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Comprehension question A

Some sample answers

- ▶ <https://educateplus.ie/free-exam-paper-solutions-pdf>
- ▶ HL – 2009 – 2016
- ▶ OL - 2009 - 2014
- ▶ Additional 2015 OL Sample answers on www.aoifesnotes.com

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Leaving Certificate English
Higher Level Examination Paper



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The questions

Part (i)

- Straightforward comprehension question.
- Looks for three points about the text

Part (ii)

- Focus on personal reflection.
- 2018 and 2019 – focus on link to studied texts
- 2020 – focus on genres but the theme of the paper was ‘Exploring genre’
- Three points specified in 2020
- 2021 – Return to reflection on writer’s observations

Part (iii)

- Generally, but not always, the style question. May vary between written text and a mixture of written and visual text.
- Four points required

Choosing the questions

Choose your Comp B first

Next, look at the style questions: you may prefer certain writing styles/language genres

Only choose the visual text option if you can be precise

Once you are *sure* which Comp B you are going to do, draw a large X through all the Comp A questions for that text

05 Wed 10 Feb 63%

Exam Paper Marking Scheme

doubt that I am very stupid, but I must confess that I am unable to follow you. How did you deduce that this man was intellectual?

For answer Holmes clapped the hat upon his head. It came right over the forehead and settled upon the bridge of his nose. 'It is a question of cubic capacity,' said he: 'a man with so large a brain must have something in it.'

'The decline of his fortunes, then?'

'This hat is three years old. These flat brims curled at the edge were fashionable then. It is a hat of the very best quality. Look at the band of ribbed silk and the excellent lining. If this man could afford to buy so expensive a hat three years

assuredly gone down in the world. The further point, that his hair is grizzled, and that it has been recently cut, are to be gathered from a close examination of the lower part of the lining. The magnifying glass discloses a large number of hair-ends, clean cut by the scissors of the barber.'

'Well, it is very ingenious,' said I, laughing. 'But since, as you said just now, there has been no crime committed, all this seems to be rather a waste of energy.'

Sherlock Holmes had opened his mouth to reply when the door flew open, and Peterson rushed into the apartment with flushed cheeks, dazed with astonishment.

*Commissionaire – a uniformed hotel door attendant.

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

(i) Based on your reading of the edited extract above, explain three insights you gain into the character of Sherlock Holmes. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)

(ii) TEXT 2 is an example of writing in the genre, detective fiction. Explain why you think this genre has a wide and enduring appeal. Make three points in your response. (15)

(iii) Identify four features of good storytelling evident in the extract. Discuss how the features you have identified add to your enjoyment of the extract. Support your response with reference to the extract. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

You have been asked to write **the introduction** to a new collection of contemporary detective fiction. In your introduction you should: outline the reasons why you think detective stories have enduring appeal, discuss some of the personal qualities you believe are essential in a memorable fictional detective, and explain why you recommend this particular collection of stories to readers.

Leaving Certificate Examination 2020
English – Higher Level – Paper 1

5

Question One



Read the questions before reading the text



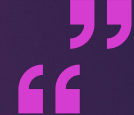
Read the introduction



Be aware of the overall aim of the piece



Aim to make three distinct points



Look for answers in the beginning, middle and end of the text to avoid repetition

Question Two

- Analyse the question carefully
- What universal truth did you learn from your chosen moment or episode?
- Focus on the quality of your reflection
- Show you know your chosen text well and quote/make close reference to prove your points
- Show personal engagement with the text and the question

Art is proof of a living spirit that defies the
or the human spirit. Art reminds us of all the possibilities we are persuaded to forget.

N.B. Candidates may NOT answer Question A and Question B on the same text.

QUESTION A – 50 Marks

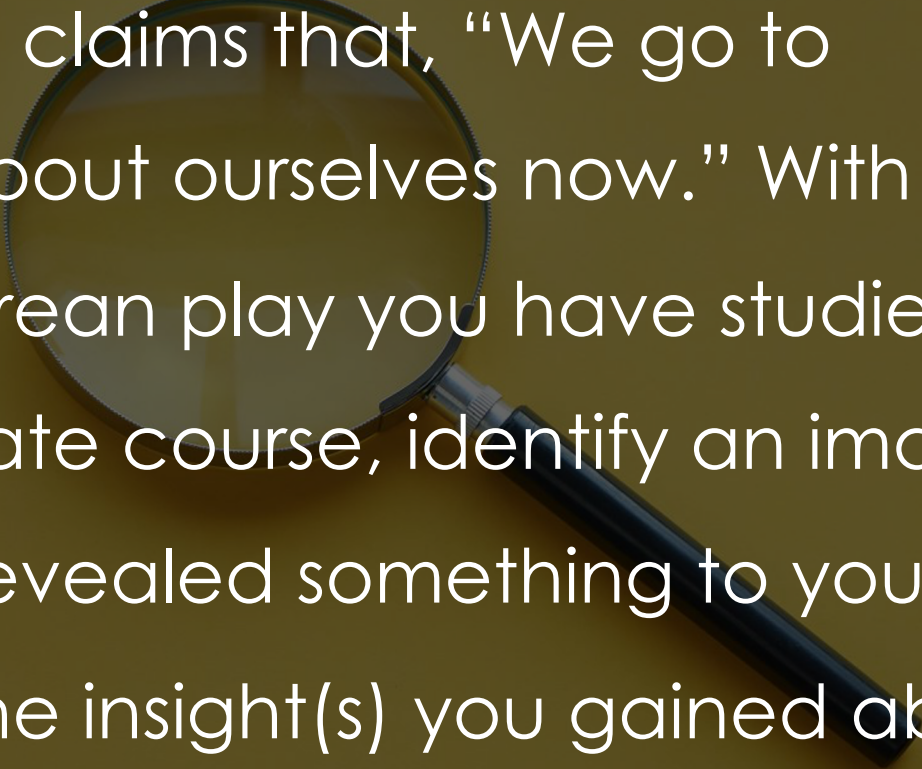
- (i) Based on your reading of TEXT 1, explain three points Jeanette Winterson makes about the value and importance of the arts. Support your response with reference to the text. (15)
- (ii) In TEXT 1, Jeanette Winterson claims that, “We go to Shakespeare to find out about ourselves now.” With reference to a Shakespearean play you have studied for your 2019 Leaving Certificate course, identify an image, moment or episode that revealed something to you about “ourselves now”. Explain the insight(s) you gained about “ourselves now” from engaging with this image, moment or episode. (15)
- (iii) Identify four elements of argumentative or persuasive language, evident in TEXT 1, and explain why their use might encourage readers to agree with the views expressed by the writer in the article. You may include any combination of elements of the language of argument or the language of persuasion in your response. Support your answer with reference to the text. (20)

QUESTION B – 50 Marks

In TEXT 1, Jeanette Winterson extols the virtues of the arts, arguing that artistic activities are beneficial

2019

TEXT 1, Jeanette Winterson claims that, “We go to Shakespeare to find out about ourselves now.” With reference to a Shakespearean play you have studied for your 2019 Leaving Certificate course, identify an image, moment or episode that revealed something to you about “ourselves now”. Explain the insight(s) you gained about “ourselves now” from engaging with this image, moment or episode.



Marking Scheme



Expect candidates to identify an image, moment or episode that revealed something to them about “ourselves now”. Candidates should explain the insight(s) they gained about “ourselves now” from their chosen image, moment or episode. Allow candidates to interpret “ourselves now” as having meaning in the present for ourselves as individuals and/or our contemporary society. Pay particular attention to the focus on insight(s) and the quality of the explanation provided.



Timeless Aspects of the Human Condition

- ▶ What aspects of the human condition does the play explore?
- ▶ Choose one
- ▶ Select a moment in which this is dealt with in some detail
- ▶ Make sure it is a moment you know well and from which you can quote! Select wisely!
- ▶ See next slide for structure

Structuring the answer – 2019 question

Paragraph one

Identify what it is about human nature that has not changed since Shakespeare's time.

Paragraph two

Discuss the moment in some detail.

Do not use unfocused narrative.

Quote to support your point.

Make sure to link back to the question.

Paragraph three

Comment on the implications of this aspect of human nature.


Evaluate.

Link back to key moment and question.

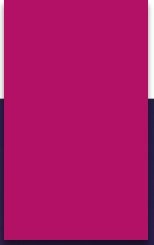
Sample Answer One

The reason for *Hamlet's* enduring popularity is because it embodies timeless strengths and weaknesses; he shows us what is best, and worst in ourselves. Much of what he reflects of human nature makes us uncomfortable: are we so self-centred and contemptuous of others? We may hope not and argue vehemently that we are better than that, but our online behaviour in particular would seem to indicate that we are just as flawed and downright unkind as the Danish prince.

Continued on next slide



One moment in the play drove this home to me most forcibly. After Hamlet stabs Polonius, he hides the old man's body, unleashing a series of events that result in the play's cascade of deaths. Hamlet appears unmoved by the realisation that he has mistakenly killed Polonius: he blames the dead man, calling him a 'wretched, rash, intruding fool'. He justifies his behaviour in the same scene, saying, 'I must be cruel to be kind'. This attitude certainly prevails in the internet generation and is manifested in the belief that anyone who errs online deserves what they get.

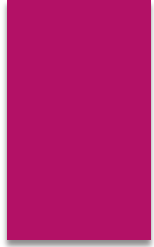


It is not as if we murder people online, certainly. But, as the shame-and-troll cycle of internet culture spins out of control, lives are ruined. We don't have to believe everyone is perfect - Hamlet is right to view Polonius as tedious, pompous, and overbearing. He errs, however, when he acts as if Polonius's very life doesn't matter. Shakespeare shows us the moral collapse that can result from our acting out of self-righteousness and a belief that the pain of those we disagree with, or dislike doesn't matter: they have brought it on themselves.

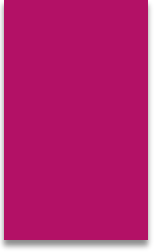
Sample Answer Two

Note: this is not on a Shakespearean text, so it is not an answer to the 2019 question. it is just an example of how you might this type of question using a different text

Studying Brian Friel's 'Philadelphia, Here I Come!' gave me a startling insight into that most familiar of themes: the relationship between parents and children. I felt a shock of recognition as I saw Gar's inability to communicate with his father in any meaningful way. It is a familiar scenario to families up and down the country: the sullen silences, surly remarks and the pain that results. What I had not really realised until I read the play was that both parties bear some responsibility for a tense relationship. Like many people my age, I suspect, I had assumed my parents were wholly to blame.



One episode in particular brought this message home with heart-breaking force. Shortly before his departure, Gar makes one last effort to connect with S.B. Gar fervently hopes S.B. remembers a fishing trip they made when he, Gar, was a small boy. Private says it was ‘a time of ‘great, great happiness, and active, bubbling joy – although nothing was said’. Sadly, nothing is really said this time either. Gar merely asks in a seemingly offhand manner if S.B. recalls the day. He does not, and Gar is crushed. However, if it were not for the persona of Private Gar, we would not know anything about Gar’s depth of feeling. S.B. certainly doesn’t, and once again the pair fails to bridge the gap that lies between them.



Seeing the difference between Gar's public and private self was an uncomfortable wake-up call as it showed me that we cannot expect others to carry the full emotional load. We must be honest, open and expose our own vulnerabilities if we expect the same of others. Gar is too immature and insecure to do this, and his humiliation at what he sees as rejection means he is incapable of listening when his father belatedly tries to respond. Gar says curtly, 'It doesn't matter. Forget it.' S.B.'s puzzlement and pain are obvious to all but Gar. While I certainly can't pretend I will change overnight, this moment in the play opened my eyes to a different perspective on an all-too-familiar issue.

Question Three



20 MARKS – 5%
OF YOUR
OVERALL
ENGLISH EXAM



AIM TO MAKE
FOUR POINTS IN
YOUR ANSWER



CLEARLY NAME
THE FEATURES OF
STYLE



PROVIDE TWO
EXAMPLES TO
SUPPORT EACH
POINT



SHORT QUOTES -
WOVEN INTO THE
FABRIC OF YOUR
SENTENCES

Tip

- ▶ Read the question
- ▶ Make a 'shopping list'
- ▶ If the question asks for four features of the language of argument and/or persuasion, jot down as many as you can think of
- ▶ When you read the text, the features will leap out at you if you have made a list and are actively looking for specific features
- ▶ Keep an open mind – you may have forgotten a feature!

Arg/Pers

- triadic pattern
- rhet. q
- quotes - allusion
- emotive lang
- inclusive - "we"
- anecdotes
- generalisations
- anaphora

Tip

- ▶ Avoid vague, generic comments that could apply to any text: 'This engages the reader and makes him or her want to read the rest of the text'.
- ▶ You must discuss the effect of the feature of style in the context of the piece.
- ▶ Look at the overall purpose of the piece; ask yourself why the writer used these rhetorical questions, for example. What effect would those exact questions have had on the reader? How would they make the reader feel? How would they reinforce the message?

2016 Text 2 - A Personal Journey

Weak

The author uses repetition to great effect in this extract. The first four paragraphs begin the same way: 'We are driving, driving, driving'. The repetition here shows that Ray is on a long journey.

Stronger

The author's clever use of repetition creates a sense that this car trip is never-ending. The first four paragraphs begin with the almost hypnotic chant, 'We are driving, driving, driving,' which gives the impression that the journey is all-consuming. There is no mention of a destination, just the fact of driving, which reinforces the idea that Ray's life is directionless and makes us wonder where this seemingly endless journey will take him.

The shape of the text

What?

- What is the writer's intention?
- What does the writer want me to think or feel?
- What is the tone of the piece?

How?

What techniques does the writer use?

How does the piece make me feel?

Why?

Why does the writer want you to feel a certain way?

Why does the writer want to establish a certain tone?

Why does the writer use techniques he or she does?

The writer's intention

- Use verbs to say what each feature of style does.
- Aim for a nuanced approach: there is a difference between challenging and attacking or implying and stating. How and why does the writer take this approach?
- Here are some verbs you may find useful when discussing the writer's style

- ▶ Challenges
- ▶ Illustrates
- ▶ Criticises
- ▶ Evokes
- ▶ Attacks
- ▶ Provokes
- ▶ Ridicules
- ▶ Questions
- ▶ Subverts
- ▶ Considers
- ▶ Creates
- ▶ Suggests
- ▶ States
- ▶ Implies
- ▶ Presents
- ▶ Reveals
- ▶ Explores

Explaining what the second example does



Reinforces
Cements



Intensifies
Strengthens



Heightens
Echoes



Underlines



Drives home



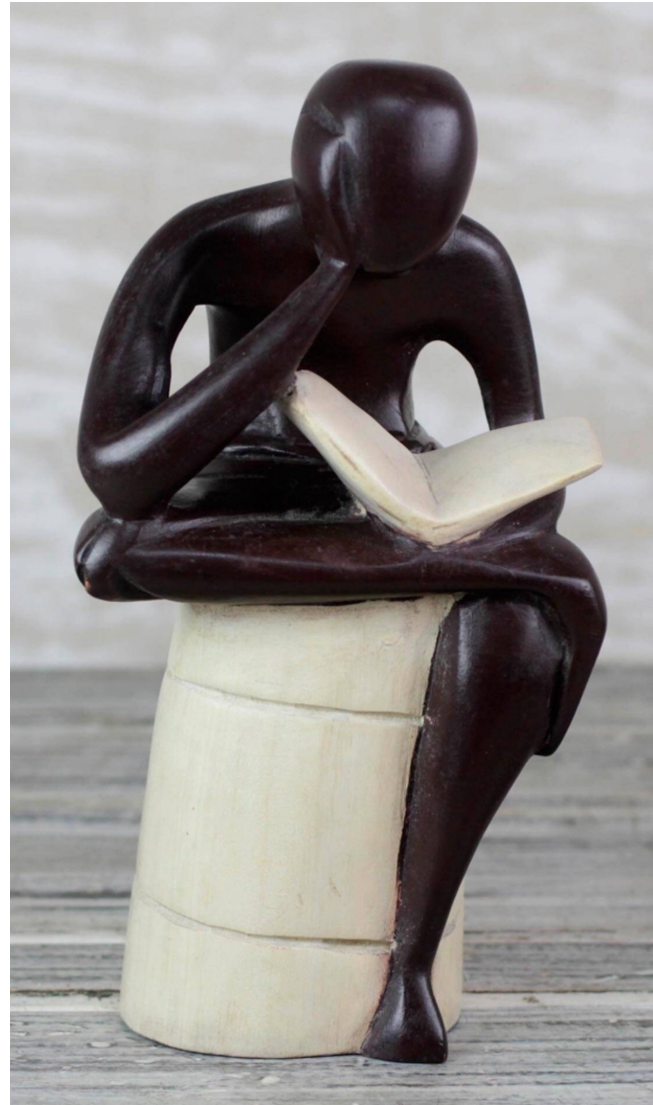
Mirrors

Linking/connecting
examples to the
Effect

- ▶ Therefore
- ▶ Consequently
- ▶ As a result
- ▶ Thus

Effect on the reader –
vital to focus on this

- ▶ Shocking
- ▶ Poignant
- ▶ Disturbing
- ▶ Thought-provoking
- ▶ Compelling
- ▶ Amusing
- ▶ Intriguing



Question – 2019 Text 1

Identify four elements of argumentative or persuasive language, evident in TEXT 1, and explain why their use might encourage readers to agree with the views expressed by the writer in the article. You may include any combination of elements of the language of argument or the language of persuasion in your response. Support your answer with reference to the text.

2019 – Text 1



Identify four elements of argumentative or persuasive language and explain why their use might encourage readers to agree with the views expressed by the writer in the article.



Straightforward question: language genres are named



Focus on effect: do the elements succeed in persuading us to agree with the writer's views? How? Why?

Possible Point- 1



Passionate/convincing/logical and rational tone encourages agreement



The use of contrast colours our attitude



Interesting choice of words/clarity/eloquence of expression makes points convincing



The employment of allusions/quotations/anecdotes/repetition substantiates/reinforces agreement



Inclusive/rhetorical language, authoritative tone convinces

2016 – Text 3 – journey into space



Do you agree that elements of informative and persuasive writing are used effectively in the above speech to win support for the envisaged space programme?



Straightforward question: language genres are named



Focus on effect: do the elements succeed in winning support? How? Why?

Topic sentence directly answers the question

First example

Effect of first example in context

Link to second example

Second example

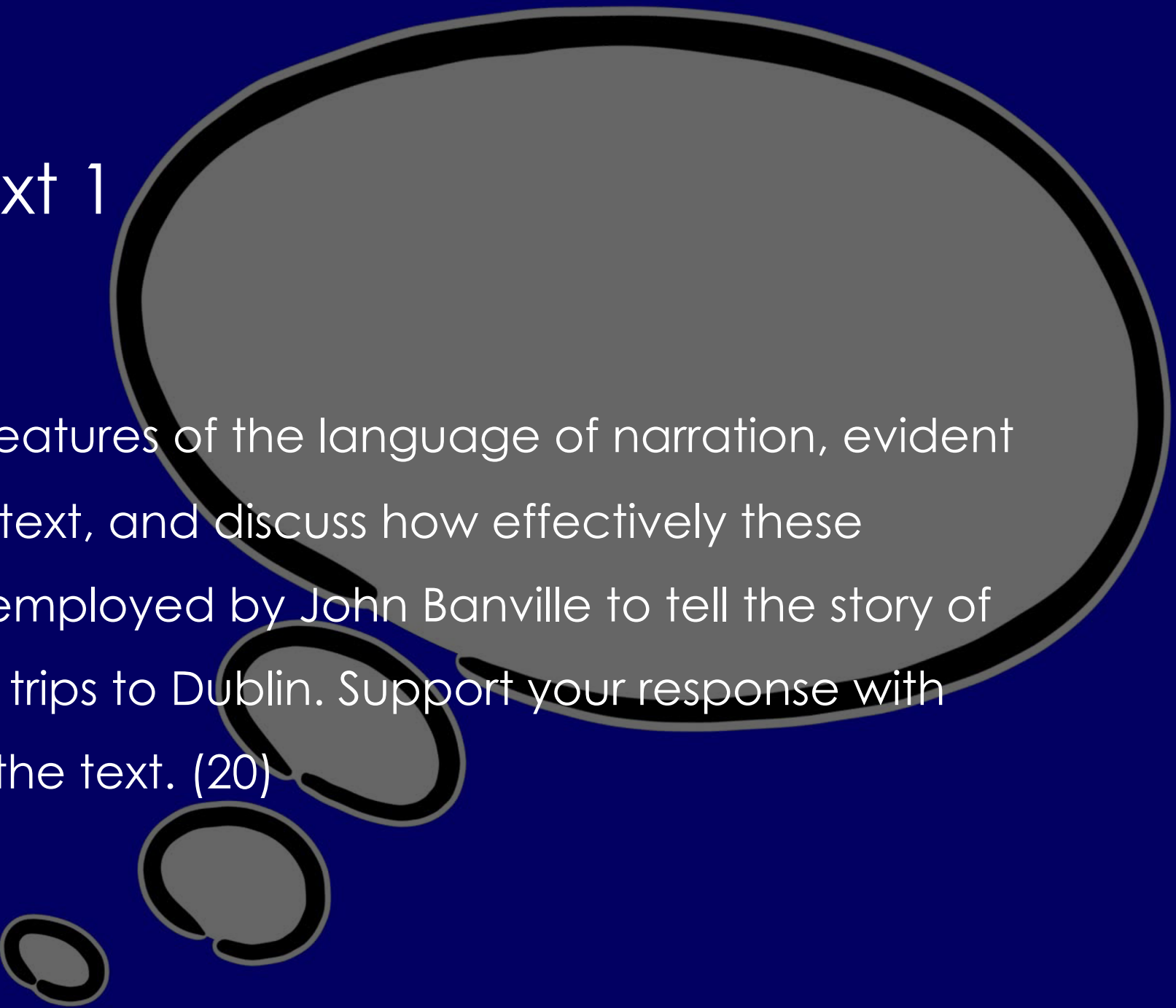
Effect on second example

Focus on the effect of these examples *in context*

Obama makes a complex, scientific topic relevant and relatable by appealing to the listener's emotions. In the opening paragraph, he recalls an early memory of sitting on his grandfather's shoulders, watching astronauts arrive in Hawaii. This charming little anecdote humanises Obama and, by extension, the space programme. As a result, the listeners are more likely to be positively disposed towards both. He reinforces the emotional power of his speech by appealing directly to crowd's patriotism, saying that not supporting the programme would be 'ceding our future [and] an essential element of the American character'. I believe this combination of the personal and the patriotic would be most effective in winning support for NASA's plans.

2021 – Text 1

Identify four features of the language of narration, evident in the above text, and discuss how effectively these features are employed by John Banville to tell the story of his childhood trips to Dublin. Support your response with reference to the text. (20)



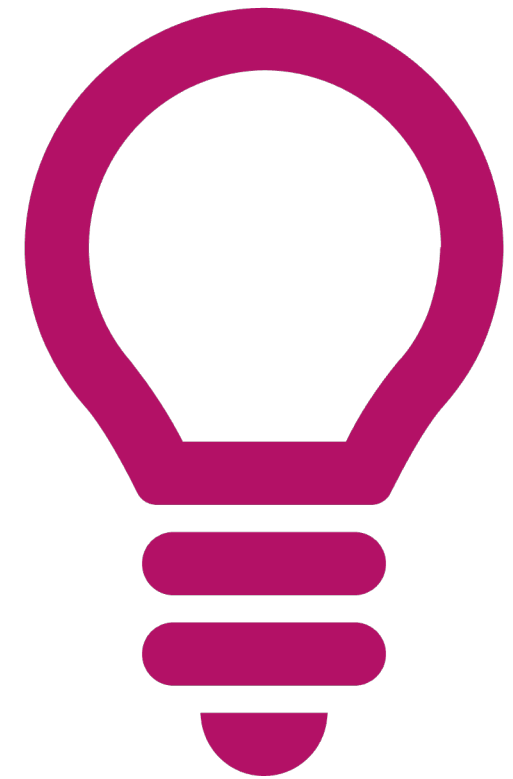


Language of Narration

GO TO SLIDE 54

Tip

Language of narration will contain elements of aesthetic language



Advice to Corrector

Expect candidates to identify four features of the language of narration, evident in the above text, and discuss how effectively these features are employed by John Banville to tell the story of his childhood trips to Dublin. **Pay particular attention to the quality of the discussion provided.** Answers should be supported by reference to the text.



Possible Points

The intriguing opening hooks readers into the story of the writer's childhood trips to Dublin

John Banville presents his childhood self as a character to great effect

The evocative, descriptive details create memorable settings for his recollections

Banville's ability to create contrasting moods and atmospheres adds to the narrative quality

The writer weaves an enjoyable coming-of-age story around his birthday outings Etc.

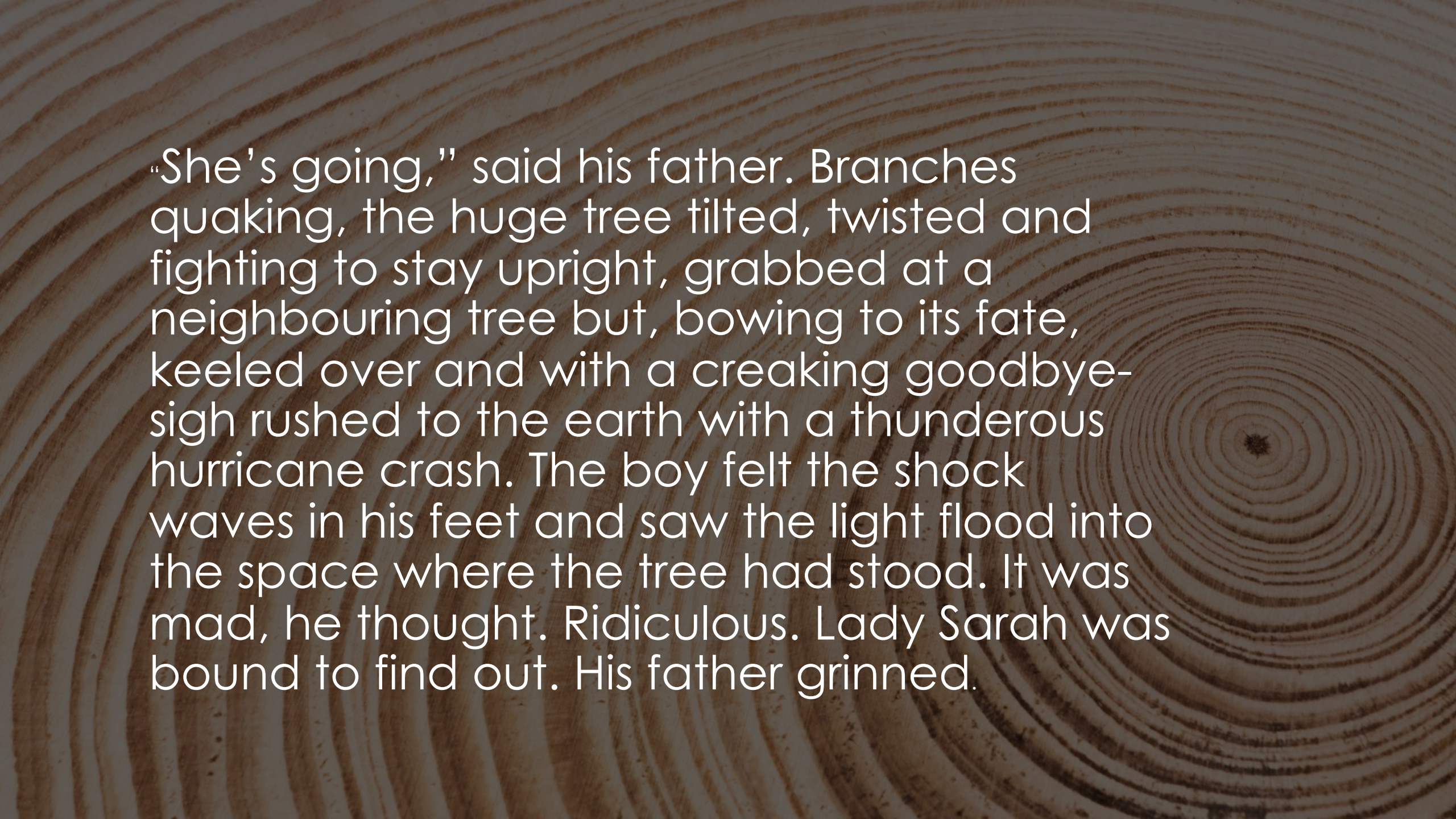


Sample answer
from an *Irish
Times*
educational
supplement



“WHAT SEEMS
TO BE THE
PROBLEM,
LADY
SARAH?”

- ▶ *In this extract (adapted from A Border Station, by Shane Connaughton) a father and son are cutting down a tree. The father, a garda sergeant, has been given permission by Lady Sarah, a member of the landed gentry, to cut down a small tree on her lands. However, he decides to ignore her wishes and cut down a magnificent beech tree on the avenue leading to the Great House. We join the story as the tree falls...*

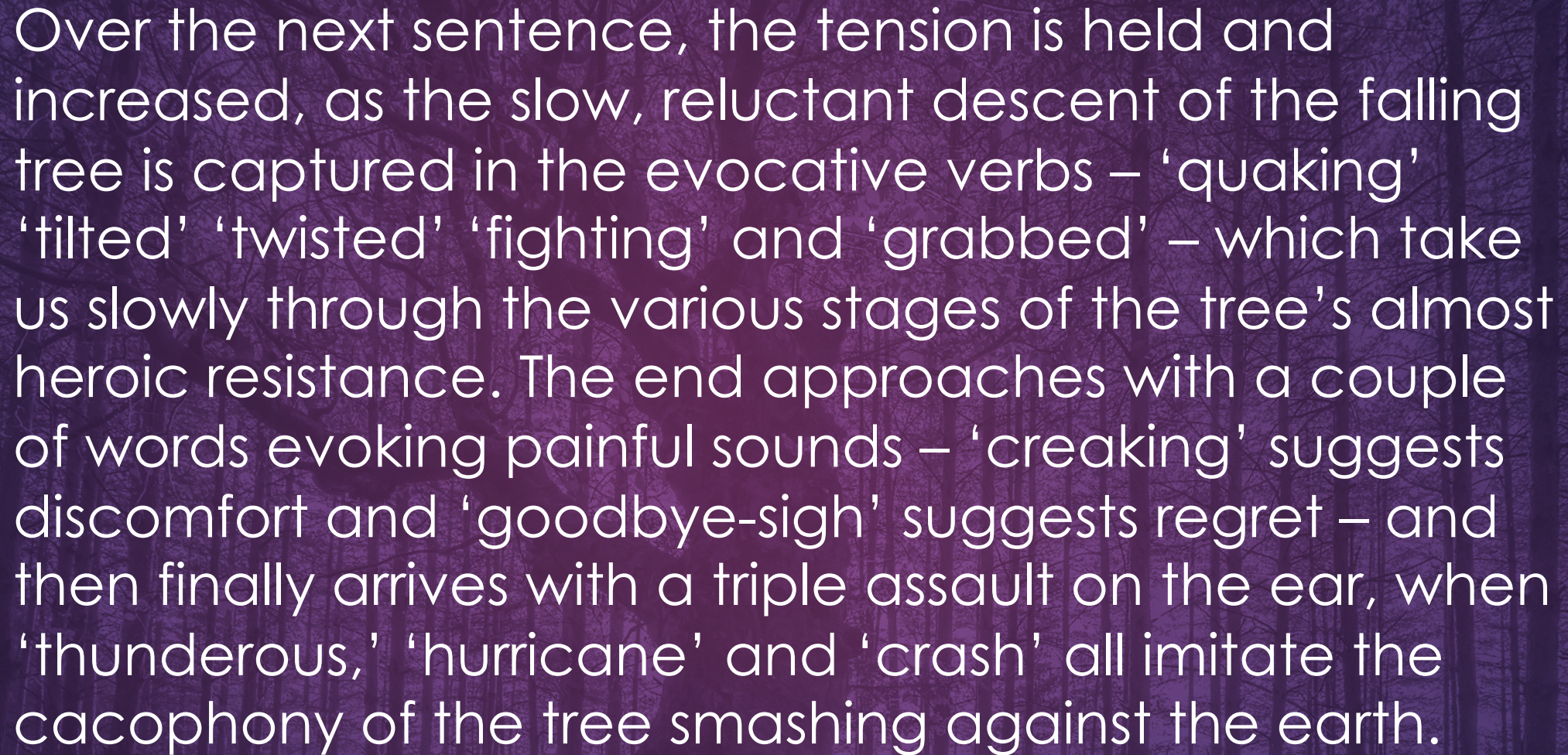
The background of the image is a close-up, top-down view of a tree trunk's cross-section, showing concentric growth rings in shades of brown and tan. The rings are more densely packed in some areas and more spread out in others, creating a textured, organic pattern. The lighting is somewhat dim, giving it a moody, natural feel.

“She’s going,” said his father. Branches quaking, the huge tree tilted, twisted and fighting to stay upright, grabbed at a neighbouring tree but, bowing to its fate, keeled over and with a creaking goodbye-sigh rushed to the earth with a thunderous hurricane crash. The boy felt the shock waves in his feet and saw the light flood into the space where the tree had stood. It was mad, he thought. Ridiculous. Lady Sarah was bound to find out. His father grinned.

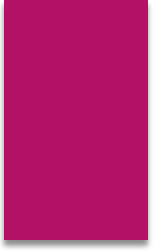
Do you consider the first paragraph to be an example of good descriptive writing? Explain your view.

Although it's very short, the opening paragraph here is also very powerful.

The writing effectively captures a scene in which there is action, movement, and human reaction, and it manages to move fluidly between the various aspects. Opening with a brief, dramatic piece of dialogue – 'She's going.' – immediately creates a sense of tension and expectation.



Over the next sentence, the tension is held and increased, as the slow, reluctant descent of the falling tree is captured in the evocative verbs – ‘quaking’ ‘tilted’ ‘twisted’ ‘fighting’ and ‘grabbed’ – which take us slowly through the various stages of the tree’s almost heroic resistance. The end approaches with a couple of words evoking painful sounds – ‘creaking’ suggests discomfort and ‘goodbye-sigh’ suggests regret – and then finally arrives with a triple assault on the ear, when ‘thunderous,’ ‘hurricane’ and ‘crash’ all imitate the cacophony of the tree smashing against the earth.



As the noise subsides, the imagery moves from reverberating in the ear to touching the other senses, as the boy feels the ‘shock waves’ along the ground where he stands and catches the ‘light’ pouring through the gap created by the felling of the tree. The verb ‘flood’ is particularly effective to describe the burst of light, because it suggests the onrushing of a tidal wave in the wake of the ‘shock waves’ of the earthquake.

Verbs, adjectives and images combine here to suggest that something truly momentous has occurred. This is reflected when we enter the boy’s mind in the next two sentences – ‘mad,’ in particular, suggesting something extreme, outlandish – but it is rather checked by the final short sentence, which captures the grin of the well-satisfied father and which somehow manages to put what has been presented throughout as the felling of a colossus – the tree is personified as a giant – into a somewhat different perspective.

In its variety and intensity, the descriptive writing brilliantly recreates a dramatic little scene.



D

Language Genres



E



Language of Information



The information should be given in as brief, clear and straightforward a way as possible.



Give facts and figures wherever possible and avoid vague descriptions.



Pieces written in the language of information should be as objective as possible. This means that the writer's tastes, feelings or opinions should not be revealed.



It is not necessary to use many adjectives or adverbs as these can make your writing subjective (influenced by personal tastes, opinions or feelings).

Language of Information continued

Personal pronouns: 'I', 'You', 'We' etc. are rarely used in informative writing.

Anecdotes (short, personal stories) should not be used as they too make the writing subjective.

Avoid qualifiers: 'Quite', 'Very', 'Fairly' etc. as they weaken your writing. Be specific.

Language of Argument



Presents a viewpoint by appealing to logic rather than emotion.



No emotionally charged language used; tone is calm and logical.



Evidence is presented, reader encouraged to make up his or her own mind.



Analogy is a useful tool here. 'Raising a child is like raising a plant. You must nurture, protect and care for both if they are to flourish.' Comparisons only go so far: they cannot prove anything.

Language of Argument continued



Rhetorical questions engage the reader and give the impression of a conversation taking place between the writer and the reader.



Facts and figures are given, but they are carefully chosen to support the point the writer is making. Using statistics can make the writer's case seem well-researched and therefore more believable.

Language of Argument continued

It is acceptable to anticipate and briefly respond to the reader's possible objections to the argument but be careful that you don't weaken your case by doing so. Acknowledging other viewpoints can make the writer appear rational and fair-minded and balanced.

Quotations can imply that the writer's opinion is shared by independent, learned individuals. A quote can be an effective way to begin or end a piece written in the language of argument.

Language of Argument continued

- ▶ Inclusive language, such as using the word 'We' is often used instead of 'I' draws the reader in and makes him or her feel on the same side as the writer.
- ▶ 'Pressure' words and phrases can make the reader feel that they, and everybody else, have always agreed with the point being made. The information now takes on the appearance of being a well-known, established fact. The reader feels that if he or she does not agree with the point, they are in the minority. Here are some examples: Clearly, plainly, undoubtedly, obviously, surely, as we all know..., everybody is fully aware that...

Language of Argument continued

Distancing phrases make the writing seem more formal and less personal: 'There are those who claim that...', 'It is often said that...'. They can also make the reader feel that the views being put forward are generally accepted.

Repetition can add emphasis and can make a piece memorable, particularly if a triadic pattern (also known as 'the rule of three') is used. This rule states that having three of something creates a memorable pattern.

Language of Argument continued

- ▶ Antithesis: contrast ideas by using parallel arrangements of words or phrases. John F. Kennedy's inaugural speech: 'Let us never negotiate out of fear but let us never fear to negotiate.' Memorable and very effective.
- ▶ Give all the points in favour of their argument and trust the reader will be intelligent enough to weigh the evidence and come to the right conclusion.
- ▶ Reference / Allusion: Reference to other sources, literary, biblical or historical, for example, to support the point. This can give the impression that the writer is learned and well-read and that the piece is well-researched and thought-out.

- ▶ Similar in many ways to the language of argument and uses some of the same techniques, such as rhetorical questions and pressure words or phrases.
- ▶ Difference: language of persuasion deliberately tries to influence the reader by appealing to his or her emotions, not reason.
- ▶ Manipulation can be a major part of the language of persuasion. Guilt, flattery etc. This is a common technique in advertising: 'L'Oreal, because you're worth it'.

Language of Persuasion

Language of Persuasion continued

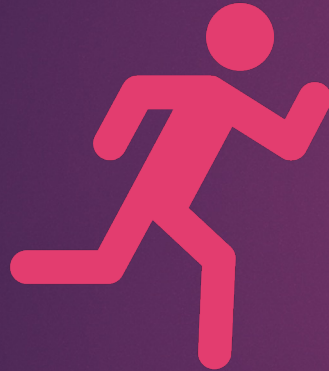
- ▶ Strong, emotive language can be used to win the reader over.
- ▶ Adjectives and adverbs are used freely, and they are often quite extreme.
- ▶ Writer's opinion is usually crystal clear from the opening sentence.



Language of Persuasion continued

- ▶ Facts and figures may be given but they may be vague or exaggerated, 'The vast majority of people', 'Almost every student in the country', etc. This can add to the manipulative effect of persuasive writing because the implication is that if you don't agree, you are going against popular opinion, and you don't fit in.
- ▶ Generalisations are used without the support of a source – watch out for 'All' or 'Every'.
- ▶ Personal opinion and anecdotes are often used. A short account of an amusing or humorous incident can add human interest to the writing and can help to illustrate the writer's point. They can prevent an informative piece from becoming too dull and dry an account of whatever the subject is.

Language of Persuasion continued



Imperatives and repetition can add a sense of urgency



Strong conclusion can be inspirational and evoke powerful emotions

Language of Narration



This is almost certainly the first type of language most people used in their compositions when they were younger.



In the language of narration, the writer simply tells a story.



The story can be fact or fiction. Autobiographies are written in a narrative style: they generally present us with the events of the subject's life in chronological order.



Particularly if the piece is written in the first person, there will be personal engagement with the topic, characters etc.

Language of Narration Continued



Stories can reveal a theme and have universal appeal.



The language of narration often contains an element of aesthetic language. Setting will usually be well-described in order to draw the reader in and allow him or her to visualise the scenes.



Hooks may be used in the introduction and intriguing details dropped in from time to time, raising questions the reader will want answered.



Dialogue is a common feature of narrative writing.

Language of Narration Continued



Characterisation plays an important role in most narrative writing.



There may be dramatic or exciting moments to hold the reader's attention.

Language of Narration Continued

- ▶ Personification can make the writing more interesting and can add drama. 'Flowers danced on the lawn.' 'The wind howled angrily around me and tugged at my clothes.'
- ▶ 'The operation is over. On the table, the knife lies spent, on its side, the bloody meal smear-dried upon its flanks. The knife rests.' Richard Selzer: *The Knife*

Language of Narration Continued

Syntax: Long sentences can engage the readers and make them more inclined to agree with the point the writer is making. Short sentences can have a dramatic effect, particularly if used after a few long sentences. Varied sentence length can stop the piece from becoming monotonous and can hold the reader's attention.

Aesthetic Language

Used to create images of beauty through carefully chosen words.

Appeals to the senses. If a reader can imagine the sights, sounds, smells etc., they will be engaged by the writing.

Usually associated with fiction but can be used in non-fiction also. Good examples of aesthetic language may be found in descriptions of travel or of nature.

Aesthetic Language Continued

Think of the literary terms you learnt for your poetry studies. Images, metaphors and similes and repetition can all be used to advantage here.

The language can also be musically pleasing, as in a poem. This is achieved using assonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia.

Aesthetic Language Continued

Just as in poetry, alliteration and assonance can be used in prose to create a sense of atmosphere. James Joyce's *The Dead*: 'His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.' The repeated 's' sounds add to the sense of peace and silence and the repetition of the alliterative words 'faintly' and 'falling' mimic the relentless snowfall.

D

Genres - appeal

EXAMPLES USED IN PAST QUESTIONS

E

When the language genres are not stated, you may be asked if the text is an effective example of...

- ▶ Good storytelling
- ▶ Personal writing
- ▶ Appealing/charming writing
- ▶ Atmospheric writing
- ▶ Engaging/inspiring writing

Autobiographies, Memoirs

Realism appeals to those who don't like fiction

Insider accounts; insights and information we would not get from any other source are fascinating

Allows the reader a glimpse of lifestyles they might not normally see: celebrities, athletes, royalty etc.

Hearing another side of a controversial story is intriguing

Nostalgia: many enjoy reading about days gone by and reliving their own childhood through the writing of others

Autobiographies, Memoirs

Variety of tones: humorous, informative, confessional, candid etc. means the genre appeals to a wide variety of readers

Authentic first-person voice and true stories engage the readers

First-hand accounts of historical events and the reflection on these is informative and thought-provoking

Interest in the lives of others is part of the human condition

Photographs, images, illustrations add to appeal of this genre

Detective Fiction - Features

High-stakes crime – usually murder

A rational and intelligent detective with excellent powers of observation and deduction

The detective may have a troubled past or be a quirky character. He or she should be credible and engaging.

A companion for the detective (usually less intelligent than the detective)

Reflection of contemporary society

The seemingly perfect crime

The wrongly accused suspect at whom circumstantial evidence points: there may be several of these

- ▶ The bungling of dim-witted police – more of a feature of earlier detective fiction. Nowadays, the detective is often a police officer or was one until recently.
- ▶ Clues to the solution which the reader can enjoy as a puzzle
- ▶ Convincing evidence which turns up early in the story usually turns out to be misleading.



Ending

Startling and unexpected denouement, in which the detective reveals how the identity of the culprit was ascertained. Again, this was a feature of earlier detective fiction. Now, the reader often shares the discovery with the detective: both learn at the same time. The reader must know all the information so he or she can deduce the solution too.



Detective fiction

Dramatic plots, ingenious twists, unexpected developments and cliff hangers help to ensure the wide and enduring appeal of this genre

Complex memorable characters, both villains and detectives, add to the fascination of the genre

The mystery that usually surrounds a crime presents a pleasing intellectual challenge

Some of the genre's enduring popularity is related to public fascination with real-life crime

Broad scope of the genre, from diverting mysteries to graphic and gruesome violent crime, ensures the genre's wide and enduring appeal

Conventions of the genre such as: the pursuit of poetic justice; realism; the restoration of law and order; the vindication of the innocent, etc. have universal appeal

Many of the writers in the genre are highly accomplished and produce high calibre work

Science fiction

Broad scope of the genre encompassing elements of fantasy, horror, humour, social commentary etc. ensures a wide and enduring appeal

Utopian, dystopian and futuristic aspects of the genre are perennially popular

Highly imaginative plots, unconventional characters and high-tech vision of the future feed and captivate our imaginations

Many of the writers in the genre are highly accomplished and produce high calibre work

Science fiction

Often called 'the literature of ideas', the genre's ability to offer imaginative insights into the potential consequences of scientific, social and technological developments adds to its appeal

A myriad of sci-fi films, TV series and interactive media help to widen the appeal of this genre

Appeals to our sense of wonder and allows us to speculate about the future

Personal Writing

Authentic personal voice: self-deprecating, reflective, confessional, honest, conversational etc.

Use of personal details and anecdotes adds authenticity and engages readers

Freshness of expression, lively, entertaining and humorous phrasing entertains

Writer is emotionally engaged with the material

Writer can present himself or herself as an interesting character in the story

Personal Writing continued



FIGURATIVE AND METAPHORICAL
LANGUAGE ADDS COLOURFUL ASPECT TO
THE WRITING



AUTHENTIC/REVEALING/EMOTIONAL
PERSONAL VOICE EVIDENT IS
ENGAGING

Advice

Honesty and
passion

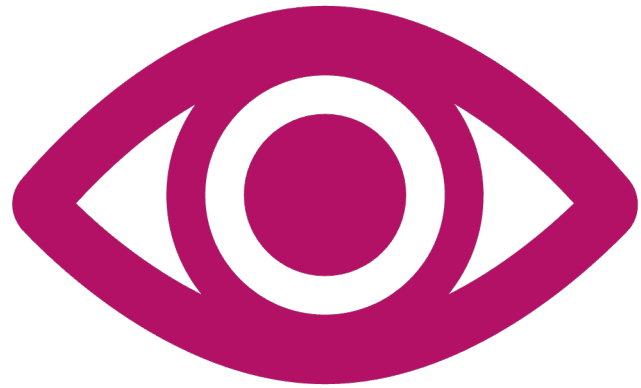
Clarity,
conciseness

Sensible, practical
advice balanced
with ideas, theories
and opinions

Lively expression
and vivid
imagery

Memorable
quotes, repetition
etc.

Imperatives create
a sense of urgency

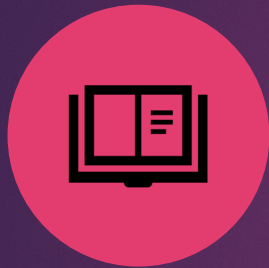


The Visual Text

APPROACHES

2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015*	2014	2013	2012	2011*
None	One visual image to compare with text	None	All of Text 3	50% of Text 1	50% of Text 1	Two book covers to compare with text	One book cover to compare with text	Two visual images to compare with text in Texts 1 and 3	Two visual images to compare with text in Text 2. Three visual images to compare with text in Text 3	Two visual images to compare with text in Text 1. Three visual images to compare with text in Text 2

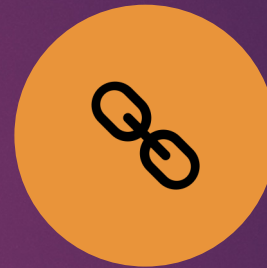
The Visual Text



LIKE THE WRITTEN
TEXT, IT HAS A
PURPOSE



EVERY PICTURE TELLS
A STORY...



THE VISUAL AND
WRITTEN TEXTS ARE
CLOSELY
CONNECTED, AND
YOU MUST
COMMENT ON THAT
LINK



IF THERE ARE TWO
OR MORE IMAGES,
DO THEY HANDLE
THE THEME
DIFFERENTLY AND
WHICH HAS A
STRONGER
CONNECTION TO
THE WRITTEN TEXT?

Focus on

Composition: What is the focus of the image? Take careful note of everything that is included: it is all there for a reason. Look at the surroundings, background, centre, people, objects etc.

Lighting: Do light and shadows play a role? What, if anything, is highlighted? Why?

Framing: If it is a photograph, think of film studies in Junior Cycle or Comparative Study. How would you analyse camera work in a film?

Continued

Colours and tones: Think of analysing posters and advertisements in Junior Cycle. Do colours link characters, ideas etc.?

Body language and facial expressions

Symbols: are there objects in the image that have a symbolic value? How are these related to the written text?

Font: If there are words on the text, are they relevant? Examine the font used. Is it elegant, minimal or flowery and ornate?

Important

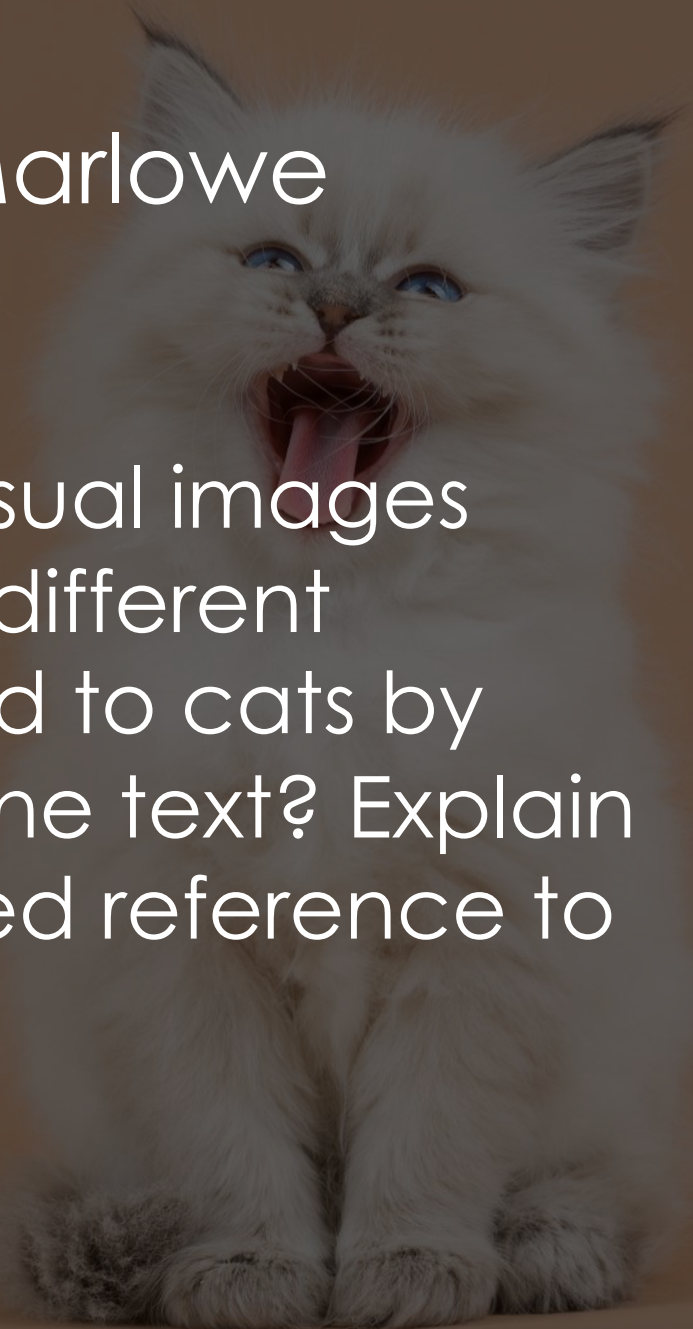
Every comment on the visual text must be **linked** to the written text

As you would in an unseen poem, think of the **theme** and **tone** of the piece. The visual images should reflect this.

Get into the habit of thinking of images **you** would choose to illustrate/support texts and justifying your choice

2011 – Text 1 – Lara Marlowe

‘Do you think the two visual images effectively capture the different characteristics attributed to cats by Marlowe and others in the text? Explain your answer with detailed reference to both visual images.’



Marks

Twenty
marks



Two images



Two
paragraphs
per image



The Visual Images

Note



'DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS
OF CATS'



'MARLOWE AND OTHERS'



'DETAILED REFERENCE TO
BOTH VISUAL IMAGES'

Over to you...

Positive

In column one, list all the positive aspects of cats

Go through the text paragraph by paragraph

Write down the quotes/references

In an exam, you may wish to underline the points and write (P) or (N) beside each one, as appropriate

Negative

In column two, list all the negative aspects of cats

Neutral/Enigmatic

In column three, list all the aspects of cats that are neutral or could be interpreted in different ways

Note

This article is written in defence of cats, so you would expect to find mostly positive comments, quotes and observations



Cat characteristics

Positive

- ▶ **Comfort** of cat in 'teapot mode' or 'curled up at the foot of the bed'
- ▶ Egyptians **worshipped** cats
- ▶ **Mirrors/shares owner's emotions/attitudes**: 'loves 'feather duvet and fireside in winter' but is also 'chronically restless'
- ▶ **Empathic**: 'They understand us better than we understand them'
- ▶ **Good judges of character**: 'I had second thoughts about a visitor whom Spike hissed at'
- ▶ **Intelligent**: 'Of course they are thinking!'

Negative

- ▶ **Menacing**: Edith Wharton: 'snakes in fur'; 'Medieval man 'burned them as witches'
- ▶ **Predatory**: Spike 'prepares to leap' as he watches sparrows and doves from the balustrades

Neutral

'A **mystery** that eludes us'

Inherent wildness: Victor Hugo: ' God invented the cat to give man the pleasure of petting a tiger'

Dominant: Spike walks on the keyboard and obscures the writer's screen, just as Pangur Ban did; considers the furniture in the apartment 'his'

Remember...

Composition

Framing

Colours and tones

Lighting

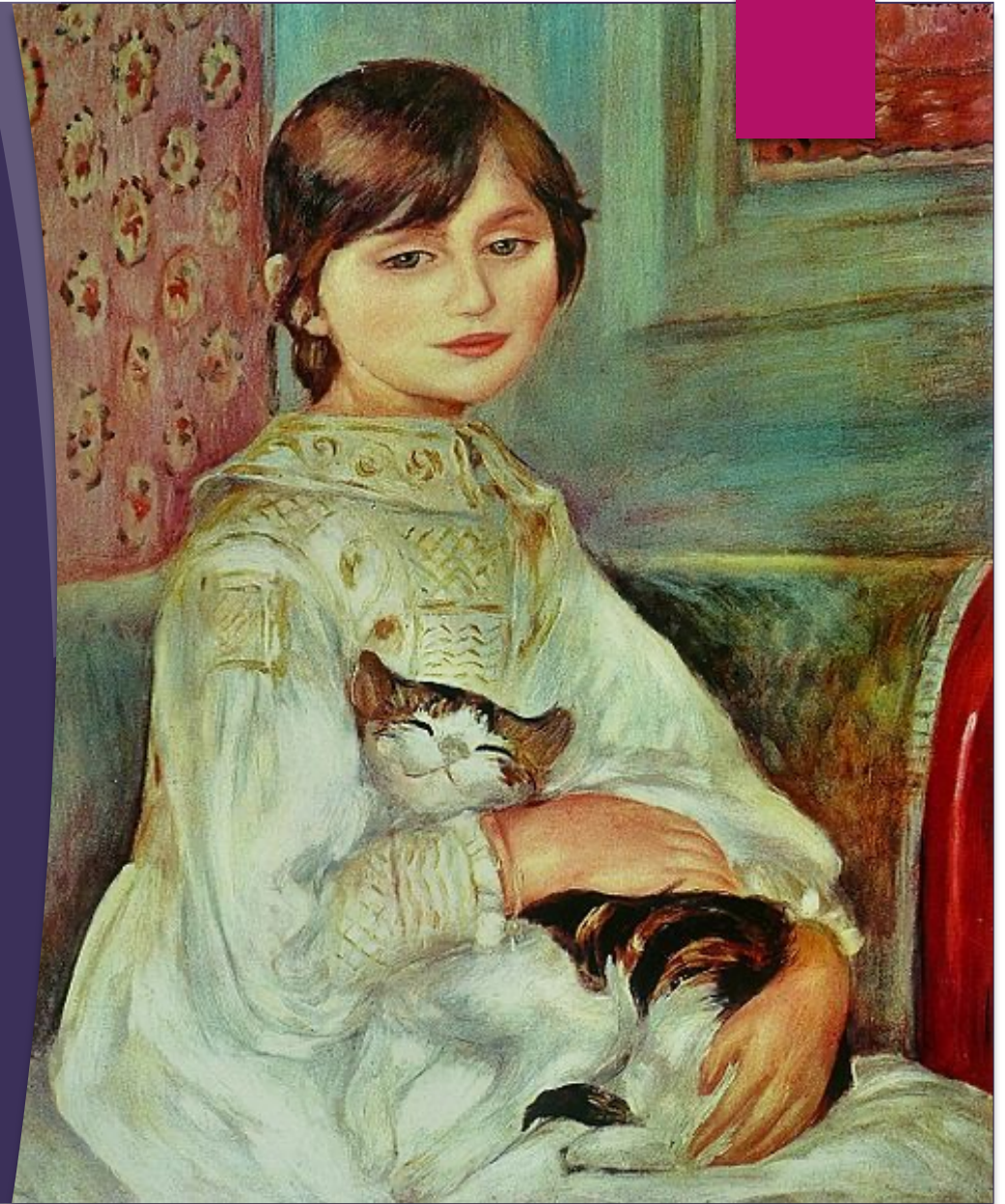
Body language and facial expressions

Symbols

You may not find all of these in every text, but several of them will be important in any given text

Positive – Cats bring comfort/peace

- ▶ Cat and girl as one; front and centre – united
- ▶ Cat blissful; head thrown back; eyes closed; 'smile' of content
- ▶ Girl's eyes are heavy/dreamy/unfocused: simply being with a cat is relaxing
- ▶ Comfort of cat in 'teapot mode' or 'curled up at the foot of the bed'



Connection between cats and owners

- ▶ Spike is in tune with owner's emotions: 'When I'm cheerful, his eyes light up'
- ▶ Owner also notes Spike's emotions: has 'second thoughts' about a visitor Spike dislikes
- ▶ This closeness is reflected in the image
- ▶ Girl cradles the cat as she would a baby
- ▶ Cat basks in loving attention and surrenders to embrace



Connection between cats and owners

- ▶ Colours add to sense of unity
- ▶ White areas of cat's fur blend into white fabric of girl's dress
- ▶ Gold detailing of girl's dress is echoed in the gold highlights in cat's fur
- ▶ Girl's dark hair matches darker part of cat's coat



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)



Air of menace

- ▶ Predatory
- ▶ Ears are pricked and eyes are fixed on something in front of him
- ▶ Narrow, yellow, slanting eyes with slit for pupil: 'snakes in fur'
- ▶ Spike stalks sparrows and doves
- ▶ None of the relaxed serenity of Renoir's portrayal
- ▶ Easy to see why Victor Hugo likened petting a cat to petting a tiger!

A dark tabby cat is sitting on a wooden ledge. Its front left leg is draped over the edge of the ledge. The cat has a serious expression and is looking towards the camera. The background is a patterned fabric with a floral or leaf-like design in shades of green and yellow.

At home wherever he is - dominant

- ▶ Cat's leg dangles over the edge of the balustrade
- ▶ Poised and confident
- ▶ Marlowe says Spike walks across her computer, is pleased to see the furniture arrive at the apartment, he judges guests etc.
- ▶ Cat in picture dominates the frame as Spike dominates the household



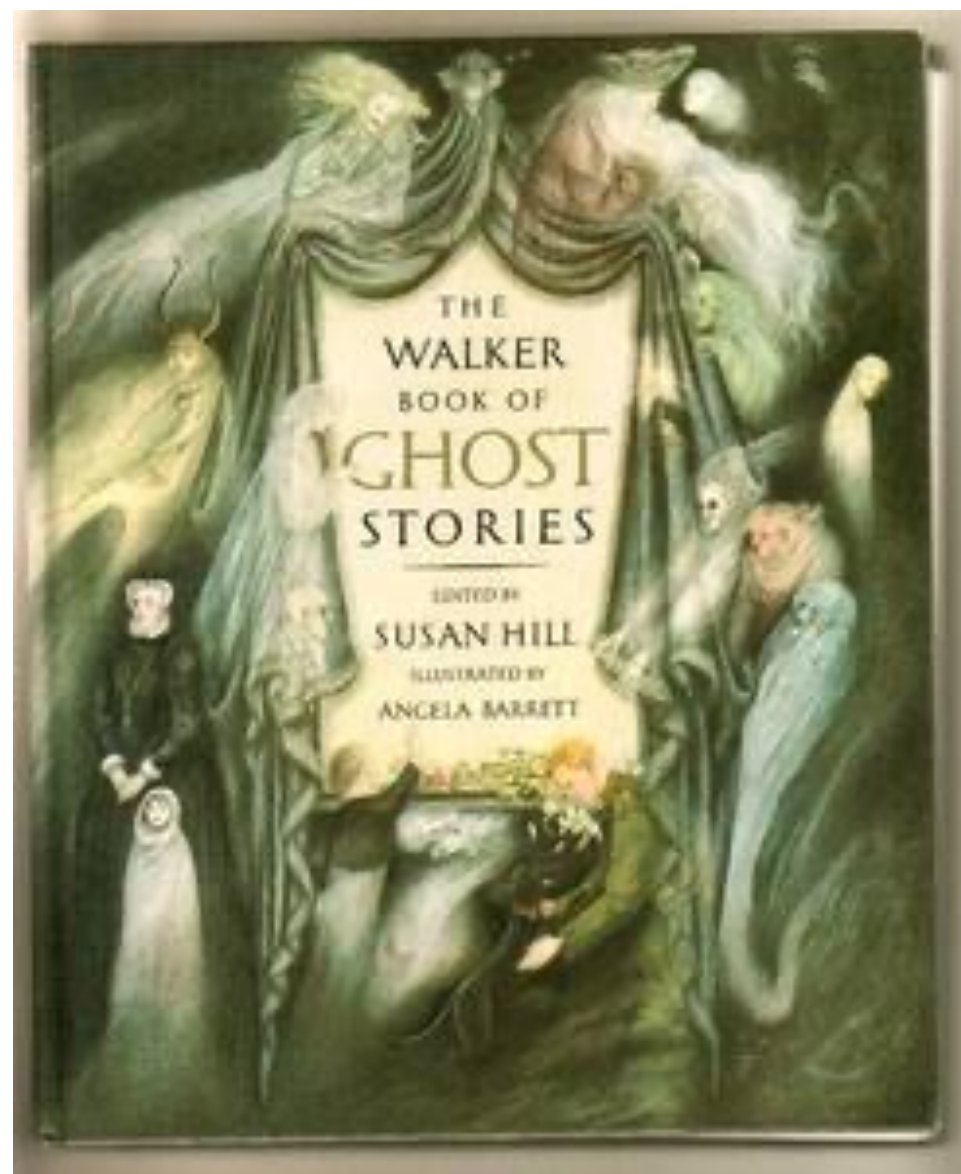
Cats' characteristics: Brief conclusion

DIFFICULT TO CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF 'A
MYSTERY THAT ELUDES US' IN ONLY TWO
IMAGES

2015 - Text 2 -Ghosts Don't Show Up On CCTV

In your opinion, how effectively do the book covers illustrate what Joanna Briscoe has to say about ghost writing in the written text above? Support your answer by detailed reference to both of the book covers and the written text.





Points to note

You must discuss both book covers.

Every point you make must contain a link between the visual and the written text.

You are free to discuss the font, quotations etc. as well as the visual images.

The words 'how effectively' mean you must say to what extent you think the covers do / do not illustrate the points Briscoe makes.

Prepare a short list of the points Briscoe makes about ghost literature but you do not have to discuss all of them, of course.

How to quickly summarise points made in the text



It is a good idea to do this as you read the piece the first time. It keeps you focused and is a quick reference point when answering questions.



The first and/or last sentences of paragraphs generally contain the topic sentence



You will quickly see that Briscoe's writing is clearly structured, so it is easy to pick out the main point in each paragraph. Look for a couple of key words you can jot down to act as a trigger to your memory

Briscoe's points

Ghosts should not be visible, at least not in any straightforward way

Dahl: best ghost stories don't have ghosts in them / Hill: less is always more

Brightness = unease: perfection can be eerie; power lies in terrors glimpsed or imagined

Writer can only keep reader in state of tension for so long



Ghost writing involves blurring between reality and madness; real chaos lies where no-one is looking



Tie up narrative strands at the end to satisfy readers but leave them uneasy



Writers can play with conventions of traditional ghost stories

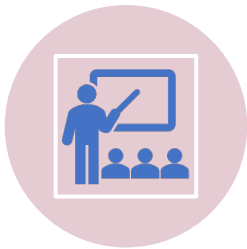


WE ARE USED TO EXTREME HORROR YET
DESIRE LESS DEFINABLE HAUNTINGS:
GOTHIC, VAMPIRES, GHOSTS



ATMOSPHERE IS KEY: A PLACE WHERE
ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN

Analysing the Visual Text



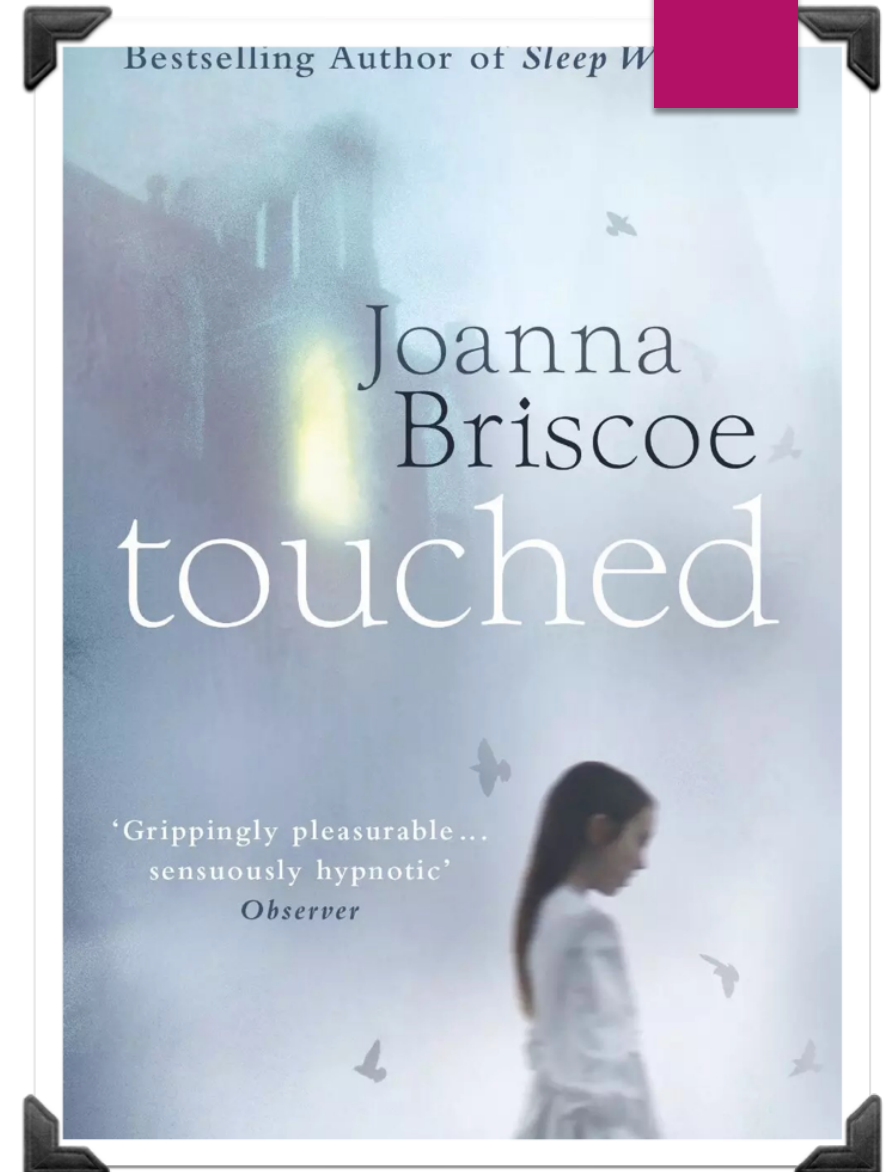
Refer back to slides on analysing visual texts before you begin



Look at each cover in turn under the following headings: composition, lighting, colour, posture, body language, clothing/props, font

Cover 1

- ▶ Blues/whites/bright - unusual choices but link to what Briscoe says about the less obvious and using brightness to evoke unease
- ▶ Figure of girl is old fashioned; head bowed in sorrow? Blend of innocence and sadness; seems ethereal - links to Briscoe's 'blurring between reality and madness'



Text



Font is simple and elegant rather than gothic and creepy - links to Briscoe's preference for 'less obvious' and claim that 'perfection can be eerie'



Comment from reviewer: 'gripping, pleasurable, sensuously hypnotic' - links to Briscoe's emphasis on atmosphere

Cover 2

- ▶ Different view
- ▶ Harks back to earlier examples of genre: colours are predictably gothic and spooky
- ▶ Figures are stereotypical: don't fit in with claim that 'best ghost stories don't have ghosts in them'
- ▶ No hint of 'terrors glimpsed in the cracks'

