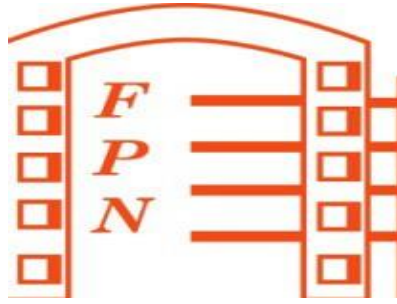


**Kingdom of Morocco  
University Mohamed I  
Multidisciplinary Faculty,  
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English Department**



**Module: Reading Comprehension and Précis**

**Semester: 2**

**Group: B**

**Prof: Mohammed EL HADIFI**

**TEXT 1:****The Violence of Illusion**

Langston Hughes, the African-American writer, describes in his 1940 autobiography, *The Big Sea*, the exhilaration that seized him as he left New York for Africa. He threw his American books into the sea: “[I]t was like throwing a million bricks out of my heart.” He was on his way to his “Africa, Motherland of the negro people!” soon he would experience “the real thing, to be touched and seen, not merely read about in a book.” A sense of identity can be a source not merely of pride and joy, but also of strength and confidence. It is not surprising that the idea of identity receives such widespread admiration, from popular advocacy of loving your neighbor to high theories of social capital and of communitarian self-definition.

And yet identity can also kill—and kill with abandon. A strong—and exclusive—sense of belonging to one group can in many cases carry with it the perception of distance and divergence from other groups. Within-group solidarity can help to feed between-group discord. We may suddenly be informed that we are not just Rwandans but specifically Hutus (“we hate Tutsis”), or that we are not really mere Yugoslavs but actually Serbs (“we absolutely don’t like Muslims”). From my own childhood memory of Hindu-Muslim riots in the 1940s, linked with the politics of partition, I recollect the speed with which the broad human beings of January were suddenly transformed into the ruthless Hindus and fierce Muslims of July. Hundreds of thousands perished at the hands of people who, led by the commanders of carnage, killed others on behalf of their “own people.” Violence is fomented by the imposition of singular and belligerent identities on gullible people, championed by proficient artisans of terror.

The sense of identity can make an important contribution to the strength and the warmth of our relations with others, such as neighbors, or members of the same community, or fellow citizens, or followers of the same religion. Our focus on particular identities can enrich our bonds and make us do many things for each other and can help to take us beyond our self-centered lives. The recent literature on “social capital,” powerfully explored by Robert Putman and others, has brought out clearly enough how an identity with others in the same social community can make the lives of all go much better in that community; a sense of belonging to a community is thus seen as a resource—like capital. That understanding is important, but it has to be supplemented by a further recognition that a sense of identity can firmly exclude many people even as it warmly embraces others. The well-integrated community in which residents instinctively do absolutely wonderful things for each other with great immediacy and solidarity can be the very same community in which bricks are thrown through the windows of immigrants who move into the region from elsewhere. The adversity of exclusion can be made to go hand in hand with the gifts of inclusion.

The cultivated violence associated with identity conflicts seems to repeat itself around the world with increasing persistence. Even though the balance of power in Rwanda and Congo may have changed, the targeting of one group by another continues with much force. The marshaling of an aggressive Sudanese Islamic identity along with exploitation of racial divisions has led to the raping and killing of overpowered victims in the south of that appallingly militarized polity. Israel and Palestine continue to experience the fury of dichotomized identities ready to inflict hateful penalties on the other side. Al Qaeda relies heavily on cultivating and exploiting a militant Islamic identity specifically aimed against Western people.

And reports keep coming in, from Abu Ghraib and elsewhere, that the activities of some American or British soldiers sent out to fight for the cause of freedom and democracy included what is called a “softening-up” of prisoners in utterly inhuman ways. Unrestrained power over the lives of suspected enemy combatants, or presumed miscreants, sharply bifurcates the prisoners and custodians across a

hardened line of divisive identities (“they are separate breed from us”). It seems to crowd out, often enough, any consideration of other, less confrontational features of the people on the opposite side of the breach, including, among other things, their shared membership of the human race.

### **Comprehension:**

#### **A- Before you read the text answer these questions**

1. Relating the title “The violence of illusion” to the question of identity, how would explain it?
2. How is violence promoted?
3. What do you think are the major sources of conflicts nowadays?

#### **B- Reading:**

1. Read the text and write down the main idea for each paragraph.
2. Read the text again and paraphrase the first three paragraphs.
3. Orally, try to give a general summary for the text.

#### **C- Discussion**

1. How do we cultivate a sense of inevitability about some allegedly unique – often belligerent – identities that we are supposed to have?
2. Explain this quote in your own words: “The illusion of destiny, particularly about some singular identity or other (and their alleged implications), nurtures violence in the world through omissions as well as commissions.”

#### **D- Précis:**

### **TEXT 2:**

#### ***The 48 Laws of Power***

***by Robert Greene***

The feeling of having no power over people and events is generally unbearable to us—when we feel helpless we feel miserable. No one wants less power; everyone wants more. In the world today, however, it is dangerous to seem too power hungry, to be overt with your power moves. We have to seem fair and decent. So we need to be subtle—congenial yet cunning, democratic yet devious.

This game of constant duplicity most resembles the power dynamic that existed in the scheming world of the old aristocratic court. Throughout history, a court has always formed itself around the person in power—king, queen, emperor, leader. The courtiers who filled this court were in an especially delicate position: They had to serve their masters, but if they seemed to fawn, if they carried favor too obviously, the other courtiers around them would notice and would act against them. Attempts to win the master’s favor, then, had to be subtle. And even skilled courtiers capable of such subtlety still had to protect themselves from their fellow courtiers, who at all moments were scheming to push them aside.

Meanwhile the court was supposed to represent the height of civilization and refinement. Violent or overt power moves were frowned upon; courtiers would work silently and secretly against any among them who used force. This was the courtier’s dilemma: While appearing the very paragon of elegance, they had to outwit and thwart their own opponents in the subtlest of ways. The successful courtier learned over time to make all of his moves indirect; if he stabbed an opponent in the back, it was with a velvet glove on his hand and the sweetest of smiles on his face. Instead of using coercion or outright treachery, the perfect courtier got his way through seduction, charm, deception, and subtle strategy, always planning several moves ahead. Life in the court was a never-ending game that required constant vigilance and tactical thinking. It was civilized war.

Today we face a peculiarly similar paradox to that of the courtier: Everything must appear civilized, decent, democratic, and fair. But if we play by those rules too strictly, if we take them too literally, we are crushed by those around us who are not so foolish. As the great Renaissance diplomat and Courtier Niccolò Machiavelli wrote, “Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good.” The court imagined itself the pinnacle of refinement, but underneath its glittering surface a cauldron of dark emotions—greed, envy, lust, hatred—boiled and simmered. Our world today similarly imagines itself the pinnacle of fairness, yet the same ugly emotions still stir within us, as they have forever. The game is the same. Outwardly, you must seem to respect the niceties, but inwardly,

unless you are a fool, you learn quickly to be prudent, and to do as Napoleon advised: Place your iron hand inside a velvet glove. If, like the courtier of times gone by, you can master the arts of indirection, learning to seduce charm, deceive, and subtly outmaneuver your opponents, you will attain the heights of power. You will be able to make people bend to your will without their realizing what you have done. And if they do not realize what you have done, they will neither resent nor resist you.

To some people the notion of consciously playing power games—no matter how indirect—seems evil, asocial, a relic of the past. They believe they can opt out of the game by behaving in ways that have nothing to do with power. You must beware of such people, for while they express such opinions outwardly, they are often among the most adept players at power. They utilize strategies that cleverly disguise the nature of the manipulation involved. These types, for example, will often display their weakness and lack of power as a kind of moral virtue. But true powerlessness, without any motive of self-interest, would not publicize its weakness to gain sympathy or respect. Making a show of one's weakness is actually a very effective strategy, subtle and deceptive, in the game of power (see Law 22, the Surrender Tactic).

Another strategy of the supposed non-player is to demand equality in every area of life. Everyone must be treated alike, whatever their status and strength. But if, to avoid the taint of power, you attempt to treat everyone equally and fairly, you will confront the problem that some people do certain things better than others. Treating everyone equally means ignoring their differences, elevating the less skillful and suppressing those who excel. Again, many of those who behave this way are actually deploying another power strategy, redistributing people's rewards in a way that they determine.

Yet another way of avoiding the game would be perfect honesty and straightforwardness, since one of the main techniques of those who seek power is deceit and secrecy. But being perfectly honest will inevitably hurt and insult a great many people, some of whom will choose to injure you in return. No one will see your honest statement as completely objective and free of some personal motivation. And they will be right: In truth, the use of honesty is indeed a power strategy, intended to convince people of one's noble, good-hearted, selfless character. It is a form of persuasion, even a subtle form of coercion.

Finally, those who claim to be non-players may affect an air of naiveté, to protect them from the accusation that they are after power. Beware again; however, for the appearance of naiveté can be an effective means of deceit (see Law 21, Seem Dumber Than Your Mark). And even genuine naiveté is not free of the snares of power. Children may be naive in many ways, but they often act from an elemental need to gain control over those around them. Children suffer greatly from feeling powerless in the adult world, and they use any means available to get their way. Genuinely innocent people may still be playing for power, and are often horribly effective at the game, since they are not hindered by reflection. Once again, those who make a show or display of innocence are the least innocent of all.

## **Comprehension:**

### **I. Answer these questions:**

1. What is power?
2. Why do people seek more and more power?
3. What is the difference between power and force?
4. In his book, Robert Greene, talks about *The 48 Laws of Power*; can you guess some of these 'laws'?

### **II. Discuss these laws:**

#### **LAW 1**

#### **NEVER OUTSHINE THE MASTER**

Always make those above you feel comfortably superior. In your desire to please or impress them, do not go too far in displaying your talents or you might accomplish the opposite—inspire fear and insecurity. Make your masters appear more brilliant than they are and you will attain the heights of power.

#### **LAW 2**

#### **NEVER PUT TOO MUCH TRUST IN FRIENDS, LEARN HOW TO USE ENEMIES**

Be wary of friends—they will betray you more quickly, for they are easily aroused to envy. They also become spoiled and tyrannical. But hire a former enemy and he will be more loyal than a friend, because he has more to prove. In fact, you have more to fear from friends than from enemies. If you have no enemies, find a way to make them.

#### **LAW 3**

#### **CONCEAL YOUR INTENTIONS**

Keep people off-balance and in the dark by never revealing the purpose behind your actions. If they have no clue what you are up to, they cannot prepare a defense. Guide them far enough down the wrong path, envelop them in enough smoke, and by the time they realize your intentions, it will be too late.

**LAW 4**

**ALWAYS SAY LESS THAN NECESSARY**

When you are trying to impress people with words, the more you say, the more common you appear, and the less in control. Even if you are saying something banal, it will seem original if you make it vague, open—ended, and sphinxlike.

Powerful people impress and intimidate by saying less. The more you say, the more likely you are to say something foolish.

**LAW 5**

**SO MUCH DEPENDS ON REPUTATION—GUARD IT WITH YOUR LIFE**

Reputation is the cornerstone of power. Through reputation alone you can intimidate and win; once it slips, however, you are vulnerable, and will be attacked on all sides. Make your reputation unassailable. Always be alert to potential attacks and thwart them before they happen. Meanwhile, learn to destroy your enemies by opening holes in their own reputations.

Then stand aside and let public opinion hang them.

**III. Write a précis of the last four paragraphs**

### **TEXT 3:**

#### **Tools of .....**

Persuasion is the art of convincing someone to agree with your point of view. According to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, there are three basic tools of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos.

Ethos is a speaker's way of convincing the audience that she is a credible source. An audience will consider a speaker credible if she seems trustworthy, reliable, and sincere. This can be done in many ways. For example, a speaker can develop ethos by explaining how much experience or education she has in the field. After all, you would be more likely to listen to advice about how to take care of your teeth from a dentist than a firefighter. A speaker can also create ethos by convincing the audience that she is a good person who has their best interests at heart. If an audience cannot trust you, you will not be able to persuade them.

Pathos is a speaker's way of connecting with an audience's emotions. For example, a speaker who is trying to convince an audience to vote for him might say that he alone can save the country from a terrible war. These words are intended to fill the audience with fear, thus making them want to vote for him. Similarly, a charity organization that helps animals might show an audience pictures of injured dogs and cats. These images are intended to fill the viewers with pity. If the audience feels bad for the animals, they will be more likely to donate money.

Logos is the use of facts, information, statistics, or other evidence to make your argument more convincing. An audience will be more likely to believe you if you have data to back up your claims. For example, a commercial for soap might tell you that laboratory tests have shown that their soap kills all 7,000,000 of the bacteria living on your hands right now. This piece of information might make you more likely to buy their brand of soap. Presenting this evidence is much more convincing than simply saying "our soap is the best!" Use of logos can also increase a speaker's ethos; the more facts a speaker includes in his argument, the more likely you are to think that he is educated and trustworthy.

Although ethos, pathos, and logos all have their strengths, they are often most effective when they are used together. Indeed, most speakers use a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos to persuade their audiences. The next time you listen to a speech, watch a commercial, or listen to a friend try to convince you to lend him some money, be on the lookout for these ancient Greek tools of persuasion.

#### **Comprehension Check:**

- 1) Give A suitable title to the passage: .....
- 2) As used in paragraph 2, what is the best **antonym** for **credible**?
  - A. unintelligent
  - B. boring
  - C. dishonest
  - D. amazing.
- 3) Amy is trying to convince her mother to buy her a pair of \$200 shoes. She says: "Mom, the shoes I have are really old and ugly. If I don't get these new shoes, everyone at school is going to laugh at me. I will be so embarrassed that I will want to die." What form of persuasion is Amy using here?
  - A. pathos
  - B. ethos
  - C. logos
  - D. a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos.

#### **4).According to the passage, logos can build ethos because:**

- A. an audience is more easily convinced by facts and information than simple appeals to emotions like pity or fear.
- B. an audience is more likely to trust a speaker who uses evidence to support his argument.
- C. a speaker who overuses pathos might make an audience too emotional; audiences who are too frightened or too sad are unlikely to be persuaded.
- D. a speaker can use misleading or false information to make his argument seem more convincing.

5). Gareth is running for mayor. He tells his audience: "Under our current mayor, there have been 15,000 new cases of unemployment. If he stays in office, who knows how many more people will lose their jobs? The number could go up even higher. When I was the CEO of Magnatech, I helped to create over 1,000 new jobs. I can do the same thing for this city if you vote for me." Which form of persuasion is Gareth using here?

- I. pathos
- II. logos
- III. Ethos.

- A. I only
- B. I and II only
- C. II and III only
- D. I, II, and III.

6). According to the passage, the most effective tool of persuasion is:

- A. ethos, because you cannot persuade an audience that does not trust you
- B. logos, because it can also be used to build ethos
- C. a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos
- D. pathos, because human beings are most easily persuaded by emotion.

7). Imagine you wanted to convince an uninformed person to take a political position that is the same as yours. What issue would you try to talk to this person about? How would you include ethos, pathos, and logos in your persuasion? Make your case below.

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8). Write a précis of the text

**TEXT 4:**

**Title:** .....

Questions about our personal identities, self-conceptions, and social selves are, of course, as old as the philosophical question 'who am I?' .So one may suspect that nothing new could sensibly be said about the topic. Yet such an attitude would be too dismissive, given the present changes. We have seen that human life is quickly becoming a matter of onlife experience, which reshapes constraints and offers new affordances in the development of our identities, their conscious appropriation, and our personal as well as collective self-

understanding. Today, we increasingly acknowledge the importance of a common yet unprecedented phenomenon, which may be described as the online construction of personal identities. Who are we, who do we become, and who could we be, once we increasingly spend our time in the infosphere? The questions are reasonable but they hide a paradox, known as Theseus' ship. So, before addressing them, we had better have a look at the paradox itself and see whether we can avoid it.

Here is how the great ancient historian Plutarch (c. AD 46–120), describes the problem:

[Theseus' ship] was preserved by the Athenians down even to the time of Demetrius Phalereus, for they took away the old planks as they decayed, putting in new and stronger timber in their place, insomuch that this ship became a standing example among the philosophers, for the logical question of things that grow; one side holding that the ship remained the same, and the other contending that it was not the same.

You may have encountered this old problem under different disguises. Recall the axe we met in Chapter 2? Is it still your grandfather's axe, if your father replaced the handle, and you replaced the head? Theseus' ship and your grandfather's axe are systems, and it is not easy to spell out exactly what keeps them together and in working condition, as well as what makes them that particular ship and that particular axe through time and changes. The same holds true about the special system represented by you.

It seems plausible to assume that Theseus' ship, the axe, and yourself are constituted by interacting and coordinated components, but the problem concerns the changes undergone by such components.

Consider your body. Most of its cells are replaced over time, yet some fundamental patterns hold, so it may not be the replacement with identical components that matters but rather that their relationship to each other and the nature of their interactions are conserved. And yet, what is this 'glue' that guarantees the unity and coordination of a system like yourself, thus allowing it to be, to persist, and to act as a single, coherent, and continuous entity in different places, at different times, and through a variety of experiences? The paradox of Theseus' ship soon starts peeping. If we wish to avoid it, we need to rely on another concept introduced in Chapter 2, that of interface.

Questions about the identity of something may become paradoxical if they are asked without specifying the relevant interface that is required to be able to answer them. Consider the following example. Whether a hospital transformed now into a school is still the same building seems an idle question to ask, if one does not specify in which context and for which purpose the question is formulated, and therefore what the right interface is through which the relevant answer may be correctly provided. If the question is asked in order to get there, for example, then the relevant interface is 'location' and the correct answer is yes, they are the same building. If the question is asked in order to understand what happens inside, then 'social function' is the relevant interface, and therefore the correct answer is obviously no, they are very different. So are they or are they not the same? The illusion that there might be a single, correct, absolute answer, independently of context, purpose, and perspective—that is, independently of the relevant interface—leads to paradoxical nonsense.

### **Comprehension:**

#### **I- Before you read the text answer these questions**

1. What is identity?
2. Do our identities develop and change through time? How?

#### **II- Read the text and give it a title: .....**

#### **III- Write *True* or *False*, then justify your answers.**

1. The writer thinks that our identities are the same from birth to death.
2. Our onlife experiences encounter the same impediments and possibilities of developing our identities, their conscious appropriation, and our personal as well as collective self-understanding.
3. The hidden logic behind Theseus' ship is that identities retain their constituents and structures regardless of their growth and maturation.
4. It's possible to determine the static and the changing features in our personal identities.

#### **IV- Answer these questions:**

1. Who are we, who do we become, and who could we be, once we increasingly spend our time in the infosphere?



2. What's Theseus' ship paradox?
3. Do you think we can avoid Theseus' ship paradox when thinking of the online construction of our personal identities?
4. Is there any force that keeps our personal identities as a fixed and unchangeable system through time and changes?
5. What does the writer mean by this 'glue' in paragraph 4?
6. What is a 'relevant interface'?

**V- Paraphrase paragraph 4 and summarize paragraph 5.**

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**VI- The writer has given three examples of what he calls 'the paradox of identity', provide your own example.**

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**VII- Provide an example of the "relevant interface" mentioned in the text**

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**VIII- Write a précis of the text**

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## **TEXT 5:**

### **I. Read the text carefully and answer the question below. Be as brief as possible.**

Imagine a morning, not many years from now, on which you awaken after a long and safe slumber. The night before, you drifted to sleep with absolutely no fear that your house would be robbed or that you would be in any danger. Your household computer informs you that your breakfast is ready, so you proceed to the kitchen to enjoy the meal that your kitchen robot has prepared.

As you eat, you glance at the headlines of the morning news on the nearby video monitor, noting that unemployment has been virtually eliminated, the gross national product has increased 15 per cent over the past year, and your stocks are doing well. Before you leave, you remind the household robot to test the children on their math lesson, review them on their other studies, and finally, join them in a game of catch. You then step into your transportation vehicle, which whisks you away to the office for a full four hours of work. As you plan the remainder of the day, you decide to spend the rest of the morning playing racquetball with some friends, followed by some good reading. After you eat your already-prepared dinner with your family, you will work with one of the household computers for the rest of the evening, and then drift off to a pleasant sleep once more.

A day like this would make many people think that they were in Utopia, yet this little excerpt from the life of one man is not as impossible as it might sound. In fact, parts of the preceding story are already true for some people. The factors guiding us into this more productive, less strenuous, and much more leisurely life-style are all centered around one thing: new technologies. These exciting advances, just emerging from the laboratories and factories, include bioengineering; personal computer, and extensive space exploration.

However, a personal robot is one machine that will probably have a more profound and widespread effect on society than any other invention. The dream of this creation has been portrayed in plays, movies and television, but only now is this exciting new tool beginning to demonstrate its potential.

Of course, new stories about the giant industrial robots in factories are seen frequently, and although these machines are efficient, productive, and useful, our lives have not been altered dramatically by them. In fact, there are relatively new robots actually working in factories. If this is the case, how will robots make such a dramatic effect on so many people?

The fact that they will have a major effect on industry will be discussed later. But the type of robot that will cause the greatest changes is not an industrial, but rather a personal robot. Or, as I like to call it a probot.

Probots will have a more immediate and direct effect on us than industrial robots because personal robots will actually be in the home, doing household chores, teaching the children, and even walking the dog. Although industrial robots will eventually have a profound effect on both labor and productivity, it simply takes a longer time for their full impact to be felt.

### **A. Vocabulary:**

#### **1. Give the meaning of the following words as they appear in the passage.**

- a- Household chores: .....
- b- Strenuous: .....
- c- Slumber: .....
- d- Drift off: .....

- e- Potential: .....
- f- Leisurely: .....

**B. Comprehension:**

1. In one sentence, give the main theme of the passage.
2. In paragraph 2, the author says: “noting that unemployment has been virtually eliminated.” Do you think he is serious? Justify your answer.
3. What is the author referring to when he says: “and your stocks are doing well”? (paragraph 2).
4. What does the author mean by the following statement? “A day like this...in Utopia”.
5. In what possible way(s) could “extensive space exploration” be part of the factors leading us to the life style mentioned in paragraph 3?
6. What can you say about the “quality” of life people will be leading if what the author is asking us to imagine comes true?
7. Comment on the tone of the passage.

**II. Précis:**

In no more than 139 words, make a précis of paragraphs 1 to 4. Use the space below.

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**Summary:**

Robots will have a more immediate and direct effect on us than industrial robots because personal robots will actually be in the home, doing household chores, teaching the children, and even walking the dog. Although industrial robots will eventually have a profound effect on both labor and productivity, it simply takes a longer time for their full impact to be felt.

**TEXT 6:**

First introduced in 1927, The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories are a series of books about the adventures of brothers Frank and Joe Hardy, teenaged detectives who solve one baffling mystery after another. The Hardy Boys were so popular among young boys that in 1930 a similar series was created for girls featuring a sixteen-year-old detective named Nancy Drew. The cover of each volume of The Hardy Boys states that the author of the series is Franklin W. Dixon; the Nancy Drew Mystery Stories are supposedly written by Carolyn Keene. Over the years, though, many fans of both series have been surprised to find out that Franklin W. Dixon and Carolyn Keene are not real people. If Franklin W. Dixon and Carolyn Keene never existed, then who

wrote The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew mysteries?

The Hardy Boys and the Nancy Drew books were written through a process called ghostwriting. A ghostwriter writes a book according to a specific formula. While ghostwriters are paid for writing the books, their authorship is not acknowledged, and their names do not appear on the published books.

Ghostwriters can write books for children or adults, the content of which is unspecified.

Sometimes they work on book series with a lot of individual titles, such as The Hardy Boys and the Nancy Drew series.

The initial idea for both The Hardy Boys and the Nancy Drew series was developed by a man named Edward Stratemeyer, who owned a publishing company that specialized in children's books. Stratemeyer noticed the increasing popularity of mysteries among adults, and surmised that children would enjoy reading mysteries about younger detectives with whom they could identify. Stratemeyer first developed each book with an outline describing the plot and setting. Once he completed the outline, Stratemeyer then hired a ghostwriter to convert it into a book of slightly over 200 pages. After the ghostwriter had written a draft of a book, he or she would send it back to Stratemeyer, who would make a list of corrections and mail it back to the ghostwriter. The ghostwriter would revise the book according to Stratemeyer's instructions and then return it to him. Once Stratemeyer approved the book, it was ready for publication.

Because each series ran for so many years, Nancy Drew and The Hardy Boys both had a number of different ghostwriters producing books; however, the first ghostwriter for each series proved to be the most influential. The initial ghostwriter for The Hardy Boys was a Canadian journalist named Leslie McFarlane. A few years later, Mildred A. Wirt, a young writer from Iowa, began writing the Nancy Drew books. Although they were using prepared outlines as guides, both McFarlane and Wirt developed the characters themselves. The personalities of Frank and Joe Hardy and Nancy Drew arose directly from McFarlane's and Wirt's imaginations. For example, Mildred Wirt had been a star college athlete and gave Nancy similar athletic abilities. The ghostwriters were also responsible for numerous plot and setting details. Leslie McFarlane used elements of his small Canadian town to create Bayport, the Hardy Boys' fictional hometown.

Although The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew books were very popular with children, not everyone approved of them. Critics thought their plots were unrealistic and even far-fetched, since most teenagers did not experience the adventures Frank and Joe Hardy or Nancy Drew did. The way the books were written also attracted criticism. Many teachers and librarians objected to the ghostwriting process, claiming it was designed to produce books quickly rather than create

quality literature. Some libraries—including the New York Public Library—even refused to include the books in their children’s collections. Ironically, this decision actually helped sales of the books, because children simply purchased them when they were unavailable in local libraries. Regardless of the debates about their literary merit, each series of books has exerted an undeniable influence on American and even global culture. Most Americans have never heard of Edward Stratemeyer, Leslie McFarlane, or Mildred Wirt, but people throughout the world are familiar with Nancy Drew and Frank and Joe Hardy.

Langston Hughes, the African-American writer, describes in his 1940 autobiography, *The Big Sea*, the exhilaration that seized him as he left New York for Africa. He threw his American books into the sea: “[I]t was like throwing a million bricks out of my heart.” He was on his way to his “Africa, Motherland of the negro people!” soon he would experience “the real thing, to be touched and seen, not merely read about in a book.” A sense of identity can be a source not merely of pride and joy, but also of strength and confidence. It is not surprising that the idea of identity receives such widespread admiration, from popular advocacy of loving your neighbor to high theories of social capital and of communitarian self-definition.

And yet identity can also kill—and kill with abandon. A strong—and exclusive—sense of belonging to one group can in many cases carry with it the perception of distance and divergence from other groups. Within-group solidarity can help to feed between-group discord. We may suddenly be informed that we are not just Rwandans but specifically Hutus (“we hate Tutsis”), or that we are not really mere Yugoslavs but actually Serbs (“we absolutely don’t like Muslims”). From my own childhood memory of Hindu-Muslim riots in the 1940s, linked with the politics of partition, I recollect the speed with which the broad human beings of January were suddenly transformed into the ruthless Hindus and fierce Muslims of July. Hundreds of thousands perished at the hands of people who, led by the commanders of carnage, killed others on behalf of their “own people.” Violence is fomented by the imposition of singular and belligerent identities on gullible people, championed by proficient artisans of terror.

The sense of identity can make an important contribution to the strength and the warmth of our relations with others, such as neighbors, or members of the same community, or fellow citizens, or followers of the same religion. Our focus on particular identities can enrich our bonds and make us do many things for each other and can help to take us beyond our self-centered lives. The recent literature on “social capital,” powerfully explored by Robert Putman and others, has brought out clearly enough how an identity with others in the same social community can make the lives of all go much better in that community; a sense of belonging to a community is thus

seen as a resource—like capital. That understanding is important, but it has to be supplemented by a further recognition that a sense of identity can firmly exclude many people even as it warmly embraces others. The well-integrated community in which residents instinctively do absolutely wonderful things for each other with great immediacy and solidarity can be the very same community in which bricks are thrown through the windows of immigrants who move into the region from elsewhere. The adversity of exclusion can be made to go hand in hand with the gifts of inclusion.

The cultivated violence associated with identity conflicts seems to repeat itself around the world with increasing persistence. Even though the balance of power in Rwanda and Congo may have changed, the targeting of one group by another continues with much force. The marshaling of an aggressive Sudanese Islamic identity along with exploitation of racial divisions has led to the raping and killing of overpowered victims in the south of that appallingly militarized polity. Israel and Palestine continue to experience the fury of dichotomized identities ready to inflict hateful penalties on the other side. Al Qaeda relies heavily on cultivating and exploiting a militant Islamic identity specifically aimed against Western people.

And reports keep coming in, from Abu Ghraib and elsewhere, that the activities of some American or British soldiers sent out to fight for the cause of freedom and democracy included what is called a “softening-up” of prisoners in utterly inhuman ways. Unrestrained power over the lives of suspected enemy combatants, or presumed miscreants, sharply bifurcates the prisoners and custodians across a hardened line of divisive identities (“they are separate breed from us”). It seems to crowd out, often enough, any consideration of other, less confrontational features of the people on the opposite side of the breach, including, among other things, their shared membership of the human race.

### **Questions**

- 1) According to the passage, the Nancy Drew mystery series was introduced in
  - A. 1925
  - B. 1927
  - C. 1929
  - D. 1930
  
- 2) Which of the following would be the best title for this passage?
  - A. Ghostwriting: A Way of Life
  - B. Who Were Leslie McFarlane and Mildred A. Wirt?
  - C. The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew: Ghostwriting a Series
  - D. The Dubious yet Profitable Practice of Ghostwriting
  
- 3) According to the passage, which of the following people was a real writer?

- A. Carolyn Keene
  - B. Franklin W. Dixon
  - C. Leslie McFarlane
  - D. Tom Hardy
- 4) According to the passage, a ghostwriter is someone who
- I. writes about mysterious or strange events
  - II. does not receive credit as the author
  - III. bases his or her books on predetermined guidelines
- A. I only
  - B. I and II only
  - C. II and III only
  - D. I, II, and III
- 5) As used in paragraph 3, which is the best definition for **surmised**?
- A. guessed
  - B. questioned
  - C. knew
  - D. proved
- 6) According to the passage, The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew books were created based on the idea that
- I. mystery books for adults are popular
  - II. children enjoy reading about characters they can relate to
  - III. girls and boys are not interested in the same things
- A. I only
  - B. I and II only (CORRECT)
  - C. II and III only
  - D. I, II, and III
- 7) Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that Leslie McFarlane and Mildred Wirt
- A. disliked writing according to a specific formula
  - B. respected the art of ghostwriting
  - C. were unsuccessful in their previous occupations
  - D. found it helpful to write from personal experience
- 8) According to the passage, some teachers and librarians objected to ghostwritten books such as The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew Mystery Stories because they
- A. disapproved of mystery stories
  - B. thought the books were too expensive
  - C. believed the books were not quality literature
  - D. disliked Edward Stratemeyer's questionable business practices
- 9) Which of the following best describes the author's attitude toward The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew book series?

- A. balanced and respectful
- B. doubtful and critical
- C. hostile but forgiving
- D. overwhelmingly praising

10) Which of the following best describes the structure of this passage?

- A. introduction, explanation, history, controversy, conclusion
- B. introduction, history, controversy, explanation, conclusion
- C. history, explanation, summary, conclusion, controversy  
history, controversy, explanation, summary, conclusion

**PRECIS:**

Write a précis of the last three paragraphs.

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### **Précis of the first text (the violence of illusion)**

In his non-fictional masterpiece, “The Illusion of Violence”, the author **claims that identity can be like a double-edged sword. It is a source of one’s pride and joy as it is a root of violence and barbarity.** The author first assumes the puerility and hazard of belonging and identification to an exclusive group that implies the divergence from the out-group members. Thus, violence is fuelled by the imposition of singular and aggressive identities on innocent people. In the same vein, labeling oneself with a particular identity can fortify the bonds between people and go beyond selfishness as it is manifested by Putman and others in social capital literature. However, the warm embracement and perpetual solidarity within one-group members implies the ruthless rejection of out-group people. Hence, the adversity of exclusion can be made to go hand in hand with the gifts of inclusion. Also, the author argues that violence is cultivated with tenacity once it is associated with identity conflicts based on dichotomized identification; be it racial, ethnic or religious. The author’s purpose is to raise people’s awareness about the vulnerability and the danger of identitarian classifications and how they can be the source of prevalent malaises around the world **in order to** make them reconsider their singular-identity based thinking and cast aside the solitarist fallacy that shapes their communities and then leads to the miniaturization of humanity, with everyone locked up in tight little boxes from which they emerge only to attack one another.

**(244 words)**



## Précis of the second text (The 48 Laws of Power)

*In his argumentative work, “The 48 Laws of Power”, Robert Greene argues that power as an integral part of our societies and lives is attained through many strategies.* First, people should take the indirect route to power by disguising their cunning. They can cleverly mask the nature of the manipulation involved by expressing their opinions outwardly and showing weakness overtly while in reality they are exercising an effective, subtle and deceptive strategy in the game of power. Second, they can also gain power by adopting equality in every area of life namely treating people equally through distributing their rewards in a way that they determine. They flaunt their moral qualities, their piety, their exquisite sense of justice but they still just distract others from power which they aspire to in turn. Third, perfect honesty and straightforwardness as a counterpart of deceit and secrecy can inwardly work as a key strategy to power. Eventually, being genuinely naïve and innocent can be the effective way to gain power since those who display innocence and virtue are the least innocent at all. *The author’s purpose is to exhibit the strategies of power in order to channelize people who seek power and help them reach it in a subtle and clever way.*

(208 words)

Four paragraphs =  $476 \div 3 = 158$

- 28 words ( genre, title, author, rhetorical verb, that clause+ thesis statement)
- 29 words ( the author’s purpose and the target audience)

### Important links:

- Advanced S1 Reading Comprehension & Précis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMIQv7yPIkI>

[http://spectrumbooks.in/books/english/comp\\_precis.html](http://spectrumbooks.in/books/english/comp_precis.html)

- Synthesis

<https://comprehensionstrategies.weebly.com/synthesize.html>

- See also the three first lectures (PowerPoint slides)
- *Practical steps for reading comprehension (reading strategies)*
- Précis strategies/ techniques
-

**Précis template:**

## **The Rhetorical Précis**

*from the work of Margaret Woodworth*

This type of writing provides a condensed statement of the text's main point (the summary part), followed by brief statements about the text's rhetorical elements: the author's purpose, methods and intended audience (the analysis part).

### **A Structure for the Rhetorical Précis**

- **Sentence #1:** Name of author, genre and title of work (date in parentheses)... a rhetorically accurate VERB (such as "claims," "argues," "suggests," "asserts," etc.)...a THAT clause containing the main idea or thesis statement of the work.
- **Sentence #2:** A section-by-section explanation of what the author is doing (verb) and how he/she is doing it (methods)
- **Sentence #3:** A statement of the author's apparent purpose, followed by an "IN ORDER TO" phrase.
- **Sentence #4:** A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

### **Fill in Starter Template**

1. In \_\_\_\_\_'s \_\_\_\_\_ (date),  
(author) (genre) (title)

she \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_  
(verb) (main idea)

2. The author first \_\_\_\_\_ by/with \_\_\_\_\_;  
(verb phrase) (methods)

she then \_\_\_\_\_ by/with \_\_\_\_\_,  
(verb phrase) (methods)

and to conclude she \_\_\_\_\_  
(verb phrase)

by/with \_\_\_\_\_  
(methods)

3. Her purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_ in order to \_\_\_\_\_.

