

Area of Exploration: Readers, Writers and Texts

I am sure most IB students have seen the meme "the curtains were blue" before. The joke behind represents students' scepticism about the authority of interpretation, and whether students as readers are imposing meaning on language that was not intended by writers.

IB addresses this doubt by naming the first Area of Exploration as "Readers, Writers and Texts". Writers do create meaning, but meaning is fluidic, changing in regards to the interplay among context of production, context of reception and language itself.

The forms that writers choose to express themselves also affect the construction of meaning. For instance, one of the guiding questions in Text 2 of 2015 SL Language and Literature Paper 1, the satirical cartoon "Madam & Eve" written by Stephen Francis and illustrated by Enrico Schacherl, *Mail & Guardian* (2012), examiners asked candidates "In what ways do the pictures convey ideas that would be difficult to express in few words?"

Visual language and verbal language are two different symbolic systems. In TOK, language as a Way of Knowing is considered as a bridge between personal knowledge and shared knowledge. Regarded as a discipline in the Area of Knowledge of Arts, literature generates knowledge primarily through the use of various systems of language. In order to be a proficient English learner, you need to consider the four major theoretical perspectives that are the central knowledge questions in the arts. (For further explanations, please view the lesson on "Perspective".

So in the end, the writer can say "the curtains were xxxxxxxx blue", but your teacher can still say "the curtains represent his immense depression and his lack of will to carry on."

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