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YEAR 12

ENGLISH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FOR THE ATAR ENGLISH COURSE

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INTRODUCTION

Insight's *Year 12 English: Western Australia* is a practical and comprehensive textbook for the ATAR English course. We hope that you find this textbook valuable as you engage with what can be a challenging syllabus.

Each chapter is devoted to a key concept that underpins the English course, such as genre, or a key skill, such as writing an analytical response. Each chapter explores this concept or skill sequentially, guiding you towards more complex understandings and highlighting connections between various syllabus concepts. We have also included two case studies, in which we synthesise the skills and understandings required for Unit 3 and Unit 4 by exploring the genre of the bildungsroman and perspectives on Otherness respectively.

The aim of this textbook is simple: to help you analyse and compose a variety of imaginative, persuasive, interpretive and analytical texts, with reference to the demands of the syllabus. Given the vast range of text types you may study or be asked to compose, it is impossible to cover them all in one textbook. However, the variety of examples in this book will assist you to apply your understandings to the studies you undertake in class. In many places we refer you to your own texts, so you can apply the suggested guidelines and modelled approaches in each chapter.

Within this textbook you will note a number of useful features:

- detailed explanations of key syllabus concepts and skills
- word banks to develop your vocabulary
- annotated extracts from a wide variety of texts and text types
- annotated examples of student writing
- activities to consolidate your skills and understandings
- 'taking it further' hints to develop the complexity of your skills and understandings
- sample exam-style questions for you to practise with
- advice for your exam preparation and performance.

While we hope that *Year 12 English: Western Australia* facilitates your success within the ATAR English course, above all we hope that it helps you appreciate the wonder and the power of language.

Adam Kealley, Patricia Dowsett, Martin Guest and Maria White

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- explore the different types of context
- examine how texts relate to a particular context or contexts
- compare the contexts in which texts are created and received
- understand the role of the audience and their context in making meaning
- consider how responses to texts may change in different contexts.

Context refers to the environment that surrounds, and therefore influences, the production (creation) and reception of a text (how the audience perceives it). This can include the broad social, cultural, political and historical circumstances – known as the **context of culture** – as well as the immediate circumstances of the creator or audience of the text – the **context of situation**.

It is important to realise that context is not a technique or feature used by creators of text. It simply exists around them, informing their perspective and shaping the construction of their text. Some may consciously respond to their context – as the anti-war poets did during World War I – or they might shape their text to suit the context of their audience, such as a personal letter referring to events in the recipient's life. Often, though, the influence of context on both the creator of a text and the audience is largely subconscious. Whatever the case, you should always consider the relationship between a text and its contexts.

Context of production and context of reception

The **context of production** refers to the circumstances surrounding the composition of the text, including general factors that describe its creator's world as well as aspects of the creator's own personal context.

The context of production also includes the medium for which the text was originally intended, such as whether an article was written for publication in a particular magazine, a video was created for broadcast on a specific website, or a film was written for the cinema or for television.

The original purpose of the text is another aspect of the context of production. For instance, a meme can radically alter the meaning of an image used to advertise a product by employing it to ridicule the users of that product, or a historical poster encouraging people to join the army in wartime could convey an anti-war message when reproduced in a different place or time.

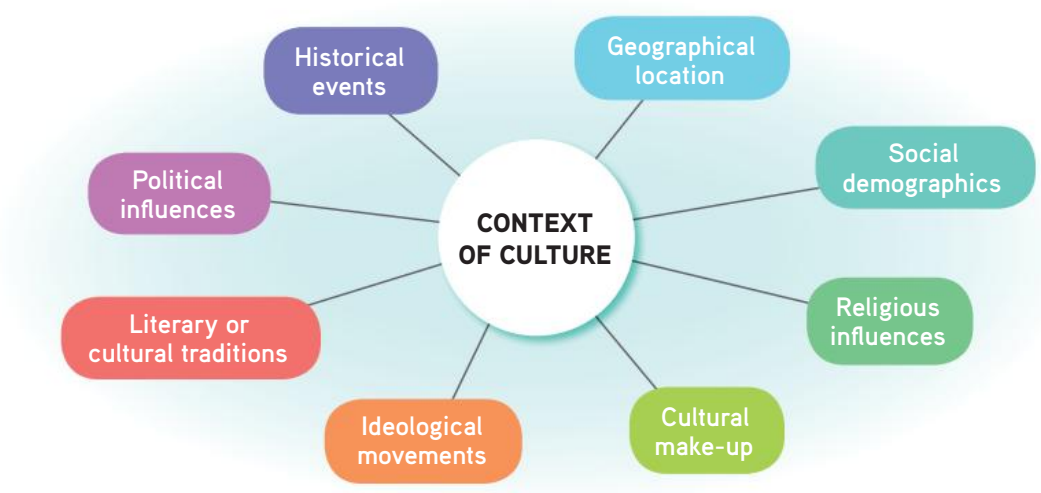
The **context of reception** refers to those circumstances surrounding the audience receiving the text – who, of course, might be quite different from the target audience. For example, as students, you study many texts for which you are not the intended audience.

This context also includes the medium in which the text is received. For example, watching a film on television with advertising breaks will be a different viewing experience from watching it on the big screen in a cinema.

The purpose for which you read, listen to or view a text is also part of the context of reception. For instance, you may have read a graphic novel for pleasure but find that you interpret it quite differently if you later study it at school; and reading several novels by an author in order to establish whether they contain similar themes is a different experience from simply reading the series to find out what happens to the main characters.

Context of culture and context of situation

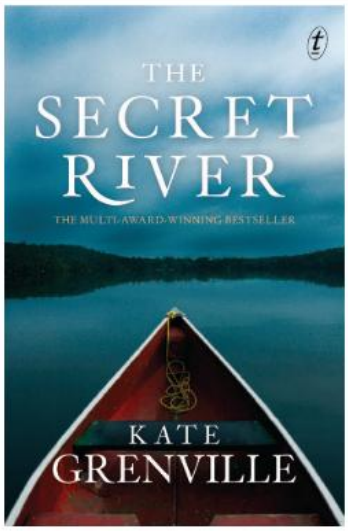
The **context of culture** can influence a text in subtle ways, shaping the values and attitudes naturalised within the text. But it may also be front and centre, as it is in George Orwell's 1945 novel *Animal Farm*, which responds to the events of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent Stalinist era.

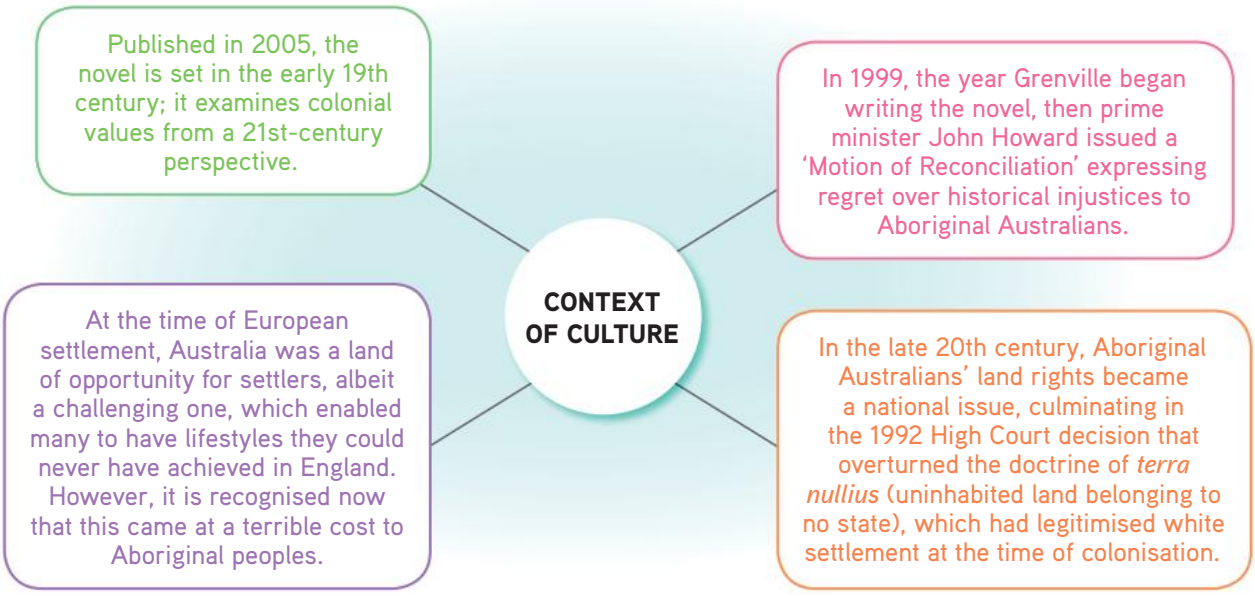


The **context of situation**, on the other hand, refers to the more immediate context of both the creator of a text and its audience. This can include the creator's personal context, a particular event to which they are responding, or a particular situation in which a text is published or received. For example, hearing a speech at the event for which it was written is different from reading a transcript of it afterwards, and watching an interactive TV show live is a different experience from watching a recorded version.

EXAMPLE Contexts of *The Secret River*

Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* is a historical novel about William Thornhill, a thief transported to Australia in the early 19th century. When he is eventually freed, he purchases some land and his wealth and status increase. However, he also participates in the massacre of local Aboriginal people. The novel explores the conflicts between white settlers and Aboriginal Australians, the traditional owners of the lands.





Here we can see how context has influenced the construction of Kate Grenville's novel.

- **Context of culture:** the reconciliation movement had an impact on Australian cultural values, prompting reflection on the historical treatment of Aboriginal peoples.
- **Context of situation:** Grenville's personal context as a descendant of a settler inspired her to write a nonfiction book about William Thornhill, but the Walk for Reconciliation contributed to her desire to offer her own apology to Aboriginal people. To do so, she changed her work to a novel to emphasise this theme.

ACTIVITY

Consider context in an image

This poster was produced by the Overseas Settlement Office in 1928, in a collaboration between the British and Australian governments. Examine the poster and its contextual information, and answer the questions on the next page.

CONTEXT OF CULTURE	CONTEXT OF SITUATION
Australia was politically and culturally tied to Britain more strongly than today. The White Australia policy restricted non-white migration. Australia's primary industry was agriculture. The society was generally a patriarchal one. Australia was developing economically but suffering from a labour shortage due to the casualties of World War I. Britain was still suffering the economic fallout of World War I.	The Overseas Settlement Office was tasked with boosting immigration to Australia. A partnership had been established between Britain and Australia to subsidise immigration costs. In 1928, Charles Kingsford-Smith completed two record-breaking flights in his plane, *Southern Cross*: the first flight across the Pacific Ocean and then the first nonstop trans-Australian flight.

1 What is the purpose of this text? How is this purpose directly related to its contexts of culture and situation?

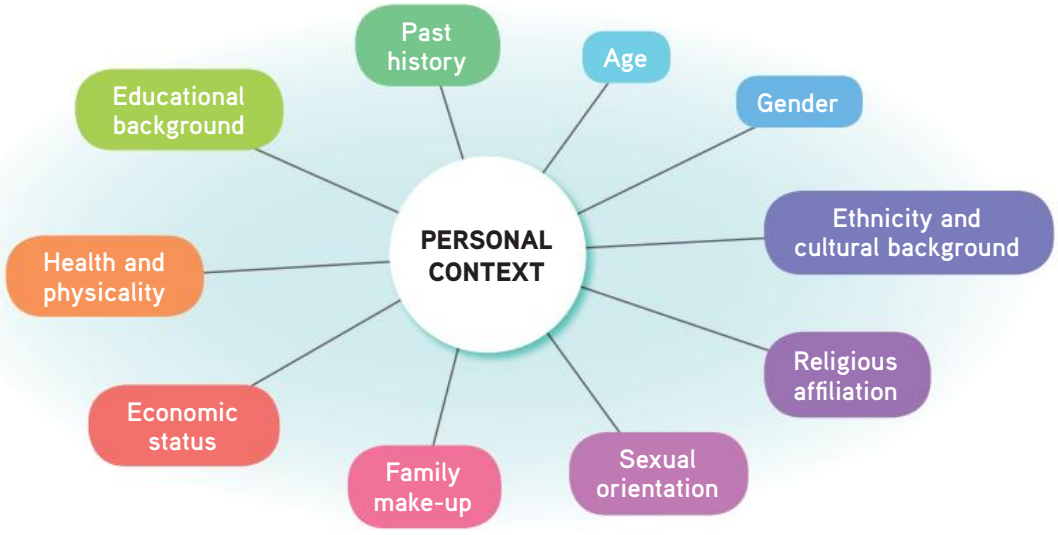
2 How might context have influenced the symbolism and values within the text?

3 How do you think a British audience would have responded to this text in 1928?

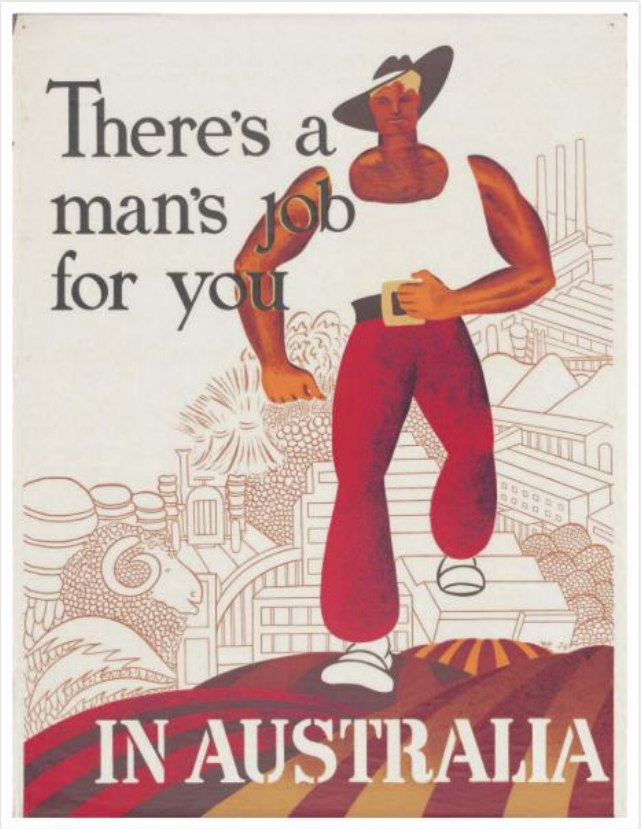
4 Do you think this text would have the same effect on British audiences today? Why or why not?

Personal context

Personal context has a significant bearing on the nature of the meanings either constructed within the text by its creator or inferred from the text by the audience. It is a significant factor in why two different people might have vastly different interpretations of, or responses to, the same text. These in turn might be quite different from what its creator intended!



The following pro-immigration poster was created by the Commonwealth Department of Information around 1947. Look at the table below to see how personal context influences three different contemporary responses to this text.



PERSONAL CONTEXT	POSSIBLE RESPONSE TO TEXT
15-year-old white male, rural upbringing, raised with patriarchal attitudes.	As an individual raised in a rural community, I have learned that a man's strength is highly valued, especially when it comes to manual labour. My personal context means I support the perspective – even if it is considered old-fashioned – that Australian immigrants should have the physical strength to meet the demands of work in factories or agriculture. Australian farming communities are struggling, and I think that encouraging migrants to come work and live in country towns could help to revitalise these areas.
18-year-old Vietnamese female, urban upbringing, athlete, aspires to join the military.	As a woman, I am affronted by the sexist attitude evident in this text. Despite the postwar date, the text overlooks the intellectual and physical power of women in Australia, who took on many traditionally male roles during wartime. From a contemporary perspective, where women have made even more progress, such as fighting on the front lines, I respond to this image with some shock but also anger at the producers who discounted the contributions of women. The text also clearly targets those of European descent; therefore it marginalises viewers like me with an Asian background.
16-year-old Eastern European female, recent immigrant with a physical disability.	My personal context as an immigrant means I empathise with prospective immigrants to Australia and so I welcome the fact that the text encourages immigration. However, as someone with a physical disability, the emphasis on the physical strength and power required of immigrants makes me sad – I don't like to think that sheer force is all that is desired in Australia. Fortunately, this is no longer the case in contemporary Australia.

These three responses to the text not only draw on each viewer's personal context, but they all suggest that their responses – as individuals – are affected by a **change in cultural context**. They are receiving a text produced around 1947 at a much later time and in a vastly different culture from that of the intended audience. New attitudes, new values and the differing perspectives held by these three viewers influence their responses to the text.

ACTIVITY

Explore personal contexts

1 Write a possible response, using the personal context profile below, to imagine how the intended audience in 1947 may have responded to the poster.

PERSONAL CONTEXT	POSSIBLE RESPONSE TO TEXT
23-year-old white Italian male, minimal schooling, unemployed, traditional values, seeks new opportunities in 1947.	

2 Select any still image and complete a similar table, considering differing responses to the image based on different personal contexts. You might like to survey a variety of people in order to gather authentic responses.

Contexts of texts

When you study any text, it is essential that you research its contexts in order to better understand the influences that have shaped its ideas, perspectives and construction. It is also important to consider the contexts in which the text is being received by its audiences, as this also affects the way it is interpreted. As you study a text, consider the following questions.

- What is the context of production? When and where was the text created?
- Does the text reflect this context in its setting, or the time and place it represents?
- What broad social, cultural, political and historical circumstances – the context of culture – might be relevant to the text's production?
- Does the text explicitly respond to these circumstances? Or is their influence more subtle, such as shaping the values and attitudes within the text?
- What were or are the immediate circumstances (the context of situation and the personal context) of the creator of the text?
- What were or are the circumstances of the audience of the text – the context of reception? This includes the personal contexts of individual audience members, as well as their wider cultural contexts. How might these be relevant or important?
- How does your understanding of these contexts shape your response to the text?

EXAMPLE Contexts of *The Handmaid's Tale*

Palm Beach, Florida, US, 20 January 2018. A group of protesters dressed as Handmaids from *The Handmaid's Tale* leads a larger group of protesters against the Trump presidency. Credit: Andres Leiva / *The Palm Beach Post* / ZUMA Wire / Alamy Live News

To understand how to identify these different aspects of context in a text, consider Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. First published in 1985, this text has recently found new audiences, due largely to the current political context of the United States, and the 2017 television series based on the novel.

The Handmaid's Tale is speculative fiction. Atwood imagines that the US has been taken over in a coup led by a fundamentalist Christian faction. This government imposes a strict conservative and theocratic regime under which women's rights are severely limited. An environmental catastrophe, implied to be nuclear in origin, has left the majority of women infertile. Those able to have children become Handmaids to the regime's elite, forced to bear their children. Atwood has said of her novel:

> When it first came out it was viewed as being far-fetched. However, when I wrote it I was making sure I wasn't putting anything into it that human beings had not already done somewhere at some time. ②

The following aspects of **context of production** and two **contexts of reception** informed Atwood's writing, and influence the responses of her readers and viewers today. Across these three contexts, we can see how:

- a writer responded to specific events as well as wider values and attitudes of her cultural contexts
- the writer's personal circumstances also influenced the text's construction
- dominant values in our own context, such as equality of gender and women's rights to reproductive autonomy, shape our responses to texts.

	CONTEXT OF PRODUCTION – US 1985	TEXTUAL EXAMPLE FROM NOVEL	CONTEXT OF RECEPTION – US 2017	CONTEXT OF RECEPTION – AUSTRALIA 2017
CONTEXT OF CULTURE	The US was essentially founded on conservative Puritan values that still inform its culture. The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 saw a quite Westernised culture become conservative and theocratic. The fall of the Iron Curtain revealed the extent to which Ceausescu-era Romania had regulated women's reproductive rights. In the US, both the feminist and queer civil liberties movements suffered from a backlash against their advances. Reagan's election as president of the US brought in an era of conservatism. The US suffered a significant nuclear disaster with the partial meltdown of its Three Mile Island nuclear power facility. Literary traditions of speculative fiction and witness literature call attention to social issues.	Handmaids' uniforms resemble those worn by Puritan women. The setting of Gilead is highly conservative and theocratic (governed in accordance with religious beliefs) following the coup. Handmaids are fertile women forced to reproduce with Gilead's leaders; the government forcefully undermines women's reproductive rights. Homosexuals are called 'gender traitors' and outlawed. Handmaids' own children are removed from their mothers by force. Mass infertility is suggested to be due to some kind of nuclear event. Offred's narrative is a transcript of her recordings recounting her experiences in Gilead as a Handmaid.	US culture is perceived as still being informed by conservative Puritan values. Media attention on Islamic fundamentalism has led to a perception of increased conservatism in the Islamic world. The current US government has introduced new laws that attempt to regulate women's reproductive rights, specifically access to abortion. A similar backlash against feminism and queer rights in the US has occurred in recent years, at both social and political levels. Donald Trump's election to the presidency has also led to policies of nationalism and social conservatism. Western cultures have been experiencing falling birth rates.	Australia was founded on similar European/Puritan values, but purports today to have become a successful multicultural society. Immigration to Australia is a major issue – especially in the post–September 11 climate – with many people calling for a limit on immigration numbers. Each state in Australia has slightly different laws regarding abortion. Federal same-sex marriage legislation was passed in 2017 following a plebiscite. There are parallels between the separation of mothers and children in the novel and the Aboriginal Stolen Generations. In the 1950s, the British conducted nuclear tests in the Montebello Islands, Emu Field and Maralinga (where Aboriginal owners of the land were forcibly removed).
CONTEXT OF SITUATION	Atwood wrote the novel in Berlin, when the wall dividing East and West Germany was still in place, and where an established order had disappeared overnight when Germany was first partitioned. Atwood travelled extensively in Eastern Europe when it was still under Soviet control. As a woman writer and an academic, Atwood had experienced discrimination.	The Wall is a setting in the novel where the persecuted are hung to deter others. Gilead is a group of US states that have been taken in a coup to form a new republic; but some states remain unchanged. Regime change created new rules to live by. All women, even the wives of the elites, are discriminated against.	Many readers came to the novel via the new television series adaptation. There still remains a significant cultural divide between the conservative South and the more liberal North of the US that dates from the Civil War era. Aspects of the reader's own personal contexts will influence their reading; for example, whether they are a white, middle-class male or a woman struggling to conceive a child.	Many readers came to the novel via the new television series adaptation. Aspects of the reader's own personal contexts will influence their reading; for example, whether they are Christian or atheist, of European descent or Aboriginal, in an arranged marriage, a surrogate mother or a political conservative.

ACTIVITY

Explore contexts in texts

1 Complete a similar table to record the contextual information for one of your studied texts.

2 Identify three elements of your personal context that have had a bearing on your interpretation of, or response to, the text you wrote about in question 1. Write a short explanation of this influence.

Understanding Australian contexts

There is a tendency for the important values and beliefs of our own context to become naturalised: they seem obviously 'right' to us, or so much a part of our culture that we don't always recognise that they are specific to the time, place and circumstances in which we live. This can sometimes make it difficult to recognise the way in which the values and attitudes of our own context shape our responses to texts.

Just as readers are not all the same, all Australians are not the same. Often, student responses homogenise Australian experience and culture or treat it as if it were all the same – usually from a suburban, coastal, middle-class perspective. Despite Australia being a Western liberal democracy, it is also a multicultural nation, and one that has changed considerably over time. This means that the 'Australian cultural context' can mean quite different things at different times and to different people.

When writing about context, avoid suggesting that 'an Australian reader' will respond in a specific way to a text. Be aware that there are many different types of Australian readers, all of whom are likely to have different perspectives, shaped by their particular contexts. Some Australian contexts and factors that shape individual situations within these include:

- historical contexts, such as colonialism and convictism, Federation, the inter-war period and the baby boom
- significant events that shaped Australian culture, such as the Gallipoli landing, the Mabo decision that recognised Indigenous land rights, the end of the White Australia policy and the election of Australia's first female prime minister
- geographical contexts, such as urban, suburban, coastal, inland, rural or remote locations
- individual or group contexts relating to diversity, such as gender, migrant, refugee, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or queer identities.

EXAMPLE Australian contexts of reception for *Dominion*

Dominion (2018) is a documentary that explores animal agriculture. It uses drone and hidden camera footage to make the case that animal farming practices are cruel and inhumane. It would be easy, after watching the film, to suggest that 'all Australians' would respond with horror and disgust at this treatment of animals. However, consider the following audiences. Do you believe that they would share a similar response to the documentary?

- A farmer working in the struggling agricultural sector who is trying to make a living and support a family.
- A homeless person who believes Australians care more about the welfare of animals than their fellow humans.
- A Hindu who is vegetarian as part of a religious practice.
- A law enforcement agency responding to allegations that the filmmakers are trespassing and conducting other illegal activity.

ACTIVITY

Consider Australian contexts

Read the following extracts from memoirs exploring Australian contexts, then answer these discussion questions.

1 Identify the context of situation represented within each text.

2 What do these extracts reveal about the context of Australia as a culture? How do they challenge the way many people might regard the Australian cultural context?

3 How did you respond to each text? What aspects of your own personal context informed your responses?

4 Write a 200–300-word entry for the Heywire storytelling competition exploring your own context in Australia.

TEXT 1: Edited extract of journalist and broadcaster Amy McQuire's 'Stranger Danger' from *Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia*, edited by Anita Heiss and published by Black Inc. in 2018. This collection highlights the diversity of Aboriginal people's experiences in modern Australia.

> It has become one of those family anecdotes: the time a stranger thought my dad had stolen me. Dad was walking around a shopping centre in Liverpool, where I was born and lived for a few months in infancy, when a perplexed man came up to him and asked, 'Is that your baby?' He was worried I had been kidnapped. I don't know if that would happen today, given how diverse western Sydney is, but back then it must have been a shock to some to see a black man with a white baby. My mother is non-Indigenous and, in terms of genetics, my South Sea Islander and Darumbal father never got much of a look-in. I came out with paper-white skin, black hair and blue eyes, which eventually turned green. [...] I always had a complex when I was younger, and it was complicated by the fact that my dad's siblings were light-skinned. I was

socially awkward, the type of child who would take books to parties and soccer games and hide under tables while my sister made new friends. Sometimes I think a part of this awkwardness came from a feeling of being an outsider and even a fraud: feeling black but looking white. [...] My developing brain was undergoing the colonising process, teaching me to consider the country I was living in a white one. This is settler colonialism at its most insidious, targeting our children and feeding them ideas of white supremacy.

TEXT 2: From Heywire 2019 winner Kassidy Fuller, a teenager from Bullfinch, WA. Heywire is a storytelling competition open to people aged 16–22, living in regional or rural Australia. Its aim is to give a voice to young people growing up in the country.

This year has been a tough year for my family. I'll give you a snapshot. [...]

It's been hard to make a profit from the land we farm for the past few years. The wheat crops have struggled because we haven't had enough rain. My parents and older siblings worked two jobs to help us stay afloat. Being mixed farmers, we hedge our bets with crops and livestock. If one fails, the other may pull us through. Thankfully some rain fell this winter. There was hope. [...] The wheat might not be looking too flash but the sheep were going to save our season.

Suddenly my brother shouted for the family to join him in the loungeroom – there was something on the TV we had to see. I dropped my fork, we raced in to the living room, and stared at the screen. We couldn't speak, not even my boisterous dad.

I cried that night.

The negligence of a live sheep exporter was threatening to destroy my family's business. How would we survive if they banned the [live export] industry? Two generations of my family had worked these paddocks, but if we can't export sheep, we can't be here – the unreliable rainfall makes it too risky just to have crops. But how could the public know that we, the farmers, aren't responsible for the horrible treatment of the sheep they saw on a livestock ship?

Writing about context

When writing about the contexts of your texts, be as specific as possible. After all, your reader might not be familiar with your text or share your perspective on its context.

- Refer to the text's context of production by stating when and where it was published. Also identify any specific cultural factors relevant to your text.
- If the context of the subject matter of your text is different from the context of its production, you should make this distinction clear.
- If the text responds to a particular event or situation, give a brief overview of this.

- Provide relevant details about the creator's personal context. Consider their position within the wider cultural context or specific aspects of their particular situation that are relevant to the text.
- Describe the intended audience of the text, particularly if you are not part of that audience.
- If you are asked to give a personal response, describe your own context and how it might affect your perspective.
- Avoid making generalisations or assumptions about any relevant contexts; make sure your inferences are based on evidence.

EXAMPLE Contexts of *Utopia*

The following extract from a student response is based on Australian filmmaker John Pilger's 2014 documentary *Utopia*, about Aboriginal Australians.

John Pilger's documentary *Utopia* is an interpretive text exploring the lives of contemporary Aboriginal Australians. Released in Australia in 2014, it is a sequel to his 1985 documentary *The Secret Country*, which argued that Aboriginal people have struggled against white oppression since colonisation. *Utopia* focuses on the Aboriginal community of Utopia in the Northern Territory, suggesting that, in the 30 or so years between the two films, little has changed to improve the lives of Aboriginal Australians. Pilger suggests that apathy, institutionalised racism and the greed of mining companies who want control of mineral-rich traditional homelands are to blame.

When considering the highly critical perspective offered by Pilger, it is important to consider the context of production. Although Australian, Pilger lives in the UK and makes his films for a primarily British audience. In fact, *Utopia* was commissioned by ITV and released in the UK a year before it hit Australian screens. Pilger is known for his polemical style of documentary, and the provocative nature of his argument might have appealed to ITV's commercial interests. While the Australian government could certainly have done more, Pilger overlooks what has been done to address Aboriginal disadvantage since 1985, such as the Closing the Gap programs and the Stronger Futures policy, which guarantees funding for essential services. There is little acknowledgement of the effects of the *Native Title Act 1993*, following the Mabo High Court case, and how this has encouraged the founding of many Aboriginal land and sea councils as a method of self-determination.

Contextual details about the film's release are stated.

Further details, including the intended context of reception, are included to show awareness of audience.

Including details about Pilger's reputation shows an understanding of his style and suggests a thoughtful response to *Utopia*.

References to specific events and political changes show a clear understanding of cultural context.

References to personal context are relevant, and indicate an awareness of how the student's situational context can shape interpretation.

Reference to the target audience here indicates awareness of how the context of reception can shape a text.

The final comment evaluates the text in light of its context.

As a recent migrant to Australia, from Croatia, I know that racism still exists, having experienced it myself occasionally. Living in the Pilbara, I can also see that there is still a lot that needs doing to improve the lives of Aboriginal people, particularly those on country. But although some of the research in Pilger's documentary shocked me, I am sceptical about his overall argument. By focusing mostly on Utopia as a single case study, and using deliberately provocative examples such as Mutitjulu, where accusations of sexual abuse (which led to the forced removal of children) were shown to be unfounded, Pilger seems to care more about engaging a TV audience than presenting a balanced investigation. Unfortunately, I feel this plays into the hands of those who believe 'enough is being done' to help Aboriginal communities. There clearly isn't, but Pilger's hysteria is not the best way to change minds.

ACTIVITY

Write about context

1 For one of the texts you are studying, write a paragraph explaining how you think the creator's context has influenced their representation of people, places and events.

2 Write a second paragraph, in which you explain how the context of reception and personal context impacts on your response to a text. Use the paragraphs about *Utopia* above as a guide.

Comparing contexts

In addition to Australian texts, you will also study texts from unfamiliar contexts. Whether you are comparing texts from completely different cultural contexts, or comparing a text's context of production with your own very different context of reception, you should try to identify similarities and differences. You might ask yourself the following questions.

- What beliefs, values and attitudes seem to be natural within these contexts? Are they similar or different?
- What events seem to have prompted the creation of the text or texts? Are there parallels or connections?
- How is human nature represented in the text or texts? Do people behave similarly? Does your own context give you a similar or different view of human nature?
- If you are comparing texts, do they explore similar ideas or concerns? Do they suggest a kind of universal experience or are they context-specific?
- If you are comparing a text's context of production with your own context of reception, in what ways does the author's situational and personal context differ from your own? In what ways (if any) is it similar?

When comparing texts from different contexts, and particularly when comparing an unfamiliar context with your own context, avoid being critical or judgemental of the values, beliefs and ideologies of other cultures, which may exhibit characteristics quite different from your own.

EXAMPLE Contexts of *We*

The following extract is from *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin (1924), a dystopian novel from an early-20th-century Soviet context. It is followed by a response from a Western context.

Plot summary

The narrator, D-503, is an engineer and a citizen of the One State. While engineering a spacecraft, the Integral, he writes a series of diary entries or records at the request of the One State. This begins his independent thought and his rebellion as he discovers love and that he is more than a number.

Contexts of production and reception

CONTEXT OF PRODUCTION	CONTEXT OF RECEPTION
Written in 1920–21 following the Russian Revolution: the union of several former states into a single Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) that promoted the spread of communism through propaganda. At this time, the switch to communist rule saw the rapid development of large-scale mechanised farming and industrial practices in the USSR. Written by a Russian as a satire on life in a communist state. Published in 1924 in the US but banned by censors in Russia. The writer was exiled to the UK because of his writing. The novel was eventually published in Russia in 1988.	Read in Australia, with its history as a former colony, but where the colonial culture remains dominant. Read in 2019, when the ongoing legacy of colonialism continues to be discussed and immigration is a current issue, with debates about whether Australia should accept those from different ideological backgrounds. Today, the rise of the gig economy and increased automation has led to a loss of human identity in the workforce. Read by a student in Australia for the purposes of analysis.

Extract

I shall simply copy, word for word, the proclamation that appeared today in the One State Gazette:

> *The building of the Integral will be completed in one hundred and twenty days. The great historic hour when the first Integral will soar into cosmic space is drawing near. One thousand years ago your heroic ancestors subdued the entire terrestrial globe to the power of the One State. Yours will be a still more glorious feat: you will integrate the infinite equation of the universe with the aid of the fire-breathing, electric, glass Integral. You will subjugate the unknown beings on other planets,*

who may still be living in the primitive condition of freedom, to the beneficent yoke of reason. If they fail to understand that we bring them mathematically infallible happiness, it will be our duty to compel them to be happy.

Long live the One State, long live the numbers, long live the Benefactor!

I, D-503, Builder of the Integral, am only one of the mathematicians of the One State. […] I shall merely attempt to record what I see and think, or, to be more exact, what we think (precisely so—we, and let this We be the title of my record).

Analysis

Here is a sample paragraph responding to this text from a different context. Note how it makes use of the contextual information provided in the table on page 15 – information gained through research.

Refers to the historical context of production.

Addresses the influence of context on genre.

Refers to the context of production and situation.

Further details regarding the historical context are taken into account. Again, refers to the impact of context on genre.

Takes more historical context into account.

Describes the impact of context and genre on the writer's perspective.

Identifies genre conventions with textual evidence.

Addresses the context of reception / personal context, yet voices this in an impersonal manner, offering a Western perspective on, or context for, the text.

The post–Russian Revolution context is evident in the writer's reference to 'the One State' and its implications of the communist ideals of unity. References to the 'proclamation' and 'the Benefactor' suggest dystopian genre conventions of a powerful figurehead and a controlled society, similar to the Soviet state that censored Zamyatin's original text. The attempt to 'subjugate the unknown beings' and the celebration of 'heroic ancestors [who] subdued the entire terrestrial globe' satirises figures such as Lenin and Stalin who drove the expansion of the USSR. Naming the narrator as a number, D-503, critiques the mechanised society that developed under their communist rule and further indicates both the dystopian setting and the satirical perspective on the Soviet regime. The Soviet context's influence on genre is also evident in the references to thought control in D-503's comment of 'what *we* think', to propaganda in the 'proclamation' and slogan of 'Long live the One State', and finally to the undermining of freedom with the phrase 'primitive condition of freedom'. Contemporary Western readers may recognise the writer's attempt to critique an oppressive government's far-reaching control and suppression of individuality and may be reminded of the dictatorships of Lenin, Stalin or even Hitler, who also used propaganda to enforce a common national cause.

Comparisons between the contexts are evident in the next paragraph.

Many Australians today will be familiar with the devastating impact of colonialism, as this continues to be a topical issue in our media. Zamyatin critiques colonialism by extrapolating the spread of communism following the Russian Revolution, when several states were drawn into the USSR, to an intergalactic context. While Zamyatin is satirising the Soviet expansion, Australians may draw parallels with the colonial history of our own country and the imposition of British culture as a 'beneficent yoke of reason' on Aboriginal Australians. Furthermore, just as mechanisation dehumanised Soviet workers, increased automation and the development of the gig economy within Australia has, as recent protests by Uber drivers suggest, led many to believe that individual workers are no longer valued or supported. This fear is satirised by Zamyatin through the dehumanised name of his character: 'D-503'. Instead of feeling that his dystopian vision is a critique of a historical situation in a far-off foreign nation, today's readers may feel anxious about what they see as a potential repetition of history within their own world.

- Introduces relevant aspect of Australian context as a basis of comparison.
- Notes specific similarity between the two contexts.
- Offers a second comparison between the two contexts.

ACTIVITY

Explore context and your text

Select a text you have studied for which the context of production is different from your own context. Write a paragraph answering this question:

> *In what ways does context impact the genre, perspectives and/or ideas in a text you have studied?*

Taking it further: satire and context

Satire is a style of writing that specifically addresses context. It uses humour – often black humour – to criticise aspects of a particular cultural or situational context, such as certain individuals, governments, events and political or social ideas. It has its origins in ancient Greece and rose in popularity in 18th-century novels such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The genre's resurgence in recent times is evident in these examples (among others):

- Bret Easton Ellis' 1991 novel *American Psycho*, a satire on 1980s US consumerism and egotism
- TV shows such as Shaun Micallef's *Mad as Hell* (Australia) and John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight* (US)
- satirical news websites *The Onion* (US) and *The Shovel* (Australia)
- the Channel 4 and Netflix series *Black Mirror*, created by Charlie Brooker, which satirises our modern obsession with and reliance on technology.

ACTIVITY

Analyse an image

Below is a still image from the 2013 episode 'White Bear' of the TV show *Black Mirror*.

The image depicts a man wearing a balaclava who is wielding a shotgun, as well as a number of onlookers who use their phones to film the situation rather than calling for help.

1 Discuss what this image suggests about our modern society.

2 How is the genre of *Black Mirror* responding to our contemporary context?

3 Why do you think Brooker chose satire, a darkly humorous and largely cynical genre, to comment on this aspect of society?

Endnotes

① Kate Grenville quoted in the 100 Objects exhibition at the NSW State Library, https://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/events/exhibitions/2010/onehundred/100-objects/Exhibit-097.htm

② 'Margaret Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale sales boosted by fear of Trump' by Reuters in Havana, *The Guardian*, 12 February 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/feb/11/margaret-atwood-handmaids-tale-sales-trump

CHAPTER 2

PERSPECTIVES

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- explore the concept of perspective, and its relationships with purpose, audience and context
- analyse how texts offer perspectives through their construction
- evaluate different perspectives, attitudes and values represented in texts
- compare perspectives within and across texts.

A perspective is a position from which we observe and respond to the world around us. It incorporates both a viewpoint and the context that informs it. This is because our experiences, our beliefs and values, and the ideologies that we grow up with all shape the way we look out into the world. Perspectives align with a text's purpose and are constructed through the structural, language and stylistic choices made by the writer.

Perspective and context

The following example shows how perspectives are formed due to different contexts, resulting in different viewpoints.

The creation of Elizabeth Quay on the Perth foreshore in 2016 was a contentious issue. Here are five very different perspectives on Elizabeth Quay.

- Lisa Scaffidi, Lord Mayor of the City of Perth

  'A design of this calibre truly highlights the potential of Elizabeth Quay and Perth city as world-class tourism drawcards with significant residential, commercial, hotel and retail opportunities that will greatly enhance our city's viability.' ①

- Sarah Watson, retail worker

  'I find it incredibly frustrating that they're going ahead with digging up the foreshore. They haven't thought about the impact this will have on those who work in the city. Riverside Drive is a major road for commuters like myself. It will be closed for years and traffic is going to be a nightmare.'

- John Le, student

  'I think it's awesome. The design so far looks really cool. I live in the city with my flatmates and we are looking forward to having another place to cycle to and socialise locally. Perth has such great weather – it makes sense to take advantage of the riverside and create something around that.'

- Professor Jörg Imberger
  Head of the University of Western Australia's Centre for Water Research

  'That foreshore is going to be a disaster from a health point of view. Any pathogens or anything that collects in there is going to stay around forever … It really hasn't been thought through.' ②

- Deborah Cullinan
  Head of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, and visiting urban planner

  'This has yet to achieve a sense of place, it does not feel like a place of distinction that has a soul, that is inspiring, that would draw people, especially people who live here … I can't quite feel Perth here, and I'm not sure exactly why if I was living in Perth I would come here. I see it more as a tourist destination.' ③

With each statement, you can see how the speaker's *context* has informed their *viewpoint* on Elizabeth Quay.

- The Lord Mayor has to consider the needs of the city's residents, as well as its economy. She is enthusiastic about Elizabeth Quay's tourism potential.
- Sarah Watson's context as a commuter into the city has informed her critical viewpoint, as her journey will be disrupted.
- John Le, a resident who is a student and a cyclist, is less concerned by traffic disruption. His supportive viewpoint is informed by his desire to socialise.
- Professor Imberger is a water health scientist, so his viewpoint is focused on the environmental and ecological impact of Elizabeth Quay.
- Deborah Cullinan's ambivalent viewpoint is informed by her context as both a visitor to Perth and an urban planner.

Perspective, purpose and language

The way in which writers and speakers use language reflects both their perspective and its connection to the purpose of their text. The following short answer presents a sample analysis of the ways in which Lisa Scaffidi's language does this.

The recent development of Elizabeth Quay in Perth, Western Australia, evoked many different opinions from a variety of perspectives, and that of Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi highlights how the perspectives and purposes of a text are evident in the language choices of its creator. The Lord Mayor of any city is expected to represent the interests of the city, valuing the needs of the residents, as well as promoting that city as a desirable place to live. It follows, then, that the language used by Lisa Scaffidi, Lord Mayor of the City of Perth, is positive and promotional, describing Elizabeth Quay as a 'world-class tourism drawcard'. At the time of the development of the foreshore, Ms Scaffidi believed that the city and its residents would benefit socially and economically from Elizabeth Quay, and her language reveals her perspective through choices that establish an optimistic tone. Referring to the 'calibre' of the design suggests it is high quality. This is also a relatively sophisticated term that suggests that Scaffidi has the necessary authority and expertise to assess the merits of the project. Similarly, Scaffidi's references to the 'potential' and 'significant … opportunities' afforded by the development have connotations of abundance, growth and prosperity, thereby conveying her pro-development perspective. Ultimately, Scaffidi's purpose was to sell the Elizabeth Quay development to the people of Perth, particularly as its construction was such a contentious issue. As the Lord Mayor, she was expected to both provide for the needs of the people and ensure the city's economic sustainability. By framing the social and economic benefits in such positive language, her perspective that Elizabeth Quay will 'greatly enhance our city's viability' is clearly aligned with this particular purpose.

- Identifies contextual factors that affect the mayor's perspective.
- States clear values.
- Uses adjectives to characterise Scaffidi's language choices precisely.
- Scaffidi's viewpoint on Elizabeth Quay is clearly stated.
- Short quotations are used to pinpoint analysis on specific language choices.
- Clearly identifies the purpose of the text.
- Connects perspective with purpose.

ACTIVITY

Explore perspective, context and language

1 Summarise the five perspectives on Elizabeth Quay. Identify the contextual factors that affect each viewpoint. Then give examples of the words or phrases each person uses to convey their perspective. The first one is done for you.

	LISA SCAFFIDI	SARAH WATSON	JOHN LE	JÖRG IMBERGER	DEBORAH CULLINAN
VIEWPOINT	As a world-class tourist attraction, Elizabeth Quay will contribute to the city's desirability and economic sustainability.				
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	Lord Mayor. Wants to promote the city to tourists. Wants to make the city a desirable place to live. Concerned with the city's economic state.				
LANGUAGE	calibre potential world-class drawcards significant opportunities greatly enhance our city's viability				

2 Referring to the above table, choose one column and use it to help you analyse how language is used to reveal a perspective on the controversial Elizabeth Quay development, and how this perspective is shaped by context and purpose. Use the sample analysis on the previous page as a guide for your writing.

3 Create a list of adjectives to describe styles of language. These adjectives are useful for engaging in specific close analysis of written texts. Some examples have been included for you below.

abstract	derogatory	formal	simple
clear	effective	hyperbolic	specific
colloquial	emotive	obscure	vague
concise	familiar	precise	verbose

Constructing perspectives in texts

The perspectives offered by a text are constructed through the language and stylistic choices made by the creator. They shape the way the text is interpreted, positioning the audience to see events or ideas from different viewpoints. You should be able to identify the perspectives in a text and evaluate how they represent the creator's values and attitudes towards the subject matter.

Language

Examining the five different perspectives of Elizabeth Quay highlights the ways in which perspectives are constructed in texts through language. Lexical choice, or diction – the choice of words – is the most overt way in which this happens: writers select language that is value-laden or has connotations that align with their perspective. However, other language choices, including the use of persuasive or imaginative devices, also contribute to the construction of a perspective.

In particular, you should consider the ways in which language is used to create empathy (enabling you to share another's perspective) or to generate controversy (by confronting or challenging the audience). For example, consider the following text – an extract from former president George W Bush's address to a joint session of Congress and to the citizens of the United States. The speech was given on 20 September 2001, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, when al-Qaida targeted the World Trade Center in New York City, as well as the Pentagon in Virginia. Involving hijacked flights, these were the deadliest terror attacks on US territory in history, and led to the so-called war on terror. Bush creates controversy through language choices designed to generate fear and establish an 'us and them' binary.

You can find online a full transcript of the speech, as well as a video of it being delivered by George W Bush. These will be useful resources in analysing his speech, an excerpt from which is reproduced below.

Tonight, we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done ...

Americans have many questions tonight. Americans are asking: Who attacked our country?

The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al-Qaida. They are the same murderers indicted for bombing American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and responsible for the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole.

The inclusive 'we' and 'our' suggests shared ideologies of solidarity, justice and freedom between himself, as the president, and the people of the US. Bush establishes 'us' as a binary on the side of 'good', and the 'enemy' or 'them' as oppositionally 'evil'.

Creates a 'threat' and appeals to fear. It also appeals to the value of freedom, a value that is naturalised in his speech.

Inclusive language and the appeal to the value of justice creates a collective 'us' and, by implication, a villainous 'them' that threatens 'our' (the immediate audience's) way of life.

Questions followed by declarative statements continue throughout the speech, giving the impression that Bush is informed and in control.

Analogy links al-Qaida – relatively unknown to the general public at the time – to a more familiar criminal organisation.

Diction such as 'fringe', 'extremism', 'rejected' and 'perverts' represent al-Qaida as an abomination.

Al-Qaida is to terror what the mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money; its goal is remaking the world – and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.

The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics – a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam.

ACTIVITY

Consider language, purpose and perspective

1 Identify the purpose of George W Bush's speech.

2 What perspective on the 'enemy' is constructed? How does Bush use language to demonise this enemy?

3 How does Bush use language to construct a perspective that, paradoxically, suggests both America's inherent superiority and its victimisation?

Visual language

Like written language, visual language can also be used to construct perspectives. When analysing photographs or films, the point of view established through a camera shot is a key consideration, but you should also examine other aspects of composition and mise en scène when identifying the perspective an image can imply.

In the photograph below, the low-angle shot looks up at four advancing soldiers and the helicopter hovering behind them. The implied perspective is that of someone who feels threatened by the soldiers, and who is potentially their target. Their dominance within the composition, as well as their drawn weapons and masked faces, also contribute to this negative perspective.

In contrast, this point-of-view shot is taken from within the hold of the plane and alongside a soldier, and implies the perspective of a fellow soldier. The high angle, and the framing of the parachuting soldiers through the open door, presents a viewpoint focused on their fearlessness. The absence of visible weaponry is a notable gap that contributes to a positive perspective.

Finally, shot from close to the ground, but at the seated soldier's eye level, this photograph constructs an empathetic perspective, although the distance suggests an observer rather than a participant. Including the dog and children within the frame contributes to a perspective that humanises soldiers, suggesting they are welcomed in this context.

Voice

Perspectives are also constructed through voice. Various voices exist in texts and these voices can offer different or marginal perspectives that help to construct the representations of individuals and groups. These perspectives shape audience responses to texts.

EXAMPLE Voice and perspective in *No Sugar*

One example through which we can examine the relationship between voice and perspective is Jack Davis' play *No Sugar* (1986). It is set in the early 20th century, within a 'Native Settlement' where Aboriginal people were forcibly relocated. *No Sugar* constructs an Aboriginal perspective through the voice of Jimmy Munday, who can be read as a figure of protest.

> JIMMY: You fellas, you know why them *wetjelas* marchin' down the street, eh? I'll tell youse why. 'Cause them bastards took our country and them blackfellas dancin' for 'em.

As this quote shows, Jimmy expresses anger, frustration, resentment and hostility towards the cultural and judicial systems that marginalise Indigenous people. This protest is conveyed through Jimmy's cynical tone, non-standard grammar, colloquialisms, swearing and Noongar language. This voice conveys a defiant perspective and expresses resistance to colonialism, which denied Aboriginal people their land, their culture and their language.

Contrast Jimmy's voice with that of AO Neville, a character based on the actual Chief Protector of Aborigines at the time of the play's setting. Note the differences in language choices, and the way Neville represents Aboriginal people. Importantly, think about how this contributes to the representation of Neville as the Chief Protector of Aboriginal people.

> NEVILLE: I'm a great believer that if you provide the native the basic accoutrements of civilisation you're half way to civilising him. I'd like to see each child issued with a handkerchief … If you can successfully inculcate such basic but essential details of civilised living you will have helped them along the road to taking their place in Australian society.

ACTIVITY

Consider voice and perspective

1. How would you characterise Neville's voice? Which language choices contribute to your understanding of that voice?
2. What is the perspective represented through Neville's voice?
3. Compare the two characters' voices. Which do you think the playwright is endorsing?
4. Jimmy has a heart attack, which can be read as signifying the death of his particular voice and therefore his protest. What might this suggest about the playwright's perspective on the situation of Aboriginal people?

Narrative point of view

Narrative point of view – that is, whether a text is narrated in the first, second or third person – constructs perspectives via the narrator (or persona, or focaliser – the primary consciousness behind a text), through whom we encounter a text's events and characters. By adopting a particular stance (omniscient or limited, for instance), writers privilege or silence certain perspectives and present specific attitudes towards events and characters that readers then accept, reject or respond to in other ways.

For example, Charlotte Wood's novel *The Natural Way of Things* (2015) can be read as an Australian dystopian text in which women are punished. The extract opposite introduces the protagonist, Yolanda, and at the same time constructs the perspective of a disempowered woman, conveyed by a third-person point of view. It also serves to establish the othering and objectification of women via the narrator's scrutinising of her body, which forces the reader to voyeuristically observe her.

Yolanda Kovacs, nineteen years eight months. Good body (she was just being honest, why would she boast, when it had got her into such trouble?). She pulled the rustling nightdress closer – it scratched less, she was discovering, when tightly wrapped.

ACTIVITY

Consider point of view and perspective

1 How does the use of parentheses in the above example contribute to the construction of a perspective?

2 How else does the third-person limited narrative point of view construct the perspective of the character of Yolanda?

How perspectives represent values and attitudes

Representation refers to the ways in which people, events, ideas and so on are constructed to appear within texts; in other words, how they are re-presented to the audience. No text is ever a completely objective portrait of the world. A text can only offer a version of reality, shaped by its creator's perspective.

A critical reader, viewer or listener will consider the representations offered by texts and their subjective nature. They understand that the creator's language choices position the audience to see the subject matter in a certain way, aligning with the writer's values and attitudes. As a result, they can choose whether to accept or to resist the creator's particular representations and associated value system.

Values are the qualities or ideals that a person holds in high esteem. Attitudes are the expression of those values, evident in the thoughts, words and actions of an individual. In analysing representations of individuals, groups, issues or institutions for the values and attitudes they convey, it is useful to consider several questions.

- Which groups or individuals are privileged in this text? Which representations are given greater prominence or are naturalised?
- Which groups or individuals are marginalised in or omitted from the text? Which representations are excluded?
- Whose perspectives are privileged and whose are diminished through these representations?
- Which values and attitudes are shown to be important, natural, dominant or insignificant as a result?

EXAMPLE Representation in a blog post

The following blog post by Evie MacNamara, a young mother from the Perth Hills, was written in 2013 in response to the opening of the Yongah Hill Immigration Detention Centre near Northam. It offers a sympathetic representation of asylum seekers, one based on highlighting their commonality with Western Australian families, particularly the shared values of tolerance and trying to safeguard one's family.

It's easy to hate refugees when you haven't met any. Not twenty kilometres from here is WA's newest prison. Oh, I'm sorry – 'temporary asylum seeker detention facility'. Yet few people who protested bitterly against its being built here have taken the drive out there. They have never taken the time to speak to one of the dozens of asylum seekers who are housed there.

If they had, they might have met Mustafa and his wife, Aliyah, and their daughter, Amina. Amina is five, and has never known a stable home. Born after the civil war in Syria began, Amina's whole life has been one of turbulence and upset. After rebel forces increased their shelling of the modern suburb where Mustafa and Aliyah lived, destroying the school where Mustafa taught, they made the difficult decision to leave behind everything they knew and try and give their daughter a new life, one where she was safe. They spent eighteen months getting to Australia's shores, and have been detained for over six months now for 'processing'. I've listened to their story, cried with Aliyah and shared Mustafa's sense of fear and desperation.

How can anyone who lives here call these gentle and frightened people 'terrorists'? They are simply a young family with the same hopes and dreams as anyone in this town. If any of those protesters bothered to talk to asylum seekers such as Mustafa and Aliyah, they would realise, as Holocaust survivor Irene Butter said, that 'enemies are just people whose story you haven't heard, or whose faces you haven't seen'.

Contrast between 'prison' and its government description reveals writer's position and encourages sympathy for the family. Euphemism implies a cynical perspective about the effectiveness of governments.

Using emotive language and focusing on the impact on the child creates a sympathetic view.

Use of emotive language again works to create a sympathetic representation.

The writer's values of tolerance and prioritisation of family are revealed.

Focusing on a specific case study and naming the refugees humanises them, encouraging empathy.

Selection of detail here emphasises qualities that are familiar to Western readers.

Rhetorical question deliberately challenges an alternate representation of refugees popular in the media.

Representations can thus be thought of as vehicles for the writer's values and attitudes. Consider that the writer of the above example is a young mother herself, lives near the detention centre and has had personal encounters with refugees. These factors inevitably shape her values and attitudes regarding refugees, and thus the way she represents them.

ACTIVITY

Explore perspectives and representations

1 Read the article 'A WA refugee's story: how strangers opened their hearts and I became an Australian' by Zubida Yezdery, which was published in *The West Australian* (https://thewest.com.au/opinion/a-wa-refugees-story-how-strangers-opened-their-hearts-and-i-became-an-australian-ng-b88498716z).

   a Identify the perspective offered by Yezdery, explaining both her context and her viewpoint on the asylum seeker experience.

   b Explain how Yezdery represents Western Australian people, and the values that are evident in this representation.

   c Compare Yezdery's perspective and values with MacNamara's on the previous page, noting their similarities and differences.

2 Carefully examine and annotate the image below to identify the techniques used to construct a representation of asylum seekers and international responses to them.

   a Evaluate the written and visual language choices made in the cartoon, and identify the values and attitudes they imply.

   b Write a short answer response to the question:

   How does the cartoon's representation of asylum seekers and those responding to them reveal particular values and attitudes?

2015 cartoon by American cartoonist Dave Granlund, which was published on a website featuring political cartoons from around the world

Multiple perspectives in texts

Texts often offer multiple perspectives on a situation, event or issue. They can include a range of voices, or develop representations or characters that present different perspectives.

However, while a text might include multiple perspectives, it doesn't necessarily *endorse* all the perspectives it presents. Some perspectives might be presented sympathetically, with the aim of encouraging readers to agree with or identify with them; others might be explicitly or implicitly condemned.

EXAMPLE Multiple perspectives in *Go Back To Where You Came From Live*

One text that presents multiple perspectives is the SBS television documentary series *Go Back To Where You Came From Live.* In it, people express varying degrees of understanding, acceptance, sympathy and hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees. In a recent season, for example, eight Australians participate in an experiment to live like asylum seekers and share their experiences. Some participants are sympathetic towards asylum seekers; others are more hostile. With their varying degrees of understanding of Australian foreign policy, border control and the human condition, it is little wonder that several of them clash and some come to change their perspectives.

	JACQUI LAMBIE	MARINA BRIZAR	PETER 'SPIDA' EVERITT	MESHEL LAURIE
CONTEXT	Tasmanian senator who ran for Parliament on a conservative platform after a career in the military.	Immigration lawyer, came to Australia as a refugee from Bosnia.	Ex-AFL player and radio host, descendant of Latvian migrants, concerned that migrant gangs are making Melbourne unsafe for his daughters.	Comedian and media personality motivated by her Buddhist spiritualism.
ORIGINAL VIEWPOINT	Sees herself as a defender of Australian values, believes migrants must assimilate into the dominant Australian culture.	Feels grateful for the opportunity she received to escape war-torn Bosnia, wants to ensure that opportunity is made available to others in need.	As a Melbourne citizen, is concerned by the media reports of Sudanese gangs apparently terrorising the city, believes members of such gangs should be deported.	Also a Melbourne citizen, believes reports of Sudanese gangs are media hype, and that migrants are being demonised.
KEY QUOTE	'We've got to take control of our borders.'	'I know what it means to be a forced migrant, a refugee, to be given a second chance.'	'Australia's refugee policy at the moment, I just don't think is hard enough.'	'Australia needs to take more refugees.'

Despite presenting these multiple perspectives, the text as a whole encourages sympathy for refugees. It achieves this through the use of experts who validate the trauma of the refugee experience, live footage of the participants experiencing the horrors of the refugee existence, and two focalisers in the studio whose tone demonstrates sympathy for the refugee plight. The narrative constructed through the participants' journey – especially those who shift from intolerance to empathy – is the key technique by which this particular perspective is ultimately endorsed.

ACTIVITY

Explore multiple perspectives

Using the information in the table on the previous page, answer the following questions. If possible, watch the first episode of *Go Back To Where You Came From Live* on the SBS website to gain a clearer understanding.

1. What attitudes does each person hold regarding refugees?
2. What contextual factors might have shaped their perspective?
3. In what ways is their perspective similar to or different from the perspectives of other subjects?
4. In what ways is their perspective similar to or different from your own?

Taking it further: considering other interpretations

An informed interpretation of any text, including its perspectives, should consider alternative responses. For example, the following extract from a review reveals Ben Neutze's interpretation of Season 3 of *Go Back To Where You Came From*, which preceded the season discussed above. Consider how reading this review might influence your evaluation of the perspectives in the documentary series.

> It feels as if it's no longer enough to show white Australians coming to the realisation that there are actually dreadful things happening in the world … and that Australia is really not leading the way in the humanitarian effort. It feels gauche to focus on the Australians' tearful reactions when a refugee woman pleads for help for her sick baby who will likely die without medical care.
>
> The producers of *Go Back To Where You Came From* might have found a way to focus on the refugee experience, without framing all of it through the Australian citizen's perspective and how it makes them 'feel'. A scene which is meant to demonstrate the realities of the boat turnback policy (the show's participants are placed on a tiny orange lifeboat for six hours) says little about the realities of the refugee experience but a lot about the realities of seasickness in small, confined vessels. The conclusion several eventually reach? Boat turnbacks are inhumane because we might make people seasick.

Rather than just showing these Australians discover human suffering, the series should have, at least for the third season, focused on those facts and the stories that actually matter. An Australian citizen's journey from naive xenophobia to compassionate, considered humanitarian hardly matters at all in this context. ④

Similarly, multiple perspectives coexist in fiction texts. These could be the perspectives of different characters, or those of the text or creator. It is important to recognise the various perspectives offered within texts in order to appreciate how they relate to one another and how they shape audience response. Audiences negotiate these perspectives and come to understand that some of them are endorsed by the text as a whole, while others are not.

Writing about perspectives in imaginative texts

When writing about perspectives in imaginative texts, you should:

- demonstrate an understanding that multiple perspectives are offered in texts
- consider the ways in which audiences negotiate these perspectives – for example, how they come to understand which perspectives are endorsed by the text and which are not
- refer to the perspective/s endorsed by the text or its creator and how these are constructed within the text
- refer to the way in which the endorsed perspective/s might not align directly with the perspective of a character in the text.

EXAMPLE Perspectives in 'Birdcall: 33°21'N 43°47'E'

Read the following two extracts from a short story by Liam Davison, titled 'Birdcall: 33°21'N 43°47'E'.⑤ In this story, a man is helping his son to move out of home. The son had left home previously, but returned after a period of military deployment. Now he is moving into the home once occupied by his grandfather, who passed away many years earlier.

Extract 1

Moving is not so much about relocation as reinvention. Before we can move Ethan in, we have to clear things out.

We find things in his room that might have belonged to strangers: football cards, a box of plastic animals, a Sony Walkman. Things that mean nothing to anyone but what they are. Then there are the things from before he left, and from after too, when we had him back, that are weighted like stone. Sketchbooks. Journals. An annotated Virgil. He disposes too willingly of them, tossing them carelessly into the skip without pause, while I resist the urge to drag them back.

My own inclination is to hoard, and I find myself caught between the twin impulses of remembrance and erasure. I remind myself that whatever memory I attach to his belongings is separate to the thing itself. Only in fiction is meaning replaced with things.

So, in this story, my son disposes of his past piece by piece with neither rancor nor intent.

'It's just stuff, Dad,' he says. 'It's nothing.'

Extract 2

There are waypoints that ground us, even as every shifting reference forces a renegotiation of what we thought we knew. I've put the box of radio parts in Ethan's room beside his list. I have his maps. I have the wooden bird-call. The gully is uncharted territory between us, a gap between the fixed points of shared experience and the vicissitudes of memory.

If the gully is my own invention, it answers to things beyond my control. Some days it opens to a chasm; others, it narrows near to closing. There can be pathways through it, narrow tracks through thickets of tangled undergrowth that push toward the other side before looping back or stopping short in open clearings. Now, with dusk approaching, there is no clear way out. Each step takes me deeper in. Above me, in the fading light, the tops of the trees are alive with birds.

The following short answer responds to the short story and demonstrates an understanding of the different perspectives it offers.

In Davison's story, we are presented with two perspectives on the accumulation of personal belongings. The son is happy to dispose of his 'old' belongings as he moves into his new home, whereas the narrator wants to keep them for the memories they embody. We can see here how context informs this perspective. As a father, the narrator is experiencing a sense of loss as his son moves out of home, the 'uncharted territory between us' as he observes, an emotional experience that is heightened by memories of the passing of his own father. The son, because of his experiences as a soldier, has become emotionally distant and feels much less connection to material objects; to him they're 'just stuff'. However, by focalising the narrative through the father's perspective, particularly by using a first-person point of view, the reader is encouraged to sympathise with him, as he feels saddened by the loss of connection with his son.

- The topic sentence identifies that multiple perspectives exist.
- Clearly articulates the different perspectives, identifying both viewpoints and the contexts that inform them.
- Refers to textual features that are used to construct perspectives.

Again, refers to textual features to analyse the construction of perspectives and the way that they are represented.

Although the son's perspective is made clear in his dialogue, the language used by the narrator represents it in a mournful light. Adverbs such as 'too willingly' and 'carelessly' imply the son's disposal of his possessions is rash and thoughtless. This contrasts with the father's own careful consideration as he attempts to respect his son's viewpoint, stating 'whatever memory I attach to his belongings is separate to the thing itself'. Despite this attempt at positioning, the reader negotiates between these two perspectives to endorse a different perspective, one informed by the observation of the two contrasting viewpoints. This suggests that the father's focus on his son's belongings is a result of his inability to bridge the emotional 'gully' that has opened up between the two characters. It is not material possessions that are important here, but the relationships between fathers and their sons.

Acknowledges the active role of the reader in negotiating these different perspectives. This demonstrates evaluation of the perspectives.

Clearly articulates a final, new perspective.

ACTIVITY

Explore multiple perspectives within a text

Read the following short extract from Davison's short story. The narrator's father was also a soldier and, like the narrator's son, was affected deeply by this experience. Answer the questions that follow.

> My mother said my father was a different man when he returned from Europe.
>
> 'He used to sing,' she said. 'He had a lovely voice.'
>
> I was born ten years after the war. I don't believe I ever heard him sing. There were photos in the house of him in uniform, and one of him standing beside a plane somewhere on the coast of England, but that was all. Mum called them his vanished years.
>
> 'He disappeared and never really came back. Not the way he was. You know what he was like.'

1. What is the mother's perspective on the effects of war on relationships?
2. How does the mother's perspective compare with the narrator's own perspective as revealed in the earlier extracts (see pages 32–3)?
3. How does your own perspective on war compare or contrast with this perspective?
4. How are textual features used to offer different perspectives on an issue?

Alternatively, answer the questions above in relation to a short story you have studied, in which there are different perspectives on an issue.

Comparing perspectives across texts

Given that perspectives are the product of people's age, gender, status, experiences, beliefs and contexts, perspectives on issues will differ *across* texts as well as *within* them.

Comparing perspectives is illuminating because it gives us insight into the ways in which perspectives change according to purpose, audience and context. Comparing perspectives also highlights conflicts of interest, foregrounds methods of persuasion, and draws on our critical reading skills, enabling us to give more informed interpretations of texts.

In comparing perspectives across texts, it is useful to consider the following.

- Whose perspectives are privileged within the texts?
- What are the contexts that inform these perspectives? Which values and attitudes do they promote?
- What do you notice when you compare these perspectives? In which ways are they alike or contradictory? Does a perspective presented in one text reinforce a perspective in the other text, or does it challenge or subvert it in some way?
- How does comparing perspectives across texts inform your interpretation of the texts?

EXAMPLE Comparing perspectives offered in two texts

You may be familiar with Tim Winton's short story 'Neighbours'. Published in 1985, significantly close to the 1988 Australian Bicentenary, the story can be read as an assertion of Australia's multicultural identity and as offering an optimistic perspective on that identity in the future. It is written from a third-person point of view, focusing on an Anglo-Australian couple who move into a multicultural suburb. They are initially anxious in this environment, but the ending of the story, when the young couple and their baby boy are surrounded by supportive European immigrant neighbours, endorses a positive and optimistic perspective on Australia as an inclusive multicultural society.

In Susan Midalia's short story 'Fitting In' (2007), on the other hand, a young girl named Ester is growing up in post–World War II Australia, having migrated with her parents from Germany. The story is confronting in its depiction of Ester's experiences of racism and bullying as she tries to 'fit in' to a new life in Australia. It highlights xenophobic attitudes expressed by Ester's two malicious classmates, Vivienne Carter and Lorraine Best. It offers a far more cynical perspective on the success of Australia's multicultural ideology.

In comparing the two texts you might examine:

- how the stories convey the struggle for new migrants to accepted by a dominant Anglo-Australian culture
- the attitudes of Anglo-Australians towards new migrants exhibited in the texts
- the perspectives the texts offer on multiculturalism
- how these perspectives are constructed by their writers, considering (for example) the effects of narrative point of view, syntax, diction and imagery.

Sample analysis: comparing perspectives offered in two texts

Topic sentence highlights concepts of intertextuality and perspective.

Reading short stories together can enhance readers' understandings of the perspectives foregrounded in those texts. Both Tim Winton's 'Neighbours' (1985) and Susan Midalia's 'Fitting In' (2007) offer perspectives on post–World War II Australian life, specifically the effects of European migration. While Winton's story endorses multiculturalism and the ways in which people, constructed as 'neighbours', can live harmoniously together, Midalia's 'Fitting In' presents a bleaker perspective on Australia's future.

Introduces the texts and their authors; identifies a point of comparison.

Establishes a point of contrast and uses terms of comparison such as 'while' and 'bleaker'.

The young couple in Winton's Australian suburbia is initially uncomfortable with the noise and activity of their European immigrant neighbours, having moved from a residence where 'good neighbours were seldom seen and never heard'. The behaviours of these new neighbours are alien and include shouting and ranting, and sawing and hammering wood. Likewise, the neighbours are suspicious of the Australian couple because they keep to themselves, and because it is the woman who goes to work while the young man 'worked steadily at his thesis on the twentieth century novel'. As the story progresses, the couple and their neighbours come to understand each other. The exchanges over gardening, children, pets and backyard construction culminate in 'the young couple [finding] themselves smiling back at the neighbours'. This suggests the possibility of all Australians benefiting from similar exchanges. Along with the ending – the birth of the couple's baby boy, celebrated by all the neighbours – these details help to construct the text's ultimately optimistic perspective on multicultural Australia.

Identifies the perspectives of the characters.

Refers to the plot development that reconciles the characters' perspectives.

Sums up the point, articulating the perspective endorsed by Winton in specific and comprehensive terms.

Restates the point and identifies it as a point of contrast.

By contrast, Midalia's 'Fitting In' offers a much bleaker perspective on multicultural Australia. The white Australians in Midalia's story, rather than hiding their resentment of their immigrant neighbours as Winton's young man does, are unable to come to a point of mutual understanding or compromise. In fact, Midalia's immigrant characters, represented in this story in the character of Ester, experience little kindness or generosity from white Australians. The reception Ester encounters is brutal, hostile and sinister, and those experiences suggest a pessimistic perspective on the outcome of multiculturalism in Australia. Ester has to modify her manners, clothing and food, and change her language and religious practice, but still she is sworn at, insulted and shamed. In this respect her bullies, Vivienne Carter and Lorraine Best, represent dominant white society. They mock, threaten and intimidate her, and eventually assault her:

Contrasts a perspective on Australian life in Midalia's story with that of one of Winton's characters.

Identifies the victim who is disempowered as part of the bleak, cynical perspective.

Specifies what contributes to the perspective on multicultural Australia.

Conveys the struggle for new migrants to accepted by a dominant Australian culture.

> And then everything went still. Ester felt the blood running out of her nose and saw it dripping onto the ground, bright red drops, one after another, separate and distinct.

The story ends with Ester sobbing 'childishly, a helpless incantation of pain, bewilderment and loss', and Vivienne and Lorraine further taunting Ester, having 'found their voices – nasal, mocking and unrepentant'. The fact that the violent actions of the girls go unpunished suggests a hopelessness about the possibility of harmony among Australians in the future. It implies a loss of innocence both in Ester and in a nation that is home to ugly, antisocial behaviours including racism, violence and ignorance. Australia is presented as a hard, hostile place – a starkly different depiction from the optimistic representation of Winton's 'Neighbours'.

Addresses the resolution of the text, paralleling the analysis of Winton's resolution in the previous paragraph.

Analysing who and what is rewarded and punished in a story serves to foreground the perspective offered by the text.

Makes comment on the Australian society that Midalia represents.

Expands on perspective by acknowledging its connection to representation.

ACTIVITY

Compare perspectives

1 Compare the perspectives on multiculturalism offered in Judah Waten's short story 'The Knife' and Victoria Zabukovec's short story 'The Young Stranger'. Alternatively, examine the construction of perspectives on masculinity constructed in Michael Wilding's story 'The Altar of the Family' and Peter Goldsworthy's story 'The Blooding'. What perspectives do they offer? How are they similar and different?

2 Find two texts (fiction or nonfiction) that explore an issue. These could be two texts that you are studying in class. The issue could be a local one, such as a proposed development, or a broader issue such as multiculturalism or sustainability.

- **a** Summarise the overall perspective on the issue presented by each text.
- **b** In which ways are the perspectives similar? In which ways are they different?
- **c** Are there different perspectives presented within each text? If so, how does each text position you to see certain perspectives as preferable to others?
- **d** What is your own perspective on this issue? Which text comes closest to reinforcing your perspective? Explain your answer.

3 Compare the perspective on war offered in 'Birdcall: 33°21'N 43°47'E' with the perspective in the following extract from Rupert Brooke's 1914 poem 'The Dead', about soldiers who lose their lives in war.

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
  There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
  But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
  Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
  That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Taking it further: ideological perspectives

Perspectives can also be described in terms of the ideologies they represent. Ideologies are systems of beliefs and values. Creators of texts who adhere to particular ideologies represent their subject matter in ways designed to reinforce those beliefs and values. Recognising these within texts can help you articulate perspectives more precisely. Some common ideological perspectives are listed below.

- A feminist perspective challenges stereotyped, traditional or disempowering views of women specifically and gender roles in general. A patriarchal perspective reinforces them.
- A postcolonial perspective challenges stereotyped, traditional or disempowering views of colonised peoples.
- An environmentalist perspective advocates for environmental conservation over human exploitation.
- A humanitarian perspective values human life over economic considerations.
- A Christian perspective views the world in light of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

ACTIVITY

Explore ideological perspectives

Livestock farming is a contentious issue, with different ideological perspectives contributing to the debate. These include an animal rights perspective, a capitalist perspective, an environmental perspective and a religious perspective, among others.

1 Adopting one of these perspectives, write a brief persuasive text that aims to convince an audience to moderate their meat consumption.

2 Identify a challenge to one of the perspectives above. For example, the role of livestock farming in promoting social justice within developing countries by organisations such as Oxfam challenges the animal rights perspective. Write an imaginative text, adopting a perspective that represents this challenge.

Endnotes

① Lisa Scaffidi cited in 'REX Architecture's Perth tower gets nod from council', *ArchitectureAU*, 13 July 2017, https://architectureau.com/articles/new-yorks-rex-architecture-to-transform-perth-waterfront/

② Jörg Imberger cited in 'Elizabeth Quay seen as litter magnet' by Daniel Mercer, *The West Australian*, 19 September 2012, https://thewest.com.au/news/wa/elizabeth-quay-seen-as-litter-magnet-ng-ya-296630

③ Deborah Cullinan cited in 'Perth's Elizabeth Quay lacks soul, sense of place, US urban art expert Deborah Cullinan says' by Laura Gartry, 2 April 2016, ABC News, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-02/elizabeth-quay-lacks-soul-expert-says/7294002

④ 'Go Back To Where You Came From needs to go back to the drawing board' by Ben Neutze, *Daily Review*, 31 July 2015, https://dailyreview.com.au/go-back-to-where-you-came-from-needs-to-go-back-to-the-drawing-board/27695/

⑤ 'Birdcall: 33°21'N 43°47'E' by Liam Davison, published in *The Best Australian Stories 2013* edited by Kim Scott, Black Inc., Collingwood, 2013.

CHAPTER 3

GENRE

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- explore the concept of genre, and the differences between genre of subject matter and genre of form and structure
- compare texts from different genres and contexts
- analyse the techniques and conventions used in different genres
- consider how the conventions of genres can be challenged, manipulated or subverted
- examine how genres and their conventions have changed and been adapted over time
- consider how responses to genres may vary in different contexts.

The term 'genre' originates from the French word meaning 'type' or 'category'; it refers to the ways in which texts are grouped. The concept of genre provides us with a shortcut to understanding the nature of texts. We can recognise a science-fiction film as science fiction due to its similarities to other texts in the same category, or as a feature film because of the characteristics it shares with other feature films. Because of these shared features, or conventions, audiences develop expectations about different genres of text.

Texts can belong to multiple genres, or can represent a specific category within a genre: a subgenre. They can blend features of different genres, resulting in hybrid genres. Genres are not static: they change and adapt, responding to contexts, audiences and changes in mode and media. Traditional genres can be challenged, manipulated and subverted, enabling writers and directors to present fresh perspectives on the issues and concepts they explore, and the use of new technologies has led to the creation of new forms and structures of texts – that is, new genres.

Understanding genre

It is important to ask *why* we group texts into categories: why is genre a useful concept? These are some of the main reasons.

- Producers of texts need to be able to appeal to their target audiences.
- Audiences want to be able to identify whether they are likely to enjoy a text.
- Genre gives us a way of organising and making sense of the vast number of texts in the world.

There are many ways of categorising texts, including by audience (e.g. Young Adult fiction), by style (e.g. blockbuster or arthouse cinema) or by context (e.g. Australian literature). In this chapter we consider two of the main ways of thinking about genre.

1 Genre of subject matter

The most common way of thinking about genre is to consider these questions: *What is the text about? What are the intended effects on the audience?* For instance, is the text a story of love against the odds (a romance) or about a battle between humans and aliens (a science-fiction text)? Is it a raucous, irreverent look at life (a comedy) or a historical narrative of the old American West (a western)? Is it a dark tale designed to shock and scare (horror) or a piece of pure imagination (fantasy)?

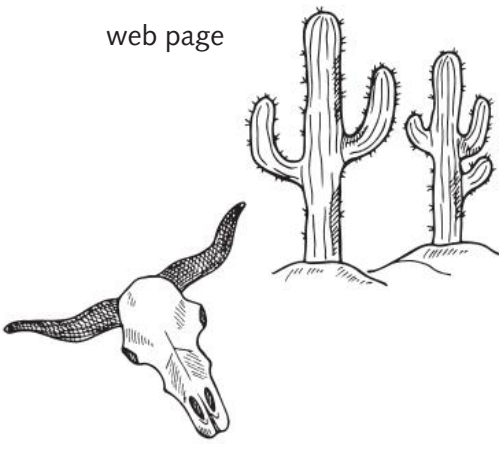
These questions lead us to identify a text's genre based on its *subject matter*. Here is a list of common genres of narrative according to subject matter.

action	fantasy	romance
bildungsroman	folk and fairytale	science fiction
comedy	gothic	thriller
crime	historical	tragedy
dystopian	horror	western

2 Genre of form and structure

Another important way of thinking about genre is to ask: *What is the form of the text?* Below is a list of common genres pertaining to form and structure.

biography	memoir	print advertisement
blog post	movie	short story
documentary	novel	song lyric
editorial	opinion piece	TV drama
film poster	podcast	vine
letter	poem	web page



Considering the genre of form and structure means taking the following elements into account in any analysis.

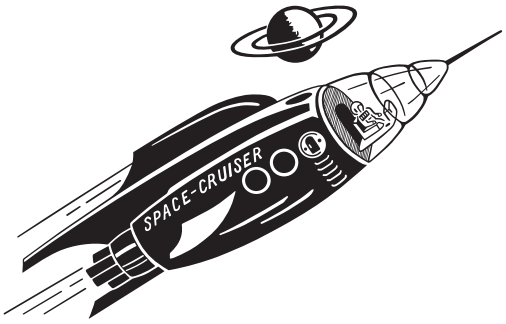
- **Audience expectations of specific text types.** What features do audiences expect when they approach a text, such as a blog post or an autobiography, and does the text meet these expectations? Does the text conform to the structures expected – such as a chronological narrative – or does it experiment with structure? For instance, films such as *Fight Club* and *Memento* intentionally play with the conventional chronological narrative structure.
- **The mode and medium of a text.** Which mode of language features is used? For example, is the text constructed using the written word, or is it a spoken text, or a multimodal text that combines auditory and visual elements? How is the text transmitted to its audience? For example, a documentary might be screened in cinemas, broadcast on television or streamed online.
- **The impact of the form and structure on the audience and their interpretation of, and responses to, the text.** Does a text surprise audiences due to its form or structure, or is it predictable and formulaic? Are the language and stylistic choices traditional or unusual? Does the filmmaker or writer forge new ground in their use of form and structure, challenging the audience to respond in new or confronting ways?

ACTIVITY

Identify genre of subject matter, form and structure

Make a list of all the texts you have studied or will study in Year 11 and Year 12. Record the details in a table like the one below.

TITLE	AUTHOR / DIRECTOR	GENRE (SUBJECT MATTER)	GENRE (FORM AND STRUCTURE)
The Handmaid's Tale	Margaret Atwood	speculative fiction / dystopian fiction	1985 novel (mostly chronological)
			1990 feature film
			2017 TV series (episodic)
Star Wars	George Lucas	science fiction	film (1977)



Genre of subject matter

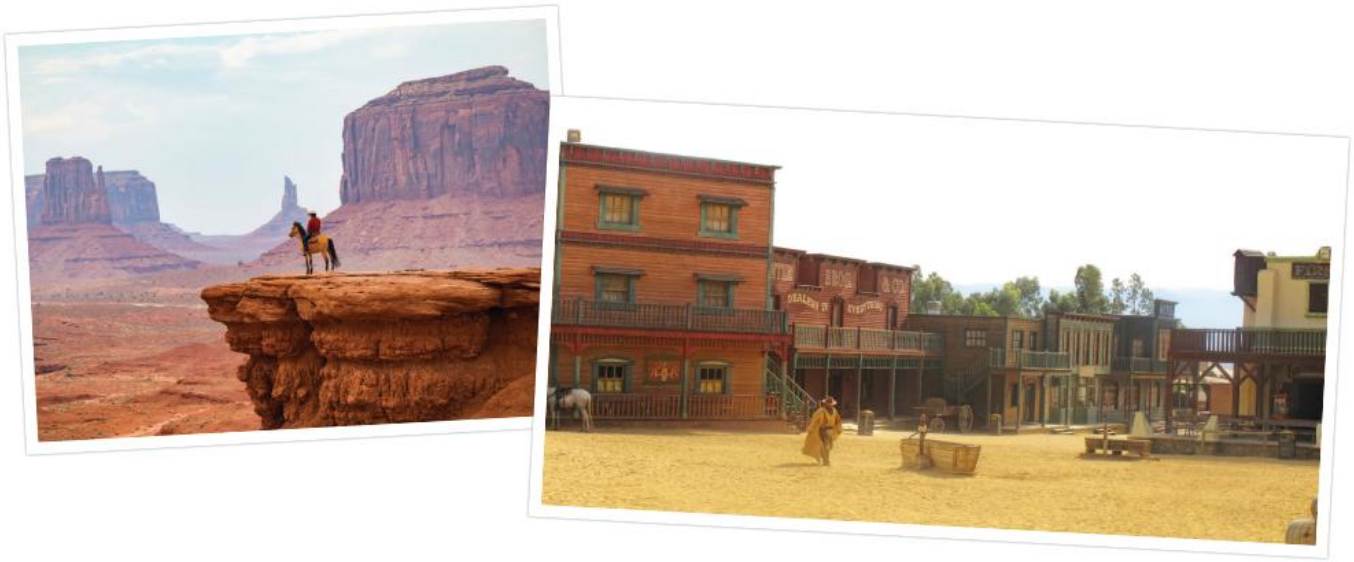
Now you should have a clear idea of the genre of the texts you have studied or will study. You may have noticed, however, that some texts were more difficult to classify than others. Genre conventions look clear-cut in some cases, while other texts change the conventions or even combine conventions from two or more genres.

Genre conventions

What identifies sci-fi as sci-fi? What distinguishes post-apocalyptic fiction from dystopian fiction? How do you recognise a western? A knowledge of genre means that you can identify the conventions of particular genres and understand when texts adhere to those conventions. You will also consider when and why writers or directors choose to challenge, manipulate or subvert genre conventions.

When talking about genre of subject matter, **genre conventions** are the ways that narrative elements such as character, setting, plot and themes are typically constructed within a specific type of narrative. Language and stylistic features are also associated with particular genres. For example, consider the conventions of the western. Although the genre has spread far and wide, the archetypal western is set in the 'Wild West' of the United States in the late 19th century.

NARRATIVE CONVENTION	GENRE CONVENTION – THE WESTERN FILM
Setting	American old West / Wild West; deserts; canyons; small towns.
Plot elements	Sheriff protects civilians from gunslinger villain; cowboys versus Indians; land disputes; revenge for killings.
Characters	Cowboys; sheriff; villain; outlaw gangs; cavalry; Native Americans (referred to as 'Indians'); 'damsels in distress'.
Language & stylistic features	Wide shots of settings to establish locations; extreme close-ups during gunfights and other crisis points; soundtrack of banjos/strings; diegetic sounds of horses, gunshots, shouting; terse dialogue between enemies; formal dialogue between genders; colloquial language between mates.
Themes	Law and order; justice; revenge; honour; civilisation; territorial expansion; economic opportunity; masculinity.



EXAMPLE Writing about genre conventions

The sample paragraph below analyses the two images on page 42, demonstrating how to write about genre of subject matter (the western) and genre of form and structure (film stills).

These two film stills depict conventional settings, characters and visual language features of the western genre. These include wide location or establishing shots, depicting dusty, wild towns and vast, mostly uncivilised desert landscapes. Such stylistic features easily identify the images as belonging to the western genre. Rock formations and mountains in the background emphasise the monumental presence of the American Wild West landscape. Within these landscapes, typical characters of the western genre are also evident. In one image, civilians populate a developing town, with props of wagons and evident signs of construction, symbolising themes such as expansion, modernity and civilisation. In the other image, a lone cowboy poses on his horse: an iconic image of the western genre. This suggests the rugged individuality of the Wild West and the self-sufficiency of cowboys in the 19th century, although modern viewers may interpret this as an outdated representation of masculinity. Indeed, the images taken together might be seen, from an environmental perspective, as reflecting man's destruction of nature, or, from a postcolonial perspective, as signalling the colonisation of the land of Native Americans. Both images suggest themes of civilisation expanding into new territories and the wild nature of life on the frontier.

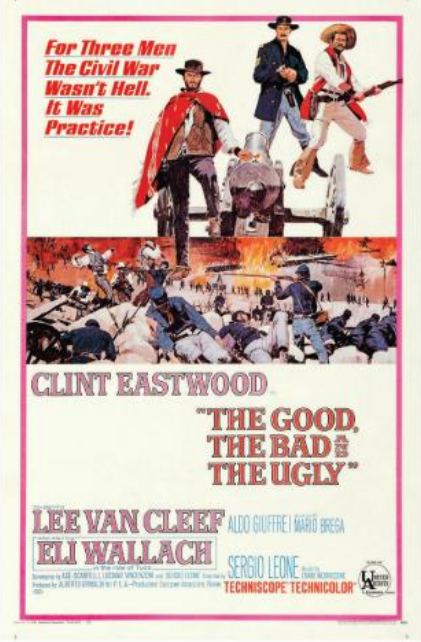
- Identifies genre of form and structure.
- Identifies the genre of subject matter; signposts genre and narrative conventions as well as visual language features.
- Uses film/visual language to discuss images in terms of genre; suggests a symbolic meaning of the setting.
- Identifies genre convention of western characters.
- Focuses not only on the character, but also on the mise en scène and symbolic function of these stylistic choices.
- Extends the description of the image, with analysis of the cowboy character, demonstrating understanding of the western genre.
- Offers modern interpretations of the images, with reference to key concepts such as representation and perspectives.
- Further demonstrates knowledge and understanding of genre conventions and themes.

ACTIVITY

Analyse genre conventions in a film poster

Carefully study this promotional film poster for Sergio Leone's 1966 spaghetti western *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Write a paragraph similar to the one above, responding to this question:

> *How does the poster conform to the genre conventions of the western, as well as the conventions of a film poster?*

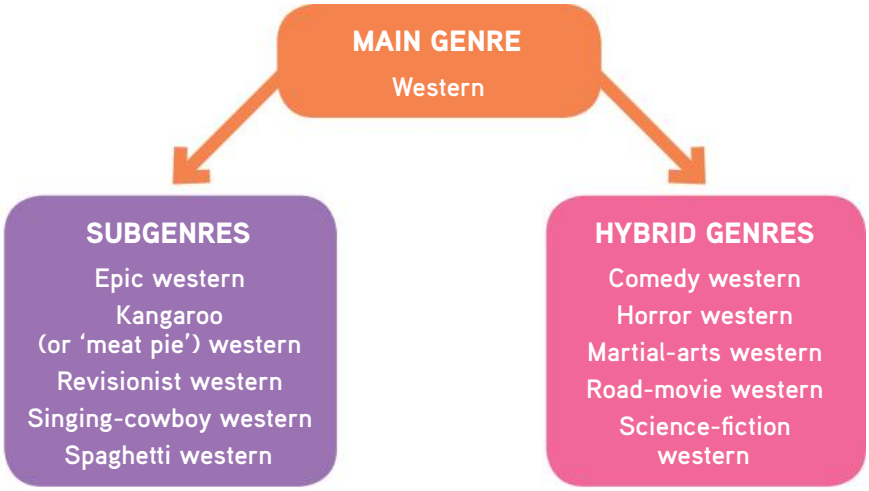


Subgenres and hybrid genres

Genres tend to evolve over time in response to changing social contexts, and as the creators of texts experiment with conventions. This leads to the creation of new genres of subject matter – such as **subgenres** and **hybrid genres**. (It also leads to the development of new genres of form and structure, which we discuss later in this chapter.)

- A subgenre is a subcategory or specialised section of a larger genre, e.g. film noir is a subgenre of the crime genre.
- Hybrid genres involve the combination or blending of conventions from two or more genres.

The following diagram shows how a genre can evolve into a number of new genres, keeping key elements of the original while bringing in new features and concepts.



Star Wars (1977) uses conventional characters of the science-fiction genre, such as droids and robots, in addition to a typical setting of a spaceship in space.

Creating hybrid genres

The table opposite summarises the conventions of the science-fiction genre, alongside the conventions of the western. Note how many similarities there are between these two genres. In fact, the classic movie *Star Wars* (1977) has long been considered essentially a western narrative transposed into space. This is an example of a hybrid genre, which is created when conventions from different genres are blended or combined.

NARRATIVE CONVENTION	GENRE CONVENTION: SCIENCE FICTION	GENRE CONVENTION: WESTERN
Setting	Exterior: vast environments of space; alien planets, environments and societies; future Earth. Interior: spaceships; laboratories; government facilities.	Exterior: vast environments of the American old West / Wild West in the late 19th century; deserts; canyons; small towns. Interior: saloons, ranches, wagons, mines.
Plot elements	Alien invasion of Earth; hero prevents evil aliens from taking over; exploration of other life/planets; establishing new human colonies; revenge for alien attacks.	Outlaw or Indian raids; sheriff protects civilians from gunslinger villains; territorial disputes; settling the West; revenge for murders.
Characters	Astronauts; scientists; aliens' armies; robots/droids.	Cowboys; sheriff; villain; outlaw gangs; cavalry; Native Americans ('Indians'); 'damsels in distress'.
Language & stylistic features	Wide and long shots to establish locations; neologisms (made-up words); scientific language; special effects; elaborate costumes; soundtrack of classical music or modern synthesisers; diegetic sounds of lasers, weapons, computers.	Wide and long shots to establish locations; extreme close-ups during conflicts and other crisis points; soundtrack of banjos/strings; diegetic sounds of horses, gunshots, shouting; short, terse dialogue between enemies; formal dialogue between genders; colloquial language between mates.
Themes	Law and order; justice; revenge; honour; civilisation; territorial control and expansion; economic opportunity; technology; good versus evil; future of humanity; hope.	Law and order; justice; revenge; honour; civilisation; territorial control and expansion; economic opportunity; good versus evil; masculinity.

Both the western and science fiction are able to stand alone as distinct genres, but they may also be blended. Both genres can present perspectives on a range of settings, characters and themes, even though their subject matter can be very different. They can raise important questions about issues such as the ethics of law and order, the representation of gender, and the expansion of humanity. Such questions can be raised effectively by texts in either genre, or by a hybrid text that blends these genre conventions.

Here are two other popular hybrid texts that blend genre conventions.

TEXT	MAIN GENRE	SUBGENRE	OTHER GENRES	HYBRID GENRE
The Hunger Games	speculative fiction	science fiction dystopia	action adventure YA (young adult)	YA-dystopia
Shaun of the Dead	comedy; horror	black comedy zombie horror	romance bromance	rom-zom-com-horror

ACTIVITY

Identify genre, subgenre and hybrid genres

1 Can you recognise the characteristics of different genres in your studied texts? Consider the extent to which your texts are from a main genre, a subgenre or a hybrid genre. Complete a table like the one on the previous page for two of your texts.

2 Consider the purposes of hybridising genre. What does combining elements from two – or more – genres allow the text's creator to do? Think about the possible impact on:

- themes and ideas explored
- audience engagement
- perspectives offered
- development of a particular style
- progression of the genre.

Choose a hybrid text you are studying and write two paragraphs on the way in which combining elements from multiple genres affects one or more of the aspects listed above.

EXAMPLE Writing about hybrid genres

The paragraph below provides an example of how to write about blended genre conventions in hybrid texts. It responds to the question:

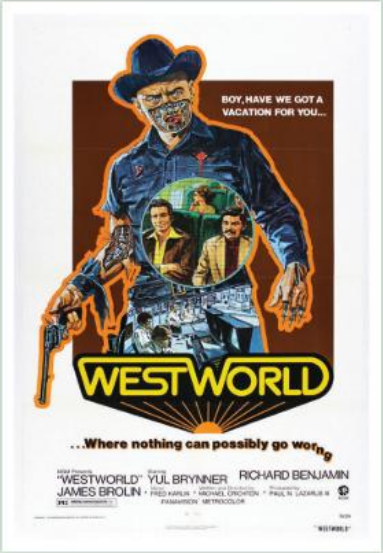
How does this still from The Martian *(2015) blend genres of subject matter to present a perspective on humanity?*

This still from *The Martian* (2015) presents generic conventions of the science-fiction genre and also incorporates generic elements of the western. The main subject of the image, an astronaut, is isolated in a strange environment, suggesting a narrative feature common to both genres: an individual undertakes a mission of exploration, discovery or conquest. The isolated figure in this setting may suggest the search for a future existence for humanity; it may also convey the loneliness of humans, especially in times of need. The composition of the image, a wide shot with centralised framing on the astronaut, depicts a vast, seemingly empty landscape, another convention of both science fiction and the western. The sandy and rocky desert is particularly reminiscent of classic western settings. The visual stylistic features and the narrative conventions of character and setting together suggest a blending of genres, and contribute to the themes of exploration, the search for civilisation and questions about humanity's pursuit of territorial expansion.

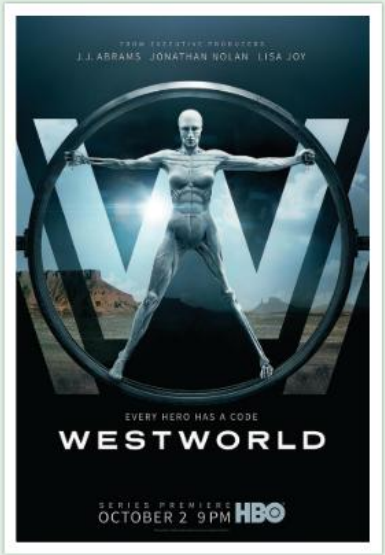
ACTIVITY

Analyse hybrid genre features

Answer the following questions to analyse conventions of both science fiction and the western in these two promotional posters.



Original film poster for *Westworld* (1973)



Promotional poster for *Westworld* TV series (2016)

1. Which elements of genre of subject matter are used in each image? Refer to both the western and science fiction (and any other genres you identify).
2. Who do you think is represented as the hero and/or villain? Refer to both written and visual language features to support your answer.
3. Describe the tone of each text. Which elements of written and visual language help to create this tone?
4. Consider the contexts of production and reception. How might each text have appealed to its audience at the time of its production?

The evolution of genre

All genres have rules, and texts belonging to particular genres mostly conform to these rules. The rules or conventions are generally established early in the genre's history. However, as contexts change, genres evolve and their conventions can be challenged, manipulated or subverted. Although these terms all indicate a degree of change and overlap, there are subtle differences between them.

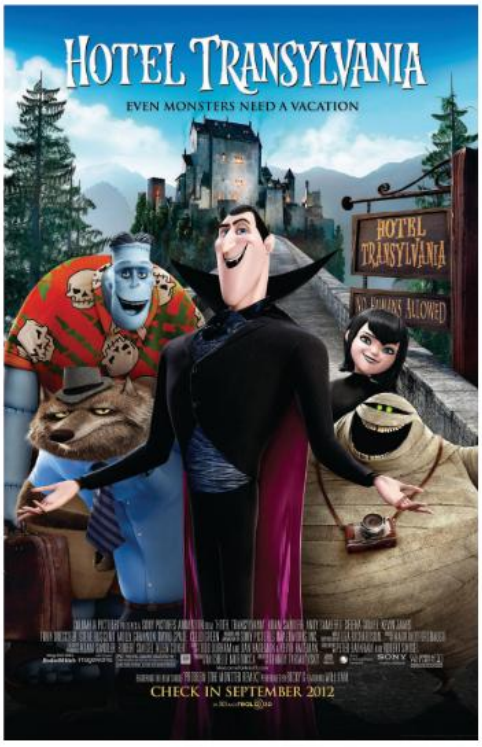
- **Conforming** to genre conventions means that the conventions are followed and adhered to.
- **Challenging** genre conventions means questioning or testing these conventions. A text that challenges genre conventions might consider whether certain conventions are still appropriate or valid, or if they have become clichéd. Alternatively, it might question how the genre typically represents people, places, values and attitudes.

- **Manipulating** genre conventions means to use them in some – usually atypical – way to achieve a particular effect. A text might alter an element in order to emphasise an idea, for stylistic effect, or to adapt the text for a new mode or medium, for example.
- **Subverting** genre conventions means established conventions are intentionally undermined or reversed. Usually, the subversion is intended to expose limitations or biases inherent in the established genre conventions, or in the assumptions that underpin them. It can present a new perspective on an issue, such as the representation of gender roles or cultural identity.

Consider the two texts below, both posters for films in the horror genre. *Dracula* is a mostly conventional horror text. *Hotel Transylvania* represents one particular evolution of the horror genre, in this case to create a text aimed at children. Factors that might have prompted this evolution include:

- changes in filmmaking technologies
- changing perceptions of children and their innocence
- the increasing significance of children as a commercial market
- audiences' increasing familiarity with horror conventions
- text creators striving for originality.

Text 1: Promotional poster for *Dracula* (1931)



Text 2: Promotional poster for *Hotel Transylvania* (2012)

The following table shows how the two texts use the conventions of the horror genre in quite different ways.

	CONVENTION CONFORMED TO	CONVENTION CHALLENGED	CONVENTION MANIPULATED	CONVENTION SUBVERTED
TEXT 1: *DRACULA*	**Monster:** vampire who is violent, aggressive, deadly, confident, theatrical. **Victim:** passive female. **Colours:** red/orange, yellow, black. **Tagline:** *A nightmare of horror!*			
TEXT 2: *HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA*	**Characters:** archetypical horror characters; vampire is confident, theatrical.	**Characters:** the girl is not a passive victim but one of the vampires.	**Characters:** brings together various horror characters into an ensemble cast. **Tagline:** *Even monsters need a vacation* – creates humour through irony. **Cinematography:** animation instead of photography.	**Characters:** monsters are comical characters, rather than those of a horror film. **Colours:** blue, pink, along with black, grey, dark brown.

EXAMPLE Writing about the evolution of genre

The following short answer discusses how genre conventions are conformed to, challenged, manipulated or subverted in the posters for *Dracula* and *Hotel Transylvania*.

Both texts belong to the same genre of subject matter – horror – and the same genre of form and structure: film posters for feature films. However, these images show how a genre can evolve. They present an evolution of the horror genre, from *Dracula* (1931) – an early example of the horror genre targeted at adults, and intended to shock and frighten – to the animated comedy *Hotel Transylvania* (2012), aimed at a young audience, with the purpose of providing entertainment and provoking laughter.

Explicit reference to the **intended effects** and the **audience** of the texts leads to an explanation of not just *how* conventions are challenged but, more importantly, *why* they are challenged.

The representation of the central vampire differs in these two texts, reflecting their very different audiences. Text 1 conforms to horror genre conventions, including the violent, cruel and sexualised gaze of Dracula as he attacks a passive female victim. This image is combined with the tagline 'A nightmare of horror!' and the use of symbolic colours: blood-red to symbolise danger, yellow to signify the moon, and black for darkness and evil. These visual language features suggest a genre and a text designed to thrill, instil fear in and horrify an early-20th-century audience relatively new to the film medium.

Focuses on the representation of the main subject.

Identifies genre expectations and the way in which the text conforms to these through the use of appropriate adjectives.

Topic sentence and elaboration demonstrates knowledge of genre and its evolution by identifying similarities between the two texts; also identifies the way in which Text 2 conforms to a particular generic convention while challenging genre conventions in other ways.

Text 2 represents an evolution of the genre, yet there are generic similarities between the two texts. Text 2 conforms to the genre by including a classically costumed vampire; however, it also challenges horror conventions by using intertextuality, adding characters from other horror narratives to the classic vampire narrative. It conforms to the conventions of film posters with a tagline, yet manipulates the horror convention by making the tagline humorous and presenting the monsters' perspective.

Identifies which element of the text has been subverted, and why, by referring to the intended effect.

Text 2 also subverts the frightening conventions of the horror genre for comedic purposes. The monsters – in particular, the central, framed vampire – display friendly, comical facial expressions. The vampire at the focal point has open, inviting and friendly body language and a smile, in sharp contrast to the 1931 text, as *Hotel Transylvania* is marketed at a modern, younger audience of children, as well as their parents, who are likely to be familiar with (and no longer frightened by) the classic tropes of the horror genre. The promotional poster for *Hotel Transylvania* may be interpreted as a parody of the original poster and represents a development in the genre over time – from one that intended to terrify audiences to one that has become clichéd and ripe for comedic subversion for a young audience.

This analysis of how the representation of the vampire subverts genre conventions recognises the importance of audience expectations.

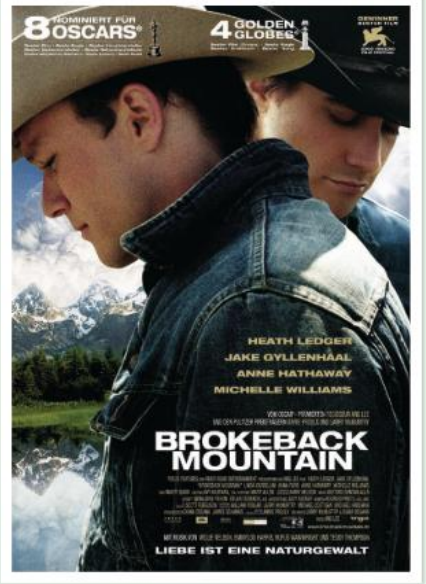
Demonstrates an understanding of the genre's evolution over time to encompass parody. Again, the focus is on the audience and intended effects.

ACTIVITY

Analyse how texts use genre conventions

How have the conventions of the western genre been conformed to, challenged, manipulated or subverted for particular purposes or audiences in these two posters?

Italian theatrical release poster for *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), the second film in the Dollars Trilogy, directed by Sergio Leone and starring Clint Eastwood



Promotional poster for *Brokeback Mountain*, a 2005 western-themed romantic drama directed by Ang Lee

Taking it further: revisionist texts

One of the ways in which genres can be challenged, manipulated or subverted is through their revision. Many writers and directors rework genres of texts to reflect attitudes and values more appropriate to the context and values of contemporary audiences. Such texts are called **revisionist** texts.

An example of a revisionist text can be seen in the various Batman reboots, particularly the Christopher Nolan films of the Dark Knight trilogy (2005–12). This series presents Batman as a dark and morally questionable character, challenging typical representations of superheroes as virtuous and just. This is an attempt to portray Batman in a more realistic light, recognising that he is often as violent, cruel and misguided as the villains he fights. It also acknowledges the psychological impact of a life of violence – something of which audiences have become increasingly aware. This model of superhero has now influenced the entire genre of superhero films, leading to ambiguous characterisations of, for example, Spiderman in Sam Raimi's *Spiderman 3* (2007) and Superman in Zack Snyder's *Man of Steel* (2013).

ACTIVITY

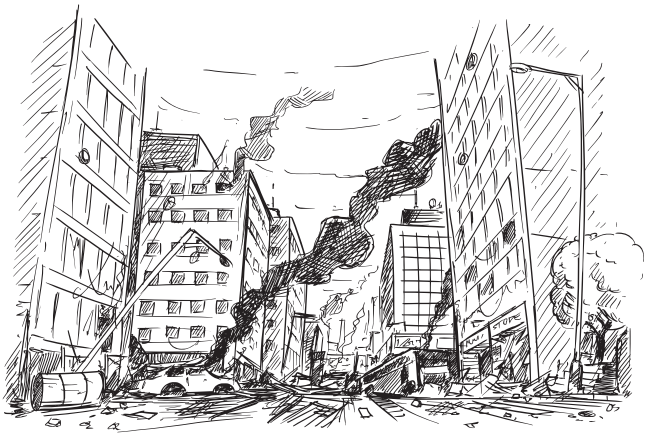
Consider perspectives within a revisionist text

1 List a number of texts within a genre you have studied. From your list, identify any texts that you regard as revisionist.

2 For one of these revisionist texts, identify the main social concerns and issues being explored. What is the text's overall perspective on these concerns? How is this perspective related to the text's revision of its genre or retelling of an established narrative?

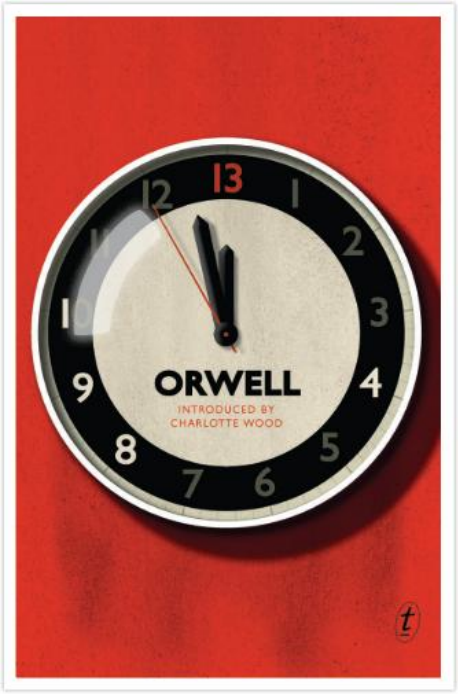
Genre and context

Genres respond to contexts of production and reception. (See Chapter 1 for more information on context.) As suggested above, they adapt to new audiences and new value systems associated with their contexts. They can also arise out of particular contexts, responding to specific events and circumstances. For example, the dystopian genre has its origins in the French Revolution, after the oppressive monarchy was overthrown. It really took off as a genre, however, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with the impacts of technological advancement, World War I and the rise of fascism, which prompted despairing visions of the future. Contemporary dystopian novels are often set in the aftermath of an environmental apocalypse, reflecting current anxieties surrounding climate change and other environmental issues.



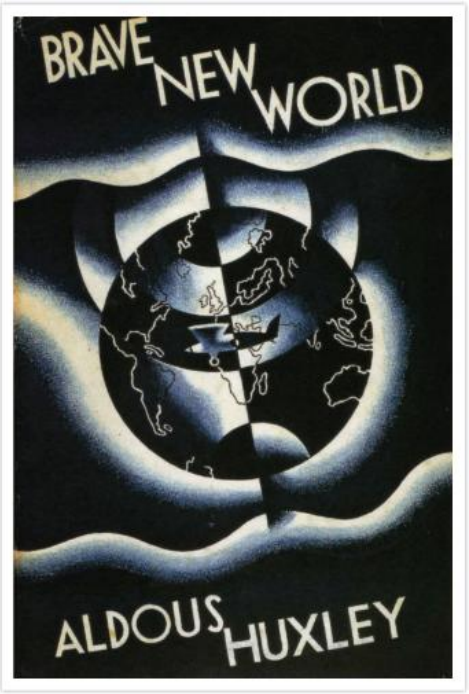
In a dystopian text the setting is often a futuristic, nightmarish or undesirable society, characterised by oppressive control. The protagonist is usually a lonely or disappointed character who becomes aware of the horrors of their society. The antagonist is often society and its rules, rather than an individual character. The narrative follows the conflict between the protagonist's attempts to resist or rebel against the system – the government, the law or the corporation in charge – to prove to others that the world needs changing. In the resolution the protagonist usually succeeds, but not always.

The dystopian genre produces texts that are warnings – cautionary tales – about what may happen if we continue on a particular path. Below are two classic examples of the genre, written in slightly different contexts and presenting contrasting perspectives on social and political concerns.



Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) by George Orwell

Summary: The Party controls everyone in Oceania through propaganda, extreme surveillance and the constant threat of interrogation and torture. Protagonist Winston Smith tries to resist this totalitarian system.



Brave New World (1932) by Aldous Huxley

Summary: Human beings, graded from highest intellectuals to lowest manual workers, are hatched from incubators and brought up in communal nurseries, learning by methodical conditioning to accept their social destiny.

Orwell and Huxley had different fears about how society would evolve. Their differing perspectives offer an interesting contrast between two authors writing in similar genres, yet with entirely different ideas about what is important, influenced by their contexts.

	ORWELL	HUXLEY
PERSPECTIVE	Orwell feared the government would ban books, limit language and attempt to regulate thought. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of detailed or accurate information. Orwell feared that the government would conceal the truth from us. Orwell feared we would become a captive, oppressed culture, living under constant surveillance.	Huxley feared that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no-one who wanted to read one. Huxley feared those who would give us so much information that we would become passive viewers or consumers obsessed with ourselves and the information would be lost. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance.
CONTEXT	Orwell's experiences during the Spanish Civil War and as a journalist during World War II made him aware of the media's ability to distort and falsify 'the facts'. For Orwell, not having access to accurate information meant a loss of freedom. Orwell's fears of the invasion of privacy and authoritarian control of totalitarian government were influenced by living through the time of Hitler and the early years of Stalin. Orwell was concerned by the book burnings of Stalin and Hitler. These were the result of distrust of intellectuals who challenged the official views of political parties or used art (film, writing) to criticise authorities and encourage free thought.	Huxley worried that easy access to information through the mass media meant we would have so much information that it would become unimportant. Huxley, writing *Brave New World* in the early 1930s, was more influenced by the effect of mass production on humanity, and predicted the trivia-obsessed audiences of our current information age.

ACTIVITY

Consider context and perspective in relation to genre

1 Look at the period in which *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* were written. Why do you think these authors both chose to write in the dystopian genre?

2 Huxley wrote his novel before World War II, Orwell after it. How might this event have contributed to Orwell's perspective?

3 What aspects of Orwell's personal context seem to have influenced his perspective?

4 How might these perspectives apply to our contemporary context? Consider the impact of social media platforms such as Twitter and Snapchat, as well as the rise of celebrity culture, reality TV and 24-hour rolling news. Which author's perspective resonates with you?

Genre and audience

The dystopian genre is also evolving to suit new audiences and contexts. A convention of dystopian texts is a particular kind of protagonist, who usually:

- questions existing social and/or political systems
- places a high value on freedom and independence
- attempts to escape, resist, change or (with others) destroy the dystopian society.

Winston Smith (John Hurt) in the Michael Radford film *1984* (released in 1984)

The rise in young adult (YA) fiction has led to a proliferation of dystopian texts for younger readers. To engage with this audience, YA writers create protagonists with whom teenage readers can identify. A major struggle for adolescents is the search for identity, to find their personality and their sense of self. Often they see themselves as pitted against an authoritarian society. This aligns neatly with the narrative arc of a dystopian protagonist, and helps to account for the rapid expansion of this genre into the YA market.

Shifting social attitudes towards gender roles, particularly within this audience, have also contributed to the proliferation of female protagonists within YA dystopian texts. These include Veronica Roth's *Divergent* and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*, in which the struggles of female protagonists in a violent, authoritarian world parallel the concerns of many young women today. The eventual triumph of these strong female protagonists provides an affirming message to readers.

Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) in the Gary Ross film *The Hunger Games* (released in 2012)

ACTIVITY

Explore dystopian protagonists

Traditionally, the dystopian genre focused on older, male protagonists. Make a list of recent dystopian texts that feature younger protagonists. Write a brief account of some possible reasons for this evolution in the genre, including some of the factors shaping audience expectations and enjoyment.

Genre of form and structure

Genres of form and structure also have their own conventions. You will have had experience analysing texts based on the conventions of form and structure. However, like genres of subject matter, genres of form and structure are fluid, and can evolve and combine in various ways. We will now look at some of these more complex forms.

Subgenre

Genres of form and structure can also be divided into subgenres. The documentary genre, for example, can be classified into subcategories such as observational, expository, participatory and performative. As with subgenres of subject matter, each of these types of documentary will have features that are common to all documentaries, but they will have unique structural or formal features as well.

OBSERVATIONAL	EXPOSITORY	PARTICIPATORY	PERFORMATIVE	RE-ENACTED
Fly-on-the-wall or cinéma vérité documentaries: the filmmaker avoids direct intervention, giving the impression of natural or objective observation.	Traditional documentaries featuring the filmmaker (or other focaliser) presenting and commenting on information to develop an argument.	Blends features of observational and expository, but the filmmaker actively directs action from behind the camera, and is seen or heard by the viewer.	Documentaries in which the filmmaker explores their own personal stories within a wider discussion of an issue.	Documentaries consisting solely or largely of re-enactments of past events by actors, straddling the line between documentary and feature film.
All use traditional documentary techniques, but emphasise the following features.				
Hidden or hand-held camera work, with few to-camera shots.	Frequent use of to-camera shots or voice-over by the focaliser.	Voice-over from filmmaker directing on-screen action.	Observational footage of the filmmaker, accompanied by their voice-over.	Re-enacted footage featuring actors, often with voice-over explanations.

Hybrid genres

Creators of texts can also blend genres of form and structure to create new forms. This practice is not as new as you might think – some of the earliest novelists combined features of both novels and letters into a hybrid genre known as the epistolary novel. In these, a series of letters and other documents shared between two or more characters construct a sequential narrative. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) is famous example, being composed entirely of letters, diary entries, newspaper clippings, telegrams, ships' logs and so on. The reader pieces together the story through the information contained in these texts.

Hybrid of documentary and drama

Two television forms that used to be distinct are the documentary and the drama. However, a recent rise in true-crime TV shows, such as *Making a Murderer* (2015), has seen the growth of a hybrid genre of docudramas. Other TV hybrids include docusoaps, reality game shows and mockumentaries.

Another example of genre blending between drama, documentary and the true-crime genre is the 2018 film *American Animals*, directed by Bart Layton. The film is in a subgenre of the crime genre – a heist film – in which a robbery is committed. It tells the story of two college students, Warren Lipka and Spencer Reinhard (played by Evan Peters and Barry Keoghan), who plan to steal a rare book.

ACTIVITY

Analyse a documentary-drama hybrid

Watch the trailer for *American Animals* here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKvPVvy2Kn8

The real Spencer Reinhard telling his story (Layton using documentary conventions) juxtaposed with the actor (Barry Keoghan) playing the role of Spencer

1 Which elements in the trailer tell you this film belongs to the crime/heist genre?

2 Watch the five-minute opening sequence (the exposition) of *American Animals*. Make notes about how the exposition blends narrative filmmaking techniques with classic documentary techniques. Write a paragraph on how the director of *American Animals* subverts conventions of the feature film to create a hybrid genre.

Hybrid of novel and nonfiction

In the written mode, two distinct, different forms are the novel and the expository text. However, an early experiment in form and structure is the now classic text *In Cold Blood* (1965) by Truman Capote. Capote read about the real-life murder of the Clutter family in 1959 in *The New York Times*, then spent six years conducting his own research and interviews, and writing about the murder, as if he were a journalist or police officer. The text that Capote eventually produced became known as the first 'nonfiction novel' – a blending of two distinct genres – as it was written as if it were a novel, with the real-life figures presented as characters, and using dialogue and highly descriptive language.

ACTIVITY

Analyse a hybrid of novel and nonfiction

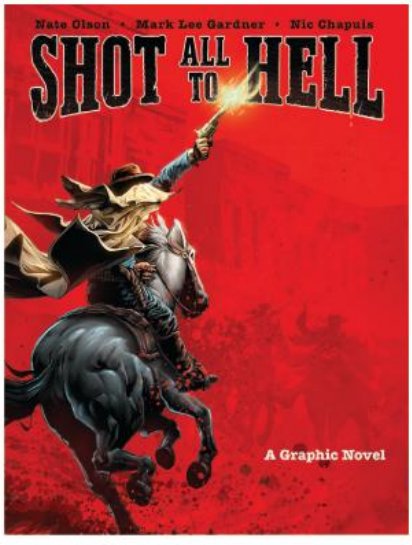
Read the following extract from Capote's *In Cold Blood* and then identify elements that usually belong to a novel, and elements that are more suited to a crime report.

> Until one morning in mid-November of 1959, few Americans—in fact, few Kansans—had ever heard of Holcomb. Like the waters of the river, like the motorists on the highway, and like the yellow trains streaking down the Santa Fe tracks, drama, in the shape of exceptional happenings, had never stopped there. The inhabitants of the village, numbering two hundred and seventy, were satisfied that this should be so, quite content to exist inside ordinary life—to work, to hunt, to watch television, to attend school socials, choir practice, meetings of the 4-H Club. But then, in the earliest hours of that morning in November, a Sunday morning, certain foreign sounds impinged on the normal nightly Holcomb noises—on the keening hysteria of coyotes, the dry scrape of scuttling tumbleweed, the racing, receding wail of locomotive whistles. At the time not a soul in sleeping Holcomb heard them—four shotgun blasts that, all told, ended six human lives. But afterward the townspeople, theretofore sufficiently unfearful of each other to seldom trouble to lock their doors, found fantasy re-creating them over and again—those sombre explosions that stimulated fires of mistrust in the glare of which many old neighbors viewed each other strangely, and as strangers.

Adaptations into different modes

Texts are frequently adapted into new genres of form and structure. Biographies, novels, stage musicals and even comic books are regularly adapted as feature films. Sometimes, films are even adapted into novels or musicals to appeal to different audiences, or to capitalise on a text's popularity. In doing so, the creators of these texts must apply a new set of language features to adapt their text for its new mode.

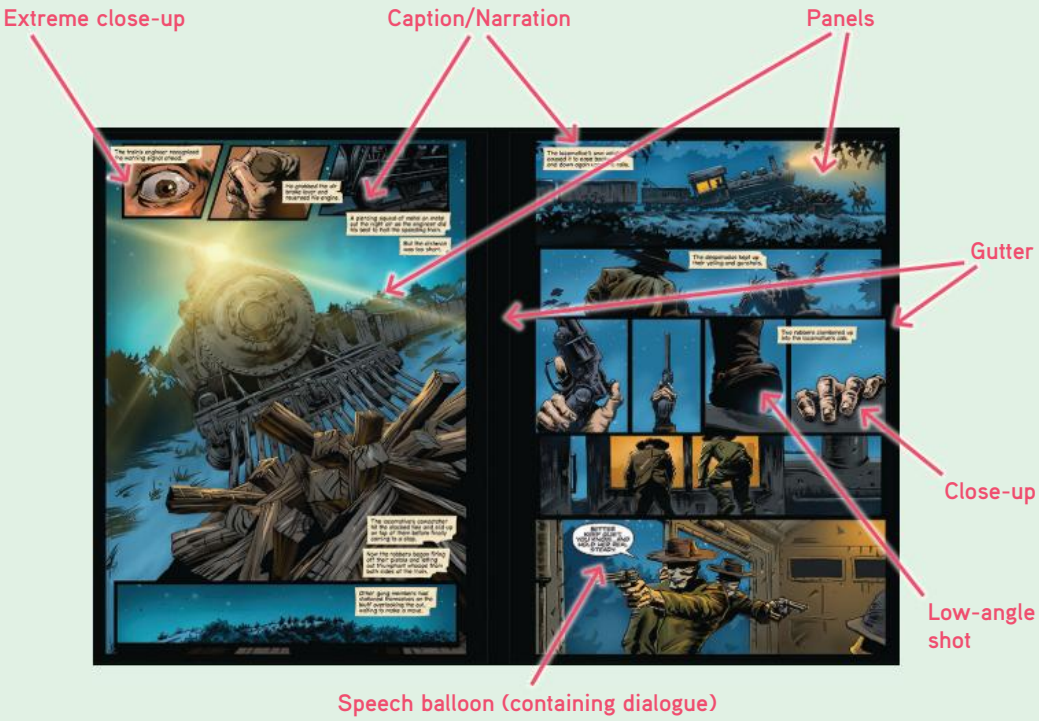
Mark Lee Gardner's *Shot All to Hell* is a nonfiction historical account of the real-life western outlaw Jesse James, a famous bank robbery and the subsequent chase to capture the gang. Gardner later teamed up with illustrators Nate Olson and Nic Chapuis to produce *Shot All to Hell: A Graphic Novel*. In doing so, the creators drew on the multimodal features of the graphic novel to bring the text to a new audience.



ACTIVITY

Analyse a graphic novel adaptation

Using the language of graphic novels annotated in the spread from *Shot All to Hell: A Graphic Novel* below, explain how this adaptation of a historical account has been created to appeal to particular audiences.

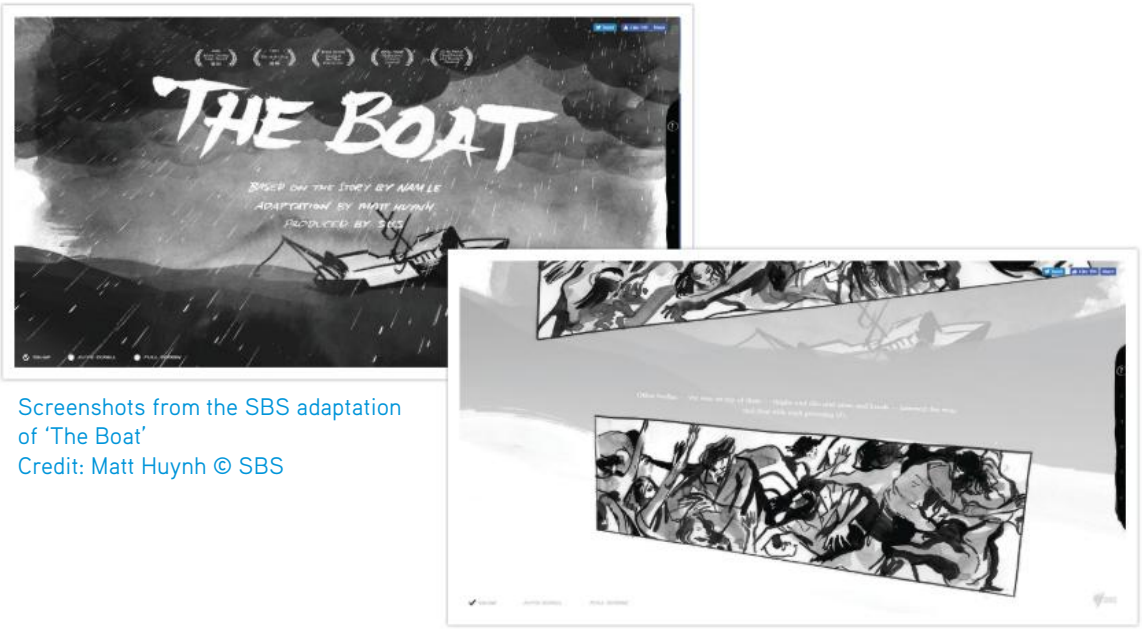


Taking it further: genre and new technologies

Technology is a significant factor influencing the evolution of genres of form and structure, as existing forms of text are adapted for modes and media that are constantly developing. The internet, social media, smartphones and streaming services have all contributed to new generic forms, including digital and interactive texts, as creators of texts are presented with new contexts of reception. These changes also influence the expectations of audiences, who demand more innovative and exciting ways of engaging with texts.

Digital texts

'The Boat' by Nam Le is a literary short story about Vietnamese boat people seeking a new life. It has been adapted into a digital, online comic graphic novella incorporating animation, text and music. Australian artist Matt Huynh created the illustrations using a traditional Vietnamese bamboo calligraphy brush, paper and Sumi ink.* Combined with digital media, the result is an immersive and atmospheric adaption of a prose text.



Screenshots from the SBS adaptation of 'The Boat'
Credit: Matt Huynh © SBS

ACTIVITY

Analyse a multimodal adaptation

Watch / listen to / read the adaptation of 'The Boat' here: http://www.sbs.com.au/theboat/

1. What is your response to the experience that this text provides?
2. How might such digital multimodal texts change the reading experience for emerging audiences?
3. Identify any stylistic choices made in this text that engage audiences.
4. How does this text present a perspective on identity, immigration or family?

Web series

Web series originated on YouTube but have evolved greatly in recent times. One of the first 'YouTuber' videos centred on the life of Lonelygirl15, a confessional vlogger (video-logger) who turned out not to be genuine, but rather a character in a scripted drama created by writers Miles Beckett and Mesh Flinders. Wondering whether they would be able to create a fictitious but believable YouTuber, the pair wrote the scripts and had an actress play the role of Lonelygirl15 Bree. It was eventually exposed as a hoax, largely because audiences recognised the clichéd generic plot concerning the developing romance between Bree and her male best friend as a standard trope of teenage rom-coms and coming-of-age narratives.

Web series are short, serialised videos with a maximum running time of 20 minutes (although most run for somewhere between six and 11 minutes). They are aired online, either via subscription or through on-demand services. This is a growing genre. For example, *The Horizon* began in 2009 and is the most watched online series from Australia, with over 60 million views globally.

The Horizon: the most watched LGBTQI web series in the world, with over 60 million views

ACTIVITY

Analyse a web series home page

High Life is a web series about a 17-year-old Australian girl. The series is described on its website as a 'comedic and heartfelt look at bipolar disorder'.

How does the home page for *High Life* suggest the coming-of-age genre?

Endnote

* 'SBS's interactive graphic novel The Boat brings Vietnamese refugee experience to life' by Joel Meares, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 April 2015, https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/sbss-interactive-graphic-novel-the-boat-brings-vietnamese-refugee-experience-to-life-20150428-1muwo7.html

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSING TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- explore the skills of analysis, interpretation and response
- consider how multiple responses to texts can arise
- learn strategies for analysing language, structural and stylistic features of texts
- consider how the content, purpose and mode of texts influences interpretation
- evaluate other interpretations of texts to develop a considered response.

It almost goes without saying that analysing texts is a core aspect of the English course. This can sometimes seem like a challenging task. However, if approached methodically, analysis should not be daunting. Remember, a clear principle within the English course is that multiple interpretations of texts are not only possible, but a given. Every student, armed with a few tools of analysis, is capable of coming up with a valid interpretation of a text.

The Year 12 syllabus calls for you to demonstrate your ability to analyse texts for particular concepts. Three of these concepts are context, perspective and genre. Because of their significance in this course, each has been explored in its own chapter. This chapter explains the skills and processes of analysing texts, so that you can develop the informed interpretations and critical responses required in Year 12. It also provides specific suggestions for analysing imaginative, persuasive and interpretive texts.

Analysing, interpreting and responding

To analyse a text, you must deconstruct it and examine its component parts: namely, its generic, language, structural and stylistic features. From this, you will be able to develop an interpretation of a text and better understand your response to it.

What is an interpretation?

An interpretation of a text is your understanding of its meanings and effects. A *critical* interpretation, however, is one that is supported by thoughtful analysis of the construction of the text, to identify how these meanings and effects are produced.

- **Meanings** can refer to the themes or arguments developed within a text. A text can have many meanings, not all of them necessarily intended by its creator. Meanings arise from individual ideas within a text; the representations it offers; and its perspectives, values and attitudes. Meanings can even arise from the omissions and marginalisations in a text: what is *not* said.
- **Effects** are the outcomes or consequences of a text – intended or otherwise. Texts may persuade audiences to act, produce an emotional response, or surprise by innovating upon an established genre. Effects can relate to the text's purposes, but because of the varied nature of audiences and their contexts, the actual effects can vary widely.
- The **construction** of a text is relevant both to its meanings and to its effects. You should be able to identify, provide examples of, and explain the functions of a text's generic, language, structural and stylistic features. As part of this, consider the mode and medium of the text as well.

What is a response?

A **response** goes a step further than an interpretation. A considered response to a text involves interpretation, but also **evaluation**. To evaluate means to make a judgement about the quality or merit of something. In relation to a text, we might evaluate it in terms of its construction, meanings or effects – or, more likely, a combination of these. Therefore, a considered response is more than just our initial emotional reaction to a text; it shows reflection on and justification for that reaction. Some examples of the way we might evaluate a text are outlined in the following table.

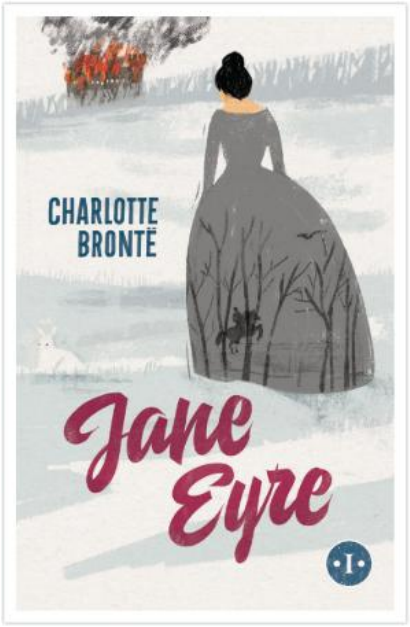
	CONSTRUCTION	MEANING	EFFECTS
We might judge a text based on …	its generic features, such as a romantic comedy that relies on cliché. its language features, such as the innovative use of camera work in a film, or the complexity of language in a news article. its structural features, such as an argument that seems poorly ordered, or a novel's clever plot twist. its stylistic features, such as the nature and tone of the voice constructed within a blog. its aesthetic features, such as the beautiful cinematography in a film, or striking imagery in a short story.	its accuracy, such as whether we agree with a documentary's representation of capitalism. its quality, such as whether we feel the argument in an opinion column is well-researched and evidenced. its biases, such as taking into account the emphases and omissions on a particular news website. our exposure to other interpretations, and the extent to which they match our own. our personal experiences with its subject matter, such as our own experiences of family life colouring our response to a family sitcom.	its perceived relevance, such as whether we believe a novel from another context has any bearing on our own world. our engagement with the text, such as whether we were entertained or moved by a biography. our reaction to the values or attitudes endorsed by the text, such as being offended by the stance of a particular speechmaker. our expectations being met or not, such as whether a crime drama was consistent with our understanding of the genre.

Multiple responses to texts

Different audiences are likely to have varying responses to a text. Reasons for this include:

- different understandings of the **language** in texts. For example, some audiences may not be familiar with the technical language in a particular text.
- different **expectations of genres**. Some audiences may be unfamiliar with the conventions of dystopian fiction, for example. Others may be avid consumers of this genre, resulting in different expectations that may be met – or not – by a particular text.
- differences in the **contexts** of the audiences. Audiences from different cultures may respond differently to a text's ideas, representations or values based on what is naturalised or considered 'normal' within their **cultural context**. **Contexts of reception** will also differ, such as when a viewer is watching a film for pleasure as opposed to for analysis. **Personal context** also plays a part.
- differences in the **knowledge** and understanding of audiences. For example, a reader familiar with the life of an author may interpret meanings in a text quite differently from someone who isn't.
- **changes over time.** Meanings are not static, as audiences and their contexts change over time.
- **ambiguities** within texts. Even the simplest text will have some degree of ambiguity within its construction that means it can be interpreted in various ways.
- the use of different **reading practices**. Ideological reading practices, such as feminist or postcolonial reading practices, will result in different interpretations.

EXAMPLE Multiple responses to *Jane Eyre*



Although you may not be familiar with the classic Victorian novel *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë, the dynamic process of responding has been mapped out below, using this text. *Jane Eyre* recounts the story of the title character, who has an unhappy childhood in which she is frequently punished by being locked in a red room. Later, Jane becomes a governess and moves to Thornfield Hall. She forms a connection to her employer, the mysterious Mr Rochester, despite several strange happenings at the estate. Their wedding is stopped when Jane learns that Rochester is already married to Bertha Mason, who is locked in the attic and considered a madwoman. Jane leaves and is penniless for a time, but later receives a generous inheritance. Eventually she returns to Thornfield to discover that it has been burned to the ground by Bertha, who died in the fire, and that Rochester has been injured. Jane cares for him and, still in love, they marry.

LANGUAGE	EXPECTATIONS OF GENRES	CONTEXTUAL
I was really captivated by the symbolism used in the novel. Jane's experience in the red room awakens a sense of passion in her character, and I noticed this colour appears at other pivotal moments, such as in the fires Bertha Mason lights at Thornfield Hall.	*As someone who has read other gothic texts, I was engaged by Brontë's reliance on the conventions of this genre. I found the creepy descriptions of Thornfield Hall enjoyable and I was curious about the ghostly laughter Jane hears, only for it to be revealed that there is nothing supernatural about this at all and that there is a somewhat logical explanation.*	*Brontë lived in an era when women struggled for independence. She originally wrote under the male name Currer Bell, knowing she was unlikely to find success as a woman. Although financial insecurity contributes to Jane's decision to marry Rochester, this simply reflects the reality of this context. Their relationship does challenge dominant attitudes, however; Rochester values Jane for her intellect and passion, and by the novel's end, there is a role reversal evident in his dependence on Jane.*
AMBIGUITIES	**RESISTANT**	**FEMINIST**
Jane's role as the narrator shapes my critical response to the text. Taking on the voice of an autobiographer, she controls the story and the accuracy of the information the reader receives. I am aware of the subjectivity and bias in her narration, particularly as she expresses little sympathy for Bertha Mason, who has been kept locked in the attic for fifteen years; Jane simply agrees with Rochester's declaration that Bertha is insane.	*My classmates spoke about how awesome Jane is, but I just don't agree. She is often complaining, even when Rochester tries to buy her dresses and jewellery. I think she seems ungrateful and speaks to him so rudely. Also, the resolution really undermines her position as an independent and feminist character. She ends up marrying Rochester! I think she should punish him for lying to her, not to mention keeping his first wife locked in the attic. How can she be sure he won't do the same thing to her?*	*By applying a feminist lens, I can see that it is really Bertha Mason who is the most important character in the text. She is kept hidden away from society but manages to escape her 'cell' more often than she is locked away. She tries to warn Jane not to marry Rochester by trampling on Jane's veil the night before her wedding: telling her not to buy into this patriarchal institution that confines women.*

Skills involved in analysis

There are several skills involved in analysing a text, and they increase in complexity. Each of these skills is identified in the English syllabus, so you should be clear about what each one means. When developing your interpretations of texts, it can be useful to reflect on the skills you are currently demonstrating, and how you might progress to more complex levels of analysis.

1. **Recognising:** identifying literal ideas stated in the text, and the various elements of construction, such as generic conventions or language features.
2. **Comprehending:** making inferences about the meanings and effects of texts.
3. **Analysing:** explaining the construction of texts and how this contributes to meanings and effects.
4. **Comparing:** reflecting on the ways in which texts are similar or different in terms of their construction, meanings and effects.
5. **Synthesising:** drawing together various aspects of analysis, or other interpretations, to create a holistic interpretation.
6. **Evaluating:** critically appraising a text and making informed judgements about its construction, meanings and effects.

Another thing that you must consider is that interpreting a text does not start and end with the text alone. In coming to a critical interpretation of the text, a high-level analysis will also consider the role of the following:

- **purpose** – the intent of the text's creator
- **context** – of both production and reception, thinking about both cultural and situational factors
- **audience** – you as an individual, but also the text's intended audience
- **comparisons** with other texts
- **other interpretations** of the text.

This will involve some research and self-reflection. Of course, you won't necessarily be able to consider all of these factors all of the time. You won't have access to a lot of contextual information when interpreting unseen texts in an exam, for instance. With your studied texts, however, you should try to consider all of these factors when writing your study notes. That way, you will be able to produce a complex critical interpretation when it comes to the exam or other assessment task. See the two flow charts in Appendix 2 (pages 245–7) for processes you can use to refine and strengthen your analysis of unseen texts in a timed assessment, or your analysis of your studied texts.

Analysing imaginative texts

With the exception of poetry, song and artistic still images, the majority of texts designated as 'imaginative' are narrative texts. Narrative texts tell stories, drawing us into other worlds and lives, either real or imagined. Plays, feature films, novels, television dramas and short stories are all forms of imaginative narrative texts.

When studying any kind of narrative text, you will need to understand how the author has constructed the narrative. Which language, structural and stylistic features has an author used? And how do these shape the narrative, creating meanings and generating effects?

Plot

The way events unfold in a narrative is key to engaging and holding our attention: we want to know 'what happens next'. The sequence of events is carefully arranged to shape our understanding of characters, to create interest and suspense, and to foreground the key ideas and concerns that the author is exploring.

Many literary critics have analysed narratives to determine common, core plots. Critic Christopher Booker argues that all narratives boil down to seven archetypal plot structures.

Comedy	A hero lives in a community where misunderstandings have led to crisis. The truth is discovered, the community is healed and, typically, the hero finds love.
Overcoming the monster	A lone hero must battle a villain to save a community.
Quest	A hero embarks on a difficult journey in search of a great prize.
Rags to riches	A downtrodden hero with hidden potential overcomes challenges and rises to success.
Rebirth	A trapped hero undergoes some critical transformation and discovers their 'true' self.
Tragedy	A flawed hero reaches a crisis point through misfortune or error. They realise the error of their ways and seek redemption, but often this comes too late.
Voyage and return	A hero travels to a foreign or fantastical land before returning home.

ACTIVITY

Analyse the plot

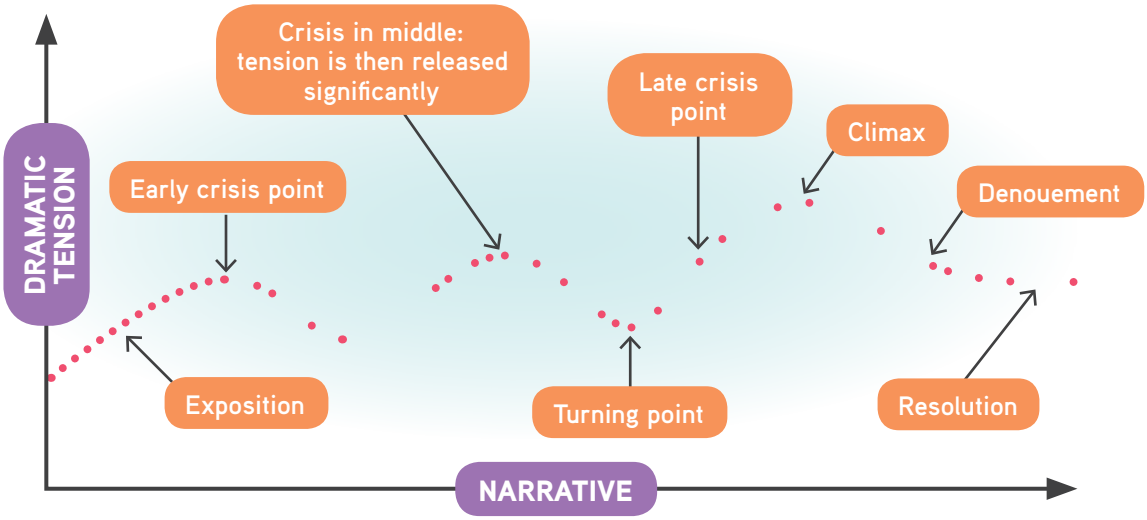
1 From your studied texts, and wider reading and viewing, identify examples of the above standard or archetypal plots.

2 Do you agree that all narratives can be boiled down to these seven plots? Have you come across examples that don't seem to fit? In what ways did they fail to conform?

Narrative structure

Analysing narrative structure requires an understanding of the different parts of the plot and the functions they perform. The structure of a narrative includes the following key points or scenes that create rising and falling tension.

- **Exposition** – the introduction of the main characters and main situation, setting the scene for some kind of conflict.
- **Crisis points** and **turning points** – moments when a character faces a problem or challenge that tests their values and beliefs; decisive changes in the course of events.
- **Climax** – the tension rises to a peak; the main conflict between characters and/or ideas must now be resolved one way or the other.
- **Denouement** – the 'unknotting' or unravelling of narrative threads, when questions are finally answered.
- **Resolution** – the tension relaxes as conflicts are resolved.



Narrative structure can also be described in terms of the overall sequence of events.

Linear or chronological	The events progress in chronological fashion, from origin to conclusion.
Circular, epic or cyclical	Events lead back to the same time and/or place that they began, often implying that the situation will in some sense repeat itself.
Framed	The 'story within a story', where the main narrative is recounted by a character external to those events.
Fragmented	The events are not revealed in order, or are viewed from a variety of different perspectives or via a collection of different texts or fragments.
Parallel	Two (or more) plotlines, involving seemingly unrelated characters, progress in parallel. The audience makes connections between these plots, which may eventually intersect.

Of course, creators of narratives play with plot and structure all the time, coming up with new and interesting ways of telling stories. The feature film *Memento* (2000) and the television drama *Rellik* (2017), for example, both tell their stories in a form of reverse chronological order.

ACTIVITY

Analyse narrative structure

1. Identify two or three crisis points or turning points in your text. Look for moments of conflict and confrontation, a difficult decision or a problem to be solved. For each point, note:
   a. the nature of the conflict or problem (e.g. loyalty to family versus loyalty to friends; the need to survive versus the desire to know the truth)
   b. how it affects your view of the characters (e.g. do you become more or less sympathetic towards them?).
2. Where does the climax occur in your text? What happens at this point and how does this bring conflicting forces or ideas to a head? For example, a climax could be a final battle between good and evil.
3. How does the resolution resolve problems or conflicts that have run through the plot? Does the resolution make the ending positive, negative or a combination of both?
4. Drawing on your answers to the previous questions, write two paragraphs on how your text uses key points in the narrative structure.

Narrator and narrative point of view

The narrator is the character or voice that tells the story. Narrative point of view refers to the ways in which a narrator may be related to the story. It is important to think carefully about an author's choice of narrator and narrative point of view, because it affects the representation of characters and events and thus how we respond to them.

Sometimes authors present more than one narrative point of view, in order to:

- introduce different perspectives or convey information not available to every narrator
- show different sides of a conflict or problem
- create a contrast between how characters see themselves and how they are viewed by others
- reveal complexities in a character that are not apparent to others
- demonstrate present consequences of past decisions.

The following table summarises the key features of the most common narrative points of view.

NARRATIVE POINT OF VIEW	PRONOUN CHOICE	DETAILS	EFFECTS
First-person narrator	I	The voice of a character or individual within the text, e.g. 'If I close my eyes, I can hear the small voices of children …' Gives an 'inside', personal and subjective account of events.	Limits the reader's knowledge of other characters to what the narrator knows or thinks about them. Allows for a rich, detailed understanding of the narrator's personality, beliefs, fears and aspirations. Places the reader in the position of an involved participant in the action.
Third-person limited narrator	he, she, they	A voice located outside the text, e.g. 'Frank put his pen down. He had an overwhelming urge to see Elsa.' Follows the experiences of a single character.	Puts the reader in the position of observer rather than participant. Encourages the reader to form their own judgements and to see complexities in issues.
Third-person omniscient narrator	he, she, they	A voice located outside the text. Follows the experiences of multiple characters, and can represent multiple perspectives. Gives a more detached, objective account.	Allows the reader to know the thoughts and feelings of as many characters as the author wishes.

Unreliable and naive narrators

Sometimes an author may create a narrator who is naive, biased or otherwise unreliable. For example, *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey features a naive narrator: 13-year-old Charlie Bucktin, whose innocence is destroyed as he begins to see the racial intolerance his friends experience. Readers typically have more awareness of racism than Charlie, so we sympathise as he learns about this quality of his society. Paula Hawkins' novel *The Girl on the Train* uses an unreliable narrator in the form of alcoholic Rachel, whose interpretation of events – and thus the readers' – is compromised by her inebriation.

ACTIVITY

Analyse narrative point of view

1. Identify the narrative point of view within a text you are studying.
2. How is this narrator related to the story? Are they close or distant? Do they have an omniscient view of all the events, or is their perspective limited in some way?
3. How does this narrative point of view influence your understanding of and response to the story?

Settings

The settings of a narrative are the places and times in which the action is located. Settings help to bring the world of a narrative to life in our imagination.

When you are writing about settings, show your understanding of how they influence an audience and how they link to other elements of the text. For example, what does the setting reveal about the characters who inhabit it? How do the characters interact with their environments? How does setting help to create atmosphere or conflict?

EXAMPLE Setting in 'Big World'

This paragraph explores the symbolic function of one of the settings within the Tim Winton coming-of-age story 'Big World'.

> Setting fulfils an important function in Tim Winton's story 'Big World'. Having failed their final exams, two teenaged boys escape the confines of the small Western Australian town in which they live, buying a Kombi van and heading north with a dream to pick fruit and lie on the beach. Before reaching their destination, however, the Kombi breaks down, leaving the narrator to remark 'it's obvious we're not going anywhere'. Without much else to do, they watch the sun set over a 'vast, shimmering pink lake that suddenly looks full of rippling water' until 'the sun flattens itself against the saltpan and disappears'. In the vastness of this outback landscape, the narrator notes 'there is just this huge silence'. The physical setting operates as a complex symbol, reflecting the world of opportunity in front of the boys. This space is both beautiful and overwhelming in its possibility, leaving everything 'impossibly far off'. Thus, the setting is an important convention that adds to one of the ideas of how, for teenagers upon leaving school, 'the world suddenly gets big' and overwhelming.

Characters

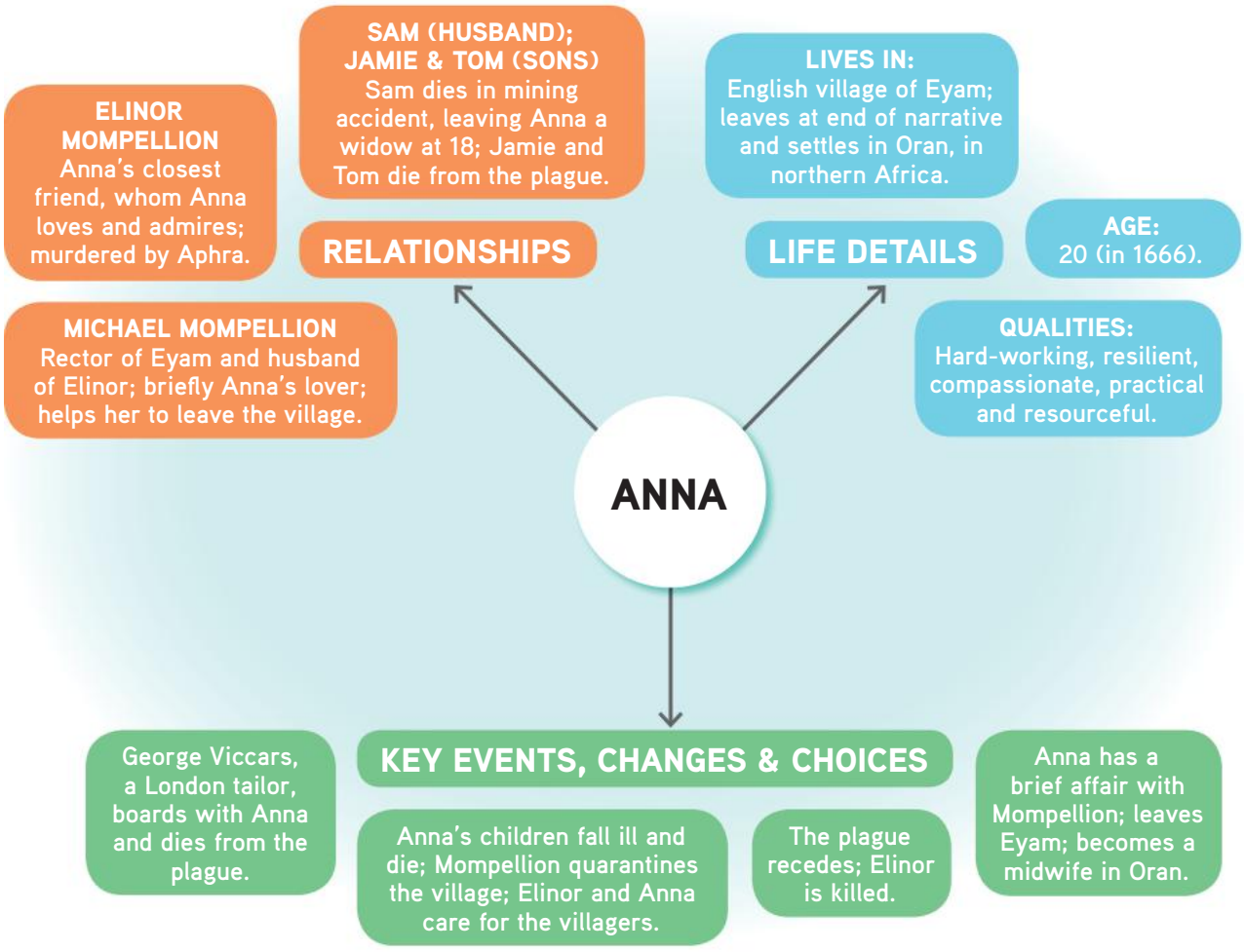
Understanding characters is central to your study of a narrative text. Characters generate the action of the narrative; our interest and emotions are engaged by their fortunes and misfortunes, their aspirations and challenges. Most importantly, an understanding of characters is crucial to understanding the themes and values they represent within the text.

Remember that the main characters will develop throughout the narrative, and what they think and do at one point in the text can be very different from their thoughts and actions at another point. Any thorough analysis will need to consider the characters' growth, and the values and attitudes this reflects.

The main techniques of characterisation include:

- direct description by the narrator (e.g. descriptions of appearance, thoughts, feelings)
- the character's speech and actions
- what other characters say about them
- their relationships and interactions with others
- images and symbols associated with the character
- in films and performances of plays, the physical appearances, facial expressions, movements and speech of the characters.

A concept map is an excellent way to summarise information about a main character. Here is an example using the central character and narrator of Geraldine Brooks' 2001 novel *Year of Wonders*.



ACTIVITY

Create a concept map

Draw a concept map for a main character in one of your studied texts. Write the name of the character in the centre of a page, then place information about that character, including relationships and events, in boxes or circles around it.

Character development

When analysing and interpreting an imaginative text, you need to go further than simply describing the characters. You can do this by showing how characterisation and other narrative features work together to present a view of human behaviour and experience.

This section provides three strategies for analysing characters by examining links between narrative structure and characterisation:

- looking at how characters respond at crisis points
- identifying the influence of other characters
- tracing how characters change as events unfold.

Character responses at crisis points

Characters are tested at crisis and turning points. They are forced to make choices and decisions, which in turn reveal their true priorities and motivations, and are closely linked to ideas and values.

For example, characters may be required to make:

- a choice between acting for oneself (perhaps for survival) and acting for others
- a choice between acting impulsively (perhaps using violence) and acting cautiously (perhaps to avoid violence)
- a choice between giving in to or fighting against adversity
- a choice between commitment to principles (such as justice) or religious beliefs, and a commitment to loved ones
- a decision to right the wrongs of the past.

For example, Christos Tsiolkas' novel *The Slap* examines how seven very different characters respond to the crisis of one man slapping his friend's misbehaving child. This event ultimately forces each character to confront their own values and loyalties, providing the conflict that sustains the narrative.

Character interactions

Some characters appear in narratives simply to impact on others' development. Other characters evolve alongside the protagonist, providing consistent influences that ultimately re-shape them.

Consider how protagonists might evolve as a result of:

- a chance meeting
- an intense relationship
- a forced collaboration
- a mentor
- a relationship with an antagonist.

For example, in the 2003 film *Japanese Story*, Toni Collette's character, Sandy Edwards, changes dramatically as a result of a meeting with a potential client, Hiromitsu Tachibana, in the Pilbara. Sandy and Hiromitsu have an unexpected romantic encounter, but his sudden death forces Sandy to reconsider her identity.

EXAMPLE Characters in 'A Blow, A Kiss'

This sample paragraph compares two male characters in Tim Winton's story 'A Blow, A Kiss', focusing on their emotional responses to and interactions with their sons.

> Despite their differences, the male characters in 'A Blow, A Kiss' have many similarities, ultimately offering a representation of masculinity that is traditional, tough, physical and characterised by the difficulty they have in expressing tender emotions. Both Wilf Beacon and Albie's father fit the stereotype of the rural Australian male: 'blokey', laconic, and interested in drinking and fishing, as well as being close with their sons. Both, however, find it difficult to express what their sons mean to them. Wilf struggles to articulate his sorrow at his son's accident, instead striking his son's head 'onto the metal tray ... like the sound of a mallee root being tossed in'. Albie's dad also finds emotions difficult, expressing his love for Albie by 'reach[ing] out and put[ting] his knuckles to Albie's cheek'. Instead of saying 'I love you, son', he says, 'Sorry about the salmon', but this still leaves Albie 'full to bursting' with his father's love. The men are differentiated by the fact that Albie's father is able to physically express tenderness towards his son, unlike Wilf, whose emotionally crippled state allows him only to express his concern for his son's injury inappropriately: lashing out violently to mask his 'unmanly' grief.

Character change

Like real people, characters are not static, but develop and adapt, sometimes changing dramatically. How characters respond to the changes in their lives can offer important comments on human nature.

Key changes to look for include:

- a shift in the way a character thinks of or interacts with others
- a transformation in the way they think about themselves
- a new understanding or appreciation of the world around them
- a change in their beliefs and values.

For example, Asher Keddie's character in the television drama *Offspring*, Nina Proudman, grows and develops over the course of each season, responding to various events and characters. Incrementally, she matures into quite a different person from the insecure and dutiful character of episode one.

ACTIVITY

Create a character arc

Follow these steps to create a character arc for a central character in a text you have studied.

1. Draw a horizontal line on a piece of paper or in a Word document.
2. Above the start of the line, summarise the nature of the character at the beginning of the text.
3. Above the end of the line, summarise their nature at the end of the text.
4. Identify the catalysts that cause changes in the character, and place these along the line at the appropriate points in the character's arc.
5. Identify the values that your character represents as a result of their change.
6. Write a paragraph analysing your character's development and the nature of the catalyst/s for their change.

Voice

Voice refers to the persona we 'hear' communicating with us as we read. It is constructed through the various language features employed by the writer, such as diction, register and tone. It becomes the vehicle through which the writer's perspective is conveyed, and has a significant impact on the audience's response.

In addition to creating a main narrative voice, writers of imaginative texts usually incorporate many other voices – and their corresponding perspectives – into a narrative. Think of the different characters in a novel or feature film, for example. The construction of these multiple voices and the degree to which they are allowed to speak contribute to our understanding of the writer's overall perspective.

Sometimes those voices might be obvious, such as those who are directly quoted or speak directly to the audience. At other times they are less obvious, operating as echoes within the text. A writer might paraphrase something written or said elsewhere, generalise about what others are saying or respond in some way to the words of others. Intertextuality and allusion also incorporate other voices. Consider how, for example, in Craig Silvey's novel *Jasper Jones*, Harper Lee and her characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are heard as echoes.

EXAMPLE Voice in *All I Ever Wanted*

This sample paragraph explores the construction of voice within a young adult novel, *All I Ever Wanted* by Vikki Wakefield.

> In her novel *All I Ever Wanted*, Vikki Wakefield constructs the voice of Mim as a frustrated and desperate 16-year-old. Ashamed of her family background, characterised as it is by crime and dysfunction, Mim can't wait to escape and travel the world. Her cynicism comes through in the tone of her first-person narration, such as when she describes turning 17 as something that 'should be a turning point, but in reality, it's just another number'. When her mother throws away Mim's precious collection of Lonely Planet books, Mim's conflicted voice, 'torn between love and loathing' for her mother, is evident in her dialogue. 'You don't get it, I need them', she yells. Her anguished tone suggests Mim's desperation to get away, boiling over into conflict with her mother. There is the possibility that readers could view Mim as selfish, but Wakefield also includes the defeated voice of Mim's mother, in dialogue with her daughter, to justify exactly why Mim is so determined to leave her dysfunctional family situation: 'We do what we do to survive, Mim. Sometimes, there's no getting out.' This provides a counterpoint, contributing to the representation of Mim's own voice as a teenager struggling with her circumstances.

Style

Style refers to the language features that are characteristic of a particular author, literary period or genre of text. In written texts, for example, style is the result of the particular uses of diction, syntax, paragraphing and other language features such as figurative language. You might think of style as the 'flavour' of the text.

WORDS TO DESCRIBE STYLE		
academic	dramatic	moody
aggressive	eloquent	obtuse
bold	emotive	plain
colloquial	flowery	poetic
conversational	formal	populist
crisp	gloomy	pretentious
descriptive	humorous	prosaic
didactic	interrogative	sensuous
direct	lyrical	succinct

Below is an extract from a short story called 'Aphelion', by Western Australian writer Eric Mann. The word aphelion refers to the point in the Earth's orbit when it is furthest from the sun. The annotations point out some of the main features of style.

First-person point of view is used to create a personal, even intimate, style.

The author uses strongly visual imagery.

A tendency to use sentence fragments is part of Mann's style.

Personification is also common to Mann's style.

Notice the conversational style, as if the narrator is talking directly to the reader.

This sequence of sentence fragments provides a staccato style of narration.

Isolated words are used to add drama, especially through their juxtaposition.

The whine of the engines increased in pitch as the plane banked hard to line up for the approach to the runway. My stomach tied itself in knots. Staring out the porthole window, the familiar outline of the Darling Scarp came into view, slicing the landscape in two. The drab olive of the eucalypt forest was punctured only by the hills' townships. Foliage faded by yet another brutal summer. Smoke from a distant bushfire. A flicker in the distance where the late sun caught the Swan River on one of its lazy bends.

Sweating, I regarded the letter crumpled in my hands. I had read it a thousand times since it had arrived only yesterday morning; a thousand times its contents had inked themselves indelibly on my memory.

A letter, so old-fashioned these days. The only paper in my letterbox these days was electricity bills and flyers for local takeouts. I almost didn't notice the small white envelope with its quaint cursive writing and a real stamp in the corner, precisely aligned to the edges. In some ways, I wish I hadn't. Inside, just a single page of delicate white paper. A few lines of the same handwriting. A few words, but enough to rip my world apart.

A rumble as the landing gear extended. The PA crackled again. 'Cabin crew, be seated for landing.' A dip as we hit a pocket of air. A gasp. Knuckles whitening on the armrest. Throat constricting as the plane turned again, and the distant city sauntered into view. A place I'd left behind years ago. Escaped.

Home.

Analysing persuasive texts

Persuasive texts come in many forms. They can include advertisements, speeches, feature articles, documentaries, posters and essays. One thing they have in common is that they present an argument designed to position an audience to respond in a particular way. This might be to change a belief, develop a new understanding or perform an action.

When studying persuasive texts, you will need to be able to identify the arguments and techniques of persuasion that have been employed, understanding the beliefs and values that underlie their persuasive intent.

Persuasive structures

Persuasive texts employ structure as a key element of making meaning. Unlike narratives, which involve a higher degree of audience participation in making connections and meaning, persuasive texts offer more explicit explanations or arguments.

Persuasive structures guide the audience through the information being presented, positioning them to accept the writer's thesis. Typically, these structures rely on logic: establishing the steps in the writer's reasoning in ways that seem natural and rational. The most common structures are summarised in the following table.

STRUCTURE	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
Appearance vs reality	Outlining the appearance or general public impression of something, then subverting that through closer investigation.	Arguing for greater efforts to be made with recycling by suggesting that the public believe they are committed because they sort their rubbish, but then investigating what really happens after collection and how little rubbish is actually recycled.
Case studies	Illustrating an observable situation and drawing conclusions from it.	Arguing for a pay rise for nurses by describing the experiences of a group of nurses during the working week, highlighting the stress they endure.
Cause and effect	Establishing the causes of a problem and outlining their observable effects.	Arguing against the solar panel rebate by suggesting that maintaining the current rebate will make electricity companies less profitable and drive up prices.
Compare and contrast	Highlighting the similarities and differences between two things, using juxtaposition to persuade audiences that one is superior.	Arguing a position on voluntary euthanasia by weighing up the arguments both for and against it.
Mistaken critic	Arguing a perspective or proposition by addressing the perceived flaws in an opposing view.	Arguing in favour of compulsory vaccination of children by dismantling the 'anti-vaxxer' campaign point by point.
Occurrence and possibility	Establishing circumstances that have happened in the past as argument for the possibility of such occurrences in the future.	Arguing for action on climate change by outlining recent extreme weather events and stating the likelihood of such events continuing to increase.
Problem and solution	Establishing the existence of a problem or issue before stating one or more solutions.	Arguing against mandatory detention of asylum seekers by highlighting the human and economic costs of detention, and then offering viable solutions such as repatriation or community detention.
Proposition and support	Presenting a hypothesis about a concept or issue and offering a variety of 'proofs'.	Arguing that economic inequality in Australia is on the rise by looking at a range of examples and projections.
Thesis, antithesis, synthesis	Outlining one perspective or proposition, followed by an opposing one, and concluding with a reconciliation of the two into a new proposition.	Arguing for the retention of a music festival on Heirrisson Island by outlining the 'pro' argument, followed by the 'anti' argument, finishing with a compromise that argues for the festival as long as particular conditions are maintained.
Ubiquity	Using the fact that an idea or issue appears to be 'everywhere' to argue its significance.	Arguing for an enquiry into performance-enhancing drug use in sport by pointing out individual cases that have hit the media.

Rebuttal and counterargument

A counterargument is where a writer acknowledges opposing points of view. Conceding that there is potential opposition to their argument is a way for the writer to show that they have a reasoned, well-considered viewpoint. However, the important part of this strategy is the rebuttal, where the writer refutes those counterarguments.

Writers vary in how and where they use rebuttal. In a longer piece, opposing viewpoints might be dealt with towards the end, after the writer has established a strong case for their position. Thus the rebuttal consolidates or 'clinches' the writer's argument. In a short piece such as a letter to the editor, however, the writer might begin with a strong rejection of another point of view – gaining the reader's attention with some colourful, emotive language – before establishing their own view as superior.

EXAMPLE Structure in a speech by Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs' commencement speech to the class of 2005 at Stanford University uses a classic case-study structure to persuade his audience of college students to embrace their youthful curiosity and pursue their passions. He makes this argument by offering three anecdotes about his own life, which collectively highlight how following his own path, rather than taking the 'sensible' option of an expensive college education, has led to greater success and fulfilment.

The first anecdote explains his risky decision to drop out of college to take a calligraphy class that seemed not to have 'any practical application'. However, it later had a significant impact on the design of the first Macintosh computer, which revolutionised the world. The lesson, he says, is that 'you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future'. His second anecdote recalls getting fired from Apple, and how this initially devastating event led to him developing animation company Pixar. Rather than be destroyed by his sacking, he persevered in the industry he loved. 'Don't lose faith', he tells the students, and 'don't settle'. In other words, follow your passion, because only then will you be 'truly satisfied' with your working life and able to overcome setbacks. The third anecdote recalls his cancer scare, and how it made him realise that life is too short 'to waste it living someone else's life'. He concludes with a call to action, synthesising his three life lessons into one simple theme: 'Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.'

ACTIVITY

Analyse persuasive structures

1 From your studied texts, and wider reading and viewing, identify examples of the persuasive structures in the table on page 77.

2 Select one of these texts to investigate its structure further.

- **a** How does the text's structure position you to accept its argument?
- **b** Does the structure emphasise a logical argument, or a more emotive one?
- **c** Does your text include a rebuttal? How does this rebuttal work to undermine the opposing argument?

Appeals to values

The purpose of persuasive texts is, ultimately, to position the audience to agree with the writer's viewpoint. Within this, though, a writer might hope to achieve a number of outcomes by influencing the way their intended audience thinks, feels and acts. The writer might seek to:

- lead the audience to reflect on the complexity of a moral or an ethical issue
- influence the audience to take a side on an issue
- convince the audience to take action (such as signing a petition, voting in a particular way or changing their lifestyle).

Many texts achieve these outcomes by appealing to the values and attitudes of their intended audience. Some common appeals are to authority figures or organisations, to common sense, to family values, to loyalty and patriotism, and to tradition and custom. Three other common appeals are explained in detail in the table below.

PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUE	HOW THE TECHNIQUE PERSUADES	EXAMPLE
Appeal to a sense of justice Plays on our belief that we all have the right to be treated fairly and we should strive for outcomes that are just.	• Positions the reader to agree that 'the punishment should fit the crime'. • Arouses feelings of anger when somebody is punished too harshly or a criminal 'gets off' lightly. • Can arouse feelings of sympathy or the desire to redress unfairness.	'It's easy to fall in love with an adorable puppy or kitten at an animal shelter. But should their age determine their chances of finding a new home? What about the many older, neglected or mistreated animals that need a loving home just as much, if not more?'
Sample analysis: The writer appeals to the reader's sense of fairness to present the case for adopting older animals. The rhetorical questions support the writer's purpose of making the reader examine their motives when choosing a pet.		
Appeal to fear and insecurity Suggests that people's safety, security or freedom are at risk; often exaggerates a situation to present a 'worst-case scenario'.	• Pressures the reader to feel that solutions are needed urgently, so they should agree with the proposals. • Also persuades the reader to believe that the writer has readers' best interests at heart by wanting to protect them.	'Think you can spot an online scam? Think again.'
Sample analysis: The statement undermines the reader's faith in their instincts regarding their online security. It thereby positions them to feel anxious and to look for further guidance and instruction, possibly from the writer.		
Appeal to the hip-pocket nerve Suggests that our financial wellbeing is under threat because we are being overcharged or 'ripped off'.	• Incites strong emotions, e.g. anger at being overcharged or because money is being misused. • Positions the reader to reject the views of those who want to raise prices, fees etc.	'The booking fee for concert tickets is highway robbery. It's not as if you receive a physical ticket anymore. I don't know about you, but the last time I sent an email it didn't set me back upward of ten bucks.'
Sample analysis: The appeal to the hip-pocket nerve positions the reader to feel cheated by agencies charging high fees. The use of the cliché 'highway robbery' combined with the outraged tone associates the agencies' behaviour with criminality, evoking a highly critical response from the reader.		

ACTIVITY

Analyse appeals

The proposal to change the date of Australia Day out of respect for Aboriginal Australians is an issue that has caused debate in recent years. Compare these two responses.

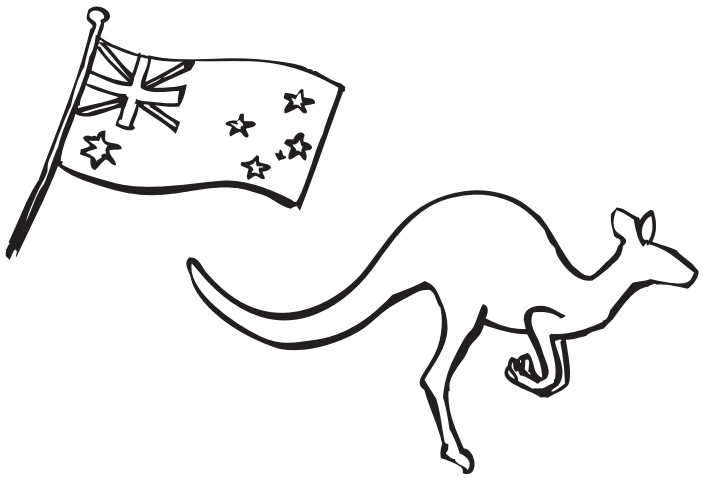
Australia Day is about celebrating what it means to be Australian today. This includes the melting pot that is our current population: descendants of settlers and convicts, new immigrants and Aboriginal people. The arguments to change the date to cater for a minority group reflect everything that is wrong in Australian cultural politics. If we change this date for fear of offending some people, what will be next? Will we have to change Anzac Day for fear of upsetting our large Turkish migrant population? Ban Christmas to avoid offending atheists and Muslims? Cancel the Queen's Birthday holiday out of respect for republicans? Where will our political correctness end?

Australia Day is intended to celebrate our collective identity as a culture. But how can it, when it is built on a foundation of oppression of an entire people? Aboriginal people are, after all, the original Australians, yet each 26 January they are forced to endure a so-called celebration that is just a painful reminder of their traumatic history. It is disingenuous to say that the Australian character is one that celebrates the idea of a 'fair go' when our national day marks a bloody history of the theft of traditional lands, a deliberate process of cultural erasure and even genocide. A more appropriate national day would be one that celebrates reconciliation with Aboriginal cultures, rather than division.

1 Identify the main appeal or appeals being made in each text.

2 Identify three pieces of evidence in each text that support your interpretation of the appeal to values.

3 Construct a third short text that uses a different appeal.



Persuasive still images

Images associated with a persuasive text do more than simply illustrate what is said in words. They often have a powerful emotive impact that underpins their persuasive effect on a reader. Images can present or support a point of view in many ways, including the following.

- They can highlight an extreme aspect of the issue; for example, a photograph of injured victims in a war zone can highlight the impact on civilians, or the extremely high human cost.
- Expressions on people's faces can convey an emotion that influences the viewer's response to the issue.
- A landscape – a natural or built environment – can be presented in a way that emphasises the beauty or ugliness of that setting.
- Light, colour, focus, angle and framing can be used to show an individual in a positive or a negative light. This can position the reader to like/sympathise with the person, or to dislike/distrust them.

The photograph below is from a series by photojournalist Gary Ramage that documents the ice epidemic in Australia. It depicts a man who had been suffering psychosis due to drug use undergoing a full body scan while still handcuffed.

Photo by Gary Ramage / Newspix

ACTIVITY

Analyse a photograph

1. The photograph on the previous page brings together two very different concepts of protection: the safety of society and the safety of an individual. Which elements of the photograph illustrate each concept?
2. Does the image create a feeling of harmony or one of tension? Why?
3. The viewer is unable to see the man's face. What is the effect of this?
4. Do you think the image suggests the photographer's personal viewpoint on the issue of ice use, or do you think the photographer withholds judgement? Explain your answer with reference to specific elements of the photograph.

Analysing interpretive texts

Interpretive texts have one feature in common: they offer an interpretation of a person, place, event, concept or idea. Interpretive texts are often hard to define, because there is such a broad range of texts that can be considered interpretive. It can be helpful to picture them as a continuum, stretching between persuasive and imaginative texts. The table below shows a variety of interpretive text types. Note that these categories can overlap, and certain text types do not always present the same kind of interpretation.

OPINIONATIVE	DISCURSIVE	NARRATIVE
blogs	blogs	allegory
current affairs programs	discursive essays	autobiographies
documentaries	documentaries	blogs
editorials	feature articles	biographies
opinion columns	panel discussions	documentaries
reviews		fables and folk tales
		myths and legends
		reality TV

More persuasive ⟷ More imaginative

These text types offer interpretations in different ways.

- Opinionative texts *share an opinion* on a topic.
- Discursive texts *offer a balanced discussion* of a topic.
- Narrative texts *tell a story* about a topic.

Unlike purely persuasive texts, interpretive texts represent an offer, rather than a demand. They offer the audience an insight, perspective or viewpoint on a topic, and can even offer multiple perspectives to give a broader interpretation. While creators of interpretive texts do seek to position their audience (of course!), they do not demand that the audience accepts their interpretation of the topic as definitive.

Interpretive structures

Many of the structures used in interpretive texts are also used in persuasive and imaginative texts. Discursive structures tend to incorporate multiple perspectives, or approach a topic from a variety of angles. Opinionative structures may only offer a single perspective, but they tend to be quite upfront about their subjective nature. In fact, many opinionative texts are designed to invite discussion: consider opinion columns, editorials and blogs, for example, which often generate responses in the form of letters to the editor or online comments. In this way, they can be seen as contributing to a discussion, even though they may only offer one side of that discussion.

OPINIONATIVE STRUCTURES	DISCURSIVE STRUCTURES	NARRATIVE STRUCTURES
cause–effect	compare–contrast	cyclical
compare–contrast	hypothesis–investigation	episodic
problem–solution	occurrence–possibility	linear or chronological
proposition–support	thesis–antithesis–synthesis	

ACTIVITY

Analyse structure in an interpretive text

1 Reflect on an interpretive text you have recently studied. Would you describe it as opinionative, discursive or narrative in its approach?

2 Which of the above structures is closest to the structure of your interpretive text?

3 How does its structure shape the interpretation it offers?

Selection and omission

A key aspect of any analysis of a text is to examine its content. Even texts that seem to be objective and factual can reveal hidden intentions through the inclusion and omission of detail. A writer will include details and viewpoints that support their argument, while excluding those that might undermine it. Sometimes, opposing viewpoints may be included but not be given as much space, or they may be buried among more supportive details. In this way, even the most seemingly objective text can be shaped to reinforce particular beliefs and values at the expense of others.

EXAMPLE Selection and omission in a documentary

Bernadette Lim's documentary *Once Upon a Time in Cabramatta* shares with Australian viewers the firsthand experiences of the first wave of Vietnamese refugees after the abolition of the controversial White Australia policy. Lim explores the struggles faced by the refugees as they tried to build a life for themselves in a completely alien culture. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many refugees struggled, and some – such as Tony Hoang and Joe Le – turned to gangs to find a sense of belonging.

Lim's intent is to foster sympathy for the plight of those who found themselves in an alien culture and thus she includes little firsthand evidence from those who were subjected to the violence of the Vietnamese gangs that formed in the Sydney suburbs. Although archival news footage is included, this seems sensational and removed from the deeply personal interviews we have with Hoang and Le. This bias, however well-intentioned, does serve to silence the victims of crime, preventing any opportunity for audiences to shift their sympathies away from the refugees.

Voice

Voice in interpretive texts falls into two broad types: subjective/engaging and objective/reasoned. Of course, there are exceptions. However, these two broad categories of voice correspond to the intensely subjective or more objective, discursive natures of interpretive texts. Let's look at two short examples.

The use of interjections such as 'well' and 'yes' contribute to a conversational, colloquial voice.

By withholding information about the film's treatment of characters, a clear sense of dialogue is established with an audience who won't want the plot spoiled.

Beginning sentences with conjunctions is also a trait of informal conversation.

Adding in descriptive phrases, particularly using dramatic language, suggests the writer's subjective perspective, and contributes to the construction of a natural, conversational voice.

The text comes to a clear evaluation or interpretation of the film in its final sentences.

Avengers: Endgame – Unconquerable brilliance takes Marvel to new heights

Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*, 24 April 2019

Well, I won't disclose how things progress here, other than to say it allows the main players to revisit some of the scenes of their most spectacular franchise triumphs. And I have to admit, in all its surreal grandiosity, in all its delirious absurdity, there is a huge sugar rush of excitement to this mighty finale, finally interchanging with euphoric emotion and allowing us to say poignant farewells. [...]

Avengers: Endgame is entirely preposterous and, yes, the central plot device here does not, in itself, deliver the shock of the new. But the sheer enjoyment and fun that it delivers, the pure exotic spectacle, are irresistible, as is its insouciant way of combining the serious and the comic. Without the comedy, the drama would not be palatable. Yet without the earnest, almost childlike belief in the seriousness of what is at stake, the funny stuff would not work either. As an artificial creation, the Avengers have been triumphant, and as entertainment, they have been unconquerable.

Too much love: helicopter parents could be raising anxious, narcissistic children

Marilyn Campbell, *The Conversation*, 9 May 2019

Research shows today's parents spend more time per day parenting than in the 1980s. But we don't know how many are over-parenting. That's because most population studies of this nature rely on self-reports and parents are unlikely to admit to being over-zealous or controlling of their children.

Sometimes over-parenting is called 'lawnmower parenting', illustrating how parents clear their children's life path of obstacles. Others have called this type of parenting like growing up in a green house. Media also refers to children of such parenting as 'cotton wool' kids or as being in 'bubble wrap'.

The use of the inclusive 'we' contributes to a sense of objectivity within the voice.

The privileging of empirical studies suggests an authoritative voice, and also avoids emotion.

The reference to other perspectives contributes to the reasoned and objective tone of the voice.

ACTIVITY

Analyse an interpretive text

The following text is an extract from an essay offering an interpretation of Lego. Write a short paragraph analysing the construction of voice in the text, using the annotations above as a guide.

Structuring thought and imagination brick by brick, Lego is more than child's play

By Sondra Bacharach

Associate Professor in Philosophy, Victoria University of Wellington

You might think Lego is just a kids' toy – one you played with as a child and now step on as you walk through the house as a parent.

These days, however, the bricks are showing up in all sorts of unexpected places – on display in museums, in street art, in home renovations and at work. Those playing with Lego are unexpected too, including artists like Ai Weiwei, corporate business people facilitating a work function or engineers designing sophisticated robotics.

Our recent book, *LEGO and Philosophy*, offers a new perspective. These brightly coloured bricks are not mere child's play. They raise important and challenging questions about creativity and play, conformity and autonomy, identity and culture.

Not just for kids

Interest in Lego has recently extended beyond simple child's play. Sociologists, psychologists and economists have studied the use of Lego bricks as tools for achieving certain ends via Lego-based therapy and similar activities.

Tools are for using, building, working, thinking, teaching, imagining, playing and much else. In fact, tools can be for anything. As soon as we realise Lego is a tool, its uses beyond mere play are obvious. Indeed, it is a universal tool that can be used to make anything we can imagine.

Analysing still images

Still images are a significant part of the ATAR English course. They appear in the Comprehension section of the examination, where they are included to test your ability to analyse and make meaning from visual texts.

There are three main groups of conventions to consider when analysing still images.

- **Mise en scène:** the elements that are visible within the frame of the image.
- **Composition:** the arrangement of elements within the frame of the image.
- **Text:** any words and typography that have been added to the image.

Appendix 1 includes tables outlining the main visual language features, providing you with the metalanguage of still image analysis; see pages 242–3.

EXAMPLE An image from *Australia*

The following image is a still from the 2008 feature film *Australia*, an epic romance directed by Baz Luhrmann. The narrative follows Lady Sarah Ashley, a British aristocrat who inherits a cattle station in the Kimberley region of Australia. She must contend with a corrupt and violent society as she takes control of the station, soon falling in love with the local drover tasked with driving her cattle to Darwin to be sold. Set against the backdrop of World War II, the film addresses issues of gender, class and racism.

Lady Ashley is captured using a long shot, to enable the viewer to appreciate the contrast between her polished character and the rustic surroundings of the Darwin waterfront.

The train and the car are metonymic of travel and journeys. Despite Lady Ashley having just arrived, these foreshadow her future journeys, both literal and symbolic.

Lady Ashley's costume is elegant and sophisticated, connoting her privileged status, but impractical, implying she is out of touch with or unprepared for the remote Australian environment.

High-key lighting suggests the heat and bright sunshine associated with Australia.

The position of Lady Ashley in the centre of the frame signifies her status, an idea reinforced by the line of servants behind her. Their ethnicity draws attention to the oppression of Aboriginal people at this time.

The expensive-looking vehicle in the foreground is also a symbol of Lady Ashley's wealth.

The colours of Lady Ashley's costume, her uniformed servants and her extensive luggage contrast with the reds and browns of her environment, suggesting possible conflict to come.

While the construction of Lady Ashley and her servants connotes white privilege and power, her stark juxtaposition against the rough setting suggests a perspective of gentle ridicule of her ignorance.

ACTIVITY

Analyse a still image

1 Identify the visual language features used in the construction of the image below, which is from later in the film than the one analysed opposite.

2 For each visual language feature you identify, explain how it contributes to the representation of Lady Ashley.

3 Write a paragraph comparing the two representations of Lady Ashley. Make sure you refer to specific visual language features.

Lady Ashley (Nicole Kidman) and Drover (Hugh Jackman) in *Australia*

Gaze

Have you ever had someone stare at you, making you unconsciously look down or away, feeling uncomfortable? Gaze can be a powerful phenomenon.

The concept of 'the gaze' comes from gender studies. Critics noticed that women were often represented in images as objects to be gazed upon and were thus disempowered by such depictions. Male subjects, however, were typically represented as performing the gaze, sometimes even boldly staring at the viewer. This afforded them power in their representation. The gaze can operate similarly in other power dynamics, such as depictions of ethnic, class or age differences.

There are two main kinds of gaze:

- An **intra-diegetic** gaze occurs when the figure in the image is looking at something or someone else within the world of the image.
- An **extra-diegetic** gaze is one in which the subject seems to be looking at something or someone outside of the frame of the image.

In both cases, it is important to consider who is gazing at whom.

In this image, a young woman offers a direct gaze towards the viewer, at eye level.

In this image, however, the woman's gaze is directed away from the viewer. Her head is tilted slightly upwards, and her gaze apparently directed at something or someone just out of shot.

ACTIVITY

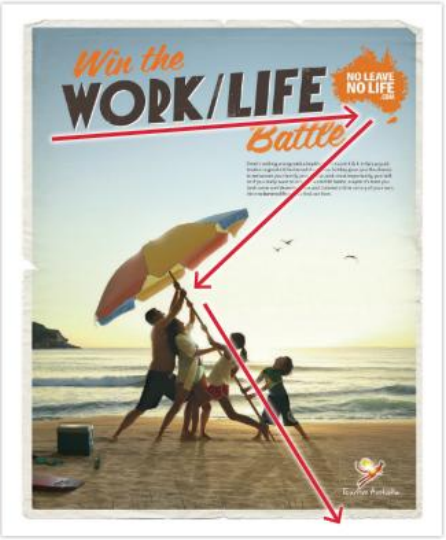
Compare two images

1 For each of the above images, list three words that characterise the representation of the subject. For example, consider which image makes her seem more powerful, vulnerable or approachable.

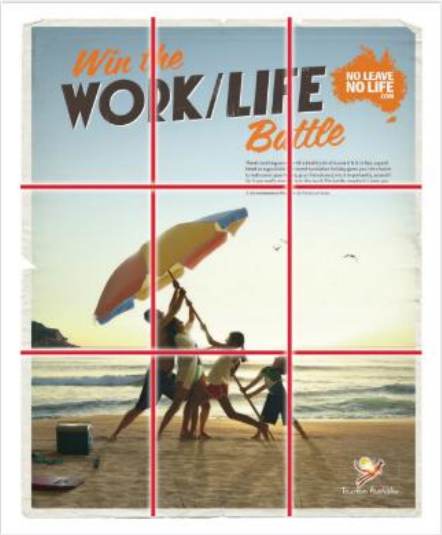
2 Explain how the gaze in each image contributes to its representation of the subject.

Other aspects of still image composition

Leading lines or vectors are created through the composition of the image. They are imaginary lines that work to draw the viewer's eye through the image. Advertising, in particular, works actively to create leading lines that draw attention to brand names and logos.



The composition of this advertisement draws the eye from the slogan to the logo for Tourism Australia, who produced the advertisement.



The Rule of Thirds is a theory that suggests when an image is divided into thirds both vertically and horizontally, the eye is naturally drawn to where those lines intersect. Photographers and artists often use this theory to compose balanced and aesthetically pleasing images. When analysing images, it can be a useful tool in describing the location of various elements in the image, such as 'in the central third'.

The composition of this advertisement is also organised according to the principle of the 'Rule of Thirds', with the slogan dominating the top third, the horizon aligned with the bottom third, and the family grouped at one of the intersections.

Multimodal still images

When analysing multimodal still images, it is important to consider how language features associated with written and visual modes operate together. In this image, the discourse of war established in the written text is supported by the allusion to a famous war photograph. Together, they create a powerful message that a family holiday is a kind of victory for the battling working classes.

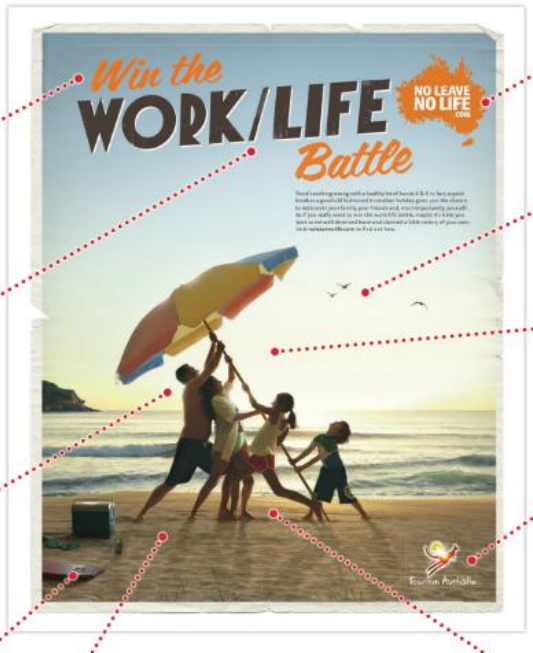
The text uses colloquialism to appeal to an Australian audience. War discourse, including terms such as 'battle' and 'victory', reinforces the overall theme while the references to family and leisure appeal to a sense of family values to justify taking a holiday.

The slogan transforms the concept of 'work/life balance' by using war discourse to suggest it is a battle; this is an appeal to a working audience who might consider themselves 'Aussie battlers'.

The close proximity of two adult and two child figures suggests family togetherness.

The relaxing setting of the beach is commonly associated with leisure time and holidays.

Costumes and props reinforce the idea of beach-side leisure.



The campaign name of 'No leave, no life' uses repetition and alliteration to reinforce a simple, memorable message.

The presence of three birds symbolises freedom, in this case from the pressure of work.

The colour palette is warm and slightly retro, suggesting happy memories of family holidays.

Iconic Australian imagery is employed, including the beach, the map of Australia and the kangaroo in the logo, to suggest that the right to have a family holiday is an Australian value.

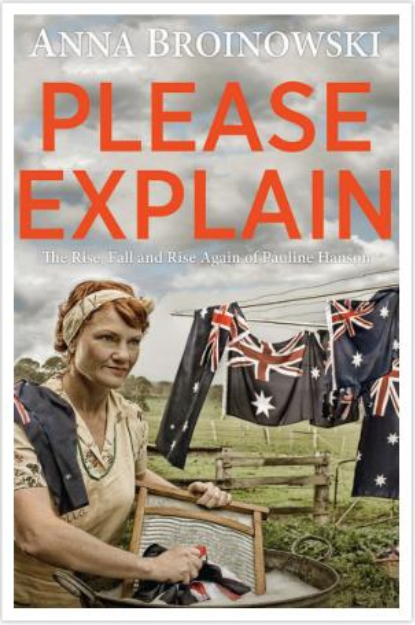
The arrangement of figures alludes to a famous World War II photograph symbolising victory.

EXAMPLE Analysing a poster

The Tourism Australia poster is a humorous advertisement that employs war discourse and imagery to encourage people to take time off from work in order to holiday with their families. The poster is largely composed of a long shot of one of the nation's many beautiful beaches at sunrise, bathing the scene in a warm sepia tone. The ocean view suggests freedom, an idea reinforced by the three seabirds visible. The image is dominated by a family setting up a beach umbrella in the foreground. Their posture and arrangement clearly alludes to the famous World War II photograph of victorious US soldiers raising the American flag over the Japanese island of Iwo Jima. This visual allusion works with the slogan emblazoned across the top third of the poster, 'Win the Work/Life Battle', to suggest that leisure time is a kind of victory for working families, especially those who might identify as 'Aussie battlers'. The close proximity of the family members also has the effect of suggesting that holidays are a way to bring people closer together, addressing another concern of busy working families. The construction of this image – with its use of war discourse, allusion to an iconic war-time photograph, proximity of its subjects and a nostalgic colour palette – suggests to the viewer that their family will be a 'winner' by spending quality time together on holiday. It offers what might be described as a working-class perspective on holidays, appealing to values of both family and leisure, suggesting that achieving a work/life balance is a 'battle' that one must 'win' to have quality family time.

Multiple interpretations of an image

Even though viewers are presented with the same image, they may arrive at quite different readings due to the ambiguities inherent within visual language and the viewer's own context. Consider the two readings of the following image.



Cover of a book about politician Pauline Hanson by Anna Broinowski, published by Penguin in 2017

One reading of this image would be that it is a positive depiction of Pauline Hanson as someone motivated by a nostalgic return to good old-fashioned traditional Australian values. Hanson is depicted in traditional housewife clothing of the 1940s, scrubbing Australian flags and hanging them on a traditional Hills Hoist clothesline. This implies Hanson is maternal and hardworking, determined to make Australia the best it can be. The historical style of the image suggests a return to traditional values, which, for those familiar with Hanson's politics, could also include a return to a pre-multicultural Australian identity. The working-class tone of the image could also suggest Hanson is a kind of 'Aussie battler': an iconic Australian

concept that represents her as an 'underdog' in the world of Australian politics. This image could be read as offering a perspective on Hanson that is based on a return to wholesome, traditional values, with Hanson depicted as a caring, maternal but hard-done-by woman who is not afraid to get her hands dirty to maintain Australia's cultural identity.

However, one could read this image as deeply ironic. Rather than viewing Hanson with a nostalgic glow, viewers could interpret the retro styling as suggesting Hanson is old-fashioned, or hanging onto a historical idea of Australia that is out of touch with the modern nation. With her outdated clothes and scrubbing board, the figure could be interpreted as stubbornly resistant to modernity. While the rural setting might be typical of Australian farms, the dilapidated state of the fence and the discarded implements could suggest that Hanson's values and politics are faulty. Using for the title a phrase derived from Hanson asking an interviewer to explain xenophobia subtly reminds the viewer of criticisms that Hanson is racist, and could also imply that she is ignorant. The title subtly foregrounds these ideas, informing the viewer's interpretation of the rest of the image. Furthermore, the image of washing the flag could even be interpreted as alluding to ethnic cleansing, a controversial representation of Hanson's resistant perspective on multiculturalism. Ultimately, this image could be interpreted as satirical, depicting Hanson as retrogressive and out of touch with modern values.

ACTIVITY

Consider different interpretations

1 Discuss these two readings with a partner. Identify at least three reasons why the same image can generate such vastly different interpretations.

2 What contextual knowledge would the viewer need in order to arrive at the second interpretation?

3 Which interpretation does your own reading support? What aspects of your own context led you to this interpretation?

4 Can you identify third possible interpretation? Write a brief paragraph explaining how a different audience might interpret this image.

Analysing moving images

In feature films, documentaries, TV programs and web series, moving images are used to tell a story. As well as using the visual language features of still images explored above, these multimodal texts have additional visual and auditory language features.

Camera movement and editing are two visual language features you should be aware of when analysing moving images. Auditory language features include dialogue, diegetic sounds and music. Refer to pages 242–4 of Appendix 1 for tables outlining the most common techniques of camera movement and film editing, as well as other multimodal language features.

EXAMPLE Analysing *Breath*

The four images in the table below represent a scene from the 2017 feature film *Breath*, directed by Simon Baker and based on the novel of the same name by Tim Winton. In this scene, a former champion surfer named Sando is mentoring a young teenager nicknamed Pikelet, who is new to surfing. You can watch the scene at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tMyzV4rlw4.

	Slow, quiet, gentle music plays. Sound of waves. Long shot of ocean. Eye level. Handheld camera rises and falls with the waves. Sando: You're right here, right now, ok? [Low, calm tone.]	The monochrome palette of grey-blue sky and sea adds a sense of tension appropriate to Pikelet's anxiety. It also contrasts with the yellow surfboard, which Sando has lent to Pikelet for this occasion of his first 'big wave'. The long shot emphasises the smallness of the figures within the sea. The eye-level, handheld nature and rise and fall of the shot creates a perspective whereby the viewer is in the sea with the two characters.
	Cut to close-up of two characters' heads in close proximity. Eye contact and arms gripping same surfboard. Sando: You got this, mate. Let's do it. Let's have a go. [Low, calm tone.]	The close-up focuses attention on the eye contact and touching arms that highlight the close mentor–mentee relationship between the two.
	Cut to over-the-shoulder shot as Pikelet heads out to catch the wave. Music picks up pace, stronger beat becomes apparent. Sound of waves continues. Handheld camera rises and falls, waves splashing the camera.	The over-the-shoulder shot continues to position the viewer as if they are in the scene, perhaps sitting on their own board behind Sando and Pikelet. The music, while remaining calm, increases in intensity and volume slightly, building a gentle sense of tension into the scene, appropriate to Pikelet's rising adrenaline.
	Low-angle shot from base of wave as Pikelet crests the wave on his board. Volume of music increases. Sando: Go Pikelet, go Pikelet! Long shot trucks with Pikelet as he surfs down and along the wave. Long take. Film speed slows down slightly, as does diegetic sound of waves crashing around Pikelet.	Low-angle shot emphasises height of wave and positions Pikelet as heroic in overcoming his fear to surf. The long take, combined with the slowing down of the film and diegetic soundtrack, adds an otherwordly or slightly surreal quality to the scene. Dialogue ceases during this shot. This contributes to the film's representation of surfing as a spiritual experience.

CHAPTER 5

COMPOSING AN ANALYTICAL RESPONSE

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- learn strategies for preparing for and planning an analytical response
- develop methods for structuring effective short answer and extended analytical responses
- explore ways of structuring a comparative response
- consider how you can use language and stylistic features to develop a voice in your analytical responses
- learn how to use textual evidence more effectively
- develop strategies for editing and improving your analytical responses.

In an analytical response you demonstrate your close knowledge of a text and your analytical and interpretive skills. It is a formal piece of writing requiring a clear, logically developed argument and precise language. It also allows you to show your understanding of and interest in the world of the text – its genre, contexts, perspectives, themes and ideas. You will be writing in response to a given essay topic, and it is vital that you work closely with the terms and ideas in this topic. The more strongly you engage with both the topic and the text, the more original and incisive your response is likely to be.

By the time you commence Year 12 English you will have learnt the basic techniques of writing analytical responses, such as essays. This chapter shows you how to develop and refine your skills, in order to write more complex, nuanced responses. In addition, you will explore the particular features of short answer responses. The sample paragraphs in this chapter provide useful examples and models; just as important are the guidelines and annotations, as these highlight elements that you should incorporate into your own writing.

Elements of a top analytical response

A high-level analytical essay will do the following things.

- Offer a clear thesis that responds directly to the question.
- Present a sustained interpretation of the text, articulated as an understanding of its themes, ideas, arguments and/or effects.
- Justify such an interpretation through close analysis of language, structural, stylistic and/or generic features.
- Show a detailed understanding of the functions of the text, through awareness of its purposes, audiences and contexts.
- Frame the analysis within the context of the syllabus concepts embedded within the question.
- Support arguments and statements about the texts with well-selected textual evidence, including short quotations, integrated into the discussion.
- Structure the discussion clearly and logically, with an effective introduction and conclusion, and several body paragraphs that offer reasons in support of the interpretation.
- Use metalanguage accurately and appropriately to discuss textual features and explain their significance.
- Use an expressive, fluent and clear writing style with correct spelling and grammar.

Preparing for your response

Whether you are writing under the intense timed conditions of an in-class or exam assessment, or whether you are completing a take-home task, there is always a degree of preparation that you should do before writing an analytical response.

Analysing the question

It is essential that you analyse the question closely in order to develop a well-structured, relevant response. Essay questions invite you to think about, and even question, a particular assertion. This assertion might relate to a specific text, how texts work in general, or the functions of various syllabus concepts.

Breaking the question down into its component parts is the first step in writing a successful analytical response. It is essential that you consider the requirements, conceptual basis and implications of the topic so that your response engages with it meaningfully.

Breaking down the question

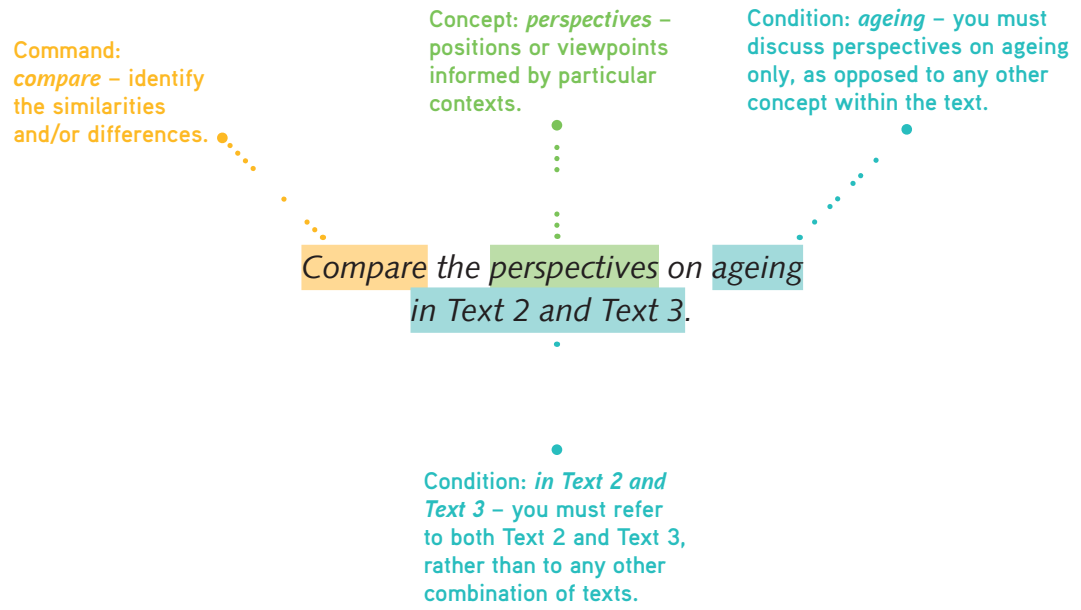
You have probably been taught to identify the keywords in a question before beginning your response. At this level, however, there are three types of keywords that you should consider: command words, concept words and condition words.

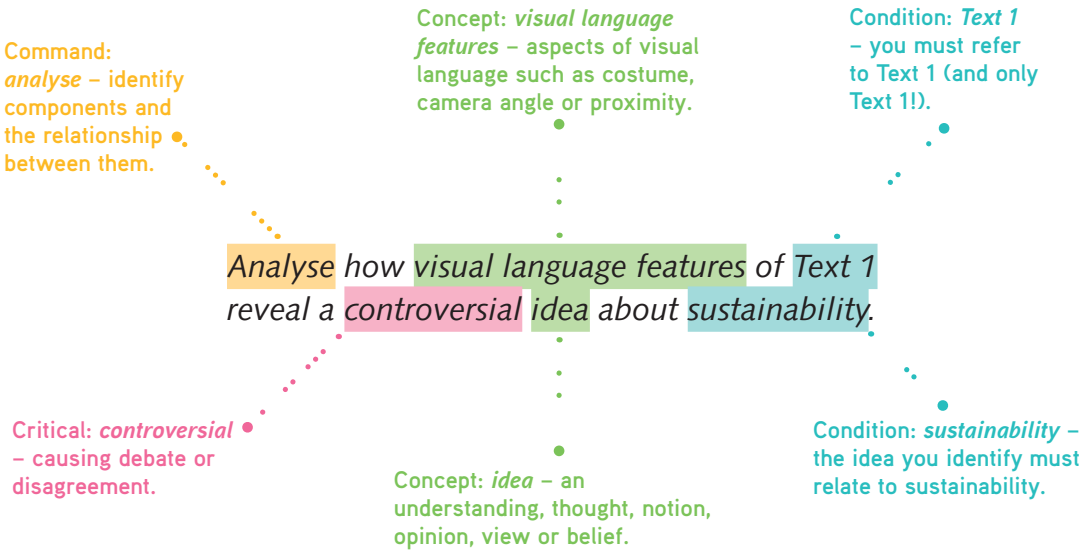
- **Command words** are the instructional terms that indicate the kind of argument you are being asked to provide. For example, 'analyse' requires you to identify various elements of a text and the relationships between them, while 'discuss' requires you to identify various ideas related to a topic and offer points for and/or against them.
- **Concept words** refer to the syllabus concepts that you are being asked to engage with. Questions may have one, two or even three syllabus concepts within them. It is important that you identify these concepts and apply them to your chosen text in the way the question demands. Ultimately, all assessment within the English course is based upon the syllabus, rather than your individual texts, so it is essential that you engage meaningfully with the syllabus concepts within your question.
- **Condition words** outline the parameters of your response. Sometimes this might be as broad as requiring you to respond 'with reference to a studied text'. At other times you may be given more specific instructions, such as to respond with reference to 'a narrative text' or 'two texts of different modes'. It is important to follow these instructions carefully as, if they are not addressed fully, your essay cannot receive a high mark.

In addition, many questions will contain further keywords – which we can call **critical words**. Exam topics often include such words so that markers can differentiate between the many student responses they read and can rank each response in relation to others. For example, previous WACE exam questions required students to discuss 'a *hidden* or *inner* conflict'. The extent to which a student explored the 'hidden or inner' nature of the conflict within their text was a factor in determining how successfully they had engaged with the question.

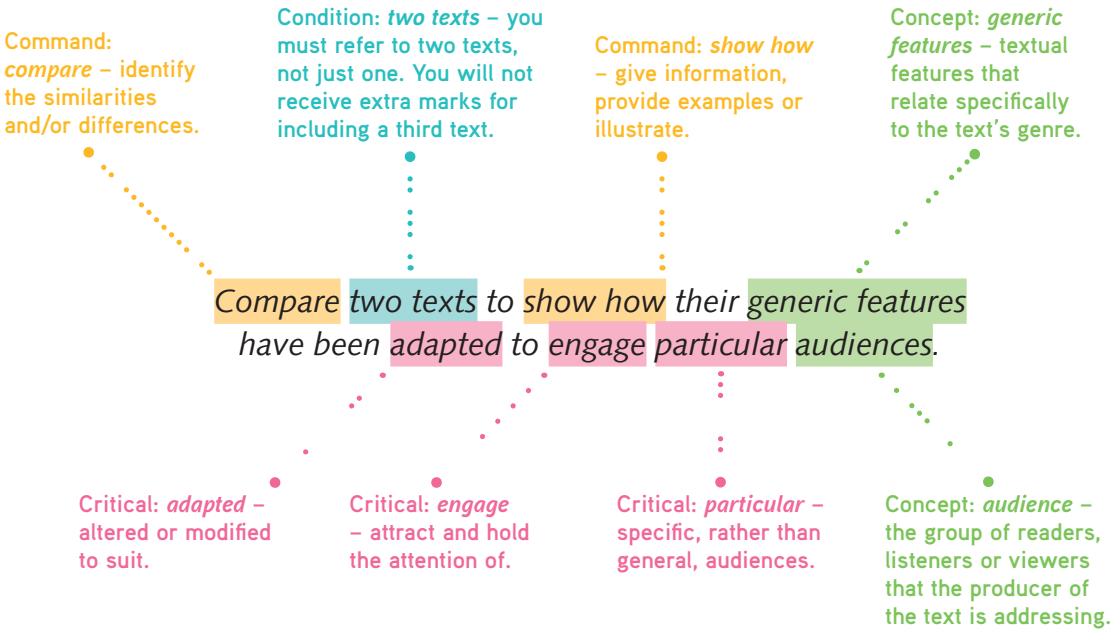
Below are four worked examples of different types of questions you may encounter, in the style of the Comprehending and Responding sections of the exam. Many of your school assessments will also use these types of questions.

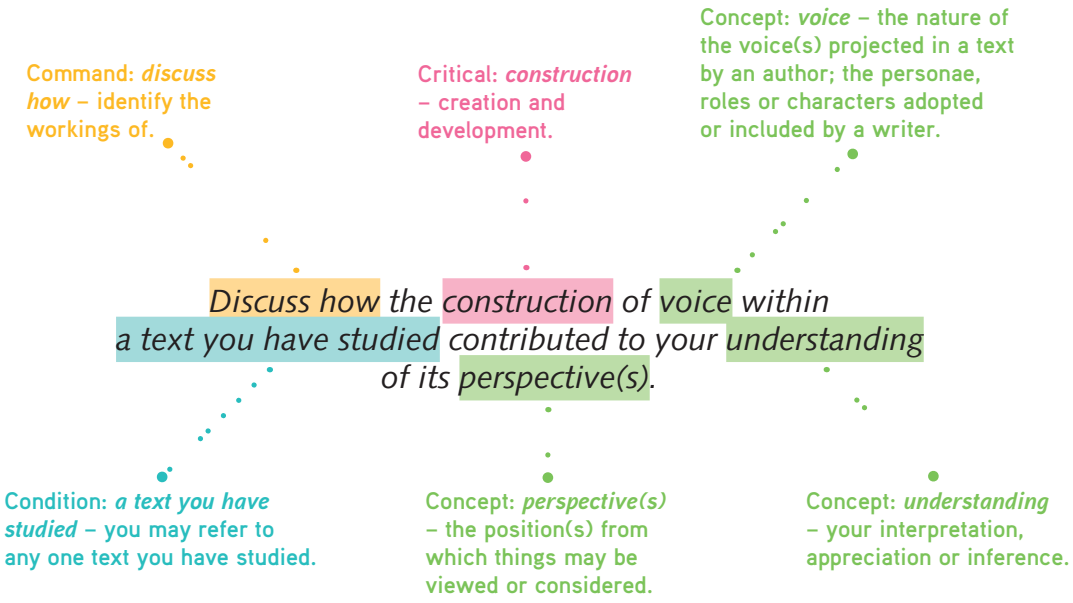
Sample Comprehending questions





Sample Responding questions





Taking it further: understanding command words

Questions will use different command words for a reason – they require slightly different responses. Being aware of the precise nature of what a question is asking you to do can help you plan a more effective approach. Some of the more common command words used in English are explained in the table below.

Account for	Give reasons for something. *Account for the differences in two audiences' responses to a text.*
Analyse	Identify and explain the function of component parts of a text, representation, perspective etc. *Analyse how the setting in Text 1 shaped your interpretation of the character.*
Compare	Show how things are similar and/or different. *Compare how texts work to represent the same idea or concept.*
Consider	Reflect on and make a judgement about. *Consider how a text you have studied might challenge the expectations an audience has of its genre.*
Discuss	Examine the various aspects of a topic. *Discuss how your context influenced your response to the attitudes represented in one text.*
Evaluate	Provide a judgement about something or appraise it carefully. *Evaluate the extent to which your understanding of one text was influenced by your experience of another.*
Explain	Identify the why or how of something. *Explain how a text you have studied subverts or challenges the conventions of its genre.*
Explore	Investigate. *Explore the relationship between voice and perspective in one text.*
Show / Show how	Illustrate through examples. *Show how certain values are promoted through the construction of character in Text 3.*

ACTIVITY

Practise breaking down questions

Annotate the following examples to develop your skills at deconstructing questions. Use the examples on the previous two pages as models.

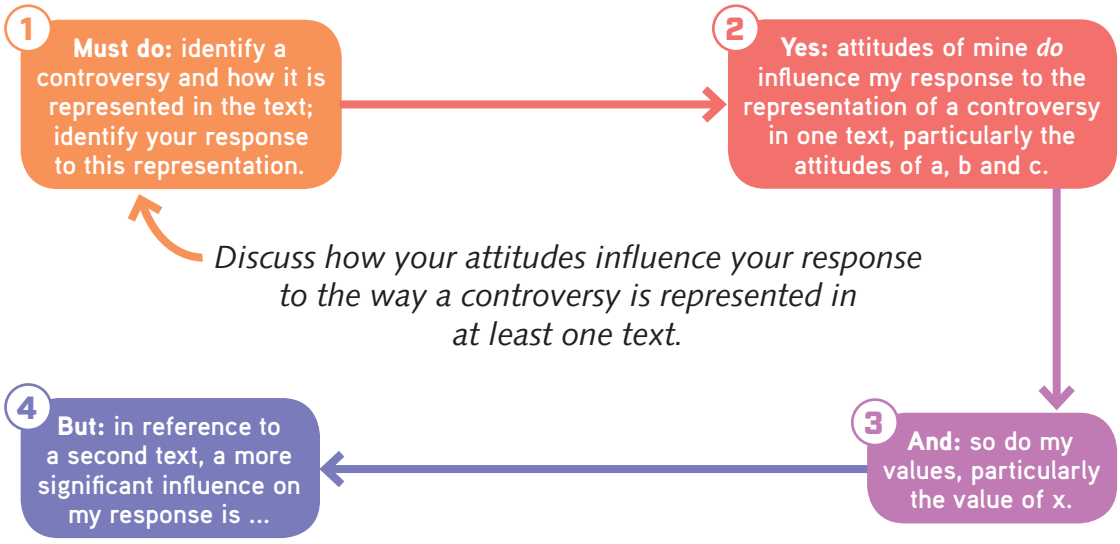
1. Explain how language features shaped your understanding of the character in Text 1.
2. Analyse the role of symbolism in Text 2.
3. Show how the voice used in Text 3 reveals particular attitudes.
4. Discuss how your personal context has influenced your response to the perspectives evident in a text you have studied.
5. Explain how at least one text has blended features of different genres for a particular purpose or effect.
6. Compare how two texts of different modes use textual features to represent a similar idea.

Taking it further: interrogating the question

'Interrogating' the question means examining its claims and assumptions about the text. Does the question contain a statement that might be challenged through discussion of one of your studied texts? Does this claim stand up to scrutiny? Can you 'test' this claim by thinking of examples and counterexamples from the text?

By interrogating the question you introduce greater complexity to your response, which can help you to write more interestingly and insightfully. However, don't completely reject an assertion within a question and then proceed to write on a different idea. You may be able to qualify or even contest a question, but you must engage with it closely in your response.

The flow chart below suggests questions to ask when interrogating a particular question. You should always think 'yes, but …', or 'yes, and …', even if the question seems to invite simple agreement. Note, however, that points 1 and 2 in the example below represent the bulk of the response.



Constructing a thesis

A thesis is a clear, concise yet comprehensive statement that sets out your overall argument. It should be one or two sentences only. Your thesis statement is the core of your response to a question: the rest of your response adds the explanations and supporting evidence. A thesis statement will typically be included as part of your introduction in an essay, or your topic sentence in a short answer.

A good rule of thumb is to take each of the generalised keywords in the question and replace them with specific terms.

Here is a simple example for a Comprehending question:

Analyse how visual language techniques work to reveal an idea about human nature in Text 1.

Your thesis statement for a response to this question could be:

> The salience and facial expression of the African American character, as well as the low camera angle used, represent her as heroic, revealing the ability to persevere in the face of adversity in Text 1.

Following the order of the keywords in the question could result in a clunky sentence, so you might choose to rearrange it.

> In Text 1, the ability to persevere in the face of adversity is revealed through the salience and facial expression of the African American character, as well as the low camera angle, which represent her as heroic.

Now here is a more complex Responding question:

Discuss how your attitudes influence your response to the way a controversy is represented in at least one text.

Your thesis statement for this question will be longer and more complex:

> My cynicism towards political correctness and virtue-signalling led to my approval of James Holdsworth's critical representation of the controversial 'Change the Date' campaign as ultimately meaningless, in his article 'Why changing Australia Day won't change anything'.

You could rearrange this statement to improve it stylistically, and by writing it as two sentences you could add more detail:

> In his article 'Why changing Australia Day won't change anything', James Holdsworth offers a damning representation of the 'Change the Date' campaign as ultimately meaningless, in that it fails to address more pressing injustices for Indigenous Australians such as inequalities in health care. As I, too, am cynical about political correctness and the empty virtue-signalling of the left-wing media, I admire Holdsworth's controversial stance.

Word bank for constructing a thesis

When constructing a thesis, you should avoid bland phrases such as 'The writer says …' Instead, experiment using the following verbs to create precision or emphasis.

For identifying a theme, idea or viewpoint *promoted* by the text.	accentuates advances advocates asserts	champions condones endorses magnifies	proposes recommends supports upholds
For identifying a theme, idea or viewpoint *rejected* by the text.	attacks condemns contradicts counters criticises	denigrates dismisses disputes impugns mocks	negates rebuts refutes repudiates undermines
For identifying a theme, idea or viewpoint *illustrated* by the text.	conveys demonstrates exemplifies explores	illuminates implies indicates reveals	shows signals signifies signposts

ACTIVITY

Create and refine a thesis statement

1. Using one of the questions you deconstructed (broke down) in the previous activity (page 98), write a clear thesis statement that summarises your position.
2. Experiment with rearranging your thesis statement, as in the examples on page 100, until you reach a version that is clear and concise, yet addresses all aspects of the question.
3. Rewrite your thesis using different verbs from the table above to add variety and nuance to your contention.

Background research

If you have the opportunity, it can be helpful to research the background of your text and its context to help you offer a more nuanced or informed argument.

Consider the following approaches.

- **Research the context of the events, issues and ideas explored in your text.** This can help you evaluate the particular perspective your text offers by considering it in relation to others.
- **Research the creator of your text.** Consider the context of the author, filmmaker or producer. What other texts have they created? How might their background influence the nature of their texts and ideas?
- **Look for alternative perspectives.** Who might offer a different viewpoint from those in your text? Who might disagree altogether?
- **Compare your text to others.** Are there other texts that do similar things to yours? In which ways are they similar or different?

You might not always be able to do such extensive research but, even with the unseen texts in exams and other timed assessment tasks, there are useful steps you can take.

- **Read the contextual information at the head of the extract.** Assessments that feature unseen texts typically include a sentence or two providing some context for the extract, such as its form and where and when it was published.
- **Check the acknowledgements page.** At the end of the exam paper you will find bibliographical details for the texts included in the Comprehending section, which could provide useful information.

Taking it further: exploring different readings

The syllabus specifically requires you to develop a more informed interpretation by considering different readings of texts. While you will be exposed to others' interpretations during classroom discussions, it is also useful to be aware of other formal readings of the text. Look for literary criticism, long-form reviews and journal articles on your texts as part of your background research, and consider the varied interpretations they offer.

Planning your response

Whether your response is written in a timed situation, such as an exam or in-class assessment, or whether you have the luxury of time with a take-home task, planning is an essential tool to help you develop the best possible argument.

The flow chart on the next page shows an effective strategy to plan for a longer analytical response, such as an essay.

QUESTION Explore how voice works within at least one text to represent a particular context.

Identify the keywords.
- Focus on the concepts and texts you will explore.

KEY CONCEPTS

Chasing Asylum; 2016 documentary by Eva Orner.

Voices of various aid workers.

Context of asylum seeker detention centres on Manus and Nauru. Represented as contentious, shameful and horrifying.

Formulate your thesis.
- Use more formal language.
- Answer the question as directly as you can.

Eva Orner incorporates a variety of voices, including those of detainees, aid workers and politicians, to represent the context of Australia's offshore detention centres for asylum seekers as shameful and horrifying, and contentious in modern Australia.

Identify your main points of argument.
- Find an example or two from the text for each reason.
- Write down some relevant quotations.

REASON 1

Use of emotive, desperate voices of detainees, exposed through hidden camera footage, creates sympathy and reveals their terrible conditions and abuses.

REASON 2

Horrified and articulate voices of aid workers in interviews and hidden camera footage reveal their dismay that such conditions exist in modern Australian detention centres.

REASON 3

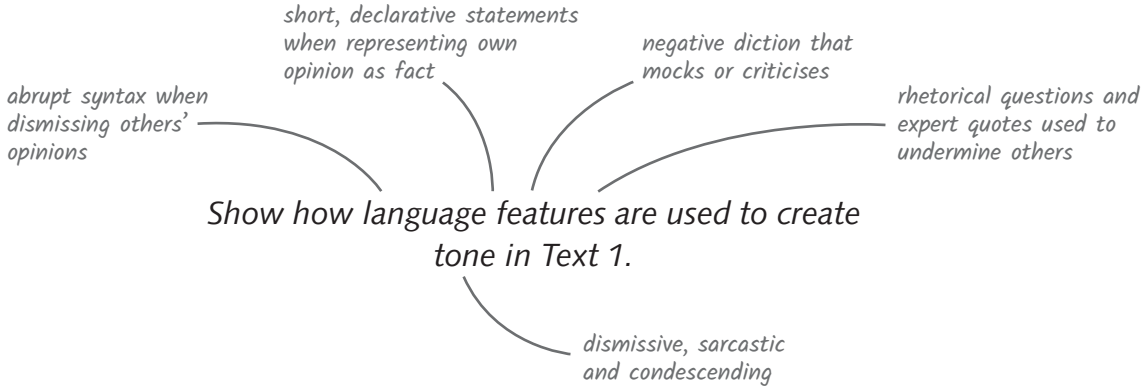
The aggressive and callous voices of certain politicians, justifying detention in offshore centres, reveal the contentious nature of the policy in modern Australia.

List the reasons in a logical order.
- List from (e.g.) least to most important or from start to end of text.
- Group similar reasons together, e.g. characters with similar qualities.
- Start with your strongest point.

1. Start with construction of politicians' aggressive rhetoric to reveal the context of Manus and Nauru detention centres, and their contentious nature.
2. Follow with detainees' voices, with their desperate tone and simple diction that creates viewer sympathy.
3. Conclude with the educated, calm yet horrified voices of aid workers in scripted interviews, to suggest the detention centre context is horrifying and shameful in modern Australia.

Now you have a plan.
- You are ready to write.

For short answer questions, you won't need such a detailed plan. In a timed assessment, you won't have very long to write short answers, so you may prefer to brainstorm around the question itself. Here is an example:



It is still worthwhile to plan even for short answer responses, so that you can select the strongest points to include and order them in the most effective way. Also, when writing under intense time pressure, it can be easy to forget your ideas if you don't have a plan.

Planning checklist

- ○ I have addressed every keyword in the question.
- ○ I have chosen the text that is best suited to this question.
- ○ My thesis offers a valid and well-considered position.
- ○ I will provide the reader with further background on my text if/where necessary.
- ○ I have chosen the strongest points of argument.
- ○ I have ordered my points to present the most logical argument.
- ○ There are no gaps in my reasoning.
- ○ I have chosen the best examples and evidence to support my argument.

Short answer responses

Short answer questions require you to respond in a clear, concise manner. You should aim to write between 200 and 300 words. Your teacher or exam markers will be looking for responses that demonstrate clarity in the presentation and organisation of ideas, as well as succinct and precise written expression.

A short answer response is not an essay. You should not write introductions or conclusions that merely repeat the same information developed in your analytical paragraphs. You won't be rewarded for saying the same thing more than once. Also, you are not necessarily expected to use the same sort of style and personal voice that earns you marks in an essay. A short answer is a different form, and the purpose is to offer a clear, logical explanation in concise and direct language.

Therefore, you should aim to produce succinct analytical paragraphs with tight topic sentences. There is no set number of paragraphs you are expected to write; you should be led by the question in determining how many are appropriate. For example, if a question requires a comparison between two texts, then two tightly linked paragraphs might be the most logical approach. If you are asked to analyse three visual language techniques, you might choose to write three brief paragraphs.

Here are two guidelines for effective short answer responses.

- **Be precise.** Telling your reader that the writer uses 'descriptive language' is virtually meaningless, unless you follow that up by identifying the precise nature of that language. Similarly, saying that a particular textual feature 'adds impact', 'encourages a response' or 'makes the text interesting' simply uses common phrases that add little value. Identify the precise nature of the impact, the specific response or the ways in which the text is interesting.
- **Be concise.** State your response in succinct language. If you need to add multiple sentences to clarify your original statement, then you probably aren't writing as concisely as you should. Outline the point of analysis you are making, provide an example or two, explain their effects and *move on*.

Two approaches to short answer responses

You can structure your short answers using the technique-led approach or the idea-led approach. The choice will depend largely on the question. (For more information about the sorts of questions that each approach best suits, see page 115.)

TECHNIQUE-LED APPROACH	IDEA-LED APPROACH
1 A concise topic sentence identifying a particular textual feature operating in the text and connecting it to the specific idea or effect it generates.	1 A concise topic sentence identifying an idea or effect arising from the text and connecting it to one or more textual features that contribute to that idea or effect.
2 A clear example, with evidence from the text.	2 A clear example, with evidence from the text.
3 A clear explanation of how that example functions.	3 A clear explanation of how that example functions.
4 Repeat 2 and 3 as necessary.	4 Repeat 2 and 3 as necessary.

EXAMPLES Different approaches to 'Supernova'

The following sample responses (referring to the short story 'Supernova' by Omar Musa) demonstrate each of these approaches. The first uses the technique-led approach, and identifies three key textual features: symbolism, flashback and imagery. It shows how three brief paragraphs are an appropriate structure for this technique-led response.

Explain how Text 1 works to represent the concept of aspiration.

Each topic sentence identifies one textual feature, as well as one aspect of the representation of the concept of aspiration.

Appropriate metalanguage is used.

The symbolism of the toy rocket is key to representing aspiration as a powerful force. Finding the toy rocket inspires Azlan to become an astronaut. It sparks 'wonder', and as a result Azlan 'vowed to become the first Malaysian astronaut'. The toy is symbolic of his aspirations: just as a rocket blasts away from the Earth's gravitational pull for the freedom of space, aspiration provides the momentum for humans to break the bonds that hold them down and reach for 'the magnificent shawl of stars'. To reach for the stars is typically used as an idiom for our aspirations, and here Azlan's desire to reach them quite literally becomes his dream.

Transition markers help to give the explanation cohesion and a logical structure.

Secondly, the structural feature of a flashback is used to suggest that Azlan is working towards his goal of becoming an astronaut, representing aspiration as sustaining. The passage opens with Azlan as an adult, evident in his recollection that he was once 'young and fit'. The fact that he is returning to his village implies that he has moved on from childhood. By then seguing to his childhood memory of finding the toy rocket and being inspired to become an astronaut, the writer encourages the reader to see a relationship, and to assume that Azlan has followed his dream.

Finally, the imagery of Azlan's simple rural childhood, juxtaposed with his dream of being an astronaut, represents aspiration as transformative. His village is described as 'sleepy', in contrast with a Malaysia that has 'developed at a rate of knots'. His family seem to live a traditional rural lifestyle, fishing the 'broad brown river'. Despite this, the toy rocket and the aspiration it represents are a 'gift' that Azlan embraces, not letting his simple context hold him back.

In contrast, the example on the next page uses the idea-led approach, and demonstrates how a well-structured single paragraph can answer the question successfully.

Explain the function of the rocket in generating an idea in Text 1.

One idea generated by the rocket in Text 1, an extract from the short story 'Supernova' by Omar Musa, is that aspiration is a powerful gift. The toy rocket functions in two ways to contribute to this idea. The first is as an object that sparks Azlan's desire to become an astronaut. The rocket prompts Azlan to consider 'whether a Malaysian had ever flown a rocket into space', and fires his ambition to 'become the first Malaysian astronaut'. In igniting his 'wonder', the rocket prompts Azlan to imagine a potential future for himself and to vow to achieve that goal, despite the fact that no other Malaysian has done so. Secondly, the rocket functions as a symbol: just as a rocket blasts away from the Earth and its gravitational pull for the freedom of space, aspiration provides the momentum for humans to break the bonds that hold them down and reach for 'the magnificent shawl of stars'. In juxtaposing Azlan's rural village lifestyle with the dream of becoming an astronaut, Musa suggests that even those from a simple background can transcend their circumstances and follow their dreams. Musa describes the rocket as 'a gift' and thus aspirations or dreams are, too, represented as gifts to be cherished.

- A clear topic sentence identifies the text and the idea generated.
- Two functions of the rocket are identified.
- Transition markers help to provide cohesion and a logical structure.
- Appropriate metalanguage is used.

ACTIVITY

Practise approaches to short answer questions

Answer the two questions below with reference to the accompanying image. Practise using the technique-led and idea-led approaches, selecting whichever approach you think would best suit each question.

Text 1

This is a greyscale reproduction of a photograph taken in Cambodia.

1 Explore how your response to Text 1 has been influenced by its composition.

2 Explain how visual language features work to represent an idea about tourism.

Analytical essay responses

An analytical essay is, essentially, an argument. That is, it offers a series of propositions, based on your interpretation of the evidence, leading to a conclusion. Even if you are writing a more discursive essay, you will still be expected to come to a clear conclusion that states your position on the question.

As you are aware, there are three main parts of an essay: the introduction, the body paragraphs and the conclusion. This section provides some ideas that may assist you in refining your analytical writing skills.

Introductions

The introduction is perhaps the most important paragraph in your essay. It gives your reader their first impression of your work and contains your answer to the question in its most concise form.

An introduction should:

- demonstrate your engagement with the question and its concepts
- clearly state your thesis, or your position on how the question applies to your chosen text
- foreshadow the content of your essay by giving an overview of your argument.

EXAMPLES Introductions

The following sample paragraphs show two possible introductions to an essay. The thesis is underlined in each case, and the introductions increase in complexity.

Show how the multiple perspectives offered in a text have given you an insight into a particular context of culture.

Clearly introduces the text.

Addresses the first set of keywords, ***multiple perspectives***.

Responds to the third group of keywords, ***context of culture***, in both local and national terms.

Thesis statement, addressing the second keyword, ***insight***.

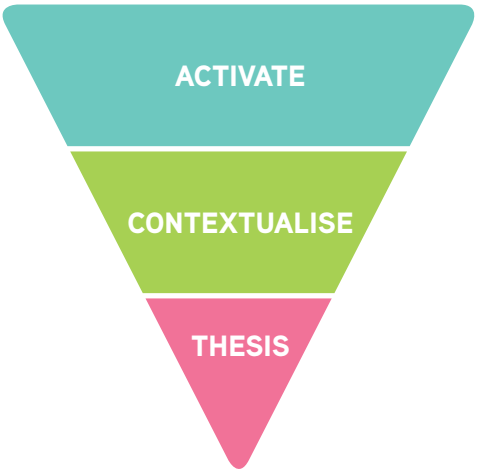
Through its various characters, Craig Silvey's 2009 novel *Jasper Jones* presents the reader with multiple perspectives that provide an insight into the racism and bigotry within a rural Western Australian town. Although the text is focalised through the naive perspective of 13-year-old Anglo-Australian Charlie Bucktin, his friendships with Jeffrey Lu and Jasper Jones allow for additional perspectives, those of Vietnamese migrant and Aboriginal Australian, on the culture of the town. As they share their experiences with Charlie, he gains a deeper insight into the violence and discrimination that non-white Australians experience at this point in Australia's history: around the time of the 1967 referendum on Aboriginal inclusion in Australia's Constitution and Australia's participation in the Vietnam War. Through the inclusion of multiple perspectives in *Jasper Jones*, I gained a more informed understanding of the discrimination facing non-white Australians in the 1960s and the impacts that intolerance, prejudice and violence had on their sense of personal and cultural identity.

Craig Silvey's 2009 novel *Jasper Jones* presents the reader with four main perspectives. Charlie Bucktin is a 13-year-old white Australian, initially naive in his understanding of the racist and violent context of Corrigan, a rural Western Australian town in the 1960s. His friendships with Jeffrey Lu, Jasper Jones and Eliza Wishart contribute to his growing awareness of the human capacity for evil. Set in the context of the White Australia policy, the Vietnam War and the 1967 referendum on Aboriginal rights, the inclusion of Jeffrey's and Jasper's perspectives reveals the extent to which migrant and Aboriginal Australians experienced racism and prejudice. Eliza offers a different perspective, revealing the extent to which this patriarchal society perpetuated violence against women. Once he is aware of his friends' abuse, Charlie goes on a journey of discovery, altering his perspective on the marginalisation of outsiders because of differences such as race, poverty, gender or physical disfigurement. In considering all of these perspectives, I was made more aware of the extent to which structures of power operated at this time to oppress a range of people, including migrants, Aboriginal Australians and women.

- Clearly introduces the text.
- Addresses the first set of keywords, ***multiple perspectives***.
- Responds to the third group of keywords, ***context of culture***, in both local and national terms.
- Thesis statement, addressing the second keyword, ***insight***.

Taking it further: the ACT model

A structure you might consider for your introduction is the inverted triangle, which draws the marker in from the broad conceptual basis of the question to the precise argument you are offering in relation to your chosen text. It can be represented by the acronym ACT:



Activate: start with a statement that engages with the conceptual basis of the question, or the ideas within your text, and sparks your marker's interest.

Contextualise: connect with your text.

Thesis: outline your precise argument in relation to the question.

EXAMPLE An ACT model introduction

Activate: Engages the marker through a bold statement addressing the key concept (in this case, the context of 1960s Australia).

Contextualise: Applies these conceptual understandings to the example text.

Thesis: Concludes with a specific thesis statement.

Australia in the late 1960s could be a harsh place for anyone not of the white majority. The White Australia policy was still in place, and the 1967 referendum to amend the Constitution to include Aboriginal peoples was only just taking place. For many non-white Australians, this was a time of prejudice, discrimination and violence. Through its inclusion of multiple perspectives, including those of a Vietnamese migrant and an Aboriginal Australian, Craig Silvey's 2009 novel *Jasper Jones* has given me a stronger insight into this context than I would have gained just through the perspective of the main character, 13-year-old Anglo-Australian Charlie Bucktin. As a result of these multiple perspectives, I gained a deeper appreciation of the extent to which fear of violence, scapegoating and social rejection impacted on the lives of non-white Australians at this time.

Introducing your texts

Many of your essay questions, and certainly those in an exam situation, will be broad questions rather than relating to a specific text. In fact, your exam marker may not even be familiar with your studied text. Therefore:

- your explanations must clearly explain how your text functions in relation to the question
- the examples you provide need to include enough context for your marker to understand them
- it may be useful to include a brief synopsis of your text in your introduction. This should be no more than two sentences and is something you can practise as part of your revision.

EXAMPLES Introducing texts

Chasing Asylum: Eva Orner's 2016 documentary is a confronting exposé of the treatment of asylum seekers in Australia's offshore detention centres on Nauru and Manus Island.

Jasper Jones: This 2009 novel by Craig Silvey is the coming-of-age story of 13-year-old Charlie Bucktin as he discovers the corruption infecting his small rural town, with its secrets of sexual assault, racism and other abuses of power.

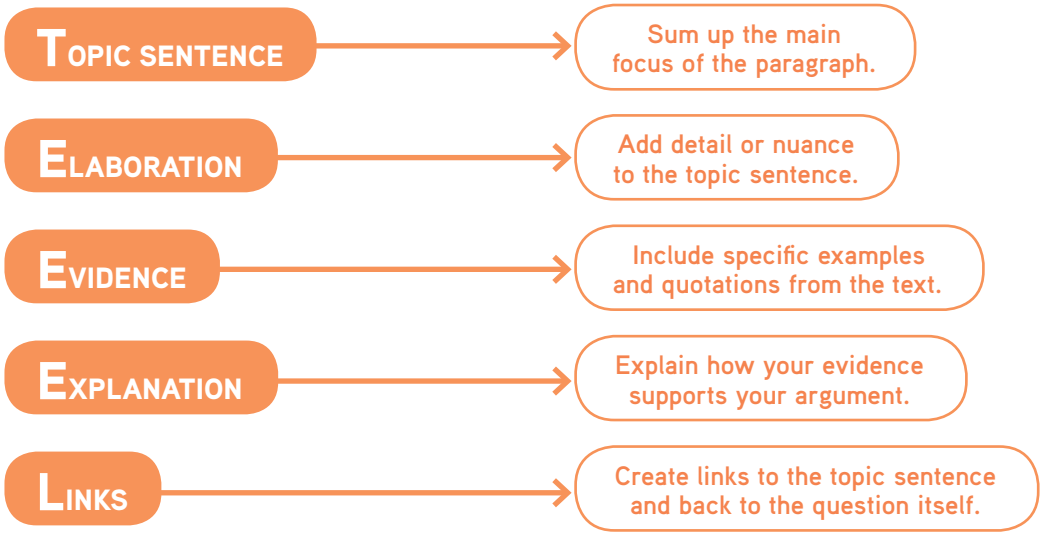
Effective body paragraphs

Body paragraphs develop and support the central argument. They need to:

- offer a single point of argument in support of your thesis
- use evidence from the text
- explain how this evidence supports your argument and interpretation of the text.

The TEEL structure

The TEEL paragraph structure (Topic, Evidence, Explanation, Links) is a tool for creating coherent paragraphs within your essay. You are probably familiar with this structure or a variation of it. At this level, it can be useful to add an extra 'E' – for elaboration. This expands on the topic sentence, which should be clear and concise.



EXAMPLES TEEEL structure

The following two examples show how the TEEEL structure can be used in a response to this question.

Show how the multiple perspectives offered in a text have given you an insight into a particular context of culture.

The dominant perspective offered within the documentary *Beneath the Veil* is that of its narrator, British journalist Saira Shah, who offers a critical perspective on the Taliban regime that is both personal and an outsider's. Although she has Afghani heritage, Shah was raised and educated in Britain, enjoying rights and privileges as a woman that would be forbidden by the Taliban. However, she tells the viewer in voice-over that her 'father was an Afghan' who remembers

A clear topic sentence identifies one of the perspectives in the text.

Elaborates on the topic sentence, giving more detail about Shah's perspective.

Gives specific examples of visual language that reveal Shah's perspective.

pre-Taliban Afghanistan as 'a kind of Eden', with its gardens and fountains. During this scene, sepia photographs of Shah as a child with her father and a beautiful park fade in and out, which establishes her personal connection to Afghanistan and reinforces her father's representation of it. These photographs are contrasted with a long shot of Shah looking down into an Afghani city from a desert hillside, listening to a radio broadcast about the execution of several women for adultery. This visually positions her as both outside and above Afghani culture and the violent Taliban regime. Informed by both her Western upbringing and her family history, Shah's perspective provides a deeper insight into the Taliban regime, increasing my shock at the brutal state of Afghanistan today by juxtaposing it against her father's idyllic memories.

Provides explanation of the evidence.

A linking sentence connects this particular perspective with the insight gained.

Once you understand the basic elements, you can vary the structure in order to develop a more complex and in-depth analysis, as shown in the example below.

Rather than beginning with a traditional topic sentence, this paragraph begins with a relevant quote from the scene to be discussed.

Provides details that elaborate on the topic sentence first.

This allows for a concise topic sentence to be revealed here.

Importantly, this explains the interpretation of evidence. Rather than focus on one perspective per paragraph, this student compares two perspectives within the one point of argument.

Still includes textual evidence.

The final sentences link the perspectives introduced and the insight gained.

The 'world has misunderstood us', insists Wakil Motawakil. As the Foreign Minister, Motowakil offers an opposing perspective, supporting Taliban rule in Afghanistan, although Shah includes it primarily to refute it. In juxtaposing the two perspectives in this scene, however, an insight is revealed that the Taliban seized control to end years of civil war, and with the support of a desperate population. Motawakil tells the audience that the Taliban have brought law and order to a country where there was none. He states that the Taliban have 'brought security, improved commerce and created jobs'. This perspective is undermined, however, by the inclusion of footage of Kabul, with bombed buildings, dilapidated shopfronts and beggars sitting in the dirt. Shah acknowledges that the destruction occurred prior to the Taliban seizing power, and that people hoped that the Taliban would bring stability, but counters this by saying that in the four years since, 'nothing has been done' to restore the city; there are no jobs to be seen 'but plenty of security'. Hidden camera footage is then shown of numerous roadside checkpoints manned by armed Taliban soldiers, giving the impression of a police state. The juxtaposition of these two perspectives provides a startling insight: Afghanistan was wracked by civil war, and the Taliban's statement that they ended the conflict and restored order seems to be true. Shah's perspective, however, reveals the terrible cost exacted to achieve this apparent stability.

Taking it further: improving your writing style

In the second example opposite, the student varies the way they explain their evidence in the body paragraph. Aim to vary your analytical sentence structure, too, so that your writing style becomes more interesting and less formulaic.

Sometimes your sentences might have this structure (TEE):

1. Commence by identifying the **t**extual feature.
2. Offer an **e**xample.
3. Identify the intended **e**ffect or idea generated.

For example:

> Hidden camera footage is then shown of numerous roadside checkpoints manned by armed Taliban soldiers, giving the impression of a police state.

Alternatively, you could also structure it this way (ETE):

1. Start with the intended **e**ffect or idea.
2. Identify the **t**extual feature.
3. Offer an **e**xample.

For example:

> This perspective is undermined, however, by the inclusion of footage of Kabul, with bombed buildings, dilapidated shopfronts and beggars sitting in the dirt.

ACTIVITY

Vary your syntax

Take an analytical essay you have written previously. Rewrite a selection of your analytical sentences, modelled on these examples of varied sentence openings.

- Representing our desire for human connection, the author portrays the main protagonist as …
- The use of emotive language evokes a sense of fear in the reader …
- The intertextual reference to … is an attempt to …
- The writer provokes the reader's outrage by …
- The documentary-maker cites a comprehensive study on … in order to …
- Establishing their credentials at the outset, the writer aims to …
- Through the use of a canted low angle, the photographer unsettles the viewer, as this angle …
- Dismay and even outrage is experienced by the audience when the focaliser declares …

Transition markers

Paragraphs should flow well and be linked through a logical progression of ideas that develop the argument. One of the ways in which you can demonstrate this progression is through the use of linking words and phrases, known as transition markers. These signpost the relationship between each paragraph and its point of argument. However, they also work within paragraphs to connect sentences.

There are different types of relationships between points of argument, and you should have a bank of words at your disposal so that you can distinguish between them.

TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP	EXPLANATION	APPROPRIATE TRANSITION MARKERS
Case study	The point provides an illustration or example of the previous point.	this can be seen when, for example, this is evident in, for instance, in particular, in the case of, this is shown in / exemplified by / illustrated when
Chronology	The point shows a transition in time from the previous point.	before, after, at the same time, simultaneously, while, when, by the time, until, since, every time, next time, afterwards, initially, eventually, finally, then
Comparison	The point highlights a similarity with the previous point.	similarly, in a similar fashion, equally, neither … nor, either … or, likewise, in comparison, just as …, so too …
Concession	The point highlights the instances where the previous point does not apply.	to a degree, although, however, even though, despite, in spite of, nevertheless, yet, to an extent, in the circumstances of
Conclusion	The point draws a conclusion from the previous point(s).	so, in conclusion, thus, in summation, to conclude
Condition	The point highlights the conditions under which the previous point is correct.	if … then, even if, in case, provided that, providing, unless, whether or not
Consequence	The point is a direct effect of the previous point.	as a result, consequently, because of this, therefore, in light of this, resultantly, due to, accordingly, hence, thus, as a consequence
Consolidation	The point adds weight to the previous point.	additionally, also, moreover, besides, in addition, furthermore, in other words
Continuation	The point continues in sequence from the previous point.	and, next, subsequently, secondly, thirdly (etc.), then, finally, lastly, thereafter, initially, to begin, in continuation
Contrast	The point highlights a difference from the previous point.	in contrast, conversely, however, instead, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, instead of, whereas, while, although

Ordering your points of argument

There are different views on the best way to order your points. You need to consider which approach is best suited to your text and the question you are answering. Some of the most common structures are outlined in the following table.

SEQUENTIAL APPROACH

- The essay is organised around the structure of your text.
- Each paragraph works through a key section of the text in sequential fashion.
- This can be useful for showing the development of ideas, arguments etc. throughout a text.

For example, an essay exploring the development of a character within a novel may begin by discussing the exposition, then move on to consider key moments of the character's development, and finally explore the character's state in the resolution.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

- The essay is organised around the concepts embedded in the question.
- The initial paragraphs explain the individual concepts.
- Subsequent paragraphs reveal the relationship between the concepts as implied by the question.
- This can be useful for complex questions requiring you to demonstrate your understanding of multiple concepts.

For example, an essay exploring how particular representations of people within a text relate to its context may begin by establishing the text's context, then outline the representations, then go on to show how such representations are reflective of that context.

TECHNIQUE-LED APPROACH

- The essay is organised around the textual features of your text.
- Each paragraph explores the functions of a particular textual feature.
- Paragraphs are ordered in terms of the significance of the textual feature within the whole text.
- This can be useful for analyses based on form or genre.

For example, an essay exploring the ways in which a feature article constructs a particular perspective may examine, in turn, a range of textual features that contribute to that perspective, beginning with the most significant, such as voice.

IDEA-LED APPROACH

- The essay is organised around the key ideas, themes, arguments, effects etc. within your text.
- Each paragraph focuses on one idea, drawing evidence from different examples within the text.
- Lead with the main idea, with subsequent paragraphs exploring subordinate ideas.
- This can be useful for analyses that focus on comprehension of multiple ideas, such as a discussion of multiple themes, perspectives, voices or representations.

For example, an essay exploring the multiple voices within a documentary might offer a sequence of paragraphs exploring individual voices, starting with the dominant voice, such as that of the focaliser.

DISCURSIVE APPROACH

- The essay is organised around a single idea or issue, with different perspectives offered.
- Each paragraph offers a different consideration of the same idea or issue.
- The later paragraphs provide some kind of evaluation of these different perspectives, prior to the conclusion that reveals your own position.

For example, an essay that explores the representation of women in a text might be organised around the different ways in which the representation might be perceived, beginning with that encouraged by the text before moving on to alternative or even resistant readings of that representation.

Taking it further: the penultimate paragraph

The penultimate – or second-last – paragraph can be used to add real value to your essay. If you have time, and you have sufficiently made your argument in the main body of your essay, you could use one of the techniques below to strengthen your argument prior to your conclusion.

- **Evaluation:** offers a reflection on the arguments made previously, and is particularly relevant to discursive structures or essays based on subjective readings of the text, such as personal responses.
- **Reflection:** offers a more personal reflection on the text. It can add a more aesthetic or affective element to an otherwise straightforward analytical discussion.
- **Refutation:** anticipates likely rebuttals or opposition to your argument and undermines them.
- **Extrapolation:** makes inferences from your analysis of the world in the text to the implications within the 'real' world. This can be useful in essays exploring ideas, themes and issues represented in the text.
- **Corroboration:** brings in secondary evidence in support of your argument, such as referring to a second text that reinforces your thesis or bringing in secondary sources that support your interpretation of a text.
- **Exclamation:** includes the most significant point supporting your argument. Placing it at the end can be a way of 'clinching' your argument.

Conclusions

The conclusion draws your discussion to a close. It should:

- clearly refer to the question and provide a concise response to it
- restate your thesis, but avoid using exactly the same words as in the introduction
- include one or two big-picture statements about the text's significance and wider meaning.

As the conclusion is usually the last part of your work that your teacher or an exam marker will read, it is worth practising writing conclusions that not only include the essential features, but also create an impression of thoughtful reflection. The introduction draws the reader in from broad concepts and ideas to the specifics of your text; conversely, the conclusion takes the reader from the specifics of your text to its broader implications. A good strategy is to ask yourself, 'So what?' That is, what are the implications of the argument you have just made? Give your reader something to think about after reading your essay.

EXAMPLES Conclusions

The paragraphs below offer one average and one above-average conclusion to an essay that responds to this question:

Show how the multiple perspectives offered in a text have given you an insight into a particular context of culture.

The conclusion below does little more than summarise the essay paragraph-by-paragraph. Although it does address the question and summarise the insight offered by these multiple perspectives, it offers little in the way of critical thought.

> Jack Davis' play *No Sugar* includes several perspectives on the context of Aboriginal camps during the Great Depression in Western Australia. These perspectives are represented by various characters in the play. An Aboriginal perspective is provided through the Millumurra family, who are oppressed by the white government. The character AO Neville, based on the real Chief Protector of Aborigines, represents the perspective of the government authority at the time. This perspective is depicted as well-meaning but damaging to Aboriginal culture. Another character, Mr Neal, represents a perspective of those white people in power who mistreated and abused Aboriginal people. These various perspectives provide an insight into the context of 1920s Australia, revealing the white oppression of Aboriginal people. The play examines the terrible impact of colonisation by showing how it tore apart Aboriginal families, destroying their dignity and freedom.

The following conclusion also provides a summary of the argument, referencing the multiple perspectives in the text. But it goes further, revealing critical thought regarding the significance of this argument. Drawing directly on the context represented in the play, it highlights insights that the play offers for the audience's current context.

> A play such as Jack Davis' *No Sugar* should be a required viewing experience for Australians. In its interweaving of multiple perspectives regarding the historical treatment of Aboriginal peoples, we can see both the misguided intent and the traumatic realities of the government's protectionist ideology. Davis offers colonial perspectives through characters such as Neville, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, whose paternalism reflects a belief in white superiority. Worse is Neal, Superintendent of the Aboriginal settlement, who is contemptuous of Aboriginal people. These are juxtaposed with the perspectives of Aboriginal characters such as Jimmy Munday and Gran, who simply desire the right to self-determination and independence. These multiple perspectives reveal not only how religion, language and violence were employed as tools of oppression, but also the ways in which Aboriginal peoples resisted colonisation, determined to preserve their cultural identity. In its unflinching, unsettling and at times humorous representation of 1920s Australia, this play provides a complex insight into a dark part of history, drawing connections to the ongoing effects of colonialism today.

Comparative responses

The syllabus requires you to develop your understanding of how a text works through comparisons with other texts, such as comparing their use of textual features, their perspectives or their representations of people or ideas. A comparative response requires a different approach from an essay focusing on a single text.

Structuring a comparative response

There are three main models for writing a comparative essay: the block approach, the alternating approach and the integrated approach. You might find that one of these works better for you than others, or that a particular structure works best for a given essay question.

Whichever approach you use, aim to write at least four or five body paragraphs. This will ensure you have space to develop your argument in relation to each text, using textual evidence to support your assertions, as well as to directly compare the two texts. If you struggle to write this much in a timed situation, you may wish to consider the integrated approach.

The three models are explained below and shown graphically in the table opposite.

Block approach

Using the block approach, you discuss the two texts separately. As you introduce your second text, you use comparative language to draw attention to the key points of similarity to and/or difference from your first text. You may include an additional paragraph that then evaluates these points of comparison, before you offer your conclusion.

Alternating approach

Taking the alternating approach, you alternate between your two texts, sequencing your paragraphs in terms of points of similarity or difference that you wish to highlight. Comparative language is used to signpost whether each new point represents a similarity or a difference between the texts.

Integrated approach

In an integrated essay structure, comparison of the two texts occurs in each paragraph throughout the essay. Each body paragraph focuses on an aspect of the main theme or issue in the given question. This can be a good approach for timed essays, as comparison begins in the very first paragraph.

	BLOCK	ALTERNATING	INTEGRATED
Introduction	• Engage with the question and its key concepts. • Introduce both texts by title, author and form. • Foreshadow main points of similarity and difference.		
Paragraph 1	Text 1, idea 1 • Explain first point of discussion.	Text 1, idea 1 • Explain first point of discussion.	Text 1 & 2, idea 1 • Explain first point of similarity / difference between the two texts.
Paragraph 2	Text 1, idea 2 • Explain second point of discussion.	Text 2, idea 1 • Explain how Text 2 is similar / different.	Text 1 & 2, idea 2 • Explain second point of similarity / difference between the two texts.
Paragraph 3	Text 2, idea 1 • Explain first point of similarity to / difference from Text 1.	Text 1, idea 2 • Explain second point of discussion.	Text 1 & 2, idea 3 • Explain third point of similarity / difference between the two texts.
Paragraph 4	Text 2, idea 2 • Explain second point of similarity to / difference from Text 1.	Text 2, idea 2 • Explain how Text 2 is similar / different.	Text 1 & 2, idea 4 • Explain fourth point of similarity / difference between the two texts.
Conclusion	• Reiterate thesis or central argument. • Evaluate the extent of similarity / difference between the texts. • Offer one or two implications arising from the comparison.		

EXAMPLES Comparing *The Proposition* and *The Dressmaker*

Below are two examples of comparative writing. Both compare the feature films *The Proposition* (2005) and *The Dressmaker* (2015) in terms of the generic features of the western they exhibit. The first example uses the alternating approach.

One of the major differences between *The Proposition* and *The Dressmaker* is the gender of its protagonists. Modern westerns typically feature masculine, morally ambiguous heroes: outlaws who have a sympathetic or human side. As a member of an outlaw gang, Charlie Burns (Guy Pearce) conforms to this archetype. He is silent and grim, using violence to communicate. This is evident in the scene where he meets Jellon Lamb (John Hurt). The scene is shot in a dark cottage, with Burns' face only half-lit by a narrow window, symbolising his moral ambiguity. His clothes are plain and dark, and he wears a wide-brimmed hat that keeps his face in shadow. While Lamb rambles through a two-minute monologue, Burns remains still and silent, until he points his gun at Lamb's forehead and coldly says, 'One more crack about the Irish, Mr Lamb, and I'll shoot you. Am I clear?' This suggests that he

The topic sentence highlights a clear difference between the texts.

is unemotional and has violent tendencies: qualities stereotypically associated with masculinity. However, we learn that Burns has actually left the gang, disgusted by the brutality of its leader – his older brother, Arthur. As he himself is a violent character, this suggests a conflicted or divided nature. Thus, Burns conforms to the stereotypical western protagonist, being a rugged, hardened man who lives by violence and has a questionable moral code.

The Dressmaker, on the other hand, features an unlikely hero in Tilly Dunnage (Kate Winslet), a glamorous dressmaker who returns to her home town to seek revenge on those who falsely accused her of murder years earlier. Similarly to Burns, Dunnage is introduced in darkness; her face is hidden in shadows until the camera tilts up to reveal her elegant make-up beneath a broad-brimmed hat. Her black-and-white outfit, as well as the shadows that bisect her face, suggest a moral ambiguity similar to Burns'. However, Dunnage subverts the stereotypical western protagonist not only in being female, but also in the fact that fashion, rather than a gun, is her weapon of choice. This is alluded to in the introductory scene, with a close-up of the Singer sewing machine brand on Dunnage's bag. Dunnage makes elaborate dresses for the town's women, setting them against each other as an act of revenge. Despite her differences from a typical western protagonist, evident in her gender and her glamour, Dunnage shares a complicated morality with *The Proposition*'s Charlie Burns and other western heroes.

The paragraph focuses on analysing a single point – gender – in relation to the first text.

The second paragraph focuses on the same point – gender – but in relation to the second text.

The overall contrast between the texts is signposted in the topic sentence.

Adds complexity by indicating a degree of similarity between the two texts.

After indicating the shared features of the two texts, their differences are signposted.

The final sentence on this point – gender – summarises the comparison between the texts.

The second example below uses the integrated approach.

A further comparison between the two films can be made regarding their representation of the rural landscape of the western. Both are set in the Australian outback: desolate, dry and sparsely populated. However, the similarities end there, as the cinematography represents these landscapes in vastly different ways. In *The Dressmaker*, Moorhouse uses the rural setting to suggest the unsophistication of the town's inhabitants. Rusting iron roofs, dirt streets and stunted trees are symbolic of the crude and ignorant inhabitants. In addition, the drab olive and brown palette contrasts with Dunnage, whose red-carpet glamour is at odds with the rustic environment. However, the focus is often on people's houses, and their derelict nature reflects the moral bankruptcy of those who blamed Dunnage for murder as a child. In contrast, the landscape in *The Proposition* plays a more active role in the film. There are many sweeping wide shots of an unending desert: rocky

Identifies a point of comparison between the two texts.

Indicates initial similarities, before signposting more complex differences.

The paragraph goes on to discuss one text first.

Clearly signposts the difference between the two texts.

Halfway through, the paragraph segues into discussion of the second text.

hills and plains baking under an oppressive sun. The constant buzz of flies irritates the ear. Shot in rich reds and yellows, the landscape appears vast and brutal, unnerving the viewer. The impact of the landscape is particularly revealed in the instances where Burns is filmed silhouetted against a huge red setting sun, which draws attention to the impact of the brutal environment upon his character. Therefore, both films draw on remote landscapes typical of the western genre, but stylistically and functionally they are quite different, with *The Proposition*'s terrifying desolation having a more dramatic impact on the viewer.

The final sentence summarises the comparison between the two texts.

Writing about similarities and differences

The following word bank contains a core set of terms for discussing similarities and differences. They will help you to make clear connections between texts and to explain the nature of those connections. Using these and similar terms throughout your essay will also enhance the coherence and fluency of your writing.

It is rare that you will find two texts working in identical ways. Conceding that your texts are similar *only to a degree* can be a way of offering a more nuanced comparison.

Words and phrases expressing similarity	a similar idea is, also, both, equally, in the same way, just as, in comparison, so too, likewise, similarly
Words and phrases expressing difference	conversely, however, in a different way, in contrast, in contradistinction, on the other hand, alternatively, whereas
Words and phrases expressing concession	to a degree, although, however, even though, despite this, in spite of, nevertheless, yet, somewhat, to an extent

Using textual evidence

Providing textual evidence is essential to any analytical essay. You must include clear, well-explained examples to support each point you make. Wherever possible, use specific quotations from the text or, in the case of visual or multimodal texts, clear descriptions of specific textual features.

- Choose the best example: use the most appropriate piece of evidence to support your point. You have a whole text to choose from!
- Use only what you need: a shorter quote that directly relates to your point is better than quoting extensively and hoping that the marker can see a connection.
- Include (at least) one significant quote in each paragraph, as the main piece of evidence to support your point.
- Use shorter secondary quotes to strengthen your point.
- Incorporate quotes into your own sentences, rather than having them stand alone.

- If you wish to include a longer quote of more than three lines, it can stand alone; the convention is to start a long quote on a new line and indent the whole quote.
- Explain your evidence. Why have you included it? What does it show? What are its effects? No evidence is self-explanatory; never leave your reader to draw their own conclusions.
- Remember that quotes rarely 'prove' anything; you can only ever offer an interpretation of the evidence. Therefore, quotes imply, reveal, suggest, make evident, can be read as, demonstrate, indicate, challenge, influence, reinforce.

EXAMPLES Evidence from *Get Out* and 'The Altar of the Family'

The following examples illustrate ways of incorporating evidence from different text types, using the horror film *Get Out*, written and directed by Jordan Peele, and Michael Wilding's short story 'The Altar of the Family' as the two texts.

Multimodal language features are used to provide a perspective on race relations within one particular scene in *Get Out*. At the family home of his white girlfriend, Chris is asked in a tone of ignorant curiosity if 'the African American experience is more of an advantage or disadvantage in the modern world'. The subtle extra-diegetic music suddenly ceases, focusing attention on the awkward question and Chris' stunned response. The camera cuts to an over-the-shoulder shot revealing a crowd of older middle-class white characters closing in on Chris to hear his answer. This shot symbolises Chris as belonging to a racial minority, one that is scrutinised or even threatened by the powerful white majority. Chris' discomfort is revealed with a close-up of his nervous facial expression. The institutional racism in the town has already been made evident earlier in the plot – through Chris' harassment by a police officer – so the question sounds naive even to the viewer. But the question also reduces the experiences of African American people, such as Chris, to a simple party conversation topic, suggesting that the white characters are completely out of touch with the realities of many African American people's lives. Therefore, director Jordan Peele uses a combination of dialogue and visual language to construct a perspective that is empathetic to the struggles of African American people in the United States.

Directly quotes dialogue, synthesised into the grammar of the student's own sentence.

Clearly describes evidence that cannot be quoted directly, such as the sudden silence or references to camera work.

Analyses each piece of evidence.

As well as specific language features, references to the film's plot also add evidence.

In 'The Altar of the Family', toxic masculinity is represented through the character of David's father. He is constructed as domineering and harshly critical of his son, who feels unable to conform to his father's masculine ideal. David is called 'a lily-livered poofter' for being a 'damn grown boy playing with [his sister's] dolls', an activity at odds with his father's belief that he should be outside playing cricket. David's actions are considered cowardly and effeminate: crimes against masculinity in his father's eyes. Wilding's lexical choices, using words such as 'disgusted', 'appalled' and 'ridiculous' in describing the father's response to David, highlight a scornful attitude that sees emotional sensitivity as unmanly. As a child, David is particularly affected by his father's prejudices, and attempts to atone for his perceived weakness by shooting a possum. However, he fails to kill the animal and is 'torn by ... his unmanly incompetence', running away in distress. Thus the character of David's father highlights the toxic effects of stereotypical masculinity, suggesting it creates a narrow and brutal definition of manhood.

- Directly quotes the text, synthesised into the grammar of the student's own sentence.
- Although you should avoid doing this as much as possible, you can clarify the meaning of quotes by adding words in square brackets.
- Metalanguage is used in the analysis of evidence.
- Short quotes can be used to reinforce points of analysis where appropriate.
- Unnecessary words can be substituted with an ellipsis, as long as the integrity of the quote is preserved.

Taking it further: using secondary sources

While the English course typically requires you to offer your own interpretation of a text, you may find it helpful at times to include secondary sources to support your argument. These might come from reviews or articles about your text, or from other texts on similar topics. When quoting secondary sources, you should include the year and, if possible, the page reference for the source of the quote. In a take-home essay, you should provide a bibliography with the details of your references.

EXAMPLES Using secondary sources

The following examples demonstrate how to incorporate references to secondary sources.

The characterisation of Lara Croft in the 2018 reboot starring Alicia Vikander offers a less sexualised representation of the heroine. As Helen Kennedy (2018) notes, Vikander's Croft is more of an 'active, tomboyish heroine' than the original film starring Angelina Jolie.

In *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore states that 'due to declining rainfall and ever-intensifying human use', Lake Chad has shrunk 'to one-twentieth of its original size'. However, Gore's environmentalist perspective oversimplifies the science. Kåre Fog (2004) argues that the shrinking of Lake Chad is 'caused by several factors working in concert', most of which are to do with agricultural mismanagement rather than climate change.

Personal voice

There is no requirement that you only write essays in a formal, objective style. Some of the most striking essays engage the marker with their strong sense of personal voice. However, this is not to say that you should fill your essay with 'I think …' or 'I feel …' You should also avoid being *too* informal or colloquial. Essays are an academic form of writing, and there is an expectation of a reasonable degree of formality.

A strong sense of personal voice demonstrates two things:

- genuine engagement with the question and text
- a sense of personality evident through the tone and style of writing.

EXAMPLES Using personal voice

The following three example paragraphs show how the same point can be made with differing degrees of personal voice.

In representing the migrant experience, *The Arrival* is an evocative and moving graphic novel. In his illustrations, Shaun Tan blends photorealistic depictions of people within surreal cityscapes to capture the dislocating effects of moving to a foreign country.

Anyone who has travelled overseas knows the strange feeling of dislocation that you feel in a new country. Things seems familiar – except not quite. Shaun Tan captures this feeling with surrealist aspects to otherwise realistic illustrations of a migrant arriving on a foreign shore.

When we were first set *The Arrival* as a text, I found myself asking why we were studying a glorified picture book. Yet Shaun Tan's incredibly moving illustrations showed me how unnerving life can be for new migrants. We share the joys, the fears and the oddities of everyday life as the protagonist negotiates a beautiful but surreal cityscape.

'Harbour' from *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan, published by Hachette Australia in 2006

Editing and rewriting

Before you submit your essay, carefully read over what you have written and fix any errors or weaknesses. In essays that you write at home or in normal class time, practise using the checklist on page 126 to improve your writing. If you do this editing and rewriting regularly, then when you write under timed or exam conditions you will be able to improve your work quickly and effectively with a final check.

EXAMPLES Editing an analytical paragraph

Although you probably wouldn't be expected to make this much change in a single paragraph, this example shows how careful editing can improve the detail and quality of your writing.

This first paragraph is unedited.

> In her speech, Valarie Kaur uses a tone of determination to challenge racism. This is evident in the diction she uses in describing resistance to racism. For example, she says her grandfather 'refused to stand down' when he experienced discrimination and how because of this she 'stood up' to racists in her own life. This shows she is passionate about ending racism and wants others to share her attitudes.

The following paragraph has been edited and rewritten, as the annotations explain.

In her speech, Valarie Kaur develops a tone of determined optimism in order to challenge the racism experienced by the Sikh community. Strong verbs are used to promote positive resistance, as Kaur describes how her grandfather 'refused to stand down' when he experienced racism, even though it led to his imprisonment. Furthermore, she emphasises the act of remaining positive by counterbalancing 'the darkness of my grandfather's cell' with a strong, affirmative adjective, describing his 'spirit of optimism' as 'ever-rising'. Because of his example, she also 'stood up' to racists within her own life, implying that others can follow their example. These choices in diction suggest Kaur's strong will and emphasise action. Kaur shows she is passionate about challenging racism and encouraging others to do the same.

- Adds nuance to the description of tone.
- A more sophisticated verb choice.
- Includes more specific detail.
- Metalanguage is more precise.
- Adds nuance to the effect created by tone.
- Synthesises evidence within a complex sentence.
- Provides context to introduce the next example.
- Uses a transition marker to connect examples.
- Adds an additional example.
- Adds explanatory detail.
- Uses more sophisticated diction.

Editing checklist

- ◯ I have established a clear thesis in my introduction.
- ◯ I have addressed each concept or keyword in the question.
- ◯ I have provided enough contextual information to introduce my text to the reader.
- ◯ A strong line of argument is evident throughout.
- ◯ Each paragraph begins with a clear topic sentence.
- ◯ Each point of argument is clearly supported by evidence, and I have analysed each piece of evidence.
- ◯ I have checked for ways in which my argument could be strengthened and for any gaps in my reasoning that should be filled.
- ◯ I have used varied vocabulary and made precise word choices.
- ◯ I have used appropriate metalanguage.
- ◯ I have varied my sentence structure throughout.
- ◯ The voice is consistent throughout the essay.
- ◯ There is a balance between careful analysis and personal interpretation.
- ◯ Spelling, punctuation and grammar are all accurate and correct.

ACTIVITY

Practise your editing

Choose one of the sample paragraphs you have written in this chapter's activities. Alternatively, take a past essay that you have written. Evaluate your writing using the above checklist. Rewrite at least one paragraph to improve it.

CHAPTER 6

CREATING TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- learn strategies for preparing for and planning creative responses
- explore ways of responding creatively to your studied texts
- explore ways of writing original imaginative, persuasive and interpretive texts
- learn how to cater for purpose and audience
- consider how to develop a sense of voice in your creative responses
- consider how language features can generate particular effects.

Composing your own texts is an important part of the English course. Throughout the year, you will be expected to construct a variety of texts. This will develop essential communication skills. Whether as a student in higher education, or an employee, or just within your everyday life, you will need to compose texts to express yourself, share information with others and reflect on what you know.

This chapter explores the kinds of creative tasks you might be asked to complete – specifically, creative responses to texts, and composing in response to a prompt, such as a question, quote or image. It also looks at some of the general skills required for composing any kind of text. Suggestions and activities are included to assist you in creating your own imaginative, persuasive and interpretive texts.

Elements of a top creative response

A high-level creative response will do the following things.

- Offer clearly developed and sustained ideas.
- Respond directly to the question, stimulus or prompt and address the required syllabus concepts.
- Cater for a distinct purpose and audience.
- Demonstrate a sustained voice.
- Conform to the appropriate conventions of form and genre, or experiment with these for specific effects.
- Make innovative and imaginative use of language features.
- Use strategies for planning, drafting, editing and proofreading.
- Use accurate spelling, punctuation, syntax and metalanguage.

Creative responses to your studied texts

A creative text response gives you the opportunity to show a detailed understanding of the world of a text in a more imaginative way than an analytical essay might. It is also a chance to explore what you love or find intriguing about your text.

The syllabus provides opportunities to respond creatively to your studied texts in several ways: by adapting, transforming or responding to texts.

Adapting the text

To adapt a text means to manipulate or alter its form. For example, you might convert a short story into a screenplay for a television pilot, or you might rewrite a speech you have studied to appeal to a new audience.

Transforming the text

Another way to respond creatively to a text is to transform it. This involves reconstructing your text to explore aspects of it that interest you. Ways to transform a text include the following.

- **Change the point of view or voice.** For example, change the narrative point of view from first person to third person, or create a new narrator to present a scene from an alternative perspective.
- **Explore the gaps and silences in the text.** For example, develop the backstory of a marginal but important character, or present an alternative point of view on an issue in an interpretive text.
- **Change the genre.** For example, rewrite a gothic horror as a parody or spoof, or take the details from a feature article and turn them into a short story.

Responding to the text

Responding to a text involves writing a completely original text that acknowledges, counters or replies to the original one. Examples of such responses include a critical review evaluating a film's treatment of an issue, a feature article that challenges the claims made in another article, or an autobiographical piece that draws a parallel with the novel you are studying.

EXAMPLE Responses to *The Handmaid's Tale*

Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* has been the subject of all sorts of creative responses, particularly recently, as shown in the table below. Other potential responses have been suggested for you to consider.

ADAPTING	TRANSFORMING	RESPONDING
The original novel has been adapted to both a feature film and a television series.	The second and third seasons of the television series transform the text by extending the narrative beyond the scope of the original novel.	Many articles responding to the novel and the television series have been written, in the form of either reviews or explorations of the narrative's relevance in a contemporary context.
POTENTIAL ADAPTATION	**POTENTIAL TRANSFORMATION**	**POTENTIAL RESPONSE**
Create a podcast using the novel's transcripts of (the main character) Offred's recorded journal.	Reconstruct a section of the novel from the perspective of Nick, Offred's love interest, who is also marginalised within this dystopian world.	Write an article that evaluates the continued relevance of the novel's strong feminist themes in light of the #MeToo era.

The most important thing to remember is that your response must be consistent with the central concepts, themes and ideas of the original text. You should not, for example, rewrite a character in a way that fundamentally changes their characterisation, or retell the story in a place or time that completely changes the central ideas that the original text is exploring.

ACTIVITY

Explore ideas for transformation

Complete the following exercises, based on what you find most intriguing in a text you have studied.

1 Identify an idea or a theme in the text that you would like to explore further.

2 Choose three key scenes, crisis points or events that give this idea or theme a particular focus.

3 Brainstorm a range of ways in which these scenes or moments might produce a strong idea for a transformed text. For example, consider how other text types, voices or settings might help you to explore important aspects or different perspectives within a scene.

Creative responses to prompts

In the exam, and probably many of your school-based tasks, you will be faced with three types of prompts to compose your own texts: questions, quotes and images.

As with all assessment tasks, you must deconstruct the question or topic carefully, considering its keywords. These might include the following.

- **Command words.** For creative writing tasks, the words are likely to be *create*, *compose*, *construct* or *write*.
- **Concept words.** These point to syllabus concepts indicated by the question, such as *perspective*, *audience*, *genre* or *representation*.
- **Condition words.** These place limitations on your composition, such as whether it needs to be a persuasive text, the opening of a narrative, incorporate the quote or accompany the stimulus image.
- **Critical words.** These add nuance to the question, such as to *subvert* a genre, or offer a *controversial* opinion.

Responding to questions or instructions

Arguably, the most straightforward creative writing prompts are questions or instructions. Here is an example:

> *Compose a persuasive text in a form of your choice that takes a position on a common human behaviour.*

Before attempting to write a response, think about the following questions.

- What are some common human behaviours? What do I admire, or find annoying? What do I find myself doing frequently?
- Which ones do I have strong opinions about? What do I want others to notice, understand or change about this behaviour?
- Is this behaviour common to most people in our society? Or am I focusing on a specific group?
- Who might be the best audience to target in order to create change? How might I persuade them?

Responding to quotes

When faced with a quote, it is important to take the time to consider it thoroughly. You must make sure you clearly understand not just its literal meaning, but also its implications or possibilities. Here's one example:

> *Compose an interpretive text that explores an idea from the following quote:*
> *'We will only understand the miracle of life fully when we allow the unexpected to happen.' (Paul Coelho)*

Consider the following questions.

- What could be meant by 'the miracle of life'?
- What does the quote imply about human behaviour in suggesting that we don't typically 'allow the unexpected to happen'?
- Do you agree that 'we will only understand' life when we allow for the unexpected?
- Who might share this opinion? Who might challenge it?

If you are directed to incorporate the quote into your text, think about how this can be done naturally. You may need to tailor your writing to match the style of the quote or structure your text in such a way that the quote becomes seamlessly integrated.

Responding to images

An image can be a rich stimulus for your creative writing. Use your skills in visual analysis to consider all aspects of the image, including its symbolic potential. Think also about the perspective suggested by the image: who might have taken the photograph, and why, for instance. Here's an example:

Compose an imaginative text that develops the atmosphere suggested within this image.

Consider the following questions.

- When you look at this image, what emotions are stirred in you? Do you see it as bleak, scary or intriguing?
- How do the composition and mise en scène work to evoke a particular atmosphere or mood?
- Who might the figure be, and why might he be in this location?
- What might the buildings and their dilapidated state symbolise (such as a decline in industry, haunted spaces, war or urban decay)?

Sometimes you are required to construct a text that might accompany the image, rather than just be inspired by it. In this situation, you must think about the kinds of multimodal texts that combine images and text. Obvious examples include feature articles, blog posts and reviews, but you could come up with something original and interesting, such as a storyboard for a documentary.

For example:

Adopting the perspective of the central figure, compose a text that might accompany this image.

Aspects to consider include the following.

- What might the situation in this image be? What are the implications of the sign?
- Who might the central figure be? What might be her background, values, beliefs and so on?
- What is the relationship between the central figure and the other people? Is she part of the situation or protesting against it?
- What do you notice within the mise en scène? Where might this image be set? What are the implications of the gender and ethnicity of the people in the image?

ACTIVITY

Practise planning responses to prompts

1 Choose three of the example questions on pages 131–3.

2 Plan two different approaches for each question, identifying the form, audience and purpose for each approach.

3 Choose two or three of your plans and compose a text for each.

Catering for purpose and audience

The decisions you make about the form and language of your text will be affected by two major considerations – your purpose and your intended audience.

Purpose

Of course, all texts fulfil multiple purposes. But you will generally have one *main* purpose, such as:

- to entertain your circle of friends with a humorous story
- to persuade middle-class families to recycle more
- to share your opinion on the issue of youth homelessness in Perth
- to reveal the pressure of unrealistic body images on young women
- to evaluate and review the latest *Star Wars* film.

Notice that these purposes are quite specific about both the message and the intended audience. That is what you should aim for in your own compositions.

Purpose is essentially the combination of two elements: the message you want to convey and the response you hope to generate. Once you have decided on your text's purpose, consider how you might achieve this purpose by asking yourself the following questions.

- Which form of text might best suit my purpose?
- How should I structure my text? How should I order points, arguments or details to best achieve my desired outcome?
- What content should I include in my text? What should be included, omitted or foregrounded in order to suit my purpose? What evidence or details will help my cause?

The word bank below gives you a variety of ways to consider or write about purpose.

PERSUADE	INFORM	INTERPRET	IMAGINE	REFLECT	SPECULATE	SATIRISE
advise	describe	clarify	amuse	meditate	consider	imitate
argue	explain	comment	entertain	memorialise	imagine	mimic
exhort	explore	evaluate	evoke	record	predict	mock
justify	illustrate	review	delight	remember	wonder	parody

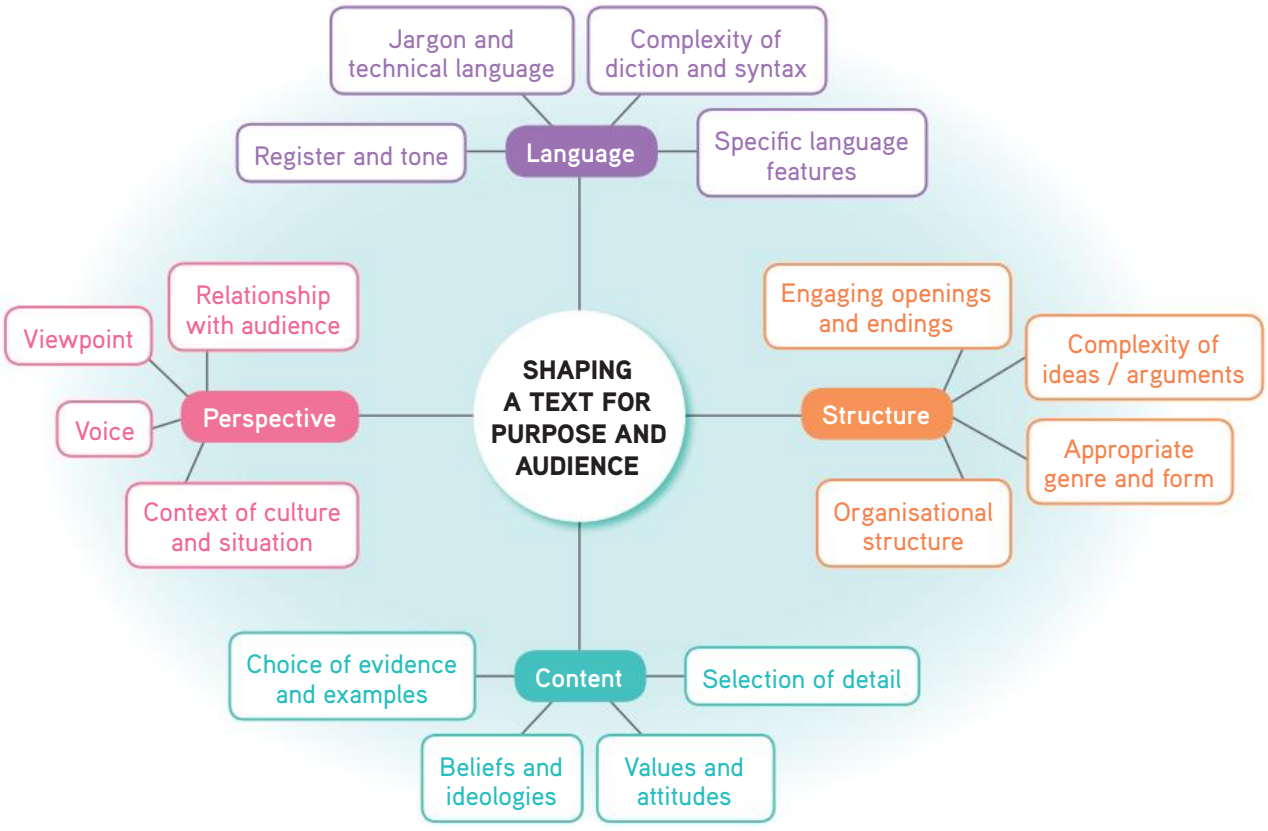
Audience

The key to engaging your audience is to know them well. Many students compose their texts for 'a general Australian audience' but, in truth, few texts will appeal to such a broad demographic. Even national newspapers will demonstrate particular biases, in their language choices, coverage, attitudes and ideologies, as they seek to appeal to certain subsections of the Australian community.

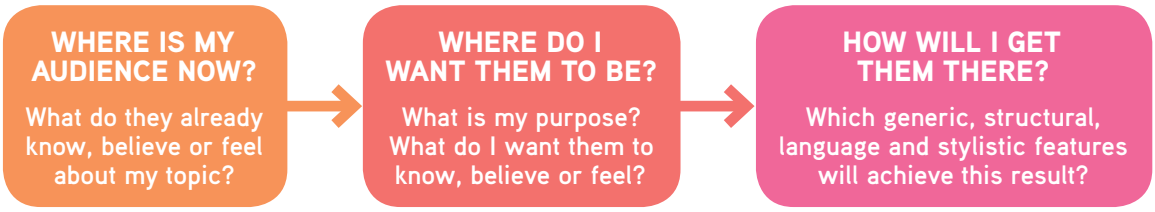
To consider audience in your writing, ask yourself these questions.

- What is the context of my audience? That is, what is their age, gender, economic class, cultural background, ethnicity, religion, geographic location and so on?
- How much background knowledge are they likely to have regarding the topic? What information will I need to provide?
- What are their values and attitudes likely to be? Am I seeking to reinforce or challenge these?
- What kind of voice should I adopt to connect with my audience?
- What sort of content is likely to interest, persuade or entertain them? Which details should I focus on?
- What sort of language is likely to be accessible or appropriate for this audience?
- Which forms of text are my audience likely to view?

Of course, purpose and audience should not be considered in isolation. There is considerable overlap in how each should shape your text. The following diagram draws attention to the sort of features that may need to be taken into account.



This diagram summarises the thought process for considering purpose and audience in relation to your text.



Choosing a form

There are many forms within the broad categories of imaginative, persuasive and interpretive texts. Each comes with its own conventions, which you will be expected to demonstrate in your work.

There are several important considerations when choosing a form in which to write.

- **Is a form specified or limited by the question or task?** For example, your task might specify that you compose a narrative. If so, you must choose a narrative form: short story, drama script, autobiographical extract etc.
- **Is there a requirement to write an imaginative, persuasive or interpretive text?** If so, which forms fit within these broad categories? If the task dictates that you write a persuasive text, a script for a television drama is probably not the most appropriate choice.
- **What is my purpose for this text?** Which form is the best way to achieve this purpose? Of course, many forms can be employed to fulfil any purpose. A poem might be just as effective as a feature article if you wanted to convince people to have more empathy for the aged, for example. But if you need to persuade people to recycle more, it might be better to write a speech than a short story.
- **Who is my audience?** Which form of text is likely to reach them? For example, how often does the average teenager read the newspaper? A social media post might be a better way to capture this demographic. Consider your audience and their likely interests and sources of information.
- **What is the context of the task?** Which form of text is most appropriate or realistic? If you have been asked to compose a text to accompany a still image, think about contexts in which this combination might be likely: for example, a feature article in a magazine, or an online news story.

Ensure that you are thoroughly familiar with the features of the form before you start to write. Many students have been undone by suggesting that they are writing a television screenplay, for example, without using screenplay conventions.

Writing from a particular perspective

A perspective is a viewpoint informed by a particular context. Many creative response tasks will specifically invite you to choose a particular perspective through which to approach your topic. You might write from your own perspective, but sometimes you might adopt a persona to portray in your text.

In deciding on a perspective, it is important to consider your own contextual background. You will find it difficult to write from a perspective you know little about. Write from what you know, or undertake research to develop a genuine understanding of another's context. Consider, in relation to yourself or your chosen persona:

- personal context (age, gender, cultural background, geographic location etc.)
- education, experiences or qualifications related to the topic
- values, attitudes and beliefs held regarding the topic
- the situational context to which your text responds.

When composing a text, the perspective you adopt will shape such features as:

- representations of your subject matter
- the voice you construct
- the beliefs, values and attitudes you present
- the content you include, foreground and/or omit.

The following examples show how context can inform perspective and the way an issue is represented in a text.

PERSPECTIVE		REPRESENTATION OF THE ISSUE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BOTTLES
CONTEXT	VIEWPOINT	
Environmental lobbyist, recently returned from a mission to clean Pacific Island beaches and rescue affected coastal wildlife.	Plastic bottles break down, contaminating the environment and posing a danger to marine and coastal wildlife.	Single-use plastic bottles should be immediately banned, and the ban extended to other plastic products. Currently the value of convenience outweighs our consideration of the environment; this must change.
Nutrition scientist who has conducted a long-term study of the effects of plastic on human health.	Chemicals from plastics, such as BPA, can contaminate food and can lead to health problems in humans.	Corporate greed means plastic manufacturers ignore the hazards their products pose. Rather than banning plastic bottles, it's more important that manufacturers improve their product.
Plastics manufacturer.	Single-use plastic is safe for human consumption. The material can be recycled to avoid it entering the environment.	Consumers bear the responsibility for disposing of plastic bottles appropriately. The idea of banning single-use plastic bottles unfairly punishes manufacturers for consumers' actions.

ACTIVITY

Consider perspectives

1. Draw up a table like the one on the previous page, with two blank rows below the column headings.
2. Complete the first row as yourself. Identify your personal context as a young adult and student, and your background knowledge on the issues surrounding single-use plastic bottles. Add any other contextual factors that might influence your perspective on this issue.
3. Outline your viewpoint on the issue.
4. Consider how you might represent this issue if you were to write an article on single-use plastic bottles.
5. Repeat steps 2–4 for one of the following personae:
   - an adult Australian on a very low income
   - a sportsperson who participates in marathons sponsored by a major drinks company
   - a representative from a meningococcal awareness foundation educating young people about the potential risks of sharing water bottles.

Developing a voice

Finding your voice can be one of the most challenging things as a writer, yet it is also one of the most fundamental aspects of all good writing.

Voice is a reflection of a writer's personality. You may craft a fictional persona to narrate your text, or you may write from your own perspective. This is the distinction between narrative voice and authorial voice, respectively. Either way, the key to connecting with your reader is to have an authentic and engaging voice.

It may be easier to consider voice in terms of spoken, rather than written, communication. Each person has a unique manner of speaking that is intrinsically tied to their personality. Individuals also vary their voice depending on who they are speaking to and the context in which they are speaking. At the core, however, their personality is still conveyed. Voice in writing is about capturing this phenomenon: helping your reader to 'hear' your writing in their head.

In speech, a sense of voice is constructed through various elements, including:

- diction or lexical choice – the vocabulary used by the individual
- intonation – the changes in tone that reflect emphasis and emotion
- rhythm – pace and flow
- idiolect – uses of language unique to the particular individual.

In writing, voice is constructed through language features such as diction, literary devices, syntax, pace and even punctuation.

Narrative voice

Sometimes the narrator of a text will be a character or persona within it; at other times it may be an external observer.

When your narrator is a character, imagine their personality. Are they sneaky and sarcastic, bold and brash, or sunny and sweet? Identifying their type of personality is the first step to imagining the way they would use language.

Think also about the character's worldview. What are their values and attitudes? What would their perspective be on the issues or experiences your writing explores?

If your narrator is an external observer, consider how they are positioned in relation to the events of the story. Are they dispassionate, reporting objectively with little emotional involvement? Or are they sympathetic, curious or even cynical about the characters they observe? Determining the perspective from which your narrator observes is essential to the development of an appropriate and authentic voice.

Consider these three examples of narrative voice.

EXAMPLE	DESCRIPTION
The boy was clearly lost. He stood in the shopping centre plaza as people rushed by. His head moved from side to side as he searched for whichever parent had lost sight of him. Those who rushed by were too busy, too concerned with their own urgent business, to take much notice of the child and his sniffles. A red balloon slipped from his fingers to glide gently towards the ceiling.	This external narrative voice is quite dispassionate, observing the event with little emotional engagement. The rhythm is fast-paced, with many one- or two-syllable words and relatively simple sentence structures.
The little boy's bottom lip trembled as he stood in the crowded shopping centre plaza. His eyes, wide and frightened, searched frantically for the comforting figure of his mother. Strangers rushed by, none sparing him as much as a glance, let alone a kindly word. Tears spilled over his cheeks and his red balloon, its momentary joy forgotten, slipped from his grasp to float away, out of reach.	This external narrative voice offers a sympathetic observation by focusing on emotive details such as the boy's trembling lip and tears. Language choices such as 'frantically' and 'comforting' also suggest a sympathetic viewpoint. The balloon drifting 'out of reach' is also more emotive than his simply letting go of it. Sentences are longer and include descriptive phrases that slow the pace and force the reader to observe the boy closely.
I was late back from lunch again. Hurrying, I made my way through the shopping centre back to the store. Assam was going to be angry with me, and would probably dock my pay. Again. As I glanced at my watch, I almost tripped over some little kid just standing there. Crossly, I went to step around him before he let out a quiet sob. I looked around. No nearby adult seemed to want to claim him. Not my problem, I thought, and I'm late already. But then his little fist let go of a balloon and his face crumpled. Sighing, I knelt beside him.	This narrative voice comes from a character within the story itself. The character's exasperation is evident in the focus on negative detail: lateness, Assam's anger, the docked pay. Language choices such as 'some little kid' and 'not my problem' also suggest an initial lack of empathy. Many sentences feature 'I' as the subject, suggesting a degree of self-absorption that makes the child a source of frustration.

ACTIVITY

Adopt a different narrative voice

Using the narrative details from the examples on the previous page, write a further example in which you adopt a different narrative voice. You might consider perspectives such as the boy's distressed mother, a kindly shopping-centre employee or an outraged observer more concerned about the careless parent.

Authorial voice

Your authorial voice is something that is fluid and dynamic, and develops over time. Therefore, the key to developing your own voice in writing is to practise often. Your study notes are a good place to do this: reflect on what you have learned, write commentaries on your texts and respond to the issues you learn about. Read back over these and ask yourself the following questions.

- Is this what I sound like?
- Is this true to how I feel?
- Is this something I would read?

Below are some other tips for developing your own voice.

- Describe yourself in five adjectives. How would you convey this in your writing?
- List your favourite writers or bloggers. How would you describe their voices? What do they have in common? What are the techniques they use to capture their voice?
- What motivates you? Which values lie at the core of your worldview? What are the important qualities you foster within yourself and admire in others?
- Free-write frequently. This involves just sitting down and writing whatever comes to mind. Practise getting what's in your head down on paper.
- Use your phone to record yourself speaking. Transcribe your speech and look for patterns that indicate your unique voice.

It is important to recognise that your voice changes in different circumstances; but even when you speak to different audiences, or are experiencing different emotions, there is still a common core to your personal voice.

Tone

Tone refers to the mood or emotion evident within the voice of the text. It reflects the attitude of the writer towards the subject matter.

Tone is mostly constructed through the diction within a text. However, sentence structure and the selection of details also reveal the writer's tone. A highly critical tone, for example, will be evident in a focus on flaws or irritants within the subject matter, while a nostalgic tone will result from a focus on warm and positive details.

The following word bank gives you some useful words for describing tone.

TONE WORD BANK			
accusatory	diplomatic	ironic	resigned
admiring	earnest	judgemental	sarcastic
aggressive	empathetic	lighthearted	scathing
belligerent	enthusiastic	mocking	sceptical
caustic	facetious	nostalgic	sensationalistic
colloquial	humble	optimistic	sentimental
compassionate	humorous	outraged	sincere
concerned	incredulous	persuasive	sympathetic
condescending	indignant	playful	tolerant
contemptuous	informative	pretentious	whimsical
cynical	intimate	resentful	worried

Authenticity

Authenticity is a key aspect of an engaging voice. Your reader will not connect with you if your writing sounds forced, unbelievable or uninformed. A common error that students make is to try to adopt the voice of a character or persona too far removed from their own experience. This is not to say that you must only ever write from the perspective of a teenage high-school student, but whatever perspective you do choose to write from should ideally have some basis within your own knowledge and experience – even if you extrapolate this into a different context. Write from what you know.

For example, you might have had a holiday in a country where people did not speak your language. Reflecting on this experience, and how you felt being in a foreign country where communication was difficult, could be useful in developing the voice of a new migrant.

EXAMPLES Authorial voice

Compare these two examples of authorial voice.

Hashtag activism or slacktivism?

Anyone familiar with Twitter knows that it frequently conveys little more than the inane postings of narcissistic millennials who think what they had for lunch is of vital importance to the social record. Mmm #burgerheaven! That it's a platform for those who spend more time posting about their day instead of living it. Oh, and for celebrities anxious to maintain their marketability. And don't forget the rantings of shock jocks whose inability to construct a complete sentence is masked by Twitter's strict character limit …

And it's true: a quick glance at today's top-trending hashtags include #Friyay, #WinniethePoohDay, #FridayMotivation and #ArianaGrande. Heavy stuff. At least since Instagram took off we've seen a sharp decline in lunch menu posts.

However, every now and then a serious hashtag comes along that connects huge swathes of Twitter's 260 million users. Think #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo or #VoteYes. These seemingly innocuous hashtags encapsulated issues of great magnitude, and their influence reached well beyond the Twittersphere.

It can be easy to dismiss those who attach themselves to such campaigns as virtue-signalling, bandwagon-jumping slacktivists. I mean, is sitting in your living room really joining in the search to #FindKony? Or is it just a self-congratulatory pat on your own back for 'making a difference'? A virtual elbow in the ribs of others to remind them how 'woke' you are?

No doubt this is the case for many. But the humble hashtag, it seems, can make a genuine impact. Viral campaigns can lead to a groundswell of support for causes that can create communities, pressure governments or organisations, and raise some serious money.

#ALSIceBucketChallenge raised nearly $100 million, funding years of research. #MeToo has prompted investigation into institutional misogyny – and a backlash campaign with its own hashtag in #NotAllMen. #BringBackOurGirls focused international attention on kidnapped schoolgirls in Nigeria. #jan25 is credited with coordinating the hundreds of thousands of protesters during Egypt's 'Arab Spring' revolution.

We can hardly dismiss these events, nor the role of Twitter in inspiring and communicating them.

The combination of sophisticated language with humour suggests an intelligent voice that makes a connection with an everyday audience.

These little asides reveal the writer's tone – a lighthearted condescension towards the average Twitter user.

Beginning sentences informally like this contributes to the writing's conversational style.

The writer's inclusion of hashtags here implies connection with the reader in assuming a shared understanding of their meaning.

The writer's voice, with its balance of colloquial and nuanced language, remains consistent throughout the text.

A personal and quite cheeky tone is developed here through the rhetorical questions, which offer a gentle dig at the reader.

Notice the greater degree of formality and seriousness when discussing important issues.

The formal nature of the conclusion, and the use of inclusive language, creates a gently authoritative voice that draws in the reader.

The great Insta-ban

So this weekend my parents decided to ban all social media. Instagram. Facebook. Snapchat. The lot. All. Gone.

The informal grammar here contributes to a conversational tone.

My life is officially over.

The manipulation of syntax generates a mock serious tone.

They've already insisted on knowing the passwords to our phones and laptops 'in the interests of keeping us safe'. Surveillance worthy of ASIO, I call it. Now they've discovered you can buy a program that lets them know whenever we try to install or use social media. What kind of cruel sicko invented such a thing?

My 14-year-old sister's shrieks of pure horror are still ringing in my ears.

These asides help create a humorous tone and the sense of a teenager pitted against their parents.

Please, for a minute, share my complete bewilderment that anyone technologically minded enough to write computer software would use that skill to deny others access to … computer software (traitors). Someone skilled enough, in fact, that the resident tech geek at school is still unable to hack their evil genius creation (a mission that has so far cost me $200 and a date next Friday).

These parenthesised statements add personality and humour to the voice.

What my parents fail to realise, however, is that they are not just ruining my social life (as soul-destroying as THAT fact alone is), they are seriously jeopardising my education. We teenagers don't just use social media for posting cute selfies and trolling each other (like there wasn't bullying in your day, Dad!). It has some genuinely useful functions.

Like the Facebook study group for Maths. How am I going to get that free tutoring now? There's only so many Friday nights available in my calendar. Or my friend at another school who has a way better English teacher who lets her photograph his whiteboard notes and Snapchat them to me. Or the fact that my Chem teacher has a whole YouTube channel where he teaches things like how to balance equations. Or my Art teacher's Instagram that's better than any textbook.

The listing and use of anaphora (repeated words at start of sentences) works to add emphasis.

What now, say I? I'm starting to hyperventilate thinking about it.

A touch of self-deprecation is included through the use of hyperbole.

Yeah, we teenagers use social media for some pretty awful things at times (you know it) but sometimes, just sometimes, we do things right too.

The conclusion, with its conceding of both the cons and the pros of social media, adds an element of reason to the voice.

ACTIVITY

Consider voice

1 How would you characterise each of the voices in the examples on pages 142–3? Who do you 'hear' within the writing?

2 Identify the impact of the tone of each voice:
- How does the first writer feel about the power of the hashtag?
- What is the second writer's attitude to social media in education?

3 Practise developing your own authorial voice by writing a response to the prompt:

'Social media: Junk food for the brain?' (Brian Lord)

Taking it further: irony

Irony is a stylistic feature that uses words to convey an idea that is the opposite of their literal or common meaning. Many students struggle to identify irony when analysing texts. This is often due to the fact that it relies on the audience having a knowledge of context in order to understand how the writer is being subversive. It is sometimes easier to recognise sarcasm, because of its mocking tone. Creating an ironic voice can be tricky, but the following language features can contribute to the effect.

LANGUAGE FEATURE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Overstatement or hyberbole	Exaggerating a statement beyond its true meaning.	I mean, global warming could even be a great thing; imagine having a whole year of nothing but summer sunshine! We'll never worry about getting caught in the rain again.
Understatement	Presenting a statement as smaller or less significant than it really is.	I looked at the mangled bike, and the car screeching down the road. 'Oh my gosh, Izzy, you're covered in blood. Are you okay?' 'It's just a scratch,' Izzy replied, pale and wobbling. 'I'm totally fine, honest.'
Sarcasm	The use of overstatement or understatement to mock or criticise.	I can see that you're eminently qualified for this role, Mr Parker, especially with all the experience as 'beach enthusiast' you've noted in your résumé. I'm surprised you haven't been snapped up by another law firm already.
Paradox	A phrase or situation that is contradictory but nevertheless true.	Nobody's going to Bali on holidays anymore – it's way too crowded. I spent a whole week by the resort pool there just last month and it wasn't relaxing at all.

The important thing to remember with using irony is the context. You need to have provided your reader with just enough background information for the subversive meaning to be clear. For example, Izzy's statement (above) that her injury was 'just a scratch' could be taken literally if it wasn't for the previous detail referencing her blood loss. Similarly, with the first example, a reader could assume the speaker is being literal – if a little naive! However, in the context of a longer speech about the threat of climate change, the irony would be apparent.

Bringing it all together

The following examples outline three responses to the same prompt, demonstrating the interrelationship of purpose, audience, form, perspective and voice.

'The only reason why we ask other people how their weekend was is so we can tell them about our own weekend.'
(Chuck Palahniuk, Invisible Monsters*, 1999)*

Construct a text in a form of your choice to explore an idea from this quote.

Type of text: interpretive.
Form: feature article – women's magazine.
Purpose and audience: to consider the way social media creates 'life envy'; young adult, Australian audience.

Perspective	Structure	Voice	Content
A young adult woman who is giving up social media because of the unrealistic expectations of life it offers, and her resulting distress.	Begin with an anecdote about life envy to connect with audience. Continue with the writer's experiences of anxiety and distress to play on audience sympathies. Broaden into discussion of it being human nature to misrepresent one's life online. Conclude with personal choice to give up social media.	Adopt a chatty tone to engage the reader at the beginning. Move to a more serious tone when discussing mental health. Include social media jargon. Include young adult colloquialisms. Adopt conversational register.	Convey personal experience of anxiety and distress. Include examples from familiar social media platforms and how they exacerbate these feelings. Focus on examples featuring other young adults. Include facts and quotes from psychologists and social media analysts.

Type of text: imaginative.
Form: play (comedy).
Purpose and audience: to satirise the human tendency to want to 'keep up with the Joneses'; middle-class, suburban adult audience.

Perspective	Structure	Voice	Content
A wry and self-deprecating observation of suburban life.	Begin at a neighbourhood barbecue where one couple brag about their weekend. Describe other couples feeling inadequate and deciding to go on adventures themselves. Depict a series of get-togethers where couples brag about more and more outrageous outings while privately bemoaning everything that went wrong. Resolve with all three couples coincidentally meeting at the same miserable destination, but lying about how great it is.	Use lots of colloquial language. Adopt a humorous tone. Slightly exaggerate Australian dialect. Use snappy dialogue.	Describe farcical situations. Depict slightly exaggerated characters. Use recognisable holiday experiences, e.g. Bali, south coast, Rottnest.

Type of text: persuasive.

Form: advice column in a parenting feature – weekend edition of a major newspaper.

Purpose and audience: to persuade parents to adopt a simpler, less competitive lifestyle for their children; middle-class, aspirational parents.

Perspective	Structure	Voice	Content
Concerned child psychologist cautioning parents about childhood stress.	Begin with an overheard conversation between a group of parents bragging about their children's numerous weekend commitments to extracurricular activities. Suggest such behaviour can be 'narcissistic parenting', whereby some parents compete with each other through their children's achievements. Continue with research and case studies about childhood stress and its long-term impacts. Call for a return to a simpler vision of childhood, with time for children's relaxation.	Use rhetorical language features such as expert opinions, facts and statistics, anecdote. Adopt a formal register and a gently authoritative tone. Use a problem-and-solution rhetorical structure (see page 77). Include a call to action.	Begin with a familiar, relatable situation of parents talking in a school car park. Define narcissistic parenting and its causes. Incorporate research into childhood stress and its effects. Use case studies to humanise the issue.

ACTIVITY

Plan a response

Plan your own text for this task. It can be any form of imaginative, interpretive or persuasive text.

1. First, brainstorm a range of additional ideas that might be explored from the prompt. Choose one idea to explore.
2. Next, choose an audience you want to target. Brainstorm some ideas around your audience, considering their context, interests, likely values related to your idea and so on.
3. Think of your purpose in targeting this group. What do you want to convey to this audience? How do you want them to respond?
4. Identify a form that seems appropriate for achieving your purpose.
5. Draw up and complete a table like the one below, considering some of the textual features and content you might incorporate to achieve your purpose and reach your target audience.

Type of text:

Form:

Purpose and audience:

Perspective	Structure	Voice	Content

Taking it further: reflecting

Reflecting is an important aspect of the creative writing process. It will help you to become a better writer for future composition tasks. The following tips will help.

- Consider carefully any feedback you receive from your marker.
- Even if you don't receive feedback, look back over your work after you have had some distance from it. What works? What doesn't? Which aspects of the text could be tightened up? What would you do differently next time?
- What did you learn as a result of this task? What strengths did you find within your own writing? What did you find challenging?
- Write a brief reflection – even if just in bullet-point form – to record your thoughts for your next attempt at a composition.

Creating imaginative texts

In this section we will look at the key elements of imaginative texts, and how to develop your own imaginative pieces.

Developing a narrative

Crafting a good narrative is not just about sequencing plot events. It is about connecting plot, character and theme in a way that is going to maintain your reader's interest while simultaneously exploring an idea. The following section outlines strategies to develop the complexity of your narrative.

THE EXPOSITION

The trigger

- The protagonist should have some trigger. This could be a character flaw, a value they hold dear or a past trauma. For example, they might be quick to anger, have recently lost their job or wear a ring that belonged to someone close to them. Giving your character a trigger will make their actions much more credible and meaningful, setting them up for future conflict.

The dilemma

- The dilemma must pose a problem for your main character, or at least a problem that the reader can see – even if the character is not aware of all the implications. Your character should have options for how to respond. For example, in *The Hobbit*, Bilbo Baggins must decide whether to stay at home – the safe option – or accompany the dwarves on their quest and have an exciting adventure.

RISING ACTION

The setback

- At some point before the climax, the main character should experience a setback: an action doesn't have the desired outcome, another complication arises or the character makes an error. This adds tension to your narrative, engaging your reader.
- As a result of this setback, new qualities should arise in your character. They may discover a skill, understand their potential or develop greater resilience. In some stories, this setback forces the character to compromise themselves in some way. The reader learns something new and the character develops in complexity.

CLIMAX

The possibility of failure

- The climax is the final test of your character, the showdown between protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist must have learned something as a result of their previous setback. If they make the same mistakes, then the character hasn't grown and there is no reason for the climactic event to turn out any differently from previous situations.
- The climax should result from a natural progression within your narrative. Your character's prior actions should lead them to a situation of confrontation with their nemesis. The climax will be more engaging if there is the real possibility that the character might fail in this confrontation.

THE RESOLUTION

The aftermath

- The resolution requires particular attention to ensure your themes are clear for your audience. The resolution does not have to be long (particularly in short narratives), but there should be an opportunity for your character to reflect or for the consequences of the conflict to become apparent.
- The resolution can be implied if you have set up your narrative well. For example, in a story about a teenage runaway, you might conclude with them deciding to return home. If your character has already thought about the pros and cons of doing so, you won't need to spell out what happens when they do return: your reader can assume what will happen.

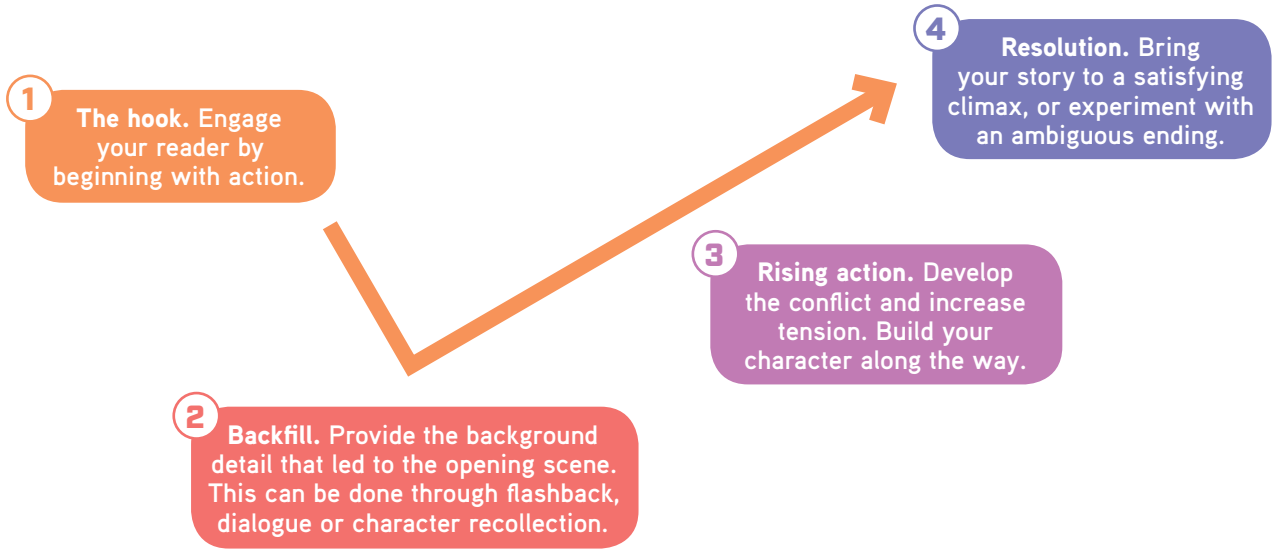
Taking it further: experimenting with structure

The syllabus asks you to experiment with textual features, and narrative structure is a good place to start. Here are four options for you to consider.

An ambiguous resolution. It is not clear what exactly happens after the events of the climax, leaving the audience in a state of anxiety. The ambiguity must be purposeful; for example, it might be used:

- to deliberately unsettle your audience
- to imply that a neat resolution to the issues, themes or ideas explored is unlikely
- to imply that the conflicts explored are ongoing
- to reflect a reality that is chaotic or disordered.

The compact narrative. This can be useful in an examination situation, as you won't have time to construct a fully developed narrative. Many students come undone by trying to write a narrative that is 'too big' to tackle in the short time frame of an exam or assessment situation. A handy strategy for a simple but effective four-part narrative is to consider using the 'tick' narrative structure.



The epistolary narrative. A popular form of fiction in the 18th century, epistolary novels were written as a series of letters between characters. Contemporary epistolary novels can be composed of combinations of letters, emails, diary entries, text messages and even other forms such as photographs and newspaper clippings. Experiment with creating a story pieced together as a dossier of different forms.

Begin at the end. Experiment with structure by beginning with your final scene, creating a sense of mystery and intrigue as the reader wonders how the character came to be in this situation. Then slip back in time and take your reader on the character's journey.

Developing complex characters

Characters that fall flat generally fail to engage the reader. You want your characters to be vivid, credible creations so that your reader becomes invested in them. These strategies will help you to develop more rounded characters.

- **Help your reader picture your character.** Drip-feed details to your reader – how the character dresses, key aspects of their physical appearance, the way they move and act, and so on. Do so in a way that is natural. If a character wheezes when they climb the stairs, your reader will understand they are unfit without you spelling it out.
- **Acknowledge your character's flaws.** Nobody is perfect, and no-one can relate to a character who is. Characters should have some flaw, doubt or insecurity: this is what makes them real.
- **Consider your character's backstory.** You won't share all of this information with the reader but it will help you to imagine how your character will respond to conflict. We are all shaped by our pasts, and by considering your characters' histories you will make them richer and more convincing.
- **Identify your character's motivations.** What gets them out of bed in the morning? Are they driven by jealousy to commit a terrible act of revenge? Does their own insecurity hold them back until a pivotal life-changing decision is made? If you keep their motivation in mind, it will be easier to figure out how your character would act or react in ways that seem believable.
- **Include idiosyncratic behaviours that add to your character's realness.** Do they chew their fingernails when they're nervous? Do they get so excited that their words all come out in a rush? Do they annoyingly butt in every time someone else is speaking? Such details help build the sense of a unique and realistic individual.
- **Develop your character's interior life.** Reveal what they are thinking and feeling. Many characters are flat because the only thing the reader knows of them is what comes through their dialogue. Add interest by creating tension between what they think and what they say.
- **Remember to consider how other characters react to the character.** This can be more revealing than the character's own actions, which may mask their true nature.
- **Remember the cardinal rule of characterisation: characters must grow throughout the text.** This doesn't necessarily have to be a 180-degree turnaround, but they must develop in some fashion, typically in response to conflict.

Taking it further: experimenting with characters

Your experimentation with textual features can also include the characters you develop. Here are some suggestions you may wish to try.

- **Choose an unexpected narrator.** Focalise your narrative through an unexpected character. For example, in a story about a couple whose relationship breaks up, write from the perspective of a close friend who is now torn between the two.
- **Experiment with the second-person point of view.** This can be tricky to do well, but try making the reader ('you') the central character in the story. Provide sufficient detail about what the character sees and does but be ambiguous enough in characterisation for the reader to put themselves into the story.
- **Create a morally ambiguous character.** Unsettle your reader with an antihero whose values are mysterious, questionable or even confronting.

Language features: creating vivid imagery

In most texts there will be moments when description is needed to set a scene, reveal an important event or offer a portrait of a character. Poor descriptive writing is often characterised by overkill – too much descriptive detail – or by an over-reliance on one aspect of description, such as visual imagery. (See Appendix 1, page 239, for explanations of descriptive and figurative language features.) When creating vivid imagery, keep these tips in mind.

- **Use sensory details.** Don't just rely on what a character can see; consider the sounds, smells and sensations that might be used to build a strong sensory image.
- **Use interesting verbs and nouns** to create impact and add precise detail, rather than drawing only on adjectives and adverbs.
- **Use figurative language sparingly.** Using too many devices, or relying too heavily on one device, such as simile or metaphor, can detract from the quality and effectiveness of your writing.
- **Focus on little details.** Provide enough general information to give the reader the gist of an image and then focus on some specific, original details that will engage their interest.
- **Carefully consider the connotations** of the words you choose.

For example, imagine a pristine beach on a calm, sunny day. Denotatively, this scene might represent the coastal division between land and sea, typically characterised by sand and dune vegetation. For many Australians, this scene has connotations of fun, relaxation, summer, socialising or exercise. However, for some, the beach is a place of danger and discomfort. The two examples on the next page show how the selection of descriptive detail and the precise use of language can be used to create quite different images of a beach scene.

EXAMPLES Imagery

Sensory details are gentle: the gulls' cries float, the water is cool, the sun warm.

Figurative language choices also suggest comfort.

Lexical choice creates positive connotations.

Choice of details focuses on the character's positive thoughts.

Zooming in on little details here suggests a character archetype found in popular films, connoting romance and excitement.

The sound of gulls floated on the air, calling me to the water's cool embrace. I closed my eyes, turning my face to the warmth of the sun, and felt the drama of the week melt away.

Kicking off my sandals, I luxuriated in the feel of sand between my toes. The coconut scent of sunscreen perfumed the air. I set down my bag and stretched out my towel. A dilemma – what to do first? A paddle, dip into that new paperback I picked up, or settle in with my iPod for some serious relaxation?

Before I could decide, a voice called to me from the water. Squinting, I looked out at the sparkling waves as a muscular shape emerged. Standing in the shallows, Jarrod, the gorgeous new guy from school, flicked wet hair from his eyes.

'Alice?' he asked. 'Is that you?'

Decision made.

This image creates an atmosphere of positivity, emotional warmth and relaxation. As the passage develops, an element of anticipation arises in the protagonist. Hopefully, the reader will share this sense of romantic anticipation.

Sensory details focus on harsh irritants: heat, sand, noise and so on.

Figurative language suggests an exaggerated awkwardness.

Lexical choice creates negative connotations, although these are lightly humorous.

Choice of detail focuses on the character's negative thoughts; however, these are gently exaggerated to undermine their seriousness.

Zooming in on details such as this highlights the character's awkwardness.

I gritted my teeth as I crossed the blistering expanse of the beach. Thanks to some crummy thong-thief, I was forced to hop awkwardly, lifting each foot as high as I could to give it brief respite from the scorching sand. I must have looked like some demented frog. A mixture of sunscreen and sweat had slithered into my eye, causing me to scrunch my face into a lopsided grimace. Added to that, the sand that had wormed its way into every nook and cranny of my bathers was making me murderous.

My little sister followed behind me, her sobs over the ice-cream, which had melted before she could eat it, escalating into a piercing wail. People started to turn and stare. I hissed at her to be quiet, pointing a deflated beach ball at her in warning.

Then I saw him – Jarrod, the gorgeous new guy from school. Two feet in front of me. Panic! I tried to throw my towel over my head to disguise myself but only succeeded in flicking his muscular shoulder with it. He turned, a scowl morphing into an amused grin.

'Alice?' he asked. 'Is that you?'

An atmosphere of frustration and irritation is established. However, there is a light edge to the tone, due to the use of hyperbole. The effect is humorous because of the exaggeration of the character's awkward situation and her gentle humiliation.

Taking it further: experimenting with syntax

One of the ways in which you can experiment with language features is through manipulating syntax for imaginative effect. Here are some possibilities.

- **Stream of consciousness.** Rather than following conventional rules of grammar and punctuation, this writing style mimics the nonlinear nature of thought. Sentences may be incomplete, change direction in the middle, or run into one another.

  I close my eyes and the dream comes back, the figure looming over me, shadows drawing round until I can't see, can't breathe and I'm trying to call out and my voice – my voice is broken, is silent, I can't speak, can't scream, words won't come my chest is tight and the shadows, the shadows ...

- **Sentence fragments.** Using fragments of one or two words can be effective at moments of heightened tension or for dramatic impact.

  Sanji turned as he heard the door slam behind him. Gareth. Six feet of bulging muscles and mean eyes. And he did not look happy. At. All.

- **Compounding phrases.** Adding several phrases to a sentence, which is usually considered poor grammar, can add a lyrical, dreamy quality to imaginative writing.

  She spun around, bathing in the glow of Times Square. The lights seemed to her like fireworks, like Catherine wheels and chrysanthemums, exploding from billboards and buildings, filling the night sky with such colour, such vivid movement that all once she became quite overwhelmed and tears sprang to her eyes.

EXAMPLE Imaginative text

The following is an example of an imaginative text written in an examination situation, responding to the prompt:

Compose a text in a form of your choice inspired by the following image.

The bushfire ripped through the forest in minutes.

Made uneasy by the towering black smoke, Ariel had already started throwing things into the car that morning. She had an ear glued to the radio all day, listening out for updates on the fire's progress. You always did, living in the Hills.

The announcer's irritatingly cheery voice told her little, however, beyond the fact that firefighters were battling to contain the blaze and were hoping for favourable wind conditions. Still, Ariel kept vigil at the kitchen window, chewing her nails while the eucalypts swayed at the foot of her yard.

It had been a long summer, and she knew the forest was bone dry.

At first, it was just a few swirling grey particles, like the ghosts of snowflakes. But then came a blizzard of ash. The world darkened, the sun shrivelling to an evil yellow glow in the sky. Stepping out her back door, the acrid taste of smoke caught the back of Ariel's throat and she coughed harshly.

As she loaded the last precious items into the car, she felt a stinging on the back of her neck, then her arms. Embers flickered through the ash like hellish fireflies.

There was a deep rumbling in the air, and as the first flames appeared through the trees she realised with horror that it was the sound of the fire itself, a deep, animalistic howl of rage.

This isolated sentence provides a dramatic introduction using the powerful verb 'ripped'.

The switch to character here provides variety, while still revealing the danger of the fire.

This metaphor reinforces the sense of Ariel's anxiousness.

The adjective 'cheery' is made more interesting by the modifier 'irritatingly'.

This metaphor conveys ideas of watchfulness, prayer and waiting.

A small detail helps build character.

A simple metaphor helps build the sense of anticipation.

This simile conveys the visual image of the ash, as well as its deadly significance.

The metaphor of a blizzard follows naturally on from the snowflake simile.

Vivid visual imagery.

The visual imagery is balanced with a reference to taste.

Sensation is also included.

Simile enhances the vivid visual imagery here.

Auditory detail is also included to help the reader fully imagine the scene.

ACTIVITY

Plan and compose imaginative texts

1 Use one of the following first lines to plan a narrative. You might like to experiment with the 'tick' narrative structure (page 149).

- Anna slowly crumpled the letter in her fist, squeezing it until the paper was a tight ball and her fingers went white with pressure.
- There was a moment when Basir thought he was going to stop in time, but then the ground fell away and he was falling, falling.
- 'Really?' Cora's eyes narrowed. 'That's the best excuse you could come up with?'
- Darkness seemed to creep through the gaping door with a low, hissing sigh.

2 Choose one of the following images. Brainstorm details for a character that suits the person represented in the image.

- Imagine that this character arrived at your school. How would they be received? What conflicts might they face?
- Write a scene based on this situation in which you focus on developing a sense of character. Include all aspects of characterisation: their actions, speech and appearance, as well as the reactions of others.

3 Here is an outline of the beginnings of a narrative, based on an issue from the media.

Elsa and Mikkel are backpacking around Australia. Running low on money, they decide to try their hand at fruit picking. An agency places them with a farm some distance from the nearest town. When they arrive, they find that their accommodation is substandard and their working conditions are not what they were promised. They must decide whether to stay or leave.

- Consider two possible resolutions: Elsa and Mikkel stay and work in these conditions, or they resist pressure from the agency and leave. Identify a possible theme that might arise from each resolution.
- Write the final scene for each of these possible resolutions, using language features to construct an image that will reinforce your chosen theme.

Creating persuasive texts

In this section we will look at the key elements of persuasive texts, and how to develop your own persuasive pieces.

Structuring an argument

Writers of persuasive texts carefully construct their arguments to position their audience to accept their point of view. Below are some common structuring strategies and their effects.

PLACEMENT OF THE MAIN CONTENTION

- **Stated at the beginning.** An upfront declaration, in the opening paragraph or even the title, can convey the writer's sense of conviction and grab the reader's attention, enticing them to read on.
- **Stated at the end.** A contention in the final paragraph can create the impression that the writer has carefully considered the issue before arriving at their point of view, implying a thoughtful, balanced approach.
- **Repeated.** A writer might state their contention in the opening paragraph, then repeat it in the conclusion. Alternatively, they might link supporting points to their contention throughout the piece, suggesting that their argument is consistent.
- **Implied.** The contention is implied, rather than explicitly stated. Various examples and reasons are provided, encouraging the audience to arrive at the same point of view as the writer, suggesting that the conclusion is inevitable.

EFFECTIVE OPENINGS

- A writer might begin with specific information or a particular case, then move to a discussion of underlying principles and wider consequences.
- Beginning with an anecdote or reference to their own experience is a way for writers to seem relatable, while also establishing their authority to address a particular subject.
- Alternatively, a writer might begin with a discussion of the broader ideas underpinning their contention, before supporting these with evidence.

ORDER OF SUPPORTING POINTS

- A writer might present their reasons from strongest to weakest, in order to be highly persuasive from the start. This can immediately gain the reader's attention and approval, before the writer consolidates support with further reasons and evidence.
- Alternatively, a writer might build towards their strongest reasons, leaving the reader with a powerful impression at the end. This can be an effective strategy with an audience that feels neutral or hostile towards the writer's position.

USE OF HEADINGS, SUBHEADINGS AND VISUAL MATERIAL

- The headline or title of a piece can summarise the writer's point of view, pose a question, make a provocative statement or spark curiosity.
- A writer might use subheadings to break up the text and signal the main points. Subheadings can suggest that the writer is approaching the subject logically.
- A photograph can emphasise the emotive aspects of an issue, or act as evidence. Presenting key information in the form of graphs, charts or tables can suggest that the writer's argument is based on sound evidence.

POWERFUL CLOSINGS

- A call to action is a common way to conclude, inviting the audience to participate in some action or behavioural change.
- A single-sentence paragraph, in clear and forceful language, can crystallise the writer's contention and have a strong impact.
- Texts that begin with an anecdote or case study might return to this at the end, as a way of reinforcing a strong opening and creating textual cohesion.

Taking it further: three additional structural features

Some other structural features employed by persuasive writers are outlined below.

Rebuttal. The use of argument and/or evidence to disprove an opposing point of view, rebuttal can be incorporated into the overall argument at the beginning or near the end, or it can be integrated throughout.

- Including rebuttal at the beginning of a piece can pre-empt an audience's objections to the writer's arguments, positioning them to reject opposing viewpoints and accept the writer's conclusions.
- Rebuttal is often placed towards the end, after a writer has outlined the reasons for their own position. This can mean that the reader is well-prepared to accept the writer's rebuttal of opposing viewpoints.
- When the rebuttal is incorporated throughout, the writer regularly compares and contrasts their point of view with opposing positions and arguments. This enables the writer to take a considered approach, persuading the reader through the accumulated weight of evidence and reason.

Creation of a dichotomy. This is a common persuasive tactic. To create a dichotomy (a division into two parts) is to frame a debate as consisting of two starkly opposing sides: 'good' and 'bad'. Simplifying a debate in this way suggests that a moderate position is not possible, leading the audience to feel that they must agree with either one side or the other. It also enables the writer to use language that is strongly loaded with positive connotations to characterise their own point of view, and strongly negative to present the opposing view.

Omissions and marginalisations. Writers sometimes omit or belittle details or perspectives that don't support their contention. For example, a documentary filmmaker might interview a range of people affected by an issue, but omit a major stakeholder or offer them significantly less airtime. A similar tactic is tokenism: a text might include an alternative perspective, but to such a limited degree that it is virtually meaningless. Persuasive texts often include an opposing viewpoint for the sake of appearing balanced, but bury it late in the text, or overwhelm it with several arguments that reinforce the writer's own viewpoint.

Language features: using rhetoric

Aristotle first laid down his analysis of rhetoric – or persuasive argument – in the 4th century BC. His ideas are still recognised and employed today. Effective persuasive texts will employ a variety of rhetorical devices.

You might be familiar with the three main components of rhetoric:

- **logos** – appealing to the audience's sense of logic and reason
- **pathos** – appealing to the audience's values or emotions
- **ethos** – appealing to the authority or credibility of the writer or speaker.

The table below shows how these three types of appeal can work; also see Appendix 1, page 240, for definitions of particular rhetorical devices.

	EXPLANATION	FEATURES	EXAMPLES
LOGOS	Logos refers to the ways in which an argument is made to look reasonable, logical and credible. Of course, this doesn't necessarily mean the argument *is* credible, as logic can be fallacious or misleading.	Facts and statistics, evidence, anaphora, examples, expert opinions and quotes, formal language, jargon and technical terminology, concessions and rebuttals.	Ninety-seven per cent of the world's climate scientists agree that climate change is anthropogenic. The average atmospheric temperature has risen sharply since the Industrial Age, suggesting a clear link with human activity. As Dr James Davis reveals in his 2014 study of paleoclimatology, if we consider climate change patterns from an epochal perspective it can be reasoned that current climate conditions are part of a natural cycle of warming and cooling experienced by the planet throughout time.
PATHOS	Pathos relates to the emotional connection with the audience. A text may create sympathy, empathy or even fear. While an argument needs some degree of evidence, it is often the emotional appeal that engages the audience. The key to effective pathos is to understand your audience and their values.	Emotive language, inclusive pronouns, imperatives, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, analogies and metaphors, attacks and praise.	Every year, thousands of unwanted pets are discarded like rubbish, left to fend for themselves on the streets. Starving, ill, lonely – these homeless animals are desperate for your support. Imagine your child contracts a life-threatening illness. Imagine them suffering in hospital, frightened and in pain. Now imagine that this disease was easily preventable.
ETHOS	Ethos refers to the writer or speaker's credibility, establishing them as someone both knowledgeable and qualified to offer their views on the issue. Ethos is essential to engaging the audience to listen in the first place.	Including your qualifications and experience, personal anecdotes, establishing commonality with the audience, reputation or social proof.	As a woman in business, I know what it is like to face casual gender discrimination every day. It's not just the glass ceiling that inhibits promotional opportunities for women, it's the myriad small acts of condescension from male colleagues that simply wear you out and make you question your own worth. For three years, I documented the lives of migrant families who settled in my home town. They invited me into their homes, where I shared their tables, their stories and their heartaches.

Taking it further: kairos and topos

There are two more elements to classical rhetoric, which you might also consider using:

- **kairos** – creating a sense of opportunity or urgency
- **topos** – employing a familiar rhetorical structure or motif.

The table below shows how kairos and topos operate.

	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLES
KAIROS	Kairos draws on context. The writer or speaker persuades the audience to act now by establishing this as a time of opportunity or urgency.	Another summer and another shark death on WA's beaches. How many lives must be lost before our government acts? When are we going to realise that we need to take serious measures to prevent such loss of life? Well, I say that time is now! Perth's wetlands are an ecological wonder. They are also shrinking, crowded out by constant suburban development. The Beeliar Wetlands is now under threat from the proposed Roe 8 highway extension once again. But we still have an opportunity to save this remarkably diverse – and increasingly rare – natural environment.
TOPOS	Topos refers to themes or motifs that have become commonplace and familiar to audiences. There is comfort in familiarity, and audiences engage when they are presented with a formula that they recognise.	US President Donald Trump employs the concept of topos with his shorthand slogans of 'Crooked Hillary', 'Fake news' and 'Make America great again'. They become symbols for complex arguments and are persuasive simply because the audience recognises them and associates them with prior support for Trump. Some idioms and clichés can be considered specific topoi, too. Examples include arguing that an unpopular decision is 'a necessary evil', and the now-infamous quote from Paul Keating in 1990 stating that Australia was experiencing 'the recession we had to have', an idiom now applied to many different issues.

EXAMPLE Persuasive text

This sample text responds to the prompt on page 153.

The Editor
The West Australian newspaper
PO Box 1959
OSBORNE PARK DC WA 6916

These features make the form of the text clear.

Dear Editor,

With summer approaching, I have received my annual notice from the local council reminding me of my responsibility to prepare my property for bushfire season.

Short paragraphs are a typical feature of the 'letter to the editor' form.

This is a responsibility I totally accept. In fact, I've already begun renewing my firebreaks. My brother is a volunteer with DFES and I know only too well the danger he regularly faces.

The writer provides some context, helping to establish their perspective.

My problem is with the council's policy for enforcing these requirements, which relies entirely on the property owner to act on this simple notice. Their letter states that 'failure to comply with *Bush Fires Act 1954* can result in a $5000 fine'. I'm sorry, but fines do little to prevent the devastation of a bushfire.

Here, the writer makes their contention clear.

The 'problem' is clearly stated for the reader.

Fines are all well and good, but what about my neighbour who rents his property and therefore doesn't receive council notifications, which go to the owner? And what about those who simply ignore the letter,

Colloquial idioms like this contribute to the writer's voice as an 'everyday' person.

Rhetorical questions advance the writer's argument.

or don't receive it? Just sending letters in the mail does nothing to ensure the physical safety of other residents and their property.

Here the writer offers a solution.

Instead, why doesn't the council intervene directly when residents don't comply? They obviously do the rounds inspecting properties in order to issue fines. At this point, why can't they step in, clear the firebreaks themselves and then charge residents for the costs? This would then ensure the safety of others in the community as well as having the added benefit of providing local employment.

By outlining additional benefits, the writer emphasises the strength of their solution.

It takes time to issue fines and follow up on non-compliance. What about residents in the meantime? Bushfire season will be over by the time the council completes due process. Perhaps the council could write to potential firebugs asking them to hold off until they collect the fines.

A sarcastic tone reinforces the writer's attitudes.

The writer's contention is restated at the end to reinforce their position.

The council must take a more active role in ensuring that firebreaks are maintained for the safety of its residents.

Yours sincerely,
A Gardener

ACTIVITY

Create persuasive texts

1 Find a persuasive text, such as a speech transcript or opinion piece.
- Identify the main contention and where it is located in the text.
- Identify the perspective being foregrounded, and those that are omitted or marginalised in the text.
- Identify whether the text uses rebuttal. If so, consider why the writer placed the rebuttal in the position they did.
- If the writer hasn't included rebuttal, write an additional paragraph in which you anticipate a likely opposing viewpoint and rebut it using evidence from within the text, and decide where the rebuttal will be most effectively placed.

2 Imagine your school is going to target the health and wellbeing of its staff and students by introducing compulsory fitness classes and removing anything remotely unhealthy from the canteen.
- Brainstorm your ideas around this issue: think of potential benefits, problems, implications, causes, effects, stakeholder perspectives, assumptions and so on.
- Plan two separate arguments, one in support of the proposal and one against it.
- For each plan, identify two or three different logos and pathos techniques you might employ.
- Take your best plan and develop it into a formal persuasive text, such as a speech, an open letter or an article.

3 Compose a persuasive text in response to one of the following questions.
- Do beauty pageants objectify or empower women?
- Should solar energy panels be compulsory for all homes in Australia?
- Should pill testing be available at music festivals?

Creating interpretive texts

In this section we will look at the key elements of interpretive texts, and how to develop your own interpretive pieces.

Developing an informed opinion

The key to effective interpretation is to have an informed understanding of your topic. Your audience is much more likely to accept your interpretation as valid if you present it as being well considered and factually based.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Conduct research. Whether examining an issue for an article, a new computer game for a review, or a past event for a memoir, your research should address:

- the context – determine the circumstances surrounding the topic
- the facts – learn the who, what, when and where of your topic
- the stakeholders – identify those affected by or involved in the topic, and gather their opinions.

ANALYSE YOUR DATA

Just as you analyse a text, analyse the data you have collected on your topic. Consider each aspect of the topic and how it has been represented in the sources you have examined.

EVALUATE YOUR OWN PERSPECTIVE

Be reflective and determine your own perspective on the topic. This involves considering your own context, particularly the experiences, values or attitudes that might colour your interpretation. You don't necessarily need to be entirely objective, but try to understand your response and offer an interpretation that is based on evidence and not just emotion.

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Consider others' interpretations of the topic. Are there alternative viewpoints you have not considered? You don't have to agree with all perspectives, or even accept them as valid, but being aware of the variety of interpretations will allow you to develop a more balanced and considered viewpoint. This will ultimately lead you to produce a more informed and credible interpretive text.

OFFER AN ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Importantly, an interpretive text should not just regurgitate what is already out there on this topic. Ask yourself the following questions.

- Why am I exploring this topic? What purpose or outcome do I hope to achieve?
- What am I bringing to the wider discussion? What new understanding, approach or perspective am I offering my audience?
- Why should it be significant to others? What should they take away from my text?

If you are not adding something fresh or original, your text is unlikely to engage its audience.

Developing an interpretive structure

While it can be difficult to outline clear formulaic structures for interpretive texts, due to their varied nature, there are some generic structures that you might consider.

STRUCTURE	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLES
Narrative	The interpretation, typically of a person or event, is structured as a narrative, with clearly developed characters and conflict. The evaluation of the topic becomes apparent in the way the narrative is resolved. This applies not just to obvious narratives such as autobiographies; this structure can also be used in other forms of interpretive texts. Documentaries and reality television shows can employ narrative structure to explore the subject's 'journey' towards some understanding.	A memoir that recounts a time when the protagonist met someone who had a significant impact on their life. An outline for a documentary about a suburban Australian who goes to live with a Bedouin tribe for a year in a bid to explore cultural differences, developing characters and conflicts as a result of the unusual situation.
Comparative	The interpretation is structured as a comparison of two or more elements, using the block, alternating or integrated methods (see pages 118–19). This can result in a balanced consideration of the topic before the conclusion reveals the final evaluation. Elements that may be compared include different examples, perspectives, contexts or features.	An article on the rise of digital streaming services as a new medium that compares them with traditional television in terms of programming, quality and accessibility. A documentary on religious bias in the media that compares reporting of terrorist attacks on white Christians with those on Muslims.
Inverted pyramid	Commonly found in media articles, the inverted pyramid structure offers an interpretation of a topic by focusing on the most important details first, with each subsequent point decreasing in value. Importantly, the text will begin with a clear statement of the overall interpretation, as the writer is aware the audience may not read all the way to the end.	An opinion column on action on climate change for the magazine *The Economist*, focusing primarily on the economic costs of climate change, before acknowledging moral and environmental implications. The school captain's speech reflecting on their final year, which orders the points in terms of personal significance.
Discursive	The interpretation is constructed in the form of a discussion, with each paragraph or point approaching the topic from a different angle or focusing on a different aspect of the topic. Subheadings may be used to clarify the shifts in topic. The conclusion offers a final evaluation of the topic.	A travel article that discusses India as a holiday destination, examining aspects such as sights, cuisine, culture and things to avoid. An essay on the impact of technology on the learning of primary school children, which examines a range of benefits and consequences in turn.

Taking it further: narrative incursion

Interpretive texts that are more purely expository (non-narrative) may incorporate narrative incursion. This is a structural feature whereby the text digresses into a piece of narrative amid the more typically expository content. For example, there might be:

- an anecdote from the writer that illustrates the topic
- a case study that explores the circumstances of a particular example
- a hypothetical situation that illustrates the consequences of an issue.

Narrative incursions can fulfil many functions. They may be used as evidence, to humanise the issue being explored or to appeal to a particular audience.

Language features: developing a voice

There are generally two ways in which writers of interpretive texts use language features to construct voice. One is to be completely objective and dispassionate; the other is to be conversational and engaging. Both work to avoid being strident and forceful, the voice we typically find in persuasive texts, and suggest that the interpretation offered within the text is reasonable and balanced. Consider the following example.

The 'gap year' is seen as a rite of passage for many Australian school leavers. After 13 years of study, the idea of a year off before continuing with further study or seeking employment can be attractive. There are, however, advantages and disadvantages to taking time out. A gap year can provide valuable life experience or revitalise a weary student, but it can also be a costly exercise, and many students struggle to regain momentum once they return to further study.

This example offers a more objective and formal voice. The colloquialism 'gap year' is in inverted commas, the syntax is formal, and diction tends towards the more sophisticated, in phrases such as 'regain momentum'. 'Students' are referred to in the third person, suggesting the persona is not a student themselves, but is observing or commenting on their behaviour objectively.

Taking a year off after school finished seemed like such a natural step. In fact, sometimes the thought of a year backpacking around Europe was the only thing that kept me focused on the books as I headed towards exams! I got into a great course, and the uni was happy for me to defer. But now that I'm back in Oz, I'm not sure it was such a great idea. I can't deny I had a brilliant time, but getting my head back into classes and studying is proving to be a real challenge. There are certainly as many cons as there are pros to a gap year.

This example offers a much more personal voice, constructed through such features as the first-person point of view, the use of colloquialisms such as 'pros' and 'cons', abbreviations and contractions such as 'uni' and 'I've', the use of exclamation, the general conversational tone, and the inclusion of content that focuses on personal recollection or experience.

Another way of creating balance and objectivity – or the appearance of it – is to consider including multiple voices in your text. Using case studies, multiple speakers, interviews, quotes from various stakeholders, or even a shifting focaliser can be a way of generating balance and objectivity, even if each voice clearly offers a subjective viewpoint.

It is important to remember that the interpretive voice will also draw on the imaginative and persuasive language features outlined earlier in this chapter.

Taking it further: using nuanced language

The syllabus requires you to experiment with nuanced language. In English, there are many words with similar meanings. There are, however, subtle differences in meaning, or nuances. For example, a writer might say they agree with another person's viewpoint, but the precise word they use can suggest different degrees of agreement. The table below shows some examples.

Admit	To confess that the other is correct, and therefore you now agree.
Concede	To agree only grudgingly or hesitantly; to acknowledge the other as correct.
Concur	To be of the same opinion; agree wholeheartedly.
Sympathise	To agree with the sentiment of the other, but not necessarily with their argument.

In addition, modality can add nuance to your language. Modality expresses how certain you are about something. This table outlines some examples of modal language.

	LOW MODALITY	HIGH MODALITY
Verbs	may, might, should, could, seem, think, appear	can, must, had better, will, know, believe
Adverbs	possibly, scarcely, apparently, rarely, occasionally, potentially	certainly, definitely, undoubtedly, obviously, seriously, surely, evidently
Nouns	chance, opportunity, potential, possibility, capacity, doubt	necessity, certainty, demonstrated ability, evidence, assurance
Adjectives	possible, potential, unproven	absolute, certain, definite, essential, complete, explicit

EXAMPLE Interpretive text

This sample text also responds to the prompt on page 153.

The punning headline and more explanatory subheading suggest the form of a feature article, reinforced by the byline.

Flamin' idiots

West Australians fail to appreciate bushfire risk

Antoni DiMarco, XYZOnline

The opening paragraph is a dramatic and emotive narrative incursion to set the scene and engage the reader.

In the summer of 2017, Ariel Richards lost virtually everything. A bushfire tore through her Hills property, taking with it nearly 15 years of family memories. Before her house was destroyed, she managed to save just a carload of her most precious belongings:

family photos, her wedding dress, her children's favourite toys. Other possessions, including antique furniture that had been in her family for generations, were lost.

Despite dozens of stories like this, many West Australians still do not take the annual bushfire season seriously. In clear contravention of state and local regulations, many do not clear firebreaks or minimise fuel loads on their properties. According to a report by *The West Australian* newspaper, more than 3500 warnings were issued to property owners, with 845 of those receiving fines for failing to adequately prepare their properties. Such figures point to a disturbing complacency within the community about the threat posed by bushfires. This complacency, suggests United Firefighters Union State Secretary Lea Anderson, 'costs resources and can cost lives'. This message, however, seems to be falling on deaf ears. Volunteer firefighter Wes Atkins believes as many as one in three fires that he has attended were exacerbated by poorly maintained or non-existent firebreaks, something he finds 'unbelievable'.

A clear topic sentence signals the content of the paragraph.

The objective rather than emotive tone here suggests a balanced discussion.

Facts, statistics and expert witnesses are features of this form and add credibility to the argument.

Despite the appearance of objectivity, the choices in diction here subtly reveal the writer's position.

It is true that many West Australians love 'the bush' and it can seem idyllic to live adjacent to or even within our natural woodlands. The development of new semi-rural housing developments in the Perth Hills region, and in other locations throughout the state such as Vasse and Dunsborough, suggest that urban residents are seeking a 'tree-change' in greater numbers than ever before. But those who choose to do so must prepare themselves adequately against the risk, suggests Vasse resident Arthur Coleman, something that is just not happening. 'Many city folk buy property down here after falling in love with the place on holidays. But they either only live down here part-time or are just plain ignorant when it comes to fires.' Coleman is currently engaged in conflict with a neighbour over just this issue. 'He reckons he came here for the bush,' Coleman says, claiming the neighbour is refusing to clear firebreaks as they are unattractive. 'He'll learn the hard way how important firebreaks are, but who else will have to suffer with him?'

Note how the writer uses Coleman's quotes to make his point. This reveals the writer's argument while still allowing the writer to appear objective.

Note the change in voice to distinguish the quote from the writer's own voice.

Ending this paragraph on a rhetorical question engages readers and encourages them to imagine the answer.

ACTIVITY

Create interpretive texts

1 Consider the following situation.

Your local council has decided to set up a youth drop-in facility in a bid to engage young adults in the community and reduce crime that they believe is committed by bored and disenfranchised teens. This centre will include a basketball court and small skate park, as well as an indoor studio space for music and other creative activities. In addition, it will include a regular 'meet your councillors' session for young people to communicate directly with the council.

- Identify your own perspective on this initiative, brainstorming ideas such as:
  - your experience with existing facilities in your community
  - your experience with local government
  - pros and cons of this initiative
  - whether developing this facility would alleviate or contribute to youth crime
  - the original contribution you might make to this debate.
- The council has called for public comment on this initiative. Write a brief speech that you might deliver at a community forum in which you outline your opinion on the proposed drop-in centre.
- Identify three potential stakeholders, such as a local businessperson whose premises are next to the proposed drop-in centre, a local police officer, and the parent of a teenager. Imagining their perspectives, and whether they might agree or disagree with your opinion, write three short texts that represent their responses to your speech.

2 Using one of the following prompts as a stimulus, construct a plan for both a narrative and a non-narrative interpretive text.

This is an image of an abandoned ship that was bringing refugees to Australian shores.

'We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims.'

(Buckminster Fuller)

'No-one realises how beautiful it is to travel until he comes home and rests his head on his old, familiar pillow.'

(Lin Yutang)

CHAPTER 7

ORAL AND MULTIMODAL PRESENTATIONS

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- learn strategies for preparing for and planning oral presentations
- explore different types of analytical, imaginative, persuasive and interpretive oral presentations
- consider how visual elements can enhance your oral presentations
- develop skills to deliver effective oral presentations.

Oral presentations require you to use both verbal and non-verbal language to communicate your ideas. This chapter looks firstly at the most common form of oral presentation – speeches. The advice and guidelines for researching, planning, writing and presenting a speech apply to most forms of oral presentation.

The chapter also considers other forms of oral presentation, including debates, panel discussions and imaginative presentations. Finally, it looks at multimodal presentations, which combine two or more of the modes of communication – reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.

Elements of a top oral presentation

A high-level oral presentation will do the following things.

- Offer a clear thesis or theme that responds directly to the question or topic.
- Present a sequence of arguments or ideas that develop this theme or topic.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the purpose, audience and context of the presentation.
- Demonstrate a clear sense of persona or character through language and stylistic features that contribute to voice.
- Show a clear awareness of the spoken mode of delivery.
- Use verbal and non-verbal language features to engage audiences and communicate clearly and with purpose.
- If appropriate, use visual or multimodal features to enhance the spoken mode.

Speeches

When structured clearly and delivered well, speeches can have a powerful impact on the audience. They give you, the speaker, the chance to use a variety of communication techniques that are not possible in a written piece, such as hand gestures, facial expressions and other body language, as well as the intonation, volume and pitch of your voice. By adding visual elements such as videos, slides or demonstrations, your speech becomes a multimodal presentation. This combination of modes is discussed on pages 181–2.

The following sections show you how to prepare, plan, structure and deliver a successful speech.

How to prepare and plan a speech

The first step in preparing your speech is to be clear about your purpose. Are you presenting a response to a text? An interpretive speech? A perspective on an issue? The sort of speech you are preparing will affect your decisions about the tone and language you use.

Main contention

Many types of speech require you to have a main contention. For example, if you are presenting an analysis of a text, your contention will be a statement that encapsulates your interpretation of the text. If you are presenting a persuasive speech, your contention will express your viewpoint on an issue.

Keep your contention or focus clearly in mind as you research and write.

ACTIVITY

Identify your main contention

Write down your main contention or main focus in one sentence: 'I think X because Y' OR 'The focus of my speech is ...'

For example:

> *Ruth Bucktin in* Jasper Jones *is painted as a villain by her son Charlie, but critical reading shows she is a lonely woman trapped in an unhappy marriage.*

OR

> *I think disposable plastic water bottles should be banned in Australia because they cause more harm than good.*

Selecting information and evidence

Understanding the audience you are speaking to and the objectives of your speech will help you to identify the strongest arguments in support of your point of view. Logical arguments are not always your most powerful tools. For example, if you were trying to convince an audience of smokers to give up the habit, consider the fact that most people who smoke are well informed about the health risks. Therefore, emotional appeals might be more effective in persuading them to quit. This could explain why the Australian government requires graphic images to be placed on the packaging of tobacco products.

Similarly, if you are presenting an analytical or interpretive speech on a text your class has studied, you can assume your audience knows the plot, so don't spend time going over it. However, your insights into the significance of key events and turning points, or the motives of main characters, will be new to them. Support these with textual evidence and include some short quotes.

When selecting your evidence, whether from a text or on a topic you have researched, make sure it is a clear and self-contained example of your point. Presenting your evidence is a good opportunity to use slides, showcasing key quotes, facts or images.

If you are delivering a persuasive or interpretive speech on a topic you have chosen to research, provide some essential and interesting facts that everyone will understand. Explain the context of your topic, particularly if it is an issue currently being debated in the media or a community, to provide a basis for the more complex arguments you wish to make.

Counterarguments and alternative perspectives

Whether you are presenting an interpretive, persuasive or analytical speech, your presentation will be stronger and your ideas more sophisticated if you consider different angles or perspectives on the topic.

Most issues will have a variety of stakeholders: people who are directly affected by the issue under discussion and have particular views on it. You could begin your research by making a list of the different stakeholders involved in your issue. As you research, summarise the main stakeholders' positions, identify any evidence that supports their assertions and identify counterarguments to these positions. Similarly, in a speech analysing or interpreting a studied text, consider others' interpretations of it and whether you disagree.

ACTIVITY

Consider alternative perspectives

Create a table that summarises different opinions or views on the topic of your speech. Aim to include at least three contrasting points of view.

For a persuasive speech you could use the following column headings:

STAKEHOLDER	OPINION / CONTENTION	EVIDENCE	COUNTERARGUMENT

For an analytical or interpretive speech, the first column might be headed 'critic' or 'expert'. Another possibility for an analytical speech on a text is to make the first column heading 'perspective' and then list several possible ways of reading the text. The table would then summarise arguments and evidence for reading the text from different perspectives, with the aim of creating a speech that compares and contrasts those perspectives, before arriving at your preferred interpretation.

How to structure a speech

A well-structured speech needs to be logically developed so your audience can follow your reasoning and you can achieve your purpose. The structure of your speech should be relatively straightforward and well signposted.

Refer to Chapters 5 and 6 for guidelines for structuring analytical, persuasive and interpretive texts. However, here are some general tips for structuring a speech.

- **Begin with a hook.** A strong opening will engage your audience. Think about using an anecdote, example, quote or provocative statement.
- **Use a linear structure.** Make it easier for your audience to follow your line of argument by using a simple, straightforward structure. Recognisable structures such as question–answer and problem–solution are easy for audiences to follow.
- **Use a motif.** Repetition of key points, phrases or slogans, as well as using lists, acronyms, diagrams or visual images that you come back to throughout your speech, can help focus your audience's attention on your message.

- **Consider the order of your points.** Audiences are more likely to remember the first and last points you make, so ensure that these are your strongest points of argument or clearest examples.
- **Leave a lasting impact.** End with a call to action, a thought-provoking statement, a real-world application or an analogy to the audience's own context. Returning to the image, example or quote you began with can also help create cohesion.

Taking it further: using Monroe's Motivated Sequence for persuasive speeches

Alan Monroe at Purdue University (Indiana, US) developed one of the most influential techniques for structuring speeches in the mid-1930s. Monroe's 'Motivated Sequence' is a way of organising persuasive speeches that inspire people to take action.

According to Monroe, most people respond to a persuasive speech by seeking to:

- be convinced of a speaker's authority
- understand the issue or problem
- sympathise with the issue or problem
- be convinced the speaker's approach to the issue or problem is feasible and beneficial
- know what they can do to help bring about a resolution to the issue or problem.

Monroe calls these five steps *attention*, *need*, *satisfaction*, *visualisation* and *action*. The following table outlines how Monroe's Motivated Sequence can be used to inform the structure of a speech.

STEP	FUNCTION	IDEAL AUDIENCE RESPONSE	WRITER OPTIONS
Attention	To make the audience listen.	'I want to hear what you have to say.'	Tell a story or present a compelling statistic or example that illustrates the issue.
Need	To get the audience to feel a need or want.	'I agree. I have that need/want.'	Identify the context. Why does the issue matter to people?
Satisfaction	To tell the audience how to fill this need or want.	'I see your solution will work.'	Present evidence of past successes; use facts, figures or expert testimony.
Visualisation	To show the benefits of a solution.	'This is a great idea.'	Reintroduce the context. What would the world look like if the audience took your side, or if they didn't?
Action	To prompt the audience to take action.	'I want it. I'll do it.'	Involve the audience by issuing a challenge or an appeal.

ACTIVITY

Plan a persuasive speech

Use Monroe's Motivated Sequence to structure a persuasive speech on an issue. Summarise your answers to the following questions in a table like the one on the previous page.

1. How you will gain the audience's attention?
2. What will you make your audience feel they need or want?
3. What solution will you propose as a way of satisfying that need or want?
4. How will you present the benefits of the solution in a way the audience can visualise?
5. How will you prompt the audience to take action?

Presenting your speech

Speakers use a range of verbal and visual techniques to inform, entertain, enlighten or persuade an audience. Consider the following elements.

Voice

A speaker's tone, pace and pitch all affect how their subject is received by the audience. For example, if you are presenting an interpretation of a text, you would likely use a calm, clear voice suitable for delivering a serious viewpoint. If you were presenting a persuasive speech on an issue, you might aim to appeal to your audience on an emotional level by using an exasperated or passionate tone. Pauses might be used to emphasise a key point or suggest an emotion such as disgust or sorrow.

Body language and gestures

When delivering your speech, the way you use the space you are in can help to support your purpose. For example, standing behind a lectern can convey an impression of authority, which would support the message of a presentation analysing a literary or serious informative text. By contrast, if you are aiming to entertain your audience with a humorous speech, or persuade an audience to share your point of view on an issue, you might move around the space so that you appear relaxed and approachable.

You can (and should) also use your hands to convey meaning and emotion. Reaching towards the audience could accompany a call to action, while crossed arms might suggest the firmness of your opinion.

Appearance

Speakers generally make deliberate choices about their appearance in order to support their purpose. For instance, a scientist wearing a lab coat to speak to a general audience is choosing to emphasise their training and expertise, while a politician wearing jeans and a t-shirt to speak at a local school might be aiming to convey an impression of approachability and relatability.

You might not have much flexibility in deciding what you wear when giving an oral presentation, but consider the factors that you can control and how they affect the impression you are creating. For instance, think about how you style your hair, whether you wear a wristwatch or jewellery, whether you wear full school uniform (to convey seriousness or respect) or whether you wear your sports uniform or casual clothes to convey a more informal approach.

Awareness of purpose and audience

A strong speaker will have a good understanding of the purpose of their speech and their audience. In Year 12 English, one of your purposes is obviously to get a good mark for the subject. But when we talk about 'purpose', we mean something more than this. Is your speech persuasive – aimed at convincing your audience to recycle more, for instance? Or are you presenting a response to a text that will give your audience new insights into an aspect of that text?

Your most obvious audience will, of course, be your teacher and your classmates. But you should consider whether your speech has another implied audience.

For example, if you are asked to write and present a campaign speech to raise interest in an issue, you should imagine that your audience consists of people directly affected by the issue. If the stakeholders are mostly working parents, you should choose language, evidence and reasons relevant to that group, even though your classmates – who are actually listening to your speech – are not affected in the same way.

Key tips for successful delivery

- **Always number your cue cards.** Then, if all the cards scatter on the floor, there's still hope. Remember that cue cards should feature key points and examples to jog your memory; you should not transcribe your entire speech onto them.
- **Write for the ear.** People are listening to, not reading, your speech, so your language and pace need to convey your message effectively. Pause to allow key points to sink in. The audience doesn't have the luxury of re-reading something they didn't absorb the first time.
- **Make eye contact.** This is essential to engaging your audience. Make eye contact with various individuals. Don't just stare at one person or a spot on the wall, or some audience members will feel excluded. If you get nervous, look *just above* everyone's heads and it will still seem as if you are interacting with the audience.
- **Breathe.** It sounds simple, but just remembering to take deep breaths between the transitions in your speech will help to slow your pace and make you appear more comfortable in front of an audience.
- **Practise reading your speech aloud.** This will show you exactly how long it takes, and help you identify potential issues with your delivery. Are some sentences too long – do you need to take a breath before you get to the end of them? Do you stumble on certain words? Practice means you will be able to *deliver* your speech to your audience, not just read it out.

EXAMPLE Speech extract

Read the following example of a speech, and the annotations, to see how the writer uses language, as well as audio and visual elements, to communicate an opinion on an issue.

ANNOTATIONS OF AUDIO AND VISUAL CUES	AUDIO AND VISUAL CUES	SPEECH	ANNOTATIONS OF SPEECH CONTENT
The speaker begins in a pleasant tone to create greater emotive contrast when the theme of this speech is revealed. Happy photos reinforce this mood.	1 Pleasant, conversational tone to introduce subject.	[1] I'd like to tell you about my neighbour, Mrs O'Neill.	The speaker begins with a 'hook' in the form of an anecdote to humanise the issue. Through descriptive language, they establish a pleasant image that many in the audience would find relatable.
Slight humour makes the speaker seem personable.	2 Project montage of photos of Mrs O'Neill smiling and her garden. Slight tone of nostalgia.	[2] For years, I would see her almost every day, working in her front garden as I walked to school. She'd always wave and say hello. She had the best garden in our street, a beautiful riot of ferns and flowers. She always hummed as she worked, [3] though as a kid I couldn't understand why weeding and pruning and spreading fertiliser seemed to make her so happy. [4] Now, I understand only too well. You see, I hadn't seen Mrs O'Neill out in her garden for many months, so one day I popped in to visit. Her daughter let me in and took me into her mum's bedroom. To others, it's a pleasant enough room at the back of the house, but to Mrs O'Neill, it is her [5] jail cell. [6] She's trapped in that room, her body slowly shutting down as motor neurone disease wastes her muscles. Her daughter says she just wants to let go, to remember her life as the time in her garden and not this prison of pain and privation. [7] Mrs O'Neill has sadly lost control of her body, but it's not just to the ravages of a terrible disease. You see, Mrs O'Neill has also lost control over her body to the state. [8]	3 Smile, slight self-deprecating tone.
Tone is manipulated here to create tension.	4 Modulate tone to be more serious.		Use of pronouns creates a sense of dialogue with the audience, establishing connection.
Looking at the photo reinforces the speaker's connection to the subject matter and makes them seem empathetic.	5 Slight emphasis on 'jail cell'. Then pause.		Sentence structure creates a binary, juxtaposing Mrs O'Neill's former freedom with her current immobility.
	6 Switch to photo of a frail Mrs O'Neill in bed. Look at the screen.		Monosyllabic words create emphasis and a dramatic tone.
Eye contact engages with the audience.	7 Return to eye contact with audience. Firm tone, particularly on 'to the state'.		Emotive language creates a shocking image that contrasts with the image of the garden.
Pause provides a moment for this information to sink in.	8 Pause for emphasis.		Alliteration used for dramatic effect.
			Repetition highlights the twin tragedies that Mrs O'Neill is suffering not just because of her disease but also because of legislation.

ANNOTATIONS OF AUDIO AND VISUAL CUES	AUDIO AND VISUAL CUES	SPEECH	ANNOTATIONS OF SPEECH CONTENT
This tone suggests the speaker is knowledgeable and not just relying on emotion.	9 Serious, authoritative tone. Slight emphasis on 'no right'.	[9] Currently, people with agonising terminal illnesses have no right to end their suffering. According to the state, and against her will, Mrs O'Neill must stay in her bedroom simply waiting to die.	Switch from personal anecdote to broader discussion of the issue.
	10 Slight outrage in tone. Concerned facial expression.	[10] We talk so much about women's rights over their own bodies when it comes to abortion, or the right to self-determination for indigenous peoples, but apparently these same rights don't extend to the terminally ill. Instead, we tell them that we know better, and that they must live. Even if it is no life at all.	Emotive language suggests injustice. Appeal to justice established through reference to lack of rights for terminally ill people.
These visual and verbal cues increase the impact of the rhetorical questions.	11 Rising inflection on rhetorical questions. Spread hands (gesture) to emphasise question. Eyeball audience.	[11] How can our state government deny terminally ill people the right to end their lives at a time and in a manner of their choosing?	Repetition of syntactical structure in these two sentences creates rhythm, though second sentence uses monosyllabic words to create emphasis. Rhetorical question engages audience in moral debate. Attention remains focused on ideas of rights and justice.
These visual cues suggest the irony of this situation is unbelievable.	12 Slight shake of head. Incredulous facial expression.	[12] Imagine that: a bunch of perfectly healthy people dictating to others that they must live with their illness, even when there is no hope of recovery.	
Showing the official media release, rather than sensational news headlines, adds to the speaker's credibility.	13 Pause. Switch visual to show media release of enquiry into voluntary euthanasia. Emphasise 'finally'.	[13] Finally, the Western Australian government is considering introducing voluntary euthanasia legislation.	It is only here that 'voluntary euthanasia' is finally verbalised. The emotive impact of the issue has been established before the controversial and highly polarising term is used.
Returning to this photo reminds the audience of the anecdote, humanising the issue.	14 Switch to photo of Mrs O'Neill.	[14] I'm here today to encourage you to write to your local MP, to express support for the rights of the terminally ill, people like Mrs O'Neill, to regain control of their bodies and exercise the right to die with dignity.	Thesis and purpose clearly stated. Mrs O'Neill is referenced to create cohesion in argument. Rights are again referenced to keep the audience focused on justice.

Debates and panel discussions

Debates and panel discussions (or forums) are effective ways to work in groups to analyse and discuss topics and issues. These forms of oral presentation deliberately invite multiple perspectives on the topic, leading to deeper understandings for both participants and the audience. They also extend your skills in presenting an opinion and speaking persuasively.

A **debate** is a structured discussion about an issue, involving two teams. Each side aims to convince the audience and the adjudicator that their point of view on the topic is more logical and reasonable than the opposition's. The side arguing *for* the topic is known as the affirmative team; the team arguing *against* the topic is the opposition.

The structure of a speech for a debate generally involves:

- an introduction that includes a definition of the topic and the team's thesis statement – also referred to as the **team line**
- the **main points** or reasons, with supporting evidence, that support the team's thesis statement
- the **rebuttal** of the opposition's arguments using evidence and reasons
- a **conclusion** that reminds the audience of the main points and reinforces the team line.

Each speaker will have a specified time (usually three to five minutes) and a clearly defined role that influences the structure and content of their speech.

- The first speaker establishes the team line and outlines the main arguments to be presented.
- The second speaker presents evidence and reasons in support of the team line and rebuts the other team's arguments.
- The third speaker sums up the team's case, affirming the team line and refuting the other team's case.

The winner of the debate can be decided by an adjudicator or by a popular vote by the audience. An adjudicator will take into account the content of the speeches as well as the way in which they are delivered; a popular vote can be much more subjective.

A **panel discussion** takes place in one sitting and involves a moderator and usually three to five panellists, each of whom has a particular perspective on the topic. The moderator is responsible for introducing the topic and panellists, as well as controlling the discussion, and typically stays impartial throughout the presentation. The moderator also ends the discussion by evaluating it in a meaningful conclusion.

Each speaker begins by making a statement and defining their viewpoint. Often, they will reveal something of their context in order to make their perspective clear. Throughout the presentation, they need to provide evidence to support claims and counterarguments by other panellists and, sometimes, the audience as well. As a panellist, you can plan your points thoroughly, but there are no scripted speeches, and some level of impromptu speaking is expected as you listen and react to others.

ACTIVITY

Have a class panel discussion

As a class, consider a concept or an issue raised in class or in a series of texts, on which people can exchange different opinions and perspectives. Devise a concise statement of this concept or issue.

For example:

> *Tim Winton's texts often raise concerns about the notion of 'toxic' masculinity, especially in Australian culture, and the effect these representations can have on both men and women.*

Or:

> *The rise in popularity of comic-book heroes in film and television raises the question: do we all believe we need saving, or are we just lacking heroes in our lives?*

Once the topic has been decided, break into groups of three or four to prepare for the panel discussion.

- Select one person from the group to be the spokesperson on the class panel; for one group, the selected person will be the moderator. Allocate 'characters' for these spokespeople, such as a researcher, a politician, a celebrity or an ordinary person with life experience that relates to the topic. Aim for diverse backgrounds and perspectives that may help to create conflict and debate.
- Once each spokesperson is chosen, the other members of the team will help the spokesperson prepare for the panel discussion. The group will do some research and planning in order to provide evidence, anticipate counterarguments and help the spokesperson write any pre-prepared material.
- The moderator's group will prepare the opening address and ensure the moderator has a strong understanding of the topic. The moderator will introduce the speakers and have ideas and material to drive the discussion in a new direction if it stalls.

The panel should sit at the front of the class. The audience will consist of all class members who are not on the panel; they can ask questions of the whole panel, or of specific panel members, when permitted by the moderator.

The moderator will conclude the debate, acknowledging the points raised by the speakers and thanking them for their contributions.
A parting comment on or evaluation of the perspectives raised in the discussion makes for an effective conclusion.

Imaginative oral presentations

Although persuasive, analytical and interpretive speeches tend to be the most common form of oral presentations, there are other, more imaginative types that can help you demonstrate an interpretation of characters and texts studied throughout the course.

These types of presentation require you to use many of the conventions and structural requirements of a standard speech. They differ, however, in the fictional nature of their context and speaker. Demonstrating an ability to capture the voice of a character or other imaginative persona is an important part of showing your understanding and interpretation of the text.

This section provides guidelines on three forms of imaginative oral presentations: soliloquies, monologues and dramatic monologues. Although each form is delivered by a single speaker, they have slightly different origins and purposes, and can achieve a variety of effects.

Soliloquies

A soliloquy is a speech in a dramatic work in which a character expresses their thoughts and feelings out loud to themselves. Audiences learn about the inner conflicts of this character while he or she is alone onstage, without any other characters around. The character speaks only to themselves and not directly to the audience, therefore the audience assumes that what they are saying is the truth. Shakespeare is well known for the many soliloquies he wrote, including the famous 'To be, or not to be' speech from *Hamlet*.

Monologues

Like soliloquies, monologues are spoken by one character in a drama; however, monologues are specifically directed at a listener, whether they are addressed to another character or directly to the audience. Unlike in a soliloquy, in a monologue a character may not be entirely honest. Consider the character's aim or purpose in delivering such a speech. Is it to create comedy or tension? To hide their motives? To play devil's advocate?

An example of an effective monologue in film is the famous park bench scene in *Good Will Hunting*, when therapist Sean Maguire (played by Robin Williams) tells Will Hunting (Matt Damon) to learn from real experiences rather than just from books.

EXAMPLE Monologue extract

Read the following monologue example and annotations to see how the writer uses language, as well as audio and visual elements, to develop characterisation.

ANNOTATIONS OF AUDIO AND VISUAL CUES	AUDIO AND VISUAL CUES	MONOLOGUE	ANNOTATIONS OF MONOLOGUE
Set design is simple, with key features to suggest a bedroom. The nightgown and props on table are symbolic of character and themes.	*Vicky stands with a Mickey Mouse nightie in one hand. A backpack lies at her feet. A simple set of a bedside table holding a framed photo of a teenage boy, a copy of* The Catcher in the Rye *and couple of simple silver bangles. A poster for an indie band is pinned to the wall behind Vicky.*	… so she says, [1] 'Vicky, what are you doing?' in a voice that would freeze lava. And I'm like, 'Nothing …' And she looks at me with this kind of 'how stupid do you think I am?' look. To be fair, she did just find me shut in my wardrobe, stuffing clothes into my backpack. So I said I was just going to Corinna's for a sleepover, blah blah, dad said it was cool, blah blah. [2] I thought I had the perfect tone of casual nonchalance. But she's like a dog with a bone, my mum. Once she gets suspicious about something … [3] well, let's just say you may as well give up any hope of escaping without a thorough interrogation. I mean, ASIO could learn a thing or two from this woman. [4] She opened her mouth and I … I just kinda gave up. Like all the confidence I'd built up, all that bravado and talk about getting away from her and standing on my own two feet – [5] it just evaporated, like summer rain on the footpath. [6] But then she just hands me the pile of clean clothes she was coming to put away. 'You might want these,' she says. [7] And so …	Reported speech allows for a second character to be developed in the monologue. Colloquial language and informal syntax creates a youthful, conversational voice. Characterisation remains consistent.
This adds variety to vocal performance.	1 Imitate mum's voice during reported speech.		Humour aids audience engagement and contributes to character development.
Actions supplement characterisation.	2 Slightly exaggerated tone, emphasis on the first 'I' and 'perfect' for humour. Put hands in pockets. Look a little bashful.		
	3 Shrug. Strong eye contact with audience.		The ellipsis and hesitation adds to the authenticity of the voice. The character's inner thoughts and motivations are developed.
The change in tone reveals the development of character. Turning away suggests a degree of shame.	4 Pause on ellipsis. Shrug once. Quieten voice. Turn away from audience slightly. Look down.		Figurative language helps develop visual imagery.
These actions suggest the character's regretful state of mind.	5 Pause. Look away to distance.		The unexpected action adds irony and pathos.
	6 Turn back to audience. Slight catch in voice after 'just'. Tone becomes quieter, a little sad. Smile, sadly or ruefully.		
Actions and props add to the tension, alluding to the conflict of running away.	7 Pick up backpack, as if testing its weight.		

Dramatic monologues

A dramatic monologue can be an extended speech from a play, but is more commonly considered a unique form of text. Many are written in prose but they can also be written as poems, using blank (unrhymed but rhythmical) verse. In a dramatic monologue, mood and character must be established through imagery, rhythm and word choice, as the text stands alone, whereas a speech in a play or film is part of a longer narrative.

Dramatic monologues can be used as a form of protest, with the persona representing a wider social group that the poem is critiquing. Bruce Dawe's poems 'Doctor to Patient' and 'Weapons Training' are examples of dramatic monologues that use figures of authority (a doctor and an army officer, respectively) to critique governments and institutions.

You will need to plan, develop and act out the role of a fictional character, so characterisation is important. There must be a story at the core of these types of speech, and every good story needs conflict. Consider the situation that has prompted your character to speak out.

Tips for developing characterisation

- Identify the conflict at the heart of the speech. Is your character responding to a particular situation, or struggling with inner turmoil? What contextual factors influence their response?
- Your character should develop in the course of the speech, and reach some understanding or realisation.
- Consider the language and stylistic features you will use to construct this character's voice, including diction, register of language and use of tone.
- Experiment with your delivery. Practise with expression, pacing, pauses, pitch etc.
- Think about your non-verbal cues. What body language or facial expressions will you adopt, and at which points will these change? Where will your gaze be directed? Consider costumes and props that might enhance your characterisation.

ACTIVITY

Deliver a soliloquy or a monologue

Write and deliver an original speech by a character from a play or film you are studying. You will need to create a character profile: make notes on their background and the style of language they would use. Employ the following structure.

- Introduction: speak in character, directly addressing the audience.
- Message: what do you want to reveal? This can be mental or emotional.
- Journey: take the audience through the character's trials and tribulations; reveal some key facts.
- Ending: make sure it flows logically from what precedes it and doesn't leave unanswered questions.

Multimodal responses

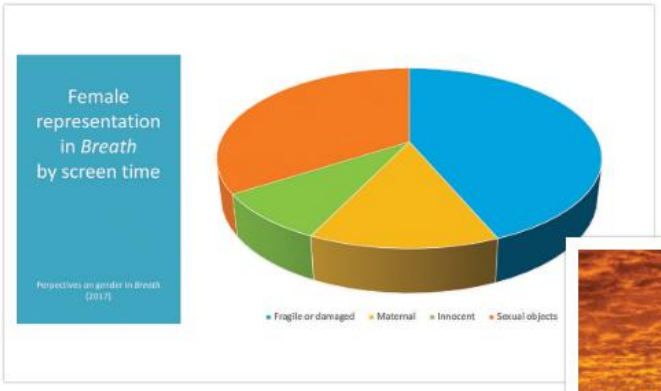
Multimodal texts incorporate more than one of the modes of communication: reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. For instance, if it is appropriate to the task and you have the skills, you could make a short film or documentary, design a web page, create a director's commentary, offer a live demonstration or stage a short play.

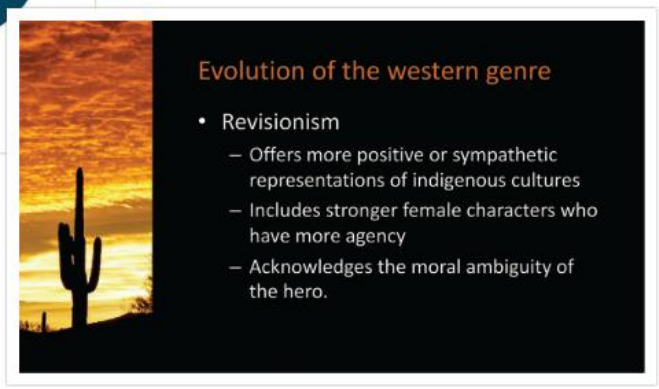
In your oral presentations, your teacher will be focused on your spoken language. Any visual or audio aids you use should *enhance*, not distract from, your presentation. Below are some tips for incorporating multimodal elements into your oral presentations.

- Limit the amount of written text you show. Slides should contain just a few words – a key point or quote to focus your audience's attention. Graphics and infographics can also be helpful. Use just a few slides, to avoid 'death by PowerPoint'!
- Use visual images or video footage judiciously. If you include too many images or screen a lengthy section of video, your audience might lose the thread of your speech. Consider using voice-over in combination with visual material.
- Use background music to enhance mood. Make sure it is not so loud that it overwhelms your voice.
- Consider filming your presentation and applying post-production elements including editing, sound effects and music.
- Remember that basic visual language features, such as costuming, body language and props, can be used to enhance the spoken aspects of your presentation.
- Consider using technology to engage your audience. For example, a quick online quiz or a live poll can be an effective way of involving your audience.

EXAMPLES Slides for multimodal responses

The following slides are for different forms of multimodal responses. They give an idea of the amount of information that should be included on a single slide.





Taking it further: the vlog adaptation

A more unusual type of imaginative multimodal presentation is a vlog adaptation. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (an adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*) and *Jules and Monty* (a student-made adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*) are examples. The characters are constructed to resemble normal vlog presenters, and their lives are presented as authentic stories.

Characteristics of a vlog, fictional or not, include:

- serialisation – videos are recorded daily or weekly over a period of time; in vlog adaptations, a storyline is told in a sequence of 'chapters'
- direct address and a strong personal voice – in vlogs, an on-screen persona produces an autobiographical narrative; in vlog adaptations, a fictional character is played by an actor who pretends to tell an autobiographical narrative
- using one camera angle or perspective, creating an intimate, confessional tone
- handheld camera work, creating authenticity and a sense of immediacy
- jump-cut editing, which can lend energy to the narrative
- a mise en scène that creates an everyday, natural and understated visual style.

ACTIVITY

Create a vlog adaptation

Focusing on one particular scene, write a brief monologue from the perspective of a character in a text you have studied. Remember that you will be talking directly to fans who have been following you over a period of time. Your voice needs to convey a level of immediacy and intimacy with the audience. Construct a strong voice for your character through language features, as well as the intonation, pace and pitch of your delivery.

As part of your vlog adaptation, consider the mise en scène, lighting and setting. You could also consider post-production elements such as sound and music, editing and cutaways. Create a video no longer than three minutes and present it to the class.

CHAPTER 8

CASE STUDY 1: THE BILDUNGSROMAN GENRE

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- gain an understanding of the key conventions and features of the bildungsroman genre
- learn about the historical development and key texts of the genre
- analyse two examples of the bildungsroman genre
- develop skills in comparing texts from different contexts and in different modes
- learn strategies for studying a genre that you can apply to your own texts.

This chapter synthesises Unit 3 content through the study of the bildungsroman genre and an analysis and comparison of two texts within that genre: the 1951 novel *The Catcher in the Rye* and the 1986 film *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*.

Concentrating on the analysis of texts and their use of the generic conventions of the bildungsroman, the chapter provides a framework that may be applied to studying your own texts. It also develops strategies for comparing texts from different modes, as well as different genres of form and structure, as the focus texts in this chapter are a novel and a feature film.

What is the bildungsroman genre?

'Bildungsroman' is a German term meaning 'novel of formation'. (In German, *Bildung* means 'formation' and *Roman* means 'novel'.) Texts in this genre – also referred to as the coming-of-age genre – chart the transition from adolescence to adulthood. The protagonist's development often includes the following changes.

FROM ...	TO ...
innocence/naivety	experience
idealism	realism
a false or ignorant view of the world	a more informed view of the world
immaturity	maturity
confusion	understanding

Just as the bildungsroman portrays the protagonist's growth and development, it also mirrors and fosters the reader's own journey towards maturity.

History of the bildungsroman genre

The bildungsroman was originally a German form, adopted by English writers such as Charles Dickens and Charlotte Brontë, then developed globally and popularised through American novels and films. The term 'bildungsroman' was coined by Karl Morgenstern in 1819, and later popularised by Wilhelm Dilthey, a critic, in 1906 when referring to Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, which was published in instalments in 1795 and 1796. This novel is about a young man who rejects his father's wish for him to join the world of business and sets off to travel and to pursue a life in the theatre. Dilthey claimed that this novel was the prototypical bildungsroman as the protagonist undertakes a journey in order to achieve self-fulfilment, in conflict with the expectations of his father and society. These tensions or conflicts between the individual and society, between youth and adult authority figures, are at the heart of the bildungsroman genre.

In his 1819–1820 lectures, Morgenstern explained that the genre would:

> bear the name Bildungsroman first and primarily on account of its thematic material, because it portrays the Bildung [formation] of the hero in its beginnings and growth to a certain stage of completeness; and also secondly because it is by virtue of this portrayal that it furthers the reader's Bildung to a much greater extent than any other kind of novel.*

This explanation from 200 years ago is still a useful definition of the genre. The emphasis on the protagonist's development and growth is a key convention of the genre and structure of bildungsroman novels. Additionally, Morgenstern's point that it furthers the reader's own 'Bildung' journey relates to the genre's appeal: the experiences of the protagonists mirror those of the audience.

ACTIVITY

Understand the history of a genre

Produce or source a time line of key texts within your genre of subject matter. Try to include texts from different genres of form and structure so that you can see how the genre has evolved, and how it is represented in different modes or mediums.

Time line of key bildungsroman texts

YEAR	TEXT	AUTHOR/DIRECTOR	FORM
1795–96	*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*	Johann Wolfgang von Goethe	novel
1847	*Jane Eyre*	Charlotte Brontë	novel
1860–61	*Great Expectations*	Charles Dickens	novel
1884	*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*	Mark Twain	novel
1901	*My Brilliant Career*	Miles Franklin	novel
1951	*The Catcher in the Rye*	JD Salinger	novel
1955	*Rebel Without a Cause*	Dir: Nicholas Ray	film
1960	*To Kill a Mockingbird*	Harper Lee	novel
1967	*The Outsiders*	SE Hinton	novel
1975	'Country Lovers'	Nadine Gordimer	short story
1982	*The Body*	Stephen King	novella
1985	*The Breakfast Club*	Writer/Dir: John Hughes	film
1986	*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*	Writer/Dir: John Hughes	film
1986	*Stand By Me*	Dir: Rob Reiner	film (based on *The Body*)
1988–93	*The Wonder Years*	Created by Carol Black and Neal Marlens	TV series
1992	*Looking for Alibrandi*	Melina Marchetta	novel
1993	*The Giver*	Lois Lowry	novel / film
1993	*Dazed and Confused*	Dir: Richard Linklater	film
1999	*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*	Writer/Dir: Stephen Chbosky	novel / film
2006	*Black Swan Green*	David Mitchell	novel
2008	*The Hunger Games*	Suzanne Collins Dir: Gary Ross	novel / film
2009	*Jasper Jones*	Craig Silvey Dir: Rachel Perkins	novel / film
2012	*The Fault in Our Stars*	John Green Dir: Josh Boone	novel / film
2014	*Boyhood*	Dir: Richard Linklater	film
2017	*13 Reasons Why*	Jay Asher Series creator: Brian Yorkey	novel / TV series

Bildungsroman conventions

The following are well-established conventions or features of texts in the bildungsroman genre.

- **Motifs of journeys.** The genre often includes journeys, both literal and figurative. The journey may be a physical one; or it may be a psychological, social or emotional journey. The text might also combine or blend some or all of these journeys.
- **Trials, temptations and rites of passage.** Throughout their journey, the protagonist will face various conflicts that represent transitions from childhood into adulthood, or from innocence to experience.
- **An unreliable narrator.** If the protagonist is also the narrator, the fact that they are discovering new things about themselves and the world – and are likely to change how they act or think as a result of these discoveries – means that the narrator may well seem unreliable or contradictory.
- **A sense of liminality.** The genre presents the protagonist in a transitional period in their life. The Latin word *limen* means threshold – so 'liminality' is a quality related to a transitional phase or a rite of passage. The characters are on the threshold of maturity or adulthood, or of a new awareness of the world.
- **A focus on identity formation.** As 'bildung' means 'education' or 'formation', any text in this genre will reveal the process of forming an identity, or of a character's growing self-realisation and awareness of who they are or want to be.
- **A conflict between generations.** The bildungsroman genre often explores the conflict between generations, as youth seeks to find and assert itself. This can be represented in situations in which a teenage protagonist comes into conflict with an adult or authority figure. These figures can include parents, teachers and others who belong to and represent the establishment.

Bildungsroman protagonists

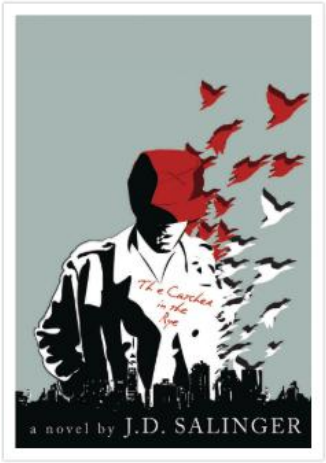
The coming-of-age genre usually has an adolescent or teenage protagonist who:

- is naive (at least initially)
- distances themself from society, then returns to society
- faces a series of challenges or tests – both literal and psychological
- learns to develop or navigate a moral code
- encounters or engages in transgressions against boundaries or rules
- searches for meaning, joy or an understanding of life
- makes discoveries about the adult world
- changes or matures as a result of these challenges and discoveries.

Key focus texts

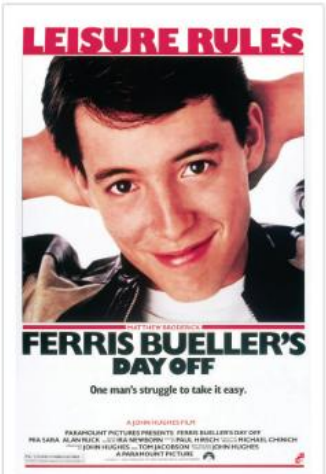
In this chapter we use two focus texts to show how you can apply an understanding of genre to a close study of texts that have different modes or different genres of form and structure. We recommend that you become familiar with these two texts, although this is not essential. It would be beneficial to also consider other texts in the bildungsroman genre so that you can apply the strategies to a different pair of texts. In addition, you can apply the same approaches and activities to your own genre of subject matter and texts within that genre.

Text 1



TITLE	*The Catcher in the Rye*
AUTHOR	JD Salinger
GENRE	bildungsroman
MODE	novel
MEDIUM	written
PUBLISHED	1951
KEY CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	1940–50s: post–WWII; Cold War; fear of nuclear war; rise of the teenager. JD Salinger fought in WWII; was raised in an upper-middle-class family (like Holden Caulfield); became a recluse.
SUMMARY	A misunderstood teen recounts, from a psychiatric hospital, his struggles with growing up and the 'phoniness' of the adult world, after skipping school and spending three days in New York City.

Text 2



TITLE	*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*
WRITER/DIRECTOR	John Hughes
GENRE	bildungsroman
MODE	film
MEDIUM	audiovisual
PUBLISHED	1986
KEY CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	Reagan-era US; hole in the ozone layer; Chernobyl disaster; economic boom; increasing commercialisation of pop culture. John Hughes was a Chicago-based writer / film director best known for his coming-of-age teen comedies.
SUMMARY	A popular teenager and two friends skip school in a parent's Ferrari, to enjoy life in Chicago for a day before their graduation from high school, all the while pursued by a vengeful school principal determined to catch Ferris Bueller.

ACTIVITY

Produce summary tables for your texts

Create a summary table for each text you are studying. Use the row headings below and the examples on the previous page as a guide for your own tables. Ideally, create these in electronic format so you can add to them as you continue to study the texts and work through the activities in the following sections.

TITLE	
AUTHOR	
GENRE	
MODE	
MEDIUM	
PUBLISHED	
KEY CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	
SUMMARY	

Similarities and differences

Already, you may have noticed similarities and differences between our focus texts. Both are coming-of-age texts, yet they were produced 35 years apart. Both texts are narratives, yet one is a novel and the other is a film. Both texts have a teenage protagonist – a distinctive feature of the genre. Yet, in Salinger's novel, Holden is an outsider, an isolated and disillusioned character, whereas in Hughes' film, Ferris is popular, outgoing and confident. These are some of the ways in which you are able to compare and contrast a distinctive feature of the genre – by analysing the characterisation of Ferris and Holden and considering each text's different use of the protagonist.

Below is a sample outline of the two texts that identifies some of their main similarities and differences. Although it is not a response to any specific essay or exam question, you should be able to see how it takes some of the basic text information from the summary boxes to construct a fairly typical introduction to a comparative essay. It demonstrates understanding of the genre, plot and context of each text.

> Although produced more than 30 years apart and received by different audiences and in different modes – novel and film respectively – both Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and Hughes' *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986) belong to the bildungsroman genre. Both texts use the genre convention of a teenage protagonist dissatisfied with high-school life, and both are structured around a visit to an American city. Salinger's novel is an earlier example of the bildungsroman genre. It was written shortly after the end of World War II, during the paranoia and fear of the Cold War era and at a time when the idea of teenagers as a distinct group with particular characteristics was gaining widespread recognition. It presents a nihilistic teen protagonist who suffers from

mental health issues and is confused about his identity. No longer a child, he feels unready for adulthood when he sets out to spend time in New York City. In contrast, Hughes' 1986 film, a product of the Reagan-era economic boom and the increasing commercialisation of teenage pop culture, represents its bildungsroman protagonists as confident in their adolescent identity. The exuberant Ferris Bueller celebrates life and shares his experiences with two friends. He, too, takes time off school, but in Chicago rather than New York, and in a parent's vintage Ferrari, as he challenges authority figures and tests his emerging independence.

ACTIVITY

Write an introductory paragraph on your two texts

Using the example above as a model, write a paragraph outlining the two texts you are studying. Explain how they use the main conventions of their genre and note some of the similarities and differences between them.

Identifying themes

Texts that belong to the same genre will share similar themes. Begin by identifying the themes in the two texts you are studying by adding a section on themes to your summary tables (see page 188).

You will also need to analyse *how* these themes are presented. This means looking closely at the conventions of the bildungsroman genre as well as at narrative conventions and written/visual language features. In addition to this, for our two focus texts, we need to compare and contrast the novelist's use of the written mode and the filmmaker's use of the visual and audio modes.

The table below shows the main themes in our focus texts.

TITLE	*THE CATCHER IN THE RYE*	*FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF*
Author/director	JD Salinger	John Hughes
Themes	coming of age	coming of age
	freedom/escape	freedom/escape
	conformity	conformity
	identity	identity
	struggle against growing up	struggle against growing up
	authenticity	authenticity
	the phoniness of the adult world	the phoniness of the adult world
	alienation as a form of self-protection	alienation as a form of self-protection
	self-discovery	self-discovery
	personal growth	personal growth
	family	family
	mental health	possessions
	sexuality	hero worship

ACTIVITY

Identify themes

Produce a comparative list of themes of two texts in the bildungsroman genre *or* in your studied genre. How similar are they? How different? Discuss some possible reasons for these similarities and differences.

Themes and expositions

When considering how themes are presented, a good place to start with any narrative is the exposition: the beginning or orientation of the text. It is often here that audiences gain an immediate insight into character, genre, plot and themes.

ACTIVITY

Analyse and compare expositions

Read/view the expositions opposite, then answer these questions.

1. Identify any narrative conventions and any written or visual language features.
2. What genre conventions can you identify (bildungsroman and novel/film?)
3. Select three clear pieces of evidence for your answers to the previous two questions.
4. What themes or ideas can you identify from the expositions?
5. How well does each extract fulfil the function or purpose of an exposition?
6. What similarities or patterns can you identify in these bildungsroman expositions?

Drawing on your answers to the above questions, complete these two longer writing tasks.

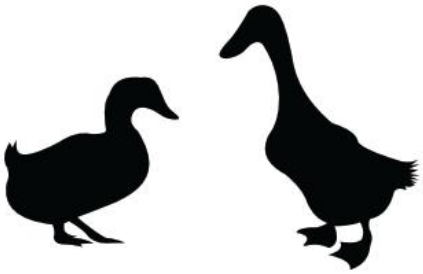
7. Write a paragraph of 200–300 words in response to this topic:

   Compare how TWO expositions in the bildungsroman genre present characters and themes.

8. Repeat question 7 using two expositions of texts in your studied genre.
9. Compose an exposition of your own using the conventions and themes of the bildungsroman genre. This may be in prose or as a screenplay.

Text 1: *The Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're nice and all – I'm not saying that – but they're also touchy as hell. Besides, I'm not going to tell you my whole goddam autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy.



Text 2: *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* written and directed by John Hughes

Matthew Broderick as Ferris Bueller

Watch the opening scenes of the film at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KFVLWX7eEY

Themes and narrative point of view

The table below shows how our two bildungsroman texts use narrative point of view to present themes. This approach to the study of genre requires you to look at narrative conventions and language features (written or multimodal) and identify how these features conform – or do not conform – to the genre's conventions.

	TEXT 1: *THE CATCHER IN THE RYE*	TEXT 2: *FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF*
Narrative point of view	Salinger uses a first-person narrative point of view. The events are narrated by Holden to an unknown reader. Holden's voice is cynical, bored, confused and distracted.	Hughes' direction breaks the fourth wall to have Ferris directly address the viewer (film version of first-person narration). We see the story from Ferris' perspective. To a teenage audience, he is fun, smart, arrogant, likeable and heroic.
HOW: written and multimodal language features	The opening sentence, 'If you really want to hear about it', uses second person ('you') to directly address the reader. The tone is chatty and frank, encouraging the reader to trust the narrator; at times, though, the tone is jaded and world-weary.	The opening monologue establishes the character's voice, personality and attitude to education. The mid shots and mise en scène show Ferris in the setting of his comfortable middle-class family home, suggesting privilege.
HOW: genre conventions (bildungsroman)	teenage protagonist conflict between generations unreliable narrator protagonist wants to resist the process of maturity, for himself and others	teenage protagonist – smart and cunning conflict between generations genre convention of naive protagonist is challenged in Ferris, who wants to enjoy life before it passes
Themes	education, school, family, mental health, identity	freedom, education, school, family, possessions, identity

You can use these conventions and features to explore and compare *how* the texts present their major themes and concerns. This, in turn, leads you to consider the perspectives the texts offer on those themes.

The notes you develop using this approach can be combined in a piece of analytical writing, like the example below.

Refers to a narrative convention (narrative point of view), using metalanguage to identify the specific feature.

Identifies themes.

Identifies genre convention.

Incorporates short quotes into the analysis, creating a fluent discussion of the text.

The use of first-person narration in both *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* aids in presenting themes of family, education and mental health. Both texts present a male teenage protagonist's point of view. Salinger's novel is narrated by Holden, using the first person to directly address the reader. The exposition opens with Holden saying in a bored and tired tone, 'If you really want to hear about it', to begin his recount of the 'madman stuff that happened' to him before he 'got pretty run-down'. This early

reference to his state of mind is the first indication of the theme of mental health in the novel. Salinger's allusion to 'all that David Copperfield kind of crap' is an intertextual reference to the bildungsroman genre, of which Dickens' *David Copperfield* is an early example. However, Holden's dismissive tone suggests that his story is going to be unlike the classic coming-of-age tale.

Indicates knowledge of the whole text by early identification of a theme that is developed throughout the text.

Shows a wider knowledge of the bildungsroman genre.

Evaluation of tone helps to place this text in the history of the genre.

Hughes' film also utilises a form of first-person narration by breaking the fourth wall, so that the protagonist addresses the viewer – much like Holden. Faking illness to get a day off school, Ferris declares to the camera, 'They bought it' – a reference to his parents, who are the authority figures he manipulates. This conflict between generations is a common convention of the bildungsroman genre. Unlike the despondent voice of Holden, though, Ferris' voice is fun, smart, arrogant, likeable and heroic to its intended teenage audience. He instructs the audience how to fake illness, whereas Holden has genuinely experienced 'madman stuff'.

Identifies a feature of film language and a similaritiy between the texts.

Demonstrates knowledge of the conventions of the bildungsroman genre.

Contrasts the two texts.

Additionally, both texts use narrative point of view to present parents as flawed and out of touch with who their sons really are. The theme of education is particularly evident in Hughes' film, as Ferris describes high school as 'stupid and childish', presenting his clear attitude towards school and rejecting the values of education in favour of hedonism. In both texts the first-person narrative point of view introduces key themes and signals the conventions of the coming-of-age genre.

Explores a further theme, linking it to the main character's attitudes and values.

ACTIVITY

Compare texts and explore narrative point of view

1 The above example addresses the following features:

- narrative conventions (the exposition; narrative point of view)
- written and multimodal language features
- the specific narrative point of view (first-person narration / breaking the fourth wall)
- how these conventions and language features are used to present themes
- the conventions of the genre.

Write your own paragraphs analysing these features in relation to the expositions of the two texts you are studying.

2 Write an exposition for a bildungsroman text in which a disillusioned teenager confides to the reader, using the first-person narrative voice. This may be in prose or in the form of a screenplay.

Considering settings

In the coming-of-age genre, the protagonist undergoes trials, goes on a journey, and reaches the end of that journey changed in some way. Simply by listing the settings – the physical places the characters go – and relating them to the narrative structure, we can see the importance of setting in the bildungsroman genre. Further, we can see that two texts from different contexts and in different modes actually have similar settings as a result of their shared generic concerns.

The following table shows how exploring settings in terms of genre conventions can illuminate important ideas and themes in the focus texts.

	SETTING	RELEVANCE TO BILDUNGSROMAN GENRE
Text 1: *The Catcher in the Rye*	**Exposition:** high school – Pencey Prep	Schools are key settings for teenage characters. For Holden, school represents failure and anxiety.
	Rising tension & climax: New York City: streets; bars; jazz club; cabs; hotel; Central Park; Holden's home; Museum of Natural History	Cities represent the adult world. Motif of adolescent journey. Holden faces a series of challenges and trials, both literal and figurative, with other characters and within himself.
	Resolution: psychiatric hospital	The setting for the resolution reveals the difficulties of the formative years and of growing up. Holden remains marginalised.
Text 2: *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*	**Exposition:** Ferris' home – suburban Chicago Cameron's home – semi-rural Chicago typical suburban high school	Teenagers' homes represent home life and reflect early childhood experiences. For Ferris, home represents safety and comfort; for Cameron, it symbolises isolation and alienation. Schools are key settings for teenage characters.
	Rising tension & climax: Chicago city centre; posh restaurant; Museum of Art; Wrigley Field baseball game; parade	Cities represent the adult world. Motif of adolescent journey. Ferris faces a series of challenges and trials, both literal and figurative, with other characters and within himself.
	Resolution: Ferris' and Cameron's homes	The homecoming brings changes for Cameron, yet little change for Ferris.

ACTIVITY

Explore setting and character

1 Create a table similar to the one above to compare the use of setting in your two texts, showing how settings are used to explore typical concerns of the genre.

2 Write a 200-word response to the question:

How do the two texts use setting to explore the concerns of their genre?

You may like to write about our focus texts or your own texts.

3 Compose a description of TWO settings typical of the coming-of-age genre. Select one setting with which your imagined bildungsroman protagonist is familiar, and one setting that is unfamiliar to them. Use figurative language and imagery to create a strong sense of place.

Considering characters

As we have established, the most significant character in the bildungsroman genre is the teenage or adolescent protagonist. However, an analysis of the other characters can reveal a text's ideas even further. Certain characters may be helpers to the protagonist; another character may be the antagonist, who attempts to block the journey or quest of the protagonist.

Vladimir Propp, a Russian folklorist, argued that all stories are essentially character-driven and that characters can be classified into eight character types or roles.

- **The hero** is the person on the quest through which the audience follows the narrative.
- **The false hero** takes credit for the hero's actions or tries to marry the princess.
- **The villain** struggles against the hero.
- **The donor** prepares the hero, or gives the hero a magical object.
- **The (magical) helper** helps the hero in the quest.
- **The princess and her father** give the task to the hero and identify the false hero; the princess marries the hero, and is often sought for during the narrative.
- **The dispatcher** is a character who describes the task and sends the hero off.

Not all narratives will include all of these character types. However, you can usually identify several of them in an extended narrative such as a novel or a feature film.

Will the real protagonist please stand up?

In *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, Ferris is the protagonist, as he plots a day off school, enlists his friend Cameron and girlfriend Sloane and gets them to Chicago for a day of restaurants, ball games, museums and parades before racing home in time to avoid being caught. The audience is positioned in the role of co-conspirator with Ferris as he breaks the fourth wall and talks to us.

However, has writer and director John Hughes created a protagonist in Ferris Bueller that truly fits the classic mould of a bildungsroman protagonist? A closer look at the character of Cameron Frye may lead to an alternative reading of the film and a discussion of how genre conventions can be manipulated and subverted.

Ferris (Matthew Broderick), Sloane (Mia Sara) and Cameron (Alan Ruck)

- Although Ferris is the apparent hero of the text, the character who actually undergoes the transformation expected by viewers of the genre is Cameron, who may also be perceived as the helper or donor.
- It is arguable that the climax of the film occurs when Cameron attacks his father's beloved Ferrari, rather than in the comical chase scene as Ferris tries to arrive home before his parents.
- Hughes gives Cameron the following lines of dialogue:

  'Who do you love? Who do you love? You love a car!'
  'I'm tired of being afraid.'
  'I want it. It's going to be good.'

  These lines indicate that Cameron is challenging parental authority in a much more powerful way than the lighthearted Ferris. They also indicate that Cameron is the character who has evolved, who has experienced the coming-of-age moment and the transitions we expect of the bildungsroman genre. Ferris, on the other hand, remains unchanged at the end of the narrative.

It's possible to argue that Cameron is a more modern version of Holden Caulfield:

- Both share anxieties, suffering from illness and depression (whether real or imagined).
- Both have virtually non-existent relationships with their parents (Cameron's parents are never seen and Holden's father is barely described).
- Both transform – or begin to – as a result of their physical, emotional and psychological journey through an American city.

ACTIVITY

Consider character and genre

1 Do the protagonists in the texts you are studying conform to the genre conventions for a protagonist? If not, how do they vary?

2 Do any of the other characters have qualities of the archetypal protagonist of this genre? If so, what are the effects of this, and why might the text's creator have depicted them in this way?

3 Identify who or what is the antagonist in each of your studied texts. Do the antagonists in the texts you are studying conform to the genre conventions for an antagonist? If not, how do they vary?

4 Which characters in your texts can be seen as a 'princess' (as defined in Propp's theory of character roles)?

5 What are the rewards for the protagonists in your studied texts? What do these rewards suggest about the perspectives of the text/creator?

6 Explore the connection between character and genre by subverting some conventions. Compose a short narrative in which you encourage your reader either to sympathise with an antagonist, or to dislike the protagonist.

Audience responses: Ferris v Rooney

Now let's look at another character: the adult antagonist in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, principal Ed Rooney. Essay and exam questions will often ask you about the likely reaction of an audience or your personal response to a character. Different audiences perceive and respond to characters in different ways. How can you consider the possibilities of different audience responses with your genre and your studied texts?

Teenage audiences of *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* will usually see Ferris as a hero – he manipulates authority figures and gets what he wants; he is fun, popular and charming. A dominant reading (that is, the most common or likely reading) would usually see Ferris' school principal, Ed Rooney, as a fool: a bitter and vengeful character intent on punishing Ferris. In generic terms, he is an adult antagonist to the youthful male protagonist.

> **Ed Rooney:** I don't trust this kid any further than I can throw him. What is so dangerous about a character like Ferris Bueller is he gives good kids bad ideas. Last thing I need at this point in my career is 1500 Ferris Bueller disciples running around these halls. He jeopardizes my ability to effectively govern this student body.
>
> **School secretary:** He makes you look like an ass is what he does, Ed.

The bildungsroman genre is evident in the clash of contexts, cultures and generations between Ferris and Rooney. However, alternative perspectives on this scene offer more opportunities for exploring genre and the ways in which different audiences may react.

While a 14-year-old viewer might well make the dominant reading that Ferris is the rebellious hero, an adult viewer who is also a parent or a teacher will be much more inclined to sympathise with Ed Rooney's situation and the desperation of his pursuit of Ferris. A teenage audience relates to the plight of the young: the desire to rebel, to not conform, to challenge the way things are. However, to an older audience, Ed Rooney actually has a good point. Would we really want a society of Ferris Buellers? Is he a great role model for young people? Should we really 'Save Ferris'? Or should we be looking to 'save' those like Cameron, who are suffering on the threshold of the coming-of-age journey? Should we 'save' Sloane from making a commitment to a man who takes no responsibility for anything?

Thinking of this text from the perspective of a teenage audience produces the dominant reading: that Ferris is the hero. Looking at this text as an evolution of the bildungsroman genre, we may pay greater attention to the emotional and psychological growth of Cameron. And viewing it from the perspective of a parent or teacher, we may reject Ferris' antics as irresponsible and sympathise much more with Rooney.

Context and character

Combining understanding of character with contextual knowledge of a text will always enhance your analysis of genre. Here is an example using Salinger's novel.

Context of *The Catcher in the Rye*

- In the late 1940s and the 1950s, the concept of the teenager was relatively new. Teenagers were perceived by mainstream society as troublesome and difficult. Little attention was paid to their development or needs, and issues such as depression, bullying and having a voice in society were not openly discussed.
- In America, the end of World War II left a generation of angry and disillusioned youth, whose anxieties were heightened by the onset of the Cold War between the United States and Russia.
- Salinger fought in World War II, including at the D-Day landing at Utah Beach (in Normandy, France) in 1944. Shortly after the war, Salinger had a nervous breakdown. He became one of the most famous literary recluses, making few public appearances between 1953 and his death in 2010.

Character and genre

- Holden Caulfield is a nihilistic, anxious, angry and disillusioned teenager.
- He feels that adults do not understand him or his needs.
- Holden is a classic bildungsroman protagonist.

Putting it together

- The fear and anxiety of the context is reflected in Holden's personal qualities and experiences. He can be seen as a symbol of the rising younger generation, angry at the older generation but not yet with a public voice. His anxiety is the anxiety of a generation.

ACTIVITY

Apply context to character

1. Referring to a text you are studying, list significant elements of the text's context of production, including relevant aspects of the author or director's personal context.
2. List three key qualities of the protagonist that match the conventions of the text's genre.
3. Write three points that connect the protagonist with the text's context.
4. Answer this question in paragraph or essay format:

   How does context influence the text's construction of character?

Considering structure

The structure of a narrative refers to the sequence of events and the way in which tension rises and falls, usually leading to a climax and then a resolution. The conflicts within a narrative are key to its structure, as they create the rising and falling tension. They can be internal conflicts (within a character's mind), or external conflicts.

The climax will involve these conflicts coming to a head and then, in the resolution, being worked out in some way: perhaps through the protagonist's greater maturity, or through their moving into the adult world with greater independence.

Exploring conflict

In the bildungsroman genre, external conflicts are often between the young protagonist and parents or other authority figures. Internal conflicts arise from the character's moral dilemmas as they negotiate the limits of their freedom as an adult, or engage with dominant social ideologies. The following table shows how these conflicts are presented in our two focus texts.

	TEXT 1: *THE CATCHER IN THE RYE*	TEXT 2: *FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF*
Internal conflicts	Holden's desire to protect innocence versus his desire to have a sexual encounter. Holden's desire to connect with others versus his beliefs that other people are fake and 'phonies'. Growing up versus retreating into childhood memories. Holden's inability to accept Allie's death versus moving on and finding ways to cope. Suicidal or depressive tendencies versus the desire to live.	Cameron's uncertainty about confronting his parents or submitting to their control. Ferris' sister's moral uncertainty about whether to reveal Ferris' scam. The moral dilemma of balancing freedom with adult responsibility. The value of school education versus life education.
External conflicts	Holden versus school. Holden versus authority figures (and adults in general). Freedom versus belonging / being accepted.	Ferris versus Rooney. Ferris versus his parents. Ferris versus his sister. Cameron versus his parents.

It is evident that the conflicts chosen by Salinger reflect the bildungsroman genre. He is writing about the conflict between adolescents and adults, innocence and experience, reality and escape, naivety and maturity. However, what this focus on conflict really shows is that Salinger uses much more internal than external conflict – the text is more of a psychological journey and confrontation than Hughes' film.

The conflicts in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* are mostly between characters rather than internal, perhaps as a result of the text's mode and medium as an entertaining Hollywood film. Each character, however, still experiences a degree of internalised conflict that is typical of the coming-of-age genre.

ACTIVITY

Identify conflicts in your texts

Create a table like the one on the previous page to identify the key conflicts in two texts in a genre you are studying.

1. What do these conflicts suggest about the characters?
2. How do these conflicts reflect the themes of the text?
3. Which kinds of conflict is the text mainly exploring?
4. What perspectives on these conflicts is the text offering?
5. How might the text's context of production have influenced the creator's choice of conflicts?
6. How might audiences in their own context of reception perceive these conflicts?
7. Write a short narrative that relies heavily on dialogue to create conflict between a protagonist and an antagonist.

Exploring rising tensions and the climax

The fluctuating tensions within a narrative enable readers or viewers to identify changes in a character. This is important in any text and genre, but it is particularly important within the bildungsroman genre, which is, above all, about the development and growing maturity of the protagonist. Protagonists experience tests and temptations, and undergo rites of passage. These events test the limits of their freedom, and trigger the development of a moral code.

To explore the role of rising tensions and the narrative climax in a text or texts you are studying, ask the following questions.

- What are the main events that cause rising tensions?
- How do the protagonist and other main characters respond to these tensions?
- How do these moments affect or change the characters?
- What occurs at the text's climax?
- How are the protagonist and other main characters affected or changed by this climax?
- How might the context of a text influence the creator's choice of tensions and the climax?
- How might audiences respond to these tensions and the climax?

The following table summarises the rising tensions and climaxes of our two focus texts.

	TEXT 1: *THE CATCHER IN THE RYE*	TEXT 2: *FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF*
Rising tensions	In Holden's encounter with Sunny, a prostitute, it becomes clear that he is unable to handle a sexual relationship, a typical rite of passage. At the end of Holden's date with Sally, he tries to get her to run away with him but she resists, conforming to social norms instead.	Ferris and Cameron pick up Sloane from school in front of Rooney in a direct challenge to the principal's authority. In the restaurant scene the police are almost called – a threat to punish the teens and force them to conform. Rooney leaves school to pursue Ferris, and Ferris' sister, Jeanie, also aims to catch him.
Climax	Holden departs from Mr Antolini's apartment when Antolini molests him during the night, revealing corruption within the adult world.	Ferris celebrates in the parade scene. Carnivals are symbols of social norms and order being subverted. Cameron attacks his father's Ferrari, another challenge to adult authority and adolescent conformity.

Exploring resolutions

The resolution of a text is essential to understanding its key ideas and its overall message. Typically, the bildungsroman resolves with the protagonist finding their place in society and developing agency – the ability to exert control over their own life. Consider the following summary of the resolutions in the focus texts.

	TEXT 1: *THE CATCHER IN THE RYE*	TEXT 2: *FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF*
Resolution	Holden and Phoebe find happiness at the carousel, a celebration of childhood joy. Holden accepts – surrenders to the fact – that growing up is inevitable, but he is distraught by this. He reveals that he is receiving treatment in a ward for his problems, unable or unwilling to take his place in the adult world he sees as phony.	In the chase scene Ferris runs home, desperate to avoid being caught. Rooney meets Ferris outside his house and attempts to assert his authority one final time. Ferris successfully returns home, apparently unchanged – but perhaps Ferris and Jeanie bond? Cameron finds the courage to confront his father. Rooney is left in tatters (literally and figuratively) in a critique of adult authority.

Consider the following questions in relation to the two focus texts, or two texts you are studying.

- What do these resolutions suggest about the characters?
- How do these resolutions reflect the themes of the text?
- What message or idea is the text leaving the audience with?
- How might the context of a text influence the creator's choice of resolution?
- How might different audiences respond to the resolution?

ACTIVITY

Identify rising tensions, climax and resolution

1 Create tables similar to those on the previous page to show the rising tensions, climax and resolution in two texts you are studying.

2 Once your tables are complete, write a short comparative response on the following topic.

> *Compare the ways in which two texts present conflict and/or resolution, and discuss how these present a particular perspective to the audience.*

3 Write a scene presenting Ferris as an adult and father of teenagers. Does he now have conflict with his children, who are having their own coming-of-age experiences?

4 Write an extract from a new final chapter for a text you have studied. Imagine the life of a main character 20 years into the future. Use the first person to present their perspective on the events, or a specific event, in the text. Indicate whether they feel the conflict has been resolved by the passage of time.

Changes to the bildungsroman genre

Like other genres, the bildungsroman has been adapted to contemporary contexts and ideologies. At the beginning of this chapter, we noted that a feature of the bildungsroman was that the journey of the protagonist was intended to mirror the journey of the reader, who is positioned to recognise the need to conform to society's expectations. However, recent bildungsroman texts are less likely to endorse uncritical conformity to social conventions and ideologies. Here are four examples of recent changes to the genre.

- **Resistance to the social contract.** Protagonists do not necessarily submit to societal norms and may continue to resist them. In bildungsroman texts from Western societies, these norms typically include giving up childhood freedoms, entering into a heteronormative relationship and beginning employment. The experience of resisting these conventions can either be negative – such as with Holden Caulfield – or positive – as with Ferris Bueller.
- **A focus on subjective morality.** Contemporary bildungsroman texts can sometimes reveal that the moral codes of their young protagonists are preferable to those of society, which can be corrupted by political interests. Rather than adopting the dominant social ideology, protagonists in these texts evaluate their own morality against that of society, and choose to live by their own rules.
- **Politicisation.** Contemporary bildungsroman texts often have a stronger engagement with current political issues, such as environmentalism and asylum-seeker policies. The bildungsroman journey is then framed as an exploration of the protagonist's emerging power to act on these issues.
- **Hybrid bildungsroman genres.** In Chapter 3 we explored the development of the young adult dystopian genre, which combines the bildungsroman and dystopian genres. The protagonist's journey takes place against the backdrop of a dystopian society, which represents an extreme form of the corrupt adult world.

Bringing it all together

The following tasks give you practice in producing a range of texts in response to exam-style questions. They each build on the knowledge and skills you have gained in working through this chapter.

ACTIVITY

Putting it into practice

Comprehending

Text 1 is the opening scene from the young adult novel *Ballad for a Mad Girl*, by Australian author Vikki Wakefield. It was published by Text Publishing in 2017.

I've been having hateful thoughts again.

I wish I could cast them out like an airborne curse or summon a superpower through sheer will. I'd choose telekinesis over flying any day—slam some saucepans, smash a few ornaments, shatter a window. I'd drag my dad across the floor, slide him up a wall, pin him to the ceiling, and laugh like a maniac as I stroll out the front door.

It's this house. Over a year and I still can't get used to it. It's everything we're not: sweet, tidy, suburban—a two-storey shoebox with a homemade plaque on the toilet door and the puke-worthy scent of potpourri in every room. It stinks of happy families. We were once a long, low farmhouse with whispering walls; we were junk and brawling dogs and sprawling yard. Our sun behind a row of cardboard houses and we never had to play musical cars to get out of the driveway. That was before. Now I can spit from the back doorstep and hit the fence; now I sleep so close to strangers I hear them breathe.

They're the polite thoughts. The hateful ones I mostly keep to myself.

My room is the only thing I like. When we moved in, I claimed the master bedroom, upstairs, far away from everyone—it has a window seat and an ensuite bathroom, shiny fake floorboards and a view down the street over the cloned roofs of the other houses in the estate. The bed was a bribe. I traded my rickety single and hundreds of acres for a king-sized bed that's bigger than our new backyard.

It's balmy tonight. Filthy black outside. The footpath beneath my window is spotted with old chewing-gum; the lace curtains twitch to a faint breeze. I'm sitting on my bed—watching *She's the Man*, painting my toenails, killing time—trying not to think about the things I'm missing. For the past hour, cars full of teenagers have been coming and going. Going, mostly, with the music up and the windows down.

My friends are out there, somewhere. I grip the brush so tightly it slips, leaving a bright red streak on the sheet, and my thoughts go from bad to worse: right this minute, if I had three seconds to make a wish, I'd swap the family I've got for the one I've lost.

Respond to the following questions in short answers of 200 to 300 words.

1 Show how the central character in Text 1 is representative of a bildungsroman protagonist.

2 Explain how Text 1 foreshadows conflicts associated with the bildungsroman.

3 Analyse the role of setting in Text 1 in contributing to your understanding of the central character.

4 Explain whether Text 1 confirms or challenges your expectations of the bildungsroman genre.

Responding

1 Discuss how a text you have studied adapts a genre for a particular audience or purpose.

2 Show how the context of production of a text you have studied is reflected in its creator's use of generic features.

3 Evaluate the extent to which a text you have studied employs generic features to comment on a social issue.

4 Compare how two texts you have studied engage with the features of a particular genre.

Composing

1 Compose the beginnings of two texts of the same genre, writing each for a different audience.

2 Compose a text that combines, for a particular purpose, the features of two genres.

3 Use the image on the right as inspiration for an imaginative text within a particular genre.

4 Use the following quote as inspiration for a text in a form of your choice.

> *'Maturity is when your world opens up and you realise that you are not the centre of it.' (MJ Croan)*

Endnote

* *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* by Martin Swales, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1978.

CHAPTER 9

CASE STUDY 2: PERSPECTIVES ON THE OTHER

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- gain an understanding of how texts offer perspectives on the concept of Otherness
- learn about the concept of Otherness within different contexts
- analyse how perspectives on Otherness are constructed in different texts
- develop skills in comparing perspectives in texts from different contexts and in different modes
- learn strategies for studying perspectives that you can apply to your own texts.

Unit 4 of the ATAR English course includes content and learning outcomes designed to develop your ability to synthesise the concepts and skills of English. This chapter models ways to do that so you are developing skills in close reading and critical analysis. It is a study of the 'Other' and 'Otherness' that incorporates concepts including perspective, ideology, representation and language, and the ways in which they shape meaning.

The concept of the Other

The Other is a broad term that refers to individuals or groups who are seen as being on the margins: outside the mainstream or what is considered to be 'normal'. The Other is usually represented not simply as different, but as inferior, less powerful and less worthy of being listened to. Those who are Othered often lack a voice, but have perspectives and stories that everyone should hear.

From a reading of the Other in texts you will be able to make connections to concepts of personal and social identity. This is because individuals' experiences of marginalisation are often determined by aspects of their identity, as well as by the values and attitudes that inform accepted ideas and beliefs in society.

Identity

When reading texts, we recognise – and often feel comfortable with – that which is familiar, such as character types, settings, lexicon (vocabulary), humour and values. This familiarity is a necessary part of identifying ourselves as individuals who also belong to particular social and cultural groups.

When we analyse texts in terms of how they represent different identities, we consider aspects such as race, religion, class, gender and sexuality. These are just some of the characteristics that influence the way we see ourselves and relate to others. For example, a person's cultural identity is expressed in their customs, practices and beliefs. Can you describe Australian cultural identity?

ACTIVITY

Consider the Other and identity

Examine the image below, of Australian supporters at an Olympic Games, then answer the following questions.

1 How would you describe Australian supporters, as suggested by this image? Consider one or more of race, class, gender and age.

2 Who might be *outside* this representation?

3 Do you think this is an accurate representation of Australian sports supporters?

Ideology, values and attitudes

An ideology is a set of beliefs and values that shapes how people think and act. When an ideology is widely held in a society it powerfully shapes ideas about what is 'normal' and attitudes towards what is different or Other. Often we don't notice ideologies because we have thoroughly absorbed and internalised their ideas, just like most of those around us have. In Western societies, some of these ideas might include:

- respecting the rights of others
- the value of working hard and earning money
- the importance of families for social cohesion.

These ideas are not objective truths; nevertheless, they are widely shared and accepted. They *seem* natural, but they are products of the society we live in.

Binary oppositions

The values and attitudes of the dominant group shape an individual's sense of self and lead to a perception of the Other as inferior, strange or aberrant. We read *Self* and *Other* as binary oppositions.

A binary opposition consists of two terms opposite in meaning, each defined by not being the other, e.g. white/black, present/absent, light/dark, freedom/captivity, masculine/feminine. Like any two terms in a binary opposition, the Self and the Other are social constructs that involve a power difference. In fact, when people study how language works in a society they recognise that one term in any binary opposition is usually privileged over or thought of as 'better than' the other term. As a result, certain values and attitudes become legitimised and associated with a 'normal' or mainstream identity. This reinforces the idea of the Other as not simply different, but inferior. In this way, language becomes part of the process of Othering, helping to perpetuate exclusion, inequality and injustice.

The politics of Othering

In many countries, especially Western countries, rapid changes in technology and in social demographics through migration and globalisation have redefined the dominant culture and what it means to be a member of mainstream society. This raises questions about identity and inclusion. For instance: What makes someone an Australian? Is it place of birth? The number of years of residence in the country? An ability to speak the national language? Flying the flag?

As a result of these sorts of questions, the dominant culture can react to assert its authority and dominance over those regarded as Others. Language such as 'take back', 'reclaim' and 'crisis' can create controversy and promote the idea that recent demographic changes have damaged the nation. It is suggested by some that the answer is to lawfully exclude groups perceived to be responsible for lowered rates of employment, fewer education opportunities or an increase in crime. We see this, for example, in Australia's 'Stop the boats' campaign or, in the United States, the 'make America great again' rhetoric.

How texts construct Others

The Other can be represented in different ways: as one to be feared, pitied, scorned, excluded, destroyed, exoticised, infantilised, stereotyped, romanticised or mythologised. These same processes are apparent in texts, in which textual features and conventions – such as characterisation, authorial voice, structure and language – are used to create perspectives from which certain individuals and groups are perceived as Other. Some ways in which this is achieved in visual and written texts are explored below.

Othered by gender

In analysing texts through the lens of gender studies, 'hegemonic masculinity' is the term often used to describe the culturally dominant version of masculinity that is authoritarian, physically strong, resilient, heterosexual, competitive and associated with the public rather than the private or domestic sphere. This ideal of masculinity and being male is represented as the preferred manner of being and, by binary definition, femininity and being female or any other gender identification is Othered and therefore devalued.

An obvious example of this is through exclusive language such as chairman, policeman, fireman and headmaster, which presume those roles to be undertaken by men and thereby exclude women. While we now know to use gender-inclusive terms such as chairperson, police officer, firefighter and principal, it is important to look out for the ways in which language can naturalise certain gendered identities and behaviours, thus Othering gendered identities that are not consistent with the norm.

Othered by race

To be Othered by race means to be excluded from the dominant group by means of racial classification. Historically, as a result of colonisation, the dominant group or norm in Australia has been white or European. Membership of an imagined 'white' race or Western cultural group has given certain individuals and groups easier access to power because, due to their status, they can perpetuate the system of exclusion by employing, promoting, publishing and marketing from the dominant racial group.

The opinion piece on the next page conveys the racial Othering experienced by columnist Claire Low as she grew up in Australia. You can find similar experiences in Anh Do's autobiography *The Happiest Refugee*, Alice Pung's *Unpolished Gem* and the anthology *Growing Up African in Australia*, edited by Maxine Beneba Clarke, Magan Magan and Ahmed Yussuf.

THIS (HALF) LIFE

In my primary school picture, the children are standing in prim rows, perfectly uniformed and very Catholic. In the midst of the bowl cuts and scrubbed white skin is me, black hair escaping from a ponytail, blunt fringe falling into dark almond eyes, skin creamy-yellow, tinged with pink.

At school there were a few children who pulled their eyes into slits and taunted me. Adults did it differently: "Where are you from?" they'd ask. "I'm Australian," I'd say looking them straight in the eye, daring them to contradict me. A doubtful expression, then a change of tactics with lightning speed: "Where are your parents from?"

"My mother is Thai, my father Chinese, born in Malaysia," I'd parrot.

They'd smile triumphantly, so pleased that I was not really Australian, just the first generation, as if this was somehow worth less.

The Thais did not believe me either. They saw past my Asian appearance. Even before I opened my mouth and betrayed myself with my accent, they knew I was foreign and raised their prices. If I spoke their language, I was still a cute foreigner whose speech was no better than a baby's. They could tell I hadn't been raised in the cloying heat; I had not been brought up like the native schoolgirls who applied lipstick calmly while on the back of a motorbike in rush-hour traffic. It was my clothes, my walk, the way I held my head. Having a Thai mother was not enough.

Much of the time I feel like an unclaimed piece of baggage on the airport carousel, a bit of this and that, born to parents from here and there. I live in limbo, a strange place with all the other children of the melting pot, the halfies, some blessed with a strange beauty that comes with receiving the best of both races, black and white, yellow and white, stained both ways, different enough that you're always foreign.①

Low's social, racial, cultural and religious identities contribute to her position as the Other since she does not adhere to conventions in appearance, deviating from the norm in terms of her skin colour, haircut, eye shape, accent and clothing. The description of her physical difference in the class photo, and her anecdotes of travelling and of conversations with people questioning her identity, all characterise her as Other – perceived by mainstream society as deficient, strange and displaced.

Exoticisation

To exoticise someone is to represent them as foreign and unusual. The individual who is exoticised may appear glamorous, but they are also represented as outside the social mainstream, not quite belonging to or having power in conventional society.

For us to analyse these representations critically we might question how they reinforce stereotypes and to what extent such stereotyping disempowers certain groups through the process of Othering.

Pom Klementieff as Mantis in *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*

EXAMPLE Exoticisation in *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*

The following sample analysis focuses on the exoticisation of the character of Mantis in the film *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*.

Identifies the Other and associates it with stereotyping. Opening sentence also establishes the context of Western film but could provide more specific contextual information.

Uses the term 'exotic' to refer to a specific aspect of Othering and identifies a feature of Mantis that is 'exotic'.

Parentheses used effectively to add explanatory detail without losing the main thread of argument.

An extension of this point might analyse the way in which, in Western literature, the exotic 'East' is often represented as feminine in contrast to the masculine West.

The stereotype of a beautiful, compliant, alluring Asian woman is a familiar inclusion in popular Western films. Mantis in *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* is one such example. She is represented as 'exotic' through her exaggerated eye make-up that emphasises the almond shape of her eyes. Because eyes are so central to our understanding of the self (as 'the window to the soul') we read this as accentuating her difference from Western characters. Mantis is a docile character whose superpower is to calm and induce sleep. Initially in thrall to the character of Ego, she is depicted as supporting an older white male she refers to as master. She is also represented as stereotypically feminine in her compliance, sensuality and, as Drax the Destroyer describes, 'weak and skinny'. Mantis is constructed as 'empathic' and

The stereotypical feminine traits assigned to Mantis highlight her weakness in the face of the masculine West.

acknowledges her sensitivity to emotions. This is in direct contrast to the original construction of Mantis in the Marvel comics as a strong, powerful woman who is skilled in martial arts. She is also human and of Vietnamese heritage, and her reconstruction as a literal alien in the film exaggerates her foreign Otherness. Overall, her representation in *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* reinforces the representation of Asian women as exotic, submissive and vulnerable, acting in a binary against the masculine strength of the West.

Comparison to the representation of Mantis constructed in the original comics highlights the filmmakers' conscious choice to exoticise her character.

This linking sentence suggests a lead-in to further analysis of the East/West binary.

Infantilisation

Another way of representing the Other is by infantilisation, which means depicting an individual or a group in a condescending way, or as though they are infants.

For example, the image above Others the elderly by representing them in a patronising manner. The way in which the doctor leans over the older woman, along with her smiling facial expression, might be read as condescending because, while she appears happy and caring, her body language signals that she is treating an individual who has less power (due to age and immobility) as incapable, incompetent and pitiful. This approach to vulnerability reinforces a power difference between the norm (young) and the Other (old).

Individuals who are Othered by exoticisation are sometimes also infantilised. The character of Mantis in *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* is both exotic and extremely childlike; despite her empathic powers, she has a child's innocence and naivety. Similarly, in Claire Low's recollection of being regarded as 'a cute foreigner whose speech was no better than a baby's' (see page 209), she is both exoticised and infantilised.

Outsiders

The 'outsider' is a popular character type in texts. The outsider status of characters is earned by those who exist outside the norm or dominant spheres of identity and social conventions in terms of race, gender, class, sexuality, religion or ideology.

Setting is often used in texts to emphasise the outsider status of certain characters. Think about the outsiders in texts you have read or seen who live on the outskirts of town or are positioned at the edge of a frame. Their literal 'outsider' position reflects their social isolation. Consider, for example, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The physical arrangement of the setting of Maycomb County acts as a metaphor for the social marginalisation of certain individuals and groups, especially those who are black or poor. The Finches, who have a high social status, live 'on the main residential street in town' whereas 'Maycomb's Ewells lived behind the town garbage dump in what was once a Negro cabin'.

EXAMPLE Otherness in *The Outsiders*

The Outsiders is a 1967 novel by SE Hinton that explores the coming-of-age experiences of a group of poor teenage boys known as greasers. The boys are tough, angry and resentful, often fighting with the Socs, a group of wealthy, privileged boys. The novel is about gang members who are outsiders in the sense that they do not conform to the conventional social behaviours or appearances established by the Socs. They are Othered.

This extract highlights how the narrator, 14-year-old Ponyboy Curtis, feels othered by his economic status and marginal position in society.

I was still thinking about it while I was doing my homework that night. I had to read *Great Expectations* for English, and that kid Pip, he reminded me of us—the way he felt marked lousy because he wasn't a gentleman or anything, and the way that girl kept looking down on him. That happened to me once. One time in biology I had to dissect a worm, and the razor wouldn't cut, so I used my switchblade. The minute I flicked it out—I forgot what I was doing or I would never have done it—this girl right beside me kind of gasped, and said, 'They are right. You are a hood.' That didn't make me feel so hot. There were a lot of Socs in that class—I get put into A classes because I'm supposed to be smart—and most of them thought it was pretty funny. I didn't, though. She was a cute girl. She looked real good in yellow.②

The allusion to Charles Dickens' novel draws attention to Ponyboy's feelings of inferiority due to his class status.

The nonchalant tone contrasts Ponyboy's familiarity with carrying a knife within his own cultural context to its transgressive nature within dominant culture.

Ponyboy's self-recrimination highlights his awareness of the need to act according to conventional social behaviours.

This reported speech from the girl establishes a clear binary between Ponyboy and the dominant culture through the singular 'you' versus the plural 'they'.

Understatement is used to highlight Ponyboy's social isolation.

Ponyboy's self-conscious narration highlights his outsider status; the girl sees him as a threat while others see him as laughable.

Perspectives on Otherness

In representing or constructing the Other, a text can convey a *perspective* on the Other through characterisation, narrative point of view, authorial voice and language features. For example, texts can expose the conflicts and divisions that Othering causes in relationships, families and societies, or they can imply that certain Others are marginalised for legitimate reasons (such as criminality, for example).

In looking at the ways in which a text constructs Others and Otherness, you should explore the different voices and perspectives it presents. In addition to the writer's voice, a text can provide insight into the contexts and perspectives of a number of individuals or groups. The text's construction, and the way these voices are represented, shapes an audience's responses to those voices and perspectives.

EXAMPLE Otherness in *Jasper Jones*

The extracts below are from the 2009 novel *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey, in which several characters are, for various reasons, presented as Other. Jasper Jones is Othered because of his impropriety and the fact that he is Indigenous:

> Jasper Jones has a terrible reputation in Corrigan. He's a Thief, a Liar, a Thug, a Truant. He's lazy and unreliable. He's a feral and an orphan, or as good as.
>
> … the message is simple: *Stay away from Jasper Jones.*
>
> I'd heard Jasper Jones described as a half-caste …

Another character in the text, Jeffrey Lu, is Othered because he is a Vietnamese migrant in the context of the 1960s:

> Jeffrey's parents are Vietnamese, so he's ruthlessly bullied and belted about by the boys at school. He probably cops it worse than Jasper.

Charlie Bucktin, the novel's narrator and protagonist, is Othered because he is bookish and socially awkward:

> Corrigan is a town whose social currency is sport. That's where most kids find and hold their own … I'm lousy at sport, and better than most at school, which garners me only ire in the classroom and resentment when report cards are issued. But at least I have something over them, even though it's a lonely celebration.

Although the society of Corrigan regards these characters as outsiders or (in Jasper's case) outcasts with little status or importance, Charlie's narrative viewpoint, as well as his friendships with Jasper and Jeffrey, compel the reader to question these categorisations, and to reject the racist, narrow-minded attitudes that underpin them.

The following sample analysis responds to the topic:

How are ideas about the Other constructed in Jasper Jones*?*

Repeats a key phrase of the question, demonstrating engagement with the topic.

Identifies a narrative convention utilised as part of the novel's construction of the Other.

Examines power relationships.

Establishes the context and links it to representation.

Closely analyses the way that language is used to construct a character and contributes to the representation of Jasper Jones as outside conventional life in Corrigan.

Identifies a binary opposition.

Summarises the representation and returns to ideas of centre and margin as related to the concept of the Other.

The novel presents ideas about the Other by constructing characters who are marginal to the dominant white society of the fictional Australian town of Corrigan in the 1960s. It presents the idea that those outside the dominant race and class are excluded and disempowered because they pose a threat to 1960s middle-class civility. The character of Jasper Jones is represented as Other and marginalised because he is Indigenous and also goes against social norms. These social norms, highly prized by Corrigan locals, include conformity and conservatism. A list of nouns used to describe Jasper carry connotations of immorality, distrust and danger, and the fact that they are each listed with a capital letter – 'a Thief, a Liar, a Thug, a Truant' – suggests he is a unique outsider, his formidability conveyed by the use of proper nouns. In this, he is distinguished from the ordinary moral citizen of conventional Corrigan, who is presumed to be good and honest. He is outcast for his 'feral' – as opposed to neat and controlled – behaviour, and is suspect because he is unattached to any noteworthy families, or at least not any respected by middle-class white society in 1960s Corrigan.

ACTIVITY

Analyse Othering in texts

1. Choose two texts that you have studied this year and identify characters that you could read as the 'norm' or as the 'Other'. Explain what makes them so.
2. Write an analytical paragraph about a character in a text you have read. Consider how this character is marginalised, and the textual features used to convey this marginalisation.
3. Using the sample analysis above as a model, answer the same question about a text you are studying: *How are ideas about the Other constructed in the text?*
4. Using a third-person narrative voice (see page 69), describe one of Claire Low's experiences. Describe the setting in detail and focus on conveying Low's discomfort, exclusion and embarrassment as she is Othered.

EXAMPLE The perspective of the Other in 'Tourism'

In the example below, Benjamin Law presents the perspective of the socially aware Australian child of migrant parents who travels to a theme park in Australia and learns to negotiate the social practices of two cultures in order to fit in. This perspective is also present in Claire Low's 'This (Half) Life' (see page 209). Law's extract humorously represents the way in which travellers to other countries marvel at sights and experiences that seem ordinary to those who live there. It also captures Law's fear of being objectified because of the characteristics and behaviours that might make him and his family seem 'Other'.

Once through the gates, we kids would do our best to distinguish ourselves from the actual Asian tourists. We'd make our Australian accents more pronounced. We ended our sentences with 'eh'. Our trousers were pulled further downwards, away from our navels. We refused to wear bumbags, and spoke English very loudly, with proper grammar and syntax. These hordes of Japanese and Chinese tourists would point to the most innocuous objects and proceed to take photographs like idiots. We could only imagine what they were hollering to each other as they ripped through their film. 'Look, a fire hydrant!' 'Over here, a drinking fountain!' 'Wow, there is a toilet: a public, shared facility and receptacle for my waste. Why not take a photo of it?'

Mum would sabotage all our efforts to set ourselves apart. She wore her hair in a Bozo-esque clown perm, and had a strange insistence on wearing her fluorescent Dreamworld T-shirt if we happened to be at Dreamworld (and her killer-whale Seaworld T-shirt if we were visiting Seaworld).

'Mum, come on,' I'd say as she posed us at the entrance of yet another ride. 'Everyone's going to think we're tourists.'

'We *are* tourists, you idiot,' she'd reply. 'Now smile big!'

It would take her about twenty seconds to finally press the shutter, and another five to release it. We'd groan.③

The following sample analysis focuses on Law's use of language in presenting a perspective on Otherness.

Identifies specific generic and language features.

Explains the humour of the extract and the way in which Othering can be used satirically.

Addresses the audience response.

Humorous imagery serves to comment on the lengths to which people will go to be accepted.

Close analysis of language.

The first-person point of view and colloquial language ('we kids') establishes, in the first sentence, a youthful voice and a casually observational tone. It also creates humour, as the rest of the sentence draws on our cultural understanding that it is undesirable to look like a tourist and therefore there is a social hierarchy of citizenship in which Law wants to claim superiority to 'actual Asian tourists'. He positions the reader to sympathise with his strategic methods of attempting to belong and to avoid being Othered. For example, he tells of his conscious efforts to adapt his accent and speech, his clothing and style, and his behaviour in refusing to take photographs of everyday scenes. The collective noun 'hordes', metaphor 'ripped through their film' and euphemism 'a public, shared ... receptacle for my waste' also convey Law's humorous perspective and show the interconnectedness of language and constructions of the Other.

ACTIVITY

Consider representations of Otherness

1 How does the characterisation of Law's mother offer a perspective on Otherness?

2 Adopt the persona of an explorer or a tourist who encounters a group of people who are unfamiliar. You might make it humorous, in the style of Benjamin Law, or more poignant and reflective, like Claire Low's piece.

EXAMPLE Perspectives on Others in *The Help*

As we have seen, texts offer perspectives through their embedded ideologies, which are communicated through their generic and language features. Through close analysis of *The Help*, a novel by Kathryn Stockett (and also a film directed by Tate Taylor), we can see how a text can offer different perspectives on the Other, and understand the ideologies underpinning these perspectives.

The Help is the story of an aspiring writer, Skeeter Phelan, set in Mississippi during the 1960s civil rights and early second-wave feminist movements. Skeeter gathers the accounts of local African American maids Minny Jackson and Aibileen Clark and writes a book that presents the stories of the white families for whom the maids work.

One way of reading *The Help* is with critical awareness of the way in which racial stereotypes and patronising attitudes towards black characters establish a binary of 'norm and other' or 'us and them'. The society of the southern United States in the 1960s determined a set of practices that dictated convention, and normalised the perspective and values of the dominant white culture. Non-whites were Othered, excluded and disempowered by a system of racial segregation that made education and social opportunity difficult, if not impossible, to access.

On the one hand, readers might identify with the novel's ideas about racial harmony, reconciliation among races and white redemption. After all, Skeeter is depicted as well intentioned in attempting to give a voice to African American women, and the novel offers a perspective of a maid in that context. Minny demands of Skeeter, 'What makes you think colored people need your help?' and 'Why you even care about this? You *white.*' In this way it generates empathy for, and gives voice to, the Other.

On the other hand, a resistant reading of the text could look at how it offers a patronising perspective through representations of:

- black women, who are depicted as servants who only have a voice through a white woman with more opportunities than them (through education and work, etc.); as maternal and domesticated; and as having little individual identity beyond their work
- black men, depicted as largely absent or abusive
- African American language, ways of speaking and cultural practices, which are depicted as inferior versions of 'correct' English and terms of address
- the focalisation through a white character, who is depicted as being the 'saviour' of these women by publishing their stories of marginalisation and, in doing so, profits from them in an alternate form of exploitation.

The following sample analysis focuses on the perspectives of Minny and Aibileen in *The Help*.

Analysing character construction in the novel *The Help* foregrounds the perspective of the Other through representations of Minny and Aibileen. When we first meet Minny she arrives at Celia's house, hoping to be employed there as a maid. On Celia's porch, before knocking, Minny tells herself to 'look like a maid who does what she's told': an obvious example of how she is expected to conform, and a reminder that obedience is a preferred criterion for employment as a maid. Furthermore, Minny has previously reflected that she 'ain't never gone to get no work again, Leroy gone kill me', representing the double-Othering of black women that means that they often have to fear both white people and black men. Stockett also offers a perspective on black women by using the narrative point of view of Aibileen, and having her compare herself to a cockroach. This image produces a visual representation of how white people in 1960s American society condescend to black people as pests – the darker, the more ominous:

> *That night after supper, me and that cockroach stare at each other down across the kitchen floor. He big, inch, inch an a half. He black, blacker than me.*

The cockroach is a significant point of comparison here as it is generally considered a low form of life. It is a pest that can

- Signals the importance of character construction, perspective and representation. The author should also be introduced if this is the first time the text is mentioned.
- Quoted example is smoothly integrated here.
- Identifies social expectations based on race and specific to a sociohistorical context (1960s America).
- Useful transition marker.
- Offers a more sophisticated cultural reading of race and gender.
- The author's full name should be used the first time they are referred to.
- Develops the comparison used in the text (dark, ominous, sinister).
- This explanation analyses the way in which the comparison is degrading and demeaning.

contaminate, infest, invade and quickly reproduce. For these reasons, the connection between a black woman and a cockroach reflects white fears about the threat of the Other and how this threat lurks dangerously in the background. Although the narrative voice here is that of Aibileen, the text also conveys the suspicious perspective of the dominant (white) group, which regards African Americans as Other even when their voices are heard.

Returns to the discourse of racial Othering.

ACTIVITY

Perspectives of the Other

1. Watch the official trailer of Tate Taylor's *The Help*.
2. What are the connotations of 'the help' and why is referring to a group of people in this way problematic (i.e. disempowering)?
3. How do the white characters in the trailer Other or marginalise their 'help'?
4. Why are the friendships between Skeeter Phelan – the aspiring writer who tells the black women's stories – and 'the help' unexpected?
5. In what ways do the domestic employees resist their servile status?
6. Use your knowledge of the context of race relations in the southern states of the United States in the 1960s to construct the opening of a short story that establishes an oppressive heat, racial segregation and a family with 'help'.

Comparing perspectives on the Other

AO Neville (Kenneth Branagh), Molly (Everlyn Sampi) and Matron (Kate Roberts) in *Rabbit-Proof Fence*

One way of increasing the sophistication of your analytical skills is to evaluate the perspectives in texts. An effective approach to this is through comparison. In relation to the concept of the Other in the 2002 feature film *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, for instance, you might compare the perspective represented by the character of AO Neville, the Chief Protector of Aborigines between 1915 and 1940, with that of the Aboriginal children, or even that of the director, Phillip Noyce. The table opposite offers some factors that might be considered in such a comparison.

	AO NEVILLE	DAISY, MOLLY, GRACIE	PHILLIP NOYCE
CONTEXT	1930s Western Australia Aborigines Act of 1905 Chief Protector of Aborigines – colonial authority with responsibility over Aboriginal people and their affairs.	1930s Western Australia Aborigines Act of 1905 Aboriginal children removed from their parents and resettled at Moore River Native Settlement.	2000s Australian film director 1997 *Bringing Them Home* report on the national inquiry into the Stolen Generations, which criticised colonial policy and called for an apology.
PERSPECTIVE	Holds a paternalisitic and assimilationist view of the Aboriginal Other as uncivilised and inferior, and as able to be improved by the rejection of traditional cultures and the adoption of the English language and Christian beliefs.	On one hand they recognise their own Othering, through their removal from their families, their objectification and abuse, and the authorities' attempts to erase their Aboriginal culture. On the other hand, the girls fear Neville and other white characters as bewildering and terrifying Others.	As director, Noyce offers a perspective that admires Aboriginal cultures – represented through the three girls in particular – for their resilience in the face of systematic Othering, and offers a clear criticism of Neville and the policies he represents.

Some additional perspectives on Otherness represented in *Rabbit-Proof Fence* include the Christian perspective of the missionaries who regarded Aboriginal peoples as lost souls who needed to be saved; the perspective of those who regarded Aboriginal peoples as subhuman and treated them with contempt and violence; and the perspective of 'benign neglect' represented by settlers who were sympathetic to the plight of Aboriginal peoples but did little to offer material support. However, Noyce represents these perspectives in such a way as to construct an overall perspective that is based on his 21st-century context, and the contemporary movement towards reconciliation with Australia's Aboriginal peoples.

You might also compare Noyce's perspective with that constructed in a different text, such as Kate Grenville's memoir *Searching for the Secret River*. This text charts Grenville's research into her ancestor, Solomon Wiseman, who settled along the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales in the early 1800s, and the subsequent writing of her award-winning novel *The Secret River*. The memoir offers an insight into Grenville's changing perspective on the Aboriginal Other. Her research, and particularly her conversations with Aboriginal people, led to a startling insight: her perspective had been formed largely in ignorance and in the context of a cultural history of representing Aboriginal peoples as primitive and as victims of colonial might. Her personal context as the descendant of a colonial figure, the situational context of her research, and a wider cultural context of the push for acknowledgement of the wrongs done to Aboriginal peoples all contributed to her growing awareness of the politics of Othering within Australia that had persistently misrepresented Aboriginal peoples and their cultures.

Here is an excerpt from Chapter 16, 'Aboriginal Voices':

> Aboriginal people were quoted in the history books I was reading, but not very often. Even when they spoke English, the first Australians in those early days generally didn't read or write it well enough to create a record. [...]
>
> But one book led to another, from specialised academic volumes to small-press local histories. I was starting to realise how wrong my preconceptions about Aboriginal life and culture were. That word 'nomad', for instance. Traditional Aboriginal people moved around, true, but within a precisely defined territory. Everyone knew exactly where the boundaries were. If strangers came onto your territory without asking permission, you were entitled to make them leave ...④

The following example of student writing compares perspectives in response to the following question:

Compare the perspectives on Otherness constructed in two texts you have studied.

In his film *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, Phillip Noyce constructs a critical perspective on the Othering of Aboriginal peoples by colonial ideologies that regarded them as uncivilised and inferior. Informed by his 21st-century context, and in particular the national discussion following the inquiry into the Stolen Generations, Noyce draws attention to the disempowering effects of colonial influence. To do so, Noyce frequently uses visual language features to position the viewer to empathise with Aboriginal characters. For example, in a scene called 'Looking for the fair ones', a close-up low-angle shot from the perspective of Molly, an Aboriginal girl, shows the Chief Protector of Aborigines, Mr AO Neville, as he leans over her to assess the darkness of her skin. This reinforces Neville's physical power as we are positioned to share Molly's vulnerability. A subsequent reverse shot depicts Molly from a high angle to suggest her disempowerment. Her intimidation is reinforced by eerie, echoing music playing as her breathing quickens. The viewer is again put in the position of the disempowered Other as another shot reveals a number of Aboriginal children dressed in identical, rough cotton dresses sitting on the ground, looking towards Neville (who is seated on a chair in his suit) while a group is forced to sing his favourite Christian hymns. By using point-of-view shots that align the viewer with young Aboriginal characters, and alternating between high and low angles to accentuate their disempowerment, Noyce presents a highly critical perspective on the way in which colonial powers treated Aboriginal peoples and their cultures as inferior.

Kate Grenville, on the other hand, offers quite a different perspective on Otherness. In her memoir *Searching for the Secret River*, Grenville ultimately suggests *she* is the Other, thus questioning the very binary on which the disempowerment of Aboriginal Australians has historically been based. In researching her colonial

ancestor, she realises that Otherness is a matter of viewpoint, and that white Australians must have seemed 'Other' to Aboriginal peoples. She uses language features to subvert the power imbalance that typifies dominant perspectives on the Aboriginal Other, placing herself in a position of intellectual weakness. First-person pronouns are used, as expected of a memoir, to chart her journey from ignorance to understanding, through phrases such as 'I could see, though, how blindly I'd been embedded in my own culture' and 'I understood a lot more now'. Grenville also uses comparative syntax to deconstruct the binaries that mark Aboriginal cultures as Other. For example, on hearing about Aboriginal land management practices, she states: 'This wasn't quite my picture of "hunting and gathering". In fact, some of it sounded very like farming.' By putting 'hunting and gathering' in inverted commas, she draws attention to its typical primitive connotations; by then stating their way of life 'in fact' seemed similar to farming – a practice associated with the colonising culture – she undermines this common binary. Unlike Noyce, whose perspective simply criticises the Othering of Aboriginal peoples in line with current dominant values, Grenville's highly personal perspective subverts the binary between coloniser and (colonised) Other, discovering that she (and by extension, white Australia) perhaps represents those very qualities for which Aboriginal peoples have been Othered: ignorance and unsophistication.

ACTIVITY

Analyse sample writing

Answer the following questions with reference to the sample student writing above.

1. A perspective is a viewpoint informed by context. What contextual factors does the student suggest influenced Noyce and Grenville?
2. Which perspective on Otherness from these two texts resonates most with you? Explain your response.
3. How well does the sample analysis engage with the question? Why do you think this?
4. Highlight all references to textual features. How successfully does the analysis engage with the 'construction' of each perspective?
5. Highlight the terms of comparison and contrast in the sample analysis, such as 'similarly', 'whereas', 'but' and 'also'. Are there areas where further comparison could be made?
6. Write a short answer response comparing a perspective on racial Otherness from a text you have studied with one of these texts.
7. Compose a brief interpretive text in which you review the perspectives on Otherness in a popular film.

Resisting representations of Otherness

One form of resistance against representations of Otherness is 'writing back' against forms of Othering. Looking at how some texts subvert the conventional Othering of individuals and of social and cultural groups involves critical thinking and foregrounds the roles of context and perspective.

Contemporary texts that resist representations of Otherness include the Netflix series *Killing Eve* (2018), in which Eve Polastri, played by Korean-Canadian actress Sandra Oh, is an appealing, intelligent rogue spy pursuing female assassin Villanelle. Bringing Asian actors to the centre helps to normalise the practice of non-white ethnicities occupying leading roles in American film and television. This role also diverges from the conventional 'oriental' sexualisation and exoticism that historically have been imposed on Asian women in Western culture.

EXAMPLE Resisting Othering in 'My Other'

Another text that resists racial Othering is the 2004 poem 'My Other' by Anita Heiss. Heiss publishes across many genres, and her identity as an Aboriginal woman – she is a member of the Wiradjuri nation of central New South Wales – as well as a writer and an academic inevitably shapes her perspectives on issues and ideas.

In 'My Other', Heiss highlights and critiques some of the ways in which non-Indigenous Australians have categorised and stereotyped Aboriginal peoples. In this way, her poem critiques classification and stereotyping because of the way that they exclude and disempower people. She writes back against Otherness by placing white readers in the Othered position of having to justify one's race, history and identity, mimicking the condescending tone of misplaced pity that Indigenous people often hear from white people. The final stanza makes the reversal explicit, with the Aboriginal speaker wishing that white readers 'would start — / asking yourself the same questions / you ask of me'.

My Other

You are 'my other'
But you do not steal my gaze
Or consume my thoughts
I am not preoccupied
  with trying to understand
  what it's like —
  to be you
  to be white
  to be the majority
  to be the so-called definition of civility
  how it must feel to assume the superior role.

And I do not ask you —
what it's like to be non-Indigenous
to have the freedom to choose
to be politically active
or to choose to participate
in the reconciliation process.

I do not ask you to tell me —
the entire history of your society
or the customs of your ancestors
or why *your* people can't seem to agree on anything.

I do not ask these questions not only because —
they may make you feel uncomfortable
but because it is important for me
to determine *my own role*

my own place
in this world we share.

So I wish you would start —
asking yourself the same questions
you ask of me
and focus
more on the 'self'
rather than 'the other'. ⑤

ACTIVITY

Resisting representation of the racially Other

1 Explain how the voice of the poem works against racial Othering.

2 How does the layout of text on the page enhance the effect of listing in the poem? What is the effect of that listing?

3 Analyse how the poem writes back against racial Otherness. You might consider the use of language, repetition, structure and tone.

4 Write a poem that mirrors the typography and resistance of 'My Other' and 'writes back' against a different form of Othering. Construct an imagined persona in which you critique the Othering process.

5 Write a speech for your classmates, from your current context, in which you argue that Othering has damaging effects. In what ways do differences (in race, gender, sexuality etc.) benefit society? In what ways can difference be celebrated in your context? Structure your speech around a specific anecdote or case study.

Bringing it all together

The following tasks give you practice in producing a range of texts in response to exam-style questions. They each build on the knowledge and skills you have gained in working through this chapter.

ACTIVITY

Putting it into practice

Comprehending

Text 1 is an extract from an opinion article by Allayne Webster, published on 12 June 2019 in the online edition of *The Guardian* newspaper.

Growing up, I was mortified by my allergies and eczema. I wish I knew I wasn't alone

Allayne Webster has lived with the conditions since age five. Her new book, Sensitive, is for kids like her – and the people around them

I'm out to dinner with friends. The waitress approaches, and I cringe. Here it comes. I'm about to do The Speech.

I point to my wrist, to my Medic Alert bracelet. "Can you let the chef know I'm allergic to …" – I rattle off a list of allergens and explain they can cause anaphylaxis. I joke that the restaurant doesn't want an ambulance out front, that it's bad for business. I don't do it to be jovial. I do it to get my point across: *My life is in your hands. You could kill me.*

Irritation flickers on the waitress's face: "What was it again?" I point to the menu and explain what I think could be a safe option – minus the sauce. "Hang on. I'll go check."

I apologise to my friends. They tell me it's no trouble. The waitress returns; there's a problem with my choice. We negotiate a different one. She goes back to the kitchen. I hold up everyone, yet again. I just want it to be over with.

When my meal arrives, I sample some and wait. No tingling, no swelling, no itchiness. When I leave, I profusely thank the staff for their service; I thank them for not killing me.

And so it goes with every social gathering at a restaurant, at a friend's house, at anywhere food is served. Food is central to how we interact; we celebrate by breaking bread and clinking glasses. But for allergy sufferers, dining out is an anxiety-producing nightmare. Our first thought is not, "What would I like to eat?" But, "What won't kill me?"

Of course, when it comes to dietary restrictions, allergy sufferers aren't alone. We are in the company of diabetics, vegans, vegetarians, the gluten or lactose intolerant, those with restrictions imposed by religion, those who simply hate mushrooms. But allergic folk are more troublesome. Menus don't indicate safe choices for us, and there's the added risk of cross-contamination, unwitting kitchen mix-ups or indifference.

Text 2 is a poster from a 2013 campaign by the Disabled People's Association in Singapore.

1 Explain the perspective on Otherness constructed in Text 1.

2 How do multimodal features of Text 2 work to challenge attitudes towards Otherness?

3 Compare how Text 1 and Text 2 represent the concept of Otherness.

4 Explain how your own context influenced your response to either Text 1 or Text 2.

Responding

1 Explain how at least one text you have studied constructs an empathetic perspective on a marginalised group.

2 Show how an understanding of a particular context influenced your response to the perspectives within at least one text you have studied.

3 Compare how two texts you have studied are constructed to privilege some voices while marginalising others.

4 Explore the reasons why you resisted the perspectives constructed within at least one text you have studied.

Composing

1 In a form of your choice, compose a text that uses stylistic features to construct a marginalised voice.

2 Compose an interpretive text that explores the concept of Otherness.

3 Compose an imaginative text in which the central conflict develops from challenging stereotypes.

4 Construct a text in a form of your choice inspired by the image below.

Endnotes

① 'This (Half) Life' by Claire Low, *The Australian*, 7 August 2005.

② *The Outsiders* by SE Hinton, Penguin Modern Classics, London, 2007. First published in 1967.

③ 'Tourism' by Benjamin Law, in *Growing Up Asian in Australia*, edited by Alice Pung, Black Inc., Melbourne, 2008, p.148.

④ *Searching for the Secret River* by Kate Grenville, The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne, 2006, pp.127–30.

⑤ 'My Other' by Anita Heiss, in *I'm not racist but …*, Salt Publishing, Cambridge, 2007.

CHAPTER 10

THE EXAM

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- gain an understanding of the Examination Design Brief
- explore the structure and requirements of the exam
- explore strategies for approaching each section of the exam
- learn some effective revision strategies.

This chapter provides essential exam information, revision strategies and tips for what to do in the exam that will help you give your best performance on the day. Reading and re-reading your set texts is an important part of your preparation. So, too, is reading widely and increasing your familiarity with a range of text types that might appear in the exam.

As the exam is worth 50 per cent of your total English WACE score, and is assessed on your written work only, you will need to practise writing high-level responses within time limits. Write your notes and practice pieces by hand as much as possible throughout the year, so that you are able to write quickly and legibly for three hours without becoming fatigued.

You need to be very familiar with the exam format, including how much each section is worth and how it will be assessed. Familiarise yourself with the examination design brief in the ATAR English syllabus documents, as your school exams and the WACE exam must conform to this design.

Exam format

Reading time: ten minutes.
Writing time: three hours.
The English exam has three sections, summarised in the following table.

SECTION	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO COMPLETE	WEIGHTING %	SUGGESTED WORKING TIME (MINUTES)
One: Comprehending	3	3	30	60
Two: Responding	6	1	40	60
Three: Composing	4 or 5	1	30	60

Section One: Comprehending

- This section is worth 30 per cent of the total exam.
- The Comprehending section requires you to comprehend and analyse previously unseen written and visual texts, and to respond in a concise, short answer format. Answers in this section should be between 200 and 300 words in length.
- This section will contain two or three texts. These will include both written and still-image texts. One or more of these texts may be multimodal – that is, combining written and visual elements. Drama and poetry texts are excluded from this section.
- There are three questions. At least one question will require you to respond to a written text and one to a visual text. There may be a question requiring you to compare texts.
- Each question in Section One is equally weighted.

Section Two: Responding

- This section is worth 40 per cent of the total exam.
- The Responding section requires you to respond to your studied texts, demonstrating your analytical and critical thinking skills. You may refer to any text or text type you have studied throughout the year.
- In this section, you will answer one question from a choice of six. Questions may ask you to interpret, analyse, compare, contrast, reflect on and/or evaluate a studied text or texts.
- Although this section is weighted more heavily than the other two, you do not need to write more or spend more time on it. A good rule of thumb is to write an essay with a clear introduction and conclusion, and four or five main body paragraphs. Focus on the *quality* of your main body paragraphs, not the quantity.

Section Three: Composing

- This section is worth 30 per cent of the total exam.
- The Composing section requires you to demonstrate your skills in constructing a written text in a particular form for a specific purpose, audience and context.
- In this section you will answer one question from a choice of four or five. Each question will require you to construct a sustained imaginative, persuasive or interpretive text.

Understanding the exam

It is important to remember that the exam is not a memory test. While you must have a good working knowledge of your studied texts, the exam will assess your ability to apply your understanding of syllabus concepts to a range of unseen texts, your studied texts and texts that you compose. Therefore, understanding the syllabus is just as important as, if not more important than, knowing your texts.

Comprehending

Written texts in this section can vary widely. Past WACE examinations have included extracts from novels, short stories, essays, autobiographies or memoirs, and feature articles. Almost any type of imaginative, persuasive or interpretative text may be included, except for poetry and drama. Make sure you are familiar with the conventions of a range of written text types so that you are not surprised by what you find in the exam.

Still images and multimodal texts have, in the past, included stills from feature films, book covers and photojournalism images. However, there are no limits on the type of still image or multimodal text that might be included, so you should also be prepared for forms such as advertisements, web pages or extracts from graphic novels. The best way to prepare is to be familiar with the conventions and principles of visual language, so that you can apply these to whichever text you are faced with. (See the flow chart on page 245 for a process to use when analysing an unseen text.)

Each response in this section should be short and concise – no more than 300 words. Write a clear, succinct and well-structured paragraph-style response to the question. Be guided by the question; if it asks you to analyse one feature, such as the construction of voice, you might find a single paragraph works best. If the question asks you to identify three aspects of visual language, then writing three short paragraphs might be more appropriate. (See pages 105–7 for more on writing short answers.)

Questions in this section typically have a narrow focus. You will be expected to analyse closely an aspect of the construction of the text and its effects, often in relation to a syllabus concept, such as perspective or voice. Different questions will incorporate different degrees of flexibility, as outlined on the next page.

Closed questions

Closed questions identify both the textual features and the effects you are required to discuss.

How is the father–son relationship represented through the construction of the narrative voice?

In this example, both the textual feature – narrative voice – and its effect – representing the father–son relationship – have been specified for you. You still need to identify the nature of that representation, though, as well as analysing the construction of narrative voice.

Limited questions

Limited questions specify one of the two aspects you are required to discuss.

Analyse how the snake is created to reveal an idea in Text 2.

In this example, you are directed to analyse the construction of the snake as a textual feature, while the idea it generates is left open to your interpretation. There is a degree of flexibility here, as the snake could be considered in terms of its literal function as a figure in the story or in terms of its symbolic potential.

Open questions

Open questions allow you to choose both the textual feature and its effects.

Explain the visual element that has had the greatest effect on your interpretation of this image.

Here, you have the freedom to select both a specific visual element as well as the interpretation you made. Thus, there is a great deal of flexibility in what you may choose to discuss.

Responding

This section is worth more marks than the other two sections, reflecting the time and effort you have spent studying texts throughout the year. You are expected to write an extended analytical response. Although it is not specified by the exam or the exam design brief, an analytical or discursive essay is the most logical way to respond.

Questions in the Responding section typically combine two or three syllabus concepts. It is vital that you are familiar with the key syllabus concepts and how they apply to your studied texts, but in this section it is also essential to consider the relationships between syllabus concepts that the questions suggest, and to construct an argument that combines these concepts in particular ways. Careful analysis of the question is required; many students have been tripped up by misinterpreting this relationship.

Responding questions will be quite broad, allowing them to be applied to the wide variety of texts and text types that are studied throughout Western Australian schools. Therefore, it is important that in your introduction you construct a clear thesis that indicates how this question applies to the text you have chosen to write about. Remember, your marker may not be familiar with your text: it is your job to make sure that your argument is clear enough to be understood by them.

You will always have a wide selection of questions in this section, so choose wisely. It is vital that you select a question in which you understand the key terms and syllabus concepts and that applies well to your studied text(s). Not all questions will suit all texts, which is why it is important that you revise a number of texts prior to the exam, rather than focusing on just one or two.

You will need to memorise quotes from your texts in order to construct successful responses in this section. Page 235 includes tips on textual evidence, to help you do this effectively. See also Chapter 5 for more guidelines on analysing Responding questions.

Planning your response

Effective planning and brainstorming will help you to identify the most significant points to include in your response, rather than simply trying to tell the marker everything you can remember about your studied text.

EXAMPLE 1

Discuss the way in which your understanding of context has influenced your interpretation of the perspectives in at least one text.

1. Identify the perspectives within the text. This implies you will also need to identify the subject matter of the text, as it is impossible to talk about a perspective without considering what it is a perspective on.
2. Articulate your interpretation of those perspectives. What have you understood about them?
3. Show how your understanding of context – such as the context of the text itself, or of its creator – shaped or influenced your interpretation of the text's perspectives.

Potential hazard: showing how the perspectives in a text shaped your understanding of its context, rather than vice versa.

EXAMPLE 2

How have language or structural innovations been used to unsettle an audience in at least one text?

1. Identify an audience and the ways in which their response might be characterised as 'unsettled'.
2. Identify specific language or structural features in the text and justify why those features or their particular use may be considered innovative.
3. Relate the unsettled audience response directly to those innovations.

Potential hazard: failing to show that the unsettled response was due to the innovations within the language or structural features.

EXAMPLE 3

Compare how two texts of different genres respond to the concerns of the same time period.

1. Identify a particular time period and its concerns (an element of the context of culture).
2. Identify how two texts respond to those concerns through their generic features, such as by representing the concerns in particular ways, or through their use of form and genre, or the perspectives they offer.
3. Compare those responses, highlighting their similarities and/or differences.

Potential hazard: not taking into account the role of genre in considering the way the texts respond to their context.

Composing

In this section, you are being assessed on your ability to compose an effective imaginative, persuasive or interpretive text that is shaped for a particular purpose, audience and context. You need to demonstrate your understanding of a particular form and strong writing skills.

Questions in this section typically come in three forms: a straightforward instruction, a stimulus in the form of a quote, or a stimulus in the form of a still image. Make sure you thoroughly analyse the question and accompanying stimulus (if applicable) before you begin writing. See Chapter 6 for more guidelines on analysing Composing questions.

Composing questions, just like those in the first two sections of the exam, require you to focus on particular syllabus concepts. That is, you may be asked to compose a text in relation to a concept such as genre, perspective or textual features. You are required to demonstrate your understanding of the concept through its practical application.

Some students try to answer exam questions by reproducing a text they have previously written. Unless you are incredibly lucky, it is unlikely that an exam question will match one you have written on before. Make sure your responses are clearly written to suit the particular scope and requirements of the question.

Similarly, rather than creating from their imagination, many students simply retell a story they know, such as from a film they have seen. Markers deeply disapprove of this degree of unoriginality, which borders on plagiarism.

Again, in this section as in the Responding section, you will have a choice of questions. Your teachers should have given you feedback on your writing throughout the year, so select a question that plays to your strengths.

Elements to consider

It can be tempting to begin writing immediately to maximise writing time. However, planning and proofreading are essential. A shorter but thoughtfully constructed text will almost always gain higher marks than a longer but poorly organised and written one.

EXAMPLE 1

Create an imaginative text with a central voice that conveys hope or redemption.

- You are limited to creating an imaginative text.
- You must demonstrate your understanding of the concept of voice and its construction by focusing on this in your composition.
- The voice you construct must have the effect of conveying hope or redemption.

Potential hazard: focusing much of your text on the character's misery and only offering a final or minor glimpse of hope or redemption.

EXAMPLE 2

'I don't think you quite understand the ramifications of this decision.' Incorporate this statement into a persuasive text for a resistant audience.

- You are limited to creating a persuasive text.
- You must demonstrate your understanding of the concept of audience, in this case a resistant one, and how texts are shaped for audiences.
- You must incorporate the statement AND consider its implications – that is, the idea that the person being addressed has already made some sort of decision that the speaker or writer believes was ill-considered.

Potential hazard: incorporating the statement in a tokenistic fashion, or ignoring or misinterpreting its meaning.

EXAMPLE 3

In a form of your choice, create a text that reveals a part of this person's history.

- You can choose to create any form of text.
- You must demonstrate your understanding of characterisation, as appropriate to your choice of text. This may be characterisation within a narrative, but even if you were writing a feature article you would be developing a character based on the image.
- Your text must directly relate to the figure represented in the image.

Potential hazard: insufficient characterisation, or an unrecognisable form of text.

Revision strategies

To prepare thoroughly for the exam you will need a range of effective revision strategies. Use the following suggestions to build your confidence and skills, and start using them several weeks before the exam date to ensure you can complete each section successfully in the three hours available.

Write by hand. Studies show that handwriting, far more than typing or reading, is the most effective way to store information in your long-term memory. Your revision should involve rewriting and organising your notes, preferably by hand, and not just merely reading over your class work.

Practise comprehending short texts. Use previous years' exams – both from your school and from the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) website – for examples of short, unseen extracts to practise on. For past papers, see https://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/publications/past-atar-course-exams/english-past-atar-course-exams.

Revise a selection of your studied texts. You don't necessarily have to revise every text you have studied, but it is not wise to select only one or two to focus on: you may find that they are not the most suitable for the questions in this year's exam.

Focus on key scenes. Instead of making lists of random quotations, pick a few key scenes or extracts from your studied texts. Understand each scene well, and select quotes that will help you convey your understanding to your marker. Choose moments in the text that reflect several syllabus concepts, so that they can be used for a variety of questions. For example, pick a key scene from a film that shows a turning point in a character's development, while contributing to a significant theme and revealing the director's perspective on the subject matter. Be sure you can quote dialogue from this scene as well as refer to its use of visual language conventions.

Create visual summaries. It is often easier to recall a diagram than plain text. Draw flow charts and mind maps to help you remember the structures and key moments of your texts.

Create summaries of themes, arguments and ideas in your texts. Include reference to the various textual features used to construct them: that is, their language, structural, stylistic and generic conventions.

Create flashcards of the metalanguage of syllabus concepts. Use the syllabus document, including the glossary, to help you define the various concepts that will appear in exam questions, such as perspective, genre and context. On the flashcards, note synonyms or refinements of such terms. For example, the 2018 exam referred to a text's 'time period' and an individual's 'circumstances', both of which are aspects of the broad concept of 'context'.

Refer to syllabus concepts in your study notes. Identify the context(s) of your texts, the perspectives they offer, the genre(s) they draw upon and so on.

Identify points of comparison between texts. There will always be questions that require you to compare at least two of your texts. Remember, comparison is not just about how your texts might be considered similar, but also how they might operate differently. For example, you might compare how two texts offer a perspective on the refugee crisis, or you might compare how a science-fiction film and a travel memoir both subvert the conventions of their respective genres.

Read around your texts. Read others' responses to these texts, and read other texts on similar subject matter or from similar contexts. This can help you to develop a deeper and more reasoned response to your text.

Be informed. Being aware of global current affairs, and having an opinion, is important. Texts are not standalone objects; we study them to help us make sense of life. Look for parallels between your texts, your own experiences and what is happening in the world around you.

Write as many practice responses as you can. Write in a range of forms: short answer, essay and a variety of types of compositions. Time yourself, but don't worry if, at first, it takes you a bit longer than the time allowed in the exam. Work on reducing the time it takes you to produce a piece and give it a quick edit.

Practise writing a plan within two minutes. A plan will keep you on track and help you to manage your time in the exam. Include in your plan the example(s) you would use to support each point. This can be helpful in highlighting whether you need to find more or better evidence.

Write sample questions. Base your questions on those in previous exams. For example, take one of last year's questions and substitute one syllabus concept within it for another. Voila! You have a new question to practise with.

Download previous years' exams. On the SCSA website you will find past papers and the Summary Examination Reports for Candidates. These provide useful advice for candidates, based on the trends markers noticed in responses to that year's paper.

In the exam

Use the following tips and strategies to make the most of your time in the exam and to write your best possible responses.

Approaching the paper

You will have ten minutes of reading time. Use these three steps to make good use of that time.

- **Step 1:** Read the exam instructions carefully.
- **Step 2:** Read through all of the questions. In Sections Two (Responding) and Three (Composing), choose the questions that you know you can answer best.
- **Step 3:** Skim the Section One (Comprehension) texts, including any contextual information provided. Read each of them with their respective question in mind, so that your reading is focused on the specific requirements of the question.

Once writing time begins, it is worth making some preliminary notes before you start writing your actual responses. The following steps give you a systematic process that you can practise using as part of your revision.

- **Step 1:** Quickly jot down any notes or ideas that came to you during the reading time, before you forget them. Do this for all sections.
- **Step 2:** Analyse the questions you will answer, making sure you clearly identify and understand each key term.
- **Step 3:** Re-read the Section One texts, annotating them as you go.
- **Step 4:** Plan and write your response to each question in Section One, and your chosen questions in Sections Two and Three.
- **Step 5:** Proofread your responses.

Note that you can work through the paper in any order you choose.

Planning your responses

- **Time spent planning is never wasted time.** Planning helps you to organise your thoughts, clarify your thesis, decide on the most convincing examples and structure your response effectively.
- As we explored in Chapters 5 and 6, questions will have three types of **keywords**: command, concept and condition words. In addition, critical words may be included to further focus your response. Make sure you carefully identify *all* keywords.
- As you have limited time, your **plans should be brief**.
- For a Section One (Comprehending) question, **annotations around the question itself** should be sufficient. You can even turn your annotations into a plan by numbering them or using colour coding to group them into paragraphs.
- For a Section Two (Responding) or Section Three (Composing) question, stick to a **series of bullet points** identifying your key arguments and pieces of evidence. Brainstorm as many as you can think of, select the best ones and then arrange them in a logical sequence.
- To write your plans, use **abbreviations**, symbols, arrows, flow charts and so on as time-saving techniques. No-one else needs to be able to make sense of your plan – it will not be marked.
- **Statements of intent**, or CAP (Context, Audience and Purpose) statements, are NOT required in Section Three – or any other section. They are not considered part of your response and WACE markers are instructed to ignore them. You may find it useful, when planning, to identify the CAP of your composition, but in itself it will not earn you any marks.

Writing your responses

- Allow time to **edit and proofread**. Correct basic spelling, punctuation and grammar errors, but – more importantly – identify gaps in your reasoning, a lack of evidence, inexplicable changes in direction or unclear ideas and arguments.
- Make sure your **topic sentences and introductions** in Sections One (Comprehending) and Two (Responding) are clear and concise. Your marker will be looking to these for evidence of your attention to the question and the stating of a clear line of argument.
- **Engagement with the question** is crucial. Make sure your responses clearly address the syllabus concepts embedded in each question.
- **Keep an eye on the clock**. Even if you have not quite finished a response for a particular question, move on to the next if the allotted time is up. You can always come back to it. It is better to have *slightly* incomplete answers for each section rather than a *largely* incomplete response for one section.
- **Clearly identify which question you are answering**. Don't make your marker guess.
- **Do not write outside the margins** on the exam paper. Anything outside the margins will be cut off when your responses are scanned to be sent to the various markers of your paper.
- If your response will not fit in the allocated space and you complete it on another page, make sure you clearly identify where the marker will find this **additional material**.
- Finally, and above all, **don't panic**. If your mind goes blank, move on to another section. If you have prepared well, and chosen questions with which you are comfortable, your answers will come to you.

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Imaginative language features

There are literally hundreds of language and literary devices. Some of the more common ones are listed below.

DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE	Adjectives and adverbs	Adjectives are words that describe nouns; adverbs describe verbs.
	Connotation	Meaning that is suggested, rather than literal.
	Sensory details	Words and phrases that appeal to the reader's senses, typically of sight and hearing, but also of touch, taste and smell.
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE	Anthropomorphism	Giving human qualities to an animal or object.
	Metaphor	A comparative device that describes one thing as being another.
	Metonymy	Using a word to represent a larger concept to which it is related, e.g. using 'the bottle' to refer to alcohol.
	Pathetic fallacy	Crediting nature with human traits, e.g. a description of the weather to symbolise a character's emotional state.
	Personification	Attributing human qualities to an object or phenomenon.
	Simile	A comparative device that describes one thing as being like another.
	Symbol	An object or phrase that embodies a range of meanings that extend beyond its literal definition.
	Synecdoche	Using a part to represent a whole concept, or something specific to represent the general, e.g. using 'hands' to refer to workers.
	Zoomorphism	Giving a human animal-like qualities.
SOUND DEVICES	Alliteration	Using words with the same initial sound in quick succession.
	Assonance	Using words with the same vowel sounds in quick succession.
	Cacophony	Combining words to create or imply a harsh or unpleasant sound.
	Consonance	Using words with the same consonant sounds, typically at the end, in quick succession.
	Euphony	Combining words to create or imply a pleasing sound.
	Onomatopoeia	Words that sound similar to the sound they are meant to depict.
	Rhyme	Words that share the same or similar sounds.
PACE	Caesura	A break in the rhythm of a line, created by splitting a sentence or interrupting its regular rhythm, resulting in a dramatic pause.
	Rhythm	Patterns created through the arrangement of words according to syllables or the natural emphases created by their pronunciation.
WORD PLAY	Irony	Using words with intended meanings that are different from, or even the opposite of, their literal meanings; is often conveyed by the tone of delivery.
	Parody	The deliberate exaggeration of particular textual features of another work for humorous effect.
	Pun	A play on words, creating humour or irony through the fact that words have two or more meanings.
	Satire	Using humour or parody to draw attention to human flaws.
INTER-TEXTUALITY	Allegory	Exploring a complex or abstract concept through the creation of a more concrete example.
	Allusion	A casual reference to another literary work or real-world event.
	Analogy	Explaining something by comparing it with a similar thing that is more familiar to the audience.
	Quotation	Repeating the words of another work or person, to add meaning or authority to a text.

Persuasive language features

Dividing language and literary devices into imaginative and persuasive categories is somewhat arbitrary. All of the imaginative language features listed on the previous page may be found in persuasive texts and used for rhetorical effects. However, the following devices are specifically rhetorical, i.e. designed to persuade an audience.

It can be helpful to think about persuasive language devices in terms of those that appeal to the audience's emotions – pathos – and those that appeal to their sense of logic and reason – logos.

PATHOS	Anaphora	The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses.
	Attacks and praise	Strongly affirming one idea or person while strongly criticising their opposite.
	Colloquialism	Using vernacular or even slang language, often to appeal to the 'everyday' person.
	Cumulation	Sometimes called the 'rule of three', cumulation refers to the accumulation (heaping up) of descriptive words or phrases.
	Emotive language	Language that is highly emotional, designed to provoke an emotional response in the audience.
	Emphasis	The devices of repetition, alliteration or cumulation, used to add emphasis to or reinforce an idea.
	Generalisation	A statement that is expanded from a specific situation to a broad one, suggesting that what is true for some is true for most or all.
	Hyperbole	A deliberate exaggeration not meant to be taken literally.
	Inclusive language	Language, such as personal pronouns (e.g. 'we', 'us', 'our'), that makes the audience feel included in the writer's argument.
	Litotes	An ironic understatement in which an idea is expressed as not being its opposite (e.g. 'not at all bad').
	Repetition	The use of a key phrase, idea or image at multiple points.
	Rhetorical question	A question that is posed not to elicit an answer but to encourage the audience to think, or for which the answer is self-evident.
LOGOS	Anecdote	A short, personal story, typically about an experience the writer has had, used to illustrate a point.
	Aphorism	A short statement of belief or opinion that is expressed as a truth.
	Evidence	Facts or examples used to support an argument.
	Expert opinions	The inclusion of quotes or research from those who might be considered credible sources of information on the topic.
	Formal language	Language that conforms to the proper rules of grammar and is appropriate to address an educated or unfamiliar audience.
	Jargon	Terminology that is specific to or part of the discourse on a particular topic.
	Statistics	The presentation and analysis of data, often expressed numerically.

Spoken language features

The following table outlines some features associated with spoken language.

Accent	The ways in which words are pronounced, usually associated with a geographical region.
Back-channel	Words, phrases and non-verbal indicators that suggest the listener is paying attention to the speaker, such as 'I see', 'oh' or 'uh-huh'.
Dialect	Grammar and vocabulary that is particular to a specific region.
Diction or lexical choice	Word choice.
Elision	The omission or slurring of syllables or words, such as 'gonna' and 'g'day'.
Ellipsis	The omission of part of a sentence to create a casual tone, such as 'You going out tonight?' (missing 'are') or 'Don't know. You?' (missing 'I' and 'are').
Enunciation	The clear pronunciation of words.
Filler	Words and non-verbal indicators that allow a brief time to think or pause, such as 'um', 'ah' or an exaggerated thoughtful expression.
Fluency	The quality of speech in terms of its fluid and error-free delivery.
Idiolect	An individual person's style of speaking.
Intonation	The expression or tone carried by the voice; also refers to whether the voice is rising, falling or remaining at the same pitch.
Modality	The degree of uncertainty conveyed through language choices and spoken language features such as tone and fluency.
Non-verbal features	Features that inform spoken communication, such as eye contact, gesture, posture and movement.
Pace or tempo	The speed at which a person speaks.
Pause	A break or hesitation in speaking.
Pitch	The sound frequency (high or low) of a voice.
Register	The degree of formality of language used.
Rhythm	The measured flow of speech, established through patterns in diction, pace, intonation, stress etc.
Sociolect	A style of speaking associated with a particular social group.
Stress	Emphasis, created through diction, pauses, intonation etc.
Tone	Language choices that convey emotion or attitude.
Transition markers	Words and phrases that indicate transitions or relationships between ideas.
Volume	The loudness or softness of a speaker.

Visual and multimodal language features

The following tables outline some of the main language features for analysing images and multimodal texts.

Mise en scène

Mise en scène refers to all the visual elements within the frame.

LIGHTING	Colour	Establishes atmosphere and tone through the symbolic associations of certain colours. For example, a palette of yellows can create warmth, while red might suggest anger or passion.
	Contrast	The juxtaposition of light and dark areas of the image; can be used to draw attention to certain points.
	Key	High key lighting is bright, leaving few shadows; low key is the opposite. Key lighting helps to establish the atmosphere or tone of the image.
SETTING	Environment	The aspects of the surroundings that indicate the time and place of an image and the location of the subjects.
	Props	Short for 'properties' – objects within the image that contribute to the setting and characterisation of the subjects.
SUBJECT	Costume	Subjects are the people – or objects – that are the focus of the image. Costumes are essential elements in establishing people's character.
	Body language	Includes the postures, facial expressions and actions of the subjects.

Composition

Composition refers to the specific placement of elements within an image. For example, objects may be arranged along a horizontal or vertical plane, or along a diagonal or another leading line (vector) that draws the viewer's eye.

CAMERA ANGLE	Low angle / worm's eye	Positions the viewer as looking up at the subject, giving the subject a sense of dominance or power.
	Eye level	Puts the viewer on the same level as the subject, suggesting equality between them.
	High angle / bird's eye	Positions the viewer as looking down on the subject. This suggests the subject is powerless or inferior in some way.
	Oblique	Refers to an image that is captured on an angle.
SHOT TYPE	Establishing / long shot	Positions the viewer far away from the subject. This can work to create emotional distance, or it may be used to reveal the subject's small stature in their environment.
	Full / medium shot	Brings the subject closer to the viewer. In a full shot the subject fills the frame, whereas a medium shot only shows their torso and head. These are common techniques as they offer a detailed representation of the subject.
	Close-up / extreme close-up	Close-ups force the viewer to get up close and personal with the subject; extreme close-ups can be confronting, forcing the viewer to focus on a particular detail of the subject.

FILM STOCK	The type of film used, such as black-and-white, sepia or colour.
SALIENCE	Refers to the dominant subject of the image, created through its size, the focus of the image, lighting and/or colour choices.
FRAMING	The positioning of the subject within the image, e.g. centrally, or to one side of the image; including the whole of the subject, or only part.
DEPTH OF FIELD	The degree to which the objects in a shot, from foreground to background, are in focus.
DENSITY	Refers to how crowded the image is. Images that contain many elements appear busy or claustrophobic.
PROXEMICS	The relative closeness of subjects within the image. The closer they are, the closer their relationship.
STAGING POSITIONS	The direction the subjects face relative to the camera. Descriptive terms include full front, quarter turn, profile, and back to camera.

Text

Text refers to any words included in the image. These might include titles, captions, speech bubbles, slogans and logos.

Position	Where in the image the text is placed. Position affects the degree to which the text draws the viewer's eye.
Ratio	The proportions of text and image in relation to each other. This determines which element has greater significance.
Typography	The style of font, including its colour and size. These elements contribute to the tone or atmosphere of the image.

Camera movement and focus

Dolly	The camera is mounted on a moving platform (dolly) and smoothly moves closer to (dolly in) or further away (dolly out) from the subject.	Gives the impression that the viewer is moving to/from the subject; creates a less artificial effect than zooming.
Handheld	The camera moves naturalistically, as if held by human hands.	Used to mimic human movement, or to create intimacy between the viewer and the subject, as if they are in the scene.
Pan	The camera rotates horizontally (left or right), from a fixed position.	Used to follow a moving character or take in a large scene, such as a landscape.
Pedestal	The camera moves vertically up or down without changing the angle of the shot.	Used to create a sense that the viewer is moving along with the subject.
Tilt	The camera moves vertically up or down, but from a fixed position.	Gives a sense of height and positions the viewer relative to the subject.
Truck	The camera moves horizontally, typically maintaining focus on a subject, without changing the angle of the shot.	Used to create a sense that the viewer is moving along with the subject.
Zoom	Changes the focal length of the lens, giving the impression of moving closer to or further away from the subject.	Used to highlight specific details, or manipulate the intimacy of the relationship between viewer and subject.

Editing

Crossfade	A gradual fade from one shot to the next.	A slow transition to create mood or indicate lengthy time passing.
Cut / cutaway	A sharp transition from one shot to another.	Used to switch to action that is happening elsewhere, or at a later time.
Fade	A gradual fade to or from a blank screen, typically black.	Often used to signal the beginning or ending of a film or complete sequence.
Jump cut	A type of cut between two sequential shots of the same subject, but from different positions or slightly later in the sequence.	Compresses time by progressing more quickly through a scene than it would take in reality.
L-cut	A cut in which the visuals transition while the audio continues (or vice versa).	Can be used to smooth the transition between scenes, or to create intrigue or tension by introducing sound before the viewer sees the visuals.
Match cut	A cut between two shots that are matched or linked through similar composition to create continuity.	Maintains visual continuity while switching between scenes.
Shot-reverse-shot	A cut between shots of two subjects within the same scene.	Often used to create tension, e.g. switching between characters having an argument.
Split screen	The screen is physically split, allowing two shots to be shown at once.	Used to indicate scenes happening simultaneously.
Wipe	Various types of gradual transitions whereby one shot blends into another.	Used to create a slower transition to new scene.

Sound

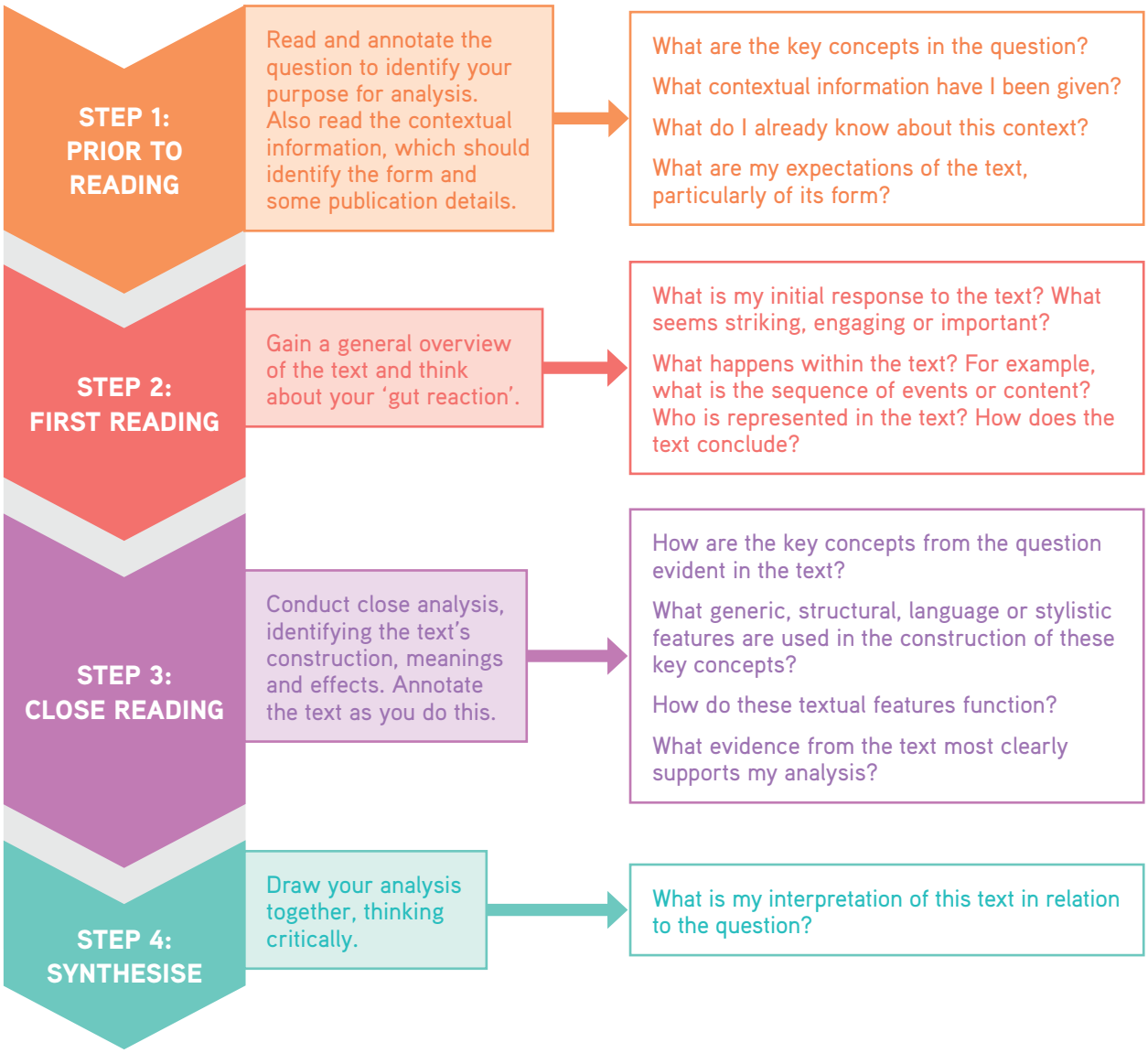
Diegetic	Sounds that are natural within the scene and are able to be heard by characters, such as dialogue, street noise, doors closing, and music on a radio.	Adds to the realism of a scene.
Extra-diegetic	Music and sound effects that are heard by the audience, but are not present within the scene, such as voice-over commentary, the music soundtrack, and sound effects for dramatic purposes.	Creates atmosphere and manipulates the audience's response.

PROCESSES FOR ANALYSING TEXTS

The two flow charts in this appendix show processes you can use to analyse any text. The first gives you a process for a timed assessment, where you are analysing a text or texts you have not previously seen. The second is a more detailed, extended process for studying a text over several weeks or even months.

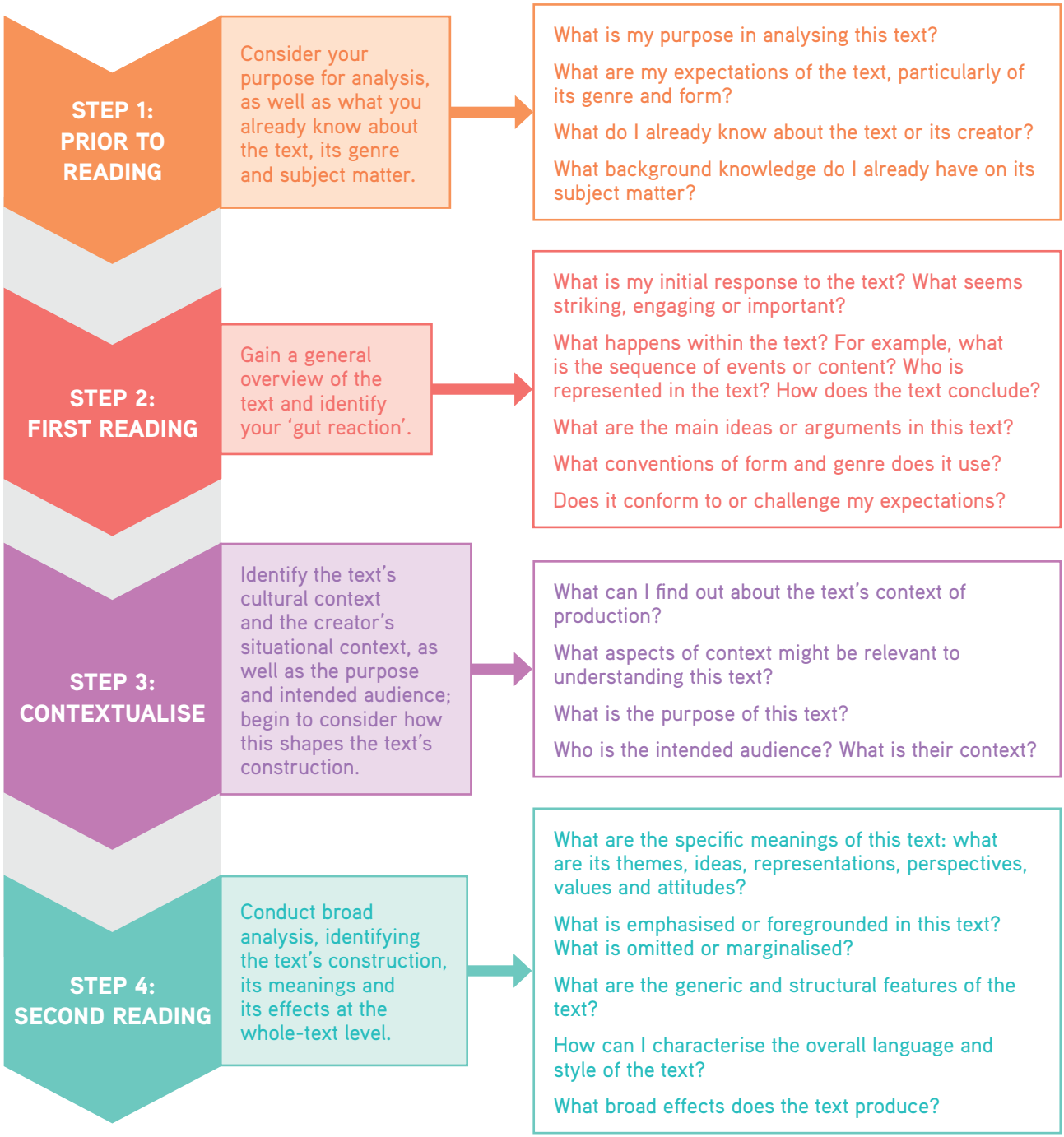
Analysing an unseen text

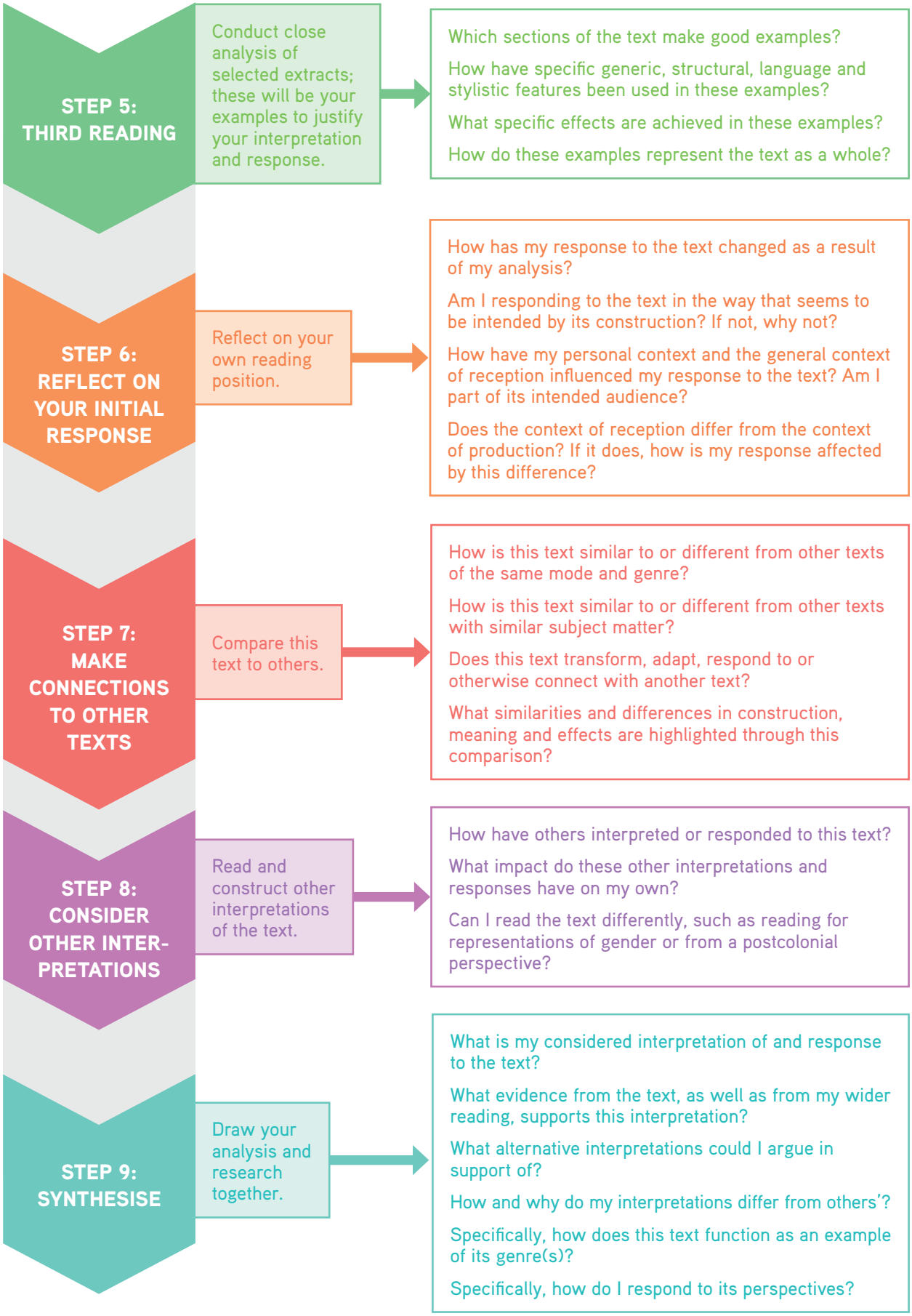
This table shows a four-step process for analysing an unseen text, such as those you will see in the Comprehending section of the exam. Because of the short time allocated for short answer responses, you would only annotate the text and the question, rather than making extensive notes.



Analysing a studied text

The extended process in this flow chart can be used for the close analysis of a text you are studying in class. It reflects the outcomes of the ATAR English course. You won't necessarily analyse every text for every concept in the syllabus; that's why the first focus question is 'What is my purpose in analysing this text?' Your teacher may set a particular text to explore in terms of its genre, for example. While that doesn't mean you can ignore the other syllabus concepts, it does mean that this particular concept will be foregrounded as you read and analyse the text.




STEP 5: THIRD READING
Conduct close analysis of selected extracts; these will be your examples to justify your interpretation and response.
Which sections of the text make good examples?
How have specific generic, structural, language and stylistic features been used in these examples?
What specific effects are achieved in these examples?
How do these examples represent the text as a whole?
STEP 6: REFLECT ON YOUR INITIAL RESPONSE
Reflect on your own reading position.
How has my response to the text changed as a result of my analysis?
Am I responding to the text in the way that seems to be intended by its construction? If not, why not?
How have my personal context and the general context of reception influenced my response to the text? Am I part of its intended audience?
Does the context of reception differ from the context of production? If it does, how is my response affected by this difference?
STEP 7: MAKE CONNECTIONS TO OTHER TEXTS
Compare this text to others.
How is this text similar to or different from other texts of the same mode and genre?
How is this text similar to or different from other texts with similar subject matter?
Does this text transform, adapt, respond to or otherwise connect with another text?
What similarities and differences in construction, meaning and effects are highlighted through this comparison?
STEP 8: CONSIDER OTHER INTER-PRETATIONS
Read and construct other interpretations of the text.
How have others interpreted or responded to this text?
What impact do these other interpretations and responses have on my own?
Can I read the text differently, such as reading for representations of gender or from a postcolonial perspective?
STEP 9: SYNTHESISE
Draw your analysis and research together.
What is my considered interpretation of and response to the text?
What evidence from the text, as well as from my wider reading, supports this interpretation?
What alternative interpretations could I argue in support of?
How and why do my interpretations differ from others'?
Specifically, how does this text function as an example of its genre(s)?
Specifically, how do I respond to its perspectives?

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