

## Form is important activities: possible observations/answers

### Prose fiction: *Madame Bovary*

*Who are the characters in the passage and what do we learn about them?*

#### Possible observations

- The characters in the *Madame Bovary* extract are Emma Bovary and her lover, Rodolphe.
- We only 'see' them for a brief time in this extract, but we can see that they love one another, that they are having an affair, and that Rodolphe is, perhaps, a little bored with Emma.

*What is the setting of the passage and how is it significant?*

#### Possible observations

- We do not get to specifically see the setting in this extract, but certain clues can help us make logical inferences. The two characters are talking about love passionately, Emma is giving Rodolphe gifts, and there is a remark about 'falling away like a garment' (undressing) ... so we can make a safe conclusion that they are probably indoors, in a bedroom.
- Because they are having an affair, the setting is full of conflict – one (or both) of them should not be there because they are in a committed relationship to someone else.

*What seems significant about the plot of this passage?*

#### Possible observations

- Because this is an extract, we do not get a good sense of the novel's plot. Additionally, in this extract, it is mostly dialogue and the characters' internal thoughts.
- Even though this particular passage has limited action, always make sure that you understand the sequence of events in a passage. For example, in this passage, the sequence of events is this:
  1. Emma gives Rodolphe gifts; Rodolphe feels conflicted about them.
  2. They talk about love and their relationship – Emma more passionately than Rodolphe.
  3. Rodolphe thinks about his life, his affairs and their relationship.

*What seems to be the point of view of this passage, and how might this affect how the story is told?*

### Possible observations

- This passage from *Madame Bovary* uses 'he' and 'she' and 'they' pronouns, which informs you that someone else is telling the story (third person). Some questions you might wonder about are: Who is this person? How do they know this information? Why are they telling this story?
- Often in Paper 1, we simply do not have enough information to determine who is telling the story, but determining the point of view is important and, if it helps you answer the guiding question, you might explore it with 'perhaps' statements – for example, 'This passage from *Madame Bovary* is told in the third-person point of view, perhaps by someone in the community who knew the characters, and wanted to tell their story in order to explore the theme of ...'.

*How do the authorial choices develop the theme, or themes, of this passage?*

### Possible observations

- There are many ways to explore themes, but it is best to be as specific as possible. One-word themes are a good starting place, but they are often too vague to be helpful.
- For example, you might identify theme ideas like 'infidelity' or 'imbalance' or 'love' or 'ennui' ... but you must clarify what you want to say about these ideas for them to be helpful:
  - 'love' could become 'an imbalance in a romantic relationship could lead to disappointment'
  - 'infidelity' could become 'one act of infidelity is likely to lead to another one'
  - 'ennui' could become 'one's boredom with one's life might lead one to take risks one might later regret'.

## Poetry: 'Travelling Through the Dark'

*How does the organization of a poem impact its meaning?*

### Possible observations

'Traveling through the Dark' is organized into stanzas. Consider:

- How are these stanzas similar to one another? Different from one another?
- Are the ideas contained within each stanza, or do they spill over into the next stanza (enjambment)?
- What is the length of the lines, and how are they punctuated?
- Do any of these structural aspects help support your response to the guiding question?
- Could the lengths of the lines, the punctuation choices or the shapes of the stanzas reinforce or reflect the setting or the tensions in the poem?

*How does the use of figurative language reinforce the main ideas of a poem?*

### Possible observations

For example, consider line 16 in 'Traveling through the Dark': 'around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.'

- How does the personification of 'the wilderness' influence your understanding of the poem?
- Regarding the guiding question, 'the wilderness' informs the reader about the setting of the poem.
- How do the author's diction choices of 'our group' and 'listen' influence your interpretation of the poem?
- The verb 'listening' helps build the tensions in the poem, as does 'our group' because it makes the reader question who does, and who doesn't, belong in the group.

### **Drama: *Lady Windermere's Fan***

*Who is the intended audience for this drama and how do you know this?*

#### **Possible observations**

- In this particular situation, the Paper 1 exam, we, the readers, are the audience for the extract from *Lady Windermere's Fan* (below). So we need to use our imaginations to 'see' the characters onstage, as well as what the stage looks like and how the characters are dressed and moving around.

*Using Lady Windermere's Fan (see the extract on page 61 in the book) as unseen practice for Paper 1, how might the background, time period, culture, gender, etc. of a playwright influence their drama?*

#### **Possible observations**

- During the Paper 1 exam, it is unlikely that you will know the playwright whose passage will be used, so don't worry about those kinds of details. It is important to remember, though, that drama is written by a specific person who made intentional authorial choices. Mention that person as you write your response – for example, 'Oscar Wilde, in this extract from *Lady Windermere's Fan*, uses his characters to develop the tension in the passage.'

*Which dramatic elements seem most important to this passage?*

#### **Possible observations**

- In your guided literary analysis, focus only on specific elements that help you respond to the guiding question. Even though there might be these six elements, perhaps only two or three of them are relevant to the passage or the question.
- In this case, you can definitely determine the characters (Dumby, Cecil, Lord Darlington, Lord Augustus), the plot (they are talking about love and relationships), and develop some themes (e.g. falling in love with someone's wife will lead to conflict).

*What type of drama does this passage seem to belong to, and why is this significant?*

#### **Possible observations**

- The nature of the dialogue in this excerpt from *Lady Windermere's Fan* seems to suggest that perhaps this is a comedy, which reinforces the theme ...

## **Prose non-fiction: *Dust Tracks on a Road***

*What is revealed about the author's life and experiences in this passage?*

### **Possible observations**

- The extract from *Dust Tracks on a Road* on page 63 in the book explores part of the childhood of the author, Zora Neale Hurston, who was a real person who lived in the USA.
- She is talking about her childhood and the struggles with poverty that she endured.

*How does the author portray her experiences, how does she feel about them, and how do you know it?*

### **Possible observations**

- The extract by Hurston is told in the first-person point of view (she uses 'I' to express her thoughts), which indicates that Hurston, herself, is talking directly to us.
- Her tone suggests that this was an exhausting and confusing time of life for her and that revisiting it is painful – which is partly why she compares poverty to death.
- While we only have this extract, we can safely determine that part of her purpose here is to explain this part of her childhood as honestly as she can.

*What form of writing is this extract?*

### **Possible observations**

- This extract is from a memoir because it is someone writing about one's life. You could also use the term 'autobiography'.