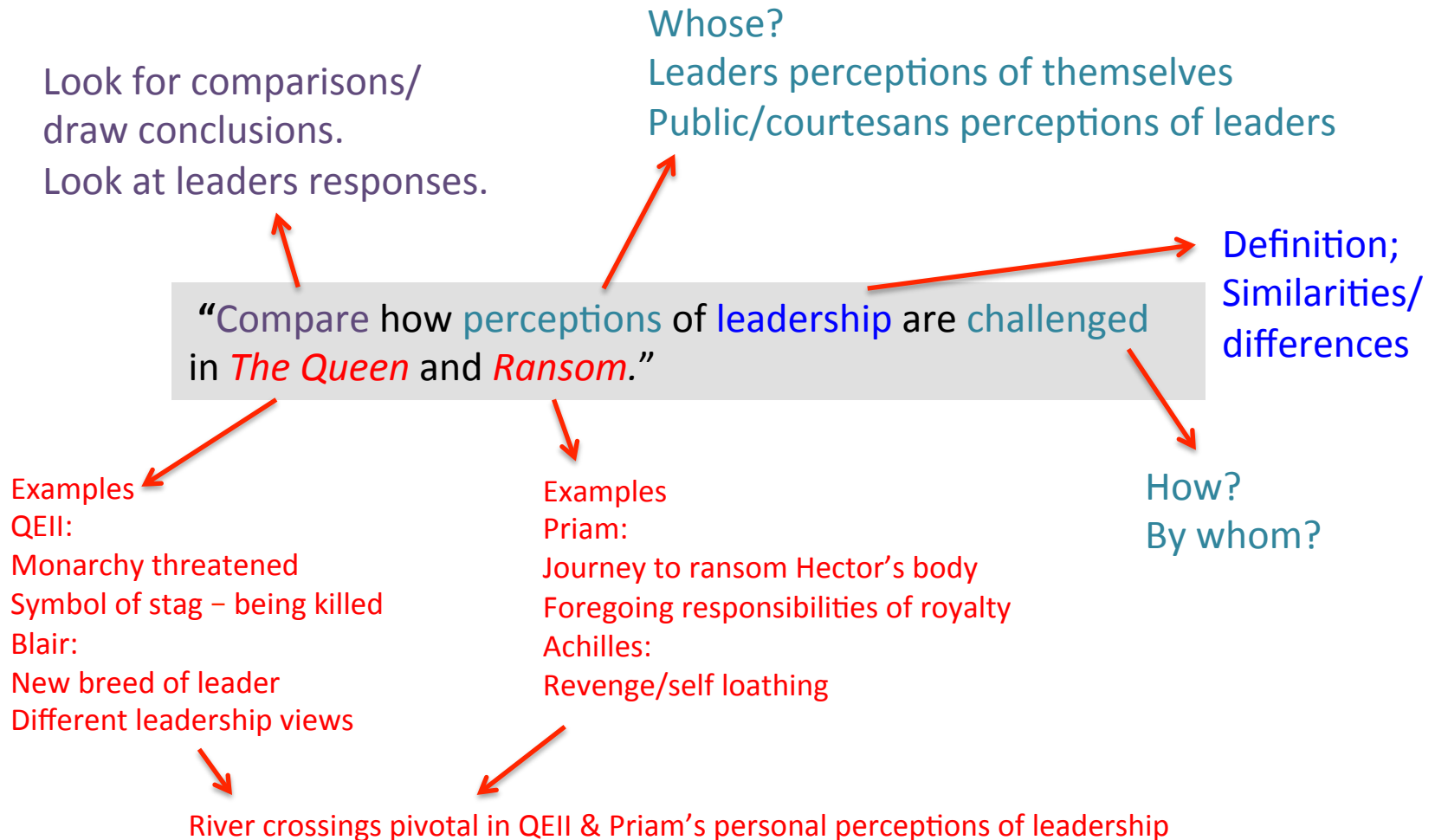


VCE ENGLISH – COMPARATIVE TEXTS: PROMPT Q2

PROMPT:

“Compare how perceptions of leadership are challenged in *The Queen* and *Ransom*.”

VCE ENGLISH – COMPARATIVE TEXTS: DECONSTRUCTING PROMPT Q2



THEMES: Leadership; Family/Parenthood; Tradition, Change & the New; Personal Journeys

“Compare how perceptions of leadership are challenged in *The Queen* and *Ransom*.”

INTRODUCTION:

The film The Queen opens with a Shakespearean quote: "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown" and thus opens a filmic exploration of the trials and tribulations surrounding leaders and their reactions to a specific and tumultuous event that is about to engulf them – the death of Princess Diana. Likewise, in the novel Ransom, one is confronted with leaders who are grappling with the after effects of the death of one of their loved ones and how this has affected their decision-making.

It is undeniable that that in both Stephen Frears' The Queen and David Malouf's Ransom one of the major foci explored is that of leadership, and the ways in which those in power view it.

In both texts, one not only gains an insight into the leaders and how they perceive themselves; but also the ways in which their actions, or inactions, are judged by those about them – their families, their inner circles of advisors and the general populace as a whole – and how these challenge their long held views of the traditional roles they play within their respective societies.

VCE ENGLISH – COMPARATIVE TEXTS - WORKED SAMPLE CONCLUSION

Both Frears' exploration of a constitutional crisis that enveloped Britain in general and Queen Elizabeth II in particular and Malouf's fictional reworking of Book 24 of the Iliad shine the spotlight on leaders, their roles and their responses to grief and grieving. They do, however, paint their protagonists in vastly different lights.

In The Queen we are presented with Queen Elizabeth II who views her primary role as ensuring the continuation and relevance of the monarchy in its current form, and is prepared to adapt her personal values to attain this goal, as can be seen in her compromising her public persona and "modernise" and revealing her "human" emotions to the general populace – in short – she puts her duty above her personal perceptions of herself.

In contrast, in Ransom we have flawed leaders in Priam and Achilles: flawed by their personal reactions to the deaths of a beloved son and a soul mate respectively, who have allowed their emotions control the way in which they conduct themselves and how they are viewed by those around them. They both set aside the traditional and expected behaviours of leaders in their positions to follow their personal journeys through grief in attempts to assuage their feelings of despair, despondency and self-recrimination – for Priam this was taking a "chance"; for Achilles it was a way to overcome "the outrage he was committing" – both seeking some form of personal closure.

Conclusively, both texts do delve into the challenges that leaders face, and although drawing different corollaries do focus on how these affect the perceptions, both private and public, of the leaders and their personal responsibilities to the positions they hold.