

Synthesising to achieve deep understanding across texts

The Syllabus requires more than the analysis of texts for Area of Study. It also expects that students will:

Explore, analyse and experiment with ... connections between and among texts.

Synthesise ideas to clarify meaning and develop new meanings.

Closer to the end of their study of Area of Study: Discovery, the following activity will help students to synthesise their thinking and prepare for the demands of the examination.

Concept map

Students should write down in 5 or 6 points what they have learned about discovery through the Area of Study. Students should read their points aloud and discuss, perhaps in groups, then take the opportunity to refine their points.

Use these points as the start of a personal concept map. Students may want to incorporate ideas from the discovery mind map they completed at the start of their studies, but it is likely that some of these earlier points would be further developed and some new points added.

Around these points add notes showing how these ideas are reflected in any texts that have been studied. Particularly useful are texts that demonstrate different perspectives in relation to these ideas. Ensure that the prescribed text relates to a few of the points, if not all. Other texts can also relate to more than one point.

Then add a further ring of notes identifying the main techniques used by the composers of these texts to represent their ideas about discovery. Ensure that for each technique, there is an illustration and a brief note about the effect of the technique.

Students could use an A3 sheet for their concept maps. Alternatively, they could use mind-mapping software, such as the freely available FreeMind software downloadable at <http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Download> or the Inspiration 9 software available for a free 30-day trial at <http://www.inspiration.com/Freetrial>.

Ask students to talk about the connections between and among the texts they have studied with reference to their concept maps.

Students could use their personal concept maps to help write extended responses to a range of essay questions. For example:

How do composers show us the power of discoveries to transform lives?

In your answer, refer to your prescribed text and one other text of your own choosing.

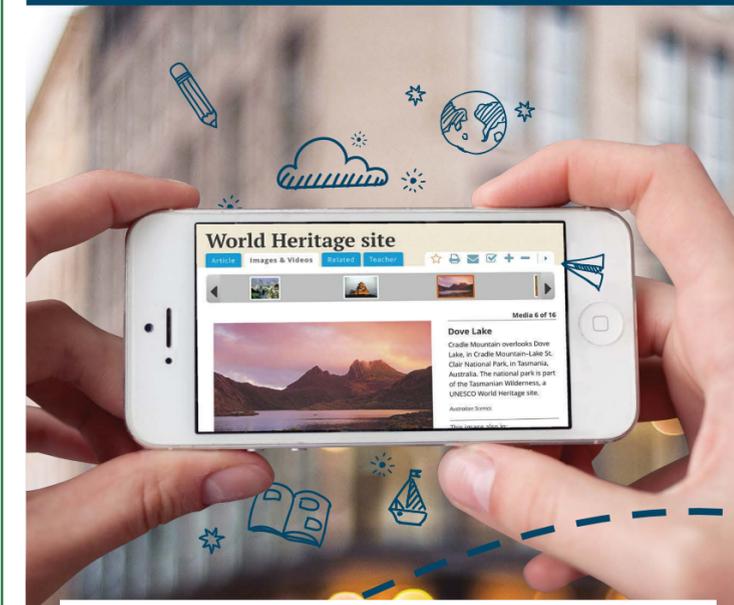
References and further reading

Board of Studies (BOS) 2009, *'English Stage 6 Syllabus'*, BOSTES, accessed 13 April 2015.

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