**Raising your essay grades to Merit and Excellence:**

**Introductions:**

Now that you are more confident with basic introductions, you need to start writing in a more convincing and perceptive way. Keep the formula for introductions, but change it up and show more individuality.

**Introductions must have:**

* Text type, title, author/director
* A focusing statement (rewording the essay question)
* Your points

To write more interesting introductions, think about the following:

* Give a broad statement
* Give the information the marker needs about the text (type, title, author/director)
* Reword the essay question
* State your points

**Examples:**

**Describe an important character in a film you have studied. Explain how that character showed you an important idea, supporting your ideas with visual and verbal techniques.**

Often we can feel that our future is decided for us, and traditions and expectations can make it difficult to break away from what is commonly accepted and rule our own life. Joe Johnston’s film, ‘October Sky,’ explores the idea that in order to be true to ourselves, we need to have autonomy. Autonomy is governing oneself and being independent. Homer Hickam, a teenager living in the small town of Coalwood, clearly shows the importance of autonomy in order to pursue our dreams. Johnston portrays this idea through Homer, using dialogue, contrasting montages and close ups.

**Describe an important character in a written text you have studied. Explain how that character showed you an important idea, supporting your ideas with specific details.**

Loyalty is built based on trust and respect, but sometimes loyalty, or a strong feeling of support, can be built on a sense of obligation. In Malorie Blackman’s bestselling dystopian novel ‘Noble Conflict,’ Kaspar Wilding lives in a world on confusion, lies and manipulation but amongst all that he shows the importance, and the true weight, of loyalty. Through Dillon’s death, his reluctance to report Rhea to the High Council and his willingness to end Rhea’s life, Kaspar portrays different aspects of loyalty.

**Body paragraphs:**

Remember that your body paragraphs need to have:

* **S**tatement (topic sentence)
* **E**xample from the text (weave them in naturally. Do not ‘dump’ quotes in a paragraph’.
* E**x**planation (avoid repetition of ‘this shows.’ A better word might be ‘signifies.’)
* **Y**ou add

**Statement:**  State what your paragraph is going to be about - the words of the essay question are helpful -

* + *One interesting aspect of the character is ...*
  + *The place in which the film is set is one aspect of setting that affects the characters*
  + *Shakespeare’s theme of the corrosive effects of jealousy is his primary concern in Act three*

**Example:** Give a precise detail from the text, usually a quotation

* + *Lennie is described as, ‘snorting like a horse’ and having hands like bear’s paws.*
  + *The director uses establishing shots and blue filters when showing the ruined buildings, rubble and raging fires in Stalingrad.*
  + *Iago’s infamous waring is clear proof of this: ‘Beware, my lord, of jealousy, it is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds upon.’*

**xplanation:** Explain why that quotation is important - linked to question

* + *Steinbeck’s use of animal imagery helps us form a picture of a very strong and very simple character.*
  + *This ruined setting is important as it is where our characters are set to go - and the obvious danger creates tension for the viewer - and a sense of awe at the hardship they are soon to face.*
  + *This infamous line clearly presents just how destructive jealousy is - allowing yourself to be taken by it will result in your quick and absolute destruction*

**Building more sophisticated paragraphs:**

Your ‘you add’ section is where you can really improve your mark. There are many ways to add to your paragraphs in this section of your body paragraphs.

* Link to another quotation
* Link it to the historical context
* Unpack the connotations of the 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 it to the author’s purpose

See the powerpoint on the weebly, under the exam section in Term 3, for examples of each of these.

**Conclusion:**

A conclusion does the same as the introduction, but in the opposite order. It is NOT a rewritten introduction. What was the main point of your essay? What conclusions can you draw?

* Sign Post Phrase
* Sums up the main points
* Draws together the argument
* Finishes with a powerful, broad statement.

Thus, through Homer, and Johnston’s use of the dialogue, contrasting montages and close ups, we can see that autonomy enables people to pursue and achieve their dreams. Etc..

**Building more sophisticated paragraphs**

**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 and 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’ it 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 is says about human nature

Offer an alternative interpretation

Explain your personal response

Link to the author’s purpose

**You add by Linking to another quotation in the text.**

*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.’*

**You add by linking to the Historical Context.**

*This is particularly pertinent in the historical context of the novel, the Great Depression in America of the 1930s, where an 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.’*

**You add by unpacking the connotations of words in the quotation.**

*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.*

**You add by linking to another similar text.**

*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.*

**You add by exploring what it reveals about the human condition**

*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.*

**You add by offering an alternative interpretation.**

*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.*

**You add by offering a personal response - the reader’s / your feelings**

*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.*

**You add by linking to the author’s purpose.**

*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.*