



Edith Cowan University

2026 ATAR Revision Seminars

ATAR English

Syllabus Concepts
Revision Activities
Revision Notes, Tips & Advice

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How to Use This Workbook

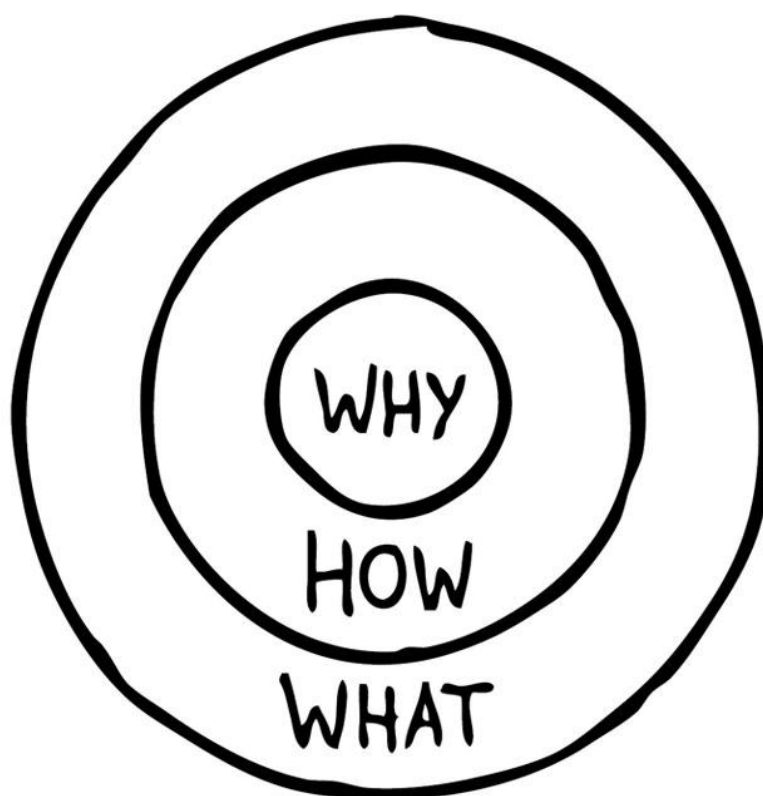
This workbook is designed to complement the ATAR English Revision Seminar. It contains activities, as well as key tips, definitions, hints and advice from the seminar so you can annotate, highlight and return to it as you prepare for your examination.

The structure follows five key areas:

- The “Big Six”: Important Concepts
- Comprehending
- Responding
- Composing
- Exam Management

Study Tip

Convert your text notes and examples to a format that mirrors these course concepts. This frees you up to answer whatever question is actually asked in the exam.



The Big Six

The Core Concepts of ATAR English

These six concepts underpin everything in ATAR English. Every text you study can be examined through each of these lenses.

1. Context

Context refers to the environment in which a text is created or received. There are three types:

Context of Culture	The broad social, cultural, political and historical environment. The wider "world" the text exists in.
Context of Situation	The immediate circumstances in which a text is produced or read. The specific moment.
Personal Context	The individual experiences, values and perspectives that each reader brings to a text.

Study Tip

When discussing context, be specific. Name the era, the political climate, the social pressures.

Aim to look at the bigger picture, and link context to purpose: why did this context shape the text in this particular way?

2. Audience

Audience refers to who a text is made for. All texts have an intended/implicit audience which is the primary audience the creator had in mind.

Key Advice

For deeper discussion, we aim to link audience to context and purpose.

3. Purpose

Purpose is what a text is designed to do. It drives every other decision a creator makes. Purpose determines genre, mode, language choices, structure and style.

Common purposes of texts: to inform, to persuade, to challenge, to examine.

Key Advice

Always ask: what is this text trying to make its audience think, feel or do?

4. Genre

Genre is a way of categorising texts. There are two types able to be discussed:

Genre of Form / Structure	The text type itself, e.g. feature film, novel, memoir, speech, advertisement.
Genre of Subject Matter	The overall content, e.g. dystopia, romance, autobiography, political commentary.

Key things to know about genre:

- Genres have conventions — the "rules" or expected features audiences recognise (like ingredients in a recipe)
- Texts can conform to conventions or deliberately challenge and subvert them
- Conventions change over time as context and culture evolve
- Genre can be used to construct or deconstruct stereotypes

Example: A memoir (e.g. Becoming by Michelle Obama) uses first person POV, emotive language and personal anecdotes as its key ingredients. If analysing an unseen extract, you could still recognise these expected ingredients of a memoir without knowing the full text.

5. Representation

All texts represent a version or construction of the world, not the exact world itself.

To discuss representation, consider:

WHAT is being represented? (people, events, concepts, groups)

HOW is it constructed? (language, structure and style choices)

WHY are we positioned to see it this way? (the ideology and purpose behind the choices)

Key points:

- Representation is always one of many possible ways to present a subject
- It is always contested. Someone else could represent the same thing differently
- Stereotypes are a form of representation that oversimplifies
- Texts can reinforce OR challenge stereotypes

Model Sentence

"The definitive, empowered voice redefines the representation of a hero, from an oversimplified stereotype to somebody that has overcome and endured incredible adversity."

6. Conventions

Conventions are the expected features of a particular genre or text type, closely linked to genre, audience, context and purpose.

- Every genre has conventions that audiences expect
- Following conventions signals genre to the audience and creates shared meaning
- Deliberately breaking conventions can challenge audience expectations and create meaning through contrast
- Conventions evolve over time as context and culture change

Activity 1 – Representation

Remember

“Representation is not a mirror of reality, it is a construction. All texts represent a version of the world, not the world itself.”

What **ideas** are **represented** in this text about:

- A particular group?
- A social issue?
- A subject?

- What version of reality is **presented**? What other versions are available?

- What is the **purpose** of the text?

Activity 2 – Representation

Question	Analysis
The purpose of this text is to ...	I know this because...
The context in which it was produced was ...	I know this because...
The intended audience is ... This audience values....	I know this because...
My response was (articulate your personal context)... This is because I value...	I know this because...

Key Advice

When describing audience values, always frame them positively.

E.g. "An audience who values resilience and determination".

Activity 3– Perspective

Remember

"Perspective is a viewpoint informed by many contexts. It is more than just an opinion."

A perspective is shaped by multiple overlapping contexts:

Sociocultural	Age, gender, class, nationality, religion, cultural background, profession
Ideological	Feminist, capitalist, Marxist, nationalistic, environmentalist perspectives

Think about the text.

- What **perspective** is offered by the text?

- Does it **reproduce**, **reinforce** or **challenge** popular ways of thinking? Justify your response.

- What different **responses** could **audiences** have? What **perspectives** inform these different responses?

- What **values** are supported by the text?

Activity 4 – Voice

Voice Operates in Two Ways

Creator's Voice (Outside the text)	The author's viewpoint; the perspective and values behind the text. Not the same as what characters say.
Narrative Voice (Inside the text)	The voice constructed within the text: first/second/third person; reliable or unreliable; exterior or interior; omniscient or limited.

To Unpack Voice: Ask Four Questions

Whose voice?	Perspective
What does it say?	Ideas and Examples
How does it sound?	Tone and Construction
Why is it constructed this way?	Analysis

Tonal Words: Build Your Own List

Get into the habit of applying a tonal word when discussing voice and attitude. Collect possibilities so you have them ready in the exam.

Tonal Word Bank

Urgent | Impassioned | Melancholic | Insistent | Admonishing | Desperate | Inclusive |
Cautionary | Warm | Awed | Celebratory | Admiring | Frustrated | Encouraging | Patriotic |
Demanding | Mocking

My additions: _____

Narrative Voice: Expression Formula

Model Sentence

"The text constructs the [1–2 descriptive words] voice of a [persona]."

Example: "The text constructs the urgent, impassioned voice of a social activist."

Activity 4 – Voice

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly is a memoir by journalist Jean-Dominique Bauby. It describes what his life is like after suffering a massive stroke that left him with locked-in syndrome.

- How does this text use **voice** to construct Bauby's **perspective**?
- Annotate the text looking for **language patterns**.

Through the frayed curtain at my window, a wan glow announces the break of day. My heels hurt, my head weighs a ton, and something like a giant invisible cocoon holds my whole body prisoner. My room emerges slowly from the gloom. I linger over every item: photos of loved ones, my children's drawings, posters, the little tin cyclist sent by a friend the day before the Paris– Roubaix bike race, and the IV pole hanging over the bed where I have been confined these past six months, like a hermit crab dug into his rock.

Consider:

- Narrative point of view
- Patterns of tonal words and connotative language
- Figurative language
- Sensory imagery
- Register (level of language – formal, colloquial, slang)
- Syntax and sentence structures
- Grammar and punctuation choices
- Structure — use of space on the page

Activity 5 – Voice

- Describe the **voice** constructed to **represent** a particular group.

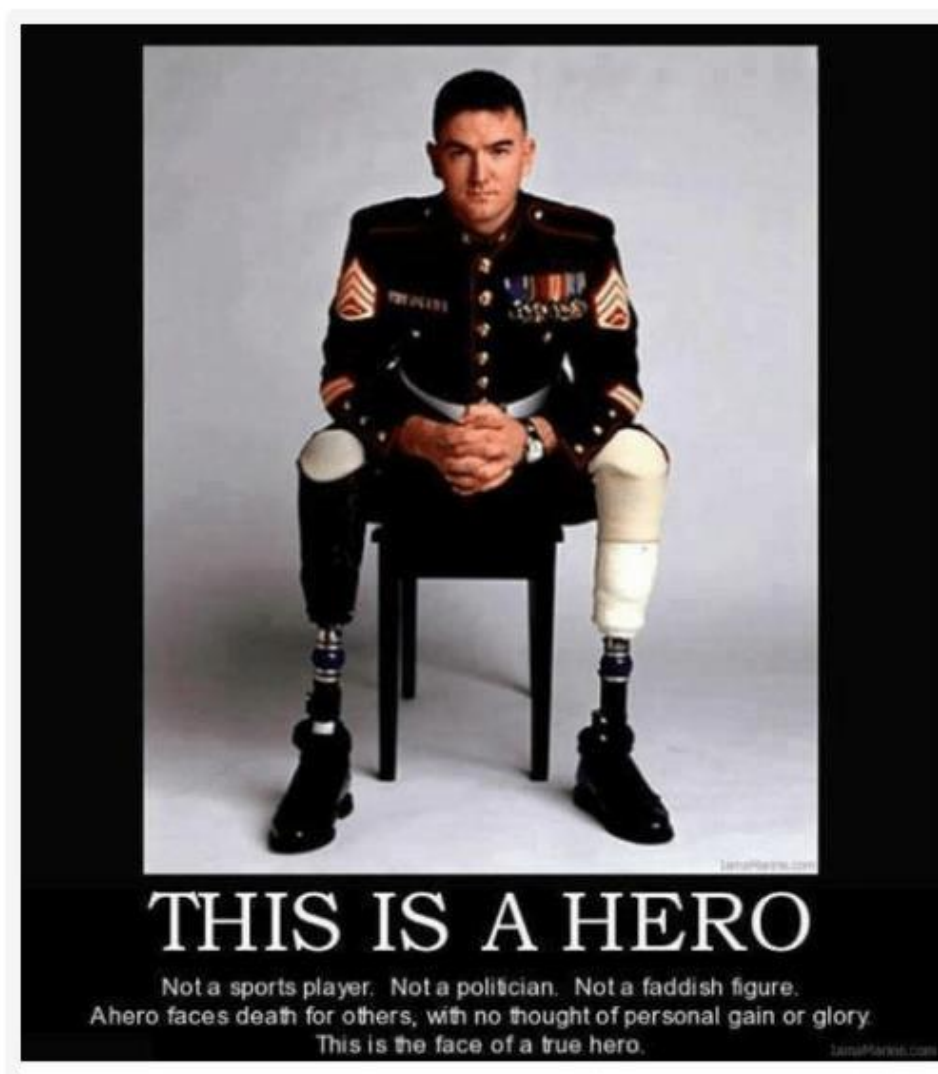
- Identify the key visual and audible **features** used to promote this **voice**.

Visual	Audible

- Which **voice/s** are foregrounded? Explain the relationship between **context** and the **voice** of this text

Activity 6 – Analysing Voice

- How does this text use **voice** and **visual elements** to challenge powerful stereotypes?



THIS IS A HERO

***Not a sports player. Not a politician. Not a faddish figure. A hero
faces death for others with no thought of personal gain or glory.***

This is the face of a true hero.

Write your notes on the next page:

The stereotype:

Voice (Written)

Visual Elements

Analysis:

Activity 7 – Comprehending

COMPREHENDING

Interpreting and Analysing Unseen Texts

What Does It Mean to Comprehend?

- Interpreting a text by examining its representation of concepts or ideas
- Discussing particular ways a text is constructed
- Being aware that the text is part of something bigger — context, genre, purpose

The task is always: **WHAT / HOW / WHY.**

Question Types

Open	A broad question with many valid interpretations. You have more freedom to choose your reading.
Partially Open	Some direction is given, but there is still room to develop your own ideas.
Closed	A specific question with a more defined answer expected.

Structuring a Comprehending Response

Aim for 250–300 words.

- Start with the **WHAT** — your interpretation (1–2 sentences).
Replace concepts in the question with your answer.
- You may choose to use paragraphs for readability.
- Work chronologically through the text where possible.

Sentence Starters That Prompt Analysis

Analysis Sentence Starters

"This implies that..."

"This suggests that..."

"This works to..."

"This clearly shows..."

"This highlights..."

Study Tip

Practise articulating the concepts so you can use them throughout a response without overly repetitive expression.

E.g. vary: representation / represents / to represent / a representation of...

Activity 7 – Comprehending

Language Features

Choices in language features and text structures define a type of text and shape its meaning. They vary according to purpose, subject matter, audience and mode.

Below are some of the more commonly discussed language features. This is not a complete, restricted list.

- Simile / Metaphor / Personification
- Emotive language
- Descriptive language (adjectives and adverbs)
- Connotation — the associations a word carries beyond its literal meaning
- Sensory details and imagery
- Allusion — reference to another text, event or cultural touchstone
- Diction — specific word choices and their cumulative effect
- Hyperbole — deliberate exaggeration for effect
- Cumulation — building up of examples or phrases
- Anecdote — a brief personal story used as evidence or illustration
- Evidence / Statistics / Generalisation
- Inclusive language — "we," "us," "our"
- Rhetorical question
- Repetition — for emphasis or rhythm

Text Structure

Text structure refers to how information is organised in different types of texts. Best understood by looking for patterns.

Linear	Events or information in straightforward sequence
Chronological	Ordered by time
Parallel	Two or more storylines/arguments developed simultaneously
Juxtaposition	Placing contrasting elements side by side for effect
Foreshadowing	Early hints that anticipate later events
Flashback	Moving back in time to revisit past events
Circular	Ending where it began — creates thematic resonance
Alternating	Switching between perspectives, timelines or locations
Frame Narrative	A story within a story — creates layers of meaning

Activity 7 – Comprehending

Stylistic Features

Remember

Stylistic choices are sustained throughout a text to become a distinctive part of its overall style. Do NOT discuss one isolated choice. Style requires something done deliberately and repeatedly. To argue something is "stylistic," you must acknowledge a PATTERN in its use.

Stylistic Features in Written Texts

- Diction — word choice and its cumulative effect
- Syntax — sentence structures and their patterns
- Tone and mood
- Tense
- Imagery and figurative language
- Narrative viewpoint
- Use of symbolism
- Choice of structure — stanzas, paragraphs, juxtaposition

Stylistic Features in Visual/Film Texts

- Use of camera — angle, distance, movement, filters, lens
- Choice of music
- Diegetic and non-diegetic sound
- Editing choices
- Lighting
- Setting
- Use of symbolism

Activity 7 – Comprehending

- Identify the **WHAT** and **HOW** of each question.
- Note whether the question is **open, partially open** or **closed**.

1. Explain how voice is used in Text 1 to construct a particular perspective.
2. Explain how Text 2 constructs an unequal relationship.
3. Use your knowledge of visual language conventions to explain your response to Text 1.
4. Compare the representations of soldiers in Text 1 and Text 2.
5. Explain how Text 2 challenges particular views about those who seek asylum in Australia.
6. Compare how Text 1 and Text 2 effectively convince their audience about the need to regulate the use of A.I in secondary schools.

Activity 8 - Style

- Let's think about our text again.

1. Describe the style of the text.

2. Identify the key stylistic elements that contribute to this.

- Now write your ideas analytically.

1. The style of this film is...

2. The key elements that contribute to its style are...

Activity 8 - Style

3. Compare the film **styles**.

4. How does the difference reflect a change in **context, purpose** or **audience**?

Activity 9 – Responding

RESPONDING

The Essay Section

How Questions May Be Presented

Compare and Contrast	"Compare the ways in which two studied texts have been effective in bringing important issues to the attention of an audience."
One Text	"Evaluate the impact of language conventions on your interpretation of at least one text you have studied."
Two Texts	"Reflect on how two texts have challenged your perspective on a social or cultural issue."

Deconstructing Questions — Command, Concept, Condition, Critical

Every question contains four types of key words. Identifying them will help you plan your response:

Command word	What you are asked to do. E.g. EXPLORE = "Investigate, search for or evaluate."
Concept word	The key English concept. E.g. VOICE = "The persona, role or character adopted by the author/narrator." REPRESENT = "The way people, events, issues or subjects are presented in a text; shaped by techniques." CONTEXT = "The environment in which a text is responded to or created."
Condition word	The scope or constraint. E.g. AT LEAST ONE = refer to a minimum of one text.
Critical word	An important qualifier. E.g. HOW...WORKS = consider the construction and function. PARTICULAR = identify a specific context.

Study Tip

Practise articulating concepts so you can vary your phrasing throughout a response.

"representation / represents / to represent / a representation of..."

Activity 9 – Responding

- Identify **command**, **concept**, **condition** and **critical** words in the question.
- Decide which questions engage with the same concept/task but have subtle differences.
- Look for limiters and modifiers to determine what is really important in the question.

Question 1

Show how at least one text reveals that the values of individuals are shaped by their circumstances.

Question 2

Compare how two texts of different genres respond to the concerns of the same time period.

Question 3

Explore how different perspectives on a controversy have been represented in at least one text.

Question 4

Discuss how voice has been crafted to reveal an inner or hidden conflict in at least one text.

Question 5

How have language or structural innovations been used to unsettle an audience in at least one text?

Question 6

Compare how two texts of different modes use textual features to represent a similar idea or theme.

Activity 9 – Responding

Question 7

Explore how voice within at least one text reflects the values and attitudes of a particular context.

Question 8

With reference to at least one text, discuss the stylistic choices made by a creator in constructing a text within a particular genre.

Question 9

Show how your knowledge of a text's context shaped your understanding of a perspective it communicated.

Question 10

Discuss how a text engages with issues or ideas significant within its context.

Question 11

Critically appraise how the conventions used in one text influence audience responses.

Question 12

Analyse how the use of voice or narrative point of view affected the representation of attitudes in one text.

Question 13

Compare how two texts created in different modes use language features to invite empathy for a particular individual or group.

Activity 9 – Responding

Question 14

Discuss how your awareness of the omissions and/or marginalisations within a text shaped your response to its perspective(s).

Question 15

With reference to at least one text, discuss why a text created in one context may resonate with an audience in another context.

Question 16

Show how analysing voice in at least one text led you to question the assumptions and/or values it communicated.

Question 17

Explain how at least one text conforms to generic conventions while still challenging its audience.

Question 18

Compare two texts of the same genre to show how they are stylistically different.

Question 19

Discuss the significance of mode in communicating a perspective in at least one text.

Question 20

Compare the effects of two texts either meeting or not meeting your expectations of their genre.

Activity 9 – Responding

Question 21

Evaluate how your context shaped your response to at least one text.

Question 22

Compare how at least two texts use different styles to captivate or surprise you.

Question 23

By comparing the use of generic conventions in two texts, explore how a genre has evolved over time.

Question 24

Discuss how a text extended your understanding of its genre by incorporating or manipulating conventions in ways you did not expect.

Question 25

Analyse how different attitudes or perspectives are communicated through the construction of voices in one text.

Question 26

Compare how two texts' treatment of a similar theme, issue or idea was shaped by their contexts.

Question 27

Evaluate how the perspective in a text was offered through the selection of language features that generate controversy.

COMPOSING

The Creative Writing Section

What is Composing?

- Your answer is marked on the quality of your writing
- A key discriminator will be how well you control, adapt, transform or manipulate the text structures and language features of your chosen form for particular effects

What is Rewarded in Composing

Develop and sustain an argument	Your writing must have a clear, consistent central idea or viewpoint throughout.
Select a genre and use it with control	Choose a form appropriate to your purpose and demonstrate genuine command of it.
Innovative and imaginative language	Go beyond cliché — find original ways to express your ideas.
Control expression	Shape the reader's response. Every word choice should be deliberate and purposeful.
Sustain a point of view	Your voice and perspective should be consistent throughout.
Engage with all parts of the question	Every question has 2–4 parts. The degree to which you address each one is a discriminator.

Key Question to Ask Yourself

Would someone want to read this? Remember: you are NOT writing for yourself.

The following pages are intentionally blank.

Write notes as we work through possibilities for imaginative, persuasive and interpretive structure.

Composing Imaginative Texts

Composing Interpretive Texts

Composing Persuasive Texts

Exam Management

How to attack study

- Know your texts and how to use them for different concepts
- Control written forms for Comprehending, Responding and Composing
- Understand the key syllabus concepts — be able to apply them, not just recall them

Text preparation:

- Convert your text notes and examples to a format that mirrors the course concepts
- This frees you up to answer the question that is actually asked

Study Tools to Build Now

Text Revision Templates	Organise your text knowledge around the Big Six concepts.
Quote Clouds	Group quotations by concept/idea so you can deploy them flexibly.
Question Mindmaps	Practise deconstructing past exam questions using the Command/Concept/Condition/Critical framework.
SCSA Website	Past exams, marking keys, and summary reports — essential revision tools. scsa.wa.edu.au

Cover All Bases

- Choose the best text for each concept before you go in — don't decide on the day
- You need clear and connected ideas/arguments, not just a summary of the text
- Audit your notes against sample questions: "Yes! I can answer that with this text..."
- Practise writing paragraphs to "find your words". The exam is not the place to discover your phrasing.

In the Examination Room

Create a gameplan:

- Use reading time strategically. Read all questions before deciding on your order
- Consider your order of completion. Which section are you strongest in?
- Strict time management. Know how much time each section is worth and stick to it
- Plan before you write. Use planning space, but don't over-plan
- Edit and proofread. Leave time at the end to review your work

Final Reminder

When you consider it logically, you have spent two whole years preparing for this exam.

Trust this preparation!