**How do I spot an idea in a text?**

This is often the hardest part of 2.3. You’re faced with a text that you’ve never seen and are expected to read it, understand it and analyse key features all in 20 minutes. Arrgghh!!

You will be presented with three different types of text: fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Let’s look at some reading strategies to help with this process.

Prose (fiction and non-fiction)

1. *Use your prior knowledge*

When you read a text, think about what you already know about the topic.

1. *Consider purpose and audience*

Who is the text written for? Where was it published? Who reads that type of literature and why?

1. *What are the main ideas??*

In a prose text, the ideas are structured in paragraphs. Each **paragraph** contains a **topic sentence** which contains the main idea, with supporting details. Apply this framework to each paragraph to help you find ideas:

1. *Consider how the ideas have been structured.*

What are you told first and why? What follows? Why are you finding out information in the order you are?

1. *What language features have been used to help develop ideas?*

Most texts will use language features that are suited to its purpose. Lists of these are available on our English department website http://stmaryswellingtonenglish.weebly.com/year-12.html

What about a poem?

You should use the same reading strategies when analysing a poem. However, because a poem contains stanzas and not paragraphs, spotting the idea can be a bit trickier.

1. Annotate the poem.

This is the best way to help spot an idea. This means highlighting language features as you read through and making notes about the hidden ideas behind these features.

1. What’s the title?

The title will often hold valuable clues as to what the poem is about. Look back after reading the poem and see if it sheds some light on what the poem is about.