KEY INCIDENT – REMINDERS

**A “favourite” with examiners, the Key Incident question will allow you the opportunity to demonstrate your thorough knowledge of several aspects of the novel.**

It may be worded in a variety of ways, so be sure to read the question very carefully. Some possibilities are:

* **An incident of great importance**
* **An incident or moment of great tension**
* **A confrontation**
* **The climax to a conflict**
* **A character makes a major decision or choice**
* **Climax of a novel**
* **Turning point**
* **An incident involving aspects such as loss, rejection, disappointment, great happiness etc …(this last element doesn’t appear very often!)**

You will probably be asked to provide a brief summary of the incident. **Keep this brief,** as your examiner will be more interested in how you handle the rest of the question. This usually asks you to show how the incident contributes to your deeper understanding of one **aspect** of the novel – eg character, or to **your understanding of the novel as a whole**. This allows you to discuss some of the following – three will usually be enough.

* Plot
* Characterisation
* Setting
* **Theme\* - you should always include this element**
* Aspects of style, eg symbolism, narrative devices such as epistolary form, character as observer, etc

**Some of the most flexible key incidents in “The Mayor…” are:**

* The sale
* “growed wheat”
* Henchard meets Susan at the Ring
* The Abel Whittle incident
* Henchard discovers E-J is not his daughter
* Henchard begins to drink again
* The furmity woman appears in court – CATALYST for downfall of tragic hero
* The fight in the grain loft – a **confrontation**, providing the **climax** to **conflict**

NB – IF THE EXAMINERS ARE LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER ON OPENING OR CONCLUSION OF NOVEL, THE QUESTION WILL SPECIFY THIS. HOWEVER, THE SAME ELEMENTS OF PLOT, CHARACTER, THEME, SETTING, STYLE APPLY.