

Tipping Able Students into Merit and Excellence...

Strategies to encourage
more sophisticated
paragraphs in literary
essays ...

Introductions ...

A brief chat with the person beside you ...

Two quick questions ...

- 1. Dogs or cats?**
- 2. What are the barriers that you see that prevent able students from tipping over into the higher grade boundaries when writing essays?**

Aims for today's workshop

- To see the usefulness of the NZQA markers' reports as a means of directing essay content
- To consider a range of different strategies which you and your students can use to add sophistication to their literature essays
- To see a possible process for implementing these in your classrooms
- To take away some useful resources



<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aims..JPG>

Where does this come from?

A slowly developing, gradually fermenting, quietly percolating idea that's grown throughout my career.

No debate - Feedback impacts on learning

The BEST feedback - not just a 'What' but a 'How'

Feedback ...



From NZQA Markers' Reports

- MERIT candidates typically ...

developed their points reasonably fully and supported them with a range of examples and evidence

- discussed questions in relation to the writer's purpose**
- showed some understanding of a key aspect's importance to the text(s) as a whole**
- presented individualised and personalised responses to texts that they had engaged**
- used linking phrases to lead to analysis and discussion of the writer's purpose.**

Excellence Candidates typically ...

- developed a 'beyond the lines' reading centred on the text itself
- demonstrated genuine understanding of the whole text
- wrote with maturity and fluency revealing an impressive personal understanding
- connected writer's purpose, techniques and appreciation of their impact on readers
- understood the social/political/historical contexts of the text.

How can we direct our students to meet these descriptors?




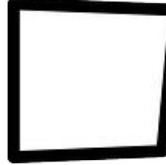
<http://pixabay.com/en/question-mark-exclamation-point-63981/>


The idea ...

Teach them **HOW** to lift the sophistication of their responses

Give a choice of strategies to use, to suit individual preferences, and particular texts.

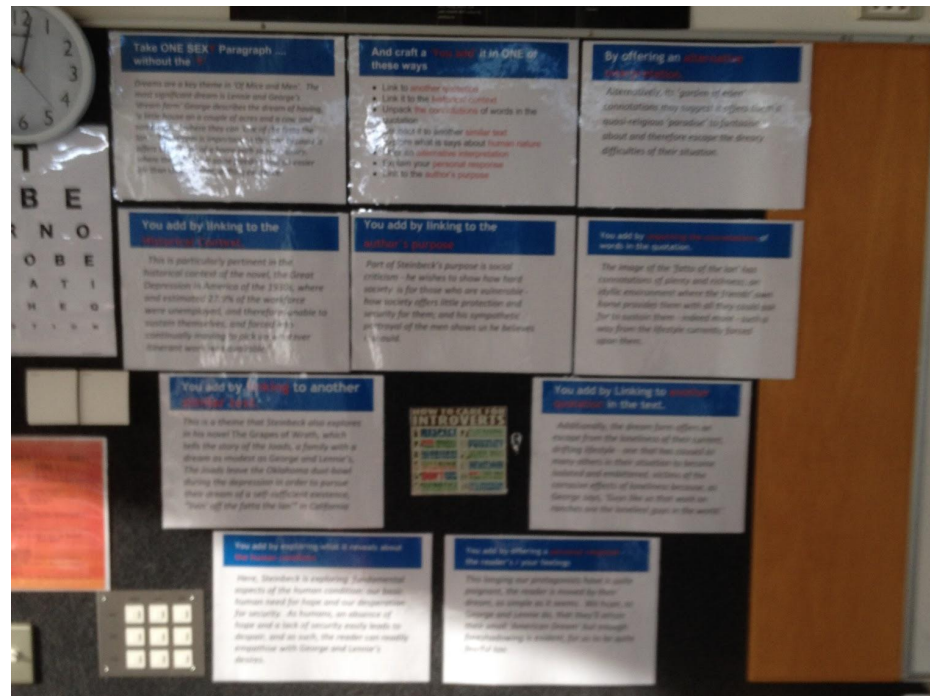






The key resource ...

One paragraph ... done eight ways.



Take ONE SEXY Paragraph without the 'Y'

Dreams are a key theme in 'Of Mice and Men'. The most significant dream is Lennie and George's 'dream farm' George describes the dream of having, 'a little house on a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs...' where they can 'Live off the fatta the lan.' This dream is important to the men because it offers them hope of a home with some stability, where they can have some freedom and an easier life than their present, drifting existence.

And craft a 'You add' in ONE of these ways

- Link to **another quotation**
- Link it to the **historical context**
- Unpack **the connotations** of words in the quotation
- Connect it to another **similar text**
- Explore what it says about **human nature**
- Offer an **alternative interpretation**
- Explain your **personal response**
- Link to the **author's purpose**

By Linking to another quotation in the text.

Dreams are a key theme in 'Of Mice and Men'. The most significant dream is Lennie and George's 'dream farm' George describes the dream of having, 'a little house on a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs...' where they can 'Live off the fatta the lan.' This dream is important to the men because it offers them hope of a home with some stability, where they can have some freedom and an easier life than their present, drifting existence. Additionally, the dream farm offers an escape from the loneliness of their current, drifting lifestyle - one that has caused so many others in their situation to become isolated and embittered, victims of the corrosive effects of loneliness because, as George says, 'Guys like us that work on ranches are the loneliest guys in the world.'

By linking to the Historical Context.

Dreams are a key theme in 'Of Mice and Men'. The most significant dream is Lennie and George's 'dream farm' George describes the dream of having, 'a little house on a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs...' where they can 'Live off the fatta the lan.' This dream is important to the men because it offers them hope of a home with some stability, where they can have some freedom and an easier life than their present, drifting existence. This is particularly pertinent in the historical context of the novel, the Great Depression in America of the 1930s, where and estimated 27.9% of the workforce were unemployed, and therefore unable to sustain themselves, and forced into continually moving to pick up whatever itinerant work was available.

By unpacking the connotations of words in the quotation.

Dreams are a key theme in 'Of Mice and Men'. The most significant dream is Lennie and George's 'dream farm' George describes the dream of having, 'a little house on a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs...' where they can 'Live off the fatta the lan.' This dream is important to the men because it offers them hope of a home with some stability, where they can have some freedom and an easier life than their present, drifting existence.

The image of the 'fatta of the lan' has connotations of plenty and richness; an idyllic environment where the friends' own home provides them with all they could ask for to sustain them - indeed more - such a way from the lifestyle currently forced upon them.

By linking to another similar text.

Dreams are a key theme in 'Of Mice and Men'. The most significant dream is Lennie and George's 'dream farm' George describes the dream of having, 'a little house on a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs...' where they can 'Live off the fatta the lan.' This dream is important to the men because it offers them hope of a home with some stability, where they can have some freedom and an easier life than their present, drifting existence. This is a theme that Steinbeck also explores in his novel The Grapes of Wrath, which tells the story of the Joads, a family with a dream as modest as George and Lennie's. The Joads leave the Oklahoma dust-bowl during the depression in order to pursue their dream of a self-sufficient existence, "livin' off the fatta the lan'" in California.

By exploring what it reveals about the human condition

Dreams are a key theme in 'Of Mice and Men'. The most significant dream is Lennie and George's 'dream farm' George describes the dream of having, 'a little house on a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs...' where they can 'Live off the fatta the lan.' This dream is important to the men because it offers them hope of a home with some stability, where they can have some freedom and an easier life than their present, drifting existence. Here, Steinbeck is exploring fundamental aspects of the human condition: our basic human need for hope and our desperation for security. As humans, an absence of hope and a lack of security easily leads to despair, and as such, the reader can readily empathise with George and Lennie's desires.

By offering an alternative interpretation.

Dreams are a key theme in 'Of Mice and Men'. The most significant dream is Lennie and George's 'dream farm' George describes the dream of having, 'a little house on a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs...' where they can 'Live off the fatta the lan.' **Perhaps** this dream is important to the men because it offers them hope of a home with some stability, where they can have some freedom and an easier life than their present, drifting existence **Alternatively, its 'garden of eden' connotations may suggest it offers them a quasi-religious 'paradise' to fantasise about and therefore escape the dreary difficulties of their situation.**

By offering a personal response - the readers / your feelings

Dreams are a key theme in 'Of Mice and Men'. The most significant dream is Lennie and George's 'dream farm' George describes the dream of having, 'a little house on a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs...' where they can 'Live off the fatta the lan.' This dream is important to the men because it offers them hope of a home with some stability, where they can have some freedom and an easier life than their present, drifting existence.

This longing our protagonists have is quite poignant, the reader is moved by their dream, as simple as it seems. We hope, as George and Lennie do, that they'll attain their small 'American Dream' but enough foreshadowing is evident, for us to be quite fearful too.

By linking to the author's purpose

Dreams are a key theme in 'Of Mice and Men'. The most significant dream is Lennie and George's 'dream farm' George describes the dream of having, 'a little house on a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs...' where they can 'Live off the fatta the lan.' This dream is important to the men because it offers them hope of a home with some stability, where they can have some freedom and an easier life than their present, drifting existence.

Part of Steinbeck's purpose is social criticism - he wishes to show how hard society is for those who are vulnerable - how society offers little protection and security for them; and his sympathetic portrayal of the men shows us he believes it should.

Time for a bit of a chat

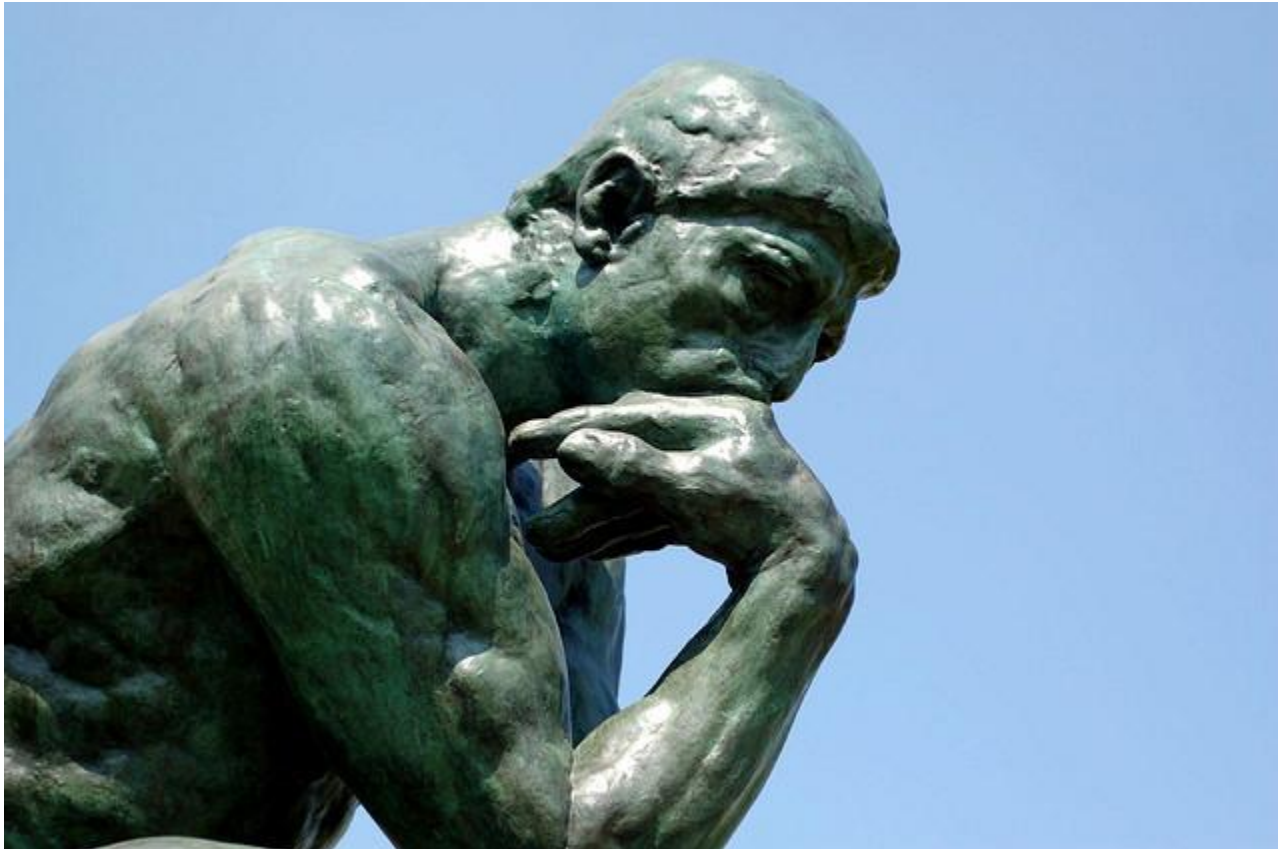
Which of these strategies appeals to you?

Which suits the texts you've taught this year?

Which would you not use?

And, of course, **WHY?**

Thoughts or Comments?



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/seatbelt67/502255276/>

A suggested process ... a multi-pronged attack!



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fork>

Introducing them to the resource ...

Introduce them to the resource ...

- **As early as Year 10?**
 - **To the whole class, or targeted individuals?**
 - **The department Essay Guide**
-
- **Making the end goal explicit from the beginning - you choose what you use!**

Have the concepts bubble away during class discussion

Can we draw from the pool of 'You Add' strategies to build more sophistication here?

How might we expand on that comment?

How did you feel at that point?

Can we offer an alternative interpretation of this?

To help with planning and drafting

Refer back to it in each essay we plan

<p>Explanation</p> <p>Totally undermines previous giddy elation, showing the threat to love that hate is.</p>	<p>Explanation</p> <p>L is reminding the viewer of fatalism - fte is ever present in the film, visually, so we know R & J cannot escape</p>	<p>Explanation</p> <p>The perceptive, analytical viewer will unpack this imagery - Juliet and Romeo and Suited - they match - and contrast entirely with Tybalt -who represents hatred - the oppositional force to love.</p>	<p>Explanation</p> <p>We again se the clash between love and hate - Juliet senses it, and the dark lighting works as a pathetic fallacy.</p>
<p>You Add</p> <p>Really Poignant and sad - foreboding and reminding us of their doomed love.</p>	<p>You Add</p> <p>Recalls the words of the prologue - a pair of star crossed lovers take their lives</p>	<p>You Add</p> <p>Flamboyant costuming is typical of Luhrmann's directorial style - Strictly Ballroom for example a fan of his work, would quickly recognise the costume's symbolic layers.</p>	<p>You Add</p> <p>Especially interesting the Tybalt gets the last word in the scene - both Shakespeare and Luhrmann remind us of the threat to Romeo's life, further emphasising how doomed their love is.</p>

As a guide when producing shared or co-constructed paragraphs

The relationship between Vassili and Dannilov **sours considerably**, when the object of both their desires in this **conventional hollywood love triangle**, Tanya, chooses Vassili. Annaud foreshadows this early, **using shallow focus** to obscure Dannilov and focus upon Vassili, from Tanya's perspective. The realisation, for Danilov, comes when Tanya hears the announcement Vassili is dead. A **dutch angle** causes the world to tilt on its axis - showing how grieved she is by this news, and confirming to Danilov that she is in love with his rival. The **conflict**, born out of this jealousy, causes Danilov to begin to conspire against Vassili - he pens a letter questioning his patriotism - a very dangerous accusation to face in the climate of such a brutal dictatorship. **As viewers, we admire** Vassili for his courage and skill, and the audience are 'on side' with Tanya and Vassili's relationship - **we expect some romance, and we expect the hero to get the girl - as is typical of the hollywood formula**. Danilov's despicable response shows us a low aspect of human nature - the corrosiveness of jealousy - and **we now come to think of him as** becoming a part of the morally corrupt, brutal leadership of the Red Army.

And finally ...

As part of the feedback process

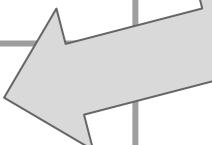
With a specific end goal - have a pool of 3 - 5 of these strategies from which to choose to suit a particular aspect of a given text ...

... or YOU choose what YOU use!

So ... time to have a go

Analyse how a frustration experienced by a character or characters was used to present a key theme or themes.

S			
E			
X			
Y			



Which of the strategies suit your texts?

And craft a 'You add' in ONE of these ways

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Taking it to the next level (ie 2 & 3) ...

Write One paragraph and try to incorporate 2-3 of the strategies within it

And ... post your example here:

<http://tinyurl.com/hbeta6>

Want the resources?

Here you go

Slideshow: <http://tinyurl.com/hbeta4>

And - the wall display I've used:

<http://tinyurl.com/hbeta5>

So ... the goal was ...

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**And now, let's do what English teachers
do best**

**Talk shop and
swap top tips**

Final Thoughts or Questions



THANK

YOU