

## Life of Pi Through Different Truths

**Hook:** “In both stories the ship sinks, my entire family dies and I suffer... So tell me, since it makes no factual difference... Which is the better story, the story with animals or the story without animals?” (352)

**Thesis:** In the novel, “Life of Pi,” by Yann Martel, Pi Patel tells two versions of his two hundred and twenty-seven days survival at sea; one involving a zebra, an orangutan, a hyena and a tiger named Richard Parker while the other with human survivors, which are a sailor, Pi’s mother and a cook. Both stories are parallels to each other as all the events from beginning to end are the same but the change in characters and the exception of the carnivorous island. However, neither is established in which version is true by the author. It is left through the reader’s personal preference, perspective, and belief that decides its plausibility.

### **Body Paragraph 1: Preference**

**Topic sentences:** One version of the story may be preferred more than the other, particularly the one with the animals. Towards the end of the novel, Pi asks the two Japanese officers before they left, in which is the better story. Mr. Okamoto and Mr. Chiba both reply, “The story with animals.” (352) They did not choose the human version simply because as Mr. Chiba says, “[It was] a horrible story.” (345)

**Point one:** In the second version, Pi tells his gruesome experiences with the cook who is “a brute” (338) as he converts into an atrocious brutal state on account of his rapacious greed and hunger. The story escalates heinously as the despicable cook amputates the sailor’s infected leg. Pi says, “There was blood everywhere,” (338) and eventually the sailor dies; the cook prepares him as food. Whereas in the first story, the dominant hyena eats the injured zebra which in the wild would be a typical event of predator vs. prey.

**Point two:** Then the worse surfaces, “The cook killed [Pi’s] mother... The knife appeared... It came down. Next it was up- it was red.” (343) A young boy dealing with the horrid thoughts of butchered human carcass, nevertheless witnessing his own mother being murdered, are already sickening and morbid enough.

**Point three:** Furthermore, the second story ends with Pi, “[stabbing the cook] in the stomach... [and] in the throat... He dropped like a stone. And died.” (345) Pi resorts to cannibalism and eats the cook’s parts as he reflects, “He was such an evil man. Worse still, he met evil in me -selfishness, anger, ruthlessness. I must live with that.” (345)

**Conclusion:** Listening to this version of Pi’s story with the horrendous, bloody and tragic experiences of four human survivors’ murderous chaos in the midst of struggling to survive is not a dainty type of story that one would likely choose to hear. Because this story involves human afflictions, it appears more tragic to the reader rather than if they were animals as they are known to be wild and ferocious behaviours like these are normal. Presumably, like the officers, the readers would also prefer the adventurous, unique beauty of the first story with Pi and Richard Parker’s journey through the Pacific, even though through the eyes of facts and science that story may be absurd.

## Body paragraph two: Perspective

**Topic sentences:** Although readers may enjoy Pi's incredible journey with Richard Parker better as it is less tragic without human death, in the perspectives of the officers, some aspects of the first story with the animals are factually and scientifically improbable.

**Point one:** The island that Pi comes across in the novel that is inhabited by "carnivorous trees...fish-eating algae that produces fresh water... tree-dwelling aquatic rodents," (326) is botanically impossible and, at least not proven by science yet. Mr. Okamoto says to Pi, "No scientist would believe you... [they are] plants that contradict the laws of nature" (327) The officer argues his point through a scientific perspective of what have been discovered and the disapproves of anything that seems contradictory to it as he knows, "well enough to know the possible from the impossible." (327)

**Point two:** Secondly, a Bengal tiger with a boy in a lifeboat stranded in the middle of the ocean is to the officers also a ridiculous idea. They question its probability, "Mr. Patel, a tiger is an incredibly dangerous wild animal. How could you survive in a lifeboat with one?" (329) Mr. Okamoto also points out that, "There are no tigers in America. If there were... don't you think the police would have heard about it by now?" (329) Richard Parker to them only exists in the boy's head, so Pi replies back with a past story of a black panther that escaped from the Zurich Zoo to explain its possibility.

**Point three:** Lastly, the small bones in the lifeboat were in Pi's story are of meerkat bones. The officers said, "We have no proof they were meerkat bones... They could be bones from another small animal... [such as] shipboard pests, like rats or mongooses." (333) "It's doubtful an expert could tell whether they were meerkat bones or mongoose bones." (334) said Mr. Okamoto. Pi argues that the mongoose didn't sell and stayed in India. Even if scientists approve that they were meerkat bones, the presence of them in the life boat does not confirm the carnivorous island. "Perhaps the mongooses were already on the lifeboat," (333) mentioned Mr. Okamoto.

**Conclusion:** Pi may have somewhat debunked some of the officers' disapprovals and theories through past life experiences and knowledge of his own, however the rest of the story is unlikely. Therefore, through the perspective of facts and science, the story is less plausible than the human parallel version. Then again, it has not been proven to be fake either, meaning there is a possibility that Pi's story is true especially if one believes in it.

## Body paragraph three: Belief

**Topic Sentences:** 'Life of Pi' is a novel that wraps around the idea of belief. It is "a story that will make you believe in God." (VIII) as Pi wholeheartedly believes with his three religions, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. With the two stories told, it brings up the question of believability.

**Point one:** The two Japanese officers insist that Pi tells a different story, one without animals, without a carnivorous island, one that does not contradict reality and one they would find that makes sense. Pi criticized the men for wanting a story that "confirms what [they] already know," (336) something that was already expected. He says, "Love is hard to believe, ask any lover. Life is hard to believe ask any scientist. God is hard to believe ask any believer." (330) They

reply with, "We're just being reasonable." (330) Simply because the officers have yet to see a boy and a Bengal tiger for company in a lifeboat or human-eating trees, they refuse to accept those ideas as existential.

**Point two:** "Two blind people in two separate lifeboats meeting up in the Pacific - the coincidence seems a little far-fetched, no?" (332) Again, the officers, "find it extremely hard to believe." (332) The probability of that happening is like as Pi says, "winning the lottery, yet someone always wins." (332) Although the odds are very rare, like one in 14 million in the lottery, according to a website called "Wonderopolis", this story may well be very true despite the unlikelihood of the event.

**Point three:** "And so it goes with God." (352) Pi says as the two officers decided that the story with the animals is better. This statement implies how faith may be the ultimate reason for believing the unbelievable as there is no absolute truth. Neither stories that Pi tells can be proven to be real or fake just as science is to God and religion. Although the men did not see the first story as plausible, they chose that that is the better story. It is to say that God may seem unbelievable as there is no proof, yet people choose to believe that there is and their lives become more meaningful, giving hope in the will to live which was Pi's key to survival. In times of desperation and suffering, like Pi aching in grief, endurance and clinging to his life towards the end of his sea voyage in the Pacific, he says, "I should turn to God." (315) Thus, religion is one of the greatest influence of faith and can create a better story in one's life.

**Conclusion:** Pi states, "You can't prove which story is true and which is not." (352) Because everyone has their own perspective of the "truth" about life and the "truth" about God, who is to say what is unbelievable? One cannot state that something does not exist, can co-exist or did not occur only because it has yet to be witnessed even if it is suspected to be impossible.

**Restate Thesis:** Both stories explain similar events and each animal character from first story is parallel to the a human character in the second. After reading both of Pi's stories in "Life of Pi" by Yann Martel, it is the reader's personal preference, perspective, and belief that determines which of the two versions is real; the incredible story with animals yet may be beyond what is imaginable in reality or the dry, yeastless, flat story with humans but does not contradict laws of nature.

**Bang:** Regardless of what is more plausible to the reader, the importance of the truth is insignificant because one thing is for certain; a sole survivor of the Tsimtsum ship sinking incident, Piscine (Pi) Molitor Patel, survived two hundred and twenty-seven days at sea and lived to tell two stories.

98% Excellent!

KC

# Language and Literature Assessment Criteria: Year 5

Achievement Level	Criterion A: Analysing	Criterion B: Organizing	Criterion C: Producing Text	Criterion D: Using Language
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	<p>Provides limited analysis of the content, context, language, structure and style of text(s) and the relationship between texts.</p> <p>Provides limited analysis of the effects of the creator's choices on an audience.</p> <p>Rarely justifies opinions and ideas with examples or explanations; uses little or no terminology.</p> <p>Evaluates few similarities and differences by making minimal connections in features across and within genres and texts.</p>	<p>Makes minimal use of organizational structures though these may not always serve the context and intention.</p> <p>Organizes opinions and ideas with a minimal degree of coherence and logic.</p> <p>Makes minimal use of referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style that may not always be suitable to the context and intention.</p>	<p>Produces texts that demonstrate limited personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrated a limited degree of insight, imagination or sensitivity and minimal exploration of and critical reflection on new perspectives and ideas.</p> <p>Makes minimal stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating limited awareness of impact on an audience.</p> <p>Selects few relevant details and examples to develop ideas.</p>	<p>Uses a limited range of appropriate vocabulary and forms of expression.</p> <p>Writes and speaks in an appropriate register and style that do not serve the context and intention.</p> <p>Uses grammar, syntax, and punctuation with limited accuracy; errors often hinder communication.</p> <p>Spells/writes and pronounces with limited accuracy; errors often hinder communication.</p> <p>Makes limited and/or inappropriate use of non-verbal communication techniques.</p>
3-4	<p>Provides adequate analysis of the content, context, language, structure, technique and style of text(s) and the relationship among texts.</p> <p>Provides adequate analysis of the effects of the creator's choices on an audience.</p> <p>Justifies opinions and ideas with some examples and explanations, though this may not be consistent; uses some terminology.</p> <p>Evaluates some similarities and differences by making adequate connections in features across and within genres and texts.</p>	<p>Makes adequate use of organizational structures that serve then context and intention.</p> <p>Organizes opinions and ideas with some degree of coherence and logic.</p> <p>Makes adequate use of referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style suitable to the context and intention.</p>	<p>Produces texts that demonstrate adequate personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates some insight, imagination or sensitivity and some exploration of and critical reflection on new perspectives and ideas.</p> <p>Makes some stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literacy and visual devices, demonstrating adequate awareness of impact on audience.</p> <p>Selects some relevant details and examples to develop ideas.</p>	<p>Uses an adequate range of appropriate vocabulary, sentence structures and forms of expression.</p> <p>Sometimes writes and speaks in a register and style that serve the context and intention.</p> <p>Uses grammar, syntax and punctuation with some degree of accuracy; errors sometimes hinder communication.</p> <p>Spells/writes and pronounces with some degree of accuracy; errors sometimes hinder communication.</p> <p>Makes some use of appropriate non-verbal communication techniques.</p>

5-6	<p>Competently analyses the content, context, language, structure, technique, style of text(s) and the relationship among texts.</p> <p>Competently analyses the effects of the creator's choices on an audience.</p> <p>Sufficiently justifies opinions and ideas with examples and explanations; uses accurate terminology.</p> <p>Evaluates similarities and differences by making substantial connections in features across and within genres and texts.</p>	<p>Makes competent use of organizational structures that serve the context and intention.</p> <p>Organizes opinions and ideas in a coherent and logical manner with ideas building on each other.</p> <p>Makes competent use of referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style suitable to the context and intention.</p>	<p>Produces texts that demonstrate considerable personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates considerable insight, imagination or sensitivity and substantial exploration of and critical reflection on new perspectives and ideas.</p> <p>Makes thoughtful stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating good awareness of impact on an audience.</p> <p>Selects sufficient relevant details and examples to develop ideas.</p>	<p>Uses a varied range of appropriate vocabulary, sentence structures and forms of expression competently.</p> <p>Writes and speaks competently in a register and style that serve the context and intention.</p> <p>Uses grammar, syntax and punctuation with a considerable degree of accuracy; errors do not hinder effective communication.</p> <p>Spells/writes and pronounces with a considerable degree of accuracy; errors do not hinder effective communication.</p> <p>Makes some use of appropriate non-verbal communication techniques.</p>
7-8	<p>Provides perceptive analysis of the content, context, language, structure, technique, style of text(s) and the relationship among texts.</p> <p>Perceptively analyses the effects of the creator's choices on an audience.</p> <p>Gives detailed justification of opinions and ideas with a range of examples, and thorough explanations; uses accurate terminology.</p> <p>Perceptively compares and contrasts by making extensive connections in features across and within genres and texts.</p>	<p>Makes sophisticated use of organizational structures that serve the context and intention effectively.</p> <p>Effectively organizes opinions and ideas in a sustained, coherent and logical manner with ideas building on each other in a sophisticated way.</p> <p>Makes excellent use of referencing and formatting tools to create an effective presentation style.</p>	<p>Produces texts that demonstrate a high degree of personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates a high degree of insight, imagination or sensitivity and perceptive exploration of and critical reflection on new perspectives and ideas.</p> <p>Makes perceptive stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating good awareness of impact on an audience.</p> <p>Selects extensive relevant details and examples to develop ideas with precision.</p>	<p>Effectively uses a range of appropriate vocabulary, sentence structures and forms of expression.</p> <p>Writes and speaks in a consistently appropriate register and style that serve the context and intention.</p> <p>Uses grammar, syntax and punctuation with a high degree of accuracy; errors are minor and communication is effective.</p> <p>Spells/writes and pronounces with a high degree of accuracy; errors are minor and communication is effective.</p> <p>Makes effective use of appropriate non-verbal communication techniques.</p>

