Reading for Information

The Question of South Africa
Speech by Desmond Tutu

What’s the Connection?
In “A Chip of Glass Ruby,” Nadine Gordimer writes about the political activities of an Indian housewife in racially segregated South Africa. Now, in “The Question of South Africa,” you will read an excerpt from a historical anti-apartheid speech by civil rights leader Desmond Tutu.

Standards Focus: Analyze a Speech
In a persuasive speech, the way a message is conveyed is often as important as the message itself. Good persuasive speakers use language to stir emotions. Here are some of the elements they use:

• **Syntax** is the arrangement of words in a sentence. A speaker may use **rhetorical devices** such as **repetition** of the same word, phrase, or sentence to emphasize his or her point. Another rhetorical device often found in speeches is **parallelism**—the use of similar grammatical constructions to express related ideas. Repetition and parallelism can help advance a speaker’s message.

• **Diction** is the choice of words. Often the words used will have strong **connotations**—positive or negative emotional associations.

• **Tone** is the speaker’s attitude toward the subject, as expressed through choice of words and details.

• **Voice** is the way a speaker uses language to allow readers to “hear” a personality in a speech.

• **Imagery** includes words and phrases that re-create sensory experiences for readers. **Figurative language**—expressions that communicate meanings beyond their literal meanings—can give a concrete form to an abstract idea or unfamiliar situation.

Use a chart like the one shown below to identify the elements found in the following speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
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<td>Tone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imagery</td>
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The Question of South Africa
by Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu (1931– ) was the first black archbishop (the head of the Anglican Church) in Capetown, a city in segregated South Africa. From this position of leadership, Tutu worked to end apartheid and create a just South African government. In 1984, Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work. He gave the following speech to the United Nations Security Council shortly after receiving the prestigious award.

I speak out of a full heart, for I am about to speak about a land that I love deeply and passionately; a beautiful land of rolling hills and gurgling streams, of clear starlit skies, of singing birds, and gamboling\(^1\) lambs; a land God has richly endowed with the good things of the earth, a land rich in mineral deposits of nearly every kind; a land of vast open spaces, enough to accommodate all its inhabitants comfortably; a land capable of feeding itself and other lands on the beleaguered\(^2\) continent of Africa, a veritable\(^3\) breadbasket; a land that could contribute wonderfully to the material and spiritual development and prosperity of all Africa and indeed of the whole world. It is endowed with enough to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of all its peoples.\(^4\)

And so we would expect that such a land, veritably flowing with milk and honey, should be a land where peace and harmony and contentment reigned supreme. Alas, the opposite is the case. For my beloved country is wracked by division, by alienation, by animosity, by separation, by injustice, by avoidable pain and suffering. It is a deeply fragmented society, ridden by fear and anxiety, covered by a pall of despondency\(^5\) and a sense of desperation, split up into hostile, warring factions.

It is a highly volatile\(^6\) land, and its inhabitants sit on a powder keg with a very short fuse indeed, ready to blow us all up into kingdom come. There is endemic\(^7\) unrest, like a festering sore that will not heal until not just the symptoms are treated but the root causes are removed.

South African society is deeply polarized. Nothing illustrates this more sharply than the events of the past week. While the black community was in the seventh heaven of delight because of the decision of that committee in Oslo, and while the world was congratulating the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize,\(^8\) the

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1. gamboling adj.: playing, frolicking.
2. beleaguered adj.: stressed; threatened.
3. veritable adj.: genuine, real.
4. pall of despondency n.: a state of hopelessness.
5. volatile adj.: explosive.
6. endemic adj.: native.
7. committee ... Prize: The committee is the Nobel Committee and the recipient is Tutu himself.
white government and most white South Africans, very sadly, were seeking to devalue that prize. An event that should have been the occasion of uninhibited joy and thanksgiving revealed a sadly divided society.

Before I came to this country in early September to go on sabbatical, I visited one of the trouble spots near Johannesburg. . . . In this black township, we met an old lady who told us that she was looking after her grandchildren and the children of neighbors while they were at work. On the day about which she was speaking, the police had been chasing black schoolchildren in that street, but the children had eluded the police, who then drove down the street past the old lady’s house. Her wards were playing in front of the house, in the yard. She was sitting in the kitchen at the back, when her daughter burst in, calling agitatedly for her. She rushed out into the living room. A grandson had fallen just inside the door, dead. The police had shot him in the back. He was six years old. Recently a baby, a few weeks old, became the first white casualty of the current uprisings. Every death is one too many. Those whom the black community has identified as collaborators with a system that oppresses them and denies them the most elementary human rights have met cruel death, which we deplore as much as any others. They have rejected these people operating within the system, whom they have seen as lackeys and stooges, despite their titles of town councilors, and so on, under an apparently new dispensation extending the right of local government to the blacks.

Over 100,000 black students are out of school, boycotting—as they did in 1976—what they and the black community perceive as an inferior education designed deliberately for inferiority. An already highly volatile situation has been ignited several times and, as a result, over 80 persons have died. There has been industrial unrest, with the first official strike by black miners taking place, not without its toll of fatalities among the blacks.

Some may be inclined to ask: But why should all this unrest be taking place just when the South African government appears to have embarked on the road of reform? . . .

There is little freedom in this land of plenty. There is little freedom to disagree with the determinations of the authorities. There is large-scale unemployment because of the drought and the recession that has hit most of the world’s economy. And it is at such a time that the authorities have increased the prices of various foodstuffs and also of rents in black townships—measures designed to hit hardest those least able to afford the additional costs. It is not surprising that all this has exacerbated an already tense and volatile situation.

So the unrest is continuing, in a kind of war of attrition, with the casualties not being large enough at any one time to shock the world sufficiently for it to want to take action against the system that is the root cause of all this agony. We have warned consistently that unrest will be endemic in South Africa until its root cause is removed. And the root cause is apartheid—a vicious, immoral and totally evil, and unchristian system . . . .

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8. wards n. pl.: children who have been placed in the care of others because their parents are dead or incapable of caring for them.
9. lackeys n. pl.: submissive followers.
10. dispensation n.: a release from a rule or requirement.
11. exacerbated v.: made worse.
Comprehension

1. **Recall**  Why has Desmond Tutu won the Nobel Prize?
2. **Recall**  Why are black students boycotting school? What has happened because of the boycott?
3. **Clarify**  How do reactions to the Nobel Prize Committee’s award to Tutu illustrate the divisions in South African Society?
4. **Summarize**  What examples does Tutu give to show that his nation is divided?

Text Analysis

1. **Analyze Speeches**  Review the elements of a speech in the chart you created as you read. Choose an example of each element, and explain how it helps make the speech effective.
2. **Compare Texts**  What similarities and differences do you see between South Africa as described by Desmond Tutu and the setting of “A Chip of Glass Ruby”? Explain your response using evidence from the texts.

Read for Information: Diction and Syntax

**WRITING PROMPT**
A writer’s or speaker’s effective use of language is essential to a work’s success. How do diction and syntax contribute to Nadine Gordimer’s “A Chip of Glass Ruby” and Desmond Tutu’s “The Question of South Africa”? Cite evidence from both works in your response.

To answer this prompt, you will need to draw conclusions based on both texts. Use the following steps.
1. Reread “A Chip of Glass Ruby,” looking for examples of diction and syntax that contribute to the story. Look especially for words with very strong connotations or sentences that slow down or speed up your rate of reading.
2. Review the chart you created as you read “The Question of South Africa.” Find examples of diction and syntax you have noted.
3. Draw conclusions about the effect of diction and syntax on each text. Select 2–3 examples to use as evidence from each text.
4. Organize your response. Discuss one text first, then the other. Or you can discuss diction in both texts first, then syntax in both texts second.
5. As you compose your response, support your statements about the effects of diction and syntax with direct quotations from the texts. After presenting evidence, explain how it supports your statements.
Poster

The poster below is from the apartheid era. It was created by Trócaire, an international relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Notice how the image and the words in this visual work together to convey meaning. Respond to the questions below, citing evidence from the visual to support your answers.

1. **INTERPRET**
   - What is happening in this poster? What does the image represent? What purpose does it help the artist to achieve?

2. **ANALYZE**
   - What is the connection between the text in this poster and what the woman is doing?
Comparing Texts: Assessment Practice

**LITERARY TEXT: “A CHIP OF GLASS RUBY”**

The title of a story is often a clue to its theme. When an assessment question asks about a story’s title, it is often asking you to show the connection between a story’s title and its theme. Use the **short constructed response question** below to practice this necessary skill.

> Why is “A Chip of Glass Ruby” a good title for the story? Support your answer with evidence from the story.

**STRATEGIES IN ACTION**

1. Examine the title. Does it refer to a person, place, thing, event, or idea?
2. Reread the story, looking for words or details that relate to the title.
3. Consider the themes expressed in the story. Choose one that relates to the story’s title.
4. Use evidence from the story in your response.

**NONFICTION TEXT: “THE QUESTION OF SOUTH AFRICA”**

The ability to make inferences based on the details of a text is a skill that all good readers possess. Practice this skill by answering the **short constructed response question** below.

> Why did the police shoot the six-year-old boy? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

**STRATEGIES IN ACTION**

1. Reread the description of the event.
2. Consider the event’s context—how this anecdote supports the ideas around it.
3. Draw on your own experience and knowledge to infer details that are not specifically given in the text.
4. Make sure your inferences are based on evidence from the text.

**COMPARING LITERARY AND NONFICTION TEXTS**

Assessment questions often ask you to compare literary and nonfiction texts. Practice this valuable skill by answering the following **short constructed response question** about “A Chip of Glass Ruby” and “The Question of South Africa.”

> What is one characteristic shared by Mrs. Bamjee in “A Chip of Glass Ruby” and Desmond Tutu? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

**STRATEGIES IN ACTION**

1. Skim both texts to refresh your memory about each person’s characteristics.
2. Because the question asks only for shared characteristics, note only similarities.
3. Choose one characteristic that stands out for both people.
4. Use evidence from both texts to support your answer.