**IB Essay Prompts**

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| **IB umbrella topic** | **The prompt** | **What they are really asking you to do/consider** |
| **Reader, culture, and text (cultural context):** The interpretation of a text is dependent on various factors, including the readers’ and producer’s cultural identities; age; gender; social status; the historical and cultural setting of the text and its production; aspects of language and translation. | **1a. How could the text be read and interpreted differently by two different readers?** | **A. Define/explain the content and genre of the text****B. Define two different possible intended audiences on the basis of the underlined components to the left or other similar categories (the two different readers are people from different social categories, not two specific individuals like your mom and your dad)****C. Discuss how the audiences would interpret the following differently: purpose, use of language, etc. using direct textual evidence****D. Be specific about the differing interpretations/reactions (HOW)** |
| **Reader, culture, and text (cultural context):** The interpretation of a text is dependent on various factors, including the readers’ and producer’s cultural identities; age; gender; social status; the historical and cultural setting of the text and its production; aspects of language and translation. | **1b. If the text had been written in a different time or place or for a different audience, how and why would it change?** | **A. Choose one of the ‘ors’ (change, theoretically, the time, place, or audience of a text)****B. It should up being time/audience, place/audience or audience alone (because if you change the time or place of a text, you are automatically changing the audience)****C. HOW would the text change? Very specific description of how content and language would change using direct textual evidence.****D. WHY would the text change? This is where you consider context.** |
| **Power and privilege:** Students are encouraged to consider how and why social groups are represented in texts in particular ways. In addition, consideration may be given to who is excluded from or marginalized in a text, or whose views are silenced. Social groups include those based on gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion, profession, social class, etc. | **2a. How and why is a social group represented in a particular way (in a text)?** | **A. Choose a social group present in the text using the underlined components to the left to guide you, and explain their characteristics****B. How are they represented? (explain how they are characterized in the text with direct textual evidence)****C. Why are they represented/characterized this way? (author’s purpose)** |
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| **Text and genre:** Students are encouraged to consider the genre in which a text is placed. Certain textual features belong to a particular genre and can be identified by a particular reader or audience. Writers make use of, or deviate from, particular conventions of genre in order to achieve particular effects. Students may also explore how texts borrow from other texts, and how texts can be re-imagined or reconstructed. Examples of the conventions of genre include structure, storyline, characterization, stylistic devices, tone, mood, atmosphere, register, visual images and layout. | **3a. How does the text conform to, or deviate from, the conventions of a particular genre, and for what purposes?** | **A. Choose your focus: conforming to a genre, or deviating, or both if that makes sense****B. Identify/explain the genre and its typical conventions****C. How does the author conform and/or deviate from the genre? Demonstrate with direct textual evidence; comment on the effects on the reader (even though the prompt does not say that last part).****D. What was the author’s purpose in using genre this way?** |
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