*The Spider’s Legend of Robert the Bruce* **Critical Essay**

How does the writer use poetic techniques to bring *The Spider’s Legend of Robert the Bruce* by Hugh McMillan to life?

*You should refer to techniques such as simile, anthropomorphism (giving human behaviours or characteristics to an animal), word choice, dialect (the fact it’s written in Scots) and narrative voice.*

The examples given in this essay plan are just for your guidance – do not feel that you have to copy my example, at all. You should try to be coming up with your own ideas and should add them into the relevant paragraphs (for example – a comment on similes in the paragraph about similes. You could mention anthropomorphism in its own paragraph if you feel brave enough!).

Introduction

* Mention the poem and the poet’s name in the *introduction*.
* Rephrase the question (e.g. *In the poem, ‘The Spider’s Legend of Robert the Bruce’, Hugh McMillan uses techniques such as simile, word choice, dialect and narrative voice, to bring the poem to life*).
* Give a personal reaction to *why* you think the use of these techniques bring the poem to life.

Paragraph 1

* This paragraph should talk about the *similes* used in the poem - this is your **P**oint.
* Pick out your favourite simile (or two) from the poem.
* Quote it (using “speech marks”) - this is your **E**vidence.
* **A**nalyse it: Say what it actually means (for example, ‘swung like Tarzan’ – Tarzan is the king of the jungle, who is well known for his ability to swing through the forest. This is called the **denotation**).
* Then go on to explain the **connotation** of the simile (for example, it gives the image of the spider being very good at swinging. We think of it being a massive swing that has been done expertly).
* *Every paragraph in an English critical essay (what this is) should contain a* ***PEA – P****oint,* ***E****vidence,* ***A****nalysis.*
* Comment on the effectiveness of the image – explain *why* you like it and *how* you find it to be effective).

Paragraph 2

* This paragraph should talk about the writer’s *word choice* – this should only be one or two words at a time (your **point**) from the poem.
* Quote the word you are talking about (using “speech marks”; your **evidence**)
* Now give your **analysis**. Think:
  + What does it mean?
  + Why do I like this word? What is it about it that makes it stand out?
  + How does it sound? Is it a harsh sounding word?
  + What does it add to the poem? Why has the writer used this choice of word?
  + **Do this for two different words.**

Paragraph 3

* This paragraph should be about *narrative voice* and *dialect.*
* State what person the poem is written in (narrative voice: 1st person – I, me, us…; or 3rd person – he, she it…).
* Why do you think the writer has chosen to use this type of narrative voice?
* Why is it good (or bad)?)
* How does it help to bring the poem to life?
* Would it be as effective if it was written in 3rd person?
* What about the dialect? Why do you think that the writer has chosen to write it in Scots?
* Would it be as effective if it was written in standard English?
* What effect does writing it in Scots have for the reader?
* Do you think that it makes the poem **more** or **less** effective being written in Scots?

Conclusion

* **NEVER INTRODUCE ANY NEW IDEAS TO YOUR CONCLUSION!!!!**
* Your conclusion should just sum up what you have already said – it is like a bow on a present; it just ties everything together nicely.
* Again, you should rephrase the question, mention the poem’s name and the writer’s name.
* Give on example of simile that you like, one for word choice and explain their effectiveness.
* Finally, mention the narrative voice and use of Scots in the poem.
* Do you find the techniques used by the writer are good at making the poem come to life? Give your own opinion.