Organisation of seminar

9.00am – 9.15am: Introduction
9.15am – 9.30am: What is Discovery?
9.30am – 10.15am: Section 1
10.15am – 10.30am: Recess
10.30am – 11.30am: Section 2
11.30am – 11.45am: Recess
11.45am – 1.00pm: Section 3

How is the English exam structured?

AOS
Section 1 – 15 marks
(Comprehension)
Section 2 – 15 marks
(Imaginative writing)
Section 3 – 15 marks
Extended response
Plus at least ONE related text

MODULES
A – 20 marks
B – 20 marks
C – 20 marks

How is a Band 6 best achieved in an exam worth 105 raw marks? By scoring 95 raw marks...

AOS
Section 1 – 15/15 marks
(Comprehension)
Section 2 – 13/15 marks
(Imaginative writing)
Section 3 – 13/15 marks
Extended response
Plus at least ONE related text

MODULES
A – 18/20 marks
B – 18/20 marks
C – 18/20 marks
= 95/105 marks (90%)

What is Discovery?

Notice the capital ‘d’ – as in, the way you will explore discovery in English is not strictly via its dictionary definition or ‘denotation’.
Rather, you will explore the syllabus definition of the term ‘Discovery’.
So read the syllabus rubric carefully!

Read your text through the magnifying glass of the rubric – do not trust a denotation alone
This Area of Study requires students to explore the ways in which the concept of discovery is represented in and through texts. Discovery can encompass the experience of discovering something for the first time or rediscovering something that has been lost, forgotten or concealed. Discoveries can be sudden and unexpected, or they can emerge from a process of deliberate and careful planning evoked by curiosity, necessity or wonder. Discoveries can be fresh and intensely meaningful in ways that may be emotional, creative, intellectual, physical and spiritual.

Area of Study Discovery rubric

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Area of Study and texts for the common content of Standard and Advanced courses

The Area of Study must be considered in the context of the relevant description in the syllabus and the course objectives, outcomes and content. In the Area of Study, students explore and examine relationships between language and text, and interrelationships among texts. They examine closely the individual qualities of texts while considering the texts' relationships to the wider context of the Area of Study. They synthesise ideas to clarify meaning and develop new meanings. They take into account whether aspects such as context, purpose and register, text structures, stylistic features, grammatical features and vocabulary are appropriate to the particular text.

AOS Discovery rubric (cont.)

Through composing and responding to a wide range of texts, students may make discoveries about people, relationships, societies, places and events and generate new ideas. By synthesising perspectives, students may deepen their understanding of the concept of discovery. Students consider the ways composers may invite them to experience discovery through their texts and explore how the process of discovering is represented using a variety of language modes, forms and features. In their responses and compositions, students examine, question and reflect on: • their own experiences of discovery • the experience of discovery in and through their engagement with texts • assumptions underlying various representations of the concept of discovery • the ways in which the composer's choice of language modes, forms, features and structure shapes representations of discovery and discovering • the ways in which exploring the concept of discovery may broaden and deepen their understanding of themselves and their world.

AOS Discovery rubric (cont.)

The 2015 HSC will have a particular focus on at least one of the key aspects of the rubric plus a committee-phase which cannot be predicted.

"Sudden and unexpected"
"Deliberate and planned"
"Assumptions underlying various representations of the concept of discovery"
"They can stimulate new ideas"
"Discoveries can offer new understandings and renewed perceptions of ourselves and others"
"Discoveries about people, relationships, societies, places and events"
Success in Section 1 is vitally important in order to achieve a Band 6 result. It is a free kick...

Section 1

15 marks
Attempt Question 1
Allow about 40 minutes for this section

Answer the question in a writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available upon request.

In your answers you will be assessed on how well you:
- demonstrate understanding of the way perceptions of belonging through text
- describe, explain and analyse the relationship between language, culture and society
- apply knowledge of culture and language to respond to the question

Question 1 (15 marks)
Examine Text one, two, three and four carefully and then answer the

Text two — Poem from Family Ties

Tractor and Father and Child
For Lions

In the front yard
of a farmhouse
by a cooling tractor
a man is hugging his child.
See, these things can be connected;
the tractor, red and powerful,
overturned wheels like a boy’s toy,
one of those that oversleep regularly
on the sloped land
in moments of imagination.
You must read for (10) ten minutes without touching a pen. Use this time well. Attempt to read all four Section 1 texts closely after first reading the focus of the Discovery questions in Sections 1, 2 and 3. This will guide your response.
Success in Section 2 relies upon how well you employ literary techniques to shape your story around the stimulus. It is a matter of trust.

Literary techniques

The markers will judge you on whether you have actively attempted to employ literary techniques. You cannot just tell a story. These techniques include (but are not confined to): symbolic setting, motif, extended metaphor, symbolism, foreshadowing, irony, intelligent references to the historical context, a unique voice...

Avoid cliché

Extended metaphor, motif, symbolism (it doesn't actually matter if you can identify these triplets by their correct name, but make sure at least one of them is in the pram)

Classic errors

- Ignoring the rubric
- Furiously writing your template without considering any aspect of the stimulus
- Forgetting the plot (complication/resolution)
- Writing an historical narrative which is boring
- Writing too much (only 800-900 words is necessary)
Symbolic setting (internal landscape as a feature of characterisation)

Symbolic setting

Symbolic setting

Symbolic setting

Extended metaphor

Groove under pressure, and find a rhythm in your writing

As the old, disappointed hippies said in the 1980's (whose one-time, long-haired friends were now wearing Nike runners, buying Macs and investing on the stock-market):

"Simplify man!"

Slow down...slow your writing almost to a standstill in the opening scene. Focus on minutiae - focus on extreme detail for its symbolic and foreshadowing effect.
Cryptic dialogue (as opposed to expository dialogue)

The best dialogue is sparse. It is genuine (well-researched), it is cryptic and it always adds to the characterisation. It doesn’t tell the story.

Consider the example of a character who is planning a dramatic event later in the story and his reaction to an open window. How would you use dialogue to act as a foreshadowing device?

Plot

Something has to happen. Your character has to experience an event which threatens to undo them or transform them. This event is known as ‘the complication’. It offers the character an opportunity to change. This change is known as ‘the character arc’. The event cannot be too trivial and it cannot be ridiculously extreme (your character has to save the world). The event ideally allows your character to express an emotional range.

The twist

Avoid it, unless you are a brilliant writer.

The very notion of a ‘twist’ suggests that you have avoided foreshadowing techniques. It suggests that your narrative lacks ‘textual integrity’. How can this help you? I have occasionally seen it work though.

Backstory

The backstory of your character is very important, even if you do not include it.

Non-sequential narrative

The narrative is not linear. It happens in time-shifts. A very effective technique if you can manage it. It suits stories about memory and the unreliability of ‘personality’.

Dual and tri-narratives

Stories might be about more than one character. However, they need to tie together by the end. Use a different pen and colour if you cannot make the voices distinct. Tri-narratives are a little ‘old hat’ and 2007. Think Justin Timberlake and Gwen Stefani. Old hat.
**Obey the stimulus!**

Whatever you do, obey the stimulus. It is the discriminator for examiners. The stimulus is not designed to trick you, but to allow you to show your skills under pressure.

**Know your characters, know their voice!**

- You need to practise writing your character's voice in stream-of-consciousness pieces of ten minutes or more. Find its rhythms, its patterns, its idiosyncratic words, its flow...
- Write a brief backstory for your character which chronicles their childhood, their nightmares, their saddest moments, their secret desires.

**Know your marker**

- This task required students to use one image to compose an imaginative piece of writing that explored the complex nature of belonging.
- Stronger Responses:
  - Submitted a sustained narrative that developed ideas in a detailed manner.
  - Wrote with flair and insight, displaying a developed control of description, word choice and figurative imagery.
  - Made few grammatical errors that would have reduced the clarity of their writing.
  - Made few spelling, punctuation errors.
  - Integrated the stimulus in a meaningful, explicit and manner.
  - Employed an effective motif symbol throughout their narrative.

- Weaker Responses:
  - Composed a narrative that was brief, lacked development of ideas and characters and / or was convoluted.
  - Wrote a narrative or adapted a pre-prepared narrative without incorporating the stimulus in an insightful manner.
  - Wrote with incongruity and / or awkwardness and / or simplicity, displaying mixed control of description, dialogue, word choice and figurative imagery.
  - Made some / numerous grammatical errors that have reduced the clarity of their writing.
  - Created conventional and / or clichéd and / or formulaic insights.

**Section 3**

Success in Section 3 relies upon how well you argue the key focus of the question and present a conceptual argument about your core and related text.

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Question 3 (15 marks)

An individual's perceptions of belonging evolve in response to the interactions with their world.

In what ways is this view of belonging represented in your prescribed texts or related text of your own choosing?

The prescribed texts are listed on the next page.
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Question 3 continues on page 12
What is a concept? How is it different from a theme?

An example of a thematic argument about your text connected to Discovery:
“Robert Gray’s poetry is about the way that people discover themselves.”

An example of a conceptual argument about your text connected to Discovery:
“Robert Gray’s poetry explores the way that people discover their innate capacity to survive in the midst of a natural crisis. His poetry examines the human will for revelatory self-discovery in nature.”

Author, Title, Year of Publication

Shakespeare’s ‘Hamlet’ (1601)

OR

William Shakespeare’s Hamlet (1601)

NOT

Shakespeare’s Hamlet written in the Elizabethan era

Exam Method

Part 1

Sacrifice three minutes to write down an essay plan – how does the question link to the rubric? How does your template essay link to the key phrases of the question?

Part 2

Write your essay in clear and flowing handwriting. Avoid crossing out words and separate your ideas so that your paragraphs are no longer than two sentences each.

Know your essay ‘voice’

- You need to practise your writing so that it is a free and flowing style which ‘tells a story’.
- Practise writing stream-of-consciousness pieces of ten minutes or more. Find its rhythms, its patterns, its idiosyncratic words, its flow...
- Believe in yourself. Confidence is everything.
How to write a related text

- Aim for a 60/40 split between your core and related text (however, if you are asked to write about two related texts, aim for a 40/30/30 split).
- Select a related text which is conceptually linked to your core text (not linked via subject matter alone).
- Attempt to include your related text in the thesis, and then every other paragraph of your essay.
- Ideally, select a related text which concurs or agrees with the concept of discovery in your core text.
- Avoid simplistic texts – remember that this aspect of the essay is the marker’s ‘discriminator’ (that is, are you an A range student?) – and always write about the ‘high end’ techniques of your related text (such as mise-en-scene, semiotics, prosody, intertextuality, character arc, extended metaphor, etc.).

Analyse your own drafts

"Change leads to new beginnings." Discuss in relation to Freedom Writers and ONE related text.

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An essay is a quick game of chess – make the right moves
What are the characteristics of a good essay?

- A complex argument
- Argues the question’s key phrase
- Clear language
- A passionate ‘voice’
- Appropriate evidence (textual citations or quotations)
- Insightful discussion of techniques
- Highly articulate writing

Avoid Pretentious writing...

“The present post-modern paradigm imbues The Tempest with a Brechtian sense of multi-layered irony and literary subterfuge; what is perceived as ordinary ennui morphs into a chaotic plot, a product of Derrida’s difference. Prospero’s language is a lascivious reverie and excoriates his usurpers in sublime melancholy. Alonso is counter-wise obtuse in his disingenuous piety at the sight of his omatate monarchy in disarray.”

Common sense: If the writing detracts from the meaning of your argument - then the writing is working against you.

Three different essay styles available to the Year 12 English student

The Ideal Essay

- Essays of approximately six to seven pages’ length which directly address the key terms of the examination question. The prose is characterised by near-perfect spelling, punctuation and syntax (sentence-construction).
- Essays are built around a highly structured and formulaic style (i.e. the thesis appears in the first or second paragraph, each topic sentence might not relate directly to the thesis statement, and the essay’s opening paragraph may address a broad context and elements of the exam not specifically cited in the question).
- Essays are of the ‘ideal’ type of essay characterised by a high level of conceptual sophistication, unforced originality, and most crucially, a high-level analysis of the composers’ techniques (which features in the essay).
- High-quality arguments that address the key terms of the examination question, demonstrate a strong understanding of authorial voice and personal response, and characterised by near-perfect spelling, punctuation and syntax (sentence-construction).
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The Strategic Essay

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The Cynical Essay

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How many words?
Approximately 850-950 words will cut it. You don’t need to write a book.

900

Literacy - is it important?
Well… yes it is. Spelling and punctuation which affects meaning can cost you crucial marks.

The aim of a good writer is to contribute to the flow of traffic

Avoid a traffic jam

The lover’s kiss - write a beautiful final sentence each paragraph