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Analysis

Analysis Foundations

What is Analysis?

For the confused student. Learn exactly what analysis is, and what you're supposed to do when your teacher asks you to "analyze" something.

If you have no idea what you're doing when you ‘analyse', then this first lesson is for you. I will explain exactly what goes into analysis, so that you can also do it without feeling confused any longer.

There are three essential ‘ingredients' to analysis. We'll look at each of these in order.

1. Writer's purpose
2. Language
3. Effect

Writer's Purpose

Writers always write for a reason. Why do they write for a reason?

Because writing is hard. No sane person on Earth goes through the torturous process of researching, brainstorming, planning, drafting, re-drafting, editing and then *maybe*, *if your writing is good enough*, finally publishing a piece of polished writing. Writers do not put themselves through this torture *unless* they have a meaningful idea or story that they desperately want other people to understand and experience. Thus, **writers always write with a purpose in mind**. This is the **most important fact** that you need to remember when you analyse.

Here are some examples of writers' purposes. Of course, there are an infinite number of reasons why a writer might have wished to smear the English alphabet onto a dead piece of tree; the following are just a couple cheesy examples to concretely illustrate the concept of a ‘writer's purpose'.

- To convey the beauty of pigeons
- To criticize the environmental destruction caused by mining
- To demonstrate why pizza is the best food (Because, you know, pizza's the best, right!?)

What we just learned is Basic Fact #1:

Writers only put words on a page because they want to achieve a real, concrete purpose, with this “purpose” being to communicate something meaningful. This could be a message, an idea or simply a story.

The take-home lesson here is that the writer's purpose is absolutely central to analysis.

A quick note on terminology: I refer to “message” and “purpose” interchangeably, so don't be confused. “Writer's purpose” means the same thing as “authorial intent”, a term with which you may be more familiar.

OK. So far, we know that writers have a purpose. We will add to this diagram very soon.

At risk of demeaning writers, you can think of this purpose as their sole goal in life. And they desperately (!) want to achieve it.

Now the question is: *How* does a writer achieve his or her purpose? To answer this, let me introduce the second essential ingredient of analysis.

Language

Yes, language.

The language on the page of a book.

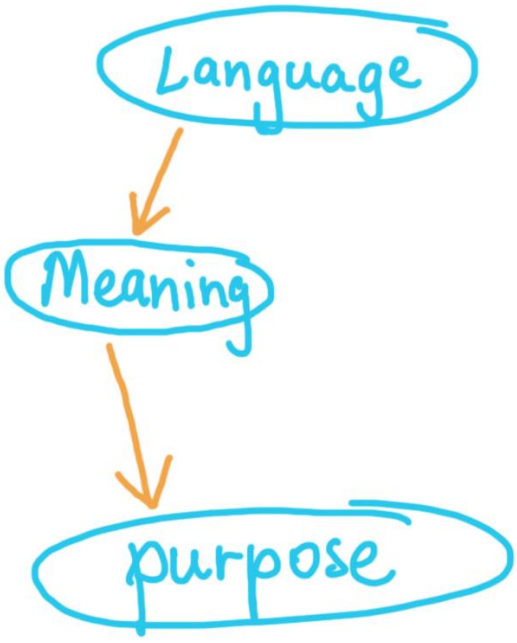
All of *that* is language. The words, the punctuation, the syntax, the literary techniques. Everything.

The language on the page of a novel or a poem is, really, the only thing on the page. And so, logically, **language is the only thing that is responsible** for transmitting the message from the writer's brain to the reader's brain. Therefore, writers have to be very **clever**: They have to deliberately choose the **right** words, the **right** literary techniques and even the **right** punctuation to most effectively convey their message.

So to answer the question of how a writer's purpose is achieved,

A writer achieves his/her purpose by using language, but not just any old language; the writer has to carefully handpick the right techniques that convey just the right meaning to achieve the intended purpose.

In the diagram below, we've added "language" and "meaning". As you can see, specific language is chosen to create an idea (meaning), with the end goal being to achieve the writer's purpose via the construction of that idea. Leaving out the intermediate "meaning" for just a second, we can see a writer always chooses language with the end goal or purpose in mind.



Okay. This is all great, and there's a fancy diagram, but **where do we fit in**? What is an IB student supposed to do when he or she "analyses" language?

The answer is contained entirely in the diagram.

To analyse a text, it is as simple as following the arrows from "language" to "purpose".

1. Find interesting language choices (literary techniques) in the text.
2. Explain the idea / meaning created by the language.
3. Explain how this idea achieves the writer's purpose.

For example, in WB Yeats' poem *The Wild Swans at Coole*, the poet's purpose is to convince the reader of the **beauty of the swans** described in the lake. In the last stanza, he uses the word

"drift"

to describe the motion of the swans on the lake.

- **Meaning**: This choice of language conveys the gracefulness of the swans. The word "drift" makes us visualise something that floats elegantly and smoothly.
- **Purpose**: This grace inherent in the elegant, aesthetic motion of the swans thus conveys their beauty to the reader.

To analyse means to be intensely obsessed with this journey from the writer's language to the meaning constructed by the language to the purpose achieved by the meaning.

Hence, we can define IB literary analysis as the process of explaining / justifying a writer's choice of language.

So far, we've learned two basic facts about analysis:

- Every writer has a purpose.
- Writers deliberately choose language to achieve their purpose.

But there's one problem. We've entirely ignored the reader from the process of analysis, which is a bit ridiculous, since, you know, the readers are the ones who *read* and *react* to the writing.

And so, the third, and final, ingredient of analysis is…

The effect on the reader

Language / techniques create an effect on the reader.

- For example, language can have an **'intellectual effect'**: A rhetorical question can force the reader to question or reflect on their own perspective on a political or moral issue.
- But much **more often**, language creates an **emotional effect:** a powerful, visceral gut reaction to words and phrases that make us jump with happiness, or suffer in sadness, or drown in guilt, or experience *any other* human emotion.

"But writers don't have superpowers! They can't just…manipulate my emotions… right?"

Wrong. Language is very powerful.

Sad words

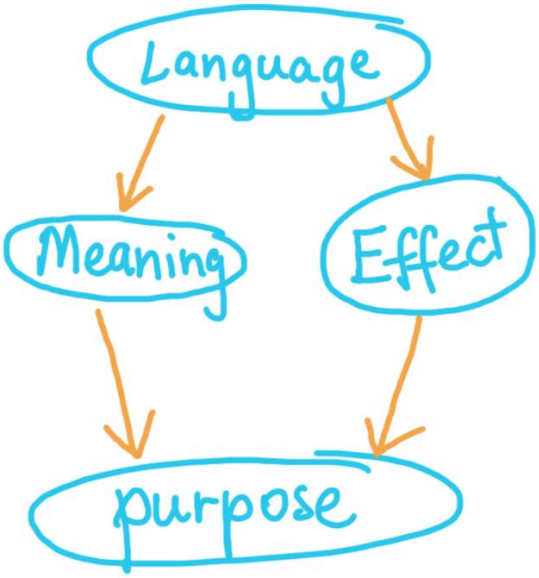
- death
- grey skies
- failure
- isolation
- abandonment

Happy words

- celebration
- birthday
- achievement
- pride

OK, language does in fact have an effect on the reader. But how does the effect of language on the reader fit into analysis?

Well, looking at the diagram from before, we already know that language can convey a meaning. So, we know for a fact that "meaning" is one thing created by language. But language also creates an **emotional experience** for the reader.



Emotions are more direct and impactful than abstract concepts / ideas, and so it makes sense that the emotional effect of language is often utilised by writers to **reinforce** this abstract idea or message.

Now that we've covered all three aspects of analysis, we can see the whole picture. The writer's language is doing **two things** at the same time: The language establishes an idea while simultaneously producing an emotional effect that, ideally, reinforces the meaning.

Hence, writers have two methods for **infiltrating and influencing** the minds of readers and infecting them with their purpose. These are the conceptual route and the emotional route. By using the effect to reinforce the meaning, the writer can ultimately convince the reader of whatever reasonable or crazy message, idea or story that needs to be conveyed.

That's enough theory. Example time.

Example: Analysis in Action

I have a lot of imaginary friends. One of these imaginary friends is Bob. He writes imaginary editorials for an imaginary magazine.

Bob's **purpose** is to criticise the environmental destruction caused by the greed of coal companies. Bob needs to align the effect of his editorial with his purpose: This means that Bob has to **impact his readers (effect)** in the right way to truly convince them that these coal companies are indeed bad, greedy corporations.

Appropriate emotions that would work well with Bob's purpose include:

- Anger
- Skepticism—Bob could make the readers question the ethics and operation of these companies
- Resentment (a bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly)
- Sadness—sadness could work as well because the reader could feel depressed from all the trees dying, and so that makes the companies look very bad.

Before we wrap up this lesson, let's revisit the swan example in Yeats' poem.

I talked about the interesting choice of the word “drift”, and how it creates a meaning: the visual image of something gliding along with incredible elegance. We only talked about the meaning, but the word also has an effect on the reader. The word “drift” evokes a sense of calmness as well; the swan is just gliding along, flaunting its beauty, and that action makes us feel peaceful as well. If you look at the diagram, the peacefulness of the scene places the reader in a state of mind that helps us better realise and appreciate the serene beauty of nature.

Summary

These are the 3 commandments of literary analysis:

- Every writer wants to achieve a **purpose**.
- Writers deliberately choose every word and technique on the page to achieve their **purpose**.
- Writers strategically manipulate the reader's thoughts and emotions to better achieve their **purpose**.

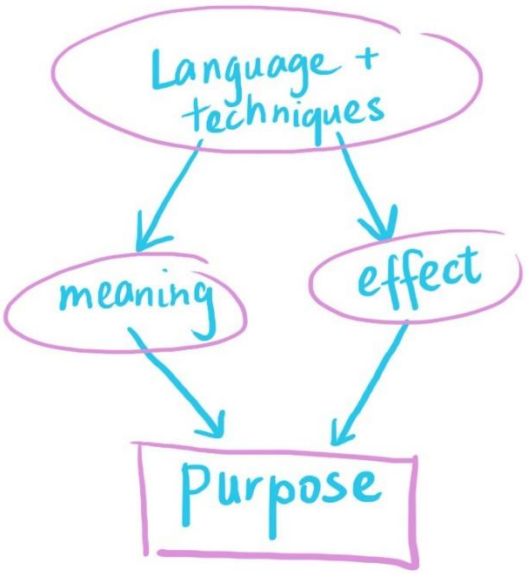
As for the diagram that looks like a diamond: Stick it on a wall. Marry it. Sing songs to it. Do whatever you have to do to become 'one' with this diagram. Next time, whenever you're confused about what exactly analysis means, just think about this diagram, because it *is* analysis.

Diamond Method

Hi, you've already met me in the previous lesson.

I'm the Diamond Method.

To make sure you don't forget me, here I am again.



The Five Step Formula

There are five essential things you need to do when you analyse any quote.

1. State the **technique** used in the quote. When the quote is simple there is only one technique, but you often get multiple techniques in the same quote.
2. Explain how the technique creates a **deeper meaning or idea.**
3. Explain how this idea in turn achieves the **writer's purpose.**
4. Explain how the technique **affects the reader.** Sometimes the *meaning* will instead create an effect on the reader. For example, depressing ideas, like death, make us feel sad.
5. Explain how the effect on the reader also achieves the **writer's purpose**.

Important tips

- **Use these steps as a general guide.** Do not follow them robotically! It'll sound unnatural.
- As you get better, **blend and combine** different steps together. No approach is wrong. Go with the flow of the sentence.
- You **should not** write 5 separate sentences. For example, points 1 and 2, points 2 and 3, and points 4 and 5 work much better when they are combined in the same sentence. Experiment and play around with it!

At the end of the day, as long as you address these 5 aspects in some natural, flowing way, then that's a complete analysis of a quote, which will score you high marks on Criterion B if that level of depth is sustained throughout your whole essay.

Tone and Mood

Why is tone so important?

So, tone means attitude. Great. But why are we even talking about tone in the first place? How is tone even relevant to analysis?

Tone is important for two reasons.

---

1. Tone is a technique

The tone of a text is never accidental. The writer consciously chooses how the text should sound, and because it's a choice, tone is therefore a technique summoned by the writer at will to achieve a specific purpose. And because tone is a technique, it therefore must to be analysed in essays and **at least once** in every point.

But wait, there's a catch: Tone isn't like your average technique (e.g. metaphor and simile). Tone is what I call a “meta-technique”: Tone is actually created from one or more 'normal' techniques.
If *normal techniques* like metaphor and simile are the ingredients in a soup, then the tone is the taste of that soup, the overall flavour of the mixture; tone is the overall result of mixing together normal techniques like diction, imagery, irony, etc.

In our first Kanye example, the hopeless tone didn't pop out of nowhere; it was born from Kanye West's sophisticated use of ellipses—a grammatical construct that is indeed a literary technique that we'll encounter very soon.

2. Tone is the most useful interpretive tool

Here's a text.

Raskolnikov was not used to crowds, and, as we said before, he avoided society of every sort, more especially of late. But now all at once he felt a desire to be with other people. Something new seemed to be taking place within him, and with it he felt a sort of thirst for company. He was so weary after a whole month of concentrated wretchedness and gloomy excitement that he longed to rest, if only for a moment, in some other world, whatever it might be; and, in spite of the filthiness of the surroundings, he was glad now to stay in the tavern.

The master of the establishment was in another room, but he frequently came down some steps into the main room, his jaunty, tarred boots with red turn-over tops coming into view each time before the rest of his person. He wore a full coat and a horribly greasy black satin waistcoat, with no cravat, and his whole face seemed smeared with oil like an iron lock. At the counter stood a boy of about fourteen, and there was another boy somewhat younger who handed whatever was wanted. On the counter lay some sliced cucumber, some pieces of dried black bread, and some fish, chopped up small, all smelling very bad. It was insufferably close, and so heavy with the fumes of spirits that five minutes in such an atmosphere might well make a man drunk.

There are chance meetings with strangers that interest us from the first moment, before a word is spoken. Such was the impression made on Raskolnikov by the person sitting a little distance from him, who looked like a retired clerk. The young man often recalled this impression afterwards, and even ascribed it to presentiment. He looked repeatedly at the clerk, partly no doubt because the latter was staring persistently at him, obviously anxious to enter into conversation. At the other persons in the room, including the tavern-keeper, the clerk looked as though he were used to their company, and weary of it, showing a shade of condescending contempt for them as persons of station and culture inferior to his own, with whom it would be useless for him to converse. He was a man over fifty, bald and grizzled, of medium height, and stoutly built. His face, bloated from continual drinking, was of a yellow, even greenish, tinge, with swollen eyelids out of which keen reddish eyes gleamed like little chinks. But there was something very strange in him; there was a light in his eyes as though of intense feeling—perhaps there were even thought and intelligence, but at the same time there was a gleam of something like madness. He was wearing an old and hopelessly ragged black dress coat, with all its buttons missing except one, and that one he had buttoned, evidently clinging to this last trace of respectability. A crumpled shirt front, covered with spots and stains, protruded from his canvas waistcoat. Like a clerk, he wore no beard, nor moustache, but had been so long unshaven that his chin looked like a stiff greyish brush. And there was something respectable and like an official about his manner too. But he was restless; he ruffled up his hair and from time to time let his head drop into his hands dejectedly resting his ragged elbows on the stained and sticky table. At last he looked straight at Raskolnikov, and said loudly and resolutely:

'May I venture, honoured sir, to engage you in polite conversation? Forasmuch as, though your exterior would not command respect, my experience admonishes me that you are a man of education and not accustomed to drinking. I have always respected education when in conjunction with genuine sentiments, and I am besides a titular counsellor in rank. Marmeladov—such is my name; titular counsellor. I make bold to inquire—have you been in the service?'

'No, I am studying,' answered the young man, somewhat surprised at the

It has lots of words—in fact, too many words. (Don't actually read the words. It's a random extract for this conceptual demonstration.) There are so many words that our puny brains can't possibly digest it all at once. But wait! What if we figured out the tone for each section (these are hypothetical tones, by the way)?

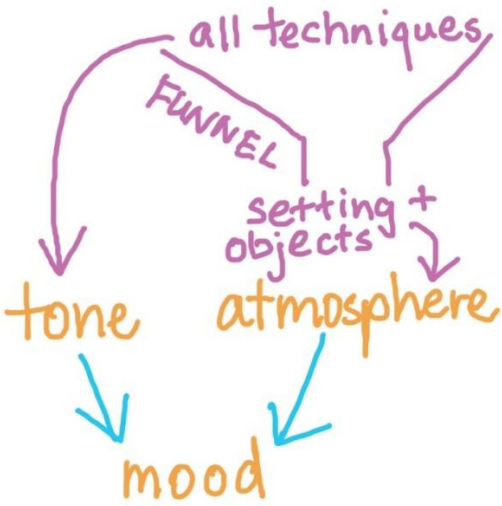
Voila. Immediately, we can get to the core, the heart of what the writer is trying to tell us. We can grasp the main idea much more easily by figuring out the tone, or multiple tones, in a passage. We will cover this in more depth when we learn about deconstruction.

How is tone related to atmosphere and mood?

Tone directly creates mood. Whenever we analyse tone, the end goal is **always** to explain how the tone creates a certain emotion in the reader. Of course, you have to talk about the meaning and purpose of tone since it is a technique, but the most direct relationship that I can think of in analysis is this inseparability between tone and mood.

Tone can contribute to the atmosphere. This happens when another character's tone in the scene imposes a feeling on us. For example, the stern tone of a principal reprimanding a student in his school office can create a suffocating atmosphere for the reader. Mood and atmosphere sometimes the same thing and sometimes not. Here, we are lucky to see an example of a **very, very distinct difference between mood and atmosphere**: You can't describe the mood / emotion of the reader as "suffocating". A "suffocating mood" doesn't make sense because "suffocating" is not an emotion. However, "suffocating" is indeed a more general *feeling*, which is why the response here is atmospheric; it's not an emotion, but instead a psychological 'sensation' of being restricted. I'm getting ahead of myself here, but it's a good discussion that we will continue in the next section on atmosphere.

Here's a diagram connecting tone, mood and atmosphere together. We will refer back to this diagram.



- Notice how the techniques are at the start of the analysis 'pipeline' or process.
- The tone and atmosphere are the intermediate 'feelings' and 'sounds' that we get from these techniques.
- Finally, ultimate end goal is the mood of the reader--how they feel as a result of the techniques, as explained via the intermediaries of tone and atmosphere.

Key vocabulary: Tone

How to use: Just add one of these words before "tone" and voila, you will sound really smart.

Positive

1. When you're really 'into' someone: Admiring, affectionate, loving
2. Being nice: Gentle, kind, amiable, friendly, enthusiastic
3. The class clown: Humorous, ironic, sarcastic

Negative

1. "I'm so much better than you": Disdainful, contemptuous, condescending
2. brb crying: Melancholy, despondent, distressed, brooding
3. Chef Gordon Ramsay in *Hell's Kitchen*: Accusatory, bitter, cynical, hostile, resentful, critical, harsh
4. Gordon Ramsay version 2.0?: Arrogant, commanding, aggressive, abusive
5. Nelson from *The Simpsons*: Mocking, ridiculing
6. Jumping off a cliff: fearful, nervous
7. "Ugh...umm": awkward, stilted, stiff

Neutral

1. Chill and honest, like Ryan Gosling: Conversational, candid, casual, sincere
2. I'm always correct: Factual, matter-of-fact, certain

3. Bro, who cares?: Apathetic, nonchalant

Key vocabulary: Mood

1. Sadness, disappointment
2. Fear
3. Empathy (knowing what someone else is feeling, can be positive or negative emotion)
4. Sympathy (feeling sorry for someone, always a negative emotion)
5. Happiness, joy
6. Humour
7. Shock
8. Disgust

Sentence templates

"The reader experiences a sense of _____"

"The reader feels _____"

"The language evokes / elicits / creates in the reader an emotion of _____"

Atmosphere

Now, let's talk about “atmosphere”, but before we do that, I want to show you a list of the top unanswered questions to ever exist.

- What is the meaning of life? Yep, that's a big one.
- How did the universe begin? That's another big one.
- Do aliens exist? This is a particularly puzzling one, because there are so many planets in the universe that it's almost certain, statistically, that intelligent life exists elsewhere—but the conundrum is: We've never met an alien before. At least, everyone outside of Area 51.

All of these are big, mysterious, unanswered questions have plagued the human mind for a long time. 'Imma let you finish', but these questions are nothing, zero, zilch, compared to the most puzzling, unanswered question of all-time:

What does the “atmosphere” of a text mean?

No one actually knows the answer to this question, at least according to Google. If you search “atmosphere in literature”, you'll find lots of different definitions. Some say atmosphere is tone, some say atmosphere is mood, and so on.

But the thing is: I never found it difficult at all. It's actually straightforward and I'll explain why.

Inspiration from real life

First, how do we **normally** use the word “atmosphere” in everyday life? Well, we usually say something like:

- “There was an awkward atmosphere in the **room”**, or
- “**Times Square** has a bustling atmosphere”, or
- “The **haunted house** has an eerie atmosphere.”

And so atmosphere is almost always used to describe the feeling or vibe—the awkwardness, the creepiness, the bursting energy—that is imposed upon us in a physical environment, situation or space ("room", "Times Square", "haunted house"). So clearly, the setting (environment) of a text is what establishes the atmosphere. Settings are usually constructed via the description of objects in the setting (e.g. a creaking floorboard in the haunted house), and so we can define atmosphere simply as this:

Atmosphere is the (not necessarily emotional) feeling of an environment, as constructed by a writer's description of the environment and objects within that setting.

Time for an example. See what I did there? Time... Times Square...

Sorry.

(Note my apologetic tone here. It is clearly dramatic and creates a humorous atmosphere. Describing the humour as an atmosphere makes sense here because the humour is external, shared between you and me, and not just experienced internally in either one of us. This brings up an important point about the distinction between mood and atmosphere that we'll see at the end of the lesson.)

Example 1: NYC

- **Techniques:** Honking cars in New York City, the bright bill boards, and the sea of people (these aren't actually techniques; they're examples of imagery, and we'll talk about that very soon in the course)
- **Atmosphere:** bustling, dynamic, energetic
- **Mood:** awe, excitement

Both atmosphere and mood refer to feelings, but there's a small difference. The atmosphere is an **external** feeling coming from the physical environment. The mood is the **internal** feeling of the reader. The external feeling induces the excitement in the reader. In other words, the atmosphere in a text influences the mood.

Example 2: Haunted house

- **Techniques:** Creaking floor boards, flapping curtains, cold winds (again, not really techniques. We'll introduce formal names for them very soon.)
- **Atmosphere:** eerie
- **Mood:** fear

The external feeling is again the atmosphere: the creepy, uncomfortable sounds and the cold wind. This is an eerie atmosphere. The mood, aka emotion, that the external atmosphere creates inside the reader is fear.

Vocabulary

- eerie, suspenseful, mysterious
- bustling, energetic, dynamic
- awkward, stilted, uncomfortable
- warm, welcoming, inviting

Relax on the definitions

Often, it's hard to decide whether something is best described as tone or atmosphere, and as atmosphere or mood.

In these cases, any choice will work because they are so similar that you can't go drastically wrong even if you tried to sabotage yourself.

Tone, mood and atmosphere is that type of alleyway in literary analysis that is sometimes well-lit and clear and clean to walk through, but on occasion the streetlights are off and when you try to walk through the darkness, you stumble over garbage bags and you get hurt and really confused.

So while these concise definitions I've given you are great for 80% of the time, they don't help you in the other 20% of the time because the tone, mood and atmosphere just overflow their definitional boundaries and overlap and mix. Such is the nature of English literature--a fundamentally subjective subject. In such cases, it's safe to bask in the confusion and use it to your advantage: Just pull out any one of those 3 things and link it however you like--reasonably, of course!

The point is: Tone, mood and atmosphere is the singular area of literary analysis that requires a **flexible, open mind** and a **blurry interpretation** of the definitions, because the concepts themselves are highly ambiguous.

Mood vs Atmosphere

Example from the Principal's office. I rudely interrupted our deep discussion about the boy and the principal in the Tone and Mood lesson. Let's resume the discourse.

The restricting atmosphere that we experience vicariously (meaning "through another person", in this case, the boy) can create different moods depending on the **context**.

- One possible mood is pity: The oppressive atmosphere makes us, perhaps, feel sorry for the little dude because he was simply speaking up for himself in response to a rude teacher, and he got in trouble for no reason. Here the oppressive atmosphere is viewed negatively by the reader as a result of the surrounding context.
- On the other hand, if the kid is a little mischievous brat and he clogged up all the toilet pipes with toilet rolls for no reason, then the oppressive atmosphere doesn't make us feel sorry for him (i.e. it's not a sympathetic mood); instead, the reader's mood would be happy or relieved or satisfied because the trouble maker has been caught. In this latter case, the oppressive atmosphere and its associated strictness are viewed positively.

Atmosphere vs Tone

There is almost always a mood created by a piece of writing, unless you're analysing a boring textbook. The question is: How is the mood created? Is it created by the tone or the atmosphere? (Recall the diagram from the end of the Tone lesson)

The mood can be created:

- entirely from the tone
- entirely from the atmosphere
- from a mixture of tone and atmosphere

Entirely tonal

"This city is so disgusting and infested. Ugh! I would never go there!"

Entirely atmospheric

"The silent air of the city had a dusty, stagnant feel to it, as if the pulsing river of life that had once coursed through its archways and corridors were now impeded, blocked, by the mounds of dusty rubble."

- Lifeless atmosphere—focus is on the physical setting

Combination of both tone and atmosphere

"The silent city was a dilapidated, defiled mess, a collection of infested rubble that seemed to be screaming helplessly into the heavy, dusty air for the return of human life."

- Disgusted tone and lifeless atmosphere

This set of 3 examples hopefully makes clear the distinction between tone and atmosphere.

Choice: When to analyze tone or atmosphere?

- **Tone**: Analyse tone when the voice shows a subjective attitude towards something—a character, a theme or an object. In such cases, the voice isn't neutral and is instead filled with emotion. One exception is a factual tone, but a factual tone still indicates the narrator's serious attitude towards that something.
- **Atmosphere**: Atmosphere is appropriate when the voice has a neutral attitude and yet we feel an emotion as the reader. For example, when we have a third person omniscient narrator or speaker whose voice simply describes the events.

Here's another example emphasising the difference between a tonal and an atmospheric passage.

Tone

"It was the most frightening hour of my life! I crept slowly along the wall, making sure he—or whoever or whatever he or it was—couldn't hear me. I was so certain he, or it, was right there that my heart beat like a thumping elephant…half-expecting something to jump out at me from the bushes."

- You can hear the fear in the voice of the narrator.
- The voice clearly has a biased, emotional attitude towards something—in this case a mysterious thing in the garden. Thus tone is the appropriate meta-technique to analyse for this extract.
- What makes this extract more tonal than atmospheric is that it's written in first person voice. The voice is personal and so the narrator's attitude is evident.
- Specifically, the fearful tone is constructed from: the high modality language in "most frightening" and "so certain"; the confusion evident in "or whoever, or whatever"; and the hyperbolic simile in "like a thumping elephant." All of these techniques build the frightened tone of the narrator.

Atmosphere

"The night was cold. A silver sliver of moonlight pierced the clouds here and there so that the garden was completely shrouded in darkness in some places and yet naked and exposed in others. Luke kept close to the wall as he crept slowly, slowly, towards what he thought was the thing. Suddenly, he stopped. He stared intently at the bushes and braced himself for the worst, as if expecting some unworldly monster to run out from under those dense leaves and bite him."

- This extract describes the same scenario as before, but it's more atmospheric and less tonal.
- First, the voice is a third-person narrator. The language used by the writer is more neutral compared to the first-person perspective. Third person narration also creates more distance with the protagonist.
- However, as the readers, we still feel a suspenseful mood despite the lack in tonality. Instead, the suspense is created by an eerie atmosphere.
- This tense atmosphere is created by a focus on the external surroundings: the coldness, the darkness, the thin rays of moonlight, the description of Luke being afraid, and his paranoia at the end of the extract. So instead of delving into Luke's *internal* emotions and attitude to

create tone, the writer focusses on the *external* scene in a spooky way to create an eerie atmosphere.

Internal vs external

In simple terms, atmosphere is what's happening on the outside in the external environment or scene. Tone is what's happening in the mind--the internal attitude.

Internal versus external is the easiest way to decide when it is appropriate to analyse the tone or the atmosphere. With that said, in many texts, both tone and atmosphere are used together to create mood.

Summary

The goal of this lesson was to give you an intuitive understanding of tone and atmosphere, and their direct relationships with mood.

Tone is how the voice of a character or narrator *sounds*, which impacts the reader. On the other hand, atmosphere is how the external situation or environment *feels*. Both tone and atmosphere influence mood, but in slightly different ways.

Tone and atmosphere are important techniques as well as tools for deconstructing a text.

Tone and/or atmosphere should be analysed to some extent in all texts, whether it's a Paper 1, a Paper 2, assignments, or anything else in English analysis. In the Advanced Analysis section of the course as well as in the Full Analysis videos, I will teach you the details for how to properly analyse tone, atmosphere and mood.

Level 1 Techniques

Diction

Diction is the simplest literary technique, but it doesn't mean it's easy to master.

Pay close attention!

Diction means "word choice": the specific words that a writer deliberately chooses to use in a piece of writing.

Diction in action looks like this:

- "The writer's use of *emotional diction* in line 5 illustrates..."
- "The religious diction such as 'communion' and 'confession' suggests..."

The problem is that every word on a page technically counts as diction. We obviously can't analyse all of them.

The rules of diction

1. Never analyse boring words.
2. Always analyse interesting words.

So how can you tell if a word is interesting and therefore worthy of analysis?

Connotations

Every word has a denotation (i.e., a boring, literal meaning found in the dictionary) and connotations.

A word is interesting if it has interesting **connotations**. In analysis, we tend to care less about the denotative meaning of word because it's not interesting.

Take the word "gold" as an example.

Denotation: "a yellow precious metal, the chemical element of atomic number 79"

Yawn. The word “gold” obviously means a lot more to us than just its boring denotation.

The word “gold” instantly makes us think of: wealth, money, luxury, prestige, royalty, quality, beauty, perfection, big fat Rolexes.

These **ideas, feelings, and impressions** that we naturally **associate** with certain words are called connotations. They are distinct from denotations: Denotation is what the thing literally means; connotation is what we think and feel about that thing. Big difference.

Since analysis is about deeper layers of meaning, we care much more about connotations when we analyse diction.

Example

Let's take a look at the diction in this sentence:

"The town was an infested den of thieves and smugglers."

What words have interesting connotations?

The word "infested" is interesting. When I read/hear the word "infested", I immediately think

Ewwwwwwwwww!!!

I think of a gross mental image of disgusting cockroaches and rats crawling around in some old basement or sewer. To me, the diction of "infested" connotes **disgust**, and the writer probably chose this word precisely because it makes the town seem dirty and disgusting.

"Infested" also connotes a sense of corruption; in this case, it's not so much the biological disease, which is the literal meaning, but instead the **moral corruption** of these thieves and smugglers who work in morally-questionable professions.

There's also another really interesting layer of meaning. We usually associate the diction of "infested" with animals and insects, as opposed to humans. So the writer uses **animalistic diction** to dehumanise these criminals to the level of animals, making us view them with contempt (remember this word from the tone list?).

By thinking about the connotations, we got some great analysis about amorality, disgust and dehumanisation.

Exemplar Analysis

Recall the 5 steps of the Diamond Analysis Formula from the Analysis Foundations section. Well, all we have to do is apply them here, and voila, we cook up some decent analysis like this:

*The author characterises "the town" to be "infested" with criminals. Here, the deliberate use of animalistic diction in "infested" serves to dehumanise the "thieves and smugglers" as creatures comparable to cockroaches or rats, which evokes a sense of disgust in readers. The animalistic diction thus captures the **squalid**, corrupted state of this "town" and builds an **unsettling** atmosphere.*

Great new adjectives to use in your next essay to boost your Criterion D Language mark:

- "**squalid**": lacking in moral standards
- "**unsettling**": disturbing, making someone feel uneasy or anxious

---

Analysis Advice

When you use the word "diction", try to precede it with an adjective. For example, avoid writing

"The diction in 'infested'..."

Instead, write

"The animalistic diction in 'infested'..."

The reason is because 'diction' itself is meaningless unless we specify a particular type of word choice. In some cases, the diction is neutral and that is when you have no choice but to just write "diction".

The same rule applies to tone, atmosphere and mood. Add a preceding adjective. There's no meaning behind tone unless it's a **specific** tone. The same goes for atmosphere and mood.

If you get tired of writing "diction" all the time, you can vary your diction by replacing it with **“language”**. For example, you can write “emotional diction" *or* “emotional language”, “formal diction” *or* “formal language”. They mean the same thing.

A Word of Warning

Students often analyze diction too much. Ideally, we want to choose a variety of literary techniques. A broad range. To get high marks in analysis, you want to show off your skills. By ALWAYS analyzing diction, you are repeatedly showing the examiner that all you know is diction. Not a good idea!

Action: Stop analyzing diction so much! And if you do analyze it, ONLY choose the best, most interesting diction.

Modality & Imperative Language

Modality

*High modality: “I **must** have an ice cream, or else!”*

*Low modality: “You know, I **could** have an ice cream, but …”*

Modality is a measure of certainty, and it's expressed through words like these.

High modality words	**Low modality words**
"must"	"might"
"should"	"could"
"need to"	"perhaps"
"have to"	"maybe"
"certainly"	"if"

High modality creates an **authoritative** and **certain** tone, which makes a person seem **superior, arrogant** and/or **decisive**.

Low modality creates an **uncertain** tone, which makes the person seem **inferior, considered**, and/or **indecisive**.

When do we normally analyse modality?

1. In relation to the narrator or speaker.
2. In relation to a character.
3. When people are trying to persuade you (e.g. advertisements, posters, infographics, speeches)

For literary works, we often analyse modality in the **dialogue** between characters, but also in the **inner thoughts** (fancy term: *internal monologue*) of characters. Apart from demonstrating inferiority, a low modality is also used to show **internal conflict**, when the character can't decide between different choices.

For example in Act 1 Scene 7 of *Macbeth*, well, Macbeth--yes, the dude's name is the same as the play's title--is standing around wondering if he will kill King Duncan to snatch the crown. Lo and behold, Shakespeare uses low modality to construct his internal conflict:

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well

It were done quickly: if the assassination

Could trammel up the consequence, and catch

With his surcease success; that but this blow

Might be the be-all and the end-all here,

Analysis Advice

- When analysing, always add the adjective "high" or "low" in front of "modality". Never use "modality" by itself, as a 'naked' modality makes absolutely no sense... This is just like the advice for diction. Patterns are beginning to emerge!
- Connect the use of modality to a tone. Your teacher will love this.
- High and low modality are often used in themes related to superiority / inferiority, authority / oppression, and in the purpose of characterisation. We explain more about characterisation in a later lesson.

Imperative language

“Eat the ice cream now!”

“But I can't…”

“EAT IT!”

Imperative language is simply an **authoritative command**. It's very closely related to **high modality**. In many cases you will see the combined use of high modality and imperative language in the same quote--especially when a character is being very bossy.

Analysis Advice

- In literary works, the writer uses imperative language in a character's thoughts and dialogue to construct tone, which in turn is used to characterise that person. **Characterisation** is a key purpose--a core part of the Diamond Analysis Formula (previous lesson). We explain more about characterisation in a later lesson.
- In non-literary works, look for 'Call-to-Actions'. Typically, these are buttons on websites, or highly noticeable commands in the footer on advertisements. Imperative language is almost always used here to propel viewers to **take action**. For example, "Book Now", "Sign Up Now", "Claim the Free Bonus", and so on.

Voice

Whenever you read something--anything--whether it be a novel, an ad, or a half-finished love letter etched into the side of a tree by an infatuated 12-year-old...

In all of these cases...

There is a **voice** talking to you.

And that **voice** can be in different 'modes':

- "first person"
- "second person"
- "third person"
- "fourth person" -- No, I'm just kidding. The English Gods stopped at the 3rd person.

The voice can also **shift back-and-forth** between the three voices throughout a single text... a goldmine for analysis!

Let's go through each of these voices, and how we can analyse them.

First person

First person voice sounds like diary writing. The narrator or speaker refers to himself/herself using first person pronouns **“I”, “us”, and “we”**. It's important to notice when the writer uses “us” or “we”, because they are called **inclusive language**.

Analysis Advice

Inclusive language has two distinct effects on the reader:

1. To create a **closer relationship** between the reader and the narrator or speaker. For example, Obama refers to his audience as "we" in his speech on the Oregon shooting, one of the practice papers, in order to show that he is empathising and suffering with his audience, making him appear more trustworthy and likeable.
2. Inclusive language brings the reader into the **immediate situation** and emotions operating within the scene. For example, first person voice works really well with imagery to create a vivid impression of a physical scene.

Second person

Second person voice is used when the narrator or speaker directly addresses **you**, the reader/audience, through the second person pronoun “you.” This technique is also called **“direct address”**.

Tone

About 50% of the time, especially in literary works, the second person voice is used to create a **confronting** or **accusatory** tone (explained previously in the Tone lesson), because it singles out the reader and points a finger at them, making them feel like they did something wrong.

Analysis Advice

- Talk about how second person voice influences the tone of a piece of writing. Teachers love tone. Write about tone. Please.
- Second person voice is often a 'side-dish' technique. It's not the drumstick. It's the coleslaw. (An allusion to KFC.) So don't spend too much time on second person voice in your analysis. It should be the 'cherry on top' that bolsters and strengthens another stronger technique.
- Direct address often creates the emotional effect of guilt and discomfort in the reader.
- Language and Literature students: The visual equivalent of second person voice is the gaze of a person! More on this in a later lesson.

We see the use of direct address as an accusatory expression in Practice Paper 1 on the poem *Departure*. Take a look at that lesson if you'd like an in-depth example of direct address.

Persuasion

Now, for the other 50%, the second person voice is leveraged in the realm of **persuasion**: the world of persuasive essays, Presidential speeches, marketing campaigns, and alluring advertisements.

If you've ever dozed off in English class (please, let's be honest here...), a sudden "you" from your teacher would be like a deafening alarm clock, waking you from your reverie (new vocabulary: it means "daydream"). The use of "you" **GRABS PEOPLE'S ATTENTION**, since people care about themselves a lot--that's right, including YOU.

Analysis Advice

The use of direct address sucks **attention** from the viewer--this is the key effect of this technique. Any successful advertisement must capture attention first. Remember to analyse the effect as taught in the Analysis Formula lesson.

For Language & Literature students: if you want to appear smart in your analysis, you can use the noun "copy" to refer to advertising and marketing language. It's a technical term: copywriters practice the art of copywriting, in which they craft persuasive "copy" 😆. So, used in a sentence, you can say something like:

The copy in the ad is particularly persuasive...

Third person

Third person voice is…

pretty standard…

and boring.

Third person voice is the ‘normal' voice that writers use for their **omniscient, god-like narrator** who can casually jump into any character's mind at any time because, you know, that's *so* realistic. However, there is an exception, and this concepts belongs to all types of voices, not just third person voice.

So that calls for a new section.

When the voice changes... :O

Voice gets really interesting when the writer suddenly transitions between first and third person.

It usually goes like this:

1. The text **starts off** with one type of voice such as first person. The use of “us” and “we” includes the reader and makes them feel a sense of belonging.
2. Then the writer sprinkles in “they” here and there--that's called **'exclusive language'**. The third person pronoun “they” often refers to other characters who might be enemies or belong to different social groups.
3. The ultimate result of transitioning from first to third person voice is to create an ‘**us versus them'** mentality, thus building themes such as conflict and disagreement.

We see this strategic voice change in the Practice Paper 1 on Obama's speech about the Oregon school shootings: take a look at this lesson for an in-depth exemplar analysis.

Analysis Advice

- Look for voice changes! They are a goldmine, and give you lots of hints about the authorial intent. It's an open window into the mind of the writer.
- Voice changes are extremely potent ingredients for analysis. It's rocket fuel for reaching the Land of the 7. When you find something like this in a text, please analyse it. Your examiner will give a mental standing ovation.

Allusion

What is allusion?

When a writer *alludes* to something, the writer makes a **passing reference to a historical event, a work of literature, a religion, or a cultural tradition**. Basically, an allusion is a bit of information that:

1. is external to the current text, and
2. contains rich meaning to those who are familiar with the reference.

Why do writers use allusion?

Writers use allusion because it adds deeper layers of meaning that otherwise couldn't be easily achieved.

Let's look at an example: One day, two friends named James and Sarah go ice skating. In a horrific turn of events, the friends fall on the ice--*hard*--and James accidentally scars Sarah's face with his sharp, metal skates.

Ouch.

In order to lucidly express James' fear and guilt as a result of his scarring Sarah, we could write:

“I was afraid to look upon her face for fear of the horrific scar coming to life and lashing out at me with its dark vengeance.”

That's pretty good, but we can do much better. In fact, we can allude to **Greek mythology** to make James' dread that much more extreme:

"I was afraid to look upon her face for fear of staring into the eyes of Medusa herself and turning into a stony slab of guilt."

Medusa is a monster in Greek mythology. She has a hideous face and turns anyone who looks at her into stone. She is very scary. The **first example** uses imagery, personification and diction to convey James' fear. The **second example** only uses allusion to create a similar, or an even stronger, effect. Whether the allusion is more effective is a subjective position, but in my opinion, the phrase "staring into the eyes of Medusa herself" is extremely powerful. We can feel the fiery rage of Medusa--I mean Sarah--blasting into our faces like the heat of a 400-degree oven.

The allusion plants richer connotations and meaning into the story because it's taking all the notions and associations that we have about Medusa, which has grown over thousands of years since the birth of Greek civilisation, and then we're just injecting all of that history and all of that culture into our description of James' fear.

Allusion is like…a Google Chrome extension that you can just download to add rich features to your internet browser. Or it's like baking a cake with a cake mix that's already been made. You can just drop in the pre-made meaning to add depth to your text.

The point is: Allusion takes advantage of the reader's pre-existing knowledge about other areas of life in order to add extra meaning to the current piece of writing.

Side note

The most iconic use of allusion in modern literature is T. S. Eliot's notoriously difficult (and pretentious) poem, *The Waste Land*. Academics love *The Waste Land*. The poem is layered in so much allusion. Think about the Empire State Building. It's a big building. Picture it in your mind. *The Waste Land* is the Empire State Building of Allusion. The notes explaining the allusions are longer than the poem itself.

- Allusions to the Bible, check.
- To Greek mythology, check.
- To literature and history, check.

Analysis advice

So how do we analyse allusion?

- First, explain the meaning, connotations, ideas and feelings associated with the alluded concept, event, person or culture.
- Next, relate these meanings and associations to the current situation in the text.

In the ice skating example, we would analyse the use of allusion by saying that the allusion amplifies the fearful tone of the narrator. The allusion also highlights the apprehension and guilt of the narrator, to the point that he physically, and psychologically, becomes a stone that cannot move as a result of shock, shame and fear of his consequences.

Practical Analysis Example: Muffins

In this lesson, we will go through a practical example that applies the **Diamond Method**. By the end of this lesson, you should have a concrete understanding of how to write analysis that is **complete** in all its parts.

Read

First, read this passage in detail. We're going to analyse it!

"As soon as Jane opened the front door, the warm and embracing aroma of her mother's freshly baked muffins poured out onto the streets. Helen loved to bake. When she wasn't singing merry Polish songs with her children, or sewing together the holes that always found their way into little Henry's shirts, or reading fairy tales with little Betty on the cosy carpet next to the fireplace, she would be in the kitchen crafting her next masterpiece for her children, clanging together pots and pans and stirring and kneading with relentless, palpable fervour."

Deconstruct

Now spend **five minutes** deconstructing this passage to find the writer's overall purpose. If you've forgotten how to deconstruct, here's a quick refresher: Identify the **tone, mood and/or atmosphere**, any repeated language and techniques, and the focal ideas of the paragraph. If you're still not confident, read this lesson on how to interpret / deconstruct a text.

No peeking! (Spoilers below)

Here's what I found

Here is what I found from my deconstruction:

- *Tone*: the paragraph has a consistently fond and affectionate tone. In other words, the narrator's attitude towards the mother is extremely positive.
- *Atmosphere:* warm, homey and welcoming—I want to live in that house and have an endless supply of muffins too!
- *Mood*: we feel comforted and welcomed by reading this extract.
- *Repeated language techniques:*
    - Imagery
    - Listing in the middle
    - Positive diction
    - Alliteration at the end
- *Theme/idea:* Helen takes care of her kids, specifically by cooking, singing and mending clothes for her children.
- *Purpose:* From all of this information, it seems like the writer's main purpose is to **characterise Helen** as a caring and loving mother.

Let's analyse a quote

There are so many great quotes to analyse in this one paragraph. Let's analyse this quote:

"the warm, embracing aroma of her mother's freshly baked muffins poured out…"

First, let's go through the five steps before we actually write the analysis.

- **Techniques:**
    - Thermal imagery
    - Olfactory imagery
    - Personification
    - Diction
- **Meaning and/or effect of technique:** (Here I'm combining steps 2 and 4)
    - Olfactory imagery --> Helen makes delicious food / pleasant atmosphere
    - Personification & thermal imagery --> inviting tone
    - Diction ("poured") --> Helen makes an abundance of delicious food, so much that the smell pours out of the house
- **Purpose of meaning and/or effect:**(Here I'm combining steps 3 and 5)
    - Olfactory imagery --> Helen makes delicious food / pleasant atmosphere --> *caring*
    - Personification & thermal imagery --> inviting tone --> *Helen's home is warm and welcoming* --> (need an extra link) *loving and caring*
    - Diction ("poured") --> Helen makes an abundance of delicious food, so much that the smell pours out of the house --> *caring*
- **Intuitive direction:** Overall, Helen is shown to be a super mum because she bakes lots and lots of awesome food, and this makes the reader feel warm and welcomed, which in turn establishes Helen as an indisputably top-quality gal.

Now, let's translate these five steps into fancy English.

Basic

We'll start off with a topic sentence introducing our point.

"In the extract, the author portrays Helen's culinary passion in order to characterise her as a caring and loving figure."

Next, we will introduce the quote that we want to analyse. I'm also going to introduce the techniques in the same sentence to make ths sentence flow.

"… The author employs pleasant olfactory imagery [STEP 1] *in describing the inviting "aroma" (line 1) of "[Helen's] freshly baked muffins" (line 2)."*

Next is the most important part of the analytical paragraph, yet so many students don't do this: analysis! Squeeze as much as you can from steps 2, 3, 4 and 5 until you have nothing else to talk about. Actually, let's continue the last sentence, because we want the analysis to flow.

"... to establish not only the warm, comforting setting of Helen's home $^{STEP\ 4}$ *but also the scrumptiousness of the food* $^{STEP\ 2}$ *that she "**crafts**" (line X).*

Here's a protip: Where relevant, add small quotes from other parts of the text. It's really impressive, because it means you understand how different bits and pieces of language work together as a cohesive whole.

Let's keep going. Now we want to link the meaning to the purpose.

"... The welcoming atmosphere (STEP 2 / 4) constructed by the olfactory imagery thus characterises the love with which Helen cares for her children (STEP 3 / 5), ..."

To wrap up the analysis, we need to talk about effect (step 4) and link it to the purpose (step 5). The above sentence actually sort of addressed this already, because the welcoming nature of Helen's home can be interpreted as either a meaning or an effect. But we'll keep going. For some reason, I really want to combine sentences today:

"... while at the same time, leaves the reader with a sense of warmth $^{STEP\ 4}$ *that underscores the mother's attentiveness* $^{STEP\ 5}$*.*

In a real analytical paragraph, we would need to extend this analysis with one or two quotes before we can wrap up the mini-point. Here, we're only focused on analysis and not writing a complete point.

Complete analysis

In the extract, the author portrays Helen's culinary passion in order to characterise her as a caring and loving figure. The author employs pleasant olfactory imagery in describing the inviting "aroma" (line X) of "[Helen's] freshly baked muffins" (line Y) to establish not only the warm, comforting setting of Helen's home but also the scrumptiousness of the food that she "crafts" (line Z). The welcoming atmosphere constructed by the olfactory imagery thus characterises the love with which Helen cares for her children, while at the same time, leaves the reader with a sense of warmth that underscores the mother's attentiveness.

Lessons learned

- How to apply the Diamond Method.
- You can combine two, three, or even four steps into a single sentence to create a flowing essay. In fact, it's a bad idea to cover each step in a separate sentence, because that makes you sound like a robot.
- Sometimes the steps can be flexible. Meaning can sometimes be the effect and vice versa.

Alright, so we've looked at one way to analyse the quote. Let's look at it another way.

Getting more concise

Study the paragraph below. Look at how it addresses (or not) the five steps of analysis.

The pleasant olfactory imagery $^{STEP\ 1}$ *of the "aroma of ...[Helen's] freshly baked muffins" (line ...) highlights the delicious food that Helen passionately crafts for her children* $^{STEP\ 2}$*. Hence, the inviting*

atmosphere created by the olfactory imagery is able to endear the reader to Helen's loving nature [STEP 4] *and thus further highlight her sweet, caring character* [STEP 5].

Lessons to learn

- **We don't have to address both Steps 3 and 5 to achieve complete analysis.** Just addressing one of the steps means that you've connected either the meaning or the effect to the *writer's purpose*, and that's enough.
- **There are many ways to analyse a quote.** In this example, we expressed the same idea as that in the first example, but here we used different words and sentences. So the moral is: Don't worry if it's 'right', just write.
- The previous example used 80 words. The current example uses half as many words to communicate the same message. When writing analysis, don't use the number of sentences or words as an indication of "Am I done yet?" Some quotes are more complex and take 5 sentences to fully analyse, while other quotes are simple and can analysed in a single sentence.
- Keep a mental checklist of the five key aspects of analysis and tick them off until you have completely addressed each aspect. That is the only time when you should move on to the next quote.

Level 2 Techniques

Figurative Language

Figurative language shouldn't be taken literally. It's supposed to give the reader an abstract idea of something: a mental image, a feeling or an emotion. The specific types of figurative language we need to know inside-out for the IB are:

- Metaphor
- Simile
- Personification
- Pathetic fallacy
- Imagery
- Symbolism
- Motif

First, let's talk about metaphor and simile.

Metaphor

Metaphor is the technique we talk about when a writer **directly compares** any one thing to any other thing in an attempt to bring out a common characteristic.

For example, we might have a very calculating character, and we want to emphasise this quality. We can use metaphor!

What non-human thing, animal or object gives the impression of always being alert?

An owl comes to mind, specifically an owl's eyes, which are watching even in the stillness of the night.

"His owl eyes scanned from left to right and back, searching, scanning, seeing."

What if a metaphor continues longer, perhaps over a whole stanza or even an entire poem or short story? That's called an **extended metaphor**. In Bruce Dawe's poem *Happiness is the Art of Being Broken*, the image of a fragile bottle floating in a wild sea is an extended metaphor for life and the difficulties we face. I have to say that ocean metaphor is pretty deep… (pun very much intended)

Simile

A simile is also used to highlight a certain characteristic of an object by comparing it with something else. In fact, simile and metaphor are almost…almost…the same thing.

"The fearless warrior, with his bulging armour of bronze, was a mountain of tremendous size."

That's a metaphor.

"The fearless warrior, with his bulging armour of bronze, was like a mountain."

That's a simile.

"The fearless warrior, with his bulging armour of bronze, was as big as a mountain."

That's also a simile.

A simile must use "like" or "as" to compare two things, so a simile is an **indirect comparison** between two things, whereas a metaphor is a **direct comparison**: the warrior *is* a mountain.

Analysis Advice

When you find a simile or metaphor in a text, you'll generally be able to analyze diction and imagery as well.

- Similes and metaphors have interesting diction because the metaphor **must** have interesting connotations, otherwise the writer wouldn't use the metaphor in the first place! For example, in the metaphor "His owl eyes", the "owl eyes" is the metaphor itself, but the animalistic diction in "owl" also has a lot of interesting connotations (alertness, a large size, etc.).
- So **don't forget about connotations!**. One simple way you can weave it all together is something like this:

The writer's use of the metaphor "owl eyes" suggests / connotes / implies the alertness, thus...

- Notice how you don't actually need to mention 'diction' to analyze diction. It can be subtle.
- If the simile or metaphor is particularly detailed, then imagery is also likely to be present. If you're still a beginner at IB English analysis, just focus on analyzing a single technique at a time. But just to foreshadow what's to come... an advanced skill you'll definitely want to learn is how to analyze multiple techniques together.

Personification

Personification

Readers are people.

People care about people.

There's no better way to spice up a text than by transforming boring animals and objects into fully-fledged humans with arms, legs, and emotions.

Check out this boring sentence:

"Every autumn the trees shed their leaves, and the red and yellow and orange pieces fall onto the ground."

That's not very moving. After reading it, I feel…nothing. Zilch. No emotion. I'm not even a tiny bit sad that summer is ending.

So let's shake it up with some personification.

"With every autumn comes the sighs of frail oaks as they gently lay each of their red and orange and yellow children to rest upon the soft forest floor in wintery, peaceful silence."

Wow. That was… I'm speechless.

I feel sad now about winter coming along and destroying the lives of these families, because it's like the old trees are parents and they're mourning the deaths of their children (aka, their leaves).

Through the power of personification, the world's most boring botanical process was turned into a distinctly human experience that brings the audience—me—to tears. Who needs soppy sitcoms when one has personification in one's life?

Analysis advice

When you analyse, keep this in mind. Personification is most commonly used to:

1. make the **setting** come to life, and hence create an **atmosphere**
2. evoke **emotion** from the reader, and hence create a **mood**

Pathetic fallacy

Pathetic fallacy is a specific type of personification. You will seem extremely smart if you use “pathetic fallacy” in your analysis. If you use it incorrectly, however, you will seem really dumb. Just kidding. Although you will lose marks. Which sucks.

Pathetic fallacy is the **embodiment of a *human emotion* in a *natural* element like the weather, or the seasons, or the environment.**

Here's an example:

"The skies wept over Melbourne, drenching the city in its sorrow."

Here the *weather*—something that is part of *nature*—embodies the depression and the misery of Melbourne. (By the way, Melbourne is actually a great city, but the weather is…not ideal.)

Personification

- When you personify an object, the object **can be anything**: natural or man-made. Also, the personified object can have any human characteristic: beauty, emotion, personality, attitude, appearance, etc.

Pathetic fallacy

- When you use pathetic fallacy, the object can **only be a natural object**: weather, a mountain, a tree, but not a computer and certainly not a TV.
- The object can only embody a human emotion like happiness, sadness, guilt, jealousy, etc. The moment you give the object a characteristic unrelated to emotion, it's no longer pathetic fallacy. You've stepped outside the bubble that is 'pathetic fallacy', and so it would just be personification.

What's the difference?

Here's a table comparing the two so you don't get confused.

	Personification	**Pathetic fallacy**

Object	Anything (a TV, a tree, a computer)	Must be a natural object (weather, mountain, tree, NOT a TV, NOT a computer)
What characteristic is being 'embodied' by the object	Any characteristic (beauty, emotion, personality, shape, size, attitude)	Must be a human emotion (happiness, sadness, guilt, jealousy, etc.)
Example	"The TV sat on his throne, looking down upon his admiring subjects and booming at them with decrees." **Object:** TV **Human characteristic:** superiority	"The sullen leaves dropped onto the forest floor." **Object:** leaves **Human characteristic:** sadness

---

Imagery

When we think about images, we think about vision and what we see from our eyes. That's 100% logical.

But the problem is: English isn't...ugh...logical. In the world of English Lit and Lang Lit, there exists a type of imagery for every sense, not just vision. Yes, logic/10.

The 7 types of imagery

1. Auditory imagery for sound
2. Olfactory imagery for smell
3. Gustatory imagery for taste
4. Tactile imagery for touch
5. Thermal imagery for temperature
6. Kinaesthetic imagery for movement
7. And of course visual imagery for vision

Purpose and effect

Here are the most important purposes and effects of using imagery in a text:

- To create a **vivid, clear mental image** in the reader's mind about a particular scene, character or object.

- Imagery is about **using the senses to make the words come to life**. It's like dropping the reader directly into the physical scene that is being described, and this allows the reader to experience everything that the narrator sees, hears and experiences as well.
- In general, the purpose of imagery is to amplify the reader's experience of sensations and emotions.

Analysis advice

- Silence counts as auditory imagery.
- Imagery is often used to establish the physical setting of a prose extract or poem and, by extension, the atmosphere of the text.
- When you analyse imagery, try to imagine the physical scene in your mind, and think about why the writer has constructed the scene in this way, linking the use of imagery to the authorial intent. LIVE IT, BREATHE IT, FEEL IT.

Symbols & Motifs

Symbol

A symbol is an object or character that represents an *abstract idea*.

Examples

For example, a rose is a universal **symbol of love** ("love" being the abstract idea or concept). You don't give your girlfriend a piece of grass for Valentines' Day, because she'll ask, with a bewildered **tone**, of course:

"Sweetie (or Honey, or whatever), why are you giving me a piece of grass?"

Unfortunately, grass—at least in Western society—doesn't represent the deeper idea of love. Grass is just grass. But a rose…oh, a rose is not so simple. A rose symbolises love.

- In *Star Wars*, light and darkness represent good and evil, respectively.
- In *The Great Gatsby*, the iconic green light represents the American Dream.
- In *Macbeth*, King Duncan represents goodness.
- In *Eveline*, a prose extract that we will analyse, we see the symbol of the "iron railing." Stay tuned for that lesson!

Analysis Advice

The purpose of symbolism is to add deeper layers of meaning to a text, which means symbolism will almost always give you deep analysis. So if you find symbolism in a text, make sure you analyse it. It's one of those rare catches that will instantly level up your analysis.

Motif

The age-old conundrum of English.

“What's the difference between a symbol and a motif?”

A motif is a recurring object that an author uses to develop a central theme or idea.

A symbol is also an object, but:

- It doesn't need to be repeated throughout a literary work. A symbol can appear once and never show up again in the rest of the text.
- It doesn't need to contribute to a central theme. A symbol can represent any abstract idea or theme, no matter how significant or insignificant that theme is to the whole text. This seems like a really weird difference, but that's how people before us have chosen to define things!

Example

In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *blood* is a motif because it satisfies the two conditions that we talked about above.

1. Blood (an object) appears again and again throughout the 5 Acts.
2. Blood also represents Macbeth's guilt (for murdering the king). Guilt is a central theme of the play

---

Analysis Advice

The analysis advice relating to symbolism is equally useful when analysing motifs. Common motifs to look for include:

- nature (e.g., trees, stars, the sky)
- animals (e.g., the rabbits in Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men', which represent the American Dream)
- quirky objects (e.g., the green light in 'The Great Gatsby', also representing the American Dream; cars to represent social status)

The most effective strategy for analysing motifs is as follows:

1. identify the motif and provide a quote
2. relate the motif to a **core theme**
3. explain why the **recurring nature** of this object effectively communicates this theme to the reader
4. as always, analyse the effect on the reader. For the motif of blood in 'Macbeth', we could write: "In order to create a continuous source of eerie tension in the play, Shakespeare constantly dangles the notion of murder in the audience's mind through the recurring nature of the blood."

Can you think of any motifs in the texts that you are studying?

Visual Techniques (Lang Lit Only)

Lang & Lit differs from Lit because y'all gotta analyse visual stuff: ads, posters, infographics, photos.

So in this section, we'll cover the essential visual techniques / features.

- colour
- headings
- composition
- angle
- framing
- background and foreground

Colour

An analysis of colour can be multi-dimensional—covering not only the *choice in colour*, but also its *appearance* and *effect*. Within this visual technique, you can discuss features including:

- **Hue:** refers to the colour itself (e.g. red, green, blue etc.)
- **Saturation:** refers to the intensity of the colour
- **Value/contrast:** describes the difference between light and dark

- **Warm vs cool colours:** reds/yellows vs. blues/greens

Example

Let's take a look at how we might analyse this poster using the techniques we just introduced above.

In this example, the artist's use of colour is two-fold. (The visual features are explicitly underlined to make it super clear.)

- Firstly, the symbolic use of hues—red, white and blue—allows the author to pinpoint the intended audience, being Americans, forcing them to individually **confront** the dangers of consumerism within their own society.
- What's more, the author's varied use of value within the subject's red coat creates a sense of filth and grime which not only repulses, but, to a certain extent, **frightens** audiences from the idea of consumerism within the context of the holidays.

Headings

Headings are often used in a variety of text types—not only in written texts, but also in visual stimuli. Headings are great to analyse, and don't worry: You'll never miss them. (That's the point of headings.)

When analysing headings, you can discuss a lot of features surrounding it, including:

- Type face
- Font size
- Colour
- Weight

Analysis Advice

- The main purpose of headings is to capture the audience's **attention**.
- Make sure you analyse the **appearance** of the heading and specifically *why the heading is appropriate* to the *particular audience* of the text (taking the audience into account is important for analysing any technique, actually). For example, an advertisement targeted at children would use bright letters and interestingly-shaped font for the heading, as this choice of visual presentation is most suitable for the target audience.

- With that said, don't just analyse the appearance! Every heading contains **words**, and all words contain meaning, so you should definitely use the literary techniques you learned in the previous section to **analyse the meaning conveyed** by the language in the heading.

Example

Let's take a look at how we might analyse the heading of the frightening image of Santa, as seen above.

First, let's introduce the particular **visual features** we want to analyse regarding the heading:

The obtrusive nature of the word "YOU" used within the heading of the stimulus stems from the author's manipulation of the colour as well as distinctly large size of the word compared to the rest of the heading.

The next step in analysis is to explain **why** these visual choices were made:

*The large, red formatting of "YOU" not only captures one's attention but also **strikes a sense of fear** in the audience, as the red hue and large size contribute to the **aggressive tone** of the poster. The imposing effect of "YOU", which directs the pressure of consumerism on the reader himself, is accentuated by both the enraged facial expression of Santa and the piercing, accusatory finger directed squarely at the audience.*

Composition, Angle & Framing

The **composition** of a text refers to the arrangement as well as the content of a visual stimulus. Some compositional elements you may wish to look out for may include the direction or subject in focus, the use of visual juxtaposition or—most importantly—the manipulation of the foreground in relation to the background (or vice versa).

The **angle** in which a visual text was shot or constructed can really impact the audience's response and reaction to the stimulus.

For example:

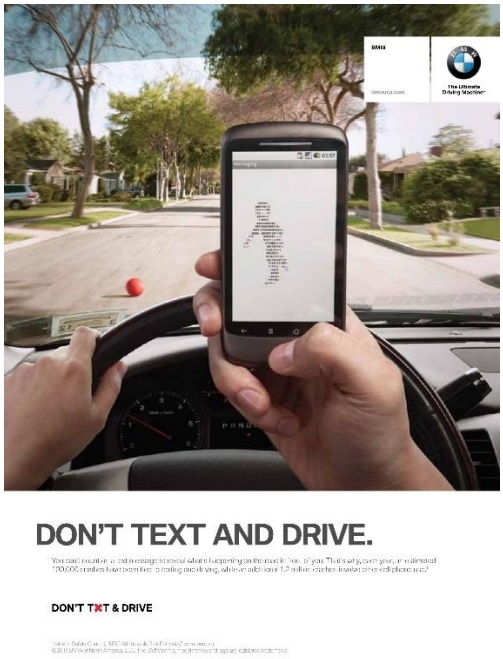
- an angle slanted downwards puts the audience in a position of vulnerability and weakness as they are forced to look up to the subject of the image.
- On the other hand, an angle slanted upwards, instead empowers audiences as the roles become reversed.

It may not be entirely obvious, but sometimes, even an angle shot at eye level can be purposeful too—making things seem more personal as though you are forced to face the subject head on.

The **framing** of a shot is also a great feature to discuss in a visual analysis. Objects captured from a long shot will likely feel distanced and detached from the reader, whereas objects shot at extreme close-up may be perceived as confronting, or even intimate, depending of the context of the image.

Big Example

Now let's discuss the last three Lang Lit techniques in relation to a single example text.



Analysis

Let's take a look at an example analytical paragraph of the poster. Note that we've added spaces to make it easier on your tired eyes--I know you've been staring at your laptop way too much today! Alas... IB...

In this shocking "Don't text and drive" safety advert, the author creates a first-person visual experience of a driver in order to deter motorists from the dangerous crime of texting whilst driving. The first-person point of view of the shot, combined with the foregrounded positioning of the hands grasping the phone and steering wheel, creates the impression that 'you', the reader, are perpetuating the crime.

Next, the angle of the composition is shot at eye level, thereby drawing the viewer's attention to the mobile phone, which obstructs the view of a boy playing ball on the suburban street in the background. The composition thus provides the visual context of the advert.

Finally, the viewer's eyes are naturally drawn towards the end point of the narrowing shot in the background, and so the framing of the background evokes a forward movement towards the boy.

Through the artist's manipulation of point-of-view, angle and framing, the viewer is placed in a shocking first-person scenario in which his car will imminently crash into an innocent little boy as a result of the viewer's negligence. By creating a confronting scenario that illustrates the mortal consequences of texting in a car, the artist is able to elicit an amalgamation of shock, guilt and fear from the audience--an emotional cocktail that will hopefully deter motorists from committing such a dangerous act. In particular, the innocence connoted by the image of the young boy with the ball serves to amplify the emotional guilt, furthering the effectiveness of this advert as a deterrent of dangerous driving.

Wait... that's weird 🤔

It's interesting that BMW chose to depict a situation where the accident has **not yet occurred**, unlike other adverts where the bloody scene of a motor accident is the source of shock.

Perhaps the imminent nature of the accident suggests that something can **still be done** to avoid the impending tragedy, thus placing the viewer (us!) in a hopeful and **action-oriented mindset** that emphasises behavioural change--no doubt a practical message for drivers!

Comics (Lang Lit Only)

In this section, we'll look at the main visual features you'll find in comics.

We've grouped these under two categories:

- Structure
- Visual characterisation

Structure

Although comics may just look like a bunch of drawings with squares and rectangles, the components of these illustrations have special names, each of which increases your English Lang Lit power level; remember to use these special terms to 5x your XP whenever you analyse comics!

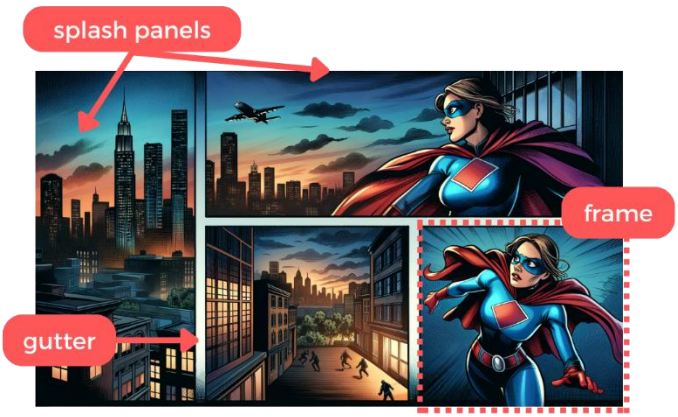
Key terms for analysis:

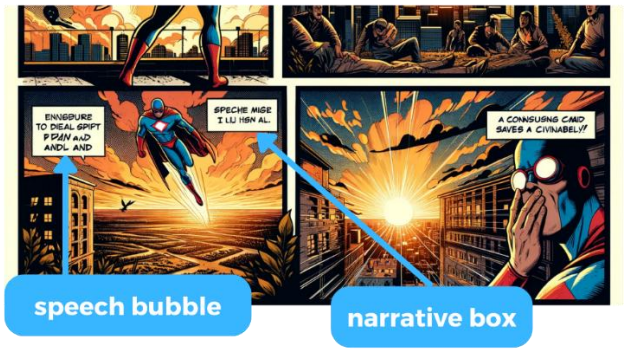
- **Panel**: refers to each square or rectangle with an illustration inside.
- **Frame**: refers to the border or line surrounding each panel.
- **Gutter**: refers to the gaps between the frames.
- **Speech bubble**: refers to a shaped outline that contains text to represent dialogue (also called a speech balloon).
- **Narrative box**: refers to a text box that contains information from a character or narrator of the story (i.e., it's not dialogue).

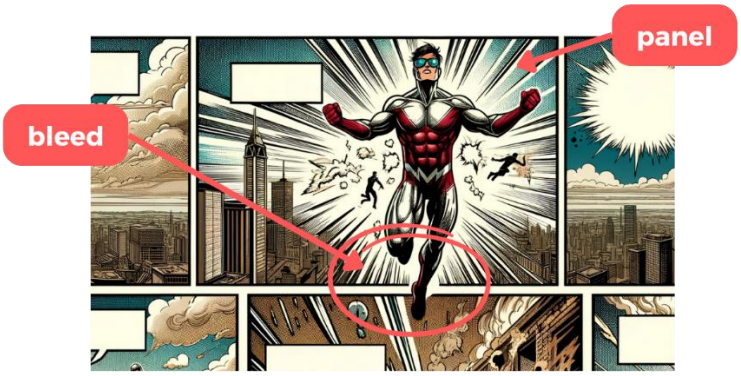
Sometimes, the panels may be composed uniquely for a certain effect. Below are common examples of structural manipulations that an author might use:

- **Bleed**: refers to when the illustration is composed to go over the panel and frames (i.e., the drawing is 'bleeding out' of the panel).
- **Splash panel**: refers to a panel that takes up the *entire width* of the page.

Take a look at the comics below to see what each element looks like in a real comic:







Analysis Advice

Knowing these key terms isn't just helpful for referring to parts of a comic, but they also give us more **structural elements** to analyse.

Narrative box

Narrative boxes can be used to reveal the internal thoughts of a character.

For example, in a Spiderman comic (not pictured), the artist is able to share Spiderman's inside thoughts with readers through narrative boxes. This helps readers get insight into his humorous and playful personality, making him feel not just impressive as a superhero, but also a likeable character that readers want to succeed.

Splash panel

Readers tend to pay more attention to splash panels because they are larger in size and area. Artists use splash panels to focus attention and place emphasis on certain things, typically action-filled panels which are visually engaging and exciting, thus affecting the mood.

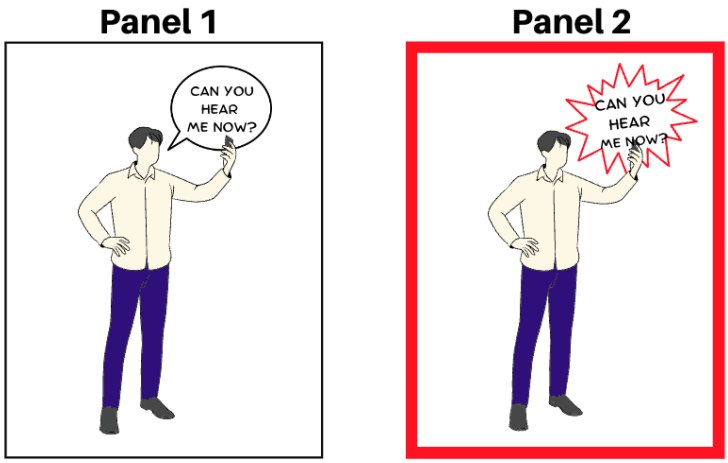
For example, in a Spiderman comic (not pictured), the splash panel at the top of the comic summarizes Spiderman's storyline and draws attention to his courageous backstory. Another splash panel in the middle of the page also serves the purpose of painting Spiderman as really cool by emphasizing his jumping abilities. Naturally, we end up paying less attention to the smaller panels at the bottom which are about Peter Parker who's not in his superhero state.

Bleed

In the third panel above, the superhero's feet are going over the frame. The bleed creates the impression that the superhero is jumping 'out' of the comic strip, thus creating a sense of motion despite the static images. The comic artist thus is able to inject more energy and excitement in the reader.

Visual style

So what about analysing the more basic features like speech bubbles and frames? These also have good analytical potential as the author can evoke different meanings just by changing their composition – have a look below for an example:



In both panels, we see the same single-frame storyline of a man face-timing someone and asking, “Can you hear me now?”

- In Panel 1, the 'normal' speech bubble suggests the man's question is expressed in a neutral, calm tone.
- In Panel 2, it's quite different. Notice how the **jagged speech bubble** and **tilted text** suggest that the man is *shouting* at the person on the phone. The **red colour** of the speech bubble and frame also imply *frustration*. So, even though the text and cartoon figure is the exact same in both panels, the subtle visual details in the speech bubble, text orientation, and frame can drastically impact the perceived meaning of the panel.

Visual Characterization

Comic artists often use two techniques to achieve a more memorable portrayal of a character:

- **Caricature:** refers to an illustration of someone that has been *distorted* with *exaggerated* features, usually to elicit humour in the readers. This effect is also called "comic effect".
- **Emanata:** you can think of "emanata" as visual hyperbole, used to symbolise a character's actions or emotions (emanata applies people, animals, as well as non-living things too!).

Let's look at some examples below:

Caricature

This is a caricature of an auctioneer holding a gavel. His head and facial features are made much, much larger than the rest of his body.

Usually, caricatures are used to mock the character by making them look absurd or grotesque. As such, it's common to see caricatures in **satirical comics** where a person is being criticized in a humorous way.

Emanata

Looking at this graphic, you can probably tell that the boy is feeling hot and sweaty under the sun. All due to the magic of *emanata*!

Notice the **giant blue sweat drops** next to his head. In real life, we definitely wouldn't see these (and if you do, please get your eyes checked). Here, the artist has enlarged the sweat droplets to humungous proportions to exaggerate the feeling of heat.

Another instance of emanata can be seen in the lines drawn around the sun. As you know since preschool, these lines represent the sun's rays, which again accentuates the heat radiating from the sun.

Summary

So far, we have just looked at the visual features that are specific to a comic text. When you are analysing an entire comic text, there would be many general features that interplay with the author's intentions (e.g., gaze, salience, onomatopoeia, etc). Don't forget about all the amazing literary techniques in the speech bubbles! Don't just analyze the visual techniques... instead analyse both and talk about how they support each other in creating meaning and effect.

Practical Analysis Example: Rain

We're going to analyse a couple quotes from a poem about rain. Let's have a look at the short extract.

Nature's wicked bullets,

hanging high in the heaving clouds,

are unleashed, and they

splash

spray

smash

into my naked skin,

shattering—

into a billion sharp shards that

pierce my glass heart

Deconstruct the text

First, deconstruct this section of the poem. Remember to analyse the techniques, tone, atmosphere, mood, main ideas, and purpose. After a couple minutes, check back to see how you went. Good luck!

No peeking! Spoilers below!

Here's what I found

Tone

- Looking at the diction, the tone is fearful and foreboding at the beginning (“wicked”, “unleashed”, “Gods”) and defeated towards the end (“naked”, “pierce”, “glass”).

Atmosphere

- Recall that atmosphere is constructed by the description of the external surroundings, while tone is constructed by the description of the speaker's internal attitude.
- The poem is only atmospheric in the 3 lines in the middle of the poem, “splash / spray / smash”, because this is the part where the external surrounding is brought to life. Here, the three lines create a chaotic atmosphere.

Mood

- After reading about the threatening bullets of rain and the speaker's subsequent surrender to powers of nature, I feel overwhelmed. Overwhelmed by the unforgiving forces of nature. Ooh, that might be the writer's purpose. We'll come back to the purpose in a second.

Techniques

In the last example about the muffins, the author used a lot of figurative language. This poem also uses a lot of figurative language, but there're also some interesting structural techniques unique to poems.

Here's the poem again for convenience:

Nature's wicked bullets,

hanging high in the heaving clouds,

are unleashed, and they

splash

spray

smash

into my naked skin,

shattering—

into a billion sharp shards that

pierce my glass heart

Line-by-line annotation

- Metaphor: “bullets”, Personification: “wicked” --> fearful, foreboding tone
- Diction: “unleashed”, “Gods” --> fearful, foreboding tone
- Progressing intensity of listing
- Sibilance, cacophony, increase pace, chaotic atmosphere
- Enjambment, line structure (single word)
- Diction: “naked”
- Grammar: em dash
- Line break, visual imagery: “a billion sharp shards”
- Diction: “Pierce”, Metaphor: “glass heart” --> idea: delicate, mood: discomfort

Purpose

After looking at all of that, it seems pretty clear that the rain is being described as a threatening thing for the speaker. The purpose must be related in some way to the threatening nature of rain or the vulnerability of the speaker.

One possible wording of the purpose: “The poet constructs rain as a threatening element of nature.”

Analysis example

There are a couple of points we can already analyse from just this tiny extract.

- The devastating power of nature
- The speaker's fragility and vulnerability

Let's analyse the first point. (You can analyse the second point as an exercise.)

The devastating power of nature

1. Topic sentence

First, let's write a topic sentence to introduce the point. Organising by section seems like a logical structure for the commentary, because the first and second parts of the poem construct different ideas. So we can write this:

In the first section of the poem (lines 1 to 5), the author constructs the devastating power of nature through the portrayal of the havoc created by the rain.

2. Quote section

Nature's wicked bullets,

hanging high in the heaving clouds,

are unleashed, and they

splash

spray

smash

3. Here's my analysis (Good level for exam)

The poet establishes a menacing tone in line 1 of the poem by metaphorically comparing the rain to “Nature's wicked bullets.” Here, the poet utilises the metaphor to construct raindrops in an unusually threatening and lethal manner, eliciting fear in the reader and causing them to feel a sense of foreboding towards the imminent downpour. The destructive and threatening nature of the rain is additionally illustrated by the poet's use of the cacophonous, sibilant sounds in “splash / spray / smash” which creates a chaotic atmosphere that further invokes disorientation and fear in the reader. The poet also introduces enjambment to lines… in order to increase the pace and thus amplify the chaotic atmosphere, eliciting further the reader's impression of the unforgiving nature of the ‘bullet-like' rain.

There are a lot more techniques that you can analyse, but you never have enough time to analyse them all. That's hard, because no one likes to intentionally omit quotes due to time constraint. Thus, it's

important that you do choose the best quotes out of all the possibilities to maximise your mark for Criterion A (Knowledge and Understanding) and Criterion B (Appreciation of writer's choice).

Level 3 Techniques

Sound Devices

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of the same letter or sound at the start of adjacent words.

“The pitter patter of the rain”

The repetition of the soft “p” sound mimics the gentle sound of rain hitting the roof.

“The jovial jazz group jammed late into the night.”

The repetition of the “j” sound creates a music rhythm, which increases the pace and creates a cheerful, upbeat tone. Whenever we talk about tone, we should also talk about its effect. Here the cheerful tone translates into a celebratory mood for the reader.

“James's careful stare cut clean through the crude clothes, cosmetics and caps and cardigans and into the soul.”

Unlike the first two examples we just saw, here the hard “k” sound doesn't mimic a real sound. Instead, the alliteration reinforces the more abstract idea of the intensity and precision of his cutting “stare”, which seems to cut through clothes and superficial things and directly into the soul of a person. Scary...

Analysis advice

- In general, alliteration mimics a real sound in order to immerse the reader in a more “realistic” fictional world.
- When alliteration isn't used to mimic a real sound, it can be used to elicit a certain feeling or reinforce an abstract idea.
- As always, choose the interpretation that best supports the writer's purpose.

Assonance

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in neighbouring words. What we mean by vowel sounds are all the sounds created by vowels:

A E I O U

A good way to remember the connection between assonance and vowel sounds is that assonance begins with the letter ‘A': a vowel.

Sounds can either be **short** or **long**. In different words, the letter ‘a' can be either pronounced as ‘ah' (as in ‘hammer'—so that's the short sound) or it can be pronounced as ‘aye' (as in ‘rain'—that's the vowel long sound). The amazing thing is that assonance can create either a fast or a slow place, and a happy or a sad tone depending on whether long or short sounds are used.

The effect of assonance entirely depends on the context and whether the assonant sounds are short or long.

The Prisoner

The man passed the gates, and pranced

And ran in glee, so pleased

He leaped, as free

As an eel in the deep blue sea

In the first two lines, the ‘a' sound is short, so the pace of the poem increases, making the tone bright and joyful. This portrays the initial excitement of the ex-prisoner as he runs around.

Now, in the rest of the lines, we see a lot of long ‘ee' sounds, and this slows down the pace. The pace is still fast, but it's slower relative to the start of the poem. And so the long ‘ee' sound contrasts the initial excitement of freedom with the more serene, peaceful feeling that the freed man experiences in the long term.

Consonance

Consonance is the opposite of assonance. Consonance occurs when we repeat consonant sounds in adjacent words. Consonants are all the letters that aren't vowels.

“Isabelle slammed the closet shut.”

In this example, the hard ‘d' and 't' sounds are repeated in quick succession to mimic the sound of the closet door slamming shut. It suggests the speed and force of Isabelle's action. Maybe she's in a hurry, and the consonance makes the reader feel a sense of urgency. Or, maybe Isabelle is just very angry, and the hard ‘d' and ‘t' sounds make us feel threatened by her aggression.

As you can see, just by subtly repeating a specific sound, the writer is able to convey lots of rich meaning while subconsciously influencing the reader's emotion.

Sibilance

She sells sea shells by the sea shore.

Sibilance is the repetition of 's' or ‘sh' sounds. Since 's' is a consonant, sibilance is actually a special case of consonance.

Analysis advice

- Sibilance creates a calm tone and mood by slowing the pace. In our very first video, we looked at sibilance in this quote: “The soothing sounds of the sleeping sea lulled Alex into a deep and satisfying slumber.”
- Sibilance can also create a harsh hissing sound, which makes the reader feel uncomfortable—the complete opposite of feeling calm. For example: “She hissed, assaulting him with a spiteful stare.” Here the sibilant sounds portray the woman's bitterness towards the man.

When you analyse sibilance, it should be clear which interpretation—the calm or the harsh sound—fits better into the writer's purpose.

Rhyme

If we're gonna talk about rhyme, then we have to talk about “The Raven,” a poem by Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem.

It has a lot of rhyme in it.

Rhyme occurs when different words end with the same sound. The difference between rhyme, and assonance and consonance, is that rhyme is not confined to the sound of single letter. Rhyming sounds are created by distinct **groups of letters**, which we call syllables. If you're not sure what syllables mean, you can check that out at Wikipedia.

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,

“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,

And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,

Types of rhyme

There are actually two types of rhyme, both of which can be seen in *The Raven*.

- *External rhyme* occurs across separate lines of a poem. Here we see the rhyming words “implore” and “door”. This is an example of external rhyme.
- *Internal rhyme* occurs within the same line. Words that are internally rhymed include “stronger” and “longer” and “napping” and “rapping.”

Rhyme scheme

Poems can also have a *rhyme scheme*. A rhyme scheme is a regular, repeating pattern of rhyming sounds. One type of rhyme scheme is AABB, which means that a different sound is rhymed in every pair of lines; these pairs of lines are called *rhyming couplets*.

An example:

O she doth teach the torches to burn bright;

It seems she hands upon the cheek of *night,*

Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ***ear****;*

Beauty too rich for us to use, for earth too ***dear****…*

Did my heart love till now, forswear it sight,

For I ne'er saw true beauty till this *night.*

You can also have ABAB rhyme schemes, or ABCB rhyme schemes, or even more complex rhyme schemes like this one in Robert Frost's “Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening”:

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village, though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

This poem's rhyme scheme is AABABBCB. Can you see why?

Here's why: AA means the first two lines rhyme, then B is the next rhyming sound and they rhyme in the corresponding lines, and then C is the sound that doesn't rhyme with anything else.

Analysis advice

- **Sounds.** Rhyme schemes create a regular pattern of sounds. In other words, rhyme schemes make poems sound rhythmical and melodic.
- **Tone and mood.** Rhyme also creates a tone and mood. Depending on the context, rhyming lines can make a poem sound cheerful, sad or even ominous. An ominous mood describes the feeling for when we expect something bad is about to happen. Shakespeare uses rhyming couplets extensively at the end of scenes in the tragedy *Macbeth* to create an unsettling mood.
- **Free verse.** We've talked a lot about poems that contain rhyme. What about poems that don't contain rhyme? These poems sound more like normal writing, or prose, and we call these poems lacking rhyme are written in *free verse*.

Cacophony

Cacophony is the **opposite** of rhyme and melody.

Basically, imagine seven-year-olds just beginning to play the violin. *That* is cacophony.

An example of cacophony that gets quoted a lot comes from Jonathan Swift's novel “Gulliver's Travels”:

“And being no stranger to the art of war, I have him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines, bombardments, ...”

Here, Swift describes the nature of war by listing lots of words in quick succession. Each word has drastically different, harsh sounds that combine together in a great big mess to create the feelings of confusion and violence and intensity, which represent exactly what war is like: a confusing, violent and intense experience.

Analysis advice

- Cacophony doesn't come up too often, but if it does, it's most easily spotted by reading the words carefully in your mind and noticing the combined result of all the sounds.
- Cacophony often accompanies auditory imagery and other sound devices that we've already talked about, like sibilance, consonance and alliteration.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia isn't just the hardest technique to spell. It's also one of the coolest techniques.

It's the **imitation of real sounds using words**. The main purpose of onomatopoeia is to make the scenario on the page come to life through sound / auditory imagery and thus amplify the emotional effect experienced by the reader.

Examples

- "Moo" -- cow
- "Meow" -- cat
- "Woof" -- dog
- "BANG" -- explosion
- "Clang" -- metal pots smashing together (We see "clang" in the *Eveline* Full Analysis lesson!)

General advice for finding sound devices in a text

Read the text out loud. If the text sounds interesting, then there's probably some sort of technique going on there. In exams, you obviously can't shout out loud, so whisper it quietly. The texts are only 1 or 2 pages long, so you have more than enough time to really enunciate the words on the page.

Structural Techniques

In this section, we look at general structural techniques that you can identify in all types of written texts, as well as ads, websites and infographics.

These include:

- Repetition
- Anaphora
- Listing / enumeration

Repetition

Repetition is really important. It's really, really, really important. Really important.

You can't get a simpler technique than repetition. It's when a writer repeats the same word or phrase over and over.

Analysis advice

- The main purpose of repetition is to **emphasise**.
- Repetition often combines with another technique to amplify its effect. And so repetition gives you a fantastic **opportunity to analyse multiple techniques** together. If a writer uses lots of colourful visual imagery, you could write “The author's repeated use of colourful visual imagery creates…(continue analysis).”
- Repetition is also used to highlight a character's **obsession** with whatever is being repeated. Or **desperation**, too! We'll look at this in more detail when we analyse short stories by Edgar Allan Poe later in the course

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Anaphora

Anaphora is a special instance of repetition. It's when a writer repeats the same word or phrase at the start of successive sentences, lines, or clauses. A clause is a subsection of a sentence (that's a slightly simplified explanation of clauses, but it does the job).

Analysis Advice

- Anaphora is commonly used in speeches and poems. Adjacent lines in the poem start the same way. The purpose of anaphora, like repetition, is to **amplify** a particular tone, atmosphere or idea.
- Anaphora is also a rhetorical technique, which means it's **persuasive**.

For example:

We will not perish, we will not cower, we will not die!

The **anaphoric chanting** of "We will not…" creates a defiant tone that energises the audience and persuades them that they will be victorious.

Listing / enumeration

Listing, also called "enumeration", is when an author writes, well, a list of things. The purpose of listing is, again, to emphasise a particular idea, feeling or mental image, not by repeating the same thing, but by presenting lots of related examples.

We already saw an example of listing from Jonathan Swift's novel "Gulliver's Travels":

"And being no stranger to the art of war, I have him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines, bombardments, …"

Here's another example:

"The New York City apartment was anything but glamorous: soggy towels abandoned across the floor; dirty dishes stacked as high as the Empire State; cockroaches feasting on crusty pasta."

The writer's use of listing and visual imagery together builds a vivid image of the apartment being in a state of utter disarray. The mental scene in the reader's mind would have been much less realistic and engaging if only one example was given. On the other hand, listing lots of visual examples—as the writer has done here—is much more effective because it makes the mental image really stick in the reader's imagination.

Analysis Advice

- **Emphasis.** Listing is almost always used to emphasise an image, idea or effect.
- **Get fancy.** You can use the fancy term "**cumulative emphasis**" when analysing the purpose of listing. For example:

*"The listing of the visual imagery creates **cumulative emphasis** of the untidiness of the apartment."*

- **Pace.** Listing can either increase the pace or decrease the pace of a poem or text, depending on whether asyndeton or polysyndeton is used in the list. We'll talk about these two new

techniques in the section on grammatical techniques, but I mention this here so that you can keep it at the back of your mind.

Structural Techniques: Poems (Lit Only)

We just had a look at structural techniques that apply to texts in general. Now, we'll look at the structural techniques unique to poems.

Stanza length

A stanza is basically a paragraph in a poem.

You should only analyse stanza length if it's special. We will go through the two special cases here and outline how these cases can be analysed.

Short stanza length

A short stanza might consist of 2 lines. However, a relatively long stanza of 10 lines might also be considered short if the poem also contains a long, 100-line stanza (not that that happens very often). The point is that stanza length isn't absolute; you need to consider it relative to other parts of the poem.

Analysis advice

- Short stanzas are most often used to create shock in the reader.
- A common technique is to have a really long stanza and then a suddenly short, jarring stanza that packs a punch. Poets often use enjambment in the previous stanza, or an em dash, to emphasise the shocking effect on the reader.
- If a whole poem consists entirely of short stanzas, then the poem has a regularly repeating structure. Depending on the context, this might represent the robotic/mechanical nature of the subject matter (e.g. criticising the destruction of the environment by highlighting the increasingly robotic nature of the world). Of course, this is just an idea--the purpose behind manipulating stanza length really depends on the poem.

Long stanza length

We often see poems that are made of one gigantic stanza. What's the purpose behind long stanza lengths? That's for you to decipher, but there are some general bits of wisdom that will help you.

Analysis Advice

- Long stanza lengths are often used to create a **'flowing' effect**. Whereas short stanza lengths force you to start and stop when stanzas being and end, a single stanza takes the reader on a continuous journey. Perhaps that the 'flowing' nature of the stanza represents the haziness of the speaker's recalling of a distant childhood memory, or perhaps the single stanza uses minimal punctuation to make the poem feel like the lifelike rant of an angry sergeant yelling at his soldiers.

Line length

Line length refers to the number of words in a line of poetry. You should only analyse this structural aspect if it's a bit weird. Here are some examples:

- All lines in the poem are very short.
- Some lines in the poem are very short.
- Very long line lengths.

Let's take a look at a couple real examples. The first is the famous poem by Robert Frost, called *The Road Not Taken*.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim

Because it was grassy and wanted wear,

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way

I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

As you can see, the line lengths appear quite normal. There are no lines that stick out as being extraordinary, and so no analysis needs to be done for line length in this particular poem.

But what about the poem *Mother to Son*by Langston Hughes?

Read the poem here at Poetry Foundation.

Without even reading the poem, you can already see that the lines consist of **various lengths**--some short, some longer. If you were to analyse the line lengths in this stanza, which instances would you choose to talk about?

- Certainly the **most interesting** line is the one containing just one word: "Bare."
- Can you think of an interpretation for this technique?

Now try to read through the poem.

Pay particular attention to the **pace** at which you read it. You will notice that the pace changes dramatically as the line length varies. Generally speaking, the pace decreases as the number of short lines increases. This is because our reading flow is stopped by more and more enjambments and line breaks.

Analysis Advice

- Only analyse interesting, extraordinary instances where the line length is WEIRD
- Short line length is often used in conjunction with enjambment
- Short lines can slow down the pace by introducing pauses between lines

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Line breaks

Line breaks are the spaces between different stanzas. Line breaks exist in probably 99% of all poems, so they're not that special. Again, you should only analyse line breaks if you can think of a cool or interesting purpose that motivated the writer to use that specific line break in a unique way.

Analysis Advice

- **Transitions.** Poets usually employ line breaks to transition the focus of the poem to something else.
- **Mid-line.** Poets can also use line breaks when the line hasn't even finished. For example, a line might cut-off and continue in the next stanza. Now, *that* would be a line break worthy of analysis. For this example, you could analyse the line break by saying that

"it creates an abrupt pause in the middle of the poem, disturbing its regular rhythm and thus shocking and disorienting the reader"

or

"the sudden line break might be emphasizing the last word of the line"

Enjambment

Enjambment occurs when a line is cut-off in the middle without a pause, continuing in the next line. The continued line could be in the same stanza or in a new stanza. If the continued line is in a new stanza, then that's the exact same example that we saw a few second ago, and so the poet is actually combining enjambment with a line break to make the discontinuity even more noticeable.

Example: "Alone" by Edgar Allan Poe

“From childhood's hour I have not been

As others were; I have not seen

As others saw; I could not bring

My passions from a common spring.”

Analysis Advice

- Enjambment puts emphasis on the last word in the line. In the first 3 lines of “Alone,” Poe uses enjambment to emphasize the verbs at the end: “been”, “seen” and “bring”.
- The main purpose of enjambment is to create a flowing, dynamic feeling for the reader. Heavy use of enjambment can also create a sense of chaos.
- Enjambment also increases the pace of the poem.
- Enjambment is a stylistic choice. You can talk about enjambment when analysing the poet's style.

Endstop

Endstop is the opposite of enjambment. Endstopping is when a pause concludes the line. The punctuation that causes the pause doesn't have to be a full stop; it can be a comma as well, or a colon, or a semicolon, a dash, a question mark, or an exclamation mark.

Example: “All the world's a stage” by Shakespeare

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players;

They have their exits and their entrances,

And one man in his time plays many parts,

...

Analysis Advice

- Poems that have a lot of endstopping feel more ordered, and that impacts the tone.
- Endstopping also slows down the pace of the poem, which also plays a part in the writer's purpose, whatever it may be.

Caesura

This is an example of caesura.

Walking past policeman…eyes down, head down,

I feel his laser eyes… Where are they aiming?'

Caesura is when a pause occurs in the middle of a line in a poem. Endstopping is pausing at the end of a line. Caesura and endstop are both pauses, but they occur in different places in a line. Again, the pause can be created by a full stop, ellipsis, comma, etc.

One really awesome example that combines caesura and endstopping is Emily Dickinson's poem called “How far is it to Heaven?”:

'Hope' is the thing with feathers—

That perches in the soul—

And sings the tune without the words—

And never stops—at all—

And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—

And sore must be the storm—

That could abash the little Bird

That kept so many warm—

I've heard it in the chillest land—

And on the strangest Sea—

Yet, never, in Extremity,

It asked a crumb—of Me.

Comments

- Here, we see something quite interesting. The poet exclusively uses the dash, or formally called the “em dash”, to create pauses not just at the end of almost every line, but also in the middle of the lines.
- The consistent endstops are like the brakes of a car and really slow down the pace of the poem to a sluggish but soothing rhythm. We also have the caesura. What could they be used for? The random caesura in lines 4, 5 and 12 add pauses that disrupt the flow of the speaker's thoughts. To me, these sudden disruptions mimic the way we think, like how thoughts can just suddenly jump into our minds. The caesura makes the tone rather contemplative and musing, as if the speaker is stuck in some deep thought on a Sunday afternoon, I don't know, sitting in the rocking chair on her front porch.

Analysis advice

- **Pace.** In general, the purposes of caesura are to slow down the pace of the poem and to disrupt the natural flow of the poem.
- **Tone.** There are numerous reasons why a poet might use caesura. One possible purpose is to establish a tone. In Emily Dickinson's poem, the caesura creates a contemplative and thoughtful tone. The start-stop nature of caesura can also create a timid, uncertain tone, which is what we saw in our first example.
- **Dramatic pause.** Caesura can also create a dramatic pause… that builds a foreboding atmosphere; we're anxiously waiting for what will happen next. It's like when you're watching a movie and *just* before the outcome we've been dying to know is revealed to us, the screen just suddenly

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Grammatical Techniques

Now, before you yawn at how boring grammar is… Hear me out. Grammar is actually a really important part of literary analysis, and if you want to write kickass analysis, then you have to understand these grammatical techniques.

Sentence length

This is hardly news to you, but in case you haven't noticed: Yes, sentences can be short and long.

Long sentences tend be slow. The pace is slow, tension levels are low, and the tone is relaxed or peaceful or meditative. We can describe fancy, long sentences as “florid” or “lengthy”.

Long sentences

Charles Dickens begins his book *A Tale of Two Cities* with this sentence. It's so long that I've only shown the first part of the whole sentence.

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—[…]”

This is a really beautiful sentence—or half-sentence. Its length creates a slow, gradual pace that just flows from one thing to the next. This makes the tone rather pensive, contemplative, with a touch of sadness.

If we change the first couple clauses to individual sentences, the magic of the sentence immediately disappears.

“It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom. It was the age of foolishness.”

Changing the punctuation from commas to full-stops adds lots of long pauses, and so the sentence loses its organic flow. It doesn't sound as emotional or thoughtful anymore.

Also, you might have noticed the contrast between consecutive pairs of clauses, and if you did: Fantastic! And if you identified this technique as antithesis, or contrast, or juxtaposition, or paradox, then that's even better!

On the other hand, short sentences are snappy, exciting, thrilling. They increase the pace, the tension, the excitement. Short sentences emphasise, shock, and create a unique tone. (fast reading pace) Because short and long sentences produce different effects, writers vary the length of their sentences to achieve particular purposes.

Short sentences

We see short sentences in Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*. Mr Ramsay, a main character in the novel, is a philosopher who yearns, or desires, to be a superior intellectual. He's actually quite obsessed with this quest, as shown in this small extract:

“Here at least was Q. He dug his heels in at Q. Q he was sure of. Q he could demonstrate. If Q then is Q—R—. Here he knocked his pipe out, with two or three resonant taps on the handle of the urn, and proceeded. “Then R… ” He braced himself. He clenched himself.

The whole alphabet thing about Q and R is just Mr Ramsay's metaphor for the degree of intellectual superiority, with Z being the height of human intellect. The short sentence structure creates an intense and obsessed tone.

There's also something interesting in the change in sentence length. The first part

"Here at least was Q. He dug his heels in at Q. Q he was sure of. Q he could demonstrate. If Q then is Q—R—"

is his first unsuccessful attempt at getting from Q to R, so he's a bit exhausted.

The middle sentence is notably longer and less restricted.

"Here he knocked his pipe out, with two or three resonant taps on the handle of the urn, and proceeded."

This makes the tone less intense, which reflects the fact that he's taking a mental break by doing some physical task.

After the relaxing break, Mr Ramsay restarts the engine of his brain, and the intensity returns in the short sentence structure.

"Then R… " He braced himself. He clenched himself.

Syntax

Syntax is defined as the *arrangement* of words in a sentence. That's a very specific definition that has to do with the order of the subject, object, and verb in a sentence.

In IB English, we can use a more relaxed definition for syntax. To us, the syntax of a sentence simply refers to sentence structure, which naturally includes things like sentence length.

Correct syntax is boring to talk about, because there's no artistic purpose behind writing normally.

Weird or extraordinary sentence structure, however, is what we want to analyse. For example:

- **Disjointed syntax.** "She jumped and—" This has a fragmented sentence structure. This creates an intense tone. A tone of heightened emotion. The narrator has experienced something so extraordinary that she cannot express complete sentences. *That* is worth analysing.
- **Parallel structure.** Parallel structure, or parallel syntax, is the repetition of the same sentence structure. Anaphora is an example of parallel syntax.
- **Long sentences.** The effect and meaning really depends on the context, so there's no point giving a specific example here.

The -deton brothers

You ready for the weirdest technqiues?

OK. Polysyndeton and asyndeton.

These two techniques relate to the use (and non-use) of conjunctions in sentences. Conjunctions are the words that connect different parts, or clauses, of a sentence. These include "and", "but" and "if".

And before you start to complain about where you *really* need to know the -deton brothers, they actually show up A LOT in all sorts of texts.

Polysyndeton

When there are **extra conjunctions** added to a sentence.

Easy to memorise because the prefix “poly-” means “multiple”.

Example

“We usually watch footy on Friday nights. But tonight, Mother made us wash the kitchen sink and dry the towels and scrub our stupid floors and wash the towels again (!) ‘cause they still had ‘all this disgusting muck on them'.”

Polysyndeton slows down the pace, conveying to the reader the dull and tedious nature of the chores. Of course, this lesson on grammar isn't tedious at all, right? It you spotted the verbal irony that I just used, then great job!

Asyndeton

Asyndeton is the opposite of polysyndeton. When we say someone is ‘amoral', we mean that they are ‘without morals', they have no morals. The a- prefix means ‘without'. Asyndeton is the same. Asyndeton refers to a writer's omission of conjunctions in a sentence where they would normally be used.

*e.g. “But now I am **cabined**, **cribbed**, **confined**, **bound** in to saucy doubts and fears”*

- The character Macbeth says this line in the play when he discovers his assassins were unsuccessful in killing all his enemies.
- The lack of the conjunction “and” between “cabined, cribbed, confined, bound” increases the pace of his dialogue. Shakespeare's use of asyndeton shows that Macbeth is in an anxious and nervous state of mind, because he is paranoid that his enemies will take his throne.
- Other great techniques accompanying asyndeton include the alliteration of ‘c' and the listing of diction connoting claustrophobia because Macbeth feels trapped in “doubts and fears.”

e.g. “I came, I saw, I conquered.” – Julius Caesar

- Can you imagine how lame Caesar's quote have sounded if he hadn't used asyndeton? It'd sound pretty lame. “I came, and I saw, and I conquered.”
- The lack of “and” makes the sentence more direct, compact, swift and ringing of victory and confidence. The asyndeton makes sound like it was easy to conquer the city

Analysis advice

- Polysyndeton and asyndeton are used to either speed up or slow down the pace of a sentence.
- They can contribute to different tones, and reveal the state of mind of a character or narrator.
- Polysyndeton and asyndeton are commonly used with listing, so you can analyse both techniques together.

Punctuation

Punctuation is…

Woah, woah, woah. Don't sleep yet. Almost done. I know grammar isn't exciting… but stay with me.

, … -- ! ?

Commas

Using frequent commas in a text creates intermittent pauses, changes the pace and contributes to many purposes, such as:

- Creating tension
- Creating fragmented sentence structure
- Creating an uncertain tone

This is definitely not an exhaustive list. There are endless possibilities for using commas.

Ellipses

Ellipses are these guys "…". A single one of these triplets is called an "ellipsis". Lots of these triplets are called "ellipses"--the plural form of the word.

Ellipses are used to indicate:

- a pause in dialogue or thought,
- a trailing thought, or
- an omission of information

James Joyce, one of the most famous modernist authors of the 20th century (and we analyse his short story Eveline in one of our Full Analysis lessons), uses extensive amounts of ellipses in his short story *The Sisters*. The character Old Cotter expresses his suspicion towards a particular priest during dinner one night in Dublin:

"—No, I wouldn't say he was exactly…but there was something queer…there was something uncanny about him. I'll tell you my opinion…"

"I think it was one of those… peculiar cases… but it was hard to say…."

- **Hesitant tone.** The ellipses create unnatural, drawn-out pauses that convey, firstly, that Old Cotter is definitely a bit hesitant to share what he suspects of the priest's character, because you can't just go around saying bad things about people in your neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the reader gets a vague sense that there is something sinister about this priest. We are forced to ask: What exactly makes him "uncanny" and "queer"?
- **Mystery and tension.** The ellipses also signify what isn't being said, and that is what creates the thick veil of mystery around this nebulous character. Old Cotter begins, "I wouldn't say he was exactly…", but his thought trails off, leaving the reading in complete darkness. What was the priest exactly not? The ellipses also create tension because we know a little about the priest's dubious reputation, but at the same time we don't yet know enough to make a firm judgment.

Analysis advice

Ellipses can have many purposes. They can:

- Create a sense of mystery by leaving out important information or dialogue

- Indicate a trailing thought or that a difficult decision is being made
- Create an uncertain tone in the character's or narrator's voice

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Em dash

"He arrived at Los Angeles airport—the largest airport in California and, probably, the world—at 10:30pm sharp."

We see these dash-like punctuation marks all the time, but what exactly are they? Well, it formal name is…wait for it… an "em dash." So you're about 60% correct if you just said "dash". Anyway, the em dash is the most flexible punctuation of all time. It can take the place of a comma, a colon, and parentheses.

Em dashes add extra information to a sentence, just like parentheses. They also add a pause, just like commas and colons.

Case Study: Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe loved to use dashes in his horrific short stories. And I don't mean that his stories were horrifically bad; I mean that he wrote scary horror stories.

The narrators in his stories, like *Black Cat* and *The Tell-tale Heart*, are often insane murderers. One literary technique that Poe uses to convey the craziness of his murderous narrators is the frequent use of em dash in the narration.

"True! –nervous – very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad?"

from "The Tell-tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe

The frequent em dashes achieve a couple things:

- Disrupt the natural flow of the narrator's thoughts.
- Highlights the spontaneity and uncontrollability of their thoughts and, by extension, their mental instability.
- The suddenness and excitement conveyed by em dashes also construct the overzealous (overly enthusiastic) tone towards the grim act of murder. Of course, this inappropriate enthusiasm further characterises the narrators as insane people.

Analysis advice

In general, em dashes can be used in several ways:

- To construct a conversational, organic or emotional tone by allowing characters to express dynamic dialogue and thoughts as they happen.
- To indicate an interruption. For example, when another character cuts off another character to—

Exclamations

An exclamation accentuates the emotion and conviction expressed in a sentence. Exclamations are extremely flexible and, depending on the context, can create a whole range of emotional tones:

- Authoritative, domineering, or commanding tone
- Fearful tone
- Passionate or excited tone
- Hateful or rude tone
- Ecstatic or happy tone

Sticking with *The Tell-tale Heart*:

"Almighty God! –no, no! They heard! –they suspected! –they knew! –they were making a mockery of my horror!"

- The string of exclamations shows the extreme paranoia of the narrator. He is convinced that the police in the room can hear the beating heart of the dead old man whom he had just murdered. Of course, the beating sound originates from his own heart due to his fear and panic.
- Notice how the exclamation combines with the dashes to create the intensely fearful tone.

Questions

Questions are most often used in dialogue, the narration of a first-person narrator, or in a speech. There are two types of questions that can be asked:

- Questions that actually desire an answer, and
- Rhetorical questions that don't require an answer.

"Rhetorical" means persuasive. Rhetorical questions are often used to persuade readers or audiences about certain ideas, by making them think about the answer to the question in their head.

In Virginia, United States in the year 1775, the US politician and Founding Father Patrick Henry persuades other delegates at the Second Virginia Convention to support his proposal to resist British military forces by mobilising an American militia. What he proceeds to do is roast the hell out of the delegates for being delusional, trusting in a false hope that America will somehow resist British rule without real military resistance.

*"But when shall we be stronger**?** Will it be the next week, or the next year**?** Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house**?** Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction**?** Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance, by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot**?"***

The chain of rhetorical questions forces Henry's audience to think about the consequences of their inaction and the foolishness of their inaction. Rhetorical questions are much more effective than such screaming points at an audience. Rhetorical questions make the audience agree with your points by themselves after a bit of thought.

In general, rhetorical questions invite scepticism, make the reader reflect on something (usually the status quo, which means the current situation), and persuade the reader.

When actual answers are desired, the tone of the speaker can also be **interrogative**:

"Who are you? What is your name?"

Questions can also convey **uncertainty**:

"Where am I?"

Lastly, questions can also convey confusion and perhaps even **obsession**:

"But after Q? What comes next?"

"R is then—what is R?"

"How many men in a thousand million, he asked himself, reach Z after all?"

- The questions not only reveal Mr Ramsay's active, intellectual mind but also his deep obsession with becoming the best and leaving a legacy as a philosopher.
- Here you can also spot the repetition of questions, so if you identified repetition is a technique, then that is spot on!

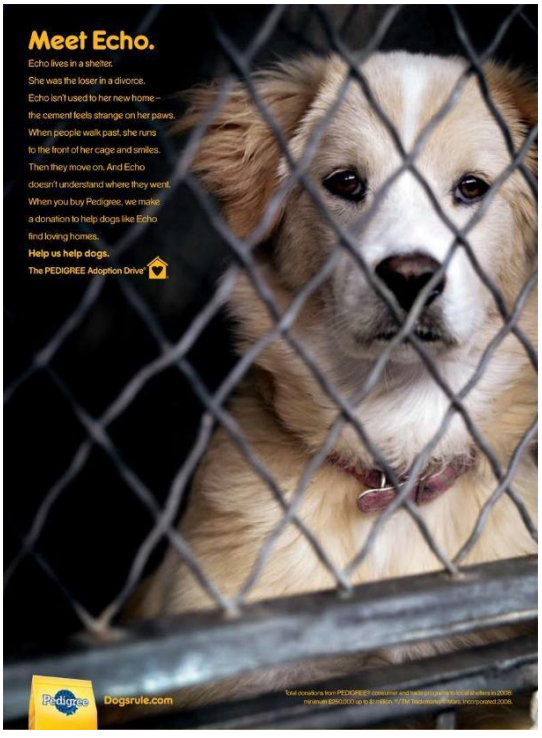
Gaze (Lang Lit Only)

Types of gaze

All you need to remember are the the two main types of gaze:

- **Demand gaze**: refers to when the person is looking *directly* at the viewer.
- **Offer gaze**: refers to when the person is *NOT* looking at the viewer.

In the two examples below, the advertisements are trying to persuade the viewer to buy their product. Let's use these texts to understand why the author / photographer might choose one gaze over the other.



Pedigree ad

Carnation ad

Analysis Examples

Let's start with the Pedigree ad of the poor dog stuck in a dog shelter. It uses a demand gaze to build a strong emotional connection with the viewer.

In first poster, Pedigree indicates that by buying their dog food product, the viewer is able to donate to the noble cause of helping unfortunate dogs like Echo. Since Echo is ***making direct eye contact*** *with the viewer, the viewer is therefore influenced to focus on her melancholic expression (yes, dogs can have facial expressions, too!) through the bleak cage in the foreground. As a result, the viewer pities Echo and develops a sense of responsibility to help her. Thus, Pedigree uses a* ***demand gaze*** *to build sympathy and persuade the viewer to support Pedigree's cause of rescuing abandoned dogs.*

Now, unlike the Pedigree ad, the Carnation is a little different. Notice how it doesn't use a demand gaze, but instead uses offer gazes between mother and child. Let's see why this might be the case:

In the Carnation ad, the company recommends that evaporated milk is beneficial to children. The mother--depicted in the ad--holds an offer gaze towards her child and vice versa (note: "vice versa" means that the baby is also holding an offer gaze towards the mother). Through the mutual gaze between mother and child, the ad builds a nurturing and intimate atmosphere, that entices the target audience of new mothers to provide loving care for her baby by purchasing Carnation milk.

Would a demand gaze work in the case of the Carnation ad? Probably not so well... Imagine a random (though cute) baby staring directly at the viewer. While cute, the baby is not the viewer's own baby, and so the image would not be able to elicit as super-powerful emotion. Instead, the offer gaze between a baby and her mother is able to **remind** the viewer of *her own deep, powerful connection* with her own child.

So, even though both ads take an emotional route to persuade the viewer to purchase a product, the ads use entirely different types of gaze to produce emotion.

Analysis Advice

- Sometimes a visual text may show multiple people or characters who all have different gazes. In such cases, it is helpful to consider how their **facial expressions** are coupled with their gaze. Ask yourself:
    - *How do their gazes influence my attention on other elements in the text* (e.g., surrounding text)?
    - *How do these gazes influence which subject I look at first?* (psst, this is called **salience** and we'll learn more about this later)
- When a person has a demand gaze, they are **demanding attention** from you, and when there is an offer gaze, they are **offering you something else to look at**. These are useful clues into the writer's / photographer's purpose.
- Demand gazes are often used to create a **powerful emotional connection** with the viewer. (i.e. 'staring into your soul' type of thing...)

Level 4 Techniques

Salience and Balance (Lang Lit Only)

Salience

What do we see first in an image?

This is the question we answer when we identify the "salient" element in an image, diagram or cartoon.

In other words, the **most obvious** visual element is called the "salient image", "salient object", or "salient figure".

There are many visual features that make something appear more 'salient'. You can think of salience as a *meta-technique*, just like tone and atmosphere, which we discussed in an earlier lesson. Salience is a quality that comes from a bunch of other, 'smaller' visual techniques. These include:

- balance
- colours and contrast
- composition
- gaze
- facial expression

Salience is a great technique to analyse because you can analyse how *other* visual techniques in turn make a visual element more salient. More techniques, deeper analysis!

Analysis Advice

- Advertisements tend to make their **product** the salient image so that the viewer clearly knows that they can purchase this product.
- Identifying the salient object is a great clue for the **purpose** of a visual text, since the most obvious element is likely to be the most important element. Thinking logically, there is a *reason* why the photographer or artist or author chose to make *this* object the centre of attention--so dig into this idea to quickly find a strong interpretation of the text.

We'll take a look at salience in the big example at the end of this lesson.

Balance

A visual element that commonly goes unnoticed is **balance**, so if you can identify and analyse this in your texts, you'll be ahead of the competition!

First, balance refers to the arrangement of *graphic weight*. Graphic weight just means 'how well something attracts attention'.

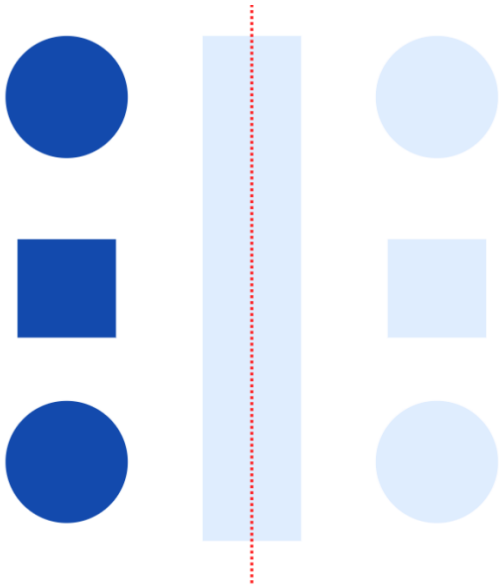
So, objects which are more noticeable are said to have more graphic weight, and are therefore described as being “heavier” elements.

To understand how authors may achieve balance, imagine that there is a straight line going down the centre of an image. An author may choose to employ some of these key concepts:

- **Symmetrical**: refers to when the objects on both sides are equal (in terms of colour, size, shape, etc.)
- **Asymmetry**: refers to when the objects on both sides are unequal (i.e., an image doesn't need to be symmetrical to be balanced).
- **Proportion**: refers to the comparison between two objects based on size.

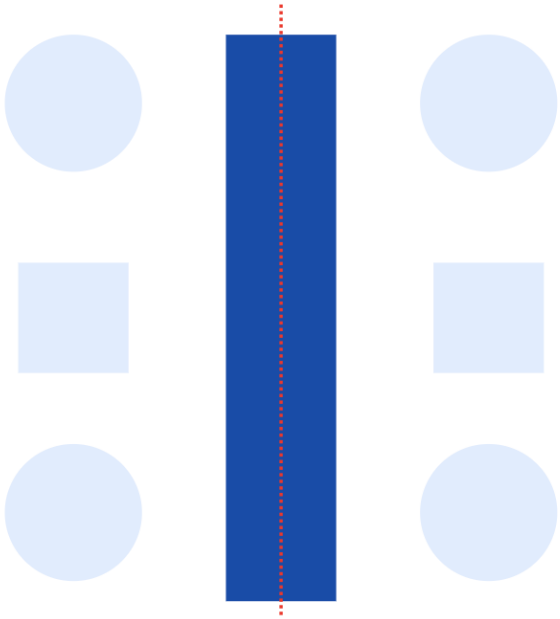
We can also manipulate balance with colour and contrast.

Here are 3 examples putting these abstract concepts into action:



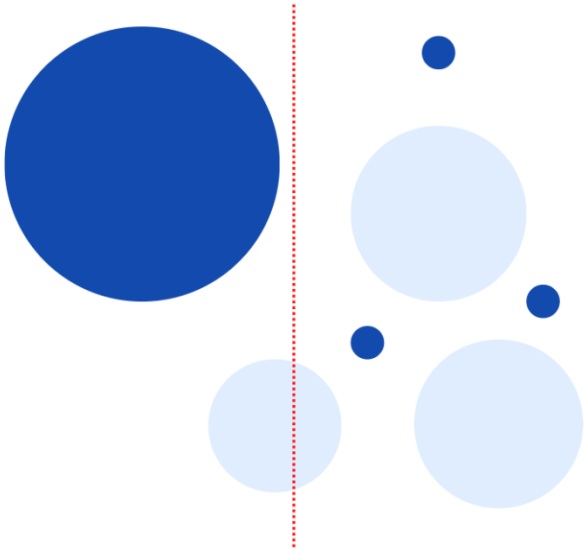
Graphic weight and Colour

Notice how even though the objects are symmetrical, the image appears to be 'heavier' on the left due to the darker blue colour.



Symmetrical Balance

The balance is created by the perfectly even distribution of graphic weight on both sides.



Asymmetrical Balance & Proportion

Although the objects are differently sized, the graphic weights on both sides are balanced. The dark blue circle is proportionally larger than the other circles but is balanced out by the greater quantity of the smaller circles.

Here are some analysis tips when looking at balance:

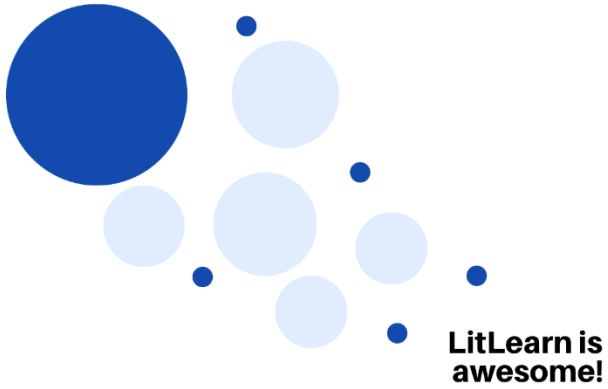
Analysis Advice

- **Why does balance matter?** In general, balance signifies **cohesion** and **completeness**. It gives readers a sense of **stability** when viewing a balanced text. If elements and objects were simply positioned haphazardly with no balance, the text can look unfinished and dissatisfying from an aesthetic perspective (which explains why many ads and magazine edits look balanced). So, when you come across a text with notable visual balance, comment on the aesthetic appeal it gives to viewers.
- **Symmetrical balance** is commonly used to manipulate **salience**. If both sides of an image are completely even, we can place a distinct object in the centre to make it stand out as the salient object.
- Alternatively, symmetrical balance can also *remove* salience *if there is no centred object*. This would mean the photographer / artist wants the viewer to look at the image as a whole, rather than focusing on individual parts of the image.

No salient object - no centred object.

There is a salient object!

- **Asymmetrical balance** is great for creating a *dynamic* text by encouraging the reader to view the text from a certain perspective. In doing so, balancing asymmetrical objects can create a sense of **movement / energy / dynamism** in a text.



The asymmetrical balance of the different circles guides viewers to move down the image diagonally towards the text in the lower-right corner.

Analysis Example: Combined

This is a poster that advocates for the homeless. Using our understanding of the visual features we have learnt so far, let's see how we can use them to analyse salience.

*"In this image, the photographer persuades the viewer to donate to The Homeless Alliance by depicting an old homeless woman struggling to make a living. First, the **black and white colours** emphasise the bleak state of being homeless. The dark shadows in the background create negative space that is **symmetrically balanced**, thus placing a visual emphasis on the woman in the centre and establishes her as the salient figure. The viewer's attention is mainly directed at her face, owing to the intense **demand gaze** that pierces into the viewer's soul (ok, that's a bit dramatic here...). The demand gaze confronts viewers with the homeless person's solemn facial expression, which makes the viewer sympathise with the homeless woman's predicament."*

Basically, to sum up this analysis into one sentence: balance, contrast and demand gaze together make the homeless woman the salient image, which draws the viewer's attention to her solemn expression. It's this sad look that portrays the horrible experience of being homeless.

Irony

Irony is a more advanced technique. The techniques we've seen so far in the course are…pretty simple. I mean, if a word is repeating, then it's repetition—even your three-year-old brother could find repetition in a text.

Irony is harder to identify because we actually have to understand the meaning of the text.

There are three types of irony.

Verbal irony

That's a fancy word for sarcasm. Saying something that you don't truly mean. For example, it's sarcastic to say "The pizza was soooo amazing!" when the pizza actually tasted like crap. The most common purpose of verbal irony is to **ridicule**. The corresponding effect is usually **humour**.

Situational irony

That's the type of irony we refer to in everyday life when we say: "Ha, that's ironic."

It's when our expectation is totally different from reality.

Like when we expect quality food from a high-end restaurant, but we get something totally unexpected--like burnt toast. That's situational irony.

Or, we run out of milk in the fridge, and we run to the shops to get more milk, but surprisingly, the shop has also run out of milk. That's situational irony because our expectation of a shop full of milk clashed violently with the sad reality of an empty dairy section.

Those were examples from real life. In literature, writers often use situational irony to **criticize** or **ridicule** some aspect of society. They do this by presenting a disturbing reality that shakes up how we normally perceive the world.

In a 2014 IB Paper 1, there's a poem that starts off describing what seems to be fun family outing; all the kids jump into the family car and off they go. The outing turns out to be the opposite of fun and light-hearted: Instead, the family specifically finds burning houses, especially those in rich neighbourhoods, and they watch in glee. The situation irony comes from the contrast between our ordinary expectation of a family trip and the shocking reality. By using situational irony, the poet is able to convey the bitterness of those at the lowest levels of the socio-economic ladder, and thus criticise things like social inequality.

Now, situational irony doesn't have to be serious. It can also be really funny, especially when the themes are light-hearted. So instead of getting really depressed or shocked when our expectations clash with a ridiculous reality, we can instead, well, laugh at it!

Take Oscar Wilde, a playwright. He was a big fan of situational irony, and he used it a lot to create witty humour. Let's have a look at some classic lines from Oscar Wilde's masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which is pretty much a comedic play about two British aristocratic lads bantering their heads off.

"The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact."

- Reader's expectation: Marriage is extremely significant and certainly an unforgettable fact.
- Writer's proposed reality: Marriage is insignificant and forgettable.

- Effect: Humour
- Purpose: To mock the respected institution of marriage

"It is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time."

- Reader's expectation: We care most about the people whom we have been acquainted for a long time.
- Writer's proposed reality: We care most about the people whom we just met.
- Effect: Humour
- Purpose: To mock the superficiality of the British aristocracy

"I am not in favor of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice."

- Reader's expectation: Morality and goodness are desirable traits in people.
- Writer's proposed reality: Immorality and badness are desirable traits in people.
- Effect: LMAO
- Purpose: To mock the immorality of the British aristocracy.

If you haven't read *The Important of Being Earnest*, you are missing out. I read it in one sitting—it's hilarious.

Dramatic irony

You probably haven't heard of this type of irony before, but once you learn it, you'll recognise it everywhere: in movies, in books, on TV. It's everywhere, because it's so effective in creating tension—a mildly uncomfortable but thrilling feeling.

Dramatic irony occurs when the audience knows a piece of information that one or more characters don't know.

In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, we the audience know that Macbeth killed the king, but the other characters in the play do not know this fact. The dramatic irony creates a tense and foreboding mood, because we expect that other people will probably find out about the truth soon enough, because obviously Macbeth didn't get a chance to see Season 1 of "How to Get Away with Murder" before he stabbed old King Duncan to death.

That was a serious example. Dramatic irony can also be really funny and bizarre, like in the hit movie *The Truman Show*. The protagonist, played by Jim Carrey, has been the star of a twisted reality TV show since the moment he was born, and everything and everyone around him is just an actor in this artificial world. The dramatic irony is that we the audience know all of this crazy stuff, but he himself does not know that he is actually living inside a fabricated world.

Dramatic irony is also used in characterisation, most commonly the portrayal of a character's ignorance. For example, in the play *Pygmalion*, which inspired the musical and movie *My Fair Lady*, all the British upper class characters don't realise that the protagonist is from the lower class. This characterises the rich folks as quite dumb. The dramatic irony also makes the social criticism that there really aren't fundamental distinctions between classes.

Analysis advice

- **Verbal irony**. Verbal irony is used to create a sarcastic tone, which can then be used to characterise a speaker, narrator or character.
- **Situational irony.** Situational irony can be used in a serious or a humorous way.
- **Dramatic irony.** Dramatic irony is used when multiple characters are present in a piece of writing. It usually creates tension or characterizes the ignorance of some character.

Hyperbole

Lucky you! This is a short lesson.

Pronunciation is key here.

Hyperbole.

Hy-per-bol…ee.

Hyperbole. Not hyperbowl.

Hyperbole.

Hyperbole is a crazy, exaggerated statement that is not intended to be taken seriously. Hyperbole, also referred to as "overstatement", is often used to create a humorous tone, or to paint a vivid mental image of a setting, character or object by exaggerating a particular feature.

Example

No hyperbole:

"The chef cooked a large plate of spaghetti."

Not very engaging or entertaining, right?

Let's hyperbolise it:

"The chef piled more and more spaghetti onto the plate until it reached high into the heavens."

We obviously don't take it seriously that the spaghetti reached into the skies. But what the hyperbole does is it creates a strong mental image of a really, really, really big plate of spaghetti.

Paradox, Juxtaposition & Friends

As you can probably tell, words are pretty interesting on their own.

But what if... what if... we combined them... and... and... we... compared them??

Well, things just got a lot more interestin'...

In this lesson, we'll look at:

- Paradox
- Juxtaposition
- Oxymoron

- Antithesis

Paradox

A paradox is a statement that, at first, appears to be contradictory and illogical, but a bit more thought quickly reveals some hidden truth beneath the surface layer of contradiction.

An example from real life

A famous paradox you might have heard before is:

“Keep your friends close but your enemies closer.”

At first, on the surface, the statement seems totally illogical to keep our “enemies” closer than our “friends”. Like, why would we? We love our friends and we hate our enemies. Why would we possibly want our enemies even remotely close to us?

But if we think about it...

... in order to not be poisoned or stabbed—brutally—by our enemies—with 10-inch knives, we need to know who our enemies are, where they are, and what evil plans they have in store for us.

With friends, we don't need to worry, but with our enemies, we need to know their every move. Thus the paradox of the inversely proportional relationship (IB Maths pun here) between physical proximity and friendship.

Example from "Macbeth"

“Fair is foul, and foul is fair” is the famous line in Act 1 Scene 1 of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. This paradox introduces the idea of deceptive appearances: What might seem good at first is indeed bad, and what might seem bad or foul may in fact turn out to be good or fair. By using paradox, Shakespeare builds a mysterious and foreboding mood at the start of the play.

Example from "An Essay on Man"

Another famous literary example comes from extract Alexander Pope's renowned poem, *An Essay on Man*, which was first published in 1710—yeah, a really long time ago. The poem was written during the Age of Enlightenment, which was a particularly exciting time when science and reasoning began to grow. And so, Pope's poem tries to understand and dissect what it fundamentally means to be ‘human'.

*“**Born but to die**, and **reasoning but to err**;*

***Alike in ignorance, his reason** such,*

Whether he thinks too little, or too much:

Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;

Still by himself abused, or disabused;

Created half to rise, and half to fall;

Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;

Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled:

*The **glory, jest, and riddle** of the world!”*

Here, Pope uses an extensive amount of paradoxes to capture the confusing and contradictory aspects of the human condition, like being born in order to die in the end anyway; the inherent flaws of our ability to reason; and the conflicting mightiness and insignificance of man.

Analysis Advice

- Paradox is normally used to point out a seemingly contradictory but hidden truth.
- When you analyse paradox, it's best to discuss the complex meaning being created by the paradox. The effect isn't as straightforward and entirely depends on the context. If I were to analyse Pope's purpose for using paradox, I would begin by writing: “Pope utilises copious paradoxes relating to the fallibility of reason, birth and death, and superiority and inferiority in order to capture the complex dualities that define the human condition.”

Juxtaposition

Juxtaposition is a very general technique. It refers to the contrast between any two things: It could be two ideas, tones, characters, symbols, colours—whatever. If it can be expressed in words, then it can be “juxtaposed”. We could also just say “contrasted”, but we won't—at least not all the time—because “juxtaposition” sounds so much smarter. In general, the purpose of juxtaposition is to emphasise differences.

Like irony, juxtaposition is also advanced technique because, to find it in a text, you have to really understand the text as a whole and be able to see the “Big Picture.”

Subtle example: John Banville

Juxtaposition can be extremely **subtle**, which is bad because it's hard to find, but it's also good because it usually gives you **deep analysis**.

The subtlest example I've ever seen in a past IB prose extract was a story about a family who goes to their holiday home every summer vacation. The family isn't particularly close in terms of their relationships. The narrator's mother and father argue a lot. So, to emphasise just how fractured the family is, the writer juxtaposes the narrator's affectionate tone towards *inanimate objects in her holiday home* with her *bitter tone towards her parents*. Why is this contrast worth mentioning? The fact that the narrator shares a closer relationship with a fireplace than her parents emphasises just how broken her relationship is with her parents. We could go further and say that the juxtaposition creates situational irony, because it's against the reader's stereotypical expectation of loving parents and close family relationships.

To be able to find subtle links between contrasting things in a text, you have to go through a couple important steps:

- First you need to understand the writer's message.
- Then you need to zoom out and look at the text as a whole. You cannot just look at a single paragraph or sentence. You need to consider separate paragraphs together. Now, ask yourself: Is the writer relating things between separate parts of the text?
- Try to identify things that are being contrasted.
- Once you find contrasting things, ask: How are they different? Does the juxtaposition help to achieve the writer's purpose?

Analysis Advice

- The general purpose of juxtaposition is to emphasise differences.
- Juxtaposition can be easy to spot if the juxtaposing elements are right next to each other: for example, in the same sentence or the same paragraph.
- It goes without saying that you should only finalise your quotes after you've completely understood the text. Otherwise, not only will you misinterpret the text and get a low mark on Knowledge and Understanding, but you'll also miss out on advanced techniques like juxtaposition, which is absolute gold in the world of literary analysis.

Oxymoron

I used to always get confused between oxymoron and paradox, but it's actually not that complicated.

We refer to the technique of "oxymoron" when contradictory words are used right next to each other. In contrast, paradox is not about contradictory words; paradox is about contradictory ideas.

- Oxymoron: words
- Paradox: ideas

A lovely example

What if we have a guy who's in love with a woman but is trying to restrain his feelings? Maybe Romeo and Juliet? Or a rich British aristocrat who has fallen madly in love with a lower class girl in the Victorian era?

How can a writer convey this internal conflict between emotion and logic, impulse and social convention? We can use oxymoron.

"I think, feel with my heart, head. The brush of her icy warmth against my skin sets off a small avalanche in my beating, stony heart."

The contradicting words in "icy warmth", "small avalanche", and "beating, stony" convey the internal war that rages between affection and resistance.

We see lots of oxymoron in the Full Analysis lesson on the poem "Departure", and it's also used to portray conflicted emotions.

Antithesis

Antithesis is the juxtaposition of ideas. So really, antithesis isn't a new technique; it's only a more specific, and sophisticated, way of describing a special case of juxtaposition…which is also just a smarter word for contrast. As you can see, English is all about appearing smart.

"She was not a servant but a leader. She was not a follower but a visionary. She was not a timid whisper but a loud voice in the fight for justice."

Let's analyse the above quote to illustrate how antithesis can be analysed. First, you will notice the following **binary oppositions** (another word for "antithesis"):

1. "servant" vs "leader"
2. "follower" vs "visionary"
3. "timid whisper" vs "loud voice"

Here the author deliberately uses antithetical language. There are several key things to notice about these antitheses:

- Antithetical ideas: The language in all three sentences relate to the opposing notions of **subordination and leadership**.
- Repetition of antithesis: Three sets of binary oppositions.
- Syntax* 1: The author also uses **repetitive syntax** in the three sentences (That's right, repetition is another technique to add to the mix!). Subordination ("servant", "follower", "timid whisper") always comes before the contrasting concept of leadership ("leader", "visionary", "loud voice").
- Syntax 2: The sentence structure follows the format of **"not...but"** such that the inferiority connoted by "servant", "follower" and "timid whisper" are always negated before highlighting the woman's/girl's possession of the much more desirable qualities of leadership, vision and strength.

* Recall that "syntax" means the ordering of words in a sentence.

Good, we've deconstructed the quote. The task now is to combine the deconstructed components into a single coherent explanation of how antithesis achieves the writer's purpose.

Oh right. We haven't talked about the purpose yet. Well, the purpose should be simple to identify: The author characterises Clair (we'll call her Clair) as an assertive leader.

While we're at it, let's jot down the effects on the audience:

- Inspiration, admiration and hope: Created by the contrast of the inferior with the superior
- The repetitive syntax creates a powerful rhythm that builds the persuasiveness--aka rhetorical appeal--of the sentences.

So how do the components of antithesis and repetitive syntax (1 and 2) relate to each other?

1. First, the **antithesis** is constructed by the contrasting connotations of the language noted above; this antithesis elevates the audience's perception of Clair as a superior leader, primarily through the juxtaposition of Clair's desirable characteristics ("leader", "vision", "loud") with the deeply undesirable. For those in need of a metaphor: A $100,000 Tesla looks great on its own, but it looks SO MUCH better if we strategically place it next to a car that has just been chomped up at the junkyard.
2. Then, the **"not...but" syntax** comes in to highlight the contrast, bolstering the persuasiveness of the statements, and hence making Clair seem *even more awesome.*
3. The **triple repetition** of these antitheses also creates cumulative emphasis of Clair's leadership capabilities.

The sentences could also have been **reversed**. For example: "She was a leader, not a servant" instead of the original "She was not a servant but a leader". The effect is totally different as a result, so syntax is *very important* in unleashing the uplifting admiration and inspiration we feel. Particularly, the **syntactical placement** of the positive, superior language at the end of the sentence places emphasis on superiority, which makes the sentences more inspiring than if the sentences were reversed.

Let's join all of this into a single bit of analysis! (We don't actually have to talk about everything; it would get quite messy if we did, so I'll leave some bits out as necessary.)

*The author uses the **antithetical diction** in "servant" and "leader", "follower" and "visionary", and "timid" and "whisper" to foreground **Clair's superior leadership qualities** against the backdrop of inferiority, which is constructed by subservience connoted by "servant", "follower" and "timid". These **binary oppositions** create a surging sense of **admiration** for Clair's character, but this inspiring effect is also compounded by the **repetitive syntax** of "not...but". Here, the consistent pattern of negating inferiority and subsequently highlighting superiority serves to **persuasively** emphasise the **brilliance of Clair's character** . **Syntactical manipulation** seems to be a stylistic choice of the author, as he also chooses to exclusively place the positive, superior diction at the end of each sentence such that the readers are left with **hope** for a bright future under the **able leadership of Clair** .*

Can you figure out what each the bolded, green and blue bits refer to? Notice how these essential elements of analysis are distributed throughout the paragraph to create balanced analysis.

Other possible avenues of analysis:

1. Auditory imagery of "timid whisper" and "loud voice"
2. Anaphora and repetition to build persuasiveness

Analysis advice

- Antithesis places two extremes next to each other to create a sense of contrast.
- Antithesis can create hopelessness or hope. For example, if negative concepts are placed at the end of a sentence and the opposing positive concepts are placed at the beginning of the sentence, then the reader is left feeling negative.
- Antithesis is often used in a rhetorical manner; that is, in a persuasive manner—for example, in speeches and essays.

Characterization & Dialogue

Characterisation

Characterisation is the creation of a character from scratch. Characterisation is a **meta-technique** like tone and atmosphere: characters are built, like lego people, from a combination of all the techniques we've seen so far.

In general, characterisation is the **sum** of the character's actions, dialogue and thoughts.

Analysis Advice

Characterisation can play two roles in analysis.

First, it can be the main technique used to construct an idea.

Example topic sentence:

“The author characterises the mother's of the protagonist

Second, it can be the idea or purpose itself, because it's such a big and encompassing meta-technique that it can be full focus of a poem or short story. It's perfectly reasonable to argue that a writer's purpose is to characterise a protagonist.

Life hack: Fall back to characterisation as a purpose or idea when the text doesn't have an obvious deeper meaning.

Example topic sentence:

"The author uses a combination of syntactical and tonal manipulations to characterise the protagonist's utter paranoia."

In these cases… Wait. Protip.

In cases where the sole focus is the story itself and a deeper message is missing, we can do a trick. **We can make the effect the new writer's purpose.** By making the effect the ultimate purpose of the writer (which it may be), the point will still feel deep enough because it is powered by intention.

*"The author uses a combination of syntactical and tonal manipulations to characterise the protagonist's utter paranoia, thus elevating the **foreboding atmosphere** of the story."*

Dialogue

Dialogue is what one character directly says to another character. Dialogue is normally placed between quotation marks, although you do sometimes get weird symbols representing dialogue, like James Joyce's em dash in the novel *Dubliners*.

The purpose of dialogue is almost always to:

- **Construct relationships between characters.** If the dialogue is aggressive, then it shows the obvious conflict between the characters. A common one that comes up is unequal relationships between superior and inferior characters, and this so-called power dynamic can be demonstrated in the unequal distribution of dialogue (one characters speaks a lot but the other character is mostly silent), the different tones of the two speakers, high/low modality and imperative language. We should know all of these techniques by now, so if you remember some or all of them: Great work!
- **Characterise the speaker himself/herself.** What we talk about and the way we talk reveal things about our personality. The same applies to fictional characters in literature. Characters always adopt some sort of attitude (i.e. tone) when they talk to other characters. Whenever you analyse dialogue, you should **always** analyse the character's tone. You will score high marks if you apply this consistently.

Internal monologue

Internal monologue is our inner voice. It's what we're thinking at any given time. It's the constant stream of our most private thoughts, and--Hey, that's a cool pencil.

1. True thoughts

Internal monologue is useful for portraying the true thoughts of a character, especially if the internal monologue contrasts with what the character is actually saying to others—the dialogue.

Example

In a past IB English Literature HL Paper 1 prose extract from the novel *Age of Iron*, the Nobel Prize-winning author J. M. Coetzee uses the juxtaposition between internal monologue and dialogue to construct the facade (the false face) that two characters use when they speak with one another; this is a source of tension because we, the readers, know that the characters are not thinking the same thing as they are saying out loud to the other character, thus constructing the theme of (non)trust.

2. Uncertainty

If a character has a lot of internal monologue, it characterises that person as someone who thinks a lot: Depending on the context, the person might be characterised as scheming and evil, or just a shy and unconfident guy with lots of doubts.

Dramatic monologue

A dramatic monologue isn't a literary technique. It's a specific type of poem. Why we talking about it if it's not a technique? Well, we're talking about "monologues", so we may as well. I mean, being able to identify a dramatic monologue is sort-of important: If you can identify that a poem is a dramatic monologue in the introduction of your essay, then you'll really impress the marker.

So what are these dramatic monologues anyway? You know those poems in which the speaker is a mysterious voice that belongs to some wise, omnipresent, but unknown being? Well, those poems are not dramatic monologues.

A dramatic monologue are poems in which the speaker plays the role of an identifiable character, for example: a soldier, a mother, a wizard, a god. In other words, there is a character behind the voice of the poem. In such poems, we can call the speaker *the persona*.

Analysis advice

- **Characterisation.** The general purpose of the dramatic monologue is to create a living, breathing character for the persona, because it's now an identifiable person that has a personality. Characterisation is a key purpose of the dramatic monologue.
- **Emotionally engaging.** The poem becomes more interactive and engaging for the reader, because he/she is now hearing a (somewhat) real person talking and not just some random, mysterious voice babbling on about God-knows-what. We say that the poem has a *personal voice*. In many dramatic monologues, the persona talks directly to the reader using direct address—a technique which we covered earlier and means second-person voice. Ultimately, dramatic monologue constructs the speaker as a more realistic person, and this allows the poet to elicit greater emotional and empathetic responses from the reader.

For example, the Australian poet Bruce Dawe criticises abortion as an inhumane act by using a dramatic monologue, in which the persona is the unborn—but talking— fetus. Creepy… This choice of persona *characterises* the dead, aborted fetus as a human, a victim, a ghost. *Emotionally*, the dramatic monologue creates shock, sadness and empathy because the reader now sees the fetus not as something without life but as a real human being who has been deprived of life, thus changing the reader's perception of abortion from an otherwise medical operation to, apparently, the brutal murder of a human child. Of course, this is a controversial subject matter, and so it makes sense to involve the reader in an intensely emotional way.

If you ever encounter a dramatic monologue in your Paper 1 poems, then you should definitely mention the fact in the introduction of your essay. It will knock the socks off your marker. That's a use of hyperbole, by the way, so if you noticed that: Good job!

Foil characters

Foil characters are definitely exotic. You don't get to see them around much. So this is just a bonus in case you wanted to be 9000 IQ.

What are foil characters?

Foil characters are **pairs of characters** that start out the same at the beginning of a text, and then diverge over time. Foil characters are used to emphasise the qualities of the protagonist by contrasting their respective actions, dialogue, personalities, tone and so on.

What if two characters are different throughout an entire text? In that case, we simply say they are "juxtaposing characters".

Advanced Analysis

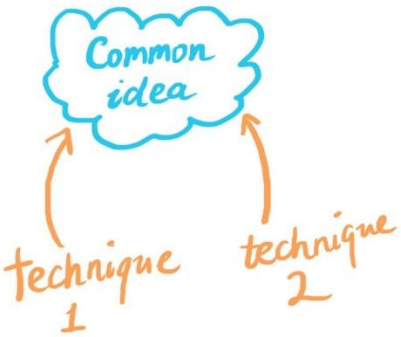
Analyze Multiple Techniques

In the Analysis Foundations chapter, I showed you how to analyse techniques one-by-one.

Analysing techniques one-by-one isn't always the best approach, especially when multiple techniques **converge to create the exact same purpose and effect**. In these cases, the best approach is to analyse multiple techniques together.

In the Foundations chapter, I merely showed you examples of multiple techniques being analysed together, but I didn't go into any detail about how to *actually* do it.

In this lesson, I will teach you how to analyse two or more techniques together.



The Muffin Example

Let's plan out an analytical paragraph for another quote from our beloved muffin extract.

"As soon as Jane opened the front door, the warm and embracing aroma of her mother's freshly baked muffins poured out onto the streets. Helen loved to bake. When she wasn't singing merry Polish songs with her children, or sewing together the holes that always found their way into little Henry's shirts, or reading fairy tales with little Betty on the cosy carpet next to the fireplace, she would be in the kitchen crafting her next masterpiece for her children, ***clanging together pots and pans and stirring and kneading*** *with relentless, palpable fervour."*

- Me. That's right APA, no reference required. Eat it.

You know the drill. Let's plan out the analysis.

---

1. Plan

Quote

"clanging pots and pans and stirring and kneading…"

Techniques

Lots of techniques to combine here.

- Kinaesthetic imagery (sense of movement) through repetition of gerunds (a gerund is the noun form of a verb, ends with "–ing")
- Polysyndeton
- Fast pace
- Auditory imagery
- Alliteration

Meaning

In the Foundations chapter, we had to attach a separate meaning to each technique.

Notice the difference here: All of the techniques illustrate the same idea; that is, the movement and energy of the mother's cooking.

The deeper meaning is thus **Helen's passion for cooking** and, in turn, **her loving nature** (since she cooks brilliant food for her children).

This is called *characterisation*, which we examined in the Literary Techniques chapter. I hope you see how everything is coming together.

The plethora of techniques noted above together build towards the same meaning in a concerted effort, and it is this orchestration of not one, not two, not three, but *five techniques* that successfully imprints upon our minds the image of a loving, caring cook and mother.

So we picture Helen as someone like this:

And certainly **not** someone like this:

"It's _____ RAW!"

(fill in the blank)

Educational procrastination

The lovely woman above is good ol' Julie Goodwin. No, not Gordon Ramsay. Above Gordon Ramsay.

Julie won MasterChef Australia way back in Season 1. Yes, I was alive back then.

Now, whenever I get on the topic of MasterChef with another human, I *always* brag about my clairvoyant abilities. And because I too treat you with the dignity and respect a human deserves, I will brag to you as well.

The story is this: It's the qualifiers. 2009. Season 1. Auditions. The pressure is on, and the atmosphere is well and truly marinated with the tension of a thousand well-done steaks.

Julie appears. She wheels her ingredients on to the stage. No one has spoken.

Yet.

I'm lying on the couch at home, and before she had even opened her mouth, before she had even cooked her first dish, let alone weaved and baked and cooked her way through the heats and semi-final and final and finally faced off with Po...

I'd already declared with a resolute tone that Julie Goodwin, Queen of Pavlova, the Breaker of Eggs, will--without a doubt--be crowned the winner of MasterChef.

There. That's the story.

Task: Analyse the above prose for an extra challenge. Post in the LitLearn Premium community if you're game.

Effect

The readers can hear, see, feel the mother's passion for cooking, which further endears her to the readers and characterises Helen as a loving mother.

As you can see, all of the techniques converge to the same meaning, purpose and effect. To avoid repeating the same purpose and effect again and again, we can analyse multiple techniques simultaneously, which we will do now.

---

2. Analyse

Spend 3 minutes reading through this analytical paragraph carefully. In particular, notice how I combine multiple techniques in my analysis.

I've annotated the five crucial components of analysis that we saw earlier.

Helen's caring nature is emphasised by the author's portrayal of her culinary passion, as shown in her "clanging pots and pans and stirring and kneading" (line ...) $^{STEP\ 1}$ *for her children's meals* $^{STEP\ 4}$*. The author's combined use of polysyndeton* $^{STEP\ 2}$ *and the alliteration* $^{STEP\ 2}$ *of "p", in "pots and pans," induces a rapid pace that captures the sheer enthusiasm* $^{STEP\ 3}$ *with which Helen approaches her cooking for her family* $^{STEP\ 4}$*. Additionally, the alliteration works in conjunction with the auditory imagery* $^{STEP\ 2}$ *of the "clanging" utensils and the kinaesthetic imagery* $^{STEP\ 2}$ *of the "stirring" and "kneading" to immerse the reader* $^{STEP\ 5}$ *in a frenetic scene marked by intense movement, energy and a tone of bursting passion* $^{STEP\ 3/4}$*. Hence, the author's orchestrated manipulation of pace, sound devices*

and kaleidoscopic imagery allows the reader to palpably and vicariously experience Helen's love for cooking [STEP 5], which underscores her undeniable affection for her children and characterises her as, in fact, the reincarnation of Julie Goodwin [STEP 4].

---

3. Lessons to learn

Analysing multiple techniques isn't drastically different from analysing techniques individually.

Step 1

Use these phrases to introduce multiple techniques at once:

"X works in combination with Y..."

"X works in conjunction with Y..."

"X combines with Y in (quote)..."

"The combined use of X and Y..."

Step 2

After you introduce the techniques, analyse the techniques under the same meaning, purpose and effect. Just like before.

Step 3

Summarise after analysing multiple techniques. It's incredibly easy for the paragraph to lose focus and look like scrambled eggs if lots of techniques are being explored. A good summary sentence concludes the paragraph with a strong focus on the point, the techniques mentioned, and the subject statement.

Make the link to purpose very explicit at the start of the paragraph. In the example, I felt that the link between 'passionate cook' and 'loving mother' was slightly weak, so I justified the relationship immediately after introducing the quote. This process of explicitly linking to the purpose is necessary when the point isn't the most direct. In general, as you write your essay, you should continuously evaluate the persuasiveness of your argument. This piece of advice doesn't fall under 'how to analyse multiple techniques', but it does fall under 'general analysis'.

If you feel that the argument is a bit weak in certain places, immediately address that weakness by throwing lots of justification at it. If you feel that it's weak, the marker will think so as well. Your essay is only as strong as its weaknesses.

A word of warning

Of course, don't go around using the same canned format (see Step 1) in every sentence and jamming every bit of analysis with loads and loads of techniques. That's too much. Like chocolate and various types of (legal) drugs, analysing multiple techniques must be used in moderation if one wishes to avoid tears. Very often, the trusted one-by-one analysis approach is clearer and better.

In any case, we will cover a much more elegant method for analysing multiple techniques in the Getting Deeper Analysis section of this chapter. I'll show you how to link techniques in a *specific* way to fuse ideas more elegantly than anything we've seen thus far.

When NOT to combine techniques

Combining techniques is extremely powerful. But with power comes...(this is so cliche)...responsibility. Or Harambe. Now we know: "Cliche" rhymes with "Harambe." I am now confident you have learned at least one thing in this lesson.

Combine only when it is appropriate.

There are three cases when you should not combine techniques:

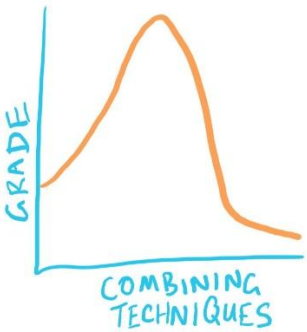
1. **When the techniques are complex.** Complex techniques include paradox, juxtaposition, irony, and characterisation. Complex techniques often require multiple sentences to fully contextualise and explain, and so the analysis can get too long and grammatically awkward if we choose to add another technique into the mix.
2. **When techniques do not build the same purpose or effect.** If they aren't converging to the exact same meaning, then the analysis will feel forced and fake.
3. **If you are still not confident with analysing single techniques.** That's like trying to dunk in the NBA when you're a point guard in the D-League. Wait till you grow your skills and be able to dish out quality analysis for single techniques in your sleep before you attempt multi-technique ninja analysis if you wish to avoid tears.

Why combine: The Benefits

Here are some philosophical reasons explaining why the combination of techniques *in moderation* can improve your analysis.

Combining techniques keeps analysis phresh. Now that you know this handy trick, you don't need to repeat analysis for techniques achieving the same purpose and effect. In the example, polysyndeton and alliteration build the same purpose and effect, but instead of repeating the analysis, we write it only once. There's a saying for that: Killing two birds with one stone. But in this case: Killing two techniques with one… analysis?

Combining techniques adds sophistication and depth to your analysis. Writers often use several literary techniques to build purpose and effect. Combining techniques in analysis shows that you understand the writer's complex web of language choices. It shows that you are keenly aware of not just how techniques work but also how techniques work together. As a result, your grade goes up like this… (Beware! If you combine too many techniques in the same sentence without analysing each one in adequate depth, your analysis will actually be worse off! You will learn to know where the sweet spot is through practice.)



Make your analysis flow

Bruce Lee said it best: "Be like water."

If you want to take your analysis to the next level, you need to start thinking more carefully about how you *word* your analysis. In essays that score 7s, you will notice that the paragraphs flow naturally. When a paragraph flows, it means that each sentence builds onto the previous sentence in a logically elegant way.

On the flip side, struggling students tend to write analysis that doesn't flow. They might be analysing all the right things—the five steps of analysis—but the main issue is that it's written in a way that doesn't flow. I'll show you what I mean.

Example of bad flow

'First, the author constructs the emotional pain of childhood through the use of figurative language. The author uses religious allusion in "The kindergarten was like hell" (line 10). This technique highlights the painful experiences that the narrator endured during her youthful years in the "kindergarten". The purpose of the hyperbole, specifically the comparison of the kindergarten to "hell", is to portray the extreme emotional pain caused by bullying. The effect is to shock the reader and create sympathy towards the bullied narrator.'

- The paragraph explores all the right things: the five aspects of analysis.
- What's the problem? It's too mechanical. The sentences start and stop. There are no logical connections gluing the sentences together.
- The paragraph is basically saying: "The technique is this. The meaning is this. The purpose is this. The effect is this." Too formulaic. Too mechanical.
- What this paragraph desperately needs is something called *causality*.

Causality

Causality [noun] – "the relationship between cause and effect"

When we analyse, we are explaining how a technique **causes** a meaning, and then (perhaps) how this meaning **creates / causes** a tone, and then how this tone **causes** an effect on the reader, and then how this effect on the reader ultimately **achieves / causes** the writer's purpose.

Flowing analysis should be written in this way. Every sentence should be able to link to the next one in some cause-effect manner. Not only does causality make your writing more "analytical", it also creates a flowing argument because your sentences aren't random ideas thrown into the paragraph; with causality, every sentence is logically placed to advance the argument and thus knock down the next domino.

So now we know that good, flowing analysis must connect the technique to the meaning to the mood to the purpose to whatever. Every sentence must be part of a logical chain--a continuous chain of something leading to something else, which leads to something else, which leads to something else.

Just to be extremely clear, if a paragraph has good flow, it will look something like this:

Topic sentence... Sentence 1 begins developing the argument. Sentence 2 builds onto sentence 1. Sentence 3 develops the idea developed in sentence 2. And so on in a connected fashion.

Bad analysis, like the example we saw earlier, analyses the five aspects in a disconnected way. Avoid analysing the five aspects in isolation. Otherwise the analysis will look something like this:

“A is this. B is this. C is this. D is this. E is this.”

Just to be extremely clear, if a paragraph has bad flow, it would look something like this:

Topic sentence. Sentence 1 begins developing the argument. Sentence 2 brings up another idea. Sentence 3 brings up another idea.

There are no logical links gluing the individual sentences together in one cohesive line of argument.

Advanced analysis mindset

At the basic level of analysis, we were mainly concerned with *what* to write for each of the five elements of analysis. We had the freedom to focus just on one element of analysis and not worry about anything else. We didn't need to think about linking or analytical flow.

To progress from basic to advanced analysis, you need to tweak your approach to analysis. You can no longer just tunnel-vision and focus on your current sentence, because now you need to **think holistically**: You need to think about how your current sentence links smoothly to the previous sentence.

Here's the secret: You need to think about analysis not in terms of individual bits and pieces, but as a continuous, logically-connected chain of the same bits and pieces. Once you understand this concept, linking will happen instinctively in your writing.

Example

Enough talk. Let's try to fix up the bad example by making it flow.

Before linking

‘...The author uses religious allusion in “The kindergarten was like hell” (line 10). The religious allusion highlights the painful experiences that the narrator endured during her youthful years in the “kindergarten”.'

The easiest thing you can do is to combine the cause and effect in the same sentence. In this case: the technique and its corresponding meaning.

After linking

‘...The author uses religious allusion in “The kindergarten was like hell” (line 10) ***in order*** *to highlight the painful experiences that the narrator endured during her youthful years in the “kindergarten”.'*

Before linking

‘The purpose of the hyperbolic simile is to portray the extreme emotional pain caused by bullying. The effect is to shock the reader and create sympathy towards the narrator.'

In general, avoid explicitly using the words “purpose” and “effect” ("effect" is ok to use, but definitely avoid "purpose"), because they make the analysis sound too formulaic. We can also create better flow by using the main idea of the last sentence as a starting point and developing it further in the current sentence. So in the last sentence, the main focus was the religious allusion. In this sentence, we can show that we are developing the argument further by referring to the *hyperbolic* use of religious allusion.

After linking

*'**The hyperbolic use of religious allusion**, specifically the comparison of the kindergarten to "hell", **in turn** portrays the extreme emotional pain caused by bullying, ...'*

Here, we've also used "in turn"—a great phrase to suggest something happening as a result of something previously.

We'll also combine the cause and effect into a single sentence, as we did before; in this case, the writer's purpose, which is also an idea, is the cause, and the reader's reaction is therefore the effect.

*'...**which shocks** the reader and creates sympathy towards the bullied narrator.'*

There's also another way to make the last two sentences flow. Instead of combining the sentences together, we can use causal links. In this case, I'll use "as a result."

As a result, the hyperbole shocks the reader and creates sympathy towards the bullied narrator.'

New paragraph:

'...The author uses religious allusion in "The kindergarten was like hell" (line 10) in order to highlight the painful experiences that the narrator endured during her youthful years in the "kindergarten". The hyperbolic use of religious allusion, specifically the comparison of the kindergarten to "hell", in turn portrays the extreme emotional pain caused by bullying, which shocks the reader and creates sympathy towards the bullied narrator.'

Much better.

Four ways to create causal flow

We just went through a real example of a bad paragraph and made it flow much better. In the process, I used a couple tricks to create causality, and I sort of explained it as I went along…but not really.

Here are four four ways to create flowing analysis.

Option 1

Write slightly longer sentences

Combine the cause and effect in the same sentence by writing longer sentences. For example, instead of writing the technique and its corresponding meaning in separate sentences, combine them in one sentence.

Obviously, you can't do this all the time because sentences *can* get too long and confusing.

Option 2

Concept of emphasis

Say that we just wrote a sentence on auditory imagery, and it reads:

'The auditory imagery of the wolves' "howling" creates a haunting experience, which instils a profound fear within the reader.'

Great. Now, let's say we want to analyse sibilance in the same quote.

If we didn't care whether our analysis flowed, we would simply add it onto the end without any extra thought:

'The sibilance in the "stern, steely silence"…'

The problem here is that the sibilance feels like a random fact. It's not linked to the auditory imagery in any logical or causal way, and so the analysis doesn't flow.

What's the solution?

We can manipulate the wording of the analysis to make the sentences link. We can say that the sibilance doesn't just portray a random idea, but that the sibilance **sustains** the **previous** idea, or **advances** it, or **develops** it, or **emphasises** it, or **reinforces** it, or **further portrays** it. By adding these words, there is now a direct, causal link between the previous sentence and the sibilance, because we are saying that the sibilance is actually doing something to further the previous idea.

If you understand what I'm trying to say, then great. But I'll try to be as specific and explicit as I can, and I won't assume that you're a genius and understand everything. The reason you are using this course is probably because you need clear advice that does not assume you know everything. So let's go over this in more detail.

To create this link, we need two things:

- The previous idea, and
- An accurate verb that describes the relationship with the previous idea

The previous idea was the fear experienced by the reader. We don't want to reuse "fear" immediately after, so let's re-word it to "the unsettling mood". That was the main idea.

What does the sibilance do to the "unsettling mood"? The sibilance could be "sustaining" the unsettling mood, or it could also be "developing" the mood.

Now that we have the previous idea and a word describing the relationship, we now have what we need to write a good link. We can write:

"This unsettling mood is sustained by the sibilance in 'stern, steely silence'…"

You could also write:

"The sibilance in 'stern, steely silence' sustains this unsettling mood by…"

Full example:

"The auditory imagery of the wolves' "howling" creates a haunting experience that instils fear within the reader. This unsettling mood is sustained by the sibilance in the 'stern, steely silence'…"

This transition is much better than the initial blind approach, because the sibilance is now developing the argument further instead of just being a random side-note, like "Hey, sibilance is used too!" The logical link is very important.

By forcing the new sentence to develop from the previous sentence, we automatically create a smooth link.

Option 3

Use causal links

In the first example, we used “As a result” to establish a cause-effect relationship. That's a causal link, because it expresses a cause-effect relationship between one thing in one sentence and another thing in another sentence.

Other great links that express cause-and-effect are:

- Thereby
- Consequently
- As a consequence
- As a result
- In order
- …in turn
- Therefore (usually at the end of a point, because it suggests finality in an argument)
- Hence (usually at the end of a point, because it suggests finality in an argument)
- Thus (usually at the end of a point, because it suggests finality in an argument)

In the sibilance example, we could have also used “In order”:

“In order to sustain the unsettling mood, the author employs sibilance in…”

Option 4

Use non-causal links

These are links that don't express causality. They include:

- Also
- As well
- In addition
- Additionally
- Moreover
- Furthermore

Sometimes these links are the right word to use. However, *if* you are trying to create a logical connection between two sentences, then they definitely aren't as good as causal links.

In the sibilance example, we could have also used “In addition”:

“In addition to the auditory imagery, the author develops the unsettling mood by utilising sibilance in…”

Special link

“Not only”

What if a technique creates two meanings or effects and you want to express both of them in a single sentence, and make it sound natural and deep?

Just use the phrase

"not only…<does it do this>, but it also…<does this>"

This phrase holds a very special place in my heart. It's my favourite go-to sentence construction when I need to mention two different things in a single sentence.

Example:

*"**Not only** does the juxtaposition of the two characters elevate the superiority of the priest, **but it also** highlights the sordid corruption to which the priest resorted in order to achieve his eminent position in post-colonial Ireland."*

Of course, you can simply use "and", but it's much, much less exciting.

"The juxtaposition of the two characters elevates the superiority of the priest and highlights the sordid corruption to which the priest resorted in order to achieve his eminent position in post-colonial Ireland."

How do I know if my analysis flows?

Swap your sentences around. If the paragraph still "sort of" makes sense after the swaps, then you're just stating random facts. This is because your later sentences clearly don't depend on and build onto the ideas introduced by previous sentences in the same paragraph.

Summary

We've covered a lot of information!

- An analytical argument will flow if your sentences are linked in a logical, causal way.
- There are 4 ways to smoothly link two sentences together:
    - Combine cause and effect in the same sentence.
    - Change the wording so that the sentence develops from the previous sentence.
    - Use causal links like "As a result" and "Therefore".
    - Use non-causal links when it's appropriate.
- In a essay you should use all of these options at some point. Vary the types of links between sentences.
- Make sure you check that your sentences flow in your practice essays.
- At the start, if you're not used to linking sentences, this process will feel a bit overwhelming. As you get better, it'll come naturally. When *I* write, I don't think about "which of the 4 links will I use?" I just link it, it's an intuitive decision.

The Secret to Deep Analysis

The biggest problem that students struggle with is depth. In order to score 4/5 or 5/5 in Criteria A and B, your analysis needs to be “deep”.

It's a simple concept, and I'll explain it to you with the aid of a metaphor.

Moving to Melbourne

So I live in Melbourne, Australia.

It's a nice city.

But it's also a big city. When I moved here in July 2016 for university, I had to ask for lots of directions to get from A to B.

On my first day in Melbourne, I somehow had to get from the University of Melbourne to Wood Street in the suburb of North Melbourne. My GPS wasn't an option because it always gets me lost.

So I asked someone:

“Hey mate, how do I get from here to Wood Street, North Melbourne?”

A bad, shallow answer would've been something like this:

“Just go out west to North Melbourne, mate.”

This is the real journey from Google Maps.

Going "west" isn't a clear instruction, and I would've gotten lost pretty quickly. And going to "North Melbourne" didn't tell me anything new or useful, because that was obvious. When we get directions in a new city, we want a **descriptive** and **detailed** set of steps that **do not omit any important detail**.

Thankfully, I happened to ask a true Melbournian, who gave me really amazing directions:

*Yeah mate, just head down **Grattan Street**.*

*Once you get to the **roundabout**, turn **right**, and keep goin' **straight**, yeah?*

*Then go through the **park** with the **school** on the side, and then turn **left** and--oh, there's a really hip **bar** on the corner--and go **straight** for **two traffic lights**.*

This idea of a detailed step-by-step explanation applies directly to literary analysis.

What makes analysis... deep?

Secret 1

When we talk about depth, we mean the **number of logical steps** it takes to analyse a quote from start to finish: from the technique to the writer's purpose. The more detailed and explicit you are in explaining the quote step-by-step, then the deeper your analysis will be.

Detail is what makes analysis deep.

Example

We've got a poem and we want to analyse the oxymoron.

- Technique: Oxymoron
- Purpose: To convey the conflicted emotions of the speaker

Shallow, bad analysis would just restate what is obvious: the oxymoron conveys the conflicted emotions.

"The poet also utilises oxymoron in line 13, which suggests the conflicted internal emotional landscape of the speaker as a result of the death of his loved one."

But **how** did you get from oxymoron to the purpose? That's like "Just go west to North Melbourne mate." This is an example of shallow analysis because it doesn't actually explain step-by-step how the writer gets from oxymoron to the idea about "conflicted emotions".

Let's make it deep.

Deep analysis naturally occurs if we simply write down the exact, detailed steps for how language leads to meaning leads to effect leads to purpose. It's one detailed, logical explanation from start to finish, with no logical jumps.

For example:

1. The poet utilises oxymoron in line 13. (now go in more detail, explain how the oxymoron is created from diction.)
2. Here, the oxymoron of "harrowing praise" highlights the conflict in the emotions of the speaker, specifically through the contrasting diction in "harrowing" and "praise", (ok, so how do the diction contrast exactly? Keep going.)
3. ... which connote acute distress and warm approval respectively. (good, now connect back to the bigger picture)
4. Hence, the poet's oxymoronic combination of the diametrically-opposed emotions of distress and warmth reveals the confusing array of emotions which speaker experiences as a result of the sudden death of his loved one, (good, purpose addressed, but where's the effect?)
5. ...inspiring in the reader a deep sympathy for the grieving speaker.

Detail is the difference

Shallow analysis:

oxymoron --> purpose

Deep analysis:

oxymoron --> diction --> contrast --> purpose --> effect

Deep analysis does not skip any logical steps between technique and purpose / effect.

Secret 2

Techniques within techniques

We'll look at Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Tell-Tale Heart".

In the short story, the narrator is an insane murderer who doesn't realise his own insanity. At the start, there's a whole paragraph where he tries to prove his sanity to the reader by demonstrating his obsessive caution in observing his victim before he brutally kills him. He describes in extreme detail each of his actions from closing the door to turning on his lantern to silently observing his victim in the dark.

Layers of logic

This is what deep analysis of the author's extreme detail would look like. Not only is detail important to depth, but analysing **techniques within techniques** is also important: This is because we don't just care about the most obvious technique at the surface, but also what other techniques work with, or build onto, the original technique. The techniques in this chain of analysis are all **bolded**. The two quotes are highlighted.

1. **Listing** of extreme details (initial technique)
2. Highlights the wisdom, caution and foresight to prove his own sanity (detail)
3. **Ironically**, the extreme detail actually conveys mad obsession instead of sanity. This dramatic irony builds ignorance as well. (detail + 'technique within technique')
4. Lack of self-awareness and the mad obsession both suggest his insanity (detail)

That's great so far, but don't stop the point there! We can drill even deeper by showing how another technique builds on top of this logical chain. Linking techniques together in this way is essentially deepening your analysis by keeping the analysis of multiple techniques in a single chain of reasoning, as opposed to lots of smaller, unlinked chains of logic. (If you do chemistry, then deep analysis is one long, chained hexane molecule whereas shallow analysis is lots of small, unchained methane molecules.)

5. Add another technique to the logical chain by linking to the same purpose: **overzealous tone** further builds onto the insanity (chain together with new technique)
6. Smaller techniques that build overzealous tone: **diction**, **repetition**, **exclamations** (techniques within technique)
7. **Situational irony** of narrator's disturbing zeal / enthusiasm for malign and morbid activities, like stalking and murder
8. Due to situational irony, overzealous tone induces not an energetic atmosphere but a **disturbing atmosphere**. The narrator is excited about the wrong thing. (detail)
9. Disturbing atmosphere creates a mood of disgust that fully convinces the reader of the narrator's insanity. (detail)

Now *that* is deep analysis. There are 9 layers of cohesive logic that progressively dig deeper and deeper and deeper into the idea of insanity. The two pieces of evidence also aren't separate but link together in one cohesive chain of logic.

Contrast with shallow analysis

Now let's compare this deep analysis with what struggling students might normally do in their essays.

1. Technique: Extreme detail (First, they introduce the quote and the technique, like before)
2. Therefore, narrator is insane (Then, they jump to the purpose.)

3. *There's no logical link between the different pieces of evidence, so it starts another shallow chain of logic instead of building on to the same idea.*
4. Technique: Overzealous tone (technique)
5. Therefore, narrator is insane (meaning)

There are only two steps of logic in the analysis of each piece of evidence. It's skipping all the other 5 steps that could be analysed. To make matters worse, struggling students often forget to link pieces of evidence together into a single chain of logic, making the analysis overall seem disorganised and random.

Mind = Blown

Is this how you feel right now after absorbing all of that insight?

Do you understand how to exactly achieve deep analysis now? I hope you do. It's a combination of these three (or four) things:

1. Detail
2. High-quality quotes.
3. Exploring techniques within techniques.
4. (Flowing analysis using logical links--from previous lesson.)

Make the Writer Active

Have a guess: What's missing from this snippet of analysis?

“The metaphor illustrates the narrator's melancholy.”

Answer: the writer

The student doesn't refer to the writer anywhere in the analysis (if we indeed give this sentence the dignity of being called "analysis"). That's a problem. The writer should at least be part of the picture.

Let's slightly edit the analysis to include the writer in the process. We can slightly change the wording from *“The technique does this…”* to *“The writer chooses this technique in order to achieve this…”* :

“The writer utilises the metaphor to illustrate the protagonist's melancholy.”

I just made the writer '**active**', because the writer is now in the active voice and doing something to the language (in this case, 'utilising' the language). The change might seem small, but it makes a big difference in the quality of analysis when applied consistently in a essay.

So why should I ‘make the writer active'?

Is this way of writing somehow better?

Analysis is the explanation of a **writer's choices**. So it makes sense to express analysis in a way that shows how the writer is actively choosing the language. Another reason for making the writer an active participant is that it adds a nice dressing, or sauce, of authorial intent, which is always a good thing to have, especially for Criterion B.

Two specific examples

Tone

“In line 5, the affectionate tone of the narrator shifts to a bitter tone…”

The tone doesn't magically shift by itself. The author shifts the tone.

“In line 5, the author transitions the affectionate tone to a bitter tone…”

Characterisation

“The characterisation of the Harry as a lonely orphan builds the theme of isolation.”

“The author characterises Harry as a lonely orphan to build the theme of isolation.”

Warning: Don't do it all the time

Now, I'm not telling you to explicitly involve the writer in every sentence of analysis. That would get very repetitive very quickly. The writer needs to be sprinkled in moderation like a salad dressing; once it's too much, the salad gets soggy and gross.

A good rule of thumb is to make the writer active at the beginning, the middle and the end of a point, so that authorial intent gracefully pervades your essay.

Last tip

Also, remember that this little trick isn't changing what you are analysing. Your analysis is still fundamentally the same: the technique, the explanation, everything—the only difference is that now you are rewording the analysis in a way that explicitly shows the writer's active, conscious role in choosing and making these language choices.

Analyze the Writer's Style

Most students don't analyse the writer's style. Style is one of the things that need to be addressed. It's actually included in Criterion B—Appreciating writer's choice.

What is style?

You've probably heard about musical style, which is the unique way a musician sings or writes music. For example, Drake has a very distinct vocal style; it's a mellow, slow, smooth type of rapping fused with singing. That's his style; it's what defines him. So when you hear a Drake song, you know it's him.

Writing style is the exact same idea. A writer's style is the unique way in the writer employs language and literary techniques. Their style is that special ‘thing' about their writing that sets them apart from all other writers.

A good contemporary example is the American author James Patterson. According to Wikipedia, he has written the most number of #1 New York Times Bestsellers in the world—in fact, well over 60 #1 Bestsellers.

What's so amazing about his writing? Why does it sell? One reason might be his unique writing style. His writing is characterised by an **extremely rapid pace**, which keeps readers engaged and turning the pages and then going to the bookshop to buy another page-turner.

Some critics also say that his books are so popular because his writing style is colloquial: he uses everyday language as opposed to really difficult words. This conversational, colloquial **style of writing** might also account for his popularity.

If we now dive into classical literature, we have to talk about Jane Austen. Famous writer. *Pride and Prejudice. Persuasion. Mansfield Park.* The books for which she is famous till even today examine the day-to-day lives of wealthy Englishman at the turn of the 18th century. The narrative voices of Austenian narrators are often infused with a **cheeky wit and sarcasm**, core elements of her writing style that foster a lively, humorous energy, even in the description of the most mundane tasks like going for a walk along the countryside. This witty way of writing is one aspect of Austen's signature style.

How do you identify a writer's style?

When you read an extract, think about what aspect of the writing strikes you as unique and significant to the text. Ask yourself two questions:

What stands out?

What is being used repeatedly?

A writer's style can be characterised by a host of things. It could be:

- Constant shifts in tone
- A focus on the internal emotions of the characters
- The use of short sentences
- The use of long and winding sentences
- The use of colloquial or sophisticated language
- The use of disjointed sentence structure
- The combination of external dialogue and internal monologue
- The interesting visual structure of the poem
- The repeated use of certain types of punctuation like em dashes and ellipses
- The use of multiple first-person narrators in the same extract
- The repeated use of caesura

Once you've identified the writer's style, think about how his/her writing style affects the reader and achieves his/her purpose.

How do you analyse a writer's style?

The writer's style doesn't need to be a major focus in a point. You can briefly mention it as a holistic, ‘Big Picture' observation after you have finished analysing the quotes in detail as you normally would.

So generally, style should be mentioned somewhere near the end of a point: It makes sense because you cannot make a generalising claim about the writer's style without having first examined specific examples in detail.

So are there any concrete ways to analyse style? Not really. There's no strict rule around how you should and should not analyse style; as long as you mention it once or twice in an entire essay, that should fulfil Criterion B.

Here are some examples of how you might analyse style.

Example 1

"...Hence, the poet's style of social criticism is marked by a clear preference for juxtaposition and situational irony—tools that are used by the poet create a jarring contrast between justice and the injustice of reality."

Example 2

"... Stylistically, the poet has employed a unique combination of sound and structural techniques to build a realistic atmosphere for the reader."

Example 3

"... The poet's witty language is thus extremely effective in shaping the reader's irreverent attitude towards a conventionally serious subject matter. As a result of the poet's incongruently witty language, the reader therefore finds himself in a paradoxical and almost heretical position that makes the poem even more humorous."

In the first two examples, we use *signposting*. Signposting is the explicit use a word, in this case "style" or its variation, to clearly signal to the IB examiner that "Yes, I am addressing this part of the criteria." Signposting is usually a good idea, although you can go overboard by being *too* explicit, such that your analysis becomes highly mechanical and robotic. The responsibility to find that sweet spot between explicit and implicit rests on you.

Sometimes, forcing the word "style" into a sentence feels awkward. In these cases, you can skip the explicit signposting. Example 3 is a good instance of how you might analyse style without explicitly mentioning the word "style". The marker can usually figure it out because it is obvious.

As you can see from these three examples, we always tend to talk about the writer's style in a general, birds-eye-view, Big Picture way. A great place to analyse style is actually in the link to the subject statement at the end of each point.

Worked Example

Let's take a look at an example from stanza 3 of Edgar Allan Poe's poem, *The Raven.*

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain

Thrilled me- filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,

"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door-

Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;-

This it is, and nothing more."

What might we say is stylistic and unique about Poe's extract?

Spend 5 minutes deconstructing it.

No peeking! Spoiler ahead!

Here's what I found

You'll notice a pattern in Poe's language:

- There is an extensive amount of **rhyme**—both internal and external rhymes.
- There is also lots of **assonance**—that's the repetition of vowel sounds, for example in "Thrilled me- filled me" where the short "i" sound is being repeated. Another example is the short "u" sound in
- "purple curtain".
- Sibilance in the first line
- Repetition of lines

Clearly, one of the stylistic aspects of Poe's writing is the frequent use of **sound devices**. If we were to write a point analysing the purpose of this small extract, we'd analyse each of the individual techniques in detail. After that, we would make a holistic observation about Poe's style by placing rhyme, assonance and sibilance all under the same umbrella of "sound devices". If we want to be inclusive of the repetition as well, we can write "repeated sound devices".

Here's a pretentious-sounding way :) of analysing the style as the concluding sentence to a point. It also links to the subject statement by referring to the theme of madness.

"... Hence, Poe orchestrates the eerie atmosphere entirely with repeated sound devices—a fitting stylistic choice given the nocturnal setting, a time when silence is most evident and the sense of hearing most acute to abnormal auditory disturbances and, in this case, ***noises springing from the depths of a mad mind.****"*

Write with Clarity

Don't be naked

The greatest sin of essay writing is using 'This' or 'It' at the start of a sentence. We call this problem the 'Naked this' or the 'Naked it'. But there are exceptions.

"This mood is amplified by the metaphor in line 5..."

I'm not talking about sentences like this one; this sentence is good.

"This is amplified by the metaphor in line 5..."

This sentence is not acceptable.

"It is amplified by the metaphor in line 5..."

This sentence is also not acceptable.

The first example is acceptable because the sentence is clear. We know that "this" means the "mood", which was probably mentioned in the last sentence.

The second and third examples are bad uses of "this" and "it", because the sentences are ambiguous.

General rules

In general, avoid using “this” by itself without clarifying exactly what you are referring to. In fact, this rule is a good writing habit, and you should apply it to all your essays, whether it be English, Science or even Maths.

“It” should only be used in the middle or the end of a sentence when 2 conditions are satisfied:

1. the object to which you are referring was identified at the start of the sentence, and
2. only one object was referred to at the start of the sentence so that there is no confusion around what “it” truly refers to.

In the first paragraph of this section on 'General rules', I wrote:

“This rule is a good writing habit, and you should apply it in all of your essays…”

- The word “This” is used properly because it's accompanied by “rule”.
- The word “it” is also used properly because we can clearly assume that "it" refers to “This rule” and only "This rule", which was specified at the start of the sentence.

“The metaphor contributes to the bright atmosphere of the poem. It/this thus emphasises the theme of hope…”

- This sentence is an example of bad usage of “this” and “it”.
- “This” is being used by itself without a clarifying word.
- “It” is ambiguous because it could refer to the metaphor or the atmosphere, and so now the marker cannot understand the analysis

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Advanced Analysis Example: Muffins

Example

In the outset of the extract, the author establishes the immediately inviting atmosphere [STEP 4] of Helen's home through the use of olfactory and thermal imagery [STEP 1] in the “warm, embracing aroma of…[Helen's] freshly baked muffins” (line X). The author's rich use of imagery not only inspires a similarly warm sense of comfort in the reader [STEP 4], but also conveys the scrumptiousness of the food that Helen “crafts” [STEP 2], hence underscoring her caring attitude towards her children [STEP 3]. The inviting tone [STEP 2] is further developed through the author's personification [STEP 1] of the “embracing” smells, which amplifies the warm mood experienced by the reader [STEP 4] and thus accentuates Helen as a loving, maternal character [STEP 5].

Lessons to learn from this example

- **Write whatever feels natural at any point in an argument.**
- For example, before I even introduce the first quote, I begin to analyse the effect, which is step 4. And that's works well. In fact, it's much better to think of the five steps of analysis not as steps, but as a checklist.

- Another example is when I jump straight to step 4 after introducing the quote, because I just felt that there is a strong, direct relationship between the imagery and the reader's emotion. So I covered step 4 first, and then I went on to address steps 3 and 4. The analysis sounds dynamic and authentic—a quality that you can't get if you use the same formulaic steps every time. BORING. Analysis is a flexible process that should go wherever the argument flows.
- That was pretty deep. I feel like Socrates…but he drank poison and died. Okay, I feel like Aristotle…(Google) but he died of stomach disease. Dammit. OK, I feel like Plato. (Google) Oh, he died of natural causes. Fantastic. I'll take that. I'll take death by natural causes over stomach disease and poisoning any day.
- **Reiterating the purpose is extremely important.** I cannot emphasise this point enough. You need to confirm, after every quote, that the purpose IS being achieved by the writer's techniques. I link back to step 4, the writer's purpose, about 4 times in that paragraph alone, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly via mood and atmosphere. A essay feels off-focus if the purpose is only mentioned once at the end of the entire paragraph. That is one of the biggest mistakes that students make. Purpose needs to be consistently present throughout the entire point. Referring to the purpose consistently is the single best trick that *will* make your essay be more persuasive and focused.
- **Cohesion between pieces of evidence is important.**
- **I'm using a lot of linking between the sentences**. This makes the argument flow and develop more strongly. Linking is an advanced concept that we covered in "Make your analysis flow".

Advanced Analysis Example: Rain

In this lesson, I'm going to further demonstrate some of the advanced analytical skills for the rain extract.

- Flow
- Combining techniques
- Style
- Structure
- Active writer

Analysis Mode: Nek level

By the way, don't worry if your analysis isn't up to this level because it's not a realistic reflection of what is possible in an exam condition. I spent a long time writing out this paragraph, and it certainly was not written under exam conditions. The value of this example is not that it shows a realistic exam response; the value here is that it shows you the proper ways to put the Advanced Analysis skills that you have just learned into practice in a real essay point.

The poet immediately establishes a menacing tone in line 1 of the poem, in which the rain is metaphorically compared to "Nature's wicked bullets." The direct comparison of raindrops to "bullets", a universal symbol of danger and death, thus conjures in the reader's mind not the image of innocuous water drops but instead that of a threatening ensemble of lethal weapons waiting to assault

the reader. The sense of fear invoked by the metaphor is also reinforced by the ominous visual imagery of the rain "hanging high in the heaving clouds" (line 2), where the speaker premonitions the imminent onslaught of "Nature's…bullets" with a foreboding sigh, as created by the alliterative 'h' in "hanging high…heaving". The poet further emphasises the frighteningly destructive force of the downpour in lines 4 to 6 by employing an array of techniques including line structure, sibilance and listing. The harsh sibilance in "splash", "spray", and "smash" create a cacophonous sound that conveys the sheer force of the rain, which is made even more terrifying by the poet's listing of the three verbs in order of intensifying diction, such that the auditory imagery of the rain ends on a resounding "smash." Moreover, the poet's portrayal of the forcefulness of the rain is strengthened in lines 4 to 6, where the poet's combined use of short line structure and enjambment not only conveys the shocking abruptness of the 'assault', but also rapidly increases the pace of the poem. This frantic pace compounds with the cacophony to induce a chaotic atmosphere, a state of utter havoc that amplifies the reader's visceral fear towards the hostile and threatening nature of the rain. Interestingly, the poet's stylistic focus on the sights and sounds of the external setting is able to paint a vivid picture of the natural landscape whilst simultaneously inspiring a deep response in the internal, emotional landscape of the reader.

A comment

Was that a melodramatic analysis? Yes. But that's the art of literary analysis. You have to assume that the techniques are so effective and the readers are so impressionable that they can't help but be affected, deeply, by what they read.

IB English Paper 1

Paper 1 Exam Guide

Paper 1 Fundamentals

Before starting this lesson, I recommend you read What is Analysis? where I explain in detail what it means to “analyze” a text.

In this lesson, we zoom out and look at the big picture:

- What is a Paper 1 essay?
- Where and how does ‘analysis' fit into a Paper 1 essay?

(We're focusing on Paper 1 here, but a similar approach applies to the Individual Oral, Paper 1, Paper 2, HL Essay. **Learn Paper 1 + Analysis, and everything else follows. It's ALL kinda the SAME.**)

What is Paper 1?

In a Paper 1 exam, you are given two mysterious, unseen texts, both of which are between 1 and 2 pages in length.

For Literature students: the texts may be a poem, fictional or non-fictional prose, or an excerpt from a play.

For Lang Lit students: you get a bigger selection of non-literary things like advertisements, web pages, articles, newsletters, and so on. All bets are off :)

Your task is to write a guided analysis essay on one of the two options.

The guided analysis essay in detail

In a guided analysis, you have one main goal:

Answer the guiding question.

In general, though, the guiding question forces you to explain how the author uses **certain language or visual choices** to build one or more **central ideas.**

And so the vague instruction of "Answer the guiding question" really boils down to a much more specific task:

Explain how the writer uses specific language to build a central idea, message or purpose.

In other words, this is the general **argument** that will you always try to prove in *any* IB English Paper 1 exam. The main argument is also called the *subject statement* or the *thesis*. The thesis is basically our **answer** to the guiding question expressed in a single sentence. More on the thesis later.

A guided analysis essay is a persuasive essay made of three parts:

- An introduction
- A body
- A conclusion

As a general overview:

- The introduction has the easy task of **introducing** the subject statement.
- The body paragraphs then do all the hard work. The body paragraphs **support, develop and prove** the main argument. The body is by far the most important part of the essay, because this is where all the analysis occurs.
- Finally, the conclusion **summarises** everything that was already said in the body paragraphs so that the essay ends on a smooth note. More on the conclusion later.

Now, let's look at each of the three parts in a little more detail.

Introduction

The main role of the introduction is to introduce the subject statement. That's pretty much it. There are some other details, but we don't care about them at the moment.

What *would* be really useful is to show you what a good, real subject statement looks like.

CS Lewis example

Let's say we've just read an extract from a novel by CS Lewis. Quick summary: the narrator is super paranoid about the dark.

- Here the writer's purpose is simply to characterise the narrator as a fearful person. Characterisation is a very common purpose that you will find in many IB extracts, *especially* prose extracts.
- A good subject statement for this extract looks like this (there are many alternatives):

"In the prose extract, Lewis uses setting and tone to characterise the irrational, fearful and unreliable nature of the narrator."

Les Murray example

Here's another quick example for a poem by the Australian poet, Les Murray.

"In the poem, Murray hyperbolises society's aversion towards emotion in order to criticize masculinity as a restrictive social norm that inhibits the natural expression of emotion."

If we look at these two good subject statements side-by-side, we can spot the formula for what makes a good subject statement:

"The writer does this, this and this in order to achieve _____ (core purpose, idea, or message)."

A good main argument is a clear statement of how the writer's language achieves the writer's overall purpose. For now, that's all you need to know.

Body

Okay, so you have a subject statement for, say, the Les Murray poem. Let's imagine that you've already written the introduction. The immediate next step is to write the body of the essay. In the body, your job is to **prove the bold claim that you made** in the subject statement.

So how do you prove the subject statement? You do it by looking at individual points. These smaller points support **smaller, specific aspects** of the overall subject statement.

The idea is that each body paragraph tries to prove a separate, smaller aspect of the bigger purpose. It's like a jigsaw puzzle: You must piece together smaller, more manageable pieces to build the bigger idea.

So there are usually three points, each in a separate body paragraph. Why does there have to be three points? I don't know. It's just convention. Probably some random philosopher in Greece like two thousand years ago thought that an argument with one supporting point is absolute rubbish, and 2 doesn't seem good enough either, so the next best thing is three. Who knows. By the way, don't write that in your history essay if you take history. In general, three points is a good balance between depth and breadth of your essay. Of course, three is only a general rule. Two and four body paragraphs also work very well if it suits the extract.

Okay, so we use specific points to support the bigger subject statement. Now the question is… how do we come up with these amazing points? Well… we don't.

Up until now, I've been very evil and sneaky. I've made you think that we start with the subject statement *and then* we think of supporting points. This is the exact opposite of what actually happens.

- In reality, we dig through an unseen extract and find interesting points and ideas first, *and then* we think of an overall subject statement—a nice large umbrella—that encapsulates each idea nicely into a single sentence.

So really, we already have the points in our minds when we write the body paragraphs. What might these points look like for our examples?

- For the CS Lewis example, the ideas contained in the subject statement are obviously the original ideas from which the subject statement was derived. The ideas would be irrationality, fear and unreliability of the narrator. Nice and simple.
- For the Les Murray example, it's less obvious, because it's a more complex piece of writing. One set of points out of many possibilities is this:
    - Portrayal of society's rejection of emotion.
    - Criticism of masculinity as a restrictive social norm.
    - Emotional expression as a natural and liberating act.
- Don't worry about how I chose these points. Those are distracting details. What you should understand from this example is simply that these points address smaller aspects of the overarching subject statement.

So how do we prove the points? Analysis. By analysing the heck out of the text. The body paragraphs should be full of analysis. If you're not stuffing these paragraphs with so much analysis like flavoured rice into a juicy chicken, then you're not doing it right.

In each point, what you want to do is:

- Present a relevant quote that supports the point.
- Analyse the quote.
- Repeat for 2, 3 or 4 quotes.

Often, students don't *really understand* why we have to analyse in the points; they analyse because the teacher tells them to do it, but they don't really know why they're doing it. Here's why you analyse.

Remember the subject statement? It claims that the writer achieves a core purpose. The rest of the essay is dedicated to proving this fact. When you analyse, what you're doing is explaining how specific examples of language achieve that core purpose. Analysis is simply about giving real examples from the text that support the subject statement.

Conclusion

The truth is: the conclusion doesn't really matter. But you still need to write it, and you still need to write it well, because Criterion C (Organisation) depends on a completely written essay. Never leave out the conclusion.

A conclusion summarises the subject statement and the points. You cannot introduce new information, new quotes or new analysis in the conclusion. Stay away from new stuff.

The best conclusions are those that finish off the essay with an insightful, relevant, and (often) slightly cheesy message about life. For example:

- How does this text impact the reader?
- How does it change the reader's worldview?

Word count

A Paper 1 should ideally be anywhere between **800 to 1000 words**. I personally wrote towards the higher end of the range, but you can certainly get a good mark if you write concisely. Quality of analysis is more important than quantity of analysis.

In terms of a word count for each section:

- Introduction – no longer than 150 words
- Body – 750 to 900 words
    - Point 1 – 250 to 300 words
    - Point 2 – 250 to 300 words
    - Point 3 – 250 to 300 words
- Conclusion < 100 words

It's important to ensure that there is a balanced word count in each of the points. A common mistake is to write a lot on the first point and then run out of time, and then rush through the last two points without any depth. Time management is important; we'll cover this skill later.

Conclusions are almost always written in a mad scramble in last 2 to 5 minutes, so 100 words is very decent effort, and I actually wouldn't write any more than that, because you're not developing newer or deeper ideas anyway.

Summary

In the Paper 1, you are trying to **prove a central argument** about how the writer achieves his/her **purpose**.

- The introduction introduces this main argument.
- The points in the body support different but connected aspects of the central argument. The magic of analysis all happens here in these 3 body paragraphs.
- In the body paragraphs, **quotes from the text are used to support the points**, and **each point supports one part of the subject statement**.

How to Interpret Any Text

Before we get into the details of *how* to successfully deconstruct a text, I think it's useful to show you what the end result of the deconstruction process looks like. After you have deconstructed a text, you should have a couple things:

- A colourfully annotated text,
- An understanding of the writer's core purpose, and
- The main ideas and techniques used to achieve this core purpose

Deconstruction is about *analysing a text line-by-line in excruciating detail* while also *understanding its overall messages and ideas* to the point that we can confidently write a essay on the text.

The first time you read the text, you will be extremely confused…especially if you're in HL English. Naturally, there will be questions floating in your mind like:

- What is happening?
- Why is there a talking bird in the poem?
- Is the narrator a guy or a girl…or an animal?

And so the first step is to actually understand the text at the literal level. Answer these questions in your head:

- **Who** is the speaker or narrator? **Who** are the characters?
- **What** is the situation?
- **Where** is the text set?
- **When** is text set? In the modern day, or 500 hundred years ago?

Let's do a theoretical running example on the side to show you what I mean as we go through the deconstruction process. After the first step, I would know this: “The poem is roughly about whale watching.”

Now, the next step is easy, you don't even need to do anything. The next step is this: Avoid the trap of randomly annotating techniques all over the place. Wildly circling techniques feels like progress, but it won't get you any closer to understanding the deeper meaning.

Steps to deconstruct any text

Step 1

Break it down

Break down the text into logical sections. These sections could be paragraphs or stanzas. If the poem is a single blob of text, then it makes things a little harder. Try to find places where the focus of the writer changes during the annotation process.

Step 2

Getting the message

Start with the first section. Annotate it completely.

- First, understand the broad focus of the section. What idea is repeated again and again? If the section mainly describes flowers, trees and animals, then the broad focus of the section must be the setting. Scribble the idea on the side of the page.
- Now that you've narrowed down the main focus of the section, you need to understand the writer's message or opinion about that focus. If the focus is “the setting”, we need to determine whether the writer's message is: “the setting is threatening”, or “the setting is welcoming”, or “the setting is beautiful”. To find the answer, you need to annotate the techniques in detail.
- What I always annotate:
    - **Any and all literary techniques**: briefly annotate the meaning, purpose and effect (< 5 words).
    - **Tone**: Tone almost always reveals the writer's message. Diction is the biggest indication of tone. Look at the connotations of the writer's diction. Is it sad? Is it happy? Is it emotional or neutral?
    - **Mood / atmosphere:** Mood is another door into the writer's purpose. Mood informs us about how the writer is trying the manipulate the reader.
    - For all techniques, briefly annotate the **purpose** and **effect.**

How I annotate texts

When I find a technique, I immediately cycle through different interpretations of the technique in my head until I find one that allows the technique to **fit nicely** into the overall purpose. It helps an **extremely significant amount** if you are familiar with the common effects and purposes of all the common techniques. We covered the most common usages of all the literary techniques in the Analysis Advice sections in the Literary Techniques section of the course.

This process of finding the appropriate interpretation for a technique is very much like a process of trial-and-error—sort of like finding the right place for a piece in a jigsaw puzzle. When I think my interpretation for the technique fits with the bigger picture (that is, the writer's message), I scribble down one or two words to summarise the basic idea, or purpose, or effect—**whatever is most important** about that technique. Don't write too much because too many annotations will get confusing.

Step 3

Summarise the idea

Using these annotations, summarise the main purpose of the section in no more than 5 words. I only move on to the next section after I've found the core idea in the current section.

- This systematic approach prevents you from getting lost and confused and juggling a hundred different ideas in your mind. Add stress to that--it's not ideal.
- The five words? It's an arbitrary number. The goal is to extract a concise central meaning out of all the confusing text, so that you have a clear and concise idea of what the writer is trying to say in each part of the text.

However, do allow some flexibility in the process

I know I just said that I annotate a text in order from start to finish, and I do—for the most part. But it's also **essential to go back-and-forth** between different parts of the text to understand the overall message. A piece of literature is just like a painting or a drawing. It's impossible to grasp the Bigger Picture, literally, if you stare at individual strokes of paint.

You need to step back and soak in all the colours, all the lines, everything at once.

The same logic applies to writing: To grasp the message of a particular section, it's important to step back mentally and absorb the ideas in the sections before and after it. So deconstruction is a sequential process overall, but you also have to look backwards and forwards.

Step 4: Can't get the message? Repeat.

At the start, you will feel like you're walking around in circles. This is normal because you haven't looked at the entire text in detail yet. Be patient.

Over the course of 10 to 20 minutes of re-interpreting and re-annotating each section, you will find interesting things you missed the first time. You will begin to see similar themes and ideas. Gradually, the writer's core message will surface and piece together… until CLICK. Everything becomes clear as day (or at least clearer).

How can I get good at deconstructing texts accurately and quickly?

- **Practice.** There are no new stories. All the stories that we hear and read are simply variations of the same fundamental narrative or poetic thread. The more you read, practise and see, the more you will gain intuition and amass a mental library of things that you've seen before in other stories and poems. I've been doing IB Papers for about 4 years now as a student and tutor. I regularly reuse the same fundamental ideas and themes because they just pop up so often.
- **Familiarity with techniques.** Being extremely comfortable with the conventional uses of all the main literary techniques will help dramatically in finding the writer's purpose more efficiently. As soon as you see a technique, you should be able to quickly grasp the idea, purpose and effect. Familiarity with techniques will really shorten the amount of time you spend in the initial stage of walking around in circles.

Deconstructing texts effectively also requires two key ways of thinking:

- Patience—a fisherman has to wait patiently for his catch. You have to wait patiently for the Eureka moment when all becomes clear.
- Confidence—you need to truly believe that that Eureka moment will come. If you patiently dig into the details of the text, it is inevitable. You *will* find the ultimate purpose of the writer.

Useful hacks and advice

- Read the **guiding question** first. They give you a hint about what the main ideas or purpose is for the text.
- If you're **stuck on one section**, you can move on to the next one to find some patterns across the text. Just don't hop from section to section without any focus.
- If it's a **poem**, look at the **title** as you go through each section. Try to find a connection between the title and the main ideas. The title often reveals a deeper message.
- **How to express strong themes.** Generalise specific ideas to get a strong theme. If a stanza in a poem is about soldiers suffering from wounds, don't write down the idea as "Soldiers suffering from wounds." Generalise the specific situation to a universal message. For example, it's much better to write "the brutality of war," because the writer's core idea isn't that wounds suck; instead, he's trying to say that war sucks. Wounds are just individual examples that illustrate why war sucks.
- **Tone is extremely useful.** That's why it's the first thing on the list to notice. Tone is the metaphorical key to unlocking the writer's message. Here's what you can do: Look at the diction; it's always reveals the tone. Determine whether the tone is positive, neutral or negative. If the tone is positive or negative, narrow it down: Is it effusive, cheerful, admiring, respectful? Or is it bitter, critical, mocking, disappointed? Or is the tone neutral, factual? Tone is like a compass; it will always point you towards the writer's attitude, and the writer's attitude will always point you to his core message.

How to Interpret Any Visual Text (Lang Lit Only)

When analysing any Language & Literature text, you'll probably come across a visual element. The IB Literature kids have it easy with just their poems and prose extracts, but Lang Lit kids like yourself must also become familiar with visual text-types. These include **photos**, **cartoons**, **posters**, and **illustrations**

Now, visual elements are certainly great to look at, but that's not the main reason why they're there! It's important to realise that *all* visual elements are purposeful in some way, and therefore visual elements must be **analysed**, much like written text, in order to squeeze out maximum marks.

Go with the flow

The best way to analyse a visual stimulus is to explore its significant visual elements **in the same order in which the reader would view and process** the piece. After all, the composition of a piece is supposed to fulfil this exact purpose: to guide the audience's focus from one element to the next.

Interpreting, deconstructing and planning our visual analysis of a stimulus in this sequential manner is the easiest, most natural method for three reasons:

- **You know where to start:** Picking the place to start is difficult when there are so many elements to choose from. Starting at the most eye-catching place gets rid of this annoying decision for you.
- **You won't get confused:** It's pretty straightforward to handle individual parts of a picture.

- **It's bakes logical flow directly into analysis:** The hardest thing to obtain in analysis is logical flow. By analysing in a logical order from start to finish, you won't have this problem! We'll learn more about the importance of logical flow in the Advanced section of the course.

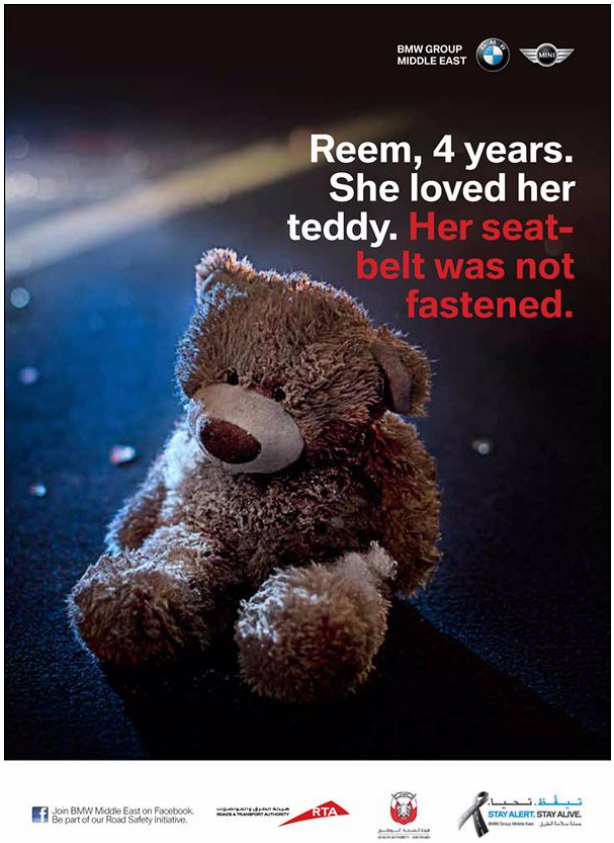
Speaking in Metaphors

Imagine that a painting is initially hidden in complete darkness. A single light lights the lower-right corner of the canvas, revealing a detail which the light now traces towards the centre of the canvas. As the light moves, revealing a new visual element at every turn, our mental image of the piece forms and solidifies. By the end, we are able to string every visual element together into a coherent an interpretation of the entire piece.

Here, the light is an extended metaphor for human attention. The painting is an extended metaphor for a Language and Literature visual stimulus. You just learned about extended metaphors whilst also learning about how to deconstruct a visual text--our productivity is through the roof!

Example: Order of visual analysis

Let's illustrate what we mean by going through the order of 'eye-catchiness' for a real visual text. The example we'll examine together is a poster advert by BMW about the importance of wearing seat belts.



1. **White text.** BAM. The pure bold, white text contrasted against the dark asphalt background. How could anyone possibly miss this? This is likely to be the first thing the audience notices in the poster advert. So what do we know so far? Well, we know that an adorable young child called Reem "loved" her teddy bear. The past tense is extremely important and creates alarm in the reader: "What happened to the girl!?"

2. **Deep red.** The reader reads the white text...which quickly transitions into a deep red font colour. Red symbolises blood, a fitting colour for the content of the text, which implies that the innocent, adorable girl died because of unsafe behaviour. At this point, we are shocked and feel a sense of loss and sadness.
3. **Teddy in the foreground.** After reading the text, our sight is naturally drawn to the next object of interest: the abandoned teddy bear positioned at the centre of the poster just to the left of the text. The teddy bear, which we know belong*ed* to Reem, is a symbol of childhood and connotes happiness, jubilance and youth, feelings and ideas that clash harshly with sad mood, which creates a feeling of remorse (i.e. awww, this shouldn't have happened!). Also notice how the teddy bear's head looks down; this dejected 'body language' reinforces the grave tone of the advert.
4. **Asphalt in the background.** The teddy and the text are in the foreground. After the foreground, we naturally notice the background: an empty asphalt road with blurry, broken glass scattered over the ground. The large empty space in the background (technique: composition), combined with the cold colours of grey and blue, thus stirs up a forlorn/lonely and dismal atmosphere that fills us with further sadness.
5. **Footer.** The white bar positioned at the bottom of the page informs the reader about several organisations that support road safety awareness.
6. **Wait, lemme see that again.** After a second scan of the stimulus, you'll notice that the poster was produced by the car manufacturer *BMW*, whose logo is positioned at the upper-right corner of the stimulus. The company's subdued branding suggests that the poster's purpose is not to sell BMW's product but in fact to engage and inform reader's about the hazards of driving without a seatbelt—i.e. raising awareness about a good cause. However, at the same time, BMW as a brand also stands to gain from voicing ethical concerns: They are viewed as an 'ethical' company that cares about its users and customers, hence improving their business in the long-term through favourable public perception of the company's values.

The blue part in step 6 is the type of analysis of writer's purpose that many Language and Literature students do not realise. Always ask yourself: "Is there another reason why this text was created? How does the identity of the author impact the purpose of this piece?" That, my friends, is how a 7 is earned.

Alternative interpretations: Always welcome!

In IB English there is never a single correct way to analyse a text, so don't be afraid to analyse a text based on how *you* perceived the text. After all, you *are* are a part of the audience, too! Of course, your interpretation must be logical and justifiable with evidence.

For example, you may have seen the teddy bear before the text, since it's right in the middle of the poster, the centre of attention. In such a case, you could say that this symbol of youthful energy immediately elicits a sense of endearment and nostalgia from the audience. Following that—when drawn towards the text—the warm emotions quickly turn to shock and sadness as the reader becomes aware of the context of the piece. You would then justify how this ordering of visual elements is intentional and that this sudden shift from positive to negative emotions, created by the composition of the visual elements (bear in the middle (1) --> text with high contrast (2)), is particularly effective in achieving BMW's (surface) purpose of reminding motorists of the importance of safe transportation practices.

Comics and Cartoons

When it comes to analysing more visual texts such as cartoons and comic strips, the same idea of sequential visual analysis can be applied. For these text types in particular, it is also very important to take note of and analyse the author's use of **facial expressions** and/or **gestures**, as this level of analysis is expected from you. Think about how these visual features develop the atmosphere or overall tone of the piece, and even how it develops over multiple frames. Often times, the facial expressions used will influence the mood of the audience greatly.

Example: Comic strip

1. In **frame 1** the nurse looks delighted, and the mother looks pleased as she announces that her baby will be "totally free form sex stereotyping". Notice the high modality in "totally", which creates a confident tone. The mother is feeling confident and proud about her decision to rebuke society's tendencies of sex stereotyping--at least so far...

2. In **frame 2** the nurse declares the gender of the baby to be male, and her facial expression remains unchanged. Meanwhile, as the nurse piles on evidence of the baby's masculinity, the mother's facial expression grows somewhat worried, insecure, and uncertain (small mouth and eyes). She seems to be observing her baby's features and considering the merits of the nurse's observations. She is asking herself: "Does my baby girl really look like a boy!?"

3. In **frame 3** the nurse maintains her relentless listing of the baby's stereotypically masculine attributes. This ultimately causes the mother to explode for she: 1) can no longer withstand the unceasing sex stereotyping that she desperately wants her baby to avoid, or 2) can no longer suppress her growing insecurity about her baby girl' masculine attributes. The mother breaks into a hysterical cry and emphasises the baby's correct gender, ironically sex-stereotyping her baby in the process.

4. In **frame 4** the nurse immediately switches her listing of attributes from male characteristics to female characteristics, which reveals the superficiality of sex stereotyping. The unimpressed facial expression of the mother shows her hostility towards society's superficial stereotyping.

Example analysis of a technique: Facial expressions

In this comic strip, the author uses facial expressions to hyperbolise and ridicule modern society's inclination towards gender stereotyping. In the third and fourth frames of the comic strip, the cartoonist uses exaggerated expressions of indignation and annoyance--specifically, the mother's hysteria in frame 3, evidenced by the gaping mouth, and her stern set of eyebrows in frame 4. The mother's extreme variation of facial and emotional expression is juxtaposed with the careless naiveté of the nurse, whose facial expressions are kept blithely constant throughout the comic. In response, audiences may feel compelled to laugh along with the comic as they watch the mother's futile attempts to wrestle with the nurse's unyielding barrage of customary gender stereotyping. Hence, through the

cartoonist's selective manipulation and juxtaposition of the characters' facial expressions, the comic offers a facetious exploration of society's predilection to the constraints of gender roles.

More analysis: Situational irony plus facial expressions

You can even extend this visual analysis deeper by discussing the **situational irony** (which we talked about earlier in the literary techniques section) that is explored through the successive **shifts in the mother's attitude towards stereotyping**:

The mother's initial eagerness to protect her newborn from the harms of "sex stereotyping" quickly vanishes upon the old nurse's wrongful stereotyping of the mother's baby girl as a male. The mother's sudden hysteria at this incorrect categorisation, hyperbolised through the capital letters and the distraught tone in frame 3, highlights the deep roots of gender stereotypes in society. The cartoonist portrays that even the staunchest protestors of gender stereotyping ultimately succumb--somewhat hypocritically--to the instinctive desire, or insecurity, to conform to the very gender norms by which she was initially repulsed. The artist's creation of situational irony in the mother's strong emotional response towards erroneous stereotyping serves to ridicule our inability to escape from traditional ideas of what gender means.

Electronic texts: Websites, blogs, and articles

Another common visual-textual text type is the electronic text, which may take the form of:

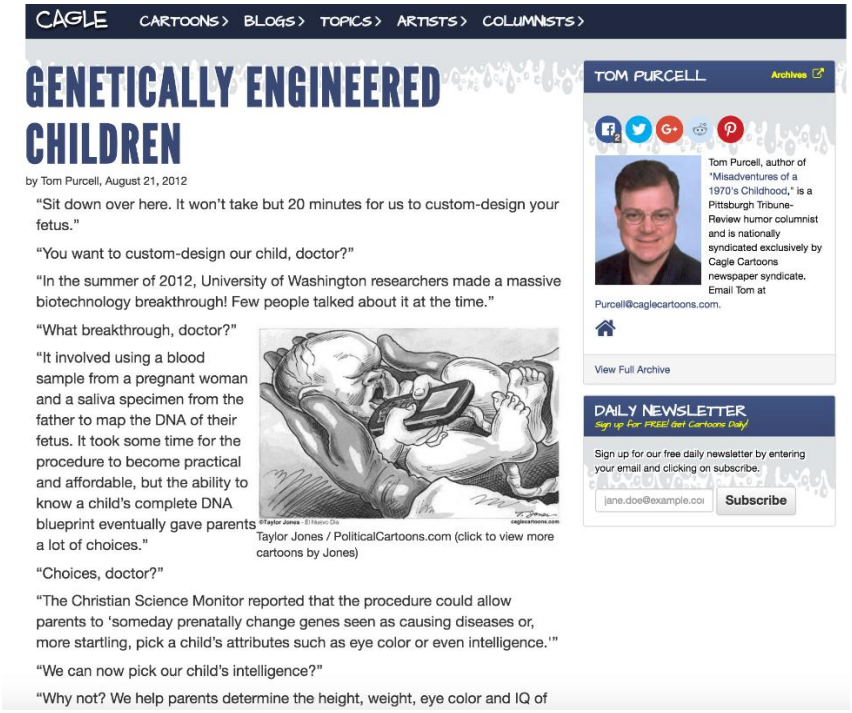
- an online news article,
- an opinion piece,
- a blog post, or
- appeals to charity and non-profit organisations

Deconstructing and interpreting an electronic text where both visual and textual information are given requires three steps:

1. Interpret the meaning of the **text**
2. Interpret the meaning of the **visual elements**
3. Consider the **connection** between the text and the visuals

Let's take a look at an example where a deconstruction of the heading, text and image together provide insight into the **writer's purpose** and the **target audience**--both of which must be ascertained first before deconstructing the text further.

Example



The formal features of online articles like this one are large headings, complementary illustrations, and of course written text.

1. In the **heading**, the words "genetically engineered" suggest that the article explores quite an intellectual topic. While the medium of the text is online and thus accessible to mass readership, the scientific language (jargon) in the heading makes us think that the intended audience of the piece is a more educated, well-informed group within society that understands, and is interested in, scientific concepts.

2. The next most eye-catching element is certainly the **image**. What does this reveal? First, it is a cartoon. It's also a ridiculous cartoon in which a baby is using a mobile phone. So far, without having even read a word of the article, we can guess that the author is poking fun at, or **satirising**, something that involves technology and babies.

3. Okay. Now we have to read the text--the final piece of the puzzle. It turns out that the text is entirely a dialogue between a doctor and a couple who are planning to have a baby. The dialogue is a **parody**, meaning that it humorously imitates and exaggerates something.

Now that we have visited each element of the text, we can fuse them together to reach the ultimate truth: What's the writer's purpose? (The target audience has been more or less nailed down.)

Since the text is a parody and the image depicts a ridiculous situation, it's fairly clear that the author is trying to **satirise the encroaching impacts of technology on deeply human areas of life**, with a focus on birth. It asks the question: "Is this the shocking, ridiculous reality that we *really* want?"

Summary

- Interpret and analyse texts in the most natural order of perception.
- Use visual and textual information to determine the writer's purpose and target audience *before* doing anything else.
- Pay attention to facial expressions and dialogue in cartoons.

- Consider the connection between the text's meaning, the illustration's meaning, and the writer's message / purpose.

How to Write a Bullet-proof Thesis for Paper 1

If you have deconstructed a text successfully, as explained step-by-step in the previous lesson, you will now have three things:

- several main ideas
- annotations of techniques
- the writer's overall purpose

Now we need to summarise these three things in a single sentence called the thesis. At this point, we still haven't started writing the essay yet. We are still in the planning phase. By doing all of this planning, the writing process will be much easier.

What is a thesis?

The thesis is a single sentence in the introduction of the essay that states *how* the writer achieves his overall purpose. (Also make sure your thesis answers the guiding question and uses the same keywords to show the examiner you're answering the guiding question.)

This sentence—this thesis—is also the *main argument* that you are trying to prove in your essay. The examiner can usually judge the strength of your analytical skills just from your thesis alone, so it needs to be well-written.

How to write a strong thesis

A good thesis **must** tick two boxes:

- clear and concise
- conveys writer's intention

Step 1

Be clear and concise

Students often write a long, winding sentence for their thesis. This is bad because the marker cannot easily distinguish your thesis from the rest of your introduction. This is particularly bad when you realise that a marker spends only a couple of minutes reading through each essay (ain't nobody got time for dat).

As such, you should always write a clear and concise thesis that is no longer than ~30 words.

"In the story, the author looks at how the main character is sad and how he always fights with his parents when he returns home from school." (27 words)

This is a bad thesis:

- The language isn't clear. In particular, the verb "looks" is too vague and informal. The word "how" is also informal.

- The sentence isn't concise. The thesis should focus only on the main ideas: sadness and familial conflict. The contextual detail of "coming home from school" is distracting. Avoid excess information in the thesis.

A better thesis looks like this:

"In the prose extract, the author conveys the sadness of the protagonist through the portrayal of his frequent conflict with his parents." (21 words)

- The language is clearer and more sophisticated. Notice how instead of writing "In the story", we can write "In the prose extract".
- The sentence is also more concise. The language in "conveys" is much better than "looks at".

Another great thesis might look like this:

"In the prose extract, the author characterises the protagonist as a sad teenager who suffers frequent conflict with his parents."

- Here, the thesis is explicit about the literary focus of the essay by including the term "characterization."
- In the poem/prose extract/article, (author X) explores/ criticizes/ ridicules/ portrays/ highlights/ illustrates the (subject) in order to (purpose).

In general, use this formula for clear and concise thesiss.

*In the poem / play / prose extract / article (**genre**), the writer explores / criticises / ridicules/ portrays / highlights / illustrates (**some verb**) _____ (**idea, effect, or meaning**).*

Our thesis is now clear and concise, but there's one problem. It feels too simplistic. There's no depth. The reason is because we're missing something essential.

Step 2

Sprinkle the writer's purpose

At the moment, our thesis is simply saying: "In the text, the writer does this." But that's only half the picture. We need to add the writer's purpose. The thesis needs to say:

*"The writer does this, this and that **in order** to achieve a purpose."*

By explaining not just **what** the writer does but also **why** the writer does it, the thesis immediately becomes deeper and more complete.

For example:

*"In the prose extract, the author characterises the protagonist as a sad teenager who experiences frequent conflict with his parents **in order to highlight the harsh estrangement of adolescence**."*

where the bolded part of the thesis expresses the **intention** (why) behind the writer's use of characterisation (what).

The thesis sounds even better if we move the author's intention to the beginning of the sentence:

*"**In order to highlight the harsh estrangement of adolescence**, the author characterizes the protagonist as a sad teenager who suffers frequent conflict with his parents."*

Or, we can be a little less explicit about the purpose by expressing it as a theme: .

"In the prose extract, the author explores the distressed emotional landscape of adolescence through the portrayal of the teenage protagonist's constant melancholy and familial conflict."

- Here the writer's message is expressed instead as a central theme: the distressed emotional landscape of adolescence.

We now have a new template for writing strong thesiss that have both clarity and depth.

*In the poem / play / prose extract / article (**some genre**), the writer explores / criticises / ridicules/ portrays / highlights / illustrates (**some verb**) _____ (**idea, effect, or meaning**) in order to _____ (**some purpose**).*

After you get used to using this template, it will start to feel formulaic and boring. At that stage, feel free to do away with the training wheels and express your thesis however you like, as long as it is clear, concise and conveys the writer's intention.

Improving a real thesis by a real student

Student's version

"Banville utilises situational irony created by the characterisation of the parents, and the situational irony of the narrator's depressing holiday to express a bittersweet tone by the narrator." (28 words)

One of my lovely students (in real life) wrote this thesis for a Higher Level Paper 1 essay. We are going to identify what's wrong with it, and then we will improve on it.

- First, the thesis is **not concise**. Situational irony is mentioned too many times, and the overall idea of the narrator's depressing memories can be conveyed more succinctly.
- Second, there's an **issue with the purpose**. The student has made the bittersweet tone the writer's core purpose. But tone is never the purpose. Ever. Tone is a technique used *as a means, a vehicle, a way* to achieve a purpose. So the purpose needs to change.

Fixed version

"Banville ironically constructs the narrator's depressing memories of her childhood holidays in order to portray the fractured relationships within her family." (21 words)

- This version is clearer and more concise. It's seven words shorter. The two uses of situational irony have been replaced by just one use of "ironically". The reason for doing so is because situational irony is distracting detail that is irrelevant in the thesis but can be mentioned later in the introduction or in the points of the essay.
- Also, the purpose is now an *actual* purpose. The message of the story was really about the horrible relationship between the narrator and her parents, and this purpose is now adequately summarised in the phrase, "fractured relationships within her family." Notice how an accurate understanding of the writer's purpose is starting to become important just in the introduction; make sure you've deconstructed a text well before you even attempt to write the thesis, because otherwise your interpretation will be wrong and your Knowledge and Understanding Criterion will go down.
- Also, I removed the reference to *tone* from the thesis. The reason why tone is removed entirely from the thesis is because, like situational irony, tone is a distracting detail that is not

important at the Big Picture level and should instead be mentioned later in the introduction and body paragraphs.

Depth can kill

A common question that students ask me is this, and you might have wondered about it many times before. The question is this: “Does the thesis (or thesis, or argument) have to be **really deep**?”

In other words, does the writer's purpose need to be highly philosophical message about things like, “What is the meaning of life?”

The answer is a definite **“No.”** Don't try to make up some deep message that doesn't exist in the text. It might sound impressive, but it won't help you at all. In your thesis, simply write down what the writer's purpose is, and as accurately as you can. *If* you have genuinely interpreted the writer's purpose to be a deep message, like “the meaning of life”, then great. But if the writer's purpose is clearly just characterisation, then simply use that as the purpose and don't make up some corny, cheesy message that doesn't even represent the text at all.

Accuracy is what you should be worrying about, and you should not be worrying about whether the purpose in your thesis sounds intellectual or philosophical.

Choosing the optimal essay structure

Great! We now understand how to craft a strong subject statement for our essay. Now let's talk about the third thing that we need to do before we pick up a pen and start writing a essay.

The goal of your essay is to prove your subject statement. In the subject statement, you said something along the lines of:

“The writer achieves his purpose by doing X, Y and Z.”

Enter: the body paragraphs.

The points in the body of your essay do the job of supporting the bold claim you made in the subject statement. You usually have three points in a Paper 1 essay, but two or four points can also work well.

So…How do you choose the right points for each of your body paragraphs?

The first thing is actually to change our **mindset**. There are no “right points” in English, but there are “good points”, and there are many of them. So our goal is not to be paranoid about whether our points are the “right ones”, because they don't exist. Instead, we should be thinking: “There are lots of great ways to structure my essay. I just have to find one combination of points that works well.”

If you deconstructed the text to a satisfactory level, then you should have on your page the annotated techniques and the main ideas explored by the writer. At this point, we face a crossroad in our Paper 1 journey.

The more you practise, the more quickly you will be able to decide which is the most appropriate road to take for that particular text.

Now, what is this crossroad that I speak of? Note how I created suspense by not explaining immediately what this crossroad is, which creates in you, the audience, further interest and engagement with my lesson. So there's a bit of meta-analysis for you—analysis of my own teaching, because that's what I do. You never stop learning in this course.

Okay, so where were we? Oh right, what is this crossroad that we all face?

The crossroad is that moment when we have to decide on how we should structure our points. Should the points be individual ideas/themes? Or should the points refer to specific sections of the text? Or should the points be, dare I say it, the major literary techniques used in the text?

Road 1: Themes / ideas

If you organise your points by ideas or themes, then each point in the body is an idea or theme explored in the text. Each point needs to argue one small aspect of the overall purpose. These ideas should come directly from your deconstruction, where you should have found the main ideas of the text.

Example

- Sam's affection for her dog
- The dog's loyalty to Sam
- The tragic parting of Sam and the dog

Let's quickly reinforce what we learned in the last lesson on subject statements. So we have some good points. What's a good subject statement for these points?

A good subject statement that encapsulates all of these elements might look like this: “The author conveys the strong emotional bond between Sam and her dog and subsequent tragedy of their parting to highlight the **universality of friendship.**”

- Clear and concise - check
- Writer's purpose/message: “to highlight the university of friendship” - check

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Road 2: Technique

When you organise your points by technique, each point focuses on a single literary technique. You can be as broad or as specific as you want in terms of how you label or name the techniques. For example, it's totally acceptable for a point to be about ‘figurative language' in general if a poem uses one metaphor here, one simile here, and one bit of imagery there. Or for a poem that uses lots of metaphors, one of its points could just be about ‘metaphors'. How broad or narrow you you're your points depends on how much material you can get from the text.

Also note that these techniques should come directly from your deconstruction, given that you have done that step well. As you see, deconstructing a text well is extremely important.

Example

- Structure of the poem
- Visual imagery
- Personification
- Syntax

A good subject statement for this would be: “In the poem, Sylvia Plath utilises structural elements, imagery, personification and syntax in order to render a surreal representation of the dark, tormenting depths of her depression.”

“render”: to represent or depict artistically

“surreal”: bizarre

Purpose: “to render a surreal representation of the dark, tormenting depths of her depression” – just a pretentious way of saying “to show how bad her depression is”

Road 3. Organising by section

This type of structure is very similar to organising by idea.

When structuring by section, you attach a single purpose or idea to each section of a text, and then you analyse the sections chronologically. That means: Your first point will analyse the first section; your second point will analyse the second section, and so on. Instead of analysing ideas across an entire text, you analyse individual ideas confined to each section of the text.

What counts as a section?

A section is simply a group of stanzas, paragraphs or even sentences that achieve a common purpose. A common purpose could be to build an idea or theme, to create an effect on the reader, or to establish a particular tone. Notice how we aren't trapped by a specific category of points, like ‘ideas' or ‘techniques'. Section-by-section is extremely flexible because it allows you to naturally analyse whatever is important at different parts of the text.

For this type of structure to work well, the text needs to have two, three or four separate sections in which the writer is clearly focusing on different aspects.

Example

A classic example of section-by-section structuring is when a writer focuses on different aspects of the same character throughout a poem or prose extract. The writer might first focus on the arrogance of the character and then transition to their aggression, and then finally to the low self-esteem that they have deep down.

Another example: tonal shifts

- Lines 1 to 12 have a joyful tone to construct the narrator's positive attitude towards his divorce.
- In lines 13 to 24, there is a grave, depressed tone that portrays the narrator's true sadness resulting from heartbreak.
- Lines 25 to 30 are defined by a sincere, apologetic tone, which reveals the narrator's willingness to confess his wrongdoings and mend the relationship.

Important advice

Analysing a text by section does not mean analysing it line-by-line. Do not ever analyse a text line-by-line. Structuring by section just means attaching a common purpose to a section, and then analysing interesting quotes from anywhere in that section, in any order, as you would in a essay structured by idea.

What's the difference between section and idea, and why should I use section?

If you structure by section, you can pick your quotes for each point from specific sections, instead of all over the text.

If you structure by idea, you can pick quotes for each point from all over text, because that same idea is constructed repeatedly throughout the entire text, and not just concentrated in one section.

If you feel like section-by-section is too restrictive for a text, then the essay should be structured by idea. When there is a linear progression in the poem or story, structuring by section is definitely the ideal structure to use.

What's the best structure?

It depends on the text. In general, though:

- idea - great
- section - great
- technique - womp womp

Technique

Structuring by technique is almost always a bad choice, and you should avoid it like the plague, because… let me explain.

Writers, in reality, combine lots of different techniques to build individual ideas. And so the techniques in a piece of writing work together to create a cumulative idea or effect.

Structuring a essay by technique destroys this authentic interaction between techniques. And that means: It's very difficult to achieve good analysis. Good analysis is achieved when you analyse how a range of different techniques combine to achieve a common purpose.

A reason why structuring by technique is so tempting is because it's easy. You can just choose 3 random techniques as your points and call it a day. The problem with this is that your points will not flow logically: We'll cover this in a later video.

So the upshot is this: Structuring by technique is easy, but you probably won't get a high mark. I say “probably” because there is *one* exception: The only time organizing by technique is an appropriate choice is when the text only explores one main idea. Other than that, this type of structure should be your last resort.

Section

Organising by section is my go-to essay structure because… it just makes sense. Writers tend to develop their ideas and characters sequentially as the story unfolds. It's also very convenient to analyse complex techniques like shifts in tone, mood, atmosphere, and pace; and not to mention how character development blends effortlessly into the essay.

The 5-Step Introduction Formula

Writing an introduction should be a quick and simple process that takes minimal brain power and **less than 5 minutes** of your exam time. To do this, what we need is a **simple formula** that tells us exactly what we need to write. That way, we can start the essay with a strong momentum. A lot of students

also fall into the trap of trying to get the 'perfect' introduction, and this formula will help you avoid it...

Formula

This is the formula we recommend to write Paper 1 introductions.

1. Basic **details** about the author, title of the work, text type.
2. A basic **summary** of the text—plot, characters, what happens. No analysis here.
3. A brief, **unique, Big Picture observation**: Anything to do with the message, tone, mood, atmosphere, or some other interesting thing you notice, like perhaps the unconventionality of the main character, or the fact that the writer uses minor characters to portray central themes. Basically, any broad, interesting observation.
4. A clear and concise **thesis (thesis)** answering the guiding question (and containing the writer's purpose).
5. **Outline** of your points. i.e. List of points in the order of presentation.

Here is an example of an excellent introductory paragraph that uses this exact formula.

"In the prose extract from the novel Into the fields by author Aaron Jaws, the protagonist Mrs. Hoof sits on her verandah as she converses with her neighbour about domestic life. Mrs. Hoof's pondering is particularly whimsical and creates a humour that pervades the extract, thus shaping the exploration of otherwise serious themes with a degree of triviality. In the extract, Jaws explores the themes of domesticity, friendship and isolation through the unconventional characterisation of Mrs. Hoof and her neighbour. The pair begin their conversation on domestic duties, which quickly turn to a discussion on relationships and loneliness."

(98 words)

Overall comments. This is an IB level 7 introduction. 98 words is a good length (less than 100 words). The thesis is concise, and the purpose in the thesis is implicit in the themes.

Unique, Big Picture observation. My personal observation is about the humour (so that's mood, but I didn't mention "mood" explicitly because it would be too analytical for the introduction):

Mrs. Hoof's pondering is particularly whimsical and creates a humour that pervades the extract, thus shaping the exploration of otherwise serious themes with a degree of triviality.

The unique comment just needs to **sound** insightful. In English, even dumb ideas can seem credible if it's worded in the right way. The comment can also be slightly subjective; it'll make it seem even more fresh and original.

Outline of points. The outline of points here doesn't seem to be necessary. Sometimes we don't need to outline the points because the thesis has already implied the order of the points, which is the case in this example.

Example by a real student

One of my lovely students again volunteered to let me use an introduction that s/he wrote. We'll use it as an example for discussion.

The passage of The Sea by John Banville is narrated by a person who is reminiscing about their relationship with their deceased parents, focusing on a specific summer holiday they spent at a beach. Due to each parents' personality, either violent or detached, readers are confronted with the memories of an abusive childhood, drawing sympathy for the narrator. Banville utilises situational irony created by the characterisation of the parents, and the situational irony of the narrator's depressing holiday to express a bittersweet tone by the narrator. He is embarrassed and irritated by the lack of positive parental qualities his mother and father had, which has carried throughout the years to the present, and readers are able to understand the disastrous effect a negative childhood had on the narrator, elevating feelings of sympathy and compassion.

(134 words)

- **Overall comment.** This is a very strong introduction. The only issues I would flag are the unclear thesis and the length of the paragraph. The thesis here is actually the same thesis we fixed up earlier in the lesson about developing a strong thesis.
- **Unique comment.** I like the Big Picture comment about the narrator's not-so-great childhood and the parents' distinct personalities.
- **Length.** This introduction is a bit too long. The last part highlighted in green is too much detail for the introduction.
- **Outline of points.** The last sentence isn't a clear outline of points. It's too long and unfocused. The outline of points needs to be concise and demonstrate the logical links between the points. The outline here does not demonstrate the links. To improve this last sentence, we need to make it 1) shorter, 2) highlight the logical links between points.

How to structure a main point for Paper 1

Every point is made up of the same three parts:

1. Topic sentence
2. Analysis of quotes
3. Link to subject statement

Let's look at each of these in detail.

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1. Topic sentence

Now, you might think that topic sentences aren't important, but actually, they're extremely important. When I read through a point, the first thing I want to know is: “What is your point?” If I don't see your point clearly outlined in the first sentence of the paragraph, then my expectation of the quality of your essay immediately drops.

- So a topic sentence needs to be good because it gives the first impression of your point, which *will affect* the marker's opinion of your writing throughout the entire point.
- A topic sentence also gives *you* a clear idea of where your argument is heading (like the guy below). A clear sense of argumentative direction is extremely important in avoiding circular arguments that either get nowhere or get lost somewhere in the bushes.

Let's look at a bad topic sentence that students always tend to write.

"The first paragraph sets the scene of the extract."

- **It's too vague.** After reading it… we still have no idea how exactly the author 'sets the scene.' How is the scene set? Is it inviting or threatening? This topic sentence answers none of those questions.
- **It's not even an analytical point.** It is simply describing what the writer is doing. It is description, not analysis. To turn the description into an analytical point, we need to explain *why* the writer chose to "set the scene." In other words, the writer's purpose is missing from this topic sentence. It feels shallow precisely because it doesn't answer the question: "Why, or for what reason, did the writer decide to do this?"

Here's a much better topic sentence. In fact, I'd call it an **excellent** topic sentence.

"In the outset of the extract (lines 1 – 10), Dickens establishes the bleak setting of London in order to portray the harsh economic climate of the 1800s."

Now, why is that a kick-ass topic sentence?

- **It's clear and specific:** We know exactly **what** is being established (the setting of London), and exactly **how** it's being established (bleak). That is a crystal clear idea: "The bleak setting of London." The topic sentence would be much worse if it didn't include the adjective, "bleak". Adding "bleak" makes the point clear.
- We also know **why** the author is establishing the setting in this "bleak" manner, and that reason is "to portray the harsh economic climate of the 1800s." That's the writer's purpose. Notice how the purpose is added in very smoothly using this sneaky phrase, my personal favourite—'in order'. Great phrase. I highly recommend it. By adding the author's purpose in the topic sentence, the point feels like it has substance and a sense of direction.
- The **line numbers** make the focus of the point extremely clear compared to just writing down: "the first paragraph." Note that you should only do this if you are organising the essay by section (my favourite type of organisation <3).

Three general rules for kick-ass topic sentences

1. Be clear. There is a time and place for mystery. A topic sentence is not one of them. Outline your entire point without ambiguity.

2. Writer's purpose. Your topic sentence needs to be analytical, not descriptive. That means it must contain the writer's purpose. Sometimes, when there isn't a clear message, you can instead substitute the effect for the writer's purpose (in this case, then, the writer's purpose is to create an effect on the reader).

For example:

"*In the outset of the extract (lines 1 – 10), Dickens establishes the bleak setting of London in order to portray the harsh economic climate of the 1800s create a pervasive sense of hopelessness for the reader."*

The problem with this is, there's still a question left unanswered: "Why is the hopelessness being created in the first place?" Sometimes, this is the best purpose you can extract from a text. An idea or message is always best, but effect is a good alternative.

3. Mentioning the technique. This is optional.

- **Do** mention it if your topic sentence feels too short or vague.
- **Don't** mention it if it makes the topic sentence too long and clumsy

When you specifically structure by section or idea:

- **Do** add a technique to the topic sentence if you plan to analyse just one or two main techniques for the point. In our example, we plan to only analyse the main technique of setting, so we can mention it without making the topic sentence too long.
- If you are planning to analyse more than two main techniques for the point, then listing all of them will only clutter the topic sentence, making it confusing. **Don't** add the techniques in this case. You can always outline the techniques in a separate sentence immediately after the topic sentence, but that's not strictly required either.

If you are structuring by technique:

1. Good luck
2. **Do** mention the technique because it's obviously essential to your point.

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2. Analysis of quotes

This is by far the **most important** part of the entire point. It's where you support your point by analysing quotes from the text.

This section will answer Frequently Asked Questions about quotes. If you have specific questions, please do ask them below in the comments!

Q1. How many quotes should I analyse for each point?

- You need about three quotes for every point.
- The optimal number of quotes depends on how complex your quotes are, but in general, three is a good number. A quote is more complex if it contains more techniques.

Q2. What quotes should I choose to analyse?

There are two factors to consider when choosing quotes from any text.

Quality

The maxim “Garbage in, garbage out” has never been truer.

If you start out with bad quotes, then you will get bad analysis. Here are the two criteria for choosing high quality quotes: 1) First, your quotes must support your point on a conceptual level; 2) Your quotes must also contain interesting techniques, which guarantee that you will have good material to analyse.

Variety

You should have a wide range of literary elements in the quotes that you choose. That means: Don't just talk about diction. Find other techniques. Mix it up! In general, avoid analysing the same technique more than once or twice in a essay. Find quotes with rhetorical questions, syntactical

parallelism, juxtaposition, hyperbole, personification, antithesis. By analysing a wide range of techniques, you can really show off those… analytical muscles, not to mention, pushing up Criteria A and B.

Q3. How many techniques should I analyse for each of my quotes?

- You should analyse **all** of the techniques that you can find in **every** quote.
- Here's why: techniques are like treasure, or money, or gold. Techniques are valuable. They provide opportunity for analysis. You wouldn't walk away from gold because it's valuable. Don't walk away from techniques because they are also valuable (perhaps even more valuable than gold).
- The exception, of course, is when you run out of words.

Q4. But what if I have too many techniques in my quote?

- You shouldn't have too many techniques in a quote because your quotes should be short and contain only the words that you intend to analyse. In the next section, I will teach you how to effectively introduce quotes into your paragraphs.

Q4. But what if some techniques in the quote don't contribute to the same purpose?

- Then you shouldn't have quoted it in the first place. It's much better to quote small, relevant snippets instead of large chunks of text. Again, this will be covered in the next section.

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3. Summary and link back to the subject statement

After you've supported your individual point by analysing the hell out of those quotes, you're now ready to move on to the next point.

But hang on!

Before you rush off to the next paragraph, make sure you look at the point holistically and explain how the current point helps to prove an aspect of your larger point—the subject statement.

We'll look at examples in the next video, but I'll give you some advice here as well.

A lot of students write boring, repetitive, formulaic summaries as well as links to their subject statement. One such dull example looks like this:

"*Therefore, the author uses irony and metaphor to construct the theme of social inequality."*

Why this summary + link is bad:

- It repeats exactly what the analysis said
- It adds no new insight

Instead, a good summary + link should do a couple of important things:

- It should add holistic **insight** to your point (that is, some fresh, Big Picture spin on the specific details explored in the point).

- It should not be repetitive.

First, how do you add holistic insight to your point?

You can do this by analysing how the writer uses a **combination** of language across multiple quotes, and why this is more effective in achieving the purpose and effect. You can also examine the **style** of the writer, which I will talk about in the Advanced Analysis section of the course.

Second, how do you not be repetitive?

Change up the wording. Express the same idea in a different but similar way.

Note that this summary + link part of the point should not be too lengthy—perhaps a maximum of 20 words. You don't want to waste too many words on non-analysis material in the essay.

Lesson summary

- In every point, we begin with a topic sentence clearly outlining the point.
- The topic sentence is essentially our argument for that paragraph.
- We then support the topic sentence by analysing roughly three quotes.
- Finally, we finish off the point with a strong link to the subject statement.

How to Smoothly Embed Quotes

We'll start off with a general guide for how to introduce quotes, and then we'll jump into an in-depth example.

To introduce a quote well, you need to integrate, contextualize, and use line numbers.

A. Integrate the quote

Instead of introducing quotes, I like to say "integrating quotes." The Holy Grail is to embed the quote naturally so that it sounds like it's actually part of the sentence--a bit like camouflage.

There are two useful methods that you can jointly use to integrate quotes into your sentences.

1. Use shorter quotes

In general, anywhere from 1 to 10 words is an acceptable length for a quote. Don't be like that guy or gal who just casually drops a 30-word quote in the middle of a sentence, expecting it to survive. Nope, the sentence is dead on impact.

Quick example: In Abraham Lincoln's famous *Gettysburg Address*, the US President says:

"We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground."

If we were to analyse the anaphora, which is the repetition of the same word or phrase in successive clauses, we might be tempted to go the easy route and quote the entire sentence. But that's not integration.

As a rule of thumb, only quote the words that you plan to analyse. Anything else in the quote is irrelevant, unless it adds contextual information. Anything else is rubbish.

For the above example, we only need to quote the two words, “we cannot,” because that's where the anaphoric effect occurs. Now, we're left with a nice, short quote that's much easier to integrate.

Let's look at something concrete.

If we quote the complete sentence, we would need to introduce the quote like this:

‘In line X, Lincoln uses anaphora when he states: “We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground.'

What if we replaced that with our shorter quote? We would introduce the quote like this:

‘In line X, Lincoln's anaphora of “we cannot”…'

What's the difference between the long and shorter quotes?

LONG QUOTE: It's okay, and it'll be fine in a essay, but it's not the ideal way to introduce a quote. Grammatically, we have to stop the sentence at the end of the quote. This severely interrupts the flow of analysis. The sentence also doesn't achieve much at all; it just states the simple fact that anaphora is used, and then it proceeds to waste 11 words on repeating the entire sentence.

SHORTER QUOTE: The shorter quote achieves the same thing in much less time, energy, and words. You also have a lot of opportunity to keep the sentence flowing and developing, as opposed to abruptly off cutting the sentence after the quote.

- For instance, you can immediately jump into analysis:

‘In line X, Lincoln's anaphora of “we cannot”… *underscores the powerlessness and insignificance of the audience in order to emphasise the significance and nobility of the soldiers who sacrificed their lives.'*

- You can combine one technique with another technique:

‘In line X, Lincoln's anaphora of “we cannot”… *works together with the rule of three to create a powerful juxtaposition between the significance of those congregated and those who died bravely in battle.'*

In summary, when you introduce quotes, try to keep them short if possible and include only the relevant words.

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2. Manipulate the quote

This is going to come as a surprise to a lot of you…but…how do I put this?

You actually have a lot of freedom to manipulate your quote so that it fits into your sentence. Here's what you can do:

- You can change the tense of the words. That means you can switch between past, present and future.
- You can fill in missing words like “the”, “and”, “or”, “he”, “she”, “it”, etc.
- And you can leave out words using ellipses, […]

Mind blown.

“The army of goblins, all of whom hailed from North Polkridge and the Eastern Isles, gathered here in the black shadows of the mountain.”

- So there's this whole middle clause that adds contextual information, which we really don't need to analyse.
- We can easily get rid of something in a sentence with ellipsis and square brackets:

‘The author establishes the foreboding tone by describing the “gather[ing]” of the “army of goblins […] in the black shadows of the mountain.”'

When you change the tense or add a word, you also need to indicate the modified word(s) using square brackets.

B. Contextualise the quote

Now you know how to integrate a quote naturally into a sentence.

The second step is easy: Sprinkle some relevant contextual information around the quote—this makes the quote much clearer. What I mean by “contextual information” is brief details about the situation described in the quote.

Quick example

Without context:

‘The author writes in line 25 that the protagonist “hits” the person and “scrambles” away into “the dark of the night.”'

The quotes are short and nicely integrated, great. But there's not much contextual detail about the situation; it's a bit confusing. Who's the protagonist? Who's the victim? Why did the protagonist hit someone and run away?

With context:

‘The author writes in line 25 that the thief violently “hits” the elderly lady as he struggles for her purse, before pathetically admitting defeat and “scrambl[ing]” away into “the dark of the night.”'

By making the characters more specific and explaining the situation a little bit more, the context immediately becomes clear. It's a thief stealing a woman's purse. Each of your quotes should be contextualized in this way.

Another quick example

Without context:

‘In line X, Lincoln's anaphora of “we cannot” underscores the insignificance of the congregated audience to emphasise and pay respect to the significance of the soldiers who sacrificed their lives.'

With context:

‘In line X, Lincoln's anaphora of “we cannot” underscores the insignificance of those commemorating the Battle of Gettysburg in order to emphasise and pay respect to the significance of the soldiers who sacrificed their lives.'

C. Using line numbers

There are two ways to use line numbers.

- State the line number as part of the sentence.
- State the line number in parentheses or brackets after you've introduced the quote.

'In lines 12 to 13, the writer uses visual imagery in the "orange glow from her hair"…'

'The author uses the visual imagery of "the orange glow from her hair" (line 15) to construct…'

You can use both styles in the same essay.

D. Detailed example

Now let's look at a more in-depth example combining all of the skills that we've learned in this lesson.

"Later that night on the rolling hills of Spring Valley, the wild rabbits danced in the frozen twilight, leaping with mesmerising rhythm and silky elegance."

I want to introduce this quote to analyse.

The parts of the quote that I actually want to analyse are:

- "danced in the frozen twilight"—personification of "danced", kinaesthetic imagery of the dancing, thermal imagery of "frozen", and the visual imagery of "twilight" (the mental image of the soft, magical glow just before sunset)
- "leaping with mesmerising rhythm and silky elegance"—good diction in "mesmerising" and "silky" to build onto the already vivid impression of the rabbits' flawless beauty.

Example 1: Bad integration of evidence

'In line 36, the author writes, "Later that night on the rolling hills of Spring Valley, the wild rabbits danced in the frozen twilight, leaping with mesmerising rhythm and silky elegance," where he uses personification to describe the rabbits.'

This is a really bad way to introduce evidence.

- The quote is too long and causes the sentence structure to become awkward.
- The contextual information about the quote isn't smoothly weaved around the quote.

Example 2: Good integration of evidence

'In line 36, the author personifies the "wild rabbits" as graceful dancers by describing, with rich visual, thermal and kinaesthetic imagery, how the animals "danced in the frozen twilight" and "leap[ed] with mesmerising rhythm and silky elegance."'

Bravo. This sentence is much better.

- The sentence flows: it is not rudely interrupted mid-sentence with a massive quote. The sentence reads smoothly like a normal sentence.
- The quotes are short.
- The story unfolds naturally to the marker by adding relevant contextual information, like 'graceful dancers', to paint a clear picture of the situation.

- Only relevant pieces of information are quoted. The first part of the sentence, “Later that night on the rolling hills of Spring Valley,” is not quoted because we don't plan to analyse it.

Essential Vocabulary

Ways to describe characters

- analytical, cold, distant
- confident, authoritative
- arrogant
- emotional, fearful, distraught
- cheerful, jovial, hopeful, optimistic
- imaginative, fanciful

Common effects on the audience

- shock, anger, fear
- sympathy
- urgency
- realization
- humour

Common purposes

- persuade, convince, encourage
- educate, inform, enlighten
- criticize, satirize, undermine

Good adjectives to know

- bright, effusive
- bleak, depressing, hopeless
- eerie, unsettling, uncomfortable, discomforting
- vivid, powerful

Good verbs to know

- portrays, establishes, demonstrates, highlights, emphasizes, suggests
- constructs, produces, conjures (an image)
- elicits, invokes, evokes, causes (the reader to feel...)

Past Paper 1 Solutions

Solutions for IB English Lang & Lit SL Nov 2017

Exam: Nov 2017 TZ0 SL Paper 1

Text: Text A - by William Lyon Phelps

For the full exam and guiding questions, refer to the paper which can be purchased from the official IB store.

This Paper 1 Breakdown is written by our IB7 Lang Lit instructor Jerica Nieva, including the plan and the exemplar essay.

Pre-planning

Before you dive straight into annotating and writing a plan, you must set the basics to effectively guide your analysis:

Text type: Radio address transcript

Overall Purpose

To promote the importance of reading more and owning books due to its benefits of tracking intellectual growth and building a relationship with the stories and authors.

Target audience(s)

1. Casual radio listeners in America.
2. People who are interested in books and literature.
3. Middle class or above (in the 1930s) - see explanation below.

Back in the 1930s, education was not as highly valued or accessible as today. Therefore, Phelps' targeted audience would have consisted of the middle class or higher. These listeners would have been educated enough to read and have the financial ability to purchase many books. This is also an example of how you can use context to aid your analysis!

Exemplar Plan

Structure: idea (i.e., each paragraph is based on an idea).

Key: Evidence + Technique+Effect

Thesis

Phelps encourages listeners to read more and build a personal book collection by compellingly promoting the contribution that books have to personal development, social interaction, and historical understanding.

Bird's Eye View

1. Phelps perceptively highlights that owning a book outweighs simply borrowing it as readers can track their intellectual journey.

2. Phelps suggests that reading books is a social activity by idealising the interaction between a reader and a story.
3. Phelps reveals that reading books enables a connection between current society and historical authors to accentuate the enduring impact of books.

Why does this structure work well?

Based on the text, we can see that Phelps organises his speech to present the different benefits of reading books. Therefore, a straightforward way to structure your essay would be to base each paragraph on one of these benefits. These benefits have been identified in the thesis as "personal development, social interaction, and historical understanding."

After identifying the main points, you want to organise them to demonstrate idea progression. This means that the paragraphs are ordered to develop on the idea presented previously.

In this structure, the first paragraph focuses on the personal benefit of owning a book which is that you can make and revisit annotations over time. This is effective for the first paragraph as it includes distinguishing between a borrowed and owned book, establishing how Phelps cherishes books which sets the optimistic tone for the rest of the extract. The second paragraph then talks about books as "friends" which smoothly follows the first paragraph's point on being familiarised with your own book. Finally, the third paragraph was added solely to expand the essay's critical thinking as discussing the historical value of books allows for exploration into the time relevance of Phelps' message and the type of audience that he writes for.

Point 1

Phelps promotes owning a book (instead of simply borrowing)

1. "A borrowed book is like a guest in the house; it must be treated with…a certain considerate formality": simile - by comparing it to a guest, Phelps associates a borrowed book with impersonality which shows how readers may not gain much emotional satisfaction from reading it (as opposed to an owned book).
2. "your own book belongs to you; you treat them with that affectionate intimacy that annihilates formality": juxtaposition, connotations and second-person perspective - the cordial connotations from 'affectionate intimacy' juxtapose those from the last quote which emphasises the intimate benefit of owning a book. Phelps uses a second-person pronoun to direct the ownership of a book to the listener, making it feel more personal. The barbaric connotations of "annihilates" is also highly emotive which villainizes formality - a concept that Phelps associates with a borrowed book.
3. "it is like visiting a forest where you once blazed a trail": simile - the comparison to a forest creates visual imagery that depicts how note-taking in books makes an elaborate record of the readers' intellectual journey. The visual imagery also supports the radio format as readers are unable to physically look at what the speaker is saying.

Comments: This paragraph talks about the personal benefit of books. As Phelps reasons that you must own a book to fully use it, it would be effective to outline the difference between an owned and borrowed book. Therefore, the first quote demonstrates Phelps' negative portrayal of a borrowed book which is followed by the second quote - the positive portrayal of an owned book. Then lastly, the third quote explains further why Phelps believes owning a book is advantageous which is that the reader can make annotations to revisit over time.

Point 2

Phelps explains that reading is a social activity.

1. “if you sit alone in the room in the firelight, you are surrounded with intimate friends”: visual imagery and metaphor - the direct comparison to friends personify the books which depict them amicably. This is also effective when considering how listeners may be seeking the radio for entertainment. The personification of books as friends also juxtaposes the prior characterisation as guests, showing how a person may develop familiarity with a book.

2. “my devotion to reading has never made me a recluse. How could it?”: rhetorical question and tone - readers are led to question the misconception about book readers being antisocial. Phelps' assertive tone (aided by the high modality of “never”)also implies the absurdity of thinking that book readers are distant from society.

3. “Books are of the people, by the people, for the people”: tricolon - the repetition of ‘people' in a tricolon accentuates how books enable a connection between people.

Comments: This paragraph talks about the social benefit of books. Throughout the address, Phelps illustrates books as highly familiar and likewise to friends which grounds his statement that reading is a social activity. Therefore, the first quote is used to establish his amicable outlook on books with the second quote addressing the reader's response to Phelps' unique opinion. The last quote is then used to clarify how a book enables social activity by outlining the interaction between writers, readers and stories.

Point 3

Phelps advocates that books let people connect to the past

1. “you can enjoy the most truly aristocratic society in the world whenever you want it.”: denotations and connotations - “aristocratic society” denotes nobility and connotes luxury which embellishes the idea of reading books. Aristocracy is also a historical term that establishes the idea of historical connection from books.

2. “you can at any moment converse with Socrates or Shakespeare or Carlyle or Dumas or Dickens or Barrie” - polysyndeton: the ongoing list signifies the endless possibilities of connecting with historical authors.

3. “you are necessary to them as an audience to an actor” - simile: by comparing readers to an actor's audience, Phelps indicates that historical authors need current societies to read their books to preserve their message.

Comments: This paragraph talks about the historical benefit of books. Near the end of his address, Phelps discusses how books have historical significance because readers are able to read stories written by authors in the past. Therefore, the first quote establishes the reason why readers themselves would be interested in the historical significance of books, with the second quote providing an example. Then lastly, the third quote demonstrates that this historical interaction is not simply one-way as authors need readers for their stories to persevere.

Exemplar Essay

Introduction

In the 1930s, the radio reached its zenith as a popular format for media and news. Consequently, many speakers such as William Lyon Phelps have delivered their addresses on the radio as a source of entertainment, education, or information. In the radio address, “The Pleasure of Books”, Phelps

encourages listeners to read more and build a personal book collection by compellingly promoting the contribution that books have to personal development, social interaction, and historical understanding. Phelps highlights that uncovering the full potential of a book includes its use to develop a personal and social journey through a perennial interaction with the stories and authors.

Point 1

Phelps perceptively highlights that owning a book outweighs simply borrowing it as readers can track their intellectual journey. He opens the speech by outlining the limitations concerned with a borrowed book as it “is like a guest in the house; it must be treated with…a certain considerate formality.” By comparing it to a guest with a simile, Phelps presents a borrowed book impersonally which depicts it as a separate entity to the reader. The lack of familiarity indicates that the borrower lacks affinity for their book which appears dissatisfying when Phelps alternatively argues that “your own book belongs to you” and hence, “you treat them with that affectionate intimacy”. The cordial connotations of “affectionate intimacy” relays the emotional advantages of owning a book, thus evoking pathos as the second-person pronouns directly relate these sentiments to the listeners. Moreover, Phelps hyperbolizes the significance of formality in the reading experience as owning a book can “annihilate formality”. The barbaric connotations villainize formality as something that must be eliminated to enjoy reading to its fullest potential. Therefore, as Phelps immediately follows his dispassionate illustration of borrowed books with the sympathetic portrayal of owned books, there is a clear juxtaposition that accentuates the emotional satisfaction gained from being familiarised with a book. Subsequently, Phelps specifies the benefit of owning a book is the ability to write on it and revisit annotations because “it is like visiting a forest where you once blazed a trail”. Using a simile to compare the annotations to a forest, Phelps denotes nature which symbolises the growth that a reader experiences each time they read and annotate a new book. In doing so, Phelps creates visual imagery that figuratively depicts an elaborate record of the readers' intellectual journey-a voyage that Phelps believes can only be achieved through book ownership. Developing visual imagery is highly effective for radio listeners as Phelps encourages them to imagine an optimistic scenery that can be associated with reading an owned book. As such, Phelps' indicates that borrowing a book is not as beneficial as owning a book because it restricts creative movement.

Point 2

Furthermore, Phelps suggests that reading books is a social activity by idealising the interaction between a reader and a story. He romanticises the scene of having a personal library at home as it would be akin to “sit[ting] alone in the room in the firelight” whilst “surrounded with intimate friends”. The metaphorical comparison to friends personifies books, thus presenting each of their unique stories as personalities for the reader to engage with. Additionally, the “firelight” scenery evokes thermal imagery that cultivates a familiar sense of warmth for readers to imagine. Considering the onset of the Great Depression in 1930s America and the concomitant gloomy society, featuring books as friends in a warm setting created an uplifting mood for listeners who were seeking the radio as a source of entertainment. The affable promotion also positions books as a light-hearted relief from the ongoing, stressful circumstances. Conversely, equating books to friends may create the misconception that Phelps is detached from reality. However, he contends that “[his] devotion to reading has never made [him] a recluse. How could it?” The rhetorical phrasing combined with the assertive tone, established by the high-modality “never”, provokes the listeners to also doubt the association between book reading and reclusion, which in turn encourages them to favour Phelps' opinion that books are special company. Moreover, Phelps expounds on the social activity offered by books, reasoning that “books are of the people, by the people, for the people”. The repetition of “the people” in a tricolon accentuates that social interaction is the driving mechanism for the creation and consumption of books. Consequently, Phelps validates that the stories provide a social activity for

readers despite no physical conversation. Overall, Phelps illustrates books as products of social connections to express reading as an intimate, cross-communal activity.

Point 3

Finally, Phelps reveals that reading books enables a connection between current society and historical authors to accentuate the enduring impact of books. Phelps details that reading books means that "you can enjoy the most truly aristocratic society in the world." Aristocracy archaically refers to the high class in society. Therefore, the characterisation of the society as "aristocratic" draws denotations to nobility and connotes opulence which presents reading as a luxury. In the 1930s, having the literacy skills to read advanced books and the financial capacity to purchase a large selection would have only been possible for the highly privileged. Consequently, Phelps tempts the listeners from the middle class and higher to read more by conveying books as a greatly valuable item. Furthermore, Phelps details the vast historical significance of books as "you can at any moment converse with Socrates or Shakespeare or Carlyle or Dumas or Dickens or Barrier". The polysyndeton structure accentuates that there are endless choices for readers to connect with historical authors. Understanding that there are boundless opportunities for reading indicates that readers can experience many diverse scenes such as the aristocratic society that Phelps previously portrays. Conversely, Phelps also outlines that reading books is not only beneficial for the reader but also for the writer as "[they] are necessary to them as an audience to an actor". The comparison via a simile of readers to an actor's audience indicates the necessity for current-day society to read older books to preserve their stories. As such, despite radio media losing popularity in the 20th century, his message remains relevant today as he discusses the perpetual significance of revisiting older books. Hence, Phelps demonstrates that books facilitate a two-way historical exchange between a writer and reader.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Phelps' radio address has demonstrated the personal and societal benefit of reading by discussing the need to be familiarised with one's book and view the unique stories as enjoyable companions. Additionally, he highlights the historical significance of books, explaining that the message of past authors can still perpetuate in today's society as readers can access their stories anytime conveniently. Ultimately, Phelps signifies that by learning how to truly appreciate a book, reading can be a very profound experience for oneself and for the wider society.

Solutions for IB English Lang & Lit SL May 2019

Exam: May 2019 TZ0 SL

Text: Text A - "21st Century" comic by Gabby Schulz

For the full exam and guiding questions, refer to the Paper which can be purchased from the official IB store.

This Paper 1 Breakdown was written by our awesome IB7 Lang Lit instructor Jerica Nieva, including the plan and the exemplar essay.

Making It Real

To really understand the text, we must think from both the author's and audience's perspectives.

So, let's imagine it as a reader: you're scrolling through your phone and you spot a link to a short comic strip that is, ironically, illustrating a story about phone usage in the 21st century. As someone

living in the 21st century with a phone, you decide to browse the comic for a fun read but also end up discovering a critical message about the societal role of phones.

Considering this set-up, as the author you would be thinking about:

1. Which audience is the most important to educate on smartphone usage?
2. What techniques can be used to convey an adverse perspective on smartphone usage?
3. What techniques can be used to make this educational message engaging?

Pre-planning

Before you dive straight into annotating and writing a plan, you must set the basics to effectively guide your analysis:

Text type

Webcomic / online cartoon

Overall Purpose

To criticise and raise awareness of society's reliance on smartphones in the 21st century due to its consequences of excessive materialism and surveillance.

Other appropriate ways to outline the purpose may be:

- To educate: Schulz wants to teach society about their issues with technological consumption.
- To entertain: the comic strip format may have been used to make Schulz's educational message enjoyable to read.
- To call to action: Schulz intends that people will change their habits to lessen the detriments of technological consumption.

Like in the exemplar below, you can choose to combine several of the author's purposes and integrate them into one main idea. Choose the approach that will best guide and substantiate your analysis!

Target audience(s)

1. Smartphone users in the 21st century
2. Online comic readers

Exemplar Plan

Structure: Idea (i.e., each paragraph is based on an idea).

Key: Evidence + Technique+Effect

Thesis

Schulz criticises how the 21st century heavily relies on smartphones by revealing society's unhealthy conformity and the public ignorance towards materialism and excessive surveillance.

Bird's Eye View 🕊️

1. Schulz derides the homogeneity of the 21st century to highlight how smartphones can limit individuality.
2. Schulz underlines the shallow quality of smartphone features to emphasize the superficiality of the 21st century.
3. Schulz elucidates the privacy risks of smartphone usage by accentuating the presence of digital government surveillance.

Why does this structure work well?

When planning your paragraphs, you want to ensure that you cover all aspects of your thesis. Therefore, it's helpful to break down your thesis into three (or more if you need!) main parts. Based on this thesis, these would include:

- How does smartphone usage relate to societal conformity, and why is this bad?
- How does smartphone usage relate to materialism?
- How does smartphone usage relate to excessive surveillance?

After identifying the main points, you want to organise them in a way that demonstrates idea progression. This means that the paragraphs are ordered to develop on the idea presented previously.

In this structure, the first paragraph focuses on how the mass usage of smartphones has led to modern conformity. This is effective for the first paragraph as it introduces the setting of modern smartphone obsession by discussing people's attitudes towards phones and those who don't use them. The second paragraph then talks about the superficial mindset involved with smartphones because it smoothly follows the first paragraph's point on societal attitude. Then lastly, the third paragraph broadens the essay's use of critical thinking by talking about the wider social implications of smartphone usage which is the privacy issues related to governments and smartphones.

Point 1

Schulz negatively portrays the homogeneity of smartphone users.

1. Structure point (first panel): composition and salience - the protagonist is displayed as a caricature and is made the salient character/image for readers to connect with. In contrast, the people in the background are composed plainly with phones which shows how phones can lead to a lack of individuality.
2. Labels: “special”, “unemployed”, “hand-me-down” - the protagonist is illustrated with these labels which have belittling connotations. This demonstrates how society is quick to stereotype people for simply not having a phone.
3. “Everyone else already has one right?” & “Don't I wanna be normal?” - the rhetorical phrases lead the readers to question their mentality toward phones in society. This also evokes pathos as people may sympathise with the protagonist's need to conform.

*Comment:*This paragraph answers “how does smartphone usage relate to societal conformity, and why is this bad?” As the comic follows a protagonist who holds a unique view towards phones, it would be effective to analyse how the author depicts this protagonist in contrast to everyone else. Therefore, the first evidence establishes Schulz's characterisation of typical smartphone users, followed by evidence that shows how these smartphone users look down on the protagonist. The last quote then encapsulates this conflict by demonstrating how one can feel pressured to get a phone for the sake of fitting in.

Point 2

Schulz highlights the absurd, superficial aspect of a smartphone obsession.

1. “Authentic fake camera-shutter sound” - the oxymoron of “authentic” and “fake” highlights society's materialised hypocrisy and how smartphones distort reality.
2. Structure point (7th panel): framing and positioning - a wide frame is used to illustrate an expansive nature scene which is juxtaposed by the protagonist's positioning in the corner with a small phone screen. This shows how phones limit a person's appreciation of real life.
3. Structure point (last panel) + “I'll always know the weather forecast!”: composition - the hyperbolic expression of the fire in which is compared to hell is a metaphor for how poorly technology can predict the weather. The irony also shows that technology cannot accurately reflect reality. This evokes humour which engages the audience, whilst conveying a message on society's wilful ignorance towards smartphone flaws.

*Comment***:** This paragraph answers “how does smartphone usage relate to materialism?” As ‘superficial' can have different applications, it is helpful to establish what we mean by ‘superficial' in this paragraph. Therefore, the first evidence introduces how the superficial nature of smartphones is that they are designed to be multi-functional, but fail to properly reflect reality. The following pieces of evidence are then used as examples to support this idea in which firstly the protagonist disappointedly neglects his surroundings by being too immersed in the phone and secondly, the phone fails to predict what happens in real life.

Point 3

Schulz reveals how smartphone usage enables excessive government surveillance

1. Structure point (last panel): hyperbolism - the large eye in the sky overlooking the protagonist on his phone acts as a metaphor for the government can watch people via phones.
2. “panopticon hive” - a metaphor that creates visual imagery of people being highly visible in a building. This shows how the technological advancement of phones enables the government to always be watchful regardless of where a person is.
3. “Beating the high score there, senator?” - The question is asked in reference to the protagonist watching the senator play a game. This evokes situational irony because the roles between society and the government are switched. The protagonist is invading the senator's privacy which is what the government does to smartphone users.

*Comment***:** This paragraph answers “how does smartphone usage relate to excessive surveillance?” The discussion that Schulz presents mass governmental surveillance as a consequence of smartphone overuse involves contextual understanding of the comic strip. Therefore, based on the context, we know that certain elements in the text are references to governmental surveillance. However, the text itself only refers to the government once clearly (i.e., the question to the senator). As such, it is important to order your evidence to aid in how you draw links between the context and the evidence that is available. This paragraph structure uses the first two pieces of evidence to establish the idea of surveillance, then uses the last quote to relate it to our contextual understanding of government surveillance.

Exemplar Essay

Introduction

With the increase of technological dependence in the 21st century, the excessive use of smartphones has become habitual for many people. Although it has its benefits, society's obsession with smartphones has led to numerous, overlooked repercussions. In the comic strip titled “The 21st Century”, Gabby Schulz explores these detrimental aspects of modern-day smartphones. Schulz criticises how the 21st century heavily relies on smartphones by revealing society's unhealthy conformity and the public ignorance towards materialism and excessive surveillance.

Point 1

Schulz derisively portrays the homogeneity of the 21st century to highlight how smartphones can limit individuality. The opening panel depicts the protagonist who doesn't use a phone standing in front of a crowd of phone users. While everyone in the background is illustrated with the same blank expressions and monochrome bodies, the protagonist is composed uniquely with a large, animated face. The juxtaposition between characters' compositions conveys that mass smartphone consumption can promote societal monotony. Furthermore, the emphasis on the protagonist's features presents him as a caricature and hence the salient image. Thus, the exaggerated properties draw attention to the protagonist, prompting readers to feel most connected to him and his doubtful sentiments on smartphones. Cultivating familiarity between the protagonist and readers is important when Schulz labels him as “special”, “unemployed” and in need of a “hand-me-down”. As these phrases have belittling connotations, Schulz reveals the pessimistic mentality of modern-day society. Despite the protagonist showing individuality, people are inclined to categorize him as poor and outlandish due to not having a phone. Schulz encapsulates this prejudicial conflict when the protagonist contemplates getting a phone because “everyone else already has one right?”. In doing so, Schulz indicates that an individual can feel socially pressured to get a smartphone which evokes pathos for readers who also live with this expectation. The rhetorical phrases accentuate this by leading the readers to evaluate their reliant attitude towards phones, questioning how they have defined this as normalcy. Overall, Schulz critically portrays society's homogeneity to express how smartphones have led to a ubiquitous mindset that is both dull and prejudicial.

Point 2

Furthermore, Schulz underlines the shallow quality of smartphone features to emphasize the superficiality of the 21st century. When the protagonist takes a picture, it is accompanied by an “authentic fake camera-shutter sound”. The oxymoron of “authentic” and “fake” criticises the impracticality of designing smartphones with minor details that ostensibly mimic reality. Consequently, Schulz exhibits the distortion of reality and society's materialised hypocrisy as ramifications of smartphones. The specious functionality of smartphones is elucidated in the 7th panel where the protagonist is standing in a forest on his new phone. The wide framing, green composition, and use of onomatopoeia like “chirp” create an immersive illustration of nature which is juxtaposed by the protagonist's trivial positioning in the corner. As such, the protagonist's small proportion in the panel embodies the dispossession from reality caused by smartphone obsession. Schulz elaborates on smartphone futility in the last panel where the protagonist exclaims that he will “always know the weather forecast!” despite a fire appearing in the rain. Although the weather forecast was inaccurate, the protagonist chooses to maintain his trust in technology. Therefore, the humorous irony of a fire in the rain both engages the reader's appeal to the comic and divulges society's baseless leniency towards smartphone flaws. However, Schulz's comical approach to criticism is also contrasted by the severe connotations of a fire from the metaphorical comparison to “hell”. Hence, Schulz hyperbolic expression on the volatility of the weather forecast highlights the gravity of feigning ignorance towards smartphone issues. Therefore, Schulz demonstrates how smartphones aren't as useful and thrilling as commonly perceived because they prompt people to become detached from reality.

Point 3

Lastly, Schulz elucidates the privacy risks of smartphone usage by accentuating the presence of digital government surveillance. He amplifies the idea of surveillance in the last panel where there is a large eye depicted in the sky. Schulz's hyperbolic illustration of an eyeball physically conveys the large magnitude of surveillance, proving it to be almost disturbing. As the protagonist is on his phone and the eyeball is directed towards him, Schulz clarifies that this alarming surveillance is connected to smartphone usage. He expands on the coverage of the digital surveillance when the protagonist admits that he is using his phone more and will soon go into the “panopticon hive”. The word “panopticon” denotes a building with rooms that are all visible from a vantage point. Therefore, Schulz produces jail-like visual imagery that acts as a metaphor for the boundless, digital exposure of oblivious smartphone use. Collectively, Sculz propagates an unsettling atmosphere that engages apprehension and doubt, hence encouraging readers to be mindful of their virtual vulnerability. He clearly defines the instigator of digital paranoia as the government when the protagonist mockingly poses to a governmental figure, “beating the high score there, senator?” Although readers may find the protagonist's casual rhetoric to the senator as invasive, Schulz purports the government likewise violates the electronic privacy of smartphone users. Therefore, the situational irony of switching the roles between society and the government avails readers to comprehend the unethicality of digital surveillance. Thus, Schulz's implications of governmental surveillance highlight the insecure nature of smartphone overuse.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Schulz's comic strip has demonstrated the harms of society's smartphone obsession by exploring the overwhelming consequence of the universal, pessimistic mentality that prejudices non-smartphone users and over-values materialism. He also accentuates the privacy issues related to smartphones by revealing the digital presence of government surveillance. While Schulz critically presents smartphones, it is important to note that he does not intend to label phones are utterly useless, but rather question society's obsession with it. Ultimately, Schulz writes to indicate how smartphones may be best used in moderated consumption.

Solutions for IB English Lang & Lit SL Nov 2019

Exam: November 2019 TZ0 SL

Text: Text A - “Push pause and hit refresh” by Angie Kelly

For the full exam and guiding questions, refer to the Paper which can be purchased from the official IB store.

This Paper 1 Breakdown was written by our awesome IB7 Lang Lit instructor Jerica Nieva, including the plan and the exemplar essay.

Making It Real

To fully comprehend every intricate purpose for each detail contained in the text, you must think from both the author's and audience's perspectives.

So, let's imagine it as a reader: It's a typical Sunday afternoon, and you're flipping through your weekly Herald Sun newspaper. There are a couple of articles written, but you're tired from the thought of working and only want to read what looks interesting. Lately, you're quite invested in the idea of a vacation - you just need a little break from work!

Considering this set-up, as the author you would be thinking about:

1. Who would be the most interested in a vacation get-away?
2. How can the targeted audience be attracted to read an article about a remote resort?
3. How can the article be made personal and relatable for the targeted audience to keep them engaged throughout?

Pre-planning

Before you dive straight into annotating and writing a plan, you must set the basics to effectively guide your analysis:

Text type: Article

Overall Purpose: to promote Gwinganna to readers as a place to stay for relaxation and a break away from stressful commitments cultivated by a fast-paced, heavily technological society.

Targeted audience/s:

1. People who have the usual 9-5 office job and would be tempted by the idea of a relaxing vacation (*the most important targeted audience for this text*)
2. People who are interested in health recommendations.
3. People who are interested in travelling in Queensland.

Typically, those who have these characteristics and would read Herald Sun are middle-aged and above, middle-class people from Australia and New Zealand.

The important point is that you offer an insightful discussion into the audience and how this influences the author's choices. You don't necessarily have to talk about all these types of audiences to do this!

Exemplar Plan 1

Structure: Idea (i.e., each paragraph is based on an idea).

Key: Evidence + Technique+Effect

Thesis

Kelly portrays Gwinganna as a scenic and rejuvenating destination, thus encouraging readers to visit the resort as a vacation away from a stressful, technology-ridden lifestyle.

Bird's Eye View 🦅

1. Kelly characterises Gwinganna as a friendly and welcoming vacation spot to candidly demonstrate that the resort is both exciting and intimate.
2. Kelly accentuates the idea of scenic relaxation at Gwinganna to entice hard-working readers.
3. Kelly highlights the pessimistic aspects of technology and the busy, corporate lifestyle to sympathise with the reader's interest in seeking relaxation.

Why does this structure work well?

When planning your paragraphs, you want to ensure that you cover all aspects of your thesis. Therefore, it's helpful to break down your thesis into three (or more if you need!) main parts. Based on this thesis, these would include:

- What makes Gwinganna seem relaxing and pretty?
- What makes staying at Gwinganna feel like a vacation?
- What relates the consequences of technology and busy work life to staying at Gwinganna?

After identifying the main points, you want to organise them in a way that demonstrates idea progression. This means that the paragraphs are ordered to develop on the idea presented previously.

In this structure, the first paragraph focuses on how Gwinganna is a vacation spot to establish Kelly's main intention of encouraging more visitors to the resort - despite being remotely located. After promoting Gwinganna as a holiday destination, the following paragraph details what Gwinganna can specially offer to visitors which is its relaxing resources and natural landscape. From Gwinganna's harmonious culture to scenic qualities, the last paragraph makes all these positive aspects relevant to modern society by emphasising why readers need to take a break as a result of their lifestyle.

Point 1

Kelly characterises Gwinganna as a friendly and welcoming vacation spot.

1. “the overwhelming vibe is supportive and nurturing” - comforting connotations from “supportive and nurturing” create a cordial mood.Casual, colloquial terms like “vibe” also make Kelly's recount feel light-hearted and genuine.
2. “a stretch class, optional boxing or tennis and water polo game takes us to lunch” - The collective pronoun ‘us' welcomes the readers into Kelly's activities, making Gwinganna appear communal and harmonious.
3. Structure point: trip notes at the end of the article - the trip notes are displayed like a real ticket which alludes to readers buying a ticket to go there which supports that the place is an easily accessible vacation destination.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph answers “what makes staying at Gwinganna feel like a vacation?” As it talks about ‘feeling', you may find it effective to discuss the overall mood/atmosphere/tone that the author uses to describe the resort. In this case, Kelly writes casually to convey that Gwinganna is a friendly resort (first quote) which then makes the destination appear welcoming (second quote). The last evidence ties these two ideas and shows that the entire process of reaching and staying at Gwinganna is simple.

Point 2

Kelly entices hard-working readers with the idea of scenic relaxation at Gwinganna.

1. “…on a luscious mountain-top” - Alluring connotations from “luscious” and denotations of nature from “mountain-top” creates a tranquil and beautiful visual imagery of Gwinganna.
2. “Seductive swimming pools…grounds with sweeping sea views; plus a luxe spa bulging with wish-list treatments” - the asyndeton listing all the activities adds to the visual imagery and the lexical chain of watercreates a calming, aquatic scenery.
3. “…with the sun rising over Burleigh Heads below wallabies eyeing our slow, flowing movements” - “slow, flowing” continues the author's lexical chain of water by adding kinaesthetic imagery which engages readers' senses. The sibilance slows down the

reading pace which mimics the wallabies' movements, creates a soothing effect and highlights the presence of wildlife.

*Jerica's Comments:*This paragraph answers “what makes Gwinganna seem relaxing and pretty?” So, you should try to discuss how the author explores different aspects of a natural resort that simply evoke the vibe of ‘pretty relaxation'. This can include nature, sceneries, and wildlife. As such, the first quote establishes how Kelly illustrates the beauty of Gwinganna with lavish visual imagery. Then the following quotes are used to further develop this visual imagery by analysing her use of water and movement.

Point 3

Kelly demonstrates the negative aspects of technology and the corporate job.

1. “…many are the hard-working, hard-playing corporate types who need stress-handling tips” - The alliteration draws attention to the cynical connotations targeted at the responsibilities of a corporate job. This also evokes pathos for office-job readers.
2. “no stimulants, junk food, late nights or digital playthings” - “plaything” denotes a toy and also has derisive connotations which create a dismissive and almost mocking tone towards technology.
3. Title “push pause and hit refresh” - the metaphor with technological allusions create a pun that attracts newspaper readers and demonstrates how Gwinganna will allow readers to take a break away from their stressful work.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph answers “what relates the consequences of technology and a busy work life to staying at Gwinganna?” You may find it cohesive to firstly explain how Kelly portrays these consequences, and then link these ideas to staying at the resort. Therefore, the first quote focuses on the consequences of work-life and the second quote on technology. The last quote then links these negative depictions to suggest that readers need a break which can be gained by visiting Gwinganna. As Kelly's intended audience is office workers, this paragraph also creates a good opportunity to show a comprehensive discussion on the audience effect.

Exemplar Plan 2

Structure: Idea

Key: Evidence + Technique+Effect

Thesis

Kelly highlights the adverse health consequences of the modern-day, city lifestyle by encouraging readers to stay at Gwinganna for its self-help and wellness resources.

Bird's Eye View 

1. Kelly highlights the health consequences of technology and the modern lifestyle to emphasise that readers need a break for their well-being.
2. Kelly recounts her stay at Gwinganna to casually inform readers that the resort offers many activities and resources.
3. Kelly exposes the struggles she had at Gwinganna to sympathise with readers who feel that a wellness retreat may be mentally challenging.

Why does this structure work well?

Read the explanation in planning option 1 to understand how to effectively approach the structure!

By unpacking the thesis, the main points would include:

- What are the adverse health consequences of the modern-day, city lifestyle?
- How do these adverse health consequences relate to readers and thus encourage them to visit Gwinganna?
- How are Gwinganna's resources helpful for wellbeing?

Applying idea progression: In this structure, the first paragraph focuses on how a person's busy schedule and dependency on technology can become unhealthy as it establishes why Kelly later promotes Gwinganna as a wellbeing hub. Subsequently, the next paragraph details the activities that Gwinganna offers to demonstrate how the resort's resources can act as a relief to the reader's stressful lifestyle. In the last two paragraphs, the focus has been on Kelly's negative stance on technology. Therefore, it is effective to discuss how Kelly makes the article engaging despite writing negatively about certain aspects of the targeted readers' life.

Point 1

Kelly highlights the health consequences of technology / modern lifestyle.

1. "…who need stress-handling tips for boardroom battle or the juggle of work and family" - double metaphoric phrases accentuate the difficulty of managing work and family life, suggesting how this can take a toll on a person's mental health.
2. "…the very people who can think of nothing worse than having no stimulants, junk food, late nights, or digital playthings" - the hyperbolic portrayal of an unhealthy lifestyle by stating that there is "nothing worse" conveys how people are prone to be excessively dependent on things like junk food and technology.
3. "…going cold turkey on TV" - using the idiom 'cold turkey' presents that TV is an addiction, just like drugs and alcohol. This implication also encourages readers to question whether their usage of TV is excessive.

Jerica's Comments: this paragraph answers "what are the adverse health consequences of the modern-day, city lifestyle?" An example of how to approach this would be to follow the process of cause and effect. The first two quotes elaborate on how stressful work and technology can be causes of unhealthy well-being. Afterwards, the last quote elaborates on the consequences by linking health implications (e.g., addiction to technology).

Point 2

Kelly casually promotes the activities at Gwinganna to readers.

1. "a cheery good morning call at 5.45am got me out of bed in the pre-dawn darkness" - Kelly uses humour and a first-person perspective to create a light-hearted anecdote to demonstrate her itinerary staying at Gwinganna.
2. "Seductive swimming pools…grounds with sweeping sea views; plus a luxe spa bulging with wish-list treatments" + "nutrition talks with practical, take-home tips…and delicious organic food" - Kelly uses similar sentence structures when listing all the scenic aspects of Gwinganna and then the health activities. This allows people to relate the two lists together,

thus associating the luxurious connotations of "seductive swimming pools" and the like, which makes the health activities feel top-class.

3. Structure point: trip notes + wellness heading -The heading that categorises the article under the 'wellness' section indicates that the activities are centred around physical and mental wellbeing which separates Gwinganna from the other vacations that may be listed in the same paper. The trip notes are displayed like a real ticket and list different options for staying at Gwinganna which makes the activities listed feel accessible.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph answers "how are Gwinganna's resources helpful for wellbeing?" You may choose to consider how Kelly informs the readers about the activities in Gwinganna as this gives insight into its well-being resources. In this case, the first two analytical quotes discuss how Kelly optimistically writes anecdotes with an informative tone to subtly give details on Gwinganna's activities without overwhelming readers who aren't used to natural retreats. The last evidence then ties these ideas back to Kelly's intention of encouraging people to stay at Gwinganna.

Point 3

Kelly makes the text relatable to readers who need a health break for their mental or physical wellbeing.

1. "…even if you head straight for the barista at the airport, are deeply sceptical or adore your bad habits" (after staying at Gwinganna) - Kelly switches to a second-person perspective to directly speak to the reader.

2. "Doing without coffee, tea, alcohol, salt, butter and water with meals is no picnic either" - use of the "is no picnic" idiom + irony demonstrates that Kelly does sympathise (pathos) with how readers may find it difficult going through this wellness retreat.

3. "High achievers…smart, sassy people aged from their 20s to 60s" - Kelly describes a large age range to indicate that Gwinganna is for a variety of people. While she targets readers with obsessions with technology (previous paragraph), she describes them with denotations of intelligence, thus confirming that it is normal for people to go through the mental and physical problems of the modern-day lifestyle.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph answers "how do these adverse health consequences relate to readers and thus encourage them to visit Gwinganna?" For this analysis, you should aim to discuss how Kelly's writing directly relates to the targeted audience and encourages them to visit Gwinganna from a personal perspective. The first two quotes establish how Kelly directly targets readers through direct voice and pathos. The last quote analyses how altogether, Kelly takes a humanistic approach by letting readers know that health issues are common among many people.

Exemplar Essay

This example essay is based on Planning - Option 1.

Introduction

Technology dependence and a hectic work schedule have become ingrained into the typical lifestyle. Consequently, many office-job workers may find it beneficial to take a vacation for a break. Angie Kelly discusses this modern issue in the Herald Sun article "*Push pause and hit refresh*" where she promotes Gwinganna for its natural scenery and health prospects. Kelly portrays Gwinganna as a scenic and rejuvenating destination, thus encouraging readers to visit the resort as a vacation away from a stressful, technology-ridden lifestyle. In doing so, she demonstrates how Gwinganna is both a beautiful and communal place that can combat the adverse effects of technology.

Point 1

Kelly characterises Gwinganna as a friendly and welcoming vacation spot to candidly demonstrate that the resort is both exciting and intimate. In the article, Kelly lists the numerous activities available for tourists to engage with, in which she describes that the “overwhelming vibe is supportive and nurturing”. By using colloquial language like “vibe”, Kelly produces an authentic anecdote of her experience that readers can light-heartedly read. This is supported by her use of the adjectives “supportive” and “nurturing” which evoke comforting connotations. As such, Kelly cultivates a cordial mood that readers can associate with the idea of staying at Gwinganna. She elaborates on this amiable atmosphere by recounting that “a stretch class, optional boxing or tennis and water polo game takes us to lunch”. The plural first-person pronoun ‘us' combined with the ongoing anecdote directly includes readers in the activities, thus immersing and welcoming them to share Kelly's enjoyable experiences. Furthermore, this implies that Kelly did her activities with other people. Therefore, although Gwinganna is remote and prevents technological usage, Kelly reveals that it is not socially isolating. At the end of the article, she emphasises the holiday nature of Gwinganna by displaying the trip notes in a ticket shape. This alludes to the readers easily buying a ticket to go to the resort which highlights how Kelly's cherished experiences are accessible for the readers to also follow. Consequently, Kelly uses amicable and inclusive language to demonstrate that Gwinganna will always appreciate new visitors.

Point 2

Furthermore, Kelly accentuates the idea of scenic relaxation at Gwinganna to entice hard-working readers. Specifically, Kelly builds an incredibly beautiful illustration of Gwinganna to oppose the bustling, city landscape that office workers are familiarised with. For example, she details that Gwinganna is located “…on a luscious mountain-top.” By combining the alluring connotations of “luscious” with the denotations of nature from “mountain-top”, Kelly paints Gwinganna as a tranquil resort with strong visual imagery of flora and fauna. The majestic imagery combats the expectations that city dwellers may have in which they assume that a remote resort is dirty and unappealing. This is later enhanced by the lexical chain of water with the terms “swimming”, “sea” and “spa” when Kelly mentions the “seductive swimming pools…grounds with sweeping sea views; plus a luxe spa building with wish-list treatments”. By intricately describing the water, Kelly creates a calming, aquatic scenery to expand on her lavish illustration of the terrain. Additionally, the use of asyndeton to freely list numerous sceneries creates energetic visual imagery in which there are a lot of picturesque activities to do at the resort. Kelly then involves kinaesthetic imagery to intensify her scenic portrayal of Gwinganna when she writes that “the sun ris[es] over Burleigh Heads below wallabies eyeing our slow, flowing movements”. The sibilance actively slows down the viewers' reading pace, thus engaging the readers' senses as they mimic the wallabies' gestures. As such, Kelly draws attention to movement to highlight the precious existence of wildlife. Overall, Kelly develops serene imagery of Gwinganna to highlight the glamour of a natural landscape.

Point 3

Finally, Kelly highlights the pessimistic aspects of technology and the busy, corporate lifestyle to empathise with the reader's interest in seeking relaxation. She categorises the main demographic of Gwinganna's visitors as “the hard-working, hard-playing corporate types who need stress-handling tips”. The alliteration of the ‘h' sound draws attention to the hyphenated phrases which raise cynical connotations towards the responsibilities of a corporate job. As she writes to engage office workers, Kelly evokes pathos by sympathising with the pressures of a work-life. This makes the readers more likely to believe Kelly's favourable stance on Gwinganna as a place to relieve stress from work. She further develops the detriments of the modern lifestyle by calling the technology a “digital plaything”. The term “plaything” denotes a toy and has derisive connotations, thus producing a dismissive and slightly mocking tone towards society's dependency on technology. In doing so, Kelly suggests that

people should become aware of their unproductive interest in technology which makes readers more enthusiastic to stay at a resort that bans all technology. She elucidates this with the impactful title: “push pause and hit refresh”. Kelly constructs a metaphor with technological allusions to imply that visitors can find immediate liberation from their demanding work at the resort. The title also poses as a technology pun that helps to attract readers who are seeking relaxation to read her article about Gwinganna and its prospects. As such, Kelly highlights the pernicious facet of the modern lifestyle to expound on why Gwinganna is the best place to visit for leisure.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Kelly's article highlights how Gwinganna is an impressive vacation destination due to its cordial atmosphere and sublime landscape. She also explores the consequences of how modern-day society is constituted by technology and works to emphasise how Gwinganna's unique requirement of banning technology is actually beneficial for visitors. Therefore, while Kelly mainly intends to improve tourist attraction to Gwinganna, it is almost important to highlight society's increasing acceptance of a stressful and unproductive lifestyle as a result of office work life and technology.

Solutions for IB English Lang & Lit SL Nov 2019

Exam: November 2019 TZ0 SL

Text: Text B - extract from *Himalayan Journals,* Vol. 2 by JD Hooker

For the full exam and guiding questions, refer to the Paper which can be purchased from the official IB store.

This Paper 1 Breakdown was written by our awesome IB7 Lang Lit instructor Jerica Nieva, including the plan and the exemplar essay.

Pre-planning

Before you dive straight into annotating and writing a plan, you must set the basics to effectively guide your analysis:

Text type: Journal Article

Overall Purpose: *Considering that this text is relevant to two different time periods, it may be helpful to use these periodic differences to breakdown the purpose into two:*

1. To inform on the botanic and cultural discoveries of the Himalayas area, thus engaging 19th-century readers that have scientific and adventurous interests.
2. To educate modern-day readers about the historical methods of scientific collection and cultural exploration in the 19th century.

The main idea is that the journal served as a scientific document during the time it was published but is now more useful as a historical document. Think about how you can use this change in the societal reception of the journal to deepen how you present critical thinking in the essay.

Targeted audience/s:

1. Casual readers of the 19th century, especially those interested in the exploration of the Himalayas and general scientific discovery.
2. Indian and British readers from the 19th century.

3. Readers who are interested in adventurous texts.
4. Modern-day readers who are interested in historical texts.

Exemplar Plan

Structure: by idea (i.e., each paragraph is based on an idea).

Key: Evidence + Technique+Effect

Thesis

Hooker details his scientific and adventurous exploration in the Himalayas to inform 19th-century readers about the discovery of a foreign culture and terrain. In doing so, Hooker also provides a historical text that educates modern-day readers on past scientific and cultural interests.

Bird's Eye View 

1. Hooker provides a highly scientific record that aligns with 19th-century standards to establish the credibility of his findings.
2. Hooker passionately highlights the thrilling aspects of his Himalayas exploration to entertain readers interested in adventure and discovery.
3. Hooker enlightens readers with the discovery of a foreign culture by embedding cultural references in his language and illustrations.

Why does this structure work well?

When planning your paragraphs, you want to ensure that you cover all aspects of your thesis. Therefore, it's helpful to break down your thesis into three (or more if you need!) main parts. Based on this thesis, these would include:

- How does Hooker relate his exploration to scientific discovery?
- How does Hooker incorporate adventure into his journal article?
- How does Hooker cover the cultural revelations in his recount of exploration?

After identifying the main points, you want to organise them in a way that demonstrates idea progression. This means that the paragraphs are ordered to develop on the idea presented previously.

In this structure, the first paragraph focuses on how Hooker's style of recording his scientific exploration creates a credible text (for the 19th century). This is effective for the first paragraph as it establishes Hooker's main aim as a botanist which is to provide information on the new terrain and plants. The second paragraph cohesively follows by explaining how Hooker has made his botanist recount engaging to readers by including thrilling elements of adventure. This can be linked to how exploration was a highlight anticipated topic in the 19th century due to the Industrial era and societal relations between the British and Indians. As such, the third paragraph follows smoothly as it talks about how Hooker's adventure was accompanied by the discovery of a foreign culture. This last idea also helps combine the first two ideas by demonstrating how Hooker's text also has anthropological undertones.

How do I talk about the different periodic responses to the text?

As this text involves discussing the change in periodic reception of the text, it can be a bit confusing trying to structure your essay to include this. For this structure, the example thesis has been broken

down into paragraph ideas that aren't limited to one period. This means that for every paragraph, the main idea can be linked to the change in societal response. Alternatively, you may choose to dedicate each paragraph to a specific time period. This structure may look like:

1. How does Hooker construct his article for 19th-century readers?
2. How is Hooker's article received by modern-day readers?
3. What elements of Hooker's article are timeless (i.e., what relates to both the 19th century and modern-day)?

In this structure, it would then be easier to interweave the ideas of adventure, science, culture, etc. into each paragraph.

Point 1

Hooker provides a scientific record (for 19th-century standards).

1. "I determined the altitude by barometer 15745 feet above the sea, and by boiling water, 15694 feet…": enumeration - Considering the technology of the 19th century, providing numerical measurements would have provided a sufficient scientific record. This evokes logos which makes the journal appear credible.
2. "I gathered forty kinds of plants…some (as species of Caryophyllaea) forming hemi-spherical balls on the baked soil.": botanic metalanguage - using metalanguage specific to botanical expertise evokes ethos which increases the readers' trust in Hooker's knowledge and skills.
3. "will it be wondered at that I felt proud…for that of the many friends, both in India and at home, who were interested in my success?": first-person perspective and rhetorical question - Hooker's first-person perspective contributes to his anecdotal style, making the exploration appear authentic. The rhetoric also causes the readers to reflect on Hooker's scientific exploration which further evokes ethos as they can see his knowledge comes from hard work.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph answers "how does Hooker relate his exploration to scientific discovery?" Throughout the article, Hooker describes many of the observations he undertakes to aid in his exploration. Therefore, the first quote provides an example of one of these procedures to demonstrate the scientific nature of Hooker's actions. This was also done to introduce the scientific standards of the 19th century and how scientists back then enforced credibility. The second quote likewise provides an example of Hooker's botany procedures to establish his job as a botanist and how this influenced his recording of data. The last quote then elaborates on the notion of scientific integrity by explaining how Hooker's anecdotal writing style makes his work credible. This would make an interesting point as the first-person perspective is not favoured in scientific works currently, but was acceptable back then.

Point 2

Hooker offers a sense of adventure

1. "I was very stiff and cold, and suffering from headache and giddiness, owing to the elevation; and having walked about thirteen miles…": polysyndeton and connotations - the repetition of 'and' allows Hooker to use the words like "stiff", "suffering", "headache" that evoke miserable connotations to build a lengthy description of his exhaustion.
2. "We were bitterly cold, as the previous rain has wetted us through, and a keen wind was blowing up the valley": alliteration of 'w' and hyperbole - the alliteration makes the sentence

flow, supporting the development of tactile imagery on the weather. The hyperbole also presents Hooker's exploration as extreme and tough.

3. “Some most delicate-flowered plants even defy the biting winds of these exposed regions”: personification and connotations - personifying the wind's movements make its intensity feel close to the readers, allowing them to develop kinaesthetic imagery. The fragile connotations of the delicate flowers also contrast the rough description of the scene which highlights the underlying beauty of adventure.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph answers “how does Hooker incorporate adventure into his journal article?” An interesting idea to note from the article is that although Hooker negatively describes the physical experience of travelling, he also subtly hints at the positive outcomes of exploration (e.g., uncovering local plants). Therefore, it may be effective to cover these changes in expression when explaining how Hooker incorporates adventure into his recount. As such, the first two quotes focus on the negative aspects revolving around the harsh climate, the cold temperatures and Hooker's exhaustion. Then, the last quote demonstrates how despite these rough conditions, Hooker still manages to uncover beauty from his exploration findings.

Point 3

Hooker explores a foreign culture

1. “The families repair yearly to Palung…paying tribute to the Sikkim Rajah for the privilege”: cultural metalanguage - Hooker's use of specific cultural terms evokes ethos as it demonstrates that he has done vast research to authentically study the foreign culture.

2. “(the headpiece) encircled the head like a saint's glory”: metaphor and symbolism - By comparing the cultural headpiece to a halo, readers can comprehend the foreign elements that Hooker details. A halo also symbolises divinity and hope which can be applied to relay Hooker's admiration for this foreign culture.

3. (Structure point) Sketches of the “Lepcha girls and Tibetan women”: logos and composition - Considering that Hooker's main audience is not familiar with Himalayan clothing, he provides a visual example for his descriptions which evokes logos. Hooker also draws girls of different cultures to face each other (i.e., offer gazes and positioning) which reflects the social interactions within this culture.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph answers “how does Hooker cover the cultural revelations in his recount of exploration?” Considering that Hooker is a British explorer/botanist and he is mainly writing for a British audience, it would be important to discuss why Hooker is credible enough to offer cultural information and how he makes this information accessible. Therefore, the first quote establishes Hooker's method of establishing credibility, with the second quote explaining how he describes the information easily for non-native readers. Lastly, the third quote elaborates on the type of cultural information that Hooker provides which is the social interactions in the culture.

Exemplar Essay

Introduction

In the 1850s, global and cultural exploration was of peak interest to British society, and ambitious explorers and scientists sought the opportunity to broaden their geographical horizons. Such an exemplar explorer included JD Hooker, who documented his expedition to the Himalayas and published his findings in the “Himalayan Journals” (1854). In these journals, Hooker details his scientific and adventurous exploration of the Himalayas to inform 19th-century readers of the

discovery of a foreign culture and terrain. In doing so, Hooker also provides a historical text that educates modern-day readers on past scientific and cultural interests.

Point 1

Hooker provides a scientific, yet personal, record of his findings to establish his credibility as an explorer. When embarking on his journey to the Himalayas, Hooker “determined the altitude by barometer 15745 feet above the sea, and by boiling water, 15694 feet…”. Considering the limited technology of the 19th century for science, Hooker's simple enumeration of his measurements would have been considered rigorous data to his contemporary audience. Through the numerical and scientific language, Hooker builds his credibility and fashions his work as a scientific document for 19th-century society. Hooker further builds his reputation as an intellectual when he uses scientific jargon in “species of Caryophyllaea” and “hemi-spherical balls on the baked soil.” By incorporating botanist metalanguage, Hooker demonstrates that he possesses vast knowledge in this area and builds the reader's trust in his writings. However, simultaneously, Hooker uses the first-person perspective that counterbalances scientism with an anecdotal writing style. The personal nature of the writing emphasizes Hooker's genuine involvement in the collection of data. The importance of his role as a botanist is further highlighted as he ponders if “it would be wondered that [he] felt proud” for the sake of those “who were interested in [his] success?”. The rhetorical phrasing of his contemplation causes the readers to also reflect on Hooker's explorative journey, encouraging them to acknowledge his hard work. In doing so, Hooker emphasises the personal perseverance that led to his botanical discoveries, which accentuates the authenticity of his journal. Overall, while Hooker's anecdotal, yet comprehensive, writing style generated a sufficiently scientific report for the 19th century, his methods would not be considered scientific in the modern-day. Therefore, the article would not be widely appreciated from a scientific perspective as it was in the past.

Point 2

Whilst Hooker aims to be rigorous and detailed in his account, he also passionately highlights the thrilling aspects of his Himalayas exploration to entertain readers interested in adventure and discovery. As Hooker journeys further into the mountain, he describes bluntly that he “was very stiff and cold, and suffering from headache and giddiness, owing to the elevation; and having walked about thirteen miles.” Hooker's pessimistic diction such as “stiff”, “headache”, and “suffering” connote physical agony. By presenting these cynical expressions in a polysyndeton, he develops a slow pace that intensifies the portrayal of his exhaustion. Hooker then continues to foster this narrative of adventurous fatigue when he recounts that “we were bitterly cold, as the previous rain has wetted us through, and a keen wind was blowing up the valley.” The alliteration of ‘w' allows the sentence to flow and accentuate Hooker's wild descriptions of the temperature and air. As a result, Hooker builds vivid tactile imagery of the wild weather, which he provokes readers to imagine through the inclusive pronoun ‘we'. Therefore, Hooker emphasizes the bleak aspects of adventure that offer readers a realistic, but still thrilling perspective into exploration. Conversely, Hooker adds that “most delicate-flowered plants [can] even defy the biting winds.” By personifying the wind's turbulent movement, Hooker uses kinaesthetic imagery to heighten the liveliness of the atmosphere and excite the reader through this vicarious adventure. However, Hooker also uses the terms “delicate” and “defy” to describe the flowers which evoke connotations of fragility and perseverance, respectively. The contrast between the bright flora and the gruelling conditions accentuates the underlying beauty that can be experienced through exploration. Collectively, Hooker's adventurous depiction of his exploration is universal for readers from different eras. The 19th century was the zenith of early Industrial development, hence the idea of exploration would have been highly anticipated. Likewise, with contemporary globalisation, many people would also be invested in reading about the geographical adventure.

Point 3

Through embedding cultural references throughout his language and illustrations, Hooker also offers Western readers an adventure of a different kind-an enlightening detour into the foreign Himalayan culture. Once at his destination, Hooker recounts that “the families repair yearly to Palung…paying tribute to the Sikkim Rajah for the privilege”. The cultural metalanguage such as “Palung” and “Sikkim Rajah” signifies that Hooker has completed extensive research to accurately study the foreign culture. Consequently, Hooker encourages the readers to trust his cultural research despite having a Western background. The explicit use of correct cultural terms also conveys that Hooker views the new culture with respect as he seeks to portray them authentically. He elaborates on his observations of the foreign culture when he describes that the girl's headpiece “encircled the head like a saint's glory”. By comparing the cultural headpiece to a halo, Hooker uses common expressions to describe a foreign artifact that may otherwise be too difficult to perceive by a Western audience. Furthermore, a halo symbolises divinity and hope which can be extrapolated to indicate Hooker's admiration for the foreign culture. In accompaniment to Hooker's observations of their traditional clothing, he provides a sketch of the “Lepcha girls and Tibetan women”. Considering that the primary audience would not be familiar with Himalayan clothing, Hooker provides a visual example for readers to refer to. Additionally, the girls are labelled from different cultures and are naturally posed with offer gazes directed toward one another. Therefore, the scene illustrated appears genuine and unposed, offering readers a realistic illustration of the cross-cultural interactions present in the Himalayas area. As such, Hooker progresses his article from a purely scientific record to an anthropological text by offering cultural information which also serves useful for modern-day historians.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Hooker's journal entry has provided in-depth botanical and cultural information by supporting his notes with a comprehensive writing style and illustrations. While his work was constructed for 19th-century society, the societal reception of the text has evolved over time to serve as a historical piece that teaches modern-day readers about the scientific and cultural revelations of the past. Additionally, Hooker's consistent reference to his adventurous efforts adds a universal element to this text as interest in exploration is apparent in both past and current timelines. In hindsight, Hooker's recount of his exploration of the Himalayas also profoundly demonstrates the importance of preserving historical documents to guide modern-day knowledge and education.

Solutions for IB English Lang & Lit SL Nov 2021

Exam: November 2021 SL

Text: Text A - “Humor At Work” by Humor That Works

For the full exam and guiding questions, refer to the Paper which can be purchased from the official IB store.

The original infographic in the Paper is found at https://www.humorthatworks.com/humor-at-work-infographic/

This Paper 1 Breakdown was written by our awesome IB7 Lang Lit instructor Jerica Nieva, including the plan and the exemplar essay.

Pre-planning

Before you dive straight into annotating and writing a plan, you must set the basics to effectively guide your analysis:

Text type: Infographic

Overall Purpose: The text informs readers on the mental and physical well-being benefits of humour through a comical format to encourage humour in workplace culture.

Targeted audience/s:

1. Both employers and employees who are interested in improving their workplace environment.
2. American, middle-aged workers

Exemplar Plan

Note: The company author "Humour That Works" is abbreviated to HTW throughout the plan.

Structure: technique (i.e., each paragraph is based on a technique).

Key: Evidence + Technique+Effect

Thesis

HTW comically promotes humour as a convenient method to improve stress, health, and performance in the workplace.

Bird's Eye View

1. HTW incorporates inclusive diction and visual composition to portray workplace difficulties sympathetically, thus presenting humour as a progressive solution to a national problem.
2. By embedding logos, HTW supports the infographic visuals with reason to enhance both the accessibility and credibility of the text.
3. HTW strategically uses humour to cultivate a delightful atmosphere for readers, thus also self-parodying the effectiveness of humour in workplace environments.

Why does this structure work well?

When deciding which techniques to pick for your body paragraphs, you need to ensure that they are not too specific as this may limit your analysis. For example, if you explicitly choose metaphors as your technique, your analysis may turn out to be repetitive as your evidence was restricted to only metaphors. Therefore, try picking techniques that are broad enough to describe other diverse techniques. For example, visual imagery is a technique but can also be conveyed via a metaphor.

After identifying the main points, you want to organise them to demonstrate idea progression. This means that the paragraphs are ordered to develop on the idea presented previously.

- In this structure, the first paragraph discusses the emotive devices that HTW uses to engage the audience and make their ideas of workplace humour relatable. This is effective for the first paragraph because it establishes the stressful environment of American workplaces which introduces the need for humour. This topic is also a good starter for establishing the intended audience as talking about emotion would require a description of who the common reader is.
- As this is an infographic and needs to provide information, the second paragraph follows smoothly by explaining how the text is still factual despite being emotive.
- Finally, the last paragraph focuses on the humorous devices integrated throughout. This paragraph was most effective as a follow-up to the paragraph about logos/reason as it primarily discusses the use of humour to make the reader's experience of an informative text enjoyable.

Point 1

Inclusive diction and composition

1. “using humour at work can make you more productive, less stressed, and happier…”: second-person pronoun - the direct addresspositions these benefits to the readers. As the intended audience is workers, readers would find these benefits personally desirable as they can relate to being stressed at work.

2. “Americans feel stressed about their jobs”, “Americans are unsatisfied with their jobs”, and “Americans struggle to stay happy”: repetition - repetition of “American” demonstrates that the average American would experience work stress, creating an inclusive environment that requires humour.

3. “the people want humour” + fists in the air (structure): composition and allusion: the fists in the air are composed of different skin colours which present the desire for humour to be relatable to all types of Americans. The fists combined with the “the people want”phrase alludes to revolution media which indicates a mass call to action to use humour at work.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph focuses on the use of inclusive elements to convey the need for humour to address the social issue of workplace stress. Therefore, the evidence is ordered to firstly relate the text to a reader individually and then develop this relation to the wider working community. For example, the first quote mentions the direct address to readers with the second quote about the national presence of workplace stress. Then the last piece of evidence is about social movement due to the revolutionary undertones. By ordering the evidence to reflect the different levels of relatability to the audience, the essay can effectively address the ‘call to action' to include humour at work.

Point 2

Appeal to logos

1. “83% (of) Americans feel stressed about their jobs” + cartoon man with a distressed expression: enumeration and emanata - the statistical information increases the credibility of the HTW's stance on humour. The sweat drops (i.e., emanata) also depict a person's stress hyperbolically, contributing to the negativity surrounding stress at work.

2. “laughing for 10-15 minutes can…burn as many calories as 5 minutes of aerobic exercise [and] 10 minutes of dancing”: repetition and simile - the repeated comparison of laughing to exercise suggests that humour has physical health benefits. This would be attractive for workers as they may be too busy to prioritise exercise.

3. “people with 3 close friends at work are 96% more likely to be satisfied with their lives”: composition and juxtaposition - colour contrast makes “3” and “96%” stand out so readers can quickly associate the numbers together. The juxtaposition between the large 96% and small 3 makes readers feel that easily connecting with a few people via humour can have drastically large benefits.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph is about all the logical elements that HTW uses to make the infographic factual. As an infographic is foregrounded by its visual elements, it is effective to mention how HTW uses factual text and visuals collectively. Therefore, the “83% of Americans…” quote and stressed worker illustration were used as the first evidence as it was a good example of how HTW combines facts and visuals. Additionally, most of HTW's facts are about the benefits of humour, so it is important to include these as pieces of evidence. As such, the next two pieces of evidence are exemplars of this with each evidence appealing to different ideals of the reader (i.e., the second

evidence appeals to a worker's need for health and the third evidence about the worker's likeness of convenience).

Point 3

Humour

1. “and burn as many calories as…15 minutes of milking a cow”: humour and entertaining tone - the comparison to milking a cow appears absurd when compared to the other descriptions of exercise, yet it is still factual. Although the poster is informative, it also involves an entertaining tone which makes it fun to read - this presents the infographic as a self-parodyto demonstrate how humour can be used to lighten professional spaces.
2. (structure) missing milk carton: pun, personification, and composition - the pun humorously implies the lack of humour at workplaces and targets middle-aged workers who would understand the 1980s reference to missing children on milk cartons. The bright orange also has alarming connotations which make readers feel that they should immediately use humour which has also been personified to evoke further pathos.

Jerica's Comments: This paragraph concentrates on all the humorous elements of the infographic. Likewise to the second paragraph, it is effective to explain how humour is used to aid the information presented by the text. Basically, as the infographic serves to provide reliable information, why does HTW decide to use humour? Therefore, the first quote is used as it can be easily analysed to explain HTW's balance between an informative and entertaining tone. The second quote is then used to broaden the essay's critical thinking as it has strong links to the audience (i.e., 1980s reference). Considering that the second quote has a lot of techniques available to analyse, two quotes are sufficient for this paragraph!

Exemplar Essay

Introduction

Typically, work culture demands high productivity and commitment which can deteriorate the well-being of many workers. Consequently, there is a crucial need to adapt the working environments to help workers achieve success and happiness in their jobs. Humour That Works (HTW) suggests in their infographic “Humor at Work” that including humour throughout daily occupational tasks can improve many aspects of a person's lifestyle. By comically informing readers on the well-being benefits of adopting humour, HTW promotes humour as a convenient method to improve stress, health, and performance in an American workplace. HTW emphasises workplace stressors as a national issue that can be alleviated by the health benefits and pure entertainment associated with humour.

Point 1

HTW incorporates inclusive diction and visual composition to portray workplace difficulties sympathetically, thus presenting humour as a progressive solution to a national problem. The infographic begins by advising that “using humour at work can make you more productive, less stressed, and happier…” By using the second-person pronoun “you”, HTW employs direct address to construct the benefits of humour as personal to the readers. Considering that the main audience would be those who are dissatisfied with their current work life, they would relate to the desire for improved productivity and happiness. As such, HTW also evokes pathos as they sympathise with the reader's work mentality, hence encouraging the audience to favour the use of humour at work as it can reduce their occupational stressors. Moreover, HTW heightens the readers' job dissatisfaction by explaining

that it is widely apparent across the nation because “Americans feel stressed about their jobs” and “Americans struggle to stay happy”. The repetition of “Americans” accentuates that poor work mental health is a national issue, thus presenting the need for humour at work as non-trivial. Consequently, the generalisation that all people across America experience the same work difficulties enhances the relatability of the text and cultivates an inclusively supportive environment for readers struggling with work. In doing so, HTW associates social unity with humour which is further emphasised when they claim that “the people want humour” with an illustration of fists in the air. As the fists are composed of different skin colours, HTW subtly portrays humour as a universal desire across all ethnicities, thus relating to readers of different backgrounds. The phrase “the people want” with upturned fists also alludes to common revolutionary media, thus signalling that more humour at work would be the progressive solution for improving stressful workplaces. Therefore, HTW actively encourages humour to improve workplace stress that is prevalent across America.

Point 2

Although HTW sympathises with readers' work lives to emotively promote humour, logos is also embedded to support the infographic visuals with reason and hence, create an accessible and credible text. When introducing America's unhealthy work culture, HTW claims that “83% [of] Americans feel stressed about their jobs” with a distressed cartoon man. The enumeration of 83% provides statistical support for HTW's benefit claims of humour, thus evoking the mode of logos as readers can accredit the information with rationality. Additionally, the emanata of sweat drops hyperbolically illustrates the man's stress which visually intensifies the concern surrounding workplace stress. Therefore, the enumeration with iconography is paired to secure both visual and informative engagement from readers. HTW further involves logos by providing compelling examples of the benefits of humour, suggesting that “laughing for 10-15 minutes can…burn as many calories as 5 minutes of aerobic exercise [and] 10 minutes of dancing.” By repeatedly comparing laughter to exercise through similes, HTW indicates that humour can have physical health benefits. As such, most readers would find these health benefits attractive as their busy work life would restrict them from regularly exercising. The continued enumeration of specifying the duration also conveys that quick laughter can amount to a longer duration of exercise, thus appealing to a worker's ideals for convenience and health. HTW broadens these benefits to other lifestyle aspects when they convey that “people with 3 close friends at work are 96% more likely to be satisfied with their lives.” The orange text of “3” and “96%” contrasts the dark blue background which prompts readers to easily associate these values together. As 96% appears proportionally larger than 3, the juxtaposition reveals that simply connecting with a few people can have drastically large benefits which reiterates the convenience of humour. Overall, HTW supports their visuals with reason to construct humour as an appropriate activity for a workplace.

Point 3

In addition to informatively explaining the efficacy of humour, HTW also strategically uses humour to create a delightful atmosphere for readers, thus self-parodying the enjoyment of having humour in workplace environments. After comparing laughter to different exercises, HTW playfully adds that laughing can “burn as many calories as…15 minutes of milking a cow. Despite the absurdity, the statistical comparison to milking a cow remains factual. Therefore, HTW integrates an entertaining tone whilst maintaining its reliability as an informative infographic. Consequently, the infographic serves as a self-parody for the effective relationship between work and humour. Specifically, HTW uses humorous devices to make an informative infographic interesting, thus simultaneously exemplifying the appropriate use of humour under professional contexts. HTW further emphasises the absence of humour in workspaces by illustrating a milk carton that declares “Missing Hugh Moore”. A pun is used to personify humour as a missing person, thus evoking pathos as readers are prompted to miss humour like a real person. The use of a milk carton also refers to the 1980s act where missing children were posted on milk cartons, thus engaging middle-aged workers who would be familiar with

this practice. As such, when combined with the bright orange colour of “Hugh Moore”, the milk carton evokes connotations of urgency which prompts readers to feel that the lack of humour at work is alarming and should be resolved. Moreover, the extended theme of cows depicted initially by the “15 minutes of milking a cow” imitates the set-up of a joke with its final punchline (i.e., the milk carton). By developing an extended joke across the infographic, HTW creates a cohesive, humorous element that effectively complements the information presented. Hence, HTW uses humour to encourage an enjoyable read, demonstrating the effectiveness of humour in lightening the mood.

Conclusion

In conclusion, HTW integrates a range of inclusive, informative and humorous techniques to construct an infographic that both entertains and educates readers on why humour is best in the workplace. HTW also includes revolutionary and alarming undertones to prompt readers to immediately follow their advice on adopting workplace humour. Although HTW focuses on the need for humour, it is equally important to recognise the widespread issue of poor mental health amongst workers. As such, HTW also provides a helpful piece that raises awareness of the detriments of the stressful work culture in America.

Solutions for IB English Lang & Lit HL May 2021

Text: Text A – “India's Soul Food” by Julie Sahni

For the full exam and guiding questions, refer to the Paper which can be purchased from the official IB store.

This Paper 1 Breakdown was written by our awesome IB7 Lang Lit instructor Jerica Nieva, including the plan and the exemplar essay.

Pre-planning

Before we dive straight into annotating and writing a plan, we must set the basics to effectively guide your analysis:

Text type: Article

Overall Purpose: To teach the historical and communal importance of Tandoori chicken in Indian culture, thus encouraging readers to partake in Indian cuisine.

Targeted audience/s:

1. People who typically read New York Times articles.
2. People who are unfamiliar with traditional Indian cuisine.
3. People who are interested in learning about new food and how to cook it.

Readers who fall under these categories collectively would mainly be characterized as White Americans from middle age to old age.

Exemplar Plan

Structure: technique (i.e., each paragraph is based on a technique).

Key: Evidence + Technique+Effect

Thesis

By offering an enriching perspective on tandoori cooking, Sahni educates readers on its social importance and encourages them to partake in the cultural experience.

Bird's Eye View

1. Sahni includes amiable diction to intimately portray the cultural unity and joy shared amongst Indians through the communal appreciation for traditional cuisine.
2. Sahni constructs delectable sensory imagery and includes appetizing photography to enhance the reader's imagination of eating Indian cuisine.
3. Sahni uses an educational tone to inform readers about the historical development and the present-day accessibility of Indian cuisine.

Why does this structure work well?

When deciding which techniques to pick for your body paragraphs, you need to ensure that they are not too specific as this may limit your analysis. For example, if you explicitly choose metaphors as your technique, your analysis may turn out to be repetitive as your evidence was restricted to only metaphors. Therefore, try picking techniques that are broad enough to describe other diverse techniques. For example, visual imagery is a technique but it can also be conveyed via a metaphor.

After identifying the main points, you want to organise them in a way that demonstrates idea progression. This means that the paragraphs are ordered to develop on the idea presented previously.

- In this structure, the first paragraph discusses that Sahni uses optimistic diction to demonstrate how traditional cuisine unites the Indian community. This is effective for the first paragraph because it establishes the positive and supportive approach that Sahni has to Indian cuisine. It also involves appealing to the reader's emotions to give Indian cuisine a personal touch.
- Subsequently, there is a meaningful transition to the second paragraph which is about appealing to the reader's senses.
- As the first two paragraphs were about engaging the reader's interest in Indian cuisine, the third and final point follows cohesively by encouraging the readers to try Tandoori cooking.

Point 1

Optimistic and friendly diction

1. “I remember gathering with my family and friends…we would dig a pit to smoke, grill and roast chicken and meat”: anecdote and positive connotations of “family and friends”– the scene is depicted with a cordial mood which encourages an optimistic outlook on eating Tandoori food. The anecdote also evokes ethos as readers know that Sahni has genuine cultural experiences with Indian cuisine.
2. “we'd devour them (the food) instantly”: collective pronoun ‘we' – Tandoori food is presented as a symbol of cultural unity amongst Indians as they commonly enjoy the food in groups.
3. “Sunday supper for some Americans”: simile – the comparison to an American cuisine tradition helps readers who are unfamiliar with Indian cuisine understand its communal importance. This also evokes pathos by making Indian cuisine appear more personal to readers.

Comments: This paragraph focuses on the use of optimistic diction and how this cultivates a sense of cultural unity. Therefore, the first evidence involves Sahni's light-hearted anecdote because it establishes the positive tone that she uses throughout this section. It also demonstrates that Sahni is sharing first-hand knowledge which introduces the idea of building a connection with the readers. The following quotes are then used to clarify that this optimistic mood is linked to eating cultural food with close people. Specifically, the second quote is on Tandoori food to relay that Sahni is focussing on Indian cuisine, but the third quote is also used to explain why discussing Indian culture is relevant for the mainly Western audience of the New York Times.

Point 2

Sensory imagery + photograph of Tandoori chicken

1. "...the juicy morsels of meat were taken from the pit": diction and alliteration – "juicy" evokes tactile imagery as readers can imagine the texture of the meat. The alliteration of 'm' also enhances this tactile imagery as it smoothens the reading pace which matches Sahni's description of "juicy" meat.

2. "…imbued with a sweet smoky aroma": sibilance and olfactory imagery – the repetition of 's' slows down the reading pace which draws attention to Sahni's description of the aroma, thus heightening the engagement of the reader's senses.

3. Structure point (tandoori chicken image): bright, colourful composition and high positioning – the image is presented as the salience which draws attention to its denotations of intense flavour. The salience also captivates readers who are interested in reading about food as they can quickly see the image.

Comments: This paragraph is all about the sensory techniques that Sahni uses to make Tandoori food appear delicious. As Sahni uses a range of imagery, evidence was used to correspond to different types of imagery. By analysing various imagery types, you can evaluate how it collectively builds one strong sensory image for the readers. Hence, the first evidence is on tactile imagery, with the second evidence on olfactory imagery. Lastly, the final evidence refers to the photograph as it provides visual support to the sensory image created. As such, you may also find it effective to order these points in a reverse manner where you introduce the picture first, and then explain how the sensory image contributes to Sahni's overall illustration of Indian cuisine.

Point 3

Educational and informative tone

1. "in the beginning of the 19th century, in Peshawar, in the northwest frontier region of Pakistan, then part of India": asyndeton – the vast, geographical development of Tandoori cooking is summarised into one sentence which makes it easier for readers to comprehend the extensive cultural roots of Indian cuisine.

2. "food was labelled low-class" and "many members of the upper class…sent their servers to pick up tandoori food": juxtaposition – the contrast between concepts of lower and upper class demonstrates how the international appreciation of Indian cuisine has improved over time. This educates readers on the evolution of Indian cuisine in America.

3. "marinade", "oven", "grill", "wood charcoal", "barbecuing": lexical chain of cooking terms – the use of cooking terms that are common to many Americans make Sahni's instructions on how to cook Tandoori food appear accessible and convenient.

Comments: This paragraph concentrates on Sahni's educational perspective on Indian cuisine, specifically her informative tone used when she describes its history and how to make Tandoori food.

As Sahni introduces the history of Tandoori food in chronological order, the pieces of evidence were structured likewise to convey how Sahni is able to teach the extensive history of Indian cuisine whilst making it all relevant to the average American reader. Therefore, the first evidence introduces the origination of Tandoori cooking in India, with the following evidence on its emergence in America. Lastly, the final evidence presents Indian cuisine in the present day where it can be fully integrated into American homes.

Exemplar Essay

Introduction

Over time, tandoori cooking has evolved from purely a cultural cuisine to an internationally enjoyed food. However, there are still many who are unaware of the traditional roots behind tandoori food. Julie Sahni concentrates on the cultural development of Indian cuisine in the New York Times article, “India's Soul Food”. By offering an enriching perspective on tandoori cooking, Sahni educates readers on its social importance and encourages them to partake in the cultural experience. Sahni writes both affably and attractively to emphasise the intimacy and delectability of cultural food, whilst also embedding historical points to demonstrate the evolution of tandoori cooking.

Point 1

Sahni includes amiable diction to intimately portray the cultural unity and joy shared amongst Indians through the communal appreciation for traditional cuisine. Sahni opens the article with an anecdotal recount in which she “remembers gathering with [her] family and friends…and dig[ging] a pit to smoke, grill and roast chicken and meat.” By beginning with a light-hearted anecdote, Sahni establishes a cordial atmosphere that encourages the readers to correlate optimistic connotations with the experience of eating Indian food. The personal account also evokes ethos as Sahni shares that she is well-involved with Indian cuisine. Hence, the readers can trust that Sahni's descriptions of Indian cuisine are genuine and feel welcomed into her unique cultural experience. Sahni elaborates on the unity that Indian cuisine brings by candidly mentioning that “we'd (her friends and family) devour [the food] instantly.” The collective pronoun ‘we' establishes that people enjoy Indian cuisine together, thus positioning tandoori food as a symbol of India's cultural community. Acknowledging that readers of the New York Times may not have close connections to Indian culture, Sahni makes a sincere effort to be inclusive by comparing it to “Sunday supper for some Americans”. This simile induces pathos as American viewers can compare Indian soul food with their pastime food. Therefore, although readers may not understand the cultural specificities of Indian food, they can relate to enjoying a communal meal. Overall, Sahni's use of affable language embraces the harmonious ideas of cultural unity and gathering to convey the communal importance of Indian soul food.

Point 2

Additionally, Sahni constructs delectable sensory imagery and includes appetizing photography to enhance the reader's imagination of eating Indian cuisine. As Sahni describes the times she ate traditional food, she details that “the juicy morsels of meat were taken from the pit”. The adjective “juicy” engages the reader's feeling with tactile imagery as they imagine the physical delectability of tandoori meat. Subsequently, Sahni linguistically enhances the tactile imagery by including alliteration with the ‘m' sound to make the sentence flow, thus mimicking the smoothness of tender meat. Enticing alliteration is typified again when Sahni expresses the meat was “imbued with a sweet smoky aroma.” Sahni's alliterative use of sibilance with “sweet smoky” slows down the viewer's reading and draws attention to the intense, fragrant olfactory imagery that she simultaneously creates. Moreover, the structural composition of the article augments Sahni's sensory development of Indian cuisine by engaging the reader's sight with the salient image of tandoori chicken. The salience is

generated by the bright orange colour of the chicken and the positioning at the top of the article. Specifically, the vibrant colours have denotations of a rich, flavourful taste which contributes to the sensory imagery that promotes Indian food palatably. By incorporating the salience, Sahni also captivates the attention of readers who are naturally interested in learning about food, thus utilising the article's placement in the New York Times food section. Therefore, by combining different imagery and structural techniques to cultivate an appetising perspective on Tandoori food, Sahni promotes that the readers can appreciate Indian food for its flavour alone.

Point 3

Lastly, an educational tone is used to inform readers about the historical development and the present-day accessibility of Indian cuisine. Sahni details that tandoori cooking was invented “in the beginning of the 19th century, in Peshawar, in the northwest frontier region of Pakistan, then part of India”. By constructing the narrative with asyndeton, Sahni covers the vast, geographical journey of Indian cooking that led to Tandoori chicken in a single sentence. The historical summary allows readers to easily comprehend the extensive cultural roots of Indian cuisine which is not as popularised as the food itself. Sahni then links the cultural history of Indian food to its emergence in America. She illustrates that the “food was labelled low class” but eventually, “many members of the upper classes” grew likeness towards it. The juxtaposition between the concepts of lower and upper classes portrays the improvement of American appreciation for Indian cuisine over time. As such, Sahni makes the history of Indian cuisine relatable to readers by conveying its presence in America's food culture. After establishing the heritage of Indian cuisine, Sahni enlightens readers on the evolution of Tandoori chicken to become a dish that can be made in the average American household. For example, Sahni uses a lexical chain of culinary terms such as “oven”, “grill” and “barbecuing” when providing cooking instructions. Although Sahni focuses on Indian cuisine, she uses cooking terminology that is common to many people. Hence, Sahni reveals that cooking Tandoori chicken is very accessible for present-day Americans. Collectively, Sahni builds an educational tone by elucidating the evolution of Tandoori from India to American homes, thus offering readers a more culturally immersive experience of Indian cuisine.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Sahni interchangeably uses genial, sensory and educational language to demonstrate that Tandoori chicken has historically evolved to become a significant aspect of Indian culture. She also accentuates the presence of Indian cuisine in American society, thus prompting readers who may be foreign to Tandoori cooking to also try eating it. Therefore, while Sahni educates readers on cooking Indian cuisine, she also highlights the importance of other cultural factors that contribute to having an immersive, eating experience of diverse cuisines. Ultimately, Sahni embraces the communal unity and historical significance that are concomitant to engaging with cultural food.

IB English Paper 2

Paper 2 Preparation

Get Started

This survival guide splits IB English Paper 2 preparation into three simple parts:

1. 🤓 Understanding your texts
2. 📖 Planning and brainstorming
3. ✍️ Writing comparative analysis

How to use this guide

Read this text in order and follow the exercises, particularly those in Part 1.

- Part 1 explains the levels of understanding you need to attain for Paper 2, and lists a set of '**missions**' to pass each level.
- Next, Part 2 explains how to structure your comparative essay, and how to plan and brainstorm something insightful within just 20 minutes of exam time.
- Finally, Part 3 explains in detail how to write strong comparative analysis.

Completing Part 1 to a good standard will take **at least a week**, so keep referring to the missions in Part 1 to improve your level of understanding.

Refer to Parts 2 and 3 when you practise past exam questions to guide you through the process of planning and writing the essay.

How to learn from the examples

Each school teaches a different set of texts for IB English Paper 2, so it's impossible to provide in-depth examples for every scenario. Instead, this Survival Guide uses three texts in its examples to demonstrate **general strategies**. These strategies are applicable to any text, whether it be a poem, novel or play.

The three examples texts we'll be using are *Pygmalion* by Bernard Shaw, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde, and *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller.

You don't need to know anything about these texts to benefit from the examples. After reading through the examples, consciously apply the same strategies to your own set of Paper 2 texts.

Levels of Understanding for Paper 2

How well you understand a literary / non-literary work can be represented on an **infinite scale**.

Like a number line, this scale starts from 0 and stretches to the right--all the way to infinite expertise. You could keep studying and studying, and there would always be more to uncover from your texts.

So, from a practical standpoint, when can we say that our understanding of a text is 'good enough' for Paper 2 and call it a day? In other words: "What exactly do I **need to know** about each of my texts? What do I **need to do** to reach the required level of understanding?"

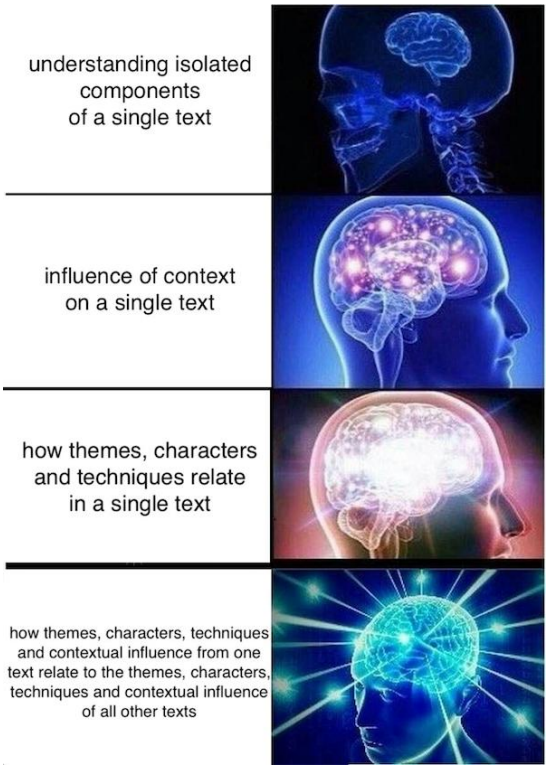
Let's answer these questions now!

Essential Knowledge

A text can be understood at three levels

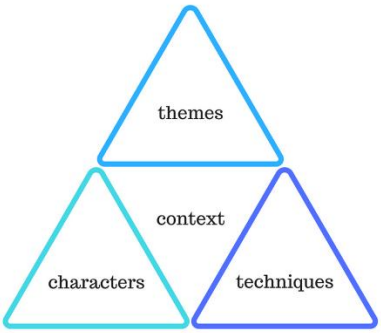
1. Basic
2. Better (for lack of a 'better' word)
3. Advanced

Or in the language of the expanding brain meme:



Level 1: Basic

This pyramid summarises the basic knowledge you need to know for a Paper 2 text.



Themes are the ideas or messages explored consistently throughout a text. Think: general ideas like “oppression”, “exploration” and “morality”.

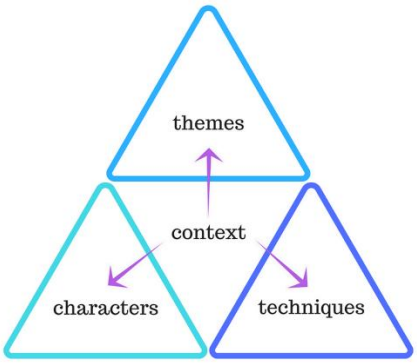
Characters are the actors in a text. They play an important role in plays, short stories and novels but are less important in poems. In poems, the main 'character' is usually the speaker.

Techniques are the tools writers use to convey meaning and elicit thought and emotion from the audience. Think: metaphor, juxtaposition and tone.

Context is placed in the centre of the pyramid to represent its influence on an entire text. Context is the social environment in which a text was written, as well as the historical events that probably led to its creation.

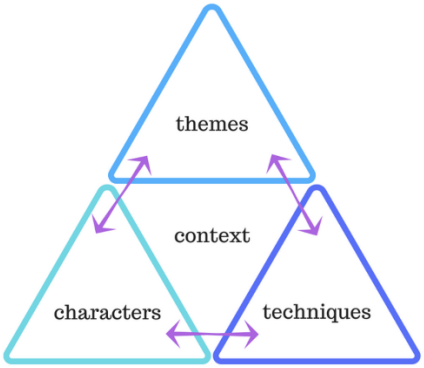
Level 2: Contextual influence

The context may not be punching you in the face when you read the words on the page (i.e., the context may not be obvious to naive reader), but be sure that it lurks behind (almost) every line. Every aspect of a text--its themes, characters and techniques--is influenced, to some degree, by its context. Being aware of the context unlocks the second level of understanding.



Level 3: Relationships

Finally, to answer an IB English Paper 2 question at a 7 standard, you must understand how the outer elements in the pyramid interact with one another.



Here are some concrete examples of how the outer elements can relate to each other:

- Characters are often associated with certain techniques. For example, diction is used frequently by Bernard Shaw to characterise Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion*, because Shaw wants to emphasise the refinements Eliza's speech as she rises through the ranks of British society. Can you think of a technique that is frequently used with a certain character in your own texts?
- Characters contribute to specific themes. For example, Arthur Miller uses priests as characters to explore the theme of morality in the play *The Crucible*.
- Themes can be associated with certain techniques.

Why do we need to understand these relationships for Paper 2?

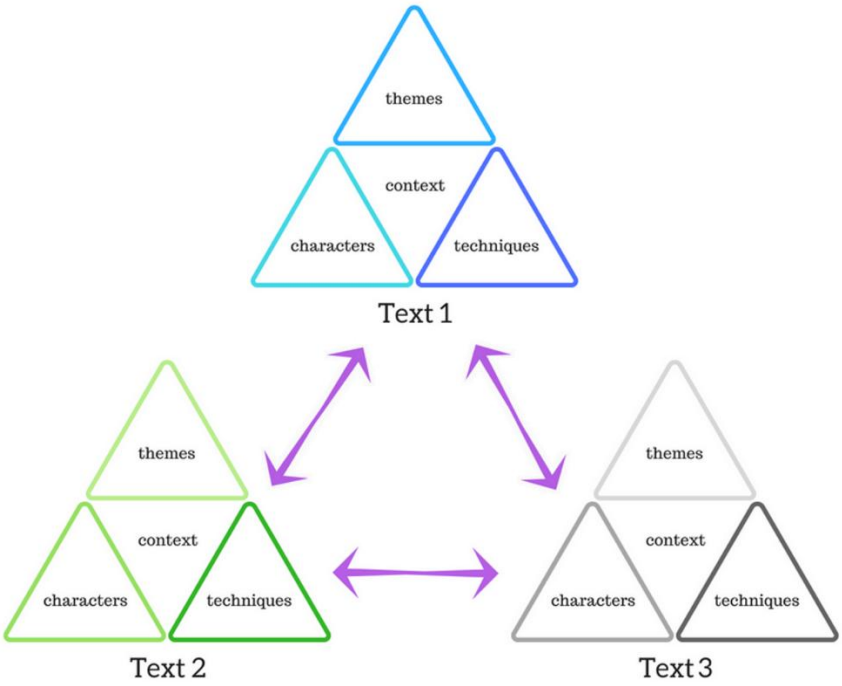
1. Prompts in Paper 2 often ask you to explicitly **connect** ideas with characters, or characters with techniques, or techniques with themes. It's advantageous to prepare these connections.
2. Connecting these aspects makes your **analysis much more sophisticated**. You gain instant brownie points in the analysis criterion.

But hang on. Don't we have, like, three texts to study for Paper 2? And don't we have to compare and contrast them?

Yes.

Level 4: Boss level

Just when you thought you'd beaten the final boss, there is actually a fourth level of understanding.



This crazy diagram represents **intratextual** (within the same text) and **intertextual** (between different texts) knowledge. Levels 1 to 3 are concerned with understanding individual texts to a high level. Level 4 builds on top of this knowledge by understanding how specific components in each text relate to each other.

Read through the following questions carefully. They give you an idea of the types of intertextual relationships you'll need to learn about for each pair of your texts.

1. "How are the **purpose, meaning and effect** of technique A in *Pygmalion* similar or different compared to the same technique in *The Crucible*?"
2. "What are the similarities and differences between the **overall contexts, themes, characters and techniques** of *Pygmalion and Earnest*?"
3. "Do the unique contexts of *Pygmalion* and *The Crucible* **influence** the themes, characters and techniques similarly or differently?"
4. "Do themes and characters, characters and techniques, and techniques and themes relate to each other in different ways in *Earnest* and *The Crucible*?"
5. "Is your answer to Question 4 driven by **contextual influences**?"

Don't panic if this all sounds a bit overwhelming. These examples simply put into words what the pyramid diagrams show. It's actually very intuitive. For example, take a look at the Level 3 diagram which shows the relationships between themes, characters and techniques. Now, notice how Question 4 above is just about comparing these **intratext** relationships **across different texts**.

Still confused? Let's make this super concrete. In an example we'll see in Part 3, both *Earnest* and *Pygmalion* use **situational irony** (i.e., technique) around the idea of **morality** (theme) to either create **humour or shock** (effect). What we just did here--in one sentence--qualifies as pure, final boss-level knowledge. We are saying that this relationship between a specific **technique** and a specific **theme** is present across two texts, however the **effects** on the audiences are slightly different in each text. This is an example of comparison and contrast at an advanced level--exactly the level of insight that will earn you a 7 in IB English Paper 2.

Now the question is, how do we get there?

Rules & Guidelines

The climb to the top

We will guide you through each level of understanding by providing a set of questions. Some ground rules and guidelines.

1. These questions are open-ended and don't have 'correct' answers (welcome to IB English?)
2. In fact, these questions are not really questions. They are prompts that put you on the right track and get you asking the right questions of your texts.
3. To answer these prompts, you probably need to do all of the following:
    1. Read your texts
    2. Flick through them looking for quotes
    3. Use Google, LitCharts, SparkNotes, CliffNotes

4. Refer to your class notes
5. And of course, use ChatGPT (don't rely on it for facts, it makes up a lot of stuff!)

4. You should spend about 30 minutes on the more difficult prompts, as you'll need to dig through your texts, find a bunch of quotes, and decide on the best quote to analyse.
5. Rome wasn't built in a day, and the same goes for your soon-to-be Pyramids of Knowledge. It will take time. Spread out the work over a timeframe of at least a week. *If you are desperately cramming, then feel free to throw this advice out of the window.* Random fact: A cool verb for throwing something out of a window is “defenestrate”. Please defenestrate the said advice if you are cramming.
6. You should progress from Level 1 to 4 **in order** as the higher levels build on top of the lower levels.

Level 1 Missions

Themes

- What are the three (or more) **main themes** in each of your texts? Can you name two interesting themes that most other students would not mention?
- How do these themes evolve and change throughout the text, in the beginning, middle and ending?
    - When does the writer first explore the theme?
    - Note down whenever the theme is explored, and whether the theme has evolved: e.g. for the theme of "guilt" in some imaginary novel, we we write: “Chapter 5: Edward is affected by guilt, Chapter 9: Both Edward and Elena suffer from guilt, Chapter 15: ...”
    - By the end of the text, what's the **message** connected to this theme?
- Can you pick the **best quote** (in your opinion) for each theme? Ideally a quote with at least 2 strong techniques.

Characters

- Who are the three (or more) **main characters** in each of your texts? Can you name two **minor characters** in each text who are important to their respective works?
- How does the character evolve?
    - When does the writer first introduce the character?
    - How does the character **develop or transform** over course of the text (this is called their "character arc")? Does s/he start out arrogant but suffers a car accident, and then becomes humble in the face of mortality? That's just an example.
- Can you pick the **best quote** (in your opinion) for each character? Ideally a quote with at least 2 strong techniques.

Techniques

- What are the three (or more) **main techniques** in each of your texts? Can you name two special techniques in each text which are strange, unique or wouldn't be named by most other students?
- Can you pick the **best quote** (in your opinion) for each technique?

Context

- Simple question: When were each of your texts written?
- What are 5 crucial facts about the upbringing, life and career of the writers of your texts?
- What genres are your texts? They each could be a farce, a comedy, a sociopolitical criticism, an entertaining story, an autobiography, etc.
- What were the important historical and social factors that impacted the writer and, thus, the writing of each text?

Note: The “best quote” simply means a quote that allows you to analyse at highly insightful level. A boring quote like “the tea was hot” would never allow you to analyse to a significant extent, but a quote like “the tea was warm, cheerful” would allow you to analyse personification, tone, mood, etc.

Level 2 Missions

Not too many prompts in Level 2, but you'll need to do some research and practice your Google-fu to figure out the contextual influences on your texts

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Context on themes

- How does the context **impact the themes** of each text? Refer to your Level 1 notes for themes.
- Can you find the **best quote** to show contextual influence on each these themes?

Context on characters

- How did the context **impact the characterisation of the characters** of each text? Refer to your Level 1 notes for characters.
- Can you find the **best quote** to show contextual influence on each of these characters, and how they are portrayed?

Context on techniques

- How did the context **impact the techniques** of each text? Refer to your Level 1 notes for techniques.
- Can you find the **best quote** to show contextual influence on each of these techniques?

Level 3 Missions

Themes and characters

- For each character, what are the two main themes in which they are involved? The character should play an active role in this theme.
    - For example, the playwright Bernard Shaw uses the character Eliza in the play *Pygmalion* to explore the themes of **social class** and **gender roles** by portraying her meteoric rise from the lower class to rubbing shoulders with the upper class Victorian society.
- Can you find the best quote to demonstrate this connection for each theme-character pair?
- Write out 1 paragraph of analysis for this quote, as preparation in case you need it in Paper 2.

Characters and techniques

- For each character, what are the **two main techniques** that the writer uses to characterise / portray them?
    - For example, diction and costuming are the two main techniques used to characterise Eliza in the play *Pygmalion*. The words she uses (diction) and the clothes she wears demonstrate to the audience that she has changed from a lower class citizen to an upper class lady by the end of the play.
- Can you find the best quote to demonstrate this connection for each theme-character pair?
- Write out 1 paragraph of analysis for this quote, as preparation in case you need it in Paper 2.

Themes and techniques

- For each theme, what are the **two main techniques** that the writer uses to develop / explore them?
    - For example, the theme of ignorance in *Pygmalion* is primarily constructed by the playwright's use of **dramatic irony** and **stage directions**, because the dramatic irony shows that the characters are clueless to facts known to the audience, and certain stage directions reinforce this ignorance.
- Can you find the **best quote** to demonstrate this connection for each theme-technique pair?
- Write out 1 paragraph of analysis for this quote, as preparation in case you need it in Paper 2.

Level 4 Missions

Answer the following questions for each pair of texts.

Theme

- List three similar pairs of themes (each theme must come from different texts)
    - Explain why the themes are similar.

- In what ways do these similar themes differentiate from each other? Look closely. Even identical twins have differences!

Character

- What are the two pairs of most similar characters (each character must come from different texts)? Why are they similar? Choose one quote from each character that shows their similarity.
    - Hints and ideas: both are protagonists, both are immoral characters, both are ignorant
- Why are these pairs of characters similar? Consider the following prompts:
    - What is the effect of context on the creation / portrayal of these characters?
    - Which themes do they each contribute to in their respective texts? In other words, what role do these characters play in the writer's message? See your notes from Level 2 for character-theme relationships.
    - What techniques are they each portrayed by? See your notes from Level 2 for character-technique relationships.
- What are the two pairs of most dissimilar characters? Why are they different? Choose one quote from each character that shows their contrasting qualities.
    - Hints and ideas: one is moral, one is immoral; one is optimistic, one is unoptimistic.
- Why are these pairs of characters so contrasting?
    - Same as questions beneath ‘similar'.

Technique

- List three major techniques that play a significant role in both texts. Think about the techniques that the writers keep using again and again.
    - Which themes do these techniques help to construct in each of your texts? Are the themes similar or totally different?
    - Which characters do these techniques help to construct in each of your texts? Are these characters similar or totally different?
- Why do the two writers use these three similar techniques?
    - Hints: Do the texts belong to the same genre and therefore similar techniques are used? Or do the writers have similar characters / themes to portray and thus use the same techniques?

Context

- List similarities in the contexts of the texts you studied.

    - Examples: Both writers were inspired by their political environments. Both writers share similar ideals and beliefs. Both writers belong to the same historical period and were influenced by similar historical events.

- What are the differences in the unique contexts of your texts?
    - Examples: One writer was capitalist, the other was communist. One writer believed that gender roles are oppressive, the other believed that gender roles are a natural part of the human condition.

Reaching the Summit

Congratulations on finishing Level 4 and reaching the top!

You should now have a strong intratextual and intertextual knowledge. You've also exercised your comparative analysis muscles, perhaps for the first time.

From now till your exam, you'll need to do two regular exercises to deepen and broaden your understanding of the texts:

1. **Quote hunting.** Find more, and better, quotes.
2. **Notes.** Improve, extend, and deepen your notes for each Level, particularly those at Level 4.

Finding Quotes

According to the current IB English syllabus (First assessment 2021), you don't need to memorize specific quotes from your texts--you just have to refer to specific details in the texts... and analyze the authorial choices...

Personally, I **do recommend memorizing quotes**. Otherwise, how on earth are you going to analyze in detail? How are you going to refer to specific technqiues and authorial choices? Since you have to know specific techniques the author is using, you're already half-way there. You may as well learn the quote!

Rule 1: Three birds with one stone

You can work hard: Memorise lots of quotes, each being relevant to a single theme / character / technique.

But it's much better to work smart: Memorise high-quality quotes that can be used to analyse not one but multiple themes, characters and/or techniques.

Choose quotes that are flexible and can be reused. This strategy minimises the number of quotes you need to memorise.

Rule 2: Two or Three quotes

For every major theme, character and technique that you noted in the Levels, choose two or three quotes to support them.

If you:

- choose two quotes for every major ‘thing', that's around 3 texts x 3 types x 2 major x 2 quotes = **36 quotes** in total for Paper 2.
- choose three quotes for every major ‘thing', that's around 3 texts x 3 types x 3 major x 2 quotes = **54 quotes** in total for Paper 2.

Apply Rule 1 to reuse high-quality quotes and decrease how much you need to memorise. In a real essay, you will use at most 3 quotes for each text within each point. You will use 2 points x 2 texts per point x 3 quotes = 12 quotes.

You will use a maximum of 12 quotes in your final Paper 2 essay, so a total of around 40 quotes memorised seems like a safe amount of quotes to choose from.

Summary

This section was about establishing a strong understanding of your texts. You have learned:

1. The level of understanding required to score top marks in IB English Paper 2
2. Exactly how to obtain this level of understanding through the four-level framework
3. The number and type of quotes you need to memorise

Now let's apply our knowledge in the second section on Planning and Brainstorming!

Paper 2 Essay Planning

Essay Structure for Paper 2

We recommend two essay structures to use for IB English Paper 2: Basic and Advanced.

The truth is... planning is the most important part of the Paper 2 process. You set yourself up for **massive success** or **disappointing failure** during these first 15 to 20 minutes of your exam.

This section will teach you about essay structure, planning, understanding the prompt, brainstorming, and thesis construction.

The essay structure

The end goal of planning is to have on your page a clear structure of your essay. I will first teach you the **basic structure**, which was enough to get me a 23/25 in my final Literature Paper 2 exam, and there is a more advanced structure that will be required if you are aiming for the highest marks, particularly in Higher Level. Luckily, the essay structures are very similar. You can start with the basic structure and, if you want, gradually transition to the more advanced structure.

Basic structure

The basic structure consists of an introduction, two broad points consisting of 3 paragraphs each, and an optional conclusion.

Here is the anatomy of the structure of a so-called “Umbrella” point:

- Paragraph 1: Analysis of Text 1 in relation to the current point
- Paragraph 2: Analysis of Text 2 in relation to the current point, plus some more comparison & contrast throughout the analysis
- Paragraph 3: An in-depth paragraph all about comparing & contrasting Texts 1 and 2

Umbrella points are complex points; they're not like your typical points in IB English Paper 1. Instead of focusing on a single text, a big point in Paper 2 is an opinion about how Text 1 relates to Text 2 around a **common focus**.

For example:

- “Both plays explore provocative themes to generate interest early in the plays.” (commonality of **provocative themes**)
- “Whereas poet A utilises figurative language to establish the notion of superiority, poet B relies more on structural and syntactic manipulation of lines to achieve the same.” (common focus on **techniques**)

In order to support this complex point, we clearly need multiple paragraphs. Thus the term “umbrella” to cover it all.

Why is this a good structure?

- **Simple.** Instead of having to juggle three different tasks at the same time (analysing Text 1, analysing Text 2, and comparing the two texts), you can simplify your task by doing these tasks sequentially.

- **Comparative.** By grouping points under two broad similarities, we've made it very easy to compare similarities at a macro-level. Then, once we've done some detailed analysis on each text, we can find similarities and differences at the micro-level.

Scribble version

These are the 3 essential components you must to write / scribble down during your planning time.

1. Introduction
    1. Defined keywords
    2. Thesis
2. Point 1 in one short phrase, like “atypical characterisation”
    1. Text 1: 2 to 3 quotes
    2. Text 2: 2 to 3 quotes
    3. C & C: short phrases like “genres different: comedy vs. criticism”, or “more use of irony in Text 1”
3. Point 2 (same as above)

Advanced structure

The basic structure is good enough to score a 7 in IB English SL. The main **weakness** of the basic structure is that it places comparison and contrast at the bottom of the priority list when it should be at the very top. So what's the solution?

Alternate between texts whenever you need to. Specifically, within each Umbrella point, try to balance (1) your analysis and (2) your comparison & contrast of the texts. It should follow these steps:

1. Analyse Text 1 until you reach a point where your ideas are deepening and becoming sophisticated
2. Analyse Text 2 and relate it to the ideas developed by the analysis of Text 1 from just earlier
3. Do comparison and contrast for the quotes and ideas analysed so far in both texts.
4. Go back to Text 1 and keep developing the argument. Repeat the process.

The advantage of using this flexible approach is that your essay will be focused on comparative analysis. You will avoid the main problem with the basic structure: isolated paragraphs focussing on just one text and not the other.

My recommendation is to start with the basic structure and gradually practise alternating between your texts more frequently throughout your point. Higher Level students should definitely think about transitioning into this advanced structure. Standard Level students are not strictly required to do so.

Great! Now we understand the end goal of the whole planning process. Let's get started on the strategy for quickly building a strong essay structure.

Planning and Brainstorming Strategy

Apart from memorising the prerequisite knowledge, the main challenge in Paper 2 is coming up with a strong, elegant plan within a short period of time.

This section will teach you how to build an effective argument from the ground up.

There are 6 steps.

Understand each and every prompt

All prompts share a common anatomy. They consist of the following parts:

1. An inspirational quote or statement at the start to spark ideas in your brain.
2. A command term which doesn't really matter because you'll be doing the same thing--that is, comparative analysis--irrespective of the command term they give you, e.g. “discuss”, “compare”, “contrast”, “evaluate”.
3. Important keywords, i.e., specific words and phrases, to which you must refer in your essay, e.g. “to what extent”, “how”, “irony”, “effect”, “technique”, “minor character”, etc.)

Keywords are by far the most important things to note. Highlight the keywords in each prompt, otherwise you may leave out important considerations from your brainstorming.

Place close attention to plurals. A prompt that asks you to discuss “a character in each of your texts” is very, very different from one that asks you to discuss “characters from each of your texts”.

Choose a prompt

Choose a prompt that *seems* like the best option. It doesn't have to *be* the best option; you just need to find a good prompt in the least time possible.

Elimination is the best approach when there are no good choices:

1. Eliminate prompts you simply cannot answer because of keywords not being easily applicable to your texts.
2. For each remaining prompt, brainstorm two broad commonalities or ‘umbrellas'. If you spend too long finding these points, eliminate the prompt.

More tips for choosing the right prompt:

- If you have done enough preparation, you should also recognise which prompts allow you to recycle your strongest points. Answer such prompts without hesitation.
- Paper 2 is one of those situations where “No pain, no gain” does NOT apply. If a prompt seems easy, by all means go for it! Don't do the the prompt that looks the most challenging.
- You should choose a prompt by the end of your 5 minutes of reading time; otherwise you're simply wasting precious exam time.

Finding the Umbrella points

Explicit prompts

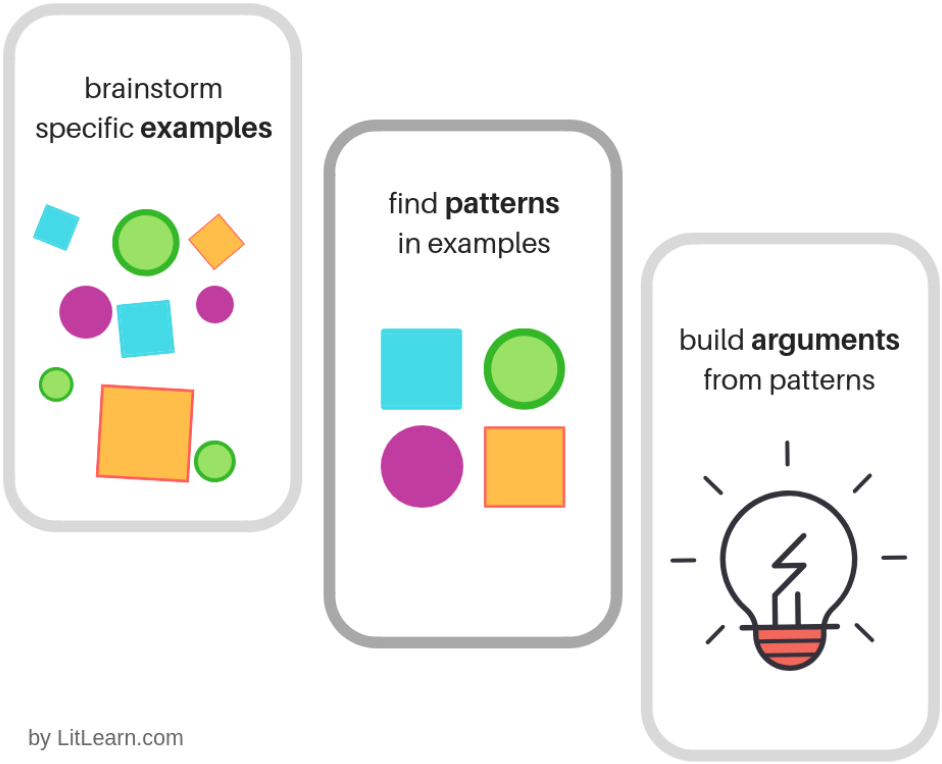
Sometimes the prompt tells you exactly where to look for points.

For example: “In what ways have at least two playwrights you have studied ensured that the plays' opening moments are likely to engage the audience?”

Here you would follow the explicit keywords in the prompt; hence you only need to brainstorm about the start of your texts.

Any prompt that mentions a specific part of the text or a specific type of technique, character, or theme falls under this category. These are usually the easiest types of prompts to answer because they are less ambiguous. However, there might be less scope for creativity and originality.

Open-ended prompts



Most often, the prompt is open-ended. For example: “Discuss the role that decisions play in two or more of the texts you have studied.” You probably don't immediately know where to start looking for arguments.

The most effective strategy is to brainstorm specific examples relevant to the prompt's keywords. These can be themes, characters or techniques related to, in this case, “decisions”.

In this example, a good starting point would be to list:

1. All the major ‘decisions' or actions of the main characters
2. All the themes explicitly related to decision-making, e.g. justice, morality, loyalty
3. All the techniques related to decisions (this might be hard)

For the main characters, the list might look like this...

Text 1

1. Gwendolyn does this…
2. Algernon does this…
3. Earnest does this…

Text 2

1. John Proctor does this…
2. Rebecca Nurse does this…
3. Elizabeth does this...

Before you celebrate and use each example as a point, we actually need to exercise our brains a little more.

An example supports a point, but it doesn't make a point. A point is a more general, higher level ‘opinion'. For example, a good point would be “The writers criticise the ignorance of the upper class”: it's a general, non-obvious idea. “Gwendolyn is an ignorant aristocrat” would make a great piece of evidence, but it certainly isn't a generalised idea.

If you're a science geek, then the examples are the data, and the points are the hidden patterns we have yet to discover.

The easiest way to develop examples into arguments is to look for patterns, i.e., things that repeat in the examples you've brainstormed. Essentially, we're looking for trends in the data.

To give you an idea of what I mean, here are some interesting patterns about decision-making in our example texts:

- Decisions made by individuals vs. groups of people
- Decisions that unknowingly affect other characters, i.e., dramatic irony.
- Actions associated with specific techniques, e.g. decisions are usually underscored by natural imagery such as thunder, etc.
- The situational irony of decisions being made by traditionally less powerful people.

Patterns can be anything, as long as they are interesting and non-obvious. The less obvious, the better. Patterns can be about specific types of characters, themes and techniques. Patterns can be exist between examples from the same text or, even better, between examples from different texts. And if you can't find patterns, then collect better data (i.e., think of better examples).

Going from a pattern to an argument is easy: simply connect the pattern to the writer's purpose, effect or context. For example, “The upper class characters are ignorant” is a pattern but not a literary point. Just add something about the authorial intent and effect, and we have ourselves a point: “Wilde characterises the upper class as ignorant to ridicule them and create humour in the audience.”

In summary, the steps of brainstorming open-ended prompts should look something like this:

1. Think of examples (data)
2. Find patterns in the data
3. Add authorial intent, effect or context to the pattern and you get a point!
4. Caveat: it's only a point if the pattern stretches across the texts you are comparing.

To really help you understand the thought processes that should occur for effective brainstorming, here is an example of brainstorming in action for our decision-making example:

1. “Hmm, what is common to all the decisions that Gwendolyn makes?” (I'm looking for patterns by generalising from the examples)
2. “Oh, all her actions are stupid because she is ignorant” (I found a pattern: “Gwendolyn's decisions are ignorant”)
3. “Oh, another upper class character's actions are also ignorant” (I found another example of the pattern)
4. “Wait, is ignorance related to social class? Is the writer trying to say something here?” (I'm looking to connect the pattern I noticed to a purpose or intentional meaning)
5. “Oh, that's right, Wilde is ridiculing the upper class throughout the whole text.” (I connect the pattern to authorial intent.)
6. “Hmm, does my other text also look at “ignorance” or “knowledge” or anything else related?” If yes, then we've found ourselves a sturdy Umbrella point!

Super open-ended

Sometimes the prompt is so open-ended that you have to redefine or interpret the keywords. Your interpretation changes where you would then look for points, so you need to choose interpretations that have a high chance of leading to interesting patterns.

For example: “Do male characters have more interesting roles than female characters in at least two texts you have studied?”

After deconstructing the anatomy of the prompt, you would realise that the keywords are “male”, “female”, and “interesting”. But what does “interesting” mean?

- It could mean characters who inspire shock, laughter, anger.
- Or it could mean characters who are elusive and quiet.
- Or it could mean the opposite: characters who are confronting and outspoken on controversial issues.

As you can see, there's no correct answer what broad terms like “interesting” mean. You should redefine “interesting” to mean whatever works best for your texts. Your task is to sculpt the keyword such that it allows you to use your prepared themes, quotes, characters, etc. to their fullest potential. For example:

- If your texts are mostly about war and famine, then you should redefine “interesting” in your introduction to mean characters who endure the universal experience of “struggle and survival”.
- If your texts have lots of iconoclastic (rebellious) characters who challenge social conventions, then you can redefine “interesting” as characters who elicit shock from the mainstream audience.
- And so on...

Evaluating the points

So you've brainstormed your heart out, and now you stand victorious on top of your desk with two concrete points on your page. But wait! Make sure the points are *actually* good before you celebrate too much.

Checklist

- Do the points complement each other?
    - Is there a way to make it seem like the second point is an advancement on the first point?
- How should the points be ordered? Which one should come first?
- Are the points actually good?
    - Think about the C&C you brainstormed. Are these sophisticated / interesting? If not, try again.
    - Do the points answer the prompt directly?
- For the quotes supporting the texts under each point:
    - Do I have too little or too many quotes? 2 to 3 quotes is a good amount for each text per point.
    - Are these good quotes? (i.e., do they contain a variety of techniques and maximises my analysis score? Do the quotes lead to strong C&C?)

How to find complementing points

Points that complement each other should do one of the following build on each other or contrast each other.

Example: Average

1. "Atypical characterisation" creates interest in the audience
2. "Technique of foreshadowing" to create interest

This is an okay structure in that both points are related to techniques. However… it's missing the special connection that we want. Now, don't get me wrong, this is definitely good enough for an essay, but it's not the amazing essay structure that will knock the examiner off his chair because of its sheer brilliance.

Example 2: Excellent

1. "Flashbacks" to create interest in the audience
2. "Foreshadowing" to create interest in the audience

This is a really interesting and strong essay structure because the two points are united by the concept of time. Like the example before, both points focus on techniques, but these points starkly contrast each other in a logical way as opposed to just being 'another point'. One point examines how the writer looks back in time, whereas the second point examines the future. The logical connection here is very strong.

However, the logical connection doesn't have to be immediately apparent in the topic sentence, as in the last example. The first point can refer to something specific, and then the second point can build

onto that specific detail as opposed to the overall topic. This might be confusing, so here's an example:

Example 3: Not so obvious

1. “Atypical characterisation” creates interest in the audience
    1. Within this point, situational irony is the major secondary technique that develops from unexpected characterisation
    2. Link to the next point on foreshadowing: “Whereas unexpected events create shock and interest, the technique of foreshadowing and giving audiences an expectation that will eventuate can also establish audience interest.”
2. “Technique of foreshadowing” to create interest

By considering more detailed levels of linking, the example that was dismissed as being average can actually be extremely strong. Usually these links are either thought of in advance as a result of experience and attention to detail, or thought of on-the-fly as a result of luck and skill.

In summary, if you have time during your planning stage, think about how you can make your points complement each other in a logical way. Points can link at the top-most level (topic sentence) and/or at lower levels (specific ideas that spawn out of the first point).

Thesis

We'll talk about the thesis in detail in the next section.

If you've picked good points as per the checklist above, you should be able to easily find a sentence that ties the points together in a thesis, meaning an opinionated statement that directly answers the prompt.

Having trouble here indicates that your points need to be more logically connected to each other. If so, revise your point

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Evaluating the whole plan

As a result of your brainstorm, you will likely have multiple plans to choose from. Which plan should you decide to write out in full? There are four aspects to consider:

- Logical: Is my argument logically sound? Does it actually answer the prompt, or is it tangential?
- Comparison and contrast: Are there more opportunities for insightful C&C in this plan?
- Originality: How unique are my thesis and points for this plan?
- Confidence: How well do I know the quotes to successfully execute this plan? Have I analysed the same quotes before?

That's it: the six steps to brainstorming and planning a full Paper 2 essay. We kept the thesis section (Step 5) a bit short, because in the next section we'll talk about how to make a strong thesis from your points.

Craft a strong thesis for Paper 2

First, a thesis is an opinionated statement; it's the overall argument that you will be supporting through the help of your two points.

Consider the following prompt: “If an audience is to be engaged by a play, the exposition must very quickly include elements that promise interesting ideas, characters or events. In what ways have at least two playwrights you have studied ensured that the plays' opening moments are likely to engage the audience?”

Examples

Let's start with the most basic thesis:

Hence, both playwrights Shaw and Wilde use characterisation in their respective texts.

The main problem here is that the thesis does not answer the prompt, nor does it reuse the keywords of the prompt to show that the thesis is relevant to the prompt that it's trying to answer. Let's fix this by simply adding a phrase containing the keywords “interest” and “early” to the end of the thesis:

Both playwrights Shaw and Wilde use provocation to create audience interest early in the plays.

In principle, a thesis should outline the broad structure of an essay's argument. This thesis only mentions one element--provocation--which suggests that the whole essay is about this one topic. A thesis needs to be more clear, so let's be explicit about the points we'll be making:

Both Shaw and Wilde use atypical characters and ideas that challenge contemporary norms to create audience interest early in the plays.

As an examiner, we now know exactly what direction the student is heading towards. This thesis is strong (relevant and specific), and it would be okay to stop here.

But we can do better! A big part of a successful Paper 2 essay is how well you can **reiterate** the fact that you are, indeed, proving your thesis. To make the job easier later in the essay, you should incorporate **one special keyword** that you can quickly repeat to remind the examiner that you are constantly supporting your thesis.

Some special words we could use here are: “iconoclast”, “provoke”:

1. “Both being iconoclasts of their time, the playwrights Shaw and Wilde use…”
2. “... provoke the audience and establish interest early in the plays”

Associating **unique words** with the original idea makes it very easy to signal to the examiner that you are referring to your thesis. Unique perspectives also separate your essay from the crowd.

List of thesis formats

- "While writer A uses / portrays / conveys ____, writer B utilises / characterises / employs ____ to a greater extent to achieve a similar message"
- "Both writers A and B use ___ and ____ to achieve ___.:
- "Due to ___, writer A does ____, whereas writer B does ____."

Paper 2 Thesis checklist

- Does my thesis reuse the prompt's keywords?
- Does my thesis outline the specific Umbrella points of my essay?
- Does my thesis contain one unique keyword?

Paper 2 Essay Writing

The Paper 2 Introduction Formula

I'm a big fan of examples. We'll talk about general guidelines and rules afterwards.

Consider the following prompt:

Discuss whether men have more interesting roles than women in at least two of the texts you have studied.

Bad introduction

"This essay will answer Prompt 3, where it states that men are more interesting than women. Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde are both playwrights who show that women have more interesting roles than men. This essay will argue this through the characters of Higgins and Eliza in Pygmalion and Algernon and Gwendolyn in Earnest."

There are all sorts of issues in this introduction:

1. It sounds unnatural. Never mention the prompt's number.
2. It lacks basic information about the texts, writers and contexts. If you aren't familiar with the texts, the above introduction would be **disorienting** because it doesn't provide sufficient background information.
3. It doesn't use the full titles first. *Earnest* is an abbreviation of *The Importance of Being Earnest*; the full title should be provided the first time before using abbreviations.
4. Weak thesis. It simply repeats the prompt without adding specific details or sophistication. We have discussed what makes a strong thesis in a previous section.
5. Lacks originality. There's no creative start to the essay. An essay cannot get more boring than one that starts off with "This essay will answer Prompt 3 […]".

Also a bad introduction

Bernard Shaw's play Pygmalion was first performed in 1913 at the Hofburg Theatre in Vienna. Shaw's play features numerous characters, such as Eliza Doolittle, Henry Higgins, and the Eynsford-Hills. Oscar Wilde's play The Importance of Being Earnest premiered in 1895 and also has a colourful cast of characters ranging from Algernon Moncrieff to Cecily Cardew. In this essay, 'interesting' is interpreted to mean 'gender differences.' Hence, [thesis]...

Okay, let's stop right there.

- Where's the prompt? No reference has been made to the prompt. The first sentence in the essay needs to establish complete relevance between your essay and the prompt that you are answering.
- Irrelevant. The introduction to the texts is more informative than the previous example. However, the information is irrelevant. Your texts need to be introduced concisely, i.e. not aimlessly listing characters.

- Unnatural interpretation of keyword. Keywords should be defined implicitly, not explicitly. It is far more natural to write “Gender differences have captured the attention of people for centuries…” than to write “In this essay, ‘interesting' is interpreted to mean ‘gender differences'”.
- No justification for interpretation of keyword. The art of essay writing is persuasion. The moment you don't explain yourself, you lose credibility--and FAST. In Paper 2 you must abide by the principles of reason and justify why on Earth the examiner should accept your interpretation of the keyword.

Excellent introduction

Nothing captures the imagination more than the prospect of transformation. Things that are dynamic, turbulent, ever-changing are inherently of interest to audiences as they represent possibilities, whereas the idle and the still are calm but hardly stimulating. Change, and the role of gender, is a central part of Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion and Oscar Wilde's Oscar Wilde's, plays which are both set in Britain during the Victorian era. [insert thesis here]

We haven't gotten to thesis yet but this is already an excellent introduction due to the following:

1. Engaging. The first sentence is creative and definitely gets the examiner interested. Brownie points definitely going your way!
2. Relevant. The examiner can easily see by the second and third sentences of the introduction that the student is answering the prompt about interest and gender because, surprise, the keywords “interest” and “gender” were strategically used. The student has gently guided the examiner from the notion of ‘change' to ‘interest' to ‘gender' without logical leaps. Bravo!
3. “Imagination” is used instead of “interest” in the first sentence to make our essay less cookie-cutter and more creative, or should I say, ‘imaginative'.
4. We can improve the relevance of the introduction by drawing the connection between interest, transformation and gender in the very first sentence, but that would be hard to do without skipping the necessary logic which is currently distributed over the first three sentences.
5. Keyword interpreted. “Interest” has been clearly defined as “change” and “transformation” in the first two sentences of the essay. The student has not just limited the ridiculously broad and subjective topic of “interest” to a manageable definition (“something that changes”); s/he has also justified in sentence 2 why this redefinition is reasonable. And you can't argue against reason.

Guidelines for writing introductions

From the above examples we can extract some nuggets of wisdom to guide us in in our introductory perils:

- The keyword of the prompt should be mentioned as soon as possible.
- Interpret and redefine the often broad keywords to give your essay a manageable direction. You must also justify why the keyword can be reasonably interpreted that way.
- Introduce the essential details of your texts:
    - Use the full title before and abbreviations

    - Mention relevant details about the audience, context and genre. Don't go into too much detail as you can reveal more about the texts' contexts and audience later on when the information is relevant to the argument.

- Next is the thesis. We've talked about this already, so we'll skip this.
- Finally, outline the points. Often this is not needed because the thesis would mention the broad Umbrella points anyway. Otherwise, if your argument has a complex structure, definitely outline your specific points in a single sentence at the very end of the introduction.

How to Write Comparative Analysis - Part 1

News flash: The primary goal of Paper 2 is NOT analysis of individual texts. Analysis is simply the path to help us reach our actual goal: comparison & contrast.

Avoid the **mistake** of making your Paper 2 essay look too much like a Paper 1 essay:

- a big chunk of analysis on one text,
- then another big chunk on the other text,
- and then two sentences of comparative analysis at the end.

Clearly, this is not the right approach to Paper 2.

The right approach is one that places an **emphasis on comparative analysis**. In this section, we'll write a comparative point from scratch and show you **how to balance** single-text analysis and comparative analysis.

Topic sentence

Comparison & contrast should be sprinkled **evenly** throughout your points. For example, we can start right away in the topic sentence:

"Whereas the playwright Wilde provides an atypical portrayal of the aristocratic character Algernon Moncrieff to engage his audience, Shaw instead employs the lower class Flower Girl, Eliza Doolittle, to induce interest."

In general for topic sentences, make sure you mention both texts and the specific way in which they are related. In the above topic sentence, I emphasised contrast by using the word "whereas".

Of course, you can emphasise similarities of the texts, too:

"Both playwrights Wilde and Shaw utilise atypical portrayals of their characters Algernon Moncrieff and Eliza Doolittle, respectively, to elicit audience interest. In particular, both playwrights elicit shock by characterising Algernon, an aristocrat, and Eliza, a commoner, with language and behaviours that depart from the stereotypes of their respective social classes."

Notice how I split up the complex idea of "the playwrights both do similar things, particularly in this specific way involving social class" across two 'topic sentences'. It's okay to break rules if it makes sense to do so!

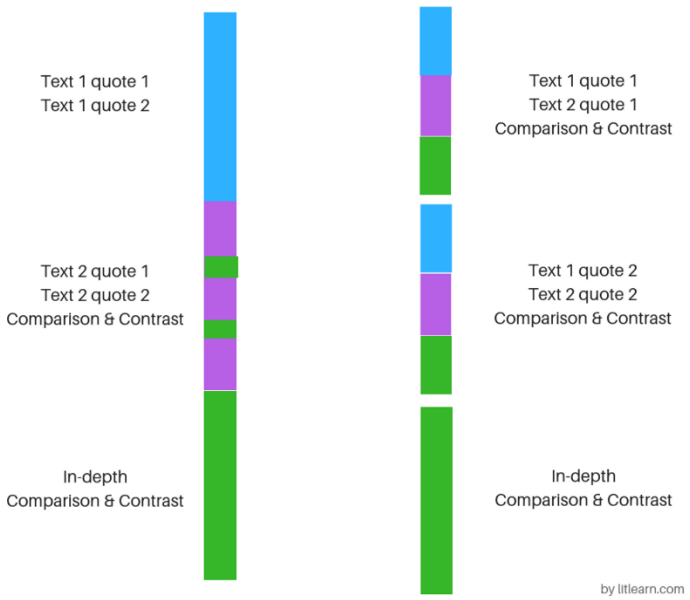
With our topic sentence finished…what now?

Balancing throughout the point

In the **basic structure** that I recommended in Part 2, you would analyse roughly two quotes for Text 1, then analyse two quotes for Text 2 while doing some comparisons with the ideas uncovered from Text 1, and then finally write a third paragraph of in-depth comparison.

If you're **achieving 5 or below** in Paper 2 (both SL and HL), you should keep using this basic structure, because your focus should instead be placed on: 1) improving your knowledge of your texts, and 2) improving your analysis and comparison skills.

If you're **achieving 6 or above**, and **especially if you are in HL**, then you should try to increase the balance between your texts. In the diagram below, the approach on the left is the basic approach and the right is the balanced approach.



So, after writing the topic sentence, we need to **first focus on analysing one text** until our analytical 'shovel' hits the insightful thing that we previously planned to compare with the other text. Once we hit this 'gold', we can **start analysing the other text** until we get to the same idea, at which point we can compare and contrast.

Continuing from the previous example, here's some exemplar analysis that analyses the first text:

'First, Wilde creates humour by characterizing Algernon as the antithesis of the stereotypically honourable aristocrat. In the opening moments of Earnest, Algernon makes numerous inversions of common proverbs, including "In married life, three is company and two is none." This reversal of the proverb is sarcastic and insinuates the failure of marriage in the upper class as a result of adultery, as suggested by "three is company." Algernon's flippant tone towards marriage and adultery, serious matters to Victorian audiences during Wilde's time, hence causes the audience to question the aristocrat's moral standing. The situational irony that arises engages the unsuspecting audience with scandalous humour.'

In this first part of the overall point, I analysed one entire quote from the first text.

Note how the analysis is **short but sufficient.** I support my point with just **one quote** to keep the analysis short, because we want to be getting to comparison and contrast **as soon as possible**.

We have things to compare and contrast!

So by analysing the first text, we have uncovered some things to compare and contrast with Text 2 in the next paragraph:

1. **Morality** in relation to social class
2. The use of **humour** as a way to engage audiences
3. The use of **situational irony**

With the first text done and dusted, let's switch to Text 2 evidence and begin comparing & contrasting with the points above:

'Curiously, Shaw also uses situational irony but exactly in the opposite way: He characterizes the flower girl Eliza as a lower class individual who is hyperbolically obsessed with morality and manners, particularly in her repeated affirmation that she is "a good girl". This shocking portrayal engages the audience for it clashes with the their worldview of a stereotypical lower class citizen who would apparently be without morals.'

In this partial paragraph, I **immediately compare** how the two writers use the same literary technique but in opposite ways (situational irony + social class + morality, except the upper class Algernon is amoral and the lower class Eliza is moral). This is advanced comparative analysis--we'll talk about this more in a later section.

The setup and the punchline

As we progress through a Paper 2 point, we have to keep in mind two important tasks related to comparison and contrast. We've been doing it already, but I'll bring explicit attention to it now. In short, you can think of comparison and contrast (C&C) as something like the structure of a joke:

1. **Set up.** In this step, we need to set up the C & C, but don't do it just yet. We analyse the first text and **intentionally mention things** that we want to compare and contrast with the other text. In the previous example, we analysed the quote in a way that mentions social class, morality and situational irony.
2. **Punchline.** This is the part where we capitalise on the things we set up earlier. Since we mentioned all the things we wanted to compare in the **Set up** step already, it's very easy to write: "Oh, also Text 2 does this as well." Not mentioning the situational irony when analysing Text 1 makes C&C impossible to do later on, because there's no commonality to refer to.

Let's continue with out example by analysing the effect of the common techniques used by the writers.

'However, Shaw's use of atypical characterization is more serious than Wilde's attempt. Shaw does not use witty sayings to create humour; instead, he introduces the more serious theme of class distinction and invites the audience to question their unfair expectations of individuals based on superficial indicators, namely class.'

Since we've only analysed **2 quotes** so far, we would now kick off another round of analysis and comparison.

(Pretend that another 2 quotes were analysed and compared in the time that you take to read this parenthetical sentence.)

Cool, now that we've analysed **4 quotes** in total: 2 quotes from each text. Let's wrap up the point by connecting to the main point in the topic sentence:

'Hence, Shaw uses challenging but serious ideas in the opening of his play to create interest, whilst Wilde utilizes challenging but trivial ideas in Act 1 of Earnest in order to engage through humour, wit and farce. Both playwrights employ the common technique of atypical characterization but the ideas explored and effect created are largely divergent.'

Rules of thumb for balanced points

We can now agree on some rules of thumb to dictate how we properly write a balanced, effective point for Paper 2.

1. Analyse only enough for you to compare & contrast with insightful material.
2. If you aren't going to compare it, don't write it down.
3. Balance: Analyse one quote from one text and then one quote from the other text.

How to Write Comparative Analysis - Part 2

I've shown you examples of comparative analysis, but I haven't yet explained the what and the how in exact terms.

The 6 ways to compare and contrast

First, the types of things people normally compare between texts are techniques, theme, characterisation, purpose, effect and context.

We can compare texts along any of these dimensions:

- **Technique**, e.g. “While Jones uses metaphorical language in his poem, Smith instead uses structural techniques.”
- **Theme**, e.g. “Both Jones and Smith illustrate the notion of conformity in their respective poems.”
- **Characterisation**, e.g. “Jones characterises the speaker as a quiet but confident student, whilst Smith's construction of his speaker is far more ambiguous.”
- **Purpose**, e.g. “In both Jones' and Smith's poems, the poets make a connection with the message that knowledge is an empowering source of growth.”
- **Effect**, e.g “On the one hand, Jones inspires readers to empathise with the speaker as she overcomes her challenges, while Smith creates a less emotional effect on the audience.
- **Context**, e.g. “Whereas Smith's poem was written during World War II, Jones' poem is a much more modern account of the life of a young student in high school.”

These are all basic examples of comparative analysis. How do we go from basic to advanced comparisons?

Basic to advanced comparative analysis

To take our comparisons to the next level, all you need to do is combine different aspects together. For example, let's break down some of the comparative analysis from our point about interesting opening moments.

1. “Shaw also uses situational irony but in exactly the opposite direction [...]”: Situational irony + morality + social class + characterisation = Technique + themes + characters
2. “Shaw's use of atypical characterization is more serious than Wilde's attempt [...]”: Situational irony + (shock vs. laugh) + (serious vs. farce) = Technique + effect + purpose

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Worked example

Let's start off with the bare minimum and improve it in understandable steps.

“Shaw uses the characterisation of Eliza whereas Wilde uses the characterisation of Algernon.”

Characterisation is always achieved by literary techniques, so we can deepen our comparative analysis by incorporating the technique used by the writers to produce such characterisations.

“Both Shaw and Wilde utilise situational irony in their characterisation of Eliza and Algernon, respectively.”

Now let's add the essential component of purpose. Both writers used the same technique for a similar goal.

“In order to interest their audiences, both Shaw and Wilde utilise situational irony in their characterisation of Eliza and Algernon.”

Great, we now are now comparing not just characterisation but also the writer's purpose and technique. We should now go into more specific detail about how exactly the constructions of the characters compare.

“[...] Interestingly, both playwrights create situational irony through the same theme of social class. Eliza is a lower class citizen whose hyperbolic concern for morality is unexpected, whilst the aristocratic Algernon impresses on the audience a character of scandal and amorality. Thus the playwrights, in order to achieve the same goal of engaging audiences, employ the same technique and the same theme of morality but in directly opposing ways, with the characters in question being from upper and lower classes and exhibiting unstereotypical amorality and morality, respectively.”

Now you get say this is pretty good (ahem, excellent) comparative analysis. What haven't we touched yet in the list? Effect and context. Let's add them into our comparison, too!

“[...] However, the effect of situational irony on the audiences is unique to each text. Wilde's characterisation of Algernon creates a comedic effect as opposed to Shaw's elicitation of shock. The contrasting effects of situational irony reflects the diverging intents of the writers. Wilde's play is a farce that aims to ridicule the folly of the upper class, whereas Shaw's play is more serious in its criticism of superficial class distinctions of the Victorian era.”

How to Write Comparative Analysis - Part 3

Context

Context is important to include in a Literature Paper 2 and absolutely essential in a Language & Literature Paper 2 (it's explicitly requested in the question, usually). Context is an umbrella term that includes all the environmental factors that influenced how and why a writer wrote his/her text. Some write because of heartbreak whilst others like Arthur Miller write to criticise political movements that affected their daily lives.

There are a number of easy ways to smoothly incorporate context in your comparative analysis.

When analysing effect on the audience

An audience of a Japanese novel from the 1800s have different things on their mind compared to, say, a modern audience. When you analyse the effect of a technique, theme, etc. on the audience, make sure that you justify why they feel, think or respond in that particular way by mentioning the cultural, historical or social factors affecting the unique audience for which the text was intended.

After that, you can discuss the similarities and differences in how the audience of the texts respond. Here are some examples of insightful comparative analysis of context and effect.

"Even though the audiences are culturally and historically different (1800s Japan vs. 1900s America), both audiences were experiencing economic hardship. Thus their responses to the texts' themes are similar."

When analysing the writer's purpose

If you've enrolled in LitLearn's Analysis Bootcamp course, then you'll know that everything in the universe comes back to one thing, and that thing is the writer's purpose.

In the crucial step of analysis where you link to the writer's purpose, you should remind the examiner that you are thinking contextually and that you understand that the writer was writing the text to convey a message relevant to the time and place in which it was written.

For example, Arthur Miller wrote his tragic play *The Crucible* not because he wanted to criticise amorality in Salem in the 1690's. We need to think contextually, i.e. what actually drove him to write the text? In fact, Arthur Miller wrote his play in response to the anti-communist hysteria of America in the 1950's; the Salem witch hunts just happened to be the perfect analogy for what was happening in the writer's world. Let's see how we can use context to improve our analysis of the writer's message:

"[some kickass analysis] Hence, through the exploration of the themes of paranoia and hysteria, Miller highlights how false accusation can lead to the decay of a society. [here's the link to the writer's real message] Miller uses 17th century Salem to mirror the harrowing effects of paranoia during the anti-communist hysteria gripping America in the 1950s."

How to Write a Conclusion

If you thought conclusions weren't important, then think again! The conclusion is the last thing your examiner will read before scoring your essay, so you better leave a good impression.

The purpose of a conclusion in a persuasive essay (such as Paper 2) is to **repeat** the significant points and leave the reader, in this case the examiner, totally **persuaded**. Let's look at the three characteristics of effective conclusions:

- **Repetitive**. You should revisit ideas that have been explored in your essay. Avoid introducing new ideas or arguments at all costs, as you'd have to provide evidence for them. Be careful: Repetitive doesn't mean that you should use the exact same wording as your topic sentences, etc. The conclusion should repeat the familiar ideas in fresh wording.
- **Persuasive**. Ensure that you use **persuasive language** in the conclusion to show that you have really argued your case through and through with conviction and confidence. Don't just write "Author achieves A and B". Jazz it up: "*Not only* does Author achieve A, but he also does B". Don't just write "Theme is used to…"; write "Hence, *it is clear* the theme is used to…"
- **Significant points.** Think 'Big Picture' concepts. The conclusion should give a macroscopic overview of the significant points of your essay. You should NOT mention. say, that specific metaphor you used in one of your paragraphs, but you SHOULD re-cap the main idea that that metaphor contributed to.

Okay, so the main task is to repeat what has been said already. There are **four such things to repeat**:

1. The prompt and the texts that have been explored
2. Your thesis and the main points / ideas you used in the response
3. The most insightful, significant similarity and difference between the texts
4. Leave a definitive, personal opinion if the prompt is quite subjective

The above list isn't a hard and fast rule; you can add more to it if you want, but these four aspects are the most essential elements to mention in the conclusion. Each point can be one or two sentences, so a conclusion should weigh in at approx. **4 to 5 sentences**. The conclusion can be quickly written in **around 2 minutes**.

Alright, enough talk. Let's look at an example of a strong conclusion:

1. **Prompt and texts.** The conflict between morality and corruption has been explored by James and Arthur in the news article *The Enlightened Gentleman* and the extract from the novel *Wrongful Deeds*, respectively.
2. **Thesis.** Each text offers its own portrayal of the struggle for good over evil, but it is clear the general message of both authors is that corruption is the darker, stronger force.
3. **Significant comparison & contrast.** Interestingly, while both texts share a pessimism towards the future of humankind, James' is paired with a sense of alarm whilst James' novel is a more reasoned deconstruction of amorality in the modern age.
4. **Definitive opinion based on texts**. Hence, *Wrongful Deeds* is a more effective and persuasive exploration of corruption for the more discerning reader.

The "definitive opinion" is simply there to set your essay apart from the others. The opinion has to be backed by what you've explored already in the essay, and it can be related to anything. Really! For example, you could offer your (informed) opinion of the effectiveness / persuasiveness of the texts, or the fact that both texts do not explore other interesting facets of the prompt enough, or how the the comparison of the texts has provided significant insight that could not have been realised otherwise! There's no right or wrong answer here.

Paper 2 Exam Tips - Part 1

Exemplar Plan

Planning time

I recommend the following amounts of planning time for Paper 2:

- Around 20 minutes for SL
- Between 20 and 30 minutes for HL students

Students should not be planning for any less than 20 minutes, unless you want to risk writing a disorganised Paper 2.

Brainstorming

Working backwards

You can reverse engineer a strong thesis from points that you know work well for your texts. Obviously do not try to force the points you've prepared in advance on every single prompt, but it's a smart idea to see if the prompts can re-use some points you've encountered in your practice essays.

Practice

Actually write and time yourself

Perfection doesn't come from practice. It comes from *perfect practice*.

I'm not saying you need to achieve perfection in Paper 2, but I am saying you need to practise like it's the real thing. Making your practice sessions seem like the real deal makes sure you don't get into these hiccups:

1. Running out of time.
2. Writing too slowly.
3. Writing too little.
4. Panicking because of an unfamiliar situation.
5. Not being able to recall quotes.

Also don't just type your essays. You get a very poor idea of how much you have to write that way, because typed essays look far smaller than the same amount of words written on a page.

Analyse as many quotes as possible beforehand

Most likely, you will not use the quotes you haven't analysed before in practice, because we humans prefer things that we know over the unknown.

So why bother even collecting and memorising so many quotes if you're never going to use them anyway? Memorising quotes for the sake of it gives students a false sense of security.

You should measure the size of your 'quote bank' not by the number of quotes you have in it, but by the number of quotes you've actually analysed and vetted for being able to provide great analysis.

Memorise your quotes

Flashcards and rote learning are important parts of the equation, but they are insufficient.

The bulk of your memorisation of quotes should come from you analysing your quotes. You will learn a lot more about your quotes this way, because you are noticing and analysing in detail the specific diction, techniques, grammatical structure, etc. of your quotes. It sure beats just repeating the words off flashcards.

Paper 2 Exam Tips - Part 2

- **Prepare an introduction** that succinctly introduces the author, context, genre, and intended audience of each of your texts. This will make your life easier during the exam, and save you precious minutes that COULD make the difference between a 6 and a 7!
- **Understand which pairs of text work best together.** For example, the themes, characters and techniques in *Earnest* and *Pygmalion* work together particularly well, whereas the combination of *Earnest* and *The Crucible* is rather forced. Since I know that *Earnest*/*Pygmalion* and *Pygmalion*/*The Crucible* are my strongest pairs, I can disregard the pair that will likely be difficult to work with.
- **Only prepare two texts in detail if you don't have enough time.** Preparing for all three is ideal, but two in-depth is better than three at a shallow level.
- There are **several types of Paper 2 prompts** every year:
    - Character-based
    - Theme-based
    - Effect-based
    - Technique-based
- Prepare in advance your **3 most effective pairs** of themes, characters, and techniques shared across your texts. These **'perfect pairs'** will be your strongest points, and there is a 95% chance you will end up using them in your final Paper 2, simply because we gravitate towards our comfort zones. This means the following tasks:
    - Find the 3 strongest quotes from each text for each pair
    - Write full analyses of these pairs
    - Brainstorm some complex C&C so that you can use them in the exam
    - How do you find your best pairs? Plan a lot of past papers.
- For example, in the play *The Crucible*, there are numerous potential pairs of characters to compare and contrast, but the best would be Reverends Hale and Parris (united by their common profession but opposing moralities), Abigail and Danforth (united in their contrasting authorities within society), and Parris and John Proctor (united in their contrasting amorality and morality).
- **Prepare generic but insightful comparisons and contrasts** for contextual influences. You can reuse these after any form of analysis.

Exemplar Paper 2 Essay

Paper 2 Prompt

This exemplar essay answers the following Paper 2 prompt from a past IB English Paper 2 exam.

"If an audience is to be engaged by a play, the exposition must very quickly include elements that promise interesting ideas, characters or events. In what ways have at least two playwrights you have studied ensured that the plays' opening moments are likely to engage the audience?"

Introduction

Playwrights often introduce interesting ideas, characters and themes in the opening moments of a play in order to capture the audience's interest and create a sense of eagerness toward the rest of the play's events. This technique of eliciting the audience's interest is clearly exemplified in the plays of Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw and The Important of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde, both of which are plays set in the Victorian era of England with the purpose of undermining and ridiculing the authority of the upper class, although Shaw's play has a far more serious effect on its audiences. Hence, both Shaw and Wilde utilise the construction of atypical characters and the introduction of ideas that challenge contemporary norms to create audience interest.

Point 1

Text 1

Firstly, Wilde provides an atypical portrayal of the aristocratic character Algernon Moncrieff in Act 1 in order to create a comic effect that engages the audience and invites them to ridicule the upper class. The setting is in a house in the fashionable "Half-Moon Street", and the room is "luxuriously and artistically furnished", complete with the melody of a piano playing in an adjoining room. The lavish setting therefore clearly establishes the audience's expectation of the play's focus on the upper class, and so the associated notions of nobility, honour, morality and respect are naturally aroused in the audience. However, using situational irony, Wilde creates humour by characterizing Algernon as an iconoclastic character who is the antithesis of the stereotype of the honourable upper class gentleman. In the opening moments of the play, Algernon makes numerous inversions of common proverbs, such as "In married life, three is company and two is none." This reversal of the proverb is sarcastic and insinuates the failure of marriage in the upper class as a result of adultery, as suggested by "Three is company." Given that contemporary audiences, which most likely consisted of middle and upper class Victorians, held marriage as a revered institution and tradition, the audience is thus invited to laugh at the scandalous comments made by Algernon, thereby creating the impression of not only his ridiculous, witty and interesting character, but also of the farcical nature of the remainder of the play. This interest is further maintained through Wilde's use of witty epigrams which, too, conflict with contemporary social expectations of sociable behavior.

Algernon remarks with a confident, matter-of-fact tone that "The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her if she is pretty, and to someone else if she is plain." This witty epigram further exposes the superficiality and the folly of the upper class as this rather harsh focus on appearances and the shallowness of Algernon's approach to sex is in direct opposition to the audience's expectation of upper class gentlemen to be well-mannered and honorable in intention. Thus, through the iconoclastic comments in conjunction with the setting of the opening Act, Wilde develops situational irony in the characterization of Algernon's triviality and scorn for marriage. These thoughts and behaviours challenge the stereotypical views of the audience towards the upper class, thereby creating humour

and farce which together induce the audience's interest towards the continuation of such themes through the remainder of the play.

Text 2

In a similar fashion, Shaw employs the characterization of the atypical character of Eliza Doolittle (the Flower Girl) in the opening scene (Act 1) of the play Pygmalion in order to create interest. In a comparable manner to Wilde, Shaw relies upon the conflict between his atypical characterization and the audience's stereotypical view of the lower class. The audience, which likely consisted of upper class people, expected the lower class to be amoral or immoral. Using situational irony like Wilde, Shaw hyperbolises the Flower girl's atypical obsession with morality. Her constant repetition of "I'm a good girl," combined with her criticism of Freddy Eynsford-Hills' lack of manners in "There's manners for you", construct Eliza's concern for her morality. This challenging portrayal of a lower class character therefore shocks the audience members and creates interest.

Comparison & Contrast

However, Shaw's treatment of atypical characterization is more serious than Wilde's attempt. Shaw does not use witty sayings to create humour; instead, the playwright introduces the more serious theme of class distinction in order to make the audience begin to question the difference between Victorian classes, thereby achieving his more serious purpose of extending social criticism. Hence, Shaw uses challenging but serious ideas in the opening of the play to create interest, whilst Wilde utilizes challenging but trivial ideas in Act 1 of Earnest in order to create interest through humour, wit and farce.

Point 2

Text 1

Furthermore, both plays explore interesting themes as well to generate interest early in the plays. Both Shaw and Wilde employ the technique of foreshadowing in Act 1 of their plays in relation to the theme of transformation and the theme of deception, thereby creating suspense and interest. Firstly, the element of transformation is introduced in Act 1 when Higgins foreshadows his future make-over of the poorly-dressed, lower-class flower girl. Higgins suggests a bet to another gentlemen (Pickering) about whether he will be able to change Eliza into an upper-class lady. Higgins says: "You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days […] in three months I will pass this girl off as a duchess in an ambassador's garden party". Higgins' contemptuous tone is created by the dehumanising diction in "creature" and the disparaging language in "kerbstone". Eliza's costume is equally poor and unattractive: she wears a "shoddy black coat" and her hair is a "mousy colour". This unattractive portrayal of Eliza, established through the use of costume, therefore makes the audience perceive this audacious proposition by Higgins to be entirely improbable. The transformation of Eliza is foreshadowed in the juxtaposition of the diction "kerbstone" and "duchess", which suggest the significant, unimaginable leap across social classes. Thus, the audience's interest is clearly aroused through Shaw's foreshadowing of the imminent transformation of the poor flower girl. The element of doubt also amplifies this sense of interest as the improbability of such a significant transformation creates suspense and dramatic tension from the outset of the play.

Text 2

Similarly, Wilde uses the foreshadowing of future events in Act 1 of The Importance of Being Earnest in order to create interest in the audience. In contrast to Shaw's focus on transformation and the serious topic of social mobility, Wilde chooses to focus on the mischief and deception of the upper-class to generate interest. The deceptive nature of the characters, especially Algernon, is established

early in the Act, when Algernon deceives Lady Bracknell about the inability to provide “cucumber sandwiches”, not even for “ready money”, in spite of his clear role in eating all of the sandwiches. However, this humour becomes much more interesting when Algernon develops interest in Jack’s ward, Cecily Cardew. Wilde uses stage directions to foreshadow his future deception. Algernon first steals the name card of “Ernest Worthing” from the cigarette case, suggesting to the audience the possibility of Algernon endeavouring to Jack’s country house under the false pretense of Ernest, which creates tension and interest early in the play. Furthermore, Algernon eavesdrops on Gwendolen and Jack in Act 1 when Jack shares his address in the country to Gwendolen. The audience sees Algernon artfully and deceptively copy the address onto his “shirt cuff”. Thus, through the use of subtle stage directions, Wilde is able to build tension by foreshadowing the future mischief of the character of Algernon. The audience is therefore captured by this tension and wish to keep watching the play.

Comparison & Contrast (also Conclusion)

Both Shaw and Wilde utilize foreshadowing, however Wilde uses stage directions to much greater effect than Shaw to achieve a tense atmosphere. Wilde’s foreshadowing, and thus the interest evoked in the audience, is more effective because the lack of dialogue and the sole use of subtle stage directions creates a much greater sense of suspense and mystery. In contrast, Shaw’s creation of interest mostly relies upon dialogue, which also differs from Wilde’s style of dialogue. In the Importance of Being Earnest, Algernon’s epigrams and iconoclastic statements are rather ridiculous and characterised by wit, whereas Shaw’s dialogue evokes interest not through humour but through the exploration of serious themes relating to social class. Hence, the diverging natures of Wilde’s and Shaw’s dialogues reflect the fundamental differences between the distinct genres of farce and social criticism. While both playwrights generate interest in the beginning of their plays, Wilde employs a more varied combination of techniques to develop a richer interest in the audience.

Feedback

Total marks: 26/30 (IB7)

Overall

Overall, the student has written an insightful piece of analysis of the individual texts Pygmalion and The Importance of Being Earnest, together with strong comparisons and contrasts being drawn between these two plays, including references to style, genre and technique.

Knowledge & Understanding

Criterion A: 9/10

No problems here! Great usage of a range of quotes and techniques. Contexts of the quotes are explained well.

Analysis & Evaluation

Criterion B: 8/10

Strong analysis for the individual analysis, but more insightful comparisons and contrasts could have been derived.

Focus & Organization

Criterion C: 4/5

The only disappointment in an otherwise well-organised essay is the lack of balance between the points. Point 1, Text 1 gets a lot more attention than Point 1, Text 2.

Language

Criterion D: 5/5

Formal register, sophisticated vocabulary. Well done!

Individual Oral (IO)

IO Study Guide

Choosing your Global Issue

What does the IB actually require?

The IB English syllabus states that you can pick *any* global issue for your Individual Oral, as long as the global issue satisfies all three of these criteria:

- It's pervasive and **experienced all over the world** in (pretty much) every country.
- It has a **big impact** on people.
- It affects people in **common, everyday scenarios** and environments.

The IB provides five categories, like "Culture, identity & community" and "Politics, power & justice".

*According to the current IB English syllabus (First assessment 2021), Global Issues **do not** have to belong to any of the 5 categories. The category is irrelevant; the categories are merely provided by the IB as a **starting point** for you to start brainstorming.*

As an example, the global issue in the exemplar IO doesn't belong to any of the five default categories. Instead, it belongs to its own category: Economics, ethics and society. And that's fine according to the syllabus.

With that said, here are 25 starting points for a global issue: use this list as inspiration, you'll definitely want to add your own twist and make them more specific to your own texts--they're quite general and vague out-of-the-box.

The List

Culture, identity & community

- The threat of cultural homogenization in the face of globalized popular culture.
- How forced migration leads to the loss of cultural identity and heritage.
- The harmful effects of social media usage on body image and self-esteem.
- How consumer culture promotes frivolous lifestyles.
- How sporting culture shapes national identity.

Beliefs, values & education

- Unequal access to education perpetuating poverty and wealth inequality.
- The impact of propaganda and misinformation on public beliefs and social harmony.
- The harmful effects of extremist ideologies on political division and democracy.
- Social tension caused by conflicts in religious belief.
- How formal education can lead to rigid ways of thinking, limiting innovation and creativity.

Politics, power & justice

- The violation of fundamental human rights leading to the oppression of individuals and communities.

- The impact of globalization on the sovereignty of nations and their political systems.
- The perpetuation of social inequality and injustice through political corruption.
- The challenge of balancing national security and civil liberties in the face of terrorism and security threats.
- The effect of systemic racism on unjust and unfair treatment under the law.

Art, creativity & imagination

- Balancing the protection of creative works with the public's right to access them in the digital age.
- The negative impact of digital sharing on the protection of intellectual property rights.
- The impact of censorship on artistic freedom and creative expression.
- The challenge of balancing artistic freedom with social responsibility and cultural / religious sensitivity.
- The restrictions placed by copyright on the free expression of musicians and artists.

Science, technology & the environment

- The impact of climate change on global food security.
- The challenge of balancing technological innovation with ethical considerations and social responsibility.
- The effect of automation and artificial intelligence on employment and the workforce.
- The challenge of balancing economic growth with environmental conservation and preservation.
- Technology companies violating the privacy of individuals.

The IO Mindset

The 2 Mistakes to Avoid

Looking at students' IOs, there are two crippling mistakes that hurt their marks.

1. Analyzing for the sake of analyzing, without direction, loosely tied to the global issue.
2. Findings in the global issue are not insightful. Surface-level.

Both of these are a symptom of not understanding the purpose of the IO.

They are typing words onto a page because they need to hit a word count, not because they understand why they are doing it in the first place. The goal is obviously to be in the latter case.

To help you avoid these mistakes, let me explain a much better mindset or mental approach to the IO.

The Mindset Shift

For a moment, forget that you're an English student.

No, instead... you're a researcher. Not a chemistry research, or a physicist, but a sociology researcher trying to discover something new and disruptive about the global, social issue you've chosen.

But imagine for a second, in this parallel universe in which you're a sociologist, that Google and the Internet ceased to exist. As a researcher, your only two sources of information about the global issue are... surprise... the two texts you've chosen.

Your job as the researcher (after all, you're gunning for a Nobel Prize) is to discover something monumental, something groundbreaking, something interesting that no one has ever thought of before about the global issue that you're researching...

That is your job.

Now, applying this metaphor back to the IO... that's what you're trying to do. You're not just writing about some texts about some global issue to meet some word count. No, you're trying to discover something new about the global issue. You're trying to find real insight into the global issue (at least if you're aiming for the highest marks).

But the catch is obviously that the findings must come from the language and authorial choices.

Put another way, you're kind of a weird sociologist / anthropologist, studying an important global issue. Except you don't directly go out and observe people and communities affected by the global issue (as a normal sociologist might do). Maybe it's a pandemic again. And so you must resort to reading texts (two, to be exact), gaining insight into the real world **via, through the eyes of, through the perspectives** of the authors and the authorial choices they make.

So in short, you are a sociologist that studies social issues from a distance, **using the authors' perspectives and language as a <u>window</u>** into the global issue.

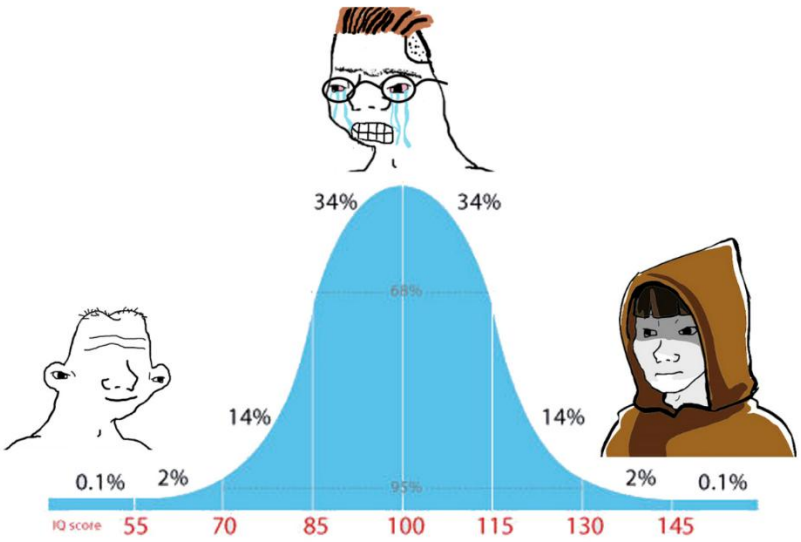
With this renewed mindset and mental approach, Mistakes 1 and 2 (the most common mistakes) are no longer a problem for you:

1. Don't analyze for the sake of analysis: Analyze to reveal and uncover new insight into the complexity of the social issue.
2. Try to avoid analysis that leads to obvious, surface-level findings of the global issue. Try to present insightful findings about the global issue which are nuanced, non-obvious, or require additional layers of reasoning.

The Ladder of Insight

Great. You now understand the right mindset to approach the IO, but it's still a bit vague. To make the road to success even more clear for you, we've come up with the Ladder of Insight.

It tells you exactly how to turn up the insightfulness of your Individual Oral analysis. You can also use this system to decide how insightful your current analysis is, and which parts need improvement.



This ladder will help you climb from left-curve to right-curve.

Level 0

You analyze a scenario that is related to the global issue but don't explicitly explain how it's relevant to the global issue.

A lot of students are stuck at this level: they just talk about the scenario or evidence, but don't explain the relevance to the global issue.

Level 1

You mention a scenario and link to a global issue, but don't back it up with analysis.

Let's say our global issue is "social media causes negative self-image in young people".

Here's an example of Level 1:

"In the extract, the author describes the social media app as a negative influence on teens. He shows that teens are suffering and highlights the significance of the global issue."

In case you don't know how to analyze properly, check out this lesson: What is Analysis... actually?

Level 2

You show how an authorial choice demonstrates the global issue.

Here, you are fulfilling the requirement of analysis, but the findings are not insightful. Most students are stuck at this level.

Here's an example of Level 2:

"In the extract, the author describes the social media app as a 'horrible' influence on teens, where the critical diction conveys the highly damaging impact of social media on mental health."

Level 3

You show how an authorial choice reveals something interesting and non-obvious about the global issue.

OK, now we're getting somewhere...

To get from Level 2 to Level 3, it's not just about analyzing more in-depth. An important part is choosing the right ingredients (i.e. authorial choices) that **contain** insight. The example above of 'horrible' is, excuse the pun, horrible evidence because all it allows you to say about the social issue is that "oh, the global issue is very bad".

We want to instead find authorial choices that add a different, or a deeper, dimension to the global issue. Here's how you can tell whether evidence has potential to be insightful or not:

- The evidence shows the global issue in action. (Not insightful: Avoid)
- The evidence reveals something interesting about the global issue. (Insightful: Aim for this)
    - The evidence **explains** the global issue and its **causes**.
    - The evidence **extrapolates** the global issue to extremes to highlight its impact.
    - The evidence **reveals unique qualities** of the global issue.
    - The evidence **reveals solutions** to the global issue.

Here's an example of Level 3:

*"In the extract, the author describes the social media app as a **'vulture'**, a scavenger that feeds off corpses. The description conjures alarming images of a these large tech corporations feeding off the attention, time and well-being of young people. **The author's unsettling diction thus adds a far more sinister perspective to the global issue: a predator-prey dynamic between social media and youth.**"*

The insight at the end about the sinisterness is only possible because we chose evidence that reveals something interesting about the global issue.

Level 3.5

You weight up the pros and/or cons of an authorial choice in its depiction of the global issue.

We call this level 3.5, because it's OK to stop at Level 3. If you reach Level 3 consistently in your analysis, then you're doing great. Level 3.5 is the cherry on top, it doesn't always happen. It's where you **evaluate** the authorial choices (weight up pros and cons).

Why is it important to evaluate in the Individual Oral? Recall the mindset shift we talked about at the start of this lesson. You are a researcher trying to glean real insight into real social issues. What if the author of the text is a complete nutjob and has an extremely skewed view of the issue? What if the author's perspective is only half the story? Clearly, our findings are limited by the author's perspective, and we need to acknowledge that fact as researchers.

Common types of evaluation:

- Is the authorial choice effective / ineffective at presenting the global issue?
- Does the authorial choice reveal bias, unreliability or fairness in the author's perspective on the global issue? Can the author's perspective be trusted?

- Does the authorial choice add nuance and perspective to the global issue?
- And the list goes on...

Here's an example of Level 3.5 insight, continuing from Level 3's example:

"In the extract, the author describes the social media app as a 'vulture', a scavenger that feeds off corpses. The description conjures alarming images of a these large tech corporations feeding off the attention, time and well-being of young people. The author's unsettling diction thus adds a far more sinister perspective to the global issue: a predator-prey dynamic between social media and youth. ***The author uses the morbid imagery to create a sickening effect, triggering in the reader a powerful, emotional disdain towards Big Tech's role in harming young people.****"*

You could also evaluate it in the opposite direction:

"In the extract, the author describes the social media app as a 'vulture', a scavenger that feeds off corpses. The description conjures alarming images of a these large tech corporations feeding off the attention, time and well-being of young people. The author's unsettling diction thus adds a far more sinister perspective to the global issue: a predator-prey dynamic between social media and youth. ***However, the strong imagery can portray an overly pessimistic view of technology in the lives of young people, and perhaps paints Big Tech in an overly dramatic villain-like way that doesn't stand up to reality.****"*

Three pieces of advice

The **perfect IO paragraph** would have: Analysis (Criterion B), Insight (Criterion A), and Evaluation (Criterion B). This doesn't happen all the time, but it's a great ideal to strive for.

Managing to find something new, while connecting it to an authorial choice, while evaluating it, while keeping it concise and within the time limit... Now that's a difficult task, and it takes time. You might not be able to get to Level 3.5 and stay within the word limit, but getting to Level 3 is fine.

Insight and flow state are closely linked. Not many people talk about this. Sometimes, I feel like I have the brain of a snail, and everything I write SUCKS! And sometimes, typically in the evening, at 8pm, things are far easier. I can see connections better, things I thought were impossible mental tasks became manageable. Take advantage of the flow state by finding out at which times during the day you're most creative and perceptive. It's like a natural Limitless window. Tap into that!

Choosing the Optimal IO Structure

Requirements

The structure of your IO (like any other essay or speech) needs to fulfill two requirements:

- It needs to be organized and focused
- It needs to be balanced

Organized and focused

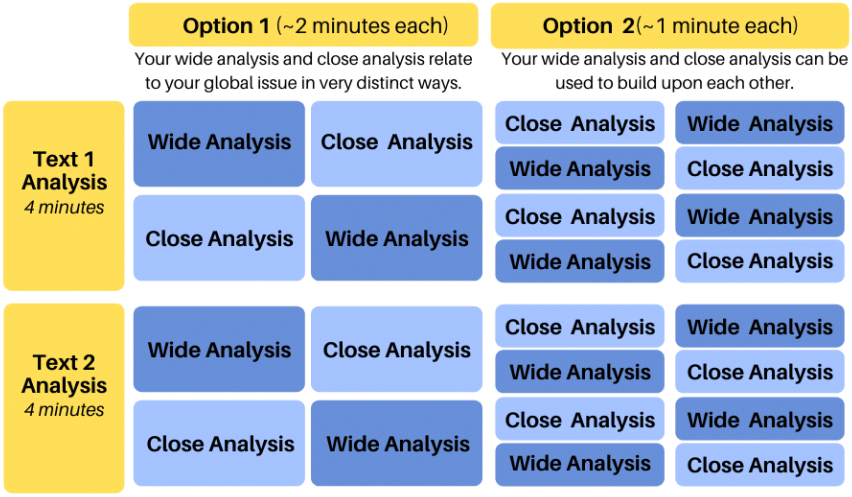
You're not just rambling about random ideas. You show the teacher that you've actually thought about the logical links and the logical order of your points. There is a reason why you present your first point before your second point, and so on. It's not just randomly put together with no rhyme or reason.

Balanced

You need to spend a similar amount of time on the first text and the second text. You want to show a balanced understanding of the details of the extract (close analysis) and the overall, bigger picture of the text (wide analysis). Thus, you need balance at the level of balancing your word count on texts, as well as balance within a text. Perfect 50-50 is hard to achieve, but it's recommended to find a 50-50 to 60-40 balance in both these aspects.

Recommended structures

To satisfy these two requirements of the IO, we recommend two different structures to achieve these two requirements of a strong structure. There's no single correct structure to use, the choice depends on the nature of your evidence and how logically related your close and wide analyses are to each other.



IB English IO example: How to structure analysis based on close and wide analysis in an alternative fashion.

The exemplar IO script uses Option 2, weaving close and wide analyses in an elegant tapestry of logic. The IO script demonstrates how to maximize Criterion C by keeping the Individual Oral flowing naturally by smoothly transitioning between the close and wide analysis sections.

What is close analysis?

We've explained this in the basic Individual Oral Explained guide, but recapping here, it's basically normal analysis like in Paper 1 where you focus on the intricate details of the extract, analyzing the language, visual techniques, etc. depending if you're in Lit or Lang Lit.

Example of Close Analysis from Exemplar

First, let's look at the extract from Scene 3 of 'Mother Courage and Her Children', where Mother Courage is selling her wares in a war zone. Her son Swiss Cheese is kidnapped by enemy soldiers, and they request a ransom in exchange for his life. In line 2, Courage yells: "Now run, and no haggling [of the ransom]!" The imperative language and exclamation create an anxious tone, revealing the mother's initial desperation to save her son at any cost. However, after realizing a financial miscalculation, she shockingly haggles the ransom in line 21 by offering "one hundred and twenty, or the deal's off." The business diction and the dismissive tone in "the deal's off" suggest that Mother Courage now sees her son's life as just another business deal. The juxtaposition in her tone

characterizes Courage as an extremely ruthless capitalist who will readily risk her son's life to save money. This is an extreme portrayal of selfishness, and Brecht effectively uses it to grab the attention of the audience through shock. The use of motherhood here is also interesting, as it shows that something as primal as the maternal instinct can be corrupted so quickly, underscoring how dehumanizing a capitalist philosophy can be.

What makes this close analysis?

- We're focusing only on the extract.
- We're using detailed evidence about the language found in the extract.
- We're still analyzing, i.e. connecting technqiue to purpose to effect.

What is wide analysis?

You may have heard of wide analysis as “Macro” or “Zooming out”. This section may be the hardest to nail as it can seem new in your IB English journey. Wide analysis is all about using techniques and ideas from{" "} *outside of your extract* which is why you would want to avoid referencing quotes here. This can be done in two flexible ways where you analyze an image or recurring motif, theme, or technique that appears:

1. Outside your extract, but still in your chosen text.
2. Outside your extract, and from another text of your author. This is mainly appropriate when your chosen text is from a collection (e.g., poem collection, photography collection, or a novel containing different short stories), and you are analyzing recurring themes and concepts. If you are doing this, it is ideal to say in the introduction that your text is from a collection.

Ultimately, when understanding the *difference between wide and close analyses*, it's not about *how* you analyze but *what* you analyze. And while it is important to demonstrate your knowledge on both the entire text and extract, ensure that everything still relates back to your global issue.

Example of Wide Analysis from Exemplar

Moving to the text as a whole, Brecht continues to portray the selfish capitalist in an extremely harsh light. This is achieved by contrasting the selfishness of Mother Courage against the opposite virtue of selflessness. Brecht uses the character of her daughter Kattrin to represent selfless compassion throughout the play. In Scene 11, Kattrin bravely risks her life to save the children of a town from a murderous ambush. Also, in Scene 6, Kattrin rushes into a burning building to save a baby. Contrastingly, in the same scene, her mother selfishly lets an amputee bleed so that she doesn't waste her precious officer's shirts. So the purity and goodness of Kattrin establishes a moral baseline with which to compare Courage's cold, capitalist behavior. Therefore, by using antithetical characterizations of Mother Courage and Kattrin, Brecht amplifies the audience's distaste for the capitalist's ruthless, self-centered way of life.

What makes this an example of wide analysis?

- Looking at patterns across the entire work.
- We're still analyzing i.e. connecting technique (characterization & juxtaposition) to purpose to effect

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Picking structure 1 or 2

So, after learning about close analysis and wide analysis, how do we use this in an IO speech? Well, this would depend on your chosen texts and the evidence you've selected. If your wide and close analyses relate to your global issue quite differently, it would make sense to separate them into two main sections (Option 1).

On the other hand, if your wide and close analyses relate to the global issue similarly it would be effective to weave these parts together (Option 2). Remember that the time you spend on the wide analysis and close analysis should 50-50 to 60-40 as an IO should be **balanced.**

IO Checklist

Wasted time

Writing your IO can be highly inefficient. aka a huge time-waster.

Because there are *so* many decisions to make, and it's *so* easy to mess up any single one of them.

For example:

- You pick bad text combinations...
- You pick bad extracts that don't have enough juicy material for analysis...
- Your global issue doesn't really gel with the chosen extracts...
- You chose the wrong quotes...
- Your close and wide analysis are unbalanced because of uneven amounts of evidence...
- ... and so on

So how do we make our lives as easy as possible?

Plan properly!

In dating, you need to evaluate your options--thoroughly!--before committing to a long-term partner. The same applies to your IO.

So use this planning template (make a copy of the Google Doc) and the checklist below to make sure your Individual Oral is *marriage material*.

It's especially painful when you dedicate *days* to your Individual Oral, only to get stuck in a couple small parts, and have to *restart* the whole thing with new extracts... or even new texts... 😨

Get some quick inspiration from the plan of the exemplar IO using the same planning template.

The 14-point Checklist

aka the "Should I Dump or Marry this IO?" checklist

Start from the top of the checklist and make your way down it.

1. You're happy with your global issue.

2. Your extracts clearly demonstrate the global issue without excessive justification or mental gynastics
3. Your extracts are not too short or too long. Ideally between 20 to 30 lines for textual extracts.
4. Close Analysis: Your extracts contain juicy literary and non-literary techniques (See Techniques - Levels 1 to 4)
5. Wide Analysis: Other sections of your text / body of work clearly demonstrate the global issue as well.
6. You've decided on 3 to 4 pieces of evidence from each extract for close analysis, and they *all* contain juicy techniques.
7. You've decided on 3 to 4 pieces of evidence from each extract for wide analysis (and ideally there are some authorial choices here too).
8. The chosen evidence from the extract are distributed quite evenly throughout the extract.
9. Each piece of evidence demonstrates some aspect of the global issue without excessive justification.
10. Inter-text Balance: You have roughly the same amount of evidence for Text 1 and Text 2
11. Intra-text Balance: For each text, you have chosen roughly the same amount of evidence from inside the extract and outside the extract. 60-40 split is OK, as there tends to be more evidence from the extract.
12. **Important:** Each piece of evidence you've selected can be analyzed to at least Level 2 on the Ladder of Insight.
13. **Ideally:** Most of your evidence can be analyzed to a Level 3 or 3.5 on the Ladder of Insight. This is hard to achieve, but it'll set you up for complete IO domination.
14. **Optional:** There is some relationship between the close analysis evidence and the wide analysis evidence, to help make the transition between close and wide analysis smoother, bumping up Criterion C: Organization (e.g. if my close analysis focused on metaphors, it would be nice / smooth for the wide analysis to also be about metaphors or something else that's related).

I recommend moving forward with your IO only if 10 of the above points are checked-off. And if you don't have time, ignore all of this advice and just get the IO done before your deadline.

Add Insight & Evaluation to Close Analysis

In this tutorial, we're going to level up this close analysis. Note that in this example we are focusing only on the first minute of a full 2-minute close analysis for the extract.

Global Issue: "Under capitalism, people sometimes act selfishly in the ruthless pursuit of money, leading to devastating effects on the wellbeing of others"

Authorial choice demonstrates global issue

Color code: ***Evidence*** Analysis **Link to Global Issue** **Evaluation**

“First, let's look at the extract from Scene 3 of 'Mother Courage and Her Children', where Mother Courage is selling her wares in a war zone. Her son Swiss Cheese is kidnapped by enemy soldiers, and they request a ransom in exchange for his life. In line 2, Courage yells: “Now run, and no haggling [of the ransom]!” The imperative language and exclamation create an anxious tone, revealing the mother's initial selflessness to save her son at any cost. However, after realizing a financial miscalculation, she shockingly and selfishly haggles the ransom in line 21 by offering “one hundred and twenty, or the deal's off.” The business diction and the dismissive tone in “the deal's off” suggest that Mother Courage now selfishly sees her son's life as just another business deal. The sudden change in tone characterizes Courage as an extremely ruthless capitalist who will readily risk her son's life to save money.”

This example is pretty good already, because we're linking an authorial choice ("the sudden change in tone" and "characterization") to the global issue, while using relevant keywords sprinkled throughout.

But there are two things missing from this link:

1. It's not adding a new perspective or implication about the global issue; and,
2. It's not evaluating the effectiveness of the author's choices.

We need these two elements to really step things up and WOW your teacher.

Level up to IB7

Add Insightful Implication & Evaluation

One thing that strikes me as particularly unique here is how **extreme** this scenario is that Brecht paints for us. Let's dig into that.

A meta / evaluative comment on this extreme perspective

the perspective that the author portrays is extreme. There are far less extreme and more relatable examples of selfishness that Brecht could have used, but he chose to go full HAM on this.

Evaluation of using this extreme perspective

- Pro: The extreme portrayal is shocking, attention-grabbing, unambiguous in criticism
- Con: the extreme portrayal might distance the audience from the play

Global issue implication about the *corrupting power of capitalism*

The people aren't necessarily bad 24/7, it's just that capitalism and its corrupting incentives turn good people into bad, greedy people

Improved version

Now let's put these insights into word form!

... business diction and the dismissive tone in “the deal's off” suggest that Mother Courage now sees her son's life as just another business deal. ***This is a rather extreme perspective on the global issue, as Brecht chooses an extreme example of selfishness--a mother selfishly abandoning her child for financial incentive. While it might distance the audience from the play, it's nevertheless shocking, attention-grabbing, allowing Brecht to unambiguously criticise capitalism for turning caring humans into heinous creatures.***

Notice the subtle sentence structure "While <insert con>, <insert pro>", which helps signpost to the teacher that you're talking about evaluation of the extract.

Phrases to use for evaluation

- "the author uses ___ to effectively ___"
- "however, the use of ___ is not as effective as it could be, because ___"
- "while a strength of this technique is ____, it also leads to <insert con>"

Avoid boring links to Global Issue

In this tutorial, we're going to level up a rather boring link to the Global Issue.

Boring link to Global Issue

"Moving on to the non-literary work, investor Mark Baum sits with a financial manager in a restaurant to learn about the soon-to-collapse mortgage bond industry. Audiences expect this manager to be morally responsible and at least somewhat concerned about the interests of his investors, but when Baum asks whether he is worried about the rising economic risks, the manager leans in and says: "I assume no risk from these products myself, Mark". Using situational irony, here McKay portrays a ***shamelessly amoral, selfish financier*** *who considers only his own gain. To make the viewer even more shocked and disgusted, McKay uses a close, over-the-shoulder shot focusing directly on the facial expressions of the manager. The manager confidently delivers the dialogue with a straight face and holds direct eye contact with Baum, showing no shame for this brazenly unethical attitude.* ***McKay alerts us to the alarming idea that some individuals in charge of our financial systems are extremely selfish.****"*

This link to the global issue is very obvious and not insightful. It doesn't reveal anything new about the global issue: how it's caused, why it happens, solutions, etc.

A much better implication for the global issue is to dig into the idea of the **shamelessness.**

Brainstorming a better link

Let's listen in on the conversation going on in my brain when I'm brainstorming a better link to the global issue:

1. "Yes, of course the guy is selfish and unethical. That's obvious and boring."
2. "But why did McKay highlight the shamelessness?"
3. "Could it be that the shamelessness reveals that it's sort-of OK to talk like this in private on Wall St?"
4. "Oh wow, maybe McKay hints at a toxic, ruthless culture that permits this kind of shameless self-interest."

5. "Oh wow, this means that the global issue is such a big problem because selfish capitalists positively reinforce each other through a toxic culture where selfish and unethical conduct is not socially shamed".

Creating wow moments

When you're brainstorming for your own IO, aim to hit a couple "Oh Wow" moments, because that means you're on the right track: you're finding interesting, non-obvious insights into the global issue. You're kind of like a researcher... but instead of analyzing tiny bacteria or nanoparticles or petri dishes, you're analyzing texts about social issues.

Improved link to Global Issue

Awesome. Now let's put this into words. We can even use the phrase "global issue" to make it super explicit and clear to the teacher:

... showing no shame for this brazenly unethical attitude. **Thus, McKay hints at a social factor--a toxic culture--that perpetuates and amplifies this global issue in the modern financial industry.**

This link to the global issue is a lot more insightful, because instead of just being Captain Obvious, we're revealing a **causal** or **amplifying** factor of the global issue.

Add Insight & Evaluation to Wide Analysis

In this tutorial, we're going to level up this Wide Analysis. Note that in this example we are focusing only on the first minute of a full 2-minute Wide Analysis for the work.

Color code: ***Evidence*** Analysis **Link to Global Issue** **Evaluation**

Starting point

"McKay also uses other kinds of metaphors throughout the movie to more effectively explore the global issue. In one scene, McKay uses a cameo of late celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain. The extended metaphor is set in a kitchen, and the chef compares the complicated idea of shady financial products, specifically CDOs, with the highly relatable and intuitive idea of an unethical chef getting rid of fish through a fish stew, just like how the financiers increased their profits by clumping risky mortgage investments together into a financial stew. The metaphor effectively engages the audience and quickly summarizes the intricacies of how those involved in CDOs acted selfishly to further their own gain."

This is actually quite a strong bit of wide analysis already, since we have some on-the-fly evaluation of the director's use of metaphor--an authorial choice.

Leveling up

But if we had some extra time to spare in the oral, we could step up the evaluation and implications like so...

"McKay also uses other kinds of metaphors throughout the movie to more effectively explore the global issue. In one scene, McKay uses a cameo of late celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain. The extended metaphor is set in a kitchen, and the chef explains the unethical nature of a financial product

by comparing it to the intuitive idea of an unethical chef getting rid of old fish through a stew to not waste money. ***The cameo and the visual metaphor inject a level of excitement and engagement that simply wouldn't be possible if the explanation was delivered less creatively.*** *And so McKay* ***cleverly manages to both educate and entertain*** *the audience about the global issue. And by using the genre of a conventional dramatic film, inserted with educational scenes,* ***McKay is able to expose the global issue to a much larger, wider audience*** *who might otherwise not have learned about the unethical behavior that caused the global financial crisis."*

What's improved?

Here we're more explicit about the evaluation and praise how "clever" and "creative" the director is in using metaphor.

This line is also quite insightful:

"And by using the genre of a conventional dramatic film, inserted with educational scenes, McKay is able to expose the global issue to a much larger, wider audience..."

I like this insight, as it's quite meta and non-obvious.

1. We're commenting on the choice of the **genre** (demonstrating knowledge of the work as a whole)...
2. Connecting it to an unconventional **directorial choice** of educational scenes...
3. And then connecting that to the **implication** of the global issue being exposed to a much wider general **audience**

The implication doesn't apply to the characteristics of the global issue directly, but one level more abstract than that: the characteristics of *audience* that would learn about the global issue via this film. That sounds pretty insightful to me!

Now, try to apply similar logic to your own Wide Analysis to level it up to an IB7.

Improving Wide Analysis

In this tutorial, we're going to level up this Wide Analysis. Note that in this example we are focusing only on the one minute of a full 2-minute Wide Analysis for the work.

Color code: ***Evidence*** Analysis **Link to Global Issue** **Evaluation**

Weak example

Interestingly, this situation is a motif that recurs throughout the work as a whole. In Scene 1, the audience witnesses Courage losing her other son Eilif to the military because she is too preoccupied with a shiny coin. We've already discussed Scene 3. In Scene 11, Courage's daughter is killed while she is away on a business trip. The deliberate repetition constructs Mother Courage as a static character who, ironically, never learns from her mistake of prioritising money over her children. With each loss, the audience pities Mother Courage more and more, to the point where she seems to be a helpless victim trapped in the cycle of greed and grief. ***By portraying Mother Courage in an unending cycle of suffering, Brecht persuades us to join him in blaming the global issue on the very system of capitalism itself.***

Problems

Here the link to the global issue is that "blaming the global issue on the very system of capitalism itself." This implication for the global issue sounds too strong, unsubstantiated by the evidence.

We want to make sure our implications are believable and don't make your teacher roll their eyes. To do this, we need to make sure everything we say is reasonable and a logical conclusion of the evidence.

Stronger example

Let's make our implication more believable by adding some more relevant evidence (though we need to watch the word count!).

We actually see this motif occur again and again throughout the work as a whole. The protagonist loses her children–one by one–because she is too fixated on money. In Scene 1, the audience witnesses Courage losing her other son Eilif to the military because she is too preoccupied with a shiny coin. We've already discussed Scene 3. Finally in Scene 11, Courage leaves her daughter on a business trip, and her daughter is killed by soldiers. The motif constructs Courage as a perpetrator, but it also casts her as a helpless victim, a static character who, pitifully, cannot learn from her mistakes. The same song about persistence and tenacity is also sung in the very first and final moments of the play, which suggests that in spite of all the devastating experiences, she will persist, unchanged. Thus, by using cyclical elements like the motif and the song, Brecht inspires a sense of complete hopelessness and defeat in the audience. ***Brecht's pessimistic take on the global issue is this: that extreme selfishness and devastation are simply the eternal, inescapable facts of capitalism.***

Improvements

- The implication is less strong in claiming the author's intent of "blaming" the global issue on capitalism.
- We've also identified that Brecht's take is **pessimistic**, which is insightful as it shows you can understand the author's choices from a bird's eye view (exactly what we need for wide analysis).
- We also use the keywords "**selfishness**" and "**devastation**" from the global issue to reiterate the strong link to the global issue. I also like the use of the word "**inescapable**", as it adds an additional implication: that this sordid mess is just the way capitalism is.

Prepare for the IO presentation

How should I prepare for the presentation?

You guessed it! Practice makes perfect.

How you practice is unique to you.

You may be stressed out on how to make sure you remember *everything* for your 10-minute speech. While writing a script is a great way to organize ideas, it can be a massive drawback if you are not able to memorize it before the deadline!

If you are **worried about not memorizing** your script, here's how you can ensure that you will speak like a total IO expert in your exam:

1. Write your script (of course).

2. Deconstruct your script into a detailed outline using lots of dot points.
3. Practice speaking whilst only using your detailed outline. This method forces you to improv your sentences on-the-fly without missing the important points.
4. After some time, you need to reduce the number of dot points in your detailed outline and repeat the process until you get down to the final 10-point outline that you bring into your actual IO.

Using a detailed outline may also help prevent you from sounding robotic and monotonous, which is a common mistake for those who choose to memorize word-for-word.

But no matter if you decide to use a script or outline when practicing, there are several ways you can ensure that you sound **confident, natural, and engaging** during your IO.

Check out Richard's experience and great tips for speaking in an IO:

What I did was write a script and then rehearse it over and over. Coherency is key and can be marked. You'll want to emphasize keywords and phrases and make your IO engaging and interesting to hear. You'll want to speak loud, sound confident, and enunciate. Remember, a part of the criteria marks your "style (for example, register, tone and rhetorical devices)". If you have a fantastic understanding, analysis and focus but poor language and delivery, you might not be able to get a 7.

My first tip for sounding natural is varying your tone, pitch and placing emphasis on important words or syllabuses. Enunciate and stress buzzwords, those important for analysis (i.e. anaphora) or relevant to your global issue (i.e. societal values).

My second tip is to record yourself for self-feedback or present it to others. You will personally know how to improve to avoid sounding robotic. And if not, hopefully, the person listening to you can give you pointers.

Richard Nguyen, IB45 graduate

The IO Conclusion

What do I say in my conclusion?

The conclusion is where you condense all your findings and insights you've gained about the global issue. You want your examiner to have a lasting impression on your IO so consider different ways to give your conclusion a profound ending.

Step 1

First, summarize how the texts have related to the global issue (write around 2 – 3 sentences for each text). Think about how you can combine all your main points in your analysis to demonstrate the author's overall perspective on the global issue.

Here, you want to include the most insightful findings you uncovered during your IO about the global issue.

Step 2

Second, compare the two texts in terms of the global issue (if you want!). You may find that comparing the texts can produce a strong conclusive statement on how you explored different aspects of the global issue. Keep in mind that a comparison is totally not necessary, so only spend around 1-2 sentences if you wish to have it.

Step 3

Third, reflect on the global issue. Similar to step 2, this part is optional but helpful in giving a thoughtful ending to your IO. Your reflection may include a general statement on the global relevance of the issue, highlighting how many authors are prompted to write about it due to its impacts within society.

From the Exemplar

Take a look at the conclusion from the exemplar IO script, quoted below.

"In conclusion, both works explore the devastating consequences of selfish, ruthless capitalism. (briefly recap the global issue)

*Brecht **embraces extremes** (top insight) to paint a harsh picture of life as a selfish capitalist. He suggests a depressing, anti-capitalist sentiment that there is **no solution to it** (top insight), that capitalism and its victims are doomed forever.*

*On the other hand, McKay offers insight into the **social factors perpetuating** (top insight) the global issue in the modern financial industry. McKay manages to make the movie **entertaining while also dissecting** (top insight) complicated, but necessary, financial concepts using engaging cameos and metaphors."*

Here we've fused Steps 1 and 2 together, using phrases like "On the other hand" to signal comparison (optional Step 2). We didn't include Step 3 because the total word count of the oral would be too high.

Notice how the 2-sentence summaries of each text are highlight reels: they contain the most insightful ideas uncovered during the IO.

How to Prepare the IO Outline

General guidelines

1. Order your dot points in chronological order as you would say them in the speech.
2. Keep your outline balanced like your oral. In the exemplar outline below, each text has four dot points (2 x close analysis and 2 x wide analysis for each text). This means that each dot point corresponds to 1-minute of the speech.
3. Avoid writing full sentences as you would be tempted to say them word-for-word which would interrupt your spontaneity/flow.

Exemplar IO Outline

This is an exemplar 10 dot point outline. For reference, this outline has 165 words.

Global issue: the lack of ethical considerations in science can diminish the qualities of a human and lead to societal misconduct.

- (INT): negligence of human dignity to further scientific progress = people either lose or win from scientific development.

- (LIT) Q1/Line#: art theme + societal allusions = imbalance between society's scientific and humanistic principles.
- (L): Student's art creativity/individuality juxtaposes conformity theme = alienation is humanistic = ostensible division between clones and humans.
- (L) Q2/Line#: objectification via anthropomorphism + contrast against prior characterisation = humanistic term "students" is a euphemism.
- (L): Dehumanisation is antithetical to Kathy's humanistic POV (non-chronological timeline) = readers feel sympathy for the mistreated students.
- (NLIT) Q1/Line#: sad diction = associate negativity with unethical research = pathos
- (N) Image: demand gaze from animals = relates unethical science on humans to unethical animal testing.
- (N) Q2/Line#: scientific metalanguage / ethos + encourages scientists (target audience) to self-evaluate = subtle call to action.
- (N): Negatively biased BUT contains reliable sources/point and evidence structure = information is credible and convincing.
- (CON): science misuse creates social division (LIT) + researchers choose vulnerable people for unethical science (NLIT)

More tips

How to use abbreviations

Use abbreviations to mark which point corresponds to which section (e.g., INT for introduction, LIT for literary text, NLIT for non-literary text, CON for the conclusion).

Using numbers

Number the quotes and/or specify the line number to keep track of which analysis matches which evidence. This is also helpful for labelling your close analysis points clearly as the wide analysis points wouldn't have a quote.

How to represent analysis in shorthand

When writing points about analysis, use + and =. This helps you maintain cause + effect and technique + authorial intent when speaking. General structure: (technique) + (effect) = (link to global issue)

Staying Motivated with IO

Why we need to edit

- The Plan is important, but it's only good for checking the overall, big picture direction. Once you start writing the IO in detail, you'll run into issues like:
    - Sounding dumb. The argument which sounded really smart on the plan, actually is pretty lame.
    - Logical holes that you had in your plan

    - The analysis for a piece of evidence actually sucks. Not as much depth as you thought.
    - ... and so on
- So the true process of improving the IO is: Edit! You need to edit to go from lower insight to higher insight. Your first draft will probably start with low insight.
- How to edit? Create a copy of your IO script, fresh copy. The biggest thing that stands in the way of improvement is the fear of ruining what you already have. Perfectionism. By creating a fresh copy, you can feel comfortable doing anything to it, because your old copy is still there in case your edit messes things up. You can take risks, move things around, it's all fine!
- Use the comment feature in Google Docs, Pages, etc. to record which Level of Insight each paragraph is at. Ideally, every paragraph should be at Level 2 at least, but ideally at 3, and some at Level 3.

How to motivate yourself to edit and improve

- It can feel tiring, overwhelming to look at your 10th Draft and still see so many areas that aren't at a good level of insight.
- A motivation trick I've discovered is to promise yourself to just do a little bit. Set the goal of simply fixing one single sentence in one paragraph. That's ALL you'll have to do. And combine this with figuring out when you enter flow state during the day, and you'll be able to smash through it. You'll move on to the next paragraph, and the next.
- Even the worst techniques that you think don't have Level 3 or 3.5 potential can actually have it inside them, so don't ditch your evidence before you've really had a crack at improving the insight. I was struggling with improving the insight until I finally looked at the evidence in a new way.

IO Exemplar

IO Exemplar Organization Explained

IO Structure

Text 1: ***Mother Courage and Her Children***

Close 1 = selfishness of mother

Wide 1 = selfishness emphasised through another technique in the work

Close 2 = devastation

Wide 2 = devastation occurs again and again

Text 2: ***The Big Short***

Close 1 = selfishness + shameless

Wide 1 = shameless also seen elsewhere

Close 2 = devastation using metaphor

Wide 2 = metaphor also used

Why it's effective

Cause and effect

Roughly, each text's analysis mirrors the structure of cause-effect: selfishness => devastation. This follows the same structure as the global issue. The only exception is Wide 2 in Text 2, which deviates a little bit from this structure.

Linking & Flow

Also notice how each wide analysis part is linked to the previous close analysis part by some logical reason:

- By Idea: e.g. selfishness, devastation
- By Technique: e.g. metaphor

Exemplar Individual Oral (IO) Script

Note: This exemplar IO is not an actual transcript, so the vocabulary and sentence structure are stronger than would be expected for an oral.

Also, don't base the length of your points on this exemplar's word count, figure out your own rate of speaking (words per minute), and tailor the length of your points to your rate of speaking. As a rough recommendation, ~1300 words is a good length for 10 minutes. (This exemplar is about 1400 words.)

Introduction

The global issue I'm exploring is how, **under capitalism, people sometimes act selfishly in the ruthless pursuit of money, leading to devastating effects on the wellbeing of others**. The literary text I will examine is Bertolt Brecht's anti-capitalist play 'Mother Courage and Her Children', which showcases the damaging effect of Mother Courage's business on her family during the Thirty Years' War. The non-literary work is the dramatic film 'The Big Short' directed by Adam McKay, which exposes how unethical and selfish actors caused the global financial crisis that devastated the entire world.

Text 1

Close Analysis 1

First, let's look at the extract from Scene 3 of 'Mother Courage and Her Children', where Mother Courage is selling her wares in a war zone. Her son Swiss Cheese is kidnapped by enemy soldiers, and they request a ransom in exchange for his life. In line 2, Courage yells: “Now run, and no haggling [of the ransom]!” The imperative language and exclamation create an anxious tone, revealing the mother's initial desperation to save her son at any cost. However, after realizing a financial miscalculation, she shockingly haggles the ransom in line 21 by offering “one hundred and twenty, or the deal's off.” The business diction and the dismissive tone in “the deal's off” suggest that Mother Courage now sees her son's life as just another business deal. The juxtaposition in her tone characterizes Courage as an extremely ruthless capitalist who will readily risk her son's life to save money. This is an extreme portrayal of selfishness, and Brecht effectively uses it to grab the attention of the audience through shock. The use of motherhood here is also interesting, as it shows that something as primal as the maternal instinct can be corrupted so quickly, underscoring how dehumanizing a capitalist philosophy can be.

Wide Analysis 1

Moving to the text as a whole, Brecht continues to portray the selfish capitalist in an extremely harsh light. This is achieved by contrasting the selfishness of Mother Courage against the opposite virtue of selflessness. Brecht uses the character of her daughter Kattrin to represent selfless compassion throughout the play. In Scene 11, Kattrin bravely risks her life to save the children of a town from a murderous ambush. Also, in Scene 6, Kattrin rushes into a burning building to save a baby. Contrastingly, in the same scene, her mother selfishly lets an amputee bleed so that she doesn't waste her precious officer's shirts. So the purity and goodness of Kattrin establishes a moral baseline with which to compare Courage's cold, capitalist behavior. Therefore, by using antithetical characterizations of Mother Courage and Kattrin, Brecht amplifies the audience's distaste for the capitalist's ruthless, self-centered way of life.

Close Analysis 2

Coming back to the extract, Brecht explores how this selfishness leads to devastation. At the end of the extract, the sound of drumming creates a gloomy atmosphere, and reveals that the haggling failed and her son has now been executed because of her greed. Brecht also makes the stage dark, and then light again, suggesting that Mother Courage has stayed seated, frozen by her grief. Brecht masterfully combines multiple dramatic techniques–lighting, stage direction, sound effects–to vividly capture for the audience the devastating impact of her selfish behavior. Brecht clearly presents the global issue in an extreme way, using the most extreme consequence of a mother losing her child, in order to convey the extreme dangers of ruthless capitalism. It evokes pathos, provokes the audience to reflect, and makes the global issue far more memorable to the audience.

Wide Analysis 2

We actually see this motif occur again and again throughout the work as a whole. The protagonist loses her children–one by one–because she is too fixated on money. In Scene 1, the audience witnesses Courage losing her other son Eilif to the military because she is too preoccupied with a shiny coin. We've already discussed Scene 3. Finally in Scene 11, Courage leaves her daughter on a business trip, and her daughter is killed by soldiers. The motif constructs Courage as a perpetrator, but it also casts her as a helpless victim, a static character who, seemingly, cannot learn from her mistakes. So we pity her because she seems doomed to this grim existence forever. The same song about ‘persistence' is also sung in the very first and final moments of the play, which suggests that in spite of all the devastation, the suffering will continue. Thus, by using cyclical elements like the motif and the song, Brecht inspires a sense of complete hopelessness and defeat in the audience. Brecht's pessimistic take on the global issue is this: that extreme selfishness and devastation are simply the eternal, inescapable facts of capitalism.

Text 2

Close Analysis 1

Moving on to the non-literary work, The Big Short, we'll look at a scene where an investor Mark Baum has a private meeting in a restaurant with a mortgage bond manager. Baum asks if the manager is worried about his clients' serious risk of financial loss, and the manager answers: “I assume no risk from these [mortgage] products myself”. The matter-of-fact tone shocks the audience, as it reveals his complete lack of concern for others, particularly the financial outcomes of his own clients. To make the viewer even more disgusted by this unethical professional, McKay uses a close-up shot focused directly on the actor's straight facial expression as he delivers the dialogue without shame. McKay's shot is also over-the-shoulder, so the manager gazes almost directly into the viewer's eyes, creating an unsettling feeling towards such a shamelessly amoral man. The situational irony is shocking, because viewers do not expect an authority in the financial system to be so shamelessly unethical. McKay's portrayal of the shamelessness suggests this ruthless, selfish mindset is not quite as taboo as one might imagine. Thus, McKay hints at a social factor--a toxic culture--that perpetuates this global issue in the modern financial industry.

Wide Analysis 1

Looking at the work as a whole, we see other examples of brazenly unethical behavior. In one scene, McKay portrays two mortgage brokers obnoxiously bragging about targeting vulnerable families to make easy money, which reveals that the ruthlessness and shamelessness seen in the manager is an industry-wide phenomenon prevalent throughout all levels of the mortgage industry. Ironically, at the end of the movie, the director depicts the two arrogant mortgage brokers as desperate, unemployed jobseekers. By juxtaposing these characters at their peak and at their nadir, McKay emphasizes how their selfish approach to capitalism is unsustainable and ultimately harms not just everyone else's livelihood but also their own.

Close Analysis 2

The extreme dangers of this kind of selfish behavior is also explored in detail in the extract. In the last shot of the sequence, a voice-over narrator states that the “synthetic CDO was the atomic bomb”. The metaphor directly compares the manager's risky financial product to the most dangerous weapon known to man. The hyperbolic, extreme comparison appeals to pathos, invoking a sense of danger, effectively helping a general audience instantly grasp just how reckless and ruthless financiers were in their pursuit of profit. Towards the end of the scene, McKay also uses fast jump cuts and intense diegetic sounds, like the sharpening of knives and sizzling teppanyaki, to build a chaotic atmosphere.

The viewer feels disoriented, mirroring how precarious the economy had become due to the creation and propagation of these financial weapons of mass destruction.

Wide Analysis 2

McKay also uses other kinds of metaphors throughout the movie to more effectively explore the global issue. In one scene, McKay uses a cameo of late celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain. The extended metaphor is set in a kitchen, and the chef explains the unethical nature of a financial product by comparing it to the intuitive idea of an unethical chef getting rid of old fish through a stew to not waste money. The cameo and the visual metaphor inject a level of excitement and engagement that simply wouldn't be possible if the explanation was delivered less creatively. And so McKay cleverly manages to both educate and entertain the audience about the global issue. And by using the genre of a conventional dramatic film, inserted with educational scenes, McKay is able to expose the global issue to a much larger, wider audience who might otherwise not have learned about the unethical behavior that caused this devastating global financial crisis.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both works explore the devastating consequences of selfish, ruthless capitalism. Brecht embraces extremes to paint a harsh picture of life as a selfish capitalist. He suggests a depressing, anti-capitalist sentiment that there is no solution to it, that capitalism and its victims are doomed forever.

On the other hand, McKay offers insight into the social factors perpetuating the global issue in the modern financial industry. McKay manages to make the movie entertaining while also dissecting complicated, but necessary, financial concepts using engaging cameos and metaphors.

Higher Level Essay (HLE)

IB English HLE Explained

What is IB English HLE?

The HL Essay (HLE) is a **1200-1500 word** essay about a text studied in the IB English course. For Lang Lit, the work you choose to analyze can be literary or non-literary, but for IB English Literature the text must be literary.

The HLE will make up **25% of your final IB English HL grade**, and it is graded externally. You must choose your own **line of inquiry** (i.e. a question that you will answer in your HLE–more on this later).

How do I choose my text for HLE?

Do NOT choose the "easiest" text. Life is always better when you do things you're interested in, and that advice applies to the HLE, too. Choose the literary / non-literary work that interests *you* the most, so that you can (semi?)-enjoy the HLE planning and writing process.

You could start by **thinking of a theme** that you find particularly interesting and determining which text studied in class demonstrates this theme well.

How do I choose my line of inquiry for HLE?

The line of inquiry is the core question that you will answer in your essay. A quick example might be:

"To what extent is masculinity undermined by the characterisation of Little Thomas?"

Now, it's your job to forge your destiny and come up with your own line of inquiry. But it's not a complete free-for all! There are rules. The main rule is that your line of inquiry **must** fall under one of the 7 main concepts of IB English (see below for a quick summary).

Concept	**Suggestions for your line of inquiry**
Identity	How is the identity of a particular **character** or group of characters represented? OR, how does the text relate to the identity of the **writer**?
Culture	How is the culture of a particular **setting, institution, or community** represented? OR, how does the text relate to a particular culture/cultural **perspective**?
Creativity	How does the text represent a **collective or individual creativity**/lack of creativity? OR, how does the text reflect the **writer's creativity**?
Communication	How are **acts of communication**/failures in communication conveyed? OR, how does the text represent an act of communication?
Transformation	How is transformation represented? OR, how is the text transformative to **other texts through reference** to them, or to the reader in terms of transforming their **beliefs and values**?

Perspective	How is a certain perspective conveyed? OR, how does the text represent the **writer's perspective**?
Representation	How are different **themes, attitudes, and concepts** represented? OR, in what way is **reality / the world** represented?

This summary is vague, so let's go in-depth on a couple of these concepts to really show you what you should be doing in the HLE.

Deep Dive

Identity

Identity is what makes you, YOU. Here are some questions the concern your own personal identity:

- What is your favourite colour? And why is it your favourite?
- What makes you different from others? Why do you think these qualities came to be?
- How would someone describe you in three words?

Now apply this same logic to characters within your text.

- How would you describe this character in three words?
- How do their actions within a text influence your view of their identity?
- How has the author crafted this character to make you view the character in a certain way?

Let's take a look at a concrete example of how we might choose evidence and quotes for a HLE on cultural identity. This example is based on a Vietnamese work in translation “Ru” by author Kim Thúy. For context, “Ru” is an autobiographical fictional account which explores Kim Thúy's move from Vietnam to Canada as an immigrant and her consequent struggles. The structure of her novel is largely lyrical and poetic.

Let's look at a section from her novel that may help us come up with an essay idea based on the concept of Identity. When she returns to Vietnam, she attends a restaurant, however this becomes a major awakening for her in terms of how she views her own personal identity. Kim narrates within her novel:

The first time I carried a briefcase, the first time I went to a restaurant school for young adults in Hanoi, wearing heels and a straight skirt, the waiter for my table didn't understand why I was speaking Vietnamese with him.

Page 77, Rú

This is a perfect quote for the Identity concept. Can you see why? Let's think through it together…

Why would the waiter be confused if Kim, a “briefcase”-carrying individual in “heels” and a “straight skirt”, was speaking Vietnamese with him?

What does being “Vietnamese” look like to the waiter? Why does Kim not conform to his expectation? Was it perhaps due to what she was wearing?

Now, if we look at the section which follows this in the novel, we are able to see the impact this had on

the character of Kim's sense of identity.

the young waiter reminded me that I couldn't have everything, that I no longer had the right to declare I was Vietnamese because I no longer had their fragility, their uncertainty, their fears. And he was right to remind me.

Page 77, Rú

Here, we can clearly see that this character is now questioning her Vietnamese cultural identity. This is just one example that demonstrates the concept of Identity.

Culture

Culture seems to be this confusing thing. *Does it have to do with religion? Race? Beliefs? What does it mean? Does the monster from Frankenstein fit into a certain culture?*

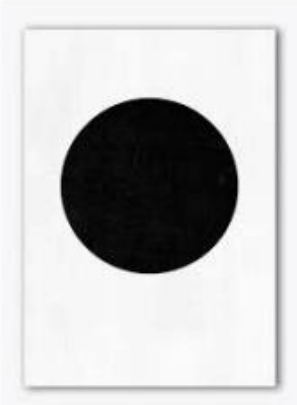
The easiest way to put it is this: **Culture is the way someone lives.** It is their "way of life." Think of it as an umbrella term. "Culture" can include so many different things; the list just goes on, for example religion, values, customs, beliefs, cuisine, etc.

Now think, how would I form an essay from this concept?

- When you read a text in class, you will notice that authors let you form an opinion on the culture of certain characters or groups within a text, but how is this done?
- How does the author represent the culture of a certain community?
- What types of patterns in daily routines are discussed?

Creativity

It seems odd writing an essay about "creativity" because… like… how can anyone definitively say what 'counts' as being creative–or not? When I say the word *creativity*, I think of new inventions, or maybe those weird and wacky art installations living inside those 'modern art' museums. But hey, what's creative to me might *not* be creative to you!



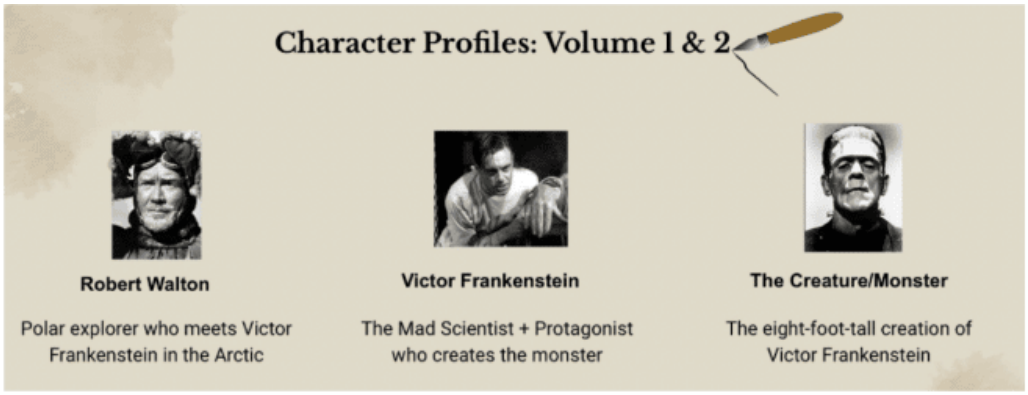
Is the painting on the left more creative than that of the solitary circle? Hmm, maybe, maybe not…

When formulating a HLE on the concept of creativity we have two main pointers for you. Look for:

1. Interesting + Unique techniques or literary devices used within a text by the author. You can learn more in the Learn Analysis section of LitLearn.
2. Recurring stylistic choices by the author

Now, for this concept, let's look at how we might select supportive evidence and quotations for a HLE on*creativity within the narrative style of author Mary Shelley* in “Frankenstein”. The narrative style uses **epistolary narration**. This is a narrative technique in which a story is told through letters. This was something that I found both interesting and recurring within Frankenstein, which I believe worked to create a personal touch within the novel.

Additionally, Mary Shelley allows different characters to narrate Frankenstein during different volumes. Let's investigate this! I have written out different character profiles of the narrators below:



These 3 characters, each relate a part of the novel Frankenstein. This is an example of a creative authorial choice that allows us, as readers to explore different points of view within the text. This is just one example of a creative aspect of a text which you can analyze for your HLE.

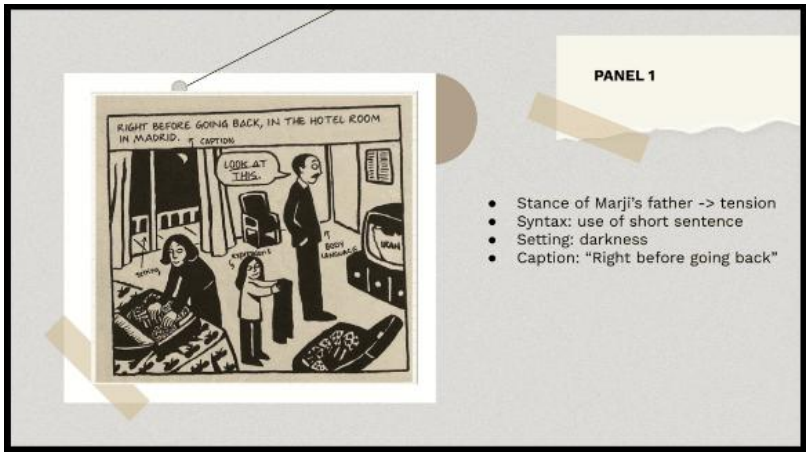
Representation

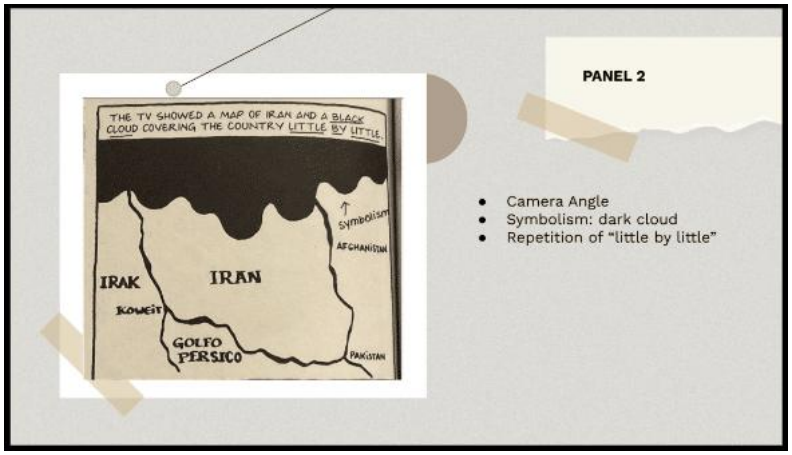
Representation is all about how something is *portrayed, conveyed, shown, described, illustrated, depicted*. There are many different things that can be ‘represented' within a text, and it doesn't have to be tangible.

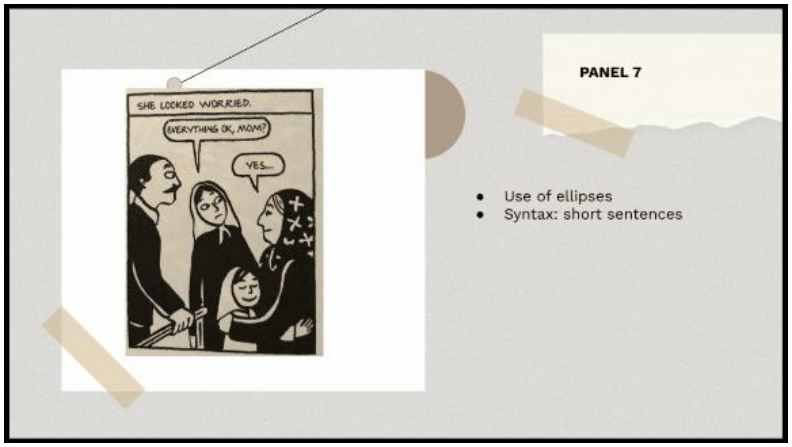
For instance, you can look at how a belief, idea or attitude is depicted within a text through different characters or devices.

Again, let's explore a concrete example to make things clear: this time the graphic novel “Persepolis”. We'll consider an HLE on how a text *represents* the **impact of political turmoil on society**.

Chapter 10 of “Persepolis” highlights societal changes occurring due to the Iranian Revolution. The panels below list the authorial choices relevant to the **negative representation** of political change in a society. When looking at the techniques highlighted in the slides below, think about how you feel when you look at the panels below. Can you sense a more positive or negative feeling?







Cool, but what do we do to turn all this into an actual HL essay? Here is a sample response. The introduction might begin like this:

In the captivating graphic novel "Persepolis," the author Marjane Satrapi explores the social and political impacts of the Iranian revolution. In particular, Satrapi conveys a disapproving viewpoint on political turmoil within the text. Throughout the graphic novel, Satrapi carefully represents how social isolation, hypocrisy and confusion is experienced by a young girl living in Tehran, as a result of political turmoil.

Example HLE Introduction

Then, in a body paragraph, on one of the key ideas mentioned above, we could analyze the different literary techniques. For example, Panel 1 is a great representation of the experience of confusion in the midst of political turmoil:

Marji is the younger girl pictured in the panels above. While her parents appear quite concerned by the news on the TV, she appears to not be in full comprehension of the cause for their distress. This is demonstrated by the visual imagery and dialogue, in panel 7, for instance, if you observe the facial expressions by each of the characters.

Example of analysis in body paragraph

This is just a short example from one particular text. To help you unpack any text, try look for the following when analyzing chapter to chapter:

- What is the main idea of the chapter?
- Why did the author write it? What purpose does it serve?

- What do you believe is the overarching importance of the passage?

Brainstorming Tips

If you're having trouble picking your text and line of inquiry, then use this simple 20-minute process to brainstorm potential questions for your HLE:

1. For each text / non-literary work, go through each concept in the table below.
2. Write down a question for each of the two prompts for each category.
3. Repeat for all of your texts.
4. Pick the question-text combination that has the greatest potential for strong analysis.

How do I ensure my HLE question has a good scope?

Choosing a question with good scope is **extremely** important, and it's one of the biggest challenges in the HLE. Here's why:

- If your scope is **too broad**, you may have too much to write about in order to answer the question, and therefore you won't be able to write deep analysis (which is super important– more on this later…)
- If your scope is **too narrow**, you may not have enough to write about and end up*overanalyzing* unnecessary and obscure details. Also something to avoid!

So, to help you get the balance **just right**, here are three examples of HLE questions, specifically for the concept of **Identity** which we mentioned in the table above (by the way, the example is a made-up novel for illustration purposes).

- **Too broad:** "How does Irene Majov in her novel *Deadly Men* effectively make her narrator a powerful mouthpiece?"
- **Too narrow:** "How does Irene Majov in her novel *Deadly Men* effectively make her narrator a powerful mouthpiece for the concerns of Asian-Americans toward discrimination in the workforce in the 21st century?"
- **Just right:** "How does Irene Majov in her novel *Deadly Men* effectively make her narrator a powerful mouthpiece for the concerns of Asian-Americans in the 21st century?"

How to get a 7 on IB English HLE

There are many things that contribute to a 7 in your HLE and your IB English grade overall. But if we had to boil it down to one secret, one essential fact… then it'd have to be this: **Get really good at analysis**.

Analysis is the key to a 7 in IB English. It doesn't matter if it's Paper 1, Paper 2, HLE, IO… You must learn how to analyze quotes at a deep level, and structure your analysis in a way that flows and delights your teachers and examiners.

Finding Quotes

Also, you'll need to find good quotes for your text. Some good sources where you can find relevant quotes include **Goodreads**, **SparkNotes**, **LitCharts**, and **Cliffnotes**. Of course, you could just find quotes yourself directly–this will ensure your quotes are unique.

Understanding the IB English HLE rubric

An essential step to getting a high mark on the HL Essay is understanding the rubric! It is SO important that you know what IB English examiners are looking for when grading your essay, as this helps you to shape the content of your essay to match (or even exceed) their expectations.

The IB English HL Essay is graded out of **20 marks**. There are 4 criteria, each worth 5 marks.

Use the checklist below to make sure you're not making simple mistakes! Note that this is **not** the official marking criteria, and I strongly recommend that you reading the official rubric provided by your teacher.

Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding, and interpretation

- Accurate summary of text in introduction
- Focused and informative thesis statement
- Effective and relevant quotes
- Relevant and effective summary and ending statement in conclusion

Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation

- Relevant analysis of a **variety** of stylistic features
- Relevant analysis of tone and/or atmosphere
- Relevant analysis of broader authorial choices i.e. characterization, point of view, syntax, irony, etc.

Criterion C: Focus, organization, and development

- Introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion
- Organized body paragraphs – topic sentence, evidence, concluding statement/link to question
- Appropriate progression of ideas and arguments in which evidence (i.e. quotes) are effectively implemented

Criterion D: Language

- Use expansions (e.g. “do not”) instead of contractions (e.g. “don't”)
- Use of a variety of connecting phrases e.g. “furthermore”, “nonetheless”, “however”, etc.
- Complete sentence structures and subject-verb agreement
- Correct usage of punctuation
- Appropriate register – no slang
- **Historic present tense**: the use of present tense when recounting past events. For example, we want to write “In *The Hunger Games*, Peeta and Katniss **work** together to win as a district” instead of using the word “worked”.

- Avoid flowery/dictionary language just to sound smart; it is distracting and difficult to read. As long as you concisely communicate your message using appropriate language, you will score a high mark under this criterion.

Summary

Here's everything we discussed:

- IB English HLE is tough work! Start early.
- Brainstorm using the table of concepts to come up with a strong HLE question. Don't give up on this!
- Analysis is the key to a 7 in IB English HLE (and in fact all IB English assessment).

Good luck, and may the odds be ever in your favor 💪