Written Explanations (also known as Statement of Intention, Reflection Page and various other names throughout different schools), are short introductory pieces to your Writing in Context essay. These Written Explanations are intended to provide your assessor an indication of what they should expect from your piece. Essentially, written explanations are a discussion of your own work. In this case, you are writing to inform the assessor of 5 elements of your essay, commonly known as FLAP + C:

- Form
- Language
- Audience
- Purpose
- Context

Most assessors are quite lenient with how you want to approach the Written Explanation – there is no rigid structure that you need to abide by. As we will discuss below, this allows you to consider what aspects of form, language, audience, purpose and context you wish to include. Each of the points should establish why you have chosen a particular form, or audience etc. Written Explanations are only required for two SACs, both Writing in Context. They are considered as part of your SAC and thus, are marked accordingly. They are however, not examinable during the English exam.

**Form**

There are traditionally three forms of writing accepted in assessments: expository, creative or persuasive essay. Recently, hybrids of the three are also accepted for example, expository essay with a touch of creative writing. Whichever form of writing you select, you need to explain the reason behind your choice. Some questions to consider:

- What was the form I chose?
- Why did this seem like the best form to choose?
- What influenced me to write an expository/persuasive/imaginative piece?

**Example**

'I chose to write in an expository style, employing conventions of format and style of a traditional essay. This allows me to express my ideas in a logical order while adopting a sophisticated tone.'

**Language**

When writing, you choose particular words and phrases to illustrate your ideas. Think about what type of language have you used and why. Perhaps your piece is formal or informal, sophisticated or simple, or, first- or third- person perspective. Also consider here the voice or persona through which you have chosen to channel your piece. All these
factors are important in shaping your Context piece. Also consider language techniques you may have incorporated such as repetition, rhetorical questions, metaphors, symbolism and more. Some questions to consider:

• What kind of language have I used to write this piece?
• What is my style like and why did this seem to be the most appropriate way to write for my purpose?

**Example**

'I have chosen formal language in an attempt to demonstrate a comprehensive and thoughtful piece. Inclusive words such as 'we' and 'us' have been incorporated to allow me to connect with the audience. Furthermore, my use of first-person perspective aims to add credibility to my argument. I have written in the first-person through the persona of Galileo.'

**Audience**

You must select a targeted audience for your essay. Your choice can be VCE students to young children, or even to your future self. Make sure your target audience is suitable for your essay – select a group that would realistically be interested in your work. Some questions to consider:

• Who am I writing for?  
• Is my audience the assessor, my peer group, family, a wider audience?
• Can I envisage publication of my writing for a particular audience?

**Example**

'My piece is to be published in an anthology for VCE students familiar with the subject matter and texts. As they have familiarity with the concepts I discuss, I intend for readers to depart with a greater understanding and appreciation of the ideas in my written piece.'

**Purpose**

The purpose section is where you discuss the message you would like to send to your audience. Here you discuss your contention or arguments, whether you completely agree, disagree or a bit of both in regards to your prompt. Some questions to consider:

• What was my purpose in writing?  
• What was I trying to explore?
• What did I want my reader to understand about my ideas at the end?

**Example**

'The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate that there can be different outcomes from encountering conflict: firstly, that conflicts can change many people through growth in understanding or a sense of self-development and secondly, that there are times when people remain unaffected by conflict and thus, unchanged.'
Context

Since your essay is based on your Context prompt, you should provide a brief discussion of the basic ideas behind the Context. You can do this prior to your Purpose section since it is a good lead-in. Some questions to consider:

• Why did I discuss these particular aspects of this context? • Why did I include the ideas and examples I used?
• Why did these examples or this story seem relevant for my purpose?

Example

'In this essay, I explored the idea that 'Conflict inevitably changes people'. Every person encounters conflict. It drives individuals to challenge themselves, and deal with new experiences.'

Different schools will set different word limits for Written Explanations. These can range from 150 – 400 words. With such a small word limit, be succinct and choose what you will discuss wisely in order to score maximum marks allocated to Written Explanations.

Opening Statements

Use these starters if you are struggling with your written explanation.

• I have chosen to write in the form of:
• In this form I have focused on language that is:
• I have made an effort to not write in language that is:
• Because the audience may perceive my writing as:
• The structure of the ... form requires me to:
• I have written my material for the audience of:
• This audience may be interested in my content because of the following context:
• The purpose of my writing is to relate to this audience in the following way:
• My interpretation of the prompt has incorporated ideas that address the following concepts:
• The text has helped to inspire my writing by discussing the following themes:
• These themes were raised by the following events in the text:
• Final summary statement: After reading my writing I feel my audience will learn:
• With this information they may feel:
• The things I missed out and did not achieve were:
Writing a Reflection Page – F L A P + C

**Form**

**Language**

**Audience**

**Purpose**

+ **Context**

**Context**: ‘Identity and Belonging’.

**Text Used**: ‘The Catcher in the Rye’.

My expository piece, entitled ‘Guess Who?’ is a short article intended to be featured in a free local magazine such as MX, targeted at technology savvy youth and adults between ages 15 and 35. The title, ‘Guess Who’, refers to a common childhood game in which players must use stereotypes to guess the identity of their character, but it also mirrors a teen’s struggle to battle their multiple identities and truly ‘guess’ who they are and where they belong. Through the use of inclusive language, personal pronouns and a direct voice I have aimed to form a personal connection with the audience; something that online users often crave. My purpose is to highlight the link between identity crises such as depression and the world of online identity fabrication. In my piece I have drawn on the novels ‘The Member of the Wedding’ and ‘The Catcher in the Rye’, discussing the ways in which both these texts show that finding your true self is difficult.

**Context**: ‘Encountering Conflict’.

**Text Used**: ‘Night’.

This expository piece is an article I wrote as a guest writer reviewing several texts suggested as resources for encountering Conflict and Racism. This article could be published in a magazine for English teachers, designed to inform them about ‘Night’ and ‘American History X’ and more specifically, how they are useful resources for the teaching of the main ideas surrounding the chosen Context. The title of my article – “Teaching kids the ‘whole cost’ of the Holocaust” – contains a play on words to grab readers’ attention. I have included statistics and a quote from a historian to prove students learn a lot form studying Holocaust texts. I compared the examples of Elie Wiesel’s compromising of his faith in God and Derek’s (from American History X) change in values, to illustrate that the ability to compromise is important when dealing with conflict/racism.
Context: ‘Encountering Conflict’.

Text Used: ‘Night’.

My imaginative piece, a short story entitled ‘My Memory of My Mother’ is written to reveal more about the female experience of Holocaust. This story could be published as part of a collection of female Holocaust survivor stories aimed at female readers between the ages of 15-45; the age of the women in these stories. In Night, we don’t see much of the female experience. Madame Schacter is dismissed by the other Jews as insane. I have based one of my characters (who nobody believes) on Madam Schacter and illustrated that the mental scars of her experience will never be healed. To explore the physical scars of this conflict, my protagonist speaks about meeting Dr. Mengele and recounts some of the experiments he conducted on Jews. I have included several quotes from ‘Night’ and written these in the voice of my female character. I have also referred to symbols such as the stars, darkness and fire, illustrating that these represent the same thing for my character as they did for Elie Wiesel; hope, despair and destruction, respectively.

Context: ‘Encountering Conflict’.

Text Used: ‘Night’.

My persuasive piece is a speech, delivered by a professor of Behavioural Science at Monash University to first year Behavioural Science students. I have referred to examples of humane and inhumane behaviour from Night, such as when Rabbi Eliahou’s son forsakes him and the men are killed in a stampede for bread compared to when the local Germans threw food to the Jews. I also referred to the valuable lessons that can be learned from the Blue Eyed, Brown Eyed experiment and demonstrated the reasons racism occurs and argued what we can learn from these. The aim of this speech is to persuade my audience that racism is not an innate behaviour, it is learned, and in turn, we can and should learn how to prevent it. I have used questions to signpost my argument, a strong and knowledgeable tone to come across as authoritative, and statistics about racism to back up my arguments.