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91472



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 3 English 2025

91472 Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and convincingly to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and perceptively to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

Write ONE essay in this booklet.

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in the margins (//////). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Merit

TOTAL 05

WRITTEN TEXTS

INSTRUCTIONS

Write an essay on at least ONE **written text** that you have studied, in response to ONE of the statements below.

Discuss the extent to which you agree with your chosen statement. Respond critically to the statement by making a close analysis of the text(s).

STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. Characters who behave badly make us think deeply.
2. Changes that take place in a text teach us valuable lessons.
3. Relationships that are challenging lead us to important discoveries.
4. Interesting settings encourage us to re-examine our own environment.
5. Carefully crafted language provokes new understandings.
6. Writers develop important ideas in order to critique society.
7. The fate of heroes helps us understand the world.
8. Effective symbols communicate significant ideas.

TEXT DETAILS

Written text type

Title

Author

Written text type

Title

Author

SELECTED QUESTION

Copy and paste the question you have chosen into the space below.

Characters who behave badly make us think deeply.

PLANNING

Thesis: Amir's actions in The Kite Runner cause the reader to examine their own lives.
Quick Notes:

- Amir is an unlikely protagonist, acts poorly
- Readers are forced to accept Amir's first person narrative, trapped in Amir's point of view and self-justification
- Amir's morality is called into question, he has moral awareness but lacks moral strength
- Indirectly gives the impression that the cause of his behaviour is to gain his father's affection
- Knowingly betrays Hassan
- Seeks redemption, manipulates the reader into thinking it is a resolution
- Defys expectations, never reunites with Hassan
- Amir's unreliable narrative perspective gives insight into human nature, we are more like Amir than we are willing to admit

"Characters who behave badly make us think deeply."

Structure:

Phase 1 - Introduce the issue

- The novel's opening chapter places the reader as confidants or even accomplices of the story. Makes it feel like a confession. The rest of the novel is foreshadowed.
 - Think Deeply: manipulates the reader into sympathising with Amir, who clearly has a guilty conscience.
- "I became what I am today at the age of twelve"

Phase 2 - Build

- Amir is an unlikely protagonist. Despite manipulation, his first person narrative and flawed character helps the reader relate to Amir. His morality is often called into question, Amir acknowledges his mistakes. When Amir betrays Hassan, he is aware of the mistake he is making, he chooses self-preservation because while he is morally aware, he is morally weak. This presents a dilemma, while Amir never did anything illegal, his inaction is largely considered immoral. Amir's self-justification attempts to manipulate the reader. The reader would expect Amir to act, but in the same position, would the reader do the same?
 - Think Deeply: are Amir's actions excusable? Everyone is flawed and doesn't always act according to their moral judgement
- "In the end I ran. I ran because I was a coward."

Phase 3 - Redemption

- As the novel progresses, the reader would expect Amir to reunite with Hassan. He never does with defys the reader's expectations. When he finds redemption, he never actually makes things right with Hassan. Hassan's off-page death may make true redemption impossible. Amir manipulates the reader into taking Amir's rescuing of Sohrab to be atonement. This is paradoxical because Sohrab actually saves Amir. Irony of Hassan being Amir's half-brother, deepens guilt, would we treat people differently knowing they were our own blood?
- Think Deeply: Make the reader think about what true redemption really is
- "I felt healed. Healed at last."
- "For the first time since the winter of 1975, I felt at peace."

Phase 4 - Conclusion

- Through Amir's first person unreliable narrative, we come to understand Amir's thought process. Amir's morality and redemption are called into question. Amir's actions reflect human nature and make us consider what we would do in the same position.
- "There is a way to be good again."

ESSAY

Type your essay in the space below. You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 800–900 words. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.)

In your essay, discuss the extent to which you agree with your chosen statement. Respond critically to the statement by making a close analysis of the text(s).

B I U ☰ ∨ ☰ ∨ ↶ ↷ ⌚

Khalid Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* follows Amir's questionable journey through betrayal, guilt, and redemption. The novel's opening chapter not only foreshadows the novel's key events, but it also places the reader as an accomplice and confidant. Amir's opening quote, "I became what I am today at the age of twelve," sets up the novel to serve somewhat as a confession. Such acknowledgement of wrongdoing and guilt from Amir manipulates the reader into sympathising with his situation. Amir's relatability in *The Kite Runner* causes the reader to re-examine their own life.

Amir's self-justification of his increasingly wrongful actions makes Amir an unreliable narrator. His unreliable first-person narrative makes Amir's journey relatable as his self-justifying perspective feels authentically human. It calls upon the reader to acknowledge that all humans are inherently flawed, and question how they would act in the positions that Amir finds himself in. While on the surface, Amir's betrayal of Hassan seems inexcusable, with further examination we come to understand the underlying reasons behind Amir's betrayal. Amir directly acknowledges his moral failure: "I ran because I was a coward". This highlights Amir's capacity for good moral understanding; it is Amir's lack of moral strength that leads him to act poorly. Moral failure is inherent to the human condition, which makes Amir's betrayal of Hassan more complex. While Amir's inaction would, by the typical reader be deemed immoral, Amir did not violate any form of law. With subjective and differing moral values across societies and cultures, it becomes up to the reader's judgement to determine whether Amir is truly guilty of wrongdoing. As such, the reader is forced to examine their own life and carefully consider how they would handle the same situation.

While Amir's immoral childhood actions come across as less severe due to Amir's relatable self-justifying perspective, Amir continues to defy the readers expectations throughout the novel. Following typical betrayal plot-lines, it would be expected for Amir to reunite with Hassan and make things right, however that never actually happens. For Amir to rejoin the moral community and have a clean conscience, he would have to atone for his sins. While Amir claims to receive redemption by rescuing Sohrab, that he was "healed at last," whether he truly redeems himself is a questionable matter. Before Amir receives "redemption", he learns that Hassan, whom at this point has died off-page, was his half-brother. The placement of such an ironic discovery later in the novel has great shock value, causing the reader to call into question the novel's events, and even reconsider their perception of Amir. It also begs the question, if Hassan is dead, is true redemption even possible? While Amir claims that, "for the first time since the winter of 1975, I felt at peace," Amir never directly made things right with Hassan. The claim that Amir rescued Sohrab is rather paradoxical considering that it was Sohrab that saved Amir with his slingshot. This poetic justice attempts to mask the fact that Amir is not the hero. The parallels drawn between Amir's confrontation with Assef and his childhood encounters, alongside the poetic justice of Assef finally becoming "one-eyed Assef", manipulate the reader into believing that the plot has circled back and that Amir has achieved true redemption. Furthermore, Amir presents a bright contrast between his guilt-ridden life before redemption and the peace he felt afterwards, further playing into the illusion that true redemption was achieved. Such uncertainty provokes the reader into questioning what true redemption really is, and if it is an impossibility for Amir considering Hassan's death.

Amir's manipulative first-person narrative traps the reader into sympathising with Amir's situation and evaluate their own moral decision making in the process. With Assef being the embodiment of Taliban ideology, the reader naturally perceives Amir to be the hero during his "fight" with Assef. While on the surface Amir appears as a relatable character, closer analysis of Amir's actions uncover how Amir manipulates the reader into taking his side. Amir's journey teaches us that true redemption is not always possible, that some betrayals cannot be atoned for. As Amir reflects on the moment he betrayed Hassan, he notes that: "it was the look of the lamb". Amir turned his back on the pure, loyal servant he was supposed to protect. Amir's betrayal of Hassan may also serve as a metaphor for the desecration of Afghanistan, which occurred during the same timeline. During the plot of *The Kite Runner*, Afghanistan, the lamb, was also slain by the powers sworn to protect it, illustrating the implications of betrayal and the potential impossibility of redemption. Amir's broken relationship with Hassan closely mirrors the fall of Afghanistan throughout the novel, adding an additional layer of meaning to Amir's betrayal. The fall of Afghanistan demonstrates the potential implications of poor actions and betrayal.

Through Amir's self-justifying narrative, we gain insight into human nature and are forced to think deeply about topics such as morality and redemption. Through different literary mechanisms, Amir tries to convince the reader that he found redemption, causing the reader to consider redemption truly is. If redemption is entirely subjective to the person in breach of a moral code, then true redemption would be achievable; however, that is typically not how justice works. Amir would need to receive forgiveness from Hassan directly to truly be redeemed. As Rahim Khan says, "there is a way to be good again," which for Amir may be achievable without true redemption. It is important to note that redemption is not about erasing the past, but rather about setting things right for the future. Amir's journey underscores the importance of atonement, both on a personal and political level. Without atonement, one would be permanently paralysed by guilt and not be able to rejoin the moral community. It also reveals the personal and subjective aspect of redemption. While unconventional, Amir's redemption allowed him to move forward and finally find inner peace.

would be permanently paralysed by guilt and not be able to rejoin the moral community. It also reveals the personal and subjective aspect of redemption. While unconventional, Amir's redemption allowed him to move forward and finally find inner peace.

"...it's wrong what they say about the past... Because the past claws its way out."

999 WORDS / 900 RECOMMENDED

Merit

Subject: English

Standard: 91472

Total score: 05

Grade score	Marker commentary
M5	This response sets up a clear argument which addresses the statement. Detailed evidence is woven into the essay in a way that shows a confident understanding of the text itself. The focus of the essay tends to be on the main character in the text 'thinking deeply' about his actions. For a higher grade, there needed to be a more developed analysis on how this impacts the reader's understanding of the idea.