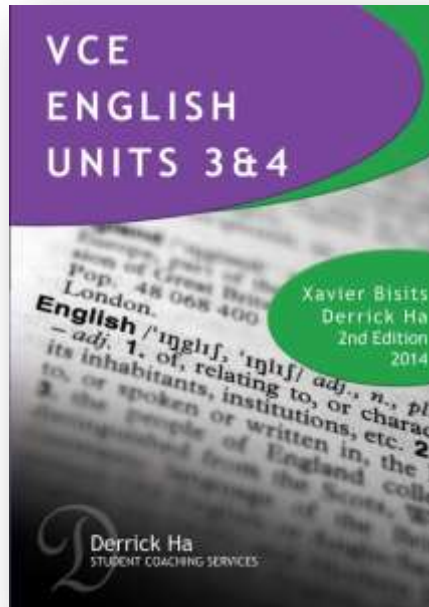

VCE English Units 3&4 Exam Revision Guide



254 pages

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Introduction

VCE English Units 3&4 is not a 'standard' book – rather, it is a revision program designed to assist students with their preparation for the English Exam. The book aims to help students improve their English exam results in the shortest time possible, and comes with a unique four week schedule to guide students during the final month of their revision.

This document contains:

- A list of the updates for the 2014 edition
- Sample – Essay
- Sample – Text Specific Notes
- Sample – Theory (Section A)
- Sample – Spelling and Grammar Section
- About the Authors

Updates for the 2014 Edition

- The notes, essays and trial exams have been updated to reflect the current texts for the 2014 VCE syllabus
- Six new Section B Essays are included to provide students with a greater variety of ideas for their creative piece
- New examples for each of the four Contexts
- Text notes have been added for No Sugar by Jack Davis
- Updated content and explanations to reflect the latest comments from the 2013 VCAA Assessment Report
- A new four week revision schedule to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of each student's exam revision.

Sample – Essay

The Exam Revision Guide includes 18 sample text responses, 14 sample Context Essays, four language analyses and one speech. All of these essays are written specifically for the English exam. They are model essays which you can use as the basis for your own pieces. Each essay is annotated in the same way as the essay below.

The following is an example of one of the Section C essays included in the book. The original stimulus material is not included here, but is provided with the guide. Only part of the essay has been included here.

SAMPLE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

In response to the impending demolition of a local war memorial by a fast food chain, the former mayor of Greenfern, Miriam Wodwin, delivered a speech entitled 'We Cannot Lose' before a crowd of protestors on May 16, 2013. In a generally affronted tone, she asserts that the actions of Noibit, the fast food chain, are disgraceful, arguing that its plans amount to a gross display of disrespect to those whom the memorial commemorates. Although she bemoans (*laments*) her own failure to prevent these plans, she remains confident that the will of those opposed to this change will prevail. While she gave her speech, two supporters stood on either side, bearing protest signs that criticised the complicity of the Council in this affair and simultaneously made demands for greater respect. Although she directs her speech, in general, to the townsfolk of Greenfern, it may be of particular interest to a coalition of older, more historically conscious members of the community, and opponents of corporatism.

Maintaining an upright tone, she declares that the war memorial should stand as a testament to the magnanimity (*generosity of spirit*) of those who laid down their lives in war. Capitalising on the likelihood that the war memorial features the forebears (*ancestors*) of some in the audience, she opens by listing a number of names. In this way, she attempts to engender (*cause*) a feeling of attachment to the memorial within listeners. Perhaps in an attempt to signal a more inclusive outlook, she includes among 'our ancestors' one woman, 'Claire Ellis'. The incorporation of Ellis' name may resonate strongly with female members of the audience, thus foiling (*frustrating*) any inclination they may have to suspect the memorial of epitomising (*representing well*) a patriarchal fondness for war. One of the placards beside Wodwin extends her emphasis on the importance of

Comment [M1]: Here, I establish the context of the persuasive piece.

Comment [M2]: You must specify not only the name of the author, but also their position or background.

Comment [M3]: Although, in general, you should use the present tense in your language analysis, when talking about specific, previous events, you should use the past tense.

Comment [M4]: 'Generally' because she does adopt a number of different tones.

Comment [M5]: Here, I use the past tense because I am describing physical actions in the past. Later on, I revert to the present tense because I am referring to the speech before me on paper.

Comment [M6]: You should not describe the content of any visual stimuli in your introduction. Rather, describe its role.

Comment [M7]: In the introduction, it is a good idea to identify at least two specific reader groups.

Comment [M8]: The sub-argument allocated to this paragraph is that we ought to respect the dead. While a very significant proportion of the piece is focused on this aspect, I cannot comment on everything. For example, in this paragraph I neglect to discuss the quote lifted from the war memorial.

Comment [M9]: You should use words like 'may' and 'perhaps' when talking about the effect upon the audience as you cannot be certain what their reaction is.

Comment [M10]: It is important to be able to refer to specific audience groups.

Continued on next page

ancestry by depicting the great-grandfather of a supporter in his military regalia (*outfit*); **his countenance (*face*) serves as a proof that the inscriptions on the memorial are 'more than just names'**. Although Wodwin is keen to appeal to patriotic fervour and pride in one's heritage, she is nonetheless careful to emphasise that the memorial is also a reminder of the 'horror of wars'. By implying that supporting a war memorial does not necessarily mean an endorsement of war itself, **she invites listeners with pacifist (*anti-war*) tendencies to support her aims**.

In a tonal shift that heralds a more caustic (*angrily critical*) approach, Wodwin disparages Noibit, condemning its plans to use the land. Employing a forceful **(verbal fragment)** that conveys her ire, she **(denigrates)** its 'disgusting' intentions. **(Whereas)** last year on April 25, her audience was 'paying its respects', 'commemorating [its] history' and 'celebrating [its] sense of community', it is now in a devastating quagmire (*troublesome situation*) owing to Noibit's actions. Her usage of a tricolon of **(present participles)** may ingratiate (*please*) locals by adding a feeling of solemnity to the occasion. **(Utilising a rhetorical question, she invites listeners to consider the unlikeliness of them having arrived 'where [they] are now')**. The conclusion her audience is likely to reach is that the town has been marred (*stained, damaged*) by the presence of an intruder – Noibit. **(It is also possible that, in demonising Noibit, Wodwin has the ulterior motive of diminishing her own culpability)**. In this sense, she displays a certain amount of political acumen (*intelligence*) undoubtedly acquired during her tenure as mayor. Continuing her attempt to foster a feeling of hostility in the crowd towards the business, she **bitterly** alludes to the belief of Noibit's CEO that the memorial is an 'eye sore'; this comment is likely to make the company appear callous (*heartless*) and unfeeling. Wodwin's assault on Noibit is also judiciously calibrated (*geared*) to appeal to progressive listeners who are, in general, opposed to 'big business'. After drawing an implicit link through the use of alliteration, she equates Noibit's insanely disrespectful 'corporatism' with the broader concept of 'capitalism'. **(In this way, she attempts to assemble a coalition comprising not only nationalists, but also those from the political left)**.

Adopting an **(increasingly)** derisive tone, she decries ***the remaining part of this language analysis has been omitted from this sample***

Comment [M11]: Although visual language typically offers much to be analysed in its own right, you can go further by explaining how it substantiates a part of the main text.

Comment [M12]: An elegant formula for describing the potential influence of a particular aspect of a piece on a certain sub-group:
- *By ..., she invites ... to ...*

Comment [M13]: 'Phrase that is not a proper sentence'.

Comment [M14]: Persuasive pieces often have a negative element to them. Consequently, you should become familiar with a number of words and phrases that carry the idea of criticism, such as 'condemn', 'disparage', 'denigrate' and 'convey her ire'. It is safe to assume that you are likely to use a word that means 'criticise' more than once in your analysis, so you should be prepared.

Comment [M15]: Notice the variation in sentence structure, which is demonstrated in the change in sentence beginnings:
- *In a tonal shift... Employing ... Whereas ... Her usage ...*
This variety is far more pleasing than having a mind-numbing sequence of sentences, such as:
- *She uses ... She utilises ... The creator of the piece uses ...*

Comment [M16]: Words ending in 'ing'.

Comment [M17]: Use this formula, or one like it, to analyse a rhetorical question. You should only include a small portion of their original question.

Comment [M18]: Although, in general, you should avoid criticising the author, you may cautiously comment on their intentions.

Comment [M19]: You can reference tone without actually using the word 'tone'.

Comment [M20]: Wherever possible, you should elaborate on the question of what audiences the creator of the piece is trying to appeal to. The discussion of a targeted audience cannot be left merely to the introduction.

Comment [M21]: The use of words like 'increasingly', 'decreasingly', 'more', 'continuing', 'changing', 'new approach', 'different', 'alternative' and 'shift' in your topic sentences can help to make your piece more cohesive. Even if your essay does not follow the chronological order of the persuasive piece, the reader still needs to be able to follow one idea to another. Make whatever link you can.

Sample – Text Specific Notes

On the next two pages is a sample of the text notes provided for Twelve Angry Men. Similar notes are provided in the book for the following texts:

- 1. A Christmas Carol – Charles Dickens*
- 2. Brooklyn – Colm Tóibín*
- 3. Cat’s Eye – Margaret Atwood*
- 4. Henry IV, Part I – William Shakespeare*
- 5. In the Country of Men – Hisham Matar*
- 6. No Sugar – Jack Davis*
- 7. Ransom – David Malouf*
- 8. Stasiland – Anna Funder*
- 9. The Reluctant Fundamentalist – Mohsin Hamid*
- 10. Twelve Angry Men – Reginald Rose*

For each text, the following notes are provided:

- A list of the ten most useful quotes*
- Analyses of the main characters*
- A discussion of three major themes of the text*
- An example of how you might acknowledge differing interpretations*
- Some detail on the social, cultural and historical context of the text*
- Some ideas on how to comment on text features, and how to include some metalanguage in your writing*

The notes for each text are written in a formal style that is more appropriate to an actual essay. This allows them to be used as part of your own text response essays.

Twelve Angry Men – Reginald Rose

TOP 10 QUOTES

1. 'I don't care what kind of man that was. It was his father. That goddamn rotten kid. I know him. What they're like. What they do to you. How they kill you every day.' – 3rd Juror
2. 'I have always thought that in this country a man was entitled to have unpopular opinions.' – 11th Juror
3. 'I'm not used to supposing. I'm just a working man. My boss does the supposing. But I'll try one. Suppose you talk us all outa this and the kid really did knife his father?' – 6th Juror
4. ... **remaining content omitted from this sample**



'El tracks' of the kind that were outside the second witness' window.

MAIN CHARACTERS

1. 8th Juror – The 8th Juror is an architect with two children, who plays a pivotal role in swaying the other jurors. By posing questions to others in a gentle manner, he encourages them to re-consider their opinions and critically examine the evidence. In general, he is patient and respectful. He does, however, show a capacity to be mildly aggressive, as when he reacts angrily to the jurors who are playing tic-tac-toe. Furthermore, he unnerves some of the other jurors by displaying a switch knife that he had bought from a shop – illegally. Overall, though, he is controlled and pleasant; although he instigates the movement to reverse their initial opinion, he is not dogmatic in his quest to free the boy. Rather, he proposes to examine the prosecution's case in more detail merely because it is 'not easy for [him] to ... send off a boy without talking about it first'. He lets others, such as the 5th and 11th Jurors, play an important role in stimulating discussion. At one point, he agrees to back down if he cannot persuade anyone else by a certain point in time. While he has compassion for somebody who may be facing the electric chair, he is determined to focus on the 'facts' in a rational and courteous manner. He even helps the 3rd Juror – the most obstinate juror – at the end of the play by giving him his jacket and aiding him in putting it on.
2. 3rd Juror – **This content has been omitted from this sample.**
3. 4th Juror – **This content has been omitted from this sample.**

THEMES

1. **Prejudice** –As the play progresses, it becomes apparent that a number of the jurors subscribe to certain pre-conceptions and ideas about the class from which the defendant hails. In justifying their belief that the boy is guilty, the jurors often cite personal traits of the boy, as well as their own intuition. This inability to 'put [their support for the boy's conviction] into words' is suggestive of personal bias. The 10th Juror, in particular, demonstrates prejudice; he views the trial as an opportunity to pursue a crusade against the boy's social-economic class. In wanting to 'get him', the 10th Juror wants to suppress the boy's 'kind' as a whole before they 'own' people of his own class. Unlike many of the other jurors, he does not seek to hide his prejudice behind a façade of reasonability. The 4th Juror and 3rd Juror also voice similar opinions at points. The 3rd Juror's prejudice, however, is complemented by a dislike of young men, who, to him, symbolise his own estranged son. These prejudices, while obvious to the audience, are nevertheless difficult to disentangle from the proceedings. In the heat of the jury room, 'facts [are] coloured by the personalities ... **remaining content omitted from this sample**

-
2. *Justice* – **This content has been omitted from this sample.**
 3. *Memory* – **This content has been omitted from this sample.**

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU MIGHT ACKNOWLEDGE DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS

This content has been omitted from this sample.

SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- At the time in the state of New York, women were in fact permitted to sit on juries. Unlike men, though, they were allowed to excuse themselves in certain cases; this provision may explain the absence of women on the jury.
- In the 1950s, some states of America use the electric chair for executions. The court case featured in *Twelve Angry Men* had a mandatory sentence; that is, if the boy were found guilty of first degree murder, he would have to undergo the death penalty.
- *Twelve Angry Men* was informed by the playwright's experience of being a juror.
- ... **remaining content omitted from this sample**

TEXT FEATURES

- The **climax** of the play probably comes at the end of **Act One**, when the 3rd Juror lunges aggressively at the 8th Juror.
- The **play** is broken up into **two acts**, but the events take place without interruption over the course of an afternoon and evening. Rose deliberately prescribes a clock for the set, allowing the audience to have an acute awareness of the passing of time. Providing a greater sense of continuity, the play has no **scenes**.
- ... **remaining content omitted from this sample**

Sample – Context Specific Notes

The following is a sample of the Context notes. Similar notes are provided in the book for all four contexts: 'encountering conflict', 'the imaginative landscape', 'whose reality?' and 'exploring issues of identity and belonging'.

These notes provide unique pre-prepared examples that can be applied to almost any Section B essay. They are designed to save you the time of having to prepare your own examples.

Whose Reality?

TEXTS

Death of a Salesman (Arthur Miller), The Lot (Michael Leunig), Spies (Michael Frayn), Wag the Dog (directed by Barry Levinson)

10 KEY IDEAS TO EXPLORE

1. We cannot always be sure of reality.
2. We can be certain of reality.
3. Sometimes fantasies and illusions can become a reality.
4. ... **remaining content omitted from this sample**

FIVE THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUOTES

1. 'Don't Take Anything Personally. Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.' - Miguel Angel Ruiz
2. 'Reality leaves a lot to the imagination.' - John Lennon
3. ... **remaining content omitted from this sample**

SEVEN REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES

1. In 1983, there was a fainting epidemic in the West Bank, in Palestine. 943 children – the vast majority girls – came down with fainting symptoms. The problem spread from school to school until it started to die down. Initially, Palestine accused Israel of having released some sort of biological weapon but now doctors agree that all symptoms were probably psychosomatic, the result of mass hysteria. You could make one of the following observations about this:
 - Those around you influence your reality.
 - We see reality through the lens of our own prejudice.
 - Illusions we have mentally can be so powerful that they affect physical reality.



Israel and Palestine, with the West Bank in the middle of Israel.

The remainder of this section has been omitted from this sample.

Sample – Theory

The next two pages provide a sample of the theory portions of the VCE English Exam Revision Guide. Some of this ‘theory’ aims to show students how to write for each of the three sections on the exam. An example of this can be found below.

On the final page, there is a sample from the ‘spelling and grammar’ section of the guide book. This section targets areas of English that are easy to improve in a short time frame. The aim of this is to help students quickly improve their study score during the final few weeks.

Sample – Theory (Section A)

Choosing a Contention

The **contention** is your main argument in response to the prompt, or topic. Every text response must have one. There needs to be a clear link between the prompt and your contention, and your entire essay needs to stem from this contention.

Most prompts have one of the following two forms:

1. A statement you are invited to ‘discuss’. For example:

‘Life of Pi suggests that life demands a choice between resistance and surrender.’

Discuss.

[Source: VCAA 2012]

“Thou art not what thou seemest.”

‘Playing a part is the only way to gain power in Henry IV, Part I.’

Discuss.

[Source: VCAA 2012]

In the second example, you may notice that a quote from the text is also included in the prompt.

2. A direct question. For instance:

*How does Kazan create tension and suspense in *On the Waterfront*?*

[Source: VCAA 2012]

Obama’s Kenyan grandmother says to him, “... a man can never be too busy to know his own people.”

Why is it important to Obama to know his people?

[Source: VCAA 2012]

Again, the second example includes a quote in the prompt.

Continued on next page

The prompt will usually focus on one or more of the following, with the first two of the list being the most common:

- Characters
- Themes
- Reader interpretation
- Ways in which the author conveys a point of view
- Structures, features and conventions with which the author constructs meaning

You must ensure that your contention addresses **every part of the prompt**. Consider the following:

Is Così more about love than madness?
[Source: VCAA 2012]

In the above situation, as the 2012 Assessment Report noted, you cannot ignore one part of the prompt in favour of another. In other words, you must discuss both love and madness in your essay. It is also worth noting that the 2013 Examination Report stressed the need to recognise ‘the specific expectations of each topic or prompt’ with a ‘precise understanding of the words that comprise the task’. In other words, the context of a particular text may mean that you need to look at more than just the literal meaning of the words in the prompt. As the Report states, ‘the topic should not necessarily be taken at face value, but should be explored and examined with a degree of profundity’.

It is also important to word your contention differently from the prompt. Below are two possible contentions to the above prompt. The first example is better than the second because it does not copy the wording of the prompt:

- ✓ *Love is a more important concern of the playwright than insanity.*
- ✗ *Così is more about love than about madness.*

Finally, it is often best to use a qualified contention – that is, a ‘yes, but...’ contention. Having a qualified contention means that you agree with most of the prompt, but hold some reservations about accepting it entirely. It means that you need to make some clarifications or identify some exceptions. Using this type of contention demonstrates that you are able to think critically.

While the idea suggested by a prompt may seem obviously true, it is often phrased to allow for a more nuanced response. In order to make a qualified contention, it may be helpful to ask yourself what assumptions are being made by a prompt, and whether any of these assumptions can be challenged. Consider the following prompt:

The remainder of this topic has been omitted from this sample.

Sample – Spelling and Grammar Section

Commonly Misused Words

1. **Continual and continuous**

We use the word 'continual' to describe something happening over a period with breaks. 'Continuous' refers to something happening over a period of time without any breaks.

Her continual pleas were heart-felt.

The continuous buzzing noise was disturbing to say the least.

2. **License and licence**

'License' is a verb (i.e. a 'doing word'), while 'licence' is a noun (i.e. a thing).

He finally gains his licence.

I license her to shoot.

She is licensed to use a Taser.

3. **Practise and practice**

'Practice' is a noun, while 'practise' is the verb form.

Marjorie is eager to practise the art of flower arrangement.

Fortunately, we abandoned the practice of cannibalism many years ago.

The remainder of this topic has been omitted from this sample.

About the Authors

Xavier Bisits

In 2012, Xavier completed his VCE, attaining the top ATAR score of 99.95, with the following results:

| | Subject | Raw Study Score | Year |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Top 4 Subjects | English | 50 | 2012 (Year 12) |
| | French | 50 (scaled to 53.2) | 2012 |
| | Australian Politics | 50 | 2012 |
| | Latin | 48 (scaled to 54.8) | 2012 |
| 5th Subject | Mathematical Methods | 48 (4.9 increment) | 2011 (Year 11) |
| 6th Subject | Theatre Studies | 45 (4.5 increment) | 2011 |
| | | Aggregate = 217.4 | |
| Extra 7th Subject | University Philosophy | First Class Honours (4.5 increment) | 2012 |

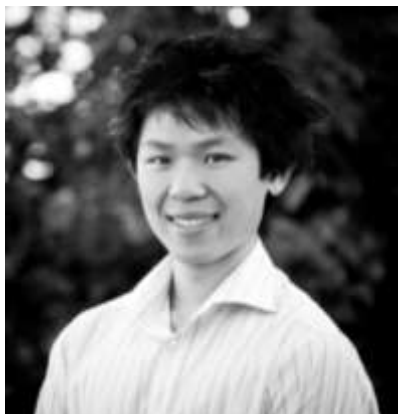
He received a Premier's Award in three subjects (French, Australian Politics and Latin). In addition, he was awarded a Premier's Top All-Round Achiever Award. In two of these subjects, Latin and Australian Politics, he was the top student in Victoria. Xavier also received the prestigious Australian Student Prize, and a prize for being the top VCE student in Extension Philosophy at the University of Melbourne. Xavier's was Dux of Xavier College.

At school, Xavier partook in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. In addition to being a Prefect in Year 12, he was also elected Debating Captain. He appeared in a number of school musicals and plays, and performed in both instrumental and choral ensembles. He twice won awards in the Champion College Essay Competition.



Xavier has extensive experience tutoring in English, French and Latin. In October 2013, he began studies in Human, Social and Political Sciences at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. He is the recipient of a Commonwealth Trust Scholarship.

Derrick Ha



Over the past seven years, Derrick has established himself as an author, tutor and lecturer in senior VCE mathematics and English. Since founding Derrick Ha Student Coaching Services in 2008, Derrick has assisted thousands of students with their VCE and helped them to achieve their goals.

Derrick's unique teaching style is drawn from his personal experiences of the VCE and his active extracurricular involvement. In 2007, Derrick attained the top ENTER (ATAR) score of 99.95, with the following results:

| | Subject | Raw Study Score | Year |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Top 4 Subjects | English Language | 50 | 2007 (Year 12) |
| | Specialist Mathematics | 50 (scaled to 54.2) | 2007 |
| | Accounting | 50 | 2006 (Year 11) |
| | Mathematical Methods | 50 | 2005 (Year 10) |
| 5th Subject | Chemistry | 50 (5.0 increment) | 2006 |
| 6th Subject | University Mathematics | High Distinction (5.5 increment) | 2007 |
| | | Aggregate = 214.7 | |
| Extra 7th Subject | English | 48 | 2007 |

Derrick's achievements also extend outside of the VCE. He has many successes in mathematics competitions and, in 2007, achieved a perfect score in the Westpac Australian Mathematics Competition. He was awarded a gold medal and the B H Neumann Certificate for being the only Senior student in Australasia to achieve this perfect score. He was also an invited attendee of four training selection schools for the Australian Mathematical Olympiad Team. In both 2004 and 2005, Derrick was awarded a Diploma by the Russian Academy of Sciences for his accomplishments in the International Tournament of Towns Mathematics Competition.

Derrick also has extensive experience in public speaking and mathematics coaching. He is the sole lecturer for state-wide end-of-year revision lectures for both Mathematical Methods CAS and Specialist Mathematics. These lectures have been held annually since 2008. Derrick is also a guest speaker and tutor, and has previously volunteered to teach English and mathematics to Sudanese immigrants.

His accomplishments as an orator include being a speaker in the team that reached the DAV Debating State Finals in four separate years. He also experienced success in mock-law courts, as a speaker in the legal team that won the State Mooting Titles in the 2007 Bond University Mooting Competition.

In his VCE year, Derrick was the School Vice-Captain of Haileybury College and the First Team Badminton Captain. He is a recipient of the VCE Premier's Award Top All-Round Achiever, the Australian Student Prize and the Monash University Prize for Academic Excellence in Year 11.

Derrick is currently a doctor at the St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne. Derrick completed his medical training at the University of Melbourne, as a recipient of the prestigious National Medicine Full Scholarship. During his training, he also won multiple Dean's Honours Awards.