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Grade 12

MIND THE GAP!

English Home Language : Literature

Life of Pi

– Yann Martel

Study Guide

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Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grade 12 English Home Language Mind the Gap study guide for the Novel: ***Life of Pi*** by Yann Martel.

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The extracts from the novel in this study guide are from *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel.

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Ministerial foreword

Matsie Angelina Motshekga, MP
Minister of Basic Education

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has pleasure in releasing the second edition of the Mind the Gap study guides for Grade 12 learners. These study guides continue the innovative and committed attempt by the DBE to improve the academic performance of Grade 12 candidates in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination.

The study guides have been written by teams of exerts comprising teachers, examiners, moderators, subject advisors and coordinators. Research, which began in 2012, has shown that the *Mind the Gap* series has, without doubt, had a positive impact on grades. It is my fervent wish that the *Mind the Gap* study guides take us all closer to ensuring that no learner is left behind, especially as we celebrate 20 years of democracy.

The second edition of *Mind the Gap* is aligned to the 2014 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). This means that the writers have considered the National Policy pertaining to the programme, promotion requirements and protocols for assessment of the National Curriculum Statement for Grade 12 in 2014.

The *Mind the Gap* CAPS study guides take their brief in part from the 2013 National Diagnostic report on learner performance and draw on the Grade 12 Examination Guidelines. Each of the *Mind the Gap* study guides defines key terminology and offers simple explanations and examples of the types of questions learners can expect to be asked in an exam. Marking memoranda are included to assist learners to build their understanding. Learners are also referred to specific questions from past national exam papers and examination memos that are available on the Department's website – www.education.gov.za.

The CAPS editions include Accounting, Economics, Geography, Life Sciences, Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy and Physical Sciences. The series is produced in both English and Afrikaans. There are also nine English First Additional Language (EFAL) study guides. These include EFAL Paper 1 (Language in Context); EFAL Paper 3 (Writing) and a guide for each of the Grade 12 prescribed literature set works included in Paper 2. These are Short Stories, Poetry, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Grain of Wheat*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Nothing but the Truth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Please remember when preparing for Paper 2 that you need only study the set works you did in your EFAL class at school.

The study guides have been designed to assist those learners who have been underperforming due to a lack of exposure to the content requirements of the curriculum and aim to mind-the-gap between failing and passing, by bridging the gap in learners' understanding of commonly tested concepts, thus helping candidates to pass.

All that is now required is for our Grade 12 learners to put in the hours required to prepare for the examinations. Learners, make us proud – study hard. We wish each and every one of you good luck for your Grade 12 examinations.

Matsie Angelina Motshekga,
MP Minister of Basic

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Dear Grade 12 learner

This *Mind the Gap* study guide serves as your companion as you prepare for the end-of-year Grade 12 English Home Language (EHL) Literature exam.

There are three exams for EHL:

Paper 1: Language in Context

Paper 2: Literature

Paper 3: Creative Writing

This study guide focuses on Yann Martel's novel, *Life of Pi*, one of the setworks in Paper 2: Literature.

How to use this study guide

- In the **introduction** to the guide (pages 2 to 4), you will find information on the author and the events that influenced his writing. There is also an overview of how the novel unfolds.
- Pages 2 to19 take you through the various chapters in the novel so that you can understand:
  - characters
  - themes
  - symbols
  - diction and figurative language used in the novel.

- Below the summary notes for each chapter, there are activities to test your understanding. You will find the answers at the back of the study guide. These will help you to check your answers. Most questions are designed in the manner in which questions are asked in your exams.

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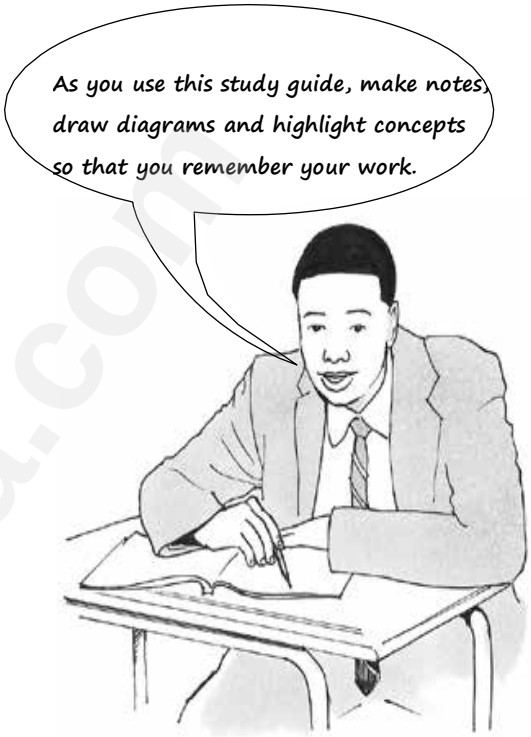
- From page 19, you will find the **analysis of the chapters**, followed by some questions to assist you in your revision of the text. Finally, you are presented with the skills, approaches and strategies for answering the **contextual** and **literary essay** questions. Practice contextual questions and essay topics are provided, along with the memoranda.



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Top 7 study tips

1. Divide your learning programme into manageable sections. This will help your brain to focus. Take short breaks between studying and set reasonable short-term goals.

2. Have all your materials ready before you begin studying a section
– pencils, pens, highlighters, paper, glass of water, etc.

3. Be positive. The right attitude is good for your mental and emotional health. It assists you to remember what you have studied.

4. Your brain learns well with colours and pictures. Try to use them whenever you can. Keep a pencil handy to make notes on this guide. Highlight important information.

5. Repetition is the key to remembering information you have to learn. Keep going over the work until you can recall it with ease. Do as many practice exercises as you can.

6. Teach what you are learning to anyone who will listen. It is definitely worth reading your revision notes aloud.

7. Sleep for at least eight hours every night. Eat healthy food and drink plenty of water. These are all important things you need to do for your brain. Studying for exams is like exercise, so you must be prepared physically, as well as mentally.

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On the exam day

1. Ensure that you bring pens that work, sharp pencils, an eraser and a sharpener. Make sure that you bring your smart ID card and examination admission letter. Arrive at the exam venue at least an hour before the start of the exam.

2. Visit the bathroom before entering the exam room. You do not want to waste valuable time during the exam.

3. Use the 10 minutes reading time to read the instructions, paying careful attention to the checklist. During this time, choose the two prescribed poems you will be answering and highlight the COMPULSORY UNSEEN POEM. Decide whether you are answering the essay question for the drama or the novel. Remember, you cannot answer two essays or two contextual questions. If you choose the essay for the novel, then you **MUST** do the contextual for the drama; or vice versa.

4. Break each question down to make sure you understand what is being asked. If you don't answer the question properly, you will not get any marks for it. Look for the key words in the question to know how to answer it.

Note: You will find the technique for answering contextual questions in this guide.

5. Manage your time carefully. Start with the question you think is the easiest. Check how many marks are allocated to each question so you give the right amount of information in your answer. Use the suggested time allocation given to you on the **instruction page** of the examination paper.

6. Remain calm, even if the question seems difficult at first. It will be linked with something you have covered. If you feel stuck, move on to another question and come back if time allows. Try and answer as many questions as possible.

7. Take care to write neatly and legibly so that the marker can read your responses.

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Overview of English Home Language Paper 2: Literature Exam

In the **Paper 2: Literature** examination, you need to answer questions from three sections:

SECTION A: Poetry (30)

SECTION B: Novel (25)

SECTION C: Drama (25)

A total of **80 marks** is allocated for Paper 2. You will have **2½ hours** for this exam.

Here is a summary of the Paper 2 Literature exam paper:

Question number	Question	Type of question	Number of marks
Section A: POETRY *Answer questions on TWO prescribed poems AND the questions on the unseen poem (compulsory).*			
1	*Prescribed poem*	Poetry Essay	10
2	*Prescribed poem*	Contextual	10
3	*Prescribed poem*	Contextual	10
4	*Prescribed poem*	Contextual	10
5	***Compulsory**: Unseen poem*	Contextual	10
Section B: NOVEL Answer ONE question. *			
6	*The Picture of Dorian Gray*	Essay	25
7	*The Picture of Dorian Gray*	Contextual	25
8	*Life of Pi*	Essay	25
9	*Life of Pi*	Contextual	25
		Total	**25**
Section C: DRAMA Answer ONE question. *			
10	*Hamlet*	Essay	25
11	*Hamlet*	Contextual	25
12	*Othello*	Essay	25
13	*Othello*	Contextual	25
14	*The Crucible*	Essay	25
15	*The Crucible*	Contextual	25
		Total	**25**

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***In Sections B and C, answer ONE ESSAY and ONE CONTEXTUAL question. You may NOT answer TWO essay questions or TWO contextual questions.**

- If you answer the **ESSAY** in **Section B**, then you must answer the **CONTEXTUAL** question in **Section C.** If you answer the **CONTEXTUAL** question in **Section B,** then you must answer the **ESSAY** in **Section C.**
- You may NOT answer TWO contextual questions or TWO essay questions.
- During the reading time at the beginning of the exam, find the questions on the set works you have studied for **Sections B and C** and read through the questions.
- Choose the **essay question** you will answer from **Section B/C** and the **contextual question** you will answer from **Section B/C**.
- Number your answers correctly – according to the numbering system used in the exam paper – for the two sections you have chosen.

What is a literary essay question?

In the literary essay question, you are given a topic statement and an instruction to respond to the statement. You will be required to respond to the question with a structured essay focusing on your understanding of the novel - its plot, characters, symbols and themes – and how this understanding supports your argument for the essay question.

A guide to answering the literary essay is given on page 55.

What is a contextual question?

In a contextual question, you are given two extracts from the novel. You then have to answer questions based on the extracts. Some answers will be found in the extract but most of the questions will test your understanding of other aspects of the novel as well: the plot, characters, symbols and themes. Some questions ask for your own opinion about the novel.

A guide to answering the contextual question is provided on page 64.

What are the examiners looking for?

Examiners will assess your answers to the essay and contextual questions based on:

- Your understanding of the **literal** meaning of the novel.
- Your ability to **reorganise** information in the novel. For example, a question may require you to place an extract from the novel in context, or to state the similarities or differences between two characters.
- Your ability to provide information that may not be clearly stated in the text, using what you already know about the novel. This process is called **inference**. This may include explaining how a figure of speech affects your understanding of the novel, explaining themes or comparing the actions of various characters.
- Your ability to make judgements about aspects of the novel and make your own opinions based on information given in the novel. This process is called **evaluation**. For example, you may be asked whether you agree with a statement, or to discuss a character's motive for doing something.

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- Your ability to respond, on an emotional level, to the characters in the novel and the style of the novel. This is called **appreciation**. For example, you may be asked how you think a certain character feels, or what you would have done if you were in their situation. You may be asked to discuss how the writer's style helps to describe what a character is feeling.

Question words

Here are examples of question types as prescribed by CAPS for English HL

Question type	What you need to do
Literal: Questions about information that is clearly given in the text or extract from the text.	
Name characters/places/things ...	Write the specific names of characters, places, etc.
State the facts/reasons/ideas …	Write down the information without any discussion or comments.
Give two reasons for/why …	Write two reasons (this means the same as 'state').
Identify the character/reasons/theme …	Write down the character's name, state the reasons, write down the theme
Describe the place/character/what happens when …	Write down the main characteristics of something, for example: What does a place look/feel/smell like? Is a particular character kind/rude/aggressive? Write down the sequence of events …
What does character x do when …?	Write what happened – what the character did.
Why does character x do …?	Given reasons for the character's action according to your knowledge of the plot.
Who is/does…?	Write the name of the character.
To whom does xx refer …?	Write the name of the relevant character/person.
Reorganisation: Questions that need you to bring together different pieces of information in an organised way.	
Summarise the main points/ideas …	Write the main points, keeping mark allocation in mind.
Group the common elements …	Combine the things which share the same features.
Give an outline of …..	Write the main points, keeping mark allocation in mind.
Place the extract in context…	Explain how the events of the extract fit into the sequence of events of the text as a whole.
Inference: Questions that need you to interpret (make meaning of) the text using information that may not be clearly stated. This process involves thinking about what happened in different parts of the text; looking for clues that tell you more about a character, theme or symbol; and using your own knowledge to help you understand the text.	
Explain how this idea links with the theme x …	Identify the links to the theme.
Compare the attitudes/actions of character x with character y …	Point out the similarities and differences.
Do you agree that the…represents the contrast between…	Point out the differences and come to a conclusion which shows your agreement or lack thereof. Note that most questions like this expect you to agree, so be careful if you choose to disagree. Your position of agreement/disagreement needs detailed textual reference and substantiation.
What do the words … suggest/reveal about…?	State what you think the meaning is, based on your understanding of the text.
How does character x react when…? Describe how something affected character x … State how you know that character x is	Write down the character's reaction/what the character did/felt.

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…	
What did character x mean by the expression …?	Explain why the character used those particular words. Make sure that you refer to specific words.
Explain the cause/effect of …	Write the reason(s) for … /Give the repercussions of …
How does the line/metaphor/simile/figurative language/image/literary device affect your understanding …?	Explain what the line/metaphor/simile/figurative language/image/literary device suggests and clarifies your understanding of the text. For similes and metaphors, discuss the comparison and how it adds meaning to the text.
What, do you think, would be the outcome/effect/etc. of an action/situation …?	Explain what the consequences of the action/situation would be.
Account for …	Give the reason behind an action/event.
What does the word/line suggest / imply…?	Explain what the word/line tells you and discuss the clues hinted at by the word/line…
Evaluation: Questions that require you to make a judgement based on your knowledge and understanding of the text and your own experience. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a valid reason for your opinion based on specific information given in the text.	
Discuss your view/a character's feelings/a theme ...	Consider all the information and reach a conclusion.
Do you think that …	Give your views/opinion on the given topic.
Do you agree with/that …	State whether or not you agree with something/someone in the tex. You need to base your opinion on specific information given in the text.
In your opinion, what …	Your viewpoint needs to be based on specific information given in the text.
Give your views on …	Your opinion needs to be based on specific information given in the text.
In light of the poem/novel/drama as a whole, critically discuss …	Evaluate and assess both sides of the topic. / Investigate or examine by argument or debate, giving reasons for and against.
In your view, is … justified?	Give reasons, based on the text, why you/a character/the writer adopt(s) a particular standpoint.
Comment on …	To discuss or speak about …providing evidence from the text to support your opinion.
Critically comment …	To discuss, speak about and form an opinion about…providing evidence from the text to support your discussion.
Appreciation: Questions that ask about your emotional response to plot, characters and style. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a valid reason for your opinion based on specific information given in the text.	
How would you feel if you were character x when …?	Imagine that you are character x and describe your emotions based on your understanding of evidence from the text.
Discuss your response to …	Give your reaction to something and give reasons for your reaction based on evidence from the text.
Do you feel sorry for…? / Do you identify with…?	State whether you empathise with the character's emotions/situation. Are you able to have compassion for …? Provide reasons for whether you have compassion or not.
Discuss the writer's use of style, diction and figurative language, dialogue …	To answer this type of question, ask yourself: Does the style help me to feel/imagine what is happening/what a character is feeling? Why/why not? Give reasons for your answer.
Comment on the appropriateness/effectiveness of a figure of speech/literary device…	State why the figure of speech/literary device has impact and give reasons for your opinion. If you state that the figure of speech/literary device lacks impact, you will need to give evidence. All reasons must be clearly explained and based on evidence from the text.

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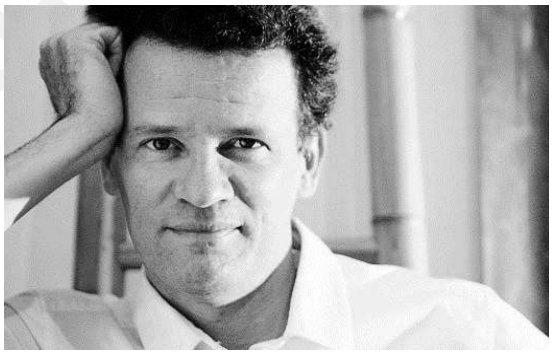
Introduction

Life of Pi is an adventure story about a young man, Piscine Patel, who survives 227 days in a lifeboat in the Pacific Ocean with a Bengal tiger, Richard Parker, after a harrowing shipwreck. The author takes the readers through Pi's life story from when he is born in Pondicherry, India, right up to when he is 42-years-old, living in Canada with his family. The novel focuses on the 227 days Pi survives at sea, starting on 2 July 1977 up to 14 February 1978, when he is rescued in Mexico.

Pi's adventures at sea with Richard Parker explore themes such as religion, spirituality, faith, doubt, survival, danger, reason, nature and the relativity of truth.

1. The author's background



Yann Martel was born on 25 June 1963 in Salamanca, Spain to Canadian parents, while they were living in Spain. His novel ***Life of Pi*** won the Mann Booker prize for best English-language novel written by a Commonwealth or Irish author. The novel has been translated into 30 languages and was made into a film in 2012.

Read '**How I Wrote *Life of Pi'*** by Yann Martel below.

How I Wrote *Life of Pi* – Yann Martell

Powell's Books Jul 17, 2015

I would guess that most books come from the same mix of three elements: influence, inspiration and hard work. Let me detail how each one came into play in the writing of *Life of Pi.*

Influence

Ten or so years ago, I read a review by John Updike in *The New York Times Review of Books*. It was of a novel by a Brazilian writer, Moacyr Scliar. I forget the title [editor's note: it's *Max and the Cats*], and John Updike did worse: he clearly thought the book as a whole was forgettable. His review — one of those that makes you suspicious by being mostly descriptive, without critical teeth, as if the reviewer were holding back — oozed indifference. But one thing about it struck me: the premise. The novel, as far as I can remember, was about a zoo in Berlin run by a Jewish family. The year is 1933 and, not surprisingly, business is bad. The family decides to emigrate to Brazil. Alas, the ship sinks and one lone Jew ends up in a lifeboat with a black panther. What displeased Updike about the story? I don't remember him being clear about it. Was it that the allegory marched with too heavy

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a tread, the parallel between the black panther and the Nazis too obvious? Did the premise wear its welcome out? Was it the tone? The style? The translation? Whatever it was, the book fatigued Updike but it had the effect on my imagination of electric caffeine. I marveled. What perfect unity of time, action and place? What stark, rich simplicity. Oh, the wondrous things I could do with this premise. I felt that same mix of envy and frustration I had felt with Mishima's *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*, that if only I had thought of it I could have done something great with it. But — damn! — the idea had been faxed to the wrong muse. I looked for the book, but booksellers consulted their computers and shook their heads. And then I forgot about it. I wanted to forget about it. I didn't really want to read the book. Why put up with the gall? Why put up with a brilliant premise ruined by a lesser writer. Worse, what if Updike had been wrong? What if not only the premise but also its rendition was perfect? Best to move on. I wrote my first novel. I travelled. Romances started and ended. I travelled some more. Four or five years went by.

Inspiration

I was in India. It was my second time. Another stint to shake me and dazzle me. The start of the trip had been rough. I had arrived in Bombay, which is indeed a crowd, but one that was bypassing me. I felt terribly lonely. One night I sat on my bed and wept, muffling the sounds so that my neighbours would not hear me through the thin walls. Where was my life going? Nothing about it seemed to have started or added up to much. I had written two paltry books that had sold about a thousand copies each. I had neither family nor career to show for my 33 years on Earth. I felt dry and indifferent. Emotions were a bother. My mind was turning into a wall. And if that weren't enough, the novel I had planned to write while in India had died. Every writer knows the feeling. A story is born in your mind and it thrills you. You nurture it like you would a fire. You hope to see it grow and eventually be born on paper. But at one point, you look at it and you feel nothing. You feel no pulse. The characters don't speak naturally, the plot does not move, the descriptions don't come to you. Everything about your story is thankless work. It has died.

I was in need of a story. More than that, I was in need of a Story.

I got to Matheran, the hill station closest to Bombay. It's a small place high up, with beautiful views over the surrounding plains, and it has the peculiarity of not being able to accommodate cars, auto rickshaws or motorcycles. You get there by toy train or by taxi, and then you must walk or ride a horse. The closest you get to the noises of a motor on Matheran's streets of fine, reddish earth are the rumbling, horking sounds of Indians spewing out betel juice. The peace of the place is blessed and utterly un-Indian. It was there, on top of a big boulder to be precise, that I remembered Scliar's premise.

Suddenly, my mind was exploding with ideas. I could hardly keep up with them. In jubilant minutes, whole portions of the novel emerged fully formed: the lifeboat, the animals, the intermingling of the religious and the zoological, the parallel stories.

Where did that moment of inspiration come from? Why did I think that religion and zoology would make a good mix? How did I think up the theme that reality is a story and we can choose our story and so why not pick "the better story" (the novel's key words)?

I could give approximate answers. That India, where there are so many animals and religions, lent itself to such a story. That tensions simmering just below my level of consciousness were probably feverishly pushing me to come up with a story. But in truth I don't know. It just happened. Some synapses in my brain started firing off and I came up with ideas that were not there a moment before.

I now had a reason to be in India.

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Hard Work

I visited all the zoos I could find in the south of India. I interviewed the director of the Trivandrum Zoo. I spent time in temples, churches and mosques. I explored the urban settings for my novel and took in the nature around them. I tried to immerse myself as much as possible in the Indianness of my main character. After six months I had enough local colour and detail.

I returned to Canada and spent a year and a half doing research. I read the foundational texts of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. I read books on zoo biology and animal psychology. I read castaway and other disaster stories.

All the while, in India and in Canada, I took notes. On the page, in a smashed-up, kaleidoscopic way, *Life of Pi* began to take shape. I took a while to decide what animal would be my main animal protagonist. At first I had an elephant in mind. The Indian elephant is smaller than the African, and I thought an adolescent male would fit nicely in the lifeboat. But the image of an elephant in a lifeboat struck me as more comical than I wanted. I changed to a rhinoceros. But rhinos are herbivores and I could not see how I could keep a herbivore alive in the high seas. And a constant diet of algae struck me as monotonous for both reader and writer, if not for the rhino. I finally settled upon the choice that in retrospect seems the obvious one: a tiger. The other animals in the lifeboat? the zebra, the hyena and the orangutan? arose naturally, each one a function of a human trait I wanted to embody, the hyena cowardliness, the orangutan maternal instincts and the zebra exoticism.

I chose meerkats because I wanted a small ferret-like creature without the connotations that ferrets have. I wanted a neutral animal upon which I could paint a personality of my choice. Also, meerkats rhymed somewhat with mirage and meekness.

The blind, cannibal Frenchman in the other boat came to me in those first moments of inspiration in Matheran; in other words, I don't know where he came from. In my first draft, the scene with the Frenchman was much longer, close to 45 pages. It was one of my favourite sections. It was Beckett in the Pacific, I thought. Which was precisely the problem, my editor told me. It was funny and absurd, she told me, but in the wrong place, like a good joke told at a funeral. The tone was wrong; it broke with what came before and after. So I had to cut it down substantially.

The algae island floated into my imagination from the same dark luminous place from whence came the meerkats, the Frenchman and, indeed, the novel as a whole.

The rest was hard, fun work, a daily getting it down on the page that came not without hurdles, not without moments of doubt, not without mistakes and rewrites, but always, always with deep, gratifying pleasure, with a knowledge that no matter how the novel would fare, I would be happy with it, that it helped me understand my world a bit better.

Source: https://medium.com/@Powells/how-i-wrote-life-of-pi-6ffe1c0177ac

Other useful resources:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B29tigyBJIQ
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty_JNJXFOQk

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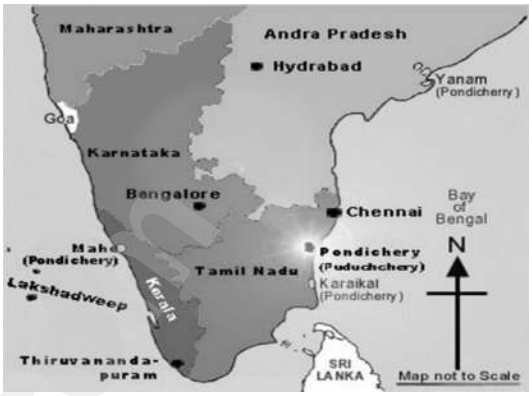
1. Setting, Context and Timeline



Part 1 of the novel is set in ***Pondicherry*** which was renamed Puducherry, a French colony in India. It is still possible to visit the city and see the beautiful Franco-Tamil architecture. There was once a zoo in the Botanical Gardens in Pondicherry and the director of the film, *Life of Pi*, used the Botanical Gardens to film the zoo scenes in the movie. However, the zoo in the novel is mostly fictitious as the Pondicherry Zoo did not have the diverse species described by Pi.

In 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was found guilty of charges related to her 1971 election campaign. However, because of the unrest in India, she kept ruling and declared a "state of emergency" which lasted 18 months and ended in March 1977. Although India was economically successful, it was a controversial time period because she took away people's rights and jailed her opponents. Pi's father gets nervous about the possibility of Gandhi taking over his business so he decides to move from India to Canada.

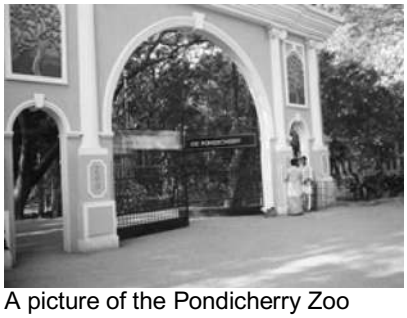
https://tornaryang.wordpress.com/2013/05/25/life-of-pi-book-review/

The setting and the context are important **plot devices** in the novel. As Pi's family are zoo owners and because of the state of emergency, a vehicle is provided for the author to place the tiger into the lifeboat with Pi, without it seeming contrived.

The focus of **Part 2** is Pi's journey at sea in the Pacific Ocean.

Martel strategically creates a situation where it is just the boy and the tiger alone at sea.

Part 3 is set in Benito Juarez Infirmary, Tomatlán, Mexico. This is where the first two parts of the novel come together to clarify the events in the story.



A picture of the Pondicherry Zoo taken from the location of the movie https://www.theguardian.com/travel/gallery/2012/dec/20/life-of-pi-on-location-pondicherry

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TIMELINE

Date	Literal Plot
1961	Birth of Pi He is named after a glorious swimming pool in Paris called the Piscine Molitor.
1968	Pi learns to swim. He is seven years old and a family friend, Mamaji, gives him his first swimming lesson in the ocean.
1975	Religion Pi grew up in a Hindu family, but he stumbles upon a church and decides to be a Christian as well. The following year he walks into a mosque and adds Islam to his collection of religions. Once the heads of the different faiths find out, they want him to choose just one (or in other words, their own belief) and they place immense pressure on him. However, Pi continues to practise all three religions.
21 June 1977	Reason for his voyage When Pi is a teenager (16), his father decides to close the Pondicherry Zoo and to emigrate to Canada because of political uncertainty in the country. Pi, his mother, father, and brother Ravi all board the *Tsimtsum*, along with the zoo animals, who are to be sold along the way.
02 July 1977	Shipwreck Pi hears a noise in the night and goes on deck, only to find a storm raging. When he gets back to the cabin that he shares with his brother, Ravi, he notices there is water on the floor. He then returns to the deck where he is thrown into a lifeboat.
09 July 1977	Kills his first fish Pi kills a flying fish by breaking its neck. This saddens him but soon after, he kills the dorado - by beating it with an axe hilt - and he feels ecstatic and proud. "... a person can get used to anything, even killing."
17 August 1977	Stopped looking for ships

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	At this stage, Pi stops looking for a rescuer almost entirely. After expending all of his flares (which happen to smell like cumin), he realises the very high improbability of being rescued by a ship.
20 September 1977	No more raft Pi gets under the tarpaulin with Richard Parker, during a brutal storm. The raft breaks free and the lifeboat is slightly damaged.
30 September 1977	Pi trains Richard Parker Pi wants to be able to get onto the lifeboat more often, so he starts to assert his dominance by blowing a whistle loudly while rocking the boat and making Richard Parker feel seasick. He is finally able to gain complete dominance over Richard Parker during a stare-down, over a dorado fish.
02 October 1977	Mortality Pi is reminded that Richard Parker is not as all-powerful as he appears to be as a Maco shark that Pi unwittingly throws onto the lifeboat, attacks Richard Parker.
10 October 1977	The Oil Tanker Pi and Richard Parker finally encounter a ship they think is close enough to see and rescue them. Pi becomes absolutely distraught when they nearly get run over and the flare he set off ricochets off the ship into the water. It is here that Pi declares his love and gratitude to Richard Parker.
25 October 1977	Pi and Richard Parker go blind Richard Parker is the first to go blind and then Pi finds that a black dot grows in his vision until he too is unable to see. They are both in a very bad physical condition (skin and bones).
27 October 1977	The Frenchman Pi is weak and when he hears a voice, he decides to talk to it. At first they talk about food but Pi is delusional and thinks that Richard Parker is talking to him, so he asks the man some questions and finds out that he killed a man and a woman. When he hears the French accent, he realises that it is a person. The man boards Pi's lifeboat, and tries to kill him. Richard Parker kills the Frenchman.

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29 October 1977	Returning Vision Pi regains his vision as he continues to rinse his eyes with seawater.
14 December 1977	Algae Island Pi and Richard Parker come across the algae island.
05 January 1978	The Fruit Pi encounters a tree with some fruit. He climbs the tree and notices that it has several stems and as he picks it up what seems to be fruit, is actually very light and not fruit at all but human teeth covered in leaves. There are 32 "fruit" - an entire human set. As he steps onto the algae at night, a searing pain shoots up his feet and he realises that the island is carnivorous.
06 January 1978	Pi and Richard Parker leave the island They leave the island together. They take some algae (tied on a rope behind the boat) and as much food as will fit in the lifeboat. Pi is filled with grief, heartache and the pain of endurance so he turns to God.
14 February 1978	Journey on the sea ends As they land on a beach in Mexico, Richard Parker leaves the boat and goes straight into the forest. Pi never gets a chance to say goodbye. He is found some hours later. Pi survives at sea for 227 days.
19 February 1978	Benito Juarez Infirmary, Tomatlán, Mexico Two men (Mr Okamoto, and Mr Chiba) visit Pi in hospital, to investigate the sinking of the *Tsimtsum.* Pi is asked to tell his story. The men are not convinced by Pi's story as they do not believe that bananas float, they do not believe in the carnivorous island and they are unconvinced about the tiger in the story. "Don't bully me with your politeness! Love is hard to believe, ask any lover. Life is hard to believe, ask any scientist. God is hard to believe, ask any believer. What is your problem with hard to believe?" "I know what you want. You want a story that won't surprise you. That will confirm what you already know. That won't make you see

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	higher or further or differently. You want a flat story. An immobile story. You want dry, yeastless factuality."
19 February 1978	" …dry, yeastless factuality" Pi decides to tell the Japanese officials a different story. This one, however, replaces the animals with actual people. After the ship sinks, he falls into the water and is pulled aboard with a lifebuoy thrown by the French cook. There is already a Chinese sailor, who has broken his femur (upper leg) while jumping onto the lifeboat. They find Pi's mother floating on a pile of bananas. The Frenchman is a vulgar man who wants to cut off the sailor's leg, to use for bait. The sailor suffers long and excruciating pain from his wound, before he finally dies. After he dies, the Frenchman mutilates and cures the sailor's flesh so that he can use it as bait and eat it as well. Pi's horrified mother slaps the Frenchman. He kills Pi's mother and throws her head at Pi. The following day, fight and Pi stabs him to death.

[Adapted from: Preceden.com/timeline/39475-life-of-pi]

3. Characters

Characterisation is the way in which the author reveals characters' personalities.

Thoughts, feelings, expressions, actions, behaviour and even what they wear can tell you more about a character.

As you read the novel, look for evidence that shows you the characters' personalities and emotions. Note that main characters often grow and change in the course of a novel.

- The central character in a novel is called the protagonist. In *Life of Pi*, the protagonist or main character is Pi.
- The antagonist is a character who opposes or is in conflict with the protagonist. One of the main antagonists is Richard Parker, the tiger.

List of Characters

- Pi (Piscine Molitor Patel)
- Richard Parker, the tiger
- The Author
- Santosh Patel, Pi's father
- Gita Patel, Pi's mother
- Ravi Patel, Pi's brother
- Francis Adirubasamy, known as Mamaji
- Satish Kumar, the biology teacher
- Satish Kumar, the Muslim mystic
- Father Martin, the Catholic priest
- The Hindu Priest / Pandit
- The blind Frenchman, another castaway
- The ship's cook, a cruel man
- Meena Patel, Pi's wife
- Nikhil Patel, Pi's son
- Mr Tomohiro Okamoto, Japanese official
- Mr Atsuro Chiba, Japanese official

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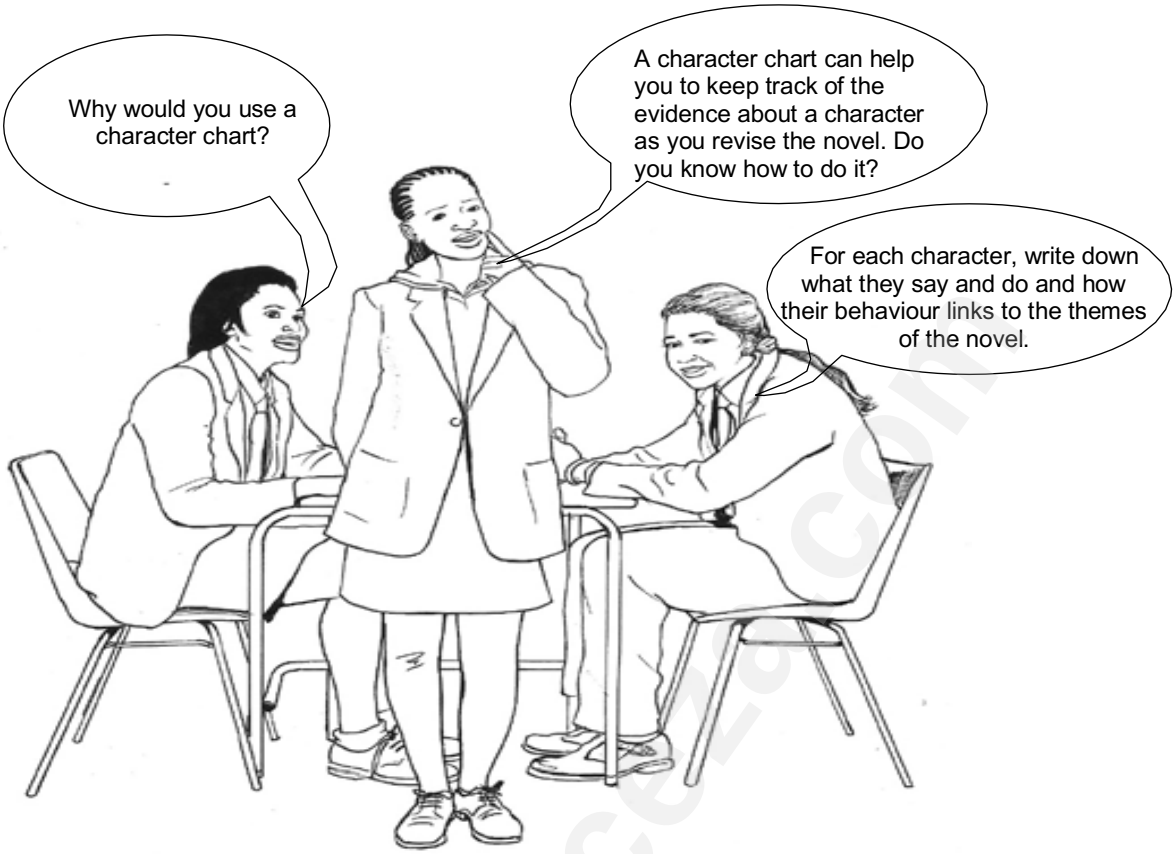

Character chart will assist you in analysing the characters in detail.

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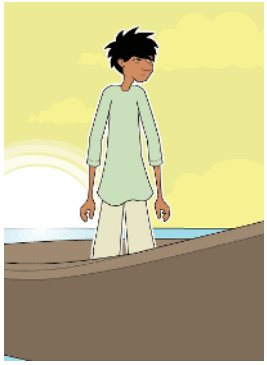
CHARACTER	FACTS AND CHARACTER TRAITS
Pi **Piscine Molitor Patel** 	• Narrator, protagonist and main character. • Son of a zookeeper. • As a teenager, he renames himself Pi. • He practises three religions - Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. • His faith and knowledge of animal psychology help him survive 227 days at sea in a lifeboat with a 450-pound Bengal tiger. • The adult Pi is described as a small, slim man, with dark hair and eyes and an expressive face. • He grows up in Pondicherry but now lives in Canada. • Pi studies Zoology and Religion at the University of Toronto.
Richard Parker 	• A three-year-old Bengal tiger who is Pi's only companion at sea. • Captured as a cub and transferred to the Pondicherry Zoo, which is owned by Pi's father. • Becomes Pi's nemesis (enemy/rival) as well as his reason to carry on living. • He has a human name as the result of a clerical error in which the real name of the tiger, *Thirsty*, and the name of his captor, *Richard Parker*, are accidentally reversed. • In Part 3, a story is presented to the Japanese officials showing Richard Parker as Pi's alter ego (a person's alternative personality).
The Author	• Author and narrator. • Interviews adult Pi and describes his home and family life. • Adds authenticity to the story by reminding the reader that Pi's story is the result of an interview process, not just a made up story.
Santosh Patel 	• Pi's father ran a large hotel in Madras before moving to Pondicherry to direct the Pondicherry Zoo. • Teaches Pi about animal behaviour and to respect animals as savage beasts. • Dies in the sinking of the *Tsimtsum*.

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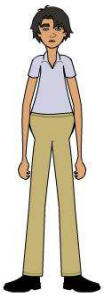
Gita Patel 	• Pi's mother is calm, unruffled, loving and nurturing. • Reads widely. • Unlike Pi, she is not interested in religion. • Dies in the sinking of the *Tsimtsum*. • In Pi's second story, her alter ego is Orange Juice, the orangutan.
Ravi 	• Pi's older brother and captain of the cricket team. • Loves teasing Pi but the brothers are close. • Dies in the sinking of the *Tsimtsum*.
Francis Adirubasamy Mamaji 	• A close friend of the Patel family and former competitive swimmer. He refers the author to Pi for "a story that will make you believe in God." • Teaches Pi how to swim which is why Pi survives when the ship sinks. • Pi refers to him as *Mamaji*, *mama* meaning uncle and *ji* indicating respect and affection - therefore respected uncle. • Gives Pi his full name – Piscine Molitor.
Sitaram	• Pi's favourite worker at Pondicherry Zoo. • In charge of the orangutans.
Mr Satish Kumar **Biology Teacher** 	• Pi's favourite teacher at his school, Petit Sèminaire. • The first avowed atheist that Pi ever meets. Pi accepts him as a believer – but of another faith. • An active communist. • Sees nature as an illustration of the logic of science. • Inspires Pi to study Zoology at college.
Mr Satish Kumar **Baker**	• Muslim mystic (a Sufi) and baker. • Ironically, this man of faith has the same name as Pi's atheist teacher. • Pi sees his shop and bakery as a sacred place and learns to practise Islam there. • Inspires Pi to study Religion at college.

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Father Martin	• Catholic priest who exemplifies Christ's love. • Explains that Christ lived the way He did because of love. • Inspires Pi's pursuit of multiple faiths.
The zebra, hyena and orangutan	• Pi's companions on the lifeboat in the more 'factual' story. • The hyena kills the zebra and the orangutan. • The hyena is the French cook's alter ego. • The zebra is the Chinese sailor's alter ego. • The orangutan is Gita Patel's alter ego.
Mr Tomohiro Okamoto	• A member of the Maritime Department in the Japanese Ministry of Transport. • Interviews Pi in Mexico to find out what happened to the *Tsimtsum*. • Reluctant to believe Pi's version of events but after hearing both stories, prefers the one with animals.
Mr Atsuro Chiba	• Okamoto's junior colleague who accompanies him to Mexico. • Seems to see a deeper meaning in Pi's story, but goes along with whatever Mr Okamoto says.
Meena Patel	• Pi's wife - later in life. • Works as a pharmacist and is a second generation Canadian (born in Canada).
Nikhil Patel	• Pi's son - later in life. • Plays baseball.
Usha Patel	• Pi's four-year-old daughter - later in life.
Auntieji	• Pi's foster mother in Toronto, Canada.

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4. Plot Development

This novel is divided into an Author's Note and three parts. Each part is associated with a change in setting and contributes to the development of the plot.

Exposition

The exposition introduces the setting and the characters.

The Author's Note presents the fictitious author narrating his first meeting with Pi. It introduces the time (1996) and the place of Pi's present home - Toronto

Part One provides information on Pi's childhood in Pondicherry, his fascination with religion, his understanding of animal psychology and his training as a swimmer. In addition, the Patel family moves from their home in Pondicherry on a ship to Canada.

It is important to note that the exposition foreshadows the events in Part Two.

Rising action and climax

The **rising action** is the development of the story and includes events of tension and **conflict** between characters or within a character. Pi's experiences of survival at sea form the rising action.

Part Two begins with the sinking of the cargo ship, the *Tsimtsum,* on which the Patels are relocating to Canada, along with a few animals – some of which they sell along their journey.

Pi is left on a lifeboat with an orangutan (Orange Juice), a zebra, a hyena and a Bengal tiger (Richard Parker).

The **tension rises** as Pi struggles to survive.

The **climax** is that point in the novel at which the tension is the greatest - Pi's experiences on algae island (chapter 92).

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The **falling action** is the aftermath of the climax. The lifeboat washes ashore in Mexico. Richard Parker leaves the lifeboat and runs off into the jungle. A group of villagers rescue Pi and he is hospitalised. He recovers from his 227 days at sea and is released into the care of his foster mother in Canada.

Denouement /Resolution (Ending)

The ending of this novel does not present the reader with a definite conclusion / resolution but invites the reader to choose "the better story". The unusual ending does not make the story any less compelling. The two endings create an internal conflict in the reader and links to the theme of the **nature of storytelling.**

In *Life of* Pi, other techniques used to develop the plot include **Foreshadowing**, **Flashback**, **Suspense, Surprise, Anti-Climax** and **Timeline.**

5.Themes

This section provides a summary of some themes in *Life of Pi*. More examples are given in the **Chapter Analysis** section of the guide.

- The Nature of Storytelling
- Identity / The Hero's Journey
- Religion and Faith
- Belief
- Heart vs Reason
- Reality vs Illusion
- The Nature of Survival
- Animal Psychology
- Zoomorphism and Anthropomorphism
- Survival

Other themes to note:

Themes are not *fixed* in novel analysis. We have highlighted some of the common themes in this novel but as you are reading, you may identify other themes that are also relevant. Make note of them in the block provided.

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The Nature of Storytelling

The nature of storytelling itself is woven throughout *Life of Pi*, as the novel is told in a complex way through several layers of narration. The real author writes in the first person, as a fictional author similar to Yann Martel himself and this author retells the story he hears from the adult Pi about Pi's younger self. At the end, in a transcript of an interview which the author provides, the young Pi tells an alternate story of how he survived his days at sea, giving a version of events with only human survivors instead of animals. The larger question raised by the novel's framework is then about the nature of truth in storytelling. Pi values atheism as much as religion but he chooses to subscribe to three religions because of the truth and beauty he finds in their stories. He also possibly invents the animal version of his story as a way of finding more truth in his ordeal – as well as staying sane by retelling his gruesome experience in a more beautiful way.

Pi thinks that the island is a paradise by day but eventually learns that at night the algae turns acidic and deadly, devouring fish nearby. He discovers a tree with black and twisted "fruit" that contains human teeth. He comes to the awful realisation that the island is carnivorous and that it has eaten a human being before him.

Survival

Much of the action of *Life of Pi* consists of the struggle for **survival** against seemingly impossible odds. Pi is stranded on a lifeboat in the middle of the Pacific for 227 days, with only an adult Bengal tiger for company. Therefore, his ordeal involves not just avoiding starvation but also protecting himself from Richard Parker. Pi is soon forced to give up his lifelong pacifism and vegetarianism as he has to kill and eat fish and turtles. In a similar vein Orange Juice, the peaceful orangutan, becomes violent when facing the hyena and Richard Parker submits to being tamed because Pi gives him food. In this way Martel shows the extremes that living things will go to in order to survive, sometimes fundamentally changing their natures.

The struggle to survive also leads the characters to commit deeds of both great heroism and horrible gruesomeness. Pi finds an amazing resourcefulness and will to live within himself and he resolves to live peacefully alongside Richard Parker instead of trying to kill the tiger. When he leaves algae island, Pi even waits for Richard Parker to return to the lifeboat before pushing off. From the start, we know that Pi will survive his ordeal, as he is telling the tale as a happy adult but his constant struggle to stay alive and sane maintains the tension throughout the book.

Religion and Faith

Francis Adirubasamy first presents Pi's tale to the fictional author as "a story to make you believe in God," immediately introducing **religion** as a crucial theme. Pi is raised in a very religious family but as a boy he becomes more devoutly Hindu and then also converts to Christianity and Islam.

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He practises all of these religions at once despite the protests of his three religious' leaders, who assert that their religion contains the whole and exclusive truth. Instead of dwelling on divisive dogma (religious teachings), Pi focuses on the stories of his three faiths and their different pathways to God. He reads a story of universal love in all three religions. In fact, it seems that faith and belief are more important to Pi than religious truth, as he also admires atheists for taking a stand. It is only agnostics that Pi dislikes, as they choose doubt as a way of life and never choose a better story.

When he is stranded at sea, Pi's faith is tested by his extreme struggles but he also experiences and appreciates the lavishness (abundance) of his surroundings. All external obstacles are stripped away, leaving only an endless circle of sea and sky and one day he rejoices over a powerful lightning storm as a "miracle". After his rescue, Pi returns to the concept of faith. He tells his interviewers two versions of his survival story (one with animals and one without) and then asks which one they prefer. The officials disbelieve the animal story but they agree that it is the more compelling and memorable of the two. Pi responds with "so it goes with God," basically saying that he chooses to have religious faith because he finds a religious worldview more beautiful. The "facts" are unknowable concerning God's existence, so Pi chooses the story he likes better, which is the one involving God.

[Themes: Adapted from www.litcharts.com]

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6. Symbols

Pi Patel	Not just a shortened version of Piscine An allegorical figure with multiple levels of meaning. π = value of the circumference of a circle (related to the circle of life) – representing eternity Pi is also an informal British term meaning “pious”. (devoutly religious)
Piscine	Piscine is related to “fish” in English as well as “pool” in French.
The colour orange	Hope and survival
The colour green	Islam, growth, fertility, nature
Tsimtsum	Name of the ship. The word “tsimtsum” (or tzimtzum) describes an idea derived from the Jewish Kabbalah teachings of Isaac Luria who is a mystic and a rabbi. This idea describes the process of creation. Tzimtzum is a word used to describe “empty space”. The belief is that God retracted (removed) his light in order to create a space for finite things (like humans) to develop. Through experiences, we grow in our faith and independence. Pi experiences this growth in his journey
Algae island	The Garden of Eden – biblical reference, offers Pi food, water and other essentials but in reality it could kill him (the “forbidden fruit” with the teeth inside).

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7. Style

Style refers to ***how*** the writer tells the story. In this case, Martel varies the narration of the story from the adult Pi, the young Pi and the fictitious author. Each of these narrations presents an observation and view of the story.

- The use of the **first-person narrator** - Pi, recounting his journey at sea, for example, makes the story authentic and therefore believable. This **conversational style** is also accessible to the reader as it allows the reader to experience the story as well.
- Martel uses **humour** to create interest. An example of this is his account of Pi's interaction with the two Mr Kumars. The humour allows the reader to connect with Pi. Think also of his "training" of his teachers and peers to change the pronunciation of his name.
- The use of varied **imagery** enhances the reading experience. The imagery is used to stretch the reader's imagination and create a sensory experience. For example, he captures both beauty and danger in his description of the algae island. In many ways, this links to the theme of the **nature of the storytelling** – the better story is the one that people enjoy more.
- The author uses particular language that relates to **animal psychology** and **nautical jargon** (vocabulary specific to sailing). This creates credibility and therefore makes the story more believable. As the story unfolds, take note of how diction (word choice) is used to create tone and mood.

For example, consider the following:
"Salt-water boils – red, angry, disfiguring – where a leprosy of the high seas, transmitted by the water that soaked me. Where they burst, my skin was exceptionally sensitive; accidentally rubbing an open sore was so painful I would gasp and cry out." (Chapter 64 page 191)
Take note of the use of colour, imagery, touch, emotive words, etc. used in this paragraph. How does this contribute to Pi's feelings at this point in the novel?

- The use of **varied fonts** differentiates the two narrators and the dialogue between the Japanese officials. The roman (upright font) is used for Pi's narration and for his interview in Part Three. Italic font is used to express the author's observations. In Part Three the cursive font represents the Japanese dialogue between the sceptical officials, so that Pi cannot understand them.

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Introduction

This part of the study guide is divided into sections. Each section covers a group of chapters.

This section of the study guide contains:

- A summary of what happens and who is involved – the main events and characters in the chapter.
- The main themes and symbols and some examples of language use in the chapter.
- Activities with exam – type questions for you to test yourself and answers to these activities.
- Please note that this study guide must be used in conjunction with the CAPS approved Oxford edition of the *Life of Pi* textbook.

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PART ONE

Author's Note

The 'author' makes a journey to India in search of inspiration for a new novel after the failure of his second novel. He meets Francis Adirubasamy who tells him that he has a story that "will make you believe in God". The story is about Piscine Patel, whom the author finds in Canada. This line engages the reader's attention and introduces some of the major themes of the novel – **religion and faith, belief**, **heart versus reason** and **the nature of storytelling.**

The foreword with acknowledgements is a mixture of **fact and fiction** which is a device the real author (Martel) uses to get the reader to believe that an entirely fictitious story is a true story.

FACT	FICTION
Pondicherry is a real place in India.	There is no Pondicherry Zoo. Mr Patel is not real.
The Piscine Molitor swimming pool complex is situated in Paris.	Francis Adirubasamy is not real.
The coffee house and the Botanical Gardens still exist.	
Martel travelled to India after writing a failed novel set in Portugal.	
The Canada Council for the Arts granted the real author, Yann Martel, support for writing *Life of Pi*.	Pi is a character purely of his imagination.
The Japanese Ministry of Transport existed until 2001, when it merged with other government departments.	Mr Okamoto (although included in the acknowledgements) is not real.

This merging of fact and fiction also relates to Pi's own survival adventure which, at the end, could be seen as a merging of fact and fiction.

Questions

1. Why does the author travel to India? (2)
2. Why does the author mail his manuscript for the book about Portugal to a 'made-up' address in Siberia? (1)
3. Discuss the strategies Francis Adirubasamy uses to arouse the author's interest. (3)

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Chapters 1 - 3

In Chapter one, Pi begins to tell his story. He is a graduate of Zoology and Religious Studies. The topic of his thesis at university "The thyroid gland of the three-toed sloth" sounds scientific but Pi admits that he chose the sloth because of its soothing, spiritually calming nature and because it reminded him of God. This highlights the link between **religious faith and science**. Pi's fascination with both subjects is sustained as the novel unfolds.

FORESHADOWING

Creates anticipation / suspense as the reader is warned of future events

He expresses his sadness that Richard Parker (whose identity we do not yet know) leaves and does not say goodbye to him. This creates suspense and curiosity in the reader. The reader is surprised later on to discover that Richard Parker is a tiger. This also relates to the theme of **zoomorphism**.

It is revealed that Pi knows a lot about animal behaviour, which makes his story in Part Two believable.

pi = π

Describes the relationship between a diameter of a circle and its circumference. What does a **circle** symbolise? What do we mean when we say 'to come full circle' in a journey?

Chapter two presents the fictitious author's description of Pi. The short, truncated sentences (**stylistic device**) create a factual **tone**. Hence, this mimics the factual style of a researcher.

In Chapter three, we discover the role of Mamaji (Francis Adirubusamy) in naming Pi - Piscine Molitor - after Adirubasamy's favourite swimming pool in Paris. Pi is the only swimmer in the family, owing to the coaching of Mamaji. This is important for later events as it explains why Pi is the only surviving member of his family when the ship sinks. This technique in writing is known as **foreshadowing** as it prepares the reader for what is about to happen. It also links to the theme of the **nature of storytelling** as Martel 'sets up' the story for us.

ZOOMORPHISM

This is a literary technique in which animal attributes are given to non-animal objects, humans, and events; and animal features are ascribed to humans, gods and other objects.

Questions

1. Refer to Chapter one. Discuss the effectiveness of the opening line, " My suffering left me sad and gloomy." (2)
2. Suggest a reason why Chapter two is written in italics. (1)
3. Explain Francis Adirubasamy's role in Pi's childhood. (2)

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Chapter 4

The key focus of this chapter is Pi's argument that zoo animals are "happy" and "free" compared to wild animals. According to Pi, animals in captivity have a structure and a support system that meets their needs and do not need to be driven by "fear and urgent necessity". For this reason, zoo animals who are released voluntarily go back to their confined habitat.

This prepares us for Part Two where we again realise **how knowledgeable** Pi is when it comes to animal behaviour. His argument about how happy animals are in captivity **foreshadows** Chapter 94 when he imagines Richard Parker in "the free confinement of a jungle". Note how **irony** is used here.

The **theme** of **Religion and Faith** is presented in this chapter and it explains why humans need faith/religious belief as it offers assistance to deal with life's ordeals.

Questions

1. Explain whether Pi believes that animals are better off in the wild or in a zoo. (3)
2. Comment on the significance of the comparison the adult Pi makes between the impulse to "free" animals and invading a person's home and "freeing" him. (3)
3. Describe what Pi means when he says that "certain illusions about freedom" plague both zoos and religion. (3)

IRONY

The use of language that normally signifies the opposite meaning, usually for humorous effect.

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Chapters 5 - 6

Chapter five highlights the importance of naming. The name of someone links closely to the theme of **identity.** The symbolic meaning of Pi's name is important to the theme of **order / reason** or **logic / rationality** as it captures the complicated nature of the universe. Life is not simple. This idea also **foreshadows** the unbelievable events of Part Two. Martel is stretching the reader's imagination to embrace these unbelievable events as **truth**.

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

A behavioural process whereby a response becomes more frequent or more predictable as a result of reinforcement, with reinforcement typically being a stimulus or reward for a desired response. Read up on Pavlov's Dog experiment.

$$\boldsymbol{\pi = Pi}$$

"And so, in that Greek letter that looks like a shack with a corrugated tin roof, in that elusive, irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe, I found my refuge."

In addition, names have important **religious** meaning in all cultures. In Islam and Christianity, many references are made to names and identity. In Hinduism, an important event is the naming of the child. When Pi orders a pizza over the phone and he is asked for his name, he answers, "I am who I am", which is how God replied to Moses. Pi also lists several followers of Jesus who were known by more than one name to show how life changes can lead to name changes. He also compares his teasing to Muhammad's persecution in Mecca.

Pi accomplishes a **personal** victory in this chapter. Consider the embarrassment or humiliation children feel when they are teased. We experience this personal victory with Pi as he cleverly "trains" his teachers and classmates to change his name from "pissing" to "Pi". This helps us to connect with the **hero** as well. It further shows us Pi's **intelligence** and ability to understand human and animal nature.
"A new beginning.
I repeated the stunt with every teacher. Repetition is important in the training not only of animals but also of humans."

This idea is explained in the theory of **classical conditioning** in psychology. It also **foreshadows** Pi's ability to understand Richard Parker later in the novel.

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Chapter 6 extends the concept of **foreshadowing** as the fictitious author describes the adult Pi's heavily-stocked cupboards. This arouses interest / curiosity about Pi. Consider why he does this.

Questions

1. Pi tells the class he is "known to all as Pi Patel". Critically discuss his strategy for renaming himself and its outcome. (3)
2. "Repetition is important in the training of animals but also of humans."

   2.1 State the reason Pi knows so much about training animals. (1)

   2.2 Explain fully how this knowledge saves his life. (3)

   2.3 In your view, is Pi suggesting that humans and animals are similar in some respects? Substantiate your response. (2)
3. Comment briefly on what the author's description of Pi's kitchen suggests. (2)

ATHEISM AND AGNOSTICISM

An atheist does not believe in the existence of God whereas an agnostic is uncertain about the existence of God.

Chapter 7

In this chapter, Pi describes his favourite biology teacher - Mr Satish Kumar **-** as having a geometric build befitting of his logical and scientific character. Mr Kumar is interested in the biology of animals which displays his scientific background. Take note of how the other Mr Kumar (the Muslim mystic) explains the existence of animals later on.

Although Pi has strong **religious** beliefs, he is able to accept Mr Kumar's views of the universe and his atheism. Pi accepts atheism but not agnosticism. He explains:

"To choose doubt as a philosophy of life is akin to choosing immobility as a means of transportation."

Pi believes that having doubt prevents one from experiencing life or taking a leap of faith. He respects Mr Kumar's ability to take a position in explaining the world, politics, animals and human existence. This relates to the theme of **reason**.

"It was my first clue that atheists are my brothers and sisters of a different faith and every word they speak speaks of faith. Like me, they go as far as the legs of reason will carry them – and they leap."

Note how Pi defines '**faith**' as believing in something. Evaluate how this relates to religious faith.

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Questions

1. Critically comment on the significance of the language and imagery that Pi uses to describe Mr Kumar. (3)
2. What does the zoo represent to Mr Kumar? (2)
3. Why does Pi accept atheists and not agnostics? (3)

Chapter 8

The concept of **anthropomorphism** is explained by Pi's father's declaring that the "most dangerous animal in the zoo" is a human being. Pi explains that by anthropomorphising animals, humans respond to them as if they are also human beings. This is dangerous as we may disrespect the animals and they may respond violently or aggressively in return.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM

When animals are personified / humanised. Remember Pi's description of the sloth in Chapter 1 – "calm, quiet and introspective".

"I learned the lesson that an animal is an animal, essentially and practically removed from us, twice: once with Father and once with Richard Parker."

At this stage of the novel, we are still unaware, as the reader that Richard Parker is a tiger. However, Pi's experience with this tiger **foreshadows** his understanding of Richard Parker later on. We see that Pi already possesses immense knowledge about animals and animal behaviour. The theme of **the nature of storytelling** is explored as Martel deliberately elaborates on Pi's knowledge of animals so that Part Two is **authentic** and **believable**. We call this technique a **plot device** as it assists with the development of the plot and ties the story together as we read on.

The incident with Mahisha, the tiger, lends insight to the character traits of Pi's family. Father appears to be concerned about equipping his sons with life skills. He is a worrier by nature. We see this later when he decides to move his family away from India because of the state of emergency. Mother, on the other hand, is a protector – "I could feel mother's hand pressed against my pounding heart." … "Mother bundled us out. We were in hysterics. She was incensed." Despite Ravi's bravado, described in earlier chapters, he is equally fearful of the tiger and obedient to his father.

The **diction** enhances the quality of the writing and it captures the tone of fear in this chapter. Mahisha is portrayed as dangerous and highly alert. The humans are quiet and fearful. The scene clearly displays the dominance and power of the beast.
"'Tigers are very dangerous,' " Father shouted."

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"Mahisha, now unconcerned with Babu, paralleled the move in his cage in a fluid, effortless motion. He crouched and lay still, his slowly moving tail the only sign of tension."

Martel also uses specific techniques to add interest and to emphasise the apprehension of the scene.

"With sudden ease the trapdoor slid open. Silence fell again, except for the bleating and the click-click of the goat's hooves against the floor."

The reader is forced to draw on his imagination to complete the gruesome carnage of this scene.

Questions

1. "Zoologists commonly say…that the most dangerous animal in a zoo is man"? Critically comment on this statement. (3)

2.1 Why does Pi relate the episode about the ravenous tiger and the goat? (2)

2.2. Why has Martel placed this episode in the same chapter with the discussion of anthropomorphism? (3)

3. What might this episode foreshadow? (2)

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Chapters 9 - 11

Pi explains the concept of flight distance in chapter nine – "which is the minimum distance at which an animal wants to keep a perceived enemy." This assists him in establishing his boundaries with Richard Parker in Part Two – **foreshadowing**. Pi admits that his father is "a natural". He has "an intuitive gift and a keen eye." This shows that Pi's training from his father becomes a useful coping tool later on.

Chapters ten and eleven continue to illustrate the idea of flight distance. Pi explains why he believes that zoos are not horrible environments for animals but that it is humans invading the territory of animals, that harms the animal. As long as humans provide animals in captivity with food, shelter and a stable environment, their flight distance is minimised and the human being is not seen as an enemy.

"Whatever the reason for wanting to escape, sane or instane, zoo detractors should realise that animals don't escape **to somewhere** but **from something**. "

This knowledge assists Pi in creating a co-habitable environment with Richard Parker in Part Two.

Questions

1. Explain the term "flight distance" in the context of the novel. (3)
2. Why is an understanding of animals' flight distance important to a zookeeper? (3)
3. What reasons does Pi give for animals wanting to escape from zoos? (2)
4. Why does Pi go into such detail in explaining how zoos work? (2)
5. According to Pi, what does "an animal hate above all else"? (2)
6. Suggest what point the writer is making about the leopard that escaped from a zoo in Zurich in the 1930s and what does the story illustrate? (3)

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Chapters 12 - 15

The fictitious author's description of Pi is a reminder that the adult Pi is telling the story. This technique is used to create realism and credibility – **the nature of storytelling**.

Chapters thirteen and fourteen focus on **social hierarchy / social order**. Pi describes how the lion tamer trains the lion to be obedient because the lion accepts its lower rank in the social order. In Part Two, Pi establishes this relationship with Richard Parker as he takes the responsibility of meeting the tiger's basic needs on the boat.

Martel refers to the fictitious author's description of Pi's home in Chapter fifteen. The religious objects tell the reader that it is definitely the same Pi who is telling the story. It further confirms Pi's deep **religious beliefs** and his **polytheistic nature**.

Questions

1. The narrator says that Pi Patel "bobs" on the "ocean of memory". Explain what this metaphor foreshadows. (2)
2. Explain the significance of Pi spending so much time discussing animal behaviour and how humans gain "control" over dangerous wild animals. (2)
3. State why social hierarchy is important to animals. What does this have to do with the story that Pi is going to tell the narrator? (2)
4. What can be inferred about Pi based on the religious artefacts that the author sees in his house? (3)

Chapters 16 - 28

These chapters focus on the theme of **religion**. Although Pi has been a Hindu all his life, he is still open to exploring other religions. We are introduced to the "three wise men"– Father Martin (the Catholic priest), Mr Satish Kumar (the Muslim Sufi/mystic and baker) and the Hindu priest.

It shows Pi's deeply **religious** nature and his ability to understand/embrace all three religions – Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The conflict arises when Pi is asked to choose one religion. Pi believes that he should not be forced to choose as each faith offers him a relationship with and understanding of God.

POLYTHEISTIC
A belief in more than one God.

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In Chapter twenty-six, he responds to his mother as follows:

"How many nations are there in the sky?"
She thought for a second. "One. That's the point. One nation, one passport."
"One nation in the sky?"
"Yes. Or none. There's that option too, you know. These are terribly old-fashioned things you've taken to."
"If there's only one nation in the sky, shouldn't all passports be valid for it?"

In other words, Pi is opposed to the categorisation of religious beliefs and instead sees the similarities in all.

An additional point of interest, is the link between the two Mr Kumars – the biology teacher and the Muslim Sufi. In Chapter twenty, Pi describes their influence on his character:

"These are common names in Tamil Nadu, so the coincidence is not so remarkable. Still, it pleased me that this pious baker, as plain as a shadow of solid health, and the Communist biology teacher and science devotee, the walking mountain on stilts, sadly afflicted with polio in his childhood, carried the same name. Mr and Mr Kumar taught me biology and Islam. Mr and Mr Kumar led me to study Zoology and Religious studies at the University of Toronto. Mr and Mr Kumar were the prophets of my Indian youth."

Questions

1. What reasons does Pi give for him being a Hindu? (2)
2. Briefly elaborate on what Pi likes most about Christianity. How does he compare it to his own Hinduism? (3)
3. How does each of Pi's three religions enrich/contribute to his life? (3)
4. One of the themes in the novel is **storytelling**.
   Critically discuss the relationship between religion and storytelling. (4)
5. Discuss the primary conflict in Chapter twenty-six, represented by Pi, his father and his mother. (4)

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Chapters 29 – 30

As mentioned in the Background, in 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a "state of emergency". Pi's father gets nervous about the possibility of Gandhi taking over his business — and he decides to move from India to Canada. Pi is concerned about moving. He describes Canada "like Timbuktu, by definition a place permanently far away." We know that Pi survives the move as, in Chapter thirty, the adult Pi introduces his wife to the fictitious author. Also, this move sets up the context of Part Two as Pi's family has to get on a ship to sail to Canada.

Questions

1. Why does Pi make a point of mentioning the animals' reactions to the political situation in India? (2)
2. Based on Pi's ordeal, why do think Pi has not mentioned that he is married? (3)

Chapters 31 – 32

Chapter thirty-one relates closely to the introduction of Mr Kumar, the biology teacher, in Chapter seven. Here, Mr **Satish Kumar (biology teacher)** and Mr **Satish Kumar (the Muslim Sufi)** meet and explain the beauty of the zebra. Pi acknowledges that both men explain the existence of the **zebra** based on their **faith / belief**. The Muslim Mr Kumar commends Allah on his creation whereas the teacher Mr Kumar commends science. Pi draws our attention to how people see the world from different perspectives. Although many see **religion** and science as contradictory, Pi is making us aware that they are complementary.

TSIMTSUM

Tsimtsum is actually a Hebrew word. It refers to the reduction or contraction of God from the universe at the moment of creation. This is an important concept because it raises the question of free will vs predetermination. In retreating from the world, God leaves room for human beings to express their faith and independence. But His departure also opens the space for human beings to sin and to give in to temptation. https://study.com/academy/lesson/life-of-pi-tsimtsum-allusions.html

Chapter thirty-two continues to elaborate on the co-habitation of species. Pi explains the concept of **zoomorphism** as mentioned in Chapter one. Pi's acute awareness of animal behaviour is crucial to his survival later on. He refers to the **co-habitual relationship** of the mouse and the viper as "freak suspension". He mentions a motherless cub who will readily accept a surrogate mother rather than face the reality of being motherless. Pi, himself, is forced to learn to survive with Richard Parker rather than to die. This highlights the theme of **survival**.

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Questions

1. What point(s) is Pi establishing with his accounts of **zoomorphism** and unusual co-habitations of prey and predator? (2)
2. According to Pi, explain why zoomorphism occurs. (3)
3. What does Pi's explanation of zoomorphism foreshadow? (2)
4 Comment on the significance of the meeting of the two Mr Kumars? (3)

Chapters 33 – 36

Pi displays the impact of his **ordeal** at sea in Chapter thirty-three: "A smile every time, but his eyes tell another story." The reader feels **sympathy** for the adult Pi as we realise that all that remains of his childhood memories are the four photographs he shows the fictitious author.

Chapters thirty-three to thirty-six focus on the preparations of the Patel family to move to Canada. They are registered to board the Japanese cargo ship ***Tsimtsum***. The name of the ship is symbolic – see side note.

Mother goes off to buy tobacco, although she does not smoke. This demonstrates her feelings of anxiety / trepidation about leaving India. She wants to take something of India with her. She also wants to stall the move. This is in contrast to the responses of Ravi and Pi, who at first were anxious but are now reveling in the excitement of an adventure and travel. Their responses **foreshadow** the events of Part Two.

Part One concludes when the fictitious author meets Nikhil and Usha (Pi's children). Once again, it is a reminder of the authenticity or **truth** of the story and that Pi survives his upcoming tragic ordeal. Part One ends optimistically, "This story has a happy ending."

Questions

1. Briefly explain what is suggested by Pi's revelation that everything before the family's emigration was "lost". (2)
2. What is the irony in the difference between the author's account (in italics) and Pi's? (2)

3. Discuss the reason Pi's mother worries about the brand names of items available in Canada. (3)
4. Comment on the surprises the narrator encounters in Chapter thirty-six. (2)
5. Account for the writer stating that "this story has a happy ending." (2)

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PART TWO

Part Two begins with Pi completely taking over the narration of the story from the fictitious author. Plot devices foreshadowed in Part One are revealed as Part Two develops.

Chapters 37 - 40

The **opening sentence** is extremely powerful. "The ship sank." The short sentence marks the beginning of the major action in the novel. It attracts the reader's attention and sets the tone for the events that follow.

Pi cries out for Richard Parker (and the reader is still unaware that Richard Parker is a Bengal tiger). Pi appeals to Jesus, Muhammad and Vishnu, demonstrating his multi-faith approach to life.

The author commands the reader's attention when Richard Parker's identity is revealed:
"I had a wet, trembling, half-drowned, heaving and coughing three-year-old adult Bengal tiger in my lifeboat."

The colour **orange** becomes a **symbol of hope** in the novel. The lifebuoy, whistle and tiger are orange.

The **flashback** technique is used in Chapters 38 to 39 to highlight the events that lead to Pi being in the lifeboat. It captures the terror and confusion that he feels. These are short chapters resembling the fast-paced action of the novel.

Questions

1. 'The ship sank.' Comment on the effectiveness of this short sentence as the opening statement of Part Two. (3)
2. Comment on the use of the flashback technique in Chapters 38 to 39. (2)
3. "I noticed an orange whistle dangling from the life jacket." Comment on the symbolism of the colour orange. (3)

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Chapters 41- 42

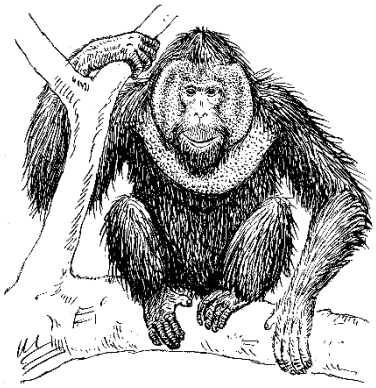
In Chapter 41 Pi watches "the ship as it disappeared with much burbling and belching". He resigns himself to his fate and begins to pay attention to his plight. On the lifeboat, Pi notices the male spotted hyena. He sees the hyena's presence as positive as he is not alone and if it were not for the crewmen seeing the hyena in the lifeboat, he would not have survived. He is not aware that Richard Parker is on board. His immediate reaction is grief at the loss of his family.

"I was alone and orphaned, in the middle of the Pacific, hanging onto an oar, an adult tiger in front of me, sharks beneath me, a storm raging about me."

Orange Juice, the orangutan, (note the **symbolic** meaning of the colour **orange**) drifts towards the lifeboat on a net of bananas and comes aboard. His description of Orange Juice reflects his happiness at seeing her:

"She came floating on an island of bananas in a halo of light, as lovely as the **Virgin Mary.** The rising sun was behind her. Her flaming hair looked stunning.

I cried, "Oh blessed **Great Mother**, Pondicherry fertility goddess, provider of **milk** and **love**…"



The **imagery** likens the orangutan to his mother and has a **religious / spiritual connotation**. The idea that she floats towards the boat on a basket of fruit further enhances this connotation. He repeatedly cries out, "I love you", when he sees her.

Pi has not yet realised how serious his situation is. He picks up the net instinctively but he does not reap the bananas. We are reminded of his wit and **keen sense of humour** as he describes the drifting bananas as "banana split".

Questions

1. In your opinion, what is the writer's intention in describing Pi alone in the lifeboat with just a hyena, a zebra and a tiger? (3)
2. Describe the mood that is created by the following words in Chapter 40: "I was alone and orphaned, in the middle of the Pacific, hanging onto an oar, an adult tiger in front of me, sharks beneath me, a storm raging about me." (3)
3. Discuss the theme of religion as presented in Chapters 41 and 42. (3)

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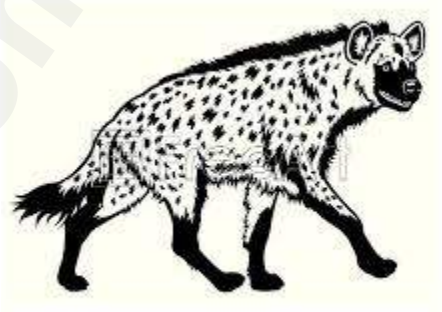
Chapters 43 - 48

The idea of **flight distance** is demonstrated. Pi realises that he needs to maintain a safe distance from the animals and they need to maintain a safe distance between themselves. The hyena eats the zebra in a slow, savage way. This mirrors the **social order** that Pi describes in earlier chapters. Pi's knowledge of **animal psychology** and his observations of the events on the lifeboat are demonstrated.

Pi **anthropomorphises** (refer to Chapter 8 for meaning) the orangutan who is described as a mother and a "simian Christ on the Cross" depicting her suffering as Christ-like.



Pi discovers Richard Parker's existence on the lifeboat. He spends some time explaining the confusion over Richard Parker's name. The **irony** of his original name, Thirsty, adds **humour** to the story.

Questions

1. In spite of Pi's knowledge of animals, he is portrayed as very anxious at this point. Comment on the cause of his anxiety. (3)
2. "Darkness came. There was no moon. Clouds hid the stars."
   Discuss how this description of the sea at night, makes Pi's predicament seem so frightening. (2)

Chapters 49 - 52

Pi's natural intelligence and his training in swimming, animal behaviour and religion in Part One, enable him to survive his 227-day ordeal.

He no longer sees the hyena as a threat as Richard Parker is the alpha and Pi's ability to dominiate him makes him (Pi) the super alpha. Pi confirms the **symbolic** meaning of the colour **orange** as **survival,** describing it as "such a nice Hindu colour".

The discovery of the survival supplies, awakens Pi's **will to survive**. He adds **God** as part of his survival list, highlighting his reliance on his **faith**.
"…1 Bengal tiger / 1 lifeboat /1 ocean / 1 God".

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Questions

1. In Chapters 49-52, the writer focuses on the theme of survival. List three examples of incidents that highlight this theme. (3)
2. Pi adds, "...1 God", at the end of his survival list.
   What does this tell us about his character? (3)

Chapters 53 - 55

Chapter 53 highlights the **power** of the **tiger** despite his human name and incredible beauty. We are reminded of his father's warning in Part One that tigers are deadly and dangerous. After Richard Parker kills the hyena, Pi knows for sure that he needs to find a way to **co-exist** with Richard Parker if he wants to **survive**. He builds the lifeboat as a temporary solution.

Pi is desperate and anxious and devises a number of plans to deal with Richard Parker, eventually settling on "Plan Six: Wage a War of Attrition." This plan deals with the acquisition of food and water but Pi knows that this is also a temporary solution.

In many ways, Pi's **preoccupation with co-existing** with Richard Parker keeps him focused on his **survival**.

Questions:

1. Pi's belief in God is further highlighted in Chapter 53. State three specific examples of this, from this chapter. (3)
2. In Chapter 54, Pi has six plans to eliminate Richard Parker; but at the end of this chapter he has not put any of them into action. Why? (2)
3. Explain fully "Plan number 6: The war of attrition". (2)

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Chapters 56 - 58

Pi recognises that he must rise above his fears, highlighting the themes of **hope, courage** and **the will to survive**. He also realises that in order for him and the tiger to co-exist, they need to establish a **zoomorphic** existence. The knowledge he has acquired about animal training from the lion tamer and the territorial habits of animals, is applied to his relationship with Richard Parker. He no longer sees the tiger as a **threat** but as a **reason** to live. Pi determines that he needs to make the tiger dependent on him (Pi) for his own survival.

In Chapter 58, however, Pi is overwhelmed and bursts into tears describing his situation as "**patently hopeless**".

Questions

1. The theme of fear is presented in Chapter 56. List three examples of what Pi says about fear. (3)
2. In Chapter 57, Pi tells us that it is Richard Parker who brings a sense of peace, despite having been the source of his anxiety. Discuss the irony of this declaration. (3)
3. Explain why Pi is disappointed that the survival manual does not address the issue of 'establishing alpha-omega relationships with major lifeboat pets". (2)

Chapters 59 - 65

Pi sets about the serious issue of survival, using all the techniques he can muster. He marks his **territory** by pouring his urine over the tarpaulin when he discovers that Richard Parker has done the same under the tarpaulin. He learns how to use the **solar stills** to distil fresh water for himself and Richard Parker. He upgrades his **raft** by making a seat and shelter. He **trains Richard Parker** to respond to the whistle. When he blows the whistle, Richard Parker goes back under the tarpaulin. Flying fish are used as bait to catch other fish.

At the same time, Pi admires the beauty of **nature**. When he mentions God again in Chapter sixty, he rekindles his appreciation of his faith, highlighting his loss of hope as opposed to his will to live. In Chapter 63, he includes daily prayer in his routine. This is symbolic of his mental and emotional state. His clothes disintegrate owing to the harshness of the elements. He is facing the biggest challenge of his life.

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Questions

1. In Chapter 59, there is interplay of hope and despair. Show how this is presented. (2)
2. Comment on what his description of the sea as a "city" reveals about Pi's character. (2)
3. Explain how losing track of time, helps Pi survive. (2)

Chapter 66 - 69

Pi resorts to **animalism** as he compromises his **beliefs** in order to **survive**. He is no longer a strict vegetarian and behaves in an increasingly savage manner. Consider how these words affect the development of his character: "I stuck two fingers into eyes, jammed hands into gills, crushed soft stomachs with knees, bit tails with my teeth …"

His **internal conflict** makes him turn to Hanuman (the Hindu Monkey God who represents courage and strength) to cope.

It is **ironic** that as Pi becomes more animal-like and savage in survival mode, Richard Parker becomes increasingly human.

The distractions in Pi's environment – the algae growing on the underside of the raft, Richard Parker's sleeping habits and a light in the distance – keep him going. The **wasted flares** are a reminder of his **hopeless** circumstances.

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Questions

1. Comment on Pi's increasing savagery as described in these chapters. (3)
2. Discuss Pi's internal conflict as presented here. (3)
3. Every time Pi sets off a flare, he is convinced that he had seen a light in the distance. In your opinion, is this a real possibility or merely a figment of his imagination? Explain. (3)

Chapter 70 - 84

Key events in these chapters include Pi's disgust at killing the sea turtle, training Richard Parker and how Pi draws on his **scientific knowledge** and **faith** to survive.

In order to cope with his boredom, Pi begins writing a diary and develops his own religious rituals. This relates to his fascination with the mystical and sensory experience that religion offers in Part One.

The physical strain begins to take its toll, even though he has established his alpha male status in relation to Richard Parker. Pi fixates on food. He imagines Richard Parker's faeces as "a big ball of gulab jamon" (an Indian sweetmeat). This explains his **hoarding of food** and his **enjoyment of cooking** in Part One.

He experiences deep **solitude**, describing the moon as a "silent circle" (Chapter seventy-eight). He wonders whether there "isn't another one like you also looking up, also trapped by geometry, also struggling with fear, rage, madness, hopelessness, apathy." This kind of **imagery** and **diction** is typical of Part Two.

At this moment, he does not know when (or if) his journey will ever end – the endless ocean and his situation create a cycle of **hopelessness** and **despair**. His condition has weakened and he, like Richard Parker, appears disinterested in the world around him.

He becomes detached and appears to have lost his **compassion**. He kills the sharks and does not share his prize fish with the tiger. However, at the end of Chapter eighty-three, he finds the last orange whistle – a small glimmer of hope.

While Pi is able to balance his understanding of the **scientific** nature of animals, he **anthropomorphises** them to cope with his solitude. He pretends that the whales are talking to him as he describes his interactions with Richard Parker.

Martel uses Pi's reflections on his survival so far, in Chapter eighty-one, to **affirm** the truth of this story: "I know my survival is hard to believe." He convinces the reader to believe his story in the final line of the chapter: "Proof: I am here to tell you this story", highlighting the theme of **order and reason / reality**.

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Questions

1. Discuss Pi's fixation on his relationship with Richard Parker. (3)
2. In Chapter seventy-five, Pi sings "Happy Birthday" on the day he estimates to be his mother's birthday. Discuss the emotions revealed by this act. (2)
3. Pi's fixation on food starts when he is at sea. Show how this has an impact on his behaviour, in relation to food in his adult life. (2)

Chapter 85 - 91

Despite being caught in a storm, Pi admires the majestic beauty of this experience and relates it to his **religious experience**. He is calm in the raging storm and sees it as a **sign** that he is alive and that God and Allah have not forgotten him.

Pi has reached his lowest point. He fails to signal the passing ship, begins to hallucinate and drifts in and out of consciousness. He sees another castaway whilst in this state and lapses between **delusion and reason**, creating confusion as to whether the castaway is real or not. In this state, he imagines that the man is trying to kill and eat him but Richard Parker saves his life by eating the other man. He finds it peculiar that Richard Parker has a French accent (this links to the 'other story' in Part Three). Martel stretches the reader's imagination by merging the **illusion** and **reality**. The reader experiences uncertainty about whether the events are true or not.

At the end of Chapter ninety-one, Pi reaches the ultimate point in suffering and moral conflict. He eats some of the dead man's flesh (**cannibalism**).

Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Pi's use of "us" when referring to himself and Richard Parker. (2)
2. Considering what Pi says about being "visited by the most extraordinary dreams, trances, visions, thoughts, sensations, remembrances," (p. 233), do you believe that the ship he sees in Chapter eighty-six is real? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (3)
3. Explain why you think Pi goes out of his way to justify eating the dead man's flesh in Chapter ninety-one. (3)

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Chapter 92 (Algae island)

This chapter causes the reader much discomfort. Pi is **hallucinating**. He has already reached his lowest physical and moral state. One may describe him as being in limbo – a lost soul in a sea of eternal vastness.

The island offers Pi rest (salvation) for a brief period of time. He has food, fresh water, peaceful sleep and shelter. '"Look for green," said the survival manual. Well, this was green. In fact, it was chlorophyll heaven. A green to outshine the food colouring and flashing neon lights. A green to get drunk on."'

The colour **green** represents **Islam** (he praises God – "My God! My God!") when he discovers that he can step onto it – restoring his **belief** and **faith**. Green is also symbolic of self-respect, fertility and growth. Pi's physical and emotional health is restored after being depleted and morally broken. Whether or not the island is a figment of Pi's imagination, it is necessary to enable him to sustain himself in the last days of his journey. He cleans himself and the lifeboat-symbolic of internal and external cleansing. He regains his intellectual interest by researching, testing and calculating. **Science** and **religion** are not intermingled. He continues to train Richard Parker. Pi also partakes of the fruit hanging from a tree – reference to the **Garden of Eden** and the **forbidden fruit**. Although Pi has had enough to eat, he gives in to his desire and eats the fruit. Upon discovering the human teeth in the fruit, he gains knowledge about the **truth** of the island. His **innocence** is shattered, like Adam and Eve's. The salvation is short-lived and he discovers that the "The island was carnivorous." (page 274).

Later in the novel, when Pi is interviewed by the Japanese officials, the discovery of "small bones" is mentioned and Pi claims that this is evidence of the meerkats. However, this cannot be proven and is inconclusive. Any question about **the existence of the island** is also inconclusive.

Questions

1. Comment on the symbolism of the colour green when Pi gets to the algae Island. (3)
2. Comment on Martel's use of biblical allusions in describing algae island and Pi's experiences there. (3)
3. Describe the island's treacherous nature. (3)

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Chapters 93 – 94

In the last chapters of Part Two, Pi is in the "throes of unremitting suffering" and resolves to "turn to God".

Pi is rescued when the lifeboat washes ashore in a village in Mexico. Richard Parker walks into the nearby trees instantly and Pi is "orphaned". He feels that his story has not concluded properly as Richard Parker has left without a proper goodbye, making his existence impossible to prove.

Pi's faith has not left him, even at this stage as he describes the beach as "the cheek of God."

Questions

1. Use the following quotations as the starting point to discuss Pi's mood at this moment in the novel.

   "In the morning the island was gone … The sea was heavy, the sky was grey." (page 275)

   AND

   "The lower you are, the higher your mind will want to soar. It was natural that, bereft and desperate as I was, in the throes of unremitting suffering, I should turn to God." (4)
2. Explain why Pi weeps when Richard Parker leaves him. (2)
3. 'Once I started eating, I couldn't stop. I thought I would never stop being hungry.'

   Discuss how these words help you to understand the significance of food in Pi's life. (2)

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PART THREE

Chapters 95 - 100

Mr Okamoto and Mr Chiba of the Maritime Department in the Japanese Ministry of Transport come to Tomatlán, Mexico to interview Pi about the sinking of the *Tsimtsum*. Mr Okamoto is mentioned in the Author's Note which makes the story more believable.

The Japanese officials are sceptical about Pi's first story which includes the tiger, the hyena, the zebra and the orangutan. They are more convinced of his second story in which the Chinese sailor breaks a leg jumping into the lifeboat, the cook then amputates the sailor's leg to use as bait, and when the sailor dies, he butchers and eats him. Pi and his mother are shocked and after a heated argument between the cook and Pi's mother, the cook kills and beheads Pi's mother. The next day Pi kills the cook. To the officials this version seems more believable.

His eccentric behaviour, like hoarding food also makes his credibility questionable. However, Pi's behaviour does makes sense to the reader.

"I know what you want. You want a story that won't surprise you. That will confirm what you already know. That won't make you see higher or further or differently … You want dry, yeastless factuality."

The parallels between the first story and the second story may be summarised as follows: the zebra breaks a leg jumping into the lifeboat; the hyena eats the zebra; the hyena and the orangutan fight; the hyena kills the orangutan and the tiger kills the hyena.

In comparison the two stories highlight the theme of **heart** and **reason**. The story with animals requires **heart**; whereas the second story supports **reason** a logical account). Pi's story requires **heart** – hence, a story that "will make you believe in God".

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Questions

1. Who is the narrator of Chapter ninety-five? (2)
2. Whilst reading Part Three of the novel, you should have noticed that it is presented in three distinctive font styles. Account for the use of these distinct font styles. (3)
3. From the two stories Pi tells to the investigators, which one does Mr Okamoto believe in and why? (2)

Memoranda for the CHAPTER ANALYSIS Questions

Author's Note

1. He was looking for inspiration to write his next novel/He had little money and a little money goes away in India. He was restless. (2)
2. He had given up on it and found a way to get rid of it without destroying. (1)
3. He engages the Author's attention by telling him that he has a story that he will make him believe in God. The Author got suspicious. He uses suspense, curiosity and suspicion. (3)

Chapters 1 - 3

1. The opening line is effective because the author starts with the word 'My', therefore indicating a personal account. It makes it authentic. It introduces the theme of suffering or gloom. (2)
2. It is the fictitious author speaking. / To distinguish between the fictitious author and Pi. (1)
3. Mamaji named Pi and taught him how to swim. (2)

Chapter 4

1. Pi clearly believes that animals are better off in a zoo. In a zoo, animals have regular medical care, plenty of food, and a well-needed schedule. In the wild, they lead lives of "compulsion and necessity." Animals are territorial. (3)
2. Pi says that no person with "all the usual ties — to family, to friends, to society", would willingly choose to be cut loose from these things. This is significant because this is exactly what will happen to Pi. (3)
3. Just as people who do not understand believe zoos imprison animals and deprive them of happiness, many people who do not understand believe religion deprives people of their freedom. (3)

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4. Pi is essentially comparing a house to a zoo. Just as humans — who once roamed "free" in jungles and on plains — have adapted satisfactorily to sheltered lives, so too do animals — especially those born in captivity — adapt to habitations in which all their needs are met.

   (Open-ended question) (3)

Chapters 5 - 6

1. His strategy is very assertive. He walks up to the black board and writes his new name. He also includes the mathematical symbol for Pi to reinforce his name. The outcome is very successful. The teachers immediately start calling him Pi and the learners soon follow. (3)

2.1) His father owns and runs the Pondicherry Zoo. (1)

2.2) When Pi is stranded on the lifeboat with the tiger, he knows that his only hope of survival is to make Richard Parker fear him so he trains him to associate the whistle with seasickness, to see him as a provider of food and water, and to keep out of his territory so he marks the tarpaulin with his own urine. (3)

2.3) Yes. By stating that both animals and humans are trained using repetition he implies that we are similar in the way we learn and respond/that humans and animals have some aspects in common/that humans have some animal-like qualities. (2)

3. The author notes that Patel's kitchen is jammed with far more food than he could eat, as if he is hoarding food against some possible disaster. (2)

Chapter 7

1. Pi says, "[Mr Kumar's] construction was geometric: he looked like two triangles, a small one and a larger one, balanced on two parallel lines." Mr Kumar represents the world of abstract reasoning. Like Pi, whose name also represents an important geometric ratio, Mr Kumar is associated with these theoretical concepts. (3)

2. To Mr Kumar, an avowed atheist, every animal in the zoo is a "triumph of logic and mechanics" and a symbol of the nature of science. (2)

3. Atheists also follow their reason; once they reach the bounds of reason, they proclaim that there is no God. Believers also go to the edge of reason, then find God beyond this edge. Pi believes agnostics are unable to commit to any position. They live in a state of perpetual doubt. (3)

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Chapter 8

1. Man is the one who causes problems in zoos by tormenting the animals. Human beings will feed dangerous items to animals just to see what the animals will do. Pi's father insists, however, that the anthropomorphised animal is the most dangerous of all. People must not make the mistake of believing that animals are like humans, with human understanding and emotions. (3)

2.1 The brutal death of the goat graphically illustrates the viciousness of the natural world. (2)

2.2 Set beside the discussion of anthropomorphism, it illustrates that wild animals are not humans with the same emotions and rational thought processes. (3)

3. Martel might be foreshadowing an incident in which human nature and brute animal nature meet one another — possibly dealing with a tiger. (2)

Chapters 9 - 11

1. A "flight distance" is "the minimum distance at which an animal wants to keep a perceived enemy." Put more simply, "flight distance" refers to how close an animal will allow an enemy to get to it before it flees. (3)
2. A caged animal that cannot flee when its enemy is too close experiences extreme stress. It is in the animal's best interest — physically and emotionally — for the zookeeper to minimise the animal's flight distance so it can tolerate being observed by humans at close range. (3)
3. He says that animals whose enclosures are not just right may try to escape, as may wild animals suddenly brought into captivity. But animals may also try to escape for no good reason, as a result of the "measure of madness" built into all living things. (2)
4. The zoo was an important part of Pi's growing up. The entire book is a study of the behaviours of humans and animals in unnatural and unexpected circumstances. (2)
5. The unknown or its territory being invaded. (1)
6. The escaped leopard lived for two months in the area around the city. Pi says that the fact that this leopard lived so long without being seen and did not attack anyone while she was out proves that escaped animals are not dangerous and are actually just trying to fit into the new environments in which they find themselves. (3)

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Chapters 12 - 15

1. The narrator is foreshadowing the telling of Pi's story, when, as a teenager, Pi floated in a lifeboat on the Pacific Ocean for two hundred 227 days. (2)

2. It is significant because the story is going to have a great deal to do with a wild animal in unfamiliar territory and a human's need to establish control over it. (2)

3. Social hierarchy is important because much of animal survival depends on knowing precisely where it fits in that hierarchy. The story Patel is going to tell the narrator most likely has to do with animal territorialism and dominance. (3)

4. The narrator describes the house as a temple. There are items in this house from three different religions; all three appear to be equally revered. There are depictions of the Hindu god Ganesha, the Hindu deity Krishna, and Jesus Christ, the central figure of Christianity. The person whose house this is appears to be a devotee of three of the major religions of the world: Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. (3)

Chapters 16 - 28

1. He says that the rich sensory details of Hinduism made him love the religion from the start. But he is also a Hindu in his religious philosophy. (2)

2. Pi is impressed by Christianity's humanity. He is "compelled" by the idea that Christ is God incarnate. He likes the idea that God is accessible to all people because His son was human. Hinduism, then, provides Pi with a spiritual sense of the interconnectedness of all living things, and Christianity offers him a means to approach God. (3)

3. Hinduism gives Pi his spiritual sense and his respect for all life. Christianity gives him a sense of humility and closeness to God. Islam gives Pi a physical and satisfying means of expressing and practising his faiths. (3)

4. Religion relies heavily on story telling. Many religious lessons are passed on through the telling of stories. If you are religious, you will be more likely to believe stories that seem impossible. Story telling is also a way to make sense of things and the world. Stories can be an explanation for things difficult to understand. In the same way religion often explains things that people do not understand. Religion and story telling have a close relationship and some may argue that religion is nothing more than story telling. (4)

5. The primary conflict is among faith, apathy, and reason. Pi represents faith, and he sees the similarities in the three religions rather than the differences. Pi's father represents bafflement or apathy. He makes a vague attempt to protest Pi's position but ultimately simply sends Pi away. Pi's mother represents reason. She tries to reason with Pi, offer analogies, and ultimately exhausts herself in her inability to dissuade him from his

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beliefs. Downloaded from eduresourceza.com (4)

Chapters 29 – 30

1. The fact that the animals neither know nor care about world politics illustrates the irrelevance of such matters to real life. (2)
2. The writer says that "life has taught [Pi] not to show off what is most precious to him." Along with the hints we had earlier, this is further evidence that Pi has experienced a great loss. (3)

Chapters 31 - 32

1. The novel is going to involve an odd co-habitation and the creation of a "herd" by an odd combination of creatures. (2)
2. Pi thinks that zoomorphism happens because it is the only way for animals to make sense of their lives. For example, in the novel Pi tells about the lion cubs bonding with a dog, he says that if the lions knew that their mother was dead, they would be sad. By bonding with another mother, even if it is a dog, they can better cope with their situations. (3)
3. Again, this explanation foreshadows a series of events involving loss and the need for those left behind to rebuild new groups and make sense of their lives. (2)
4. Mr Kumar, the teacher, represents pure science. In the past, he has asserted that he does not believe in God, only in science. Mr Kumar, the baker, is a devout Muslim. He thinks that God manifests himself in nature. Both men admire the zebras, so their meeting represents the symbolic meeting of science and spirituality. (3)

Chapters 33 – 36

1. All of the evidence so far indicates that, between India and Canada, Pi experienced a tremendous loss of family members, animals, personal possessions and a severe break with his past. (2)
2. Pi's account is factual and detailed. The author's account is sentimental. (2)
3. Concern over the brand names available is Mrs Patel's way of expressing her apprehension about leaving everything familiar behind and facing an entirely new life in a new country and culture. (3)
4. Pi has a son, a daughter, and a dog. The narrator said earlier that Pi hides everything precious to him; he seems to have kept his family hidden. (2)
5. Despite the great tragedy has been hinted at the scene of cosy domestic life may be coming after some family tragedy. (2)

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Chapters 37 – 40

1. The alliteration created by the [s] foreshadows Pi's solitude as he has to face the journey alone in the open silent sea. All possibilities of hope fade. The shortness of the sentence creates a sense of urgency. Pi is desperate. (3)

2. It takes us back to how he comes to be in the lifeboat. /It explains the events that lead to Pi being in the situation. (2)

3. It symbolises hope. In this case the whistle is orange and Pi will use it to train Richard Parker and to call for help. (2)

Chapters 41 – 42

1. The writer intends to take the readers back to Part One, which highlight's Pi's knowledge of animals. Here he has to use this knowledge to survive in the presence of the hyena, the zebra and the tiger. (3)

2. It creates a gloomy and dangerous atmosphere, where Pi feels hopeless and desperate. The choice of words such as "alone", "hanging onto" and "raging" shows he is in danger. (3)

3. Religion gives Pi hope and zeal to carry on with his life in spite of his predicament. Both female figures, the Virgin Mary and the Hindu goddess of fertility, represent hope and comfort. (3)

Chapters 43 – 48

1. He knows that when the flight distance is reduced, the animals can become unpredictable, as shown when the hyena attacks the zebra. He also remembers the fact that hyenas are "cowardly carrion-eaters" and this makes him anxious every time the hyena comes close to him. (3)

2. This description creates a sinister setting for the events to follow, showing no sign of hope and emphasises his solitude. (2)

Chapters 49 - 52

1. He looks for water and food – sustenance. / Maintains a safe distance from the hyena and the tiger. / Conquers his fear of the animals. / Uses his knowledge of science. (3)

2. Pi is steadfast in all three faiths. He believes that God will not abandon him. Spirituality /faith in God are a matter of life or death. (3)

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Chapters 53 – 55

1. 1) He attributes his sole survival to God when the rest of his family do not survive.

   2) He cites his survival as a miracle he owes to God being with him.

   3) The fact that Richard Parker does not attack him is another miracle he attributes to God. (3)

2. It is because his hope to survive has been renewed by the fact that he was going to let the rules of nature take their course by waiting for Richard Parker to waste away. (2)

3. It is passivity/ letting things happen/the waiting game that Pi has to 'play' to await any reaction from Richard Parker. (2)

Chapters 56 – 58

1. Fear respects no laws of convention

   Fear comes with doubt

   Fear destroys all hope. (3)

2. What makes this ironic is the fact that Pi comes to the realisation that Richard Parker will be the source of his death and instead of panicking he resigns himself to such an ending and makes peace with it. (2)

3. It is because he needs information to assist him to deal with the animals in the lifeboat with him and the manual has none of this information. (2)

Chapters 59 – 65

1. Pi realizes that Richard Parker is as helpless as he is. This gives him hope for survival but the fact that he cannot predict Richard Parker's next move fills him with despair. (2)

2. It reflects his ability to visualise the impossible. His love of nature and keen eye for detail are revealed through the parallels he draws between the city and the sea. (2)

3. It helps him to focus on the here and now without being anxious about his future. (2)

Chapters 66 – 69

1. He is at his lowest and will do anything to survive, including eating meat when he is a vegetarian. The way he kills his food is also out of character for him because he does so in a cruel manner. This is shown when he says*: "I stuck two fingers into eyes, jammed hands into gills, crushed soft stomachs with knees, bit tails with my teeth…"* (3)

2. His conflict is based on the contrast between the peace of his upbringing and religious beliefs and the savage behaviour he is forced to adopt in order to survive. (3)

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3. Yes it is possible. In the huge Pacific Ocean there are countless possibilities. It could be a ship, another lifeboat or even a sign from God **OR** No, he could be delusional and the ”sightings” could be a figment of his imagination due to his desperation to be rescued . He is not in a stable frame of mind hence it is possible that his mind could be playing tricks on him (3)

Chapters 70 – 84

1. Richard Parker is an immediate threat to his life compared to anything else that can happen to him. He has to be on guard at all times. In addition, Richard Parker is the only possibility he has to form a relationship with another living being. (3)

2. This act is a revelation that he misses his family desperately, especially his mother. Despite his survival skills in the Pacific Ocean, Pi is still his mother’s child and that longing for a parent comes out at this point. (2)

3. This is seen when he hoards and hides the food in Parts One and Three of the novel. (2)

Chapters 85 – 91

1. It reveals his acceptance of Richard Parker as a companion and equal as shown through him conversing with the tiger in a manner one would do with another human being. (2)

2. (Open-ended) Yes. Because of Pi’s unique personality, identity and multi-faith practices, anything is possible Or No because of Pi’s obvious delusional state mind he is unstable and is therefore is prone to such fanciful /strange thoughts and images. (3)

3. He acknowledges his actions and continues to pray for the man’s soul. He also wants to highlight his plight, showing the reader what one will do when the need to survive is stronger than the need to be moralistic. (3)

Chapter 92

1. Green represents life. It is at this moment that Pi feels he has found salvation at last when he lands on the island. He says, “This was green. In fact, it was chlorophyll heaven. A green to outshine the food colouring and flashing neon lights. A green to get drunk on.’ It gives him a sense of rejuvenation and happiness that, as a vegetarian, he will now have plenty of green to eat. (3)

2. He draws parallels between the beauty of the Garden of Eden and the island. He also talks about the algae that Pi eats before discovering that the island is carnivorous. This relates to the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, with its hope and accompanying threat of expulsion. (3)

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3. The island is made up of edible, sweet algae and is green and beautiful during the day. At night it devours anything alive. This is why the meerkats sleep in the tree and the reason for Pi's anger at having eaten the carnivorous algae. (3)

Chapters 93 - 94

1. Pi is dejected because the island is gone. The heavy, grey sky reflects his gloomy mood. His resolution to turn to God suggests Pi's powerlessness, his loss of the will to survive, and his belief that only God can intervene. (4)

2. It is because of the 'unceremonious' way in which Richard Parker leaves. Pi feels that there should have been a goodbye of sorts considering their common experiences during their time in the Pacific Ocean. Their relationship does not deserve such a parting, hence feeling 'orphaned' when the tiger walks out of his life. (2)

3. It explains the adult Pi's fear of running out of food because of his lack of food when he is at sea. He is seen hoarding and hiding food in Part One of the novel because of the trauma experienced when he was without food at sea. (2)

Chapters 95 – 100

1. It is the fictitious author.

2. Chapter 95 and 100 are presented in italics because the narrative voice is that of the fictitious writer. The interview between Pi and the two officials from the Japanese Ministry of Transportation is presented in roman font used in the rest of Pi's narration. The cursive font is a translation from Japanese, the language Mr. Chiba and Mr. Okamoto used when talking to each other so that Pi could not hear their direct comments on his narration. (3)

3. He believed in the first story with animals because he says it is a better story compared to the other one. (2)

Important Quotes to Consider:

When studying the novel, it is important to take note of some significant quotations that enhance your understanding of the text as a whole. Consider the following:

- The context in which these quotations appear in the novel
- Your understanding/interpretation of these quotations
- The significance of the quotations in relation to the plot, character analysis and themes

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1	Richard Parker has stayed with me. I've never forgotten him. Dare I say I miss him? I do. I miss him. I still see him in my dreams. They are nightmares mostly, but nightmares tinged with love. Such is the strangeness of the human heart. I still cannot understand how he could abandon me so unceremoniously, without any sort of goodbye, without looking back even once. That pain is like an axe that chops at my heart. Chapter 1, page 13
2	I know zoos are no longer in people's good graces. Religion faces the same problem. Certain illusions about freedom plague them both. Chapter 4, page 26
3	There are no grounds for going beyond a scientific explanation of reality and no sound reason for believing anything but our sense experience. A clear intellect, close attention to detail and a little scientific knowledge will expose religion and superstitious bosh. God does not exist. Chapter 7, page 34
4	It was my first clue that atheists are my brothers and sisters of a different faith, and every word they speak speaks faith. Like me, they go as far as the legs of reason will carry them – and then they leap. I'll be honest about it. It is not atheists who get stuck in my craw, but agnostics. Doubt is useful for a while. We must all pass through the garden of Gethsemane … But we must move on. To choose doubt as a philosophy of life is akin to choosing immobility as a means of transportation. Chapter 7, page 35
5	We commonly say in the trade that the most dangerous animal in a zoo is Man. In a general way mean how our species' excessive predatoriness has made the entire planet our prey. Chapter 8, page 35
6	Only the trainer better make sure he always remains super alpha. He will pay dearly if he unwittingly steps to beta. Much hostile and aggressive behaviour among animals is the expression of social insecurity. Chapter 13, page 50
7	… Hindus, in their capacity for love, are indeed Hairless Christians, just as Muslims, in the way they see God in everything are bearded Hindus, and Christians, in their devotion to God, are hat-wearing Muslims. Chapter 16, page 56
8	I can well imagine an atheist's last words … and the deathbed leap of faith. Whereas the agnostic, if he stays true to his reasonable self, if he stays beholden to dry, yeastless factuality, might try

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	explain the warm light bathing him by saying, "Possibly a f-f-failing oxygenation of the b-b-brain," and, to the very end, lack imagination and miss the better story. Chapter 22, page 70
9	The pandit spoke first. "Mr. Patel, Piscine's piety is admirable. In these troubled times it's good to see a boy so keen on God. We all agree on that." The imam and the priest nodded. "But he can't be a Hindu, a Christian and a Muslim. It's impossible. He must choose …" "… Hmmm, Piscine?" Mother nudged me. "How do you feel about the question?" "Bapu Gandhi said, 'All religions are true.' "I just want to love God," I blurted out, and looked down, red in the face. Chapter 23, page 75
10	The zebra's broken leg was missing. The hyena had bitten it off and dragged it to the stern, behind the zebra. A flap of skin lay limply over the raw stump. Blood was still dripping. The victim bore its suffering patiently, without showing remonstrations. A slow grinding of its teeth was the only visible sign of distress. Shock, revulsion and anger surged through me. I felt intense hatred for the hyena. I thought of doing something to kill it. But I did nothing. Chapter 45, page 121
11	I was giving up. I would have given up – if a voice hadn't made itself heard in my heart. The voice said, "I will not die. I refuse it. I will make it through this nightmare. I will beat the odds, as great as they are. I have survived so far, miraculously. Now I will turn miracle into routine. The amazing will be seen every day. I will put in all the hard work necessary. Yes, so long as God is with me, I will not die. Amen. Chapter 53, page 148
12	I must say a word about fear. It's life's only true opponent. Only fear can defeat life. Chapter 56, page 161
13	I wept heartily over this poor little deceased soul. It was the first sentient being I had ever killed. I was now a killer. I was now as guilty as Cain. I was sixteen years old, a harmless boy, bookish and religious, and now I had blood on my hands. It's a terrible burden to carry. All sentient life is sacred. I never forget to include this fish in my prayers. Chapter 61, page 183
14	Despair was a heavy blackness that let no light in or out. It was a hell beyond expression. I thank God it always passed. A school of fish appeared around the net or a knot cried out to be reknotted. Or I thought of my family, of how they were spared this terrible agony. The blackness would stir and eventually go away, and God would remain, a shining point of light in my heart. I would go on loving.

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	Chapter 74, page 207
15	Life on a lifeboat isn't much of a life. It is like an end game in chess, a game with few pieces. The elements couldn't be more simple, nor the stakes higher. Physically it is extraordinarily arduous, and morally it is killing … You get your happiness where you can. You reach a point where you're at the bottom of hell, yet you have your arms crossed and a smile on your face, and you feel you're the luckiest person on earth. Why? Because at your feet you have a tiny dead fish. Chapter 78, page 214
14	I was dazed, thunderstruck – nearly in the true sense of the word. But not afraid. "Praise be to Allah, Lord of All Worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Ruler of Judgment Day!" I muttered. To Richard Parker I shouted, "Stop your trembling! This is miracle. This is an outbreak of divinity. This is … this is …" I could not find what it was, this thing so vast and fantastic … I remember that close encounter with electrocution and third-degree burns as one of the few times during my ordeal when I felt genuine happiness. Chapter 85, page 230
17	By the time morning came, my grim decision was taken. I preferred to set off and perish in search of my own kind than to live a lonely half-life of physical comfort and spiritual death on this murderous island. Chapter 92, page 275
18	"If you stumble at mere believability, what are you living for? Isn't love hard to believe? ... Life is hard to believe, ask any scientist. God is hard to believe, ask any believer. What is your problem with hard to believe?" "We're just being reasonable." "So am I! I applied my reason at every moment … Nothing beats reason for keeping tigers away. But be excessively reasonable and you risk throwing out the universe with the bathwater. Chapter 99, page 289

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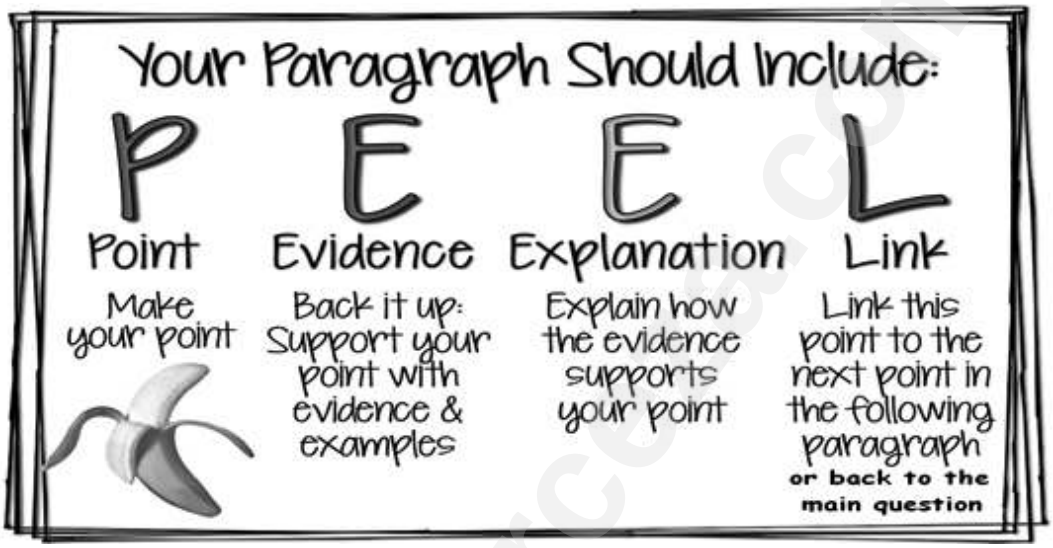
Answering the Literary Essay

Revise your knowledge of the structure of the Literary Essay

The structure of the literary essay is the same as any other essay as it has an introduction, body and conclusion. However, this essay differs from creative writing in that you are required to have read the literature text (which is your drama or novel) and present an argument about what you have read. The tone of the literary essay is **formal**.

The PEEL method explained:



The **PEEL** method essentially focuses on the format and structure when formulating a written piece.

Each element helps to strengthen your argument by allowing you to produce overall effective paragraphs that complement and connect to one another.

POINT – Your **topic sentence** is extremely important for providing variability and unity within your paper. Therefore the first sentence of each paragraph should clearly state the point of the paragraph which should be directly connected to the argument of the essay. Essentially keep it short and straight to the point.

EVIDENCE – The evidence presented should be in line with your point of view, meaning the evidence provided should be **credible and verifiable** such as examples from the text.

EXPLAIN – This portion of your paragraph may be the largest one as it involves interpreting, evaluating as well as providing additional details to accompany your main idea. Similarly this section may also include a verdict or claim being made in which you clearly state a supposition based on the evidence provided.

LINK – When providing the link sentence at the end of your paragraph, you are not only linking back to the bulk of the paragraph and the topic, but you are also allowing for a transition to the next topic or paragraph. In some cases, the candidate may consider the link sentence actually to be the first sentence of the next paragraph. This may provide unity and coherence to the work.

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Points to consider before you start with the literary essay:

- Write in the **present tense:** e.g. Instead of saying Hamlet **was** self-destructive, say Hamlet **is** self-destructive. The writer has created him that way therefore he does not change.
- Always write in the **third person:** Do not say **I** agree… Say **it is** evident that…
- Do not use **contractions** or **abbreviations: Don't** should be written as **Do not**
- Do **not retell** the plot/story and respond directly to the question verb: **Evaluate, Assess, Discuss.**
- **Use linking words e.g. However, In addition, considering, in contrast etc.**
- This essay is an argumentative essay; therefore identify the argumentative element in the topic.

A suggested approach for the exam:

- Think and plan at the same time.
- Look at the plan very carefully and then begin to write what will be your final essay - you will not re-write this version.
- Re-read the essay, correcting any errors that you find as neatly as possible. This is the version that you will write in your answer book for marking.

EXAMPLE TOPIC

QUESTION 8: LIFE OF PI – ESSAY QUESTION

The novel, *Life of Pi*, suggests that, despite offering contradictory approaches to life, reason and faith can co-exist.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400 – 450 words. (2–2½ pages).

[25]

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ANSWERING THE QUESTION

The topic usually has two or more components:

1. THE STATEMENT/QUESTION

The novel, Life of Pi, suggests that, despite offering contradictory approaches to life, reason and faith can co-exist.

What does this statement mean?

Always paraphrase the statement before you start writing the essay, so that you can unpack it.

The novel shows us that although reason (science) and faith (religion) appear to offer different approaches to life, they can work together.

2. INSTRUCTION

The 'instruction' tells you how to approach your essay.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

The instruction is asking you to *take a position* on this argument. Do you agree or disagree? Maybe, you agree to a certain extent.

THE PLANNING PHASE

This is the most important part of your response. You must find a clear way to outline the **approach** to your essay before you start writing your final draft.

Some tips for planning:

- ✓ Use a mind map (see the example below) or note key words.
- ✓ Spend between five and ten minutes on your mind map.
- ✓ You must use a range of examples to support your arguments. Knowing a few quotes helps **BUT** rather re-phrase the quote in your own words than quote incorrectly. Using a quote is not the **only** way to reference. You can also refer to a particular incident in the novel. For example:

  In the first chapter, Pi mentions the study of the sloth for his zoological thesis at university. He mentions various sources and gives the scientific biological information about the sloth; however, he also describes the sloth's soothing and spiritually calming nature, which remind him of God. This shows the lack of clear boundaries between religion and science.
- ✓ Decide on your key points. How are you going to discuss the topic? Are you going to focus on characters OR are you going to look at key events in the novel? If you are

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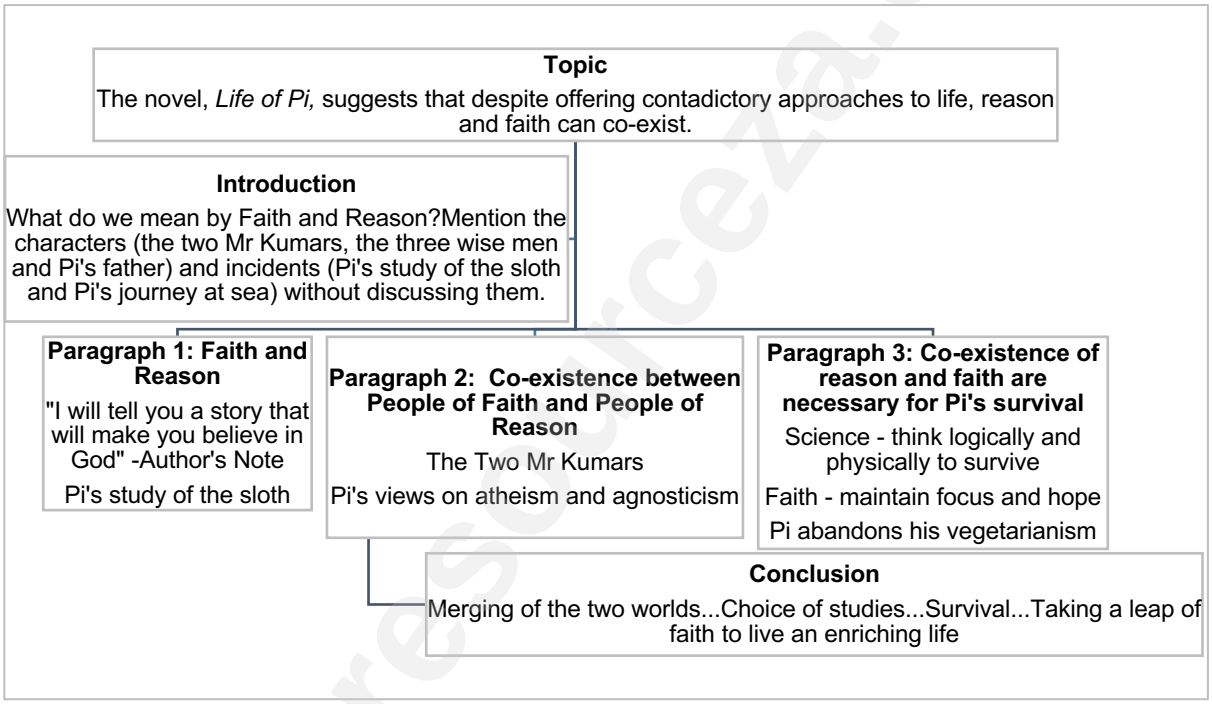
looking at key events, then you must set out your essay where the events are mentioned in the order that they happen – i.e. chronologically.

- ✓ Keep referring to your topic statement so that you do not go off the topic.
- ✓ **Never retell the story**. There may be some parts of the story that do not have any relationship to the topic. Focus on what you are arguing about. In this case, your focus should be on the theme of science and religion.
- ✓ Remember that the person marking your essay, has read the novel. You do not need to remind them about the entire story again. You **only** need to refer to the part of the story, the characters and the information that speak to **your essay topic**.
- ✓ Refer to the rubric (page 89) for the marking of the essay to guide your response.

AN EXAMPLE OF A MIND MAP



HOW TO WRITE AN INTRODUCTION

Make a broad statement introducing the topic.

Reason is the power to think about, understand, and form judgements logically. It helps one to consider the effects before taking any action. Faith, on the other hand, is a belief in a higher power.

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Draw on your understanding of the novel as a whole.

In Life of Pi, *Yann Martel uses various characters and incidents to demonstrate how reason and faith co-exist. Some of the characters who represent the merging of science and religion in the novel are the two Mr Kumars. Further, Pi's journey at sea shows how he has applied the co-existence of reason and faith in order to survive.*

Then, make a statement based on the instruction of the topic, showing your intention/aim in this essay.

This essay will show that although these might appear to be contradictory concepts, Pi maintains that reason and faith can co-exist.

Please note that all the bold words in the full introduction come directly from the topic /question. This should enable you to structure your essay more easily.

FULL INTRODUCTION

Reason is the power to think logically and to consider the effects before acting. **Faith**, on the other hand, is a belief in a higher power. In *Life of Pi*, Martel uses various characters and incidents to demonstrate how **reason and faith**, which are key themes in the novel, **co-exist**. The two Mr Kumars represent the merging of science and religion or reason and faith. In addition, Pi's journey at sea shows how he applies **the co-existence of reason and faith** in order to survive. This essay will show that although these might appear to be contradictory concepts, Pi reveals that **reason and faith can co-exist** and are necessary for his survival.

Tips to consider:
Remember to use words that **link** each paragraph to the next in a logical manner. E.g. however, therefore, thus, furthermore…
Each paragraph must contain ONE idea ONLY and supporting evidence.
Write each paragraph in the order that the events occurred in the novel.

HOW TO WRITE THE BODY OF THE ESSAY

The body of the essay must be guided by the points that you have isolated in your planning as well as your argument in your introduction. In this case, every paragraph in your essay should answer this question:

Does this show how reason and faith co-exist?

Example of paragraphing

Paragraph 1 – Focus on Faith and Reason

In the Author's Note, the element of faith is introduced when the narrator is told that Pi's story "will make you believe in God". In Chapter One, Pi mentions the study of the sloth, citing various sources and giving the scientific biological information about the animal. ***However***, he describes the sloth's soothing and spiritually calming nature as reminding him of God. ***Hence***, at the outset of the novel, the themes of religion and science are introduced and the lack of clear boundaries between religion and science or belief and logic, are presented.

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Paragraph 2 – links to paragraph 1 but introduces a new idea which is the influence of the two Mr Kumars.

Pi's passion for science and religion is ***further*** encouraged by his role models, the two Mr Kumars. Despite their different perspectives, one scientific and the other religious, they are able to reach consensus on their appreciation of the zebra. This suggests that these two perspectives can co-exist. Pi concludes that, although his teacher Mr Kumar is an atheist, and the baker Mr Kumar is a devout Muslim, the atheist is also capable of having faith; although his faith lies in science rather than in a belief in God. It is for this reason that Pi detests agnostics who cannot hold on to either reason or faith and thus live an uneventful life.

Paragraph 3 – links to paragraph 2 but shows how Pi's survival depends on the co-existence of reason and faith.

In the introduction, it was mentioned that: ***Pi shows that reason and faith can co-exist <u>and are necessary for his survival</u>.***

On the lifeboat, both reason and faith help Pi to survive. His faith allows him to maintain focus and hope while his scientific knowledge and his ability to think logically sustain him physically. Pi's ability to reason makes him realise that he has to abandon his vegetarianism and resort to killing in order to survive. He is able to reconcile himself to his savagery by showing reverence for and praying over his kill. He also rationalises the need to distance himself from the savagery into which he descends. The creation of Richard Parker, his alter ego, enables him to cope with the horror of his actions.

> Ensure that you have addressed everything that you mentioned in your introduction. The marker refers to your introduction constantly in the marking of your essay, as it presents your argument. For example, this introduction mentions: … **and are necessary for survival**.

HOW TO WRITE A CONCLUSION

The conclusion ends your argument with the final outcome of your approach. It also establishes whether you have done what you intended to do, in your introduction. You must relate your conclusion to the introductory paragraph and the topic.

Example of a conclusion

In conclusion, Pi is able to survive his ordeal by merging his understanding of science and his religious faith. Furthermore, his creation of Richard Parker as his alter ego and the compromises he makes in terms of his beliefs, provide an avenue for him to maintain his humanity at his lowest moments. Whilst science provides the answers to most questions, it cannot explain the complexity of human emotions and therefore Pi maintains that, at times, one has to have faith and belief, such as the belief in the existence of God, without any empirical evidence (proof).

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Practise the Literary Essay

TOPIC NUMBER 1

Stripped of his normal life, Pi must diminish his humanity and re-assert his animal instincts in order to survive.

In an essay of 400 – 450 words (2 - 2½ pages) critically assess the validity of the above statement.

[25]

TOPIC NUMBER 2

The themes of a literary work carry relevant lessons for today's readers.

Discuss the lessons conveyed by the theme of Pi's WILL TO SURVIVE in *Life of Pi*.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400 - 450 words (2 - 2½ pages).

[25]

TOPIC NUMBER 3

People who fabricate stories for their self-preservation are often enslaved by their own creation. But the truth is always revealed and they are then set free.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement with reference to *Life of Pi.*

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400 - 450 words (2 - 2½ pages).

[25]

MEMORANDA FOR LITERARY ESSAYS

A NOTE OF CAUTION

Although we have included points for your essay response from the official memoranda, this is not how you should answer the question in the exam. You must write in PARAGRAPHS, and NOT point form. Your essay must flow. These points are a guide but you must include your own ideas and expression.

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TOPIC NUMBER 1

Stripped of his normal life, Pi must diminish his humanity and reassert his animal instincts in order to survive.

In an essay of 400 – 450 words (2 - 2½ pages) critically assess the validity of the above statement.

[25]

POINTS TO CONSIDER FOR TOPIC 1

- As a Hindu, Pi has been taught to love, value and respect all living things. He has deep faith in the three different religions – Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Initially Pi displays a deep sense of humanity but while on the life boat, his need to survive results in his humanity being compromised.
- His moral beliefs are discarded. He transforms from being a strict vegetarian and having a deep respect for life, to killing and at one stage, cannibalism.
- His need for nourishment forces him to learn to fish and to catch turtles which he kills in a barbaric manner. He not only consumes fish but drinks the turtles' blood. This savagery and brutality shocks Pi.
- He wolfs down his food as he needs to do so before Richard Parker is aware of the supply of fish. He now displays animalistic tendencies.
- After Richard Parker has killed the Frenchman, Pi uses some of the dead man's flesh as bait and also tries to eat a piece of his flesh.
- When Pi is stranded on the lifeboat with the tiger, establishing the borders of Pi's territory becomes imperative to his survival. He eventually marks his territory by urinating around his space. He can only do this if he proves himself to be the alpha male.
- In the second story that Pi relates to the Japanese officials, Pi kills the cook and then eats his heart, liver and some of his flesh.
- The adult Pi still struggles to come to terms with the killing of the French cook as he recognises how he had lost an essential part of his humanity and had taken on the traits of an animal.
- His creation of Richard Parker as his alter ego is a result of his desire to separate himself from his brutal survival instinct.

Alternative points:

- Despite Pi's acts of brutality, he still maintains his humanity and faith, showing reverence for life by praying before each act of killing.
- The adult Pi is still haunted by his actions aboard the lifeboat. He displays deep love for his family and has strong religious faith.

[25]

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TOPIC NUMBER 2

The themes of a literary work carry relevant lessons for today's readers.

Discuss the lessons conveyed by the theme of Pi's WILL TO SURVIVE in *Life of Pi*.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400 - 450 words (2 - 2½ pages).

[25]

POINTS TO CONSIDER FOR TOPIC 2

- The will to survive affects a person's choices in life: survival has always been important to Pi.
- Ridicule can teach one perseverance in one's survival: Pi's attempts in his early childhood to survive ridicule give him the persevering spirit needed to overcome the challenges that threatened to destroy him. He gives himself a new identity.
- Survival of the fittest depends on using one's innate knowledge and skills. In the story of the journey with Richard Parker in Part One, Pi uses his skills to stay alive and outwit Richard Parker. In the alternate story, Pi (who is a gentle character and vegetarian) kills the cook and eats him in his attempt to survive. Pi's spiritual and mental capacities also contribute to his will to survive and overcome adversity.

TOPIC NUMBER 3

People who fabricate stories for their self-preservation are often enslaved by their own creation. But the truth is always revealed and they are then set free.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement with reference to *Life of Pi.*

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400 - 450 words (2 - 2½ pages).

[25]

- Pi is able to survive by recounting stories of the early days of his life and about his adventures with Richard Parker after the shipwreck.
- These stories give his life meaning and give him the hope to persevere amidst the suffering of life and make Pi's existence bearable.
- His literal rescue from the sea brings to an end his need for story-telling, and once the truth is told, Pi is freed from terror and suffering, yet the memory of how he used his imagination saves him from the harsh-reality of what happened on the boat.

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Answering the Contextual Question

- ✓ The contextual question consists of **25 marks**. To revise for this section, ensure that you know the text well.
- ✓ Use the checklist on your right to ensure that you have covered the important revision aspects.
- ✓ Note that there should be TWO extracts and that some questions may refer to both extracts. Read the instructions carefully and take note of the lines or paragraphs referred to in the question.
- ✓ Knowledge of the entire novel or drama is essential in answering the contextual. For example, the first question on an extract assesses whether you can place the extract in context. i.e. When does this happen in the novel? What has led to this?
- ✓ Structure your answers using the **PEEL METHOD** – Make a point. Explain your point. Give evidence from the text to support it and link this to your explanation.

I know the following: PAPER 2 - LITERATURE	Tick
Title and author	
The plot / story	
The setting	
The names of the characters	
The role of each character	
Relationships between characters	
Character development, growth	
Protagonist and antagonist	
Themes or messages	
Events – causes and consequences	
Meanings of words in context	
Figures of speech and the effect thereof	
Style – Punctuation, diction, paragraphing, narration	
Irony and dramatic irony	
Important quotes	

PEEL METHOD
Point,
Explain,
Evidence,
Link

The following section is an analysis of the contextual from the **November 2018 English Home Language Paper 2**. This will be used to guide you through the skills of answering the contextual question.

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QUESTION 9: LIFE OF PI – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT ONE

The elements allowed me to go on living. The lifeboat did not sink. Richard Parker kept out of sight. The sharks prowled but did not lunge. The waves splashed me but did not pull me off.

I watched the ship as it disappeared with much burbling and belching. Lights flickered and went out. I looked about for my family, for survivors, for another lifeboat, for anything that might bring me hope. There was nothing. Only rain, marauding waves of black ocean and the flotsam of tragedy.

…

I inched my way along the oar till my feet were against the bow of the boat. I had to proceed with extreme caution. My guess was that Richard Parker was on the floor of the lifeboat beneath the tarpaulin, his back to me, facing the zebra, which he had no doubt killed by now.

…

Of greater significance to me was the strange fact that Richard Parker had not killed it. In the normal course of things, he should have killed the zebra. That's what predators do: they kill prey. In the present circumstances, where Richard Parker would be under tremendous mental strain, fear should have brought out an exceptional level of aggression. The zebra should have been properly butchered.

The reason behind its spared life was revealed shortly. It froze my blood – and then brought a slight measure of relief. A head appeared beyond the end of the tarpaulin. It looked at me in a direct, frightened way, ducked under, appeared again, ducked under again, appeared once more, disappeared a last time. It was the bear-like, balding-looking head of a spotted hyena.

[Chapter 41]

9.1 Refer to lines 1–2: 'Richard Parker kept out of sight.'

Explain Richard Parker's presence on the lifeboat. (3)

Step 1: Understand the **instructional verb**. To '**explain'** is to give reasons for something or to make it clear.
Step 2: Understand the **question** and **references**. This question is asking you to give reasons for Richard Parker being on the lifeboat and for keeping out of sight (line reference). How did Richard Parker end up on the lifeboat and why is he 'out of sight'?
Step 3: Look at the mark allocation. Three marks are given for any two ideas that are discussed.
Points and Evidence:
Pi spots Richard Parker in the water. He is pleased to see a familiar figure and wants to rescue the tiger.
Richard Parker keeps out of sight because he is in unfamiliar territory and he is sea-sick.

Answer:
After finding himself on the lifeboat, **Pi spots Richard Parker in the water**. Being pleased to see a familiar figure and out of concern for the tiger's safety, Pi helps the tiger onto the boat. **Richard Parker prefers to hide himself away** because he finds himself in unfamiliar territory and is feeling sea-sick.
Alternative answer:
In the second story, Richard Parker is present as **Pi's alter ego**, which enables him **to cope with his ordeal**. Richard Parker's being **out of sight** is because, at this point, Pi is still **able to control his savagery**.

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9.2 Refer to lines 4–7: 'I watched the ship … flotsam of tragedy.'

What do these lines suggest about Pi's state of mind as the ship sinks? (3)

Step 1: Understand the **instructional verb**. To '**suggest'** is to **imply**. In other words, what do the lines tell you…

Step 2: Understand the **question**. This question is asking you to focus on **Pi's state of mind** as the ship is sinking. You must refer to the given **lines 4 – 7** in your explanation.

Step 3: Look at the mark allocation. Three marks are given for any two ideas that are discussed or for three ideas.

Points and evidence:

Look at the events/descriptions mentioned in these lines and consider his state of mind.

ship sinks - despair / hopelessness

'marauding waves of black ocean' – distressed, vulnerable

'flotsam of tragedy' – broken, desolate, at the mercy of the elements

extinguished lights – despondent, lonely

Answer:

Pi feels **despair** and **hopelessness** as the ship sinks. A sense of Pi's **distress** and **vulnerability** is reinforced by the description of the waves as 'marauding'. The phrase, 'flotsam of tragedy' suggests that Pi feels **broken**, **desolate/alone** and at the mercy of the elements. The finality of the **lights** being **extinguished** emphasises Pi's feelings of **despondency**. The bleakness of the description is a reflection of Pi's state of mind.

9.3 Refer to lines 20–21: 'It was the … a spotted hyena.'

Comment on the significance of the hyena in the context of the novel as a whole. (3)

Step 1: Understand the **instructional verb**. To '**comment on**' is to **discuss or speak about..**.

Step 2: Understand the **question**. This question is asking you to speak about the significance of **the hyena** in the **novel** as a whole. In this question you need to consider the whole novel and not just this extract.

Step 3: Look at the mark allocation. Three marks are given for any two ideas that are discussed or for three ideas. z

Points and evidence:

You already know that the novel presents TWO stories. This is a character analysis question. You need to mention the traits of the hyena in the novel BUT you must not forget to include the FRENCH COOK who represents the hyena in the second story.

Hyena – greedy, cunning, vicious / hyenas are scavengers, they prey on the weak / cowardice when faced with a stronger opponent

French cook – viciously attacks the sailor

Critical comment – humans are capable of savage behaviour in order to survive.

Answer:

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In both stories, the hyena/French cook is portrayed as **unpredictable**, **greedy**, **cunning** and **vicious**. As scavengers, hyenas **prey** on those who are perceived as **weaker**, but are **cowardly** and afraid of confronting a more powerful adversary. In the same way, the **French cook** is **cowardly** and **viciously** attacks the injured sailor. **The hyena is a reminder of the savagery of which humans are capable when survival is at stake.**

9.4 In the light of the novel as a whole, critically discuss how Pi's knowledge of animals ensures his survival on the lifeboat. (3)

Step 1: Understand the **instructional verb**. To '**critically discuss**' is to **evaluate or assess something**.

Step 2: Understand the **question**. This question is asking you to evaluate or to assess how Pi's knowledge of animals enables him to survive on the lifeboat. In this question you need to consider the whole novel and not just this extract.

Step 3: Look at the mark allocation. Three marks are given for any two ideas that are discussed or for three ideas.

Points and evidence:

Zoo – observe animals

Science – Animal behaviour

Anthropomorphising – Survival

Survival Manual

Answer:

Pi's early years are spent at his father's **zoo** where he is able to observe animals at close quarters. His interests in **science** and **zoomorphism** give him detailed knowledge of animal behaviour. Without this knowledge, Pi would not have known how to tame the tiger and predict how the animals would respond on the lifeboat. His **father's lesson** on the danger of **anthropomorphising** animals is also instrumental in his survival. In addition, the knowledge gained from the **survival manual** about which sea creatures are edible also ensures his survival.

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EXTRACT TWO

The smell of vegetation was extraordinarily strong. As for the greenness, it was so fresh and soothing that strength and comfort seemed to be physically pouring into my system through my eyes.

…

I heard a growl. I turned. Richard Parker was observing me from the lifeboat. He was looking at the island, too. He seemed to want to come ashore but was afraid. Finally, after much snarling and pacing, he leapt from the boat. I brought the orange whistle to my mouth. But he didn't have aggression on his mind. Simple balance was enough of a challenge; he was as wobbly on his feet as I was. When he advanced, he crawled close to the ground and with trembling limbs, like a newborn cub. Giving me a wide berth, he made for the ridge and disappeared into the interior of the island.

I passed the day eating, resting, attempting to stand and, in a general way, bathing in bliss. I felt nauseous when I exerted myself too much. And I kept feeling that the ground was shifting beneath me and that I was going to fall over, even when I was sitting still.

…

[Richard Parker] killed beyond his need. He killed meerkats that he did not eat. In animals, the urge to kill is separate from the urge to eat. To go for so long without prey and suddenly to have so many – his pent-up hunting instinct was lashing out with a vengeance.

[Chapter 92]

9.5 Place the extract in context. (3)

Step 1: Understand the **instructional verb**. To 'place' something in context means to 'fit' the extract into the story

Step 2: Understand the **question**. This question is asking you to explain the situation in which this extract occurred.

Step 3: Look at the mark allocation. Three marks are given for any two ideas that are discussed or for three ideas.

Points and evidence:

Algae island

- What happens before he gets to the island? He meets the blind Frenchman.
- What happens when he discovers the island? Uncertain if it is real.

Answer:

Soon after **Pi's encounter with the blind Frenchman**, Pi and Richard Parker come across an **island of trees**. At first Pi thinks that it is an illusion, especially when he notices that the island has no soil. His scepticism is overcome when he falls overboard and encounters solid land.

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9.6 Refer to lines 9 - 10: 'Giving me a ... of the island.'

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Based on your knowledge of the novel as a whole, discuss the implication of Richard Parker's behaviour in these lines. (3)

Step 1: Understand the **instructional verb**. To 'discuss' something means to investigate or examine by argument; debate; give reason for and against.

Step 2: Understand the **question**. This question is asking you what conclusion you can draw from Richard Parker's behaviour in lines 9 – 10. **'to give a wide berth'** means that you keep your distance from someone or something. Even if you did not understand the meaning of this expression, the paragraph gives us many clues about Richard Parker's behaviour. Always attempt to answer the question.

Step 3: Look at the mark allocation. Three marks are given for any two ideas that are discussed or for three ideas.

Points and evidence:

Richard Parker – passive, avoids Pi who is still alpha male. Animal and not a human.

Respectful distance between the two

Implications – later on Richard Parker leaves Pi

Answer:

Richard Parker follows his **predatory instinct** by rushing off to hunt. However, through his training of Richard Parker, Pi has established himself as the **dominant force** in order to **survive**. Richard Parker's giving Pi 'a wide berth' indicates that he accepts Pi as the alpha male and respectfully avoids intruding on Pi's territory. Richard Parker's disappearance on the island **foreshadows** his leaving Pi when they reach Mexico.

Alternative answer:

Pi is able to keep the tiger's savagery at bay in the safe confines of the island and thus Richard Parker is allowed to disappear. Richard Parker's behaviour foreshadows Pi's separation from his **alter ego** when it is no longer required to ensure his survival.

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9.7 Refer to lines 16–17: 'To go for ... have so many'.

Comment on the extent to which these lines foreshadow the effect that Pi's ordeal will have on his life. (3)

Step 1: Understand the **instructional verb**. To 'comment on' is to discuss or speak about...

Step 2: Understand the **question**. This question is asking you to speak about how this ordeal will impact on Pi's later on. More specifically, you need to refer to lines 16 – 17: **'To go for so long without prey and suddenly to have so many – his pent-up hunting instinct was lashing out with a vengeance.'**

Step 3: Look at the mark allocation. Three marks are given for any two ideas that are discussed or for three ideas.

Points and evidence:

Lines 16 – 17 refer specifically to Richard Parker's response to the abundance of food – 'prey' – that he has in the island, after doing without for so long. His response is to lash out in excess when given this opportunity.

Richard Parker is also Pi's alter ego in the story. In Part 3 (see chapter analysis), Pi hoards food. Earlier on in Part 1, the fictitious author takes note of how he stockpiles his cupboard.

Answer:

On the island, Richard Parker (**Pi's alter ego**) kills more meerkats than he can eat. Pi greedily **eats** and **hoards** any food he is given in hospital, and as an **adult**, **Pi** stockpiles food in his home. Pi needs the **security** of knowing that he has **enough** food and that he will **never** again have to **resort to savagery**. This is an indication that Pi is still psychologically scarred by his ordeal. The memory of the deprivation he has suffered remains with him throughout his life.

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9.8 Refer to lines 11–12: I passed the … bathing in bliss.

Do you agree that the island represents the contrast between reality and illusion? Justify your response, using this extract as a starting point. (4)

Step 1: Understand the **instructional verb**. You need to take a position in your response – Do you agree…This is a critical response.

Step 2: Understand the **question**. This question is asking you whether you agree that the island shows the contrast (differences) between reality and illusion (see **themes**). You need to justify or support your answer.

Step 3: Look at the mark allocation. Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR four ideas.

Points and evidence:

Reality and Illusion – what is truth or the existence of things as they are vs the appearance of truth / deception. Consider the island as a representation of the 'Garden of Eden' in the Bible. You need to understand the symbolic meaning of the island and then relate this to the theme of **reality vs illusion**. For this response, it would be difficult to disagree.

Answer:

AGREE

At first the island is a **sanctuary** to Pi and Richard Parker as it provides for all their essential needs. (reality)

However, Pi realises that, rather than being a paradise which offers **salvation**, the island is **carnivorous** and **deadly**. The island seems to be like the Garden of Eden/Paradise, but Pi discovers the human teeth, suggesting beastly characteristics. This leads to the realisation that the island is evil which symbolises a shallow faith. It is not the safe haven that Pi assumes it to be. It is this knowledge that finally spurs him to leave the island.

Alternative Answer:

Pi's mind is in a hallucinatory state and unable to distinguish between what is real and what is imaginary. (You will get at least 2 marks for this response.)

'Disagree' response is unlikely

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Practise the Contextual Questions

QUESTION 1: CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT A

So you see, if you fall into a lion's pit, the reason the lion will tear you to pieces is not because it's hungry – be assured, zoo animals are amply fed – or because it's bloodthirsty, but because you've invaded its territory.

As an aside, that is why a circus trainer must always enter the lion ring first, and in full sight of the lions. In doing so, he establishes that the ring is his territory, not theirs, a notion that he reinforces by shouting, by stomping about, by snapping his whip. The lions are impressed. Their disadvantage weighs heavily on them.

…

Only the trainer better make sure he always remains super alpha. He will pay dearly if he unwittingly slips to beta. Much hostile and aggressive behaviour among animals is the expression of social insecurity. The animal in front of you must know where it stands, whether above you or below you. Social rank is central to how it leads its life. Rank determines whom it can associate with and how; where and when it can eat; where it can rest; where it can drink; and so on. Until it knows its rank for certain, the animal lives a life of unbearable anarchy. It remains nervous, jumpy, dangerous. Luckily for the circus trainer, decisions about social rank among higher animals are not always based on brute force.

…

It's a question of brain over brawn. The nature of the circus trainer's ascendancy is psychological.

[Chapter 13]

1.1 Refer to lines 1 – 3.
Account for the difference in the behaviour between "zoo animals" and "wild animals". (3)

1.2 Refer to lines 4 – 11.
Discuss how the knowledge Pi gains in this extract assists him when he is stranded on the lifeboat later in Part Two. (3)

1.3 Refer to lines 17 - 18. "Until it knows its rank for certain, the animal lives a life of unbearable anarchy. It remains nervous, jumpy, dangerous."
Discuss how Pi plans to deal with Richard Parker's behaviour on the lifeboat. (3)

1.4 Critically comment on Pi's understanding of the relationship between man and animal as conveyed in this extract. (3)

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EXTRACT B

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When we reached land, Mexico to be exact, I was so weak I barely had the strength to be happy about it. We had great difficulty landing.

…

I let myself down the side. I was afraid to let go, afraid that so close to deliverance, in two feet of water, I would drown. I looked ahead to see how far I had to go. The glance gave me one of my last images of Richard Parker, for that precise moment he jumped over me. I saw his body, so immeasurably vital, stretched in the air above me, a fleeting, furred rainbow. He landed in the water, his back legs splayed, his tail high, and from there, in a few hops, he reached the beach.

…

He passed directly in front of me on his way to the right. He didn't look at me. He ran 100 yards or so along the shore before turning in. His gait was clumsy and uncoordinated. He fell several times. At the edge of the jungle, he stopped. I was certain he would turn my way. He would look at me. He would flatten his ears. He would growl. In some such way, he would conclude our relationship. He did nothing of the sort. He only looked fixedly into the jungle.

Then Richard Parker, companion of my torment, awful, fierce thing that kept me alive, moved forward and disappeared forever from my life.

…

I was weeping because Richard Parker had left me so unceremoniously.

[Chapter 94]

1.5 Refer to lines 1-2. "When we reached … great difficulty landing."
Account for Pi's feelings at this point in the novel. (3)

1.6 Refer to line 3: "… afraid that so close to deliverance ..."
Comment on the author's use of the word "deliverance" to describe Pi's rescue.

1.7 Refer lines 5–6: "I saw his body, so immeasurably vital, stretched in the air above me, a fleeting, furred rainbow."
Discuss how Pi's attitude to Richard Parker has changed. (3)

1.8 Refer to line 13: "He only looked fixedly at me."
Suggest a reason why Richard Parker does not look back. (3)

1.9 By referring to your knowledge of the novel as a whole, comment on how Richard Parker's exit affects Pi's well-being. (4)

[25]

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QUESTION 2

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EXTRACT D

I got up from my desk and hurried to the blackboard. Before the teacher could say a word, I picked up a piece of chalk and said as I wrote:

My name is

Piscine Molitor Patel,

known to all as

-I double underlined the first two letters of my given name-

Pi Patel.

For good measure I added:

π=3.14

and I drew a large circle, which I then sliced in two with a diameter, to evoke that basic lesson of geometry.

There was silence. The teacher was staring at the board. I was holding my breath. Then he said, "Very well, Pi. Sit down. Next time you will ask permission before leaving your desk."

"Yes, sir."

He ticked my name off. And looked at the next boy.

"Mansoor Ahamad," said Mansoor Ahamad.

I was saved.

"Gautham Selvaraj," said Gautham Selvaraj.

I could breathe.

"Arun Annaji," said Arun Annaji.

A new beginning.

I repeated the stunt with every teacher. Repetition is important in the training not only of animals but also of humans. Between one commonly named boy and the next, I rushed forward and emblazoned, sometimes with a terrible screech, the details of my rebirth. It got to be that after a few times the boys sang along with me, a *crescendo* that climaxed, after a quick intake of air while I underlined the proper note, with such a rousing rendition of my new name that it would have been the delight of any choirmaster. A few boys followed up with a whispered, urgent "Three! Point! One! Four!" as I wrote as fast as I could, and I ended the concert by slicing the circle with such vigour that bits of chalk went flying.

When I put my hand up that day, which I did every chance I had, teachers granted me the right to speak with a single syllable that was music to my ears. Students followed suit. Even the St. Joseph's devils.

…

Even my brother, the captain of the cricket team, that local god, approved. He took me aside the next week.

"What's this I hear about a nickname you have?" he said.

I kept silent. Because whatever mocking was to come, it was to come. There was no avoiding it.

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"I didn't realize you liked the colour yellow so much."
The colour yellow? I looked around. No one must hear what he was about to say, especially not one of his lackeys. "Ravi, what do you mean?" I whispered. 40
"It's all right with me, brother. Anything's better than 'Pissing'. Even 'Lemon Pie'."
As he sauntered away he smiled and said, "You look a bit red in the face."
But he held his peace.
And so, in that Greek letter that looks like a shack with a corrugated tin roof, in that elusive, irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe, I found refuge. 45
[Chapter 5]

2.1 Explain why the narrator had come to be named Piscine Molitor. (3)

2.2 Relate why the narrator renamed himself. (2)

2.3 What does the narrator's choice of the name, Pi, suggest about his identity? (2)

2.4 Refer to lines 34 - 46. What do these lines suggest about the relationship between Pi and his brother, Ravi? (2)

2.5 Comment critically on how the writer's sentence structure reveals Pi's emotions in this extract. (4)

At times he gets agitated. It's nothing I say (I say very little). It's his own story that does it. Memory is an ocean and he bobs on its surface. I worry that he'll want to stop. But he wants to tell me his story. He goes on. After all these years, Richard Parker still preys on his mind.
He's a sweet man. Every time I visit he prepares a South Indian vegetarian feast. I told him I like spicy food. I don't know why I said such a stupid thing. It's a complete lie. I add dollop of yogurt after dollop of yogurt. Nothing doing. Each time it's the same: my taste buds shrivel up and die, my skin goes beet red, my eyes well up with tears, my head feels like a house on fire, and my digestive tract starts to twist and groan in agony like a boa constrictor that has swallowed a lawn mower. 5
[Chapter 12]

2.6 Place the above extract in context. (3)

2.7 Refer to line 2 - 3: "*Memory is an ocean and he bobs on its surface.*" In the light of the novel as a whole, why is this metaphor such a powerful image? (3)

2.8 Refer to line 3: "After all these years Richard Parker still preys on his mind". In your opinion is Pi justified in allowing Richard Parker to occupy so much of his thoughts after such a long time has passed since the events of Pi's story?

Substantiate your opinion with close reference to the text. (3)

2.9 Critically discuss how the diction and imagery influence the characterisation of Pi in this extract. (3)

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MEMORANDA FOR CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1 ANSWERS

1.1 There is no real difference as long as their needs are met e.g. territory, shelter, food etc. If something is wrong – that is when an animal will act out. They do not act out because they are in captivity – it is harder for wild animals to survive as neither of the aforementioned are guaranteed. Thus zoo animals are actually better off than wild animals. (3)

1.2 Pi uses his understanding of animal behaviour in regards to needs and territory, as well as his knowledge of the alpha and beta male system to train Richard Parker in the lifeboat. He blows a whistle, and turns the boat against the waves to make him sea sick, to enforce the alpha male training system. (3)

1.3 Pi is incredibly logical and enjoys and thrives when he can use his knowledge and intelligence in problem solving. He is aware that Richard Parker is an alpha male. Therefore, in order to settle him, and to ensure his own survival, he uses his knowledge logically to allow them to live together in the lifeboat. He makes sure that Richard Parker understand his place. (3)

1.4 Pi knows animals are intelligent. They are also "happy" if their needs are met. He does know that his intelligence, used along with their insecurities and needs, will allow him to survive. It is brain over brawn – the danger of man. (3)

1.5 This is how he feels when he begins to retell his story. He is still presently affected by how Richard Parker left him, and it seems it is because he wasn't given a chance to say goodbye to this part of himself, or to thank him. He feels abandoned. He feels sadness and regret. (3)

1.6 Deliverance: the action of being rescued or set free. This word would usually be associated with being set free/rescued from a sin you have committed e.g. religious reference. It is a cleverly chosen word as Pi has found land, he has been rescued from his "tsimstum" where he was lost at sea. He has survived his ordeal and has been delivered/freed. This is very relevant in the context that it is a very religiously orientated story, and man. (3)

1.7 This is a powerful image – he sees the enormity of Richard Parker (physically) and perhaps this represents how big a part of him he is. He sees him as a furred rainbow – symbolic of hope and of significance in his life. Richard Parker is a vital part of Pi. Previously has was terrified of Richard Parker.

1.8 Richard Parker does not look back because as Pi's alter ego, he is no longer necessary to Pi's survival as Pi has been rescued. He immediately abandons his savage side as it would not be appropriate in civilized society. Pi prefers his own original, gentle character. (3)

Pi feels abandoned. It is evident when he starts the story in extract A. It seems it is an unclosed chapter of his life. He does not feel that he has had the opportunity to say goodbye and close the chapter/ordeal that they have been through. Perhaps he feels that Richard Parker does not feel the same way about him. He has anthropomorphised Richard Parker. Pi did not have the chance to say goodbye to a part of himself he doesn't need anymore, but which he relied so heavily on. (4)

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1.9 There is no real difference as long as their needs are met e.g. territory, shelter, food etc. If something is wrong – that is when an animal will act out. They do not act out because they are in captivity – it is harder for wild animals to survive as neither of the aforementioned are guaranteed. Thus zoo animals are actually better off than wild animals. (3)

1.10 Pi uses his understanding of animal behaviour in regards to needs and territory, as well as his knowledge of the alpha and beta male system to train Richard Parker in the lifeboat. e.g. he blows a whistle, and turns the boat against the waves to make him sea sick, to enforce the alpha male training system. (3)

1.11 Pi is incredibly logical and enjoys and thrives when he can use his knowledge and intelligence in problem solving. He is aware that Richard Parker is an alpha male etc. and thus in order to settle him, and to ensure Pi's own survival, he uses his knowledge logically to allow them to live together in the lifeboat. (3)

1.12 Pi knows animals are intelligent. They are also "happy" if their needs are met. He does know that his intelligence, used along with their insecurities and needs, will allow him to survive. It is brain over brawn – the danger of man. (3)

1.13 This is how he feels when he begins to retell his story. He is still presently affected by how Richard Parker left him, and it seems it is because he wasn't given a chance to say goodbye to this part of himself, or to thank him. He feels abandoned. He feels sadness and regret. (3)

1.14 Deliverance: the action of being rescued or set free.This word would usually be associated with being set free/rescued from a sin you have committed e.g. religious reference. It is a cleverly chosen word as Pi has found land, he has been rescued from his "tsimstum" where he was lost at sea. He has survived his ordeal and has been delivered/freed. This is very relevant in the context that it is a very religious orientated story, and man. (3)

1.15 This is a powerful image – he sees the enormity of Richard Parker (physically) and perhaps this represents how big a part of him he is. He sees him as a furred rainbow – hope and of significance in his life. RP is a vital part of Pi. (3)

1.16 Pi feels abandoned. It is evident when he starts the story in extract A. It seems it is an unclosed chapter of his life. He does not feel that he has had the opportunity to say goodbye and close the chapter/ordeal that they have been through. Perhaps he feels that RP didn't feel the same way about him. He has anthropomorphised RP. Pi did not have the chance to say goodbye to a part of himself he doesn't need anymore, but which he relied so heavily on. (4)

[25]

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QUESTION 2 ANSWERS

2.1 The name was suggested by Mamaji (Francis Adirubasamy), a friend of Pi's parents.✓ He loved swimming and taught Pi swimming✓, and had fond memories of the Piscine Molitor, a grand swimming pool in Paris.✓ (3)

2.2 Pi re-named himself, as the pronunciation of his name PISCINE, led to him being given the humiliating nickname PISSING✓. The boy was motivated to shorten his name to Pi (the first two letters of his name), as the symbolism attached to Pi in Maths (it is an irrational number and unending) appealed to him. (2)

2.3 Pi is an infinite and irrational number which is used to calculate things logically.✓ In the same way, Pi cannot be limited by LOGIC, as he is a highly creative person, whose mind and essence cannot be confined by the categorisations of society. ✓ (2)

2.4 Pi looks up to his older brother, Ravi, even though Ravi ridicules Pi✓; but beneath the ridicule lies a brotherly respect. ✓ (2)

2.5 The short sentences at the beginning creates a mood of nervous expectation which mirrors the tension Pi feels as he waits for the reaction to his renaming of himself as Pi. ✓ The longer sentence signals Pi's growing confidence as he repeated the process of writing his new name on the board with every lesson.✓ And the "Three! Point! One! Four!" highlights Pi's assertiveness at changing his name.✓ The word order of the final sentence highlights the word, "Refuge" and emphasises the peace Pi feels within himself at the acceptance of his name by his peers and family. ✓ (4)

2.6 The narrator is in the home of the adult Pi Patel in Toronto.✓ It is years after Pi's experiences on the lifeboat✓, and the narrator is an author who is there to hear Pi's story with the view of writing and publishing it.✓ (3)

2.7 The comparison of Pi's memory to an ocean✓ is so appropriate as he shares his memories about his adventure of survival on the lifeboat in the open ocean.✓ Just as an ocean is deep, with strong under-currents and hidden treasures and truth far beneath its surface, so too is Pi's complex memory, and he chooses how much of the truth he reveals to the author✓. (3)

2.8 Accept any well-substantiated opinion.

He is justified, as his experiences on the lifeboat with Richard Parker gave him his survival instinct✓, which has shaped the rest of his life✓. If it were not for his time on the lifeboat with Richard Parker, and trying to outwit the ferocious animal, Pi would not have discovered his innate strengths and weaknesses of character, discoveries which have enabled him to survive in life. ✓

OR

He is not justified, as his time in a lifeboat with Richard Parker was far in the past ✓and it is evident that he has moved on,✓ that life has been good to him in Toronto as a "sweet man" who enjoys sharing his story and creating South Indian culinary feasts for the narrator. ✓ (3)

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2.9 The use of the words “agitated” and “sweet” shows what a complex man Pi Patel is.✓ The use of the word “preys” reinforces the image of Pi’s mind being held captive by the memories of Richard Parker, and suggest that his story of surviving in the ocean with Richard Parker agitates him,✓ maybe because he wants the real truth to be revealed, and not to insist on an alternate story as it is more credible to its hearers. Although settled and content in Toronto, Pi has a nostalgia for South India, the place of his birth, shown through his ability to create South Indian culinary feasts.✓ (3)

[25]

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- **Eastern Cape Provincial Papers (June - 2018 and 2019)**
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RUBRIC FOR LITERARY ESSAY – NOVEL

Criteria	Exceptional	Skilful	Moderate	Elementary	Inadequate
CONTENT Interpretation of topic. Depth of argument, justification and grasp of text. **15 MARKS**	**12–15**	**9–11**	**6–8**	**4–5**	**0–3**
	-Outstanding response: 14–15 Excellent response: 12–13 -In-depth interpretation of topic -Range of striking arguments extensively supported from text -Excellent understanding of genre and text	-Shows understanding and has interpreted topic well -Fairly detailed response -Some sound arguments given, but not all of them as well motivated as they could be -Understanding of genre and text evident	-Mediocre interpretation of topic; not all aspects explored in detail -Some good points in support of topic -Some arguments supported, but evidence is not always convincing -Partial understanding of genre and text	-Scant interpretation of topic; hardly any aspects explored in detail -Few points in support of topic -Very little relevant argument -Little understanding of genre and text	-Very little understanding of the topic -Weak attempt to answer the question -Arguments not convincing -Learner has not come to grips with genre or text
STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE Structure, logical flow and presentation. Language, tone and style used in the essay. **10 MARKS**	**8–10**	**6–7**	**4–5**	**2–3**	**0–1**
	-Coherent structure -Excellent introduction and conclusion -Arguments well-structured and clearly developed -Language, tone and style mature, impressive, correct	-Clear structure and logical flow of argument -Introduction and conclusion and other paragraphs coherently organised -Logical flow of argument -Language, tone and style largely correct	-Some evidence of structure -Logic and coherence apparent, but flawed -Some language errors; tone and style mostly appropriate -Paragraphing mostly correct	-Structure shows faulty planning -Arguments not logically arranged -Language errors evident -Inappropriate tone and style -Paragraphing faulty	-Lack of planned structure impedes flow of argument -Language errors and incorrect style make this an unsuccessful piece of writing -Inappropriate tone and style -Paragraphing faulty
MARK RANGE	**20–25**	**15–19**	**10–14**	**5–9**	**0–4**

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