

**SECTION 1**

As you are reading Act 1 of *Sailmaker* you should be looking for three things:

- the **STORY**, sometimes called the **PLOT**
- the kind of **CHARACTERS** in the story
- the kind of **LANGUAGE** the writer has used to tell the story.

**Step 1**

Read pages 3 and 4 to the following stage direction, two-thirds of the way down the page (*Lights up. IAN enters, running*). This first part of the play is quite difficult to grasp. It begins with Alec as a young man remembering his mother's death. However, when his father Davie speaks, he does so in the language patterns of the day she died, i.e. '*Ab've got a bit of bad news for ye son. Yer mammy's dead.*' He speaks as he would have done when he was breaking the news to Alec.

This technique of flashback tells the reader that the story is going to concentrate on the relationship between Alec and his father and on the lives of Alec and his father following the mother's death.

For much of the rest of the play Alec is taken back to his childhood and we watch him grow up in a home where Davie is struggling to cope both emotionally and financially.

This puts great strain on the actor playing Alec in these two pages. He has to be both a gentle young man who is still hurting about his mother's death, and a wee boy.

**Tasks**

- Which stories/plots are there on pages 3 and 4?
- Make notes on the kind of characters the two men are. Lay them out like this:

<b>Alex</b>	
<p><b>Character point</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sensitive/has feelings</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evidence</b></p> <p>He still wakes up remembering his mum's death.</p>

## Davie

**Character point**

- coping with looking after Alec
- frightened

**Evidence**

*'Ab'll make some breakfast.'*

*'There's just you an me now son.'*

*'...this is me for the rest ae ma days.'*

- Alec speaks differently from his dad. Explain in what way his LANGUAGE is different. Can you suggest a reason why the writer has done this?

You should now be able to connect up LANGUAGE and CHARACTER. Alec's use of language tells you about his character.

- Try the same for Davie. Look closely at the words he uses. What do they tell you about his character? Look back at your character notes and explain exactly **how** the words show him to have the character points you have identified.

Here is an example. The writer has made Davie say '*Sometimes for whole minutes you can nearly nearly forget about it...*'. This use of 'whole minutes' shows the overwhelming sense of loss Davie feels. Likewise the repetition of 'nearly': what he is really saying is that he can never completely forget about his loss.

**Step 2**

*Read pages 4–9*

This section introduces Ian, Alec's cousin. The point of this section is to **show the relationship between the two boys**. It does so by ranging across a variety of topics, e.g.

- pirates
- America
- Rangers.

**Tasks**

Divide the section into sub-sections as outlined above and explain what each sub-section tells us about:

- the relationship between Ian and Alec;
- Ian's CHARACTER. What LANGUAGE does Ian use to let us know his character? On page 4, Ian says '*Your da sells stuff on the never never and collects the money roon the doors. He's a tick man.*' Is Ian being cruel, or just puzzled, when Alec says his father is a sailmaker and Ian knows he isn't?
- How is the PLOT/STORY developed in this section? (From now on the STORY will always be referred to as the PLOT.) What do we learn has happened?

Begin your list with the following points:

- Davie is working as a debt collector.
- Cousin Jacky has gone to America.
- Davie is not coping with the household chores.

**Step 3**

Two new aspects of the study of literature are going to be introduced now. They are:

- **THEME**
- **STRUCTURE.**

The **THEME** of a text is the idea underneath the story, what the story is exploring.

One **THEME** in this play is the effect of loss, and the grief surrounding it. Another **THEME** is the decline of traditional trades and the effect on men when their skills are no longer needed by society.

**Task**

Try and work out the theme underneath the conversation about Rangers (page 6) and the figure of Mary (page 7).

**STRUCTURE** is the order in which the writer has put the story together. The writer here chose to begin the story with Alec as a young man in order to plant the idea that he will leave home and become middle class. We pick this up from the way he speaks.

In the section you have just read (pages 4–9), there are many bits of conversation which are very realistic to little boys. However, there are many things little boys say that are not in the play. The writer has chosen the things that are there, and left the rest out for a reason. Can you suggest a reason they are there?

The answer is to develop CHARACTER and THEME. Once the characters of the boys are introduced, the sectarian THEME is used to develop them. They speak about it in a besotted but childish way, as children would.

The choice of content and the order of content is STRUCTURE.

**Tasks**

- Why are the Romans spoken of, and then American comics?
- Why is there a reference to Alec fancying wee Maureen?
- On page 9 the sailmaking theme is introduced again. Alec is proud of his father, but that is not the only reason it is brought in again.

PLOT – it reminds us that Davie is not working in his trade.

CHARACTER – it tells us of Alec’s pride in his father.

THEME – the de-skilling of skilled men is emphasised.

STRUCTURE – it reminds the audience of the theme, and the effect on Davie is then developed in the next part of the play.

**Step 4**

*Read pages 10–11 (to ‘Pockets line’).*

**Tasks**

- write notes on the CHARACTER of Davie. Use LANGUAGE to support your points, as below.

<b>Davie</b>	
<b>Character point</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• struggling with his job as a tick man</li> <li>• doesn’t like cooking</li> <li>• still sees himself as a sailmaker</li> </ul>	<p>His nom-de-plume at the bookies is Mainsail.</p>

Look at *everything* Davie says. Does he change when he talks about sailmaking?

- What PLOT developments have occurred since the previous sections?
- What new THEMES have been introduced?

### Step 5

*Read pages 11 and 12 (to 'Enter DAVIE and BILLY').*

Before you tackle PLOT, CHARACTER and LANGUAGE in this part think back to the previous two parts. Ian and Alec, as little boys dreaming of pirates and Superman, moved through the talk of sailmaking tools, to the sadness of Davie's life. From there the plot shifts. The dialogue about the bookie is the link. Understanding this is understanding STRUCTURE.

### Tasks

- Why has the PLOT been ordered in this way?
- What points is the writer making by writing it like this?
- Is there a contrast in MOOD, and what effect does it have?
- Is there any new PLOT development?
- Is there new CHARACTER development?
- Is there any change in LANGUAGE use?

### Step 6: Textual Analysis

*Read pages 12–14 (to 'They cross to where ALEC is playing with yacht').*

In this step you are going to do a TEXTUAL ANALYSIS exercise. This means you will be learning how to tackle the textual analysis in the external examination. The questions are based on what is said, how it is said, and why it has been said.

WHAT is being said draws on PLOT and CHARACTER  
– **understanding**

HOW is it being said draws on LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE  
– **analysis**

WHY it is being said is an ANALYSIS evaluation question. How effective are the WHAT and the HOW to achieve the author's purpose?  
– **evaluation**

***Advice***

Before you write down the answers to the questions, read the passage at least twice. Check if the question is about:

- Understanding (U): plot and character
- Analysis (A): language and structure
- Evaluation (E): purpose and effect.

**Textual Analysis 1**

**Marks**

**Part 1: ‘Eb, Billy... And he’s a pape.’ (pages 12–13)**

1. a) Davie gives six reasons for being short of money. What are they?

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) \_\_\_\_\_
- (v) \_\_\_\_\_
- (vi) \_\_\_\_\_

(U) 3

You must use your own words here.

1. b) Which sentence shows fully the desperate nature of the debt situation Davie is in?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(A) 1

1. c) Which words most clearly show Billy’s sympathy? How do they do this?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

(E) 2

**Part 2:** *'Still, Aw ab need's...knows a few hard men.'* (page 13)

2. a) What is Billy's attitude to betting?

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(U) 2

2. b) Look at the sentence *'Get a job as a company director or somethin!'*. What is the tone of this sentence? How does it show Davie's mood?

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(A) 2

2. c) What is the purpose of the last line of this part, and how does it change the mood (bottom of page 13)?

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(E) 2

**Part 3:** *'What a carry on, eh?... If ab ever dae.'* (page 14)

3. a) (i) What information are we given about Billy and Davie's father's childhood?

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(U) 2

(ii) What are we told in this scene about Alec?

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(U) 1

3. b) From the speech '*Naw ye don't know... Gets on top of ye.*' write down a phrase that shows what Davie is feeling and explain how it does so.

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(A) 2

3. c) (i) Suggest a reason for this part about the adults' childhood being included in the play.

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(E) 2

(ii) Do you think it is effective? Give reasons for your answer.

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(E) 1

**Step 7**

*Read pages 14–19 ('How ye doin wee yin?... Tapped me for ten bob the week before he died.')*

**Task – Group discussion**

- What plot lines are developed in this section?
- What new strands of character are introduced? Consider for example whether or not Billy taking the yacht to fix is simply about Billy being kind and helpful to his nephew, or is it also plot? Does this shock Davie out of his despair enough to fix the yacht?

Billy says he will see to it that Davie is no longer in debt to the loan shark. Davie is then beaten up. What does this tell us about character and plot?

- When Billy gives Alec books, his language suggests more than one feeling. Look closely at the words Billy uses and decide what they tell you he is feeling.

- This section brings in references to sailmaking, football, religious bigotry and American fantasy through the references to the Indians and the bows and arrows. Can you suggest what the author's purpose might be in doing this?
- Throughout page 17 Billy speaks differently to Alec from how he speaks to Davie. Look closely at the language and suggest how the actor should speak these lines. How should Billy come across to the audience at this point?

Before you begin group discussions, remember there are some very clear rules.

- You must contribute.
- You must listen to what other people say and perhaps develop an idea someone else has put forward.
- You must support your point with a reference to the play.
- You must disagree politely and give a reason for disagreeing. Develop the disagreement into an idea you put forward.
- You must look at your group and operate inside it.
- You must **NOT** dominate the group and shout everyone else down.
- You must **NOT** be rude.
- You must **NOT** interrupt.
- You must **NOT** say nothing.
- You must **NOT** ramble off the subject or have a chat.

Before you begin your discussion appoint someone who will keep the group focused on the task.

**Step 8**

*Read pages 19–22.*

Just before this section there is a reference to Benny Lynch. He was a world class boxer from Glasgow who died in poverty and alcoholism. This section begins with reminiscences on the football heroes of Glasgow in the past. It then passes on to comic dialogue about a football match in space. These two sections are lighthearted and relieve the grimness of the violent attack narrated by Davie on page 18 and Davie, badly beaten, as he appears on page 21. This is a STRUCTURAL device to shock the reader. All the threads are again pulled together just before the end of the act.

Davie is now sacked from his job and Billy helpfully suggests work as a sweeper up. The slide from skilled sailmaking is complete.

The yacht is symbolically put away. Davie uses the same language to tell Alec about losing his job as he did at the beginning of the act to tell Alec his mum was dead. Can you suggest a reason for this deliberate word choice by the author?

Davie’s last sentence in Act 1 is ‘*Never died a winter yet.*’ Billy has just said this. Again here we see deliberate repetition of words. Can you suggest a reason for this?

**Step 9: Group discussion**

Following the rules of group discussion as listed on page 9, in groups discuss the whole scene using the worksheet (on page 12) to help you.

1. Look at all the plots. Identify and list them.
2. Check the notes you have so far written down for each character. Discuss each character and make further notes.

	<b>Davie</b>	
<b>Character point</b>		<b>Evidence</b>

Now do the same for Alec, Ian and Billy.

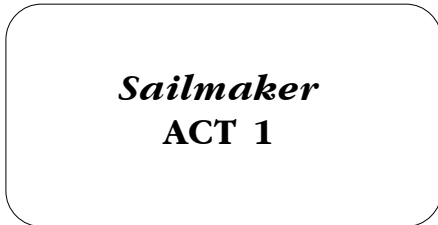
3. Identify different types of language being used throughout Act 1, e.g. Alec's adult language at the beginning.
4. Act 1 began with the loss of the mother. It ends with the loss of the job. Why have the different sections in between been put there, and how have they been connected up?
5. What are all the themes of the play?
6. Go right back to the opening. Why is '*Yer mammy's dead*' repeated? Is the reason Plot, Character, Theme, Language or Structure or several of these?
7. Lastly, construct a map of the play as on page 12.

**Plots**

1. Davie loses his job
2. Davie's wife dies
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Themes**

1. Men becoming unskilled
2. Grief
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



**Language patterns**

1. Alec is an educated young man
2. Billy can be childish
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Structure**

- Part 1: Sadness of death (opens with Alec when he is older, looking back)
- Part 2: Children playing
- Part 3:

**CHARACTERS**

- Alec
- Billy
- Davie
- Ian

**SECTION 2**

The work on Act 2 is the same as for Act 1. You will read the act section by section and study the plot lines, characters, language, themes and structure.

At the end of Act 2 you should have a sound understanding of how the writer has constructed the whole play, and the ideas he has explored within it. This will make it possible for you to write a critical essay on it.

**Step 1**

*Read pages 23–27 (→ ‘Decent job’).*

Act 1 was broken into smaller sections for study. In this act the sections will be longer, and will require to be sub-divided. This section, pages 23–27, can be broken into three sub-sections.

**Tasks**

- Decide where each section and sub-section ends.
- The first section has a number of strands of conversation. Make a list of them and discuss whether or not they are attached to theme, plot or character. For example, Davie says when he was young he dreamed of being an explorer. This links up with the pirates and the Superman conversation in Act 1 and suggests that one of the ideas in the play is what happens to children’s dreams. Davie wanted to be an explorer. He became a skilled tradesman and then, because of the changes in the nature of work, became a sweeper up. At the same time he is urging his son to do well at school, go to university, get a decent job so that ‘[you] *Never have tae take yer jacket off.*’

Many pieces of conversation combine like this to build a theme.

You should now be able to examine closely the other parts of the conversation and analyse them in the same way.

Some hints:

- Why is Alec so involved in religious meetings?
- Why are we told about a green and gold badge?
- Why is it emphasised that Alec came top equal in the bible exam?
- Alec’s long speech on pages 25 and 26 is similar to his long speech in Act 1. He speaks it in both standard English, and in Glasgow dialect.

Identify which bits are standard English and which are Glasgow dialect and suggest why the writer has done this.

- What point is Alan Spence making about religious meetings through Alec's long speech?

There is humour in Alec's 'commentary' (page 27): '*Three rounds to decide...*', etc., which continues with a joking reference to Benny Lynch's granny. Davie, however, is offended by this and obviously sees himself being at some point in his life associated with a life beyond what he refers to as '*darkest Govan*' being '*a place like this*'. Benny Lynch died in a '*terrible state*', as Davie admits.

- Why is Davie so sensitive about Benny Lynch?

Before leaving this section organise your findings under PLOT, CHARACTER, LANGUAGE, THEME and STRUCTURE.

## Step 2

*Read pages 28–31 ('Never have tae... Ready or not.')*

This section is about Alec sitting an exam to go to a private school on a bursary. His father has said on the previous page that for Benny Lynch, boxing was the way out. For Alec it will be his brains.

This raises the question: what does '*the way out*' mean? Does it mean out of poverty, or out of the area or out of the social class?

Alec will go to a private school, and be separated from his working-class origins. His friends will be at the local school. He will have difficulty fitting in where he is going because of where he comes from. He will also come to have difficulty fitting in in Govan because of the private school. This is clearest in the two bits of conversation about uniform. In Govan they will scorn his cap: at the school they will scorn his blazer being too big.

This introduces another theme. What is the solution for children living in poverty? Should only the bright and the athletes find a way out? Must it end in disaster as it did for Benny Lynch?

Twice on page 30 Ian says '*...ab'd watch ma bum if ab was you!*'. This also indicates the perception of one social group of another. Through all this the theme of class division is opening up.

**Step 3**

*Read pages 31–35 ('Factory's shuttin doon right enough son... Someone waits for me.')*

**Tasks**

- Why do the lines about the factory shutting down follow immediately on from the scene about private education?
- Into which category – plot, character, theme, language, structure – would you put your answer to the first question?
- How has the passage of time been indicated in Alec's language immediately before this section?
- How do you know that Billy and Ian have moved away from the area?
- Are Billy and Ian managing financially, or are things hard for them? How do you know?
- To what previous theme does the conversation about the Army belong?
- Food features prominently in this section. Alec is thinking of becoming a vegetarian and his father ridicules this. How does this fit into a previously identified theme? Eventually Alec and Davie have a '*Candlelight dinner for two*' of pies. Ian and Billy have cheese and spam sandwiches. Why has the author brought all these food references together, and at this point in the play? Up until now food, other than a cup of tea, has not been mentioned.

You should be aware by now that as the class theme is being explored more fully, earlier themes (e.g. grief) are of less immediate significance to the play.

We learn in this section that Billy also had a dream – going into poultry raising. He did not do so because of the risks involved. Is the writer suggesting that people are their own worst enemies – Lynch drank, other people won't take risks?

- Gather together all the ideas you have explored and add them to the Character, Plot, Language, Structure, Theme notes you made at the end of Act 2, Step 1.

**Step 4: Textual Analysis 2**

Read pages 35–39 ('Hey, yer auld da... What is it I'm looking for? God knows.')

As in Act 1 this section will ask questions on:

- Understanding (U)
- Analysis (A)
- Evaluation (E)

Read the passage at least twice and think about the plots, the language, the characters and the themes. Think also about structure – why this section comes immediately after Ian and Billy finding life hard, but coping wherever they have gone.

1. a) Where has Davie been, and what is Alec doing when Davie comes home?

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(U)2

1. b) (i) How is Alec feeling about Davie when he comes home?

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(A)1

- (ii) Which words tell you this? Explain how they do so.

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(A)2

1. c) Mr Micawber is a character in *David Copperfield* who was regularly in debt. Why does Davie quote him at this point?

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(E)2

2. a) How does Davie justify his evening out?

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(U)2

2. b) (i) What information are we given about the state of the house?

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(A)1

(ii) How has the writer shown this?

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(A)2

2. c) Davie says, '*Think ab came fae another planet.*' How effective is this sentence in showing how far apart Davie and Alec have grown?

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(E)2

3. a) What is Davie's attitude to male/female attraction?

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(U)1

3. b) How do you know this? Give two pieces of evidence that show his attitude.

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(A)2

3. c) In the small section, *'Look at the state we are... Forget it all.'* (page 38), how effective are the words in telling you Alec's state of mind, and Davie's state of mind?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(E)2

You must explain their state of mind with quotes to support your opinions.

4. a) What is Alec trying to remember?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(U)1

4. b) How does the last speech develop Alec's character?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(A)1

4. c) How well does this speech round off this section of the play?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(E)1

**Step 5**

*Read pages 39–44 ('Remember this?' to the end.)*

The final split between Alec and Davie takes place in this section. Alec has used his brains to get out and is moving from the area. His father will be rehoused, with no furniture and on the dole.

From the Glory Hole things are brought out for burning; literally and symbolically the past is being burned. The catechism, the comics, the torch and, most important of all, the sailmaking tools, made from lignum vitae (a term that Alec is now able to translate).

**Tasks**

- How does the plot end?
- How have the characters been developed in this section?

- Why does this section contain excerpts from a book called *The British Working Man*? What point is the writer making here?
- Which themes are significant in this section?

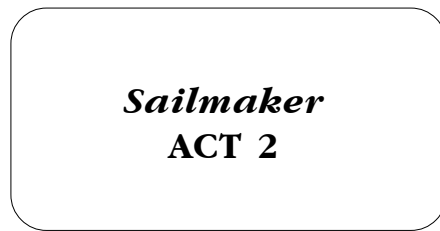
At the end of Act 1 you put all your notes together into a large diagram. You should do the same for Act 2. An outline is provided on page 20.

**Plots**

1. Alec goes to private school
2. Alec plans to leave home
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Themes**

1. Class
2. Break-up of families
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



*Sailmaker*  
**ACT 2**

**Language patterns**

1. Repeating words
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Structure**

- Part 1:  
Part 2:  
Part 3:  
...etc.

**CHARACTERS**

- Alec  
Billy  
Davie  
Ian

**Step 6: Group discussion**

With your two maps of the text, and your notes, you are ready to discuss the whole play. This should follow the order below, and will take about two hours to complete thoroughly.

Remember the rules of discussion in Act 1:

- Don't interrupt
- Stick to the topic
- Contribute fully and politely
- Explain your point of view with reference to the text.

1. What are the plots of the story?
  - (a) Davie going from his trade as a sailmaker to unemployment.
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Refer to your notes on character. Trace the changes in the four characters throughout the text. Always use evidence from the text to support the point you are making.
3. Identify the different types of language used in the play. Why and when do the characters speak differently?
4. The play begins with Alec remembering the day his mother died. Why has the author shaped the play like this?

Discuss how the various parts of the story have been sewn together in an order.

5. List all the themes of the play.

Discuss what points the author is making. For example, is he saying that private education is the right route? (Consider what has happened to Ian.) Is he saying that it is not possible to better yourself? (Consider what he is saying about Benny Lynch, and about the bookie.)

Explain how each point of view is clear from the story and the development of the characters.

6. The story is set in a Govan tenement in the 1960s just before much of Glasgow's substandard, inner-city housing was demolished and people were rehoused in new, mainly out-of-town housing.

*Sailmaker* is a play, so it should be performed on a stage.

Now that you understand the story, and the themes of the play, it is possible for you to work out how the stage should look.

As a group, design what the stage would look like, and describe what changes would have to take place to the set as the play developed.

Each person in the group should report back to the class on at least one of the points of discussion.

You are now ready to write the critical essay, as explained in Section 3.

**SECTION 3**

This section covers the four main types of extended writing you may be asked to do: the critical essay, the non-fiction essay (whether factual or argumentative), the personal essay, and the short story.

**Step 1: The critical essay**

A critical essay is often about a work of literature, such as *Sailmaker*. It should display knowledge of the text you are writing about, and knowledge of the writer's craft.

Knowledge of the text means knowledge of PLOT, THEME and CHARACTER.

Knowledge of the writer's craft means understanding how the writer has written the text by closely examining its LANGUAGE and STRUCTURE.

As in the textual analysis, marks are allocated for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation. In the critical essay they are also allocated for expression, i.e. how well you write your essay.

A critical essay must be:

- an adequate length (300–500 words)
- in sentences and paragraphs
- accurate in spelling
- on the topic.

In class, with teacher assistance, you will have the opportunity to write a critical essay. This will be marked and returned to you with advice on how to improve it.

This process can be repeated if necessary until you are ready for the unit assessment, when you write a critical essay on *Sailmaker* with the text in front of you, but using no notes and with no teacher help. This is called an open book exam. Before you do this you will need to learn the themes, plots, characters and language of the text and their supporting evidence; that will mean learning quotations. The practice essays prepare you for this.

**Practical for the critical essay**

In *Sailmaker* the writer explores the idea of loss in a number of ways. Show how he does this with reference to the plot, characters, language and structure of the text. Remember you must **NOT** just tell the story.

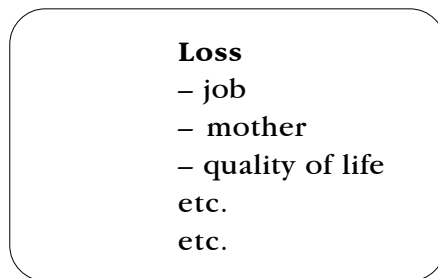
To tackle this, plan your essay by creating a box plan like your maps of Act 1 and Act 2. It will help you if you remind yourself of these.

**Plots**

Alec's mother dies  
 Davie becomes de-skilled  
 Billy loses his job and has to move,  
 etc.

**Characters**

Alec's feelings  
 Davie's sense of shame,  
 etc.



**Language**

The change of Alec's language,  
 etc.

**Structure**

Episodes over a ten-year  
 period  
 Structured to show loss – how?

Fill out all the boxes identifying how:

- the plots show loss
- the characters show loss
- the language shows loss
- the structure shows loss.

Now you are ready to write.

Begin with an Introduction. This should contain what you are going to write about along with the title and author.

*Sailmaker*, by Alan Spence, deals with the subject of loss in a number of ways. I will examine this by explaining in turn how the play's plot, language, character and structure all portray loss.

Each box from here on should deal only with what you have in your plan. Each box is one paragraph and opens with a KEY SENTENCE.

Just as a key opens a door, so a key sentence generally opens a paragraph. Certainly, it is the sentence the whole paragraph hangs on.

After the Introduction, the next paragraph might begin:

The most obvious analysis of loss is through the selection of plots.

You then use the rest of the paragraph to explain the link between each plot and loss, for example:

Before the play begins, Alec's mother has died, and we are immediately faced with the effect of that loss on Davie and Alec.

You don't need to explain their feelings here as that will appear in the character section. You simply detail the points of loss in the plots. This paragraph would therefore continue with the loss of Davie's skilled trade, and move on to the other plots as they relate to loss.

You then move on to CHARACTERS and introduce that paragraph as follows:

The loss of job and family do not leave the characters untouched; they are greatly affected by their losses. At the beginning Davie is trying to cope. We know this when \_\_\_\_\_ , but by the end he \_\_\_\_\_ .  
This is shown \_\_\_\_\_ .

This is your plan throughout for the rest of this paragraph and the next two paragraphs.

The last paragraph is a Conclusion, and in it you say what you thought of the play. Did it touch you, or make you think about something you were not familiar with? Did it entertain you?

Whatever your opinion, you must support it with evidence from the text.

### **Step 2: The non-fiction essay**

Non-fiction essays are factual essays. Sometimes people think that if they write about real events that have happened to them, that is a non-fiction essay. Not so. That is a personal essay and will be discussed in Step 3.

Non-fiction essays can be easily divided into two groups:

- factual
- argumentative.

**Factual essays** simply state facts. **Argumentative essays** argue a point of view. Both of them follow the box plan of the critical essays.

Here is an example of a factual essay about Benny Lynch.

#### ***Introduction***

Benny Lynch was a working-class hero who rose from boxing-booth bouts to become world champion. But his life at the top was short lived. He ended up lower than he began, as a beggar inviting pub customers to hit him for the price of a drink.

#### ***Paragraph 2 – Success***

He was born in Glasgow's Gorbals in 1913, and like many young boys from the poverty-stricken tenements of working-class Glasgow he saw a route to success through his talent. By 1934 he was World Flyweight Champion. Success brought money, and he lavished it around on wine and women. If he fancied a round of golf he bought clubs at the course and forgot to take them home. His hangers-on envied him and for a brief time enjoyed the good life through him. In 1937 he defeated England's Peter Kane at Shawfield Park to retain his World Flyweight Title.

**Paragraph 3 – The turning point**

But from there it was all downhill. Within a year he was out of boxing for good.

**Paragraph 4 – Downhill**

His behaviour out of the ring was the cause of his downhill slide. On one of his drinking bouts he caused a serious accident almost killing himself, a woman and a child. He was lucky to escape with a fine. The high living took its toll on his weight and he lost his title by default. Unfit and overweight, he was not allowed to defend his title in June 1938.

**Paragraph 5 – The end**

Benny Lynch died at the age of 33. Friendless and penniless, he was found by a Samaritan in the Glasgow docks seeking help for his drunken state. The Samaritan took him to the Southern General Hospital where he died the next morning, 8 August 1946.

**Task**

You should choose a subject based on something in the play and write a factual essay on it, using the model above. You must use facts, not opinions. You may need to do some research in libraries or on the Internet, but you must rewrite everything you find in your own words. Suggested topics:

- Rangers/Celtic
- Sailing
- Life in the tenements
- Home life without a mother
- Another 'Benny Lynch' figure, e.g. George Best.

These topics are only suggestions. There will be many others you might prefer.

**The argumentative essay** weighs ideas and opinions and leads the reader through the arguments to a Conclusion.

Here is an example of an argumentative essay about the World Cup.

The World Cup has always been played over four-year periods. Ever since it started nearly a century ago this tradition has been observed. The four years in between give the organisers a chance to get all the details sorted; for example, they have to decide what sponsors they need, what country the tournament will be held in, etc.

The four years between tournaments also give the teams time to prepare. The players have to concentrate on club football as well as on the national game. The team manager also has to find himself the strongest national team, and this takes lots of time and thought. The supporters are the most important tradition of all. The organisers also have to consider what the supporters want, and if they too benefit from the four years of waiting.

There has to be some sort of reason why the competition is only held every four years. Who decided four years? Why not two years or three years? Would the World Cup every two years be appropriate? There would certainly be more money involved, but would the supporters be able to afford the costs and travelling every two years?

The four-year time-scale allows the players to prepare and raise their fitness up to its highest level. It also gives the travelling supporters time to make all their arrangements and get everything sorted for the big event. They have to be as well prepared as anyone involved in the competition. The four years leading up to the World Cup is a great build-up of excitement. Everyone world-wide looks forward to it and it is watched by millions when the time comes.

The World Cup would not be as exciting if it was held every two years. The tournaments would feel too close to each other and they would not be enjoyed as much by the fans or players. The two-year deal would also scrap the countries' own national tournaments. Events like the European Championship and the Copa Americas would suffer. There would be no time to play qualifiers or organise these events. The two-year gap would be very hard on the players too. It would certainly interfere with club football and managers world-wide would strongly object to their players missing their pre-season training every two years because of the World Cup.

So the organisers of the World Cup – FIFA – would need some excellent reason for trying to hold the competition every two years. Why all of a sudden would they want this? What would be in it for them? Football is all about money these days and everyone would suspect that was why the organisers were trying to pull a stunt like this, for their own benefit. The two-year gap would mean a lot of publicity for the World Cup and for its sponsors. The television stations would be making a hefty profit as would the rest of the competition.

But all this would be very expensive from a supporter's point of view. The World Cup is one big holiday for the fans and holidays are expensive. The tournament would lose out on a lot of travelling supporters if there were only a two-year gap, unless the ticket prices and travelling expenses were lowered so that fans could actually afford to attend a tournament every two years. Otherwise it would be seen as a case of pure greed on the part of the organisers and everyone involved. They wouldn't be doing this for anyone but themselves. Nobody else would be benefiting from this but FIFA. I for one would think it was one big scam.

The World Cup is a huge event enjoyed the world over and is greatly looked forward to. It's the biggest event on the planet for sports fans, and is broadcast world-wide. For months leading up to the competition everyone is buzzing about it. People are arguing about who's going to win it. Who will be the stars? How well will their team do? There is a great rush of excitement inside everyone as the tournament gets closer. For all ages it is so exciting that nothing can compare with it.

If the World Cup took place every two years that excitement would fade. It's the four-year gap and the wait that makes it more exciting for everyone. The competition is enjoyed much more because of the large gap and without that the enjoyment would slowly fade away. The month of the World Cup is a big world party and everyone enjoys themselves. If the two-year gap was to happen, the spirit and enjoyment would fade away, just like Christmas.

**Tradition**

- Always been four years
- Time for organising
- Time for preparation
- Whose policy is it?

**Money**

- Publicity
- Sponsorship
- Coverage

**SHOULD  
THE WORLD CUP  
BE HELD EVERY  
TWO YEARS?**

**Effects on players and supporters**

**Players**

- Training
- National games
- Time to prepare

**Supporters**

- Anticipation of the four-year wait
- Pleasure of looking forward to it
- Less enjoyable every two years

**Excitement**

**Four years**

- It's a huge event
- Pleasure of the build-up
- One big holiday

**Two years**

- Not exciting
- The pleasure would fade away, like Christmas

The first paragraph opens the essay and makes clear what the writer will be arguing.

The last paragraph draws together the whole essay and states firmly the author's opinion.

**Task**

You are now able to write a non-fiction essay.

Topics can grow out of *Sailmaker* or you can choose a totally different topic.

Points must be argued, not just stated, and the whole essay must move to a Conclusion. Suggested topics:

- Is private schooling a way out of poverty?
- Do talented sportsmen from poor backgrounds inevitably end up failures?
- When people's skills are no longer needed by society, what should be the solution?
- Should children like Alec be removed from fathers like Davie?
- Is Davie a hopeless failure?
- How can the problem of sectarian attitudes be tackled?

Before you begin your essay, organise all your points into a box plan (as on page 30).

Think about the logical order of your arguments. Write a strong Introduction and then work through the essay paragraph by paragraph.

**Step 3: The personal essay**

This is, as the title suggests, personal. The focus is on the author's experience. It is characterised by the use of the word 'I'.

Here is an example of a personal essay.

Last week all of third year went to college for four days and I wanted to do glazing but I did woodcraft. I thought it was going to be boring but it was very good. I made a spice rack, a wood puzzle, a shoe shine and a birds' house. But the best thing about the woodcraft is that there were very nice boys there and we were talking to them.

On the last day I was very sad because I had to leave the nice boys. I had a very good time even if in the dinner hall the food was horrible. We were sitting next to the lads most of the time. There were these other boys who were in the work-base across the room and they were very cheeky to us. They were being nice to us for the first two days and then they started being nasty to us. We just walked away from them then because the other boys that were nice to us went down the stairs, so we followed them and they talked to us for ages. Then we had to go to another class-room. While we were in the other class we did some more work then we went home and then had a long weekend and then we had to come back to school.

I found the birds' house very easy to do, it was the easiest thing I did because the wood was already cut for us and we just had to put it together and drill a big hole in it for the bird to get in. Then we had to sand the corners so that it had a good shape.

I found the wood puzzle very good. All you had to do was cut a square piece of wood and draw lines on it. Then you cut them out and put them together again but we did not put glue on them.

**Task**

Once again the box plan is very clear.

Using the box plan system, write a personal piece. As with the other types of writing, this could use a *Sailmaker* topic or something else. Suggested topics:

- Death of a relative
- Leaving home
- Unhappy home life
- Going to a new school
- Experience of prejudice
- A much-loved toy from the past
- Dreams and hopes.

Before you begin, organise your material into its plan.

Remember that in this type of writing your strength of feeling and use of detail is most important. The reader should emerge with a stronger feeling of **you** than of **the event**.

**Step 4: The short story**

A short story is a very particular type of writing. It:

- has few characters
- deals with one event
- makes very precise use of detail
- may have a surprise ending.

Alan Spence wrote *Sailmaker* as a short story before he wrote it as a play. It was published in his collection of short stories called *Its Colours They Are Fine* (Collins, 1977). Read the short story and in groups discuss the differences to the PLOT, CHARACTER, LANGUAGE, THEMES and STRUCTURE.

Use the sheet below to record your findings:

PLOT \_\_\_\_\_

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CHARACTER \_\_\_\_\_

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---

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LANGUAGE \_\_\_\_\_

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---

---

THEMES \_\_\_\_\_

---

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---

STRUCTURE \_\_\_\_\_

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Now look carefully at the Introduction. How has Alan Spence introduced the story?

How has he ended the story?

Work out how the story has been planned, i.e. what were Alan Spence's boxes?

***Task***

You are now ready to write a short story. Choose **one** other part of the play and write it (or a version of it) as a short story.

Suggested topics:

- the opening part recalling the death of Alec's mother
- the scene when Davie comes home drunk
- the scene when Davie is beaten up

or

- an imagined scene, such as Alec's first day at the new school.

Again you can choose another plot line altogether, but follow the formula you have identified in your discussion.

**SECTION 4**

One of the options of English at Access 3 or Intermediate 1 is Individual Talk. This involves preparing and delivering a talk lasting three to five minutes from notes. You are **not** allowed to write the talk out, or to read it.

The talk can be a personal piece, or it can be non-fiction.

You could choose to do your talk on a topic related to *Sailmaker*. If you do so, you should prepare your notes exactly as you have done for the writing topics in Section 3. You can organise them as one large sheet with boxes, or cards where every card is a 'box'. Either way, they should contain only headings to remind you of things you are going to say, and the order in which you are going to say them.

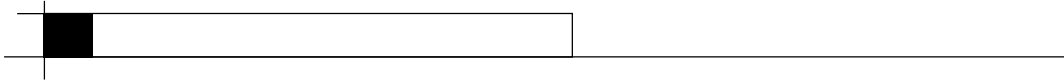
It is a good idea to think out your opening sentence and your closing sentence to the point that you **almost** memorise them. You must not under any circumstances memorise the whole of a prepared speech however.

It is also wise to plan your link words and write them on your notes.

Make your opening sentence or statement bold in order to raise the interest of your listeners.

Speak clearly and with confidence. Draw your speech to a definite end – don't let it stagger to a halt.

Prepare yourself to answer questions from your listeners.



**SECTION 5****Answers to Textual Analysis 1**

1. a) (i) He was not making enough by selling.  
(ii) He was failing to collect the debt.  
(iii) He was not being paid much commission.  
(iv) He was drinking.  
(v) He was betting.  
(vi) He was paying heavy interest on unpaid loans.
1. b) *'Ab must've paid him back two or three times over, an ab still owe him the full wback.'*
1. c) *'Bastard, eh? Sicken ye. And he's a pape.'* Billy's words indicate his sympathy forcefully. He not only calls the bookie a bastard; he is also down on him because of his religion.
2. a) He thinks it's a loser's game because it is set up to favour the bookie.
2. b) Sarcasm is the tone used in this sentence.  
The use of sarcasm emphasises Davie's despair that things are hopeless particularly when juxtaposed against the broo.
2. c.) It indicates Billy will use his connections with the underworld to help Davie. This introduces a darker mood, a mood of threat/violence.
3. a) (i) He was very poor and he was a tough character. He moved from the country to the city to find work.  
  
(ii) Alec is doing well at school/is clever.

3. b) '*Naw ye don't know...*' shows Davie's feeling of anger when he contradicts his brother's polite but meaningless remark.

or

'*Naebody knows, unless they've been through it.*' shows Davie's loneliness in his loss – bereavement is a bigger event than most people experience.

or

'*Comin' hame's the worst.*' shows Davie's loneliness when he comes home – coming home is for him the opposite of what coming home should be.

or

'*Gets on top of ye.*' shows Davie's despair, but that he's trying to cope and to care.

or

'*If ah ever dae.*' shows Davie's despair, that he sees no hope.

3. c) (i) The reference to the adults' childhood provides a link to the past and suggests they had a happy time, even if they were poor. They were good companions and maybe this explains why Billy will help Alec now.

or

It echoes the relationship between Alec and Ian.

- (ii) A valid answer should tie up this part to the character, plot and structure.

## Answers to Textual Analysis 2

1. a) Davie has been drinking in the pub. Alec has been at home studying for an exam. (It is not enough just to say Alec has been reading a book.)
1. b) (i) Alec is angry/worried.
- (ii) 'A book' is Alec's clipped, angry answer to Davie's question 'What ye readin?'. 'I didnae know where ye wur' is evidence of Alec's worry.
1. c) Alec has mentioned *David Copperfield*. Debt is uppermost in Davie's mind, so he quotes the debt character in the Dickens novel: Mr Micawber's philosophy is exactly the same as Davie's.
2. a) There was good company. Good patter. He needed to relax.
2. b) (i) It is filthy. There is no food.
- (ii) The reference is to '*bloody Steptoe an Son!*', to the fact that the house needs gutted, the '*Place is like a midden.*' i.e. filthy. Creamed rice and soup is all the food there is in the house.
2. c) To the people Alec is at school with Davie will seem as if he is from another planet. They will have no idea of the despair, the state of his house, etc. Alec must feel a real split when he is at school and thinks of his home. Consequently it is hard for Alec to talk to Davie about a girl he has met who may well be of a different background from their own.
3. a) He is embarrassed or uncomfortable with it.
3. b) He gave Alec a row, and called him bad for playing innocent childhood kissing games. Also he cannot admit to being attracted to women he meets. And he hits Alec when Alec says he fancies the women he meets.
3. c) Alec is angry and in despair. He is fed up. (*'Look at the state ae us. We're livin like bloody Steptoe an Son! Nae light. Place is like a midden.'*)
- 'So ye go an get bevvied. Forget it all.' He feels anger at his father's irresponsibility.

Davie mainly feels self-pity. '*...it's no easy on yer own.*' He has made no effort in the years since his wife died.

4. a) Alec is trying to remember the happiness of childhood; his childhood dreams; and the time when he had a clean home.
4. b) It is in Standard English. He uses 'I' not 'Ah' so it develops his educated side, which will lead to him moving away.
4. c) It draws together Davie's failure and Alec's success as well as referring to Davie's loneliness and inability to recover from his wife's death.

It rounds off the relationship of the two main characters at this moment in the play.