2024 VCE Texts and Traditions external assessment report

General comments

The overall standard of student responses in the 2024 examination was very high. It is clear that students are preparing across the whole study design: the set text, relevant themes, and in particular the passages for special study. Most students can, at the least, provide relevant responses to questions.

Higher-scoring responses answered in line with the [VCAA published command terms](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/GlossaryofCommandTerms.aspx), which in the 2024 examination were almost identical to previous years. The command terms are typical of scriptural scholarship, and are therefore typical of most VCE Texts and Traditions exams. The command terms were:

* analyse
* compare
* define
* describe
* discuss
* explain
* explain with the use of two examples
* identify
* illustrate your response
* name
* outline
* select and discuss
* use examples to support your response
* what is …?
* who was …?

The short-answer questions in Part 1 and most of the essay questions have multiple parts; this provides a guide for students to structure their responses.

It is safe to assume that questions will be different from previous years, especially the parts of compulsory Question 4, so it is advised that students read all parts of the chosen question. High-scoring responses answered the actual question that was asked.

Most students paid attention to the multiple parts of the questions, and used these parts to help structure their responses.

Students are reminded to write their answers in English. There are no extra marks for words or phrases written in Hebrew, Greek or Arabic.

Higher-scoring responses incorporated quotations. However, if students are unsure whether the quotation is accurate, it is preferable to paraphrase a scholar – that is, not to use quotation marks but rather to write, for example, ‘Scholar A says that …’

Students are to be commended on following instructions in the Answer Book. This enabled students to answer questions more fully, especially Question 4.

It is important for students to indicate the correct answer at the top of the appropriate page in the Answer Book, and to ensure that only one question is answered per page. It is not necessary to write out the question. Responses that are continued in the extra space provided must be labelled to indicate they are ‘continued’, so that the examiner knows to continue reading and awarding marks.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Part 1: Extended Responses

This part of the examination is almost always from Unit 3 Outcomes 1 and 2. Questions 1–3 are worth 10 marks each. Each question has two to three parts, and each part has marks awarded to it.

High-scoring responses answered each part of the chosen questions, and demonstrated familiarity with the command terms in addressing the questions.

Lower-scoring responses tended to not answer all parts of the question, not follow the command terms, include material that was not directly relevant to the question, or were too brief to fully answer the question.

Some students wrote very long responses, almost to the length of an essay, going into more detail than was required to answer the question.

Statistics for this examination cover all four tradition strand questions; it is not possible to provide statistics on individual questions. The average mark for Questions 1–3 across the four tradition strands ranged between 5.6 and 6.1. Five to 10 per cent of attempted responses did not address the question.

It is important that students show an understanding of specialist terms by providing a clear definition or by demonstrating understanding through their discussion. Responses can then be marked within that understanding of the term.

The spread of marks over the four strands of the study were as follows.

Question 1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 5 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 13 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 10 | 6 | 6.1 |

Question 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 9 | 0.8 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 17 | 16 | 14 | 9 | 4 | 5.6 |

Question 3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 3 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 17 | 16 | 12 | 7 | 7 | 5.8 |

Question 4

Each part of Question 4 is dependent on Unit 4 Outcome 3 of the study design. For this compulsory question, many students may benefit from knowing how a theme in the set text has been reapplied, reinterpreted, re-contextualised, referred to, or used by the tradition over a period of time discernibly later than the original set text. High-scoring responses answered all parts of the question. Familiarity with the study design may assist students to prepare for this question.

Question 4 is the same question across the four tradition strands. Students should note, however, that the question is not repeated from year to year. Many students in the 2024 examination provided responses to Question 4 from the 2023 examination.

Eight per cent of responses did not name a textual theme studied in Unit 4 Outcome 3. These responses therefore were also not successful in outlining a theme. Some responses discussed more than one textual theme; however the question, and the study design, asks for only one textual theme from the set text.

Students should only refer to textual themes that come directly from the set text. Students should not need to refer to sacred texts outside the set text in order to explain the textual theme.

Nearly 15 per cent of responses were not able to discuss how the later tradition explained its interpretation of the theme or changes that may have occurred over time, and nearly 25 per cent of responses did not successfully explain the relevance of the original text to the later tradition’s understanding of the textual theme.

Most students correctly used the Answer Book to structure their responses into the three separate parts of the question.

The brief excerpts from student responses that follow are not intended to be used as a template, but to demonstrate how some students successfully responded to Question 4 on the 2024 examination.

Question 4a.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
| % | 8 | 34 | 37 | 21 | 1.7 |

Jeremiah & Ezekiel

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘Messianism was considered used as a tool of hope for the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as their prophetic ministries were amidst a period … when the destruction of Judah was looming …’

Luke

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘Through the characters of Mary, Elizabeth … Luke portrayed not only their complete faith in God but the potential for women … to access the Kingdom of God. The development of the idea of women had been slowly infiltrating religious institution such as …’

John

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘The theme of Jesus being the “Word” from “the beginning” was a pivotal concept … highlighting the divine … identity of Jesus. This theme [was] developed and … interpreted by … Arius who … opposed the concept of Jesus being a divine being.’

Qur’an

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘The textual theme Shirk (polytheism) [is] prevalent in Surah Baqarah through the damnation of idol-worship and emphasis on Allah’s attributes … In parallel, Ibn Taymmiyah’s simplification of the textual themes served to […] through simplification for easier comprehension of the theme.’

Question 4b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 15 | 11 | 32 | 27 | 16 | 2.2 |

Jeremiah & Ezekiel

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘The later tradition, particularly the reform sect of Judaism explained their interpretation by affirming that [Jewish Law] “is our guidance, not our governance (Rabbi Solomon Freehoff), and thus they were not required to take the descriptions … [literally].’

Luke

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘William and Catherine Booth, the founders of the Salvation Army explained their interpretation of the Kingdom of God by re-asserting that all people require a Saviour and that the marginalized are not to be excluded … demonstrating an evolution in how the kingdom of God is preserved and shared.’

John

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘… This sparked controversy in the Church at the time and the first Council of Nicea was call to define the nature of [Jesus].’

Qur’an

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘Through Ijma (Islamic law) and Qiyas, modern scholars have been able to interpret Shirk to beyond physical idol worshipping …’

Question 4c.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
| % | 25 | 26 | 31 | 19 | 1.5 |

Jeremiah & Ezekiel

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘Reform radically shifted the belief, holding it as partially relevant to the way the prophets taught Messianism … they hoped for Messianism to be a “kingdom of truth, peace and justice” (Pittsburgh Platform).’

Luke

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘In the “Manchester Statement”, they referenced Luke 8:1-3 as an example of women providing support for Jesus’ ministry by their “own resources.” The Anglican Church claimed that this was exemplary of women’s importance in the kingdom of God …’

John

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘John’s Gospel … is relevant to the notion of Jesus’ identity… through his representation of the Father and Son relationship … The later tradition provided a similar idea … which ultimately supports the belief … that he was a human in his nature as well as … divine’

Qur’an

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

‘The Qur’an … continually condemns the act of shirk which remains relevant to Islam … “Do not commit shirk”. This serves as the framework [for] Islam.’

Part 2: Exegetical response

Questions 5–7

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| % | 2 | 0.5 | 1 | 0.3 | 1 | 0.6 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | Average |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 18.0 |

The average mark for the exegesis questions was 18 out of a possible 30 marks. Approximately 40 per cent of responses achieved more than 20 marks; 45 per cent achieved between 10 and 20 marks.

High-scoring responses:

* included good exegetical method
* included analysis, not just a summary of the passage
* commented on the sociocultural or historical (if appropriate) and literary context of the passage
* used signposting, such as ‘A literary form found in this passage …’
* explored the use of literary forms and techniques, such as metaphors; rhetorical questions; end stress; and grouping of passages or ayahs or verses and their effect within the passage, section, or whole set text
* provided informed discussion on themes found within the text
* provided explicit reference to the meaning for the original audience or receivers of the text; for example, ‘From this passage, the original audience would have learnt that …’
* analysed the passage as a connected whole, rather than ayah by ayah, or verse by verse
* discussed whole bolded phrases, rather than discussing separate, individual words within the phrase
* were able to demonstrate scholarly opinion; some students were able to name scholars.

Part 3: Essay

Questions 8–10

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| % | 3 | 0.7 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 6 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | Average |
| 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 16.5 |

The average mark for the essay questions was 16 out of a possible 30 marks. Approximately 33 per cent of responses achieved more than 20 marks; 47 per cent achieved between 10 and 20 marks.

High-scoring responses usually:

* answered all parts of the question
* clearly indicated an understanding of the key terms of the question. Note that students should not take for granted a common understanding of terminology, and should express their understanding of key terms in their introduction
* included references to passages and an explanation as to how various passages showed the theme or idea
* used an essay structure similar to that used in VCE English, which tended to lead to the development of a strong argument
* discussed a passage’s implications rather than retelling the content of a passage
* moved beyond summary.

Essays that were not well developed or were poorly structured were not able to achieve high grades.

Students are reminded to follow the directions within the question when crafting their response. For instance if three examples are specified in the question, it is not useful to include more than three examples in the response.