



English I: Reading: Module 3: Lesson 13: Section 4
Analyze Literary Essays' Inclusion of Personal Opinions and Facts
Difference, Dominance, Design

Instructions: Read the following excerpt from James Seilsopour's essay "I Forgot the Words to the National Anthem." When you're finished, comment on difference, dominance, and design by answering the questions that follow. Mouse over the button after each question to see a possible response.



(1) Because of my father's birthplace [he was born in Iran], he was unable to obtain a job. (2) A naturalized American citizen with a master's degree in aircraft maintenance engineering from the Northrop Institute of Technology, he had never been out of work in his life. (3) My father had worked for Bell Helicopter International, Flying Tigers, and McDonnell Douglas. (4) Suddenly, a man who literally was at the top of his field was unemployable. (5) There is one incident that haunts me even today. (6) My mother had gone to work, and all the kids had gone to school except me. (7) I was in the bathroom washing my face. (8) The door was open, and I could see my father's reflection in the mirror. (9) For no particular reason I watched him. (10) He was glancing at a newspaper. (11) He carefully folded the paper and set it aside. (12) For several long moments he stared blankly into space. (13) With a resigned sigh, he got up, went into the kitchen, and began doing the dishes. (14) On that day, I know I watched a part of my father die.

1. **Difference.** Reread the passage leaving off the sentences that focus on factual information (2–4). What changes for a reader when this information is not included? Write a statement about this.

Possible Response



2. **Difference.** Reread the passage starting with Sentence 1 and ending with Sentence 4. Leave out the personal example and the personal idea. What changes when the example and the idea are not included? Write a statement about this.

Possible Response

3. **Dominance.** Is this passage primarily about the factual information or the personal example and idea? Would you say instead that it is equally focused on both aspects? Comment both on which aspect is dominant and how this affects us as readers.

Possible Response

4. **Design.** Does the passage interweave the personal and factual aspects, or are they clearly divided into blocks of text within the passage? Comment on the design used in this passage and also on how this design affects us as readers.

Possible Response



In the essay you just read, there was a balance of fact and personal content; the next essay will be very different. Instructions: Read the second excerpt from Lewis Thomas's essay "On Societies as Organisms," and answer the questions that follow. Again, mouse over the button after each question to see a possible response.



(1) Ants are so much like human beings as to be an embarrassment. (2) They farm fungi, raise aphids as livestock, launch armies into wars, use chemical sprays to alarm and confuse enemies, capture slaves. (3) The families of weaver ants engage in child labor, holding their larvae like shuttles to spin out the thread that sews the leaves together for their fungus gardens. (4) They exchange information ceaselessly. (5) They do everything but watch television. (6) What makes us most uncomfortable is that they, and the bees and termites and social wasps, seem to live two kinds of lives: they are individuals, going about the day's business without much evidence of thought for tomorrow, and they are at the same time component parts, cellular elements, in the huge, writhing, ruminating organism of the hill, the nest, the hive. (7) It is because of this aspect, I think, that we most wish for them to be something foreign. (8) We do not like the notion that there can be collective societies with the capacity to behave like organisms. (9) If such things exist, they can have nothing to do with us.

1. **Difference.** Reread the passage leaving off the sentences that focus on factual information (2–6). What changes when this information is not included? Write a statement about this.

Possible Response



2. **Difference.** Reread the passage starting with Sentence 1 and ending with Sentence 6. This reading leaves out the personal idea. What changes when the example and the idea are not included? Write a statement about this.

Possible Response

3. **Dominance.** Is this passage primarily about the factual information or the personal example and idea? Would you say instead that it is equally focused on both aspects? Comment both on which aspect is dominant and how this affects us as readers.

Possible Response

4. **Design.** Does the passage interweave the personal and factual aspects or are they clearly divided into blocks of text within the passage? Comment on the design used in this passage and also on how this design affects us as readers.

Possible Response