**Significant Cigarettes (The Road Home)**

**ideas**

This extract is the start of the novel. Lev is on a bus from Eastern Europe to London. He is alone in the beginning but then he starts talking to Lydia, who is sat next to him. Lev tells us about his unemployment and that he decided to go to London to support his family.

**context**

This is an extract from a much longer novel. Tremain won an ‘Orange Broadband Prize’ for ‘The Road Home’. Tremain goes on to criticise the selfishness of the upper class in the novel, using the eyes of Lev to achieve this.

**author’spurpose**

Rose Tremain was born in 1943, London. She is famous for writing short-stories and television/radio scripts. She is a historical novelist and she enjoys the writing of William Golding (‘Lord of the Flies’).

**language**

**Informal/colloquial language vs formal language**

Informal language is language that is not perceived to be grammatically correct, whilst formal language is the standard form.

We immediately learn that Lydia is highly educated, as she was a teacher. She struggles to understand Lev’s informalities:

‘May I say some words and you can tell me if I’m pronouncing them correctly?’

‘Yes, of course,’ said Lydia.

Lev said: ‘Lovely. Sorry. I am legal. How much please. Thank you. May you help me.’

‘May I help you,’ corrected Lydia.’’

Lev perceives his English as a way of achieving success. He wants perfect English, so that he can gain a position of employment. He sees Lydia as an opportunity of achieving this.

**Symbolism**

Symbolism is a linguistic device that is used when one object represents another. Lev’s craving for a cigarette grows extremely strong, to the extent that ‘his hands grew fidgety’. This reflects his anxiety at leaving his home and travelling to a new country. He craves for it to go well but it is Lydia who is calm: ‘I’m sorry, but there is no smoking allowed on this bus.’ She is apologising and more willing to please than Lev.

**structure**

**Opening**

It is important to remember that this is the opening of a wider novel. This means we should not assume that the ending of the extract is the end of the story. It is much harder to consider the ending of this particular extract.

Tremain is attempting to hook us in and keep our interest for the remaining story. It is important to consider how this opening achieves this purpose.

The two characters are particularly contrasting. Lydia aspires to be a ‘translator’, whilst Lev is just hopeful for work.

**Memory**

Tremain uses moments on the train to help to present important memories for Lev:

‘Sleeping upright was not something Lev was practised in. The old seemed to be able to do it, but forty-two was not yet old. Lev’s father, Stefan, sometimes used to sleep upright, in summer, on a hard wooden chair in his lunch break at the Baryn sawmill, with the hot sun falling onto the slices of sausage wrapped in paper on his knee and onto his flask of tea.’

It is interesting how Tremain connects the idea of the present (of ‘sleeping’) with the past (Lev’s father).

**exampractice**

Within the exam, you will be asked to compare one text to another of your choice. Here are 3 example essays that you could practice. You must consider the use of language and structure in your answer:

Compare the sense of hope in ‘Significant Cigarettes’ to another text of your choice.

Compare the sense of contrast in ‘’Significant Cigarettes’ to another text of your choice.

How is uncertainty presented in ‘Significant Cigarettes’? Compare it to a text of your choice.