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By now you will have had an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the new Diplomas at Associate and Advanced Associate levels and to browse and/or work from the new Public Speaking Syllabus 2014. Many of you will already have students about to sit examinations in one or other of the new modules.

The syllabus now states information is to be with Local Secretary five days before the examination. However, this is presenting some logistical problems and will not necessarily provide time for information to get to the examiner, particularly when there are a larger number of entries and/or those modules come early in a tour. Where there are ASB, Advanced ASB or LSB candidates the Local Secretary will be asked to email to the examiner the theme of the programme, along with titles and authors of all pieces used, including the character in the play. This will help examiners in their preparation – particularly when there are a larger number of entries. The Local Secretary will still require physical copies of extracts which will go to the examiner prior to the examination day.

Similarly in Public Speaking for Modules which require presentation/analysis of speeches, the Local Secretary will be asked to email the speaker, the title and the occasion (context) to the examiner before they leave.

Public Speaking Grade 5: Section 1.

A point of view on a letter to the Editor OR a media blog or on-line forum on a current issue.

In bringing this section up to date and opening it up to a media blog or on-line forum, as well as the traditional letter to the editor, Speech NZ is aware there may be some 'fishhooks'. Ideally we want a candidate to recognise a current issue, state the topic under consideration and the point of view held by a particular writer, give the source of the blog/letter to the editor, and then state their own point of view clearly and logically supported with reasons. However with a blog or on-line forum there are often additional opinions stated from other readers. In discussing this section the examiner may also ask if opinions were expressed by other writers so it would be helpful if candidates are able to extend their ideas briefly into this area.

If you are exploring this option a possible approach within the talk may be for your student to summarize the general reaction, eg, 'mostly people supported the commentary because ..., others disagreed for the following reasons... My opinion is . . .'

SNZ does not have any guidelines as to appropriate blogs or on-line forums – **except that the topic must a current issue.** As with Letters to the Editor these are left for candidates to explore for themselves. It may be in time we can build up some suggestions.

Some general reminders:

Speech and Drama and Oral Communication syllabuses:

Copies of texts

A reminder that candidates must supply examiners with legible copies of poems, prose extracts, dramatic extracts and any devised work.

(See page 97 Speech and Drama Syllabus and P 8 Oral Assessments)

This is to ensure accuracy of work presented and assist the examiner in assessing adherence to shape and form in poetry sections.

Editing texts: All levels:

In longer poems, which do not fit the prescribed time limit, it is often necessary to cut lines or omit verses – or to just perform a well-chosen section of a poem.

As long as the flow of the storyline or ideas is maintained there should be no problem.

It is wise to ensure the examiner knows – eg introduction may state ‘An extract from . . .’ or the candidate may just point out that there have been cuts made to the original poem.

Sometimes there may be discussion on cuts – but not usually as this happens frequently within exams.

In editing play texts or in developing work from a novel or story, it is important to keep the flow of action in mind and the shape of the scene so it comes to a clear, strong conclusion.

Your extract, whether it is for solo performance or a group, needs to ‘stand alone’ with very little need for explication. By all means use cuts as necessary but remember too many cuts will destroy the flow of dialogue and leave your audience confused. Similarly an extract that is essentially for two people, with the dialogue of one character cut, has little chance in performance for satisfactory development or for the performer to connect with the audience.

In a group or solo performance ask yourself – Will the examiner or your chosen audience be drawn in to the circumstances, the needs of the character(s) and their inner life?

Can you perform it in a way to engage the examiner or your chosen audience?

Do remember, if there is anything related to examinations you are not quite clear about Speech NZ is very happy to answer queries you may have on any of our syllabuses.

Enjoy your teaching.

Have a good term.

Pam