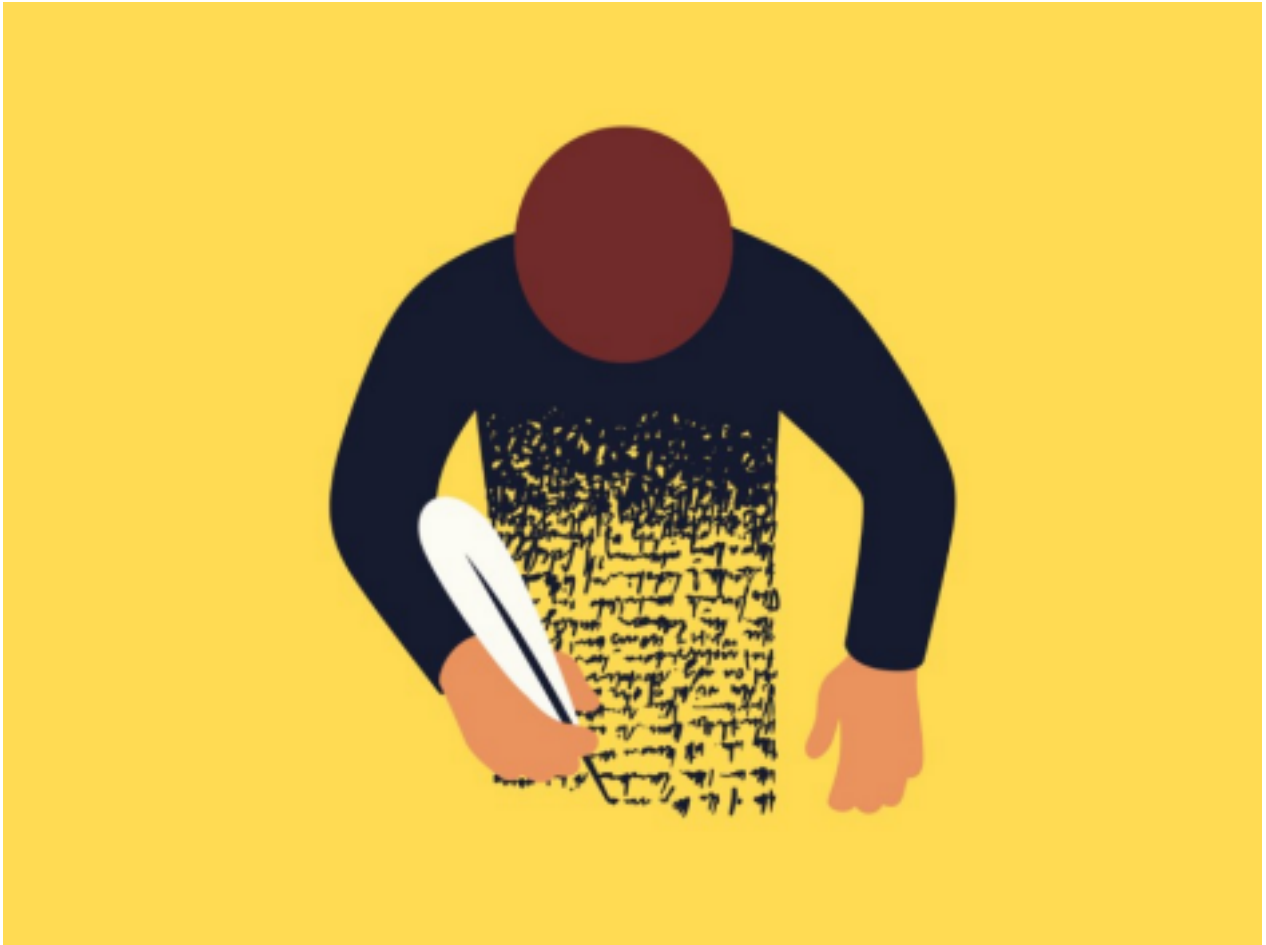


Year 8

Summer Term 1



Reading and Writing Memoirs

Memoirs as a Literary Genre

LE: What are memoirs - who writes them and why?

Memoir Definition

A memoir is a literary genre in which the author relates and reflects on experiences from their own life. Memoirs and autobiographies share many similarities, as both are types of self-written biographies. But while an autobiography provides a comprehensive account of the entirety of someone's life, a memoir is a series of formative or notable memories or events that impacted the author in some way. Memoirs also focus on the author's thoughts and feelings about those events, what they learned, and how they integrated the experiences into their life.

The History of the Memoir Genre

The literary genre of memoir has been around since ancient times. One of the first prominent memoirs was *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* by Julius Caesar, in which Caesar recounted his exploits fighting in the Gallic Wars. During the Middle Ages, historians Geoffrey of Villehardouin and Jean de Joinville and diplomat Philippe de Commines wrote notable memoirs. French princess Margaret of Valois was the first woman to write a modern memoir during this period.

Over the latter half of the 18th through the mid-20th century, memoirists generally included those who were noted within their chosen profession. These authors wrote as a way to record and publish their own account of their public exploits. Authors included politicians or people in court society and were later joined by military leaders and businessmen. An exception to these models is Henry David Thoreau's 1854 memoir *Walden*, which presents his experiences over the course of two years in a cabin he built near Walden Pond.

In the twentieth-century war memoirs became a genre of their own, including, from the First World War. Memoirs documenting incarceration by Nazi Germany during the war include Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man*, which covers his arrest as a member of the Italian Resistance Movement, followed by his life as a prisoner in Auschwitz; and Elie Wiesel's *Night*, which is based on his life prior to and during his time in the Auschwitz, Buna Werke, and Buchenwald concentration camps.

Memoirs today

In the early 1990s, memoirs written by ordinary people experienced a sudden upsurge, as an increasing number of people realized that their ancestors' and their own stories were about to disappear, in part as a result of the opportunities and distractions of technological advances. At the same time, psychology and other research began to show that familiarity with genealogy helps people find their place in the world and that life review helps people come to terms with their own past. With the advent of inexpensive digital book production in the first decade of the 21st century, the genre exploded. Memoirs written as a way to pass down a personal legacy, rather than as a literary work of art or historical document, are emerging as a personal and family responsibility.

How are Memoirs Told and Who Tells Them?

Memoirists can tell their stories in a number of ways. Framing devices are popular structures for memoirs, opening and closing with more recent events and, in between, going back in time to earlier events.

Many authors construct their memoirs as a series of anecdotes or short snapshots about their lives. This has been a popular approach in recent years with several notable essay collections receiving widespread attention and landing on bestseller lists. For instance, actors Anna Kendrick and Mindy Kaling released personal essay collections largely centred around their Hollywood experiences.

Famous people, however, are not the only ones who write successful memoirs. Ordinary people often have just as, if not, more interesting and emotional stories to tell. Lab Girl (2016) is professor of geobiology Hope Jahren's engaging memoir which tells the story of her fight to establish and fund her own research laboratory. In In A Long Way Gone (2007), Ishmael Beah tells a riveting story: how at the age of twelve, he fled attacking rebels and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence.

Other common memoir subjects include addiction, mental illness, difficult childhoods, spiritual or religious journeys, travelogues, and political careers.

The Function of Memoirs

A memoir gives an author an opportunity to share what they have learned from specific life experiences. Instead of recording every major life event, a memoir focuses on certain details around a central theme. This approach might help the author find clarity and meaning in their lives.

Memoirs also help readers gain insights, both into the lives of others and their own. Memoirs invite readers into someone else's mind, and in doing so provide answers, a sense of humour, common ground, and interesting or unique stories that speak to life's challenges or absurdities. Memoirs are both intimate and all-encompassing; in telling their own story, the author is often speaking to a vast audience.

In summary, a memoir can be a lot of things: a journey through someone's life, an insight into their mindset at a particular time, a comfort to someone experiencing similar things, an inspiration for those seeking something more.

Over the next term, we will be reading excerpts from the following memoirs.

Malala Yousafzai: I am Malala

Haruki Murakami: What I Talk About When I Talk About Running

Mohsin Zaidi: A Dutiful Boy

Michelle Obama: Becoming

Helen Keller: The Story of My Life

Task 1: Check your understanding of memoirs as a literary genre by answering the questions below

1. Where does the word "memoir" come from?
2. What is the definition of the word memoir?
3. How are memoirs different to autobiographies?
4. How long have people been writing memoirs for?

5. Summarise some of the ways in which the genre has developed over time.

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6. What types of people write memoirs?

7. Why might people write memoirs?

8. Look again at the titles of some of the memoirs we will be reading from. What do lots of the titles have in common?

Malala Yousafazi: I am Malala

Haruki Murakami: What I Talk About When I Talk About Running

Mohsin Zaidi: A Dutiful Boy

Michelle Obama: Becoming

Helen Keller: The Story of My Life

9. Have you heard of any of the writers of these memoirs? If so, what do you know about them?

This half term, you will be reading excerpts from different memoirs. You will learn about the features of memoirs and how writers use these to convey their thoughts, feelings and memories to the reader.

This half term you will be assessed on your knowledge and understanding of how writers use devices to convey their thoughts, feelings and memories.

Next half term, you will use what you have learnt about the features of memoir writing to write a short memoir of your own where you recount a significant or memorable moment in your life.

When reading and discussing these memoirs, it is important to remember that they sometimes deal with sensitive topics. It is important to remember that everybody's experiences and beliefs (even if they are different from our own) should be tolerated and respected.

As we read and discuss these memoirs, please remember to be:

- **Respectful**
- **Kind**
- **Non-judgmental**
- **Open-minded**
- **Curious**

Now, before you read the first extract from Malala's memoir, write down any important

events or significant memories that you might like to write about next term—you don't have to share these with anyone!

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Memoir 1: *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafazi

LE: How do writers convey their thoughts, feelings and memories?

Knowledge Recall: True or False?

1. The literary genre of memoir was invented in the 20th century
2. A memoir gives an author an opportunity to share what they have learned from specific life experiences.
3. Only celebrities write memoirs
4. A memoir is a literary form in which the author relates and reflects on experiences from their own life.



the **Taliban** in **Pakistan** when she was fifteen years old.

Pakistan: Pakistan is a country in southern Asia. It is next to India, Iran, Afghanistan, and China. It is officially called the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Pakistan has the fifth largest population (207.77 million) in the world.

Taliban: The Taliban is an extreme Islamist organisation. Although it means different things to different people, in the UK the term Islamist is generally used to refer to groups who want to live by a very :



Who is Malala Yousafazi?

Task: Read the short biography of Malala below. As you are reading, think about WHY Malala might have chosen to write

a memoir

Malala Yousafzai was born in the Swat Valley, in Pakistan in 1997. Many children in Pakistan cannot go to school, especially if they are girls, but Malala's father thought that education was very important and he ran a school.

When Malala was about 12 years old, the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley. They did not want girls to go to school and they closed many schools. Malala started writing a blog for the BBC but she did not use her real name. She wrote about life in her town and she said that she was afraid her school would be shut down.

The Taliban told Malala's father that he had to close his school. Malala and her father continued to speak out for the right to education, even though it was very dangerous to do this. The Taliban

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told Malala's father that he had to close his school. Malala and her father continued to speak out for the right to education, even though it was very dangerous to do this. The Taliban told them to stop, otherwise they might kill them, but Malala and her father did not stop.

In 2011, Malala received the National Youth Peace Prize in Pakistan. She was becoming famous and the Taliban decided to try to kill her, even though she was still a child. On 9 October 2012, Malala and her friends were on the school bus on their way home from school.

A gunman came on to the bus and asked which girl was Malala. Then he shot her in the head. Two of her friends were also injured. Malala survived but she was very badly hurt. She went to hospital in Pakistan and then she was flown to a hospital in the UK. She had to stay in hospital for over two months.

People all around the world were very shocked that the Taliban tried to kill a 15 year old girl, just because she spoke out for education. Many people supported Malala and thought she was very brave and she became a symbol of children's right to education.

After she left hospital Malala started going to school in the UK, but she was also even more determined to fight for children's rights to go to school. She was now famous and on her 16th birthday she made a speech to the United Nations Youth Assembly.

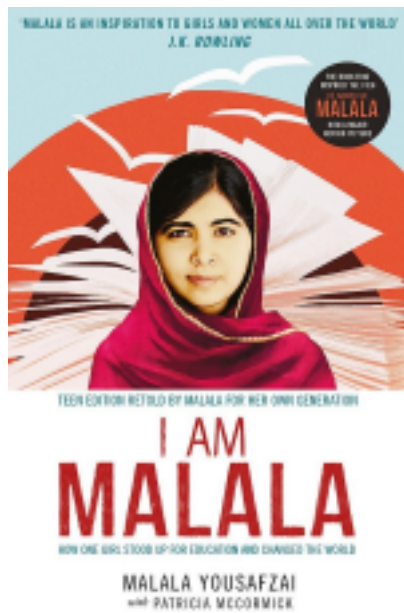
In December 2014, Malala was the youngest person ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her work 'for the right of all children to education'. She used her prize money to build a secondary school for girls in Pakistan and continued campaigning for education for all children.

She celebrated her 18th birthday by opening a school for Syrian girls in a refugee camp in Lebanon. Malala then went on to study for a degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Oxford, UK.

Task 1: Copy and complete the sentences

1. When she was fifteen years old, Malala was shot by the Taliban because... 2. People around

the world were shocked by what had happened to Malala because... 3. Malala survived the attack and has dedicated her life to



Task 2: Malala published her memoir, 'I Am Malala' in 2013. In the memoir, she tells her story Read some of the media reviews of the book.

'A tale of immense courage and conviction which begins as [Malala] is shot for campaigning for the rights of girls to an education.' - The Independent

'For sheer inspiration read I Am Malala.' - Kirsty Brimelow, The Times

'The story of the girl shot by the Taliban for speaking up for women's education is one of idealism and stubborn courage, and a reminder that women's rights and many children's rights to education are continually threatened.' - Metro

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Task 3: Why might Malala have written her memoir? Discuss as a class and then complete the sentences below.

I think Malala wrote her memoir to...

draw attention to....

reveal...

share...

challenge...

Task 4: This extract comes from the opening of the book.

As you read, pay attention to the thoughts, feelings and memories Malala conveys. Begin to think about HOW she does this.

When I close my eyes, I can see my bedroom
unmade, my fluffy blanket in a heap, because
I was out for school, late for an exam. My school bag
was on my desk to a page dated 9 October 2012.
My uniform—my white *shalwar* and blue *kamiz*—
was hanging on the wall, waiting for me.

I can hear the neighborhood kids playing in the
alley behind our home. I can hear the hum of traffic
far away. And if I listen very closely, I can hear my
friend next door, tapping on the wall we share, telling
me a secret.

I smell rice cooking as my mother works in the kitchen.
I hear my little brothers fighting over the TV remote
switching between *WWE SmackDown* and *Cartoon Network*.
I'll hear my father's deep voice as he calls out to me.

1. Where and when does Malala travel back to in her mind when she closes her eyes?

2. When describing this day, Malala describes what she can hear and what she can smell. We call this **sensory language**. Underline examples of sensory language in these three paragraphs.

3. Why do you think Malala uses **sensory language** here?

4. Malala describes her memory in the **present tense**. Why might she do this?

5. Why do you think Malala includes the name of her friend and mentions **specific details** such as the colour of her uniform and what was on the TV?

Task 5:

Questions for after reading

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6. Why might Malala include **dialogue** between her father and her?

7. Find evidence from this part of the text that implies that the day which is being described was a very significant one.

8. Why does Malala only visit this place in her mind?

9. How might Malala feel about not being able to return to a place which was once her home?

10. What does Malala worry about and why are these things significant to her?

11. Malala calls the day she recalls “fateful”. Why might she use that word?

12. How does Malala take the reader back to the present?

13. How does Malala contrast Birmingham with her home in Pakistan? Why might she do this?

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14. Why might Malala repeat “No” throughout this paragraph.

15. Malala uses **emotive language**—“I can hear someone in my family **crying** for home”. Why might she use this device?

16. Identify more examples of **emotive language** in this paragraph.

17. The writer (Malala) has shifted into **past tense**—why might that be?

18. How does Malala set the scene in this part of the memoir?

19. How does Malala portray her family in this part of the memoir?

20. Identify some of the **specific details** which the writer includes here.

21. What impression does Malala create of her family?

Atal, the little clown in the family, pretended to be cross. “No!” he cried. “She will be *my* secretary!”

All this banter nearly made me late, and I raced out the door, my half-eaten breakfast still on the table. I ran down the lane just in time to see the school bus crammed with other girls on their way to school. I jumped in that Tuesday morning and never looked back at my home.

it always did. The chaos of Mingora city surrounded us with its honking horns and factory noises while we worked silently, bent over our papers in hushed concentration. By day’s end I was tired but happy; I knew I’d done well on my test.

“Let’s stay on for the second trip,” said Moniba, my best

The ride to school was quick, just five minutes up the road and along the river. I arrived on time, and exam day passed as

22. How does the writer build tension from this part of the memoir onwards? Underline any moments of tension.

Moniba and the other girls covered their heads and faces before we stepped outside the gate and got into the waiting *dyna*, the white truck that was our Khushal School “bus.” And, as usual, our driver was ready with a magic trick to amuse us. That day, he made a pebble disappear. No matter how hard we tried, we couldn’t figure out his secret.

We piled inside, twenty girls and two teachers crammed into the three rows of benches stretching down the length of the *dyna*. It was hot and sticky, and there were no windows, just a yellowed plastic sheet that flapped against the side as we bounced along Mingora’s crowded rush-hour streets.

Haji Baba Road was a jumble of brightly colored rickshaws, women in flowing robes, men on scooters, honking and zigzagging through the traffic. We passed a shopkeeper butchering chickens. A boy selling ice-cream cones. A billboard for Dr. Humayun’s Hair Transplant Institute. Moniba and I were

23. Why might Malala include these details from her and Moniba’s conversation that day?

24. How does Malala recreate the atmos

phere of that day in this part of the memoir?

Just after we passed the Little Giants snack factory and the bend in the road not more than three minutes from my house, the van slowed to a halt. It was oddly quiet outside.

“It’s so calm today,” I said to Moniba. “Where are all the people?”

25. How is tension created at this point in the memoir?

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26. What questions, thoughts or feelings might the last line of this extract leave the reader with?

Task 6: In the opening of her memoir, Malala tells the story of the days leading up to the day she was shot. She also describes the day itself. Why might she have decided to tell this story? Re-read the information we read about the function of memoirs.

The Function of Memoirs

A memoir gives an author an opportunity to share what they have learned from specific life experiences. Instead of recording every major life event, a memoir focuses on certain details around a central theme. This approach might help the author find clarity and meaning in their lives.

Memoirs also help readers gain insights, both into the lives of others and their own. Memoirs invite readers into someone else's mind, and in doing so provide answers, a sense of humour, common ground, and interesting or unique stories that speak to life's challenges or absurdities. Memoirs are both intimate and all-encompassing; in telling their own story, the author is often speaking to a vast audience.

In summary, a memoir can be a lot of things: a journey through someone's life, an insight into their mindset at a particular time, a comfort to someone experiencing similar things, an inspiration for those seeking something more.

Task 7: Keeping in mind the extract of Malala's memoir and what we know about the function of memoirs, answer the following questions:

1. What specific life experience does Malala describe in the opening of her memoir?
2. What central theme do you think she will go on to talk about?
3. What insights does Malala give into her life and the lives of her family and friends?
4. Does Malala give the reader an insight into anything else?
5. How does Malala create a sense of intimacy with the reader? When does she do this?
6. In telling her own story, what all-encompassing, wider purpose might Malala be fulfilling?

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Task 8: Think back to the questions you answered in the margins of the extract. All of these questions encouraged you to understand and unpick **HOW Malala tells her story**.

In the table below are some of **the ways in which Malala recounts her memories**. In telling her story, she draws on lots of **features** found in the **literary genre of memoirs**.

They are conventions of the genre. Complete the table to consolidate your understanding of some of these features. We could also refer to these features as **devices, techniques or methods.**

Method	Example	Effect
Use of tense		
Sensory language		
Specific or precise details		
Emotive language		
Dialogue		
Descriptions of people		
Descriptions of place		

Memoir 2: *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running* by Haruki Murakami

LE: How do writers convey their thoughts, feelings and memories?

Knowledge Recall

1. In memoirs, writers recreate the sounds and smells of a place—what do we call this device?
2. In memoirs, writers often explore and express their own thoughts, feelings. They might also describe other people's emotions. What do we call this type of language?
3. Can you recall any other features or devices found in memoirs?

Who is Haruki Murakami?

Born in Kyoto in 1949, Murakami became a full-time writer following the publication of his first novel in 1979. Later, he was thrown into the lime light with the publication of *Norwegian Wood*, which to date has sold more than 4 million copies in Japan alone.

He is now Japan's best-known novelist abroad and the author of many novels as well as short stories and non-fiction, including *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, *Kafka on the Shore*, *After Dark*, *1Q84*, *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running* and *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*.

What I Talk About When I Talk About Running is a memoir by Haruki Murakami in which he writes about his interest and participation in long distance running.



Task 1: Before we start reading the opening of Murakami's memoir, discuss with your partner why someone might want to write about their experiences of running. Use these sentence stems to guide your discussion. Jot down your ideas as you discuss them.

He might have written this memoir to...

share....

celebrate...

inspire...

Task 2: Your teacher will read the opening of Murakami's memoir. Once you've read it, go back and answer the questions to explore HOW Murakami conveys his thoughts, feelings and memories.

Excerpt

What I Talk About When I Talk About Running

One

AUGUST 5, 2005 . KAUAI, HAWAII

Who's Going to Laugh at Mick Jagger?

I'm on Kauai, in Hawaii, today, Friday, August 5, 2005. It's unbelievably clear and sunny, not a cloud in the sky. As if the concept of clouds doesn't even exist. I came here at the end of July and, as always, we rented a condo. During the mornings, when it's cool, I sit at my desk, writing all sorts of things. Like now: I'm writing this, a piece on running that I can pretty much **compose** as I wish. It's summer, so naturally it's hot. Hawaii's been called the island of eternal summer, but since it's in the Northern Hemisphere there are, arguably, four seasons of a sort. Summer is somewhat hotter than winter. I spend a lot of time in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and compared to Cambridge—so **muggy** and hot with all its bricks and concrete it's like a form of torture—summer in Hawaii is a **veritable** paradise. No need for an air conditioner here—just leave the window open, and a refreshing breeze blows in. People in Cambridge are always surprised when they hear I'm spending August in Hawaii. "Why would you want to spend summer in a hot place like that?" they **invariably** ask. But they don't know what it's like. How the constant trade winds from the northeast make summers cool. How happy life is here, where we can enjoy lounging around, reading a book in the shade of trees, or, if the notion strikes us, go down, just as we are, for a dip in the inlet.

Since I arrived in Hawaii I've run about an hour

every day, six days a week. It's two and a half months now since I resumed my old lifestyle in which, unless it's totally unavoidable, I run every single day. Today I ran for an hour and ten minutes, listening on my Walkman to two albums by the Lovin' Spoonful—Daydream and Hums of the Lovin' Spoonful—which I'd recorded on an **MD** disc.

Tone: mood or attitude which reflects the writer's attitude

1. One of the ways the writer sets the scene in the opening of this memoir is through **sensory imagery**. Underline and annotate three examples of this.

2. How else does the writer set the scene?

3. The writer's **tone** seems quite informal and conversational at points. Can you find two examples of this. Why might the writer have wanted to create this **tone**?

4. What do we learn about the writer in this part of the memoir?

Right now I'm aiming at increasing the distance I run, so speed is less of an issue. As long as I can run a certain distance, that's all I care about. Sometimes I run fast when I feel like it, but if I increase the pace I shorten the amount of time I run, the point being to let the exhilaration I feel at the end of each run carry over to the next day. This is the same sort of tack I find necessary when writing a novel. I stop every day right at the point where I feel I can write more. Do that, and the next day's work goes surprisingly smoothly. I think Ernest Hemingway did something like that. To keep on going, you have to keep up the rhythm. This is the important thing for long-term projects. Once you set the pace, the rest will follow. The problem is getting the flywheel to spin at a set speed—and to get to that point takes as much concentration and effort as you can manage.

It rained for a short time while I was running, but it was a cooling rain that felt good. A thick cloud blew in from the ocean right over me, and a gentle rain fell for a while, but then, as if it had remembered, "Oh, I've got to do some errands!", it whisked itself away without so much as a glance back. And then the merciless sun was back, scorching the ground. It's a very easy-to-understand weather pattern. Nothing **abstruse** or **ambivalent** about it, not a speck of the metaphor or the symbolic. On the way I passed a few other joggers, about an equal number of men and women. The energetic ones were zipping down the road, slicing through the air like they had robbers at their heels. Others, overweight, huffed and puffed, their eyes half closed, their shoulders slumped like this was the last thing in the

world they wanted to be doing. They looked like maybe a week ago their doctors had told them they have diabetes and warned them they had to start exercising. I'm somewhere in the middle.

I love listening to the Lovin' Spoonful. Their music is sort of laid-back and never pretentious. Listening to this soothing music brings back a lot of memories of the 1960s. Nothing really special, though. If they were to make a movie about my life (just the thought of which scares me), these would be the scenes they'd leave on the cutting-room floor. "We can leave this episode out," the editor would explain. "It's not bad, but it's sort of ordinary and doesn't amount to much." Those kinds of memories—**unpretentious, commonplace**. But for me, they're all meaningful and valuable. As each of these memories flits across my mind, I'm sure I unconsciously smile, or give a slight frown.

Commonplace they might be, but the **accumulation** of these memories has led to one result: me. Me here and now, on the north shore of Kauai. Sometimes when I think of life, I feel like a piece of driftwood washed up on shore.

5. What do you notice about the **tense** that is being used throughout this memoir?

6. What does the writer compare running to?

7. The writer has shifted back to the day in August on 8. What has the writer shifted the focus of their which they were running. How do they recreate that memoir to now? Why might they have done this? day?

9. How does the writer feel about their own memories?

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As I run, the trade winds blowing in from the direction of the lighthouse rustle the leaves of the eucalyptus over my head.

I began living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the end of May of this year, and running has once again been the mainstay of my daily routine ever since. I'm seriously running now. By seriously I mean thirty-six miles a week. In other words, six miles a day, six days a week. It would be better if I ran seven days, but I have to factor in rainy days, and days when work keeps me too busy. There are some days, too, when frankly I just feel too tired to run. Taking all this into account, I leave one day a week as a day off. So, at thirty six miles per week, I cover 156 miles every month, which for me is my standard for serious running.

In June I followed this plan exactly, running 156 miles on the nose. In July I increased the distance and covered 186 miles. I averaged six miles every day, without taking a single day off. I don't mean I covered precisely six miles every day. If I ran nine miles one day, the next day I'd do only three. (At a jogging pace I generally can cover six miles in an hour.) For me this is most definitely running at a serious level. And since I came to Hawaii I've kept up this pace. It had been far too long since I'd been able to run these distances and keep up this kind of fixed

schedule.

There are several reasons why, at a certain point in my life, I stopped running seriously. First of all, my life has been getting busier, and free time is increasingly at a premium. When I was younger it wasn't as if I had as much free time as I wanted, but at least I didn't have as many **miscellaneous** chores as I do now. I don't know why, but the older you get, the busier you become. Another reason is that I've gotten more interested in triathlons, rather than marathons. Triathlons, of course, involve swimming and cycling in addition to running. The running part isn't a problem for me, but in order to master the other two legs of the event I had to devote a great deal of time to training in swimming and biking. I had to start over from scratch with swimming, relearning the correct form, learning the right biking techniques, and training the necessary muscles. All of this took time and effort, and as a result I had less time to devote to running.

Probably the main reason, though, was that at a certain point I'd simply grown tired of it. I started running in the fall of 1982 and have been running since then for nearly twenty-three years. Over this period I've jogged almost every day, run in at least one marathon every year—twenty-three up till and participated in more long-distance races

all around the world than I care to count.

10. Why do you think the writer gives us these specific details about their running routine?

and of all the habits I've acquired over my lifetime I'd have to say this one has been the most helpful, the most meaningful. Running without a break for more than two decades has also made me stronger, both physically and emotionally.

The thing is, I'm not much for team sports. That's just the way I am. Whenever I play soccer or baseball—actually, since becoming an adult this is almost never—I never feel comfortable. Maybe it's because I don't have any brothers, but I could never get into the kind of games you play with others. I'm also not very good at one-on-one sports like tennis. I enjoy squash, but generally when it comes to a game against someone, the competitive aspect makes me uncomfortable. And when it comes to martial arts, too, you can count me out.

Don't misunderstand me—I'm not totally uncompetitive. It's just that for some reason I never cared all that much whether I beat others or lost to them. This sentiment remained pretty much unchanged after I grew up. It doesn't matter what field you're talking about—beating somebody else just doesn't do it for me. I'm much more interested in whether I reach the goals that I set for myself, so in this sense long-distance running is the perfect fit for a mindset like mine.

11. What is the writer focusing on at this point?

Marathon runners will understand what I mean. We don't really care whether we beat any other particular runner. World-class runners, of course, want to outdo their closest rivals, but for your average, everyday runner, individual rivalry isn't a major issue. I'm sure there are **garden-variety** runners whose desire to beat a particular rival spurs them on to train harder. But what happens if their rival, for whatever reason, drops out of the competition? Their motivation for running would disappear or at least diminish, and it'd be hard for them to remain runners for long.

Most ordinary runners are motivated by an individual goal, more than anything: namely, a time they want to beat. As long as he can beat that time, a runner will feel he's accomplished what he set out to do, and if he can't, then he'll feel he hasn't. Even

if he doesn't break the time he'd hoped for, as long as he has the sense of satisfaction at having done his very best—and, possibly, having made some significant discovery about himself in the process—then that in itself is an accomplishment, a positive feeling he can carry over to the next race.

12. How has running impacted the writer's life?

13. How does the writer use their interest in long-distance running to tell us about other aspects of their personality and interests?

14. How does Murakami maintain a conversational and informal tone at points in this part of the memoir?

The same can be said about my profession. In the novelist's profession, as far as I'm concerned, there's no such thing as winning or losing. Maybe numbers of copies sold, awards won, and critics' praise serve as outward standards for accomplishment in literature, but none of them really matter. What's crucial is whether your writing attains the standards you've set for yourself. Failure to reach that bar is not something you can easily explain away. When it comes to other people, you can always come up with a reasonable explanation, but you can't fool yourself. In this sense, writing novels and running full marathons are very much alike. Basically a writer has a quiet, inner motivation, and doesn't seek validation in the outwardly visible.

For me, running is both exercise and a metaphor. Running day after day, piling up the races, bit by bit I raise the bar, and by clearing each level I

elevate myself. At least that's why I've put in the effort day after day: to raise my own level. I'm no great runner, by any means. I'm at an ordinary—or perhaps more like **mediocre**—level. But that's not the point. The point is whether or not I improved over yesterday. In long-distance running the only opponent you have to beat is yourself, the way you used to be.

15. For the second time, what does Murakami compare running to?

16. According to Murakami, how are writing and running similar to one another?

17. In your own words, explain why Murakami runs?

Task 3: Re-read the information about the function of memoirs.

A memoir gives an author an opportunity to share what they have learned from specific life experiences. Instead of recording every major life event, a memoir focuses on certain details around a central theme. This approach might help the author find clarity and meaning in their lives.

Memoirs also help readers gain insights, both into the lives of others and their own. Memoirs invite readers into someone else's mind, and in doing so provide answers, a sense of humour, common ground, and interesting or unique stories that speak to life's challenges or absurdities. Memoirs are both intimate and all-encompassing; in telling their own story, the author is often speaking to a vast audience.

In summary, a memoir can be a lot of things: a journey through someone's life, an insight into their mindset at a particular time, a comfort to someone experiencing similar things, an inspiration for those seeking something more.

Having read the opening of Murakami's memoir, what function do you think this memoir serves— why do you think he has written it? Use the sentences below to help you

Through his memoir, Murakami...

...shares what he has learned about...

...might be trying to gain clarity about...

...gives the reader an insight into...

...might be trying to inspire readers to...

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Task 4: Explore HOW the writer uses methods to convey their thoughts, feelings and memories.

Method	Example	Effect
Use of tense		
Sensory language		

Specific or precise details		
Emotive language		
Dialogue		
Descriptions of people		
Descriptions of place		

Task 5: Murakami's **tone** is quite conversational and informal. At times, it sounds like he is speaking his thoughts directly to the reader. HOW does he create this tone and WHY might he do this?

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Memoir 3: A Dutiful Boy by Mohsin Zaidi

LE: How do writers convey their thoughts, feelings and memories?

Knowledge Recall

1. Complete the sentence below using the words: precise and places

In memoirs, writers often describe people and _____ in specific and _____ detail to recreate their memories for the reader.

2. What is another word for **tone**?

3. What is **emotive language**?

Read a synopsis of the memoir that we are going to read next:

Winner of the LAMDA Literary Award

Named one of the best books of the year by The Guardian, GQ, The NewStatesman and Attitude

A Dutiful Boy is a coming of age memoir about Mohsin, a Muslim boy growing up in a poor part of London in a strict religious household who has to come to terms with the fact that he is gay. He becomes the first person from his school to go to Oxford University, where he is confronted with the broken parts of his identity and seeks a way to reconcile seeming irreconcilable worlds. He then goes on to become a criminal barrister.

In young adulthood, Mohsin fights for a place in his family and ultimately finds it. At its heart, the story is one of family love, with parents overcoming the religious and cultural barriers that stand between them and their son. As well as faith, sexuality and mental health, the book addresses issues of race and class in a subtle but sophisticated manner.

I worked closely with Judge Lord Wilson from the start, who expected me to meet him in his office at 9 a.m. each morning to discuss the day's upcoming case.

that judicial assistants had to address the justices by their title, rather than their first name. It demonstrated respect for the institution.

'Good morning, Mohsin,' he said in his cut-glass accent. He had thick, white, slicked-back hair and a wide smile.

'I've been invited to give a speech to the Medico-Legal Society at Queen's University in Belfast,' he said. I stared at him blankly. 'A group of Northern Irish lawyers,' he explained. 'Given my background in family law, I'd like to make a speech

'Good morning, Lord Wilson.' The court decreed

on gay marriage and I'd like your help.'

statement, I welled up.

I froze, wanting the floor to open up and suck me in.

Task 1: Answer the questions after reading

'Yes, of course. What can I do?'

1. How does the writer introduce Lord Wilson?

'Well, as you know, gay marriage is not yet legal in Northern Ireland.' 'Yes.'

'Well, I'd like to illustrate how ridiculous this is through historical and current examples of marriage. I want to show that the concept was man-made and can therefore be adjusted by man.'

2. Why might dialogue be used here?

I wanted to come out to him right there and then but it was irrelevant and, more to the point, unprofessional.

3. The writer said that he "froze, wanting the floor to open and suck me in". Why might he have felt this way?

'Of course, Lord Wilson. I'll get to work straight away.'

The speech went through at least twenty-four drafts and each draft brought with it more queries to resolve and quirky examples to find. During the course of working on the speech, I noticed Lord Wilson's formidable literacy didn't extend to computers so I lent him my new iPad in an effort to demonstrate how easy they were to use. Two days later he had acquired his own. It was the first time he would have an email address.

4. What did this moment in his career prompt the writer to want to do?

Every minute of working on the speech taught me something new; I was doing something that mattered. Lord Wilson effortlessly, politely and humorously dismantled the arguments levelled against gay marriage by using examples throughout history of how human beings had changed the concept of marriage to suit themselves. **His ability to sculpt words into an attractive argument was akin to watching Michelangelo work with marble I imagined.** The first time I read his concluding

5. How did the writer feel about working on the speech with Lord Wilson?

6. Look at the words underlined in bold. What does the writer compare Lord Wilson's speech writing skills to? Why? What tone does this create?

7. Why might the writer have "welled up" when he read the concluding statement of the speech?

The most important benefit of same-sex marriage is the symbol that it holds up to the heterosexual community, not forgetting teenagers apprehensively trying to make sense of their own emerging sexuality, that each of the two types of intimate adult love is as valid as the other. The

availability of marriage properly dignifies same-sex love. To the question 'why should same-sex couples, who can as civil partners already enjoy all relevant rights, be allowed to get married?', the proper response in my view is 'why shouldn't they?'

I had to pinch myself to make sure I wasn't

dreaming. Not only did I have the most interesting job a young lawyer could do, but by extraordinary luck, I was also working on a project that held a deeply personal significance.

8. Why do you think the writer includes an extract from Lord Wilson's speech here?

9. How does the writer feel about working on this project? Underline any words and phrases which imply his thoughts and feelings.

Task 2: Having read the extract and answered the questions, remind yourself of some of the methods writers use to convey their thoughts, feelings and memories in memoir writing.

- Use of tense
- Sensory language
- Specific and precise details
- Emotive language
- Dialogue
- Descriptions of people
- Descriptions of places

Method	Example	Effect
Use of tense		
Sensory language		
Specific or precise details		
Emotive language		

Dialogue		
Descriptions of people		
Descriptions of place		

B. Give an example of HOW and WHY the writer uses certain devices. An example has been done for you.

HOW: Dialogue—‘Given my background in family law, I’d like to make a speech on gay marriage and I’d like your help.’

WHY: The writer uses dialogue to introduce what would become a significant moment in his career as a lawyer and which he had a personal connection to.

HOW: Emotive language—

WHY:

HOW:

WHY:

Use some of the phrases on the right to help you.

...to focus the reader’s attention

on... ..draws attention to...

...gives the reader an insight

...to introduce...

into... ..evoke...

..recreates...

....emphasises/highlights/reiterates

... ..suggests/implies..

...portrays/presents/conveys...

LE: How do writers convey their thoughts, feelings and memories?

Knowledge Recall

1. Recall three devices you might find in a memoir.

2. Complete the sentences below:

Someone might write a memoir to share...

Someone might write a memoir to reflect on...

Someone might write a memoir to inspire...

Who is Michelle Obama?

Former First Lady Michelle Obama was born in Chicago in 1964. At a young age she excelled in school and worked hard in middle and high school to graduate with honours and as her high school class salutatorian.

Following high school, she attended Princeton University where she graduated with honours with a Bachelors in Sociology. Michelle then went to Harvard Law School and worked to bring more equality to the enrolment in the school for minority professors and students.

In 1992 Michelle married Barak Obama, who eventually became the president of the United States from 2008- 2016. As First Lady, Michelle Obama focused on healthy eating initiatives for families and children, supporting working women with families, education and supporting the arts, supported military families, and so much more.

Her memoir, *Becoming*, chronicles her life as a young girl in Chicago, her life as a lawyer, and of course, her experiences as the First Lady of the United States.

Task 1: Read some of these quotes from Michelle Obama's memoir. Why might she have chosen to write a memoir? Use some of the words below to help you:

to share.../to inspire.../to draw attention to.../to celebrate...

"Even when it's not pretty or perfect. Even when it's more real than you want it to be. Your story is what you have, what you will always have. It is something to own."

"For me, becoming isn't about arriving somewhere or achieving a certain aim. I see it instead as forward motion, a means of evolving, a way to reach continuously toward a better self. The journey doesn't end."

"If you don't get out there and define yourself, you'll be quickly and inaccurately defined by others."

"Confidence, I'd learned then, sometimes needs to be called from within. I've repeated

*the same words to myself so many times now, through many climbs. Am I good enough?
Yes I am."*

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I was about four when I decided I wanted to learn piano. Craig, who was in the first grade, was already making trips downstairs for weekly lessons on Robbie's upright and returning relatively unscathed. I figured I was ready. I was pretty convinced I already had learned piano, in fact, through straight-up osmosis—all those hours spent listening to other kids fumbling through their songs. The music was already in my head. I just wanted to go downstairs and demonstrate to my exacting great-aunt what a gifted girl I was, how it would take no effort at all for me to become her star student.

Robbie's piano sat in a small square room at the rear of the house, close to a window that overlooked the backyard. She kept a potted plant in one corner and a folding table where students could fill out music work sheets in the other. During lessons, she sat straight spined in an upholstered high-back armchair, tapping out the beat with one finger, her head cocked as she listened keenly for each mistake.

Was I afraid of Robbie? Not exactly, but there was a scariness to her; she represented a rigid kind of authority I hadn't yet encountered elsewhere. She demanded excellence from every kid who sat on her piano bench. I saw her as someone to win over, or maybe to somehow conquer. With her, it always felt like there was something to prove.

At my first lesson, my legs dangled from the piano bench, too short to reach the floor. Robbie gave me my own elementary music workbook, which I was thrilled about, and showed me how to position my hands properly over the keys.

"All right, pay attention," she said, scolding me before we'd even begun. "Find middle C."

When you're little, a piano can look like it has a thousand keys. You're staring at an expanse of black and white that stretches farther than two small arms can reach. Middle C, I soon learned, was the anchoring point. It was the territorial line between where the right hand and the left hand travelled, between the treble and the bass clefs. If you could lay your thumb on middle C, everything else automatically fell into place. The keys on Robbie's piano had a subtle unevenness of colour and shape, places where bits of the ivory had broken off over time, leaving them looking like a set of bad teeth. Helpfully, the middle C key had a full corner missing, a wedge about the size of my fingernail, which got me centred every time.

It turned out I liked the piano. Sitting at it felt natural, like something I was meant to do. My family was loaded with musicians and music lovers, especially on my mother's side. I had an uncle who played in a professional band. Several of my

aunts sang in church choirs. The musical centre of my family, though, was my grandfather Shields, the carpenter, who was also Robbie's younger brother. He was a carefree, round-bellied man with an infectious laugh and a scraggly salt-and pepper beard.

Task 1: Answer the questions after reading

1. What is Michelle Obama describing in this extract? Why might she have focused on this experience in her life?

2. Identify some of the precise and specific details the writer uses to give us an insight into the sort of person her great-aunt Robbie was.

5. How does the writer give us an insight into how she felt during her first piano lesson?

6. How does the writer use her childhood experience of learning to play the piano to draw attention to other aspects of her life and her story?

7. Can you identify any examples of the writer adopting a conversational tone where she seems to be speaking directly to the reader?

Task 4: Explore HOW the writer uses methods to convey their thoughts, feelings and memories.

Method	Example	Effect
Use of tense		
Sensory language		
Specific or precise details		
Emotive language		
Dialogue		
Descriptions of people		
Descriptions of place		

Task 5: Murakami's **tone** is quite conversational and informal. At times, it sounds like he is speaking his thoughts directly to the reader. HOW does he create this tone and WHY might he do this?

Memoir 5: The Story of My Life by Helen Keller LE:

How do writers convey their thoughts, feelings and memories?

Knowledge Recall

1. Which device can writers use to convey and evoke feelings and emotions?
2. Which device can writers use to describe what they could see, hear, taste and touch in their memories?
3. Why might writers include precise details in their descriptions of people and places?

Who was Helen Keller?

In the early part of the 20th century she was one of the most famous women in the world - she was an author, she was an Oscar winner and she had the ear of presidents for over 60 years.

She was born in Alabama in the 1880s. And when she was just 18 months-old she contracted an illness that left her deaf and blind.

Her parents hired a teacher, Ann Sullivan, to help her communicate. Anne took Helen to a water pump and as the water splashed on her hands, she spelt W-A-T-E-R in her hand.

That day, Helen Keller learnt 30 words. She went on to learn not just English language but French, German, Greek and Latin.

She became an activist campaigning for the rights of disabled people – she persuaded Congress to change the law so that books in braille would be made available in libraries.

She wrote many books on social issues, such as segregation, women's suffrage, capitalism and class struggle that were published across the world.

When the Nazis were burning books, her books were deemed dangerous enough to be burnt. In the Second World War, she campaigned for all those fleeing Fascism to be accepted into America.

She spent the war visiting army hospitals to give solace to the wounded.

She wanted to campaign for all people's rights and set up the American Civil Liberties Union which to this day protects worker's rights.

She travelled the world campaigning not just for her own cause but for everyone and her personal triumph was not allowing her disability to hold her back.

Task 1: Read the information above and watch the short video about Helen Keller

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/history-ks3-helen-keller-the-writer-who-proved-her-disability-was-not-debilitating/zvv4vk7n>

Task 2: Why might Helen Keller have written her memoir?

She might have written this memoir to...

share....

celebrate...

inspire...

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The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me. I am filled with wonder when I consider the **immeasurable** contrasts between the two lives which it connects. It was the third of March, 1887, three months before I was seven years old.

On the afternoon of that eventful day, I stood on the porch, **dumb, expectant**. I guessed vaguely from my mother's signs and from the hurrying to and fro in the house that something unusual was about to happen, so I went to the door and waited on the steps. The afternoon sun penetrated the mass of honeysuckle that covered the porch, and fell on my upturned face. My fingers lingered almost unconsciously on the familiar leaves and blossoms which had just come forth to greet the sweet southern spring. I did not know what the future held of marvel or surprise for me. Anger and bitterness had preyed upon me continually for weeks and a deep **anguish** had succeeded this passionate struggle.

Have you ever been at sea in a **dense** fog, when it seemed as if a **tangible** white darkness shut you in, and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore with plummet and soundingline, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding-line, and had no way of knowing how near the harbour was. "Light! give me light!" was the wordless cry of my soul, and the light of love shone on me in that very hour.

I felt approaching footsteps. I stretched out my hand as I supposed to my mother. Some one took it, and I was caught up and held close in the arms of her who had come to reveal all things to me, and, more than all things else, to love me. The morning after my teacher came she led me into her room and gave me a doll. The little blind children at the Perkins Institution had sent it and Laura Bridgman had dressed it; but I did not know this until afterward. When I had played with it a little while, Miss Sullivan slowly spelled into my hand the word "d-o-l-l." I was at once interested in this finger play and tried to imitate it. When I finally succeeded in making the letters correctly I was flushed with childish pleasure and pride. Running downstairs to my mother I held up my hand and made the letters for doll. I did not know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed; I was simply making my fingers go in monkey-like imitation. In the days that followed I learned to spell in this uncomprehending way a great many words, among them pin, hat, cup and a few verb like sit, stand, and walk. But my teacher had been with me several weeks before I understood that everything has a name.

One day, while I was playing with my new doll, Miss Sullivan put my big rag doll into my lap also, spelled "d-o-l-l" and tried to make me understand that "d-o-l-l" applied to both. Earlier in the day we had a **tussle** over the words "m-u-g" and "w-a-t-e-r." Miss Sullivan had tried to impress it upon me that "m-u-g" is mug and that "w-a-t-e-r" is water, but I persisted in **confounding** the two. In despair she had dropped the subject for the time, only to renew it the first opportunity. I came impatient at her repeated attempts and, seizing the new doll, I dashed it upon the floor. I was keenly delighted when I felt the fragments of the broken doll at my feet. Neither sorrow nor regret followed my passionate outburst. I had not loved the doll. In the still, dark world in which I lived there was no strong **sentiment** or **tenderness**. I felt my teacher sweep the fragments to one side of the hearth, and I had a sense of satisfaction that the cause of my discomfort was removed.

Task 1: Answer the questions after reading

1. How does the writer convey the significance of this day?
2. How does the writer signal that this day was a turning point in her life?
3. Identify and annotate the **sensory language** used in paragraph two.
4. Identify and annotate the **emotive language** used in paragraph two.
5. How does Keller try to communicate what it felt like to be deaf and blind? Identify the **metaphor**.
6. What does Keller describe in this paragraph?

7. Why might Keller have included this moment in her memoir? What might she be trying to draw the reader's attention to?

I learned a great many new words that day. I do not remember what they all were; but I do know that mother, father, sister, teacher were among them—words that were to make the world blossom for me “like Aaron’s rod, with flowers.” It would have been difficult to find a happier child than I was as I lay in my crib at the close of that eventful day and lived over the joys it had brought me, and for the first time longed for a new day to come.

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She brought me my hat, and I knew I was going out into the warm sunshine. This thought, if a wordless sensation may be called a thought, made me hop and skip with pleasure.

8. How does Keller convey her feelings when she knew she was going outside?

9. Why might Keller have used so much sensory language here and in this whole extract?

We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Someone was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty **consciousness** as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I know then that “w-a-t-e-r” meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living words awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There was barriers still, true, but barriers that could in time be swept away. I left the well-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought. As we returned to the house every object which I touched seemed to quiver with life. That was because I saw everything with the strange, new sight that had come to me. On entering the door I remembered the doll I had broken. I felt my way to the hearth and picked up the pieces. I tried vainly to put them together. Then my eyes filled with tears; for I realised what I had done, and for the first time I felt **repentance** and sorrow.

10. What does Helen Keller suddenly understand and how does this realisation make her feel?

11. How does Keller draw attention to the impact this day had on her life?

Task 2: In this memoir, Helen Keller spends lots of time describing sensations and feelings in **precise detail**. She uses **sensory language** and **emotive language** to do this.

Devices	Example	Effect
Emotive Language		

Sensory Language		

CLOSE ANALYSIS

How does the writer convey their thoughts and feelings in the extract below?

Sensory

language evokes
the setting of this memory
and draws the reader’s
attention to precise details
they can recall from their
memories

Emotive language gives the
reader an insight into how
Helen felt on this important
day. The use of a list to
describe her emotions
further highlights the
intensity of her feelings.

Task 3: Read the annotations above and annotate 2-3 more examples of sensory language: Try to use these words in your annotations

...draws attention to...

...gives the reader an insight into...

...evokes a sense of...

..recreates a sense/feeling of...

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Task 4: Writing up your analysis of how a writer conveys their thoughts and feelings

Task 4: Read the model below—your teacher will explain each of the success criteria—you might notice that the skills and terminology are similar to when you analysed language and imagery during your study of the gothic. That's because reading, interpreting and analysing texts as a student of literature usually involves unpicking HOW a writer uses words, phrases and devices and exploring WHY they might have made these choices.

Some evaluative words	Language of Interpretation
Effectively	...draws attention to...
Particularly	...gives the reader an insight
Clearly	into... ..evoke...
Vividly	..recreates...
emphasises/highlights/reiterate
	s... ..suggests/implies..
	...portrays/presents/conveys...

**Task 5: As a class,
write a
paragraph analysing
this example
of emotive language.**

Task 6: Choose one other example of either sensory or emotive language from the extract to analyse below:

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Task 7: Helen Keller primarily uses sensory language, emotive language and focuses on precise details. However, like the other writers, she also uses other devices to convey her thoughts, feelings and memories. Complete the table to explore some of these devices. Put N/A if the device is not used.

Method	Example	Effect
Use of tense		
Specific or precise details		
Dialogue		
Descriptions of people		
Descriptions of place		

For your assessment, you will need to answer the following question:

How does Helen Keller convey her thoughts, feelings and memories in this extract from her memoir?

You must comment on at least one example of sensory language, one example of emotive language and should try to comment on at least one example of another device or method.

For your assessment, you will be given a blank copy of the extract and a planning sheet. You will have 50 minutes to annotate, plan and write up your response. You will be marked on your use of terminology to identify devices, your use of evidence and the quality of your analysis and interpretation.