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| Introduction   * Say what texts (titles, authors and what type) your essay will cover. * Say what the connection is * Expand a little on the connection – elaborate – what do you mean by the key words? | My study included the following texts: Singing my Sister Down by Margo Lanagan, Mothers Love Your Sons by Glenn Colquhoun, What I Will by Suheir Hammad and One Good Reason by Peter Friend. The connection I looked for between these texts was bravery or bravado – what’s the difference? I wanted to see how the courage to act selflessly was similar to or different from, actions that were reckless or foolhardy. |
| Paragraph 1   * State briefly (2-3 sentences) how the connection is shown in text A. (describe) * Add specific and relevant examples that show the connection. * Explain how the connection is treated by the author ie what ideas about the connection is the author suggesting? | In my first text, Singing My Sister Down by Margo Lanagan, the connection is shown by two characters especially. Ikky bravely accepts her punishment. She could have tried to commit suicide and gain a quicker, less gruesome death than sinking inch by inch into the tar pit, but that would get her family into trouble so she acts calmly and strongly as she slowly sinks. The narrator, her young brother, also shows bravery by supporting Ikky with songs and talk and just being there to say goodbye without causing a big scene. The effort this took is shown when he breaks down as they leave the tar pit, as he no longer needed to be brave for his sister’s sake. In one sense, the brother was showing bravado, but in a good way. I think that Lanagan shows us in this story that having your family around you as you face a daunting challenge can help you to be brave. Also, Ikky’s bravery seemed to come from an acceptance of her fate, and her bravery inspired her family to stay strong. So I think this shows that bravery can be contagious. |
| Paragraph 2   * Repeat paragraph 1 but this time write about text B **AND** * Compare the way the connection is presented in text B with text A ie what similarities or differences are there in the ideas the author shows about the connection? * What ideas about the connection is the author suggesting? * Comment on or evaluate the authors’ ideas on the connection. | In my next text, Mothers Love your Sons by Glenn Colquhoun, the connection is both bravery and bravado. We see bravery when the mothers are encouraged to be strong for their sons and stay close to them throughout their youth in preparation for an inevitable accident which may be fatal. Bravado is present in the text when Colquhoun refers to the actions of the sons as thoughtless showing off to their mates. Colquhoun seems to be saying that bravado is so common among young males, that it is inevitable that they will suffer some harmful consequences, possibly even death. His suggestion to this is since it is unavoidable, make the most of the time you have got.  Acting without thinking of the consequences is what got Ikky into trouble, although the difference here is that she is a female character. Maybe bravado is common amongst all young people, not just males. |
| * Repeat paragraph 2 but this time write about text C **AND** * Compare the way the connection is presented in text C with text A and text B ie what similarities or differences are there in the ideas the author shows about the connection? * What ideas about the connection is the author suggesting? * Comment on or evaluate the authors’ ideas on the connection. | My third text is What I Will by Suheir Hammad. Like Colquhoun’s poem, this text has bravery and bravado. The speaker of the poem is brave to speak out against the war that is drummed up by the leaders. This way of drumming up support for a war is a kind of bravado. The truth of war is that it leads to killing, and Hammar boldly risks reprisal by advocating peace and life, rather than revenge and martyrdom. This text shows me that the bravery we often associate with war is in the fighting, but it also takes courage to stand against war. This is particularly true for a female criticising a male lead war.  Another similarity with Colquhoun’s poem is the way that bravado is challenged by positive affirmation of life. Hammad says she will “dance and persist” and Colquhoun’s mothers are told to patiently forgive and continue to love their sons no matter what. Ikky’s mother was forced to do just that as she did her utmost to make her daughter’s last hours as much a celebration as possible. |
| * Repeat paragraph 2 but this time write about text D **AND** * Compare the way the connection is presented in text D with text A and text B and text C ie what similarities or differences are there in the ideas the author shows about the connection? * What ideas about the connection is the author suggesting? * Comment on or evaluate the authors’ ideas on the connection. | My final text, One Good Reason, by Peter Friend, clearly deals with bravado. Jay and Carl were both reckless and thoughtless in their decision to challenge each other to skate down the motorway off ramp. The risk they took was unnecessary and in the end, it was Jay’s brother who paid the price. Friend seems to be saying that decisions made as emotional reactions rather than thoughtful choices have the potential to endanger others, not just the risk takers. This kind of bravado causes unnecessary hurt and the pointlessness of it all makes the cost even harder to bear.  Jay and Carl are precisely the kind of young men Colquhoun’s poem refers to. Their bravado ends in a shock. |
| * What ideas about the connection do your texts show? * What implications for readers and/or society do these ideas have? * What is your overall evaluation of the ideas about the connection? | Overall, all my texts show that bravery and bravado have a close link. Where there was bravado, it took the bravery of someone else to try to stop it or cope with the consequences. I think that the peer pressure young people experience makes them particularly vulnerable to risky, thoughtless acts of false courage. Education does its best to equip young people with the skills and bravery to speak out against foolishness and resist the pressure to show off. However, adults too are more than capable of putting on a big act to attract attention, acting as poor role models. |