**Exam Preparation**

**EXAM INSTRUCTIONS:**

**You will have 90 minutes writing time in which to complete two responses. You are to spend 45 minutes on each task.**

1. **Text Response**
2. **Personal/Creative Writing**

Learn from previous work:

* Refer to your Semester 1 exam for areas to improve.
* Look at class work and teacher feedback
* Study your class notes

Revise essay structure:

* Introduction
* Body Paragraphs (TEEL)
* Conclusion
* refer to feedback from previous essays, especially your first semester exam, for areas to improve.

Consider the following areas for improvement:

* **Difficulty coming up with ideas?** Practise brainstorming and planning essay outlines for multiple essay prompts. First, you need to know the text well!
* **Difficulty matching your paragraphs to the essay prompt?** Try 5 minute speed writing. Consider the ‘big ideas’ that relate to the prompt, not just details about characters. Practise writing topic sentences that match the prompt.
* **Difficulty getting detail into your body paragraphs?** Study the text and text notes further. Read analysis websites online. Schmoop and Spark Notes are good places to start, or just put “Million Dollar Baby analysis” or “Million Dollar Baby summary” into a search engine.
* **Difficulty writing introductions and conclusions?** Practise writing these. Get feedback from your teacher and peers.

Practise developing your writing technique:

* Use models of good writing and have a go imitating the style in a short piece of writing.
* Consider the 6 traits of writing and focus on one or two that you know you need to develop the most: organisation, idea development, sentence fluency, word choice, voice, conventions.
* **Word choice**: powerful verbs, precise nouns, appropriate or evocative adjectives, similes, metaphors, personification, alliteration, assonance, power of three, repetition...
* **Sentence fluency**: variety of sentence beginnings, variety of sentence types, variety of sentence lengths.

**Essay tips – do’s and don’ts**

* The number one mistake students make when writing a text response essay is they don’t stick to the topic. It is very important to read the topic carefully, highlight key words, and understand what the topic wants you to discuss. Another tip is to plan your topic sentences for each body paragraph before you begin and ensure you are answering the topic in each one.
* The second most common mistake is to spend too much time explaining what happened in a particular scene – this is often referred to as plot summary – keep your references to the events brief and to the point so that you can move on to analysing.
* To analyse means to look at both big and little things in the text and give your own explanation of what it means, who the characters truly are underneath, what motivates them, what consequences they cause or get caught up in, and what the writer was teaching the audience about themes and the place and time period (context) when the text was set.
* Know your text well – read the class notes, read information online, but most importantly re-read (or re-watch) the text more than once. Form opinions about each character – who are they, what motivates them, what are their strengths, their weaknesses, fears, desires, how much are they influenced by their time period and those around them, what do they value? Identify and understand the themes of the text, how the themes are presented in the text, and what the author might have been meaning to teach audiences about that theme.

**TEXT RESPONSE ESSAYS**

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| Introduction | * States the title and author/director * Gives brief plot overview – main character/s and what they are trying to do, context (setting, time period) * Thesis statement (clear response to the topic) * Brief summary of your key ideas/main points |
| Body paragraphs | * Topic sentence that responds to the topic * At least one quote, and you explain what the quote reveals/how it supports your main point * At least two pieces of evidence from the text and it relates to your main point * Rounding off sentence (not always needed) |
| Conclusion | * Thesis statement (your response to the topic) * Summary of main ideas (remind the reader of the main points – you can find these in the topic sentences or in the introduction. * A strong ending statement – often of what the text teaches us (in connection to the essay topic) |
| Other | * I don’t keep repeating the same word/s * I have tried to use interesting and varied vocabulary * Capital letters for characters, title, beginnings of sentences and other proper nouns * Apostrophes * Spelling * Did I stick to the essay topic throughout my essay? * Did I avoid giving long explanations of what happened and keep each reference brief? * Do my sentences/ideas flow smoothly? |

**CREATIVE STORY EXAM RUBRIC**

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| **10** **PLOT** Original and effective ideas for plot that grab and maintain attention throughout, building on a recognisable theme. Strong ending. | **8** Cohesive and well-structured – message or impact perhaps not as strongly conveyed as could be, **OR** originality lacking. Provides enough information for reader to easily understand. | **6** Cohesive plot but perhaps cliché. May lack a controlling theme. Ending may lack impact or clarity. May be missing opportunities for subtly – perhaps over-explaining elements. | **4** Mostly cohesive plot with some aspects that either don’t fit or don’t contribute to the engagement of the reader. Overly simplistic. No clear controlling theme. Ending may lack impact or clarity. | **2** Aspects of the story don’t feed into the plot. Difficult to see any cohesive structure. May be plot parts missing or lacking enough explanatory detail. |
| **10** **STYLE** Masterful control of style throughout piece with features such as strong vocabulary, varied sentences, use of similes, adjectives, descriptive detail. A sense of the student having made very deliberate choices that combine smoothly into the story-telling – uniqueness of style perhaps. | **8** Good control of writing features, with room for mastery to achieve fuller impact. | **6** Developing a good sense of using writing techniques such as similes, vocab choices, sentence variety, but not consistently or to full effect. | **4** Some attempts at use of writing techniques to engage reader, such as adjectives/ description, perhaps a simile, some dialogue… | **2** Very basic writing style, no discernible use of writing techniques to engage the reader. |
| **LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS** |  | **3** Few or no spelling and punctuation errors. Very well paragraphed. May include the ability to use punctuation to full effect, eg commas in complex sentences; semi-colons, dashes… | **2** Some spelling and punctuation errors but does not slow down reading. Opportunities for dashes, exclamation marks, commas for complex sentences not fully utilised. Good paragraphing but room for improvement. | **1** Frequent punctuation and spelling errors on words that Year 10 are expected to know. Paragraphing skills not well developed. |
| **GRAMMAR & FLUENCY** | **4** 97-100% mastery of grammatical rules – room for one or two small mistakes. | **3** some grammar problems – eg occasional tense errors | **2** frequent grammar problems, (eg tenses and run-on sentences ) but story can still be understood with some effort. | **1** frequent grammar problems that making reading difficult to understand. |

**TEXT RESPONSE EXAM RUBRIC**

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| **10** **TEXT KNOWLEDGE**  Detailed and insightful knowledge of text. Sufficient examples used to make each point. Consistently focused on analysis, rather than plot summary**.** | **8** Very good knowledge of text, but lacks originality of ideas. Shows strong understanding of themes and characters. Sufficient examples to make point. Mostly focused on analysis rather than plot summary **OR** shows originality of ideas but lacks detail. | **6** Good knowledge of text shown but lacking insight into themes, character traits; lacks explanation or originality. Perhaps not using enough text examples/detail to make their point. May be overdoing plot summary rather than sticking to analysis. **OR** *some* original points but lacks details. | **4** Limited knowledge of text shown; lacking detail. **OR** tending to summarise the plot without analysis or very limited analysis. | **2** Poor knowledge of text; multiple inaccuracies, **OR** essay too short to make assessment of knowledge. |
| **10 ESSAY STRUCTURE**  Essay includes introduction, at least 3 body paragraphs and a conclusion, and all are well structured, comprehensive and relate clearly to the topic. Flows smoothly throughout. | **8** Essay includes introduction, 3 body paragraphs with good structure or two body paragraphs with very good details and structure. Could be needing greater fluency/cohesion. Perhaps lacking some detail in parts. Clearly relates to topic throughout most of essay. | **6** All elements present but lacking detail or fluency. May not clearly link to the topic at times **OR** some elements of structure not developed enough. | **4** One element missing (intro, body, conclusion). **OR** One or two elements poorly developed or expressed **OR** all elements are there, but do not relate to the topic well. | **2** Two or more elements missing (intro, body, conclusion) eg introduction and conclusion.  **OR** has all elements but only in skeleton or dot point form. |
| **STYLE** |  | **3** Masterful control of academic style and vocabulary throughout piece. | **2** Good control of writing features, with room for mastery to achieve fuller impact. May need more academic style. | **1** Still developing sense of control over style and academic language. More than two examples of slang/informal language. |
| **LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS** | as above |  |  |  |
| **GRAMMAR & FLUENCY/CLEAR EXPRESSION** | as above |  |  |  |

**EXPOSITORY ESSAY EXAM RUBRIC**

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| **10** **KNOWLEDGE**  Detailed, original and insightful knowledge of topic. Sufficient examples used to make each point. | **8** Detailed knowledge of the topic, but may need to support general ideas with more specific examples. | **6** Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key issue or portion is unsupported. | **4** Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues or portions are unsupported. | **2** Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic. |
| **10 ESSAY STRUCTURE**  The introduction grabs the reader’s attention and orients the reader. The body of the writing is well organised, flows smoothly and builds detail seamlessly. The conclusion powerfully reinforces the writer’s thesis. | **8**  The introduction is inviting and orients the reader. The body of the writing is well organised, flows smoothly and builds enough detail. The conclusion reinforces the writer’s thesis. | **6** All elements present but lacking detail or fluency. May not clearly link to the topic at times **OR** some elements of structure not developed enough. | **4** One element missing (intro, body, conclusion). **OR** One or two elements poorly developed or expressed **OR** all elements are there, but do not relate to the topic well. | **2** Two or more elements missing (intro, body, conclusion) eg introduction and conclusion.  **OR** has all elements but only in skeleton or dot point form. |
| **STYLE** | 4 Masterful control of selected style and vocabulary sustained throughout the piece. Strong vocabulary. All sentences are well-constructed with varied structure. Sustains readers’ engagement through language choices/techniques. | 3 Good control of selected style with occasional lapses. Most sentences are well-constructed with varied structure. Keeps readers’ engagement most of the time through language choices/techniques. | 2 Good control of writing features, with room for mastery to achieve fuller impact. May need more selected style. Most sentences are well-constructed but have a similar structure. Invites readers’ engagement at times, through language choices/techniques. | 1 Still developing sense of control over style and language. Sentences lack structure and appear incomplete or rambling. Little attempt to keep the reader engaged. |
| **LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS** |  | 3 Few or no spelling and punctuation errors. Very well paragraphed. May include the ability to use punctuation to full effect eg commas in complex sentences; semi-colons, dashes… | 2 Some spelling and punctuation errors but does not slow down reading. pportunities for dashes, exclamation marks, commas for complex sentences not fully utilised. Good paragraphing but room for improvement. | **1** Frequent punctuation and spelling errors. Paragraphing skills need a lot of development. |
| **GRAMMAR & FLUENCY/CLEAR EXPRESSION** | 4 97-100% mastery of grammatical rules – room for one or two small mistakes. Sentences and ideas are expressed clearly and fluently. | 3 Some grammar problems – eg occasional tense errors - or awkward/unclear expressions | 2 Frequent grammar problems, (eg tenses and run-on sentences ) but essay can still be understood with some effort. | 1 Frequent grammar problems that making reading difficult to understand. |

**Romeo & Juliet Essay Prompts:**

1. Does Romeo and Juliet have a villain, or do you have another explanation for why characters behave badly?
2. “Am I the master here or you?” Is Capulet to be hated or pitied?
3. “Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast” Friar Laurence advises Romeo to slow down. To what extent do you think the impulsiveness of Romeo and Juliet are to blame for their own deaths? Consider what other factors you might see as important causes.
4. Is love or hate more powerful in Romeo and Juliet?
5. In Romeo and Juliet all are punished for the sins of a few. Discuss.
6. Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* gives us a convincing portrayal of how impulsive, all-consuming and passionate young love can be. Do you agree?

**Million Dollar Baby Essay Prompts**

1. Was Frankie right to help Maggie die?
2. Million Dollar Baby shows that it’s never too late to ‘make good’. Discuss.
3. Every character in Million Dollar Baby has their own ‘fight’ to face. Discuss in relation to one or more character.
4. Sometimes the family you choose know you better than the family you are born with. Discuss in relation to Million Dollar Baby.
5. What do you see as the most important messages of Million Dollar Baby?
6. What are Maggie’s three best qualities? Discuss with evidence.

**Blood Diamond Essay Prompts**

1. Blood Diamond is set during the Sierra Leone civil war where many parties aim to exploit the country’s diamond deposits. Discuss how one or more groups/individuals exploit the unstable political environment of Sierra Leone, the country’s rich diamond deposits to achieve their own agendas.
2. Examine the choices, decisions and behaviours of Danny Archer and discuss whether he can be considered redeemed by the end of the film, or not.
3. Exploitation is central to the story of Blood Diamond. Discuss who exploits whom, and how and why. Consider the exploitation of Sierra Leone’s diamond deposits, exploitation of the civil war/political instability, exploitation of the young, exploitation of each other’s desperation.
4. “It is what they do that makes them good or bad. A moment of love, even in a bad man, can give meaning to a life.” Do you think Danny is redeemed at the end or not?