The Craft of Writing
Imaginative Composition and Reflection Statement
English Standard
Part A: Imaginative Composition

The Yellow Star on my Coat

I rubbed the dull yellow star on my velvet jacket apprehensively, hoping that this new identification would not make a difference in my outside life. Shrinking back into my mother’s shadow, I pretended I was oblivious to the dark looks and whispers that were directed our way. This time that I had always looked forward to; the afternoons in the park, seemed like torture rather than a reward.

Sitting on the well-worn wooden park bench, I observed the merry children frolicking in the playground. Their happy shrieks seemed like a distant memory. The playground seemed beckoning, but the star on my jacket pulled me back with magnetic force, never letting me roam far from the protection of my mother’s side. I sat glumly on the bench pondering my surroundings, whilst Mother sat reading her latest fashion magazine. I was thankful when she said it was time to go home.

The sun was slowly sinking behind the hill, casting long shadows across the pathway as we left the park. My house welcomed me inside and wrapped me in its warmth. The fire crackled in the hearth, and the strong scent of Mothers perfume hung in the air. I took off my jacket and hung it on the hook ready for tomorrow. Every time I took my jacket off, it felt like the spell had been broken from an awful curse that was bestowed on me.
The morrow approached with haste and as I stepped outside, the blustery weather shook my coat, reminding me of the person who I truly was. Dark clouds hung over my head as I made my way to the park. The place that had always welcomed me shook its head - I was no longer accepted. It snickered as I turned away and made my way back home. The feeling of rejection penetrated my soul, making me feel more alienated and alone than I had ever felt before. Why was I a victim of circumstance?

Like the only thread I was hanging from had been cut, all my connections had been severed. Days were spent in solitude and sheer boredom. Rain beat on the windowpanes, mimicking the tears on my face. The wind pounded on the glass like angry little fists with no patience. An envelope lying on the floor caught my attention. The bold words ‘Eviction Notice’ marked the wet cover. These were the same words that Mother had murmured about. This sudden incident stunned me, and fears infected my mind. Out of the corner of my eye, the star on my jacket looked over me as I held the letter in my hand. The beating of the rain was the only sound as we sat in silence. Mother folded the letter and placed it in on the marbled bench, bowing her head like a wilted flower.

With my trunk opened, and clothes and toys sprawled out in my airy room, I wondered what I should take. I questioned the essentials of existence, not knowing what my new life would require. After repeatedly sitting on my belongings to flatten them, I clasped my trunk together.
I stuck my hands through the sleeves of my dark green jacket and picked up
my trunk. The jacket squeezed me tightly, sending small shivers up my spine. A
sense of nostalgia mingled with sadness came over me as I stepped out of
my house. I gladly accepted Mother’s hand as we made our way down the
street, filled with others doing the same. My heart and shoes were heavy as I
trod along the road that had known me for so long. We were soon swallowed
up by those making their way to the same unknown destination.

Just as I thought we would never arrive; a faint outline of buildings was seen in
the distance. As we came closer, I could see dirty gray apartments that
snuggled together. My mind that was used to solitude was suddenly flooded
with friends, like seeing the light after spending years in darkness. As I stepped
inside our new house, I did not dread the morrow. I knew the radiating star on
my jacket would connect me with my new companions, like a lost puzzle
piece that had finally been fitted.
Part B: Reflection

The short story titled *The Yellow Star on my Coat* uses the voice of Charles to explore the themes of identity and connections. The voice of Charles and the setting of the park have been derived from the picture book, *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne. In this, Charles faces loneliness and limited connections. These themes were adapted to the short story, and a new theme of identity was created.

Within the short story, the idea of how connection is more important than social status or material possessions was expressed. Likewise, the message of overcoming ashamedness of race with acceptance was also conveyed.

The creative piece was written in the form of a short story, as this allowed for the emotions of Charles to be expressed. Choosing this form also invited the reader to feel the events in his life. A stylistic choice included the use of first-person voice, which made the story more personal and allowed the reader to understand life through his perspective.

With the use of language devices and literary techniques, the key messages were developed. Historical allusion to the Third Reich in Germany was used where Charles and his family are Jews, in which they are faced with issues that arose in this time, including eviction from their house. This was used to show extreme disconnection and loss of identity, to further portray the key ideas in the story. Historical allusion is shown throughout the text including references to the yellow star on Charles’s jacket.
Motif was used to develop the historical allusion further. Charles’s Jacket symbolizes his identity due to the Star of David that is attached to it. Laws passed in Germany required all Jews to wear the Star of David. In the story the jacket is a motif and plays an important role, dividing him and connecting him to the others depending on their identity, such as “my jacket pulled me back with magnetic force”. This conveys to the reader how much Charles’s identity influenced his actions, through with he could not make connections. The motif was also used to express the idea of accepting race. This was shown where he speaks about “the dull yellow star” at the start of the story, and “the radiating star” at the end, revealing his shift in attitude towards his religion.

Adapting the story Voices in the Park to a sustained creative composition and using the historical allusion in an interesting and original way, provided a challenge. This was addressed by using language techniques that expressed human emotions of loneliness and connections, where Charles eventually found connections due to his religion. Using a range of literary techniques including figurative and descriptive language, the message of identity and connection was effectively portrayed.