

In order to tackle a question at Leaving Certificate level, you are expected to respond to the question, address the text, analyse and discuss with personal response.

PQER

Point	A topic sentence that begins your paragraph, it is a statement of response in relation to the question asked.
Quotation/paraphrase	Carefully selected quotes, paraphrasing from the text to illustrate the point you have made. We tend to blend these into our writing rather than reciting large chunks of quotation. This creates a flow to our writing .
Explain	This explains the relevance of our chosen quotes/ how they illustrate the point that we originally set out to make.
Response	Personal response - this is essential as it is demonstrative of your engagement with the text and your understanding of what you have just pointed out and exemplified.



Why?

Chief Examiner's Report 2013

- *Paper 2 consists ... is designed to "test the students' knowledge of and response to a range of texts" (Leaving Certificate Syllabus, English, para. 7.4). (We call this CRITICAL LITERACY!)*
- *"Greater attention should be paid to the knowledge and control of the formal aspects of language by students at all levels".*

What does this look like?

An extract taken from an answer on the following question: What is your impression of Lear in Act 1, Scene 1.

My early impression of Lear is that he appears a rational and fair individual who has elected to divide his kingdom among his daughters as he feels that he is no longer fit to govern given his age. He wishes to confer his kingdom "on younger strengths" so that he can be "unburdened" and "crawl toward death" gracefully. It would appear that his kingship is no longer a source of joy to him and he sees it as a burden, given his age. The fact that he wishes to divide his kingdom between his offspring demonstrates rationality and fairness also. This introduction to the character of Lear evoked sympathy from me initially, I saw these words as an admission and awareness of his old age and I felt that he demonstrated great wisdom in his proposed actions.

Let's continue...

Point 2 - The love test changed my perception of him, his fatal flaw is revealed, susceptibility to flattery, theme of blindness introduced

When Lear introduces the 'love test' my perception of him changed considerably. The wise, rational leader is replaced with a demanding character who is susceptible to flattery. He asks his daughters "which of you doth love us most" and expects his daughters to comply by lavishing him with empty compliments to satisfy his ego. Goneril tells him that she loves him more than "words can wield the matter" and that her love for him is "dearer than eyesight" while Regan, not to be outdone, tells him that Goneril has "come too short" and flatters him further. Lear's response, to confer the land to both, highlights his emotional blindness and vulnerability, he is willing to accept the empty words of his daughters because they serve to boost his ego. To me, this highlights an important component of his fatal flaw, his willingness to accept praise even if it comes in the form of words over actions.

Point 3 - Irrational: treatment of Cordelia

Lear's prideful, irrational character is further exposed through his treatment of Cordelia. Initially, he shows favouritism referring to Cordelia as "our joy". This, to me, negates the purpose of the "love test" and brings into question fairness in respect of the division of the lands. However, his disposition alters drastically when she is unwilling to play the game and turns it back on him by stating that she loves him "according to my bond, no more nor less". Here, Cordelia gives Lear an opportunity for redemption, she implies that she loves

him because she should, because that is the role of a dutiful daughter, but Lear refuses to comply blindly declaring: "Nothing will come of nothing" and banishing her. Lear's irrationality is conveyed strongly in this moment, I was frustrated by his inability to see through Goneril and Regan's blatant manipulation and by his willingness to disregard the 'joy' embodied by Cordelia because of his own pride.

Point 4 - Stubborn: treatment of Kent

Finally, Lear's stubborn nature is exemplified through his exchange with Kent, a loyal advisor and confidant who pleads with Lear to "see better". Again, Lear fails his daughter and the audience due to his blind pride. He refuses to be challenged and grows full of "hideous rashness" as he banishes Kent for attempting to reason with him. These actions clarify to me that Lear is someone who is used to getting his own way and not being challenged, he is unwilling to see things from other's perspectives and is thus blinded by pride.

Point 5 - Concluding remark, appearance vs reality - foreshadowing "Nothing will come of nothing"

Despite my initial perception of Lear, the opening scene serves to solidify Lear as a character that is weak and vulnerable and therefore he must learn the real truth of his own assertion that "Nothing will come of nothing".

Now...over to you ☺

Question: Discuss Goneril's treatment of Lear in Act 1, Scene 4.

Possible structure and ideas to help with the formation of topic sentences:

Opening remark	Goneril's "pernicious" character is fully exposed in this scene. From the outset, her aim is to provoke and chastise Lear...
Point 1:	Her first act of spite, sending Oswald to receive Lear is demeaning, shows Goneril's disdain and disrespect for Lear.
Point 2:	As the Fool and Lear are inextricably bound, with the fool personifying Lear's conscience, Goneril's treatment of the Fool is demoralising and malicious towards Lear... (re-examine p.41, lines 188-201)

Point 3:	This scene highlights how Goneril has forsaken her filial obligations "Are you our daughter" and uses her new found position of power to berate Lear.
Point 4:	Goneril exercises her power spiteful fashion by dispossessing Lear of most of his knights
Point 5:	Goneril's exchange with Albany at the scene's conclusion further exposes her wickedness and her complete disregard for her father

Words that mean "to show"	Phrases/ words for 'this suggests'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight • Convey • Demonstrate • Exemplify • Illustrate • Emphasise • Reveal • Express • Portray 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggests that... • Imply/ implies that... • Asserts • Seems to... • Alludes to... • Reminds me of... • Evokes a feeling of... • Claims that... • Purports that... • Signify/ signifies

