

THE DETAILED STUDY

After meeting with more than 200 students each year, during the last five years, it has become evident that a number of them experience difficulty with the Detailed Study. This does not just apply to students who have similar problems with the General Conversation but to a much wider group of candidates.

The problems encountered could be listed under the following headings:

- ✧ *lack of effort on the student's part*
- ✧ *lack of basic Italian – possibly due to insufficient oral work in the early / middle years*
- ✧ *lack of understanding the requirements of the Detailed Study*
- ✧ *Poor topic choice*
- ✧ Poor choice of texts
 - *insufficient material*
 - *texts that do not work well together*
 - *texts that are too simple or too difficult*
 - *texts that are not related to the stated topic contention*
- ✧ Poor activities
 - *too much emphasis on grammar*
 - *insufficient interpretation of poetry and song texts*
 - *use of textbook activities which are not aimed at the Detailed Study*
 - *lack of analysis and synthesis of materials*
 - *lack of comparison or points for / against*
- ✧ *Too late a start / insufficient time dedicated to the study*
- ✧ *A contention that does not make use of the material available*
- ✧ Lack of brainstorming prior to reading texts
 - *students are not familiar with the main ideas within the topic*
 - *students lack the confidence to examine the details of the topic*
 - *students are familiar with ideas but not with cause [] effect / sequencing*
 - *absence of strategies such as highlighting in different colours / creating headings / blending materials from different texts / selecting / expanding*
- ✧ Lack of vocabulary and expressions
 - *students know their topic but cannot verbalise their ideas*
 - *insufficient attention to specialised terminology / vocabulary*
 - *lack of linking words*

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Some solutions and strategies:

- δ *Motivate students by setting clear, sequential tasks in small steps and with set dates.*
- δ *Promote confidence by achieving a strong level of General Conversation at Year 11.*
- δ *Distribute the Study Design pages on the Detailed Study and discuss in class.*
- δ *Select a topic in which both students and teacher are interested*
 - *avoid topics that have been done to death*
 - *avoid topics that result in lists and dates and little discussion*
 - *avoid art / music unless students already have strong grasp of these concepts and a suitably developed vocabulary*
- δ *Do not choose a text for its own value.*
- δ *Choose texts that work together to provide diverse aspects of the topic.*
- δ *Choose texts that will suit both the weaker and stronger students in the class.*
- δ *This may mean selecting 7-9 texts but giving each student only 3-5.*
- δ *Search, read, think prior to making final selection.*
- δ *It is preferable for teachers to select texts. Check any text selected by student.*
- δ *Ensure that texts contain sufficient material to answer the set question.*
- δ *Work on the grammar in the student's response and writing, **not** on the reading text*
- δ *With poetry or songs ensure that students can interpret text and connect it to other texts.*
- δ *It is time-saving to use activities from books, but these must lead to a discussion relevant to the chosen issue.*
- δ *The text should not to be studied for its own sake but in terms of the chosen theme.*
- δ *Students need to be taught how to find and combine information from different texts*
- δ *Enlist the assistance of the English teacher in developing this skill. Start before Year 12.*
- δ *Teach students how to use different highlighters, concept maps, headings and sub-headings in order to organise their material in a format that responds to their needs.*
- δ *Encourage different viewpoints on the topic; this leads to discussion.*
- δ *If you are lucky enough to teach both 11 and 12, start some work on the topic in Year 11*
- δ *Otherwise start towards the end of Term II and no later than early Term III.*
- δ *Remember that for every hour at school, students may need to spend an equivalent amount of time at home.*

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- δ *If the texts do not provide sufficient material to discuss the issue, change the issue to suit the texts.*

- δ *Discuss the main ideas and concepts before the students approach the texts.*
- δ *It may be worth doing some of this in English and providing a word bank. (Teachers will have read the texts and selected appropriate words).*
- δ *Encourage students to summarise main ideas in the texts—then select relevant ones and order.*
- δ *Teach students to reduce sentences to point format—easier to re-arrange materials*

- δ *Help students to sequence the content of their response by discussing the order of items.*
- δ *Encourage students to photocopy texts in order to annotate them.*
- δ *Ensure that there are plenty of examples / facts to use in order to support ideas and opinions*

- δ ***Teachers should actually do the Detailed Study themselves—on the basis of the selected texts. This process will quickly bring up weak points in the choice of texts or contention. Remember, the teacher should be familiar enough with the possibilities of the topic in order to GUIDE the students—by means of questions / positive criticism / new leads...***



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