Teaching notes

These activities were designed for question 2 of the AQA (2015) GCSE English Language paper, but are relevant for language analysis for all exam boards.

For task five, you will need to choose a text extract for your students. The following suggestions are given, listed from the least to the most challenging:

*The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins:
From the start of the text up to ‘The reaping isn’t until two. May as well sleep in. If you can.’

*1984* (1949) by George Orwell:
From the start of the text up to ‘Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer.’

*Brave New World* (1931) by Aldous Huxley:
From the start of the text up to ‘Meanwhile, it was a privilege. Straight from the horse’s mouth into the notebook. The boys scribbled like mad.’

*The Road* (2006) Cormac McCarthy:
From the start of the text up to ‘It swung its head from side to side and then gave out a low moan and turned and lurched away and loped soundlessly into the dark.’
The following tasks will help you prepare for analysing the language in text extracts. You will know some of the technical terms already, but there will probably be some new words here too. The wider your vocabulary, the more precisely you will be able to analyse a text!

**Task one: Revising English literary and linguistic terminology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of technique</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sound techniques</td>
<td>pronoun, proper/common/concrete/abstract noun, adjective, verb, adverb, in/definite article, connective, modal verb, phrasal verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence forms</td>
<td>paragraph, single sentence/single word paragraph, graphology, cliff-hanger, media res, flashback, circular structure, climax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word classes</td>
<td>alliteration, assonance, rhyme, rhyming couplets, alternate rhyme, half rhyme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural techniques</td>
<td>imagery, simile, metaphor, personification, rhetorical question, symbolism, onomatopoeia, bathos, the senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell), pathetic fallacy, oxymoron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language techniques</td>
<td>viewpoint (first/second/third person), tense, tone/register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole text techniques</td>
<td>topic sentence, simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, short sentence, fragment, exclamation, declaration, question, command</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extension: in which category would you place each of these words?**

- chronological
- allegory
- understatement
- direct speech
- irony
Task two: looking closer at the techniques

Work in pairs for the following activities:

1. Choose five techniques that you are sure you understand. Circle each of these and for each: discuss what this technique is or means, and think of examples to check your understanding and that you agree.

2. Underline any words that neither of you know for sure.

Now pair up with another pair and discuss the words you’ve underlined. Can you help each other out, and now circle any of these?

Task three: filling in the gaps

Select up to five of the words that were new to you. Use the internet or literary dictionary to complete the table below on your own. One example has been done for you as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bathos</td>
<td>Leaving a ridiculous or less noble idea at the end of a sentence, so that the sentence ends with an anti-climax, lending it a comic effect.</td>
<td>‘The ballerina rose gracefully en pointe and extended one slender leg behind her, like a dog at a fire hydrant.’ (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task four: how important are literary and linguistic terms?

The exam boards are sensible about how you should use these terms in your writing about texts. They reward accurate use of the vocabulary, but only when it helps your argument. If you build detailed arguments on an inaccurate use of a term, then you will be marked down.

Think of the pros and cons for using the terms and add these to the table below. Examples have been given to start you off:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using the right term makes your comment more precise.</td>
<td>You could fall into the trap of ‘spotting’ all the features you know, but not analysing these.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task five: analysing some extracts

Use the sentence stems below to help you analyse an extract from the text you have been given.

**Sentence starters for analysis**

This suggests/shows/imply/connotes/indicates …

From this, the reader can see that/infer …

This gives the sense of …

By using the word … the writer shows …

Perhaps the writer is saying …

This relates back to/foreshadows …

This is similar to …

This is used to show that …

The connotations of this are …

Some people may read this as …

Conversely, this could be interpreted to mean …