

# ALL THE LIGHT: KEY IDEAS PARAGRAPHS

Below are some paragraphs on *All the Light We Cannot See*. Look at the way these are written and adapt your essay paragraphs so that they reflect a similar sophisticated engagement with the text.

**However, please note that these paragraphs need to include the impact of the story on you, the reader. You need to explicitly state how the text shapes your understanding of the ideas: how you read and interpret the text and what you come to understand.**

The keys to a successful paragraph are:

- Precision
- Starting with a strong conceptual statement (in your case this must be explicitly linked to the question)
- Ensuring each piece of evidence clearly develops your argument/what you have proposed in your paragraph statement
- Ensuring each paragraph skillfully demonstrates a deep understanding of the text through close textual and technical engagement. This includes:
  - Ensure you include a number of quotes as evidence
  - Ensure you include a number of techniques which are clearly explained
  - Explicitly discuss how you 'read' the text and its significance regarding the reshaping of perspectives, values, attitudes and beliefs.
  - Look at the enduring value of the ideas and values in the text – what does this reveal about the human condition.
  - End the paragraph with a strong final sentence – this is the LINKING sentence as it should affirm your paragraph argument.

## FATE VERSUS FREE WILL

Great stories have the capacity to transform our human experience by offering readers a new lens through which to perceive and understand themselves and the world. Certainly Anthony Doerr's *All the Light*, through posing difficult questions about personal agency and predestination provokes me to reconsider the extent to which individuals have control over their own lives. Ominous chapters in Part Zero act as the novel's **prologue foreshadowing** the inexorable historical and political forces that can shape people's destiny. Inevitable doom is evoked in the **imagery of destruction** that closes the opening chapter: "a half-dozen American artillery units drop incendiary rounds into the mouths of mortars." However, whilst external forces shape the lives of the characters within the text, illustrative of the capacity for individual agency in the midst of war is Doerr's **characterization** of Marie-Laure and Madame Manec. Maintaining her silence about her uncle's radio in the attic, is the first **symbolic** act of Marie-Laure's conscious resistance and demonstrative of her choice to take fate into her own hands. Inspired by Madame Manec, passive defiance transforms into active opposition when Marie-Laure joins the French Resistance as she heeds Madame's warning that "doing nothing is as good as collaborating". It is through such representations that Doerr's novel allows me to appreciate the complex interplay between ... and ... that shapes our lives. However, Doerr further complicates this exploration of free will and predestination through his deliberate construction of Werner whose personal agency is slowly eroded by his sense of duty. Frederick's **declarative statement** captures this: "Your problem," he tells Werner, "is that you still believe you own your life." Frederick's fate affirms the truth of this statement for Werner – beaten within an inch of his life, Frederick ....

What is the paragraph missing? What frame do I need to put around it? How do I do that?

I need to insert my reading of the text into the paragraph. How?

I need to include the enduring value of the ideas in the text.

I need to look at how the text reshapes perspectives – link to context.

How can I end my paragraph so it affirms my reading of the text in relation to its representation of the human experience which I also explicitly connect to the given question?

Thus, a close reading of Doerr's text affirms for me the power of stories to ...

# NATURE OF HUMANITY

An artful exploration of what gives life meaning, [reading](#) Doerr's novel [enhances](#) readers [understanding](#) that even in the midst of violence and harrowing despair, the pleasures of the world cannot be defeated. Structurally juxtaposing sections and chapters, including contrasting the prologue and Part 1, captures this. Whilst the wanton destruction of war is evoked through images of "... " and "... " in the Zero chapters, deliberate flashbacks to the past in Part 1, evoke the deep connection between Marie-Laure and her father – a relationship that provides the hope which sustains her in the darkest of times, evident in the narrative reflection: *"In another half second her father's hands are in her armpits, swinging her up, and Marie-Laure smiles, and he laughs a pure, contagious laugh, one she will try to remember all her life..."* Similarly, Werner's repaired radio symbolises the beauty of scientific discoveries and art as antidotes to an oppressive reality – as static gives way to violin and piano melodies, the simile *"inside Werner's head, an infinitesimal orchestra has stirred to life... Little radio... like a miracle. (p33)"*, captures his awakening joy as he is transported into another world. Doerr employs this music motif as central to the novel's circular structure ... [Incomplete paragraph]

Music 2 – p.454

[I need to insert my reading of the text into the paragraph. How?](#)

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# MORAL CORRUPTION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

The struggle to maintain one's nobility in the midst of the chaos and brutality of war is central to Doerr's All the Light which ultimately reveals that true enlightenment comes from the realisation of our own flawed natures. Capturing this idea is the Professor's advice "Open your eyes and see what you can with them before they close forever," evoking the novel's title that we must look beyond the surface to see all the light that is often obscured or overlooked. Literally blind, ironically, Marie-Laure, is the most insightful character – her moral integrity and ability to see what others cannot is evoked through the motif of vision: "To shut your eyes is to guess nothing of blindness. Beneath your world of skies and faces and buildings exists a rawer and older world, a place where surface planes disintegrate and sounds ribbon in shoals through the air." Most importantly, she recognises the beauty in the world and the humanity of others that is often hidden or overlooked. Bildungsroman-esque enlightenment comes at the end for Werner – swept up in the Nazi war machine, paradoxically it is in the darkness of the Hotel of Bees when his "physical eyes are rendered useless" (name of critic) that Werner is forced to confront the metaphorical darkness within himself. The reflective third person narrative voice: "Frederick said we don't have choices, don't own our lives... in the end it was Werner who pretended there were no choices" (Doerr 407), captures his personal realisation that his sense of fear and duty to the Nazi cause destroyed his moral integrity and sense of self.

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