English Studies- Understanding the 2019 HSC examination section 4 part 1 transcript

(Duration:17 minutes 09 seconds)

Welcome to the HSC hub student support session for English Studies. In this session, we are unpacking section four, the writing skills section of the HSC English Studies examination paper. Like our other resources, this resource can be used by teachers with their classes or by students revising in their own time. If using this in the classroom context, you may like to view the presentation and pause and discuss key ideas with your students during designated times, add your own ideas, resources, or sample questions to the resource booklet, allocate sections for students to view as flip learning, and then co-construct modelled, guided and then independent responses. If using this resource at home independently, you will need a copy of the student booklet, either hard copy or digital, an access to the 2019 examination paper and the sample paper, all found by searching NESA English Studies on the NESA website.

This resource is part one of the section four, writing response component of the examination. In this part of the resource, students will be able to understand the types of texts required in section four of the examination, specifically imaginative texts. In this resource, we're exploring the writing skill section of the examination and how to ensure you can engage with this section in the examination. Some examples and activities are available in the student resource booklet.

This section is quite different from other parts of the examination. The writing skills section could include a persuasive, informative or imaginative piece. So in this part of the presentation, we will unpack the various types of questions and how you could engage with this in your exam. You'll be required to compose a creative, extended response based on a stimulus or question. This section does not require you to connect with texts you've studied in class. Rather, it's an opportunity to showcase your skills in writing. Don't forget the English Studies presentation, Expectations for the Examination, which walks you through each section of the paper. It is strongly suggested you view that presentation first. This shows you where this section of the examination is in relation to the rest of the paper and where you can write your response.

Like explained in section three of the examination, time management is crucial to your performance. This section of the paper is 30 minutes in length. Try your best to adhere to these time guides. As a reminder, here are some time management tips. Pop your head up often and check the clock. Ensure that you include time for an adequate conclusion. You don't want your conclusion to appear tacked on. Plan your response before you execute it. That way, you don't get lost in answering or engaging with the question and spend too much time on one section or ID and not enough time on the other. Your plan should not take up too much of your time. It should rather just be a skeleton of what will be in your response. There shouldn't be a lot of detail in there at all. Have a look at the resource booklet for an example of planning your response.

Let's get started. Let's start with Activity one, types of texts. How confident are you? It's a bit of an audit of your learning. So how confident are you in writing the three types of texts? The three types of texts are imaginative, informative and persuasive. Take the most appropriate column in this table for how you feel right now. Do you feel very confident, a little confident, so-so, a little worried or very worried? Remember to tick the most appropriate value in this activity in the student resource booklet when you complete all the resources and parts of the support for section four of the English Studies examination, go back to Activity 1a in your student booklet and complete the types of text features. Your level of confidence should have built and you'll find that these types of texts are no longer so concerning. These should reinforce your knowledge of this section of the examination.

It is important to know the type of texts you may be required to create in this section of the examination. The three main types of texts are imaginative, informative, persuasive. The "New South Wales English Study Stage 6 Syllabus" glossary of key words defines imaginative, informative and persuasive as types of texts. Imaginative, a text that represent ideas, feelings and mental images in words or visual images. An imaginative text might use metaphor to translate ideas and feelings into a form that can be communicated effectively to an audience. Imaginative texts also make new connections between established ideas or widely recognised experiences in order to create new ideas and images. Imaginative texts are characterised by originality, freshness and insight. These texts include novels, traditional tales, poetry, stories, plays, fiction for young adults and children including picture books and multimodal texts such as film. Each of these, however, are not the styles or forms of writing you would see in the examination. They may ask for an imaginative piece or a persuasive piece. However, they could also ask for an argument which we know is persuasive or a short story which we know is imaginative. Do not just expect to see the words persuasive, informative or imaginative. Some samples of the forms of writing you may be asked to create could be short stories, poems or extracts of an imaginative piece. It could ask you to start the imaginative piece with a written stimulus or use it at the end or use a visual stimulus as a setting for a story. This is not an exhaustive list but just some examples of what you may be asked to write. Remember imaginative does not mean just a short story.

This is all available in Resource one in the student booklet. Considering the definition available in Resource one in your booklet, let's reflect on your past learning and think about the types of an imaginative text you have created in the past. Think back to your work in year 11 or even year 10. Identify one imaginative text you have written in the past. Explain the plot. What was the purpose of this piece of writing? Was it for class? Was it marked? What did you receive if it was marked? What did you like about it? What was the hardest part about writing it? Did it do any of the examples given in the definition? Did it represent ideas, feelings and mental images in words or visual images? Did it use metaphor to translate ideas and feelings into a form that can be communicated effectively to an audience? Did it also make new connections between established ideas or widely recognised experiences in order to create new ideas and images? These are ways that you can consider the definition and if your pieces in the past have done those things. If it did any of the three of those things that we just mentioned, it would be classified as an imaginative text. Pause the presentation and complete Activity two, reflecting on past learning imaginative texts.

Let's look at an extract of an imaginative text. This is a short story and this is what we'll be focusing on here. But it is not the only type of imaginative text you may be asked to write. It is the most commonly known, however, and this is why we're focusing on it in this session. You're not expected to have an entire novel like "Harry Potter" or an action movie in your story. You are exploring a moment in time. This piece really focuses on that moment in time. It is thinking about the past and using memory. Let's have a look at this now. "There is this place my father used to take me. I remember driving with him in his old work van. Rusty tools rattled in the back. He used to drum on his steering wheel while he drove. My bed shakes a little and I'm instantly taken back. I hear a car honk, and I'm there. It's one of those memories your brain begs you to relieve. I'm scared of what might happen if I do what if it wants and let's go over reality. I give in, and suddenly I'm back. The van bounces as we hit a pothole. I hear dad swear. He hates the council. He turns to me and makes me promise not to tell mum what he said. I promise. All is quiet. I'm happy. Then he passes an accident, and I remember which memory this is, which time. I beg my brain to make it stop. I brace myself. 'Dad,' I say quietly, 'What's a divorce?'" What is in this extract that works as an imaginative text?

Let's unpack this a little. This is the first paragraph of this short piece. It is introductory. The first sentence, "There is this place my father used to take me," is a short sentence that clearly establishes the tense, tone and characters involved in this narrative. They use the past tense to tell us that this will be a memory. What that gives us is flexibility within that moment in time. A memory is only but one moment in our life but it can give us a lot of depth if needed. We know it is a memory due to the past tense in the verb, "I remember." The subject of the story is the character, the persona's dad. The repetition of father and dad tells us that he's important in this story and in the persona's memory. How do we know that it is the beginning? And how does the student create that kind of tone? The use of past and present tense tells us it is the start and he's reflecting on that memory. The purpose may not be 100% evident but we can tell that it will include an important moment in this persona and their father's life. Another device used by the student is emotive imagery, "Your brain begs," "I'm scared," "I beg my brain." The use of emotive words, such as scared and begs gives the audience a strong feeling of sadness. We start to know that this memory is not a happy one. We can guess that the character loves their father, but this memory is not one that makes them happy. The use of this language is important as it automatically engages the audience. "The rusty tools rattled," a simple alliteration that takes you to the image of the bumpy road and the age and where or maybe even their father as the van is old and the tools of rusty. The students also uses different sentence lengths. This changes the tone and pace of the narrative, another device that reinforces the purpose and engages the audience. A motif of the car accident is established from the beginning. There are three images that tell us or hint at a car accident. And it may mean more than what is saying here in these sentences. There are so many different ways that this first paragraph hooks the audience in. Now, I would like you to pause this presentation and turn to Resource two in your student booklet. Underline any other language devices or sentences that demonstrates the students attempt to engage the audience. As an added activity, try to find the three images that tell us or hint at a car accident.

Thinking about the extract we just read and analysed, let's go back to understanding how an imaginative text can be a narrative and what that looks like in a generalised, basic structure. Resource three is a basic structure, one you may have learned in your junior years. This is based on Freytag's pyramid for a narrative arc. We all know this type of structure but is this useful for the purpose that we want in a 30 minute examination style, short imaginative response? Let's have a look at what might be needed for these short imaginative response. So what is needed for a short 30 minute imaginative response? We need to remember that this does not need to be a complete story. Rather, it just needs to be a moment in time, a moment that is part of a larger event. What we should include in this type of narrative is no more than two characters as this is a strong response dialogue and long conversations, which is typical in a longer story is not needed. A strong setting is needed. This doesn't have to be wild or adventurous. The setting can be a room in your home or a street you're walking down, but it must be vividly explored. You need to use clear imagery. A motif also helps. You need a purpose that is evident from the outset. This doesn't have to be a large, grand purpose. It can be that the character is reflecting on their life and choices in a moment while striving, or it can be in the moment of an action that involves the character. You also need a clear understanding of your audience. Remember this is written for examination conditions so your intended audiences are adults. This is also all available in Resource four in your student work booklet. Now we have reviewed the "Stage 6 English Studies Syllabus" glossary definition of imaginative text, looked at a basic structure and reflected upon a student sample. It is time to complete Activity three in your student booklet. You should give yourself 15 minutes to complete this activity. You've gone through the definition of an imaginative text. You've read the beginning of an imaginative text. Now it is your turn to write an outline of an imaginative text. Remember it is a moment in time. What will you add? What will your narrative be about? Will it use a flashback. Is it in first or third person? Is it only one character? Now turn to Activity three, imaginative text, and complete this task. Thank you for listening to part one, imaginative text, understanding the types of texts required in section four of the examination writing skills.

Remember to view the next five parts of this series on section four, the writing skills section of the English Studies examination.

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