

Conclusions

Here are some tips to help you write a good conclusion to your exam essays. When writing a conclusion you should:

- Keep it short
- Refer clearly back to the question
- Avoid repeating all the points you have already made
- Sum up the *flavour* of your point of view
- Pick out the most effective way that something was done
- End with a snappy quotation that answers the question well

The following example conclusions were written in response to the question 'Compare the way that Seamus Heaney conveys the experience of childhood trauma in 'The Barn' and another poem of your choice.'

Example 1:

In conclusion, both poems effectively convey the experience of childhood trauma. 'The Barn' shows us the trauma of a child's fears and nightmares; 'Mid-Term Break' shows us the trauma of a sibling's death at a young age.

Comment [K1]: Good clear focus on the key issue

Comment [K2]: It would have been better to concentrate on moods or bigger ideas, rather than just the basic 'story' of the two poems

Example 2:

In conclusion, Heaney focuses on the connotations of the words in which he uses in both poems. These connotations set the mood, tone, feel and in some cases the rhythm. When this is used, the poem simulates a typical child's trauma attack, something which everyone can relate to at one point in time. Thus really connecting with the readers and serving as a reminder of the reader's child trauma. With connotations, the imagery of the words use, and of the persona's imagination and insignificance we definitely are reminded of a child's trauma.

Comment [K3]: 'which he uses' not 'in which'

Comment [K4]: Connotations don't really set the rhythm of a poem

Comment [K5]: The candidate writes about typical child hood trauma rather than the traumas explored in these poems

Comment [K6]: This is all a bit vague – connotations of what?

Example 3:

In conclusion, the trauma in 'The Barn' is shown very differently to the trauma shown in 'Mid Term Break'. 'The Barn' shows trauma mainly through the connotations of words as well as their sounds, such as fricative or sibilance. 'Mid Term Break's' trauma tends to be shown through actions and mystery. Throughout the poem the reader is constantly trying to figure out things, such as who died and why or how the persona is related to the death. These facts all tie in to create the traumatic atmosphere.

Comment [K7]: Clear comparison

Comment [K8]: Basically this just sums up the points already made but it is done smoothly and well

Comment [K9]: Clear relation back to the question

Example 4:

Through clever imagery, words, similes and alliteration Heaney manages to illustrate his experience as a child. The negative imagery allows us to pictures all of the vicious frogs ready to attack Heaney after taking his land, the alliteration allows us to pick out key words of importance, the similes shows us how different something may seem to a child when to us it is nothing, and all of these combined demonstrate how this event in his life changed it forever.

Comment [K10]: A nice quick, concise summary of the points made

Comment [K11]: However, instead of just listing what has gone before there is a very brief comment on its effect

Comment [K12]: The conclusion builds up to this final statement which ends the essay with a sense of force

Example 5:

Perhaps one of the most effective ways in which Heaney conveys the experience of childhood trauma is by showing the persona's desperate attempt to escape from it. In 'Death of a Naturalist', the persona 'sickened, turned and ran' from the frogs. The commas in the sentence show the abruptness and fast pace of these movements, as if the persona wanted to run away as quickly as possible from the source of his terror. The persona in 'The Barn', too, tries to escape' he 'scuttled fast into the sunlit yard'; the fact that the yard is 'sunlit' shows the childishness of the persona, as fear of the dark is one of the common fears of children. In 'The Barn', however, there was no escape; the persona's trauma continued into his nightmare.

Comment [K13]: A nice way of showing that the poems are not just being compared but evaluated

Comment [K14]: A nice comparison

Comment [K15]: Nice detailed explanation of the effect of punctuation

Comment [K16]: Nice powerful final statement to sum up the mood of 'The Barn' and leave the reader thinking and feeling vaguely threatened themselves