English-Advanced-Module A- Part two component three – Writing thesis statements transcript

(Duration 16 minutes 43 seconds)

(soft music)

Hello, and welcome to the HSC hub part two, component three of this resource for English Advanced, Module A, Textual Conversations. If you have not listened to the other components, then we advise that you do so because they contain valuable information and activities. English Advanced, Module A, Textual Conversations, Staying focused on the module. This component, which is component three, is in the same student booklet.

[Slide reads: Advice for teachers and students

* Just a quick reminder about how to use this resource if you are a teacher support your students or a student working on this on your own.
* For teachers, there are a few different ways you might like to engage with the material and activities with your class. You might like to view the recording together, and pause and discuss the key ideas or activities with your class during designated times. These designated times are indicated through the cue ‘pause the clip here’.
* You may like to download the resource booklet and add your own ideas, resources and/or sample questions and then share this with your class. You might like to allocate sections for students to view and complete as flipped learning and then co-construct modelled and guided responses as a class. This can help students feel even more confident as they continually to construct independent responses.
* For a student working independently, it is advised that you have completed part 1 and the first two components of part 2 of this resource before you proceed. For this resource you will need access to your assessments for this module, a copy of the student booklet from part one as well as the student booklet for this resource.]

Advice for teachers and students. This information is in the student booklet. Please make sure you have read this content about how to use this resource. This is section four of this resource. Component three of part two, writing thesis statements. One of the most difficult aspects of writing an extended response in an examination situation, is to establish a clear thesis to guide your argument. Even though you can prepare by writing thesis statements around the module statements, it is the question in the HSC examination, that is the unknown. So, you need to be prepared to think on your feet. Remember the module statement and the syllabus outcomes are where the Examination Committee gets their ideas for the examination questions. Thorough knowledge of both texts, understanding of the context and purpose of both composers, being familiar with the module statement, plus some practice writing thesis statements, will help you prepare for the unknown of the question.

What is a thesis statement? This is an insight, by you, about your text pairing, in relation to the question, with knowledge of both the texts, the context of both composers, and the module statement. It should be clear in your introduction what your thesis statement is, because the role of the thesis statement, is to make the context and purpose of your response clear to the reader, drive your argument throughout your response, keep you on track because the thesis is written for the specific examination question, and connect the pieces of your response together, and give cohesion to your argument.

This introduction on the text pairing of ‘King Richard III’, and ‘Looking for Richard’, has a clear thesis statement, which the student uses throughout their response to build their argument. It is clear that they have written this response with the question in mind. Listen carefully or follow along using your copy, in resource six, to see if you can identify the thesis statement. “The statement, ‘when exploring the conversation between texts, is the disparities which are far more revealing and stimulating than the aspects they have in common ‘is a limiting one. Rather the conversations between texts are made, revealing and stimulating by commonalities and disparities being considered at the same time as this allows for a holistic understanding of cultural change from one text’s context to another's. This is especially clear in Shakespeare's ‘King Richard III’ and Al Pacino's docudrama, ‘Looking for Richard’. The commonalities and disparities between each text's representations of the workers Richard encounters reveal significant cultural change, from Elizabethan England and the Tudor Myth, to 1990's Hollywood. However, they also reveal continuities between the two. Further, the differentiated discussion of religion in each text results in disparities due to contextual difference. However, it is the commonalities that exist alongside it that allow for a revealing and stimulating conversation." Pause the presentation here and highlight the thesis statement on your copy of this introduction in resource six. (soft music)

You might like to check your answer. Did you think that the student's thesis was, "The conversations between texts are made revealing and stimulating, by the commonalities and disparities being considered at the same time, as this allows for a holistic understanding of cultural change from one text's context to another's." You may have also realised that the question involves the qualifier, "to what extent." The student addresses this in the first sentence, saying that the statement "Is a limiting one." The student then goes on to name the two text titles and their composers, and the rest of introduction lists the aspects they will discuss, and finally they reinforce their thesis in the last example at the end.

How do you practice developing clear thesis statements? Consider this question, “texts are being reframed to create new texts, which may challenge or agree with the ideas and values of the original text. To what extent is this statement true of your prescribed text for Module A, Textual Conversations?” There is a copy of this question in your student booklet as resource seven.

What do we mean by value? In this case, we're talking about the principles or standards of behaviour, or one's judgment of what is important in life. If we look at context and the perspective of both of the composers, we can see how the values are expressed in their texts. When Shakespeare was performing ‘Richard the III’, his audience had clear feelings about the nature of evil, their perspective on evil dictated how they felt about King Richard as a character. In this way, it shaped how they saw his actions and what they thought about him. Therefore, Shakespeare is reflecting the values of the time about the nature of being evil. Richard was born evil, he committed evil acts throughout his life, and he was considered a vice character, cruel and two faced. For example, he killed his wife, brother, young nephews, and he is haunted by their ghosts. Therefore, an Elizabethan audience’s perspective, is that he would go to hell.

Whereas, Al Pacino's ‘Looking for Richard’, a docudrama filmed in New York in 1990's, centred around Al Pacino himself and his Hollywood reputation of starring in films like ‘Scarface’ and ‘The Godfather’. This conveys Pacino's perspective that King Richard is ambitious, modern tyrant, and that his acts of violence, Hollywood style, play to a modern audience. There is a perspective of analysing Richard's motives and to consider the underlying psychology behind his actions. The value of evil is represented quite differently between the two texts, and the textual conversation is an interesting one as a result. King Richard committed the same crimes, but they're represented quite differently by each composer.

One method to help you think about a clear line of argument in response to this question, is to use the terms from the module statement, identify, interpret, analyse and evaluate. Keeping in the question in mind, identify a common value or idea, that has been reframed in the modern text. Interpret where the value or idea originated by exploring the context that established the value or idea in each text. Analyse how these are represented in each text. Evaluate the common value or idea in light of the question being asked. A copy of these instructions is in resource eight of your student booklet. Pause the presentation here and fill in the table in activity five, to practise this skill with respect to the question. Remember, you have a copy of the question as resource seven. (soft music)

Once you have established your line of argument, by working through the previous activity, you can begin to establish your thesis statement. Here are three examples of thesis statements, from a broad one to a specific one for the text pairing. “Values that people hold are a reflection of their overall context”, or “a composer's context has an effect on the values they hold and how they are represented”, or “both Shakespeare and Atwood skilfully explore, within their own contexts, the enduring ideas of imprisonment and liberty from incarceration, further tackling the values surrounding the subjugation of marginalised groups and their potential for rehabilitation”. Remember the role of a thesis statement. You may have realised, for your purposes, in an examination situation, that a more text specific thesis statement will work best to drive your argument and keep you on track throughout your whole response.

[Slide reads: Composer A (insert name of composer) values X (insert value statement) due to the social context of Y (insert aspect of context here). X is reframed by composer B (insert name of composer) as Z (insert the new value) because of their milieu which accepts C (insert the new context and what it accepts now). ]

When writing your own thesis statement for this question, in the next activity, you may need some support, or you may not be sure where to start. If that's the case, consider using this sentence scaffold, as it may help you to articulate your thoughts. There is a copy of this scaffold as resource nine in your booklet. Once you have these bare bones, you can then add your own personal touch to it. To demonstrate the use of the sentence scaffold, here's a thesis statement example. “Shakespeare's play affirms the values associated with Elizabethan England and the Tudor Myth. Whereas Al Pacino values the demystifying of Shakespeare and the exploration of the craft of performance in line with his experience of 1990's Hollywood”. It's interesting to point out here, that these values link closely to both the composers' purpose, and, they're a direct result of their changing contexts.

Now that you have identified some content and examples, and considered your text pairing in the table in activity five, look at what you have written, and now try to establish an overall thesis statement in response to the question. Remember, you can use the scaffold sentence from resource nine to support you. Pause the presentation here and complete activity six. (soft music)

Another way to prepare your notes for the examination, is to look closely at the degree of influence that your two texts have had on each other, and you, as the responder. Thinking back to the module statement, here you are being asked to consider, when comparing your two texts, to come to an understanding of how composers are influenced by other texts, contexts, and values, and how this shapes meaning. You're also asked to consider how your study of the two texts together influences your perspectives and shapes your own compositions. In this way, it is vital that you consider the degree of influence the composers have on other composers, and you as a responder. The next activity contains a series of questions that will help you unpack this degree of influence. Remember, in part one of this resource, where we explored how texts can talk. Well, this is expanding on the ideas raised there, even further. Let's try to expand your thinking.

In order to explore the degree of influence, let's consider these questions. To what extent is Composer A, influenced by their context and values? These can be social, historical, political, or economic. To what extent is Composer B, influenced by their context and values? To what extent has composed Composer B been influenced by Composer A and how do you know? And to what extent has composer of B influenced you? To do these things, engage personally with their text, engage personally with the original text, Composer A, in a new way. Reflect on your own context and values, and to experiment in your own composing. These questions are in your student booklet as resource 10, consider the textual conversations of your text pairing. In your student booklet, you can utilise tables six, seven, eight, and nine in activity seven, to address each of these questions in detail. Pause the presentation here and complete activity seven. (soft music)

Here are some example phrases from the module statement, using these to write introductions will help you practice writing thesis statements. You can use them to complete the last activity as there is a copy of them in your student booklet as resource 11. Consider: a perspective that aligns in both of your texts, but is reframed through form. Are common assumptions represented in both texts? Dissonance about an issue due to changing historical context. Ways context knowledge of both texts helps us to understand the purpose of the composers. An innovation in plot, and or setting, due to the reframing. Now that you are more familiar with the module statement, it's possible that you can make up some questions of your own.

Your turn to write. A comprehensive way to map your understanding of the module phrase or examination question, is to utilise this thinking routine. It will help you to build a field of deep thinking around the module statements and your text pairing. You can use some module statements from the speech and thought bubbles to practice. You can also use this method with practice questions that your teacher has given you. You will need a blank piece of paper, a pen, and a red pen. Turn to activity eight for a copy of the following instructions. Firstly, generate a list of ideas and initial thoughts that come to mind when you think about the module statement or the question, with respect to your text pairing. Note, in this case, these could include examples from the texts. Secondly, sort your ideas according to how central or important they are. Place the important ideas in the centre of the page and the less important ones towards the outside, do not discount any idea, it may become important as you develop your thesis. Thirdly, connect your ideas by drawing lines between them. Explain and write a brief note about how these are connected. Note, this could be a good way to link your ideas to the context of each composer. Lastly, elaborate on the ideas and add examples to support. Continue to extend and add to these initial ideas, continuing, generating, connecting, and elaborating new ideas, until you feel you have a good representation of your understanding. At this point, you can sort your main ideas to address the question in a logical way. Now, try to write your overall thesis statement and topic sentences to support it. You are well on your way to writing your response. At the end of this presentation, you may like to try this thinking routine with a peer. Select another question or module statement, and begin the process again. Two heads are better than one.

This is the end of part two of this resource. Thank you.

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