English – Extension One
Resource two Engaging Literary Worlds-part two transcript

(Duration 22 minutes 13 seconds)

(soft piano music)

Welcome back to the HSC hub student support session for English Extension one. Our focus across the resources within this session has been on exploring the key intentions of the Common Module for Extension one. Through a study of the module description, then an application of key ideas to case study texts, we've been refining ideas about the ways in which artists respond to the world by creating literary worlds. In this second resource of the series, we've been applying this thinking to an unseen text, an extract from the Cormac McCarthy's novel, "The Road." In part two of this resource, we will look at the types of imaginative and analytical writing that you could be asked to do using the sample examination and the 2019 HSC as models. Our focus is not so much on unpacking and analysing the exam. You will find that in an upcoming third resource in this series, but on getting you to think like the examiners, when it comes to unseen texts and stimulus readings that you may be presented with. In other words, unpacking the layers of extended writing for the Extension one course.

Remember, if you are a student working alone or a teacher working with your class, to check the necessary materials and the list provided in the booklet that accompanies this resource. And just a reminder that parts one and two of this resource connect to the single student resource booklet for Engaging with the literary world. Here's the agenda for the second part of the resource. In section one, we will reengage with our unseen text briefly by returning to the key module lens questions. We will then explore HSC style exam questions in both imaginative and analytical modes in order to deepen your thinking about how you might be asked to respond to a literary world in this section of the exam.

Here are the learning intentions and success criteria for this second part of resource two. For students to identify and understand the connections between the processes of responding to and composing fiction required in this course. Understand and analyse the thinking behind and construction of examination style questions for literary worlds. For students to be able to analyse the construction behind analytical and imaginative questions developed for this section of the exam. Create their own versions of examination questions appropriate for the requirements of the module. Identify appropriate stimulus to utilise as unseen texts that suit the examination requirements for literary worlds.

As you will know from your own analysis of the NESA sample exam, then the 2019 HSC exam, the examiners have a few choices in the way they may structure this part of the exam. Before we engage with those options and workshop them in relation to our unseen text, let's reengage with our underlying approach to this module and remind ourselves of how that applies to Cormac McCarthy's literary world. Here are four foundational questions that will help you engage quickly with any unseen text. Let's use them now to reengage with the extract from "The Road." One, what is the literary world? Two, how is it shaped? Three, what are the intentions of the composer and how are these apparent through the values embedded in the text? Four, what kinds of engagement does the reader have with this literary world? Pause the recording here and use this framework to remind yourself of the unseen text. You will find the full extract at the start of the student resource booklet for this engaging with the literary world student resource booklet. Pause the recording, read it again, then use activity six in the student booklet to review your ideas in relation to these four questions..(mellow instrumental music)

As we have a look at some suggested answers, add anything you want to your discussion in activity six. These are indicative rather than definitive ideas. You may well have had many alternative responses that are just as viable. So what is the literary world? A horrific vision of a post apocalyptic dystopia. How is it shaped? Concrete, descriptive imagery as well as lyrical and figurative descriptions of place. What are the intentions of the composer? In the extract at least, to evoke a sense of fear as part of a potential warning, but also to reaffirm human connection. How are these intentions apparent through the embedded values? The warning is apparent in the ways that the landscape evokes a horror at the destructiveness of humanity, and yet there is the love of father for child. What kinds of engagement does the reader have? Perhaps a visceral fear, a pessimistic regard for the future of humanity, a respect for the courage of survival and enjoyment of a refreshing literary take on the speculative fiction genre. Through considering the phrase, "Invite the reader into the world of the text," we're going to look at the ways examiners think in order to deepen your preparation. You would have noticed if you've been exploring the sample and 2019 HSC examination questions, that the phrase, "Invite the reader into the world," pops up a few times. To prepare for the next section and to wrap up our analysis of McCarthy's deliberate construction of his literary world, consider this question. How does McCarthy invite the reader into the world of the novel in this extract from the beginning of "The Road?" It may be a strange invitation to evoke a sense of fear and tension, but if he is successful, then it is a stylistic choice that certainly enfolds the reader into that dystopic landscape and the values embedded through the extract, particularly in relation to parenthood. In a moment, pause the recording and complete the table in activity seven in the student booklet outlining the elements of McCarthy's style or language features that invite the reader into the world. Notice the space for you to comment on the effectiveness of each. Perhaps put them in order and expand your comment on the most effective and, to your mind, least effective way in which he tries to achieve this invitation. If you're in the mood for an extension activity, why not answer the question once you've found all that evidence? (mellow instrumental music)

In your analysis of how McCarthy is setting up his literary world, you may have said something about the early dream sequence involving the pale creature from which the man wakes into horrific reality. In identifying and evaluating this stylistic feature, you are laying the groundwork for your transition from responder to composer. If you're asked to compose imaginatively in response to an extract of fiction, you will need to be nimble in your ability to recognise what the composer is up to, then be able to work with that in your own writing. If you have a piece of your own imaginative writing with you, pause the recording now and practice some self-analysis and redrafting. How have you tried to invite the reader into the world of your fiction? If it's not evident and you feel like a brain break, try the second extension activity and rewrite your first paragraph with more of a conscious effort to deliberately construct the literary world. (mellow instrumental music)

Be careful though. You can't do everything under exam conditions. What are the two or three key elements of style you would choose to help you shape your world? In the following activities, we will look at the transition from responder to composer that you will undergo in your response to the unseen text and the exam. As you will now see from our emphasis in the last section on one of the key phrases from the sample and HSC exams, we are suggesting that one significant skill in transitioning to the composition process is to think more like an examiner. Keep in mind the core concepts and skills of the course, and then see the ways in which those elements can be woven into the questions you are asked. We will look first at imaginative questions, not so much from the perspective of answering them, but of creating them and thinking like the people who create them.

As stated, our focus here is not so much on analysing that this question, taken from last year's exam, but on becoming comfortable manipulating it and applying it. The activities which follow ask you to rework the question in relation to our unseen text. You should be doing this kind of work repeatedly in the run-up to exams. Take case study texts, as well as random texts that you are unfamiliar with and do this kind of examiner work. It will keep your mind nimble, work away at the suppleness of your quick thinking creativity, but most importantly, it is getting you to think like an examiner. Remember our underlying purpose in this part of resource two is to practice engaging with the secret worlds that lie in the minds of the examiners.

So the question from the 2019 exam was, “using the character in text two, imagine a moment in which the past intrudes on this character's fabricated world. Compose a piece of imaginative writing that explores this intrusion”. This could become, if we apply it to our unseen text, using one of the characters in the extract, imagine a moment in which the past intrudes on this character's world. Compose a piece of imaginative writing that explores this intrusion. Notice that we have removed the word fabricated and just left it as “world”. Could we replace fabricated with another word here? The internal world of the father? But there are other ways we could experiment with this type of question in relation to our unseen text. How about, “using the setting in the extract, imagine a new character entering this world and meeting the father and son?” Compose a piece of imaginative writing that explores this meeting. But there are many more possible questions in this style that we could create. Pause the recording here and work on activity eight in the student booklet. (mellow instrumental music)

The first component asks you to think of other ways to replace, "fabricated world." Then the second component gives you the space to come up with at least two more possible imaginative writing questions that we could apply to this extract from "The Road." What did you notice in doing this activity? There are probably two key take-aways at this stage of the process, and both remind us of the importance of the marking rubric that appears before the examination questions in both the NESA sample exam and the 2019 HSC exam. The first point is about imaginative writing skills, not only being able to wield specific features and devices, but your ability to note, analyse, and adapt these from a stimulus text into your own writing. Strategies for practicing this? Practice, practice, practice with a variety of short extracts. And this relates to point two in the rubric. Students craft a sustained composition appropriate to the question, demonstrating control of the use of language.

The second point takes us back to our work on the module description. What are the main aspects of the composer's deliberate construction that you are going to work with? How will your writing setup, continue, extend those insights developing from the text? How will you approach the embedded values in your text? Notice that each question gives you a location or an invitation to explore these aspects of literary worlds, the past intruding on a fabricated world, for example. And this relates to point one in the rubric. Students demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and values of literary worlds and how they are shaped and reflected in texts. Pause the recording in a moment and have a look at activity nine in the student booklet. Here you are asked to brainstorm ideas inspired by rubric point one on the screen. Thinking about one of our reworked exam style questions, you will need to brainstorm the ways in which you will respond to the rubric point. (mellow instrumental music)

Here's another kind of question that you may be asked. This time it's from the NESA sample examination for English Extension one. In this sample, you are given an extract to read, then a two-part response is required. We will explore the analytical part in a few moments, but first, you're asked to use text one to answer this question. The final line of the extract from "Eveline" states, "But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that." Compose a piece of imaginative writing in which you imagine that new world and whatever Eveline's life will be like in her new home. Your response should draw on your knowledge and understanding of the module, Literary Worlds. We have adjusted this to fit our unseen text. The final line of the extract from "The Road" states, "Then they set out along the blacktop in the gun-metal light, shuffling through the ash, each the other's world entire." Compose a piece of imaginative writing in which you imagine that world and what their life will be like in it. To finish practising our ability to come up with questions in the style of the exam, see if you can find two or three other appropriate lines from the extract from "The Road" that would lend themselves to being a jumping off point for imaginative writing. For example, "There'd be no surviving another winter here." An imaginative task that asks you to imagine their last winter could be built from that line. Pause the recording and try writing two questions like this in activity 10. Remember to show them to a peer, or your teacher, for feedback. (mellow instrumental music)

How will you create the voice of the characters you include in your imaginative piece? Remember to keep practising specific acts of deliberate construction yourself to hone your skills. A character's voice can be created through choosing between long flowing or staccato sentences, literal or figurative sentences, humour and seriousness, considering their actions often very subtle while they speak, choosing between colloquial or formal registers, between a confident or hesitant tone, a meandering, or to-the-point frame of mind. Pause the video if you need to jot some of these ideas down and don't forget to try them next time you write. Above all, be consistent to achieve textual integrity. Would someone who talks hesitantly in short sentences, use many figurative devices? And don't forget the narrative voice. That requires just as much deliberate construction.

If you are familiar with the available exam questions, you will know that there is one particular connection between one of the questions in the NESA sample exam and the 2019 HSC exam in that students are asked to write analytically in response to both an imaginative extract and a stimulus piece about the art of writing. This does not mean, of course, that this year's exam will follow this pattern. However, it is an important part of developing your skills of thinking in the ways that examiners do to use these examples and apply them to our unseen text.

Here are two examples of the ways in which students can be asked to write in response to two texts, one of which is fiction. Notice especially the core instructions in these two questions. The first from the sample exam is, “evaluate how effectively, in the light of the extract from his Nobel lecture, Orhan Pamuk invites the reader into the world of the novel in the opening of "Snow." Your response should draw on your knowledge and understanding of the module, Literary Worlds.” Notice the instruction to evaluate the fiction extract in the light of the speech. An instruction, in other words, to apply thinking from one stimulus text to the other.

In the second example from the 2019 HSC exam question, you're asked to discuss both fiction and nonfiction text in the context of your own understanding, “to what extent do both extracts resonate with your understanding of why we compose literary worlds?” In both cases, a strong interaction is set up between two stimulus texts, and you are expected to frame your extended analytical response through an understanding of the course generally, and the interaction between the texts. Let's practice this with a sample of largely discursive style text that could be presented to you in this part of the exam to use as a stimulus. You should be on the hunt for extracts like this, and you should be practising the process of seeing how they interact with prose extracts that construct specific types of literary world.

[Slide reads: n example to apply to our unseen case study extract

Arthur Berger on symbolism – activity 11, student booklet

“In literary criticism, for example, we often find that the study of symbolism in texts is connected with an investigation of their mythic elements... Heroes and heroines in novels… often have symbolic dimensions: what they say and what they do are often symbolic and allegorical as well as connected, indirectly, to the actions of ancient mythic heroes and heroines. That is why some critics argue that all texts are intertextually related to other texts, even though audiences may not be aware of the fact or the creators of texts aware of what they have done.”

© Arthur A Berger, Cultural Criticism: A primer of key concepts. 1995, Sage Publications Inc. p 78]

You will find this extract in the student resource booklet. In a moment, you're going to practice using the stimulus text as a foundation for thinking like the markers and writing examination questions. Pause the recording first though, and read the extract. Use the table under activity 11 to list phrases that refer to the deliberate construction of literary worlds, then those that relate to the experience of responders. Pause the recording, read the extract, and complete activity 11. (mellow instrumental music)

Here are a couple of ways that we could use the known questions to shape our own versions for practice. One, evaluate how effectively in the light of Berger's extract, McCarthy uses symbolism to draw the reader into the world of his novel. Your response to draw on your knowledge and understanding of the module, Literary Worlds. This first one pulls you into a specific device, symbolism, but it would still allow you to range more widely as you draw on your understanding of the module to answer the question. Two, to what extent did both texts resonate with your understanding of the connections between literary worlds? Notice in this one, the move from why we compose literary worlds, in the original, to the connections between literary worlds. Can you construct more possible questions of this kind? How about, to what extent do both texts resonate with your understanding of how audiences respond to literary worlds? Try this next activity in two stages. First, use the module description, appendix two in the student booklet, to identify phrases that could be used in this type of question. Then write a few questions in the space provided. Pause the recording now and complete activity 12. (mellow instrumental music)

[Slide reads:

* To what extent do both texts resonate with your understanding of how texts construct imaginary worlds?
* Evaluate how effectively, in the light of the Berger extract, McCarthy uses figurative devices to reveal the interaction of personal and public worlds. Your response should draw on your knowledge and understanding of the module Literary Worlds.]

Here are two possible questions. Note the incorporation of module description phrases and synonyms for key phrases. Pause the recording if you need to in order to add these to your list in the student booklet. Make sure you share your ideas with a peer and your teacher to check that your questions are realistic.

In your preparation for exams, you should be actively reading the types of texts that markers may be considering as a stimulus for this part of the exam. Here are some possible stimulus types that an extract could come from. An interview with a writer, an artist's biography, a podcast transcript from a literary festival, a review of a new fiction release. Can you think of any others? What do you think you should do to help you prepare for the exam when you are reading one of these? You will find this list under activity 13 in the student booklet. Brainstorm more working with a partner or your class if you can. See if you can find an example for each over the coming weeks. Create a question that links each to a fiction extract. Share these with your partners. Discuss the best one and practice writing the response. For a moment, pause the recording and check activity 13 to see if you can add any more ideas to the list. (mellow instrumental music)

[Slide reads: 2019 exam: article on artists and art then a prose fiction extract. Evaluate (to what extent...resonate with your understanding...) Required response: imaginative using a character

Sample paper A: Nobel Lecture by a writer on his craft then a piece of his imaginative writing. Required response: evaluative writing

Sample paper B: short story. Required response: imaginative plus critically analyse... your creative choices

Sample paper C: Non-fiction about the emotional power of novels. Required response: imaginative writing]

One key way of preparing for the examination, as we have seen, is to think like an examiner. Consider what there is in the extract that relates to literary worlds. Write possible exam style questions in the margins as you read. Find a fiction text that you know, which connects conceptually to what the extract is about and try writing one of the questions that ask you to use both texts. Get nerdy. Behave like a marker and experiment with questions as often as you can. Pause the recording here and check out this overview table of the four questions that we have so far. What patterns can you see? This should help you on your quest to behave like a marker. Use these patterns and write as many questions as you can using as many different stimulus and unseen texts as you can. You are also given this table as resource two in the booklet. (mellow instrumental music)

To complete this section and this whole resource, please turn to activity 14 in the student booklet. Use the space provided to create your own questions in the style of the various questions we have seen in this resource. Be creative. Use the Berger stimulus with the McCarthy extract or another piece of fiction. Use another stimulus with "The Road." Use your own case study fiction texts and your own stimulus extracts about art, literature, and writing. Above all, share them with peers and your teacher to workshop them. Write answers to the most interesting or the most difficult.

(mellow instrumental music)

End of transcript