**ENGLISH 1 2019**

**FIRST TERM**

**YELLOW TUTORIAL MATERIAL**

****

**ENGLISH 1: FIRST SEMESTER 2019 Yellow tutorials**

**Yellow tutorials happen between Wednesday afternoon and Friday; check ROSS and the noticeboards for your tutorial and room number.**

**Worksheets are handed in to your tutor at your tutorial.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LECTURE**  **TERM 2 TE R M 1** |  | **YELLOW TUTORIAL** | **ASSESSMENT** |
| **Week 1: 13-15 Feb**  ***Short Stories*** |  | No Tutorials |  |
| **Week 2: 20-22 Feb**  ***Short Stories*** |  | What kind of thing is this text? |  |
| **Week 3: 27 Feb-1 Mar**  ***Nervous Conditions***  **(Lynda Spencer)** |  | What’s the story? | **Worksheet 1 due** |
| **Week 4: 06-08 Mar**  ***Nervous Conditions***  **(Lynda Spencer)** |  | Points of view | **Worksheet 2 due** |
| **Week 5: 13-15 Mar**  **What is this thing called Poetry?**  **(Deborah Seddon)** |  | What is literary criticism? | **Worksheet 3 due** |
| **Week 6: 20-22 Mar**  **What is this thing called Poetry?**  **(Deborah Seddon)**  **22 March- Human Rights Day** |  | Sentenced to life: Syntax | **Worksheet 4 due** |
| **Week 7: 27-29 Mar**  ***Death and the Maiden***  **(Sue Marais)** |  | Who’s stealing what?! | **Worksheet 5 due.** |
| **MID-SEMESTER VACATION**  **30 March-14 April** | | | |
| **Week 8: 17-19 Apr**  ***Death and the Maiden***  **(Sue Marais)**  **19 April-Good Friday** |  | “What’s the question?’ | **Worksheet 6 due.** |
| **Week 9:24-26 Apr**  **South African Poetry**  **(Dirk Klopper)** |  | Bad Sentence! | **Worksheet 7 due** |
| **Week 10: 01-03 May**  **South African Poetry**  **(Dirk Klopper)**  **01 May- Workers Day** |  | “May I introduce … and conclude” | **Worksheet 8 due** |
| **Week 11: 08-10 May**  ***Ubu &TRC***  **(Sue Marais)** |  | Truth and reconciliation | **Worksheet 9 due** |
| **Week 12: 15-17 May**  ***Ubu &TRC***  **(Sue Marais)** |  | Library Workshop (TBC) |  |
| **Week 13: 23-25 May**  ***Young Blood***  **(Sue Marais)** |  | Young Blood | **Worksheet 10 due** |

**Using these tutorial sheets**

**Lectures** are delivered in order to guide you through the syllabus, demonstrate essential skills, and stimulate further thought.

**Tutorials** are small-group discussions. These sheets contain each week’s work. The questions on each sheet are to guide your own inquiries into the text at hand, week by week.

For these yellow tutorials, you will be handing in hard copies of your answers to the questions each week as indicated on the worksheets. The worksheets may be handwritten or typed. The first page must be headed with essential information (name, tutorial group etc) as specified in the Course Guide.)

These tutorials will review the work so far, further back up the lectures, and provide guidance on the work to come.

If you do not prepare adequately for your tutorials, your tutor has the right to mark you absent. This will count against your DP, which stipulates that you *must* attend 90% of all tutorials.

**Outcomes**

We expect:

* that by the end of the year, you will have thoroughly read *all*  the set work;
* that you have completed and handed in *all* the required written work;
* that you will be able to express your knowledge and arguments in the form of a coherent essay;
* that you will begin to demonstrate *independent thinking:* it is *not* expected that you will simply regurgitate the opinions of your lecturers or tutors, though it *is* expected that you learn certain crucial skills from them;
* that you will have mastered the crucial vocabularies and habits specific to literary criticism and analytic argumentation.

**TUTORIAL 1**

WEEK 2: Weds p.m. 20 Feb – Fri 22 Feb

***INSTRUCTIONS. Read this worksheet right through. Once you’re clear on what you need to do, write or type your answers in the given order. Make sure you include at the top of your first page the information needed, as laid out in the Course Guide (same as for essays).***

**Hand your answers in to your “Yellow” tutor in the tutorial.**

What kind of thing is this text?

Writers write about stuff for a reason: there is a **why** – even when the writer may not be thinking too precisely about that. Writers also choose a **how** **–** a particular form or style or format – often called a **genre**.

**QUESTION 1**. Look up “genre” in a decent dictionary of literary terms (eg M H Abrams *Glossary of Literary Terms*). Your pocket dictionary won’t cut it.) In the space on the answer sheet, explain where the word comes from, and enter a definition of “genre” *in your own words*.

A great deal of world literature, throughout history, might be said to be about **love**. Passionate and romantic love; family love; love of places or of animals; love thwarted by war or accident; warped or misguided or crazy love.

Consider these three pieces of writing about love. Each is written in one of the three main literary genres: *drama, prose fiction*, and *poetry*. In the spaces on the Answer Sheet, identify each text’s genre, and explain in a little detail how you recognised the genre. What exactly is it about its layout or its features that allows you to identify its genre?

1. **Carol Ann Duffy: “Hand”**

Away from you, I hold hands with the air,

your imagined, untouchable hand. Not there,

your fingers braid with mine as we walk.

Far away in my heart, you begin to talk.

I squeeze the air, kicking the auburn leaves,

everything suddenly gold. I half believe

your hand is holding mine, the way

it would if you were here. What do you say

in my heart? I bend my head to listen, then feel

your hand reach out and stroke my hair, as real

as the wind caressing the fretful trees above.

Now I can hear you clearly, speaking of love.

1. **Guess which text this is from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ !**

*Ben:* Tell me in sadness who is that you love?

*Romeo:* What, shall I groan and tell thee?

*Ben:* Groan? Why no, but sadly tell me who.

*Romeo:* Bid a sick man in sadness make his will?

A word ill-urg’d to one that is so ill.

In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

*Ben.* I aim’d so near when I suppos’d you lov’d.

*Romeo:* A right good marksman; and she’s fair I love.

*[…]* Show me a mistress that is passing fair;

What doth her beauty serve but as a note

Where I may read who pass’d that passing fair?

Farewell, thou canst not teach me to forget.

*Ben:* I’ll pay that doctrine or else die in debt. *Exeunt.*

1. **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun***

The first few times she called Kainene that evening, there was no answer. Perhaps Kainene was in Lagos. She called again at night and when Kainene said, ‘Hello,’ she sounded hoarse.

‘*Ejima m*,’ Olanna said. ‘Do you have a cold?’

‘You fucked Richard.’

Olanna stood up.

‘You’re the good one.’ Kainene’s voice was controlled. ‘The good one shouldn’t fuck her sister’s lover.’

Olanna sank down on the puff and realized that what she felt was relief. Kainene knew. She would no longer have to worry about Kainene finding out. She was free to feel real remorse.

**QUESTION 2.** Now choose ONE of these pieces, and “translate” it into any one of the other genres. (That is to say: for example, what might the drama piece look like if it were written as a poem; or the story as a piece of drama?) There is no one way of doing this – have fun with it.

**QUESTION 3.** Look up the *Song of Solomon* – in your Bible or online. Read Chapter 3 in particular Does it fit snugly into any of the genres you have defined so far? If not, why not?

**An argument:** Scholars disagree on whether *Song of Solomon* is really a love-tribute between two people, or symbolises love of a worshipper for the Church? Based on what you have read of the text itself, what is your impression?

**Creative corner:** Imagine and write, as a prose fiction piece of no more than 150 words, the view of the missing partner implied by Duffy’s account above. Who is s/he, and what might s/he be thinking?

**PRE-READING QUIZ:**

(This is to get you reading ahead and thinking about the text being studied next week, which in this case is Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*).

1. From whose quotation is the novel’s title derived? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does ‘Babamukuru’ mean? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Of what is Nyasha’s anorexia symbolic? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is Nyasha’s main hobby later in the novel? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the name of the nearest town in the novel’s setting? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**TUTORIAL 2**

WEEK 3: Weds p.m. 27 Feb – Fri 1 March

What’s the story?

Much of the US president’s power to represent and to inspire comes from *narrative*. It is largely through the stories he tells or personifies, and through the stories told about him, that a president exerts moral force and fashions a nation-defining legacy. Like all of us, presidents create in their minds personal life stories—or what psychologists call narrative identities—to explain how they came to be who they are. This process is often unconscious, involving the selective reinterpretation of the past and imagination of the future. A growing body of research in personality, developmental, and social psychology demonstrates that a life story provides adults with a sense of coherence, purpose, and continuity over time.  (Dan P McAdams, *The Atlantic*)

Humans have told stories to one another since time began. Stories are about the passage of time, and depend on the passage of time to unfold – one thing following another. Why do stories seem so important to us? And what *is* a “story”, anyway? Is there a difference between “story”, “plot”, “tale” and “narrative”?

Look up each of these terms, and explain briefly for yourself in what ways they differ and/or overlap.

The English novelist E M Forster famously wrote:

A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality – “The king died and then the queen died” is a **story**. “The king died and then the queen died *of grief*” is a **plot.**'

What kind of story we think we are reading, affects how we define and respond to its *purpose*. The following is one version of a Nigerian tale which may be centuries old, its original author long lost, if there ever was one.

**The Skull on the Path**

A hunter went out one day into the forest to hunt. He walked along this path and that, looking and looking. He found himself on a game-trail he had not walked along before. Suddenly he stopped, for there on the side of the trail lay a skull – a human skull. The hunter leaned on his spear and contemplated the skull. After a while he said aloud to himself, “Well, I wonder what brought *you* here?” To his astonishment, the skull replied. And the skull said: “Talking brought me here.”

Frightened out of his wits, the hunter scrambled away and raced back to the village. At the edge of the forest he met some children playing. “You will never believe what I saw,” he panted, “I saw a skull that spoke to me!” The children just stared disbelievingly. Near the stream he met some women drawing water. He shouted, “I heard a skull that spoke to me, what do you make of that?” The women laughed, and shook their heads; the hunter must be mad, they said. Finally the hunter met some men at the village, and stammered out his story. The men took him to the elders to report this strange event. The elders conferred. At last they said:

“It is difficult to believe this thing, but if it is true you have been greatly privileged. We cannot call you a liar. So you will take with you two soldiers. You will find this skull and you get it to speak. If it is found you were lying, the soldiers will kill you on the spot. Is it agreed?”

“Agreed,” said the hunter. He walked back into the forest; the soldiers walked behind him with their spears. They came to the place where the skull lay as before.

“Speak to me,” said the hunter to the skull. But the skull said nothing. The hunter tried the question he had first asked: “I wonder what brought you here?” But the skull was silent. All the rest of that day, the hunter tried to coax the skull to speak. But the skull did not.

Sunset came, and the soldiers killed the hunter and left him there. As their footsteps died away into the distance, the skull said to the dead man’s head, “I wonder what brought you here?”

And the dead man’s head said, “Talking brought me here.”

**QUESTION 1:** Would you define this as a ‘fairy story’? A ‘folktale’? A ‘parable’? A reflection of reality? Depending on your decision, explain how your classification might affect your sense of the story’s purpose. (150 words)

**QUESTION 2:** Complete the sentence: I think this story is about …

(max 6 words, i.e. encapsulate what you take to be the story’s *theme* or central issue or question)

**QUESTION 3:**  Read Chapter 3 of *Nervous Conditions*. First jot down on scrap paper what you think are its main events. Then write out a narrative, flowing **summary** of the chapter, in no more than 150 words.

**NB**. Summary is a vital skill that needs practice; it is the art of choosing the most important information, discarding the inessential, and stitching together a coherent version for quick digestion. Summary is different from *interpreting* the story, i.e. deriving from it what you think it is ‘about’.

**CREATIVE CORNER:** How long is a ‘novel’? How short is a short story?

Here is a complete ‘short story’ by American Lydia Davis:

*A Strange Impulse*

I looked down on the street from my window. The sun shone and the shopkeepers had come out to stand in the warmth and watch the people go by. But why were the shopkeepers covering their ears? And why were the people in the street running as if pursued by a terrible spectre? Soon everything returned to normal: the incident had been no more than a moment of madness during which the people could not bear the frustration of their lives and had given way to the strange impulse.

(From *The Collected Stories of Lydia Davis*; Picador, 2009:700).

Read Lydia Davis’s insightful account of how she wrote one story:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/07/lydia-daviss-very-short-stories/372286/>

Note the crucial phrase she uses: **“every word is ripe for scrutiny”**. This is the essence of writing and literary criticism alike.

Ernest Hemingway claimed that his best work was a minimalist short story comprising only six words:

“For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

To read more six-word short stories, many written by recognised fiction writers, see <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.11/sixwords.html>.

Try writing a 60- word story. Then try writing a 6-word story!

**PRE-READING QUIZ.**

Next week we begin exploring poetry. Although poems can’t be just reduced to a bundle of technical bits, it is necessary to be able to recognise some common features of poetic discourse. Try these examples drawn from your lectures:

1. Is the following an example of *metaphor* or *simile*?

You kissed me. It was lighter fuel. (Kate Tempest)

1. Is the following an example of *assonance* or *alliteration*?

And Debauchee of Dew – (Emily Dickinson)

1. Do the following lines contain *parallelism*; or *chiasmus*; or both?

and these are the forces they had ranged against us,  
and these are the forces we had ranged within us,  
within us and against us, against us and within us. (Adrienne Rich)

**TUTORIAL 3**

WEEK 4: Weds p.m. 6 March – Fri 8 March

Points of view

We all have a “point of view” on things. This can be meant in different ways. It might be simply a matter of position in **space**, eg:

From where I was standing on the cliff -top, I could see all the way down the valley – and I could see that, far below, Dan was blissfully unaware of the dangerous bagel creeping up on him.

Or it could be a matter of progression **in time**, eg:

As an adult, Jane realised that her childhood ideas of love had been wildly mistaken.

Or it could be a matter of opinion or **theory:**

In my view, Dumela hadn’t the faintest idea what was meant by “love”; he didn’t realise that “true love” was more than a romantic flash of ecstasy, but involved the daily grind of commitment and routine.

It can be readily seen that having a “point of view” distinguishes one from others: out of this difference, stories are spun!

**Narrative point-of-view** can involve all of the above, but also has a specific meaning. “Narrative point of view” describes *the point of view created by a writer for an invented character*. As we’ll see, it can get much more complicated, but there are two common and essential types:

1. **First-person narrative:** this is delivered by an “I” - the narrator is a character in the story, and the reader receives everything through that one person’s eyes. This character-narrator can be either:
   1. *central* (the main character or protagonist, eg. Holden in *Catcher in the Rye*), or
   2. *peripheral* (a minor character observing from the sidelines, eg. Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby*).
2. **Third-person narrative**: this is delivered ‘impersonally’ by a narrator who is *not* a character in the story; there is no “I”, only “he”, “she”, ”they”.

Third-person narration can be of two main types:

a) Third-person *limited*: the story is narrated by a third-person narrator, but is focalised mostly through one character; or

b) Third-person *omniscient* (all-knowing): the narrator moves freely, like a kind of roving camera, from one character to another, one mind or place to another.

**For more detailed discussion, a reasonable website is:**

[**http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/point-of-view/**](http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/point-of-view/)

A writer chooses a narrative point of view in order to achieve particular effects; it affects the way a reader responds to the story. Each mode involves certain strengths and limitations, and dictates how information can be selected and distributed to the reader.

**QUESTION 1.** Identify the narrative points of view displayed in the following three extracts (all from works you have encountered, or will do later in the course):

1. I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologising for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling. For it is not that at all. I feel many things these days, much more than I was able to feel in the days when I was young and my brother died, and there are reasons for this more than the mere consequence of age. Therefore I shall not apologise but begin by recalling the facts as I remember them that led up to my brother’s death, the events that put me in a position to write this account.
2. All the gentlemen, except Gabriel, ate some of the pudding out of compliment to Aunt Julia. As Gabriel never ate sweets the celery had been left for him. He had been told that celery was a capital thing for the blood and he was just then under doctor’s care. Mrs Malins, who had been silent all through the supper, said that her son was going down to Mount Melleray in a week or so. The [people round the] table then spoke of Mount Melleray, how bracing the air was down there, how hospitable the monks were and how they never asked for a penny-piece from their guests.
3. The man kept one arm around the woman, while with the other he held a bottle of cold beer. He had the television set on, and insisted that he would watch the Independence celebrations first. He had already given her the money, and she kept it knotted in a yellow heandkerchief which she had tied on the strap of her bra. The stadium, usually reserved for soccer matches, was filled to capacity. First there was traditonal dancing in the middle of the stadium. The woman withdrew into the safe space in her mind, and watched the pictures go by on the screen.

**QUESTION 2.**  What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of a) first-person narration, and b) omniscient narration? What kinds of narrative freedom or restriction does each mode involve? (150 words)

Stories unfold in **time**.

How does a writer indicate the passage of time, and the relationship in time of one event to another? Some indicators are obvious: *Seven years later…; After a while she said…; The previous day she had…* But others are more subtle: changes in verb tense (past tense (*he did it*), past perfect tense (*He had done it*)), references to remembering or looking ahead, indicators of season etc.

**QUESTION 3**. What indicators of time can you pick up in Extract A, above? What hints are given about the position in time of the narrator as against the event(s) she refers to? How does the passage of time correlate to a shift in attitude on the part of the narrator? (150 words)

**QUESTION 4: An argument**

In what ways would you say any or all of these extracts are “about” (thematically concerned with) *a tension or struggle between callousness and generosity*? (150 words)

**CREATIVE CORNER**

Now try re-writing ONE of these extracts, using a different form of narration. That is: try shifting first-person into third-person, or vice versa. Or you might like to take the point of view of one of the characters in the extract, and re-write the same events, but from that person’s different point of view.

**TUTORIAL 4**

WEEK 5: Weds p.m. 13 March – Fri 15 March

Now we’ve gone through a couple of approaches to literary pieces, consider this question:

**WHAT IS “LITERARY CRITICISM”?**

We’re at the beginning of learning to becoming “literary critics”. What kind of **criticism** is this?

QUESTION 1: What definitions of the word “criticism” does your dictionary supply? Do any of them throw light on the question? (The entry on the Dictionary Page attached will give you a start; the *Oxford English Dictionary [OED] Online* is the best of all.)

Literary criticism involves two main stages:

- *reading* works of literature attentively, with specific questions in mind;

- *writing* out our answers to those questions in the form of extended arguments.

**Reading**

The questions we might bring to our reading vary widely, but they can be said to fall into four broad areas: **linguistic, structural, contextual, and theoretical**. In practice, we are usually dealing with all these areas at once, but in these worksheets we’ll try to tease them apart a bit.

For the moment, we’ll will focus on “linguistic” aspects, drawing mainly on the poems you’re studying in lectures and tutorials. The three aspects we concentrate on for now are *diction, syntax* and *structure*.

**Diction**

Diction means simply **the choice of individual words**. Writers work with fierce concentration to choose exactly the right word for the intended effect, and it is only respectful that we concentrate similarly when we are reading.

**Words are all ‘parts of speech’**

Communication couldn’t happen unless we roughly agreed what particular words mean. Write down definitions of, and make sure you can recognise, the following basic “big five”: ***verbs, adverbs; nouns, adjectives; conjunctions.***

QUESTION 2: Read the following stanza from ”God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins, and list on the answer sheet which words are which of the Big Five:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?\*

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man’s smudge, and shares man’s smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

(\* Note: ie: “Why don’t men nowadays recognize his authority?” The oil is probably olive oil.)

**QUESTION 3. Briefly discuss the effects of this diction in ONE paragraph**. Does any part of speech predominate? Does this help us decide and evaluate WHAT the piece is about? Hopkins was writing over a hundred years ago, but is his subject relevant today? Can you find THREE adjectives OF YOUR OWN that you think describe.Hopkins’s attitude, feeling, or tone towards his subject in this stanza? (150 words)

**QUESTION 4.** As always, writers see a “rule”, then instantly violate it! What happens when a word that is usually one part of speech (a noun, say) is changed in a particular text or over time to another (a verb, say)? Hopkins did this regularly: for example, he invented the verbs “selve” and “unselve”, derived from the noun “self”.

Write down, and briefly comment on, an instance *in your own context* in which such a switch in usage has been made recently (eg in computer language, or business-speak)?

**Words have histories**

The point implicit in the last question is that language-use changes over time, and from one place to another. Words change in meaning. The English language developed over centuries, finding roots in Latin, French, Anglo-Saxon, German, and thereafter borrowing and absorbing other languages globally. And it continues to develop: We now talk of many ‘Englishes’.

**QUESTION 5**: Survey the accompanying dictionary page. Choose THREE words whose origin is other than mainstream English. What do you know of the history behind the acquisition of those words?

English has also contributed to other languages. If you can speak a language other than English, can you think of an example of a borrowing or adaptation from English (or another language)?

**QUESTION 6:** Words can sometimes be placed in – or be indicators of – their specific time and place. Which words in the following extract mark it as **specifically South African**? Why does the author (Jeremy Cronin, “To learn how to speak”) choose these particular words, and how does this choice reflect his overall purpose? (100 words. It might help you to look up and read the complete poem.)

To write a poem with words like:

I’m telling you,

Stompie, stickfast, golovan,

Songololo, just boombang, just

To understand the least inflections,

To voice without swallowing

Syllables born in tin-shacks, or catch

The 5.15 ikwata bust fife

Chwannisbeg train, to reach

The low chant of the mine gang’s

Mineral glow of our people’s unbreakable resolve.

**CREATIVE CORNER**:

Write a very brief poem or story using diction which speaks of a recognisable and particular time and place. (You could tie it to a foreign place, a past era, a fantasy world…)

**NB: Next Thursday is a public holiday. If your tutorial falls on a Thursday, consult your tutor about handing-in arrangements**.

**TUTORIAL 5**

WEEK 6: Weds p.m. 20 March – Fri 22 March

**Thursday 21 March Human Rights Day: Please make alternative arrangements for tutorials that fall on the day**

Sentenced for life: SYNTAX

‘Syntax’ simply means ‘Sentence structure’. You have to understand what a sentence is, at least in Standard English. Only when you understand the basics of the standard sentence will you understand what writers are doing when they warp, depart from or rebel against those standard structures.

The old joke: What is the shortest sentence in the Bible: *Jesus wept*. This is a complete sentence because it has a SUBJECT (Jesus, the person doing the action) and a VERB (the action). Every sentence needs this basic, the beginning signalled by a capital letter and ending with a full-stop. This is the case no matter how complex the sentence gets:

**Example:** The dog barked and then ran to welcome its owner

(*Compound sentence*, with another clause added, using *and* or *but*, and two verbs, *barked* and *ran.*)

**Example:** The dog, which was welcoming its owner, barked furiously.

(*Complex sentence*, with a subordinate clause (highlighted) slipped in between subject and verb, and the addition of an adverb. Note the use of commas to signal beginning and end of the inserted clause.)

Such grammatical observations are not just a set of rules to conform to; they also offer an infinite wealth of possibilities for stylistic effect.

**Some basic thoughts**:

You cannot learn enough about grammar; the more refined your understanding, the better your analyses. Consult the *Collins CoBuild Grammar* or similar guide.

Accurate grammar also incorporates accurate punctuation. Again, punctuation is not just a set of regulations. Punctuation marks are tools of meaning, signals to the reader as to where the sentence is going.

The combination of diction and syntax, crudely put, constitutes STYLE. One of our primary tasks as literary critics is to describe and evaluate a writer’s style.

**Take the following two extracts.** A reasonably well-read person will recognise the two writers immediately from their style. You should be able to identify the first as you have studied this story:

A)

He picked up the two heavy bags and carried them around the station to the other tracks. He looked up the tracks but could not see the train. Coming back, he walked through the bar-room, where people waiting for the train were drinking. He drank an Anis at the bar and looked at the people. They were all waiting reasonably for the train. He went out through the bead curtain. She was sitting at the table and smiled at him.

You might consider such questions as: Which of the following parts of speech dominate: verbs, nouns, conjunctions, adjectives, adverbs? What does the writer seem to want us to focus on as a result? What part of speech is the word “reasonably”? Why does it stick out in its context? Does this in any way emphasise the possible themes of the whole story?

The next passage is from another American novel, Henry James’ *Portrait of a Lady*.

B)

It often seemed to her that she thought too much about herself; you could have made her colour, any day of the year, by calling her a rank egoist. She was always planning out her development, desiring her perfection, observing her progress. Her nature had, in her conceit, a certain garden-like quality, a suggestion of perfume and murmuring boughs, of shady bowers and lengthening vistas, which made her feel that introspection was, after all, an exercise in the open air, and that a vista to the recesses of one’s spirit was harmless when one returned from it with a lapful of roses.

QUESTION 1.

Locating the two passages on the following ‘scales’ might also give us a handle. Write H (for Hemingway) and J (for James) alongside what you would see as the appropriate number on each line:

Simple 1 2 3 4 5 Complex

Action 1 2 3 4 5 Thought

Exterior 1 2 3 4 5 Interior

Direct 1 2 3 4 5 Meandering

Compound... 1 2 3 4 5 Complex sentences

Short words 1 2 3 4 5 Long words

QUESTION 2.

Style is much more complicated than this rough comparison, but it’s a start. Using some of these handles, now in a short paragraph try to explain in what ways James’s style is different from Hemingway’s.(150 words)

Consider, if you wish: how many adjectives and adverbs are used, compared to Hemingway? Are more complex or compound sentences used? How many comparisons (ie figures of speech like metaphors or similes) are used in each case?

QUESTION 3.

Have fun with the James passage. Pretend you are an editor. You find James’s style unbearably flowery; you want to cut it down to something more like Hemingway, while keeping the basic sense. What would the result look like?

In academic writing, we use Standard English exclusively. But obviously many writers, especially poets, deliberately violate the rules. The following South African poem (an extract from “Winter 2003” by Rustum Kozain), points to South Africa’s language issues through specific uses of diction and syntax.

And *witmanstaal* the slave’s tongue

in caricature,

The *djy en djou* of the laughing coon

the snoek and jam

the picture expected of me.

But all I am, will ever be

is a different tree.

So fuck Caliban\* and his iambic task.

Still, some cry: victimhood.

And some say: yes, no more victim

and, head held high

we work hard

to achieve our own accounts

to make our lives

to forget

what with

blacks pon di radio

blacks pon tv

wi sir and wi lord and wi m.b.e.

a figat wi figat ar a it dat?

\*Caliban is a character from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, which you will study later in the year. He is an ugly kind of servant to the lord Prospero, and complains that he has only been taught to curse.

QUESTION 4

Write a brief response to Kozain’s poem, showing how diction and syntax are deployed to enhance or illustrate his theme. (150 words)

HINT: Read poems at first sentence by sentence (fullstop to fullstop, as if it were prose). Then the basic sense often becomes clearer.

You might consider: use of different languages (multilingualism); the way stanzas break across sentences – why? Choose some examples to work with in your answer, don’t try to do it all; it’s a rich extract. What the main theme is, is for you to decide: there may be many different answers.

**TUTORIAL 6**

WEEK 7: Weds p.m. 27 March – Fri 29 March

**Who’s stealing what?!**

**Plagiarism: What is it, and why is it important?**

The University policy basically defines plagiarism as “writing into your essay or project somebody else’s words or ideas and pretending they are your own”.

**The issues**

1. It is dishonest.
2. It is lazy.
3. It means you are not doing the work, getting the actual practice you need to acquire a skill. (It’s a bit like watching cricket on TV and then thinking you can bat and bowl yourself. Not so! You have to get out into the actual field, practice and practice.)
4. You are developing a mind-set of dependency instead of independence, following blindly instead of creating and leading. (Pathetic, isn’t it?)

**The solution**

Easy really: NEVER cut and paste; and ALWAYS reference your sources (see the Referencing sections in your *Guide to Writing Essays*.)

The basic idea is this: Of course others will have said and written lovely things about the text you are studying; can you do anything original? Maybe not in the bigger picture: but what you do now is original to you. All we are asking is for you to think independently about stuff. So by all means pick up an observation or an idea from another writer or critic – but follow up with your own thinking and response.

For example: “Andrew Offenburger writes that General Cheeseburger is ‘a writer of rare delicacy’ (Offenburger 2017: 203). I agree/disagree because …”

**A case study**

If only it were always so easy. In the “creative field” it can be more complicated. The following case study involves a novelist (Zakes Mda) allegedly plagiarising from a historian (Jeff Peires). The accusation involves Mda’s depiction of a crucial event in Xhosa history, the 1856 Cattle-Killing. (You would benefit from reading a little about it in other sources.)

The exercises are designed to test the following

1. Your ability to summarise (we’ve had one practice, in CCW2; this will test you a bit further)
2. Your ability to distinguish good argument from bad.
3. Your understanding of plagiarism itself.

**A pointer:** In the academic field, an argument is not about emotionally-driven mud-slinging: it is defined as *the use of clear evidence in support of a logically coherent interpretation or claim.*

**Question 1.**

Summarise the Andrew Offenburger article “On authorship and originality: a response” (150 words).

**How to do this**: Read the article carefully. Isolate what you take to be the five or six main points you think Offenburger is making. Cut out personal asides, detailed evidence, and repetitions. Then try to weld those main points into a single coherent paragraph starting, perhaps, “Offenburger argues that…”

(A good way – not the only way – to organise the paragraph would be “Firstly, Secondly,… Thirdly… etc.)

**Question 2.**

Assess the extract from a response by Stephen Gray (a very well-known South African academic and writer), and the third letter, “Dark force closing in on Mda”. Are either of these strong arguments (in terms of the definition given above)? Why or why not? (100 words)

**Question 3.**

Let’s imagine that Peires did decide to take Mda to court. Imagine you are the judge in the case. Briefly summarise your judgement. In your summary, outline the main questions the case raised for you, and make a reasoned decision on whether or not Mda should be prosecuted. (150 words).

(Don’t worry: Mr Mda will never get to hear of your opinion!)