Prompt: Distorting reality can result in both good and bad.

Unpacking the prompt:

“Distorting reality”

* Twisting
* Garbling
* Altering
* Changing
* Falsifying
* Misleading
* Disfiguring
* Warping
* Realism
* Authenticity
* Truth
* Genuineness
* Certainty
* Representativeness
* Veracity
* Actuality
* Experience
* Existence

“Good and bad”

* Positives and negatives
* Polar opposites
* Good and evil
* Light and dark
* Light and heavy
* Day and night
* Sunrise and sunset
* Giving and taking
* Easy and hard

Recent events/texts/sources-

* Refugees
* Children overboard incident
* ANZAC Day- glorifying war
* Religion- dogma
* Essendon drug saga
* Reality television

Connection to Context ‘Whose reality?’-

* Different environmental factors lead to different truths
* What is good for one person is not necessarily good for the majority
* It’s necessary to dream to avoid bad things

References to the text- Death of a Salesman

* Betrayal leads to resentment
* Self-deception blinds us to reality

Possible contentions-

Is it ever ok to lie?

A guide to keeping everyone happy

A guide to happiness

There is always next time

Hope for Generation Y, Z

Possible expository styles-

* Essay
* Article
* Reflection

Options

1. An essay on the benefits and disadvantages of allowing children to have unrealistic dreams
2. A feature article on Australia’s love affair with reality television
3. A guide to being Australian/un-Australian
4. A expose on good and bad of plastic surgery
5. An essay on imagination and its benefits/disadvantages.

M- Message

1. Audience

P- Purpose

S- Style

Message-

Exploring why Australian love reality television

Audience-

Green guide readership-

Purpose-

Inform the readership of the good and bad of

Style-

Feature article- sarcastic tone

Structure:

* Intro- the idea of reality television and a television-loving public
* First paragraph- cheap
* Second paragraph- entertaining
* Third paragraph- appealing to the lowest common denominator
* Fourth paragraph- we are being manipulated
* Conclusion- weighing up the positives and negatives

**“From MasterChef to the Bachelor: Australia’s love affair with reality television”**

Australians loves reality television. In fact, Australia loves television full stop. However, there are few things more enjoyable than sitting down after a long day at the office with a glass of red and watching George, Gary and Matt tell shouting aggressively, perhaps unnecessarily so that there are just ’30 minutes left’. We turned up our noses as Blake chose Sam then Louise and then someone else. And we took great pleasure in seeing Big Kev loose ridiculous amounts of ‘fried chicken’ fat from his bones. Without a doubt Australians are passionate about watching people being manipulated to behave in ways that they would not usually behave. So why reality television and why not reality?

* Imagination can help us doctor/ shape, interpret/ our reality in such a way as to make life more pleasant, hopeful, happy, rewarding… (illusions can be good)
* Too much imagination, too many illusions, can be destructive/ illusory/ lead to failure/ downfalls and disappointment.
* Sometimes we need imagination to imagine a life that is true, and that brings happiness and that may resist the dominant narrative/ story… (Biff imagines a different life story)

**“The importance of imagination in a contemporary society: equally rewarding and destructive.”**

Imagination is a wonderful gift. It can help us shape and interpret our reality to make life more bearable; happier, brighter and better. However, too much imagination, too many illusions can equally lead to downfalls and disappointment. Sometimes we need imagination to bring us happiness and sometimes the truth can be destroyed by an over-active imagination.

Letting imagination run wild is one of the most rewarding and exciting things to do. We live in a society that values and encourages dreaming. As young children we are encouraged to reach for the stars, to imagine a more hopeful, more peaceful and overall enhanced version of our lives. From the earliest fairy tales we are read as small children we learn of good overcoming evil. Prince Charming is always climbing through a window to save Sleeping Beauty from an endless monotony. Similarly evil stepmothers are dressed in the darkest shades while Elsa gets to wear beautiful shades of blue with sparkly diamonds and deep blue eye shadow. As we grow we are encouraged to believe in the power of good and a a possibility of a better reality. Recently watching J.K. Rowling one of the most prominent dreamers of the 21st Century give her Harvard commencement speech we are yet again reminded of the importance of having a dream. At the age of thirty Rowling was sipping tea in small cafes and furiously scribbling tales of Harry and his friends at Hogwarts. Her stories remind us that good overcomes evil, just as a down-and-out Rowling followed a similar rise as her stories took on international acclaim and become a multi-million dollar venture. Rowling remains inspiration to younger generations and those to come that letting your imagination run wild is fortuitous and beneficial.

Nevertheless, equally we are constantly reminded that an over-active imagination, too many illusions of grandeur can be destructive. Having an over-active imagination without grounding in truth can also lead to failure. In the case of the Essendon Football Club, players who have dreams of being top-class athletes, fit enough and strong enough to lead the competition ultimately led them to injecting who-knows-what. The pressure of fitting in and reaching their dreams steered them to making decisions that they no doubt regret. Similarly, it was difficult to watch as many Australians looked on helplessly as Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran’s lives were ended by the firing squad almost one year ago. While main stream media and many around the country were condemning their impending fate as inhumane and unnecessary it turned out that these discussions, debates and pleas would go unheard by the Indonesian government and a society that has a zero tolerance attitude toward drug smuggling. No amount of dreaming was going to save these two from the firing squad. Likewise, it is difficult to read *Dear America- Letters from Vietnam* without becoming emotional, young soldiers who dreamt of one day returning to their hometowns. Many never did. They were lead into war regarding it as a heroic thing to do but those who returned were welcomed home as heroes. In these cases, no amount of imagination was going to lead to a positive outcome.

Sometimes we need to imagine a life that is true, brings happiness and that may resist the dominant narrative. Previous generations are often condemned for being less motivated, less resilient and less successful than the ones that came before them. Like Biff in *Death of a Salesman,* most of us feel the need to head out on our own into the world with limited recognition thought for what our parents have done before us. We must forge our own paths. Just as Willy chastises Biff for not living up to his potential, Biff is determined not to allow his life to follow the same boring narrative as his father’s. He imagined a different life story that would ultimately lead to happiness. Miller explores the concept of a fluid American Dream that alters from generation to generation. Is it any wonder the ANZAC Day has emerged recently as a day of celebration. April 25th was a day that was once used as a warning of the failures and horrors of war and even not that long ago was seen to tarnish our reputation as a peaceful country. Where the dominant narrative not that long ago was of atrocities of meaningless death and destruction, we now see young men sporting southern cross tattoos and wearing the union jack emblazoned flag as a cape. Perhaps they need to imagine war as a place where national heroes are borne and not the grim reality of blood and carnage. The grim reality that this day actually commemorates is resistant to the happiness the alternative offers.

When we use our imaginations we can control the battle between good and evil. Our dreams have been steeped in the history of storytelling, imagining a happier world with less destruction and the reality that man can be evil and cruel. However, imagination can be equally damaging. Not allowing us to face reality and leading to disappointment as our dream lives will never live up to the heights of our imaged ones. It is true that regardless of the quality of our imagination we need to escape the real world that is grim and a truth that we would rather ignore.

**Written explanation:**

This expository essay entitled “The importance of imagination: equally rewarding and destructive” is aimed at an adult audience who are aware of current events in Australia’s media. It is written as a feature article in *The Age- Good Weekend* magazine as a reflection of current and historical events so as to engage a wider audience.

This essay addresses the context of ‘Whose reality?’ by exploring the ideas of an imagined reality and why people choose to delve into illusions rather than face the truth. I have chosen to write at first about the importance of imagination and the rewards that an active imagination can bring as well as the destruction that imagination can bring. I have used examples of current issues such as the death of drug smugglers in Indonesia as well as the glorification of war on ANZAC Day to engage the reader in thinking about their own use of imagination in their lives.

I have addressed the prompt ‘Distorting reality can result in both good and bad’ by exploring the ‘distorting reality’ as imagination and then looking at both the advantages and disadvantages of using ones imagination rather than reality. I have also chosen to discuss the necessity of imagination as a means of escaping the harsh conditions of life.

I have referenced ‘Death of a Salesman’ in my third paragraph. Using the example of Biff’s determination to forge his own path and not walk the same path as his father, I have explored the idea that it is important to have dreams that veer away from the norm so as to seek out happiness.

I have written this piece using easily accessible language for a wider audience. I have referenced current events and contemporary literature like *Harry Potter* to engage a younger audience and then reference *Dear America: Letters from Vietnam* to encapsulate an older audience with the hope that it will spark discussion among families about the necessity of imagination.