How to Write PEEL-Paragraphs for literary analysis

POINT

P

Start with a clear topic sentence.
Your topic sentence introduces the main idea of the paragraph.

Example: *The first-person narration presents the conversation mainly through Angela's emotional reaction.*

EVIDENCE

E

Support your point with a short quotation.
Use quotation marks and line numbers.

Example: *Angela says, "I was too stunned to work out what [she] really thought" (ll. 22–23).*

EXPLANATION

E

Explain how the quotation proves your point.
Focus on perspective, language and/or effect.

Example: *This quotation reveals Angela's confusion because the reader gets direct access to her inner thoughts, while Gracey's feelings remain less visible.*

LINK

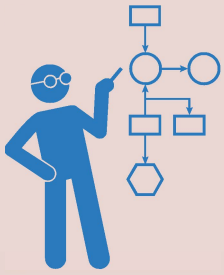
L

Link back to the task and the next paragraph.

Example: *As a result, the reader experiences the conflict from Angela's limited point of view and understands how personally she takes Gracey's decision.*

TIPS FOR WRITING WITH PEEL

- Stick to one clear idea per paragraph.
- Use short quotations and always explain **what** they show and **how** they affect the reader.
- Do not retell the story — analyse how the text works.
- Use **literary terms**.



General Structure

for the analysis of literary texts



How to Structure Your Analysis

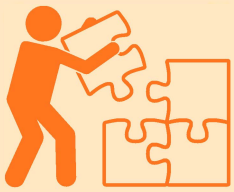
A literary text analysis should have a clear structure: **introduction, main body and conclusion**.



BASIC STRUCTURE

Introduction

- Which text are you analysing? What is it about?
- Name title, author, text type, publishing date, topic/theme



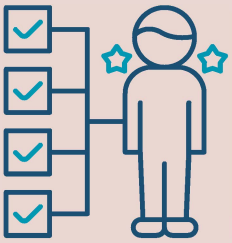
Main body

- Follow the **task** carefully.
- Choose your paragraphs according to the **aspects** you are asked to analyse.
- Possible **focus areas** may include ***narrator type, narrative perspective, language / word choice, structure, effect on the reader***.
- Only analyse aspects that are **relevant** to the task.

Conclusion

→ Sum up how the text's narrative technique creates its effect, and how effective it is in relation to the task.

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General Structure

for the analysis of literary texts



INTRODUCTION

Briefly **introduce** the text and the task focus.

Include:

- title of the text / chapter
- author
- text type (e.g. novel extract, short story)
- narrator type (e.g. first-person narrator)
- topic / situation



Example

The extract from Gary Paulsen's novel Lawn Boy, first published in 2007, is narrated by a twelve-year-old boy who unexpectedly starts a lawn-mowing business. Paulsen uses a first-person naïve narrator to present the boy's accidental entry into capitalism and to explore the gap between what the narrator understands and what the reader sees.

MAIN BODY

In the main body, always stick closely to the task and analyse exactly what you are asked to focus on. The focus and paragraph structure may vary depending on the task.



Write one PEEL paragraph for each relevant analytical focus.

Possible analytical focus areas

→ **Narrator / Narrative Perspective**

- Identify and analyse who tells the story and how this shapes what the reader knows.
- Example focus: first-person naïve narrator → limited knowledge → dramatic irony

→ **Language**

- Analyse how the author's word choice shapes meaning and the reader's response.
- Example focus: simple vocabulary, matter-of-fact tone, humour through understatement

→ **Effect on the Reader**

- Analyse how the narrative technique creates a specific reaction in the reader.
- Example focus: emotional connection, sympathy, humour, dramatic irony

Important:

→ Only include the **aspects** that are **relevant** to the task.

CONCLUSION



- Summarise your **main findings** with clear reference to the **task**.
- Sum up the effect the narrative technique creates on the reader and explain how it achieves this.
- Do not add new evidence.

Example

Overall, Paulsen combines a first-person naïve narrator, simple colloquial language and dramatic irony to create a story that is both humorous and thought-provoking. The narrator's limited understanding invites the reader to see more than he does, which makes the story engaging and subtly educational.

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General Tips



Do

✅ Use **present tense**: The narrator uses /creates...
✅ Use **formal** English.
✅ Analyse **how** the text works, not only what it says.
✅ Keep each **paragraph** focused on one clear idea.
✅ Always **connect** your analysis narrator's perspective or the effect on the reader.
✅ Use **topic sentences** to guide your reader.
✅ Explain the **effect** of every **quotation**.



Don't

❌ Don't use I think or in my opinion.
❌ Don't retell the story.
❌ Don't list techniques without explaining.
❌ Don't confuse summary with analysis.
❌ Don't write about the topic only; write about *how* it is presented.

General Useful Phrases

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES

- The extract from "..." by ... deals with ...
- In [title] by [author], a [first-person / third-person] narrator describes ...
- The text is a(n) [novel extract / short story] narrated by a [first-person / third-person limited / omniscient] narrator.
- The narrator focuses on ...
- The narrative perspective is first-person, which means the reader only knows what the narrator experiences.
- The text deals with ... and invites the reader to ...



Example

The extract from Gary Paulsen's novel Lawn Boy is narrated by a twelve-year-old boy who accidentally becomes a small businessman. The first-person naïve narrator describes his growing involvement in the economy without fully understanding what is happening, which creates humour through the gap between what the narrator sees and what the reader recognises.

P – POINT

- The text is narrated by a [first-person / naïve / unreliable] narrator, which creates ...
- The narrator's limited perspective creates ...
- The use of [I / me / my] throughout the text emphasises ...
- The text opens with ... which draws the reader into ...
- The narrative perspective creates ... because the reader only knows what the narrator knows.
- The narrator's choice of words creates ...
- The narrator presents [character / situation] as ...
- The narrative shifts from ... to ... which creates ...
- The final paragraph / sentence of the text functions as ...



E – EVIDENCE



- This can be seen when the narrator says, "..." (l. ...).
- For example, the narrator describes ... as ... (cf. ll. ...).
- The phrase "..." (l. ...) suggests that ...
- The word "..." (l. ...) has [negative / positive] connotations.
- The narrator describes ... (cf. ll. ...).
- This is illustrated by the quotation "..." (l. ...).
- The narrator refers to ... when he says, "..." (l. ...).
- This becomes clear in the sentence "..." (l. ...).

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General Useful Phrases

E – EXPLANATION



- This suggests that ...
- This emphasises ...
- This highlights ...
- This creates the impression that ...
- This makes the narrator appear ...
- This creates humour / irony because ...
- This encourages the reader to ...
- This makes the reader feel ...
- The effect of this is that the reader knows more than the narrator, which ...
- The reader is invited to see ... as ...
- The narrator presents [character / situation] as ...
- This gap between the narrator's understanding and the reader's creates ...

L – LINK

- Through this narrative technique, ...
- By narrating the story in this way, the narrator ...
- This perspective strengthens the effect of the first-person narration because ...
- This makes the text more engaging / humorous / thought-provoking because ...
- The narrative technique creates ... which leads the reader to ...
- In this way, the first-person perspective draws the reader into ...
- This links back to the overall effect of the narrative: ...
- Therefore, the reader is encouraged to ...
- The limited perspective of the narrator means that ...
- The gap between what the narrator sees and what the reader understands creates ...

CONCLUSION

- In conclusion, the analysis has shown that ...
- Overall, the text uses [narrator type], language and [structure / irony] to ...
- All in all, the narrative perspective creates ... mainly through ...
- The combination of ..., ... and ... contributes to the overall effect of ...
- In conclusion, the narrator presents [character / topic] as ...
- The story develops through a narrator who ...
- By the end of the text, the reader is led to consider ...
- The central effect of the narrative technique is ...
- Therefore, the text both entertains the reader and invites them to ...
- The narrative technique can be seen as effective because ...



PEEL-Focus areas for literary texts



Narrative perspective

How does the narrative perspective shape what the reader knows and feels?

Useful aspects, e.g.:



First-person narrator

- first-person narrator (I, me, my) – character inside the story tells the events
- limited knowledge – reader knows only what the narrator knows or notices
- naïve narrator – narrator misunderstands or underestimates situations
- unreliable narrator – narrator's account may be biased or incomplete
- dramatic irony – reader understands more than the narrator
- emotional closeness – reader is drawn directly into the narrator's thoughts and feelings
- retrospective narration – narrator looks back on past events

Third-person limited narrator

- third-person limited narrator (he, she, they) – outside narrator focuses on one character
- limited knowledge – reader knows only the thoughts and feelings of the focussed character
- narrative distance – slightly more objective than first-person; creates some detachment
- suspense – limited knowledge of other characters creates uncertainty
- emotional connection – reader still identifies closely with one character

Omniscient narrator



- omniscient narrator (he, she, they) – all-knowing narrator outside the story
- unlimited knowledge – narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all characters
- overview – reader sees the full picture: past, present and future events
- dramatic irony – reader knows more than individual characters
- narrative distance – less emotional closeness to any single character
- free movement in time – narrator can reveal past, present and future freely

PEEL focus

P — Name the **type of narrator** and its purpose.
E — Quote a **specific moment** that reveals the narrator's perspective.
E — Explain how the **perspective shapes** the reader's reaction.
L — Link the perspective to the effect on the reader.

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Useful phrases:
Narrative perspective

P – POINT

First-person narrator



- The text is narrated by a first-person narrator, which creates ...
- The narrator's limited perspective creates ...
- The use of 'I' / 'me' / 'my' throughout the text emphasises ...
- The narrator does not fully understand ..., which creates ...

Third-person limited narrator

- The third-person limited narrator focuses on ... , which means the reader ...
- By limiting the narrative perspective to one character, the text creates ...
- The narrative distance created by 'he' / 'she' / 'they' allows the reader to ...

Omniscient narrator

- The omniscient narrator gives the reader access to all characters' thoughts, which creates ...
- By knowing everything about all characters, the narrative creates ...
- The all-knowing perspective allows the reader to see ... which creates ...

E – EVIDENCE

First-person narrator



- This can be seen when the narrator says, "..." (l. ...).
- The phrase "..." (l. ...) reveals that the narrator ...
- The narrator refers to ... when he / she says, "..." (l. ...).

Third-person limited narrator

- This becomes clear when the narrative describes ... as "..." (l. ...).
- In lines ..., the narrative focuses on [character]'s thoughts: "..."
- The narrator reveals [character]'s feelings when [he / she / the narrative voice] says, "..." (l. ...).

Omniscient narrator

- The omniscient narrator reveals ... when [he / she / the narrative voice] states, "..." (l. ...).
- This can be seen when the narrative shifts to [character]'s perspective: "..." (ll. ...).
- The narrator reveals what both characters think: "..."

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Useful phrases:
Narrative perspective

E – EXPLANATION

First-person narrator

- This creates dramatic irony because the reader understands … while the narrator does not.
- This makes the narrator appear naïve / unreliable / emotionally involved because …
- The reader is drawn into the narrator's perspective, which creates …
- The limited knowledge of the narrator means the reader can only see … which creates …

Third-person limited narrator

- This creates suspense because the reader does not know what the other characters think.
- By focusing on one character's thoughts, the narrative creates emotional closeness to … .
- The narrative distance makes the situation appear … because the reader sees it from the outside.

Omniscient narrator

- This creates dramatic irony: the reader knows … while the character does not.
- By revealing all characters' thoughts, the narrative gives the reader a complete overview of …
- The reader can see the contrast between … and … which highlights …

L – LINK

First-person narrator

- Through the first-person perspective, the reader experiences … directly, which creates …
- The limited perspective of the narrator means that … , which leads the reader to …
- The gap between what the narrator understands and what the reader recognises creates …

Third-person limited narrator

- By restricting the narrative to one character's perspective, the text creates … which makes the reader …
- The third-person limited perspective means the reader shares [character]'s uncertainty, which creates …
- This narrative distance allows the reader to observe … without being fully drawn into …

Omniscient narrator

- The omniscient perspective creates … which would not be possible with a first-person or limited narrator.
- By giving the reader access to all characters' thoughts, the narrative creates … and leads the reader to …
- The all-knowing narrator leaves the reader with a sense of … because …

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General Tips for writing with PEEL

P – POINT

Do ✅

- Start with a clear topic sentence.
- Name the narrator type and the specific technique.
- State the effect the technique creates on the reader.
- Do not connect the point to the author – focus on the narrator and the narrative.

Don't ❌

- Don't write vague points like: "The narrator tells the story."
- Don't start with a quotation.
- Don't only say what the story is about.
- Don't say what the author wants – say what the narrative does.

Better:

✅ The text is narrated by a naïve first-person narrator, which creates humour through the gap between what the narrator understands and what the reader recognises.

❌ The narrator is a boy and tells the story.

E – EVIDENCE

Do ✅

- Choose a short, relevant quotation that clearly supports your point.
- Add line numbers.
- Embed the quotation into your own sentence.

Don't ❌

- Don't use very long quotations.
- Don't quote without explaining.
- Don't forget line numbers.
- Don't choose random evidence.

Better:

✅ The narrator comments, "That, I was to learn later, was called capitalism" (l. 15).

❌ The narrator says something about capitalism.

E – EXPLANATION

Do ✅

- Explain how the evidence proves your point.
- Connect the evidence to the effect on the reader.
- Use analytical verbs: suggests, creates, emphasises, reinforces, highlights.

Don't ❌

- Don't only repeat the quotation in your own words.
- Don't just summarise the content.
- Don't write vague sentences like: "This shows the narrator is young."
- No unsupported personal judgements.

Better:

✅ This creates dramatic irony: the reader recognises the significance of capitalism while the narrator dismisses it as something he simply learnt later.

❌ This shows that the narrator is young.

L – LINK

Do ✅

- Link back to the task.
- Sum up what effect is created by the narrative technique.
- Explain how the narrative technique creates this effect on the reader.

Don't ❌

- Don't end the paragraph suddenly after the explanation.
- Don't introduce a completely new idea.
- Don't write about what the author wants – focus on the effect of the narrative.

Better:

✅ The naïve narrator makes the text both entertaining and thought-provoking, as the reader is constantly aware of more than the narrator himself – which is precisely the effect the first-person perspective creates.

❌ This is why the text is interesting.

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