

Summer Reading for IB English 11

Welcome to IB English. Over the next year, we will explore college-level texts chosen to challenge and stimulate your critical thinking abilities. To prepare for our literary conversations this fall, IB students need to read, critically think about, and explore *Song of Solomon*, a novel by Toni Morrison over the summer, along with a short reading from *Voice Lessons*, a short survey of language devices that shape meaning. After reading, you will have two writing assignments described below.

1. Begin by reading the excerpt from *Voice Lessons* to review some key terms: diction, syntax, detail, imagery, and tone. When you return to school, you should understand what all the bolded terms mean, and more importantly, how and why writers use these literary features. After reviewing, you are ready to read the novel. As you read, look for short (2-10 sentences) passages that feature rich literary language that would work well for a commentary. Be sure your selections provide readers with language that lends itself to analysis. Type up two of these passages, with citations, and then write a short commentary analyzing how the language contributes to the effect. Bring this to our first day of class. (See rubric at end of document for assignment 1)

2. In *Song of Solomon*, characters and their development enrich and drive the story. To prepare now for a stimulating class discussion this fall, choose a major character that interests you. Jot down quotes and page numbers as you discover key lines that reveal this character's nature and how s/he changes (or our perception of the character changes). Type up at least 10 quotes that span the course of the novel, and after each quote write a brief interpretation of what this quote reveals about the character and/or shifts in characterization.

When you finish reading the book and collecting information on the character, write a one page Character Profile of this character, with correctly embedded quotes and MLA citations. Your profile should consider aspects such as the character's personality, motivations/desires, dominant traits, how s/he is perceived by others, and how s/he changes over the course of the novel. An example of how to correctly embed and cite quotes is on page 6 of this handout. Also notice the reminder that analysis should accompany all quotes. Submit this one page Character Profile to TurnItIn.com (directions are attached) before you turn this in the first day of class. This website is a tool to prevent plagiarism and it is used throughout the IB and AP programs. (See rubric for assignment 2 at end of document.)

We hope you enjoy your first reading of *Song of Solomon* and keep an open, inquiring mind. Keep reading this document to learn how to use TurnItIn.com and to find the *Voice Lessons* review, quote integration review, grading rubrics, and book list for your junior year.

How and Why to use Turnitin.com

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Directions for using Turnitin.com

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2. To enroll in a class enter the class section ID (3992153) and enrollment password (honor).
3. Make sure to use your real first name and existing email. **Write this and your password down somewhere safe so you have it the next time you log in.**
4. After you enroll in the class, it will appear on your homepage when you log in. Click on the name of the class to enter and access your class portfolio.
5. Click on the SUBMIT button next to the name of the assignment to submit a paper. The paper submission page will open. Complete the form, click BROWSE, locate your file, and click SUBMIT. You should receive an email confirmation. If you do not, you did not follow these steps correctly. Try again.

Be sure to print out your TurnItIn.com receipt or the confirming email and attach it to the front of your writing. **Papers without a receipt will not be accepted.** Late penalties will apply, and papers will not be accepted after the deadline, which is three days after the due date. If the paper is not submitted within three days, you have missed the deadline and the paper will receive a zero.

Although you have been educated about plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, you may still have some questions. If this is the case, go to the turnitin.com homepage and click on the Research Resources link. The IB program will not tolerate cheating in any form.

If you have any problems, you can go to the Turnitin.com homepage and scroll to the bottom of the page to access their helpdesk.

Voice Lessons Review for Close Reading and Analysis
(Keep this handout in your IB English notebook)

Understanding voice gives readers a deeper appreciation of the richness of language and a deeper understanding of literature. Through voice we come to know authors; by exploring voice, we learn to wield language. One aim of our studies is to develop a clear and stylistically mature personal voice. To do so, we must first learn to recognize voice and analyze its elements. The five elements of voice we will focus on to begin are diction, detail, imagery, syntax, and tone.

Diction—The author’s choice of words to express shades of meaning and tone. Effective writers avoid non-specific, weak words such as *nice*, *thing*, *stupid*, etc. Instead, a strong writer employs precise, descriptive words for specific effect. Instead of using weak linking verbs (*is*, *do*, *get*), a powerful writer uses precise, active verbs. For example, in the *Voice Lessons* exercises we will work with during our first week this fall, one writer does just that as he writes that an army does not merely want revenge; it thirsts for revenge. A door does not simply shut; it thuds closed. Verbs are the strongest parts of speech, and strong verbs such as “thirsts” and “thuds” are powerful and descriptive.

Diction is dependent upon topic, purpose, and occasion. The topic often determines the specificity and sophistication of diction choices. A writer creating a scholarly article for a scientific journal would use specialized diction choices to convey meaning precisely and efficiently.

The writer’s purpose—whether to convince, entertain, amuse, inform, or plead—partly determines diction choices. For example, if an author’s purpose is to inform, the reader can expect straightforward diction. In contrast, if the purpose is to entertain, the reader will likely encounter ironic, playful, or unexpected diction choices.

A writer’s diction choices also depend upon the occasion. Formal diction is largely reserved for scholarly writing, serious prose, or poetry. Informal diction is the norm in exposition, newspaper editorials, and works of fiction. Colloquial diction borrows from informal speech and is typically used to create a mood or capture a particular historic or regional dialect.

Be aware of both the **denotation** (dictionary definition) and **connotation** (emotional meaning) of diction choices. When a writer calls a character slender, this conveys a different feeling from calling the character gaunt.

Diction choices can impart freshness and originality to writing. Words used in surprising or unusual ways make us rethink what is known and re-examine meaning. For example, writer Annie Dillard describes the sea as “a monster with a lace hem.” Good writers often opt for complexity rather than simplicity, for multiple layers of meanings rather than precision.

Detail—Facts, observations, and incidents used to develop a subject and impart voice. Specific details bring life and color to description, focusing the reader’s attention and bringing the reader into the scene. Detail makes an abstraction concrete, particular, and unmistakable. For example, when Orwell describes an elephant attack, the attack comes alive through his description of the elephant’s specific violent actions. By directing readers’ attention to particulars, detail connects abstraction to their lives and engages them.

Detail can also create **understatement**, through a lack of detail. The absence of specific details, for example, may be in sharp contrast to the intensity of a character’s pain. The laconic cowboy who claims his gunshot wound is “Only a scratch” is using understatement, which makes him appear brave. In this case, elaborate,

descriptive detail could turn the pain into sentimentality. Good writers choose detail with care, selecting those details which add meaning and avoiding those that trivialize or detract from their expression.

Imagery=The verbal representation of sensory experience. In literature all five senses may be represented: sight (visual imagery), sound (auditory imagery), touch (tactile imagery), taste (gustatory imagery), and smell (olfactory imagery). Visual imagery is the most common, but good writers experiment with a variety of imagery. Imagery depends on both diction and detail: an image's success in producing a sensory experience results from the specificity of the author's diction and choice of detail.

Imagery itself is not figurative, but may be used to impart figurative or symbolic meaning. For example, the parched earth can be a **metaphor** for a character's despair, or a bird's flight a metaphor for hope. Traditional imagery typically has a cultural history. For example, in western culture, immersion in water frequently signifies rebirth or baptism, and the image of flight frequently symbolizes freedom. However, sometimes a writer will play with this cultural expectation and subvert its meaning. For example, Toni Morrison incorporates flight imagery to convey the effects of running away from our responsibilities. An alert reader needs to recognize and analyze traditional meanings of images, departures from tradition, and the effect of both on the meaning of the text.

Syntax=The way that words are arranged within sentences. Although the basic order of the English sentence is prescribed (there must be a subject and verb; word order cannot be random), there is great latitude in its execution. How writers control and manipulate the sentence affects the voice we hear and imparts personality to the writing. Syntax encompasses word order, sentence length, sentence focus, and punctuation.

Most English sentences follow a standard pattern of subject-verb-object/complement. Deviating from this pattern can startle the reader and draw attention to the sentence or particular words in the sentence. There are many ways to change normal word order, such as—

- Inverting subject and verb (Am I ever sorry!);
- Placing a complement at the beginning of a sentence (Hungry, without a doubt, he is.);
- Placing an object in front of a verb (Sara I like—not Susan).

Good writers shift between conformity and nonconformity, preventing reader complacency without overusing unusual sentence structure to the point of distraction. Linguistically, the point of most emphasis is on the last word in a sentence (a good reason to never end a sentence with a weak preposition).

Another aspect of syntax is sentence length. Writers vary sentence length to avoid monotony and control emphasis. A short sentence following a much longer sentence is emphasized by the **juxtaposition**. Many modern writers place key ideas in short sentences, but this has not always been the case throughout history. Now it is.

Writers also use syntactic tension—the withholding of syntactic closure—to engage readers. Sentences that delay closure are called **periodic sentences**. Periodic sentences carry high tension and interest: the reader must wait until the end of the sentence to understand the meaning.

Here's an example: *As long as we ignore our children and refuse to dedicate the necessary time and money to their care, we will fail to solve the problem of school violence.* By using the syntactic tension of a periodic sentence, this writer places the emphasis in this sentence on the problem. We can't understand this sentence until we read all the way to the end word.

In contrast, sentences that reach syntactical closure early (*loose sentences*) relieve tension and allow the reader to explore the rest of the sentence without urgency. Note the difference in tension when we change the sentence to a loose sentence: *We will fail to solve the problem of school violence as long as we ignore our children and refuse to dedicate the necessary time and money to their care.* The emphasis here is on the cause of failure.

Repetition is another way writers achieve syntactical focus. Purposeful repetition of a words, phrase, or clause emphasizes the repeated structure and focuses the reader's attention on its meaning. Repeating parallel grammatical forms such as infinitives and prepositional phrases balances parallel ideas and give them equal weight.

Punctuation is another way writers can manipulate syntax to reinforce meaning, construct effect, and express their voice. Of particular interest in shaping voice are the semicolon, colon, and dash.

- The *semicolon* (;) gives equal weight to independent clauses in a sentence; the resulting syntactical balance reinforces parallel ideas and imparts equal weight to both independent clauses.
- The *colon* (:) directs reader attention to the words that follow. A colon sets the expectation that important, closely related information will follow, and words after the colon are emphasized.
- The *dash*(--) marks a sudden change in thought or tone, sets off a brief summary, or sets off a parenthetical part of the sentence. A dash--like an aside--can convey a casual tone.

Tone=Expression of attitude. It is the writer's (or narrator's) implied attitude towards his subject and audience. Tone is created by word selection (diction) and arrangement of words (syntax) and by purposeful use of details and images. Tone sets the relationship between reader and writer.

Tone is usually described with an adjective, such as one of the following: affectionate, angry, anxious, apprehensive, approving, ardent, bitter, calm, confident, confused, disrespectful, exhilarated, joyful, sympathetic, etc.

Understanding tone is requisite to understanding meaning. Identifying and analyzing tone requires careful reading, sensitivity to diction and syntax, and understanding of detail selection and imagery. This is where all your skills come into play. But, if we don't understand that a writer's tone is joking, we might misinterpret his meaning and find ourselves offended or angry. That's one reason that email, which does not convey tone well because of its brevity, relies on emoticons to convey tone :)

Excerpted from--Dean, Nancy. *Voice Lessons—Classroom Activities to Teach Diction, Details, Imagery, Syntax, and Tone.* Gainesville, Florida: Maupin House, 2000.

How to Successfully Embed and Cite Quotes and Integrate Analysis into Your Writing
(Use this to help with your Character Profile for *Song of Solomon*)

Let's look at a sample analysis, with three student responses. (Notice that in these responses, the writers are focusing on imagery; your analysis will be on character and its development in the novel.) The students' ability to include quotes and analysis ranges from just awful (Mary) to merely okay (Joe) to great (Susie). If you are not sure how to use quotes to support your analysis of a passage, look over these examples for a quick review. Here we go—

Imagery Exercise

Read and think:

On the night the baby was to be born the villagers raided our house. Some were crying. Like a great saw, teeth strung with lights, files of people walked zigzag across our land, tearing the rice.

Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* page 13

Write about it:

1. How does the imagery help convey the villagers' mood as they punish the family?

(A) Susie wrote an excellent response that embeds evidence (the quotes) to support her well-developed analysis and she also provides correct MLA citation. Note that since all quotes are from same page, she only needs to provide one citation in the paragraph:

Kingston employs violent imagery in this scene, comparing the villagers to a "great saw" (Kingston 13), cutting down and destroying everything in its path. This simile also emphasizes how cohesively they act as a single unit. Even though some villagers weep as they destroy the family's crops, they are all committed to punishing the family. The chaos of this scene is further emphasized as the villagers are moving "zigzag," or randomly, as they are violently "tearing the rice," revealing the passion of this destruction.

(B) Joe's response is just barely okay. He correctly inserts a quote but not very gracefully, his citation does not follow MLA format, and his analysis is weakly developed:

The narrator uses lots of tool imagery in this passage. The narrator says, "files of people walked zigzag" (page 13). Tools are used to accomplish things and these villagers are accomplishing a job together.

Do you see the difference between an embedded quote (Susie's writing) and the way Joe mechanically works his quote into his writing? This is a difference in style—she has it, he doesn't.

(C) And now for poor Mary. She apparently was asleep during English the last few years. She does not know how to correctly introduce a quote or even begin to analyze the quote. This is not acceptable:

The writer uses imagery. "Like a great saw, teeth strung with lights, files of people walked zigzag."

Choose Susie as your role model. She writes clearly, knows how to embed a quote smoothly into a sentence, and analyzes how this imagery conveys the villagers' mood. Now—let's begin with some practice Voice Lessons!

Diction

Read and Think:

He spent hours in front of the mirror trying to **herd** his teeth into place with his thumb. He asked his mother if he could have braces, like Frankie Molina, her godson, but he asked at the wrong time.

Gary Soto, "Broken Chain," *Baseball in April and Other Stories*

Write About It:

1. What is Gary Soto implying about the narrator's teeth when he uses the verb **herd** in the first sentence?

2. How would the meaning change if the sentence were written like this?

*He spent hours in front of the mirror trying to **push** his teeth into place with his thumb.*

Now you try it:

Fill in the blank below with a strong verb that creates a clear picture in the reader's mind just as Soto does. Avoid such obvious verbs as *brush*, *comb*, or *fix*. Be creative!

She spent hours in front of the mirror trying to _____ her hair in place for the party.

Name: _____

Detail

Read and Think:

It isn't a pretty pass. The ball is moving so slowly I can clearly see its white laces turning through the air. I can see Tommy Zodac and Johnny Sanders, the middle linebackers, straining to reach for it, but it falls softly like a spent balloon into the fingers of Jared Bonton, Hudson's tight end.

Jan Cheripko, *Imitate the Tiger*

Write About It:

1. What is the main idea or focus of this paragraph? What details support the main idea and bring the reader into the narrator's experience?
2. How would the meaning and impact of the passage change if Cheripko had written the paragraph like this?

It is a terrible, slow pass. Members of our team try to catch the ball, but it falls right into the hands of one of their team's players.

Now you try it:

Write a paragraph about a time you tried to do something and weren't very successful. Use lots of vivid detail. Start with a general statement and support it with the specific details that make the experience come alive for the reader.

Name: _____

Imagery

Read and Think:

The silence was delicate. Auntie Ifeoma was scraping a burnt pot in the kitchen, and the *kroo-kroo-kroo* of the metal spoon on the pot seemed intrusive. Amaka and Papa-Nnukwu spoke sometimes, their voices low, twining together. They understood each other, using the sparest words. Watching them, I felt a longing for something I knew I would never have. I wanted to get up and leave, but my legs did not belong to me, did not do what I wanted them to.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*

Write About It:

1. Imagery is the re-creation of sensory experiences through language. Which of the five senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell) is most important here? Underline the particular words that create this sense experience for the reader.

2. The *kroo-kroo-kroo* of the metal spoon on the pot is described as *intrusive*. What does this mean? What image is contrasted with the sound of the metal spoon on the pot? What effect does this have on the passage?

Now you try it:

Describe your school hallway between classes. Focus on the sounds that are important in the scene. Use two contrasting images and a made-up word which imitates a sound, as Adichie does in her passage.

Name: _____

Syntax

Read and Think:

But once I spread my fingers in the dirt and crouch over the Get on Your Mark, the dream goes and I am solid again and am telling myself, Squeaky you must win, you must win, you are the fastest thing in the world, you can even beat your father up Amsterdam if you really try. And then I feel my weight coming back just behind my knees then down to my feet then into the earth and the pistol shot explodes in my blood and I am off and weightless again, flying past the other runners, my arms pumping up and down and the whole world is quiet except for the crunch as I zoom over the gravel in the track.

Toni Cade Bambara, "Raymond's Run" (*Creative Short Stories*)

Write About It:

1. Look at the first sentence in this passage. The sentence is made up of many short clauses in a row, each clause separated by a comma. Read the sentence aloud several times and think about it. A comma indicates a short pause, a little breath. Why do you think the author wrote the sentence this way instead of dividing it into separate sentences? In other words, how does the sentence structure emphasize the meaning of the sentence?
2. Both of these sentences start with conjunctions (but, and). What is the purpose of a conjunction? Why do you think the author has chosen to start these sentences with a conjunction?

Now you try it:

Write a sentence describing getting a phone call you are really excited about. Try to capture your excitement through your sentence structure, as Bambara does, using short clauses connected by commas. Begin your sentence with a conjunction (*and, but, or*).

Name: _____

Tone

Read and Think:

Turning off my headlamp, I freeze in the darkness. I quietly wait to hear the noise again. Suddenly something scuttles in the leaves scattered on the ground. My heart beats faster. What is it? Could it be a snake?

Rene Ebersole, "Night Shift," *National Geographic Explorer*, Oct. 2004

Write About It:

1. What is the tone of this passage? How does the syntax help create the tone? Look especially at the use of verb tense, sentence length, and questions.

2. How would the tone of the passage change if it were written like this?

I turned off my headlamp and froze in the darkness. I quietly waited to hear the noise again. Suddenly something scuttled in the leaves scattered on the ground. My heart beat faster. I wondered what it was and if it could have been a snake.

Now you try it:

Change the tone of the following paragraph by changing the syntax. In order to do that, change the verbs from the past tense to the present tense. Then combine some sentences to create longer sentences, but keep your most important ideas in short sentences. Finally, turn the last sentence into two questions.

I stopped suddenly and looked around me. I could not hear a sound. There was no traffic. I couldn't see anyone walking around in the park. Everything was too still. I wondered if something had happened and where everyone had gone.

Excerpted from--

Dean, Nancy. *Discovering Voice: Voice Lessons for Middle and High School*. Gainesville, Florida: Maupin House, 2006.

Rubric for *Song of Solomon* Passage Identification and Brief Analysis (Assignment#1):

- Two short (3-8 sentences) excerpts are chosen, with speaker and page number identified
- Student writes a few sentences for each passage analyzing why this language is special in terms of literary features such as imagery, alliteration, unusual syntax, repetition, symbolic imagery, etc. Don't merely identify devices (there's a simile); analyze why this is important. See Susie's great analysis example on page 6)

Total of 10 Completion Category Points

Rubric for *Song of Solomon* Character Profile (Assignment#2):

- TurnItIn.com Receipt: Place this on the top of the Character Notes and one page Character Profile. The assignment will not be accepted or graded without this receipt.
- Character Notes: List at least 10 quotes with page numbers and short analysis.
- Character Profile: Write one page or longer focusing on one character. Clearly written with at least three quotes correctly cited (10 points)
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Total of 25 Completion Category Points

READING LIST FOR COURSE:

<i>Song of Solomon</i>	Morrison, Toni
<i>Chronicle of a Death Foretold</i>	Garcia-Marquez (translated by Rabassa)
<i>Hedda Gabler</i>	Ibsen (translated by Fjelde)
<i>Hamlet</i>	Shakespeare
<i>Farming of Bones</i>	Danticat, Edwidge
<i>Heart of Darkness</i>	Conrad, Joseph,
<i>Death and the Maiden</i>	Ariel Dorfman
<i>The Visit</i>	Durrenmatt (* translated by Valency)

We will also read selected poetry by a major poet.

(* note: this translation may not be available in retail stores. Copies are available in class.)

Although you can borrow a copy of *Song of Solomon* from the English department, you may prefer to buy a copy so that you can annotate it freely. Since the books we are reading are frequently encountered in college, this might be worthwhile for other canonical texts on the list, such as *Hamlet*. If you are interested in buying a used copy of any book at a fraction of the cost, check out *Second Story Books* in Rockville. It's a marvelous place to spend a rainy day this summer, looking through hundreds of thousands of used books at very low cost. Have a great summer and be sure to read the grading rubrics for both assignments on the next page.

If you have any questions after carefully reading this entire document, please contact [Davina T. Smith@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Davina.T.Smith@mcpsmd.org) (my email address is also on the RMHS website under English staff)