

## [Study Unit 1 Revision](#)->Close Reading and Critical Analysis - DOs and DON'Ts [NB]

As per Study Unit 1, your approach to analysing a set text is essentially two-pronged—it consists of conducting a close reading and performing a critical analysis of the text. These are not two mutually exclusive, separable concepts; they constitute your process of analysis as a whole. As the cruxes of a proper academic analysis, it is worthwhile for us to revise and elaborate on what we mean by 'close reading' and 'critical analysis'. Within this discussion, I will provide brief summaries of how to conduct a close reading and perform a critical analysis, and what not to do.

### Close Reading

#### Conducting a Line-by-Line or Stanza-by-Stanza Analysis

Aside from obviously thoroughly and carefully reading through the set text, a close reading may also require you to do a brief line-by-line or stanza-by-stanza analysis of the text in the **planning stages of your analysis**. Note that I refer here to considering the text line-by-line or stanza-by-stanza only in planning your analysis; your final essay should not be structured in a line-by-line or stanza-by-stanza analysis format.

Given the time limit in the examination, you should definitely not attempt to write a full rough draft, or conduct an extensive line-by-line analysis before starting on your final essay, but a brief line-by-line or stanza-by-stanza consideration of the text will go a long way in ensuring that you conduct a proper, thorough close reading of the text and in helping you identify the devices present in the text. You need not even rewrite the lines of the text in performing such a close reading of it, you can simply jot down your thoughts alongside the text on the examination paper.

#### Focus on Identifying the 'What' and 'Why' of the Text

Regardless of the specificities of the set question (with the exception of a Conversational Analysis question, to which this point would not pertain), you need to approach a close reading of a set text with the goal of determining what the text is about and why it has been written. Keeping this goal in mind at the outset is key to performing an academic reading of the text, and is vital for focussing your analysis, as opposed to merely identifying the devices present in the text with no real point or argument.

### Critical Analysis – What It IS and What It IS NOT

What do we mean by 'critical analysis'? You need to consider what the writer, speaker or narrator sets out to achieve or relay (the 'why' of the text—see why it is important to keep this in mind whilst performing a close reading of the text?) and dissect exactly how he/she goes about achieving it (the 'how' of the text—which would include identifying and critically analysing the devices utilised in the text). I have posted guidelines and model essays pertaining to the 'what', 'why' and 'how' elements of analysis as it concerns different genres of text in these forums and under 'Additional Resources' on this site, please peruse these if you have not done so already. To summarise, the following is what does and does not constitute a critical analysis of a set text.

#### A Critical Analysis **DOES NOT**:

- **Criticise the Text/Make Value Judgments:** The term 'critical analysis' does not mean you should be overly critical of a text and attempt to attack, disprove or argue against it. You

need to conduct a thorough academic analysis of the text—that is all. Please do also not make value judgments about a text; terms such as ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘interesting’, ‘very’, ‘exceptional’ et cetera have no place in an academic analysis.

- **Relay the Text without Analysing It:** That does not however mean that you should merely relay the text without analysing it. A number of students unfortunately mistakenly think that conducting an analysis of a text means merely relaying to the reader of their essay what transpires in the text, by elaborating on the text and explaining what the devices in the text mean, but this is not what is required for a critical analysis of a set text. A critical analysis requires you to identify the devices present in the text first and foremost, and then critically consider the effect of the devices you have identified—specifically with reference to what you have identified as the ‘why’ of the text. Again, please refer back to the relevant genre discussion topics and the model essays for further guidance in this regard.
- **Reiterate How Effective/Convincing the Text is [Without Analysing How Exactly the Text Creates that Effect]:** In marking the Question 1 responses for Assignment 1 we have found that a number of students repeatedly stated how persuasively effective and convincing the set text was, without detailing how or why exactly the text is effective or convincing. You need to closely refer to (i.e. quote from—but embedding the quotes within your sentences/paragraphs as I do in the model essays, not in line-by-line analysis format) to the text as you progress with your analysis, supporting each and every assertion that you make about the text in general.

#### **A Critical Analysis SHOULD:**

- **State the Purpose/Theme of the Text at the Outset:** As aforementioned, the ‘why’ of a text (‘purpose’ insofar as persuasive prose is concerned and ‘theme’ insofar as prose/fiction, poetry and drama are concerned) is of key importance, as the ‘how’ element of analysis—the bulk of your analysis—should continually relate back to the purpose/theme (i.e. how does [this] device or feature further the purpose/theme of the text?). It thus makes sense that you should identify the purpose/theme of the text in conducting your close reading of the text, and state it at the outset of your essay, so that you may continually refer back to it as you progress with your analysis.
- **Dissect the Devices Utilised in the Text:** As I have variously reiterated throughout this semester, it is not sufficient to *only* identify the devices present in a set text—identification of the devices present if only half of the analysis done. You need to dissect the devices utilised—considering the effect that each creates in and for itself and within the text as a whole (i.e. pertaining to the purpose/theme of the text). Once more, please refer back to the extensive guidelines I have provided, and will be providing in the respective study unit revision forums, for more specific guidance on analysing the devices present in a text.

#### [Study Unit 1 Revision](#)->Essay Writing Revision [NB]

In an effort to aid you in writing proper academic essays in the upcoming examination, herewith revision of—and elaboration on—the advice on essay writing that I have posted throughout this semester.

If you have not yet done so, please read through the ‘Essay Writing Guidelines’ topic that I posted in the ‘General Assignment Information’ forum before perusing this topic. If you only read through

this topic your understanding of what is required and what pitfalls to avoid when writing an academic essay would be incomplete.

I would again like to reiterate the importance of writing properly structured academic essays. If you end up struggling somewhat with the content of your analysis in the examination, and your mark is hanging in the balance, a properly or poorly structured essay can be the difference between a pass or a fail. Similarly, even if the content of your analysis is somewhat brilliant, you cannot be awarded a distinction if you have not structured your analysis as a proper academic essay. ENG2602 is after all an English module, and English as a subject requires the writing of full, proper academic essays, not merely the writing of answers in a disjointed format.

### Writing a Proper Introduction: Revision and Elaboration

- **Opening with a 'Hook', Quotation or General Definition:** As you are writing purely academic analyses, it is not necessary to include a so-called 'hook' in your introduction. Likewise, I would strongly caution against opening your essay with a quotation; if you do, it should be highly relevant to the set question, and even then I would not personally deem it to be quite appropriate. Lastly, it is also not appropriate or necessary to open your essay with a definition of the genre of text you are to analyse—for example, when analysing a persuasive text, it is not appropriate or necessary to open with your Study Guide's general definition of what constitutes a persuasive text or what the general purpose of persuasive prose may be. The general definitions included in your study material is to inform your understanding of the genres and concepts you have learnt about in your study of this module, they are not for inclusion in your analyses. In essence, you are writing an academic analysis, not a study guide or study material. The only exception to this would be if (specifically in the case of a Conversational Analysis question) you are tasked with defining certain concepts in your analysis, but then this would of course occur in the body of your analysis, not in your introduction. How then should you open your introduction?
- **Introducing the Set Text:** Ideally, the opening of your introduction should introduce the set text that you will be analysing in your essay. This includes introducing and stating the title of the text—for example 'a/the given extract from George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as per the set examination question'—and briefly summarising the 'what' of the text (i.e. outlining what the text is about).
- **Highlighting the Purpose of the Essay:** After introducing the set text, you need to highlight the purpose of the essay. You can paraphrase the wording of the set question or you can utilise your own wording; of key importance is that you indicate to the reader of your essay how you will be approaching/analysing the set text (i.e. the steps you will take/questions you will answer in your analysis).
- **Thesis Statement versus Personal Opinion:** This is a more technical point; if you are not familiar with the concept of a 'thesis statement', you need not concern yourself with this point. In the past, there has been some confusion amongst students as to what constitutes a so-called thesis statement versus a personal opinion or response to the text (the latter of which I have reiterated should not be included at any point in an academic analysis). A thesis statement may be quite appropriate to an academic analysis, but remember that a thesis statement is a critical academic stance on the set question; it is not a personal opinion. At this level, it is not compulsory for you to include a thesis statement in your introduction (you can instead explore the set text in the body of your essay and conclude with a critical assessment of the text), but if you do opt to include a thesis statement in your

introduction, your statement should be academic in nature—not subjective. To reiterate, a critical academic stance is appropriate to an academic analysis, a personal response or opinion is not.

### The Body of Your Essay: Brief Revision and Elaboration

- **Subheadings and/or Questions Restated:** Insofar as the body of your essay is concerned, it is of the utmost importance that you write a continuous analysis—WITH sectioning in the form of paragraphs but WITHOUT subheadings or set questions restated. Even if certain questions are posed that you must answer, or aspects are indicated that you must discuss, you need to answer these questions or discuss these aspects WITHIN your paragraphs; you should NOT utilise these questions or aspects as subheadings to different sections of your essay. To reiterate: You need to write a continuous analysis, which flows from one paragraph to the text. For practical guidance on how to do this, please see the model essays that I posted under ‘Additional Resources’ on this site.
- **Structuring Your Essay as a Line-by-Line Analysis:** You should not structure your essay as a line-by-line analysis. It is not appropriate to simply quote extensive snippets of text and then set about analysing the quoted text. Whilst a line-by-line consideration of the text is recommended in planning your analysis, you should not structure your actual essay in this way—i.e. you should not quote a line of text, analyse it, quote a line of text, analyse it et cetera. You need to structure your analysis in cohesive sentences and paragraphs, with quoted text incorporated seamlessly within these sentences and paragraphs. The Prose [Fiction] Model Analysis that I uploaded is the best example I can provide in this respect. Notice how I quoted from the text extensively, but how this flows as part of my discussion? You should do the same within your analysis of set texts. On a related note, make sure that you analyse the text that you quote, not merely ‘explain’ it. An analysis of a text considers ‘why’ the quoted diction has been employed and, most importantly, to what effect it has been employed. An explanation of a passage that merely reads as a synopsis of the text does not constitute an analysis.

### Writing a Proper Conclusion: Revision and Elaboration

- **Reiteration of Your Introduction:** A number of students construct their conclusion in a very similar manner to their introduction, which is perfectly fine to an extent, but your conclusion needs to summarise the main findings in your analysis, not merely outline what you looked at in your analysis. Your introduction, in essence, will read something along the lines of ‘In this analysis of [text] I will be looking at [this], [this], [this] and [this]’, which is correct, but it is not correct for your conclusion to simply state ‘In this analysis of [text] I have looked at [this], [this], [this] and [this].’ This is merely a past tense reiteration of your introduction, and not a conclusion in its own right. Instead, your conclusion needs to read ‘In this analysis of [text] I have found [this], [this], [this] and [this]’—i.e. you have to summarise the findings that pertain to each of the points you discussed at the outset of the essay. An example: Say you, in your introduction, stated that you are setting out to explore the purpose of the text/what the text sets out to achieve and how it does that. In your conclusion, you thus have to state: I have found the purpose of the text to be [this] and it achieves this purpose by [doing this], [this] and [this].
- **Summarising Your Findings:** You need to do the above-noted (i.e. state your findings) for each question you set out to answer or aspect of the text you set out to discuss at the outset of your analysis. In essence, each question/aspect you raised/stated in your

introduction should have a summarised answer in your conclusion. It should not be difficult to summarise an answer for each of the questions/discussion points you set out to answer/explore, with the exception of the 'how' element of analysis, as this aspect in essence comprises the writer/speaker's entire approach in the text. To conclude on the 'how' element of analysis, you need to summarise the main techniques/devices you have found to have been used by the writer/speaker to relay the theme/meaning or achieve the persuasive purpose of the text and conclude on the effect to which he/she used these.

### Study Unit 1 Revision->How to Answer the Set Question for Each Type of Text

As per my first post in this forum, titled 'Recap on Understanding the What, Why and How of a Text', your guideline with regards to the 'how' aspect of your analysis (i.e. which elements of the given text you should focus on in your essay) would be the set question. Quite simply, you need to ensure that you adhere to and answer the set question. When considering the details of a given text in order to comment on the creation of meaning in the text and ultimately answer the 'how' question, you need to keep in mind which details you were asked to explore in the first place. Even if you were to answer the 'what' and 'why' questions pertaining to the text perfectly, you are not likely to pass the essay if you explored extraneous details of the text and did not adequately comment on the details you were asked to comment on.

### How to Answer a Set Persuasive Prose Question

A set persuasive prose question will likely ask you to consider the following key questions: Who? What? How? Why? I addressed the 'what', 'why' and 'how' elements of analysis under the 'Recap on Understanding the What, Why and How of a Text' discussion topic, whereas the 'who' of a text simply refers to who the text is aimed at—i.e. who the target audience of the text is—and the 'when' may refer to publication date or date of address et cetera (more on this in the Study Unit 3 revision forum).

You may also be asked to further consider certain specific features of the text, such as, for example, the layout of the text, the way in which the writer positions the reader, the possible ideology/ideologies observed by the writer et cetera. It goes without saying that, if you are asked to consider such specific features of the text in your analysis, you should make a point to focus significantly on these features (not merely briefly touch on them or mention them in passing).

In general, regardless of the specific features of a given persuasive text you are to tasked with considering, your analysis should:

- i. **Identify and State the Persuasive Purpose of the Text:** This comprises the 'why' element of analysis (i.e. the why the text was written) and is of the utmost importance when critically analysing the content of a text or excerpt as a persuasive text. The persuasive purpose of the text should ideally be stated at the outset of your analysis, with your analysis thereafter setting about analysing how the writer achieves this purpose (i.e. what persuasive strategies he/she has employed and to what effect—in essence the 'how' element of analysis).
- ii. **Properly Comment on the Effect of Features Identified:** As touched on above, it does not suffice to merely identify the features of the text or note the persuasive strategies employed by the writer—you need to comment on the effect of these features/strategies. Your analysis is essentially incomplete if you fail to do this.

### How to Answer a Set Prose/Fiction, Poetry or Drama Question



Prose/fiction, poetry and drama set questions tend to be quite specific; you may be asked to consider aspects such as figurative language, characterisation, setting et cetera as pertaining to a specific theme or subject. Again, your analysis has to focus on the aspects you are asked to discuss; if you, for example, conduct a brilliant analysis of the setting of the text but were in fact tasked with considering characterisation and did not touch on this in the required detail, you will not likely pass the essay.

In general, your analysis of a prose/fiction text, drama extract or poem should:

- i. **Focus on the Theme/Poetic Subject of the Text:** Regardless of whether you are specifically instructed to do so or given a specific theme or subject to focus on, your analysis should always consider the theme/s (often referred to as 'poetic subject' insofar as poetry is concerned) present in the text; this is the 'why' aspect of prose/fiction, poetry and drama and as such is a vital part of your analysis. You cannot move on to consider the 'how' of a text (i.e. the devices employed in the text and effects created) if you have not first considered the 'why' (i.e. theme or poetic subject) of the text.
- ii. **Properly Comment on the Effect of Devices or Features Identified:** Sometimes when answering a prose/fiction, poetry or drama question students think it is sufficient to merely identify and/or define the devices present in the text, without commenting on the creation of meaning and effect through these devices. As mentioned in the point pertaining to persuasive prose analysis above, it does not suffice to merely note or list the features of a text (and, insofar as 'common' devices such as metaphors, similes et cetera are concerned, it is not at all necessary to define these devices); you need to identify the features of—and devices present—in the text as well as comment on the creation of meaning and effect through the features/devices you note.

### Answering the Set Conversational Analysis

A set conversational analysis question will ask you to analyse a given conversation by considering certain key conversational concepts, write your own dialogue and thereafter perform a conversational analysis of it (answering certain set questions), or to write a theory essay about [a] certain element/s of conversational analysis.

Writing a dialogue should not be significantly challenging for you, though if you are writing one for the purpose of analysis it would be a good idea to purposely include (some of) the mechanisms you have come to learn about in your study of Study Unit 6 within your dialogue so that you may then 'identify' and comment on the effect of these mechanisms. Remember also that, whilst the participants in your conversation can make use of improper grammar, pauses, fillers et cetera (as we all tend to in spoken conversation), instances of such then need to be pointed out and discussed by you in your analysis, otherwise it merely comes across as you as the writer of dialogue having made the error/s and not the participants in the conversation.

When answering a conversational analysis practical question (i.e. when asked to analyse a transcript of a spoken conversation) it is of course of the utmost importance to note and theoretically discuss the conversational elements you have been instructed to discuss—but this is not as far as your analysis should go. Of key importance to performing a proper conversational analysis is determining meaning. You ultimately need to comment on the outcome and success of the given conversation. Was it successful? Why or why not? You would, of course, need to utilise your knowledge of the elements of CA to support your assertions in this regard.

Lastly, when answering a conversational analysis theoretical question, it is of the utmost importance that you consider the practical application/s of the theory you purport as well. That means that you should not only vaguely and generally discuss the conversational concepts you have been tasked with discussing, but that you should also include practical examples of the concepts you discuss.

I hope you have found the above breakdown of how to approach the different types of questions you will come across in the examination helpful. If you have a query or concern about any of the points I have raised above, please do not hesitate to ask

[Forums](#)->[Study Unit 1 Revision](#)->Recap on Understanding the What, Why and How of a Text

As per Study Unit 1 [page 1] in the Study Guide, our first step in practically approaching the critical reading and analysis of a text requires us to pose the questions 'what', 'why' and 'how'. These questions form the basis of our analyses of texts for ENG2602 [**Note:** We also need to consider the 'who' and perhaps the 'when' when analysing persuasive prose, but more on that in the Study Unit 3 revision forum].

What exactly should we look at—and look for—when critically reading and analysing a text? While it would be near impossible to create an exhaustive practical guide on the number of ways in which a text may be explored, here follows a practical guide and further information on considering and answering the above questions when analysing a text.

Please do work through Study Unit 1 in the Study Guide before reading through this breakdown; this breakdown clarifies and elaborates on the information in the study unit, and should not be studied instead of studying the set study material.

### What?

In simplest terms, this question requires you to consider what the passage, extract or poem is about.

In addressing the 'what' of a text, it is important to let the marker know that you understand the subject matter of the text, but you need to be careful not to focus your entire analysis on simply paraphrasing, relaying or summarising what the text is about. Practically, the bulk of your analysis should not merely retell or recount the plot of the given text, as there is absolutely no way that you can achieve a pass mark in doing so.

To reiterate, do not provide an extensive synopsis of the given text in place of a proper analysis. Instead, you need to concisely answer the 'what' question. Quite simply, you should briefly outline or summarise *what the text you are analysing is about* and/or *what kind of text it is* in one or two sentences at the outset of your analysis. Your essay introduction would be the best place to do this. This is as far as your summary of the text should go. If you proceed to merely relay the text throughout your essay, without analysing it, you would not have met the outcomes set for the essay.

### Why?

The 'why' of a text relates to the theme or the purpose of the text. You need to ask yourself why the text has been written so that you may determine its purpose.

When analysing a persuasive text, such as an advertisement or a speech, your consideration in this regard would be quite literal. Essentially, you would need to consider why a specific text was created and to ultimately determine the advertiser or speaker's intended outcome/s for the text. This is what we refer to as the persuasive purpose of the text.

However, when analysing prose/fiction, poetry or drama, you should not necessarily concern yourself with the purpose/s of the author or poet in writing the text (as this is often difficult to impossible to determine), but rather with your own response/s. This does not mean that you ought to simply provide your own subjective opinion as a definitive determination of the 'why' of the text; instead, you need to ask yourself what ideas (themes) are conveyed to the reader by the writing. These ideas (i.e. the themes that the text explores) constitute the purpose of the text. I will provide further guidance on the identifying and discussing theme in due course (be on the lookout for this in the Study Unit 2 revision forum).

### How?

If you have ensured that you understand the different ways in which one may consider and analyse different kinds of texts, answering the 'how' question for a given text is simple. In a nutshell, after establishing the purpose/s or theme/s of the given text, you should discuss how the details of the text combine to produce this/these meaning/s.

As aforementioned, these details would differ from text to text. The creation of meaning in persuasive texts is normally vastly different from the creation of meaning in prose/fiction. Likewise, given the innumerable amount of literary techniques and features available to writers for utilisation, the 'how' element may be significantly dissimilar between two fiction texts—despite the genre similarity between the texts.

Briefly, when considering the 'how' of a given text, you may consider the linguistic information that the text holds, the structural cohesion within the text and the style and tone of the text. Your guideline in this regard would be the essay question set in the assignment/s or examination. You may be asked to consider such aspects as characterisation, or figurative language, or politeness strategies, to name but a few. The bottom line is this: When considering the details of a given text to comment on the creation of meaning in the text and ultimately answer the 'how' question, you need to keep in mind which details you were asked to explore in the first place. Even if you were to answer the 'what' and 'why' questions pertaining to the text perfectly, you are not likely to pass the essay if you explored extraneous details of the text and did not adequately comment on the details you were asked to comment on.

As stated at the outset of this discussion, there are several different ways in which one may approach analysing a text, but for the purposes of this course you need to understand and apply the 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions as outlined above.

If you have any comments on or questions about the above guidelines or close reading and critical analysis in general, please do not hesitate to post these below; I would be happy to clarify and elaborate.

### Study Unit 2 Revision->Aspects of Prose Analysis [Building Blocks of the 'How' of a Fiction Text]

The purpose of this discussion topic serves to provide you with some guidance on the aspects of analysis that you may need to consider when answering the 'how' question as it pertains to a Prose [Fiction] text. If you have not yet done so, please do consult the Prose [Fiction] Analysis 'How to' topic that I posted in the Assignment 2 forum before consulting this topic or any other topic in this forum.

It is important to note that a Prose [Fiction] question may not necessarily ask or require of you to discuss solely these aspects; you may be asked to consider certain other specific aspects of the text as well. However, these generally are the main and most important aspects of Prose [Fiction] Analysis. If you are not asked to discuss these or any other aspects specifically, and instead are merely instructed to analyse in general how the author relays a certain theme or subject, looking at



these aspects of the text is a very good starting point (as these aspects are, after all, the building blocks of creative writing).

### *Introduction of the Theme*

The general purpose of a Prose [Fiction] analysis is for you to focus on how certain literary and language aspects—for example, narrative structure and point of view, the creation of character, tone, diction and poetic devices as well as other language techniques—convey the central theme of a given passage.

It goes without saying that you should state what you consider the theme of the passage to be at the outset of a Prose [Fiction] Analysis. Thereafter, in the body of your essay, you would perform a detailed analysis of how the aspects you were instructed to focus on convey the theme that you have identified.

Essentially, once you have identified the central theme in the passage, you need to ask yourself: How do I know that this is the theme? What literary and language devices have been utilised by the writer to convey the theme in the passage? In general, if you are unable to appropriately comment on the creation of theme in a given passage, your identification of the central theme in the passage is probably not entirely correct or complete. If you have successfully identified the overarching theme in the passage, you should naturally be able to explain how the theme is conveyed in the text.

### *Narrative Structure and Point of View*

Narrative structure, quite simply, refers to the structure of the narrative. It pertains to the content of the story and the form utilised in telling the story.

The first two questions you need to ask yourself when tasked with analysing narration or point of view in a given passage are: (i) 'What type of narration is employed?' and (ii) 'Who is the narrator?' The 'how' of the how the story is being told in any given text relates to the narrative point of view or, in simplest terms, the narrator. In order to analyse point of view, you would thus first and foremost need to have a cursory understanding of the types of narration that may be employed in a text (the below link may be helpful or you can Google 'types of narration').

However, merely identifying the type of narrator employed to be [this] type of narrator is not sufficient. You need to support your assertion of the type of narrator employed in the text with close reference to the text. How did you determine this to be the type of narration employed? Quote from the text to substantiate.

Once you have identified and 'proven' the type of narration employed in a text, you need to consider how the narrator impacts the telling of the story. How does the type of narration employed specifically impact the meaning of the text? For example, when analysing a first-person narrative, you need to remain aware of the fact that the information that you are receiving will inevitably be coloured by the subjectivity of the narrator. This is not only important to keep in mind as it pertains to how the circumstances and other characters in a given passage are described, but also to how it may inform your understanding of the narrator him or herself.

### *Creation of Character*

When asked to consider characterisation within a given passage, it would not suffice to merely identify a protagonist and an antagonist in the text. Insofar as the creation of character is concerned, instead of stating 'this is the protagonist' and 'this is the antagonist', you need to

explore and comment on how the characters that feature are introduced and represented. Who are the main characters in the given text (not necessarily the names of the characters, which may not be given, but simply by description)? How are they introduced? How are they portrayed? How does the tone of the passage contribute to the creation of the identified character/s? In essence, what is said about the character/s and how is it said?

Further to the creation of character, a text may provide extensive and explicit written descriptions of certain characters. However, character descriptions are often symbolic and figurative, as much as they are literal. For example, if a character is described as having 'dark hooded eyes' it may not only be a description of their appearance, but may also be an allusion to their less than trustworthy personality. It is important to not jump to conclusions in this regard (the character may be delightfully open and honest and simply have hooded eyes), but to be aware of possible connotations and to look out for other indicators in the text that may support a certain assertion about the character either way.

Please refer to the following resource for a breakdown on narration and how different types of narration may affect characterisation:

<http://www.studygs.net/fictiona.htm>.X

I hope that you find this resource helpful, as I believe it explains the relationship between narration and characterisation more concisely than I could.

### *Elaboration of Theme Through the Manipulation of Tone and Diction*

What is the tone of the given passage? Is it formal or informal? Is it intimate, conversational, solemn, playful or ironic? The tone of a prose text, as you may well know, pertains to the mood that is created within the text and ultimately impacts how the theme is approached within the text. Diction merely refers to the writer's choice of words, which you would need to quote extensively to support your identification of tone and discussion of the creation of character. Insofar as tone is concerned, if for example you consider the tone of the passage to be formal, you need to quote specific phrases or words from the text to support this assertion.

### *Poetic Devices and Language Techniques*

Please do not panic if you are unable to identify a certain number of poetic devices and/or language techniques in the given passage. Your analysis of the text should not be focussed on identifying and listing as many poetic devices and language features as possible. As noted above, the most important aspect of your analysis is identifying and exploring the theme in the passage. As such, your focus should be on theme first and foremost and then on how the devices within the text convey the theme.

Of course, while theme comes first, you do need to be able to identify and discuss those devices in the text that are indeed present and relevant to the creation and development of theme. For a recap on identifying the poetic and language features of a passage, please refer back to pages 14—15 in the Study Guide. Please also consult Addendum A in Tutorial Letter 101. A number of language and literary techniques—including diction, tone, symbolism, grammar, characterisation, narration et cetera—will inevitably also be present in a text, and you need to refer to these in your analysis as well. How should you go about analysing these? I have posted a Prose [Fiction] Model Analysis under 'Additional Resources' on this site, which should provide further elucidation in this regard. In short, you need to comment on the effect of the techniques, devices and features you note—each in and for itself and in the context of the passage as a whole. How do the aspects you

have identified create meaning? How and what does each contribute to the meaning of the passage? This is ultimately what your analysis of any given Prose [Fiction] text needs to conclude on: the creation of meaning and thematic effect through the language and literary devices present in the text.

*NB: To reiterate, it is NOT sufficient to merely consider the introduction of theme in a given passage at the outset of your essay and to then not mention theme again throughout your analysis. You need to relate each feature of the text that you note back to the creation of the central theme of the passage as you progress with your analysis.*

### **Study Unit 2 Revision**->Focussing Your Analysis on Theme [Important]

As per the introductory topic in this forum, I am dedicating the next few weeks to revision and to guiding you through the process of examination preparation, and am focussing on Study Unit 2 – Prose [Fiction] this week. If you have not yet done so, please do consult the Prose [Fiction] Analysis 'How to' topic that I posted in the Assignment 2 forum before consulting this topic or any other topic in this forum. Also, as always a reminder that the information or material I post is merely supplementary to your core revision—which should be focussed on ensuring that you are familiar and comfortable with the set study material (i.e. all material contained in the Study Guide and the prescribed chapters in the Goatly textbook).

#### *Importance of Theme in a Prose [Fiction] Analysis*

The introduction and development of theme is the primary and most important aspect you should focus on in your analysis of a Prose [Fiction] text. In essence, every aspect of a Prose [Fiction] text (i.e. the 'what' and 'how' of the text—including the language and literary devices contained within the text) contributes to the creation of theme—the 'why' of the text. Theme is, quite simply, always a consideration and should be the core focus of your analysis of a Prose [Fiction] text. Yes, you may be asked to consider diction, symbolism, characterisation et cetera, and you should certainly analyse the text by considering the devices you are instructed to consider in the essay question, but all of this culminates in the creation of meaning and thematic effect.

#### *How to Identify the Theme of a Given Text*

Essentially, you need to ask yourself, what could the theme/s of the given text possibly be? How is/are the theme/s introduced/presented in the text? You might not be able to identify the theme/s in a given passage at first glance and may (in the planning stages of the essay) need to perform a line-by-line analysis of the extract before being able to do so. This is perfectly alright, as the purpose of a close reading is not merely to identify theme, but also to ascertain how theme is presented in the text. You should, in the body of your essay, explain how you determined the theme/s of the passage. Such an explanation, in essence, would be a commentary on the creation of thematic effect.

Please also remember that theme is always specific—never generalised. What do I mean by this? It does not suffice to merely identify the theme of a given passage to be 'nature', 'love', 'marriage' et cetera; the text is more likely than not making a specific point about nature, love or marriage and it is up to you to identify and explore that point. At the crux of it, that is how you analyse the introduction and development of theme—by identifying what the narrator is saying about the topic/s (nature, love, marriage et cetera) and exploring how he/she is saying it.

### *Elaborating on Theme—A Required Aspect of Your Analysis*

To reiterate, it is not sufficient to merely identify the theme/s in a given text without elaboration. Once you think you have identified the theme/s in the text, you need to ask yourself: How do I know that this is the theme? What literary and language devices has the writer utilised to create the theme/s in the text? In general, if you are unable to appropriately comment on the creation of thematic effect in a given text, your identification of the theme/s in the passages is probably not entirely correct or complete. If you have successfully identified the overarching theme/s in the passages, you should naturally be able to explain the thematic development in the passages.

### *Theme versus Other Aspects/Features of Text*

As reiterated, theme is of the utmost importance and your analysis should emphasise how the writer/narrator uses linguistic and literary devices to bring about the theme/s in the story, but such an analysis should not exclude or discount aspects such as characterisation, plot and setting.

To again recap on the 'what', 'how', 'why' elements of analysis, theme is the 'why' of a Prose [Fiction] text, with the 'why' being of the utmost importance to your analysis. The 'what' of a text quite simply refers to 'what the text is about', which should be stated at the outset of your analysis. Insofar as a Prose [Fiction] text is concerned, the plot of a given extract is essentially the 'what' of the text. The 'why' and 'how' elements of analysis need to be analysed/proven. In essence, the 'how' creates the 'why'—i.e. pertaining to Prose [Fiction], you need to analyse how the theme (the 'why') is created/brought about.

As literary elements, characterisation and setting, for example, may both form part of the 'how' element of analysis. Your analysis of the 'how' of the text (i.e. how the theme/s is/are brought about in the story) should focus on 'linguistic features' (i.e. diction, tone, style, grammar and specific linguistic features such as repetition et cetera), literary devices (i.e. so-called figures of speech) and literary elements (i.e. setting, characterisation, narration et cetera)—essentially each and every aspect that makes up the 'how' of the text. Given the time limit set in the Exam, the extent to which you focus on each of these aspects would depend on the relevance of their presence in the set text and, most importantly, on the set question. If you specifically are, for example, asked to consider characterisation and setting in the text your emphasis on these aspects certainly would be more extensive than your consideration of say symbolism or such and such metaphor, but regardless your analysis will to an extent revolve around the thematic effect of all aspects you are asked to and opt to consider—because, as I have stated, these aspects combine to form the 'how' of the text, whereas the theme comprises the 'why', and an analysis without consideration of the 'why' aspect of analysis is incomplete.

You should have a working knowledge of the core poetic devices that a writer/narrator may utilise (see Addendum A in Tutorial Letter 101) in order to successfully identify these devices in a set text. Do not get too bogged down on poetic devices though—not each and every Prose [Fiction] extract will have [a] poetic device/s present in the text. If there is/are [a] poetic device/s present, you need to identify and analyse it, but if there aren't any, there aren't any. A number of language and literary techniques—including diction, tone, symbolism, grammar, characterisation, narration et cetera—will be present in a text, and you need to refer to these in your analysis.

How should you go about analysing these? I hope the Prose [Fiction] Model Analysis I posted under 'Additional Resources' will provide elucidation in this regard. Ask yourself: How do the aspects you have identified create meaning? How and what does each contribute to the meaning of the passage? This is ultimately what your analysis of any given Prose [Fiction] text needs to

conclude on: the creation of meaning and thematic effect through the language and literary devices present in the text.

**Study Unit 2 Revision**->How to Prepare for the Prose [Fiction] Section in the Exam

**Study Unit 2 Revision**->How to Section your Prose [Fiction] Analysis into Paragraphs

As aforementioned, your analysis of any text for this module (and for most, if not all, of the other English modules you may complete) should be structured in paragraph form without headings or subheadings.

How specifically should you structure your paragraphs and how many paragraphs should the 'body' of your essay essentially include? The one-idea/one-paragraph rule is somewhat of a hard and fast rule. If you have two or more ideas that fall under one overarching idea, grouping these ideas together in one paragraph is not only acceptable, it is recommended.

At this level, markers are not exceptionally strict with paragraphing. You will only be penalised if you either go with the one extreme of utilising little to no paragraphs and presenting the body of your essay as one, single difficult to read mass OR if you go with the other extreme of utilising paragraph breaks between one or two lines of text. To clarify, in an essay of 600 to 1200 words you should have about (at least) three to six supporting paragraphs and a paragraph should not be only a few lines in length.

If you have met the above basic requirements in your assignment/s and a marker has nonetheless made a comment about your paragraphing, this might be because, even though the body of your discussion might have been adequately broken up and your paragraphs are of the right length, your ideas are not logically grouped in your paragraphs. Keep in mind though, that, at this level, markers do not deduct significant marks for poor grouping of ideas under paragraphs, even if they do alert you to it in their comments. Where marks will start making a difference in this regard is if you are a distinction candidate. In order to achieve a distinction, your ideas need to be logically grouped in your paragraphs, and the marker will thus consider both the structure and the content of your paragraphs.

### *How to Section your Prose [Fiction] Analysis into Paragraphs*

The set question might make breaking up your essay quite straightforward for you by asking you to address a number of specific points in your analysis. If you are instructed to discuss certain aspects of the text, it is generally recommended that you dedicate a paragraph or two to each respective aspect. Please just remember, no headings!

If you are not given such specific points to discuss, you will need to section your discussion yourself. To that point, I would like to provide you with a genre-specific example of how to logically group ideas into paragraphs in a prose/fiction analysis.

I call your attention to the following paragraph from the Prose [Fiction] Model Analysis that I posted under 'Additional Resources' on this site.

#### *Paragraph:*

"To the above point, how does Dickens create thematic effect in the extract? What literary and linguistic devices has he employed? The first mention of death is not explicit; instead the word "tombstone" is employed, which as a symbol and consequence of death, immediately tells the



reader that Pip's father is no longer living. In considering symbolic effect, how does the mention of Pip's father's tombstone in such a cavalier fashion impact the tone of the passage? The passage opens in a somewhat conversational and neutral manner, with Pip introducing himself to the reader, but the mention of a tombstone, a symbol of death, sets a somewhat sombre tone. This is intensified in the next line when Pip mentions that he "never saw [his] father or [his] mother", which tells us [again not explicitly] that Pip is an orphan. This is reiterated when Pip's mother's tombstone is also mentioned and we receive confirmation that she too is deceased. Through the imagery of Pip's father and mother's tombstones and the insinuation that they died when Pip was quite young—that is, too young to remember either of them—the themes of loss and death are created."

*Comment:*

Whilst this paragraph is comprehensive, note how it in actual fact only deals with one idea—the creation of thematic effect. You will notice that the paragraph following this one also deals with theme, but more specifically with the 'development of theme', versus the 'introduction of theme' in the above paragraph. Technically, these paragraphs could be merged into one overarching discussion about theme, but such a paragraph would be overly long and cumbersome to read. For this reason, I broke my discussion of theme up into more specific discussions about theme—i.e. the introduction of theme and the development of theme (comprising further thoughts on the themes identified in the preceding paragraph). This also logically links the two paragraphs, as I identified and started a discussion on the theme/s present in the text in the first paragraph, and then continued this discussion in the second paragraph.

When writing an analysis, keep the above-mentioned guideline (about three to six supporting paragraphs in an essay of 600 to 1200 words) in mind and, if a paragraph gets to be too long, attempt to specify the discussion further and then break the single paragraph up into two or three paragraphs. Again, a paragraph should also not be only a line or two in length. If it is, the point you are discussing can—and should—be merged with another point into one paragraph.

>[Study Unit 3 Revision](#)->Common Persuasive Prose Analysis Mistakes

As per my previous post in this forum, I am dedicating the next few weeks to revision and to guiding you through the process of examination preparation, and am focussing on Study Unit 3 – Persuasive Prose this week. Please peruse the Persuasive Prose Analysis 'How to' in the Assignment 1 forum before you consult the topics in this forum. Also, as always a reminder that the information or material I post is merely supplementary to your core revision—which should be focussed on ensuring that you are familiar and comfortable with the set study material (i.e. all material contained in the Study Guide and the prescribed chapters in the Goatly textbook).

Herewith a brief breakdown of mistakes to avoid when conducting a Persuasive Prose Analysis.

*No Introduction and/or Conclusion*

As I mentioned under the 'Essay Writing Guidelines' topic in the 'General Assignment Information' forum, a proper academic introduction and conclusion are vital to any analysis. Right off the bat, structuring your analysis in a proper academic format and including an introduction and conclusion is a sure-fire way to win marks. If you struggled with the content of your analysis and your mark is perhaps hanging in the balance, the inclusion or exclusion of an introduction or conclusion can be the difference between a pass and a fail. How do you construct a proper academic introduction

and conclusion? Please refer consult the aforementioned topic in the 'General Assignment Information' forum.

### *Neglecting to State the Persuasive Purpose of the Text*

Remember, regardless of whether the text is a magazine or newspaper article, fictional extract, informative in nature or conversational in style, it nonetheless falls into the genre of Persuasive Prose, and thus needs to be critically analysed as such. To that point, you need to state and explore the persuasive purpose of the text. Ideally, you should state the persuasive purpose of the text under analysis at the outset of your essay.

### *Merely Relaying/Paraphrasing the Text*

Relaying or paraphrasing the text without providing significant or critical comment is not the same as analysing the text. You need to identify the features of the text and ultimately comment on how these features further the persuasive purpose of the text. Merely telling the reader of your essay what transpires in the text is entirely superficial and does not meet this requirement. Relaying the text extensively only addresses the 'what' question of analysis; it does not consider the 'how' and the 'why'.

### *Not Properly Commenting on the Effect of the Features Identified*

When analysing a persuasive text, it does not suffice to merely identify [a] certain feature/s of the text—you need to comment on effect. How does/do the device/s or feature/s you have identified impact the meaning of the text? How specifically does it aid the persuasive purpose of the text? For example, if you have identified the style of the text to be conversational, why do you think the writer or speaker has employed this style? What does he/she hope to achieve by specifically employing this style?

### *Elaborating on the Topic as a Whole*

When conducting an analysis of a persuasive text, be careful of going off on a tangent and elaborating on a controversial topic dealt with in the given text. You have to refer closely and solely to the given text, not explore or elaborate on the topic as a whole. In essence, you need to explore how the given text has specifically dealt with the topic/issue, not discuss or comment on the topic/issue in general.

### *Defining Aspects without Analysis*

Be careful of merely defining the aspects that make up persuasive texts in general without in actual fact stating or exploring those aspects of the given text. Students often define or refer to ideologies or persuasive techniques in general, but do not carry this through to properly analysing the ideologies or persuasive techniques present in the given persuasive text. For the most part, it is not necessary to include general definitions of or statements about techniques, strategies, elements or devices—get right to identifying and commenting on the actual occurrences of these in the given text.

### *Erroneously Referring to a Text as an Advertisement*

This may seem like a somewhat silly point, but unfortunately a number of students in the past have been unable to properly distinguish between an advertisement specifically and a persuasive text in general. Remember, an advertisement is a *type of Persuasive Prose*, but not all Persuasive Prose can or should be referred to as an 'advertisement'. A given persuasive text may be an

advertisement, a news report, a tabloid or magazine article or a speech. The persuasive purpose of a persuasive text may not always be to sell something—it could be to convince the audience to respond or act in a certain way, to share a certain belief et cetera.

I hope you have found this breakdown somewhat helpful. If you have a question or concern about any of the above points, please do post it below.

### **Study Unit 3 Revision**->How to Prepare for the Persuasive Prose Section in the ExamX

I have created this forum specifically for Persuasive Prose revision for the examination in October. How did you find your study of Study Unit 3? Did you experience any particular challenges with the unit?

#### *How to Prepare for the Persuasive Prose Section in the Exam*

In order to prepare for the Persuasive Prose section in the Exam, you need to first and foremost work through Study Unit 3 in the Study Guide as well as any recommended sections in the prescribed text by Goatly and/or Toolkit/Reader. This not only includes reading through and ensuring that you properly understand the content of the unit, but also completing the set study activities. Working through the study activities and consulting my suggested responses (posted as 'Study Unit 3 - Suggested Responses to Study Activities' in the 'Study Activities Feedback' forum) is excellent practice in textual analysis, so please do take time to do this as part of your revision plan.

Insofar as the additional guidelines and information I have provided are concerned, as you can see I posted three other guidelines topics in this forum last week, but please refer to the Persuasive Prose Analysis 'How to' topic I posted in the 'Assignment 1' forum as well as the Persuasive Prose [Advertisement] Model Analysis and the Persuasive Prose [Speech] Model Analysis I posted under 'Additional Resources' on this site before perusing the topics I posted here. Please do read through all these topics and download the model analyses at your earliest convenience in order to allow yourself to adequately prepare for the examination.

Once you have worked through Study Unit 3 and the guideline topics I have posted, you may want to download a couple of the Past Exam Papers (available under 'Official Study Material' on the main ENG2602 site) and attempt to do a practice analysis of a Persuasive Prose question, or at least read through a couple of the past Persuasive Prose questions to be prepared for what will be expected of you in the examination.

If you have had any questions about or problems with Study Unit 3 or Persuasive Prose analysis in general, please do post these here as soon as possible.

### **Study Unit 3 Revision**->How to Section your Persuasive Prose Analysis into Paragraphs

As aforementioned, your analysis of any text for this module (and for most, if not all, of the other English modules you may complete) should be structured in paragraph form without headings or subheadings.

How specifically should you structure your paragraphs and how many paragraphs should the 'body' of your essay essentially include? The one-idea/one-paragraph rule is somewhat of a hard and fast rule. If you have two or more ideas that fall under one overarching idea, grouping these ideas together in one paragraph is not only acceptable, it is recommended.

At this level, markers are not exceptionally strict with paragraphing. You will only be penalised if you either go with the one extreme of utilising little to no paragraphs and presenting the body of your essay as one, single difficult to read mass OR if you go with the other extreme of utilising paragraph breaks between one or two lines of text. To clarify, in an essay of 600 to 1200 words you should have about (at least) three to six supporting paragraphs and a paragraph should not be only a few lines in length.

If you have met the above basic requirements in your assignment/s and a marker has nonetheless made a comment about your paragraphing, this might be because, even though the body of your discussion might have been adequately broken up and your paragraphs are of the right length, your ideas are not logically grouped in your paragraphs. Keep in mind though, that, at this level, markers do not deduct significant marks for poor grouping of ideas under paragraphs, even if they do alert you to it in their comments. Where marks will start making a difference in this regard is if you are a distinction candidate. In order to achieve a distinction, your ideas need to be logically grouped in your paragraphs, and the marker will thus consider both the structure and the content of your paragraphs.

### *How to Section your Persuasive Prose Analysis into Paragraphs*

As far as sectioning a persuasive prose analysis into paragraphs is concerned, the set question might make breaking up your essay quite straightforward for you by asking you to address certain questions or points in your analysis. If so, it is generally recommended that you dedicate a paragraph to each of the questions or points that you are instructed to answer/discuss. Just a reminder, please do not state the actual question or point to be discussed as a heading to each respective paragraph. Answer each question or address each point within its dedicated paragraph.

If you are not given specific questions to answer or points to discuss, you will need to section your discussion yourself. If you refer to the persuasive prose questions in the past exam papers, you will notice that the question generally tends to instruct you to analyse the set text by considering the 'what', 'who', 'why', 'where' and 'when' questions of analysis. This makes structuring your analysis easier since you can, with the exception of the 'how' of the text which should be somewhat more extensively addressed and the 'why' which you should keep referring back to as you progress through your analysis, dedicate a paragraph to each of the aforementioned questions respectively. This is only a very basic rule though—for some texts your answers to two or more of the questions might more appropriately be merged into a single paragraph; alternatively, your discussion in response to one of the questions might be so extensive that it becomes necessary for you to section your answer to the question off further into two or more paragraphs. To that point, I would like to provide you with a genre-specific example of how to logically group ideas into paragraphs in a persuasive prose analysis.

I call your attention to the following paragraphs from the Persuasive Prose [Speech] Model Analysis that I posted under 'Additional Resources' on this site.

*Paragraphs:*

“With the ‘what’ having been established, who is, or was, the Gettysburg Address aimed at? That is, who formed the target audience of the speech? While for an assignment question you could look up who the Address was presented to in order to inform your determination of the ‘who’ in the speech, you would not be able to do so in an examination, thus you need to be able to draw certain inferences by merely looking at the text itself. You can, given that the speech was presented by the then-President of the United States of America, assume that, while perhaps presented to a select congregation, the speech was nonetheless given with the intention of eventually reaching a wider audience [that is, at the very least, the American public]. The last sentence of the speech reinforces such a determination, in that the message seems to make a final promise to the nation as a whole.

The language and the style of the speech is formal, though we must keep in mind that, since the speech was given in the late 1800s, the use of archaic language such as “[f]our score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth” might well have been colloquial at that time. To that point, the Gettysburg Address while formal is nonetheless quite simple and understandable, and should have been easily understood by any reasonably educated American at the time.”

*Comment:*

My discussion of the language and style of the text in the second of the above two paragraphs relates to the ‘how’ of the text, but it also relates that to the ‘who’ of the text, in that I conclude by utilising my findings about the language and style of the text to support my assertion about who the speech was possibly aimed at. Why then did I not draw it this short second paragraph up into the ‘who’ paragraph or include it with the ‘how’/‘why’ paragraph that follows immediately after? Quite simply, because it addresses two aspects of analysis simultaneously, it serves quite excellently as a linking paragraph between my main ‘who’ and ‘how’ discussions, thus giving cohesion to my analysis. Also, more specifically, it deals with the style of the text, which is a completely separate idea that should ideally be addressed in a paragraph of its own.

Keep the above guideline (about three to six supporting paragraphs in an essay of 600 to 1200 words) in mind and, if a paragraph addressing a certain question (often the case with the ‘how’ question of analysis) gets to be too long, attempt to specify the discussion further and then break the single paragraph up into two or three paragraphs. Again, a paragraph should also not be only a line or two in length. If it is, the point you are discussing can and should be merged with another point into one paragraph.

### **Study Unit 3 Revision**->Persuasive Prose Analysis 'How to' - Revision & Further Information

I am dedicating the next few weeks to revision and to guiding you through the process of examination preparation, and am focussing on Study Unit 3 – Persuasive Prose this week. Please peruse the Persuasive Prose Analysis ‘How to’ in the Assignment 1 forum before you consult this topic, as this one builds on that one. As always a reminder that the information or material I post is merely supplementary to your core revision—which should be focussed on ensuring that you are familiar and comfortable with the set study material (i.e. all material contained in the Study Guide and the prescribed chapters in the Goatly textbook).

#### *Analysing Persuasive Prose*



To recap, how does one perform a close reading of a persuasive text? In essence, you need to approach the text, be it an advertisement, speech or article, from the perspective of answering the 'who', 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions. More specifically, you would of course need to look at what precisely the set question is asking of you. However, regardless of the specific features of the text you are instructed to consider, your analysis of any persuasive text should nonetheless as a whole answer the 'who', 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions—the 'when' is, depending on the text, optional. How then do you specifically answer the 'who', 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions pertaining to a persuasive text?

- Who: As far as Persuasive Prose is concerned, the 'who' may pertain to 'who the text is about', 'who the writer or speaker is' or 'who is involved in the text', but of paramount importance is considering 'who the text is aimed at.' The reason why identifying the target audience is so important is because the writer, speaker or advertiser's intentions and methods pertaining to the 'why' and 'how' of the text are directly related to the target audience. It is preferred that, for the purposes of this module, you state who you identified the target audience of the text to be at the outset of your essay. The length of your consideration of the 'who' of the text would depend on the set question, but as a rule of thumb I would advise that the length of your elaboration pertaining to target audience should be in direct relation to the specificity of the target audience segment you identified. If you deem the target audience to be quite broad or general, you need to include only a few lines stating why it is you think so, whereas if you identify the target audience to be of a specific gender, age, culture and/or socio-economic group, you would need to provide more extensive evidence from the text to support your assertion/s as such.
- What: The 'what' of the text should also be stated at the outset of your essay—if not in your introduction then in the first body paragraph. The 'what', quite simply, refers to 'what the text is about.' Again, the length and depth of your consideration of the 'what' of a given text would depend on the set question, but your analysis should at the very least state what the topic, subject, theme or core concern/s of the text is/are. Give a short synopsis of the text, but be careful not to extend your consideration of the 'what' so far that your analysis as a whole starts to read as a mere synopsis or summary of the text.
- Why: You need not explore the 'why' of the text within your introduction, but it too needs to be stated as soon as possible within your essay. Personally, I find the first body paragraph the best place to answer the 'why' question. As far as Persuasive Prose is concerned, the 'why' of a text pertains to the persuasive purpose of the text. What does the text hope to achieve? What action does it hope to spur the target audience to? At the crux of it, the aim of an advertisement would be to sell more products or of a political speech would be to ultimately get the audience to support the speaker's political party, but you need to be more specific in your consideration of the persuasive purpose of a text. What is the immediate purpose of the text? Does it want you to think or feel a certain way about something? To convince you of something specific? Does it want you to request more information? To sign up for a free trial? Of course, as for each of the 'who', 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions, you need to support your identification of the persuasive purpose of a given text with close reference to the text. Also remember, whilst certain persuasive texts might be informative in nature (this is particularly the case when it comes to articles or news reports), you nonetheless need to identify and state its persuasive purpose and analyse it as a persuasive text.
- How: Considering the 'how' of a given text would be the bulk of your analysis. It is the part of your essay that would be the most extensive and detailed. Considering the language

strategies used, the meaning and the layout of the text would fall under the 'how' element of analysis. In analysing a persuasive text, answering the 'how' question requires you to consider 'how the writer, speaker or advertiser has set about achieving the persuasive purpose of the text'. Essentially, it requires you to consider the written or verbal and, if relevant, visual strategies employed to satisfy the 'why' of the text. As you can see, the 'how' then naturally flows from the 'who', 'what' and 'why'. Analysing the 'how' of a given text would include analysing such as diction, tone, figurative language use et cetera.

- *When*: The 'when' of a given text may relate to the publication date of a text (or date of address in the case of a speech) as well as to the 'when' of events referred to in the text. If you are not specifically asked to address the 'when' of a persuasive text, I would recommend you do not do so unless it is particularly relevant. For example, if you were to analyse Nelson Mandela's inauguration speech, the time/setting of the speech would be highly relevant, and thus you would of course include the 'when' element in your analysis.

Finally, please take note of the following important point: When analysing a persuasive text, you need to systematically analyse the persuasive techniques utilised in the text. Please do not base the body of your analysis on telling the marker how effectively you have been persuaded by the given text. In essence, do not write about how you have been persuaded by the text, analyse how it persuades. You may include a brief mention of how persuasive and/or effective you deem the text to be in your conclusion as a summary on the persuasive techniques you have analysed in the body of your essay.

#### **Study Unit 4 Revision**->Common Poetry Analysis Mistakes

As per my previous post in this forum, I am dedicating the next few weeks to revision and to guiding you through the process of examination preparation, and am focussing on Study Unit 4 – Poetry this week. Please peruse the Poetry Analysis 'How to' in the Assignment 2 forum before you consult the topics in this forum. Also, as always a reminder that the information or material I post is merely supplementary to your core revision—which should be focussed on ensuring that you are familiar and comfortable with the set study material.

Herewith a brief breakdown of mistakes to avoid when conducting a Poetry Analysis:

- *No Introduction and/or Conclusion*: As I have mentioned throughout this semester, a proper academic introduction and conclusion are vital to any analysis. Right off the bat, structuring your analysis in a proper academic format and including an introduction and conclusion is a sure-fire way to win marks. If you struggled with the content of your analysis and your mark is perhaps hanging in the balance, the inclusion or exclusion of an introduction or conclusion can be the difference between a pass and a fail. How do you construct a proper academic introduction and conclusion? Please refer to the 'Essay Writing Guidelines' topic in the 'General Assignment Information' forum.
- *Relaying/Paraphrasing the Poem*: Relaying or paraphrasing the poem without providing significant comment is not the same as analysing it. If your analysis reads as an explanation of the poem instead of an analysis of the devices in the poem and a commentary on how meaning is created, you cannot pass the essay. Please see the model analysis that I posted under 'Additional Resources' on this site to see how to analyse the devices in a poem and comment on how meaning is created. In essence, analysing a poem

and commenting on how meaning is created is not the same thing as simply explaining what a poem 'means'.

- *Not Commenting on the Creation of Meaning and Effect through the Features Identified:* Again, when analysing a poem it does not suffice to merely identify the literary or language devices or figures of speech present in the poem—you need to comment on the creation of meaning and effect through the devices and figures you note. How do the devices or figures you have identified impact the meaning of the poem? How does the poem use language to present and explore its main themes and concerns?
- *Defining Aspects without Proper Analysis:* Be careful of focussing on generally defining literary and language devices or figures of speech present in a given poem instead of exploring the specific meaning and effect of these devices or figures in the poem. In fact, you need not include general definitions for common literary or language devices or figures of speech at all; you can assume that the marker knows these terms. What does this mean? Quite simply, if you for example identify a metaphor or simile in the poem, you do not need to define the term metaphor or simile by stating that it is 'a comparison with/without the use of like or as.' Rather get right to telling the reader of your essay how the metaphor or simile has been used in the poem. What is being compared to what? To what effect? How does this relate to the creation of meaning in the poem as a whole?

#### [Forums->Study Unit 4 Revision->Explaining versus Analysing a Poem \[NB\]](#)

I will be posting a 'Common Poetry Analysis Mistakes' topic in this forum within this week, but for now I would like to focus your attention on one of the most widespread and problematic mistakes made by students when analysing poetry.

It is of the utmost importance, when analysing a set poem, to comment on the creation of meaning and effect through the features you are able to identify in the poem, *not* to merely relay, paraphrase or explain the poem. Relaying or paraphrasing the poem without providing significant comment is not the same as analysing it. If your analysis reads as an explanation of the poem instead of an analysis of the devices in the poem and a commentary on how meaning is created, you cannot pass the essay. When analysing a poem it does not suffice to merely explain the meaning of the literary or language devices or figures of speech present in the poem—you need to comment on the creation of meaning and effect through the devices and figures you note.

What is the difference?

Ask yourself:

- How does/do the device/s or figure/s you have identified impact the meaning of the poem?
- And, of particular importance, how does the poem use language to present and explore its main themes and concerns?

Firstly, in order to frame your analysis properly and set yourself up for analysing how the poem uses language and poetic devices to present and explore its main theme/s and concern/s, you need to state the theme/s or core concern/s of the poem at the outset of your essay. This is important because your entire analysis will be based around the theme or subject of the poem. If the theme or subject is highlighted in the set question you can simply copy and state it at the outset of your analysis. However, if the theme or subject is not stated in the set question, you will have to identify it yourself and then nonetheless state it at the outset of your analysis.

Insofar as the difference between analysing versus merely explaining a poem is concerned, I would like to refer your attention to the Poetry Model Analysis that I posted under 'Additional Resources' on this site.

In the model analysis, I identified 'love' and 'time' to be the two core themes/concerns of the poem. I quote from the analysis as follows:

*The image of "rosy lips and cheeks" [Line 9] is an image for youth, while "brief hours and weeks" [Line 11] is a more direct reference to the passage of time.*

In the above-quoted text, I provided a decent explanation of the two lines/images to which I refer, which is necessary, but that is all it is—an explanation or clarification, not a close analysis that examines how the poet utilises the language or device/s in question to comment on the theme/s of love and/or time. If I had concluded my analysis of the lines/images in question with the above-quoted statement, my analysis of the lines/images would be incomplete, and if I conducted my entire analysis in this manner I would not likely pass the essay.

Note how I expanded on the above-quoted statement:

*The image of "rosy lips and cheeks" [Line 9] is an image for youth, while "brief hours and weeks" [Line 11] is a more direct reference to the passage of time. These two phrases reinforce the notion that, while youth is fallible and the passage of time is inevitable, true love is not determined or eradicated by the passage of time.*

In the second sentence, I elaborated on my statement as required by commenting on the creation of meaning and effect through the lines/images I noted. My analysis of the lines/images in question is brief, but effective. You need not analyse each and every line, image, figure or device in great detail—especially not in an examination scenario where you are working within a limited timeframe—but of key importance is that you do analyse the meaning and effect of the lines, images, figures and devices in the poem, not merely explain or reword them.

Does this make sense? If you have a question or concern about any of the above points, please do post it below.

[Study Unit 4 Revision](#) -> How to Prepare for the Poetry Section in the Exam & Important Revision Notes

As you know, I created this forum to focus specifically for Poetry revision for the Examination. How did you find your study of Study Unit 4? Did you experience any particular challenges with the unit?

### *How to Prepare for the Poetry Section in the Exam*

In order to prepare for the Poetry section in the Exam, you need to first and foremost work through Study Unit 4 in the Study Guide as well as any recommended sections in the prescribed text by Goatly and/or Toolkit/Reader.

Insofar as the additional guidelines and information I have provided are concerned, but please refer to the Poetry Analysis 'How to' that I posted in the 'Assignment 2' forum before perusing the topics I post here. You may also want to download the Poetry Model Analysis that I posted under 'Additional Resources'.

Once you have worked through Study Unit 4 and the guideline topics I have posted in the 'Assignment 2' forum and in this revision forum, you may want to download a couple of the past

exam papers (available under 'Official Study Material' on the main ENG2602 site) and attempt to do a practice analysis of a Poetry question, or at least read through a couple of the past Poetry questions to be prepared for what will be expected of you in the examination.

### *Important Revision Notes on Poetry Analysis*

Students are often quite concerned about the prospect of unseen poetry analysis, so I would like to allay your fears somewhat by providing you with a concise set of revisionary guidelines on what is generally expected of when performing Poetry Analysis. Your consideration of a given poem would depend on the specificities of the set question, but in general approaching Poetry Analysis would require you to identify the main theme (or poetic subject) of the poem and prove your assertion of what the main theme (subject) is by analysing the poet's use of syntax, tropes, schemes, diction, and other linguistic devices within the poem.

#### *Identifying the Main Theme of the Poem*

When first approaching a close reading of the given poem, you need to ask yourself: What could the theme (subject) of this poem possibly be? Once you have identified what you deem to be the theme of the poem, you need to analyse how the theme is presented and developed—this would form the basis of your analysis. If you are having trouble with exploring and irrefutably proving the theme of the poem as you first identified it, your identification of the main theme is probably not entirely correct. If this is the case, perform a close reading of the poem once again and see if anything else jumps out at you as a theme (i.e. subject, overarching idea or 'message' of the poem).

Remember, it should not be exceptionally difficult for you to glean a main theme from the set poem. The theme is created by the linguistic features of the poem—i.e. the theme exists within the language of the poem. Allow the language to speak to you. You might need to first perform a line-by-line analysis of the poem before you are able to adequately assert a theme. This is perfectly alright, as the purpose of a close reading is not merely to identify theme, but also to ascertain how theme is presented in the text (which, as stated above, would be the main argument of your essay).

*Important Reminder:* A line-by-line analysis should merely be used to perform a close reading of the poem in the planning stages of your essay. Please do not include a line-by-line analysis in the body of your final essay, this is not an appropriate structure and you will likely lose significant marks for doing so. That is not to say that you should not—within your final essay—quote from the text to support your argument, as you absolutely must do so. Essentially, you should not quote a line of text, analyse it, quote a line of text, analyse it et cetera. Instead, you need to structure your analysis in cohesive sentences and paragraphs, with quoted text incorporated seamlessly within these sentences and paragraphs. The Poetry Model Analysis that I uploaded should serve as an example in this respect. Notice how I quoted from the text extensively, but how this flows as part of my discussion? You should do the same. In the Exam, to save time when analysing the poem and planning your essay, you can simply perform your line-by-line analysis on the examination question paper, filling your notes in next to the lines of the poem—no need to rewrite the lines as rough work or in any way construct a rough draft, which takes too long.

As aforementioned in this forum, please also make sure that you analyse the text that you quote, not merely 'explain' it. An analysis of a poem considers 'why' the quoted diction has been employed and, most importantly, to what effect it has been employed (i.e. how it creates the theme



you have identified). An 'explanation' of a poem merely reads as a synopsis of the text, which does not constitute an analysis.

A final point pertaining to your identification of theme in the poem, please remember that theme is always specific, never general. What do I mean by this? It does not suffice to merely identify the theme of a given poem to be 'nature', 'love', 'marriage' et cetera; the poem is more likely than making a specific point about nature, love or marriage and it is up to you to identify and explore that point. At the crux of it, that is how you analyse the theme—by identifying what exactly the author is saying about the topic/s (nature, love, marriage et cetera) and exploring how he/she is saying it.

### *Analysing the Linguistic Features of the Poem*

Structurally, you should briefly outline the 'what' and 'why' of the poem (i.e. what the poem is about and what you have identified its main theme to be) at the outset of your essay, and then set about exploring how the theme is relayed or developed in the body of your analysis (i.e. the 'how' of the poem). It goes without saying that you should have a clear understanding of syntax, tropes, schemes, and diction in order to properly analyse such in the given poem. You should have gleaned an understanding of these poetic and linguistic features in your study of ENG2602 thus far. Refer to Study Unit 4 and Addendum A to Tutorial Letter 101 for poetic and linguistic devices that you should be familiar with and be able to identify in the given poem.

As explained in detail in the Poetry Analysis 'How to' topic in the 'Assignment 2' forum and the 'Explaining versus Analysing a Poem' topic in this forum, correctly identifying the devices in a given poem is only the first part of your analysis. You need to support the devices you identify in the given poem by explaining why you say a certain line or stanza contains that particular device. It is not sufficient to simply list all the devices in the poem. That is not to say you should necessarily define the devices you identify. If we take a metaphor as an example, you do not need to define the term 'metaphor', as you can assume that your reader knows what a metaphor is. Instead, you need to comment on why the text you quote is metaphorical; that is, what is it a metaphor for?

Substantiation and elaboration are of the utmost importance. If you do not elaborate as required, your analysis will be considered incomplete and you will achieve a failing mark, no matter how correct your identification of the devices in the poem is.

An example:

From Shakespeare's Sonnet 18:

"But thy eternal summer shall not fade" [Line 9]

Sonnet 18 comprises an extended metaphor whereby the speaker compares his beloved to summer whilst Line 9 contains a specific manifestation of this metaphor. If you were to analyse Line 9, you would receive no marks for simply stating that the line contains a metaphor and will receive a partial mark for stating that the line contains a metaphor whereby the speaker's beloved is compared to summer. A proper analysis would require you to elaborate on your assertion by exploring the meaning of the metaphor. What is 'summer' a metaphor for? This is open to interpretation, though popular metaphorical connotations to summer include youth, vibrancy and (probably most applicable to Sonnet 18) beauty or fairness. To reiterate, after identifying the metaphor in Line 9 and stating that the speaker is comparing his beloved to summer, you would need to comment on the effect of this comparison by exploring the symbolism of the metaphor.

You would of course also have to comment on the specific meaning of the phrase 'eternal summer' and then explore the meaning of the entire line.

*Note:* FYI, pertaining to extended metaphor in a poem as a whole (such as is the case with Sonnet 18), you would need to: 1. Identify and comment on the meaning of the specific instance of the extended metaphor within such and such a line (i.e. in and for itself); and 2. Comment on how the metaphor in such and such a line contributes to the extended metaphor and the creation of meaning in the poem in its entirety (i.e. its effect within the poem as a whole).

I hope this discussion topic has been helpful to your revision of Study Unit 4. If you still have any questions about or problems with Poetry Analysis, please do post these here as soon as possible.

### **Study Unit 4 Revision**->How to Section your Poetry Analysis into Paragraphs

As aforementioned, your analysis of any text for this module and for most, if not all, of the other English modules you may complete should be structured in paragraph form *without bullet points, headings or subheadings*.

How specifically should you structure your paragraphs and how many paragraphs should the 'body' of your essay essentially include? The one-idea/one-paragraph rule is somewhat of a hard and fast rule. If you have two or more ideas that fall under one overarching idea, grouping these ideas together in one paragraph is not only acceptable, it is recommended.

At this level, markers are not exceptionally strict with paragraphing. You will only be penalised if you either go with the one extreme of utilising little to no paragraphs and presenting the body of your essay as one, single difficult to read mass OR if you go with the other extreme of utilising paragraph breaks between one or two lines of text. To clarify, in an essay of 600 to 1200 words you should have about [at least] three to six supporting paragraphs and a paragraph should not be only a few lines in length.

If you have met the above basic requirements in your assignment/s and a marker has nonetheless made a comment about your paragraphing, this might be because, even though the body of your discussion might have been adequately broken up and your paragraphs are of the right length, your ideas are not logically grouped in your paragraphs. Keep in mind though, that, at this level, markers do not deduct significant marks for poor grouping of ideas under paragraphs, even if they do alert you to it in their comments. Where marks will start making a difference in this regard is if you are a distinction candidate. To achieve a distinction, your ideas need to be logically grouped in your paragraphs, and the marker will thus consider both the structure and the content of your paragraphs.

### ***How to Section your Poetry Analysis into Paragraphs***

As far as sectioning a Poetry Analysis into paragraphs is concerned, the set question might make breaking up your essay quite straightforward for you by asking you to address certain aspects of the poem in your analysis. If so, it is generally recommended that you dedicate a paragraph to each of the aspects that you are instructed to answer/discuss.

If you are not given specific questions to answer or points to discuss, you will need to section your discussion yourself. To that point, I would like to provide you with a genre-specific example of how to logically group ideas into paragraphs in a poetry analysis. I call your attention to the following paragraphs from the Poetry Model Analysis that I posted under 'Additional Resources'.

*Paragraphs:*

“In the lines “Love is not love /Which alters when it alteration finds” [Line 2 – 3], we see the personification of Love [How does love “find” anything, if it is an abstract concept?], which is carried through in the lines that follow. Note how, whilst specific human qualities are not directly attributed to love [as we would normally expect in a case of personification], Love is spoken about as though it is a conscious person with specific features. The personification of Love almost makes it the protagonist of the poem, which allows the reader to identify with the theme of the poem. That fact that Love is discussed as though it is a person with certain characteristics also aids in defining the abstract concept of true love.

The image of love as “the star to every wandering bark” [Line 7]—that is, the guiding star to lost ships—creates a high expectation of love [literally], though the speaker acknowledges that the worth of the star [or specifically, love] is not always known or appreciated [Line 8]. The image of love as a star furthermore reiterates the permanence and infallibility of love as identified in the opening lines of the poem, thereby reinforcing the theme and the speaker’s attitude towards love.”

*Comment:*

Notice how, whilst the above paragraphs from my analysis both address figurative language in the poem and both deal with the theme of love, I have nonetheless split the discussion into two paragraphs. Why? I did so because the discussion pertained to two separate aspects and images of love created by the poet—that is, love personified and the infallibility of love. It would not be incorrect to merge these paragraphs, but the ideas in them are best separated, yet kept in close confines with one another, with the one paragraph flowing to the next. Insofar your analysis of poetry is concerned, your analysis of figurative language and theme will almost always be quite extensive, and thus your discussion pertaining to the figures of speech and/or theme/s in a given poem should be broken up into a number of paragraphs. That is not to say that you should discuss each figure of speech and/or each theme you identify in a paragraph of its own; instead, you should discuss each idea in a paragraph of its own—including any and all figures of speech and devices that contribute to this idea. For example, if you are discussing the personification of love, you would need to quote and comment on all sections of the poem that contribute to that personification.

To reiterate, keep the above guideline (about three to six supporting paragraphs in an essay of 600 to 1200 words) in mind and, if a paragraph addressing a certain aspect gets to be too long, attempt to specify the discussion further and then break the single paragraph up into two or three shorter paragraphs. Again, a paragraph should also not be only a line or two in length. If it is, the point you are discussing can and should be merged with another point into one paragraph.

Best,

**Study Unit 5 Revision**->Elaboration on Approaching Drama Analysis

This discussion follows on the ‘How to ...’ set of guidelines I posted in the ‘Assignment 2’ forum; if you have not yet done so, please read through that discussion before consulting this one. Also, in addition to (and ideally *before*) perusing these two genre-specific sets of guidelines, please peruse the general critical analysis guideline topic—titled ‘Recap on Understanding the What, Why and How of a Text’—that I posted in the ‘Study Unit 1 Revision’ forum.

*Drama Analysis: Additional Aspects (Part 2 of the Drama Analysis 'How to' I posted in the 'Assignment 2' forum)*

Your analysis of a given Drama extract would depend on the specificities of the set question, but in general a set Drama question may, in addition to the main aspects touched on in the above-noted 'How to ...' discussion, require you to consider the following particular aspects.

*Comedy versus Tragedy*

Please refer to pages 61—62 in the Study Guide for a breakdown of what constitutes comedy and tragedy respectively. Remember that you should base your assertion of whether you deem a play extract to be comedy or tragedy on the information provided in the given text. Please also remember that you need to support your assertion of whether the play in question is comedic or tragic—it is not sufficient to simply state as that it 'is' a comedy or tragedy, you need to explain why you say so.

*Character Creation [through Dialect and Idiolect]*

In addition to consulting Study Unit 5 in the Study Guide, you may refer to the 'Characterisation' point in the 'How to' topic. For more specific guidance on how to determine what the way in which a character speaks may reveal about him/her, you might also like to download and peruse the 'Drama [and Conversation] Model Analysis' that I posted under 'Additional Resources' on this site. In the model analysis, I specifically consider what the way in which Shawn and Pegeen speak reveals about their characters, which you may find a helpful example.

*Use of Soliloquy/Monologue*

There is not much clarification that I can offer on this aspect beyond what is included in Study Unit 5 in the Study Guide (refer in particular to the section titled 'Different types of dialogue' on page 67). Remember to motivate your answer as to whether or not the given extract is a soliloquy/monologue by explaining what does/does not make it a soliloquy/monologue and commenting on effect.

*Figures of Speech/Rhetorical Devices*

In order to identify and comment on the rhetorical devices (otherwise known as figures of speech) used in the given extract you would of course need to have a sound knowledge of the main rhetorical devices that may be utilised by an author/playwright. Consult Addendum A (Tutorial Letter 101) and the glossary of the prescribed text by Goatly (pages 329—345) in order to brush up on your knowledge of rhetorical devices/figures of speech. Whilst the set question may not specifically instruct you to also comment on the rhetorical devices you identify in the text, please remember that you always have to at the very least briefly comment on the effect of the devices utilised in a set text.

*Influence of the Possibility of Performance on the Text*

You need to keep in mind that a Drama text would necessarily need to be more descriptive than—for example—a Prose/Fiction text, because a Drama text is written for performance and thus needs to provide the director with enough information to set the scene and direct the actors on what actions to perform/how to conduct themselves. The setting of the scene and actor direction are normally found in the stage directions, but if little or no stage direction is included, the director will need to look at the content of the dramatic dialogue for the necessary information. With this in mind, you need to consider the descriptive quality of the given drama extract and (i) imagine how

seeing the text performed may differ from merely reading it; and (ii) consider how the author/playwright made the text purposefully descriptive for performance.

I hope this discussion has been helpful. If you have a query or concern about drama analysis in general or about anything I have stated above, please do not hesitate to ask.

Best,