English Stage 5 (Year 9) – core formative tasks

Exploring the speculative – Term 4

This document contains the core formative tasks that accompany the Year 9 teaching and learning program ‘Exploring the speculative’.

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* Right click on the table and select ‘Update table of contents’ (in the browser version) or ‘Update field’ (in the desktop app). In the browser version, it will automatically update the entire table.
* In the desktop app, you will then need to select ‘Update entire table’. Your table numbers should then update to reflect your changes.

# About this resource

In this program, students will develop their understanding of how the style of a text can represent larger ideas through genre. Students will explore the potential impacts of speculative fiction on audiences. Students will analyse the form and features of a suite of texts to develop their understanding of how and why genres evolve in response to changing values.

This core formative tasks booklet has been developed to assist teachers in NSW Department of Education schools to create and deliver assessment practices that align with the [English K–10 Syllabus](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview) (NESA 2022).

## Purpose of resource

This core formative tasks booklet is not a standalone resource. It has been designed for use by teachers in connection to the program materials for ‘Exploring the speculative’ and the accompanying resources.

## Target audience

The core formative tasks are intended to guide interpretation of the syllabus and provide a model of syllabus-aligned assessment practice. The content provided is educative and is intended to support the teacher and their practice as they design assessment tasks for their students.

**Teacher note:** the text in the blue feature boxes are instructions for the classroom teacher engaging with the resource. This is to be deleted by the teacher before issuing the core formative tasks to students.

## When and how to use

The core formative tasks are intended to guide students as they gradually work towards their formal assessment for the program, ‘Exploring the speculative’. Students will develop their skills in reading, research and writing in the discursive style. The core formative tasks are written specifically about the core texts. If different texts are selected for study, the core formative tasks could serve as a model for the design of formative tasks aligned to specific core texts.

The tasks have been created to allow entry points for students across a range of abilities. Each core formative task focuses on one or more of the key skills needed to successfully complete the feature article assessment.

## Opportunities for collaboration

The following is an outline of some of the ways this core formative task booklet can be used with colleagues.

* Use and adapt the sample core formative tasks if selecting different texts.
* Use the core formative task booklet as inspiration for designing student-specific tasks in line with the backward design process to support success in formal assessment.
* Examine the core formative task booklet during faculty meetings or planning days to provide opportunities for collaborative resource development, or the sharing of student work samples.
* Use the core formative tasks booklet as the basis for professional learning in the faculty. This document can facilitate discussions around embedding formative assessment in faculty assessment processes.

## Core texts

A list of the core texts and publication information has been provided.

Table 1 – core texts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Core text | Author and publication details |
| *The Giant and the Sea* | Jamieson T and Cai R (2020) *The Giant and the Sea*, Lothian Children’s Books, Australia and New Zealand. The extracts included in this resource have been reproduced and made available for copying and communication by NSW Department of Education for its educational purposes with the permission of Hachette Australia. We are grateful for their support in the development of this resource. This resource is licensed up until May 2027. |
| The Giver | Lowry L (2014) *The Giver,* HarperCollins Children’s Books, London. |
| [*Crazy Fun Park*](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/crazy-fun-park) [television series] | Verso N and Hickey S (directors) (2023) [*Crazy Fun Park*](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/crazy-fun-park) [television series], ABC, Melbourne. The series trailer, episodes 4, 9, 10 and an extract from episode 3 have been reproduced and made available for use by NSW Department of Education for its educational purposes with the permission of Australian Children’s Television Foundation. We are grateful for their support in the development of this resource. This resource is licensed up until March 2029. |

# Exploring the speculative – core formative tasks

**Teacher note:** a short description of each task is provided. This description is written in plain English. If the tasks are modified, the description should include a clear outline of the audience, purpose and context of the task. This helps students and teachers plan for the style, form and the necessary language, forms and features required.

Supplementary information can be provided later in the document or listed within the ‘Relevant resources’ heading provided for each task. This reduces the cognitive load experienced while using the overviews and provides easy reference points for teachers as they navigate the multiple documents connected to this program.

The tasks provided align with NESA’s [Assessment principles](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/understanding-the-curriculum/assessment/assessment-principles) and provide clear opportunities for teachers to gather evidence about student achievement in relation to syllabus outcomes.

In this program, students engage with a range of speculative fiction texts. The formal assessment task is a feature article. Students use the structural conventions of a feature article to discuss the power of speculative fiction, using one or more of the core texts to support their discussion.

The core formative tasks build the capacity of students to demonstrate their understanding in the formal assessment task. This includes demonstrating awareness of texts and genre, the discursive style of feature articles and appropriate research and inclusion of links.

## Core formative task 1 – generating ideas

**Teacher note**: Core formative task 1 can be found in Phase 1. Relevant resources and activities have been identified below.

The purpose of this first core formative task is to provide students with the opportunity to speculate on the future in a low-stakes and engaging context.

1. Students will be given the prompt – ‘What if you could travel through time? Imagine that you have just returned from a world-first voyage through time. You have visited the year 2250. What is the world like?’
2. Students may present their response as:
3. a written description
4. a storyboard
5. a brainstorm or completed graphic organiser.
6. Teachers may use prompts for students requiring support to start such as ‘What can you see? What do you hear? What does it smell like? What does it feel like?’
7. Allow students 20 minutes to complete their response.

### Relevant resources

* **Core formative task 1 – generating ideas (Phase 1)**

**Teacher note:** this task connects to the following content points:

**EN5-ECA-01**

* **Writing** – experiment with language to create tone, atmosphere and mood
* **Text features – express ideas, using appropriate structures for purpose and audience, that reflect an emerging personal style**
* **Word-level language – make vocabulary choices that enhance stylistic features of writing, and shape meaning through connotation**

## Core formative task 2 – reflecting on self-selected texts

**Teacher note:** Core formative task 2 can be found in Phase 2. Relevant resources and activities have been identified below.

1. Students identify a text that conforms to the conventions of speculative fiction. This text could be chosen from their own wide reading and viewing experiences, or a text could be allocated by the teacher. A list of possible suggestions for short texts for this activity have been provided in **Phase 2, resource 1 – short speculative fiction texts**.
2. Students discuss their self-selected texts in pairs or small groups. Students should prepare answers for these questions. As part of this discussion, one student should ask the questions below. A second student responds about their chosen text. Students repeat this process until all students have had the opportunity to discuss their text.
3. What is the text’s name, its author and its form?
4. Who is the target audience for the text, and how can you tell?
5. What is the text about? For example, what is its plot and who are the main characters?
6. What features of the text make it speculative?
7. What is the sub-genre of the text? For example, is the text science fiction, fantasy, gothic, dystopian, or historical fiction?
8. *The Giant and the Sea* provides an allegorical representation of climate change. How does your text represent a real-world issue or experience?
9. Would you suggest that this is a text that I should read? Why or why not?
10. Students complete the exit ticket in **Phase 2, activity 7 – 3, 2, 1 exit ticket**.

### Relevant resources

* **Core formative task 2 – reflecting on self-selected texts** (Phase 2)
* **Phase 2, resource 1 – short speculative fiction texts**
* **Phase 2, activity 7 – 3, 2, 1 exit ticket**

**Teacher note:** this core formative task draws on the following content points.

**EN5-RVL-01**

**Reading for challenge, interest and enjoyment** – read increasingly complex texts that challenge thinking, pique interest, enhance enjoyment and provoke a personal response

**Reflecting** – reflect on own experiences of reading by interacting with peers in meaningful ways about the value of reading

**EN5-ECA-01**

**Speaking** – participate in and lead a range of informal discussions about texts and ideas, including analytical, speculative and exploratory talk, to consolidate personal understanding and generate new ideas

## Core formative task 3 – response to characterisation, writing discursively

The purpose of **Core formative task 3 – response to characterisation, writing discursively** is for students to experiment with a discursive style of writing by offering ideas and responding to the ideas of their peers in writing. Students compose a short discursive piece of writing using the content from the silent discussion in which they have engaged.

1. In pairs, students participate in a ‘silent discussion’ in response to the following prompts.
2. **The characters in speculative fiction texts are more important than the setting.**
3. **Composers of speculative fiction spend so long building a world that they neglect to create characters that engage audiences.**
4. The characters in the core text reflect, and challenge or subvert the values and attitudes of the context in which they were composed**.**
5. **The core text constructs characters that are authentic and connect with the audience both intellectually and emotionally.**
6. **A composer has complete control over how responders react to the characters they create.**
7. After the time allocated to the discussion, students read through the contributions from each participant.
8. Students use the content from the discussion to inform a mini discursive piece of 200 to 400 words that responds to the prompt ‘How important is the reader’s connection to characters in speculative fiction texts?’
9. Students refine their response by incorporating a range of elements of discursive writing with a focus on the use of varied sentence structure.

### Relevant resources

* **Core formative task 3 – response to characterisation, writing discursively**
* **Phase 3a, resource 10 – conducting a silent discussion (*Crazy Fun Park)***
* **Phase 3b, resource 7 – conducting a silent discussion (*The Giver)***
* **Phase 3a, resource 9 – What is discursive writing? (*Crazy Fun Park)***
* **Phase 3b, resource 6 – What is discursive writing? (*The Giver)***
* **Phase 3a, activity 23 – comparing analytical and discursive writing (*Crazy Fun Park)***
* **Phase 3b, activity 17 – comparing analytical and discursive writing (*The Giver)***

**Teacher note**: this task connects to the following content points:

**EN5-URA-01**

* **Characterisation – explore how characters in texts can be lifelike constructions with whom audiences establish intellectual and emotional connections, and can be perceived to reflect, challenge or subvert particular values and attitudes**

**EN5-URC-01**

* **Genre –** analyse how elements of genre in texts can shape the way ideas and values are represented and perceived, and experiment with elements of genre in own texts to shape meaning and response

**EN5-ECA-01**

* **Writing –** select and adapt appropriate codes, conventions and structures to shape meaning when composing written texts that are analytical, informative, persuasive, discursive and/or imaginative
* **Text features –** use the structural conventions of discursive texts purposefully, including the transition between personal and abstract texts, to present complex and nuanced ideas

## Core formative task 4 – research task

The purpose of Core formative task 4 is for students to undertake research into their core text and one or more of the ideas, themes or experiences represented within the text. Students complete this task by:

1. locating and summarising online sources relevant to the core text and a real-world idea, themes or experiences represented within the text
2. synthesising and summarising the information gleaned from their research
3. identifying how they could use the sources they have found to support their feature article for the formal assessment task.

For *Crazy Fun Park*, students focus on real-world experiences and understandings of grief within the teaching and learning program, and this is identified as the focus for the core formative task in both the teaching and learning program and the resource booklet. For *The Giver* students focus on real-world experiences and understandings of the importance of memory within the teaching and learning program.

However, the core formative task could be modified to include the following real-world ideas, themes or experiences represented within *Crazy Fun Park*:

* capitalist negligence and theme park accidents
* social and public perceptions of female beauty and attractiveness
* the importance of friendship and family
* the challenges faced by youth with diverse identities.

The core formative task could be modified to include the following real-world ideas, themes or experiences represented within *The Giver*:

* aged care and euthanasia
* totalitarianism and conformity to rule
* eugenics
* utilitarianism and government rule
* coming of age and maturity
* morality.

### Relevant resources

* **Core formative task 4 – research task** (Phase 4a and Phase 4b)
* **Phase 6, resource 2 – how to hyperlink**

**Teacher note:** this formative task draws on the following content points:

**EN5-RVL-01**

* **Reading, viewing and listening skills – apply reading pathways appropriate to form, purpose and meaning, and connect ideas within and between texts**

**EN5-URB-01**

* **Argument and authority** – research, select and sequence appropriate evidence from texts and reliable sources to construct cohesive and authoritative arguments
* **Perspective and context – analyse how elements of an author’s personal, cultural and political contexts can shape their perspectives and representation of ideas, including form and purpose**

**EN5-ECA-01**

* **Word-level language – make vocabulary choices that enhance stylistic features of writing, and shape meaning through connotation**

**EN5-ECB-01**

* **Planning, monitoring and revising – research, summarise, evaluate and synthesise information and perspectives from different sources to generate new ideas and create detailed and informed texts**

# The English curriculum 7–12 team

The English curriculum 7–12 team provides support for the delivery of the English curriculum 7–12 in NSW Department of Education high schools.

## Share your experiences

If you use the core formative tasks in your faculty and school context, reach out to the English curriculum team. We would love English teams from across NSW to share snapshots of their practice and how this resource has been used in their unique context as part of our ‘Voices from the Classroom’ section of the English 7–12 newsletter. Send submissions to [English.curriculum@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:englishcurriculum@det.nsw.edu.au).

## Support and alignment

If you have any questions regarding the use of material available or would like additional support, please contact the English curriculum team by emailing [English.curriculum@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:English.curriculum@det.nsw.edu.au).

**Alignment to system priorities and/or needs:** [School Excellence Policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2016-0468)

**Alignment to the School Excellence Framework**: this resource supports the [School Excellence Framework](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2016-0468) element of assessment (formative assessment, summative assessment, student engagement).

**Alignment to Australian Professional Teaching Standards**: this resource supports teachers to address [Australian Professional Teaching Standards](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/teacher-accreditation/meeting-requirements/the-standards/proficient-teacher) 5.1.2, 5.2.2, 5.3.2

**Consulted with**: school-based colleagues, subject matter experts within the Rural Learning Exchange.

**NSW Syllabus:** [English K–10 Syllabus](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022?tab=course-overview) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2022.

**Syllabus outcomes**: EN5-RVL-01, EN5-URA-01, EN5-URB-01, EN5-URC-01, EN5-ECA-01, EN5-ECB-01

**Author:** English curriculum 7–12 team

**Resource**: core formative task booklet

**Related resources:** further resources to support Stage 5 English can be found on the NSW Department of Education [English K–12 curriculum page](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/english) and the Stage 5 [Teaching and learning support](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022?tab=teaching-and-learning) section in the [English K–10 Syllabus](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview)from the NSW Education Standards Authority.

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Jamieson T and Cai R (2020) *The Giant and the Sea,* Lothian Children’s Books, Australia and New Zealand. The extracts included in this resource have been reproduced and made available for copying and communication by NSW Department of Education for its educational purposes with the permission of Hachette Australia. We are grateful for their support in the development of this resource. This resource is licensed up until May 2027.

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Verso N and Hickey S (directors) (2023) [*Crazy Fun Park*](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/crazy-fun-park) [television series], ABC, Melbourne, accessed 17 January 2024. The series trailer, episodes 4, 9, 10 and an extract from episode 3 have been reproduced and made available for use by NSW Department of Education for its educational purposes with the permission of Australian Children’s Television Foundation. We are grateful for their support in the development of this resource. This resource is licensed up until March 2029.

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