

Passage based Questions

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 12 Sep 2017 @ 22:17

You must know the passage concerned in great detail. It is demanding because you HAVE TO look at aspects of structure, form and language. You are not being asked to remember vaguely what was presented in lectures and tutorials, you are being asked to **consider in detail** and you have no excuse because the material is there and waiting for you.

Read the question carefully, and make sure you know what it is asking you to do. Think hard about the **'trigger'** words like 'presentation': these are there to point you towards discussing the writer's techniques and away from general unsupported points.

Read the poem/passage very carefully before you start to write. Make sure that it is one you recognise and understand – do not attempt to do it 'unseen'.

Focus all the time on the passage/poem that is set. **Work outwards from the detail of the passage**, not in from some grand, big idea that you have had.

Discuss **how** the writer is creating effects in the poem/passage.

Do not waste time simply identifying and listing literary devices: it is **how** they work, and the **effects** they create, that matter. If the question asks for this, look for how the poem/passage seems characteristic of other things in the whole text.

Essay Length for the Exam

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 18 Sep 2017 @ 19:42

It depends on your handwriting, really.

If it is small to average, it is 2-2.5 exam script pages. Which is not a lot, really. The larger your handwriting, the more pages. But you should focus on the content - Have you looked at the What, Why and How in detail? Have you answered the question?

Also, try to maintain an essay structure – paragraphs, please!

Spelling is not a focal point, but basic language ability is considered – the question is, can I (as the marker) read and comprehend the language used?

The focus is content – be relevant, be direct, don't waffle and don't try to impress. I find that is when students lose sight of the question in exams.

Some possible key termsby C BARRINGTON - 18 Sep 2017 @ 19:42

Comment on ...; Discuss ...; Consider ...

These are just ways of asking you to think about a particular view or angle, and to write about your own thoughts, but with careful and detailed supporting illustration from the text itself.

Discuss the importance of ...; Discuss the effects of ...; Discuss the writer's treatment of ...; Discuss your response to ...; How does ...? How effective is ...?

Each of these instructions appears to be more exact and specific, but again the thrust is similar – the Examiner is asking you to look at one particular aspect of the text, and to write about it, and about how you react to it. If it asks about 'the importance', it is really much the same as if it said 'what you think is important'

Concerns and methods..., Dramatic effects/effectiveness..., Style and concerns..., With close reference to...

These should be fairly self-explanatory. 'Concerns' may be an unfamiliar word, but it simply means whatever it is that the writer is writing about in the text – his/her ideas, topics, themes, problems, interests, characters and so on. 'Methods' and 'style' mean much the same – they refer to how the work is written, and expect you to look at the language, images, structure and so on. 'With close reference to ...' – which very clearly reminds you to use as much reference and quotation as you can from the passage or wider text.

1. Reading the exam question and what and how to focus on the QUESTION.by C BARRINGTON - 18 Sep 2017 @ 19:54

Hello All.

Today we will look at how to interpret an exam question for **prose fiction** and begin planning out an answer based on **WHAT_HOW_WHY triangle**.

The exam paper that we will look at is last year's November paper (ENG2602-2014-E-1.pdf) which can be found on the ENG2602-15-S2 website.

First thing you need to do on any exam is to make sure:

- a) The paper you have been given is on the topic and module you are meant to be writing on. The paper is not missing any questions and/or pages.

It is YOUR responsibility to alert the examiner that they have given you the incorrect paper/that pages are missing.

- b) Find out how many marks each question is out of versus how many questions you need to answer versus the time you have. You then need to plan. If you have 2.5 hours, but only have two long essay questions, schedule an hour a question. Once the hour is up, no matter what you have written, move on. That way, you will have 15 minutes to go back, read over and write a concluding paragraph for each question, and you will use your time to its fullest capacity.

Now that you have done the above and nothing is wrong with the paper, it is time to look at the question:

(Please have the question paper for this exam in front of you; I will not be re-typing the actual question.)

The question asks you to 1. Write an ESSAY.

- This means you need, to the best of your abilities, to include an introduction and conclusion in your exam answer. Now this does not need to be long – time is a factor, but you still need to, at the least include the title and the author’s name and the major elements that you will focus on in the beginning and indicate what you have looked at in a sentence or two at the end.
- Use quotes (citing in an exam is not necessary, but if you are able to, then do so)
- Unpack the significance of the quote in relation to the characterisation, setting, theme, point of view, and et cetera.

So, now onto the detail of the question:

In this particular paper I first read over the question to gain a general idea of what the examiner wants of me: In essence, *I am to provide an analysis of an extract.*

Now I pick up key words: **discuss -> literary and linguistic devices.**

Then, using those devices, I am to consider how they are **thematically** (what themes can be found in them) and **symbolically relevant** (what is the significance/meaning of such elements –what can we read into the text because of it).

Specific focus to be applied to **characterisation.**

Remember NO headings or subheadings in an essay.

My introduction will be something similar to:

The extract from page 16 of Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988) focuses strongly on the theme of education, expanding into themes of critical thinking and the challenging of traditional and patriarchal rule. As such, the essay will consider the characterisations of the figure of the mother, the father and the daughter/speaker in relation to the themes of gender politics, education and sensibilities.

Notice how I have not rewritten the essay question. Instead I have AT the BEGINNING identified the main themes which will assist me in exploring the characters within the extract.

1. What are my literary and linguistic devices?

Let us consider 'Linguistic devices' first, because it has not, as of yet, been at the centre of any posts.

Here we want to look at any language that might affect the way we read the text and how/why that language has an impact.

- DO NOT GET TIED UP IN PARTS OF SPEECH. In fact, do not even mention "this verb" or "that pronoun". You will get distracted and will not be answering the question.

- What you DO want to look for:

- DRAMATIC language – those words or phrases that attract our attention through their emotional or subjective implications. For example (from the exam extract):

**"His intention was to soothe me with comforting, sensible words"
(Dangarembge 16)**

The words I identify as particularly important: **"sooth"** and **"sensible"**.

Why? When I read the extract, I understand that *it is a little girl speaking about wanting to go to school. She is obviously being denied this by a patriarchal father who would rather she stay home and learn what would best be termed in the author's own words "the business of womanhood"*.

The term "sooth" suggests that the father is attempting to pacify his daughter, but there are connotations of the word within the context, of the father denying his child an education based on gender. He perhaps unintentionally, is being patronising towards his daughter by "sooth[ing]"

her as he would a temperamental animal or baby. This automatically removes or at least diminishes the daughter's capacity for autonomy and associates the father negatively with issues related to gender politics. Not only this, but his denial is, as the speaker suggests, constructed as a "sensible" expectation. Here, this suggests two primary ideas: Firstly, the daughter is being unreasonable for wanting to go to school. Secondly, that it is reasonable for the father to deny her this right (which here is perceived as a privilege and NOT a right). The two words together demean the daughter's ambitions and, in effect, reduce her to a pre-defined inescapable gendered role. In the extreme, here she becomes more an object than a subject.

As you can see from the above paragraph, just by focusing on dramatic and emotive language, you can unpack a lot of connotative meaning from the smallest of sentences. If you continue to focus of the extract in this way, you will find that you will have MORE than enough to write on, just by using language alone.

Notice how I did not once mention that anything was an adjective or a verb or a pronoun. Focus on the meaning of the language, not the structure.

- Now, language also implies we consider elements such as any **slang or colloquial language**. Such language allows us to (potentially) identify with the text if we are familiar with the informal language (A South African author will often use South African slang such as "My China" to suggest a friend; a "robot" to suggest a traffic light; and so on and so forth.), and if not, at least will allow us to contextualise the work in terms of setting and location and period.

- Can I see any colloquial or slang language in the extract? No, none is obvious at a glance. Perhaps when I look at it in more detail I will notice something. For now, I move on.

- Point of View may be placed under this heading as well:

The daughter/speaker, whose name is never mentioned in the extract, is a first person speaker. This implies that what is narrated to the reader is from her biased and subjective view. As such, the extract's overall tone is that of a young girl, bewildered by the slight both her parents have given her by refusing to consider that she is capable of being educated and still being able to fulfil the expected role of mother and wife as her culture dictates. Nevertheless, the text is written as a reflective narration, suggesting that it is an older version of the daughter/speaker who is retelling the story of her youth. As such, we can see that the elder daughter/speaker does attempt

to be critical of her limited perspective as a youth. Even then however, the narrative is still framed from the perspective of only the single speaker, leaving us dependant on her point of view alone.

2. LITERARY Devices:

- We have focused on this in last week's post. If you have not, please go to the additional resources and download the figures of speech document I created.
- Actively look for ANY figures of speech in the extract. Use a coloured pen or a highlighter to mark them so that when you begin writing your analysis, they are easily identifiable, and all you need to worry about is writing them into the essay (identify the figure of speech, quote and explain the significance).

For example (from the exam extract):

“My father thought I should not mind.” -> Indicates that the speaker should not think about or be concerned about being educated.

The author is also PLAYING with words here: “mind” also implies that the father says she should NOT THINK. The ‘mind’ is the abstract concept that we use when activating the more intellectual functions of the brain – essentially, when one thinks, logically and critically, employing memory and reason. The ‘do “not mind” attitude is coupled with her father’s quote of “it’s nothing”...

The best way to write a literature essay is to merge your devices and your analysis with language. Here I am picking out words which I feel are important to the overall meaning of the extract, and which if I argued further, will help me in creating an analysis of themes, characterisation and meaning.

For example:

The father, who tells his daughter not to think, clearly does little of it himself. He is characterised as being lazy and ignorant by the speaker who states that her father “jump[s] whichever way was easiest” and labels the man arguing for a “sensible” domesticated life for a daughter as “not [being] sensible”. Clearly, sensibleness is an important motif, which is repetitively mentioned in relation to both the speaker and her parents.

So I have introduced the concept of ‘mind’ (thinking, logic and intelligence) and linked it to a brief characterisation of one of the characters. I can, and am able to expand this further, because the theme of sensibleness is linked to all three major

characters. I can now compare the mother and the father, discussing how they are different from and similar to each other, and then contrast them with the daughter.

Once this is complete, I will have looked at language, LITERARY DEVICES, characterisations and **write a conclusion which will have something similar** (if more refined for a continuous flowing uninterrupted essay) to:

This essay has developed an overarching argument that the extract argues from the daughter/speaker's perspective that an education is important regardless of gendered stereotypes and that the traditional arguments for not allowing a female child to be educated are not logical.

WHAT, WHY?, HOW?

by C BARRINGTON - 23 Sep 2017 @ 12:35

Remember in Unit one, we considered the 'WHAT', 'WHY', 'HOW' and 'WHO' of a text?

Now, I am going to quickly recap the terms, and then consider how they relate to one of the categories of prose fiction and non-fiction we have examined within the semester. I will only do one here, and it will be a general consideration, as I will use the old exam paper's to provide more detailed example's of how to use these terms.

WHAT?

- What is the text about?

Here, in **your own words** explain the **concepts** that the text considers.

If you do this correctly, then it should really take 1-2 sentences, which you then need to in the subsequent sentences, **unpack and explain**.

The expansion of the 'what' comments you make are essential, as you will begin to substantiate your reading (your interpretation of the 'WHAT').

This is not a request of a summary!

- How can 'WHAT' be used in **PROSE FICTION**:

This is perhaps the easiest section to consider the 'WHAT' of the text, because novels often have obvious social, historical and political implications. These are the elements you would look for.

That being said, YOU will (in the exam) only examine an extract. Therefore, you have a limited scope from which to consider the purpose of the text.

Think back to the **Essay and Exam writing** forum, specifically the **Passage based Questions**. The trick is to pick out the 'trigger' or key words, phrases and concepts.

So, if an extract focuses on the exchange between two children, one male, one female, and they are fighting about who gets to go to school and who has to stay home: Then the **general concepts raised here are connected to gender relations and politics, as well as education**.

To support this argument (highlighted in yellow), I will then quote the key phrases and explain the context (of only the extract) as evidence (This is essentially a part of the 'HOW' element of literary analysis).

Once this is complete, I move onto the:

WHY?

- Why has the text been written?

Moving on from the 'WHAT', I must now hypothesise on any messages the text might be advancing

for example, that good always trumps evil

and extrapolate the possible purpose of the text, and (if possible) the intentions of the text. Here the focus is often on the THEMES.

for example, the reason why good (themes of **good** and **evil**) always wins: Good becomes synonymous with the 'average' individual's position in society being assured and protected from any potential aggressors.

This in turn suggests social stability, and in turn reinforces cultural behaviours of the society the story represents.

As with the 'WHAT', my 'WHY' needs to have support, and I must turn to the 'HOW' to find my evidence.

- In fictional works, the authorial intent is not as important as the readers' response to the text. (What do *you* understand from the text?)

HOW?

- How does the text produce meaning? How does it stress or emphasise the themes and ideas of the text? How is the text structured?

- **Language, diction, tone, characterisation and figures of speech** are all elements of a text which you will need to consider when discussing HOW a text is filled with meaning.

Most you can find in the original post of 'What, why, how and who' in Unit one, and I shall not go through them all.

However, a few ones based off of what I have seen in your assignments:

- Based on the language (syntax, diction and imagery) used, you may be able to recognise the tone of the text. The tone suggests the overall attitude (emotional) to the theme or topic of the text.
 - Language usage.

TIP: do not focus on elements such as 'verbs' 'adverbs' 'adjectives' or 'punctuation' unless you can explain how such elements add to the texts meaning: for example, short sentences, all with heavy punctuation might signal an urgency related to the action.
 - Figures of Speech: Please know your figures of speech (I will upload a post on them and direct you to a number of videos to assist you)
- When reading critically, you need to focus **on a number of aspects** within the text to answer your questions.

WHO?

- In addition to the WHAT, WHY and HOW considerations of a textual analysis, you must also be aware of 'WHO'. (This can be taken as part of the 'how' – the support of your reading of the text.)
- Who is **the creator** (author/poet/playwright) of the text and **what is the text's name?**

Please identify BOTH in the first few sentences of your essay.
- Who is **the speaker** AND how does identifying him/her add to your reading of the text?

Poetry - Aunt Jennifer's Tigersby [C BARRINGTON](#) - 25 Sep 2017 @ 22:45

Hello All,

Remember when I put up the poem with annotations on it? That was a poem from one of the exam papers. Please go to additional resources for the poem, if you have yet to look at how an annotated poem should look like (and for the poem itself!)

.....

Poetry Essay question:

Now that you have analysed the poem directly, it is time to look at the question:

In the exam paper from November 2014, the poetry question first provides the poem, and then the essay question.

As with the prose section, you need to identify key words, and from those words understand what the question is asking from you.

Firstly, the poetry question here provides a short contextualisation of the poem. The provided paragraph informs the reader that Aunt Jennifer is creating a tapestry, something that might not be obvious for those reading the poem for the first time. It indicates that the poem is linked to notions of 'freedom', 'imagination', 'gender roles' and 'expectations'. In your reading of the poem, you will need to consider how such concepts are introduced and used, and what significance are you able to deduce from the analysis of the literary elements and figurative language.

Now, the actual essay question:

In the essay you need to focus on the SUBJECT Aunt Jennifer.

You need to focus on the literary elements and figurative language in order to support your analysis of

Remember the What, How and Why.

What?

Can you identify what type of text this is?

- This is a poem with three stanzas. Each stanza is made up of six lines, all of which make up three pairs of rhyming couplets.

What is the poem about?

- Having read and deconstructed the poem, you should be able to tell the marker that the poem is about patriarchal oppression and freedom of artistic expression.

Remember, you are not here to REWRITE the poem, or explain the sequence of events. To do so will cost you time which will be wasted.

Therefore, my introduction will have two key elements:

Adrienne Rich's poem *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers* focuses on a single individual, Aunt Jennifer, in relation to her social position, which is defined by her gender. The three stanza poem, divided further into three rhyming couplets each, speaks of Aunt Jennifer's oppression within her marriage, and her escape through her art. This essay will analyse the poem, looking in detail at the gendered themes with specific interest in how Aunt Jennifer is presented, by taking into consideration literary elements and figurative language.

- 1) I have identified the text I am writing on and the poet.
- 2) I have indicated that it is a poem I will be analysing.
- 3) I have given a very general statement relating to the poem, just so that the reader has some knowledge of the poem.
- 4) I have given a basic explanation of what will happen in the poem.

If you have formulated an academic opinion (perhaps that Aunt Jennifer is symbolic of something, for example) you can include a more definitive thesis statement. A thesis statement will in one or two sentences explain to the reader your primary argument.

Within this particular example, given that the question has asked to focus on Aunt Jennifer, further limiting your reading of the text through a definitive argument might be problematic.

Once you have written your introduction, you need to have at least four and a maximum of eight paragraphs within your essay. Remember that you have more than one long essay to tackle in an exam, and you must be able to answer all questions.

In the body of the essay, you need to consider closely the WHY?:

- Remember here you need to identify the themes and consider **why** they are important (oppression and artistic expression, for example).

You also, once you have considered the themes, you will need to, through close analysis explain **HOW** the themes are significant.

Before you write anything, look at the poem you have deconstructed. Consider how the images and figures of speech interact to present a representation of Aunt Jennifer. What do we know about her and what comparisons are drawn within the poem? What themes are introduced and how might we expand on those themes.

Now create an essay plan. Each paragraph needs to build on the last, until you have considered all aspects of Aunt Jennifer. Her relationship to her husband and to herself; the presence of the tiger's and how they are related to both Aunt Jennifer and men . . . Be as detailed as you can.

Once you have written your analysis based off your reading, do not forget to write your conclusion.

[Reading the drama/conversation question.](#)
by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 9 Oct 2017 @ 23:08

Hello All

By now you should all have be comfortable with the units of drama and conversation. The exam paper we will look at in this week's revision is the 2014 October/November paper.

Question 5 (listed under drama) asks us to analyse a dialogue from Caryl Chrchill's play *Top Girls*.

Key phrases/words in the essay question:

'analyse'

'effect'

'purposes'

'reveal about their characters'

'mood'

'relationship'

'plot'

Focus on 'language'.

What is the question asking you to do? You need to read the extract and explain what is going on in this particular scene. Do not hypothesis about anything, let the contents of the extract guide your breakdown of it and the conclusions that can be drawn there.

Avoid value judgements (i.e. 'the children are disrespectful' or 'why are they not in school?'). Consider how they play off one another, what is being said and what is being implied (very BASIC conversational analysis, here the focus is on dramatic elelemts, setting and characterisation). Also keep in mind how language assists in our reading of the girls, and in the events taking place in the play.

Remember what has been reiterated with the WHAT, WHY and HOW elements of analysis.

1. What?

- a. What text is this?
 - i. It is a passage or excerpt from a play titled *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill.
 - ii. It also happens to be a dialogue.
 - iii. This means that when we begin deconstructing the extract, we need to look at BOTH dramatic and conversational elements.

Dramatic Elements

Stage directions

The flow of the dialogue

Choice of words

Any visual and aural elements presented

Setting

Characterisation

Themes

Plot

Dramatic Dialogue (linked closely to characterisation)

Types of dialogue

Figurative language/Rhetorical devices

b. What is the extract about?

- i. The extract depicts two girls, Angie and Kit, as they hide from an authority figure, possibly Angie's mother, Joyce. The themes of friendship and money (and poverty) are visible within the given extract. In addition, the concept of authority figures is also raised.

2. Why?

- a. Now although I have identified the 'themes' within the WHAT, they allow us to draw conclusions as to the purpose of the text (or our interpretation) and are therefore under the category of WHY. This can be placed within the introduction or the body. Regardless, you will need to explain your comments and use the text to support your findings.

- i. The themes of the extract emphasise the friendly and supportive relationship between Angie and Kit. The age difference and

the economical difference suggest that friendship is not something that is limited to those within the same age or class.

3. How: In your body you must now look at the (in no particular order):

Dramatic Elements

Stage directions

The flow of the dialogue

Choice of words

Any visual and aural elements presented

Setting

Characterisation

Themes

Plot

Dramatic Dialogue (linked closely to characterisation)

Types of dialogue

Figurative language/Rhetorical devices

Elements, and begin **unpacking the dialogue to support the WHAT and the WHY**

Poetry Mock Essay

by C BARRINGTON - 28 Sep 2017 @ 8:30

Just remember that poetry can be complex, but it can also be simple. Sometimes, what is written has no deeper meaning than what is there. Focus on identifying and explaining figures of speech where you can, and then linking them back to the significance of the poems themes. Remember to READ the poem carefully.

SONNET 73

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day,
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by-and-by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

William Shakespeare's *Sonnet 73* contemplates the onset of old age and the coming of death. Using images such as the changing of the seasons and the coming of the night, Shakespeare considers a darker and more sombre representation of death. The poem itself seems to be an attempt to prepare for death and its allusions to nature especially appears to be an attempt to mollify the poet/speaker and audience about death. Yet, at the same time, the poem does not actually contemplate death from the perspective of the dying. Overall, the poem considers the relationship between death and love and does so for an observer of death. The poem indicates that death is natural, as natural as the seasons, as day and night and that it is not something which should be feared, even though it should be taken seriously.

He begins the poem with the notion of time and specifically "that time of the year" (l. 1), which, with the presentation of the "yellow leaves" and bare trees (l. 2) become a metaphor for the approaching death. Winter is often considered the season which is associated with death, and the autumn, here late autumn, is the season which prepares for death. Trees lose their leaves, plants die and animals hibernate. The images Shakespeare present are not those of comfort and there is a quite tone of acceptance of mortality which is embedded within the poem. He uses words which often have negative associations, which is especially important given the poems content.

The winter Shakespeare depicts within the poem is especially brutal and barren of life, with "boughs" that "shake against the cold" and "bare ruined choirs, where ... bids sing" (l. 2-3). Here, the leafless trees are stripped of their protection and they shiver and shake

against the cold. This suggests that the cold seeps into everything, and that a tree, naturally strong and protected by the elements is not strong enough. Here, nature is threatened by nature and, as such, the threat of impending death is absolute. The inclusion of the “ruined choirs” (l. 3) suggests the ruination of a location where birds once might have sung their songs in summer and spring. Of course, the inclusion of “sweet” (l. 3) is suggestive of a reminiscing of better days and includes a wistful tone into the sombre tone of the poem.

The association of the choir is also a youthful image and is juxtaposed by the word “ruined” (l. 3) equals ruin, and it suggests that youth, with its evidence of life presented through noise – song – is gone from the world, and all that is left are broken structures. Ruins are also suggestive in the theme of nature. As manmade structures and those that built them fade, nature creeps up and begins dismantling the buildings through sand, rain, sun and the other natural elements. This natural decomposition of moments past is superimposed on the image of the birds of summer and spring having retreated from the path of the oncoming winter, which within the context of the poem is representational of death.

The poet/speaker moves on from the seasons to another cyclical aspect of nature, day and night. Both are metaphors comparing the poet/speaker to their respective ends. Nevertheless, the change of subject matter is most important because, unlike the seasonal images of the previous four lines, the day/night image becomes linked to the poet/speaker himself. Similar to the seasonal aspect of the poem, there is no real mention of the day (as there is no real mention of spring and summer) and the poet/speaker is situated in the “twilight of such day” while the “sunset fadeth” (l. 5-6). This once more presents the theme of time. However, this notion of time, throughout the poem has suggested a lack of time, rather than a suggestion that there is time. The fading of the sun and the mention of “twilight” (l. 5) are indications that the poet/speaker is not just watching a day draw to an end, but that he is watching, or at least aware of his own metaphorical day coming to an end. This awareness of his mortality is continued in the later lines of the poem where, having now admitted that the end of the cyclical nature images are “in me” (l. 5), rather than just observations of the changing seasons and days, becomes more of an internal confession soliloquy than anything else.

As before, with the harsh image of the “cold” (l. 3), the image of “black” (l.7) becomes the threat. Both the cold and the black are suggestive of a deeper terror which all mortals face, the end of existence. The images presented within the poem and within humanities own fear of death is potentially summed up by these two words which Shakespeare has chosen to use. Despite the poet/speakers attempt at consoling while facing reality, death is always depicted as a threat within the poem. It is a danger which cannot be overcome and therefore, the poet/speaker’s only choice is to reluctantly accept it. This reluctance and the threat which death is seen by the way in which the “night” is taken away (l. 7). The

poet/speaker is a passive observer while death, through the images of the “black night” (l.7) becomes the active participant within the poem. As the night, the natural day comes to an end and night *becomes*, so too does the poem reinforce the notion of taken, through line 8, in which “Death’s second self” “seals up all *in rest*” (l. 8). Here, death takes what life is left, just as the “black night” takes the day. The poem then uses its first set of repetition in line 9. “In me”, the poet/speaker recalls.

This repetition of the “in me” from line 5 now reinforces the idea that the poem is about an individual at the beginning of the end of his life. The “in” of the phrase, is indicative of the level of personal struggle. This is an internal battle with the poet/speakers very notion of *being* or *existing*, and, at the end, of existing no more. Another image of nature, of fire, now begins to be associate to the complex ideas of life and death. The “glowing of such fire” (l. 9) which the poet/speaker has within him is also once more juxtaposed by the images of death which have come before, of the cold and the black. The natural inclination to associate life with warmth is used within the poem on multiple levels. The introduction of fire is meant to bring forth connotations of not only warmth and life but also light. Death, within the poem is dark, and therefore, life its polar opposite must be light.

Still, even the presentation of life through the image of “fire” (l. 9) is brief and suggests that even though the poet/speaker sees life within himself, in that he “see’st the glowing of such fire”, and wishes for more because he is not finished yet. Despite this last implication of resistance towards death, the next line suggests that this metaphor of life to fire is built on “the ashes of his youth”. Once more, the notion of a youthful image is eradicated. Like the image of the ruin, here youth is burned up by the very flame from which it came and all that is left of the poet/speakers life is the “ashes” of his past. Such a metaphor clears the path of all resistance and what is left is weary acceptance on the poet/speakers behalf. As such, the fire will only burn as long as there is fuel and the fuel of the poet/speaker is nearly out. Old age then is representative of the dying fire. This transformation from the fire to an old man is more clearly described in the last two lines (l. 11-2) of the third quatrain. Here, the image of the “death-bed”, which is closely linked to that of the elderly dying becomes the summary of the burnt out fire of lines 9 and 10, “whereon it must expire, /consumed with that which it was nourish’d by” (l. 11-2).

In the last couplet of the poem, which following the structural rules of a sonnets construction is a rhyming couplet, the poem draws to a conclusion. However, this conclusion actually changes the entire tone of the poem. Where before, lines 13 and 14 contemplated the coming of death and negotiated the impending event with a sombre yet fearful tone, the last two lines suggest a more distant observational point of view or even a more drastic change to a response of a loved one watching someone die. The personal meditations of the poet speaker who repeated the phrase “In me” (l. 5 & 9) as if, in him are the stirrings of death changes to “thou”, and is suggestive of the poet/speaker interacting with another individual. The theme of death then becomes problematized and closely tied

to the abruptly inserted theme of love. The poet/speaker says “this thou perciv’st, which makes thy love more strong” (l. 13). As throughout the poem, life has been the opposite of death, so here within the last two lines, love becomes the point of opposition to death. No longer is the poem about how one deals with their own death, but the death of a loved one, and the poem ends with the statement that “to love that well, which thou must leave ere long” (l.14) “makes thy love more strong” (l. 13). It suggests that, despite death being natural, inevitable and unpleasant, that capacity for people to love despite the knowledge of death, not of oneself, but of the loved one, people are stronger than even their inevitable fate.

Given the nature metaphors which have been presented within the text, that of the seasons of autumn and winter, the emergence of twilight and the night and the burnt up fire, the poem takes great care in discussing the inevitability of death. Despite the negative reflections from which the poem has (re)presented death, the rhyming couplet twists the poem’s meaning from embittered resignation to a declaration of strength. It does so through the presence of the notion love and through this love, the notion of death becomes less a battle for existence than an acknowledgment of relationships.

Re: Z-Questions

by [C CROUS](#) - 9 Oct 2017 @ 7:54

I would love to comment on the last 7 lines. Sometimes I get this wild imaginative train of thought. The 'fire' mentioned in line 11 can relate to the theme of death in the poem, as a fire also 'consumes' life. The 'ashes' mentioned in the poem may be the poet reminiscing on his passed youth (now only ash). The fire within may also relate to a 'burning' desire to live even though it won't last. The speaker is aware of the fact that this fire will burn out or 'expire' as the speaker maintains that 'it must' be so. A fire requires oxygen to burn as does life, but the fuel that keeps our fire will eventually burn out, as recognised by the speaker. The poet may mean to say that we are also 'consumed' by this life and turned to 'ash' which could be in the literal sense as in the case of cremation or in the figurative sense as the end of our life. The fact that death is drawing near is 'percievest' or perceived and that 'love' will strengthen, may emphasise the importance of love above the power of 'death' and that we should love until the day we 'leave' or depart from this world.

Re: Z-Questions

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 11 Oct 2017 @ 20:34

Reply analysis

I would love to comment on the last 7 lines. Sometimes I get this wild imaginative train of thought.

The 'fire' mentioned in line 11 can relate to the theme of death in the poem, as a fire also 'consumes' life —careful with your explanations of metaphors (**death** also 'consum[es]' life, as **a fire burns** up anything in its path) this then paths the way to the next sentence with more clarity. The 'ashes' mentioned in the poem **may** — try not to use words like 'may' this suggests weakness in your argument. Always be definitive and strong in your language (in the poem reflects the poets reminiscence of his youth, which, like the metaphor suggests, has been reduced to ash, leaving only death now as his life has been spent) — so here you are skipping steps, you are not explaining you're the ash links to his youth be the poet reminiscing on his passed youth (now only ash). The fire within **may** also relate to a 'burning' desire to live—explain this further, why do you think it might be thus? even though it **will not** last—what do you mean here?. The speaker is aware of the fact that this fire will burn out or 'expire' as the speaker maintains that 'it must' be so —what must be so?, you need to explain the quotes a little more please!. A fire requires oxygen to burn as does life, but the fuel that keeps our fire will eventually burn out, as recognised by the speaker. The poet may mean to say that we are also 'consumed' by this life and turned to 'ash' which could be in the literal sense as in the case of cremation or in the figurative sense as the end of our life —an interesting point, which I would like to see expanded J. The fact that death is drawing near is 'percievest' or perceived and that 'love' will strengthen, may emphasise the importance of love above the power of 'death' and that we should love until the day we 'leave' or depart from this world.

Hope this helped!

Re: 01. Revision exercise and sample essay

by [R GOLDMAN](#) - 9 Oct 2017 @ 19:33

Hi Raseshwari,

Unfortunately, there is no way that I can provide you with a comprehensive list of poetic devices and language techniques and their use in the development of meaning, as there are so many different devices and techniques used in English and you should have been

building up a repertoire of these devices and techniques over your entire academic career, from grade 3 until now.

That having been said, however, I am reproducing a post I made at the beginning of the semester for a student with a similar query that provides a fair summary of the various techniques and devices most commonly used in each of the types of literature that you have been required to familiarise yourself with over the course of this semester:

There are so many techniques used across the various types of writing that you're going to be studying this semester that it would be ridiculous to list them all, but as you requested, here is a brief list of a number of the most common features you should look out for, along with some pitfalls you will want to avoid:

When dealing with **fiction, drama and poetry** there tends to be a fair amount of **overlap in the techniques** to look out for. Always **consider tone and register carefully**; pay attention to the **connotative meaning** of what you're reading; examine the text closely for imagery, symbolism, metaphor and simile, as these are some of the most prevalent techniques employed; keep an eye out for irony, but be wary of identifying statements as sarcasm, as sarcasm tends to be much less common, due to its somewhat harsh and critical nature; examine syntax and diction in detail, but never forget that **syntax refers to the construction of sentences** and **diction refers to the choice of words** (when dealing with syntax, remember that you are looking for anomalies in the construction of sentences; when dealing with diction, consider how word choice might affect meaning, for example: "he was angry", as opposed to "he was livid" - how does replacing "angry" with "livid" affect the portrayal of the subject?)

Rhyme and metre are unique to poetry and generally important; **alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia are much more common in poetry** than literature and drama and you should always be careful about seeing sound patterns in literature that have little explicable reason. You should also pay careful attention to the structure of poems you are analysing and **always consider the relationship between the title and the body of the poem.**

When dealing with **persuasive prose**, many of the above techniques also apply, but remember that they tend to be much more subtly employed. Of particular relevance is narrative voice, as it can subtly elicit a broad array of emotional responses in a reader. The use of rhetorical questions and imperatives is also very common. Of particular note is the tendency for persuasive prose to advance ideological agendas and to manipulate the psychology of readers, for example through appeals to logos, ethos and pathos. You should also **pay careful attention to font, layout, use of pictures and colour and**

structure of passages, as they can all influence readers as well.

When dealing with **conversational analysis**, much of the above is far less relevant, as natural conversations are not rehearsed or scripted, but you need to be comfortable with those elements unique to the medium. Turn-taking is often employed as a means of manipulation between participants and tone and register are of particular importance, as they can tell you much about the backgrounds and relationships of the people involved. You also need to **be very familiar with Grice's maxims**, as they govern much of the interaction that occurs in conversations, along with inter-subjectivity, which deals with how well participants implicitly understand one another. Always keep an eye out for breakdowns and repairs in conversations, as they are signifiers of mutual understanding and relative politeness and respect. Also take particular note of the fact that many of these features can be applied as easily to dramatic dialogue.

As I said earlier, there is a lot of ground to cover, so I hope that this list doesn't leave you feeling overwhelmed or more confused than you might have been before reading it, but take heart in the fact that many of these techniques are covered in some depth in your study guide and prescribed book.

Regards,

Russell

Hello All

Welcome to week 14!

You are almost at the end of the journey, and I hope that you have absorbed some interesting information and that you are developing your critical skills :)

Now, I have seen a number of messages asking about assignment one marks before exams: I have answered this query a number of times and repeatedly asking me the same question is not going to change the answer:

We are marking as fast as we can, and I know the markers intend to have assignment one out in time for the exams.

If you are unsure of how you have done, or how you can improve here are **common errors**:

1. Not identifying the text you are analysing in the introduction, and not having a clear thesis statement. This means I need to **indicate that this is a PROSE FICTION, or a POEM, or an ADVERT, or a SPEECH, or a DIALOGUE...** and on and on and on. Then: That is the actual text: **the title** (or general description if no title is present), **who it is by**, or **what website it is hosted on**.

Thesis statement needs to be relevant to the question: If it asks you to focus on a certain theme, or character, then your argument will be that the author uses specific syntax, diction, imagery... to provide an THIS kind of text.

Paragraphs: If you are struggle with writing essays, below is an easy format which should help you

Each paragraph should have a main idea. You look at diction analysis to support that main idea (this word has these connotations or these implications, and therefore shows this relation to theme/setting/character/mood/tone/atmosphere... do this three times (using different phrasing and words/phrases/figurative devices you have identified), and then link back to your thesis statement.

So

Intro: Introduce the text under analysis and the main argument of the essay. You will prove this argument through three main points. Those points are A, B, C, (Hint: here you can look at what the question is asking you to focus on.)

Paragraph A: Main point (think sub-point of main argument): Support through diction analysis and explain through showing how it explains the paragraphs point. Provide two or three examples to prove your point, always developing a ongoing argument. P+E+E+Link. Then link to the main argument: HOW does this one point support the essays over all argument?

Rinse and repeat no fewer than 3 times, more if needed (i.e. 3 paragraphs minimum in your essay's body).

Then conclude.

Write neatly. Markers won't feel bad and give you marks if they can't read your handwriting, they will fail you. Focus on your language: If we can't understand what has been written, we fail it.

READ THE QUESTIONS!!!!

Hope that helps!

Claire.