HSIE- Aboriginal Studies
Exam preparation transcript

(Duration 24 minutes 38 seconds)

Welcome to the HSC hub presentation for Aboriginal studies. This presentation will take approximately 25 minutes. I would like to pay my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of all of the lands on which this video is being watched, and also pay respect to elders both past and present. The aim of this HSC hub video is to support you in your preparation for the Aboriginal studies HSC exam. This video will include an introductory look at the layout and the structure of the exam, some tips on preparing for the exam before the big day, and a deeper look at the exam section by section, with some discussion of specific past paper questions and feedback from the marking centre. The key message we can send you to help you prepare for the exam, is that to prepare well, you need to have a strong grasp of the key content and concepts, and you need to spend a lot of time practicing the ways to respond to different types of questions. Cramming or studying just before the exam will not be as effective as a long-term study approach. And at the end of the day, you need to know a lot about the Aboriginal studies topics that you have studied to be able to write about them in an exam setting. So wide reading and engaging with the content deeply is a key to success.

Before the exam day, make sure that you've downloaded the HSC timetable and highlight all of your exams. The 2020 examination timetable has already been released and can be found on the NESA website. The Aboriginal studies exam will be held on day 10, which is Monday the 2nd of November at 1:55 PM. Make sure you manage your time and travel so that you can arrive with plenty of time to be seated before your exam begins. Revision and exam preparation are crucial to you performing to the best of your ability. As with all of your subjects, it's essential that you practice past HSC papers. This will give you a solid understanding and awareness of the structure of the HSC exam. As you practice your exam questions, make sure you read through the notes from the marking centre to identify what it is that students did that was positive and negative. The key to your revision is to know your syllabus, ensure you are familiar with all the dot points and syllabus language. Questions can be drawn from any part of the syllabus and will use the language of the syllabus. Plan your revision schedule to match up with your exams. You should have a regular study routine that you are following to keep up with coursework. Continue to study and revise each of your subjects. However, in the days before the exams, you may need to give a little more emphasis to the exams you'll complete first. As you complete exams, the time you would have spent on those subjects can then be allocated to exams yet to come.

Get a good night sleep before each exam, late nights will harm your performance. Your brain needs time to rest, and you'll be able to engage better with the questions, if you're not physically and mentally exhausted. Keep in mind that a number of studies have shown that last minute cramming isn't as beneficial as knowledge that is acquired and committed to long term memory over a period of weeks and months. Make sure you get a good night's sleep the night before your exam so that you arrive at the exam refreshed and positive. Breakfast on the day of your exam is also important to support you in delivering your best performance in your exam. There's plenty of information on the internet on exam day breakfast suggestions. Most of them focus on a solid serve of slow release carbohydrates, such as grains, whole grain bread, yogurt, eggs, and nuts. These foods will keep you feeling full for longer and provide fuel for the most important part of your body, your brain. Remember to also stay well hydrated, drinking plenty of water before and during the exam. This is a key to keeping your brain functioning at its optimum. As the Aboriginal studies exam is after lunch, you should also make sure to have a healthy lunch before you go into your exam.

Finally, make sure you have all of your equipment ready, pack it up in a clear pencil case or plastic sleeve the night before so that you aren't rushing and forget something on the morning of the exam. What can you bring into your Aboriginal studies exam? To start with, you should be writing in black pen, make sure you bring multiple pens in case one of them runs out of ink. It's important to use black pen, as exam papers are scanned to allow for onscreen marking. Lighter coloured pens may not scan as well and will make reading your response quite difficult for the marker. You want to do everything you can to make things easy for the marker. For Aboriginal studies, other useful additional materials that you may also bring include highlighters, to highlight key parts of a question, pencils, which should be at least 2B and a sharpener and a bottle of water in a clear water bottle. All of these items can be found relatively cheaply at stationary stores, newsagents or supermarkets. Don't wait until the last minute to find these items. You should be using them throughout your course. Remember, you're not allowed to borrow equipment during the HSC exam. So it's very important to make sure that you have what you need. You should place all of your items in a clear plastic sleeve or pencil case before entering the room. You can wear your watch to your exams, but once you sit down, you'll have to take it off and place it in clear view on your desk. Programmable watches, including smart watches will not be allowed in the exam room. Make sure that you are familiar with the rules and procedures for the HSC exam. These can be found on the NESA website, under the rules and procedures guide.

The Aboriginal studies exam consists of three sections. The first section is on social justice and human rights, and is by far the biggest section of the paper. It consists of multiple parts with each part taking a different focus. This section is worth 55 marks and you should allow a total of one hour 35 minutes for this section of the exam. Section two of the exam relates to research and inquiry methods and requires you to respond to one question with multiple parts. Section three of the exam is in relation to the options. And so you'll be required to select either Aboriginality and the Land or Heritage and Identity, and respond to the question with multiple parts that links to your chosen option.

Section one contains some questions that you'll answer on the exam paper and others that you'll need to answer in separate writing booklets. Sections two and three will both require separate writing booklets for your responses. It's very important that you read the instructions at the top of each section and each question, to ensure that you're writing your response in the appropriate place. And please make sure that you label your writing booklets and exam paper very carefully to avoid any mix ups. The exam is three hours and five minutes in duration. You'll start with five minutes reading time. During this time, you are not permitted to write anything. You should take the time to read through your paper and finalise your plans for approaching the paper. The three hours writing time. During this time, you are to complete the paper to the best of your ability. You must remain in the examination room for a minimum of one hour, and you will not be permitted to leave in the last 15 minutes. This is to minimise disruption at the end of the exam period. Once you leave the exam room, you won't be permitted to re-enter. So we strongly advise that you remain for the duration of the exam period.

Let's have a look at section one of the Aboriginal studies exam. It's quite a large section and it's worth 55 marks in total. There'll be three parts to this section, each with varying weight and focus. You should allow around one hour and 35 minutes total for this whole section. I'll break down each section briefly here, and then in more detail as we move through the exam part by part. Part A is about the global perspective and is made up of five to 10 objective response multiple choice questions, and a number of short answer questions. This part is worth 25 marks in total, one per multiple choice, and varying marks for the short answer questions. And may involve the use of the source booklet to answer the questions. A note about the multiple-choice questions. Multiple choice questions are the application of knowledge. They require you to know your syllabus content deeply, and to be able to apply that knowledge to specific questions. Read the questions very carefully to dissect each term and phrase. They focused on higher order thinking and require the evaluation of all alternatives. Most of the options to choose from will include distracters designed to target common mistakes and simple thinking. Make sure you answer all multiple-choice questions. Please don't leave any out. Use the process of elimination and choose the answer that best fits the question. Keep in mind some parts may provide stimulus material for you to apply your knowledge. Make sure that you mark your answers on the multiple-choice answer sheet provided. A great way to practice your multiple-choice section is to use the NESA quiz tool. You can find it by searching for NESA quiz or following the link on the supplementary resource for this video.

Part B of section one is about the comparative study and is worth 15 marks. There'll be six different question options, and you're required to choose one of these questions to respond to in a separate writing booklet. There'll be one question option for each of the different topics in the comparative study. Make sure you select one of the options that you've actually studied in class. Even though some of the other options may feel tempting, it's important to focus on what your teacher has been working with you on in class, as those will be the options that you are best placed to answer. The question in this part will contain multiple parts, so make sure you respond to each part by taking into account the amount of marks allocated to guide how much you write. You need to make sure that you answered the separate parts of the question in separate writing booklets and clearly label them. Make sure to read the instructions at the top of the page explaining this.

Part C is also worth 15 marks and should take about 25 minutes to complete with the expectation being about four pages of the writing booklet or 600 words. This section is a combination of the global perspective and comparative study content. And will give you an opportunity to integrate your knowledge and understanding of the two. You'll have one question for this section and you're expected to answer it with reference to the global perspective, and two topics investigated in the comparative study. You should write the response to your part C question in a separate writing booklet and be sure to clearly label the front for the marking centre. Be conscious of your time management during this section. You should ensure that you have enough time to think through the answers, but do not waste time here. Utilising some of your writing time to strategise for this section can be worthwhile. Ensure you mark your answers on the exam paper provided.

Let's take a look at an example of a question that comes from section one of the 2019 Aboriginal studies HSC exam. This question was in part A of section one. It is question eight and was worth six marks. The question is “how have government initiatives attempted to address discrimination against Aboriginal peoples?” The best way to break down a question is to look at it in parts before the whole. Let's start with the directive verb. In this question, they've used how, which we've circled in red. This isn't a typical directive verb, so it can be a little bit trickier, but when read in the context of the question, it works in a similar way to explain. Moving on to the content of the question. In blue boxes, you can see that you're looking at government initiatives in relation to discrimination against Aboriginal peoples. Finally, make sure to take note of any specifics or signposts that are contained in the question to guide your response. In this question, the phrase "attempted to address" gives us more information about what you're meant to be doing. So essentially your response should explain the way that government initiatives have tried to do something about discrimination against Aboriginal peoples. The criteria for this section requires you to show sound knowledge of government initiatives, and to demonstrate how those initiatives attempted to address discrimination. Some examples for initiatives to discuss could include the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975, or the Native Title Act. The key here is that the initiatives must be at the government level, and you must show how they were used to attempt to address discrimination against Aboriginal peoples particularly.

The 2019 NESA marking centre notes for this question, show that in better responses, students were able to provide explicit links to government initiatives and focused on the attempt of those initiatives to address discrimination. As well as stating why they have been unsuccessful. This is an important thing to note, as the phrase "attempted to address", clearly implies that the initiatives haven't succeeded. So identifying why they were unsuccessful will add depth to your response, whilst highlighting to the marker that you've read and understood the question in full.

Moving onto section two of the exam, which will be assessing your knowledge and understanding of research and inquiry methods in relation to the Aboriginal studies syllabus. You'll have one question to respond to with multiple parts. Each part will require you to use a separate writing booklet. So please make sure you take special notice of the instructions on the exam paper, and mark your writing booklets carefully. This section requires you to draw on knowledge and understanding gained through the work you've done on your major project around protocols for consultation, and ethical research practices when working with Aboriginal communities.

The marking criteria on the paper for section two shows that your answers will be assessed on how well you: one, demonstrate knowledge and understanding relevant to the question, two, communicate using relevant concepts and terms and three present a sustained logical and cohesive response. The feedback from the marking centre for the 2019 exam, said that the better responses in this section were seen when students were able to be clear about effective community consultation and demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of ethical research practices. Students could have improved in this section by ensuring that they drew clearly on their major projects' methods and protocols and gave examples of this to support their responses. Also integrating examples from their major project throughout their response would have made for stronger responses in some instances.

Let's take a look at an example of a question from section two. This one was from question 17 in the 2019 Aboriginal studies exam, and it was worth 15 marks. The question has two parts and each part shall be done in a separate writing booklet. Part A is, “outline the protocols and methods for effective community consultation”. Looking at the directive verb circled in red, it's asking you to outline, which according to NESA's glossary of keywords means to sketch in general terms, indicate the main features of. The blue box shows that the content being addressed in this part of the question is specifically the protocols and methods for effective community consultation. Now, we need to be aware that this part is worth five marks as indicated on the exam paper. And this should be a guide to how much you'll need to write in response. Some ideas for answers to part A would include, respecting sensitive issues and secret knowledge, accepting the rights of Aboriginal peoples not to answer questions and ensuring that Aboriginal people should be consulted and involved in all decisions affecting them amongst many other examples. Students that were successful in this part of the question, we're able to clearly outline the methods for effective community consultation, and identify protocols for working with communities, providing clear examples to support their answer.

Part B of the question is worth 10 marks. So the expectation is that you would write significantly more in response. This is drawn out in the directive verb circled in red, which is explain. In this context, meaning to provide why and or how. So this question, “explain the importance of applying ethical research practices when undertaking consultation with Aboriginal communities, is asking you to demonstrate why it is important to use ethical research practices during community consultation. Looking at the verb here is important. This part is asking you to go into more detail and to give the why rather than simply the what. Some answers that you could consider for this question would be around the importance of recognising diversity of Aboriginal cultures across Australia, and discussion around how ensuring ethical research practices ensures the continued integrity and maintenance of Aboriginal control of cultural knowledge, and supports the development of partnerships with Aboriginal communities. Better responses to this part of the question in the 2019 exam, were able to show clear knowledge and understanding of ethical research practices when working with Aboriginal communities, as well as being able to explain why these ethical research practices are important. They were also able to explain the impact of not using ethical research practices.

For this section, the 2019 markers centre notes suggested that students could have improved their responses by being more clear and concise in their writing when identifying key information, as well as ensuring that they draw on their major projects for both methods and protocols, and as examples. Also, sometimes students did not show a clear distinction between ethical research practices and consultation. So that is something to be sure that you are clear about before you walk into your exam. Knowing the terminology of the syllabus and the exam, and being able to use that terminology accurately is a very important skill.

Section three of the Aboriginal studies exam is where you will respond to a question with multiple parts about the option. Either Aboriginality in the land or heritage and identity. There may be a temptation to select an option that you haven't studied, because the questions look interesting or easier, but please make sure to answer the question that your teacher has prepared you for. This is the best way to be successful in the exam, as you'll be clear on the knowledge and understanding that you need to show. The question that you answer will have two parts. The first part will be a question in response to a specific piece of stimulus material in the source booklet. Make sure that you incorporate this source material throughout your response to ensure that the marker can see that you've engaged with the question and were clear about what to do. This part of the question will be worth 10 marks and you're expected to write around 400 words or three pages of the writing booklet.

The second part won't have a stimulus from the source booklet, but will also be an extended response. The second part will be a longer extended response of roughly 800 words or six pages of the writing booklet. The marking criteria on the paper for section three, show that your answers will be assessed on how well you one; demonstrate knowledge and understanding relevant to the question, two, communicate using relevant concepts and terms and three, present a sustained logical and cohesive response. You might have noticed a trend here, in that these criteria are the same as for section two. This is a good thing. As the expectations are clear and consistent across the paper, you're expected to show that you have deep knowledge and understanding and that you can apply what you know in a way relevant to the questions being asked. You're also being assessed on how you communicate this understanding through concepts and terminology that are specific to Aboriginal studies and relevant to the question. Finally, you're expected to be able to write to responses in this section that are sustained, logical and cohesive. And this will apply especially to part B of section three, as it is an 800 word response.

Let's take a look at question 19 from the 2019 exam, which is worth 30 marks in total. The question has two parts, A and B. Part A is worth 10 marks and part B is worth 20 marks. Part A is, “explain the key contemporary issues that affect Aboriginal peoples social and cultural lives. In your answer refer to source on page four of the source booklet and your own knowledge”. Part B of the question is “explain how representations in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media have promoted Aboriginal people's heritage and identity”. Both of these parts of the question draw on the heritage and identity topic syllabus content. So it's important that you're very familiar with the syllabus and the content that falls within each of your studied topics. Take note of part A, it is explicitly asking you to refer to the source material in the source booklet, as well as your own knowledge. When you write your response, you need to make sure that you are very clear about your inclusion of the source stimulus material in your answer. Some examples of contemporary issues that affect Aboriginal people's social and cultural lives that you could consider using to respond to part A of this question include access to health services, racial discrimination, loss of languages, and Aboriginal intellectual and cultural property, amongst many others.

Let's closely unpack the second part of the question in a bit more detail. The directive verb of ‘explain’ is it the start of both these question parts. However, in part B it is a more complex demand, as it's asking you to explain how something has been done. The content you're looking at in the blue boxes is referring to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media, and the way that Aboriginal people's heritage and identity are present in that space. The words underlined in dark blue are the key signposts in this question, because they let you know what your focus needs to be in relation to the content. So essentially, this question is asking you to tell the marker how the way that the media has promoted Aboriginal people's heritage and identity through representations. The marking criteria for this part of the question shows that you'll be assessed on the extent of your knowledge of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media representations, and being able to show examples of how these representations have promoted Aboriginal people's heritage and identity. You need to do this through a sustained logical and cohesive response, that includes relevant terms and concepts. Some examples of Aboriginal media representations could include NITV, Living Black SBS, or Koori radio. You could discuss the way that these are important in maintaining and strengthening Aboriginal heritage and identity. New technologies that empower Aboriginal voice like social media and the way they assist in accessibility, flexibility and diversity, could also be a point to use for this question.

The notes from the 2019 marking centre for part B of this question highlighted that students who wrote better responses were able to demonstrate extensive knowledge and understanding of key contemporary issues that affect Aboriginal people's social and cultural lives, and clearly identified sources of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media. They also make clear links to Aboriginal people's heritage and identity and provided specific examples from Australian Aboriginal communities to support their answers. Areas for students to improve on this question as a whole included in part A ensuring that references to the source were clear and integrated into the response, and clearly linking both parts of the question in their response. That is identifying the key contemporary issues and then detailing how they affect Aboriginal people's social and cultural lives. For part B clearly identifying Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media was an issue, as well as linking key contemporary issues from the syllabus to Aboriginal people's heritage and identity.

This video has been a short introduction to the Aboriginal studies HSC exam, and should be used as a starting point only. Your teacher is best placed to support you in your preparation for the exam, and is an expert in both the specific topics that you've been learning about, and how to teach them to your class. If you have any questions about the exam, your topics in Aboriginal studies, or where to next, have a chat with your teacher about the websites that you can use to help you study and how to access the range of past papers available. Good luck in your preparation for the Aboriginal studies exam.

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