

The following pages contain some examples of student journal responses to the assignment given on pages 150–151 of the book *Language A for the IB Diploma: Concept-based learning: Teaching for Success*.

Free Write Dichotomies

Movement/Stillness

We move all the time, especially in ballet as the dancer is the music in motion. As a dancer you use movement to express your feelings, interpret music and make people feel something when they watch us.

The weeks before a performance can be very stressful but tension builds the more time passes. We go from learning a choreography to practicing and finally perfecting it. You can never be 100% perfect in dance but that is what you should aim to be.

When you finally reach the day of your performance you put on your costume one last time, and then you start practicing your dance knowing that it's movement will die after the performance.

There is both an air of relief but also of strain. Questions start running through your mind, you question everything to do with the dance in the past weeks, you start doubting yourself until you nail one of your repetitions and you gain all that confidence.

But it is those moments of stillness that weigh on you the most, that moment right before you go on stage. Your name is called and there is a moment that you have most dreaded and are the most excited about. It feels like an eternity has passed until you aren't yourself but you are a dancer, and you know that when you step on that stage the music will come alive with your movement your emotions portrayed through the movement and you will make people feel something.

Showtime ...

Journal Questions

3. Make a chart of the dichotomies of positive and negative on p.5 and your own associations. As you read, continue to add to chart and write a response to one of the dichotomies. Does it deconstruct? How and why?

Lightness	Darkness
Ephimeral	Eternal return
Fineness	Coarseness
Warmth	Cold
Being	Non-being
Imaginary	Real
Movement	Stillness
Music	Silence
Success (failure)	Failure (success)
Fixing mistakes	Repetition of mistakes
Time (free)	Time (planned)
Movement	Paralysis
Knowledge	Ignorance
Positive	Negative
Companionship	Loneliness
White	Black
Diligence	Sloth
Confidence	Shyness
Bravery	Fear
Happiness	Sadness

Throughout reading the novel nearly all the dichotomies are deconstructed especially the one between lightness and weight. Kundera does this by trying to give different approaches to the dichotomy, this allows the reader to form their own opinion although he puts a more positive connotation on what approach he believes in. For example when he explains how Beethoven viewed weight 'unlike Parmenides, Beethoven apparently viewed weight as

something positive. Since the German word *Schwer* means both difficult and heavy. Beethoven's difficult resolution may also be constructed as a heavy or weighty resolution. The weighty is at one with the voice of Fate (E.s. *moss sein!*); necessity, weight, and value are three concepts inextricably bound: only necessity is heavy, and only what is heavy has value.' I think that Kundera deconstructs most of the dichotomies so that do not get forgotten or are lost when focusing on the story.

4. How can a suitcase contain a life (9)? Is that a silly idea or not?



Found on page 9 this line says a lot about the overall meaning of the suitcase to not only Tereza but also Tomáš. In a way the suitcase both represents her old life but also both of their fears of bringing their lives together.

The suitcase can be seen as a weight by Kundera, it is the insignificant object that will affect these two lives significantly, changing almost everything about them by uniting these lives.

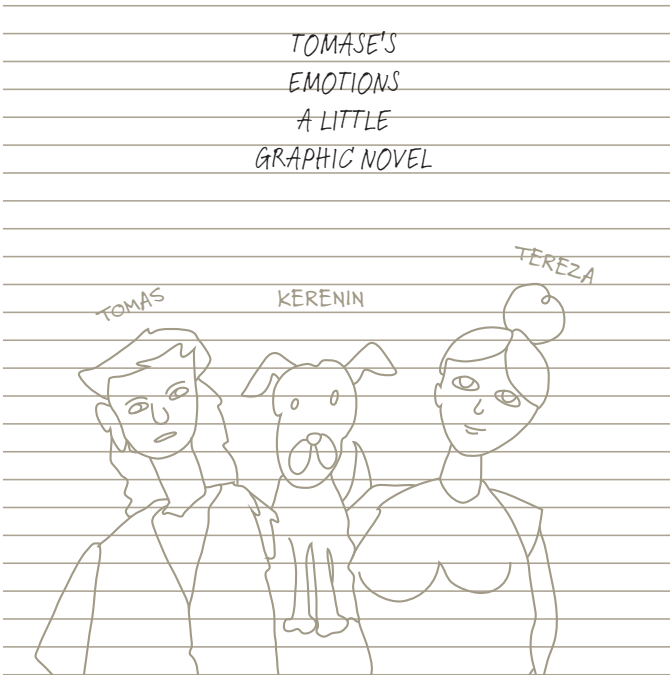
This can also be seen by Tereza's hesitation to bring it directly and only telling him about it later and 'offer him up her life'. The suitcase in some respects stands for something bigger, it stands for something that you both in a certain way don't want or can't want to have, more out of fear than plainly out of making a significant change.

The suitcase not only is heaviness itself but makes Teresa a heavy character to Tomáš. It seems like Tereza is a burden to Tomas and by introducing this suitcase he is also taking on the burden of her life that he yet to know about.

The form of putting life in a suitcase is mildly exaggerated, not that it isn't possible but more that taking your life, putting everything a suitcase and moving is a large burden on the owner of the suitcase. Mostly this decision doesn't fall easily and mostly is driven by force of self or other. Forcing you to put life away and bring it out again somewhere else. Through this we can see that Tereza's decision of bringing her life in a suitcase to Tomas, was a hard decision driven by stronger powers and that Tereza's hesitation show that she might not even want to bring the burden of the suitcase on Tomas.

5. A drawing of the two main characters and the dog. Label them and add characteristics in any way you see fit.





5. Track the emotions that Tomas goes through in the text.

START

5. He continues having sex with other women whilst being with Tereza.

1. he has strict rules on how to interact with women and avoids any emotional connections.

2. He meets Tereza and is confused about his feelings towards her.

4. He has love and compassion for Tereza.

TO LOVE SOMEONE
OUT OF COMPASSION
MEANS NOT REALLY
TO LOVE.'

3. He accepts his feelings for her.

6. He justifies this, saying that although he sleeps with them he doesn't love them (sex and love are separate).

7. Rarely expresses his feelings. He is a very reserved character.

8. He only expresses happiness in Zurich as Tereza left him. This is very paradoxical since the reader would expect him to feel betrayed.

shows the reader about relationship between Tomas & Tereza.

6. In what ways does this book fit into the dialogue of literature?

Allusions in VLB (shmoop)

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 1) Nietzsche | 9) Kafka | 17) de Balzac |
| 2) Parmenides | 10) Andre Breton | 18) Jesus/Moses/ |
| 3) Tolstoy → 'Karenin' | 11) Oedipus | The old Testament |
| 4) Henry Fielding | 12) Gorky | 19) St. Francis of Assisi |
| 5) Thomas Mann | 13) Pushkin | 20) Valentinus |
| 6) Socrates | 14) Solzhenitsyn | 21) Adam & Eve |
| 7) 'Gulliver's Travels' | 15) Voltaire | 22) Bible → Genesis |
| 8) Stendhal | 16) 'Two Years on Holiday' | 23) Tristan/Hercules/Romulus/Narcissus |
| | | 24) Beethoven |