Generation & Thesis
Objectives.

Gain familiarity with using Generation tools.

Understand how to focus an essay after Generation Stage.

Understand the elements of and evaluate for a strong thesis.
Overview.

Question Analysis
Understanding

Generating
Brainstorming, Developing, Exploring

Focusing
Purpose, Thesis
Generating.
Problem:
You have your essay prompt but you have no idea where to start.
Starting Point

Question Analysis

What might you need to take note of within the Qn?
Starting Point

Question Analysis

**Question Demands**
What does the writing task need you to do?
- PPT: Counter-Arg + Response?
- LH: Close-reading? Literary Analysis
- Compare/Contrast
- Apply
- Relate

**Information Words**
- Summarise
- Explain
- Illustrate with examples

**Relation Words**

**Materials Available**
- Secondary sources?
- Primary Materials? Cross-references?
E X E R C I S E  # 1
Question Unpacking

WRITE YOUR QUESTION INTO THE BOX BELOW.
IF YOU ARE DOING YOUR OWN QUESTION AND HAVE YET TO COME UP WITH ONE, USE A GIVEN QUESTION FROM YOUR QUESTION PAPER OR BORROW A FRIEND'S ONE!

IDENTIFY:
Now What?
4 Strategies.

Freewriting

Clustering

Webbing

Questioning
Freewriting.

A continuous stream of writing anything that comes to mind relating to the question at hand.
The PSC Scholarships is the most prestigious SG government scholarships. Typically those in elite schools receive them, although the PSC has committed to having more awardees from non-elite JCs and the Polys. I wonder how effective that has been. Many of the Parliament Ministers are also PSC scholars themselves; what might this say about the the relationship of public service and politics? Where do these scholars typically study? Usually need good academic qualifications to stand a chance. Is there an inequality of educational opportunity and reproduces a disparity in academic achievement?
I notice how Decameron presents a spatial separation between the City and the Countryside. The city is in ruin and disarray from the plague. But the country? Looks quite idyllic leh, the characters sit around and chat, tell stories all. Don’t even need to wear masks! Perhaps there is some presentation of ideal (unattainable?) vs actual circumstances of life? Perhaps governance/social order? The plague is described to be a product of bad order/governance, but the group of friends set in place a system of taking turns that seems to function well...

Two distinct spaces of town and city

Ideal vs Actual Circumstances

Governance & Politics
Benefits of Peer Freewriting

- Speak your mind without censoring your ideas
- Your peers can help ask questions and refine your ideas
- Some people express themselves better through speech
Freewriting Peer Exercise!

EXERCISE # 2
Peer Freewrite

Exchange handouts with your partner.

Take notes for your partner as they describe their thoughts, observations or ideas relating to their essay. Feel free to draw diagrams, mindmaps, etc to help record what your partner has shared.
Any interesting points from your discussions?
I notice how Decameron presents a spatial separation between the City and the Countryside. The city is in ruin and disarray from the plague. But the country? Looks quite idyllic leh, the characters sit around and chat, tell stories all. Don't even need to wear masks! Perhaps there is some presentation of ideal (unattainable?) vs actual circumstances of life? Perhaps governance/social order? The plague is described to be a product of bad order/governance, but the group of friends set in place a system of taking turns that seems to function well...

| Governance & Politics | Sima Qian? | Another text that also comments on Govt/Politics? |
From Freewriting to Question Setting

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Goverance & Politics

Another text that also comments on Govt/Politics? Sima Qian? Both texts present critiques of ruling institutions. Both texts also present certain ideals of ruling institutions.
From Freewriting to Question Setting.

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Governance & Politics

Another text that also comments on Govt/Politics?

Sima Qian?

Both texts present critiques of ruling institutions
Both texts also present certain ideals of ruling institutions

Compare and contrast the criticisms of ruling institutions contained within Boccaccio’s Decameron and Sima Qian’s Shi Ji: The Annals of Emperor Gaozu.
Webbing & Clustering

Developing Ideas further by branching off from previous ones.
Starting Points?

Freewriting
Starting Points?

Themes

How is the theme depicted in the text? [Literary devices, Author's position]

What effect does the theme have on you? Why?
Starting Points?

What surprised you?
What confused you?
What triggered you?
What caught your attention?
What related to you?

WHY?
What surprised you?
What confused you?
What triggered you?
What caught your attention?
What related to you?

WHY?

Odd lines
Descriptions
Colour Schemes
Repeated Words, imagery, symbols
Camera Angles
Shot composition

Signposts
Webbing & Clustering

Diagram:
- Town
- Countryside
- Spatial Separation
- Delamere
- Ideal vs Reality
  - Ideal Governance
    - Clearly structured authority
    - Ideal values?
  - Reality
    - Corrupt
    - Lack of authority
    - Inadequate laws and regulations
- Sara Qian
  - Xiang Lin (corrupted)
  - Li En (corrupted)
- "Ideal vs Reality?"
Questioning.
Developing Points Further.

Questions to **Explain**
- Who is doing it?
- What is at issue?
- When does it take place?
- Where is it taking place?
- Why does it occur?
- How is it done?

Questions to **Persuade**
- What claim are you making about your topic?
- What good reasons support your claim?
- What valid underlying assumptions support the reasons for your claim?
- What backup evidence can you find for your claim?
- What refutations of your claim should you anticipate and address?
- In what ways should you qualify your claim?
Focusing.
Focusing your Paper.

Scope.

What will your essay ultimately prove/show
Set Essay Scope

Exercise #3
Focusing The Essay

On your own handouts:

Looking at the points from the previous activity, freewrite what the scope of your essay will be:

What will your essay seek to show?

This is not your thesis, but a first step to ground what your essay will prove.
Elements of a Thesis.

**Topic**
What material/content is going to be discussed

**Overall Claim**
What about this material/content are you going to show/prove?

**Roadmap**
How will you demonstrate your claim?

**Relevance**
Why is this claim important to discuss? Why is it significant?
Thesis Checklist.

**Argumentative, not descriptive.**
They should contain a claim that could be disputed, not mere observations from the material.

**Specific.**
Is your claim too general (can be easily applied to another text/topic)? Does your claim consider specific features of the material you are writing on/wider discourses it engages with?

**Manageable**
Can you fully espouse your claim within the length of the paper? Do you need to trim timeframe/amount of the text you will consider?
Recap.
Starting Point

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4 Strategies of Generation.

- Freewriting
- Clustering
- Webbing
- Questioning
4 Strategies of Generation.

Freewriting → Clustering

Webbing → Questioning

Questioning → Analysis
Book 1-on-1 consults with our peer tutors!

yalenus.mywconline.com