



YEAR 8 EXTENSION WRITING

This term the Year 8AB English class engaged in an extension writing activity, where they explored the purpose of art in society in an extended response. The students were introduced to a new writing form, discursive writing, which is included in the HSC courses. I was very impressed with the way they engaged with this activity, and invite you to read some of the most impressive samples included here:

Is our purpose connected to what we can do, like a job or something greater?

Most of us will spend our lives trying to discover our purpose. Striving to find reason behind the occurrences of our everyday world, searching for greater fulfilment. Some people believe their purpose is to be a mother, or a business owner or someone who will make a difference. Our purpose is most certainly connected to what we can do, as our purpose is the reason we are on Earth. If our lives are not lived fulfilling what we believe to be our purpose are we really living at all? A passion unpursued is the greatest waste of human potential. The question we all should be asking ourselves is, What can't I do?

The purpose behind the job of an artist or a poet or a filmmaker is to express. These creative professions are some of the most significant facets of our ancient and modern world. Those who bear the talent to express vibrant emotion through the brushstrokes on a canvas or the lines of a poem hold the extraordinary power to influence and effect.

Of course, all art is subjective, and only you can decide whether an art piece moves you or

embodies something you have experienced, but I believe the most crucial part of our society is the making of art. If we had nothing to appreciate, nothing to observe, nothing capable of sparking emotion we would lose a key aspect of our very human nature.

Take Picasso's *Guernica* for example; This painting is based on Franco's attack on Guernica in 1937. Picasso has taken a catastrophic event that he was personally affected by, and created this moving expression of emotion through the medium of painting. Think of those who were injured or knew people who died in this bombing. Picasso has boldly expressed his political stance in a time where it could prove fatal, in order to speak out and comfort those affected.

To this day it is important people express their views and opinions through art, and even though we may not agree with all of them, we must recognise that to be able to live in a world with opportunities to produce pieces of work that hold such value and personal opinion is a blessing and most certainly, a right. If we lived a life robbed of artistic creation where would Picassos or the Jane Austens of the world be?

Art allows us to tell our most intimate thoughts and feelings, without speaking at all. Art transcends the verbal world. There is no medium so individualistic, so personal, and so beneficial, as art. Whether that be a movie or a painting or a book, we need art to spark conversation, to catalyse change, and to keep us thinking. Because truly the greatest gift in the world is that of expression.

- India W

Art has a remarkable ability to depict both the chaos and order in the world. It evokes feelings that we occasionally find difficult to express.

The painting, *Guernica*, by Picasso, does this quite well. It's more than just an anti-war demonstration; it's a glimpse into internal conflict.

I'm reminded of moments when life seems chaotic by the painting's unique shapes and striking contrasts. Like those debilitating times we all experience, every part is noisy and unpredictable. Those deranged, hopeless looks remind me of some of my own hardships. That's how life might seem sometimes—a mixture of panic, dismay, and a relentless fortitude.

We can see our messiness mirrored back in works like *Guernica*. They serve as a reminder that we are not alone, even in the midst of disaster.

Consider also Wilfred Owen's "*Dulce et Decorum Est*", where every line captures the chaos and horror of war, echoing the events in *Guernica*. Owen's depictions of men stumbling and breathing convey the uncertainty and horror of warfare, much like Picasso's warped figures.

In both pieces, we are drawn into a chaotic realm with no clarity or predictability. In "*Dulce et Decorum Est*", soldiers struggle, coughing and blinded, while gas fills the air. Like the screamed, broken figures in *Guernica*, the scene is in total chaos.

Like Picasso's piece, I'm personally reminded of the tough times that feel like I'm in a crowded room and there's no escape, people bombarding you at every moment. Owen's poem reflects the harsher realities of life, showing us we're not going through these things alone.

These works serve as a reminder that a significant portion of human misery is disorder. We are compelled to face this disturbing reality through poetry and art, demonstrating that we are not

alone in facing it even in the most dire circumstances.

Maybe that's part of art's purpose: to help us get through tough times, knowing others have been there too.

- Amelia S

Is our purpose connected to what we can do, like a job, or something greater? What is the purpose of an artist, filmmaker, novelist or poet?

Life is a funny thing. We get sent to this Earth to enjoy the pleasures of life as well as enduring the cruelties. Most people just enjoy these pleasures, but some are creators, people who create this entertainment, these beautiful, heart-wrenching, funny, creative expressions because pursuing their passion and making other people's existence more full of life brings a sort of joy and accomplishment that cannot be described.

The creators of these artistic expressions love their work, love creating these pieces that they pour their soul into, hoping that the same emotion sparks in the souls of whoever looks at their work. Whether it be an artist with their paints or a novelist with their pen and paper, that feeling never changes. Their work is their comfort and their job is to share that solace with others, hoping they enjoy that little dive out of reality for as long as they need.

I love to write my own stories and disappear out of reality into my own worlds because that brings comfort to me, and I hope one day whoever reads my work will enjoy it as much as I did while writing it.

Some pieces of work try to convey how broken the world is to spark awareness, like in Picasso's artwork, Guernica which portrays the suffering brought by violence and chaos, hoping that people would see how horrible violence is. The cubism and geometric shapes help convey the chaos to further establish the pain and turmoil.

Life is a beautiful thing, and although the artwork is beautiful, sometimes its message is ugly, because even though life is incredible, it isn't perfect. Artists express themselves in a way that words cannot and novelists usually try to convey a message with stories, using words in a different way to truly show what they mean. In Leigh Bardugo's trilogy, Shadow and Bone, it shows the importance of self control through more intense, fiction scenarios. The creators of artistic expressions pour their own broken souls into their work, portray the horrors of this world, but they also show the beauty, they also make people laugh and teach them lessons to apply into their own lives. They show everything. They are everything. Everyone expresses somehow, the only question is, where do you pour your soul?

- Syra N

Artists, filmmakers, novelists, and poets hold significant roles in society by using their creative talents to communicate complex human experiences.

Their work transcends mere entertainment, offering deep insights into emotions, culture, and historical events. Through their craft, they enable audiences to experience life from new

perspectives, giving them empathy and understanding.

Art is powerful because it allows individuals to engage with the world in ways that other professions do not. For instance, Picasso's Guernica is not merely a representation of war, but a profound statement about the chaos and suffering it causes. The distortion of form and scale in the painting powerfully conveys the emotional intensity of conflict, demonstrating that art can communicate far beyond literal interpretation. Picasso states that 'The meaning of life is to find your gift, this metaphor from Picasso tells us he knew what his gift was, it was painting and creating geometric paintings that look disproportional, in Guernica's case, to illustrate the chaos of war.

Through creativity, artists provide a language for expressing complex, often unspoken, truths about human existence. I remember feeling like this when, in Year 7, I travelled to an art museum and looked at an artwork that gave me a perspective I never thought I'd have.

These creative professions are significant because they reflect the values, struggles, and battles of society. Art records and shapes cultural history, capturing emotions and events that might otherwise be forgotten. They also challenge social norms, provoke new ways of thinking, and inspire change. Without such forms of expression, the world would be a much less reflective place, potentially stifling growth and progress.

If art were absent, life would become less rich and less meaningful. Without artistic expression, we would lose the ability to explore emotions, question societal values, and imagine different futures. Art challenges us to look beyond our immediate surroundings and think critically about the world. Without it, society would likely feel flat, lacking the depth that fuels our imagination, empathy, and progress.

In conclusion, artistic professions are essential to both individual and collective growth. They offer unique insights, encourage reflection, and help shape a more thoughtful, compassionate society. A world without art would be far less vibrant and connected.

- April M

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