

2015 specification
first exams in 2017



American Literature

Unseen Prose Preparation Pack for A Level OCR

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Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been designed to support the teaching and study of the OCR A Level English Literature 'American Literature 1880–1940' topic. Its aim is to provide students with the skills needed to complete the first task of the Comparative and Contextual Study Component 2 exam, a critical analysis of an unseen prose extract from the period. The resource includes 10 examples of prose extracts from texts that are not on the OCR list of specified texts for this unit, making them suitable for use in preparing for the unseen extract element of the OCR English Literature exam. There are also activities and essay practice questions that will help students develop the necessary skills for writing excellent essay responses in the summer exam.

At the front of the pack you will find guidance on the exam question wording, an assessment objective break down and some points on the exam structure. This offers an overview both of the module and of the style of assessment that students will face in the exam. A guide on the structure of the resource, outlining its inclusion of example analyses and additional unseen extracts for students to use as exam practice, has also been included in this section. We have also included a timeline of key historical events between 1880 and 1940, and some key texts of the period.

In the main body of this resource, you will find 10 unseen extracts of prose taken from the period of American literature between 1880 and 1940. These have been supplied as unannotated and annotated versions to provide differentiation, practise close-reading skills and demonstrate how to analyse a previously unseen piece of literature. The extracts are also accompanied by a paragraph of example analysis, with reflective activities to encourage students to evaluate responses. Each section contains an additional unannotated passage from the same text with activities that are designed to further test students' analysis skills. Also included within these notes are some of the key literary concepts, contexts and terminology that define American writing of the period.

The analysis and activities relating to the unseen extracts included in this resource have been designed to cover and test the three Assessment Objectives against which the exam board will test students' responses. Note, in particular, that the primary Assessment Objective being tested is AO2:

	Assessment Objective
AO1	Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression (12.5%)
AO2	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts (75%)
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received (12.5%)

At the back of the resource is a series of general practice essay questions, written in the style of the OCR examination. These are designed to help students bring together the knowledge and skills they have acquired and apply it to an exam-style task. You may choose to set these essay questions as classroom activities under timed conditions in order to prepare your students for the conditions of the exam itself, or use them as homework tasks.

Answers / indicative content for all tasks have also been provided at the back of the resource. The answers are not intended to be comprehensive, but should offer you and your students some ideas on the kinds of interpretation they may want to consider in their essay responses. You will also find a glossary of key literary and contextual terms that have been taken from the main body of the resource, which will consolidate any important vocabulary used during the analyses of the set texts and encourage students to use these in their future essays on the topic. All key terms throughout the resource are in bold italics, and the glossary is arranged in alphabetical order for ease of use.

You may want to photocopy pages from this study guide and use them in your lessons, or hand them out as homework resources to consolidate students' critical analysis skills. Alternatively, you may want to split your use of the resource between lesson time and homework time (for instance, you could read through and discuss a section of notes collectively during a class, and set the activities at the end for homework). The resource is for you to use in whichever way you wish.

This resource exists as a supplement to the ZigZag American Literature: Student Guide for A Level OCR, which contains an overview of the themes and contexts related to the topic of American literature between 1880 and 1940, as well as analysis of the set texts specified by the exam board for this unit.

We hope you and your students find the resource helpful and informative. Good luck!

November, 2017

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Exam Guidance

Exam Question Break-down

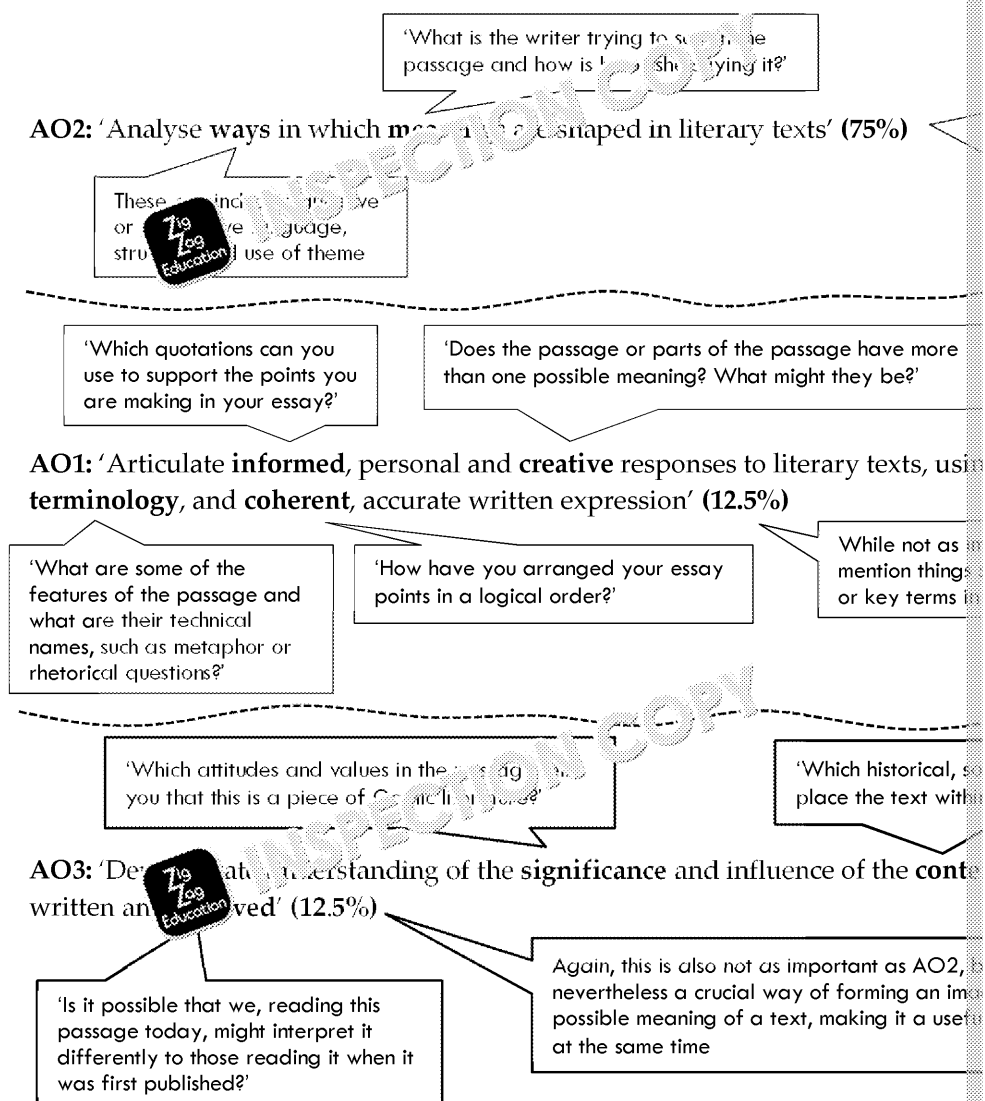
What are you being asked to do in the exam?

In this section of the exam, you will always be asked to write a **'critical appreciation'** and **relate it to your study of American literature between 1880 and 1940**. Look at the time, it is not always immediately clear what you are being asked to do. To help you, we have reworded the question to make it clearer.

1. 'Critical appreciation' is another way of saying **'critical analysis'**, which is a method of analysing a text in two stages: firstly, you identify some of the **language** present in the text, and, secondly, you suggest what the **effect** of each of these on the reader's response to the text. Completing both of these stages gives you a **critical appreciation** of the text; by working out **how something has been written** and **intended to have on the reader**, you have identified the meaning.
2. With this in mind, it is often useful to **reword the task** so that it actually forms a question essentially being asked a question in two parts, which we have separated into two questions.

'What are the ways in which the writer of this passage uses language, then, to create meanings in this passage? Use your knowledge of how other American writers between 1880 and 1940 create meaning in their texts to help you write your answer.'

Let's look at how the reworded question above relates to each of the three Assessment Objectives (AOs) the exam board will use to measure the quality of your answer:



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Suggested Timings

In the Comparative and Contextual Study exam you have two and a half hours to answer the question, the first of which asks for an analysis of an unseen extract. Therefore, it is advised that you spend the first hour and 15 minutes writing your critical analysis before moving on to the second question. One way in which you might choose to divide up the 75 minutes you should give to the critical analysis is as follows. **However, you must bear in mind these are guidelines only and that you must allow less time to the various stages, such as planning, in order to allow more time for writing your response.**

Exam Timings	Stages of the Exam
0–5 minutes	Read through the extract two or three times. It's important to read the extract carefully: the first time around, you are reading the passage purely to get a general impression; the second and third readings will enable you to identify specific usages and thematic details that will form the basis of your response. Take notes in your answer book about some of the features of the passage.
5–15 minutes	Plan your essay by organising these bullet points under subheadings. Consider: what particular theme or type of language used throughout? Could you identify different types of language are used to present another element of the text? Each bullet point that you go on to mention in your essay must have a reference to it.
15–70 minutes	Aim to write between five and seven paragraphs that each analyse a different aspect of the text, such as its use of characterisation, presentation of setting or consistency of tone. You should spend approximately eight to ten minutes writing each paragraph. Each paragraph should also be a brief introduction to the content of the paragraph. You should summarise the main points of your response. Unlike other types of essay, while studying A Level English, you do not need a strong line of argument. What your opening and concluding sentences do need to show is that you understand how each aspect of the passage identified in your paragraphs contributes to the general effect.
70–75 minutes	Read through your essay, checking your spelling, punctuation and grammar. Make sure you have included enough text quotation throughout. Since this is the final stage, it is tempting to skip this stage in favour of gaining a head start on the second question. However, over your work is an invaluable way of checking that your use of words is strong enough to meet the standard required by AO1.

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Student Instructions

How to Use This Guide

This pack is made up of 10 sections, each based around a passage from American literature from 1940 that are not on the list of set texts provided by the exam board for the topic. The passages are arranged in chronological or thematic order to help you get a sense of the 'unseen' nature of the exam. You will get in the exam itself, it is likely that you will not have read these extracts. The passages are divided into four parts that will help you develop the critical analysis skills that are needed for the exam. Each section contains an unseen extract, an example analysis, a second unseen extract, and close reading and topic-linking activities.



1) Unannotated and annotated unseen extract

The first part of each section provides an unseen passage that you must analyse. The passage is provided with annotations that highlight key language features of the text and comment on their possible meanings. An example analysis is provided afterwards for you to compare your own annotations to. The annotations and example analysis provide examples of what you will be expected to notice about your own unseen passage. The terminology that will be useful to your own analysis has been highlighted in the annotations. Definitions of these terms can be found in the glossary at the back of the pack.



2) Example analysis

After each unseen passage is an example of a paragraph of analysis showing how the annotations are used. Each paragraph looks at a specific language use that we have picked out from the extract in our annotations. The questions below are designed to increase your understanding of how the analysis is written and evaluates the effectiveness of the extract.



3) Second unseen extract

A further unseen extract, taken from the same text, has also been included. This extract is unannotated for you to make notes on yourself, using the annotated extract as a guide. Examples of how to pick out key features of an unseen passage. While you are not allowed to annotate the provided passage in the exam itself, it is nevertheless a useful tool while learning how to do critical analyses for the first time.



4) Close reading and topic-linking activities

The final part of each section is a series of activities that test your understanding of how the writer shapes meaning in the second unseen extract while encouraging you to develop your own. The 'Close Reading' activities are primarily intended to test AO1 and AO2. The 'Topic Linking' activities focus more on the creative and contextual aspects of the text, requiring AO3.



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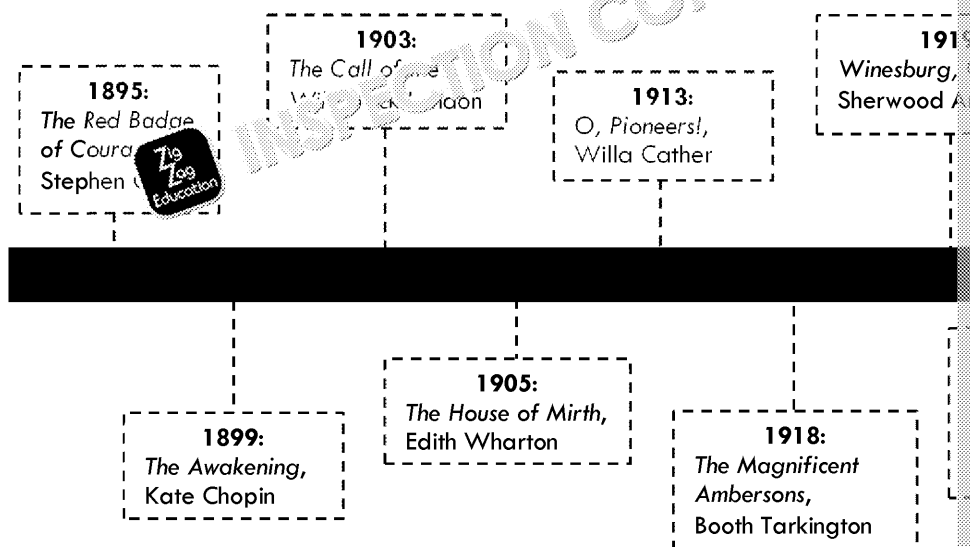
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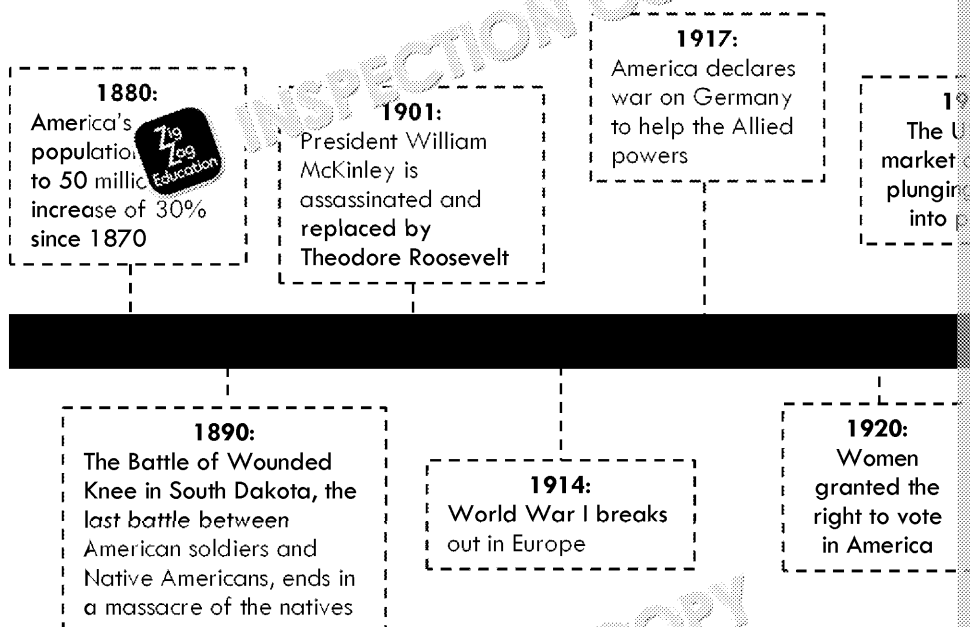


Timelines of Key Texts Historical Events

Module Texts



Key Historical Events



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We have included some background information on the plots and general themes. Extracts are contained in this resource. Although this information will not be provided in the exam, it may find it useful to consider this contextual background while you familiarise yourself with the texts for critical analyses.

Winesburg, Ohio – Sherwood Anderson (1919)

Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* is a collection of short stories based on the lives of people in Midwestern America. While the collection explores the lives of many of the townspeople, it is particularly on a young man, George Willard, and his family: their dreams, their struggles to make ends meet. The passage taken from one of the first stories in the collection, 'The Doctor', shows George's parents, who are running a failing hotel in the town while George attempts to become a doctor.

Key Themes and Subjects: family relationships, small-town American life, the American Dream
Key Literary Features: third person omniscient narration, imagery, juxtaposition

This Side of Paradise – F Scott Fitzgerald (1925)

This Side of Paradise is the first novel published by F Scott Fitzgerald, whose most famous work is *The Great Gatsby*, you may be reading as one of your set texts. The novel is the coming-of-age story of a young university student who falls in love with a rich New York woman, only for her to marry a richer man. In the passage contained in this resource, Amory is experiencing the aftermath of this event while wandering through the graveyards and streets of Princeton.

Key Themes and Subjects: wealth, the modern city, romance and idealism
Key Literary Features: juxtaposition, sentence structure, ellipses

The Red Badge of Courage – Stephen Crane (1895)

Published in 1895, Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* is a fictional account of a Civil War battle which ended 30 years previously. It tells the story of a young soldier called Henry Fleming, who is referred to in the novel as 'the youth' – who battles the enemy army and his own cowardice. The novel is praised for its honest and often brutal depiction of the Civil War, portraying the war as a chaotic and terrifying experience rather than a theatrical triumph.

Key Themes and Subjects: war, heroism and cowardice, man's relationship to nature
Key Literary Features: symbolism, personification, metaphor

O, Pioneers! – Willa Cather (1913)

O, Pioneers!, the first novel in Willa Cather's trilogy of novels about life on the Nebraska prairie, tells the story of an immigrant family called the Bergsons and their efforts to make a home on the prairie in the American West. The daughter of the family, Alexandra, grows up over the course of the novel with her childhood friend Carl, and in this passage they contemplate leaving the prairie to move to San Francisco. You may be studying *My Antonia*, another book in the Nebraska trilogy, for the exam.

Key Themes and Subjects: landscape, female strength and independence, memory
Key Literary Features: exposition, figurative language, symbolism

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter – Carson McCullers (1940)

Published when she was just 23, Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is a novel set in a dispirited and lonely city in a small town in the state of Georgia during the Great Depression. The extract from the novel included in this resource sees a young character called Jack Singleton, who is a deaf-mute, describe the economic and social conditions that he has observed during his travels around America.

Key Themes and Subjects: loneliness, isolation, poverty and social inequality
Key Literary Features: reported speech, unreliable narration, numerical language

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In *The Awakening*, a woman named Edna fights the conventions of the early 20th-century South. Excerpted in this text is a passage that affected Edna's

Key Themes and Key Literary Features

The House of Mirth depicts a woman who descends into poverty throughout the novel, feeling lost and alienated. The text is also a satire

Key Themes and Key Literary Features

This short novel depicts the challenges and hardships of a dog's perspective

Key Themes and Key Literary Features

Booth Tarkington's *The American Midwesterner* depicts a rich Midwesterner of the American

Key Themes and Key Literary Features

In John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, work during the Great Depression ends meet in a hard time. In other great novels for this topic. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Lennie waits for

Key Themes and Key Literary Features

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Edna Chopin (1899)

Edna Chopin, a frustrated and unhappily married woman. Throughout the novel, Edna fights the social and culinary oppression. However, as the passage progresses, she experiences the same unhappiness and resentment that has

Independent female character
Language, juxtaposition

Edith Wharton (1905)

A woman who loses her standing in society and her identity. A particular theme which Wharton illustrates is the existence of a social class that is always changing, leaving its inhabitants feeling like 'strangers' because of its depiction of high society, the superficiality and hypocrisy.

Depiction of urban life
Third-person omniscient narration

Jack London (1903)

A young man named Buck who is taken to the northern territories of the Yukon. On the journey Buck's team faces many hardships, brutal and savage. The novel's reliance on a naturalistic literature.

Natural landscape
Contextual allusion

Booth Tarkington (1919)

The rapidity of modernisation which was sweeping the country concentrates on the fortunes of the Ambersons, a family that declines over three generations in the 60 years following the end

Historical settings, modernity
Address, satire

John Steinbeck (1937)

George and Lennie, travel across California in search of work. They meet a cast of misfits also trying to make a living. The novel bears close similarity to that of Steinbeck's other works, which you may be studying as one of your set texts. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, George has gone off in search of more work while Lennie waits for him on the farm they are living on.

Class, the American Dream



Unseen Extracts

Unseen Extract 1 - Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*

Read the passage below and annotate it to identify features of the passage that reflect themes of isolation and hardship.

Extract from 'Mother', in *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) – Sherwood Anderson



Elizabeth Willard, the mother of George Willard, was tall and gaunt and wrinkled with smallpox scars. Although she was but forty-five, some observed that she had taken the fire out of her figure. Listlessly she went about the disorderly house, looking at the faded wall-paper and the ragged carpets and, when she was able to be idle, she did the work of a chambermaid among beds soiled by the slumbers of fat traveling men. Her husband, Tom Willard, a slender, graceful man with square shoulders, a quick step, and a black mustache trained to turn sharply up at the ends, tried to keep his mind off his wife. The presence of the tall ghostly figure, moving slowly through the house, took as a reproach to himself. When he thought of her he grew angry and wished himself dead. He was unprofitable and forever on the edge of failure and he wished himself dead. He thought of the old house and the woman who lived there with him as things done for. The hotel in which he had begun life so hopelessly was now a modest hotel should be. As he went spruce and stylish through the streets, he sometimes stopped and turned back to look about as though fearing that the street and of the woman would follow him even into the streets. 'Damn such a woman!' he thought listlessly.



Tom Willard had a passion for village politics and for years had been the leader in a strongly Republican community. Some day, he told himself, the tide would turn in my favor and the years of ineffectual service count big in the rewards. He dreamed of going to Congress and even of becoming governor. One younger member of the party arose at a political conference and began to speak of faithful service, Tom Willard grew white with fury. 'Shut up, you,' he roared about. 'What do you know of service? What are you but a boy? Look at me here! I was a Democrat here in Winesburg when it was a crime to be a Democrat. In old days they fairly hunted us with guns.'



Between Elizabeth and her one son George there was a deep unexpressed feeling based on a girlhood dream that long ago died. In the son's presence she was reserved, but when he hurried about town intent upon his duties she would close his room and closing the door knelt by a little desk, made of pine, and sat near a window. In the room by the desk she went through a ceremony of prayer, half a demand, addressed to the skies. In the boyish figure she saw something half forgotten that had once been a part of herself recreated. It concerned that. 'Even though I die, I will in some way keep defeat from my door,' so deep was her determination that her whole body shook.

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from 'Mother', in *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) – Sherwood Anderson

Imagery
signifying
financial
hardship

Use of **third-
person
omniscient
narration** to
provide insight
into
characters'
thoughts

Connection
between lack of
religious faith
and lack of
purpose

**Consecutive
rhetorical
questions**
emphasise
distance
between older
and younger
generations

Elizabeth Willard, the mother of George Willard, was tall and gaunt and was marked with smallpox scars. Although she was but forty-five, smallpox disease had taken the fire out of her figure. Aimlessly she went about the old hotel looking at the faded wallpaper and the ragged carpets. She was able to be about, doing the work of a chambermaid among beds and slumbers of fat men and women. Her husband, Tom Willard, a slender man with small eyes, a quick military step, and a black mustache that tapered to points at the ends, tried to put the wife out of his mind. The presence of this ghostly figure, moving slowly through the halls, he took as a reproach. When he thought of her he grew angry and swore. The hotel was old and forever on the edge of failure and he wished himself out of it. He thought of the old house and the woman who lived there with him as things done for. The hotel in which he had begun life so hopefully was now what a hotel should be. As he went spruce and business-like through Winesburg, he sometimes stopped and turned quickly about as though the spirit of the hotel and of the woman would follow him even into the street. 'Damn such a life, damn it!' he sputtered aimlessly.

Tom Willard had a passion for village politics and for years had been the Democrat in a strongly Republican community. Some day, he told himself, things political will turn in my favor and the years of ineffectual service will be rewarded by the bestowal of rewards. He dreamed of going to Congress and even of becoming governor. Once when a younger member of the party arose at a political meeting and began to boast of his faithful service, Tom Willard grew white with anger. 'Up, you,' he roared, 'and tell me what you have done! What do you know of service? You are but a boy!' 'What have I done here! I was a Democrat here in Winesburg for twenty years and I have never been a Democrat. In the old days they fairly hunted us out of town.'

Between Elizabeth and her one son George there was a deep understanding and bond of sympathy, based on a girlhood dream that had long ago died. In her presence she was timid and reserved, but sometimes while he hurried on his intent upon his duties as a reporter, she went into his room and closed the door. She knelt by a little desk, made of a kitchen table, that sat near a window. At the desk she went through a ceremony that was half a prayer, half a dream, half addressed to the skies. In the boyish figure she yearned to see something forgotten that had once been a part of herself recreated. The prayer came. 'Even though I die, I will in some way keep defeat from you,' she thought. Her deep was her determination that her whole body shook.

American Dream: wanting a better life for oneself

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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the text and evaluates how they combine to create meaning for the reader.

Example of Analysis

One of the themes of this passage that is central to American literature of the period is that of financial struggle. Anderson's use of imagery in describing the hotel run by the McAdams family, such as 'faded' and 'ragged carpets', indicates to the reader that the family are struggling to make a living. The hardship is connected to their dreams of better living, but the fact that Tom and Elizabeth have separate perspectives towards the tendency of writing in the period to show how financial instability causes families to disintegrate. For example, it is the father 'wished himself out' of his current situation, dreaming 'of going to Congress and even becoming a governor'. By contrast, Elizabeth's hope for the future is that she will 'keep defeat' so that he will not have to suffer as she and her husband have. Willard's wish is self-centred while Elizabeth's is dedicated to her family. illustrating how their financial woes create a sense of distance and alienation between the characters of the father and mother in the passage.

Use of textual support



Use of comparison

Final sentence links point in the opening sentence to textual support in the middle of the paragraph



Tip

In your critical analysis, you can either structure your essay around particular themes or characters (exemplified by the example above), or on types of literary technique and their effect on the reader.



Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract.



Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) How does the analysis support the argument that imagery is used to represent financial struggle?
- 2) Underline all the words and phrases in the example analysis that link one point to another. Why are these connective words useful when writing an analysis?
- 3) Where does the example analysis demonstrate an understanding of the text was written? Highlight the relevant passage.



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We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *Winesburg, Ohio*. Read it with the annotations as you go such as those included with the previous extract, and then answer the questions following.

Second Extract from *Winesburg, Ohio*

The communion between George Willard and his mother was outwardly without meaning. When she was ill, she sat by the window in her room in the evening to make her tea. They sat by a window that looked over the frame built up Main Street. By turning their heads they could see the alleyway, long an alleyway that ran behind the Main Street stores and in front of Groff's bakery. Sometimes as they sat thus a picture of village life came before them. At the back door of his shop appeared Abner Groff with a stick or a bottle in his hand. For a long time there was a feud between the baker and the doctor. The boy and his mother saw the doctor emerge from the back door of the bakery and presently emerge followed by the baker, who swore at him with his arms about. The baker's eyes were small and red and his black hair and beard were thick with flour dust. Sometimes he was so angry that, although the cat had been hitherto a friend, he hurled sticks, bits of broken glass, and even some of the tools of his trade at the doctor. Once he broke a window at the back of Sinning's Hardware Store. In the alley the doctor's cat hid behind barrels filled with torn paper and broken bottles above which flew the flies. Once when she was alone, and after watching a prolonged and ineffectual part of the baker, Elizabeth Willard put her head down on her long white hair and wept. After that she did not look along the alleyway any more, but tried to keep her mind on the contest between a quarrelsome man and the cat. It seemed like a rehearsal of the tragedy of her own life.

In the evening when the son sat in the room with his mother, the silence felt awkward. Darkness came on and the evening train came in at the station below feet tramped up and down upon a board sidewalk. In the station yard the evening train had gone, there was a heavy silence. Perhaps Skinner Lease, the agent, moved a truck the length of the station platform. Over on Main Street a man's voice, laughing. The door of the express office banged. George Willard, crossing the room fumbled for the doorknob. Sometimes he knocked against it and it scraped along the floor. By the window sat the sick woman, perfectly still. Her long hands, white and bloodless, could be seen. She was leaning over the ends of the chair. 'I think you had better be careful of the boys. You are too much of a doctor, striving to relieve the suffering of the people. I thought I would tell you,' replied George Willard, who felt awkward and confused.

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



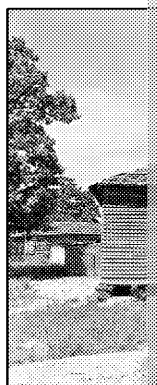
Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) What kind of town do George and his mother live in? Is it a vibrant place, and how can we tell?
- 2) Write down two quotations that illustrate the nature of the relationship between George and his mother.
- 3) Where in the passage do we read about what Elizabeth believes is the significance of the conflict between the cat and the baker? What symbol?
- 4) Create a spider diagram containing all the different language features from the extract above, with one textual quotation from the extract to support each feature.
- 5) **Extension Task:** Group the language features you have collated and use in one paragraph to consider one particular theme.



Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) How does the relationship between George and his mother compare to family relationships from the period that you have studied?
- 2) How does the passage explore themes of isolation and loneliness through the relationship and speech between George and his mother?
- 3) Imagine you are writing a critical analysis of this passage. Write a paragraph that examines the presentation of family relationships in the extract, making use of textual quotations and links to the conventions of the period as a whole.
- 4) Read through the paragraph you have written and underline where you have used textual quotation to support the points you have made (there should be at least two examples of quotation in the paragraph).



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Unseen Extract 2 - F Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*

The extract below focuses on one particular character and his views on the world. Annotate it to identify how the author uses characterisation to shape meaning.

Extract from *This Side of Paradise* (1920) – F Scott Fitzgerald

He wondered that graves ever made people consider life in vain. Somehow nothing hopeless in having seen all the broken columns and clasped hands. The angels meant nothing to him. He fancied that in a hundred years he would like to look at his grave would have about it an air of many, many years ago. It seemed out of a row of Union soldiers two or three made him think of dead loves when they were exactly like the rest, even to the yellowish moss.

Long after midnight the towers and spires of Princeton were visible, with the late-burning light—and suddenly out of the clear darkness the sound of the endless dream it went on; the spirit of the past brooding over a new generation of youth from the muddled, unchastened world, still fed romantically on the half-forgotten dreams of dead statesmen and poets. Here was a new generation learning the old cries, learning the old creeds, through a reverie of long days and nights, finally to go out into that dirty gray turmoil to follow love and pride; a generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of failure and the worship of success. Here all Gods dead, all wars, all faiths in man shaken....

Time went on for them, was still not sorry for himself—art, politics, religion, the medium should be, he knew he was safe now, free from all hysteria—he could be acceptable, roam, grow, rebel, sleep deep through many nights....

There was no God in his heart, he knew; his ideas were still in riot; there was a sense of memory; the regret for his lost youth—yet the waters of disillusion had passed his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint stirring of old ambitions and dreams. But—oh, Rosalind! Rosalind!...

'It's all a poor substitute at best,' he said sadly.

And he could not tell why the struggle was so futile, why he had detached himself from the personalities he had passed.

He stretched out his arms to the crystalline, radiant sky.

'I know myself,' he cried, 'but that is all.'

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from *This Side of Paradise* (1920) – F Scott Fitzgerald

Third-person omniscient narration builds sympathy for his character

Romanticised view of the past

Use of juxtaposition and contrast

Reflecting increasingly secular nature of American society

He wondered that graves ever made people consider life in vain. So he could find nothing hopeless in having lived. All the broken columns, the clasped hands and doves and angels meant no more to him. He fancied that years he would like having young people speculate as to whether his eyes were brown or blue, and he hoped to die passionately that his grave would have an air of mystery. Years ago. It seemed strange that out of a man who had been a soldier, a man who had made him think of dead loves and dead lovers, and even of the rest, even to the yellowish moss.

Long after midnight the towers and spires of Princeton were visible, and there a late-burning light—and suddenly out of the clear darkness the city came. As an endless dream it went on; the spirit of the past brooding over a new generation, the chosen youth from the muddled, unchastened world, looking romantically on the mistakes and half-forgotten dreams of dead statesmen. Here was a new generation, shouting the old cries, learning the old lessons through a revery of long days and nights; destined finally to go out into a gray turmoil to follow love and pride; a new generation dedicated to the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken....

Amory, sorry for them, was still not sorry for himself—art, politics, whatever his medium should be, he knew he was safe now, free from all that he could accept what was acceptable, roar or rebel, sleep deep through the nights....

There was a God in his heart, he knew; his ideas were still in riotous rebellion; the memory; the regret for his lost youth—yet the waters of life had deposited on his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint stirrings of ambitions and unrealized dreams. But—oh, Rosalind! Rosalind!..

‘It’s all a poor substitute at best,’ he said sadly.

And he could not tell why the struggle was worthwhile, why he had determined to use to the utmost himself and his heritage from the personalities he had passed....

He stretched out his arms to the crystalline, radiant sky.

‘I know myself,’ he cried, ‘but that is all.’

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Read the paragraph of example analysis that responds to the unseen extract on the 'Analysis in Action' questions below.

Exam Tip

Don't panic if you're not sure what 'the meaning' of the passage is – if you can demonstrate that an extract might have several different meanings, the exemplar analysis on this page does this.

Example of Analysis

Focus of the paragraph is still thematic



Fitzgerald uses language and formal features to create a sense of ambivalence about the **theme** of 'coming of age'. On the one hand, the character of Amory seems to feel largely optimistic about the future in a graveyard, faced with mankind's inevitable mortality, he can feel 'nothing hopeless in having lived'. Similarly, the long run-on sentence '... roam, grow, rebel, sleep deep through many nights...' uses a long sentence to illustrate the vitality and possibility that belong to the state of youth. However, the descriptions of Amory in this extract also indicate that coming of age requires him to face up to loss as well as possibility. Amory already has 'regret for his lost youth' and a 'pain of memory' which leads the reader to Fitzgerald's wider point that growing up inevitably means leaving things behind. A possible explanation for these contrasting attitudes towards growing up is the 'muddled' and 'confused world' of modern life. Amory finds himself becoming a 'muddled' person. The word 'muddled', especially, suggests that the speed of modern progress increases the feeling among young characters of a 'lost' period that they are being forced to 'lose' to the future.

Demonstrates understanding of multiple possible interpretations of the passage

Awareness of how context influences the meaning of the passage



Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) Highlight the instances in the passage where the analyst explores the quotations included in the analysis.
- 2) Identify three sentences in the extract that correspond to the following: a) 'focus of the paragraph' b) 'example of understanding through additional context' c) 'example of close reading/focus on language use'.

Exam Tip

Make sure that, at different points in your response, you support your analysis with specific pieces of textual evidence. This will demonstrate that your meaning is created throughout the passage.



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Read this second unseen extract from *This Side of Paradise*. Pay particular attention to the language that the writer uses and the similarities and differences between them.

Second Extract from *This Side of Paradise*

There was a bright star in February. New York burst upon him on Washington Square with the brilliance of a long-anticipated event. His glimpse of it as a vision against a deep-blue sky had left a picture of splendour that rivalled the dream of the Arabian Nights; by night he saw it by electric light, and romance glowed in the chariot-lamps on Broadway and from the women's eyes at the Astor, and in the eyes of Paskert from St. Regis' had dinner. When they walked down the city streets, greeted by the nervous twanging and discord of untuned violins and the perfume and fragrance of paint and powder, he moved in a sphere of epicurean delight that enchanted him. The play was 'The Little Millionaire,' with George M. Cohan. There was one stunning young brunette who made him sit with brimming eyes watching her dance.

'Oh—you—wonderful girl,
What a wonderful girl you are—'

sang the tenor, and Amory agreed silently, but passionately.

'All—your—wonderful words
Thrill me through—'

As the strains swelled and quavered on the last notes, the girl sank to a crouch on the stage, a great burst of clapping filled the house. Oh, to fall in love like this, to the languorous magic melody of such a tune!

The last scene was laid on a roof-garden, and the 'cellos sighed to the music of a light adventure and facile froth-like comedy flitted back and forth in the air. Amory was on fire to be an habitué of roof-gardens, to meet a girl who should look like that very girl; whose hair would be drenched with golden moonlight, whose sparkling wine was poured by an unintelligible waiter. When the curtain fell for the last time he gave such a long sigh that the people in front of him twisted around and stared at him, loud enough for him to hear:

'What a handsome-looking boy!'

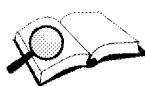
This took his mind off the play, and he wondered if he really did seem so handsome to the population of New York.

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Complete the activities below, which are designed to test your ability to connect social and historical context.



Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Annotate the passage in the same way that you have done in the three examples each of language that presents New York in a positive light.
- 2) Which part of the passage might you quote to support the interpretation from social class and narcissism?
- 3) Underline examples of where Fitzgerald uses third-person omniscient in the passage. Why is it important in relation to the theme of superficiality?
- 4) **Extension Task:** What might the potential significance be of the title? Think about what you know about the state of the American economy in the 1920s.



Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) How is the presentation of Amory in this extract similar or different to the presentation of masculinity in the texts that you have studied?
- 2) What does the mixture of positive and negative adjectives suggest about city life in American literature of the 1920s?
- 3) Write an essay plan for a critical analysis of this passage. Divide it into paragraph subheadings based on Fitzgerald's use of either language or structure. Write a brief heading under each subheading on what you would include in each paragraph.

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Unseen Extract 3 – Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*

The passage below describes a bloody and terrifying battle which occurs during the American Civil War. Read the passage and annotate it to identify how the passage uses symbolism and personification, and otherworldly atmosphere.

Extract from *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) – Stephen Crane

The youth tried to observe everything. He did not use care to avoid trees and his forgotten feet were carelessly knocking against stones or getting entangled. These battalions with their commotions were woven red and blue in the fabric of softened greens and browns. It looked to be a wrong place.

The skirmishers in advance fascinated him. Their shots into thickets and prominent trees spoke to him of tragedies--hidden, mysterious, solemn.

Once the line encountered the body of a dead soldier. He lay upon his back. His head was turned toward the sky. He was dressed in an awkward suit of yellowish brown. The youth could see that the soles of his shoes had been worn to the thinness of writing paper, and from one the dead foot projected piteously. And it was as if fate had betrayed the youth, for it exposed to his enemies that poverty which in life he had perhaps concealed.

The ranks opened covertly to avoid the corpse. The invulnerable dead man looked at himself. The youth looked keenly at the ash-colored corpse. The wind raised the dead man's hair as if a hand were stroking it. The youth desperately desired to walk around and stare; the immovable dead man seemed to try to read in dead eyes the answer to his question.

But the youth's march the ardor which the youth had acquired when out of the ranks had suddenly faded to nothing. His curiosity was quite easily satisfied. If an enemy had caught him with its wild swing as he came to the top of the bank, he might have been killed. This advance upon Nature was too calm. He had opportunity had time in which to wonder about himself and to attempt to probe his secret.

Absurd ideas took hold upon him. He thought that he did not relish the thought of death. He thought that he did not relish the thought of death. He thought that he did not relish the thought of death. A coldness swept over his back, and it is true that his trousers were no fit for his legs at all.

A house standing placidly in distant fields had to him an ominous look. The woods were formidable. He was certain that in the vista there lurked fiercer things. The swift thought came to him that the soldiers did not know what they were doing. They were all a trap. Suddenly the forests would bristle with rifle barrels. They would all be killed. They were all going to be sacrificed. The general would presently swallow the whole command. He glared about him. He saw the stealthy approach of his death.

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Exam Tip

For critical analyses, you don't need to write an extended introduction or conclusion. Sentences at the beginning and ending of the essay, summing up the broad points made by the extract, are all that you need to include.

Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the previous extract.

Extract from *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) – Stephen Crane

Colour used to **contrast** symbolically man's violence with nature's peacefulness

The youth tried to observe everything. He did not use care to avoid the branches, and his forgotten feet were constantly knocking against stones entangled in briars. He was aware that the battalions with their colorful woven red and startling into the fabric of softened greens. It looked to be a wrong road in a wide field.

Example of **incongruity**



The skin of the advance fascinated him. Their shots into thickets and ancient trees spoke to him of tragedies—hidden, mysterious, secret. Once the line encountered the body of a dead soldier. He lay upon his back at the sky. He was dressed in an awkward suit of yellowish brown. To see that the soles of his shoes had been worn to the thinness of writing paper from a great rent in one the dead foot projected piteously. And it was betrayed the soldier. **In death it exposed to his enemies that power of life he had perhaps concealed from his friends.**

The ranks opened covertly to avoid the corpse. The invulnerable dead way for himself. The youth looked keenly at the ashen face. The wind tawny beard. It moved as if a hand were stroking it. He vaguely described around and around the body and stare; the impulse of the living to try the dead eyes the answer to the **Question**.

Harsh reality of war **juxtaposed** with romantic idealism

During the march the ardor which the youth had acquired when of the field rapidly faded to nothing. His curiosity was quite easily an intense scene had caught him with a cold swing as he came to the bank, he might have been going on. This advance upon Nature was had opportunity to reflect. He had time in which to wonder about him at the grove his sensations.



Personification of the landscape

Absurd ideas took hold upon him. He thought that he did not relish it. **It threatened him.** A coldness swept over his back, and it is true that felt to him that they were no fit for his legs at all.

Short sentences creating a sombre, doom-laden tone

A house standing placidly in distant fields had to him an ominous look. The shadows of the woods were formidable. He was certain that in this view fierce-eyed hosts. The swift thought came to him that the generals did what they were about. It was all a trap. Suddenly those close forests with rifle barrels. **Ironlike brigades would appear in the rear. They were going to be sacrificed. The generals were stupid. The enemy would swallow the whole command.** He glared about him, expecting to see the stealthy approach of his death.

Personification of death

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Exam Tip

For critical analyses, you don't need to write an extended introduction or conclusion sentence at the beginning and ending of the essay, summing up the points raised by the extract, are all that you need to include.

Read the paragraph below as an example of how to consider a specific aspect of this example, the use of language is being considered in relation to the narrative

Example of Analysis

Paragraph focused writer's use of language

Identification of language feature

Comment on how language influences the overall tone of the passage

The writer of this passage manipulates language to convey the absurdity of the battle. The narrator mentions at one point 'absurd idea' look 'hold' of the youth, and there are various instances of unusual language, such as the description of the youth as 'the sight of onrushing enemies, which exemplify such absurdity; youth should be terrified, he is intrigued. An additional example of unconventional language use is that of the 'calm' which descends the battlefield, creating an eerie atmosphere because it opposes the idea of a war zone as loud, frenetic and violent. The writer also describes the landscape, describing the wind 'stroking' the beard of a dead soldier, the surrounding forest as 'fierce-eyed' to emphasise further the horrors creates a hallucinatory, dream-like effect in the mind of the reader. Each of these examples is designed to make the point that war is not a place for heroism or 'ardor', and that these ideas 'rapidly fade' in the face of the reality of conflict.

Use of quoted summing-up paragraph – structure



Exam Tip

You can also structure your critical analysis around technical features of the different texts you are exploring. These features can include the imagery (shown in the example above), structure, form, or narrative point of view.



Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) Underline the example in the paragraph where the analysis paraphrases the language of the passage to demonstrate understanding.
- 2) Look at the first and last sentences of the paragraph. How has the point about the 'horror of war', made at the beginning of the paragraph, been developed or explored?
- 3) Highlight examples in the paragraph where textual quotation has been explained to suggest its possible meaning.



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Read the following extract from *The Red Badge of Courage* that depicts another battle scene.

Second Extract from *The Red Badge of Courage*

The column that had butted stoutly at the obstacles in the roadway was broken. The youth's sight before he saw dark waves of men come sweeping out of the woods through the fields. He knew at once that the Rebels had been washed back. They were bursting from their camps and their equipments as from entanglements. They charged down upon him like terrified buffaloes.



Behind them blue smoke curled and clouded above the treetops, and through it could sometimes see a distant pink glare. The voices of the cannon were an interminable chorus.

The youth was horrorstricken. He stared in agony and amazement. He felt engaged in combating the universe. He threw aside his mental pamphlets of the retreated and rules for the guidance of the damned.

The fight was lost. The dragons were coming with invincible strides. The youth, lost in the matted thickets and blinded by the overhanging night, was going to be killed. The red animal, war, the blood-swollen god, would have bloated fill.



Within him something bade to cry out. He had the impulse to make a rallying cry, singing a battle hymn, but he could only get his tongue to call into the air: 'What for? What for?'

Soon he was in the midst of them. They were leaping and scampering all about him. Their blanched faces shone in the dusk. They seemed, for the most part, to be terrified. The youth turned from one to another of them as they galloped along. His questions were lost. They were heedless of his appeals. They did not seem to care.

They sometimes gabbled insanely. One huge man was asking of the sky: 'Spare me, spare me! Where de plank road!' It was as if he had lost a child. He wept in his confusion.



Presently, men were running hither and thither in all ways. The artillery moved forward, rearward, and on the flanks made no use of ideas of direction. The youth vanished into the gathered confusion. The youth began to imagine that he had reached the center of the tremendous whirl, and he could perceive no way out of it. Of the things that came a thousand wild questions, but no one made answer.

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Use these activities to strengthen your understanding of the passage and how it uses literary devices such as similes and symbols, to create meaning.



Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Where does the writer use simile to compare soldiers with animals? What is the effect of the comparison? Does it present the war in a positive light or a negative one?
- 2) What is the significance of the young man finding himself at the 'centre' of the war? What does he see? What point is the writer trying to make about the nature of the war?
- 3) Write three bullet points on the symbolic importance of colour in the passage.



Activities: Links with Topic Convention

- 1) How does this presentation of masculinity compare with the set text? What does it tell you about the period? Think about how it supports or contradicts 'the myth of the American hero' that was a particular feature of American literature at this time.
- 2) Find an example of the writer using the mock-heroic (a literary mode that uses the style of epic to draw attention to a character's lack of heroism or cowardice). What does this device say about the attitudes of the passage towards war?
- 3) Write a paragraph of critical analysis on the theme of hopelessness in the passage, and how this presentation relates to your wider knowledge of the importance of American literature between 1880 and 1940.
- 4) **Extension task:** What would you include in another paragraph to contrast the theme of hopelessness with that of courage? Does the passage suggest that the war entails a sense of hopelessness?

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Unseen Extract 4 - Willa Cather, *O, Pioneers!*

The relationship between landscape and a sense of home or belonging is one of the central themes in Cather's writing between 1880 and 1940. Read the extract below and annotate it to show this relationship.

Extract from *O, Pioneers!* (1913) – Willa Cather

'Carl,' said Alexandra, 'I should like to go up there with you in the spring on the water since we can see the ocean, when I was a little girl. After we were here I often dream sometimes about the shipyard where father worked, a big place, full of masts.' Alexandra paused. After a moment's thought she said, 'I would never ask me to go away for good, would you?'

'Of course not, my dearest. I think I know how you feel about this country. Do yourself.' Carl took her hand in both his own and pressed it tenderly.

'Yes, I still feel that way, though Emil is gone. When I was on the train that we got near Hanover, I felt something like I did when I drove back with Emil that time, in the dry year. I was glad to come back to it. I've lived here and I feel a great peace here, Carl, and freedom.... I thought when I came out of the poor Frank is, that I should never feel free again. But I do, here.' Alexandra took a deep breath and looked off into the red west.

'You belong to this land,' Carl murmured, 'as you have always said. Now you belong to it more than ever. You remember what you once said about the old story writing itself over? Only it is we who write it, with the best we can.'

They paused on the last ridge of the pasture, overlooking the house and the stables that marked the site of John Bergson's homestead. On every side the waves of the earth rolled away to meet the sky.

'Lou and Oscar can't see those things,' said Alexandra suddenly. 'Suppose the land to their children, what difference will that make? The land belongs to us, that's the way it seems to me. How many of the names on the county clerk's list will be there in fifty years? I might as well try to see the sunset over there to my children. We come and go, but the land is always here. And the people who understand it are the people who own it—for a little while.'

Carl looked at her wonderingly. She was still gazing into the west, and in her face was that exalted serenity that sometimes came to her at moments of deep peace. As the rays of the sinking sun shone in her clear eyes.

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from *O, Pioneers!* (1913) – Willa Cather

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Tone of reported speech

suggests respect between the two characters

'Carl,' said Alexandra, 'I should like to go up there with you in the spring. I've been on the water **since we crossed the ocean**, when I was a little girl. When I first came out here I used to dream sometimes about the shipyard where you worked, and a little sort of inlet, **fringed in pines**.' Alexandra paused. At that moment's thought she said, 'I don't think you would ever ask me to go away, would you?'

'No,' she said, 'not, **my dearest**. I think I know how you feel about the land, **as well as you do yourself**.' Carl took her hand in both his own and pressed it tenderly.

Remembered hardship

suggesting the struggles the family have endured

'Yes, I still feel that way, though Emil is gone. When I was on the train and we got near Hanover, I felt something like I did when I drove back to the river that time, in the **dry year**. I was glad to come back to it. I've been a long time. There is great peace here, Carl, and freedom.... I thought with me of that prison, where poor Frank is, that I should never feel free again.' Alexandra took a deep breath and looked off into the red west.

Importance of landscape

to formation of identity during the period

'**You belong to the land**,' Carl murmured, 'as you have always said more than ever.'

'Yes, now more than ever. You remember what you once said about the land, the old story writing itself over? Only it's new. You can't write it, with the best of us.'

Metaphor of the ocean connects the land to the sea journey the family had made to reach it

They paused on the hill, the pasture, overlooking the house and the stream that marked the site of John Bergson's homestead. On the horizon the edge of the earth rolled away to meet the sky.

'Lou and Oscar can't see those things,' said Alexandra suddenly. 'So I tell my land to their children, what difference will that make? The land is the future, Carl; that's the way it seems to me. **How many of the names of the county clerk's plat will be there in fifty years?** I might as well tell the sunset over there to my brother's children. We come and go, but the land is here. And the people who love it and understand it are the people who stay a little while.'

Carl looked at her wonderingly. She was still gazing into the west, and there was that exalted serenity that sometimes came to her at moments of feeling. The level rays of the **sinking sun** shone in her clear eyes.

The **sinking sun** is used to emphasise the inevitability of change

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Look at this example of how you might go about writing a theme-based paragraph extract on the previous page. Pay particular attention to how the first and last sentences maintain the focus of the discussion.

Example of Analysis

Using wording from the specification and exam question that highlights relevance of the point being made



Establishes the subject of the paragraph at the very beginning, aiding the clarity of the essay structure as a whole

One theme that is strongly emphasised in this passage is that of identity and belonging, and how rural landscapes help to establish these concepts in American writing of the early 20th century period. Mentions of topographical features such as 'the rolling hills of the pasture' and 'windmills and the stables' are used to establish that the setting in the passage is a rural landscape. The use of the personal pronoun 'I' in Alexandra's statement 'I do, here', and the personal pronoun 'you' in Carl's phrase 'You belong to the land' indicate that this rural landscape is crucial to the understanding of Alexandra's identity. This theme of identity is also explored through the use of metaphorical and symbolic language. Alexandra 'crossed the water with her family to reach their rural American home; later in the passage, the water imagery is again used in the description of the rolling fields as 'waves'. This metaphor conjoins Alexandra's personal experience with the landscape of the setting, deepening the sense that this rural landscape is connected to her sense of belonging within it.

Appropriate use of key literary terminology

Using language from the start of the paragraph in its conclusion, ensuring that the section of the analysis remains focused

Exam Tip

Make a bullet-point list of points before starting to write your critical analysis in order to avoid writing about one specific aspect of the extract for too long



Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) What are the two features of the analysis which are used to explore the theme of identity?
- 2) Where can you find an example in the analysis of its understanding of the rural landscape being sustained throughout the unseen extract?
- 3) Write your own version of a paragraph that considers the present extract, using this example analysis as a template. You might use the same theme as the example and use different supporting quotations, or you might choose a different theme altogether.



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Read through this second extract from the text, making annotations as you go on that are particularly striking.

Second Extract from *O, Pioneers!*

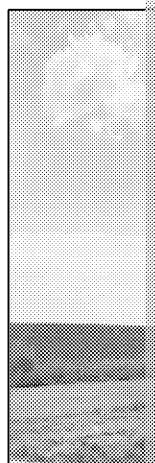
Alexandra and Emil spent five days down among the river farms, driving the valley. Alexandra talked to the men about the crops and to the women about poultry. She spent a whole day with the young farmer who had been away who was experimenting with a new kind of clover hay. She learned a great deal from him. And Emil talked and planned. At last, on the sixth day, they turned Bringham's head northward and left the river behind.

'There's nothing in it for us down there, Emil. There are a few fine farms owned by the rich men in town, and couldn't be bought. Most of the land is hilly. They can always scrape along down there, but they can never do anything. Down there they have a little certainty, but up with us there is a big chance. I have faith in the high land, Emil. I want to hold on harder than ever, and when you'll thank me.' She urged Bringham forward.

When the road began to climb the first long swells of the Divide*, Alexandra sang an old Swedish hymn, and Emil wondered why his sister looked so happy. She was so radiant that he felt shy about asking her. For the first time, perhaps, since she emerged from the waters of geological time, the American face was set toward the future. It seemed to him so clear, rich and strong and glorious. Her eyes were so full of life and tears blinded her. Then the Genius of the Divide, that spirit which breathes across it, must have bent lower than it ever bent to man before. The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman.

Alexandra reached home in the afternoon. That evening she held a family council with her brothers all that she had seen and heard.

'I want you boys to go down yourselves and look it over. Nothing will convince you like seeing with your own eyes. The river land was settled before this, and so they are a few years ahead of us, and have learned more about farming. The land sells for three times as much as this, but in five years we will double it. The rich men down there own all the best land. They are buying all they can get. The first thing to do is to sell our cattle and what little corn we have, and buy the Linstrum place. Then the next thing to do is to take out two loans on our half-sections, and buy Peter Crow's place; raise every dollar we can, and buy every acre we can.'



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*the name given to the area of the Nebraska prairie on which Alexandra and her family lived

These close-reading and linking activities will help support your understanding of a passage to the wider context of the topic of American literature.



Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) What is the effect of capitalising the word 'Circus' to make it a proper noun?
- 2) Look at the two pieces of rhetorical speech in the passage. What does each tell the reader about the level of authority that Alexandra's character has?
- 3) Draw a mind map or spider diagram that includes examples of Alexandra's strength and toughness of Alexandra's character throughout the passage.
- 4) Imagine that you are writing a paragraph of critical analysis on the passage. Number the quotations of Alexandra's character in the passage. Number the quotations of the narrator included on your map or diagram in the order that you would mention them in your paragraph.



Activities: Links to Topic Conventions

- 1) Research the subject of Manifest Destiny and its importance to Americans in the 19th century. Which quotations from the passage support this idea of Manifest Destiny?
- 2) Annotate the passage, identifying where language has been used to describe the relationship between the land and its inhabitants.
- 3) Write a paragraph of critical analysis examining the presentation of Alexandra in the passage.
- 4) **Extension Task:** In the paragraph you have written, add a couple of sentences on how Alexandra compares or contrasts with the archetype of the pioneer protagonist that became common during this period of American literature.

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Unseen Extract 5 – Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

When reading this extract, make annotations that explore how American attitudes and socio-economic context of the period, affect the language and tone of the character (please note that the extracts in this section are shorter than those that you will be asked to read in the exam)

Extract from *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940) – Carson McCullers

Slowly he turned the sphere in his hand. 'All I can say is this: The world is mean and evil. But three fourths of this globe is in a state of war. The thirteen states are united and the men who know are isolated and terrified! But if you were to ask me to point out the most uncivilised area on the globe I would point here-'

'Watch sharp,' said Doctor Copeland, 'you're out in the ocean.'

Jake turned the globe again and pressed his blunt, grimy thumb on a card. 'Here. These thirteen states.* I know what I'm talking about. I read books. I been in every damn one of these thirteen states. I've worked in every one. I think like I do is this...there are corporations worth billions of dollars – thousands of people who don't get to eat. And here in these thirteen states is so that – that it's a thing you got to take in with your own eyes. In my mind that would make a man go crazy...the average wage of a worker on a tenant farm is seventy-three dollars per year. I mean you, that's the average! The tenant sharecroppers run from thirty-five to ninety dollars per person. And this year I mean about ten cents for a full day's work...I'm talking about things that have been hidden from the people. The things they have been told so they can't see. The poisonous lies. So they aren't allowed to know.'

*The Thirteen States are those former British colonies which declared independence and laid the foundation for the United States of America

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the extract.

Extract from *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940) – Carson McCullers

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Exclamation marks and repetition create a rambling, unhinged tone

Ironic contrast between the image of Jake holding the world in his hands and his impoverished state

Theme of hypocrisy concerning economic inequality in the USA during the period

Accumulation of numerical language highlighting struggle for survival among American working class

'Slowly he turned the sphere in his hands. 'All I can say is this: **The** of meanness and evil. Huh! Three four'... this globe is in a state of oppression. The liars and fiends **are** it and the men who know are without defence. **But!** ... you were to ask me to point out the most area on the face of it, I would point here-'

'...sharp,' said Doctor Copeland, 'you're out in the ocean.'

Jake turned the globe again and pressed his **blunt, grimy thumb** on the selected spot. 'Here. These thirteen states.* I know what I'm talking about. I go around. I been in every **damn** one of these thirteen states and worked in every one. And the reason I think like I do is this...**there are corporations worth billions of dollars – and hundreds of thousands of people who don't get to eat.** And here in these thirteen states the reason is so that – that it's a thing you got to take in with your own eyes. In many things that would make a man go crazy...the average age of a worker on a farm is only **seventy-three dollars** per year. And mind you, that's the wages of sharecroppers run from **thirty-five to ninety dollars** per year. And thirty-five dollars a year means just about **ten cents** for a full day's work. And **thirty-five dollars a year means just about ten cents** for a full day's work. **talking about the way the truth has been hidden from the people** they have been told so they can't see the **truth**. The poisonous lies. So they're allowed to know.'

Repetition of 'truth' emphasises importance of the word while adding to its mystery

*The Thirteen States are those former British colonies which declared independence and formed the foundation for the United States of America

Exam Tip

Spend 10 or 15 minutes at the beginning of the exam reading the extract and making bullet-point notes on the features of the extract in your own words. Then, organising these bullet points into an essay plan.

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This example analysis offers a useful template on how to explore the writer's creative use of indirect methods such as a character's words or their actions.

Example of Analysis

In the long speech in the second half of this extract, the writer uses indirect characterisation – the revealing of character traits through words or appearance – to reveal aspects of Jake's character. Jake is presented as being different – or at least different – throughout the passage. On the one hand, he uses elaborate rhetorical devices such as numerical language ('the shirts in the store run from thirty-five to ninety dollars') to create the impression of an educated and well-informed character. In contrast to this, the frequent insertion of exclamation marks and coarse colloquial phrases like 'damn' suggest the presence of a less well-refined aspect of his character. Using these different registers presents Jake as a complex character, far removed from a conventional archetype of a working-class American. This is a key the interest in American literature of the period in creating characters that were realistic and defined by their contradictions. Additionally, the repetition of words in phrases such as 'But! But...' and '... so it's a thing...' produce a rambling and unhinged tone that provides an additional contrast to Jake's factual knowledge, indicating the instability of his character...

Awareness of the passage's place within the **wider context** of the literary period

Use of **ellipses** within the analysis to avoid writing out an unnecessarily long quotation

Exam Tip

Avoid using overly long quotations in your analysis by using ellipses (...). This will save writing time and enable you to do a more focused understanding of the passage.

Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) Where does the analysis consider the effect of punctuation marks in the passage?
- 2) Identify the two sentences in the analysis that compare how two characters are created simultaneously within the unseen extract.
- 3) We have deliberately left the last sentence of this paragraph unfinished. Write a concluding sentence that summarises the extract.

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In this second extract, the theme of loneliness is crucial to an understanding of the convey. As you read through the extract, annotate the parts of the passage that y

Second Extract from *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

Nothing seemed real except the ten years with Antonapoulos. In his half-
friend very vividly, and when he awoke the at-aching loneliness would
Occasionally he would pack his things, but he never rec-
And so the mon-
pass, in this empty, dreaming way.



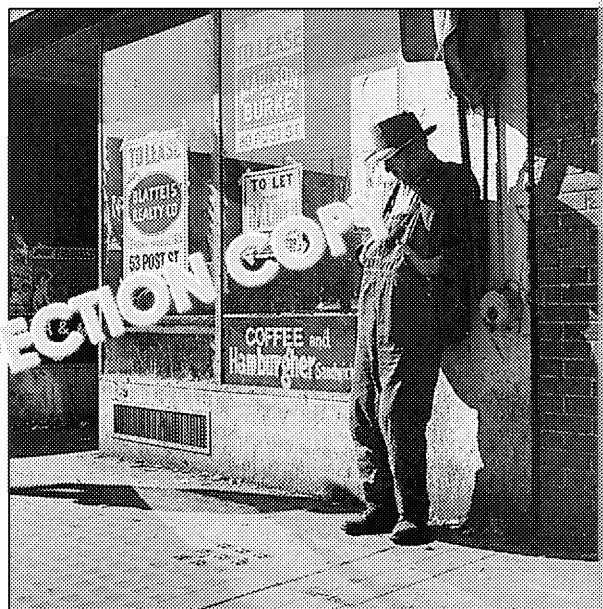
the spring a change came over Singer. He could not sleep and his body
At evening he would walk monotonously around the room, unable to wear
of energy. If he rested at all it was only during a few hours before dawn
drop bluntly into a sleep that lasted until the morning light struck sudden
opening eyelids like a scimitar.

He began spending his evenings walking around the town. He could not
rooms where Antonapoulos had lived, and he rented a place in a shambly
not far from the centre of town.

[...]



Each evening the mute walk-
the hours in the street. Sometimes
with the sharp, win-
march and it would be raining heavily. But
not
his gait was always agitated and he kept his hands stuffed in
pockets of his trousers. Then as the weeks passed the days grew warm and
agitation gave way gradually to exhaustion and there was a look about
In his face there came to be a brooding peace that is seen most often in the
sorrowful or the very wise. But still he wandered through the streets of
silent and alone.



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The activities below focus on the use of narrative point of view and the themes of isolation and communication as their links to American writing as a whole between 1880 and 1940.



Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) How can we tell from the passage that Sina cannot hear or speak?
- 2) Which types of third-person narrative are being used in this passage? How do they relate to the isolation and loneliness experienced by the character?
- 3) Find the descriptive adjectives in the passage which suggest that Sina is experiencing emotional suffering.
- 4) **Extension Task:** What is the significance of the emotionally fragile 'shambling boarding-house'? What is the literary term for the narrative here?



Activities: Links to Topic Conventions

- 1) Using two different colours, underline quotations in the passage that relate to the themes of isolation and communication.
- 2) Use the quotations that you have underlined to write a paragraph illustrating how these two themes of isolation and communication are linked throughout the passage.
- 3) Write three bullet points for commenting on how you think the use of the period relates to its importance to American writing between 1880 and 1940.

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Unseen Extract 6 - Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*

In this unseen extract, dialogue is crucial in conveying a sense of character as well as the dynamics that exist between the two characters depicted. Make annotations to the writer in her development of dialogue.

Extract from *The Awakening* (1899) – Kate Chopin

'Now you know,' he said, 'what I have been fighting against all summer at Grand Isle; what drove me away and drove me back again.'



'Why have you been fighting against it?' she asked. Her face glowed with

'Why? Because you were not free; you were Leonce Pontellier's wife. I could not love you if you were ten times his wife; but so long as I went away from Grand Isle, away I could help telling you so.' She put her free hand up to his shoulder and pressed it against his cheek, rubbing it softly. He kissed her again. His face was wet

'There in Mexico I was thinking of you all the time, and longing for you.'

'But not writing to me,' she interrupted.

'Something put into my head that you cared for me; and I lost my senses and wrote everything but a wild dream of your some way becoming my wife.'

'Your wife!'

'Religion, loyalty, even my flag would give way if only you cared.'



'But you must have forgotten that I was Leonce Pontellier's wife.'

'Oh! I was demented, dreaming of wild, impossible things, recalling men and women whose wives free, we have heard of such things.'

'Yes, we have heard of such things.'

'I came back full of vague, mad intentions. And when I got here—'

'When you got here you never came near me!' She was still caressing his face.

'I realized what a cur I was to dream of such a thing, even if you had been free.'

She took his face between her hands and pressed it into it as if she would need his eyes more. She kissed him on the forehead, the eyes, the cheeks, and the lips.



'You are a very, very foolish boy, wasting your time dreaming of impossible things! When you speak of Mr. Pontellier setting me free! I am no longer one of his possessions to dispose of or not. I give myself where I choose. If he were to say to Robert, take her and be happy; she is yours,' I should laugh at you both.'

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from *The Awakening* (1899) – Kate Chopin

'Now you know,' he said, 'now you know what I have been **fighting** against all last summer at Grand Isle; what drove me away and drove me back again. Why have you been fighting against it?' she asked. Her face glowed with the lights.

Indication of character: **emotional**, **heightened state**



'Why? Because you were not free; you were Leonce Pontellier's wife; you were ten times his wife; but so long as I went on, I could help telling you so.' She put her free hand up to his cheek and then against his cheek, rubbing it softly. He kissed her again. His face was warm and flushed.

'There in Mexico I was thinking of you all the time, and longing for you.'

'But not writing to me,' she interrupted.

'Something put into my head that you cared for me; and I lost my sense of everything but a **wild dream** of your some way becoming my wife.'

'Your wife!'

Trope of love as something that is ultimately impossible

'Religion, loyalty, everything would give way if only you cared.'

'Then you must have forgotten that I was Leonce Pontellier's wife.'

'Oh! I was demented; I was full of wild, impossible things, recalling the things I had heard of such things.'

'I have heard of such things.'

Use of **repetition** (in tone) to signify Edna's state of mind

'I came back full of vague, mad intentions. And when I got here—'

'When you got here you never came near me!' She was still caressing his cheek.

'I realized what a cur I was to dream of such a thing, even if you had been.'

She took his face between her hands and looked into it as if she would withdraw her eyes more. She kissed him on the forehead, the eyes, the lips.

'You have been a **very, very** foolish boy, wasting your time dreaming of such things when you speak of Mr. Pontellier leaving me free! **I am no longer Mr. Pontellier's possession, to do as he pleases or not.** I give myself to no one. If he were to say, "Here, Robert, take her and be happy; she is yours," I would not care.'

Contrast between highly **romantic language** of male character and Edna's **pragmatic language**



Contrast between argumentative speech tone and external action

Use of **intensifiers** to stress the contempt that Edna shows for her partner at this point in the passage



Presentation of Edna's character

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The points made in this analysis are based around the presentation of romantic relationships in the extract and how they relate to both the literature and the cultural norms of the period.

Example of Analysis

Combination of language and structure evidence

demonstrates understanding of how similar meanings are shaped in different ways



Awareness of societal as well as literary context

The presentation of the relationship in this passage bears close relation to the presentation of romantic relationships in literature more generally of the period. Various aspects of the extract's language and structure demonstrate the attraction between the two characters as distinctly confrontational and adversarial. The male character describes how he has been 'fighting' for the female character, while the back-and-forth dialogue also portrays their engagement with each other as a battle. There are two possible meanings behind this opposition. First, that the female character is already married, as indicated by the statement that 'you were Leonce Pontellier's wife'. This plot of a relationship being an affair is one that is used by other writers of the period, such as F Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby*, to represent the idea of a lasting, faithful marriage, around the turn of the twentieth century began to be viewed with increasing scepticism. In addition, the sense of dissatisfaction that belongs to the female character in this passage also stems from her desire to be independent of men even if she is romantically involved with them, as is suggested by her statement that she is no longer one of Mr Pontellier's possessions to dispose of as he chooses, but 'myself where I choose'. This presentation of the female character is consistent with other depictions of strong female characters from the period, such as Carrie Meeber in *Sister Carrie* and Antonia Shimerda in *My Antonia*. Adversarial depictions of romantic relationships in this extract, therefore, closely reflect the period's wider concerns regarding the dissolution of marriage and the increased independence of female characters in literature.



Concluding sentence of paragraph **restates the theme of the paragraph's discussion** while connecting it to the rest of the text.

Exam Tip

If you have knowledge of contextual information that relates to the period, such as that included in the exemplar paragraph above, it is a good idea to include the final main paragraph of your analysis so that your essay flows smoothly from close reading to discussion of the passage's place within the period.

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Article Analysis in Action

- 1) Find one other quotation from the unseen extract to support the idea that the female character of Edna desires to be an independent person.
- 2) Where in the passage is an example of two different interpretations of a theme? It is important to do this during a critical analysis?



The second unseen extract from *The Awakening* describes another confrontation through a combination of dialogue and prose. As you read the passage, make an impression of the balance of power shifts between the two characters.

Second Extract from *The Awakening*

'Edna, dear, are you not coming in soon?' he asked Leonce, this time fondly, with a smile.

'No; I am going to stay out here.'

'This is not a lady's way,' he blurted out. 'I can't permit you to stay out there. You must come in the house instantly.'

With a writhing motion she settled herself more securely in the hammock, and her will had blazed up, stubborn and resistant. She could not at that moment have done other than denied and resisted. She wondered if her husband had ever been like that before, and if she had submitted to his command. Of course she had remembered that she had. But she could not realize why or how she should have felt as she then did.

'Leonce, go to bed,' she said, 'I mean to stay out here. I don't wish to go to bed. I intend to. Don't speak to me like that again; I shall not answer you.'

Mr. Pontellier had prepared for bed, but he slipped on an extra garment of wine, of which he kept a small and select supply in a buffet of his own. He took of the wine and went to the pantry and offered a glass to his wife. She refused. He drank, and then, hoisted his slippered feet on the rail, and proceeded to smoke two cigars; then he went inside and drank another glass of wine. Pontellier again declined to accept a glass when it was offered to her. She once more seated himself with elevated feet, and after a reasonable interval smoked some more cigars.

Edna began to feel like one who awakens gradually out of a dream, a delicate, impossible dream, to feel again the realities pressing into her soul. The peaceful sleep began to overtake her; the exuberance which had sustained and exalted her helpless and yielding to the conditions which crowded her in.

The stillest hour of the night had come, the hour before dawn, when the world holds its breath. The moon hung low, and had turned from silver to copper in the sky. The old owl no longer hooted, and the night birds had ceased to moan as they began to sleep.

Edna arose, and lay down so long and still in the hammock. She took a long, deep breath, and lay feebly at the post before passing into the house.

'Are you coming in, Leonce?' she asked, turning her face toward her husband.

'Yes, dear,' he answered, with a glance following a misty puff of smoke. 'I have finished my cigar.'

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Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Consider the writer's use of adjectives in describing Edna's feeling is 'delicious, grotesque, impossible'. Which does the contrast between adjectives reveal about Edna's state of mind?
- 2) Find an example of personification in the extract, and note down the atmosphere it helps to create.
- 3) What is the hammock symbolic of in the extract? Consider the symbolic of two different or contrasting ideas.



Activities: Links to Topic Conventions

- 1) What are the attitudes towards marriage that are communicated?
- 2) Annotate the passage in the same way as we have done in the past, identifying in particular any language that relates to a comparison between interior and exterior states.
- 3) Use your annotations to write a paragraph of critical analysis on the language to convey the difference between Edna's state of mind and her situation.
- 4) **Extension Task** How does this contrast between internality and externality help you know about the importance of this theme to American literature in 1940?



Exam Tip

Within your essay, try to make a point about how the same meaning can be created by two different literary techniques. You might find a piece of language or a structural detail to support your argument. This theme is critical to the novel, so make sure you have been given the opportunity to discuss it.

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Unseen Extract 7 - Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth*

The important thing to note about this extract is the variety of techniques – narrative and structural manipulation – that are used to explore its central themes. Read the passage and identify features of the passage.

Extract from *The House of Mirth* (1905) – Edith Wharton

It was no longer, however, from the vision of material poverty that she took her greatest shrinkings. She had a sense of deeper impoverishment – of an inner compulsion which her outward conditions dwindled into insignificance. It was terrible to be poor – to look forward to a shabby, anxious middle-age, led by degrees of economy and self-denial to gradual absorption in the dingy corners of the boarding-house. But there was something more miserable still – it was the solitude at her heart, the sense of being swept like a stray uprooted growth by the heedless current of the years. That was the feeling which possessed her now, being something rootless and ephemeral, mere spin-drift of the whirling existence, without anything to which the poor little tentacles of self could cling. An awful flood submerged them. And as she looked back she saw that there had been no time when she had had any real relation to life. Her parents too had been blown hither and thither on every wind of fashion, without any personal existence of their own from its shifting gusts. She herself had grown up without any one spot of ground dearer to her than another: there was no consecration of family pieties, of grave customs and traditions, to which her heart could turn for refuge and from which it could draw strength and tenderness for its life. There was only a slowly-accumulated past in which she had gathered up whatever fragments of a concrete image of the old house stored with visual memories and the perception of the house not built with hands, but made up of inherited prejudices and loyalties – it has the same power of broadening and deepening the individual by attaching it by mysterious links of kinship to all the mighty sum of human life.

Such a vision of the solidarity of life had never before come to Lily. She had had a premonition of it in the blind motions of her mating-instinct; but they had been the disintegrating influences of the life about her. All the men and women were like atoms whirling away from each other in some wild centrifugal dance. The sense of the continuity of life had come to her that evening in Nettie Struther's

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from *The House of Mirth* (1905) – Edith Wharton

Use of **third-person omniscient narration**

Themes of detachment and alienation

Language depicting the **rush of modern existence**

Parenthetical statement creating a longer sentence and a subsequent impression of modern experience being overwhelming

Simile used to highlight the smallness and insignificance

It was no longer, however, from the vision of material poverty that she derived the greatest shrinking. **She had a sense of deeper impoverishment, a destitution compared to which outward conditions dwindled in insignificance.** It was indeed miserable for the poor—to look forward to an anxious middle-age, leading a life of **drudging** degrees of economy and self-denial, and then to a gradual absorption into the **dingy** communal existence of the boarding-house, where there was nothing more miserable still—it was the clutch of solitude that was the worst of being swept like a stray uprooted growth down the heedless years. That was the feeling which possessed her now—the feeling of something **rootless and ephemeral**, mere spin-drift of the **whirling existence**, without anything to which the poor little tentacles of self could cling before the awful flood submerged them. And as she looked back she saw that there had never been a time when she had had any real relation to life. Her life had been rootless, blown hither and thither on every **wind of fashion**, and she had no personal existence to shelter them from its **shifting gusts**. She herself had been up without any one spot of earth being dearer to her than another: the centre of early pieties, of grave endearing traditions, to which her heart had clung and from which it could draw strength for itself and tenderness for others. She had whatever form a slowly-accumulated past lives in the blood—**whether it be a concrete image of the old house stored with visual memories, or a conception of the house not built with hands, but made up of traditions, passions and loyalties**—it has the same power of broadening and deepening individual existence, of attaching it by its various links of kinship to the sum of human striving.

Such a vision of the continuity of life had never before come to Lily. She had been content to let it in the **blind motions of her mating-instinct**; but now she was checked by the disintegrating influences of the life about her. All the women she knew were **like atoms whirling away from each other in a centrifugal dance**: her first glimpse of the continuity of life had come to her that evening in Nettie Struther's kitchen.

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In this example analysis, notice how the first sentence uses a broad focus so that it covers the whole passage and features that are relevant to the discussion of how loneliness is presented in the text.

Example of Analysis

Quotation
blended into
the analysis

Understanding
of how
meaning is
sustained
throughout
passage

Demonstration
of how
meaning is
influenced by
reader's
perspective

In the passage, the writer explores the theme of loneliness through the use of a first-person narrative point of view. The main character, Lily, has a strong sense of loneliness, signified by the 'clutch of solitude' that she feels in her 'heart'. This sense of the protagonist is an ironic one as she is living in a 'boarding house', a place of 'communal existence' of a 'boarding house', suggesting that she is not alone, even within the company of others. A possible explanation for this is the 'dingy' and 'dreary' poverty that the boarding house suggests, suggesting that her financial circumstances cut her off from society as a whole. This thought is continued later in the passage when the writer uses a metaphor of men and women as 'atoms whirling away from each other'. This generalisation of the protagonist's specific experience to 'all men and women she knew' means that the passage is also a piece of commentary about the loneliness of modern life as a poor individual. of third-person omniscient narration, allowing the reader access to the inner thoughts and feelings such as her 'sense of deeper empowerment'. The writer develops this theme of loneliness further by highlighting how only the protagonist always remains hidden from the world around her; only she is given access to her innermost emotions. The reader is provided with a stronger sense of Lily's character as an individual through this use of a first-person point of view, but at the same time is shown how her economic status contributes to her feeling of loneliness by preventing her from communicating her individuality to others.

How does the writer show how **two themes** – individuality and loneliness – **interact with each other** in the passage?

Exam Tip

Spend approximately 10 minutes writing each paragraph of your analysis to allow you to consider a variety of linguistic techniques and features without from using up too much time on this section of the exam.



Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) Highlight the sections in the paragraph where the analysis a) makes a point about the unseen extract, b) provides evidence for the point, and c) explains the meaning or significance of the evidence provided.
- 2) Look at the quotation 'atoms whirling away from each other' that is used in the analysis. Can you think of another possible interpretation of the language used to describe loneliness? Think in particular about the connotations of the word 'atoms'.
- 3) Discuss as a class whether you feel there are any improvements to the analysis of the passage. Does it need more textual quotations, for example?

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In several sections of this resource we have considered how to analyse extracts from the bottom rungs of American society. Look at how this extract acts as a contrast to the privilege in American writing of the period.

Second Extract from *The House of Mirth*

They turned into Madison Avenue and began to go all northward. As she went with her long light step, Selden was conscious of taking a luxurious pleasure in her nearness: in the model of her wide car, the crisp upward wave of her hair, the slightly brightening of her cheek?—and the thick planting of her straight black hair. You could see at once vigorous and exquisite, at once strong and fine. He was sure that she must have cost a great deal to make, that a great many dull sacrifices must, in some mysterious way, have been sacrificed to produce her. He was sure that the qualities distinguishing her from the herd of her sex were chiefly external. The glaze of beauty and fastidiousness had been applied to vulgar clay. Yet there was something unsatisfied, for a coarse texture will not take a high finish; and was it not the material was fine, but that circumstance had fashioned it into a futile shape?

As he reached this point in his speculations the sun came out, and her lightness of heart was his enjoyment. A moment or two later she paused with a sigh.

'Oh, dear, I'm so hot and thirsty—and what a hideous place New York is! I'm despairingly up and down the dreary thoroughfares. Other cities put on their best in summer, but New York seems to be in its shirtsleeves.' Her eyes wandered into the side-streets. 'Somebody ought to plant a few trees over the city and lead into the city.'

'I'm glad my street meets with your approval,' said Selden as they turned into the city.

'Your street? Do you live here?'

She glanced with interest along the new brick and limestone house-fronts that varied in obedience to the American craving for novelty, but fresh and inimitable in their awnings and flower-boxes.

'Ah, yes—to be sure: THE BENEDICK. What a nice-looking building! I don't think I've ever seen it before.' She looked across at the flat-house with its marble porch and pseudo-Georgian facade. 'Which are your windows? They will be the awnings down?'

'On the right-hand side, yes.'

'And that nice little balcony is yours? How cool it looks up there!'

He paused a moment. 'Come up and see,' he suggested. 'I can give you a cup of tea in no time—and you won't meet any bores.'

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Use these activities to explore how the language of the extract uses connotation, a social commentary on masculinity, femininity and urban settings.



Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Identify a quotation which suggests that Selden's house is an upper-class residence.
- 2) What is implied about Selden's social status by the description of his 'pseudo-Georgian' 'façade'? 'Pseudo-Georgian', in the context of this passage, refers to a style of architecture that mimics the architectural style of the Georgian or Regency periods, late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
- 3) What are the connotations of the words 'herd' and 'vulgar' in the passage? How do they suggest about Selden's opinion of women?
- 4) What is the 'analogy' (a comparison between two different things, one of which is an aspect of one or the other) that is used at the end of the first paragraph? Why does it leave Selden unsatisfied?
- 5) **Extension Task:** Annotate the rest of the passage, picking out any language features you could use in a critical analysis of it.



Activities: Links to Topic Conventions

- 1) On one piece of paper, draw three separate mind maps or spider diagrams, each focusing on language features relating to the attitudes of the passage towards:
 - a) femininity,
 - b) masculinity,
 - c) New York.(You might already have some examples highlighted from the extract.)
- 2) On your mind maps or spider diagrams, see whether any of the language features you have picked out also belong to another of the themes, and draw linking lines to show these.
- 3) Using the information on your completed mind map, write a bullet-pointed critical analysis on the passage. Use the links you made in your mind map to structure the order of the themes you would discuss in the essay.
- 4) Draw a table that compares the passage's attitudes towards femininity and masculinity in New York with what you already know about attitudes towards these themes in other texts of American literature between 1880 and 1910 more generally.



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Unseen Extract 8 - Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*

This passage is particularly useful to analyse because of how it combines an innovative narrative point of view with recognisable themes from American literature of the period. Use the passage to identify features of the passage.

Extract from *The Call of the Wild* (1903) – Jack London

Buck did not read the newspapers, nor could he have known that trouble was brewing alone for himself, but for the very tide-water dog, strong of muscle and with a pedigree from the Yukon to San Diego. Because men, groping in the Arctic darkness for gold and low metal, and because steamship and transportation companies were sending thousands of men were rushing into the Northland. These men wanted dogs, and they wanted were heavy dogs, with strong muscles by which to toil, and with which to protect them from the frost.

Buck lived at a big house in the sun-kissed Santa Clara Valley. Judge Miller called. It stood back from the road, half hidden among the trees, through which could be caught of the wide cool veranda that ran around its four sides. The house was approached by gravelled driveways which wound about through wide-spreading oaks under the interlacing boughs of tall poplars. At the rear things were on a more spacious scale than at the front. There were great stables, where a dozen horses were held forth, rows of vine-clad servants' cottages, an endless and orderly array of long grape arbors, green pastures, orchards, and berry patches. Then there was the pumping plant for the artesian well, and the big cement tank where Judge Miller took his refreshing plunge and kept cool in the hot afternoon.

And over this great demesne Buck ruled. Here he was born, and here he lived the years of his life. It was true, there were other dogs, There could not but be dogs in such a vast a place, but they did not count. They came and went, resided in the kennels, or lived obscurely in the recesses of the house after the fashion of Toots, the English bulldog, or Ysabel, the Mexican hairless,—strange creatures that rarely put nose out foot to ground. On the other hand, there were the fox terriers, a score of them, who yelped fearful promises at Toots and Ysabel looking out of the windows at the street, protected by a legion of housemaids armed with brooms and mops.

But Buck was neither house-dog nor kennel-dog. The whole realm was his. He went into the swimming tank or the garden with the Judge's sons; he escorted Alice, the Judge's daughter, on long twilight or early morning rambles; he lay at the Judge's feet before the roaring library fire; he carried the Judge's bag, or rolled them in the grass, and guarded their footsteps through the garden down to the fountain in the stable yard, and even beyond, where the path led to the berry patches. Among the terriers he stalked imperiously, and Toots and Ysabel ignored, for he was king,—king over all creeping, crawling, flying things in that place, humans included.

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from *The Call of the Wild* (1903) – Jack London

Indirect exposition that protagonist is, in fact, a dog

Comic description of gold from a dog's perspective, highlighting the ordinary

Repetition of 'wide' emphasises amount of open space in the setting

Social commentary on xenophobia in American society, viewing foreigners as 'strange creatures'

Buck did not read the newspapers, or he would have known that trouble was not alone for himself, but for every tide-water dog, strong of muscle, warm, long hair, from Puget Sound to San Francisco. Because men, groping in darkness, had found a yellow metal, and because steamship and transportation companies were booming, thousands of men were rushing into the West. These men wanted the dogs they wanted were heavy dogs, with muscle, bone, and toil, and furry coats to protect them from the frost.

Buck lived at a big house in the sun-kissed Santa Clara Valley. In this place, it was called. It stood back from the road, half hidden among the trees through which glimpses could be caught of the wide cool veranda that ran on four sides. The house was approached by gravelled driveways which ran through wide-spreading lawns and under the interlacing boughs of the trees. The rear things were on even a more spacious scale than at the front. There were great stables, where a dozen grooms and boys held forth, rows of vine-covered cottages, an endless and orderly array of outhouses, long grape arbors, pastures, orchards, and berry patches. Then there was the pumping station, an artesian well, and the big cement tank where Judge Miller's boys took their plunge and kept cool in the hot afternoon.

And over this great demesne Buck ruled. Here he was born, and here he spent the four years of his life. It was true, there were other dogs, There could be other dogs on so vast a place, but they were no count. They came and went, and resided in the populous kennels, or lived obscurely in the recesses of the house in the fashion of Toots, the little pug, or Ysabel, the Mexican hairless creature. They rarely put nose out of doors or set foot to ground. On the other hand, the fox terriers, a score of them at least, who yelped fearfully at the dogs and Ysabel looking out of the windows at them and protected by housemaids armed with brooms and mops.

But Buck was neither house-dog nor kennel-dog. The whole realm of the Judge plunged into the swimming tank or went hunting with the Judge's son Mollie and Alice, the Judge's daughters, on long twilight or early morning. On wintry nights he lay at the Judge's feet before the roaring library fire, or the Judge's grandsons on his back, or rolled them in the grass, and gave his footprints through wild adventures down to the fountain in the stable yard beyond, where the paddocks were, and the berry patches. Among the dogs he stalked imperiously, and Toots and Ysabel he utterly ignored, for he was over all creeping, crawling, flying things of Judge Miller's place, human

Subversion of religious belief that human beings are the most advanced

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Below is an example of a paragraph of critical analysis that responds to the extract

Example of Analysis

The fact that the passage is written from the perspective of a dog enables the writer to offer commentaries on aspects of American society at the beginning of the twentieth century. The gold rush is 'brewing' through the humorous description of the reason behind the search for 'yellow metal'. Because the dog-protagonist does not understand the concept of gold and the more common way which allows the writer to implicitly criticise the importance that Americans place on wealth and riches. In a similar way, Buck's realisation that 'the whole realm was his' clearly demonstrates the emptiness of the American Dream. This was an idea, prevalent during the early twentieth century, of ownership of property as something worth aspiring towards. The fact that a dog owned the land draws attention to the ridiculousness of the idea that land can be owned. A more pointed attack on American attitudes and values comes at the very end of the passage when Buck is declared as a ruler over all things on the property, 'humans included', subverting the Christian belief in the highpoint of God's creation. These satirical and subversive meanings behind the passage question established assumptions about attitudes and values in the America of the early twentieth century.



Exam Tip

Revise by creating a glossary of literary terminology, familiarising yourself with the terms within it so that you can identify them more quickly in the exam.

These activities will help you increase your understanding of the analytical skills that you need to identify meanings from the unseen extract above.



Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) You have seen that this paragraph has not been annotated with critical analysis. Using highlighters of different colours, pick out examples of each of these analytical skills: a) identification of passages that / quotations from text, and c) explanation of quotations' meanings.
- 2) Which sentence or sentences in the above paragraph demonstrate contextual factors related to the passage?
- 3) What is the overall subject or topic of the paragraph? Where is it stated, and why is it important that it has been mentioned here?

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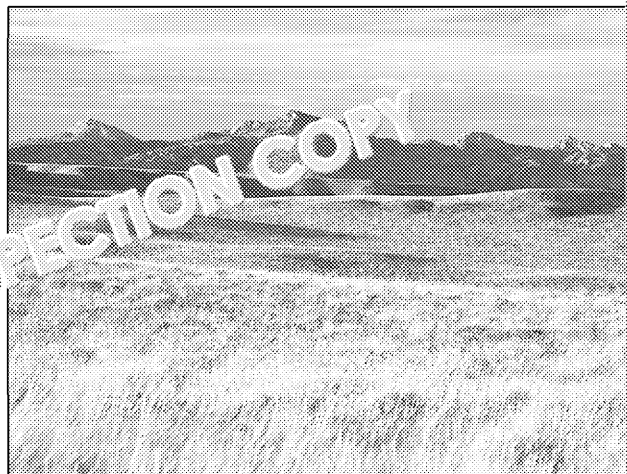
Look at this second extract from *The Call of the Wild* and complete the activities for

Second Extract from *The Call of the Wild*

He swiftly lost the fastidiousness which had characterized his old life. As he found that his mates, finishing first, robbed him of his unfinished ration, he defended it. While he was fighting off the newcomers, it was disappearing from the others. To remedy this, he began to follow as they; and, so greatly did hunger was not above trying to get what did not belong to him. He watched and learned. Pike, one of the new dogs, a clever malingerer and thief, slyly steal a slice of the trail's back was turned, he duplicated the performance the following day with the whole chunk. A great uproar was raised, but he was unsuspected awkward blunderer who was always getting caught, was punished for Buck

This first theft marked Buck as fit to survive in the hostile Northland environment marked his adaptability, his capacity to adjust himself to changing conditions which would have meant swift and terrible death. It marked, further, the pieces of his moral nature, a vain thing and a handicap in the ruthless struggle for existence. It was all well enough in the Southland, under the law of love and respect private property and personal feelings; but in the Northland, under the law of club and fang, whoso took such things into account was a fool, and in so far as he would fail to prosper.

Not that Buck reasoned it out, but that was all, and unconsciously accommodated himself to the new mode of life. All his days, no matter what he had to do, from a fight. But the club of the man in the red sweater had a more fundamental and primitive code. Civilized, he could have died for consideration, say the defence of Judge Miller's riding-whip; but the complete decivilization was now evidenced by his ability to flee from the defence of consideration and so save his hide. He did not steal for joy of it, but because of his stomach. He did not rob openly, but stole secretly and cunningly, with club and fang. In short, the things he did were done because it was easier not to do them.



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These activities are designed to help you pick out the features and meanings of a text to construct an extended piece of critical analysis.



Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) What does Buck learn to do that makes him 'fit to survive in the harsh environment'?
- 2) Which sentence of the passage compares the ease of Buck's former life with the one he now faces?
- 3) Draw a table with two columns comparing language that describes Buck as loyal and adaptable against language that presents him as immoral and selfish.
- 4) Using the quotations that you have collected in your table, write a paragraph of analysis focusing on the possible meanings behind the ambiguous character in the passage.



Activities: Links to Topic Conventions

- 1) Annotate the passage, highlighting and making notes on how the theme of survival is explored throughout.
- 2) Is the theme of survival present in one of the other set texts that you have studied? Write your annotations into a table along with points relating to the themes of your set texts, and write a paragraph that points on how the present passage compares with its presentation in the other American texts you have studied.
- 3) Spend 10 minutes planning a critical response to the extract about the theme of survival. Write ideas for five paragraphs, giving each of your planned paragraphs a 'theme of survival' or 'use of violent imagery'. Look at the annotated extract in this section for how to do this.
- 4) **Extension Task:** How does this extract present the value that is placed on individualism in American literature during the period? How does the value relate to the prevalence of individualism around the turn of the twentieth century?

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Unseen Extract 9 - Booth Tarkington, *The Magnificent Ambersons*

Read the passage below and annotate it to identify specific language uses such as sentences; these are useful examples of how to do detailed close reading.

Extract from *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918) – Booth Tarkington

New faces appeared at the dances of the night; new faces had been appearing for that matter, and families were disappearing, merged in the increasing crowd that had gone forever and was little and not long; for the town was growing and changing and changing before.

It was heaving up in the middle incredibly; it was spreading incredibly; it was spreading and spread, it befouled itself and darkened its sky. Its boundary was merging the run; a raw, new house would appear on a country road; four or five others would presently be built at intervals between it and the outskirts of the town; then the road would turn into an asphalt street with a brick-faced drugstore and a frame corner; then bungalows and six-room cottages would swiftly speckle the open spaces—and a farm had become a suburb which would immediately shoot into the country, on one side, and, on the other, join itself solidly to the city. Between pleasant fields and woodland groves one spring day; and in the next over the same ground, you were warned off the tracks by an interurban trolley rattling, gonging, and beheld, beyond cement sidewalks, a new house-owner in. Gasoline and electricity were performing the miracles Eugene had predicted.

But the change was in the citizenry itself. What was left of the patriarchal generation that had fought the Civil War, and subsequently controlled politics, was venerable and was little heeded. The descendants of the pioneers and early settlers were merging into the new crowd, becoming part of it, little to be distinguished. What happened to Boston and to Broadway happened in degree to the Midland. The old became less and less typical, and of the grown people who called the place home, a third had been born in it. There was a German quarter; there was a Jewish quarter; there was a negro quarter—square miles of it—called 'Bucktown'; there were Irish neighbourhoods; and there were large settlements of Italians, and of Hungarians, Rumanians, and of Serbians and other Balkan peoples. But not the emigrants were the almost dominant type on the streets downtown. That type was the prosperous offspring: descendant of the immigrants of the Seventies and Eighties and Nineties, those great folk in search not so directly of freedom as of more money and more labour. A new Midlander—in fact, a new American—was ready to emerge.

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918) – Booth Tarkington

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Accumulation of **present participles** creates atmosphere of tumultuous change

New faces appeared at the dances of the winter; new faces had been appearing everywhere, for that matter, **and familiar ones were disappearing**, the increasing crowd, or gone forever and a new one had appeared a little and not long. The town was growing and changing. It had grown and changed.

American life becoming more **fluid and unstructured**

It was **heaving** and **spreading** incredibly; it was **spreading** incredibly, heaving and spreading, it befouled itself and darkened its sky. Its boundaries were **blurring** on the run; a **raw, new house would appear on a corner** where four or five others would presently be built at intervals between it and the town; the country road would turn into an asphalt street with a brick drugstore and a frame grocery at a corner; then bungalows and six-room houses would swiftly **speckle the open green spaces**—and a farm had become a city which would immediately shoot out other suburbs into the country, on the other, join itself solidly to the city. **You** drove between pleasant fields and groves one spring day; and in the autumn, passing over the same ground, you were warned off the tracks by an interurban trolley-car's gonging, and beheld cement sidewalks just dry, new house-owners busy 'moving in.' **Gasoline and electricity were performing** the miracles Eugene had predicted.

Presentation of **setting** as changing from rural to urban over time

Industrialisation of rural American landscape

But the great change was in the citizenry itself. What was left of the old stock generation that had fought the Civil War, and subsequently come to be had become venerable and was little heeded. The descendants of the early settlers were merging into the new, becoming part of it, but distinguished from it. **What? after a while, to Boston and to Broadway in degree to the Mississippi**, the old stock became less and less typical. The old stock people who had made the place home, less than a third had been born there. There was a Jewish quarter; there was a negro quarter, several miles of it—called 'Bucktown'; there were many Irish neighborhoods; there were large settlements of **Italians, and of Hungarians, and of Serbians and other Balkan peoples**. But not the emigrants were the almost dominant type on the streets downtown. That type of emigrant's prosperous offspring: descendant of the emigrations of the Eighties and Nineties, those great folk-journeys **in search not so much of freedom and democracy as of more money for the same labour**. A Midlander—in fact, a new American—was beginning dimly to emerge.

Spread of **urban progress** across America

List sentence signifies the increasing diversity in population of American cities

High identity becomes

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Below is an example of an essay paragraph that considers the effects and meaning in the above extract.

Example of Analysis

Focus of the paragraph clear from the outset

Discussion of what is implicitly suggested by the language of the passage

Example of very close reading, demonstrating understanding of mechanics of language

The writer's presentation of setting conveys the industrial and that are taking place over the course of the text. A contrast between urban and rural environments is exemplified by the narrative statement that houses once surrounded by 'pleasant fields and woodland' replaced, in the new era, by 'cement sidewalks just dry'. The landscape is a body that is wounded by the building taking place on it. From this, it can be argued that the writer's attitude towards the industrialisation and modernisation of America are negative. The fact that this wave of change is repeatedly referred to with the vague impersonal pronoun, 'it', at the beginning of the second paragraph to the air of uncertainty and foreboding surrounding the changes to the American landscape described during the extract. Furthermore, the use of the indefinite article 'a' when describing what is being built over the landscape - 'a brick-faced drugstore and a frame grocery' - indicates that the similarity between each new street is creating an urban landscape that is homogenous. These uses of language that create setting combine to suggest that the attitude of the passage towards the changing nature of the American landscape is somewhat scornful and concerned.

Use of sentence structure to emphasise the writer's attitude

Exam Tip

If you do not understand a word or phrase in the unseen extract, don't worry. You do not have to consider the extract line by line, so focus your analysis instead on what you do understand.

These activities will allow you to explore how the argument of the passage above is developed to a higher band, and understand what precise close reading looks like.

Activities: Analysis in Action

- Find an example in the analysis above where a point or a particular argument is supported by two separate pieces of quotation.
- 'Furthermore' is one example of a connective word that you can use to link your argument. As a class, come up with five other connective words that can function in a similar way.
- Read through the extract from *The Magnificent Ambersons* again and find evidence that you feel could be added to the example analysis above. Write a sentence which includes this additional textual evidence.

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Read this second extract from *The Magnificent Ambersons* and use the questions developing your understanding of the extract.

Second Extract from *The Magnificent Ambersons*

A new spirit of citizenship had already sharply defined itself. It was idealism. The ideals were expressed in the new kind of young men in business downtown—optimists—optimists to the point of blindness—their motto being ‘Boost!’ And they were hustlers, bustling in hustling and in honesty because both their city and country for it with a plutonic energy which was always and everywhere vigorously governed, but they sometimes went so far to struggle for the account of the helpful effect of good government on the price of real estate ‘betterment’ generally; the politicians could not go too far with them, and the idealists planned and strove and shouted that their city should become a better city—and what they meant, when they used the word ‘better,’ was ‘prosperous,’ and the core of their idealism was this: ‘The more prosperous the more prosperous beloved!’ They had one supreme theory: that the happiness of cities and of human life was to be brought about by more factories; mania for factories; there was nothing they would not do to cajole a factory to another city; and they were never more piteously embittered than when one went away from them.

What they meant by Prosperity was to build the bank; but in exchange for got nothing that was worth it, and, therefore, to a sane mind, valueless, was clean again before the cleaning was half done. For, as the new city with an incredible completeness. The idealists put up magnificent buildings and boasted of them, but the buildings were begrimed before they were built. They boasted of their libraries, of their monuments and statues; and poured. They boasted of their schools, but the schools were dirty, like the children. It was not the fault of the children or their mothers. It was the fault of the city. ‘The more dirt, the more prosperity.’ They drew patriotic, optimistic breath, powdered filth of the streets, and took the foul and heavy smoke with gusts of profundities of their lungs. ‘Boost! Don’t knock!’ they said. And every year boomed a great Clean-up Week, when everybody was supposed to get rid of his backyard.

They were happiest when the tearing down and building up were most rapid. A new factory district was being laid out. In truth, the city came to be a great, skinned, to show his busy works, yet wearing a few bare patches. And such a figure carved, coloured, and discoloured, and set up in the middle of the city, to have done well enough as the god of the new people.

Exam Tip

Ensure that you have five minutes at the end of your exam to read through your answers to ensure that you have used correct spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout.

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The 'Close-reading Skills' activities are designed to show how attention to language themes relating to the development of American society during the period. These are linked by the linking activities underneath.



Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Find two quotations that illustrate the airiness of the modern American text.
- 2) Why are the words 'better' and 'betterment' included in quotation marks in the first paragraph of the extract?
- 3) Find an example of personification in the last paragraph of the extract.
- 4) What does the fact that the 'magnificent buildings' described in the extract were 'before they were finished' suggest about the text's attitude towards progress and chaos in this landscape of modernity?
- 5) **Extension Task:** What language can you find in the extract that suggests a sense of progress and chaos in this landscape of modernity?



Activities: Links to Topic Conventions

- 1) Discuss as a class how the satirical tone that the extract adopts towards progress and modernisation compares with other representations of this theme in American literature between 1880 and 1940.
- 2) Draw a table that includes the language used to describe the 'city' in the first paragraph of the extract. In a second column, write down each of these language uses.
- 3) Using your table as well as your own contextual knowledge, write a paragraph that you would include in a paragraph of critical analysis about the presentation of business and businessmen in the extract. Your final bullet point should state whether you feel the presentation to be broadly negative or positive.



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Unseen Prose Extract 10 – John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*

This extract from *Of Mice and Men* encompasses many of the themes and language common throughout the period of American literature between 1880 and 1940. I will annotate it to language that relates to the key themes of the period.

Extract from *Of Mice and Men* (1937) – John Steinbeck

Crooks said, 'I didn't mean to say no. He'll come back. I was talkin' a guy sets alone c... here, I don't want, maybe readin' books or thinkin' or stuff. Sometimes I gets thinkin', an' he got nothing to tell him what's so an' maybe if he sees somethin', he don't know whether it's right or not. He ask other guy and ast him if he sees it too. He can't tell. He got nothing to m... things out here. I wasn't drunk. I don't know if I was asleep. If some guy could tell me I was asleep, an' then it would be all right. But I jus' don't was looking across the room now, looking toward the window.'

Lennie said miserably, 'George wun't go away and leave me. I know Geor

The stable buck went on dreamily, 'I remember when I was a little kid on chicken ranch. Had two brothers. They was always near me, always the right in the same room, right in the same bed- all three. Had a strawberry alfalfa patch. Used to turn the chickens on the alfalfa on a sunny mornin'. Brothers'd set on a fence rail an' watch 'em. White chickens they was.'

Gradually Lennie's interest came around to what was being said. 'George we alfalfa for the rabbits.'

'What rabbits?'

'We're gonna have rabbits an' a berry patch.'

'You're nuts.'

'We are too. You ast George.'

'You're nuts.' Crooks was scornful. 'I see a side As of men come by on the ranches, with their bind'... back an' that same damn thing in Hundreds of the... The... come, an' they quit an' go on; an' every damn a little... in his head. An' never a God damn one of 'em ever gets... even. Ever'body wants a little piece of lan'. I read plenty of books out never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land. It's just in their head. Th talkin' about it, but it's jus' in their head.'

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from *Of Mice and Men* (1937) – John Steinbeck

Crooks said, 'I didn't mean to scare you. He'll come back. I was talking to myself. A guy sets alone out here at night, maybe **readin' books** or doin' stuff like that. **Sometimes he gets thinkin' that he's got something to do with what's so an' what ain't so.** No, if he sees somethin', he don't know if it's right or not. He can't ask no other guy and ask him if he sees what he can't tell. He got no measure by. I seen things out here. I wish I could go to sleep. If some guy was with me, he could tell me what I should do. But I jus' don't know.' Crooks was in the room now, looking toward the window.

Dangerous nature of **individualism**



Lennie said miserably, 'George wun't go away and leave me. I know I can't do that.'

Adverb suggests **nostalgia** for the past

The stable buck went on **dreamily**, 'I remember when I was a little kid, I had a man's chicken ranch. Had two brothers. They was always near me, and I used to sleep right in the same room, right in the same bed- all three of us. **Used to sleep right in the same room, right in the same bed- all three of us. Strawberry patch. Had an alfalfa patch.** Used to turn the chickens on a sunny morning. My brothers'd set on a fence rail an' watch the chickens they was.'

Short sentences reflect **simplicity of the past** in American society

Gradually Lennie's interest came around to what was being said. 'We're gonna have alfalfa for the rabbits.'

'What rabbits?'

'We're gonna have rabbits an' a berry patch.'

Humble man's dream

'We're nuts.'

'We are too. You ask George.'

Repetition of 'hundreds' emphasises number of people trying to live their dream of owning a piece of land



'You're nuts.' Crooks was scornful. 'I seen hundreds of men come by here an' on the ranches, with their bindles on their back **an' that same dream in their heads. Hundreds** of them. They come, an' they quit an' go on. I seen damn one of 'em's got a little piece of land in his head. An' never a one of 'em ever gets it. Just like heaven. **Everbody wants a little piece of land.** Plenty of books out here. Nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets it. It's just in their head. They're all the time talkin' about it, but it's just in their head.'



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It is easier to relate theme to wider contextual discussion than it is to judge how contextual aspects. Study the annotations of this example analysis to see how the a passage from the period can be related to its wider context.

Example of Analysis

Brief summary of what will be discussed in the paragraph

The writer uses a naturalistic, realistic prose style to convey a character and the wider literary and social context in which the set. The dialogue of both Lennie and Crooks is written in the thick, flat West, signifying how the two characters originate in a rugged countryside as opposed to a more sophisticated city setting. One of this device is a common characteristic of American writing of this period, which was generally founded on the modernist idea that reality, such as the particular nature of different speech patterns, should be presented as accurately as possible. This emphasis on naturalism is also reflected by the words of Crooks in the first paragraph extract, in which he admits that he 'just don't know' whether the things he has seen while working on the farm are real or merely his imagination. Consideration of the relationship between unreal and imagination is also included towards the end of the passage where he argues that the dreams of 'hundreds' of men to own 'a little house and a lot of land' exist only 'in their head', not in reality. This comment serves as a critique of the American Dream, an idea based on the principle that every American should be free to pursue his or her own happiness. The naturalistic and realistic prose style of the writer, however, contrasts with the unrealistic and idealistic nature of this idea.

Inclusion of relevant social and historical context to explain secondary level of meaning in the extract

Summary of what the 'findings' of the paragraph have been

Complete these activities to assess how well you understand the analytical techniques used in this example paragraph.



Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) Using highlighters of different colours, highlight where the above analysis uses each of these three analytical techniques: a) identification of the passage, b) specific examples of this language feature, and c) the language feature's meaning.
- 2) Discuss as a class how effectively you feel the above paragraph remains focused on its subject of the author's prose style.
- 3) Is there any relevant additional quotation from the passage that has not been used? Write a sentence that includes this additional quotation and its relevance to the subject of the paragraph.

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In this activity, your task will be to use what you have learned through your writing analysis to construct an essay-length critical response to the unseen extract from



Activities: Essay Practice

1) For this last section, we have not provided a second extract from the text. Instead, you are going to use the annotations on the given extract of the example analysis, to write a full-length critical analysis of the text, its features and analyse them for their meanings and overall effect. When completing your analysis, remember to:

- spend five to ten minutes picking out features of the passage and create a point plan based either around themes or literary techniques
- spend five to ten minutes writing each paragraph – this should be enough time to cover five or six aspects of the passage
- write only one or two sentences for both your introduction and conclusion – describe, in general terms, what the passage is about and the writer presents its subject



Exam Tip

In the exam, the year in which the unseen extract was written will be provided. See whether the passage was written around the same time as one of your texts. You can draw any comparisons between the two in light of this potential similarity.

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Practice Essay Questions

These questions have been written in the style of the OCR exam and are focused on the extracts used in this resource. Using the close-reading skills you have gained through the sections, as well as referring back to the introductory pages on exam information, write your essay responses to each of these questions. Use the table below to help you structure your answer, using the essay subtopics as suggestions for what to include.

- 1) Using your close-reading skills and contextual knowledge of the period of American literature between 1880 and 1940, write a critical analysis of the extract from Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*.
- 2) Write a critical analysis of the extract from Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*, commenting on the writer's use of language, presentation of theme and how this relates to your knowledge of American literature between 1880 and 1940.
- 3) Using your close-reading skills and contextual knowledge of the period of American literature between 1880 and 1940, write a critical analysis of the extract from Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*.
- 4) Analyse the meanings contained in the extract from F Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*, commenting on the writer's use of language, presentation of theme and how this relates to your knowledge of American literature between 1880 and 1940.
- 5) Using your close-reading skills and contextual knowledge of the period of American literature between 1880 and 1940, write a critical analysis of the extract from Willa Cather's *O, Pioneers!*.

Essay subtopics / 'paragraph titles'	Quotations (aim to include at least two quotations per paragraph)	
(1) 		
(characterisation)		
(presentation of setting)		
(use of imagery and symbolism)		
(influence of contextual factors) 		

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Supporting Mate

AO Checklist

OCR A Level Student Self-Confidence Scheme

This mark scheme combines the AO1-3 given in the AOs and the OCR mark scheme and combines them. You should use this to mark your work and to ensure you are aware of the areas to work on.

		Level	Level 1	Level 2	
		Key words	Irrelevant, undeveloped, inaccurate	Limited understanding, inconsistent	
Skills to demonstrate in your work	AO1	I demonstrate my knowledge of the texts			
	AO1	I present an effective and sustained argument in my writing			
	AO1	I use literary terminology and concepts in my work			
	AO1	I express myself clearly and with precision			
	AO2	I use evidence from the text to support my argument			
	AO2	I discuss the effects of the language, form and structure used by the author			
	AO2	I use analytical methods in my work			
	AO3	I understand the importance of the context in which the texts were written			
	AO3	I understand the importance of the context in which the texts were received			

NB: AO4 and AO5 are not marked in Part 1 of the scheme.

Best area: Areas to work on:

Teachers should refer to the mark schemes given on the OCR website for marking and to ensure

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Key Terms Glossary

In this section, we have collated all of the literary and contextual terminology useful when writing informed, detailed answers during the exam. This is not an exhaustive list, but you might find it helpful to add to these lists while you complete independent research between 1880 and 1940.

Literary Terminology

Imagery	the description of objects, settings and other elements with the aim of creating a 'mental picture' in the mind of the reader
Rhetorical Question	a question that does not require an answer
Third-person Omniscient Narration	a type of narration in which a third-person narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of their characters
Complex Sentence	a sentence which is made especially long either through the use of a combination of clauses and commas
Ellipsis	a silence or a pause within narration usually denoted by three dots
Connotation	a meaning that is suggested but not explicitly stated by a word or phrase
Symbolism	something, usually a physical object, which is used to stand for an idea or quality
Juxtaposition	the placing of two elements in close proximity to each other for the purpose of comparison
Personification	giving human characteristics to something that is not human
Metaphor	a word or phrase which refers to one thing by making a comparison with another that is seemingly unrelated. An extended metaphor is a metaphor that is repeated or used in a slightly different way to emphasise a point
Exposition	an explanation of what is going on in the plot of a narrative
Reported Speech	the speech of characters in a narrative that is contained within the narrative
Dash	the hyphen is referred to as a hyphen, it is a textual mark used to indicate a pause in the narration
Colloquial Language	language that is casual and informal, often used in regional dialects
Connective	a word used to connect two parts of a sentence or two sentences
Trope	a particular image or idea that is repeatedly included in a work of literature
Repetition	a phrase repeated in a different tone or style, often with a different meaning
Intensifier	a word – usually an adverb or an adverbial phrase – that is used to emphasise the thing being described
Alliteration	words placed near each other that begin with the same letter or sound, creating meaning through sound patterns
Parenthetical Statement	a statement contained within the main body of a sentence, separated from it by two dashes
Simile	a comparison between two different things that uses the words 'like' or 'as'
Anthropomorphism	giving human characteristics to animals or objects
Indirect Exposition	information about the action of a plot that is not explicitly stated but suggested or implied by the narrative
Subversion	a deliberate reversal or contradiction of the reader's expectations
Present Participle	in addition to a word, usually an '-ing' suffix, that indicates an action is ongoing
Second-person Narration	a form of narration which addresses the reader directly using 'you'
Dialect	a form of narration or reported speech that has been written in a particular way for the representation of different accents and speech patterns
Adverb	a word that is used to change or intensify the meaning of a verb or a sentence

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Contextual Terminology

The American Dream	idea popularised during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that Americans should be afforded equal opportunities to success and happiness
Romanticisation	an excessively idealistic and dreamy view of the world, often contrasted with a pragmatic attitude
Secular	unconcerned with religious or spiritual issues and beliefs
Context	in literary terms, a work's context is the social and historical circumstances in which it was produced and which may have influenced its content
Pragmatism	a practical and realistic approach to questions or problems
Industrialisation	the process by which machines begin to do work-related tasks previously carried out by people
Nostalgia	a bittersweet longing for the past
Modernism	a cultural period centred around the turn of the twentieth century, characterised by greater levels of artistic experimentation in order to better understand the workings of the mind in a more realistic way
Individualism	a world view in which a person considers their own interests and desires as the most important thing in existence
Social Critique	an aspect of a text that attacks or criticises an element of society, such as the gap between rich and poor people or degrading attitudes towards certain groups

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Indicative Content for A

For each of the questions and activities in this pack, we have included suggested relevant students' answers. This is intended to provide an indication as to the direction which students should take in their answers; the more open-ended or debate-based activities; it should not, however, prevent students from responding creatively about American literature.

Resource Section	Question	Indicative Content
Section One – <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i> 	Analysis in Action	1. 'faded wallpaper' and 'ragged carpets' 2. 'for example', 'by contrast', 'illustrating' – these words indicate that the argument is being developed or explored in more detail than a band answer 3. '... points towards the tendency of writing in the period'
	Close-reading Skills	1. Largely desolate place – repeated references to the town 2. The quotation, 'over on Main Street sounded a man's voice', 'The communion between George Willard and his mother was a thing without meaning.' / '... replied George Willard' – both of these quotations indicate the strained nature of the relationship 3. 'It seemed like a rehearsal of her own life...' – this suggests that life can be defined by struggles and battles against the world 4. Examples might include: run-on sentence ('the back of his black hair and beard were filled with flour dust'), and acoustic language ('It seemed like a rehearsal of her own life'), and acoustic language ('It seemed like a rehearsal of her own life') 5. Student's own response required
	Links to Topic Conventions	1. Answers will depend on the points that students have studied about the distance between generations and family struggles brought about by the passage of time 2. The passage suggests that George and his mother are not really there in the presence. The reported speech also suggests that they are not there in spite of the fact that their relationships are so close 3. Student's own response required 4. Students should be able to identify two uses of text in the paragraph of analysis
Section Two – <i>This Side of Paradise</i> 	Analysis in Action	1. ... uses a list of verbs to illustrate the vitality and state of youth / The word 'muddled', especially, suggests that progress increases the feeling among young characters 2. a. Fitzgerald uses language and formal features to suggest something about the theme of 'coming of age'. b. Similarly, the long run-on sentence ending '... through many nights...' uses a list of verbs... c. The word 'muddled', especially, suggests that...
	Close-reading Skills	1. Annotations might highlight positive language such as 'discord' and 'crumpled' 2. 'This took his mind off the play, and he wondered if the population of New York.' 3. Examples might include: '... everything enchanted him' relate to how the character is charmed by the surface of his appearance with his own appearance 4. A possible interpretation might be that Fitzgerald is looking at the end of 1929 and the end of the decadent, materialistic...
	Links to Topic Conventions	1. Student's own response required, but relevant characteristics from the period include self-obsession and romanticism 2. Presentation of the city as a complex and ambiguous place where you can see problems lurking underneath its attractive surface 3. Suitable paragraph headings might include: 'use of setting', 'characterisation', 'relationship', 'use of imagery and symbolism'

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Resource Section	Question	Indicative Content
Section Three – <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i>	Analysis in Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ... where the youth should be terrified, he is intrigued 2. Point is developed to show that the horror of war is not just a reality but rather than dreams of heroism 3. '... creating an eerie atmosphere because it opposes the zone as loud, frenetic and vibrant.' / '... emphasise creates a hallucinatory or dream-like effect in the mind'
	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'The youth looked down upon him like terrified buffaloes' – suggesting that fear has made them stupid and slow 2. Writer uses a paradox by placing the youth in the position of the enemy, preventing him from understanding it, underlining the irony 3. Bullet points might include references to the color of the sky, the pink of the sky and nature's indifference to the smoke as symbolic of the peace that descends
	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student's own response required but understanding of the literature of the period viewed the idea of heroism 2. 'He had the impulse to make a rallying speech, to tell them that war is not a place for men to become heroes, but a place for fearful men' 3. Students' response will depend on the set texts they have studied – mention the prevalence of the theme of hopelessness and despair relating to financial hardship 4. Student's own response required
Section Four – <i>O, Pioneers!</i>	Analysis in Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mentions of topographical features (description of the landscape using metaphorical/symbolic language) 2. 'Alexandra "crossed the ocean" with her family to the West' – later in the passage where imagery is again used to describe the fields as "brown waves" 3. Student's own response required – other themes could include the value of femininity or the value of work
	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capitalisation makes the landscape of 'the Divide' a thought and feeling; it personifies the landscape 2. Their extended length – and the fact that they are named – suggest that Alexandra is an authoritative character 3. Examples of relevant quotations could include: 'All day long she rode down among the river farms, driving up and down the valley, held a family council and told her brothers all that she had to say' 4. Students' response dependent on quotations identified
	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manifest Destiny: the belief proliferated throughout the 19th century that Americans had a God-given right to inhabit the continent of America (an example of a relevant quotation is '... we will cover every acre we can') 2. Student's own response required, but quotations could be used to show how the country begins in the heart of a man or a woman 3. The characterisation of Alexandra as strong and authoritative is a relevant focus to the paragraph 4. References to other strong female protagonists from the period – Shimerda, Maria, Isobel Archer, Ma Joad – could be used to relate to advancement of women's rights
Section Five – <i>The Heart is a Lonely Hunter</i>	Analysis in Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In contrast to this, the frequent insertion of exclamations 2. The two sentences are in the middle of the paragraph – 'hand' to 'aspect of his personality' 3. An example of a concluding sentence might read: 'The conflicting aspects of Jake's character so that he is both a victim of the unfairness of his social situation while implicitly responsible for this situation has inflicted on him.'

Resource Section	Question	Indicative Content
Section Five – <i>The Heart is a Lonely Hunter</i>	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to the sentence: ‘Each evening the mute walked alone’ or ‘and so the months passed in this empty silence, such as ‘but still he wandered through the streets alone’ or ‘and so the months passed in this empty silence in this context and might be used to demonstrate how silence is reflected by the environment through which he walks’. Third-person omniscient narration is used to create distance from the reader, and examples include sentences such as ‘Each evening the mute walked alone for hours in the cold with the sharp, wet winds of March and so on’ demonstrates how he is isolated not only from the world around him but even from those reading about that world. This type of narration is used to comment on the extent to which the mute is isolated from the world around him in the wake of the death of his friends. Third-person omniscient narration is also used to describe the life of Singer’s character, as in the example: ‘... and the aching loneliness would be in him’. Students may also note how omniscient narration differs from other deployment of narrative serving to further emphasise the gulf in understanding between Singer and his readers. Examples of relevant adjectives might include: ‘empty’, ‘sorrowful’. Students might also mention how the pervasive tone of despair throughout the passage serves to comment on the extent of the loneliness being experienced. References to pathetic fallacy or symbolic external elements to demonstrate the significance of this part of the passage.
	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> An example of a student’s response relating to communication might be: ‘Although he never received a response, he wandered the streets of the town, trying to make a connection between the relevance of this communication and that of isolation, as suggested by the previous set of questions in this section, and demonstrating that an inevitable result of failing to communicate is a sense of loneliness.’ Student’s own response required but connections to the text generally focus on how breakdowns in communication lead to isolation, as indicated by the indicative content for this section. Bullet points might mention a) how urbanisation led to fragmented communities, b) other lonely characters in the period (such as Jay Gatsby), and c) relationship between person limited/omniscient narration. Other relevant points include general reference to how the speed of modern life of American marriages and families or how the period’s community values that, in previous eras, prevented the loneliness exhibited by the writing of the period.
Section Six – <i>The Awakening</i>	Analysis in Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> An additional quotation added to the analysis would be: ‘there are no more choices’ – the purpose of this is to demonstrate an awareness of how Edna’s situation is more than one meaning.
	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The contrast between the positive and negative aspects of the unstable and internally divided nature of Edna’s character. ‘the water-oaks had ceased to moan’ – this effect creates a dark and foreboding atmosphere. The hammock is symbolic both of a safe haven in which her husband lives, and also of the imprisoning, stifling atmosphere of her husband’s life.

Resource Section	Question	Indicative Content
Section Six – <i>The Awakening</i>	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Generally negative attitude towards marriage is represented by the confrontational dialogue and Student's own response required, but quotes such as 'pressing into her soul' and 'exuberance which had left her helpless and victim' to the conditions which Students' analyses are dependent on their annotations. Edna's inner strength does not correspond to her physical strength. Mentally free but not physically free. Student's own response required
Section Seven – <i>The House of Mirth</i>	Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 'In the passage, the writer explores the theme of... '... such as her "sense of deeper impoverishment" 'develops this theme of loneliness further by showing that the character always remains hidden' An additional interpretation is that the word 'atom' suggests the insignificance of human life, heightening sense of isolation Student's own response required, but an example might be: '... there was no centre of early pieties, of grave heart could revert and from which it could draw strength for others'
	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> An example of a supporting quotation might be: '...' Understanding of the connotations of falsehood in the interpretation of Selden's character as superficial Both words suggest that women are animal-like and that their connotations are negative The analogy compares the female character to an animal, unsatisfied because it is too simple to describe the character's personality Student's own response required
	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Student's own response required, but quotations of masculinity should be drawn primarily from the first paragraph Student's response dependent on their mind map. A link may be made between references to the female character and the architecture of New York Student's response dependent on work completed in previous sections Relevant information might include misogynistic attitudes of the period as well as an increased desire among women for male authority
Section Eight – <i>The Call of the Wild</i>	Analysis in Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Student's own response required, but the first three paragraphs have been written to exemplify each of these analytical activities Passage's discussion of the American Dream is relevant to the overall subject Overall subject is mentioned in the first sentence, giving the reader a clear idea of the paragraph's purpose and analysis as a whole
	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Learns the importance of 'stealing from others in order to survive' 'It was all well enough in the Southland, under the respectability of property and personal feelings; but in the Northland, where the law was a mere name...' Sourceful language might include 'he watched the unheroic language might include 'it marked, further, his moral nature' or 'stole secretly and cunningly' Students might make reference to the writer's attitude to survival in a realistic way, while also suggesting the more and less moral sides to them

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Resource Section	Question	Indicative Content
Section Eight – <i>The Call of the Wild</i>	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A suitable quotation to annotate would be: 'It may be that the dog had to adjust himself to changing conditions, the lack of food, and the terrible death.' 2. Answers will depend on students' set texts, but given the context, they might refer to the uncanny nature of heroism from survival, or how he began to focus on the more selfish and individualistic aspects of life. 3. The two examples in the activity question serve as good examples such as 'use of anthropomorphic language' and 'individualism' and 'presentation of character as a hero'. 4. Student's own response required
Section Nine – <i>The Magnificent Ambersons</i>	Analysis in Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The passage of the analysis describing the combination of impersonal pronouns and indefinite articles is relevant. 2. Examples of useful connective words include: 'and', 'but', 'however', 'subsequently/consequently', 'therefore', 'conversely', 'for example', 'of equal importance', 'for instance'. 3. For example: 'An additional example of language used to describe the American landscape in a negative light is the narrative of the civilisation "befouled itself and darkened its sky".'
	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examples might include 'they got nothing that was an incredible completeness'. 2. The quotation marks suggest that these words are not to be taken at face value, that modern progress does not, in fact, entail the complete destruction of the old. 3. 'the city came to be like the body of a great dirty animal' is used here to illustrate how the city built by wealthy businessmen and lavish lifestyles. 4. The speed with which the modern buildings accumulated, and how it believes modernisation to be ultimately self-destructive, is a product of building at such a rapid rate degrades the environment. 5. An example of a relevant quotation that might explain the area is: 'They were happiest when the tearing down of the old was most riotous, and when new factory districts were thrust up in the place of the old.'
Section Ten – Of <i>Mice and Men</i>	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Answers will depend on the set texts studied, but given the context, they might refer to the paradoxical nature of modern progress, where some improve while others degenerate. The undertone of the modernisation in writing of the period is another example. 2. For example: 'And every year or so they boomed and the new buildings highlights hypocrisy of their characters; 'They were the best of men and building up were most riotous...' indicates the hypocrisy of the characters. 3. Bullet points might be based around the hypocrisy, obsession with profit / false idealism of modernisation. A summarising sentence should mention what all of this is about, such as their portrayal of modernisation as a phenomenon in the literature of the period.
	Analysis in Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This excerpt from the analysis has been subdivided into three points, in order of point, evidence, and conclusion. The writer uses a realistic, realistic prose style to describe the life and social context in which the characters of <i>Of Mice and Men</i> is written in the dialect of the American West. two characters originate from the rugged country and the sophisticated city setting 2. Student's own response required 3. For example: 'The realism with which the American writer describes the life of the characters is also reflected by the observation of the characters that "they quit an' go on", indicating how the reality of life is more frustrating and mundane than its idealistic dream.'

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Resource Section	Question	Indicative Content
Section Ten – <i>Of Mice and Men</i>	Essay Practice	<p>1. Student's response will depend on the language they identify from the extract, but higher-band answers will identify meanings of each piece of quotation they provide. Individual meanings combine to create an overall meaning. Answers will also refer to the literary and social context of American literature between 1880 and 1940 to support the analysis of relevant quotations for discussion when answering the question. The dialectic speech to communicate the language of the characters and reflect the passage's modernist style in a more truthful manner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of the falseness behind the idealism indicated by the naïve simplicity of Lennie's hope for Crooks' damning assertion that 'nobody never had no land' • Connected themes of uncertainty about the future suggesting that American literature at this time remains 'present' in the midst of personal and social change • Theme of individualism, as conveyed by Crooks' assertion that 'of the West, men 'can't turn to some other guy' (Links may be made between the presentation of individualism in such as <i>The Great Gatsby</i> and <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i>)
Essay Practice Questions	Questions 1–5	There is no indicative content provided for these essay questions. They are assessed by the same criteria outlined in the 'Essay Practice' section, as well as by how well students use textual quotation, in relation to the study of American literature between 1880 and 1940 to meet the Learning Objectives outlined in the introduction of this resource.

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