

English Tips!

So having endured a year of Advanced English I thought I'd share some advice and tips that I WISH I had been told before beginning the course.

I'll split this off into over all tips and just tips per Module.

I'll also list my marks for each essay so you can see how it went in assessments;

- Discovery; 14/15 in trial and assessment (lost 1 mark the first time because I was slightly "too repetitive" and in the trial because my related didn't have "enough quotes")
- Mod A; 19/20 (top mark) in assessment, 18/20 in trial (lost 2 marks bc Ms Trimble disagreed with my opinion on EBB and believes it is more 'a celebration of love')
- Mod B: 20/20 in assessment and 19/20 in trial (lost one mark for not referencing the question enough)
- Mod C: 19/20 in speech (lost 1 mark because I didn't say the word REPRESENTING enough)

I took on ALL the above feedback and ensured my essays for the HSC didn't have the same problems – so rest assured that hopefully the essays you have now are "practically perfect"

OVERALL

1. Your TEACHER is your BEST FRIEND – fulfil their wishes.

Your teachers are walking, talking English machines.

They have YEARS of experience and can analyse a text for you in 0.2 seconds.

Write down EVERYTHING they say. Keep note of it, use it in your essays and LISTEN TO THEM.

They award marks to people who abide by their idea.

If Ms Turco hates gender in Hamlet then DO NOT talk about gender in your essay. DO WHAT THEY WANT and it will pay off for your internal mark.

Keep a 10/10 relationship with both of these teachers and utilise them as much as you can. They are both such hardworking women and will 1000% provide you with help at every beckon call.

Though you may feel very very overworked by the amount of homework they give you – it WILL pay off.

2. ASSESSMENTS and the MARKER

For every assessment – FIND WHAT TEACHER IS MARKING IT and ask girls in that class what the teacher has emphasised.

I know it seems unfair, but you want to RANK WELL and have a HIGH INTERNAL MARK. Often this will help you work out what the teacher might ask or even dictate how you will write your essay.

If your courageous enough, hand your draft to that teacher. Despite having Ms Trimble, I gave my Module A essay to Ms Lidman to mark and used her feedback. On this essay I received the highest mark in the cohort!! (19/20)

Every teacher has a different style and favour things more than others. Find out what they want and GIVE it to them. e.g.

- Ms Lidman LOVES quotes and textual evidence – lots of it
- Ms Trimble and Turco LOVE unique, deep and profound analysis that tugs their heart strings. SO MUCH SO that even if you have 2 quotes in your paragraph but lots of deep analysis you will get an A+.

If you want to succeed in English you must have all your essays checked by your teachers. Prior to an assessment write an extremely general essay (using my notes and sources) and hand it to them to mark. They will help you so much and deduct almost no marks off you in the assessment.

3. DO NOT NEGLECT Form and Structure

Some of us do not even KNOW what this is. But form and structure is really what differentiates a band 5 from a band 6.

Form and structure varies across every text and MUST NOT BE CONFUSED with techniques.

While techniques are literary, the form of a text differs. This is where you must reference poetic, novel, film and “whole” techniques.

For example;

- Poems: enjambment, dialogue, cyclical nature, Petrarchan form, reverts from sestet to...
- Novels: Motif, 1st person narration, poetic, segmentation etc.
- Films: Pretty much any film technique!!

Make sure you have at least 1-2 of these per paragraph and always reference the EFFECT this has on the reader.

4. Analysis and Techniques

Keep it deep and profound. DO not engage in superficial and obvious analysis that doesn't “WOW” the marker.

Write things that sound far-fetched and over the top.

e.g. Fitzgerald certainly did not use the symbolism of the grass as a reflection of the infiltration of consumerism into the lives of those who value material excess → but this was enough to make Ms Lidman give me 3 marks when she marked it in the assessment!!

DO not just write down WHAT the technique is. HOW does it engage the reader and create meaning!!

5. Introductions – ARE IMPORTANT

The Introduction is what markers first see. It is how they sort you into a band at first glance. So start of profound, amazing and with a bang.

I always memorise my essays and made sure I had a very very vague and profound essay that I was easily able to adapt. I kept the same structure for every essay;

- Sentence 1 – some way of how an exploration into that **module** reveals aspects of a text/set question
- Sentence 2 – Thesis statement and a direct **reference to the set question**
- Sentence 3 – Introduce your text! Reference the YEAR, mode and title (underlined) and a quick sentence on what it explores.
- Sentence 4 – If you have another text, use this sentence to do that – if not, add something else that links to the module.
- Sentence 5 – how such an exploration impacts the **audience** and increases understanding

6. To memorise or not to memorise?

My answer is – TO MEMORISE!!

I memorised every single bloody essay in year 11 and 12. While teachers advise against it, there was NO way I could write 8 pages of genius in 40 minutes.

Write very very general essays that have HEAPS in them. I wrote essays with 6-8 body paragraphs and only picked 4 to answer my question. Pick very broad and universal topics that are MOULDABLE.

I also tended to make body paragraphs that were extremely long and had a lot in them.

Trust me – IT HELPS.

7. How to Memorise?

I used a VARIETY of techniques when memorising my essays, such as;

1. AUDIO – I record my voice and listen back to it whenever I can for up to a week prior to the assessment. In the shower, while I ran, on the dinner table and before I went to bed.
2. Write it out – Just write it out as many times as you can, do it open book, closed book and under timed conditions
3. Make a “Run Down Version” – If you are utterly incapable of memorising an essay break it up into Quotes, Techniques and Effect. You can easily remember this as a bare minimum and back bone to your essay!!

8. ANSWER THE SET QUESTION

Make sure you answer the SET question. Link every point you have to the question – if not, you will be penalised.

This can be as simple as throwing a comma and linking to the question.

USE the WORDS of the question. If they ask you to talk about love and humanity, just keep saying those words or synonyms of them throughout.

9. TIMED practise essays at home

I 10/10 recommend that you practise moulding your MEMORISED essay to a variety of different questions under timed conditions.

That way – you will be prepared for the worst and know how well you’ve written your essay. Do these under timed conditions so you know what to expect for the real thing.

You can find essay questions from acethehsc.com or just google some!

10. MOVIES

If your text has a film version of it – WATCH IT.

Personally I never understood Shakespearean, so watching the 4 hour Kenneth Branagh Hamlet movie (was a trek) helped me A LOT when understanding the text.

Even better – it gives you an excuse to watch The Great Gatsby with Leo in it!!

11. Short Stories – How to write a good one?

I know short stories are a pain in the ass – I have sent you 5 but you can write your own if you like !!

Only bit of advice I can give is – write them early and get them marked. Do not wait around until the week before trials to do this. I wrote mine in the 6 week holidays!!

THEN MEMORISE THEM.

Make sure the story is applicable to all possible stimuli.

The MOST Important tips I can give to writing a story is.....

12. A CULTURAL ELEMENT in your story

Set your story in another country, in a different context and somewhere that is somewhat “third world”.

The story I used was set in Afghanistan and achieved 15/15. The other 2 girls who got 15/15 set their story in Sudan and Africa.

Markers love setting and things that have a humanitarian touch to it. It adds depth and makes your story sounds beautiful and profound.

Research the country or culture and reference the food, culture and language within your story!!

13. How to write your essays

Use other essays. Yes this may be “playgiarism” but obviously do not copy chunks out of other essays as you might get caught.

Take ideas, quotes, analysis and fit them to your own paragraphs. Use entire ideas but ensure you re-word to suit your thesis.

I used up to 20-40 essays to make my own!! I just found TONS of deep analysis and tried to write it and improve my essay ensuring I was meeting ALL requirements.

It is always VERY helpful to read a Band 6 essay – so buying my essays was good idea HAHHAHA

14. MOST IMPORTANT... MEET THE MODULE'S REQUIREMENTS!!!

Every module is different.

For all the essays I have sent you – you will notice that I have highlighted random sentences. This is where I have linked to the module directly!!

Make sure you read the rubric and interweave what it expects. This will allow you to reach higher marks EASILY.

If you read each module below I have tips on what you HAVE to include. Remember;

- Area of Study – DISCOVERY (reference the rubric)
- Module A – context and values
- Module B – textual integrity/timeless through the texts enduring values
- Module C – how landscapes impact people, how the composer used FORM and STRUCTURE to MANIPULATE responders into accepting their views

DISCOVERY

1. THE RUBRIC IS YOUR BIBLE

I know discovery is a PAIN but it is the EASIEST module of them all.

All you have to do is REGURGITATE the RUBRIC. Every single linking sentence I had in my essays were a direct re-word of aspects of the rubric.

MEMORISE this rubric so you know it during the short answer section of Paper 1.

Know every single key word in there e.g. transformative/far reaching discoveries, unexpected etc.

A way that I approached it was identifying;

- TYPE of discovery – is it sudden, unexpected etc?
- How was it EVOKED – curiosity, wonder or necessity?
- EXTENT of IMPACT of discovery - was it transformative, far-reaching, confronting etc.?
- HOW it impacted – did it change perceptions etc?

2. Film Techniques

Life of Pi is easy – just now your film techniques and reference them throughout !!

3. Related Texts

I hate hate hate related texts. But I used the same one that I used for Conflict in Year 11.

DO NOT pick a mainstream text

STAY AWAY FROM INVICTUS - we all googled it and it's the first thing that comes up, I know, but so have every other student in HSC doing Discovery

Pick a text that is unique so that if you reach a worst case scenario.. you can make up quotes... trust me, I did 😊

MODULE A

1. What is Module A?

Module A is intertextual perspective. So it is how context has impacted the way a text has formed.

The most important part of this is to COMPARE your two texts (draw similarities AND differences) and to refer to VALUES.

2. VALUES and CONTEXT

Values and context is VERY VERY Important.

You need to talk about the political/social/economic climate of each respective text and reference how this impacts their values. E.g. the hedonistic and consumerist Jazz Age.

Then talk about how this is evident in the text.

3. How to COMPARE them

I like to keep my essays in ABAB form NOT integrated.

Integration is hard because paragraphs start becoming lumpy and confused.

Always link the two texts in the start, middle and end of your paragraph.

MODULE B

1. TEXTUAL INTEGRITY – what is it?

This is the MOST important aspect of Module B.

Your module B essay is literally a 1000 word rant about how AMAZING you think Hamlet is.

You must justify why you think it is so relevant and amazing. I used the weirdest terms throughout my essay but Ms Turco LOVED it.

- *“Hamlet has transcended the test of time”*
- *“has enduring values”*
- *“is regarded as a critical work of art”*

Also remember to refer to how the text has ENDURING values that are relevant – give example of why this is so? E.g. issues of corruption are still evident today in society !!

2. The Dangers of Module B!

Module B is very specific so you often can't memorise essays in “block”.

I walked in with 8 body paragraphs to both my trial and HSC and only used 3-4 of them. I linked them to the question and tried my best to use the language.

Be prepared for anything and PRACTISE AT HOME.

3. Play Techniques!

Once again, use thematic play techniques within your essay – not just literary

Refer to things like; soliloquy, Aristotelian tragedy, restricted view of the play, stage direction, meta-theatre etc.

Feel free to really deconstruct my essay!

MODULE C

1. People and Landscapes??

Basically the module asks you how real, remembered and imaged landscapes impact the individual!

Just literally talk about how it affects their identity, spirituality etc and you'll be set.

2. Form and Structure

Once again, make sure you mention this where you can as this module is very orientated around this!!

3. Manipulation of the Audience

You must mention how the author uses their textual form to MANIPULATE the reader into ACCEPTING his views.

4. REPRESENTATION

Literally just SAY the word as many times as you can without it being excessive!!

5. Related Text?

USE A ROMANTIC POEM.

Nature is what exists within the romantic genre so I 10/10 recommend Keats, Coleridge etc.

MAKE SURE that the text you pick isn't already prescribed in another English course, as I know Ext 1 English also does romanticism.

A FINAL WORD...

If you currently feel abandoned in HSC English because your prelim marks were not what you hoped – DO NOT WORRY.

You can turn this around.

I was an ESL student in primary school until year 5 and come from a non-english speaking background. Infact, English isn't even my 1st language. Yet I managed. YOU CAN DO IT TOO!

I hope these tips will be helpful during your HSC year and in English!

Remember to vary your study habits (reading, audio, writing), do a little bit of work every night, make your STUDY NOTES AS YOU GO and stay calm.

Work Hard and Aim High! It will be over before you know it!!

Good Luck!

Love – Neilab Osman xx