

Eco Application: Mishima

Social Studies 10 · The Seduction of Certainty

THE TASK

Analyse Yukio Mishima using Eco's 14 features of fascism. Your goal is not to prove Mishima was a fascist (he was), but to understand how fascism functioned in his life and thought.

WHAT TO DEMONSTRATE

Structure your analysis using PEEL paragraphs (see the PEEL Guide). Each paragraph should:

1. **Identify features.** Which of Eco's features appear in Mishima's writing, life, or actions? Focus on the clearest ones.
2. **Provide evidence.** Use the primary sources we read. Quote directly. You may also reference his biography and final actions.
3. **Explain the connection.** Don't just match features to quotes. Explain HOW the evidence demonstrates the feature and WHY it matters for understanding fascism.
4. **Show patterns.** Link your paragraphs together. How do Eco's features function together in Mishima's case?
5. **Engage the paradox.** Mishima worshipped beauty, strength, and life—and then destroyed himself. What does this reveal about fascism's internal logic?
6. **Acknowledge complications.** Where doesn't Mishima fit Eco's framework neatly? What does he reveal about the model's limits?

CHOOSE YOUR FORMAT

Select the format that lets you demonstrate your analysis most effectively. All formats are assessed using the same criteria.

Option A Written Analysis	A traditional essay-style analysis. Length: 500–800 words
Option B Annotated Visual	A diagram, concept map, or visual representation showing how Eco's features connect to Mishima, with annotations explaining your thinking. Include: Visual + 200–300 words of written explanation addressing the paradox and complications
Option C Audio/Video	A recorded analysis where you explain your thinking aloud. You may include visuals, slides, or screen-share of your notes. Length: 3–5 minutes
Option D Structured Analysis	Use the graphic organiser on the next page. Complete each section with evidence and explanation. Best for: Students who prefer clear structure and step-by-step guidance

WHY MISHIMA?

Most fascists are easy to dismiss. Mishima is not. He was brilliant, sensitive, disciplined, and self-aware. He didn't stumble into fascism—he chose it with full literary consciousness.

Analysing Mishima forces us to take fascism seriously as an aesthetic and psychological phenomenon, not just a political one. If we can understand what fascism offered him, we understand something about what it offers anyone.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Competencies: Evidence evaluation, perspective analysis

Criterion	Emerging (0-4)	Developing (5-7)	Proficient (8-10)	Extending (11-12)
Evidence Quality	Uses general claims without specific sources. <i>Tip: Quote Mishima's own words from the primary sources.</i>	Includes some evidence but relies on paraphrase or biography alone. <i>Tip: Engage the writing itself.</i>	Uses specific, well-chosen quotes from Mishima's writing. Citations support the analysis effectively.	Evidence reveals patterns in Mishima's thought that aren't obvious on first reading.
Framework Application	Lists features without connecting to evidence. <i>Tip: Explain what makes each feature visible in Mishima.</i>	Connects some features to evidence but treats them as a checklist. <i>Tip: Show how features interact.</i>	Explains how features function together in Mishima's case. Analysis shows patterns, not just matches.	Uses Mishima to reveal something about fascism itself—how aesthetic and political dimensions connect.
The Paradox	Doesn't address the paradox or treats it superficially. <i>Tip: Why does worship of life lead to death?</i>	Notes the paradox but doesn't explore it. <i>Tip: What does Mishima's end reveal about fascism's logic?</i>	Engages seriously with the paradox. Connects Mishima's death to fascism's internal contradictions.	Uses the paradox to illuminate fascism's appeal and its self-destructive core.
Nuance & Honesty	Forces all features to fit or ignores what doesn't. <i>Tip: Note complications.</i>	Acknowledges some complications but doesn't engage deeply. <i>Tip: Explain why something is uncertain.</i>	Honestly addresses where Mishima complicates or exceeds Eco's framework.	Uses complications to deepen analysis. Raises questions the framework can't answer.

OPTION D: STRUCTURED ANALYSIS

Complete each section. Use this organiser if you chose Option D.

1. FEATURES I SEE IN MISHIMA

List 3–5 of Eco's features that appear in Mishima's writing or actions.

2. EVIDENCE FROM MISHIMA'S WRITING

For each feature, quote Mishima directly. Explain what the quote shows.

Feature	Quote from Mishima	What This Shows

3. PATTERNS: HOW DO THESE FEATURES CONNECT?

Don't just list—explain how the features reinforce each other in Mishima.

4. THE PARADOX

Mishima worshipped life, beauty, and strength—then destroyed himself. What does this reveal about fascism?

5. COMPLICATIONS

Where doesn't Mishima fit Eco's framework? What questions remain?