

### Unpacking the question

The assessment criteria remind us that the module is about how ideas are represented in texts. Remember that the Syllabus states that, “Students analyse and evaluate how acts of representation, such as the choice of textual forms, features and language, shape meaning and influence responses”.

The instruction implies that conflict is a good thing, because it generates diversity of opinions and challenges thinking and assumptions.

A way into this question could be to choose evidence of conflicting perspectives from your prescribed text and at least one other text and explore how the representation of these differences in perspective creates ‘diverse and provocative’ views. To do this successfully, you will need to identify events, personalities and situations in the texts, identify the relevant conflicting perspectives and explain how those perspectives are represented.

The approach for the following response is, in the most basic terms, to:

- Identify a perspective or issue in your prescribed text and explain how it is represented
- Identify a similar perspective or issue in another text and explain how its different representation leads to a different understanding
- Write about at least one other text, apart from your prescribed text. Make sure that your textual discussion is balanced.

### Sample response: Shakespearean drama

**Prescribed text:** Julius Caesar, William Shakespeare, 1599

**Related texts:** BabaKiueria, Don Featherstone, 1984 (film)  
‘Eulogy for Princess Diana’, Earl Spencer, 1997 (speech)

Responds directly to the wording of the question and identifies some conflicting perspectives in the prescribed text

Each named perspective is taken in the order that is stated and connected to the two related texts, while addressing the Module C focus on representation of ideas

Takes first point listed in the introduction (clash of political ideologies) and explains this over two paragraphs, linked by the words *in contrast*

When points of view differ, diverse and sometimes provocative opinions will be generated. This is apparent in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, a play that explores a number of ideas from different perspectives: the clash of political ideologies; the clash of class and status; conflict between the public and private spheres; conflicts within seemingly homogeneous groups; and disagreement over definitions of ‘honour’ and ‘honourable’. Shakespeare conveys the complexity of these concepts to the audience through language and dramatic devices. The ways concepts are represented shape how the audience will perceive them. In Don Featherstone’s 1986 mockumentary, BabaKiueria, (pronounced, ‘barbecue area’) the elements of satire have been used to represent the clash of political ideologies and conflicts of class and status. The Earl of Spencer represents the conflict between the public and private spheres and different perceptions of honour through language and the devices of formal rhetoric in his 1997 eulogy for his sister, the Princess of Wales. In all these texts, there is a deliberate manipulation of language and other textual features to create a particular, highly subjective view of ‘reality’.

The central conflict of Julius Caesar, leading to Caesar’s assassination, is the clash of views about how Rome should be governed. Even though it is clear that Shakespeare disapproves of the conspirators and their murder, he also disapproves of Caesar’s manipulation to become sole ruler and is sympathetic to Brutus’s fears about the loss of the republic. On several occasions in the play Caesar is represented as deceptive and insincere, merely acting a part to get what he wants. The rejection of the crown, in particular, shows us Caesar at his most manipulative and self-interested. He

and Mark Antony have no qualms about shamelessly exploiting the gullibility of the masses for their own gain. Far from being concerned with the overthrow of the established Roman republican tradition, they are doing everything they can to bring this about.

In contrast, Brutus is wracked with conscience. He feels compelled to act against his own moral code for the greater good of Rome, and there is no doubt that his intentions are indeed honourable. He is unable to sleep and knows that it is wrong to associate with the conspirators who disguise themselves and will not show their faces or consciences to the light of day, but his fears for Rome and his sense of duty to a higher cause override his considerable misgivings. The other conspirators are shown by Shakespeare to have more in common with Caesar than with Brutus. Cassius tells us that he is stronger, braver and cleverer than Caesar and it is clear that Cassius's motives are self-interest, not genuine concern for Rome's future. Cassius acts a part to Brutus, seeming to defer to him and honour his opinions, just as Caesar does with the plebeians. But all the while Cassius is manipulating Brutus, the naïve and idealistic front-man, to carry out an assassination that is contaminated by Cassius's personal hatred.

Related text linked through contrast of methods

Don Featherstone employs quite different methods to present the clash of ideologies in [BabaKiueria](#). The unfairness of Australia's Aboriginal policies and entrenched racism is highlighted through an ironic inversion of reality: the carefree whites enjoying a peaceful 'traditional' barbecue on the beach are invaded by black imperialists, who assume power, take all the available land and confine conquered whites to their own suburban ghettos. Throughout the film, the conflicting perspectives of the powerless whites and their Aboriginal masters are highlighted by this role reversal: the subversion of the normal allows us to see that it is wrong when one group dominates and controls another. The strangeness of this situation causes us to question the fairness of the actual power relations that exist in Australia. White Australia easily accepts the conflict of black and white views when the white view prevails, but by showing us unacceptable marginalisation when the roles are reversed, Featherstone has generated a provocative insight.

Discussion of *diverse insights* from question

Both Shakespeare and Featherstone explore how power is imposed and maintained through the interaction of the rulers and those they rule. The Roman mob is an important part of the action in [Julius Caesar](#) but, unlike the nobility, they function as a single-minded group, rather than as defined individuals. They are shown as having power, such as when they have the power to cede Caesar the crown, but this power is really superficial, as we also see how they are being manipulated by Caesar into giving him the power he wants. Similarly, Antony tells them they have the power to avenge Caesar's murder, but again we have just seen them being manipulated by Antony to bring them to the point of murderous revenge. The perspective Shakespeare brings to this is that the masses are easily led and satisfied with the appearance of power, while real power resides with those who can manipulate the mob for their own ends.

How representation of ideas in a related text positions the audience

Featherstone explores some of the same ideas in [BabaKiueria](#). The black imperialists make all the rules and hold all the power. However, real power is exercised here through the denial of identity and validity. In the inverted world of [BabaKiueria](#), white people are disempowered through poverty, police brutality and indifference, arbitrary dispossession, government inaction, white tokenism and forced family separations. White people are

characterised as lazy, unintelligent and untrustworthy and those who protest about conditions are labelled “trouble-makers”. White rituals and cultural values are derided and dismissed as meaningless. Through using irony of situation and parodying the real circumstances of black-white relations in Australia, the audience understands how whole groups of people can be rendered powerless and kept in submission.

Conflicting perspectives of public/private in the prescribed text

There is a conflict between the public and private spheres in *Julius Caesar*. We see this most clearly in Caesar, whose domestic life is a humanising antidote to the godlike public persona he has carefully created. We also see the public and private lives of Brutus. The private Brutus is the one we understand best and in whom his disinterested motives, personal anguish and genuine “honour” are most obvious. Shakespeare makes the point that power and public image give us manufactured personalities that show very little of the real person or even what that person really feels and thinks. Thus, there can be conflicting perspectives within a person, as well as between people.

Second related text introduced and connected with prescribed text through the *situation* of public/private

The Earl of Spencer uses the public/private divide to great effect in his sister’s eulogy. He reminds his audience that she was a very public personality, loved and admired the world over. He brings the global audience for the eulogy into the private realm by addressing her as “you”, as though she were still with the audience and among them. But she was also a private individual and a private person and the real Diana was known best by her “blood family”. This phrase, together with the inclusive “you”, implies that the mass audience knew the real Diana in the same way as her own family did, but also suggests that her public family, the royal family, did not share this knowledge. He thus creates a number of conflicting perspectives about family and private lives. The world at large is part of Diana’s extended ‘family’, because they recognised Diana’s sincerity, openness, generosity and so on, and share the same values. The royal family, on the other hand, are not part of this family because they do not have her “natural nobility” and “classless” connection with the wider world. They are confined by their public “royal role” and have now forever lost the opportunity to know and appreciate Diana as the rest of the world instinctively understood her.

Topic sentence on *honour* which links both prescribed and second related text over two paragraphs

“Honour” and what it means to act honourably are explored by Shakespeare and the Earl of Spencer, using much the same methods and context. Mark Antony’s famous funeral oration in *Julius Caesar* uses many rhetorical devices to exploit the gullible plebeians and incite them to murderous vengeance. He is duplicitous from the outset, underplaying his skills as a public speaker to make his audience think he is being truthful and open with them. By repeating “honourable” and “noble” so often, he draws attention to the possibility that Brutus has actually been dishonourable and ignoble. Why else would these virtues need to be mentioned all the time? He also cynically manipulates his audience, knowing that they are easily bought and that their gullibility can be exploited. He claims that he is speaking truth and reason to them, but in fact nearly everything he says has an emotive quality that is intended to whip them up to a frenzy of vengeance. This is particularly so when he displays Caesar’s body as factual “evidence”: the language starts with the mildly negative “envious”, but, by the end of the description of the assassination, has moved through “cursed”, “stabbed” and “the unkindest cut of all” to “bloody treason”. He finishes the performance with an aside: “Now let it work”. Antony’s speech manipulates

the mob into believing that Caesar was indeed a noble and god-like statesman and that Brutus is no different from the other conspirators, a self-interested, cold-blooded murderer and far from an “honourable man”.

The Earl of Spencer also explores notions of honour in his speech. He also is addressing a public grief-stricken at a death and looking for someone to blame. Like Antony, he elevates his subject through denial. He warns his audience not to sanctify Diana, but the very connection of her name and “saint” has the effect of mythologising her in people’s memories as a kind, generous and pure woman, a woman of the people who had known the worst suffering. He depicts her as a victim by drawing attention to the irony that, whereas Diana was the ancient Roman hunting goddess, the real Diana was one of the hunted, her “genuine goodness” something that had to be destroyed by the forces of evil. The villains are the “ever-present paparazzi” and the voracious press with an insatiable appetite for anything about her. He includes the royal family in the list of the villainous by saying that he and his sisters will do their best to nurture the “souls” of William and Harry, so they are not narrowed and confined by lives “immersed by duty and tradition”. In all of this, he succeeds in depicting Diana as an honourable woman hounded to death by the press and abandoned by the cold-hearted royal family.

Conflicting perspectives do generate diverse and provocative insights, because there is inevitably a clash of opinions and beliefs. How those perspectives are represented in texts tells us the composer’s attitudes about the perspectives. Shakespeare shows us characters who are all manipulative, self-interested or misguided in some way, indicating that he is critical of their actions. Featherstone shows us how wrong Australia’s black-white relations are by reversing the real situation and making us squirm with discomfort at the result. The Earl of Spencer represents his sister’s life and death as a struggle between good and evil where the innocent are helpless victims. Each text comes from a different time and centres on a situation around which there are conflicting perspectives. By exploring the conflicting perspectives, each text gives the audience access to insights that may not have been possible by seeing only one view.

**Working with the sample response**

1. The words in the shaded box come from the Notes from the Marking Centre that appear below. Place the words in the table next to the synonym with the closest meaning.

**Words:** articulated; perspectives; thesis; sustained; judiciously; aspiring; diverse; provocative; adversely

Word	Synonym
	Line of argument
	Hopeful
	Negatively
	Continued
	With some thought
	Differing
	Challenging
	Expressed
	Viewpoints