English Stage 1
Work Samples

Reading
Complete a retrieval chart about short stories studied in class, including notes about plot, setting, characters and theme.

Complete comprehension exercises about selected feature articles, considering the ideas presented and how the headings, illustrations, point of view and style of language relate to those ideas.

Write a detailed response (500 - 800 words) to short written read in class, considering the themes and issues you find in the text.

Viewing
Identify themes in a film shown in class and write detailed responses to questions about characters, setting and plot.

Create a written response (500 - 800 words) to the ideas in a film that are relevant to your life.

Complete detailed notes or retrieval charts about film texts or still visual images based on selected topics.

Write a report about a range of popular visual images such as film posters or CD covers.

Writing
Create a research report on an aspect of your community, using a range of information gathering techniques such as survey questionnaires, letter or email approaches to appropriate agencies, library and internet research, and interviews.

Write an autobiographical narrative (500 - 800 words) relating an important or influential event in your life.

Write a narrative based on a selected theme.

Write a feature article for a teenage audience about a topic of relevance to teenagers. Make appropriate use of feature article conventions learnt in class.

Speaking and Listening
Devise and deliver oral presentations such as those below:

Deliver an autobiographical oral presentation (2 - 3 minutes) retelling an event from your life.

Deliver a Powerpoint presentation with appropriate explanation, showing aspects of a selected community.

Participate in a group discussion about a topic relevant to teenagers.
Interview a range of people as a part of the production of a research report.
English Stage 2
Work Samples

Reading
Answer these questions in relation to the passage which follows:

Write an essay outlining the ideas in the passage and explaining how the writer has constructed the passage to present them.

Write a detailed explanation of how the text represents comic book publishers. Make reference to the text in your response.

Write an essay explaining how values and attitudes relating to gender become evident in the text.

Give a detailed explanation of the ways different audiences might respond to the text.

Write an essay outlining relevant aspects of your own social and cultural context, and explaining how they influence your response to the text.

TEXT A

Superheroes need rescuing from sexism

Sometimes, defending superhero comics’ right to a place in mainstream culture is like defending a sozzled, lecherous uncle’s right to a wedding invitation. I dearly love them, but I’m ashamed of them too. This year, for instance, three tawdry incidents have left DC Comics and Marvel Comics, the “Big Two”, facing accusations of misogyny* from even their most ardent fans.

First and worst was the case of “Mary Jane Watson: slutty housewife”, when Marvel released a statuette of Spiderman’s girlfriend bending over to pull his costume out of a laundry basket, showing off maximum cleavage and thong underwear. Soon after came two issues of monthly comics with irredeemable front covers: Heroes For Hire #13 showed three busty superheroes menaced by an alien insect called the Brood, which many saw as a deliberate reference to the “tentacle rape: genre of Japanese manga comics; Justice League of America #10, meanwhile, showed off Power Girl with breasts that were surreally oversized even by comics’ regrettable standards.

Superhero comics have always been plagued with sexism. Back in the 60s, the problem was marginalisation* - just as every black superhero had to have “black” in his name, female superheroes were called something like Shrinking Violet or Invisible Girl, and certainly knew their place.

These days, there are lots more strong women in comics. But marginalisation has been replaced by objectification*: female characters get stuck with implausible curves, skimpy costumes, and stripper poses. Then there’s “women in refrigerators” syndrome - the way male writers seem happy to make violence against women (often sexual violence) into a cheap plot device.

This year’s comic scandals have left a lot of fans wondering if real progress will ever be made. But, on the bright side, they’ve helped rally together a network of passionate feminist bloggers and critics who are sick of Marvel and DC Comics behaving like teenage boys. Sites like When Fangirls Attack and Girls Read Comics and They’re Pissed have made the sexism debate impossible to ignore - and although Marvel refused to back down over Mary Jane or Heroes For Hire, the Power Girl backlash led DC to revise that cover, reducing her cup size from Inconceivable to merely Absurd.
Except, actually, that’s not really such a victory, is it? There’s still a long way to go - and you might feel that, if you want to see female characters treated with any respect by their creators, the male-dominated world of superhero comics is just not for you. But there are exceptions. Two of Marvel’s most entertaining writers - Buffy creator Joss Whedon and Lost staff writer Brian K Vaughn - have casts full of believable women. (Try Whedon’s Astonishing X Men Volume 1: Gifted or Vaughn’s Runaways Volume 1: Pride and Joy.) But perhaps the greatest female superhero of recent years is Michael Bendis’s Jessica Jones. Formerly a flying crime-fighter called Jewel, Jones hangs up her cape to become a private investigator. For more than forty issues - now collected in a series of paperbacks starting with Alias Volume 1 - Bendis took us inside her head, creating one of the bravest, wittiest and most sensitive portraits of a female character that superhero comics have ever seen.

Plus, she had a realistic body and didn’t try to battle evil in a gold bikini and stiletto heels. But even that wasn’t what really shocked fans. Jessica Jones had a particular superpower that was so alien, so incomprehensible, so disturbing, that barely a single male comics writer had ever dared to depict it before. Wonder Woman or Storm may save the world twice a day, but they’d never admit this terrifying secret. That’s right: Jessica Jones actually had a menstrual cycle.

* misogyny - hatred, dislike or mistrust of women
* marginalisation - the social process of ignoring the interests of particular groups

**Writing**

Write extended texts in any form responding to the topics below. Focus on using appropriate generic conventions and maintaining a high standard of spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Write a text (800-1000 words) designed to show how the choices we make in our lives help to define who we are.

We can often find ideas and themes in texts which we can apply to ourselves. Write a text (800-1000 words) designed to convince English teachers to study a particular text in class for this reason.

Write a text (800-1000 words) which includes the line “There is a lot more to this than meets the eye.”

Write a text (800-1000 words) explaining why you like or admire a character from a fiction text you have studied this year.

**Speaking and Listening**

Devise and deliver oral presentations such as those below:

Present a persuasive speech to the class (3 - 4 minutes) on a selected topic, making use of the persuasive techniques learned in class.

Participate in a panel discussion designed to present and evaluate ideas in relation to a social issue.

Present a tutorial exploring an aspect of a novel or film studied in class. (Approximately 5 minutes speaking time plus engagement in general discussion.)
Viewing
Answer these questions in relation to the images which follow:

Identify and compare ideas about women and clothing in the two images. What does the clothing suggest about women and the roles they play in a society?

Explain how the images work to represent women in a particular way. Consider the content of the images, and also construction, aspects such as framing, focus etc.

Write an essay explaining how each of the images works to either reinforce or undermine predominant social values relating to gender.

Who, if anybody, might be offended by the content of either of the two images? Explain in detail why those people might respond in such a way.

What emotional responses do you have to the women in each image? What intellectual responses do you have? Which responses are stronger for you?

**IMAGE A**

![Image A](scienceprogress.org)

**IMAGE B**

![Image B](kerrycollison.blogspot.com)