

Multiple choice

These are difficult because some answers are "both" right and if answered in longer responses, with explanation and proof, some of the less right answers would be acceptable. Even on a test - with me - and you answered the less right option and argued rationally that it is a good answer, then I would give you full marks.

However, since you will not have these options on a standardized test, such as the OSSLT Literacy Test or the Apex Exam, let's examine why, for example, the author chooses to use "scraps" to communicate what information the Suitcase Lady was volunteering.

The option that says "her memories are personal and easily shared" could be correct, but it requires that you guess or express an opinion, whereas the option that says, "her memory is patchy and uneven," is the better option because the examples that the Suitcase Lady provides throughout are all over the place. Random. This option is thus the more "provable" option based on the information in the text.

But like with any art, writing does impact the reader on a subjective level. The reader may read the words and "feel" them differently. Thus, for me, a discussion and debate is completely acceptable. Standardized tests, however, do not.

Diction

When commenting on your impressions and why the author uses a specific adverb, adjective or verb, you are in a sense commenting on the same thing. For example, when the author writes chapped, you might have the impression/image of red, peeling and painful. This is exactly what the author wants you to feel. The author could have used red or cold-looking, however, the word chapped encapsulates all of that. Using chapped implies unhealthy, cold, raw, weathered, painful. It is a word that is symbolic of the suitcase lady's existence on the streets. The writer could have easily wrote, her legs, chapped like her life.

Language

The language was quite simple, objective and concrete. Although there are a few moments when the author chooses to "sway" the reader with her choice of verbs and adjectives, the author chooses to use the words of the Vicomtesse to provide the details. They are not analysed. The reader is left to interpret the words as they are.

Syntax

Focus on the most prominent types that pop up. Any extended piece of prose will have a myriad of sentence combinations, but the ones that stand out are what you should focus your attention on. If the author uses short, simple sentences, it is probably to give the reader the impression of force or importance, especially when used in short paragraphs. McLaren uses this technique at least three times

She calls herself Vicomtesse Antonia The Linds'ays. She's the suitcase lady of Queen Street.

She calls herself by a very romantic, imaginative name - the Vicomtesse Antonia The Linds'ays - creating a character to cope with the cold, hard streets of Toronto. But it's just one of her names. She is also The Suitcase Lady of Queen Street.

She looks out the window. She is 60 years old.

She looks out the window onto a cruel, rough, unfeeling world that has aged her beyond her 60 years.

Her suitcase is full of dreams.

These short paragraphs communicate a complete thought. She is being empathic, precise and blunt in her syntax. She is almost mimicking the Vicomtesse in her matter-of-fact, this-is-life voice. Her sentences are not long, nor explicitly moralizing. Her syntactical tone is implicit. It shares the voice of the Vicomtesse.