

HSC Area of Study – Creative Writing Hot Tips

This section of the paper is the only time in the HSC English exam that you become the composer. The other 5 sections, you are the responder.

Purpose of creative writing in the HSC is to display you:

- Ability to write in the nominated text type – (P.I.L.S)
- Display your understanding of the concept of belonging

What is a narrative?

A narrative is a story. Therefore a narrative concept is flexible enough for you to transform into other text types such as diaries, letters, speeches and interviews etc which also tell stories.

- Narratives are made up of 4 main elements – plot, setting, themes, characters
- Narratives are constructed by using a variety of techniques
- Narratives have a definite structure of orientation, complication and resolution
- Narratives can be written in a linear, woven or circular style

Building a narrative for HSC English

Establish the T.O.O (this will be your concept)

This can be achieved by drawing on ideas or combinations of ideas from a wide variety of sources (stimulus) as well as your own experiences or expectations or experiences of others.

Once you have your idea or **concept** of the narrative establish whether the story is going to be character driven or setting driven (this will be determined by the type of belonging you are focussing on eg disconnection to place = setting driven, belonging in a relationship = character driven. If your story is character based, the reader **MUST** have an emotional connection to them. If the story is setting based, then the reader **MUST** be able to visualise that place as though they have been there.

The story then needs to build around the focus. You must decide what techniques allow the focus of your story to be conveyed:

- Narrative voice: 1st, 2nd, 3rd person narrative. Which is more appropriate for the focus of your story?
- Sensory image – touch, taste, sound, sight and smell. Which is more appropriate for the focus of your story?
- Descriptive passages.
- Sentence structure – Long sentences create a calm slower pace. Shorter sentences create pace and energy.
- Punctuation – commas and semi colons can be used to control pace by pauses or listing.

General Tips

Your concept needs a **'hook'** for **ENGAGEMENT**. You need to think – what is different about my concept to the other 60,000 stories being written by other HSC students and read by HSC markers? This can be achieved through:

- The idea/concept
- The style – linear, woven or circular
- The effective use of techniques
- The structure – orientation, complication and resolution.

Really Stuck for ideas?

- 1) Jot down random words to do with belonging
- 2) Convert them to sentences
- 3) Build them into paragraphs
- 4) Layer techniques into the paragraphs
- 5) Work with the structures of a variety of text types
- 6) Decide the style – would changing your linear style to circular style add interest?

Remember- writing is **PROCESS**. Your final product is a series of corrections, inclusions, exclusions, rewrites, blood, sweat and tears.