MATURA WRITING TASKS

LITERARY ESSAY

Level C1 · set texts: About a Boy (Hornby) & Foster (Keegan)

Your goal at C1: Write a sophisticated literary essay with a nuanced argument. Analyse language, form and structure closely, weave in evidence, and sustain a critical, cohesive voice.

C1 · PHASE 1 – CRITICAL VOCABULARY

Replace each phrase with a precise critical term, then use it in a sentence about a set text.

1 the way the story is told → _____
2 the feeling/mood of a scene → _____
3 words that stand for bigger ideas → _____
4 how the character grows → _____
5 leaving things unsaid → _____
6 the writer's choice of words → _____

TASK: Add five advanced critical terms of your own (e.g. juxtaposition, understatement).

C1 · PHASE 2 – A NUANCED THESIS

A C1 thesis is arguable and precise, not a plot summary. Rewrite each flat statement as a nuanced thesis.

1 About a Boy is about a man who changes.
2 Foster is a sad story about a girl.
3 Both books are about family.
4 Keegan uses simple language.

C1 · THE STRUCTURE YOU ARE BUILDING TOWARDS

Study this plan before you start. A literary essay makes an **argument** about a text and proves it with **evidence** from the book. The heart of it is the **P–E–A** method: make a **Point**, give **Evidence** (a short quotation or detail), then **Analyse** how it works. Write about literature in the **present tense**.

A LITERARY ESSAY — STRUCTURE



C1 · PHASE 3 – CLOSE ANALYSIS

Sophisticated essays analyse the text closely. Build an analytical paragraph using the chain below (invent a short, plausible quoted phrase where needed).

Element	What to include
Claim	a precise interpretive point
Quotation	a brief, well-chosen phrase
Technique	the device at work (imagery, understatement…)
Effect	what it does to the reader / meaning
Link	how it serves your wider argument

Write two developed paragraphs of close analysis – one on *About a Boy*, one on *Foster* – each running through the full chain.

C1 · PHASE 4 – ANALYSING FORM & STYLE

Write one developed sentence analysing each feature.

- Keegan's **spare, understated prose** and use of silence/gaps in *Foster*
- Hornby's **dual narration and humour** in *About a Boy*
- the significance of the **first-person child narrator** in *Foster*
- the use of **contrast and structure** to trace Will's or Marcus's development
- the effect of each novel's **ending** (ambiguity, restraint, resolution)

C1 · PHASE 5 – HANDLING COMPLEXITY & COUNTER-READINGS

A top essay acknowledges other interpretations. For each claim, add a counter-reading and your response.

1. Will is genuinely redeemed by the end of About a Boy.
2. The Kinsellas' care in Foster is wholly positive.
3. Foster has an optimistic ending.
4. About a Boy is essentially a comic novel.

C1 · PHASE 6 – COHESION & CRITICAL VOICE

Combine your strongest analysis into one cohesive 100-word passage. It must:

- sustain a single line of argument, not a list of observations
- integrate quotation and analysis seamlessly
- use varied cohesive devices and a confident critical register
- compare or connect the two texts where relevant

C1 · PHASE 7 – INTRODUCTION & CONCLUSION

Introduction: frame the question, signal your critical angle, and state a nuanced thesis in one confident paragraph.

Conclusion: synthesise your reading and reflect on the text's wider significance or artistry.

C1 · FINAL WRITING TASK

Choose ONE question and write a critical literary essay.

Either: “In *Foster*, what is left unsaid matters as much as what is said.” Discuss how Keegan uses restraint and silence.
Or: “*About a Boy* is a novel about learning to need other people.” To what extent do you agree?
Or: Compare how *Foster* and *About a Boy* present the idea of family.

Write a **critical literary essay of 180–200 words** in which you:

- frame the question and state a nuanced thesis
- develop a sustained argument through close analysis of the text(s)
- analyse language, form and technique, integrating quotation
- engage with complexity and conclude with critical insight.

Your essay should read as fluent, sophisticated and cohesive, with a distinctive critical voice.