

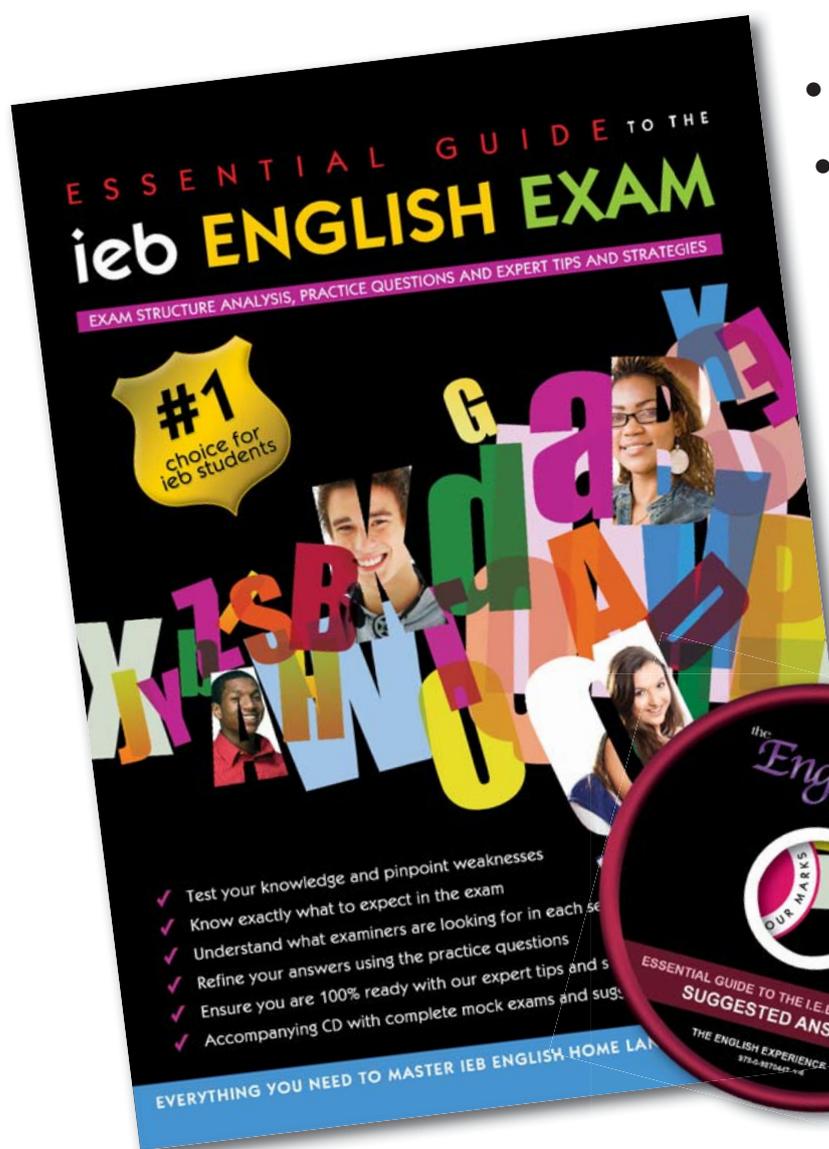


SAMPLE SECTION

The Beneficiaries
THE COMPLETE GUIDE AND RESOURCE

BE FULLY PREPARED FOR THE FINAL EXAM

Essential Guide to the IEB English Exam:
Exam structures analysis, practice questions and expert tips and strategies



- Detailed analysis of Paper I & II
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Everything needed to master IEB English Home Language Papers I & II

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Foreword

About the English Experience

Aware of the scarcity of genuinely fresh and complete English educational resources, The English Experience remains dedicated to publishing the very best in Matric English resources. The team of passionate, talented experts behind The English Experience work tirelessly to ensure that every resource encourages insight, growth and debate — enriching and challenging both educators and learners, without losing sight of the important goal of exam readiness and success.

The English Experience is an independent South African publishing house that specialises in developing high-quality IEB Matric English educational resources for educators and learners.

Focused on bringing the text to life, every resource The English Experience publishes incorporates a range of features, including content, contextual and essay questions, tear-out rubrics and stimulating enrichment materials, designed to encourage a critical appreciation of the text and inspire the high order thinking for which examiners are always looking.

The world-class English Experience team includes highly experienced educators, some with over 20 years of classroom experience, passionate literary experts in various fields, such as historical fiction, poetry and Shakespeare, fanatical historians and researchers, creative writers, skilled editors, picky proofreaders and obsessive fact checkers — together with spirited university lecturers and enthusiastic young minds who ensure our approach remains unique and fresh.

While exam readiness and success is a non-negotiable, our aspiration is to inspire a genuine interest in, and love of, English literature.

Our approach

Perhaps the toughest challenge with teaching literature to modern learners is convincing them that the extra effort required in reading a novel — compared with the passive immediacy of movies and TV shows — is worth it. Decoding the language and bringing the text to life in the imagination can be taxing for learners so it's perhaps not surprising that many of them see novels as works through which they have to slog to pass an exam.

This resource has been written with this reality in mind. Even though the language and settings of the novel are likely to be immediately accessible to Matric learners, particular attention has been paid to providing the kind of context and insight necessary to help them fully empathise with the characters and their struggles.

We passionately believe that studying literature rewards us with a broader, deeper understanding of ourselves and those around us. That is why this resource does more than provide learners with a

comprehensive, detailed analysis of the text. It also encourages them to engage with the novel on a personal level and to uncover their own responses through the extensive chapter-specific questions, enrichment tasks and essay topics.

Throughout this resource, learners are challenged to agree or disagree with both the characters and events in the novel and the analysis provided. By formulating and expressing their own responses to the opinions, ideas and themes explored in the novel, learners are encouraged to reflect and grow as individuals as well as students.

In the end, we have approached *The Beneficiaries* the same way we approach every text: with two, interrelated goals in mind. The first, non-negotiable objective is to ensure exam readiness and success. The second ambition is to inspire a genuine interest in, and appreciation of, the work being studied.

Using this resource

This comprehensive resource includes: an extensive introduction to the novel, the author and its historical background; detailed summaries; rich literary analyses; diverse, chapter-specific short questions, challenging essay questions and stimulating enrichment tasks. In short, everything needed to study the novel intensively and to bring it to life.

We recommend working through the **background to the novel** section first so that learners become familiar with the author, the novel's historical context, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the transition to democracy, and the novel itself.

Some learners might have preconceived ideas about apartheid and even a block about studying this period.

This resource has been written with such students in mind and particular attention has been paid to breathing new life into this fascinating transitional time.

The 'introduction to the novel' segment completes this section, giving learners an initial overview and appreciation of the plot, characters and themes, before they engage with the text itself.

By working through this comprehensive introductory section first, learners will be prepared, engaged and able to read the novel with the right mindset.

Once learners have been prepared and have read through the novel, the summaries and analyses provided in the **critical commentary** section ensure that a solid foundation of knowledge is laid.

Key to using the boxes in this resource



Info Box



Definition/
Glossary Box



Quirky Fact
Box

Each chapter and sub-section is summarised and analysed separately. Extensive glossaries are included and learners are required to engage with the content directly through chapter-specific questions. Learners can then methodically build on this foundation, only dealing with the whole novel once they have worked through it step-by-step.

At the end of the summaries, there are also a series of enrichment tasks and a wide selection of rigorous essay topics, ensuring that learners also tackle the novel in its entirety.

The **literary analysis** section includes analyses of the plot, narration and structure, characters, themes, motifs and symbols. It also highlights key quotations from the novel, with suggested explanations.

To ensure exam readiness and success, the resource also features an extensive section on the **literary essay**. This section provides guidelines on writing literary essays, two annotated examples from which to learn, and a selection of essay topics. It also includes suggested further reading, a useful revision reading quiz and suggestions on how to prepare for the final exam.

We hope you enjoy using this resource as much as we enjoyed putting it together. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Background to the novel

Author background

In *The Beneficiaries*, author Sarah Penny has created an extremely accessible, insightful and thought-provoking novel that explores the notions of truth, memory and identity in contemporary South Africa. Penny's astute portrayal is drawn from her personal experience of life as a teenager in South Africa during the 1980s. In this section, Penny recalls life at school and the events and characters that helped shape her world and inspire the novel.

'*The Beneficiaries, boarding school and me*', by Sarah Penny

'It's your memory and their forgetting. You can make yourself remember, but you can't make them not forget. So you go there and you make yourself remember and you put yourself in that place and then ... your memory finds their forgetting. And it makes you angrier.' (p.169)

I think I was rather indulged before I went to boarding school. I was the youngest child in a large family in Cape Town and all the older children had left home already, leaving me as the centre of attention. Apart from my very nice parents and my wonderful nanny, there were dogs and cats and budgies and squirrels in the roof and we all lived together in a beautiful early Georgian National Monument surrounded by a huge garden with a river running through it.

Nothing lasts forever, though, and, when I was sixteen, my parents and I decided between us that it would be interesting to go off to boarding school and meet some new people and have some new experiences.

The school was about a ten hour drive from Cape Town, in a small rural town in the Eastern Cape, not far from the border with the independent Bantustan of the Transkei. It wasn't an absolute backwater, nonetheless. There were shops and restaurants, two cinemas and even a university.

The Rhodesian connection

I hated boarding school from the get-go. The food was terrible, there was never enough hot water to go round and the uniform was drab and depressing. More than that, however, the whole ideology of the place was horrific. In Cape Town, my school used to go to chapel to pray for a peaceful transition to democracy. There was none of that liberal malarkey in the Eastern Cape.

This was 1987. In the Southern African sub-region, Angola and Mozambique had succumbed to black rule back in 1975 and Rhodesia was renamed Zimbabwe under a black government in 1980. South Africa was only headed one way. The staff and pupils at my boarding school were not very pleased about it. They were not going to accept black rule while there was a man, woman or child among them left standing.

Run by a man who gave us to believe he'd been something or other important in the Rhodesian Bush War, the school had an informal policy of employing other people who'd served in that conflict. Some of the staff still used their military titles like Major Carlton does in the book. There were a fair few of them,

as well as all the Rhody kids whose parents didn't want them educated alongside blacks in the new Zimbabwe. I hated Rhodesian kids at the time. They were ruthless, self-sufficient and tough as old boots.

But you don't spend two years immersed in the ruins of someone else's war without becoming a little obsessed with it yourself. My most recent book, *The Lies We Shared*, is partially set during the Rhodesian Bush War.

Adjusting to civilian life

Boarding school ended and I was turfed out along with my trunk and my diaries and what civilian clothes I had. I was a bit shell-shocked after boarding school. As much as I hated it, I had got used to institutional life. It was odd having to assemble a whole wardrobe and, at university, I kept calling the lecturers 'Sir' and 'Ma'am' — to much mirth from the other students, most of whom hadn't been boarders.

I was free and out of school, but I kept having very bleak nightmares that I was still there. Even though I had really happy times at university in my twenties and made life-long friends, there was always a shadow hanging over me of not coping with my school memories very well.

Writing *The Beneficiaries*

When I was 28 I won a South African National Arts Council Scholarship to study a Master's Degree in Creative Writing (MLitt) at St Andrews University in Scotland. I needed to find a dissertation topic. My anger towards the school hadn't gone, but it had finally cooled into something that I could draw on to mould a novel. I started writing *The Beneficiaries*.

I changed some details in the book. It was a private school and I made it into a government school, for example. Also, there were a number of black children in the classes, mostly the offspring of Bantustan despots being educated at the expense of the South African government. I changed that because most South African schools attended by whites were government and whites-only and I wanted the novel to reflect the educational dynamics in the country as a whole. I kept many descriptive elements exactly as they were in my experience, though, such as the practice of isolating children in the sanatorium before expulsion.

The TRC: lifting the iceberg

At the same time as I was writing the novel, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa was drawing to a close. For the last few years, it had staged public platforms to record the testimony of both the victims and the perpetrators of apartheid. There is much criticism of the TRC now, but, if you had grown up during apartheid as a white person, in that culture of silence and conformity, it was the most extraordinary thing to listen to those hearings.

The TRC made sense out of the atmosphere that had shrouded us at school. It felt as if, during those school years of constant suppression and pettiness, I'd seen the tip of the iceberg and suspected the looming shape under the water, but, through the TRC, was finally able to see the iceberg lifted clear and to realise the enormity of what apartheid was and what it did to the people who lived through it.

The good things that came out of school

There were a couple of good things that came out of boarding school. I had a fantastic English teacher.

FOREWORD

BACKGROUND TO
THE NOVELCRITICAL
COMMENTARY

LITERARY ANALYSIS

THE LITERARY ESSAY

PERFORATED RUBRICS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

She always made me feel, not only that writing was a worthy and noble ambition, but that I had it in me to be a writer as well.

One other thing that that school did do for me, that I now recognise and value, was to widen my perspective of who I was. South Africa was incredibly parochial at the time because we were cut off from virtually all international contact, but there were children at that school from white enclaves all over Africa, which made me see that I wasn't just a South African, but part of a whole history of whites colonising Africa, and everything that meant.

I have never really thought of myself as a South African novelist. I think of myself as a writer from Africa. So, despite everything, I have a debt to that school for making the whole business of identity such a thorny thing to settle — at such a relatively impressionable age — that I have had to give quite a lot of thought to the matter in the two and a half intervening decades since I left.



Sarah Penny was born in Cape Town in 1970. She was schooled in Cape Town and the Eastern Cape. After school, she went on to study at the University of Cape Town, Rhodes University and St Andrews University, Scotland.

Penny has lectured in English and Creative Writing at Brunel University since 2003, where she is currently reading for a PhD in Creative Writing. She has published three books with Penguin South Africa: *The Whiteness Of Bones* (a travel narrative) and two novels, *The Beneficiaries* and *The Lies We Shared*.

Her abiding interests are in African history, culture and languages, particularly from southern and East Africa. Another lifelong fascination is African wildlife, animal behaviour and nature conservation. She lives in North London, is married to the Mafia historian John Dickie and has two young children.

Novel or autobiography?

It is often said that an author's first novel is his/her most autobiographical, but this remains a very difficult claim to substantiate. Where do we draw the line between author and narrator, for instance? Are events that happen in the novel autobiographical simply because they are similar to known events in an author's life?

Sarah Penny has noted in a number of interviews, including this author background, that there are numerous autobiographical elements to *The Beneficiaries* and it is interesting to note these elements, both as a way of discovering how the work was created and of getting further insight into the meaning and messages being conveyed.

On the other hand, though, it could be a mistake to overstate the autobiographical nature of the novel. It is, first and foremost, a work of fiction and, therefore, of the imagination. It is likely to prove a futile and unrewarding exercise to try to precisely separate the factual elements in the novel from those of the author's imagination.

The Beneficiaries is a fascinating novel, given added authenticity by the author's experiences of being schooled in South Africa in the 1980s. By blending historical fact and fiction, personal experience and the imagination, the novel successfully explores and illuminates both the personal journey of the protagonist and the political journey of apartheid South Africa towards healing and hope.

Enrichment tasks

Exercise 1: Visual Literacy

Consider the following cartoon by Zapiro, published in the *Sowetan* newspaper during the TRC hearings, and answer the questions that follow.

i 'Zapiro' is the penname of Jonathan Shapiro, a South African cartoonist best known for his politically satirical cartoons that regularly appear in various national newspapers.



? Questions

1.1. Identify the Figure of Speech in the caption, 'As the TRC scales Mount Evidence...,' and explain how it functions to create humour in this cartoon. (2)

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- BACKGROUND TO THE NOVEL
- CRITICAL COMMENTARY
- LITERARY ANALYSIS
- THE LITERARY ESSAY
- PERFORATED RUBRICS
- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Consider the following cartoon, also by Zapiro and published in the *Sowetan*, and answer the questions that follow.



1.4. Explain how, and to what purpose, the cartoonist satirises the traditional legal oath made by witnesses in court. (3)

1.5. The man depicted in the cartoon, Craig Williamson, was an apartheid operative who applied for amnesty for a series of crimes, including kidnapping and assassination. How does the cartoonist represent this 'character'? Please provide evidence to support your answer. (3)

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CRITICAL COMMENTARY

1.6. What does the cartoonist suggest about Craig Williamson’s motivations in applying for amnesty? Provide sound reasoning in support of your response by referring closely to the cartoon. (2)

LITERARY ANALYSIS

THE LITERARY ESSAY

Refer to the following short poem by Antjie Krog and answer the questions that follow.

“Clean Slate”

‘I have been given a clean slate and can continue with my life.’ 1

‘I have given a clean slate and see how they simply continue with their lives.’

‘I am surprised about my clean slate – it shows they cannot even hate properly.’ 5

‘I am surprised that I have given a clean slate and they simply continue as before.’

1.7. Identify the speaker(s) in Antjie Krog’s poem. (2)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PERFORMED RUBRICS

Critical commentary: part one

Preparation

How to read novels for academic analysis

When reading a novel that you are required to analyse for academic purposes, you need to approach the text in a slightly different way than you do when reading a novel for pleasure. Here are few tips to keep in mind when reading novels for academic analysis.

- It may sound obvious, but **make sure you are paying attention** when you read. Often when we are reading, our attention wanders and we don't really take in what it is that we're reading. Be sure that when you're reading a novel for academic purposes, your attention stays focused at all times and that you are not distracted by your phone, television, friends or family members.
- **Make notes** in the page margins as you read. Marking important passages as you read them will help you save time when you are looking for them again later and will also help to keep you focused as you read.
- **Underline unfamiliar words** so that you can look up their definitions and make a note of their meanings.
- Keep the **themes** of the novel in mind as you are reading and keep asking yourself how these themes are being conveyed and developed in the narrative. Make notes of any recurring **motifs and symbols** and what these represent in the text.
- Remember that you are reading for **meaning** (*what* is being said) and for **form** (*how* it is being conveyed). Literary analysis is about detecting patterns in the text and determining how these patterns convey particular messages.

Patterns of meaning

What is the text saying? (i.e. Themes)

- How is the plot structured? What happens in the narrative and in what order?
- Where and when does the story take place?
- Who is the subject of the story?
- What are the recurring themes in the narrative?
- What message is being conveyed?
- How do you feel about what is happening in the story?

Patterns of form

How is it being said? (i.e. Technique)

- Who is the narrator of the text? When or on what occasion(s) is this narration taking place?
- How does the point of view from which the story is being told affect our understanding?
- How are the characters developed throughout the text? How do they interact with one another, and why?
- Is the narration sequential or achronological? Are there flashbacks or flash-forwards? Why is the narration structured in this way?

- What kind of symbols and motifs recur in the text? What do these symbolise and how do they reinforce the themes of the novel?
- What do the title and chapter headings tell us about this narrative and how we should interpret it?



Glossary of important literary terms

archetype, archetypal: a very typical or common example of a particular type of person or thing.

bildungsroman: a genre of literature in which the protagonist, usually an adolescent, undergoes spiritual, intellectual, moral, psychological and/or social growth throughout the course of the narrative and, in doing so, achieves maturity (also known as a 'coming of age' story).

catharsis: the often painful process through which a character heals, usually through the release of strong or repressed emotions.

connotation: an idea, association or feeling that is evoked by the use of a particular word, in addition to its literal meaning.

context: the 'things around the text'; the particular circumstances that form the setting for a narrative event, statement or idea.

denouement: the climax or finale of a narrative in which the various strands of the plot are drawn together or resolved.

diction: the choice of words used.

discourse: written or spoken communication or, in literary terms, the treatment of a particular subject within the narrative.

foil: a character who contrasts starkly with another character, usually the protagonist, in order to emphasise the particular qualities or traits of the other character.

form: the structure or design of a particular literary work.

genre: in literary terms, a genre is a particular and distinguishable category of writing which employs distinct, common conventions that are recognisable across all works of the same genre.

ideology: a system of beliefs or ideals which often forms the basis for a political or economic policy, for example, apartheid.

irony: a perceptible inconsistency (sometimes humorous) in an apparently straightforward statement or situation which, given its particular context, takes on the opposite meaning or significance. In the case of **dramatic irony**, the reader or audience may know more about the character's situation or circumstances than the character and is able to recognise a sharply different or contrasting meaning to the character's statements.

metaphor, metaphoric: a Figure of Speech in which one thing is taken to represent or symbolise something else, in order to transfer particular associations or qualities on to the thing or idea being represented.

paradox, paradoxical: a statement that is so obviously untrue or contradictory that it leads the reader to consider alternative contexts in which it may be considered accurate; or a situation, person or thing that combines contradictory features or qualities.

point of view: the position or vantage point from which the events of a story are presented to the reader.

protagonist: the main/central character in the narrative.

syntax: the particular arrangement of words or phrases to create sentences, which may carry particular emphasis or connotations.

theme: the central message, idea or insight of a literary work.

Summaries and analysis

Using this section

Working through the novel chapter by chapter ensures that a solid foundation of knowledge is laid, and then gradually and effectively expanded. Learners are not required to deal with the entire novel until they have worked through it in a methodical, step-by-step manner.

Each chapter and sub-section is summarised and analysed separately. Extensive glossaries are included and learners are required to engage with the content directly through chapter-specific questions. At the end of the summaries, there is also a series of enrichment tasks and a wide selection of rigorous essay topics, ensuring that learners also tackle the novel in its entirety.

Setting the scene — London and the Eastern Cape (Pages 3 to 17)

Summary

The novel opens with '**A Letter**', an unwelcome request from a woman named Nomda Qhashane. The recipient of the letter, who is not named at this point, claims that she will not do whatever the letter is requesting and throws the letter away in a neighbour's dustbin.

In the following chapter, '**1998: Contact**', set in London, Lally contacts Pim using a phone number she was given months before. It is clear that the two have not been in contact for a number of years: Pim is astonished to hear from Lally and both ask to be called by the more formal versions of their names, 'Laeticia' and 'Edgar'.

Lally visits Pim at his house on the other side of London, where she meets his family and has dinner with them. Pim and his wife, Ruth, have two sons. It is revealed that Lally and Pim knew each other as children in South Africa and that Lally still owns an ostrich farm there, although she hasn't visited it in over five years. Pim has not taken over the running of his family's farm, despite the fact that it is the tradition in his family for the eldest son to do so.

The next chapter, titled '**1978: Standard Eight: Hadedas and Earthworms**', recalls a younger Lally, during her boarding school days in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. During her Standard Eight (Grade 10) year, Lally is seated at the window of her dormitory in the Girls' Division of the school, looking out over the grounds at sports fields and school buildings. She is enjoying the brief period of quiet and solitude in the dormitory as the rest of the girls are at tea, eating jam sandwiches — Lally herself is a 'difficult eater' (p.11) and chooses to avoid tea.

She is holding a letter from her mother, composed of the usual news about the farm and her home district, which she will answer later. When the other girls return to the dormitory, it is clear that

Lally is an outsider, although not exactly unpopular. Lally is called upstairs by Emily, a prefect, and although Lally is apprehensive about going into the senior girls' dormitories, she has little choice but to obey.

Emily is Pim's girlfriend of two years and because Lally usually spends the holidays at Pim's house, Emily has come to regard her as a kind of younger sister (p.16). Emily shows Lally a picture of Pim, who matriculated the previous year. Dressed in his soldier's uniform, Pim is now in the infantry and has been promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

Analysis

A Letter

Although the recipient of the letter and its contents are not revealed at this point, we later find out that it is a request addressed to Lally from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for information regarding an incident she witnessed during her school days, involving the son of Nomda Qhashane.

It is clear that Lally has no wish to fulfil this request: her forceful actions — speaking loudly to herself and flinging the letter in the dustbin — suggest that the letter has reminded her of something unpleasant or upsetting, something she would rather forget or that has even made her angry.

1998: Contact

This chapter establishes the ambiguous and even uncomfortable relationship the characters have with their South African heritage. It is suggested that Lally and Pim were once close, although they have been out of contact for quite some time, and their meeting is initially quite awkward.

Their insistence on the use of their full names, 'Laeticia' and 'Edgar', indicates that both have changed substantially over the years and that they feel they are no longer the same people they were when they last knew each other. Interestingly, however, the narrator still refers to them as 'Lally' and 'Pim', perhaps suggesting that they have not changed as much as they may believe.

Pim speaks 'like an Englishman' (p.6) and has clearly been living in London for a long time. Both Lally and Pim have left behind family farms in South Africa. Lally expresses her indifference to the running of her ostrich farm, while it seems that Pim's decision not to run his family's farm — thus breaking with a long-standing tradition — is a contentious issue within the family.

Pim's wife, Ruth, is British and she becomes uncomfortable when Lally and Pim start talking about South Africa. She 'feels marginalised in her own home' (p.7), excluded from Lally and Pim's shared heritage. There seems to be an underlying tension in Ruth and Pim's marriage, suggested by her irritation with Pim's comment about her potatoes and by Pim's consciously exaggerated efforts to appear as a good husband and father as he shows off for Lally.

Ruth's feeling of exclusion is further emphasised when she 'savagely' (p.8) denies her son's claim that he is 'a Pim' (p.8) — the nickname given to all the eldest sons in his father's family. It is also suggested that Lally's visit makes Ruth feel insecure, as she looks at herself in the mirror and tells herself that she is 'still a young woman' (p.9).

1978: Standard Eight: Hadedas and Earthworms

This is the first glimpse we have of Lally at boarding school. The strict, institutional characteristics of the school are emphasised here: the buildings are regularly laid out, the students' time is strictly regimented and the social hierarchy among the students is rigorously observed.

This sense of hierarchy is emphasised by Lally's hesitation when Emily invites her up to her room (the domain of the senior girls, where Lally has no right to be) and by the dilemma experienced by Emily's friend, who wants to reprimand Lally for her uneven hemline, but feels she cannot do so because Lally has been invited up by Emily.

It is also suggested in this section that Lally has a rather cold, formal relationship with her parents. Her letters from her mother all follow the same pattern and do not seem to contain any familiarity or warmth. Lally herself is established as an outsider at school; she is not disliked by the other students, but she is not popular and seems to prefer to distance herself from others. The contrast between her and Emily is clear as Emily is depicted as popular, athletic, attractive and vivacious.

**Glossary****A Letter**

surreptitiously: acting in a stealthy manner to deliberately avoid being seen

forlorn: appearing hopeless or miserable because of abandonment

sullied: soiled, dirtied or tarnished

1998: Contact

opaque: not transparent, blocking light

azure: sky blue colour

felicities: happy occasions

indefatigable: tireless, inexhaustible

briar: a woody, thorny plant

blighted: harmed or destroyed

deputising: temporarily acting in the place of something or someone else

1978: Standard Eight: Hadedas and Earthworms

raffish: suggestively vulgar, or carelessly unconventional

belligerent: hostile or aggressive

irrevocable: not able to be reversed or changed

pedagogical: related to teaching or education

alumni: former students

endowments: donated funds

lucerne: another name for alfalfa, a kind of plant

apprised: informed or told

mufti: casual dress

hierarchical: arranged in order of rank or importance

prerogative: a right or privilege

vagaries: unexpected or inexplicable changes

impermeable: impossible to penetrate

anschluss: a political or economic union

impetuous: impulsive

raison d'être: reason or justification

impasse: an impossibly difficult situation

in loco parentis: in the place of a parent

conscription: compulsory enrolment in military service

suavities: smooth, sophisticated mannerisms

de facto: in fact or reality

philanthropic: seeking to promote or ensure the welfare of others

slovenliness: untidy dress or appearance

dudgeon: feeling of resentment

Annotated essay examples

Essay topic 1:

Discuss the physical ways in which Lally's emotions manifest themselves in *The Beneficiaries*, and explain why she experiences her emotions in this very particular way. Your answer should be approximately 600 words in length and should provide concise, relevant examples from the text wherever possible.

Notes on the essay topic:

- This topic directs you to **discuss** the theme of physicality in the novel and, specifically, as it applies to Lally's physical ailments as expressions of her emotions.
- The **word count** is specified clearly and should be adhered to.
- You are asked to **refer to the novel closely**, meaning that you should include examples and quotations as supporting evidence for your points. You should not simply retell the plot of the novel in your essay; your supporting evidence should be concise and carefully selected examples that illustrate your argument.
- **Key words** include 'physical', 'emotions', 'manifest' and 'experiences' — these are words that should be used in the essay itself.

Essay:

In *The Beneficiaries*, Lally's realisation that apartheid society is based on a morally corrupt system of beliefs provokes an incredibly intense emotional response. Lally's inability to deal with the intensity of her emotions, however, means that they are instead turned inward and manifest themselves in a variety of physical disorders. Rather than working through the trauma caused by the knowledge that her society is morally baseless, Lally's method of 'coping' by suppressing her pain results in the development of a severe eating disorder, insomnia and panic attacks.

Introduction

Comments:

Note the structure of the introductory paragraph: the thesis statement is indicated in **bold** (this is the main argument that will be referred to throughout the essay). The underlined sentence gives a 'preview' of the argument, as these are the topics that will be discussed further in the body of the essay.

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Body

The reader soon comes to realise that Lally's anorexia is a means for her to retain some semblance of control over her own life. Early on in the novel, Lally is described as a 'difficult eater' whose mealtime habits are monitored by the matron of the school. She is often described as lean and thin in appearance, both as a teenager and an adult. When Pin's brother Michael comments on her thinness, she feels 'a fierce surge of pride at her self-control', indicating that she does not starve herself for aesthetic reasons, but because she enjoys the sense of control it gives her. Realising that she is irretrievably caught up in a corrupt political system, which she cannot change or escape from, she finds relief in her ability to maintain control over what happens to her body. As she later observes, the 'only thing she was always able to control was her own body'.

Later on in the novel, as Lally comes to recognise the inherent corruption of the school institution, the food provided to her by the school comes to represent its immorality and depravity. This realisation, prompted by the selection of prefects in her Standard Nine year, coincides with a marked development in the severity of her eating disorder. In rejecting the school's food, which she describes as 'scabrous, tainted, scrofulous, peccant, gangrenous', Lally is symbolically rejecting the beliefs that both the school and apartheid are based on, and purging herself of the corrupting influences of both institutions.

Lally also experiences severe bouts of insomnia throughout the novel. She is often described as having difficulty sleeping, rising early in the morning or lying awake during the night, plagued by a feeling of restlessness. The occasional relief she experiences from her insomnia coincides with instances of emotional or psychological well-being, when she first arrives at Pin's farm for the short holiday, for example, or when she watches Siphon from her dormitory window. Her difficulty in sleeping indicates unresolved anxiety, which plagues her on a sub-conscious level and is only alleviated when she leaves the school or experiences some form of emotional comfort.

In the second paragraph, the sentence in **bold** indicates the topic sentence: this is the point that this paragraph will deal with. The quotations and examples from the text support the claim being made by the topic sentence. The underlined sentences form the analysis or elaboration of this point, and explain its relevance to the thesis statement.

Though this paragraph is linked in subject to the previous paragraph, it is a new point and, therefore, a new paragraph has been started. Note how, throughout the essay, direct quotations are seamlessly and grammatically incorporated into the sentences.

Again, take note of the T-E-A structure of this paragraph (Topic sentence — Evidence — Analysis). The sentence in **bold** is the topic sentence; the quotations and examples provide evidence, and the underlined sentences are the analysis of this point.

Body

On several occasions in the novel, Lally also suffers from panic attacks brought on by unpleasant or confusing realisations. The first of these occurs after her classmate, Zulu, is unjustly blamed for a classroom prank; in this instance, Lally finds herself sobbing uncontrollably in her dormitory, where she is comforted by Nonda. As an adult, she experiences the physical sensations associated with these panic attacks when unexpectedly confronted by the traumas of her past, in the form of a racing heart, a metallic taste in her mouth and nausea. This demonstrates how Lally's emotions, particularly those she has suppressed, manifest themselves physically.

Conclusion

Throughout the novel, Lally is confronted with difficult truths and realisations about the society in which she lives; truths that provoke intense emotional reactions. Rather than dealing with her emotions, however, Lally suppresses her pain. As a result, she experiences various physical ailments, including anorexia, insomnia and panic attacks, as physical manifestations of the emotional traumas she is refusing to deal with.

Note the use of connective words to link paragraphs, which ensures the logical organisation and progression of the argument. Other potential connectives that can be used include 'furthermore', 'moreover', 'further to', 'in addition to'.

The concluding paragraph sums up the argument, drawing on words and phrases used in both the question and the introduction, but restated in an original way. The sentence in **bold** indicates a restatement of the thesis statement.

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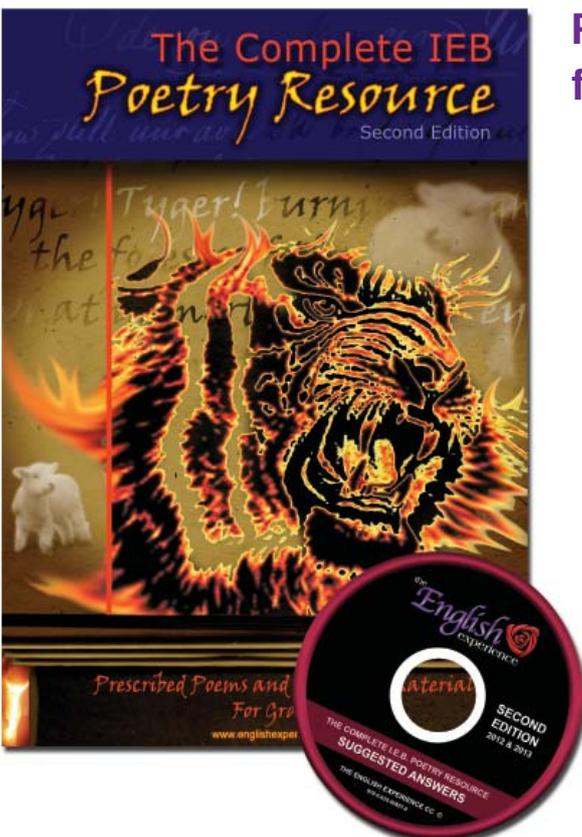
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