**ASHA Lectures**

**Language Analysis: Chunking Essays**

Paragraphs of language analysis essays can seem more difficult to assign compared to context or text response where one paragraph revolves around one topic sentence.

There are a many different approaches to how you break up your analysis into paragraphs, here a few:

* By text (for multiple pieces)
* By supporting argument:

Each text has a number of supporting arguments that form the foundation for the overarching contention. When using this approach, be very careful that you are merely using the supporting arguments to break up the analysis into paragraphs. In each paragraph you are analysing the LANGUAGE, not the argument itself. For example, a paragraph may be organised under the author’s argument that greyhound racing is animal cruelty. Here, you would analyse the techniques used to express this particular viewpoint such as appeals to morality, expert opinion, etc., not the validity of the viewpoint itself.

* By positioning:

Although identifying positioning is not strictly a necessity, it is a very important element of language analysis that helps to better understand the author’s manipulation of language in accordance with target audience. Positioning is how the author aims to portray certain stakeholders involved in the issue. For example, when contending that guns should be banned in the US, an author may try to depict the government as negligent and gun holders as reckless. An essay on this may devote one paragraph to the language used to paint the government in a certain way, and another paragraph the to language used to paint the gun holders in another way.

Chunking your essay efficiently is important to ensure that your paragraphs have a general direction, and don’t trail on longer than necessary. Also, remember that chunking is simply a means to group the analysis of different techniques, and not the subject matter of analysis itself.

Read the following piece and plan how each paragraph will be structured.

**What Waleed Aly and John Oliver have in common (The Age, May 10 2016)**

***Josephine Tovey***

When Waleed Aly walked on stage to receive his Gold Logie on Sunday, in front of a cheering crowd on its feet and a television audience that was (mostly) cheering too, it was hailed as a milestone for diversity on Australian television, a celebration of the too-long-undervalued excellence of Aussies with "unpronounceable names", as Aly himself said. And fair enough, too.

But it was also just gratifying to see someone who has something to say about Australia win such a high-profile award. It was a watershed for a different type of journalism and entertainment that Aly has honed and that saw him, after just 15 months on the moderate-rating The Project, become a bona fide star and the subject of endless aggrandising online articles, and won him much respect, as well as the visceral ire of his critics.

What he does so well is a punchy, social media-friendly style of journalism that tackles policy failings and issues of social injustice and, most importantly, unashamedly takes a position on those issues.

While Gold Logies have gone to the trusted blokes of Australian current affairs before (and they are almost always blokes), Aly's trademark 'Something we should talk about' editorials on The Project have more in common with that other viral sensation, John Oliver, than he does with past winners such as Ray Martin or Karl Stefanovic.

Aly is a presenter and Fairfax Media columnist with an academic background, and Oliver is a satirist with a mischievous, prankster edge, but they do a similar thing on television: break down complex current events or issues, communicate their outrage and build a serious argument about what the problem is and what should be done about it.

Both are on television, but their work has a huge second life beyond the broadcast, as their YouTube shares and endless online articles with titles such as "Waleed Aly nails negative gearing" or "John Oliver eviscerates the Oscars" attest. The ubiquity and hyperbolic tone of a these cheap, churned articles can be irritating (even Oliver, tongue-in-cheek, questioned how Donald Trump could have become the Republican nominee given the internet said he'd "destroyed" Trump in an earlier segment) but it shows the appetite and appreciation for what they're both doing.

"His power is in his ability to be playful, make the citizen feel smart, bring attention to things they perhaps haven't paid attention to before, and give them credit for doing it," is how one US communications professor, Dannagal Young, described Oliver's power to the Guardian. Though he's less playful, it's an observation as relevant to Aly.

A major criticism of mainstream media in recent years is that an obsession with balance and remaining politically "neutral" has sucked the intelligence and verve out of much journalism - leaving stories or broadcasts a bland collection of facts and quotes that ping pong between the opposite "sides" of an issue. Journalism academic Jay Rosen calls this the "view from nowhere" approach, "a bid for trust that advertises the viewlessness of the news producer" and that "places the journalist between polarised extremes and calls that neither-nor position 'impartial'."

Both Aly and Oliver always take a view in their segments. Whether it's on asylum seekers or climate change in Aly's case, or net neutrality and maternity leave on Oliver's show, they don't insist all views on the issue are equal - but weigh up the evidence and make their case. They pick issues often ignored or superficially covered by the commercial broadcast media in both countries too, and ones of particular relevance to a young, online audience that skews progressive.

Neither one has has reinvented the media wheel. Talkback radio is heavy with views, but they're too often hectoring instead of persuading, appealing to retrograde (and usually very right wing) notions of "common sense" rather than evidence. Newspapers and digital written media are also thick with analysis but by their form, garner less attention than an entertaining, easily digestible and shareable personality-driven video. I kind of wish other websites would do pieces like 'Michael West totally nails corporate tax avoidance in today's SMH Business section' but I get why they don't.

Nonetheless, it's no surprise that some traditional media commentators take such umbrage with Aly and have been fuming over his nomination and win. There was a bigoted edge to much of the backlash, especially online, in seeing a Muslim man of colour embraced by a popular, mainstream television awards show. But what rankles other commentators is this effective approach to storytelling and his views themselves, which run counter to much of the broadcast commentariat in this country. He's not only on their turf but finding new audiences online too, and as the award proves, many Australians like what they hear.