



## PHIL AND LEAH

**! YOUR ESSAY MUST MEET ALL THE CRITERIA FOR THE INTRODUCTION, BODY PARAGRAPHS, AS WELL AS CONCLUSION; OTHERWISE, YOUR ESSAY WILL NOT BE MARKED! !**



**! COMPLETE THE COVER LIST BELOW TO ENSURE YOU HAVE MET ALL THE CRITERIA !**

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### Cover Checklist- Tick Each Section When Complete.

- ☒ ~~PREP STEP - Make a copy of this document.~~
- ☒ ~~PREP STEP - Share your essay outline template with your tutor.~~
- ☒ ~~PREP STEP - Copy and paste the link for your essay outline into your study system.~~
- ☒ ~~STEP 1 - Outline your 100% essay -~~ **START WITH THE CONCLUSION & WORK BACKWARDS**
- ☒ ~~STEP 2 - Use the TTECEA checklist for details~~
- ☒ ~~STEP 3 - Revise your essay - check for coherence & cohesion, redundant repetition, clarity, vocabulary, etc.~~
- ☒ ~~STEP 4 - Edit your essay.~~
- ☒ ~~STEP 5 - Put your essay together as one complete piece.~~

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## Table of Contents

100% ESSAY STRUCTURE OVERVIEW	3
ESSAY PLAN	4
ESSAY BREAKDOWN	5
STEP 1: OUTLINING - Complete Your 100% Essay Outline	8
STEP 2: ADDING DETAIL-Complete the TTECEA Checklist for Detail	13
STEP 3: REVISING - Revise Your Essay	14
STEP 4: EDITING - Edit Your Essay	15





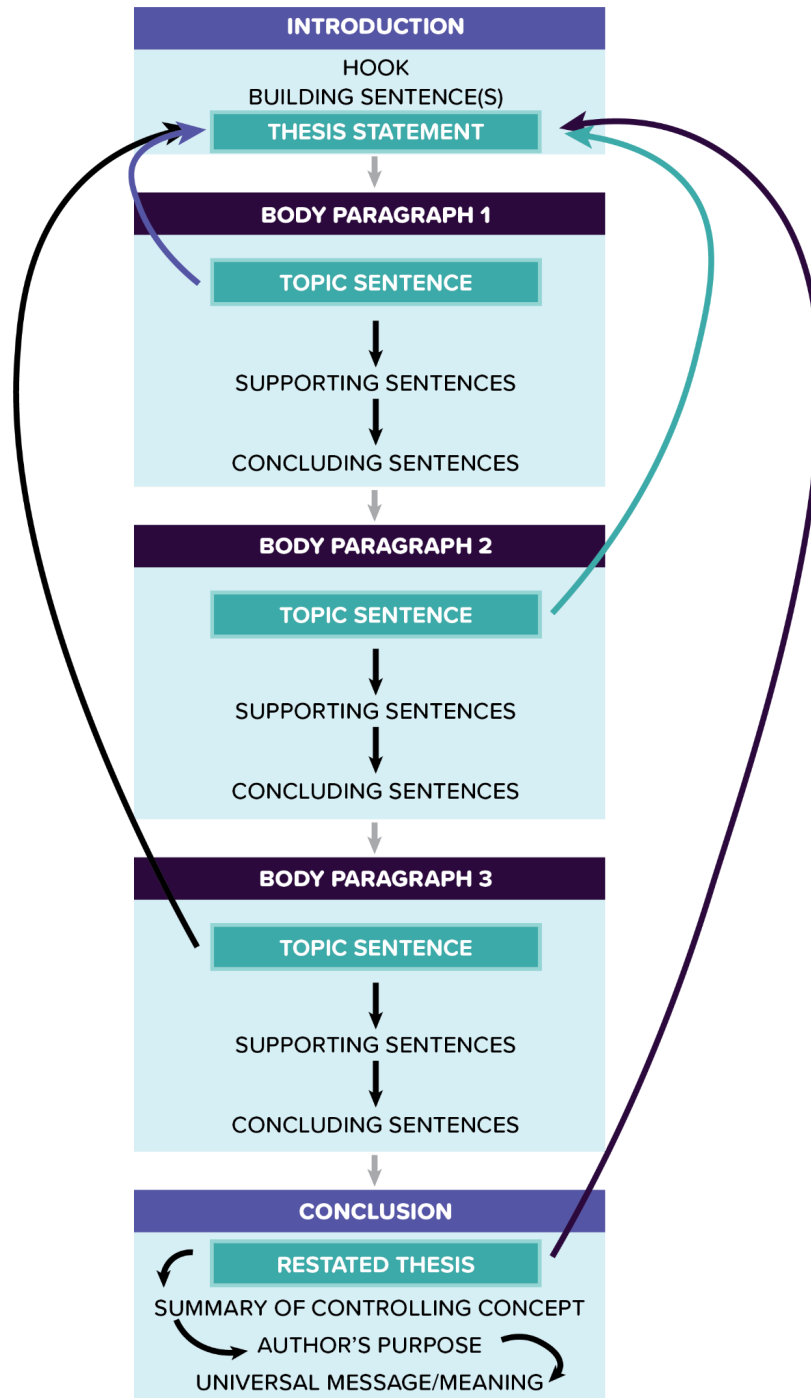
**STEP 5: COMPLETE - Complete Essay on Phil and Leah**  
**VERSION 2**

**16**  
**18**





## 100% ESSAY STRUCTURE OVERVIEW





## ESSAY PLAN

- **Introduction:**

- Explain the significance of the title 'DNA' and its connection to human identity.
- Introduce the characters of Phil and Leah as contrasting figures representing different responses to violence and power dynamics.
- Mention the real-life events that influenced the play (Bulger case, post-9/11 global landscape) to provide context.
- Thesis statement: Discuss Kelly's goal of prompting audience reflection on emotional engagement, ethical principles, and societal power dynamics, which encourages a more mindful approach to violence and power structures.

- **Body Paragraph 1:**

- Topic: The use of silence and dialogue in the play, particularly in the characterisation of Phil.
- Analyse Phil's silence and constant eating as significant elements of his character.
- Discuss examples from the play, such as Leah's plea to Phil and his non-reaction.
- Analyse how Phil's silence and indifference provoke discomfort and self-reflection in the audience.

- **Body Paragraph 2:**

- Topic: Leah's characterisation and the contrast between Leah and Phil.
- Analyse Leah's monologue in Act One and its significance in revealing her reflective personality and struggle with the group's violent actions.
- Discuss the contrast between Leah's verbal reflection and Phil's silent indifference, and how this contrast impacts the audience's perception and understanding.
- Discuss how Leah's characterisation encourages the audience to consider their ethical principles and responses to societal violence.

- **Body Paragraph 3:**

- Topic: The shifting power dynamics within the group, particularly Phil's transition from silence to speech.
- Analyse a specific instance where Phil breaks his silence and assumes a leadership role, highlighting the change in power dynamics.
- Discuss how Kelly's use of language manipulates power dynamics and provokes audience reflection on their responses to power structures in their lives and society.

- **Conclusion:**

- Recap the analysis of Kelly's strategic characterisations and his manipulation of language and silence.
- Reiterate how these elements of the play provoke audience reflection and encourage a more mindful approach to violence and power structures.
- Discuss the broader societal context, including increased youth violence and global conflicts, and how the characterisations in 'DNA' encourage audience introspection and proactivity in addressing these issues.
- Summarise the ultimate purpose of Kelly's work: to encourage a more mindful, proactive approach to the violence and power structures that individuals encounter in their everyday lives.





## ESSAY BREAKDOWN

Topic	Quote	Author's Technique	Effect on Audience	Author's Purpose	Context
Title and Introduction	'The use of 'DNA' in the title is not just a reference to a molecule; it indicates the distinct attributes of human identity'	Use of symbolism	Stimulates curiosity and engages audience in further understanding of the play's themes.	To introduce the themes of the play and prepare the audience for the exploration of human identity and existential distinctiveness.	The title suggests a deeper exploration of human nature and identity, connecting to broader themes of genetics and existentialism.
Phil's Characterisation	'Phil, right, f***ing... I mean it! I really, really...'	Use of silence, eating habits as character traits, and contrasting responses.	Provokes feelings of discomfort, introspection, and identification with Phil's detachment and indifference.	To highlight emotional disengagement and encourage audience to reflect on their emotional responses to violence and power structures.	Highlights the individual reactions to societal pressures and the variety of responses to violence.





Leah's Characterisation	'You know we're 98.7% genetically identical to bonobos. Bonobos don't hurt each other. They're peaceful...'	Use of monologues, contrasting character traits, and moral questioning.	Promotes empathetic understanding, emotional investment in Leah's character, and contemplation of ethical principles.	To draw attention to ethical dilemmas and incite audience's reflection on societal violence and their own morality.	Demonstrates the diverse responses to societal pressures, namely youth violence, and calls for active prevention and empathy.
Power Dynamics and Phil's Rise to Power	'We'll take you up the grille now. We'll get you by the arms. By the legs. And we'll swing you onto the grille. We'll throw rocks at you until you drop through. You'll drop through. You'll fall into the cold. Into the dark. You'll land on Adam's corpse and you'll rot together' (p. 79)	Use of language, dark imagery, tone, and narrative shift.	Generates feelings of fear, worry, and a call to consider personal responses to power dynamics and societal structures.	To reveal the harmful outcomes of quick shifts in power, the negative side of leadership, and implications of unrestrained authority.	Reflects the societal implications of power abuse and calls for scrutiny of personal experiences with power dynamics.





Conclusion	'In the face of increased youth violence, crime and global wars such the Iraq and Afghan wars, these characterisations illuminate diverse responses, from Phil's indifference to Leah's moral questioning.'	Summary of characterisations, and a call to action.	Encourages introspection, self-reflection, and a proactive approach to addressing societal issues.	To encourage a more mindful, proactive approach to violence and power structures encountered in everyday life.	Connects the play's themes to real-world situations like increased youth violence and global wars, emphasising the play's relevance and urgency.
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## STEP 1: OUTLINING - Complete Your 100% Essay Outline

Criteria	Status	INTRODUCTION - Do not make this too detailed.
<u>Hook AO1</u>  <div>fact/statistic ▾</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	The use of 'DNA' in the title is not just a reference to a molecule; it indicates the distinct attributes of human identity, suggesting Kelly's exploration of genetic and existential distinctiveness in his characters.
<u>Building sentence(s) AO3</u>  <div><input type="checkbox"/> counter-argument</div> <div>OR</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> some contextual info</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	The contrast between Phil and Leah provides a platform for the audience to analyse their responses to violence and power dynamics in their own lives. Referencing real-life events like the Bulger case and the post-9/11 global landscape, 'DNA' prompts its audience to confront the capacity of humans, particularly children, to commit acts of extreme violence.
<u>Thesis statement AO1</u>  <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-1</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-2</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-3</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Consequently, this essay will analyse how Dennis Kelly, through strategic characterisations and manipulation of language and silence, provokes the audience to reflect on their emotional engagement, confront their ethical principles, and question societal power dynamics, encouraging a more mindful and proactive approach to the violence and power structures in their lives.
Criteria	Status	BODY PARAGRAPH 1 - only focus on KEY IDEA #1
<u>WHAT? Topic sentence AO1</u>  <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-1</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	In the play 'DNA,' playwright Dennis Kelly employs the technique of silence, interspersed with dialogue, to engage the audience.
<u>HOW? Supporting sentences AO2</u>  <div><input type="checkbox"/> terminology</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> close analysis</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> effects*</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Phil, one of the characters, embodies this technique, with silence being a consistent feature of his character throughout the play. Presented as a quiet character, Phil is continuously engaged in eating, regardless of the ongoing chaos. Kelly's crafting of Phil's silent character plays a significant role. It generates a range of emotions in the audience and encourages them to reflect on their potential responses in similar scenarios. In one instance, Leah pleads, 'Phil, right, f***ing... I mean it! I really, really...!'. Despite this appeal, Phil continues spreading jam on his waffle without any reaction. This lack of response highlights the contrast between Leah's plea and Phil's silence, emphasising Phil's emotional disconnect. Kelly employs this strategy to direct







		<p>the audience's focus towards Phil's indifference. This could cause the audience to experience discomfort and consider the implications of emotional disengagement, possibly leading to self-reflection regarding their emotional responses. Kelly's usage of silence aligns with themes of absurdist existential philosophy. When linked with Phil's continuous eating, it could imply an attempt to fill a perceived existential void. Phil's continuous consumption, lacking in apparent pleasure, accentuates his detachment, potentially creating a sense of alienation that the audience might identify with. As a consequence of this disconnect, the audience could be motivated to question indifference, particularly when encountering instances of violence.</p>
<p><a href="#">WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</a></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> author's purpose</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>This could encourage the audience to be more mindful and proactive in their lives.</p>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>BODY PARAGRAPH 2 - only focus on KEY IDEA #2</b>
<p><a href="#">WHAT? Topic sentence AO1</a></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea 2</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>Building upon Phil's unique characterisation, another character in Kelly's 'DNA,' Leah, presents a contrasting picture.</p>
<p><a href="#">HOW? Supporting sentences AO2</a></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> terminology</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> close analysis</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> effects*</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>An example is Leah's monologue in Act One, where she says, 'You know we're 98.7% genetically identical to bonobos. Bonobos don't hurt each other. They're peaceful...'). By using the monologue as a device, Kelly reveals aspects of Leah's reflective personality, showing her struggle with the violence around her and her wish to comprehend their group actions. Kelly juxtaposes Leah's articulateness with Phil's silence, providing a detailed exploration of their relationship dynamics. This characterisation heightens the contrast in communication within their relationship - the spoken versus the unspoken, the communicative versus the reserved. It isn't merely a situation of one character talking while the other stays silent; it's an examination of different methods of perceiving and reacting to the world. Leah's continuous questioning of morality, her attempt to rationalise their actions, connects with the audience's empathetic understanding. The</p>





		audience is encouraged to share Leah's emotional distress, fostering feelings of mutual apprehension and concern. As a result, the audience becomes invested in her character and is encouraged to contemplate the ethical consequences of the group's actions. Kelly's careful construction of Leah's character serves two purposes; Leah's monologues provide a glimpse into her need for understanding and validation, but they also reflect the audience's own thoughts and worries, highlighting the ethical issues the play addresses. This emotional connection can influence the audience's thoughts and actions, possibly encouraging them to consider their own ethical principles and their responses to societal violence. Considering the social and political context of increasing youth violence, Kelly's contrast between Leah's verbal reflection and Phil's silent indifference illustrates the multifaceted responses of youth to societal pressures.
<u>WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</u>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> author's purpose <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)	<b>Complete</b> ▾  (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	This confrontation with tough realities serves as a warning to the audience, encouraging them to question their own morality and possibly motivating them to take a more active role in preventing violence and fostering empathy in their communities.
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>BODY PARAGRAPH 3 - only focus on KEY IDEA #3</b>
<u>WHAT? Topic sentence AO1</u>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-3	<b>Complete</b> ▾  (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Shifting focus from the individual characters, Kelly also addresses power dynamics within the group in 'DNA' by using language.
<u>HOW? Supporting sentences AO2</u>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> terminology <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> close-analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> effects*	<b>Complete</b> ▾  (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	This approach is seen when Phil, who was silent before, breaks his silence and takes on a leadership role after John Tate's decline. He speaks to the group, stating, 'We'll take you up the grille now. We'll get you by the arms. By the legs. And we'll swing you onto the grille. We'll throw rocks at you until you drop through. You'll drop through. You'll fall into the cold. Into the dark. You'll land on Adam's corpse and you'll rot together' (p. 79). Phil's words, filled with dark imagery and a serious tone, signal a change in power dynamics and his rise. The detail of his instructions, the vividness of his threats, and his nonchalant delivery of these orders convey his new authority and control over the group's destiny. This use of language to assert power





		impacts the audience, causing feelings of fear and worry about the group's future under Phil's rule. As the audience absorbs the terrible images in Phil's words and the threatening tone of his speech, they are encouraged to think about their own responses to power dynamics in their lives and societal structures. Kelly's goal here has several layers. He shows how power can shift quickly in a group, especially during crises, and how such changes can lead to harmful outcomes. At the same time, he draws attention to the less positive side of leadership, one that relies on manipulation and intimidation, causing discomfort and worry among the audience. From a wider perspective, Kelly's use of language to manipulate power dynamics reflects societal implications of unrestrained authority, which can be seen in instances of oppression and abuse in real-life power structures. Therefore, the audience may feel encouraged to scrutinise and question power dynamics they experience in their own lives.
<p><u>WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> author's purpose</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	They may also be urged to think about the potential outcomes of giving up control to unrestrained authority, cultivating a sense of responsibility and watchfulness in their real-world interactions.
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>CONCLUSION - CRUCIAL!</b>
<p><u>Restated thesis AO1</u></p> <p>(Re-write your thesis statement in different words.)</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	In conclusion, this analysis has demonstrated how Dennis Kelly, through strategic characterisations and manipulation of language and silence, provokes the audience in 'DNA' to reflect on their emotional engagement, confront their ethical principles, and question societal power dynamics, thereby encouraging a more mindful and proactive approach to the violence and power structures in their lives.
<p><u>Summary of controlling concept AO1</u></p> <p>How does your thesis link to the central theme of the text?</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	In the face of increased youth violence, crime and global wars such the Iraq and Afghan wars, these characterisations illuminate diverse responses, from Phil's indifference to Leah's moral questioning. Through this, Kelly encourages the audience to reflect on their attitudes and potentially take more proactive steps towards addressing violence and inequality in their communities.





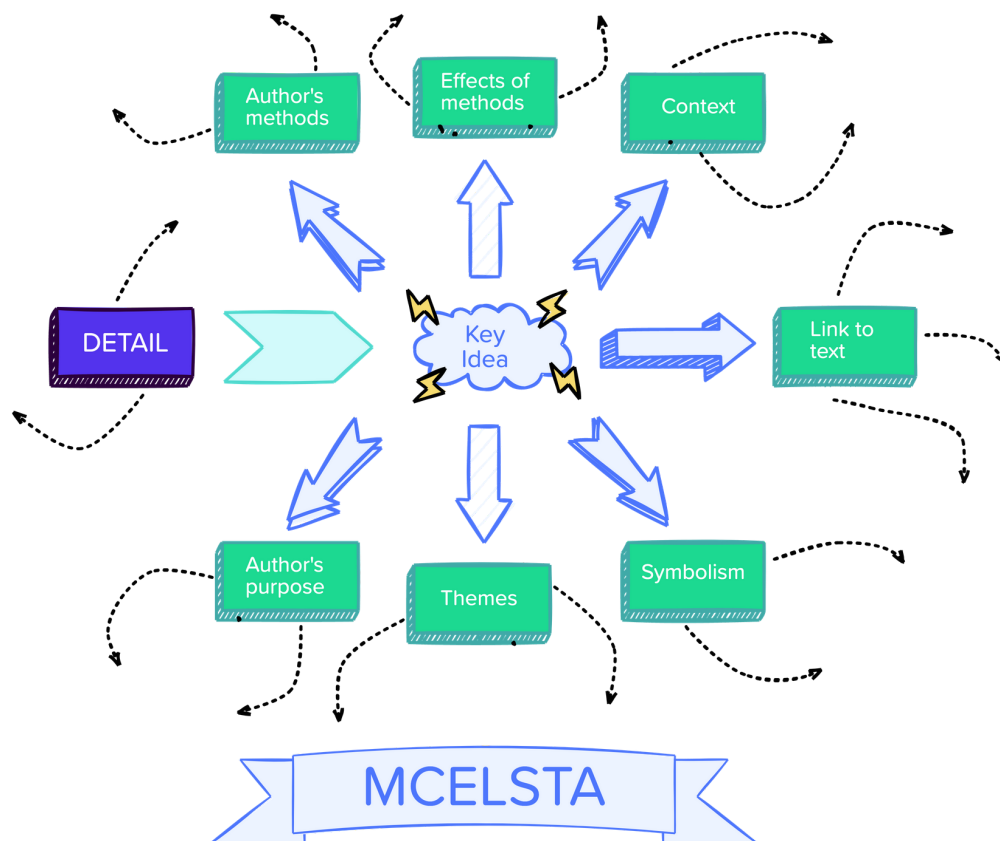
<p><u>Summary of author's central purpose</u> <u>AO1/AO3</u></p> <p>How does the controlling concept reflect the MAIN reason that the author wrote the text?</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>Through this complex characterisation, Kelly's intention is to push the audience towards introspection and self-reflection, encouraging them to take a more active role in confronting violence, scrutinising power dynamics, and fostering empathy within their own communities.</p>
<p><u>Universal message AO1</u></p> <p>(What is the MAIN message of the text? Focus on the end.)</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>His ultimate purpose is to use the medium of drama to encourage a more mindful, proactive approach to the violence and power structures that individuals encounter in their everyday lives.</p>



## STEP 2: ADDING DETAIL-Complete the *TTECEA* Checklist for Detail

1. To achieve a grade 9 level of detail, ensure that you link your key idea in each of your body paragraphs to as many of the elements of the *TTECEA* mnemonic as possible (aim to write about 650-950 words maximum for the entire essay)
2. You do not need to have each of the *TTECEA* elements in each paragraph, but make sure you have all of them in the entirety of your essay.
3. Each item on the checklist should only have 2 main purposes:
  - a. **to link to your key idea in each paragraph**
  - b. **and support your argument.**

- ☒ **TOPIC SENTENCE:** Introduce the key idea of your body paragraph.
- ☐ **TECHNIQUE:** Select a key technique the author uses (one you can explore in detail, eg, metaphor, simile, etc).
- ☒ **EVIDENCE:** EMBED a quote to back up your ideas.
- ☐ **CLOSE ANALYSIS:** Break the technique into smaller pieces, zoom in and analyse them PERCEPTIVELY.
- ☐ **EFFECTS ON THE READER\*:** Explore what the author's method makes us focus on, feel (emotionally) or think.
- ☒ **AUTHOR'S PURPOSE:** Explore why the might want to make us feel a certain way about certain ideas.





## STEP 3: REVISING - Revise Your Essay

Ensure you have revised the following aspects of your essay:





- ☒ Removed/replaced ALL redundant repetition.
- ☒ Replaced ALL instances of the word 'shows' with more accurate and specific verbs for inferring effects of the author's methods (check toolkit).
- ☒ Revised essay for coherence: are the ideas in each of the paragraphs clearly connected to each other?
- ☒ Revised essay for cohesion: check the toolkit for help.
- ☒ Removed all instances of the following words and replace them with specific details of the topics you are exploring:
  - How
  - Shows
  - Some
  - Something
  - Thing
  - This
  - Way
  - What
- ☒ Your vocabulary is academic – no informal language unless quoting directly.
- ☒ Revised essay for clarity – is your essay easy to read? Ask a peer to read it and give you feedback.





## STEP 4: EDITING - Edit Your Essay

Ensure you have edited the following aspects of spelling, punctuation, and grammar:

- ☒ All words are spelt correctly.
- ☒ All sentences and names begin with a capital see guidelines below 
- ☒ All sentences end with a full stop.
- ☒  No sentences are separated with a comma  
- ☒ I used a comma before and after the following words or phrases:
  - for example,
  - however
- ☒ I have used ellipses to indicate missing words in quotes.
- ☒ I have used at least one semi-colon to separate or join closely related sentences.
  - The language paper focuses on various forms of writing; the literature paper focuses primarily on academic essay writing.
  - There are five keys to a grade 9 essay: structure, conceptualisation, context, detail, and convincing evidence.
- ☒ I have used a colon to introduce a quote, phrase, word, etc.

### HOW TO REMEMBER CAPITALS - **ABLE PRINTS**:

- **Abbreviations: U.K., USA, UAE**
- **Beginnings of sentences: Nobody** saw it coming.
- **Languages: French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic,**
- **Emphasis - I LOVE CHEESE!** (avoid this)
  
- **Places: Africa, Mecca, London, Zimbabwe**
- **Religions and words related to them: Islam/Muslim, Christianity/Christian, Judaism/Jewish, Hinduism/Hindu**
- **I, as in me**
- **Names (specific) of people, places, businesses, e.g., Shakespeare, Apple, London.**
- **Titles of books, movies, or programmes, e.g., The Lion King, Macbeth,**
- **Special days: Eid, Christmas, Diwali**

### SPAG RULES

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/category/handbook/>





## **STEP 5: COMPLETE - Complete Essay on Phil and Leah**

The use of 'DNA' in the title is not just a reference to a molecule; it indicates the distinct attributes of human identity, suggesting Kelly's exploration of genetic and existential distinctiveness in his characters. The contrast between Phil and Leah provides a platform for the audience to analyse their responses to violence and power dynamics in their own lives. Referencing real-life events like the Bulger case and the post-9/11 global landscape, 'DNA' prompts its audience to confront the capacity of humans, particularly children, to commit acts of extreme violence. Consequently, this essay will analyse how Dennis Kelly, through strategic characterisations and manipulation of language and silence, provokes the audience to reflect on their emotional engagement, confront their ethical principles, and question societal power dynamics, encouraging a more mindful and proactive approach to the violence and power structures in their lives.

In the play 'DNA,' playwright Dennis Kelly employs the technique of silence, interspersed with dialogue, to engage the audience. Phil, one of the characters, embodies this technique, with silence being a consistent feature of his character throughout the play. Presented as a quiet character, Phil is continuously engaged in eating, regardless of the ongoing chaos. Kelly's crafting of Phil's silent character plays a significant role. It generates a range of emotions in the audience and encourages them to reflect on their potential responses in similar scenarios. In one instance, Leah pleads, 'Phil, right, f\*\*\*ing... I mean it! I really, really...'. Despite this appeal, Phil continues spreading jam on his waffle without any reaction. This lack of response highlights the contrast between Leah's plea and Phil's silence, emphasising Phil's emotional disconnect. Kelly employs this strategy to direct the audience's focus towards Phil's indifference. This could cause the audience to experience discomfort and consider the implications of emotional disengagement, possibly leading to self-reflection regarding their emotional responses. Kelly's usage of silence aligns with themes of absurdist existential philosophy. When linked with Phil's continuous eating, it could imply an attempt to fill a perceived existential void. Phil's continuous consumption, lacking in apparent pleasure, accentuates his detachment, potentially creating a sense of alienation that the audience might identify with. As a consequence of this disconnect, the audience could be motivated to question indifference, particularly when encountering instances of violence. This could encourage the audience to be more mindful and proactive in their lives.

Building upon Phil's unique characterisation, another character in Kelly's 'DNA,' Leah, presents a contrasting picture. An example is Leah's monologue in Act One, where she says, 'You know we're 98.7% genetically identical to bonobos. Bonobos don't hurt each other. They're peaceful...'). By using the monologue as a device, Kelly reveals aspects of Leah's reflective personality, showing her struggle with the violence around her and her wish to comprehend their group actions. Kelly juxtaposes Leah's articulateness with Phil's silence, providing a detailed exploration of their relationship dynamics. This characterisation heightens the contrast in communication within their relationship - the spoken versus the unspoken, the communicative versus the reserved. It isn't merely a situation of one character talking while the other stays silent; it's an examination of different methods of perceiving and reacting to the world. Leah's continuous questioning of morality, her attempt to rationalise their actions, connects with the audience's empathetic understanding. The audience is encouraged to share Leah's emotional distress, fostering feelings of mutual apprehension and concern. As a result, the audience becomes invested in her character and is encouraged to contemplate the ethical consequences of the group's actions. Kelly's careful construction of Leah's character serves two purposes; Leah's monologues provide a glimpse into her need for understanding and validation, but they also reflect the audience's own thoughts and worries, highlighting the ethical issues the play addresses. This emotional connection can influence the audience's thoughts and actions, possibly encouraging them to consider their own ethical principles and their responses to societal violence. Considering the social and political context of increasing youth violence, Kelly's contrast between Leah's verbal reflection and Phil's silent indifference illustrates the







multifaceted responses of youth to societal pressures. This confrontation with tough realities serves as a warning to the audience, encouraging them to question their own morality and possibly motivating them to take a more active role in preventing violence and fostering empathy in their communities.

Shifting focus from the individual characters, Kelly also addresses power dynamics within the group in 'DNA' by using language. This approach is seen when Phil, who was silent before, breaks his silence and takes on a leadership role after John Tate's decline. He speaks to the group, stating, 'We'll take you up the grille now. We'll get you by the arms. By the legs. And we'll swing you onto the grille. We'll throw rocks at you until you drop through. You'll drop through. You'll fall into the cold. Into the dark. You'll land on Adam's corpse and you'll rot together' (p. 79). Phil's words, filled with dark imagery and a serious tone, signal a change in power dynamics and his rise. The detail of his instructions, the vividness of his threats, and his nonchalant delivery of these orders convey his new authority and control over the group's destiny. This use of language to assert power impacts the audience, causing feelings of fear and worry about the group's future under Phil's rule. As the audience absorbs the terrible images in Phil's words and the threatening tone of his speech, they are encouraged to think about their own responses to power dynamics in their lives and societal structures. Kelly's goal here has several layers. He shows how power can shift quickly in a group, especially during crises, and how such changes can lead to harmful outcomes. At the same time, he draws attention to the less positive side of leadership, one that relies on manipulation and intimidation, causing discomfort and worry among the audience. From a wider perspective, Kelly's use of language to manipulate power dynamics reflects societal implications of unrestrained authority, which can be seen in instances of oppression and abuse in real-life power structures. Therefore, the audience may feel encouraged to scrutinise and question power dynamics they experience in their own lives. They may also be urged to think about the potential outcomes of giving up control to unrestrained authority, cultivating a sense of responsibility and watchfulness in their real-world interactions.

In conclusion, this analysis has demonstrated how Dennis Kelly, through strategic characterisations and manipulation of language and silence, provokes the audience in 'DNA' to reflect on their emotional engagement, confront their ethical principles, and question societal power dynamics, thereby encouraging a more mindful and proactive approach to the violence and power structures in their lives. In the face of increased youth violence, crime and global wars such as the Iraq and Afghan wars, these characterisations illuminate diverse responses, from Phil's indifference to Leah's moral questioning. Through this, Kelly encourages the audience to reflect on their attitudes and potentially take more proactive steps towards addressing violence and inequality in their communities. Through this complex characterisation, Kelly's intention is to push the audience towards introspection and self-reflection, encouraging them to take a more active role in confronting violence, scrutinising power dynamics, and fostering empathy within their own communities. His ultimate purpose is to use the medium of drama to encourage a more mindful, proactive approach to the violence and power structures that individuals encounter in their everyday lives.





## VERSION 2

'Dennis Kelly's play 'DNA' investigates the destructive potential of group dynamics and power relations, with a specific emphasis on the central characters, Leah and Phil. These two characters exhibit contrasting personalities and attitudes, providing an opportunity for Kelly to explore the power of silence, the effectiveness of speech, and the psychological effects of violence. Kelly's skillful use of language, structure, and form techniques serve to illuminate these aspects, as well as his understanding of the human condition, especially as it relates to the psychological effects of guilt and power. This essay aims to dissect these techniques in an in-depth manner, highlighting their contribution to the overall message and impact of the play.

In 'DNA,' playwright Dennis Kelly meticulously manipulates the dramatic technique of silence, punctuated by sparing dialogue, to elicit potent emotional responses from the audience. This technique is most prominently embodied in the character of Phil, whose silence is as pronounced as it is unsettling. Throughout the play, Phil is drawn as an almost eerily silent character, absorbed in the act of eating, seemingly unperturbed by the turmoil unravelling around him. Kelly's purposeful crafting of Phil's stoic silence prompts a mixture of emotions in the audience, ranging from curiosity to discomfort, forcing them to question their own reactions in similar situations. Consider the emotionally-charged scene where Leah desperately implores, 'Phil, right, f\*\*\*ing... I mean it! I really, really...' (p. 84). Here, Phil, unblinking and unphased, continues to methodically spread jam on his waffle. The stark contrast between Leah's frantic plea and Phil's impassive silence underlines his emotional unavailability. By having Phil remain unresponsive, Kelly forces the audience into an uncomfortable awareness of his apathy. This in turn arouses feelings of tension and unease, forcing the audience to confront the impact of emotional disconnection, which could lead to introspective reflections about their own emotional engagements. Furthermore, Kelly's theatrical experiment with the silence is steeped in absurdist existential philosophy, which, when applied to Phil's continuous eating, suggests an attempt to fill a perceived void of meaningless existence. This continual act of consumption, devoid of joy or satisfaction, further emphasises Phil's profound detachment, thereby creating an atmosphere of alienation that resonates with the audience. This sense of disconnection may instigate the audience to question the morality of indifference, particularly when confronted with acts of violence, possibly encouraging them to be more mindful and active participants in their own lives. Hence, the potency of Kelly's stylistic technique of silence and minimal dialogue lies not merely in highlighting Phil's emotional disengagement but in prompting the audience to critically engage with the ethical implications of such detachment. This powerful evocation of emotions not only invites introspection but may also affect the audience's thoughts and actions, instigating a ripple effect of awareness and moral questioning.

As a counterpoint to Phil's aloof silence, the character of Leah emerges as a vociferous, philosophical entity in Kelly's 'DNA,' wielding the power of her words with deftness and intensity. A notable instance is Leah's thought-provoking monologue in Act One where she muses, 'You know we're 98.7% genetically identical to bonobos. Bonobos don't hurt each other. They're peaceful...' (p. 16). In deploying the monologue as a narrative tool, Kelly peels back layers of Leah's introspective personality, revealing her quest to grapple with the unsettling violence around her and the desire to understand their collective actions. Kelly's adept juxtaposition of Leah's eloquence against Phil's silence provides an intricate exploration of their relationship's dynamics. This contrasting characterisation intensifies the dichotomy of communication within their relationship - the verbal versus the nonverbal, the expressive versus the impassive. It's not simply a case of one character speaking while another remains silent; it's a study in starkly different ways of processing and responding to the world. Leah's relentless inquiry into the nature of morality, her quest to rationalise their actions, is a clarion call to the audience's empathetic sensibilities. The audience is compelled to reciprocate Leah's emotional turmoil, fostering feelings of shared apprehension and concern. As a result, the audience is not only invested in her character but also spurred to question the ethical repercussions of the group's actions. Kelly's careful crafting of Leah's character serves a dual purpose. On the surface, Leah's monologues offer insight into her desperate





need for understanding and validation. Yet, they also function as an echo chamber for the audience's own thoughts and concerns, amplifying the ethical dilemmas the play grapples with. This emotional resonance can have a profound impact on the audience's thoughts and actions, perhaps prompting them to reflect on their own ethical standards and their reactions to societal violence. Drawing from the sociopolitical context of rising youth violence, Kelly's contrast between Leah's wordy introspection and Phil's silent apathy illuminates the complex reality of youthful reactions to societal pressure. This confrontation with harsh realities serves as a cautionary tale for the audience, urging them to question their own morality and potentially drive them to adopt a more active role in preventing violence and promoting empathy in their own circles.

In 'DNA,' Kelly deftly maneuvers power dynamics by manipulating language. This strategy culminates when the previously silent Phil shatters his quiet facade and assumes the mantle of leadership following John Tate's downfall. His chilling command to the group encapsulates this transition, as he declares, 'We'll take you up the grille now. We'll get you by the arms. By the legs. And we'll swing you onto the grille. We'll throw rocks at you until you drop through. You'll drop through. You'll fall into the cold. Into the dark. You'll land on Adam's corpse and you'll rot together' (p. 79). Phil's harsh words, rife with dark imagery and a menacing tone, broadcast a shift in power dynamics and signal his ascendancy. The specificity of his directives, the evocative nature of his threats, and the casualness with which he delivers these chilling orders serve as potent tools in conveying his newfound authority and control over the group's fate. This linguistic strategy of power assertion unsettles the audience, evoking feelings of dread and apprehension about the group's future under Phil's dominion. As the audience absorbs the horrific imagery of Phil's words and registers the threatening tone of his speech, they are compelled to reflect on their own reactions to power dynamics in their personal lives and societal structures. Kelly's purpose here is multilayered. He showcases how power can quickly shift in a group setting, especially amidst crises, and how such changes can lead to destructive outcomes. Simultaneously, he highlights the sinister side of leadership, one that capitalises on manipulation and intimidation, eliciting unease and anxiety among the audience. From a broader perspective, Kelly's manipulation of power dynamics through language echoes the societal implications of unchecked authority, reflective of instances of oppression and abuse in real-life power structures. Thus, the audience might feel compelled to scrutinise and challenge authoritative dynamics they encounter in their own experiences. They may also be nudged to consider the potential consequences of surrendering control to unchecked authority, fostering a sense of responsibility and vigilance in their real-world interactions.

In conclusion, Dennis Kelly's 'DNA' employs an array of structural, linguistic, and form techniques to effectively convey the intricacies of power, guilt, violence, and indifference. Through the characters of Leah and Phil, Kelly presents a profound examination of human nature and the consequences of our actions. His exploration of the power of silence, the potency of language, and the dynamics of power relations provokes readers to question their own moral compass and the way they perceive responsibility and culpability. As such, 'DNA' stands as a compelling to end.

