# Writing about HSC Visual Arts

## Section II – improving language skills

### Connecting verbs activity

Highlight where connecting verbs and phrases have been used in the updated PEEL Goya example paragraph. Look at how these words and phrases connect either the artists’ intention or the audience response to the artists’ choice of techniques. Some connecting verbs have been highlighted in bold as a guide.

It may be helpful to have a copy of table 23 in ‘[Improving language skills](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/creative-arts/media/documents/creative-arts-s6-visual-arts-hsc-writing-module-2-language-skills.pptx)’ open when you are completing this activity.

Note the original paragraph can be found on slide 7 of ‘[Scaffold the body of your extended response](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/creative-arts/media/documents/creative-arts-s6-visual-arts-hsc-writing-module-2-extended-response-body.pptx)’.

In the painting, *The Third of May, 1808*, Spanish artist Francisco de Goya utilised his innovative visual language thereby **challenging** the social and political traditions of his time and place. In this work he **shifted away from** how past artists celebrated war as honourable and heroic. Despite beginning as a commission in 1815 from the Spanish government to celebrate the expulsion of the French army, Goya’s experimental and impassioned imagery acted as recognition of the brutality of war. He emotionally conveyed the brutal massacre by Napoleonic military forces of everyday people who had revolted against the forceful taking of the Spanish throne in 1808 by Napoleon’s brother. Goya portrayed an ordinary man, arms raised in terror, kneeling before faceless soldiers, guns pointing in the moment of execution. To the right, others look on horrified, while to the left lie bloodied corpses illustrating the inhumanity of war. His expressive and experimental choice of symbolic language, dramatic lighting, and innovative composition provoked an emotional response from his audience to the horror of this specific event. Goya portrayed the executioners as anonymous and machine-like, again employing light to highlight the horrifying scene. He placed the victim off centre, bathing him in a dramatic, almost spiritual light, thereby positioning the audience as shocked witnesses to this gruesome event. These innovative compositional and pictorial devices highlight the victim as the focal point of the image. Goya used, in particular, the crucifixion pose of the victim and the stigmata on his hands to connect the victim to the martyrdom of Christ. These symbols evocatively highlight the inhumanity of war. Art historian, Kenneth Clark, identifies this work as ‘the first great picture which can be called revolutionary in every sense of the word, in style, in subject, and in intention’ (Richman-Abdou K 2019). This highlights how Goya employed his revolutionary and innovative visual language to interrogate conventional political and social views of war and powerfully challenge previous ideas of war as necessary and noble.

## References

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Richman-Abdou K (2019) [*6 of Francisco Goya’s Most Famous Masterpieces*](https://mymodernmet.com/francisco-goya-art/), My Modern Met website, accessed 24 May 2023.

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