

**Writers can sometimes present their ideas in unusual and thought-provoking ways. How, and to what effect, has this been shown in two of the works you have studied?**

Complete the essay by filling in the gaps. Wherever you see a series of asterixis (\*\*), add extra information. You can look at the information in the second column for extra guidance.

Traditionally, stories are told in a linear and objective manner, drawing upon established ideas to reinforce dominant perspectives and uphold conventional understandings of history and mythology. However, authors sometimes deviate from these conventions, employing unusual storytelling techniques to challenge existing narratives and provoke thought. Two texts that do this are The Penelopiad by Margaret Atwood and The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid. \*\*\*\*\*, on the other hand, \*\*\*\*\*. The two texts present their ideas in \*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\* ways by reimagining established narratives through unconventional narrative perspectives.

Both texts challenge the nature of truth through the use of unreliable narrative perspectives. In The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Hamid uses a limited narrative perspective in order to explore bias in storytelling. The Reluctant Fundamentalist is entirely narrated from Changez's perspective. While dining with an unnamed American in Lahore, Changez dominates the conversation, leaving the reader with only his account. \*\*\*\*\* "telling [him] a history, and in history [...] it is the thrust of one's narrative that counts, not the accuracy of one's details." Hamid's use of a dramatic monologue evokes ideas of performance and artistry \*\*\*\*\*. Additionally, Changez not being able to recall specific facts evokes a sense of doubt from the reader because it suggests that his version of events may be constructed or selectively remembered rather than factually reliable. This works in conjunction with the lexical choice of "history", which also implies that Changez isn't given an objective account of his time in America given that

Don't forget that we have to contextualise in a manner that's relevant to the focus of our essay.

It's important to use the key words of the prompt in our essay.

Don't forget that we have to accurately contextualise our essay so people can understand our textual references even if they haven't read the text.

We need to justify our close reading.

histories are inherently shaped by interpretation, perspective, and the selective omission of details. As a result, the text's narrative perspective is limited to a single, potentially \*\*\*\* perspective that is giving a selective version of events. This is an unusual technique that deviates from \*\*\*\*\* modes of storytelling and calls into question the nature of truth by highlighting the role of bias in personal narratives.

Atwood, in *The Penelopiad*, \*\*\*\* uses an unreliable narrative perspective in an unusual way to explore ideas of truth. Throughout the novel, Atwood alternates between Penelope's perspective and the collective voice of the maids. In one instance, Penelope dismisses the rumors of her alleged infidelity during Odysseus's absence by asking, "Who could believe such a monstrous tale?" However, in the following chapter, the maids stage a play that satirically reenacts her supposed affair with one of the suitors. This performance is prefaced by one of the maids declaring that Penelope "Was—when it came to sex—no shrinking sissy!" In Penelope's narrative, the rhetorical question reinforces her certainty that the rumors are false, as rhetorical questions typically imply an obvious answer—in this case, that no one could possibly believe she was unfaithful. This works in conjunction with the lexical choice "tale," which is associated with fiction and fabrication, and the adjective "monstrous" that implies these tales are evil or immoral. However, the maids' narrative emphatically asserts that Penelope did sleep with the suitors via the declarative sentence structure in their line claiming that Penelope wasn't a "shrinking sissy" when it came to sex. This is achieved because declarative sentences are often used to assert certainty, and it ends with an exclamation mark that connotes confidence and authority. The juxtaposition between these Penelope and the maids' claims elicits a sense of doubt from the reader because the two opposing versions of events are put forward with authority. As such, \*\*\*\*\*, *The Penelopiad*'s narrative perspective is unreliable. Therefore, in an unusual manner, Atwood also deviates from classical omniscient narration, questioning the nature of truth in storytelling.

Be specific in your Level 2 analysis

Make sure that your Level 3 analysis answers the question

We have to compare and contrast throughout the essay

In short, both The Penelopiad and The Reluctant Fundamentalist narrate their stories in unusual ways to call into question the reliability of truth. However, The Penelopiad does this via dual narration, which expands beyond the conventional use of a single narrator; whereas, The Reluctant Fundamentalist does this by narrowing the focus to a singular, potentially manipulative perspective. When read together, the reader is invited to consider the ways in which perspective influences the ways in which ideas in a story are accepted.

Another way in which the two texts are similar is that both authors critically reinterpret and subvert established narratives through tone in a thought-provoking way. In The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Hamid uses a \*\*\*\* tone towards \*\*, which undermines the established narrative that \*\*\*\*. \*\*\*\* "We are America—the mightiest civilisation in the world. You have slighted us, beware our wrath." The syntax of these lines is reminiscent of the depictions of giants in fairy tales, associating America with \*\*\*\*. This is further reinforced by the lexical choice of "wrath" which connotes vengeful fury, implying \*\*\*\*. Elsewhere in the novel, Changez\*\*\*\*\* "Pakistani cabdrivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI was raiding mosques, shops, and even people's houses; Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention centers for questioning or worse." Here, the \*\*\*\* listing emphasizes the relentless nature of the injustices experienced by the Muslim men, suggesting that just as the list flows without pause, so too does their unceasing mistreatment. Additionally, the \*\*\*\* of Pakistanis being beaten within an inch of their life underscores the brutality of this prejudice via the violent imagery that suggests grave harm being inflicted upon them. As such, \*\*\*\*, establishes a \*\*\*\* tone towards the country by framing it as vengeful and aggressive. This portrayal of America at the time of the 9/11 as an aggressor could be considered as \*\*\*\* because it undermines the ideas of the country as a sympathetic victim in mourning. Such a portrayal is \*\*\*\* as it compels the reader to reconsider a dominant historical narrative.

Whenever we mention tone, we have to be specific. What's the tone, and what's it towards?

Which narrative is being undermined?

Don't forget that we have to accurately contextualise our essay so people can understand our textual references even if they haven't read the text.

We need to justify our close reading.

We need to give specific effects with our close reading.

Don't forget that we have to accurately contextualise our essay so people can understand our textual references even if they haven't read the text.

We have to specify authorial choices in our close reading.

Make sure that your transition between Level 1 & 2 indicates that the Level 2 analysis is connected to all of the close reading done at Level 2

*Whenever we mention tone, we have to be specific.*

It's important to use the key words of the prompt in our essay.

\*\*\*\*, Atwood subverts the traditional portrayal of Odysseus as a \*\*\* through a \*\*\*\* tone towards his legendary exploits. \*\*\*\*. These stories include references to the grand tales told in the Odyssey, such as “[fighting] with a giant one-eyed Cyclops” and being “the guest of a goddess on an enchanted isle.” However, they are immediately undercut by a far less glorified version of events, depicting him instead as battling “\*\*\*\*” and lodging at “\*\*\*\*.” The juxtaposition between the two versions of events implies that Odysseus might not be the noble and courageous figure he is traditionally portrayed as. This is achieved by the mythical, valiant allusions to the Odyssey being immediately undermined by tales of debauchery, particularly with the visual imagery of a “\*\*\*\*,” which is significantly less awe-inspiring than a giant Cyclops, and a “\*\*\*\*” which is vulgar and crude rather than possessing the enchanting allure of a goddess’s island. Additionally, when Penelope recalls Odysseus’s return to Ithaca, she claims that “[she] knew that the beggar was Odysseus” but she didn’t let on because “it’s always an imprudence to step between a man and the reflection of his own cleverness.” The short, simple declarative sentence claiming that she knew Odysseus was a beggar \*\*\*\*\* because \*\*\*\*. What’s more, Penelope’s quip associates Odysseus with foolishness, given that quips are often used to subtly mock or ridicule others. Consequently, Atwood, \*\*\*\*, also establishes a significant tone toward something traditionally esteemed—Odysseus, whom she mocks for being unheroic. \*\*\*\*, this might seem \*\*\*\* given that it challenges widely accepted narratives, which is \*\*\*\* because it encourages readers to reconsider the extent to which traditionally revered figures or entities truly embody the values they are celebrated for.

\*\*\*\*, The Penelopiad and The Reluctant Fundamentalist prove to be \*\*\*\* as they undermine established narratives with the tones they use to describe them. The Penelopiad does this by mocking Odysseus as being unheroic, but The Reluctant Fundamentalist does this with a critical tone towards America after the events of 9/11.

We have to compare and contrast throughout the essay

Be specific

Whenever we mention tone, we have to be specific.

Don’t forget that we have to accurately contextualise our essay so people can understand our textual references even if they haven’t read the text.

Be accurate when quoting the text that you’re analysing.

We need to give specific effects with our close reading.

We need to justify our close reading.

We have to compare and contrast throughout the essay

It’s important to use the key words of the prompt in our essay.

Use transitions effectively to help your reader follow your interpretation

In conclusion, through unconventional narrative perspectives, both texts challenge traditional narratives in \*\*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*\* ways. In The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Hamid employs a dramatic monologue to confine the reader to a single, unreliable perspective, emphasizing bias in personal narratives. On the other hand, Atwood, in The Penelopiad, uses dual narration contrasting Penelope's account with the maids' voices. Additionally, both authors also use tone in a thought-provoking way to subvert established ideas with Hamid's critical tone portraying post-9/11 America as aggressive rather than a victim, and Atwood's mocking tone towards Odysseus undermining his heroic reputation. Fundamentally, by undermining traditionally accepted truths, Hamid and Atwood compel readers to \*\*\*\*\*.

It's important to use the key words of the prompt in our essay.

If you have time, it's good to end with an implication. Why is your interpretation of both texts important?

## Colour Code Key

### Transition Words

#### Intro:

Outlining the scope of the argument  
Introducing texts

Thesis Statement: Method & Interpretation

#### Body Paragraphs

Claims: Method & Interpretation

Evidence: Context & Textual References

Analysis:

Level 1: Authorial Choices & Effects

Level 2: Comment on how the authorial choices form a larger aspect of the text

Level 3: Significance of text (Answer to question)

Summarising your argument and relating it back to the question

**Conclusion:**

Restated Thesis Statement: Method & Interpretation

Summary of main points

Implications of arguments

**Paper 2 Specifics:**

Compare & Contrast Language

Key words from the question