

English Activity Centre Module

On the novel “The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas”.

In the domain of analysis.

Level One: Context of the Novel.

Warning:

The novel studied in this module concerns the events of the Holocaust*.

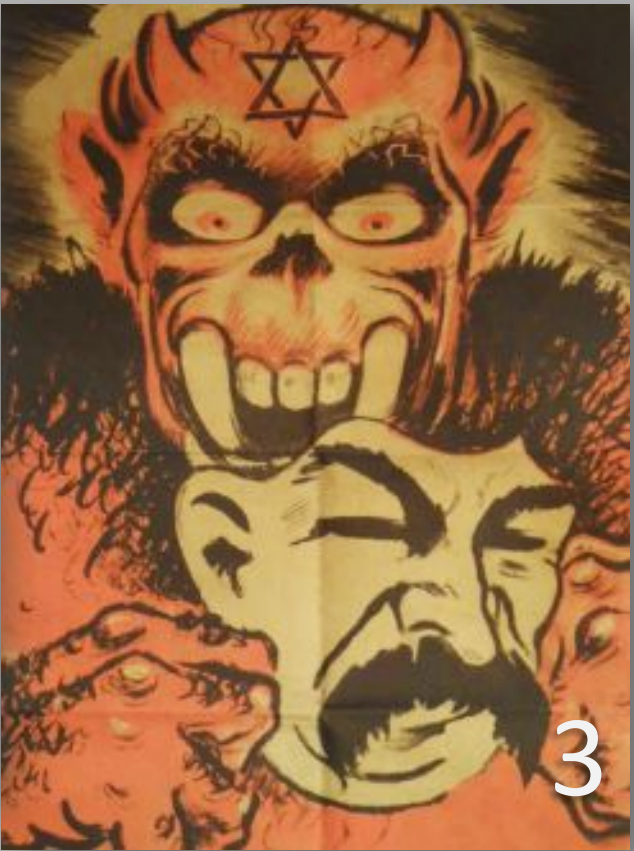
Students may find some of the content disturbing.

Please inform your teacher if you feel you require special consideration.

*The word Holocaust comes from the Greek word *holókaustos*, meaning 'wholly/completely burnt'. Of Europe's nine million Jews, six million were annihilated.



The Holocaust refers to the **systematic** murder of six million European Jews over the period 1933 to 1945; it is the most devastating act of **genocide** the world has ever witnessed. Other classes of people such as Jehovah's witnesses, alcoholics, blacks, eclipitics, retarded, homosexuals, and gypsies were also targeted. Below are a selection of **anti-sematic** posters that the Nazi government displayed on walls as propaganda to change the minds of Germans.



Design an imaginative poster that a government might have displayed to attack your class of people.

Sec 1.

Nazi Germany, also known as the 3rd Reich, existed from 1933 to 1945, under Hitler's rule, Germany was transformed into a totalitarian state where nearly all aspects of life were controlled by the state. Nazi Germany ceased to exist after the Allied Forces defeated it in 1945, and ending World War II in Europe.



Give evidence to show Australia is not a totalitarian state?



What was so attractive about joining the Hitler Youth?



The Hitler Youth was a paramilitary organization of the Nazi Party. It existed from 1922 to 1945. It was made up of the Hitler-boys aged 14 to 18; the younger boys' section, for those aged 10 to 14; and the girls' section, the League of German Girls.



Reword the clause in Section 1 with the apostrophe for possession so that it's not necessary.

Between 1933 and 1939, the Nazi Government implemented more than 400 anti-Jewish laws aimed at depriving Jews of their right to practice their religion, as well as stripping them of their civil and economic rights.



1933:

- A boycott of Jewish shops ensured that most closed down due to lack of income.
- Non-Aryan civil servants were forced to resign from their jobs.
- Ritual slaughter of animals was banned, stopping Jews from eating kosher foods.

1935:

Restrictions on Jewish involvement in daily life, specifically the ability to have sexual relationships with non-Jewish German citizens.



1938:

- 'Jewish' street names were replaced with Aryan names.
- Kristallnacht, or Night of the Broken Glass – direct violence against Jews, resulting in 74 deaths, 20 000 arrests, destruction of 875 shops and burning of 191 synagogues.
- Jewish children were removed from German schools.
- Jewish businesses were forced to close down.
- Jews were banned from walking in the streets.

1939:

- Jews were forced to hand over drivers' licenses and radios to police.
- Jews were ordered to wear the yellow 'Star of David' badge or armband, so they would be easily identifiable.
- Jews were prohibited from owning a telephone.

1942


- Jews were banned from using public transport.
- Blind or deaf Jews were not allowed to wear armbands/badges identifying them as such when crossing roads.

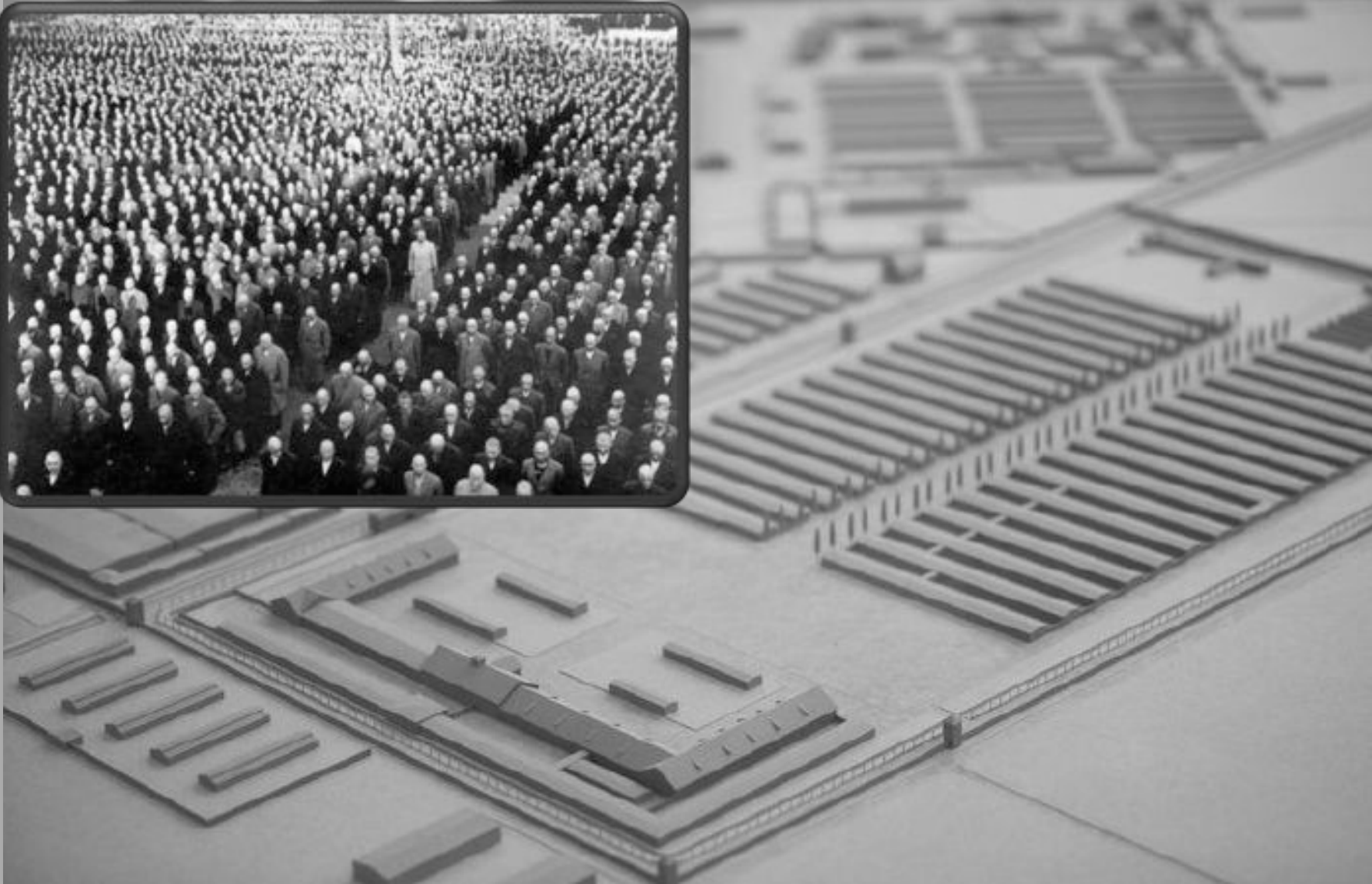
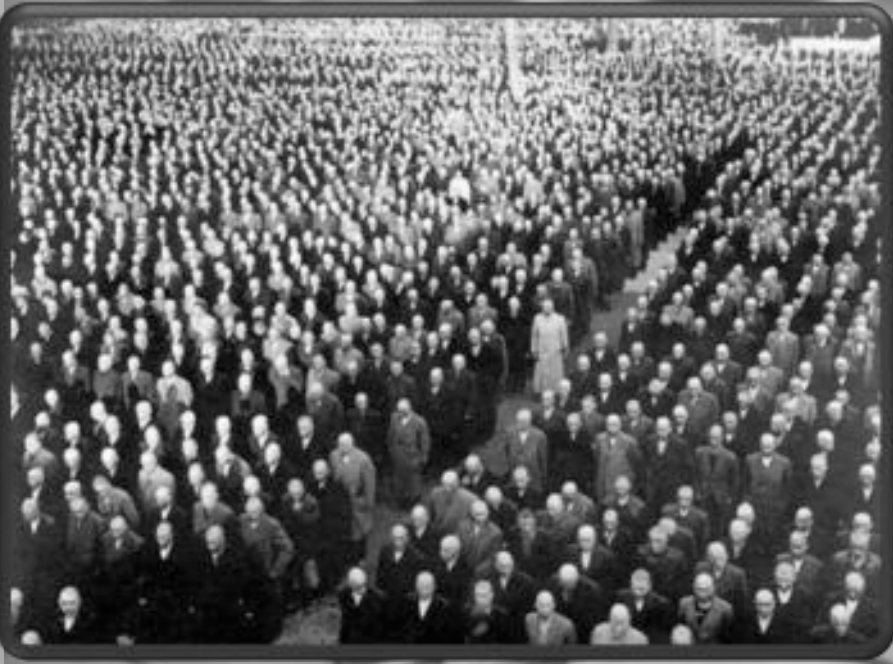


Choose one of these laws or events, and explain the effect that they would have had Jews.



Imagine being banned from your current school. How would you feel and what would you do?

Hitler established the first concentration camp at Dachau, near the city of Munich, in 1933. Over the next 10 years, he established 10000 more, of varying sizes. 




Josef Stessel, shot on 11.08.1940
"while trying to escape"



Why were there so few escape attempts?



Dachau could hold 63,000 prisoners. They were More than 99% died, only a few escaped. 



Upon entering a camp, usually by sealed train, all prisoners had their heads shaved and were given the standard blue-and-white striped uniform. They then had a number tattooed on their arm – this, rather than their name, would be used to identify them.



What do you think were the reasons for a prisoner's head to be shaved?



What laws are there that prevent a holocaust happening again?



If hypothetically this were to occur in Australia, judging by how some classes are treated by the media, who would we exterminate?



Those deemed unfit for labour, such as the sick, elderly or mothers with small children, were exterminated in gas chambers at these death camps.



Every camp followed the same deadly routine: prisoners were told that they were going to have a shower, and were forced to strip naked and stack all of their possessions neatly, before being led into a large chamber. The walls and ceilings of some of these chambers contained pipes that ended in dummy 'shower heads'. When the people were inside, guards on the roof released Zyklon B tablets into the chamber through openings in the ceiling, turning the 'shower room' into a gas chamber, where those inside suffocated. After a maximum of 30 minutes, other prisoners were designated the job of entering the chamber, removing all of the dead bodies and searching them for valuables such as gold fillings. The bodies were then sent to the large ovens, or crematoria, to be burnt.



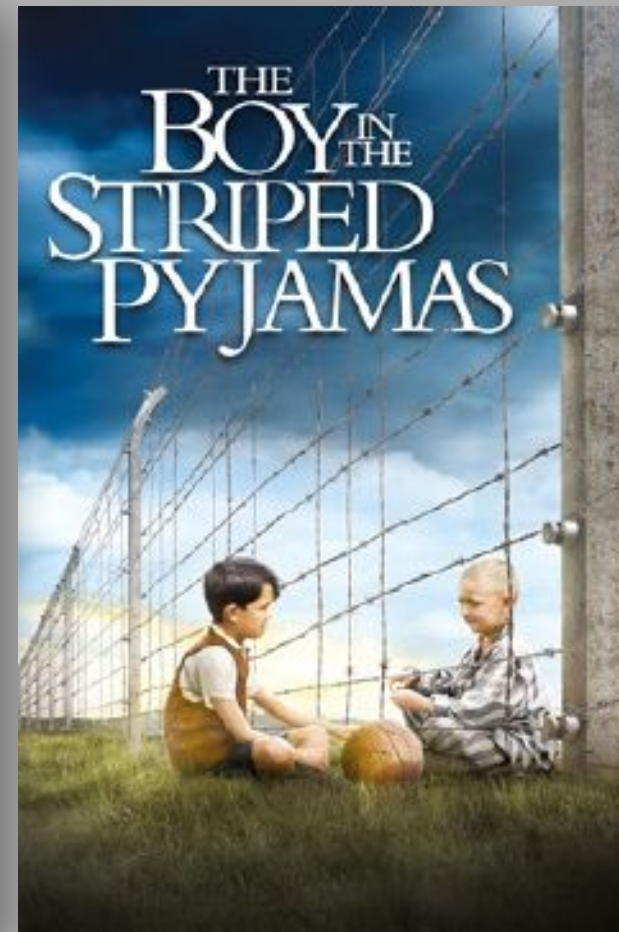
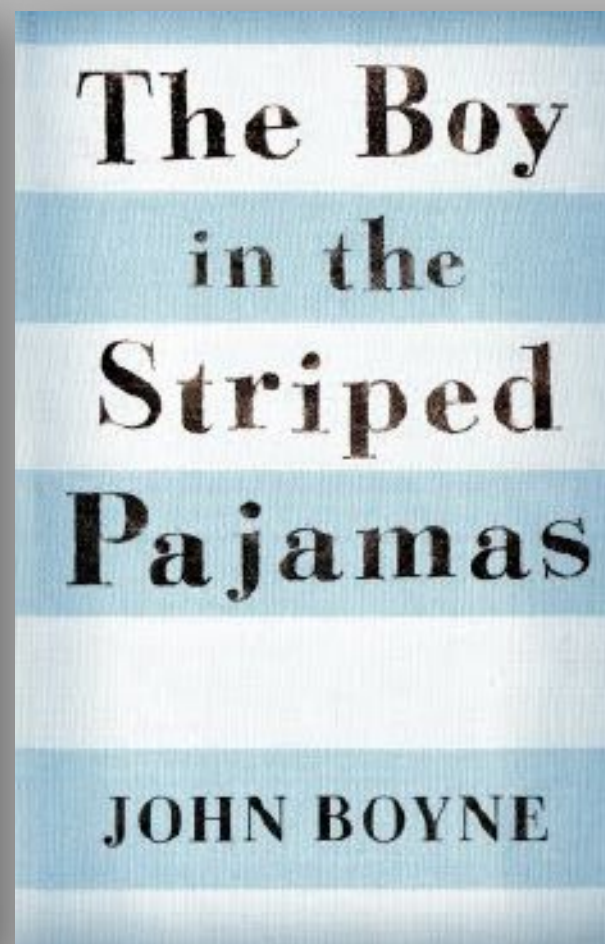
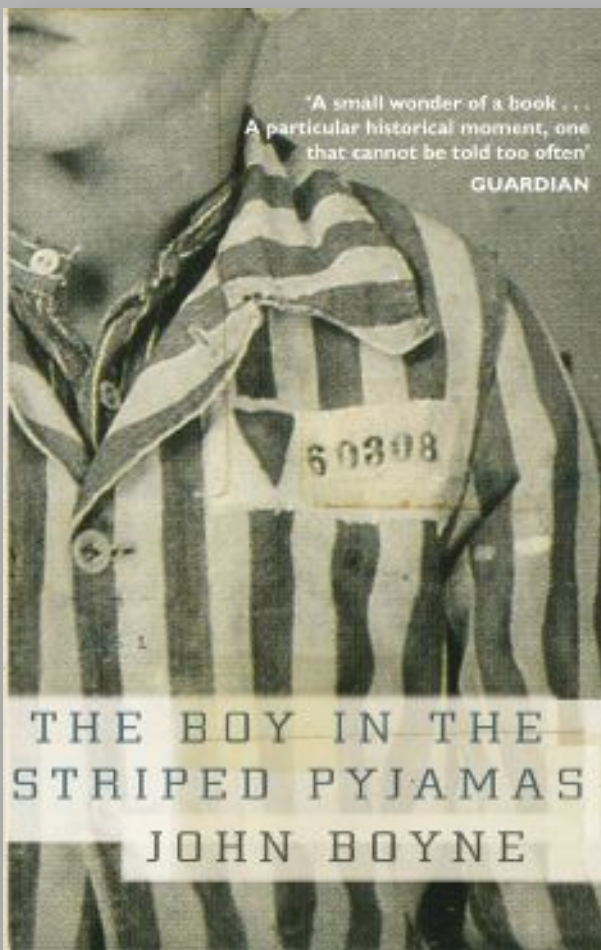
What can be done to guarantee this does not happen to your children?



Why did the Nazi's choose Zyklon B tablets as a murder weapon?



How might have parents reassured small children who were about to enter the chambers.



Here are 3 different covers to the same novel. Explain which one is the most authentic?



What is ironic about the novel's title?

“The Boy in the Striped Pajamas” is a 2006 novel from the point of view of a young boy, written by Irish novelist John Boyne. As of March 2010, the novel had sold more than five million copies around the world. The story is about Bruno a 9-year-old boy growing up during World War II in Berlin. His father is a high-ranking SS officer who becomes Commandant of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. Bruno becomes friend with a boy prisoner there. Because Bruno is too naive to understand that Auschwitz was a death camp, he is mistaken as a prisoner and is gassed to death along with his friend the boy in striped Pajamas.





The author John Boyne is an Irish novelist. To pay his way through school he worked at a large bookstore, typing up the drafts of his manuscripts of his novels by night. Boyne is the author of six novels, as well as a number of short stories which have been published in various anthologies and broadcast on radio and television. His novels are published in 39 languages. The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, has sold more than 5 million copies. The film adaptation was released in September 2008. Boyne said that he wrote the entire first draft of his story in two and a half days, barely sleeping until he got to the end.




About how he came to write the book.

"...it wasn't really part of my plan, but then sometimes one thing that happens to you as a writer is an idea comes to you and it seems so powerful, so interesting, that you can't walk away from it and that's the way it was with 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'. When the idea for that book first came to me, a very simple image at the start of just the two boys sitting on a fence talking to each other, I felt I couldn't walk away from that story..."



How might Morrison's quotation match Boyne purpose in writing his novel?

**"If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."
— Toni Morrison**

Reviews on “Boy in Striped Pajamas” have been very mixed. They range from admiration to disgust. Positive reviews speak of the importance of writing about such a shocking era in history. Negative reviews react badly to the style of writing, being a children’s story. Here are 3 reviews from the Goodreads website. 




How many stars out of 5 might Jennifer give to this novel?

Jennifer Wardrip :What an incredible story! John Boyne has created innocent, naïve Bruno and given him a powerful story to tell. This moving book should be required reading for everyone.

Wayne: I seriously suggest you read about what happened to real children in the Holocaust. It won't fill your thoughts for many days or shock you; rather it will fill your LIFE and make you feel sick to the core of your being.



Why does Wayne capitalise the word life in his review?

How does this reviewer’s use of quotation marks when writing ‘disappeared’ reinforce the tone of his writing? 

Al Bitá: There is nothing to learn from this book. There is much to dislike. From certain perspectives, it can even be said to be detestable.... Even at the end, as Bruno and Schmuel go hand in hand into the 'darkness' and 'disappear' there is really nothing to indicate what happened to them. A child reading this, without any awareness of the horrors of Auschwitz, could be forgiven for believing simply that they 'disappeared' into some mysterious unknown ... The book is inane, badly written, historically inaccurate, lacking in any sense of moral teaching (no one in the book 'learns' anything, or even changes their attitude to anything) and is hardly inspiring. It is banal.

Mostly the media gave Boyne's novel positive reviews, praising its unusual perspective of being from a small boy and skill of the writer.



Assuming Blech is correct with his facts, does Boyne's novel have any redeeming features.

The Age Newspaper:

After some initial tonal clunkiness where you can almost detect the author thinking "how do I write a child", the story is an effortless read that puts you directly into Bruno's worldview. It is elegant story-telling with emotional impact and an ending that in true fairytale style is grotesquely clever.

In particular it is the children's tale style of the novel that reviewers found difficult to accept. Ironically, for a book which draws people to the horrors of genocide, those who most hate the book seem to be the survivors of the Nazi death camps.



Rabbi Benjamin Blech:

"There were no nine-year-old Jewish boys in Auschwitz -- the Nazis immediately gassed those not old enough to work...I have spoken to Auschwitz survivors. They tell me how the stench of burning human flesh and the ashes of corpses from the crematoria filled the air for miles around...A survivor of the holocaust wept, and begged me tell everyone that this book is not just a lie and not just a fairytale, but a profanation. No one may dare alter the truths of the Holocaust, no matter how noble his motives."

Test!



A	Novels
B	Students
C	Propaganda
D	Anti-Semitism
E	On the history of the Novel, "Boy in Stripped Pyjamas."

Questions Menu

Expected Word Count

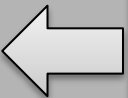
\$	Provide an extended text :	Yr10	Yr09	Yr08	Yr07
18	on anything.	35	30	20	10
16	on C.	45	40	25	15
14	on B.	55	45	30	20
12	on A.	65	50	35	25
10	Using C format on A.	75	60	40	25
8	on Student & A.	85	70	55	30
6	on A & B	95	80	60	35
4	on improving A B or D.	105	90	65	40
2	on improving this module.	115	95	70	45
0	on E	125	100	75	50

When analysing an extract from a novel ask what about it is unique. What does the extract communicate more fully than any other section?



Written in a straightforward simplistic style.

Vague time references indicates child's perspective or fairy tale.

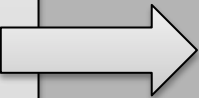


Indicates the story is set a some years in the past.



Chapter One: Bruno Makes a Discovery

One afternoon, when Bruno came home from school, he was surprised to find Maria, the family's maid — who always kept her head bowed and never looked up from the carpet — standing in his bedroom, pulling all his belongings out of the wardrobe and packing them in four large wooden crates, even the things he'd hidden at the back that belonged to him and were nobody else's business.



Shows a differences in status between characters.



Intellectually inferior & inexperienced



Feels he has little privacy.



What is it about the material of the crates that tells us the story is set some years ago?



How do we know, from her behavior, that Maria is subservient to Bruno?

While examining a text we can write about its values. This is what the characters or the writer revolve around or think is important. Understanding the values of the character's helps us determine their motivation, fears and desires.



‘What are you doing?’ he asked in as polite a tone as he could muster, for although he wasn’t happy to come home and find someone going through his possessions, his mother had always told him that he was to treat Maria respectfully and not just imitate the way Father spoke to her. ‘You take your hands off my things.’

Maria shook her head and pointed towards the staircase behind him, where Bruno’s mother had just appeared. She was a tall woman with long red hair that she bundled into a sort of net behind her head, and she was twisting her hands together nervously as if there was something she didn’t want to have to say or something she didn’t want to have to believe.



Explain what the difference in treatment of the servants between Bruno’s mother and father.



How was Bruno expected to treat Maria?



What does this extract communicate?



How does Maria’s silence tell us about her values?

Having an understanding of meta-language can be very useful for language analysis. Meta-language is the way that English is described. Words such as verb, noun and paragraph are used to describe language. By understanding the names of the parts of English we can be more exact in our analysis of the effect of words.



1 'Mother,' said Bruno, marching towards her, 'what's going on? Why is Maria going through
2 my things?'
3 'She's packing them,' explained Mother.
4 'Packing them?' he asked, running quickly through the events of the previous few days to
5 consider whether he'd been particularly naughty or had used those words out loud that he
6 wasn't allowed to use and was being sent away because of it. He couldn't think of anything
7 though. In fact over the last few days he had behaved in a perfectly decent manner to
8 everyone and couldn't remember causing any chaos at all. 'Why?' he asked then. 'What have
9 I done?'



Write down the pronoun
in line 3?



What verb in line 1 adds
to military genre of this
novel?



What adverb in line 4 tells us that Bruno is slightly
panicking and feels time is short?

‘Come downstairs with me,’ said Mother, leading the way towards the large dining room where the **(R)**Fury had been to dinner the week before. ‘We’ll talk down there.’

Bruno ran downstairs and even passed her out on the staircase so that he was waiting in the dining room when she arrived. He looked at her without saying anything for a moment and thought to himself that **(O)**she couldn’t have applied her make-up correctly that morning because the**(F)** rims of her eyes were more red than usual, like his own after he’d been causing chaos and got into trouble and ended up **(E)**crying.

(A) ‘Now, you don’t have to **(E)**worry, Bruno,’ said Mother, sitting down in the chair where the beautiful blonde woman who had come to dinner with the Fury had sat and waved at him when Father closed the doors. ‘In fact if anything it’s going to be a great adventure.’

ANALYSIS STRUCTURE

A	ARGUMENT
F	FACTS
O	OPINIONS
R	REFERENCES
E	EMOTION
S	STYLE
T	TECHNIQUES



Write a sentence for each step of an analysis on the text.

To understand the ignorant world-view of the Bruno, the author purposely gives the reader wrong information.



Chapter One :Bruno Makes a Discovery. Continued.

‘Yes, of course,’ said Bruno, nodding his head, because there were always so many visitors to the house — men in fantastic uniforms, women with typewriters that he had to keep his mucky hands off — and they were always very polite to Father and told each other that he was a man to watch and that the Fury had big things in mind for him.

‘Well, sometimes when someone is very important,’ continued Mother, ‘the man who employs him asks him to go somewhere else because there’s a very special job that needs doing there.’

‘What kind of job?’ asked Bruno, because if he was honest with himself — which he always tried to be — he wasn’t entirely sure what job Father did.



Choose one thing that tells us that Bruno’s father has an important job?



Rewrite this section from the Mother’s POV.



Why might the author choose to write Father & Mother with capital letters?



Explain the reasons behind Bruno’s uncertainty about his father’s occupation?