

Analysing writers' effects

Part 1: Structure, principles & literary techniques

The requirements

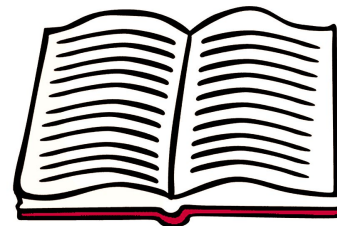
Prerequisites to do well

- **Sincere interest:** be genuine intrigued by the text, and curious to 'decode' it
- **Desire to convince:** be enthusiastic about conveying your perspective to the reader
- **Make associations:** look at the entire text and establish links between words, concepts, themes, symbols
- **Originality:** your analysis can provide exciting insight into aspects of the text that may have been ignored
- **Close reading of the text:** attention to the words and the relation between words (context)

Things to avoid: 3 common pitfalls

- **Formulaic phrases:** E.g. 'The writer shows...' 'This technique is used by the writer to convey...' - such phraseology takes up space, tires the reader and keeps your style at a mechanistic level.
- **Generalisations:** give an accurate reflection of the meaning of the text; accurately express what you are thinking; give specific evidence; mention the specific part of the text you are focusing on.
- **Repeating yourself:** this can tire the reader in addition to showing that you are using a limited range of vocabulary and ideas.

Reading: AOs



SECTION A: READING – Assessment Objectives

AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.• Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.
AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.
AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.
AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.

Writing: AOs



SECTION B: WRITING – Assessment Objectives

AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences.• Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.
AO6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole).

Part 1: Decoding an unseen text

Semantic fields

- The first thing you have to look for when you get an unseen text, is **semantic fields** (groups of words that can be categorised under a **common idea**).
- There are several benefits to doing this:
 - You get a **sense of control**: you get the impression that you are already understanding and 'controlling' what's going in the text
 - You identify **themes** faster, and so
 - You may write the analysis (especially the **topic sentences**) faster
- Looking at **adjectives, adverbs, verbs, and nouns**, is a good approach to identify words that may belong to semantic fields.
- Usually, the semantic field is a **feeling** or a **condition** in literary texts.

Let's practise

Read the passage on the next slide and follow the steps below:

1. **Read the question** carefully and highlight the keyword.
2. **Highlight** words that can be grouped under a semantic field within each paragraph (or within the text as a whole).
3. **Note down** the word that captures the idea of each semantic field.
4. **Underline** all the literary techniques you can find.

Look in detail at this extract from **lines 8 to 18** of the Source:

The wind came in gusts, at times shaking the coach as it travelled round the bend of the road, and in the exposed places on the high ground it blew with such force that the whole body of the coach trembled and swayed, rocking between the high wheels like a drunken man.

The driver, muffled in a greatcoat to his ears, bent almost double in his seat in a faint attempt to gain shelter from his own shoulders, while the dispirited horses plodded sullenly to his command, too broken by the wind and the rain to feel the whip that now and again cracked above their heads, while it swung between the numb fingers of the driver.

The wheels of the coach creaked and groaned as they sank into the ruts on the road, and sometimes they flung up the soft spattered mud against the windows, where it mingled with the constant driving rain, and whatever view there might have been of the countryside was hopelessly obscured.

How does the writer use language here to describe the effects of the weather?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

[8 marks]

What to highlight in a text for analysis

- You can start by looking for any of the following - presented in order of priority:
 - **Semantic fields** (of fear, of nature, of love, of religion, etc.)
 - **Literary techniques** (similes, metaphors, etc.)
 - **5 senses** (sight, touch, taste, etc.)
 - **Interesting/unusual words**
- And finally consider:
 - **Structure** (of sentences and paragraphs)
 - **Rhythm & pace**
 - **Interesting uses of punctuation**

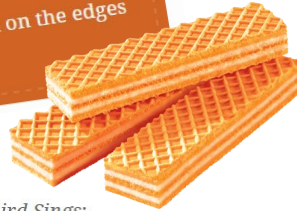
Tips

→ Look for imagery

- If you are struggling to find techniques, look for imagery.
- Imagery is language that relates to the **senses** (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch) and aims to create a **sensory response** in the reader.
- Imagery is the **basis of descriptive language**, and therefore, of any literary text

From Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*:

"They were flat round wafers, slightly browned on the edges and butter-yellow in the center"



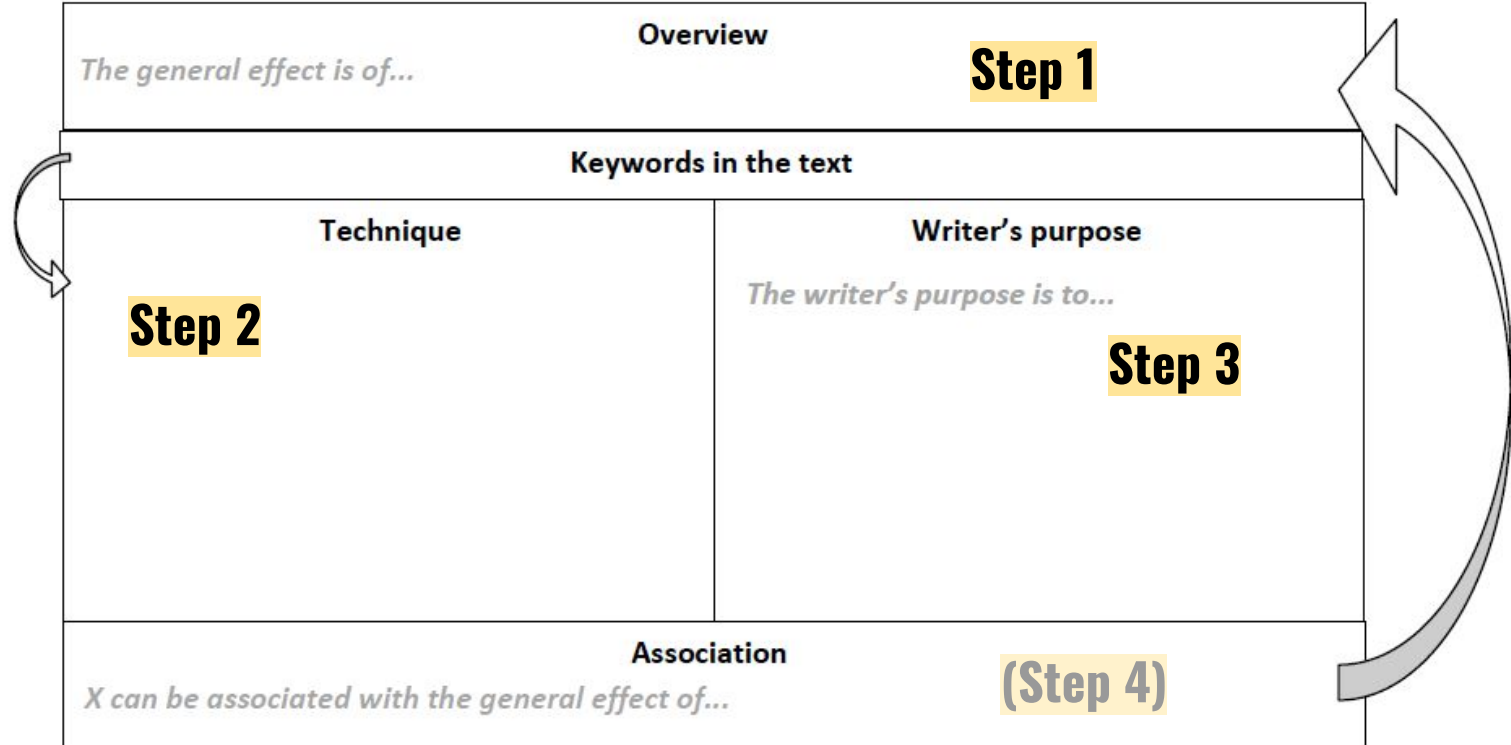
From Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*:

"The sweet vanilla flavor was still on my tongue and [Mrs. Flowers'] reading was a wonder in my ears. I had to speak."



Part 2: Paragraph structure for analysis

A more detailed approach to the classic structure



Step 1: Present the Point (Overview / Topic sentence)

- Start each paragraph with a **topic sentence**.
 - Use the **semantic fields** / **a single word** (e.g. 'disgust,' 'threat' below) that captures the main idea of the paragraph
- E.g.:
 - *The general effect is of **disgust** – accumulated dirt indicating years of neglect*
 - *The general effect is one of **threat**, as if there is something powerful and alien watching the area.*

Step 2: Mention the Technique

- Ideally, add the technique **as close as possible to the quote** in which it is found. The technique can precede the quote or go after it, but ideally it will be in the same sentence as the quote.
- Refer to **slides 28-36** for a list and explanations of the most common literary techniques).

Step 3: Explain the Writer's Purpose

- The writer's purpose is the same as the **effect on the reader**.
- You try to answer the following questions when trying to explain this part:
 - Why did the writer use this **specific word / technique**, and not a different one?
 - What **feeling / impression** is created through the word / technique used?
 - How do **you** feel when reading the phrase silently?

Step 4: Establish the Link (optional)

- This is an optional step but it can show that you are not losing focus of the topic of your paragraph.
- It's a nice touch at the end to create a sense of completion.

Sample response

"They were flat round wafers, slightly browned on the edges and butter-yellow in the center"

The general effect is that of delight, as the character marvels at the delicacies generously offered by her guest. In the text, the great pleasure the character experiences is shown through the use of imagery. The latter presents the wafers through a vivid picture that appeals to the reader's sense of sight. The writer uses imagery to indicate that the wafers are lightly burnt because the edges are "slightly browned" but the centre is almost unbaked as shown by its "butter-yellow" colour. The colours are warm and friendly, and can be associated with the character's delight at the sight of food.

Sample response (explained)

Overview	<i>The general effect is of that of delight, as the character marvels at the delicacies generously offered by her guest. In the text, the great pleasure the</i>
Technique	<i>character experiences is shown through the use of imagery. <u>Sensory imagery presents the wafers through a vivid picture</u> that appeals to the reader's sense of sight. The writer uses imagery to indicate that they are lightly burnt because</i>
Writer's purpose	<i>the edges are "slightly browned" but the centre is almost unbaked as shown by it's "butter-yellow" colour. The colours are warm and friendly, and can be associated with the character's delight at the sight of food.</i>
Association	

Marking Criteria for Question 2

READING

Use the following table to give a mark out of 10.

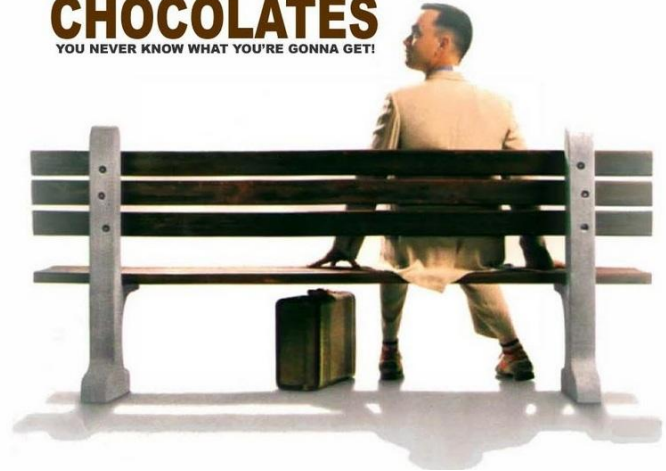
Band 1: 9–10	Wide ranging discussion of language with some high quality comments that add meaning and associations to words in both parts of the question, and demonstrate the writer's reasons for using them. May give an overview of the paragraph's combined effect, or comment on language features additional to vocabulary. Tackle imagery with some precision and imagination. There is clear evidence that the candidate understands how language works.
Band 2: 7–8	Reference is made to a number of words and phrases, and explanations are given and effects identified in both parts of the question. Images are recognised as such and the response goes some way to explaining them. There is some evidence that the candidate understands how language works.
Band 3: 5–6	A satisfactory attempt is made to identify appropriate words and phrases. The response mostly gives meanings of words and any attempt to suggest and explain effects is basic or very general. One half of the question may be better answered than the other.
Band 4: 3–4	The response provides a mixture of appropriate choices and words that communicate less well. The response may correctly identify linguistic devices but not explain why they are used. Explanations may be few, general, slight or only partially effective. They may repeat the language of the original or do not refer to specific words.

Revision of literary techniques

Simile

- A descriptive technique that compares one thing with another, usually using 'as' or 'like'.

**LIFE IS LIKE A BOX OF
CHOCOLATES**
YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GONNA GET!



Metaphor

- A descriptive technique that names a person, thing or action as something else . (Something **is** something else).
- Ex.: The **circus** was a **magnet** for the children.



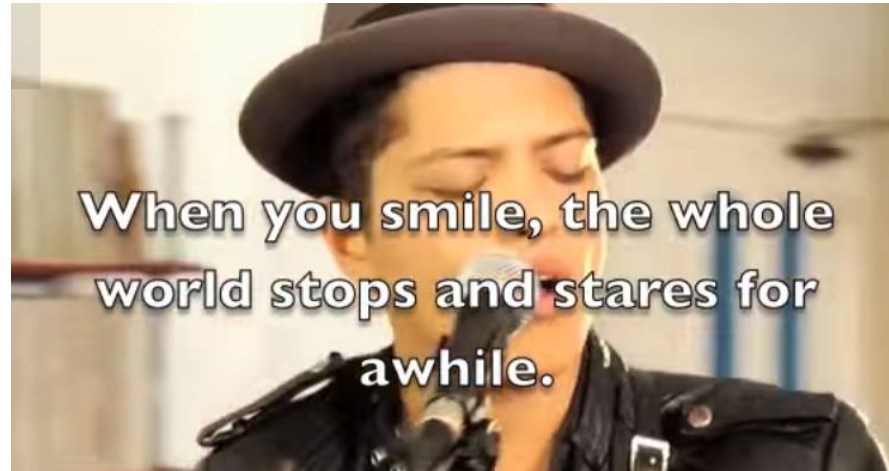
Metaphor: My heart's a stereo/Make me your radio

Hyperbole

- A use of obvious exaggeration for rhetorical effect.

“Well now, one winter it was so cold that all the geese flew backward and all the fish moved south and even the snow turned blue. Late at night, it got so frigid that all spoken words froze solid afore they could be heard. People had to wait until sunup to find out what folks were talking about the night before.”

- *Babe, the Blue Ox* American folklore

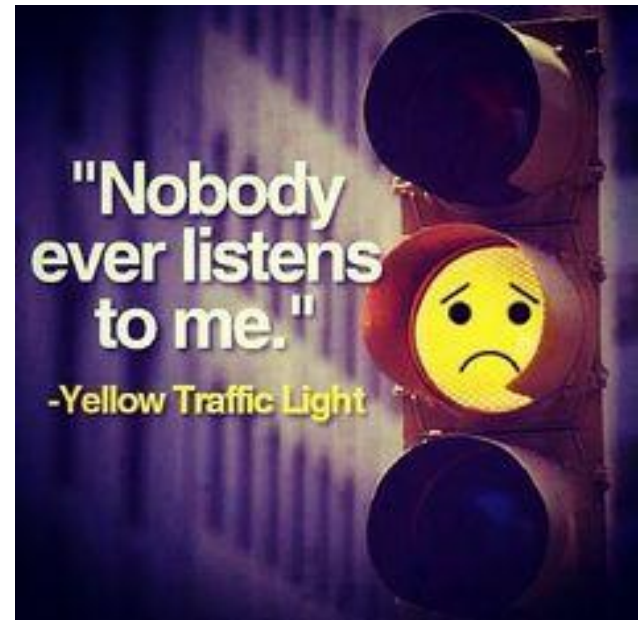


Personification

- When inanimate objects or abstractions are endowed with human qualities.

“Pearl Button swung on the little gate in front of the House of Boxes. It was the early afternoon of a sunshiny day with little winds playing hide-and-seek in it.”

- *How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped* by Katherine Mansfield



Pathetic fallacy

- The author ascribes the human feelings of his or her characters to non-human objects/nature/phenomena.

Macbeth – William Shakespeare

Act 2, Scene 3

*The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatched to the woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamored the livelong night. Some say the Earth
Was feverous and did shake.*



Onomatopoeia

- Words that sound a little like what they describe.

water plops into pond
splish-splash downhill
warbling magpies in tree
trilling, melodic thrill

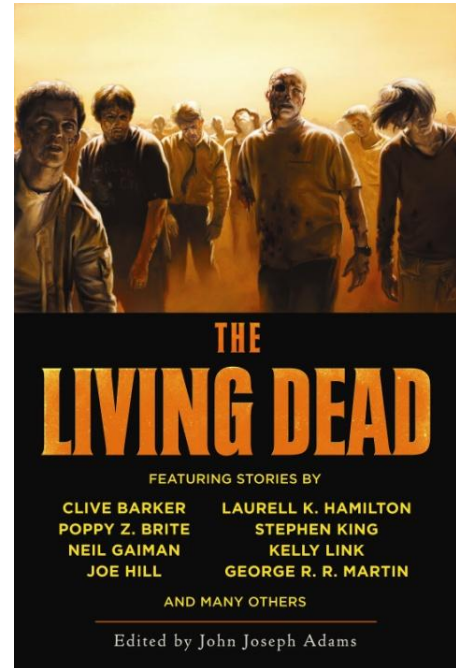
whoosh, passing breeze
flags flutter and flap
frog croaks, bird whistles
babbling bubbles from tap

- Lee Emmett



Oxymoron

- A phrase combining two or more contradictory terms (usually 2 words that cancel each other out).
 - Cruel kindness
 - Living death
 - Sweet sorrow



Reminder: imagery is your friend!

If you cannot find any of these, there is always sensory language or interesting and unusual vocabulary to comment on!

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"They were flat round wafers, slightly browned on the edges and butter-yellow in the center"

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