



VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET Supplement 3

VCE English/ESL Text list 2008–2009 VCE Literature Text list 2009

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The following texts proposed by the English Text Advisory Panel have been approved by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as suitable for study in Units 3 and 4 in 2009.

Criteria for text selection

Each text selected for the VCE English and English (ESL) text lists will:

- have literary merit and be worthy of close study
- be an excellent example of form and genre
- sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and providing challenging ideas
- be appropriate for both male and female students
- be appropriate for the age and development of students and, in that context, reflect current community standards and expectations.

The text list as a whole will:

- be suitable for a wide range of students, including second language students
- reflect the cultural diversity of the Victorian community
- include a balance of new and established works
- include texts that display affirming perspectives.

Guidelines for text selection

The text list for VCE English/ESL must:

1. Contain a total of 36 available texts
 - 20 (List 1: Area of Study 1)
 - 16 (List 2: Area of Study 2) (four for each Context):
 - The imaginative landscape
 - Whose reality?
 - Encountering conflict
 - Exploring issues of identity and belonging
2. Represent the full range of texts indicated in the study design in the following approximate proportions:
 - Area of Study 1: List 1 (20 texts)
 - 8 novels
 - 2 collections of short stories
 - 2 collections of poetry or songs
 - 3 plays
 - 2 film texts
 - 3 non fiction texts



Area of study 2: List 2 (16 texts)

For each Context

1 novel

1 film text

Plus 2 from the following, depending on relevance to the Context:

Plays

Short stories

Poetry

Other Literature

3. Contain at least five texts for List 1, four texts for List 2 (one in each Context) by or about Australians.
4. Contain print and film texts that are widely available, preferably for sale.
5. Contain no titles in common with those on the VCE Literature list.
6. After the first two years of implementation be reviewed annually with approximately 25 per cent of the texts being changed. After the first two years of implementation no text should appear for more than four consecutive years or fewer than two years.
7. Be accompanied by full bibliographic details where necessary.

Text selection – advice to schools

Texts for study in Units 3 and 4 English/ESL are grouped into two lists: List 1 for Area of Study 1, Reading and Responding, which focuses on the reading of a range of literary texts to develop critical and supported responses in relation to Outcome 1; and List 2 for Area of Study 2, Creating and Presenting, which focuses on reading and writing and their interconnection, in relation to Outcome 2.

Teachers should consider the lists in conjunction with the relevant Text Selection requirements set out in the *VCE English/ESL Study Design* for Units 3 and 4.

A film text may be selected from List 1 or List 2 but not both. **Students are not permitted to write on more than one film in the examination.**

At least one of the selected texts in each of Units 3 and 4 should be an imaginative print text such as a novel, a play, a collection of short stories, or poetry.

At least one of the selected texts should be by an Australian or about Australians.

The annotations are provided to assist teachers with selection of texts in accordance with the requirements in the *VCE English Study Design*. It is important to avoid genre confusion. A film version of a novel, short story, play or non-fiction text is not acceptable for purposes of the examination, although it might be used in the classroom for teaching purposes.

Note: While the VCAA considers all the texts on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that **with some texts there may be sensitivities in relation to certain issues**. In selecting texts for study, teachers should make themselves aware of these issues prior to introducing the text to students.

Key to codes

This list is presented alphabetically by author, grouped according to kind of text. Abbreviations in brackets after the titles signify:

(A) This text meets the Australian requirement

(#) Bracketed numbers indicate the number of years that a text or Context has appeared on the English text list.

List 1

Novels

Allende, Isabel, *Of Love and Shadows* (3)

Behrendt, Larissa, *Home* (A) (3)

Dickens, Charles, *Hard Times* (3)

Goldsworthy, Peter, *Maestro*, (A) (2)

Harrison, Charles Yale, *Generals Die in Bed* (4)

Hosseini, Khaled, *The Kite Runner* (4)

O'Brien, Tim, *In the Lake of the Woods* (4)

Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (3)

Short stories

Farmer, Beverley, *Collected Stories* (A) (2)

(The stories for study are as follows: 'Place of Birth', 'Caffe Veneto', 'The Harem', 'A Woman with Black Hair', 'Market Day', 'Home Time', 'White Friday', 'A Man in the Laundrette', 'Fire and Flood', 'Marina', 'A Girl on the Sand', 'Matrimonial Home', 'Pomegranates', 'Our Lady of the Beehives')

Poe, Edgar Allan, (ed. G.R. Thompson) *Great Short Works* (2)

(Tales for study are as follows: 'Berenice', 'The Fall of the House of Usher', 'William Wilson', 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', 'The Oval Portrait', 'The Masque of the Red Death', 'The Pit and the Pendulum', 'The Tell-Tale Heart', 'The Black Cat', 'The Premature Burial', 'The Purloined Letter', 'The Cask of Amontillado')

Plays

Bolt, Robert, *A Man for all Seasons* (3)

Rayson, Hannie, *Inheritance* (A) (4)

Shakespeare, William, *Richard III* (2)

Poetry/Songs

Kelly, Paul, *Don't Start Me Talking: Lyrics 1984–2004* (A) (4)

Slessor, Kenneth, *Selected Poems* (A) (2)

Film texts

Citizen Kane (Director: Orson Welles) (3)

Look Both Ways (Director: Sarah Watt) (A) (3)

Non-fiction texts

Gaita, Raimond, *Romulus, My Father* (A) (5)

Krakauer, Jon, *Into Thin Air* (2)

Xinran, *Sky Burial* (4)

List 2

The Imaginative landscape (2)

Frost, Robert, (ed. Edward Lathem), *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (2)

Jindabyne (Director: Ray Lawrence) (A) (2)

MacLeod, Alistair, *Island* (2)

Malouf, David, *Fly Away Peter* (A) (2)

Whose reality? (2)

Drewe, Robert, *The Shark Net* (A) (2)

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Director: Michael Gondry) (2)

McEwan, Ian, *Enduring Love* (2)
Williams, Tennessee, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (2)

Encountering conflict (2)

Flanagan, Arch and Martin, *The Line*, (A) (2)
Grenville, Kate, *The Secret River* (A) (2)
Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible* (2)
Omagh (Director: Pete Travis) (2)

Exploring issues of identity and belonging (2)

Dawe, Bruce, *Sometimes Gladness* (A) (2)
Murray-Smith, Joanna, *Bombshells* (A) (2)
Salinger, J D, *The Catcher in the Rye* (2)
Witness (Director: Peter Weir) (A) (2)

Annotations

These annotations are provided to assist teachers with text selection. The comments are not intended to represent the only possible interpretation or a favoured reading of a text. The list is arranged alphabetically by author in text types. Films are listed by title. The VCAA does not prescribe editions: any complete edition may be used. The bibliographic information is provided to assist teachers to obtain texts and is correct, as far as possible, at the time of publication. Publishing details may change from time to time and teachers should consult the VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET and VCAA website regularly for any amendments or alterations to the list.

List 1

Novels

Allende, Isabel, *Of Love and Shadows*, Black Swan, 1988

Of Love and Shadows is a political novel which examines the circumstances in an unnamed South American country in the 1970s. Using the framework of an unfolding love story between the main protagonist, Irene Beltrán, and her photographer lover Francisco, Allende examines and exposes the human rights abuses under Pinochet's regime in Chile. Allende combines an affectionate description of the strength and magic which can be found in a community suffering horrible oppression with a profound understanding of characters and motivations. She has created a dense text which utilises imagery of good and evil, of hope and oppression, of defeat and defiance. Allende explores the triumph of the human spirit under an oppressive regime.

Behrendt, Larissa, *Home*, University of Queensland Press, 2004 (A)

Larissa Behrendt, a practising lawyer, has had a distinguished career lecturing and writing extensively on the Law. *Home* is Behrendt's first novel. It is a heartfelt and largely autobiographical account of the impact of government policies which saw the removal of indigenous children from their families. Candice, a successful city lawyer, visits her ancestral country and begins a personal journey as she learns of Garibooli, her grandmother, who was wrenched from her family as a young girl. Through Garibooli and her extended family, Behrendt explores issues of race, identity, loss, and ultimately, survival.

Dickens, Charles, *Hard Times*, Penguin Classics, 2003

Hard Times begins in a nineteenth-century classroom in Coketown, a fictional city where rapid industrialisation has led to dehumanising conditions. The classroom is represented as a microcosm for the world outside; a factory-style method of mass education is designed to produce future workers who are treated like machines. While exploring social conditions and the role of education, Dickens also shows the impact on the family of Thomas Gradgrind of the attempt to eliminate imagination and inculcate facts and statistics.

Goldsworthy, Peter, *Maestro*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2004 (A)

Paul Crabbe, recently arrived in Darwin, is taught by another exile, Eduard Keller. Paul initially dislikes his teacher, but changes as he comes to understand him. In the process Paul learns more about himself, about the difference between musical competence and genius, and about facing up to reality.

Harrison, Charles Yale, *Generals Die in Bed*, Penguin, 2003

Drawing on his own experiences in World War I, Charles Yale Harrison tells a stark and poignant story of a young man sent to fight on the Western Front. This novel brings to life a period of history seen through the eyes of a twenty-year-old narrator, who reminds us that there is neither glamour nor glory in war.

Hosseini, Khaled, *The Kite Runner*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004

Khaled Hosseini was born in Afghanistan and is now a doctor living in California. *The Kite Runner*, a timely and topical novel, is set against the background of Afghanistan's recent turbulent history. It is the tale of the friendship between two young boys, Amir and his family's low-caste servant, Hassan, which changes forever on the day of a kite running tournament. Amir flees with his family to America when the Russians invade. His past betrayal of his friend can no longer remain buried, and, as a man, Amir returns to Afghanistan to redeem himself.

O'Brien, Tim, *In the Lake of the Woods*, HarperCollins Publishers, 1995

Set in northern Minnesota, during the week immediately following the first electoral loss for a formerly successful politician, O'Brien's novel explores, among other issues, the 'win at all costs' mentality of political campaigns, the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, and the cost to human relationships as well as the compromise of personal integrity. The plot is driven, in part, by the mysterious disappearance of the politician's wife.

Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Penguin Classics, 2000

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston lives in a totalitarian society led by Big Brother. His behaviour is censored, as are his thoughts. Winston, and his clandestine lover Julia, attempt to rebel against the regime, only to realise its complete power and their own powerlessness. Published in 1948, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is George Orwell's bleak vision of how the power of the state could come to dominate the lives of individuals. Winston's individual personality cannot withstand Big Brother's cultural conditioning and torturous tactics. Winston

ultimately accepts his powerlessness and declares his love for Big Brother. Orwell's chilling warnings about authoritarian regimes and an individual's political vulnerability resonate today.

Short stories

Farmer, Beverley, *Collected Stories*, University of Queensland Press, 2004 (A)

(The stories for study are as follows: 'Place of Birth', 'Caffe Veneto', 'The Harem', 'A Woman with Black Hair', 'Market Day', 'Home Time', 'White Friday', 'A Man in the Laundrette', 'Fire and Flood', 'Marina', 'A Girl on the Sand', 'Matrimonial Home', 'Pomegranates', 'Our Lady of the Beehives') **Note:** these stories were formerly anthologised in the collection *Home Time*.

This collection of stories features a range of settings, including Australia, Greece and the United States, with some of the stories being linked by characters and others by a sense of place. The stories deal with the experiences of people coming to terms with a range of circumstances. They are rich in character and variety and will engage students on a number of levels. The writer captures superbly the Greek ambience and environment; her characters are finely developed and readily come to life for readers.

Poe, Edgar Allan (ed. G. R. Thompson), *Great Short Works*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2004

(Tales for study are as follows: 'Berenice', 'The Fall of the House of Usher', 'William Wilson', 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', 'The Oval Portrait', 'The Masque of the Red Death', 'The Pit and the Pendulum', 'The Tell-Tale Heart', 'The Black Cat', 'The Premature Burial', 'The Purloined Letter', 'The Cask of Amontillado')

A man contemplates the meaning of darkness in a mysterious prison. Another commits the 'perfect murder' but is given away by a beating heart. At a surreal fancy dress party, an uninvited guest called Death suddenly appears. Edgar Allan Poe's stories explore the gloomy corners of existence while occasionally poking fun at the conventions of the Gothic genre that influenced so much of his work. Stories such as 'The Tell-Tale Heart' reveal Poe's subtle understanding of the human mind and there is a sophisticated psychological dimension to these stories. Poe's writing is timeless and he is credited with creating the first modern detective in the Sherlock Holmes-like Auguste Dupin who appears in several tales including 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'. All of the stories are challenging but also highly entertaining. Edgar Allan Poe's characters and language will linger long in the imagination.

Plays

Bolt, Robert, *A Man for all Seasons*, Methuen, 2001

Henry VIII broke with Rome and established the Church of England because the Pope would not give him a divorce. Sir Thomas More, a great lawyer, was one of the few men who refused to agree to the King's action, choosing to act in accordance with his conscience, rather than from self-interest. More, who has no wish to be a martyr, has to contend with the attempts of his friends, his enemies and his family to persuade him to act pragmatically. More ultimately faces

death because he is morally unable to lie under oath. The play explores psychological and political issues which are still relevant today.

Rayson, Hannie, *Inheritance*, Currency Press, 2003 (A)

At the core of Hannie Rayson's play are some vexed questions. Both in real and moral terms, she asks whose land is it: those who own it in law, either legal or spiritual, or those who work it? Taking the story of two related clans, the Hamilton and the Delaney, over five generations, and the Indigenous 'illegitimate' son of one of the family patriarchs, Rayson mixes mythic narratives with contemporary political and family discourses to tell a story of Australia.

Shakespeare, William, *Richard III*, Penguin Shakespeare Series, 2005

Shakespeare's *Richard III* is one of several 'history' plays and chronicles the bloody deeds and atrocities perpetrated by its central figure—the murderous and tyrannical King Richard III. The power of the drama lies partly in the ease with which he commits crime to achieve his ends. Many historians now reject this version of Richard arguing that he was a king of far greater courage and ability than previously acknowledged. Shakespeare's Richard, though, is Machiavellian in his ruthlessness; a character of seemingly endless villainy. The play also compares the destructive leadership of Richard with that of the noble Richmond. Students will enjoy the richness of language, the fast pace, and the opportunity to explore the machinations of a man bent on gaining power at any cost.

Poetry

Kelly, Paul, *Don't Start Me Talking: Lyrics 1984–2004*, Allen & Unwin, 2004 (A)

One of Australia's best loved songwriters and performers and also one of the most prolific, this collection gathers together all of Kelly's lyrics and poems written between 1984 and 2004. Kelly's greatest gift as a songwriter is his honesty. The lyrics include low key love songs with a message and always with an edge, as well as lyrics dealing with the minutiae of the lives of everyday Australians.

Slessor, Kenneth, *Selected Poems*, HarperCollins Publishers, 1993 (A)

The poems of Kenneth Slessor explore universal human concerns such as time, the meaning of life, change and death. His poems reflect his knowledge of Australia's historical heritage and of Australian urban and rural landscapes. In addition, his poems reveal his interest in widespread subject matter such as mythology, history and other cultures. Slessor focuses on the inner and external experiences human beings encounter. His poems explore dualities and contain a balance of tensions in an attempt to understand contradictory aspects of experience.

Film texts

***Citizen Kane* (Film) Director: Orson Welles (1941)**

Written and directed by and starring Orson Welles, this 1941 film is generally regarded as one of the classics of twentieth century cinema. Welles used film techniques in an innovative way to tell the story of Charles Foster Kane in his journey from

newspaper journalist to media tycoon, famous capitalist and politician. The film, which has many parallels with newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, is the story of a reporter who decided that Kane's dying words would explain his life. Through the use of flashbacks, his research takes him to five different people who each give their own version of Kane's life. It is only the audience who discover the truth about Kane, his personal despair, his motivations and his image of himself. (Classification: PG) (English subtitles for the hearing impaired.)

Look Both Ways, (Film) Director: Sarah Watt, 2005 (A)

This film explores the effect of traumatic incidents on peoples' lives. The two main characters are a woman who witnesses the death of a man hit by a freight train and the photographer who attends the accident. Both characters have experienced tragedies in their lives that they were struggling to deal with. Their relationship blossoms in the context of the train accident which is set against a larger, more newsworthy disaster. The film, which has an uplifting conclusion, raises many questions about why these things happen, whether they can be avoided and if tragedy does happen, is it sometimes meant to be? The film is characterised by the use of montage and animated sequences. (Classification: M)

Non-fiction texts

Gaita, Raimond, *Romulus, My Father*, Text Publishing, 2002 (A)

Romulus Gaita fled his home in Yugoslavia at the age of thirteen soon after the end of World War II and came to Australia with his young wife Christine and their four-year-old son. Tragic events were to overtake them, events which Gaita explores in his story about growing up with his increasingly troubled father in rural Victoria. This is the story of how a compassionate and honest man taught his son the meaning of living a decent life. It deals with friendship and betrayal, with the fragility of existence, with the cruelty of depression and mental illness and the dignity of work. It is about survival and the struggle to establish a sense of self and integrity of character despite, or because of, the obstacles that fate may provide.

Krakauer, Jon, *Into Thin Air*, Pan Books, 1998

Journalist and accomplished climber, Jon Krakauer presents a controversial and compelling account of the worst tragedy on Mount Everest. In May 1996, eight climbers died trying to reach the summit in treacherous conditions. The climbers' experience in mountain climbing and dealing with high altitudes varied – some were qualified while others were highly reliant on the guides. All had paid up to \$US65 000 for the climb. Krakauer suggests that this transaction distorted the judgements made on the mountain and resulted in the line between the dangerous and the deadly being crossed, with tragic consequences. Krakauer, who participated in the climb, completed extensive research and interviewed the survivors. The text examines how arrogance, ego and commercialism impacted on this endeavour to conquer the mountain.

Xinran, *Sky Burial*, Chatto and Windus, 2004

In March 1958, a Chinese woman learns that her husband, an idealistic army doctor, has died while serving in Tibet. Determined to know what has happened to him, she courageously sets off to join his regiment. To her horror,

instead of finding a Tibetan people welcoming their Chinese 'liberators', she walks into a bloody conflict. Before she can know her husband's fate, she is taken hostage and embarks on a life-changing journey through the Tibetan countryside – a journey that will last twenty years and lead her to a deep appreciation of Tibetan culture.

List 2

The Imaginative Landscape

Novel

Malouf, David, *Fly Away Peter*, Vintage, Random House, 1999 (A)

Set initially in Queensland in 1914, *Fly Away Peter* tells the story of Jim Sadler, an amateur ornithologist who is befriended by Ashley Crowther, the owner of a marshland. He is given the task of recording the bird life of the area. Imogen Harcourt, a photographer, meets Jim, and their shared interest in birds cements their friendship. The timeless landscape, with kingfisher and ibis, is contrasted with the brutal conflict of World War I. Jim and Ashley, as soldier and officer respectively, find themselves on the Western Front in France.

Deceptively simple in plot and structure, the novel celebrates the life of an ordinary, self-effacing man. We follow Jim through the horrors of trench warfare to the moment when he confronts his deepest fears. Malouf tackles the ANZAC story and examines some of the mythology surrounding Australia's involvement in World War I. He is also interested in the notion of life as a continuum and explores notions of the individual's place in a complex, multilayered world, the importance of a sense of place, and the relationships between nature and the world of men and women.

Film

***Jindabyne*, Director: Ray Lawrence, 2006 (A)**

The screenplay written by Beatrix Christian is based on Raymond Carver's short story, 'So much water so close to home', also drawn on by songwriter Paul Kelly in his work.

On an annual fishing trip, in the isolated high country in the Snowy Mountains, four men find a girl's body in the river. They make the decision to finish their fishing weekend rather than make the trek back to report her death. On their return the consequences of their disturbing decision are far reaching for the men, their families, the girl's family and their community. The varied reactions form the core of the story. Some believe they have done nothing wrong; however, others react differently and one is particularly repelled and haunted by the choice.

The realisation that what is done cannot be undone is sobering and viewers are faced with the effects of the corrosive nature of guilt. (Classification: M) (English subtitles for the hearing impaired.)

Short stories

MacLeod, Alistair, *Island*, Vintage, Random House, 2002

Note: These stories were formerly anthologised in the collection *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood*.

Alistair MacLeod's first short story collection, now published as *Island*, includes finely crafted tales of individuals, families, and small communities. Most of the stories are set

in Canada's remote eastern provinces. His preoccupations are familial relationships and memory. Grandparents, parents, husbands and wives and their children come to terms with the past as they face an uncertain future. The reader sees a community in a period of modernisation and change: and is invited to question what is gained and what is lost. The landscape is cold and unforgiving but there is, nevertheless, a warmth to these stories.

Poetry

Frost, Robert, (ed. Edward Lathem), *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, Vintage, Random House, 2001

Frost's poetry is characterised by precise and evocative imagery to describe the landscape of New England. Through observation and description he celebrates our place within the world and our contributions to its shape. His poetry usually explores the perspective of the solitary figure in the landscape and the writing creates links between man's inner life and the land. Frost's poems should enable students to explore and present their own links to their physical world in exciting ways.

Whose Reality?

Novel

McEwan, Ian, *Enduring Love*, Vintage, Random House, 2006

After a tragic ballooning mishap, the lives of an academic couple Joe and Clarissa, are set asunder by Jed Parry, another person involved in the accident. Jed's initial attempts to make sense of the experience through Joe gradually turn into a more sinister obsession. Joe's reaction to this interest becomes increasingly damaging both to himself and to his relationship with Clarissa. The novel builds to a dramatic denouement that addresses love and the role of truth in relationships. *Enduring Love* looks at love with a dispassionate eye and questions what is it to love someone and how we deal with unrequited love. The title's ambiguity makes the reader think about how love lasts, and how it can be a trial.

Film

***Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, Director: Michel Gondry, 2004**

This film presents a world where people can have unpleasant memories erased. It centres on one couple, Joel and Clementine, who wipe each other's memory of their relationship. Through the use of multiple narratives, switching dream sequences and the erasing procedure itself, the film presents a series of dilemmas. It shows what may take place if the unpleasantness of life were removed. It also seems to suggest the inevitability and inscrutability of love and emotions and represents the messiness and unpredictability of life. (Classification: M) (English subtitles for the hearing impaired.)

Play

Williams, Tennessee, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Penguin Classics, 2000

Streetcar's Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski are two of the most well-known characters in American literature. Blanche's visit to her sister Stella's apartment in New

Orleans precipitates the conflict between Blanche's 'Old South' pretensions, and the raw physical reality of Stella's husband, Stanley. Blanche denies reality: her age, her issues with alcohol and the reasons she has left the family home in Laurel, Mississippi. Stanley sees through her fabrications, and despises her condescension towards his inner-city, diverse working-class world – the new America. Ultimately, Blanche's insecurities and denials mean that she withdraws from the real world altogether. Williams' play is a rich examination of ideas about desire and death, fantasy and reality.

Other Literature

Drewe, Robert, *The Shark Net*, Penguin, 2003 (A)

This memoir chronicles the life of Drewe from the age of six when his family moves to Perth, depicted as a sandy place on the edge of a vast continent. With a tone that combines nostalgia and a sense of the macabre, Drewe attempts to make sense of the changes in Perth wrought by serial killer Eric Cooke, and perhaps to make sense of himself as he comes to terms with his family relationships, his career as a cadet journalist and his yearnings for acceptance. The murders form a background to Drewe's exploration of the loss of innocence. When Drew returns to Melbourne his fantasies about the romantic beach films of his adolescence and his feelings for Perth are resolved.

Encountering Conflict

Novel

Grenville, Kate, *The Secret River*, Text Publishing, 2006 (A)

Kate Grenville's acclaimed novel is set in the early nineteenth century. In 1806, protagonist William Thornhill is transported for the term of his natural life and with his family travels from the slums of London to New South Wales. After eight years as a convict, Thornhill is emancipated and sails up the Hawkesbury River to stake his claim of one hundred acres. Grenville presents a powerful, contemporary insight into the relationships between the settlers, the land and the Aboriginal people. Based on research into her own family history, the text deals with issues of identity, relationships, belonging and ownership.

Film

***Omagh*, Director: Pete Travis, 2004**

On 15 August 1998 in Omagh, County Tyrone in Northern Ireland, a bomb explodes and hundreds of people are killed or injured in the blast. Pete Travis' film focuses on the family in a manner that reintroduces the 'personal' into the increasingly abstract notion of terrorism. The opening sequence leading up to explosion is almost unbearably tense. Afterwards viewers are left with a grieving father searching for elusive answers and some form of justice. Veteran Irish actor, Gerard McSorley, conveys his character's quiet dignity and pain with precision and sympathy. The film does not offer simple solutions, but instead raises even more difficult questions about culpability and the price of a drawn out peace process. Although it is set in Ireland, the ideas that drive the narrative are universal. This is a film that will provoke much debate and discussion. (Classification: MA)

Play

Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible*, Penguin Classics, 2000

Set in the claustrophobic and dangerous times of the Salem witch hunts in 1692, Arthur Miller recreates the terrifying reality of a village in New England caught up in naming and blaming each other for acts of witchcraft and trafficking with the devil. Abigail and a group of other young girls seem possessed and, in an attempt to escape retribution themselves, point the finger literally and figuratively at others. Of particular fascination is the flawed but ultimately heroic response by the protagonist, John Proctor, a man who has committed adultery but wants to save his marriage. He is identified as the chief perpetrator of witchcraft. His battle with Puritan authorities, jealous neighbours and those bent on personal revenge, suggests that love, integrity and dignity can prevail. *The Crucible* becomes a metaphor for what happened in 1950s Cold-War America where a number of people became entangled in the paranoid world of 'reds under the bed' and the 'outing' of 'communists'. Whilst the power of the play ensures its historical appeal, it remains disturbingly relevant for the early twenty-first century. Students will have the opportunity to explore a fine play in which the best and worst of humanity are revealed.

Other literature

Flanagan, Arch and Martin, *The Line, One Day Hill*, 2005 (A)

This biographical story has two of everything: two authors, two stories, two types of history and two hearts; but it is not a story divided. The stories intertwine with one explaining the other. Arch and Martin Flanagan, father and son, describe how Arch's difficult wartime experiences and memories made them who they are as individuals and as a family. Theirs is not the only relationship explored. Arch's four sections of *The Line*, about the building of the Burma rail line by prisoners of war, are interspersed with Martin's reflections on his father and the men with whom he went to war. For such a brutal experience, the warmth, gentleness and humour of many of those people are captured by both authors. The awfulness and enduring impact of the war experience are also described with enough detail to reveal the realities of dying in a jungle or of dealing daily with extraordinary privation. *The Line* is both a personal history and a larger history of a time, a place and people who were thrown together by harsh and brutal experiences.

Exploring issues of identity and belonging

Novel

Salinger, J D, *The Catcher in the Rye*, Penguin, 1994

Holden Caulfield has run away from Pencey School, following his expulsion for poor academic performance. The archetypal alienated youth wanders around New York, just before Christmas, afraid to go home and tell his parents that

he has been expelled from yet another school. Caulfield is a depressed and unreliable narrator, and his insights are often both cynical and wry. Intensely critical of his world and the people he encounters, he is also capable of disarming affection and sensitivity. Holden's confession to his younger sister, Phoebe, that he wants to be a Catcher in the Rye, is based on his mishearing (when he was a child) the line in the song 'Comin' thro' the rye' as 'When a body catch a body, comin' thro' the rye'. Holden's view of himself as a potential catcher, or rescuer, of children, is symbolic of his own need to be rescued. Holden's first person narrative allows access into his own exploration of issues of identity and belonging.

Film

***Witness*, Director: Peter Weir, 1985 (A)**

Samuel, a young Amish boy, on his first visit to the city witnesses the murder of a detective by corrupt fellow officers. John Book, an honest policeman, attempts to protect Samuel and is given refuge in an Amish community living in Western Pennsylvania. The film explores the developing relationship between Book, Samuel and his mother, and the Amish community, and the ways in which different cultures see and understand each other. Weir presents the Amish, living as farmers, without technology and rejecting violence, and Book's world. Contrasting cultures are seen through the eyes of the main protagonists so that the audience is given different perspectives, and an understanding of what it means to 'belong' in two different worlds. (Classification: M) (English subtitles for the hearing impaired.)

Play

Murray-Smith, Joanna, *Bombshells*, Currency Press, 2004 (A)

First produced in 2004, *Bombshells* comprises six unconnected monologues, ranging from a teenager, a bride-to-be, an exhausted young mother, a deserted wife with a caustic approach to her hobby, a grieving, isolated widow, and a stage 'star' at the end of a supposedly great career. The play presents varying views of the roles of women, exploring a surprising range of emotions, all of which are presented with compassion and insight. The tone of some monologues is light, comic and playful, others poignant and touching.

Poetry

Dawe, Bruce, *Sometimes Gladness*, Pearson, 2006 (A)

Bruce Dawe's poetry explores a range of human experience, often drawing on the voice of the 'person in the street', and using small episodes to make important points. His poems can be funny, witty and satirical on the one hand, yet lyrical, poignant, sad and tender on the other. The poems highlight the value and warmth to be found in everyday experiences. Hardship is acknowledged, but life is affirmed, and the poems explore the ways in which feelings of identity and belonging may be shaped by experience.

VCE Literature Text list 2009

The following texts proposed by the Literature Text Advisory Panel have been approved by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as suitable for study in Units 3 and 4 in 2009.

Criteria for text selection

Each text selected for the VCE Literature text list will:

- have literary merit and be worthy of close study
- be an excellent example of form and genre
- sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and providing challenging ideas
- be appropriate for both male and female students
- be appropriate for the age and development of students and in that context reflect current community standards and expectations.

The text list as a whole will:

- be suitable for a wide range of students, including second language students
- reflect the cultural diversity of the Victorian community
- include a balance of new and established works.

Guidelines for text selection

The text list for VCE Literature is determined within the following guidelines:

1. Texts used as the basis for achieving outcomes in the school-based coursework may be selected from either List A or List B.
2. The texts selected as the basis for the examination responses must come from List B.
3. Forty texts should be available for List A.
4. Thirty texts should be available for List B.
5. The list must represent a range of forms, experiences and voices, as described in the study design.
6. Genres for List A must be represented in the following approximate numbers:
 - 10 Novels
 - 10 Performances
 - 8 Poetry
 - 6 Stories
 - 6 Other Literature
- Genres for List B must be represented in the following approximate numbers:
 - 9 Novels
 - 9 Performances
 - 6 Poetry
 - 3 Stories
 - 3 Other Literature
7. One-third of the texts should be Australian.
8. Approximately 75 per cent of the texts must be texts that would be expected to be familiar to most Literature teachers.
9. Contain no titles in common with those on the VCE English/ESL text lists
10. Be reviewed annually, with approximately 25 per cent of the texts being changed. No text should appear for more than four consecutive years or fewer than two years.
11. Full bibliographic details must be supplied where necessary.

Text selection – advice to schools

Text selection advice is published on page 19 of the *VCE Literature Study Design*.

When selecting texts teachers should ensure that students experience a range of literature from early to contemporary works, dealing with a diversity of cultural experiences and a range of points of view.

At least two texts should be Australian.

At least two texts should be selected from List A and two texts from List B.

Selections from the text lists should include:

- One novel
- One play, film or television mini-series
- Between 10 and 15 poems
- Collection of short stories, letters, memoirs, essays, tales, myths and short extracts from a variety of sources
- Two further texts selected from novels, plays, collections of poetry, collections of short stories, biographies, autobiographies, collections of essays, letters or memoirs.

Note: While the VCAA considers all the texts on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that **with some texts there may be sensitivities in relation to certain issues**. In selecting texts for study teachers should make themselves aware of these issues prior to introducing the text to students.

The VCAA does not prescribe editions: any complete edition may be used. However, **it should be noted that editions nominated for titles from List B are those from which the passages for the examination will be selected**. The bibliographic information is provided to assist teachers to obtain texts and is correct, as far as possible, at the time of publication. Publishing details may change from time to time and teachers should consult the VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET regularly for any amendments or alterations to the list.

In List A the choice of poems for study is a teacher decision. Poems may be sourced from any edition of a poet's works and editions nominated for List A are not prescriptive. For List B, on the other hand, listed poems are prescriptive.

Key to codes

- (A) This text meets the Australian requirement.
(#) Bracketed numbers indicate the number of years that a text has appeared on the Literature text list: (1) for example, indicates that 2009 is the first year a text has appeared on the list.

List A

Novels

- Buck, Pearl, *The Good Earth*, Washington Square Press, 2004 (3)
Day, Gregory, *The Patron Saint of Eels*, Picador, 2005 (A) (3)
Eliot, George, *Silas Marner*, Penguin Classics, 1997 (2)

- Johnston, George, *My Brother Jack*, A&R Classics, 2001 (A) (1)
- Gaskell, Elizabeth, *North and South*, Penguin Classics, 1996 (4)
- Grenville, Kate, *The Idea of Perfection*, Picador, 2000 (A) (4)
- Leon, Donna, *Doctored Evidence*, Random House, 2004 (4)
- Mayes, Andrea, *The Rose Notes*, Penguin Books, 2005 (A) (2)
- Rhys, Jean, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Penguin Classics, 2001 (1)
- Vonnegut, Kurt, *Slaughterhouse Five*, Vintage, 1991 (1)

Plays, film or television mini-series

- Aristophanes, *The Birds in Four Plays by Aristophanes*, Penguin, 1994 (4)
- Brecht, Bertolt, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Methuen, 1994 (3)
- Casablanca* (Film) Director: Michael Curtiz, (Classification: PG), (3)
- Enright, Nick, and Monjo, Justin, *Cloudstreet* (adapted from the novel by Tim Winton), Currency Press, 1999 (A) (2)
- Grave of the Fireflies* (DVD Animation), Director: Isao Takahata, (Classification: M), 1988 (4)
- Nowra, Louis, *Radiance*, Currency Press, 2004 (The Playscript) (A) (3)
- Parsons, Nick, *Dead Heart: The Play*, Currency Press, 2003 (A) (2)
- Stoppard, Tom, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Faber and Faber, 1967 (1)
- Water* (film, DVD) Director: Deepa Mehta, (Classification: M), 2005 (1)
- Wilde, Oscar, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays*, Penguin Classics, 2000 (3)

Short stories

- de Maupassant, Guy, *A Parisian Affair and Other Stories*, Penguin, 2004 (1)
- Dick, Philip K, *Minority Report*, Gollancz, 2002 (4)
- Drewe, Robert (ed.), *The Penguin Book of the Beach*, Penguin, 2001 (A) (3)
- Mansfield, Katherine, *The Collected Stories*, Penguin Classics, 2001 (2)
- Mears, Gillian, *A Map of the Gardens*, Picador, 2002 (A) (4)
- Munro, Alice, *Dance of the Happy Shades*, Vintage, Random House, 2000 (2)

Other literature

- Ginibi, Ruby Langford, *Don't Take Your Love to Town*, University of Queensland Press, 2007 (A) (1)
- Hemingway, Ernest, *A Moveable Feast*, Arrow Books, 1994 (1)
- Li, Cunxin, *Mao's Last Dancer*, Penguin, 2003 (A) (4)
- Ondaatje, Michael, *Running in the Family*, Picador, 1982 (2)
- Winchester, Simon, *The Surgeon of Crowthorne*, Penguin, 1999 (1)
- Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own*, Penguin, 2000 (3)

Poetry

Note: No specific editions or poems are nominated for poets in List A as the choice of poems is a teacher decision.

- Eliot, T S (4)
- Lawrence, Anthony, *Skinned by Light*, University of Queensland Press, 2002 (A) (3)
- Lowell, Robert (3)
- Murray, Les (A) (2)

Poetry in Translation; Modern French Poetry: a selection of poems chosen from the works of Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and Guillaume Apollinaire (See Annotation below for details) (2)

- Strauss, Jennifer (A) (1)
- Wordsworth, William (4)
- Wyatt, Thomas (4)

List B

Novels

- Austen, Jane, *Emma*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (1)
- Barker, Pat, *Regeneration*, Penguin Books, 1992 (3)
- Bronte, Anne, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Penguin Classics, 1996 (2)
- Dickens, Charles, *Bleak House*, Penguin Classics, 2006 (2)
- Forster, E M, *A Passage to India*, Penguin Classics, 2005 (2)
- James, Henry, *Washington Square*, Penguin Classics, 1986 (4)
- McGahan, Andrew, *The White Earth*, Allen & Unwin, 2004 (A) (3)
- Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (1)
- Stead, Christina, *The Man Who Loved Children*, Melbourne University Press, 2008 (A) (1)

Plays

- Chekhov, Anton, *Three Sisters*, translated by Peter Carson, Penguin, 2002 (4)
- Frayn, Michael, *Copenhagen*, Methuen Student Edition, 2003 (1)
- Ibsen, Henrik, *Hedda Gabler*, in *Hedda Gabler and Other Plays*, Penguin, 1961 (3)
- Murray-Smith, Joanna, *Honour*, Currency Press, 2006 (A) (4) (**Note:** The 1997 edition differs significantly from the 2006 edition and should not be used)
- Rayson, Hannie, *Hotel Sorrento*, Currency Press, 2002 (A) (3)
- Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet*, Cambridge School Shakespeare, Cambridge University Press, 2006 (1)
- Shakespeare, William, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Penguin Shakespeare Series, 2005 (3)
- Sophocles, *Antigone*, translated by E F Watling in *The Theban Plays*, Penguin, 2004 (3)
- Thomas, Dylan, *Under Milk Wood*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2000 (4)

Short stories

- Astley, Thea, *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*, Penguin, 1981 (A) (4)
- Byatt, A S, *Sugar & Other Stories*, Vintage, Random House, 1995 (3)
- Lawrence, D H, Three Novellas: *The Fox/The Captain's Doll/The Ladybird*, Penguin Classics, 2006 (2)

Other literature

- Funder, Anna, *Stasiland*, Text Publishing, 2003 (A) (1)
- McGirr, Michael, *Bypass: The Story of a Road*, Pan Macmillan, 2005 (A) (3)
- Wolff, Tobias, *This Boy's Life*, Bloomsbury, 1989 (2)

Poetry

- Note:**
1. Each poem listed for a poet must be studied
 2. Teachers should note that in the case of longer poems, extracts from the poem may be used in the examination.

Auden, W H, *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson, Faber & Faber, 1979 (4)

This lunar beauty
To ask the hard question is simple
Look, stranger, at this island now
Lay your sleeping head, my love
Musée des Beaux Arts
In Memory of W.B. Yeats
The Unknown Citizen
September 1, 1939
Law, say the gardeners, is the sun
Lady, weeping at the crossroads
In Praise of Limestone
Under Sirius
The Shield of Achilles
The More Loving One

Beveridge, Judith, *Wolf Notes*, Giramondo Publishing Company, 2003 (A) (2)

Part 1: Peregrine

The Saffron Picker
The Lake
Exsanguination
Woman and Child
Crew

Part 2: Between the Palace and the Bodhi Tree

Dawn
The River
Tigers
A Vow
The Kite
A Way
In the Forest
Path

Part 3: Signatures

Apprentice
Sailor

Donne, John, *Selected Poetry*, Oxford World's Classics, 1996 (4)

From The Satires:

- Satire 3 [Kind pity chokes my spleen]

From the Love Elegies:

- To his Mistress Going to Bed
- His Picture

From the Songs and Sonnets:

- The Flea
- The Good Morrow
- The Sun Rising
- The Canonization
- Song (First line: *Sweetest love, I do not go*)
- The Anniversary
- A Valediction: forbidding Mourning
- The Relic

From the Holy Sonnets:

- [At the round earth's imagined corners]
- [Death be not proud]
- A Hymn to Christ, at the Author's last going into Germany
- Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness

Harwood, Gwen, *Collected Poems*, ed. Alison Hoddinott and Greg Kratzmann, University of Queensland Press, 2003 (A) (1)

Prize-Giving
A Kitchen Poem
Estuary
An Impromptu for Ann Jennings
The Violets
Iris
Father and Child
The Lion's Bride
The Secret Life of Frogs
Mother Who Gave Me Life
Class of 1927
Night and Dreams

Keats, John, *The Major Works*, Oxford World Classics, 2001 (2)

Ode to Apollo
To My Brother George [Sonnet: *Many the wonders I this day have seen*]
On First Looking into Chapman's *Homer*
On The Sea
'When I have fears that I may cease to be'
The Eve of St Agnes
La belle dame sans merci
Ode to Psyche
'If by dull rhymes our English must be chained'
Ode on Indolence
Ode to a Nightingale
Ode on Melancholy
Ode on a Grecian Urn
To Autumn
'Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou'

Larkin, Philip, *Collected Poems*, The Marvell Press and Faber & Faber, 2003 (3)

Poetry of Departures
Mr Bleaney
Love Songs in Age
Home is so Sad
The Whitsun Weddings
MCMXIV
Ambulances
The Arundel Tomb
The Explosion
Aubade

Annotations of texts new to the Literature List 2009

These annotations of texts new to the Literature list in 2009 are provided to assist teachers with text selection. The comments are not intended to represent the only possible interpretation or a favoured reading of a text; nor do they represent the view of the VCAA. The list is arranged alphabetically by author or poet. Films are listed by title.

Novels

List A

Johnston, George *My Brother Jack*, A&R Classics, 2001 (A)

Published in 1967, George Johnston's autobiographical Australian novel is dedicated to his brother, Jack. In a vividly realist narrative the fifty-two-year-old Johnston traces the early lives of two brothers against a background of global conflict. Jack and David Meredith's parents returned from service in WW I to suburban life in Melbourne, but their very different sons grow to maturity in the shadow of WW II. This poignant Bildungsroman, narrated by the younger David, offers a means of revisiting a mid-twentieth-century understanding of Australian identity from a male perspective. Johnston's laconic, measured style rewards close attention.

Rhys, Jean, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Penguin, 1997

Born in Dominica in 1890, Jean Rhys drew on her childhood in the Caribbean for the setting of this haunting exploration of the tensions of marriage and colonisation. *Wide Sargasso Sea* creates the story of Bertha, the mad Mrs Rochester of Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Rhys constructs the narrative using the voices of Antoinette and her unnamed husband. Creole heiress Antoinette Cosway, accepted by neither the negroes nor colonial community and suspected of being mentally unbalanced, leaves her troubled island home for marriage with a hypocritical, selfish Englishman who distrusts and betrays her. Christophine's obeah (spirit) magic becomes a catalyst for disempowering Rochester (male and colonial) and freeing Antoinette. The novel is a moving denunciation of human slavery in its various forms.

Vonnegut, Kurt, *Slaughterhouse Five*, Vintage, 1991

Inspired by the bombing of Dresden in World War II, *Slaughterhouse Five* is an absurdist, funny and vehemently anti-war novel. Vonnegut's use of metafiction, science fiction devices and irreverent colloquial language was experimental and controversial when the novel was first published. The author explains his reasons for writing, then appears in his own story as a minor character and the failed science fiction writer Kilgore Trout. The narrative follows Billy Pilgrim, an American soldier imprisoned in Dresden at the time of the bombing, who becomes 'unstuck in time' and is captured by Tralfamadorians who mate him with Montana Wildhack. Billy cannot alter his fate but he can revisit any part of his life as often as he wishes. The novel examines free will, fate and the randomness and irrationality of the human condition. The 1972 film was directed by George Roy Hill.

List B

Austen, Jane, *Emma*, Penguin Classics, 2003

As Jane Austen sagely observed: 'Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favour of matrimony'. With this in mind, Austen's heroine, Emma Woodhouse, attempts to engineer an advantageous match for the unfortunate Harriet Smith, embroiling the residents of Highbury in a series of comic and embarrassing misunderstandings. In their pursuit of marital bliss or material gain, Austen's characters unwittingly reveal their own foibles and also highlight the superficiality of upper-class Regency England. Emma is also flawed; she is condescending, bossy and often difficult to like. As her heroine develops greater humility and insight, Austen deftly exposes the shallowness of a society obsessed with status and appearance.

Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein*, Penguin Classics, 2003

A pioneering science fiction story, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is profoundly relevant to the ethical issues raised by contemporary science. At the centre of the story is the monster first created, then spurned, by the brilliant but ethically questionable Victor Frankenstein. The creature, abandoned by his maker, feared and reviled by the rest of mankind, is driven by bitterness and self-loathing to seek a brutal revenge on Frankenstein. On one level this is a tragedy about the flawed visionary, Frankenstein. On a larger level, it is a study in the ethics, motivations and consequences of scientific discovery. The story is narrated by Walton, a captain intent on navigating the Arctic at any cost who discovers Frankenstein in pursuit of his murderous creation. Complicated parallels are drawn between explorer, scientist and monster.

Stead, Christina, *The Man Who Loved Children*, Melbourne University Press, 2008 (A)

The Man Who Loved Children is a classic family saga of Dickensian proportions. Set in Washington DC and Baltimore during the 1930s, it is also heavily informed by Stead's own childhood in Sydney 20 years earlier. The novel centres on the family of the self-aggrandising Samuel Pollit, whose love for his children is matched only by his unabashed love for himself. Sam's enthusiasm for life is juxtaposed and in conflict with the bitterness and moroseness of Henny, his second wife. Caught between their parents, the six children search for their own destinies in a confused and changing world. Language is crucial to the construction of identity – from Sam's childish chatter and Henny's misanthropic curses, to Louisa's incessant reading and invention of a secret language. Christina Stead's evocative prose and sharply-observed characters bring the whole improbable, but unforgettable, family to life.

Plays, films or television mini-series

List A

Stoppard, Tom, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Faber and Faber, 1967

Tom Stoppard weaves in and out of Shakespeare's Hamlet in his play about the hapless friends who find themselves pawns in the conflict between Prince Hamlet and his Uncle. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are summoned to Elsinore to

console their friend Hamlet. The audience is in the privileged position of knowing what lies ahead for the two as they fumble their way towards their fate. Stoppard's wit adds comic effect to what is in fact a tragic betrayal of the two key characters. While the play is an ideal companion to the Shakespearean play, it stands as a cleverly crafted work in its own right and raises profound philosophical questions.

Water, Director: Mehta, Deepa, DVD, 2005

Water explores the plight of widows in 1930s India through the story of eight-year-old Chuyia. Married as a child bride, she is sent to the 'widow house' after the death of her elderly husband. In accordance with Hindu teachings, a widow has three options: to marry the husband's younger brother, to die on the funeral pyre, or to be forever segregated from society. As social outcasts, the widows survive by begging and prostitution. Chuyia brings to the widow house her independence of spirit, while her fellow spirited widow, the beautiful Kalyani, becomes involved in a doomed relationship with an enlightened politically active scholar. This beautiful and powerful film affords glimpses of the daily rhythms of Indian life, yet it led to violent confrontations during filming.

List B

Frayn, Michael, *Copenhagen*, Methuen Student Edition, 2003

Why did the German physicist Werner Heisenberg visit the Danish physicist Niels Bohr in Copenhagen in 1941? To enlist his services? To mislead him? To inform him of Germany's plans? In Frayn's play, the characters revisit this pivotal moment, and events are replayed from different perspectives in an attempt to establish the 'facts'. Despite their earlier mutual respect, this was no ordinary meeting of scientists or friends. Heisenberg worked for the Nazis, part-Jewish Bohr lived in a German-occupied country, and both had conducted research that suggested an atomic bomb could be built. *Copenhagen* draws on scientific ideas such as the 'principle of uncertainty' as it explores the impact of human acts and decisions on key world events, and the impact of history on individuals.

Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet*, Cambridge School Shakespeare, Cambridge University Press, 2006

Shakespeare's great tragedy, *Hamlet*, is deeply psychological and metaphysical in its content; nevertheless it maintains the pace of an action-filled revenge narrative. Hamlet is commanded to avenge the murder of his father, the King of Denmark. He suspects his uncle, Claudius, who has hastily married Hamlet's mother and usurped the throne. Caught between the desire to act and grief at the loss of his father, Hamlet becomes deeply embroiled in political machinations and personal dilemmas. What are the consequences of action, lack of action, or indecision? Is revenge ever justified? Hamlet's dilemmas are irresolvable and timeless.

Short Stories

List A

de Maupassant, Guy, *A Parisian Affair and Other Stories*, Penguin 2004.

Maupassant's stories provide excellent examples of the short story genre. A prolific writer, his 'golden decade' was the 1880s. His beautiful, evocative writing draws on many influences – his childhood in Normandy, the Franco-Prussian war and his working life amongst the literati of Paris. Writing in a social realist tradition, he examines the vanities and foibles of the bourgeoisie. His stories are characterised by sharp observation, great economy and elegant wit; many of them give an ironic twist that invites the reader to critique the characters and their social values.

Other Literature

List A

Hemingway, Ernest, *A Moveable Feast*, Arrow Books, 1994

These reflective vignettes centre on Hemingway's own experiences as a young man living in the bohemian world of Paris between the wars and reflect his development as a writer. The literary anecdotes featuring Pound, Stein and Fitzgerald were written quite late in Hemingway's life. The delicate control of language and the gentle, affectionate wit he brings to the memories are entrancing. At times the writing is closely observational, brimming with a sense of mirth and joie de vivre that evokes a Paris full of creative freedom. The collection also has moments of shrewdness as Hemingway portrays the flawed nature of his acquaintances.

Ginibi, Ruby Langford, *Don't Take Your Love to Town*, University of Queensland Press, 2007 (A)

Ruby Langford Ginibi's *Don't Take Your Love To Town* belongs to the life-narrative genre. Ginibi's itinerant life, her fraught relationships with the fathers of her children, the strength of family and her increasing awareness of injustices against indigenous Australians are presented in an honest, direct narrative. Domestic violence, alcohol abuse and deep depression following the deaths of two children, together with Ginibi's resilience and her capacity for laughter, hard work and love, make compelling reading. The episodic quality of the narrative reflects an oral tradition of storytelling, and allows for the incorporation of supplementary material: recipes, poetry, letters, witness statements, and media clippings. It is an engaging and challenging narrative of race relations and the experiences of the life of an extraordinary individual.

Winchester, Simon, *The Surgeon of Crowthorne*, Penguin Books, 1999

The Surgeon of Crowthorne tells how one man's highly significant contribution to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) was made from within the walls of an asylum for the criminally insane. The creators of the OED had no idea that their regular correspondent Dr William Minor was an inmate, not an employee, of the asylum. The story of editor James Murray's unlikely friendship with the 'murdering soldier' Minor is interwoven with a rewarding exploration of the words, contexts, social conventions and sheer hard

work associated with compiling the vast dictionary. As the dictionary creators wrestle with their task, what is revealed in this engaging example of narrative non-fiction is the OED's profound contribution to the English language.

List B

Funder, Anna, *Stasiland*, Text Publishing, 2003 (A)

Anna Funder's account of the suffering of ordinary people under the brutally efficient East German government in the aftermath of World War II is a compelling blend of investigative reporting and sympathetic personal insight. In interviewing victims and perpetrators of Stasi tyranny, Funder speaks eloquently for persecuted and silenced people everywhere. Yet in highlighting the misguided idealism or the desperate pragmatism of the regime's administrators, she also recognises the complexities involved in reconstructing a society shattered by war.

Poetry

List A

Jennifer Strauss, *Tierra del Fuego*, Pariah Press, 1997 (A)

The poetry of Jennifer Strauss employs a lyrical voice which privileges natural imagery, scholarly references to the Western literary tradition, and a sense of human vulnerability that engages the reader to reflect upon his or her own experience in an insightful way. Strauss often considers the position of the marginalised individual and reflects the capacity for individual experience to be seen against a broader social background. Her poetry opens up debate about political and social issues such as feminism and the Vietnam War without slipping into dogma. Her work is characterised by a boldness of style and impeccably constructed verse.

The following annotation is reprinted to assist teachers:

Poetry in Translation; Modern French Poetry; a selection of poems including works by Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and Guillaume Apollinaire (2)

Baudelaire's poetic masterpiece, *The Flowers of Evil* [1857], likens the poet to a condemned hero shackled to the earth by wings of lead. His selected poems and works are available in English from many publishers including New Directions, Oxford and Penguin. Rimbaud's (1854–1891) poet is an outlaw-chemist advocating the disintegration of all the senses and the reintegration of them and the world through language and poetry. Wallace Fowle (University of Chicago Press, 1966), Paul Schmidt (Harper and Row, 1975) and Martin Sorrell (Oxford University Press, USA, 2001) have translated his complete works into English. Apollinaire's (1880–1918) part-symbolist, part-spiritual aesthetic is the voice of a poet eternally longing in the eternal present. Anne Hyde Greet has translated his pre-war collection, *Alcools* (University of California, 1965) and his 1918 *Calligrammes: Poems of War and Peace* (1991 and 2004). Oliver Bernard has translated his *Selected Poems* (Anvil Press, 2003).

List B

Harwood, Gwen, *Collected Poems*, University of Queensland Press, 2003 (A)

Gwen Harwood's poems have proven very popular with students in past years. Her poetry displays a consummate mastery of form, a deeply-grounded wit and a temperament that challenges many poetic conventions. She delights in experimenting with voice, in playing with language and in stretching the boundaries of poetic form. Her poems adopt a variety of forms and voices, many apparently personal, but always there remains a distance between the persona and the authorial voice. This is particularly evident in the poems in which a clearly different persona such as crab or the lion is adopted, and in those poems portraying childhood experiences in which a mature and wiser adult voice reflects on moments when the child did not act generously or rightly.



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