

LIFE OF PI, YANN MARTEL**SSIP CAMP NOTES (12 PAGES)****PLOT OVERVIEW**

In an Author's Note, an anonymous author figure explains that he travelled from his home in Canada to India because he was feeling restless. There, while sipping coffee in a café in the town of Pondicherry, he met an elderly man named Francis Adirubasamy who offered to tell him a story fantastic enough to give him faith in God. This story is that of Pi Patel. The author then shifts into the story itself, but not before telling his reader that the account will come across more naturally if he tells it in Pi's own voice.

Part One is narrated in the first person by Pi. Pi narrates from an advanced age, looking back at his earlier life as a high school and college student in Toronto, then even further back to his boyhood in Pondicherry. He explains that he has suffered intensely and found solace in religion and zoology. He describes how Francis Adirubasamy, a close business associate of his father's and a competitive swimming champion, taught him to swim and bestowed upon him his unusual name. Pi is named after the Piscine Molitor, a Parisian swimming club with two pools that Adirubasamy used to frequent. We learn that Pi's father once ran the Pondicherry Zoo, teaching Pi and his brother, Ravi, about the dangerous nature of animals by feeding a live goat to a tiger before their young eyes. Pi, brought up as a Hindu, discovers Christianity, then Islam, choosing to practice all three religions simultaneously. Motivated by India's political strife, Pi's parents decide to move the family to Canada; on June 21, 1977, they set sail in a cargo ship, along with a crew and many cages full of zoo creatures.

At the beginning of Part Two, the ship is beginning to sink. Pi clings to a lifeboat and encourages a tiger, Richard Parker, to join him. Then, realizing his mistake in bringing a wild animal aboard, Pi leaps into the ocean. The narrative jumps back in time as Pi describes the explosive noise and chaos of the sinking: crewmembers throw him into a lifeboat, where he soon finds himself alone with a zebra, an orangutan, and a hyena, all seemingly in shock. His family is gone. The storm subsides and Pi contemplates his difficult situation. The hyena kills the zebra and the orangutan, and then—to Pi's intense surprise—Richard Parker reveals himself: the tiger has been in the bottom of the lifeboat all along. Soon the tiger kills the hyena, and Pi and Richard Parker are alone together at sea. Pi subsists on canned water and filtered seawater, emergency rations, and freshly caught sea life. He also provides for the tiger, whom he masters and trains.

The days pass slowly and the lifeboat's passengers coexist warily. During a bout of temporary blindness brought on by dehydration, Pi has a run-in with another blind castaway. The two discuss food and tether their boats to one another. When the blind man attacks Pi, intending to eat him, Richard Parker kills him. Not long after, the boat pulls up to a strange island of trees that grow directly out of vegetation, without any soil. Pi and Richard Parker stay here for a time, sleeping in their boat and exploring the island during the day. Pi discovers a huge colony of meerkats who sleep in the trees and freshwater ponds. One day, Pi finds human teeth in a tree's fruit and comes to the conclusion that the island eats people. He and Richard Parker head back out to sea, finally washing ashore on a Mexican beach. Richard Parker runs off, and villagers take Pi to a hospital.

In Part Three, two officials from the Japanese Ministry of Transport interview Pi about his time at sea, hoping to shed light on the fate of the doomed ship. Pi tells the story as above, but it does not fully satisfy the skeptical men. So he tells it again, this time replacing the animals with humans: a ravenous cook instead of a hyena, a sailor instead of a zebra, and his mother instead of the orangutan. The officials note that the two stories match and that the second is far likelier. In their final report, they commend Pi for living so long with an adult tiger.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Though just six pages long, the Author's Note **clues us into the book's origins even as it blurs the boundary between fact and fiction**. The note claims the text is nonfiction, placing this book squarely in the tradition of picaresque novels like *Don Quixote*, which masquerade as fact even though they are obviously works of imagination. In picaresque novels, the harsh realities of life—poverty, illness, and so on—are subject to wry, ironic, and even humorous treatment. In *Life of Pi*, Martel uses his narrator to make serious commentary on everything from religion to politics, and the mock-journalistic introduction emphasizes the intersection of fact and fiction in his literary world.

The Author's Note blends facts and fictions about Yann Martel's own inspiration for the book to illustrate the central theme of the book: storytelling. Martel really had written two not-so-successful books before this one and inspiration had struck him during a visit to India. But did he really meet Francis Adirubasamy in a coffee shop, and does Pi Patel really exist? The answer is no. On one level, Martel is just doing what fiction writers do: creating an imaginary scenario to delight and entice his readers. But on another level, these opening six pages deftly lay the foundation for the novel's central theme, which is that storytelling is a way to get around telling the boring or upsetting or uninteresting truth. Martel doesn't want to say that this novel was created by painstakingly researching zoos and religions and oceanic survival guides, getting up early every morning, and writing for several hours a day. Such an explanation would poke a hole in the balloon of fantasy that Pi's account inflates over the course of the next three hundred pages; so, instead, he invents a different origin story.

Pi (The hero?) He does not ask for the situation he finds himself in, it happens to him. He is not of noble birth, but an ordinary boy. He does possess human flaws?	
1.	Faces separation (leaves home country (ordinary world) India where he has learned much which prepared him for his ordeal for Canada in search of a better life), initiation (ship sinks and survival instincts kicks in and returns (lands up on coast of Mexico in hospital to tell his remarkable story of survival).
2.	Dilemma – he is forced to face distress and thus to change in order to survive (moves from vegetarian to cannibalistic meat-eater) becomes like his alter-ego “Richard Parker”.
3.	Confronted by death – survives a succession of trials, the ferocious hyena – the tiger, extreme thirst, hunger, cannibalism (French cook/ the castaway/ algae island). Uses Faith and reason to survive. Pays attention to details/ he grown into a better person because of his survival (coming-of-age). Develops Alpha qualities, use strength, confidence to survive. Strengthens his faith. Prays to God. He is extremely brave in the sight of his challenges.
4.	Hero escapes death (everything is at stake and he survives with nothing) – he redefines faith and tells a story “that will make you believe in God”.
5	Hero helps everyone, using his knowledge as an elixir (a magical or medicinal potion).

CHARACTER LIST:

Piscine Molitor Patel (Pi)	The protagonist of the story. Piscine is the narrator for most of the novel, and his account of his seven months at sea forms the bulk of the story. He gets his unusual name from the French word for <i>pool</i> —and, more specifically, from a pool in Paris in which a close family friend, Francis Adirubasamy, loved to swim. A student of zoology and religion, Pi is deeply intrigued by the habits and characteristics of animals and people
Richard Parker	The Royal Bengal tiger with whom Pi shares his lifeboat. His captor, Richard Parker, named him Thirsty, but a shipping clerk made a mistake and reversed their names. From then on, at the Pondicherry Zoo, he was known as Richard Parker. Weighing 450 pounds and about nine feet long, he kills the hyena on the lifeboat and the blind cannibal. With Pi, however, Richard Parker acts as an omega, or submissive, animal, respecting Pi's dominance
The Author	The narrator of the (fictitious) Author's Note, who inserts himself into the narrative at several points throughout the text. Though the author who pens the Author's Note never identifies himself by name, there are many clues that indicate it is Yann Martel himself, thinly disguised: he lives in Canada, has published two books, and was inspired to write Pi's life story during a trip to India
Francis Adirubasamy	The elderly man who tells the author Pi's story during a chance meeting in a Pondicherry coffee shop. He taught Pi to swim as a child and bestowed upon him his unusual moniker. He arranges for the author to meet Pi in person, so as to get a first-person account of his strange and compelling tale. Pi calls him <i>Mamaji</i> , an Indian term that means <i>respected uncle</i>
Ravi	Pi's older brother. Ravi prefers sports to schoolwork and is quite popular. He teases his younger brother mercilessly over his devotion to three religions.
Santosh Patel	Pi's father. He once owned a Madras hotel, but because of his deep interest in animals decided to run the Pondicherry Zoo. A worrier by nature, he teaches his sons not only to care for and control wild animals, but to fear them. Though raised a Hindu, he is not religious and is puzzled by Pi's adoption of numerous religions. The difficult conditions in India lead him to move his family to Canada
Gita Patel	Pi's beloved mother and protector. A book lover, she encourages Pi to read widely. Raised Hindu with a Baptist education, she does not subscribe to any religion and questions Pi's religious declarations. She speaks her mind, letting her husband know when she disagrees with his parenting techniques. When Pi relates another version of his story to his rescuers, she takes the place of Orange Juice on the lifeboat.
Satish Kumar	Pi's atheistic biology teacher at Petit Séminaire, a secondary school in Pondicherry. A polio survivor, he is an odd-looking man, with a body shaped like a triangle. His devotion to the power of scientific inquiry and explanation inspires Pi to study zoology in college.
Father Martin	The Catholic priest who introduces Pi to Christianity after Pi wanders into his church. He preaches a message of love. He, the Muslim Mr. Kumar, and the Hindu pandit disagree about whose religion Pi should practice
Satish Kumar	A plain-featured Muslim mystic with the same name as Pi's biology teacher. He works in a bakery. Like the other Mr. Kumar, this one has a strong effect on Pi's academic plans: his faith leads Pi to study religion at college

The Hindu Pandit	One of three important religious figures in the novel. Never given a name, he is outraged when Pi, who was raised Hindu, begins practicing other religions. He and the other two religious leaders are quieted somewhat by Pi's declaration that he just wants to love God
Meena Patel	Pi's wife, whom the author meets briefly in Toronto
Nikhil Patel (Nick)	Pi's son. He plays baseball.
Usha Patel	Pi's young daughter. She is shy but very close to her father.
The Hyena	An ugly, intensely violent animal. He controls the lifeboat before Richard Parker emerges. The chef's ulter-ego (anthropomorphism)
The Zebra	A beautiful male Grant's zebra. He breaks his leg jumping into the lifeboat. The hyena torments him and eats him alive. The chef's ulter-ego (anthropomorphism)
Orange Juice	The maternal orangutan that floats to the lifeboat on a raft of bananas. She suffers almost humanlike bouts of loneliness and seasickness. When the hyena attacks her, she fights back valiantly but is nonetheless killed and decapitated. Pi's mother's ulter-ego (anthropomorphism).
The Blind Frenchman	A fellow castaway whom Pi meets by chance in the middle of the ocean. Driven by hunger and desperation, he tries to kill and cannibalize Pi, but Richard Parker kills him first.
Tomohiro Okamoto	An official from the Maritime Department of the Japanese Ministry of Transport, who is investigating the sinking of the Japanese <i>Tsimtsum</i> . Along with his assistant, Atsuro Chiba, Okamoto interviews Pi for three hours and is highly skeptical of his first account.
Atsuro Chiba	Okamoto's assistant. Chiba is the more naïve and trusting of the two Japanese officials, and his inexperience at conducting interviews gets on his superior's nerves. Chiba agrees with Pi that the version of his ordeal with animals is the better than the one with people.
The Cook	The human counterpart to the hyena in Pi's second story. He is rude and violent and hoards food on the lifeboat. After he kills the sailor and Pi's mother, Pi stabs him and he dies.
The Sailor	The human counterpart to the zebra in Pi's second story. He is young, beautiful, and exotic. He speaks only Chinese and is very sad and lonely in the lifeboat. He broke his leg jumping off the ship, and it becomes infected. The cook cuts off the leg, and the sailor dies slowly.

LIST OF THEMES	EXPLAINED
FAITH/ RELIGION	<p>Pi views his favourite teacher, Mr. Satish Kumar, as a man of faith, despite his atheism. While Pi feels drawn to the study and practice of religions, he does not adhere to any one doctrine or book of religious texts. Instead, he explores Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. Fundamentally, Pi connects with the key concepts that unite these religions: God, light, and love. Pi's choice to have faith leads him to be accepting of atheists. Like him, they have made a choice to believe in something, even if that belief declares God doesn't exist. Pi prays for the daily miracles he will need in order to stay alive. When the reality of sharing a lifeboat with Richard Parker hits Pi, he feels terrified and hopeless. As he considers giving up, he hears a voice in his heart telling him to fight to survive. Pi finds within himself a determination to deal with his circumstances and live. Pi believes that the mere fact of living from day to day will qualify as a miracle, showing the presence of God with him. As long as Pi remains faithful—and works hard—he can survive.</p>

During his interview with the Japanese officials, Pi gives two versions of what happened after the boat sank—one with animal companions and one with human companions—and the officials reveal that they prefer the animal narrative despite how unbelievable the story seems. Pi uses their concession to explain his religious feelings. While belief in God might not make factual sense, it makes emotional sense: Faith uplifts the mind and spirit and makes the world a better place. Like stories told by religions, Pi's story with the animals highlights miracles and serves, at heart, as a story of love between a boy and a tiger.

THE ART OF STORYTELLING

The Author presents one of the story's essential themes early on: the purpose of storytelling. According to these lines, fiction allows writers to take the essence of an experience and transform the truth in the best way to communicate the deeper message. The art of fiction lies in having something to say and capturing an audience. With these lines, the narrator asks readers a key question not answered until the end of the story: whether or not Pi truly shared the lifeboat. Yet whether the tiger really exists matters less than the fact that Pi survived the overall experience. When the Japanese officials visit Pi in the hospital, they expect to hear a factual account of why the ship sank. Given their expectation, they initially reject Pi's tale of animals and Richard Parker. Here, however, Pi pushes back, asserting that the way in which people choose to see the world creates the world itself. According to Pi, people don't exist merely in the fact-based world. The lens through which people view themselves and the words they use to express what they see and perceive actually form the reality around them. Pi's words affirm the power of telling stories. After sharing two versions of his story—one with animals and one without—Pi asks the Japanese officials to pick between the two tales. His question underscores that a story consists of more than the "dry, yeastless factuality" that Pi references several times throughout the text. A story also relies on drawing the listener and the teller into a world of its own making. By sharing a story about a miraculous partnership between a boy and a tiger, Pi not only ensures that people will listen to the tale, but he also creates a narrative that he can live with.

SURVIVAL

In the moments right after the ship begins to sink and Pi finds himself in the water, he realizes two things: He's lost everyone he loves, but his will to survive remains strong. Yet, at the time, Pi does not understand why he would even want to continue living with all this terrible loss. However, as the reader comes to understand, Pi feels not only the instinctual desire to live, but also a strong faith in God, which insists he not give up. Just as he has faith in God, Pi has faith in himself. As the sun rises on the first full day in the lifeboat, Pi discovers with horror that the zebra has been grievously attacked by the hyena, but his thoughts soon turn back to his own survival. Pi instinctually understands that he mustn't use up his energy worrying about the zebra, who faces certain death, and must instead focus on his own needs. He needs to invest all his effort into figuring out how he can increase his own chances of survival. Pi comments on the fact that on the second day in the lifeboat, the zebra suffers fatal wounds after being attacked by the hyena but doesn't die right away. The zebra's slow death represents a testament to the will of a living body to cling to existence despite injury, pain, and seemingly impossible circumstances. Although the zebra finally succumbs, this scene foreshadows the tenacity to which Pi clings to life in his 277 days as a castaway. Pi survives his ordeal through his own hard work and ingenuity.

Pi's words mark a pivotal moment in both the animal and human versions of his story. In the animal version, Richard Parker reveals himself, with Pi feeling doomed to have a tiger on board. In the human version, Pi's words mark the moment he kills the cook, with Pi experiencing the darkness of his own nature. In both versions, Pi's realization that nothing can get worse allows him the freedom to fight with careless abandon to live. In either case, he survives the discovery of the violence within the boat or within himself. Shortly after Pi discovers Richard Parker aboard the lifeboat, he begins to devise his plan for survival. Pi realizes that up until then, he had been waiting to be saved by others—waiting for a ship to come along and find him. But now he resolves to work to earn his own survival, for instance, by fishing for sea life and devising ways to store rainwater. Not only will taking an active role in surviving his ordeal increase his chances for success, but also remaining active will give him purpose and keep him from wallowing in despair.

SYMBOLS:

Pi

Piscine Molitor Patel's preferred moniker is more than just a shortened version of his given name. Indeed, the word *Pi* carries a host of relevant associations. It is a letter in the Greek alphabet that also contains *alpha* and *omega*, terms used in the book to denote dominant and submissive creatures. Pi is also an irrational mathematical number, used to calculate distance in a circle. Often shortened to 3.14, pi has so many decimal places that the human mind can't accurately comprehend it, just as, the book argues, some realities are too difficult or troubling to face. These associations establish the character Pi as more than just a realistic protagonist; he also is an allegorical figure with multiple layers of meaning.

The Color Orange

In *Life of Pi*, the color orange symbolizes hope and survival. Just before the scene in which the *Tsimtsum* sinks, the narrator describes visiting the adult Pi at his home in Canada and meeting his family. Pi's daughter, Usha, carries an orange cat. This moment assures the reader that the end of the story, if not happy, will not be a complete tragedy, since Pi is guaranteed to survive the catastrophe and father children of his own. The little orange cat recalls the big orange cat, Richard Parker, who helps Pi survive during his 227 days at sea. As the *Tsimtsum* sinks, Chinese crewmen give Pi a lifejacket with an orange whistle; on the boat, he finds an orange lifebuoy. The whistle, buoy, and tiger all help Pi survive, just as Orange Juice the orangutan provides a measure of emotional support that helps the boy maintain hope in the face of horrific tragedy.

ANTROPOMORPHISM

Anthropomorphism is when an author portrays an animal or an object in such a way that it appears to be human. In Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*, Pi is stranded on a **life** boat with animals that are occasionally **anthropomorphized**. Eg. The tiger (Richard Parker) is Pi's **alter-ego** (a person's secondary or alternative personality). His mother is represented by the orangutan (Orange) and the Cook is represented by the hyena.

When analysing past Exam Question papers, you need to be aware of the question words and what they demand of you :

Question words...	Implication/What is expected of you
Place the above extract in context.	Consider the extract given and reflect over what has happened before the extract, when it happened, who was involved. What has happened prior to the extract that has been given to you? Usually a simple question to answer if you are able to identify correctly the position of the extract within the novel/drama. Provide 3 points for the 3 marks normally allocated to this type of question.
Discuss	Talk about or write about in detail, taking into account different issues or ideas...
Discuss the significance	The importance of the identified issue in context.
What impression is created	What does <i>the reference in the question</i> lead you to think?
Explain the mood	What emotions does the extract/identified lines evoke in you as a reader?
What is the tone ?	The viewpoint/ attitude of a writer on a particular subject. The tone is reflected in a particular word choice/ diction.
Explain	Make clear the meaning of something, by describing it in more detail or revealing relevant facts
Do you agree – Asks for your opinion	Take a stance with a definite Yes or No. However, no marks for Yes or No , rather for your justification. Response is NOT always YES . Do not doubt yourself...know your text!
The above question is usually followed by: Justify your response	Show or prove the statement to be right or reasonable. The evidence/justification must come from the novel/drama that you have studied.
Based on your knowledge of the novel/ drama as a whole	Consider the novel/drama in its totality, taking into account not just the extract in front of you. This could be based on a theme/ symbol or a character or the words of a character in a drama/ novel.
Evaluate effectiveness/ appropriateness of...	Break down the pros and cons of the issue at hand. Form a judgement of the statement in the question from an analysis.
Comment on the effectiveness of	Express your opinion or reaction to the degree to which the reference in the question/statement is successful or not in producing a desired result. Express your point of view.
Comment on the significance	Express your opinion or reaction to the importance of the “reference in the question/ statement.
Account for...	Give reason for the “statement in the question.

Now, let us practice a few CONTEXTUAL (SHORT) questions on *Life of Pi*.

EXTRACT - LIFE OF PI

<p>'I told you two stories that account for the 227 days in between.'</p> <p>'Yes, you did.'</p> <p>'Neither explains the sinking of the Tsimtsum.'</p> <p>'That's right.'</p> <p>'Neither makes a factual difference to you.'</p> <p>'That's true.'</p> <p>'You can't prove which story is true and which is not. You must take my word for it.'</p> <p>'I guess so.'</p> <p>'In both stories the ship sinks, my entire family dies, and I suffer.'</p> <p>'Yes, that's true.'</p> <p>'So tell me, since it makes no factual difference to you and you can't prove the question either way, which story do you prefer? Which is the better story, the story with animals or the story without animals?'</p> <p>Mr. Okamoto: 'That's an interesting question ...'</p> <p>Mr. Chiba: 'The story with animals.'</p> <p>Mr. Okamoto: 'Yes. The story with animals is the better story.'</p> <p>Pi Patel: 'Thank you. And so it goes with God.'</p> <p>[Silence]</p> <p>Mr. Okamoto: 'You're welcome.'</p> <p>Mr Chiba: 'What did he just say?'</p> <p>Mr. Okamoto: 'I don't know.'</p> <p>Mr. Chiba: 'Oh look – he's crying.'</p> <p>[Long silence]</p> <p>Mr. Okamoto: 'We'll be careful when we drive away. We don't want to run into Richard Parker.'</p> <p>Pi Patel: 'Don't worry, you won't. He's hiding somewhere you'll never find him.'</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p> <p>20</p> <p>25</p>
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[Chapter 99]

9.5 Place this extract in context. (3)

Pi eventually reaches Mexico. Officials representing the shipping company of the Tsimtsum come to Mexico to question the recovering Pi. They find his story of his 227 days at sea too implausible to believe and Pi tells them a second story.

9.6 Refer to line 18: 'And so it goes with God.'
Comment on what Pi's tone reveals about his relationship with God. (3)

His tone is confident. The only constant presence during his ordeal on the boat has been an awareness of God's presence. Even the investigators' skepticism is not enough to shake his unwavering belief. It is the only thing that he has to show after 227 incredulous days.

9.7 What does the '[long silence]' in line 24 indicate about the investigators' understanding of Pi's version of events? (3)

The silence occurs because Pi cries. Up to now he has been very confident and in control. His emotions indicate that there must be some truth to what he has been telling them. They are uncomfortable because he could be speaking the truth and their disbelief is challenged. They are moved by his crying.

9.8 Critically comment on the mood in both extracts and show how this is essential to understanding Pi's survival. (4) [25]

EXTRACT C: The mood is reflective, warm and sincere. Pi relates his experience in hospital with appreciation. He is touched by people's kindness and interest. He copes with the painful reminder of Richard Parker.

EXTRACT D: The extract contains an element of humour as Pi challenges the very serious investigators who come looking for the 'straight facts'. The fact that Pi has survived this ordeal is in itself a far-fetched reality which defies explanation. Pi is light-hearted with the investigators who do not seem to get his point that there can be more truth and significance behind a story than just the 'dry, yeastless' facts. OR Pi starts crying because he is overcome with relief. He might even be saddened by his recollection of his terrible experience. The investigators are taken aback by his display of emotions; it changes the initial light-hearted mood to one of sadness. [Award 4 marks only if reference is made to the mood in both extracts.]



If you want a good mark for your Lit Essay, stick to criteria for 1-4, NOT 5-7!



HERE IS SAFE



MARK RANKINGS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MARK ALLOCATION	Outstanding 8-10marks	Meritorious 7-7½ marks	Substantial 6-6½ marks	Adequate 5-5½ marks	Moderate 4-4½ marks	Elementary 3-3½ marks	Not achieved 0-2½ marks
CONTENT [15] Interpretation of topic. Depth of argument, justification and grasp of text.	Coherent structure. - Excellent introduction and conclusion. - Arguments well-structured and clearly developed. - Language, tone and style mature, impressive, correct	Essay well structured. - Good introduction and conclusion. - Arguments and line of thought easy to follow. - Language, tone and style correct and suited to purpose. - Good presentation	Clear structure and logical flow of argument. - Introduction and conclusion and other paragraphs coherently organised. - Flow of argument can be followed. - Language, tone and style largely correct.	Some evidence of structure. - Essay lacks a well-structured flow of logic and coherence. - Language errors minor, tone and style mostly appropriate. Paragraphing mostly correct.	Structure shows faulty planning. - Arguments not logically arranged. - Language errors evident. Tone and style not appropriate to the purpose of academic writing. - Paragraphing faulty.	Poor presentation and lack of planned structure impedes flow of argument. - Language errors and incorrect style make this a largely unsuccessful piece of writing. Tone and style not appropriate to the purpose of academic writing. - Paragraphing faulty.	Difficult to determine if topic has been addressed. - No evidence of planned structure or logic. - Poor language. Incorrect style and tone. - No paragraphing or coherence.
MARK ALLOCATION	Outstanding 12-15 marks	Meritorious 10½-11½ marks	Substantial 9-10 marks	Adequate 7½-8½ marks	Moderate 6-7 marks	Elementary 4½-5½ marks	Not achieved 0-4 marks
STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE [10] Structure, logical flow and presentation. Language, tone and style used in the essay	In-depth interpretation of topic, all aspects fully explored. - Outstanding response: 90%+. Excellent response: 80-89%. - Range of striking arguments extensively supported from text. - Excellent understanding of genre and	- Above average interpretation of topic, all aspects adequately explored. - Detailed response. - Range of sound arguments given, well supported from text. - Very good	Shows understanding and has interpreted topic well. - Fairly detailed response. - Some sound arguments given, but not all of them as well motivated as they could be. - Understanding of genre and text evident	- Fair interpretation of topic, not all aspects explored in detail. - Some good points in support of topic. - Most arguments supported but evidence is not always convincing. - Basic	Very ordinary, mediocre attempt to answer the question. - Very little depth of understanding in response to topic. - Arguments not convincing and very little justification from text. - Learner	Poor grasp of topic. - Response repetitive and sometimes off the point. - No depth of argument, faulty interpretation/Arguments not supported from text. - Very poor grasp of genre	Response bears some relation to the topic but argument difficult to follow or largely irrelevant. - Poor attempt at answering the question. The few relevant points have no justification from

HOW TO WRITE A LITERARY ESSAY

- It is a reasoned response to a question or statement on a work of Literature.
- You MAY agree, disagree or provide a mixed response to the topic.
- The style of this Essay is FORMAL. Avoid colloquial language, e.g.. “The writer is “like” saying...”things”, “that guy ”and contractions, e.g.. can’t
- Study topic carefully and underline key words with a highlighter.
- **Brainstorm all your ideas.** In this case, write down all the reasons why you agree or disagree with topic.
- **Structure your ideas:** Once you have all of your ideas, you can start evaluating which ones you think will be best for your topic. Eliminate ideas that will not work.
- **Prepare your evidence:** Next to each of your major points put examples from the novel/ play that support your argument. **NB** Ask yourself if this argument answers the essay question.
- **NB: Decide on paragraphs:** Put your ideas in an order. Each major argument should form one paragraph.
- **Structure your essay PARAGRAPHS as follows:**
 - **P: Point – state your point**
 - **E: Explain your point**
 - **E: Provide evidence/ examples from the play/ novel**
 - **R: Relate your point back to the essay question.**
- **INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH:**
 - Rewrite the essay topic in your own words and state your stance (say whether you agree or disagree). This is your **thesis statement** – tell the examiner how you will go about structuring your argument.
 - Briefly mention the points you will give in support of your stance on the topic.
 - Formulate a thesis statement based on the topic. Avoid being creative.
 - **HAVE ONE PARAGRAPH FOR EACH MAJOR POINT.**
 - **NEVER RETELL THE WHOLE STORY.** Only retell the bits of the story (examples) that back up your point and say something like this “ this example shows us that...” and relate that example back to your point and the essay question.
 - Make sure that each paragraph follows the **PEER** outline.
- **CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH**
 - Never introduce new facts into your conclusion.
 - Here briefly say what you covered in your essay, and what you have now “shown” the reader. (Sum up your argument)
 - **NEVER ADD IN RHETORICAL QUESTIONS IN YOUR CONCLUSION.**
- **REMEMBER**
 - Always give your essay a title.
 - Always write in the present tense.
 - When you mention the name of a play or a novel, put it in inverted commas.
 - In plays you speak about the audience, in novels you speak about the reader.
 - Your language must be formal. (No abbreviations, slang or colloquialism)
 - Do not write conversationally (E.g. So now you guys see L)
 - DO not write in the first person (“ I think ...” rather say “so one can see...)
 - Your tone (your attitude to the subject) must be appropriate – don’t sound arrogant and don’t attack.
 - If needed, place points/facts in chronological order.
 - Make sure that your paragraphs flow from one into the other.
 - Use the linking words below.
 - Use words like “**Also/ Furthermore/In Addition / Moreover**” if you want to add to a point that you made in the previous sentence.
 - Use words like “ **Contrary/ However/ Conversely/ In opposition/ On the other hand**” if you want to use the word “but” to start a sentence.
 - If **AND** is overused, it usually slips into a narrative/ creative essay where you merely retell the plot to examiner which is **NOT A GOOD IDEA.**

ESSAY QUESTION - EXAMPLE

The novel, Life of Pi, suggests that, despite offering contradictory approaches to life, reason and faith can co-exist. Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement. Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages). [25]

MEMORANDUM:

Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation. • A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments. • Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

Candidates might agree to a greater or lesser degree with the statement but are unlikely to disagree wholeheartedly. • Reason is the power to think about, understand, and form judgements logically. It helps one to consider the effects before taking any action. Faith, on the other hand, is a belief in a higher power. Although these might appear to be contradictory concepts, the novel suggests that reason and faith can co-exist. • In the Author's Note, the element of faith is introduced when the narrator is told that Pi's story 'will make you believe in God'. • Pi's love for the logic of science is nurtured by his Biology teacher, Mr Kumar, as well as through his observation of animal behaviour at his father's zoo. • Pi embraces all three religions to which he is exposed because he recognises that they all reflect the common element of love for God. • His passion for science and religion is encouraged by his role models, the two Mr Kumars. Despite their different perspectives, one scientific and the other religious, they are able to reach consensus on their appreciation of the zebra. This suggests that these two ideas, reason and religion, can co-exist. • Atheists are also capable of having faith although their faith lies in science rather than in a belief in God. • Some agnostics believe that reason and faith cannot co-exist and that everything should have a logical explanation. • On the lifeboat, both reason and faith help Pi to survive. His faith allows him to maintain focus and hope while his scientific knowledge and his ability to think logically sustain him physically. • Pi's reason makes him realise that he has to abandon his vegetarianism and resort to killing in order to survive. He is able to reconcile himself to his savagery by showing reverence for and praying over his kill. He also rationalises the need to distance himself from the savagery to which he descends. The creation of Richard Parker, his alter ego, enables him to cope with the horror of his actions. • Later, at university in Canada, Pi's choice of subjects reflects his ability to find commonality in seemingly disparate world views. • His choice of science as a career and his religious nature reflect his ability to reconcile reason and faith. • Furthermore, the Japanese officials do not believe Pi's version of the story with the animals and the algae island because it defies logic. Nevertheless, Pi uses the example of the floating bananas in an attempt to prove the truth of his experiences. He maintains that, at times, one has to have faith and belief, such as the belief in the existence of God, without any empirical evidence.