



NEA Student response with commentary

A-level English Language and Literature

Making Connections: non-exam assessment

For teaching from September 2015

For assessment from June 2017

Introduction

Making Connections focuses on language use in different types of text and requires students to make active connections between a literary text and some non-literary material. The NEA offers students the opportunity to undertake a small-scale research project in stylistics. It is designed to build on and extend skills and knowledge developed on other areas of the course.

The resource below is an exemplar NEA student response with an accompanying commentary. This resource should be read in conjunction with the NEA requirements set out in the specification and *Making Connections: guidance on non-exam assessment*.

An investigation into the use of linguistic devices to assert power in George Orwell's *1984* and Barack Obama's 2014 speech about ISIL.

Comment [A1]:
Clear and focused title.

Introduction and Aims

Orwell's *1984* is a three part dystopian novel set in a 'version' of London in the state of Oceania. It presents a world where there is constant war, surveillance and manipulation of its citizens bureaucratically and absolutely controlled by the Party and by a personified Big Brother, who appears on posters and through telescreens. Orwell wrote it in a post second world war context, when totalitarian regimes were taking control over wider parts of the world and economic recovery from war was slow. Orwell's partially inversion of '1948' for the title links the 'present' of the world he was writing in and a possible terrible future world.

Comment [A2]:

The *Introduction and Aims* should:

- justify decisions for choosing the literary text and chosen focus: why is the study relevant and interesting?
- show that the whole text has been read
- provide a sensible rationale for choosing non-literary material including briefly commenting on data collection methods
- clearly consider the relationship between the literary and non-literary texts.

(750 words)

Orwell mainly adopts an internal heterodiegetic narrative, allowing the 'narrator' to step into the consciousness of one particular character, Winston Smith. Winston's role is as a minor Party member with a job in the Ministry of Truth, ironically named as its purpose is censorship, propaganda and a revision of history. In the novel, Winston starts to question the Party and its control, starting an affair with Julia, who shares his aspirations and views. Winston is deceived into thinking that he is being helped by others, but these characters are part of the Party machine, the Thought Police. In particular, O'Brien is responsible for torturing both Winston and Julia, in another ironically named Ministry of Love. After initially protecting each other, both Winston and Julia resort to betrayal. With Winston the ultimate torture is O'Brien's use of his biggest fear, rats. The message appears to be that, here in this dystopian storyworld, resistance is futile and, in the novel's conclusion, Winston finally finds love for Big Brother.

Comment [A3]:
In this paragraph the student shows an understanding of the whole novel.

In *1984* Orwell shows how language can use to deceive and manipulate citizens into accepting the 'reality' of whatever the controlling powers tell them. Glover (2010) calls the novel a 'creative effort in leading people to question the power structures and motives behind their governments, war, and economic class distinctions'. One major way Orwell achieves this is through the creation of a new version of language 'Newspeak' and a contradictory way of looking at the world in 'Doublethink'. The latter is outlined at the start of the novel, in Part 1 Chapter 1 in the Party's slogan 'WAR IS PEACE. FREEDOM IS SLAVERY. IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH', which seems deliberately paradoxical and confusing. It is as if the citizens lack independent thought and need the Party to explain everything to them. This reversed way of looking at the world through language is also shown in Orwell's deliberate naming of the Ministries by an antonym – such the Ministry of Plenty,

Comment [A4]:
In this section the student links an understanding of the whole novel with the chosen topic focus of power and politics. There is also some evidence of reading around the topic area.

which controls rationing. The 'Doublethink' acts euphemistically, something that governments are accused of doing today to disguise the truth, create 'spin' and persuade their audiences. Indeed, Orwell himself made this link to his view of politics in the real world explicit when he wrote in 1946 'political language is designed to make lies sound truthful'.

The extracts that I have chosen to focus on in *1984* are from Part 3, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 which presents Winston Smith's interrogation by IngSoc party member O'Brien. I have excluded sections of dialogue as I want to focus on O'Brien's justification of his torture and attempt to impose the Party's ideology on Winston.

Comment [A5]:

The choice of extracts from the literary text is justified and the rationale for including/excluding certain elements is offered.

For my non-literary material, I have chosen a speech from 2014 by the current American President, Barack Obama. The reason for choosing this rather than a British politician speech, for example, is because America is viewed as one of the most powerful countries in the world and Obama himself exercises a high degree of power in international situations. He also is known as a powerful public speaker. As the content of Obama's speech that I have selected is about America's proposed actions against ISIL, it is calling upon public fear (in a similar way to dystopian fiction). To support this, Mourby (2003:16) argues 'global terrorism' has, amongst other potential environmental and human catastrophes, 'been offered up' as a 'credible' way 'in which life as we know it may fall apart'. Likewise Nazaryan (2014:155) says that while 'Utopia is illusory', 'dystopia is all too real, a future more frightening than the dreary present'.

Comment [A6]:

The student justifies the specific selection of non-literary material and demonstrates the connection being made to the literary text in this section.

With both the literary and non-literary material I am going to focus on exploring if they call upon the same linguistic devices to exert power and persuade their respective audiences – the fictional citizens of Airstrip One and Oceania and the "real" American public.

Comment [A7]:

Establishes overall aim clearly.

A sense of some of the contextual factors surrounding the texts have also been introduced in this section.

Review

Comment [A8]:

The Review should demonstrate:

- that secondary sources have been read and understood
- a clear discussion of ideas (about the material itself or about ideas for analysis or both)
- accurate citations and references.

(300-500 words)

Keedle (2008:14) defines political rhetoric as 'eloquent, persuasive, and effective political speech' but adds in a second definition of 'speech that sounds good but means nothing', which 'at its best inspires, persuades, and calls people to action'. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2014) too highlights that rhetoric is the 'art of using words effectively' but focuses on the role of delivery: 'an oration involves a speaker; an audience; a background of time, place, and other conditions; a message; transmission by voice, articulation, and bodily accompaniments; and may, or may not, have an

Comment [A9]:

Selects relevant secondary reading and uses in-text referencing conventions.

At the end of this paragraph the student makes links between their readings and their chosen focus of political speech.

immediate outcome'. Both these viewpoints seem to suggest the context surrounding the political speech is really important and will affect the language used.

'Spin' is a more recent term used to discuss politicians' language manipulation. A 2008 *New Scientist* article reported researcher David Skillicorn's development of an algorithm to test verbal 'spin'. This evaluated word usage within speech to work out when someone knows that what they are saying is not the truth. He counted the usage of first person pronouns, believing that 'I' tends to indicate less spin than 'we'. Beard (1999:45-46), in exploring political language, interprets pronoun choices differently by looking at the usage of singular and plural forms, with the view that these show personal and collective responsibility.

Comment [A10]:

In this paragraph the student evidences their wider reading – mixing a more accessible text available to A level students (Routledge's Language series) and the *New Scientist* report on a scientific study of language use.

Again the research is relevant, varied and makes link back to the texts the student has chosen for analysis.

By analysing American presidential candidates' speeches (including Barack Obama) Skillicorn found differences, as the journalist Hutson reports in his article 'even though the speeches were rehearsed, written by professionals and delivered by trained speakers' (2008:22). He concluded that despite these contextual factors speeches are still 'highly individualised' and that a speaker's own voice and opinions need including to make the delivery of the speeches convincing. This suggests some political conviction is important and could be shown in O'Brien's language in 1984, as well as by Obama.

Baird (2014) identifies a political speaker's motivation as seeking to change human behaviour or to strengthen convictions and attitudes', asserting that an orator seeks to 'establish psychological patterns favourable to his own wishes and platform'. This links back to the purpose of political discourse as mainly persuasive. Charles (1996:321) states 'that language is an eminently political tool and inescapably suited to ideology' and gives examples of current euphemistic phrases used in society today. He demonstrates how Orwell calls deliberately on euphemisms in 1984 in Newspeak as a deliberate linguistic strategy in discouraging independent thought. Orwell wrote an essay in 1946 before writing 1984 called 'Politics and the English Language' where he talks about the political language he dislikes such as pretentious, inflated language, long verb phrases and 'worn-out metaphors', which some may see as very typical devices of literature.

Carter and Nash (1990) suggest the idea of 'literariness' as a continuum with texts showing fewer or greater literary elements than others. Because 'rhetoric' is a longstanding concept with its roots in Ancient Greece, political speeches may have more, what Carter and Nash term, semantic density. Giovanelli et al (2015:66) clarify semantic density by saying that 'a more literary text might have foregrounded features at the levels of phonology, syntax and lexis all working together to create a rich and complex set of effects'.

Comment [A11]:

The student calls upon one of the key concepts of the specification and makes a relevant link to their chosen focus of rhetoric and political discourse.

Analysis

How are first person singular and plural pronouns used to exert power?

Beard (2000:45) identifies these pronouns as giving a sense of personal involvement on the speaker's part. In 1984, O'Brien uses the first person during Winston's interrogation: 'I am taking trouble with you', 'I am well aware', 'I will put it', 'I tell you', 'I took part in', 'I saw them' and 'I do not have to tell you'. Very few of these are linked to actions, given his torture of Winston, except 'I took part' that refers to his torture of others. Most are linked to verbal processes and relational processes, perhaps as he is trying to reason with and persuade Winston to agree with the Party.

Obama opens his speech with the personal pronoun 'I want to speak to you', invoking his desire to keep his audience informed. Later he uses the first person again when he takes individual responsibility for the issues he is about to address: 'I will not hesitate to take action' and 'I ordered the military'. These all present Obama's decision-making and action, qualities perhaps perceived as necessary in an American president. His decision-making is shown by the combination of the pronoun and the material verb processes. He also combines the first person with mental verb processes 'believe' and 'know'. Interestingly he also uses many verbal verb processes with the first person: 'have said', 'call', 'announce' and 'ask'.

Beard (2000) says that 'we' can have multiple meanings, referring to self and one other, self plus a group (ie a government or party) or self and a whole country (and perhaps even larger than this). In 1984, O'Brien uses 'we' and 'us' to refer to the Party, as in 'we are different from the persecutors of the past' and 'surrender to us'. O'Brien's use of the plural form is often attached to material verb process: 'we convert him, we capture', 'we reshape him' and 'we burn all evil'. The collective is used to sinister effect in outlining what the Party's intentions are to the people who oppose them and O'Brien's declaratives 'we make him one of ourselves before we kill him' and 'we bring him to our side' foreshadow the ending where Winston finally feels an overwhelming love and acceptance for Big Brother and the Party.

When Obama discusses previous terrorist attacks and previous actions, such as the death of Bin Laden, he uses the first person plural 'we' to create a sense of achievement for everyone – as if it was a group or country effort. The plural 'we' also helps to share responsibility for difficult decisions and distributes the praise and achievement to the people. Obama shares the responsibility for the

Comment [A12]:

The *Analysis* should:

- have sub-headings to shape the analysis
- focus on different aspects of language
- be clear and readable.

(1250 words)

Comment [A13]:

The sub-heading is phrased as a question to draw upon the connections being analysed, which is perhaps more helpful than using simply the name of the individual feature.

Comment [A14]:

The student still calls upon the theories, concepts and ideas raised in their *Review*, highlighting the relevance of these in their on-going analysis.

killing of Bin Laden by using 'we' when talking euphemistically about 'taking out' Bin Laden. 'We' disguises the degree of his participation in the killing. Attacking a foreign country is also something that an individual would not want to be responsible for and it's better if the whole country is involved. The collective possessive determiners involve the public with the decision in 'our combat', 'our forces', 'our country'. Sometimes he does use 'we' to present his administration's decisions, for example when he says 'we will conduct a systematic campaign of airstrikes'.

Are second person pronouns used as a means of power and persuasion?

The most significant difference between the texts in their pronoun use is in the second person. In *1984*, it is the more commonly used pronoun in the extracts selected. This may be because this is a one-to-one interrogation and O'Brien is trying to intimidate Winston. The declarative 'you are thinking' also suggests that the Party and O'Brien are omniscient and know Winston's thoughts. This omniscient power relates to Orwell's purpose in creating his storyworld, as it stimulates the consciousness of the audience as he reminds them of how his dystopia is relevant to political systems as the government watches over them and controls their lives, although not as far as reading thoughts. O'Brien often uses 'you' to speak for Winston, as in 'you know', 'you suffer', 'you persuade yourself'. This suggests that O'Brien (and the Party by extension) understand Winston completely by using 'you' as the subject of the sentence. O'Brien also uses them to threaten Winston, as seen when the pronoun is attached to modal verbs like 'you will be annihilated' and 'you will never' and 'you must'.

Comment [A15]:

The use of questions as sub-headings is continued as a way of focusing on specific aspects. This approach allows for a comparative approach, which is appropriate for this student's choice of literary and non-literary material. However, this does not have to be a formula used in all NEA tasks.

Obama immediately directly address the whole American public with the second person pronoun. 'I want to speak to you'. He only uses the second person once more 'I want you to know' Both times the audience is placed in the object position but these allow the public to feel engaged and included and that they are being told the truth.

How important are metaphors in persuasion and to present the enemy?

O'Brien uses metaphors to describe Winston negatively, declaring that he is 'a flaw in the pattern' and 'a stain that must be wiped out'. These both suggest something wrong in Winston that must be corrected by the Party. Comparisons to washing and cleansing (often used in religious contexts) are also contained in O'Brien's statement that 'everyone is washed clean' and threat that Winston 'will be lifted clean out from the stream of history'. O'Brien calls upon semantic fields of mental stability and illness to make Winston question his own mental stability and grasp of reality, and also

to assert the Party as the possible solution. Adverbial intensifiers with 'mentally deranged', adjectives such as 'defective' and verbs like 'suffer' are used to make Winston believe that he is ill in his defiant attitude to the Party. The language of medicine in the adjective 'curable' and O'Brien's assertion that Winston has failed to get better because he has 'never cured' himself and his presentation of Winston as 'clinging' to his 'disease'.

Obama uses less metaphorical language, although there is a similar representation of the enemy and ISIL threat to a 'cancer' but this is not developed into any kind of semantic field. Obama does appeal to his audience by talking of America's collective 'pain' in their recent economic and terrorist experiences, calling too on an illness source domain. Perhaps Obama's avoidance of metaphor is a way of presenting himself as being truthful and honest in his dealings with the public.

What rhetorical devices are important in the language of power and persuasion?

In 1984, asyndeton appears in extended lists such as 'cringing wretches, confessing whatever...whimpering for mercy' and tripling in 'we convert him, we capture him his inner mind, we reshape him.' and 'whimpering', grovelling, weeping'. Noticeable is the emphasis on the verb choices. The present continuous 'ing' form presents the effect of power on the victims of regimes, whereas the material verb process links the action directly to the subject – ie the Party. The triple structure also appears in Obama's speech, seen through the tripling of emotive and powerful verbs and nouns when he discusses how ISIL 'enslave, rape and force women into marriage'; these will help persuade the audience to support Obama's proposals. Tripling is used to link abstract nouns link to American values, 'we stand for freedom, for justice, for dignity', and another tripling of noun phrases collectively praises American society: 'our scientists, our doctors, our know-how'. Polysyndeton 'we will redouble our efforts...and stem the flow' contains the verb choices 'improve', 'strengthen', 'counter' and 'stem' that compare to O'Brien's assertive ones showing the material action Obama is taking.

O'Brien uses hypophora, raising questions and answering them at length: 'Why was that? Because...' and 'Why was it? In the first place'. Through this device O'Brien introduces Winston to the Party's explanations and ideologies in order to persuade Winston that his resistance is futile. Rhetorical questions, 'does the past exist concretely, in space? Is there somewhere or other a place...where the past is still happening' appear more philosophical. In Obama's speech the lack of questions link to his declaration that he is 'Commander-in-Chief' and therefore he is just transmitting his decisions.

O'Brien's use of anaphora is shown in the repeated 'you' in his direct speech; 'you know', 'you have known', 'you are', 'you suffer', 'you are unable'. This is mediated by the omniscient narrator in describing his behaviour with 'he had the air of a doctor, a teacher' and 'anxious to explain and persuade', indicating his verbal manner of delivery to Winston. Anaphora appears later in the interrogation where O'Brien presents the Party's ideology and repeats sentences beginning with 'we: 'we are different', 'we are not content, 'we do not' etc. 'ISIL is not a state' and 'ISIL is a terrorist group' create anaphora in Obama's speech. Commentators on political speech, such as Edith Hall speaking in a Radio 4 programme (*Read My Lips* 2015) said that this adds a semi-poetic structure. In Obama's speech this is shown in the plural pronoun + modal structure as in 'we will increase our support to forces fighting these terrorists on the ground', 'we will send in an additional 475 service members to Iraq' and 'we will also support Iraq's efforts'. The modal verb implies not only determination but a future action. Towards the end, Obama uses anaphora deliberately, repeating 'it is America' four times to highlight the positive contributions that America makes across the world, such as curing Ebola.

Comment [A16]: The student throughout the NEA calls upon a range of secondary sources, including an interesting and pertinent radio programme.

In 1984 parallelism is evident in a repeated noun phrase pattern: 'An act of self-destruction, an effort of the will', and in the Party's slogan, 'who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past'. In 1984, Orwell calls upon antithesis to create opposite truths and contrasting relationships: 'all the glory belonged to the victim and all the shame to the inquisitor' and 'it set out to eradicate heresy, and ended by perpetuating it'. The whole of Obama's speech presents the contrast between the "good" America and "evil" ISIL and he spells this out more literally throughout the whole speech. Obama's parallelism is again more obvious, using it as the speech's conclusion: 'May God bless our troops, and may God bless the United States of America.'

Various types of repetition are demonstrated in 1984. These are at the level of individual lexical choices with O'Brien repeating nouns like 'heretic' and 'power' to make his point and infiltrate Winston's consciousness. Conduplicatio, where a key word is repeated, is evident in the abstract noun 'reality' repeated six times by O'Brien to reinforce his message that it is the Party that controls what reality is to its citizens. In Obama's speech, conduplicatio is in the repetition of the key word 'threat', repeated six times. This has a focusing effect for the audience, making them fearful of the dangers of ISIL. The threat is modified by 'growing' and 'greatest' to intensify the danger.

Conclusion

It is clear that both texts use similar rhetorical devices, one because it is a political speech and calls upon the conventions of the genre and Orwell's novel because he explicitly calls upon the same conventions to explore the abuse of power through the manipulation of people and language. Perhaps the biggest difference is that in *1984*, there is a greater use of parallelism and antithesis as Orwell seeks to show the impact of opposites like truth and lies and uses these to show how the Party seeks to exploit its citizens' confusion. Obama, in contrast, uses more phonological features such as alliteration, perhaps because it is delivered orally to a large national and global audience and the sound of the speech would be important to make it memorable.

The degree to which Obama's speech could be seen as 'literary' might be challenged by Baird (2014) who says that 'oratory is instrumental and practical, as distinguished from poetic or literary composition, which traditionally aims at beauty and pleasure'. By using the term 'marketplace' he suggests that oratory is 'not always concerned with the universal and permanent' (something that perhaps is another traditional definition of literature) and an orator is primarily persuasive rather than informational or entertaining. So, with this in mind, it might be supposed that Orwell's *1984* might be more literary in its fictional presentation of political language. This does not seem to be true. What Orwell does add is the perspective of a narrator, whether this is filtered through the Winston's consciousness or omnisciently. This gives the reader a commentary on O'Brien's direct speech and a challenge to O'Brien's words. For example, to counter Winston as mad, the narrator describes O'Brien's face as 'filled with a sort of exaltation, a lunatic intensity', repeated in 'the exaltation, the lunatic enthusiasm, was still in his face'. So we are asked as readers to view O'Brien's words and ideology as undesirable. This direct narrator role is absent from a political speech, although clearly there will be different interpretations of his words and responses to his decisions.

Comment [A17]:

The *Conclusion* needs to:

- give a summary of the main points revealed in the study
- be an overview of what has been revealed by bringing the textual sources together
- show how the understanding of each text has been enhanced by consideration of the other.

(200-500 words)

Comment [A18]: Links are made back to concepts and ideas raised in the *Review* and explored in the *Analysis* and the student draws conclusions based on the texts chosen and the findings.

References

- Baird, AC. (2014) 'Oratory', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Research Starters.
- Beard, A. (2000) *The Language of Politics* London: Routledge.
- Carter, R. and Nash, W. (1990) *Seeing Through Language: A Guide to Styles of English Writing* Oxford: Blackwell.
- Charles, JD. (1996) 'The new verbal order', *Modern Age*, 38, 4, p. 321.
- Giovanelli, M., Macrae, A., Titjen F., and Cushing, I. (2015) *English Language and Literature* Cambridge: CUP.
- Glover, B. (2010) 'Nineteen Eighty-Four', *Masterplots, Fourth Edition*, pp. 1-3.
- Hutson, S. (2008) 'Spotting the spin in political speeches', *New Scientist*, 199, 2674, p. 22.
- Keedle, J. (2008)Vol. 58 Issue 4, p16-19, 4p..
- Mourby, A. (2003) 'Dystopia: Who Needs It?', *History Today*, 53, 12, pp. 16-17.
- Nazaryan, A (2014) 'CHOOSE YOUR DYSTOPIA', *Newsweek Global*, 162, 4, pp. 154-160.
- Orwell, G. (1946) 'Politics and the English Language', Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Read My Lips: Why Politicians Speak The Way They Do* (2015), BBC Radio 4 11 February 2015, Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0520q63>, last accessed 29 October 2015.

Comment [A19]:

This section demonstrates the range of sources the student has used to inform all aspects of the investigation.

Text sources

<http://www.george-orwell.org/1984/19.html>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/09/10/politics/transcript-obama-syria-isis-speech/index.html>

Appendix 1: George Orwell 1984 extracts (literary text)

Comment [FT20]:

The *Appendix* contains only the literary extracts and non-literary material chosen.

Due to copyright restrictions we have provided only the start and finish of each extract, however, students would be expected to provide the full extract.

Extract 1 - Part 3, Chapter 2

Start: 'O'Brien's manner became less severe.'

Finish: That had lasted for four years. Before that --'

Extract 2 - Part 3, Chapter 2

Start: 'O'Brien was looking down at him speculatively.'

Finish: 'Is there somewhere or other a place, a world of solid objects, where the past is still happening?'

Extract 3 - Part 3, Chapter 2

Start: 'O'Brien's manner grew stern again. He laid his hand on the dial.'

Finish: 'You must humble yourself before you can become sane.'

Extract 4 - Part 3, Chapter

Start: 'He was bending over Winston.'

Finish: 'O'Brien halted and looked down at him. His voice had grown stern again.'

Extract 5 - Part 3 Chapter 3

Start: 'As you lie there,' said O'Brien, 'you have often wondered you have even asked me -- why the Ministry of Love should expend so much time and trouble on you.'

Finish: 'Go on, speak,' he added as Winston remained silent.'

(2000 words approximately)

Appendix 2: Barack Obama's speech (non-literary material)

Start: 'My fellow Americans -- tonight, I want to speak to you about what the United States will do with our friends and allies to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL.'

Finish: 'May God bless our troops, and may God bless the United States of America.'

A transcript of Obama's speech can be found at: <http://fox61.com/2014/09/10/full-transcript-of-pres-obamas-isis-speech/>

Version 0.1

First published (20/01/2016)

Last updated (20/01/2016)