



# Teacher guidelines

## Soap opera proposal

**Year 9**

**English**

**Students will write a proposal for a new soap opera that features a non-stereotypical character. They will write a brief synopsis and create a storyboard to include with their proposal.**

**Time allocation** 6 hours

### Context for assessment

Soap operas raise topical issues and present a range of complexities and perspectives that can position audiences to accept or challenge certain stereotypes. This assessment provides an opportunity for students to understand how stereotypes are created or challenged through language choices and visual representations.

## Identify curriculum

Defining what students are expected to learn, and how they will demonstrate their achievement.

This assessment gathers evidence of learning for the following **Essential Learnings**:

English		Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9	
<b>Ways of working</b> <b>Students are able to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• demonstrate and analyse the relationship between audience, subject matter, purpose and text type</li><li>• interpret and analyse how language elements and other aspects of texts position readers/ viewers/listeners</li><li>• construct literary texts by planning and developing subject matter, and manipulating language elements to present particular points of view</li><li>• construct non-literary texts by planning and organising subject matter according to specific text structure and referring to other texts.</li></ul>		<b>Knowledge and understanding</b> <b>Writing and designing</b> <b>Writing and designing involve using language elements to construct literary and non-literary texts for audiences across local, national and global contexts.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writers and designers establish and maintain roles and relationships by recognising the beliefs and cultural background of their audience, and by making specific language choices.</li><li>• Words and phrases, symbols, images and audio affect meaning and establish and maintain roles and relationships to influence an audience.</li></ul> <b>Language elements</b> <b>Interpreting and constructing texts involve manipulating grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, audio and visual elements, in print-based, electronic and face-to-face modes (speaking and listening, reading and viewing, writing and designing) across local, national and global contexts.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vocabulary is chosen to establish roles and relationships with an audience, including the demonstration of personal authority and credibility.</li></ul> <b>Literary and non-literary texts</b> <b>Manipulating literary and non-literary texts involves analysing the purpose, audience, subject matter and text structure.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non-literary texts analyse, inform, argue and persuade.</li></ul>	
<b>Assessable elements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge and understanding</li><li>• Interpreting texts</li><li>• Constructing texts</li></ul>			
Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007. <i>English Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9</i> . QSA, Brisbane.			

## Links to other KLAs

This assessment could be expanded to assess the following **Essential Learnings**:

<b>The Arts</b>	<b>Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9</b>
<p><b>Ways of working</b></p> <p><b>Students are able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make decisions about arts elements, languages and cultural protocols in relation to specific style, function, audience and purpose of arts works</li> <li>• create and shape arts works by manipulating arts elements to express meaning in different contexts</li> <li>• present arts works to particular audiences for a specific purpose, style and function, using genre-specific arts techniques, skills, processes and cultural protocols.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Knowledge and understanding</b></p> <p><b>Media</b></p> <p><b>Media involves constructing meaning, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, by manipulating media languages and technologies to shape representations.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still and moving images, sounds and words are used to construct and reconstruct meaning in media texts.</li> <li>• Representations of different beliefs and ideas in media texts are influenced by regulations and by contexts of audiences, producers and institutions.</li> </ul>

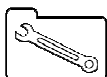
Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, *The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9*, QSA, Brisbane.

## Sequence learning

Describing learning experiences and resources that will enable students to complete the assessment.

Listed here are suggested **learning experiences** for students before attempting this assessment.

- Explore the genre of soap operas, including developing suspense, exploring everyday life concerns and issues, episodes that continue and avoid closure, influencing sympathetic audiences and addressing complications and character development.
- Explore the limitations of a soap opera, such as understanding that soap operas are usually brief.
- Identify satire, comedy and drama in soap operas while foregrounding sensitivity and consideration of audiences.
- Use setting, characters and a climax or conflict to develop themes and story-lines.
- Write a synopsis.
- Create a storyboard. (See Appendix A: Blank storyboard.)
- Identify the kinds of jobs people perform when producing soap operas (e.g. scriptwriters, actors, editors, directors and camera operators).
- Apply media techniques and direction to a storyboard (e.g. camera angles, shots).
- Select and use language to position and influence an audience.
- Select and use language to demonstrate authority and credibility.
- Write cohesive paragraphs and use accurate punctuation and spelling.
- Write a proposal in the form of a business letter.



## Teacher resources

Appendix A    Blank storyboard

*Featuring film*, Cox, P, Goldsworthy, F 1995, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 22–23.

*Cohesion*, Cybergrammar, accessed 19 February 2008,  
<[www.cybergrammar.co.uk/discourses\\_cohesion.php](http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/discourses_cohesion.php)>.

*Letter writing rules*, Englishplus.com, accessed 19 February 2008,  
<<http://englishplus.com/grammar/letrcont.htm>>.

“Making meaning”, The Office of Queensland School Curriculum Council 2002, accessed 21 September 2007, search for “Making meaning” from <[www.qsa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au)> (PDF document).

*Formal letter writing*, Using English.com, accessed 19 February 2008,  
<[www.usingenglish.com/resources/letter-writing.html](http://www.usingenglish.com/resources/letter-writing.html)>.

## Develop assessment

Gathering evidence that demonstrates how well students have achieved the curriculum expectations.

### ***Preparing***

Consider these points before implementing the assessment.

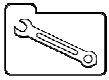
- Addressing stereotypes and challenging stereotypical beliefs teaches students to have respect for diversity. When students begin to understand stereotypes, they gain a sense of perspective, whether cursory or profound, that enables them to see with less bias. A unit of work that explores soap operas enables students to make connections with real life by recognising aspects of their own, or their family's, lives in a different context.
- At the beginning of this assessment, create a set of parameters that can be used to discourage inappropriate comments, such as criticising the soap opera genre. Instead, develop an open forum for students' sincere questions and concerns. This type of forum should include modelling appropriate responses to sensitive topics and listening to students as they share their thoughts and feelings.
- You could also ask students to complete the following additional activities:
  - prepare a 30-second pitch for their proposal. This will provide an opportunity to assess Language elements (Speaking and listening)
  - write a description of their storyboard, or dialogue to accompany their storyboard. This will provide an opportunity to further assess Writing and designing
  - film a scene (if appropriate) and review the film. This will allow students to explore the link to Media in more depth.

Note: These additional activities are at the teacher's discretion.

## Sample implementation plan

This table shows one way that this assessment can be implemented. It is a guide only — teachers may choose to use all, part, or none of the table. You may customise the table to suit your students and their school environment.

Suggested time	Student activity	Teacher role
<b>Section 1. Write a synopsis</b>		
10–15 minutes	Highlight key concepts and parts of the assessment.	Clarify the assessment and conditions (i.e. set parameters for discussing sensitive issues).
20–30 minutes	Revise soap opera features and the structure of a synopsis.  Brainstorm ideas for the non-stereotypical character.	Lead the revision and discussion — stay alert to sensitive issues.
30–45 minutes	Plan a soap opera using the Soap opera planning table in the <i>Student booklet</i> — select a setting, characters and climax or conflict that can demonstrate the non-stereotypical character's attributes in a positive and/or challenging manner.	Revise the features of a soap opera that were discussed during the learning experiences.  Assist students as they plan their soap opera.
45–60 minutes	Draft and write a synopsis (200 words).	Assist students when necessary.
<b>Section 2. Create a storyboard</b>		
20–30 minutes	Explore the expectations of a storyboard.	Discuss media conventions used in storyboards. Use Appendix A: Blank storyboard, Appendix B: Media conventions — framing & Appendix C: Media conventions — shot sizes and angles.
60–90 minutes	Create a storyboard depicting one key scene. Use the Blank storyboard in the <i>Student booklet</i> .	Assist and monitor students.
<b>Section 3. Write a proposal</b>		
60–90 minutes	Write a proposal to a television producer, in the form of a business letter, to seek support for a soap opera idea (200–300 words). Include the synopsis and storyboard from Sections 1 & 2.  The proposal should be 400–500 words in total, including the letter and synopsis but not the storyboard.	Monitor students. Remind them that the proposal should be in the form of a business letter that includes the synopsis and storyboard.  Use Appendix D: Formal writing conventions.



## ***Resources for the assessment***

- Appendix A     Blank storyboard
- Appendix B     Media conventions for storyboarding — framing
- Appendix C     Media conventions for storyboarding — shot sizes and angles
- Appendix D     Formal writing conventions

## Make judgments

Making standards-referenced, consistent judgments.

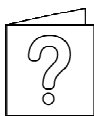
During the learning process, you and your students should have developed a shared understanding of the curriculum expectations identified as part of the planning process.

After students have completed the assessment, identify, gather and interpret the information provided in student responses. Use only the evidence in student responses to make your judgment about the quality of the student learning. Refer to the following documents to assist you in making standards-referenced judgments:

- *Guide to making judgments*
- *Indicative A response*
- Sample responses (where available).

### Making judgments about this assessment

Drawing ability demonstrated on the storyboard should not be taken into consideration when making judgments about the quality of student learning.



For further information, refer to the resource *Using a Guide to making judgments*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website.

## Use feedback

Using feedback to enrich teaching and learning.

Evaluate the information gathered from the assessment to inform teaching and learning strategies.

Involve students in the feedback process. Give students opportunities to ask follow-up questions and share their learning observations or experiences.

Focus feedback on the student's personal progress. Emphasise continuous progress relative to their previous achievement and to the learning expectations — avoid comparing a student with their classmates.



For further information, refer to the resource *Using feedback*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website.




### **Blank storyboard**





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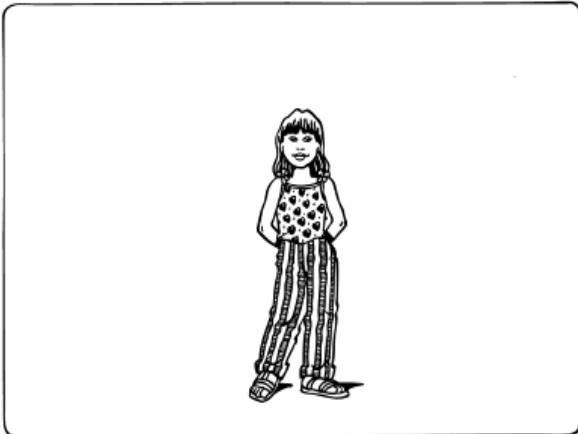


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## Media conventions for storyboarding

### Framing



Too small



Too tight



Well framed  
(suitable for location news reporter)



Too much head room



Too little head room



Well framed  
(suitable for studio news reader)



Not enough looking room or talking room  
We need to see both eyes



Well framed

## **Media conventions for storyboarding**

### **Shot sizes and angles**

Most productions look better with a range of different shot sizes.



**LS — long shot**

Usually shows a whole person, from head to foot.



**VLS — very long shot**

Shows a person in the distance.



**MS — mid shot**

Usually shows a person from waist to head, giving the impression of the whole person.



**MLS — medium long shot**

Usually shows a person from hips or knees to head.



**CU — close-up**

Usually shows a person from neck or shoulders to the hair.



**MCU — medium close-up**

Usually shows a person from waist to the head. Halfway between a MS and CU.



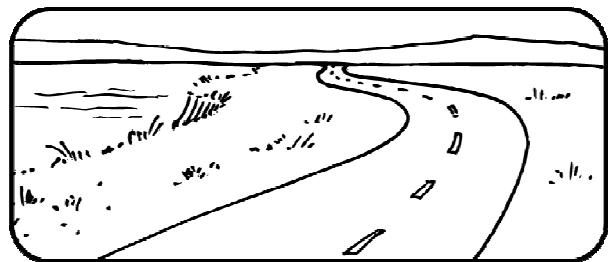
**ECU — extreme close-up**



**BCU — big close-up**  
A tight close-up of the face or  
a section of the face.



**TS — two shot**  
A comfortable shot of two people.



**Pan — panorama**  
A wide shot where the camera moves  
horizontally, covering an angle of up to 360°.

## Angles



**HA — high angle**  
The camera is higher than eye level looking  
down, which can make a subject look inferior.



**LCA — low camera angle**  
The camera is lower than eye level and looking  
up, which can make a subject look enormous.

## Formal writing conventions

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### Language elements

The tone of this writing should be formal, so avoid conversational language such as contractions, abbreviations, and slang. Write in the present tense using full sentences (simple and compound). Structure ideas in paragraphs and use linking words and phrases, such as “therefore” and “for this reason”, which support reasoning or refer to cause and effect information.

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### Writing a formal letter

Insert letterhead information at the top of the page or write your address in the top left corner of the page. Underneath, write the date as a number and the month as a word, followed by the year as a number (e.g. 20 January 2007).

Write the address of the person you are writing to underneath the date. Capitalise the first letter of each name and place, and leave out commas and full stops.

If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, use “Dear Sir or Madam” with no comma. If you know the name, use the title (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss, Dr, etc.) and the surname only, and do not use punctuation. If you are writing to a woman and do not know if she uses Mrs or Miss, use Ms, as this represents both married and single women.

Or you may use a position (e.g. Editor, Manager, etc.)

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The **first paragraph** should be short and state the purpose of the letter. This may be to make an inquiry, a complaint or request.

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The **middle paragraphs** should contain relevant information connected to the purpose of the letter. Most formal letters are not long, so keep the information concise, and use persuasive language and supporting evidence that is organised in a clear, logical manner.

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The **concluding paragraph** should state what action you would like the recipient to take as a result of the letter.

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To **end the letter**, use “Yours sincerely” if you know the name of the person, or “Yours faithfully” if you do not. Sign your name, and then print your name underneath the signature.

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### Sources

<[www.macquarie.vic.edu.au/sample.htm](http://www.macquarie.vic.edu.au/sample.htm)>

<[www.usingenglish.com/resources/letter-writing.html](http://www.usingenglish.com/resources/letter-writing.html)>

<[www.cybergrammar.co.uk/discourses\\_cohesion.php](http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/discourses_cohesion.php)>

<<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/studyskills/academic/writing-style/index.html>>