THE ESSAY

An essay is marked out of IMPRESSION! It should have the following qualities:

1. ***An Introduction (at least 3-5 sentences)***

* Write an opening statement about the key concerns of the novel or play, for example: *‘The Voter’ ridicules politics in Africa*…

*‘A Walk in the Night’ is an exceptionally critical text which exposes the gross evils of the apartheid policy in South Africa...*

* Define or comment on the key phrases or words of the question, for example: *Satire is the skill of pointing out human weaknesses or flaws in character through light moments*.
* Show your approach, for example: *The elements of satire have been used to develop themes and ideas as discussed here below*:

1. ***The Paragraph (An Ideal Paragraph)***

* ***The topical sentence***, i.e. state the point in the first sentence of your paragraph, for example:

*-Tess exposes the evils of social classification*…

*-Oby exposes the evils of bad culture and traditions...*

[N.B: Do not keep repeating the question phrase so as to erase any form of monotony].

* ***The Example***, i.e. an example connects the play or novel to your essay. It forms the basis of your analysis. So, it is a MUST! Therefore, select RICH examples, i.e. an example that can be interpreted in the FIVE elements of the play or novel. Select examples from across the text, use an example ONCE, and keep it short – DO NOT NARRATE!
* ***My response to the question***: You should have at least 5 or 6 sentences per paragraph. Discuss, assess, analyze aspects of the question. What is Literature to a candidate? It is the skill, the art of interpretation and analysis.

***Tools of analysis to use in a paragraph***:

Methods, ways, devices to use and generate Literature, i.e.

* Themes
* Ideas
* Traits of characters
* Lessons
* Development of plot
* Emotive or Effectives, i.e. mood, tone, attitude, feelings, atmosphere etc
* Writer’s intention
* A personal opinion or view

1. ***The Conclusion***

* It must rhyme with the overall position of the writer, for example: *Women must be liberated from the obnoxious cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation that does not stop Oby from enjoying her freedom*.

***Grading of an Essay***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***x/33*** | ***Comment*** |
| 0-09 | Candidate;  -Didn’t read the play or novel  -Did not respond to the question |
| 10-14 | Candidate;  -Read the play or novel halfway  -Partially responded to the question |
| 15-19 | Candidate;  -Read the play or novel  -Generally narrates |
| 20-24 | Candidate;  -Read the play or novel  -Responded to the question  -Made quotations in the essay  -Made some analysis |
| 25-27 | Candidate;  -Read the play or novel  -Responded very well to the question  -Made several quotations in the essay  -Appropriate/Deep analysis made in the essay  -Minor errors |
| 28-33 | - Excellent interpretation of the question  - Excellent introduction and knowledge of the text  - Appropriate quotation and paraphrases  - Originality and creativity  - Chronological flow of ideas  - Good use of literary language  - Appropriate examples. |

The Context Question

1. ***To Contextualise***

* To explain a happening
* Use earlier gained knowledge and explain why things are the way they are.

*Therefore, Context questions aim at testing whether or not one has read the text, knows the events and can connect incidents to each other. Context passages are usually extracted from turning points in a text. Several questions are asked based on all the aspects of the novel.*

1. ***The Context Extract***

* A passage is selected from the novel or play from the high moments of the plot
* It is a sample of the whole novel or play
* It tests knowledge of all the elements of the play or novel

1. ***Comment on the narrative techniques used in the extract\*( for novels)***

-Identify the narrative techniques in the extract

-Illustrate from the extract

-Give the effectiveness in terms of themes, character traits, lessons.

1. ***Significance of an Extract***

* To the development of the play/novel or the rest of the play/novel
* To the development of the plot
* To the development of themes
* To the development of character
* Quotation question quoting some statement from the extract

***N.B: Development means that we connect the extract to the play or novel (transition)***

***Simple Approach***

1. ***Development of the plot:***

* Plot is about events – identify at least 4 events
* For each event, quote or cite first from the extract
* Give 2-3 other events that happen elsewhere in the play or novel because of the selected event from the extract
* Trace the subplot of the selected event
* *There are two approaches to answering this question:*

*APPROACH 1\**

*One single event* ***IN*** *the passage and many other events* ***OUTSIDE*** *the passage. The event* ***IN*** *the extract is called the trigger event. This can lead to several other events connected to it outside the passage.*

***For example;***

*In the extract, Mama Oby rejects Pa Okolo's proposal to have her daughter Oby get married to the Chief's son, Ndubisi.. Elsewhere, Pa Okolo and Chief resolve to teach Mama Oby a lesson . They ask Uncle Ben to inflict the punishment. Mama Oby's shop at Eke market is burnt. Oby reports the case to police. Uncle Ben is arrested. He bribe...etc etc*

*In the extract, Satan says, “I want to give you a job in Ngorika Hill.” Elsewhere, Wariinga is given a gun by Muturi… (i.e. state the trigger event first and then give events that happen because of it!)*

*APPROACH 2:*

*One event* ***IN*** *with corresponding event* ***OUT****. For each event start from the extract, then state events that happen elsewhere because of it.*

1. ***Development of themes:***

* Identify 4 themes
* For each theme, quote from the extract
* Also show where else in the novel or play this very theme is found or portrayed
* Point out 2-3 incidents or areas where this very theme is found

1. **Development of traits:**

* Give the trait of major characters
* For each trait quote from the extract
* Mention where else you find this very trait elsewhere in the novel or play
* Begin with the traits that rhyme with the themes, for example, hypocrisy (theme), hypocritical (trait). Then give other peculiar traits.

***Place the extract in context (of the whole play or novel)***

*What happens* ***before*** *the above extract? What* ***precedes*** *the above extract? or* ***Place*** *the passage in its context*

* Tests knowledge of plot
* Mention relevant events; Consider only relevant events connected to the passage in question
* Cite 10 events: at least 5 before and 5 after: Relevant events might be got from immediate chapters / Acts , scenes or far chapters, acts, scenes
* Follow or trace the subplot(s) of the play or novel
* It is not about scene or chapter by chapter.
* Write short clear sentences in the present tense
* Do not narrate.

***For the question requiring to put the extract in context.***

* Relate what happens before the extract and then relate events after the extract. Write one paragraph for events before the extract, then another paragraph for events after the extract.
* Use cause and effect approach. That is, the events in the extract help to identify causes elsewhere and these very events in the extract can help identify other events /effects elsewhere in the novel/play
* Give at least ten events before and ten after.

***Examples***:

* *Before this extract, Oby meets Chike at the Cafeteria. They plan to go to the beach on Saturday....*
* *Before this extract, Tess finds work at Trantridge. She is raped by Alec and becomes pregnant. She gives birth to a child whom she names Sorrow. The Parson refuses to baptize the child. The child later dies...*
* *After this extract, Tess finds work at Tobathay’s diary where she meets Angel Clare...*