



Common Assignment 3

LDC Task and Module

Explanatory Essay Analyzing Tone in George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant"

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Dialectical Journals

Teacher Instructions

This is an adapted dialectical journal designed to scaffold the reading process of “Shooting an Elephant” toward the LDC module in the “Words Matter” unit, which asks students to explain how specific word choices and connotation develop tone.

Copy several pages for each student or copy one page and ask students to add additional pages on their own paper. Some students may prefer to fill out a digital version. If you have the technology and want to allow students to collaborate, several students could share a Google Doc version.

If students have never used a dialectical journal, model a few rows first. You can use any text—it is probably best to model with something OTHER than “Shooting an Elephant” so you do not unduly influence students’ reading.

You can assign a specific number of entries or allow students to self-regulate, with the reminder that the more entries they complete, the more support they will have for their final essay.

Differentiation Suggestions

This adapted dialectical journal can be further adapted in several ways to support different levels of readers and/or elicit different responses from students depending on what you know your classes need to focus on. Here are a few suggestions.

1. Change the page layout to “landscape,” and widen certain columns to encourage more detail in student responses.
2. Divide the cells in Column 3 to provide distinct space for denotation/definition and connotations. For example:

Page #	Word Choice	Denotation and Connotations	How do this word choice and its connotation contribute to the tone?
		D:	
		C:	

3. Simplify the Column 4 prompt to “What tone does the author’s diction create?,” and use it in tandem with a tone word list.
4. Have students fill out Columns 1–3 independently, and then use small group discussion to help them fill out Column 4.
5. Pre-identify a few key words from the text, and require students to complete entries on those words (in addition to some student-selected words).



Name: _____

Date: _____ Block: _____

Dialectical Journals

As we read “Shooting an Elephant” by George Orwell, complete the dialectical journal to analyze the diction and tone of the passage. This will help you gather and analyze evidence for your final essay.

Page #	Word Choice Pick out significant examples of the author’s diction and any essential vocabulary used.	Denotation and Connotations Define the word(s), and list the connotations.	How do this word choice and its connotation(s) contribute to the tone of the passage?



Page #	Diction and Vocabulary Pick out examples of the author's diction and any essential vocabulary used.	Denotation and Connotations Define the word(s), and list the connotations.	How do this word choice and its connotation(s) contribute to the tone of the passage?



Small Group Discussion for “Bridging the Conversation”

Instructions and Protocol

Context

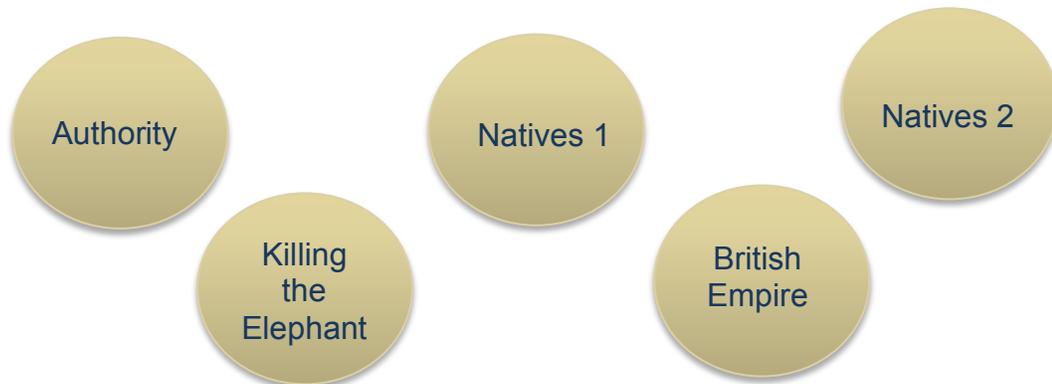
After closely reading Orwell’s “Shooting an Elephant,” it will be important for all students to discuss what they’ve read in a more focused manner. Before writing their essays, students must choose a specific aspect of the story (the natives, British Empire, having to shoot the animal, etc.) and focus on the evidence and implications of the author’s diction toward that aspect. The focus for this activity will come from which aspect they choose.

So if you have a group of writers who want to focus on the narrator’s attitude toward the native, then they will make up a “natives” group. If a larger number of students is leaning toward the same direction, just be sure to break that group up into multiple smaller groups so they are more effective at closely reading; annotating; and sharing their evidence, annotations, and thinking on tone specific to their focus.

This mini-task is meant to take place in a single period (50 minutes), helping students organize their notes and thinking on the narrator’s tone in the short story, making for an easier transition to the writing process.

Practice

1. After having modeled your own thinking and allowing students to practice their close reading strategies earlier, students now need to decide on the aspect of the surroundings or predicament they want to key in on. Group students according to their choices:
- 2.



3. The mandate in the groups is as follows: (a) another round of annotation that centers on their particular focus; (b) choosing and documenting key pieces of evidence (diction/words and phrases that lead to a particular tone) connected to that focus and the narrator’s attitude; (c) short response in their task log about the attitude(s) the narrator has toward that focus. You may choose to provide a specific graphic organizer or evidence log for students to use or let them use their own system. (20–30 minutes)
4. Each group is then responsible for reporting out their findings and implications drawn to the whole class. Here, the teacher facilitates the discussion that is based solely on what each group has discovered about the text and their conclusion around the narrator’s tone. (20–30 minutes)

The goal of this mini-task is to facilitate the type of thinking and discussion writers need to have around a particular text, the opportunity to grapple with complex texts and organize their thoughts (or cement a thought). They may have shared ideas, and that is okay, so long as it is student generated through their collaboration with one another. Having students learn from each other is a step in the right direction this early in the year. Plus, we foster that collaborative effort and teamwork in the fall semester, a practice we want them to continue as the year progresses.

This is also a solid formative check for you, as you bounce around the room, listening in on groups and guiding their discussions if necessary.

Words Matter: Common Assignment 3—LDC Task and Module
Small Group Annotation and Discussion of “Shooting an Elephant”



You are now in a small group with other students who have chosen the same focus for their essay as you have. Here is what you need to do:

1. Individually annotate the story **again**, this time specifically focusing on diction and other evidence that is **specifically related to your topic**.
2. Record key pieces of evidence that you might use in your essay—that is, examples of diction/words and phrases that develop a particular tone.
3. Write a short response about the narrator’s attitude toward your chosen focus.

Then, get together with your group, and discuss all of the above. Add to your notes as you gain further insights from your peers.

Finally, you’ll share out with the whole class.



Teacher Instructions and Protocol

Context

This activity is meant for the “Preparing to Write” portion of the LDC Module, just after the “Bridging the Conversation” section. The purpose is to create a class model of an essay that will holistically earn a score of 3 or higher on the LDC Explanatory Rubric. This “Whole Class Write” is meant to be done over the course of two periods (90–120 minutes total). This activity is adapted from an AP protocol, but it will work for 10th graders.

Since there are no student exemplars for the unit yet, the students work together as a class, facilitated by the teacher, to create a literary analysis on tone that will serve as an exemplar/model they will be writing for Orwell’s short story, “Shooting an Elephant.” However, the text on which they will focus will be one of the texts from Unit Section 2/the formative assessment*: “Same Song,” “Eleven,” or “Those Winter Sundays.” This class write will echo the type of writing expected for the short story.

**The original intent is for the instructor to choose which text, quite possibly informed by a student excerpt that scored well on the formative assessment and that effectively analyzed tone.*

Steps

1. Give students a prompt that echoes the task for Orwell’s short story, except substitute one of the above texts from Unit Section 2 (“Eleven,” for instance):

How does Orwell use diction to convey tone? After reading “Eleven,” write an essay in which you explain how Cisneros’ diction conveys the narrator’s complex attitude toward her childhood. What conclusions or implications can you draw regarding the narrator’s attitude? Support your explanation with evidence from the text.
2. Divide the class into roughly five groups. Each group writes ONE introductory paragraph and hands to the teacher. Provide a checklist of introductory elements (title, author, brief context, thesis on tone.) The class discusses which introduction was best and revises it if needed. (Blending of multiple paragraphs can occur.) The revised intro is quickly typed up by one student on a laptop, projecting the class progress up to this point. *If possible, each group can have a laptop. This is where Google Docs becomes a useful tool, and the teacher can project the shared document.*
3. During this typing time, the whole class chooses five aspects of tone that would work with this prompt, and each group is assigned a particular attitude of the narrator. Then each group gets together and writes ONE paragraph on their assigned tone. When finished, they type on a computer in the classroom. *If a short period, approximately 50 minutes, students go home at this point. If not, tone paragraphs are copied and pasted onto one document, which gets printed.*
4. Next, hand around the printed copies (one for each student). Students decide as a class what order the paragraphs should go in.
5. They then go back into their groups and each group writes a transition for the paragraph they originally drafted. Teachers should collect the transitions. Each group now writes a conclusion.
6. As before, all conclusions are discussed by whole class, and one is chosen (or blended). Entire essay is copy/pasted together to create the whole class exemplar. Then the teacher can model the grading that would occur with this essay using the rubric.
7. Then a copy is made for each student to have as a model for “Shooting an Elephant,” as they venture further into the writing process.

This activity allows for plenty to be accomplished: analysis of rubric, discussion of the type of thesis required for this analysis, transitions, exemplary elements that make up a proficient and advanced essay. This also allows for a nice reciprocity in the unit, calling on earlier texts the students are familiar with and have already closely read.



Instructional Plan for “M.E.A.T. Paragraph Writing Strategy” Mini-Task

Context

The idea behind this mini-task is to provide students with a simple outline to use when drafting each of their body paragraphs for a simple essay. This mini-task can be used outside of the context of a full essay by assigning students a controlling idea and having them write one paragraph that supports that controlling idea, or it can be used to help them construct multiple body paragraphs in support of the controlling idea in an essay they are writing. In either case, it is suggested that you model this process for the students and allow them to practice one M.E.A.T. body paragraph outside of the content you want them to write about.

Explain to students that the body paragraphs are really the **meat** of the essay—the lengthiest part of the essay that serves to support their controlling idea. Each body paragraph should focus on one topic.

It is presumed that students have been taught the basic structure of a five-paragraph (or similar) essay and already know how to write or have already written introductory paragraphs.

It should be suggested to students that, depending on the essay, the topic, and the way they write, more than three body paragraphs may be appropriate.

It should also be noted that this mini-task does not specifically help students write body paragraphs that deal with counterclaims.

Finally, this should be used as scaffolding for students new to basic essay writing or for students who are struggling and need extra help. If students are successful using M.E.A.T. after a few essays, they should then be given less direct scaffolding.

Suggested Instructional Steps

1. Ask students what function the body paragraphs of an essay serve.
2. Ask students what is similar about the structure of a body paragraph compared to the introductory paragraph and what is different.
3. Situate the body paragraphs for them thusly:

Full Essay Outline

I. Introductory Paragraph

- **Hook**
- **Background**
- **Thesis**
- **Transition**

II. Body Paragraph 1 (supporting evidence for thesis)

III. Body Paragraph 2 (supporting evidence for thesis)

IV. Body Paragraph 3 (supporting evidence for thesis)

V. Conclusion

- **Summary**
- **Restated thesis**
- **Consideration of counterclaims**
- **Conclusion**

4. List the key terms of the M.E.A.T. outline for students and ask them to define each:
 - a. **Main idea** (topic sentence)
 - b. **Evidence**
 - c. **Analysis**
 - d. **Tie-up/Transition**



5. Give students a sample controlling idea and/or a sample introductory paragraph for an essay similar to what you are assigning.
 - **Sample Essay Prompt**

Between direct democracy and representative democracy, which form of government do you think is a better system for the United States today?
 - **Sample Controlling Idea**

Representative democracy is a better form of government for the United States than direct democracy.
 - **Sample Introductory Paragraph**

In ancient societies as well as in some state and local political systems in the United States today, there are examples of citizens practicing the purest form of democracy known to man. This form of government—direct democracy—involves every citizen having a direct say in the law-making process. However, most Americans are much more familiar with representative democracy, which is a system wherein citizens vote for leaders to represent and make laws for the society as a whole. Both systems have always had certain benefits but also many drawbacks. After considering ancient as well as recent uses of direct democracy, there are some clear advantages to having citizens more actively engaged in the making of laws. However, given the complexity of the United States and modern society in general, it's clear that representative democracy is a better form of government for the United States than direct democracy.
6. Have students brainstorm some ideas to support this sample claim that you are modeling. For example:
 - The United States has a very large population.
 - Most Americans don't have the time or ability to understand every single legislative issue.
 - Direct democracy is just as or even more prone to the rise of demagogues than representative democracy.
7. Using the M.E.A.T. template, model for students how to write a **main idea** based on one or more of the brainstorming ideas. For example:
 - The size of the U.S. population is one reason that representative democracy is better for the United States than direct democracy.
8. Ask students to brainstorm **evidence** for the sample main idea. For example:
 - More than 300 million people are living in the United States.
 - The population of Ancient Greece was much smaller than this.
 - The populations of states and localities in the United States that use direct democracy are also much smaller than this.
9. Using the M.E.A.T. template, model for students how to write **evidence** statements. For example:
 - According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are more than 300 million people living in the United States. Even with a much smaller voting age population, more than 100 million Americans voted in the last presidential election.
10. Using the M.E.A.T. template, model for students how to engage in **analysis** of their evidence. For example:
 - It is simply not practical to expect hundreds of millions of people to be able to cast hundreds of votes every year each time an important new law is under consideration. It probably wouldn't be logistically or fiscally possible to provide the needed structures to get all Americans to participate in direct democracy even if we wanted to. On the other hand, ancient Greek city-states had and local communities within the United States that practice direct democracy have much smaller populations, which makes direct democracy feasible.



11. Using the M.E.A.T. template, model for students how to **tie up** this paragraph and/or **transition** from this paragraph to the next. For example:
 - Without question, the size and complexity of American life is a key reason why direct democracy just couldn't work in the United States.
12. Present the full sample/modeled paragraph to students:
 - The size of the U.S. population is one reason why representative democracy is better for the United States than direct democracy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are more than 300 million people living in the United States. Even with a much smaller voting age population, more than 100 million Americans voted in the last presidential election. It is simply not practical to expect hundreds of millions of people to be able to cast hundreds of votes every year each time an important new law is under consideration. It probably wouldn't be logistically or fiscally possible to provide the needed structures to get all Americans to participate in direct democracy even if we wanted to. On the other hand, ancient Greek city-states had and local communities within the United States that practice direct democracy have much smaller populations, which is what makes direct democracy feasible. Without question, the size of the American population is a key roadblock that prevents direct democracy from working in the United States.
13. Give students the M.E.A.T. graphic organizer and have students practice by writing a **SECOND** body paragraph using the same sample topic or by providing another simple sample topic. Students can either work individually or with a partner to get through the sample. This sample should be collected and scored.

Then, provide students with three or more M.E.A.T. graphic organizers and have them work on the body paragraphs for their full essay. Encourage them to use the texts, their notes, or their full essay outlines as they work on this. Each M.E.A.T. graphic organizer should be collected and scored before students draft their full essay.

Words Matter: Common Assignment 3—LDC Task and Module
Final Assessment: Rubric

INFORMATIONAL/EXPLANATORY TEACHING TASK RUBRIC (TEMPLATE TASK COLLECTION VERSION 2.0)

Scoring Elements	Not Yet		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Focus	Attempts to address prompt, but lacks focus or is off-task.		Addresses prompt appropriately, but with a weak or uneven focus.		Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. D: Addresses additional demands sufficiently.		Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately and maintains a strongly developed focus. D: Addresses additional demands with thoroughness and makes a connection to controlling idea.
Controlling Idea	Attempts to establish a controlling idea, but lacks a clear purpose.		Establishes a controlling idea with a general purpose.		Establishes a controlling idea with a clear purpose maintained throughout the response.		Establishes a strong controlling idea with a clear purpose maintained throughout the response.
Reading/ Research	Attempts to present information in response to the prompt, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the prompt with accuracy and sufficient detail.		Accurately presents information relevant to all parts of the prompt with effective selection of sources and details from reading materials.
Development	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, including retelling, but lacks sufficient development or relevancy.		Presents appropriate details to support the focus and controlling idea.		Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support the focus and controlling idea.		Presents thorough and detailed information to strongly support the focus and controlling idea.
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.		Uses an appropriate organizational structure to address the specific requirements of the prompt, with some lapses in coherence or awkward use of the organizational structure		Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address the specific requirements of the prompt.		Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt.
Conventions	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using an appropriate format with only minor errors.		Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using an appropriate format.
Content Understanding	Attempts to include disciplinary content in explanations, but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.		Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.		Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.		Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.



Final Assessment: LDC Explanatory Essay

Background

Earlier in this unit, we explored real-world examples of the power of words and learned how much of that power comes not from a word's dictionary definition but from its **connotation** and **tone**.

Tone refers to an author's attitude as narrator toward the subject of the story and the readers of the story. Since we cannot hear an author's voice, our only clue to how an author feels—their attitude or tone—about what they are writing about is hidden in the text itself. If we analyze the word choice (diction) used, we can often figure out the author's tone. A student's ability to recognize tone can often be the key to understanding the text or not.

LDC Task

How does Orwell use diction to convey tone? After reading "Shooting an Elephant," write an essay in which you explain how Orwell's diction conveys the narrator's complex attitudes toward his surroundings and predicaments, such as the natives, the British, authority figures, or the very act of shooting the elephant. What conclusions or implications regarding the narrator's attitude can you draw? Support your discussion with evidence from the text(s).



“Shooting an Elephant” Explanatory Essay Planning

At this point in the unit, you have read Orwell’s “Shooting an Elephant,” created a dialectical journal to start your thinking about diction and tone, chosen an area of focus for your essay, and met with a group to generate some initial ideas about the narrator’s attitude toward your area of focus.

Now you will plan the three main components of your essay:

1. Thesis statement
2. Body paragraphs
3. Inferences and conclusions

This is not a detailed outline; it is an opportunity for you to write out your initial ideas.

First, review the prompt one more time:

Prompt: How does Orwell use diction to convey tone? After reading “Shooting an Elephant,” write an essay in which you explain how Orwell’s diction conveys the narrator’s complex attitude toward his surroundings and predicaments, such as the natives, the British, authority figures, or the very act of shooting the elephant. What conclusions or implications regarding the narrator’s attitude can you draw? Support your explanation with evidence from the text.

Now, based on your dialectical journal, other annotations, and the group work you just did, generate a rough thesis statement.

1. **Rough thesis statement:** Be sure to identify the narrator’s attitude/tone and briefly describe the type of diction used by the author to achieve this tone.
2. **Body paragraphs:** In this section, you will generate the ideas that will become your body paragraphs. You should focus on explaining the **complexity** of the narrator’s attitude by identifying multiple facets (these multiple facets may become your individual body paragraphs later).
 - What is the narrator’s attitude toward _____ (area of focus for your essay)?
 - How is this attitude complex? What are some different facets of the narrator’s attitude?
 - Evidence from the text that supports this analysis (specific diction):
3. **Conclusions and implications:** What conclusions or implications can you draw about the narrator’s attitude?

Evidence from the text that supports this analysis (specific diction and/or actions of the narrator):



M.E.A.T. Paragraph Writing Strategy (Outlining/Development of Body Paragraphs)

M	Write a sentence that explains the main idea/topic sentence of your body paragraph.
E	Write one or more sentences that gives evidence to support the main idea.
A	Write one or more sentences that analyzes and explains the evidence you have provided.
T	End your paragraph by tying up the ideas of your paragraph to transition to the next one.



Ideas Under Control

Thesis Statement:	
Topic Sentence:	Connections:
Body Paragraph 1:	Does this topic sentence connect to the thesis? What evidence from the text supports your thinking?
	Does this topic sentence answer the prompt? What evidence from the text supports your thinking?



Body Paragraph 2:	Does this topic sentence connect to the thesis? What evidence from the text supports your thinking?
	Does this topic sentence answer the prompt? What evidence from the text supports your thinking?
Body Paragraph 3:	Does this topic sentence connect to the thesis? What evidence from the text supports your thinking?
	Does this topic sentence answer the prompt? What evidence from the text supports your thinking?



GEORGE ORWELL

Shooting an Elephant (1936)

George Orwell (1903–1950) has written some of the most influential novels and essays of the 20th century. His work, including Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, centers on biting satire, examinations of the dangers of totalitarian political systems, and frightening depictions of future dystopias. As you read, consider the way Orwell presents himself as the narrator through his depictions of his actions and reactions.

In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people—the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically—and secretly, of course—I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lockups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos—all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something

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clamped down, in *saecula saeculorum*, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal byproducts of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism—the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old .44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful *in terrorem*. Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone “must.” It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of “must” is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit, but had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow, and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violences upon it.

The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palm-leaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning people as to where the elephant had gone, and, as usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of an elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of “Go away, child! Go away this instant!” and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man's dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him



with its trunk, put its foot on his back, and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. (Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish.) The friction of the great beast’s foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend’s house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelled the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of the houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant—I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary—and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was a metalled road and beyond that a miry waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd’s approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant—it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery—and obviously one ought not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of “must” was already passing off; in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home.

But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes—faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all



certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd—seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the “natives,” and so in every crisis he has got to do what the “natives” expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing—no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with the preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a *large* animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged I could shoot, if he took no notice of me it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steamroller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of “natives”; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind



was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on, and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do. There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim.

The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from earhole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole; actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick—one never does when a shot goes home—but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line on his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralyzed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time—it might have been five seconds, I dare say—he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upwards like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skywards like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open—I could see far down into the caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally, I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet



powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dahs and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND WRITING

1. What is Orwell’s argument in this essay? How does he use the story of shooting the elephant to make that argument? Are you persuaded by his argument? Why or why not?
2. Explore Orwell’s use of the lines of argument. Where does he use arguments from the heart, from character, from values, from facts and reason? Which uses seem the most effective? Which seem less effective? Why?
3. Orwell is known for his masterful use of language; choose a section of the essay that you found especially engaging and analyze how Orwell used stylish or figurative language. How does his choice of words affect your reaction to the essay?



Teacher Instructions

1. Utilize the “Revision Guide” for specific feedback.
2. As needed, use the Delineate-Evaluate-Explain organizer for students to delineate and evaluate one another’s explanations. This is a literacy strategy that will be utilized as a peer review tool. It is a partner activity where students switch papers. If time allows, have students switch papers again to get more feedback. The +Prompt activity is optional and may not be relevant to this task.
3. As needed, use the “Revising—Sentence Variation Models” and “Focus for Editing and Revising” tools for further refinement.
4. Self Reflective Comments
 - a. This activity can be done using Microsoft Word comments, Google Drive comments, or physical Post-It notes, depending on the available technology.
 - b. After students have completed peer editing and received feedback from both peers and teacher, allow time for students to reflect by “marking up” their own paper. Model a thinkaloud of this process to ensure students understand what they are being asked to do.
 - c. You could also use this step BETWEEN peer feedback and teacher feedback so that students can point your attention to areas where they want you to look closely.
 - d. Give your students clear directions and guidelines, such as:

“This is your opportunity to communicate with me ‘backstage’ about the choices you’ve made in your essay. You might note places where:

 - you’ve tried to draw on key concepts from the readings or course materials;
 - you think you’ve expressed an idea or developed an explanation particularly well;
 - you feel uncertain about whether you’ve gotten your point across;
 - you are struggling with or confused about a particular concept;
 - you’ve incorporated suggestions for revision from me or your peers; or
 - you’d like me to respond to any other issues.

Make sure your questions and comments offer enough information to allow the reader (me) to know how to respond to you—e.g., explain why you’re confused (not just that you’re confused) or why you’ve used the concepts you’ve chosen, refer to specific ways you think you’ve expressed something well, and so on.”



Author's Name: _____ Title of Essay: _____

Revision Guide

Peer revision is a way for you to get input from someone else on the strengths and weaknesses of your essay. Someone else can often see problems that you can't. The following activity is a guide for peer revision. It focuses on parts of your essay that you may not have thought of as you wrote it. These are elements that can strengthen both the content and the style of your essay.

Peer Reviewer Editing Directions

Step One:

- Read your partner's essay individually.
- Complete the Delineate, Evaluate, Explain handout.

Step Two:

- With your partner, discuss each of the questions below and fill out the revision guide.

1. Thesis Statement

What is the subject of the thesis statement? _____

Does the author address the task? *Yes or No*. How can the author revise their thesis statement to address the prompt?

Is the essay focused? *Yes or No* Circle words throughout the essay that refer to the ideas in the thesis.

2. Are there concrete details (specific textual references, usually enclosed in quotation marks)? *Yes or No*
Underline them.

Are ideas fully developed? Does the author need to add commentary (analysis)? *Yes or No*
If needed, use the focused questioning technique.

- 1) Highlight the phrases or clauses that can be elaborated on.
- 2) Create a question about the highlighted portion of the sentence.

3. Sentence Beginnings

In the chart below, write the first four words of every sentence. What patterns, if any, do you see emerging in the writing?

Sentence Number	First Four Words	Notes about Patterns
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Words Matter: Common Assignment 3—LDC Task and Module



4. Are there any awkward or poorly worded sentences that need to be corrected? Highlight or underline them in a different color, and make suggestions for how to improve each.

5. State the writer's strengths and areas for growth in the sections below. Please give specific details and reference the writer's work. Avoid using non-specific words like "good," "nice," and "great job" that do not help the writer improve his/her draft.

What are two areas that are particularly strong about the writer's essay?

What are two areas that could be improved in this essay?

Peer reviewed and edited by: _____

Author Directions

After reviewing your essay with your partner, complete the following tasks:

1. Revise your thesis statements based on your partner's answers to question 1.
2. Answer the questions your partner wrote about the highlighted sentences for question 2, and then tie the answer to the topic sentence. This will help add commentary and analysis to your essay.
3. Look at the patterns your partner found in question 3. If you see the same type of sentence beginning, such as always starting with the subject, use the Sentence Variation Models list to vary the beginnings of your sentences.
4. Look at the sentences your partner identified that need to be revised in question 4. Use the Focus for Editing and Revising handout to revise these sentences.
5. Make sure you address the two areas of improvement that your partner identified in question 5.