

OXFORD

ENGLISH

for

Queensland

UNITS 3 & 4

KELLI MCGRAW

LINDSAY WILLIAMS

SOPHIE JOHNSON

Texts:
connections and
close study



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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Published in Australia by
Oxford University Press
Level 8, 737 Bourke Street, Docklands, Victoria 3008, Australia.

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First published 2019
1st Edition

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A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
National Library of Australia

ISBN 9780190313142

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Edited by Sandra Balonyi
Typeset by Newgen KnowledgeWorks Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, India
Proofread by Jeanette Birtles
Indexed by Neil Daly
Printed in Malaysia by Vivar Printing

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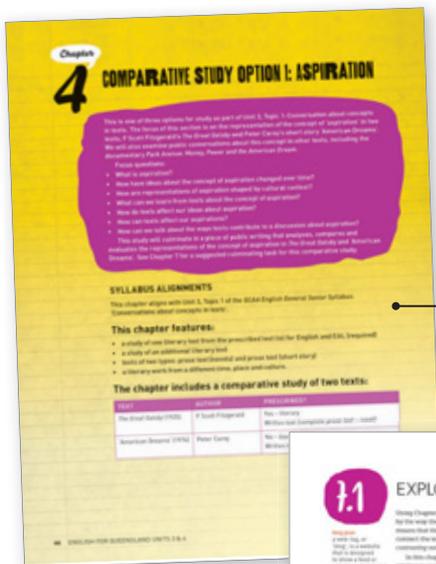




Our brand new two-volume series, *English for Queensland*, is written specifically for the new *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*. The series is designed to exemplify possible learning pathways and model approaches to text analysis and creation. It provides deep and complete coverage of the syllabus in an accessible format that encourages all students to succeed.

English for Queensland Units 3 & 4 ensures the best learning outcomes for students. Key features include:

- comprehensive coverage of the new syllabus
- reinforcement of key knowledge and skills from Years 7 to 10 English
- a handy write-in textbook format
- an expert author team writing in a highly engaging, direct and concise style
- clear topic sections to scaffold student learning and aid navigation
- a range of engaging classic, contemporary and media texts, including digital, multimodal and visual texts
- differentiation support through a range of appropriately levelled *Your turn* questions and activities for each section
- targeted support and resources for assessment, including exam preparation and practice
- a standalone reference section (Chapter 14 'English toolkit') that supports the acquisition of key skills and provides practical ready-resources, such as templates, proformas and checklists.

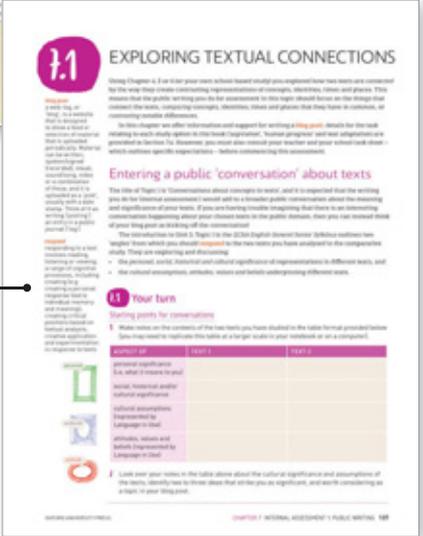


Each chapter opening page introduces the key concepts and skills included in the chapter, and incorporates key syllabus information.

The comprehensive content is rich in visual material, as well as authentic texts and text extracts.



Margin glossary definitions aid understanding by helping students quickly and easily find the meaning of unfamiliar terms.

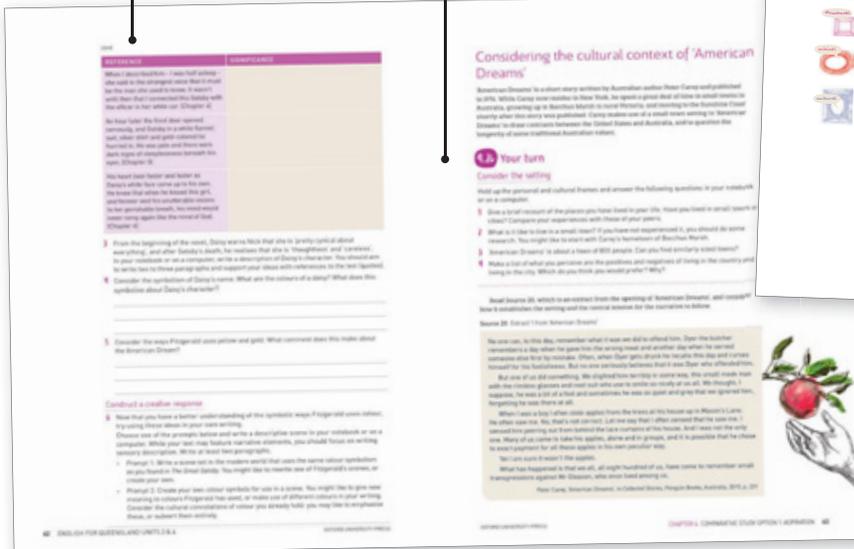


IN UNITS 3 & 4 ENGLISH

A generous amount of space is provided for students to write answers to task questions.

Your turn tasks are included for each topic, and answers to every question in the Student book are provided on Teacher obook assess.

Comprehensive and targeted support is provided for assessment, including exam preparation and practice.



9.5 SUGGESTED TASK FOR ASSESSMENT

To create a persuasive spoken response for this assessment task, you'll need to draw on the study of media texts that you studied for Unit 3, Topic 2 'Conversations about issues in space'. In the table on page 299, we've provided some details about two possible response options.

- 1 Perform live to a small to medium audience.
- 2 Produce digitally and publish online to reach a wider audience.

As always, be sure to check your school task sheet to confirm your specific assessment requirements before completing this task.

9.5 Your turn

Talking about surveillance: a conversation about textual connections

1 Create your spoken response

Drawing on analyses of different perspectives on mass surveillance represented in a range of media texts, create a spoken response of 5–8 minutes that enters the public conversation after a controversy.

- ✓ is supported by persuasive arguments
- ✓ offers a counterpoint
- ✓ provides responses that connect with the positions offered by others.

Target audience: Before commencing, confirm using your school task sheet, or perhaps decide as a class the intended audience of your spoken response.

Will it be:

- ✓ your English teachers and classmates only?
- ✓ your parents or other family members?
- ✓ students in other grades?
- ✓ a public audience beyond the school?

Medium: Before commencing, confirm the options available to you for presenting your spoken response.

Will it be:

- ✓ a performed spoken/signed response in front of a live audience?
- ✓ a performed spoken/signed response for a video recording to be submitted with (or for) digital editing?
- ✓ audio/video recorded in stages, then edited together to create a media text?

2 Interact (optional)

Comment: You may have the opportunity to upload your video for others in your class, school or wider community to view. If two or more students do this, you can engage the conversation in your spoken responses by adding comments and comment responses under the video.

Share: If completing this assessment task is included in the recording of an authentic message about an issue that you would like to contribute to public debate, attempt to spread the talk using social media and other strategies, to gain the attention of influential voices.

obook assess

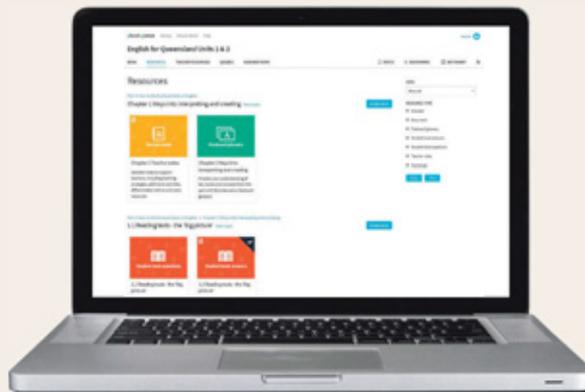
English for Queensland Units 3 & 4 is supported by a range of engaging and relevant digital resources via obook assess.

Students receive:

- a complete digital version of the Student book – the obook – with added notetaking and bookmarking functionality
- a free *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* look-up feature
- a range of interactive, auto-correcting, multiple-choice assess quiz questions
- access to work assigned by their teacher, such as reading, homework, quizzes and assignments
- the ability to use their cloud-based obook anywhere, anytime, on any device.

In addition to the student resources, teachers also receive:

- a detailed course planner and teacher notes
- answers to all questions and assessment tasks in the Student book
- the ability to set up classes, set assignments, and view all available content and resources in one place.



Super!



Part

A

STUDYING SENIOR ENGLISH

UNITS 3 & 4

Chapter 1 Preparing to study Units 3 & 4

- 1.1 Review of key information from *English for Queensland Units 1 & 2*
- 1.2 Independent study for English: Guide and tips

Chapter 2 Unit 3: Making connections between texts

- 2.1 What connects texts?
- 2.2 What is a concept?
- 2.3 What is an issue?

Chapter 3 Unit 4: Responding critically, responding creatively

- 3.1 Studying literature
- 3.2 Creating invited and critical readings
- 3.3 Cognitive processes for critical and creative responses

PREPARING TO STUDY UNITS 3 & 4

Your success in English can be achieved through the consistent and systematic use of frameworks that are transferable from one situation to the next – from one text to the next. Being able to analyse and interpret one particular text is not enough.

As analysing and interpreting texts is such an important skill, the focus in this chapter is on general advice and tips for English. It details frameworks and ideas that you can adapt to just about any situation that involves the comprehension and creation of stories, arguments and literary responses.

Focus questions:

- What are text frames and how will they be useful to you when reading?
- What is the model of language that underpins a study of English?
- What are your goals (personal, academic, cultural/sporting, work-related) for this year?
- How can you set yourself up for success? What study techniques might work for you?

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

The approaches and frameworks discussed in this chapter can be applied to Units 3 & 4 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*.

This chapter features:

- a review of four frames that can be useful for making interpretations of texts
- a review of the Language in Use model that underpins the approach to interpreting and creating texts in the syllabus
- a starting point for reflecting on your own study skills coming into Units 3 & 4
- explicit links to relevant cognitive verbs
- practical strategies and skills for English (and beyond).

1.1

REVIEW OF KEY INFORMATION FROM *ENGLISH FOR QUEENSLAND* *UNITS 1 & 2*

Before you proceed with Units 3 & 4, it is worth reminding yourself about two frameworks that will assist you when interpreting (i.e. reading, viewing and listening) and creating (i.e. writing, speaking and signing) multimodal texts. Summarised in this section are:

- frames for interpreting texts
- the Language in Use model.

Interpreting texts using frames

Your assessment in English usually requires you to demonstrate your ability to *analyse*, *interpret* and *evaluate* various types of texts. In this book, we will use the umbrella term *interpret* to refer to all the different processes involved in reading and understanding meaning.

Interpreting texts involves using your subjective standpoint in the world to make sense of how someone else has used language to create meaning. Even when we agree with our peers about the meaning of a text, in our minds we are linking that text to a different (possibly unique) set of memories, past experiences and related texts. Sometimes this means we interpret a text differently from someone else. To ensure our interpretations are based on personal responses that have been rigorously considered, it's important that we keep the big picture in mind and always push to look at the text from different angles.

One metaphor that we recommend using to ensure that your personal response contains multiple elements of interpretation is 'framing'. By ensuring that we look at a text through multiple frames, we give ourselves a system for seeing different things and creating rich responses to the work of others. To really get a 'big-picture' understanding of a new text, you should figuratively place each of the frames shown on page 6 over the text to generate ideas about personal, structural, cultural and critical meanings. Being able to integrate and synthesise these various meanings is essential for your success in Units 3 & 4.



Critical frame

critical



Focus: Evaluating the values, beliefs and assumptions underpinning the text

Key guiding questions:

- What does this text invite us to believe, do and feel?
- Whose perspectives have been omitted, disregarded or marginalised?
- Whose perspectives have been included, emphasised or privileged?
- What linguistic, textual or cultural conventions are challenged by this work?
- What can we create to challenge this text by adapting, intervening in or transforming it?
- At this point, have any of your personal feelings or reactions to the text changed?

Personal frame

personal



Focus: Noticing your reaction to the text and what stands out to you personally

Key guiding questions:

- How did this text make you feel?
- What were the first things you noticed about this text?
- Can you see your own story or perspective in this text?
- Does it remind you of any other texts?

Cultural frame

cultural



Focus: Exploring how the text represents the society and culture of a particular time and place

Key guiding questions:

- When and where was this text produced?
- What social and cultural norms are represented?
- What values are promoted?
- Was this text controversial or conservative for its time?
- Does this text belong to a movement or style?

Structural frame

structural



Focus: Analysing the way structure, language and other textual features work to give a text meaning

Key guiding questions:

- How has this text been organised?
- What genre is being used?
- How have written, spoken, visual or other features been used?
- Do any patterns stand out (e.g. metaphors, motifs/ themes and symbols)?
- How are the textual features working to give this text meaning?

1.1a Your turn

Practising the reading frames

Find a short text (a blog post, a review, a news story or an extract from a novel or play). Read it a few times, applying a different reading frame each time. With other students, reflect on the following questions:

- What did you find easy? What did you find difficult?
- If you strike difficulty with particular frames, what can you do to solve that problem? Who can you get help from with particular frames?

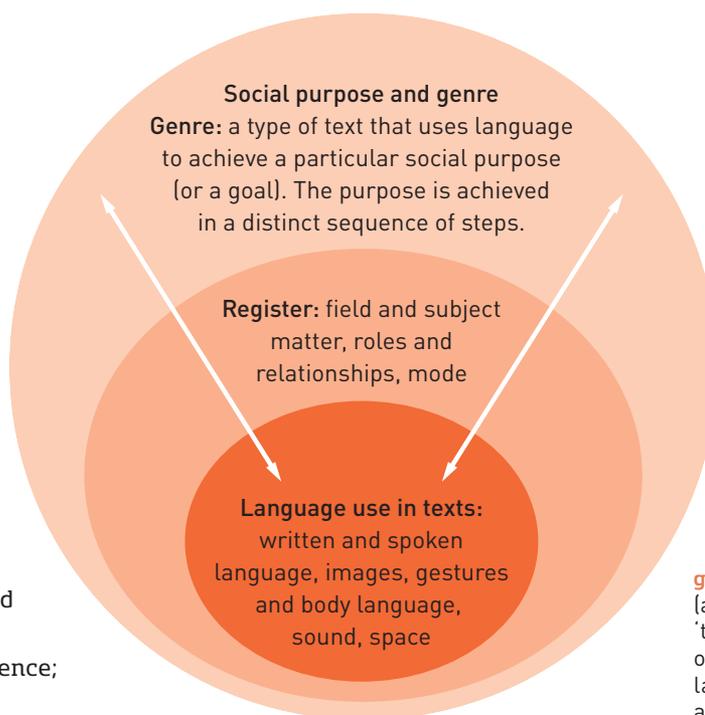
Language in Use

We are going to use the Language in Use model to help us make sense of some of the 'bigness' and complexity of language. A model is a way of representing aspects of the world and can be a useful thinking tool. The model allows us to think about the way language is used in different contexts relevant to Senior English (e.g. everyday, civic, literary and academic contexts).

One version of the model is presented in the diagram in Source 1. The double-headed arrows indicate a two-way influence; that is:

- the *purpose, genre* and *register* influence the selection of language for a text, and
- choices in *language* can affect, challenge or subvert the register and genre.

For example, a student is expected to be polite and deferential when speaking to the principal, but a student could challenge the relationship by sitting in the principal's chair, calling her 'mate' and asking, rather than answering, questions.



Source 1 The Language in Use model

genre
(also known as 'text type') a type of text that uses language to achieve a particular social purpose or goal in a distinct sequence of steps or stages

register
a collective term encompassing field and subject matter, roles and relationships, mode and medium; these variables influence language choices

field
the general area of activity (e.g. football training, literary studies, biology, civic protest) in which a text user is using language

subject matter
the specific content or topic of a text (e.g. frogs within the field of biology or marriage within the field of literary studies)

role
the identity or part (e.g. coach, literary critic, scientist) that one adopts in a specific communication context

relationships
the power, distance and alignment of values that influence the language people use with each other in a specific context

Questions to guide text creation

Whether you are writing, speaking, signing or producing a multimodal text, you should ask yourself the questions listed in Source 2 before you start. Your answers will help ensure that the text you produce is both appropriate (i.e. fit for purpose) and effective (i.e. does its job well).

Source 2 Questions to ask yourself about texts

ASPECT OF LANGUAGE IN USE MODEL	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Purpose and genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the social purpose of the text? - Therefore, what genre (or combination of genres) would be most appropriate? (Refer to Source 3.)
Register Field and subject matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What field will you be involved in (e.g. literary criticism, journalism, civic activism)? - Within this field, what is your subject matter? Alternatively, what question do you need to answer?
Roles and associated relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What role do you need to adopt (e.g. journalist, film critic, blogger, student of literature)? - Who is your audience (e.g. the general public, an online special interest group, older adolescents, an examiner)? - What relationship should you assume between you and your audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - close $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ distant - equal $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ unequal - values aligned $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ values not aligned?

(Continues on next page)

Source 2 cont.

mode
a channel of communication, most commonly written, spoken, visual, audio (i.e. sounds), gestural and spatial

medium
the method or technique of communication used to produce a text (e.g. paper and pen, film stock, digital file, live in front of an audience)

ASPECT OF LANGUAGE IN USE MODEL	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Mode and associated medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the task mainly written or spoken? Are you required to include images? - How will the text be conveyed (e.g. on paper, digitally, face to face)?
Language and other features	<p>Given the context above, what type of meaning-making resources will you need to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>language</i> (e.g. noun and verb groups, evaluative language, cohesion, aesthetic features and stylistic devices) - <i>spoken features</i> (e.g. intonation, rhythm, pitch, intensity) - <i>images</i> (e.g. gaze, colour, shot type) - <i>gestures and body language</i> (e.g. eye contact, gesture, body movement and orientation) - <i>sign language</i> - <i>sound</i> (e.g. soundscape, sound effects, silence) - <i>space</i> (e.g. bound/unbound, bonding) - some combination of the above?

The questions in Source 2 can also be helpful to consider when interpreting texts, especially when holding up the structural, cultural and critical frames. For example, when applying the structural frame, you would find it helpful to think more about the structure and features of the text in relation to the register: what do these reveal about the field of the text, the role adopted by the writer, the intended audience and the assumptions about relationships?

Source 3 Key genres for Senior English

GENRE FAMILY	GENRE	SOCIAL PURPOSE	TYPICAL STAGES
			Note: Optional stages are shown in brackets
Story	recount	to recount events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - orientation - events
	narrative	to resolve a complication in a story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - orientation - complication - (evaluation) - resolution - (coda)
	anecdote	to share an emotional reaction to a remarkable event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - orientation - complication - (evaluation)
	exemplum	to judge characters/people or behaviour in a story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - orientation - complication - (evaluation)
	news story	to report a significant event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lead - angles

(Continues on next page)

GENRE FAMILY	GENRE	SOCIAL PURPOSE	TYPICAL STAGES
			Note: Optional stages are shown in brackets
Argument	exposition	to argue a point of view	- (background) - thesis - supporting arguments - reinforcement of thesis
	discussion	to discuss two or more points of view	- (background) - issue - sides - resolution
	challenge	to rebut a position on an issue	- position - rebuttal
Response to text	review	to assess the value of a literary, visual or musical text	- context - interpretation of elements of text - judgment
	character analysis	to evaluate character(s) in a text	- character presentation - character description - character judgment
	compositional analysis	to analyse the elements used to compose a culturally significant work	- context - analysis - summary/judgment
	analytical essay (interpretation)	to interpret themes/ messages or aesthetics of a text	- thesis: theme identification and preview of elements - element evaluation - theme reiteration
	analytical essay (critical response)	to analyse and evaluate the themes, ideas, aesthetics or messages in a work	- text evaluation - deconstruction of text - challenge to message

1.16 Your turn

Thinking about Language in Use

Read your first assessment task sheet carefully. Then, in small groups (if possible), see how many of the questions from Source 2 you can answer. Remember, not all the information will be given to you explicitly – you might have to make inferences based on your prior knowledge of and experience in English.



1.2

INDEPENDENT STUDY FOR ENGLISH: GUIDE AND TIPS

Before reading any further, stop for a moment and think about your various goals for this year.

Hint: It's a good idea to write these down and pin them up somewhere prominent in your study space.



Source 4 Questions to consider in your final year of school

In all likelihood, you will be aiming for some combination of goals; the important thing is to achieve balance in your life. And this won't happen without some planning, persistence and discipline.

The remainder of this chapter will focus (mainly) on your academic goals, and especially how you can maximise your grades in General English. We'll be focusing on three main areas:

- preparing for study: planning, and space and **time management**
- key thinking processes for English
- concentration, memory skills and overlearning.

Along the way, we'll try to address some common issues that students of English face.

Preparing for study: planning, and space and time management

In this section, we focus on some key skills that will set you up for success. While these ideas are especially directed at your studies in English, they can be adapted for any subject.

Please note that 'reading' will be used throughout to cover reading, viewing and listening; 'writing' will be used as a convenient term to capture writing, speaking and creating multimodal texts.

time management
having the ability to use your time effectively and productively at school, at work and at home

Planning

Study in English will mainly involve engaging closely with a range of different types of texts, especially stories, arguments and literary responses. Having a clear purpose for your reading is crucial. While personal pleasure from your reading, viewing and listening is always a bonus, in English you might also be aiming to:

- obtain background information on the context of a new text or a particular author
- clarify an emotional reaction (i.e. why did I react in the way that I did to that text? Is it something in my personal or family background? How did the author use structure and language to position me?)
- identify patterns of evidence to test and justify an interpretation
- ... do something else.

Each purpose will require a slightly different approach to your study and associated reading. Source 5 provides a couple of illustrative examples of what this might mean.

Source 5 Planning for reading (illustrative examples)

PURPOSE OF READING	HOW YOU MIGHT APPROACH YOUR STUDY (SAMPLE ACTIVITIES)
To read a novel for personal pleasure (always a good idea on the first reading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sit in a comfortable chair or lie down in a hammock or bed - ensure the space is as distraction-free as possible - allow yourself to be immersed in the world of the story - share your immediate reactions to the text with friends (e.g. via social media)
To identify patterns of evidence to test and justify an interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - slow down the pace of your reading - underline key passages and write annotations (e.g. on colour-coded sticky notes) - keep an open mind as you read; because of your own, unique background and experience, you might have a different perspective on a text from someone else - discuss ideas with others (e.g. via a focused chat session)

Space management

Ideally, you need a permanent, personal space of your own where you can study as free from distraction as possible. This space should have everything you need within easy reach and be kept as tidy as is practicable. Study essentials might include the following:

- a room with a door you can close
- a desk and a comfortable chair
- shelving (e.g. for set texts, textbooks, other reference books) and storage (e.g. for pens, paper, paper clips, sticky notes)
- a noticeboard and/or whiteboard – for reminders, or as a calendar with due dates marked, rough ideas, or important information
- good lighting (preferably natural during the day)
- a fan (or air conditioner) and heater, depending on the season – make sure these are safe to use
- an area free from distractions (e.g. Can you charge your phone on the other side of the room, away from your desk or outside the room?)
- access to the internet, with a dictionary and thesaurus bookmarked in your browser.

What if I don't have my own quiet space where I live?



You might be able to find space elsewhere. Try the local library. Also, many schools run homework clubs outside of school hours.



Time management

As we saw earlier, you may have a number of goals for your final year in high school: academic (and not just for English), personal, cultural/sporting and employment. Time will need to be allocated to each goal. In addition, you will need to allocate time for typical daily activities, including:

- eating (and food preparation)
- household chores or a part-time job
- moderate, daily exercise (essential)
- relaxation
- social bonding activities with family and friends
- at least 8 hours of sleep per night.

So you don't end up feeling overwhelmed, it might be useful to draw up a weekly timetable. This could be done using the calendar function in your mobile phone, or you might prefer a hard copy that you pin to a noticeboard. Important tasks can also be placed in your mobile phone's 'Reminders' app.

Once you have drafted a plan, stick to it as closely as you can. However, if you don't quite hit your targets, be kind to yourself because the plan can be reviewed at the end of each week and modified as necessary. Also, avoid overplanning – a *too* detailed plan won't leave space for the inevitable, unexpected disruptions.

There is one more important activity for which to set aside time. To maximise success in all your subjects, *daily wide-reading of self-selected texts* (these can be good-quality non-fiction, podcasts, blogs, online news stories, etc.) is essential; this can help you expand your general knowledge and develop your vocabulary (for which exposure to written language is crucial). You also need to work on your thinking processes for reading, viewing and listening (see below), but *20–30 minutes per day* of wide-reading is a very good discipline to get into.

If you're having any major issues, make sure you get help from a trusted adult. You could share your problems with friends, an uncle or aunt, a home-room teacher, deputy principal or guidance officer, who will have access to a range of resources and services that might help you solve your problem.



infer

draw a conclusion based on evidence and reasoning rather than what is explicitly stated in a text

analyse

break down a text into its component parts in order to find patterns and relationships, and to explain and interpret the text

interpret

draw conclusions about the meaning[s] of a text; this involves reading the text closely and drawing on your own knowledge, experience and world view

evaluate

make judgments about a text, based on criteria and/or your world view

synthesise

combine ideas, information, analysis and interpretation into a coherent whole, in order to create and display new understanding

Key thinking processes for English

By now, no doubt you have heard *a lot* about cognitive verbs. As you know, a verb is a doing, thinking, saying, feeling or being word. However, in the syllabus, 'cognitive verb' is used as a convenient term for what happens in your head as you read and produce texts; that is, your thinking processes. In the next two sections, we outline the thinking processes that will be useful for:

- reading, viewing and listening
- writing, speaking and creating.

This discussion will draw explicitly on Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority's (QCAA) official list of cognitive verbs, but will also expand on those where required.

Finally, it is assumed that most of the information and tips are prompts and reminders for you, rather than being completely new.

Reading, viewing and listening

If your task is to analyse and interpret texts, the following are some tips on when and how to apply particular thinking skills. Crucially, research shows that engagement in learning is increased for students who actively apply practical strategies such as those in Source 6. *Even when students aren't especially interested in the content, merely using the strategies diligently tends to improve engagement.*

The tips in Source 6 can be used in conjunction with the four reading frames reviewed earlier. If you're having trouble with any of these processes (or you have particular learning needs), make sure you talk to your English teacher early in the year.

Source 6 Thinking processes for reading, viewing and listening

STAGE OF READING	KEY THINKING PROCESSES TO APPLY	PRACTICAL IDEAS
Before reading/ viewing/listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>investigate</i> and <i>understand</i> the context (historical, social, cultural, political) - make <i>predictions</i> about the text - <i>determine</i> your purpose for reading (e.g. for pleasure, to obtain information, to clarify an emotional reaction, to identify patterns of evidence, to test and justify an interpretation; something else?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conduct research, if necessary - brainstorm what you know already and what you want to know (e.g. via a KWL) - base predictions on an analysis of the cover, scanning chapter titles and headings, and your own prior knowledge/experience
During reading/ viewing/listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>identify</i> field and subject matter, roles (including 'intended' or 'ideal' readers) and relationships - <i>generate</i> questions as you read (e.g. what, where, when, how, why, what if ...?) - visualise and <i>create</i> sensory images (touch, smell, taste, hearing) in your head - <i>determine</i> connections to prior knowledge, experience and other texts - <i>explore</i> connections between various parts of the text – identify patterns and discontinuities - <i>infer</i> meanings (e.g. What aren't you told directly but can work out for yourself?) - monitor your reading and <i>apply</i> strategies to <i>solve</i> comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - read/view/listen to the text more than once - engage emotionally with the text – especially during a first read - use the probe questions for the four reading frames (see page 6) - create a double-entry diary for key passages (especially useful when re-reading) - underline key sections, annotate the text (using sticky notes if necessary) - create flow charts, graphic organisers, mind maps, story maps, sociograms etc.
After reading/ viewing/listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>analyse</i> the key features of the text, including structure and language - <i>interpret</i> the overall meaning/s of the text - <i>test</i> ideas against textual evidence and other people's interpretations - <i>determine</i> and <i>select</i> important information in relation to an assessment task - <i>evaluate</i> the text and make <i>judgments</i> about it, including in comparison to other texts - <i>develop</i> an argument in relation to the text and <i>justify</i> it with patterns of textual evidence (analytical and critical responses) - <i>apply</i> knowledge of the text to <i>experiment</i> with and <i>create</i> new texts (imaginative responses) - <i>synthesise</i> your responses and understandings - <i>reflect</i> on your personal reading experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - see the writing process in the next section - base judgments on established criteria, as well as personal and socially agreed values, attitudes and beliefs

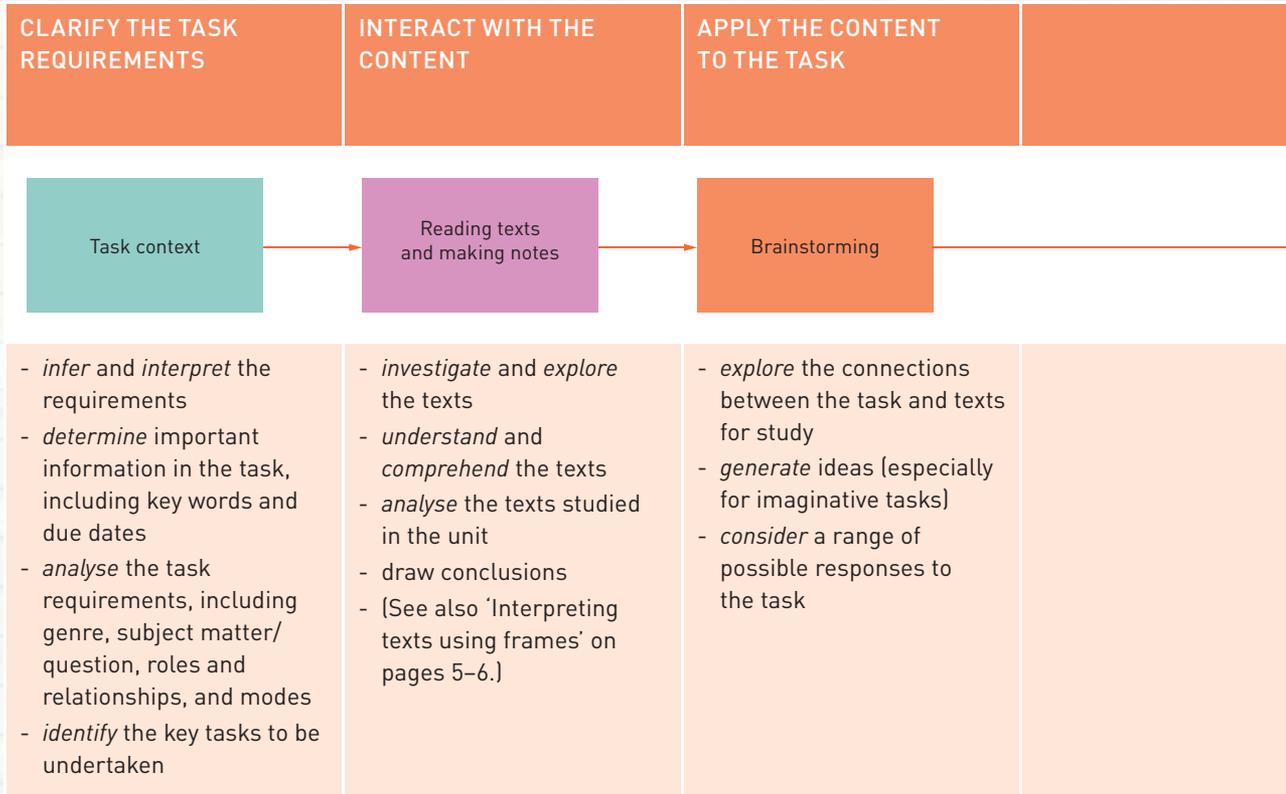
More specific tips related to reading complex novels and plays are provided in Chapter 12.

Writing, speaking and creating

Source 7 on the following page recommends a process for writing responses for assessment, either as assignments, under supervised conditions or in external exams. This writing process can be adapted as required for multimodal and spoken tasks. The bottom row of the table lists key thinking that would be useful to apply at each stage of the process. Finally, although it is represented in a linear manner, you can revisit stages as many times as necessary and the process can be adapted for the specific task.

It's important that you consistently follow a logical and systematic process such as the one shown in Source 7. If each stage is completed diligently, you will be able to submit your task with confidence.

Source 7
A suggested writing process for creating responses in assessment (modify as required for multimodal and spoken tasks)



infographic
a visual representation that combines information or data with graphic elements, e.g. as a chart or diagram

discerning
discriminating, insightful; showing intellectual perception and good judgment; making thoughtful, astute choices selected for value or relevance

manipulate
adapt or change a genre, structure, language feature or ideas to suit one's purpose; control in a skilful manner

Concentration, memory skills and overlearning

This might seem a bit old-school, but there are times throughout the year when you will need to remember large blocks of information; for example, for supervised writing tasks (including the external exam) and live spoken tasks. Research suggests that there are two critical steps in learning content in any subject:

- 1 taking good-quality notes
- 2 reviewing your notes thoroughly.

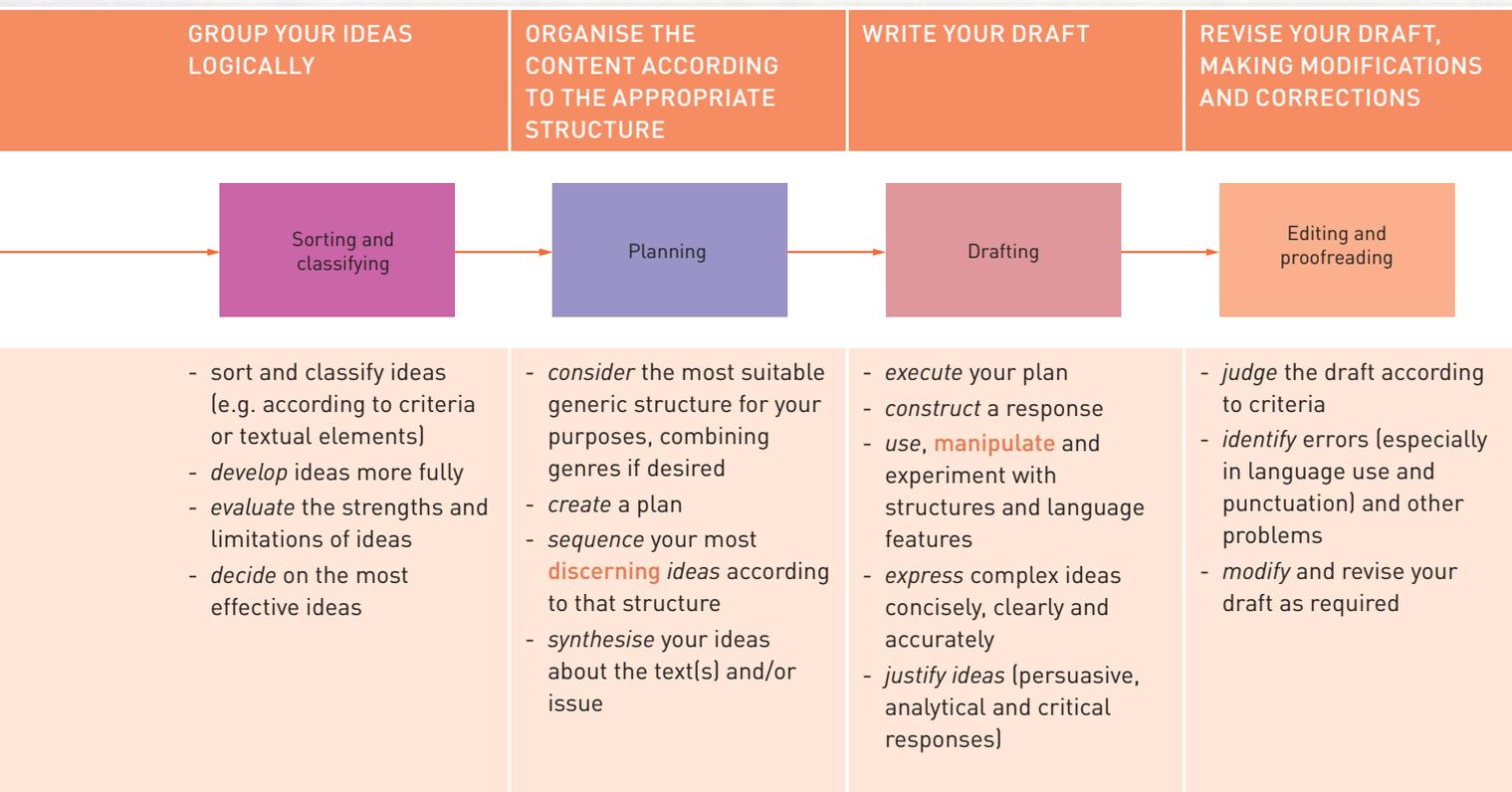
Let's take a closer look at these steps.

Taking notes (encoding your learning)

The first step is to encode what you are learning and turn it into a form that makes sense to you. This might involve translating information from a text into a written set of notes using mainly words, an **infographic**, a graphic organiser or a similar visual design.

In English, you will want to make notes from two main sources. The suggested strategies identified in Source 8 can all be found easily through online research, and we will illustrate many of these at various points in the book.

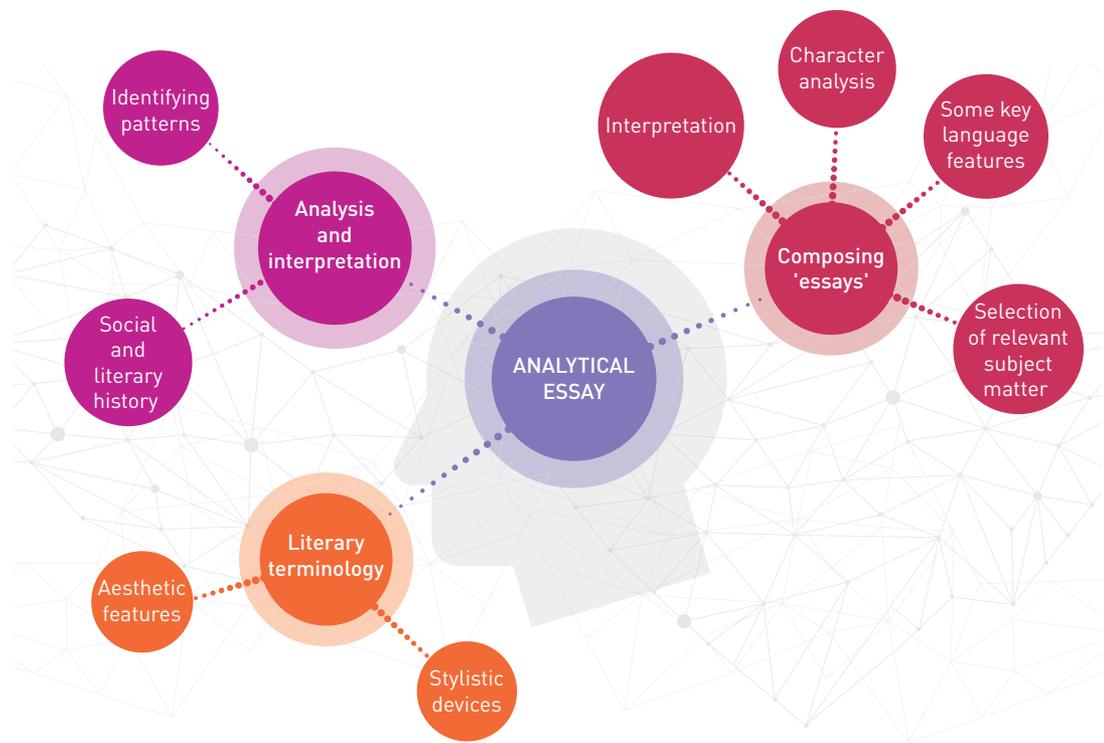




Source 8 Strategies for notetaking in English

Classroom talk, including explicit teaching by the teacher, and small group discussion	Try using the Cornell note taking system (see Chapter 14 for more information)
Texts studied closely in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>story maps</i>: a visual means of summarising the main elements of a story. - <i>sociograms</i>: a chart of relationships between people (in the real world) or characters in stories - <i>cartographical maps</i>: try representing a setting as a map using clues from a story you are reading - <i>trading cards</i>: search for the 'ReadWriteThink' Trading Card Creator for a clever way of creating succinct notes on various aspects of stories (including setting and characters) - <i>mind maps</i>: a way of summarising and categorising information under various headings, and showing the relationships among the information (see Source 9). There are some good, easy-to-use, inexpensive apps (e.g. <i>SimpleMind</i>) available for computers and mobile phones - <i>retrieval charts</i>: special tables that allow you to systematically organise notes under consistent headings (e.g. a three-column analysis) - <i>flow charts</i>: special diagrams that help you summarise a process or sequence of information (e.g. in a factual text). Along with other types of charts, these can be created easily using SmartArt in Word (or a similar program/app)

This is just a sample of useful strategies. Find a selection that works for you.



Source 9 Sample mind map of elements involved in writing an analytical essay

Reviewing (storing your learning)

Once you have a good set of comprehensive notes, make sure you review these thoroughly and frequently. This might be as simple as reading over the notes from time to time. This is also where informal study groups work well: teaching the content to someone else can be a great way to learn new material.

If it's important to learn the notes off by heart (e.g. for a test), find some good memorisation strategies. You might like to try:

- recording the notes and playing them back
- saying the notes aloud (walking around and speaking dramatically can also help your memory)
- reproducing the notes in writing
- translating written notes into a visual representation.

In all these cases, it is important to put your notes to the side and try not to look at them unless you absolutely have to. The more times you do this, the more confident you will become. It's also worth doing some online research on other ways to enhance your memory; for example, through the use of flashcards, and a technique known as the 'memory palace'.

In addition, if you are learning lines for a script (e.g. a monologue or play intervention), you might find the following curated sites useful:

- '12 tips for learning lines' <www.dramaresource.com>
- 'How to memorise lines fast' <www.backstage.com>
- 'How to memorise lines: Tips from top Chicago stage actors' <www.chicagotribune.com>.



These all contain further useful tips, including references to apps you can download.

It's worth remembering too that healthy eating, exercise, meditation and sleep can all have a positive impact on memory and recall. Finally, harness the power of **overlearning**. This is the well-known practice of knowing something well and continually reviewing it, practising it and memorising it. In this way, information can be easier to retrieve from your memory, and this memory is likely to be more resilient. Another way of putting this is: 'use it or lose it' – in other words, if you don't make use of the things you are learning, they are likely to become much harder to retrieve from your memory.

overlearning
learning something to the point where responses become automatic and instinctual

1.2 Your turn

Preparing for effective study

Over the course of this section, we have covered a number of study skills that can be useful for you when studying English Units 3 & 4. Before embarking on your studies in English this year, take time to review and make some notes about the following:

- your goals (academic, personal, cultural/sporting, employment) for the year – write these down and post them somewhere prominent so you can refer to them frequently

- your study space – set this up so that (where possible) you have a private, personal space devoted to study. If this isn't possible, find an alternative space for quiet study

- your time management – based on your goals, draft a week-long timetable. Try this out and review it at the end of the week. Think about what rewards you can give yourself for staying disciplined and achieving your weekly goals.

Conduct further research to find out more about some thinking and memory skills that you think might help you. Remember, seek the early advice of a trusted adult when necessary.



FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



UNIT 3: MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TEXTS

Your first textual studies (and assessment tasks) for Senior English will be based on Unit 3. This unit is all about comparing texts to explore their connections and adding your own voice to broader social conversations about concepts and issues. In one study, you will conduct a critical comparative analysis of two texts. In the other study, you will look at a wider range of texts to explore media representations of a specific social issue.

Focus questions:

- How do we interpret the connections between texts?
- What is a concept and what is an issue? How are they different?
- How do literary and media texts represent concepts and issues?

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

The approaches and frameworks discussed in this chapter can be applied to both topics in Unit 3 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*. This chapter contains material and activities that are intended as a foundation for other chapters in this book as outlined below.

UNIT 3 TOPIC	TEXT STUDY	ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE
Topic 1: 'Conversations about concepts in texts'	Chapter 4 <i>or</i> Chapter 5 <i>or</i> Chapter 6	Chapter 7
Topic 2: 'Conversations about issues in texts'	Chapter 8	Chapter 9

This chapter features:

- approaches to exploring textual connections
- consideration of how concepts and issues are represented
- consideration of how the context of a text shapes the way we interpret its messages about concepts and issues
- discussion of how texts position audiences to adopt perspectives on concepts and issues.

The chapter includes exploration of the following texts:

TEXT	AUTHOR	PRESCRIBED?
<i>Burial Rites</i> (2013)	Hannah Kent	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel)
<i>Macbeth</i> (1606)	William Shakespeare	Yes – literary Written text (play)
<i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> (1949)	George Orwell	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel)
<i>The White Earth</i> (2004)	Andrew McGahan	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel)
Opinion article	Sarah Bakewell	No – non-literary Written/multimodal text (media)

2.1

WHAT CONNECTS TEXTS?

In Unit 3, the first textual connection you will be offered will relate to the subject matter of the texts (the field). These subject matters, or fields, must represent a common:

- *concept* (e.g. aspiration, human progress, justice) in Topic 1, or
- *issue* (e.g. mass surveillance) in Topic 2.

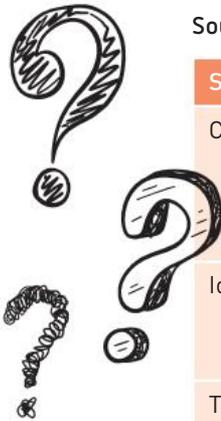
Further, the English syllabus suggests focusing your attention on the following areas when you are considering the subject matter of the texts in question:

Syllabus Objective 3: create and analyse perspectives and representations of *concepts, identities, times and places*.

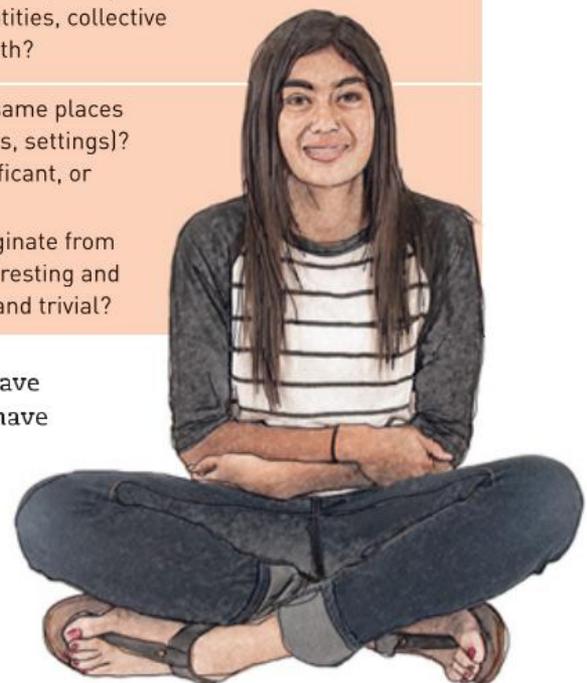
Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

This checklist can help you consider all these areas when you analyse texts.

Source 1 Checklist for text comparison in Unit 3 relating to syllabus Objective 3



SUBJECT MATTER	PROMPTS TO CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING
Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are these texts both trying to represent the same concept? Is that interesting and significant, or coincidental and trivial? ✓ If the two texts clearly <i>are</i> both trying to represent the same concept, then what are some related concepts you can compare and contrast?
Identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are these texts both trying to represent similar kinds of people (e.g. in terms of age, gender, ethnicity/nationality, religion, social role)? Is that interesting and significant, or coincidental and trivial?
Times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do the texts represent situations from the same time period/s? Is that interesting and significant, or coincidental and trivial? ✓ Did the texts originate around the same time (e.g. are they from the same week, year, decade, era)? Is that interesting and significant, or coincidental and trivial? ✓ Is there a focus in the text on exploring and illuminating: individual identities, collective identities or a balance of both?
Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do the texts represent the same places (e.g. countries, states, towns, settings)? Is that interesting and significant, or coincidental and trivial? ✓ Did the texts or authors originate from the same place? Is that interesting and significant, or coincidental and trivial?



Before commencing Unit 3 it is assumed that you have already completed Units 1 and 2 of Senior English and have a firm grasp on:

- the role of *perspectives* in texts and ways of representing perspective
- the relationship between texts and *culture*, and ways of representing cultural *identity*.



Considering concepts and issues in the context of culture

Texts can be connected by any aspect of their language use. Considering the context of culture will help to illuminate points of connection between texts. Look at Source 1 in Chapter 1. The context of culture relates to the outer circle, where the social purpose and genre of a text are identified. Any time we try to understand messages about a concept or an issue in a text, we first have to consider the context of the culture it was produced in (and for).

Consider, for example, how differently some types of texts (e.g. comic books) have been valued at various times and by various cultural groups.

There are multiple aspects to the cultural context of a text. To understand the social purpose and genre of a text, we can consider the extent to which it is reflecting or resisting conventions based on:

- *historical context*: representing a real time period, or based on an imaginary or alternative history/future
- *political context*: including hierarchies of political power
- *social context*: including hierarchies of power in social groups
- *cultural context*: including customs and habits
- *geographical context*: including the location and physical features of the place where the action occurs.

For each of these, we can think about both the context of the author and their original audience, as well as the contexts of the audiences that have experienced the work since then, including ourselves.

Importantly, when you think about cultural context you also have to think about how the world views of people living in a specific time and place can 'speak through' a text as all texts arise out of the knowledge, experiences, values, attitudes and assumptions that frame the author's social and cultural context. Consciously or unconsciously, the world views of the author and their community are incorporated into the text that they create. So, through the representations of issues and concepts within and between texts, a conversation is also taking place about the world views underpinning those representations.

For example, the success of the film *Black Panther* (2018) lies partly in its challenge to historical but ongoing representations of race in popular culture in the United States. This is, in turn, part of a broader conversation about issues and concepts regarding race in various parts of the world. Similarly, the world views underpinning Henry Lawson's 1892 short story, 'The Drover's Wife' are explored and challenged by modern readers in texts such as Leah Purcell's 2016 play *The Drover's Wife* and Ryan O'Neill's 2018 collection of short stories in *The Drover's Wives: 99 Reinterpretations of Henry Lawson's Australian Classic*.



2.1a Your turn

Articulate your cultural context

1 Concisely describe each of the following aspects of your own cultural context. Write in your notebook or on a computer if you need more space.

a historical context: _____

b political context: _____



- c social context: _____
- d cultural context: _____
- e geographical context: _____

- 2 Discuss your answers to Question 1 with a classmate or your teacher.
- Were any aspects of your current context difficult to define?
 - Which category was easiest to define?
 - To what extent would you say that your understanding of Australian or Queensland politics, society or culture is based on assumptions rather than facts?

Connecting via literary and media texts

In Unit 3, you will encounter at least one literary text in Topic 1, and in Topic 2 you must study a range of media texts. You will be asked to look for connections between texts, and this will include considering their styles and conventions.

In literary texts, which are imaginative and story based, authors can make purposeful references to another text, even ones from much earlier historical periods. **Allusions** and **intertextual references** are two well-used literary devices for signalling connections to earlier work. The literary ‘conversations’ that are produced by re-using or linking to existing cultural references can span a long time, with some intertextual references linking back to texts from ancient civilisations. In media texts, references can also be made directly using mode-appropriate devices (e.g. hyperlinks in online texts).

Text connections: Conceptual, intertextual, personal

Aside from the way texts are explicitly connected by referencing each other within the text, or conceptually connected by the representations they offer, there is one more important connection to consider: your own connection to the texts that you study in Unit 3.

Sometimes texts ‘speak to each other’ because the audience sees a link. Perhaps there is a reference to something in your history or memory that the authors could not have predicted, but that your experience and perspective leads you to make a connection around. This personal conversation that we have with texts as we interpret them is an important one to note, as it will provide a source of material for your own writing and speaking and, more importantly, gives personal relevance to your textual studies.

allusion
in a literary sense, the way a text invites readers to make connections to another text (story, poem, argument, etc.) without the author referring to it explicitly

intertextual reference
the relationship between different texts, which shapes or influences their meaning for the author and reader

2.1b Your turn

Locating textual connections

- 1 Comic books, music videos and novels are examples of texts that have been enjoyed differently by various people, for various reasons, in various time periods. Give another example of a type of text that has changed cultural status over time.

- 2 Give an example of a text that contains an allusion to another text.

- 3 What strategies do you know for comparing meanings in multiple texts (e.g. graphic organisers)? Note them in your notebook or on a computer and share them with your classmates.



2.2

WHAT IS A CONCEPT?

concept

an abstract idea that does not exist in one particular time or place. Language is used to represent these abstract ideas by naming them and associating them with other 'concrete' things that can be located in time and place

A **concept** is an abstract idea – that is, something that can't be pointed to in the physical world. The word has a Latin origin and it came into use in the mid 1500s when scientists and philosophers were thinking in new ways about the difference between perceptions (things you learn through your physical senses) and thoughts. When we 'conceive' something, we think about it conceptually.

Representing concepts

When we conceptualise something, we make a picture of it in our mind. But how do we make these mental pictures?

Let's take the concept of 'home' as an example. When I say the word 'home' to you, you might think of your own home, or other homes you've been in. You might conjure a mental image of a house or an apartment, if those are where you and most people you know live. You might think of homes you've seen or read about in fictional stories, and about the meanings that characters in those stories ascribe to their homes (e.g. Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*; House Stark in *Game of Thrones*). You might think of renovation shows on television or home improvement magazines and websites and the pictures in them. You will also think of a raft of images, sounds, smells, feelings and tastes relating to home that would never occur to others because we each have unique personal experiences of home.

In English we are interested in the ways authors represent the world. Authors represent concepts through their language use and textual choices. Think of how much your concept of home changes, for example, if we extend the noun: *a* home, *the* home, *our* homes. Authors direct what you think about a concept through the language they use.

Abstract noun groups

By now, you should know that a noun is a naming word (person, place, thing, idea). In sentences, a noun can be used as the thing around which a group of other words are clustered. This group of words is called a 'noun group' and can consist of six elements.

Read the extract from George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Source 2) and see how the nouns have been categorised by element in Source 3.

In this extract, the protagonist, Winston Smith, is talking to his superior, O'Brien, about a banned book supposedly written by the mysterious, revolutionary figure, Goldstein.

Source 2 An extract from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

'You have read it?' said Winston.

'I wrote it. That is to say, I collaborated in writing it. No book is produced individually, as you know.'

'Is it true, what it says?'

'As description, yes. The program it sets forth is nonsense. The secret accumulation of knowledge – a gradual spread of enlightenment – ultimately a proletarian rebellion – the overthrow of the Party. You foresaw yourself what it would say. It is all nonsense. The proletarians will never revolt, not in a thousand years or a million. They cannot. I do not have to tell you the reason: you know it already. If you have ever cherished any dreams of violent insurrection, you must abandon them. There is no way the Party can be over-thrown. The rule of the Party is forever. Make that the starting point of your thoughts.'

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Secker & Warburg, 1949, Book 3, pp. 300



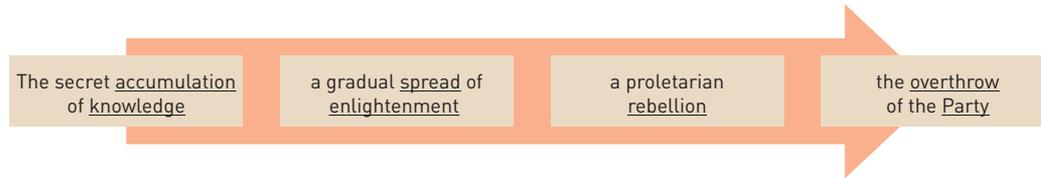
Source 3 Elements of a noun group

WHICH ONE?	HOW MANY?	WHAT QUALITY?	WHAT TYPE?	THING	WHAT ELSE?
	no			book	
				description	
the				program	
the		secret		accumulation	knowledge
a			proletarian	revolution	

Although a pronoun (e.g. you, I, it) can function as the *thing*, notice how in these examples it is always a noun (e.g. book). Note that other elements (e.g. What else?) can also contain a noun (e.g. 'knowledge' in the prepositional phrase 'of knowledge'). In addition, some nouns are **concrete**, e.g. 'a book', while others are more **abstract**, e.g. 'knowledge'.

Winston wants to know if Goldstein's book is true. In answering the question, O'Brien draws a distinction between the book as *description* and *program* – both are abstract nouns. O'Brien then elaborates on the abstract 'program' by specifying its steps in a sequence of abstract noun groups separated by dashes (-). In Source 4, the nouns (all abstract) are underlined.

Source 4 A flowchart representing 'the program' as a sequence of noun groups



The abstractions here can be unpacked further. For example, the abstract *idea* of a proletarian rebellion captures the *action* in the real world of 'poor people rising up against another group of people called the Party'. As O'Brien goes on to explain to Winston, these abstract ideas that make up 'the program' are false: 'There is no way the Party can be overthrown'. This powerful and troubling idea is central to the concepts of individual freedom and state power developed through the novel.

Imagery and visual language

A stretch of language that is visually descriptive is referred to as 'imagery'. Assuming the reader shares experiences and background knowledge with the writer, imagery can help readers create mental pictures of a person, scene or event. Imagery can be created through the careful selection of specific nouns (and detailed noun groups), precise verbs and the use of figurative language (e.g. similes, metaphors and personification). In a story, imagery serves important functions:

- It adds authenticity to a piece of writing, helping readers to 'suspend disbelief' and immerse themselves in the storyworld. This is one of the real pleasures of reading for many people.
- The pleasure gained from this type of immersion also means that readers are more likely to adopt an invited reading (see Chapter 3 for detailed information about invited readings) and less likely to consider the story critically. In this way, world views underpinning stories might remain unexamined.

concrete noun
a naming word that labels something that can be physically touched, seen or otherwise sensed [e.g. dog, car, tree, mountain, Sam]

abstract noun
a naming word that does not label something that can be physically touched, seen or otherwise sensed; instead, observable actions and behaviours are packaged up into generalised ideas and concepts [e.g. freedom, power, knowledge, sexism]

Sources 5 and 6 are two contrasting examples of imagery from novels by Australian writers. Source 5 is from *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent, a story set in Iceland in the nineteenth century. In this scene, a blizzard is raging and the protagonist, Agnes, decides to open the doors to the house where she is living.

Source 5 An extract from *Burial Rites*

I'm not sure why I opened the door to look outside. I suppose I was curious. But some strange compulsion took me and I unlocked the latch to peek out at the weather.

It was an evil sight. Dark clouds bore down upon the mountain range and under their smoky blackness, a grey swarm of snow swirled as far as you could see. The wind was fierce, and a great, icy gust of it suddenly blew against the door so hard that it knocked me off my feet. The candle on the corridor wall went out in an instant, and from within the croft Björn shouted what the Devil I thought I was doing, letting the blizzard into his home.

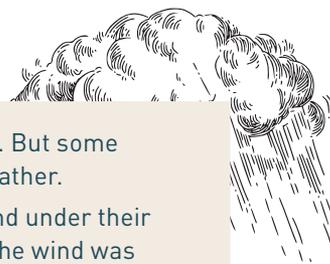
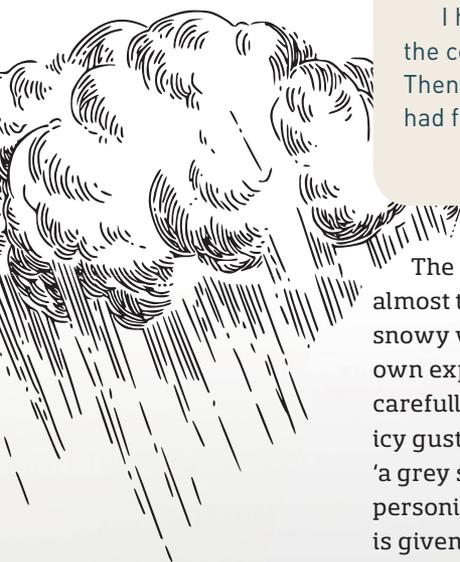
I heaved against the door to shut it, but the wind was too strong. My hands stiffened with the cold rush of air. It was as though the wind was some form of ghoulish demanding to enter. Then, all of a sudden, the wind dropped, and the door slammed shut. As though the spirit had finally entered and closed the door behind it.

Hannah Kent, *Burial Rites*, Bolinda Publishing, 2013, pp. 144

The image created here is of the weather, of course – and it is a type of weather (a blizzard) almost totally unknown in Queensland. It is likely that most readers would be familiar with snowy weather, however, from children's picture books, television, movies and even their own experiences while travelling. To help readers conjure mental images, notice Kent's use of carefully constructed noun groups: 'dark clouds', 'smoky blackness' (of the mountains), 'a great icy gust' and the 'cold rush of air'. There are also some nice alliterative clauses; for example, 'a grey swarm of snow swirled as far as you could see'. Central to this description is the personification of the blizzard as 'some form of ghoulish demanding to enter'. In this way, the storm is given life and agency (the ability to act on its own).

As happens in many stories (especially Nordic noir and Gothic novels), weather plays an important, recurrent role in *Burial Rites*; it is a motif that takes on symbolic importance. The harsh environment is a menacing backdrop to the story and suggests that humans (and our petty problems) are at the mercy of bigger forces beyond our control: there is a wildness lurking behind our human activity.

Source 6 is from *The White Earth* by Andrew McGahan, which is set on a property on the Darling Downs in southern Queensland. In this extract, eight-year-old William and his mother are living with his great-uncle after the death of William's father. In this scene, William and his great-uncle are camping in a remote part of the property where his great-uncle has called a secret meeting of white landowners. William has been left alone.



Source 6 An extract from *The White Earth*

The air had turned cold.

William sat up, hugging his arms around himself. It was coming. A moment, a thing – he was suddenly alert to its approach. His limbs ached, and the pain in his ear was piercing, but he found that he could see everything around him with chill clarity. Every tree, each individual leaf, was a crystal-edged shadow. The black bulk of the hills rose against the paler darkness of the sky. A thousand stars blazed noiselessly high above. And yet everything might have been frozen, the trees, the hills, the stars, paused in an instant of expectation. Even the insects that crawled in the grass had fallen still. The small animals that burrowed in the earth or hunted each other across the ground had ceased their activities. The night birds that stood sentinel in the trees, black eyes shining, had become stone. Every creature was motionless. Up on the hill people argued and fires burned, but all around them the land stood deathly still in anticipation.

And in answer, something came to William from out of the night.

Andrew McGahan, *The White Earth*, Soho Press, 2006, pp. 213–14

The first sentence in Source 6 draws on a common convention in supernatural stories: the drop in temperature when a supernatural phenomenon is imminent. The image that follows this has two phases:

- the sudden 'chill clarity' of William's sight, in contrast to the limits in his physical abilities and hearing
- the stillness of the natural environment, as conveyed through verb choices (e.g. 'the trees, the hills, the stars, *paused*'; 'The small animals [...] had *ceased* their activities') and quality adjectives (e.g. 'the insects [...] had fallen *still*'; 'Every creature was *motionless*'). At the end of the second paragraph, note that the land is personified: it '*stood* deathly still'. Also note the adverb 'deathly', used to intensify how still the land is.

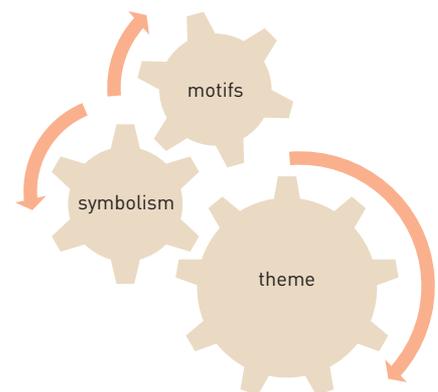
Unlike Source 5, Source 6 does not represent the environment as menacing and potentially destructive. Instead, the atmosphere is one of expectation and anticipation: something is coming to William, but we don't (yet) know what.

The imagery in the two extracts invites the reader to create very different mental images of nature and the environment. However, a common thread is the idea that humans and nature are inseparable: we are a part of a world that we barely understand or control.

Motifs, symbols and themes

In *Burial Rites*, weather in its various manifestations is a recurring feature of the story and, as such, can be regarded as a motif. Moreover, this motif takes on symbolic meaning in the story and can be connected to the more abstract idea (or theme) of human destiny that runs through the novel. Likewise, nature in its various manifestations is a motif in *The White Earth*, and also takes on symbolic significance. In this case, it is connected to the theme of humans' relationship to the land.

This relationship between the elements of the story can be represented as cogs in a wheel, working together to help the reader infer meanings and take away messages from the story.



Source 7 A representation of the relationship between motif, symbol and theme in stories

2.2 Your turn

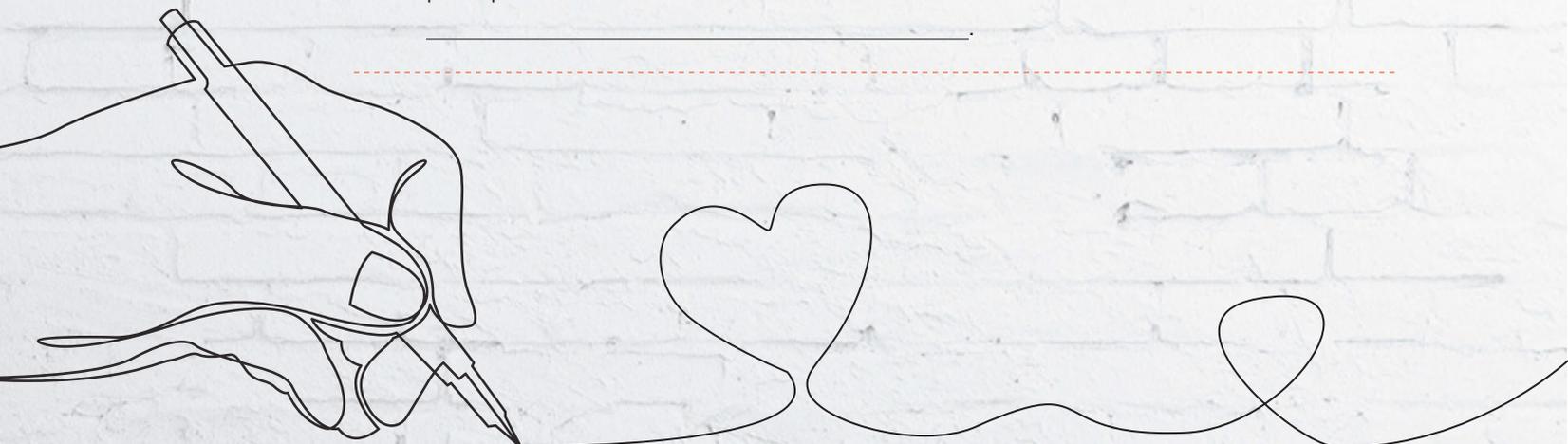
Relating concepts to our values, attitudes and beliefs

- 1 Consider this line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: 'Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so' (Act II, Scene 2). Hamlet speaks this line after disagreeing with Rosencrantz on whether Denmark is like 'a prison'.
 - a Do you think some concepts carry more negative or positive meanings than others? Discuss this with a classmate and note an example of a concept that can be considered to have both negative and positive connotations.

 - b Of the following concepts, circle the ones that you think have positive cultural associations and be prepared to discuss your choices.
love war truth justice ambition power rebellion
- 2 Consider the concepts listed in the table below. Write notes in the empty columns on how each concept could be seen in a negative or positive light depending on past experiences.

EXPERIENCES, RELATED IMAGES AND CONCEPTS WITH <i>NEGATIVE</i> CONNOTATIONS	CONCEPT	EXPERIENCES, RELATED IMAGES AND CONCEPTS WITH <i>POSITIVE</i> CONNOTATIONS
	weather	
	home	
	animal rights	
	the weekend	
	change	

- 3 Compare your responses to Questions 1 and 2 with those of your classmates. Reflect on instances when your different perspectives or world views led to the same answers, and instances when they led to different answers. Provide an example of each.
 - a My classmates and I tended to agree that _____ because we share the value / attitude / belief that _____.
 - b Something a classmate disagreed with in my responses was that _____ perhaps because we have different values / attitudes / beliefs about _____.



2.3

WHAT IS AN ISSUE?

issue

a contentious topic or a problem that people talk about in relation to a definable event, time and place

Unlike a concept, which is represented using abstract language, an **issue** must be represented by identifying actual people, times and places in the real world. Issues can be defined in broad and specific terms. As we add more concrete contextual information, the issue becomes more narrowly defined and can be easier to discuss.

Concrete nouns indicating people, times and places

In Section 2.2 we looked at abstract nouns and the work they do to represent a concept. Sometimes issues can be represented too broadly, or too conceptually, to be discussed and debated easily. One example of this is the issue of 'reconciliation'. As an abstract noun, reconciliation represents a socially and culturally constructed package of images and related ideas that is understood differently by different people.

Using this conceptual example of 'reconciliation' let's consider how the scope of current social issues can be defined more precisely:

- *broadly*: Indigenous rights and recognition in Australia
- *specifically*: Indigenous incarceration rates and deaths in police custody; land rights and Native Title claims; current and projected gap between non-Indigenous and Indigenous life expectancy, employment and educational outcomes; recognition for Indigenous art forms, artworks and artists.

Note that issues always relate to concepts because we always go beyond our perceptions of an issue (information we have sensed about 'who, what, when, where?') to think about the circumstances and people involved in an issue in conceptual ways. The reason 'Indigenous rights and recognition in Australia' is such a broad concept is that although 'Indigenous' and 'Australia' are concrete nouns telling us *who* the issue relates to and *where* it is located, information about *what* kind of rights and recognition, and the time *when* the issue took place is missing.

Representing concepts and issues in news media

In Unit 3 Topic 2 you will conduct a media study to see how an issue has been represented across a variety of sources. The issue should be one that has had news coverage in the past 12 months. You can locate conceptual themes within media texts and compare these to shed light on how different texts position you, using language, to think about a specific issue.

Source 8 on pages 28–9 gives an opinion about the broad issue of technological enhancement. Read the article and use it to consider the representation of both issues and concepts in *Your turn 2.3*.



Humanity is a work in progress, constantly adding technology

Sarah Bakewell, *The Guardian*,
1 October 2012

Some technologies we successfully adapt now feel as natural to us as our own hands and eyes.

On 2 September 2010, [Karen Throsby](#) became the 1,153rd person to swim the Channel, taking 16 hours and nine minutes, and keeping herself going on handfuls of jelly babies passed down by her support team. Many Channel swimmers are purists: wetsuits are banned, never mind performance-enhancing drugs. The sport sees itself as an assertion of human ability in natural form. Throsby, a sociologist researching the effects of extreme sports, takes a different view.

She was a speaker at last Saturday's [Human Limits, a Wellcome Collection](#) symposium linked to its Superhuman exhibition on physical and mental enhancement. The question it investigated was how much technology can add to a human being before it becomes something else – a cyborg, perhaps, or a superhuman, or a post-human, or a transhuman. What are our limits?

Some speakers discussed the 'singularity': the idea that in a few years' time we may converge with our technology to the point that some as yet inconceivable superhuman entity emerges. Others highlighted the fear or even disgust we can feel when new inventions threaten our sense of who we are; uneasy about our authenticity, we look back



SOURCE 9 Comedian David Walliams readies to swim the Channel for charity. The Vaseline used to prevent chafing is technology too.

nostalgically to an era assumed to be simpler, more human.

Throsby's contribution was to remind us that even something as elementally 'human' as marathon swimming involves many artificial techniques: gaining weight, acclimatising to the cold, monitoring one's psychology, and developing new micro-senses – an awareness of tiny differences in water temperature, a heightened kinetic sense of the body's balance and position, and so on. It means self-transformation, and is filled with 'uncountable, mundane bodily technologies'. Channel swimmers use rubber caps, sunblock, Vaseline to prevent chafing, sleek swimsuits and energy-boosting snacks. They are accompanied by boats with GPS.

And they use goggles, an invention variously attributed to Polynesians, Persians and the Inuit, but later improved by innovators such as first female Channel swimmer [Gertrude Ederle](#), who smeared paraffin wax on motorcycle glasses in 1926 to make them watertight. More recently, goggles have been made with better rubber, adjustable straps

and prescription lenses. It would be hard to swim far or fast without them.

As always, successful technologies tend to disappear in their use, becoming almost indistinguishable from ourselves and our own efforts. A smartphone sits in our hand announcing: 'I am technology', but the spectacles through which we peer at its screen, the pocket into which we slip it and the heel with which we stamp it into the ground in a rage if it malfunctions all feel as natural as our own hands and eyes. It takes a leap of thought to realise that Vaseline and jelly babies are technology, too.

Human Limits asked how much technology we can add before losing ourselves, but there is also the question of how human we remain if familiar enhancements are taken away: not just devices but practices – our mastery of writing, our elaborate educations, our knives and fires and cooking-pots, our language, our laboriously polished social skills. At what point do we cross the line into being no longer ourselves?

As human beings, we tread a narrow ridge where we roughly know who we are, with landscapes of mystery, anxiety and ambiguity on each side. But the ridge does not run straight, or lead in a predefined direction. It is partly up to us to decide what a human being is.

'Man is rightly called and judged a great miracle and a wonderful

creature,' wrote philosopher Pico della Mirandola in 1486, opining that we are wonderful not because we live up with the angels, or down with more modest beasts, but because we occupy an intermediate realm in which we invent and alter ourselves. 'Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we

given thee,' he imagines God saying to man. 'Thou, constrained by no limits, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature.'

Of course we are hemmed in by mishaps and errors, and technology goes wrong. But to a large extent we are our own works in progress. And when all goes smoothly, we don't even know it.

2.3 Your turn

Positioning an audience by linking issues and concepts

- 1 Do you agree that the *broad* issue represented in this article is technological enhancement? Explain your answer, citing a quote from the article.

- 2 What other *specific* issues are discussed in the article?

- 3 The writer is sharing her perspective on the issue/s. List the people and events that she shares a 'vision' of.

- 4 How does the image selected to accompany the article advance or detract from the author's message?

- 5 *Annotate the article:* Two conceptual themes that are evident in this text are those of 'aspiration' and 'human progress'. Choose one of these concepts and annotate the opinion article to locate ways that language has been used to construct the concept (e.g. using abstract nouns and imagery).



FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension

UNIT 4: RESPONDING CRITICALLY, RESPONDING CREATIVELY

The second unit of textual studies (and assessment tasks) for Senior English is Unit 4: Close study of literary texts. In this unit you read, listen to or view two literary texts in depth to explore how the personal, social, historical, authorial and cultural contexts influence their meaning. You then offer creative and critical responses to these texts.

Focus questions:

- What systematic processes can help to guide the analysis of literary texts and the creation of responses to literature?
- How does an invited reading differ from an alternative or resistant reading?
- Why are aesthetic features of language and text so integral to literary meaning?
- How do 'cognitive' processes relate to the texts we analyse and create in English?

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

The approaches and frameworks discussed in this chapter can be applied to both topics in Unit 4 of the *English General Senior Syllabus*. This chapter contains material and activities that are intended as a foundation for other chapters in this book as outlined below.

UNIT 4	TEXT STUDY	ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE
Topic 1: 'Creative responses to literary texts'	Chapter 10	Chapter 11
Topic 2: 'Critical responses to literary texts'	Chapter 12	Chapter 13

This chapter features:

- processes for creating and analysing texts with respect to their social purpose
- information about invited, alternative and resistant ways of reading
- discussion of how aesthetic features and stylistic devices create meaning
- exploration of key cognitive processes relating to 'close analysis' and 'responding to texts'.

The chapter includes exploration of the following texts/extracts:

TEXT	CREATOR	PRESCRIBED?
'Rain' (2011)	Poet – Hone Tuwhare	No – literary Written text (poetry)
<i>Wuthering Heights</i> (1847)	Author – Emily Brontë	No – literary Written text (prose – novel)

3.1

STUDYING LITERATURE

In Unit 4, you will undertake a close study of two literary texts. Based on these studies you will create your own literary text for internal assessment and – during the external exam – an analytical essay. While these have specific assessment purposes for English, during this unit you will develop your understanding of how to read complex texts, and to draw on a range of thinking skills to respond to complex texts in an appropriate and coherent manner. These skills are applicable across a wide range of occupations.

To assist in the assessment tasks ahead of you we have outlined suggested steps that you can follow when creating your own literary texts and analytical essays. You will also have the opportunity to reflect on your own writing process when creating new texts.



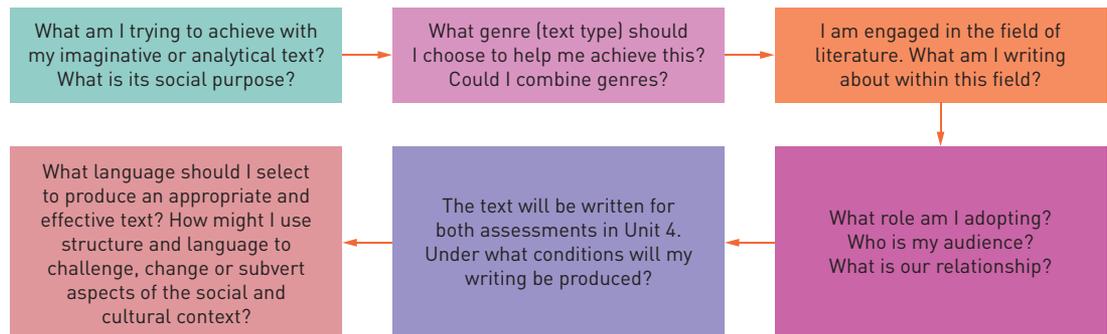
response
using analysis and interpretation as the basis for constructing new meanings and creating new texts

Processes for interpreting and creating texts

In Chapter 1, we described the Language in Use model that underpins the understanding of texts in the English syllabus. In this chapter we suggest ways you can apply this model to respond to literature and create the type of literary-oriented texts required in Unit 4.

Creating imaginative and analytical texts

With a focus on the Language in Use model, the process of creating a text starts with a consideration of the social purpose of the text. What is the text trying to achieve? Are you trying to tell a new story or explain a critical **response**? The choices you make about language use should all flow from that one starting point, as shown in Source 1.



Source 1 Steps for creating imaginative and analytical texts in Unit 4

3.1 Your turn

Auditing your writing process



- Individually, consider how you normally approach the writing in an assessment task. What is the first thing you do? Do you make plans before writing? If so, what do they look like? Are they written only, or do you include visuals (drawings, diagrams, flowcharts etc.)?
 - How systematic and thorough are you at considering all aspects of your writing? Use Source 1 to edit your planning process. Where are your strengths and where could you do better? How often do you try to write with an audience in mind beyond your teacher? What do you do when you come to a block – a problem – with your writing?
- Share your responses with your peers. What similarities and differences do you notice? How do you think your own writing habits can be improved?



3.2

CREATING INVITED AND CRITICAL READINGS

Studying English involves constantly creating. Even when you're not creating actual texts such as stories or essays, you're still in a constant state of creating responses and readings of the texts around you. In this book we have already talked about taking time to hold up different 'frames' to look at a text in different ways and to gain a deeper understanding of it. But most of us don't walk around with these frames constantly on our mind (unless we are very practised at this kind of literacy).

Invited, alternative and resistant readings

When we look beyond the invited reading of a text, we gain access to new options, including the choices of creating an alternative reading, or even a resistant or oppositional reading. Consider the definitions of various types of 'readings' from the glossary of the *English & Literature Extension 2020* syllabus:

- Readings:** the meanings produced when a reader applies particular meaning-making strategies or reading practices to interpret a text; some ways of interpreting texts include:
- > invited readings
by reading with the text, the reader produces the meaning/s the text seems to invite
 - > alternative readings
by reading across the text, the reader may challenge aspects of the invited reading/s but not totally oppose it/them
 - > resistant or oppositional readings
by reading against the text, the reader recognises the invited reading/s, but challenges or opposes it/them.

Source: *English & Literature Extension 2020 v1.1 General Senior Syllabus*
© Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

There is nothing in this to say that you must choose one way of reading the text and lock it in forever. You might shift between a range of interpretations and readings as you read and re-read (or watch or hear) texts or parts of texts.

In order to look beyond the 'invited reading' of a text, it is vital to consider both how a text uses language and its cultural context. It is also important to cast a critical eye on the identities that are given voice in the text and the cultural assumptions behind its messages. Sometimes we have no interest in doing this kind of text work. For example, in our use of everyday informational texts such as tickets, labels, lists, menus, announcements and notes, we are often only interested in the invited reading – it is usually the meaning we came for and the only one we wish to know.

But what about when we choose to accept the invited reading of other kinds of text, like personal correspondence, a work of journalism or literature? What happens when we read these types of text without any cultural or critical thought? When we read a text that has been created for an aesthetic purpose and prompts an emotional or critical reaction, we owe it to ourselves to question that reaction, even just a little, to check we are not blindly taking in harmful or damaging messages and possibly perpetuating them.

One story, multiple 'readings': An example

To illustrate, let's consider the well-known western fairytale 'Cinderella', the tale of the young woman who is mistreated by her 'evil' stepmother and stepsisters, but ends up marrying a prince. The sympathetic construction of the character of Cinderella and the depiction of her eventual escape from her tormentors invites readers to cheer Cinderella's success and to believe that – for young women – one day their prince may also arrive and 'save' them.

However, some readers would choose to resist and challenge this invited reading. For example, a reader could interpret the story as reinforcing traditional, unequal roles of women and men. This resistant reading relies not just on interpreting this one story, but also on recognising the story as part of a larger cultural pattern – that is, all the other stories (e.g. 'Rapunzel', 'Snow White', early Disney films) that perpetuate similar conservative values. Other readers might resist the construction of the other women in the story, especially the stepmother and stepsisters. While their treatment of Cinderella might have been unpleasant and even immoral from one perspective, as an alternative reading, perhaps it is understandable given the position of women at the time the original story was written. The stepsisters were just as much victims of their gender and birth as Cinderella, dependent on a 'good' marriage for financial comfort and relative freedom in their adult lives.

Analysing aesthetic uses of language

A threshold concept for your study in English is the meaning of the terms **aesthetic** and **aesthetic features**. Sometimes people limit the word 'aesthetics' to a study of whether things are beautiful or pleasant to experience. But when something is described as having an aesthetic quality, this means it has special meaning *because of the way our senses perceive key elements*. Language used aesthetically goes beyond its functional purpose (e.g. communicating information and sharing ideas) and engages artistic strategies for providing a sensory experience and eliciting emotional responses. For example, a text may describe a special sound or evoke a meaningful image. Language used as an aesthetic feature doesn't have to be 'pleasing', but these features do have to engage our senses to prompt an emotional response of some kind.

Stylistic devices are applications of any language or textual features that are constructed to emulate or challenge an established style. The content of a text, as well as the structure, shape and sequence of material within a text, can all be seen as opportunities to **create** and analyse style. Styles, like other aspects of language, are socially constructed – social groups form subcultures that, through their own choices in language use, create styles (e.g. gothic, country and western, journalistic, archaic, Shakespearean, romantic, K-pop). New styles can be created when innovative trends and fashions gain a following, and established **canons** can be challenged.

aesthetics

principles concerned with beauty and artistic taste

aesthetic feature

any language or textual feature that provides a sensory experience or elicits an emotional or critical response

stylistic devices

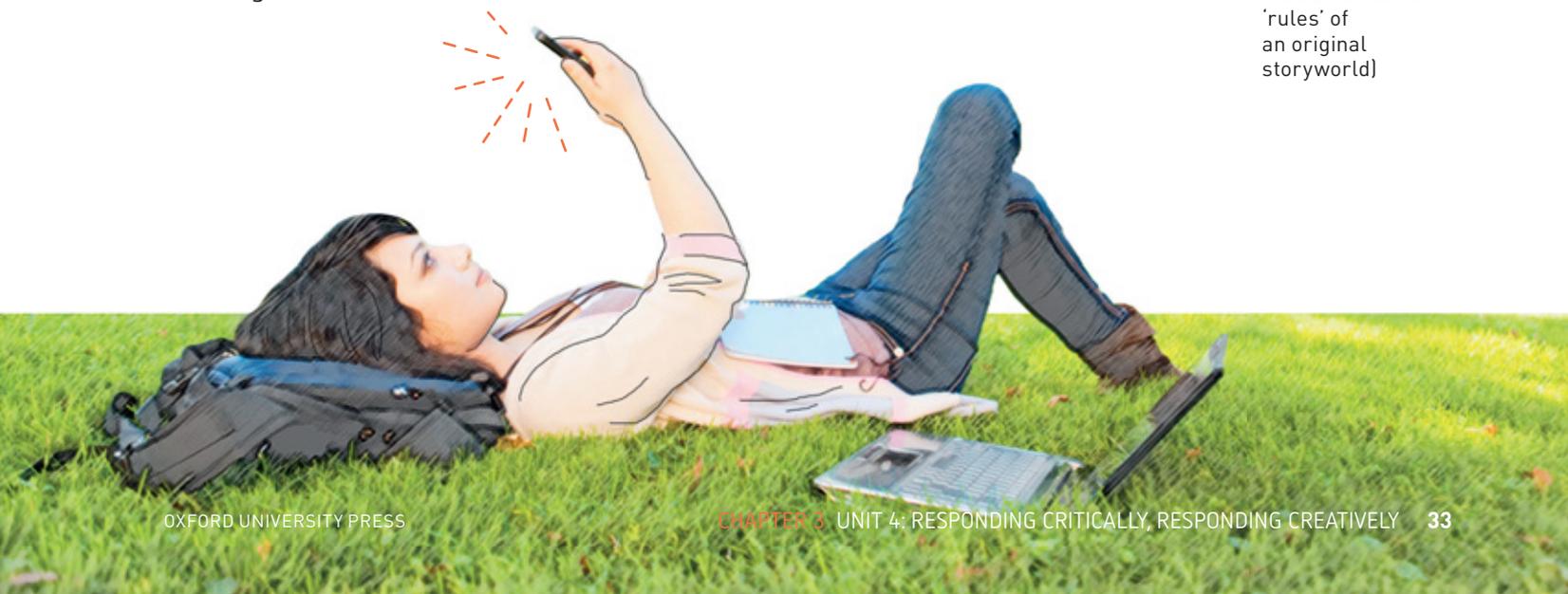
language and textual features that are constructed to emulate or challenge established styles

create

to use language, sound and images to produce a text; to bring the text into existence

canon

any collection of texts that is considered an authorised list or authoritative sample of its category (e.g. 'Western literary canon' refers to lists of important works in the category of 'Western literature'); in popular culture it can refer to the authoritative 'rules' of an original storyworld]



Syllabus advice on aesthetic features and stylistic devices

Literary texts frequently use language to engage us emotionally through aesthetic experiences. They also draw inspiration from a range of established styles. But aesthetic features are found beyond literature too, in media texts and even in personal, community and workplace texts.

Some features and techniques that can be used as aesthetic features and stylistic devices are listed in the *English General Senior Syllabus* and reproduced in Source 2.

Source 2 Features and techniques that can be used as aesthetic features and stylistic devices

EXAMPLES OF AESTHETIC FEATURES INCLUDE:

- > poetic devices such as alliteration, assonance, imagery, metaphor, personification, simile, symbolism
- > written devices such as imagery, irony, metaphor, motif, personification, representation, symbolism
- > spoken devices such as imagery, motif, rhetoric, symbolism
- > film devices such as costuming, editing, imagery, motif, photography, screenplay, symbolism
- > dramatic devices such as costuming, dialogue, motif, style, symbolism.

Stylistic devices can be any literary device or technique, such as:

- > text structures
- > juxtaposition (e.g. of two contrasting settings)
- > approaches to narration
- > the use of narrative viewpoint
- > approaches to characterisation
- > use of figurative devices
- > use of rhetorical devices (e.g. repetition)
- > control of sentence length and form
- > literary patterns and variations
- > sound devices
- > visual devices.

Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

This list is not exhaustive, and some techniques are listed in multiple places. We do not advise using this list as a shopping list of devices to search for, but it is a good place to get inspiration for the range of things you might comment on in your analytic writing, or experiment with in your imaginative writing.

Example analysis: Interpreting imagery

The following poem is by the distinguished Māori poet, Hone Tuwhare (1922–2008). He addresses rain directly using second person ('you'), telling the rain what it means to him. This is achieved through the aesthetic feature of imagery, with Tuwhare accumulating details based on the five senses: sense of sight, sense of sound, sense of taste, sense of smell and sense of touch. Sometimes the images are conjured metaphorically (e.g. lines 2–5); sometimes Tuwhare invites

the reader to connect with their own memories (e.g. lines 14–15) to work out what he means; and at other times, he uses specific, quality adjectives (e.g. lines 18–19). Together, these images weave a spell, helping the reader conjure their own memories of rain with their associated emotions. However, lines 22 to 30 suggest that rain is more than just a physical phenomenon – it also has a metaphysical significance. What do *you* think Tuwhare meant in those final lines?

Source 3 'Rain' by Hone Tuwhare

LINE	'RAIN' BY HONE TUWHARE
1	Rain
2	I can hear you
3	making small holes
4	in the silence
5	rain
6	If I were deaf
7	the pores of my skin
8	would open to you
9	and shut
10	And I
11	should know you
12	by the lick of you
13	if I were blind
14	the something
15	special smell of you
16	when the sun cakes
17	the ground
18	the steady
19	drum-roll sound
20	you make
21	when the wind drops
22	But if I
23	should not hear
24	smell or feel or see
25	you
26	you would still
27	define me
28	disperse me
29	wash over me
30	rain

Hone Tuwhare, 'Rain', in *Small Holes in the Silence: Collected Works*, Godwit, (Random House), 2011 p. 88 © Hone Tuwhare 2011

In longer texts such as novels, the emotions provoked by imagery can play a more complex role in the development of a story. Indeed, in many stories the geographical setting (as represented through imagery) almost becomes a character, playing a significant role in the story. Possibly one of the most famous novels in which this happens is the gothic tale *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, first published in 1847. Set on the Yorkshire moors in England, it is the story of the tempestuous, mutually destructive relationship between the fiery Catherine Earnshaw and the orphan boy Heathcliff. In Source 4 (from Chapter 3 of the novel), a man called Lockwood has been visiting his landlord, the brooding adult Heathcliff. Lockwood's sleep in his 'oak closet' (a form of bed) is disturbed by the wind-blown branches of a pine tree tapping on his window. As you read, consider how Brontë uses aesthetic features such as imagery to encourage strong emotional reactions from the reader.

Source 4 Extract from *Wuthering Heights*

[...] I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause: but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to silence it, if possible; and, I thought, I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement. The hook was soldered into the staple: a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten. 'I must stop it, nevertheless!' I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed, 'Let me in – let me in!' 'Who are you?' I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself. 'Catherine Linton,' it replied, shiveringly [...] – 'I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor!' As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window. Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, 'Let me in!' and maintained its tenacious grip, almost maddening me with fear. 'How can I!' I said at length. 'Let me go, if you want me to let you in!' The fingers relaxed, I snatched mine through the hole, hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and stopped my ears to exclude the lamentable prayer.

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, Project Gutenberg, 2007, Chapter 3, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/768/768-h/768-h.htm>



All texts (especially stories) use imagery in some way to represent places, as well as construct characters and depict events. As you read, listen to or view texts in Senior English, take note of the imagery used and consider the possible symbolic role it plays in stories.

3.2 Your turn

What's your appetite for analysis?



1 Language invites us to be and do things in the world – in English, we examine and analyse texts to gain insights into textual meaning, and to ensure we understand clearly what we are being invited to *do* and *be*.

a Do you enjoy analysing language and texts? Explain why/why not.

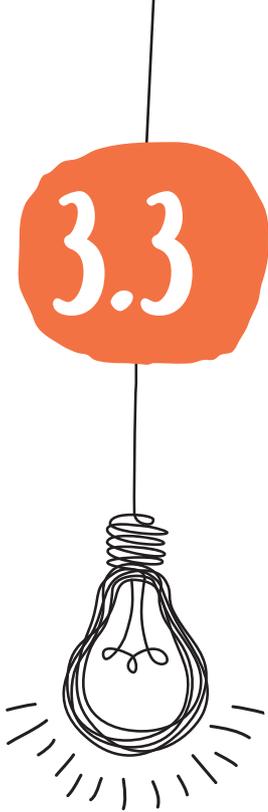
b Do you enjoy exploring alternative and resistant readings of texts? Explain why/why not.

2 What are 2–3 aesthetic features that you would like to learn more about? Write them down here. Then talk to your teacher or another expert to get some further information about and resources for each.

3 In relation to literary analysis, debate the following with a peer or as a class: 'Ignorance is bliss'.

- Affirmative side: It is better to be oblivious to the way texts work and feel happy with the stories they invite you to believe.
- Negative side: It is better to become aware of the way texts work, even though this could bring challenge and discomfort.





COGNITIVE PROCESSES FOR CRITICAL AND CREATIVE RESPONSES

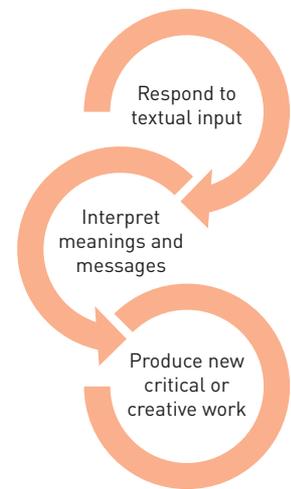
We have already offered some resources in Chapter 1 to support your critical and creative response to texts. Importantly, the processes of critical reading can provide opportunities for creative response, as seen in the critical reading frame (see page 6) where a suggested critical response is 'What can we create to challenge this text by adapting, intervening in or transforming it?'

The cognitive processes defined in the *English General Senior Syllabus* that are most closely linked to textual response are:

- 'investigate' (investigating/investigation)
- 'analyse' (analysing/analysis)
- 'determine' (determining/determination)
- 'appraise' (appraising/appraisal)
- 'evaluate' (evaluating/evaluation)
- 'interpret' (interpreting/interpretation).

When we respond to a text, we use processes (such as those listed above) to make new meanings, and in turn, new texts. Responding in English involves more than analysing texts; you also have to use your analysis to interpret and explain what a text means, both to you and to others.

After you have responded to a text by examining and analysing it, and you have considered its meaning, you have the option of turning your interpretation into the basis of a new text (see Source 5). You can produce a *critical* response to texts, where your response is communicated directly in a logical argument (e.g. a review, character analysis, compositional analysis, interpretation or critical evaluation), or a *creative* response to texts, where you respond in the form of an imaginative work (e.g. intervention, fan fiction, adaptation or transformation). An old-school way of saying this is that you can write a response as fiction (creative/imaginative), or non-fiction (critical/evaluative).



Source 5 A process for turning a textual response into a new critical or creative work

Cognitive processes assessed in Unit 4

The *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus* uses a variety of verbs to describe the cognitive work involved in doing English. By 'cognitive work' we mean the mental processes you need to undertake to get a job done.

In Chapter 1 you were offered a breakdown of the thinking processes that are involved in the *before*, *after* and *during* phases of reading/listening/viewing (see Chapter 1, Source 6, p. 13). In the following sections we will look at the key cognitive processes that are named in the assessment objectives for Unit 4, specifically, *analyse*, *create* and *use*.

Analysing

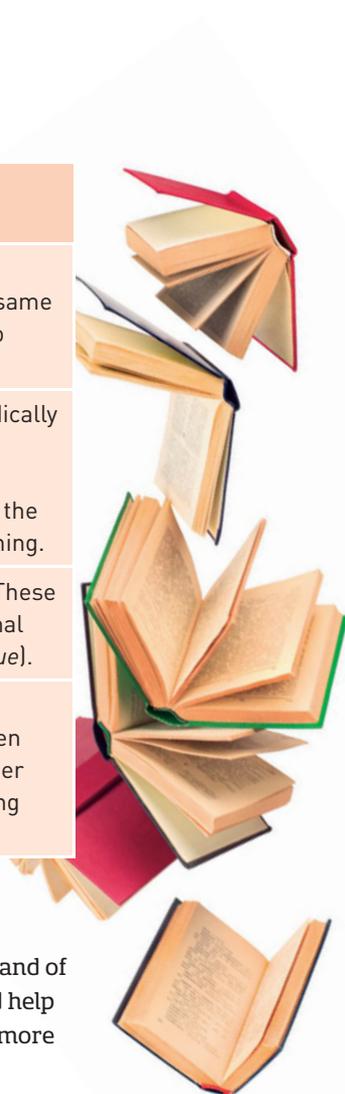
In English it feels like we are analysing all the time. Let's face it – we are! The syllabus uses the word 'analyse' in several objectives, but it is vital that you understand that there are a range of complementary processes that help us:

- conducting a *robust* analysis (by correctly identifying, differentiating and categorising language/text choices)
- analysing the *most important things* in a text (by considering available choices before rushing into analysis)
- avoiding *misanalysis* (by applying contextual knowledge)
- relating analysis of text parts to *find patterns* across the whole text (by synthesising your analytical findings).

A range of additional cognitive processes relating to analysis are outlined in Source 6.

Source 6 Some significant cognitive processes featured in English

These eight cognitive processes can be presented as pairs to capture some of the important analytical work we do with texts in English.	
<i>Compare and contrast</i>	When you are asked to compare and contrast language/texts, you are being asked to look at them beside each other and notice what is the same (<i>compare</i>) and what is different (<i>contrast</i>). Often when you are asked to compare texts, the act of contrasting is implied.
<i>Consider and explore</i>	During an analysis of language/texts, you must ensure that you periodically step back to make room for alternative meanings and messages. <i>Considering</i> involves thinking carefully, perhaps by applying multiple reading frames, before moving on. <i>Exploring</i> involves moving between the big contextual picture and the fine-grained text work to discover meaning.
<i>Reflect and critique</i>	In English, both reflection and critique are conducted systematically. These processes involve deep thinking that relates textual analysis to personal understandings (<i>reflection</i>), and social/cultural understandings (<i>critique</i>).
<i>Judge and evaluate</i>	Analysing texts always requires <i>judgment</i> , as we are always coming to conclusions or forming opinions about the evidence in front of us. When we make those judgments against a specific set of criteria (e.g. whether a text is conforming to the elements of a style or genre) we are applying judgment to <i>evaluate</i> .



Analysing to support a critical response: Interpreting and explaining

Explaining how texts work and interpreting their meaning involves close analysis of language and of text structures. Some people love this work, and some people find it challenging. You may need help from your peers, your teacher or an expert to improve your analytical skills and you will learn more and improve your text analysis skills every time you complete a close textual study.

Don't forget that the point of all this analysing is to improve your ability to make interpretations of your own. When you produce a critical response (e.g. an essay) you must go beyond identifying techniques or features; you must also explain how you think they work. Your identification and explanation should provide an interpretation of the significance ('So what?') or relevance ('Why should I care?') of the text to an audience.

Creating

The other big action we are invited to undertake in English is creating. Just like text analysis, text creation involves a range of complementary processes to help us:

- share *perspectives* with an intended audience (by expressing interpretations and imaginative ideas in new texts)
- produce complete texts *from a range of potential ideas* (by appraising which ideas are strongest)
- *carefully construct* the new text (by designing the content around a generic structure, manipulating language for effect and experimenting with drafts)
- conform to or challenge an established *style* (by making decisions about how to use and arrange language features in a text).

When you produce a creative/imaginative response, you use your interpretation to make choices about whether to extend or challenge the meanings of the original text. Your interpretation will be based on any invited, alternative or resistant readings you had.

Other processes underpinning text creation

A variety of cognitive processes related to creating are indicated in the objectives for English. It is important to keep in mind that in this sense, creating involves producing any kind of new imaginative or analytical text. Looking closely at the objectives for Unit 4 in the *English General Senior Syllabus*, you can see that there is one objective that signals what you will create.

Syllabus objective 3: Students will create perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in their own imaginative texts, and analyse these in literary texts created by others.

Source: English 2019 v1.5 *General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

Connected to this objective are the two assessments in Unit 4, which are:

- Internal assessment 3, where you *create* perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in an imaginative, creative response
- External assessment, where you *create* a response that analyses perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in literary texts created by others.

Note that there is a strong connection between the 11 syllabus objectives for this unit. This means that a created text that successfully meets Objective 3 (explained above) will also see you:

- construct meaning to 'establish and maintain' appropriate roles and relationships (Objective 2)
- develop, manipulate and predict responses when you 'use' and 'make use of' language (Objectives 1, 4, 5, 8–11)
- select and synthesise material to emphasise and/or support certain perspectives and ideas (Objective 6)
- organise and sequence information based on conventions of genre and style (Objective 7).

Using language to support an effective textual response

The syllabus objectives are a good guide to the features that markers will be looking for in the imaginative and analytical texts that you produce for English, including:

- patterns and conventions of the required genres (Objective 1)
- aesthetic features and stylistic devices (Objective 3)
- cohesive devices (Objective 8)
- grammar and language structures (Objective 10)
- mode-appropriate features (Objective 11).



Activating your knowledge of language to increase the depth of your interpretation and creative work is not intended to feel like ticking off a shopping list. When you 'use' these aspects of language in English, it is supposed to be with the aim of giving your knowledge a purpose: either to extend the knowledge by processing it analytically to find meaning, or to put the knowledge into practice by creating something new for an audience.

3.3 Your turn

Self-assess your writing levels

- 1 Use the levels below to self-assess your experience in writing creative and critical responses before embarking on the Unit 4 assessment tasks.



INTERNAL ASSESSMENT 3: CREATIVE RESPONSE (IMAGINATIVE WRITING)	EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT: CRITICAL RESPONSE (ANALYTICAL WRITING)
800–1000 WORDS	800–1000 WORDS
2 HOURS + 15 MINS PLANNING (WITHIN 5 DAYS)	2 HOURS + 15 MINS PLANNING (SINGLE SESSION)
<p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Level 1: Have never completed creative writing under these conditions. – Level 2: Completed creative writing under these conditions last year. – Level 3: Have completed creative writing under these conditions several times. 	<p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Level 1: Have never completed analytical writing under these conditions. – Level 2: Completed analytical writing under these conditions last year. – Level 3: Have completed analytical writing under these conditions several times.
<p><i>Activity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Level 1: Have never completed creative writing that is supposed to respond to other texts. – Level 2: Have previously completed <i>one</i> kind of creative response (e.g. intervention, fan fiction, adaptation). – Level 3: Have previously attempted or completed various kinds of creative response. 	<p><i>Activity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Level 1: Have never completed analytical writing that gives a critical perspective. – Level 2: Have previously completed <i>one</i> kind of critical response (e.g. analytical essay, exposition, critical evaluation). – Level 3: Have previously attempted or completed various kinds of critical response.



- 2 Discuss your level of writing with your teacher and let them know if you have any concerns about your ability to meet the assessment objectives in Unit 4.

FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension





Part

B

UNIT 3 TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS – CONCEPTS IN TEXTS

Chapter 4 Comparative study option 1: Aspiration

- 4.1 Representing the concept of 'aspiration'
- 4.2 'Aspiration' in *The Great Gatsby* and 'American Dreams'
- 4.3 Comparing representations of 'aspiration' in the texts

Chapter 5 Comparative study option 2: Human progress

- 5.1 Representing the concept of 'human progress'
- 5.2 'Human progress' in *Hidden Figures* and poetry by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner
- 5.3 Comparing representations of 'human progress' in the texts

Chapter 6 Comparative study option 3: Sherlock Holmes

- 6.1 Adaptation: *The Case of Sherlock Holmes*
- 6.2 It's elementary: Updating Sherlock Holmes
- 6.3 Comparing *A Study in Scarlet* and 'A Study in Pink'

Chapter 7 Internal assessment 1: Public writing

- 7.1 Exploring textual connections
- 7.2 Structure and features of a blog post as compositional analysis
- 7.3 Writing for print or digital publication
- 7.4 Suggested tasks for assessment

COMPARATIVE STUDY OPTION 1: ASPIRATION

This is one of three options for study as part of Unit 3, Topic 1: Conversation about concepts in texts. The focus of this section is on the representation of the concept of 'aspiration' in two texts, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Peter Carey's short story 'American Dreams'. We will also examine public conversations about this concept in other texts, including the documentary *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream*.

Focus questions:

- What is aspiration?
- How have ideas about the concept of aspiration changed over time?
- How are representations of aspiration shaped by cultural context?
- What can we learn from texts about the concept of aspiration?
- How do texts affect our ideas about aspiration?
- How can texts affect our aspirations?
- How can we talk about the ways texts contribute to a discussion about aspiration?

This study will culminate in a piece of public writing that analyses, compares and evaluates the representations of the concept of aspiration in *The Great Gatsby* and 'American Dreams'. See Chapter 7 for a suggested culminating task for this comparative study.

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 3, Topic 1 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*: 'Conversations about concepts in texts'.

This chapter features:

- a study of one literary text from the prescribed text list for English and EAL (required)
- a study of an additional literary text
- texts of two types: prose text (novels) and prose text (short story)
- a literary work from a different time, place and culture.

The chapter includes a comparative study of two texts:

TEXT	AUTHOR	PRESCRIBED?
<i>The Great Gatsby</i> (1925)	F. Scott Fitzgerald	Yes – literary Written text (complete prose text – novel)
'American Dreams' (1974)	Peter Carey	No – literary Written text (complete prose text – short story)

4.1

REPRESENTING THE CONCEPT OF 'ASPIRATION'

'To accomplish great things we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.'

(From an introductory speech at a session of the Académie Française, 24 December, 1896) – Anatole France, *Works of Anatole France*

The word 'aspiration' comes from the Latin *aspirare*, which means 'to strive for' or 'to seek to reach'. Aspirations are the ideas and goals that drive us, and give us hope for the future and something to aim for.

We enjoy texts that are aspirational in their nature: stories of people overcoming the odds, and working and striving for a better future. In Australia, we particularly celebrate those stories that represent 'the underdog' – the characters who have the odds stacked against them but put up a good fight in the hope of success. These stories are uplifting and inspiring, showing us that individuals can overcome the trials of life and become better people, whatever it takes.

4.1a Your turn

Consider your aspirations



Hold up the personal frame and answer the following questions.

- 1 What are some of your goals for the next:
 - week? _____
 - year? _____
 - 5 years? _____
 - 10 years? _____
- 2 When people ask, 'What do you want to do when you finish school?' what is your answer?

- 3 Draw a concept map in your notebook or on a computer, placing the word 'aspiration' at the centre. Brainstorm all the things you can think of that people might strive for in life.

US author Roxane Gay wrote the extract reproduced in Source 1 in an essay about heroes and aspirations in response to a high-profile police shooting in the United States.

Source 1 An extract from *Bad Feminist*

There's a great deal about our culture that is aspirational – from how we educate ourselves to the cars we drive, to where we work and live and socialize. We want to be the best. We want the best of everything. All too often, we are aware of the gaping distance between who we are and whom we aspire to be and we desperately try to close that distance. And then there are superheroes, mythical characters embodying ideals we may not be able to achieve for ourselves. Superheroes are strong, ennobled, and graceful in their suffering so we don't have to be. In *Superman on the Couch*, Danny Fingeroth writes, 'A hero embodies what we believe is best in ourselves. A hero is a standard to aspire to as well as an individual

[Continues on next page]

Source 1 cont.



to be admired.' We crave the ability to look up, to look beyond ourselves and toward something greater.

We are so enamoured of this idea of the heroic that we are always looking for ways to attribute heroism to everyday people so we might get just a bit closer to the best version of ourselves, so the distance between who we are and who we aspire to be might become narrower.

Heroism has become overly idealized, so ubiquitous that the idea of a hero is increasingly diluted. Athletes are heroic when they are victorious, when they persevere through injury or adversity. Our parents are heroes for raising us, for serving as good examples. Women are heroes for giving birth. People who survive disease or injury are heroes for overcoming human frailty. People who die from injury or disease are heroes for enduring until they can endure no longer. Journalists are heroes for seeking out the truth. Writers are heroes for bringing beauty into the world. Law enforcement officers are heroes for serving and protecting. As Franco and Zimbardo suggest in 'The Banality of Heroism,' 'By conceiving of heroism as a universal attribute of human nature, not as a rare feature of the few 'heroic elect,' heroism becomes something that seems in the range of possibilities for every person, perhaps inspiring more of us to answer that call.' Or maybe we have an excess of heroism because we have become so cynical that we no longer have the language or the ability to make sense of people who are merely human but can also rise to the occasion of greatness when called upon.

Roxane Gay, *Bad Feminist*, Harper Collins, 2014, pp. 331–2

4.16 Your turn

Representations of aspiration

structural



Hold up the structural frame and answer the following questions.

1 How does Roxane Gay define the concept of aspiration in the extract in Source 1?

2 What issues in our culture does Gay identify with the use of the words 'hero' and 'heroic'?

3 Why do you think Gay uses the idea of superheroes to frame her discussion?

When answering the following question, hold up the cultural frame.

cultural



4 Do you think it is more beneficial for society to view heroism as something everyone can achieve, or a term only applicable to a select few?

The American Dream

A key lens through which we can understand aspiration in both Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* and Carey's short story 'American Dreams' is the notion of the American Dream.

The beginnings of the American Dream can be seen in a quote from the United States Declaration of Independence (signed in 1776) that reads, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness'. The term has come to represent a set of traditional US **values**, including beliefs that:

- every citizen has a right to freedom and opportunity
- everyone has an equal hope of succeeding in life
- hard work leads to prosperity
- aspirations are valid.

Over time, the markers of this success changed. Following the First World War, mass manufacturing made luxury goods cheaper and more readily available to everyone. The rise of Wall Street and the stock exchange meant that educated men could make their fortune trading money rather than working hard in traditional occupations. With the rise in secretarial work and the labour shortages following the war, many women were able to secure gainful employment for the first time.

However, the divide between rich and poor grew: while for some it was easier to attain the markers of prosperity, for others the lack of material gains served to heighten their sense of not achieving the American Dream.

values

the things that are highly esteemed by people in particular communities. The term also includes the assumptions people make, and their attitudes towards various topics

4.1c Your turn

Considering the cultural significance of the American Dream

Use the cultural frame to answer the following questions.

- 1 Read the quote from the Declaration of Independence again. Highlight any words that are interesting or unfamiliar and write down their definitions in your notebook or on a computer.
- 2 The ideals laid out in the Declaration of Independence applied only to those who were citizens at the time. Which groups of people do you think might have been excluded by the declaration? (You may need to briefly research the history of the United States.)

- 3 Why do you think the promise of the American Dream would be attractive to immigrants to the United States?

- 4 a What values do you think might underpin the 'Australian Dream'?

- b In more concrete terms, what might attainment of the Australian Dream look like? How would you know you have achieved it?



4.2

ASPIRATION IN *THE GREAT GATSBY* AND 'AMERICAN DREAMS'

In this section, we are particularly concerned with how the concept of 'aspiration' is represented in two texts: F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby* and Peter Carey's 1974 short story 'American Dreams'. We will start by looking at *The Great Gatsby* because it was written first, and because it establishes ideas about 'aspiration' that underpin aspects of Carey's story.

text

any passage of language that makes meaning. Texts can come in a huge variety of forms (e.g. a shopping list, a novel, an email, a conversation, a movie, an artwork, a maths equation, a school uniform or a cereal packet)

Considering the cultural context of *The Great Gatsby*

The Great Gatsby is commonly referred to as 'the great American novel'. Alongside other famous works like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, readers can gain a varied understanding of the ways early twentieth century America defined itself.

As it is nearly 100 years old, *The Great Gatsby* is essentially a historical novel, and approaching the **text** requires an understanding of its historical and cultural context. Once you understand this, you can better decode the **perspectives** represented in the novel.

4.2a Your turn

Social and historical contexts

Hold up the cultural frame to investigate the context of the novel.

1 The context of *The Great Gatsby* is somewhat different from the world we know. To understand it, you will need to do some research. Using the internet, or the books in your school library, find answers to the following questions. Write the answers in your notebook or on a computer. Your teacher might ask you to complete this activity in groups and present your findings to the class.

- a Who was F. Scott Fitzgerald? Why is he a significant author?
- b How did the First World War affect the economy in the United States? You should consider both the post-war depression and the increase in consumerism.
- c How were women's rights changing in the 1920s?
- d What was prohibition?
- e What was New York like in the 1920s? Why is it called the Jazz Age?
- f Who were the Lost Generation? Why are they significant?



perspective

in simple terms, a point of view or way of thinking about situations, ideas, arguments and texts. It also refers to the way the text positions a reader/viewer/listener, or how a systematic way of thinking is embedded in a text (e.g. a feminist perspective, an ecological perspective, a Kalkadoon perspective)



Source 2 A scene from the 1974 adaptation of the film *The Great Gatsby*

Physical settings in *The Great Gatsby*

Within the cultural setting, Fitzgerald makes use of a range of locations around New York as the physical settings for his novel. While these are based on real places, Fitzgerald imbues them with **symbolic** significance to reinforce the themes of his novel.

East Egg

The eggs are two peninsulas that jut out into the bays of Long Island Sound and are shaped like eggs. East Egg is home to the wealthy 'old money' and represents tradition and the upper echelons of the class system. Daisy and Tom live in East Egg.

West Egg

Nick (the narrator in *The Great Gatsby*) describes West Egg as 'the less fashionable of the two' (1926, p. 5) eggs. West Egg is where the newly wealthy congregate, and is home to both Nick and Gatsby. While Nick can barely afford to live there, a home in West Egg represents the achievement of Gatsby's financial aspirations. West Egg signifies new money and consumerism.

Manhattan

Manhattan is the business district of New York. It is where Nick and Tom work, and where Tom keeps an apartment for his mistress, Myrtle. It is also the scene of the dispute between Tom, Daisy and Gatsby. Manhattan represents many of the evils of consumerism, financial corruption and infidelity.

The Valley of Ashes

The Valley of Ashes is a wasteland that lies between the eggs and Manhattan. It is where the rubbish of New York is dumped and burnt. George and Myrtle live here at their petrol station. It represents the decay of the American Dream, the plight of the poor, and the issues wealthy New Yorkers choose to ignore.

4.26 Your turn

Mapping key locations

Using the information above and your knowledge of the text, draw a map of the novel *The Great Gatsby*. You can research the geography of the New York region, but you should draw the map yourself. You should include:

- the key locations listed above
- the paths of important journeys made in the novel
- the locations of characters' houses, the hotel in Manhattan and Wall Street.

Compare your map with your classmates' and decide who has represented the novel most effectively.

symbol
a symbol is something that stands for something else, especially something tangible (e.g. a flickering candle) that represents an abstract idea (e.g. the brevity of life)



Source 3 East Egg is home to the wealthy elite in *The Great Gatsby*.



Source 4 West Egg is where the newly wealthy live in *The Great Gatsby*.



Source 5 The Valley of Ashes in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* symbolises the decay of the American Dream.

How is the story told? Narration: Voice and perspective

internal focalisation

narration that is limited to a single character inside the story

external focalisation

narration that is from a character outside the story who has no insight into characters' minds

omniscient focalisation

when the narrator is external and all-knowing, often able to get inside characters' heads

reliable narrator

someone the reader can trust

unreliable narrator

someone the reader might not be able to trust

There are two key questions to ask when considering how a story is told: 'Who sees?' and 'Who speaks?' By now, you would be aware that the consciousness of the focaliser in a story can be **internal**, **external** or **omniscient**. When an identified character takes on the narration of a story, they can be considered to be **reliable** or **unreliable**.

While the character of Jay Gatsby lends his name to the title of our novel, he is not in fact the narrator. The story is told by his neighbour, Nick Carraway, using internal focalisation, and the use of 'Great' in the title is a value judgment that is reflective of Nick's point of view. Read Source 6, in which Nick introduces himself.

Source 6 Extract 1 from *The Great Gatsby*

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

'Whenever you feel like criticizing any one,' he told me, 'just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.'

He didn't say any more but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores ... Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth.

And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction – Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the 'creative temperament' – it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No – Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men.

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, pp. 1–3



Source 7
Sam Waterston
as Nick Carraway
in the 1974
adaptation of *The
Great Gatsby*.

4.2c Your turn

Consider Nick's role as the narrator

Hold up the structural frame and answer the following questions.



structural



- 1 Later in the novel, Nick asserts that, 'I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known'. (p. 63) How does Source 6 establish the notion that he is an honest, trustworthy narrator?

- 2 Do you believe that Nick is capable of reserving 'all judgments'? Is any person capable of such a stance?

- 3 In Source 6, on the first page of the novel, Nick indicates that he has moved from New York back to the mid-West, a place that becomes symbolic of traditional US values, and that the events that follow occurred in the past. How does this affect Nick's reliability as a narrator?

- 4 The second half of the extract introduces Gatsby. Highlight all the evaluative **language** Nick uses to describe Gatsby.

- 5 Despite these positive descriptions, Nick says, 'Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn'.

- a How does this relate to Nick's assertion that he reserves all judgment? What does this suggest about his narration?

- b This presents something of a paradox – Nick claims to scorn everything Gatsby represents, yet he uses positive language to describe him. Why do you think this might be?

language

literally, a set of words and the system for using them that is common to a community of people. More recently, the term has also come to be applied metaphorically to the systematic and meaningful uses of image, sound, body language, typography, and so on

6 It is interesting that Fitzgerald has chosen a narrator who exists on the edge of the story. He is not the title character of the novel. What are the effects of using such a narrator? What does this say about Nick as a character?

7 Source 6 establishes a strong tone of admiration that pervades the rest of the novel. How do you think Nick feels about Gatsby? How does this change throughout the novel?

8 What judgment is Nick making when he comments on the 'foul dust' that 'floated in the wake of' Gatsby's dreams?

personal



Hold up the personal frame to answer the following questions.

9 Consider the title.

a What does it mean to be 'great'?

b Make a list of people you think are worthy of being called 'great'. What characteristics make them great?

c Compare your ideas with your peers'. What is similar? What is different?

10 If you were to write a novel about someone using a similar title (e.g. *The Great Darcy* or *The Great Mrs Lacey*), who would you write about? What would be your focus?

Now return to the structural frame and answer the next question.

structural



11 In light of the extract reproduced in Source 6, and given your knowledge of the novel, how might the word 'Great' in the title be viewed as ironic?

The characters' American Dreams

One of the first people to write about the American Dream was James Truslow Adams, in his 1931 book, *The Epic of America*. His view of the American Dream is expressed in Source 8.

Source 8 An extract from *The Epic of America*

The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.

James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America*, Little, Brown, 1931, p. 404

Adams shared concerns of authors like Fitzgerald, and others of the Lost Generation who questioned the integrity of the American Dream in a modern world. Regardless of how true it remained to the ideals of their ancestors, the American Dream continued to be an aspirational target for US society, and notably, the characters of *The Great Gatsby*.



Source 9 Leonardo DiCaprio plays the role of Jay Gatsby in the 2013 adaptation of the film.

4.2d Your turn

Develop a personal response

- 1 While there are different ways to measure attainment of the American Dream, some key elements are consistent. What constitutes the American Dream for the following characters? How do they achieve their dreams? Make a list for each in your notebook or on a computer.
 - Tom
 - Daisy
 - Wilson
 - Myrtle
 - Nick
 - Gatsby
- 2 Compare your ideas with those of your peers and consider:
 - Which character's aspirations most align with your own?
 - Which character's aspirations are the most foreign to you?
 - Which are still relevant in the modern world?
- 3 Pretend you are writing an article about each character. Try to express each character's aspirations in a short headline (maximum of six words). Compare your headlines with those of your peers and select the best headline for each character.



Gatsby's aspirations

representation

the way texts construct concepts, identities, times and places, underpinned by the cultural assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, values or world view of the writer, shaper, speaker/signer, designer (and of the reader, viewer, listener)

Jay Gatsby is a striking **representation** of the concept of aspiration. Frustrated with his situation in life, Gatsby sets out early to better himself and achieve success: the American Dream.

Read what Nick has to say about Gatsby in Source 10.

Source 10 Extract 2 from *The Great Gatsby*

The truth was that Jay Gatsby, of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God – a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that – and he must be about His Father's Business, the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 104

Nick's use of 'Platonic conception of himself' refers to the philosopher Plato's contentious 'theory of Forms' (or 'theory of Ideas') in which he considers the relationship between the real world and the ideal versions of reality humans can create in their minds. Essentially, this is the way we can dream or visualise versions of ourselves and attempt to become them, either by knowingly emulating our dreams, or unwittingly becoming too occupied by them. For Gatsby, this started early in his life: he planned a program of self-improvement, changed his name from James Gatz and befriended Dan Cody as a mentor and patron.

We learn in Chapter 4 of the novel that Daisy and Gatsby met prior to the events of the novel. They shared a brief romantic affair before he was sent to war in 1917, and despite promising to wait for him, Daisy married Tom before Gatsby could return.

Gatsby recounts this to Nick in Chapter 8 (see Source 11).

Source 11 Extract 3 from *The Great Gatsby*

I can't describe to you how surprised I was to find out I loved her, old sport. I even hoped for a while that she'd throw me over, but she didn't, because she was in love with me too. She thought I knew a lot because I knew different things from her ... Well, there I was, way off my ambitions, getting deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I didn't care. What was the use of doing great things if I could have a better time telling her what I was going to do?

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 159



Source 12 Daisy and Gatsby, played by Mia Farrow and Robert Redford in the 1974 adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*.

Gatsby's aspirations from this point in his life onwards tend to focus on making himself 'good enough' for Daisy. He sets about amassing wealth and creating a new personal history for himself to explain his position in life. He purchases a colossal house, an ostentatious yellow car and a refined wardrobe, and sets about attracting the notice of Daisy Buchanan once again.

Daisy is central to Gatsby's aspirations. She becomes a symbol of his dreams, and acts as a figment of his romantic aspirations, but also a marker of success. Without the love and approval of Daisy, his efforts to better himself appear to him as somewhat meaningless. This is an interesting contrast to the young boy who wrote schedules for self-improvement for his own sake.

4.2e Your turn

Consider the Platonic conception of self

Hold up the personal frame to answer the following questions.

- 1 A 'Platonic conception of self' is a person's idealised version of themselves. It may, for example, be a 'better' or 'truer' image that heightens their good qualities and reforms their defects. What features would your Platonic conception of yourself possess? In your notebook or on a computer:
 - a create a representation of the features of your Platonic conception of yourself. You might like to write a list of characteristics, create a collage, draw an image or write a creative piece such as a poem or diary entry.
 - b consider whether your Platonic conception of yourself is attainable. If so, what steps would you have to take to achieve it? If not, how close could you get to attaining it, and how?
 - c discuss whether you are comfortable with the steps you would have to take to achieve this conception of yourself. Are the steps moral? Legal? Physically possible? Explain your reasoning.



Now apply the structural frame to answer the next questions.

- 2 What features do you think were important to Gatsby in his Platonic conception of self? Explain your ideas with references to the text.

- 3 In your notebook or on a computer, create a timeline or chronological list of the steps in Gatsby's transformation from a boy called James Gatz into the Jay Gatsby we meet in the novel.

Take a position

- 4 Do you support Gatsby's attempts to 'better himself'? Why or why not? Plan two to three main points for your answer in your notebook or on a computer; then write a full-paragraph response.



Once Gatsby buys his house on the tip of West Egg, his hopes for Daisy are in literal view. Gatsby becomes obsessed with his view of the green light at the end of her dock, across the bay from him. Read the extracts reproduced in Sources 13, 14 and 15 and consider how this light operates as a symbol for Gatsby's aspirations.

Source 13 Extract 4 from *The Great Gatsby*

But I didn't call to him for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone – he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward – and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the quiet darkness.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, pp. 22–3

Source 14 Extract 5 from *The Great Gatsby*

'If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay,' said Gatsby. 'You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock.'

Daisy put her arm through his abruptly but he seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 99



Source 15 Extract 6 from *The Great Gatsby*

And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther ... And one fine morning –

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 192

4.2f Your turn

Consider Nick's impressions of Gatsby

Apply the structural frame to answer the following questions.

1 The colour of the light is important in creating symbolism. Make a list of the **connotations** of and your own associations with the colour green. What ideas does it symbolise?

2 Consider the light as a symbol. Why is it significant that Gatsby is obsessed with a light at the end of a dock? What function do lights have? How do maritime lights work? Why is the light's location important?



structural



connotations

the implied meanings or associations of a word or phrase. A kind of 'cultural baggage', connotations vary based on a person's experiences – words can mean slightly different things for different people

Answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 3 Source 13 illustrates the first time readers meet Gatsby. Why is it significant that he is alone and looking at the green light?
- 4 Why does the green light lose its significance in Source 14?
- 5 The final line of Source 14 reads, 'His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one'. What has Gatsby lost in attaining Daisy in real life? Has he only lost a light?
- 6 Why does Nick say that Gatsby's dream is 'already behind him' in Source 15? What is he unable to grasp, and why?
- 7 Nick uses second-person perspective to talk about the 'orgastic future' in Source 15. What is he talking about? How might this be a comment about the American Dream?

Gatsby's demise and the destruction of the American Dream

Fitzgerald's tale is not a happy one. In some ways, it is possible to view Gatsby as a tragic hero:

- Readers are positioned to like Gatsby and support his hopeful efforts.
- His fatal flaw could be said to be his blind ambition and inability to rationalise the fact that time has moved on and prevented his romantic attainment of Daisy.
- Readers witness his inevitable downfall and understand the restoration of order at the conclusion of the novel.

It is also possible to argue that Gatsby himself operates as a symbol of hope and aspiration. However, his hopes are unattainable from the moment Daisy weds Tom, because Gatsby hopes for a pure romance in which Daisy loved only him. He believes that if Daisy will only say that she never loved Tom, it will be like her marriage never happened. This can be seen in an extract from *The Great Gatsby* Chapter 6 (see Source 16).

Source 16 Extract 7 from *The Great Gatsby*

'I wouldn't ask too much of her,' I ventured. 'You can't repeat the past.'

'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!'

He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand.

'I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before,' he said, nodding determinedly. 'She'll see.'

He talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was ...

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 117



It is interesting here to consider Gatsby again in terms of the American Dream. His dreams are tied up in Daisy – by elevating his status to that of the wealthy upper class, he will finally be good enough for her in a way that he wasn't in 1917. However, his methods for doing so have become warped – he is no longer the hard-working young boy he once was. Gatsby's money is gained through various illegal means. This is not the traditional ideal of the American Dream.

Gatsby's downfall begins when he is confronted with the reality of time moving on.

Source 17 Story timeline



irony
a language technique in which what is said is not what is meant. It often implies the opposite meaning of what is said

4.2g Your turn

Fitzgerald's representation of the American Dream



Hold up the personal frame to answer this question:

- 1 What is your personal reaction to Gatsby's sentiments in Extract 7 (Source 16)? Do you think reliving the past would do Gatsby any good? What could he change?



Now hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions.

- 2 At what point do you think Gatsby realises that he is not going to achieve his aspirations? Is he still optimistic at his death?

- 3 Look back to the American Dreams you identified for the major characters in the novel in *Your turn 4.2d*.

a Which characters achieve their dreams in the course of the novel?

b Which characters do you think may go on to achieve them after the end of the novel?

c Which characters fail? What caused them to fail in the novel?

d What trends can you find? Are there particular types of dreams or characters that succeeded or failed more than others?

4 Consider the relationship between Myrtle and Daisy. Daisy seems to have everything Myrtle aspires to.

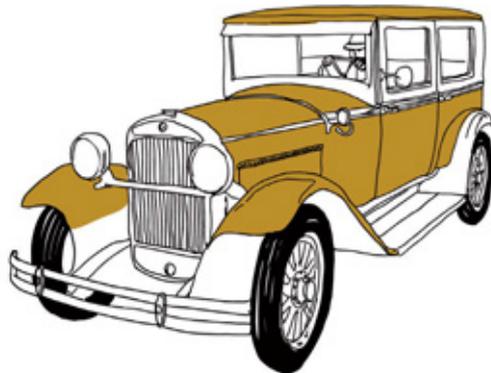
a Comment on the way Myrtle tries to achieve her aspirations. Do you think this aligns with the traditional values that underpin the American Dream?

b What is the significance of Daisy driving the car that kills Myrtle? What comment do you think Fitzgerald might have been trying to make?

Take a position

Answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer. You will need to write one to two paragraphs for each question.

5 Gatsby and Tom both represent different versions of wealth and masculinity in the novel. Consider their similarities and differences (it may help you to make a list of both). How does Tom operate as a **foil** to Gatsby? What **values, attitudes and beliefs** does Fitzgerald endorse through their contrast?



foil
a character whose traits are the opposite of another character's (usually the protagonist). This contrast is created to highlight the traits of the other character

6 George is characterised as weak, snivelling and very poor, yet is arguably the most honest and hardworking character in the novel. Why is it significant that he is the one to kill Gatsby? What comment does this make about the achievability of the American Dream for those in poverty?

7 It can be argued that Gatsby had to die at the end of the novel. After the Manhattan fight he loses grip on his hope for a life with Daisy. He has nothing to live for because he is so committed to his aspirations. Do you support this reading of the text? Defend your response.

8 What is the significance of the final line of the novel, 'So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past'? What comment do you think Fitzgerald ultimately makes about the American Dream?

values, attitudes and beliefs
perspectives that individuals or groups think are true and important, which therefore shape their world view

Colour symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*

Fitzgerald makes effective use of colour imagery for symbolic effect throughout *The Great Gatsby*. An appreciation of this symbolism can deepen your understanding of the novel and may prove to be a useful tool for your own creative writing.

We are going to consider the use of four key colours, but once you start looking for them, you will notice other colour references throughout the novel.

Green

The green light at the end of Daisy's dock is the most recognised symbol in the novel, and you have already considered its significance to *Gatsby* in *Your turn 4.2f*. However, saying that the light simply represents Daisy is an over-simplification: the green light is symbolic of hope and the future, both for Gatsby and the US people. We can gain a broader understanding of the symbolism of the colour green when we link it to other instances in the text. Nick refers to the first US settlers gazing on the 'fresh, green breast of the new world' and states in the final throes of the novel, 'Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us'. It is interesting, then, that Gatsby attaches these hopes to Daisy and her green light, as Daisy is a figment of his past, and is unattainable in the future.



Source 18 The colour yellow in *The Great Gatsby*



Source 19 The colour white in *The Great Gatsby*

Yellow and gold

While they are very similar, yellow and gold represent different ideas in the novel.

Gold is symbolic of old money. We often see these references in relation to Daisy: she is the 'golden girl'; her house is fronted with a bank of windows 'glowing now with reflected gold'; and she stops to notice the 'pale gold odour' of the flowers in the garden. The connotations around gold and wealth are obvious – for years it was one of the most stable and valuable commodities in the world.

Gatsby has amassed great wealth, and he makes some shows of linking himself with the colour gold. His bedroom is largely unadorned, except for the notable 'toilet set of pure dull gold'. However, Gatsby's gold is only 'gold coloured' or 'dull gold', not the pure hue we see associated with Daisy and old money.

More frequently, Gatsby is associated with the colour yellow: the colour of new money. While Gatsby tries to elevate himself to the level of the Buchanans, he falls short: Gatsby is yellow, not quite gold. Most obviously, he drives a beautiful yellow Rolls Royce.

The other obvious use of yellow is in the sign for Dr TJ Eckleberg, the long-gone oculist whose yellow glasses still stare out over the Valley of Ashes, and bear witness to Myrtle's death. While George believes they are the literal eyes of God watching over his unhappy life, it is more likely that they are a kind of warning symbol, looking upon the wasteland that symbolises the materialism (of people like the newly rich) that has destroyed the American Dream.

White

White is generally associated with Daisy. Complete the questions in *Your turn 4.2h* to consider the significance of white, and how all of the colours work together to enhance Fitzgerald's message.

4.2h Your turn

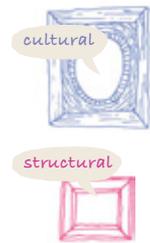
Consider the significance of colour symbolism

Use the cultural frame to answer the following question.

- 1 Colour associations vary around the world. What connotations does the colour white have in Western cultures?

Now, using the ideas you developed in Question 1, apply the structural frame to answer the following questions.

- 2 What is significant about the following references to the colour white?



REFERENCE	SIGNIFICANCE
Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water. (Chapter 1)	
They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. (Chapter 1) Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter, that was as cool as their white dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire. (Chapter 1) Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols, weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans. (Chapter 7)	
'Is she from New York?' I asked quickly. 'From Louisville. Our white girlhood was passed together there. Our beautiful white ...' (Chapter 1)	
'Oh, sure,' agreed Wilson hurriedly and went toward the little office, mingling immediately with the cement color of the walls. A white ashen dust veiled his dark suit ... (Chapter 2)	
The largest of the banners and the largest of the lawns belonged to Daisy Fay's house. She was just eighteen, two years older than me, and by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville. She dressed in white, and had a little white roadster and all day long the telephone rang in her house and excited young officers from Camp Taylor demanded the privilege of monopolizing her that night, 'anyways, for an hour!' (Chapter 4)	



(Continues on next page)

cont.

REFERENCE	SIGNIFICANCE
When I described him - I was half asleep - she said in the strangest voice that it must be the man she used to know. It wasn't until then that I connected this Gatsby with the officer in her white car. (Chapter 4)	
An hour later the front door opened nervously, and Gatsby in a white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold-colored tie hurried in. He was pale and there were dark signs of sleeplessness beneath his eyes. (Chapter 5)	
His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. (Chapter 6)	

- 3 From the beginning of the novel, Daisy warns Nick that she is 'pretty cynical about everything', and after Gatsby's death, he realises that she is 'thoughtless' and 'careless'. In your notebook or on a computer, write a description of Daisy's character. You should aim to write two to three paragraphs and support your ideas with references to the text (quotes).
- 4 Consider the symbolism of Daisy's name: What are the colours of a daisy? What does this symbolise about Daisy's character?

- 5 Consider the ways Fitzgerald uses yellow and gold. What comment does this make about the American Dream?

Construct a creative response

- 6 Now that you have a better understanding of the symbolic ways Fitzgerald uses colour, try using these ideas in your own writing. Choose one of the prompts below and write a descriptive scene in your notebook or on a computer. While your text may feature narrative elements, you should focus on writing sensory description. Write at least two paragraphs.
- Prompt 1: Write a scene set in the modern world that uses the same colour symbolism as you found in *The Great Gatsby*. You might like to rewrite one of Fitzgerald's scenes, or create your own.
 - Prompt 2: Create your own colour symbols for use in a scene. You might like to give new meaning to colours Fitzgerald has used, or make use of different colours in your writing. Consider the cultural connotations of colour you already hold: you may like to emphasise these, or subvert them entirely.



Considering the cultural context of 'American Dreams'

'American Dreams' is a short story written by Australian author Peter Carey and published in 1974. While Carey now resides in New York, he spent a great deal of time in small towns in Australia, growing up in Bacchus Marsh in rural Victoria, and moving to the Sunshine Coast shortly after this story was published. Carey makes use of a small-town setting in 'American Dreams' to draw contrasts between the United States and Australia, and to question the longevity of some traditional Australian values.

4.2i Your turn

Consider the setting

Hold up the personal and cultural frames and answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 Give a brief recount of the places you have lived in your life. Have you lived in small towns or cities? Compare your experiences with those of your peers.
- 2 What is it like to live in a small town? If you have not experienced it, you should do some research. You might like to start with Carey's hometown of Bacchus Marsh.
- 3 'American Dreams' is about a town of 800 people. Can you find similarly sized towns?
- 4 Make a list of what you perceive are the positives and negatives of living in the country and living in the city. Which do you think you would prefer? Why?



Read Source 20, which is an extract from the opening of 'American Dreams', and consider how it establishes the setting and the central tension for the narrative to follow.

Source 20 Extract 1 from 'American Dreams'

No one can, to this day, remember what it was we did to offend him. Dyer the butcher remembers a day when he gave him the wrong meat and another day when he served someone else first by mistake. Often, when Dyer gets drunk he recalls this day and curses himself for his foolishness. But no one seriously believes that it was Dyer who offended him.

But one of us did something. We slighted him terribly in some way, this small meek man with the rimless glasses and neat suit who use to smile so nicely at us all. We thought, I suppose, he was a bit of a fool and sometimes he was so quiet and grey that we ignored him, forgetting he was there at all.

When I was a boy I often stole apples from the trees at his house up in Mason's Lane. He often saw me. No, that's not correct. Let me say that I often sensed that he saw me. I sensed him peering out from behind the lace curtains of his house. And I was not the only one. Many of us came to take his apples, alone and in groups, and it is possible that he chose to exact payment for all these apples in his own peculiar way.

Yet I am sure it wasn't the apples.

What has happened is that we all, all eight hundred of us, have come to remember small transgressions against Mr Gleason, who once lived among us.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, p. 231



4.2j Your turn

Analyse Extract 1

structural



Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about the extract.

- 1 The opening line of the story reads, 'No one can, to this day, remember what it was we did to offend him'. How does this line immediately create tension?

- 2 Prior to the final line of this extract, Mr Gleason is not named. He is simply 'he' or 'him', though he is described in some detail. How does this introduction to Mr Gleason position readers to respond to him?

- 3 How is the rest of the town characterised in comparison to Mr Gleason?

- 4 What are your predictions for the rest of the story? What might be the significance of the title 'American Dreams'?

Australian dreams

The significance of the title of the story 'American Dreams' is quickly introduced.

Source 21 Extract 2 from 'American Dreams'



My father, who has never borne malice against a single living creature, still believes that Gleason meant to do us well, that he loved the town more than any of us. My father says we have treated the town badly in our minds. We have used it, this little valley, as nothing more than a stopping place. Somewhere on the way to somewhere else. Even those of us who have been here many years have never taken the town seriously. Oh yes, the place is pretty. The hills are green and the woods thick. The stream is full of fish. But it is not where we would rather be.

For years we have watched the films at the Roxy and dreamed, if not of America, then at least of our capital city. For our own town, my father says we have nothing but contempt. We have treated it badly, like a whore. We have cut down the giant shady trees in the main street to make doors for the school house and seats for the football pavilion. We have left big holes in the countryside from which we have taken brown coal and given back nothing.

The commercial travellers who buy fish and chips at George the Greek's care for us more than we do, because we all have big dreams of the big city, of wealth, of modern houses, of big motor cars: American dreams, my father has called them.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, p. 232

4.2k Your turn

Analyse Extract 2

Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about the extract.

structural



1 Why does the narrator's father say that the residents have 'treated the town badly'?

2 How is the setting of the story developed in this extract? Support your response with evidence from the text.

3 Why does the narrator's father describe the residents' dreams as 'American dreams'?

4 How do you think the sentiment of American dreams will link to Gleason later in the story?

Now use the personal frame to answer the following questions about some texts you are familiar with.

personal



5 For many years, there has been a concern in our society that Australia is becoming 'Americanised' because our popular **culture** is being influenced by the United States. Consider your own interactions with popular culture.

a Make two lists of texts you enjoy reading or interacting with: one list for Australian texts and another for US texts. You can list any text types: books, films, television shows, magazines, blogs and so on.

b Which do you interact with most: Australian or US texts?

c What do these texts have in common? What is different about Australian and US texts?

d How aspirational are the US texts? What do you aspire to within the texts?

culture
the characteristic ideas, social behaviour and customs that are shared by a group of people and evidenced in the way they use different genres to create texts



The complication of the story is introduced when Mr Gleason retires and buys a block of land on a hill overlooking the town. His actions perplex the residents.

Source 22 Extract 3 from 'American Dreams'

Bald Hill towered high above the town and from my father's small filling station you could sit and watch the wall going up. It was an interesting sight. I watched it for two years, while I waited for customers who rarely came. After school and on Saturdays I had all the time in the world to watch the agonizing progress of Mr Gleason's wall. It was as painful as a clock. Sometimes I could see the Chinese labourers running at a jog-trot carrying bricks on long wooden planks. The hill was bare, and on this bareness Mr Gleason was, for some reason, building a wall.

In the beginning people thought it peculiar that someone would build such a big wall on Bald Hill. The only thing to recommend Bald Hill was the view of the town, and Mr Gleason was building a wall that denied the view.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, pp. 234–5

4.2c Your turn

Analyse Extract 3

structural



Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about Extract 3.

- 1 Look back to your predictions about the plot of the story in *Your turn 4.2j*. How does this compare to your predictions?

- 2 What is the effect of the contrast between the narrator's actions and the building of the wall?

- 3 Why is the final paragraph of this extract ironic?

- 4 Why do you think Mr Gleason is building a wall around his block of land?

cultural



Now hold up the cultural frame to answer Question 5 in your notebook or on a computer.

- 5 Why do you think Carey has chosen to use a cultural stereotype in characterising the builders of the wall as Chinese? What critique might this make about the global economy?

The wall stands in place long enough for the town to forget about it before Mr Gleason's death. At that time, his wife oversees the removal of the wall. Source 23 details the town's first reactions to what they find behind the wall.

Source 23 Extract 4 from 'American Dreams'

And between us and Mrs Gleason was the most incredibly beautiful thing I had ever seen in my life. For a moment I didn't recognize it. I stood open-mouthed and breathed the surprising beauty of it. And then I realised it was our town. The buildings were two feet high and they were a little rough but very correct. I saw Mr Dyer nudge my father and whisper that Gleason had got the faded U in the BUTCHER sign of his shop.

I think at that moment everyone was overcome with a feeling of simple joy. I can't remember ever having felt so uplifted and happy. It was perhaps a childish emotion but I looked up at my father and saw a smile of such warmth spread across his face that I knew he felt just as I did. Later he told me that he thought Gleason had built the model of our town just for this moment, to let us see the beauty of our town, to make us proud of ourselves and to stop the American Dreams we were so prone to. For the rest, my father said, was not Gleason's plan and that he could not have foreseen the things that happened afterwards.

I have come to think that this view of my father's is a little sentimental and also, perhaps, insulting to Gleason. I personally believe that he knew everything that would happen.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, pp. 239–40

The narrator is the catalyst for the next series of complications. There are interesting overtones here of Dylan Thomas's radio play *Under Milk Wood*, which narrates the dreams of the residents before following the implications of these dreams throughout the day.

In 'American Dreams', Mr Gleason had also replicated the residents of the town in his model, going about activities that were quintessential of their routines. The narrator removes the roof from one of the model houses and finds Mrs Cavanagh and Craigie Evans in bed together – not Mr Cavanagh! Other residents see what he has uncovered. Source 24 deals with the aftermath.

Source 24 Extract 5 from 'American Dreams'

And then we all stood around in little groups and regarded the model town with what could only have been fear. If Gleason knew about Mrs Cavanagh and Craigie Evans (and no one else had), what other things might he know? Those who hadn't seen themselves yet in the town began to look a little nervous and were unsure of whether to look for themselves or not. We gazed silently at the roofs and felt mistrustful and guilty.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, p. 241

4.2m Your turn

Analyse Extract 4

Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about the extract.

- 1 Why do you think the narrator, and others, were overcome by the 'surprising beauty' of what Mr Gleason had created? Why might it 'stop the American dreams' they were 'prone to'?



2 Does Mr Gleason's creation support the narrator's father's belief that he 'loved the town more than any of us'? Explain your reasoning.

3 How is Mr Gleason characterised in this extract? What do you think will be the 'things that happened afterwards'?

The Americans

Word of the model's existence quickly spreads and the site is preserved (after removal of 'certain controversial items'). The minister for tourism addresses the town and promises that their businesses will flourish with an increase in tourism.

Source 25 Extract 6 from 'American Dreams'

The Americans would come, he said. They would visit our town in buses and in cars and on the trains. They would take photographs and bring wallets bulging with dollars. American dollars ...

Well, they did come. And let me tell you how it has all worked out for us.

The Americans arrive every day in buses and cars and sometimes the younger ones come on the train ... On Bald Hill there are half a dozen telescopes through which the Americans can spy on the town and reassure themselves that it is the same down there as it is on Bald Hill ... To tell the truth most of us are pretty sick of the game. They come looking for my father and ask him to stare at the gears on Dyer's bicycle ... They stand around him. Often they remember the model incorrectly and try to get my father to pose in the wrong way. Originally he argued with them, but now he argues no more. He does what they ask ...

Then I know they will come to find me. I am next on the map. I am very popular for some reason. They come in search of me and my petrol pump as they have done for four years now. I do not await them eagerly because I know, before they reach me, that they will be disappointed.

'But this is not the boy.'

'Yes,' says Phonse, 'this is him all right.' And he gets me to show them my certificate.

They examine the certificate suspiciously, feeling the paper as if it might be a clever forgery.

'No,' they declare. (Americans are so confident.) 'No,' they shake their heads, 'this is not the real boy. The real boy is younger.'

'He's older now. He used to be younger.'

... The Americans pay one dollar for the right to take our photographs. Having paid the money they are worried about being cheated. They spend their time being disappointed and I spend my time feeling guilty, that I have somehow let them down by growing older and sadder.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, pp. 242-5



4.2n Your turn

Analyse Extract 6

Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about the extract.



- 1 What attitudes do the US tourists have towards the residents of the town? In your notebook or on a computer support your answer with evidence from the extract.
- 2 How does this extract, which forms the closing stages of the narrative, make the title of the story seem ironic?

- 3 There are other instances of irony operating in this extract. Explain how the following features work ironically to develop the meaning of the text.
 - a 'On Bald Hill there are half a dozen telescopes through which the Americans can spy on the town and reassure themselves that it is the same down there as it is on Bald Hill.'

- b 'And he gets me to show them my certificate. They examine the certificate suspiciously, feeling the paper as if it might be a clever forgery. 'No,' they declare. (Americans are so confident.)'

- 4 What is the effect of the closing sentence of the extract?

Now hold up the cultural frame to answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.



- 5 What comment might Carey be making about the process of 'Americanisation'?
- 6 How does Carey represent cultural stereotypes in the story? (Consider the roles of Australians, Chinese and Americans.)
- 7 Gleason's motives for creating the model town are unclear. Below are some possible statements Carey might have been making about Australian society in the 1970s.
 - a Australians should be happy with their society as it is.
 - b Americans are not aspirational.
 - c Australians are easy to take advantage of.
 - d Australians can't get stuck in time; they must develop.
 - e Australians are too quick to follow US trends.

Compile evidence from Extracts 1 to 6 to support each statement. Then, write a one-paragraph argument about which statement you believe is most applicable to the text.

4.3

COMPARING REPRESENTATIONS OF 'ASPIRATION' IN THE TEXTS

It is useful to consider Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Carey's 'American Dreams' as companion texts; while they are written from different cultural perspectives, they both explore concepts and issues surrounding the integrity of the American Dream.



Source 26
Carey Mulligan as Daisy Buchanan in the 2013 adaption of *The Great Gatsby*.

Aspiration and the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby*

Fitzgerald is critical of the state of the American Dream in post-war United States. While he never saw active service on the battlefield, Fitzgerald did enlist as a lieutenant in the First World War to fight alongside the bulk of his generation, many of whom did not return. Those who did found a United States that was unfamiliar and lacked many of the traditional values they had risked their lives for.

The young people of the United States were able to live a life their forefathers had only dreamed about. Mass-manufacturing and the rise of jobs in finance and administration meant that many could afford the trappings of luxury. Prohibition was failing and the black market alcohol industry (bootlegging) provided another means of making money for those willing to break the law, and supported the strong call for celebratory alcohol in the post-war years. Women were 'liberated' – they had grown accustomed to earning their own money and had won the right to vote. Those who had survived the war celebrated their very right to live.

However, tensions developed within the older generations of US society. Some of those who knew what it was to work hard resented the wealth of the newly rich. For many of the working class, great riches, luxury items and the types of parties immortalised in *The Great Gatsby* would be forever out of reach. A generation of men who had served in the war were suffering under the strain of post-traumatic stress disorder, which would not be recognised until the 1950s. Some women did not want to be 'liberated' and dealt with the tension of wanting to maintain their stable domestic lives when the world was telling them to make the most of their 'freedom'.

4.3a Your turn

Fitzgerald's representation of aspiration

structural



Hold up the structural frame and answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 Consider the way each of the characters in the novel symbolises particular feelings within US society by collecting evidence from the text to answer these questions:
 - a What **world view** does Daisy represent about older generations of women in US society?
 - b What world view does Jordan represent about the liberated women in US society?
 - c What world view does Tom represent about the 'old money' in US society?
 - d What world view does Gatsby represent about the newly rich in US society?
 - e What world view does George represent about the working class poor in US society?
 - f What world view does Myrtle represent about poor women in US society? Does she represent positive or negative ideas about women's liberation?
 - g How does Nick represent traditional US values in the novel?

world view encompasses a person's experiences, assumptions and beliefs about the world, and their valuing of certain ideas and things. Broad world views are shared by groups of people within a community

Now use the critical frame and answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.



- 2 In light of your responses to Question 1, what comment do you think Fitzgerald is making about the American Dream in post-war society? To answer this question fully, you may need to consider writing a series of paragraphs.
- 3 What comment do you think Fitzgerald makes about the concept of aspiration in *The Great Gatsby*? Write one to two paragraphs.
- 4 To what extent is this message relevant to modern audiences? Australian audiences? Write one to two paragraphs.

A comparison of Gatsby and Gleason: the dreamers

Both *The Great Gatsby* and 'American Dreams' feature a character whose dreams eclipse those of the people around them. While they are aspiring to very different things, a lot can be learnt from a comparison of the dreamers: Jay Gatsby and Mr Gleason.

JAY GATSBY	MR GLEASON
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gatsby's aspiration is for economic power to win Daisy.- He is god-like in his own illegal empire.- Gatsby focuses on reshaping himself to overcome the challenges of society.- Gatsby's dream is for himself.- He challenges social issues and aspires to overcome them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gleason is critical of his town's aspiration to 'Americanness'.- He fashions himself as a god-like figure by creating a replica of the town.- Gleason seeks to challenge society to change.- Gleason's dream is for the community.- He challenges social issues and aspires to overcome them.

4.3b Your turn

Comparing texts

Hold up the personal frame and answer the following questions.



- 1 Which character do you identify with more: Gatsby or Gleason? Why?

- 2 Which character do you think is more successful in changing the attitudes of those around them? Why?

critical



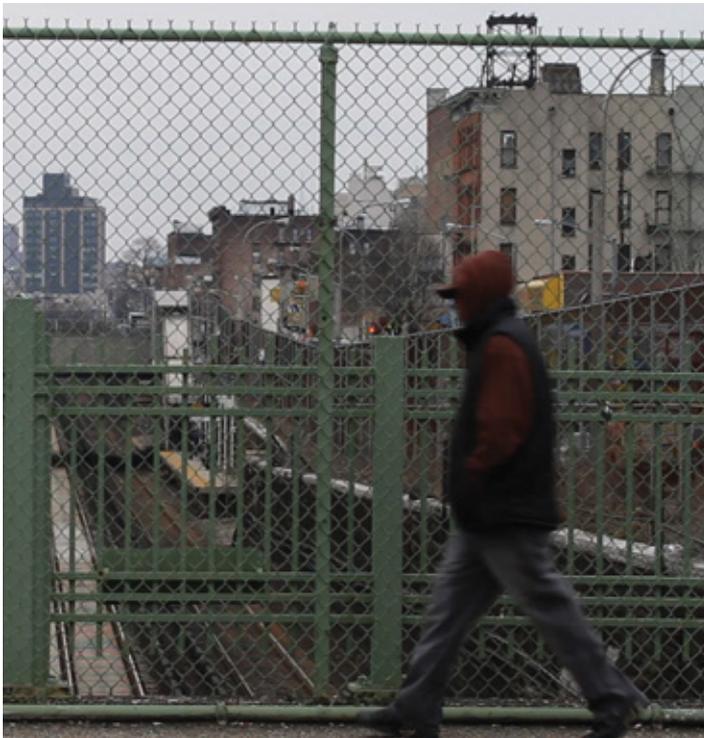
resistant reading after analysing the world view(s) embedded in a text and considering possible gaps and silences, readers can consciously choose to challenge the text, interpreting it in a way that the author probably did not intend, and to 'resist' the most common (or dominant) interpretation that 'typical' readers might make

- 3 How does an understanding of *The Great Gatsby* help readers make sense of the short story 'American Dreams'? Respond by writing a paragraph in your notebook or on a computer.
- 4 How does 'American Dreams' contextualise *The Great Gatsby* and make it relevant for Australian readers? (You should discuss the ideas presented in *The Great Gatsby* in comparison to those in 'American Dreams'). Respond by writing a paragraph in your notebook or on a computer.

Now apply the critical frame to consider how these texts relate to each other. Answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer. You will need to write at least one paragraph for each response.

- 5 What views of, or ideas about, 'aspiration' are left out of:
 - a *The Great Gatsby*?
 - b 'American Dreams'?
 - 6 Consider the conversation about aspiration between the two texts (the ways they relate to each other).
 - a To what extent do they represent the idea that aspiration is the American Dream?
 - b What flaws do they highlight in this representation of aspiration?
- } A **resistant reading** is one in which readers do not accept the dominant values, attitudes and beliefs presented by the author. In what ways is it possible to take a resistant reading to the representation of aspiration in these two texts?

Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream



Source 27 A still from the documentary *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream*

One of the reasons *The Great Gatsby* is still studied all over the world is because it represents concepts such as 'aspiration' in a universal way that is still applicable to readers today. Additionally, there are parallels in the cultural setting that make its study particularly interesting.

Alex Gibney's 2012 documentary *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream* explores issues around the distribution of wealth in the United States. The film investigates the residents of two streets called Park Avenue, both in New York. One of the streets is situated in South Bronx, an area where 40 per cent of the population lives in poverty. The other Park Avenue is located in the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

The latter street is the focus of the documentary: it is home to '740 Park Avenue', the apartment building with the highest concentration of millionaires in the country. The documentary is critical of the political power concentrated in the building – many of the residents provide large donations to political parties, and the documentary implies a link between these donations and laws that help to protect their business empires.

4.3c Your turn

Consider the cultural context

- 1 *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream* is widely available. If possible, watch the documentary. If not, conduct research into the residents of 740 Park Avenue.
- 2 While *Gatsby* was written before 740 Park Avenue was built, the novel depicts the lifestyles of a similar strata of society. Conduct research into the lifestyles of the wealthy in the 1920s. You might like to start with the parties hosted by the Vanderbilt family, and continue to investigate some of the people who attended.

While Australia does not boast a single building that is as wealthy or powerful as 740 Park Avenue, similar economic issues exist in our own society. Incredibly, the top 1 per cent of the economic population possesses as much wealth as the bottom 70 per cent of the country combined. While the rich in Australia continue to prosper, the wealth of the bottom 50 per cent has continued to fall over the past 20 years. The situation for young people is particularly bleak, with concerns that millennials will be too old to pay off a 30-year mortgage once they have saved up the deposit required for a house deposit.



Source 28 The entrance to 740 Park Avenue, which features in *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream*.

4.3d Your turn

Relevance to modern Australians

Apply the personal frame and answer the following questions.

- 1 Do you think the dream of home ownership and financial stability is still applicable to Australians?

- 2 How could we define an Australian dream that is not tied to financial prosperity?





Source 29
John Howard,
Australian
Prime Minister
1996–2007

Bringing your ideas together: Australian dreams

While Australia does not have a formal document like the United States Declaration of Independence, which clearly sets out the founding values of the nation, we have some similar world views drawn from our collective experiences. In 1999, the Australian Government, under then Prime Minister John Howard, commissioned the composition of a preamble to the Australian Constitution to attempt to give expression to some of these shared values.

Source 30 Preamble to the Constitution

With hope in God, the Commonwealth of Australia is constituted by the equal sovereignty of all its citizens.

The Australian nation is woven together of people from many ancestries and arrivals. Our vast island continent has helped to shape the destiny of our Commonwealth and the spirit of its people.

Since time immemorial our land has been inhabited by Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, who are honoured for their ancient and continuing cultures.

In every generation immigrants have brought great enrichment to our nation's life.

Australians are free to be proud of their country and heritage, free to realise themselves as individuals, and free to pursue their hopes and ideals. We value excellence as well as fairness, independence as dearly as mateship.

Australia's democratic and federal system of government exists under law to preserve and protect all Australians in an equal dignity which may never be infringed by prejudice or fashion or ideology nor invoked against achievement.

In this spirit we, the Australian people, commit ourselves to this Constitution.

4.3e Your turn

Comparing cultural contexts



Hold up the cultural frame and consider the following questions.

- 1 What similarities and differences do you notice exist between the proposed preamble to the Australian Constitution and the quote from the United States Declaration of Independence on page 47?

- 2 John Howard was criticised for using the word 'mateship' in this context.

a What are the connotations of the word 'mateship'?

b Who do you think might feel excluded by the use of the word 'mateship'?

3 How well does Source 30 represent your ideas about what constitutes the 'Australian Dream'?

Having considered some of the ways the concept of aspiration is represented in literature, you will have a chance to compare these representations with your own ideas in an extended piece of writing. Before you do so, you should consider and respond to the questions in *Your turn 4.3f*.

4.3f Your turn

Develop a personal response

Use the personal frame to answer the following questions.

1 What do you aspire to?

2 What do others aspire to?

3 What could you challenge in society to make the world better?

4 What have you learnt from the texts studied in this unit?

5 What do you want to say to the world about aspiration, hopes and dreams?

6 How will you say it?



FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



COMPARATIVE STUDY OPTION 2: HUMAN PROGRESS

This is one of three options for study as part of Unit 3, Topic 1, 'Conversations about concepts in texts'. The focus of this chapter is a comparative study of the representation of the concept of 'human progress' in two texts: the film *Hidden Figures* (directed by Theodore Melfi) and poetry by Marshallese poet Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner.

Focus questions:

- Why do humans create texts about their progress?
- What representations of human progress are evident in the film *Hidden Figures* and selected poems by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner?
- What ideas about human progress are prompted by comparing and contrasting the representations in the selected texts?
- How do the film and poems position audiences to think about particular issues, places and times?
- How could alternative perspectives on human progress be represented?
- How can you draw from the analysis of these texts to develop your own perspective on human progress?

This study will culminate in a piece of public writing that analyses, compares and evaluates the representations of human progress in the texts. See Chapter 7 for a suggested culminating task for this comparative study.

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 3, Topic 1 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*, 'Conversations about concepts in texts'.

This chapter features:

- a study of one literary text from the prescribed text list for English and EAL (required)
- a study of an additional literary text from the prescribed text list for English and EAL
- texts drawn from two syllabus categories: selection of poems; multimodal text (film)
- a literary work that contains perspectives and representations from the Asia-Pacific Region.

The chapter is a comparative study of two texts:

TEXT	CREATOR	PRESCRIBED?
<i>Hidden Figures</i> (2016)	Director: Theodore Melfi	Yes – literary Multimodal text (feature film)
Poems (2016–2018): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'History project' • 'Bursts of Bianca' • 'Crash' • 'Tell them' • 'Dear Matafele Peinam' • 'Anointed' 	Poet: Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner	Yes – literary Written and multimodal texts (poetry selection)

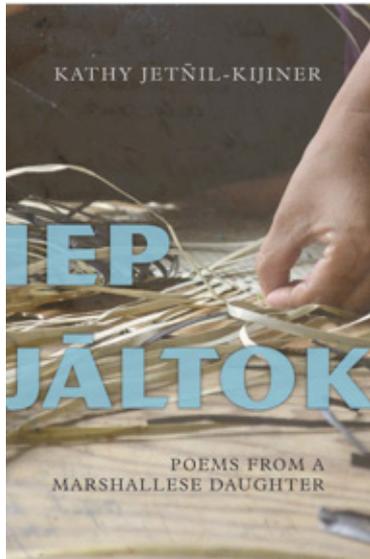
5.1

EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF 'HUMAN PROGRESS'

The concept of 'human progress' is something that can be thought of as a single concept, or as two concepts paired together. What does it mean to 'be human'? What does it mean to 'make progress'? As you engage in this study, you may find yourself pulling these ideas apart so you can think about them separately, as well as together.



Source 1 Movie poster for *Hidden Figures* (2016)



Source 2 Cover of the book *Iep Jältok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter* (2017)

As young adults, you are entering a phase of life where you (a human) may be thinking more and more about what you should do with your time and energy (your progress). And that is one aspect of human progress we want you to think about: the progress of individual humans. But there are other aspects too, like the way groups of humans (e.g. a cultural or social group) move forward and find ways to develop and thrive. Or thinking bigger still, consider the whole of humanity and how we are progressing as a species.

As you watch the film *Hidden Figures* and read the poetry of Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner in this comparative study, identify and examine the messages they offer in relation to the concept of human progress. Throughout this study you will consider your own views on human progress, and the perspectives provided in the texts about our society and culture.

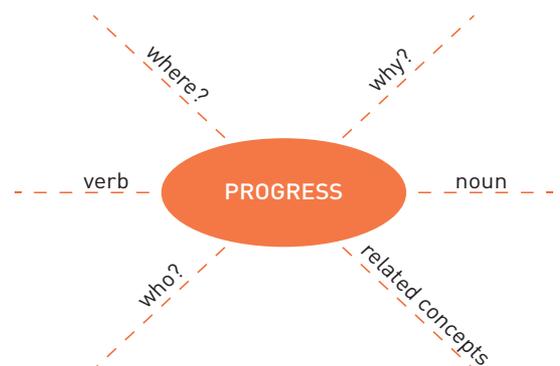
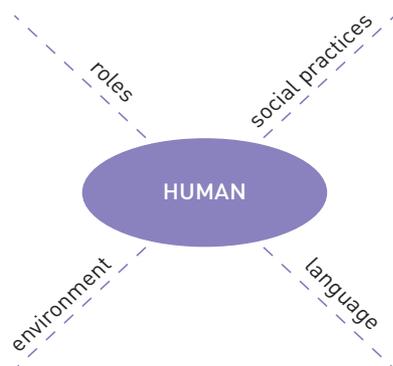
5.1a Your turn



Concept exploration

Before we begin studying texts in depth to discover how human progress has been represented in written, spoken and visual language, pause to think about the concept and note down your thoughts.

- 1 Create two concept maps in your notebook or on a computer: one for the word/concept 'human' and one for the word/concept 'progress'. You could use these prompts as starting points:



- 2 Discuss the following propositions with a classmate or in a class discussion forum and decide whether you agree or disagree with each. Write some notes in the table to explain your position.

PROPOSITION	AGREE/DISAGREE? NOTES
Humans make more and more progress with each new generation.	
Some humans are making progress, but others are not.	
Unless all of humanity is making progress, none of us can say we are really thriving.	
School students are not experienced enough to have a view on human progress.	
It is easy to measure human progress.	
Most Australians are likely to have the same view about human progress.	

- 3 In 1958, American activist and Baptist minister Martin Luther King Jr. wrote this passage in a book titled *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*.

Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Even a superficial look at history reveals that no social advance rolls in on the wheels inevitability. Every step towards the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals ... This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.

synonym
a word or phrase that has the same meaning as another word or phrase

- a What words in the quote would you say are **synonyms** for 'progress'?

- b Write down at least one example of 'progress' being described metaphorically in the quote.

- c Come up with another **metaphor** for 'progress'.

- d 'Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable.' Do you agree? Why or why not?

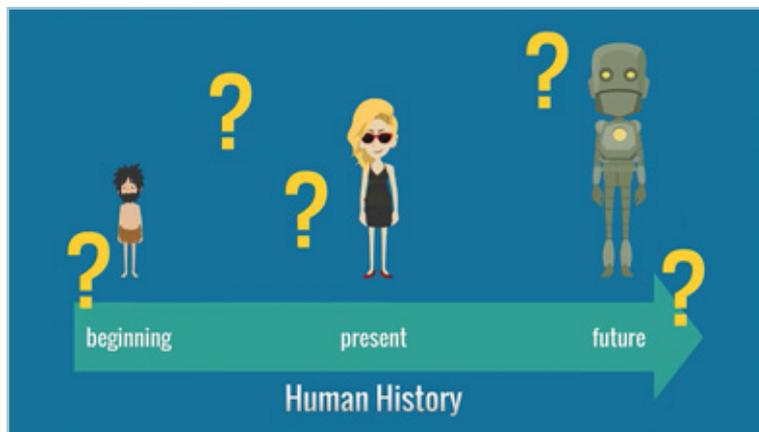


Representing: Being human, making progress

We can start thinking about what it means to be human by considering the notion that we are all part of the human race – that is, the biological species *Homo sapiens*. Often, when trying to learn about people from other cultures, ethnicities or nations, there can be a tendency to focus on what is different between two groups, rather than what is similar. But thinking about ‘being human’ can involve thinking more broadly about our shared experience.

However, human beings don’t individually experience the world in the same way. This makes the notion of a global ‘humanity’ difficult to imagine, as we do still belong to discrete cultures, ethnicities and nations. We also each have a totally unique perspective on the world around us as a result of existing in a particular time and place.

The conversations about human progress that will be evident in your text studies in this chapter relate closely to the push and pull of the two ideas above – that we are all part of one human race, and that we are also all unique individual humans. The texts you study here have been chosen because they represent important ideas about what progress looks like for humans, and about the ways in which we pursue, stand up for and respond to different types of progress.



Source 3 Screenshot from the online video *The question of human progress*

5.16 Your turn

Different perspectives on human progress

Watch the short video, *The question of human progress* to learn about some different perspectives on human progress. A link is included on your obook.

1 The five ‘frames’ (or world views) relating to human progress put forward in the video are:

- a *theistic frame*: human history is explained by divine forces
- b *chaos frame*: human history has no coherent story
- c *decline frame*: humans are pretty much getting worse
- d *progress frame*: humans are pretty much getting better
- e *cyclical frame*: human history is explained by constant forces.

Circle the perspective that is currently closest to your own view and, in your notebook or on a computer, write a short explanation of your view.

2 In your notebook or on a computer, brainstorm any ideas you have about human progress in two lists:

- ‘Things that show the human race is flourishing’
- ‘Things that should make us worried about the future of humanity’.

3 In your notebook or on a computer, write about some of your hopes for the future of humanity. For example, what would you like to see us do or achieve in the next five years, or in the next 50 years?

4 Create a digital or paper-based collage/diagram that explores your own perspective on human progress and positions the viewer to see the concept from your point of view. You could draw on your responses from Questions 1–3 for ideas about what to represent.





Public writing about human progress

In Chapter 7 we go into greater depth about what it means to write for a public audience, including the audience and social purpose of your writing, the choices of publishing medium generally available, and the distinction between self-publishing and writing for an established publication.

For now, let's consider the kinds of concepts and broad issues that might arise in a piece of **public writing** about human progress. Consider the meanings and messages about human progress offered in Sources 4 and 5.

Source 4 Media text extract 1

public writing

any written work that is published for a broad audience. This includes feature articles and opinion articles in widely distributed magazines and newspapers, as well as articles, reviews and essays in literary journals, websites, zines, and blog posts that are self-published or hosted on a larger website

Humanity's "sustainability" is no excuse for abandoning planet Earth

'Spreading out into space will completely change the future of humanity,' says Stephen Hawking. It 'may be the only thing that saves us from ourselves. I am convinced that humans need to leave Earth'.

The world-famous physicist was talking at a recent science festival in Trondheim, Norway. And his keynote speech to the Starmus Festival about giving humanity a sense of purpose raises some very important questions about our views of positive futures.

For Hawking 'a new and ambitious space programme would excite (young people), and stimulate interest in other areas, such as astrophysics and cosmology'. Humans have to leave Earth, he explained, due to an array of threats including asteroid strikes, resource depletion, overpopulation, deforestation, decimation of animal species, and the effects of human made climate change (particularly rising temperatures and melting ice caps).

Yet hearing such a viewpoint in response to the challenges we face leaves me cold. We cannot flee the apocalypse forever, leaving a chosen few to flourish on other planets; we need positive visions for humanity here on Earth.

Stephen Allen, 'Humanity's "sustainability" is no excuse for abandoning planet Earth', *The Conversation*, 17 July 2017

Source 5 Media text extract 2

Human trials on Earth are the key to how we will survive on Mars

In Europe, 250 years ago, there was a red, dusty, alien environment out there on the frontier. Hostile, unknown, dangerous. Six months away on a ship, if you survived at all.

How could you live there? Why would you go at all? What would you do there?

That was Australia. Now look at us. Can anything that those early explorers did compare in importance to us with the fact that they decided to go there and set up a colony?

A Mars colony would be a truly wonderful thing. A whole new branch of humanity, with its own customs, laws, science, business, music, art, dance and literature.

It would be an inspiration even to those who would never go. It would make some good headlines, for a change. It would be giving something positive to the future, instead of always robbing it.

Graham Mann, 'Human trials on Earth are the key to how we will survive on Mars', *The Conversation*, 2 September 2016

Sources 4 and 5 are extracts from opinion articles, meaning that they contain clearly stated viewpoints as well as persuasive language techniques and stylistic choices. These sources both draw heavily on contrast: contrasting images and contrasting 'what was' with 'what is' or 'what could be'.

Positioning audiences to accept your ideas

All information, even information that is deemed objective or unbiased, has been collected by an author with particular experiences and interests and is communicated with a specific social purpose. Information communicated in English always includes, grammatically and by default, someone's perspective. Information is never neutral; it is always assembled by an author and reflects their values, attitudes and beliefs.

Not all information is aimed to be presented objectively. Sometimes we are given information to persuade us of something, or to get us thinking about something deeply by presenting a range of positions. The language chosen by the author will reflect many contextual factors, including:

- how urgent they see the need to persuade you (their role in delivering the message)
- how open they believe you are to understanding and accepting their message (their relationship with you).

Some public writing, such as a news story is intended to represent multiple perspectives and to use objective language to minimise bias in the storytelling. Other genres of public writing have different objectives, and can tolerate a narrower perspective or deployment of aesthetic and persuasive language. In any case, it is important for the audience to understand how language is being used.

5.1c Your turn

These extracts are both from articles about the possibility of establishing a human colony on Mars. In your notebook or on a computer write up to half a page explaining an example from either extract where contrast, story or imagery is used to position this issue as a relevant or pressing concern for readers.

structural



critical



Perspectives as reflections of world views

The study of human progress offers a good opportunity to revise the notion of world view. At its core, your world view is how you see the world, metaphorically speaking. It is about your philosophies, beliefs and ideologies. Your world view shapes how you interpret the things you see happening in the part of the world that is right in front of you.

It is important to remember that two people can 'see' the same piece of information (e.g. a picture, or a word) but interpret it differently based on their world view.

5.1d Your turn

As your comparative text study advances, your knowledge and understanding of human progress – as well as your perspectives and positions on the concept – may change. In your notebook or on a computer, record your opinions in relation to the following questions before commencing your text study.

- 1 What frustrates you the most about human society now, and what do you imagine would make for positive progress in that area?
- 2 Do you feel you have a significant stake in seeing humanity make progress, or in seeing the status quo retained in any specific areas of our society or culture? Explain your answer.

personal



critical



5.2

'HUMAN PROGRESS' IN *HIDDEN FIGURES* AND POETRY BY KATHY JETÑIL-KIJINER

In this section, we focus on the ways the concept of 'human progress' is represented in two texts: the film *Hidden Figures* (directed by Theodore Melfi and released in 2016) and a collection of six poems by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner (published in page and/or video format from 2016 to 2018). We will hold up structural, cultural and critical frames as we compare contemporary perspectives on human progress across a range of areas, including equal rights, technological advancement, the environment and social justice.

Film study: *Hidden Figures*

Hidden Figures tells the stories of three female African-American 'human computers' who performed calculations at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA): Katherine Johnson (played by Taraji P. Henson), who calculated flight trajectory space missions; Dorothy Vaughan (Octavia Spencer), a mathematician who became a programmer and the first African-American female supervisor at NASA; and Mary Jackson (Janelle Monáe) the first African-American female engineer at NASA. Through the **character arc** of each of the three women we gain various perspectives on the social issues represented.

character arc

the transformation that takes place for a character over the course of the story

archival footage

(also called *stock footage*) refers to video recordings that have previously been used for other purposes

Historical and cultural context of the story

The film *Hidden Figures* covers issues and concepts relating to three historically significant sources of human progress in the twentieth century:

- the Civil Rights Movement in the United States
- second-wave feminism
- the Space Race between the Soviet Union (USSR) and the United States.



Source 6 From left: Octavia Spencer, Taraji P. Henson and Janelle Monáe in *Hidden Figures*

Although some aspects of the film are fictional, as a 'biographical drama' it has used stylistic devices (e.g. inclusion of archival footage) to connect audiences with historically authentic situations and problems.

Referencing history using archival footage

The **archival footage** used throughout the film includes:

- interviews with Soviet cosmonauts
- television coverage and footage of Alan Shepard's launch into space
- extracts from President John F. Kennedy's famous 'Moon speech'
- television coverage and footage of the 1961 attack on the Freedom Rider bus.

At times, the archival footage includes historically significant quotes from speeches or interviews. When this is examined alongside the scenes occurring before and after the footage, as well as with respect to the overall messages of the film, additional meanings can emerge.

Source 7 Extracts from JFK's 'Moon speech'

For the eyes of the world now look into space, to the moon and to the planets beyond, and we have vowed that we shall not see it governed by a hostile flag of conquest, but by a banner of freedom and peace.

... We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won.

... We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.

Transcript of extracts from President John F. Kennedy's 'Moon speech', September 1962

5.2a Your turn

Human progress in (and since) 1961

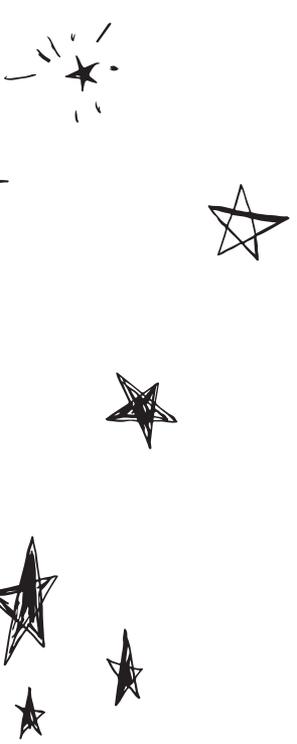
For this activity, and the remaining activities in this chapter, we have assumed that you have watched the film *Hidden Figures* in its entirety. Answer questions 2 and 3 in your notebook or on a computer.



- 1 Use the table to collect analytical notes about the ways archival footage is used to create meaning in the film *Hidden Figures*.

	RELEVANT MESSAGES DIRECTLY SPOKEN IN THE FOOTAGE	SCENES IMMEDIATELY BEFORE AND AFTER, OR IN MONTAGE	PERSPECTIVES THAT AUDIENCES ARE POSITIONED TO ACCEPT
Interviews with Soviet cosmonauts			
TV coverage and footage of Alan Shepard's launch into space			
Extracts from President John F. Kennedy's 'Moon speech'			
TV coverage and footage of the 1961 attack on the Freedom Rider bus			

- 2 Research the stylistic conventions of a biographical film, or 'biopic'. In your notebook or on a computer, identify some ways that the film *Hidden Figures* draws on (or challenges) the conventions of this style.
- 3 How can stories about personal and social histories give insights into current issues? Answer with reference to an example from the film *Hidden Figures*.



Representing social progress in the storyworld

Race and gender relations are two dominant thematic categories relating to social progress in *Hidden Figures*. There are repeated representations of racism and racial segregation, as well as references to gender equality and the female characters' experiences of social progress.

Social progress: Gender

On multiple occasions the dialogue in the film includes direct reference to gender equality. At other times, the messages about gender equality are represented with imagery to create meaningful symbols or motifs.

Source 8 The dialogue between Katherine Johnson and Lieutenant Colonel Jim Johnson when they meet for the first time

Lieutenant Colonel Jim Johnson: Pastor mentioned you're a computer at NASA. That's pretty heady stuff.

Katherine Johnson: Yes it is.

LTC Jim Johnson: They let women handle that sort of ... [sees Katherine looking offended] ... That's not what I mean.

Katherine Johnson: What do you mean?

LTC Jim Johnson: I'm just surprised at something so taxing.

Katherine Johnson: Oh Mr. Johnson, if I were you, I'd quit talking right now.

LTC Jim Johnson: I don't mean no disrespect.

Katherine Johnson: I will have you know, I was the first negro female student at West Virginia University Graduate School. On any given day, I analyze the binomial levels for air displacement, friction and velocity. And compute over ten thousand calculations ... by hand. ... So yes, they let women do some things at NASA, Mr. Johnson. And it's not because we wear skirts. It's because we wear glasses.

Hidden Figures, 2016

Social progress: Race

The concept of 'race' is interesting to interrogate in the context of this study, where we have framed 'humanity' as one species: *Homo sapiens*. With this world view, humans are seen as a single species and our differences as mostly cultural. When we view humanity as a single race, people can still be categorised based on various social and cultural factors such as ethnicity, language, religious belief or nationality. The category of 'race', however, is reserved for the collective species.

An alternative to a biological construction of race is a social construction of race. The film *Hidden Figures* reflects social constructions of race (and, by extension, racism) relevant to the context of the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. The subject matter of the film directly engages with African-American experiences during the Civil Rights movement. As a contemporary production, it invites audiences to reflect on ways that racism has shaped our recent history, on marginalisation of non-white and non-male identities, and on the power of individuals to personally and collectively overcome social oppression based on racial discrimination.

Source 9 Still from *Hidden Figures*



Source 10 The conversation between Katherine, Dorothy, Mary and a police officer on the side of the road, where the women's car has broken down

State Trooper: You have identification on ya?

Katherine Goble: Yes sir. We're just on our way to work. At Langley. NASA, sir.

[Mary, Katherine and Dorothy all display their NASA ID cards.]

Dorothy Vaughan: We do a great deal of the calculating getting our rockets into space.

State Trooper: All three of ya?

Mary Jackson: Yes, officer.

[The State Trooper studies Mary's ID card for a few moments.]

State Trooper: NASA. That's somethin'. Had no idea they hired ...

Dorothy Vaughan: There are quite a few women working in the Space Program, sir.

Hidden Figures, 2016

Source 11 Katherine's monologue about bathroom access

Katherine Johnson: There's no bathroom for me here.

Al Harrison: What do you mean there is no bathroom for you here?

Katherine Johnson: There is no bathroom. There are no colored bathrooms in this building or any building outside the West Campus, which is half a mile away. Did you know that? I have to walk to Timbuktu just to relieve myself, and I can't use one of the handy bikes. Picture that, Mr. Harrison. My uniform, skirt below my knees, my heels, and a simple string of pearls. Well, I don't own pearls. Lord knows you don't pay coloreds enough to afford pearls! And I work like a dog, day and night, living off of coffee from a pot none of you want to touch! So, excuse me if I have to go to the restroom a few times a day.

Hidden Figures, 2016

5.2b Your turn

structural



cultural



Signs, labels and passes

Complete these activities in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 Collect examples of times when a physical sign, label or pass was used in the film *Hidden Figures* to indicate segregation/limitation or inclusion/access.
- 2 Locate examples in the film where a character arc is used as a device for developing the following themes: power/empowerment, crossing boundaries and social justice.
- 3 How can stories about individuals represent the struggles of a larger social group? Write an extended answer of up to half a page that includes an example from the film.
- 4 Katherine changes her last name after marrying. Discuss with a classmate:
 - What does this symbolise in the context of the storyworld?
 - In what ways might this symbolism resonate (or not) with contemporary audiences?
 - How might this symbolism be interpreted differently depending on your world view?

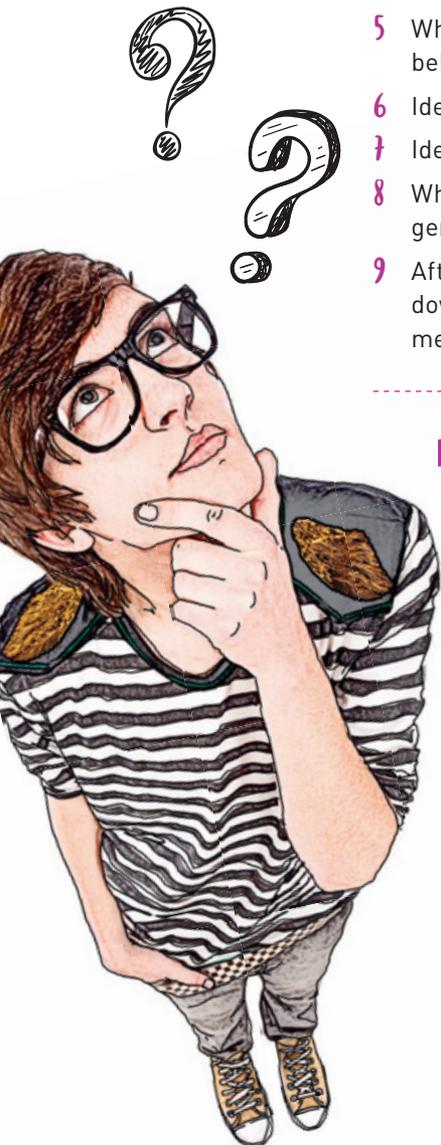
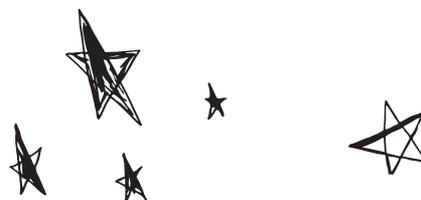
Representing racism

- 5 What motivations are attributed to individual characters who display racist attitudes or behaviours? Give two examples.
- 6 Identify an example of *overt* racism represented in the film.
- 7 Identify an example of *covert* ('casual') racism represented in the film.
- 8 What position is taken in the film on the relative progress of movements for racial and gender equality?
- 9 After Katherine's monologue (Source 11), Al Harrison makes the grand gesture of smashing down the toilet sign to end segregation of bathroom facilities in the workplace. What meaning did you take from this scene?

Representing technological progress in context

Interwoven through the story of social progress is the story of an emerging technology and an emerging role required to work it: the machine computer, and the role of computer programmer. In *Hidden Figures*, the machine that features as the new, more powerful computer in the narrative is an IBM 7090 data-processing system. The new programmers, led by Dorothy Vaughn, needed to learn the programming language Fortran in order to program the machine computer and avoid redundancy.

The film also represents the technological progress required to create materials and structures that can withstand space travel. The character arc of Mary Jackson is crucial to developing this representation.



5.2c Your turn

Machines, humans and automation

Answer these questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 The introduction of the IBM computer creates an opportunity for Dorothy Vaughn, but makes Katherine Johnson's position as a human computer redundant.
 - a How does the film-maker extend Katherine's character arc to reassure the audience of her ongoing success?
 - b Does the film leave any unresolved questions about the possible negative impact of machines and automation?
 - c Give an example of visual language used in the film to represent the magnitude of opportunities provided by new technologies.
- 2 A key theme in the film is the impact of machines and automation on human labour. What other themes relating to technological progress can you identify?
- 3 In what ways does the film hold up a mirror to our contemporary experiences with machines and automation?
- 4 Write 2–3 paragraphs describing ways the film illustrates the proposition that 'progress is a double-edged sword'.

Representing personal progress

One of the stylistic devices of the film *Hidden Figures* is the use of different characters to provide multiple narrative viewpoints. While Katherine Johnson stands out as the lead character in the story, alternating with Katherine's viewpoint are the perspectives of Mary Johnson and Dorothy Vaughn.

Although Katherine can be identified as the protagonist in the story, all three characters act as focalisers for the narrative. We see scenes from each of the characters' lives that do not involve the others, as well as scenes with the characters together. By opening the film with a scene featuring all three characters as a band of close friends and ending the film with postscripts about the outcome of all of their real-life stories, the film-makers position us to consider all three identities and personal journeys as equally significant.



Source 12 Mary Jackson attends class as the only female and non-white.

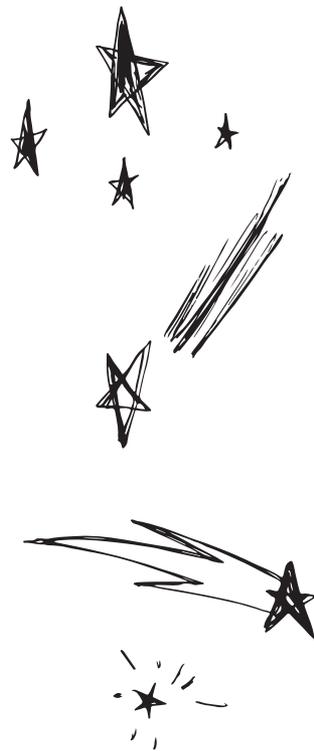


Source 13 Katherine G. Johnson outside the facility at NASA named after her.

structural



cultural



5.2d Your turn

structural



Character study

Answer these questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 Make notes about the character arcs of Katherine, Dorothy and Mary to locate points in the plot where a key moment of personal success or growth takes place.
- 2 Research the plot conventions of a 'hero's journey'. Do you find any character in *Hidden Figures* portrayed as being on a heroic journey? Why or why not?
- 3 What unique perspective on social issues of the time is provided by each of the following narrative focalisers: Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughn and Mary Jackson?
- 4 In what ways can the stories of personal progress in *Hidden Figures* be interpreted as symbolic of social progress in the context of the United States?
- 5 In what ways can the stories of personal progress in *Hidden Figures* be interpreted as representative of human progress generally?

Poetry study: Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner



Source 14 Marshallese poet Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner addresses the United Nations (UN) Climate Summit in 2014.

Poetry has a long tradition of being produced orally, as a text that is memorised and reproduced through verbal speech or songs. However, it also has a rich tradition of being written down and reproduced in print and there is a multitude of poetic devices specific to the layout of words on a page.

Contemporary poets have at their disposal both 'page' (written down) and 'stage' (spoken) poetry conventions and audiences. Poets such as Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner also utilise digital technologies for producing 'video poems', which layer the audio track of the poem being read aloud onto a video for additional visual meaning.

In this poetry study we will explore six poems by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner: five from the poetry volume *Iep Jältok* (2017), and one that is published online. All are available as written texts and four of them are also spoken, either as video poems or speeches.

- 'History project' (written, *Iep Jältok*, and spoken/video poem)
- 'Bursts of Bianca' (written, *Iep Jältok*)
- 'Crash' (written, *Iep Jältok*)
- 'Tell them' (written, *Iep Jältok*, and spoken/video poem)
- 'Dear Matafele Peinam' (written, *Iep Jältok*, and spoken, UN Climate Summit)
- 'Anointed' (written and spoken/video poem).

Historical and cultural context: The Marshall Islands

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (the Marshall Islands) is located in the Pacific Ocean and is part of the larger geographic area of Micronesia. The islands are spread out over 29 coral atolls, including the Majuro, Bikini and Enewetak Atolls.

Between 1946 and 1962 sites in the Marshall Islands formed most of the area known as the 'U.S. Pacific Proving Grounds', where the United States carried out nuclear weapons tests. Sixty-seven of these tests were conducted at Bikini and Enewetak Atolls between 1946 and 1958. In contemporary times the rising sea level poses a significant threat to the islands and there is much debate about the role of the global community in reducing environmental damage, in particular in light of changes in global climate.

The legacy of nuclear testing and the potential future destruction of the islands due to climate change are recurring themes in Jetñil-Kijiner's poetry. Central messages about the historical context relate to the unjustified displacement and loss that the Marshallese have experienced due to the actions of larger world powers. The United States is constructed in several poems as wielding colonial power and facilitating the destruction of Marshallese culture.

Poetry and activism

Jetñil-Kijiner's poetry can be described as political poetry when it:

- addresses specific political actors, or
- refers to political issues, and
- is published in a public forum.



Source 15 Runit Island on the Enewetak Atoll, Marshall Islands. To the left is the Dome, containing 80 000 cubic metres of toxic nuclear waste.

By publishing her poetry on open-access digital platforms, the poet has been able to reach a wide global audience, enabling her political messages to reach beyond the Marshall Islands and the United States. The use of multiple modes and poetic forms – written poems, live performance, video poems – increases the likelihood that an audience will find the work appealing or engaging, which helps to achieve the activist aims of the poems.



Source 16 Location of the Marshall Islands

Islands and atolls: Watch the video poem 'Anointed'

Watch the video poem 'Anointed'. A link is included in your [obook](#). Jetnil-Kijiner opens the video poem for 'Anointed' with the following message written on a black screen, and with the sounds of ocean waves heard in the background.

[black screen] After WWII the United States tested 67 nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands.

[black screen] Two decades after testing ended, contaminated waste was collected and dumped in a crater on Runit Island in Enewetak Atoll.

At the conclusion of the poem further written notes appear on screen, this time overlaid onto video scenes from Enewetak.

[footage of children playing] The people of Enewetak returned home after three decades of being displaced.

[footage of children playing] Their community is 15 miles downwind from where the nuclear waste is buried.

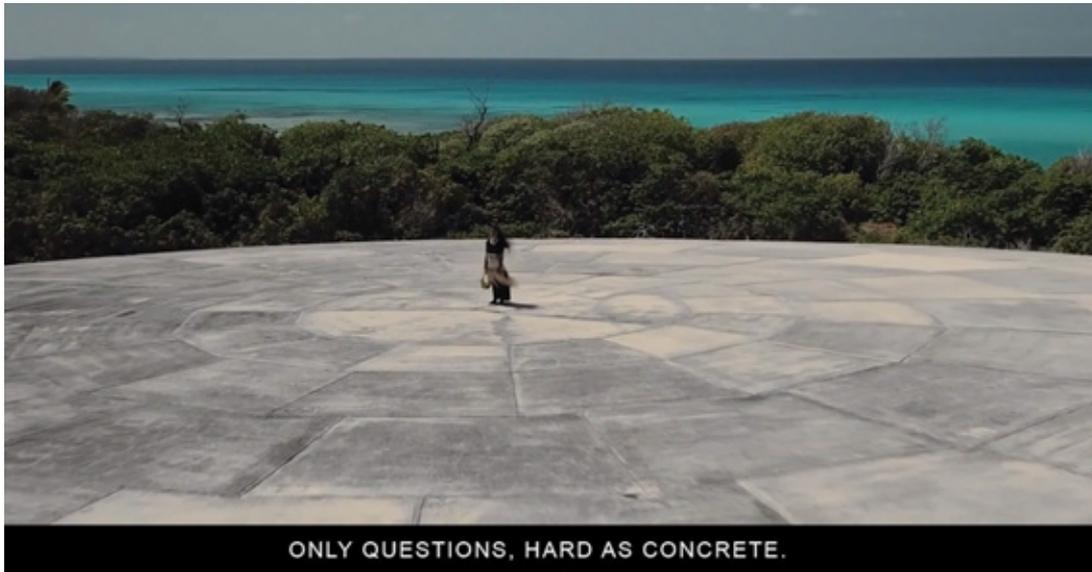
[footage taken as driving down a road of local houses] Most islands in Enewetak and Bikini Atolls are still considered uninhabitable.

[birds eye view of water lapping the shoreline] In 2017 the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Currently 122 countries have agreed to adopt the Treaty.

[black screen] None of the 9 nuclear-armed countries have joined the Treaty.

Although 'Anointed' is one of the poet's more recent poems, it is a good choice for starting your poetry study because it is a poem connecting you to present experiences. Watching/ listening to the video poem may also help you read the page poems by helping you to imagine the poet's voice, expression and body language as you process the written text.



Source 17 Still from the video poem 'Anointed'

Human progress and the environment

One of the central themes of Jetñil-Kijiner's poems is the need for harmony between humans and the environment. The connection between the Marshallese people and their land is a motif in most poems in this study, as are contrasts in imagery relating to the islands and the Marshallese in the times before the era of nuclear testing (represented as bountiful, productive and idyllic), and after (represented as hard, lifeless and mutilated).

Source 18 Public writing: Opening paragraphs of 'A ground zero forgotten'

A boy and his grandfather are fishing in the shallows off their tiny island, a dot of green in the sapphire eternity between Hawaii and Australia. The flash comes first, silent and brighter than the sun, from a four-mile-wide fireball beyond the horizon. The sky turns blood red. Wind and thunder follow.

Even 61 years after, Tony deBrum gets 'chicken skin' when sharing his memories of the largest American nuclear-weapons test – the biblical, 15-megaton detonation on Bikini Atoll, 280 miles northwest of his island. Its flash was also seen from Okinawa, 2,600 miles away. Its radioactive fallout was later detected in cattle in Tennessee.

Dan Zak, 'A ground zero forgotten', *Washington Post*, 27 November 2015

5.2e Your turn

personal



structural



cultural



Geographical context and the environment

Answer these questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 How are words and images used in the video poem 'Anointed' to represent geographical context? Annotate your copy of the poem to note a range of examples.
- 2 Studying geographical context can include using words like *biogeographic*, *ecosystem*, *geochemistry* and *geopolitics*.
 - a Write the definitions for any of these four words that you are unfamiliar with.
 - b Write down whether you think knowing words such as these is important when thinking about the concept of 'human progress'. Explain your answer.
- 3 Had you heard of the Marshall Islands before beginning this poetry study? Talk with a classmate or your teacher about your prior knowledge of the Marshall Islands. Then write down three things you know about the Marshall Islands, two things you would like to learn more about and one question you would like to ask.

Interpreting the poem 'Anointed'

- 4 Watch the video poem 'Anointed'. A link is included in your obook. In line 3 of the poem the speaker asks, 'What stories will I find?' List the stories you can locate in the poem.
- 5 At the end of the poem, the speaker poses two questions as the final two lines: 'Who gave them this power?' and 'Who anointed them with the power to burn?'
 - a Who does the pronoun 'them' refer to?
 - b What makes 'anointed' a significant word choice in this line?
- 6 Annotate the poem to trace choices of first-person and second-person pronouns, noting also the use of singular and plural pronouns.
 - a Locate the point in the poem where the speaker stops addressing the island directly and explain the meaning of this change.
 - b How are pronouns used in various ways to position the audience throughout the poem? Make notes of a few examples.
- 7 Give an example of how *analogy* or *metaphor* have been used in the poem to create messages relating to human progress. (Write an analytical paragraph.)



Poem: 'History project'

The poem 'History project' is an autobiographical account of the poet's own experience researching and authoring a history project at 15 years of age on nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands. The speaker in the poem, as in all of the poems in this study, represents ideas from a first-person perspective, inviting the audience to hear the speaker's voice as the poet's own voice. The poem positions the audience to see, in a matter-of-fact way, a series of historical sources through the eyes of the poet, as she recalls experiencing them at 15. It is one of the first poems the poet recorded as a video poem and is also published in the volume *Iep Jältok*.

Source 19 The opening three stanzas of 'History project'

At fifteen I decide
to do my history project
on nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands
time to learn my own history
I weave through book after article after website
all on how the U.S. military once used
my island home
for nuclear testing
I sift through political jargon
tables of nuclear weapons
with names like Operation Bravo
Crossroads
and Ivy
quotes from american leaders like
 90,000 people are out there. Who
 gives a damn?
I'm not mad
I already knew all of this

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, 'History project', in *Iep Jältok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter*, The University of Arizona Press, 2017, p. 20



Source 20
American military
commander
Commodore
Ben Wyatt (left)
addressing the
people of the Bikini
Atoll, Marshall
Islands in 1946,
moments before
they were removed
and relocated

Who is the speaker in a poem?

Unlike a story, which has a narrator, the voice we imagine when we read a poem is called the voice of the *speaker*. This connects poetry to its oral tradition and refers to the fact that even 'page poetry' is written to be spoken aloud as well as read.

Whether or not we know much about a poet, we still find ourselves imagining that when we read a poem it is the poet's own voice that we are hearing, and their own experiences being recounted. This need not be the case: poets are as capable as prose fiction writers at creating characters and storyworlds that are imagined, not biographical. However, when the poet has not constructed a clear alternative character and the poem is expressed using first person perspective, the audience is positioned to hear the poem as though it is the poet's own voice.

In the case of Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner's poetry, the subject matter of the poetry can be easily linked to her biography and to textual records of her perspectives. As a living poet, she is accessible for interviews and other means of dialogue, and recordings of some of her public speeches are found on her website alongside her poems. By creating poems in written form as well as spoken word videos, Jetñil-Kijiner provides audiences with an opportunity to hear her voice and to deeply grasp her intended meaning by gaining additional insights from her vocal pitch, pause, pace, volume and cadence, as well as non-verbal meanings.

5.2f Your turn

Poem study: 'History project'

Answer these questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 Research poet Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner using the poet's website and other sources.
 - a What is the poet's stated position on climate change?
 - b What significant perspectives has the poet shared about Marshallese culture?
 - c How does knowing about the poet's context influence your reading?
- 2 In the opening stanza, the poet writes of using a history project as 'time to learn my own history'. In the second stanza, a range of historical information is listed, but in the third stanza Jetñil-Kijiner shares, 'I already knew all of this'.
 - a Give 2–3 examples of things the poet learned about her history that are described after stanza 3.
 - b Compare the imagery in stanza 2 to the imagery in stanzas 4, 5 and 6. How is imagery used across these stanzas to express messages about humanity or human history? Write a half-page answer.
- 3 How is capitalisation used throughout this poem to reflect the poet's values, attitudes and beliefs?
- 4 Watch the video poem version of 'History project', available on the poet's website. Explain how visual elements such as the setting, lighting, shot length/angles and the non-verbal aspect of speech contribute to communicating meanings in the poem.
- 5 Give an example of how *contrast* has been used in the poem to create messages relating to human progress.

personal



structural



cultural



- 6 In her page poetry, Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner uses sentence length and line breaks more often than punctuation to shape the pace of the poem and create moments for pause and reflection.
- a Read the lines below from stanza 16 of the poem 'History project' aloud several times, experimenting with pace.
- b Rewrite the lines below as a single prose sentence, adding elements such as punctuation and italicising or underlining words to indicate your preferred intonation, pace and points of emphasis.

LINE 'HISTORY PROJECT'

89 At 15
 90 I want radioactive megatons of tnt and a fancy degree
 91 anything and everything I could ever need
 92 to send ripples of death through a people who put goats
 93 before human beings
 94 so their skin
 95 can shrivel
 96 beneath the glare
 97 of hospital room lights
 98 three generations later

- ‡ Read the entire poem aloud at least once (without stopping if you can) and reflect on whether this helped you understand any significant parts.

Poem: 'Bursts of Bianca'

'Bursts of Bianca' is quite a sad poem. It is about the poet's experience of visiting her niece Bianca in the hospital during Bianca's chemotherapy treatment. The subject matter reflects the real story of Jetñil-Kijiner's cousin Bianca, who died at 8 years of age from leukaemia.

Source 21 Stanzas 6 to 7 of 'Bursts of Bianca'

This is not uncommon
 You remind yourself
 This situation?
 Not so rare
 Most Marshallese
 can say they've mastered the language of cancer
 Bianca doesn't know much English
 and yet she knows
 what blood cells mean
 what bone marrow, catheter
 and remission therapy means

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, 'Bursts of Bianca' in *Iep Jaltok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter*, The University of Arizona Press, 2017, pp. 39–40



The poem is spoken from a second-person perspective, creating the effect of the poet writing to herself about one of her memories. The memory of the visit to the hospital is recalled in fragments, representing the traumatic nature of the experience, or of the act of remembering, or both. Imagery is contrasted throughout the poem, with imagery used to represent Bianca as opposed to her situation, positioning the audience to adopt the values, attitudes and beliefs of the speaker.

5.2g Your turn

Poem study: 'Bursts of Bianca'

Answer these questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 Annotate the poem to identify the tense used in each stanza. What changes in tense can you observe in the poem?
- 2 How does the poet use tense as a device to shift the perspective in the poem from 'in the moment' to 'looking back'?
- 3 Consider the pronouns and tense used at this point in the poem (stanza 12):

and when visiting hours are over it's
not easy
it's harder than you'd think

 - a Who does 'you' refer to in this stanza?
 - b Did the metaphor of 'visiting hours' being 'over' (or any other metaphor in the poem) provoke an emotional response from you? Explain your response to any metaphor in the poem.
- 4 The subject matter of this poem is personal and tragic. Has the poem helped or hindered your connection to themes shared with other poems in this study (e.g. 'loss', 'health', 'justice')?

personal



structural



vignette

a description of a short scene that paints a picture or provides an insight for the audience; it is not intended to tell a complete story on its own. A vignette is part of a larger work and may have no plot, or it may be developed as an anecdote or exemplum

Poem: 'Crash'

In the poem 'Crash', the poet presents a narrative, telling us about a car crash that the speaker lived through with a friend and recounting some of the encounters that followed. We can glean from the reference to calling '9-1-1' that the story in this poem is taking place in the United States, and many of the speaker's personal attributes align with the poet's so we are positioned to read the poem as the poet's own story.

As people and places are referred to in abstract terms ('a looming mountain', 'my friend', 'the hospital') rather than directly named, the audience are further positioned to read themselves into the story, to put themselves in the speaker's shoes. A series of **vignettes** reveals ways in which the speaker experiences casual racism and her personal response to this during a time of vulnerability and fear.

CRASH

By the side of a looming mountain my friend and I
staggered away
tiny and scared
from a silver beast
flipped over and smashed
to glass pieces
cold mortality dripping down my forehead
sliced skin flapping against my palm
flannel draped white Samaritans blew smoke in my eyes
threw camouflage hunting jackets on me
hollered WE
pointing to themselves
calling 9-1-1! YOU
pointing to me
bloody!
Cold? Shiver shiver?
How many fingers?
Dos?
Traayaz?
Strapped
into a rolling ambulance
a sugar blond nurse
asked me how to spell my name
seven times
giggled. every time
eyed me with suspicion
Are you Indian?
In the hospital a male nurse
strung stitches
through the blooming wounds in my wrists
the only remains
of the passenger window

His blue aloha shirt
reminded me of home
I wanted to tell him I wasn't from here
I wanted to tell him I missed my mom
I wanted to tell him I was scared
of dying in someone else's country
As whimpers escaped from my lips
he yanked the black thread just
a little
tighter
sealing my voice into my wrists
At my friend's house
I leaned against a porcelain shower stall
yearned
to be diluted
into waters
clear of color
when I turned the knob of the shower off
I suddenly remembered
her entire corn blond family
Desperate
I searched the bathroom
swept
wiped
scooped
gathered
my swirls of long curly black hair
wary
of leaving any
trace

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, 'Crash', in *Iep Jältok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter*,
The University of Arizona Press, 2017, pp. 54–5

5.2h Your turn

Poem study: 'Crash'

personal



structural



cultural



critical

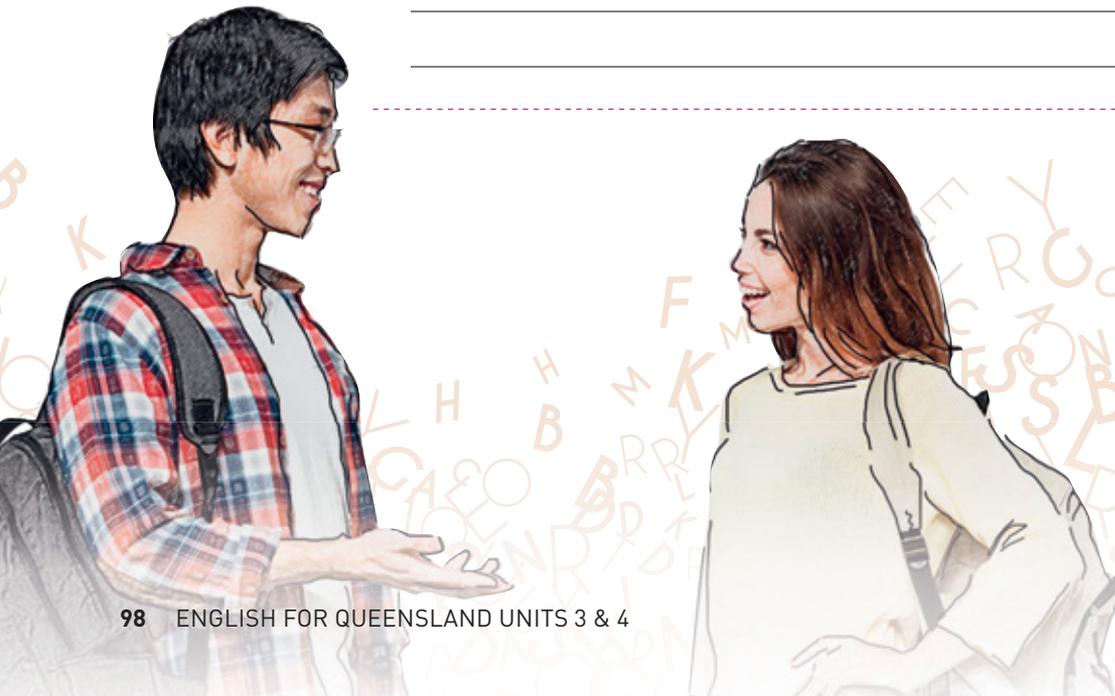


1 Does knowing the poet's background help you to interpret the poem? Explain your response.

2 How are bodies used as symbols for culture in this poem? Describe two examples.

3 Do you agree with the interpretation that this poem is about experiences of casual racism? Explain your response with reference to ways verbs are used in the poem.

4 Read the next poem in this study, 'Tell them' (Source 23). How do the two poems represent the poet's experience of friendship with people from a different culture? Compare a quote or section from each poem to add detail to your response.



Poem: 'Tell them'

In the poem 'Tell them', the speaker is recounting her memory of preparing a package of Marshallese gifts for friends in the United States. The poem opens by positioning the audience to hear this first-person recount, but use of the singular, first-person 'I' drops away after the opening phase of the poem.

Source 23 The opening 10 stanzas of 'Tell them'

I prepared the package
for my friends in the states
First—the dangling earrings, woven
into half-moons black pearls glinting
like an eye in a storm of tight spirals
Second—the baskets
sturdy, also woven
brown cowry shells shiny
intricate mandalas shaped
by calloused fingers
Inside I write a message:
Wear these earrings
to parties classes and meetings
to the corner store the grocery store
and while riding the bus
Store jewelry, incense, copper coins
and curling letters like this one
in this basket
And when others ask you
where you got this
you tell them
They're from the Marshall Islands
Show them where it is on a map
Tell them we are a proud people
toasted dark brown as the carved ribs
of a tree stump
Tell them we are descendants
of the finest navigators
in the world
Tell them our islands were dropped
from a basket
carried by a giant



Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, 'Tell them', in *Iep Jältok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter*,
The University of Arizona Press, 2017, pp. 64–5

Representing cultural identity

Texts can represent cultural aspects of an individual's personal identity, as well as collective cultural identities. In the poem 'Tell them' the poet represents cultural identity by:

- representing symbols of Marshallese culture in the opening stanzas (earrings, basket)
- directly relating aspects of Marshallese culture in the middle and concluding stanzas (that they are 'a proud people' – line 24; 'descendants of the finest navigators in the world' – lines 27–8; and 'we are afraid' – lines 78–9)
- metaphorically relating aspects of Marshallese culture in later stanzas, including shared experiences, ideas, social behaviour and customs ('We are wood shavings / and drying pandanus leaves' – lines 36–7; and 'We are little girls with braids / cartwheeling beneath the rain' – lines 62–3).

'Tell them' also includes insights into cultural aspects of the poet's personal identity. She has friends in the United States, and a good knowledge of their everyday cultural experiences. This represents the poet's biographical experience of growing up on the Marshall Islands, later studying and living in the United States, and traversing those two cultures.

Source 24 Extract from Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner's blog post, 'A few thoughts on pacific literature'

Since going to the United Nations, I've been asked to join multiple campaigns on climate change. And I have no problem joining forces, lending my support in whatever way I can because hey – it's for the cause. Whatever will wake people up to save my islands.

However, I've also been worried that I've been pigeonholed into an expectation that everything I will write about from here on out will be climate change related. That I will become 'The Climate Change poet.' Nothing wrong with that, but here's the thing: there's more to my islands than the threat of being drowned.

From Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner's blog post, 'A few thoughts on pacific literature', 9 January 2015

5.2i Your turn

Poem study: 'Tell them'

- 1 Take a copy of the poem 'Tell them' (a link is included on your obook) and cut it up into sections, starting a new section for each new thing the speaker asks the imagined audience to tell people ('them') about. Then:
 - a re-order the things the poet wants told about the Marshall Islands, placing what you believe is the poet's most important message at the top, and the least important message at the bottom of the list (record the order you created for later revision)
 - b summarise here the three things that you think the poet has constructed as the most important aspects of Marshallese cultural identity



- c re-order the poem sections again, this time grouping them according to common themes (record the themes and related lines for later revision)
- d summarise here what you believe are the main themes evident in Jetñil-Kijiner's representations of Marshallese cultural identity.

2 How is language used in the poem to convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the cultural identity of the Marshallese?

3 How is imagery used to construct the tone of the poem? Explain two examples: one where positive tone is created, and one where negative tone is created.

4 In Source 24, Jetñil-Kijiner writes in her blog post, '... there's more to my islands than the threat of being drowned'. Do you find that the poem 'Tell them' supports this position? Explain your interpretation.

Poem: 'Dear Matafele Peinam'

After sharing video poems online for 'Tell them' and 'History project', Jetñil-Kijiner gained increased attention as a poet and was nominated to be the Civil Society Speaker to the United Nations Climate Summit in 2014. The video recording of the speech she delivered and the poem performance that followed is available to watch online.

The subject matter of the poem is the impact of climate change on rising sea levels, and a warning of the impending destruction this has brought – and may increasingly bring – to nations such as the Marshall Islands. The poet is positioned to share civil perspectives that are valued in the context of the situation, and the audience for the live performance is gathered there as listeners and as witnesses to the spoken messages.

Marshallese language in this and other poems is used to establish the poet's unique cultural knowledge and to draw immediate attention to cultural concerns. This reflects the poet's values, attitudes and beliefs regarding the importance of mother-tongue languages in maintaining identities and cultures.



Source 25

Jetñil-Kijiner with her husband and daughter following her reading at the United Nations Climate Summit in 2014

Source 26 The opening seven stanzas of 'Dear Matafele Peinam'

Dear Matafele Peinam
You are a seven month old sunrise of gummy smiles
you are bald as an egg and bald as the buddha
you are things that are thunder
shrieks that are lightning
so excited for bananas, hugs and
our morning walks past the lagoon
Dear Matafele Peinam
I want to tell you about that lagoon
that lucid, sleepy lagoon
lounging against the sunrise
Men say that one day
that lagoon will devour you
They say it will gnaw at the shoreline
chew at the roots of your breadfruit trees
gulp down rows of your seawalls
and crunch your island's shattered bones
They say you, your daughter
and your granddaughter, too
will wander
rootless
with only
a passport
to call home



Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, 'Tell them', in *Iep Jältok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter*, The University of Arizona Press, 2017, p. 70

5.2j Your turn

Poetry review in light of the poem 'Dear Matafele Peinam'

- 1 How has the poet used genre conventions of a personal letter to create meaning in the poem 'Dear Matafele Peinam'?

- 2 Watch the video of the poet delivering a speech and performing 'Dear Matafele Peinam' at the UN Climate Change Summit in 2014. A link is included on your book.

a What opportunities for non-verbal expression become available for the poet when she moves from the speech podium down to the recital microphone?

b How have other aspects of the situation (e.g. prefacing the poem with a speech; appearing on stage with her husband and child following the poem performance) added to the persuasive impact of the poem?

- 3 How does Jetñil-Kijiner's poetry position audiences to adopt her world view? Explain your interpretation with reference to quotes from two poems including 'Dear Matafele Peinam'.

- 4 In what ways is the poem 'Dear Matafele Peinam' typical of Jetñil-Kijiner's poetic style?

- 5 What messages does the poem 'Dear Matafele Peinam' convey about human progress?

- 6 Compare the poem 'Dear Matafele Peinam' to the poem 'Tell them'.

a Annotate the poems to locate all of the references to speech acts (e.g. *tell*, *say*, *promise*).

b Discuss with a classmate or your teacher: Is there a consistent message between the two poems about what the poet wants to say?

structural



cultural



5.3

COMPARING REPRESENTATIONS OF 'HUMAN PROGRESS' IN THE TEXTS

It is useful to consider Melfi's film *Hidden Figures* and Jetñil-Kijiner's poetry in relation to one another: although they are different types of text and written from different cultural perspectives, they both explore concepts and issues surrounding the problems and possibilities of human progress.

Humanity and human progress in *Hidden Figures* and the poems of Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner

In this study we have explored representations of the concept of human progress and this has required occasionally reflecting on our cultural assumptions and world view to consider the nature of humanity. Even when texts do not explicitly portray global issues or narratives, you can interpret their meanings and messages as universally relevant to humans and human experience. As you compare the texts, consider whether you see their messages as universally relevant, and whether this may be shaped by your own cultural assumptions about whose voices matter the most.

5.3a Your turn

Comparing perspectives on human progress



- 1 Think back to the video *The question of human progress* that you watched for *Your turn 5.1b*, and the five frames it offered for explaining human history (theistic, chaos, decline, progress, cyclical).
 - a What perspective on human history do you think most aligns with the messages in the film *Hidden Figures*? Provide textual evidence for your answer.

- b What perspective on human history do you think most aligns with the messages in the six poems by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner? Provide textual evidence for your answer.

- 2 After analysing and comparing the film and the poetry, are you left with the belief that humanity is improving over time? Explain your answer.

3 The two texts studied both contain representations of the concept 'human progress'. Note other significant related concepts that are evident in the texts.

a Concepts relating to human progress in both texts:

b Related concepts constructed in *Hidden Figures*:

c Related concepts constructed in Jetñil-Kijiner's poems:

4 Do either of these texts represent a profound or diverse enough experience to justify adopting their perspectives offered on human progress? Explain your position.

5 Imagine you are given an essay question that asks you to propose a thesis about how human progress is represented in texts by responding to a quote prompt:

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner wrote in a blog post (Source 24), '... there's more to my islands than the threat of being drowned'.

In your notebook or on a computer, practise constructing paragraph-long thesis statements for each of the following, referencing the quote prompt each time.

a In the two texts studied, what things are represented as threats to human progress?

b In the two texts studied, what relationships are represented between national progress and human progress?

c In the two texts studied, hopes for human progress are contrasted with evidence of human decline. Do you agree?

Cultural assumptions and representation

We started this study thinking about human progress by reflecting on conceptions of what it means to belong to 'humanity' and to 'be human'. In comparing two texts, we can contrast how these concepts are underpinned by different cultural assumptions relating to political, social, cultural, geographical and historical contexts of the text and the audience.

Cultural assumptions can be revealed when we analyse representations of:

- *concepts*: the concepts that get connected to 'human progress' in a text help show us what the author assumes is agreed by (or will be agreeable to) the audience
- *identities*: the way people and groups are represented (e.g. using imagery, or figurative or evaluative language) conveys assumptions about who has a favourable impact on or approach to human progress
- *times*: texts that convey messages about human progress do so by either directly or implicitly contrasting various points in time that are assumed to be significant
- *places*: the extent to which a text provides perspectives from a range of places inhabited by humans reveals cultural assumptions about whether humanity is a shared global identity, and about what constitutes a significant site of progress.

5.36 Your turn

structural



cultural



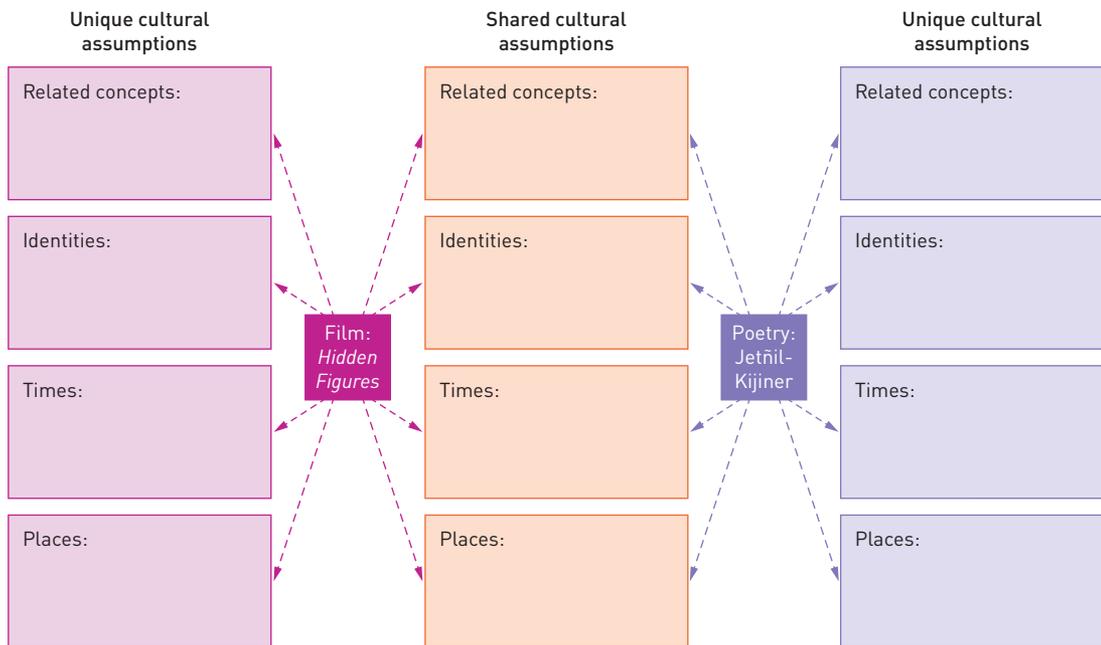
critical



Cultural assumptions about human progress

- Given that humanity contains such a range of different cultures, what can be used to define and measure 'human progress'?

- Write 1–2 paragraphs in your notebook or on a computer about each of the two texts studied, describing how they show humans making progress and outlining the important messages they convey about human experiences of progress.
- What similarities and differences in cultural assumptions are revealed in the texts when they are compared? In your notebook or on a computer, use a graphic organiser like the one below to note the shared assumptions and contrast the assumptions that are unique to each text.



Considering the multimodal affordances of film

Film, as a multimodal text, uses a combination of words, images and sounds to make its meanings. Film-makers can draw on conventions of established film genres (such as romance, comedy, action or biographical drama), as well as devices for meaning-making in film (such as dialogue, costuming, editing, lighting and photography).

Feature films such as *Hidden Figures* have an extended amount of time to develop a complex narrative, as opposed to short films and music video clips, which may only have time to explore an anecdote or exemplum. As a poet using written and spoken poems, including video poems that are hosted on popular video-sharing platforms and curated on her website, Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner uses the affordances of film language to enhance the meaning of her poems through visual storytelling.

Reaching audiences through popular culture

The texts in this comparative study could all be considered popular culture artefacts, although they have different levels of reach in mainstream culture. As a feature film produced and distributed by the major film studio 20th Century Fox, *Hidden Figures* was screened internationally with high box-office sales and continues to be available via multiple media streaming platforms. By publishing her work online using new media platforms, Jetñil-Kijiner has also reached a global audience. As contemporary audiences are increasingly drawn to visual and screen-related modes of meaning-making, the poems are arguably more likely to appeal to a wide audience by drawing on spoken and visual language resources than they would be as written-only 'page poetry'.

Source 27 Extract from Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner's blog post, 'Spoken Word Poetry vs Page Poetry'

To be real though, there doesn't have to be a line between the two forms. I think a good poet is able to cross the barriers of both forms – spoken and page. I mean why limit one's art work to just one form? My recent goal as a poet is to push the boundaries of what I'm comfortable with, and to explore and push myself as much as I can to write and tell the story however it needs to be told. In the end, my big question when writing isn't always 'Should this piece be a page poem or a performance poem?' Most of the time, my only question is, 'How should this story be told?'

From Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner's blog post, 'Spoken Word Poetry vs Page Poetry',
25 March 2014

5.3c Your turn

Develop a personal response

Having considered some of the ways the concept of human progress is represented in literature, you will have a chance to compare these representations with your own ideas in an extended piece of writing. Before doing so, you should hold up the personal frame to reflect again and respond to the following questions.

- Do you share any of the values, attitudes or beliefs about human progress represented in the two texts studied, or in any other text?
- Do you believe there is currently a 'human culture' or 'global culture'?
- Is social progress integral to the health and sustainability of a cultural group?
- What insights have you gained from the texts studied in this unit?
- What roles do texts (including literature) and language play in improving the prospects of the human race?
- What could you challenge in global culture to help humanity progress?
- What do you want to say to the world about the concepts of humanity and human progress?



FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



6

COMPARATIVE STUDY OPTION 3:
SHERLOCK HOLMES

This is one of three options for study as part of Unit 3, Topic 1: 'Conversation about concepts in texts'. The focus of this section is on the process of adaptation, specifically comparing and contrasting the original version of the first Sherlock Holmes story with a recent BBC television adaptation. We will also examine public conversations about these texts in blogs and online news sites.

Focus questions:

- What's the same and what's different between the original story and the screen adaptation?
- What did the critics of the time think about the original story and the screen version? What might this tell us about the effectiveness of the adaptation?
- What choices were made in adapting the original story for the screen? What influenced these decisions? Influences can include financial pressures, practical considerations (e.g. length of the original story), social and political climate (including underpinning cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs across time).
- To what extent is the adaptation faithful to the original story?
- What do we learn about the different affordances of novels and television shows to position readers/viewers to engage emotionally and critically with stories about law, order and justice? In other words, what is possible to do in a novel that you can't do as well or easily on film – and vice versa?

This study will culminate in a piece of public writing that analyses, compares and evaluates the workings of the original version of a story and an adaptation. See Chapter 7 for a suggested culminating task for this comparative study.

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 3, Topic 1 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*, 'Conversations about concepts in texts'.

This chapter features:

- a study of one literary text from the QCAA Prescribed Text List for English and EAL (required)
- a study of an additional literary text
- texts drawn from two syllabus categories: prose text (novels) and multimodal text (television series)
- a literary work from a different time, place and culture.

The chapter is a comparative study of two texts:

TEXT	AUTHOR/CREATOR	PRESCRIBED?
<i>Sherlock</i> (2010) Season 1, Episode 1: 'A Study in Pink'	Creators: Mark Gatiss & Steven Moffat	Yes – literary Multimodal text (television series)
<i>A Study in Scarlet</i> (1887)	Author: Arthur Conan Doyle	No – literary Written text (complete prose text – novel)

6.1

ADAPTATION: THE CASE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

Adaptations are very common:

- Novels and graphic novels are made into films – for example, the Harry Potter or Hunger Games series, or anything in the Marvel Universe.
- Plays are made into films – for example, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which was adapted by Japanese film-maker, Akira Kurosawa as *Throne of Blood*.
- Movies are made into stage shows – for example, *Mamma Mia* and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*.
- Stage shows are made into films – for example, *Bran Nue Dae* and *Hairspray*.
- Books are made into stage shows – for example, *Matilda* and *Wicked*. Some books have even been adapted as operas, including *The Great Gatsby* and *1984*. The play *Romeo and Juliet* was adapted as *West Side Story*, a musical.
- Numerous books have become computer games – for example, *Assassin's Creed*, which is based on a 1938 novel, *Alamut*, by Vladimir Bartol. And the computer game was in turn adapted as a Hollywood film in 2016. Did you know there is also a series of books adapted from the computer game?
- Novels and plays have become graphic novels – for example, the very first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet* by Arthur Conan Doyle. The novel was also adapted as 'A Study in Pink' – which is the first episode of the contemporary BBC series *Sherlock* – and in turn the television episode was adapted as a manga originally published in Japan!

The list goes on ...

It's obvious that adaptations play a huge role in our popular culture. In fact, according to research produced by Frontier Economics, film adaptations of books gross 53% more world wide than films from original screen plays.



Source 1 Benedict Cumberbatch, Basil Rathbone and Robert Downey Jr in various adaptations of Sherlock Holmes

6.1a Your turn

Tapping into personal knowledge and values



Hold up the personal frame and answer the following questions.

- 1 What adaptations do you know about? These might come from the list on page 109, but hopefully you can add some additional adaptations.

- 2 Are there any adaptations that you have seen/read/played that you thought were better than the original?

- 3 What's your position on this question: Is the book always better than the film? Why or why not?

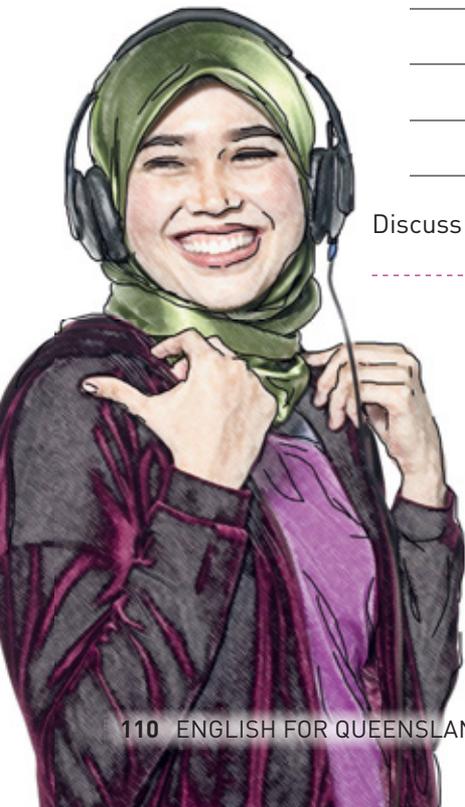


For the final question, hold up the cultural frame.

- 4 Why do you think adaptations are so ubiquitous in our culture? What might account for their popularity among, for example, viewers and film-makers?

Discuss these questions with your classmates.

As you start this chapter, you might find it useful to read an online story called 'But it's nothing like the book! Why film adaptations rarely stay faithful' by Matilda Battersby. A link is included on your [qbook](#).



What is an adaptation?

Adaptation refers to the process of interpreting and translating a story from one medium to another, in the context of this chapter from its original written version into a visual version for film or television. As we considered earlier, there are myriad types of adaptation.

A very important point does arise from our simple definition, however: the adaptation is not just a version of the original story; it is in fact a new and distinct text. Literary theorist Porter Abbott describes the adaptation process as ‘creative destruction’; that is, the original written text is destroyed in order to create the new text for film or television.

There are three generally accepted categories of adaptation:

- 1 an adaptation that follows the main thrust of the story fairly closely (i.e. it has a high degree of **fidelity** to the original)
- 2 an adaptation in which the core structure of the story is kept, but the original has been significantly reinterpreted or even deconstructed (i.e. pulled apart and put back together in a different way)
- 3 an adaptation in which the original story is merely raw material for the creation of an original work. This would involve a more substantial transformation of the original.

Furthermore, Porter Abbott suggests six reasons why the written and film/television versions are different.

- 1 *Time unfolds differently*: Readers can spend as long as they want reading a book, but the demands of film and television mean that the same story has to be told in a much more compressed manner.
- 2 *Character*: When reading a book, each reader pictures the characters slightly differently. On screen, our image is pre-determined for us – and pretty much fixed. This can create a couple of challenges: What happens if the film/television version is very different from what was already in the reader’s head? What happens if a new actor takes over a role? Think about the initial furore over the casting of a black actor as Hermione in the original stage play, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. JK Rowling was forced to point out that in her original novels, Hermione’s race was not specified.
- 3 *Figurative language*: Often, written stories achieve atmosphere and evoke mood by the author’s skilful use of metaphor, simile and personification. Unless a film includes voice-over, film-makers must find other ways to create the same effect.
- 4 *Gaps*: Making sense of a written story involves the constant filling in of gaps (i.e. information that it is assumed readers will know). Again, this is handled very differently in film, mainly through the use of **montage**. To simplify a complex area, this involves editing together different lengths of film, often shot in different locations at different times, and joining them together to create a sense of continuity.
- 5 **Focalisation**: In written texts readers ‘see’ the action from the perspective of particular characters, and these perspectives often include traces of the thoughts and emotions of those characters; this is focalisation. In film, the camera can be used to shift our perspective rapidly and fluidly as well, but it is much harder for the camera to get inside the head of characters (unlike first person or omniscient narration in novels). Film-makers and actors must find other ways to portray inner thoughts and struggles, with varying degrees of success.
- 6 *Constraints of the market place*: The readers of novels and viewers of films or television shows can be very different and require different types of stories. For example, books are relatively cheap to produce and sell. On the other hand, most films are expensive to produce and there is a lot of pressure to have a blockbuster first weekend. One of the results is that films are shown to a group of people, a test audience, before release and the film can be changed to

adaptation
the process of translating a story from one medium (e.g. writing) into another (e.g. film)

fidelity
in our context, the degree of exactness with which the story is copied when adapted for another medium

montage
numerous camera shots edited together in a fast-paced fashion in order to compress time and convey lots of information quickly

focalisation
the consciousness through which readers ‘see’ a story

reflect their feedback. This in turn can result in films that are very 'safe' and do not take too many risks. For example, happy endings are common in Hollywood movies and it is unusual to find too many films that break this mould (unless they are part of a trilogy, such as *Avengers 4: Infinity Wars Part 1*, whose ending shocked many Avengers fans). However, audience expectations can change; for example, there is evidence that post-MeToo film-makers have been forced to think more carefully about casting and the representation of men and women.

6.1b Your turn

Reflecting on adaptations



Think about an adaptation that you liked (or didn't like). With reference to Porter Abbott's points answer the following questions.

- 1 Why do you think the original version and the adaptation ended up being so different?

- 2 Why is it problematic to say something like 'the book is better than the film' or vice versa?

- 3 Before we look at one particular adaptation closely, think about a favourite novel, graphic novel, play or computer game that you would like to see adapted for the screen. Referring to Porter Abbott's reasons, what changes might need to be made to the original story in the process of adaptation? Use the table opposite to record your ideas. You will refer to this table again in *Your turn 6.3d*.

REPRESENTATIONS OF ...	ORIGINAL TEXT	SUGGESTED CHANGES FOR ADAPTATION
Context and setting		
Characters		
Plot		
Themes and motifs		

6.2

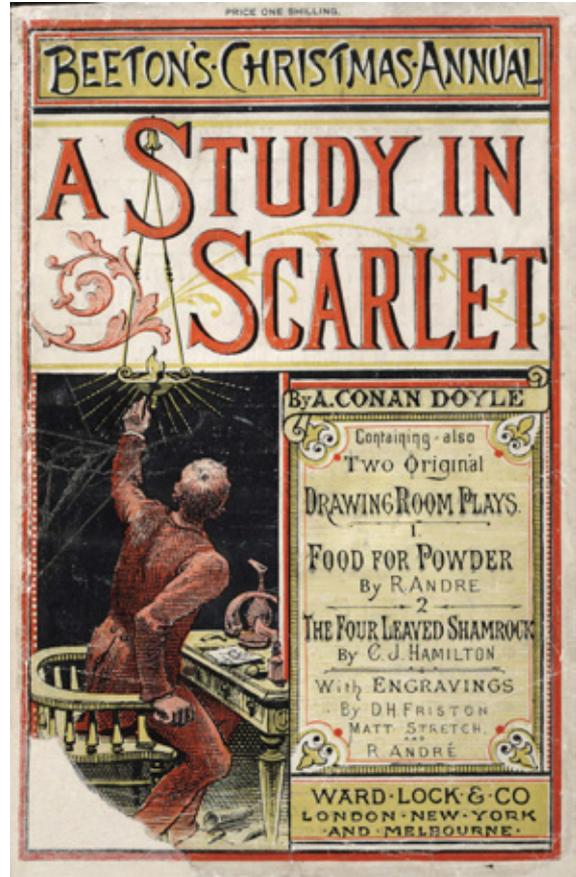
IT'S ELEMENTARY: UPDATING SHERLOCK HOLMES

In this section, we will explore and evaluate adaptations in more detail. To do this, we will be holding up structural, cultural and critical frames as we compare the first Sherlock Holmes story by Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, with 'A Study in Pink', an episode from the 2010 BBC television series *Sherlock*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman.

Introducing the stories

Sherlock Holmes is one of the most famous fictional detectives, debuting in Arthur Conan Doyle's 1887 story, *A Study in Scarlet*. It was first serialised in England in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* and, according to a study by academic Katherine Wisser, was motivated by Conan Doyle's attempts to supplement his income from an unprofitable medical practice.

The title derives from a conversation between Holmes and his offsider, Dr John Watson at the end of Chapter 4. In the extract in Source 3, Holmes is speaking.



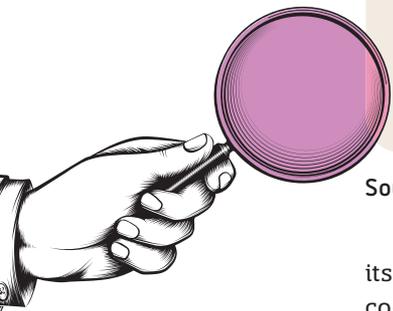
Source 2 The front cover of *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, which featured the first Holmes story

'... I must thank you for it all. I might not have gone [after the murderer] but for you, and so have missed the finest study I ever came across: a study in scarlet, eh? Why shouldn't we use a little art jargon. There's the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it.'

Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, Chapter 1, Gutenberg Press: www.gutenberg.org/files/244/244-h/244-h.htm

Source 3 Extract 1 from *A Study in Scarlet*

On July 2010, the BBC broadcast a modern adaptation of the story 'A Study in Pink' to kickstart its new series, *Sherlock*. Directed by Paul McGuigan, it was written by Steven Moffat and co-created by Mark Gatiss, both of whom were writers on another BBC series, *Dr Who*.



6.2a Your turn

Who is Sherlock Holmes?

If you don't know much about Sherlock Holmes or Arthur Conan Doyle, it's worth doing some online research. A good starting point is 'The Official Site of the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Literary Estate', which includes biographical information about Conan Doyle, background information about Holmes (and other characters from his stories) and links to adaptations and other stories written by Conan Doyle. A link is included on your [gbook](#).



Source 4 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Reading and viewing

A Study in Scarlet is set in a foggy London in the late nineteenth century. Much of the novel is narrated in the first person by the character of Dr John Watson, who has recently returned injured from the Second Afghan War and is looking for cheap lodgings (i.e. accommodation). An old friend introduces him to the enigmatic Sherlock Holmes, who is searching for a flatmate. They find each other compatible and settle into a second-floor flat at 221B Baker Street.

Begin by reading Source 5, which is an extract from the beginning of Chapter 1, 'Mr. Sherlock Holmes'.

Source 5 Extract 2 from *A Study in Scarlet*

Part 1

(Being a reprint from the reminiscences of JOHN H. WATSON, M.D., late of the Army Medical Department)

CHAPTER 1 MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES.

In the year 1878 I took my degree of Doctor of Medicine of the University of London, and proceeded to Netley to go through the course prescribed for surgeons in the army. Having completed my studies there, I was duly attached to the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as Assistant Surgeon. The regiment was stationed in India at the time, and before I could join it, the second Afghan war had broken out. On landing at Bombay, I learned that my corps had advanced through the passes, and was already deep in the enemy's country. I followed, however, with many other officers who were in the same situation as myself, and succeeded in reaching Candahar in safety, where I found my regiment, and at once entered upon my new duties.

The campaign brought honours and promotion to many, but for me it had nothing but misfortune and disaster. I was removed from my brigade and attached to the Berkshires, with whom I served at the fatal battle of Maiwand. There I was struck on the shoulder by a Jezail bullet, which shattered the bone and grazed the subclavian artery. I should have fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly, who threw me across a pack-horse, and succeeded in bringing me safely to the British lines.

[Continues on next page]



Source 5 *cont.*

I had neither kith nor kin in England, and was therefore as free as air – or as free as an income of eleven shillings and sixpence a day will permit a man to be. Under such circumstances, I naturally gravitated to London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained. There I stayed for some time at a private hotel in the Strand, leading a comfortless, meaningless existence, and spending such money as I had, considerably more freely than I ought. So alarming did the state of my finances become, that I soon realized that I must either leave the metropolis and rusticate somewhere in the country, or that I must make a complete alteration in my style of living. Choosing the latter alternative, I began by making up my mind to leave the hotel, and to take up my quarters in some less pretentious and less expensive domicile.

On the very day that I had come to this conclusion, I was standing at the Criterion Bar, when some one tapped me on the shoulder, and turning round I recognized young Stamford, who had been a dresser under me at Barts. The sight of a friendly face in the great wilderness of London is a pleasant thing indeed to a lonely man. In old days Stamford had never been a particular crony of mine, but now I hailed him with enthusiasm, and he, in his turn, appeared to be delighted to see me. In the exuberance of my joy, I asked him to lunch with me at the Holborn, and we started off together in a hansom.

'Whatever have you been doing with yourself, Watson?' he asked in undisguised wonder, as we rattled through the crowded London streets. 'You are as thin as a lath and as brown as a nut.'

I gave him a short sketch of my adventures, and had hardly concluded it by the time that we reached our destination.

'Poor devil!' he said, commiseratingly, after he had listened to my misfortunes. 'What are you up to now?'

'Looking for lodgings,' I answered. 'Trying to solve the problem as to whether it is possible to get comfortable rooms at a reasonable price.'

'That's a strange thing,' remarked my companion; 'you are the second man to-day that has used that expression to me.'

'And who was the first?' I asked.

'A fellow who is working at the chemical laboratory up at the hospital. He was bemoaning himself this morning because he could not get someone to go halves with him in some nice rooms which he had found, and which were too much for his purse.'

'By Jove!' I cried, 'if he really wants someone to share the rooms and the expense, I am the very man for him. I should prefer having a partner to being alone.'

Young Stamford looked rather strangely at me over his wine-glass. 'You don't know Sherlock Holmes yet,' he said; 'perhaps you would not care for him as a constant companion.'

'Why, what is there against him?'

'Oh, I didn't say there was anything against him. He is a little queer in his ideas – an enthusiast in some branches of science. As far as I know he is a decent fellow enough.'

'A medical student, I suppose?' said I.



'No – I have no idea what he intends to go in for. I believe he is well up in anatomy, and he is a first-class chemist; but, as far as I know, he has never taken out any systematic medical classes. His studies are very desultory and eccentric, but he has amassed a lot of out-of-the way knowledge which would astonish his professors.'

'Did you never ask him what he was going in for?' I asked.

'No; he is not a man that it is easy to draw out, though he can be communicative enough when the fancy seizes him.'

'I should like to meet him,' I said. 'If I am to lodge with anyone, I should prefer a man of studious and quiet habits. I am not strong enough yet to stand much noise or excitement. I had enough of both in Afghanistan to last me for the remainder of my natural existence. How could I meet this friend of yours?'

'He is sure to be at the laboratory,' returned my companion. 'He either avoids the place for weeks, or else he works there from morning to night. If you like, we shall drive round together after luncheon.'

'Certainly,' I answered, and the conversation drifted away into other channels.



The Battle of Maiwand, Second Afghan War, 26 July 1880

Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, Chapter 1, Gutenberg Press:
www.gutenberg.org/files/244/244-h/244-h.htm

It is worth knowing some historical background to Conan Doyle's work. The Sherlock Holmes stories were hugely popular at the time of their release. This is illustrated by the reaction when Conan Doyle wrote the story in which Holmes is killed in a struggle with his arch-enemy, Moriarty, at the Reichenbach Falls: overwhelming public demand forced him to resurrect the character.

Katherine Wisser explains that the stories arrived at the right moment in British history, tapping into the social and cultural zeitgeist (spirit of the time). Education rates had surged, and literacy rates among the public along with them. In addition, public libraries were popping up all over the place. At the same time, the first phase of the industrial revolution was coming to an end, there was a clearer distinction between work and home, and the length of the work day had been fixed – all of which led to the creation of more leisure time. As a result, the public was clamouring for good fiction, and Conan Doyle's stories appealed for a number of inter-related reasons; for example, they:

- referred to a familiar setting (London) and integrated events from the near past
- tapped into an existing public interest in science (Charles Darwin's revolutionary *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859, less than 30 years before the publication of *A Study in Scarlet*)
- were written in a time of uncertainty and Holmes represented and reaffirmed a Victorian era code of morals, especially in relation to the search for truth and justice.

With this (potted) historical background in mind, read the rest of the novel, taking notes as outlined in *Your turn 6.2b*.

6.2b Your turn

Reading the novel and taking notes



- 1 a** As you read the novel *A Study in Scarlet*, hold up a structural frame and a cultural frame and take notes about the following elements of the novel:

 - *Narration: Who sees? Who speaks?* – remember that this might change as the story progresses
 - *Storyworld: context and setting* – identify information about the (fictional) historical, political, social and cultural context, as well as the physical setting
 - *Characters in the storyworld* – focus on the construction of key characters
 - *The plot* (the unfolding events across the novel) and *story* (the chronology of total events, which might include inferred events and backstory)
 - *Themes and motifs* – in particular, consider how the concepts of justice, and law and order are dealt with in the story (e.g. the role of the police, the 'proper' practice of detection, the nature of truth and the source of justice).

In your notes, include references to how language (including aesthetic features and stylistic devices) is used to construct the narration, storyworld, characters, plot, themes and motifs.

- 2** When you finish, write a short response to the novel, including answers to the following three questions.

a Holding up a personal frame, what was your reaction to *A Study in Scarlet*? Why do you think you reacted in this way?



b Holding up a cultural frame, if you were a screenwriter adapting the novel as a 90-minute television drama, which elements of the original story would you keep and which would you change? Explain your decisions, especially in relation to the potential social, historical and cultural significance of these changes.



c Holding up a critical frame, respond to the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- i In what ways does the story reflect the world view of the time in which it was written?
- ii As a twenty-first century reader, how did you react to the story?
- iii Is there anything in the original story you would challenge? For example, how would you evaluate the representations of race, gender and class? You might like to think about how the story would be changed if the Watson and Holmes characters were female. [In fact, in the American television series *Elementary*, Watson was rewritten as a woman.]



3 In small groups, share your ideas with other students.

The first episode of the BBC adaptation *Sherlock* – titled ‘A Study in Pink’ – brings the story into contemporary London. Like in the novel, Dr Watson has recently returned from war in Afghanistan, in this case suffering from psychological problems. He is also looking for cheap accommodation and is put into contact with Holmes by a mutual friend. In a break from the original story, three apparent suicides appear in quick succession early in the episode.

Before you watch the episode, consider the still shown in Source 6 on the next page.



6.2c Your turn

Initial comparisons of novel and television episode



After reading the novel, hold up the personal frame and answer the following questions:

- 1 To what extent does Source 6 fit with your mental image of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson? Alternatively, was your mental image of these characters already formed by seeing the characters on the screen (including other film and television versions)?

- 2 Do the characters appear to have been well cast?

- 3 What changes (if any) have been made to suit a contemporary audience?

To help in answering these questions, here is part of Watson's description of Holmes from Chapter 2:

His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have alluded; and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination.

Answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer:

- 4 What clues are there in the novel about Watson's appearance? For example, what can be inferred about him based on his army service as a doctor in Afghanistan?



- 5 There are no direct clues about Watson's height and weight. What inferences might be drawn from his description of Holmes?

- 6 Watson is often portrayed as shorter and sometimes heavier than Holmes. What purpose does this size difference serve in the story, do you think?

You should now watch 'A Study in Pink', the first episode of the television series *Sherlock*, noting the instructions in Your turn 6.2d.

Source 6 Holmes and Watson in the BBC series *Sherlock*

6.2d Your turn

Viewing the episode and taking notes

1 As you watch the episode, hold up a structural frame and take notes about the following elements of the story:

- *Storyworld: context and setting* – identify information about the historical, political, social and cultural context, as well as the physical setting
- *Characters in the storyworld* – focus on the construction of key characters
- *The plot* (the unfolding events across the novel) and *story* (the chronology of total events, which might include inferred events and backstory)
- *Themes and motifs* – in particular, consider how the concepts of justice, and law and order are dealt with in the story (e.g. the role of the police, the ‘proper’ practice of detection and the source of justice).

In your notes, make sure you include reference to the use of visual features (e.g. editing, camera movement, shot types, social distance, colour, **mise-en-scène**), body language (e.g. gaze, facial expression, posture, gesture, body orientation), costuming and sound (e.g. sound effects, music, use of silence, dialogue) to represent the storyworld, characters, plot, themes and motifs.

When you have finished, write a short response to the television episode, including answers to the following three questions.

2 Holding up a personal frame, what was your reaction to ‘A Study in Pink’, including the name change from the original? How did it compare with the novel? Why do you think you reacted in this way?

3 Holding up a cultural frame, to what extent do you think the episode was a successful adaptation? What elements do you think worked well? Was it faithful to the original source (refer to categories of adaptation on page 111)? Socially and culturally, what might explain this?

4 Holding up a critical frame, did the adaptation take account of the experiences and world views of twenty-first-century viewers? For example, how would you evaluate the representations of race, gender and class?

5 In small groups, share your ideas with other students.

structural



mise-en-scène

everything (including setting, lighting, costume and staging) that appears within the frame and how these elements are arranged

personal



cultural



critical



6.3

COMPARING A *STUDY IN SCARLET* AND 'A STUDY IN PINK'

We are now going to directly compare and contrast the original story with the adaptation. To assist you, key extracts from the original novel have been provided, along with associated references to the television series (see pages 124–32). However, be warned: the suggested comparisons do not call attention to *all* of the similarities and differences between the original story and the adaptation – you'll need to do quite a bit more work yourself.

6.3a Your turn

Synthesising notes and making comparisons

Complete the table below, drawing on the notes you made during your earlier reading and viewing. You could re-create the table in digital format so that you can fit more information in easily.

ELEMENT	<i>A STUDY IN SCARLET</i> (NOVEL): DISTINCTIVE FEATURES	FEATURES SHARED BY ORIGINAL AND ADAPTATION	'A STUDY IN PINK' (TELEVISION EPISODE): DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
Narration (and associated language, visual and other features)	e.g. <i>Watson is an internal focaliser</i>		e.g. <i>no voice-over but close-up shots of Watson's blog</i>
Storyworld: context and setting (and associated language, visual and other features)		e.g. <i>set in London, H & W live at 221B Baker Street</i>	
Characters in the storyworld (and associated language, visual and other features)	e.g. <i>includes character of Tobias Gregon as foil to Lestrade – sets up another layer of conflict</i>		e.g. <i>Moriarty (H's arch-enemy) is referenced in dialogue – not in original story</i>
Plot and story (and associated language, visual and other features)		e.g. <i>pills involved in both murders</i>	e.g. <i>Opening scenes: use of disorienting montage to introduce Watson</i>
Themes and motifs (and associated language, visual and other features)	e.g. <i>image of the 'scarlet thread of murder' (Chapter 4)</i>		

ELEMENT	<i>A STUDY IN SCARLET</i> (NOVEL): DISTINCTIVE FEATURES	FEATURES SHARED BY ORIGINAL AND ADAPTATION	'A STUDY IN PINK' (TELEVISION EPISODE): DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
Overall evaluations	e.g. time in USA would be very expensive to film and relevance to modern audience uncertain		

Starting points for comparison

This section contains extracts for comparison alongside suggested parts of the television adaptation. Note that time references are based on the version available from Apple iTunes.

To help you make comparisons, see the table on pages 324–5 (Chapter 14). It summarises some of the specific meaning-making resources (written, visual, sound, body language, etc.) used to represent various elements of the story. These will be especially useful for zooming in on particular scenes (from the novel and television episode) and analysing them more closely. Moreover, it will help you consider the opportunities for expression and representation (i.e. the **affordances**) offered by the different modes.

Comparison 1

The first extracts that you should read from *A Study in Scarlet* are the early part of Chapter 1 (see Source 5, pp. 115–17) and the beginning of Chapter 2 (see Source 8 on page 124). These can be compared to the first 18 minutes of the video, in which:

- Watson and Holmes are first seen – pay close attention to how the introductions are achieved, and *how* they are initially represented (especially Watson in the opening scenes)
- a montage of the first three murders is presented
- the police hold a news conference
- Watson and Holmes meet – there are some obvious and subtle differences from the novel to identify
- the pair move into 221B Baker Street and Mrs Hudson is introduced – note the role that Hudson plays and compare it to the original story
- Lestrade arrives and informs them of the fourth suicide
- Holmes says, ‘The game, Mrs Hudson, is on’.

affordance
something that is made possible in a particular mode (i.e. the opportunities a mode offers for expressing ideas and representing people, things, places and times)



Source 7 Inside 221B Baker Street, from the BBC series *Sherlock*

Source 8 Extract 3 from *A Study in Scarlet*

We met next day as he had arranged, and inspected the rooms at No. 221B, Baker Street, of which he had spoken at our meeting. They consisted of a couple of comfortable bed-rooms and a single large airy sitting-room, cheerfully furnished, and illuminated by two broad windows. So desirable in every way were the apartments, and so moderate did the terms seem when divided between us, that the bargain was concluded upon the spot, and we at once entered into possession. That very evening I moved my things round from the hotel, and on the following morning Sherlock Holmes followed me with several boxes and portmanteaus. For a day or two we were busily employed in unpacking and laying out our property to the best advantage. That done, we gradually began to settle down and to accommodate ourselves to our new surroundings.

Holmes was certainly not a difficult man to live with. He was quiet in his ways, and his habits were regular. It was rare for him to be up after ten at night, and he had invariably breakfasted and gone out before I rose in the morning. Sometimes he spent his day at the chemical laboratory, sometimes in the dissecting-rooms, and occasionally in long walks, which appeared to take him into the lowest portions of the City. Nothing could exceed his energy when the working fit was upon him; but now and again a reaction would seize him, and for days on end he would lie upon the sofa in the sitting-room, hardly uttering a word or moving a muscle from morning to night. On these occasions I have noticed such a dreamy, vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic, had not the temperance and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion.

As the weeks went by, my interest in him and my curiosity as to his aims in life, gradually deepened and increased. His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have alluded; and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch, as I frequently had occasion to observe when I watched him manipulating his fragile philosophical instruments.

The reader may set me down as a hopeless busybody, when I confess how much this man stimulated my curiosity, and how often I endeavoured to break through the reticence which he showed on all that concerned himself. Before pronouncing judgment, however, be it remembered, how objectless was my life, and how little there was to engage my attention. My health forbade me from venturing out unless the weather was exceptionally genial, and I had no friends who would call upon me and break the monotony of my daily existence. Under these circumstances, I eagerly hailed the little mystery which hung around my companion, and spent much of my time in endeavouring to unravel it.

Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, Chapter 2, Gutenberg Press:
www.gutenberg.org/files/244/244-h/244-h.htm

Comparison 2

Next, read Source 9 carefully. It reveals details of the crime in the novel, and also presents further insight into the evolving character of Watson, and the burgeoning relationship between Watson and Holmes. It is interesting because of the way London is represented to create atmosphere. This section is also noteworthy for the way Holmes represents the police. By comparison, watch the television episode from about 19 minutes to 28 minutes:

- Holmes makes guesses about Watson's life and is represented as fallible.
- Holmes and Watson arrive at Lauriston, the scene of the latest suicide. The representation of police and their relationship to Holmes and Watson is of interest here.
- We are taken inside the scene of the murder. Note in particular the similarities and differences between the crime in the original story and the adaptation.

Source 9 Extract 4 from *A Study in Scarlet*

This is the letter which I read to him –

'MY DEAR MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES, –

'There has been a bad business during the night at 3, Lauriston Gardens, off the Brixton Road. Our man on the beat saw a light there about two in the morning, and as the house was an empty one, suspected that something was amiss. He found the door open, and in the front room, which is bare of furniture, discovered the body of a gentleman, well dressed, and having cards in his pocket bearing the name of 'Enoch J. Drebber, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.' There had been no robbery, nor is there any evidence as to how the man met his death. There are marks of blood in the room, but there is no wound upon his person. We are at a loss as to how he came into the empty house; indeed, the whole affair is a puzzler. If you can come round to the house any time before twelve, you will find me there. I have left everything *in statu quo* until I hear from you. If you are unable to come I shall give you fuller details, and would esteem it a great kindness if you would favour me with your opinion. Yours faithfully,

'TOBIAS GREGSON.'

'Gregson is the smartest of the Scotland Yarders,' my friend remarked; 'he and Lestrade are the pick of a bad lot. They are both quick and energetic, but conventional – shockingly so. They have their knives into one another, too. They are as jealous as a pair of professional beauties. There will be some fun over this case if they are both put upon the scent.'

I was amazed at the calm way in which he rippled on. 'Surely there is not a moment to be lost,' I cried, 'shall I go and order you a cab?'

'I'm not sure about whether I shall go. I am the most incurably lazy devil that ever stood in shoe leather – that is, when the fit is on me, for I can be spry enough at times.'

'Why, it is just such a chance as you have been longing for.'

'My dear fellow, what does it matter to me? Supposing I unravel the whole matter, you may be sure that Gregson, Lestrade, and Co. will pocket all the credit. That comes of being an unofficial personage.'

'But he begs you to help him.'

'Yes. He knows that I am his superior, and acknowledges it to me; but he would cut his tongue out before he would own it to any third person. However, we may as well go and have a look. I shall work it out on my own hook. I may have a laugh at them if I have nothing else. Come on!'

(Continues on next page)

Source 9 *Cont.*

He hustled on his overcoat, and bustled about in a way that showed that an energetic fit had superseded the apathetic one.

'Get your hat,' he said.

'You wish me to come?'

'Yes, if you have nothing better to do.' A minute later we were both in a hansom, driving furiously for the Brixton Road.

It was a foggy, cloudy morning, and a dun-coloured veil hung over the house-tops, looking like the reflection of the mud-coloured streets beneath. My companion was in the best of spirits, and prattled away about Cremona fiddles, and the difference between a Stradivarius and an Amati. As for myself, I was silent, for the dull weather and the melancholy business upon which we were engaged, depressed my spirits.

Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, Chapter 3, Gutenberg Press:
www.gutenberg.org/files/244/244-h/244-h.htm

Comparison 3

The next three extracts (Sources 11, 12 and 13) deal with the capture of the murderer and the aftermath. As well as using these as a reference for comparing events in the original and the adaptation, pay particular attention to the representation of concepts such as truth and justice. By comparison, watch the television episode again from about the 1-hour mark onwards, noting in particular:

- Holmes's realisation that Rachel is not a name
- the montage as Holmes assembles the clues to arrive at 'the truth'
- the confrontation with the serial killer, during which Holmes is represented as quite vulnerable – how does this compare with the original story?
- the revelation of the killer's motivations and a secret 'sponsor'
- Watson's desperation to save Holmes
- the demise of the killer
- the aftermath, including the appearance of Holmes's brother, Mycroft.



Source 10 Mark Gatiss as the mysterious Mycroft in the BBC series *Sherlock*.



Source 11 Extract 5 from *A Study in Scarlet*

Neither of them had time to speak, however, before there was a tap at the door, and the spokesman of the street Arabs, young Wiggins, introduced his insignificant and unsavoury person.

'Please, sir,' he said, touching his forelock, 'I have the cab downstairs.'

'Good boy,' said Holmes, blandly. 'Why don't you introduce this pattern at Scotland Yard?' he continued, taking a pair of steel handcuffs from a drawer. 'See how beautifully the spring works. They fasten in an instant.'

'The old pattern is good enough,' remarked Lestrade, 'if we can only find the man to put them on.'

'Very good, very good,' said Holmes, smiling. 'The cabman may as well help me with my boxes. Just ask him to step up, Wiggins.'

I was surprised to find my companion speaking as though he were about to set out on a journey, since he had not said anything to me about it. There was a small portmanteau in the room, and this he pulled out and began to strap. He was busily engaged at it when the cabman entered the room.

'Just give me a help with this buckle, cabman,' he said, kneeling over his task, and never turning his head.

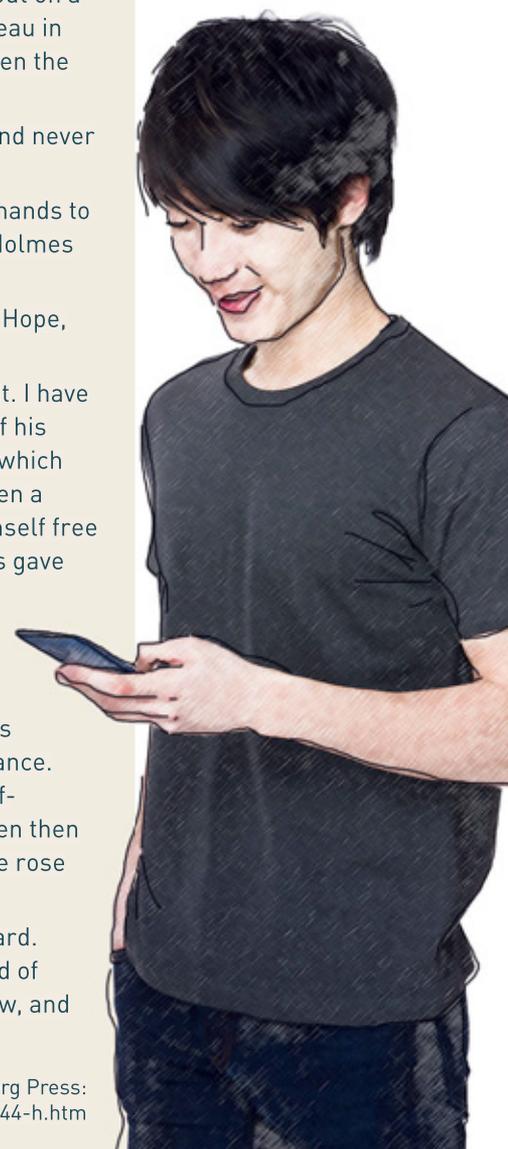
The fellow came forward with a somewhat sullen, defiant air, and put down his hands to assist. At that instant there was a sharp click, the jangling of metal, and Sherlock Holmes sprang to his feet again.

'Gentlemen,' he cried, with flashing eyes, 'let me introduce you to Mr. Jefferson Hope, the murderer of Enoch Drebber and of Joseph Stangerson.'

The whole thing occurred in a moment – so quickly that I had no time to realize it. I have a vivid recollection of that instant, of Holmes' triumphant expression and the ring of his voice, of the cabman's dazed, savage face, as he glared at the glittering handcuffs, which had appeared as if by magic upon his wrists. For a second or two we might have been a group of statues. Then, with an inarticulate roar of fury, the prisoner wrenched himself free from Holmes's grasp, and hurled himself through the window. Woodwork and glass gave way before him; but before he got quite through, Gregson, Lestrade, and Holmes sprang upon him like so many staghounds. He was dragged back into the room, and then commenced a terrific conflict. So powerful and so fierce was he, that the four of us were shaken off again and again. He appeared to have the convulsive strength of a man in an epileptic fit. His face and hands were terribly mangled by his passage through the glass, but loss of blood had no effect in diminishing his resistance. It was not until Lestrade succeeded in getting his hand inside his neckcloth and half-strangling him that we made him realize that his struggles were of no avail; and even then we felt no security until we had pinioned his feet as well as his hands. That done, we rose to our feet breathless and panting.

'We have his cab,' said Sherlock Holmes. 'It will serve to take him to Scotland Yard. And now, gentlemen,' he continued, with a pleasant smile, 'we have reached the end of our little mystery. You are very welcome to put any questions that you like to me now, and there is no danger that I will refuse to answer them.'

Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, Chapter 7, Gutenberg Press:
www.gutenberg.org/files/244/244-h/244-h.htm



Source 12 Extract 6 from *A Study in Scarlet*

We had all been warned to appear before the magistrate upon the Thursday; but when the Thursday came there was no occasion for our testimony. A higher Judge had taken the matter in hand, and Jefferson Hope had been summoned before a tribunal where strict justice would be meted out to him. On the very night after his capture the aneurism burst, and he was found in the morning stretched upon the floor of the cell, with a placid smile upon his face, as though he had been able in his dying moments to look back upon a useful life, and on work well done.

Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, Chapter 7, Gutenberg Press:
www.gutenberg.org/files/244/244-h/244-h.htm

Source 13 Extract 7 from *A Study in Scarlet*

'It is wonderful!' I cried. 'Your merits should be publicly recognized. You should publish an account of the case. If you won't, I will for you.'

'You may do what you like, Doctor,' he answered. 'See here!' he continued, handing a paper over to me, 'look at this!'

It was the *Echo* for the day, and the paragraph to which he pointed was devoted to the case in question.

'The public,' it said, 'have lost a sensational treat through the sudden death of the man Hope, who was suspected of the murder of Mr. Enoch Drebber and of Mr. Joseph Stangerson. The details of the case will probably be never known now, though we are informed upon good authority that the crime was the result of an old standing and romantic feud, in which love and Mormonism bore a part. It seems that both the victims belonged, in their younger days, to the Latter Day Saints, and Hope, the deceased prisoner, hails also from Salt Lake City. If the case has had no other effect, it, at least, brings out in the most striking manner the efficiency of our detective police force, and will serve as a lesson to all foreigners that they will do wisely to settle their feuds at home, and not to carry them on to British soil. It is an open secret that the credit of this smart capture belongs entirely to the well-known Scotland Yard officials, Messrs. Lestrade and Gregson. The man was apprehended, it appears, in the rooms of a certain Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who has himself, as an amateur, shown some talent in the detective line, and who, with such instructors, may hope in time to attain to some degree of their skill. It is expected that a testimonial of some sort will be presented to the two officers as a fitting recognition of their services.'

'Didn't I tell you so when we started?' cried Sherlock Holmes with a laugh. 'That's the result of all our Study in Scarlet: to get them a testimonial!'

'Never mind,' I answered, 'I have all the facts in my journal, and the public shall know them. In the meantime you must make yourself contented by the consciousness of success, like the Roman miser –

'Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo

Ipse domi simul ac nummos contemplor in arca.'

Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, Chapter 7, Gutenberg Press:
www.gutenberg.org/files/244/244-h/244-h.htm

6.3b Your turn

Thinking critically about the adaptation process

At the beginning of this chapter, we posed a number of focus questions that can be considered when studying adaptations:

- 1 What is the same and what is different between the original story and the screen adaptation?
- 2 What did the critics of the time think about the original story and the screen version? What might this tell us about the effectiveness of the adaptation?
- 3 What choices were made in adapting the original story for the screen? What influenced these decisions; for example, financial pressures, practical considerations (e.g. length of the original story), social and political climate (including underpinning cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs across time)?
- 4 To what extent is the adaptation faithful to the original story?
- 5 What do we learn about the different affordances of novels and television shows to position readers/viewers to engage emotionally and critically with stories about law and order, and justice? In other words, what is possible to do in a novel that you can't do as well or easily on film – and vice versa?

Based on your analysis so far, in dot points write answers to these questions in your notebook or on a computer. Hint: You'll need to read the next section to answer Question 2.

Finally, develop your answers to at least one of these questions into an extended response (at least two paragraphs long) intended for an informed literary audience.

Critical reactions to 'A Study in Pink'

On page 118, you read that the public of the day loved the Sherlock Holmes stories due to the social, cultural and political climate of the times. Flashing forward more than 100 years, contemporary audiences, fans and critics have also responded favourably to the television adaptation – although this positive reception has not been universal.

Sources 14, 16 and 18 are three present-day reactions to the stories: two blogs and one online review. Together, they create a type of conversation about the BBC adaptation (although none of them, to our knowledge, was written as a direct response to another). These will help you consider the significance (e.g. personal, social, historical and cultural) of the representations in the adaptation and help you reflect on what is valued by a modern audience. In addition, these extracts model the type of writing that will be expected of you when you complete the final assessment task, so pay attention to the structure and language features.



Source 14 'Retrospective Review #1: A Study in Pink', by Prof. Jenn

[After comparing some of the plot similarities between the original story and the television series, Prof. Jenn moves on to discussing the visual style of the series.] ...

But what sets this show apart from other adaptations, which we see immediately in this first episode, is its now-iconic style.

Before we meet Sherlock as a character, we meet the signature style in which his deductions are illustrated to us throughout the series: the appearance of text on screen. In the press release scene during which poor DI Lestrade and his sidekick sergeant Donovan attempt to placate the public in light of apparent serial suicides, we see the conglomeration of press people's text messages floating right there on the screen. Shortly after, when we get to see Sherlock at a crime scene for the first time, we watch as he examines the body and surroundings, but instead of guessing what he's finding, we see the words of his conclusions printed right in front of us. This is an artistic choice more in the vein of a visual art than a cinematic art. It's not a surprise to learn that director Paul McGuigan began as a photographer. The use of line and framing, composition, and the stylized inclusion of text onscreen, as well as liberal use of actual stills throughout give this show much more of an artistic feel than what we'd find in a mere police procedural, even a very good one. This is what sets *Sherlock* apart more than anything else from its contemporary counterparts (I'm thinking *Elementary* in particular, as good as that show is) – the diligent nods to Doyle, and the intensely artistic eye.

'A Study in Pink' sets the stage for what the show will be with its character introduction, development, and a beginning of the Adventures of Sherlock Holmes very close to how the originals began, without intruding anachronisms in a Victorian setting, or alternately shoving stoic tradition into a modern setting. In this first episode, Mofftiss get it right.

Prof. Jenn, 'Retrospective Review #1: A Study in Pink', Sherlock's Home website: www.sherlockshome



Source 15 Holmes and Watson meet

Sherlock has a great new take on the characters – but what happened to the plot?

Sherlock Holmes has been kidnapped – by Steven Moffat, the man currently in charge of *Doctor Who*. He has bundled Conan Doyle's great detective into the Tardis and transported him to 2010. The famous Baker Street address remains the same, but the pipe has been replaced by nicotine patches – three for a difficult case that needs a lot of deep thought concentration. London is largely smoke-free, too. The way around is no longer by hansom carriage, but by modern TX1 black cab. Mrs Hudson remains Mrs Hudson, but Dr Watson is now John. And Holmes is Sherlock (BBC1, Sunday).

The shift in time is cleverly done.

[Wollaston goes on to provide examples of what works well, including the use of Holmes's traditional methods of deduction and the embrace of modern technology. He then moves on to characterisation.]



SOURCE 17 Holmes and Watson outside Baker Street in the BBC series *Sherlock*.

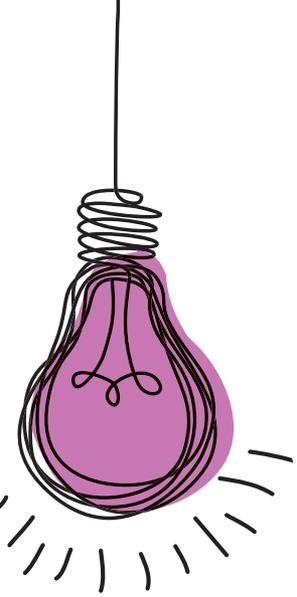
I like Benedict Cumberbatch in the title role. He has the right edge and energy, the razor-sharp mind, but also the lack of social skills and impatience that appears to border on cruelty. A Holmes that Conan Doyle would possibly approve of, I think. Martin Freeman's Watson is very good, too – closer to Sir ACD's thoughtful narrator than the bumbling fool so often portrayed on screen. Their relationship is spot on – a mixture of frustration, admiration and genuine affection. Even from Holmes. Characterwise, it's great.

[Wollaston then discusses problems he has with the story itself, finding it confusing. For example, he wonders why Moriarty would want the victims dead and he does not like the convenient coincidence that the victims always choose the wrong pill. He would have also liked the story to be scarier, as he elaborates below.]

And that's another problem with *Sherlock* – in blowing away the fog, brightening it up for the 21st century, they've done away with the fear as well. It's slick, and quick, and yes, compelling. But there's also a sanity about it, a pantomime squeaky-cleanliness.

I had a nagging sense of recognition throughout. There's something about the pace of it, and the comedy; even the youthful hero with the cheek and the cheekbones and the geeky chic – charming, attractive, but asexual ... what is it reminding me of? And then it came to me! It's no surprise I suppose, given who's behind it, but I think Steven Moffat has created Sherlock Whoms.

Sam Wollaston, 'TV Review: Sherlock and Orchestra United', *The Guardian*, 26 July 2010



Source 18 'TV Review – Steven Moffat's Sherlock: A Study in Pink' by Brendon Connelly

[Although there are features of the series that Connelly likes, including the lack of distracting 'period trappings', and the scripting, unlike Wollaston, he is not a fan of the visual style.]

On paper, this is as good a retelling of Sherlock Holmes as I would reasonably expect. It's tightly plotted – of course it is, this is Moffat doing Conan Doyle – and full of zippy dialogue that deftly shades the characters even as it's whipping up laughs. Crucially, the script also manages to plant the leaps of deduction on the right side of implausible while still deep into the improbable.

There are some disappointments, many of them in the look of the thing. This Holmes absolutely loves mobile phones and text messaging. In several sequences the screen is covered in subtitle-style text showing us the messages being sent or received. Indeed, in the first instance we see several phones all receiving the same message at the same time, the legend 'Wrong!' rising from each in unison. This might be a pretty economical way of avoiding endless cut-aways to cellphone screens, but it is inherently distancing and will, I think, date rather badly. Score one against director Paul McGuigan.

There's a lot of artificially defocussed images too, where part of the screen has been fed through a post production filter. At best this is a little off-putting, at worst it is ugly and quite irritating. See also: some curiously forced compositions (see Watson's therapist before the opening titles for a particularly stressed example) and a few quick-cut deduction sequences that just seem silly.

Brendon Connelly, 'TV Review – Steven Moffat's Sherlock: A Study in Pink', *Bleeding Cool* website: www.bleedingcool.com/2010/07/22/tv-review-steinven-moffats-sherlock-a-study-in-pink/, 22 July 2010

6.3c Your turn

Examining critical reactions

After reading the three reviews, answer the following questions.

- 1 To what extent do the assessments of the three 'reviewers' align with your own response? What do you agree with? What do you disagree with? Does anything confuse you?

- 2 In what ways are the three reviews similar and different?

3 What inferences can you make about each of the reviewer's values with regard to storytelling and adaptation? (*Hint*: Identify the language used to evaluate the adaptation.) What can you say about the assumptions they make, their general attitudes and their beliefs?

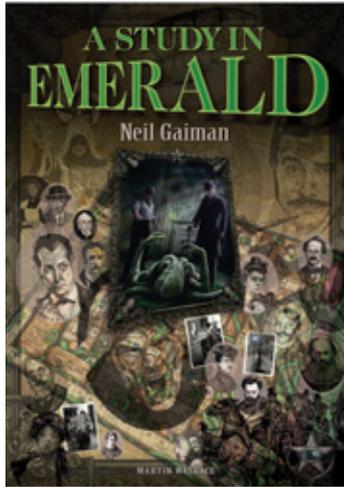
4 How might the intended audience for each review have influenced the way it was written?

Share your answers with others and discuss what critics and reviewers thought about the original story and the screen version. What might this tell us about the effectiveness (or otherwise) of the BBC adaptation?

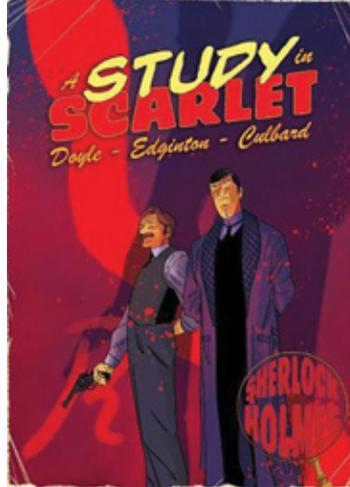


A plethora of adaptations

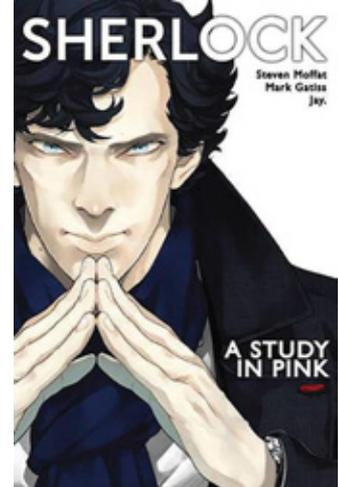
We have only scratched the surface of Sherlock Holmes adaptations in this chapter. However, if you are looking for other texts to compare to *A Study in Scarlet* or 'A Study in Pink', you might find some of the following adaptations interesting and fun.



Source 19 The 'A Study in Emerald' board game



Source 20 A graphic novel adaptation of *A Study in Scarlet*



Source 21 A manga adaptation of 'A Study in Pink'

'A Study in Emerald' by Neil Gaiman

- Gaiman transfers 'A Study in Scarlet' to the shared universe of the Cthulhu Mythos, which was developed by US horror writer HP Lovecraft and his peers – it is akin to fan fiction. A link is included on your [qbook](#).
- First published in 2003 in *Shadows Over Baker Street* (edited by Michael Reeves and John Pelan), the short story won the 2004 Hugo Award for Best (SciFi) Short Story.
- The piece 'There Are Other meanings' by Ruthanna Emrys and Anne M Pillsworth sets two reactions to the story side by side. A link is included on your [qbook](#).
- 'A Study in Emerald' has been turned into a board game by Treefrog Games.
- You can read 'A Study in Emerald' on Neil Gaiman's website. A link is included on your [qbook](#).



Source 22 Author Neil Gaiman

A Study in Scarlet: A Sherlock Holmes Graphic Novel by Ian Edginton

- This is a graphic novel adaptation of the original short story by Arthur Conan Doyle, published by SelfMadeHero in 2017 and illustrated by INJ Culbard.
- A review by Rachel Cooke of *A Study in Scarlet: A Sherlock Holmes Graphic Novel* is available on the Guardian's website. A link is included on your obook.

Sherlock: A Study in Pink by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss

- This novel is a manga adaptation of the BBC episode, 'A Study in Pink', which was first serialised in Japan. It was published by Titan Comics in 2017 and illustrated by Jay.
- The English-language version is printed in the original right-to-left manga format.
- If you are interested in the personal, social, historical and cultural significance of manga, listen to the engaging and informative ABC Earshot episode, 'Mad for manga', produced by Masako Fukui.

There is lots more to explore, including a whole online community that has built up around Sherlock Holmes. Have a look at these as a starting point:

- Fan fiction
- Twitter accounts (e.g. @sherlock221b)
- Instagram profiles (e.g. sherlock_holmes_official)
- Tumblr posts/reposts tagged with #Sherlock (and related words).

6.3d Your turn

Creating your own adaptation

Return to Question 3 in *Your turn 6.1b* where you were asked to think about a favourite novel, graphic novel, play or computer game that you would like to see adapted for the big screen.

Now that you have studied a specific adaptation closely and seen the diversity of forms that an adaptation can take, look at your original ideas in the table in *Your turn 6.1b* and evaluate and revise them. If you are inspired, develop your ideas further and write a **story treatment** or even start writing a screenplay. Alternatively, you might have ideas for other types of adaptation; for example a graphic novel or game (board or computer). In this case, you could develop some initial sketches.

story treatment
a detailed prose summary of a proposed film written to sell an idea

FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



INTERNAL ASSESSMENT 1: PUBLIC WRITING

No matter what comparison option you studied for Unit 3 Topic 1, the suggested culminating task for assessment is a 1000–1500-word piece of public writing such as an article, essay, blog post or column. The public writing must add to ongoing, informed and public ‘conversations’ about two texts, including analysis of the texts and their contexts, and comparison of the concepts and identities represented in two texts.

You must check your own school task sheet for the conditions of submitting your public writing for ‘Internal assessment 1’ (IA1). We have provided guidance in writing a multimodal (written + images) blog post for publication online in a publicly accessible blogging platform. However, parts of this chapter may be useful to you even if you are not writing a blog post for online publication. We have also provided general support for writing a compositional analysis, which can be applied to other types of public writing as needed (e.g. a feature article).

Focus questions:

- What are the requirements of the first internal assessment task?
- How can comparing texts illuminate significant meanings and connections?
- What options does the task present for publishing and sharing your writing?
- How can you enhance your writing skills to craft a successful response for the assessment task?

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 3, Topic 1 (‘Conversations about concepts in texts’) and Internal assessment 1 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*.

This chapter features:

- an opportunity to create a piece of public writing that is 1000–1500 words in length
- consideration of digital and online writing as a type of publication
- guidance in creating a compositional analysis (genre) as a blog post (genre/production medium).

The chapter includes a comparative study of:

TEXT(S)	AUTHOR	PRESCRIBED?
A compositional analysis of <i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i> (novel and film)	Lindsay Williams	Compositional analysis is a typical genre for the prescribed public writing task; the literary texts do not feature on the prescribed texts list; they are used to model a compositional analysis.

7.1

EXPLORING TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Using Chapter 4, 5 or 6 (or your own school-based study) you explored how two texts are *connected* by the way they create contrasting representations of concepts, identities, times and places. This means that the public writing you do for assessment in this topic should focus on the things that connect the texts, *comparing* concepts, identities, times and places that they have in common, or *contrasting* notable differences.

In this chapter we offer information and support for writing a **blog post**; details for the task relating to each study option in this book ('aspiration', 'human progress' and text adaptation) are provided in Section 7.4. However, you must also consult your teacher and your school task sheet – which outlines specific expectations – before commencing this assessment.

Entering a public 'conversation' about texts

The title of Topic 1 is 'Conversations about concepts in texts', and it is expected that the writing you do for Internal assessment 1 would add to a broader public conversation about the meaning and significance of your texts. If you are having trouble imagining that there is an interesting conversation happening about your chosen texts in the public domain, then you can instead think of your blog post as kicking off the conversation!

The introduction to Unit 3, Topic 1 in the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus* outlines two 'angles' from which you should **respond** to the two texts you have analysed in the comparative study. They are exploring and discussing:

- the *personal, social, historical and cultural significance* of representations in different texts, and
- the *cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs* underpinning different texts.

blog post

a web-log, or 'blog', is a website that is designed to show a feed or selection of material that is uploaded periodically. Material can be written, spoken/signed (recorded), visual, sound/song, video or a combination of these, and it is uploaded as a 'post', usually with a date stamp. Think of it as writing ('posting') an entry in a public journal ('log')

respond

responding to a text involves reading, listening or viewing; a range of cognitive processes, including creating (e.g. creating a personal response tied to individual memory and meaning); creating critical positions based on textual analysis; creative application and experimentation in response to texts



7.1 Your turn

Starting points for conversations

- 1 Make notes on the contexts of the two texts you have studied in the table format provided below (you may need to replicate this table at a larger scale in your notebook or on a computer).

ASPECT OF	TEXT 1	TEXT 2
personal significance (i.e. what it means to you)		
social, historical and/or cultural significance		
cultural assumptions (represented by Language in Use)		
attitudes, values and beliefs (represented by Language in Use)		

- 2 Look over your notes in the table above about the cultural significance and assumptions of the texts; identify two to three ideas that strike you as significant, and worth considering as a topic in your blog post.

7.2

STRUCTURE AND FEATURES OF A BLOG POST AS COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS

Do I want to recount a significant event in my life?

Do I want to analyse a television show I really liked?

Do I want to present my position on an issue?



Source 1
Questions to consider when writing a feature article

The term 'blog' is used widely in contemporary society. Like the feature article, the blog post is not really a genre of its own (except in a very broad sense). When writing a blog post, you really need to understand three things about the context:

- You are writing about something in which you typically have a keen interest. Bloggers, moreover, often belong to a community of like-minded people.
- Your audience is usually made up of people who share a similar interest and who are looking for a less formal, even friendly way to explore and develop their interest.
- The writing you produce will appear online.

Your purpose for writing a blog post can vary.

In the context of this chapter, you are writing a blog post in response to a textual study and your purpose is to respond to two texts in an informed manner. Even

more specifically, you are analysing the elements used to compose culturally significant works (a novel, a short story, a television series, etc.). In the English language, the genre that has developed to fulfil this purpose is called '**compositional analysis**'.

compositional analysis

a writing genre in which the author breaks down significant elements of a text's composition, appraising language and textual choices and structures in light of various contextual factors

intranet

a private network, only available to people within an organisation; access from outside of the network typically requires a user name and password

7.2 Your turn

'Blogging' your compositional analysis

Research:

1 Investigate the blogging platforms available in your school, class and home. What platform is easiest to access when using:

a the school network?

b the home network?

c a mobile device?

2 Does your school (or other learning context) have any guidelines or restrictions on public writing (e.g. use of real name; use of school email to create accounts; provision of **intranet** platform)?

3 Investigate your own digital footprint. Look up a guide for searching the internet for your own name to see if any text and images turn up. Record what you find:

- text
- image/s
- video/s
- profile/s
- nothing!



Reflect:

4 What would you want out of a blogging platform (e.g. easy to use; private/public audience; own blog, or part of a group)?

5 Do you think it is better to write in public under a pseudonym, or using your real or full name? Explain your answer.

6 Consider how you might shape your digital identity through your blog writing. Do you want to make this blog look and feel like a special project, or to use it as a way to develop your online writing profile? Write a draft of 100–250 words in your notebook or on a computer for an 'About' page on your potential blog for this assessment.

Typical structure of a compositional analysis

Source 2 shows the typical structure for a compositional analysis, as well as optional elements you might like to include because it is being written as a blog post.

Source 2 Typical structure of a compositional analysis

TYPICAL STRUCTURE	COMMENTS
Hook (optional)	<p><i>You may opt for a creative opening to establish your role/relationship with the audience.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find a way to connect with the readers (remember, these are people who share an interest in your topic). - Think about different ways of doing this (e.g. tell an anecdote, pose some questions, offer a challenge).
Context	<p><i>Although this section will vary depending on the texts and topic, some key things you might include are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>identification</i> of the title of the novel, film, story, television series, etc. being analysed, as well as its creators and year of publication/release - <i>background</i> information relevant to the topic - <i>a very brief synopsis</i>, if necessary, of the texts (two sentences maximum) - <i>thematic concerns</i> related to the topic (e.g. representations of an issue, identity, time or place). You should foreshadow your final judgment - <i>preview of relevant elements</i> to be considered in the blog.

(Continues on next page)

Source 2 *cont.*

TYPICAL STRUCTURE	COMMENTS
Analysis	<p><i>This section will demonstrate your detailed, technical understanding of the way the two texts work. Each paragraph should deal with one main narrative element (as relevant to your topic).</i></p> <p>Each paragraph should be structured logically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - claim - elaboration - evidence. <p>Remember that you must compare two texts. This can be done in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a <i>serial</i> fashion (i.e. where you examine one text at a time) or - an <i>integrated</i> way (i.e. where you compare an element – e.g. character, events, setting) in both texts within the same paragraph. This is the preferred way. <p>Whichever way you choose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure you make appropriate critical evaluations of the texts throughout this section – go beyond simply describing the texts - provide specific evidence to support your analysis.
Summary/judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make an <i>overall judgment</i> about the two texts in relation to the topic. - Briefly <i>summarise your analysis</i>. - If you like, finish with a <i>comment</i> that brings the analysis back to why your audience might care about this here and now. - As this is a blog post, also include something related to <i>online community building</i> (e.g. an invitation to leave comments).

Source 3 is an exemplar blog post that shows an approach to writing a comparative analysis about an adaptation. Whether you have engaged with the ‘Harry Potter’ series or not, you should be able to see the ways in which the author moves between *analysis of two texts* and *discussion of ideas*. In this exemplar, subheadings have been used to break the post into smaller chunks. Chunking is a useful convention to use for long (800 words or more) posts.

Another way of breaking up long sections of text into visually separated sections is by including images. As you read through Source 3, consider any places where you feel an image could have been added to illustrate or enhance the message in some way.

Source 3 An exemplar blog post

Abomination or masterpiece?

A retrospective look at *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1*

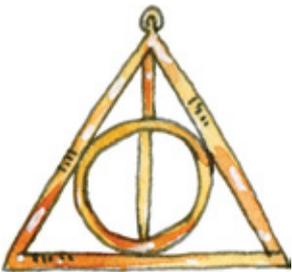
Posted by Lindsay Williams on 24 October 2018

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1 is the best movie in the franchise by a country mile.

There.

I’ve come out and said it.

I know that this is controversial for a movie that only scored about 78 per cent on Rotten Tomatoes and a lowly 65 per cent on Metacritic. It was also loathed by many fans for **that** scene. You know the one I mean. The one that should not be named: Harry and Hermione dancing awkwardly to the croonings of Nick Cave. But, more on that later.



As hard to believe as this might seem, the much-anticipated film was released nearly ten years ago in 2010. It was directed by David Yates, who took over the reins of the franchise with the fifth film, *The Order of the Phoenix* and resulted in marked change in visual style for the series, introducing a darker tone, appropriate for the increasingly dire circumstances in which Harry, Hermione and Ron find themselves. His direction was generally well-received by fans and JK Rowling alike and most people seemed pleased that he was asked to bring the film adaptations home.

Nevertheless, there was a mixed reaction to his decision to split the final book into two films. At worst, this was seen as a cynical exercise to squeeze more money out of audiences, who would be forced to spend their admission and popcorn money twice. And, of course, this idea has been exploited by later franchises such as *The Hunger Games*.

Looking back to reviews at the time, critics liked the visual style but were exasperated by the story and its apparent lack of real direction. We just want to get to the ending, many seemed to opine. For me, though, this movie was an opportunity to spend some last, quality time with the main characters. I wasn't in a hurry to get to the end. At 607 pages, the book is rich and immersive, and I didn't want it crammed into two hours on the screen.

More importantly, though, the film captures perfectly the foreboding atmosphere of Rowling's novel. Additionally, while the third person narration of the sprawling novel allows Rowling plenty of space to explore the characters and their interactions, Yates had to find a way to achieve these same insights in concise, visual ways. That's why new scenes such as the dreaded dance-in-the-tent-in-the-wilderness should be embraced by viewers who understand that novels and films are different and require different approaches to storytelling.

Capturing the darkness

As readers know, the Harry Potter novels become darker as the series progresses and in *Deathly Hallows*, of course, Harry must accept his impending death. Rowling emphasises this using Harry as the focaliser and an omniscient, third person narrator who can reveal his thoughts. So, after Harry, Hermione and Ron escape the Ministry of Magic and are camping in the forest, readers are given access to Harry's ruminations: he knows that Hermione and Ron can walk away at any time, but he can't and is battling to manage both fear and exhaustion. The menacing atmosphere is also created by Rowling's skilful use of imagery. She isn't one for lots of figurative language, metaphors, similes and the like. Instead, she uses strong, concrete words, saturating the text with negative evaluation. Across chapters 14 and 15 for example, Rowling uses feeling nouns (fear, exhaustion, foreboding), an explosion of quality adjectives (starving, *deserted* and *dark* forest, *paralysing* cold, lonely, secluded, the *burning* scar), and specific, weather-related nouns (mist, rain, wind, isolation).

One advantage of splitting the final novel is that Yates can focus on this darkness before the story of the ultimate victory. The opening credits are more like the opening sequence for a Batman movie: the colours are completely desaturated, the titles wreathed in wispy grey cloud. One of the earliest scenes depicts Voldemort torturing and killing Charity Burbage, the Muggles Studies teacher at Hogwarts. Yates then switches to a point of view shot of Nagini eating the body: the huge, CGI snake slithers towards the camera, and then pounces, its wide, open mouth filling the entire screen.

Friendships in peril

However, in some senses, this darkness becomes a backdrop to the real focus in this movie. The world of Harry, Hermione and Ron is changing forever and, like their audience, they are growing up. Inspired by the book, the heart-breaking, opening scene shows Hermione using the Obliviate spell to remove her parents' memories of their daughter, with even her image disappearing from photos. This sets the scene for what is to come: the children are entering a dangerous world where they must rely on themselves and it's the adults who need protection.



(Continues on next page)

Source 3 cont.



Where Rowling has only words (and the readers' imagination) to tell her story, Yates draws on the full set of resources at his disposal to establish a chaotic, dangerous world in which the characters' relationships are under strain. There's a prolonged, exciting chase scene through London which ends in the countryside and a wide shot of falling, arcing powerlines. Throughout the movie, Yates uses a desaturated colour palette, verging on black and white at times, and a lighting scheme that emphasises dark shadows. Long expository scenes from the book have been condensed through the use of disorienting montages.

Characterisation is crucial in Rowling's book with the breakdown in the relationship between Ron, Hermione and Harry an important sub-plot. Yates captures the tensions skilfully. For example, after their escape from the Ministry of Magic, the three friends are standing in the forest arguing over what is to happen next. Using a wide shot and blocking, the distance between the characters is effectively visualised: Ron and Harry are standing far apart, Harry with his back to the others. Hermione is in between the two boys. Moreover, Ron's mental deterioration is depicted through Rupert Grint's hooded gaze, the use of make-up to give him dark rings under his eyes, and a dishevelled costume.

Shall we dance?

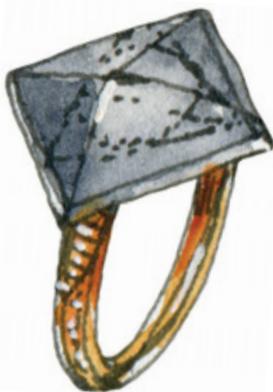
A clever addition to the story is the crackling radio. This is not featured in the novel, but was possibly suggested by a scene in the novel where Harry tells Ron he is not a television antennae. Inside the stark canvas tent, Ron is shown crouching over the radio listening desperately for news of his family; appropriately, it's like something out of an old-time war movie and is an elegant visualisation of Ron's growing sense of despair. Moreover, the sound of the irritating radio crackle is a metaphor of the tensions between Ron and Harry.

Without the radio, one of the most controversial departures from Rowling's original story would not have been possible: the dance between Harry and Hermione. After Ron storms off, Harry and Hermione have travelled to a rocky, limestone pavement (actually located in Malham Cove, Yorkshire) under a cloudy canopy of sky that reflects their mood. It's night, the radio is playing and Yates has the actors sitting on opposite sides of the tent, the physical distance reflecting the tension. The radio can be heard in the background of the soundscape, but if you listen carefully the plaintive 'O Children' by Nick Cave is playing. Harry walks towards Hermione and holds out his hand. After some hesitation, she takes it, standing on the word 'rejoice' as the song becomes louder on the soundtrack. The two dance awkwardly at first, their faces expressing melancholy. However, the dancing becomes increasingly frenzied and they smile – until they slow down and, in an intimate gesture, put their heads on each other's shoulders for a few moments. The music gradually fades into the background, they step apart, smiles on their faces gone. It is a tour de force of direction and editing, and captures what Rowling has said in a 2014 interview with *Wonderland* magazine is the 'ghost of what could have been'.

The final judgment?

At the time, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* marked the end of the stories of Ron, Hermione and Harry. Like the readers of the series, the characters were growing up and in this book about to leave school and start on the next stage of their lives. In many ways, the story of Voldemort is simply the backdrop against which the characters forge their identities and must separate psychologically from their parents and mentors. Looking back, it's this element of Rowling's novel that has been captured so successfully by Yates and his team, using the full resources of image and sound at their disposal. Harry Potter purists may not like the liberties Yates has taken with the source material, but for me the movie is a successful and moving prelude to the high drama of the final act in Harry's story.

So, what do you think? Did you love it or loathe it? Leave a comment below. We'd love to hear from you.



7.3

WRITING FOR PRINT OR DIGITAL PUBLICATION

From Source 3, you can see that the written text achieves all the required elements of a compositional analysis without using any digital elements. Although we have called it a 'blog post', it could be submitted for a print publication rather than being published online.

When we talk about the difference between writing in print or online, we are talking about the medium that is being used to publish the work.

To publish your writing you can either:

- submit your work to an established title that is put out (often periodically) by a company or organisation. You will have to conform to the purpose and style of the publication
- self-publish your work (individually or with a group) in forms such as a **zine** or blog. You will have to create a broader purpose and style for your own publication.

Overall, there are more opportunities to publish your work online than in print. Access to free online content has challenged traditional print media such as magazines and newspapers to retain audiences. While many publications that only existed in print now publish in print and online, other publications began with, or have moved to, an entirely online presence.

For any publication, 'being online' means having a website where its content can be found. A blog is simply another kind of website. Writing that is intended to be published on a website should be:

- *multimodal*: written language combined with images to enhance meaning
- *digital*: written language augmented using webpage editing or direct coding to create **hyperlinks** and add metadata (e.g. categories and tags).

zine

a low-budget, handmade magazine that is made by one person or a small group of people, usually on a niche subject; can be produced or published in print or online

hyperlink

a section of text on a webpage that can be clicked to take you to another webpage, or to bring up an embedded document or other file; hyperlinks are usually blue and underlined

Enhancing online writing

Blogs are multimodal, digital online publications, so blog posts can include features such as:

- *hyperlinks* to websites that elaborate on a point or expand on an example, or lend authority to information in your post by connecting readers to the source of your information
- *relevant images* that add visual appeal and, more importantly, provide visual support for a point being made in your post. These images could reinforce information already in the written text, provide a contrasting perspective or include additional information (i.e. you might distribute information between the written text and the image).

7.3a Your turn

Enhancing a blog post for online publication

Enhance the exemplar blog post in Source 3 for an online environment by adding hyperlinks and relevant images (with appropriate captions to attribute their source). Be prepared to justify your suggestions to your classmates.

Creating and sharing blogs and blog posts

WYSIWYG

an acronym for 'what you see is what you get', a name that describes how text and images can be edited together in a user interface in a way that closely resembles the final appearance; pronounced 'wiz-ee-wig'

HTML

an acronym for 'Hypertext Markup Language', code that is used to 'tag' your content and to tell a web page how to display it; a markup language that defines the structure of webpage content

thumbnail

a reduced size version of a larger image used in a text, typically used in preview screens or indexes

You might have to develop new skills when using a platform such as a blog to write online for a public audience. Blog writing, for example, can often be done in 'WYSIWYG' editing pages, where editing text involves using toolbars. This is much the same as editing in a word-processing program. However, the finer elements of your blog post can also be tinkered with if you are confident going into the HTML editor and applying your own tags and content in the code. HTML code can often be added to text in blog comment editors (e.g. to comment on your classmates' work).

```
<h1>Main title</h1>
<h2>Top level heading</h2>
<ul>
<li>Unordered</li>
<li>Lists</li>
</ul>
<bold>Defines bold text</b>
<i>Defines italic text</i>
<blockquote>Defines a section that is quoted from another source</blockquote>
<a href="home.html"> Text to appear hyperlinked </a>
```

Source 4 Some basic HTML tags that you can experiment with. A longer glossary of HTML tags is included in Chapter 14.

Spreadable media

Blog posts can be shared as links on several platforms. To make your blog post more enticing to potential audiences, you should:

- have a catchy title that represents the content and is not misleading
- break up long paragraphs, especially long introductions, for easier screen reading
- add metadata – categories and tags – to organise content and maximise related search hits
- include at least one image to create an appropriate or enticing **thumbnail** for sharing.

If you are blogging with a group of classmates, reading and commenting on each other's posts is a great way to initiate and stimulate conversations. What strategies can you draw on to make your blog post stand out from the rest of your English class?

7.36 Your turn

Publicising your public writing

- 1 In your notebook or on a computer, write notes on:
 - a what you see as the difference between the terms 'spreadable media' and 'viral media'
 - b the experiences you have had with viral media and memes
 - c how you would define 'spam'
 - d which members of the public you envision will access your blog post. Which members of the public may face challenges with the required literacy and/or internet connectivity?
 - e whether you agree with the proposition, 'if it doesn't spread, it's dead'.

Discuss what you have written with your classmates.

7.4

SUGGESTED TASKS FOR ASSESSMENT

To create a blog post for this assessment task, you will need to draw on your comparative study for Unit 3, Topic 1 'Conversations about concepts in texts'. Source 5 contains possible response options for the study in Chapter 4 (the concept of 'aspiration'), Chapter 5 (the concept of 'human progress') or Chapter 6 (the adaptation of Sherlock Holmes). As always, be sure to check your school task sheet to confirm your specific assessment requirements before completing the task.

Source 5 Contextual elements and prompts for writing a blog post

ASPECT OF THE WRITING CONTEXT	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 1:	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 2:	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 3:
	STUDY OF 'ASPIRATION' (CONCEPTUAL CONNECTION)	STUDY OF 'HUMAN PROGRESS' (CONCEPTUAL CONNECTION)	STUDY OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (CONNECTION THROUGH ADAPTATION)
Genre and social purpose	Blog post in the form of a compositional analysis		
Subject matter (What is my topic? What question/s do I need to answer?)	<p>Critically compare the novel <i>The Great Gatsby</i> with the short story 'American Dreams'.</p> <p>Make sure your blog post addresses ONE of the following focus areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The way representations of aspiration respond to differing social, historical and cultural contexts 2 Cultural assumptions about class, gender or individualism across times and places 3 The purpose of novels and short stories as media for reflecting or challenging perspectives. <p>Support your analysis with specific evidence (including quotations) from the texts.</p>	<p>Critically compare the film <i>Hidden Figures</i> with six poems by Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner.</p> <p>Make sure your blog post addresses ONE of the following focus areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The way representations of human progress respond to differing social, historical and cultural contexts 2 Cultural assumptions about gender, ethnicity or the environment across times and places 3 The purpose of films and poetry as media for reflecting or challenging perspectives. <p>Support your analysis with specific evidence (including quotations and screenshots) from the texts.</p>	<p>Critically compare an episode of the BBC adaptation of 'Sherlock' with an original story by Arthur Conan Doyle.</p> <p>Make sure your blog post addresses ONE of the following focus areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Changing representations of truth and justice across time 2 Cultural assumptions about gender or class across time 3 The purposes of films and novels as media for storytelling. <p>Support your analysis with specific evidence (including quotations and screenshots) from the versions of the stories.</p>

(Continues on next page)



Source 5 *cont.*

ASPECT OF THE WRITING CONTEXT	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 1: STUDY OF 'ASPIRATION' (CONCEPTUAL CONNECTION)	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 2: STUDY OF 'HUMAN PROGRESS' (CONCEPTUAL CONNECTION)	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 3: STUDY OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (CONNECTION THROUGH ADAPTATION)
<p>Roles and relationships (What writing role am I adopting? Who is my audience? What is our relationship in terms of distance, power and alignment of values?)</p>	<p>Adopt the role of a literary blogger. Your readers are others interested in the ways literature impacts personal reflection and growth. You should assume the following relationship between you and your readers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Distance</i>: you don't know each other personally - <i>Power</i>: your audience is 'well-informed and knowledgeable' about the novel <i>The Great Gatsby</i> and the short story 'American Dreams' - <i>Alignment of values</i>: you may have divergent views about how the texts position audiences to conceptualise 'aspiration' 	<p>Adopt the role of a literary blogger. Your readers are others interested in the power of literature to reflect or create social change. You should assume the following relationship between you and your readers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Distance</i>: you don't know each other personally - <i>Power</i>: your audience is 'well-informed and knowledgeable' about either the film <i>Hidden Figures</i> or the poetry of Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, but might only be 'familiar' with the context of the other text - <i>Alignment of values</i>: you may have divergent views about how the texts position audiences to conceptualise 'human progress' 	<p>Adopt the role of a literary blogger. Your readers are others interested in literary adaptations and fans of the Sherlock Holmes stories. You should assume the following relationship between you and your readers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Distance</i>: you don't know each other personally - <i>Power</i>: your audience is 'well-informed and knowledgeable' about Sherlock Holmes and various adaptations - <i>Alignment of values</i>: you share a love of the Arthur Conan Doyle stories, but may have divergent views about the value of film and television adaptations
<p>Mode (Is this assignment written, spoken or multimodal?)</p>	<p>Multimodal: Written with digital elements (e.g. hyperlinks and relevant captioned images). A combination of written and visual material is required</p>		
<p>Medium (How do I need to submit this assignment – e.g. on paper, as a digital file or URL ...?)</p>	<p><i>Preferred – digital (online or offline)*</i>: Published online using an individual or group blog page, or offline as a digital file with embedded hyperlinks. <i>Alternative – print</i>: The blog post can be submitted on A4 paper, with intended hyperlinks indicated with <u>underlined formatting</u> and a numbered list of hyperlink URLs attached in an appendix *Check your school assessment task sheet for specific conditions of your task.</p>		

7.4 Your turn

Writing your blog post: A conversation about textual connections

Using the contextual elements and prompts offered in Source 5 create a blog post of 1000–1500 words that provides a target audience with your critical perspective on two ‘connected’ texts.

- *Target audience:* Before writing, confirm (using your school task sheet, or perhaps decide as a class) the intended audience of your blog.
- *Medium:* Your piece must be for an online publication, either on a platform of your choice or within a whole-class site. A combination of written and visual material is required.

Interacting and reflecting

- *Interact:* When you and your classmates have published your blog posts, read each other’s posts and leave comments in response. Interact with the ideas that your classmates have presented in their posts by adding a comment that relates personally to one of their insights, or extends their analysis by adding additional information.
- *Reflect:* Write down or talk to someone about your blogging experience.
 - Did you find it hard to come up with something to say?

- Were you able to confidently create a digital text that used consistent and appropriate formatting?

- How difficult was it to find the right images to illustrate your blog?

- What are three pieces of advice you would give someone else doing this task about how to effectively communicate their position or perspective in a blog?

FOR THE TEACHER

Check your [obook](#) [assess](#) for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension





Part

C

UNIT 3: TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS 2 – ISSUES IN TEXTS

Chapter 8 Conversations about ‘mass surveillance’
in media texts

- 8.1 Conversations about the issue of ‘mass surveillance’
- 8.2 Examining media texts
- 8.3 Exploring textual connections

Chapter 9 Internal assessment 2: Persuasive speaking

- 9.1 Speaking persuasively about contemporary issues
- 9.2 Persuasive language and structuring arguments
- 9.3 Speaking in live and recorded situations
- 9.4 Adding multimodal and non-verbal components
- 9.5 Suggested task for assessment

8

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT 'MASS SURVEILLANCE' IN MEDIA TEXTS

This is a study of representations in media texts as part of Unit 3, Topic 2: 'Conversations about issues in texts'. The focus of this chapter is the broad issue of mass surveillance, modelling processes for you to apply in analysing your own media texts from the previous 12 months.

Focus questions:

- What is mass surveillance and what makes it a contentious social issue?
- How are perspectives about mass surveillance represented in media texts?
- How are representations of mass surveillance shaped by cultural context?
- How can you draw from the analysis of these texts to develop your own perspective on mass surveillance?

This study will culminate in a persuasive speech that responds to representations of a contemporary social issue in the media within the previous year. See Chapter 9 for a suggested culminating task for this media study.

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 3, Topic 2 of the *English General Senior Syllabus*: 'Conversations about issues in texts'.

This chapter features:

- a focus on media texts
- text drawn from the syllabus category: multimodal text (television series)
- prompts for producing a variety of short persuasive texts.

The chapter includes a study of several media texts:

TEXT	AUTHOR	PRESCRIBED?
Digital opinion article	Uri Gal, <i>The Conversation</i> , 6 June 2017	No – non-literary Written/multimodal text (media)
Investigative news report	Nawal Al-Maghafi, BBC, 2017	Yes – literary Multimodal text (television series)
Digital opinion article	Kishor Napier-Ramandec, <i>Crikey</i> , 21 December 2018	No – non-literary Written/multimodal text (media)
Special report article	<i>The Economist</i> , 2014	No – non-literary Written, spoken & multimodal texts (media)
News feature article	John Naughton, <i>The Guardian</i> , 2019	
Blog post	Jenny Abamu, www.edsurge.com , 2017	

8.1

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE ISSUE OF 'MASS SURVEILLANCE'

media text

a news media text, as well as a text that is produced or distributed using mass media or new media technologies

contention

a proposition that is maintained in an argument

classifier

a word used with a noun to 'classify' it, by determining how it should be measured or counted

mass surveillance

surveillance of an entire population, or a large section of the population, without targeting individuals. Data and metadata are typically collected by an institution (e.g. government) from telecommunications and travel networks

In the **media text** study for this chapter we explore the issue of 'mass surveillance'. You may have chosen this yourself, or your teacher may have selected it. If you are using this chapter to guide your study of a different issue, you should still be able to apply the information and activities to your own media study. Either way, you will have to:

1. *analyse* how a contentious issue has been *represented* in a range of media texts, and think critically about the public 'conversation' that has played out between them
2. *create* a persuasive speech that *positions* an audience to agree with a **contention** about this issue, adopt your perspective and align with your values, attitudes and beliefs (see Chapter 9 for closer guidance on creating your persuasive speech).

Meanings and concepts related to 'mass surveillance'

Let's establish the meaning of the two words, 'mass' and 'surveillance', and consider their related concepts. The word 'surveillance' is an abstract noun and as a single word, its meaning is conceptual. Some useful concepts related to surveillance are security, privacy and control.

In order to name a narrower issue than 'surveillance' we added the word 'mass'— involving or affecting a 'large number or amount' of something, including people—as a **classifier**, to describe the issue covered in this chapter: **mass surveillance**.

The word 'surveillance' is derived from the Latin word *vigilare*, meaning 'to keep watch'. When you add *sur*, which means 'over' or 'above', you see that 'surveillance' effectively means 'to watch over'.

8.1a Your turn

Surveillance and related concepts

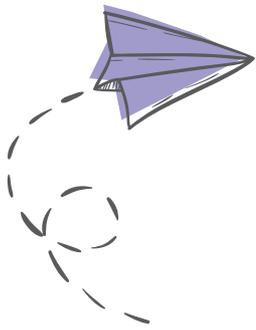
There are positive and negative connotations to the idea of being watched over.

- 1 Brainstorm 2–3 situations where the word 'surveillance' would have *positive* connotations.

- 2 Brainstorm 2–3 situations where the word 'surveillance' would have *negative* connotations.

- 3 In your notebook or on a computer, create a concept map with 'mass surveillance' written in the centre. Add words, lines and symbols to your concept map, showing how you see them to be linked. Aim to include at least the following terms relating to this issue: power, security, safety, privacy, control, ethics, technologies, rights, freedom, tracking, profiling, monitoring, recording.





Surveillance: Perspectives and world views

We listed 'security', 'privacy' and 'control' as concepts strongly related to 'surveillance', and you may have identified more in *Your turn 8.1a*. We've explained the need for more information to be provided about places and situations in order to pinpoint specific current issues. However, you should also consider that audiences have pre-existing world views that influence the way they think about issues, and the way a media article is conceptually framed can lead us to take a position on an issue. This is also true of the journalists, creators and editors who make the media texts – their perspectives are shaped by their attitudes, values and beliefs, and their position is underpinned by a range of cultural assumptions.

As you progress further into your study of media reporting of mass surveillance, we have provided *Your turn* opportunities for you to reflect on your own perspectives. You may discover that your initial position on mass surveillance is influenced as much by your world view and your abstract ideas about surveillance generally as it is by your knowledge of the issue. You may also discover as you progress through the study that your world view changes a little, as knowledge of a contentious issue in the real world can often lead you to reconsider old perspectives.

Freedom versus happiness

Arguments about surveillance often make reference to privacy and safety, usually with the two options framed as a **binary opposition**: you can either have one, or the other. Although these are not actually 'binary' oppositions (like on/off or up/down), language can be employed by the writer or speaker to position audiences to see them that way. Consider this quote from the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell, paying close attention to the way Orwell uses the **preposition** 'between':

The choice for mankind lies between freedom and happiness and for the great bulk of mankind, happiness is better.

By only offering two options for the reader, and then saying the choice is between them, an opposition is subtly created. Look out for language tricks like this in media articles, especially those purporting to be objective or 'unbiased' news reports.



binary opposition
construction of two terms or concepts as opposite in meaning, and mutually exclusive

preposition
a word that is used in front of a noun or pronoun to show place, time, direction or method

8.1b Your turn

Establish your prior knowledge and initial perspectives

1 Ensure you know the meaning of the following key terms by writing their definitions using either your prior knowledge or a reference source:

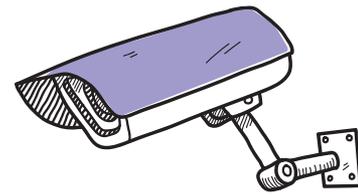
a Metadata:

b Encryption:

c Malware:

d Phishing:

e Third party:



f Cyber surveillance:

g Data mining:

2 Discuss the following propositions with a peer or in a class discussion forum and decide whether you agree or disagree with each.

PROPOSITION	AGREE/DISAGREE?
If you use social media, you should always be prepared for your private information to be leaked.	
Australian school students are generally not monitored by mass surveillance systems.	
The choice between 'freedom' and 'happiness', proposed by Orwell, is a false dichotomy.	
There is nothing wrong with being monitored – if you have nothing to hide, then you have nothing to fear.	
It's worth sacrificing privacy to have increased safety and security.	
We give away too much of our personal data.	
Privacy is an unnecessary social construct that we could do without.	

3 Choose one of the propositions above, and write a few lines of explanation to justify your position:

Social issues and current affairs related to 'mass surveillance'

We'll be honest with you – this topic asks a lot. First, you have to *identify* a range of media texts (we suggest three to five) from the past 12 months that present perspectives on a contentious issue. Maybe you have a teacher who has done this for you, but the rest of the process is down to you! You have to learn enough about the issue via research or media sources to be able to *evaluate* the perspectives represented. Then you must *analyse* the structural and cultural elements of their language use, as well as *critically engage* with their messages. Before you can come up with your own response you'll have to *compare/contrast* the way different texts have represented the issue, as well as *recall* how to structure an argument and *consider* how to effectively phrase and sequence your own spoken arguments about the issue. Phew!



Build your 'field' knowledge about mass surveillance

Before you can join a public conversation about an issue, you have to learn enough about the subject matter (or 'field') so that you know what you're talking about and can understand the messages of others. This means knowing a range of:

- relevant vocabulary (e.g. cyber security, metadata)
- significant people, places and events (e.g. ASIO, Ecuadorian embassy)
- context-specific factors (e.g. national and international laws).

When considering mass surveillance as a social issue, a range of more specific public debates might arise. These include debates about:

- *data security* – who should have access to the things you say and write down?
- *data retention* – how much of our data/metadata is collected, and by whom?
- *security cameras and other recording devices* – where should they be placed and what should they record?
- *monitoring* – how do we decide who to 'target' with surveillance, and for how long is it reasonable to watch them?
- *privacy* – to what extent do we control information about ourselves that is available in various print and digital records?

The spoken response you deliver for the assessment task in this unit might focus on a specific angle relating to mass surveillance, such as those listed above, or it might take a broader view of how the issue is represented. If you are studying a different issue from mass surveillance, search online to identify and research key debates relevant to your own focus.

Focus on media from the past 12 months

You must keep in mind that this study requires you to select media texts *from the past 12 months* to analyse. The reason for this is the way contextual factors relating to an issue are always changing. Consider this quote from American entrepreneur and privacy advocate Michael Fertik, who was interviewed by the American TV network CBS News:

Source 1 Media extract

The dossier on each of us that is easily aggregated, digitally, is now, probably, say, let's call it ten pages. Four years ago it was two pages. In four or five years it's going to be 100 pages. Why? Because the amount of data that's being collected about each of us every day proliferates.

'The internet and our right to privacy', CBS News, 6 February 2011

In this source from 2011, an interviewed expert talks about what the world will be like in 'four or five years'. That means he was making predictions about what life would be like in 2015–2016. We're well past that time now, and as interesting as this news source is, we'd need a much more current source to learn about current issues relating to mass surveillance. In this chapter we provide examples of relevant media texts and use them to demonstrate critical analysis techniques – however, by the time you use this Student book, you (or your teacher) will have to source more up-to-date materials.

Source 3 contains an article from 2017, which is already out of the 12-month freshness zone. Although you'd need to access newer sources for the most up-to-date information, we find there is a benefit to exploring articles like this from earlier periods – they help us to increase our knowledge of the subject matter and be aware



of how current issues fit into ongoing conversations. Read the article and think more about messages that have ongoing relevance in *Your turn 8.1c*.

Opinion article: Introduction to the issues of data retention and privacy

The opinion article in Source 3 gives some indication of a current issue in Australian society: data retention.

This subject matter may not strike you as interesting at first. But consider one of the key questions within the personal frame: 'Can you see your own story or perspective in this text?' Your first reaction might be 'no' – maybe you've never thought about data retention laws before, and don't really care about them now! But issues relating to data retention are smaller parts of the bigger issue of mass surveillance. Consider this plea from Dr Cory Doctorow (journalist, science fiction author and blogger):

Source 2 An interview extract

We really do need kids to understand and be literate about surveillance. You know, we're in this, you know, great global conversation about social media and what Shoshana Zuboff calls 'surveillance capitalism', and kids, you know, are perfectly capable of understanding that stuff! You know, if there's anyone who understands what it means to be manipulated by people who think they have your best interests at heart, it's kids.

Extract from an interview with Cory Doctorow for the EdSurge podcast, September 2018

As you read the following article, consider the ways in which the author has used language to make his perspective clear.

Source 3 A digital opinion article

The new data retention law seriously invades our privacy – and it's time we took action

Over the past few months, Australians' civil rights have come under attack.

In April, the government's data retention law came into effect. The law requires telecommunications companies to store customer metadata for at least two years. Metadata from our phone calls, text messages, emails, and internet activity is now tracked by the government and accessible by intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

Ironically, the law came into effect only a few weeks before Australia marked Privacy Awareness Week. Alarming, it is part of a broad trend of eroding civil rights in Western democracies, most noticeably evident by the passage of the Investigatory Powers Act in the UK, and the decision to repeal the Internet Privacy Law in the US.

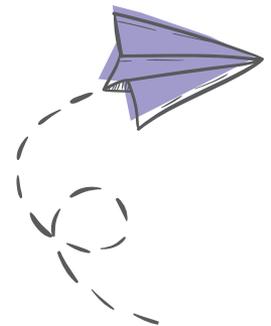
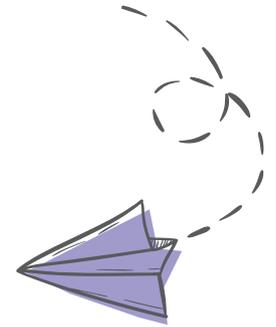
Why does it matter?

Australia's data retention law is one of the most comprehensive and intrusive data collection schemes in the western world. There are several reasons why Australians should challenge this law.

First, it undermines the democratic principles on which Australia was founded. It gravely harms individuals' right to privacy, anonymity, and protection from having their personal information collected.

The Australian Privacy Principles define limited conditions under which the collection of personal information is permissible. It says personal information must be collected by 'fair' means.

(Continues on next page)



Despite a recent ruling by the Federal Court, which determined that our metadata does not constitute 'personal information', we should consider whether sweeping collection of all of Australian citizenry's metadata is consistent with our right to privacy.

Second, metadata – data about data – can be highly revealing and provide a comprehensive depiction of our daily activities, communications and movements.

As detailed here, metadata is broad in scope and can tell more about us than the actual content of our communications. Therefore, claims that the data retention law does not seriously compromise our privacy should be considered as naïve, ill-informed, or dishonest.

Third, the law is justified by the need to protect Australians from terrorist acts. However, despite the government's warnings, the risk of getting hurt in a terrorist attack in Australia has been historically, and is today, extremely low.

To date, the government has not presented any concrete empirical evidence to indicate that this risk has substantially changed. Democracies such as France, Germany and Israel – which face more severe terrorist threats than Australia – have not legalised mass data collection and instead rely on more targeted means to combat terrorism that do not jeopardise their democratic foundations.

Fourth, the data retention law is unlikely to achieve its stated objective and thwart serious terrorist activities. There are a range of widely-accessible technologies that can be used to circumvent the government's surveillance regime. Some of them have previously been outlined by the now-prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull.

Therefore, in addition to damaging our civil rights, the law's second lasting legacy is likely to be its contribution to increasing the budgetary debt by approximately A\$740 million over the next ten years.

How can the law be challenged?

There are several things we can do to challenge the law. For example, there are technologies that we can start using today to increase our online privacy.

A full review of all available options is beyond the scope of this article, but here are three effective ones.

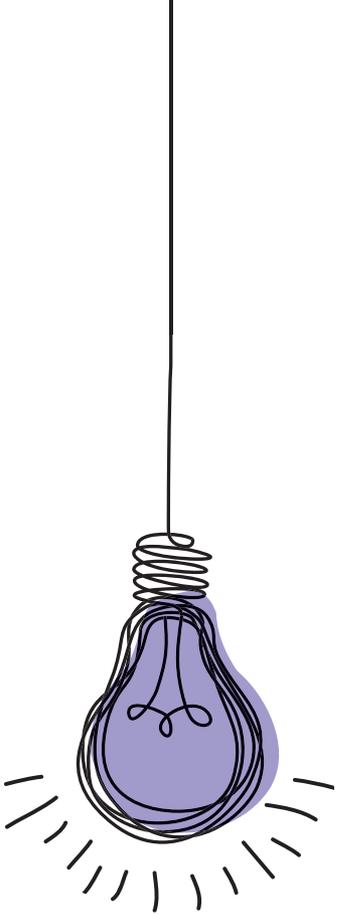
- 1 Virtual private networks (VPNs) can hide browsing information from internet service providers. Aptly, April 13, the day the data retention law came into effect, has been declared the Australian 'get a VPN day'.
- 2 Tor – The Onion Router is free software that can help protect the anonymity of its users and conceal their internet activity from surveillance and analysis.
- 3 Encrypted messaging applications – unprotected applications can be easily tracked. Consequently, applications such as Signal and Telegram that offer data encryption solutions have been growing in popularity.

Australian citizens have the privilege of electing their representatives. An effective way to oppose continuing state surveillance is to vote for candidates whose views truly reflect the democratic principles that underpin modern Australian society.

The Australian public needs to have an honest, critical and open debate about the law and its social and ethical ramifications. The absence of such a debate is dangerous. The institutional accumulation of power is a slippery slope – once gained, power is not easily given up by institutions.

And the political climate in Australia is ripe for further deterioration of civil rights, as evident in the government's continued efforts to increase its regulation of the internet. Therefore, it is important to sound a clear and public voice that opposes such steps.

Finally, we need to call out our elected representatives when they make logically muddled claims. In a speech to parliament this week Tuesday, Turnbull said:



The rights and protections of the vast overwhelming majority of Australians must outweigh the rights of those who will do them harm.

The data retention law is a distortion of the logic embedded in this statement because it indiscriminately targets all Australians. We must not allow the pernicious intent of a handful of terrorists to be used as an excuse to harm the rights of all Australians and change the fabric of our society.

Uri Gal, *The Conversation*, 16 June 2017

Applying reading frames to personally respond to a media text

As with any text, you can use the four frames outlined in Chapter 1 to develop your interpretation of a media text. We find that, especially when starting a new topic, it is best to start with the personal frame.

8.1c Your turn

Apply different frames to explore meaning in a media text

Use these questions to practise thinking about a media text by using various response frames. If you ever find yourself stuck on a media text and unsure what to analyse, you can return to the four response frames to make sure you're looking at the text from all possible angles.

Hold up the personal frame and answer the following questions.

- 1 How did this text make you *feel*? Tick all that apply:
 - Uneasy
 - Confused
 - Angry
 - Alarmed
 - Interested
 - Surprised
 - Bored
 - Other: _____
- 2 If you use social media, are you confident that you know how much of your personal information (e.g. birthday, location, age, school, workplace, religious or political views) is available for public view and data mining? Elaborate your answer with a *position* on how carefully you think people should monitor their privacy settings.

Hold up the structural frame and answer the following questions.

- 3 How have subheadings been used to organise the article and draw the reader's attention?
- 4 Explain one example of numbered lists being used to structure the arguments within the article in Source 3.



5 How have hyperlinks been used to connect with existing 'conversations' about this issue?

6 Who are the main people, places and things connected to the issue?

7 Locate two examples of evaluative language being used to express judgment and explain how they position the reader to think about the subject matter. Refer to the evaluative language template on page 323 (Chapter 14) for guidance.

Hold up the cultural frame and answer the following questions.



8 Who is the author of the text and why have they published it on this website?

9 Do the actions suggested in this article seem conservative or controversial? Explain your answer with reference to the intended audience of the website.

Hold up the critical frame and answer the following questions.



10 Whose perspectives have been included or foregrounded in this article?

11 What actions does this text invite us to take, and how likely are you to take them?

Media texts: Impact of genre on reader positioning

In this study you are asked to focus on media texts. The types of texts that appear in the media belong to a range of genre families. Here are a few typical examples:

- *News stories* belong to the *story* family. Their social purpose is to report events, provide relevant factual details and represent multiple sides of a story.
- *Opinion* and *editorial* texts belong to the *argument* family. Their social purpose is to provide a position on an issue by offering at least one clear contention about a current issue.
- *Feature articles/stories* draw on a range of genre traditions, and are a kind of *hybrid genre*. Their social purpose is to provide depth to stories and arguments by illuminating the lived human experience of an issue.

Take care to examine how different kinds of media texts will draw on different aesthetic features and rhetorical devices to position readers. For example, if a text presents itself as a 'news story', then the genre positions you to receive facts, but if it is found to provide an overly subjective view of the issue, then you will want to critique that. If an opinion is offered that downplays or subverts oppositional views, you'll want to critique that too.

Media texts: Modes and mediums

Texts tend to get categorised as 'media' texts if their content is drawn from journalistic contexts (i.e. news media texts), or if they have been produced using broadcast technologies (i.e. transmitted via radio, television or the internet). This means media texts can utilise a range of mediums. For example:

- texts containing *news media content* can appear in newspapers, television programs, radio segments and websites
- *mass media* and *new media technologies* can be used to produce/distribute both literary and journalistic texts.

The *English General Senior Syllabus* gives an indication of the range of texts that can be considered as 'media texts' in this unit. They include:

news, television programs, online publications, documentaries, films, social media, graphic texts, websites, interviews with public figures, music/lyrics, poetry. (p.27)

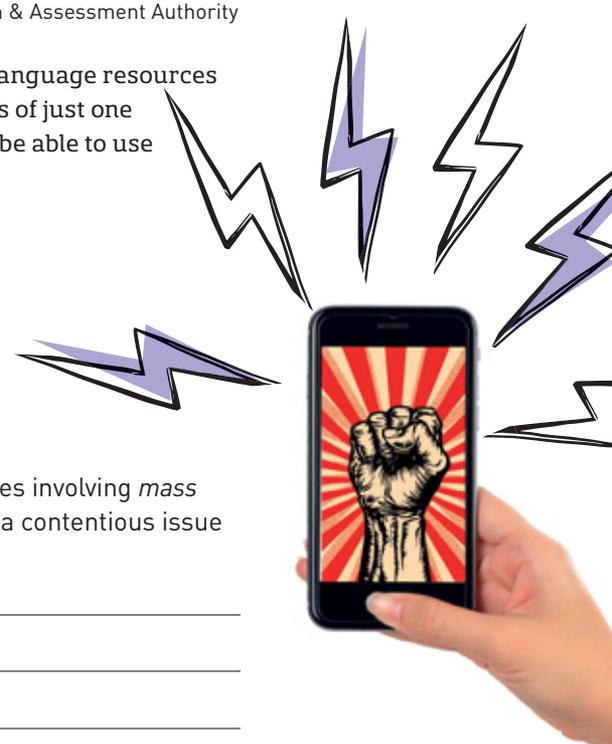
Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

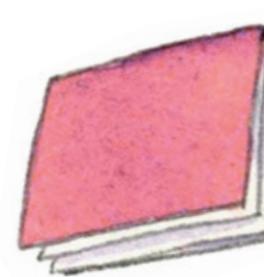
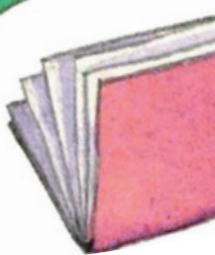
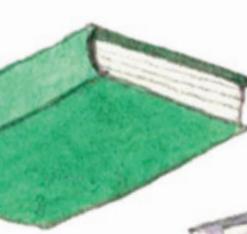
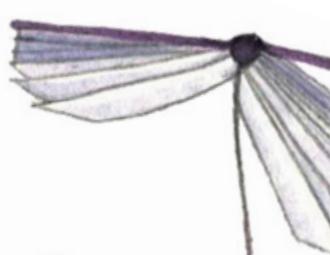
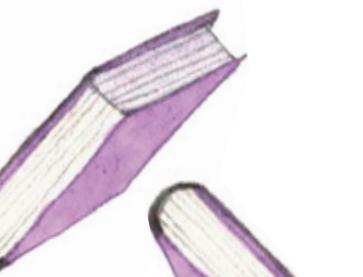
Media texts can be produced in all language modes and so use various language resources to achieve their purposes. They can be *monomodal* and have the affordances of just one language mode to make meaning (e.g. radio), or they can be *multimodal* and be able to use multiple layers of representational meaning (e.g. television).

8.1d Your turn

Initial search for current issues in the media

Search local, national and international news sites to discover current issues involving *mass surveillance*. List at least two texts (from anywhere in the world) relating to a contentious issue that has been reported in the past 12 months.





Media study guide

The table below is a media study guide. This guide provides questions based on the 'Language in Use model' (see Chapter 1), encouraging systematic analysis and critical evaluation of media texts. You can use this guide with any media text, including ones that you source independently.

Questions to guide analysis of Language in Use in media texts

QUESTIONS TO PROBE THE TEXT
<p>Purpose and genre</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 What is the text's main purpose? Is it constructed as a 'story' or an 'argument' about a current issue? 2 What is the genre? Does the text consist of a combination of genres? 3 How is the text structured (think about introduction, body and conclusion)?
<p>Subject matter</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 What is the text about? What is the main issue explored? 2 Has information provided in the text been fact checked? Is it possible for you to fact check the details? 3 What information/representations have been foregrounded (given emphasis)? 4 What information/representations have been omitted, silenced or marginalised? 5 What function do hyperlinks perform (e.g. to link to more detailed information or challenges to the position; to provide informal citations for the information presented)?
<p>Roles and relationships</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Who is the author/creator of the text? 2 What do you know about them? Are they reliable? Do they have known biases? 3 Who is the intended audience? How can you tell (e.g. language used, or publication demographic)? 4 Whose voices and perspectives do you get to hear in the text? Whose are omitted, silenced or marginalised? 5 What relationship does the text set up in terms of power, distance and alignment of values? Consider not just relationships between the author/creator and their intended audience, but also the relationship established between the audience and the various people given voice in the text.
<p>Mode and medium</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Is this text mainly written, spoken, visual or some combination of these? 2 How was the text published/distributed (e.g. via print or online newspaper, television, radio, the internet)?
<p>Language resources</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Who are the main people, places and things connected to the issue? What are they doing, thinking, feeling, etc.? Where, when, how, why? 2 What types of sentences are used: statements, questions, commands? 3 What evaluative language (positive and negative words and phrases) are used to express emotions, make judgments and communicate appreciations? This might include the use of similes and metaphors. 4 Is there evidence of the evaluations being intensified or softened? 5 Is concession used (in conjunction with contrasting conjunctions)? 6 How does quoting occur (e.g. is it direct, indirect, paraphrased)? What quoting verbs are used and do these enhance or detract from the authority of those quoted? 7 What element (e.g. participants: who or what; verbs: what's happening; circumstances of time, place, reason) is placed first in the text, in paragraphs and in sentences? 8 Are conjunctions used to compare, contrast or add information?

QUESTIONS TO PROBE THE TEXT

Images (photographs, videos, diagrams, maps)

- 1 If it is a still/static image, how is it organised (e.g. ideal/real, given/new, centre/margins)?
- 2 If it is a moving image, what are the effects of camera movement and editing?
- 3 What is depicted in the image?
- 4 What body language (gesture, facial expression, stance) is evident in the human figures?
- 5 How are vectors used to draw the eye and suggest movement?
- 6 Are people in the image looking at or away from the viewer?
- 7 What is the shot type (e.g. close-up, long shot)? How does this position the viewer?
- 8 What is in and out of focus?
- 9 What does the angle (e.g. high, low, eye-level) suggest about power relationships?
- 10 How are colours used? What tone do they evoke (e.g. warmth, coolness, distance)?
- 11 How is lighting used? What atmosphere does this evoke?
- 12 If the image is an element of a mostly written text, where have images in the text been placed? Does this placement seem to be meaningful?

The media study guide and the four response frames

The question categories in the media study guide can be thought of as a way to structure your text analysis when looking through the structural, cultural and critical response frames.

Personal frame	Pre- and post-analysis, use this frame to consider how you relate to the text and what you want to do with it.
Structural frame	Closely aligns with questions about 'Language resources' and 'Images' in the media study guide.
Cultural frame	Closely align with questions about 'Purpose and genre' and 'Subject matter' in the media study guide.
Critical frame	



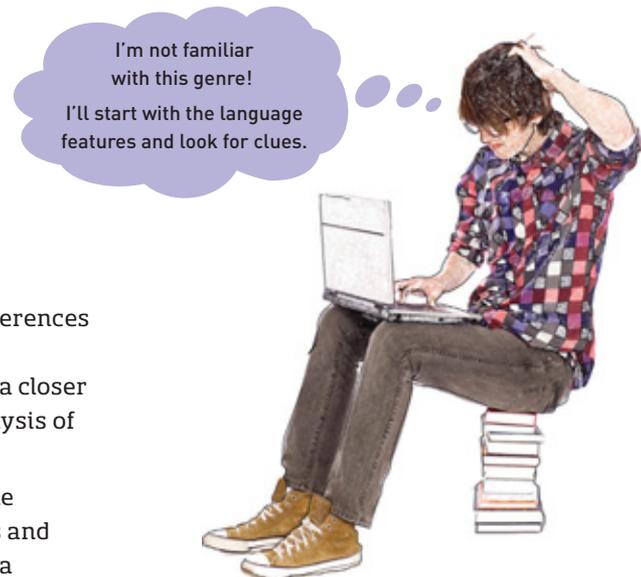
So ... now that you have all the tools and frameworks for media analysis, what next? It can be hard to decide where to start with a new text. Two ways you can approach it are:

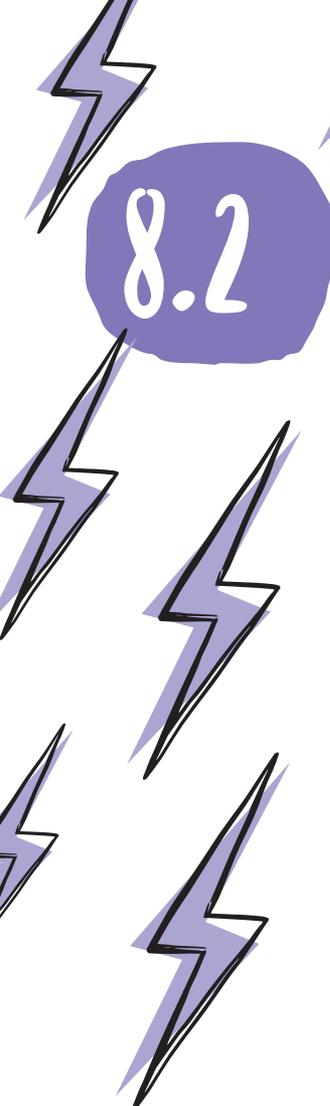
- *Option 1:* Start with an analysis of the way meaning-making resources (e.g. language and visuals) are used, then use that close analysis of the text to make inferences about the context (e.g. purpose, genre, subject matter, roles and relationships),

or

- *Option 2:* Start with your inferences and then seek to verify and substantiate them through a closer reading of the text and analysis of its language features.

Whichever way you tackle the task, justifying your ideas and opinions with hard evidence is a discipline you should develop, not just as a student, but also as an active and informed citizen.





8.2

EXAMINING MEDIA TEXTS

In section 8.1 you considered the meaning of 'mass surveillance', the nature of media texts and tools for systematically analysing them. In this section we examine two full media texts – one television episode from screen media (an investigative news report) and one opinion article from a news website – and model different approaches to close analysis with each of them. We then examine extracts from a range of media sources to show some of the ways that stories can be used to construct persuasive arguments and to position audiences.

Depth study: Investigative news report from a television program

The first media text we will analyse in depth is a feature-length news investigation, reported by Nawal Al-Maghafi. The episode was produced for television by the BBC, first screening in the UK on 7 July 2017, and presented on air in Australia on 31 July 2017 by Sarah Ferguson for the ABC television program *Four Corners*. On their website, the social purpose of journalism presented on *Four Corners* is made clear:

Since 1961, *Four Corners* has been exposing scandals, triggering inquiries, firing debate and confronting taboos. We exist to serve the public interest and you.

The BBC episode 'Weapons of mass surveillance' meets this brief, as it seeks to expose ways that mass surveillance is being used in various countries and to initiate debate about the role played by weapons manufacturers in the UK in exporting technologies that could be used against them later.

Critical analysis of television journalism

This exploration of the investigative news report 'Weapons of mass surveillance' will model an approach to using the media study guide that undertakes text analysis for a specific aspect of knowledge application: interpreting how *concepts*, *identities*, *times* and *places* have been represented in the text. This relates to Objective 3 in the syllabus.

After establishing an initial personal response, questions from the media study guide are used to guide structural, cultural and critical analysis of the texts. This is followed by a brief critical evaluation.

Example of an initial personal response to the text

- *Before watching (Example response):* The title of the episode reminds me of the phrase 'weapons of mass destruction'. This phrase became popular when George W. Bush used it in relation to military operations and the Iraq war. The phrase has negative connotations and got me wondering why mass surveillance would be described as a weapon. I was reluctant to watch the episode at first, because I don't usually watch long news items – they seem boring.
- *After watching (Example response):* I was glad that this episode was structured like an unfolding story, with the journalist acting like a storyteller. The people interviewed were interesting and I trust their perspectives because they seem to have expert knowledge. It was uncomfortable at first to read subtitles, although I got used to it – sometimes I wanted to replay sections to re-read them and I'll probably have to re-watch those in my own time. The graphics that introduced new cities and countries in the story helped me to stay interested by breaking the episode up and also because I didn't know all of those place names, so it was useful to see them written on the screen. I'm not sure what I'm going to say to respond to this text because I don't know much about how the issues presented impact people in Australia.



Source 4 A still from the television movie *Weapons of mass surveillance* from the BBC report of the same name

Source 5 A transcript of the introductory segment of an investigative news report, 'Weapons of mass surveillance'

Nawal Al-Maghafi (reporter): This is a film about a world in which surveillance has no limits, and what can happen when it's in the hands of repressive governments.

It used to be 'walls have ears'. Now it's 'smartphones have ears'.

Al-Maghafi: This is the story of how British technology may have helped silence a generation in the Arab world.

For each and every case where someone is silenced or ends up in prison with the help of EU-made technology, I think is unacceptable.

Our investigation shows how Britain's leading weapons manufacturer has profited from exporting sophisticated, officially classified equipment.

Any country willing to write a pay cheque to the right party can do this sort of surveillance. But nobody wants to admit it.

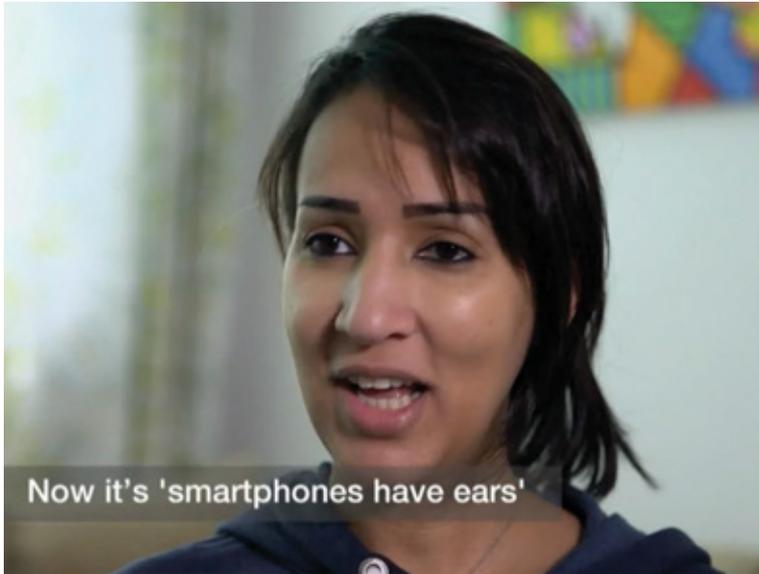
We reveal that some of this equipment is so powerful that foreign governments who've bought it have the capability of using it against the UK and its allies, threatening national security.

Representation of concepts

(Example response): In relation to mass surveillance, a dominant concept in the episode is national security. This use of language in this concept mirrors mass surveillance by providing the same pattern: abstract nouns 'surveillance' and 'security' are classified as 'mass' and 'national' respectively. Doing this not only connects the ideas of surveillance and security, but also the idea of mass with the national population, or 'the masses'. The belief that national security justifies mass surveillance, however, is undermined throughout the episode by reporting examples of mass surveillance being used for government control and oppression of their own citizens. The concept of control in this episode is linked in this way to concepts with negative meanings such as suppression and persecution.

Representation of identities

One of the *stylistic features* of journalistic texts is that they tend to contain multiple voices, either through direct quotes or interview footage, or through reporting of a perspective obtained from some other primary source. (*Example response*): The television episode 'Weapons of mass surveillance' opens with a montage of perspectives that is transcribed in Source 5. The introductory statements by BBC journalist Nawal Al-Maghafi are cut together with footage of interviews with various sources to establish that multiple perspectives have informed the investigation and subsequent report.



Source 6 Saudi activist Manal Al-Sharif being interviewed in the BBC report 'Weapons of mass surveillance'

There are several identities in this episode, including the reporter, people interviewed formally (named and anonymous sources), people interviewed in the field during the investigation, organisations (e.g. BAE) and national leaders (e.g. Ben Ali). The personal identities of people interviewed in the story are usually communicated before we hear their perspective, except for those who have interview sections quoted in the introduction of the episode. By placing these interview clips *before* the identities of the sources are introduced, the reporter is representing their messages as significant, regardless of the reputation of the person who spoke them.

In *Your turn 8.2a* you should take time to analyse the episode further to explore ways that spoken and visual language are used to establish the credibility of various perspectives.

Source 7 A transcript of the conclusion of the episode, 'Weapons of mass surveillance'

Some argue there could still be a justification for selling these kinds of weapons.

[cut to scene showing the reporter interviewing *Maj-Gen Jonathan Shaw*]

I would imagine the consideration that plays on people's minds is not so much the economic advantage for weapons like this; it's that the security of the state we're talking to is so closely linked to ours, or they are tracking people who are a direct threat to Britain and we need their assistance.

But even at the expense of them not upholding the same values that we hold here in the UK?

It's a trade-off. None of these countries have the same ethical or moral code as we do in Britain, but we still do it. Every country therefore involves some form of compromise, some form of judgment about how those tools are going to be used.

[end interview scene]

No-one in the British government would speak to the BBC about the findings of this film. In a statement the Department for International Trade said:

The government takes its defence export responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust export control regimes in the world. All export licence applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against strict criteria taking

account of all relevant factors at the time of the application, including human rights considerations.

One of the few European politicians prepared to discuss the export of surveillance technology is the Dutch MEP Marietje Schakke.

[cut to footage of interview response from *Marietje Schakke*]

For each and every case where someone is silenced or ends up in prison with the help of EU-made technologies, I think it is unacceptable. The fact that these companies are commercial players, are developing these highly sophisticated technologies that could have a deep impact on our national security, on people's lives et cetera, requires us to look again at what kind of restrictions may be needed, what kind of transparency and accountability is needed in this market, before it turns against our own interests and our own principles.

During the making of this film we met nearly a dozen insiders from BAE, the government and the intelligence community. They're all bound by legal restrictions but one of them agreed to have his words spoken by an actor:

At the government level, there are holes and loops in the export licence system that no-one seems in a hurry to shut. This is partly ignorance. But also companies take advantage of government policies. Ultimately you have no control over how the countries that buy this stuff use the kit.

[cut to dramatic enactment of the reporter walking down an empty street at night]

In this film we show that a British company is selling cyber surveillance equipment to oppressive governments in the Middle East. In addition, by exporting its decryption facility BAE is giving these governments the potential to turn the same secret and invasive technology against Britain itself. It may be time to look more closely at the new kinds of weapons that Britain is selling.

In the section of the episode transcribed in Source 7, interview comments from Marietje Schakke and Maj-Gen Jonathan Shaw 'voice' perspectives that function as some of 'the last words' on the matter. The placement of these world views positions them as a significant part of the conclusion of the episode.

Reporter Nawal Al-Maghafi can be assumed to be the interviewer for all the interview scenes in the episode. However, she only appears in situ in a few scenes. These include the outset of the report in Beirut, with Mohammed Maskati learning how easy it is to track her using her phone; encountering a security guard in the field at BAE; and the footage of her interview at the conclusion of the episode

Representation of times and places

The episode uses visual language in segment title screens to indicate significant places and uses discussion of the context of recent times in those places to structure the episode. The perspectives of some participants are represented as relevant to a specific time and place when they are confined to that segment; however, when a source is quoted multiple times throughout the episode, we are positioned to see their perspectives as relevant to understanding the issue more broadly.

In *Your turn 8.2a* there are questions to prompt your further analysis of the ways times and places are represented in the episode to create meaning.



- 2 Identify the names and reputations of all the people interviewed in the episode. Construct a table like the one below in your notebook or on a computer to gather notes about how their interview responses have been used to position the audience.

PERSON	REPUTATION (ESTABLISHES AUTHORITY)	NOTABLE CONTENTION	KEY QUOTE	VISUAL REPRESENTATION – MEANING/CONNOTATIONS

- 3 a How has the reporter represented the timeline of events in this story?

- b What places or points in time are you invited to believe are significant in relation to the issue of mass cyber surveillance?

- c What distinct locations (identifiable geographical spaces) or eras (identifiable historical periods) are proposed as warranting our attention?

- d Explain how two or more events have been presented chronologically to create meaning.

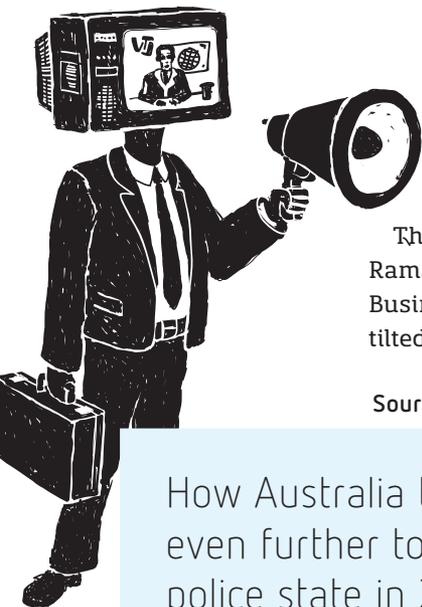
- e Explain how an event has been presented out of chronological order to create meaning.

Responding to a contention

- 4 Identify a contention in the text that you strongly agree or disagree with. Note it down and explain your perspective.

Conversing

- 5 What did this text get you thinking about? If you could have a conversation with reporter Nawal Al-Maghafi, what would you say about her report? In your notebook or on a computer, write a half-page letter to the reporter, or to any other person interviewed in this text, telling them your views or asking them questions about mass surveillance.



Depth study: Opinion article from a news website

The next media text for analysis in this study is an opinion article written by Kishor Napier-Raman for the news website *Crikey*. The website is organised in seven sections: Politics, Business, Media, State politics, Features, Culture, World. This article is titled 'How Australia tilted even further towards police state in 2018' and appears in the Politics section of the site.

Source 8 A digital opinion article

How Australia tilted even further towards police state in 2018

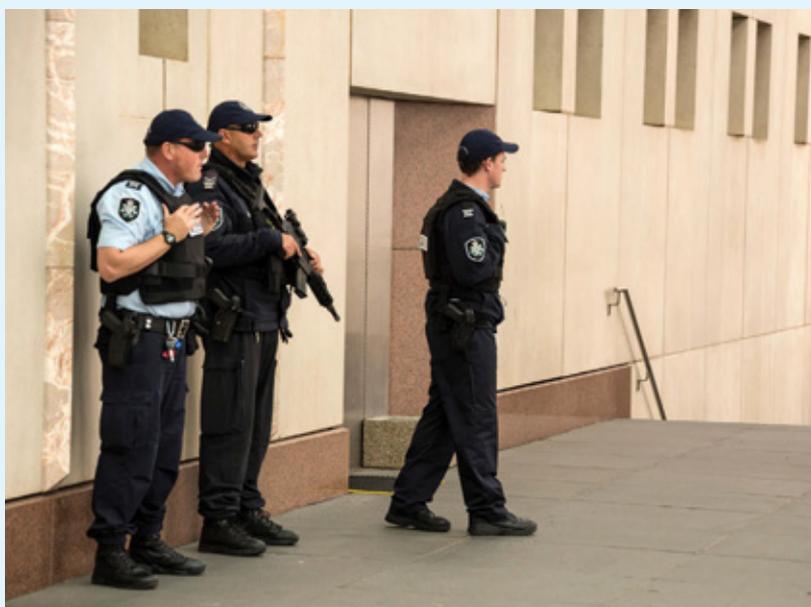
2018 saw sweeping surveillance and security laws push Australia significantly down the path to authoritarianism.

On the chaotic final sitting day of parliament a fortnight ago, the Morrison government got its wish. It pushed through a broad, sweeping law that would give state security agencies power to read people's encrypted messages, despite serious reservations from the tech industry, and some occasional, muted noises of discomfort from Labor.

The encryption laws represent the latest piece of Australia's post-9/11 legislative puzzle. In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, western nations scrambled to deal with the spectre of terrorism, drawing up new laws on the fly and expanding the powers of state security agencies. But since then, such expansive national security laws have become the new normal in Australia, leading to a steady erosion of civil liberties.

A world leader

'There's been a massive amount of legislation passed that prior to then would have been unthinkable',



Pauline Wright, President of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties says. 'There have been incursions into freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of movement, right to protest, all basic legal rights that underpin our democracy'.

Wright believes Australia has gone further than other western nations, not only enacting more national security laws, but also enacting far more stringent ones.

According to George Williams, dean of law at the University of New South Wales, Australia has enacted over 50 anti-terror laws since 2001. In a 2016 survey of the legislative landscape, Williams found there were 350 Commonwealth, state and territory laws which arguably

infringed democratic rights and freedoms.

2018 has been something of a bumper year for restricting civil liberties. In the same week that the encryption bill passed, the government also legislated to make it easier for state governments to summon the defence force on the streets. In June, the government passed a major overhaul of the laws around espionage and foreign interference, in response to fears about Beijing's growing influence in Australian politics, which could criminalise journalists and charities for doing their job.

Civil liberties are also being increasingly overlooked at a state level. In July, NSW passed

regulations giving the government broad power to disperse protests, which one academic described as akin to Bjelke-Petersen era Queensland. Meanwhile, police strip searches doubled in the state between 2016 and 2017, triggering a law reform commission inquiry.

Other restrictive laws have been tabled but are yet to pass. The government plans to give police powers to request identification and issue move-on directions in airports. Also on the cards is a push to make it easier to strip convicted terrorists of their citizenship. Under the government's proposed amendments, introduced last month, the minister need only be 'reasonably satisfied' that a person is a dual citizen. The proposal will also remove the requirement that a person be convicted for a sentence of six years or more.

Leaving the public in the dark

As the national security state steadily expands, Australia's lack of safeguards to protect civil liberties becomes increasingly apparent.

Australia is the only democratic country without some kind of national human rights law, such as a bill or charter of rights. According to Wright, the lack of a charter means governments have much freer rein to pass laws encroaching on civil liberties, while robustness of the public debate around such laws is limited.

'Because we don't have the context to discuss the impacts of our legislation, there is no public debate around it, and parliamentarians can pass laws that would previously be unthinkable without public opprobrium,' she says.

According to Williams, a key characteristic of Australia's post-9/11 national security legislation is the way it rushed through parliament with limited oversight, leaving the public blindsided.

'Too often, parliamentary inquiries have been given inadequate time to call for submissions, hold hearings and deliver considered reports,' Williams wrote in 2011.

Recent legislation is a case in point: the government was so desperate to get the encryption bill passed before Christmas that it ignored repeated warnings from the tech industry and legal bodies.

The foreign interference laws were initially tabled in December last year, with the country distracted by the marriage equality bill which passed days earlier. They were rammed through parliament in June despite numerous concerns hanging over them, because Attorney-General Christian Porter wanted them in place before the Super Saturday by-election.

Unintended consequences

When these laws are shoved through parliament with only half-baked consultation and review, they leave security agencies with vast unchecked powers well beyond the initial intention of the legislation, which Wright says would leave the general public 'horrified'.

The encryption laws, designed to target terrorism, could allow security agencies to trick suspects into giving up access to their private messages, effectively robbing them of the privilege against self-incrimination, and also give law enforcement the ability to circumvent the need to obtain a warrant.

Meanwhile, the foreign interference legislation meant to

curb Beijing's influence, could have a severe chilling effect on journalism. Despite amendments tampering some of the original bill's more draconian elements, journalists could still face up to 20 years imprisonment for dealing with or publishing certain types of classified information.

Similarly, if passed, the citizenship laws may allow the government to effectively render people stateless, by lowering the threshold for the minister to invoke their power to cancel citizenship. By broadening their application to all terror offences, people who unwittingly commit a terrorist offence might be caught in its net. So, for example, a person who provided financial support by donating to a charity which passed that money onto, or was somehow embroiled in, terrorism, might potentially be stripped of their citizenship.

The biggest problem with these laws is their scope creep, their capacity to be slowly pushed beyond their original purpose steadily taking the government's power into uncharted territories.

'When laws come in about one kind of offence which the public understands it becomes easier for them to be applied to other offences, because we're used to it,' Wright says.

'It's like the classic boiling frog, the temperature rises, but bit by bit we lose the ability to jump out of that water because we're half-cooked and paralysed.'

Kishor Napier-Raman, *Crikey*, 21 December 2018

Critical analysis of opinion

To undertake the next critical analysis, we have modelled using *all* relevant questions in the media study guide to systematically examine the language in use in the opinion article. This is followed by a brief critical evaluation.

Purpose and genre

- *What is the article's main purpose? (Example response):* The main purpose of the article appears to be to argue the position that 'surveillance and security laws push Australia significantly down the path to authoritarianism'.
- *What is the genre? Does the article consist of a combination of genres? How is the article structured (think about introduction, body and conclusion)? (Example response):* Typically, you would use an Exposition to make an argument, and elements of this are apparent, e.g. the article begins with a couple of paragraphs outlining the Thesis. Then, the body of the article (Argument stage) gradually develops this position, divided (using headings) into three sections:
 - Context ('A world leader')
 - Process by which security laws have been introduced ('Leaving the public in the dark') – this is in the form of the Sequential Explanation genre
 - Consequences of the laws ('Unintended consequences') – this is in the form of the Consequential Explanation genre.

This focus on explanation is captured by the headline, 'How Australia ...' Finally, the piece finishes with a call to immediate action through the use of the frog analogy in the final quotation.

Subject matter

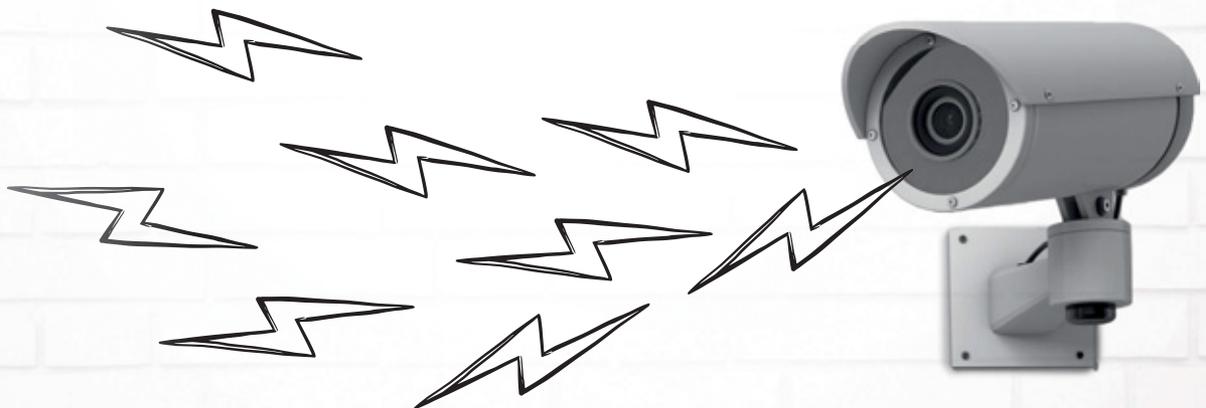
- *What is the article about? What is the main issue explored? (Example response):* The field here is national security, with this article focused on the unintended consequences of security and surveillance laws.
- *Has the information in the article been fact checked? Is it possible for you to fact check the article? (Example response):* The claims in this particular article have not been independently fact checked, although Crikey has presented their evidence in other articles. They have even acknowledged in an article 'An incomplete list of evidence that Australia is becoming a police state' (posted 12 June 2018) that the claim might sound 'absurd, the claim of a bug-eyed conspiracy theorist' – but then they go on to challenge that perception. Nevertheless, while many of the facts in the article(s) can probably be checked against other news outlets and Hansard with a bit of effort, the concept of 'police state' could be more subjective and harder to prove.
- *What information has been foregrounded (given emphasis)? (Example response):* The disadvantages of new laws have been emphasised, especially the negative effects of the rise of state power on individual freedoms.
- *What information has been omitted, silenced or marginalised? (Example response):* The benefits of the laws have been downplayed, as well as constraints on state power and safeguards for individual freedoms.
- *What function do hyperlinks perform, e.g. to link to more detailed information or challenges to the position, or to provide informal citations for the information presented? (Example response):* The hyperlinked sites provide further information and support for the views expressed in the article. Most of the links direct readers to other news sites (e.g. *The Guardian* and the ABC), but two links early in the article lead to university law review journals.

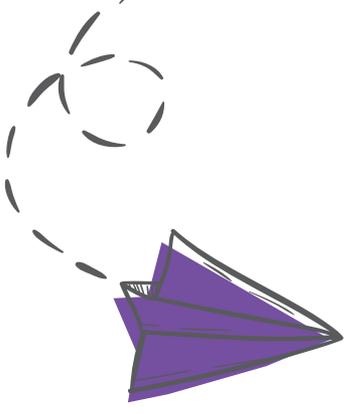
Roles and relationships

- *Who is the author/creator of the article? (Example response):* According to his publicly available LinkedIn profile, Kishor Napier-Raman is currently a journalist for *Crikey*, having previously worked as a research assistant at the Human Rights Commission after graduating from university in 2017.
- *What do you know about them? Are they reliable? Do they have known biases? (Example response):* *Crikey* is a long-running independent news site and aims (in their words) to be 'fair and open', publishing 'information that might otherwise be suppressed' (see 'About Crikey' on their main website). While they have journalists with a range of backgrounds, they do tend to support progressive causes, but not uncritically.
- *Who is the intended audience? (Example response):* Readers of *Crikey* – you must be a subscriber to have access to most articles.
- *Whose voices do you get to hear in the article? Whose are omitted, silenced or marginalised? (Example response):* Besides the journalist's voice, readers hear from Pauline Wright, the president of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties and George Williams, dean of law at the University of New South Wales. Both people (no doubt experts in their field) appear to support Napier-Raman's position – at least in the quotations included. No politicians from any party are interviewed, nor is anyone from the security forces or the tech industry.
- *What relationship does the article set up in terms of power, distance and alignment of values? (Example response):* Napier-Raman writes in an authoritative manner and both Wright and Williams are presented as credible 'witnesses', so power between the author and reader are unequal. The use of third person distances the reader from the journalist – although there is a shift to inclusive third person at the end, which closes the distance for the concluding comment. There does appear to be a sense that readers will be generally aligned with the views expressed. However, the use of lower modality (e.g. through words such as 'could' and 'potentially') does indicate that the journalist shares the value of fairness and objectivity with his readers – that is, he is not overstating his claims.

Mode and medium

- *Is this article mainly written, spoken, visual or some combination of these? (Example response):* This is a largely written text that includes a single image.
- *How was the article communicated? (Example response):* The article was originally published on the internet.





Language resources

- Except for the expert ‘witnesses’, the participants are abstract (e.g. legislation, legislative landscape, parliament, the Morrison government, security agencies, civil liberties).
- In the final paragraph, outlining consequences, modality is low (e.g. *could* allow, *may* allow, *could* still face, *might* be caught, *might potentially* be stripped).
- There is some use of concession, in the last section, in order to acknowledge an alternative position but then challenge it (e.g. ‘*Despite* amendments tampering some of the original bill’s more draconian elements, journalists *could* still face up to 20 years imprisonment ...’).
- Evaluative language is used frequently to add (mainly negative) emotional charge to the text, including through adjectives (e.g. ‘*police state*’, ‘*chaotic* final sitting day’, ‘*a broad, sweeping law*’), nouns (e.g. ‘*spectre* of terrorism’, ‘*incursions* into free speech’, ‘*erosion* of civil liberties’) and verbs (e.g. ‘*could criminalise* journalists and charities’, ‘*infringed*’).
- Grading words ‘turn up the volume’ on these evaluations (e.g. ‘*a steady* erosion of civil liberties’; ‘*a chaotic* final day’ instead of, say, a ‘*messy* final day’; ‘*sweeping* surveillance and security laws’) but sometimes turn the volume down (e.g. ‘*arguably* infringed’, ‘*occasional, muted* noises of discomfort from Labor’).
- Quotations are used by ‘expert’ witnesses throughout using terms such as ‘says’, ‘according to’ and ‘wrote’ – their believability is not questioned through quoting verbs such as ‘claims’ or ‘suggests’.
- The expertise of witnesses is established through the use of long noun groups (e.g. ‘George Williams, *dean of law at the University of New South Wales, Australia*’ – note that his qualification is provided by a post-qualifier (italicised) in an extended noun group).
- The use of the frog-in-boiling-water analogy at the end of the text reinforces the concern readers should feel.

Images (accompanying photograph)

- In the foreground, an upright, solitary, unsmiling policeman is depicted in a dark blue uniform and cap, holding a rifle. Behind him is a white wall that is out of focus. The shadow of what might be a chain wire fence is superimposed on the man and the wall.
- A long shot reveals the policeman from the knees up and creates ‘public’ social distance (i.e. the man is a stranger; we have a more formal relationship with him).
- He is looking away from the image viewer, positioning the viewer as an onlooker rather than a participant in the action. Combined with the long shot, a distant relationship is established between the viewer and the policeman (a symbol for the police state).
- Colours are muted and the colour pallet is limited (mainly dark blue and off-white).
- The policeman is centred.
- The image is placed prominently in the centre of the screen, just under the by-line.

Example of an overall evaluation

What is your immediate reaction to the article? How are readers/viewers positioned? What values are readers/viewers invited to accept? Do you accept or resist the invited reading? Why? (Example response): My immediate personal reaction was: Wow! This is a pretty scathing article and a bit scary. Overall, the article positions readers to accept that the issue of surveillance and associated laws is significant, not so much for us personally in our daily lives, but for the health of Australia as a democracy and the functioning of our civic institutions. This is achieved through the confronting image of the policeman, the focus on abstract entities, the use of a great deal of negative evaluation with the ‘volume turned up’, the quoting of prominent, well-respected authorities, and the use of an analogy at the end that warns readers to act before it’s too late – although it’s not clear what readers should do.

While prepared to accept the invited reading (with some reservations), I would like to see a representation of the issue that:

- a focused on more immediate, personal consequences of the laws, making the effects of abstract entities more concrete
- b brought in a wider range of independent voices
- c included consequences that could be conveyed with a higher degree of probability
- d included some specific actions that readers could take.

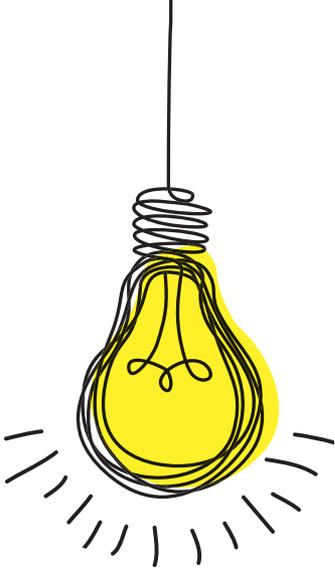
8.26 Your turn

- 1 Identify something you noticed about the opinion article that was not mentioned in the analytical commentary.

- 2 Identify something in the analytical commentary that you (or others) disagree with (give reasons).

- 3 What did this opinion article get you thinking about? If you could have a conversation with reporter Kishor Napier-Raman, what would you say about his article? In your notebook or on a computer, write a half-page letter to the reporter, or to any other person interviewed in this text, telling them your views or asking them questions about mass surveillance.





Using stories to support persuasive messages

Back in junior school, your English teachers may have encouraged you to start your persuasive texts with a brief story; executed well, it can be a way to engage your reader or listener. However, stories can also be used to illustrate your claims, making abstract ideas more concrete – and, therefore, more memorable and likely to ‘stick’ (see more about this concept in Chapter 9).

However, the use of stories in senior school needs to be discriminating and nuanced; if you choose to begin with a story, it needs to be there for a clear purpose, foreshadowing the position that you are taking and the arguments you are making.

We will now explore how different types (and lengths) of stories can be integrated into a persuasive text. All the examples are from authentic texts of various kinds. Think about how you can use some of the ideas in your own text creation.

Source 9 Extract 1: opening paragraph from a special report article, ‘Getting to know you’

In ‘Divergent’, a book series and Hollywood film, humans in a post-apocalypse Chicago are split into five different groups according to their aptitudes and values. All 16-year-olds take a test to be categorised for life. The world of online advertising is not quite as rigid as that, but gathering information about users and grouping them into sellable ‘segments’ has become big business. Data are crucial to the \$120 billion online advertising economy.

‘Getting to know you’, Special report on data, *The Economist*, 11 September 2014

In order to engage with readers, the text begins with a recount of a popular film released in 2014, the same year in which the article was published.

This is used to draw an analogy with what happens in advertising, foreshadowing the article’s central position that our internet and social media usage is tracked and commercialised.

Source 10 Extract 2: opening paragraphs from a news feature article, ‘“The goal is to automate us”: welcome to the age of surveillance capitalism’

We’re living through the most profound transformation in our information environment since Johannes Gutenberg’s invention of printing in circa 1439. And the problem with living through a revolution is that it’s impossible to take the long view of what’s happening. Hindsight is the only exact science in this business, and in that long run we’re all dead. Printing shaped and transformed societies over the next four centuries, but nobody in Mainz (Gutenberg’s home town) in, say, 1495 could have known that his technology would (among other things): fuel the Reformation and undermine the authority of the mighty Catholic church; enable the rise of what we now recognise as modern science; create unheard-of professions and industries;

These are the opening paragraphs of a review in the Business pages of *The Observer* website of a 2019 publication, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* by Shoshana Zuboff.

The first paragraph draws a parallel between life in 2019 and the town of Mainz in 1495. Notice the use of the inclusive ‘we’.

This historical account includes a list of unforeseen consequences of the invention of the printing press.

change the shape of our brains; and even recalibrate our conceptions of childhood. And yet printing did all this and more.

Why choose 1495? Because we're about the same distance into our revolution, the one kicked off by digital technology and networking. And although it's now gradually dawning on us that this really is a big deal and that epochal social and economic changes are under way, we're as clueless about where it's heading and what's driving it as the citizens of Mainz were in 1495.

John Naughton, "The goal is to automate us": welcome to the age of surveillance capitalism', *The Guardian*, 20 January 2019

The second paragraph brings the reader back to the present, explaining the relevance of these historical events to readers in 2019 in order to unsettle the readers' world views, especially the belief that we understand our world and the consequences of technological developments.

Source 11 Extract 3: opening paragraphs from a blog post, 'Why the state of surveillance in schools might lead to the next Equifax disaster'

Blaine is a student in a suburban town. He wakes up at 7 am and brushes his teeth before wolfing down a bowl of cereal. After putting on his high-top sneakers, he races out the door to the street corner, where he waits for the school bus.

As he steps on the yellow ride, Blaine panics. Did he forget his school-issued RFID badge that he has to tap so that the district can have a record of him getting picked up? Whew, it's at the bottom of his backpack.

While Blaine is a fictional student, the technology that's tracking him is real, and actually in use in some school systems, part of a growing set of tools that leave data trails about students throughout the day. These days, fingerprint scanners and cameras are regular parts of school life – on the ceilings watching students walk, and on their laptops analyzing their facial expressions. The tools could yield benefits for safety, performance development and security, but they also raise thorny security and privacy issues.

Jenny Abamu, 'Why the state of surveillance in schools might lead to the next Equifax disaster', www.edsurge.com, 19 September 2017

The 'recount' here is a fictional story designed to make the issue concrete. Notice the use of specific details throughout and the use of present tense to make the story seem more immediate.

At the same time, readers are distanced from the events by the use of third person. This is probably appropriate given the audience is not really students, but readers with a more professional interest in educational technology.

Finally, notice how this fictional story builds towards the general point the article is making. In other words, these opening paragraphs are designed so it moves from the specific to the general.

When you come to write your own persuasive text (see Chapter 9), consider how these introductions might help you design an opening that establishes a rapport with your audience, garners their attention and foreshadows the central premise of your argument.

8.3

EXPLORING TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

As we revised in Chapter 1 there is a ‘two-way influence’ when we use language and create texts:

- the *purpose, genre* and *register* influence → the selection of *language* for a text
- choices in *language* can influence → the *register* and *genre*.

When looking out for ‘connections’ between texts, you can start by trying to find them in any area of language use, and then work back and forth between text and context elements to compare the texts. Do they share a common purpose? Do they use the same medium or similar language features to convey their messages? Are they connected by a common audience, or are the authors playing a similar social role (such as experts, influencers, lobbyists or learners)? The list goes on. A process for seeking these connections and responding to them in your own spoken response is outlined in Chapter 9.

8.3 Your turn

Compare and contrast to uncover conversation points

- 1 Use the table below to gather and note down some of the contentions and perspectives that have stood out for you in the various media texts in this chapter. Use each column to systematically think about the similarities and differences between the positions put forward, before finally indicating (using a 5-star rating) the extent to which you personally *agree* with the positions put forward, and how much you personally *care* about the issue presented.
- 2 Take the text that contains positions that *you care about the most* and write 12 paragraphs in your notebook or on a computer explaining your main reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with its messages. Consider using this as a starting point for the draft of a longer spoken response in Chapter 9.



MEDIA TEXT	NOTABLE <i>CONTENTION</i> OR <i>PERSPECTIVE</i> (INCLUDE QUOTE OR OTHER TEXT INFORMATION IF POSSIBLE)	NOTABLE REPRESENTATION OF A <i>CONCEPT</i> OR <i>IDENTITY</i> (INCLUDE QUOTE OR OTHER TEXT INFORMATION IF POSSIBLE)
Source 3: Digital opinion article ‘The new data retention law seriously invades our privacy – and it’s time we took action’		
Source 5: Investigative news report ‘Weapons of mass surveillance’		
Source 8: Digital opinion article ‘How Australia tilted even further towards police state in 2018’		
Other source (from a source of your own choosing)		

Comparing contentions and perspectives: Missing voices

Other than sharing a broad issue as their subject matter, the texts in this chapter have at least one more thing in common: they all only represent *adult* voices on their respective issues. Consider their messages, and the messages you might create in response *as a young adult in contemporary Australian society*.

What message do you have about this issue?

We can't guess what messages you're likely to have about the issue you've studied, and we can't predict the topical issues that will be in the media during the 12 months leading up to your spoken response. However, if you studied mass surveillance as a broad issue in this chapter, these stimulus questions give an idea of the potential issues that can arise in this area.

- Are you convinced that government surveillance is any worse than the surveillance (or 'tracking') that we allow companies to do using our social media profile data?
- Would you support the adoption of a single 'identity card' in Australia that links all of your banking details with your medical records, taxation systems, licences and memberships?
- Is the use of biometric data to recognise us using our faces, fingerprints, retina, DNA, voice and other physiological and behavioural characteristics an inevitability in our future?
- Should citizens have the right to private phone conversations and emails that are not under any surveillance for their content *or* metadata?

FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



	MEDIA TEXTS FEATURING SIMILAR POSITIONS	MEDIA TEXTS FEATURING CONTRASTING POSITIONS	YOUR AGREEMENT LEVEL & 'CARE FACTOR'
			Agree: ★★★★★ Care: ★★★★★

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT 2: PERSUASIVE SPEAKING

Following your critical evaluation of a range of media texts for Unit 3, Topic 2, this chapter will help you prepare your own persuasive spoken response for Internal assessment 2. By now you should know enough about a contentious social issue to be able to take a stance and tell others about it. What will you say? Will your message be controversial, conservative or somewhere in between? Whatever it is, you must deliver it *persuasively*.

Focus questions:

- What are the requirements of the second internal assessment task?
- How can spoken arguments add to public conversation about a controversial social issue?
- What options does the task present for responding to media representations of the focus issue?
- How can you enhance your speaking skills to craft a successful spoken response for the assessment task?

You must check your own school task sheet for the conditions of delivering your spoken response for Internal assessment 2. We have provided guidance in creating an exposition that is either delivered live as a formal speech to an invited audience, or recorded and produced for online sharing. However, parts of this chapter may be useful to you even if your speaking task is different. We have also provided general support for producing recorded spoken responses.

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 3, Topic 2, 'Conversations about issues in texts', and Internal assessment 2 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*.

This chapter features:

- an opportunity to create a persuasive speech that is 5–8 minutes in length
- consideration of live and digital mediums of spoken word performance
- guidance in blending genre elements to suit the social purpose of your speech.

The chapter includes examples from the following spoken texts:

TEXT	SPEAKER	PRESCRIBED?
IQ2 debate speech: 'Racism is destroying the Australian Dream' (2015)	Stan Grant	No – literary Spoken text (speech)
Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech (10 December 2014)	Malala Yousafzai	No – literary Spoken/multimodal text (speech)

9.1

SPEAKING PERSUASIVELY ABOUT CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

The title of Topic 2 is ‘Conversations about issues in texts’. Here, you will use your analysis of an issue represented in media texts to inform your own position, so that the spoken response you deliver in Internal assessment 2 adds to a broader public conversation. Your role will be to get your audience thinking critically about a contentious social issue and lead them through an argument that persuades them to adopt your personal position.

Constructing a persuasive spoken argument: Genre

We know that two vital things to consider when creating any text are the intended audience (context of situation) and the purpose of the text (context of culture). In Chapter 1 we offered an outline for the key genres in Senior English. Now that we’re focusing closely on ‘persuasion’, let’s take another look at the main genre family connected to persuasion and recall the various social purposes that *arguments* can serve.

GENRE FAMILY	GENRE	SOCIAL PURPOSE	TYPICAL STAGES
Argument	Exposition	to argue a point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – (background) – thesis – supporting arguments – reinforcement of thesis
	Discussion	to discuss two or more points of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – (background) – issue – sides – resolution
	Challenge	to rebut a position on an issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – position – rebuttal

Because your persuasive spoken response could utilise the structure of any of these argument genres, our focus in preparation for Internal assessment 2 will be to show you ways of selecting subject matter and communicating it in persuasive ways that are appropriate for the context of your situation. This includes considering your role as a communicator in the internet age, where digital recording devices and avenues for sharing your views online have proliferated.

Communicating in the internet age

In 1993, the Mosaic web browser was unveiled, and from this point on the internet developed into the digital tool that we know today. Then, in 2007, Steve Jobs revealed the iPhone, which influenced the design of all the smartphones we now use, whether you’re an Apple or an Android user. These technological innovations have impacted massively on the way we communicate, negotiate and build communities.



In this unit, one of the mandatory assessments is a spoken persuasive task. However, it would be rare in our interconnected world for a speech to be made in isolation; it's much more likely to be part of a broader strategy for change, including a social media campaign.

Let's look at some helpful advice on ensuring that you're an effective communicator in the twenty-first century. We'll briefly examine how to:

- make ideas stick
- build communities of like-minded people that help your ideas spread
- argue with others in a civil manner.

In this chapter we can only draw your attention to some key ideas. If you want to know more, you'll need to conduct some further research and read the books mentioned below.

Making ideas stick

Two American brothers, Chip and Dan Heath, in their book *Made to Stick* (2008) argue that six qualities contribute to the stickiness of an idea. It must:

- be *Simple* – don't overcomplicate your message; synthesise your ideas to one, clear, strong message that captures your central concerns
- be *Unexpected* – attract attention to your idea by presenting your message in a way that manipulates, even overturns, people's expectations and provokes surprise (but without being gimmicky)
- be *Concrete* – include specific detail connected to the real world; avoid being too abstract
- be *Credible* – establish your credibility and the credibility of your message
- be *Emotional* – tap into people's emotions, avoiding an approach that's too psychologically distant
- involve *Stories* – people respond best to messages delivered in story form.

They call this the SUCCESS model. There's no final quality beginning with an 'S', but they argue that SUCCESS is more memorable than SUCCESS.

Building communities: Making ideas spread

In their book *New Power*, Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms make the point that *as well as* stickiness, you want an idea to spread – you're probably very familiar with the concept of 'going viral'. If you want to spread your ideas, add these three principles to those of the Heath brothers – ideas must:

- be *Actionable* – the audience for your message must be able to do something as a result of the message; in a persuasive speech we often talk about having a 'call to action'
- be *Connected* – the audience is given tools and tips for connecting with others
- be *Extensible* – others can take your message and build on it in their own contexts – that is, they can extend your idea.

This is Heimans and Timms's ACE model. They argue that SUCCESS + ACE will work best for spreading a message that sticks and builds a community that rallies round that idea.

Arguing with others in a civil manner

Have you heard of 'information bubbles'?

The way technology is used can make it easy for us to obtain information from only the sources that reinforce our existing opinions and understandings – even where these might be harmful or just plain wrong. This is leading to societies that are becoming increasingly divided.

In this context, it's important to listen carefully to others who might not share your opinion, to try to understand the basis for their views.



In writing, the genre for arguing a position on an issue is 'exposition'. This genre assumes that you'll not be with the person while they're reading your argument. However, in casual conversation with friends and acquaintances, if we're discussing a controversial issue, we can ask questions, clarify points and make challenges immediately. As such, Western culture has developed the opinion genre, which is structured as follows:

- *Opinion* – someone states their position on an issue
- *Reaction* – the other interactants react to this opinion
- *Evidence* – where disagreement or challenge results, the various speakers provide evidence to support their position
- *Resolution* – eventually the interactants find a way to resolve the disagreement (or not).

However, what happens when someone refuses to budge on their position, even when presented with strong, fact-based evidence based on research? A quick online search will help you locate some useful, research-based advice. Unfortunately, it appears that many people, when presented with the facts, simply dig into their current positions and cling to their incorrect understandings. This is because their world view (and, therefore, their identity – their image of who they are) is felt to be under attack. So, what can you do?



Ethics of persuasion

One of the common arguments that English teachers use to encourage students to develop their persuasive speaking skills, is that it will help you convince adults (e.g. parents) to give you what you want. Has it struck you that there's a dark side to this power?

As you reach the end of your high-school studies, take this assessment task as an opportunity to explore your personal persuasive voice, as well as to reflect on the extent to which you're prepared to consciously employ persuasive devices. To persuade someone is to convince them, using influence and argument. When persuasive speech takes on a controlling or deceitful purpose, it moves into the territory of manipulation and coercion. It's up to you whether you use these powers for good or for evil!

9.1 Your turn

personal



critical



- 1 Identify a meme, video or campaign that has gone viral. In small groups, discuss:
 - a What aspects of the SUCCESS + ACE models do you think account for its popularity?
 - b Do you consider the meme, video or campaign to have been ethical? Apply the critical frame and consider what world views are projected, who possibly wins and loses, and whose voices are heard and not heard.
 - c What lessons can you learn and apply to your own persuasive speech?
- 2 In small groups, discuss a situation where you've been arguing with someone and one or both of you have been unprepared to change your position. Based on what you've been reading in this section:
 - a why do you think this happened?
 - b how could the situation have been improved?



9.2

PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURING ARGUMENTS

The task specifications for Internal assessment 2 in the syllabus state that your speech is supposed to:

employ and synthesise nuanced rhetorical and persuasive strategies to position an audience to accept the perspective constructed in the text.

Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

Your use of ‘rhetorical and persuasive strategies’ applies to both the organisation and development of your speech, and its textual features. In this section we review a range of persuasive devices, categorised by the type of persuasive appeal they’re most likely to support.

Review of persuasive devices

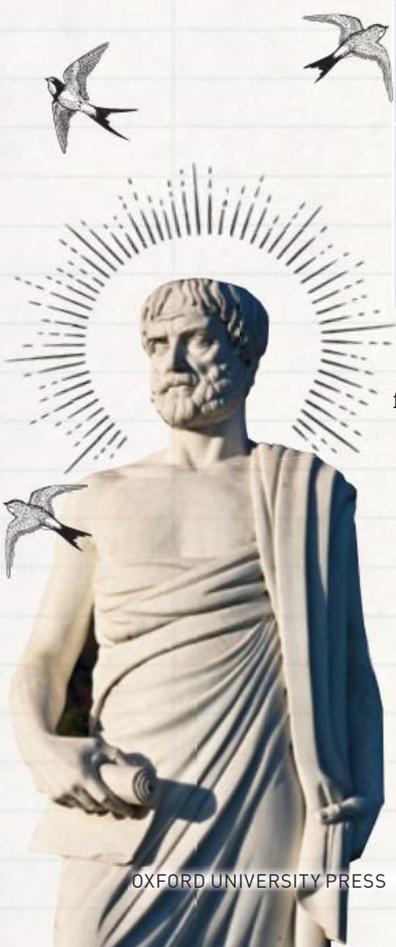
By now, you’ll be no stranger to arguing persuasively, be it at home, in your community or at school. The foundations of argument in Western culture are Aristotle’s three basic appeals as outlined in the table below, along with a fourth principle that many people find useful.

APPEAL	WHAT IS IT?
logos	an appeal to the <i>head</i> : using logic and reasoning
pathos	an appeal to the <i>heart</i> : targeting the emotions, using personal stories to create empathy and sympathy
ethos	an appeal to <i>image</i> : building rapport with the audience by targeting values (related to a sense of closeness and alignment of values), and establishing respect for and the credibility of the writer/speaker/designer
kairos	referring to the timeliness of an argument – that is, whether it’s delivered at the most appropriate, critical moment. This might be within a speech itself, but more importantly within the bigger conversation about an issue, e.g. you might post a vlog at exactly the right moment when it’s likely to gain attention and synthesise various strands of a conversation

In the rest of this section, we’ll review some useful language resources for supporting the first three appeals.

Appeals to logic (‘logos’)

- *Manipulation of stages* (i.e. the specific introduction, body and conclusion for the genre) and phases to ensure the text unfolds logically across time. Crucial here is to consider:
 - a How will you structure and develop the argument you wish to make?
 - b How will you use the structure to establish and maintain an effective relationship with your audience and build a community around your ideas? This is related to appealing to the heart and image, of course, but here we’re interested in your plans to structure this across the speech.



cultural artefact

an object made by humans that has particular cultural significance. Texts are cultural artefacts that use language (i.e. spoken or written words)

- *Use of cohesive devices* (e.g. cause–effect, contrasting conjunctions and text connectives, part–whole words and phrases) to help your text hang together and to demonstrate the logical connection between ideas – see more about contrasting conjunctions below.
- *Use of sentence, paragraph and text openers.* Consider what you'll put up front in the text. What will your starting points be? How can these openers help change the direction of a text? For example, in some sections of your speech, it's a good idea to acknowledge another perspective and then challenge or reject it using concession (see below).

Appeals to heart ('pathos') and image ('ethos')

Use of evaluative language and associated grading. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 14, but remember to choose discriminating language that expresses emotions, makes judgment about behaviour and appreciates **cultural artefacts** – and spread this appropriately across your argument. In addition, consider the way that you grade your evaluations (that is, turn the volume up and down on them) through the use of, for example:

- *core vocabulary choices*, e.g. an environmental *event* vs. an environmental *catastrophe*; *settlers* vs. *invaders*
- *adjectival graders*, e.g. 'This gave us a brief glimmer of hope', 'in *stark* contrast'
- *intensifying adverbs*, e.g. really, very, extremely – don't overdo these
- *repetition of words*, e.g. 'This problem is *growing and growing and growing*'
- *listing and accumulation of attitudes*, e.g. 'We will be *bigger, better, stronger*'
- *uses of pairs, triplets (also known as tricolon or the 'rule of three') and parallelism.* Presenting ideas in pairs and triplets can help increase the emotional strength of your argument. Parallelism (which can be used in conjunction with pairs and triplets) involves using sentence structures that are similar, e.g. *There is nowhere to hide; there is nowhere to run*
- *swearing.* In some contexts (but almost certainly not a school assignment) and used judiciously, 'taboo' language can add impact to an argument and signal group membership.

These techniques can be used in conjunction with each other, and can be reinforced by gradually increasing pitch or volume when speaking.

- *Use of figurative language, including metaphor, simile and personification.* By now, these terms should be very familiar to you. In essence, these devices allow you to transfer the qualities of one thing to another. The purpose could be to turn up the volume on an evaluation, or to encourage the listener to react emotionally to your message. Related to these is analogy, where you help people understand a concept or issue using a comparable situation with which they might be more familiar. Unlike metaphor and simile, however, you're not directly transferring qualities from one thing onto another.
- *Use of sound devices, including alliteration and repetition of consonant sounds.* Again, it's assumed you're familiar with these terms. If used judiciously and sparingly, these sound devices can help add to the euphony of your speech and help make it more memorable. However, unless it will somehow add value to the effectiveness of your argument, avoid devices such as onomatopoeia.
- *Use of contrast, concession and contrasting conjunctions.* Sometimes, you might want to set up a simple contrast between two people, events or ideas, in which case you'll draw on conjunctions and text connectives such as 'similarly', 'in contrast' and 'on the other hand'. However, as signalled above, you might use concession to contrast your position with an alternative, using contrasting conjunctions such as 'however', 'but', 'nevertheless', 'yet' and 'although'. It should be noted that when speaking, contrast can also be established by using contrasting pitch levels such as 'low' (possibly suggesting gravitas or seriousness) versus 'high' (possibly suggesting hysteria).

- *Citing and quoting.* Think about how you'll incorporate evidence and the voices of others to acknowledge their position and use these to support your own argument. Footnotes and references can't be included in the same way in a spoken argument, so you'll need to consider how to signal these if they're relevant to developing the argument.
- *Use of high and low modality.* You'll have encountered this language feature before, and maybe you've been told that high modality is most convincing. However, overdoing this – sounding too absolute – can undermine the credibility of your argument, and you can come across as hectoring and even bullying. So, think carefully about the relationship you wish to establish with your audience.
- *Audience address.* Think carefully about how you'll address the audience. For example, will you greet them with 'Ladies and gentlemen', 'Fellow Earthians' or 'My brothers and sisters'? In addition, while you can use inclusive pronouns such as 'us' and 'we', you might also want to use pronouns such as 'us' and 'them' to establish group membership. How you address your audience depends on your role, target audience and purpose. Just be aware that the choices you make can impact whether your audience members feel included or excluded.

Focus on using concession

Concession can be an effective way of integrating your analysis of media articles (see Chapter 8) into your persuasive speech in a meaningful way that adds weight to your own position and argument. This technique is illustrated in Source 1, a speech that is worth reading/watching in full as it illustrates a variety of other elements that might be useful for your spoken assessment, including a range of rhetorical devices, the incorporation of analysis into an argument and the adoption of specific perspectives.

For now, as you read Source 1, consider how *you* can use concession to acknowledge (or concede) positions, arguments and evidence presented in the texts you analysed to reject or challenge those positions, arguments and evidence.

Source 1 is the conclusion of a much longer speech by journalist, author, academic and Wiradjuri man, Stan Grant, during the 2015 IQ2 debate, 'Racism is destroying the Australian Dream'. Grant is arguing the affirmative case and you can find a video and transcript of the full speech online. Note:

- the noun group 'The Australian Dream' is a refrain used by Grant throughout the speech
- contrasting conjunctions signalling concession are highlighted in green. They signal that some idea has been conceded and now Grant intends to counter (argue against or challenge) that idea.





Source 1 Extract from a speech by Stan Grant during the 2015 IQ2 debate

'Racism is destroying the Australian Dream'

The Australian Dream.

We're better than this. I have seen the worst of the world as a reporter. I spent a decade in war zones from Iraq to Afghanistan, and Pakistan. We are an extraordinary country. We are in so many respects the envy of the world. If I was sitting here where my friends are tonight, I would be arguing passionately for this country. **But** I stand here with my ancestors, and the view looks very different from where I stand.

The Australian Dream.

We have our heroes. Albert Namatjira painted the soul of this nation. Vincent Lingiari put his hand out for Gough Whitlam to pour the sand of his country through his fingers and say, 'This is my country.' Cathy Freeman lit the torch of the Olympic Games. **But** every time we are lured into the light, we are mugged by the darkness of this country's history. Of course racism is killing the Australian Dream. It is self evident that it's killing the Australian dream. **But** we are better than that.

The people who stood up and supported Adam Goodes and said, 'No more,' they are better than that. The people who marched across the bridge for reconciliation, they are better than that. The people who supported Kevin Rudd when he said sorry to the Stolen Generations, they are better than that. My children and their non-Indigenous friends are better than that. My wife who is not Indigenous is better than that.

And one day, I want to stand here and be able to say as proudly and sing as loudly as anyone else in this room, Australians all, let us rejoice.

Thank you.

Stan Grant, 'Racism is destroying the Australian Dream', IQ2 debate, 27 October 2015

9.2 Your turn

Find the complete text of Grant's speech (as a written transcript) or use another text that you have found.



- 1 Annotate it, identifying specific rhetorical devices and aesthetic features that the speaker has used to appeal to logos, ethos and pathos.
- 2 Then, consider how the principle of *kairos* is applied, and make notes in your notebook or on a computer:
 - a Within the speech itself, how 'timely' are the points made? Are they delivered at a moment in the text when they will be most impactful?
 - b More broadly, what accounts for the time of the delivery of the speech? How did it tap into the zeitgeist (the spirit of the times)?
- 3 How does Grant use inclusive pronouns to position himself in relation to various communities?

- 4 In your opinion, has language with high modality been used judiciously in this extract to create persuasive messages for the intended audience? Explain your answer with reference to textual examples.

9.3

SPEAKING IN LIVE AND RECORDED SITUATIONS

To create a successful persuasive spoken response for Internal assessment 2, you will have to consider the context of the situation provided in the task. You may be asked to create a live speech to be presented to a target audience. Or you may be asked to create a video or an audio recorded speech, perhaps with the opportunity for multiple recordings and additional production elements. This section of the chapter gives an overview of some typical situations for persuasive speaking – both live and recorded contexts.

Spoken word situations

In situations where your spoken words need to be the focus, creating a close relationship between the speaker and the audience is crucial. For listeners, keeping track of the messages in an extended spoken response can be tricky. That's why, when we use our spoken words (speech) as a mode of communication, we rely on non-verbal language and other textual features that will complement the speech, such as visual illustrations and graphics, or dramatic use of the body and the stage space.

In an era of digital, connected and online media, video and audio recordings of spoken messages are dominant mediums of production. The rise of video sharing and streaming platforms such as YouTube and Twitch, and the boom in popularity of podcasts, have been enabled by advances in digital technologies. Our appetite for live spoken presentations, however, remains strong. In Australian society there are many opportunities to give speeches at formal and ceremonial events – these can be serious and informative, or funny and entertaining in their tone and genre.

Different speaking scenarios require different amounts of preparation and rehearsal. Four broad categories of speaking preparation are:

- *Impromptu.* When you are asked to speak 'on the spot' with very little or no preparation, this is impromptu speaking. We don't advise impromptu speaking for assessment tasks in English!
- *Minimal notes.* If you are very familiar with your material you can use just a few cards as prompts to ensure you stay on track or have fine grain details on hand. This approach maximises eye contact and connection with the audience without removing support notes completely.
- *Memorised.* When you want to command an audience fully, you'll want to use gestures, stance and body language to their full capacity as meaning-making resources. This involves memorising your speech so you can have your hands free of notes.
- *Scripted.* If the precise words you need to say are important, but you don't have the capacity to memorise them, you may need to speak directly from a script. This is more successful in audio recorded speech (e.g. radio, podcasts) where you are not required to make eye contact with the audience. In highly produced speaking situations, teleprompters or cue cards might be available to minimise the impact of script reading. However, speaking from a script in a live situation will significantly disrupt your connection with your audience. Reading and talking at the same time is hard enough; it's unlikely your non-verbal language will have an impact when your focus is taken up by a script.



Rehearsed presentations

In the worlds of employment and education, there are several contexts where you may be required to deliver a rehearsed presentation. You may need to speak in a position of leadership, to provide information about a complex idea, inspire a group of people or motivate them to take action. You may need to speak in order to offer a proposal or submit a request where the result is contingent on the quality of your 'pitch'.

Popular styles of contemporary speech

Two contemporary examples of popular speaking genres that have become well known for their specific style are:

- *TED talks*. Modelled on the conventions of presentations given at 'TED' conferences, these speeches are often 15–20 minutes in length and accompanied by a slideshow. Their goal is to share a single and important idea from any field of knowledge in a way that makes the idea stick in the audience's mind, helping that idea to 'spread'.
- *Pecha Kucha*. Named using the Japanese term for 'chit chat', this style of presentation is structured around 20 images that each appear on screen for 20 seconds, giving a total speech time of 6 minutes and 40 seconds. Speakers offer ideas concisely, with the visual slideshow used to create a multimodal experience that helps the audience to better imagine or relate to ideas.



Source 2 A scene from a Brisbane Pecha Kucha night

Planning speeches for multiple audiences

Speeches and presentations delivered initially to a live audience can also be video recorded, uploaded and shared online, enabling the speech to reach another potential audience. In these situations, it's worth considering which target audience is your biggest priority.

- If the *live audience* is the primary audience, you'll use their feedback (e.g. their facial expressions, body language, laughter, applause and silence) to modify aspects of your speech delivery as you go. You may have to add extra energy to your own facial expressions and gestures for your non-verbal language to have an impact on people at the back of the room.



- If an *online or broadcast audience* is your primary audience, you'll largely ignore the feedback of your live audience unless it interferes with your audio-visual recording. You'll speak as though you're speaking to the camera, to an audience beyond the room, rather than responding to the people in front of you. You'll need to make sure your face is always expressive (as sometimes your gestures won't be captured if you choose to zoom in for a close-up), and you'll need to be careful not to step out of camera shot while on stage.

Think back to the information in Section 9.1 of this chapter on Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms's ACE model and consider how live speeches can be spread to a potentially global audience when uploaded online.

Panel discussions and interviews

Not all contexts for spoken communication involve a single speaker giving a solo performance. And rarely in life do we realistically get to speak for an extended period with no interruption! Two examples of spoken presentations that involve multiple people are *panel discussions* and *interviews*.

When a range of speakers are assembled and placed on stage together as a 'panel', there's usually a chair or a host who provides questions and prompts for each of the panellists to respond to if they wish. Panellists can give a brief answer, or speak at length, and they can respond to each other to create a discussion. This format can take the shape of a multi-person conversation, but can also be used as an opportunity for participants to give mini-speeches to the audience. Panel discussions can happen at live events (e.g. literary and cultural festivals), provide the structure for informative or entertaining television shows, or be recorded in studios for a video channel or podcast.



Source 3 A panel discussion at the *Brisbane Writers Festival*.

An interview situation is different from a panel, as the discussion takes place between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer asks questions, and the interviewee (who can be a person or a group) answers the interviewer – the main interaction is between these two participants. In these situations, the interviewer plays a more prominent role, as they are relied on more heavily as a source of interaction and feedback. Because there's not a panel of other guests who can answer questions, the interviewee is not afforded as many 'breaks' from responding.

9.3a Your turn

Reflect

- 1 What would you say is the difference between a 'performance', a 'presentation' and a 'conversation'?

- 2 To what extent, in your opinion, are all spoken communications 'performances'?

Review responses to your focus issue

- 3 Recall one of your responses to the issue of mass surveillance from Chapter 8 (or to another issue you may have studied).

- a 8.1a: What are the main concepts that you associate with the issue of surveillance?
- b 8.1b: What was your response to one of the propositions offered in the table?
- c 8.1c: How carefully do you think people should monitor their privacy settings?
- d 8.2a: What did the television report 'Weapons of mass surveillance' (or another media text you have studied) get you thinking about?
- e 8.2b: What did the opinion article 'How Australia tilted even further towards police state in 2018' (or another opinion article) get you thinking about?

Create

- 4 Conduct a live, spoken interview with a peer. Prepare your own answers to the questions above, then practise delivering a brief response to each question (with minimal notes) in a mock interview scenario lasting 5–10 minutes. Swap roles to take turns being the interviewer and the interviewee.

Reflect

- 5 Did your strategy for remembering your prepared answers work out? Were you able to deliver your responses confidently, without notes? Write down what worked well, and what you would change next time to reduce your reliance on speech notes.

- 6 If you were a guest on a panel show or being interviewed, you would have a host or interviewer to structure the session with questions to be answered. What strategies can you use when speaking as a solo presenter to 'signpost' when you are moving on to a new idea or topic?

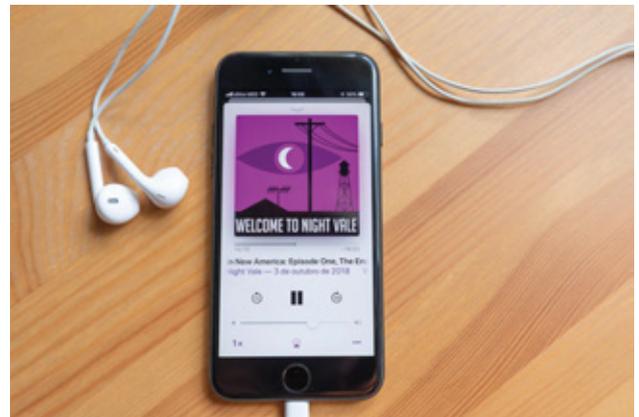
Speaking platforms: Video and audio productions

With increased ownership of mobile digital devices and access to the internet, Australians are able to hear extended spoken responses from people via several audio and visual channels. Traditional broadcast media including television and radio broadcasts rely on a linear format, where content is scheduled to be screened or aired at a certain time. One of the significant affordances of new media is that content can be created, uploaded and then consumed by the audience in multiple ways. Some content is still broadcast or live-streamed on the internet, but often a recording is also available for later viewing. Some audio and video products can also be downloaded to be watched or listened to offline, which is important for people who rely on public wifi to get access to the internet.

Podcasts

The word 'podcast' sometimes refers specifically to an *audio* series that is presented in episodes. However, the term can more broadly refer to any portable media such as audio or video files that can be streamed or downloaded to be consumed as a series of episodes on a portable/mobile device. A recent survey of over 2500 Australians aged 18–75 found that 91 per cent of people were aware of podcasts; 1 in 3 have listened to podcasts in the past month; and 1 in 5 have listened to podcasts in the past week (ABC Corporate Tracking Study, 2018).

Podcasts are an alternative source of entertainment to screen-based media and are a popular way to pass time when travelling or undertaking manual and household labour. Podcasts can be recordings of group or panel discussions, interviews, stand-up comedy, lectures, episodes of a fiction story or a range of other formats.



Source 4 *Welcome to Night Vale* is a long-running podcast series about a fictional desert town in the American southwest.

Videos and multimedia

The popularity of video-sharing platforms such as YouTube has made the act of spreading spoken video messages a commonplace activity. The purpose of these videos varies and includes:

- *vlogging* – recording a regular reflection on your personal thoughts or experiences, like a video diary with a public audience
- *citizen journalism* – reporting your first-hand experience, or investigating a current issue
- *animation and multimedia* – teaching or illuminating concepts/information using illustrations.

Recording a spoken response in the style of a vlogger, citizen journalist or other kind of content creator means needing to imagine a context for your channel or show, including an imagined audience. You must also imagine the context of the platform you're uploading to, including:

- whether you're creating a long-term stand-alone video, or a short-term 24-hour 'story'
- the privacy settings of your channel or profile
- commenting and moderation settings.





Source 5 A still from the vlog 'We have destroyed copyright law' by vlogbrothers on YouTube

9.3b Your turn

Draft a script

- 1 Choose a contention that you have about the issue you studied for Unit 3, Topic 2. Write a script for a 30–60-second explanation of your contention in your notebook or on a computer.

Record, listen, refine

- 2 Record yourself delivering your spoken/signed explanation using a video or an audio recording device. You are allowed to read from your notes.
- 3 Listen to the recording, focusing on the aural qualities of your speech: volume, pace, variation and pausing. Make a note of 1–2 ways you would like to improve the sound or tone of your prepared speech.

- 4 Refine your original speech notes with line breaks, symbols and other annotations or changes to the written language that might help you plan a more powerful or nuanced delivery of spoken/signed words. Consider using successful speech-scripting strategies in your spoken response assessment task.



9.4

ADDING MULTIMODAL AND NON-VERBAL COMPONENTS

There are many options for producing your persuasive spoken response for Internal assessment 2. It can be created as a monomodal text with the meanings taken primarily from spoken language, or as a multimodal text, with non-verbal 'paralanguage', visual or aural representations contributing significantly to the meaning.

Textual features of spoken responses

Your objectives with the textual features of this assessment task should be:

- to make suitable, effective or discerning choices in spoken/signed language for the purpose of persuading an audience
- to suitably, effectively or discerningly use grammar and language structures that create a persuasive spoken/signed response
- to use spoken/signed and non-verbal features (and other complementary features if appropriate) in suitable, effective or discerning ways to create a persuasive spoken response.

Let's think about how these objectives relate to both monomodal and multimodal spoken/signed texts.

Integrating multiple language modes and complementary features

For a text to be truly multimodal, two or more modes have to be integrated and delivered at the same time. It's easy to achieve a multimodal text when you produce a video for broadcast, as you're likely going to choose a meaningful background, outfit/costume and shot framing – these are all examples of *visual* language. Sometimes writing appears on screen, adding another layer of *written linguistic* meaning. If sound tracks or sound effects are used, that's another layer again, of *aural* meaning. When we draw on other language modes, for example using visual and auditory resources to enhance our spoken message, these are called *complementary features*.

Popular multimodal texts that combine *spoken/signed* language and *visual* language are television shows (including news and current affairs), films and online videos. Popular multimodal texts that combine *spoken/signed* language and *aural* language are radio shows and podcasts.

If you're preparing a live spoken response for Internal assessment 2, you will likely be focusing on demonstrating your capacity to use a single mode: spoken/signed words. However, you may be invited to add multimodal elements, and this presents both an opportunity and a challenge in this task. The opportunity is the ability to use more than spoken words alone to convey your meaning and create a rich textual experience for your audience. The challenge is to perform at a high standard in terms of your language choice, grammatical structure and creative production across multiple modes, rather than just focusing closely on speaking/signing.



Speaking and the use of non-verbal language

A speech is not just an essay read aloud. The words you speak are important, but so is the non-verbal language, otherwise known as ‘paralanguage’. ‘Para’ means alongside or beside, so ‘paralanguage’ includes elements such as the gestures, facial expressions, gaze, body orientation and movement that are used alongside language (including words, intonation and stress). The non-verbal language adds meaning to spoken texts in a variety of ways and needs to be considered carefully if you want to be successful in public speaking contexts.

To illustrate this, you should watch a video of the highly regarded speech delivered by Malala Yousafzai when accepting the Nobel Peace Prize for her speech in Oslo on 10 December 2014. Born on 12 July 1997 at Mingora in Pakistan, at 17 Malala was the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, which was awarded ‘for struggle against the oppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education’.

The transcription (see Source 6) is broken down into lines based on where she pauses (usually after a complete clause):



- > Line numbers are included for ease of reference.
- > Double brackets indicate non-verbal elements of the speech.
- > The words of the speech itself are included next to the line number.
- > The letters written in CAPS are the syllables that are stressed (i.e. emphasised) and the **bold** word is the one with the most highly stressed syllable (i.e. the tonic) in each line. Importantly, the tonic signals what is being treated as *new* information. Consider how the meaning of lines would change with the emphasis on different words.
- > Screenshots (above the words) illustrate the non-verbal language used – static images, of course, can’t capture movement, which is also crucial.

Source 6 An excerpt from Malala Yousafzai’s Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in 2014

	
L1	((starts about 4 minutes 32 seconds into speech)) This a W ARD is not just for M E ((pauses, looks down at notes))
	
L2	It is for T HOSE for G OTten child R EN who want edu C ATion



L3

It is for **THOSE**

FRIGHTened child**DREN**

who want **PEACE**



L4

It is for **THOSE**

VOICEless child**DREN**

who want **CHANGE**
((looks down at notes))



L5

I am **HERE**



L6

to **STAND** up for their **RIGHTS**



L7

to **RAISE** their **VOICE** ((looks down at notes briefly))



L8

((shaking head and wagging finger)) It is **NOT** time to **PITY** them

(Continues on next page)

Source 6 cont.

			
L9	((shaking head and wagging finger)) It is NOT time		to PITy them
			
L10	It is TIME	to take ACTi on	
			
L11	So it be COMES	the LAST TIME	
			
L12	The LAST TIME		
			
L13	So it be COMES	the LAST TIME	
			
L14	((hand beats in synch with stressed words and gradually drops lower)) That we SEE a CHILD deprived of education ((looks down at notes briefly))		
L15	((sustained applause from audience))		



9.4 Your turn

Notice non-verbal language in use

- 1 Note down an example of each of the following from Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize speech:
 - a The way Malala's gaze is maintained, and re-directed occasionally so that she embraces the whole audience.

 - b The orientation of Malala's body so she is nearly always front on to the audience (note: otherwise, she remains quite still).

 - c The way gestures are used in sync with the rhythm of the wording, e.g. downward strokes on stressed syllables.

 - d The raising of her chin at key moments (e.g. in Line 7 'to RAISE their VOICE').

 - e The way the words and gestures work together to add force to her delivery (e.g. in Lines 8 to 13 where her finger beats in sync with the stressed syllables).

- 2 What else do you notice about the use of non-verbal language in this speech (e.g. Line 14 where she points away from herself, towards the children perhaps, and gradually drops her hand as she beats out the rhythm of the speech)?

The gap between scripts and spoken words

Compare the spoken performance of Malala Yousafzai's speech to a transcription of the words, which is only available on the Nobel Peace Prize website. A link is included in your obook. Notice how it fails to capture much of what happened live in front of an audience.

This award is not just for me. It is for those forgotten children who want education. It is for those frightened children who want peace. It is for those voiceless children who want change.

I am here to stand up for their rights, to raise their voice ... it is not time to pity them. It is not time to pity them. It is time to take action so it becomes the last time, the last time, so it becomes the last time that we see a child deprived of education.

So, whether you are delivering your speech live to an audience, or for recording and viewing online, ensure you think carefully about the use of language *and* non-verbal language rather than relying on scripted words alone to convey your message. Trying to use non-verbal language purposefully but to also keep it as natural as possible isn't easy! If you prepare your speech ahead of time and make sure to rehearse before the day of the presentation, you'll have a much better chance of ironing out any imbalance in your style.

9.5

SUGGESTED TASK FOR ASSESSMENT

To create a persuasive spoken response for this assessment task, you'll need to draw on the study of media texts that you undertook for Unit 3, Topic 2 'Conversations about issues in texts'. In the table on page 199, we've provided some detail about two possible response options:

- 1 perform live to a small to medium audience, or
- 2 produce digitally and publish online to reach a wider audience.

As always, be sure to check your school task sheet to confirm your specific assessment requirements before completing this task.

9.5 Your turn

Talking about surveillance: a conversation about textual connections

personal



structural



critical



cultural



1 Create your spoken response

Drawing on analyses of different perspectives on mass surveillance represented in a range of media texts, create a spoken response of 5–8 minutes that enters the public 'conversation' about the issue. Your response should:

- ✓ offer a contention
- ✓ be supported by persuasive arguments
- ✓ provide responses that connect with the positions offered by others.

Target audience: Before commencing, confirm (using your school task sheet, or perhaps decide as a class) the intended audience of your spoken response.

Will it be:

- ✓ your English teachers and classmates only?
- ✓ your parents or other family members?
- ✓ students in other grades?
- ✓ a public audience beyond the school?

Medium: Before commencing, confirm the options available to you for presenting your spoken response.

Will it be:

- ✓ a performed spoken/signed response in front of a live audience?
- ✓ a performed spoken/signed response for a video recording to be submitted with no (or minor) editing?
- ✓ audio/video recorded in stages, then edited together to create a media text?

2 Interact (optional)

Comment: You may have the opportunity to upload your video for others in your class, school or wider community to view. If two or more students do this, you can extend the conversations in your spoken responses by adding comments and comment responses under the video.

Share: If completing this assessment task resulted in the recording of an authentic message about an issue that you would like to contribute to public debate, attempt to spread the link using social media and other strategies, to gain the attention of influential voices.

Contextual elements and prompts for creating a spoken response

ASPECT OF THE WRITING CONTEXT	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 1: PERFORMED LIVE (SPOKEN OR SIGNED) DIRECTLY TO AN AUDIENCE	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 2: VIDEO RECORDED (SPOKEN OR SIGNED) FOR SHARING ONLINE
Genre and social purpose	Exposition. Persuasive speech intended to influence or challenge the perspectives of the invited audience.	Exposition. Persuasive spoken message intended to influence or challenge the perspectives of a potentially wide audience.
Subject matter (What's my topic? What question/s do I need to answer?)	<p>Critically evaluate representations of 'mass surveillance' in media texts, explore the connections between these, and provide your own perspective. Possible prompts for a speech on mass surveillance include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Critically evaluate the ways that representations of mass surveillance respond to contemporary social and cultural contexts. 2 Interpret the underlying cultural assumptions about privacy, security, control or authority in texts from different times and places. 3 Take a personal position on a contentious social issue and convincingly argue the relevance of your view in light of recent media conversations. <p>Support your analysis with specific evidence (including quotations) from the texts.</p>	
Roles and relationships (What writing role am I adopting? Who is my audience? What is our relationship in terms of distance, power and alignment of values?)	<p>Adopt the role of a public speaker in a formal situation. Your audience is other students and guests who are interested in media texts, news and current affairs. Check your school assessment task sheet to consider what you can assume about the relationship between you and your audience. Remember to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social distance • power dynamics • alignment of values. 	<p>Adopt the role of a social media influencer in a semi-formal situation. Your viewers/subscribers are interested in media texts, news and current affairs. You should assume the following relationship between you and your viewers. Remember to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social distance • power dynamics • alignment of values.
Mode (Is this assignment spoken/signed or multimodal?)	Spoken/signed with non-verbal elements (e.g. gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, stance).	Spoken/signed – multimodal including non-verbal elements, complementary features and resources from additional language modes.
Medium (How do I need to submit this assignment, e.g. on paper, as a digital file or a URL?)	Live performance: Deliver your speech within the set time frame to a live audience.	Video file or URL: Check your school policy for advice on submitting videos for assessment. If your task involves connection to social conversations, you may need to upload your video to a public video-sharing platform or other website before submission.

FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension





Part

D

UNIT 4: CLOSE STUDY OF LITERARY TEXTS 1 – RESPONDING CREATIVELY

Chapter 10 Close study of *Island* by Alistair MacLeod

- 10.1 Introduction to short stories
- 10.2 Characters in short stories
- 10.3 Storyworlds in short stories
- 10.4 Problems in short stories

Chapter 11 Internal assessment 3: Imaginative writing

- 11.1 Responding creatively to a close literary study
- 11.2 Interventions and standalone stories
- 11.3 Creating an imaginative response

10 CLOSE STUDY OF *ISLAND* BY ALISTAIR MACLEOD

This is a study of Unit 4, Topic 1, 'Creative responses to literary texts'. The focus of this section is a study of the narrative conventions used in the short story collection, *Island: Collected Stories* by Alistair MacLeod.

Focus questions:

- What makes short stories unique among narratives?
- How are characters constructed in short stories?
- How do short stories develop storyworlds?
- How do authors use problems to drive the narrative in short stories?
- How do short stories represent the culture in which they were created?
- How can audiences read short stories critically?
- How can you draw from the analysis of these texts to develop your own short story writing?

At the end of this study you will be asked to compose, under timed conditions, a piece of narrative writing that responds to a short story from the collection studied. See Chapter 11 for suggested culminating tasks for this study.

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 4, Topic 1 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*: 'Creative responses to literary texts'.

This chapter features:

- a close study of one literary text from the QCAA Prescribed Text List for English and EAL (required)
- a text focus on the category 'prose text (short story)'
- a literary work from a different time and place.

The chapter is a study of narrative conventions:

TEXT	AUTHOR	PRESCRIBED?
<i>Island: Collected Stories</i> (2011) Close study: – 'The Boat' – 'The Vastness of the Dark' – 'To Every Thing There Is a Season' – 'The Return' Extracts: – 'In the Fall' – 'Vision' – 'Second Spring'.	Alistair MacLeod	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – short stories)
Prose extract: <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (1813)	Jane Austen	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel; extract only)
Prose extract: <i>Save Me the Waltz</i> (1932)	Zelda Fitzgerald	No – literary Written text (prose text – novel; extract only)

10.1

INTRODUCTION TO SHORT STORIES

While short stories have been a popular teachers' choice for English assignments, they are a notoriously difficult form of the **narrative** genre to master.

Short stories are concise, sharp and refined. But don't be fooled into thinking they are light and fluffy: while they are intended to be read in one sitting, they often deal with concepts and issues that are challenging and confronting.

The shortened length comes with many hurdles as the author must be able to justify the inclusion of every single word, space and punctuation mark. Edgar Allan Poe, arguably one of the greatest short story writers in the English language, said, 'A short story must have a single **mood** and every sentence must build towards it'. Despite the obvious challenges of this form of writing, many authors – including writers such as Poe, F Scott Fitzgerald, Roald Dahl, Ursula Le Guin and Neil Gaiman – are as famous for their short stories as their long-form fiction.

In this chapter we will consider some of the challenges faced when writing short stories and uncover some of the joys of writing in this narrative form, while focusing on three key aspects of narratives:

- character (discussed in Section 10.2)
- storyworld (discussed in Section 10.3)
- problem (discussed in Section 10.4).

At this point in your English studies, you should have extensive experience reading and analysing narratives. Perhaps you've even discovered the joys of reading short-form fiction for yourself. The culminating activity for this task requires you to write a short story of your own, under timed conditions. To complete this task you will need to consider the ways authors manipulate the narrative form to create succinct 'slices of life' for readers, as well as how to do that yourself. But the essential element for success in this unit is to practise, practise, practise writing your own stories. Let's get started.

narrative

a genre in the 'story' genre family that has a social purpose of resolving a complication in a story; typical stages of a narrative are an orientation, complication and resolution, with optional stages of an evaluation and a coda

mood

the emotions (e.g. fear, longing, sympathy, joy, surprise, trust, anger, pleasure) provoked in the reader, partially by the tone and/or atmosphere of a text

10.1a Your turn

Playing with story length

Complete the following activities in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 Write a summary of your favourite movie or book in 100 words. Try to choose a famous story that would be familiar to others in your class. Make sure you write in complete sentences.
- 2 Now rewrite your summary in 50 words. Remember to keep writing in complete sentences.
- 3 Now rewrite your summary in 25 words. Can you keep your complete sentences, or does your grammar have to suffer to adhere to the word limit?
- 4 Share your 25-word summary with your classmates. Are you able to guess which titles your classmates have written about?
- 5 Hold up a personal frame and write a short reflection (three to four sentences) on the process of shortening your summary. What was difficult? What kinds of information did you have to leave out the second and third time? How did your use of language change each time you wrote the summary?



Types of short stories

style

a distinctive way that language (and other meaning-making resources) are used in a text. An individual author can have a discernible style; so can a group of people (such as journalists), or even a period (such as the Elizabethan era)

Although they are all a form of narrative, short stories come in many **styles** and forms. One of the most contested features when considering a definition of short stories is the length. Alistair MacLeod once said, 'Well then. Well then. Just make your story as long as a piece of string, and it will work out just fine'.

Over time, the publishing industry has developed some conventions that offer guidance about the word limit for short stories. It is generally accepted that short stories be under 7500 words in length.

For a school assessment, you would never be asked to write a 7500-word short story. The focus of this chapter is preparing you for Summative internal assessment 3: Examination – imaginative written response. The stipulated length for this task is 800–1000 words, which, as a narrative, falls into the category of 'flash fiction'.

The term 'flash fiction' is relatively modern, but the form has been around since the beginning of recorded literature. These days, online publishing has increased the popularity of flash fiction, and it appeals to readers who may only have short bursts of reading time available during their busy days. Each year, numerous competitions attract flash-fiction writers. The parameters of these competitions have helped to define the following sub-types within flash fiction: the six-word story; dribble or minisaga (50 words); drabble or microfiction (100 words); Twitterature (280 words); sudden fiction (750 words); and flash fiction (1000 words).

Regardless of the length, flash fiction is characterised by its brevity and the fact that it contains a beginning, a middle and an end.

Types of collections

While online publishing is the perfect domain for individual short stories, many authors still publish collections of short stories as books. It is possible to roughly categorise these collections into two types:

- *Collections organised around a central idea.* This might be a **theme**, a place, a type of story or even a time of year. Sometimes these collections are anthologies (when more than one author contributes to a collection). Other examples of collections of this type from the English Prescribed Text List are Nam Le's *The Boat* and Tim Winton's *The Turning*.
- *Collections of stories from across an author's career.* Their only link is usually that they are all written by the same person. Examples of this type of collection from the English Prescribed Text List are the collected short stories of Frank O'Connor and Katherine Mansfield.

theme

an abstract element (e.g. surveillance, love, reconciliation ambition) in a literary text that is repeated or referred to several times

10.16 Your turn

Experiment with flash fiction

- 1 Write a six-word memoir about yourself (a memoir is an account of someone's life).

- 2 Now write a 10-word memoir about yourself.

- 3 Compare your memoirs with your peers. Discuss the writing process with them: Did you find this challenge difficult? Which of your memoirs do you prefer? Why? Which were the most engaging memoirs in the class?
- 4 If you have access to the internet, find and read some examples of flash fiction online. Websites such as *The New Yorker* and *Book Riot* have excellent collections of flash fiction.

Alistair MacLeod's *Island*

The central text in this chapter is Canadian author Alistair MacLeod's *Island: Collected Stories*, published in 2011. This collection contains 16 stories and is the amalgamation of two earlier collections, *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* (1976) and *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories* (1986).

While these stories span the duration of MacLeod's professional writing career, they are unified by a common idea: an exploration of the interaction between people and place. Most of the stories contained in *Island* are set in Cape Breton, an island off Nova Scotia in the far east of Canada. Other stories depict the experiences of Cape Bretonites when they leave or return to the island.

MacLeod, a native of Cape Breton, said that he was simply writing from what he knew. He was a professor of English who returned to Cape Breton each summer to write. A perfectionist, MacLeod wrote an average of one short story a year, and each is dated within *Island*, which gives interesting insight into the way the landscape and its people changed over time.

The stories contained in *Island* reveal a great interest in the ways people relate to the land – many of the characters rely upon the environment for employment, sustenance and shelter. Having grown up on a farm, MacLeod presents realities of agricultural life that some readers may find confronting. Through this world view, MacLeod explores a range of themes, including the cycle of life and death; the development of agriculture; urbanisation; the impact of itinerate employment on individuals and families; intergenerational family relationships; masculinity; and how people interact with the ocean.

Due to the chronological nature of the stories, the concept of human progress – which was explored in Chapter 5 – is evident.



Source 1 The location of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia

10.1c Your turn

Research the context

context
the situational or cultural environments in which authors, texts and audiences exist

While MacLeod wrote in the modern era, his **context** is very different from what we are familiar with in Australia. As he writes largely from personal experience, it is valuable to develop an understanding of both MacLeod and the local world in which he was writing. Using the internet, or library books, find answers to the following questions. Write your answers in your notebook or on a computer.

1 Alistair MacLeod

- a Who was Alistair MacLeod? What interesting experiences did he have in his life?
- b What was MacLeod's approach to writing? See if you can find interviews that he has given to help you.
- c What were MacLeod's significant writing achievements?

2 Nova Scotia and Cape Breton

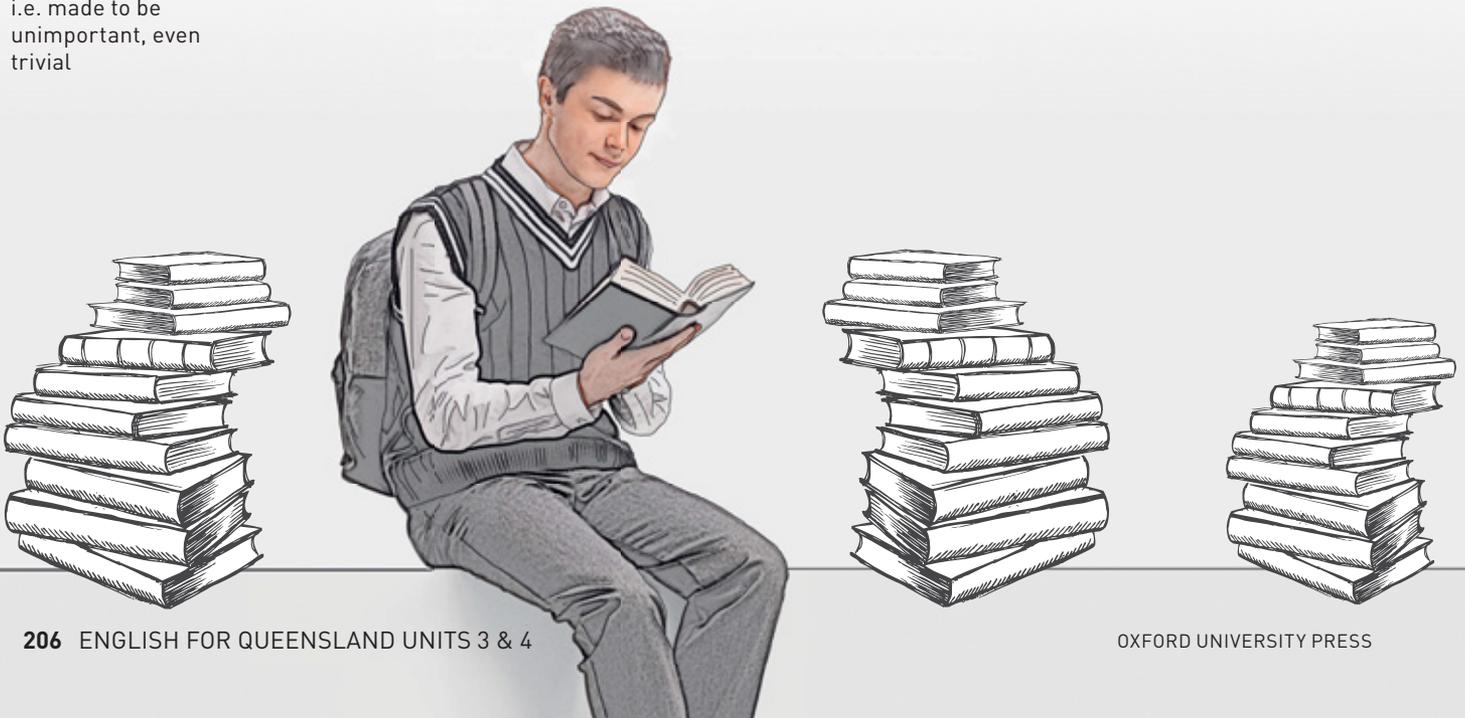
- a What can you discover about the landscape and climate in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton? How is this landscape different from Queensland's?
- b How do the following industries contribute to the lifestyles of those living on Cape Breton?
 - Fishing
 - Mining
 - Agriculture
- c How has daily life changed for residents of Cape Breton since MacLeod was born in 1936?

Make predictions

Based on your research, write some predictions about the following in your notebook or on a computer.

- 3 What types of characters do you expect to encounter in MacLeod's stories?
- 4 What kinds of things do you think will happen to these characters?
- 5 What kinds of characters are likely to be excluded from or **marginalised** within the stories? Why?
- 6 What types of values, attitudes and beliefs do you think the stories will endorse?

marginalised
an adjective that refers to something being pushed to the side, i.e. made to be unimportant, even trivial



10.2

CHARACTERS IN SHORT STORIES

The first essential aspect of narratives is the characters. Although it is true that characters in narratives are as unique as the individuals who exist in the real world, it is possible to consider groups of similar characters when analysing the ways stories are written. Broadly, characters fall into three categories:

- close to self
- self if ...?
- different from self.

You will notice that these categories are not determined by characteristics of the narrative character (such as vampires, brooding heroes or sassy heroines) but rather by the way they relate to the author. This is a useful lens to use throughout this chapter because your final task will require you to write a creative piece of your own. Looking at the ways authors create their characters will help you to create characters of your own.

Characters that are 'close to self'

The old saying goes, 'every person has a story inside them', and you will likely find that characters we can describe as 'close to self' are the product of these stories.

'Close to self' characters have a great deal in common with their authors and their stories may be semi-autobiographical in nature. They are likely to have the following features:

- similar life stage to the author, or written as a younger version of the author
- same **gender** identification as the author
- existence in a storyworld that reflects the author's real-life context
- experiences within the stories that reflect the author's own, or experiences that are well known to the author (experiences of friends and family, experiences that are common in the author's context)
- a world view that generally reflects that of the author.

There are many notable examples of characters that are 'close to self' in published literature. If you study Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in English you will become familiar with a **protagonist** who is 'close to self'.

gender

while male and female are largely ascribed as biological categories, gender is socially, culturally and personally constructed. Gender can sit outside the commonly assumed binary of masculine and feminine, and gender identity refers to one's self-identification using a range of terms that may go beyond 'male' and 'female'

protagonist

the lead character in a story (novel, play, film)

10.2a Your turn

Creating a 'close to self' character

- 1 In your notebook or on a computer, write a descriptive paragraph that introduces readers to a character who is close to yourself. You might like to include details about:
 - your age
 - the gender with which you identify
 - your appearance
 - the values, attitudes and beliefs you hold.

Rather than simply writing a list, consider how you can show your character being and doing these things as if your paragraph forms part of a story.

- 
- 2 Now consider how a character who is 'close to you' would exist in a narrative. Write two lists in your notebook or on a computer, one each for:
 - a places you exist in
 - b the ways you spend your time.
 - 3 Return to the paragraph you wrote for Question 1. Improve the quality of your description by adding details about one of the places and one of the activities from your lists in Question 2.
 - 4 If you feel you need further extension or support, try writing more paragraphs using different combinations of settings and activities to introduce your character. Choosing very different settings and activities will be more challenging than using those that logically fit together.
-

Characters that are 'self if ...?'

Some authors push their 'close to self' characters into new directions to create 'self if ...?' characters. These characters are created by changing something about a 'close to self' character, and exploring how they would react. These changes may include:

- an aspect of the character's essential make up, such as their gender **identity**, ethnicity, age or physicality
- putting the character into a new or challenging situation. This situation may be real or imagined
- giving the character magical, supernatural or physical powers
- putting the character into a different time, place or social setting.

The question the author then explores becomes 'How would the character behave if ...?'

'Self if ...?' characters are popular in published literature, particularly in the category of Young Adult Fiction, where teenage characters are forced to confront challenging situations. Dystopian narratives also make use of this character type. If you study Karen Joy Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* in English you will become familiar with a protagonist who is a 'self if ...?' character. The beauty of these types of characters is that they tend to be quite realistic in their construction and allow readers to consider how they might react if faced with a similar change in their lives.

10.2b Your turn

Creating a 'self if ...' character

- 1 Return to the 'close to self' character you created in *Your turn 10.2a*. Write a descriptive paragraph in your notebook or on a computer for each of the changes suggested below for creating a 'self if ...?' character. You should try to be as creative as possible, but if you are struggling, a suggestion is included in brackets:
 - a an aspect of the character's essential make-up (e.g. change your character's gender identity)
 - b putting the character into a new or challenging situation (e.g. your character must take control of an aeroplane)
 - c giving the character magical, supernatural or physical powers (e.g. give your character incredible strength)
 - d putting the character into a different time, place or social setting (e.g. put your character into Medieval England).
-

identity
a person's conception or understanding of themselves, and the ways they represent this through their genre and language choices

Characters that are 'different from self'

As an author, it is almost impossible to write a completely impartial text. Aspects of an author's own world view will always permeate their writing in some way. However, one of the greatest joys of writing is the ability to imagine yourself in other people's shoes, to think about the perspectives and experiences of others.

Characters that are 'different from self' are a product of this kind of thinking. These characters are intended to represent a different life experience – one that is foreign to the author, and possibly the reader. Sometimes these characters are made foreign by the storyworlds they inhabit or the challenges they face; however, they vary from 'self if ...?' characters as they are not representations of the author facing these foreign settings or challenges, but characters that are significantly different from the author.

Characters that are 'different from self' may be either real-world characters or imagined characters.

Real-world characters

Some authors choose to model their characters on real-world people; for example, famous or historical figures as in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* and Hannah Kent's *Burial Rites*. Others may be imagined characters based on a strong understanding of a time and place, such as in Anthony Doerr's *All the Light We Cannot See* or Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. This approach to creating characters is reliant on extensive research on the author's part to ensure their character is believable to readers, particularly those who are familiar with the chosen context.

Imagined characters

Some authors choose to create characters that are entirely imagined. For example:

- a character that is a fantastical creation that does not conform to human traits. This might be a sci-fi or fantasy character such as a robot, an alien or an animal, as in Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot*. This type of character would not be expected to behave as humans do
- a character that is human, but with characteristics that are fantastical and bearing little in common with the author, such as the character Lestat in Ann Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* series. This character may have reason not to behave like a human
- characters that are human but very different from the author, such as Ponyboy Curtis in SE Hinton's *The Outsiders*. Readers would expect these characters to adhere to normal conventions of human society, and they may not be aware of the significant differences between the author and the character.

Ethical considerations for characters 'different from self'

Although creating characters that are different from yourself can be exciting and liberating, there are also ethical considerations involved in writing from a different perspective. Authors writing from a position of cultural power must beware of accidentally engaging in **cultural appropriation** if representing minority cultures through their characters. A recent literary movement has emphasised the value of writing in your '**own voice**'. If you do decide to write in a significantly different 'voice' from your own, some strategies you can use to check and refine your representations are to:

- investigate the cultural concepts and identities you want to represent in your story to appreciate potential areas of sensitivity or struggle

cultural appropriation

when cultural elements such as ceremonies, traditions, fashion, symbols, language and music from a minority group are adopted or represented by a member of the dominant culture (e.g. an author) in a decontextualised and sometimes disrespectful way

own voice

when diverse characters are written by authors from that same diverse group





- ask someone who belongs to the cultural group you are trying to represent to act as an ‘authenticity reader’, evaluating the meanings in your story from their perspective
- be ready to accept critical feedback and to abandon characterisations that aren’t working out – you might be trying to write too far out of your experience zone, for now.

10.2c Your turn

Creating a character who is ‘different from self’

- 1 Based on the explanations discussed, create two characters who are ‘different from self’.
 - a One character should be a real-world character. You might like to research a famous figure or draw on contexts you have learnt about in other subjects at school.
 - b The other character should be imagined.

Write a descriptive paragraph about each character in your notebook or on a computer. Remember to show readers where the character exists and what they do, rather than listing features.

Reflecting on your ethical choices

- 2 When you considered different characters to create, did you encounter any personal ‘no-go’ areas; that is, any cultural group that you felt entirely unprepared (or unwilling) to represent? If so, write about them in your notebook or on a computer.
- 3 Do you think you conducted a satisfactory amount of research into the characters’ context before constructing them in a story? In your notebook or on a computer, explain whether your research preparation enabled you to respectfully create new characters with an authentic perspective.

How characters are crafted

To be effective, characters must be believable and well crafted. While in real life we meet real people and have opportunities to interact with them, when ‘meeting’ fictional characters we only have access to the information the author chooses to give us. We create a character in our minds by assembling:

- how the character is described
- what the character does
- what the character says
- what other characters say about them.

In his book *Literary Terms: A Practical Glossary* (2005), Brian Moon identified two approaches to constructing a character from this information.

Traditionally, readers have collected the information given about a character and treated it as if that character is a real person. This allows readers to apply their understanding, morality and world view to the character to make judgments about their behaviour. They are able to identify with or villainise characters based on their notions of correct behaviour in a given situation. This reading approach aligns with what we have termed the ‘personal frame’ in this Student book.

More modern reading practices look at characters as devices that represent particular world views and the values, attitudes and beliefs that underpin those world views. This reading approach acknowledges that all stories are contrivances intended to **position** readers in a particular way. While accepting that reading requires readers to fill the gaps in a text in the way

position
the way an author uses structures, language and resources from other modes to influence readers’ attitudes about people, characters, events, ideas and arguments

the author intended, it also allows for critical or resistant readings of characters and their actions. This reading approach aligns with what we have termed the 'critical frame' in this Student book. Let's take a look at how the four frames model can help us better understand the ways characters are constructed in narratives. Read the following excerpts from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (Source 2) and Zelda Fitzgerald's *Save Me the Waltz* (Source 3) and answer the questions in *Your turn 10.2d* in your notebook or on a computer.

Source 2 An extract from *Pride and Prejudice*

[This extract depicts the end of a conversation between Mr and Mrs Bennet. Mr Bennet is the first to speak.]

'You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.'

'I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference.'

'They have none of them much to recommend them,' replied he; 'they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.'

'Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves.'

'You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these last twenty years at least.'

'Ah, you do not know what I suffer.'

'But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood.'

'It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them.'

'Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all.'

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Penguin Books, London, 2008, pp. 6–7

Source 3 An extract from *Save Me the Waltz*

'She's the wildest one of the Beggs, but she's a thoroughbred,' people said.

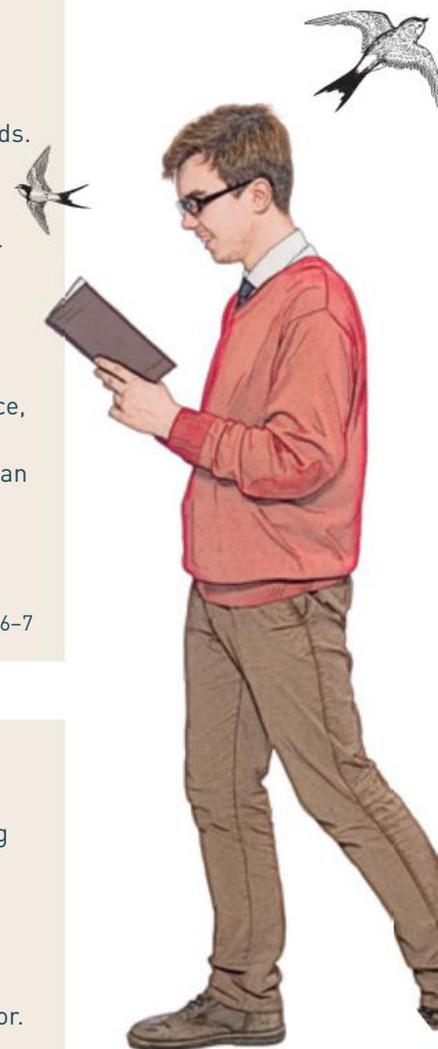
Alabama knew everything they said about her – there were so many boys who wanted to 'protect' her that she couldn't escape knowing. She leaned back in the swing visualising herself in her present position.

'Thoroughbred!' she thought, 'meaning that I never let them down on the dramatic possibilities of a scene – I give a damned good show.'

'He's just like a very majestic dog,' she thought of the tall officer beside her, 'a hound, a noble hound! I wonder if his ears would meet over his nose.' The man vanished in a metaphor.

His face was long, culminating in a point of lugubrious sentimentality at the self-conscious end of his nose. He pulled himself intermittently to pieces, showering himself in fragments above her head. He was obviously at an emotional tension.

(Continues on next page)



Source 3 *cont.*

'Little lady, do you think you could live on five thousand a year?' he asked benevolently.
'To start with,' he added, on second thought.
'I could, but I don't want to.'
'Then why did you kiss me?'
'I had never kissed a man with a moustache before.'
'That's hardly a reason – '
'No. But it's as good a reason as many people would have to offer for going into convents.'
'There's no use in my staying any longer, then,' he said sadly.
'I s'pose not. It's half-past eleven.'
'Alabama, you're positively indecent. You know what an awful reputation you've got and I offer to marry you anyway, and – '
'And you're angry because I won't make you an honest man.'

Zelda Fitzgerald, *Save Me the Waltz*, Vintage, London, 2001, pp. 28–9

10.2d Your turn

Understanding character construction

personal



Holding up the personal frame, respond to Questions 1 to 3.

- 1 Which character from Sources 2 and 3 do you find the most interesting? Why?
- 2 Do you see aspects of your own personality represented in any of the characters?
- 3 Do the characters resemble anyone you know? Explain.

structural



Holding up the structural frame, respond to Questions 4 to 8.

- 4 How does Austen create humour in the dialogue in Source 2?
- 5 In Source 2, the characters are illustrated through a combination of what they say and what the omniscient narrator says about them at the end of the extract. How does this narration build on what has been revealed in the dialogue?
- 6 How are readers positioned to react to the characters in Source 2?
- 7 How would you describe the character Alabama in Source 3? Support your ideas with evidence from the extract.
- 8 What does Source 3 reveal about the relationship between the characters?

cultural



Holding up the cultural frame, respond to Questions 9 and 10.

- 9 How do the extracts in Sources 2 and 3 differ in their representations of women?
- 10 What cultural or social norms about marriage are represented in the extracts? How do they differ?

critical



Holding up the critical frame, respond to Questions 11 to 15.

- 11 Whose perspectives are endorsed by these representations?
- 12 Whose views are omitted or silenced by these representations?
- 13 Does either extract represent men positively? Explain your reasoning.
- 14 Which extract are modern readers more likely to support? Why?
- 15 What types of people might feel challenged by the constructions of gender in these extracts?

Examining characters in MacLeod's *Island*

Alistair MacLeod makes use of a range of techniques to create characters readers can connect with. One example of this is the characterisation employed in 'To Every Thing There Is a Season', from the collection *Island: Collected Stories* (2011).

'To Every Thing There Is a Season' is a story written from the perspective of an older **narrator** reflecting on a Christmas from his boyhood. This is one of the shortest stories in the collection. After giving a vivid description of the frigid conditions his family are living through on their farm on Cape Breton, the narrator turns his attention to the impending arrival of his older brother, who is returning home for Christmas. Neil arrives and his youthful strength and energy serve to both excite the family and contrast with his father's deteriorating health. Amid the closing scenes of sharing Christmas gifts, the narrator realises that he is no longer one of the young children, and begins to become aware of himself approaching adulthood, and his father approaching the end of his life.

Read the story 'To Every Thing There Is a Season' of *Island: Collected Stories* and complete *Your turn 10.2e* in your notebook or on a computer.

narrator
the voice that tells the story. This might be one of the characters (first person) or an omniscient voice (second or third person). It is possible that the focaliser (the one who sees the story) and the narrator (the voice that tells the story) are different

10.2e Your turn

Holding up the personal frame, respond to Questions 1 to 5.

- 1 What memories of family gatherings does this story evoke for you?
- 2 How did the story make you feel?
- 3 What did you like about the story?
- 4 What, if anything, did you find challenging about this story?
- 5 How does it remind you of other stories you have read or heard?

Holding up the structural frame, answer Questions 6 to 10.

- 6 The opening of the story is unusual because it identifies that the narrator is looking back on an earlier point in his life. He admits that, 'I am not sure how much I speak with the voice of that time or how much in the voice of what I have since become. And I am not sure how many liberalities I may be taking with the boy I think I was' (p. 209).



tone

the attitude (e.g. casual, defiant, sarcastic, nostalgic, melancholic, positive, negative) of characters (especially the focalising character and/or narrator) that readers infer from a text



privileged

an adjective that refers to someone's perspective being given focus and prominence, almost as if it were a right



- a How does this affect the reader's perception of the narrator's reliability?
- b Why might an author choose to use this perspective for their focalisation?
- f How does MacLeod construct a **tone** of admiration towards the older brother, Neil?
- 8 The narrator seems to naturalise his father's behaviour and ill-health, whereas Neil is shocked by it. What does this suggest about their different perspectives and characters?
- 9 As the gifts are distributed (p. 217), the narrator realises that he is not one of the young children anymore. How has MacLeod foreshadowed this realisation earlier in the story?
- 10 The story closes with the following observation: "Every man moves on," says my father quietly, and I think he speaks of Santa Claus, "but there is no need to grieve. He leaves good things behind" (p. 217).
 - a What insight does this give into the characters of the father and the narrator?
 - b How does this shift in tone affect the reader's final impression of the story?

Holding up the cultural frame, answer Questions 11 to 13.

- 11 What social and cultural norms about family are represented in this story?
- 12 How does the author represent masculinity in the story?
- 13 What values about youth and ageing are promoted?

Holding up the critical frame, answer Questions 14 to 18.

- 14 What does this text invite us to believe about growing older?
- 15 Whose perspectives have been marginalised by the story?
- 16 Whose perspectives have been emphasised or **privileged** within the story?
- 17 What textual or cultural conventions are challenged by this story? Consider how the story represents Christmas and/or family gatherings.
- 18 This story was adapted into a picture book in 2012, with the subtitle, 'A Cape Breton Christmas Story'. What does this suggest about the way people have read and responded to the story?

Use the story 'To Every Thing There Is a Season' to prompt your own creative writing. In your notebook or on a computer, write an extended response (at least 600 words) to one of the following questions.

- 19 Readers are given some insight into the character of Neil through the narrator's descriptions of him. Write as the character Neil. You might like to set your response in the time before he arrives home, or show his feelings about what he finds upon returning home.
- 20 While the narrator mentions his sisters, they are silenced in the story. Take up one of these characters and write their perspective on their brother (and possibly his travelling mates) arriving at the home.
- 21 The opening passage of the story identifies that 'Christmas is a time of both past and present and often the two are imperfectly blended' (p. 209). Part of this is due to the rituals some people repeat every year at Christmas. Consider an event from your childhood that seems to happen in the same way every year and write an account of this event (e.g. Christmas, a birthday, a family holiday, a trip to the beach).
- 22 The use of a narrator who is an adult reflecting on their childhood is a powerful choice in this story. Consider an event from your childhood that you now have a better understanding about. Try to write an account of this event from a child's perspective that hints at your mature understanding.

10.3

STORYWORLDS IN SHORT STORIES

The storyworld is the second integral part of a narrative because characters must exist in a time and place. In some short stories, the exact nature of the storyworld is not significant: the constraints placed on the author in terms of word count require a focus on characters and action rather than on developing an elaborate world within which those characters exist. In other narratives the storyworld can have a significant role in shaping both the characters and the action. This is particularly true if any aspect of the storyworld creates the problem, as in the case of dystopian and sci-fi narratives.

Storyworlds can be organised into three broad categories:

- 1 well known
- 2 visited
- 3 imagined.

As with the character types discussed earlier, these categories should be considered in relation to the author – these are storyworlds based on social and cultural settings that authors are familiar with, have visited or have imagined themselves. In representing the storyworld in their narrative, authors will consider how familiar this social and cultural setting is likely to be to their intended **audience** – the greater the distance of knowledge between the reader and the storyworld, the greater the onus on the author to make it seem familiar to the reader.

audience
the people a writer/speaker has in mind when producing a text. This might be a real audience or one that can be inferred from evidence in the text

Known and visited settings

Settings that are well known by the author and those they have visited can be considered together because they have some common features:

- they exist in the real world
- the author has experienced them firsthand
- some readers will also have visited these places, or places like them
- there can be incorrect or unrealistic ways to represent these places and times, and some readers will be able to identify these.

Setting a narrative in a known or visited storyworld has some advantages: the setting requires less creativity to develop and authors can rely on their memory of the place to help construct a realistic representation of it. If the setting is likely to also be familiar to readers, such as a school or a famous city, it may not be necessary to provide as many details because readers will be able to imagine the setting effectively themselves; this can cut down the word count of short stories considerably.

However, there are traps in using a setting that is well known to readers if the author does not render it effectively. If the setting is famous or widely known, readers will expect that the author's representation of it aligns with what they also know of the setting, which takes some care on behalf of the author.

Another important factor in creating a believable storyworld is an effective representation of social organisation. As known and visited settings exist in the real world, the author needs to represent roles and relationships that generally reflect those found in the real world. These roles and relationships are constructed through language choices that depict the closeness and power between characters, and between the reader and the characters. While authors may wish to create a disturbance in known roles and relationships in order to position readers to react in a particular way, the reason for this disturbance needs to be understood by readers, and whatever roles and relationships are established need to be relatively consistent within the storyworld.

Now complete the activities in *Your turn 10.3a* in your notebook or on a computer.



10.3a Your turn

Creating a setting you know or have visited

- 1 Create two lists of storyworlds: one containing 10 places you know well and one containing 10 places you have visited.
- 2 Choose one place that you could make interesting for readers. Write 400 words of descriptive prose about that place. Note: you are not required to create a complete narrative, but you may wish to write about a person or people interacting with this place.
- 3 Now rewrite your description in 200 words.
- 4 Hold up the personal frame and write a short reflection (three to four sentences) on the process of shortening your description. What was difficult? What kinds of information did you have to leave out the second time? Which description is more effective?



Imagined settings

Although known and visited settings have their advantages, some authors find them limiting or inappropriate to a particular narrative and choose to create a storyworld based on an imagined setting instead. We use the term 'imagined settings' to describe settings that are:

- real places that the author has not visited. This might include foreign countries, different parts of their own country or different historical periods
- alternative representations of the real world in the form of futuristic or dystopian settings or alternative histories
- imagined settings that do not exist in the real world. This includes fantasy worlds such as Tolkien's Middle-earth or Sarah J Maas's Prythian, and many sci-fi settings.

In writing a story within an imagined setting, authors need to ensure that their storyworld makes sense. In the case of a real-world setting, this is reliant on extensive research in order to represent the real-world locations faithfully. Regardless of whether they are real or entirely imagined, the roles and relationships the author establishes need to be consistent and believable.

Read the two storyworld extracts in Sources 4 and 5 before completing *Your turn 10.3b*.

Source 4 Storyworld: Extract 1

I was a ball of excitement as we prepared to step out onto the moon. Shifting anxiously from foot to foot, I awaited the permission I needed to open the door of the shuttle in front of me. 'All clear!' I heard the commander yell, 'Roll out guys!' This was the culmination of all my hopes and dreams. I gripped the handle and pushed the door outwards.

Johnny pushed past me and tumbled down the stairs at a run in his haste to be the first to set foot on this new planet. I took one step and leaped out into the air, making the most of the lack of gravity to float my body towards the ground. I landed with a thud on the ground, sending a puff of white dust up into the breeze around me. I lurched at Johnny and tackled him into the dust; we'd grown close in the two months it had taken us to fly from Earth.

I stared out into space, taking in the dark blue of the sky and watching as the Earth rose in the East. The stars seemed closer here, and the breeze ruffled the moondust as if it was talcum powder. A guy sure could get used to this!



Source 5 Storyworld: Extract 2

'Activating external access' cracked the tinny voice in my ear as the door in front of me opened and my body was pulled forward slightly by the suction of the air lock releasing. The weight on my shoulders shifted slightly as the compressor on my life-pack kicked up a gear and the stale smell of recirculated oxygen wafted into my helmet. As the heavy door swung to the left on its pneumatic arms, I saw the culmination of my hopes and dreams revealed before me.

I stepped forward into a world that was blinding white earth and engulfing black horizon in equally overwhelming measures. The light reflecting off the powdery ground cut into my eyes in the moments it took my auto-visor to adjust and darken. Once I could focus again I reached forward and gripped the rail at my right hand to steady myself, and indicated to my commander that he could release his grip on the back of my suit. I felt ever so slightly buoyant, in a strange limbo between the weightlessness of travelling within the shuttle and the familiar reassurance of stronger gravity at home on Earth. As I wobbled down the short flight of stairs my woollen undergarments itched against my close-fitting outersuit. The layers were irritating, but they fought off the frigid stillness of this barren atmosphere.

I took my first step on the hallowed terrain of the moon. My foot sank as if the ground was composed of crushed bones or shell, before meeting the resistance of the rock below with a dry squelching sensation like stepping onto hot sand, the lightness of my body feeling alien despite the familiarity of the action.



10.3b Your turn

Considering the construction of an imagined setting

- 1 The moon is an interesting setting for a story. While most people are familiar with images of it, very few have ever been there. Which extract best aligns with your knowledge of the moon? Why?

Hold up the structural frame and answer Questions 2 to 6.

- 2 Underline any details in the extracts that you think are factually inaccurate.
- 3 Choose a different coloured pen for each of the five senses (touch, smell, taste, hearing, vision). Underline or highlight the description in each of the extracts that appeals to those senses.
- 4 Look closely at the dialogue. What differences do you notice between the two extracts?

- 5 How does the use of the word 'alien' in Source 5 have multiple meanings?

structural



6 Which extract is more successful in creating a believable storyworld? Why?

Create a response

7 Choose a setting from the list below that you have not visited and write a descriptive scene in which a character enters that setting. Before you start writing, you should consider how the setting would interact with the five senses. Write approximately 500 words of your scene in your notebook or on a computer.

- a A coral reef
- b A foreign city such as Paris, New York or London
- c A snowy alpine forest

Storyworld of *Island*

Authors work in different ways and find inspiration in different places. Some stories start with a strong impression of a character or a problem that needs to be solved; others are dictated by a particular setting or storyworld. Alistair MacLeod's *Island* is a collection unified by a strong sense of place, with most of the stories set on Cape Breton or depicting characters who have lived there. As this is a setting in which MacLeod spent much of his life, it is a well-known setting, even though in time and place it might feel quite foreign for Australian readers today.

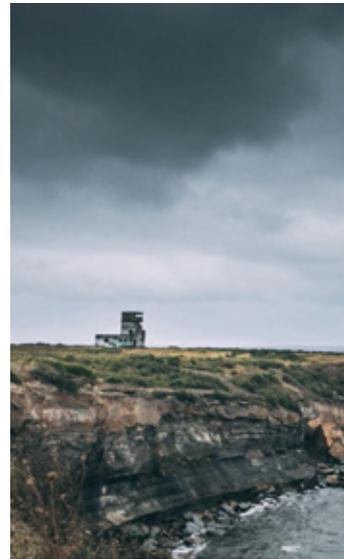
To better understand how this setting is constructed by MacLeod as a storyworld, read Sources 6, 8 and 9 and look carefully at the images in Source 7, before completing *Your turn 10.3c*.

Source 6 *Island* Extract 1 (from the short story 'In the Fall')

It is hard to realize that this is the same ocean that is the crystal blue of summer when only the thin oil-slicks left by the fishing boats or the startling whiteness of the riding seagulls mar its azure sameness. Now it is roiled and angry, and almost anguished; hurling up the brown dirty balls of scudding foam, the sticks of pulpwood from some lonely freighter, the caps of unknown men, buoys from mangled fishing nets and the inevitable bottles that contain no messages. And always also the shreds of blackened and stringy seaweed that it has ripped and torn from its own lower regions, as if this is the season for self-mutilation – the pulling out of the secret, private, unseen hair.

We are in the kitchen of our house and my mother is speaking as she energetically pokes at the wood and coal within her stove. The smoke escapes, billows upward and flattens itself out against the ceiling. Whenever she speaks she does something with her hands. It is as if the private voice within her can only be liberated by some kind of physical action. She is tall and dark with high cheekbones and brown eyes. Her hair, which is very long and very black, is pulled back severely and coiled in a bun at the base of her neck, where it is kept in place by combs of coral.

Alistair MacLeod, *Island: Collected Stories*, Vintage, London, 2011, p. 99



Source 7 The scenery on Cape Breton Island

Source 8 *Island* Extract 2 (from the short story 'Vision')

My father was in good spirits because the season was over and we had done reasonably well and we were bringing in most of our gear intact. And there seemed no further need to rush.

The sea was almost calm, although there was a light breeze at our backs and we throttled down our engine because there really was no reason to hurry into the wharf for the last and final time. I was in the stern of the boat steadying the piled lobster traps that we had recently raised from the bottom of the sea. Some of them still gleamed with droplets of salt water and streamers of seaweed dangled from their laths. In the crates beside my feet the mottled blue-green lobsters moved and rustled quietly, snapping their tails as they slid over one another with that peculiar dry/wet sound of shell and claws over shell and claws. Their hammer claws had been pegged and fastened shut with rubber bands so they would not mutilate each other and so decrease their value.

'Put some of those in the sack for ourselves,' said my father, turning his head back over his right shoulder as he spoke.

Alistair MacLeod, *Island: Collected Stories*, Vintage, London, 2011, p. 322

Source 9 *Island* Extract 3 (from the short story 'Second Spring')

Finally I found her heavy tracks deep in the wet spring earth. They were already nearly filled with water, indicating that she had passed a considerable time before. I followed them across a small stream which trickled from a marsh and then around the edge of the marsh itself and then up a steep incline and finally to the edge of a considerable grove of spruce and fir.

The trees of the grove were closely crowded together. Parting the branches and still following the heavy tracks in the brown needled floor, I came suddenly into a small clearing which was almost like a room. The edges of it were bordered by wild brambles which had not yet begun to bud, and there were also several older heavier trees which had been uprooted and toppled by the winter winds and now lay like heavy barriers along the wooded perimeter. There seemed no way out of it except through the entranceway that we had used.

Alistair MacLeod, *Island: Collected Stories*, Vintage, London, 2011, pp. 246–7

10.3c Your turn

Evaluating the construction of settings

evaluative language

this includes the positive and negative words and phrases used to express emotions, judge people's behaviour and appreciate (as either good or bad) things such as ideas, cultural artefacts (books, ideas, performances, artworks), natural landscapes and events

- 1 Look at the images in Source 7 again. Give a description of the environment you can see in these images. Write one to two paragraphs in your notebook or on a computer.
- 2 Annotate the three extracts (Sources 6, 8 and 9) to identify the **evaluative language** MacLeod has used in relation to the settings and the characters within them.
- 3 Consider Source 6.

a How does MacLeod create contrast between the ocean and the narrator's mother?

b What is the effect of this contrast?

- 4 Compare Sources 6 and 8.

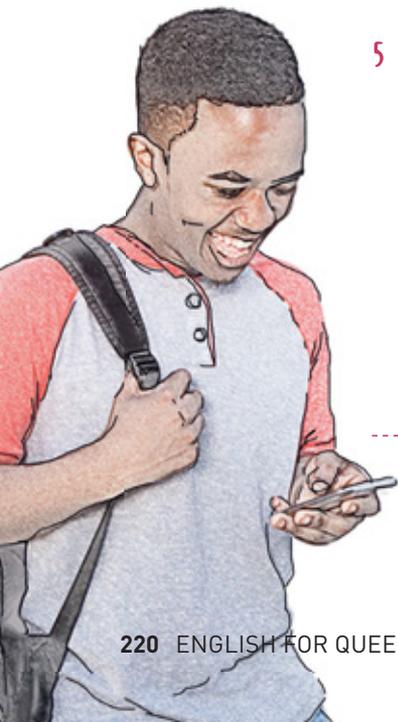
a How does the description of the sea create different moods in the extracts?

b How do the different ways the characters interact with the environment give hints about their characterisation?

- 5 Consider Source 9.

a How does MacLeod's language change when describing the forest setting in Source 9?

b In your notebook or on a computer, sketch what you imagine the scene in Source 9 to look like. Compare your drawings with your peers. What aspects are similar?

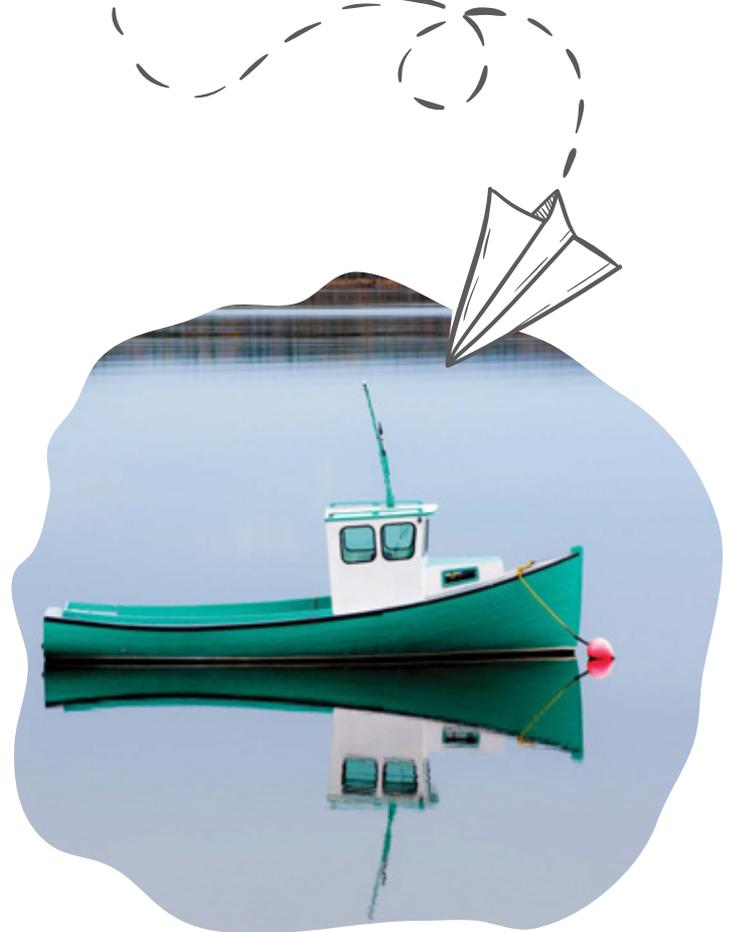


Examining storyworld in MacLeod's *Island*

MacLeod makes use of a range of techniques to create believable storyworlds in his short stories. One example of this is the representation of the environment in 'The Boat'.

'The Boat' is a story that deals with relationships within a family, and between the members of that family and the sea. The story opens with the narrator suffering from sleeplessness and heading to an all-night diner in the early hours of the morning to stave off loneliness before he starts his day. The story is reflective in tone and focuses on the narrator's relationship with his father, and on the periphery of this, both of their relationships with his mother and the narrator's sisters. The complication occurs in the form of the father growing older and less able to man his boat. The narrator steps in to assist and recounts events from their time fishing together. The climax occurs as the father is thrown overboard and the reasons for the narrator's loneliness and sense of guilt are explained.

Read the story 'The Boat' on pages 1–25 of *Island: Collected Stories* (2011) and complete *Your turn 10.3d* in your notebook or on a computer.



Source 10 A Cape Breton Island fishing boat

10.3d Your turn

Considering storyworld in a short story

Holding up the personal frame, answer Questions 1 to 5.

- 1 How did the story make you feel?
- 2 Which character/s do you most identify with: the narrator, his father, his mother or his sisters? Why?
- 3 What did you like about the story?
- 4 What, if anything, did you find challenging about this story?
- 5 How does it remind you of other stories you've read or heard?

Holding up the structural frame, answer Questions 6 to 11.

- 6 How does the opening setting of the novel establish a mood? Support your ideas with evidence from the text.
- 7 How do the mother's and father's spaces within the house represent their characters?
- 8 Consider the use of the boat as a **motif**:
 - a What does it symbolise?
 - b How do the repeated references to the boat establish a set of values within the storyworld?
 - c How does the motif of the boat amplify in significance in the climax of the story?

personal



structural



motif

a concrete element in a literary text that is repeated or referred to several times. These motifs will generally be related to one or more themes

- 9 Consider the representation of the sea in the story.
- a What is the significance of the sea within the storyworld and the events of the story?
 - b Does the sea have any symbolic meaning within the story?
- 10 The narrator's siblings leave the island quite early in their lives, and by the end of the story, it is only his mother who remains.
- a How is the departure of the sisters represented in the story?
 - b How is the narrator's departure different? How is this reflected in the setting of his scenes off the island?
- 11 In the final scenes on the boat, MacLeod reveals some surprising information about the father's relationship with the ocean. How does his use of irony affect his representation of the father?



Holding up the cultural frame, answer Questions 12 to 14.

- 12 How does this story represent the relationship between people and the environment?
- 13 What social and cultural norms about gender are represented in this story?
- 14 What values about the following are promoted?
- a Family
 - b Masculinity
 - c Femininity
 - d Loyalty
 - e Education



Holding up the critical frame, answer Questions 15 to 18.

- 15 What does this text invite us to believe about a person's connection to place?
- 16 Whose perspectives have been marginalised in this story?
- 17 Whose perspectives have been emphasised or privileged?
- 18 Who might find the ideas represented in this text challenging? Why?

Use this story to prompt your own creative writing. Write an extended response (at least 600 words) to one of the following questions.

- 19 Take up the perspective of one of the narrator's sisters to write a creative response. You might like to set it at the point of leaving the island, or when she is sending books back home to her father.
- 20 Consider the father at an earlier point in his life. Write a scene in which he walks from his house to the boat, taking care to emphasise the physical setting of your response.
- 21 Which place makes you feel connected with the natural world? Write a response set in that place that highlights its effect on you.
- 22 The symbolic connection between characters and places is important in the story. Create a setting that represents who you are and set a response there (think of the father's messy but interesting bedroom or the mother's clean and stern kitchen).



10.4

PROBLEMS IN SHORT STORIES

The third essential aspect of a short story is the problem. In the genre table in Source 3 of Chapter 1 (Key genres for Senior English) this is referred to as the complication of the plot. Whichever word you choose, the function is the same: looking at the happenings of the story and the tension created through those things happening.

Narrative structure

Traditionally, short stories are considered to have some combination of the following stages:

- *orientation*: introduces readers to the setting and the key character/s
- *complication*: introduces the problem that must be solved in the story
- *resolution*: creates the peak of the action, where the problem is solved for better or worse
- *coda*: short stories tend to have a short period of falling action after the climax, if they have any at all. Many, prompted by a short word count, move straight to resolving the story.

Within these stages, authors can create rising and falling action to enhance the sense of tension as characters make attempts to solve the problems they face.

Unlike in novels, the elements of their structure tend to be compressed. You are likely to notice the following characteristics about short narratives:

- limited characters: there could be as few as just the protagonist, the protagonist and an **antagonist**, or the protagonist and a supporting character or two. This limits the types of problems and the ways of resolving those problems that an author can employ
- short orientation and resolution: a need to only communicate what is necessary means that authors will often cut straight to the action
- a limited number of attempts to solve the problem
- one main storyline: unlike in novels, there is no space for sub-plots in the final resolution.

Although short stories can be presented using a linear narrative structure, authors frequently subvert this structure in different ways for particular effect, which creates a non-linear structure. This might include:

- starting at the peak of the action, or immediately before the climax
- neglecting to include the orientation
- ending on a 'cliffhanger' (without a thorough resolution)
- using flashbacks to fill in information for readers as needed
- withholding information until the climax
- starting with the resolution and 'looping back' to tell the story from the beginning, **foreshadowing** the ending for readers.

Types of short story problems

There are a vast number of things that can go wrong (or right) for characters in a narrative. Sometimes this essential problem can be the inspiration for a story: once the author has the problem in mind, they can figure out what type of character could confront this problem and where or when that might happen. For other writers, generating a problem for the characters will come later in the planning process.

We can broadly categorise the problems of short stories into two types: 'moment in time' and 'reflective or character driven'.

antagonist

in a story, the character who opposes or is hostile to the protagonist, their adversary or their enemy. In some stories, the protagonist is the lead character's shadow (or foil), represents dark to the protagonist's light

foreshadowing

the inclusion of details that hint at or warn of events or developments that will occur later in the narrative



'Moment in time' stories

These stories happen within a very short space of time – usually no longer than half an hour. They may be small problems that are quick to solve (though no less significant to the character for being small) or larger problems that are solved with a single, grand action. The pace of these stories tends to be fast, and they likely feel 'action-packed' to readers. While these stories are brief in their time frame, they are still capable of tackling 'big issues' – often readers meet characters in the midst of a significant crisis or event that gives insight into the character's nature (and perhaps, more generally, into human nature).

'Reflective or character-driven' stories

Sometimes, the problem is not so much the focus of a short story, as it is the means of exploring a character. This is the case in reflective or character-driven stories. These narratives tend to play out over a longer 'real-world' time frame and may include significant tracts of reflection or flashback. The problems faced by characters are not likely to be so immediate, though they are still important to the character. These types of stories are difficult, though not impossible, to execute in the type of word limit allowed by flash fiction. You will notice that the bulk of the stories in Alistair MacLeod's *Island* are of this reflective type.

Language features and structure

The language features employed by an author affect the pace of their writing and the ways they are able to build tension towards the climax of their story. Language features are considered 'aesthetic' when they have potential to represent and evoke sensations and perceptions. Stylistic devices can also be used to craft the structure of a text in ways that prompt emotional and critical responses. For example, sentence structure is a stylistic device that can be used to shape meaning.

Sentence structure

One of the greatest influences on the pace of a story is not the action that is occurring, but the structure of the sentences that are used to narrate the action. Because every sentence must contain at least one verb, something will naturally happen in each sentence. Thus, the length and structure of those sentences will dictate how quickly or slowly things are happening due to the frequency of verbs within a text.

Simple sentences

Simple sentences are also called independent **clauses**. In their most basic form they contain a **subject** and a verb, forming a completed thought, as in, 'We're going to Blind River'. A succession of simple sentences will create a fast pace due to the high frequency of verbs compared to other words. You will often find simple sentences used to create rising tension and in proximity to the climax of a story. You should remember, however, that using too many simple sentences will limit the level of description you can achieve.

Compound sentences

A compound sentence contains two independent clauses joined by a coordinating **conjunction**. The coordinating conjunction shows the relationship between the two clauses or events (e.g. words such as because, and, but, so) as in, 'I will write, but it will not be from Blind River'. While the frequency of verbs in these sentences is still high, compound sentences enable authors to show relationships between actions, including those actions executed by different characters in the story. They are useful in various ways in all stages of the plot.

clause

a group of words that contains a verb (doing, being, thinking, saying word) and can contain further groups of word that communicate who or what is involved and in what circumstance (where, when, how, why, with what), e.g. *The boy (who) sat (verb) under the tree (where)*

subject

the person, place, thing or idea (expressed as a noun or noun group) that is doing something or being something ('participating') in a sentence

conjunction

a word that connects clauses within a sentence

Complex sentences

Complex sentences contain an independent clause and up to two dependent clauses. A dependent clause contains a subject and a verb, but cannot stand as a completed thought on its own. Dependent clauses can modify (add detail to) verbs (*adverbial clauses*) or nouns (*adjectival clauses*) or they can operate as nouns themselves (*noun clauses*). An example of a complex sentence is 'Its headlights seek out and follow the beckoning white line, which seems to draw us forward, upward and inward, forever into the vastness of the dark'. Complex sentences tend to be slower in pace, and are useful for descriptive passages. As such, they are more frequently found in the orientation and resolution of short stories.

Value-packed language

Given the brevity of a short story, every single word choice is critical. Indeed, Alistair MacLeod famously laboured over his language, writing his short stories one sentence at a time, by hand. He never needed to rewrite his drafts because he wouldn't move on until each sentence was perfect. Little wonder he only wrote one short story a year!

One way to gain depth in your expression without sacrificing your word count is to make the most of your nouns and verbs. There is no need to tell readers that 'He ran very quickly' if you can say that 'He dashed' or 'He sprinted'. Similarly, there is no need to describe a 'much taller and more commanding than average' man if you can call him 'imposing'. While adjectives and adverbs have their place, you can often write as effectively by choosing accurate, powerful nouns and verbs.

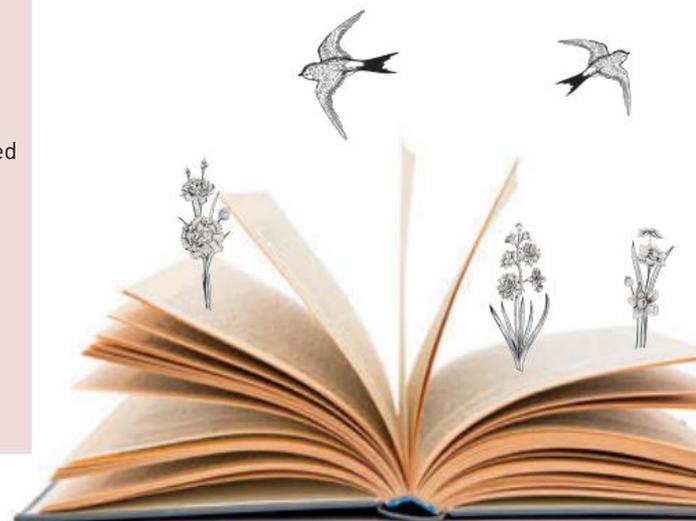
10.4a Your turn

Planning short stories

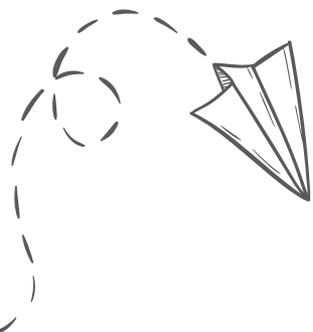
Holding up the structural frame, consider how to organise short stories.

- 1 Choose an option from each of the columns in the table below so that you have a character, a setting and a problem.

CHARACTER	SETTING	PROBLEM
- A high school student	- A boat in the middle of the ocean	- There is a fire
- A middle-aged office worker	- A distant planet	- A criminal is present
- A clown	- A Christmas party	- There is no food
- A commuter on their way to work	- A hairdressing salon	- A team challenge must be completed
- A shopper	- The school oval	- Something needs to be built
- A personal trainer	- A bakery	- Someone is vomiting
- A child with a bloody nose	- A poultry farm	- Someone is screaming
- A frazzled teacher	- Your house	- Something has disappeared



- 2 In your notebook or on a computer, write an outline of a short story in which the character solves the problem. You should be able to explain your story in 50 to 100 words (this is an overview only, not a completed story).
- 3 Now challenge yourself by choosing an anachronous or ridiculous combination of character, setting and problem for another story.
- 4 Write an overview of your second story, aiming again for 50 to 100 words.
- 5 Compare your story overviews with your peers. Who has crafted the most engaging story? Which one appears to be the most difficult one to write?
- 6 Choose one of your story overviews and write it up as a complete short story. You should aim to keep your word count under 1000 words. If you feel like challenging yourself, choose the second (anachronous) story that you created.



Examining problem in MacLeod's *Island*

MacLeod makes use of a range of techniques to create problems for his characters to solve. One example of this is the storyline of 'The Vastness of the Dark'.

'The Vastness of the Dark' is written from the perspective of a young man who has decided to leave his home on Cape Breton Island on his 18th birthday. In the morning, he lies in bed pondering his family and his decision, before confronting his parents in the kitchen. He is a little disappointed by the fact that he meets little resistance from either his parents or his grandparents, whom he visits on the way out of town. Though he has little in the way of a plan, he hitchhikes towards Vancouver, detailing his interactions with drivers. After a stint with a middle-aged salesman that causes him to question his perspective of both his own town and the ones he travels through, he accepts a ride with miners from Cape Breton who are heading towards Blind River – the one place he had disdained visiting.

Read the story 'The Vastness of the Dark' on pages 26–58 of *Island: Collected Stories* (2011) and complete *Your turn 10.4b* in your notebook or on a computer.

10.4b Your turn

Consider problems in a short story

Holding up the personal frame, answer Questions 1 to 5.

personal



- 1 Did you identify with the character's need to strike out on his own? Why?
- 2 What aspects of your life are similar to the life of the narrator?
- 3 What did you like about the story?
- 4 What, if anything, did you find challenging about this story?
- 5 How does it remind you of other stories you've read or heard?

structural



Holding up the structural frame, answer Questions 6 to 9.

- 6 While the story opens with mentions of it being the narrator's 'day of my deliverance' (p. 26) and it being a 'momentous day' (p. 26), it is not revealed that 'today I plan to leave behind this grimy Cape Breton coal mining town' until page 33. In the interim, he has reflected on his family and the geography of his house. How does this structural choice contribute to the construction of his perspective?

7 On page 45, the narrator reaches the mainland. He reflects:

I have been somehow apprehensive about even getting off Cape Breton Island, as if at the last moment it might extend gigantic tentacles, or huge monstrous hands like my grandfather's to seize and hold me back.

Yet he was a little disappointed that neither his parents nor his grandparents tried to obstruct him. How does this position readers to view his choice to leave?

- 8 How does the narrator's travel with the man in the red car complicate his feelings about leaving his 'grimy Cape Breton coal mining town' (p. 33)?
- 9 The final scene of the story shows the narrator accepting a lift with a group of miners from Cape Breton, who are travelling to Blind River. When they ask where he is going, the narrator says, 'I don't know. I'll have to think about it. I'll have to make up my mind' (p. 58).
- a What is the significance of the fact that the narrator finds himself travelling to Blind River at the end of the story?
 - b How does the travelling group of men mirror earlier scenes of comradery?
 - c How does the final line, 'it seems to bust your balls and it's bound to break your heart' (p. 58) – spoken in reference to coal mining – position readers?
 - d Make a prediction: what do you think will happen to the narrator after the conclusion of the story? What suggestions in the text is your answer based upon?

Holding up the cultural frame, answer Questions 10 to 12.

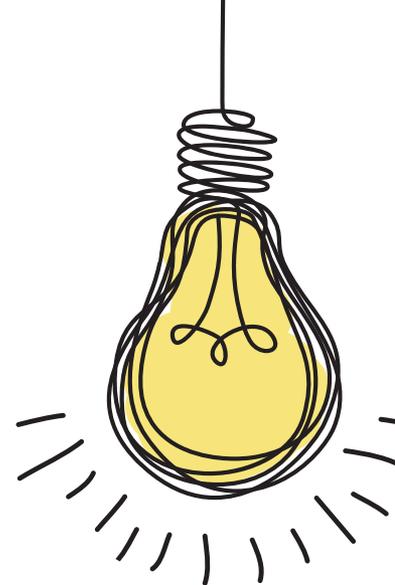
- 10 Consider the representation of race in the story.
- a What social and cultural ideas about African Americans are normalised in the story?
 - b How are Caucasian Canadians represented in the story?
 - c How do you think contemporary readers would react to these representations?
- 11 How are relationships between men and women represented in the story?
- 12 What values about family are promoted?

Holding up the critical frame, answer Questions 13 to 16.

- 13 What does this text invite us to believe about growing up?
- 14 Whose perspectives have been omitted, disregarded or marginalised?
- 15 Whose perspectives have been included, emphasised or privileged?
- 16 What kinds of readers might reject the dominant reading of this text? Why?

Use the story 'The Vastness of the Dark' to prompt your own creative writing. In your notebook or on a computer, write an extended response (at least 600 words) to one of the following questions.

- 17 Write from the perspective of one of the narrator's sisters. What is her experience of the morning that her brother leaves home?
- 18 Take up the grandmother as your focaliser. Use the letters as a symbol and write about her advice to her grandson.
- 19 If you were to pack up and leave home, where would you go? Show your readers what it looks like when you get there.
- 20 Write the reverse of this story: create a character who is being forced to leave home and goes unwillingly.



Examining character, storyworld and problem in MacLeod's *Island*

Now that you have developed an understanding of each of the elements of a short story, you can consider how they interact to create an effective short story. A good example of this interaction is in 'The Return'.

As the title suggests, 'The Return' depicts the return of a man, Angus, to his childhood home of Cape Breton, with his family in tow. The story is written from the viewpoint of his 10-year-old

son, Alex, and readers see his first impressions of a lifestyle that is very different from the one he knows in Montreal. Alex details adventures with his cousins, and a symbolic act of male bonding, sharing an after-work wash down with his grandfather and uncles, all of whom still work in the coal mines that his father has abandoned.

MacLeod makes interesting use of Alex's naive perspective to innocently represent the tensions that exist within the family, particularly due to Angus's leaving his parents to live with his wife's family. This is compounded by his wife's obvious distaste for life on Cape Breton. The story ends with the family boarding the train after two weeks to return home to Montreal.

Read the story 'The Return' on pages 79–97 of *Island: Collected Stories* (2011) and complete the activities in *Your turn 10.4c* in your notebook or on a computer.



Source 11 This bridge was built during MacLeod's life. His earlier stories are set before the bridge was built, when characters were isolated. Due to the construction of the bridge, the characters in MacLeod's later stories are more connected.

10.4c Your turn

Bringing it all together

personal



Holding up the personal frame, answer questions 1 to 6 in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 How did the story make you feel?
- 2 Have you ever returned to a place where you once lived? If not, how would you feel if you had to leave the place where you are living now?
- 3 Do any of the relationships depicted in the story resemble relationships in your own family?
- 4 What did you like about the story?
- 5 What, if anything, did you find challenging about this story?
- 6 How does it remind you of other stories you've read or heard?

structural



Holding up the structural frame, answer questions 7 to 12 in your notebook or on a computer.

- 7 What is the effect of using a child as the narrator in this story?
- 8 How is the storyworld of Cape Breton established?
- 9 How are the contrasting colours of black and white used throughout the story?
- 10 Why is the scene in the showers significant as the climax of the story?
- 11 How does the character of Mary drive tension in the story?

12 Which characters are readers positioned to sympathise with? How is this achieved?

Holding up the cultural frame, answer questions 13 to 16.

13 How is masculinity represented in this story? What values, beliefs and ideas does this support?

14 How are women represented in the story?

15 How does the contrast between Montreal and Cape Breton represent different groups within society?

16 What values about family are promoted in this story?

Holding up the critical frame, answer questions 17 to 20.

17 What does this text invite us to believe and do?

18 Whose perspectives have been omitted, disregarded or marginalised?

19 Whose perspectives have been included, emphasised or privileged?

20 What linguistic, textual or cultural conventions are challenged by the work?

Use this story to prompt your own creative writing. In your notebook or on a computer, write an extended response (at least 600 words) to one of the following questions.

21 Mary is represented quite negatively in the story. Write a scene from her perspective that makes readers sympathise with her world view.

22 Adopt one of Alex's cousins as your focaliser. Write a scene that shows his impressions of Alex.

23 Write a scene in which you visit a place you knew about or visited during your childhood. You should write from the perspective of a teenager and consider how this would change your impressions of the place.

24 Have you had an experience that has made you able to better understand someone else's perspective? Write about that experience and show what you learnt.



FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



INTERNAL ASSESSMENT 3: IMAGINATIVE WRITING

Having analysed in Chapter 10 the ways Alistair MacLeod crafts stories in his anthology *Island: Collected Stories*, this chapter will help you to prepare your own creative response to a story for 'Internal assessment 3'. You will consider some of the ways that established – or 'parent' – stories can inspire writers (including you), and you will be presented with two different forms that your response might take.

Focus questions:

- What are the requirements of the third internal assessment task?
- How can writers respond creatively to works of literature?
- What options does the task present for challenging the ideas presented in MacLeod's stories?
- How can you enhance your writing skills to craft a successful narrative for the assessment task?

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 4, Topic 1, 'Creative responses to literary texts', and 'Summative internal assessment 3 (IA3): Examination – imaginative written response' from the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*.

This chapter features:

- an opportunity to create a written imaginative response that is 800–1000 words in length
- consideration of the affordances of written language in print literature
- guidance in creating a short story that responds to a literary text.

The chapter includes a study of a literary text:

TEXT	AUTHOR	PRESCRIBED?
Short story selection: <i>Island: Collected Stories</i> (2011) Example study: 'The Tuning of Perfection'	Alistair MacLeod	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – short stories)

11.1

RESPONDING CREATIVELY TO A CLOSE LITERARY STUDY

The focus of this chapter is the preparation and completion of 'Summative internal assessment 3 (IA3): Examination – imaginative written response'. The English syllabus states that this task requires an interpretation of a literary text in the form of an imaginative response.

Context and conditions for the exam

In this chapter we will work towards writing a short story narrative as a specific kind of imaginative text. You will use stories from Alistair MacLeod's *Island* as either a prompt to inspire a new storyworld or to write a narrative intervention into the existing storyworld by revealing something potentially unseen in one of the original stories.

In doing this, you will be writing in the following context:

- *genre*: a narrative in response to stimulus (one of the stories in the anthology *Island*) in the form of either:
 - a narrative intervention into the text studied
 - a 'standalone' narrative that has been inspired by the text studied
 - *subject matter*: a creative response to a text studied in Unit 4 Topic 1. You will receive the specific task one week prior to the commencement of the exam
 - *roles and relationships*: you will be required to adopt the role of a narrative author writing for a teacher examiner who has a deep understanding of the stimulus narrative. In this situation, the relationship will be:
 - *somewhat distant* – you will likely know the examiner, but you are not addressing them directly in your role as author
 - *unequal* – the examiner will be an expert in the stimulus narrative, so you must demonstrate knowledge of the text and your own creative response to it
 - *one of generally aligned values* – you must demonstrate that you appreciate literature and seek to engage your examiner in the narrative you have written
 - *mode and medium*: handwritten in a test booklet (unless you have received Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) to complete the exam another way).
- You should also be aware of the task conditions. The syllabus states the following conditions:
- Written: 800–1000 words
 - Time: 2 hours plus planning (15 minutes)
 - Other: students to be given the specific task one week prior to the assessment
 - Other: no access to teacher advice, guidance or feedback once the task is distributed.

Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority



Writing an imaginative response for assessment

What sets your writing apart from that of published authors such as Alistair MacLeod is that your work must conform to specified parameters and will be graded against a set of criteria laid out in the syllabus. These are summarised in Source 1.

Source 1 Assessment objectives that underpin the criteria used to judge your response

KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Create perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in an imaginative text– Make use of the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin texts and invite audiences to take up positions– Use aesthetic features and stylistic devices to achieve purposes
ORGANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Use patterns and conventions of an imaginative genre to achieve particular purposes in a specific context– Establish and maintain role of the writer and relationship with the audience– Select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives– Organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes– Use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an imaginative text
TEXTUAL FEATURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Make language choices for particular purposes and contexts– Use grammar and language structures for particular purposes– Use mode-appropriate features to achieve particular purposes

Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

Responding creatively to 'The Tuning of Perfection'

We are going to work with MacLeod's short story 'The Tuning of Perfection' for the rest of this chapter. Using this text as a basis, we are going to consider ways to write an intervention into the text and ways to use the text as a 'springboard' or inspiration for another story.

As you read this story, you will need to take careful notes about the:

- characters
- setting
- problem.

The short story 'The Tuning of Perfection' highlights the intergenerational tensions that can exist within a family and represents different perspectives on an issue. Archibald is an older man who lives on his own in the mountains. The story opens with a recount of his rather tragic life: he has long been alone following the death of the wife he loved deeply and of his twin brother shortly thereafter, followed soon after by his young daughters going to live with their aunts. The focus of the story is the efforts of his granddaughter Sal to ready the family for an audition to sing traditional Gaelic songs on television. Archibald is resistant to the producer's attempts to edit the songs, and this is ultimately what costs the family the contract, though the impression Archibald makes on others is represented as being worth the loss.

You should note that, at 38 pages in length, this is a *long* short story. For your assessment, you will likely need to isolate a narrower section of the story to work with.



11.1 Your turn

Constructing your personal response

Read the story 'The Tuning of Perfection' on pages 271–309 of *Island: Collected Stories* (2011) and complete the activities below.

Holding up the personal frame, answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 How did the story make you feel about the concepts, issues, identities, time or place represented?
- 2 Do any of the relationships depicted in the story resemble relationships in your own family? Explain your answer.
- 3 What did you like about the story?
- 4 What, if anything, did you find challenging about this story?
- 5 How does it remind you of other stories you've read or heard?

Holding up the structural frame, answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 6 How does the use of Archibald as the focaliser affect the way readers are positioned?
- 7 How is the storyworld of Cape Breton established?
- 8 How is a generation divide created between the characters?
- 9 How do the traditional songs operate as a symbol throughout the story?
- 10 How does the structure of the story position readers to react to the characters?

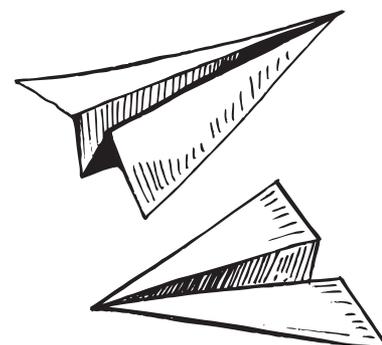
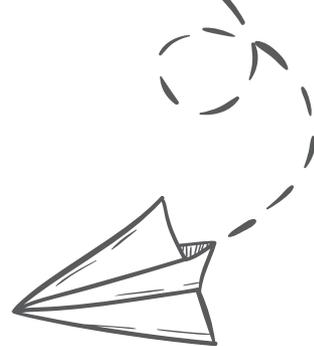
Holding up the cultural frame, answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 11 When and where was this text produced?
- 12 What social and cultural norms are represented?
- 13 What values are promoted in the story?
- 14 Do you think this text would have been controversial or conservative for its time? Why?

Holding up the critical frame, answer the following question in your notebook or on a computer.

- 15 What does this text invite us to believe and do?
- 16 Whose perspectives have been omitted, disregarded or marginalised?
- 17 Whose perspectives have been included, emphasised or privileged?
- 18 What linguistic, textual or cultural conventions are challenged by the work?

Once you have a strong understanding of the story 'The Tuning of Perfection' you should move on to the assessment section that is appropriate to your in-school assessment task. You should remember to be guided by your teacher in relation to the final task. You will need to re-read the story as you prepare your task, and you should consider reading it another two or three times as you prepare for your assessment.



11.2

INTERVENTIONS AND STANDALONE STORIES

The following activities will prepare you for two different versions of this assessment task, which are laid out as examples in the syllabus:

- 1 a narrative intervention; that is, an intervention into the text studied that offers a different perspective or fills a 'gap' or challenges a silence or representation or perspective in the original text.
- 2 a short story whereby the central idea has sprung from the text studied.

Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

Your teacher will give you instructions about the parameters of your final task. Remember that the parameters issued by your school are the guidelines you must follow when preparing your final assessment.

This task can be broken down into a few distinct options. Your story could:

- offer a different perspective from the one presented in the text (e.g. by changing the level or character of the focaliser)
- fill a 'gap' in the text
- challenge a silence, a representation or a perspective that is presented in the text.

The option you choose will be based on factors such as the nature of the original text, the point at which you choose to intervene, the characters in the text and what they represent, and how you personally respond to the text.

While this might seem like a strange type of narrative to attempt to write, there are many famous examples of published texts that fit within this definition of 'intervention', including Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (based on Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*), Jo Baker's *Longbourn* (based on Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*) and Ronald Frame's *Havisham* (based on Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*). It can be fascinating to consider the impact of minor characters within the story, or the events the authors have chosen to silence for one reason or another. In fact, you could look upon intervention writing as a form of fanfic, where you only have the narrative resources available at a key turning point in the story to then use in your own 'what if ...?' side-story.

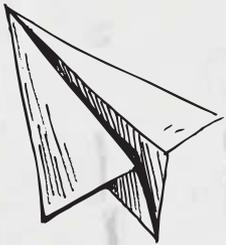
What makes for a successful intervention?

There are many factors to consider when crafting your intervention for assessment in English.

Storyworld and characters

In order to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding, your construction of both the characters and the storyworld should be consistent with the parent text, in that you can't make significant changes to key aspects of either (e.g. changing the gender or age of characters, or moving the setting of the story). However, you may choose to challenge the ways the parent text represents either of these by:

- positioning readers to sympathise with different characters, perhaps by shedding new light on a character's reasons for behaving in a particular way or giving more information about their background that is silenced in the parent text



- highlighting social or historical issues with the representation of the storyworld. Perhaps social standards have changed since the parent text was written, or the author has given a narrow view of the world by privileging particular world views.

Problem

Although you can't make significant changes to the plot of the parent text, you should consider what smaller problems characters could face within the time frame of your intervention. Something needs to happen in your narrative.

Style

You do not have to replicate the style or the aesthetic features used by the author of the parent text. However, you must demonstrate achievement of the assessment criteria and a good story that will emotionally engage your reader, which will require you to use your best language. Some students find that adapting aspects of the aesthetic features used in the parent text can help improve the style of their own writing.

Choosing a form of intervention

There are several different forms in which you can write your intervention. The one you choose will depend upon your writing style, the original story you are writing into and your purpose in doing so.

Your intervention is likely to take one of the following forms: filling a 'gap' in the narrative; adding events before, within or after the story; or giving an alternative perspective on the story. Let's have a look at each of these.

Filling a 'gap' in the narrative

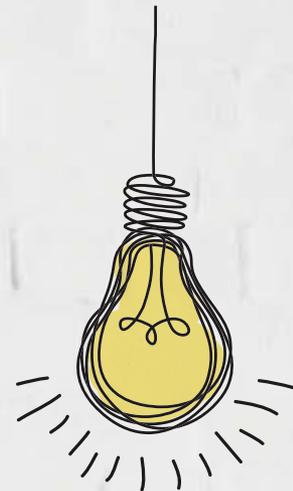
You might like to write a scene or event that is alluded to in the original text, but is not seen by readers. It might be a conversation that takes place out of view, an event from which the focaliser is excluded, something the focaliser mentions but does not elaborate on, or something that must have logically taken place in order for the events in the narrative to make sense.

Adding events before, within or after the story

You may wish to add to the readers' understanding of the narrative by adding events that act as a *prologue* or *epilogue* to the story. It can be interesting to speculate about what happened to characters before the narrative takes place, or what happens to them after it ends. You can also speculate about what would happen to characters during *interludes*, or 'side-stories', within the story.

Giving an alternative perspective on the story

If you wish to challenge a representation or perspective that is presented in the text, you could do this by adopting the antagonist or one of the minor characters as your focaliser. In this instance, you need to take care that you are not simply retelling the original narrative from a different point of view – you need to add to the readers' understanding of why that character has a particular perspective. This needs to be in the form of new events or new insight into the character.



Choosing a site for your intervention

Once you have considered the form of your intervention, you need to find the best place to locate it within the original text. Some types of intervention fall into place logically; for example, a prologue or epilogue will take place at the beginning or end of the story and filling a 'gap' will occur where the gap exists in the text.

However, there are some questions you should ask yourself when considering the placement of your intervention:

- How will my intervention start?
- At what point will my intervention move away from the original text?
- What events will take place in my intervention?
- How will I build to a climax in my intervention?
- How will my intervention end? Does my focaliser have to re-enter the original story at the end of the intervention, or can I be creative in ending my intervention?

Developing characters

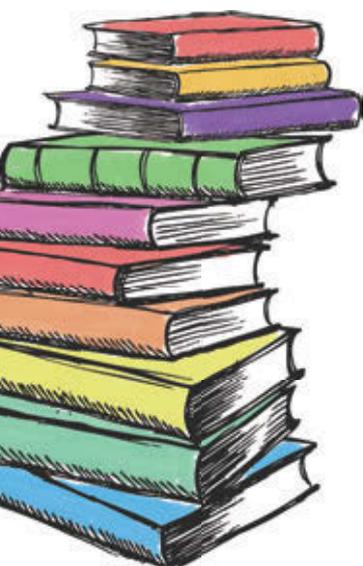
In order to write an effective intervention, you need to have a strong understanding of the characters in the original story. In most cases, it is easier to choose a different character for your focaliser from the one presented in the original story as this allows you to develop ideas and perspectives that are silenced in the original story.

Your marker will be looking for evidence that you have strong knowledge and understanding of both narrative writing, and the text that has inspired your intervention. While you do not have to write in the same style as the original story, you need to ensure that your rendering of characters is consistent with what the author has established. If you are presenting an alternative representation, this must not alter significant details about the character (e.g. you can't suddenly change their gender or race for the purpose of your intervention). However, you can create further information about the character that would help to develop your readers' understanding of them. It's also worth noting that, if your character will re-enter the original story after your narrative, you can't add details that would prevent this, such as killing them off or allowing them to run away to join the circus.

11.2a Your turn

Creating a response

- 1 Now that you have a clear idea of the social context and style of interventions, test your understanding by developing interventions for the following points in 'The Tuning of Perfection' in your notebook or on a computer.
 - a Using Sal as your focaliser, write about before she enters the story on page 283. How does she feel about visiting Archibald? How does she plan to approach the meeting?
 - b From the perspective of one of the other members of Archibald's family, provide an account of one of the singing practices that are mentioned on page 293. This will require you to fill a gap (these events are mentioned, but not explored). What could happen at the practice to provide and resolve tension?
 - c Show the conversation that is likely to take place between the producer and his assistants after they hear the family sing on page 299. Use this opportunity to show that you understand the different values, attitudes and beliefs of characters in the narrative.



Remember to include a balance of dialogue and narration to make your intervention interesting.

At the very least, you should:

- brainstorm possible responses
- write notes on the characters who would appear in the intervention
- plan a response in the form of a short narrative.

- 2 Practise writing to the assessment task word limit by writing at least one of your ideas as a completed story of 800–1000 words in your notebook or on a computer.



Standalone stories

Using a stimulus or parent text to inspire a standalone story (a short story in which the central idea has sprung from the text studied) provides you with a great deal of freedom and creativity. This can be daunting at first, but with practice, you will be able to approach the exam with confidence knowing that you can craft your own narrative.

While you have scope to be very creative in this task, you need to demonstrate a discernible link between the stimulus text and your narrative. For example, you couldn't respond to any of the stories from *Island* by writing about a boy who discovers he's a wizard when he's sent to a magical school where he battles against a dark overlord and a giant snake, because saying something like, 'There's a boy in the stimulus story' doesn't show that you understand MacLeod's writing.

If this still seems confronting, you might like to consider keeping some aspects of the stimulus story for use in your own writing, while being creative in changing other elements.

Source 2 offers suggestions based on MacLeod's 'The Tuning of Perfection'. You will notice that making a link to an aspect of the stimulus doesn't require you to replicate every detail of the original story.

Source 2 A matrix for deciding which original story elements to keep/change in a standalone story

IF YOU KEEP:	YOU MIGHT LIKE TO CHANGE:
<p>Storyworld You might choose to represent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cape Breton Island - another island of your own creation - an isolated setting such as Archibald's house in the wilderness - a family dynamic that features a generation gap. 	<p>Character You could explore how new or very different characters would exist in the established storyworld.</p> <p>Problem Explore any problem that could reasonably exist within the aspect of the storyworld you have chosen to keep. You might like to consider historical changes to the storyworld or the impact of significant events.</p>
<p>Character You might choose to represent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one of the minor or silenced characters from the stimulus story - a type of character used in the stimulus story, such as a granddaughter or an ageing man. 	<p>Storyworld You could choose a realistic setting that the character might logically visit, or place them in a different place or time to consider how they might exist in a different storyworld.</p> <p>Problem The problem facing the character could be almost anything.</p>



(Continues on next page)

Source 2 *cont.*

IF YOU KEEP:	YOU MIGHT LIKE TO CHANGE:
<p>Problem</p> <p>You might choose to represent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trying to work as a family to achieve a goal • trying to maintain a sense of the past. 	<p>Storyworld</p> <p>These problems could reasonably exist in any storyworld of your creation.</p> <p>Character</p> <p>There are many characters who could reasonably be involved in these problems. Consider which one you would be able to write about in a believable way.</p>

message
what the text means, including moral or ethical lessons, attitudes towards and judgments about an issue or theme, or even a strong emotional reaction to key aspects of a text

Using an idea as your springboard

Other aspects of the parent story that might inspire your own writing are the theme or **message**. These can offer you greater creativity to change the storyworld, characters and problems from those presented in the stimulus story. However, you will need to ensure that there is an obvious and significant link between the stimulus story and your own. This is one of the ways your marker will know that the narrative you have written is your own original work and has been created for this assessment task, not recycled from another context.

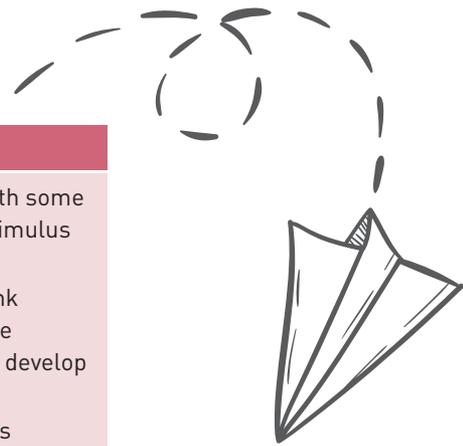
Examples of story ideas that have sprung from a stimulus text

Source 3 gives examples of ideas for narratives that have sprung from an aspect of the story 'The Tuning of Perfection'. You will notice that an attempt to explain the link to the stimulus story has been included, as has brief commentary on whether the narrative is likely to be successful in meeting the assessment brief.

Source 3 Examples of story ideas and commentary on how strongly they link to 'The Tuning of Perfection'

IDEA	LINK	COMMENTARY
My story is about an older woman (Betty) who is being confronted with changes to the ways society views women. She is conservative, and doesn't like the way her granddaughter dresses or the fact that she is a lesbian. By the end of the story, she realises that social change is improving the lives of women like her granddaughter and they grow closer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While the gender has changed, Betty is similar to Archibald in that they are both ageing and feeling like the world is changing. - There are similarities between the granddaughters in the stories. - While dealing with similar themes of ageing and social progress, my story represents them in different ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear links to the stimulus story in terms of both characters and themes - Creative development of own ideas - Clear narrative structure
The focaliser of the story is an old man called Bumblemore. He is the headmaster of a school for wizards. He guides a boy called Barry to be a great wizard and defeat the dark lord Smoldemort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Archibald is an old man, and so is my focaliser. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The link is weak: while the focalisers are both old men, there is nothing similar about them. - This is clearly a rip-off of a famous story. Don't try to pass other people's ideas off as your own.





IDEA	LINK	COMMENTARY
<p>My narrator will be a young man who grew up in a small island town. He leaves home to go to university. He is excited because he finds the town and its small-minded busybodies suffocating. He wants to be an artist, and while he is inspired by the natural setting in which he lives, he wants to travel and explore art. The story finishes with him getting on the ferry to the mainland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Some of the other inhabitants of the town in the stimulus story have moved away. – Exploration of tension between generations – the young man and the busybody elders. – I like the way MacLeod describes the environment, and I want to represent that from an artist’s perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interesting story with some clear links to the stimulus text – Use of artist as a link to MacLeod could be something lovely to develop in the story – Be aware that this is quite similar to one of the other stories in the <i>Island</i> anthology. You would need to take care to avoid rewriting that other story.
<p>The focaliser lives in a small coastal town in Far North Queensland. One day she walks through the main street of town, greeting the locals as she goes. She walks to the jetty, strips off and jumps into the ocean, never to be seen again. The rest of the story is told from the perspective of her ghost, who follows the townspeople as they try to figure out why she did it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Representation of small-town life – Some of MacLeod’s other stories deal with the ocean and death. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The link to the small community in the stimulus story is tenuous. – Draw links between the stimulus text and yours, not just MacLeod’s writing generally. – Killing a focaliser and having them narrate as a ghost rarely works. – What is the ‘it’ that she did, exactly? Plan is unclear.

11.2b Your turn

- Take one of the story ideas that received negative feedback in Source 3 and answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer.
 - Rewrite the outline of the narrative so that it better meets the task requirements (focusing on creativity, effective narrative conventions and a link to the stimulus story).
 - Compare your response with your peers’. Exchange feedback on the new story ideas.
- Use the keep/change method outlined in Source 2, and answer the following questions in your notebook or on a computer:
 - generate outlines for any of your own stories that have sprung from ‘The Tuning of Perfection’. At the very least you should: brainstorm possible responses; write notes on the characters, storyworld and problem you would use in one of your story ideas; and plan a response in the form of a short narrative.
 - create a narrative that does at least one of the following:
 - keeps an aspect of the storyworld
 - keeps an aspect of the characters
 - keeps an aspect of the problem
 - springs from one of the themes or messages of the story.
- Write at least one of your ideas as a story of 800–1000 words in your notebook or on a computer.



11.3

CREATING AN IMAGINATIVE RESPONSE

The parameters of this task allow you to receive the details of the assessment one week before you commence the exam. This might be different from exams you completed in the past. The extra time is in recognition of the fact that polished creative writing rarely happens in a two hour block of time. It should be an indication that your teacher is expecting you to make use of that week to give your response some serious thought.

You should approach this task with consideration of:

- the structure of your exam sessions: you have 2 hours and 15 minutes in total to complete the exam, but your school can choose to schedule this in one session, or across a span of up to a week
- your other commitments: don't leave preparation to the last minute if you know you have work or sport the night before the exam
- whether you are required to complete an intervention or a standalone story: an intervention will require greater fact-checking to align with the parent story
- your examination style: by now, you should know how well you operate under pressure. Some people enjoy the thrill of writing under exam conditions. Other people dislike exams and find them a source of great stress. The way you react to exams will affect how you prepare.

The goal of your preparation for this exam should be to ensure that you walk in the door feeling confident, and prepared enough to deliver your best performance in the exam.

A note on memorising a response

You will notice, at some point in your preparation for this exam, that a week of notice is long enough to write, edit and memorise a response. This approach may work for some people, but there are some risks, namely that you forget part of what you memorised once you're in the exam, which might affect your confidence and ruin your response. You should refer to the suggestions for memorising outlined in Chapter 1 when deciding whether this will work for you.

A better approach may include:

- 1 *brainstorming as many ideas as possible in response to the task*
- 2 *selecting the one you feel is best*
- 3 *taking some time to thoroughly plan:*
 - *storyworld*
 - *character/s*
 - *problem (including a detailed structure for your narrative)*
- 4 *memorising key aspects of your plan and ideas about the imagery you wish to create*
- 5 *possibly memorising useful words or phrases you wish to use in the exam.*

It might be useful to practise writing your story a few times before you sit the exam, but it is not necessary to memorise a complete story in order to do well in this task. Practising under timed conditions will improve your confidence and the speed of your writing.

You should also note that this task is intended to develop your exam-writing skills ahead of the 'Summative external assessment (EA): Examination – analytical written response'. You will not be able to prepare a response for the external exam, and doing so for this creative response exam may leave you underprepared to write under pressure ahead of the final assessment for English.

Planning the structure of your narrative

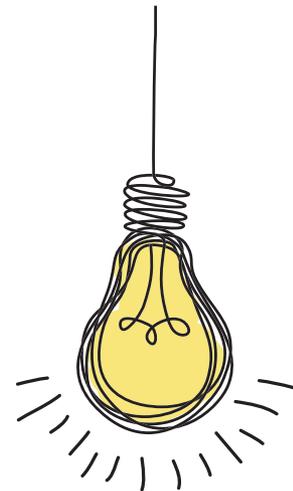
You will recall from your study of the stories in *Island* that traditional short narratives usually contain the following stages:

- orientation
- complication
- resolution
- coda.

You may choose to subvert this structure by, for example, starting the telling of your story later in the narrative (at a point of high tension and 'filling in' details for readers later); omitting or compressing the detail in the orientation; or using flashbacks to orient readers.

Regardless of whether you choose a traditional story structure, you will need to communicate your narrative effectively within the space of 800–1000 words. It will be easier to stay within the word limit if you consider:

- telling your story through only one focaliser
- employing a short time frame
- setting your story in one or two locations
- restricting the number of characters in your narrative.



Preparing your language

In order to demonstrate your ability to make language choices for particular purposes and contexts as required by the criteria for this task, you will need to write effectively under the pressure of exam conditions. The best way to ensure you can do this is to practise. Practise writing description and action. Practise writing full narratives within the 800–1000-word limit. Practise writing these narratives under timed conditions.

One of the areas you will need to focus on is your ability to use language concisely but with great effect. You should explore:

- *employing high-value nouns* – selecting the right nouns removes the need to couple them with adjectives
- *employing high-value verbs* – selecting the right verbs removes the need to couple them with adverbs
- *making use of effective dialogue* – sometimes a character can say something more concisely than the narrator can
- *writing description that appeals to all five senses* – activating all of a reader's senses can engage them more rapidly in your storyworld and in the action.



11.3a Your turn

These activities are designed to improve your language selection in the exam. You might like to challenge yourself and your peers by creating more of these exercises once you have practised these ones.

structural



Holding up the structural frame, answer the following questions.

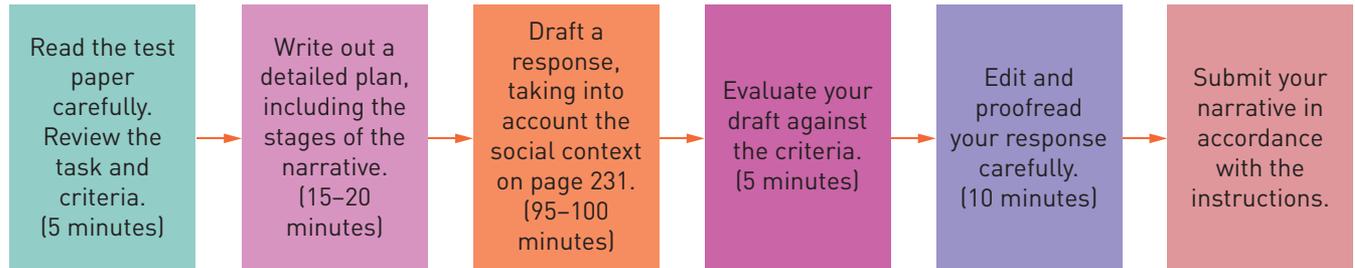
- Express yourself as concisely as possible by selecting an appropriate single noun to replace the following noun groups. The first has been completed for you as an example.
 - big rock = *boulder* _____
 - large tree branch = _____
 - grotesque magical creature = _____
 - very small figure = _____
 - enormous, hairy dog = _____
 - very long book = _____
- Improve expression by selecting an appropriate single verb to replace the following verb groups. The first has been completed for you as an example.
 - ran very fast = *sprinted* _____
 - fell over awkwardly while walking = _____
 - jumped extremely high = _____
 - flew effortlessly = _____
 - folded in on itself = _____
 - smiled in a cute and attractive way = _____
- Write short scenes of dialogue between two characters to represent the following scenarios. Remember that readers can learn as much about characters through how dialogue is used as through what is said. You may also like to include information about what characters are doing throughout the scenes.
 - One character has caught the other stealing something.
 - One character is declaring their love for the other.
 - One character wants the other to feed them.
 - One character is lying to the other.
- Write short, descriptive paragraphs of no more than 100 words to represent the following ideas. Remember to appeal to the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch) in your writing.
 - getting caught in a summer storm
 - rolling down a hill
 - standing in a lift with a stranger
 - riding your pushbike into a headwind



IDEA

A suggested writing process

Source 4 is a suggested process for using your time during the exam. It will be assumed that prior to the day you will have thoroughly planned your response and written a practice exam (though it will *not* be assumed that you will have memorised a response). The times are suggestions only and are meant as a starting point; through practice, you will discover what works best for you.



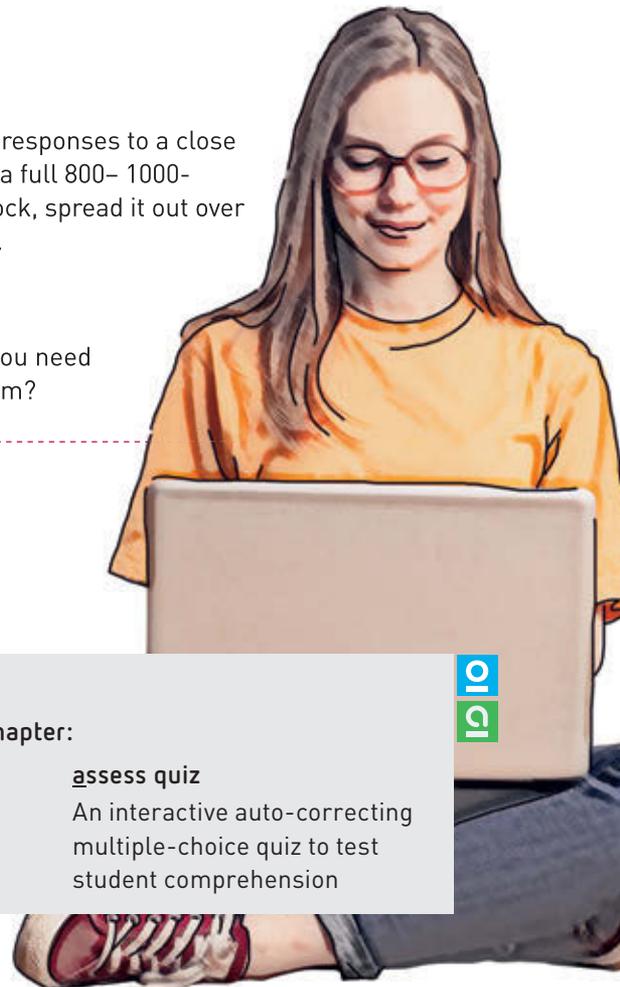
Source 4 A suggested allocation of time for stages of the writing process under exam conditions

You might think that taking 15 to 20 minutes to write out a plan is a waste of time, especially when you've had a week to think about it already. Remember though that 2 hours and 15 minutes is a long time to focus under exam conditions. Your hand will get sore. You will get distracted. Taking the time to write a thorough plan means you won't lose your place. This will ultimately reduce your anxiety and ensure you stick to the brilliant plan you spent all week honing.

11.3b Your turn

In *Your turn 11.2a* and/or *11.2b*, you generated ideas for a range of creative responses to a close literary study. You should now use one of those ideas and attempt to write a full 800– 1000-word response under timed conditions. If you can't find this time in one block, spread it out over a couple of days, ensuring you don't go over the maximum time allowance.

- Give yourself 2 hours and 15 minutes to complete the task.
- Try to stick to the timelines given.
- Reflect on your process – where do you need to save time? Where do you need to allow more time? What skills do you need to practise before the exam?



FOR THE TEACHER

Check your [obook](#) [assess](#) for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

[assess](#) quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



Part

E

UNIT 4: CLOSE STUDY OF LITERARY TEXTS 2 – RESPONDING CRITICALLY

Chapter 12 Close study and critical response

- 12.1 Analysing literature
- 12.2 Guides for close study of all external assessment texts
- 12.3 *Burial Rites*: Hannah Kent
- 12.4 *Cat's Eye*: Margaret Atwood
- 12.5 *Hamlet*: William Shakespeare
- 12.6 *Jane Eyre*: Charlotte Brontë
- 12.7 *Macbeth*: William Shakespeare
- 12.8 *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: George Orwell
- 12.9 *The White Earth*: Andrew McGahan
- 12.10 *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*: Karen Joy Fowler

Chapter 13 External assessment: Analytical writing

- 13.1 Essay writing
- 13.2 Creating a critical response for external assessment

CLOSE STUDY AND CRITICAL RESPONSE

In this chapter you will be guided through key elements of a 'close study' of a literary text. The purpose of your study is to explore the emotional and critical reactions that are prompted by the language and composition of your text and to formulate your own critical response. You will analyse the mechanics of the language in use and go beyond your initial and invited readings to deeply consider different ways of interpreting the text and to investigate how the text reflects and challenges the world view of various audiences.

Focus questions:

- What are some strategies for reading and interpreting literature?
- How can stories be understood by systematically analysing the narration, storyworld, characters and plot?

This study will culminate in an analytical response written under exam conditions that will demonstrate your ability to interpret a literary text. See Chapter 13 for further support in preparing to write this response in an examination context.

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 4, Topic 2 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*, 'Critical responses to literary texts'.

This chapter features:

- preparation and support for close, critical reading of literature
- guides for close study of all eight literary texts listed for external assessment in the Prescribed Text List for English and EAL
- text options drawn from two syllabus categories: play and prose text (novel).

The chapter includes studies of all text options for the external assessment:

TEXT	AUTHOR	PRESCRIBED?
<i>Burial Rites</i> (2013)	Hannah Kent	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel)
<i>Cat's Eye</i> (1988)	Margaret Atwood	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel)
<i>Hamlet</i> (~1603)	William Shakespeare	Yes – literary Written text (play)
<i>Jane Eyre</i> (1847)	Charlotte Brontë	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel)
<i>Macbeth</i> (1606)	William Shakespeare	Yes – literary Written text (play)
<i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> (1949)	George Orwell	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel)
<i>The White Earth</i> (2004)	Andrew McGahan	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel)
<i>We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves</i> (2014)	Karen Joy Fowler	Yes – literary Written text (prose text – novel)

12.1

ANALYSING LITERATURE

This chapter is all about close study and critical analysis of a single literary text. There are six novels and two Shakespearean plays for you (and your teacher) to choose from, and they are all rich with meaning. In this study, you will draw on everything you know about interpreting a text to get to the bottom of a literary work that has been deemed culturally significant enough to warrant close study in Senior English.

Unit 4, Topic 2 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus* is described succinctly:

Through a close, critical study of a literary text and various interpretations of it, students strengthen their capacity to develop their own analytical response to it. Students independently develop and compose original, analytical texts.

Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

By the end of the study you will have examined language choices and stylistic devices, investigated how a text reflects or challenges various cultural contexts, considered your own personal interpretation and discussed the interpretations of others.

The focus of this topic is to show that you can conduct a skilled analysis of a literary work. This involves more than just reading a few internet summaries and then playing 'spot the language device' or 'memorise that quote'. Your analysis still needs to culminate in a thoughtful response – one that considers various interpretations of a text and is informed by a critical perspective.

Once you have completed your close study, you will be assessed in an external examination, where you will have two hours to write an 800–1000-word analytical essay about your text. The essay questions will be previously unseen. We have provided guidance in Chapter 13 for you to prepare ideas and notes and improve your writing skills as this critical task approaches.

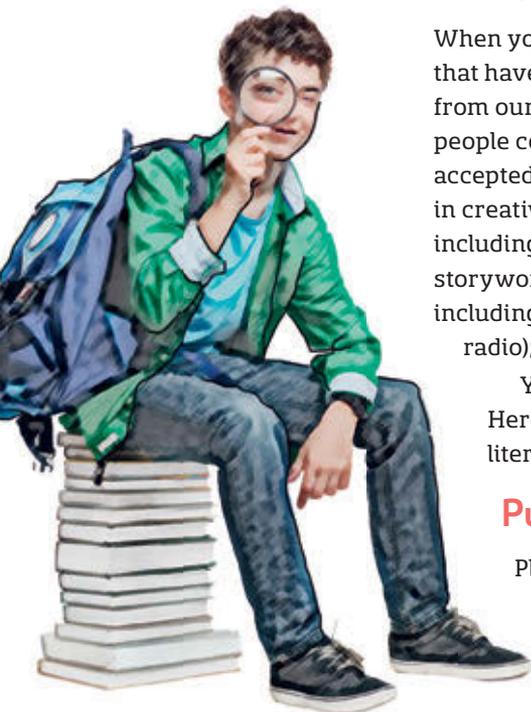
Why spend time 'closely reading' literature?

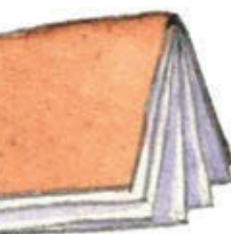
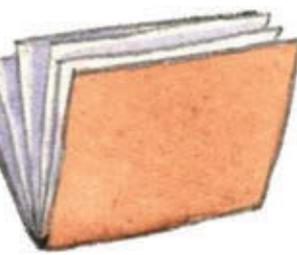
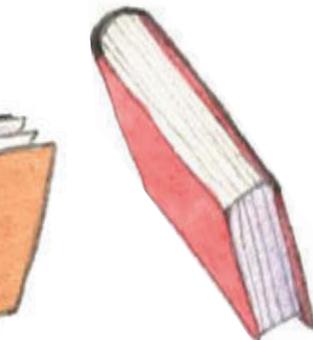
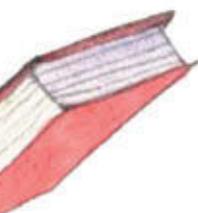
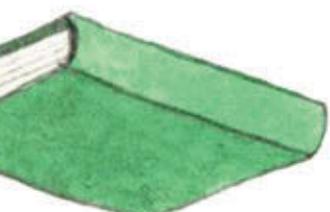
When you read literary works – literature – you are reading products of human language use that have been artfully made. The range of literature available to us goes beyond famous texts from our history; it also includes poems, prose and plays we encounter in society today. Some people consider literature to only include culturally significant texts, but a more commonly accepted definition is that literature includes any spoken or written texts that use language in creative and expressive ways. An example of creative language use is figurative language, including metaphor; an example of an expressive purpose for language is the creation of storyworlds and narratives. Literature can be produced and distributed in a range of media, including print (e.g. books, chapbooks, magazines, zines); live performance (e.g. theatre, speech, radio); and screen technologies (e.g. film, television broadcast, internet webpages, e-readers).

You can revisit Chapter 3 for more support to prepare for close reading of literature. Here, let's just talk about a few specific reasons to take an interest in critically responding to literature.

Putting plays and novels into historical context

Plays and novels have been around for quite a long time in the history of human literature, but plays have the longer history by far. Ancient Greeks were performing theatre in the sixth century BCE in Athens, and Aristotle was writing about dramatic theory, including tragedy, and using terms like 'catharsis' and 'hamartia' around 330 BCE. Currently, understandings of literature in mainstream Australian





culture still draw much from these European sources, although there is increasing awareness of the older storytelling traditions of Australian Indigenous cultures including oral storytelling, totem drama, song-drama and songlines.

Medieval theatre flourished across Europe for about 1000 years before the English Renaissance period of the 1500s and early 1600s. The Renaissance period included the English reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603) and then of James I (1603–1625) – periods that are also called ‘Elizabethan’ and ‘Jacobean’ in English history. This is where William Shakespeare enters the scene and where the earliest novels in English are written. So, the Shakespearean plays *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are the oldest pieces of literature listed for possible study in this topic, but really, they are not that old in the scheme of things.

Novels are a specific kind of literature, and you should consider their specific role in culture. Novels contain original stories that are told as one long, unified narrative – usually one that presents a realistic human story. They are different from epic narratives, which are told in episodes, or collections of short stories. They are different from ‘romances’ (which were around before novels), as novels portray realistic human situations instead of heroes going on quests in fantastical settings. Why did this form of literature, the novel, begin to appeal strongly to English-speaking cultures in the nineteenth century, and do you agree that it has ongoing appeal in your contemporary society?

The role of literature in cultures

Literature, like other artforms, can both reflect culture and act on it. Some literary works are so controversial that they get banned for periods in certain countries. Some are so widely celebrated and enjoyed that their messages inform our social rules and norms.

As a cultural artefact, literature represents the available world views of the culture in which it was created. Authors and playwrights make their stories out of the perspectives and cultural resources available to them, and so

these works can tell us a great deal about the experiences and assumptions of a culture, including:

- the *attitudes* held (or being questioned) by the author and/or people in that society
- the ways certain ideas and things were *valued* in a particular time and place
- the *beliefs* that were held (or being questioned) about various aspects of the world.

As audiences, we interpret meanings and messages from literature when our personal world view informs our response to the world view presented in the text.

One aspect of subject matter that is unique to this topic in Unit 4 is the suggestion that in your close textual study you should:

investigate the role of literature, from various times and places, within cultures and its power to reflect and challenge social and cultural perspectives in relation to the larger issues of gender, age, race, identity, power, class and the environment



Source 1 Actors performing Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* at the Globe Theatre in London

Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

This list of 'larger issues' provides a handy reference point for the big cultural and social ideas that you might be called on to write about in your essay for assessment in this topic. A notetaking guide for checking you have considered the representation of all these issues is included in Chapter 14 (pp. 326–7).

Textual integrity and cultural significance

Another reason to study a piece of literature very closely is to fully appreciate its **textual integrity**. Sometimes the beauty or profound quality of a story or expression is not picked up at first glance. We've returned throughout this book to the personal, structural, cultural and critical frames that you need to use for text analysis if you are to reach a thoughtful, synthesised interpretation that reflects depth of thinking.

When we weigh up the 'integrity' of a text, it is the closest we come to asking whether a text is 'any good'. Judging whether art is 'good' or 'bad' is a very subjective activity. As such, in English it is useful to discuss our personal response to a text separately from appraising whether it has high textual integrity (i.e. whether it works well, for example, 'as a tragedy' or 'as a dystopia'). This is a different question again from whether a text has **cultural significance**.

textual integrity
high textual integrity means having an overall unified meaning – the language, structure and content of the text work cohesively to produce a consistent message. Low textual integrity means that the chosen combination of language, structure and content is confusing or not working well together

cultural significance
a text can be 'significant' to a culture if that group celebrates or recognises it as having a historical or future importance in terms of social or artistic value. Some ways in which cultures officially show that a text is significant to them are giving it an award; placing it in a 'best of' list; teaching it in schools

12.1 Your turn

Note your initial response

Answer these questions in your notebook or on a computer.

- 1 What do you know about the social and cultural context of the text you have been set/selected for close reading?
- 2 What do you wonder (and plan to research) about the social and cultural context of the text you have been set/selected for close reading?
- 3 The text you will closely study was chosen from a list of literary works that are valued by English teachers for their textual integrity and cultural significance. Reflect on whether you agree with their choice and look forward to reading your text.
- 4 Based on your existing knowledge of your text, what broad social issues do you expect to encounter messages about (possibilities include gender, age, race, identity, power, class and the environment)?



Make life easier for yourself by forming a study group and sharing the workload.

Teaching others about what you have found and discussing the story with other students will improve your understanding.

This might seem like a lot of work, but the better you know the story, the better prepared you'll be for the external exam.

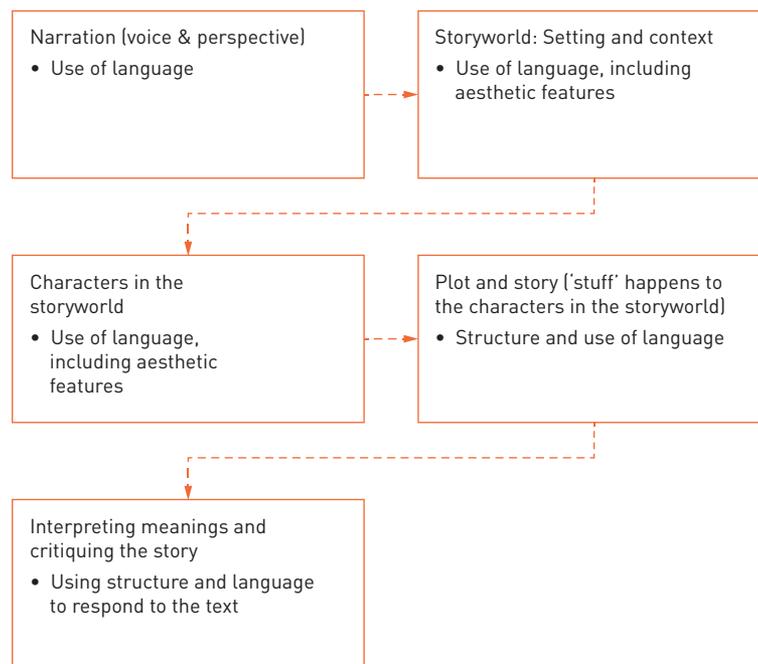
A study group will work even better if it includes a range of peers with different interests, abilities and backgrounds.



A general process for interpreting literary stories

In this section, you will review a general process designed for interpreting the meaning(s) of literary stories, especially those in the form of novels and plays. The reading frames introduced in Chapter 1 are still useful here. In the first four stages of interpreting a story, you will mainly be holding up the structural and cultural frames, and in the final stage it will mainly be the critical frame. However, throughout this process, you should also frequently hold up the personal frame to consider how your own experiences, knowledge and world views are influencing your reactions and interpretations.

While the flowchart in Source 2 makes the process for analysing and interpreting a story seem very linear, you can jump backwards and forwards between the steps as necessary. We'll explain this process further in the following pages.



Source 2 The process for analysing and interpreting a story

First, to be well prepared for the external exam, we recommend that you read the story (your selected novel or play) at least three times. Try to focus on the areas described in Source 3.

FIRST READING	Focus: Reading for pleasure and general understanding – hold up the personal frame
SECOND READING	Focus: Reading for detail – annotating the text (e.g. through the use of pencil or sticky notes) to highlight significant extracts, and to make informed observations and comments linked to the interpretation process
THIRD READING	Focus: Sorting and classifying annotations for efficient, flexible access, to identify patterns, and to assist in creating a written response

Source 3 Suggested focus areas to observe when reading a story for 'close study'

Narration

Undertaking multiple readings of your text will help to ensure that you understand your novel or play very well and, therefore, are prepared to respond to any question that might appear on the external exam.

In general terms, 'narration' refers to the telling of a story, especially in novels.

Narration typically has two elements: Who sees (focalisation)? and Who speaks? The answers to these questions are helpful in working out how you, the reader, are being positioned, and can help you resist that positioning where appropriate.

Perspective: Who sees?

This question refers to the identity of the focalising character or characters – that is, the consciousness through which readers ‘see’ the story. Sometimes, the author uses a single focaliser (such as in *Jane Eyre*, *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, *Cat’s Eye* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*), or the author might choose to tell the story from two or more perspectives (as happens in *The White Earth* and *Burial Rites*). Moreover, there are three basic choices for focalisation, namely:

- *internal*, where the focalisation is limited to a single character, who is a part of the story
- *external*, where the focalisation is from a narrator outside the actual story who has no insight into the inner workings of characters’ minds
- *omniscient*, where the focalisation is provided by an external, all-knowing narrator who can even get inside characters’ heads.

Voice: Who speaks?

This refers to the story’s voice; for example, is the story told in first, second or third person? These terms should be familiar to you from your previous studies in English. Another important concept is ‘free indirect discourse’, where even though third person is used, the story is written in such a way that the distinction between the external and internal narrator is blurred. This allows the author to filter the thoughts, feelings and words of a character through the third-person narrator, rather than giving the reader direct access to those thoughts, feelings and words (e.g. via first person).

Finally, the narrator can be constructed as reliable or unreliable. The reader’s perceptions of reliability can evolve and change as the story unfolds.

While narration is mainly relevant to novels, in Shakespearean plays a chorus (acting as an external or omniscient focaliser) might provide explicit narration, and aspects of the story can be focalised through the use of first-person **soliloquies**. Despite this, in plays it is generally more important to consider the concept of representation when that play is staged – that is, how contexts, characters and events are represented (or depicted) through specific direction; the use of intonation, body language, movement and so on by the actor; costuming; set design; lighting (e.g. to create a particular **atmosphere**) and so forth.

Storyworld: Setting and context

Obviously, the characters in a story go about their lives in a world created by the author – even if that world is based on a real place and time. This is called the storyworld. The storyworld will contain settings and situations that reflect a combination of:

- historical context, which can have a real-life connection or a context based on an imaginary or even alternative history
- political context, including hierarchies of power at a state level
- social context, including hierarchies of power in social groups
- cultural context, including customs, habits and ways of getting things done in the world
- geographical context, including the physical features of the place where the action occurs.

Setting can also reflect the emotional tone of a story or even play a symbolic role. In *The White Earth* by Andrew McGahan, for example, the land is represented as being ‘alive in its own right’, symbolising the connectedness of all the previous and future owners through their relationship with and impact on the land: ‘It has a history. It’s growing and changing all the time. It breathes’. Another example would be the red room in *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë; this is where Jane’s aunt locks her up as a punishment, during which time she is traumatised and hallucinates.



soliloquy

part of a play where a character speaks their inner thoughts aloud to the audience, but as if the words are spoken to themselves only

atmosphere

the general feeling, ‘vibe’ or impression (e.g. spooky, frightening, awkward, energetic, wondrous) evoked for a place, environment, setting or situation, partially evoked by careful selections of language and other meaning-making resources

Characters moving through the storyworld

Now that you are coming to grips with the storyworld, we will turn our attention to the characters inserted into that world. One of the delights of reading for pleasure is to immerse yourself in a character's life and get to follow them around on their various 'adventures', empathising with them as they have wins and losses. When studying novels and plays more academically, however, it is crucial to bear in mind that characters are *not* real. Instead, characters are constructed from the materials of language (our cultural resources), just as a house might be built from various materials such as brick, timber, steel and so forth.

In a story, readers piece together a picture of the characters (i.e. they make inferences and evaluations) from information revealed as the events unfold across the novel or play, including:

- What does the character do, and how do they do it?
- What does the character think and feel?
- What does the character say, and how do they say it?
- What do other characters say? How do they react to the character?
- What does the narrator say?

See Chapter 14 page 328 for a character analysis guide (based on these questions) and for zooming in on the types of judgments made about the character by the narrator and other characters.

Once you have undertaken this close reading and analysis of characters, you are in a much better position to make inferences from the emerging patterns; for example:

- Is there a contrast between the actions of a character and the way the author/playwright has other characters react? If so, what might be the significance of this?
- Does the character change over the course of the novel or play? Is this for better or worse? How does any change compare to the way other characters in the story either change or don't change?
- Are various characters stereotypes – one-dimensional – or are the characters non-stereotypical and well-rounded?

Parallel to analysing the characters in this way, it is also useful to consider:

- How can various characters be grouped and/or contrasted?
 - Who is the protagonist and who is the antagonist?
 - Who are the allies of the protagonist and the antagonist?
 - If this is a **genre novel** or play (e.g. fantasy, science fiction, tragedy), are there archetypal roles that the characters fulfil?
 - Are any *contrasting* characters evident – that is, pairs of characters who appear to be complete opposites, but who the author pairs in some way? (This might be as a foil; for example, Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty.)
- In making inferences about these groupings, consider:
 - What is the significance of these groupings for the story itself?
 - What might the characters represent (e.g. does the character stand in for a group in society or is the character representative of a more abstract idea/concept?)
 - How might they contribute to an overall interpretation of the story's messages?

genre novel

a term used in the publishing and bookselling industries to refer to categories of novels that are given a specific name. In terms of the definitions from Chapter 1, the term typically refers to the subject matter of the novel (e.g. romance, crime fiction, science fiction, fantasy) or the target audience (e.g. children's fiction, young adult, new adult)

Plot and story: Putting the characters into the story

Characters do not exist in a vacuum – they are constructed by the author and put in a particular context so that ‘stuff’ can happen to and around them. Of course, a character can also be the catalyst for, or agent of, particular events that they set in motion. The role given to various characters (e.g. passive or active), how the author has characters react to events, and how you interpret this through the lens of your own experiences and world views are important factors in deciding the meaning of a literary text (e.g. novel, play).

Although we’ve already seen that there is much work to be done unpacking complex novels and plays, once you understand which characters you are encouraged to align with and which you are not, then (at a basic level) it’s a matter of asking:

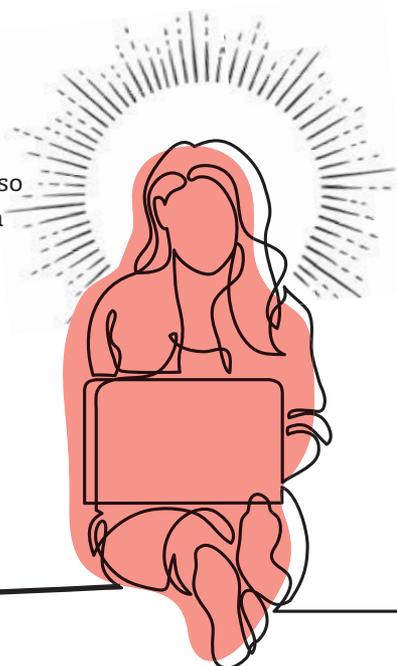
- What is at stake in the story; for example, something psychological (e.g. well-being, happiness, love) or physical (e.g. money, job, land), ethical (e.g. safety, privacy, autonomy) or social (e.g. position and power in society, friendship and loyalty)?
- Who ‘wins’ by the conclusion of the story? Who ‘loses’?
- Who changes as a result of the story? Who does not change?

Interpreting meanings and critiquing the text

Finally, what does all this mean? One of the roles of literature is to reflect and challenge social and cultural perspectives of people from particular times and places. With this in mind, you should consider what ‘messages’ a reader might take away from the novel or play, especially in relation to larger issues of gender, age, race, identity, power, class and the environment. What does the text mean to us, personally, and what has it meant or what might it mean for other readers, perhaps in other times, places and cultures? Holding up a critical frame, how might a text be read resistantly (consider, for example, that the texts chosen for the external exam are all written by white authors)?

If you have kept up your analysis, this last step involves drawing together everything you have already been thinking about in relation to your selected novel or play. For example, it should be (relatively) easy by now to identify some key themes and associated motifs. Based on your analysis of the focaliser and viewpoint, setting and context, and the events that happen to the characters, you should be in a position to interpret meanings associated with these themes and motifs. Moreover, the author or playwright often addresses the themes directly; for example, in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* during the eponymous hero’s soliloquy, ‘To be or not to be ...’

When interpreting the possible meanings of a story, your own experiences and world views might cause you to question or challenge the invited reading – and you might make an alternative or resistant reading instead. In holding up a critical frame to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, for example, readers might accept the negative judgments that Orwell makes of totalitarian governments (an invited reading), while also challenging the construction of the main, female character, Julia, as a corruptor (compare her with Eve in the *Christian Bible*). A reader might also feel very uncomfortable with the racist attitudes underpinning Winston Smith’s description (in Chapter 6) of the ‘black hordes’ in Africa and Orwell’s use of the African continent as a location for a (supposedly) devastating war against the ‘hordes of Asia’.



A summary of key questions to guide your analysis

The following table is a summary of key questions that you can use to guide your independent analysis of a novel or play.

At all stages of the process, ensure that you collect specific examples, quotations and page references that will help you justify your evolving understandings about, and position on, the text.

STORY ELEMENT	FOCUS QUESTIONS
Narration (See pp. 250–51 for details.)	1 Who speaks? Who sees? Does this remain the same throughout the story? 2 If you are reading a play, is there evidence of a chorus or the use of soliloquies? 3 Is the narrator reliable or unreliable? Does the reader's judgment of the narrator's reliability change throughout the story? 4 What effect does the choice of narration have on the reader? If the story shifts narrators at various points, what effect does this have on the way readers are positioned? 5 What other choices for narration (e.g. using marginalised or silenced characters) could have been made and what difference might that have made?
Storyworld – setting and context (See p. 251 for details.)	1 What is the context of the story: historical, political, social, cultural or geographical? 2 How does the setting contribute to the story's atmosphere? 3 Does the setting have a symbolic significance for the story?
Characters in the storyworld (See p. 252 for details.)	1 Who do you personally identify and not identify with? 2 How are the various key characters constructed by the author across the story? 3 How can the various characters be grouped and/or contrasted? What is the significance of these groupings? 4 What patterns can you identify? 5 From these patterns, what inferences can you make?
Plot and story – putting the characters into the story (See p. 253 for details.)	1 How does the story unfold for the various characters? 2 What is at stake (psychologically, ethically/morally, physically, socially) in the story? 3 By the conclusion, who wins and loses? 4 Who changes as the story unfolds? Who does not change?
Interpreting the story (See p. 253 for details.)	1 What themes and associated motifs can you identify? 2 How does this tie in with the characterisation and how the story unfolds? 3 What inferences can you make about the world view of the author/ playwright from what happens to the various characters as the events of the story unfold? 4 What connections do you make between the world of the text and your own knowledge, experience and world view? 5 Do you accept the positioning offered by the text, or do you resist and challenge that positioning? How might readers from another time, place or culture respond to the text? 6 With reference to larger issues of gender, age, race, identity, power, class and the environment, what messages do you take away from the novel or play: invited, alternative and/or resistant?

12.2

GUIDES FOR CLOSE STUDY OF ALL EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT TEXTS

The remainder of this chapter contains guides for the close study of literary texts that are listed as options for the external assessment in Unit 4 of Senior English. Each text option appears as a new chapter section.

How to use the guides for close textual study

The guides in this chapter are not intended to be used in isolation. Additional support and information for conducting your close study of a text is provided in Chapters 3 and 13, as well as Section 12.1 of this chapter.

We suggest using the various Student book materials in the following way:

- *Step 1:* Use Chapter 3 to consider the nature of critical response, including:
 - ✓ the purpose of studying literature and interpreting its meanings
 - ✓ the reading practices involved in creating a critical evaluation of a text
 - ✓ the cognitive processes relating to critical 'response'.
- *Step 2:* Use **ONE** of the following chapter sections to guide your close study of a literary text:
 - 12.3 *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent (novel)
 - 12.4 *Cat's Eye* by Margaret Atwood (novel)
 - 12.5 *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare (play)
 - 12.6 *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë (novel)
 - 12.7 *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare (play)
 - 12.8 *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell (novel)
 - 12.9 *The White Earth* by Andrew McGahan (novel)
 - 12.10 *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* by Karen Joy Fowler (novel)
- *Step 3:* Use Chapter 13 to develop your critical response by:
 - ✓ examining the features of 'critical response' as an assessment genre
 - ✓ reflecting on the marking criteria for the external assessment (examination: analytical essay)
 - ✓ planning a writing process for examination conditions
 - ✓ practising your essay writing.
- *Step 4:* Access related Toolkit resources in Chapter 14 throughout your study.

Note: Once you have chosen the text you will study closely, use the *Your turn* questions for that text as practice questions for preparing for the external assessment exam.

12.3

BURIAL RITES: HANNAH KENT

Hannah Kent is an Australian author. Her debut novel *Burial Rites* was published in 2013. It is a historical novel based on the true story of Agnes Magnúsdóttir, the last woman to be executed in Iceland in 1830. *Burial Rites* has won a host of awards around the world.

Burial Rites as a significant literary work

Strictly speaking, *Burial Rites* is a work of historical fiction: the fictional retelling of the lead-up to the execution of Agnes Magnúsdóttir, which presents a more sympathetic account of the murderess than historical records provide. However, it also makes use of elements of the Gothic style, particularly through its rendering of the harsh landscape of the Icelandic coast in the nineteenth century. The narrative alternates between first-person narration (the focalisation of Agnes) and third-person omniscient, with epistolary chapter openings that make use of historical records. Kent's prose is evocative and skilfully interweaves stark realism and musings about the nature of humanity.



Source 4 Hannah Kent (b. 1985)

Considering the text, author and audiences

Burial Rites is Hannah Kent's debut novel. You will find a substantial catalogue of interviews with Hannah Kent and reviews relating to *Burial Rites* online. These will answer questions like why an Australian author would write their first novel about Iceland; and why a contemporary author would write about historical events from the nineteenth century, which are questions commonly asked about Kent. To date the novel has been translated into 28 languages, which demonstrates the popularity of historical fiction!

In the case of Hannah Kent, not only will you read a novel by a living author, but you also have a chance to read a novel by an 'up and coming' author in your own country. Kent is a founding editor of the (now online) magazine *Kill Your Darlings*, and maintains an active author website and social-media profiles. If you are an aspiring writer, it is worthwhile reflecting on what it takes for an author or a text to gain a status of 'cultural significance' in today's cultural landscape.



12.3a Your turn

Research and relate

A strong understanding of the social context of the novel will assist you in understanding and analysing the text. By this point, you should have experience in researching the context of texts and their authors.

- 1 In addition to your own ideas, you should consider investigating:
 - nineteenth-century Iceland
 - historical accounts of the case depicted in the novel
 - conventions of the Australian Gothic style.
- 2 Locate a version of Gudrun's saga from which the novel's epigraph is taken; for example, a brief audio version can be found on the ABC Earshot site (search for 'Saga Land 2: The Story of Gudrun'). As you read *Burial Rites*, consider the similarities and differences between the stories of Gudrun and Agnes (the main character of the novel).

personal



Interpreting elements of the story

In order to do your best in the summative external assessment, which is the culmination of this unit, you will need to develop a thorough and complex understanding of the story presented in *Burial Rites*. You will have to draw on all the skills you have learnt throughout your Senior English course, particularly those outlined on pages 249–54. The questions below are tailored to *Burial Rites* and intended to extend your understanding of this text.

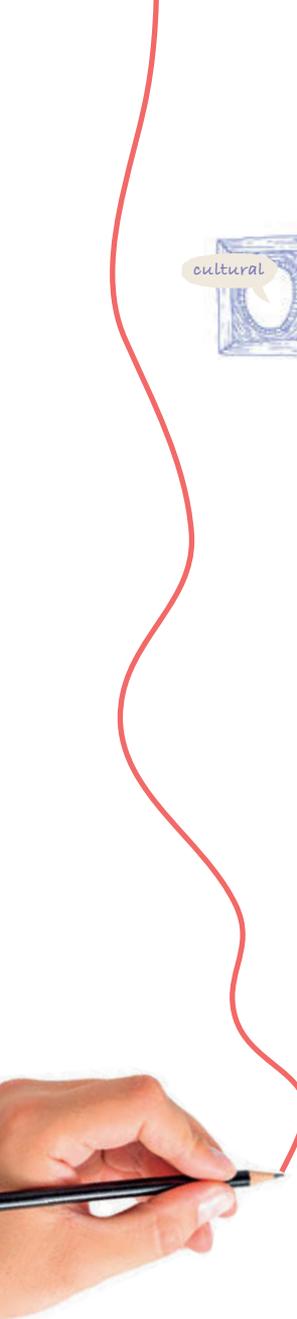
12.3b Your turn

Narration

- 1 What is revealed through the following forms of narration:
 - a Agnes's first-person account?
 - b the third-person omniscient narration?
 - c the use of epistolary sections at the start of chapters?
- 2 What is the effect of these shifts in narration (consider both who sees and speaks)?
- 3 How reliable is Agnes's narration?
- 4 How is the theme of truth constructed through the narration choices?
- 5 What is the effect of Agnes withholding her truth about the murders until late in the novel?

structural





cultural



Storyworld

- 6 Research the Icelandic landscape and geography. In what ways is it similar to Australia? In what ways is it different?
- 7 The physical setting of *Burial Rites* is significant. How does the setting of the novel take on a malevolent atmosphere? In what ways does it threaten and constrain the characters?
- 8 How does Kent represent theocracy in the storyworld?
- 9 How do social hierarchies operate within the novel? Consider who has power and what gives them power.
- 10 What spoken and unspoken social rules are transgressed by characters in the storyworld?

Characters in the storyworld

- 11 Naming is important in the novel. Consider:
 - a How does the concern of the Kornsó family around using Agnes's Christian name represent both Agnes and themselves?
 - b What does Agnes gain in changing her name when her details are entered in the census? What is the significance of her comment that she didn't realise it was so easy to change a name?
 - c There are rumours about Natan's name. How do these represent his character and the values of the community?
- 12 Agnes is the hero, or anti-hero, of the story. How are readers positioned to sympathise with her? (Remember that a sympathetic reader may not *like* the character, but they do *understand* the character.)
- 13 Tóti is commissioned with overseeing the spiritual counsel of Agnes. What is his function in the narrative?
- 14 What is the significance of Margrét being the person to whom Agnes tells her version of the truth?
- 15 How are readers positioned to react to Natan? How does this change across the course of the novel?
- 16 Which characters are constructed as villains?
- 17 Which characters are represented positively? What is the effect of this?

Plot and story

- 18 Agnes's death is assured from the outset of the novel, in much the same way as the Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* warns audiences of the pair's tragic end. How does this affect the way readers view events in the novel?
- 19 How do the letters at the beginning of Chapter 1 position readers? In what way are readers in the same situation as the Kornsó family?
- 20 How do characters' attitudes towards Agnes change in the course of the novel? What effect does this have on readers?
- 21 What is at stake in the novel? Are there any winners? What do they win?
- 22 How did you respond to not discovering the fate of characters other than Agnes? Why do you think Kent chose not to tell readers what happened to other characters?
- 23 After Agnes's confession to Margrét in Chapters 11 and 12, the pace of the narrative escalates towards Agnes's execution. What is the effect of this?

Looking through the structural frame

When looking through the structural frame, it is useful to consider the construction of the whole novel as a story (paying attention to the narration, characters, storyworld and plot) and the way the words within it are used to communicate. In this regard, you can draw on your knowledge of the Language in Use model and your understanding of narrative conventions.

The language used in the novel gives a raw, realistic depiction of life in nineteenth-century Iceland. The modes of address and reactions of characters reinforce a gaping class divide between those who own land, the servants who are at their mercy and the wealthy minority who rule the society. Particular descriptive choices heighten readers' sense of what daily life was like for these people, particularly those living in poverty: from Agnes's wretched state post-incarceration at the start of the novel, to the chilling account of her adoptive mother's death and the minutiae of butchering lambs, Kent does not shy away from confronting readers with fine detail.

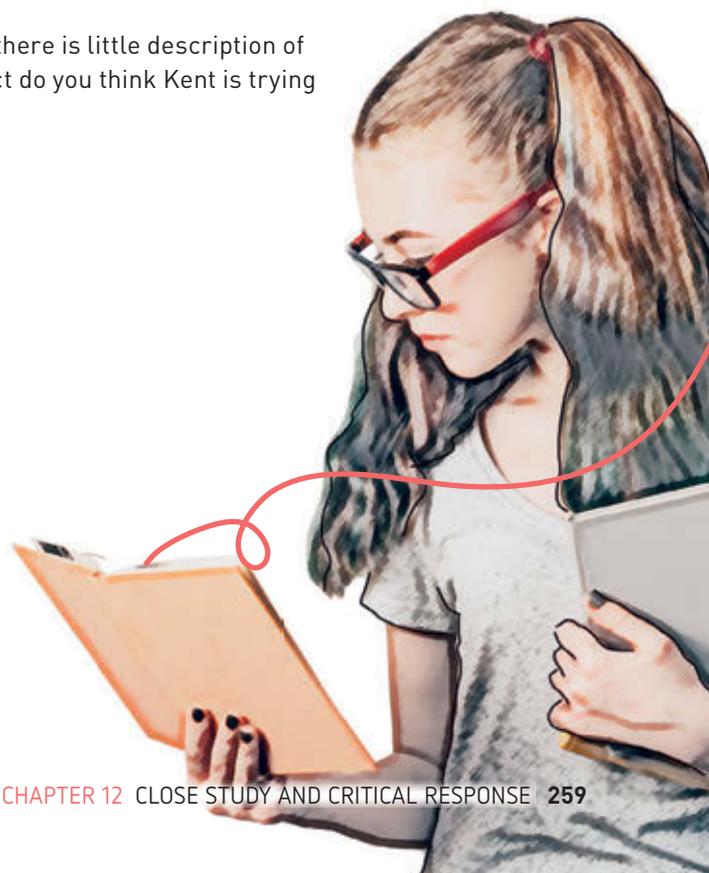
The structure of the story makes use of alternating perspectives to highlight the themes of truth and reality through the differences between Agnes's experience from her own point of view and what the world sees of her. This is reinforced through a somewhat non-linear structure, which highlights the value of memory, while also questioning its reliability and truthfulness. A steady escalation of the pace throughout the novel at once replicates the struggling pace of servant life and the relatively rapid march towards Agnes's death.

12.3c Your turn

Hold up the structural frame

- 1 Which scenes or descriptions did you find particularly confronting? Re-read these and comment on the techniques and stylistic devices used to create this effect.
- 2 Did any scenes or descriptions stand out to you as particularly beautiful? How were these effects created?
- 3 There are graphic scenes of animal slaughter in the novel, but there is little description of what must have been the bloody execution of Agnes. What effect do you think Kent is trying to achieve through these contrasting choices?
- 4 How is language used to construct Agnes as:
 - a a murderer?
 - b a victim?
- 5 How do the following symbols operate in the novel:
 - a birds?
 - b the stone Agnes keeps?
 - c fire?
 - d the weather?
- 6 How are the following themes and motifs explored in the novel:
 - a family?
 - b the role of religion?
 - c crime and punishment?
 - d truth?

structural



- 7 There is a great deal of language around consent in the novel. What power relationships does this language endorse?
- 8 What evidence of the following conventions of Gothic literature can you find in the novel:
 - a a malevolent landscape?
 - b a protagonist wanderer who ultimately finds themselves alone and isolated from society?
 - c the familiar made strange or aspects of ordinary life causing terror?
 - d superstition or the supernatural?
 - e a passion-driven, wilful villain?
 - f depictions of humanity's deepest, darkest fears?

Reflect on your personal response

personal



- 9 Did the novel meet your expectations of a historical novel? Did it meet your expectations of a story about a murderer?
- 10 How do you feel about Agnes?
- 11 Has this story affected your thoughts about capital punishment?
- 12 Which characters resonated with you, for better or worse?
- 13 What were your favourite aspects of the novel?
- 14 Which other historical figures or stories would you be interested in reading about?
- 15 Does *Burial Rites* remind you of any other texts (e.g. novels, films, television shows, poems, plays)?

Looking through the cultural frame

Hannah Kent based *Burial Rites* on extensive historical and cultural research. She depicts a cultural system characterised by a clear class divide, which is exacerbated by the expense of increasing modernisation. The power of the Lutheran theocracy adds a further layer of complexity to social relations, as the cross-over between religious and political power created additional expectations and rules for individuals. Through this lens, the existence of superstition and archaic aspects of paganism within the society are interesting for readers, and sometimes difficult for characters.

The position of women in the novel is fraught with difficulty. In Lauga we have an image of the ideal woman, but other characters such as Sigga and Agnes show that the plight of women, particularly those of the servant class, was at the mercy of men, and these women were often taken advantage of.

12.3d Your turn

- 1 Consider Blondal's visit to Kornsa in Chapter 1.
 - a How does this scene depict the social divide present in the novel and his attitudes towards the lower classes?
 - b How does this scene characterise Blondal, Lauga and Steina?
- 2 What makes a 'good woman' and a 'good man' in the culture of the novel?

- 3 How do the community's differing reactions to Sigga and Agnes represent the Madonna—Whore Complex?
- 4 Men in the novel seem particularly drawn to Agnes – both Natan and Tóti experience emotional and physical desire for her. Why has Kent constructed a character who is both attractive and a renowned killer?
- 5 How do the women in the novel react to Agnes? Is this different from how the men react to her?
- 6 What values, attitudes and beliefs about religion and superstition are foregrounded in the novel?
- 7 What comment does the novel make about the value of truth in the justice system and in our everyday social relations?

Looking through the critical frame

In *Burial Rites*, Hannah Kent takes a perspective marginalised by history (that of a condemned criminal) and asks readers to sympathise with it. Through this, she challenges traditional constructions of women as murderers and men as heroic protectors. In traditional Icelandic sagas, women rely on their words to kill, and the fact that Agnes physically kills Natan moves away from tradition. The novel also highlights the misogynistic belief that intelligence in a woman is dangerous. The representation of the judicial system in the novel questions the universality of justice when faced with corruption and officials who rule based on personal feelings rather than truth.

A number of resistant readings to the novel are possible, particularly as it is based on historical events. For example, it is possible to argue that Agnes deserves her punishment as she has committed murder, whatever her reasons for doing so. Modern readers may also resist the normalisation of domestic violence in the novel, which is accepted by some characters due to aspects of the historical context. However, other aspects of the novel are suggestive of modern values, attitudes and beliefs, more characteristic of the author's time than the society in which her characters exist.

12.3e Your turn

Hold up the critical frame

- 1 Who is marginalised or silenced by the novel? What effect does this have?
- 2 To what extent is Natan characterised as a romantic hero? Does this affect how readers relate to Agnes?
- 3 Tóti fails in carrying out the job he is ordered to do and is criticised for allowing Agnes to speak, rather than sermonising to her. What values, attitudes and beliefs about religion and spirituality does this highlight?
- 4 What values, attitudes and beliefs about families are endorsed by the novel?
- 5 Does the novel challenge or endorse the class system it represents as existing in Iceland in the nineteenth century?
- 6 What message does the novel put forward about truth? What values, attitudes and beliefs are endorsed or challenged by doing so?



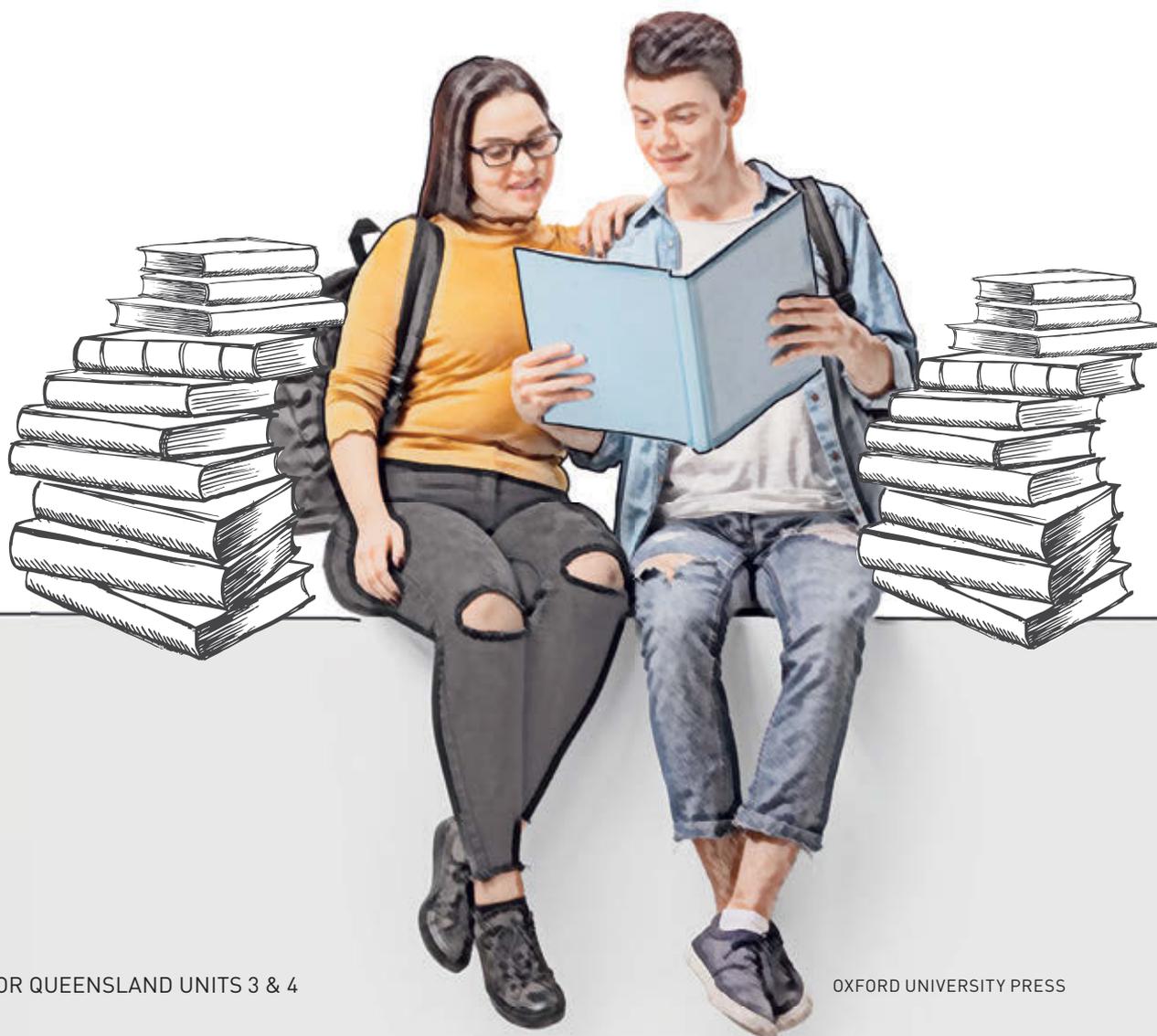
critical



- 7 What world views are endorsed by the novel?
- 8 What world views are challenged by the novel?
- 9 This is a work of historical fiction, not a novel that is contemporary to its historical setting. What traces of contemporary values, attitudes and beliefs can you identify? Is Kent imposing her own values as a contemporary author on the behaviour of nineteenth-century characters?
- 10 Conduct some online research to discover what the Stockholm Syndrome and the Lima Syndrome are. How might these phenomena explain the changing relationships between Agnes and the people at Kornsó, especially given the constraints and isolation imposed by the harsh environment? Does knowledge of these syndromes change your response to Kent's version of events?

Reflect on your evolving interpretation

- 11 Which perspectives in *Burial Rites* do you support? Which do your values most align with?
 - 12 Has any part of *Burial Rites* challenged your own perspectives on the world?
 - 13 In what ways has reading *Burial Rites* altered your own values, attitudes and beliefs?
-



12.4

CAT'S EYE: MARGARET ATWOOD

Margaret Atwood is a Canadian author. Published in 1988, *Cat's Eye* is a story about a fictional character, Elaine Risley, a controversial painter in mid-twentieth-century Canada. Told from a first-person perspective using flashbacks to childhood, teen and young adult years, the story focuses on female friendships and the impact of bullying.



Source 5 Margaret Atwood (b. 1939)

Cat's Eye as a significant literary work

Margaret Atwood is a contemporary author, writing prolifically across a range of genres and mediums. To an extent this makes all her works 'significant', with *Cat's Eye* being one of the five novels that Atwood has had nominated for the prestigious Man Booker prize. The literary significance of *Cat's Eye* specifically relates to its subject matter. With the story timeline ranging from the 1940s to the 1980s, the reader is afforded a complex and nuanced exploration of a social world that changed rapidly for girls and women through waves of feminism. The protagonist's maturation as an artist and a woman provides a window into personal development and the ways we can be profoundly shaped by friendships and perspectives from our youth.

Considering the text, author and audiences

Cat's Eye is Atwood's seventh novel. It followed her renowned novel *The Handmaid's Tale* and she has written another ten novels since then. The novel was started in 1964, much earlier than it was published, and some suggest the novel has autobiographical elements. The storyworld is based on Canadian contexts, so there is some work for an Australian reader to do in imagining the setting. However, the representations of characters, in particular relating to gendered experiences, may still have strong resonances for Australian readers.

At first it looks like a dense novel – lots of pages! Lots of print! But by breaking the text into manageable chunks using *parts* as well as *chapters*, the author helps us to avoid getting bogged down in dense pages of prose. If you 'read' this novel in audiobook format, we suggest you also keep a print copy of the part and chapter numbering handy so you can more easily visualise and find meaning in the book's structure.

12.4a Your turn

Research and relate



A strong understanding of the social context of the novel will assist you in understanding and analysing the text. By this point, you should have experience at researching the contexts of texts and their authors.

- 1 In addition to your own ideas, you should consider investigating:
 - Margaret Atwood's interests and concerns (especially as she might be best known to you as the author of *The Handmaid's Tale*, on which the television series was based)
 - second wave feminism
 - attitudes towards women globally in the 1980s.
- 2 Talk with a classmate or your teacher about your prior experience reading novels that deal with female friendships or feminist issues. What ideas or subject matter are you expecting from this novel?

Interpreting elements of the story

To do your best in the summative external assessment, which is the culmination of this unit, you will need to develop a thorough and complex understanding of the story presented in *Cat's Eye*. You will have to draw on all the skills you have learnt throughout your Senior English course, particularly those outlined on pages 249–54. The questions below are tailored to *Cat's Eye* and intended to extend your understanding of this text.

12.4b Your turn

Narration

structural



- 1 Elaine narrates this story in the first person. Is she a reliable or unreliable narrator? Does your judgment of her reliability change throughout the story?
- 2 The story switches between different focalisers: Elaine the child and teenager, Elaine the young adult, and Elaine in her late 40s in the present. What effect does this have on the way readers are positioned?
- 3 How would the story be different if told through the eyes of another character? Support your response by discussing a couple of specific characters.

cultural



Storyworld

- 4 In the world that Atwood constructs, there are a number of social hierarchies at play (e.g. in the family, school friendship groups, academia, romantic relationships and the art world). Consider the significance of each over the course of Elaine's life.
- 5 How is language used in the storyworld to construct the concept of gender? Give some examples.
- 6 To what extent are the norms, issues and conflicts relating to gender in the storyworld evident in our Australian society today?
- 7 In the novel, how are Toronto and Vancouver represented? What is the significance of the contrasting nature of the cities that Atwood constructs?

Characters in the storyworld

- 8 What is Elaine's perspective on ageing and how is this represented?
- 9 Initially, Elaine wishes to become a biologist, but she suddenly decides to pursue an artistic career. What prompts this change of heart and what impact does this have on her life and the story more generally? What role does science continue to play in Elaine's life?
- 10 Which characters in the story are adhering to their social roles, and which are not? How do you know? Give 2–3 examples.
- 11 How is clothing used symbolically to represent the values, attitudes and beliefs of various characters? Give 2–3 examples.
- 12 The reader is positioned to perceive various characters at different points in the story; for example, Cordelia takes on almost a traditional antagonist role early on, only to become a more sympathetic (or perhaps pitiful) figure later in the novel. What is the significance of these changing representations?



Plot and story

- 13 The novel is split into 15 'parts'.
- a How do these parts help to organise the story?
 - b What is at stake for the protagonist in each part?
 - c What parts of the story do you find the most interesting? What parts are most challenging?
- 14 The story does not unfold in a linear manner. Try plotting the main events of Elaine's life on a timeline. What is the effect on the reader of the way these events are revealed in the novel?
- 15 Can we say there are any (traditional) winners and losers at the end of the story? If so, what is won and lost?

Looking through the structural frame

Two things that stand out about the way this novel is structured are that it uses flashbacks to tell the story, and that it is a story divided into lots of sub-sections. Zooming in more closely, some interesting things to notice are how dialogue has been balanced with free indirect discourse to position the reader, how characters use inclusive/exclusionary language to define roles and relationships, and how evaluative language is used by characters to reinforce or challenge cultural assumptions about gender. There is a lot to keep track of in this story and in the activity below we suggest that an epic notetaking table is called for, to look for meaningful patterns and more easily visualise the plot sequence.

12.4c Your turn

Create a summary table

Construct an expansive table (in digital format or using several A3 sheets) to collate notes about each 'part' as well as each 'chapter' of the novel. We suggest it might look like this, although you could add as many extra columns as you wish.



PART	FLASHBACKS FROM	NUMBER OF CHAPTERS	KEY EVENTS	SIGNIFICANCE OF PART TITLE	MEANINGFUL IMAGERY AND SYMBOLS	MEANINGFUL LANGUAGE USE - KEY QUOTES
1 Iron lung						
2 Silver paper						

structural



- 1 How is imagery used to convey the trauma of bullying?
- 2 How do the following symbols and motifs operate in the novel:
 - a the cat's eye marble?
 - b the ravine?
 - c food?
 - d Toronto?
 - e the Virgin Mary?
 - f Elaine's paintings?
 - g entomological specimens?
- 3 Why is the painting of Cordelia titled 'Half a face'?
- 4 Although art and science are often seen as polar opposites, biology and cosmology are referenced a number of times in the novel, and the latter even influences the choice of names for some sections of the novel. Where do these references occur and how are they significant for the overall messages of the novel?
- 5 Margaret Atwood is a skilled author and the novel is full of evocative imagery. How does this imagery contribute to the authenticity of the novel, as well as its emotional impact?

Reflect on your personal response

personal



- 6 Chapter 43 begins 'Now I'm in Grade Eleven ...'. Did you find the flashbacks from Elaine's senior years of high school more engaging than other flashbacks because you are also a senior high-school student? Explain your answer.
- 7 Has this story affected your thoughts about bullying?
- 8 Has this story revealed anything new to you about the social construction of gender norms?
- 9 Which characters resonated with you, for better or worse?
- 10 *Cat's Eye* is quite a long novel. Did you 'read' it on audiobook?
 - a If you did and the narrator had a Canadian accent, did this help you to imagine the characters and storyworld as Canadian?
 - b If you did not listen to an audio version, were you able to successfully imagine the characters and storyworld as Canadian based on the dialogue and imagery?

Looking through the cultural frame

Sometimes it's hard not to be curious about the author's context when reading a novel and *Cat's Eye* is an example of this. Because it is told in the first person, and there are biographical similarities between the protagonist and the author, there is a conflation between the author's voice and the protagonist's voice. Researching the novel uncovers that Margaret Atwood began writing it in 1964 but did not complete it until years later after having the chance to observe her own daughter growing up. So, to what extent does this novel reflect Atwood's own life experiences, or her daughter's? As a 'coming of age' story, to what extent are we invited to see our own perspectives in the stories of Elaine Risely? How 'novel' was it, in the late 1980s, for an author to receive critical acclaim for telling a story like this (with a close focus on female experience)?

Published in 1988, but also using flashbacks as early as the 1940s, the storyworld in this novel includes settings from historically different eras. There are overt references and direct comments throughout the novel to art movements and world events that can be related to the personal stories unfolding in the plot. The question that will play on your mind and have

you going back again and again to your close analysis work is, 'To what extent are Elaine's memories accurate and formative of her adult experiences, and to what extent is she projecting her current perspective and world view onto childhood memories?'

12.4d Your turn

- 1 In what ways does the story reflect values, attitudes and beliefs relating to:
 - a female ageing?
 - b menstruation?
 - c swearing?
 - d gender roles, including constructions of masculinity?
- 2 Is there a vast difference between the bullying tactics used by children and those used by adults in the story?
- 3 What ideas about childhood memories are represented by the text?
- 4 How are cultural assumptions and ideals relating to motherhood represented? Compare and contrast at least two characters who have roles as mothers.



Looking through the critical frame

The obvious talking points relating to *Cat's Eye* are the representations of gender and bullying. However, another standout aspect of the protagonist's identity is that she and her family are often poor. At the outset of the story they are also depicted as having a transient lifestyle due to her father's work as a field entomologist. In the field of contemporary gender studies, it is typical to explore intersections in identity, but in many instances, gender is treated in the novel as a concept in isolation. Less prominent are explorations of what it means to be female and poor, or female and transient. The novel doesn't foreground complex representations of ethnicity, but religion is offered as a significant point of cultural difference between families, and as a defining factor in identity.

Does this mean that Atwood is offering gender, religion and experiences with bullying as the most important aspects of our identity, and as factors that define our social roles and relationships? Perhaps. All texts, including literary texts, have a meaning that is created by the author, but only comes to life through interpretation by the reader.

So, what do you think *Cat's Eye* is about? And, as you look through the critical frame, is there anything you think the novel fails to say?



12.4e Your turn

critical



intersectionality taking an intersectional view on society involves considering the multiple social, biological and cultural aspects of our identities, and understanding each identity as a unique intersection of such factors. It particularly involves being mindful of the way people can experience multiple forms of discrimination that 'intersect', and how this can result in amplified experiences of disadvantage

- 1 To what extent are the gendered experiences represented in the novel generalisable to:
 - a readers in 1988 when the novel was published?
 - b readers today?

- 2 Critically reading from the perspective of **intersectional** feminism, how are concepts of gender limited in this novel?

- 3 Consider this quote from Chapter 42 in Part 8:

I have a fleeting image of Grace once more, disappearing into her house through the front door, in her skirt with the straps, her pilly sweater. She was adored, by all of us. But she is not anymore. And in Cordelia's version, now, she never was. (p. 253)

- a To what extent do you think this novel is a caution against authors re-versioning history to suit their own needs?
- b Contrast this with a quote from Chapter 41: '... in real life the bloomers on Mrs. Smeath are an intense indigo blue that took me weeks to get right ...' (p. 248). To what extent does this novel illuminate the ethics of artistic representation (in writing, painting etc.)?

Reflect on your evolving interpretation

- 4 What inferences can you make about the world view of the author from what happens to the various characters as the events of the story unfold?
- 5 Do you accept the positioning offered by the text or do you resist and challenge that positioning? How might other readers of different genders respond to the text?
- 6 Has any part of *Cat's Eye* challenged your own perspectives on the world?
- 7 In what ways has reading *Cat's Eye* altered your own values, attitudes and beliefs?
- 8 How do your own values, attitudes and beliefs impact on your ability and willingness to accept *Cat's Eye* as a great literary masterpiece?



12.5

HAMLET: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The Tragedy of Hamlet is one of Shakespeare's longest and most famous plays – equally as popular during his lifetime as it is enduring today. Although the date of its publication is not certain, experts place it between 1599 and 1602.



Source 6 William Shakespeare (bapt. 1564–1616)

Hamlet as a significant literary work

Hamlet is possibly the greatest example of a revenge tragedy, a style of theatre of which Shakespeare was one of the early pioneers. However, *Hamlet* complicates the revenge tragedy by posing some big questions about the legitimacy of the human desire for revenge, the effects of looming mortality and the afterlife, and the value of appearances in a broken society where distrust and surveillance are the norm. Hamlet himself is one of the most interesting and complex characters of Shakespeare's creation: his motives are unclear; he struggles with the tension of inaction; and his beautiful intellect stands in stark contrast to the violent deeds he engineers.

Considering the text, author and audiences

'To be, or not to be, that is the question.' Almost every student beginning their study of *Hamlet* knows that line. It has become a popular cultural reference. The familiarity that people have with Shakespeare's works, though, can be a problem. Even though it sometimes feels like the challenge of reading Shakespeare's unfamiliar language puts the meaning of his plays out of reach, you can simultaneously think that you already know everything important about a popular play such as *Hamlet* before you even start. 'It's a tragedy, and he is indecisive, blah blah; nearly everyone dies in the end; I get it!' Maybe you have already lined yourself up a swag of study guides and film adaptations to get you through this study so you don't even have to read the play – you wouldn't be the first student to try it. Supplementing your reading with such resources is a good plan, but avoiding the reading altogether is not advised.

One of the amazing things about Shakespeare is that he wrote his works at a time when the world was changing profoundly. The Enlightenment? It hadn't happened yet, but it was about to. The English dictionary? An endorsed one wasn't published until 1755! Some still believed the Earth was flat. And yet ... the concepts, dilemmas and even humour put forward by Shakespeare are always surprising in their relevance to contemporary times.



12.5a Your turn

Research and relate

personal



A strong understanding of the social context of the novel will assist you in understanding and analysing the text. By this point, you should have experience at researching the contexts of texts and their authors.

- 1 In addition to your own ideas, you should consider investigating:
 - the five-act structure of a Shakespearean tragedy
 - revenge tragedies
 - attitudes towards women and their place in Shakespeare's time
 - attitudes towards mental illness in Elizabethan England.
- 2 Talk with a classmate or your teacher about your prior experience with Shakespearean plays. List *three* things you already know about this form of literature; *two* things you'd like to learn more about; and *one* question you have.

Interpreting elements of the story

In order to do your best in the summative external assessment, which is the culmination of this unit, you will need to develop a thorough and complex understanding of the story presented in *Hamlet*. This will require you to draw on all the skills you have learnt throughout your Senior English course, particularly those outlined on pages 249–54. The questions below are tailored to *Hamlet* and intended to extend your understanding of this text.

Note: Numbers like 1:2, 2:4 and so on refer to Act 1 Scene 2, Act 2 Scene 4 and so on. You will come across this scene referencing style for plays both in this text and in the external assessment, so ensure that you are familiar with it.

12.5b Your turn

Narration

structural



Shakespeare's plays do not feature a designated narrator in the same way they exist in novels. However, you can learn a lot from considering which characters tell parts of the story to the audience.

cultural



- 1 How does the conversation between the soldiers in Act 1 Scene 1 establish the setting? What information does the audience learn?
- 2 Soliloquies are delivered by a character who is alone (or thinks they are unheard by others) onstage and give insight into that character's thoughts and feelings. Hamlet performs seven soliloquies across the play (1:2, 1:5, 2:2, 3:1, 3:2, 3:3, 4:4). Carefully re-read each soliloquy and comment on:
 - a how they operate as narration
 - b what they reveal about Hamlet's character and actions.
- 3 There are instances in the play where one character directs others to act (Polonius to Laertes; Polonius to Ophelia; Ghost to Hamlet; Claudius to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern). How does the audience witnessing these instructions serve as a form of narration?
- 4 What does the 'dumb show' (the play put on by the acting troupe in Act 3) reveal to the audience?

Storyworld

- 5 There is a great deal of political turmoil in the play, famously expressed in Marcellus's line, 'Something is rotten in the state of Denmark' (1:4.67). What is the significance of this comment, and how does this turmoil set the mood of the play?
- 6 How have the recent changes to Hamlet's family dynamic affected the ways he operates in the world?
- 7 Which characters hold power in the play? What social constructs give them power?
- 8 Consider the way gender exists in the storyworld:
 - a What social rules do the men appear to follow?
 - b Which characters break these rules?
 - c What social rules do the women appear to follow?
 - d Which characters break these rules?



Characters in the storyworld

- 9 How does Hamlet's character change across the play?
- 10 How does Ophelia's madness act as a foil to that shown by Hamlet?
- 11 What similarities and differences exist between Hamlet's relationship with his mother and his relationship with Ophelia?
- 12 How does the dead King Hamlet act as a foil to Claudius? What negative qualities does this highlight in Claudius's character?
- 13 How can characters be grouped according to their attributes? Which characters are audiences positioned to support?

Plot and story

- 14 How does the dead King Hamlet drive the action of the play?
- 15 Do you think Hamlet would have sought revenge on Claudius on his own?
- 16 What is the purpose of the dumb show? What are the broader effects of this play-in-a-play?
- 17 How do the murders in the play create shifts in the tension and action?
- 18 How does the need for characters to travel provide opportunities to break up the action of the play?
- 19 In what ways is order restored at the end of the play? Is this a satisfying ending?
- 20 What is at stake in the play? Who wins? Who loses?

Looking through the structural frame

When looking through the structural frame, it is useful to consider the construction of the whole play as a story (paying attention to the narration, characters, storyworld and plot) as well as a performance piece (paying attention to dialogue and stage directions) and the way the words within it are used to communicate. In this regard, you can draw on your knowledge of the Language in Use model and your understanding of theatrical conventions.

In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare employs a traditional five-act structure wherein the commencement

of each act signals a new phase of action. Within this, he utilises many conventions of the revenge tragedy; however, Hamlet is somewhat unprepared for the task – his indecision and internal war between desire for revenge and moral philosophising see him spending most of the play avoiding acts of vengeance.

Analysing the language used in *Hamlet* is a different process from considering a novel. Shakespeare's plays contain scant stage directions, so you are largely working with dialogue, considering what characters say. However, in *Hamlet* we have a hero who is a lover of language – one of his more famous lines is literally, 'Words, words, words' (2.2:1296). Often, he relies on his skill with words as a weapon to avoid taking action. When working with plays in English, it is important to remember that they are written for performance, not silent reading. Your understanding of the play will be considerably improved if you are able to watch a performance (live or recorded) or participate in a reading of the play.

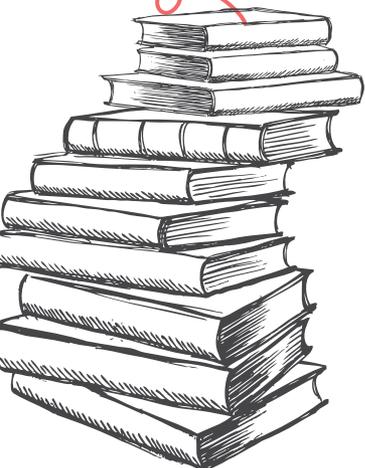
12.5c Your turn

structural



Hold up the structural frame

- 1 Consider the stages of the five-act structure below. Make a list of the key events that occur in each stage of the play:
 - Act 1: Exposition
 - Act 2: Complication
 - Act 3: Climax
 - Act 4: Falling action
 - Act 5: Catastrophe
- 2 What is the effect of the following features of the revenge tragedy style in the play:
 - a ghosts?
 - b insanity and/or madness?
 - c a dumb show or play-within-a-play?
 - d corpses?
 - e sensational onstage violence?
- 3 Without prescriptive stage directions, what clues do directors and actors use to guide their performances? (You might like to compare recordings of some performances of the play.)
- 4 Shakespeare's plays were generally written as part scripts, wherein each actor received only their lines and their cue line (the line immediately before their own). The full plays were only compiled after the productions were staged. How might this affect the way the script is written and performed?
- 5 How do the following symbols and motifs operate within the play:
 - a poison?
 - b flowers? (You might like to investigate symbolic meanings of flowers throughout history.)
 - c the ghost? (Characters can operate as symbols too!)
 - d Yorick's skull?
- 6 Consider the conversation between Hamlet and Polonius in Act 2 Scene 2. How does Hamlet insult Polonius? How does this exchange contribute to the audience's perceptions of these characters?
- 7 What is the effect of Hamlet's use of paradox and double entendre when abusing Ophelia in Act 3 Scene 1?
- 8 Hamlet dies with one of the best final lines in literature: 'The rest is silence' (5:2:300). What does he mean? How does this line represent his skill with language?



Reflect on your personal response

- 9 Consider your expectations when you started reading *Hamlet*. Did the play meet your expectations? Why or why not?
- 10 What did you find surprising or interesting about the play?
- 11 How do you feel about Hamlet?
- 12 How do you feel about Ophelia?
- 13 Which characters do you think deserved their fates at the end of the play?
- 14 Does any part of the play resonate with your own experience?
- 15 Does *Hamlet* remind you of any other texts (e.g. novels, films, television shows, poems, plays)?



Looking through the cultural frame

Hamlet operates within an openly **patriarchal** society, and is particularly concerned with the operation of these values within the family sphere. Hamlet seeks revenge for the death of his own 'pater' and is angered by his mother's lack of loyalty to the same. He seemingly extends this distrust of women to the woman he has been courting, questioning Ophelia's purity and loyalty, violently berating her. Interestingly, it is this patriarchal loyalty that is Ophelia's demise; her madness, caused by the death of her father, is ultimately the purported cause of her death, whether by her own hand or accident.

Hers is not the only death in the play, and a preoccupation with mortality pervades many of Hamlet's speeches. While not an overly religious play, *Hamlet* poses big questions about death and the afterlife, although it provides audiences with no real answers, and the events and ideas around mortality presented in the play are often contradictory in nature.

patriarchal
an adjective describing social systems that empower men over women. This empowerment may be legal or social, and can be formal or informal

12.5d Your turn

Hold up the cultural frame

- 1 Based on the research you completed in *Your turn 12.5a*, what aspects of Elizabethan society can you see represented in the play?
- 2 Shakespeare's choice to set the play in Denmark allowed him to depict a society recovering from a war and facing the threat of another. Within this atmosphere, how does Shakespeare question the need for espionage and surveillance?
- 3 What values, attitudes and beliefs about mortality are represented in the play? You might consider:
 - Hamlet's contrasting desire for, and fear of, death
 - Ophelia's death
 - the murders Hamlet commits
 - Hamlet's 'Alas, poor Yorick' speech.
- 4 How is grief represented in the play? Does it validate the actions of certain characters?
- 5 Consider the women in the play.
 - a Does Hamlet have different expectations of his mother and his girlfriend?
 - b How do other characters' expectations compare to those shown by Hamlet?
 - c How, then, is femininity and female sexuality represented in the play?



- 6 How is masculinity represented in the play?
 - 7 What world views are endorsed by the play?
 - 8 As a modern reader, do you view the play as controversial or conservative?
-

Looking through the critical frame

Hamlet's complexity opens it up to a host of critical readings. Countless academics and critics have debated Hamlet's motivations, his inaction and the representation of his actions (when he finally makes up his mind). His sexuality is also a common topic of contention – whether he loved his mother too much and inappropriately, how poorly he treated Ophelia and whether he had any sexual desire for women at all.

Through this gender lens, Ophelia's life and death are scrutinised, including the extent to which she embodied the social roles required of her and whether her death was an accident or occurred by her own hand.

The bigger questions about life and death posed by the play are perhaps even more puzzling. Life expectancy was short in Shakespeare's age, and the shadow of death hung low over the living. However, the deaths we see in the play are violent and often pre-meditated. Hamlet's meditations on murder and suicide sit a little awkwardly given that many in the audience would be facing the threat of death through the Plague, malnutrition or countless other medieval diseases.

12.5e Your turn



Hold up the critical frame

- 1 How could a sympathetic reading of *Hamlet* be justified by the text?
- 2 What evidence in the text allows the reading of *Hamlet* as:
 - a Goethe's suggestion of a poet who is too sensitive for the political world of the play?
 - b Freud's suggestion of a man with an Oedipus complex (you may need to research that)?
 - c a loyal son?
 - d blinded by grief?
 - e mentally ill?
 - f not attracted to women?
- 3 What values, attitudes and beliefs are supported by the various readings of *Hamlet* outlined in Question 2?
- 4 Is Hamlet a hero or a villain?
- 5 What ideas about loving fathers are represented in the text? To what extent do the fathers in *Hamlet* embody the convention of the 'meddling mother' seen elsewhere in literature?
- 6 Is the representation of women acceptable to a modern audience? Why or why not?
- 7 Consider the representation of 'madness' in the play.
 - a How does Ophelia's own descent into madness act as a foil to Hamlet's behaviour? What values, attitudes and beliefs does this highlight?
 - b How do these representations align with current perspectives on mental health/illness?

- 8 What values, attitudes and beliefs about mortality and the afterlife does the play endorse and/or challenge? (You might need to consider how this changes in different stages of the play, or how characters represent different viewpoints.)
- 9 What world views are endorsed by the play?
- 10 What world views are challenged by the play?

Reflect on your evolving interpretation

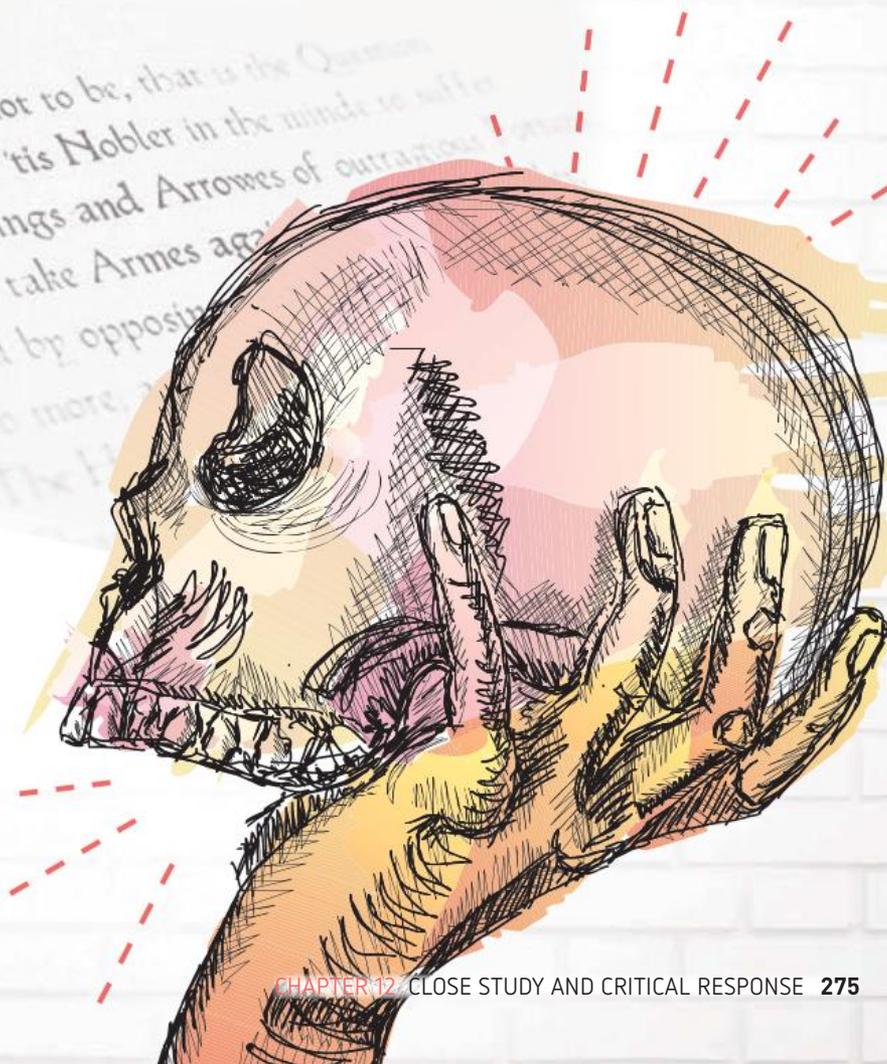
- 11 Which perspectives in *Hamlet* do you support? Which do your values most align with?
- 12 Has any part of *Hamlet* challenged your own perspectives on the world?
- 13 In what ways has reading and/or viewing *Hamlet* altered your own values, attitudes and beliefs?
- 14 How do your own values, attitudes and beliefs impact on your ability and willingness to accept *Hamlet* as a great literary masterpiece?



[Enter Hamlet.]

HAMLET

To be, or not to be, that is the Question
Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer
The Slings and Arrows of outrageous Fortune,
Or to take Arms against a Sea of Troubles,
And by opposing end them. My conscience
Doth bathe me in affliction, deeper than
Ever yet drops-wet. My thoughts are
Myself, and I myself am but a sick man,
And I myself am but a wounded wretch,
And I myself am but a wounded wretch,
And I myself am but a wounded wretch.



12.6

JANE EYRE: CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Jane Eyre was published in 1847 under Charlotte Brontë's pseudonym, Currer Bell. The setting of the novel is contemporary to its publication and it follows the adventures of the title character from childhood into her adult life.

Jane Eyre as a significant literary work

Bildungsroman

a coming-of-age story that shows a young protagonist's development from immaturity to maturity

Jane Eyre was Charlotte Brontë's first published novel. While it has semi-autobiographical elements and aspects of a **Bildungsroman**, it is also significant as an example of a Gothic romance. Within the bounds of a romance, *Jane Eyre* is notable for representing some progressive ideas for its time, particularly in regard to education, the role and place of women in society, and women's identity and sexuality. Some go as far as calling *Jane Eyre* an early work of feminist fiction, although this is disputed. In more recent years, the text has been challenged from a post-colonial perspective and was the inspiration for Jean Rhys's 1966 novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*.



Source 7
Charlotte Brontë
(1816–1855)

Considering the text, author and audiences

Charlotte Brontë was the oldest of three sisters who all wrote novels and poems during a time when female authors were not as respected or influential as males. *Jane Eyre* was published at a time when the novel had grown in popularity as an artform in England during the end of the Romantic period and into the Victorian era. Before this time, novels as we know them weren't really a thing. Poetry and plays were far more popular, before the boom in novel writing in nineteenth-century England.

You might have also heard of Jane Austen, or Mary Shelley, other famous female novelists who wrote in England a few decades before the Brontës. A couple of decades *after* Jane Eyre, a lot of Charles Dickens's famous novels appeared. What this means for you is that, in reading *Jane Eyre*, you are reading a novel that comes from smack-bang in the middle of a really significant time for novels, and for female authors. Aside from the historical significance of novels written at this time, there were important developments in audiences and distribution: more people than ever were literate enough to read; advances in print-press technology meant more written material could be printed than ever; and changes to copyright laws meant increased ownership and royalty payments for authors.

So, put yourself in Charlotte Brontë's shoes; it's the 1840s in Manchester, England. What cultural resources do you have on hand to work into a novel that will get people reading? And ... does any of this sound interesting to you yet?



12.6a Your turn

Research and relate

A strong understanding of the social context of the novel will assist you in understanding and analysing the text. By this point, you should have experience at researching the contexts of texts and their authors.

- 1 In addition to your own ideas, you should consider investigating:
 - Gothic romance
 - Victorian morals
 - British colonialism in the nineteenth century, particularly in Jamaica
 - post-colonial
 - the Byronic hero convention.
- 2 Talk with a classmate or your teacher about your prior experience in reading nineteenth-century English novels. List *three* things you already know about this form of literature; *two* things you'd like to learn more about; and *one* question you have.



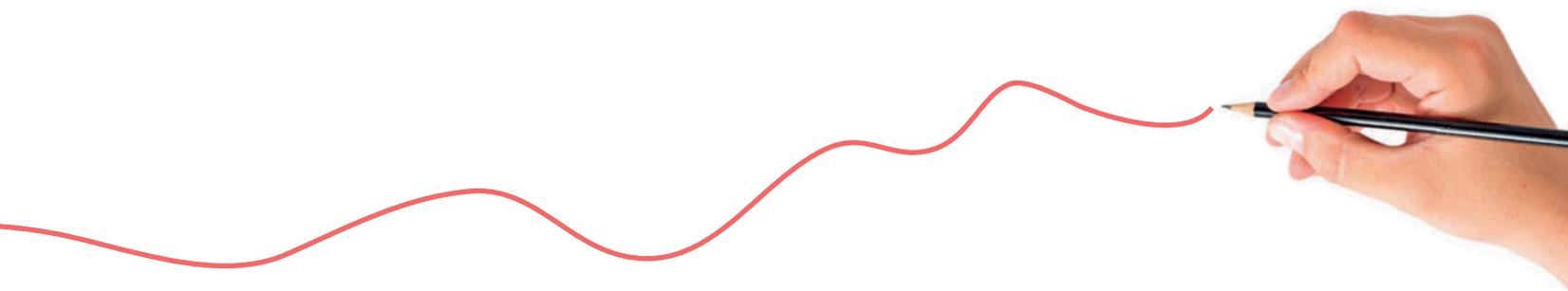
Interpreting elements of the story

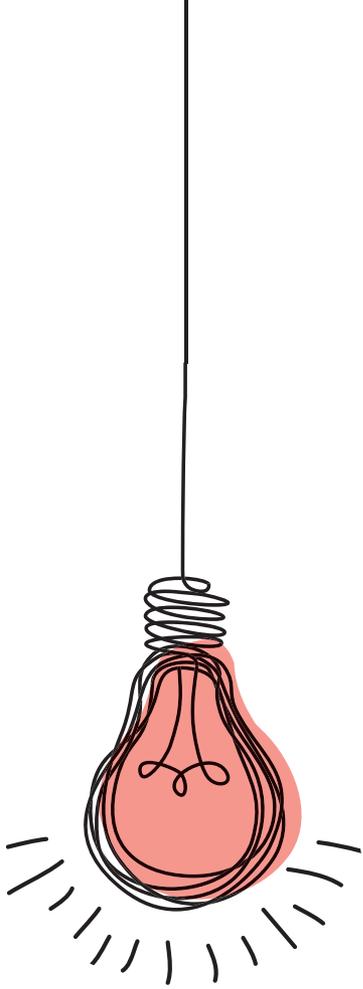
In order to do your best in the summative external assessment, which is the culmination of this unit, you will need to develop a thorough and complex understanding of the story presented in *Jane Eyre*. You will have to draw on all the skills you have learnt throughout your Senior English course, particularly those outlined on pages 249–54. The questions below are tailored to *Jane Eyre* and intended to extend your understanding of this text.

12.6b Your turn

Narration

- 1 The novel was initially titled *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*. What does Brontë gain by using a first-person narrator?
- 2 What are the limitations of the first-person narrator in the novel; that is, what are readers unable to see or understand?
- 3 What is revealed about Jane's character through her first-person narration?
- 4 How would the story be different if told through the eyes of another character? Support your response by discussing a couple of specific characters.





Storyworld

- 5 What social rules or expectations are different characters expected to abide by?
- 6 What social rules or expectations does Jane break in the novel? What social rules do other characters break?
- 7 How do power relationships operate within the novel:
 - a Which characters have power? Over whom?
 - b Which characters are powerless? What causes this?
- 8 How do the different physical settings within the novel represent different stages of Jane's life?
- 9 How is the natural world represented in the novel?
- 10 How is the social world different from the world you know? What social customs have you noticed?

Characters in the storyworld

- 11 How does Jane develop as a character throughout the novel? You might like to use the template on page 328 to analyse Brontë's construction of Jane and other key characters.
- 12 Which characters does Jane learn from? How?
- 13 To what extent can Rochester be considered a Byronic hero?
- 14 How does St John operate as a foil to Rochester? What is the effect of this?
- 15 How are audiences positioned to feel about Bertha?
- 16 Which characters have symbolic functions in the novel?

Plot and story

- 17 What are the key stages of the plot?
- 18 What are the significant turning points within these stages?
- 19 How does the introduction of different characters move the narrative forward?
- 20 How is tension created in the lead-up to the wedding scene?
- 21 Jane's journeys between places are solitary and relatively uneventful. What does she learn through her journeying?
- 22 Consider the winners and losers in the novel:
 - a Who wins? What do they win (i.e. What was at stake)?
 - b Who loses? What do they lose (i.e. What was at stake)?
- 23 Does Jane deserve the happy ending she receives? Does Rochester deserve the ending he receives?

Looking through the structural frame

When looking through the structural frame, it is useful to consider the construction of the whole novel as a story (paying attention to the narration, characters, storyworld and plot) and the way the words within it are used to communicate. In this regard, you can draw on your knowledge of the Language in Use model and your understanding of narrative conventions.

You will notice that the language in *Jane Eyre* is slightly different from ours in Australia. Not only do some of the word choices feel antiquated, but the patterns of language use are also different from modern communication. Language patterns in *Jane Eyre* are dictated by the more

rigid social rules representative of the Victorian Era and clearly indicate levels of power within the society.

It is also interesting to read *Jane Eyre* as a Gothic romance genre novel. This type of novel casts the female protagonist as the victim of flights of fancy and overwhelming supernatural elements within a realism setting. A range of **archetypes** and motifs are used to reinforce this. However, it is worth noting that *Jane Eyre* has some autobiographical and Bildungsroman elements through which Brontë crafts a strong female character who grows across the course of the novel.

archetype

a typical example of a person or thing, especially (for our purposes) when used as a pattern or template for characters in a story. These archetypes may reinforce social stereotypes (e.g. the archetypal hero is a handsome, white male)

12.6c Your turn

Hold up the structural frame

- 1 How has the text been organised to reflect Jane's growth and 'coming of age'?
- 2 What features of the Gothic romance genre has Brontë used?
- 3 Consider the language used in Jane's narration:
 - a What is the effect of Jane directly addressing readers at points in the narration?
 - b How does the tone of Jane's narration change as the novel develops?
- 4 Consider how Brontë uses dialogue to depict characters and their relationships:
 - a How does the dialogue between Jane and Rochester operate? Who has power? Does this shift? How does the dialogue reveal this?
 - b What does the contrast between the dialogue of Rochester and St John reveal about their relationships with Jane?
- 5 How is evaluative language used to position readers with respect to settings, characters and events? (See page 323 for an analytical template.)
- 6 What is the significance of the following:
 - a the motif of the supernatural?
 - b premonitions and hallucinations?
 - c symbolism of the weather?
 - d architectural settings with frightening features?
- 7 How does the concept of 'home' operate symbolically for Jane?
- 8 How is the theme of 'real versus imagined' represented in the text?

structural



Reflect on your personal response

- 9 Consider your expectations when you started reading *Jane Eyre*. Did the novel meet your expectations? Why or why not?
- 10 What were your favourite aspects of the novel?
- 11 How do you feel about Rochester and his actions throughout the novel?
- 12 How do you feel about Jane?
- 13 Does any part of the novel resonate with your own experience?
- 14 If you were to write a coming-of-age novel based on your own life, what experiences would you emphasise?
- 15 Does *Jane Eyre* remind you of any other texts (novels, films, television shows, poems, plays)?

personal





Looking through the cultural frame

Jane Eyre is reflective of the Victorian era in which Brontë was writing. While its morals are quite conservative, it reflects societal moves towards education for women and the early whispers of feminism and female emancipation.

Rochester is presented as subverting the ideals of high Victorian morality as he flouts social rules in attempting to commit bigamy with the unsuspecting Jane. While Jane asserts herself in leaving Rochester, her character ultimately endorses the patriarchal power Rochester possesses as Jane chooses to return to him regardless of his marriage.

The very fact that Rochester hides his first 'mad' wife, Bertha, in the attic of his home reflects the poor understanding and treatment that existed at the time regarding mental illness – while he has not placed her in an asylum, as was the common practice, it is for his own reasons, not hers, that he keeps her locked up.

12.6d Your turn



Hold up the cultural frame

- 1 Based on the research you completed in *Your turn 12.6a*, what aspects of Victorian society can you see represented in the novel?
- 2 How does Brontë represent the Victorian class divide in the novel? Does she challenge or accept this social structure?
- 3 Consider the reasons Rochester gives for his treatment of Bertha.
 - a What values, attitudes and beliefs about race does his reasoning suggest?
 - b What values, attitudes and beliefs about gender does his reasoning suggest?
- 4 It can be argued that, despite his deception and treatment of his wife, readers are positioned to sympathise with Rochester.
 - a How is this positioning achieved by Brontë?
 - b What does this suggest about Victorian values, attitudes and beliefs?
- 5 Consider the ways the men in Jane's life treat her. How does this endorse patriarchal values?
- 6 What values, attitudes and beliefs are endorsed through the contrast between Rochester and St John, particularly in terms of their morality and their relationships with women?
- 7 Do some research: How was *Jane Eyre* received by readers and critics when it was published? Was it controversial?
- 8 As a modern reader, do you view it as controversial or conservative?

Looking through the critical frame

Jane Eyre is reflective of a particular time and place in history. For this reason, some groups of readers, including modern audiences, have found it quite challenging.

Although Brontë hints at some feminist ideas, patriarchy is ultimately endorsed at the conclusion of the novel. Many readers take a resistant reading to Rochester's actions, unable to support a man attempting to commit adultery and bigamy. Through this lens, it can be difficult to support a heroine as a feminist if she accepts this behaviour.

St John presents almost the opposite attitude to Rochester, one based on rigid Christian morality rather than masculine passion, but his world view is dictated by heavy religious overtones, which

serve to alienate some readers. While for some he symbolises aspects of Victorian morality effectively, this does not necessarily translate to readers from other backgrounds.

Such readers may also reject the depiction of Bertha. Written from a British colonialist perspective, Brontë's depiction of the 'madwoman in the attic' carries negative connotations of the mentally ill and reinforces a colonial world view.

12.6e Your turn

Hold up the critical frame



- 1 Which characters in the novel are readers positioned to support?
- 2 Which characters in the novel are readers positioned to reject or challenge?
- 3 Bertha is literally and figuratively silenced in the novel.
 - a What values, attitudes and beliefs are normalised in doing so?
 - b What could be gained by allowing Bertha to have a voice in the novel?
 - c What world views would support a resistant reading of the way Bertha is depicted in the novel?
- 4 Which other characters are silenced in the novel? Can you see and explain a trend here?
- 5 Charlotte Brontë's father was a curate of the Church of England and she had a strong Anglican faith.
 - a How is this represented in the novel?
 - b How can the supernatural elements in the novel be read as challenging this perspective?
- 6 Victorian England was characterised by a rigid class system. Does *Jane Eyre* challenge or endorse this system?
- 7 In what ways does *Jane Eyre* champion education for women? What are the limitations of this?
- 8 What world views are endorsed by the novel?
- 9 What world views are challenged by the novel?

Reflect on your evolving interpretation

- 10 Which perspectives in *Jane Eyre* do you support? Which do your values most align with?
- 11 Has any part of *Jane Eyre* challenged your own perspectives on the world?
- 12 In what ways has reading *Jane Eyre* altered your own values, attitudes and beliefs?
- 13 How might others (e.g. from different cultural backgrounds) respond to the novel?
- 14 How do your own values, attitudes and beliefs impact on your ability and willingness to accept *Jane Eyre* as a great literary masterpiece?



12.7

MACBETH: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was first performed in 1606. Often referred to as 'The Scottish Play', a great deal of superstition surrounds the title of the play, and many thespians refuse to say it aloud.



Source 8 William Shakespeare (bapt. 1564–1616)

Macbeth as a significant literary work

One of Shakespeare's shorter plays, *Macbeth* stands out as a brilliant example of a play in the traditional tragic genre. The play, which is set in clan-era Scotland, was written to flatter the new King of England, James I, who was of Scottish descent. James's influence can also be seen in the presence of the witches and the conspiracy to kill the king. *Macbeth* has been viewed as a cautionary tale about the perils of 'vaulting ambition', the fatal flaw that causes Macbeth's downfall from power. The play is also interesting for its depiction of Lady Macbeth, the heroine who receives the most lines of anyone in Shakespeare's plays, but whose characterisation is layered and ambiguous.

Considering the text, author and audiences

Have you ever been minding your own business, satisfied with your life, only to have someone mess with your mind and make you think you should be something more? Or, have you ever thought that you should be in charge of something, and made a plan to take control, only to regret that plan (and your actions) later? If so, these are just some of the ways you might relate to Macbeth and his ambitious goal to become King.

Macbeth is a very popular play for high school study. It is an action-packed story: there are witches, ghosts, murders and one of the strongest female characters in all of Shakespeare's plays, Lady Macbeth. But the inclusion of supernatural beings and forces in the play does more than make the story exciting for audiences – these inclusions were designed to appeal to King James, who had just taken over as King of England and solemnly believed in witchcraft. King James announced he would sponsor Shakespeare's theatre company very soon after being crowned King, so this play was written with the knowledge that it would be seen by the King. So ... is *Macbeth* a play that was created to flatter and appease King James? Or was Shakespeare cunning enough with his words to hide criticism of the King throughout the play as well? And what role does art have in general in maintaining or challenging state power anyway?

12.7a Your turn

Research and relate

A strong understanding of the social context of the novel will assist you in understanding and analysing the text. By this point, you should have experience in researching the contexts of texts and their authors.

1 In addition to your own ideas, you should consider investigating:

- King James and the Guy Fawkes conspiracy
- King James's *Daemonology* and beliefs about witches in seventeenth-century England
- the Chain of Being and the place of women in Shakespeare's time
- the five-act structure of a Shakespearean tragedy.

personal



- 2 Talk with a peer or your teacher about your prior experience with Shakespearean plays. List *three* things you already know about this form of literature; *two* things you'd like to learn more about; and *one* question you'd like to ask.

Interpreting elements of the story

In order to do your best in the summative external assessment, which is the culmination of this unit, you will need to develop a thorough and complex understanding of the story presented in *Macbeth*. You will have to draw on all the skills you have learnt throughout your Senior English course, particularly those outlined on pages 249–54. The questions below are tailored to *Macbeth* and intended to extend your understanding of this text.

Note: Numbers like 1:2, 2:4 and so on refer to Act 1 Scene 2, Act 2 Scene 4 and so on. You will come across this scene referencing style for plays both in this text and in the external assessment, so ensure that you are familiar with it..

12.7b Your turn

Narration

Shakespeare's plays do not feature a designated narrator in the way they are featured in novels. However, you can learn a lot from considering which characters tell parts of the story to the audience.

- 1 According to the Greek convention of characters speaking in unison as a whole, the three witches can be considered to be a chorus. Traditionally, the chorus would narrate parts of the plot. What do the witches reveal to the audience?
- 2 How does opening the play with the witches foreground their role in the action of the plot? What does this suggest about their power?
- 3 Soliloquies are delivered by a character who is alone (or thinks they are unheard by others) onstage and give insight into that character's thoughts and feelings. How do Macbeth's soliloquies (1:7, 2:1, 2:3, 3:1 and 5:7) act as narration? What do they reveal about Macbeth's character and actions?
- 4 Lady Macbeth delivers two of the most famous soliloquies in the play in Act 1 Scene 5. What do these reveal about her character and her intentions?
- 5 The porter's speech in Act 2 Scene 3 provides a rare moment of comic relief in the play. What is significant about:
 - a the placement of this speech?
 - b the content of this speech?

Storyworld

- 6 How is the social position of the king represented in the play? What power does he have? Why are his followers loyal to him?
- 7 Consider the way gender exists in the storyworld:
 - a What social rules do the men appear to follow?
 - b Which characters break these rules?
 - c What social rules do the women appear to follow?
 - d Which characters break these rules?

structural



cultural



- 8 The witches' scenes are set on a 'blasted heath' away from civilisation. What does this suggest about their place in society?
- 9 The witches say, in the opening scene, 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair' (1:1.10), a sentiment that is quickly reiterated in Macbeth's first line: 'So foul and fair a day I've not seen' (1:3.36). What evidence is there that within society, fair has become foul in the play? What roles and rules have been subverted?

Characters in the storyworld

- 10 How does Macbeth's character change across the play?
- 11 How does Lady Macbeth's 'deal with the spirits' (1:5) affect her throughout the play?
- 12 How does the relationship between the Macbeths change across the play? What significant incidents cause these changes?
- 13 How can characters be grouped according to their attributes? Which characters are audiences positioned to support?
- 14 How does Macduff serve as a foil to Macbeth?
- 15 What do Macbeth and Banquo's different reactions to the witches suggest about their belief in the supernatural?

Plot and story

- 16 How does the timing of Duncan's decision to promote Macbeth cause a misunderstanding that affects the rest of the play?
- 17 How do the witches' prophecies frame the action in the first and second halves of the play?
- 18 How do the murders in the play create shifts in the tension and action?
- 19 In what ways is order restored at the end of the play? Is this a satisfying ending?
- 20 What is at stake in the play? Who wins? Who loses?
- 21 What evidence exists to suggest that Macbeth would have usurped King Duncan at some point, even without Lady Macbeth's coercion?

Looking through the structural frame

When looking through the structural frame, it is useful to consider the construction of the whole play as a story (paying attention to the narration, characters, storyworld and plot) as well as a performance piece (paying attention to dialogue and stage directions) and the way the words within it are used to communicate. In this regard, you can draw on your knowledge of the Language in Use model and your understanding of theatrical conventions.

In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare employs a traditional five-act structure wherein the commencement of each act signals a new phase of action. Within this, he utilises many conventions of the classical tragedy to construct Macbeth as a tragic hero. While Macbeth possesses a self-acknowledged fatal flaw – ambition – the play remains ambiguous about the extent to which outside forces influence his actions.

Analysing the language used in *Macbeth* is a different process from considering a novel. Shakespeare's plays contain scant stage directions, so you are largely working with dialogue, considering what characters say. However, the play still features a range of interesting symbols and motifs and makes use of foreshadowing to heighten dramatic tension. When working with plays in English, it is important to remember that they are written for performance, not silent reading. Your understanding of the play will be considerably improved if you are able to watch a performance (live or recorded) or participate in a reading of the play.



12.7c Your turn

Hold up the structural frame

- 1 Consider the stages of the five-act structure below. Make a list of the key events that take place in each stage of the play:
 - Act 1: Exposition
 - Act 2: Complication
 - Act 3: Climax
 - Act 4: Falling action
 - Act 5: Catastrophe
- 2 What evidence of the following features of the tragedy genre can you find in the play:
 - a creation of a sense of urgency?
 - b misreadings and rationalisations by characters?
 - c exile and alienation?
 - d mobilisation of the enemy?
- 3 Without prescriptive stage directions, what clues do directors and actors use to guide their performances? (You might like to compare recordings of some performances of the play.)
- 4 Shakespeare's plays were generally written as part scripts, wherein each actor received only their lines and their cue line (the line immediately before their own). The full plays were only compiled after the productions were staged. How might this affect the way the script is written and performed?
- 5 How do the following symbols and motifs operate within the play:
 - a the supernatural, including premonitions and ghosts?
 - b blood?
 - c light and dark?
 - d water?
- 6 What effect does **pathetic fallacy** have in the play?
- 7 Consider the ways Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are described by other characters:
 - a What words are used to describe them before and around their entrances into the play?
 - b How are they described in the final scene of the play?
 - c How do these descriptions relate to what we see of them in between?
- 8 Look at Lady Macbeth's persuasion of Macbeth in Act 1 Scene 7. What are the phases of her argument? What persuasive techniques does she use?
- 9 Macduff's reaction to the news that his family has been slaughtered (4:3) highlights the differences between him and Macbeth.
 - a What is the effect of the avian metaphor he uses in relation to his family?
 - b What does his declaration, 'I must also feel it like a man' (4:3.221) suggest about his character and notions of masculinity?

Reflect on your personal response

- 10 Consider your expectations when you started reading *Macbeth*. Did the play meet your expectations? Why or why not?
- 11 What did you find surprising or interesting about the play?



structural



pathetic fallacy

attribution of human emotions to inanimate objects in nature, including the weather. This technique enhances the creation of mood within a text

personal



- 12 How do you feel about Macbeth?
- 13 How do you feel about Lady Macbeth?
- 14 Which characters do you think deserved their fates at the end of the play?
- 15 Does any part of the play resonate with your own experience?
- 16 Does *Macbeth* remind you of any other texts (e.g. novels, films, television shows, poems, plays)?

Looking through the cultural frame

While it is set in Scotland, *Macbeth* clearly reflects the values of Jacobean England. King James was obsessed with witches, and their intrusion into the storyworld of the play reflects his negative attitudes towards the supernatural. Their actions, and Lady Macbeth's interactions with the spirit world upset the natural order of the world, or the Chain of Being, a construct that reinforced patriarchal power. Because of this, Lady Macbeth is able to act outside of her gender expectations and the result is chaos for both Macbeth and Scotland. In some ways, this mirrors societal concerns about Queen Elizabeth's reign (a female monarch was unsettling to some) and the restoration of order at the end of the play reasserts traditional ideas about social order and provides further flattery for the new English monarch, James I.

12.7d Your turn

Hold up the cultural frame

- 1 Based on the research you completed in *Your turn 12.7a*, what aspects of Jacobean society can you see represented in the play?
- 2 Shakespeare's choice to set the play in Scotland allowed him to depict a society divided by clan wars. In what ways are violence and murder normalised in the play?
- 3 What 'essential' parts of herself did Lady Macbeth sacrifice in her deal with the spirits (1:5)? How can her descent into madness be viewed as a restoration of the natural order?
- 4 Consider the representation of women in the play.
 - a In what ways is a fear of feminine power displayed?
 - b What values, attitudes and beliefs about women are supported by the depiction of the witches?
 - c How does Lady Macduff operate as a foil to Lady Macbeth?
 - d What message is communicated by the fact that both Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff die in the play? How do the ways they die shape this message?
- 5 Consider Macbeth's 'Is this a dagger' soliloquy (2:1).
 - a What values, attitudes and beliefs about honour are revealed here?
 - b How does Macbeth justify his decision to kill the king?
- 6 How is masculinity represented in the play?
- 7 What world views are endorsed by the play?
- 8 As a modern reader, do you view the play as controversial or conservative?



Looking through the critical frame

The play privileges a patriarchal, Christian view of the world, which would have appealed to the intended audience. While Shakespeare normalises classism in the play, it is likely that his audience (many of whom would have been of the lower classes) would have enjoyed watching the fall of a 'great' and powerful man due to his character flaws and his reliance on the supernatural. The play is ultimately ambiguous in its representation of the supernatural, and some audiences would take a resistant reading to the construction of the witches. However, the woman who causes the greatest division is Lady Macbeth. A host of readings of Lady Macbeth – sympathetic, admirational, feminist – are possible, depending on the audience's world view.

12.7e Your turn

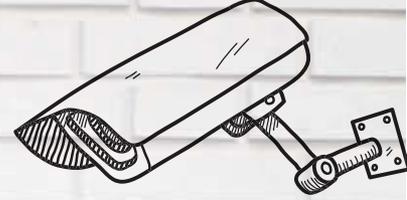
Hold up the critical frame

- 1 How could a sympathetic reading of *Macbeth* be justified by the text?
- 2 What evidence in the text allows the reading of Lady Macbeth as:
 - a a perfect wife?
 - b a grieving mother?
 - c a master manipulator?
 - d a scheming murderer?
 - e mentally ill?
 - f a femme fatale?
- 3 What values, attitudes and beliefs are supported by the various readings of Lady Macbeth outlined in Question 2?
- 4 Through the construction of the witches, what values, attitudes and beliefs about those who are social outsiders or 'different' does Shakespeare endorse?
- 5 How are tensions between the supernatural and Christianity represented in the play? Does Shakespeare ultimately take a stance on this tension?
- 6 Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking and disturbed mental state are attributed to spiritual and religious causes in the play. How might modern audiences, with a better knowledge of mental health, understand the change in her character?
- 7 What world views are endorsed by the play?
- 8 What world views are challenged by the play?

Reflect on your evolving interpretation

- 9 Which perspectives in *Macbeth* do you support? Which do your values most align with?
- 10 Has any part of *Macbeth* challenged your own perspectives on the world?
- 11 In what ways has reading and/or viewing *Macbeth* altered your own values, attitudes and beliefs?
- 12 How do your own values, attitudes and beliefs impact on your ability and willingness to accept *Macbeth* as a great literary masterpiece?





12.8

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR: GEORGE ORWELL

Nineteen Eighty-Four was published in 1949 by English writer George Orwell. It is a dystopian fiction about a possible post-Second World War world told as a novel in three parts from the point of view of the protagonist Winston Smith. There is also an appendix to the novel ('The Principles of Newspeak').



Source 9 George
Orwell (1903–1950)

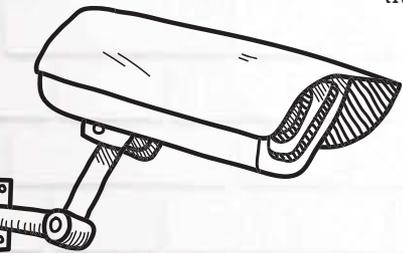
Nineteen Eighty-Four as a significant literary work

This is the final novel that George Orwell wrote before dying in January 1950 while suffering tuberculosis. By the time he published *Nineteen Eighty-Four* he had already had critical acclaim for his allegorical novella *Animal Farm*, and built a career as a prolific essayist, columnist and reviewer. It is one of the seminal dystopian novels of the twentieth century and introduced several new terms into popular culture, including 'Big Brother', 'doublethink', 'newspeak' and 'thought police'.

Considering the text, author and audiences

The world has changed a lot since this novel was published, and yet many of its concerns still relate to aspects of our lives. George Orwell was the pen name chosen by Eric Arthur Blair, an English writer who produced a range of political fiction and non-fiction texts. Born in 1903, Orwell wrote about his own experiences of living in poverty, fighting in the Spanish Civil War and the plight of unemployed miners. The rise of totalitarian regimes during the Second World War and the threat of Stalinist political tactics were large concerns of Orwell's, and audiences reading his novel in the early 1950s would have recognised the political references.

Today our society contains many of the surveillance and tracking technologies that were warned against in the novel; however, there is a difference. Where Orwell cautioned against governments imposing these technologies to control populations, our society entices us to opt in to these technologies for the sake of entertainment or convenience. Contemporary audiences may not find the constant presence of telescreens to be as strange or unnerving as the author intended them to be!



12.8a Your turn

Research and relate

A strong understanding of the social context of the novel will assist you in understanding and analysing the text. By this point, you should have experience in researching the contexts of texts and their authors.

- 1 In addition to your own ideas, you should consider investigating:
 - George Orwell's political views and affiliations
 - the differences between autocratic, oligarchic and democratic forms of government, and the features of totalitarianism
 - 'dystopia' as a literary genre.
- 2 Talk with a classmate or your teacher about your prior experience with dystopian literature. List *three* things you already know about this form of literature; *two* things you'd like to learn more about; and *one* question you'd like to ask.



Interpreting elements of the story

In order to do your best in the summative external assessment, which is the culmination of this unit, you will need to develop a thorough and complex understanding of the story presented in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. You will have to draw on all the skills you have learnt throughout your Senior English course, particularly those outlined on pages 249–54. The questions below are tailored to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and intended to extend your understanding of this text.

12.8b Your turn

Narration

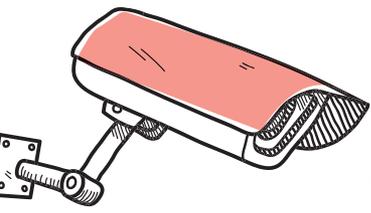
- 1 In the novel we 'see' through Winston's eyes as the focaliser, but the story is told in third person by an omniscient narrator. How does this affect the way this story is told?
- 2 How would the story be different if told through the eyes of another character? Support your response by discussing a couple of specific characters.
- 3 Given what you know about George Orwell's cultural context and political views, to what extent do you think Winston Smith's political positions represent Orwell's own world view?
- 4 How do Goldstein's Manifesto, and the appendix to the novel provide additional perspectives on the storyworld? Who are constructed as the focalisers for these story elements?



Storyworld

- 5 In what ways do the contexts (historical, political, social, cultural, geographical) of the storyworld mirror the context of post-Second World War England?
- 6 How is imagery used to create a dystopian atmosphere in the novel?
- 7 How do descriptions of the Golden Country position audiences to adopt Romantic ideas about the value of the natural world?
- 8 To what extent are the social strata in the fictional world of Oceania evident in our Australian society today?
- 9 How is language used in the storyworld to promote 'doublethink'? Give some examples.
- 10 Explain what O'Brien means when he refers to Winston as the 'last man' in Book 3, Chapter 3.





Characters in the storyworld

- 11 How are representations of the proles contrasted with representations of people in the Party?
- 12 What paradoxes can be observed in Winston's world views?
- 13 What is revealed to us about the storyworld through the arrest/torture of the following characters:
 - a Mr Parsons?
 - b Syme?
 - c Ampleforth?
- 14 What threat did the love between Winston and Julia represent to the Party?
- 15 How do developments in the relationship between Winston and Big Brother convey the dangers of totalitarianism?
- 16 Julia was born into the world of IngSoc, but Winston wasn't. Compare and contrast their values, attitudes and beliefs throughout the novel. Which character do you most identify with?

Plot and story

- 17 To what extent do the three books that organise the novel follow the conventions of a three-act plot structure? How is the tension between freedom and control reflected in key events in each of the three books?
- 18 How does the rhyme 'oranges and lemons' act as a foreshadowing device?
- 19 What is at stake in the novel? Are there any winners? What do they win?
- 20 How does the appendix help to resolve the narrative in the novel?
- 21 In what way are readers in the same situation as Winston Smith?

Looking through the structural frame

When looking through the structural frame, it is useful to consider the construction of the whole novel as a story (paying attention to the narration, characters, storyworld and plot) and the way language is used to communicate this. To do this you can draw on your knowledge of the Language in Use model and your understanding of narrative conventions.

Because this novel includes commentary on the role of language in promoting (or limiting) thought, audience attention is drawn to **semantics** and word play in the story. Concepts that are usually constructed as binary oppositions – freedom/slavery, war/peace, ignorance/strength – are equated with each other in the three doctrines of IngSoc, and Newspeak is created by using **portmanteau** words. Your work in the structural and cultural frames will be closely linked for this text study, as Orwell uses language powerfully to make direct critical comment about the politics of his context.

semantics

the study of words and their meanings using linguistics and logic

portmanteau

a word that has been created by 'pushing together' parts of other words to make a new meaning

structural



12.8c Your turn

Hold up the structural frame

- 1 What is the meaning of the word 'orthodox' and what are its connotations in the context of the novel?
- 2 How are portmanteau words used to represent the philosophy and objectives of the Party?
- 3 How do the following symbols operate in the novel:
 - a Big Brother?
 - b the paperweight?



- c telescreens?
 - d Winston's varicose ulcer?
 - e the Chestnut Tree café?
 - f chess pieces/problem?
- 4 How is dialogue used to affect and position the audience in the scene between Winston and O'Brien in Book 3, Chapter 3?
 - 5 How are the people of Eurasia and Eastasia described?
 - 6 How is evaluative language used to position readers with respect to settings, characters and events? (See page 323 for an analytical template.)
 - 7 How is free indirect discourse used to position the audience?
 - 8 What evidence of the following conventions of dystopian fiction can you find in the novel?
 - a presenting a negative view of the future
 - b illusion of a perfect society
 - c those in power use oppressive systems of control
 - d a protagonist who feels trapped and can see the world for what it is
 - e implied criticism of a current social, cultural or political trend
 - 9 What is the effect of dividing the novel into three parts?
 - 10 Is the bullet in the final scene of the novel real, or a metaphor? Explain your reasoning.

Reflect on your personal response

- 11 Consider your expectations when you started reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Did the novel meet your expectations? Why or why not?
- 12 What were your favourite aspects of the novel?
- 13 How do you feel about Winston and his actions throughout the novel?
- 14 How do you feel about Julia and her actions throughout the novel?
- 15 Does any part of the novel resonate with your own experience?
- 16 If you were to write a dystopian novel, what aspects of society, culture or government would you seek to warn your audience against?
- 17 Does *Nineteen Eighty-Four* remind you of any other texts (e.g. novels, films, television shows, poems, plays)?



Looking through the cultural frame

The dystopian vision in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a **didactic** one: readers are left in no doubt about Orwell's position on authoritarian systems of rule, specifically socialism, specifically with reference to Stalinism. In Book 2, Chapter 9, we learn that the Party's doctrines arose partly from an ability to understand human history (and therefore work out how to alter it), but mostly from a desire to maintain inequality, because equality was seen as 'a danger to be averted' (p. 119) if you wanted to stay in power. O'Brien explains further in Book 3, Chapter 3 that 'we know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end' (p. 152). These messages reflect the context in which the novel was written: the years following the Second World War, when authoritarian regimes had come to rule in Spain, Italy, China, Russia and Germany, and where defeating Germany in the war had meant creating alliances with Stalin and others.

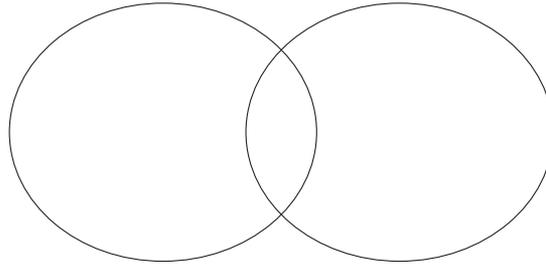
didactic
texts that are constructed in a way that 'teaches' the audience by conveying an overt moral or message

12.8d Your turn



Hold up the cultural frame

- 1 In what ways does our perspective on this text differ from (or align with) the perspective of audiences when the novel was published in 1949? Make notes in a Venn diagram to compare and contrast these historical contexts.



- 2 In what ways might the novel have been read in the context of the actual year, 1984. The narrative foregrounds male identities and perspectives, with Julia the only substantial female character. How does this reflect the context of Orwell's society?
- 4 To what extent can Julia be interpreted as playing out the trope of Eve offering 'forbidden fruit' in the Garden of Eden? What cultural knowledge does such a reference assume?
- 5 Consider this quote from Book 2, Chapter 9:

By the fourth decade of the twentieth century all the main currents of political thoughts were authoritarian ... every new theory, by whatever name it called itself, led back to hierarchy and regimentation (p. 119)

- a What political belief systems in British society was Orwell referring to?
 - b What role does restriction of vocabulary play in social 'regimentation'?
 - c How are references to Orwell's contemporary society used to create a didactic situation between the novel and the reader?
- 6 In our contemporary context of a globalised media landscape that includes 'fake news' and 'alternative facts', what do you find to be the most relevant messages in the novel?

Looking through the critical frame

Orwell's novel invites us to accept his critical world view regarding authoritarian systems of rule and related matters of power, surveillance, justice, control, compliance and freedom. However, the narrative focaliser for this message is Winston Smith, a middle-aged citizen of Oceania who works for the Ministry of Truth and prides himself on being an intellectual. The identities and experiences of the proles, of women and of younger citizens are marginalised in the narrative and this creates a contrast for critical evaluation: if Winston is complicit in the operation of the Party and thinks himself to be superior to others, does this change how we align with his values, attitude and beliefs, or change the symbolic meaning of his 'rebellious' thoughts and acts?

As well as critically examining the structure of the text, we can also consider critically the relevance of Orwell's dystopia to contemporary readers. The rationing and material deprivation experienced in the storyworld of Oceania reflects the reality of Orwell's society; today developed nations could be described as having the opposite social problem in our tendency to over-produce and over-manufacture. Yet despite this over-supply, contrasting with Orwell's generation's deprivation, political manipulation continues to occur.



12.8e Your turn

Hold up the critical frame

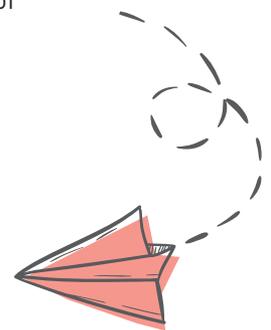
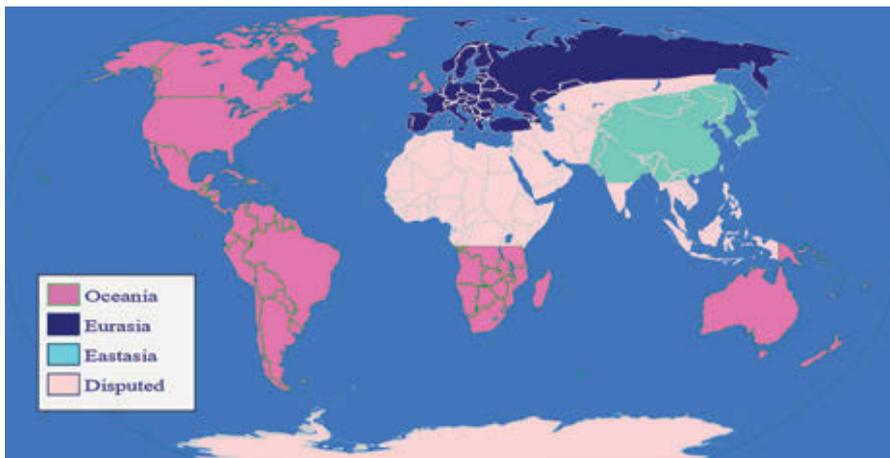
critical



- 1 Identify 2–3 examples of paradox in Winston's thoughts and actions.
- 2 Do you see Winston as a credible 'rebel'?
- 3 How does the foregrounding of male identities and voices in the narrative represent Orwell's context?
- 4 Winston describes Julia as 'only a rebel from the waist downwards' (p. 90). How are intellectual enlightenment and physical experience presented as separate concerns in the novel?
- 5 Among other things, Julia uses her freedom from surveillance as an opportunity to put on make-up and a dress.
 - a What is your contemporary response to the gender-related aspects of this representation?
 - b How else might this representation of female freedom be interpreted by a contemporary reader?
- 6 How do you react to the representation of Winston's fear of the African 'hordes' in the final chapter? What resonances does his world view have for modern-day Australia?

Reflect on your evolving interpretation

- 7 Who do you most identify with in this novel: Outer Party workers such as Winston and Julia; Inner Party elite such as O'Brien; or the proles?
- 8 How might this story have been told differently from the perspective of a prole?
- 9 Is Orwell's dystopia still relatable, or has our social, cultural and political context changed too much since 1949 to give credit to Orwell's warnings? Explain your position.
- 10 Digital devices that feature screens, cameras and microphones and are connected to centralised data systems have become ubiquitous in Australian society. Has reading this novel prompted you to reconsider any of your values, attitudes or beliefs about the role of screens in your life?
- 11 Is there any hope in Orwell's message?



Source 10 The three fictional super-states in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* illustrated on a world map

12.9

THE WHITE EARTH: ANDREW MCGAHAN

The novel *The White Earth* by Australian author Andrew McGahan was published in 2004. It is a narrative about the history of two fictional families, the Whites and the McIvors, living on a sheep station in the Darling Downs area of Queensland. Although the characters and events portrayed are fictional, the storyworld is drawn from real Queensland locations and history.



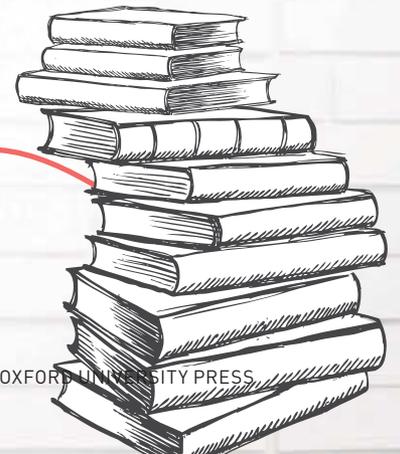
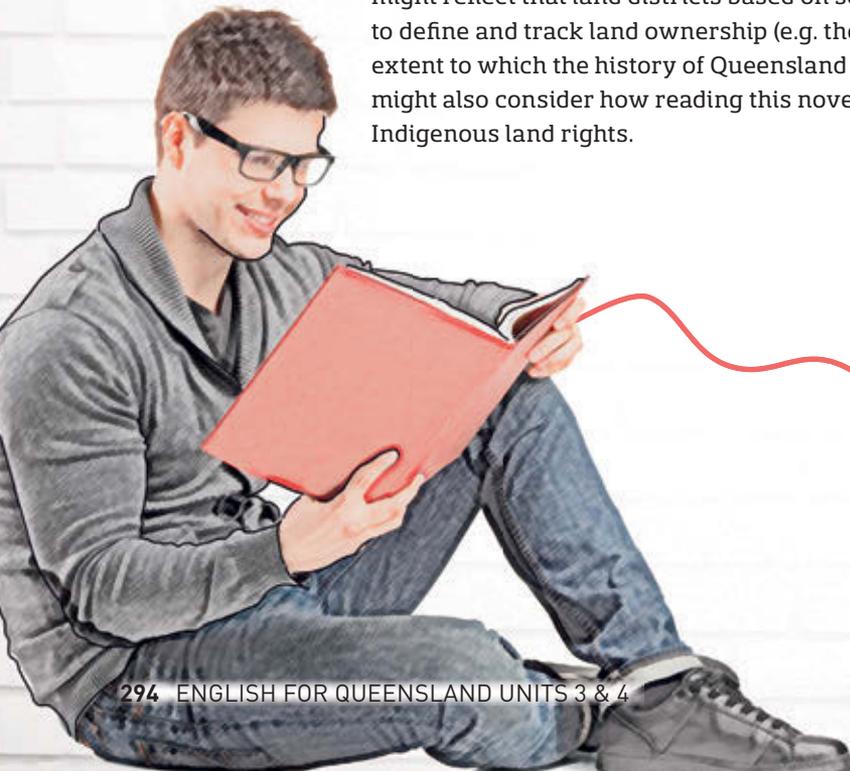
Source 11 Andrew McGahan (1966–2019)

The White Earth as a significant literary work

The White Earth won many literary awards, including the Miles Franklin Award and awards from *The Age* and *The Courier Mail* for Book of the Year (fiction), and it was shortlisted for the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards. It is a significant example of Australian Gothic style, and it raises significant dilemmas of contemporary relevance relating to colonial settlement in Queensland, and more broadly.

Considering the text, author and audiences

Andrew McGahan was a celebrated Australian author who published works across a range of genres, styles and fields. However, works of literature that are acclaimed by adult Australians are not always as interesting to young adult readers, and Australian authors do struggle to be featured in mainstream culture as prominently as international authors, especially English and North American writers. This may mean that you have never heard of this author before, despite his popularity in the Australian literary community. But whether you had heard of this author or this novel previously, you are in luck because as a contemporary Australian citizen you are a key target audience for this book. As you undertake your studies in Queensland, you might reflect that land districts based on squatter maps are still used by the State Government to define and track land ownership (e.g. the Darling Downs, Leichardt, Mitchell) and ponder the extent to which the history of Queensland has been shaped by squatters and pastoralists. You might also consider how reading this novel connects you to ongoing national debates relating to Indigenous land rights.



12.9a Your turn

Research and relate

A strong understanding of the social context of the novel will assist you in understanding and analysing the text. By this point, you should have experience in researching the contexts of texts and their authors.

- 1 In addition to your own ideas, you should consider investigating:
 - the geographical context of real Queensland locations featured in the narrative: Hoop Mountains, Lansdowne, Powell, Cherbourg and the Condamine River
 - the Mabo ruling and its impact on Native Title
 - the role of squatters and pastoralists in the settlement of Queensland during the nineteenth century
 - the nature of a 'Faustian bargain'.
- 2 Talk with a classmate or your teacher about your prior experience in reading contemporary Australian novels. List *three* things you already know about this form of literature; *two* things you'd like to learn more about; and *one* question you'd like to ask.
- 3 Ensure you know the definitions of the following field-specific terms and find out the meaning of any unfamiliar terms: *squatter*; *pastoral*; *dynasty*; *swagman*; *first settlers*; *spur (geography)*; *Bora Ring*; *bunyip*.



Interpreting elements of the story

In order to do your best in the summative external assessment, which is the culmination of this unit, you will need to develop a thorough and complex understanding of the story presented in *The White Earth*. You will have to draw on all the skills you have learnt throughout your Senior English course, particularly those outlined on pages 249–54. The questions below are tailored to *The White Earth* and intended to extend your understanding of this text.

12.9b Your turn

Narration

- 1 The story is told through the eyes of three different characters: William, John and Ruth Mclvor.
 - a Make a note of who the focaliser is for each chapter.
 - b How do changes in narrative perspective act as a plot device?
- 2 How is Ruth Mclvor's perspective used to add meaning to the story?
- 3 How would the story be different if told through the eyes of another character? Support your response by discussing a couple of specific characters.



Storyworld

- 4 To what extent are you familiar with the landscape in the storyworld? What impact did your familiarity or unfamiliarity with this landscape have during your reading?
- 5 How are images and descriptions of maps used as textual resources in the novel?
- 6 How is the social world different from the world you know? What social customs have you noticed?

Characters in the storyworld

- 7 Who is the protagonist? How can you tell?
- 8 Create a map of the McIvor and White family trees, using lines and symbols to show how characters relate. Compare your map with that of a classmate to check for gaps or inaccuracies.
- 9 How do power relationships operate within the novel?
 - a Which characters have power? Over whom?
 - b Which characters are powerless? What causes this?
- 10 How does William develop as a character throughout the novel? You might like to use the template on page 328 to analyse McGahan's construction of William and other key characters.

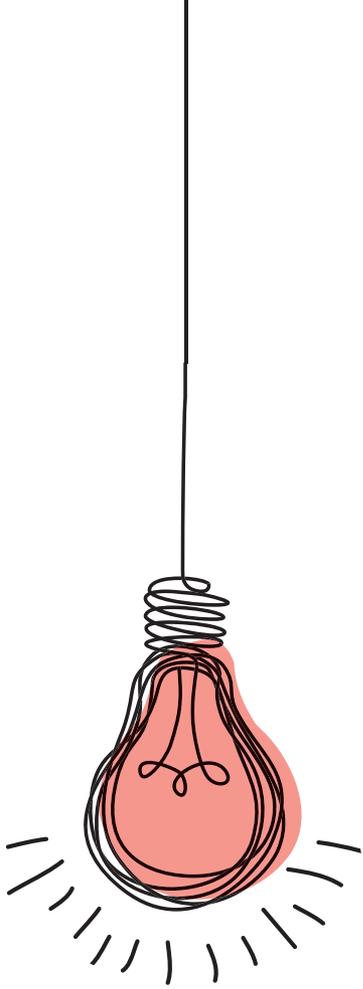
Plot and story

- 11 How does the introduction of different characters move the narrative forward?
- 12 How is imagery used to construct atmosphere in key moments in the story?
- 13 How do William's dreams work to illuminate or complicate points in the plot?
- 14 Consider the winners and losers in the novel.
 - a Who wins? What do they win (i.e. What was at stake)?
 - b Who loses? What do they lose (i.e. What was at stake)?
- 15 To what extent are deals to take ownership of land constructed in the narrative as 'Faustian bargains'?

Looking through the structural frame

When looking through the structural frame, it is useful to consider the construction of the whole novel as a story (paying attention to the narration, characters, storyworld and plot) and the way the words within it are used to communicate. In this regard, you can draw on your knowledge of the Language in Use model and your understanding of narrative conventions.

The White Earth is a novel that is rich with imagery and symbolic meaning. This means that, although the narrative description of the storyworld can seem overly detailed at the outset of the novel, looking through the structural frame we can see the purpose of these detailed representations, as aspects of the house and the land take on figurative meanings.



12.9c Your turn

Hold up the structural frame

- 1 The story in *The White Earth* spans several time periods. How are intergenerational links used to illuminate changes in society over time?
- 2 What features of the Australian Gothic style can be noticed in this novel?
- 3 What is the significance of the following symbols and motifs:
 - a the waterhole?
 - b fire?
 - c William's earache?
 - d ghosts?
 - e seeing and sight?
 - f the song 'Waltzing Matilda'?
 - g architectural settings within Kuran House and on Kuran Station?
- 4 Consider the symbolic meaning of the man on fire. What do you think he represents?
- 5 Where are other texts embedded within the novel (e.g. newspapers, maps, television news) and how do they offer alternative perspectives on the story?
- 6 We do not discover the reason why so many characters hate Daniel McIvor until late in the novel. In what places in the novel can you find the reasons for this dislike being foreshadowed?
- 7 At the end of Chapter 44 and the start of Chapter 45, John's perspective on the evidence in the waterhole (he should destroy it 'as his father should have destroyed it', p. 360) is **juxtaposed** with William's ('for him the inheritance had been darkened by the shadow of a malevolent history', p. 361). Find 2–3 other examples where characters' perspectives have been juxtaposed.

Reflect on your personal response

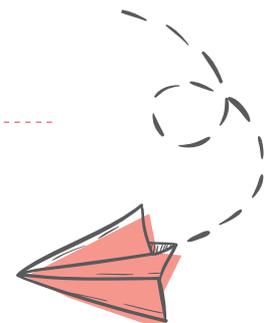
- 8 Consider your expectations when you started reading *The White Earth*. Did the novel meet your expectations? Why or why not?
- 9 What were your favourite aspects of the novel?
- 10 How do you feel about John McIvor and his actions throughout the novel?
- 11 How do you feel about William?
- 12 Does any part of the novel resonate with your own experience?
- 13 Did you know about the Australian Native Police or the Queensland Native Mounted Police before reading this novel?
- 14 Does *The White Earth* remind you of any other texts (e.g. novels, films, television shows, poems, plays)?

structural



juxtaposition
placing two or more things side by side for a contrasting effect

personal





Looking through the cultural frame

The White Earth is by an Australian writer, and its subject matter delves deeply into aspects of Australian history, in particular in relation to land rights and Native Title. The storyworld borrows heavily from historical records of people and events in the Darling Downs area, referencing directly the placenames and geographical features of real areas of colonial settlement in Southern Queensland. The novel assumes an audience who is familiar with references to Australian contexts, though even Australian readers require a broad knowledge of historical and political issues (or a willingness to investigate them as prompted) to grasp the full cultural significance of this text.

There is a point in Chapter 8 where William wonders, after his initial explorations of Kuran Station: 'Would everything on his uncle's property be the same, defaced and decayed and torn apart by the slow creep of branches and roots? If so, then what was the point of exploring any of it?' (p. 67). In this moment of free indirect discourse, the voice of the author seems to reach out to us through the perspective of William, acknowledging the hard slog of seeing the meaning in a novel like this, where knowledge of history is needed to make sense of the present.

12.9d Your turn

Hold up the cultural frame



- 1 Based on the research you completed in *Your turn 12.9a*, what historically accurate situations can you see represented in the novel?
- 2 How does McGahan represent social groups in the novel? Does he challenge or accept divisions and hierarchies in social structure?
- 3 Consider the ways John McIvor explains his personal connection to the land throughout the novel.
 - a What values, attitudes and beliefs about ownership does his reasoning suggest?
 - b What values, attitudes and beliefs about responsibility does his reasoning suggest?
- 4 How are audiences positioned to feel about Native Title?
- 5 In what ways do the fictional Kuran Station and McIvor family echo characteristics of actual places and families in that area of the Darling Downs?

Looking through the critical frame

In Chapter 8, William explores the cemetery on Kuran Station and we are offered one of many cultural provocations when he wonders: 'Who were these Whites, and why were they the only ones buried here?' (p. 66). When we later learn that there are other bones to be found on the station, we are offered a profound further point of reflection about land ownership, personal relationships with land, and colonial power. However, Aboriginal perspectives are presented in a ghostly way in the novel, with Aboriginal characters represented as ephemeral outsiders rather than as focalisers in the narrative.

There are other points in the novel like this one, where McGahan's choices about whose perspectives to represent can be understood as providing their own layer of critical meaning. For example, in Chapter 42 John McIvor reflects: 'The women weren't important, they would never grasp the truth. Perhaps, John considered, ownership was fundamentally a male concern' (p. 341).

Despite offering this view explicitly through the voice of John, there is evidence that women in the novel are very concerned with issues of ownership. By providing contradictions such as this, McGahan creates considerable space for readers to personally interrogate and interpret the messages of the novel.

12.9e Your turn

Hold up the critical frame

- 1 In what ways can *The White Earth* critique be classified as a post-colonial text? What are the limitations of its critique of colonial power?
- 2 What world views are endorsed by the novel?
- 3 What world views are challenged by the novel?
- 4 Do you believe the ghostly representation of Aboriginal people on the land amounts to a silencing of Aboriginal voices in this novel? Or do you think the writing has constructed these perspectives in more subtle ways to purposefully create a haunting absence? Justify your answer with textual evidence.
- 5 How might others (e.g. from different cultural backgrounds, or readers of future generations) respond to the novel?
- 6 The female characters in the novel are often constructed as harmful, aggressive and selfish.
 - a Are male characters represented as more complex, more powerful or in a more positive light than female characters? Justify your answer with textual evidence.
 - b Do you think McGahan's representation of female characters is problematic, or justifiable?



Reflect on your evolving interpretation

- 7 Which perspectives in *The White Earth* do you support? Which do your values most align with?
- 8 In representing the impact of 'squatter families' in the Darling Downs area, does *The White Earth* challenge or reinforce your perspective on Australian settlement? Did reading the novel prompt you to review any of your cultural assumptions or positions?
- 9 When the novel concludes:
 - a what were you left wishing would happen to Kuran Station? Who do you believe should take ownership?
 - b what does your response reveal about your own values, attitudes and beliefs?



12.10

WE ARE ALL COMPLETELY BESIDE OURSELVES: KAREN JOY FOWLER

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves was published in 2014 by American author Karen Joy Fowler. It has received international acclaim, winning several awards and receiving a nomination for the Man Booker Prize in 2014.



Source 12 Karen Joy Fowler

We are All Completely Beside Ourselves as a significant literary work

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves is a unique and enthralling novel. The narrator, Rosemary Cooke, is highly engaging and very funny, although she seems to live an utterly unextraordinary life. Almost a quarter of the way through the novel we discover something quite extraordinary about her, which comes as a shock to most readers. *Note: we can only avoid this spoiler for so long and from Your turn 12.10b onwards we will assume you have read the book!*

Considering the text, author and audiences

In the novel, the parents of the protagonist, Rosemary, are both scientists, and this work pervades their family life. This situation opens the door for a story that lets audiences think about scientific issues, and the changing nature of scientific ethics over time. Because the narrative switches between scenes in the 'middle' of the story (in the 1990s), the 'start' of the story (in the 1970s) and contemporary times (up to 2012), the text is able to convey messages about social and cultural change over time.

As the novel was published during the last decade, it reflects many of our contemporary cultural concerns. This includes both broad social concerns about human impact on ecological systems and animal rights, and more personal concerns such as the nature of family relationships.

12.10a Your turn

personal



Research and relate

A strong understanding of the social context of the novel will assist you in understanding and analysing the text. By this point, you should have experience in researching the contexts of texts and their authors.

- 1 In addition to your own ideas, you should consider investigating:
 - the experiments of Luella and Winthrop Kellogg
 - animal rights in the United States in the late nineteenth century
 - themes within the writing of Franz Kafka
 - environmental literature and 'eco-fiction'.
- 2 *For school/group settings:* Before continuing this study, communicate with others about your personal position on animal cruelty and any kinds of images/conversations relating to this topic that you would like to be warned about before encountering them.

Interpreting elements of the story

In order to do your best in the summative external assessment, which is the culmination of this unit, you will need to develop a thorough and complex understanding of the story presented in *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*. You will have to draw on all the skills you have learnt throughout your Senior English course, particularly those outlined on pages 249–54. The questions below are tailored to *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* and intended to extend your understanding of this text.

12.10b Your turn

Narration

- 1 How does the choice of first-person narration and Rosemary as primary focaliser affect the way this story is told?
- 2 What are the limitations of the first-person narrator in the novel – that is, what are readers unable to see or understand?
- 3 How do Rosemary’s musings on the changeability of memory affect your perception of her as a narrator? Is Rosemary a reliable or unreliable narrator? Explain.
- 4 How would the story be different if told through the eyes of another character? Support your response by discussing a couple of specific characters.

structural



cultural



Storyworld

- 5 What social rules or expectations does Rosemary break in the novel? What social rules do other characters break?
- 6 How do power relationships operate within the novel:
 - a Which characters have power? Over whom?
 - b Which characters are powerless? What causes this?
- 7 How do each of the places where Rosemary lives symbolise the different stages of her life in the narrative?
- 8 How is the animal world represented in the novel?
- 9 How is the scientific community represented in the novel?

Characters in the storyworld

- 10 How does Rosemary develop as a character throughout the novel? You might like to use the template on page 328 to analyse Fowler’s construction of Rosemary and other key characters.
- 11 Consider the character of Fern.
 - a How are audiences positioned to relate to her before page 77?
 - b How does this affect how readers feel about her after page 77?
 - c Looking back at the start of the novel, what clues can you find about Fern’s nature?
- 12 How does the contrast between Grandma Donna and Grandma Frederika reflect attitudes in society?
- 13 What roles do Harlow and Lowell play in the story?
- 14 Lowell and Rosemary show different ways of dealing with their ‘extraordinary’ lives at the end of the novel. Which do you most identify with?

Plot and story

- 15 Rosemary openly begins her story 'in the middle'. How does this affect the way readers approach the narrative?
- 16 The first part of the story loops back and effectively tells the beginning of the story. How does the first quarter of the novel position readers?
- 17 What is the effect of the information that is revealed on page 77?
- 18 After the reveal, much of the narrative becomes more linear, with some flashbacks to fill in new information about Fern's nature. How is the reader's positioning different from at the start of the novel?
- 19 The resolution is set much later in time than the rest of the narrative. What is the effect of this choice?
- 20 Does the novel have a happy ending?

Looking through the structural frame

When looking through the structural frame, it is useful to consider the construction of the whole novel as a story (paying attention to the narration, characters, storyworld and plot) and the way the words within it are used to communicate. In this regard, you can draw on your knowledge of the Language in Use model and your understanding of narrative conventions.

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves has a conspicuously non-linear structure in that a significant piece of information is withheld until a quarter of the way through the novel. The narration alternates between memories and real-time narration. The memories are clearly signposted for readers, and the nature of these memories is not consistent, which questions the validity and reliability of memories.

The story is set in late twentieth-century America and makes use of references to popular culture to position the novel in the social world, and scientific and psychological references to position it in the scientific world. Often, important observations are introduced with one of these references, giving some philosophical framing to Rosemary's personal story.

12.10c Your turn

Hold up the structural frame

- 1 What are the benefits of using an unreliable narrator in telling this story?
- 2 Consider the language used in Rosemary's narration.
 - a What is the effect of Rosemary directly addressing readers at points in the narration?
 - b How does Rosemary's sense of humour affect reader positioning?
- 3 How is evaluative language used to position readers with respect to settings, characters and events? (See page 323 for an analytical template.)
- 4 How do the following act as symbols in the narrative:
 - a Rosemary's mother's journals?
 - b the puppet (Madam Defarge)?
 - c the red tokens?
- 5 How is language used to highlight the differences between the social and scientific worlds?

structural



- 6 How do epigraphs frame the parts of the novel?
- 7 How does the non-linear structure affect the way readers understand the story?
- 8 Rosemary mentions that her mother used the saying 'completely beside ourselves' to describe Rosemary and Fern being overcome with happiness. What is the significance of using this as the title of the novel?

Reflect on your personal response

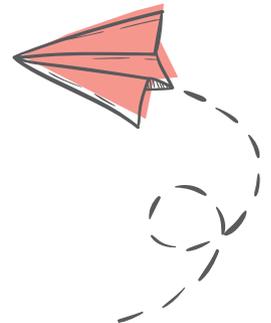
- 9 Consider your expectations when you started reading *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*. Did the novel meet your expectations? Why or why not?
- 10 What were your favourite aspects of the novel?
- 11 How do you feel about Rosemary's parents and their actions throughout the novel?
- 12 How do you feel about Rosemary?
- 13 Does any part of the novel resonate with your own experience?
- 14 Does *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* remind you of any other texts (e.g. novels, films, television shows, poems, plays)?



Looking through the cultural frame

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves raises issues about similarities between humans and animals on scientific and social levels. The narrator cites a range of scientific sources, but the personal nature of her story implies that not everything can be explained by science. It is clear that Fern and Rosemary have a deep connection due to their upbringing, but this connection also highlights their essential differences.

By setting her story within a life that will be completely foreign to almost all readers, Fowler questions what it means to be human. In some ways, the strangeness of the situation unites readers in a feeling of foreignness, which reinforces the essential nature of humanity. Alongside this, Fowler normalises a dysfunctional family structure and raises questions about the different identities we wear in public and at home.



12.10d Your turn

Hold up the cultural frame

- 1 Consider the representation of science in the novel.
 - a What seems to be the scientific basis for the experiment on Fern and Rosemary?
 - b What values, attitudes and beliefs does Rosemary have about science? Does this change throughout the novel?
 - c Which of Rosemary's parents is more scientific? Who are readers positioned to support?
 - d What values, attitudes and beliefs about science does the novel support?
- 2 What ideas about childhood memories are represented by the text?
- 3 It can be argued that the Cooke family is dysfunctional.
 - a To what extent is this caused by the scientific experiment they live through?
 - b What aspects of the family dynamic, or particular individuals' behaviour, suggest that the family would not operate perfectly, even if they didn't carry out the experiment?
 - c When does Rosemary realise that her family is different? How does this affect her?



- 4 Rosemary comes to realise that she needs to wear one identity in public, and another at home.
 - a How do these two versions of Rosemary's identity differ?
 - b How does she re-establish her identity once she leaves home?
 - c In what ways do readers witness Rosemary changing as an adult in the novel?
 - 5 a What perspectives on animal rights does the novel represent?
 - b Which of these perspectives does the novel endorse?
 - 6 Which world views does the novel endorse?
-

Looking through the critical frame

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves presents some viewpoints that readers may find challenging. The central question of the similarities between humans and animals is confronting, particularly when viewed in contrast to Lowell's activism with the Animal Liberation Front. Ethical lines around the study of biology and psychology are blurred by a number of characters in the novel, with various effects.

At its heart, though, the novel is about love. Readers are confronted with a loving, although unconventional, family. The events around Fern leaving home challenge our ideas about the unconditional love of parents and the capacity for love between siblings to endure separation. The novel raises questions about the extent to which humans can love animals, and whether any animals are capable of returning affection. Against this backdrop, we meet children who are struggling to find their places in the world and making sometimes poor decisions in their search for identity.

12.10e Your turn



Hold up the critical frame

- 1 Which perspectives are privileged by the text? How is this achieved?
- 2 Consider the representation of the scientific community in the novel.
 - a Rosemary's father is a scientist, but his perspective is largely marginalised. What does this suggest?
 - b There are numerous scientific studies cited in the novel. How does this affect the way readers are positioned to feel about Rosemary's father and the broader scientific community?
- 3 Rosemary and Harlow both lie about their lives. How are they represented differently? What is the effect of this?
- 4 The novel deals with the issue of evolution.
 - a What values, attitudes and beliefs about evolution does it endorse?
 - b Which ones does it challenge?
 - c In what ways might this be confronting for readers?
- 5 Is this novel scientific? Why or why not?
- 6 In what ways does *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* champion animal rights? What are the limitations of this?

- 7 What world views are endorsed by the novel?
- 8 What world views are challenged by the novel?

Reflect on your evolving interpretation

- 9 Which perspectives in *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* do you support? Which do your values most align with?
- 10 Has any part of *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* challenged your own perspectives on the world?
- 11 In what ways has reading *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* altered your own values, attitudes and beliefs?
- 12 How might others (e.g. from different cultural backgrounds) respond to the novel?
- 13 How do your own values, attitudes and beliefs impact on your ability and willingness to accept *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* as a great literary masterpiece?



FOR THE TEACHER

Check your [obook assess](#) for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



13 EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT: ANALYTICAL WRITING

Building on the work done in Chapter 12, the focus of this chapter is on preparing for the external exam. Specifically, we will examine key aspects of the analytical essay in detail. While you must complete the exam as part of your English studies, this type of essay develops your ability to think critically and logically (skills highly valued by employers), to formulate a sustained argument and to read complex texts closely.

Focus questions:

- What are the requirements of the external exam?
- How is a typical analytical essay structured and what are its key language features?
- What options do you have for making invited and resistant readings of the novel/play you have studied?
- How should you use your time during the exam?

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 4, Topic 2, 'Critical responses to literary texts', and 'Summative external assessment (EA): Examination – analytical written response' from the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*.

This chapter features:

- an unpacking of requirements for the external exam
- a review of the basic structure and language features of an analytical essay
- a close examination of the critical response genre as a vehicle for resistant readings of a text
- advice on time management during the exam
- practice questions for all eight prescribed texts for the external exam.

The chapter includes a study of a media text:

TEXT	AUTHOR	PRESCRIBED?
Critical response to <i>The Great Gatsby</i>	Lindsay Williams	Analytical essay is the prescribed genre for the external exam; <i>The Great Gatsby</i> is a prescribed text, but is not on the external exam text list.

13.1

ESSAY WRITING

In Chapter 11, the focus was on studying a literary text in order to produce a *creative* response. In this chapter, our attention turns to responding *critically* to one of the prescribed external exam texts.

Context and conditions for the external exam

When responding critically to one of the prescribed external exam texts, you will be writing in the following context:

- *genre*: analytical essay in the form of either:
 - an *interpretation* to interpret the themes, messages or aesthetics of a literary text, *or*
 - a *critical response* to analyse and evaluate the themes, ideas, aesthetics or messages in a literary text.

The syllabus asks you to communicate an informed and critical perspective of the text in response to an unseen question.

- *subject matter*: an unseen question based on the play or novel of the prescribed external exam texts (see Chapter 12). Although you won't know the precise question, the syllabus does make it clear that the essay will involve:
 - analysing perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text
 - analysing the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions
 - analysing the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text.
- *roles and relationships*: you will be asked to adopt the role of a literary analyst writing for an anonymous examiner who has a deep understanding of the novel or play. In this situation, the relationship will be:
 - *distant*: you do not know the examiner and you are expected to be formal and academic
 - *unequal*: the examiner will have expert knowledge of the novel or play, so you must demonstrate specific and detailed knowledge (this includes using direct quotations)
 - *one of generally aligned values*: you must demonstrate that you appreciate literature and value rational, informed and justified discussion of novels and plays. You can adopt a resistant reading of the text as long as you have the textual evidence to support your claims and interpretations.
- *mode and medium*: handwritten in a test booklet (unless you have received special consideration to complete the exam another way).

In addition, you need to bear in mind the following conditions:

- *time*: 2 hours of writing time, plus 15 minutes of perusal and planning time
- *length*: 800–1000 words.



Structure and features of an (interpretation-style) analytical essay

By now, you are no doubt very familiar with the structure and language features of an analytical essay of the interpretation style. Its primary social purpose is to interpret the themes/messages or aesthetics of a text. It is an appropriate choice of genre when you are making an invited reading of a novel or play.

A summary of the structure and significant language features of an interpretation-style analytical essay is provided in Source 1. The examples are drawn from an essay on *Lady Helen and the Dark Days Club* by Alison Goodman (ask your teacher for a complete exemplar).

Source 1 Summary of the structure and significant language features of an interpretation-style analytical essay

STRUCTURE (STAGES AND PHASES)	LANGUAGE FEATURES
<p>Thesis</p> <p>In the order shown below, your introduction would typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identify the text and its author, as well as evaluating its general cultural significance – provide a succinct synopsis relevant to the question – state your position with regard to the set question/task and as relevant to the text's theme/message or your aesthetic response – preview the elements (e.g. setting, character, aesthetic features) to be examined. 	<p>Evaluative language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use of positive appreciation to evaluate the text (e.g. 'detailed rendering', 'sumptuous', 'exciting', 'effective', 'significant') <p>Cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use of pronoun reference (e.g. 'Lady Helen' – 'she') <p>Packaging and condensing information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use of nominalisation (in italics) (e.g. 'The exciting story is used as an effective vehicle for exploring <i>the societal, familial and personal expectations weighing down young people, especially women.</i>')
<p>Element evaluation</p> <p>Your body paragraphs will typically contain phases such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a topic sentence stating a claim relevant to the question or task – elaboration of the claim – argumentation and a pattern of examples (with supporting quotations or specific text references) to support and develop the claim – a warrant that establishes the link between your examples, claim and overall statement of position. 	<p>Evaluative language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use of appreciation words to evaluate (e.g. 'Civility is an <i>important</i> principle ...') – use of judgment words to evaluate characters (e.g. 'good manners', 'politeness and decorum – especially avoiding the appearance of sexual impropriety –') <p>Conjunctions and text connectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – adding information (e.g. 'in addition', 'moreover', 'furthermore') – contrasting ideas (e.g. 'however', 'though', 'but') <p>Cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use of synonyms (e.g. 'values' → 'guiding principles') – part-whole relationships (e.g. novel → setting ('Regency England'), narrator ('third person', 'focaliser', 'Lady Helen')) <p>Citing and quoting to add authority to textual arguments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use of a variety of techniques for integrating quotations (e.g. paraphrasing; projecting via a colon, the use of 'that', or a saying/thinking verb; incorporating into sentence flow)

cohesion
the use of language resources that help a text 'hang' together, giving it a sense of unity

nominalisation
turning verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, etc. into nouns, and turning clauses into noun groups

warrant
a phase in an essay where a link is established between a claim, examples and an overall position; it makes your chain of reasoning explicit

STRUCTURE (STAGES AND PHASES)	LANGUAGE FEATURES
	<p>Managing information flow using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – paragraph openers (topic sentences) to shift the focus of the essay (e.g. ‘Civility is an important principle that guides the upper class in the Regency England of the novel’. The next paragraph begins: ‘However, through the choice of Lady Helen as the focaliser and third person narrator, the reader becomes aware that she recognises this civility as a veneer that masks hypocrisy and violence’). – sentence openers (in italics) to shift the focus of a paragraph (e.g. ‘<i>As a young, unmarried woman</i>, Lady Helen is weighed down by social and familial expectations’; ‘<i>In the first four chapters</i>, Goodman shows us the tightening spiral of restrictions flowing from these expectations’).
<p>Theme reiteration</p> <p>Your conclusion will typically contain phases such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – re-statement of position – review of elements and arguments – overall comment or observation, often relating the text to the present. 	<p>Evaluative language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use of positive appreciation (in italics) to evaluate the influence of values (e.g. ‘Regency England as represented in the novel is <i>significant</i> in shaping Helen’s values’) and the character of the protagonist (e.g. ‘Lady Helen can be a <i>role model</i> for young people’). <p>Conjunctions and text connectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use of linking words to conclude and signal synthesis (e.g. ‘overall’, ‘in conclusion’)

13.1 Your turn

Reviewing your understanding of analytical essays

Reflect on how much of the information in Source 1 is familiar to you. If you can, obtain a copy of a previous analytical essay you wrote and identify the structure and language features. Then, working with your classmates, consider:

- what you are already confident with (that is, what can you do well?)
- what your limitations are (that is, what don’t you know or can’t you do? What do you need to do to improve?)
- how you will improve your ability to write an analytical essay.

A good (curated) source of further examples of good student essays is the website for Roane State Community College in the United States. Search for ‘OWL types of papers literary analysis’. The two examples display many (but not all of) the basic features of the essay you will need to write. After working through this chapter, look at these examples and, in small groups, discuss how they might need to be modified, added to, and so on, to address the marking criteria for your external exam (see Chapter 14, p. 336).

13.2

CREATING A CRITICAL RESPONSE FOR EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The cultural background of texts on the prescribed list for the exam is quite narrow. Of the eight books, all the authors are white and they come from only four Western countries: two are Australian, four English, one Canadian and one American. Depending on your personal, family and cultural backgrounds, you might find yourself questioning or even rejecting the messages and world views underpinning the text you are studying. If this is the case, you *can* critique the text in the external exam, but it is important that you have a strong, logical structure to organise your response and supporting evidence and arguments. This is where the genre of critical response is useful.

Social purpose and structure of a critical response

Like the interpretation-style analytical essay, the critical response belongs to the Response to Texts family of genres (Chapter 1, p. 9). Its primary social purpose is to analyse and evaluate the themes, ideas, aesthetics or messages in a work, and it typically has three main stages (see Source 2).

Source 2 Stages of a critical response

STAGES	FUNCTION AND TYPICAL PHASES
Text evaluation (suggests the possibility of a challenge)	Your introduction would typically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identify the text and its author, as well as evaluating its general cultural significance – provide a succinct synopsis relevant to the question – state your position (or thesis) relevant to the set question or task – preview your challenge to the text.
Deconstruction of the text (reveals how the message is constructed)	In the body, you would typically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – provide detailed and specific arguments and evidence to support your thesis – analyse how the text works to position readers to accept the message/s of the text; this can include discussion of gaps and silences in the text. As in any other analytical essay, your body paragraphs are likely to contain phases such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a topic sentence stating a claim relevant to the question or task – elaboration of the claim – argumentation and a pattern of examples (with supporting quotations or specific text references) to support and develop the claim – a warrant that establishes the link between your examples, claim and overall statement of position.



STAGES	FUNCTION AND TYPICAL PHASES
Challenge to the message (denaturalises the text)	<p>In the conclusion, you would question or challenge the positioning offered by the text. This paragraph is likely to contain phases such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a claim (your challenge to the text) starting with a contrasting conjunction (e.g. 'but', 'however', 'yet', 'nevertheless') – elaboration on the claim – argumentation and a pattern of examples (with supporting quotations or specific text references) to support and develop the claim – an overall summary comment or observation.

Exemplar of a critical response

The exemplar in Source 3 is based on the classic American novel, *The Great Gatsby*, by F Scott Fitzgerald. You may have studied this novel in a depth in Chapter 4. However, if you are unfamiliar with either the novel or one of the film versions, you might like to find a synopsis online and read it first. Note that *The Great Gatsby* is not one of the prescribed texts for the external exam, so the approach taken in this essay would need to be adapted to the specific text you have studied and the question/task set.

This essay takes account of the social context described on page 307 in response to the following question:

In The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald, how are representations of places used by Fitzgerald to explore social issues of the time?

In the exemplar (Source 3), stages are labelled for your information and paragraphs are numbered so they can be referred to easily later in this chapter.

Source 3 Exemplar of a critical response essay based on *The Great Gatsby*

STAGE	PARA	ESSAY TEXT
Evaluation (suggests the possibility of a challenge)	1	<p>Published in 1926, <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F Scott Fitzgerald is the classic tale of the darkness at the heart of the American Dream, the national belief that anyone can achieve success and rise in society through individual effort. In the novel, with the help of mentors (Dan Cody and then Meyer Wolfsheim), Jimmy Gatz, a poor young man from the mid-west transforms himself into Jay Gatsby, an enigmatic but wealthy man who is obsessed with a past love, the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, now a married woman with a three-year-old daughter. Fitzgerald's evocative representation of place (including East and West Egg, the mansions of the Buchanans and Gatsby, and the Valley of Ashes) are significant for the author's exploration of issues associated with the American Dream. However, through this exploration, Fitzgerald also reinforces colonial attitudes and appears to miss the point that the dream itself might be the problem, not just – as narrator Nick Carraway asserts – the 'foul dust' (p. 8) floating in its wake.</p>

(Continues on next page)

Source 3 *cont.*

STAGE	PARA	TEXT
<p>Deconstruction (reveals how the message is constructed)</p>	2	<p>First, the mansions belonging to Gatsby and the Buchanans play a significant, symbolic role in the novel. Much of the action revolves around two egg-shaped peninsulas (West Egg and East Egg) about 20 miles from New York that are separated by a bay. Both Gatsby and Nick live in West Egg, ‘– well, the less fashionable of the two’ (p. 11). Representing new money, it is here that Nick tells Gatsby rents a ‘colossal’ mansion, ‘a factual imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy’ (p. 11). The mansion is meant to impress and it is where Gatsby holds his frequent, elaborate parties, hoping that one day Daisy will show up. With its library of uncut, unread books, the mansion represents both the extravagance and illusion of the times. Moreover, the mansion is directly opposite the Buchanan’s house in fashionable, old-moneyed East Egg. From his lawn, Gatsby can see the green light at the end of the Buchanan’s dock, a symbol of Gatsby’s dream of Daisy, who, like the light, remains tantalisingly out of reach. Tragically, Gatsby never truly grasps the unbroachable nature of the distance (both physical and social) between himself and Daisy.</p>
	3	<p>Another significant place is the Valley of Ashes – ‘a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat’ (p. 29) – situated on the road about halfway between West Egg and New York City. A depressing, in-between place inspired by TS Eliot’s grim poem ‘The Wasteland’, it is where New Yorkers literally and metaphorically dump the debris from their pursuit of the American Dream. In contrast to the green lawns, blue waters and white homes of the Eggs, Nick uses negative adjectives such as ‘grey’ and ‘bleak’ to describe the valley, telling readers it is bounded by ‘a small foul river’ inhabited by ‘ash-grey men’ (all quotes p. 29). It is here that George Wilson has his garage and he and the ill-fated Myrtle reside. This is the flipside of the ‘Roaring Twenties’ – more than 60 per cent of Americans lived below the poverty line. It is from this life that Myrtle hoped to escape through her relationship with Tom Buchanan; it is what prompts her to run out onto the road the night she is killed and set in motion two more deaths. Looking down on this grey land are the gigantic, blue eyes of Doctor TJ Eckleburg. A decaying sign for an optometrist, a grieving George Wilson calls it the eyes of God and it may symbolise God casting judgment on 1920’s America as a moral wasteland. Emerging from this wasteland after his wife’s death, the ‘ashen, fantastic figure’ (p. 168) of George Wilson shoots Gatsby and then himself, ending both their dreams. Meanwhile, the ‘careless’ (p. 186) lives of Daisy and Tom – representing old money – continue on, almost uninterrupted.</p>

STAGE	PARA	TEXT
	4	For Fitzgerald, the places described in <i>The Great Gatsby</i> are more than just settings where the action unfolds; they take on metaphorical and symbolic significance, which contributes to Fitzgerald's critique of the American Dream. It is worth noting that Nick, the first-person, internal focaliser, is from the conservative mid-west, an outsider to New York society. While he might 'reserve all judgments' (p. 7), in Chapter 1 Nick states explicitly that Gatsby '[...] represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn' (p. 8). Yet, he is sympathetic to Gatsby, stating that he 'turned out all right at the end' (p. 8). The real problem was 'what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams' (p. 8) – and after 'Gatsby's death the East was haunted' (p. 183) for Nick. Through the use of places in symbolic and metaphorical ways (reinforced by the story's tragic outcome), Nick's construction as a reliable narrator, and evocative use of language, Fitzgerald invites readers to accept Nick's appraisals.
Challenge (denaturalises the message)	5	However, what if the dream <i>itself</i> was the problem? On his final night in West Egg, Nick wanders down to the beach and becomes 'aware of the old island that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes – a fresh green breast of the new world' (p. 187). This land – by extension the whole American continent – brought the sailors 'face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder' (p. 187). These are elegant, inspiring words, but they assume an empty land waiting for settlement. Of course, this was not actually the case and reflects a colonial world view, conveniently ignoring the bloody frontier wars between the native Americans and European invaders. This in turn means the 'pure' American Dream that Nick celebrates is conceived on the mistaken belief that the early settlers (including religious groups escaping persecution in Europe) could attain a better life for themselves in an ostensibly empty continent. So, perhaps it was the dream itself that was 'foul' and what remains is that the tragedy of Gatsby is also the tragedy of America, a country where dreams are built on illusion and self-deception. (Length: 986 words)



Commentary on the critical response exemplar

In this section, we will evaluate the exemplar (Source 3) with reference to the marking criteria from the syllabus (*QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*, 2019, p. 51). See if you can find further evidence from the exemplar to support or challenge the evaluations. You will find a checklist for evaluating your own analytical essays in Chapter 14, p. 336.

Here's a reminder of the essay question:

In *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald, how are representations of places used by Fitzgerald to explore social issues of the time?

Knowledge application

The syllabus asks you to:

- analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text
- analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions
- analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text.

Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

As the question requires, the writer of the essay explores Fitzgerald's representations of place (for example, the Eggs, the mansions of Gatsby and the Buchanans, the Valley of Ashes) in *The Great Gatsby* and how they relate to identities, especially of the various characters (Gatsby, George Wilson, the Buchanans) as representatives of aspects of the American Dream. In doing so, the writer identifies the cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpinning the novel (the invited reading); for examples of this, see Sources 4, 5 and 6.

Source 4 Example from Paragraph 4 of the exemplar (Source 3)

The real problem was 'what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams' (p. 8) – and after 'Gatsby's death the East was haunted' (p. 183) for Nick. Through the use of places in symbolic and metaphorical ways (reinforced by the story's tragic outcome), Nick's construction as a reliable narrator, and evocative use of language, Fitzgerald invites readers to accept Nick's appraisals.

As this is a critical response, the writer also reads the text resistantly (see Source 5).

Source 5 Example from Paragraph 5 of the exemplar (Source 3)

Of course, this was not actually the case and reflects a colonial world view, conveniently ignoring the bloody frontier wars between the native Americans and European invaders.

Finally, there is frequent, explicit analysis of the use of aesthetic features and stylistic devices, including narration, symbols and metaphors, and evaluative language.



An important point to note is that there is a big difference between summary and analysis. In Source 6, notice how the writer does not just summarise what he has found (that is, the eyes of Dr TJ Eckleburg) but goes on to analyse its significance (telling the reader how and why the eyes are important).

Source 6 Example from Paragraph 3 of the exemplar (Source 3)

Looking down on this grey land are the gigantic, blue eyes of Doctor TJ Eckleburg. A decaying sign for an optometrist, a grieving George Wilson calls it the eyes of God and it may symbolise God casting judgment on 1920's America as a moral wasteland.

Organisation and development

The syllabus asks you to:

- use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task
- establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers
- select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task
- organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes
- use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay.

Source: *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

It is clear that the exemplar has been structured according to the typical stages (and phases) for a critical response (see pp. 310–11). Moreover, the relationship between reader and writer is formal and academic; for example, there are no contractions, the personal pronoun (I) is avoided, nominalisation and technical language is used, and so on. There is also a balance between demonstrating detailed knowledge of the novel (more on this in a moment) and over-explaining. For example, in Paragraph 3 it is assumed that the reader knows who Tom Buchanan is and what happens when Myrtle Wilson runs out on the road.

There is frequent, detailed and specific information relevant to the question by way of:

- concrete details paraphrased from the novel; for example (in italics, from Paragraph 2), '*With its library of uncut, unread books, the mansion represents both the extravagance and illusion of the times*'.
- direct quotations; for example (from Paragraph 3), 'Nick uses negative adjectives such as "grey" and "bleak" to describe the valley, telling readers it is bounded by "a small foul river" inhabited by "ash-grey men" (all quotes p. 29)'. While it is not essential to include page references, memorising some key quotations (related to various elements of the novel or play) along with the page reference or act/scene/line is a good way to demonstrate your understanding.

However, you need to be selective and be prepared to 'kill your darlings'. For example, the writer of the exemplar was keen to include a reference to an iconic scene where Nick sees Daisy Buchanan for the first time in her own home. While this showed a good knowledge of the story, it did not contribute to the writer's argument and would have blown out the essay's word count.

Finally, you will notice the use of cohesive devices to:

- emphasise ideas; for example, parallel sentence structure (in italics, from Paragraph 3): '*It is from this life that Myrtle hoped to escape through her relationship with Tom Buchanan; it is what prompts her to run out onto the road the night she is killed and set in motion two more deaths*'.
- connect parts of the essay; for example, 'First', 'Another significant place', 'However ...'

Textual features

The syllabus asks you to:

- make language choices for particular purposes in an essay
- use grammar and language structures for particular purposes in an essay
- use written features to achieve particular purposes in an essay.

Source: English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

For a summary of the key language features of an analytical essay, see pages 308–9; these are all evident in the exemplar.

We want to draw your attention to two other important textual features.

- 1 *Use of elaboration*: this refers to a writer's ability to:
 - restate an idea in different words that reinforce and add to a reader's understanding
 - provide more specific detail and information
 - make a comment
 - add relevant examples.

Research reveals that elaboration is one of the keys to attaining high grades, mainly because it enables writers to add depth and complexity; that is, it helps demonstrate discernment, discrimination and thoroughness. Source 7 provides an example of this, with the equals sign (=) indicating elaboration.

Source 7 Example from Paragraph 2 of the exemplar (Source 3)

From his lawn, Gatsby can see the green light at the end of the Buchanan's dock, [=specifying] a symbol of Gatsby's dream of Daisy [=commenting] which, like the light, remains tantalisingly out of reach. [=commenting further] Tragically, Gatsby never truly grasps the unbroachable nature of the distance (both physical and social) between himself and Daisy.

- 2 *Use of implication sequences*: this simply means explaining a logical sequence of events; that is, 'a' leads to 'b', which in turn leads to 'c'. While the writer can use cause-effect conjunctions and text connectives (e.g. 'a' causes 'b'; 'b' happened because of 'a', which in turn led to 'c'), the sequence can be implied by the order in which information is placed. In an analytical essay, implication sequences are important for demonstrating the chain of logic in your argument. See Source 8 for an example.

Source 8 Example (in italics) from Paragraph 5 of the exemplar (Source 3)

Of course, this was not actually the case and reflects a colonial world view, conveniently ignoring the bloody frontier wars between the native Americans and European invaders. *This in turn means* that the 'pure' American Dream that Nick celebrates is conceived on the mistaken belief that the early settlers (including religious groups escaping persecution in Europe) could attain a better life for themselves in an ostensibly empty continent. *So*, perhaps it was the dream itself that was 'foul' and what remains is that the tragedy of Gatsby is also the tragedy of America, a country where dreams are built on illusion and self-deception.

13.2a Your turn

Editing the exemplar

In Source 9 you will find three excerpts from a draft version of the exemplar critical response essay that you read in Source 3. Accompanying each excerpt is feedback from peers, who are experienced English educators. Once you have read the comments, re-read the final version (Source 3). Then, in small groups discuss:

- How was the feedback addressed; that is, how were the problems identified by the writer's peers fixed by the writer?
- Do *you* think the changes are better than the original?
- What do you make of the contradictory advice? How has the writer dealt with it? What can *you* do when presented with contradictory advice to a practice draft?
- What messages do you take away from this exercise – for practice essays and the actual external exam?

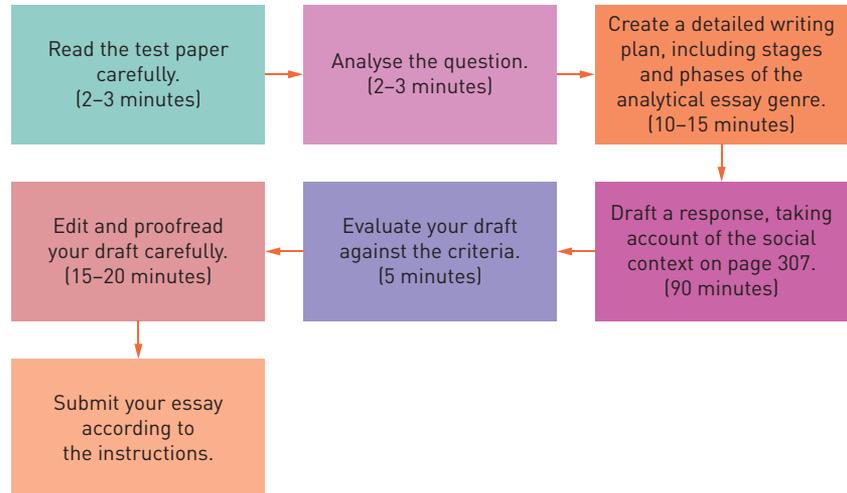
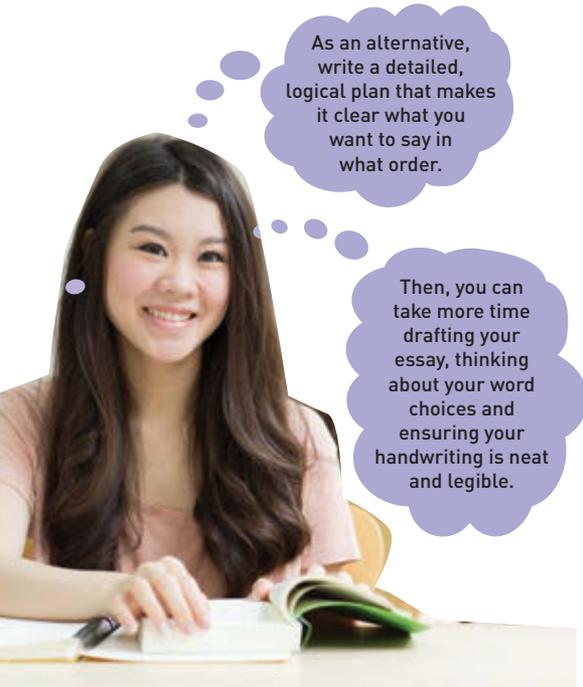


Source 9 Feedback on draft exemplar

DRAFT VERSION OF EXEMPLAR	PEER FEEDBACK
<p><i>From Paragraph 1:</i> However, in doing this, Fitzgerald also reinforces colonial attitudes and appears to miss the point that the dream itself might be the problem, not – as narrator Nick Carraway asserts – just the ‘foul dust’ floating in its wake.</p>	<p><i>Peer 1:</i> Clarify what ‘this’ is. (Objective 10: use grammar and language structures for particular purposes in an essay [unclear referent = weak link])</p> <p><i>Peer 2:</i> Not sure I agree. To me it reads as his exploration of the issues ... The markers like this kind of cumulative emphasis.</p>
<p><i>From Paragraph 2:</i> Initially, let’s zoom in and focus on two significant places (Gatsby mansion and that belonging to the Buchanans) that play a symbolic role in the novel.</p>	<p><i>Peer 1:</i> This signposting seems a bit narrative (or personal, discursive ...?) to me. Maybe even patronising, given the essay is ‘for an audience with a deep understanding of the text’. ‘Let’s ...’ (Objective 9: make language choices for particular purposes in an essay)</p> <p><i>Peer 2:</i> I tend to agree. That would likely get hit for a lack of formality. It might be a great talking point in a sample script, and you’d probably get away with it. But a marker at home would probably knock it.</p>
<p><i>From Paragraph 4:</i> At the beginning of Chapter 1, Nick (as first person, internal focaliser) states explicitly that Gatsby ‘[...] represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn’ (p. 8). Yet, Nick is sympathetic to Gatsby and states that he ‘turned out all right at the end’; the real problem was ‘what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams’ (p. 8). Given the tragic outcome of the story, Nick’s construction as a reliable narrator, and the evocative use of language (including the use of places in symbolic and metaphorical ways), readers are positioned to accept Nick’s appraisal.</p>	<p><i>Peer 1:</i> Knowledge application: Strong on Objective 3 ‘analyse perspectives ...’</p> <p><i>Peer 2:</i> For me, this wanders a little from the argument about place, though I can see what you’re doing. To bring it back, I’d include a comment about how Nick is from another place – he’s pretty open about being conservative because he’s from the mid-west. He’s an outsider to the whole New York society, and this is partly why he’s so judgmental and unreliable – he really doesn’t fit in or ‘get’ NY. He’s so disgusted at the end that he leaves. (Only needs a comment, not my whole rant!)</p>

A suggested writing process

We're now going to look at a suggested process for using your time during the exam. It is assumed that prior to the day you will have taken detailed notes during analysis and interpretation, and sorted and classified those notes according to relevant headings. The timings are suggestions only and are meant as a starting point; through practice, you will need to discover what works best for you.



Source 10 A suggested process for using your time during the exam

This process assumes that you are writing *one* full draft only. Two full drafts would only be necessary if you needed to significantly re-order your ideas (an outcome of poor planning) and you will in all likelihood run out of time, especially time for careful editing and proofreading.

13.2b Your turn

Practising essay writing

Listed on the following page are practice essay questions based on the subject matter and assessment objectives for Unit 4, Topic 2. Choose one that is relevant to you and write an analytical essay based on that question. You may write an interpretation-style essay (if you're making an invited reading) or you could write a critical response (if you wish to make a resistant reading).

Ensure that you:

- take account of the context and conditions (see page 307 for details)
- use a methodical writing process (such as the one above)
- write by hand using a pen (unless you have been given special consideration).

Texts in contexts

- How are representations of identity and human experience created in your selected novel or play?

- Literature uses language in creative and expressive ways. Evaluate how your selected novel or play engages various audiences by conforming to or challenging the conventions of its genre.
- Literature has the power to reflect and challenge audience perspectives in relation to larger social and cultural issues. Explain the ways in which your selected novel or play engages with one or more of the following issues: gender, age, race, power, class, the environment.

Language and textual analysis

- Consider the significant perspectives and representations in your selected novel or play. What does the text seem to be positioning the audience to think, be or do?
- Characters do not exist in a vacuum - they are constructed by the author and put in a particular context so that `stuff` can happen to and around them. Explain the role of the characters in your selected novel or play in positioning the audience to take up certain cultural assumptions, values, attitudes and beliefs.
- Physical location can have a significance beyond providing a setting for the actions of the story. Explain how the representations of place are used by the author of your selected novel or play to explore social issues of the time.

Responding to texts

- Does your selected novel or play have personal relevance to you? Explore how your own reading of the text reflects your individual world view and consider how different readers might respond to the text in different ways.

Once you have finished, ask a trusted peer or adult for feedback using the criteria from the syllabus (see the peer feedback checklist in Chapter 14, p. 336). In addition, you should reflect on your use of the writing process, considering specifically:

- Did I analyse the question carefully, ensuring I addressed all aspects?
- Did I create a logical and useful plan that followed the structure of an analytical essay?
- Was I able to complete the essay in two hours?
- Did I take some time to evaluate my draft against the criteria?
- Did I leave sufficient time for revision and proofreading?
- How did I go writing by hand for the full two hours?
- Did any other issues arise during the writing time?
- Overall, what were my three main strengths in using the process and three key areas for further improvement?

Based on the peer feedback and self-reflection, set yourself three **SMART goals** for improvement.

SMART goal
an aim that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely

FOR THE TEACHER

Check your obook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

Assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



Part

F

ENGLISH TOOLKIT

Chapter 14 Toolkit

- 14.1 Quick lookup
- 14.2 Planners and guides
- 14.3 Checklists



14.1

QUICK LOOKUP

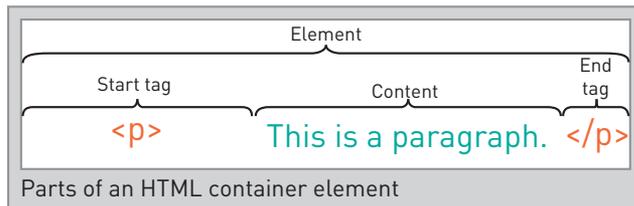
This section of the toolkit contains some useful information about features of written and visual language that you can check at a glance.

HTML tags

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is a language used to 'mark up' text with extra information for use in web pages and web applications. By adding HTML tags to your content, you tell a web browser what the different parts of the document are so that the correct style is applied.

HTML is written as a series of 'elements'. Each element consists of at least a 'start tag' followed by 'content', and is then usually closed with an 'end tag', as shown in Source 1.

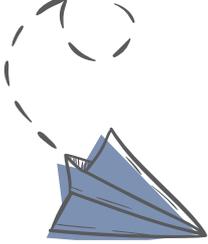
Source 2 is a list of some HTML tags for defining basic document elements, formatting and list making. When you are working on a blog post or website content, you may not have to write using this code directly. However, you will often need to know HTML code in order to add style to online comments and other web-based documents.



Source 1 Parts of an HTML container element

Source 2 HTML tags for defining basic document elements, formatting and list making

TAG	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE
<code><head></code>	Defines information about the document	All HTML pages need to include these tags to create a page 'head' (which includes the page title) and a page 'body' (for the rest of the content).
<code><title></code>	Defines a title for the document	
<code><body></code>	Defines the document's body	
<code><h1></code> to <code><h6></code>	Defines headings	Organising webpage text using headings is useful for breaking up long blocks of text. <code><h1></code> is the top-level and largest heading style; <code><h6></code> is the smallest heading style.
<code><p></code>	Defines a paragraph	This tag is used for showing where to split content into paragraphs.
<code>
</code>	Inserts a single line break (note: no end tag required)	Paragraphs do not always create line breaks. Use the <code>
</code> or <code>
</code> tag to insert an empty line into the page.
<code></code>	Defines bold text	Used to create thicker lettering so a word stands out. A similar tag is <code></code> .
<code><i></code>	Defines italic text	Used to make font <i>slant to the right</i> . A similar tag is <code></code> for 'emphasis', but this does not always create an italic effect.
<code></code>	Defines an unordered list	This is used to start a bullet-point list (the page style will determine what the bullet points look like).
<code></code>	Defines an ordered list	This is used to start a numbered list.
<code></code>	Defines a list item	This is used for each new item in either an unordered or ordered list.



Evaluative language: Expressing attitude and positioning readers

Evaluative language is the name given to language that expresses emotions, makes judgments about people and their character, and appreciates things (e.g. artworks, literature, performances, landscape, appearances, ideas and concepts).

The evaluations usually lie on a continuum of positive to negative, and can be expressed in direct terms (e.g. She *loved* the painting!) or indirect terms (e.g. She had never seen another painting like it!). As the second example suggests, there is an element of interpretation involved in using and analysing evaluative language, so make sure you consider the context. The table below summarises the main choices available to writers. As you use this Student book and read widely, add to the small selection of examples provided.

TYPE OF ATTITUDE	EXAMPLES OF ATTITUDE WORDS	
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
AFFECT (EXPRESSING A FEELING, EMOTIONAL STATE OR SURGE OF EMOTION)		
Matters of the heart	love; excitement	misery; hate; can't stand
Satisfaction and happiness	happy; curious; enjoying	bored; displeased; suffering
Security	safe; confident; comfortable	angry; anxious; a spasm of panic; uncomfortable; scared; huddled in the corner
JUDGMENT (ASSESSING SOMEONE'S CHARACTER OR BEHAVIOUR)		
THE DEGREE TO WHICH BEHAVIOUR IS SOCIALLY ESTEEMED		
How normal or extraordinary?	one of us; normal; mundane; extraordinary; superhuman; remarkable	abnormal; not one of us; usual; ordinary
How capable?	capable; talented; powerful; witty; gifted; learned; productive; fit; strong	erratic; hair-brained; lacking hand-eye coordination; powerless; weak
How courageous?	courageous; brave; a hero	cowardly; yellow
How tenacious or resilient?	tenacious; will never back down; persistent; indefatigable; flexible; quick to recover	irresolute; weak; inflexible; vulnerable; sensitive
THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEIR BEHAVIOUR IS ETHICAL OR LEGAL		
How moral?	moral; ethical; a gentleman or a lady; virtuous; respectable; honourable; noble; law-abiding	immoral; unethical; dishonourable; bad
How truthful?	truthful; sincere; candid; genuine; plain-spoken; tactful	a liar; deceptive; perjurer; prevaricator; fabulist; blunt
APPRECIATION (EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF THINGS; E.G. NATURAL PHENOMENA, LITERARY WORKS, ARCHITECTURE, PERFORMANCES)		
What reaction do they provoke?	awesome; amazing; moving; arresting, captivating; splendid; fresh; unpredictable	<i>painful</i> moments; <i>boring</i> novel; repulsive; flat; predictable
How well are they composed?	harmonious; complex; balanced; <i>rounded</i> or <i>three-dimensional</i> character	disorganised; unclear; confusing; flawed; <i>one-dimensional</i> character
What is their social value?	innovative; original; significant; authentic; award-winning; effective	insignificant; mundane; dated; shallow; derivative; worthless; ineffective

Analysing the use of evaluative language

Analysing the evaluative language used by writers or speakers can help make inferences about the ways readers, listeners and viewers are being positioned. To assist in this analysis, use the template below, which can be copied or re-created digitally.

TYPE OF ATTITUDE	EXAMPLES OF ATTITUDE WORDS	
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
AFFECT (EXPRESSING A FEELING, EMOTIONAL STATE OR SURGE OF EMOTION)		
Matters of the heart		
Satisfaction and happiness		
Security		
JUDGMENT (ASSESSING SOMEONE'S CHARACTER OR BEHAVIOUR)		
<i>The degree to which behaviour is socially esteemed</i> How normal or extraordinary?		
How capable?		
How courageous?		
How tenacious or resilient?		
<i>The degree to which their behaviour is ethical or legal</i> How moral?		
How truthful?		
APPRECIATION (EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF THINGS; E.G. NATURAL PHENOMENA, LITERARY WORKS, ARCHITECTURE, PERFORMANCES)		
What reaction do they provoke?		
How well are they composed?		
What is their social value?		

Meaning-making resources for written and visual stories: A rough reference guide



The table below is a list of resources that can help storytellers represent setting, characters, plot and so on. It is especially useful for studying text adaptations between page and screen (such as in Chapter 6), but also for examining stories more generally.

This is not exhaustive and in reality the divisions are not as neat as displayed here. Rather, elements can be used in combination. Nevertheless, this table should assist you in making a direct comparison between the same story in different media: for example, a novel and a television episode.

Remember: to make inferences and interpret the meaning behind the use of these structural resources, you will need to draw on the personal, cultural and even critical frames.

ELEMENT OF STORY	RESOURCES FOR REPRESENTATION IN WRITTEN STORIES (E.G. SHORT STORY, NOVEL)	RESOURCES FOR REPRESENTATION IN VISUAL STORIES (E.G. TELEVISION, FILM)
Narration: Who sees (focalisation)? Who speaks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • person, i.e. first, second, third • tone via evaluative language (positive or negative) • adopting an omniscient or limited perspective • including thoughts of only one character, or including thoughts of multiple characters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the camera as seer • point-of-view shots, e.g. seeing events as if through a character's eyes • voice-over and to-camera monologues • close-ups of documents, e.g. a letter being written
Storyworld: Context and Setting (including atmosphere)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of word groups indicating time and place, e.g. later that month, under the bridge • noun groups, including specific nouns, quality and type adjectives, and post-modifiers • evaluative words, especially appreciation words, e.g. barren, bustling, hellish • use of metaphors, similes and alliteration • use of sound devices such as onomatopoeia and alliteration • use of verb tense, e.g. past and present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of establishing shots, e.g. very long shot • use of framing, i.e. What's in the frame and what's been left out? • depth of field, what's in focus and what's not in focus? • use of voice-over, subtitles etc. • mise-en-scène, i.e. What objects, furniture, etc. are depicted in the shot? • lighting, e.g. bright, dark, shadows • lens filters, e.g. used to create atmosphere and suggest time of day • use of colour and saturation, i.e. How intense or washed out are the colours? • post-production processes, e.g. filtering • use of music, sound effects and silence • use of editing, e.g. length of shots, use of transitions, etc.



ELEMENT OF STORY	RESOURCES FOR REPRESENTATION IN WRITTEN STORIES (E.G. SHORT STORY, NOVEL)	RESOURCES FOR REPRESENTATION IN VISUAL STORIES (E.G. TELEVISION, FILM)
Characters (including their relationships, emotions and reactions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noun groups, including specific nouns, quality and type adjectives, and post-modifiers • actions, signalled by 'doing' words, and how the action was performed signalled by adverbs • thoughts and feelings, signalled by 'thinking' and 'feeling' verbs • dialogue, signalled by 'saying' verbs and punctuation, e.g. inverted commas; and associated language [including formality of terms of address such as 'mate', 'Miss Williams', 'Alex', 'Hey you'; use of slang and swearing; interrupted sentences; use of abbreviation and other shortened forms] • use of metaphors, similes and alliteration • use of sound devices such as onomatopoeia and alliteration • use of evaluative words, especially emotion and judgment • use of free indirect discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actors as characters • make-up (e.g. How is it used to modify the actor's appearance?) and costuming (i.e. What are the characters wearing?) • dialogue and associated language (e.g. terms of address such as 'mate', 'Miss', 'Alex'; use of slang and swearing; interrupted sentences; use of abbreviation and other shortened forms) • vocal qualities (e.g. 'rough', 'smooth') and accents • facial expressions, e.g. smiling, frowning • body posture (e.g. upright, slumped) and orientation (e.g. turned away or towards camera), to show engagement with others (including the audience) • gaze, e.g. directly at the camera, looking into another's eyes • shot types, e.g. close-up for reactions • association of particular characters with musical themes • use of high, low and eye-level shots to indicate power relationships
Plot and Story (including pacing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structuring of stages and phases • use of flashback and flashforward • narration • use of verbs (especially 'doing' verbs) and adverbs • use of metaphors, similes and alliteration • use of sound devices such as onomatopoeia and alliteration • varying pace by using different sentence lengths, e.g. short sentences to speed the story up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structuring via acts and scenes • use of flashback and flashforward, as well as parallel scenes, i.e. two or more scenes side by side on the screen • visual depiction, i.e. What is shown happening? What happens off-screen? • use of camera shots, e.g. helicopter shot to show chase • camera movement, e.g. dolly shot, pan and tilt • editing for pace and to compress ideas, e.g. via montage • use of transitions in editing • use of sound effects and music
Themes and Motifs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeated ideas and things via narrative description and free indirect discourse, for example • use of symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeated visual depictions of an object • repeated music, especially associated with events, places or people • use of visual symbols

14.2

PLANNERS AND GUIDES

This section of the toolkit contains templates you can use to plan creative works as well as extended responses to texts.

'Author says, I say' notetaking

'Author says, I say' is a technique that you might like to try when making notes about texts. This template is designed to help you focus on making inferences and interpreting what you read.

The text says ...	I say ...	And so ...
Quote the actual words from the text.	e.g. Make connections, ask questions, infer, evaluate.	e.g. Consider significance, implications, possible messages.
<p>Summary Synthesise your ideas.</p>		

Adapted from D Buehl, *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning* (4th edn), Hawker Brownlow Education, Australia, 2017

Cornell-style notetaking template

The Cornell notetaking system is another method for recording and clarifying key ideas (from a class, a novel, an article etc.), and for remembering what you have learnt in the long term. After taking the notes, you need to frequently (a) re-read the notes, preferably aloud and (b) ensure you understand the notes and key ideas/concepts. If you google 'Cornell notetaking' you will find lots of information online, including videos showing how to make your notes more visual.

Name: _____ Topic: _____ Date: _____

Step 2: Key ideas and concepts
Identify key ideas.*

Step 1: Notes
Record what is seen, heard, read – as diagrams and sketches if desired.

Step 3: Summary
Synthesise the notes in one or two sentences, or a sketch or flow chart etc.

* You can include icons, numbering etc. to sort and classify ideas, if desired.

Character analysis guide

The right-hand column of the table below can be completed to guide your analysis of key characters (including the protagonist and antagonist) in any 'close study' of the language used in a print text. In addition, as you will want to note any changes that the character undergoes, you may wish to repeat this activity at various, significant points in the text.

Character's name: _____

PROBE QUESTIONS	POSSIBLE LANGUAGE CLUES	EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT (INCLUDING QUOTATIONS) WITH PAGE REFERENCES
What does the character do and how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • action verbs • adverbs • similes and metaphors 	
What does the character think and feel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'thinking' and 'feeling' verbs • free indirect discourse • positive and negative evaluation words 	
What does the character say (and how)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • saying verbs and accompanying dialogue • adverbs • free indirect discourse • positive and negative evaluation words 	
What do other characters say? How do they react to the character?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • saying verbs and accompanying dialogue • adverbs • free indirect discourse • thinking and feeling verbs • positive and negative evaluation words 	
What does the narrator say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • descriptions as noun groups • use of quality and type adjectives • positive and negative evaluation words 	

Blog post planner

Use this planner if you are undertaking a blog post as public writing for Internal assessment 1 (see Chapter 7).

PLANNING ELEMENT	YOUR NOTES
What are the two texts that I am responding to?	
Will I use a typical structure for a compositional analysis (outlined in Chapter 7), or another genre?	
What concepts are significant across both texts?	
What other comparisons or contrasts could be discussed (e.g. representations of identities, times and places)?	
What is my position on the world views or cultural assumptions made by each of the texts?	
What interesting points of connection between the two texts can I highlight?	
Who else's positions will I represent to support or contrast with my own?	
What kinds of audiences do I envision accessing my blog post?	
What relevant digital/online sources could I hyperlink?	
What images might I use to illustrate or symbolise the post content? Do I know how to correctly attribute these?	
Are there any videos or quotes from other sources I could embed in my post?	
Given the word-length constraints, how might I chunk my post into paragraphs?	
What categories or tags are appropriate for the content I'm covering?	

Persuasive spoken response planner

Use this planner if you are undertaking a persuasive spoken response for Internal assessment 2 (see Chapter 9).

PLANNING ELEMENT	YOUR NOTES
What overarching issue am I responding to?	
Will I use a typical structure for an exposition (outlined in Chapter 9), or another genre?	
Three texts (including media texts) that offer notable contentions or perspectives on this issue are:	1 2 3
Three texts (including media texts) that offer notable representations of concepts or identities relating to this issue are:	1 2 3
Are there any points worth making about how this issue has been represented differently in various times and places?	
What is my position on the world views or cultural assumptions made by each of the texts?	
What interesting points of connection or 'conversation' between the texts can I highlight?	
Who else's positions will I represent to support or contrast with my own?	
What kinds of audiences do I envision for my spoken response?	
How can I position my perspective on the issue as relevant and worth listening to?	

Analytical essay (interpretation) planning template

The purpose of an analytical essay (also known as an interpretation) is to interpret the meaning of a literary text. More specifically, the English syllabus states that an analytical essay should communicate an informed and critical perspective of the text.

Before planning your own analytical essay, make sure you also consider:

- What subject matter will I choose to answer the set question (based on the field of Literary Studies you're writing in)?
- What role am I adopting? Who am I writing (or speaking) to? What relationship do I want to establish in terms of distance, power and alignment of values?
- What is the mode: written or multimodal? How will the text be communicated: on paper or in digital form?

STAGES AND PHASES	PLANNING NOTES (IN DOT POINTS)
<p><i>Thesis about text</i> (stating your interpretation of the text and previewing elements for analysis)</p> <p>Within this stage, you might include some or all of the following phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction to focus text • position on text (in response to set question) • preview of <i>elements</i> selected for analysis, e.g. setting, plot, characters, values and beliefs, language features* (including aesthetic features and stylistic devices) 	
<p><i>Element evaluation</i> (based on a close reading of the text)</p> <p>Within this stage, you might include some or all of the following phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • claim (related to an element signalled in 'Thesis about text' and used to justify your overall position on the text) • elaboration • evidence (examples and quotations from the text) • warrant (linking the evidence to the claim) <p>(This stage may be repeated one or more times.)</p>	
<p><i>Reiteration</i></p> <p>Within this stage, you might include some or all of the following phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of elements discussed • restatement of position on text • final observation about text and/or author's 'message' 	

*When discussing language features, it is best to integrate this into your discussion of other elements; for example the way the author constructs setting, characters, plot, and values and beliefs – and, therefore, how readers are positioned.

Analytical essay (critical response) planning template

STAGES AND PHASES	PLANNING NOTES (IN DOT POINTS)
<p><i>Text evaluation</i> (Suggests the possibility of a challenge) Within this stage, you might include some or all of the following phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction to focus text, including an evaluation of its cultural significance • succinct synopsis • position on text (or thesis) in response to set question) • preview of challenge to text 	
<p><i>Deconstruction of the text</i> Within this stage, you might include some or all of the following phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • claim • elaboration of the claim • argumentation and evidence (examples and quotations from text) • warrant (linking the claim and evidence) <p><i>[This stage may be repeated one or more times.]</i></p>	
<p><i>Challenge to the message</i> Within this stage, you might include some or all of the following phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • claim – your challenge to the text, starting with a contrasting conjunction • elaboration of the claim • argumentation and evidence (examples and quotations from the text) • overall summary comment or observation 	

14.3

CHECKLISTS

Use the table and checklists in this section to help evaluate your work as it progresses through the planning and drafting stages. You could use these for self-assessment or peer-assessment, or as a support when you consult your teacher.

Context retrieval table

In creating texts in *any* genre or mode, you can use this checklist to ensure your work focuses on the major requirements of the context. Use this table to retrieve information from your assessment task sheets or from your intended audience about what is expected of your composition.

CONTEXT PROMPT QUESTIONS	INFORMATION YOU HAVE RETRIEVED (FROM YOUR ASSESSMENT TASK SHEETS OR FROM YOUR INTENDED AUDIENCE)	HAS IT BEEN CONSIDERED IN YOUR COMPLETED WORK? (YES/NO)
<i>Genre:</i> What is the social purpose of my work?		
<i>Field:</i> What information, concepts or issues do I need to include and respond to?		
<i>Roles:</i> Who is the intended audience?		
<i>Roles:</i> Is my work for an imagined audience, or will I authentically present my work to this audience in real life?		
<i>Roles:</i> What role am I trying to play and what role is my audience likely to play? <i>Tip:</i> this is usually represented by a noun (e.g. teacher, parent, journalist, student, politician, radio host, entertainer, interested audience, critic).	My role:	
Audience's role		
<i>Relationships:</i> Is there a pre-determined or pre-existing relationship between me and my audience?	Distance between you and your audience:	
Power balance (equal or more power on one side?)		
Alignment of values		
<i>Relationships:</i> Do I want to establish or change the relationship between me and my audience?	Distance between you and your audience:	
Power balance (equal or more power on one side?)		
Alignment of values		
<i>Mode:</i> Am I supposed to use written-only, spoken-only or multimodal language? (If multimodal, what modes have been combined? e.g. written + visual)		
<i>Medium:</i> Will this be produced in print, as a live performance or digitally?		

Blog post checklist

Use this checklist if you are undertaking a blog post as public writing for Internal assessment 1 (see Chapter 7).

- This post compares, contrasts or otherwise evaluates two texts.
- The title is attention-grabbing, but also accurately represents the content (unlike 'click bait').
- The post is a timely response to a current (or recent) idea/event.
- The structure of the post can be clearly categorised as a response (e.g. compositional analysis).
- The opening paragraph/s of the post provide some background or an orientation to the two texts.
- This post has a clear position on the significance of concepts represented in the two chosen texts.
- There are enough images to break up long stretches of prose writing and keep the reader engaged.
- There is enough written material in between images so the writing stands out and doesn't get 'lost'.
- A mix of short and long sentences has been used to keep readers engaged.
- Selected images appropriately represent the situation or concepts in the post.
- All images are captioned to attribute their source.
- Hyperlinks are used to substantiate claims or offer further explanations.
- Hyperlinks open in a new window so that readers aren't taken 'away' from your post when they click through.
- The length of the post (e.g. 1000–1500 words) is presented in chunks (e.g. using sub-headings) that are likely to be read by the intended audience.
- It is clear from the language of the post whether it is a stand-alone piece, or part of a series.
- 'Metadata' including categories and tags have been used to help readers understand the field, and to help search engines find the post.

Write down any other aspects of your work you want to review:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Persuasive spoken response checklist

Use this checklist if you are undertaking a persuasive spoken response for Internal assessment 2 (see Chapter 9).

For all spoken responses:

- The spoken response relates to a clear issue.
- The issue is timely and has been represented in the media in the past 12 months.
- You have offered a clear contention about the issue.
- You have offered an accurate analysis of ways that the issue has been represented in texts, including media texts.
- The response is longer than 5 minutes.
- The response is shorter than 8 minutes.
- The response connects with various positions on the issue offered by others.
- The structure of the response reflects the purpose of persuading an audience.
- The pace of the vocal delivery 'fits' the argument.

For video responses only:

- Considered choices have been made about the visual content to feature on the screen (speaker or other? camera position and shot lengths?).
- Fancy video effects and transitions have been avoided (unless purposely used to add meaning).
- Background music and sound effects have been avoided (unless purposely used to add meaning).
- The recorded sound is crisp and clear.
- The volume of the recorded voice is consistent (doesn't jump from loud to quiet for no reason).
- Information about the source of any images or video footage is included in the end screen, video description or another place accessible to the intended viewer.

Write down any other aspects of your work you want to review in your notebook or on a computer.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Feedback checklist for analytical essay

The *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus* lists three criteria for judging your responses in English. You can use the checklist for peer and self-evaluation of practice analytical essays (using interpretation or critical evaluation) or to evaluate sample essays.

Name: _____

CRITERIA	GUIDE QUESTIONS (BASED ON ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES)	FEEDBACK (INCLUDE COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC STRENGTHS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT)
<p>Knowledge application How well can you apply what you understand about the novel/play to the question?</p>	<p>Have you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> analysed perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in your novel/play? <input type="checkbox"/> analysed the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin the text and invite audiences to take up positions? <input type="checkbox"/> analysed the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text? 	
<p>Organisation and development How logically is your argument organised? How discerning is your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> supporting elaboration and argument? <input type="checkbox"/> choice of examples and quotations from the novel/play? 	<p>Have you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> used patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to the question/task? <input type="checkbox"/> established and maintained the role of essay writer and formal relationships with an expert reader? <input type="checkbox"/> selected and synthesised subject matter to support perspectives in your essay in response to the set question/task? <input type="checkbox"/> organised and sequenced subject matter to achieve your purpose/s? <input type="checkbox"/> used cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of the essay? 	
<p>Textual features How accurate, effective and appropriate is the choice of language for the purpose (i.e. interpretation or critical evaluation) and social context?</p>	<p>Have you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> made language choices for particular purposes in the essay? <input type="checkbox"/> used grammar and language structures for particular purposes in the essay? <input type="checkbox"/> used written features to achieve particular purposes in the essay? 	

Adapted from *English 2019 v1.5 General Senior Syllabus* © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, p. 51

Glossary

A

abstract noun

a naming word that does not label something that can be physically touched, seen or otherwise sensed; instead, observable actions and behaviours are packaged up into generalised ideas and concepts (e.g. freedom, power, knowledge, sexism)

adaptation

the process of translating a story from one medium (e.g. writing) into another (e.g. film)

aesthetic

principles concerned with beauty and artistic taste

aesthetic features

any language or textual feature that provides a sensory experience or elicits an emotional response or critical response

affordance

something that is made possible in a particular mode (i.e. the opportunities a mode offers for expressing ideas and representing people, things, places and times)

allusion

in a literary sense, the way a text invites readers to make connections to another text (story, poem, argument, etc.) without the author referring to it explicitly. The success of allusions depends on a shared reading history between the reader and the author. It is one technique for making an intertextual reference

analyse

break down a text into its component parts in order to find patterns and relationships, and to explain and interpret the text

antagonist

in a story, the character who opposes or is hostile to the protagonist, their adversary or their enemy. In some

stories, the protagonist is the lead character's shadow (or foil), representing dark to the protagonist's light

archetype

a typical example of a person or thing, especially (for our purposes) when used as a pattern or template for characters in a story. These archetypes may reinforce social stereotypes (e.g. the archetypal hero is a handsome, white male)

archival footage

(also called *stock footage*) refers to video recordings that have previously been used for other purposes

atmosphere

the general feeling, 'vibe' or impression (e.g. spooky, frightening, awkward, energetic, wondrous) evoked for a place, environment, setting or situation, partially evoked by careful selections of language and other meaning-making resources

audience

the people a writer/speaker has in mind when producing a text. This might be a real audience or one that can be inferred from evidence in the text

B

Bildungsroman

a coming-of-age story that shows a young protagonist's development from immaturity to maturity

binary opposition

construction of two terms or concepts as opposite in meaning, and mutually exclusive

blog post

a web-log, or 'blog', is a website that is designed to show a feed or selection of material that is uploaded periodically. Material can be written, spoken/signed (recorded), visual, sound/song, video or a combination of these, and it is uploaded as a 'post', usually with a date stamp. Think of it as writing ('posting') an entry in a public journal ('log')

C

canon

any collection of texts that is considered an authorised list or authoritative sample of its category (e.g. 'Western literary canon' refers to lists of important works in the category of 'Western literature'); in popular culture it can refer to the authoritative 'rules' of an original story world)

character arc

the transformation that takes place for a character over the course of the story

classifier

a word used with a noun to 'classify' it, by determining how it should be measured or counted

clause

a group of words that contains a verb (doing, being, thinking, saying word) and can contain further groups of words that communicate who or what is involved and in what circumstance (where, when, how, why, with what), e.g. *The boy (who) sat (verb) under the tree (where)*

cohesion

the use of language resources that help a text 'hang' together, giving it a sense of unity

compositional analysis

a writing genre in which the author breaks down significant elements of a text's composition, appraising language and textual choices and structures in light of various contextual factors

concept

an abstract idea that does not exist in one particular time or place. Language is used to represent these abstract ideas by naming them and associating them with other 'concrete' things that can be located in time and place

concrete noun

a naming word that labels something that can be physically touched, seen or otherwise sensed (e.g. dog, car, tree, mountain, Sam)

conjunction

a word that connects clauses within a sentence

connotations

the implied meanings or associations of a word or phrase. A kind of 'cultural baggage', connotations vary based on a person's experiences – words can mean slightly different things for different people

contention

a proposition that is maintained in an argument

context

the situational or cultural environments in which authors, texts and audiences exist

create

to use language, sound and images to produce a text; to bring the text into existence

cultural appropriation

when cultural elements such as ceremonies, traditions, fashion, symbols, language and music from a minority group are adopted or represented by a member of the dominant culture (e.g. an author) in a decontextualised and sometimes disrespectful way

cultural artefact

an object made by humans that has particular cultural significance. Texts are cultural artefacts that use language (i.e. spoken or written words)

cultural significance

a text can be 'significant' to a culture if that group celebrates or recognises it as having a historical or future importance in terms of social or artistic value. Some ways in which cultures officially show that a text is significant to them are giving it an award; placing it in a 'best of' list; teaching it in schools

culture

the characteristic ideas, social behaviour and customs that are shared by a group of people and evidenced in the way they use different genres to create texts

D

didactic texts that are constructed in a way that 'teaches' the audience by conveying an overt moral or message

discerning

discriminating, insightful; showing intellectual perception and good judgment; making thoughtful, astute choices selected for value or relevance

E**evaluate**

make judgments about a text, based on criteria and/or your world view

evaluative language

this includes the positive and negative words and phrases used to express emotions, judge people's behaviour and appreciate (as either good or bad) things such as ideas, cultural artefacts (books, ideas, performances, artworks), natural landscapes and events

external focalisation

narration that is from a character outside the story who has no insight into characters' minds

F**fidelity**

in our context, the degree of exactness with which the story is copied when adapted for another medium

field

the general area of activity (e.g. football training, literary studies, biology, civic protest) in which a text user is using language

focalisation

the consciousness through which readers 'see' a story

foil

a character whose traits are the opposite of another character's (usually the protagonist). This contrast is created to highlight the traits of the other character

foreshadowing

the inclusion of details that hint at or warn of events or developments that will occur later in the narrative

G**gender**

while male and female are largely ascribed as biological categories, gender is socially, culturally and personally constructed. Gender can sit outside the commonly assumed binary of masculine and feminine, and gender identity refers to one's self-identification using a range of terms that may go beyond 'male' and 'female'

genre

(also known as 'text type') a type of text that uses language to achieve a particular social purpose or goal in a distinct sequence of steps or stages

genre novel

a term used in the publishing and bookselling industries to refer to categories of novels that are given a specific name. In terms of the definitions from Chapter 1, the term typically refers to the subject matter of the novel (e.g. romance, crime fiction, science fiction, fantasy) or the target audience (e.g. children's fiction, young adult, new adult)

H**HTML**

an acronym for 'Hypertext Markup Language', code that is used to 'tag' your content and to tell a web page how to display it; a markup language that defines the structure of webpage content

hyperlink

a section of text on a webpage that can be clicked to take you to another web page, or to bring up an embedded document or other file; hyperlinks are usually blue and underlined

J**identity**

a person's conception or understanding of themselves, and the ways they represent this through their genre and language choices

infer

draw a conclusion based on evidence and reasoning rather than what is explicitly stated in a text

infographic

a visual representation that combines information or data with graphic elements, e.g. as a chart or diagram

internal focalisation

narration that is limited to a single character inside the story

interpret

draw conclusions about the meaning(s) of a text; this involves reading the text closely and drawing on your own knowledge, experience and world view

intersectionality

taking an intersectional view on society involves considering the multiple social, biological and cultural aspects of our identities, and understanding each identity as a unique intersection of such factors. It particularly involves being mindful of the way people can experience multiple forms of discrimination that 'intersect', and how this can result in amplified experiences of disadvantage

intertextual reference

the relationship between different texts, which shapes or influences their meaning for the author and reader. Intertextuality can be explicit (e.g. through allusion via direct quotation and reference), implied (e.g. allusion using similar styles or genres) or inferred (i.e. the reader makes the connection via their own reading history and experience with texts)

intranet

a private network, only available to people within an organisation; access from outside of the network typically requires a user name and password

irony

a language technique in which what is said is not what is meant. It often implies the opposite meaning of what is said

issue

a contentious topic or a problem that people talk about in relation to a definable event, time and place

J**juxtaposition**

placing two or more things side by side for a contrasting effect

L**language**

literally, a set of words and the system for using them that is common to a community of people. More recently, the term has also come to be applied metaphorically to the systematic and meaningful uses of image, sound, body language, typography, and so on

M**manipulate**

adapt or change a genre, structure, language feature or ideas to suit one's purpose; control in a skilful manner

marginalised

an adjective that refers to something being pushed to the side, i.e. made to be unimportant, even trivial

mass surveillance

surveillance of an entire population, or a large section of the population, without targeting individuals. Data and metadata are typically collected by an institution (e.g. government) from telecommunications and travel networks

media text

a news media text, as well as a text that is produced or distributed using mass media or new media technologies

medium

the method or technique of communication used to produce a text (e.g. paper and pen, film stock, digital file, live in front of an audience)

message

what the text means, including moral or ethical lessons, attitudes towards and judgments about an issue or theme, or even a strong emotional reaction to key aspects of a text

metaphor

a special, figurative use of vocabulary in which the qualities of one thing are transferred to another thing or person (e.g. 'I am the generator')

mise-en-scène

everything (including setting, lighting, costume and staging) that appears within the frame and how these elements are arranged

mode

a channel of communication, most commonly written, spoken, visual, audio (i.e. sounds), gestural and spatial. Each mode represents a different 'toolbox' of meaning-making resources, e.g. words and grammar in the written mode, gaze and composition in the visual mode

montage

numerous camera shots edited together in a fast-paced fashion in order to compress time and convey lots of information quickly

mood

the emotions (e.g. fear, longing, sympathy, joy, surprise, trust, anger, pleasure) provoked in the reader, partially by the tone and/or atmosphere of a text

motif

a concrete element in a literary text that is repeated or referred to several times. These motifs will generally be related to one or more themes

N**narrative**

a genre in the 'story' genre family that has a social purpose of resolving a complication in a story; typical stages of a narrative are an orientation, complication and resolution, with optional stages of an evaluation and a coda

narrator

the voice that tells the story. This might be one of the characters (first person) or an omniscient voice (second or third person). It is possible that the focaliser (the one who sees the story) and the narrator (the voice that tells the story) are different

nominalisation

turning verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, etc. into nouns, and turning clauses into noun groups

O

omniscient focalisation

when the narrator is external and all-knowing, often able to get inside characters' heads

online

a state of connectivity to the internet

overlearning

learning something to the point where responses become automatic and instinctual

own voice

when diverse characters are written by authors from that same diverse group

P

pathetic fallacy

attribution of human emotions to inanimate objects in nature, including the weather. This technique enhances the creation of mood within a text

patriarchal

an adjective describing social systems that empower men over women. This empowerment may be legal or social, and can be formal or informal

perspective

in simple terms, a point of view or way of thinking about situations, ideas, arguments and texts. It also refers to the way the text positions a reader/viewer/listener, or how a systematic way of thinking is embedded in a text (e.g. a feminist perspective, an ecological perspective, a Kalkadoon perspective). Etymology: per (through) + specere (look at)

portmanteau

a word that has been created by 'pushing together' parts of other words to make a new meaning

position

the way an author uses structures, language and resources from other modes to influence readers' attitudes about people, characters, events, ideas and arguments

preposition

a word that is used in front of a noun or pronoun to show place, time, direction or method

privileged

an adjective that refers to someone's perspective being given focus and prominence, almost as if it were a right

protagonist

the lead character in a story (novel, play, film)

public writing

any written work that is published for a broad audience. This includes feature articles and opinion articles in widely distributed magazines and newspapers, as well as articles, reviews and essays in literary journals, websites, zines, and blog posts that are self-published or hosted on a larger website

R

register

a collective term encompassing field and subject matter, roles and relationships, mode and medium; these variables influence language choices

relationships

the power, distance and alignment of values that influence the language people use with each other in a specific context

reliable narrator

someone the reader can trust

representation

the way texts construct concepts, identities, times and places, underpinned by the cultural assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, values or world view of the writer, shaper, speaker/signer, designer (and of the reader, viewer, listener). Etymology: re (again, anew) + praesentare (to present, place before) + ation (noun-forming suffix)

resistant reading

after analysing the world view(s) embedded in a text and considering possible gaps and silences, readers can consciously choose to challenge the text, interpreting it in a way that the author probably did not intend, and to 'resist' the most common (or dominant) interpretation that 'typical' readers might make

respond

responding to a text involves reading, listening or viewing; a range of cognitive processes, including creating (e.g. creating a personal response tied to individual memory and meaning); creating critical positions based on textual analysis; creative application and experimentation in response to texts

response

using analysis and interpretation as the basis for constructing new meanings and creating new texts

role

the identity or part (e.g. coach, literary critic, scientist) that one adopts in a specific communication context

S

semantics

the study of words and their meanings using linguistics and logic

SMART goal

an aim that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely

soliloquy

part of a play where a character speaks their inner thoughts aloud to the audience, but as if the words are spoken to themselves only

story treatment

a detailed prose summary of a proposed film written to sell the idea

style

a distinctive way that language (and other meaning-making resources) are used in a text. An individual author can have a discernible style; so can a group of people (such as journalists), or even a period (such as the Elizabethan era)

stylistic devices

language and textual features that are constructed to emulate or challenge established styles; the language choices and arrangements that conventionally have meaning for a group of people in a time and place; style changes over time and is defined through usage of conventions by individuals, eras, cultures and subcultures

subject

the person, place, thing or idea (expressed as a noun or noun group) that is doing something or being something ('participating') in a sentence

subject matter

the specific content or topic of a text (e.g. frogs within the field of biology or marriage within the field of literary studies)

symbol

a symbol is something that stands for something else, especially something tangible (e.g. a flickering candle) that represents an abstract idea (e.g. the brevity of life)

synonym

a word or phrase that has the same meaning as another word or phrase

synthesise

combine ideas, information, analysis and interpretation into a coherent whole, in order to create and display new understanding

T

text

any passage of language that makes meaning. Texts can come in a huge variety of forms, (e.g. a shopping list, a novel, an email, a conversation, a movie, an artwork, a maths equation, a school uniform or a cereal packet)

textual integrity

high textual integrity means having an overall unified meaning – the language, structure and content of the text work cohesively to produce a consistent message. Low textual integrity means that the chosen combination of language, structure and content is confusing or not working well together

theme

an abstract element (e.g. surveillance, love, reconciliation, ambition) in a literary text that is repeated or referred to several times. It should not be confused with the meaning of the novel, play, poem etc. However, the meaning a reader makes will probably be related to the theme/s (e.g. theme = ambition; an associated meaning of text = 'vaulting ambition' can be destructive personally and disruptive in a society)

thumbnail

a reduced size version of a larger image used in a text, typically used in preview screens or indexes

time management

having the ability to use your time effectively and productively at school, at work and at home

tone

the attitude (e.g. casual, defiant, sarcastic, nostalgic, melancholic, positive, negative) of characters (especially the focalising character and/or narrator) that readers infer from a text

U

unreliable narrator

someone the reader might not be able to trust

U

values

the things that are highly esteemed by people in particular communities. The term also includes the assumptions people make, and their attitudes towards various topics

values, attitudes and beliefs

perspectives that individuals or groups think are true and important, which therefore shape their world view

vignette

a description of a short scene that paints a picture or provides an insight for the audience; it is not intended to tell a complete story on its own. A vignette is part of a larger work and may have no plot, or it may be developed as an anecdote or exemplum

W

warrant

a phase in an essay where a link is established between a claim, examples and an overall position; it makes your chain of reasoning explicit

website

a collection of interlinked web pages accessible on the internet; websites have a unique web address (URL) and can belong to individuals or groups

world view

encompasses a person's experiences, assumptions and beliefs about the world, and their valuing of certain ideas and things. Broad world views are shared by groups of people within a community

WYSIWYG

an acronym for 'what you see is what you get', a name that describes how text and images can be edited together in a user interface in a way that closely resembles the final appearance; pronounced 'wiz-ee-wig'

Z

zine

a low-budget, handmade magazine that is made by one person or a small group of people, usually on a niche subject; can be produced or published in print or online

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AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

ISBN 978-0-19-031314-2



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