AOS: Belonging

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‘Man – a being in search of meaning’

Plato.

What do the texts tell you about the human experience?
Belonging is an intensely personal experience and our sense of belonging is inevitably coloured by our situation and personality. Given the wide range of the human condition, it is inevitable that there will be a varied and complex range of experiences of belonging.
The Looking glass self:
According to Cooley, the self is the conscious social identity that any individual has. We are who we think we are, but a good deal of who we think we are—our self-concept—derives from seeing ourselves as others see us.
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

TS. Eliot – ‘The Waste Land’
Belonging

- Ontological connection between belonging and identity.

- Who and what we are and the place and places we inhabit are mutually disclosing and mutually defining. People are involved fundamentally in the constitution of place, and places are involved fundamentally in the construction of persons.

- Both our identity and our belonging relate to our social, historical and environmental context.
The Rubric

- **Perceptions** and ideas of belonging, or of not belonging, vary.
- These perceptions are shaped within personal, cultural, historical and social **contexts**.
- A sense of belonging can emerge from the connections made with **people, places, groups, communities and the larger world**.
- Students may consider aspects of belonging in terms of **experiences and notions of identity, relationships, acceptance and understanding**.

The Concept of Belonging

- How do you view the notion of belonging?
- Do the texts invite you to belong to their worlds?
- How do the texts represent the concept of belonging?
- How do your perception and assumptions about belonging compare with that of the composers you are studying?
- Has your perspective been challenged or altered?
- What lines of argument have you developed as a result?
Theses

- Essential to develop at least four overarching theses or points of view
- A synthesis of the ideas you have gathered about belonging.
- Apply to all sections of Paper 1.
Belonging is an ambivalent notion; a dynamic state of flux.
The greatest barrier to belonging is the self: our perceptions, assumptions and degree of self-efficacy act as enablers or impediments.
Belonging comes from within rather than without. To belong is to be. We cannot belong until we understand ourselves.
Place plays a fundamental role in the lives of human beings, it is the nexus of existence. Our physical, psychological and cultural connection to the world we move in impacts on our perception of belonging.
Theses

- We spend our lives trying to belong to self, a place and others, not realising that it is our perceptions and attitudes that enable us to belong.

- Belonging may be a fundamental human need but it also a choice.

- An individual’s identity and notion of belonging to self and others is forged in relation to familial and cultural connections.
Section 1: Reading Task

“Strong responses demonstrated perception and insight into the ideas embedded in the texts and supported a thesis with effective textual evidence.”

“Weaker responses simply described the content of either the written or visual without linking them”

“A discussion which focused primarily on language techniques often restricted the candidates’ opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the ideas in the texts or to develop their ideas effectively”
Reading Task

- The overarching idea
- Composer’s purpose and attitude towards belonging
- **How** language features, form and structure represent belonging
- How you respond **personally** to the ideas in the texts.
Reading Task

- Assumptions about belonging that have shaped the representation.
- Different perspectives on belonging.
- Synthesis in final question
Section 2
The Writing Task
Imaginative Writing

- Writing is a craft that can be learned and transformed to become artistry!
- ‘Life, like a dome of many-colored glass, Stains the white radiance of eternity’ (Percy Bysshe Shelley ‘Adonais’).
Artistry

- The art of the first and last lines!
- The details
- Setting – synaesthesia, colour, sounds...
- Verbal cinema
Artistry

- **Voice:**
  - Writing from experience
  - Conviction
  - Word choice
- **Subtlety:**
  - Tension
  - Ambivalence
- **Structure:**
  - Cyclical
  - Flash back
  - A fragment
Artistry

- **Mechanics:**
  - Syntax: varying length and beginnings
  - Lexical density
  - Imagery: figurative devices/synesthesia
  - Sound: euphony, discordance, disruption
  - Verbs not adjectivous
Artistry

- Characterisation:
  - Idiosyncrasies
  - Complexity
  - Perspectives and values
  - Back story
  - How they move and act in the setting
  - Dialogue and voice
  - Relationships
  - Actions and consequences
Strategies

- Create a character and a setting and then pack them into the Tardis and allow them to travel to different places and contexts.
- Motifs: Suitcase, hands, rear-vision mirror...
- Writing backwards
- Creative non-fiction – *The 100 year old man who climbed out the window and disappeared*
He starts to play. I gaze in fascination at his perfectly curved fingers and the flowing movements of his arms. His hands glide effortlessly over the keyboard whilst his core sways to and fro with the tempo of the music. The increasing dynamic stature, chromatic dissonances and the unresolved chord progressions – typical of my grandfather’s naturalistic compositional style – lure me into the music. I am struck by the sheer dynamism of his posture; his entire self devoted to the release of passion through the weaving of his beautiful melodies, working to achieve a work of absolute perfection far surpassing Chopin’s Etude. Notes on a page are being transformed into passions and emotions. The fire crackles with nervous excitement.
Section 3

Critical Response

The texts of your own choosing become the discriminators for your response.
In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate understanding of the concept of belonging in the context of your study
- analyse, explain and assess the ways belonging is represented in a variety of texts
- organise, develop and express ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context
Section III: Extended Response

- Must demonstrate understanding of key concepts and ideas of belonging from the rubrics and through the response to the texts
- Develop theses or lines of argument
- Choose texts that connect with concepts
Extended Responses

- Conceptual understanding:
  - The thesis or line of argument
  - In response to the question
  - The framework and drivers for extended responses
  - Integrates the response
  - Support and challenge
Developing a Thesis

- Strong opening paragraph that introduces a clear line of argument or thesis that directly addresses the question.
- A response that is driven by a thesis connected to the question. Each successive point must further the thesis through textual analysis and support. Support or even challenge the thesis through the analysis of the text/s.
- Precise topic sentences that are connected to and build on the thesis.
The human experience: Overarching idea first....

When developing theses students should consider that the notion of belonging is never fixed. It is constantly shifting depending on the individual’s experiences, emotional state and relationships with self and others.

They need to consider how humanity’s flaws and qualities challenge and enrich belonging.

Regard belonging as an ambivalent notion. Explore when and why individuals move between belonging, indifference and alienation.
Theses

- Overarching through the question to specific lines of arguments.
- Supporting the thesis with the reasons why the student has arrived at this point of view.
- At least two – three supporting arguments used to further the thesis that addresses the question in the essay.
- E.g. The greatest barrier to belonging is the self: our perceptions, assumptions and degree of self-efficacy.
Cohesion

- Making connections between the texts through:
  - The thesis
  - Characters
  - The act of representation

- Connecting words: 
  *Furthermore,
  alternatively...*
Paragraph 1: Immediately address the question and introduce the thesis or line of argument that challenges or supports it. Provide at least one or two supporting arguments through an explanation of the thesis.

Paragraph 2: Connect to the question and the thesis using a topic sentence. Then connect to the prescribed text by discussing whether the text supports or challenges the question. Integrate the significance of the composer’s context and times, and his or her perspectives, and how these influence the text’s representation of belonging and the underlying assumptions of the text about belonging.
Paragraphs 3 - 5: Connect the topic sentence to the previous paragraph and build on the thesis. Use the question and the associated thesis or line of argument to discuss those aspects of the text that are relevant. Integrate an analysis of the textual features and details that convey belonging. Use quotes from the text, but don’t use lengthy quotes that are not explained or linked to your discussion. Make connections with one or more of the other texts through the thesis, characters’ responses to belonging or language features used to represent belonging.
To an individual, belonging is potently influenced by their connection to social and cultural contexts. While these connections can be fundamental in the forging of identity, they can present barriers that thwart an individual from forming an identity and from feeling a sense of belonging. This sense of disconnection is heightened when an individual’s perception of belonging is uncertain. Peter Skrzynecki’s suite of poetry explores this ambivalence and his search for a connection. Nam Le in the short story ‘Love and Honour’ and Devil’s Playground by Lucy Walker explore similar tensions that arise from the inability to belong to cultural and social contexts and the enduring quest of identity formation.
Texts of own Choosing

- Discerning choice of related material that enhance and strengthen the argument through subtle comparison or stark contrast.
- Enable the student to support and challenge the theses or lines of argument
- The discriminator!!

Way Home
Libby Hathorn
Related Texts

- *One Night the Moon*: Prejudice destroys all hope of a family being reunited.
- *Beneath Clouds*: A community divided by racism.
- *The Island*: Unquestioning conformity and mob rule in its most ugly and destructive form.
- *Apocalypse Now*
- *Black Balloon*
- *Che*
Related Texts

- Archie Roach: ‘Down City Streets’
- *Catcher in the Rye*: Holden chooses alienation because of the phoniness of others.
- *Jasper Jones* – Craig Silvey: ‘I think Jasper Jones speaks the truth in a community of liars.’
- Tim Winton: *The Turning* – short stories
Related Texts

- **Social Network**: How relationships strengthen and challenge the notion of belonging.
- Archie Roach’s songs and poetry: ‘Took the Children Away’...racial barriers
- **Whale Rider**: Gender barriers
- **A Beautiful Mind**: Barriers and obsessions
- **God of Small Things** - Arundhati Roy
Related Texts

- ‘Despair’ & ‘Scream’ – Edvard Munch
- Love and Honour’ - Nam Le
- Namatjira - Scott Rankin
- The Life Of Pi – Yann Martel
- The Bell Jar – Sylvia Plath
- Secret Lives of Others
- Skin
- Death of a Salesman – Arthur Miller
- Five Bells – Gail Jones
- ‘Vincent’ – Don Maclean
- Slum Dog Millionaire
- Persepolis
- City of God
- Tsotsi