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The Creating Task

This is an initiative of the Canberra College Literacy Plan

This booklet is designed to give you information that will help you in your History studies. It contains a number of different types of information including bibliography writing, marking rubrics and schemes, information about producing different types of assessment items, samples of excellent work, resources you can use, academic requirements.

The Creating Task

There are two parts to the Creating Task;

- **The Piece**, which can be written, artistic or even musical – dependent on the teacher’s instructions.
- **The Rationale** that clearly describes how the response links to the text you've been studying.

The intention of the Creating Task Response is to allow you to respond to a text in an imaginative way using a medium of your choice. While other assessment items are either written or oral, the Creating Task can incorporate a range of different forms of communication. These can be visual such as a series of photographs, a drawing, painting or sculpture. You may also choose to create an original play, musical composition, film or dance. It may be appropriate to write a story, poetry, diary entries or something in mixed media, such as an advertisement. In effect, there are no real restrictions on your choice – but check with your teacher if an option that you wish to pursue is not on the Creating Task assessment sheet.

The Creating Task shares a common purpose with all assessment items in English. You need to demonstrate knowledge and an understanding of the content and themes of the text. Along with the theme you need to show your understanding of how the text was constructed with literary devices such as setting, character and plot development and style. Remember that style includes elements such as use of language, syntax (the grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence), structure and tone. To this end the Creating Task is supported by a Rationale, in which you’re expected to articulate the aims of your response, analyse and explain the reasoning behind your chosen medium and use direct evidence/examples from the text to support your analysis.

A common difficulty or problem with the Creating Task is that they’re not well executed. You should use a medium with which you’re comfortable. In effect, don’t draw if you can’t create a composition that is both meaningful and attractive, or perform a dance if you have no training. While a good Creating Task requires imagination it also needs to be completed in a competent fashion.

Steps to forming a good Creating Task.

1. Read the text.
2. Think about the text in relation to the central themes discussed in class.
3. Make a decision about the theme/s you are going to explore.
4. Choose a medium that is capable of imaginatively exploring these themes and with which you are comfortable.
5. Discuss your ideas with your teacher before you produce a draft. Use planning sheets provided by your teacher so your discussion has a structured purpose.
6. Produce a draft of both the Rationale and the Creating Task for your teacher.
7. Review the drafts. Pay particular attention to the relationship between the text and your response and whether you have substantiated the use of medium in your Rationale. Make sure you have made direct reference to the text i.e. that you have used quotes to back up your ideas.
8. Submit it on time.

Wilfred Owen

Disabled

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,
Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,
Voices of play and pleasure after day,
Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him.

About this time Town used to swing so gay
When glow-lamps budded in the light-blue trees
And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim,
— In the old times, before he threw away his knees.

Now he will never feel again how slim
Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands,
All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,
For it was younger than his youth, last year.
Now he is old; his back will never brace;
He's lost his colour very far from here,
Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,
And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race,
And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.
One time he liked a bloodsmear down his leg,
After the matches carried shoulder-high.
It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,
He thought he'd better join. He wonders why . . .
Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts.
That's why; and maybe, too, to please his Meg,
Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts,

He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;
Smiling they wrote his lie; aged nineteen years.
Germans he scarcely thought of; and no fears
Of Fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts
For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;
Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits.
And soon, he was drafted out with drums and cheers.
Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal.
Only a solemn man who brought him fruits
Thanked him; and then inquired about his soul.
Now, he will spend a few sick years in Institutes,
And do what things the rules consider wise,
And take whatever pity they may dole.
To-night he noticed how the women's eyes
Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.
How cold and late it is! Why don't they come
And put him into bed? Why don't they come?

The Piece

Let's look at the poem *Disabled* by Wilfred Owen. The obvious things we can see in the text are a story about a young man who joined up to please and impress a girl. He then is injured in the trenches and has his legs and arms amputated. Now the only women in his life treat him as a patient, and he is sad lonely and dependent. The obvious **theme** is the terrible waste of war.

A literal interpretation of the text might be a story about Johnny going to war, maybe the war might be a more recent one but with parallel experiences but the emphasis would still be on the story of Johnny. This could be shown too in a collage that perhaps on one side of the page showed the happy sporty young man, had an embracing couple in the centre of the page and in grey tones a picture of a disabled man in a wheel chair. Both of these would be considered to be very **superficial/literal** interpretations of the poem.

- **So how do we go beyond the obvious?**
- **What are the deeper meanings, themes issues and ideas? You could explore in your response?**
- **What is the best way to explore these themes and ideas in a creative manner?**

Think of the tone of the poem, read out loud one can feel the anger of the poet. He isn't angry with the Germans, but the people who convinced the innocent youth to join up who ignored his age and promised him excitement and glory. Think of our character as an innocent who was seduced and discarded, his seducers moving on to more attractive prey.

The most plaintive note (used to describe something that sounds slightly sad) in the poem is that last line, 'Why don't they come?' He is so needy and dependent and worse repugnant to those who must assist him. He is a victim.

So the deeper themes we might want to explore could be:

- **Anger**
- **Seduction**
- **strength and weakness**
- **victim /dependence**

How you choose to develop these themes in a creative manner is up to you. But do choose a medium that you are comfortable with and one that you can do well. So if you can't draw and hate painting don't do an art piece. If you haven't had any dance training a dance may not be a sensible thing to work on. **Remember a successful Creating Task is an imaginative piece that has been completed in a competent fashion.**

While you're developing your Creating Task, don't forget it's a response to the text. You **MUST** be able to draw clear links to the text. You will develop these in your **Rationale**.

The Rationale

You must present a Rationale with your Creating Task. You explore in your rationale the reasons for your choice of medium, the themes, characters and symbols you've explored and you provide textual evidence from the text to support your ideas, all within the word limit.

So let's imagine I decided to complete an art work on the poem. Perhaps my painting shows a broken puppet discarded on a grey and empty stage the audience facing away from it engrossed in a new entertainment.

In my rationale I will try to describe what I'm trying to say about the poem and what the poet is saying. I will describe how the choice of a puppet implying manipulation I will describe how he was seduced by attractive uniforms, and trying to impress girls etc. I will take a quotation from the poem to provide evidence to reinforce my point. Then I might talk about his isolation and neglect, again providing evidence with a quotation from the poem. Finally, I will describe the audience and how they're focussed on the theatre of war.

Having explored the WHY I will then discuss the HOW. In this paragraph I will talk about my choice of colour, medium and maybe even brush strokes! I will discuss how my choices show a deep understanding of the text, again referring back to the text to reinforce my ideas.

Finally I might write a brief conclusion. I will not write 'to conclude' or 'in conclusion'! But I might start with a sentence like:

The poem *Disabled* by Wilfred Owen is one of the most disturbing of the war poems of World War. Then I will briefly sum up my ideas. In the conclusion I won't introduce any new ideas or examples from the text.

Tips

- Remember the rationale is short only 600 words.
- It should be written in a personal essay style. You can say that it is an exploration of the WHY and HOW of your Creating Task.
- It must demonstrate STRONG links to the texts so examples and/or quotations are very important (do use citation when necessary).
- It should be clear and demonstrate a deep understanding of the text.