

4 Module C: The Craft Of Writing

SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS

In Paper 2, Section III of the HSC English Standard examination, you will be asked to write an imaginative, discursive or persuasive piece of writing in response to a question.

In Module C you will examine and analyse at least two prescribed texts as well as texts from your own wider reading. These texts will provide models and stimulus for the development of the ideas and writing style you include in your own imaginative and creative responses for school-based assessment and the HSC English Standard examination. Remember all prescribed texts from the modules for the English Standard course can be used to enhance the quality of your writing. See Chapters 26–29 for more information on the prescribed texts for Module C.

The information and activities below will help you develop your imaginative, discursive, persuasive and reflection writing skills. As you develop your writing skills, try to experiment and play with language and your ideas. Drafting, editing and rewriting are an important part of the creative writing process, so you can always change your writing if you feel the piece is not working.

KEY TERMS

Sustained: continued for an extended period or without interruption

Cohesive: integrated, linked, unified

Appraise: assess the value or quality of something

Discuss: examine different perspectives about an idea, concept or issue in the textual features of a text

Explain: clarify and describe how the textual features create meaning

Speculate: form a theory or conjecture about a subject from the evidence available

SAMPLE HSC EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS FOR PAPER 2, SECTION III

Before you begin to experiment with your own writing, it is important to understand the types of questions you may be required to answer for Paper 2, Section III.

Section III—The Craft of Writing (20 marks)

Below are three sample questions for Section III – The Craft of Writing. All questions have TWO parts. However in the exam you may only have to answer one part. Pay particular attention to whether the question asks you to write in a particular text type or not. Generally, the question will guide you to write an imaginative, discursive or persuasive text. Remember you can write a hybrid of these texts, which means a combination of one or more text types.

Example A

The following question has TWO parts. Read all parts of the question before you begin.

There was a steaming mist in all the hollows, and it had roamed in its forlornness up the hill, like an evil spirit, seeking rest and finding none. A clammy and intensely cold mist, it made its slow way through the air in ripples that visibly followed and overspread one another, as the waves of an unwholesome sea might do.

Acknowledgment: *A Tale of two Cities* by Charles Dickens [Text is in the public domain.]
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/98/98-0.txt>

- Describe how the writer sets up a potential conflict through the setting in this text. In your response refer to at least ONE language device or stylistic feature. (5 marks)
- Write the next part of the narrative where a conflict between characters develops, using the setting from the extract as inspiration. (15 marks)

Part A specifically requires you to show how the writing alludes to a potential conflict through the setting. Your reflection should also include an explanation of how the writer uses one language or stylistic device to achieve their purpose. Part B requires you to develop the narrative further by showing how a conflict between characters develops, using the setting from the extract as inspiration. This questions is geared toward an imaginative response. As a guide, make Part B your main writing as it is worth 15 marks, whereas Part A is only worth 5 marks.

Example B

The following question has TWO parts. Read all parts of the question before you begin.

- a) Choose a setting or landscape from ONE prescribed text that you have studied in Module C. Use the setting or landscape to explore an idea that enhances a perspective represented in the original prescribed text. (15 marks)
- b) Justify the creative decisions that you have made in your writing in part (a). (5 marks)

Part A specifically requires you to use a setting or landscape from a prescribed text studied in Module C to explore a way of looking at the world that enhances the perspective already explored in the original text. You can write in any text type you like as one is not specifically given. Part B requires you to explain the reasons you chose the setting and landscape and how you explored the ideas and stylistic devices used in the original text in your own writing. You may refer to another prescribed text. As a guide, make Part A your main writing as it is worth 15 marks, whereas Part B is only worth 5 marks.

Example C

The following question has TWO parts. Read all parts of the question before you begin.

- a) Use the image (right) as a stimulus for 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 prescribed texts from Modules A, B or C. (15 marks)
- (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 from Modules A, B or C. (5 marks)

Part A specifically requires you to use the image given in a creative way in your writing. You also need to include figurative devices that you have learnt from your study of prescribed texts in Modules A, B or C. Part B requires you to show how your writing was influenced by figurative devices from the prescribed texts from Modules A, B or C. As a guide, make Part A your main writing as it is worth 15 marks, whereas Part B is only worth 5 marks.

OVERVIEW OF TEXT TYPES

There are four text types you may be asked to write in Paper, 2, Section III. They include:

- imaginative
- discursive
- persuasive
- informative.

It is important to remember that the definition of these text types from the NESAs glossary are neither static nor watertight and particular texts can belong to more than one category. The definitions of the text types below indicate an approach to writing in relation to audience and purpose rather than outlining a specific textual form that must be adhered to. Because of this only three text types will be dealt with extensively in this chapter: imaginative, discursive and persuasive. Discursive and persuasive text types could be considered informative.

Features	Imaginative	Discursive	Persuasive	Informative
Definition	Characterised by originality, freshness and insight, these texts represent ideas, feelings and mental images in words or visual images, usually through figurative devices	Texts that involve the discussion of an idea(s) or opinion(s) without the direct intention of persuading the reader, listener or viewer to adopt any single point of view	Texts that convince the responder of the strength of an argument or point of view through information, judicious use of evidence, construction of argument, critical analysis	Texts that provide information through explanation, description, argument, analysis, ordering and presentation of evidence and procedures
Purpose	To entertain by making new connections between established ideas or widely recognised experiences in order to create new ideas and images	To explore an idea or variety of topics	To put forward a point of view and persuade a reader, viewer or listener	To provide informative content, as a store of knowledge and reflection of everyday life
Audience	People who love stories about real and imagined experiences	Depends on the topic	Depends on the topic	Depends on the topic

Features	Imaginative	Discursive	Persuasive	Informative
Tone	Humorous, light-hearted serious	Humorous, light-hearted serious	Serious and purposeful	Serious and purposeful
Register	Formal, informal	Formal, informal	Formal, informal	Formal
Examples	Novels Traditional tales Fairytales Poetry Stories Plays Fiction for young adults and children Picture books Multi-modal texts, for example film	Feature articles Creative nonfiction Blogs Personal essays Documentaries Speeches Cultural commentary	Exposition essay Debates Arguments Discussion essay Advertising Propaganda News articles Blogs	Reports Explanations and descriptions of natural phenomena Recounts of events Instructions and directions Rules and laws News bulletins and articles websites Text analyses
Language features	Figurative language Sound and visual imagery Descriptive language	Imaginative techniques Modality Emotive language Rhetoric Evidence (examples and references)	Imaginative techniques Modality Rhetoric Emotive language Evidence (examples and references)	Explanation Descriptive language Evidence (examples and references)

Reference: NESA English Standard Glossary

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-english/english-standard-2017/glossary>

WRITING STRATEGIES: GETTING STARTED

When writing for Module C, you may write in any number of text types. You may for example write a journal entry, a narrative or an inter-generic piece of writing that combines different genres. For the HSC Standard course, writing is not just writing a short story. Most importantly, writing is about tapping into your creativity.

Note that there are many more imaginative, discursive and persuasive writing strategies you can use in addition to those explored in this chapter. Some elements of imaginative, discursive and persuasive writing are not addressed comprehensively.

The following writing strategies will help you to develop your imaginative, discursive and persuasive writing skills. They are also designed to create a scaffold for your writing. You may find that you can connect some of the writing pieces to make a completed piece—it is up to you.

‘Show don’t tell’

Writers often hear that it is important to ‘show don’t tell’. What exactly does that mean? As a reader we like to imagine what the writer is creating through his or her words and the way the ideas are brought together.

When you read a story or nonfiction piece of writing, what happens for you in your imagination? Do you associate aspects of the story or events and/or ideas depicted to your own experiences? Does one thing stand out for you over another? Do you feel certain emotions?

The reading experience is unique to each individual. That is why some aspects of a story or writing piece will stand out for you more than it will for another person. In other words, we all bring our own context to a story. It’s the writer’s job to make their writing interesting enough that the ideas and concepts relate to people. One way they do this is by showing the reader what is happening rather than telling them. Readers like to be able to imagine what is being described by filling in the gaps themselves. It’s a bit like being told what to do. We prefer to figure it out ourselves in our own way. Writing is like that too.

In saying this at times you may feel that for certain parts of your story or writing ‘telling’ is the best way to get your message across. Go with that if that feels right, but think about your reader and the effect this will have on them.

Freewriting

Freewriting is an effective strategy to get your mind thinking creatively. It is an idea first explored in combination with spiritual and automatic writing (allowing a person to produce written words without consciously writing).

Dorothea Brande first introduced the concept of freewriting in *Becoming a Writer*, published in 1934, and it was popularised by Julia Cameron through her book *The Artist's Way* (1992).

This type of writing is about being a conduit: a medium if you like. In order to free write, you write continuously for the allocated minutes in each task without stopping. Don't worry about spelling, punctuation or grammar. Just get your ideas down on paper. Afterwards, read over what you have written, selecting and developing the words, images and stylistic choices you think have potential.

We are going to experiment with a way to draw out your internal world in a creative way. Below is a piece of freewriting about the exploration of internal feelings of an implied character. The phrase 'I feel' has been used to help access the internal world. Figurative language has been used. Figurative language is language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation. The use of figurative language prevents the writing from being over emotional and sentimental.



As you read the example of freewriting below, take note of how figurative language is used to express feelings. Think also of how grammar, punctuation and correct sentence structure are secondary to allowing ideas to flow.

Modelled response

I feel the longing in my feet squeezing my veins gently in the rhythm of a heartbeat. I feel the juices flowing freely past the mechanics of me within, delighting the senses, tingling them awake, making me hum vibrations. I feel the echo of your voice from the ether, soothing my sad eyes, mellowing the hollow gap in between breathing. I feel the soft sticky flesh of you like a mango caressing my skin, cooling the humidity. I feel the flow of the breeze whispering to greet me at the door to let me in.

Activity

1. Free write for three minutes your feelings right now using figurative language to describe the emotional impact they have on you. Remember to 'show, don't tell'.
2. You might like to start with 'I feel' but you don't have to. You could start with a heading like 'Black Rocks' or 'Heavy Rain' or 'Music Crushing'. Let the headings inspire the focus of your writing.