

The PIE Essay (Comparison & Contrast)

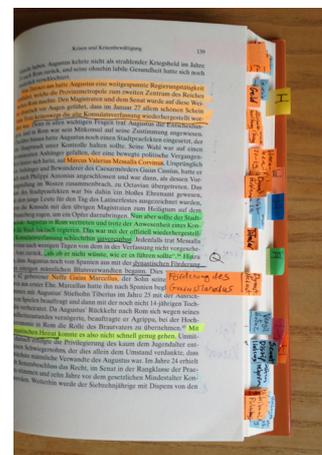
1 — Read the texts

The verb *to read* has two distinct meanings. On the one hand, it refers to the often pleasurable activity of decoding letters on paper and putting them back together again to form images of a story in your imagination. On the other hand, reading can also refer to the careful study of a text and its subject matter. While reading any text in the IB English A: Language & Literature course, you need to focus on the latter. More precisely, you need to focus on the **big 5** of reading and analysing texts:

Analytical Tools – The Big 5	Questions
Audience and Purpose	Who wrote the text? Who was it written for? Why did the writer write it?
Content and Theme	What is the text about?
Tone and Mood	What is the writer's tone? How does the text make the reader feel?
Stylistic Devices	What stylistic devices does the writer use?
Structure	What kind of text is it? What structural conventions are used?

2 — Annotate

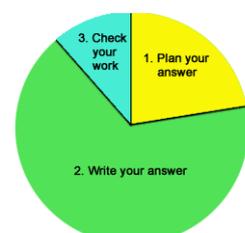
A good essay can provide evidence to make its case, to support *all* its arguments. Evidence can only be found on the scene of the crime, or in this case, the text(s). It is crucial to carefully annotate and highlight key phrases or statements while reading. Label your annotations systematically (according to the Big 5) so that you can quickly find them again while writing your essay.



3 — Use your time wisely

Remember, you (HL) will have 120 minutes to write your essay. Divide your time up like this:

- 30 minutes to **read** and **plan** your essay
- 60 - 75 minutes to **write** your answer (including first + final drafts)
- 15 minutes to **proof-read** your answer



4 — Use the PIE Essay Structure

Remember that when you make a point, you need to support it with a quotation and then explain exactly how the quotation highlights what you want to show. This is also known as the PIE essay structure (Point — Illustration — Explanation) and can be used for any type of essay. The outline below is for a **comparative analysis** of two texts (**Paper 1**):

Introduction (1 paragraph)	A	Attention Grabber (holistic, intriguing, thought-provoking first statement)
	B	Introduce texts and link them to your Attention Grabber
	C	Thesis Statement (3-part structure that compares & contrasts both texts)
Body 1 (1-2 paragraphs)	P	Topic Sentence (focus on one of the Big 5, compare both texts)
	I	Provide / Integrate quotes to illustrate point / argument
	E	Explanation & Analysis (reinforces topic sentence, thesis statement)
Body 2 (1-2 paragraphs)	P	Topic Sentence (focus on one of the Big 5, compare both texts)
	I	Provide / Integrate quotes to illustrate point / argument
	E	Explanation & Analysis (reinforces topic sentence, thesis statement)
Body 3 (1-2 paragraphs)	P	Topic Sentence (focus on one of the Big 5, compare both texts)
	I	Provide / Integrate quotes to illustrate point / argument
	E	Explanation & Analysis (reinforces topic sentence, thesis statement)
Conclusion (1 paragraph)	A	Summary of central comparisons (return to thesis statement)
	B	Final argument(s) & observations about the texts
	C	Thought-provoking final statement

5 — Explanatory Video

Watch this explanatory video on YouTube to gain further insights into the PIE essay structure. The video focuses on how to use the PIE structure when writing comparative essays.

[is.gd/PIEssay](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)