**How to get Familiar with Unfamiliar Texts**

Here are some simple questions and strategies you can apply to any text to help gain understanding.

1. Look at the bibliographical details.
   1. The title: is it obvious or ambiguous? Is there any word play?
   2. The author or owner: gender? known or not? Any credentials given?
   3. The date: when was the text produced? What significant events were happening around that time?
   4. Publication source: known to you? New Zealand focused?
   5. Text type: what genre format and restrictions are there?
2. Who is the target audience? Who is this text intended for?
3. Consider the time period and verb tense. Do they change? Why?
4. Where is it set? Relevance and restrictions?
5. Participants: who is involved in the text? What are their various relationships?
6. Look at the language used. How is it appropriate for the purpose?
7. Find the figures of speech. Is there a pattern to them?
8. What is the writer’s attitude towards his/her characters? Tone? Does it change?
9. Look at the layout of the text. What could any divisions between chunks of text signify? How is it made accessible to the reader?
10. ?

**Remember that nothing in a text is there randomly. Why did the author choose to use it?**

**PILATES (for the brain)**

Here is an useful acronym to apply to language analysis

[](http://www.google.co.nz/imgres?imgurl=http://www.busheyu3a.org.uk/U3Aimages/pilates/Pilates-picture.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.busheyu3a.org.uk/htmlpagesandbuttons/pilates.html&h=486&w=656&tbnid=nCMXwhMF15FOdM:&zoom=1&docid=_Ew_shf2nAFJCM&hl=en&ei=VNhBU8KhD8y6lQXIx4H4BA&tbm=isch&ved=0CMIBEIQcMBw&iact=rc&dur=1061&page=2&start=18&ndsp=28)

**P** purpose

**I** idea

**L** language

**A** analysis

**T** techniques

**E** effect

**S** synthesis

Remember to **PLAN** your answer. Unfamiliar text responses are now required in essay format. Make it easier for the reader/marker by writing a planned and organised discussion.

Make the introduction clear. Use the keywords from the question in the topic sentence. Outline the main points of your answer in the scope or thesis statement.

Start each paragraph with a topic sentence that clearly states the point about to be analysed. Elaborate upon the feature explaining the effect and give evidence from the text to prove your point.

**How to write the perfect paragraph like Woody**



T opic sentence: a staging device and a simple descriptive sentence

E xplain and elaborate: show your knowledge about the topic

eX amples: prove what you are saying by giving reliable and referenced (source anddate of publication) evidence

A nalysis: relate why these examples are relevant and what they help prove

S ummarise: state why this paragraph is important to the overall topic of the essay

**Some Advice from some 2013 Year 13s to 2014’s Year 13s**

Enjoy Year 13

Get a job and save!

Learn to budget

Relationships – end them before you head away

Be prepared to adapt to new things quickly

Learn to be self-directed

Make study the priority

Apply for scholarships early: apply for everything you can

Get StudyLink up and running early

Get into a hall

Share your feelings of homesickness. Everyone is in the same boat as you. They are likely to be homesick even if they are not showing it

Remember your aims / goals/ purposes for tertiary study

Restrict distractions

Restrict extra-curricular activities

If you’re taking a Gap Year ensure it is organised not simply drifting

Get used to taking notes and revising them each day

Join a study group

Learn how to use the library system

Ask your teachers to give some lecture-type classes for note-taking practice

Learn how to reference. Bibme.org is easy to use

Ask questions if you don’t understand. Don’t be afraid!

Have Plans A, B, and C

Learn how to print out on the university system before you need to do it in a hurry to meet a deadline

Deadlines are strictly adhered to. Marks **ARE** deducted for late work

Try not to fall behind; it is hard to catch up

Lectures are fast and don’t cover everything in detail. Get used to doing self-study

Do your readings **beforehand**

Recreate positive relationships with lecturers. Go to office hours (one-on-one consultations)

Make friends with others in your course

Don’t be afraid to ask others to proof read your work

Arrive early so you get settled in your accommodation. Buy your books and be ready to go right from the start

Eat well, eat regularly and stay healthy