**ANALYSIS OF SAGAN’S TEXT**

**Unit Four: Content**

**Investigate and evaluate the relationships between texts and contexts by:**

• *undertaking close analysis of texts*

• *examining how each text relates to a particular context or contexts*

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| **What evidence is there in the script AND the images to support the following two readings:**   1. The Catholic and the communist, the corporate and the criminal care little for Sagan’s homogenisation of cultural views and blind faith in science. In other words, the pro-science ideology does not necessarily dominate. |
| *• comparing* *the contexts in which texts are created and received.* |
| 1. Sagan’s context emphasises how science can be fantastic and improve our world; conversely, the readers belonging to the context of those who are afflicted by the issues of our world might not see any solutions to their problems emanating from Sagan’s rhetoric. |
| **Evaluate different perspectives, attitudes and values represented in texts by:**  • *analysing content, purpose and* *choice of language*   * *analysing the use of voice and point of view* |
| 1. Sagan uses language cleverly. For example, in the clause, ‘precisely because of the obscurity of our world thus revealed,’ the word ‘precisely’ counterbalances with ‘obscurity,’ which in turn fits oxymoronically with ‘revealed’. That something obscure is revealed implies the power of science and just a little self-congratulation on Sagan’s part for having the idea to take the shot.   **Find specific examples in the text that reveal Sagan’s voice as academic, scientific, philosophical, privileged, didactic, proselytising.** |
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| • exploring *other interpretations and aspects of context* to develop a considered response. |
| 1. A resistant reading (an alternative interpretation) might be that the vast amounts of money spent on space exploration could help to eradicate hunger and suffering here on Earth. |

**What evidence is there in the script AND the images to support this reading?**

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| **Evaluate how texts offer perspectives through:**  • *the selection of* *mode, medium, genre and type of text* |
| 1. *A Pale Blue Dot* is considered a hybrid text. How does voice-over, visuals: stills and footage and text suggest a hybridity of mode, medium and genre? |
| * *the ways* *points of view* and values are represented |
| 1. What is essentially an opinion wavers between philosophical musing and considered argument with a dose of scientific-factual tone. |
| **What evidence is there in the script of these three positions?**  • *the selection of language features that generate empathy or controversy* |
| 1. Accumulations of nouns and noun phrases, for example, ‘every hunter and forager; every hero and coward; every creator and destroyer of civilizations; every king and peasant, every young couple in love; every mother and father; hopeful child; inventor and explorer; every teacher of morals; every corrupt politician; every supreme leader; every superstar;’ act to hammer home his point, to insist on empathy. |
| **Identify the words and phrases that generate:**  **Empathy**  **Controversy**  **Reflect on their own and others’ texts by:**  *• analysing and evaluating how different attitudes and perspectives underpin texts* |
| 1. Sagan’s attitudes are complex but fairly clear in this text: pro-space science, pro-humanity.   **What evidence is there in the text to show he is pro - space science and pro - humanity?** |
| • *questioning the assumptions and values in* *texts* |
| 1. Some assumptions and values can be questioned. For example, space research is often valued as necessary because of what we learn and because of the possibility of other life out there. All indications so far, however, suggest that there is nothing like human life (or animal life) out there.   **Do you think the continuing expenditure and consequences are justified?** |
| *• identifying omissions, inclusions, emphases and marginalisations* |
| 1. Sagan’s emphases are identifiable: Sagan is pro-space research which has opened his eyes, he claims, to the idea that it is only we, human beings, who can look after ourselves and our planet.   **One question elided is whether governments’ budgets can accommodate both space research and social welfare and if not, which has to be allocated less than it needs?** |
| • *discussing and evaluating different readings of texts* |
| **Different readings of this text are possible.** |
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| 1. Sagan concludes with a humanitarian and eco-critical perspective e.g. ‘Like it or not, for the moment, the Earth is where we make our stand.’   ‘It underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the only home we’ve ever known.’ |

**Complete your ‘Reading Practices’ handout. Which reading of the text are you most comfortable with? Explain why, making explicit your values and attitudes that inform your position.**