good luck to everyone writing the exam tomorrow :) you got this.

HOW TO WRITE AN IB ENGLISH **HL LANGLIT PAPER 1**

We'll use this paper from May 2016 as an example.

1. ANNOTATING AND ANALYSING

2. WRITING AN INTRODUCTION

3. CREATING A THESIS & STRUCTURE

4. BODY PARAGRAPHS

5. CONCLUDING THE ESSAY

If you're not doing Lang/Lit HL, pay attention to the structure - the rest may be a little superfluous.

1.ANNOTATING AND ANALYSING

Before writing anything, **spend at least 15 minutes reading, annotating, and planning.** Make sure you don't rush into writing before you know what you're going to write about, you want to keep this structured and coherent. You have 2 hours and your essay doesn't necessarily have to be long - it just has to be good.

You have two pairs of texts and will only write on one pair. You can either read all four texts before deciding which to analyse & write on, or you can skim-read them and pick early.
You will need to identify the **common theme** and **text type** of the texts, and this will help you decide which to write on.

A. Linking Theme

Start by identifying the **common theme** between the two texts. You can usually glean this from a quick skim of both texts. In the example, **Text A** and **Text B** are both about the environment and humanity's relationship with it. **Text C** and **Text D** both concern an approaching ☭**workers' revolution**☭**.**

B. Text Type

Next, you need to be able to quickly identify the **text type.** Here's a nonexhaustive list of what may come up, you should be able to identify all of these.

a. Advertisement
b. Opinion column/op-ed
c. News article
d. Magazine article
e. Extract from an essay
f. Extract from prose novel
g. Extract from screenplay
h. Poem
i. Song lyrics
j. Webpage (be specific if possible - social networking, blog, etc)
k. Photograph
l. Political cartoon
m. Poster

The source will be identified at the bottom of the page, which should help you identify the text type if in doubt. Text type will influence the **structure** and **stylistic devices** of the text, so you should refer to it in your analysis.

By now, you'll probably have an idea of which pair you'd rather write on. Pick the pair of texts that you think you can engage with more and write on more.

C. Audience and Purpose

You must also identify the **Audience** and **Purpose** of each text, which are both interrelated and connect to the **text type**. For example, the **purpose** of an advertisement (the **text type**) will be to sell you something, while the **audience** will be its target demographic who will be seeing the advertisement.

Here's what I'd identify as the audience and purpose for the texts in the linked example if you want an idea of how to go about it:

Text	Audience	Purpose
A (webpage)	People who do not know much about 'biounderstanding' or 'biosensitivity' but are open to learning. It is clearly very newbie-friendly. Use .au domain or Canberra address to infer that it is directed at Australian audience.	It says it itself: *'to stimulate thought and discussion about the way forward to an ecologically sustainable, healthy and fair society and to introduce the concept and vision of biosensitivity*.' You can criticise/disagree that this is its purpose if you want, but start from there.

B (web political cartoon)	This is more broad and up to interpretation. I would say people who already care about the environment, as it is not making an attempt to 'convert' people but rather poking fun at people who do not care about the destruction of the environment. Use 'Los Angeles times' on sidebar to infer it's directed at American audience, although not necessary.	It's a political cartoon, so it is both making a point and attempting to make people laugh. Essentially its purpose is to satirise.
C (poem)	Fellow 1910s workers, and poetry enthusiasts. This one is maybe a bit harder as it is quite old. Use the title 'Chicago Poems' to infer that it is American, compare with text D which is also American. Use the date (1916) to contrast with text D as that one is from 2014!	To warn of an oncoming uprising from the perspective of 'the mass'. Also to argue that this is not only inevitable, but desirable.
D (op-ed magazine article)	Rich, politically-involved people, mostly Americans - the readers of Politico magazine. Hanauer addresses it to his 'fellow zillionaires', a tongue in cheek way of addressing the bourgeois capitalist pigs.	To warn, in a tongue-in-cheek way, of oncoming instability and workers' uprising. Also to argue that this can - and must - be stopped. Contrast with text C - both warn of the same thing, but C supports it and D fears it.

D. Message and stylistic features

Now that you've identified the key elements of the texts, it's time to annotate them in detail for **stylistic devices** and differences in **message/theme.**

This is a **compare & contrast,** so as you annotate the two texts you should get a feel for the **difference in theme.** While they'll both be connected by this theme, they will almost certainly approach it differently. From our example, Text C and Text D both warn of a coming workers' uprising - yet Text C portrays this as both positive and inevitable, while Text D shows it as terrible and avoidable. **This should ideally form the core of your thesis statement,** which we'll get to shortly.

Importantly, *you need to make reference to the author's use of stylistic devices throughout your analysis* in order to fulfill Criterion B. This means the use of language, structure, tone, style, etc.

You can't easily memorise all of them, but you should have an idea of what each mean and when to deploy them in a Paper 1.

In my experience, the most versatile devices to analyse are **tone, structure, diction, imagery, rhetorical devices, and style.** You can almost always comment on these. You can bring more specific devices, such as metaphor or irony, to support these.
If the text uses visual elements and images, you **must** comment on them. They are important!

2. WRITING AN INTRODUCTION

By now you should have recognised the **linking theme, text type, audience, purpose, message,** and most of the **stylistic devices** of each text. These are the necessary ingredients of an introduction and a thesis statement.

The first sentence should **name both texts**, **identify the text type,** and **identify the linking theme** - this will ensure you signify to the examiner you know what to talk about. Next, you want to identify the audience and purpose of each text. Here's an example of what that might look like:

> Text C, "I Am the People, the Mob", a poem by and text D, "The Pitchforks are coming... For Us Plutocrats" both foretell a coming uprising of the working class. They differ heavily in their audience, as Text C, published 1916, was targeted at an audience of early 20th century workers, while Text D, published 2014, is addressed at an audience of wealthy 21st century capitalists. Because of this, their purposes differ: while text C seeks to impress and inspire the reader with this revolution, text D warns that it must be stopped.

We still need to add the thesis to this, though.

3. CREATING A THESIS & STRUCTURE

Now for the most important part of the essay: the thesis. This will guide your structure for the entire essay.

Ideally, a **three-prong thesis statement** works very well. In this, you use the **linking theme** as the basis for 3 paragraphs of analysis on how the two texts approach the **linking theme** differently. You want three **thesis strands** to base your essay around. These can either be structured thematically, or by stylistic devices. **I prefer structuring the thesis strands**

thematically as it allows you to employ multiple stylistic devices to support them, but this won't always work, and you can structure it by stylistic device. Example: 'the tone in text C is serious and treats the issue gravely, while text D treats it in a lighthearted manner'.

Here's how I'd write a thesis to conclude the introduction for the example paper:

Thesis: While texts C and D both warn of a coming revolution, the approach differs heavily, as text C can be considered a Marxist, worker's poem supporting this revolution while text D, written by a modern American capitalist, seeks to argue that this revolution can and must be prevented.

Thesis Strand 1: Key to this, text C presents the revolution as inevitable and insurmountable while text D presents it as something that can be stopped.
- Stylistic devices for the body paragraph:
- use of *historical allusion* - text C alludes to 'the Napoleons and Lincolns', text D alludes to the French Revolution
- *repetition* of 'the mob-the crowd-the mass' in text C creates image of insurmountable force
- *anaphora* in 'when I, the people' emphasises the inevitability of this - it is not if, but when

Thesis Strand 2: Further, text C shows this awakening of the mass as heroic and righteous, while text D paints an image of chaos and destruction
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Thesis Strand 3: Finally, text C portrays exploitation of workers as the key motivator for this revolution, while text D shows a more modern approach by focusing on inequality as the driver of this potential revolution.
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Now our introduction is complete:

> *Text C, "I Am the People, the Mob", a poem by and text D, "The Pitchforks are coming... For Us Plutocrats" both foretell a coming uprising of the working class. They differ heavily in their audience, as Text C, published 1916, was targeted at an audience of early 20th century workers, while Text D, published 2014, is addressed at an audience of wealthy 21st century capitalists. Because of this, their purposes differ: while text C seeks to impress and inspire the reader with this revolution, text D warns that it must be stopped.* While texts C and D both warn of a coming revolution, the approach differs heavily, as text C can be considered a Marxist, worker's poem supporting this revolution while text D, written by a modern American capitalist, seeks to argue that this revolution can and must be prevented. Key to this, text C presents the revolution as inevitable and insurmountable while text D presents it as something that can be stopped. Further, text C shows this awakening of the mass as heroic and righteous, while text D paints an image of chaos and destruction. Finally, text C portrays exploitation of workers as the key motivator for this revolution, while text D shows a more modern approach by focusing on inequality as the driver of this potential revolution.

4. BODY PARAGRAPHS

Each body paragraph must start with a **topic sentence** that should really just be restating your thesis strand: this should make it clear what the paragraph is about for easy marks on Criterion D.

From here, you want to **compare and contrast** the two texts with reference to **stylistic devices.**

You can either do one text, then the other, or go back and forth between each text, but if you do one then the other you **must** make sure you conclude the paragraph by comparing and contrasting the two texts. Remember: this is an analytical compare & contrast essay, so you must make sure you do not treat either text in isolation.
What's most important is that you identify the **stylistic devices** used, **their effect on the reader(!!! don't forget this !!!)**, and ideally discuss their relationship with the **audience, purpose,** and **text type.** Try and discuss each text evenly. If you cover all of those things, you should have a very good paper 1 on your hands.

5. CONCLUDING THE ESSAY

The conclusion is maybe one of the harder parts of the essay. You want to rephrase and develop your thesis statement and thesis strands here, and hopefully connect it to a broader **social context/message.** Here, if you can, you want to show off by engaging with both texts, connecting it to historical/social context, providing a nice ending that makes it clear you've understood the relationship between context, audience, purpose, and message. Here, you can let the neutral tone slip a little and pass judgment on the message of each text, just don't overdo it.

If in doubt, summarise your thesis statement and strands succinctly and comment on the connection between the two texts. Showing that you're thinking about how they're connected - and the social context of the linking theme - is good.

Also, don't introduce any new stylistic devices or points here. Rather, this should be applying what you've said in the rest of the essay to a broader context.

Any more LangLit questions? [Come join the /r/ibo Discord and come to the #english_lang-lit channel!](#) We'll make it through this exam hell together.