Investigating Section 7: Night - Chapter eighteen

- Offred says, ‘One of the gravestones in the cemetery... has an anchor on it and an hourglass.’
  - What, in your opinion, are the possible meanings of these symbols?
  - How do they relate to the words, ‘In Hope?’

Investigating Section 8: Birth Day - Chapter nineteen

- In this chapter the idea of an egg is focussed on in great detail, though it adds nothing to the immediate plot. Why?
- Re-read from ‘In front of me is a tray’ to ‘eat the contents’
  - Consider the implications of all the thoughts which Atwood creates in Offred’s mind about eggs.

Investigating Section 8: Birth Day - Chapter twenty

- Use the internet to investigate the (still continuing) ‘Take Back the Night’ campaign.

Investigating Section 8: Birth Day - Chapter twenty-one

- Offred is extremely sensitive to smell, as we have seen before (e.g. chapters 5, 8 and 12). The second paragraph of this chapter focusses vividly on smells:
  - Find two other examples of her response to smell in this chapter.

Investigating Section 8: Birth Day - Chapter twenty-two

- ‘All of it is a reconstruction’ Offred says at the start of the next chapter. Atwood could have told the story of Moira’s escape from the Red Centre in various ways and from different viewpoints, even using different chronology.
  - Make a list of some of the possible ways in which the story of Moira’s escape could have been told.
    - Note that in chapter 38, when Moira tells her own story of the escape, she begins it from the end of the events outlined in chapter 22, and in any case Offred again ‘reconstructs’ only what she can remember.

Investigating Section 8: Birth Day - Chapter twenty-three

- The banning of language or of books is a frequently-used political tool.
  - Read, or read a synopsis of, the one-act play Mountain Language by Harold Pinter, or the play Translations by Brian Friel, both of which examine the repression of a native language.