

Comparative Study Explained

The comparative study question asks you to compare two texts under one of the following three modes of comparison. (In this case, 'compare' means point out similarities and differences.)

The comparative modes for 2009 are:

1. Theme
2. Relationships
3. Social Setting

You need to know your comparative text well, but not in the same level of detail as your single text. When you are reading through your text, it is a good idea to keep the modes of comparison in mind.

Concentrate on key moments in each text. (The word 'moment' here can be taken to mean an entire chapter or scene.) A key moment in your text is one which illustrates or helps in the development of one of the chosen modes.

A key moment may be:

- A moment of conflict.
- A moment of resolution.
- A moment which shows the chosen theme very clearly.
- An occurrence or description which gives us an insight into the social setting.
- A pivotal moment in a relationship.

Key moments can overlap, one may be an illustration of both the theme and a pivotal moment in the central relationship, for example.

When you are reading your comparative text, as well as keeping the modes in mind, you should think about your personal response. The examiners will be looking to see how well you engaged with the text. As you read, ask yourself:

- Did I like the characters?
- Would I like to have lived in that time or in that place? Why? Why not?
- Is the theme one to which I can relate?

- Do I like the way in which the author presents the theme?
- Do I find certain parts of the text funny or poignant or disturbing?

Note:

The word 'text' refers to books, films and plays.

The word 'author' refers to novelists, playwrights and film directors.

Theme

The main theme is the main message of text, the issue or concern the writer is trying to explore. The theme is not the plot, don't confuse the two.

There can be several themes in a text besides the main one; it doesn't matter which one you pick as long as it is central to the texts you are studying.

When you are reading the text and thinking about this mode of comparison, ask yourself:

- How is the theme introduced? Is there a key moment that gives us an indication of the message the author is trying to explore? Does one of the central characters say or do something that sets us on the path of understanding the theme? Or is it conveyed by the minor characters or even the setting?
- How does the author develop this theme? Is it through a series of small events? Do we see situations developing that we know must lead to a crisis of some sort? How does the author interest us in the theme? Is it through a central character with whom we can empathise?
- Is there a moment of crisis or a turning point in the text? Does the central character have to make a difficult decision? Does the character do the right thing? How is this decision linked to the theme?
- How is the theme resolved? Are you very clear on the author's view of the ideas explored in the theme? Have we learned anything about human behaviour or society in general from the exploration of this theme?
- Does the author's use of setting, imagery, motifs, lighting, costumes, special effects or music (if it's a film) add to your understanding of the theme?

The theme we will be exploring in 'Strictly Ballroom' is:

Independence/Autonomy

Relationships

The vast majority of narrative texts centre on relationships. They can be relationships between lovers, friends, family or even enemies. In 'Strictly Ballroom' we will be concentrating on the central relationship between Scott and Fran.

When you are reading the text and thinking about this mode of comparison, ask yourself:

- How is the relationship introduced?
- Does the relationship change or develop as the narrative progresses? Is it through a series of small events? Do we see situations developing that we know must lead to a crisis of some sort? How does the author interest us in the theme? Is it through a central character with whom we can empathise?
- Is there a crisis or complication in the relationship? Does the central character have to make a difficult decision? Does the character do the right thing? How does this decision affect the relationship?
- Does the relationship end well?

Social Setting

The social setting is the kind of world in which the story takes place.

When you are reading the text and thinking about this mode of comparison, ask yourself:

- In what century or decade is the story set? Does the time matter? Could the story take place now or are things in our society very different?
- Where is the story set? Does the setting matter?
- Do we learn a lot about the social life of that place or time by reading the text?
- What are the protagonists' attitudes and values?
- Are there class distinctions?
- Are there race distinctions?
- Are there gender distinctions?
- Are children treated well?
- What are the manners and customs of that place/time?

- How does the daily life of the characters differ from life in 21st century Ireland?
- What are their attitudes towards religion, money, love, family etc.?
- Would you like to live in that time or place? Why? Why not?



What is Ballroom Dancing?

It can help in your study of 'Strictly Ballroom' if you understand a little of the background to competitive ballroom dancing.

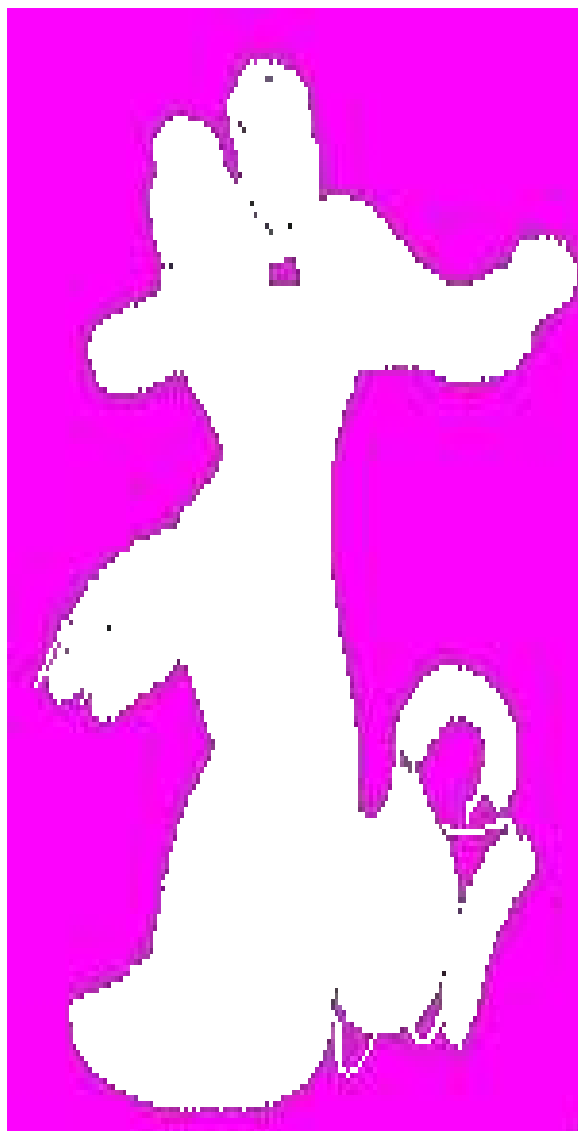
Ballroom dancing was initially popularised in eighteenth and nineteenth century England. It was an important social event and an opportunity to meet potential partners. In general, it was restricted to the upper classes. As time passed, formal balls gave way to social dances which allowed people of all backgrounds to socialise. Dancing skills were admired and people often went to these dances not just to meet a potential partner but to show off their dancing skills. In the 1920s, dancing competitions became popular and the strict rules of ballroom dancing were introduced. Dancing schools sprang up and the 'experts' showed generations of young hopefuls how to dance the 'correct' style of dancing for competition. The two types of competition dancing were 'modern' or 'ballroom' dancing and Latin American. Not only is the music different in both styles of dancing, but so are the costumes. In ballroom dancing, the men wear tuxedos and the women wear long, full skirted dresses that flare out as they move, emphasising each twist, turn and glide they make on the dance floor. In Latin American dance, the costumes are meant to tell a different story, a more sensual one. The women wear more tightly fitting dresses that emphasise the movement of their bodies and the men wear shorter jackets and brighter, tighter trousers.

In 'Strictly Ballroom', Scott and Fran dance two Latin dances, the Rumba and the Paso Doble. The Rumba is a dance which originated in Cuba; sometimes known as the 'Latin Waltz' or 'Waltz With A Wiggle'. Its slow tempo and emphasis on the movement of the hips make it a sensual, romantic dance - Scott tells Fran it is 'the dance of love'.

The Paso Doble (meaning 'double step') is a Spanish dance based on bullfighting, meant to show strength and courage. In this dance, the man plays the role of the bull and the woman represents a matador's cape or a flamenco dancer.

Both dances described above play an important role in 'Strictly Ballroom' and it is worth being aware of their history so that you can compare the original idea behind the dances with the way they are danced according to ADF rules.

In 'Strictly Ballroom' we see the conflict between dancing as an expression of passion and individuality and dancing to conform to a rigid set of rules imposed by the Australian Dance Federation.



The Director/Background to the Film

Baz Luhrmann – Director and Co-writer - Born in Sydney, Australia in 1962

Although he is considered one of the most innovative directors in the film industry, Baz Luhrmann had only three feature films to his name by 2001. The three films were his 'Red Curtain Trilogy', *Strictly Ballroom*, William Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* and *Moulin Rouge*. Each of these films share the following characteristics:

- The audience knows how it will end right from the start. Fran is the ugly duckling who becomes beautiful, simply by removing her glasses, letting her hair down and wearing better clothes. Scott is the man of her dreams and they end up together. It is a predictable plot but one that transcends time - people still pay to see this story played out over and over.
- The storyline is simple. Girl meets boy, girl loses boy, boy struggles with inner conflict and the manipulative characters around him, girl and boy (and almost everybody else) end up in one another's arms. In *Strictly Ballroom*, the David & Goliath myth can be seen quite clearly in Scott's struggle against the mighty Dance Federation. Similarly, the fairy tale about the ugly duckling being transformed into a swan is mirrored in the character of Fran.
- The world created in the film is one of heightened reality. The audience are constantly reminded that what they are watching is not real. The opening, with the red curtains parting to reveal the elaborate costumes and flamboyant dancing, is the perfect introduction to a film that is part mockumentary, part fairytale, part comedy. The 'mockumentary' style alerts the audience to the fact that the film will be satirical (ridiculing human weakness, vice and stupidity) and humorous.
- There is a specific device driving the story, whether it be dance, iambic pentameter or the characters bursting into song. In *Strictly Ballroom*, dance is the device.

Strictly Ballroom was the first installment of Baz Luhrmann's Red Curtain Trilogy. It launched the theatricalised cinema style, which is now characteristic of Luhrmann films. Pitching such a highly stylised film would not have been easy for Luhrmann, considering that such a film was quite unusual in the Australian cinema environment at the time, and he himself was a relatively unknown individual. Luhrmann's mother is a Ballroom Dance Teacher and Luhrmann from a young age was a ballroom dancer. It was the close relationship with the films subject that helped make the film the success it is today.

Luhrmann describes his films as being 'audience participation cinema' whereby the audience participates in the telling of the story through a device. In Strictly Ballroom, the story is predominantly told through dance. Baz Luhrmann's flamboyant and colourful debut feature Strictly Ballroom (1992) opens with a theatrical swish of red velvet curtains and leads us into the larger-than life world of competitive ballroom dancing. It tells the story of Scott and Fran, who rebel against Dance Federation rules in order to dance their own steps. The film is the first in Baz

Luhrmann's 'red curtain' film trilogy, and can also be described as a combination of the following: a fairy tale, a romantic comedy, a dance musical, even a satire.



The film plays with [clichés](#) and [stereotypes](#), mocking and embracing them at the same time. Luhrmann has also commented that the film revolves around stories similar to [David and Goliath](#), [Cinderella](#) and [The Ugly Duckling](#).

The Cast/Major Characters

Scott Hastings- The hero: Doug and Shirley Hasting's son who rebels against the conventions of ballroom dancing competitions and dares to dance his own steps. Scott is an angry, sometimes arrogant young man who rebels against the restrictions imposed on him by the ADF. Played by *Paul Mercurio*.

Fran- The heroine: a plain, easily overlooked girl who worships Scott from afar and finally plucks up the courage to approach him when he has scandalised everyone with his new, crowd-pleasing steps. She is the archetypal ugly duckling who turns into a beautiful swan. Although she seems meek and eager to please, we soon learn that she has courage and spirit. Played by *Tara Morice*.

Barry Fife-President of the ADA: a manipulative, lecherous older man who fears losing his power and influence if Scott's innovative style of dancing catches on. He is the villain of 'Strictly Ballroom'. His wig and the unflattering, extreme close-ups of him encourage us to take this view of Barry Fife from the first moment we meet him. Played by *Bill Hunter*.

Doug Hastings- Scott's father and Shirley's husband: a meek man who is dominated and treated with mild contempt by both his wife and Barry Fife. Played by *Barry Otto*.

Shirley Hastings- Scott's father and Doug's wife. She is a pushy mother who wants Scott to win, not for himself but for her. She is scornful of Scott's father, calling him a 'silly man' and a 'stupid man' to his face. Played by *Pat Thomson*.

Liz Holt – Scott's dancing partner at the beginning of the film. She is only interested in winning and is furious when Scott ruins her chances. She appears shallow and stupid, 'I don't think'. Her appearance is often heralded by a scream or a wail, signalling that there is some huge crisis. However, she is redeemed somewhat at the end of the film when she turns the music back on to allow Scott and Fran to complete their dance. Played by *Gia Carides*

Les Kendall – Scott's coach, Les is represented as something of a buffoon, with his bouffant hair and his eagerness to please Barry Fife. Like Shirley and Barry, he is sometimes the victim of the distorting extreme close-up. Played by *Peter Whitford*.

Other Characters

Rico - Fran's father

Ya Ya – Fran's grandmother

Ken Railings – Scott's rival

Tina Sparkle – Dancing champion

Charm Leachman – Barry's girlfriend

Wayne Burns -

Vanessa Cronin – Wayne's girlfriend

Kylie -Scott's sister

Luke – Kylie's partner

Antonio Vargas

Armonia Benedito

John Hannan

Sonia Kruger

Kris McQuade

Pip Mushin

Leonie Page

Lauren Hewett

Steve Grace



Plot Overview

Scott Hastings, (Paul Mercurio) has been ballroom dancing since he was six years old and has won numerous competitions. Recently he has become bored with the traditions of the circuit and wants to dance his own 'new' 'crowd pleasing' steps. He first dances these 'non-federation' steps at the Waratah State Championships, to the delight of the audience and the disgust of his partner, Liz, who abandons him as a result. This leaves Scott only three weeks to find a new partner, thereby jeopardising his chances of winning the Pan-Pacific Grand Prix Amateur Championships.

There follows a series of tryouts, where girl after girl is rejected. It begins to look as if Scott's chances of winning are doomed. One afternoon, as he practices his new steps, he is approached by Fran, a beginner, who asks if she can be his partner. Scott is both amused and bewildered but agrees to give her a chance when she points out that by dismissing her when she is willing to dance his non-federation steps, he is as bad as everyone else. They practice together secretly, without telling Scott's parents or Les Kendall, their dance teacher.

One evening, when he has walked her home. Fran's Spanish family catch Scott at their house. Her father, Rico, is angry until they tell him that they are only dancing partners. Rico challenges Scott to show him their dancing, 'Show me your paso doble' and is both amused and scornful when he sees the pair dancing in a stilted, meaningless way. Angered by the contemptuous laughter of the crowd at the fiesta, Scott stands up to Rico. Ya Ya, Fran's grandmother, intervenes before things get out of hand and soon she and Rico begin to teach Scott and Fran how to dance with passion, from the heart.

Fran translates a Spanish proverb for Scott, '*vivir con miedo es como vivir en medias*' 'A life lived in fear is a life half lived'. Scott takes courage from this and decides to tell everyone that he and Fran are partners and will dance together in the Pan Pacific Championship.

Meanwhile, it is announced that Tina Sparkle's partner is retiring and Scott's mum assumes that Tina, a brilliant dancer, is the new partner that Scott has been talking about.

Once they have overcome the confusion, there is a backlash from Scott's family and friends over the fact that he has decided to dance with Fran instead of Tina. Australian Dance Federation President Barry Fife (Bill Hunter) is particularly concerned that Scott will taint reputation of the Federation by dancing non-federation steps and tells Scott that he will not win at the Pan-Pacific's by doing so. Scott realises that the only way he can win is to dance acceptable steps, so he ends up back with Liz Holt, his original partner.

In a twist to the storyline, it is revealed that Scott's father was a brilliant ballroom dancer who also had ideas of dancing his own steps. He was however, coerced by Scott's mother to dance from the rulebooks or they would lose the Championships. In the end, they lost anyway. So Scott's father convinces Scott to go ahead and dance how he wants even if it means losing, because otherwise he will regret it for the rest of his life. The 'life lived in fear' credo is reiterated here.

Scott, in a climactic ending, dances his own moves with Fran at the Pan-Pacific Grand Prix Amateur championships much to the crowd's enjoyment. Barry Fife is humiliated. In a typical ending, Scott and Fran express the love they have developed for each other through a romantic kiss.



Sequences for Study

1. The Southern District Waratah Championships

- Red curtain opening, with music from Strauss' "Blue Danube".
- Shirley Hastings speaks to camera in 'mockumentary' style.
- Flashback to the dancers at the Waratah Championships.
- Scott and Liz are shown being 'boxed in'.
- Scott dances his own 'crowd pleasing' steps in response.
- Barry Fife, shown at his desk, gives his opinion.
- The winners are announced, and Scott and Liz have lost.

2. New Partners - Kendall's Dance Studio

- Liz is furious with Scott and refuses to be his partner.
- Scott asks Wayne his opinion of the steps, but Wayne says he doesn't know.
- Les tries to persuade Scott not to dance his own steps.
- After Pam Short's unexpected accident, Ken asks Liz to be his new partner.
- Doug secretly watches film footage of Scott dancing his new steps.
- Scott dances alone in the studio.
- Fran approaches Scott and asks to be his new partner: he accepts after she calls him a 'gutless wonder'.

3. The Try-Outs

- Les Kendall and Shirley Hastings hold try-outs to find Scott a new partner.
- Fran and Scott practice together in secret.
- Doug dances alone at the Dance studio.
- Fran and Scott dance together on the rooftop.
- At the Hastings' house, Shirley expresses her frustration at Scott's lack of a suitable partner.
- Fran and Scott continue practising, dancing to the song 'Time after Time'.
- Scott walks Fran home. Rico, Fran's father, seems angry with Fran. Ya Ya

watches from the window.

4. The State Championships

- Shirley Hastings tells Fran that Tina Sparkle will be Scott's new partner. Fran runs off, upset. Scott chases Fran and everyone else chases Scott.
- Scott finds Fran and dances backstage with her, to the song 'Perhaps'.
- Liz arrives and breaks the spell, telling Fran she's just a beginner. Fran trips over, suddenly self-conscious.
- Shirley, Vanessa and Liz all persuade Fran to go home and not 'spoil things for Scott'.
- Tina Sparkle is introduced to Scott as her new partner, but Scott tells her he's not available.
- Scott goes after Fran, knocking over Barry Fife's video display stand as he leaves.

1. Paso Doble – Fran's house

- Scott follows Fran home and meets a suspicious Rico.
- Scott and Fran are asked to show everyone how they can dance.
- Everyone laughs at Scott and Fran's ballroom dancing version of the Paso Doble.
- Rico and Ya Ya dance the Paso Doble their way, and teach Scott how to listen to the rhythm.
- Scott goes home and tells Shirley that he is going to dance with Fran. Shirley reacts angrily and slaps him.

6. Practising for the Pan-Pacifics

- Rico and Ya Ya help Scott and Fran prepare for the Pan-Pacifics.
- New steps are rumoured but Barry Fife denies it: 'There are no new steps'.
- Rico tells Scott and Fran they are ready for the Pan-Pacifics.

- Scott and Fran exchange a kiss.
- Back at the Dance Studio, Barry tells Scott that Doug ruined his own dancing career because of his crazy new steps.
- Flashback to the past and Barry's version of Doug's downfall.
- Scott needs proof, so he opens Doug's locker and discovers the photo.

7. The Pan-Pacific Grand Prix Dance Championship

- Scott is dancing with Liz because he believes Barry Fife's story.
- Fran competes in the Beginner's Final without Scott.
- Doug eventually catches up with Scott and reveals the truth about what happened in 1967 – Shirley dumped him to dance with Les instead.
- Doug explains, 'We lived our lives in fear!' and Scott leaves Liz onstage as he rushes after Fran.

8. Scott and Fran's Big Moment

- Scott catches up with Fran and she agrees to dance with him.
- Wayne and Vanessa overhear Barry telling a drunken Ken Railings and Tina Sparkle that the competition has been fixed in their favour.
- Wayne and Vanessa tell Les and he confronts Barry.
- Scott dances with Fran and the audience loves them.
- Charm Leachman cuts the music and Barry tries to disqualify Fran and Scott.
- Doug starts to clap. Then Rico and Ya Ya join in and soon the whole audience is applauding.
- Scott and Fran dance on to the rhythm of the clapping.
- Liz reconnects the power supply and the music starts again.
- Fran and Scott's dance ends, to massive cheering from the crowd.
- Barry falls and knocks over the display of trophies.
- Everyone joins in the dance finale together to the song 'Love is in the Air'.

Themes in 'Strictly Ballroom'

Note – **(K)** symbol means 'Key Moment' in the text. It is important to use key moments to illustrate the points you are making in your answer.

The theme we will be exploring in 'Strictly Ballroom' is:

Autonomy/Independence

- How is the theme introduced? Is there a key moment that gives us an indication of the message the author is trying to explore? Does one of the central characters say or do something that sets us on the path of understanding the theme? Or is it conveyed by the minor characters or even the setting?
- How does the author develop this theme? Is it through a series of small events? Do we see situations developing that we know must lead to a crisis of some sort? How does the author interest us in the theme? Is it through a central character with whom we can empathise?
- Is there a moment of crisis or a turning point in the text? Does the central character have to make a difficult decision? Does the character do the right thing? How is this decision linked to the theme?
- How is the theme resolved? Are you very clear on the author's view of the ideas explored in the theme? Have we learned anything about human behaviour or society in general from the exploration of this theme?
- Does the author's use of setting, imagery, motifs, lighting, costumes, special effects or music (if it's a film) add to your understanding of the theme?

How is the theme introduced?

When we first meet Scott, he is dancing at the Southern District Waratah Championships. **(K)** Our first indication that he might be a rebel who wants to do things his own way comes when he and Liz are 'boxed in' by Ken Railings and Pam Short. Scott reacts by breaking into an improvised and spontaneous dance routine which delights the crowd but shocks the traditional ballroom dancing teachers and competition organisers. **(K)** The only one who seems to agree with Scott is Fran, she alone has words of praise for his new steps, 'I thought what they danced was wonderful. I thought they should have won.'

Both Scott and Fran struggle to assert their independence but it is Scott who finds it

most difficult. Fran already knows that she wants to dance from the heart. The Spanish proverb, 'Vivir con miedo, es como vivir a medias' – A life lived in fear is a life half-lived, is one of the main messages in the film and is closely associated with Fran. It is surprising, given Fran's shyness, ungainliness and lack of confidence, to discover that it is actually she and not the handsome, self-assured, slightly arrogant Scott who is actually further along the path to independence. In many ways, she is similar to Jane Eyre, who also possesses a core of inner strength despite her seeming timidity and desire to take a back seat. Scott is astonished when she turns on him in the dance studio:

You're just like the rest of them! You think you're different, but you're not, because you're just, you're just really scared! You're really scared to give someone new a go, because you think, you know, they might just be better than you are! Well, you're just pathetic, and you're gutless. You're a gutless wonder! *[shouting]* *Vivir con miedo, es como vivir a medias!*

How is the theme developed?

Scott and Fran find support in one another in their quest for autonomy and independence. They are also helped by Fran's family. Her father, Rico, seems initially to be a threat to their plans but is soon revealed as a willing and helpful accomplice. It is he, and Fran's grandmother, Ya Ya, who really show Scott what he is seeking, the passion and true freedom of expression of dance.

(K) Scott's triumph is short-lived, however. When he gets home late, Shirley is waiting for him. She corners him and tries to threaten and manipulate him into conforming to ADF approved dance routines.

We can compare this scene to the one at Fran's home shortly afterwards when Ya Ya is fixing up a flamenco dress for Fran. She reassures the nervous girl, 'You just got not to be scared'. Meanwhile, in the background, Rico continues to teach Scott to dance properly. We feel and see the affection between Fran, her Ya Ya and her father. Contrast this with Scott's chaotic and conflicted family and it is easy to understand why Scott has more difficulty asserting his independence than Fran does. On the surface, her family appear oppressive but they are loving and supportive while Scott's family are dysfunctional – his mother is attempting to live vicariously through him. This is a serious threat to Scott's sense of self, his mother does not want to allow him to move away from her control and does everything in her power to manage his life

for him.

Fran and Scott practice for the Pan-Pacifics with the guidance and support of Rico and Ya Ya. **(K)** When Fran dances complicated steps with her father, the reaction shot of Rico shows his surprise and pride. It is as if he is seeing his daughter in a new light. Like Ya Ya, he accepts that Fran has overcome her shyness and is ready to dance at the Pan-Pacifics. Unlike Shirley Hastings, Fran's father is happy to see this change in his child. He does not resent her finding her own way and although he was unhappy about her dancing with Scott at the outset, he respects Fran's choices and ultimately gives her the support she needs, even if it means she grows away from him and towards Scott. Rico poses no real threat to his daughter's independence.

Scott and Fran's rebellion against the narrow-minded attitudes of the ADF is not met with acceptance or support by anyone else, however. Barry Fife plots Scott's downfall, rigging the Pan-Pacifics so he cannot possibly win. He is terrified that if Scott shows others how to break free, the ADF will lose control of the ballroom dancing world and he is willing to do anything to maintain the status quo (or the 'Status quo vadis' as he calls it.)

Is there a moment of crisis or a turning point in the text?

(K) The turning point in the text comes at the Pan-Pacific Grand Prix Championships. Scott has changed his mind several times, saying he will dance with Fran and then that he won't. Having refused to dance with Tina Sparkle, he is now back with Liz as a partner and Fran is dancing in the Beginners' competition. It seems that despite all their efforts to break free and to assert themselves, nothing has changed for Fran and Scott. They are both dancing with their original partners and it appears they have achieved nothing. It is Scott's parents, ironically, who are ultimately responsible for his rediscovering his passion and his independence. Doug tells Scott the truth about the 1967 competition. Shirley states the reason for dancing with Les rather than Doug:

'There was too much at stake. Our dancing career was on the line. I couldn't throw all that away on a dream. We had to survive. We would never have been able to teach.'

Doug counters with:

'Son, it was the dancing that mattered... We had our chance but we were scared. We walked away... We lived our lives in fear.'

Doug's desperate tone echoes in Scott's head. The tension mounts and then Scott makes his decision. He runs from the stage, leaving Liz alone. He finds Fran and asks her if she still wants to dance. They take to the floor and finally dance their own steps.

Does the use of setting, imagery or motifs add to your understanding of the theme?

(K) When Scott and Fran begin to dance on the roof of the dance studio, the aerial shot of them emphasises their sense of freedom and their non-conformity. When Fran and Scott are truly expressing their individual style and independence, they are often outdoors. If we compare the seeming perfection of the dance studio, with its waxed floors, to the uneven boards and grimy industrial setting of Fran's yard, we see that the latter represents freedom and a disregard for the rules and conventions of 'strictly ballroom' dancing. It is in these settings that Fran and Scott are truly able to express themselves and assert their independence.



Relationships in 'Strictly Ballroom'

Note – **(K)** symbol means 'Key Moment' in the text. It is important to use key moments to illustrate the points you are making in your answer.

We will be studying the relationship between Scott and Fran.

- How is the relationship introduced?
- Does the relationship change or develop as the narrative progresses? Is it through a series of small events? Do we see situations developing that we know must lead to a crisis of some sort? How does the author interest us in the relationship? Is it through a central character or characters with whom we can empathise?
- Is there a crisis or complication in the relationship? Do the central characters have to make a difficult decision? Do the characters do the right thing? How does this decision affect the relationship?
- Does the relationship end well?

How is the relationship introduced?

(K) The relationship between Scott and Fran is initially hinted at when we see that she is the only one who approves of his 'new steps': 'I thought what they danced was wonderful. I thought they should have won'. During the mockumentary section of the film, it is clear that Scott is in disgrace, isolated from the other dancers, teachers and even his mother by his rebellion and Fran's admiration links the characters even at this early stage in the film. Fran is similar to Jane Eyre in that they are both plain and regarded as inconsequential by the more glamorous, socially accepted members of their communities. Jane however, is cooler in her initial assessment of Mr. Rochester, her admiration dawns more gradually than does Fran's. Fran faces the added complication that Scott is very good-looking while she is decidedly unattractive in the early part of the film.

(K) Our first real introduction to Fran and Scott as a potential couple occurs when Scott is alone in the studio after his dramatic split from Liz. Fran timidly approaches him and asks if he will dance with her. His harsh response, 'A beginner has no right to approach an open amateur' stings her into a passionate response:

Fran: Yeah, well an Open Amateur has no right to dance non-Federation steps, but you did, didn't you?

Scott: But that's different.

Fran: *How* is it different? You're just like the rest of them! You think you're different, but you're not, because you're just, you're just really scared! You're really scared to give someone new a go, because you think, you know, they might just be better than you are! Well, you're just pathetic, and you're gutless. You're a gutless wonder! *[shouting]* *Vivir con miedo, es como vivir a medias!*

The audience, familiar with the traditional Cinderella/Ugly Duckling stories, has a good indication at this stage that the couple will end up together but still wants to know exactly how this can be achieved. Luhrmann manages to make us care about his characters - we identify with the shy, hopeful but passionate Fran and the rebellious but conflicted Scott.

Scott is still living a life of pretence, even though he thinks he is following his own path. As Scott and Fran practice late into the night, he tells her: 'We're telling a story. The rhumba is the dance of love. Look at me like you're in love. While Fran responds over-enthusiastically, we learn a lot more about Scott. He is still rebelling, still wanting to dance his own steps but it's all still pretend for him. He has also defined his own problem. Dancing is often about courtship, or wanting to be in love, or a way of expressing love, or at least physical passion. Without knowing it, the passion for the dance and his partner are what Scott has been missing up to now. This false, unsatisfying life with its constant quest for love is very similar to Mr. Rochester's condition in *Jane Eyre*. He too, has been seeking peace of mind and true passion but has only succeeded in having a series of meaningless affairs. Like Scott, he finds his soul mate in the unlikeliest of places and like Scott, he struggles with inner conflict about the relationship.

Does the relationship change or develop as the narrative progresses?

(K) Fran and Scott's romance develops as they dance together on the rooftop. The simplicity of their clothes and the unlikely backdrop contribute to the idea that they are separate from the other, gaudy dancers but are like one another. The lyrics of the song that plays as they dance, 'Time after Time', emphasise the nature of the developing relationship between Scott and Fran: *(see the section on Film Soundtrack and Song Lyrics)*

Scott seems to be softening towards Fran, he takes her glasses from her, commenting that it 'Might help'. It's not clear if he means it might help their dancing or their budding relationship. It certainly assists in Fran's fairly swift transition from ugly duckling to beautiful young woman.

Like Jane and Mr. Rochester, Fran and Scott seem happiest when alone together, free from the pressures, expectations and disapproval of others. Like Mr. Rochester, Scott seems to blow hot and cold towards Fran, leading her on to believe they will dance together and then appearing to desert her for other, more socially acceptable partners.

(K) The course of true love does not run smoothly for Scott and Fran. She is ecstatic when he tells her he will definitely dance with her at the try-outs and she is ecstatic, literally jumping for joy. Her enthusiasm and delight infect Scott and we are hopeful that Fran's dreams are all about to come true and that love is in the air. When he walks her home she explains the expression, 'To live with fear.... is a life half-lived'. However, as they reach Fran's home - behind a run-down milk bar - Scott clumsily tries to tell Fran that he's not in love with her:

'The rumba... it's pretend. You just pretend to be in love, it's not real.'

In a tragi-comic climax to the scene, Fran tries to cover her obvious infatuation with Scott, trips over a carton of bottles and scuttles inside, denying her own feelings.

(K) At the State Championships Scott tries to explain to Fran why he is going to dance with Tina Sparkle instead of her and Fran fives in sadly but graciously. There is still a lot of chemistry between Fran and Scott and they dance together to 'Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps', attracting the attention of the other dancers and the judges. But at Liz's bitchy remark, 'You're kidding!', Fran loses confidence and falls.

(K) A significant development in Fran and Scott's relationship is the moment when they first kiss. We see them in an industrial landscape, the least romantic setting imaginable. Yet it is here that Scott finally admits his feelings:

'You know what I said about the rumba, and it being pretend?'

This time Fran is not making any assumptions. She waits. Scott goes on:

'I think I made a mistake.'

They kiss. Much of the scene is shown in wide shot and we see Scott's fingers clasp the wire fence that separates us, the audience, from Fran and Scott. What meaning should we attach to the industrial setting and to the fence? While the dialogue and the kiss tell us that the relationship is finally developing, might the fence suggest that there are still many problems for Scott and Fran to face?

The ending of the scene deliberately undercuts the romance. Scott has forgotten that he's meant to be teaching Wayne the Bogo Pogo. Scott runs off, leaving Fran alone in the bleak landscape.

Is there a crisis or a complication in the relationship?

As in 'Jane Eyre' there are several complications in the relationship.

- Social pressures threaten the couple – Barry Fife and the ADF will do anything to prevent Scott from dancing his new steps with an untested partner. They try to arrange for him to dance with Tina Sparkle and will stop at nothing to bring Scott down when he eventually decides to dance with Fran.
- Family – Scott's mother, Shirley Hastings, has pinned her career and her life's happiness on her children. She wants Scott to win and does her best to manipulate Fran into giving up Scott. In the film she savagely spits out the plastic strip of a Bandaid while using her good old emotional blackmail:

'You don't want to ruin his chances, do you? ... Now you can see it'd be best for everybody concerned if you just went home and forgot all about this, can't you, Franny?'

Does the relationship end well? Do any of the characters' lives change as a result of the relationship?

As the audience expected, 'Strictly Ballroom' ends with a 'happily ever after'. Scott and Fran dance together to rapturous applause from a delighted audience. Fran's transformation to beautiful, fairytale princess is complete. She and Scott are equals at last, she is poised and elegant and his match on the dance floor.

There is a happy ending for almost all the other couples too. Fran and Scott's triumph brings tears to even Shirley's eyes and she takes to the floor with Doug in the final scene. Rico dances with Liz, who has been redeemed by her decency in switching on the power: Ya Ya and Les pair up on the dance floor, even the pathetically reduced Barry Fife is fussed over by Charm. As the lyrics of the final song say, 'Love is in the air'.



Social Setting in 'Strictly Ballroom'

Note – **(K)** symbol means 'Key Moment' in the text. It is important to use key moments to illustrate the points you are making in your answer.

Social Setting

The social setting is the kind of world in which the story takes place.

When you are reading the text and thinking about this mode of comparison, ask yourself:

- In what century or decade is the story set?
- Where is the story set?
- Are there class distinctions?
- Are there race distinctions?
- Are there gender distinctions?
- What is the attitude towards family and children?
- What are the protagonists' attitudes, religious beliefs and values?

In what century or decade is the story set?

The film is set in Australia of the early 1990s. Unlike 'Jane Eyre', however, in which the values of Victorian England were very much to the forefront, the world of 'Strictly Ballroom' is such an enclosed one, focusing as it does on the competitive dancing circuit, we learn very little about general attitudes and social issues of the day.

Where is the story set?

As we have seen in the discussion on red curtain cinema, one of its conventions is that the story takes place in a heightened, fantastical world. There are two contrasting worlds in Strictly Ballroom. Both are located physically in the suburbs of Sydney, but they are distinct and separate, reflecting the film's collision of wills and cultures.

The first world we enter is the competitive world of ballroom dancing. Locations in this world are always interior. It is represented as being fiercely conservative, with rigid rules that must be obeyed. Characters are Anglo-Australian comic stereotypes,

whose costumes are garish and glitzy. They wear heavy make up, have elaborate, cartoon-like hairdos, and are overly concerned with outward appearances. Obsessed with winning ballroom dancing competitions, they are unable to talk about anything else. They have created an insular, claustrophobic world where outsiders are not welcome and innovation is seen as a threat. The heightened and stylised ballroom dancing world satirises aspects of Australian society. It serves as a metaphor for a particular Anglo-Australian attitude, shown here as hierarchical and conservative. The Dance Federation's obsession with rules and conformity could also be said to represent a fear of change in a part of Australian society that discourages spontaneity and creativity. Scott's crowd-pleasing steps are seen as pointless compared to the obsession with winning competitions. After Scott and Liz lose the Waratah Championships Liz is furious. Scott tries to persuade her to listen to his ideas but she is only interested in winning:

Scott: I'm just asking you what you think of the steps.

Liz: I don't think. I don't give a shit about them. We lost.

The second world is the Toledo Milk Bar, where Fran's Spanish family lives. As recent migrants to Australia they are shown as living on the fringes of mainstream society, literally beside the railway tracks. Providing a stark contrast to the artificiality of the ballroom dancing world, their world is shown as more real. The exterior location suggests space and freedom. Characters are portrayed as more passionate and authentic than the winning-obsessed Anglo-Australians because they dance from the heart rather than from a desire to win competitions. Baz Luhrmann explains: 'The Anglo world took the Paso Doble, which is a dance of expression, and put a whole lot of rules on it, and made it about winning. Whereas in Fran's family, dancing is a tradition, it comes from life, it is an expression of life... The film tries to capture the original passion inherent in dance before it became restrained and stifled. When Ya Ya encourages Scott to 'listen to the rhythm', the film suggests that expression in dance should be lived and enjoyed, rather than made into a competitive sport.'

Are there class distinctions?

Although the film shows two cultures in opposition, it is more difficult to position them in terms of class. The Anglo- Australians can be described as white working-class or lower middle-class. They have more money and status in society than the characters in the Spanish world, which places them in a higher position. Yet their

values and attitudes are satirised in the film, so that the Anglo-Australian world is presented as tacky and artificial, lacking depth. The Spanish characters, living on the margins of an urban society can also be described as working-class. However, their values are celebrated in the film, placing them above the Anglo-Australians.

Are there race distinctions?

In the film the Anglo-Australian world is shown as dominant, and 'normal', with Fran's Spanish world represented as the ethnic 'other'. This could be said to mirror the migrant experience in Australia, where Anglo-Australians form a majority of the population and have lived there longer than more recent arrivals. **(K)** Fran's experience at Kendall's Dance Studio reflects this marginal status. She is known as 'just Fran' rather than by her full name Francisca. She is reluctant to say her Spanish name because it reinforces her outsider status, making her a potential target for name-calling by Liz and Vanessa. Fran's appearance is also different. Her dark hair and natural skin provide a contrast to the artificial glamour of the other ballroom dancers. Shirley, in her role as cosmetician, is always encouraging Fran to use apricot scrub or Buff Puff to improve her skin, and tries making her up so that she looks like the others. (The Try-Outs). It is as if Fran's ethnicity marks her as different, and is considered a drawback to her integration and acceptance into the Anglo-Australian world. **(K)** At the Pan-Pacifics Fran tells Scott how difficult it has been for her: 'Frangipannidelasqueegymop. Wash the coffee cups Fran. How's your skin Fran?' (At the Pan-Pacifics)

When Scott is introduced to the Spanish world, he is at first treated with suspicion by Rico **(K)**. At first characters speak in Spanish in front of Scott, often at his expense, and as a way of excluding him from their conversation. For the first time Scott experiences what it is like to be an outsider. But after initial suspicion he is accepted. Scott is willing to learn from Rico and Ya Ya, and realises that the experience is enriching. It is interesting that as Rico and Ya Ya help Scott and Fran practice for the Pan-Pacifics they begin to speak both Spanish and English, indicating their growing acceptance of him and their openness to the Anglo world.

The film's triumphant finale, which shows the two cultures uniting on the dance floor, offers a celebration of Australia's multicultural society. As characters from the ballroom dancing world and Fran's Spanish world dance together, Rico with Liz Holt,

Ya Ya with Les, the film offers an optimistic ending. From being two separate, distinct cultures, the finale ensures that they intermingle, each enriched by the other. Only Barry Fife seems not to fit into this new, inclusive world, suggesting that he really does belong to a bygone era.

The Anglo-Australian characters are those who are depicted as having power in the film. But Barry Fife's power is represented as hierarchical and corrupt. During the Waratah Championships the Dance Federation judging panel is framed with a low angle shot, showing Barry and his fellow officials placed on a stage above the audience, reflecting their superior status. Barry is willing to fix the Pan-Pacific Grand Prix Dance Championships, so that Scott doesn't win, as his words to a drunk Ken Railings reveal: 'Your year, Ken. Just get on the floor, go through the motions and it's in the bag...' Throughout the film, his unscrupulous methods reveal that he is willing to do anything to hang onto power. He is portrayed much like a corrupt politician or businessman who will do favours for certain people in order to gain personal advantages.

In contrast, Fran's family, who live on the edges of society, are depicted as less powerful because they are not part of the established, dominant Anglo-Australian culture. However, their sympathetic portrayal in the film suggests that despite their marginal status, they are culturally richer than their Anglo counterparts.

Are there gender distinctions?

In the ballroom dancing world, the men appear to be in control. Barry Fife, the ultimate patriarchal, authoritarian figure, treats women as decorative objects. His scenes with 'loyal companion' Charm Leachman and when he demonstrates the Bogo Pogo dance step to Wayne and Vanessa reveal his sleazy side. But elsewhere there are men who do not have such authority. The 'camp' representation of Les Kendall throughout the film indicates that he is homosexual. The fact that he is different, the film suggests, has not been to his advantage. Barry Fife calls him 'a pathetic fag'. At the Pan-Pacifics when Les discovers the truth about the 1967 Championships.

Doug Hastings is also different. Far from being the conventional male head of the family, he is bullied by his wife Shirley and seems to have no authority at home. Whenever he tries to talk to Scott he is ignored, until the Pan-Pacifics when he is

finally able to make Scott listen. Doug's role as father is in marked contrast to the way Rico is depicted. As a strict, authoritarian father, he is also portrayed as strong and masculine, his dance prowess seen as a macho attribute. He becomes a mentor, even a father figure to Scott when he teaches him about the real meaning of dance.

The film satirises Anglo-Australian women by depicting them as hysterical, bitchy and manipulative. **(K)** The following melodramatic comments by Liz Holt suggest that men lead, at least on the dance floor: 'he forced me into it - where the man goes the lady must follow - I had no choice...' (Waratah Championships). Liz's words are ironic, especially when we consider that she is the one who refuses to dance with Scott after he dances his own steps, and throws a temper tantrum when she does not get her own way. Similarly, Shirley bursts into tears at the dance studio when the efforts to get Scott and Liz back together fail.

Their portrayal is in marked contrast to the way Fran is depicted. Shown very much as a fairy tale heroine, Fran is shown more positively. Her shyness and lack of self-confidence give way to her blossoming courage and independence. Her natural appearance contrasts with the heavily made-up ballroom dancers, again reinforcing the idea that Fran is genuine and has more depth than the superficial female characters of the ballroom dancing world.

What is the attitude towards family and children?

Although they appear conventional enough, with a mother, father and two children, the Anglo-Australian Hastings family is shown as dysfunctional. The film subverts our expectations of the 'average' family.

Shirley, like the other characters from the ballroom dancing world is one dimensional. She is depicted as a stereotypical domineering wife, browbeating mild-mannered husband Doug. She is also a stage mother who lives vicariously through her children's successes. Shirley is ambitious for her son Scott to win the Pan Pacific Dance Championships, but only if he dances the Federation way.

Fran's Spanish family is portrayed more sympathetically, but also somewhat stereotypically. Like Cinderella, her real mother has died. Her father Rico is shown as

swarthy, unshaven and ultra-strict. Fran's body language and actions suggest that she is afraid of him and when we first meet Rico after Scott walks Fran home his words to Fran are harsh.

Fran's grandmother Ya Ya, dressed in black with a crucifix around her neck, grey hair tied back in a bun at first looks like a stereotypical 'ethnic' grandmother, but her appearance is deceptive. **(K)** She is in fact Fran's ally, covering for her when she goes out, and revealing a playful sense of humour at Scott's expense during the Paso Doble scene when she speaks in Spanish about Scott's 'nice body'.

There are two children in the film, Kylie, Scott's younger sister, and Luke, her dance partner. Both are aged ten, and are dressed as miniature ballroom dancers, complete with elaborate costumes and hairdos. Their function is to comment honestly and insightfully on the action, and they also provide comic asides, for example when Kylie says: 'It's the inconceivable sight of Scott dancing with Fran,' as she watches them dance backstage at the State Championships. Kylie and Luke also act during the Pan-Pacifcs to help Fran and Scott. Realising that Barry Fife plans to cut the music, they lock themselves into the sound booth so that his plans are thwarted. **(K)** Their heroic actions at the end and the way they cheer for Scott and Fran suggest that they represent a brighter future for dance.

What are the protagonists' attitudes, religious beliefs and values?

Although dancing is an amateur pastime for most of the characters in the ballroom dancing world, they are so obsessed that it dominates their lives. For some of the characters, ballroom dancing also provides their livelihoods. Les Kendall and Shirley run Kendall's Dance Studio together. Shirley's explanation of why she dumped Doug at the Pan-Pacifcs in 1967 reveals her fear of insecurity. It also suggests that in this world people feel they have to sacrifice their dreams to obtain job security: 'There was too much at stake. Our dancing career was on the line. I couldn't throw all that away on a dream. We had to survive. We would never have been able to teach'. (The Pan-Pacifcs) Barry Fife displays quite a different attitude to work. He uses his position as Federation President to further his own business interests, notably the way he places his video, Dance to Win, on display at every opportunity, and gives a copy

to Wayne as a sweetener to get him on his side against Scott (The State Championships).

By contrast, Fran's family business is the Toledo Milk Bar. Business does not seem to be booming, as the milk bar looks shabby and run-down. Its paintwork is dingy and worn and there are bins full of rubbish in front. In some ways the Toledo Milk Bar suggests an earlier era, the 1950s, when such places were first popular, and also when southern European migrants started arriving in Australia. It is clear that Fran's family is not as financially well off as the Anglo- Australians. But the fiesta that takes place at the back of the house conveys that there is life and soul here.



Quotes

Scott Hastings

- Look, a beginner has no right to approach an open amateur.
- We're telling a story. The rumba is the dance of love. Look at me like you're in love.
- You know what I said about the rumba and it being pretend? I think I made a mistake.
- I have to help Wayne with his bogo pogo.
- I don't want you to be like them. You're better than all of them.

Fran

- A life lived in fear is a life half lived.
- Hard? *Hard?* How hard do you think it's been for *me*? To get you to dance with me in the first place? *Frangipannidellasqueegymop*. "Wash the coffee cups, Fran, how's your skin, Fran?" *Hard?*
- I understand. You've got your Pan Pacfics to win and I'm back in beginners, where I belong.

Doug Hastings

- *[repeated line]* Son, can I bend your ear for a tick?
- We had the chance but we were scared. We walked away. *We lived our lives in fear!*
- *[final line]* Shall we dance?

Barry Fife

- . Well, you can dance any steps you like... that doesn't mean you'll win.
- . One bad egg can rot the whole barrel.
- . There are no new steps!

Others

- . **Kylie:** A bit of musicality, *please!*
- . **Liz:** *[to Scott]* I'm not dancing with you, all right? I'm not dancing with you 'til you dance like you're supposed to!

Dialogue

Liz: What do I want? I'll tell you what I want! I want Ken Railings to walk in here right now, and say "Pam Shortt's broken both her legs, and I wanna dance with you!"

[The door flies open, and Ken walks in.]

Ken: Pam Shortt's broken both her legs, and I wanna dance with you.

Kylie: That was unexpected.

Scott: Look, a beginner has no right to approach an Open Amateur.

Fran: Yeah, well an Open Amateur has no right to dance non-Federation steps, but you did, didn't you?

Scott: But that's different.

Fran: *How* is it different? You're just like the rest of them! You think you're different, but you're not, because you're just, you're just really scared! You're really scared to give someone new a go, because you think, you know, they might just be better than you are! Well, you're just pathetic, and you're gutless. You're a gutless wonder! *[shouting]* *Vivir con miedo, es como vivir a medias!*

Barry: Where do you think we'd be if everyone went around making up their own steps?

Scott: Out of a job.

Film Language

Art Director: The designer in charge of sets and costumes.

Camera Position: The position from which a camera is pointed at the subject.

- High Angle Shot: The camera points down towards the character, making the subject look vulnerable.
- Low Angle Shot: This shot is taken from below with the camera pointing up towards the character, making him/her look bigger and more powerful, for example Barry Fife on stage (Sequence 1: The Waratah Championships).
- Aerial Shot: A shot taken from a plane, crane or helicopter, for example when Scott and Fran are dancing on the roof (Sequence 3: The Try-Outs).
- Close-Up: When the camera is very close to a subject to show more detail or the expression on a character's face.
- Point-of-View Shot: A shot that shows the action from a character's point of view, for example when Doug reveals the truth (Sequence 7: The Pan- Pacifics) the camera shots are from Scott's point-of-view as he looks around him before jumping off the stage.
- Panning Shot: The camera moves from left to right.
- Tracking Shot: Any shot in which the camera moves from one point to another, sideways or in or out, for example when Scott slides along the dance floor at the Pan-Pacifics (Sequence 8: Scott and Fran's Big Moment).
- Zoom: The lens of the camera is adjusted so that the subject is brought much closer to camera, for example in Barry Fife's office (Sequence 1: Waratah Championships) the camera zooms into a close-up of his mouth.

Director: The director organises the efforts of all the artistic/technical people involved in the production and gives the finished film its shape, tone and visual signature.

Flashback: A scene or a sequence that is inserted into a scene in present time and deals with the past, for example when Shirley speaks to camera about Scott's steps, the film cuts to a flashback of the Waratah Championships (Sequence 1).

Genre: A particular narrative form or type of film. There are several recognisable film

genres including the Western, Detective Story, Romantic Comedy, Documentary, Horror, Musical. Baz Luhrmann describes his trilogy of films as examples of red curtain cinema, a new cinema form/genre.

Lighting: The process and technology of illuminating sets and action in the shooting of a film.

Montage: A short sequence of rapidly cut or dissolved shots that tell a story economically, or show the passage of hours, days, months or years, as in Sequence 3: The Try-Outs.

Narrative/Plot: The story

Scene: A series of shots or a single shot that takes place in a single location and deals with a single action.

Score: The music for a film.

Sequence: A series of scenes that make up a complete section of the film's story.

Slow-Motion: This effect is achieved by filming action at speeds faster than the normal 24 frames per second, and then projecting them at normal speed. Slow-motion has been described as a 'close-up in time' as it nearly always has the effect of making the scene seem more lyrical, for example the silhouetted dancers in the opening moments of the film (Sequence 1: Waratah Championships).

Voiceover: Spoken description or analysis of action on the soundtrack of the film, for example Barry Fife's version of the truth about the 1967 Championships, as told to Scott (Sequence 6: Practising for the Pan-Pacifics).



Film Soundtrack and Song Lyrics

1. "Love Is In The Air" (Ballroom Mix) performed by John Paul Young
2. "[Perhaps Perhaps Perhaps](#)" (Quizas Quizas Quizas) performed by [Doris Day](#)
3. "[La Cumparsita](#)/Tango Please" (Medley) performed by [David Hirschfelder](#) & The Bogo Pogo Orchestra
4. "Tequila/Sinful Samba" (Medley) performed by David Hirschfelder & The Bogo Pogo Orchestra
5. "Rhumba de Burros" performed by Ignatius Jones
6. "Doug's Tearful Waltz/First Kiss" performed by David Hirschfelder & The Bogo Pogo Orchestra
7. "[Time After Time](#)" performed by Mark Williams & Tara Morice
8. "Standing in the Rain/Scott's Sinful Solo" (Medley) performed by John Paul Young/David Hirschfelder & The Bogo Pogo Orchestra
9. "Yesterday's Hero" performed by [Ignatius Jones](#)
10. "[The Blue Danube](#)" performed by David Hirschfelder & The Bogo Pogo Orchestra
11. "Scott & Fran's Paso Doble" performed by David Hirschfelder & The Bogo Pogo Orchestra

"Time After Time" performed by Mark Williams & Tara Morice

Lying in my bed I hear the clock tick,
and think of you
caught up in circles confusion--
is nothing new
Flashback--warm nights--
almost left behind
suitcases of memories,
time after--

Sometimes you picture me--
I'm walking too far ahead
you're calling to me, I can't hear
what you've said--
Then you say--go slow--
I fall behind--
the second hand unwinds

Chorus:
If you're lost you can look--and you will find me
time after time
I you fall I will catch you--I'll be waiting
time after time

After my picture fades and darkness has
turned to gray
watching through windows--you're wondering
if I'm OK
Secrets stolen from deep inside
The drum beats out of time--

chorus:
if you're lost...

You said go slow--
I fall behind
the second hand unwinds--

Chorus:
If you're lost...
...time after time , time after time
time after time, time after time

"Perhaps Perhaps Perhaps" performed by Doris Day

You won't admit you love me
and so how am I ever to know
you always tell me
perhaps perhaps perhaps
a million times I've asked you
and then
I ask you over
again
you only answer
perhaps perhaps perhaps
if you can't make your mind up
we'll never get started
and I don't wanna wind up
being parted
broken-hearted
so if you really love me
say yes
but if you don't dear
confess
and please don't tell me
perhaps perhaps perhaps
perhaps perhaps perhaps
if you can't make your mind up
we'll never get started
and I don't wanna wind up
being parted
broken-hearted
so if you really love me
say yes
but if you don't dear
confess
and please don't tell me
perhaps perhaps perhaps
perhaps perhaps perhaps
perhaps perhaps perhaps

LOVE IS IN THE AIR (John Paul Young)

Love is in the air
Everywhere I look around
Love is in the air
Every sight and every sound

And I don't know if I'm being foolish
Don't know if I'm being wise
But it's something that I must believe in
And it's there when I look in your eyes

Love is in the air
In the whisper of the trees
Love is in the air
In the thunder of the sea

And I don't know if I'm just dreaming
Don't know if I feel sane
But it's something that I must believe in
And it's there when you call out my name

(Chorus)
Love is in the air , Love is in the air
Oh oh oh , Oh oh oh

Love is in the air,
In the rising of the sun
Love is in the air
When the day is nearly done

And I don't know if you're an illusion
Don't know if I see it true
But you're something that I must believe in
And you're there when I reach out for you

Love is in the air
Every sight and every sound
And I don't know if I'm being foolish
Don't know if I'm being wise

But it's something that I must believe in
And it's there when I look in your eyes (Repeat Chorus 4X)

Guidelines for Answering Exam Questions
--

This section is worth 70 marks and should take you around an hour to complete. You will be asked to answer **one** question, A or B.

The questions are generally divided into two parts, (a) and (b) which are worth 30 and 40 marks respectively. This is not written in stone, however, so check before you begin your answer.

You may be asked, in part of a question, to answer on one of your texts separately.

Points to note:

- When you read the question, underline the key words, 'one of the texts', 'key moment', 'describe', 'explain' etc.
- Plan your answer. It is well worth taking the time to do this.
- Think in terms of key moments; this will ensure that you refer to the text and will help you to keep the sequence of events in the right order.
- When you are planning your answer, try to think of approximately five key moments which illustrate the mode you have chosen.
- In your introductory paragraph, name the text, the author and the mode you have chosen.
- You must compare your texts and answer on the mode you have chosen.
- Do not, under any circumstances, simply summarise the plot.
- When you are comparing texts, do not write a separate paragraph for each text. Instead, you must constantly compare one with the other.
- Use a selection of the link words and phrases below when comparing texts. The examiner will be looking for them.

Link words and phrases:

Likewise

Similarly

Also

In the same way

In the same manner

Just as

Both texts/characters

Each text

Conversely

On the contrary

Whereas

Differs from

However

In contrast

This is different to

While

Comparing the texts

The examiners' reports show that the two most common faults in the comparative study section of Paper 11 are:

1. Students simply summarising the plot.
2. Students treating each text separately and not comparing them.

Listed below are some sentence structures you could use when linking texts. In these sentences, T1 and T2 refer to the texts, C1 and C2 refer to the characters and A1 and A2 refer to the authors.

- We can see in both T1 and T2 that.....
- Like C1, C2 resists the pressure to conform.....
- I feel that there are many similarities between C1 and C2.
- Unlike C1, C2.....
- The same theme is handled completely differently in T2....
- A1 uses humour while A2 treats the theme more seriously....
- Both characters have to deal with....but C1 handles it very differently to C2....
- In both T1 and T2, the characters face a crisis.....but the outcome is very different.....

It cannot be stressed enough that simply retelling the story will not get you marks. The examiner knows the plot and it is assumed you do too. Avoid falling into the trap of simply describing the social setting, for example, without saying what effect it has on the characters' lives.

In order to get high marks, you need to:

1. Answer the question asked (30%)
2. Make sure every paragraph develops that answer (30%),
3. Use varied and appropriate language (30%)
4. Keep an eye on your spelling and grammar (10%). Think about the first two points when you are planning your answer.

Exam Questions

2008

SECTION II

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 MARKS)

Candidates must answer **ONE** question from **either A – Relationships, or B – Social Setting**.

In your answer you may not use the text you have answered on in **SECTION I – The Single Text**.

N.B. The questions use the word **text** to refer to all the different kinds of texts available for study on this course, i.e. novel, play, short story, autobiography, biography, travel writing, and film. The questions use the word **author** to refer to novelists, playwrights, writers in all genres, and film-directors.

A RELATIONSHIPS

1. (a) “Relationships can be very complicated.”

Describe a relationship which you have studied in one of the texts on your comparative course, and explain why you found it to be complicated. (30)

- (b) Choose a relationship from another text on your comparative course and explain why you found this relationship more **or** less complicated than the one you described in (a).

Remember to refer to both relationships in the course of your answer. (40)

OR

2. (a) Briefly describe a relationship from each of **two** of the three texts you have studied on your comparative course. (30)

- (b) Explain why you think one of the relationships you described in (a) is more successful than the other.

Remember to refer to both relationships in the course of your answer. (40)

B SOCIAL SETTING

1. (a) “A person is often greatly influenced by his or her social setting.”

Show how the social setting greatly influences a character in one of the texts on your comparative study. (30)

- (b) From one of the other texts studied on your comparative course, choose a character and show how, in your opinion, this character is influenced to a greater or lesser degree by his/her social setting than the one dealt with in (a) above.

Remember to refer to both social settings in the course of your answer. (40)

OR

2. (a) Briefly describe the social setting of **two** of the three texts you have studied on your comparative course. (30)

- (b) Write a piece in which you compare and/or contrast the two social settings

described in (a) explaining why you found one social setting more appealing than the other.

Remember to refer to both social settings in the course of your answer. (40)

2007

SECTION II

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 MARKS)

B THEME

Before beginning your answer to either of the two questions on THEME, you should

- name the texts studied for your comparative course and
- name a theme that you are going to discuss.

1. (a) Describe how your chosen theme is presented in **one** of the texts. (30)

(b) Compare the way in which the same theme is presented in a second text with the way it has been presented in the text in (a) above. To begin your answer use one of the following statements:

- *"I thought the theme in my first text was more powerful/less powerful than the theme in my second text because..."*

- *"I enjoyed the theme of one text more than the other because..."*

(40)

OR

2. (a) Write a piece in which you attempt to persuade a reader that a theme is presented in a more interesting way in one text rather than in another.

Support your views with reference to the two texts chosen. (30)

(b) Select one moment from each of **two** texts that you have studied that appeals to you in a special way. Say how, in your opinion, these moments have helped you to understand the theme involved.

Explain your answer with references to your chosen texts. (40)

B SOCIAL SETTING

1. (a) Name the text from your comparative course which describes a world that you would either like to visit **or** avoid.

the features of that world explaining why you find it either attractive or not. (30)

(b) Compare the world that you have just described with the world from another text you have studied on your comparative course. Explain what it is about this second world that you find **either more or less** attractive than the one already described in (a).

Refer to each text to support the points you are making. (40)

OR

2. (a) “A key moment in a text can tell us how a social setting can influence a character in a text.”
Describe a key moment from **one** of the texts you studied on your comparative course that tells how a character was influenced by the social setting at an important time. (30)
- (b) Describe a key moment from another one of the texts on your comparative course and show how the social setting influenced a character in the same or in a different way to the one you have already described in (a) above.
Refer to each text to support the points you make. (40)

2006

SECTION II

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 MARKS)

B SOCIAL SETTING

1. (a) Name the text from your comparative course which describes a world that you would either like to visit **or** avoid.
Describe the features of that world explaining why you find it either attractive or not. (30)
- (b) Compare the world that you have just described with the world from another text you have studied on your comparative course. Explain what it is about this second world that you find **either more or less** attractive than the one already described in (a).
Refer to each text to support the points you are making. (40)

OR

2. (a) “A key moment in a text can tell us how a social setting can influence a character in a text.”
Describe a key moment from **one** of the texts you studied on your comparative course that tells how a character was influenced by the social setting at an important time. (30)
- (b) Describe a key moment from another one of the texts on your comparative course and show how the social setting influenced a character in the same or in a different way to the one you have already described in (a) above.
Refer to each text to support the points you make. (40)

2005

SECTION II

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY (70 MARKS)

A RELATIONSHIPS

1. (a) Name a text that you have studied for your comparative course. Give a brief description of **one** relationship in the text, that you feel is interesting. (30)

- (b) Compare the relationship that you have already described in part (a) above with a relationship from another text. Refer to each text to support the points that you are making. (40)

OR

2. (a) “Relationships can fail as well as succeed.”
From one of the texts that you studied for your comparative course, describe a relationship that, in your view, was either a success or a failure. Explain your answer. (30)
- (b) Compare a relationship from a second text you have studied in your comparative course with the relationship you have chosen in (a) above. In the course of your answer, you must deal with **both** relationships. Support your answer by references to the texts. (40)

B SOCIAL SETTING

1. (a) “The places we read about in texts can be places that we ourselves would like to live in or not like to live in.”
Describe the social setting in one of the texts in your comparative course and show how it appeals or does not appeal to you. (30)
- (b) Compare the social setting in a second text from your comparative course with the social setting in the text you chose for your answer to part (a) above. Refer to each text to support the points you are making. (40)

OR

2. (a) “A character in any text can be made happy or unhappy by his or her social setting.”
Name one text you have studied for your comparative course and describe how the social setting caused one character to be happy or unhappy. (30)
- (b) Compare the social setting in a different text from your comparative course with the social setting of the text you have used in part (a) above. Refer to each text to support the points you are making. (40)

2004

B THEME

1. (a) Name a theme that you found in the texts that you studied for your comparative course. Choose one text and show how the theme plays an important part in the story. (30)
- (b) Compare the way in which **the same theme** plays an important part in the story of another text that you studied. (40)

OR

2. (a) *Discovering an important theme in a text makes studying the text more interesting..*
Describe what you find interesting about a theme in one text you studied. (30)
- (b) *Discovering in another text on your comparative course, can see interesting comparisons between the two texts..*

Describe some interesting comparisons you found when you discovered **the same theme** in another text. (40)

2003

A THEME

1. (a) Name a theme that was explored in a text you studied for your comparative course and show how important it was in the life of one of the characters from the text. (30)
- (b) Compare the way in which the **same theme** was important in the life of a character from another text on your comparative course. (40)

OR

2. Write down the theme that was common to two of the texts you have studied for your comparative course and then complete the following statements, (a) and (b).
 - (a) “*The theme was clearest to me in the first text when...*” (30)
 - (b) “*You could clearly see the same theme in the second text when...*” (40)

Student's Notes

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 28 horizontal black lines spaced evenly across the page, typical of notebook or composition paper. The lines are thin and extend from the left edge to the right edge. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.