

# MODULE C: THE CRAFT OF WRITING

## ABSTRACT

For Module C students must strengthen and extend their knowledge, skills and confidence as accomplished writers. They need to write for a range of audiences and purposes using language to convey ideas and emotions with power and precision.

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## MODULE C: CRAFT OF WRITING - HSC EXAMINATION

*“Exercise the writing muscle every day, even if it is only a letter, notes, a title list, a character sketch, a journal entry. Writers are like dancers, like athletes. Without that exercise, the muscles seize up” Jane Yolen.*

*“When you write, you lay out a line of words. The line of words is a miner’s pick, a woodcarver’s gouge, a surgeon’s probe. You wield it, and it digs a path you follow. Soon you find yourself deep in new territory. Is it a dead end, or have you located the real subject? You will know tomorrow, or this time next year. You make the path boldly and follow it fearfully. You go where the path leads. At the end of the path, you find a box canyon. You hammer out reports, dispatch bulletins. The writing has changed, in your hands, and in a twinkling, from an expression of your notions to an epistemological tool. The new place interests you because it is not clear. You attend. In your humility, you lay down the words carefully, watching all the angles. Now the earlier writing looks soft and careless. Process is nothing; erase your tracks. The path is not the work. I hope your tracks have grown over; I hope birds ate the crumbs; I hope you will toss it all and not look back” (Annie Dillard’s ‘The Writing Life begins’).*

You are encouraged to write frequently and to experiment with form, language and syntax. You need to spend time immersing yourself in the writing process.

## MODULE C: THE CRAFT OF WRITING

In Module C: The Craft of Writing, students are required to:

- Write for a range of audiences and purposes using language to convey ideas and emotions with power and precision
- Evaluate how writers use language creatively and imaginatively for a range of purposes - insights, emotion and vision to shape perspectives
- Appreciate, analyse and evaluate the power of language
- Consider purpose, audience and context to deliberately shape meaning
- Produce highly crafted imaginative, discursive, persuasive and informative texts
- Analyse at least TWO of the prescribed texts and may revisit prescribed texts from other modules

## HSC EXAMINATION

- One question that may contain up to two parts.
- The question will require an imaginative, discursive, persuasive, informative or reflective response.

Your answer will be assessed on how well you:

- craft language to address the demands of the question
- use language appropriate to audience, purpose and context to deliberately shape meaning

## EXAM STYLE QUESTIONS

1. *“Someday we’ll be able to measure the power of words. I think they are things. They get on the walls. They get in your wallpaper. They get in your rugs, in your upholstery, and your clothes, and finally in to you”* (Maya Angelou).
  - a. Use this statement as a stimulus for the opening of a piece of persuasive, discursive or imaginative writing that expresses your perspective about the power of words. (10 marks)
  - b. Reflect on how ONE of your prescribed texts from Module C reinforced your understanding of the importance of the power and precision of language. (10 marks)
  
2. “The opening of text should immediately hook the responder if they are going to be engaged emotionally and intellectually.”
  - a. Write the opening for a persuasive, discursive or imaginative text that engages the reader emotionally and intellectually. (12 marks)
  - b. Select the opening of one of your prescribed texts from either Module A, B or C, and evaluate how this opening informed your understanding of how to ‘hook’ the responder? (8 marks)
  
3. “Composers use unique voices to convey their key concerns.”
  - a. Compose an excerpt from a persuasive, discursive or imaginative text that reflects the unique voice of one of your Module C prescribed texts by using the same person and tense to convey a key concern. (12 marks)
  - b. Justify how you have appropriated the unique voice of one of the Module C prescribed texts. Ensure that you refer to the use of person and tense. (8 marks)

a.

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Composes an engaging piece of writing that responds to the question skilfully</li><li>• Uses a range of language devices skilfully to create a voice</li><li>• Demonstrates skilful control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose, context and selected form</li></ul>	10–12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Composes an engaging piece of writing that responds to the question effectively</li><li>• Uses language devices effectively to create a voice</li><li>• Demonstrates effective control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose, context and selected form</li></ul>	7–9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Composes a piece of writing that responds to the question simply</li><li>• Uses some language devices to create a voice</li><li>• Demonstrates variable control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose, context and selected form</li></ul>	4–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Composes a piece of writing that has some relevance to the question</li><li>• Demonstrates limited control of language</li></ul>	1–3

b.

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a comprehensive justification of their writing decisions in part (a)</li><li>• Demonstrates effective control of evaluative language</li></ul>	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a sound justification of their writing decisions in part (a)</li><li>• Demonstrates sound control of evaluative language</li></ul>	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a simple justification about their writing decisions in part (a)</li><li>• Demonstrates limited control of evaluative language</li></ul>	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides some relevant information about their writing in part (a)</li></ul>	1–2

4. “The context, perspective and purpose of a composer influence the choices they make when constructing their texts and the insights they wish to provoke.”

a. Compose an excerpt from a persuasive, discursive or imaginative text that conveys a significant insight that you gained from studying one of your

- prescribed texts in Module C and reflects an intended purpose and your perspective and context. (12 marks)
- b. Justify your choice of text form and insight, and explain how they reflect your purpose, perspective and context? (8 marks)
5. *“Graffiti or street art is often designed to express a concern or question what is happening in society.”*
- a. Create the setting for an imaginative piece of writing that incorporates graffiti or street art as a central focus. Ensure that a key concern is evident. You must use two key language techniques from one of your Module C prescribed texts. (10 marks)
  - b. Explain how you used the graffiti as a central focus and why you chose the two key language techniques from one of your Module C prescribed texts. (10 marks)
6. *“Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them” Orson Scott Card.*
- a. You have encountered interesting stories in the prescribed texts you have studied in Modules A, B and C. Each of these texts featured an ending that was carefully crafted. Reflect on which ending captured your imagination and why? (8 marks)
  - b. Use this ending as the stimulus to compose the ending of your own original persuasive, discursive or imaginative text that features an interesting story. (12 marks)

## THE CHALLENGES: IMAGINATIVE RESPONSES

*“Texts 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” (NESA Glossary)*

### Language

Be aware of every word that you use:

- The sound of the vowels and consonants to amplify or create euphony, discordance or disruption
- Plosive or fricative consonants
- Long or short vowel sounds
- Verbs the muscles of writing
- Striking imagery through figurative devices and word choice
- Lexical density!
- Verbal cinema - Looking through the lens of a camera to write
- Tricolon. E.g. Colum McCann’s *Let the Great World Spin* – “Car horns. Garbage trucks. Ferry whistles.”

## Syntax

- Playing with syntax. E.g. Hyperbaton – unusual inversion of word order in a sentence, such as in Eliot’s poem “Journey of the Magi” - “*A cold coming we had of of it*”. Writers, such as Shakespeare, TS Eliot and George Orwell, subverted the conventional word order and structure of sentences to be provocative and to amplify the intended meaning.
- Anaphora: The repetition of a word at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses or sentences to emphasise an idea or feeling. E.g. *Eight words spoken quietly, indifferently, without emotion. Eight simple, short words.* (Night, Elie Wiesel)
- Epistrophe or Antistrophe: The repetition of a word or phrase at the end of successive clauses or sentences.
- Anadiplosis: The repetition of the last word of one clause at the beginning of the next clause. E.g. I balanced all, brought all to mind,  
*The years to come seemed waste of breath,*  
*A waste of breath the years behind*  
*In balance with this life, this death.* (“An Irish Airman Foresees His Death”, W.B. Yeats)
- Epizeuxis: The repetition of a word or phrase emphatically in succession with no other words in between to produce a special effect. E.g. “*Alone, alone, all, all alone, / Alone on a wide wide sea!*” (“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, Samuel Taylor Coleridge)
- Tricolon: The use of three parallel words, phrases or clauses. E.g. “*You have a schedule, a calendar, a time for dinner or a movie.*” (The Time Keeper, Mitch Albom)
- Anastrophe or Inversion: The reversal of normal, syntactically correct word order. E.g.  
*Whose woods these are I think I know. / His house is in the village though...* (“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”, Robert Frost)
- Asyndeton: The omission of conjunctions, articles, and often pronouns for the sake of speed and economy. E.g. “*An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was thick, warm, heavy, sluggish.*” (Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad)
- Polysyndeton: The use of unnecessary conjunctions in a sentence. Can emulate a young voice or emphasise boredom. E.g. “*Luster came away from the flower tree and we went along the fence and they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass.*” (The Sound and the Fury, William Faulkner)
- Parallelism: Constructing consecutive sentences in a similar style in order to balance each other. E.g. “*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.*” (A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens)

## Setting

- The minutiae – the details that make a setting authentic

- Authentic references
- Verbal cinema: Open with an extreme close-up and then draw back to a medium shot...use mise-en-scene to create a room or a place.
- Synaesthesia: colour, sound, smell...
- Imagery
- Pathetic fallacy and symbolism

### Character

- Complexity and paradoxes of life
- Qualities
- Shifting emotions
- Details
- Back story
- How they move and act in the setting
- Dialogue and voice
- Relationships
- Actions and consequences

### Form and structure

- Point of view, perspectives and voice – play with more than one perspective
- Striking opening that disconcerts, intrigues or engages emotively or aesthetically

## THE CHALLENGES: DISCURSIVE RESPONSES

*“Writing without the direct intention of persuading the reader, listener or viewer to adopt any single point of view. Discursive texts can be humorous or serious in tone and can have a formal or informal register”* (NESA Glossary)

Discursive writing is exploratory. It takes an idea, a quote, an event, a person or a memory and explores this. It may end with a reflection and draws widely from many sources including the individual’s personal knowledge, understanding and experience. It can come in many forms, such as a creative non-fiction piece, a travel blog, a discussion essay, a speech or a personal essay. According to essayist Annie Dillard:

*“There’s nothing you cannot do with it; no subject matter is forbidden, no structure is proscribed. You get to make up your own structure every time, a structure that arises from the materials and best contains them. The material is the world itself, which, so far, keeps on keeping on. The thinking mind will analyse, and the creative imagination will link instances, and time itself will churn out scenes — scenes unnoticed and lost, or scenes remembered, written, and saved.”*

Discursive writing can have the following features:

- Explores an issue or an idea
- Can open with a quote or anecdote

- Personal anecdotes may be included
- Third or first person
- Can present multiple or different perspectives of an idea or experience
- Uses figurative language
- Uses factual information
- Draws upon real life experiences and often reflects key societal concerns or raises significant questions
- Uses engaging imagery and language features
- Could begin with an event, an anecdote or relevant quote that is then used to explore the idea
- A personal discursive piece is often deeply relatable provoking discussion
- Could end with a reflective resolution

You need to:

- Find a compelling topic or idea to explore
- Start with a strong hook, such as David Sedaris' essay 'Untamed' *"When I was young, my family didn't go on outings to the circus or trips to Disneyland. We couldn't afford them. Instead, we stayed in our small rural West Texas town, and my parents took us to cemeteries."*
- Show not tell
- Craft a thought-provoking, reflective conclusion that could leave the issue open for further thought.

### Planning a discursive piece

You begin by asking the following questions:

- What was the event, idea or situation or who was the person?
- Why does the event, idea, situation or the person still linger in your memories?
- What questions are provoked?
- How did you feel?
- How did you respond?
- What did it mean to you then?
- What does it mean to you now?
- Did it change the way that you perceive yourself, others or the world around you?

### Examples

- Wendell Berry's essay "An Entrance to the Woods" - [https://psych.utah.edu/documents/psych4130/Berry\\_W.pdf](https://psych.utah.edu/documents/psych4130/Berry_W.pdf)
- Annie Dillard's 'Total Eclipse' - <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/08/annie-dillards-total-eclipse/536148/>
- David Sedaris' "Untamed: On making friends with animals" - <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/untamed-animal-friends>
- EB. White's "Once More to the Lake" - <https://genius.com/E-b-white-once-more-to-the-lake-annotated>



- George Orwell's 'A Hanging' - [http://www.george-orwell.org/A\\_Hanging/0.html](http://www.george-orwell.org/A_Hanging/0.html)
- Annie Dillard's "Total Eclipse" - [https://home.ubalt.edu/ntyqfit/ai\\_05\\_mapping\\_directions/ai\\_05\\_see/ad\\_total\\_eclipse.htm](https://home.ubalt.edu/ntyqfit/ai_05_mapping_directions/ai_05_see/ad_total_eclipse.htm)
- Anna Ruta's "A Tree Left Standing (*inspired by Walden by Henry David Thoreau*)" - [https://stuy.enschool.org/ourpages/writing\\_exemplars/english/Sophomore%20Exemplars/Narrative/A%20Tree%20Left%20Standing%20by%20Anna%20Ruta.pdf](https://stuy.enschool.org/ourpages/writing_exemplars/english/Sophomore%20Exemplars/Narrative/A%20Tree%20Left%20Standing%20by%20Anna%20Ruta.pdf)
- Virginia Woolf's "The Death of a Moth" (with analysis) - <http://www.davidglensmith.com/wcjc/1301/PDFs/1209-woolf.pdf>
- "Snow Fall" The Avalanche at Tunnel Creel – multi-modal by John Branch; *The New York Times*, Dec. 20, 2012 - <http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/#/?part=tunnel-creek>

### **Alex Preston's 'The Death of Privacy' -**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/03/internet-death-privacy-google-facebook-alex-preston>

*"The message seems to be that if you really want to keep something private, treat it as a secret, and in the age of algorithmic analysis and big data, perhaps best to follow Winston Smith's bitter lesson from Nineteen Eighty-Four: "If you want to keep a secret, you must also hide it from yourself."*

*Here lies our greatest risk, one insufficiently appreciated by those who so blithely accept the tentacles of corporation, press and state insinuating their way into the private sphere. As Don DeLillo says in Point Omega: "You need to know things the others don't know. It's what no one knows about you that allows you to know yourself." By denying ourselves access to our own inner worlds, we are stopping up the well of our imagination, that which raises us above the drudge and grind of mere survival, that which makes us human.*

*I asked Josh Cohen why we needed private lives. His answer was a rallying cry and a warning. "Privacy," he said, "precisely because it ensures we're never fully known to others or to ourselves, provides a shelter for imaginative freedom, curiosity and self-reflection. So to defend the private self is to defend the very possibility of creative and meaningful life."*

## **THE CHALLENGES: PERSUASIVE RESPONSES**

*"Persuasive texts seek to convince the responder of the strength of an argument or point of view through information, judicious use of evidence, construction of argument, critical analysis and the use of rhetorical, figurative and emotive language. They include student essays, debates, arguments, discussions, polemics, advertising, propaganda, influential essays and articles" (NESA Glossary).*

- Cohesive and focused line of argument
- Deliberate choice of form, structure and language
- Rhetoric: repetition, tricolon, emotive language, allusions, rhetorical questions, collective pronouns...

- Factual references
- Supporting evidence, such as references to experts or statistics
- Humour or satire
- Appeals to reason and emotions
- Does not have to be a speech or essay

## **THE CHALLENGES: REFLECTIVE RESPONSES**

*“The thought process by which students develop an understanding and appreciation of their own learning. This process draws on both cognitive and affective experience”* (NESA Glossary). *“Consciously thinking about and analysing what one has done (or is doing)”* (Bolton 2005).

- Requires you to describe or explain, analyse and evaluate
- Retrospective
- Personal – first person
- Supported by clear analytical examples
- Makes connections between what you have learned and your practice
- Conveys a deep understanding and appreciation of what, why and how you have written
- Use of anecdotal references, imagery or metaphor
- Explanation, description or justification of the use of specific language or stylistic devices
- Connections between what you learn about writing and the writing that you craft
- Self-awareness of the learning process
- May be objective and/or subjective

## **THE CHALLENGES: INFORMATIVE RESPONSES**

*“Texts whose primary purpose is to provide information through explanation, description, argument, analysis, ordering and presentation of evidence and procedures. These texts include reports, explanations and descriptions of natural phenomena, recounts of events, instructions and directions, rules and laws, news bulletins and articles, websites and text analyses”* (NESA Glossary).

- Primary purpose is to provide information
- Include reports, explanations and descriptions
- Features specific factual evidence
- Usually in the present tense
- Can use sub-headings
- Could use precise language and technical jargon

## MODULE C CRAFT OF WRITING: KNOWING THE PRESCRIBED TEXTS

In the Trial and HSC examination, you are going to have to be agile when it comes to responding to the MOD C questions. You know that you are required to produce either an imaginative, discursive or persuasive response and that you will be drawing upon what you have learnt about the craft of writing from your prescribed MOD C texts and your MOD A and MOD B texts. The form you write in will be the one that best fits the question.

You could be asked questions that require you to create an original text that features:

1. A similar perspective or point of view or voice
2. Use two or more of the key language techniques or conventions, such as an extended metaphor
3. A similar opening or closing or create an alternative opening or closing
4. A setting that has been influenced by the style of the prescribed text
5. One of the key ideas of a prescribed text
6. A character excerpt inspired by the prescribed text.

To prepare for this complete the following table for each prescribed text.

**Prescribed text:** .....

<b>Form and structure</b>	
<b>Context and purpose</b>	
<b>Key influential language features and conventions</b>	

<b>Opening and closing</b>	
<b>Main idea/concerns</b>	