

THEORY BOOKLET

NAME:.....

YEAR 12

ENGLISH

COMMON MODULE

LESSON 2: EXPLORING EMOTION

1300 008 008

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1. BUILDING EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

Our emotions are one of the key ways in which we process our experiences, but what are these things we feel and, more importantly, how can we become better at identifying them and thinking about their representation in texts?

The central question we will investigate in this lesson is:

How does engaging with a variety of texts help build your emotional awareness?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Consider your intuitive response to this question and note it down. Your teacher may ask you to share your thoughts with the class.

In order to answer this question in depth, we will need to engage with a variety of texts and then reflect upon our emotional responses.

We thought a little bit about the spectrum of emotions when we examined Plutchik's Wheel of Emotion in Lesson One. This provides a vocabulary for describing emotions, but it doesn't necessarily mean that you're highly skilled at identifying all these emotions when you're asked to respond to your prescribed texts or unseen texts under exam conditions.

Part of the requirement of the English Advanced course is to expand your skills in engaging with texts and analysing the emotional nuance explored in literature. One way to build these skills is to consider carefully our feelings in response to texts. Building self-awareness of our own emotional landscape can help us read texts in a more subtle way. Engaging in this process regularly will allow you to fulfil the requirements of the following syllabus outcome:

EA12-5: A student: thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively, critically and discerningly to respond to, evaluate and compose texts that synthesise complex information, ideas and arguments

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Let's begin by thinking about our emotional response to the following text. Spend two minutes noting down the emotions that you feel in response to this photograph and its accompanying caption. As you do this, consider why you feel this way. Your teacher may ask you to share your response with the class.

Barbara Davidson, December 29, 2010 – Los Angeles Times



"A wreath honouring slain student Dannie Farber Jr. is given a prominent seat at the Narbonne High graduation ceremony. Farber, who played wide receiver on the school's football team, died after he was shot three times while eating dinner in Compton. He was three weeks from graduation when he was killed."²²

²² Caption on this Pulitzer Prize winning example of photojournalism: <http://www.pulitzer.org/winners/barbara-davidson>

PAIR DISCUSSION

Talk to a fellow student and discuss the emotions that you noted down in response to this picture. In your conversation try to explain why you felt these things. Note down any ideas or additional insights that you discover from this conversation.

CLASS DISCUSSION

What do you find emotionally powerful about this photograph?

How has the photograph captured these emotions?

FOCUS QUESTION

1. Choose one person depicted in the photograph and explain the emotions that Davidson has captured.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Consider the painting below. Your task is to describe as best you can the emotions that you experience by engaging with the painting. In this exercise you are seeking to build your active awareness of how you feel and attempt to describe it.

Raul G. 2011. Brit Pop, A Portrait of James Myhill²³



²³ <http://www.byraulg.com/>

Use the space to describe your emotional response to the painting. Things you might consider your response:

- The feelings evoked by particular colours²⁴
- Your intuitive response to the shapes you see
- The impressions you have formed about the subject of the painting
- The emotional tone you take away from the painting as a whole



²⁴ *Evoke* verb. To bring or recall a feeling, memory, or image to the conscious mind.

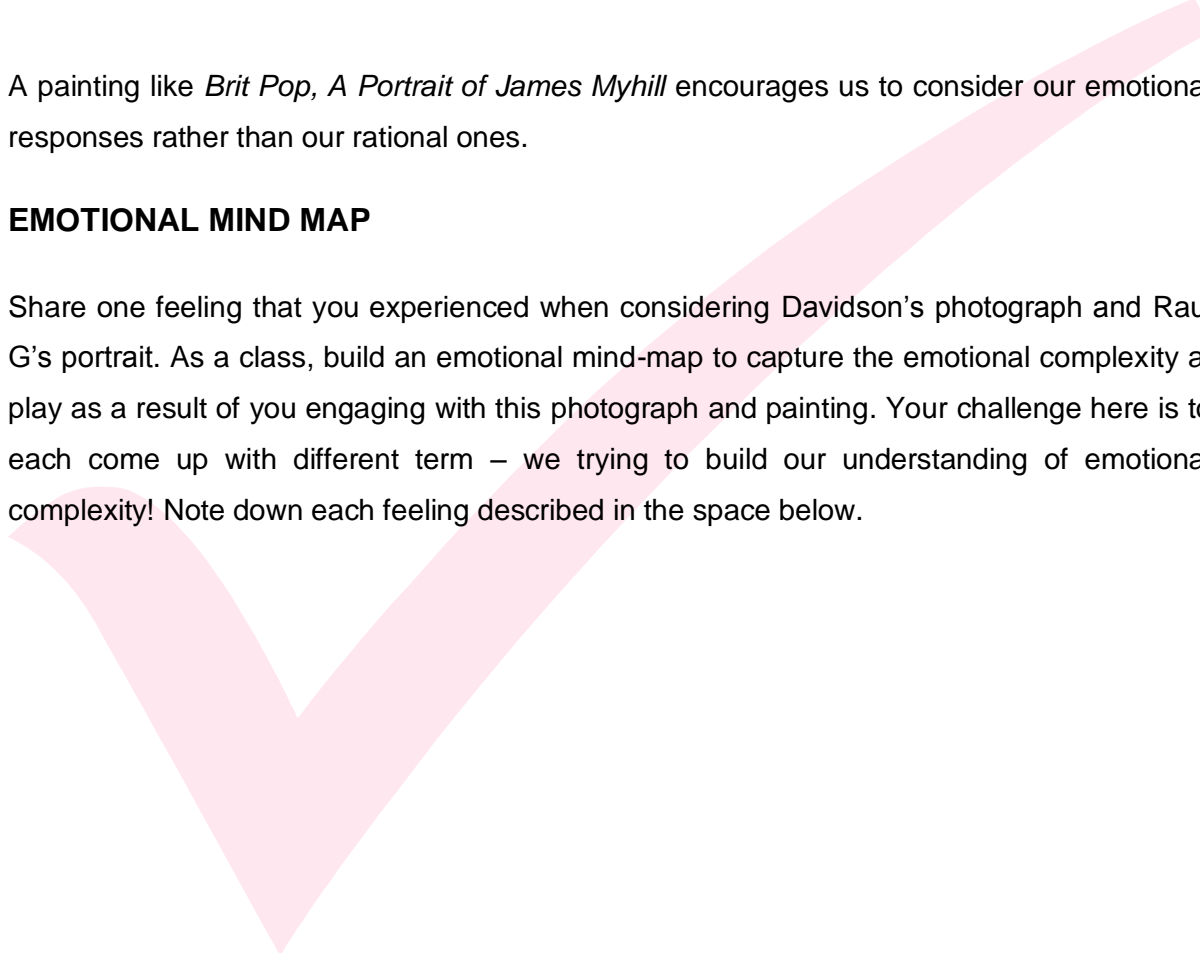
PAIR DISCUSSION

Share your feelings in response to *Brit Pop, A Portrait of James Myhill* with a fellow student. Consider any similarities and differences in the feelings you've experienced.

A painting like *Brit Pop, A Portrait of James Myhill* encourages us to consider our emotional responses rather than our rational ones.

EMOTIONAL MIND MAP

Share one feeling that you experienced when considering Davidson's photograph and Raul G's portrait. As a class, build an emotional mind-map to capture the emotional complexity at play as a result of you engaging with this photograph and painting. Your challenge here is to each come up with different term – we trying to build our understanding of emotional complexity! Note down each feeling described in the space below.



2. THE ATLAS OF EMOTIONS

People’s interest in understanding themselves better has increasingly lead many different fields of enquiry to consider emotions, what they are, why we have them, and the implications of them. If you’re looking to expand your understanding of emotions and your vocabulary for discussing emotions, this type of research can be a great starting point!

Let’s explore how emotions have been charted by an evolutionary psychologist. Spend some time with your teacher exploring the following website:

WEBSITE: <http://atlasofemotions.org/>

CLASS DISCUSSION

What do you find interesting about this approach to emotions? What questions do you have about the Atlas of Emotions?

The Atlas of Emotions is a project supported by the Dalai Lama and the American evolutionary psychologist Paul Ekman. Ekman’s research on the study of facial expressions is the basis for the Atlas. His work has gained widespread recognition through his outreach work such as the BBC documentary series *The Human Face* (2001), and his advisory role on the US television series *Lie to Me* (2009-2011) and the Disney-Pixar animated film *Inside Out* (2015).

CLASS DISCUSSION

What do you know about the Dalai Lama?

CRITICAL THINKING

Why do you think the Dalai Lama would be interested in supporting this project?



The emotions left-right of Anger, Disgust, Joy, Fear, and Sadness from *Inside Out* (2015)

Ekman and other evolutionary psychologists argue that there are some basic and fundamental emotions that people share regardless of culture or context. The list of these emotions differs depending on the psychologist. Ekman's current list includes: amusement, contempt, contentment, embarrassment, excitement, guilt, pride in achievement, relief, satisfaction, sensory pleasure, and shame.

Define the following terms (look them up if you need to!) and include an example of the emotion from your own experience or from a text that you are familiar with.

EMOTION	DEFINITION and EXAMPLE
AMUSEMENT	
CONTEMPT	
CONTENTMENT	
EMBARRASSMENT	
EXCITEMENT	
GUILT	
PRIDE IN ACHIEVEMENT	
RELIEF	

3. PAINTING AS A SITE OF EMOTION

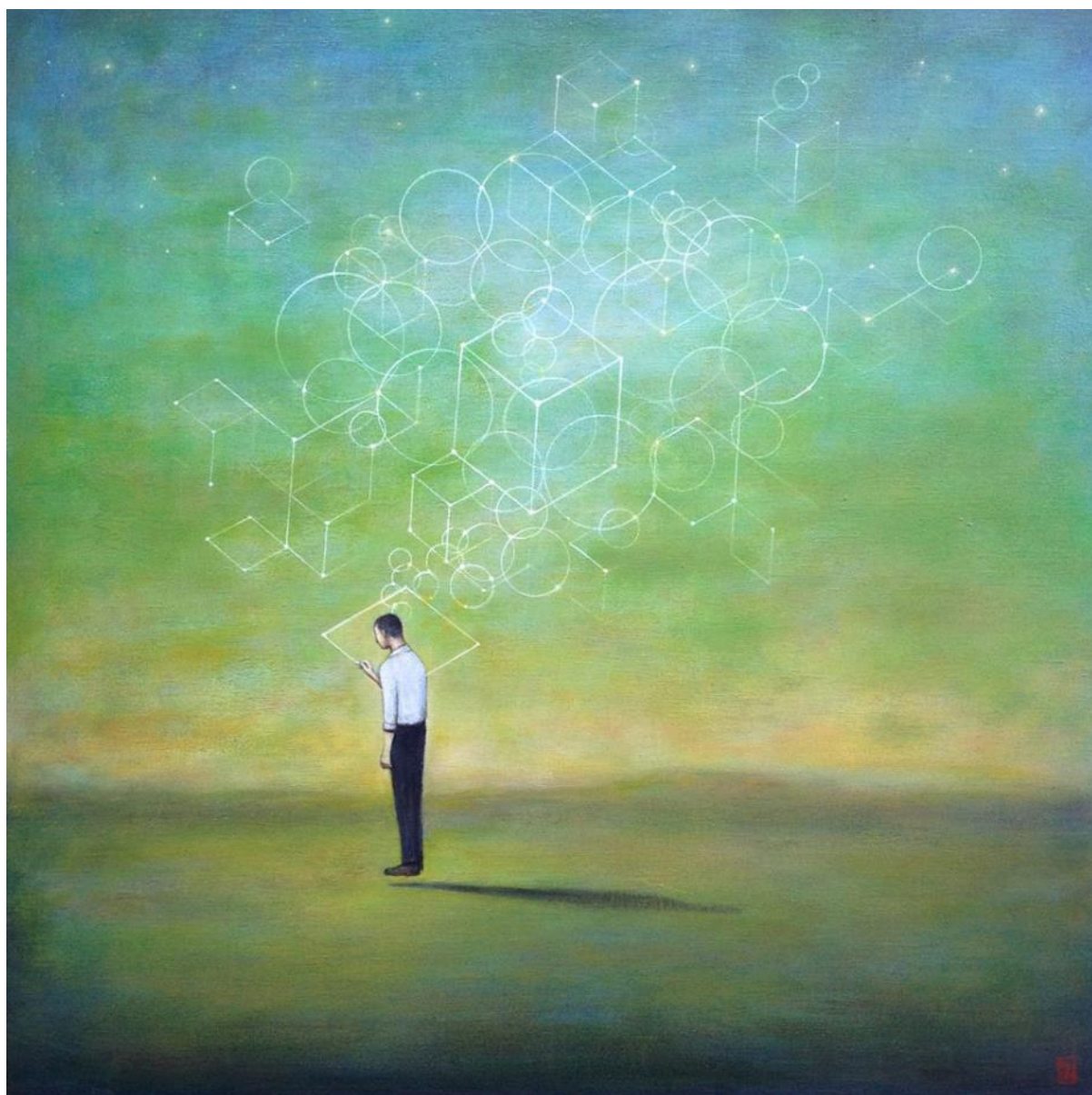
Thinking about emotions from different perspectives is part of the process of developing your own emotional awareness. As we've seen, the complexity of emotions is revealed when we realise that different fields of study attempt to understand them better in different ways. You can build on the ideas about emotions you take from subjects such as History and Psychology and apply them to texts in English.

Now is your chance to apply them by considering a painting in depth. Your analysis of any text begins with simple questions that serve to guide you in your comprehension. Here are the general questions worth considering as you approach any unseen text.

- What human experiences are represented in this text?
- What emotions are explored in this text?
- What is the purpose of this text?
- What is my personal reaction to the experience represented? To what extent does my personal reaction allow me to gain insight into that experience?

Consider the painting on the following page and as a class discuss techniques, emotions, and experiences. There's space around the painting for your notes.

Duy Huynh 2016. Thinking Outside The Box Makes Me Lightheaded



PAIR EXERCISE

Find another student that you haven't met or don't know well and introduce yourself. Discuss your answers to the following questions with them and work on your answers together.

1. What human experiences are represented in *Thinking Outside The Box Makes me Lightheaded*? Go with your intuition!

2. What emotions are explored in *Thinking Outside The Box Makes me Lightheaded*?

3. What is the purpose of this painting? While we can't be completely sure why an artist has painted a particular picture, as we're not inside their head, we can make intuitive inferences based on our understanding of other paintings.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

On your own, spend time writing up your answer to the following questions:

What is my personal reaction to the emotions and experiences represented? To what extent does my personal reaction allow me to gain insight into that experience?

Testing your understanding against other people’s understanding is a critical step in deepening your own appreciation for the perspective of others. It also helps you build your skills in appreciating that texts can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Different readings of a text form the basis for nuanced discussion in essays and imaginative pieces.

CLASS BRAINSTORM

What aspects of human emotion and experience are represented in this text? Aim to build on the ideas that you developed with your partner and explore the connections between ideas through a brainstorming exercise.