English Standard, Module C
Discursive part three transcript

(Duration 31 minutes 13 seconds)

Welcome to the HSC hub student support session for the English Standard. This is resource three in relation to the series of four resources, supporting your understanding of discursive writing. In this resource, we'll be exploring Module C: The Craft of Writing, through the lens of discursive writing we will help students respond to and unpack sample questions and writing samples. The purpose of this resource is to give students extra support in their preparation for Trial or HSC examinations. It's really important that this resource is not seen as a substitute for classroom work with teachers and peers, that students really need in order to perform at their absolute best over the coming months. This is our review resource, and it will work at best under the guidance of the classroom teacher, but it may also be used independently to remind students of the key direction and concepts of this module. If this is being used in collaboration between the teacher and students, we'd like you to take note that this has been designed to run for approximately 30 minutes, excluding time for activities. If 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.

[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 you are a student and you're working through this resource independently, we suggest you stop the recording when asked to and complete all of the activities. This includes thinking routines, reflection activities, and written responses in the student resource booklet. Make sure that you have downloaded a copy of the resource booklet. All activity numbers align with the numbers on the slide. The information that is on the screen now is also in the resource booklet. Take a moment to read this information.

As we have already said, 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 of these resources. They contain spaces for writing practice along with some resources that you may find very handy. The series has been designed to be completed in order however you can dip in and out of the other sessions depending on your area of need. This is resource three, and in this session we will respond to and unpack sample questions and writing samples. It's also really important that you have some lined paper handy. We do encourage you to hand write your longer responses and that you use black pen to do so, because this is what is required within your HSC examination. Now we will unpack the 2019 HSC exam question for The Craft of Writing for Standard and discuss various ways this question could be responded to through the discursive style.

[Slide reads: (a) Create a piece of imaginative, discursive or persuasive writing that ends with the provided image.12 marks

(b) Explain how your study of the craft of writing has enabled you to create an engaging piece of writing. In your response, make detailed reference to your use of language in part (a). 8 marks]

Before we unpack some sample responses to the 2019 question, it's important that you reread the question. This is provided in the resource booklet and is on the screen now. If you would like to explore this question in more detail, we highly recommend that you listen to the resource ‘Module C Staying focused on the module’, part three component one as we've unpacked this question and we also provide another sample examination question to support your writing process.

[Slide reads: Discursive – a reflection about the unexpected role of place in shaping and reshaping identity/values/desires during a time of limited freedom, the piece ends with the valuing of the spaces that initially seemed insignificant and potentially avoided because of how they are perceived or portrayed…]

So how could we answer the question as a discursive text? Well, in Module C Standard part three, we suggested the following ideas. We said maybe a character reflects on and thinks over the unexpected role of place in shaping and reshaping identity, or reshaping our values and desires during a time of limited freedom. The piece could end with the valuing of the spaces that initially seemed insignificant and potentially avoided or undervalued because of how they are perceived or portrayed. The avoided back alley, for instance, could be the metaphor for the undervalued personal location, or it could be about a character reflecting on a parent's story of childhood, the open spaces and freedom from the dangers of the unknown. These were just a couple of options that we suggested to you. Reflecting on what you now know about the discursive writing style, what would you have come up with if you were sitting in that examination space, looking at this question and thinking about responding in a discursive style?

Well, this is what one student did. This is an extract from a student's response to the 2019 question and stimulus. Use your knowledge of the discursive style developed in resource one to identify key features the student has used in this extract of their response. The extract states: "Do I pick up a pen? Do I use it to write a song to pour my heart out? Do I write a poem full of powerful symbols like the yew tree manipulating its dark shades, the voices in the churchyard, the clouds, the birds, the tender melancholy, that Sylvia Plath explores in "A Comparison". "Shall I put pen to paper to express my inner most fears? Or do I pick up a paintbrush? Do I let my paintbrush express my happiness on a large canvas painting bold slashes of colour like the painting I did for my mum's birthday when I was five. That beautifully abstract version of a sunflower lit up her face every time she passed it, hanging proudly on the fridge. Or do I pick up a can of spray paint? Do I shake out my emotions as I shake the can in preparation for my next masterpiece on a brick wall in an inner city alleyway? I could sneak through the streets, a hoodie protecting my identity, with my artist tools clinking in my backpack and find an empty space on a wall full of colourful art for me to express my own frustration with the world".

Now we would like you to pause the presentation and complete activity one in the resource booklet. Don't forget to pause the clip and complete activity one. You may wish to revisit the material that you were exploring when you completed resource one.

How did you go? In this extract from a response to the 2019 HSC Module C question, the student has composed a clearly discursive text in response to the question. They have taken inspiration from the art of the wall on the alleyway and extended this into an exploration of the creative arts, bringing in the graffitied alleyway towards the end of their piece. They move around the topic. They change focus like our earlier analogy of cogs and wheels. We can also identify some of the key features of the discursive text, including quotes from other texts, specifically Sylvia Plath's essay, "A Comparison". There is also a personal anecdote. There is purposeful repetition and first person narration. Just to break that down a little further for you we open with purposeful repetition of the opening of the sentence, and this is called anaphora with the ongoing repetition of ‘do I’ at the start and then ‘or do I’ later in the extract, there is also first person singular pronouns, ‘I’, and then express ‘my’ and then I did it for ‘my’ mum. You can see there ‘I’ and ‘my’ are used throughout. The quote from Sylvia Plath, ‘manipulating it's dark shades’. The voices in the churchyard, the clouds, the birds, the tender melancholy is used to illustrate the power of words and their ability to draw on elements of nature and turn them into extended metaphors and symbols that lead to a contemplation of the fleeting nature of life. Then we have the personal anecdote, which also uses irony as they comment on the often very enthusiastic celebration of art created during childhood. The quote reads: "abstract version of a sunflower lit up her face every time she passed it hanging proudly on the fridge". The reference to abstract followed by the subordinate clause, hanging proudly on the fridge, creates a lovely juxtaposition between high art and our creations during childhood, when, as we often think our art really is the most amazing thing in the world. Then we have a shift in focus and a connection to the stimulus, ‘or do I pick up a can of spray paint’ and ‘brick wall in an inner city alleyway’. We hope this helps you unpack the lovely language devices and features that this composer has used. Pause the presentation and add any extra ideas to your response to activity one.

Now we will move on to sample extract two. Once again we will spend some time reading the extract and then you will use your knowledge of the discursive style developed in the earlier sessions and identify a few key features that the student has used in this extract of their response. The extract states: "I've always found that the arts, drawing and creating visuals are one of the creative ways for me of exploring the true emotion and feelings that run around your mind constantly. But what if words could also help me express the message that I want to convey at times? What if my skill with words could be combined with my artistic skills and I could transfer the world of my mind to more than just a canvas? What kind of stories could I tell? What kind of worlds could I create? Could I bring memories from the vault floating to the surface? Don't get me wrong, words for so many people really allow them to dig deep and describe some of the most intimate and personal parts of their souls, allowing them to take their readers into places in the mind that I never thought possible. Winton makes you feels as if you're in the wave with him while Garner makes you reflect on childhood memories you thought were no longer there, buried so deep in the memory vault they'd been so covered in dust you didn't know what they were anymore. But then I stand in front of the waves of colour patterns that flicker over a canvas, a wall, even an alleyway these days. Moments in time captured and crafted by the artist, a face frozen in time that leaves you wondering who were they? Why were they important? What did they do? Why was this story told? And I want to know, I want to read their story".

Now we would like you to pause the presentation and complete activity two in the resource booklet. Make sure you give yourself sufficient time to annotate the extract. If you can, complete this activity with a peer. Don't forget to pause the presentation and complete activity two.

How did you go? Did you notice different language features or devices in this extract? Well in this sample extract, there is once again the use of the first person singular pronoun; we have ‘I’, ‘me’, and ‘my’ repeated throughout. There was also a clear purpose outlined in the opening paragraph through the comparison between the composer's love of art and the desire to combine this artistic skill with their desire to create literary artistic narratives, as well as using the creative arts. The rhetorical question ‘what if my skills with words could be combined with my artistic skills and I could transfer the world of my mind to more than just a canvas?’ showed the desire to explore the possibilities that this combination would bring.

Sentences like “I have always found that the arts, drawing and creating visuals are one of the creative ways for me of exploring the true emotion and feelings that run around your mind constantly”, show a less formal register and convey a personal and reflective or contemplative tone. There is also the purposeful use of alliteration and the plosive ‘d’ sound in “dig deep and describe”, which also creates a physical imagery leading you to think about the physical nature of the creative process, as well as a physical response to that experience for the responder.

In the same way as sample one, repetition or anaphora is used in the opening of reflective questions that include ‘what if my’, ‘what kind of’, ‘what kind of’, personal voice is also used and is sustained throughout the piece, as the composer shifts in their thought process, as they move from the contemplating of the two forms of artistic expression, to an exploration of a couple of writers. There are then intertextual references to Tim Winton and a story about his surfing and Helen Garner's letter, which is one of the prescribed texts, "Dear Mrs. Dunkley". This then moves onto the connection with the stimulus through the shift in focus, once again, exploring the connection to art, the image in the alleyway and the colourful face. The personal voice and connection back to purpose is shown in the final line of this extract, the questions who were they, why were they important? What did they do? Why was their story told? And then the final sentence. ‘And I want to know that I want to read about their story’, illustrates the composer's point that powerful stories can be created when there is a combination of art and literature.

Now that we've spent some time unpacking this extract, we would like you to pause the presentation and complete activity three. In this task, you will see that we have given you a list of language forms and features. We would like you to finish annotating the extract and add anything that you missed. Just a reminder. Make sure you give yourself sufficient time to annotate the extract. If you can work with a peer, don't rush these activities as engaging with an unseen text in a thoughtful manner can then help you experiment with your own writing.

[Slide reads: Stimulus one - I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky. .. John Masefield, Sea Fever or

Stimulus two - A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on. Sir Winston Churchill

(a) Use one of the lines above as a stimulus for the opening of an imaginative, discursive or persuasive piece of writing. In your piece of writing incorporate at least one example of figurative language that you have learned about through your study of the prescribed texts for Module C.

(b) Explain how your writing in part (a) was influenced by what you have learned about figurative language through the study of your prescribed texts for Module C.]

Now, we are going to explore some of the NESA sample questions and give you an opportunity to plan how you would approach these through a discursive lens. This sample question is from the English Standard sample examination materials Paper Two. Now let's explore example B from this NESA samples questions paper and then we're going to identify ways that this could be approached using a discursive style. Part A asks you, "use one of the lines above as a stimulus for the opening of an imaginative discursive or persuasive piece of writing. In your piece of writing incorporate at least one example of figurative language that you have learned about through your study of the prescribed texts for Module C”. In this question, you will need to choose which line you will focus on as stimulus, which form you will write in, and which figurative devices you will incorporate from one of the Module C prescribed texts that you have studied. This will take some time to decide on. Do not rush into writing your response until you have a clear idea of what you are going to do. Please note that in this question, you are not expected to write a complete text. Just the opening paragraphs. The focus is on the quality of your writing.

[Slide reads: Could I write a discursive text? Activity four stimulus one

* key times the persona has visited the sea and its impact on them – sea could become a metaphor for their changing lives and relationships
* the role the sea plays in our lives – social, economic, artistic
* what else?

Stimulus two

* the art of lying
* do we really want to hear the truth?
* an exploration of gossip
* fake news and the media
* what else?]

On the screen now are a few ideas that you might like to explore as you experiment with the discursive. This information is also found within resource five, activity four. Within the examination you are encouraged to take a couple of minutes to brainstorm ideas and potential forms before you start writing. You have reading time in Paper Two, and you are encouraged to use this time to read the questions for Modules A, B, and C, and start planning your ideas. As you can see here some questions will have greater potential for discursive texts or a hybrid text using discursive elements. Taking the time to let your creative inspiration fire up, is time well spent as you will have a clearer purpose and direction, and you can make choices that will highlight your strengths as a writer.

We would now like you to spend some time brainstorming ideas in relation to this sample question. Now we would like you to spend some time brainstorming ideas in relation to the NESA example. Don't rush this activity as engaging with the question and its stimulus in a thoughtful manner, can then help you push your ideas and experiment with your own writing and this can also help ensure that you are meeting the requirements of the question. Pause the presentation now and to complete activity four which is found within resource five.

Now we are going to move on to a different sample. Sample question two states: "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in", Leonard Cohen, "Anthem". "You can't say it, but you know it's true", Barack Obama. A, requires you to use one of the lines above as stimulus for the opening of an imaginative, discursive or persuasive piece of writing. In your piece of writing incorporate at least one example of figurative language that you have learnt about through your study of the prescribed texts for Module C and this is worth 12 marks. Part B requires you to explain how your writing in part A was influenced by what you have learnt about figurative language through the study of your prescribed texts for Module C and it is worth eight marks. This information is also outlined in resource six.

Now we would like you to pause the presentation and reread the question and complete activity five. In this activity you will be required to plan and write a response to the question, but only complete part a. We don't want you to write your reflection just yet. Make sure you take the time to complete the table in detail before you start writing. This activity may take you 30 to 40 minutes as we do want you to practice writing as well. Remember to hand write and use a black pen when you do get up to the writing your response section, pause the presentation and make sure you complete activity five in the resources booklet in detail.

How did you go? We hope you gave yourself a little bit of time to explore and experiment with your writing. Now onto the second NESA sample that we will explore. This question is from the English Standard sample examination materials for Paper Two. Part A ask you "use the image above to write creatively about a character's response to entering this unfamiliar setting for the first time", and this is worth 10 marks. Note the boxes in blue that highlight you do not need to write a complete narrative. This is a moment in time, the character's response to entering this unfamiliar setting for the first time. The mood or atmosphere you create is entirely up to you. You have also been told to write creatively about a character's response. You might have noticed that this question seems to naturally lend itself to the creation of one type of text over others. Well, this is the imaginative. However, you could still respond using the discursive style, and we will unpack this in the next slide.

Part B of this question asks you to “assess how effectively you have evoked your character's response to this experience, making detailed reference to your use of a range of language devices and stylistic features.” For this activity once again, we are only wanting you to focus on part A of this example.

As we said, this question certainly lends itself to an imaginative response. However, that doesn't mean you cannot incorporate discursive elements into your imaginative response. And if you did that well that would be creating a bit of a hybrid text and you are allowed and in fact, encouraged, to incorporate elements and features for any of the styles of text studied in Module C. These, as I've just said, are called hybrid texts and choosing to borrow language forms and features of different styles and purposes allows us to compose engaging and effective texts as long as this experimentation and this play links to your purpose. Many discursive features can be used to great effect in both imaginative texts, such as in the sample question and with more persuasive texts. In a minute we are going to ask you to experiment with some of these suggestions. If you want, you could start a piece with an anecdote. You could start from some point in the future and then look back at that moment. You might move between description of the setting and its impact and other places you or the character has visited. Reflect on positive elements and reactions to the space, and then shift to other reactions. Explore the space through the different senses and connect those with another place, time or experience.

Now onto the activity. The creative side of things. Pause the presentation and complete activity six, which is a part of resource seven. We would like you to experiment and compose the opening of the piece, but we want you to try and utilise some typically discursive features. This is why we have indicated that you may need 15 to 20 minutes for this activity.

How did you go? Did you have a bit of fun there and experiment with different features or devices? We hope that you are purposefully playing with your writing. Now onto our final sample question, you may have seen this question before as it was part of a different resource session. And if you have already written a response, this will be a particularly useful activity to help you play with your writing features and devices as you reflect on what you have achieved so far. In part A you are told to "use the image to write creatively about a character's response to entering this familiar setting for the last time". Before we move on to part B, what does this actually mean? What does the phrase ‘write creatively’ require of you? Well, you actually have the opportunity to be flexible in your approach. You do not need to stick to the traditional imaginative response if you don't want to, you can in fact, write a hybrid or write a persuasive or discursive response. You just need to make sure you capture your character's response to entering this familiar setting for the last time and you write to your strengths. Maybe your hybrid response to this utilises features of the imaginative and the discursive. And the purpose of this piece is to showcase a young woman's internal conflict about leaving this place. This piece could open with a personal anecdote about the space and utilise an allegory to show how the character is experiencing this inner turmoil. Maybe it is written in first person and uses flashbacks to shift the focus and connect to memories of childhood. It isn't required in part B, but in the planning, the text that inspired the response could have been "The Pedestrian" and "Dear Mrs. Dunkley". These texts might have influenced the protagonist's focus on reflecting on childhood, but also the dark dystopian and melancholic mood.

Part B requires "assess how effectively you have evoked" your character's response to this experience, making detailed reference to your use of a range of language devices and stylistic features". And this is worth the same marks, 10 marks, as part A. In a second we are going to get you to pause the presentation and complete activity seven, which is part of resource eight in the resource booklet. Now we would like you to write a full response. We want you to apply all of your recent learning and your experimentation and try and compose a hybrid response to sample question two. We understand that you will want to plan your ideas, and we have provided you with some of those resources to assist you with this process. Give yourself 40 to 50 minutes to complete activity seven, and don't forget to pause the presentation now.

Now that you have completed a couple of discursive writing tasks and hopefully composed a hybrid it's time to reflect on what you have learned during this session. Spend some time completing activity eight and reflect on how your knowledge and understanding has been developed through your engagement with these resources and activities. Pause the presentation now and complete activity eight in the resource booklet. This is the final activity in this resource.

Good luck with your writing and enjoy the opportunity to experiment.

End of transcript