



VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

3 April 2017

Mr John Firth and the members of the VCAA Board
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
Level 1, 2 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, 3000

Dear John and the members of the VCAA Board,

I am once again writing to you, in my capacity as President of VATE, to express the concerns of the membership as to the release of information regarding the new VCE Literature study design. The recent release of the Literature sample paper has been met with much disquiet by the VATE Literature teaching network, so I am writing to forward you some of their concerns.

A chief concern is the tardiness with which the Literature sample exam has been released. I understand that there were some extenuating circumstances regarding the release of information for the new study design, however, Literature teachers were anticipating that elements of the marking criteria would be better explained with the release of the sample exam. Unfortunately, overwhelming feedback to our office indicates that teachers feel that the criteria are not clear, particularly for the literary perspectives section, and indeed many teachers have been left feeling more confused.

Literature teachers have particularly taken issue with the sample questions that were released. Part of the concern here is one of inequity—the topics used past texts rather than the current ones, whereas the English sample exam uses current texts. Having said that, our network has concluded that the types of topics are more important than the sample texts, but that it remains unclear as to whether they are more English type questions, or 'views and values' questions, as well as whether or not the literary perspective will be prescribed. Further, the information released by the VCAA during the implementation phase is in conflict with the style of topics now released. VATE and its Literature teaching network plans to devise some sample papers and topics but teachers remain unclear as to how to contribute topics that will mirror the style and range of the exam topics.

On behalf of the membership, I would like to request that the VCAA release further information about the Literature exam. Ideally, teachers would like to see a response and clarification as to the types of topics that will appear on the exam, as well as an example of how literary theory has been applied in a perspectives essay.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Frawley
VATE President