

# TEXTS AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE LESSON



HSC COWORKS

## INTRODUCTION

Humans beings are certainly complex creatures aren't we? It's baffling to comprehend the billions of people around the globe, individually living out their unique lives. We like to think of ourselves as individuals, but paradoxically, we also like to think of ourselves as deeply connected as a universal human race.



Despite our differences in religion, ideology, beliefs and context our commonalities are abundant:

- We all crave connection, belonging, community.
- We all feel an intense spectrum of emotion.
- We all have a brain responsible for processing both the sensory/physical and relational aspects of our existence.
- We all, at some time or another, will reflect upon those big existential questions that cause us to consider how we came to be and for what purpose our existence was created.

And perhaps that's what being human is all about – forging, crafting and interpreting our own unique experience of life; reflecting upon our identity, our relationships and our sense of purpose to find a sense of meaning.

It's no wonder that we love to reflect upon our humanity and texts provide us with the perfect forum to do just that. No matter the form (whether it be poetry, film, theatre, prose or blogs, tweets, vines and memes), texts have always been a perfect tool for us to learn about the experiences of others as a collective race of beings and engage with our own sense of self as unique individuals.

That's what this Common Module is all about. Let's look at it in a little more detail.



## WHAT IS COMMON MODULE?

Whether you're studying Advanced or Standard English you'll definitely be studying the Common Module: Texts and Human Experience.

Your study will require you to examine various aspects of the human experience in a range of different texts, but you'll examine one prescribed text in detail. You'll also be required to find ONE text of your own selection that connects to your study.

But before we go any further let's check out the rubric, then we'll go through it, statement by statement.

## THE COMMON MODULE RUBRIC?

*In this common module students deepen their understanding of how texts represent individual and collective human experiences. They examine how texts represent human qualities and emotions associated with, or arising from, these experiences. Students appreciate, explore, interpret, analyse and evaluate the ways language is used to shape these representations in a range of texts in a variety of forms, modes and media.*

*Students explore how texts may give insight into the anomalies, paradoxes and inconsistencies in human behaviour and motivations, inviting the responder to see the world differently, to challenge assumptions, ignite new ideas or reflect personally. They may also consider the role of storytelling throughout time to express and reflect particular lives and cultures. By responding to a range of texts they further develop skills and confidence using various literary devices, language concepts, modes and media to formulate a considered response to texts.*

*Students study one prescribed text and a range of short texts that provide rich opportunities to further explore representations of human experiences illuminated in texts. They make increasingly informed judgements about how aspects of these texts, for example context, purpose, structure, stylistic and grammatical features, and form shape meaning. In addition, students select one related text and draw from personal experience to make connections between themselves, the world of the text and their wider world.*

*By responding and composing throughout the module students further develop a repertoire of skills in comprehending, interpreting and analysing complex texts. They examine how different modes and media use visual, verbal and/or digital language elements. They communicate ideas using figurative language to express universal themes and evaluative language to make informed judgements about texts. Students further develop skills in using metalanguage, correct grammar and syntax to analyse language and express a personal perspective about a text.*

Now to break it down into key sections:



*In this common module students deepen their understanding of HOW texts **represent** individual and collective **human experiences**. They examine HOW texts represent **human qualities** and **emotions** associated with, or arising from, these experiences.*

In other words you're going to need to get really clear on how individual and collective human experiences are represented through the techniques used by composers. There are some significant key terms that you'll need to be familiar with. NESA has provided a Glossary of Key Terms used in questions.

The NESA Stage 6 Glossary is also a very helpful resource you should check out.

#### **KEY TERMS:**

**How** – typically requires you to examine the techniques used by composers to communicate messages and ideas to responders.

**Represent** – The NESA glossary provides two definitions to help us out here:

**Representation:** The way ideas are portrayed and represented in texts, using language devices, forms, features and structures of texts to create specific views about characters, events and ideas. Representation applies to all language modes: spoken, written, visual and multimodal.

**Representing:** The language mode that involves composing images in visual or multimodal texts. These images and their meaning are composed using codes and conventions. The term can include such activities as graphically presenting the structure of a novel, making a film, composing a web page or enacting a dramatic text.

**Human Experiences** – the vast array of interactions and emotions we experience on the great journey between birth and death.

**Human Qualities** – the distinctive attributes, characteristics and properties that make us human. Consider qualities such as compassion, empathy, leadership... What other qualities can you add to this list?

**Emotions** – Emotions have incredible influence over human experience, but what exactly are they? In psychology emotion is often defined as a complex state of feeling that results in physical and psychological changes that influence thought and behaviour. To get a better understanding check out 6 Major Theories of Emotion.

*Students **appreciate, explore, interpret, analyse** and **evaluate** the ways language is used to shape these representations in a range of texts in a variety of forms, **modes** and **media**.*



You're going to be engaging with a wide variety of texts and flexing your analysis muscle by looking at the ways ideas are represented through language.

### KEY TERMS:

**Appreciate** – Make a judgement about the value of

**Explore** – Enquire into or discuss a subject in detail

**Interpret** – Draw meaning from

**Analyse** – Identify components and the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications

**Evaluate** – Make a judgement based on criteria; determine the value of

**Mode** - The various processes of communication: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing. Modes are also used to refer to the semiotic (meaning-making) resources associated with these communicative processes, for example sound, print, image and gesture

**Media** – Means of communication, for example print, digital. Plural of medium.

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Great texts will always impact the responder in some way. Your job is going to be the examination of how fresh representations of the human experience shapes a responder's beliefs, assumptions, ideas and even their understanding of themselves.

### KEY TERMS:

**Anomalies** – something that deviates from what is normal, standard or expected.

**Paradoxes** – a person or thing that combines contradictory qualities or features

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*By responding and composing throughout the module students further develop a repertoire of skills in comprehending, interpreting and analysing complex texts.*

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Not only are you going to be analysing texts, but you're also going to do some composition of your own. This is where you develop your ability to represent your own ideas through your texts, just like the composers you'll be studying.



*Students study one **prescribed text** and a **range of short texts** that provide rich opportunities to further explore representations of human experiences illuminated in texts. They make increasingly informed judgements about how aspects of these texts, for example **context**, **purpose**, **structure**, **stylistic** and grammatical features, and form shape meaning.*

You'll have one main texts that you'll evaluate in detail, but your understanding of the Module will also be enhanced by your study of a range of short texts selected by your teacher.

#### KEY TERMS:

**Context** – The social, historical and political factors that were evident at the time the composer crafted their text.

**Purpose** – The specific reason why a text was created. This will influence the themes, style and form of the composition.

**Structure** – The relationships of different parts of a text to each other and to the text as a complex whole. The structure of a text can refer to the internal organisation of ideas, as in an argument or story, the development of parallel plots in a novel or play, or the overarching framework of the text

**Stylistic features** – The ways aspects of texts, for example words, sentences and images, are arranged, and how they affect meaning. Style can distinguish the work of individual authors (for example Jennings' stories, Lawson's poems) as well as the work of a particular period (for example Elizabethan drama, nineteenth century novels). Examples of stylistic features are narrative viewpoint, structure of stanzas, juxtaposition, use of figurative language and tone.

*In addition, students select **one related text** and draw from personal experience to make connections between themselves, the world of the text and their wider world.*

If you need some help choosing your related text, check out the HSC CoWorks online lesson, accessible by clicking here.

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There's a pretty good chance you may be required to do a multimodal internal assessment for this Module, depending on how your teacher has designed your assessment schedule. But, either way, you'll be doing lots of responding and composing to build your skills and understanding of how a range of different techniques work in texts to communicate ideas effectively.

#### KEY TERMS:

**Comprehending** – a responder's ability to bring meaning to and extract meaning from texts.

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*They communicate ideas using **figurative language** to express universal themes and evaluative language to make informed judgements about texts. Students further develop skills in using **metalanguage**, correct grammar and syntax to analyse language and express a personal perspective about a text.*

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You'll use all those skills you've developed by composing your own work that engages with the themes of the module and also to form insightful personal opinions about all the texts you study.

#### KEY TERMS:

**Figurative Language** – Words or phrases used in a way that differs from the expected or everyday usage. Figurative language creates comparisons by linking the senses and the concrete to abstract ideas. Words or phrases are used in a non-literal way for particular effect, for example simile, metaphor, personification. Figurative language may also use elements of other senses, as in hearing with onomatopoeia, or in combination as in synaesthesia.

**Metalanguage** – Language (which can include technical terms, concepts, ideas or codes) used to describe and discuss a language. The language of grammar and the language of literary criticism are two examples of metalanguage.

## HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?



### Internal School Assessment

You'll definitely have one internal school assessment for the Common Module. Be sure to check your assessment schedule carefully to find out the style and weighting of this task.

### The HSC Examination

This Module will also be assessed in Paper One of the HSC Exam. There will be two sections in this paper:

**Section 1:** Contains 4 to 5 short answer questions based on a stimulus book. At least 2 of these questions will be the same for Standard and Advanced students. The rest will be unique questions depending which course you're studying.

**Section 2:** This section will require you to write a sustained piece of writing where you'll need to integrate your knowledge of your prescribed text. Although you'll study a piece of related material in class you won't be required to write about this in your HSC examination.

## WHAT SORT OF QUESTIONS WILL I BE ASKED IN THE HSC?

NESA have released a range of sample questions to help you get an idea of the style of questions you could be asked in the HSC. Click to check out the NESA Advanced sample paper.

## GENERAL HINTS AND TIPS FOR TEXTS AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Of course you want to do your best to prepare for this Module. In order to get yourself on track here are some helpful hints and tips to keep you on track:

- Know the rubric! There's no substitute for this. If you know the rubric you'll find it much easier to craft a strong thesis statement that is relevant to the Module. Take the time to know each part of the rubric in detail.
- Ensure you have an insightful understanding of the human experience. Make sure you've researched this concept and taken some good quality notes about the topic area. Really try to think outside the square so that you have some unique and original ideas to include in your responses.
- Know your prescribed text. Take the time to read/view it a few times if possible. Engage with all of the activities you do in class and find people who are happy to discuss the text's key ideas. Do this early.
- Select your related material early. Although you don't need this for the HSC exam, there's a pretty good chance you're going to need it for an internal school assessment. Deciding on your texts and analysing it early will take some of the pressure off.
- Get familiar with the NESA sample papers so you know what to expect in your exam.
- Start your EBT early. Submit it to the markers for feedback and as soon as you have it complete start working on a draft.
- Be open minded about the feedback you get from the marking team and the coaches. This is not criticism. The feedback you receive is guidance on how to improve your skills and understanding. Those students who do exceptionally well typically embrace feedback as an opportunity for development.

***Over to you now! Good luck with your study of the Common Module.***