

# 2024 ASSESSMENT REPORT

## ENS315124 ENGLISH STUDIO

Well done to all those students who participated in the first year of English Studio. As with the previous course, English Writing, there were some folios featuring outstanding student writing that were a delight to read. This year the course had 600 candidates, with 226 Year 11 students and 374 Year 12 students.

The change in the award requirements algorithm from four external As to three external As contributed to the higher number of Exceptional Achievement (EA) awards achieved this year. Overall, there were also higher internal ratings compared to externals. As this is the first year of the course, in 2025 teachers will need to take into consideration the ratings achieved by students externally in 2024 as they apply the standards in assessing student work internally. There will be a period of adjustment in understanding the criteria and consistently applying the standards, so this is not a surprise.

Teachers and students are implored to read this Assessment Report carefully and ensure they are also consulting the External Assessment Specifications (EAS) to ensure that all aspects of submission, and academic integrity are understood along with specific details of the required manuscript formatting.

The best of the folios, which were a privilege to read, showed the writer's ability to create sustained and confident texts in a variety of forms and genres featuring variation and polished narrative voices. They included pieces that were beautiful, rich, complex, fluid, mature and authentic featuring genuine emotional engagement. Use of humour was another aspect of the stronger folios. While there were some folios awarded for their experimentation, diversity and/or versatility as well as extensive use of literary devices and figurative language, others were rewarded for their high degree of attention to the requirements of the craft of writing; for example, controlling pacing, establishing a character or conflict and telling a story in an engaging way.

Less successful folios were repetitive in style, use of form, genre and narrative voice. They also often featured a lack of clarity in the plot as well as featuring a lack of polish, poor grammatical structures and ineffective use of punctuation. Creative nonfiction in some of the least successful folios were closer to information texts than creative nonfiction; thus, they did not include the "creative" elements required in this genre. Poetry, with a few exceptions, was also one of the least successful aspects of this year's folios.

Titles should not be an afterthought; they are an essential aspect of the meaning making of a text. Students should try to ensure they are evocative and representative of the associated texts.

## Criterion 2

This criterion focuses on the "Use of language to craft texts, establishing a personal style and voice and shaping meaning and response". It requires students to consider their word choice closely and make sure that it is aligned with their purpose, audience, genre and text type. This includes the use of language features and literary devices chosen to "shape meaning and response". To meet the criterion, students need to make the best language and word choices for

the genre and form they are creating. Students also need to focus on using language to develop the voice/s in the text that are appropriate to and reflect the story. Finally, the criterion focuses on developing complex ideas, concepts, themes, or perspectives. This is a vital part of shaping meaning, engaging the reader, and eliciting a response from the audience, for example, an emotional or intellectual response.

Excellent and stronger folio examples demonstrated the students' skill in using a variety of language features including evocative description, imagery and symbolism. They also showed discerning use of literary devices as well as carefully choosing stylistic devices to develop a distinct voice or voices in their work/s. Importantly, they were able to match word choice and vocabulary with the topic they were exploring and the voice they were developing. Candidates who submitted less successful folios overused clichés or relied heavily on simplistic language struggling to shape meaning, leading to ambiguity or lack of depth in their pieces.

## Criterion 3

Editing and polishing to manuscript standard, accurately formatting according to the TASC guidelines as specified in the EAS, and meeting the academic integrity requirements of the course are key features of this criterion “Craft and edit manuscript standard texts”. Students can be penalised under this criterion when they do not meet the requirements (see the EAS for the list of penalties). This includes penalties for whole folios or individual pieces not meeting the specified word count. There were several examples which suggested the student thought they could use “leftover” words from one piece and add them to another as long as they were within the word count of the whole folio. This is not the case, and students must adhere to the word count of each pitch and piece as outlined in the course documents and the EAS.

A carefully edited and polished manuscript is one that is accurate in terms of word order, correct use of sentence structure (syntax), spelling, use of punctuation and grammar, including verb tenses. Strong folios are accurate and precise, and this helps the students create complex texts and shape their work to meet their purpose and to suit the chosen audience and publication. Less successful folios featured poor sentence structure that included multiple punctuation errors especially in dialogue, and inconsistent use of tenses.

Accurate formatting is meeting all the requirements of manuscript formatting set out in the EAS; for example, margins, font choice, paragraph indenting, time shifts, dialogue punctuation. Strong candidates were able to demonstrate adherence to these demands; however, there was a consistent inclusion of additional line spacing between paragraphs across the folios, which needs to be removed before submission. Candidates with less knowledge of the use of Microsoft Word or less attention to detail were often penalised for poor formatting including using incorrect fonts, block paragraphing, inconsistent use of paragraph indents. Demonstrating they can adhere to the manuscript formatting requirements, shows the marker that the student has the skill to learn the requirements of a publisher and adhere to their formatting requirements.

Students are reminded to look at the EAS for clarification around the inclusion of a “formatted version” of any of their texts. This is required for multimodal texts, which according to the course document can only feature between one to four images. The “formatted version” should appear before the “manuscript version” and should show where the images would appear and how they contribute to the meaning; the writing that is the key component being assessed. The “formatted version” should also demonstrate the presentation requirements of the form, or the publication chosen for the pitch.

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TASC ID: 00Z1234

### Module 1 Pitch

Intended publisher or publication type: *Magazine A* is an Australian online publication that features the work of new young writers previously unpublished featuring works of all genres. They encourage authors to experiment with form.

Word count: 149

### Module 1 Piece

Title: Juice hop

Genre: Comedy

Form: Short Story

Word count: 1480 words

Works Cited list

### Module 2 Pitch

Intended publisher or publication type: *B Magazine* is an online-based publication promoting personal essays from writers around the world that explore all issues relating to humans, the environment and society.

Word count: 147 words

### Module 2 Piece

Title: Letter of Dreams

Genre: Creative nonfiction

Form: personal essay

Word count: 1497 words

Works Cited list

Works Consulted list

### Module 3 Pitch

Intended publisher or publication type: *Magazine C* is an Australian-based publication actively seeking new voices and focussing on promoting experimental prose and poetry or hybrid pieces featuring poetry and prose, either fiction or creative nonfiction.

Word count: 370 words

### Module 3 Piece

Title: Ebbs and Flows

Genre: Creative nonfiction

Form: Poetry and prose memoir

Word count: 1000 words poetry using word count parity and 1800 words prose (2800 total).

Work Cited list

Total word count:	6443
Reference system:	MLA9

Another part of the accurate manuscript formatting is the correct completion of the List of Contents page at the start of the folio. These were extremely inconsistent this year and this needs to be improved in future years. The List of Contents sets out for the marker all the contents in the order they appear in the folio, so need to be accurate. A common error this year was keeping “Works Cited and/or Works Consulted” on the content’s page regardless of the inclusion within the folio.

Students must meet the academic integrity requirements outlined in the [TASC Academic Integrity Policy](#), with further information on the [Academic Integrity](#) webpage for teachers/schools and the [Academic Integrity](#) page for students. Well done to the students who were meticulous in their referencing and creating appropriate and polished citation lists. These students referenced not only research but also wider reading as well as the websites or submission guidelines of publishers they were pitching to. There were many folios with inadequate referencing this year and students are reminded they must use in-text citations or footnotes featuring citations to accurately acknowledge the source/s of their information, particularly for the Module 2 creative nonfiction piece.

The information many students were using in their folios, particularly for Module 2, was clearly researched and including a Works Cited and/or a Works Consulted list alone is not sufficient to

fully meet the academic integrity requirements. Students are encouraged to include Works Consulted as well as Works Cited lists for all pieces that required research; this may include historical fiction pieces as well as the creative nonfiction pieces. Although MLA9 does not recommend footnotes for citations, only explanatory material, students may choose to include their citations in footnotes for this course in acknowledgement that many of the text types being written by students are not published with in-text citations and they can disrupt the reading experience. Although students may use other referencing forms, they are encouraged to engage with MLA9 as per the recommendations to ensure ease of marking.

## Criterion 6

Criterion 6: “Compose texts, applying the elements and conventions of short story writing” is about knowledge of the form and conventions of the short story, creating complex stories that have a clear purpose and are suited to a specified audience. Most students demonstrated familiarity with the short story form, which helped them create engaging stories; however, in many folios the short stories were not as developed as the pieces from Module 2 and 3. Students are reminded they should revisit their short story and rewrite, edit and polish it using all their learning to help them improve this piece before the final submission.

The most successful candidates were able to use relevant genre conventions and develop convincing, well-paced plots. Their work also featured discernible themes that were an essential part of the shaping of the meaning of the text. They also developed more compelling characters and well-structured narratives, often feeling like a “slice of life” of deeper planning and world-building on the part of the writer.

The less successful folios demonstrated that the students had limited control over plot, and they contained numerous errors and inconsistencies. The candidates submitting these folios, struggled to build coherent and engaging narratives, and often had weak, rushed, or incomplete resolutions and implausible situations and characters. Repetitive dialogue often featured, and the pieces tended to “tell” rather than “show”.

Fantasy, horror, and dystopian genres were popular, and students are reminded that to be successful within the word count of 1500 to 2000 words, they need to be able to quickly and effectively establish character, setting and theme to enable the development of an effective narrative. Some pieces featuring these genres ended abruptly or seemed unfinished.

American settings were popular, and students need to consider what this brings to the story: are they using these settings because of their familiarity with American TV shows and films or because it suits the purpose of the story? Often this choice leads to stories that do not contain the realism they purport to have, and they tend to feature more clichés and film tropes. Students must remember that there are benefits in writing about familiar local environments and people.

Students are encouraged to read a variety of short stories to develop and enhance their understanding of the form and the various methods and crafting techniques writers use to develop their pieces and create complex, sustained and sophisticated, convincing stories that suit their purpose and are relevant to an audience evoking a range of intellectual and emotional responses.

## Criterion 7

This criterion, “Compose texts, applying the elements and processes of creative nonfiction writing”, used to assess the creative nonfiction piece from Module 2, was the most problematic within the folio. There were varied understandings of the genre creative nonfiction with many of the weakest folios featuring nonfiction texts that did not contain any creative elements. Lee Gutkind, known as the “godfather behind creative nonfiction”, describes the genre as “writing true stories that provide information about a variety of subjects, enriched by relevant thoughtful ideas, personal insight, and intimacies about life and the world we live in” (Gutkind “What is Creative Nonfiction?”).

Gutkind suggests that creative nonfiction writers use “literary techniques in their prose – from scene to dialogue to description to point of view” (Gutkind “Creative nonfiction: A Movement, Not a Moment”) and each piece incorporates the five Rs – real life, reflection, research, reading and writing. Thus, the piece is based in fact, incorporates reflection and the writer’s personal insights and responses, is underpinned by research, which Gutkind argues “anchors the creative effort”, involves reading, not just the research material but also the works of other creative nonfiction writers and writing, which is the crafting part, the use of techniques often found in fiction, the incorporation of “vignettes, episodes and other slices of reality” (Gutkind “Creative nonfiction: A Movement, Not a Moment”).

Students are encouraged to consider the key literary and crafting techniques they are taught in Module 1 and look for these being used in examples of creative nonfiction works. Sensory description, figurative language including repetition, alliteration, and hyperbole, for example, symbolism, dialogue, characterisation and narrative perspective can often be found used in numerous ways in strong examples of creative nonfiction. Voice is also an essential part of this genre, and close reading of an array of texts will reveal the many ways creative nonfiction authors construct the voice within their pieces. The field of creative nonfiction extends an invitation to students to experiment; whether this is via blending modes or incorporating fiction-writing techniques into reporting on a factual subject, there is scope for versatility and dynamic writing regardless of subject matter. There are opportunities for intertwining personal and objective narrative voices.

Successful submissions of creative nonfiction in this year’s folios were authentic writing that included students’ personal insights or experiences balancing factual accuracy with engaging and experimental structures and showed narrative flair. Successful pieces were often light hearted or humorous. They were also able to demonstrate the integration of research to support the exploration of a topic. Although research is not always required for a memoir, the best of the memoirs often featured some elements of research even if it was verification of memory.

Less successful submissions were overly factual, dry writing that neglected the creative elements and showed little development of thematic depth or purpose. In some cases, this was intensified by the lack of research or referencing on the part of the student to show the depth of their learning around the topic they were writing on.

Of concern to markers was the number of confronting accounts of differing kinds of abuse. While it’s not a new issue that students might choose to use aspects of their personal or traumatic personal history in pieces of writing, it is essential that students be aware of a number of things: while writing can be cathartic, they need to be aware of whether they are emotionally ready to write about trauma, they must be aware of the mandatory reporting requirements for teachers that such writing may invoke, and they need to ensure that the piece they are writing is suitable for publication. If there is no suitable publication, the piece is not suitable for inclusion in the Writer’s

Folio. As this is a professional practice course, finding suitable publishers should not be overlooked or underestimated.

## Criterion 8

The final externally assessed criterion is “craft original texts for different purposes, audiences and contexts”. This criterion features three elements used to assess the Independent Writing Project (IWP) and one element to assess all three pitches included in the folio. It was a complicated criterion to apply as the IWP and pitches are quite distinctive styles of writing.

The IWP should be the strongest piece in the Writer’s Folio as students should be able to show the depth and extent of their learning in this course. Students were able to choose their genre and form and, while there was a proliferation of short stories and creative nonfiction pieces, there were also other hybrid and experimental forms, scripts and poetry. The most successful folio submissions provided variations from Modules 1 and 2 and were coherent, sustained, complex explorations of the chosen topic. They often included multiple perspectives and voices.

The writers of the least successful folios showed less control over grammar, repetition or lack of clarity in the plot. They also relied heavily on dialogue and some students found it difficult to capture realistic human speech in a sustained manner and balance it with action and description. The quality of the poetry in this year’s folio, with a few exceptions, was poor. Some admirable examples demonstrated rigorous crafting and was organic but unfortunately many less successful poetic efforts were an assemblage of clichés.

The three pitches include the two shorter pitches for Modules 1 and 2 and a longer pitch for Module 3. To be effective a pitch needs to feature a clear succinct description of the text, a justification of the appeal of the piece to the publisher and appropriate research into finding the most suitable publisher. Finding comparison titles is also important as it shows knowledge of the commercial appeal of the piece. What other texts are there like the one ready to pitch that are selling or being published by the organisation you are pitching to? In the case of screenplays and drama productions, this can extend to the relevant production companies, literary agents or theatre companies, as there is often no suitable publication that accepts scripts.

Overall, students managed admirably with this new form; however, many pitches were statements about the pieces rather than directed at the publisher. The audience for the pitch is the publisher and it is vital that students have carefully researched to find an accurate fit for their pieces. This is a demonstration of industry knowledge, which is key in a professional studies course. The choice of publisher needs to be well considered, deliberate and justified in relation to the piece identified as suitable for the publication. Students need to be wary of naming a book publisher for any of their pieces unless they are authoring a novel chapter for Module 3, as these publishers do not accept a submission of a short piece the length of those in the folio. Students must also be clear of the genres and forms that the chosen publisher will accept, otherwise the pitch will be inaccurate.

The best of the pitches developed a strong voice and imparted genuine information about the piece rather than being persuasive rhetoric with little detail. They were also clear about each project’s commercial and artistic potential, and often demonstrated wider reading through discussion of “comparison texts” that showed a clear market for their work. They also more clearly identified the target audience for their piece and the type of experience the reader may have.

Less successful responses often used valuable words in plot retell and did not show an understanding of the publication's target audience and neglected to be clear about how they differentiated their style or tone for this specific context. Often pieces were being offered vaguely to a publisher of magazines without evidence of research as to why the publisher would be interested. Specifics and effort of research into the publishers' market separated top pitches from the rest.

## Concluding Thoughts

Students are encouraged to read as widely as possible the forms and genres that they want to write. The best folios showed students' knowledge of these aspects of writing and clearly drew influence and inspiration from authors and their works. They should also read to enhance their knowledge of the way writers use crafting techniques to meet their purpose and position their audience for specific responses. It is also vital that students read and research for Module 2. The memoir would generally require the least research, but there will be times that writers want to verify aspects of their memory, for example, details of a location. The research should then be represented in the folio through accurate Works Cited and Works Consulted lists and in-text referencing, or citations presented in footnotes so that the work clearly meets the academic integrity requirements.

Students are reminded not to underestimate the industry relevant research that they need to undertake to identify suitable publishers and be familiar enough with their publications to be able to justify why their work is suited to this publication.

There are, no doubt, some very, very talented writers in this state and this course offers them the possibility of developing and practicing their craft and, hopefully, help them grow their practice in a sustainable and rewarding direction in the future.

We look forward to 2025 and the student offerings in the second year of this new course.

## Works Cited

- Gutkind, Lee. "What is Creative Nonfiction?." *Creative Nonfiction*, 2022, [creativenonfiction.org/what-is-cnf/](https://creativenonfiction.org/what-is-cnf/). Accessed 03 Sept. 2024.
- Gutkind, Lee. "Creative Nonfiction: A Movement, Not a Moment." *Creative Nonfiction*, no. 29, 2006, pp. 6–18. [creativenonfiction.org/writing/creative-nonfiction-a-movement-not-a-moment/](https://creativenonfiction.org/writing/creative-nonfiction-a-movement-not-a-moment/). Accessed 02 Sept. 2024.