English Stage 5 (Year 10) – sample assessment notification

Novel voices – analytical response – Term 1

This document contains a sample assessment notification and a student work sample. This accompanies the teaching and learning program ‘Novel voices’.

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**Updating the table of contents**

Want to update the table? Have you added content to the document and noticed the page numbers have changed? As you add content to this report, you can update the table of contents to accurately reflect the page numbers within the resource. To update the table:

* Right click on the table and select ‘Update table of contents’ (in the browser version)
* ‘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

This sample assessment notification has been developed to assist teachers in NSW Department of Education schools to create and deliver assessment practices that are contextualised to their classroom. It is designed as an example of how the [English K–10 Syllabus](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview) (NESA 2022) could be implemented.

The content has been prepared by the English curriculum team, unless otherwise credited.

## Purpose of resource

This sample assessment task notification and student work sample are not a standalone resource. They have been designed for use by teachers in connection to the program ‘Novel voices’ and the accompanying resources, including the teaching and learning program and resource booklet. The sample notification and student work sample are intended to support teachers to develop a consistent approach to formal assessment notifications, guide interpretation of the syllabus and provide a model of syllabus aligned assessment practice.

It is acknowledged that many schools have their own assessment templates. The content from the heading ‘Novel voices – analytical response’ to the heading ‘Student support material’ is student facing and could be copied and pasted into the school’s assessment template.

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

## Target audience

A combination of teacher and student information is contained in this resource. The purpose of the content intended for teachers is educative. This is intended to support the teacher and their practice as they design formal assessment task notifications. Teachers must ensure they omit or delete information that is not relevant to students prior to distribution. Instructions have been provided throughout this template to indicate where this may be necessary.

## When and how to use

This assessment notification has been designed for Term 1 of Year 10. It provides opportunities for students to engage analytically with one core text. Students are provided with the opportunity to express an informed understanding of prose fiction that explores the role of characterisation, point of view and narrative in positioning readers and influencing their personal responses to texts. The task and sample provide an opportunity for modelled and guided co-construction of analytical writing.

In the program ‘Novel voices’, students engage with a novel to explore how authors use point of view and characterisation to represent ideas and shape meaning. As they study the teacher-selected novel, students deepen their understanding of how elements of prose fiction and point of view can be used to influence a reader’s response to the text. Students will explore how characters in texts can be lifelike constructions with whom an audience can establish intellectual and emotional connections. This analytical response will allow students to explore how characterisation and point of view are shaped by the authorial intentions of the composer. Students develop their skills in expressing their ideas analytically through the core formative tasks in the teaching and learning program.

## Opportunities for collaboration

The following is an outline of some of the ways this sample assessment notification can be used with colleagues:

* The task and student sample provide an opportunity for modelled and guided co-construction of faculty assessment documents.
* Use the student response as an example and model of how to achieve success. Make modifications to the model to reflect contextual needs. This can take place prior to students beginning their own compositional process and as a feedback opportunity, to refine compositions as they engage with the task.
* Examine the sample assessment and student sample (in this document) during faculty meetings or planning days and collaboratively refine them based on faculty or school goals.
* Examine the materials during faculty meetings or planning days and collaboratively plan opportunities for team teaching, collaborative resource development, mentoring, lesson observation and the sharing of student samples.
* Use the example as inspiration for designing student-specific tasks.
* Use the assessment practices or syllabus planning as an opportunity to backward map Years 10–7 to guide programming, assessment design or the scope and sequence.

# Novel voices – analytical response

In this program, you will engage with an extended prose fiction text in the form of a novel. You will explore the role of point of view and characterisation in positioning readers and influencing their personal responses to texts.

Using the form of an analytical response, you will demonstrate your understanding of the relationship between point of view, characterisation and the authorial intentions of the composer. You will analyse how an author’s use of language forms, features and structures of a novel has shaped your understanding and engagement with a text.

**Teacher note**: change the tense of these instructions if you are issuing the assessment later in the program when students have engaged in this learning.

## Task overview

**Teacher note**: the annotations column has been provided to assist assessment design. This column is for the teacher only and should be deleted prior to distributing the assessment notification to students.

The task overview provides a concise description of key information about the assessment.

Table 1 **–** overview of the assessment task

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year 10 – English | Task details | Annotations |
| Task number | 1 | [Task number – ensure this reflects the chronological order outlined within the scope and sequence and the assessment schedule.] |
| Issue date | Term 1, Week 1, 2024 (last lesson of the week – indicative only) | [Issue and date – state the day and date the assessment is issued.] |
| Due date | Term 1, Week 10, 2024 (first lesson of the week – indicative only) | [Due date – state the day and date the assessment is due. The [timing, frequency and nature of assessment processes should be time efficient and manageable for teachers and students](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0290#:~:text=the%20timing%2C%20frequency%20and%20nature%20of%20the%20assessment%20processes%20are%20time%20efficient%20and%20manageable%20for%20teachers%20and%20students.). Issue the task early in the program so students can make connections and seek clarification as they progress through their learning. The NESA [Developing formal school-based assessment programs in Stage 6](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/Understanding-the-curriculum/assessment/assessment-in-practice/school-based-assessment-programs) information provides useful guidance for schools implementing formal assessment procedures in Stage 4 and Stage 5.] |
| Outcomes being assessed | **EN5-RVL-01**: reading, viewing and listening for meaning  **EN5-URA-01**: point of view; characterisation  **EN5-URB-01**: theme  **EN5-ECA-01**: writing; text features; sentence-level grammar and punctuation | [Ensure details align with the scope and sequence, assessment schedule and any details that have been provided to students in the school’s assessment handbook.] |
| Weighting | 25% (indicative only) | [Where applicable, ensure details align with the scope and sequence, assessment schedule and any details that have been provided to students in the school’s assessment handbook.] |
| Submission details | Analytical response (800 to 1000 words) | [Be specific about the process for submission and parameters for the task. This includes:   * where the task will be submitted * word and time limits * any additional information in accordance with school assessment policy.] |

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

# Task description

**Teacher note**: provide a short description of the task. This description should be written in plain English. It should include a clear outline of the audience, purpose and context of the task. This helps students understand appropriate style, form, and the necessary language, forms and features required. This advice can be customised at a school level.

Supplementary information can be provided later in the document. This reduces the cognitive load experienced while using the notification. The assessment should align with NESA’s [Assessment Principles](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/assessment-and-reporting/assessment-principles) and provide clear opportunities for teachers to gather evidence about student achievement in relation to syllabus outcomes.

## The context of the task

**Teacher note**: the task provides an authentic audience and purpose in the form of a school-based analytical writing competition. Teachers may adjust this audience and purpose as necessary to suit their context.

This is designed to be a response that is developed throughout the term and submitted on the due date at the end of the unit. Drafting and feedback processes are included in the program to ensure that the response is authentically composed by students. However, this task could be adjusted to a timed response completed in-class.

The word limit for this task could also be adjusted to suit the individual needs of students in each school context.

Our school English department is hosting their annual analytical writing competition. You are invited to contribute a submission to the competition based on the novel you have studied in your English class this term. The question for 2024 is:

How does Benjamin **Alire Sáenz** use characterisation and point of view to challenge and expand your thinking about the main ideas of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*?

**Your task – analytical response**

1. Compose an 800 to 1000 word analytical response to the competition question.

Table 2 – core text

|  |
| --- |
| Text details |
| **Alire Sáenz B (2021)*, Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, Simon & Schuster, New York.** |

**In your analytical response you should:**

* engage with the question’s key words and concepts
* make close reference to **Alire Sáenz’s** use of characterisation and point of view in *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*
* use metalanguage when analysing the language forms, features and structures of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*
* use a personal and informed voice appropriate for your intended audience (English teachers) and the purpose of this task (writing competition)
* use the structural conventions of analytical writing, including a thesis, supporting paragraphs and conclusion.

## What is the teacher looking for in this assessment task?

**Teacher note**: this outline uses the criteria points from the marking guidelines to articulate the skills and knowledge required to meet the requirements of this task. It highlights to students what is expected of the response.

The teacher is looking to see how well you:

* engage with the question – analyse how Alire Sáenz challenges and expands your thinking about the main ideas within Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe (**EN5-RVL-01:** Reading, viewing and listening for meaning; **EN5-URB-01:** Theme)
* demonstrate understanding of how language forms, features and structures are used to craft characterisation and point of view, supported by textual evidence (**EN5-URA-01:** Point of view; Characterisation)
* compose an analytical response – use language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and form (**EN5-ECA-01:** Writing; Text features; Sentence-level grammar and punctuation).

## Steps to success

This schedule is designed to support students to successfully complete the task and to support teachers in their monitoring of student progress. This schedule is not for the purposes of compliance and students should not be penalised for not meeting interim times. The second column could be:

* determined and refined by the teacher based on school context
* used to feed forward
* co-constructed with students.

Implementing the steps to success will support you to demonstrate your knowledge, skills and understanding and prompt you to seek support as it is needed. These steps also provide you with opportunities to receive feedback throughout the drafting and refining process.

Table 3 – assessment preparation schedule

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Steps | What I need to do |
| Deconstruct the question – isolate the key terms of the question | Use **Phase 6, activity 1 – how to isolate and deconstruct key terms of a question** to unpack the question and begin planning your analytical response.  Examine **Phase 6, resource 2 – what a good one looks** **like** to create a list of success criteria that can be applied across the planning stages of this assessment. |
| Select thematic messages or ‘main ideas’ and connect to textual evidence and examples | Use **Phase 4, activity 9– exploring thematic messages and Phase 6, activity 4 – brainstorming thematic messages.**   * Step 1 – determine 2 to 3 relevant and appropriate thematic messages or ‘main ideas’. * Step 2 – connect these ‘main ideas’ to aspects of characterisation and point of view, as per the question. For further support in developing an argument map for analytical or persuasive writing, refer to **Phase 6, resource 3 – argument mapping** in the [Year 7, Term 1 – Powerful youth voices program.](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/english/professional-learning-english-k-12/english-7-12-professional-learning-catalogue/stage-4-year-7-powerful-youth-voices-teaching-and-learning-progr) * Step 3 – select evidence and examples from the core text to demonstrate language forms, features and structures used by the author. **Phase 4, activity 12 – Seldon method or This Does That for textual analysis** will be used later in the program to analyse these forms, features and structures in greater depth. |
| Create a personal thesis statement | **Phase 6, activity 3 – creating a personal thesis statement** has been developed to support you with **Core formative task 1 – sharing and reflecting on reading experiences and Core formative task 2 – developing a thesis.** This activity will use a model and include direct teacher instruction to provide ways to improve your thesis statement and develop your personal voice. Supplementary resources include **Phase 6, resource 3 – developing personal voice and precise vocabulary**, and **Phase 6, resource 4 – annotated personal thesis statement.** |
| Develop a personal understanding of characterisation and point of view in the texts | Review the textual understanding you developed in Phase 3 and Phase 4, including the work completed in **Core formative task 3 – exploring point of view and Core formative task 4 – study guide.** This will support you in the planning of your focus of the ‘main ideas’, including what evidence and examples are needed in the body of your analytical response. |
| Write your analytical paragraphs | Using **Phase 4, activity 11 – crafting analytical paragraphs** begin to draft a structured paragraph that is controlled in its use of language. You will then replicate this process to write 2 more body paragraphs independently, with your final submission consisting of at least 3 analytical body paragraphs. Specific focus will be placed on developing your ability to purposefully use:   * nominalisation * present tense * cohesive devices * textual evidence * metalanguage and vocabulary for precision.   As part of **Core formative task 5 – analytical paragraph,** you will engage with the planning, monitoring and revising process, including reflecting on self, peer and teacher feedback**. Phase 4, resource 7 – annotated WAGOLL paragraph** has been provided as a model and to support you in the composition your own paragraphs. **Phase 4, activity 1a – dreams as a narrative device** contains examples of how to use nominalisation and complex noun groups to support analytical writing. |
| Write an engaging conclusion | **Phase 6, activity 5 – features of a rhetorically effective conclusion** and **Core formative task 6 – writing a rhetorically effective conclusion** will assist you to compose an appropriate conclusion to your analytical response. |
| Reflect on and edit your analytical response | Engage in the feedback cycle, evaluating and editing your work based on self, peer and teacher feedback. This process has been explicitly outlined for you in **Core formative task 7 – reflecting on and editing your analytical response.** Additionally, it may be useful to refer to your notes from **Phase 6, activity 1 – how to isolate and deconstruct key terms of a question** and **Core formative task 2 – developing a thesis** to ensure you have sustained engagement with the question within your response. |

# Marking guidelines

The structure of the marking criteria depends on the requirements of the assessment task. Two marking criteria templates have been provided. This demonstrates the various approaches to marking criteria.

The following table contains sample language that may be useful in the composition of criteria for each grade. Each criterion would need to be refined to reflect the requirements of the outcomes. The language is reflective of the K–10 [Common Grade Scale,](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/understanding-the-curriculum/awarding-grades/common-grade-scale) syllabus outcomes and the English Stage 5 – Year 10 Record of School Achievement [Course performance descriptors.](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/assessment#course-performance-descriptors-english_k_10_2022)

The K–10 [Common Grade Scale](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/understanding-the-curriculum/awarding-grades/common-grade-scale) can be used to report student achievement in both primary and junior secondary years in all NSW schools. Teachers may find the language helpful when composing their own marking criteria.

The English Stage 5 – Year 10 Record of School Achievement [Course performance descriptors](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/assessment#course-performance-descriptors-english_k_10_2022) are used to ‘identify and report a student’s level of achievement in a Board Developed Course at the end of Stage 5’ (NESA 2022a). Teachers may find the language and descriptions helpful interpretations of the holistic descriptions of the typical achievement at different grade levels in English.

## Marking criteria

Table 4 – marking criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Marking guideline descriptors |
| A | * Critically and effectively analyses how Alire Sáenz challenges and expands his audience’s thinking about the main ideas within *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (**EN5-RVL-01**: Reading, viewing and listening for meaning; **EN5-URB-01**: Theme) * Demonstrates perceptive understanding of how language forms, features and structures are used to craft characterisation and point of view, supported by well-selected textual evidence (**EN5-URA-01**: Point of view; Characterisation) * Demonstrates effective and consistent control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and form (**EN5-ECA-01:** Writing; Text features; Sentence-level grammar and punctuation) |
| B | * Effectively analyses how Alire Sáenz challenges and expands his audience’s thinking about the main ideas within *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (**EN5-RVL-01**: Reading, viewing and listening for meaning; **EN5-URB-01**: Theme) * Demonstrates thorough understanding of how language forms, features and structures are used to craft characterisation and point of view, supported by appropriate textual evidence (**EN5-URA-01**: Point of view; Characterisation) * Demonstrates consistent control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and form (**EN5-ECA-01:** Writing; Text features; Sentence-level grammar and punctuation) |
| C | * Explains how Alire Sáenz challenges and expands his audience’s thinking about the main ideas within *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (**EN5-RVL-01**: Reading, viewing and listening for meaning; **EN5-URB-01**: Theme) * Demonstrates sound understanding of how language forms, features and structures are used to craft characterisation and point of view, supported by textual evidence (**EN5-URA-01**: Point of view; Characterisation) * Demonstrates sound control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and form (**EN5-ECA-01:** Writing; Text features; Sentence-level grammar and punctuation) |
| D | * Describes how Alire Sáenz challenges and/or expands his audience’s thinking about ideas within *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (**EN5-RVL-01**: Reading, viewing and listening for meaning; **EN5-URB-01**: Theme) * Demonstrates basic understanding of how language forms, features and structures are used within the core text (**EN5-URA-01**: Point of view; Characterisation) * Demonstrates basic control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and form (**EN5-ECA-01**: Writing; Text features; Sentence-level grammar and punctuation) |
| E | * Attempts to create a response about Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe * Demonstrates elementary understanding of how language forms, features and/or structures are used within the core text (**EN5-URA-01**: Point of view; Characterisation) * Demonstrates limited control of language and/or structure appropriate to audience, purpose and/or form (**EN5-ECA-01**: Writing; Text features; Sentence-level grammar and punctuation) |

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## Student-facing rubric

The student-facing rubric is designed to provide context-specific explanations of the assessment marking criteria. This criteria uses student-friendly language and unpacks the specific knowledge, skills and understanding required when composing each component of the assessment. When teachers are providing feedback, they may make comments on the specific knowledge, skills or understanding that needs further development and methods for improvement.

Table 5 – student-facing rubric

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Extensive | Thorough | Sound | Basic | Elementary |
| Analyse how Alire Sáenz challenges and expands your thinking about the main ideas within Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.  You could do this by:   * developing a thesis that engages with all aspects of the question, including the main ideas explored by Alire Sáenz and how the text challenges and expands your thinking * making links to the question throughout each part of your response, which is structured to include an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion * engaging personally with the main ideas of the core text through use of personal style when writing such as personal pronouns. | Your response outlines how your thinking has been challenged and expanded, through a perceptive thesis. You have critically and effectively sustained this thesis throughout your response. In this response you effectively identify and critically analyse the main ideas of your core text. You make consistent and perceptive references throughout your response to how your thinking about these main ideas has been expanded and challenged by the author, Alire Sáenz. | Your response outlines how your thinking has been challenged and expanded, through an effective thesis. You have effectively sustained this thesis throughout your response. In this response you effectively identify and analyse the main ideas of your core text. You make consistent and thorough references throughout your response to how your thinking about these main ideas has been expanded and challenged by the author, Alire Sáenz. | Your response outlines how your thinking has been challenged and expanded, through a sound thesis. You have attempted to sustain this thesis throughout your response. In this response you identify and explain the main ideas of your core text. You make references to how your thinking about the main ideas has been expanded and challenged by the author, Alire Sáenz. | Your response to the question may describe your thinking about the text. You have attempted to develop a thesis. You attempt to identify and describe ideas from your core text. You may attempt to make reference to how your thinking has been expanded and/or challenged by the author, Alire Sáenz. | You have attempted to identify and/or describe aspects of the ideas explored in the text. You attempt to respond to the core text, though this is limited. |
| Demonstrates understanding of how language forms, features and structures are used to craft characterisation and point of view, supported by textual evidence.  You could do this by selecting and analysing a range of:   * language forms, such as the use of epistolary form, textual hybridity of the journal, conventions of the bildungsroman genre, intertextual references throughout the text * language features, such as symbolism, narrative devices including the motif of dreams * language and textual structures, relating to characterisation and point of view from Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe such as the use of first-person, the symbolic nature of character names * using carefully selected textual evidence and examples from the core text to support analysis. | You have supported your analytical response with well-selected and relevant evidence and examples from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. Your response demonstrates a perceptive understanding of the language forms, features and structures used to craft characterisation and point of view. You use a range of metalanguage to effectively analyse characterisation and point of view. | You have supported your analytical response with appropriate evidence and examples from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. Your response demonstrates an effective understanding of the language forms, features and structures used to craft characterisation and point of view. You use a range of metalanguage to effectively analyse characterisation and point of view. | You have supported your analytical response with evidence and examples from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. Your response demonstrates a sound understanding of the language forms, features and/or structures used to craft characterisation and point of view. You use metalanguage to explain characterisation and point of view. | You have attempted to support your response with evidence and/or examples from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. Your response attempts to describe some language forms, features and/or structures used. You may attempt to use some metalanguage. | You have attempted to include some examples and a description of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. Your response may attempt to describe some forms, features and/or structures, though this will be limited. |
| Demonstrates control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and form.  You could do this by:   * structuring your response into an introduction, 2 to 3 body paragraphs and a conclusion * composing complex analytical sentences using the ‘This Does That’ method * having control over your expression of ideas, using language features such as nominalisation and present tense, and creating cohesion through synonyms, reference, engaging sentence starters and punctuation. | Your analytical response is effective and consistent in its control of language and structure. You have applied structural features, including a purposeful introduction, a series of cohesive body paragraphs and an engaging, rhetorically effective conclusion. You have effectively used language features appropriate to your audience (English teachers), purpose (writing competition) and form (analytical response). | Your analytical response is effective in its control of language and structure. You have applied structural features, including an introduction, a series of body paragraphs and an effective conclusion. You have used language features appropriate to your audience (English teachers), purpose (writing competition) and form (analytical response). | Your analytical response is sound in its control of language and structure. You have applied structural features, including an introduction, a series of body paragraphs and a conclusion. You have used language features appropriate to your audience (English teachers), purpose (writing competition) and form (analytical response). | Your response is basic in its use of language and structure. You have attempted to apply structural features, including an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion. You have attempted to use language features appropriate to your audience (English teachers), purpose (writing competition) and/or form (analytical response). | You have attempted to compose a response, with limited control of language and/or structure. |

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## Assessment policy

Assessment notifications should contain a reference to the school’s assessment policy and the relevant information or support. Schools may wish to include specific reminders on the assessment notification itself. Some relevant reminders are suggested below but this should be adjusted to reflect the context of your school. Schools may provide the administrative procedures associated with the following:

* late submission of tasks due to illness or misadventure
* malpractice
* invalid or unreliable tasks
* student appeals
* ‘N’ determinations (where appropriate).

Assessment notifications should contain a reference to the school’s assessment policy and the relevant information or support. Consult [ACE 4022](https://ace.nesa.nsw.edu.au/ace-4022) for an overview of the Stage 5 assessment – tasks, programs and adjustments information.

# Student support material

This list should be adjusted by the teacher to reflect the resources and materials provided to the class. The list provided below reflects the resources, activities and core formative tasks provided within the resource booklet that would be useful for students as they refine their assessment submission.

You should refer to the following resources and activities to help you prepare for the assessment task:

* the student C range work sample, marking criteria and student facing rubric contained in this document
* materials to support the development of an informed personal voice and thesis statement (**Phase 1, activity 1 – reflecting personally on characters**, **Phase 1, activity 3 – the language of opinion, Core formative task 1 – sharing and reflecting on reading experiences, Core formative task 2 – developing a thesis, Phase 6, activity 1 – how to isolate and deconstruct key terms of a question, Phase 6, activity 3 – creating a personal thesis statement, Phase 6, resource 3 – developing personal voice and precise vocabulary** and **Phase 6, resource 4 – annotated personal thesis statement**)
* resources and activities to demonstrate your knowledge of the text as you read it (**Phase 3, activity 1 – reading journal,** **Phase 3, activity 2 – 3, 2, 1 chapter summary, Phase 3, activity 4 – gist, analysis, synthesis, elaboration**)
* resources and activities to develop your understanding of the ‘main ideas’ being communicated in the core text (**Phase 4, activity 9 – exploring thematic messages and Phase 6, activity 4 – brainstorming thematic messages**)
* model text and support materials for control of language and structure (**Phase 4, activity 1a – dreams as a narrative device, Phase 6, resource 2 – what a good one looks like, Phase 4, activity 11 – crafting analytical paragraphs, Phase 4, activity 12 – Seldon method or This Does That for textual analysis, Core formative task 5 – analytical paragraph, Phase 6, activity 5 – features of a rhetorically effective conclusion** and **Core formative task 6 – writing a rhetorically effective conclusion**)
* information, resources and activities to support student understanding of characterisation, and point of view (**Phase 3, activity 9 – characterisation in the opening chapter, Core formative task 3 – exploring point of view, Phase 4, activity 7 – Who were Aristotle and Dante?, Phase 4, resource 4 – sample character study guide** and **Core formative task 4 – study guide**)
* resources and activities to support student understanding of narrative conventions used to create point of view and characterisation (**Phase 3, activity 11 – the Bildungsroman**, **Phase 3, activity 12 – understanding narrative structure**, **Phase 3, activity 13 – identifying foreshadowing, a treasure hunt**, **Phase 4, activity 1b – dreams as a narrative device**, **Phase 4, activity 3 – examples of epistolary writing, Phase 4, activity 6 – analysing Dante and Aristotle’s letters**, **Phase 4, activity 8 – Aristotle’s emergence from the cave**)
* monitoring and revising support materials (**Phase 6, activity 6 – self-evaluation template, Phase 6, activity 7 – peer-evaluation template** and **Core formative task 7 – reflecting on and editing your analytical response**).

## Student work sample

The following work sample is designed to provide one example of a completed analytical response that aligns with the assessment task requirements. It is not designed to be an example of exemplary student work.

**Question**

How does Benjamin **Alire Sáenz** use characterisation and point of view to challenge and expand your thinking about the main ideas of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*?

**Analytical response**

Benjamin **Alire Sáenz** uses characterisation and point of view to challenge and expand my thinking about the main ideas of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* This novel is a bildungsroman and it is about two teenage Mexican boys living in Texas who are best friends and end up falling in love with one another. Firstly, the novel explores ideas about identity and growing up. Secondly, the novel explores ideas about powerful friendships. Finally, the novel explores ideas about family. The novel engages readers with these ideas through the characters and point of view.

Firstly, Aristotle is a character who explores ideas about identity and growing up. Aristotle doesn’t like himself very much at the beginning of the book. He says ‘I was 15. I was bored. I was miserable’. In this quote an anaphora technique was used ‘I was’. This showed that Aristotle doesn’t like himself very much and doesn’t like his own identity. He then said to his mum ‘Fifteen-year-olds don’t qualify as people’. This is an example of the technique dialogue that shows that Ari doesn’t see himself as a human and this makes him a dynamic and complex character. Ari also wrote in a journal and this made the novel an epistolary novel. Ari reads his journal and criticised his old self. He did this when he read his journal entry that says ‘*I made up my mind that year – when I was 10 – that I wasn’t going to sound like another Mexican. I was going to be an American. And when I talked I was going to sound like one*’ and the italics show it is a journal entry. But then he says ‘Reading my own words embarrassed the hell out of me. I mean, what a *pendejo*’ and in that quote the italics mean that he is using a Spanish word. Benjamin Alire Sáenz made Ari a character who didn’t like himself very much and was ashamed of himself and this makes him a complex and dynamic character. The audience can learn important ideas about identity and growing up from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*.

Secondly the book explores ideas about powerful friendships. Aristotle and Dante had a very powerful friendship which is important for Aristotle because he didn’t have any friends and they ended up falling in love. Ari and his mum talked about Ari not having many friends and the technique of dialogue was used when his mum says ‘You don’t have any friends’ and Ari says ‘I *do* have friends, Mom. I have school friends. And Dante. He’s my friend’. The impact of Dante’s friendship on Ari is seen when Dante moves and Ari becomes really sad. In the quote ‘I felt like I was the saddest boy in the universe. Summer had come and gone. Summer had come and gone, And the world was ending.’ A repetition was used by Benjamin Alire Sáenz of ‘summer has come and gone’ and the technique hyperbole is used to show how dramatic Ari is being because his close friend is leaving him. However when Dante leaves he keeps the friendship going through letters making the book epistolary. Ari doesn’t answer these letters at first and Dante acknowledges this when he says in a letter ‘ *I’m not going to get on your case about writing back. I promise. If I want to write you, then I’ll write to you. And if you don’t want to write to me, you don’t have to. You have to be who you are. And I have to be who I am. That’s the way it is.*’ The letters that Dante wrote help us to see Dante’s point of view on his friendship with Aristotle. Dante and Ari are both interesting characters because they are very different from each other but they still are each other’s best friends which engages readers with ideas about how friendships can be powerful and complex.

Finally, readers are engaged in Ari and Dante’s relationships with their parents and we learn how important loving and supportive parents are to gay teenage boys. The quote by W.S. Merwin on the title page for the fifth section is an example of intertextuality and it says ‘*Through all of youth I was looking for you without knowing what I was looking for*’. This quote was used by Benjamin Alire Sáenz because Ari was looking for Dante all along but didn’t know that he was into him romantically. This is an interesting use of point of view in the text because even though the book is written from Ari’s point of view the audience can tell that Ari likes Dante more than a friend before Ari realises it himself. His parents can also tell and are the ones who reveal it to Ari showing their point of view. Ari’s dad tells him using dialogue ‘Ari, the problem isn’t just that Dante’s in love with you. The real problem – for you, anyway – is that you’re in love with him’ and his mother says ‘Ophelia’s taught me some things, you know? All those letters. I’ve learned some things. And your father’s right. You can’t run. Not from Dante.’ There is characterisation used in Ari’s parents and Dante’s as well because they are loving and supportive and accepting of their sons no matter who they love. This is a big and powerful idea because so many gay people in the real world don’t have the love and support of their parents.

In conclusion, Benjamin **Alire Sáenz** uses characterisation and point of view to challenge and expand my thinking about the main ideas of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. It does that through characters like Ari and Dante and their parents and the way that their point of view is shown through the epistolary of letters and journal entries and the dialogue between the characters. This made me challenge and expand my thinking to a great extent.

## Annotated student work sample

The following work sample is not designed to be an example of exemplary student work. This sample is reflective of a C grade response.

Table 6 – student work sample annotations

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Student work sample | Annotations | Features of analytical writing used to shape meaning |
| Benjamin Alire Sáenz uses characterisation and point of view to challenge and expand my thinking about the main ideas of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. This novel is a bildungsroman and it is about two teenage Mexican boys living in Texas who are best friends and end up falling in love with one another. Firstly, the novel explores ideas about identity and growing up. Secondly, the novel explores ideas about powerful friendships. Finally, the novel explores ideas about family. The novel engages readers with these ideas through the characters and point of view. | This response opens by repeating parts of the question.  Within the introduction this student establishes a sound thesis that lists 3 ideas that will be explored in their analytical response. However, the simplistic restating of the question restricts the student’s ability to demonstrate an informed, personal response.  There is reference to the text within the introduction, with aspects of plot and style described. Characterisation and point of view have been stated, but not engaged with in a meaningful way.  The student concludes their introduction by restating the statement attached to the question, without supporting with a personal evaluation.  Closer engagement with all parts of the question is necessary to elevate this response. | This response demonstrates sound control of language, with ideas organised through a series of direct statements.  Adverbials (‘firstly, secondly, finally’) are used to organise ideas and demonstrates sound control of structure when considering the audience and purpose of this response.  Language choices include some metalanguage (‘bildungsroman’) and vocabulary (‘powerful friendships’) demonstrating sound understanding of text features and the main ideas.  Nominalisation will support students to further develop register appropriate to audience, purpose, form and context. |
| Firstly, Aristotle is a character who explores ideas about identity and growing up. Aristotle doesn’t like himself very much at the beginning of the book. He says ‘I was 15. I was bored. I was miserable’. In this quote an anaphora technique was used ‘I was’. This showed that Aristotle doesn’t like himself very much and doesn’t like his own identity. He then said to his mum ‘Fifteen-year-olds don’t qualify as people’. This is an example of the technique dialogue that shows that Ari doesn’t see himself as a human and this makes him a dynamic and complex character. Ari also wrote in a journal and this made the novel an epistolary novel. Ari reads his journal and criticised his old self. He did this when he read his journal entry that says ‘*I made up my mind that year – when I was 10 – that I wasn’t going to sound like another Mexican. I was going to be an American. And when I talked I was going to sound like one’* and the italics show it is a journal entry. But then he says ‘Reading my own words embarrassed the hell out of me. I mean, what a *pendejo*’ and in that quote the italics mean that he is using a Spanish word. Benjamin Alire Sáenz made Ari a character who didn’t like himself very much and was ashamed of himself and this makes him a complex and dynamic character. The audience can learn important ideas about identity and growing up from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. | This paragraph opens by repeating aspects of the introduction, restating the phrase ‘identity and growing up’ without any further elaboration.  Aspects of response lapse into recount and description of the text, though textual evidence of characterisation and point of view is provided. The selection of textual evidence could be more appropriate.  The inclusion of language forms, features and structures connected to evidence demonstrates sound understanding of these devices and how they are used by the author.  This response explains, rather than analyses, the use of characterisation and point of view.  This response can further be improved by linking to the ‘challenge and expand your thinking’ aspect of the question. By moving the discussion of textual evidence and language forms, features and structures beyond the literal use in text to the author’s purpose will improve this response.  Returning to the author and the main idea that is discussed in response to the question is sound. | This response continues to demonstrate sound control of language and structure, with this paragraph following an appropriate structure for purpose and form.  The use of adverbial (‘firstly’) to open the paragraph is methodical, but the language of this response would be enhanced by using nominalisation and precise vocabulary to create a more informed personal voice.  At times there are inconsistencies in tense (‘explores’ and ‘showed’). Maintaining present tense across the response will improve cohesion, resulting in a more effective response.  Integrating textual analysis through complex sentences that use a range of appropriate verbs will enable this response to analyse more effectively.  Control of language is evident. Vocabulary choices for this paragraph can be improved to develop and sustain a personal voice, and appropriately engage the specific audience (English teachers).  Developing a more lexically dense response will support effective appeals to audience, as this response is informal in register at times (‘doesn’t like himself very much’).  Editing for punctuation, specifically around including quotes is necessary. |
| Secondly the book explores ideas about powerful friendships. Aristotle and Dante had a very powerful friendship which is important for Aristotle because he didn’t have any friends and they ended up falling in love. Ari and his mum talked about Ari not having many friends and the technique of dialogue was used when his mum says ‘You don’t have any friends’ and Ari says ‘I *do* have friends, Mom. I have school friends. And Dante. He’s my friend’. The impact of Dante’s friendship on Ari is seen when Dante moves and Ari becomes really sad. In the quote ‘I felt like I was the saddest boy in the universe. Summer had come and gone. Summer had come and gone, And the world was ending.’ A repetition was used by Benjamin Alire Sáenz of ‘summer has come and gone’ and the technique hyperbole is used to show how dramatic Ari is being because his close friend is leaving him. However when Dante leaves he keeps the friendship going through letters making the book epistolary. Ari doesn’t answer these letters at first and Dante acknowledges this when he says in a letter ‘ *I’m not going to get on your case about writing back. I promise. If I want to write you, then I’ll write to you. And if you don’t want to write to me, you don’t have to. You have to be who you are. And I have to be who I am. That’s the way it is.*’ The letters that Dante wrote help us to see Dante’s point of view on his friendship with Aristotle. Dante and Ari are both interesting characters because they are very different from each other but they still are each other’s best friends which engages readers with ideas about how friendships can be powerful and complex. | An acknowledgement of the idea of ‘powerful friendships’ is used to introduce this second body paragraph. ‘Challenge and expand your thinking’ continues to be neglected.  Textual summary and description of Aristotle and Dante’s friendship and dialogue imply characterisation and point of view, though more explicit engagement with the question is necessary.  The use of evidence and language forms, features and structures continue to demonstrate sound understanding. Though embedding quotes in a more integrated manner (without the explicit phrase ‘in the quote’) will support improvement.  Using metalanguage more thoroughly will improve the response.  The selected examples are linked to the concepts of characterisation and point of view, though this student explains, rather than analyses, the language forms, features and structures used by the author.  The paragraph links back to aspects of the question (‘characters’ and ‘ideas’) through explanation – drawing causal links (‘because they are very different’).  Attempt to explore the effect on reader’s is sound, but would be improved through greater attention to the whole question (‘challenge and expand your thinking’). | Consistent with the first body paragraph, this response continues to demonstrate sound control of language and structure.  The paragraph is methodical in its organisation, beginning and ending with a consideration of many aspects of the question.  Punctuation and register are becoming increasingly inconsistent across the response. Editing is important for improvement. Selecting more appropriate and precise vocabulary will further improve the lexical density of this response.  Embedding more consistent personal analysis and evaluative verbs is also necessary to best engage with the appropriate audience for the purpose of this task. |
| Finally, readers are engaged in Ari and Dante’s relationships with their parents and we learn how important loving and supportive parents are to gay teenage boys. The quote by W.S. Merwin on the title page for the fifth section is an example of intertextuality and it says ‘*Through all of youth I was looking for you without knowing what I was looking for*’. This quote was used by Benjamin Alire Sáenz because Ari was looking for Dante all along but didn’t know that he was into him romantically. This is an interesting use of point of view in the text because even though the book is written from Ari’s point of view the audience can tell that Ari likes Dante more than a friend before Ari realises it himself. His parents can also tell and are the ones who reveal it to Ari showing their point of view. Ari’s dad tells him using dialogue ‘Ari, the problem isn’t just that Dante’s in love with you. The real problem – for you, anyway – is that you’re in love with him’ and his mother says ‘Ophelia’s taught me some things, you know? All those letters. I’ve learned some things. And your father’s right. You can’t run. Not from Dante.’ There is characterisation used in Ari’s parents and Dante’s as well because they are loving and supportive and accepting of their sons no matter who they love. This is a big and powerful idea because so many gay people in the real world don’t have the love and support of their parents. | Another example of a methodical opening sentence that includes a main idea, in response to the question. Greater planning in the drafting phase will support this response to present a more thorough analysis of the whole question.  As with preceding body paragraphs, this response continues to display sound textual knowledge, supporting the explanation with evidence from the text.  Language forms, features and structures continue to be explained in this response. Moving this textual discussion from explanation to analysis is necessary, focusing on the effect of each device in challenging and expanding thinking.  While this response continues to demonstrate understanding of the text, there is a tendency to lapse into description and summary. Greater focus on analysis of the question and concepts of characterisation and point of view is necessary. | This response continues to organise ideas into a sound paragraph structure that uses some language from the question.  Explicit focus on formal register will enable this student to appeal to the audience and purpose of this task more effectively.  Editing for punctuation and to evaluate where and how a personal voice has been established and sustained is necessary to move this response into the higher grades. |
| In conclusion, Benjamin Alire Sáenzuses characterisation and point of view to challenge and expand my thinking about the main ideas of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. It does that through characters like Ari and Dante and their parents and the way that their point of view is shown through the epistolary of letters and journal entries and the dialogue between the characters. This made me challenge and expand my thinking to a great extent. | This response concludes by repeating the question.  Referencing ‘characters’ and ‘point of view’ is sound, with some listing of devices used by the author.  The final line, ‘this made me challenge and expand my thinking to a great extent’, is the only acknowledgement of this part of the question. Engaging with, rather than repeating, the question is necessary to elevate this response. Providing an overview responding to the content, rather than repeating the question, is advised. | This conclusion demonstrates sound control of structure.  More effective sentence starters can be applied to compose a rhetorically engaging conclusion. This can be achieved through using a range of modal verbs or adjectives and nominalisation to increase density and formalise register.  Considering ways to include more personal insight to conclude the response will also elevate this response. The inclusion of personal pronoun (‘me’) is an effective device to show understanding that can be used throughout for effect. |

**Feedback comment**

**This sample response exemplifies how a C range student might perform in this assessment. This student has explained how an author uses characters and point of view to explore ‘main ideas’. Unfortunately, links to ‘challenge and expand thinking’ and ‘engage readers’ are dealt with superficially or neglected. This student clearly has knowledge of the text, including evidence to demonstrate sound understanding across the body of the analytical response. Discussion of language forms, features and structures is also demonstrated in a sound manner, linked to character and point of view appropriately. Examination of the text explains, rather than analyses, with causal links often ending at the text level, rather than effectively connecting to how the author has used these devices, or how these devices/evidence have enabled the student to ‘challenge and expand thinking’.**

**The response is sound in its control of language, using some appropriate metalanguage and vocabulary throughout. Maintaining a more consistent personal voice that does not lapse into informal register is recommended for future analytical tasks. Further, engaging in the editing process to review and revise punctuation and tense for cohesion is also a necessary practice for this student as they progress through Year 10 and into Stage 6. Developing skills in choice of vocabulary for precision and enhanced personal voice is similarly advised moving forward. Consideration of audience and purpose for the task is evident, but greater lexical density would have elevated this response.**

**The structure of this analytical response is likewise sound in its control, demonstrating that this student has methodically considered the appropriate form for this task. Developing engaging sentence starters that move away from simple adverbials (firstly, secondly, in conclusion) and instead use nominalisation and modal verbs to communicate personal voice and understanding is recommended. Moreover, structuring analysis to embed quotes and integrate effect statements is also advised as an area for future focus. Instances of summary/description should be replaced with more personal analysis and opportunities to link back to all aspects of the question and prompt.**

**Overall, this is a sound response that genuinely engages with the text and attempts to deal with all task requirements.**

# 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 sample assessment 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:english.curriculum@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**: this resource is evidence-based, as outlined below and supports English curriculum leaders to advance equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences for their students. It also provides guidance that enhances the delivery of outstanding leadership, teaching and learning as per the goals of the [Plan for Public Education](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/plan-for-nsw-public-education). It is an example of [Universal Design for Learning](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/planning-programming-and-assessing-k-12/about-universal-design-for-learning) and aligns with the [School Excellence Policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2016-0468). It is designed to support school and curriculum leaders as they plan syllabus implementation. It can be used during the design and delivery of collaborative curriculum planning, monitoring and evaluation.

**Alignment to the School Excellence Framework**: this resource supports the [School Excellence Framework](https://education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/directory-a-z/strategic-school-improvement/school-excellence-framework) element of assessment (formative assessment, summative assessment, student engagement).

**Alignment to Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**: this resource supports teachers to address [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](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 and subject matter experts from the Rural Learning Exchange

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

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

**Resource**: assessment task notification

**Related resources**: further resources to support English Stage 5 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/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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