

## 2.9 Exemplars

### Low Excellence:

#### How did you respond to the characters in the text? Explain.

In Speak, I hated the supporting characters for ignoring Melinda's depression and I felt this was an injustice to her. Characters in this text judge Melinda's muteness as rude and rebellious, and do not see it as a means of her coping with her depression. Mr. Neck, one of her teachers, is the personification of judgment. In one scene Melinda refuses to do a speech in Mr. Neck's class and thinks to herself, "There's no way he can do this to me...Why does he hate me so much?" Instead of discussing with her why she refuses to do the speech and being a listening ear, he becomes agitated and shouts at her, "Open your damn mouth! I'm so sick of your attitude!" I felt so angry with Mr. Neck, who as a teacher has been trained to support young people, for being so obtuse and refusing to be understanding. It is people like this that further put people into depression, as they will further feel as though they are misunderstood, as Melinda did after this incident "Why does everyone want me to talk? Maybe, I have nothing to say....I am nothing".

**Comment [SH1]:** Reasoned, clear viewpoint about other characters' behaviour.

**Comment [SH2]:** Reasoned, clear viewpoint about other characters' behaviour.

#### What did you learn from this text?

The text taught me that offering a willing ear is often what people with depression need. Depression often makes people feel like nobody wants to hear what they say. I learned how Melinda feels that nobody will care about what she is feeling and what is on her mind, even if she were to tell people. This resonated deeply for me as I saw all Melinda wanted was for someone to listen to her. If those around a person like Melinda were to open their minds to see what was eating away at this person, their condition would be much more manageable for them. However, it cannot be assumed that your pain and thoughts are being picked up by the people around you, because what is clear to you may not be clear to others. You must speak. In the story, Melinda realizes this and tells her best friend about her depression and rape. In our society, the silence behind mental health must also be broken.

**Comment [SH3]:** Developed, insightful understanding of depression.

**Comment [SH4]:** Developed, insightful understanding of depression.

**Comment [SH5]:** To gain Higher grade, develop the link between text and the social context by expanding on the ways that depression is understood and dealt with in our society.

**Comment [SH6]:** Places issue of depression in NZ context.

**High Merit**

Title: Life of Pi  
Student 2: High Merit  
Author: Yann Martel  
Text Type: Extended text — Novel

**Explain how a particular scene/moment in the text provoked a strong personal reaction from you.**

At the end of this novel Pi has run aground in Mexico and is being questioned about the sinking of the cargo ship by two executives. He tells of his extraordinary story yet the executives do not believe him. Pi then offers an alternate story in which the orang-utan is Pi's mother, the hyena is the ship's cook, the zebra is a sailor and Pi is Richard Parker, the Bengal tiger. I found this explanation that Pi gave to the executives extremely enthralling because it made me look at the whole novel in a totally different light.

**Did you find this text convincing? Explain why or why not.**

Throughout the novel the animals on the lifeboat were just that; they behaved just as you would expect a wild animal to act in a distressing situation. The hyena kills and eats both the zebra and orang-utan and then Richard Parker kills the hyena. I found this unsurprising as both hyenas and tigers are predatory animals and for them to attack another animal, let alone in a survival situation, was expected to me. However when it was revealed that each animal had a human counterpart I was shocked that people would act in such a way. However, after some thought I did not find it too unreasonable that the cook had killed and cannibalised the sailor and Pi's mother. This is because I think we underestimate and downplay the animalistic qualities that people have. Humans try to separate themselves from animals; say that they are more civilised and intelligent. However, when put in an extreme situation, like being stranded at sea in a lifeboat, to survive you must do anything you can to preserve and protect yourself; you must adapt to survive. Cannibalism is seen by western society to be taboo and is generally a big no no however it occurs when there is no other option.

**Comment [SH7]:** Significant understanding of the different viewpoints about the interpretation of the animals' behaviour. Reasoned, clear viewpoints are supported by evidence.

**Comment [SH8]:** Significant understanding of the different viewpoints about the interpretation of the animals' behaviour. Reasoned, clear viewpoints are supported by evidence.

**Comment [SH9]:** Begins to show insight

**Comment [SH10]:** To gain E: further develop viewpoint about what we might do when confronted with the unthinkable.

### Low Merit:

Title: Catch-22

Author: Joseph Heller

Text Type: Novel

I felt very upset after Milo, the mess officer who is obsessed with trading airbase goods for profits, breaks his allegiance to his own country by trading and working with the German forces. It was disturbing to see how Milo was constantly obsessing over the expansion of his operations because he didn't actually care about the people in his unit. His ambitious nature often causes him into making irrational and ill-thought-out calls. On one occasion, he trades all of the men's parachutes for low-grade cotton, risking the safety of all the bombardiers. Milo seems to have no allegiance with any country or person unless he generates profit from it which I found really uncaring and selfish. In my opinion, he is essentially the living representation of capitalism. Milo can be compared to modern America's behaviour as the country sells its own military equipment and vehicles to other countries for profit. Though these weapons are used to protect a country, they have been used to attack and invade other less-equipped nations. I thought Milo's complete disregard for his men and for the country he works for stems from the ambition that has caused him to only strive for personal gain. From this novel I have learned that ambition is very dangerous to those who let it consume them. It can cause one to lose their moral path and that is why I think that ambition must follow with your heart.

**Comment [SH11]:** Just sufficiently expresses a reasoned and clear viewpoint using supporting evidence.

**Comment [SH12]:** Just sufficiently expresses a reasoned and clear viewpoint using supporting evidence.

**Comment [SH13]:** Reasoned and clear viewpoint on character.

**Comment [SH14]:** Significant understanding of link between ext and society.

**Comment [SH15]:** To gain higher grade: Further develop reasoned viewpoint regarding consequences of Milo's actions.