

*Questions/points involving B's devt or childhood: Flesh out properly specific trait before writing out para

1	<p>'Either she saw, or she did not see. There was nothing in between.' Discuss the significance of perception in <i>Atonement</i>.</p> <p><u>1. Maturity and limited capacity to perceive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young B and her inability to look beyond her own limited perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentions of as-yet unknowable/distant concepts of sexual bliss, divorce - Associated with a childish self-preoccupation and lack of empathy (twins, Lola) - Acknowledging that others had experiences equally complex as hers, but unable to understand this <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B unable to mature as she so wishes because of this <p><u>2. Manifest in central crime</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B's inability to perceive and later desire to act upon these views - Viewing fountain scene from limited vantage point of window symbolic of limited perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through repeated retelling of story from multiple perspectives, makes clear B's severe misreading of situations (fountain + library scene) + distortion of facts; imposes them into her neat storylines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fountain: Mangling sequence of devts (what presented here fit well) - Library: Clinging on to R as a maniac - Central crime is committed when B is driven to act upon her flawed assessment of situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Believed it necessary to intervene on sister's behalf - Led to false testimony <p><u>3. Misperceptions not singular to B</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through re-telling from multiple perspectives, limitations of other characters' POVs also revealed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R: Thinking B committed crime out of betrayal for schoolgirl crush - C: R taking off shoes when walking in household - L: Misreading of PM's sexual advances (dangerous implications) - In fact, they work towards preserving social hierarchies + bias and confirming false acquittal of R <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R and Hardman; no one considers PM as possible culprit (c.f. E thinking PM compatible with C) <p><u>4. B's means of atonement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing up with devt awareness of her limited worldview - Attempts to atone through re-telling story through eyes of R and C: Compelling and detailed - Reflective of attempts to empathise and correct her limited perspective <p><u>5. McEwan challenging readers' perceptions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When fundamental instability of meaning highlighted at the end <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B as an unreliable narrator: Changes to storyline and details - Readers question truthfulness of B's account; complex narrative screened by layers of perception - C.f. Awareness of limited perspective characters have - In these ways challenging traditional novel with omniscient narrator and unchallenged meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key concerns on what really happened, whether B is forgivable left in hands of readers - Points towards inherent subjectivity of meaning and rejection of absoluteness
2	<p>'I'm beginning to understand the snobbery that lay behind their stupidity.' Examine the significance of class in <i>Atonement</i> in the light of this quotation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C.f. Part 2 (letters exchanged b/w R and C) and its key assertions - C arguing that it was class bias that saw her family members conspire against R; an easy solution <p><u>1. (R) Apparent ability to surmount matters of class</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C.f. JT's sponsorship of R's education; R's 1st at Girton and ambitions - R's upbringing: Freely crossing over to main household symbolic of ease of transcending class boundaries - R's self-assurance (embracing identity) and promising future prospects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embodied in gait and imagery of being too big for his own room <p><u>2. Value systems of Tallis household</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significantly shaped by matters of class - E a barometer for conventional attitudes: Active condescension towards R <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Her opposition towards funding R's education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Viewing PM as compatible on terms of his wealth - Reinforced by choice of descriptors in Part 1 <p><u>3. Acute sensitivity even between R and C</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial awkwardness b/w R and C (navigating affections) reveals class consciousness on both ends - R: Taking out socks when entering household - C: Not interacting with R at Girton; highlighted by L <p><u>4. Class bias in relation to central crime</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C/R thinking it DH: Shaped by early interactions with him; later reflected in suspicions - No one ever considers PM <p><i>*Limited essay scope</i></p>
3	<p>'If I really cared about facts, I would have written a different kind of book'. How important is being faithful to the truth an issue in <i>Atonement</i>? <i>*Similar to Q1 but tailored explanations</i></p> <p><u>1. Maturity and comprehension of worldly truth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B's inability to understand complexities of adult world, although she claims to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tenuous understanding of the truth as it stands - Reflected in views of writing: Reductionist style and belief in neatly outlined stories - Desire for excitement and stories reflected in B's penchant for imagination and storytelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Danger when she later projects imaginative faculties onto real-world devts <p><u>2. Cause for central crime</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through repeated retelling of story from multiple perspectives, makes clear B's severe misreading of situations (fountain + library scene) + distortion of facts; imposes them into her neat storylines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fountain: Mangling sequence of devts (what presented here fit well) - Library: Clinging on to R as a maniac - Central crime is committed when B traps herself in false testimony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B qualifying her notion of 'seeing' with 'knowing' <p><u>3. Self-deception and rejection of truth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C and her indispensability to household + disregard for R - E and her migraines a justification for her passiveness - E and JT wrt illusion of stability in their marriage - A necessary hopefulness in context of war: Sustaining C and R's r/s - Literary allusions helping to preserve their love in early letters exchanged <p><u>4. B's means of atonement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In light of impossibility of atonement: Best B can aspire towards is truthful retelling events - Attempts to atone through re-telling story through eyes of R and C: Compelling and detailed - Reflective of attempts to empathise and correct her limited perspective + absolve others of crime <p><u>5. McEwan challenging readers' perceptions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When fundamental instability of truth highlighted at the end <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B as an unreliable narrator: Changes to storyline and details; family tree and name changes - Readers question truthfulness of B's account; B asking if the truth really matters - Pointlessness of truth in B's re-telling of events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portrayal of lovers' reunification: Purpose of a story to inspire 'hope' and grant 'satisfaction' - Self-deception on part of readers: Desire to run away from 'bleak realism' - In these ways challenging traditional novel with omniscient narrator and unchallenged meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Points towards inherent subjectivity of meaning and rejection of absoluteness - Questioning the value placed on facts
4	<p>'Nothing is random in the world created by the author.' How does Ian McEwan use narrative features to explore ideas in his novel <i>Atonement</i>?</p> <p><u>1. Reinforcing both inner psyche of characters + their external realities and circumstances</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part I: Primarily characterisation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeated storytelling through multiple perspectives (characterization) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key to examination of perspectives, individual bias, self-consciousness and indiv posturing - C: Self-deception wrt indispensability in household and feelings towards R - E: Delusions about own importance + justifications for passive role. Conventional biases - B: Childlike tendencies which explain what compels her to false testimony - Cinematic detail invested in weather and setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long sentences adorned with extensive descriptions - Together from repeated retelling of story contributes to slow, leisurely, languorous pace - Excessive heat symbolic of a restlessness that eventually leads B to commit crime - Explains to some extent B's nature - Part II: Draws parallels between external chaos of war and internal discord <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative features mirror inner chaos and discord within R <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetition of images: Psychological distress to horrors of war (leg in the tree) - Straightforward narration, choppy prose, shorter + simpler sentences - Emphasis on objects, bodies, physical sensations of hunger/thirst/fear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representing narrowing of thoughts to point of survival + disorientation - Reinforce the nature of war <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corruption of innocuous images; messy prose reinforcing idea of ceaseless onslaught - Overall (Parts I and II): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflective of B's attempts to re-imagine thoughts + feelings of characters in attempts for atonement <p><u>2. Illustrate central theme of postmodernism: Inherently unstable meaning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PI: Emphasis on descriptions on external appearances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tallis household: Artificial lake + fountain replica + symbol of vase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mirrors pretensions + attempted façade of wealth though B later acknowledges house was 'ugly' - Highlights disparity b/w appearances and reality - Discrete inclusion of details that corroborate with changes suggested by CC - Suggesting that B has made alterations to storyline: Meissen vase, 25-pounder guns, 1000-pound bomb - Use of narrative anticipation feeding into understanding that B is writing in retrospect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B herself admits that for convenience sake, collapsing experiences in diff hospitals into one - Reinforce her position as an unreliable narrator <p><u>3. Emphasising centrality of writing + to advance meta-fiction theme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-textual references: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questioning nature and value of literature - Playing a defining role in R/C's r/s: Used as subtext to highlight initial awkwardness (self-consciousness in references to Clarissa) and later, intensity of emotion (letters while R was in prison) - Writing as a key symbol: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An outlet for younger B to invest her wild imagination + channel childish tendencies - Informing B's decision to provide false testimony - Twins' letter running away - CC's letter on B's transcript - Mode of correspondence b/w C and R, key in developing r/s - B's attempt to atone - Draws attention to writing as a medium and tool: How it can potentially distort meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Fundamental limitations to it: B's inability to atone through writing
5	<p>What techniques does Ian McEwan use in his novel <i>Atonement</i> to explore the idea that one person's perception of reality may differ from that of another?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitive narration - Cinematic detail

6	<p>In what ways does Ian McEwan's use of setting reinforce the central ideas of <i>Atonement</i>?</p> <p><u>1. Elements in characterisation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key hints to external indicators (e.g. class) that influence behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tallis household: Luxury, wealth and boredom explaining B's traits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Penchant for imagination + excitement + attention - Often serving to reinforce specific character traits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bedrooms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B: Shrine to her orderly spirit - C: Messiness and restlessness - Twins': Disorderly, absence of needed guidance - E: Darkness and distance from family - R: Constraining effect, imposing on him revealing potential - Triton (half-scale reproduction of Greek god): Rep of R's lost grandeur + unrealized potential - Interaction of characters with their surroundings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surroundings reveal relative position in household as locations often carry implicit associations - Children feeling they only belong in nursery (associated with safety from adult world) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sinister undertones when breached by PM <p><u>2. External realities paralleling internal psyche</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pt I Weather: Heat reflective of restlessness and tension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awkwardness between R and C, tension at dinner table, B's restlessness - Pt II Messiness and chaos surroundings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Images of ghastly horrors and physical destruction // R's lost life - Bray Dunes and aimless masses walking // internal discord - Distortion of natural settings: R constantly harkening back to a better time - Pt III Sterile setting and images of cleansing reflecting B's desire to be (metaphorically) rid of guilt <p><u>3. Illustrate central theme of postmodernism: Inherently unstable meaning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transformation of Tallis household: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pt I: Artificial lake + fountain replica + symbol of vase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflective of failed attempts at posturing, façade of a wealthy household - Pt III: Becomes a hotel with its interiors refurbished - Discrete inclusion of details that corroborate with changes suggested by CC - Suggesting that B has made alterations to storyline: Meissen vase, 25-pounder guns, 1000-pound bomb - Use of narrative anticipation feeding into understanding that B is writing in retrospect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B herself admits that for convenience sake, collapsing experiences in diff hospitals into one - Reinforce her position as an unreliable narrator
7	<p>How does Ian McEwan explore the idea in his novel <i>Atonement</i> that passionately holding on to a belief can both sustain and destroy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R + C's relationship - B's false testimony - B's attempt at atonement
8	<p>In what ways does Ian McEwan explore the idea that it is seemingly civilised people who abuse power in <i>Atonement</i>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through examination of wider social conventions that shape notions of civility + who is awarded power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First example of abuse of power: B as a child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abusing her role as key witness to rape to give false testimony - Highlights unreliability of B as a witness; clear indications of immaturity - Calls to question how extensive power to determine R's fate lands in her hands - Structures in place that protect individuals like PM from being convicted of rape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C.f. manipulative PM: Abuse of class, status and age in Lola's rape

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manages to get away with it: Emerges triumphant relative to other characters in novel - Marries off to Lola, grows wealth, lives till 88; no one harbours suspicions <p>- Through examination of how external circumstances can incite individuals to incivility + abuse of power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - War dehumanizes and incites men to violence + irrationality - Attack on RAF personnel who did not fight back <p>- On a larger scale, calls to question what constitutes power abuse given extensive authorial control B wields</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C.f. Readers' awareness that events were written in retrospect by B, who altered certain elements - Pitted against B's arguments on pointlessness in re-telling the truth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portrayal of lovers' reunification: Purpose of a story to inspire 'hope' and grant 'satisfaction' - Self-deception on part of readers: Desire to run away from 'bleak realism' <p>> Ultimately, complexities of power how it is wielded</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On plot level: Abuses of power led to B's crime + preventing justice from being delivered (PM) - Central to novel is how extensive authorial power prevents B from attaining atonement
9	<p>Briony believes that with 'her absolute power of deciding outcomes, she is also God'. TWE is this true of fiction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-creation of experiences through eyes of C, R and E - Reunification of lovers; alterations of storyline - At the same time, chasm between fiction and reality is clear - Limitations of B's power in altering outcomes grounded in real devts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No atonement; no forgiveness