

RUBRIC – Texts and Human Experiences

Common Module: English Standard, English Advanced and English Studies

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.

Key Module Requirements:

Based on the rubric, there are three key actions you must undertake in order to demonstrate your understanding of the topic. These are highlighted in blue and are as follows:

1. 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.
 - Within this module, you will be required to study one prescribed text, selected by your teacher, and explore the ways in which it reflects the human experience. The study of this text will be assessed once in Term 1 of year 12 and then again in trials and your HSC examination.
 - You will also be required to study a variety of short texts in class in preparation for the comprehension component of the HSC exam, which tests your ability to identify ideas about texts and human experiences in *unseen texts*.
2. Students select one related text and draw from personal experience to make connections between themselves, the world of the text and their wider world.
 - This topic also requires you to study *self-selected* related text to supplement your study of your prescribed text. You must consider the ways this text reflects ideas of the human experience broadly, but also the ways in which it resonates with your personal experiences. It is a good idea to select a text that relates to your prescribed text as you may be required to draw connections between the two.
3. Students examine how different modes and media use visual, verbal and/or digital language elements.
 - You are required to analyse texts across a range of different text types. Therefore you won't be able to study two texts of the same medium (e.g. two films), but rather need to select different types (e.g. poem and film)

Key Module Ideas:

In order to help you meet the module requirements, there are a number of key concepts about texts and human experiences that you will need to analyse and discuss. These are highlighted in green and are as follows:

1. Students deepen their understanding of how texts represent individual and collective human experiences.
 - The human experience broadly refers to the common encounters that define our identity and make us human. Within this topic, you will need to explore both the human experience *collectively* (i.e. universal encounters that are felt by all individuals within a group, community and/or the world) as well as the *individual* experiences of people through considering the ways that particular characters engage with such experiences.
 - Once you've gained a grasp of this, you need to consider the way that this is *represented* in texts through the different language forms, features and structures used to create particular insights into characters, events and ideas.
2. Students examine the human qualities and emotions associated with, or arising from, these experiences.
 - 'Human qualities' are perhaps the most complex aspect of the module, as it essentially requires you to think about *what it is that makes us human*. There is no single or clear answer to this and therefore it is up to you to formulate a personal insight into what this may constitute. Research into philosophical theories may be quite useful on this front (consider the writings of ancient philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Socrates, as well as the more modern ideas of Descartes, Kant, Chomsky, Hume, Aquinas and Freud). Some qualities discussed as intrinsic to being human include having a 'soul', being able to think critically and self-reflect, a capacity for self-awareness, and the ability to formulate and engage with complex ideas, memories and language.
A more basic approach to this would be to consider general aspects of human behaviour that are intrinsic to the human identity. For example, sensations such as desire, ambition and determination, general outlooks such as pessimism, optimism and apathy, and qualities such as hope, the imagination and spiritual faith are all qualities that mark us as human and may be a good starting point for approaching this module.
 - 'Emotions' associated with being human are a more accessible concept. Consider the *emotional experiences* of being human, as well as our *emotional responses* to things we encounter. Robert Plutchik's 'Wheel of Emotions' can provide a good starting point for considering this, however once again there is a lot of philosophical theory relating to human emotion which you can look into in order to enrich your understanding and discussions of this idea.
3. Students explore the anomalies, paradoxes and inconsistencies in human behaviour and motivations.
 - Human behaviours = the way we act
 - Human motivations = the drives and desires that shape our behaviour
 - Anomaly = something that deviates from what is standard or accepted.
 - Paradox = A person or thing that combines contradictory qualities or features.
 - Inconsistent = not staying the same by changing or deviating from a prior behaviour.

These ideas should serve as the starting point for you to consider the complexities associated with being human, as they highlight the contradictions that often underlie human behaviour. You need to analyse characters on a deep level and take into account their complex array of actions, motives and experiences. You should also consider the role of the narrator and your role as the reader, and consider any compare/contrast your emotional experience of reading the text with the emotional encounters manifested by the composer.

4. Students consider the role of storytelling throughout time to express and reflect particular lives and cultures.
 - This point requires you to consider the ways in which storytelling shapes and reflects particular aspects of the human experience in different lives and cultures. As the human experience is a universal one, this therefore requires you to engage with the ideas of metanarrative (i.e. the 'grand narrative' that is told and retold in many different ways but with the same basic narrative arc and events e.g. the heroes journey, Marxist narrative, stories based on biblical allusion etc). You also need to consider the role and function of storytelling in reflecting humanity, as well as your personal experience with it and these shape your conceptions of human experience as a whole.

Key Module Skills:

In order to succeed in this module, there are a variety of core skills you need to develop and demonstrate in your responses. These are highlighted in **yellow** and are as follows:

1. 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.
 - This statement encapsulates the basic analysis of texts you have gotten used to in previous years. It basically means you need to demonstrate the ability to understand the content of a text (key themes, ideas, characters etc.) and be able to acknowledge how the composer has conveyed this meaning through the use of various techniques.
2. Inviting the responder to see the world differently, to challenge assumptions, ignite new ideas or reflect personally.
 - By engaging with texts about the human experience, you are expected to be able to reflect on how your personal understanding of the human experience and the world has been shaped and evolved. You may be asked to write reflective responses to questions in accordance with this, so its important that you refine these skills that you were introduced to in the year 11 Reading to Write module.
3. By responding to a range of texts students further develop skills and confidence using various literary devices, language concepts, modes and media to formulate a considered response to texts.
 - Rather than just analysing techniques, forms and structures in texts, you also need to learn how to apply them in your own writing. In assessments, you may be asked to write in an evaluative form like an essay, or produce an imaginative recreation or multimodal presentation with a reflection statement. You therefore need to develop skills in using language techniques and styles across a range of mediums, and highlight your competence in using them.
4. Students make increasingly informed judgements about how aspects of these texts, for example context, purpose, structure, stylistic and grammatical features, and form shape meaning.
 - Context = the period in which the text was composed, including the events, perspectives and values that shaped the text's development
 - Purpose = the intention of the composer. The meaning the text was constructed to convey
 - Form = the text type and its associated features. May also include a consideration of genre
 - Style and structure = the overall structural features of the text that shape its progression. May include specific uses and arrangement of language, point of view, plot development, images and/or perspective to shape audience understandings of the experiences created.
 - Grammatical and Rhetorical decisions = the deliberate use of language features such as tone and modality to shape the meaning conveyed.

In your responses, you need to consider how the composer has made the compositional choices they have in order to shape meaning and influence the reader's perceptions.

5. 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.
 - Figurative language = metaphorical language such as metonyms, similes, hyperbole and personification, used to describe abstract concepts.
 - Evaluative language = critical language used to make judgements and facilitate analysis of texts.
 - Metalanguage = 'technical' language that enables us to talk about texts e.g. narrator, metafiction, characterisation etc.
 - Syntax = the structure of sentences

In your responses, you need to demonstrate both an understanding of these concepts (as used by composers) as well as an ability to use them in your own writing to express your own personal perspective.

The Rubric Summarised:

In order to negotiate the requirements, skills and ideas of the rubric, there are four simple stages you should undertake sequentially:

1. Familiarise yourself with the key rubric ideas:
 - Before you do anything else, you should read through the rubric and the above breakdown carefully. Make sure you understand all the concepts in detail by doing further research if needed, developing vocab lists etc.
2. Develop an understanding of what 'the human experience' constitutes:
 - Once you have a foundational understanding based on the rubric, research further into the concept of the 'human experience' itself. Delve into established philosophical theory and use these insights to develop personal definitions and understandings of what the human experience involves. Continue developing a vocab list through this stage to give you a vast array of concepts to fall back on in order to enrich your future responses.
3. Begin identifying aspects of the human experience in texts:
 - Start by analysing short texts such as poems, short stories, novel extracts etc. and use the rubric as a guide to break them down. Consider the ideas of human experience they relay, the techniques and features used to communicate these concepts and reflect on the way they shape and/or mirror your personal understanding of human experiences.
 - Once you feel comfortable with this and the ideas of the module, begin taking notes on your prescribed text by following the same stages of analysis
4. Develop and refine your own writing skills and ability to use these concepts:
 - Practice your analytical writing skills by starting with short answer responses to short texts. This will help to prepare you for the comprehension component of the HSC exam
 - Refine and enhance your analytical writing skills by progressing onto extended response questions on your prescribed text, and eventually begin essay writing. This will help to prepare you for the essay component of the trial and HSC examinations.
 - In preparation for the potential requirements of your term one assessment, you should also practice implementing the techniques and ideas of the module into your own imaginative writing tasks.
 - Finally, work on your reflective writing skills by writing practice reflection statements commenting on both decisions made in your creative work and your personal response to the texts studied.