

# VCE English assessment advice



VICTORIAN CURRICULUM  
AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY



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# Acknowledgement of Country

The VCAA respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pays respect to the ongoing living cultures of First Peoples.



# Structure of the presentation

- Internal assessment across the study design
- Ideas to assist in organising SACs
- Suggested timelines for Unit 3 and 4
- The role of internal assessment in VCE
- Moderation and its role in internal assessment
- Examination advice
- The role of external assessment in VCE

# Unit 3, Outcome 1/Unit 4 Outcome 1

- Familiar areas of study and assessment
- Single text response
- Often assessed under examination conditions and within a limited timeframe
- Assessment is worth 40 marks
- The marks and the timeframe suggests and contains the length of the student response
- Usually between 800 and 1000 words

# Unit 3, Outcome 2: Creating texts

- Two written texts constructed in consideration of audience, purpose and context
- One commentary reflecting on writing processes
- Each of the tasks in Unit 3, Outcome 2 are worth 20 marks
- This weighting indicates the length of student responses for each task should be about 500 words
- Quality is not equivalent to quantity
- **We would advise to complete the assessment in Unit 3, Outcome 2 in two SACs**

# Unit 3, Outcome 2: example of SAC 1

- Combine two tasks (one written text and the commentary reflecting on writing processes) to create one SAC where students create their text and then comment on it
- The whole SAC should be up to 1000 words, and will be worth 40 marks overall
- Students complete this SAC in class (for authentication purposes) with conditions that best suit the cohort (open book/writing journal, for example). If the SAC runs over more than one class, teachers gather up the student work between each SAC session
- For teachers familiar with the previous study design, the creative task in Unit 3, Outcome 1 could be used as a model for the SAC
  - Students were required to develop ‘a creative response and include a written explanation of the decisions made in the writing processes’

# Unit 3, Outcome 2: example of SAC 2

- Students create one written text (with no commentary)
- This SAC can be conducted under examination conditions
- The task itself could be modelled on the sample examination
- The word length should be about 500 words
- Can be part of a practice mid-year examination (ensure that students use equal time for the 'SAC' by collecting papers after allotted time)

# Using performance descriptors

- Both sets of performance descriptors (Task 1 and 2) can be employed to assess a combined task, while one only would be used for a standalone task

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/english-and-eal/Pages/Assessment.aspx>

- Option to combine both sets of performance descriptors into one document and colour code for feedback
- Use performance descriptors to provide overarching feedback to students
- Use more targeted and individual feedback for **acknowledgement and improvement**
- When entering marks to the VASS system, three marks are still required for this Outcome (each one out of 20)



# Unit 4, Outcome 2: analysis

- Combine both texts to conduct one SAC for analysis (as seen in previous examinations, see for example, VCE English examination 2019)
- As in the previous study design, students engage with multiple texts when analysing argument and language
- No requirement for comparison
- Students analyse each text in turn
- The audio/audio visual text can be a 'seen' text (with a transcript)
- The print text can be 'unseen' for authentication

# Unit 4, Outcome 2: POV presentation

- Oral presentation can be digital – students can record their presentations
- Oral presentation can be a group presentation – for example, a debate
- Depending on the timing, the oral presentation can be explored after Unit 3, Outcome 2, with a topic of the students' choosing
- Providing a length – under 6 minutes – creates the word length

# Advice on timelines

- Outcomes can be done in any order (but Units cannot – Unit 3 must be finished before beginning Unit 4)
- Outcomes can be split; each part of Area of Study 2 in both Unit 3 and 4 can be completed independently
  - For example, the oral presentation can be completed at the end of term 2, and the analysis of argument and language can be completed at the end of term 3, with the Reading and Responding outcome completed between these tasks
  - This advice is true too for Creating texts
- It may be more appropriate to teach and assess Creating texts (either in full or as a split outcome) in Term 1

# The role of internal assessment

- Internal assessment has a combined formative and summative purpose
- Its role as formative includes feedback and next steps for students to continue their exploration of skills, and to target new knowledge
- In Creating texts, students have the opportunity to improve across two shorter written tasks
- They also have this opportunity in Reading and Responding; students can explore these skills across two different texts in two Units
- Feedback, through assessment, will build capacity, confidence and control
- The summative aspect of SAC (the scores submitted to VCAA) has little impact on student growth

# Advice on moderation

- Benchmarking
  - Professional conversations about the performance descriptors and stages of development to improve teacher practice
  - Benchmark prior to marking of a cohort – by one or two teachers selecting high, medium and lows from a class
  - Benchmark after marking (same process) and adjusting as necessary
  - Discussing problematic papers with colleague or marking buddy (in a safe environment)
- It is important that class teachers engage with students and provide rich feedback
- Double blind marking is used for external assessment but is not as useful for internal assessment. It can create a workload burden and is not necessarily more accurate than teachers marking their own class(es)

# External assessment

Note that:

- For Section B, focus students' attention on the 'title' and the 'stimulus materials'. These are the 'unseen' elements in the examination (in the same way topic is unseen in Section A). Students need to engage meaningfully with these unseen elements in their responses
- Section C will consist of one print text only
- This text, while print, might be a speech or a spoken text (as seen in previous examinations)
- A visual element (photo, cartoon) will be included in the examination text

# The role of external assessment

- External examination is truly summative (no feedback given to students)
- In combination with the SACs and the GAT, it provides for statistical moderation
- For more information on statistical moderation:  
<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/VCAAProfessionalLearning/ProfessionalLearningPrograms/Pages/AnalysingYourSchoolsVCEResults.aspx>
- It is statewide, rather than cohort specific
- It is double blind marked (like all VCE examinations)
  - High level of agreement between markers
  - All scripts are double blind marked because a small percentage of scripts will be problematic and this is the best way to fairly assess them
  - Addresses any issues of perceived favouritism or bias to a particular group or individuals

# Support for VCE English Study Design

- New Frequently Asked Questions with direct advice about assessment  
<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/english-and-eal/Pages/Planning.aspx>
- Ongoing support for teachers and opportunities for feedback
  - online forums to share ideas and feedback
  - possibilities of face-to-face presentations to teachers



# Contact

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