

AS91475: Writing Portfolio

Version 1

3.4: Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains and structures ideas.

6 Credits

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas.	Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas and is convincing .	Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas and commands attention .

The Tragic Hero Essay

Outline

This task is the culmination of our study of the tragic Shakespearean play, *King Lear*.

This task gives students the opportunity to critically analyse a key element of the genre of tragedy: the tragic hero. The aim is to analyse the central figure of the play, Lear, and his position as an Aristotelian tragic hero.

The tragic hero is a long standing figure of literature, dating back to the Greek dramatists. They are a distinctive feature of the genre of tragedy and well defined by Greek philosopher, Aristotle.

Develop a response to the following statement:

Knowledge of the Aristotelian tragic hero reveals much about Shakespeare's intentions in the tragedy *King Lear*.

Preparation

- Read and consider the relevant extracts from Aristotle's *Poetics* manuscript. Ensure you are comfortable with discussing his definition of the tragic hero. A full PDF copy of *Poetics* is available on our class blog.
- Identify a range of features and evidence that reflect Shakespeare's presentation of King Lear as a tragic hero.
- Consider Shakespeare's understanding of classical literature and theories.
- Plan the structure of your essay.
 - A clear introduction, body and conclusion.
 - Effective paragraphing.
 - A logical progression of ideas.

- Consider the conventions of argument essay writing such as:
 - A clear thesis
 - The use of transitional and connective words and phrases
 - The use of language devices (metaphor, analogy, imagery etc.) to build on your ideas, present your opinion or clarify your argument.
 - The use of quotations and examples with clear explanations of how these develop your argument.
 - Explore the language in your selected quotations and where this further supports your thesis.
 - Effective syntax allowing you to build, connect and develop ideas.

The Final Piece

Size

Once your initial research and preparation is complete, your final piece should be written in the form of an essay. In order to keep your work focused, there is a word limit of **1500 words** for this essay.

Conditions

The drafting and editing of your piece will happen in class over **8 periods**. You may use any notes you have created during our exploration of *King Lear* and you may seek feedback during the first 4 periods of writing. After this time, your teacher will be “hands off” and it will be up to you to polish your work.

Scope

Your proficiency with spelling, grammar and punctuation will aid the clear and effective communication of your argument, as will conforming to a clear structure with your writing.

Advice

You are advised to refer to the critical readings and essays that you have been exposed to during our study of *King Lear* to refine your understanding of how an argument can be constructed effectively.

You are encouraged to seek advice from your teacher early in the drafting process to ensure you are on the right track.

Consider how to split your time between what you want to say in your essay and how you say it. It is wise to remember that this is a writing assessment so **how** you convey your ideas and the effectiveness of this is essential to your success in this assessment.

Exemplar

Time to Abandon Grand Ethical Theories

by Julian Baggini (writing for *The Times Literary Supplement*)

Ethics today is in a curious state. There is no shortage of people telling us that Western civilization is facing a moral crisis, that the old foundation of Christianity has been removed but nothing has been put in its place. Christian writers such as Alister McGrath and Nick Spencer have warned that we're running on the moral capital of a religion we've long abandoned. It's only a matter of time before, like Wile E. Coyote, we realize we've run off a moral cliff, impossibly suspended in mid-air only as long as we fail to realize there's nothing under our feet.

One supposed sign of this malaise is that scepticism about morality has never been higher. University philosophy lecturers consistently report that their new undergraduates tend to arrive assuming that all thinking people are moral relativists who believe that what's right for some is wrong for others and that's all there is to be said for it. Psychology has fuelled this scepticism, with researchers like Joshua Greene arguing that most moral judgements come straight from the "hot" amygdala, not the "cool"

The opening paragraph effectively grabs the reader using a short, punchy opening statement, personal pronouns such as "we" to address that this "crisis" we face is one that will affect us all. The argument is clearly laid out: ethics is a problem and no one is doing anything about it.

The use of imagery around Wile E. Coyote is effective in clarifying the point the author is making: we are not going to realise we have made an error until we are off the cliff with nothing to catch us like Coyote is when he chases Roadrunner. It is further developed by the complex syntax around it.

The language choices in the second paragraph develop a commanding and knowledgeable voice. The author has an opinion and is very precise in how he will present it.

One supposed sign... and Yet for... the use of transitional phrases helps to move the argument to the next logical point. It guides the reader through the essay and creates a clear structure.

prefrontal cortex. On this account, moral principles are post-facto rationalizations of emotional reactions.

Yet for such a sickly beast, ethics is energetically at work everywhere. You may doubt the sincerity of corporate social responsibility but the very fact that every reasonably sized company feels the need to demonstrate it says something about public expectations. "Ethical consumers" used to be a small band of idealistic hippies but now mainstream supermarkets boast of their fairly traded coffee and chocolate. You can't actually buy a banana at Sainsbury's that doesn't carry the Fairtrade label. In 1997 Robin Cook was laughed at for making the modest suggestion that "our foreign policy must have an ethical dimension". Now governments are routinely lambasted when they are seen not to have one. Sexual harassment has gone from being "just one of those things" to a moral failing for which you can lose your job and your reputation. For a nation that has lost its moral compass, we seem remarkably keen to march to an ethical beat.

You can read the rest of this essay by following the link in the blog post or heading to:

<https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/public/ethical-thinking-baggini/>

In 1977 Robin... the use of specific examples to further develop the idea the writer is conveying.

The author is deliberate in his use of figurative language throughout the piece. For each point, he uses a different set of techniques that make the argument real for the reader.

- *The imagery in paragraph 2 around the "hot" and "cold" parts of the brain.*
- *The personification of ethics into a "sickly beast" in paragraph three.*
- *The imagery of the "moral compass" and "marching to an ethical beat" in paragraph three.*

All of these devices build on, present and clarify the argument.

The argument is developed in the third paragraph. After being introduced to the problem, given some background on where it comes from, we are now presented with a development of the original argument: people like the idea of being ethical but no one is really sure what that means at the core of the matter.