English – Standard - Discursive writing - Resource four - part one transcript

(Duration 21 minutes 40 seconds)

Welcome to the HSC hub student support session for English Standard. This is resource four, in relation to the series of four resources, supporting your understanding of discursive writing. This is part one of resource four, and it has been broken up into two parts as they both require lengthy writing response times so you have time to practise writing using the suggested strategies. Part one is focused on writing activities to help you practise writing in the discursive style. While part two is focused on reflective writing strategies. It's important that you complete part one prior to engaging in part two, as the activities in part two build on the content revised within this resource.

In this resource, we will be exploring Module C, The Craft of Writing, through the lens of discursive writing. We will help students practise writing in the discursive style. If this resource is being used in collaboration between the teacher and students, we'd like you to note that it has been designed to run for approximately 20 minutes, but this time does not include the time required for the activities.

[Slide reads: In a classroom context you may like to –

* use this resource in a workshop setting with a group or an individual student to work through on their own
* pause the recording and ask students to read, reflect and write
* use school-based assessments and classwork as examples to use as case studies.]

If you're using this in a classroom setting, we suggest that the teacher stop the recording at key points and facilitate the set activities. Please feel free to supplement these with your own strategies. This information is also provided in the resource booklet.

[Slide reads: If using this resource at home independently you will need:

* access to some of your school classwork and assessment tasks
* access to both this presentation and the student resource booklet
* time to explore the activities suggested here. This resource works best if you follow all instructions and complete the thinking routines, reflection activities and written tasks. Make sure you take adequate breaks!]

If the student is working through this resource independently, please make sure you have your assessment and or examination responses for Module C with you as you will revise these at the end of this resource. We suggest that you stop the recording when asked to and complete all the activities. This includes thinking routines, reflection activities, and written responses that are provided within the student resource booklet. The information that is on the screen now is also in the resource booklet. Please take a moment to read this information and make sure you are organised.

There are four resources designed to assist your understanding of the discursive style and your approach to writing in this style. Make sure you have the student resource booklet for each resource. They contain spaces for writing practice along with some resources that you may find very handy. This series has been designed to be completed in order. However, you can dip in and out of the other sessions, depending on your area have need. This is part one of resource four, and we will focus on helping you practise writing in the discursive style. In this session, you will be required to hand write responses. Make sure you have a black pen and lined paper handy. As you need to write with a black pen in the HSC examination, it's a good idea to practise this beforehand so you know what type of black pen is most comfortable for you and you are used to writing with that pen for prolonged periods.

While you need to respond to the question on the day, you can do some preparation that will help you to be flexible and confident to respond, regardless of the question. And some of these include: it's a good idea to have a range of topics and issues that you can draw on in preparation for writing a discursive response or another type of response. These can be quite broad in nature. And later in the presentation, we will also be suggesting ways that you can use your studies to develop ideas and topics for your writing. Thinking about and writing about possible anecdotes that you could use in a response will also be helpful. Start with ones from your own life, but these could also come from other people you know, be based on something that happened to a character in something that you've read or listened to, or even watched. Having a bank of anecdotes you can call on will ease the stress at exam time when you were trying to add this personal voice. Once you have some ideas for a topic, put them on sticky notes, one idea per sticky note, and play with the order. What order would emphasise that these are different ideas coming from different tangents or perspectives? These suggestions are all found within resource one. Now, we would like you to experiment. Pause the presentation and explore activity one that is found in your resource booklet. Take between five and 10 minutes to complete this activity.

Now, onto the second part of resource two. Develop a bank of motifs that you could draw upon when talking about different concepts and ideas. For example, what could be an effective motif for a character who's experiencing some kind of change? Perhaps a storm, a change of seasons. Having some to draw on will always make life easier and your writing more effective, particularly if you've crafted that character carefully and you understand their backstory. Find some quotes and experiences, yours or other people's or other characters, that you can use when exploring your ideas and concepts. These add authority to your writing, as well as providing a different perspective. Something else you can do is experiment with modality. Persuasive texts, use high modality words, words that demand the reader to engage with and connect with the narrators or their character's point of view on a given topic. Discursive texts will often not have that same focused language. Discursive texts, as we know, offer up ideas and thoughts so authors use a lower modality words to allow the reader an opportunity to see things differently, to explore the different perspectives on the topic that are being provided. Pause the presentation now and explore activity two in your resource booklet. Once again, take five to 10 minutes to complete this activity.

You have no doubt said at some point, ‘I don't know what to write about’. Well, the best place to start building up ideas for topics and concepts that you could draw upon for discursive writing is texts you already know really well. This could be your prescribed texts and the modules themselves. You have already thought about these in some detail and looked at them from a range of perspectives. You could draw on these characters and the events in the texts for your exploration of various concepts. Some suggestions for you include identifying different human experiences. Identify ones from the texts you have studied in the Common Module, Texts and Human Experiences. There are so many great concepts to choose from to help you as a starting point. Concepts like acceptance, fear, jealousy, love, loyalty, poverty, success, or grief for example, could all be found in multiple prescribed texts, including "Billy Elliot" "Wasteland" "Past the shallows" "The Crucible" and "The Merchant of Venice" just to name a few. Concepts explored in Module A and B are also a great place to find inspiration. Things like mateship as explored in “The Castle” or the changing face of Australia based on say the Henry Lawson short stories or contemporary Asian Australian poets. You could also assume a role. Choose a character from one of your texts and write a discursive response from their perspective. There are so many options for you to choose from here, and these can often make things easier for you to write about. You could also reshape a text. You could reshape a perspective. Change one of the texts that you have studied as part of Module C, Craft of Writing from a persuasive or imaginative text to a discursive text, or reshape the perspective that the text is told from. This can also be an effective starting point for a new discursive text. For example, you could turn Bradbury's concerns from "The Pedestrian" into a discursive text exploring communities. Pause the presentation and explore activity three in your resource booklet. For each module and text, you can identify some topics, ideas, issues, and experiences that you could choose for a discursive piece, as well as some characters and events that you could draw upon. With the prescribed texts from Module C, Craft of Writing, think about how you could turn their ideas and details into a discursive text. Give yourself between 15 and 20 minutes to complete this activity and refer to your notes on the other modules to assist you with this response.

Now, we would like you to explore activity four in your resource booklet. For each module and text, you can identify interesting aspects of the text you'd like to use and experiment with. Then, spend some time writing and exploring at least one thing you have identified for each text. We have indicated that you should take between 30 to 40 minutes to complete this activity. Hopefully you are very familiar with your texts or you have your classwork for these handy. Refer to the work that you have completed on these texts and use this material as inspiration and assistance. With the writing activity, we don't want you to necessarily write long pieces. The focus is on experimentation and exploring new ideas and using the various language features or devices. Pause the presentation now and complete activity four.

How did you go? Did you experiment with some new ideas? Next, we will show you a few discursive writing planners. These are very flexible and would be a great task to complete with your peers. It is always important to take the time to plan your response, especially in exam situations. As a minimum, you need to decide what your topic is, what form you will write in, what is the purpose for the text and who is the intended audience? You should also brainstorm the possible perspectives or ideas you could explore as part of the response and what key discursive features you intend to use. The planner also found in the resource booklet is one option for helping you plan and write some practice responses.

You do not need to read this information right now. We will give you time to process this in an upcoming activity. To use this planner, you need to select from each of the first four columns and from there, add your ideas to the last two columns. For example, you could choose the topic of wishes. Then you will write an essay with the purpose of sharing a vision with other teenagers. From there, you would decide what aspects of wishes you would like to explore. For example, wishes that came true, those that you wish hadn't come true, maybe past wishes or the changing nature of these since you have started to grow up and you're engaging in that process of maturation, this might reflect your changing priorities as a young adult. Then, you would explore specific features and you might identify that you would like to start with a personal anecdote that you would like to focus on. Maybe that could be a quote from someone like Walt Disney, and maybe you would like to include the motif of the magic wand spread throughout your response. At the moment, we just want you to read the information provided within resource four, and then read through question one. Pause the presentation and explore activity five within resource four, and read through question one.

Before you utilise the table to plan your own ideas, we want you to unpack a sample discursive text and then complete the table. For this activity, you will need to complete each of the following steps. Firstly, select one of the suggested texts. You will notice that the texts name is provided along with a synopsis and a link to the text. After this, you'll need to read the first few paragraphs of that text, predict the topic and the purpose. Continue reading and confirm or adjust your prediction. Identify the form and the audience. Identify the perspectives presented. Identify your favourite moments in the piece, and then identify the features or devices utilised. Text one is by Zadie Smith, it is called "Joy." This is a personal essay that explores Smith's ideas and observations about the subtle differences of the experiences of joy and pleasure. This essay does contain references to drug use. The second option is by Jake Tuck and it is called "I've Quit Writing Personal Essays About Quitting: A Personal Essay." It is a satirical personal essay and it comments on the current trend of people writing openly and publicly about their personal lives and behaviours. The essay is light-hearted, but does explore some quite serious issues facing people in a time where people can become obsessed with social media and sharing their personal lives in very public forums. As I've just said, at the moment, we just want you to identify the information provided within resource four in another composer's response. If you wish, you could also utilise one of the discursive texts from the prescribed list. Pause the presentation and explore activity five, question two in your resource booklet. Give yourself between 15 and 20 minutes for this activity as you will need to read the responses.

How did you go? Did that discursive piece help expand your thinking about the discursive style? Pause the presentation now and explore activity six, question one in your resource booklet. Now we would like you to plan your own response utilising table four, a discursive planner. Give yourself five to 10 minutes to complete this planning.

Now you will write. Give yourself 20 to 30 minutes to complete this writing activity. Pause the presentation and complete activity six, questions two and three. Make sure you have a black pen and lined paper available.

Now, we would like you to spend 10 to 15 minutes composing an explanation of your creative process. Pause the presentation and complete activity seven in its entirety.

You have now spent some time reading, planning, writing, and evaluating, and you might even have some extra ideas bubbling around. This is a good opportunity for you to put these into table five, a discursive planner so you don't forget them. As an aside, within the examination, if you think of an idea you know you want to explore, make sure you make note of that somewhere within your planning pages so you don't forget it. You can then come back to your planning page as you progress through the exam and cross ideas off as they are utilised. Pause the presentation and spend some time adding other ideas to table five. Use between three and five minutes to complete this activity. You might even like to share some of your ideas with a peer.

You have now completed a couple of discursive writing tasks. You have written an explanation of your writing process, and it is now time to reflect on what you have learnt. You will need your Module C assessment or your examination response for Module C to help you with this activity. Spend some time completing activity eight and reflect on how your knowledge and understanding has been developed through your engagement with these resources and the activities. At the end of this activity, we would like you to identify specific focus areas for refinement of your discursive writing and your examination style reflection.

This is the final activity of part one. And in part two, we will help you practice writing reflectively, focusing on three reflections strategies. Pause the presentation and complete activity eight in the resource booklet.

End of transcript