**Beware of the Dog by Roald Dahl**

*The extract is the opening of a short story. It is set in 1943, and focuses on a WW2 RAF fighter pilot who is flying home.*

Down below there was only a vast white undulating sea of cloud. Above there was the sun, and the sun was white like the clouds, because it is never yellow when one looks at it from high in the air.

He was still flying the Spitfire. His right hand was on the stick, and he was working the rudder bar with his left leg alone. It was quite easy. The machine was flying well, and he knew what he was doing.

Everything is fine, he thought. I'm doing all right. I'm doing nicely. I know my way home. I'll be there in half an hour. When I land I shall taxi in and switch off my engine and I shall say, help me to get out, will you. I shall make my voice sound ordinary and natural and none of them will take any notice. Then I shall say, someone help me to get out. I can't do it alone because I've lost one of my legs. They'll all laugh and think that I'm joking, and I shall say, all right, come and have a look, you unbelieving lot. Then Yorky will climb up onto the wing and look inside. He'll probably be sick because of all the blood and the mess. I shall laugh and say, for God's sake, help me out.

He glanced down again at his right leg. There was not much of it left. The cannon shell had taken him on the thigh, just above the knee, and now there was nothing but a great mess and a lot of blood. But there was no pain. When he looked down, he felt as though he were seeing something that did not belong to him. It had nothing to do with him. It was just a mess which happened to be there in the cockpit; something strange and unusual and rather interesting. It was like finding a dead cat on the sofa.

He really felt fine, and because he still felt fine, he felt excited and unafraid.

I won't even bother to call up on the radio for the blood wagon, he thought. It isn't necessary. And when I land I'll sit there quite normally and say, some of you fellows come and help me out, will you, because I've lost one of my legs. That will be funny. I'll laugh a little while I'm saying it; I'll say it calmly and slowly, and they'll think I'm joking. When Yorky comes up onto the wing and gets sick, I'll say, Yorky, you old dog, have you fixed my car yet? Then when I get out I'll make my report and later I'll go up to London. I'll take that half bottle of whisky with me and I'll give it to Bluey. We'll sit in her room and drink it. I'll get the water out of the bathroom tap. I won't say much until it's time to go to bed, then I’ll say, Bluey, I've got a surprise for you. I lost a leg today. But I don't mind so long as you don't. It doesn't even hurt.

We'll go everywhere in cars. I always hated walking, except when I walked down the street of the coppersmiths in [Bagdad](http://www.reference.com/browse/Bagdad?r-13), but I could go in a [rickshaw](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/rickshaw). I could go home and chop wood, but the head always flies off the ax. Hot water, that's what it needs; put it in the bath and make the handle swell. I chopped lots of wood last time I went home, and I put the ax in the bath. . . .

Then he saw the sun shining on the engine cowling of his machine. He saw the rivets in the metal, and he remembered where he was. He realized that he was no longer feeling good; that he was sick and giddy. His head kept falling forward onto his chest because his neck seemed no longer to have any strength. But he knew that he was flying the [Spitfire](http://www.reference.com/browse/Spitfire?r-13), and he could feel the handle of the stick between the fingers of his right hand.

I'm going to pass out, he thought. Any moment now I'm going to pass out.

**Question 2**: Look in detail at lines 1 to 8

**How does the writer use language to communicate the feelings of the pilot?**

You could include the writer’s choice of:

* words and phrases
* language features and techniques
* sentence forms

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**Question 3**: You now need to think about the **whole** of the **source**.

This text is from the opening of a short story.

**How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?**

You could write about:

* what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
* how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
* any other structural features that interest you.

**Question 4**:

Focus this part of your answer on the **whole source.**

A student, having read this text, said: “*The writer makes you care about what happens to the pilot.”*

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

• consider your own impressions of the pilot

• evaluate how the writer creates these impressions

• support your opinions with references to the text