

Foreword

Good Answers guides are produced by the English Teachers Association of Western Australia. ETAWA is the professional association for English teachers in WA and works to help teachers improve their professional skills and knowledge through conferences, seminars and publications, including examination papers and online resources.

The sample responses in this book have been chosen from candidate responses to the 2022 English ATAR course examination. The purpose of this collection and accompanying activities is to provide teachers and students with a range of responses, which together exemplify ways for students to improve their performance in the external ATAR English course examination.

The scripts reproduced in this publication were written under English ATAR examination conditions and may contain faults in written language conventions and general argument development that should not feature in responses prepared outside of examination conditions. Candidate scripts have been reproduced as accurately as possible. Minor editing of misspellings or grammatical errors may have taken place in the rare instance that a sentence was otherwise unintelligible.

It should be noted that this publication is not designed to be used as a textbook in the traditional sense; rather, it should be read **primarily as an examination preparation guide**. The Year 12 English ATAR course syllabus, which directly informs the coursework and assessments in all schools, along with the Examination Brief contained within it, should remain the primary document/s that students refer to in their preparation for the examination.

The texts referred to throughout this guide for illustrative purposes have been selected on the basis of their diversity or their potential as exemplars. Not all texts referenced will be regarded as accessible or appropriate for study within particular classroom contexts or as suitable for some candidates. Every effort has been made to include a broad range of both the 'tried and true' texts, as evidenced in past examination responses, as well as more recently produced texts that indicate a capacity for analysis. Texts that relate to the three cross-curriculum priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and sustainability have also been favoured when possible. The variety of texts suitable for study in the ATAR English course is virtually endless; not all of them can be included in this guide.

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Introduction

Welcome!

Good Answers 2023 contains candidate responses to questions from the Comprehending, Responding and Composing sections of the 2022 English ATAR course examination. It also contains information and activities to assist you in preparing for this year's examination. *Good Answers* also includes a section devoted to 'Revising the Syllabus', including a range of practice examination-style questions.

Consistent practise of skills such as close reading, comprehending, analysing, synthesising, composing and reflecting will aid considerably in developing the quality of your written responses; this guide will help you to actively engage in some of these skills and prompt you to work independently on them during regular study sessions.

Good Answers provides a wide range of responses to help you recognise that there is no single 'right' answer to any question. While there are undoubtedly certain structures, features and characteristics of responses which markers are looking for, so too do markers reward the individual expression, style, perspective and voice of each student.

The following points, however, are essential criteria for all candidates to consider when answering any question:

- *engage* critically with the question
- *organise* and *sustain* a cohesive and articulate discussion, argument, explanation, interpretation, narrative or perspective
- *substantiate* your discussion, argument or point of view by referring to texts or examples, where required
- *express* your own ideas clearly.

This book is called *Good Answers*, not *The Best Answers* or *Perfect Answers*; samples are selected from these available scripts because they serve to illustrate points from which you can learn. It is critical that you carefully read the annotations provided by markers in order to identify aspects that were rewarded as well as flawed areas for which possible improvements have been suggested.

It is recommended that ATAR students devote at least three to four hours a week for study of English, which is in addition to completing required assessments. *Good Answers 2023* can be used as a tool to guide this study and practice.

Preparing for the exam

There are a variety of ways to ensure that you are thoroughly prepared for the English ATAR course examination. Some of these ways include the following:

- **Familiarise yourself with every aspect of the Year 12 English ATAR course syllabus.** This includes becoming familiar with the metalanguage and subject-specific vocabulary you should be using. This document will be provided to you by your teacher at the beginning of the year, but digital versions are also accessible through the SCSA website (scsa.wa.edu.au). Examination questions draw exclusively on the Year 12 English ATAR course syllabus, so if you know it well there should be no nasty surprises.
- **Experiment with writing in a variety of forms for different purposes and audiences.** You do not always need to write full-length responses. Sometimes time constraints will mean that a plan, a thesis statement, an introduction, a plot overview and so on will still allow you to think carefully about a question and demonstrate your understanding of it.
- **Each time you study a new concept, spend time thinking and writing about it.** Don't move on until you have mastered the concept successfully, even if this involves asking your teacher for clarification, checking your understanding with other students or locating further explanations through independent research.
- **Read the work of your peers.** Try to read peer models that you aspire to. In this way, you are able to apply your understandings of what works successfully to your own responses.
- **Know what to expect by reading numerous sample or previous English ATAR course examinations.** Try to identify patterns between them and note how they fulfil the Examination Brief.
- **Practise responding to these sample or past examinations under a range of conditions.** This includes with unlimited time and access to your notes and computer, as well as under strictly timed conditions.
- **Edit, edit, edit!** Constantly rework your responses once they have been marked and returned to you. Make the suggested corrections and improvements before resubmitting them for extra feedback. This process can be repeated many times.
- **Form small study groups and discussion forums with your peers.** Get together over a coffee once a week and have a conversation about your studies in ATAR English.
- **Stay positive.** Avoid getting absorbed in any negative talk or thoughts in the lead-up to the exam. Approach it with the positivity that comes from preparation and practice.
- **Never attempt to memorise and reproduce a previously submitted or pre-written response.** Rather, work on applying your skills and knowledge to the widest range of questions possible within the syllabus framework. Spontaneous answers have a better voice and generally score more highly.

Wider independent reading and viewing

The benefits of regular independent reading on writing outcomes are well known and documented. Reading and viewing for pleasure can:

- enhance imagination
- promote self-awareness and empathy
- improve vocabulary, grammar, spelling and written expression
- provide insights into different cultures, experiences and perspectives
- allow a sense of escapism into another world
- assist you to disconnect from social media and the pressures of study
- improve general knowledge
- introduce you to a greater range of text types and the ways different texts work.

Reading and viewing independently and thoughtfully for pleasure – that is, texts of your own choosing, at your own pace – will likely result in significant improvements to your writing and understanding in the areas listed above. If you've never experienced the joy of reading a great book, we hope that your study of the ATAR English course will change that! Try to add some quiet reading to your regular night-time routine, if you are not already doing so.

Select texts to read, watch and listen to from a range of genres that you don't usually engage with to expand the styles you are exposed to and the ideas you encounter. The important point is that you must do this actively, consciously and critically, rather than without consideration and with little thought afterwards.

Activity: Sourcing good reads

If you don't know where to start in selecting something to read or view for pleasure, visit your school or local community library and chat to a librarian about their recommendations. Don't hesitate to ask for advice from English teachers either, most of whom love to talk books and films! Discuss possibilities with your study group, or even visit social network sites such as Goodreads, Scribd, Booktopia and Bookperks.

The 2023 English ATAR course examination

In 2023 there will be one English ATAR course examination. It will examine the essential content of the course, as described in Units 3 and 4 of the Year 12 English ATAR course syllabus.

The English ATAR course examination includes three sections: Comprehending, Responding and Composing. You should already have a good understanding of these three exam sections, the Examination Brief, the types of questions in each section and how much time is recommended for each section. Later this year, all schools will receive the official cover and inside cover of the 2023 English ATAR course examination, outlining how many questions will be in each section of the paper, how much each is worth and how much recommended time to spend on each section – this saves you valuable time reading the same information in the exam.

When considering what to study, it is very important to realise that texts are not an end in themselves. That is, the meaning you have made from any one text is not as important as your understanding of how and why you made that meaning. The texts you study are vehicles to help develop your understanding of how language works and how to use it effectively. In a nutshell: subject English is not text-based. It is based on concepts and skills.

While you cannot know the exact wording of the questions, the examination structure is not a mystery – you will have to discuss texts in detail and you will have to demonstrate your comprehending, analytical and composing skills. It is clear that the greater engagement you have with a wide range of texts, the more likely you are to demonstrate a broad and deep understanding of the Year 12 English ATAR course syllabus, the concepts it covers and its examinable content. Indeed, the syllabus on which the exam is based is the most important text to know thoroughly, given that exam writers use it to construct the examination.

The English ATAR course examination at the end of Year 12 will assess how well you have developed the understandings and skills required by Units 3 and 4 in the Year 12 English ATAR course syllabus, which build on the content covered in Units 1 and 2. Several focal aspects of each of these units are likely to be combined within one question, particularly in the Responding section. It is not possible to examine every single aspect of the course in just three hours. Naturally, a particular examination paper can only include questions about some aspects of the syllabus. That's why it's so important that you are familiar with the syllabus in its entirety and that you practise refining your skills, knowledge and understandings, along with your adaptability.

The English ATAR Examination Design Brief appears in the Year 12 English ATAR course syllabus. It is a guide that dictates how the exam must be structured. It is essential that you familiarise yourself with it closely, so you know exactly what to expect and how to manage your time efficiently. You can refer to the Exam Brief via the copy of the syllabus provided by your school or download it via the SCSA webpage at <https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au>.

Revising the syllabus

Although you should familiarise yourself with the full Year 12 English ATAR course syllabus document throughout the duration of your studies, there are some sections which you should focus on more thoroughly. This includes the unit description for both Units 3 and 4, reproduced below:

Unit 3

Students explore representations of themes, issues, ideas and concepts through a comparison of texts. They analyse and compare the relationships between language, genre and contexts, comparing texts within and/or across different genres and modes. Students recognise and analyse the conventions of genre in texts and consider how those conventions may assist interpretation. Students compare and evaluate the effect of different media, forms and modes on the structure of texts and how audiences respond to them. Understanding of these concepts is demonstrated through the creation of imaginative, interpretive, persuasive and analytical responses.

Unit 4

Students examine different interpretations and perspectives to develop further their knowledge and analysis of purpose and style. They challenge perspectives, values and attitudes in texts, developing and testing their own interpretations through debate and argument. Through close study of texts, students explore relationships between content and structure, voice and perspectives and the text and context. This provides the opportunity for students to extend their experience of language and of texts and explore their ideas through their own reading and viewing. Students demonstrate understanding of the texts studied through creation of imaginative, interpretive, persuasive and analytical responses.

2023 School Curriculum and Standards Authority

Organising framework

Content descriptions in each unit in the English ATAR course are grouped under an organising framework consisting of:

- texts in contexts
- language and textual analysis
- engaging and responding
- creating texts
- reflecting.

Activity: Understanding the syllabus terminology

As you read the unit content for both Units 3 and 4, highlight significant words and write down their meaning. Note down any gaps in your understanding and work through the 'Revising the Syllabus' section, concentrating on these concepts. Repeat this definition activity to measure the knowledge you have gained and identify further areas needing attention.

Types of texts

The Year 12 English ATAR course syllabus glossary classifies texts according to the following categories, although it is important to understand that distinctions between these groupings are not strictly fixed and therefore texts can sometimes be regarded as belonging to more than one 'type':

Analytical Texts

Texts whose primary purpose is to identify, examine and draw conclusions about the elements or components that make up other texts. Analytical texts develop an argument or consider or advance an interpretation (e.g. commentaries, essays in criticism, reflective or discursive responses and reviews).

Imaginative Texts

Texts whose primary purpose is to entertain or provoke thought through their imaginative use of literary elements. They are recognised by their form, style and artistic or aesthetic value (e.g. novels, traditional tales, poetry, stories, plays, fiction for young adults and children, picture books and multimodal texts such as film).

Interpretive Texts

Texts whose primary purpose is to explain and interpret personalities, events, ideas, representations or concepts (e.g. autobiography, biography, feature articles, documentary, satire and allegory).

Persuasive Texts

Texts whose primary purpose is to put forward a point of view and persuade a reader, viewer or listener (e.g. advertising, polemics, essays and articles).

The syllabus also groups texts according to both literary and non-literary forms including:

- fiction (novels, short stories, fables, fairy tales, plays, poems, song lyrics, films, television programs, comic books, computer games.)
- non-fiction (biographies, journals, essays, speeches, reference books, news reports, documentaries, photographs, diagrams.)
- media texts (newspaper/magazine articles, editorials, websites, advertisements, documentaries, photographs, television programs, radio programs.)
- everyday texts (blogs, films, television programs, comic books, computer games, manuals etc.)

Activity: Understanding syllabus concepts

Use the table below to identify a specific example of a text you have studied that fits with each of the types and forms listed above.

Text type/form	Example
<i>analytical</i>	
<i>imaginative</i>	
<i>interpretive</i>	
<i>persuasive</i>	
<i>fiction</i>	
<i>non-fiction</i>	
<i>media</i>	
<i>everyday</i>	

The English ATAR course syllabus contains multiple references to several key concepts in the unit descriptions and elsewhere throughout the document. These include:

representations	themes/issues/ideas/concepts
comparison	genre
context	relationships between language, genre and context
interpretations	perspectives
purpose	style
values	attitudes
voice	relationship between content and structure
relationship between text and context	relationship between voice and perspective

Think about your studied texts and how they relate to the key concepts above. Many of the concepts are co-dependent; analysis of one may require discussion of another. These key concepts are each dealt with throughout the Revising the syllabus section.