

6.3 Writing diary entries

Writing diary entries from a character's perspective helps one to understand characterisation and motivations of the novel, and develops empathy in literature.

As you read the novel, write diary entries to reflect on the various events from the point of view of one of the three adolescent characters: Pete, Petrus, or Sarita. By immersing your-

self in their thoughts and emotions, you are able to establish a deeper connection with the characters, recognising their vulnerabilities, aspirations and challenges. This approach will enhance your reading experience, allowing you to appreciate the complexity of human nature and gain insight into diverse perspectives.

Spend no more than 15 minutes writing each diary entry, with your writing presented as a stream of consciousness, capturing the feelings and thoughts that arise from the events the characters experience. Through this exercise, you will better be able to understand the character's inner workings and form a more profound and empathetic connection with their journey throughout the story.

Example of diary entry prompts

Diary entry 1 (end of p. 22): Write your first entry now that you have read the opening chapter, “The Day After”.

Diary entry 2 (end of p. 49): Write an entry from the perspective of your character, using information provided up to this point of your reading to inspire you.

Diary entry 3 (end of p. 86): Write an entry from the perspective of your character, using information from the different chapters to inspire you.

- If you are **Pete**, refer closely to the conversation that you had with your father about the Group Areas Act (p. 76).
- If you are **Petrus**, refer closely to the event in the chapter “One Six”.
- If you are **Sarita**, refer closely to the event in the chapter “Forgetting”.

Example of diary entry:

Dear diary,

I have been trying to hide the bruises on my body from Mum the whole day. I threw my clothes away immediately when I got home last night; they were soiled and ripped. I could not sleep last night after what happened.

I was scared. I flung open the passenger door while the person holding me was briefly distracted . . . but I didn't get far before he caught me and kicked me to the ground. I landed on my back. I don't know how I am going to explain my bruises to my mother. He towered over me, his scary smile searing into my memory. I tried to fight back, screaming and struggling, but he kept me down. Suddenly, through my tears, I saw a flash of black and white, and soon I was on my feet running. A black guy was on my left, a white guy on my right. I tripped, but they caught me. There were gunshots. I took a dive and hid behind a rock, praying for God to save us. Then there was a really loud bang, too close for comfort. I screamed, and we huddled together, terrified. An engine revved nearby, and then it got quiet. I couldn't stop crying, still in shock from what happened.

I wish it were just a nightmare.

Sarita