

## Guide to Grade 7 Thematic Study

With the 2012 Speech and Drama syllabus Speech New Zealand has introduced a new approach to the Grade 7 Module 3 Communication examination. This new option is titled 'thematic study' and gives students the opportunity to choose a theme or idea and using a wide range of resources to support personal claims while presenting their findings in a programme format.

Before deciding on the relevant resources, students will need to narrow down their theme to ensure that they can make necessary connections between texts within the allocated 10 minute timeframe. The presentation is to be performed in a programme format, incorporating three different literary sources while connecting each element through a linking commentary. At least three different references must be used throughout the programme, and the range includes: Prose (fiction, non-fiction), poetry, plays, static image, short story.

The thematic study allows students who have an interest in a topic from a particular subject or event to present this theme using a wide range of perspectives. For example in an English lesson students may have discussed the great New Zealand novel 'Once Were Warriors'. Within the novel the importance of family is presented in great detail. This idea may have captured the attention of the student and therefore could become a starting point for a programme which explores the theme of 'personal identity' and how family helps to shape each individual. The student may wish to use a prepared reading from the novel as one of their resources throughout the programme.

Another potential theme could result from the personal history of a student. For example, the student may have immigrated to New Zealand, or their parents may be immigrants. They may wish to use this event as a stimulus and explore the theme of immigration or marginalisation within a society. They would then need to find relevant literature and resources which backs up the information they wish to deliver.

It could be beneficial to brainstorm a theme with the students and allow them to steer the theme in whatever direction they find interesting. Ask them to include books, images, films, plays that may relate to the theme and why they think those particular resources are important. What do they portray?

### Questions that may help when choosing a topic.

What am I interested in?

What have I been studying at school that I would like to explore further?

Is there an issue in the media that I would like to learn more about?

Am I passionate about an issue that I would like to present to an audience and research literature to back up my case.

A static image may be used within the thematic study programme as one of the three required resources. The image must be presented in a format easily visible by the examiner. With any image, painting or sculpture individuals appreciate different elements of each. It is therefore necessary for students to give a commentary of the image so that the examiner is able to follow the students interpretation. It is still important for the student to research the artists overall intention, and they may wish to mention why they agree or disagree with the research. The static image must be big enough to be seen easily by the examiner, and the student may place it on a board with highlighted areas to ensure the importance of particular sections or symbols are identified.

The thematic study allows students who may be interested in a particular topic to bring in influences from a range of subject areas. By allowing the student to incorporate a wide range of literature and resources there is potential to broaden both their perspective and knowledge base.