BOOK **1**

ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

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CONSULTING EDITORS: BRENTON DOECKE
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CAMBRIDGE**FIRST**

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1

BOOK

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Cambridge University Press

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ABOUT THE COVER

The cover photo, *The Hare and Tortoise*, represents the Aesop fable in a highly visual form. Both lifelike and completely fabricated, this image reminds us of the continuing importance of storytelling to our cultural life, and of the value of retelling 'old' stories in new and extraordinary ways.

NOTE:
Activities 2.14 and 2.15 on pp. 65 and 66 ask students to use a Sylvia Plath poem to explore the idea of who speaks in the poem. For this reason, the poem's title – 'Mushrooms' – does not appear with the poem in Chapter 2.

FOREWORD

The project of developing the teaching and learning resources presented in these volumes began with a workshop at Cambridge University Press in 2009, when a team of English teachers from across the country came together to share their knowledge, history and expertise in the area of English Curriculum and pedagogy. The occasion for this meeting was the new Australian curriculum. The aim was to develop quality resources that teachers and students might use within the national framework being mooted at that time, which has now been published as *The Australian Curriculum: English*.

Authors, editors and publishers brought with them a wealth of professional experience in local, state, national and international settings. We all valued the opportunity to learn from colleagues accustomed to working in different curriculum and socio-cultural contexts. We believed in the value of professionals working collaboratively, creatively and respectfully, in the best traditions of English teaching in this country. And we were committed to generating curriculum materials that could recognise and speak to the needs of diverse Australian students and their teachers in the twenty-first century.

In 2008, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) spoke of the need to position young people, in all their cultural, social and religious diversity, 'at the centre' of curriculum conversations and classroom pedagogy, in order to support them to live 'fulfilling, productive and responsible lives' (p. 7). This was indeed the thrust of the workshop conversations. Drawing on their experiences of teaching in different states, the authors contributed, in their own distinctive voices, nuanced accounts of their professional practices and experiences of working with young people in English classrooms.

> 'I've had great success teaching [name of text].'
>
> 'Actually, I've found that novel rather alienating for students who live in the twenty-first century.'
>
> 'Hmm. That's possible, but not inevitable. If you can keep the emphasis on students bringing their own particular lifeworlds to their reading, rather than plugging away with the generic same-old same-old … It doesn't *have* to be alienating.'
>
> 'Really? So, how does that happen?'
>
> 'Well, some colleagues and I developed a unit where …'

A characteristic feature of the conversations at this workshop was the creativity of the authors as they shared and made sense of each other's experiences. In the process, they found themselves affirming principles of English curriculum and pedagogy that they share as members of the English teaching profession in Australia:

'We need to reaffirm the importance of students engaging with texts in different ways. It's not a matter of anything goes, but it's certainly not a matter of the teacher leading her class to produce a single reading.'

'Our resource books should reassert the importance of students *creating* texts, of creativity as well as analysis, in the process of interpreting texts.'

As the conversations unfolded during the day, the authors gradually generated a collective vision of English teaching that they could own and believe in, one that appreciated the particularity of teachers' own experiences in local settings and yet still addressed the larger national curriculum imperatives.

In the conversations that have occurred through email and other exchanges since then, this vision has come into sharper focus as authors and editors worked on particular chapters and as authors shared and provided feedback on each other's chapters-in-progress, always with reference to the Australian Curriculum as it unfolded, and was finalised during the time that they have been writing their texts.

A key aim of the authors has been to develop resources in which the strands of *The Australian Curriculum: English* – Language, Literature and Literacy – are brought together in a dynamic relationship, building on each other in the form of imaginative and intellectually stimulating material that appeals to students from a range of backgrounds and interests.

To achieve this goal, each chapter is structured around a selection of texts that are both engaging and challenging, prompting students to extend their capacities to use and reflect on the English language and the other semiotic resources available to them. Each chapter is designed as an inquiry into significant dimensions of English, culminating in textually innovative work done for real purposes and audiences that students will find intellectually and personally rewarding.

We trust that you will find the wealth of ideas, texts and activities in these books of immense value in your continuing efforts to meet the particular needs of the young people in your classrooms, and that you will enjoy being part of the conversation that Cambridge University Press initiated in 2009.

BRENTON DOECKE AND GRAHAM PARR, JANUARY 2011

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

BRENTON DOECKE

Brenton Doecke is a Professor of Education in the Faculty of Arts and Education at Deakin University. He has written extensively on English curriculum and pedagogy, and has co-edited several titles in the Interface Series (Wakefield Press/AATE), including *Writing=Learning* (2005) and *'Only connect…': English teaching, schooling and community* (2006).

He is a former editor of *English in Australia*, the journal of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE), and co-editor of the *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy,* the journal of Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA).

Brenton played a major role in the development of the Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA) and has since engaged in research on the impact of standards-based reforms on the professional identity and practice of English teachers. Brenton is a life member of both the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) and the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE).

GRAHAM PARR

Graham Parr is currently a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia. He was previously a teacher of secondary English and literature for fourteen years in Australia and in the USA.

As a teacher educator, he has maintained strong connections with English teacher professional associations, serving on committees and on the Council of the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE). He has published in a range of international peer-reviewed journals, including *English in Australia, Changing English, English Teaching: Practice and Critique* and *Mentoring and Tutoring*. With Brenton Doecke he co-edited *Writing=Learning* (2005) for Wakefield Press, and with other colleagues at Monash University he has co-edited three books of teachers writing about their professional learning for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). He is on the editorial board of *English in Australia*.

In 2008, Graham co-authored the *Report of the National Mapping of Teacher Professional Learning in Australia Project*, a year-long inquiry into professional learning policy, practice and research for the Australian Federal Government. And in 2010, he published *Inquiry-based professional learning: Speaking back to standards-based reforms*, a book documenting the professional learning of a group of literature teachers in a Melbourne secondary school over the course of a year.

PAM MACINTYRE

Pam Macintyre teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses in language, literacy, children's and young adult literature in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne. She is the editor of the quarterly review journal, *Viewpoint: on books for young adults*, and reviews for *Australian Book Review* and *The Age*.

Pam has been a member of the National Executive of the Children's Book Council of Australia, a judge for the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, Aurealis Awards and CBCA Book of the Year Awards. With co-author Susan La Marca she has written *Knowing Readers: Unlocking the Pleasures of Reading* (2006).

NATALIE BELLIS

Natalie Bellis teaches English at The Peninsula School in Mt. Eliza, Victoria. Still relatively new to the profession, she completed her Master of Arts (Creative Writing) at Monash University during her first few years of teaching. She has a passion for curriculum design and exploring new texts with her students. She loves writing about teaching almost as much as she loves teaching and has published her reflections in a number of professional journals, as well as the AATE/Interface publications *Writing=Learning* and *'Only connect…':* She particularly enjoys writing collaboratively.

SCOTT BULFIN

Scott Bulfin taught English in a number of secondary schools before completing a PhD examining new media literacies. He is currently a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. Scott has served as a member of both the Council of the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE) and the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE).

KELLI MCGRAW

Kelli McGraw is a Lecturer in Secondary English Curriculum at The Queensland University of Technology. She has been an English teacher in south western Sydney and worked in primary and high schools across NSW to develop students' skills in debating and public speaking. Her work with the English Teachers Association (ETA) and the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) has focused on issues relating to curriculum and assessment, including providing feedback during the development of the Australian Curriculum for English, and she has recently completed her doctoral thesis on the innovations and challenges observed in the implementation of the 1999 HSC English syllabus for NSW.

LISA MCNEICE

During her seventeen years as a classroom teacher, Lisa McNeice has taught English, Literature, English Language, ESL and Art. She is a published poet and has had experience in student theatre as a writer, director and set designer.

In her poetry workshops, Lisa aims to develop the skills and confidence young writers need to give voice to their ideas. She believes that developing students' knowledge of the function and structure of language, while valuing their unique experience, is the key to this process.

KAREN MONI

Karen Moni is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at The University of Queensland and is a former secondary English teacher and teacher-librarian. She currently coordinates English curriculum, young adult literature and effective pedagogy courses in undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

Karen is the Executive Director of Latch-On, a post school literacy research and teaching program for young adults with intellectual disabilities. Her research interests include literacy, literature and adolescents, literacy and young adults with intellectual disabilities, and teaching, learning and assessment in higher education. Karen is a past president of the English Teachers Association of Queensland (ETAQ), the immediate past editor of *English in Australia* and the current President Elect of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE).

GARY SIMMONS

Until 2009, Gary Simmons worked full-time at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) where he delivered lectures and workshops to students and teachers over nine years in the Screen Education Unit. He now works as an independent writer and speaker on screen texts in schools and universities throughout Victoria. He is a literacy coach in schools in the Western Metropolitan Region (Victoria) and still lectures on a sessional basis in both education and general public programs at ACMI.

Gary is the author of the acclaimed ACMI study guide series for VCE English and has written a monograph on the film *Rabbit Proof Fence*. He regularly writes for the national *Screen Education* journal and occasionally for *The Age* and the *Herald Sun*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cambridge University Press

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

COPYRIGHT AND PRIVACY

Activities may ask students to record (audio and video) or photograph friends or family to use as part of multimodal presentations. Students may extend this by uploading finished videos on external websites, such as YouTube.

Students wishing to record, photograph or upload video of friends or family are advised to obtain permission to do so from the people involved. This is particularly important if they intend to place any finished multimodal texts in the public domain, such as YouTube.

Students should also avoid the use of pirated or illegally downloaded films or soundtracks when completing these tasks as this may represent a serious breach of copyright law.

Please encourage your students to take steps to ensure that individual privacy and copyright regulations are observed in the completion of these activities.

FILM AVAILABILITY AND CLASSIFICATION

The films presented for exploration in *English for the Australian Curriculum Book 1* are readily available. The foreign language films explored in Chapter 6, *Children of Heaven* and *The Colour of Paradise* are widely available in video stores or most stores will track them down for you.

Afghan Alphabet is available as a DVD extra to the feature film *Kandahar* and is also readily available at most video outlets. Schools in Victoria can also access these films through The Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) which is now affiliated with the National Film and Sound Archive.

The films in this book have been chosen for the richness of their subject matter and their suitability for the age group. They are rated **G** or **PG**, however, teacher discretion is still advised should your student group have particular sensitivities or needs.

The additional film in Chapter 6, *Persepolis,* is rated **M**, and as noted on p. 204, teacher and parent discretion are advised. It is an extra text and not a core part of the work in this chapter.

Any other films have been referenced as examples only that you may draw on in the classroom. Teachers are advised to check the classification of these films before introducing them into individual classrooms.

GRAPHIC ORGANISERS

Details about how to use a variety of graphic organisers such as Y-charts, PMI charts and other strategies in your teaching are available on *Cambridge GO for Teachers*.

USING TECHNOLOGY

Explanations of and guidelines for incorporating technology into your teaching through class wikis, blogs and other digital projects are also available on *Cambridge GO for Teachers*.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

English for the Australian Curriculum Book 1 provides a fully balanced and integrated approach to the three strands of *The Australian Curriculum: English.*

Seven chapters provide units that study language and literacy through literature and non-literary texts. *English for the Australian Curriculum Book 1* promotes the enjoyment of texts of various modes and genres by encouraging student creativity and active engagement with them.

Activities throughout the book, as well as the activities at the end of each chapter, address student achievement standards by revealing a transformation in what students know and what they can do with those skills.

Chosen texts and activities assist in developing the Curriculum's general capabilities, in particular, critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour, competence in ICT, personal and social competence and intercultural understanding. Cross-curriculum priorities are addressed through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and texts, and an understanding of Australia's engagement with Asia.

EACH CHAPTER CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING KEY FEATURES:

START HERE
a series of big questions that draw on students' personal worlds to begin critically and creatively evaluating ideas
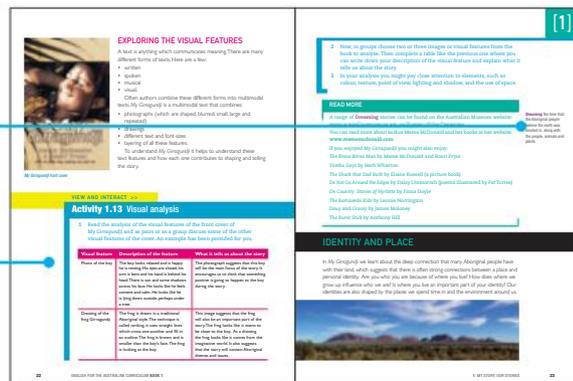
IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL
a series of statements that draw clear connections between Curriculum content descriptors and the specific skills developed in the chapter

GLOSSARY TERMS
a definition appears in the margin when a term first appears and is then reproduced in the Glossary or Glossary of Film Terms to allow for easy reference and reinforcement

ACTIVITIES
labelled for easy identification of active literacy skills, such as 'respond', 'interact', 'analyse' and 'evaluate', that develop proficiency across all language modes

LOOK CLOSER

looking closer at the text – questions that ask students to explore in more detail some aspect of a text or idea, and may offer opportunities for additional research

REFLECT ON

reflecting on what we can learn about ourselves and our world from the text – questions that ask students to reflect more deeply on some aspect of a text or idea by drawing directly on their personal world and knowledge to do so

READ, WRITE, CREATE

the end of each chapter features a big activity or a series of smaller, connected activities that draw together what students have learned throughout the unit and reflect deep learning in the creation of their own texts

READ MORE OR VIEW MORE

provide details of further reading or viewing to stimulate student interest and extend learning

MY STORY,
OUR STORIES

[1]

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- read, view and respond to a variety of texts, including material by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and multimedia texts

- explore how events, issues and characters in these texts are drawn from and shaped by different historical, geographical, social and cultural contexts

- analyse how language enables people to express attitudes, feelings and opinions and to construct stories that are meaningful to them

- understand that historical, social and cultural changes, and technological innovations affect styles of speech, idioms and language use

- explore how language is powerful in the creation and expression of personal and social identities

- apply your knowledge of language structures and narrative features to write and create imaginatively in print and digital modes.

texts communications in various media; texts can be written, visual, spoken or multimodal and in print or digital form

- Who are you? Why are you here? What do you want? Where do you come from? Where are you going? How will you get there?
- What stories can you find or tell about your family, home or community?
- How do people, places, artefacts, objects and **texts** shape your personal world?
- How do you use writing and other communication modes such as speaking to shape your identity?
- What is identity and why does it matter?

REFLECT AND INTERACT >>

Activity 1.1 Shoebox autobiography

Collect 3–5 items in a shoebox that you feel tell stories about your personal world. Consider items like **photographs**, books, cards, music, magazines or clothes – any kind of special objects that you think will give others insight into your personality, background or interests. (Take care with valuable items and ask permission from your parents or guardians if you need to do so.)

1   First, write down a few thoughts about why these objects are important to you. What do they say about who you are and what you would like to be and become? (Key words or short sentences will do.)

2   Now, in small groups, take turns sharing the contents of your shoebox with other classmates, explaining why the objects are important to you. You might want to tell a brief story about each object.

3   Take a picture of your shoebox and its contents, and upload it to a photo-sharing website (such as **www.flickr.com**). Many of these sites have tools to help you label and describe photos. (Be careful uploading images that might identify you or others.)

LOOK CLOSER

1 What kinds of objects or stories were similar or different among your group or class? Did you learn anything new about your classmates or teacher?

2 What things make your identity unique? Are there elements of your identity that you share with other people?

3 Is our identity something we are born with or does it develop? What things do you think help to shape or influence our identities? Can you think of any examples from your shoebox or from the stories and objects of other group members?

4 Do you think it is possible to change your identity? If so, explain in what ways. If not, explain why not.

Activity 1.2 A meme about me

meme (pronounced 'meem') idea, activity, image/video or off-beat story, which is shared online from person to person, like a virus

Complete the following **meme** and share your answers with at least one partner:
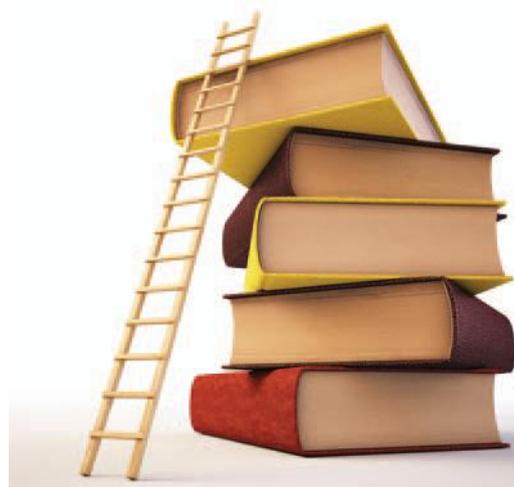
1   What is your current problem?
2   What makes you happy the most?
3   Do you like to cook?
4   What is the name of the song that you last listened to?
5   Do you have any pets?
6   Have you ever sung in front of a large audience?
7   Has anyone ever said you look like a celebrity?
8   Do you still view kids' films or kids' TV programs?
9   Do you speak any other languages?
10   Has anyone you have been close to passed away?
11   Do you ever play video or computer games?
12   What is the favourite room in your house?
13   Are you a 'morning person'?
14   What really annoys you?
15   What is your favourite quote or expression?
16   Do you believe in ghosts?

Share some of the responses you heard with the class. See if you can get your teacher to complete this meme too!

YOUR PERSONAL WORLD OF STORIES

Most stories happen to someone, somewhere. Stories come in all shapes and sizes. Some stories have a beginning (orientation), middle (complication) and an end (resolution), but many don't. In fact, authors often mix these up to make things more interesting. You have probably written plenty of stories both in and out of school. We hope you will write many more.

In this book you will encounter and explore lots of different types of stories: novels, short stories, micro stories,

animation, comics, poetry, pictures, newspapers, websites, video clips and more. Stories are told in all of these forms. In this chapter we will be focusing on how we represent our personal worlds through stories.

animation the rapid display of a sequence of images of 2-D or 3-D artwork or models positioned in order to create an illusion of movement

IDENTIFY AND INTERACT >>

Activity 1.3 Getting to know you

Start by brainstorming all the things that make us who we are – things that define our **identity**. Here are two ideas to get you started:

```
  personality                              [        ]

              ( What makes up an
                   identity?    )

  hobbies                                   [        ]
```
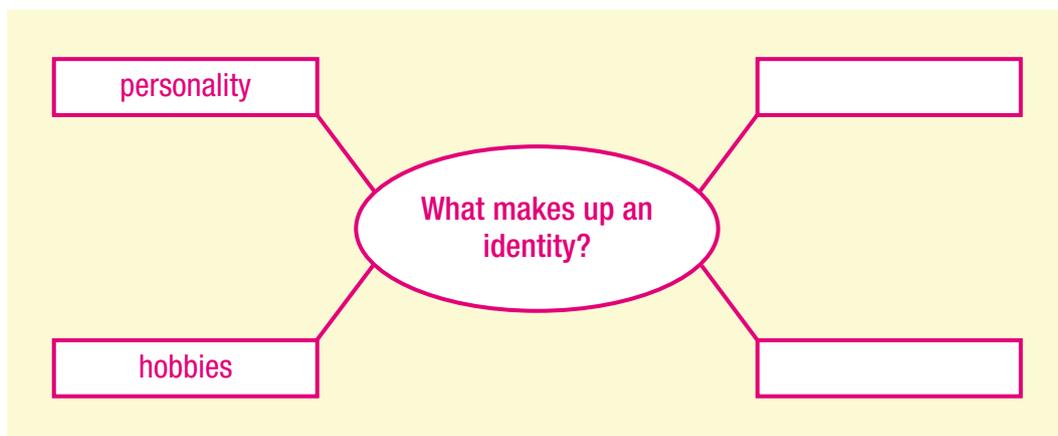
You can add to this brainstorm any time you think of something new.

1   Brainstorm everything you can think of that makes us feel like we **belong** somewhere.

```
  familiar places                          [        ]

              ( What makes us feel
                 like we belong?  )

  knowing people                           [        ]
```

2   Now take time to compare your ideas with other members of the class. Keep both these brainstorms and add to them as you think of other ideas.

Activity 1.4 You be the dictionary!

Imagine that you have been chosen to write the definitions of the words 'identity' and 'belonging' for a new dictionary written especially for young people like yourself. Use the ideas from your discussions and brainstorming to complete a table like the one below (to begin you might want to think of related ideas or concepts):

identity

belonging

Share your definitions with the class and then have a class vote on those you think best capture these complicated terms.

LOOK CLOSER

Respond to the following questions:

1   What is one thing you would like to learn about yourself?
2   What is one thing you would like to find out about your family history?
3   What is one thing you would like to discover about the place you live in?

Your responses to these questions might help you to come up with ideas for your own writing and creating later in this chapter.

BEING A STORYTELLER

Have you ever thought of yourself as a storyteller? When and where do you tell stories? Can you think of a time and place where you recently told a story? Who was listening? Why were you there? What happened?

We are all storytellers even if we don't think of ourselves in this way. We all tell stories to celebrate, remember and make sense of events in our lives. We tell stories every day about who we are and who we would like to become. We tell stories about others, people we know and those we don't know.
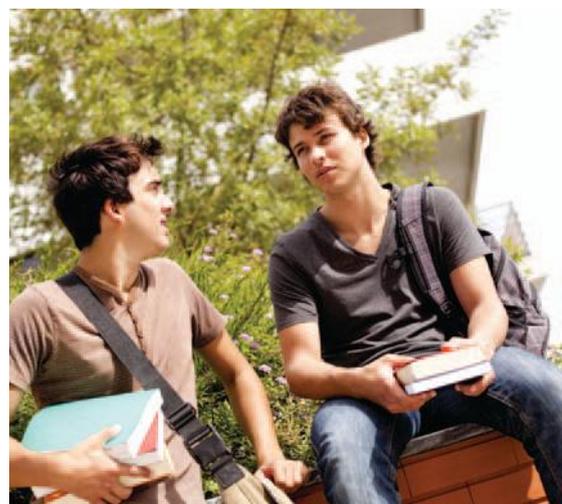
The kinds of stories we tell and how we tell them can say a lot about who we are and what we think is important. These stories are most often **narratives** in which we or other people are the main characters. Professional storytellers often work with five questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why?

narratives the relating of stories of events or experiences, imaginary (fiction) or real (non-fiction), including what is narrated and how it is narrated

Activity 1.5 Telling stories

Here is a chance for you to tell some stories. Follow these steps:

1 In small groups of two or three create a story to share with your class or another audience. It can be based on something that really happened (non-fiction) or it can be made up (fiction).

2 Tell the story as a group and then have your audience work out if they think the story is true or not. You might want to record your stories using an audio or video recorder (on your phone perhaps) and then upload them to a class **blog** or website (e.g. YouTube) for others to enjoy. (Be sure to get permission from the people in the recording before posting the stories online.)

blog a site that is maintained by an individual or group that contains regular updates of words, pictures, videos and other material, where users are able to share and publish their opinions and discuss various subjects on the site, while readers are allowed to view and comment on the entries

When you have shared your stories, think about the following questions:

1 Were you able to tell the non-fiction stories from the fictional ones? How?

2 Did the non-fiction stories have anything in common? Did the fictional stories share any characteristics?

3 What storytelling strategies did the groups use to tell their stories and to engage their audience?

4 What might you do differently next time?

You might like to use these stories as the basis for creative writing. Take a story you enjoyed and develop it into a longer piece of writing.

TWELVE-WORD STORIES

What is the shortest story you have ever read? You have probably heard of short stories, but have you ever read a **micro story**?

'12words' is an Australian website **(www.12words.com.au)** that encourages anyone to submit and publish a '12 word story'. They explain:

What we love about the micro story is that it is accessible for everyone. Whether you are a published writer or you have never written any fiction before, you can give this a go and enjoy it.

Show us what you can do in 12 words or less. Tell a story, convey a mood, give a glimpse at a person. ...

The micro story isn't new. Ernest Hemingway once said his six-word story, *Baby Shoes*, was his favourite. 'For sale: baby shoes: never used.'

Gertrude Stein beat him with an even shorter story called *Longer* 'She stayed away longer.'

More recently, New York based writer, Amy Hempel wrote a twelve-word story – *Memoir* – 'Just once in my life. Oh, when have I ever wanted anything just once in my life.'

A SELECTION OF MICRO STORIES

A Woke up. Went to School. Came Home. Slept. And started over... (jaybee)

B He travelled the world only to find what he wanted back home. (Ling)

C She breathed deep and stepped off the edge. It was only beginning. (oreonimrodel)

D Girl meets vampire. He sparkles. They snog. He saves her. *BIG WOOP* (PieTray)

E Mum's room. Dad's room. My room. Before the divorce, it was home. (stories2009)

F Her teddy lay in the gutter while Rosie cried herself to sleep. (Heila)

G She always blamed the universe, but never blamed herself. (chewtoy)

H It's all in a name, and hers was Gertrude. (ellyjette)

I I gently placed the wreath on the coffin, then spat on it. (CandiceLS)

J Behind blue reflections on a space helmet a monkey daydreams of bananas. (pf1101)

Source: **www.12words.com.au**

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READ MORE

There is lots and lots of short fiction online. Try doing a web search to see what you can find. You can read more twelve-word stories, and contribute your own, at the 12words website: **www.12words.com.au**.

If twelve words isn't enough for you, try some 'fifty word fiction' at: **www.tangents.co.uk/50words**.

But if twelve words are too many for you, the American SMITH magazine goes further with its 'Six-Word Memoir' project at: **www.smithmag.net**. Yes, six words to tell your story!

WRITE AND EVALUATE >>

Activity 1.6 Write and think about micro stories

1   Look again at the micro stories. Which stories do you think are funny? Or sad? Or clever? Which stories appeal to you and why?

2   Choose the three stories that you like the best. Why have you chosen these stories?

3   Copy and complete the table to identify what is revealed in your three chosen stories, then list at least three questions you could ask about parts of each story that are left untold. An example has been included for you.

Story	What is revealed? (Consider: who, where, what, when, why?)	Questions you are left asking about the story
e.g. **A**	We find out what the main character does all day. It is not very exciting and every day is the same. Their time is spent at school, at home and then sleeping.	• Who is the main character? • Do they ever eat? • Does the character interact with anyone? • Is this a serious story or is it supposed to be funny?

- **From 12 to 50 words:** Choose one story and imagine possibilities for the untold parts. Discuss some ideas with a partner, and once you have a story concept you are happy with, practice explaining your story in less than 30 seconds. You will then be ready to write it down in your own **50 word story**.
- **Now write your story:** Be prepared to write more than one draft in order to find just the right words to tell your story. This is what writers do. They play around with different possibilities and see which ones work best. You might also want to get feedback from someone else.
- **Publish:** When you have finished, collect all your class stories into a micro story **anthology**. This might be on a class or school wiki or class discussion board. Publicise your stories and encourage others to read and comment on your work. You may also wish to use the free program VoiceThread (**www.voicethread.com**).

anthology a specially selected collection of poems, stories, songs or other writing

BEING AN AUTHOR

If someone asked you if you were an author, what would you say? Have you ever written a story or **fan fiction**? How about a poem or song? A blog or a website? Have you ever made a short video? If the answer is yes, then you are an author!

People can mean different things when they use the term 'author'. Sometimes the word is used in a very broad sense, to mean that someone *created* something. This could be any kind of artistic or intellectual work. Most people, however, use the word 'author' to refer to the person who created a *written* text. This includes literary texts where the written text is performed as a play or film, or a **multimodal text** where writing is mixed with images.

Read the observations and advice given by published authors (below) about the process of writing and the work that authors do, and consider whether you agree. Reproduce your favourites and display them in your classroom or around your desk at home as inspiration for your own writing.

fan fiction fiction which uses characters and settings from books, films, TV programs, games and comic strips written by fans of the original work; it often plays out scenarios not in the original work

multimodal text a text that combines language modes (reading, viewing, writing, creating, speaking and listening) and processes, for example the production of visual, audio, spoken and non-verbal forms of expression through a range of technologies

'Every writer I know has trouble writing.'

Joseph Heller

'A word is not the same with one writer as with another. One tears it from his guts. The other pulls it out of his overcoat pocket.'

Charles Peguy

'I try to leave out the parts that people skip.'

Elmore Leonard

'I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter.'

James Michener

'Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.'

Anton Chekhov

'By writing much, one learns to write well.'

Robert Southey

'Short stories can be rather stark and bare unless you put in the right details. Details make stories human, and the more human a story can be, the better.'

V.S. Pritchett

'The best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas.'

Linus Pauling

'The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt.'

Sylvia Plath

REFLECT ON

1 Do you like to write? Where do you write? Why or why not? (Not everyone does of course!)
2 Which one of the above quotes best describes your own feelings about being an author?
3 What problems have you come across in your own writing? How do you think you could overcome these?
4 What kinds of stories do you enjoy reading or hearing?
5 Does your family or community have any stories that are special or significant?
6 What stories could you tell? If you could choose to write about anything, what would it be?

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME?

Have you ever heard the saying '… a rose by any other name would smell as sweet'? This line comes from a play by William Shakespeare called *Romeo and Juliet*. The line suggests that the name of something or someone is not as important as its qualities. A rose would still smell like a rose, even if it were called an 'Ian'. What do you think? Do you agree?

Many authors choose to publish their work under a **pseudonym**. This can be for a number of reasons – can you think of some? For example, the mathematician Charles Dodgson wrote fantasy stories, such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, using the name Lewis Carroll. Harry Potter creator, Joanne Rowling, was encouraged by her publisher to write under the 'pen name' J. K. Rowling, because they feared that young boys in the target audience would not read a book written by a woman.

pseudonym a name used to mask a person's true identity, also called an alias or pen name

But it is not only published authors who make up new names for themselves. Today many people create usernames or aliases (sometimes called 'handles') to represent themselves when they write, especially online. Usernames help writers disguise their identities.

Charles Dodgson, who wrote under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll

LOOK CLOSER

1   What does your name mean to you (consider your complete name, *first* and *family name*)? Where is it from? Research its cultural and historical origins. Does anything you find surprise you?

2   Do you know why you were given the name you have? If not, ask some family members to help you find out. Write a paragraph explaining the story of your name.

3   If you could change your name to anything, what would it be?

4   Do you have a pseudonym or alias that you use when online? How and why did you choose this name?

COMPARE AND EVALUATE >>

Activity 1.7 Comparing offline and online identities

1   Look again at the usernames of the micro story authors on p. 10. Can you tell what the authors' real names are?

2   What kinds of things might you consider when choosing an online name? (For example, did you decide to make it easy or difficult to guess your real identity?)

3   Do you use different usernames for different online communities or groups, or do you stick with one online identity?

4   Complete a table like the one following to compare your offline and online identities.

Name or username (list as many as you have, including nicknames)	Is this used offline or online?	The group or community in which this is used

5   How might the different groups you are involved with influence the identity you choose for yourself?

6   Do you act, speak or write differently than you would normally when using different usernames? If you think you might, can you think of any specific examples?

MY GIRRAGUNDJI (1998)

The short illustrated novel *My Girragundji* by Meme McDonald and Boori Pryor is a story which explores issues of identity and belonging. After your first reading of the text take some time to consider whether you think it is a good or effective story and discuss the reasons why. Did the events interest you? Did you want to find out more about the main characters? What did you think about the use of the written text and images? Was there an effective balance between these elements? In your opinion, what makes a good or effective story?

A girragundji or green tree frog

© Macintyre et al. 2011   Cambridge University Press

Even though many people or characters feature in this story, the narrator and **protagonist** is mostly telling a story about himself and how he overcomes his fears. Individuals tell stories about themselves for many reasons. How many can you think of?

TELLING THE STORY OF *MY GIRRAGUNDJI*

Before we go further, let's re-read the text.

INTERACT >>

Activity 1.8 Story events

Work in pairs and put the following events from the story in their correct order. Then map them on a timeline in the order they occur:

- The protagonist gets 'dropped', but has the self-confidence to move on
- Cousin Kev hides from the Hairyman
- Sharyn comes to watch the boy play football
- Too scared of the Hairyman to get up to go to the toilet at night
- There is a smoking at the house to scare off the Hairyman
- Family trip to the Bohle
- Gets into a fight with Stacey Straun
- The boy learns how to hunt and kill a turtle for food
- A frog, a girragundji, arrives in the night
- The voice of the girragundji gives the boy inner strength to stop fearing the Hairyman at night
- The boy grows warts on his fingers, but he doesn't mind
- A snake attacks the girragundji on a rainy night.

At the end of *My Girragundji* there is an explanation of the history behind it. Meme McDonald explains how *My Girragundji* was written:

My daughter Grace first prompted Boori to tell the story of his pet frog. Boori's childhood stories of his frog and the snake, the hairyman and having seven sisters, the mangroves, footy, and growing up between two worlds, tickled my imagination too.

I began writing these stories down and weaving them together. When Boori visited his mother's homeland, Yarrabah, his Uncle Henry Fourmile gave him the Kunggandji word for green tree frog – girragundji. So we called the story *My Girragundji*.

For over a year or so, Boori and I worked together on *My Girragundji*. Then we took a draft to Boori's family for them to read. Laughter and jokes and yarns enriched the story. A group of Boori's nephews and nieces quickly overcame their shyness of the camera and were happy to take us

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down to the beach to go fishing with their grandad, Monty. They led us into their favourite mangroves, kicking the footy along paths that Boori remembered walking well.

The story had come home to its beginning. Without the Pryor family this story would not be here for the telling. It is with their approval that we offer it to you and hope that it brings to life how different and how much the same growing up can be.

Source: McDonald, M. and Pryor, B. (1998) *My Girragundji*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 77–8

IDENTIFY AND INTERACT >>

Activity 1.9 Including others in your story

Being an author comes with responsibilities. It's important when telling other people's stories that you do so with respect for their feelings, dignity and privacy.

1   Read Meme McDonald's description of the writing process behind *My Girragundji* (above). Identify the parts where she describes the way that she collected the original stories and worked together with the people in them to make sure the stories were told accurately and with respect.

2   In small groups come up with your **top three tips** for developing a story that includes other people and their experiences. These can be published as a group poster or in a class display.

LOOK CLOSER

1   Are there any events in *My Girragundji* that you found confronting or difficult to read about?

2   Do you think storytellers and authors should avoid portraying events or experiences that might upset their audience? Why?

3   Do you think the priority for a storyteller should be accurately representing events and experiences?

PERSONAL IDENTITY

In *My Girragundji* the story is told from the point of view of a young male protagonist. We do not discover the boy's name, but seeing the world 'through his eyes' helps us to understand his experiences. We see the world from his point of view, and we are invited to see him as he sees himself. We learn about his personal or individual identity. Throughout the story a range of events occur that have an impact on how the main character sees himself.

LOOK CLOSER

Consider what kinds of things happen in the story that shape the protagonist's sense of self. Identify events from the story that encourage the boy to feel each of the following emotions:

- happiness
- embarrassment
- fear
- maturity
- strength
- shame
- bravery

REFLECT ON

1   Our relationships and experiences with others can have a profound impact on our identity. In the narrator's life, how significant has his relationship with the Girragundji been?

2   Do you think the boy has a more positive personal identity at the start of the story, or at the end? Write down three reasons for your answer.

3   Who or what is *your* girragundji?

Activity 1.10 Growing up – your story

1   Create a timeline of your life, marking out significant events that have happened so far. Use a key, or some other visual code, to indicate whether the events had a positive or negative impact on your life. You might want to use a computer and include descriptions of events, and pictures or images.

2   Write a first person account of an experience or an event that has shaped your self identity.

IDENTITY AND CULTURE

As well as having an overall personal identity, people's cultural identity can also have a big impact on their personal values and attitudes. You might identify with a range of different cultural groups depending on your gender, nationality, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or ethnicity, as well as on things like your leisure interests or fashion sense.

REFLECT, WRITE AND CREATE >>

Activity 1.11 Cultural ID cards

Many groups and organisations give their members an ID card (identification card) to show that they belong. We can show our identity and our association with a group by showing an ID card.

1   Think about the types of ID cards that people might have in their wallets, like a driver's licence, library membership or sports club card. What others can you think of? Brainstorm a list.

2   Now consider the cultural groups that *you* belong to and imagine what an ID card for that group might look like. What colours would it use? Is there a special **symbol** that could be included? What kind of information is included? How long does membership last for?

symbol something that stands for or represents something else within a text

3 Choose 3–5 cultural groups that you belong to and design a set of 'cultural ID cards'. You could make these the same size as real membership cards, and represent your cultural group in a positive light. Show the finished product in class.

IDENTITY CARD

NAME: Jane Doe
SEX: Female
HAIR: Brown
HEIGHT: 170cm
WEIGHT: 65kg
BORN: 01-01-1990

123 4567 89000 000
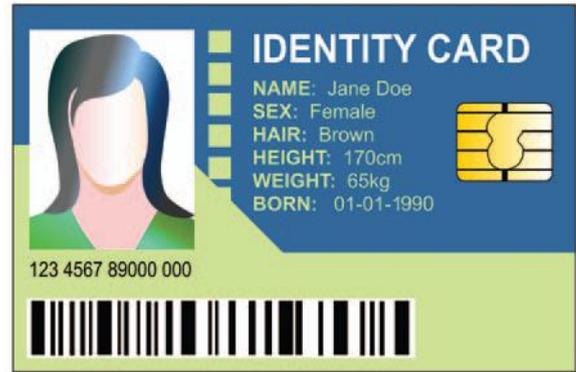
In many stories authors signal the influence of culture by making special reference to elements such as language, clothing, family structure, food and pastimes. In *My Girragundji* the authors incorporate Aboriginal words and describe traditional hunting practices and spiritual ceremonies. Sometimes the narrator tells us what the word means, but at other times we have to use the context of the word to understand its meaning.
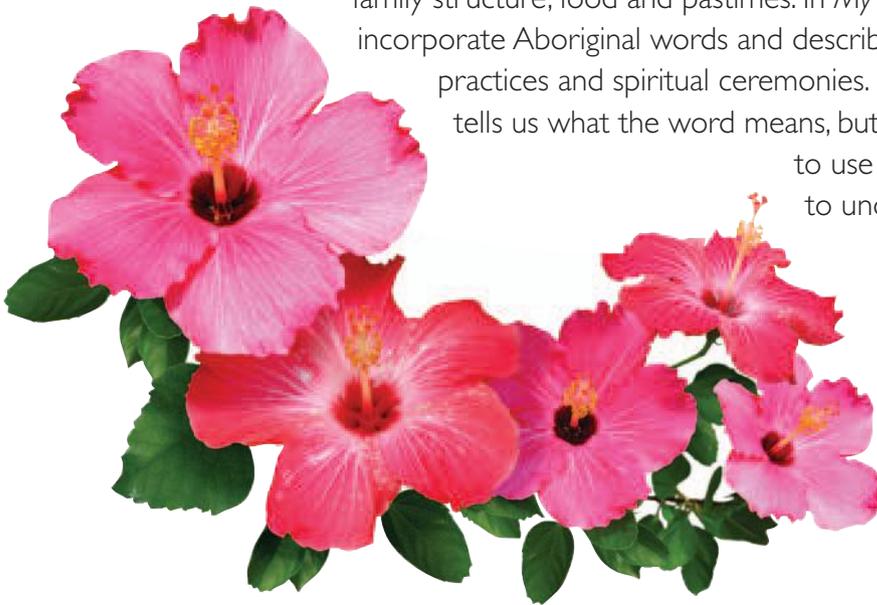
LOOK CLOSER

Write your own glossary of Aboriginal words used in the text. For each Aboriginal word used write your own definition of its meaning.

EXPLORING THE TEXT FURTHER

Use the three-level question guide on the following page to see how well you know *My Girragundji*. The first level contains basic statements which the text is very clear on. The second level contains statements which are less clear, but which you might be able to infer (deduce or conclude) from evidence and reasoning. The third-level statements require you to think about some of the bigger ideas and issues the text considers.

Activity 1.12 Three-level guide

Read the questions and decide if you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statements. Add your own statements to the list if you wish.

Write a **T** next to those statements that you believe are true and an **F** next to those which you believe to be false. For all statements, write a brief justification in your notebook for your decision and be prepared to argue your point of view in a class discussion.

Level 1: Literal

Does the text say this? What words or images support your answer?

____ Girragundji uses a hibiscus tree to get in and out of the bedroom.

____ A Quinkin is a bad spirit.

____ The family goes hunting for crocodiles in the mangroves.

____ The Bohle is a special place where the river meets the sea.

Level 2: Inferring

Does the text give you these ideas? What evidence supports your answer?

____ The Hairyman is real.

____ Pets are unimportant.

____ Throughout history the Aboriginal people of Australia have passed down knowledge and advice through oral storytelling.

____ The story is set in North Queensland.

Level 3: Evaluation and application

Do you agree with these statements? Why? Be prepared to share your reasons.

____ Sometimes hearing a story is not enough and you have to experience things for yourself.

____ It is important to pass on cultural traditions and customs to the next generation.

____ Our cultural identity influences the relationships we have with others.
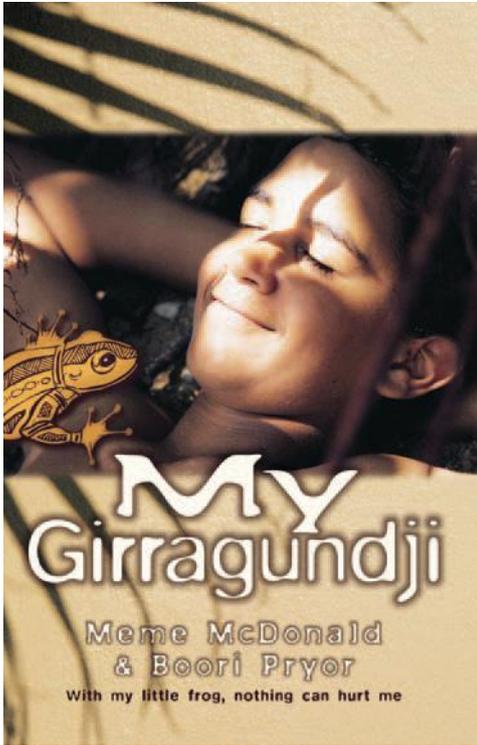
My Girragundji front cover

EXPLORING THE VISUAL FEATURES

A text is anything which communicates meaning. There are many different forms of texts. Here are a few:

- written
- spoken
- musical
- visual.

Often authors combine these different forms into multimodal texts. *My Girragundji* is a multimodal text that combines:

- photographs (which are shaped, blurred, small, large and repeated)
- drawings
- different text and font sizes
- layering of all these features.

To understand *My Girragundji* it helps to understand these text features and how each one contributes to shaping and telling the story.

Activity 1.13 Visual analysis

1   Read the analysis of the visual features of the front cover of *My Girragundji* and as pairs or as a group discuss some of the other visual features of the cover. An example has been provided for you.

Visual feature	Description of the feature	What it tells us about the story
Photo of the boy	The boy looks relaxed and is happy; he is resting. His eyes are closed, his arm is bent and his hand is behind his head. There is sun and some shadows across his face. He looks like he feels content and calm. He looks like he is lying down outside, perhaps under a tree.	The photograph suggests that this boy will be the main focus of the story. It encourages us to think that something positive is going to happen to the boy during the story.
Drawing of the frog Girragundji	The frog is drawn in a traditional Aboriginal style. The technique is called *rarrking*, it uses straight lines which cross one another and fill in an outline. The frog is brown and is smaller than the boy's face. The frog is looking at the boy.	This image suggests that the frog will also be an important part of the story. The frog looks like it wants to be close to the boy. As a drawing the frog looks like it comes from the imaginative world. It also suggests that the story will contain Aboriginal themes and issues.

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2   Now, in groups choose two or three images or visual features from the book to analyse. Then complete a table like the previous one where you can write down your description of the visual feature and explain what it tells us about the story.

3   In your analysis you might pay close attention to elements, such as colour, texture, point of view, lighting and shadow, and the use of space.

READ MORE

A range of **Dreaming** stories can be found on the Australian Museum website: **www.australianmuseum.net.au/Stories-of-the-Dreaming**.

You can read more about author Meme McDonald and her books at her website: **www.mememcdonald.com**.

If you enjoyed *My Girragundji* you might also enjoy:

The Binna Binna Man by Meme McDonald and Boori Pryor

Yumba Days by Herb Wharton

The Shack that Dad Built by Elaine Russell (a picture book)

Do Not Go Around the Edges by Daisy Utemorrah (poems illustrated by Pat Torres)

On Country: Stories of Nyrlotte by Fiona Doyle

The Barraumbi Kids by Leonie Norrington

Doug and *Gracey* by James Moloney

The Burnt Stick by Anthony Hill

Dreaming the time that the Aboriginal people believe the earth was created in, along with the people, animals and plants

IDENTITY AND PLACE

In *My Girragundji* we learn about the deep connection that many Aboriginal people have with their land, which suggests that there is often strong connections between a place and personal identity. Are you who you are because of where you live? How does where we grow up influence who we are? Is where you live an important part of your identity? Our identities are also shaped by the places we spend time in and the environment around us.

Activity 1.14 Who are we Australians?

There are many images of Australian people and Australian landscapes. We see many of these in the media and in advertising.

classic a model, an important and excellent example

1   Can you think of any **classic** images of Australia? These might be places, objects or people. Brainstorm a list as a group or class. How many can you come up with?

2   What is Australian identity? When you think of this phrase, what comes to mind?

3   Explore the Tourism Australia website (**www.australia.com**). Are there any 'classic' Australian images on this site? Are there any images that surprise you or that you didn't expect to see?

4   Who do you think this website is for? Who might the audience be? How can you tell? Why do you think this audience would visit a website like this? How helpful would it be for people who live outside Australia?

5   How does the website portray Australia and Australians? What kinds of stories does it tell? Do you identify with any of the images? Do the images capture the kind of Australian that you are?

6   If you were asked by Tourism Australia to redesign the website and change the content, what images and stories would you choose to put up? Is there anything missing from the website as it is now? What kinds of Australian identities would you want represented?

The diverse physical landscape of Australia provides lots of possibilities when it comes to choosing a place to set a story. In fact, all kinds of texts – novels, poems, films or picture books – have been used to represent places in Australia and the experiences of people who live here. From the ocean, reef and beach, to the suburbs of an urban metropolis, to the dry and dusty desert outback – the story spaces available in Australia are as vast as the land and as different as the people.

[1]

Activity 1.15 Take a second look

Authors use words and phrases to create 'pictures' in the reader's mind and stimulate their memories and their senses. These memories can be positive, negative or ambivalent (somewhere in between) and help contribute to the feeling, tone or mood of a story.

A good storyteller is always looking for unique and unusual things to describe a place so that their **imagery** is not boring or clichéd. How often do you take a really good look at the images, colours and shapes that occur in the landscape around you?

imagery descriptive language that can be said to create pictures in our heads when we read; imagery evokes the senses – hearing, taste, touch, smell, sight

Places in Australia

Refer to the images of places in Australia.

1   Brainstorm words and ideas related to each of these pictures.

2   What kind of **atmosphere** is created in each picture? Can you describe the feeling or mood of the picture? What parts of the picture is your eye drawn towards? Be as specific as you can!

atmosphere the mood or emotion created by images

So far we have begun to see how identity and place are closely connected, and especially how images can evoke strong feelings about places. But places and environments not only influence our identities, they can also feature in our stories.

Activity 1.16 Writing about places

1   Brainstorm a list of the different places you can remember visiting in the last week (e.g. school, the supermarket, home, a friend's house, a mosque, the swimming pool, a sports oval/court). Be as detailed as you can. Are you surprised by the number of places you have been to? Would any of these places be a good setting for a story? Why or why not?

2   Circle two places from your list that might make unconventional topics for a poem. Don't worry if your choices seem boring or silly at first.

3   Create a **Y chart** (see the example below) for each choice, and fill it in with words and phrases describing what you can imagine seeing, hearing and smelling at the place you have chosen to write about.

see

hear   smell
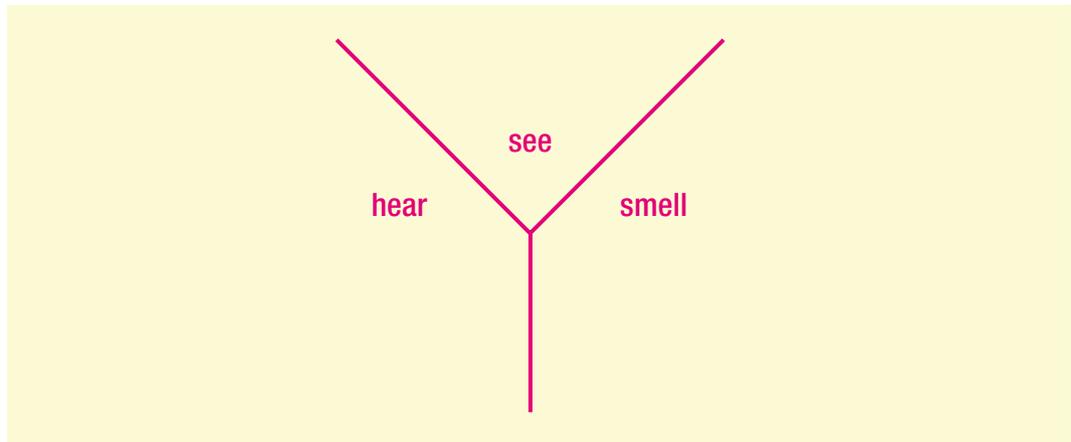
4   Finally, choose **one** of these places and write a five senses poem about it. You can use the model below to help you begin. You might want to modify the model to suit your own ideas. When you have finished, give your poem a title and share it with someone.

Title: _____

[What you can *see*]_____

[What you can *hear*]_____

[What you can *smell*]_____

[What you can *feel*]_____

[What you can *taste*] _____

 ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1** © Macintyre et al. 2011   Cambridge University Press

IMAGINE WHAT LIFE IS LIKE IN THE SUBURBS

While Australia is largely rural and regional and is surrounded by water, most people do not live in the bush or across the road from the beach. In fact, most Australians live in cities and in suburbs – densely populated areas stretching out around main cities.

You may or may not live in the suburbs, but most people have an opinion about suburban living. For some people the suburbs are 'home'. Other people prefer to live somewhere else. What comes to mind when you think about the suburbs? Classic Australian suburban images include lawn mowers, Hills Hoist clotheslines and barbeques. The image of houses side-by-side is another view of suburban life.

Perhaps you live in the bush or in regional Australia and your experience of place is different? Perhaps it involves dusty red earth, lots of animals and wide open spaces, a tractor and a cattle dog.

These images present one view of what it is like living in the suburbs. The photograph of houses lined up in a row and the immaculately manicured family home in the Howard Arkley painting, *Suburban exterior*, may be said to present a **stereotype** of life in the suburbs – the suburbs as monotonous, bland and ordinary. But this is not the only view of life in the suburbs and may be completely different from your own, if this is where you live.

stereotype a widely held but oversimplified image or idea about a particular type of person or thing

Rows and rows of houses in the suburbs

REFLECT ON

Can you relate to the idea of the suburbs presented in these images? Can you think of other images that are different or more appropriate than these?

Suburban exterior, Howard Arkley, 1993, acrylic on canvas, 203 × 257cm, Monash University Museum of Art

Activity 1.17 The place where you live

Take some time to think about where you live. Make some notes in response to the following questions. You might also like to draw some pictures or annotate some images or photos:

1   What is good or bad about where you live? What would you change?
2   Describe your house/apartment/farm. Where is it and what is it like to live there?
3   What is in your backyard? Do you have a local park? What is your town like?
4   Is where you live an important part of your identity? How does where you grew up influence who you are and who you might become?
5   Do you feel you are different from people who live in other places?
6   Examine the images of suburban life in the photo of rows and rows of houses. What does it suggest about life in the suburbs?
7   Examine the Howard Arkley painting *Suburban exterior*. Who do you imagine lives in the house? Can you imagine your family living in this house? What would it be like living in this suburb? Write a description.
8   Discuss the similarities and differences in your responses to Questions 6 and 7 with a partner, small group or the whole class.

Below is an extract from the National Museum of Australia website about the growth of the suburbs in Australia and about the way many Australians lived fifty years ago. As you read, you might want to ask yourself 'has anything changed?'

Suburban boom

Australia faced a severe housing shortage after the Second World War. About 300 000 homes were needed quickly for returned servicemen and women, and for migrants arriving from war-torn Europe. Governments built public housing, but most people wanted to buy their own home. People borrowed and saved as never before to realise their dream. The suburban boom, and the urban sprawl, had begun.

Living in a material world

After war-time restraint, Australians were encouraged to spend. In advertisements, labour-saving appliances such as vacuum cleaners promised women that their domestic drudgery was over. Owning these things also showed that you were successful and 'modern'. As their disposable income increased, people needed little persuasion. They bought more than six times as many washing machines in 1960 as they had in 1950.

The Sunbeam Mixmaster, released in 1948, was the first motor-driven small kitchen appliance. It was hugely successful, popular both with busy mums making cakes and with kids who begged, 'Can I lick the beaters pleeeease?'

Source: **www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/nation/suburbia**

Activity 1.18 The stuff that you own

Take some time to think about the stuff you own. Make notes in response to the following questions. Again, you might also like to draw pictures or annotate images and photos:

1   What appliances or electronic devices could you not live without? Why?

2   Do you think Australians are still 'living in a material world'? What does the phrase 'living in a material world' mean to you?

3   Do you think it is still important to look 'successful and modern' by owning the latest luxuries and technologies?

4   Are we what we own? How does what we own influence our identities and relationships with others?

5   Discuss your responses to these questions with a partner, small group or the whole class.

6   Conduct further research: interview friends, family members and others in the community about these issues and develop a report or news story for a class wiki or blog.

Contemporary objects of desire

TALES FROM OUTER SUBURBIA (2008)

Many Australian artists and writers have been inspired by ordinary and everyday parts of life like living in the suburbs. Shaun Tan's book *Tales from Outer Suburbia* is a good example of an artist depicting life in the suburbs in an imaginative way. The book is an anthology of fifteen short stories that see ordinary things as extraordinary and magical in everyday life.
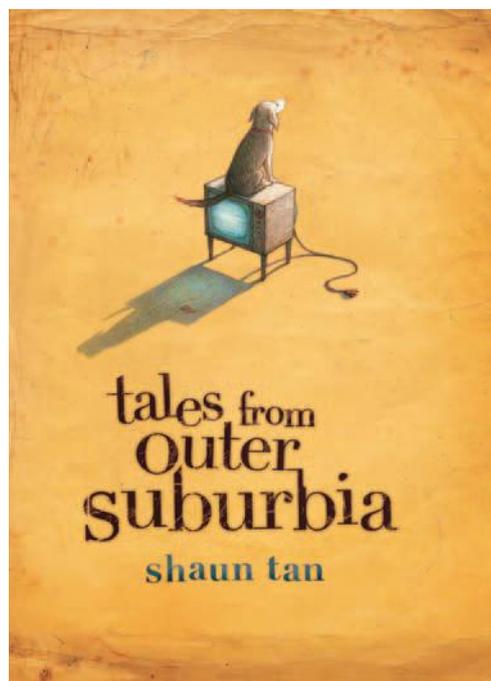
Front cover of *Tales from Outer Suburbia*

LOOK CLOSER

1   Consider the title of Shaun Tan's book. Why do you think he chose to use the phrase 'outer suburbia' and not just 'suburbia'? What other places, stories or texts does a phrase like 'outer suburbia' remind you of?

2   Examine the cover image. Why do you think Shaun Tan used this image? What is he inviting us to think about or to feel? Consider the use of features such as colour, texture, point of view, lighting and shadow, and the use of space. What do these features make you think or feel? Does the author give the reader any clues about the contents of the book from the cover?

3   Can you imagine what strange situations and events might happen in ordinary, familiar suburbs and towns?

Here is what appears on the back cover **blurb** of *Tales from Outer Suburbia*:

do you remember the water buffalo at the end of our street?

or the deep-sea diver we found near the underpass?

do you know why dogs bark in the middle of the night?

Shaun Tan … reveals the quiet mysteries of everyday life: homemade pets, dangerous weddings, stranded sea mammals, tiny exchange students and secret rooms filled with darkness and delight.

blurb the information or advertisement on the cover of a book, film, CD or DVD, which briefly describes the content and gives praise

REFLECT ON

The blurb holds clues about the ideas and stories in the book. What do you think a phrase like 'the quiet mysteries of everyday life' means? Can you think of some examples of 'quiet mysteries of everyday life' in your own life?

Title page of
*Tales from
Outer Suburbia*

INTERACT AND CREATE >>

Activity 1.19 Write and present your own 'tale from outer suburbia'

Can you imagine a homemade pet, a dangerous wedding or 'secret rooms filled with darkness and delight'?

1   In pairs or groups of four, imagine story scenarios that might fit each of these descriptions. Choose your favourite and create a 'tale from outer suburbia' to be recounted to the whole class.

2   Write your story and design a story title page for your work in the style of Shaun Tan's artwork. This could be done with pens and paper or drawn using a computer.

Activity 1.20 'Our expedition'

1   Read the short story 'Our expedition' in Shaun Tan's *Tales from Outer Suburbia* and jot down some notes using the following questions. Compare your notes and thoughts with a partner or group.

   • What images (words and pictures) do you think are most interesting? Why?
   • Which phrases and lines draw your attention?
   • How many different ways can you find of answering the question, 'what is the story about?'

Activity 1.21 Your expedition

How long have you lived in your current area and do you know it well? How could you find out more about it? Have you ever walked around your suburb or town to see it from street level?

1   Plan an expedition around your local area. Start by getting different types of maps together (paper street directories, online maps such as **maps.google.com**, **bing.com/maps** or **nearmap.com**) and use these to explore places of interest before venturing out on your expedition. If available, experiment with the different map views (photomap, streetmap, terrain, landscape). Do you notice anything you haven't noticed before? What is different about these perspectives on your local area? What stands out to you?

2   While on your expedition, record aspects of the area with a camera. You can then submit these photos to the National Library Archives as part of your contribution to documenting Australian life for the 'Picture Australia Project' **(www.pictureaustralia.org)**.

3   As part of the documenting process, write a 150-word account of what you find, focusing on what you consider to be the main stories of interest in your area.

4   As a class, produce a print or online publication about everyone's local community.

Another story from *Tales from Outer Suburbia* is 'No other country'. Here is what Shaun Tan has said about how he came to write 'No other country':

 ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1**

Growing up I often had Italian friends and neighbours, without knowing a great deal about their cultural background. It has only been in recent years that I've visited Italy and returned with a greater sense of that country's long, deep and complex history, so physically evident in the urban and rural landscape. I have since thought a lot about the difference between Australian and European towns, and considered how waves of Mediterranean immigrants must have felt arriving in Perth during the 1950s – not the most cultured or cosmopolitan city in the world at that time – and then often treated as second-class citizens. This is something I began researching for another book, *The Arrival*.

I read one story of an immigrant who referred to 'the curse of two countries'. He spoke of the tendency to idealise one's homeland in the face of problems and disappointments experienced in a new place; 'it's never as good as home'. Yet when he revisited the Italian town of his youth as an older man, he realised that it was not actually the nostalgic place constructed in memory … but greatly transformed due to social and technological change, such that the 'Old Country' now existed only in his imagination. My small story takes some inspiration from this condition, the 'curse of two countries', and also its simultaneous 'blessing': the opportunity for a richly imagined, internal landscape, the immigrant's 'inner courtyard'.

There are two other sources for this story: the fact that our plastic Christmas tree really did once melt in the roof-space of our family home (due to a fierce Perth summer); and a visit to the Santa Maria Novella in Florence, which has a very peaceful inner courtyard, not unlike the one featured in my illustration.

Source: **www.shauntan.net**
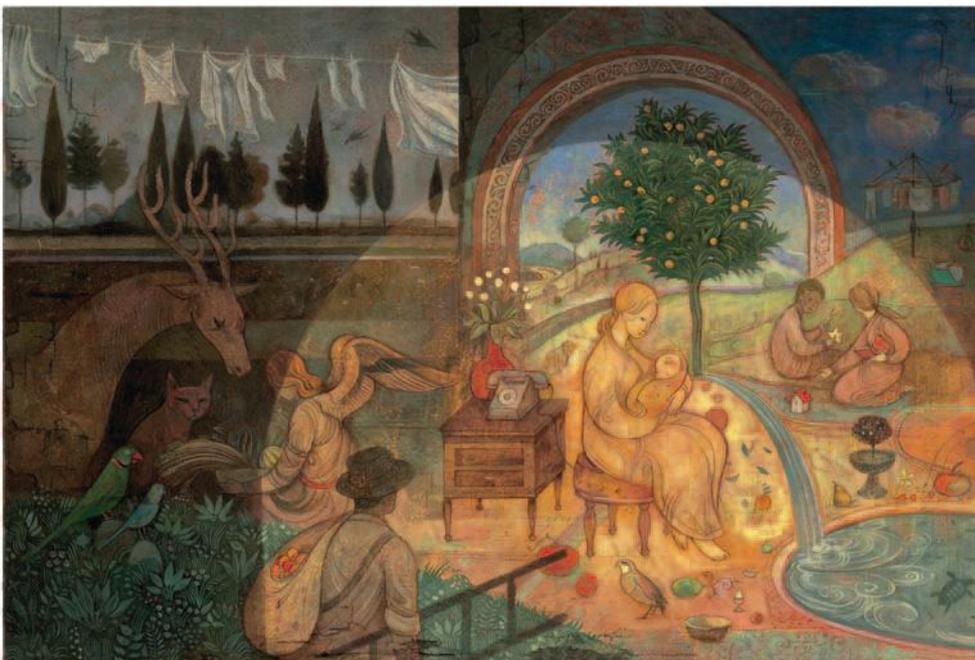
The inner courtyard from 'No other country' in *Tales from Outer Suburbia*

Activity 1.22 'No other country'

narrative mode
describes a set of
methods an author
uses to tell a story;
features of narrative
mode include narration,
point of view, voice,
structure and tense

first-person narrative
a narration by a
character from their
point of view where the
character refers to him
or herself as 'I'

**third-person
narrative** a narration
by someone or
something that is not a
character in the story
and characters are
referred to as 'she',
'he', 'it' or 'they'; this
is the most common
narrative mode in
literature

1   Read the short story 'No other country' in Shaun Tan's *Tales from Outer Suburbia*. What two questions would you ask about this story? Write these down and discuss them with your partner, small group or whole class.

2   Examine the double-page visuals which accompany this story:
   • From what point of view are the images drawn? What is the effect of this technique?
   • What do these images make you think about? Do you recognise any Australian myths? Why do you think there is a clothesline running through both images?

3   In pairs, discuss what these images say to you about the connection between place and identity.

'No other country' and 'Our expedition' are very different stories, written from different perspectives. One of the main differences is in **narrative mode**. One story is written as a **first-person narrative**, the other as a **third-person narrative**. Can you tell which story is written in which mode?

LOOK CLOSER

Make a list of the similarities you identify between 'No other country' and 'Our expedition'.

Activity 1.23 The inner courtyard

1   What can we learn from 'No other country' about the experiences of newly arrived migrants? Find details in the story which show how this family felt about their move to Australia and the difficulties they endured.

2   Do Tan's comments change your view or ideas about the story? Why or why not? Have you ever had the experience of returning to a place long after you left it and finding that it was somehow different to your memory? How would you explain this situation? Is a place only a geographical location or can it be something more than this?

3   In the story, the 'inner courtyard' reflected the identities of the family and their cultural backgrounds. Spending time in the courtyard allowed them to reconnect with their past and gave them 'time out' from the challenges they faced as migrants. What might be in *your* inner courtyard?

4   Draw or create an image of your 'inner courtyard'. You could use Tan's artworks as inspiration for your own. Share these with the class and discuss the decisions you made in the creation of your inner courtyard.

5   Write a text – poem, speech, **monologue**, newspaper article, short play or scene for a film – about the things that give you 'time out' from the challenges you face as a young person in Australia today.

monologue a speech given by one person

Activity 1.24 Endpaper characters and stories

Shaun Tan's picture books are carefully designed with many elements that that contribute to and enhance the stories.

1   Examine the **endpapers** of *Tales from Outer Suburbia* and you will find hundreds of small drawings. Why do you do think Shaun Tan has drawn and included these endpapers? How do they prepare the reader for the stories and images within the book?

endpapers the leaves of paper at the front and back of a book, which are pasted to the inside of the covers to attach the binding

2   Choose the two images that most appeal to you and use these as inspiration to write your own short story about something odd or strange from a place you know well. You may want to develop your character first before launching into your short story. You may also want to use other stories from Shaun Tan's book as inspiration or as models for your writing.

3   When you have finished your short story, create suitable endpapers for your work.

4   Collect everyone's stories together and publish them online or in a book. Share them with other classes at your school.

READ MORE

Spend time exploring Shaun Tan's other writing and artwork at this website: **www.shauntan.net**.

TELLING STORIES AND MAKING MEMORIES

In the previous section, we have been thinking about the connection between identity and place. In this final section, we shift back to storytelling, but consider its connection to history, memory and identity.

Can you remember your early childhood? Do all our memories fade and change over time? Do our personal stories and shared histories tell us who we are and who we might

become? What is the connection between our history, our memories and our identities?

Histories are often passed on through oral storytelling and captured in oral histories. What do you know about oral history? Have you come across oral histories before? Perhaps you have been involved in an oral history project in your family, school or community? The following excerpt is one view of oral history:

Oral History is the recording of memories of people's unique life experiences. Often the only way to find out about the past is to ask someone who knows about it.

Oral history creates a record or supplements existing ones. Through oral history the past comes alive. People can be much more interesting than documents.

Oral history preserves the past for now and for the future. The recording of oral history is a two-way process in which someone shares memories with an interviewer who has carefully planned an interview.

Oral history preserves voices, accents and vocabularies of individuals interviewed.

Source: Oral History Association of Australia, **www.ohaa.org.au**

REFLECT ON

1   Are there any life experiences that you would like to record for future generations? Have you had any 'unique' experiences that other people might like to hear about?

2   How reliable is your memory, not just for facts and figures, but for people, activities and experiences? What helps you remember something vividly? Can you recall a strong memory? (It might not be a pleasant one.) What were you doing at the time?

3   What records do you keep of your life or activities that someone else could use to learn about you, what you do and who you are? Do you keep a journal or diary? A blog or social networking profile? Do you use instant messaging or send SMS messages?

4   What records do others keep about you (e.g. bank statements, medical records, school enrolment and reports)? What might these records say about you and your history?

TREASURED STORIES

If you were forced to leave your home forever and could only take a few valued possessions and your memories, what would you take with you? Vietnamese refugee, Cuc Lam, took family photos and jewellery but sacrificed one precious possession to buy a simple red suitcase. Her red suitcase is now in Melbourne's Immigration Museum.

Cuc Lam's suitcase

As we saw in the beginning of this chapter, objects and artefacts which have special significance can be a valuable way of remembering events in the past (just like your Shoebox autobiography).

'Cuc Lam's Suitcase' is an episode of the TV series 'National Treasures' produced in 2004. In this episode, Cuc Lam talks to cartoonist Warren Brown about her journey to Australia and how this small red vinyl suitcase was a symbol of a new beginning in a new country. You can view it here: **www.nationaltreasures.com.au/treasures/suitcase**.

VIEW AND RESPOND >>

Activity 1.25 'Cuc Lam's Suitcase'

What are your first impressions after viewing 'Cuc Lam's Suitcase'? What questions do you have about her story?

1   Write three questions you could ask about the film and Cuc Lam's experience to find out more. Share these with your group or class. Choose another two questions from the class and use these to investigate the story further.

2   Why do you think this film was made? Why do you think the producers chose Cuc Lam's story? Who do you think is the intended audience for the film? Why?

3   How is clothing and jewellery used as a symbol of identity at different points in the film?

VIEW AND RESPOND >>

Activity 1.26 Shaping a story with film

Strong visual symbols are important in stories of all kinds. View 'Cuc Lam's Suitcase' again and consider the following:

1   What images or symbols stand out in your mind? Why?

2   How is music used in the film to contribute to the telling of the story?

3   What effect does the inclusion of **archival footage** have on how you view this film?

4   There are two different **montages** of archival footage used: one is of a refugee camp and the other is of refugees arriving in Australia. View these montages again and consider more deeply how the people in the footage appear to feel about what is happening. How might feelings of estrangement or belonging shape the kinds of stories they would tell? Can you imagine yourself in a similar situation?

archival footage film or video material obtained from a historical collection

montages the products created by selecting, editing and piecing together fragments of pictures, written text or music into a new whole

Warren Brown's cartoon of Cuc Lam's suitcase is available on the National Treasures website (**www.nationaltreasures.com.au/treasures/suitcase/cartoon.html**). Locate the cartoon and try the activities included.

REFLECT ON

1 How did your family come to Australia? When did they come? What was your/their experience of migration like? Can you find any stories, images or objects from your family history that describe or are related to departure, journey, arrival or re-settling?

2 Do you enjoy looking at old photos and video footage? What do you think they can tell us about the past?

3 After working with Cuc Lam's story, do you have any further ideas about the kinds of stories you could tell about yourself or others you know?

READ MORE

All the films made as part of the National Treasures project are available online. You can view them at: **www.nationaltreasures.com.au**.

RESEARCH >>

Activity 1.27 Researching past stories and lives

Choose a member of your family or an older person in your life who knows something about your family history. Interview them and record their stories.

1 Choose someone to interview.

2 Copy and complete the following **KWHL chart** to identify information you can collect in your interview. You can ask questions to find new information, or ask your interviewee to retell stories you might already know so you can capture them in an audio recording.

Know	What	How	Learned
What do you already **know**?	**What** do you want to find out?	**How** are you going to ask about this?	Record what you **learned**.

3   Using the information in your KWHL chart, come up with approximately ten questions to ask your interviewee. Remember to ask an **open-ended question** where possible. To check you have done this, try saying the question out loud. If it can be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no' then it is a **close-ended question** so try to ask it a different way. **Tip:** Ask questions with *Why* and *How* or *Tell me about …*

4   Conduct and record the interview. An audio recording is best, so that you can listen again later, but making thorough notes for each answer can also provide a useful record.

5   Now, write a report where you use your interview material to write about and illustrate some of the significant events or experiences in your interviewee's life. You could include photos, biographical information, a family history or pedigree chart, and whatever else you think is appropriate.

Note: The interview material and other artefacts that you collect during this activity can be used later when you come to write or create your personal story (see below). Make careful notes and recordings and store everything in a safe place.

open-ended question
a question that encourages a full, meaningful answer

close-ended question
a question that can be answered briefly, often with a single word like 'yes' or 'no'

LOOK CLOSER

1   Did you discover any information about your family history that was surprising?

2   How difficult was it to make an audio recording of your interview? What would you do differently next time?

3   Did you stick to your planned interview questions, or did you add to them or make changes 'on the spot'? Which interview questions produced the best responses?

digital story a very short, personal film a person can make for themself; also known as a 'mini-movie'

In this final section you will draw together what you have learned about story, identity, place and community in order to create a multimodal text called a **digital story** or **digistory**.

Digital stories are very short, personal films people can make for themselves. They have been called 'mini-movies'. Some people use tight guidelines, but there is no one-size-fits-all formula. One of the most important aspects is creating a story with real interest.

You are going to create a personal digistory about something that is important to you. It might be about you, your friends, your family, your neighbourhood, your town, whatever. Unleash your imagination! Your story will be small, as you only have about 250 words, ten or so pictures and two minutes to tell it.

graphic novel a text that uses both words and images to tell a story, often in a comic strip layout

photostory a story or narrative told mainly through photographs rather than written text

Of course, you don't have to use a computer either. You can create your digistory in any format you like: a comic or **graphic novel**, a **photostory** or an animation. There are lots of possibilities.

Many of the activities in this chapter have been designed to help you prepare for this big creative task. We encourage you to review the activities you have completed and use the writing and thinking you have already done to assist you in your project. For example, in Activity 1.27 ('Researching past stories and lives') you would have interviewed someone and written a report on their life. This material might form the basis of your digistory.

Alternatively, in Activity 1.1 ('Shoebox autobiography') you wrote and spoke about objects that are significant to you or your family. These objects could help you focus on stories that you might use.

SOME QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED

FIND A FOCUS

What particular aspects of your story or identity (or your family, your class, your school or your community) would you like to focus on? Brainstorm some ideas and have a look at all the writing, drawing and thinking you have done in this chapter. It can also help to think of events, people, problems or objects to get you started.

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

Write/draw up a plan for your digital story. Try to aim for about **250 words, ten or so pictures and about two minutes length**. Use a storyboard (template available on Cambridge GO) or basic slide presentation (such as PowerPoint) to plan your digital story. Remember to indicate the visual, audio and written components on your plan. You might do one of these elements during your first draft and then progressively add the others in subsequent drafts as you gain confidence.

Digital story planning

Frame (number)	Image (notes or sketch)	Audio (narrative and/or sounds)

GATHER YOUR RESOURCES

Consider what resources you need to create your digital story and where you can get them. Include these details in your plan. If you are creating a comic, you might be able to use a computer program (such as Comic Life) or use a free online comic creator like pixton.com to help you design and produce your digital story. You can do a similar thing with paper, pens and scissors. The technology is not what matters – your audience just wants to read, hear or see a good story!

GET HELP

Go online for help. There are hundreds of websites offering good advice and tips on creating digital stories. Search online for 'creating digital stories'.

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

There are many ways of telling a story. You might prefer to draw or take pictures (a mobile phone will do the job) of the objects you used in the 'Shoebox autobiography' (see Activity 1.1) or use other objects which reflect something about your family or community (see Activity 1.27: 'Researching past stories and lives') and create a photostory, poster or booklet that links these objects to stories of your family and/or community. Modify everything to suit your project!

USEFUL WEBSITES

Explore these websites containing examples of different forms of storytelling you can examine before beginning:

Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)

ACMI run a digital storytelling project for adults and young people. You can view some of the best here:

> **www.acmi.net.au/digitalstorytelling.aspx**
> **www.acmi.net.au/video_kids.htm**

Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE): DigiTales

ICE is a western Sydney community organisation sponsoring programs for young people at the intersection of arts and technology: **www.ice.org.au/projects/digitales**.

BBC Capture Wales Digital Stories

In the Capture Wales Digital Storytelling project, the BBC ran workshops to help people all over Wales make digistories and share them on this website: **www.bbc.co.uk/wales/arts/yourvideo/queries/capturewales.shtml**.

Telling their stories: Oral history archives project

View young people from across the USA interview 'elders who witnessed key historic events of the 20th century' at: **www.tellingstories.org**.

REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

3-2-1 REFLECTION

Review what you now know about storytelling and identity. Take time to write down:

- **three insights** you now have about your identity or the identities of others and the kinds of influences that shape identity
- **two questions** you still have about storytelling, your own stories or some of those stories you might have discovered during your work
- **one idea** about story, identity, place or community we have not covered in this chapter but which you think is important.

POETRY ACTIVATED

[2]

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- read, listen and respond to various poetic forms and texts, including ballads, rap, hip-hop, song lyrics, conversations, monologues, haiku, renga, nonsense poetry and verse novels
- analyse and discuss how language features are used to evoke particular effects
- identify, use and play with particular poetic and literary techniques to express ideas, and convey them to an audience
- enjoy, create, share and perform your own poetry.

- What do you think poetry is?
- Why do you think people write poetry?
- Where else might you find poetry other than in a book?

WHAT IS POETRY?

Let's start our inquiry with a poem.

POETRY

poetry don't have to be
living in a library
there's poetry that you can see
in the life of everybody,
a lick of paint's the kind of thing I mean
a lick of paint's a lovely piece of writing
the tongue of the paintbrush
giving something drab
a dab new sheen
a lick of paint's exciting.

there are folk who like to see
Latin in their poetry
and plenty of obscurity
me for instance
(only joking)

how I like to listen to the lingo
in bingo
legs eleven
clickety-click
a lick of paint
no - sorry that ain't one
poetry - language on a spree
I want to be
a leaf on the poetree
poetry is good for me
I think I'll have some for my tea.

John Hegley

Activity 2.1 What do you think poetry is?

What do you think poetry is? In groups, spend 10 minutes writing out statements about poetry on sticky notes. Here are some sentence stems to get you started:

poetry is …	poetry might …	poetry lets …
poetry could …	poetry says …	poetry contains …
poetry would …	poetry can …	poetry uses …
poetry will …		

Now sort your sticky notes into three or four groups. What broad understandings about poetry have your groups come up with? Share them with the class.

Post your sticky notes and statements on a wall in the classroom so they can be added to as your understanding of what poetry is (and what it could be) grows.

Activity 2.2 Go find some poetry!

Bring some poetry to class. You will find it in songs, on walls, in children's books, in advertisements, in the newspaper on Valentine's Day, in blogs, websites, and books at home or in a library.

Ask a friend or family member if they know any poetry.

Create a collage in your workbook (you could start a Writer's Notebook) or make a class mural of the poems.

WHAT DO POETS SAY ABOUT POETRY?

Poets often talk about how we shouldn't be too 'precious' about poetry. It's an immediate, personal and sometimes risky way to present your particular view of the world to an audience. Amelia Walker is a poet based in South Australia, whose work with high school students appears on pp 70-72. She believes that once people start writing their own poetry they become free of notions of what poetry 'should' be and start to play with possibilities. They recognise that they already have knowledge and experience that they can use as a basis for their writing.

Activity 2.3 Write without stopping

Write a response to each of the following prompts without stopping for two minutes per prompt. Your teacher will time you and give you the chance to share your work between each activity:

• a person you remember
• a place you remember
• an event you remember
• a time and place when something happened and it changed you in some way – small or large.

Now go over your writing with a highlighter and pick out the strongest words from your most interesting response. Arrange the words in different combinations – don't try to make 'sense' at this stage. What did you come up with? Share your combinations with your neighbour.

ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1**

POETIC TERMS AND TECHNIQUES

To be able to speak and write about poetry you need to become familiar with its **metalanguage**, the terms or language we use to describe the structures and features of poetic language.

    The poetic terms and techniques listed in the table below are some of the most common metalanguage you will encounter when studying poetry. You will encounter examples of some of these terms and techniques throughout this chapter and in later chapters (for example, Chapter 4) in this textbook.

metalanguage the terms or language we use to describe the structures and features of language

Metalanguage	
Alliteration	The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words that are close together. Examples: *She came closer to the crooked corner.* *Many moons may pass before we may meet again.*
Assonance	The repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds in words that are close together. Examples: *Strips of tinfoil winking like people …* 'The Bee Meeting', Sylvia Plath *Hear the mellow wedding bells …* 'Bells', Edgar Allen Poe

Metalanguage

Connotation	The idea or feeling implied or evoked by a word, for example what you think about or feel when you read or hear the word.
Imagery	Descriptive language that can be said to create pictures in our heads when we read. Imagery evokes the senses – hearing, taste, touch, smell, sight. Metaphors, similes and personification help to create images in our heads when we read.
Line break	Refers to the end of a line of poetry, when the reader turns to the start of the next line. Line breaks help to create meaning in the poem and influence how the reader reads the poem.
Metaphor	A comparison of one thing to another where it is described in terms of being something else without the use of 'as' or 'like'. Examples: *His heart is gold.* *The room is a freezer.* *The garden was a jungle of green.*
Onomatopoeia	Words that sound like the thing they are describing or that sound like they look. Examples: *fizz, crackle, pop, hiss, splash, baulk, whack, zip, slurp, gurgle.*
Personification	When human characteristics are given to inanimate objects, such as a chair, or animals, or to abstract ideas. Examples: *The breeze wraps its arms around her.* *My coat is a good friend.* *The branch has knobbly fingers that reach out to greet him.*
Repetition	The use of repeated words or phrases for emphasis.
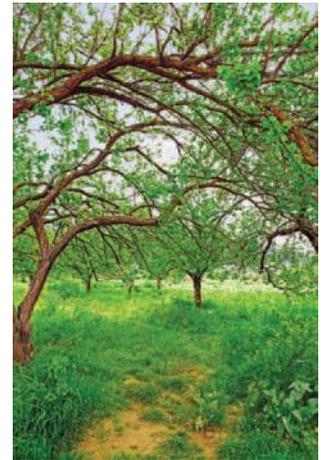
Metalanguage	
Rhyme	The correspondence of sound between words or the ending of words.
Rhyme scheme	The ordered patterns of rhymes at the end of lines in a poem.
Rhyming couplet	Two consecutively rhyming lines within a poem.
Rhythm	The pace or the beat of the poem.
Simile	A comparison between two different things, actions or feelings using the words 'as' or 'like'. A very famous example is: *O my love is like a red, red rose …* 'A Red, Red Rose', Robert Burns Other examples: *The night is as cold as ice.* *Julian sings like a bird.* *My heart is as light as a feather.*
Sound devices	The devices poets use to draw attention to the sounds that words make, including, rhyme, alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia.
Stanza	The division of a poem into groups of lines.
Synonym	A word or phrase that means the same, or nearly the same, as another word or phrase. Examples: **synonyms for *funny* include** *amusing, merry, witty, jocular.* **synonyms for *intelligent* include** *clever, smart, bright, astute.*

2: POETRY ACTIVATED
Cambridge University Press **51**

Many great poems deal with experiences that are very personal to the poet. Poets can shape these personal experiences into different forms. We will now explore some of these poetic forms.

THE ORAL TRADITION

Every family has stories that are told and retold from one generation to the next. What are the favourite stories in your family? Is it a story about you or another family member when they were younger that gets told over and over again?

People have been creating and sharing stories ever since they first learned to communicate. Songs and stories that come down to us from these very early times are part of the **oral tradition** – that is, they were passed on by word of mouth. The 'Song Cycle of the Moon-Bone' is an example of some of the most ancient poetry in the world. It was translated into English and recorded after white settlement, but before this, the poem had been handed down through countless generations of *Wonguri-Mandjigai* people.

oral tradition stories or other messages which are passed down by oral means, such as song, speech, folk tale, ballad or chant. By this means societies with no formal writing systems pass on important aspects of their culture and identity from one generation to the next. Texts within the oral tradition often contain rhyme, rhythm and repetition of key words and phrases, which help people remember them.

FROM 'SONG CYCLE OF THE MOON-BONE'

2

They are sitting about in the camp, among the branches, along the
    back of the camp:

Sitting along in lines in the camp, there in the shade of the paperbark
    trees:

Sitting along in a line, like the new white spreading clouds:

In the shade of the paperbarks, they are sitting resting like clouds.

People of the clouds, living there like the mist; like the mist sitting
    resting with arms on knees,

In here towards the shade, in this Place, in the shadow of paperbarks.

Sitting there in rows, those *Wonguri-Mandjigai* people, paperbarks
    along like a cloud.

Living on cycad-nut bread; sitting there with white-stained fingers,

Sitting in there resting, those people of the Sandfly clan ...

Sitting there like mist, at that place of the Dugong ... and of the
    Dugong's Entrails ...

Sitting resting there in the place of the Dugong ...

In that place of the Moonlight Clay Pans, and at the place of the Dugong ...

There at the Dugong place they are sitting all along.

3

Wake up from sleeping! Come, we go to see the clay pan, at the place of
   the Dugong ...

Walking along, stepping along, straightening up after resting:

Walking along, looking as we go down on to the clay pan.

Looking for lily plants as we go ... and looking for lily foliage ...

Circling round, searching towards the middle of the lily leaves to
   reach the rounded roots.

At that place of the Dugong ...

At that place of the Dugong's Tail ...

At that place of the Dugong; looking for food with stalks,

For lily foliage, and for the round-nut roots of the lily plant.

Wonguri-Mandjigai people

LOOK CLOSER

1 Read sections 2 and 3 of the poem aloud several times. What do you find interesting, unusual or unexpected in the poem?

2 What connections can you make between your own life and the world of this ancient poem?

3 Can you think of some purposes this poem might serve for the people who shared it and passed it on?

4 What features do you notice have been used by the creators of the poem so that it could be handed down for generations without being written down? (For example, repetition.)

5 Where else have you noticed these features being used? (For example, in songs.)

6 Share your thoughts with your group or the class.

BALLADS

A **ballad** is another form of poetry that tells us stories that are often personal. Have you ever heard 'Waltzing Matilda', 'Click Go the Shears', 'The Wild Colonial Boy' or 'The Man from Snowy River'? These are all examples of ballads and they all tell us a story.

The ballad which follows comes from a much later period in Australian history than the extract from the 'Song Cycle of the Moon-Bone'. 'The Female Transport' tells the story of a convict being sent to Van Diemen's Land in the early days of white settlement. Often the story in a ballad involves a tragedy befalling an individual or community, or perhaps a story of bravery or betrayal may be told. In 'The Female Transport' the voice of the female convict is very clear, and it is easy for the audience to feel sympathy for her. Like many balladeers, the composer of this ballad has used the direct speech of the central character to tell her story.

ballad a poem in narrative form that tells a story in a simple, direct and dramatic manner; it originated in the thirteenth century, was popular until the nineteenth century, and was often set to music and sung

THE FEMALE TRANSPORT

Come all young girls, both far and near, and listen unto me,
While unto you I do unfold what proved my destiny,
My mother died when I was young, it caused me to deplore,
And I did get my way too soon upon my native shore.

Sarah Collins is my name, most dreadful is my fate,
My father reared me tenderly, the truth I do relate,
'Til enticed by bad company, along with many more,
It led to my discovery upon my native shore.

My trial it approached fast, before the judge I stood,
And when the judge's sentence passed it fairly chill'd my blood,
Crying, you must be transported for fourteen years or more,
And go from hence across the seas unto Van Dieman's shore.

It hurt my heart when on a coach I my native town passed by,
To see so many I did know, it made me heave a sigh,
Then to a ship was sent with speed along with many more,
Whose aching hearts did grieve to go unto Van Dieman's shore.

The sea was rough, ran mountains high, with us poor girls 'twas hard,
No one but God to us came nigh, no one did us regard.
At length, alas! we reached the land, it grieved us ten times more,
That wretched place Van Diemen's Land, far from our native shore.

They chained us two by two, and whipp'd and lashed along,

They cut off our provisions if we did the least thing wrong,

They march us in the burning sun until our feet are sore,

So hard's our lot now we are got to Van Dieman's shore.

We labour hard from morn to night until our bones do ache,

The every one they must obey, their mouldy beds must make,

We often wish when we lay down we ne'er may rise no more,

To meet our savage governor upon Van Dieman's shore.

Every night when I lay down I wet my straw with tears,

While wind upon that horrid shore did whistle in our ears,

Those dreadful beasts upon that land around our cots do roar,

Most dismal is our doom upon Van Dieman's shore.

Come all young men and maidens, do bad company forsake,

If tongue can tell our overthrow it will make your heart to ache,

Young girls I pray be ruled by me, your wicked ways give o'er.

For fear like us you spend your days upon Van Dieman's shore.

Anonymous

REFLECT ON

1 What strikes you as interesting, unusual or unexpected in the ballad 'The Female Transport'?

2 What stories of arrival to Australia are told among your friends and family?

3 What features, such as rhyme or repetition, has the composer of 'The Female Transport' used to make the ballad easy to remember? Provide two examples.

4 Look closely at the following words: **chill'd** (stanza 3), **'twas** (stanza 5), **ne'er** (stanza 7) and **o'er** (last stanza). What letter has been left out of each word? Why?

5 Do you know of any other ballads that end or begin in a similar way? Use the Internet to locate the ballad 'Botany Bay' (it starts with the line 'Farewell to old England forever'). How many similarities and differences can you identify between it and 'The Female Transport'? A Venn diagram may help you record your responses.

6 Who do you think the original audience for this ballad was? Why do you think it was written?

7 Consider how the speaker of 'The Female Transport' views the landscape. Contrast this to the way the speakers of 'Song of the Moon-Bone Cycle' view the land.

Did you notice the **rhyme** in 'The Female Transport'? Do you think rhyme in a poem might make it easier to follow and understand? What are you favourite rhymes from when you were younger? You might be able to remember skipping songs or other playground rhymes.

Poets sometimes use what is known as a **rhyme scheme**, where words rhyme in a particular pattern. In 'The Female Transport', the rhyme scheme is **AABB**. This means the first line rhymes with the second line, and the third line rhymes with the fourth line. Therefore, each **stanza** of this ballad is made up of two **rhyming couplets**, or consecutively rhyming lines.

Rhyme, along with a clear rhythm, is very common in the ballad form, making the poem easier to remember and pass on. There are also half rhymes, or near rhymes, that are sometimes used.

Take a closer look at the first two lines of the third stanza where the word 'stood' is rhymed with 'blood'. Read it aloud. It is worth noting, though, that this could indicate changing accents over time. When 'The Female Transport' was first being shared, the word 'blood' was pronounced to rhyme with 'stood'.

Activity 2.4 Write your own short ballad

1   Create a short ballad in rhyming couplets (like those used in 'The Female Transport') about something that happened to you, to a friend or relative, or to your community.

- You might write your own story of arrival to Australia, or that of an ancestor or an imagined person from the past.
- **Or** you could write about a time a celebrity came to town, a sporting triumph or an extreme weather event.
- You might use some of the features from 'The Female Transport', such as rhyme, rhythm and repetition.
- You might like, as the composer of 'The Female Transport' did, to make your story a sort of warning, designed to dissuade others from doing what you have done.

OR

2   In groups, prepare a presentation or performance of 'The Female Transport' to the class.

Poets are still writing about their experience of coming to Australia or what it feels like for them to be living in Australia. Read the following poem by Ouyang Yu, published in 2004.

FAR AND NEAR

in australia

i am as far from any australians

as china is from australia

and i am as near them

as a cloud

near the sky

Ouyang Yu

Activity 2.5 Living in Australia

Write a poem that explores how *you* feel about living in Australia. You might like to create your poem in six lines like Ouyang Yu's poem.

RAP AND HIP-HOP

Do you like **rap** music or **hip-hop**? Who are your favourite artists and groups? Where do you see and hear it being performed?

Like many poets, rap and hip-hop artists use their own experience to connect with their audiences. Rap had its beginnings in the African oral tradition, and has brought the language, experience and culture of urban African-Americans to a mainstream audience, where it has had a huge influence. With its background as a voice of the oppressed and marginalised, rap speaks to audiences everywhere. Hip-hop is an extension of rap that might be said to be more interested in musicality and sampling beats than social change. There is also a vibrant hip-hop music scene in Australia.

rap a genre of music originating in New York City in the late 1970s and early 1980s; with its roots in African music it initially featured spoken or chanted lyrics set to tough musical rhythms and often conveyed a strong social message

hip-hop often used interchangeably to describe rap music, hip-hop also describes the entire culture around the music, including urban style and fashion. It has gained significant mainstream success since the early 2000s with artists, such as Kanye West, Jay-Z and M.I.A.

'The Message' is a hip-hop song by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, among the pioneers of hip-hop music. It was released in 1982 as a single and was later featured on an album which is also called *The Message*. It is one of the first hip-hop songs to gain a mainstream audience and is still frequently referred to as one of the greatest ever. Search online for the lyrics and read over them. You can watch the original video and listen to the complete song online. Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five were the first hip-hop group to be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2007.

LANGUAGE FOR THE PEOPLE

Maxine Beneba Clarke is an Australian poet of West Indian descent who has performed her poems across Australia in all sorts of venues. She says:

> For me, poetry is about the power of words to move and to communicate to people, and to hopefully initiate change. Although I am a university-trained poet, most of my writing challenges traditional notions about poetry. I believe poetry should not be high art or difficult to interpret, but that it is a universal language with no rulebook: a language of the people, for the people.

> Many of my favourite poets, such as Benjamin Zephaniah, do not have an extensive education, but they are crazy about words, and use them with passion. I primarily write rap, jazz and hip-hop inspired poetry, patois poetry and sound poems which draw on my West Indian heritage and experiences as a poet.

patois a regional dialect

Maxine Clarke's poem, 'Mistah School Teachah' reflects her heritage and these influences, and is written in Jamaican **patois**. The accents and styles of speech in this poem play a significant role in the creation of personal and social identity. You can visit her blog at: http://slamup.blogspot.com/2009/05/mistah-school-teachah-poem_18.html.

MISTAH SCHOOL TEACHAH

mi teachah seh *who ye favourite poet?*

mi seh *benjamin zephaniah*

teachah seh *mi nah askin yu*

mi raise hand seh *benjamin zephaniah*

teachah seh *cheeky wait ye turn*

mi seh *benjamin zephaniah*

teachah seh *benjamin wha?*

what he 'bout when he at home?

benjamin zephaniah / repeat it

benjamin zephaniah / seh again

benjamin zephaniah / write it downg

benjamin / mi seh benjamin

benjamin z

look / mistah school teachah
it nah personal but / listen up
get dem white hand-a babylon
off-a dis feisty brown girl education
is enough!
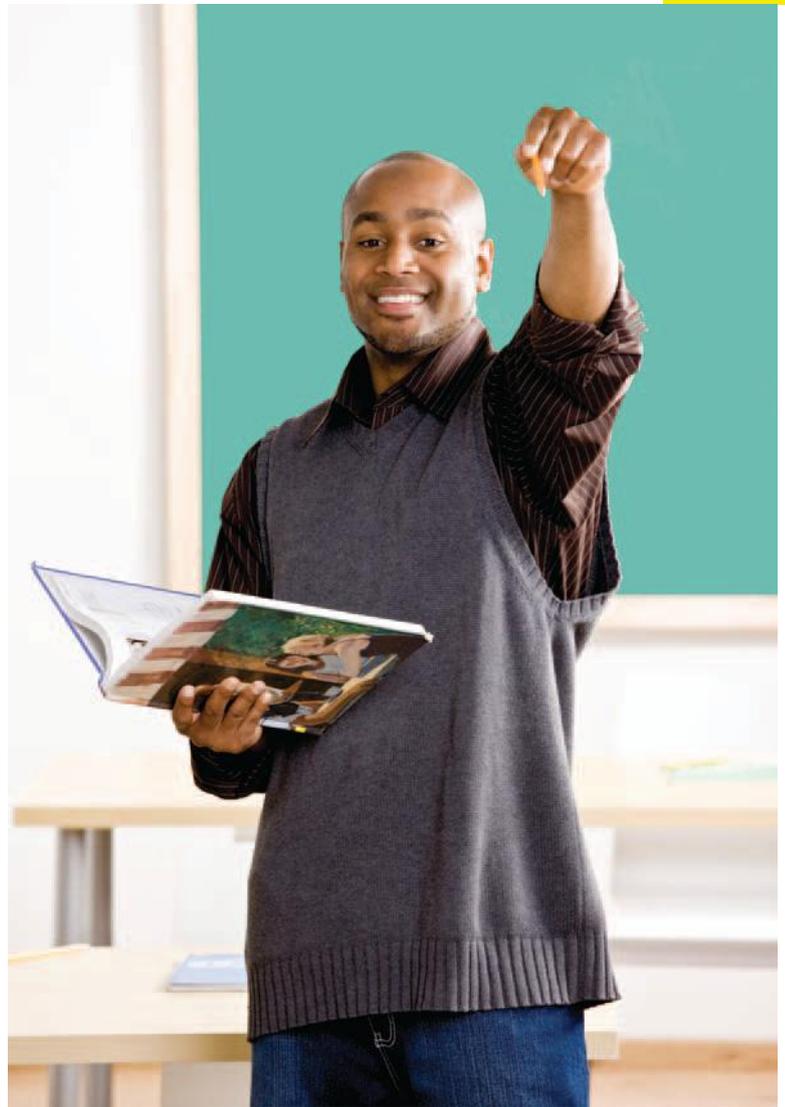
mi blood boil / vein pop outta mi fore
head / scream hot mi mind a-fire
teachah seh sit downg / get off de desk
mi gwan stage it up / kick off a riot
mi back im up against de blackboard
point de chalk right at im throat
udda hand rip up im oxford best
dat keats in pieces all a-throw

benjamin zephaniah / repeat it
benjamin zephaniah / seh again
benjamin zephaniah / write it downg
benjamin / mi seh benjamin
benjamin z
look /mistah school teachah
it nah personal but / lord
get dem babylon white hand
off-a dis angry brown girl education
is enough! mis seh again

den preach mi / linton kwesi johnson
consume mi / robert nesta marley
screech mi / de watts poets
beat mi / de last poets
baraka / def jam / giovanni
call mi / wanda robinson
berate mi / saul & soul nah sham

mi raise hand seh *benjamin zephaniah*
teachah seh *cheeky wait ye turn*
mi seh *benjamin zephaniah*
teachah seh *benjamin wha?*
what he 'bout when he at home?

Maxine Beneba Clarke

Activity 2.6 Active reading

In groups of four, read the song lyrics for 'The Message' and the poem 'Mistah School Teachah' to each other.

Choose one text which your group will perform for the class. You might decide to perform one section each, or you might like to divide the texts into the various voices and take a voice each. You can provide your own accompaniment. When it is your group's turn to present, tell your audience about the decisions you made in the process of rehearsal and why you made those decisions.

Activity 2.7 Write your own rap poem or song

Have you got an opinion about something? Something you love or something you want to protest against? Create a poem that gives voice to something you believe strongly.

Here's what Benjamin Zephaniah says about writing poetry. You may wish to follow his advice.

I try to write poems that are fun but they should also have a serious message. I am very concerned about racism, animal rights, pollution and I have always believed that boys and girls should be treated equally. I hate wars and I think it is not right that adults should tell children not to deal with disputes by fighting and then those same adults go and fight in wars. I think armies should be banned.

I love jogging, Kung Fu, football, collecting old banknotes and exploring woods and forests. Most of my best friends are animals and I am passionate about being vegan.

You can visit Benjamin Zephaniah's website at: **www. benjaminzephaniah.com/content/ kidz.php**.

SHARE YOUR POETRY: HOLD A CLASS POETRY SLAM

A poetry slam is a competition where poets read or recite their original work. Performances are judged by previously selected members of the audience, and also by the general level of audience enthusiasm. The MC (Master of Ceremonies) has a hat which holds the names of the poets who will perform, and the names are drawn out at random. Poets are judged not only on content, but on the delivery and passion of their performance. Maxine Clarke, who wrote 'Mistah School Teachah', has taken part in many poetry slams across Australia.

Activity 2.8 Hold a class poetry slam

As a class, hold a poetry slam of your own, using the rap poems or songs you wrote in Activity 2.7. You will need a microphone, an audience and some willing poets.

SONGS

What are your favourite songs? Do you know the lyrics off by heart? Do you sing it all the time without realising that you are? Why do certain songs appeal to you? Many poets connect with their audiences through a combination of words and music. The band Moving Pictures was formed in Sydney in 1978. Their song 'What About Me' (1982) was a huge hit.

REFLECT ON

Search online for the lyrics to 'What About Me' and read them. You can also listen to the complete song online.

In pairs, respond to the following questions:

1   Have you ever felt as though the rest of the world couldn't care less about you?
2   Make a list of all the 'little people' you can think of who might be being referred to in the song.
3   Who do you think are the 'big people' referred to in the song?

Activity 2.9 Create a PowerPoint presentation of a song of your choice

Take the words of a song you think successfully combines music and lyrics to connect with an audience.

Split the words of the song over 10 or 12 slides and provide a background to each slide. Try to make your choice of visuals reflect your interpretation of the song's meaning.

Animate the slides so that they run as a show, and add the song as a backing track.

proverb a well-known and often-repeated simple saying that expresses a belief or truth, based on common sense or practical experience

cliché a phrase, character, plot or event etc. that has become so common and expected that it is no longer meaningful

PROVERBS

Do you know any proverbs or well-known sayings? What are the favourite ones used in your family? Do your teachers have their favourite sayings?

A **proverb** is a well-known and often-repeated simple saying, which people sometimes say without thinking. In this way, a proverb can become a **cliché**. Many poets see their role as making language meaningful again, and they connect with their audience by taking well-known phases and 'tweaking' them so that we are forced to think again.

Poets love to play with proverbs because they are a good way to get people to look at 'truths' differently and arrive at a deeper understanding of things.

Activity 2.10 Write a poem that re-examines a commonly held proverb

Explore and re-examine the 'wisdom' of one of the following proverbs, or research and choose another proverb to examine. Use it as a basis for your own poem of 5–10 lines.

There's no use crying over spilt milk.

Forgive and forget.

While the cat's away the mice will play.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Necessity is the mother of invention.

Activity 2.11 Identify the poetic device

You are probably already familiar with many poetic devices, especially as they are used in proverbs and familiar family sayings. The proverbs listed in Activity 2.10 make use of several poetic devices. Can you match the following device to the proverb?

- personification
- assonance
- alliteration.

Check the definitions of the devices provided earlier in the Metalanguage Table.

CONNECTING WITH YOUR BELIEFS

The process of writing poetry, or other texts, often means we have to think deeply about what we believe and find the best way to express this.

Activity 2.12   What are some of your personal beliefs?

Make a list of five personal belief statements under the heading 'What I Believe'.

WHAT I BELIEVE

I believe the world is round like a ball and spins through space.
This belief helps me get along with neighbours and work colleagues.
Without it I would be mad or sick, I believe.
I believe there are human footprints on the moon.
This belief helps me to bear watching television news.
I believe that money is the shadow of infinity,
that I will die and know nothing about it.
I believe you are like me.
This belief, I believe, makes me a fool or an optimist.
I believe most of us mistake the present for the past,
and that the future is the past;
that what is right is nearly always obvious;

that belief works best as a necessity or a distraction.

I believe the universe is a dangerous place.

I believe that God is an elaborate and mediocre idea;

that panic is our companion,

and travelling through space will be the last of our tasks.

I believe the purpose of all this is the creation of memory.

I believe most beliefs are yet to be discovered.

I believe in what is most fragile and uncertain,

the paragraph, for instance, or clouds; rain; leaves.

I believe death makes love possible,

and that if you do not train them at once your beliefs
  will bark all night.

Kevin Brophy

LOOK CLOSER

1 Did any of the beliefs in Kevin Brophy's poem resonate with your own beliefs?

2 What do you think the speaker of Brophy's poem means with the last line? What are the connotations of the words 'bark all night'? In other words, what do these words suggest? List all the words you associate with the phrase 'bark all night'.

3 What is the effect of the repetition in the poem? Is repetition used to the same effect in this poem as it was in earlier poems in this chapter?

4 Why would the speaker find the first belief listed in the poem 'helps me get along with neighbours and work colleagues'?

5 Can you find examples of a simile and a metaphor in the poem? Use the definitions in the Glossary.

WHAT DOES THE POET SAY?

Speaking about 'What I believe' Kevin Brophy says he was inspired by Leo Tolstoy's book, *What I Believe*, and that although he found the book quite boring, it inspired him to think about the things that mean the most to him.

Activity 2.13 Write your own 'What I Believe' poem

Using the list of personal belief statements you wrote in Activity 2.12, add five additional belief statements to it. Use this list as the basis for your own poem titled 'What I Believe'.

You might like to try to include at least one simile and one metaphor in your finished piece. Think about the connotations of your word choices.

WHOSE VOICE?

The voice of the speaker in any given poem is not necessarily the poet's own voice. The following poem is an example of a poet who has taken the voice of 'another' to explore and present an idea.

Activity 2.14 Who is speaking here?

In pairs, take turns in reading the following poem by Sylvia Plath several times. As you read, consider who or what you think is speaking. What group is being represented by the poem? What is the mood of the poem? What might be the intention of the speakers?

Overnight, very
Whitely, discreetly,
Very quietly

Our toes, our noses
Take hold on the loam,
Acquire the air.

Nobody sees us,
Stops us, betrays us;
The small grains make room.

Soft fists insist on
Heaving the needles,
The leafy bedding,

Even the paving.
Our hammers, our rams,
Earless and eyeless,

Perfectly voiceless,
Widen the crannies,
Shoulder through holes. We

Diet on water,
On crumbs of shadow,
Bland-mannered, asking

Little or nothing.
So many of us!
So many of us!

We are shelves, we are
Tables, we are meek,
We are edible,

Nudgers and shovers
In spite of ourselves.
Our kind multiplies:

We shall by morning
Inherit the earth.
Our foot's in the door.

Sylvia Plath*

* The title of this poem has been omitted so you can complete Activities 2.14 and 2.15. The poem's title can be found at the start of this book on p. xiii.

Activity 2.15 Present your findings on 'Who is speaking here?' to the class

In groups of four (two pairs), decide on who you believe the voices ('we') of Plath's poem belong to. Choose a method of presentation to show your conclusions and ideas to the class. You might use PowerPoint, write a speech or create a visual presentation of the poem in poster form. Make sure you give evidence from the poem for your decisions during the presentation. When everyone has presented, find out the title of the poem on p. xiii.

 ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1** © Macintyre et al. 2011   Cambridge University Press

CONVERSATIONS AND MONOLOGUES

Everyone has conversations, and everyone has created a **monologue** in their heads. Conversations, both real and imaginary, can be the subject of poetry. What conversations do you have with yourself? Share some of these with a partner. Read the monologue below.

monologue a speech given by one person

TEARS FOR MUM

Mum can I cry at your funeral, can I wail
Like I do out bush, can I walk the aisle in ochre
Can you tell the other kids that this is okay, this is
What I need, the way we grieve, proper way out bush

Mum can you explain that I need my sisters from Yuendumu
And Haasts Bluff by my side at your funeral
Can you tell the other kids that this is okay, this is
What I need, the way we grieve, proper way out bush

Mum can you understand this is the only way I know
To mend my aching heart when you pass away
Can you tell the other kids that this is okay, this is
What I need, the way we grieve, proper way, out bush

Ali Cobby Eckermann (Nunga poet/writer)

WRITE AND PERFORM >>

Activity 2.16 Write a monologue or conversation poem

Write a letter to a parent or other significant adult in your life. Use the letter to say everything you want to say, uninterrupted by any response from the recipient.

OR

Write a dialogue between yourself and a significant adult. This dialogue could take place via email, text messages, face to face or over the phone.

THEN

Perform a monologue or dialogue poem for the class. You might like to perform your own work, or the work of another poet, such as Allan Ahlberg, Michael Rosen or Elizabeth Honey.

Poets use different forms to create poetry and draw on a variety of experiences of the world as their subject matter. These are the tools that poet's draw on to create poetry.

One poetic form we have already looked at in this chapter is the ballad. Another form is the haiku.

HAIKU

haiku a short, evocative poem that captures a moment of awareness and often deals with the seasons of the year

syllables units of pronunciation uttered without interruption: the word 'write' has one syllable, the word 'haiku' has two syllables, and the word 'poetry' has three syllables

Haiku are short, evocative poems that capture a moment of awareness. Originating in Japan, haiku were written in a 5-7-5 format – that is, five **syllables** in the first line, seven in the second and five in the third. This is a rule that can be followed, but is not essential. Traditional haiku also referred to nature, but again, this is something that modern haiku writers have sometimes moved away from.

REFLECT ON

Read the following Japanese haiku by Basho:

lightning

a heron's cry

stabs the darkness

With a partner, make a list of everything you notice about Basho's haiku. For example, it is a short poem of three lines. How many other things do you notice about the poem?

Share them with the class to make a master list of 'Haiku Characteristics'.

Activity 2.17 Syllable activity

With your partner, decide how many syllables are contained in the following words. You might like to tap the words out during this activity. Divide the words into groups of one-, two-, three-, four- and five-syllable words. Can you find the six-syllable word?

song	conversation	poem	experience
people	simile	alliteration	patois
rhyme	personification	dialogue	performance
generations	rhythm	prompt	

Because haiku is a form of poetry that is centuries old, conventions or rules have developed to guide poets to write haiku. These rules are not carved in stone, though. There are many variations on a general set of rules.

Here are some general guidelines for writing traditional haiku:

• write in three lines
• include what is known in haiku as a 'fragment' and a 'phrase' (*lightning* is the fragment; *a heron's cry/stabs the darkness* is the 'phrase')
• make a reference to nature
• write in present tense
• avoid punctuation
• aim for a syllable count of between 9 and 17
• avoid rhyme.

How many of these did you come up with after reading Basho's haiku?

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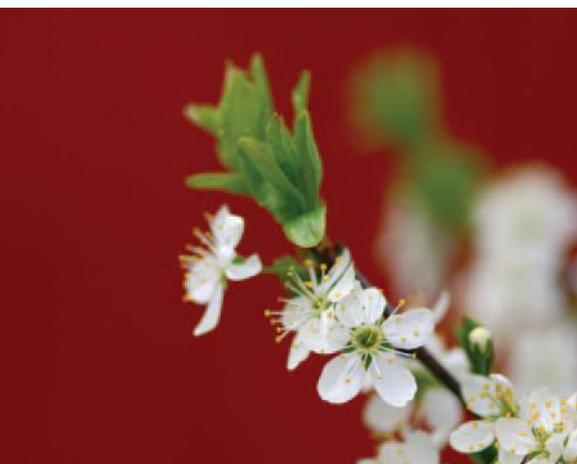
Activity 2.18 Write your own haiku

Each person in the class contributes to this activity. Decide on a topic – perhaps school camp or an excursion – and create a series of haiku that capture a moment in time from the perspective of each member of the group.

RENGA

Renga is a Japanese form of poetry that traditionally uses many linked haiku to reflect the passing of the seasons. Amelia Walker worked with the students of Collingwood Alternative School in Melbourne to produce a class novella. 'Snatches of Truth' is a modified Ninjun Renga poem that appeared as part of the finished collection.

renga a form of Japanese collaborative poetry which reflects the passing of the seasons

The students were presented with a scenario and certain story line elements, but had full freedom in creating and driving the actions of the main character. Their project focused on mental health and wellbeing. Students researched and responded to the scenario of TJ's older brother Vincent being diagnosed with a mental health disorder. They explored how this would affect the lives of everyone in the family and the kinds of responses and reactions that could follow.

The students learned about and used several poetic devices, including metaphor, simile, imagery, symbolism, rhyme, rhythm, assonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia. The forms each poem took covered hip-hop, concrete (shape) poetry, renga and haiku.

'Snatches of Truth' covers a time span of six months in the lives of the characters TJ, Ella and Vincent. It shows Vincent returning home and initially making good progress: he gets a job, joins in family life and helps TJ study for exams. However, the happy times are sullied by Vincent's struggle with weight gain – a side effect of many antipsychotic medications. Towards the conclusion of the renga, Vincent loses weight again, but becomes withdrawn and strange, indicating he is no longer taking his medication.

SNATCHES OF TRUTH

(a modified Ninjun Renga)

Engine growling,
Mum chain smoking menthols,
Vincent beside me, heading home.

Walking up the steps to the house,
sparrows gather twigs for their nest.

On the roof with Vincent,
memories flowing,
faces glow in the gobbled moon.
Smell of lasagne filling our house,
table set for three.

* * *

Birds chirp outside,
Vincent straightens his Maccas cap,
gives himself a dirty look.

School holidays, smell of popcorn,
screenful of cars in flames.

Sweat's sweet reek,
rhythmic clink of weights,
Vincent red-faced before we've begun.
Halloween Party: Vincent as Jekyll
turns Hyde when I suggest fewer sweets.

Vincent's clothes expand,
my brain shrinks,
cramming for exams.

Sunlight brightens my room,
my brother shines light on algebra.

Scent of burnt roast turkey,
our whole house an oven,
candle lit for Dad.

Tis the season for over-eating,
Vincent turns his mirror to the wall.

Last day of the year:
sand, stars, laughter,
floating away in my Jim Beam.

Awake, dry mouth, cold kitchen floor,
how did I get here?

Bucketful of crabs,

sand squeaking beneath our feet,

Vincent running, laughing.

Summer days stretch long and lean,

Vincent's clothes hang loose once more.

* * *

3am, what a nightmare!

Tip toe to the kitchen tap – cool drink,

Vincent scribbling in a book.

Perfect day for a surf,

Vincent in bed, "go 'way snitch".

Backyard, Vincent chewing soursobs,

alfoil lining his cap – why?

"They're my thoughts, you can't have them."

February heatwave,

so many tears I can't cry.

Students of Collingwood Alternative School, Melbourne

Amelia Walker explains the following about her work with the students of Collingwood Alternative School:

> Renga is a Japanese form of collaborative poetry that traditionally uses multiple, linked haiku to reflect the passing of the seasons. Writers take turns to contribute sections, which is how the students wrote this poem. There are many different varieties of Renga. We have based ours upon the Ninjun Renga, which contains 20 haiku verses, alternating between two and three lines each. The third verse of the Ninjun Renga should reference the moon and the 19th verse should reference flowers.

> Traditionally, Renga does not contain a **narrative**, which is one of the reasons why we call this poem a modified Ninjun Renga. [emphasis added]

> There are two main views concerning haiku in English. One school of thought is that the haiku must have a strict number of syllables (five in the first line, seven in the second line and five in the last line). The other school of thought, which we apply here, is that haiku should present striking and meaningful imagery within 2–3 economically-written lines.

narratives the relating of stories of events or experiences, imaginary (fiction) or real (non-fiction), including what is narrated and how it is narrated.

SHARE YOUR POETRY: CREATE A CLASS VERSE NOVEL

Have you ever read a verse novel? Steven Herrick, Catherine Bateson and Sherryl Clark have all used this form to create terrific collections of poems that tell a story.

Activity 2.19   Create a class verse novel

With your teacher, decide on a story or scenario that you could explore in the form of a class verse novella. Your scenario might stem from something you are studying in another subject, such as Science or Physical Education, or it might emerge from a discussion you have been having in your English class.

- Create three main characters who will appear in the novella.
- Use the forms of poetry that we have covered so far in the chapter: ballad, rap, song, re-examined proverbs, statement lists, conversations, monologues, haiku and renga.
- Try to make use of the poetic and other language devices we have looked at, such as: rhythm, rhyme, rhyming couplets, stanzas, connotation, personification, assonance, alliteration, simile, metaphor, syllables and narrative.

NOT *JUST* ABOUT ANIMALS

Do you have a favourite animal? Or an animal you really dislike or are afraid of? Or an animal that is important to you for some other reason?

Poets often connect with animals and use them to explore all sorts of themes. Read the following poem by Alice Wong, and think about what **else** it might be about, apart from kangaroos.

BIGFOOT

the first one I saw was white
on red on the tail
of the plane that brought me here
then, fluffy toys at the airport,
some donning akubras complete
with corks to swing at flies

didn't realise they were so
big until I saw a real one at the zoo
lounging in the shade

licking arms and forepaws;
a clever way of cooling
I was told

when we drove to Queensland and the sun
pierced through the windscreen I tried
the roo's trick on my scorched skin

"it works!" I exclaimed
and almost as if they heard me
a pair leapt

out across the road
and sent the brakes
screaming

were they escapees from a zoo
or like the mob we found by the beach
wild as the surf?

making home where we could smell gumtrees
through the windows brought us neighbours
that on one occasion we caught

grazing at midnight on the front lawn
my heart bounded as high as you did
as I proudly pointed you out to overseas visitors

at the duty free shops, I idly
stroked the furs and hoped
that your kind get shorn like sheep
         although they sold jerky too

Alice Wong

REFLECT ON

1 What does the kangaroo represent for you?
2 Apart from kangaroos, what else is 'Bigfoot' about? Discuss with a partner, finding evidence from the poem to support your ideas.

Anne Elder has written a poem about a white spider. As you read 'The White Spider', think about what else it might be about. Consider how much of it is about the spider and how much is about the speaker of the poem?

THE WHITE SPIDER

Something white scuttled
into this black hole
the body soft as a blob of pus,
the legs rapidly working.

This is a creature without camouflage,
its only weapon
being that it is impossible to kill
because of the squash,
so a deep revulsion shakes us
when something white scuttles
into a black hole.

It is a ghost of horror,
so small but of great power,
and horror terror horror terror
go its legs rapidly working.

Anne Elder (1918–76)

REFLECT ON

1 What gives you the creeps? What makes you shudder?
2 Brainstorm and come up with a list of vocabulary associated with the things in the natural world that give you the creeps or frighten you. This vocabulary will help you complete Activity 2.21.

WRITE AND RESPOND >>

Activity 2.20 Write a 'horror terror' poem

Write a 'horror terror' poem that springs from your list of vocabulary associated with what gives you the creeps or frightens you.

OR

Write a response to the poem 'The White Spider' written from the spider's point of view.

Activity 2.21   Shape poem – write a poem about an animal that's important to you

A **shape poem** is a poem that is shaped to give a visual image of something. For example, a poem about a tree that is shaped like a tree when it is written out.

Write about an animal that is important to you for any reason. You might love it, fear it, have to feed it every day, or perhaps have never seen it in real life. Arrange the poem to fit the shape of the animal.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Poets often use their experience of their surroundings, or the environment in which they find themselves as inspiration for their work.

MESSAGES

for Nana Kumana Watson and Aunty Nura Ward

Every grain of sand in this

big red country

is a pore on the skin

of my Family

Every feather on the ground in this

spinifex country

is a spiritual message

from my Ancestors.

Every wild flower that blooms in this

desert of red

is a signpost of hope

from my People.

Ali Cobby Eckermann

WHAT DOES THE POET SAY?

Nunga poet, Ali Cobby Eckermann, has spent the past 13 years reuniting with her family, first finding her mother, and then her son four years later. 'Messages' is from her collection *little bit long time*, where she recounts a journey of over 30 years. A long time resident of the NT, she now lives in Koolunga, South Australia.

Ali's focus is on culture, 'how many Australians perceive that Aboriginal culture is a thing of the past, yet most Aboriginal people still see it as strong and used in everyday life'.

LOOK CLOSER

What messages do you find in your surroundings? Think about your environment, and tell a partner about the signs and sounds that are meaningful to you.

WRITE >>

Activity 2.22 Write an urban, suburban, rural or outback 'Messages' poem of your own

Write a poem about the messages that surround you in your choice of environment. It could be on your way to school or at school, where you go to have a holiday, or at home.

Activity 2.23   Create a 'Messages' PowerPoint of your chosen environment

Take photos of the places that are important to you. Create a PowerPoint presentation that combines your 'Messages' poem and the photos. Add some music of your choice.

PLAYING WITH WORDS

The imagination is always a source of inspiration to poets. The following poem was written by Lewis Carroll as part of his novel *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, which was published in 1872. It is a nonsense (or, in the poet's words, 'nonce') poem, which the author wrote for the amusement of his friends and family. In the book, Humpty Dumpty translates the nonsense words of the first stanza for Alice, and over the years many commentators – and Lewis Carroll himself – added to the list of definitions.

JABBERWOCKY

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
*   Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:*
All mimsy were the borogoves,
*   And the mome raths outgrabe.*

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
*   The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!*
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
*   The frumious Bandersnatch!"*

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
*   Long time the manxome foe he sought—*
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
*   And stood awhile in thought.*

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
*   The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,*
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
*   And burbled as it came!*

Jabberwocky as illustrated by John Tenniel

One, two! One, two! And through and through

The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!

He left it dead, and with its head

He went galumphing back.

"And, hast thou slain the Jabberwock?

Come to my arms, my beamish boy!

O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"

He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All mimsy were the borogoves,

And the mome raths outgrabe.

Lewis Carrroll

PORTMANTEAU WORDS

Students in South Australia and Queensland will be familiar with the word 'portmanteau', or 'port', meaning suitcase.

A portmanteau word is a blend of two words and their meanings into one new word. Lewis Carroll's playful poem 'Jabberwocky' contains many portmanteau words of his own creation. Two of them, 'chortled' and 'galumphing', have made their way into the English Language.

You can look up 'galumph' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, where it is defined as:

1. move noisily or clumsily. 2. go prancing in triumph. [ORIGIN: coined by Lewis Carroll, perhaps from GALLOP + TRIUMPH.]

Therefore, the 'beamish boy' in the poem 'Jabberwocky' goes galloping home in triumph in the fifth stanza.

INTERACT >>

Activity 2.24 Write your own definitions

In pairs, write your own definitions of the following words from 'Jabberwocky'. Discuss with your partner exactly why you think the word should be defined in a certain way. For instance, is it the sound of the word, the look of the word, or what it reminds you of? Then negotiate an agreed definition with your partner.

| brillig | burbled | frabjous | gyre | slithy |
| beamish | chortled | frumious | mimsy | wabe |

Activity 2.25 Try creating your own portmanteau words

Think of two adjectives that describe a noun (see definitions below), and then see if you can join them together. For example, 'ginormous' is made up of the words 'giant' and 'enormous'.

OR

Try joining an adjective and a noun together (definitions below). For example, a 'hot, sunny day' could become a 'hunny' day.

OR

Try joining two nouns. For example, a friend who is also your enemy becomes your 'frenemy', and acne that grows on your back is 'backne'.

PARTS OF SPEECH

Parts of speech are the categories into which we place words according to the function they play within a sentence. Nouns, verbs and adjectives all have a different role to play within a sentence.

Nouns are naming words used to identify people, places, animals, abstract ideas or things. There are a number of different categories of nouns.

A **proper noun** names something specific, such as 'Lisa', 'New York City' and 'Friday.' A **common noun** names general things around you that you can see and touch, such as 'table', 'apple' and 'baby'. **Collective nouns** refer to groups or collections of people, things or animals, such as 'choir', 'team' and 'family'. An **abstract** noun names emotions, ideas, or feelings – things that you cannot see or touch, such as 'loyalty', 'love' and 'curiosity'.

Verbs are doing words that show an action being taken, such as 'jump', 'run', 'talk' or 'write'.

We can see how nouns and verbs work together in a sentence in the following simple sentence:

The **boy** (noun) **ran** (verb) to the **shop** (noun).

If we add a descriptive word to one of the nouns, we have added an **adjective**. An adjective tells us something more about the noun. Adjectives also come in different categories.

There are **descriptive adjectives** which are the most common form of adjective. Some examples include 'generous', 'angry' and 'beautiful.' There are also **quantitative adjectives**, which relate to numbers and amounts, such as 'both', 'several' and 'half'. And there are **distinctive adjectives** to differentiate one noun from another, such as 'this', 'that' and 'either'.

Here is our sentence with a descriptive adjective added:

The **happy** (adjective) boy ran to the shop.

ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1**
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Make a copy of the poem 'Jabberwocky' and complete the following task using three different coloured highlighters.

1   Use one colour to highlight the nouns in the poem.

2   Use a different colour to highlight the verbs in the poem.

3   Use a third colour to highlight the adjectives in the poem.

4   Discuss your decisions with a partner.

REFLECT AND WRITE >>

Activity 2.26 Create a description poem using your knowledge of parts of speech

Consider a time of day, a person, an animal or season of the year, and use the following layout to write your own description poem:

Noun

Three adjectives

Synonym

Verb

Here is an example to inspire you:

Midnight

dark, cold, silent

the witching hour

descends

REFLECT AND WRITE >>

Activity 2.27 Write a poem addressed to an insect, animal or bird

Use your knowledge of parts of speech to write a poem addressed to an insect, animal or bird of your choice. Address it 'To a … '. Be creative with the presentation of your poem. You might want to follow this layout:

To an … (insect/animal/bird of choice)

You … (10 verbs in any design you want)

Collective noun (you might want to make this up)

The abstract nouns associated with your word of choice

For example:

To an ant

You invade, follow, walk, work, hurry, scurry, carry, bury, tunnel and obey

The colony

Obedience, industry, diligence.

COHESION AND COHERENCE

How did you know what was happening in 'Jabberwocky'? How did you gain an understanding of what was generally going on, even though you couldn't understand all the words?

When a text is cohesive, it means it hangs together so that the sentence structure can be understood, even if the words themselves are unfamiliar to us. 'Jabberwocky' is a good example of a cohesive text because we can work out that someone went somewhere and did something to someone else and then came back!

When a text is coherent, it means that we can understand it – its meaning is clear to us. 'Jabberwocky' is not coherent by this definition, but it is still a lot of fun to engage with the poem and to try to *make* it coherent!

WRITE >>

Activity 2.28   Create a nonsense poem

Create a short action/adventure tale in 'correct' English. With a partner, come up with nonsense or portmanteau words for *some* of the nouns, verbs and adjectives in your piece of writing. Leave enough words that can be understood easily so your writing is cohesive, even though it won't be particularly coherent! You might like to use one of the following as a starting point:

- The sun rose as she tiptoed away.
- The dog lay on the bathroom floor.
- The call of the wild was loud and clear.
- 'Quick!' they cried, 'we're almost there!'
- The Earth looked small; the moon looked big.

CREATE MORE POEMS: SEVEN QUICK POETRY WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 1

A 'Top Ten' poem

Make some lists and turn them into poems. Use the following stating points, or think up your own 'Top Ten':

the top ten things adults say

the top ten things that inspire you

the top ten things you want to do in your life

the top ten people you know

the top ten places you will go to

the top ten places you have been

the top ten things to write a top ten list of

WORKSHOP 2

The forty-word poem

Write a paragraph of 100 words on one of the following topics: a season, a car, a friend, playing netball, packing to go camping, learning lines for a play or anything else you choose.

Now reduce the paragraph to the 40 best words.

Now arrange the words in lines:
- first line – 10 words
- second line – 5 words
- third line – 10 words
- fourth line – 5 words
- fifth line – 10 words.

Edit the result until you are happy with the arrangement of words.

WORKSHOP 3

The syllable poem

The syllable poem is a ten-line poem that has one syllable in the first line, two in the second line, and so on until you get to five syllables in the fifth line. Then go back to four syllables in the sixth line and so on until you're left with one syllable in line 10.

For example:

> I
>
> never
>
> would have gone
>
> but she made me
>
> now I'm in trouble
>
> and it's really
>
> just not my
>
> fault at
>
> all.

WORKSHOP 4

Chance poems

Interesting poems can be found by chance. Take a sheet from a newspaper or magazine and draw five **small** circles at random. Place the first four words you circled in any order you choose and use the fifth as a title.

OR

Draw five **large** circles and create a collage of the results, again using a word from one of the circles as a title.

This activity works well with news pages, entertainment pages and advertisements.

WORKSHOP 5

'Guess what?' poems

Write a description of a colour without naming the colour. For example, what colour is described in the poem below?

> Footpath, street,
>
> Fall asleep weary,
>
> wake up bleary,
>
> wet newspapers,
>
> winter sky,
>
> uniform,
>
> smoke.

OR

Write a description of an object without naming it.

OR

Write a description of an emotion without naming it.

WORKSHOP 6

A simile poem

Add an adjective and a noun to the following. For example, 'as slow as a wet week'.

as fast as a …   as heavy as a …   as red as a …   as happy as a …

as nervous as a …   as boring as a …   as kind as a …   as green as a …

Now arrange your similes in any order you choose.

PERSONIFICATION

Personification is a poetic technique where human characteristics are given to inanimate objects, such as a chair, or to abstract ideas. Basically, to use personification is to give human qualities to something that is not human. '*The wind scratched its back against my door*' and '*the sun smiled on my face*' are examples of personification, where the wind and sun are doing things – 'scratched its back' and 'smiled' – that we usually associate with people.

Melbourne poet Myron Lysenko loves to play with words and enjoys writing about objects as if they are people. For example, he says he used to go home and the answering machine would tell him all about its day.

Exploring a party theme, Myron improvised at a poetry workshop:

> The window went to the party and got blind,
>
> the glass got full,
>
> the chair was showing off its legs
>
> and the light was turned off.
>
> The clock was paranoid because everyone kept looking at him,
>
> and the window was smashed.

WORKSHOP 7

A personification poem

Write about some emotions as if they were human. For example, 'Fear was under the bed'.

> **OR**

'What if Love and Hate played tennis?' Brainstorm the vocabulary associated with a tennis match and then create a poem about the tennis match between Love and Hate.

> **OR**

Try: 'Fear and Joy go surfing'.

> **OR**

'Shyness and Exuberance go to drama class'.

READ, WRITE, CREATE

Now it's time to put your reflections on the question 'What is poetry?' and your responses to the activities contained in this chapter in a portfolio of poems. You have read, performed and listened to the work of many poets who are actively engaged in the field of poetry in Australia. Hopefully, your experiences and responses to the activities in this chapter have enabled you to produce a collection of varied, vibrant poetry.

CREATE AND PRESENT A FOLIO OF POEMS

Using the portfolio of poems you have created throughout this chapter you will now prepare for a presentation. You might like to post the poems as part of a class wiki, create a paper version of your work, or create and publish a class anthology.

OR

Create a short film of your most successful poem using PowerPoint or Photostory. You can accompany the words with your choice of sound and visuals.

OR

In small groups, present your work to the class as part of a series of short performances.

SHARE YOUR POETRY: PUT IT IN UNUSUAL PLACES

Have you ever seen poetry in strange or unusual places? Where? Discuss as a class.

All over Australia, individuals and groups are involved in placing poetry in unusual places and sharing it in new ways. Some people like to put poems on the backs of toilet doors, others put poems on trains and trams, others send their haiku via Twitter.

As a class, brainstorm places to display your poetry. You might approach your school principal about displaying your poems in the cafeteria, the staff kitchen, the bathrooms and sports facilities. Approach the local council and shopkeepers about having your poems appear in bus shelters, on park benches, shop windows and the local library.

Or

Try screen printing your poems on shopping bags and T-shirts ... maybe your art teacher would be interested in helping you.

Where will your poetry appear?

REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

How have your ideas about what poetry is changed? Write 150 words including your new ideas about what poetry is and where you might find poetry in everyday life.

EXPLORE MORE

Australian Poetry Centre

The peak body for poetry in Australia has recently joined forces with the NSW Poets Union to promote and support Australian poets here and all around the world: **www.australianpoetry.org**.

The Wheeler Centre

Located in Melbourne, it is the heart of UNESCO's City of Literature Initiative to promote books, writing and ideas. Poets regularly talk about their writing: **www.wheelercentre.com**.

ABC Poetica

An arts program on ABC Radio National that focuses on the live performance of poetry: **www.abc.net.au/rn/poetica**.

You can listen to poets reading their work here with Poetica's series of podcasts of Australian poetry, 'A Pod of Poets' at:
www.abc.net.au/rn/poetica/features/pod/default.htm.

OTHER WEBSITES TO EXPLORE, READ AND LISTEN TO POETRY:

The Poetry Archive
www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/home.do

Poem Hunter
www.poemhunter.com
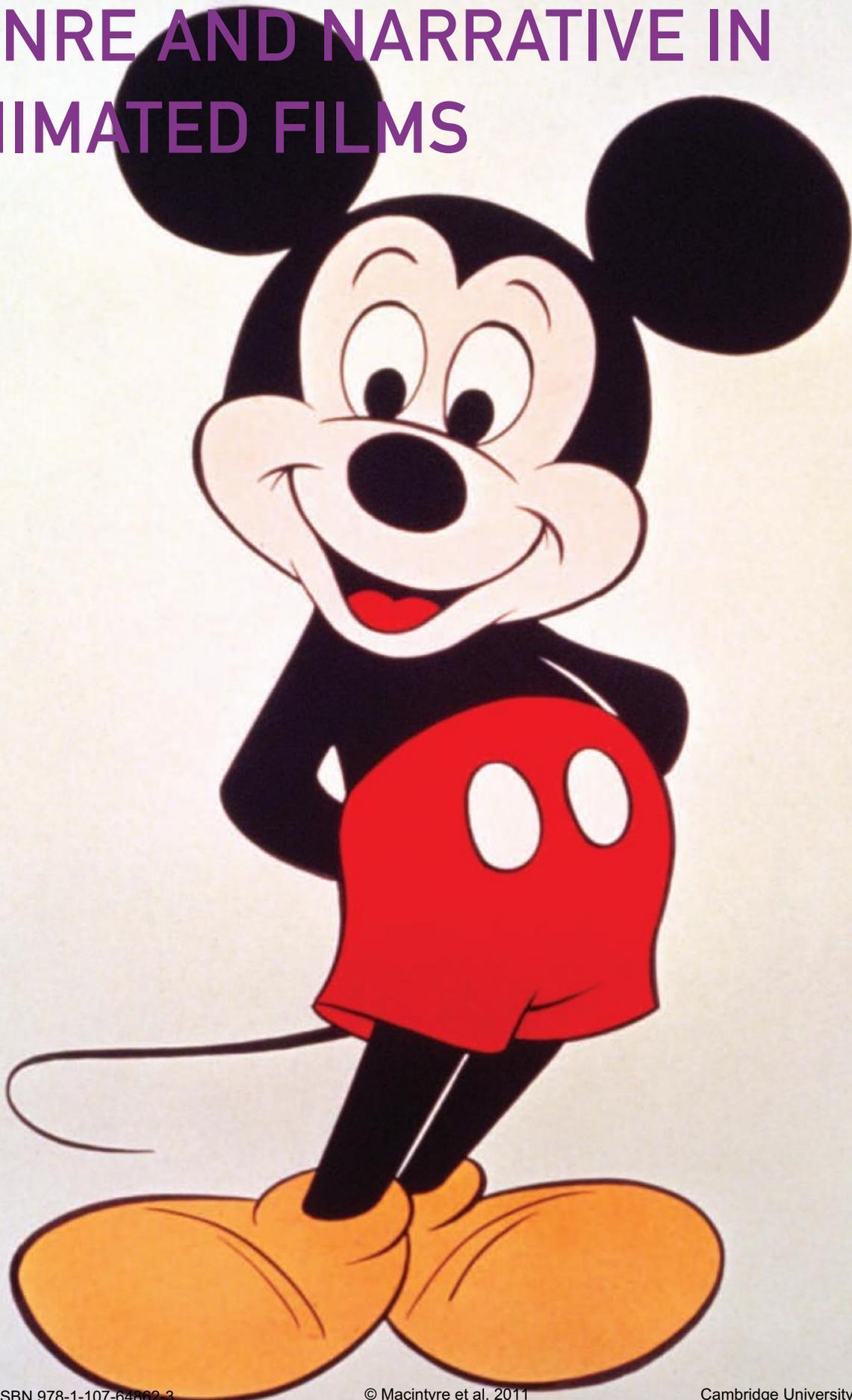
Poets.org from the Academy of American Poets
www.poets.org

Modern Australian Poetry – Australia's Culture Portal
www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/poetry

GETTING ANIMATED: GENRE AND NARRATIVE IN ANIMATED FILMS

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Cambridge University Press

[3]

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- view and respond to *WALL-E* directed by Andrew Stanton, *Mary and Max* directed by Adam Elliot, and *Howl's Moving Castle* directed by Hayao Miyazaki

- analyse, interpret and evaluate the genre of animated film, including Japanese anime and stop motion modes

- explore and analyse how the design elements and narrative structures chosen by film makers seek to influence their audiences

- write and respond using the specialised language that describes the features of animated film-making

- apply your knowledge to adapt, evaluate, play with or create your own animated short film.
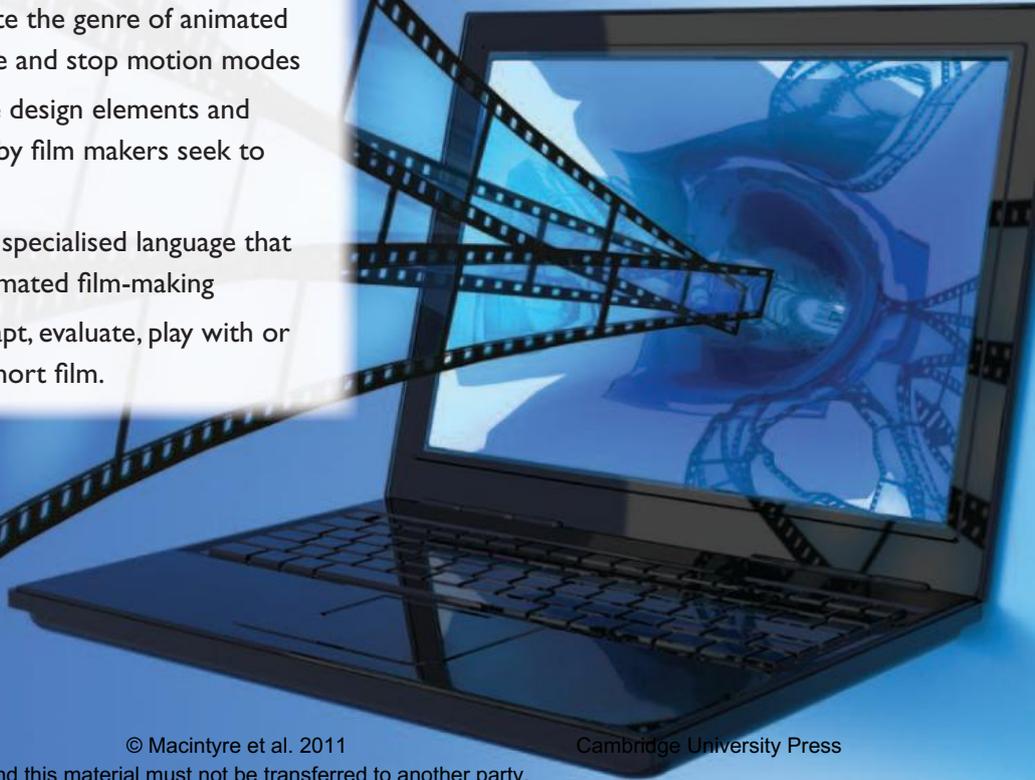
animation the rapid display of a sequence of images of 2-D or 3-D artwork, or models positioned in order to create an illusion of movement

In this chapter you will explore three very different animated films:

WALL-E (dir. Andrew Stanton 2008) **G**

Mary and Max (dir. Adam Elliot 2009) **PG**

Howl's Moving Castle (dir. Hayao Miyazaki 2004) **PG**

• Why do filmmakers choose to make their films using **animation** rather than real life characters and settings?

• What appeals to us about animated films?

• Do these cartoons and animations have any thing to say about real life?

ANIMATED FILM AND YOU

You have probably viewed animation on television and at the movies in the form of cartoons, animated TV series like 'The Simpsons' and animated feature films like *Happy Feet*. Many of you will have grown up with the Pixar animated features which started with *Toy Story* in 1995 and have included *Finding Nemo*, *WALL-E* and *Up*. Perhaps you also enjoy playing animated video games and creating your own animations using Flash animation.

Think about the animation you have seen and make notes when answering the following questions:

• What was the first animated feature film you saw at the cinema? Describe what you saw and your reaction to it.

• What are your earliest memories of animations or cartoons on television?

• What do you remember most about the animations and cartoons?

• Were there any animated characters that you idolised, who were perhaps on posters on your bedroom wall?

• Who were they and why did they make an impact on you? What did you like about these characters?

• What was the last animated feature that you saw at the cinema and why did you go to see it?

• What animated video games do you play? What do you like about the visual elements of these games? What do you like about the stories or how you play the games?

LOOK CLOSER

Animation is a graphic representation of drawings to show movement within those drawings. A series of drawings is linked together and usually photographed by a camera. The drawings have been slightly changed between individual frames so when they are played back in rapid succession there appears to be perfect movement within the drawings. This is called stop-motion. You can read more about different kinds of animation online by searching for 'Cinemation: the story behind animation'.

INTERACT AND RESEARCH >>

Activity 3.1 What do you know about animated film?

Find out how much the class knows about animated films. Create a timeline of animations that you have viewed from your pre-school days until the present.

EVALUATE AND RESPOND >>

Activity 3.2 The best animated films

Every year the Academy Awards have a category for Best Animated Feature. Below is a table listing the nominees and winners since 2001. The winners are in **bold** type. How many have you seen? Choose three, and present a clip from each, explaining why you liked it with reference to the central character(s), the story and the **special effects**.

special effects photographic, artistic, animated or computerised effects that are filmed to approximate reality or produce a sense of the surreal

Academy Awards Best Animated Features 2001–2010

Year	Film
2001	*Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*
	Monsters, Inc.
	Shrek
	Ice Age
	Lilo & Stitch
2002	*Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*
	Spirited Away
	Treasure Planet
2003	*Brother Bear*
	Finding Nemo
	The Triplets of Belleville

Year	Film
2004	*The Incredibles*
	Shark Tale
	Shrek 2
2005	*Howl's Moving Castle*
	Tim Burton's Corpse Bride
	Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit
2006	*Cars*
	Happy Feet
	Monster House
2007	*Persepolis (rated M)*
	Ratatouille
	Surf's Up
2008	*Bolt*
	Kung fu Panda
	WALL-E
2009	*Coraline*
	Fantastic Mr. Fox
	The Princess and the Frog
	The Secret of Kells
	Up
2010	*How to Train Your Dragon*
	The Illusionist
	Toy Story 3

Note: Parent and teacher discretion is advised when introducing *Persepolis* to the classroom.

Activity 3.3 Humour in animated films

Find your own funny animation and play it to the class. You will need a room that has Internet access and a big screen.

YouTube **(www.youtube.com)** and websites such as Aniboom **(www. aniboom.com)** provide many short animations online. Go to either of these websites or others that you might know about and look for funny animations. One example you might enjoy is the YouTube animation called 'Animator vs. Animation'.

Discuss whether everyone finds the same films funny. Why do you think there are differences in opinion?

Activity 3.4 Make your own simple animations

All of the animated films listed in the previous table are made in large studios with huge teams. Perhaps you have made a simple animation at home or at school.

- If so, bring your animation to school on a USB drive, show your class what you made, and talk about the process and software programs that you used.
- If some students in your class have skills in producing animations, they could run a workshop or demonstrate how to make a simple stop-animation.

ANIMATION RE-WIND

The animated features that we have mentioned so far are recent, but there is a long history and tradition of animation on the screen.

Figure 3.1 Japanese anime-style animation

The first recorded animated feature, *Il Apostol*, by Quirino Cristiani was made in Argentina in 1917. *Steamboat Willie*, the Disney cartoon which made Mickey Mouse famous, was released in 1928 (you can view it on YouTube). Tezuka's *Astro Boy* was one of the precursors of **Japanese anime** (also available to view on YouTube).

Examples of animated features are *Howl's Moving Castle* by Japan's Studio Ghibli and the Aardman animations *Wallace & Gromit* and *Chicken Run*. You will also encounter 3-D animations in Disney/Pixar's *WALL-E* and the claymation *Mary and Max*, which are all examples from this rich history of animation.

Animation examples
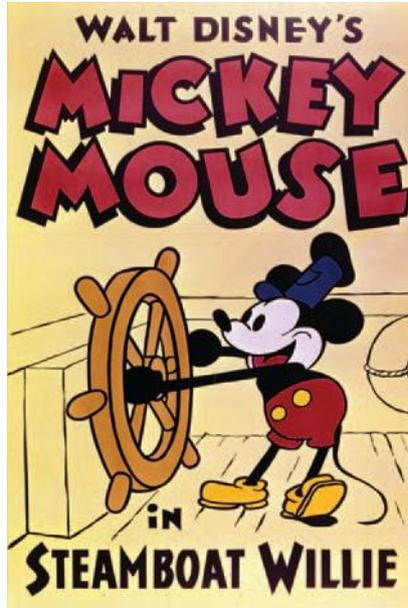
© Disney

You can find out more about the history of animation by researching it online, including information about the history of animation in Australia: **www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/animation**.

REFLECT ON

Believe it or not, your parents were young once and also viewed animations and cartoons. Interview them about what they viewed and what they liked. Share your findings on a class discussion board. Were there any common favourites?

THE CULTURAL IMPORTANCE OF ANIMATION

The importance of animation is recognised by major awards in the film industry. In Melbourne, for example, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image has an annual film festival which features animations from around the world. For details of the festival look at the Melbourne International Animation Festival website (**www.miaf.net**).

As you have seen in Activity 3.2, animated features often have their own category for an award at the Academy Awards. On the right is a model of *Harvie Krumpet,* an early short film made by Melbourne-based writer and director, Adam Elliot, who also made *Mary and Max*. In 2003 *Harvie Krumpet* won an Oscar at the Academy Awards for Best Animated Short Feature.

The Oscar winning animation, *Harvie Krumpet*

REFLECT ON

1   Do you think animations can appeal to both young and adult audiences? If you think they can, provide examples of animations that might have this dual appeal.

2   Have you seen any films that have animated sequences as part of the film's story? Why do you think that a director chooses to include animated sequences?

GETTING READY TO VIEW THE ANIMATED FEATURES

Before you view *WALL-E*, *Mary and Max* and *Howl's Moving Castle* there are some important things you should consider: the kinds of stories people connect to, how these stories are shaped and structured, and their generic features. These are ideas you will build on throughout this chapter and as you gain greater knowledge of visual texts.

The three animations we will explore are good examples of the particular ways in which stories are told. There are often common or popular storylines that shape the narratives that recur in films and books. This does not mean that there is a formula, but there are some common patterns in stories which you can explore and understand.

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

What kinds of stories do you like? What are the ingredients of a good story? What are some of your favourite stories and why have they made an impact on you? What kinds of things might a good story tell you about people and the world?

Story and storytelling form the solid base of these three animated features. Storytelling is also a basic part of your daily life. Conversations and discussions, and telling others about your experiences are part of storytelling as well. You recount events and your feelings in particular ways, giving the story a specific shape and structure that helps to tell the listener what kind of story it is.

TRAILERS

Before you view the three films and the stories they tell, view the trailers of each film. Trailers introduce you to the story without giving away too much of what happens. Their purpose is to 'whet your appetite' and introduce the characters and ideas.

Search for the *WALL-E* trailer at the Disney Videos website. You can view the *Mary and Max* trailer at the official *Mary and Max* website (**www.maryandmax.com**). And you will find the trailer for *Howl's Moving Castle* at the Studio Ghibli website: (**www.onlineghibli.com/howls_castle/media.php**).

Activity 3.5 Movie trailers

As you view the trailers of *WALL-E*, *Mary and Max* and *Howl's Moving Castle* write down what you learn about the characters and the ideas that you think the film might explore. Some points to get you started are listed in the table below.

Film	Character	Idea
WALL-E		Humans have seriously made a mess of the planet
Mary and Max	Mary and Max find that their pen friendships fills a need in them	
Howl's Moving Castle		Love and friendship are powerful forces

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Do you like films with happy endings? During the school holidays when you notice advertisements for animated feature films (often with lots of action and endearing characters – sometimes human, sometimes animal) do you choose films that you think might have a happy ending?

In these films, the characters have to overcome obstacles, such as their inner fears, or defeat an arch-enemy who is opposed to the values of the hero. The hero may have to make choices about the kind of person they want to be and what they want to be remembered for. This is a familiar pattern: the heroes are faced with a problem or crisis and must resolve the dilemma or overcome the crisis to achieve a better world. This storyline uses the 'overcoming the odds' **narrative structure**.

narrative structure the framework and order of a story

When you view a film it is the narrative structure which helps define the story. It helps the viewer understand the message of the film and give it meaning. This also applies when you tell someone else a story or recount an event.

However, the narrative structure applies only to the *way* in which a story is told, not to the story itself. It contains the chronological stages or steps in the story.

This kind of narrative structure is sometimes called a three-act structure. The three-act structure has:

Act 1: an introduction to ideas and characters

Act 2: a conflict which comes to a head

Act 3: a conclusion or resolution in which a better person or world is created and a satisfying sense of order is established. This is often described as the 'feel good' ending because the film ends happily.

When you are viewing the animated features see if you can identify these elements.

EVALUATE >>

Activity 3.6 Common story patterns

The example above of characters overcoming obstacles is one of the popular common storylines that you see in films or read in books. Think about some of the films, animations and books that you have read and come up with some more examples of recurring common storylines. Below are some examples to get you started – add to this list in your workbook.

Common storylines

• overcoming 'difference'
• from rags to riches
•
•
•

WHAT IS GENRE?

After school one afternoon, go to your local video shop and browse generally. Can you tell by the covers of the DVDs what type of film will be inside? Now look at how the DVDs and games are arranged and make a note of the major categories which are used to organise the material. Talk to one of the staff, and ask questions about how and why they arrange their DVDs in this way.

Look for the following:

- the range of **genres** and where they are located
- which genres seem to be the most popular with specific age groups
- the familiar storylines and images in each genre by reading the **blurb** on a few films from each genre

genres types of texts or categories of texts that use particular conventions

blurb the information or advertisement on the cover of a book, film, CD or DVD, which briefly describes the content and gives praise
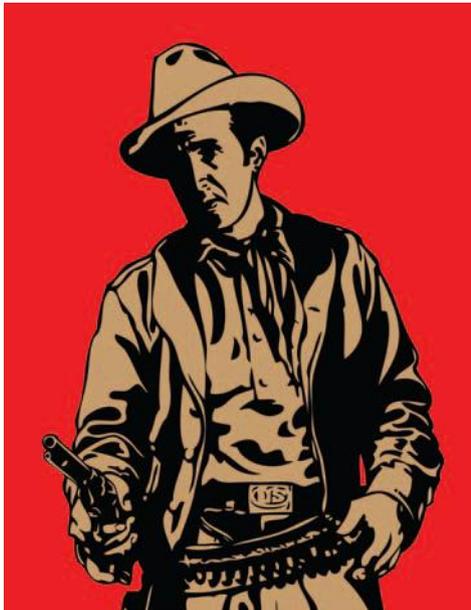
Images associated with Westerns, science fiction, comedy and action adventure films

- whether the same film is located in more than one genre
- which animations are borrowed most regularly
- any other questions that you formulate yourself.

Present all your information in a genre poster using images of films from the photo galleries on the Internet Movie Database **(www.imdb.com)**. Add your own text and display these posters on the class wiki.

Genre describes the look and feel of a film. It might use familiar and repeated patterns, images and narrative structures that provide you with a framework for viewing a film and that help you predict or speculate on the outcome. There will often be patterns of imagery, dress code, location, style and even dialogue, which are common to a specific genre. Some common film genres are **comedy**, **Westerns**, musicals, **science fiction**, **melodrama**, **horror**, **romantic comedy**, **action adventure** and **historical drama**.

Every film fits into a main genre, but some may also contain elements of other genres too (as you can see in the genre table that follows). For example, in *Howl's Moving Castle*, the sudden appearance of the dark, seething monsters is straight out of the horror genre.

These details about genre relate to the process involved in making a film and the kinds of questions we ask when we view a film. But genre is also a marketing tool. The tagline 'the greatest love story ever told' might just be the hook that gets you into the cinema.

Westerns films or novels set in what was known as the 'Wild West' of the United States of America (states west of the Mississippi river); they typically feature cowboys, and explore themes like justice and the law

Genre	Main features
Comedy	• a genre based around various forms of humour • designed to make audiences laugh • happy ending • may feature popular stand-up comics or television comedians of the day **Note:** there are various sub-genres, such as screwball comedies (popular during the 1930s and 1940s), parodies or spoofs, black comedies, gross-out comedies, romantic comedies and even sci-fi comedies, such as *Ghostbusters* (1984) and *Back to the Future* (1985)
Western	• the quintessential American film genre that tells stories primarily set in the old American West, or 'Wild West' • often feature a lone hero in conflict with his/her environment • often present simple morality tales • society is organised around codes of honour and private justice • can also present morally ambiguous worlds where the lines between good and bad are blurred and challenged
Musical	• developed out of the stage musicals of the 1920s and 1930s • song and dance numbers are interwoven into the narrative • glamorous settings and costumes • often have romantic storylines • musical comedy is a sub-genre of the musical

Genre	Main features
Science fiction	• a genre which speculates on future worlds in which humans are no longer in control of what they have created • it plays on fears of science and technology • explores the consequences of change and are often set in worlds after there has been a major disaster, such as nuclear war • may also feature alien life forms that threaten the future of humankind
Fantasy	• contain magical or imagined characters living in invented lands • may often cross over with another genre such as science fiction, action adventure or horror
Drama	• the most frequently produced film genre • interested in developing realistic characters or characters that are recognisable to the audience as particular types of people • will involve a major conflict that needs resolution • has many sub-genres, including romance, historical drama, war film, crime drama, comedy-drama, biopics and melodrama
Horror	• aim to startle, shock and even disgust the viewer • deal with audience's fears and nightmares, on both conscious and unconscious levels • may contain unhuman characters such as ghosts, vampires, zombies • may contain a supernatural element • a hero may have to conquer and destroy the source of the horror within the narrative
Romantic comedy	• are based on a similar structure where the hero and heroine have a chance meeting, fall in love (often without realising it), are separated by a misunderstanding, are reunited with a kiss or the promise of marriage • light-hearted and humorous storylines differentiate them from romantic dramas
Action adventure	• has a narrative structured around heroic acts • the hero may face incredible challenges that threaten his/her life or the life of those around them • may be set in different periods in history • features exciting, 'edge of your seat' sequences • may feature any of the following: explosions, car chases, fights • character development not a high priority • often have sequels that follow similar storylines
Teen film or coming-of-age film	• will feature a teenage central character, or protagonist • character development is focused on personal growth and change

ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1**

Activity 3.7 Understanding genre

Another way to explore genre is by developing an overview based on your viewing of films at home. Copy the genre table and add to it over time. An example has been completed for you. You may wish to place it on a class wiki that can be updated regularly.

Genre	Name of films	Familiar images, storylines and characters
Comedy		
Western		
Musical		
Science fiction		
Fantasy		
Drama		
Horror	*Disturbia* (2007)	the anti-social killer, the innocent victim, dark shadows, foreboding music, the removal of the killer in the ending
Romantic comedy		
Teen film or coming-of-age film		
Action adventure		

Activity 3.8 Addicted to a genre

Is there a film genre that you are addicted to? Some people cannot get enough horror or superhero films. Using the genres listed in the table in Activity 3.7, conduct a survey in which everybody in the class nominates their top three genres, and their favourite film within that genre.

OR

Do a 'vox populi' (opinion poll) at recess in which you randomly ask students at all year levels what genre they prefer.

• Construct a pie chart of your findings and place it on the class wiki.
• Use a roving small camera for the 'vox pop', but make sure you get permission from your teachers.

THE GENRES OF THE THREE ANIMATED FILMS

WALL-E is a science-fiction fantasy animated film with a strong message about the ways humans have neglected the biological health of the planet.

LOOK CLOSER

1. What does *WALL-E* say about humans not being in control of what they have created?
2. What current fears about our world does *WALL-E* project on to a future world?
3. What other evidence is there in *WALL-E* to suggest that it belongs in the science fiction genre?

parable a simple story which has a moral or a message

Howl's Moving Castle is a magical fantasy or a kind of **parable** on the importance of having heart and courage when facing fears. Many films in this genre take us to adjacent worlds that are one step removed from our reality and allow the viewer to compare and contrast our own world with the world of the film.

LOOK CLOSER

1. What are the elements of magic in *Howl's Moving Castle*?
2. Describe the worlds into which you are taken.
3. What do these worlds tell you about being human?

Mary and Max is a mix of comedy and melodrama. A sub-genre of drama, melodrama captures the ups and downs of people's lives and appeals to the heightened emotions of the audience viewing the film. Both Mary and Max experience these ups and downs throughout their twenty year relationship. Much of this melodrama is presented with humour and pathos.

LOOK CLOSER

1. What are the high points and the low points of Mary and Max's lives?
2. Mary and Max fall out of friendship with each other. How is their friendship tested by this falling out?
3. Which moments in the film made you laugh?
4. What are the happiest and the saddest moments of the film for you?

WALL-E (2008)

STORYLINES AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Earlier in the chapter you looked at the power of storytelling and the concept of the three-act structure. Let's look more closely at how *WALL-E* uses this structure:

Act 1: an introduction to ideas and characters

Act 2: a conflict which comes to a head

Act 3: a conclusion or resolution in which a better person or world is created and a satisfying sense of order is established, often described as the 'feel good' ending because the film ends happily.

Look closely at the Introduction (Act 1):

1 How does the setting of a polluted Earth affect you?
2 What specific details of this dead city do you specially notice?
3 Why is the cockroach included?
4 Why does WALL-E collect, store and value the waste he collects?
5 Does WALL-E have human qualities?
6 What is the significance of the arrival of EVE?

Look closely at the conflict (Act 2):

1 Where does the real conflict occur?
2 Why does the conflict occur?
3 How does it develop and who is involved?

Look closely at the Conclusion (Act 3):

1 How is the conflict resolved?
2 Are order and hope established? If so, how does the story reveal this?

THE LOOK AND FEEL OF *WALL-E*

WALL-E tells a good story, and also uses particular characters and specially designed worlds to convey meanings. The first forty minutes of *WALL-E* are like a silent film. Why do you think the director chose to do this? What do you focus on? For instance, the setting tells you much about the state of the Earth without dialogue and commentary. You are invited to reflect on that world.

Think about the design elements of *WALL-E*. After you view the film, look at the opening and closing scenes again to explore the characters and the worlds they inhabit. You might notice that the brown sepia tones (washed out and hazy) in the opening of the film contrast with the bright colours at the end of the film.

© 2008 Disney/Pixar

An image from *WALL-E.*

Now it is time to look at how an animated film creates its effects and messages.

REFLECT ON

1. What do you think is suggested by the filmmaker and the production designers in the choice of colours and textures in the opening and closing sequences of the film?
2. How does this choice of colours and textures underline the messages of the film?

The opening and closing images of *WALL-E* contain references to other works of art. Australian writer and illustrator Shaun Tan, who is known for his picture books such as *Tales from Outer Suburbia* (see Chapter 1) and *The Arrival*, was one of the concept designers for the film. Tan's film *The Lost Thing* won the Academy Award for Best Short Animation in 2011. Find some of his books in the library, or look at images on his website and see if you can spot the similarities between his work and the opening sequences of *WALL-E.*

The film's closing image is reminiscent of paintings from a nineteenth-century Dutch artist named Vincent van Gogh, who painted landscapes with strong, broad brush strokes.

RESEARCH >>

Activity 3.9 Finding artworks

Find images by Vincent Van Gogh at: **www.vangoghgallery.com** and Shaun Tan at: **www.shauntan.net**.

Print one of each artist's drawings and paintings and paste them in your workbook next to an image from *WALL-E.*

IDEAS IN *WALL-E*

Activity 3.10 Key ideas in *WALL-E*

Below is a table listing some of the ideas that WALL-E explores. Copy this table and add your own ideas to it. For each idea, identify two sequences from the film to illustrate it.

Key ideas	Scenes
• the impact of human excess on the environment • a yearning for the past • the significance of love and life • the need for companionship • respect for the planet • the consequences of consumerism and greed • loss of human priorities • optimism versus pessimism • the importance of remembering the past	

CLOSE READING OF TWO KEY SCENES

Now you are going to look closely at two key scenes in *WALL-E*. There are some prompts provided to help you focus on important aspects of the sequences. The prompts ask you to think about the effects created by the director's choices. There is a visual language that is used by the filmmakers to tell the story. The *Glossary of Film Terms* will provide you with the language to use in your responses.

Remember that opening sequences introduce characters, foreshadow ideas and set up expectations for the viewer. The endings of films often reveal personal growth and/or self-knowledge as well as a speculation on life ahead.

Scene 1: *WALL-E's world* (00.50–7.08)

Write brief notes on the following in terms of what the filmmaker has chosen to do and how you react to it:

- The use of the **establishment shots** of outer space
- The use of the song from *Hello Dolly*, 'Put on your Sunday Clothes'
- The details of the wasteland, such as the compacted waste in the form of skyscrapers
- The long shots of the city
- The cockroach
- The appearance of WALL-E
- The images of decay, including money strewn on the road
- The sense of a lost world
- The content of the screens advertising a world of escape. This is not animated. Why do you think this is? How does it contrast with the later animations of the colony on Axiom?
- WALL-E's 'home' and its collectibles and contents
- WALL-E's obsession with *Hello Dolly* and the reasons for this obsession
- The body language of WALL-E
- The feelings that are evoked in this sequence.

Scene 2: *The triumph of art and beauty* (83.00–88.50)

Write brief notes on the following:

- How is the relationship between WALL-E and EVE portrayed?
- The place of memory in lives. What activates memory?
- The soundtrack
- The close-ups of EVE looking into WALL-E's eyes

- The intercutting of WALL-E/EVE and *Hello Dolly*
- The accelerated ending that includes shots of the excited humans, the re-growth and its intense colours, and the zoom out which reveals the planet from a distance
- The music from *Hello Dolly* and its meanings ('It only takes a moment')
- The graphics of the credits and the story that they tell. Think about the colours and textures, references to the art of antiquity with the frieze and the mosaic as well as specific painters, such as Vincent van Gogh
- The image of the boot and the roots of the tree
- The use of the song 'Down to Earth'.

MARY AND MAX (2009)

A BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE WORK OF ADAM ELLIOT

Adam Elliot is a Melbourne-based writer and director whose earlier work included a trio of short claymations, *Uncle* (1996), *Cousin* (1998) and *Brother* (1999), all of which provide examples of Elliot's dark but humorous way of looking at the world through character.

> **Advice to Teachers:** Teachers are advised to view *Mary and Max* before showing it to younger students as the film includes some challenging issues, such as alcoholism, agoraphobia, homophobia, divorce, depression, anxiety, suicide, social isolation and Asperger's syndrome.

As in the Oscar-winning *Harvie Krumpet* (2003), Elliot creates the drama of ordinary people who are as flawed and unique as they are deeply and touchingly human. One of the common storylines suggested earlier in the chapter was that of overcoming 'difference'. All of Adam Elliot's films follow the idea that 'difference' is imposed on people. In other words, those who see themselves as 'normal' make comparisons and contrasts with themselves, when in reality, everybody is 'different'.

All of Adam Elliot's earlier work can be found on the *Harvie Krumpet* compilation DVD. View his shorter films either in class or at home.

Adam Elliott with some of his clay figures

REFLECT ON

1 In what ways do the central characters in these short films remind you of the characters in *Mary and Max*?

2 What do you think Adam Elliot is inviting you to think about his characters?

CHARACTERS

All of the characters in *Mary and Max* are distinctive. They have individual features and behaviours, which provide contrasts and comparisons. They do not fit into a clearly identifiable 'type'. The two sets of characters in Melbourne and New York are also representations of specific social settings.

Mary at her typewriter

Max at his typewriter

Activity 3.11 Character profiles

Write character profiles of 50 words each for one character in Mary's world and one character in Max's world. Include descriptions about appearance, personality, strength and frailties in your character profile. The characters are listed in the table below – don't they have great names?

Mary's World	Max's World
Mary Daisy Dinkle	Max Jerry Horowitz
Noel Norman Dinkle	Ivy Ruby Bevan
Vera Lorraine Dinkle	Doctor Bernard Hazelhof
Len Graham Hislop	Mister Alfonso Ravioli
Ralph Keith Dinkle	Marjorie Hyacinth Butterworth
Damien Cyril Popodopolous	

SETTINGS IN *MARY AND MAX*

As you view *Mary and Max* pay attention to the artefacts, objects, activities and behaviours of people's lives that reflect the period and places in which the film is set. Why do you think the filmmaker decided to use these two very different settings?

Setting is very important in this film and set, costume and production design are carefully constructed. Suburban Australia and big-city New York during the 1970s through

to the 1990s are the settings. The opening scenes, which are full of suburban seventies references, reflect the style of the period and the values of the characters. Note down things you notice that are strange or different from today's world.

HUMOUR AND TONE

Do you like funny films? Films that make you laugh out loud, or films that make you chuckle quietly to yourself? Although *Mary and Max* has ideas that are serious and potentially bleak, the director has used music, verbal humour and visual jokes to provide funny moments and balance the bleakness. It also uses **dark humour** or black humour. An example of dark humour in the film is when Max spins out when he is highly stressed.

dark humour humour that sees the funny side of something that we usually take seriously

The balance of affection, humour and sadness, optimism and pessimism, is consistent with the genre of melodrama as discussed earlier.

INTERACT AND SPEAK >>

Activity 3.12 Humour in *Mary and Max*

Let's tease out the humour in *Mary and Max*. You might discover that what is funny for one person might not be funny for someone else.

Appoint a note taker. In small groups of four, record the funniest moments and saddest moments in the film from everybody in the group.

Note all points of agreement and disagreement between members of the group.

Present your group's funniest and saddest moments to the class.

IDEAS IN *MARY AND MAX*

Do you sometimes find yourself thinking about a film quite a while after you have viewed it? Often it is the ideas in the film that keep us wondering.

IDENTIFY IDEAS >>

Activity 3.13 Key ideas in *Mary and Max*

On the next page is a table listing some of the ideas that *Mary and Max* explores. Copy this table and add your own ideas to it. For each idea, identify two sequences from the film to illustrate it.

Key ideas	Sequences

- the desire for acceptance and love
- how we define what is 'different'
- a common humanity
- the strength of the human spirit when things are difficult

CLOSE READING OF TWO KEY SCENES

Just as you did for *WALL-E* you are going to look closely at two key scenes in *Mary and Max*. As you view these scenes you should think about the director's choices and how this affects your response to the film. The *Glossary of Film Terms* will provide you with the language to describe your responses.

Scene 1: *A tale of two cities* (0.00–6.31)

- What does the overhead shot of Mount Waverley tell you?
- The detail of suburbia has been carefully selected. What does it say about this time and place?
- Why has the filmmaker chosen to use brown tones in the photography?
- What are you aware of in the camera work?
- How does the music and sound design affect the story?
- The 'realism' of the production design
- The portrait of Mary. What do you think she is like?
- The use of the voiceover. What does it tell you?
- The gallery of portraits
- The pace of the narrative
- The tone of the narrative
- The highlights of red such as Mary's hair clip.

Scene 2: *The big apple* (8.08–10.15)

Remember the period is 1976 and this scene is a portrait of a city at a specific time and place. It would have required a lot of research to represent New York accurately during this era. What do you notice that is different from images of New York that you see on television, in the news, or in movies? For instance, compare these aspects of *Mary and Max* with other images of New York:

- The establishment shots of New York
- The illuminated torch and the facial expressions of the Statue of Liberty
- The firing of bullets
- The sombre tones of the city
- The homelessness
- The portrait of Max at both an emotional and a physical level
- The link with Mary via the Noblets and what this might signify about their respective lives.

THE ENDING OF *MARY AND MAX*

At the end of *WALL-E* you will have identified the idea of a potentially happy outcome with the first signs of revegetation and regeneration. However, the ending of *Mary and Max* is very different.

LOOK CLOSER

1 Why do you think Adam Elliot decided to script the ending this way?

2 Is the ending too sad, or do you think the filmmaker wants us to take other meanings from it?

3 What discoveries does Mary make? Why do you think she smiles to herself?

HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE (2004) AND THE FEATURES OF JAPANESE ANIME

Have you ever viewed *Pokemon* or *Dragon Ball Z* or *Sailor Moon*? These films are known as Japanese anime. In Japan, people of all ages go to see Japanese animations. Anime, once known as 'Japanimation', and **manga** are both popular forms of entertainment for all age groups in Japan. Mangas are Japanese comics and are like novels with pictures.

manga a Japanese form of comic

- What do you know about Japanese anime?
- Have you seen any Japanese anime or read any manga? If so, which ones?
- What kinds of stories do they tell?

You have just explored a Hollywood animation *WALL-E*, a 'claymation' *Mary and Max*, and now we will look at a final example of animation, Japanese anime. To begin, start a class discussion board on which you list all the Japanese anime that you have viewed. This can be added to over time.

Howl's moving castle

A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON HAYAO MIYAZAKI

Osamu Tezuka is regarded as the 'godfather' of anime. He made the original *Astro Boy* in the 1960s. Like Tezuka, Hayao Miyazaki has produced many mangas. Miyazaki created a beautiful manga called *Nausicaa* that ran for over twelve years.

READ MORE

You can read more about Tezuka and *Astro Boy* at the official website of Osamu Tezuka.

The Studio Ghibli website will also provide you with more information on the work of Miyazaki through a fansite devoted to his work: **www.nausicaa.net/miyazaki/ghibli**.

DESIGN IN JAPANESE ANIME

Anime is known for its artistic mastery that creates its overall look. The stylised, colourful and vibrant characters often look like live action, due to careful selection and filmic elements, such as camera shots, angles and movements. Anime looks and feels different from Western animation, and its storylines are more complex.

You can see these differences in the following illustrations:

Howl's Moving Castle, Studio Ghibli

The Incredibles, Disney/Pixar.

© 2004 Disney/Pixar

LOOK CLOSER

What are the differences in use of colour, textures, characterisation (eyes and bodies) and storyline between *Howl's Moving Castle* and a Hollywood animation that you have seen?

Anime films often look like paintings, with textures and an almost 3-D, layered appearance, even though it is a 2-D art form. The backgrounds in anime are often created by hand and usually have little computer-generated work done in post-production (during editing, after the anime is filmed).

LOOK CLOSER

Miyazaki uses contrasting images in the film. Identify some of these contrasts. For instance, the images of fields and the images of war is one contrast. What other worlds does he create through his images?

THE POWER OF IMAGES

What were the images that made an immediate impact on you when you were viewing *Howl's Moving Castle*? Thinking about them helps to provide a framework for understanding the film's broader ideas.

The following activity will help you note your first impressions of *Howl's Moving Castle* by identifying and recording the memorable moments in the film. Write about five images or impressions from the film. There is an example to start you off.

Activity 3.14 Memorable moments

Record your first impressions of *Howl's Moving Castle* by identifying its most memorable moments. Copy the following table and record 4–5 images or impressions. An example has been included to start you off.

What: image, sound, dialogue	Why: the reason the impact was profound	How: the ways in which emotional effects are created
A feathered Howl flies through a fiery, aerial combat zone and is chased away, returning home exhausted, where he morphs back to normal and has a conversation with Calcifer about the dire straits of the warring country he lives in.	The speed of the action and the danger that Howl faces is breathtaking.	The brutality of war and its futility are created in this scene.

MAGICAL SETTINGS AND CHARACTERS

Did you notice some of the strange inventions, such as trolley cars, buggies and the first passenger vehicles in *Howl's Moving Castle*? Which of these are real and which are imaginary? For example, in the skies, strange aircraft slice through the air.

Magic lurks and hovers, both marvellous and threatening. We are introduced to this magical world at the start of the film when Sophie is literally swept off her feet (and above the rooftops) by a handsome stranger who defies gravity. Beyond the town, there is the beautiful **pastoral** landscape, and in the hinterland, there's a particularly strange machine, known as Howl's Moving Castle.

What do you make of this invention? Would you like to live in it? Would you like to be one of the characters in the worlds created by Hayao Miyazaki and be able to move through time and place and flit from one parallel world to another, effortlessly?

pastoral relating to country life or the countryside

At first, in *Howl's Moving Castle*, it looks as if Miyazaki is giving us a familiar heroine like the ten-year-old heroine of *Spirited Away* (2001) mentioned in Chapter 5. The heroine of *Howl's Moving Castle* is the shy Sophie, a dutiful eighteen-year-old, who works in the hat shop her father once ran. But her life is quickly transformed.

Transformation in characters is one of the characteristics of Miyazaki's films. The young/old transformation is an interesting starting point that indicates the transformation in Sophie.

COMPLEX STORIES IN *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE*

In Japanese anime, characters face complex journeys. Good and evil is not clear-cut. Heroes and villains are never fixed or impossibly 'good' or 'bad'.

CLOSE READING OF TWO KEY SCENES

Just as you did for *WALL-E* and *Mary and Max*, you are going to look closely at two key scenes, and think about the director's choices and how this affects your response to the film.

From your viewing and analysis of the other films you will have built up good specific knowledge about films and the decision directors make to influence us in particular ways. However, the *Glossary of Film Terms* will give you extra assistance. Looking at the opening and closing scenes will also reveal the transformations and changes in characters.

Scene 1: *Wandering the Waste* (0.00–10.42)

- Why has the director used mist as the castle moves through a pastoral landscape?
- What can you see in the shape of the bizarre form of the castle?
- The depiction of the town
- How do you think Sophie feels about herself? Do you think she is happy?
- Are the tones and colours employed by the artists and filmmakers important?
- How is the sense of something more sinister in a war which is about to erupt conveyed? (Think of the camerawork here.)
- The sound design and its effects
- The physical form of the henchmen and Howl
- The magic ingredients of the story
- How this opening sequence sets up expectations.

Scene 2: *Howl finds his heart* (100.10–110.30)

- The parallel worlds that are created and their effectiveness
- The magic play of light and its significance
- 'Find me in the future!' screams Sophie as she is sucked into a whirlpool. What has she learned about Howl from this strange dreamlike encounter in this other world?
- Sophie's powers and the reasons for her tears
- The multiple identities of Howl
- Sophie's fairytale kissing of Howl
- The sacrifice of the Witch of the Waste
- The revival of Howl and the reasons for this revival
- Breaking the spells
- The closure of the film and the sense of order that is established.

 ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1** © Macintyre et al. 2011 Cambridge University Press

READ, WRITE, CREATE

Now, it is time to draw on what you have learned from viewing these three animations. You will have a lot of ideas and knowledge that you have developed throughout this chapter which will allow you to write about and create your own films. Here are some suggested activities for you to choose from.

WRITE A FILM REVIEW

Write a 200-word film review on the animation you have enjoyed most in this chapter. Use **evaluative language** (such as 'wonderful', 'charming', 'ineffective' or 'disastrous') to promote your point of view and make both positive and negative judgements about the film. Identify your personal ideas and opinions about the animation to share with others. Explain and analyse the appeal of the animation genre.

Remember that a good review:

- invites and entices the reader with its opening sentence
- doesn't give away too much of the plot
- expresses an opinion and is able to justify that opinion
- places the text being reviewed in its historical, social and cultural context
- should tell the reader of the review what you think
- sounds like the person who wrote it – you should read over it and know it was written by you, in your voice.

You can use this structure for your film review:

Description of the context:

What you are reviewing? When it was produced? Who produced it? How does it fit into the genre?

Summary of the text:

What is the film about? What happens? Who are the characters? What do they do? Who is the intended audience?

Judgement or verdict:

Why do you think this film was made? How did the film make you feel? What do you think about the characters and their actions? What do you think of the film as a work of art? What does the film tell you about human experience? What do you think the film is *really* about?

CREATE A PODCAST FILM REVIEW

Pair up with someone who has written a review of the same film as you have. Present your film reviews as a podcast. Follow the steps for writing a film review in the previous activity.

You can use podomatic (**www.podomatic.com**) to record and publish your podcasts.

In your podcast, compare your personal viewpoints and justify your responses.

- What are the areas of agreement between your opinions about characters, settings and events?
- What are the areas of disagreement between your opinions?

CHARACTER PROFILES

Write a series of six character profiles (50 words each) in which you explore the concept of heroism in the three films.

The hero might be an individual of great strength and courage in the classic hero sense, but the definition of the hero needs to be re-defined when looking at the central character or characters in the three films.

There are both male and female heroes in the films that you have viewed. Here are some of them:

- Sophie
- Howl
- EVE
- WALL-E
- Mary
- Max.

READ AND EVALUATE

Hayao Miyazaki's starting point for the film was a small visual detail. When Miyazaki read a Japanese translation of the book *Howl's Moving Castle* by the British author Diana Wynne Jones, he was immediately taken with the idea of a castle that traverses the countryside.

Read the book by Diana Wynne Jones and write a comparison of the two, indicating points of similarity and difference.

WHAT MOVES YOU?

In viewing these three animated features there will be key moments when you were moved by what was said or happened. In *Mary and Max*, one of the most heartfelt sequences in the film might be the one in which Max is visibly and emotionally upset by Mary's signed book on Asperger's Syndrome. She has used him as a case study. He writes a deeply affecting letter in response.

Present clips from one or all of the films which you found touching, and in your oral presentation indicate why they had such an impact on you.

MAKE YOUR OWN ANIMATION

You might already be familiar with the process, especially if someone in the class has demonstrated the process as suggested in one of the earlier activities.

There are many websites on how to make an animation and here are some to get you started: **www.makemovies.co.uk** and **www.xtranormal.com**.

You will be guided through the process, which begins with storyboarding and goes through steps of making your own animation leading to your finished product.

If you want to look at student work to inspire you further, the website of The Australian Centre for the Moving Image has examples: **www.acmi.net.au/video_kids.htm**.

ANIMATED GAMES

Choose an animated game that you play at home and bring the game to class. Demonstrate the principles of game play and explain the ways in which an interactive story unfolds, which in most cases can always be re-played if you don't get the outcome you want.

CREATE A TRAILER OF YOUR FAVOURITE ANIMATIONS

Here are a few tips:

View lots of animation trailers and take notes. The best trailers pull the viewer into the film's plot and characters without giving away too much. Use popular editing software like iMovie or Moviemaker.

Sketch a storyboard for your trailer. You can use editing software or do it the old-fashioned way, with pen and paper. If you are clear about your concept at the outset, it will save you time and frustration at the computer later.

THE SOUNDTRACK

Choose ONE of the three films and present a sequence to the class in which you explain the effective use of the soundtrack and sound design. This could involve an explanation of the use of silence or the use of music from *Hello Dolly* in *WALL-E*, the voiceover narration of *Mary and Max* or the use of sound effects and music in *Howl's Moving Castle*.

The soundtracks of these films are complex, multi-layered and subtle. Soundtracks generally have several main elements:

• the voices of the characters
• the musical soundtrack and sound design
• the voice of the narrator in the case of *Mary and Max*
• silence.

Each film uses a musical theme associated either with character or with specific emotional moments in the story to heighten mood.

REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

The following questions will allow you to reflect on what you have learned about animated film and draw your ideas together. Your responses can go on your class discussion board.

1   What do you know about animated films that you didn't know before?
2   How do you now respond to the following statements?
   • Animated films are only for little kids.
   • Animated films tell us a lot about real life.
   • Animated films are more fun to view than films about 'real life'.
3   What are three common patterns and threads in *WALL-E*, *Mary and Max* and *Howl's Moving Castle*?
4   What do you believe is the goal in each film?
5   What human values do the central characters represent in each film?
6   Sum up your thoughts and ideas by writing a letter to one of the three filmmakers and tell them about what you have learned from viewing their film.

VIEW MORE

If you want to read more about the history of animation the following website is excellent: **www.filmsite.org/animatedfilms.html**.

The official websites for Studio Ghibli, Pixar, *Mary and Max* and Adam Elliot provide you with lots of ideas and fun activities which have not been covered in this chapter.

www.studioghibli.net

www.pixar.com

www.maryandmax.com

www.adamelliot.com.au/Adam_Elliot_Pictures.html

GHOSTS, GHOULS AND DOPPELGANGERS: EXPLORING GOTHIC HORROR STORIES

[4]
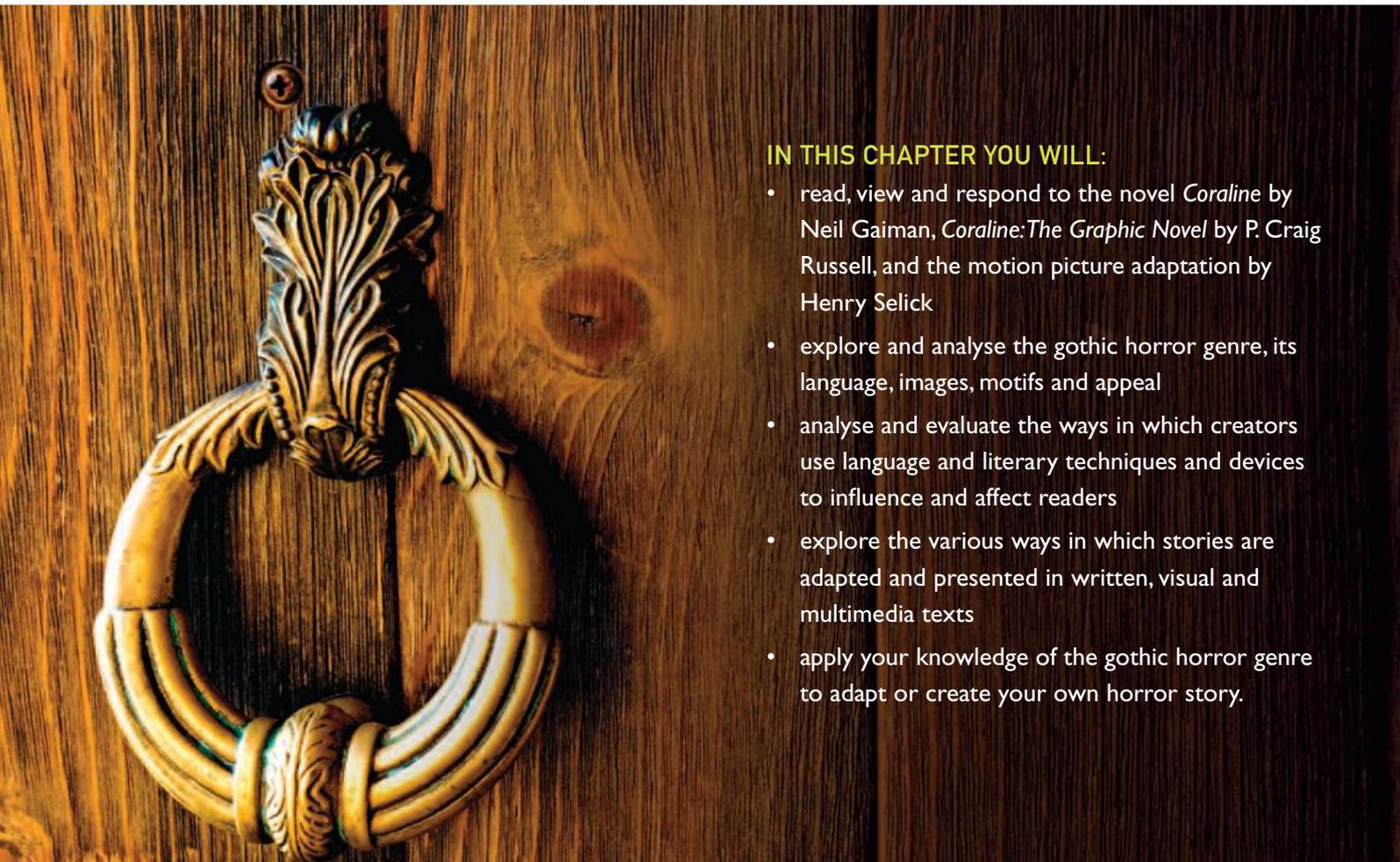
IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- read, view and respond to the novel *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman, *Coraline: The Graphic Novel* by P. Craig Russell, and the motion picture adaptation by Henry Selick

- explore and analyse the gothic horror genre, its language, images, motifs and appeal

- analyse and evaluate the ways in which creators use language and literary techniques and devices to influence and affect readers

- explore the various ways in which stories are adapted and presented in written, visual and multimedia texts

- apply your knowledge of the gothic horror genre to adapt or create your own horror story.

- What do we find scary when we read a book or view a film?
- Why do we like being frightened in films and books, but not in real life?

Activity 4.1 Your favourite scary books

Authors aim to scare us by making us imagine frightening images and situations. Discuss the following with a partner:

1   When you hear (or read) the words of a story or a poem, do they bring to mind images of the people and places they are describing?

2   Can you think of a scary story which has caused you to imagine frightening images and situations?

READING AND RESPONDING TO *CORALINE* IN THREE WAYS

Coraline by Neil Gaiman is a powerful story. It has been adapted into a graphic novel by P. Craig Russell and into an animated film, directed by Henry Selick. These three versions of the same story – print, illustrated and multimodal – show us that words are good at doing some things, that images and words are good at doing other things, and images, sound effects, music, editing and animation are good at even other things.

THE ORIGINAL NOVEL

The original novel version of *Coraline* begins in the normal world (although it is quite eccentric). Here is the opening:

> Coraline discovered the door a little while after they moved into the house.
>
> It was a very old house—it had an attic under the roof and a cellar under the ground and an overgrown garden with huge old trees in it.
>
> Coraline's family didn't own all of the house—it was too big for that. Instead they owned part of it.
>
> There were other people who lived in the old house.
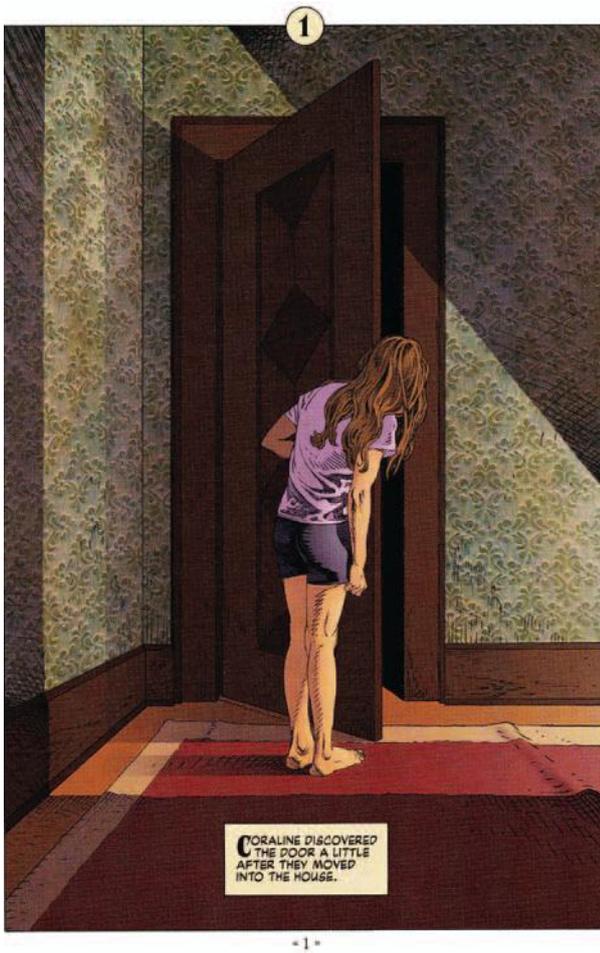
Source: Gaiman, N. (2002), *Coraline*, Bloomsbury, London, p. 9.

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

Here is the graphic novel visualisation of that scene:

CORALINE DISCOVERED THE DOOR A LITTLE AFTER THEY MOVED INTO THE HOUSE.

The opening of Coraline, the graphic novel

LOOK CLOSER

1 Which example do you find most effectively invites you into the story – the words from the original novel version or the image from the graphic novel?
2 Which one makes you want to read more?
3 Why?

THE FILM

Now view the two trailers from the film version of *Coraline* – the web trailer in HD and the official trailer, both of which you can view on YouTube.

REFLECT ON

1 Which of the two trailers is more interesting to you? Why?
2 Compare the trailers to the opening of the story you have just read.
3 What do you think this story is going to be about?
4 What kind of story do you think it is going to be?
5 What tells you that?

Note: The answers to these questions might be different for each format of the story. For instance, in responding to a multimodal text we are often influenced powerfully by music and sound.

Gothic horror story
a story of suspense and horror that makes us fearful; it contains supernatural events and characters, and has a sinister, claustrophobic atmosphere

As we explore *Coraline* (in all three versions) the focus will be on the elements of this story that make it a **Gothic horror story**.

THE GOTHIC HORROR STORY

Have you heard of Dracula? Have you read the story of Jekyll and Hyde? Have you ever viewed any films or TV shows that include a Frankenstein monster? All these stories and characters are examples of the Gothic **genre.** For at least two centuries, people have loved stories like this, especially those set in a gloomy castle or monastery.

Famous examples are *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (1918), *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (1897) and *The Strange Case of Dr Jeckyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson. Edgar Allen Poe also wrote scary short stories with Gothic elements. You might have seen film versions of these stories. Ghosts, goblins, hauntings, horrors, violence and fear characterise this type of story.

Early examples of these stories written for young readers that you might have read or seen the film version of include *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911) with its haunted house and gardens.

genre a type of text or category of texts that uses particular conventions

Modern examples you might have read or might like to read include Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, which tells the very dark story of the Baudelaire orphans and the terrible Count Olaf who pursues them with the intent to kill. It is also darkly funny. Another book by Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, is about an orphan who lives in a cemetery and is brought up by ghosts and a vampire. It has a menacing opening involving a toddler being chased by a killer with a knife. Most famous of all is the *Harry Potter* series set in the Gothic Hogwarts Castle with evil and creepy characters, including Moaning Myrtle.

Coraline is a particularly modern example because it suggests that evil is not external. Evil is not a force that acts on us, but comes from within us. Perhaps Coraline is in some way responsible for the appearance of the 'other mother', and therefore she must repel this embodiment of evil from the world herself.

Here is a poem by Jack Prelutsky that captures the atmosphere of the gothic horror story and also reveals that humour and fear often go together. 'The Ghoul' is fun to read aloud, especially in a dark room while shining a torch on the face of the reader.

The Ghoul

The gruesome ghoul, the grisly ghoul
without the slightest noise
waits patiently beside the school
to feast on girls and boys.

He lunges fiercely through the air
as they come out to play,
and grabs a couple by the hair
and drags them far away.

He cracks their bones and snaps their backs
and squeezes out their lungs,
he chews their thumbs like candy snacks
and pulls apart their tongues.

He slices their stomachs and bites their hearts
and tears their flesh to shreds,
he swallows their toes like toasted tarts
and gobbles down their heads.

Fingers, elbows, hands and knees
and arms and legs and feet–
he eats with delight and ease,
for every part's a treat.

And when the gruesome, grisly ghoul
has nothing left to chew,
he hurries to another school
and waits…perhaps for you.

Jack Prelutsky

IDEAS >>

Activity 4.2 Annotate the poem

Read the poem again and copy it into your workbook. Annotate it using the prompts below. This helps you to focus on the ideas and feelings in the poem and the way the poet has used language to convey them.

?	Place a question mark (?) next to lines that you need to ask a question about, for example, when the lines contain words that you haven't encountered before.
C (connect)	Write a **C** next to lines that connect to something that you have read or experienced before. Pay special attention to lines that remind you of scary stories, TV programs or films that you have read/viewed before.
Underline	Draw a line under words or phrases in the poem that you think are written in an interesting way. You could go a step further and add the names of poetic techniques that you recognise, such as repetition, imagery or alliteration.
!	Use an exclamation mark for images or words that you find interesting or surprising.
✓	Use a tick for lines or sections that you really like. There is good horror vocabulary used here. You might like to highlight words you like that you can use later on when you create your own story.

Activity 4.3 Features of the Gothic genre

Now you can view scenes from the 1949 film *The Secret Garden*. Search for 'Margaret O'Brien *The Secret Garden*' on YouTube. Identify the elements of the gothic in these scenes.
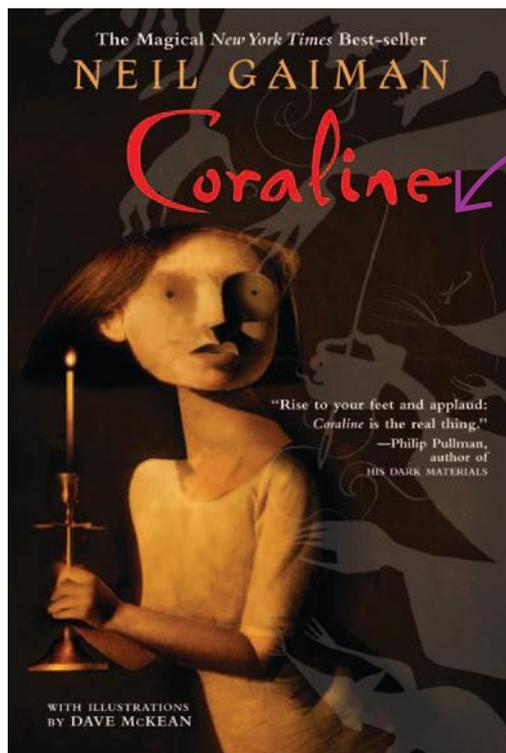
Before we look at the specific characteristics of a Gothic horror story, and *Coraline* in particular, we will look at some of the covers for the books to see how the illustrators have suggested that this is a scary, suspenseful story.

Activity 4.4 Analysing cover images

Following is a series of different covers for the novel.

Consider what it is about each of the covers that tells you *Coraline* is going to be a scary book. There are some suggestions for the first cover below.

GOTHIC IMAGERY

- Dark colours and shadow are on Coraline's face.
- Coraline has a startled expression – what is she seeing?
- Coraline is holding a candle in an old-fashioned candle holder.
- Shadowy images of a hand are grabbing Coraline.
- Coraline looks as though she is running away – perhaps being chased.
- Her gaze – Coraline is looking straight at us.
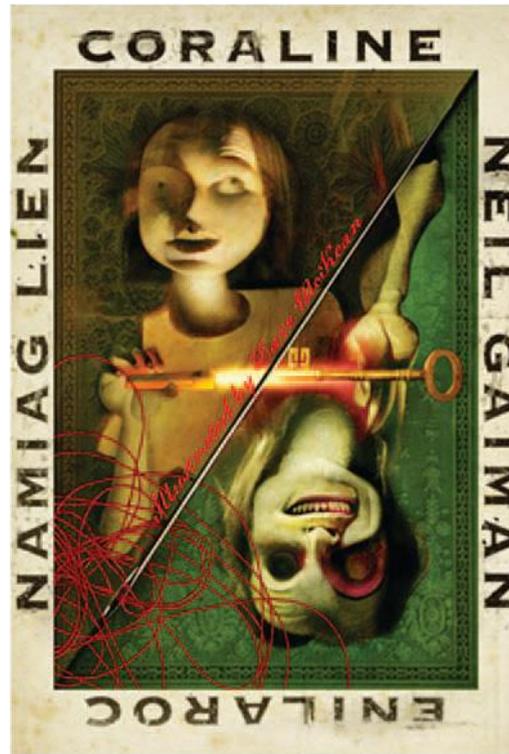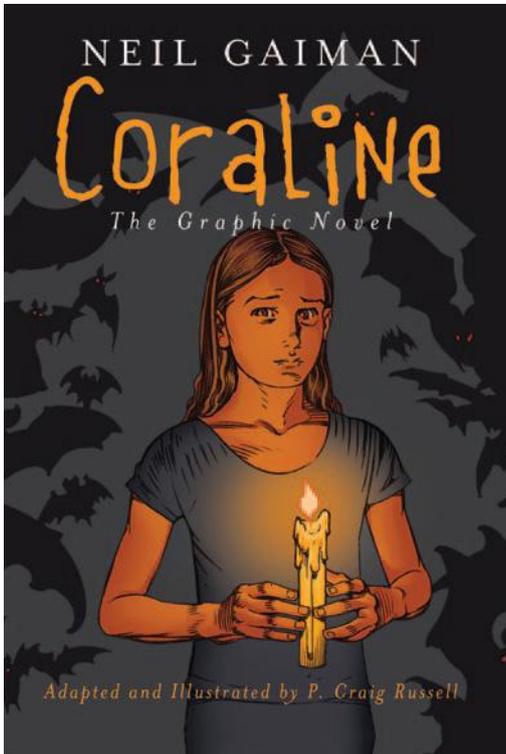
REFLECT ON

Can you think of other devices that might make characters in your own Gothic tales familiar or strange or different? For example, scissorhands? Lizard tongues? Fish scales on the backs of the character's hands? No eyebrows or eyelashes?

GOTHIC LANGUAGE FEATURES AND WRITING TECHNIQUES

You have looked at how illustrators create a sense of creepiness and scariness – or a sense of the Gothic – using colour, shape, choice of image, lighting, gaze, etc. Writers choose to use words to create atmosphere, suspense and dread. While you read, think about how Neil Gaiman has created a 'good shiver'. Write down examples and excerpts. How does he create suspense and fear?

Eventually, you will have the opportunity to write your own horror story, so take note of aspects of the features you think you might use in creating your story. You might want to start your own **Writer's Notebook** to make notes in.

For example, you can record your ideas for a scary cover, or keep copies of images you have seen. You can add to these notes whenever you find something useful or interesting.

Neil Gaiman uses particular techniques to create a sense of threat, such as the verses and the warnings that characters like Miss Spink, Miss Forcible and the crazy man upstairs give to Coraline. A writer (including you when you write your horror story) uses language and pacing to create suspense and dread, and to create a memorable setting.

Another device writers use is **foreshadowing**. For example, in *Coraline* we are introduced to the door in the opening sentence and we know it is going to be important later in the story. Find other examples of foreshadowing of events. This is an important feature of writing horror and you will need to keep it mind when you come to writing your own story. You could add this idea to your Writer's Notebook.

As with film making, the author of a novel can vary the pace of the story to create a sense of suspense and tension. While you are reading *Coraline*, identify where Neil Gaiman does this and where you are conscious of reading *quickly* to see what will happen. Have a set of sticky notes next to you and mark pages to share as examples. These examples will help you when you create your own story.

IDENTIFYING THE GOTHIC FEATURES IN *CORALINE*

Below is a list of features found in Gothic novels. There are some examples from *Coraline* to help you think about this type of story and the choices the author has made to build an atmosphere of threat and fear. Copy the list and add to it over time from your own reading and from the films and television programs you view. Add extra columns for other texts.

Gothic features	Examples from *Coraline*
Setting: story takes place in one location and setting is given in detail	The old house has an attic, a cellar and a run-down garden: 'stunted, fly-blown rose bushes … squidgy brown toadstools which smelled dreadful'.
Unexpected/nightmarish events	Coraline hears a '*kreeee…aaaak*' in the night and something that 'scuttled down the darkened hall, fast, like a little patch of night'.
Foreshadowing	'… Coraline, who was standing in the doorway, cast a huge and distorted shadow onto the drawing room carpet—she looked like a thin giant woman.'
Supernatural events	
Foreboding/dread	Miss Spink and Miss Forcible read in Coraline's tea leaves that she is in terrible danger.

Gothic features	Examples from *Coraline*
Vocabulary is used to create atmosphere	'There was a cold, musty smell coming through the open doorway: it smelled like something very old and very slow.' 'uneasily', 'confused', 'peculiar'.
Omens	
Elements such as sighs, moans, howls, eerie sounds, footsteps, gusts of wind blowing out lights, thunder and lightning, crazed laughter	
Contrast of everyday with strange events	
Dismembered body parts	
Other people's lives are dependent on the central character	
Threatening, evil monster	
Resolution – something changes in the real world	

CHARACTERS

A Gothic horror novel depends on the reader identifying with and caring about the fate of the central character, in this case Coraline Jones.

Coraline Jones

Coraline has an unusual name – writers choose names carefully. Perhaps you are already thinking of names for your own story. You might like to change letters like Neil Gaiman has done to create an unusual name. Write possible names in your workbook or Writer's Notebook when you think of some, or come across some interesting ones. You might also draw or paste in pictures of how you imagine they look.

Coraline Jones as she appears in the film

> **REFLECT ON**
>
> 1 'Coraline'? What kind of name is that?
>
> 2 Why isn't it 'Caroline'? Why do you think that her surname is 'Jones'?
>
> 3 What does her unusual name make you think about Coraline?
>
> 4 Why do you think the author chose such an unusual first name to sit beside such an ordinary family name?

Activity 4.5 Write a character profile of Coraline Jones

Answer the following questions to help you collect the information needed to write a character profile of Coraline Jones.

1   Neil Gaiman doesn't tell us what Coraline looks like, but he tells us what she likes and doesn't like. For example, we know that she doesn't like her father's recipes, such as 'leek and potato stew with tarragon garnish and melted Gruyère cheese'. Find out what else she likes and doesn't like.

2   He also tells us the things she likes to wear, such as a 'blue coat with a hood, her red scarf and her yellow wellington boots'. You can create a character by showing what they eat, wear, do and say without having to describe them directly. This will be helpful when you create your character. What else does Coraline wear?

3   Coraline lives in a strange, old house. Write a brief description of where she lives and who with: place, time, family, friends, neighbours, etc.

4   Writers also use what characters say to show us what they are like. For example, Coraline says to her mother, 'But Mum, *everybody* at school's got grey blouses and everything. *Nobody's* got green gloves. I could be the only one.' Find other examples of things Coraline says that gives you a picture of what she is like.

5   Can you find examples of what other characters think of her?

6   Do you think she is brave? Find examples of the choices she has made through the novel to provide evidence for your opinion.

7   What are Coraline's strengths and weaknesses?

8   Would you like her to be your friend? Why or why not?

9   Does Coraline change during the story? Is she different at the end from at the beginning? How?

10 If you think she has changed, identify what has caused the change. Consider that at the end Mr Bobo says 'Coraline' repeating her name with wonder and respect: 'Very good, Coraline.'

Activity 4.6   Create a 'Word Cloud' for Coraline

Go to the **Wordle website** (**www.wordle.net**) and, using the Wordle, create a Word Cloud for Coraline. Paste in the words you have used to describe her and what others have said about her from the profile above.

1   Choose a font that best suits her.

2   What words appear the largest for Coraline?

ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1**

3   Compare your Word Cloud with the ones by others in your class and then discuss the similarities and differences.

4   Paste your Word Cloud into the class wiki.

5   Sketch how you imagine Coraline to look, giving her a clear facial expression.

The 'other mother'

The other important character in the story is the 'other mother'. Coraline has to outwit and defeat her in order to save herself, her parents and the ghostly children. Now we will focus on her.

One day, Coraline takes an old key that unlocks the door, goes through it and finds a world very like her own, and in this world she finds a woman who looks very much like her own mother:

> Only her skin was white as paper.
>
> Only she was taller and thinner.
>
> Only her fingers were too long, and they never stopped moving, and her dark red fingernails were curved and sharp.
>
> ...
>
> And then she turned around. Her eyes were big black buttons.
>
> 'Lunchtime, Coraline,' said the woman.
>
> 'Who are you?' asked Coraline.
>
> 'I'm your other mother,' said the woman.

Source: Gaiman, N. (2002), *Coraline*, Bloomsbury, London pp. 34–5.

Here is how the 'other mother' appears in the graphic novel. View the film trailers again and pay particular attention to the 'other mother'.

LOOK CLOSER

1   Which version of the 'other mother' is the creepiest?

2   Why?

3   Is what you imagined the 'other mother' to look like different from the graphic novel and film versions?

4   How, specifically?

This idea of the 'other mother' and the 'other father' is one that many readers find creepy and they wonder where the author got the idea from. Here is how Neil Gaiman explained it in an interview:
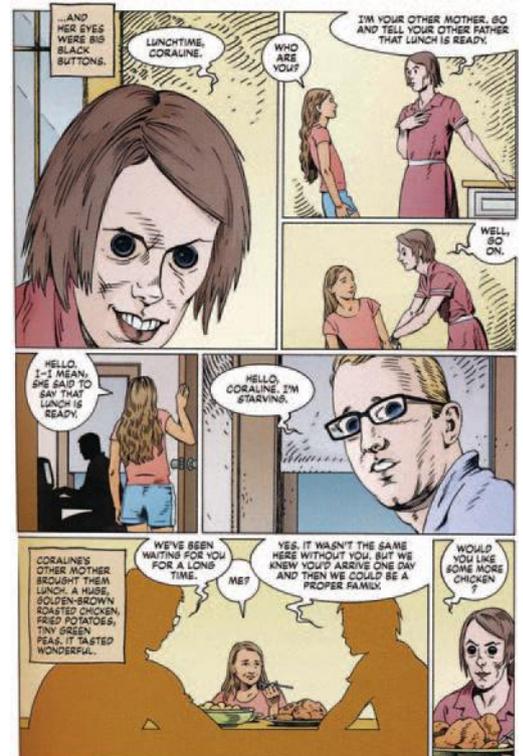
The 'other mother' in the graphic novel

'It began with a very odd story by Lucy Clifford … called 'The New Mother', a most unsettling story. … The kids go into the town and see a boy playing on an unusual musical instrument and ask if they can have a go. He says only if they are naughty. So they go home and they are naughty. The mother says, "Please don't be naughty because I will have to go away and your new mother will come." The children are naughty three times and after they visit the boy, their mother isn't there. They can hear something in the distance: they see the flaming eyes of their new mother, and hear the swish, swish, swish of her wooden tail. And that idea stayed with me – the idea that your mother could be replaced with something – 'the other mother'. It was suddenly there and it strangely trips off the tongue.'

Source: La Marca, S. and Macintyre, P. 2008, 'Neil Gaiman', *Viewpoint: on books for young adults*, 16 (2), p. 8.

READ MORE

You can read the complete interview in *Viewpoint: on books for young adults* 16 (2) pp. 8–9.

You can read more about the link between *Coraline* and 'The New Mother' (1882) by Lucy Clifford at Locus Magazine online.

You might like to read Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*, which takes its central idea from Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, particularly the character and role of the tiger, Shere Khan.

What a lot of readers find really creepy is not the 'other mother' herself, but her button eyes and the button eyes of all the characters in the alternative world behind the door.

REFLECT ON

1 Why do you think the author gives the 'other mother' button eyes?

2 What do you think the button eyes symbolise? For example, there is a saying about the eyes being the 'windows to the soul'; toys often have buttons for eyes; the Bible talks about 'an eye for an eye'; ancient Romans puts coins on the eyes of the dead.

3 Why does the 'other mother' want Coraline to have button eyes?

INVESTIGATE AND WRITE >>

Activity 4.7   Write a character profile of the 'other mother'

1 Earlier in this chapter we looked at the description of the 'other mother' when she first appeared in the novel. Examine the following description, which is towards the end of the novel:

'… her head almost brushed the ceiling of the room—and very pale, the colour of a spider's belly. Her hair writhed and twined about her head, and her teeth were as sharp as knives …'.

Find examples of how the author describes the changes to the 'other mother'.

2   What does she say that gives you a picture of what she is like?

3   What do other characters say about her? For example, the cat says, '… there's no guarantee she'll play fair'.

4   What makes her change from the 'ideal' mother to the hideous creature she becomes?

Activity 4.8 Create a 'Word Cloud' for the 'other mother'

Go to the Wordle website again **(www.wordle.net)** and this time, paste in the words you have used to describe the 'other mother' and what others have said about her from the profile above to create a Word Cloud.

1   Choose a font that best suits her character.

2   What words appear the largest for her?

3   Compare your Word Cloud with examples by other people in your class and discuss their similarities and differences.

4   Paste your Word Cloud into a class wiki.

Activity 4.9 Visualising the 'other mother'

Sketch how you imagine the 'other mother' looks towards the end of the novel. These examples from the film will help you.

You might draw her realistically or as a cartoon strip figure. You could use a drawing program, such as Comic Life: **www.comiclife.com**.

The 'other mother' in the film version of *Coraline*

Other characters

While the central conflict in the story is between Coraline and the 'other mother', there are many other important characters.

Activity 4.10 Character portraits

In small groups choose two characters from the following list that you will focus on:
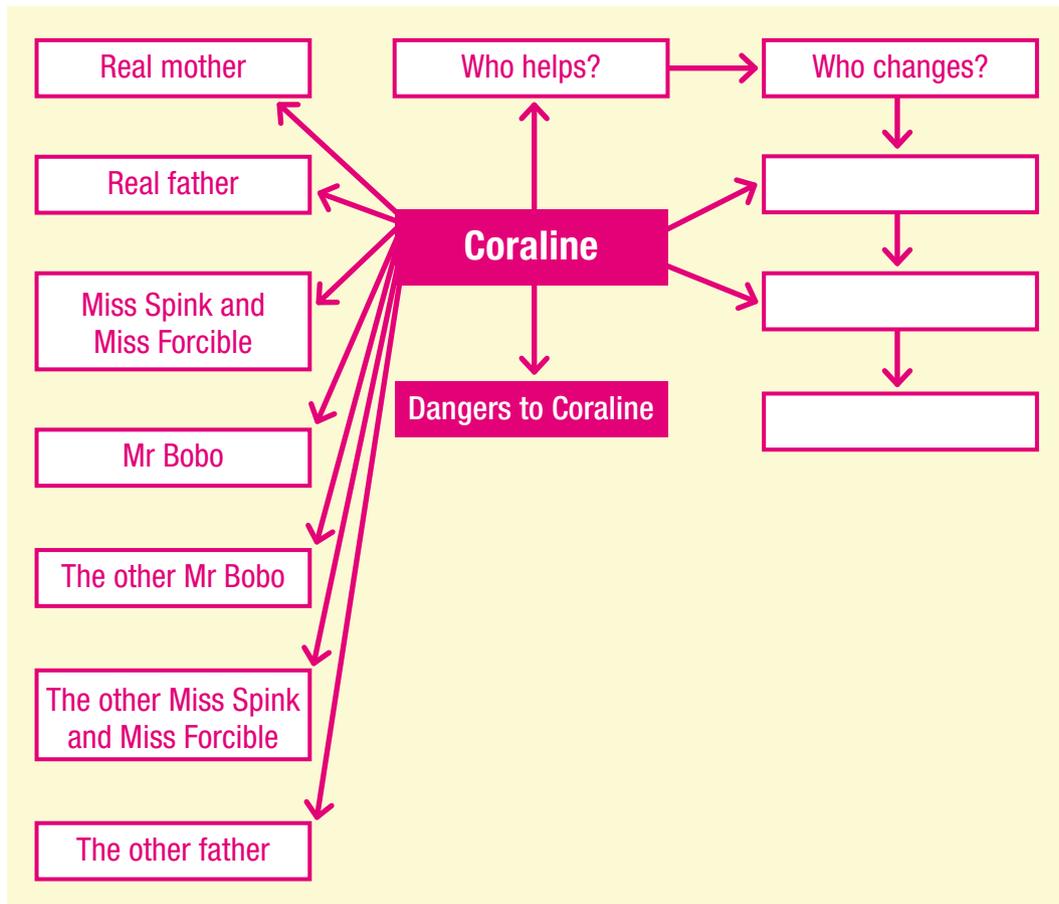
- Coraline's real mother
- Coraline's real father
- Coraline's other father
- Miss Spink and Miss Forcible
- The other Miss Spink and Miss Forcible
- Mr Bobo
- The other Mr Bobo
- The ghost children
- The cat.

Respond to what you find out about these characters by completing the following:

1 Describe your character/s in five words.

2 Create an image of them – draw, paint, paste, etc.

3 Interview your character/s (either audio or video) about how they feel about Coraline and the 'other mother'. Keep in mind how they are portrayed in the novel. For example, Miss Spink and Miss Forcible are eccentric, ageing actresses, who live with their Scottie dogs. Their speech is full of references to the theatre, such as 'trod the boards' and 'Don't wear green in your dressing room.' When they read Coraline's tea leaves they tell her that she is in great danger. Mr Bobo is mysterious. He says he is training a mouse circus, but no one has seen the mice. He tells Coraline that the mice have a message for her: 'Don't go through the door.' Is he really crazy? The ghost children behind the mirror seem to have been there for a long time – for such a long time that they have forgotten their names. How long have they been imprisoned?

4 Put your images and interviews onto a class wiki.

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Activity 4.11 Create a Story Map

1   Share all the information about the characters that the class has collected.

2   Create a Story Map like the one below to show how the characters interact with Coraline. For example, are they her friends? Do they help her? Do they change in the 'other world'? Create your own headings and connections using arrows.

Real mother	Who helps? →	Who changes?
Real father		
Miss Spink and Miss Forcible	**Coraline**	
Mr Bobo	Dangers to Coraline	
The other Mr Bobo		
The other Miss Spink and Miss Forcible		
The other father		

RESPONDING TO IDEAS IN *CORALINE,* THE NOVEL

BEING BRAVE

When Coraline tells the cat the story of her father saving her from the yellow wasps, she says that being brave is not about *not* being scared. As she puts it, being brave 'is when you're scared but you still do it anyway'.

LOVE

The author tells us that:

> ... the other mother loved her. But she loved Coraline as a miser loves money, or a dragon loves its gold. In the 'other mother's' button eyes, Coraline knew that she was a possession, nothing more.

simile a comparison between two different things, actions or feelings using the words 'as' or 'like'

REFLECT ON

1 Is this really love?

2 Can you have 'bad love' and 'good love'?

3 Evaluate the similes used; how does a miser love money or a dragon its gold?

4 Write a **simile** for 'good love'.

EXPLORING IDEAS

Coraline says:

> I don't *want* whatever I want. Nobody does. Not really. What kind of fun would it be if I just got everything I ever wanted? Just like that, and it didn't *mean* anything. What then?

Extracts from *Coraline*, Neil Gaiman (2006)

LOOK CLOSER

1 Do you agree with what Coraline says about wanting things?

2 Do you think she has always thought this, or has what has happened to her changed her views?

3 Can you think of an experience that happened to you that supports what she says?

INVESTIGATE >>
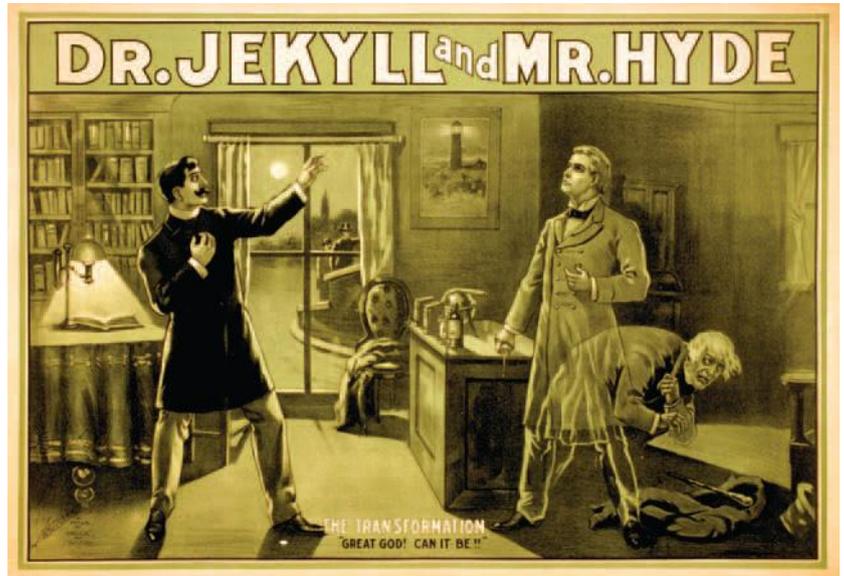
Activity 4.12 Doppelgangers

In the parallel characters in the 'other world', Gaiman uses the concept of the **doppelganger**.

Investigate the concept of doppelgangers and their use in other stories and films. For example, the television show 'Dr Who' often uses doppelgangers, or the short story *William Wilson* (1839) by Edgar Allan Poe.

doppelganger a ghostly double of a person, or an evil twin whose appearance usually has sinister outcomes

1 Make a short list of doppelgangers in other texts.

2 Why doesn't Coraline have one?

3 The ghostly children call the 'other mother', the 'beldam'. Investigate what a beldam is.

LOOK CLOSER

1 There is another character without a doppelganger and button eyes in the 'other world'. Who is it?

2 Why does this character not have button eyes?

intertextual references when a writer refers to other texts (films, novels, poems, etc.) within their own text

intertextuality the way in which texts are connected to each other

Authors often refer to other works in their texts in a network of connections that are referred to as **intertextual references** or **intertextuality**.

Here are some examples of intertextual references in *Coraline*. You might find others:

- The black cat, particularly in the way it talks to Coraline is like the Cheshire Cat in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll)
- Coraline is the same age as Alice
- Coraline goes through a door, while Alice goes down a rabbit hole.
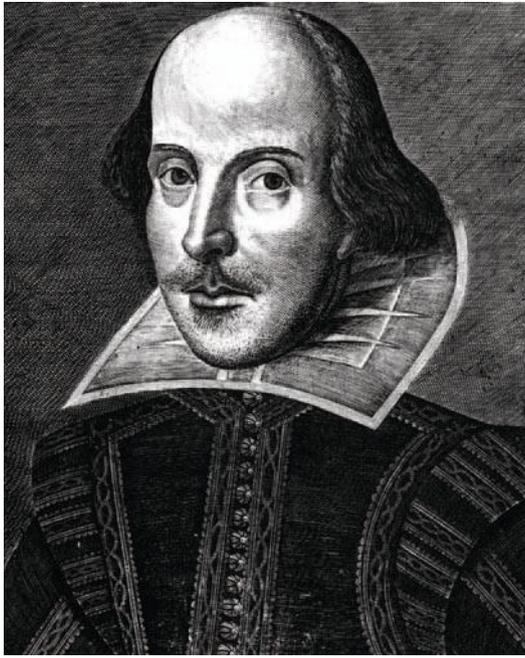- The rats in *Coraline* chant:

    We have eyes and we have nerveses

    We have tails, we have teeth,

    You'll all get what you deserveses

    When we rise from underneath

- This chant is similar to the way that Gollum speaks in *The Lord of the Rings* (J.R.R. Tolkien) 'my precioussss'.

The Cheshire Cat as imagined by John Tenniel

- The 'other mother' is a like a fairytale witch or like the mythic Medusa who had snakes for hair. For example, her hair is described as 'wriggling like lazy snakes on a warm day' and 'like the tentacles of a creature in the deep ocean'.
- 'Is this a dagger I see before me?'; 'What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.'; 'I know not how to tell thee who I am.' These are all quotations from the plays of William Shakespeare. Find out which plays the lines come from.

William Shakespeare

REFLECT ON

1 Why might the author, Neil Gaiman, have chosen to include all these references to other stories/plays in his story?
2 Do you think he wants you to read these stories and plays?
3 Do you think knowing about such references affects the meaning?
4 Do you enjoy stories and films more when they remind you of other things you have read/viewed?

EXPLORING LITERARY LANGUAGE

metalanguage the terms or language we use to describe the structures and features of language

Writers use different types of language – often called 'figurative' or 'poetic' language – to make their writing more interesting and evocative. Good writers often use literary devices to 'show' rather than 'tell' the reader. Neil Gaiman uses such language and some examples from *Coraline* are given below. These terms are examples of the **metalanguage** we use to describe literary language. You might like to write some examples in your workbook or Writer's Notebook, as you read.

GUIDE TO METALANGUAGE IN *CORALINE*

Alliteration
the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words that are close together, such as: 'helping hand' and 'curled on the couch'.

Analogy
the illustration of an idea by means of a more familiar idea that is similar to it, such as: 'She popped another black beetle into her mouth, and then another, like someone with a bag of chocolate-covered raisins.'

Assonance
the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds in words that are close together, such as 'slippery to grip'.

Hyperbole
when exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect. For example, Coraline's father says about the rain: 'It's bucketing down.'

Metaphor
a comparison of one thing to another where it is described in terms of being something else without the use of 'as' or 'like', such as: 'The world she was walking through was a pale nothingness'. Mixed metaphors can be fun to find, such as: 'A virgin forest is one where the hand of man has never set foot.'

Onomatopoeia
words that seem to imitate the sounds they refer to, such as 'fizz', 'crackle', 'hiss'.

Personification
when animals and inanimate things are referred to as if they were human, such as: "It was the kind of rain 'that threw itself down from the sky and splashed where it landed'".
'It appeared to Coraline that [the house] was crouching down and staring at her.'

Pun
the humorous use of a word or words, which look or sound alike but have different meanings; a play on words.

Simile
a comparison between two different things, actions or feelings using the words 'as' or 'like', such as: 'The mist hung like blindness around the house.'; 'hair wriggling like lazy snakes on a warm day'; and a voice 'as dry as a dead fly on a window sill in winter'.

Activity 4.13

Find examples of similes that you like.

1   Write your own similes to describe things instead of using adjectives.

2   Use similes to show feelings, such as 'as sad as …'; 'as scared as …', etc.

3   Try to create powerful images and feelings.

In Chapter 2 Coraline is bored and her parents are too distracted and busy to spend time with her. Think about how she is feeling. How do you interpret what Coraline writes in the corner of a white sheet of paper?

M   S T
    I

LOOK CLOSER

1   Why might the author have wanted it written in this particular way?

2   What happens if you think of this word as a pun ('missed')?

3   What significance does the dropped down letter 'I' have?

READ AND VIEW MORE

Before we leave the gothic horror novel, you might like to read or view some other examples:

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman

MirrorMask by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean

MirrorMask a film by Jim Henson

Wolves in the Walls by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean

Tales of Mystery and Imagination by Edgar Allan Poe

Tales of the Unexpected by Roald Dahl

Dracula films such as *Dracula 2000* by Wes Craven

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein directed by Kenneth Branagh

WHAT IS A GRAPHIC NOVEL?

Some of you might have read the *Tintin* books by Hergé, or the *Asterisk* books by Goscinny. Graphic novels are written and illustrated stories in which the reader reads simultaneously the written narrative, the dialogue represented in speech balloons, the interior conversations in thought balloons, and the interactions between characters and the setting portrayed in the images. You might recognise these visual features from comic books, which are similar in style but not in content.

In graphic novels, readers need to be able to 'read' the often sophisticated visual text as the artist animates what are complex, multi-layered stories.

The narrative is expressed in sequential visual frames in which the illustrations can range from comic-like **manga** to **photorealist art**, with frames within frames, close-ups, spot-lit scenes, and so on.

While some of the visual style of graphic novels is similar to comics, graphic novels tend to deal with real-world problems as well as important personal and social issues, and often have protagonists who tend to be lonely people who don't fit in.

Graphic novels belong to a long tradition of stories which are told in illustrations, such as cave paintings and medieval tapestries. The Pulitzer Prize winning *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman is one of the most famous examples of the genre. *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *The Wall* by Peter Sis, *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan, *American Born Chinese* and *The Eternal Smile* by Gene Luen Yang are all fine examples worth reading.

manga a Japanese form of comic

photorealist art a style of painting that resembles photography in its meticulous attention to realistic detail

P. Craig Russell has adapted Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* into a graphic novel. In this version of the story, P. Craig Russell has chosen what to keep as words from the text and what is better told in the visuals. You will explore some of the decisions he has made as an artist to capture the mood, tension and threat in Neil Gaiman's story.

P. Craig Russell has said that the appeal of doing such adaptations is the challenge involved in taking a piece of the novel apart and then putting it back together into a completely different art form. He likens it to solving a puzzle.

You will look more closely at the specific features of a graphic novel in Chapter 5 on pp. 176–77.

It took P. Craig Russell two years to complete the adaptation of *Coraline*. The brief was to produce a 200-page book. In an interview he said that his favourite scenes were 'the other' and the evil attic. He also liked drawing the creepy basement and the 'other mother's' hand.

LOOK CLOSER

1. Can you identify what has been left out of the original novel in the adaptation to a graphic novel?
2. What do you think the effect on the story is? Is it positive or negative?

COMPARE AND EVALUATE THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF *CORALINE* AND THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

Now it is time to compare the experience of reading the original book with reading the graphic novel. Before you complete the PMI chart in Activity 4.15 on the following page, here are some ideas to start your discussion and comparison.

Activity 4.14 Reflect on the graphic novel

In pairs, write brief answers to the following discussion points:

1   What is the balance between image and text?
2   What is the balance between action and speech?
3   How do the images and the text merge to tell the story?
4   How 'filmic' was the reading experience? Consider the use of close-ups, wide-shots, dialogue, changes of pace, etc.
5   Do the illustrations depict Coraline's development as a character? Is she a different person by the end of the book?
6   Why do you think she is presented realistically rather than as a cartoon character?
7   Did you imagine sound effects when you read the book?
8   If you had to choose music to accompany the story what would it be?

Activity 4.15 Comparing the novel and graphic novel

1   In pairs or in a small group, discuss how reading the graphic novel was different from reading the original novel.
2   Individually copy and complete the PMI chart below for the novel and the graphic novel to record your responses.
3   Compare these responses with other group members. You might find that some people's pluses are other people's minuses.
4   What does this suggest about the different ways we read?

| Novel		
Plus	Minus	Interesting

Graphic Novel		
Plus	Minus	Interesting

There are descriptions in *Coraline* of the two worlds that Coraline lives in: the real world of life with her parents and the parallel one with the doppelgangers.

LOOK CLOSER

1. How has the illustrator reflected the contrast between the two worlds that Coraline lives in?
2. Do you think the illustrations heighten the horror? Give examples.
3. How does the illustrator create tension?
4. How does the illustrator show movement?

For every illustration, the illustrator chooses a particular viewpoint from which to view the action. For example, in the panel on the right, consider the effect of the colours used, the effect of the lighting, that we are seeing Coraline from behind and cannot see her face, and importantly that we are seeing Coraline from above, looking down on her.

SHE WENT INTO HER PARENTS' BEDROOM BUT THE BED WAS MADE AND EMPTY.
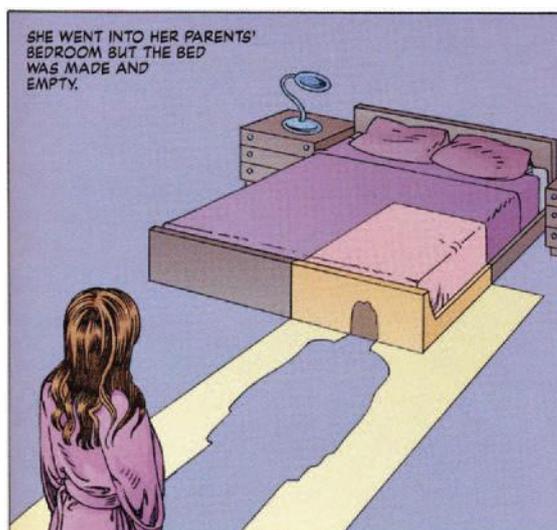
Coraline in her parents' bedroom

ILLUSTRATIVE TECHNIQUES

COLOUR

used to prompt an emotional response, such as anger with red or calm with green

TEXTURE

can be used to create empathy, such as an animal's fur

LINE

can be thick or thin, vertical (suggests isolation), horizontal (suggests calmness), diagonal (suggests tension, off balance), jagged (suggests anger, destruction), curved (suggests fluidity, movement)

FORM

how objects are arranged in relation to each other (such as a hunched figure turned away from other figures)

BALANCE AND LAYOUT

dominant images, where your eye travels, framing (what is in the frame, what is out of it or partially in/out)

LOOK CLOSER

1   Find examples of where the viewpoint is critical to your experience of the story.

2   How do angles, close-ups and the size of panels influence the way we 'read' the images?

3   Find examples of where the illustrator has created a particular mood or conveyed strong emotion.

4   What illustrative techniques are used to create this mood or emotion?

READ AND EVALUATE >>

Activity 4.16 Powerful images

1   Choose three striking images from the graphic novel version of *Coraline* and think about their power and effect.

2   You might want to photocopy the panels/pages and annotate the images according to the illustrative techniques described above.

3   You could scan the panels/pages and project them on a smart board to analyse and annotate them and then share your thoughts with the group/class.

RESPONDING TO *CORALINE* THE FILM

Now it is time to view the second adaptation of the story *Coraline*, the stop-motion animated film, written and directed by Henry Selick. There is a comprehensive treatment of film and its components in Chapter 3, which will be useful for you to refer to. You might also like to read through and familiarise yourself with the *Glossary of Film Terms* before you view the film.

STOP-MOTION ANIMATION

You might remember reading about stop-motion animation in Chapter 3, where you might have looked at particular examples of the *Wallace & Gromit* films, *The Nightmare before Christmas* and *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Stop-motion animation is a technique that involves building models of figures and moulding them into different positions for each frame. It is different from computer–generated animation.

In the case of *Coraline*, however, the animators stored each frame on a computer, which allowed them to refer to a monitor while reviewing their shots. For the character of Coraline there were 30 different puppets, over 200 000 facial expressions and nine changes of costume. There were more than 150 different sets of varying sizes, all hand constructed. Four hundred and fifty individual Scottie dogs were created for the scene in the theatre.

READ AND VIEW MORE

If you like stop-motion animation you might like to view a scene from *Wallace & Gromit: A Close Shave* (1995), which is available on YouTube.

You can also read *Coraline: A Visual Companion* by Stephen Jones. It is all about the process of adapting the book to the film and the sorts of things that animators have to do.

Another book you could look at is *The Alchemy of MirrorMask* by Dave McKean and Neil Gaiman, which explains the decisions made to convert the book to film.

Bringing *Coraline*'s world to life in the film

REFLECT ON

1 Why do you think the filmmaker chose stop-motion animation rather than live action or computer-generated techniques?
2 Do you think a live action film would have been too scary?

BOOK TO FILM: PROCESSES AND PROBLEMS

Neil Gaiman says of the writer Henry Selick who adapted the book into the animated film and wrote the script: 'Henry wrote a script immediately. … However, the problem with the first script was that it was probably *too* faithful to the book.'

REFLECT ON

1. Considering what you now know about *Coraline* the novel and *Coraline* the film, what do you think Neil Gaiman means here?

2. What do you think would make the script *too* faithful?

3. Can you think of an example of a film that you have seen that is too faithful to the book? For example, some people think the *Harry Potter* films follow the books too closely.

INTERACT AND WRITE >>

Activity 4.17 Adaptations

In a small group, identify the changes that have been made to the adaptations and talk about why you think they have been made.

To help you, consider the following statement by Neil Gaiman:

> In the book I could describe something indescribable … I could talk about walking through a fog, and the way that the trees stopped being trees and just became things that look like the idea of trees.
>
> That is something you can do on paper, and it is something you can do in prose with somebody's imagination, because you know that nobody is ever going to have to draw it, or make it real.

Then, individually, answer the following questions:

1. How has the filmmaker been able to deal with this problem?

2. Do you think it is successful?

3. Why, or why not?

LOOK CLOSER

Henry Selick, the director, says of the film: 'The screenplay is less creepy than the book … It is still dark in moments, but also funnier and lighter in others. It has a little more balance.'

1. In small groups, discuss this statement and consider why the director might have aimed for this.

2. Do you think the humour takes away some of the tension, or do you agree that the story needed more balance?

In discussing the actual character of Coraline, Neil Gaiman has said that Henry Selick's version of her was totally different from what he originally imagined, but that he didn't have a very clear idea of what she looked like, in his head. You now have three pictures of Coraline – the one you have created in your mind when reading the novel, the realistic one created by P. Craig Russell, and the animated version created by Henry Selick.

REFLECT ON

1 Does the version of Coraline in the three versions match the image you have created of her?
2 Which version do you feel most attached to?
3 Which is the 'real' Coraline to you?

SPECIFIC CHANGES FROM BOOK TO FILM

Here are some of the changes that have been made in the adaptation of the book to the film version. Keep a record of any changes that you notice, why you think they have been made, and whether or not you like them.

- The setting has moved from England to Ashland, Oregon (United States of America).
- Mr Bobo has become Mr Bobinsky, a Russian giant.
- Wybie Lovat and his grandmother, who owns the house (now called the Pink Palace), have been added. Henry Selick said this character was needed because in the book Coraline has a lot of internal thoughts and in the film he needed someone for her to share those thoughts with. Why do you think he chose a boy rather than a girl? Is Wybie a good choice as someone shy and lonely?
- The Coraline look-alike doll has been added – Wybie gives it to Coraline.
- The beautiful garden created by her 'other father' has been added.
- The performance in the theatre in Miss Spink and Miss Forcible's room has been expanded.
- Mr Bobinsky's mouse circus that spells out her name has been added.
- The door is a little door that Coraline can crawl through.
- Music and sound effects have been added.

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LOOK CLOSER

In pairs, discuss these changes and why they have been made. Do you agree with/like all of the changes? Do you understand why there had to be changes from one medium to another?

LISTEN AND ANALYSE >>

Activity 4.18 Analysis of sound effects and music

1. Choose a particular section of the film, such as when Coraline first meets Wybie and view it with the sound off.
2. Then view the same section with the sound on and compare the experience.
3. Do you think that the scene lacks atmosphere and tension without the sound? Or is it more powerful?
4. Do you notice more about the visuals with the sound off?
5. Repeat this for another section of the film where you think sound effects and/or music are very important.

REFLECT ON

1. What is the scariest part of the book? The graphic novel? The film?
2. What makes each part so scary?
3. Is it the same for each version of the story?
4. If not, why are different parts scary in different versions of the story?

You have explored three different versions of the same story and examined in detail the similarities and differences, and the various ways that each version tells the story. Now you can demonstrate this new knowledge in different ways. You have been keeping ideas in your Writer's Notebook to use. Here are some activities for you to choose from.

DEBATE

Form two teams of three students each. Your topic is: 'Film is more powerful than the written word.' Divide teams into **Affirmative** and **Negative**. Use the novel and film versions of *Coraline* as primary source documents.

AFFIRMATIVE PLANNING:

- First speaker: define topic (key words and their meanings)
- Introduce team theme and other speakers' topics, as well as your own
- Make arguments (first speaker affirmative has no rebuttal)
- Third speaker: can only introduce one new point in addition to their overall summary of the team's case and rebuttal of the opposition's argument
- Second and first speaker: should have 2–3 points per speech which need to be developed and linked back to the team theme/case.

NEGATIVE PLANNING:

- All speakers have to rebut the opposition's argument
- Third negative does not introduce new points
- Be prepared to redefine and correct opposition's definition
- First speaker must state whether or not the team agrees with the opposition's definition.

There are many online resources available to help you plan your debate and develop your argument.

DRAMATIC RESPONSES

IN THE 'HOT SEAT'

In your groups, take it in turns to 'hot seat' Coraline, the 'other mother', Coraline's real parents, Wybie and the cat.

A hot seat activity involves a class member sitting in a seat and immediately becoming one of the characters from the story. The group and the class (as perhaps journalists or television talk show hosts) ask questions of the person.

The 'journalist' interviewers take notes during the interview, think up new questions and later write up their stories, including an intriguing headline for the national or

local newspapers. Alternatively, present a current-affairs segment in television format. You might like to model your hot seat interview on a favourite television talk show with members of your group role-playing the interviewer. You could record these interviews and put them on the class wiki for *Coraline*.

ROLE-PLAY

Another drama activity to choose is a role-play, which involves taking on the role of specific characters in a particular setting or situation.

You are going to role-play a situation after the end of the story. Select one of the following: (You might have a better idea, but remember you will have to work out how the characters get into role.)

1 The next day, after the end of the story, Coraline's parents realise they have not been paying enough attention to her and invite Miss Spinks, Miss Forcible and Mr Bobo for lunch. As they are having lunch, Coraline notices a white-fingered hand running across the grass towards the group. Act out the lunch scene.
2 On Coraline's first day at her new school, she is aware of the three ghost children sitting next to her. They whisper to her that they never want to leave her now that she has saved them. Act out Coraline's first day at school.

Setting up the role-play:

There are stages to go through to make sure your role-play is well planned and satisfying to you and your audience. Before you design and rehearse your role-play it is important to 'get into role'.

Initiation: (getting into role – you can do with this with a partner or with the group)
Scenario 1:

For Miss Spinks and Miss Forcible, write a letter that each of them has written to another friend who lives in New York, telling them all their news.

For Mr Bobo, write his diary entries about how the mice rehearsals are going.

For Coraline's parents, write the conversation they had about choosing this house to live in.

Scenario 2:

For the ghost children, write the conversation they have about wanting to be with Coraline for ever, and to be able to protect her.

For Coraline, write the conversation she has with the black cat about going to her new school.

The role-play:

During this stage, you need to make sure that the goals that the characters are setting out to achieve are made difficult either by conflicts or dilemmas. (Stories need complications.) Brainstorm these goals in your group and think about challenges that will animate your role-play through frustrating the characters. Some writers suggest that characters should have two unsuccessful attempts at solving the problem and then succeed on the third.

Act out your role-play for the class.

WRITING OR ART

Now you can transform your knowledge from the role-play activity into writing or artwork, such as a report for the local newspaper on the dramatic events that upset the social occasion of the lunch of well-known local identities (it could be mainly photographs with captions), or an entry in Coraline's diary about her first day at school. You could storyboard the events of her first day at school and the encounter with the ghostly children (graphic novel style). These are only suggestions. You might have much better ideas.

Creating your own texts

Adapt

Take a section of a written story – either from *Coraline* or a related scary story and adapt it to a graphic novel format (you could use **www.comiclife.com**).

OR storyboard it

OR produce a short film version of it, using video editing software, such as Photo Story, iFilm or Filmmaker

OR rewrite the story of *Coraline* as a poem, using 'The Ghoul' as a model.

Present your adaptation to the class and include a short talk about the decisions you made.

Create

Write your own horror story incorporating the necessary elements and language that characterise the genre – you have a lot of material in your Writer's Notebook to help you.

OR write a script and perform it

OR produce a short horror film, using video editing software, such as Photo Story, iFilm or Filmmaker

OR create a short stop-motion film of a scary event.

Present your work to the class including information on how your story developed from an idea to a narrative, and how important the choice of music and sound effects were, for example.

REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

CORALINE

At the beginning of *Coraline*, Neil Gaiman has included a quotation from the author G.K. Chesterton: 'Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.'

- Reflect on why you think the author chose this quotation to introduce his story.
- Do you think that *Coraline* tells us that dragons can be beaten?
- How important is beating dragons in a horror story?

GOTHIC HORROR STORIES

- From creating your own stories, what do you now know about the three different versions of gothic horror stories – written, graphic novel and film?
- How hard was it to create a really scary story?
- What did you have to know about? What did you have to do?
- Were there dragons that were beaten in your story?

FAIRYTALES
REVAMPED

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[5]

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- read, view and respond to classic and contemporary fairytale texts in a variety of forms, including the short story, graphic novel and film

- identify, analyse and evaluate the features of fairytales and draw on prior knowledge about fairytale characters, plots and events

- explore how fairytale texts are shaped and re-shaped by different historical, geographical, social and cultural contexts

- challenge conventional ideas about heroism and how these are represented in fairytale texts

- apply your knowledge to create your own fairytale graphic novel or short story using appropriate textual conventions.

contemporary writers
writers who are published within our time

- How can fairytales influence the way we see ourselves and the world?
- Why do fairytales remain popular and relevant?
- How often do fairytales appear in the books, films and TV programs we enjoy? Why are writers inspired by them?
- Why are **contemporary writers** interested in re-writing fairytales?

Once upon a time

Activity 5.1 What do you know about fairytales?

Search for the '*Shrek 2* trailer' online and view it. The *Shrek* films are extremely popular and include many references to characters and events from fairytales that you may recognise. Copy the table below and list all the references that you recognise.

Image or words from the trailer	Origin (What text is it from?)	Why do you recognise it? (Where have you seen/heard it before?)
Carriage made from an onion	*Cinderella*	It reminds me of the part of an old fairytale when Cinderella's fairy godmother transforms a pumpkin into a carriage.
A pub named 'The Poison Apple'	*Snow White*	I remember reading about it in a book of fairytales we have at home. Snow White bites the poisoned apple when the disguised Queen hands it to her.

Share and compare your lists and see how many fairytale references you have in common.

TALES WITHIN TALES

Writers and filmmakers refer to other stories in their texts all the time. When a writer refers to another text within their own story it is called **intertextuality**. If readers know the text that the writer is referring to it can add to their understanding or enjoyment. Interestingly, many writers refer to fairytales within their stories.

intertextuality the way in which texts are connected to each other

REFLECT ON

1   Why do you think that fairytales are commonly used as **intertextual references**?
2   Do any of your favourite writers use this technique?

intertextual references when a writer refers to other texts (films, pictures, books, poems, etc.) within their own text

EXAMINE AND CREATE >>

Activity 5.2 Features of fairytales

In a small group, choose one of the fairytales that you recorded in Activity 5.1 and see if you can find it on the SurLaLune Fairytales website: **www.surlalunefairytales.com**. This website is a rich resource for fairytale enthusiasts. It contains many versions of popular fairytales for you to choose from. Read at least one version of your story. Create a Story Map like the one on the following page about your story, using the subheadings and questions from the example:

Characters: What kinds of characters appear? What adjectives would you use to describe them?

Messages: What is the reader invited to think about as they read? Is there a moral? What can you learn from the tale?

Places: Where do the events in the tale occur? Are the settings described in detail?

Challenges: What obstacles do the characters need to overcome?

Resolutions: How are the challenges overcome? Are the loose ends tied up neatly?

```
                        Characters
                            ↑
         Places  ←      Fairytale      →  Challenges
              ↙                      ↘
        Messages                      Resolutions
```
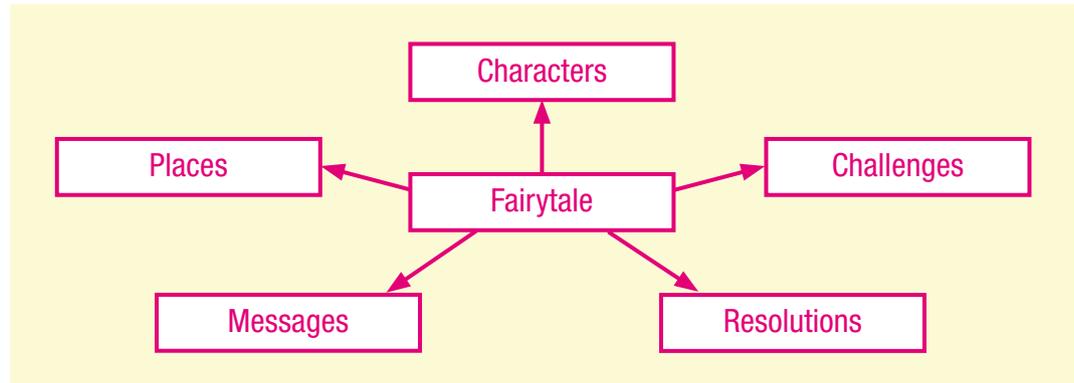
Place your Story Maps on your class wiki, intranet page or classroom walls for your classmates to read, or present your Story Map to the class.

LOOK CLOSER

1   What similarities do you notice between the fairytales you have read and discussed?
2   What elements do these stories have in common?
3   Based on your class exploration, construct a list of elements that you could expect to see in a fairytale.

IN A LAND FAR, FAR AWAY ...

Neil Gaiman is a writer who often uses fairytales as inspiration. Read his poem 'Instructions'. The author has written a set of instructions, in the format of a poem, which read like a manual for what to do should you ever find yourself in a fairytale. Before you begin reading the poem, think about the fairytales that you have read and discussed. Do you think that instructions could be helpful for a character in a fairytale? What about instructions for someone reading a fairytale?

Neil Gaiman

INSTRUCTIONS

Touch the wooden gate in the wall you never saw before,
Say "please" before you open the latch,
    go through,
walk down the path.
A red metal imp hangs from the green-painted front door,
as a knocker,
do not touch it; it will bite your fingers.
Walk through the house. Take nothing. Eat nothing.
However, if any creature tells you that it hungers,
feed it.
If it tells you that it is dirty,
clean it.
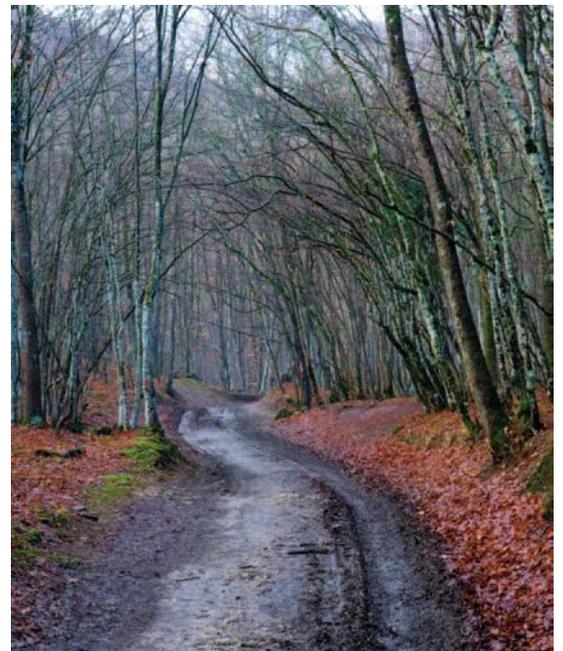
If it cries to you that it hurts,
if you can,
ease its pain.

From the back garden you will be able to see the wild wood.
The deep well you walk past leads down to Winter's realm;
there is another land at the bottom of it.
If you turn around here,
you can walk back, safely;
you will lose no face. I will think no less of you.

Once through the garden you will be in the wood.
The trees are old. Eyes peer from the undergrowth.
Beneath a twisted oak sits an old woman. She may ask for something;
give it to her. She will point the way to the castle. Inside it
are three princesses.
Do not trust the youngest. Walk on.
In the clearing beyond the castle the twelve months sit about a fire,
warming their feet, exchanging tales.
They may do favours for you, if you are polite.
You may pick strawberries in December's frost.

Trust the wolves, but do not tell them where you are going.
The river can be crossed by the ferry. The ferryman will take you.
(The answer to his question is this:
If he hands the oar to his passenger, he will be free to leave the boat.
Only tell him this from a safe distance.)

If an eagle gives you a feather, keep it safe.
Remember: that giants sleep too soundly; that
witches are often betrayed by their appetites;
dragons have one soft spot, somewhere, always;
hearts can be well hidden,
and you betray them with your tongue.

Do not be jealous of your sister:

know that diamonds and roses

are as uncomfortable when they tumble from one's lips as toads and frogs:

colder, too, and sharper, and they cut.

Remember your name.

Do not lose hope – what you seek will be found.

Trust ghosts. Trust those that you have helped to help you in their turn.

Trust dreams.

Trust your heart, and trust your story.

When you come back, return the way you came.

Favors will be returned, debts be repaid.

Do not forget your manners.

Do not look back.

Ride the wise eagle (you shall not fall).

Ride the silver fish (you will not drown).

Ride the grey wolf (hold tightly to his fur).

There is a worm at the heart of the tower; that is why it will not stand.

When you reach the little house, the place your journey started,

you will recognise it, although it will seem much smaller than you remember.

Walk up the path, and through the garden gate you never saw before but once.

And then go home. Or make a home.

Or rest.

Source: Neil Gaiman, 2006, *Fragile Things: Short Fictions and Wonders*, London: Headline Publishing Group, pp. 253–6.

READ AND ANALYSE >>

Activity 5.3 Analysis tools

A really good way of getting to know texts that you haven't read before is to **annotate** them. Annotating helps you to find and remember interesting details within the poem that you can then think about in more detail. When you annotate a text you highlight important information and add words or symbols to remember how you responded to the text and what you noticed.

Make a copy of 'Instructions' by Neil Gaiman and annotate it using the following symbols:

annotate to highlight important information and add words or symbols

?	Place a question mark (?) next to lines that you need to ask a question about, e.g., when they contain words that you haven't encountered before.
C **(connect)**	Write a 'C' next to lines that connect to something that you have read or experienced before. Pay special attention to lines that remind you of fairytales or stories that you have read before. For example, the line 'witches are often betrayed by their appetites' might make you think of *Hansel and Gretel*.
<u>**Underline**</u>	Draw a line under words or phrases in the poem that you think are written in an interesting way. You could go a step further and add the names of poetic techniques that you recognise, such as repetition, imagery or alliteration.
!	Use an exclamation mark for images or words that you find interesting or surprising.

INVESTIGATE >>

Activity 5.4 Instructions for fairytale adventures

On your next reading of 'Instructions', look for the pieces of advice that Gaiman provides about being inside a fairytale. Assign the pieces of advice to the categories in the table:

What should you do?	What should you avoid?
What attributes do you need?	How should you interact with others?

Apply your knowledge

Choose a character from one of your favourite fairytales. Think about how the lessons in 'Instructions' would apply to them.

• When does your favourite character encounter a challenge?
• What would have helped them on their journey?

Write

Write a letter or a poem (like 'Instructions') to your favourite character providing them with advice that would help them on their quest.

OR

Create an instructional text for a situation that you would typically find in a fairytale. For example:

• 'How to live happily ever after without really trying.'
• 'A wolf's guide to fairytale survival.' (Think of the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood*.)

- 'So you want to be a Prince?' (Advice for a frog who wants to transform into a Prince.)
- 'The fool's guide to finding your way home again.' (Think of *Hansel and Gretel*.)

Don't be afraid to use your sense of humour!

READ MORE

Once you have read and annotated the poem on your own or as a class, you might like to listen to Neil Gaiman read this poem to an audience. Search online for Neil Gaiman reading 'Instructions'. As you listen to Neil Gaiman read the poem see if you notice anything new about the poem. Does listening to the poem add to, or change, your understanding of it?

CREATE AND SPEAK >>

Activity 5.5 Poetry and performance

In small groups, create your own performance of this poem (or a section of it). Use **tableaux**, movement and your voices to capture the important moments in the poem for the rest of your class. You may choose to take photographs of your tableaux and use them as the basis of a multimodal version of the poem by adding text and music to the photos in MovieMaker.

tableaux scenes in which all the actors freeze in one position

OR

In small groups, create a performance entitled 'It's a fairytale world'. Draw on events and characters from a variety of fairytales to show your audience what living in a fairytale is like, and what they should do if they find themselves in a fairytale.

THE ORIGINS OF FAIRYTALES

Fairytales have a very long history. The fairytales that we read today have evolved over hundreds of years. They began as oral tales that storytellers told to entertain their families and audiences. Then, people began to write them down and publish them.

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5: FAIRYTALES REVAMPED
Cambridge University Press
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Some of the most famous writers of fairytales are the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde, but no one can really know what the original version of each fairytale is. Different cultures around the world have their own versions of *Cinderella*, *Rapunzel* and *Little Red Riding Hood*.

It is impossible to know which version came first. In fact, that is one of the best things about fairytales – writers are free to use their creativity to adapt, re-write and **revision** them to make the fairytale sound fresh and new again. Writers who use fairytales as inspiration must keep some elements the same (so that we still recognise the fairytale), and change other elements in order to create something new. *Tangled* (2010) is an animated musical film by Walt Disney Animation Studios that has revised the 'Rapunzel' tale.

revision to change a text in some way, in order to alter the meaning

REFLECT ON

1 Are any of your favourite books or films inspired by fairytales?

2 Why do you think that so many writers are inspired by fairytales?

3 Can you think of any reasons why fairytales from the past should be revisioned?

ANALYSE AND EVALUATE >>

Activity 5.6 Visual analysis: versions of *Rapunzel*

Rapunzel is a popular fairytale that is attributed to the Brothers Grimm. It still inspires many writers today.

Look closely at these images of versions of the 'Rapunzel' story that have been published during the last few years.

Image 1

© Disney

Image 2

 ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1**
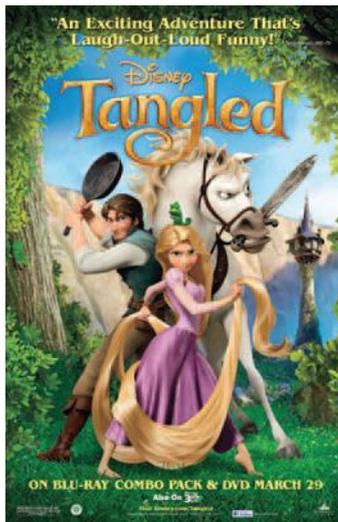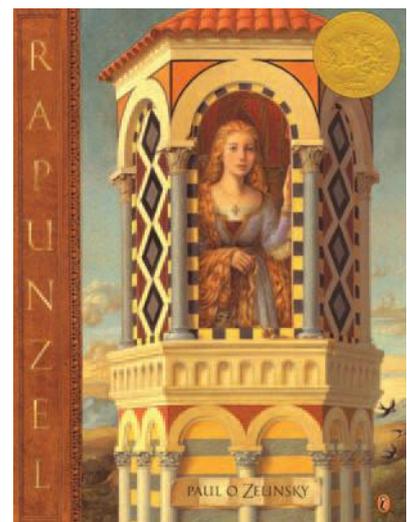
Images on book and DVD covers and film posters are chosen very carefully to catch your attention and make you want to take the product off the shelf. They often provide you with the first clues about the story. The images can also influence the way you read the text and what you notice the most.

Copy the table below and **analyse** the images by completing each column. For the third column, use the internet to find your own image of Rapunzel. Your aim is to uncover why each detail has been included and how it shapes your first impressions of the text.

Details	Image 1	Image 2	Image 3
Text/words			
Images/objects		The tower is the focus as it takes up most of the cover space. It has a large window, so people passing by can see Rapunzel, but it doesn't appear that she has much room!	
Figures (characters)	Rapunzel stands in front of the Prince, taking control of the situation.		
Style			
Your impressions (what does the image make you think/feel/notice?)			

Evaluate the images

1   What elements or details are included in every image design? Why do you think this is the case?
2   What sort of reading experience do you think each image suggests?
3   What kinds of readers are these images likely to appeal to?
4   What assumptions are these images making about readers of *Rapunzel*? (Who do these covers think you are?)

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY A FAIRYTALE?

One thing that makes fairytales so recognisable and enduring is the fact that they usually include images or elements that we have come to associate with particular tales. For example, Little Red Riding Hood always wears a red cape. This means that, if we know the fairytale, we instantly recognise the character when she appears in another story or film.

Read the version of *Rapunzel* written by the Brothers Grimm and the adaptation by Andrew Lang on the SurLaLune Fairytales website: **www.surlalunefairytales.com/ rapunzel/index.html**.

Activity 5.7 What are the recognisable images in *Rapunzel*?

In small groups, discuss the function (role) of each of the following elements in *Rapunzel*:

- the tower
- the witch
- rampion (an edible plant like a turnip)
- long, golden hair
- the handsome prince.
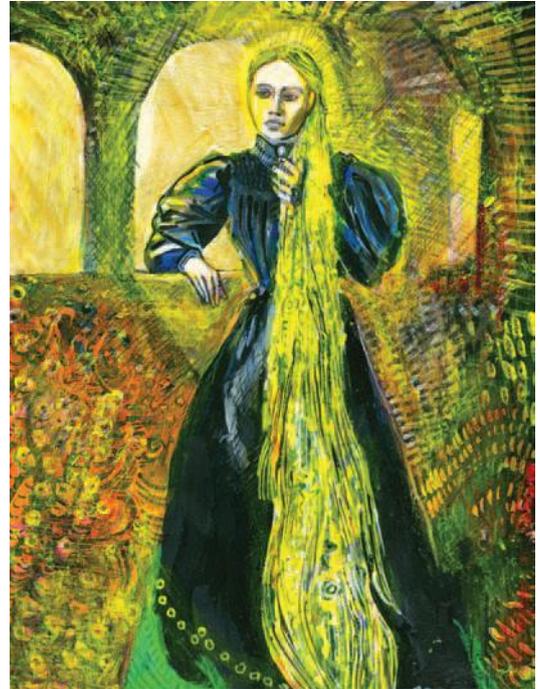
READ MORE

You may also like to read versions of the story from other cultures and compare them. You can find them on the SurLaLune Fairytales website:

(www.surlalunefairytales.com/rapunzel/index.html).

FAIRYTALE HEROES

Typically, fairytales revolve around a hero. The term 'hero' is simply a name for the central character of the story, but we also tend to associate heroes with outstanding, positive attributes. Heroes can be male or female characters, but the term that is often used to describe the central female character in a fairytale is 'heroine'. Think about the ways that male heroes and female heroes are portrayed in fairytales – are they the same?

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Activity 5.8 Fairytale heroes and heroines

In pairs, brainstorm a list of attributes or qualities that you would expect a 'typical' male hero and female heroine to have. Make sure that your list is based on the fairytales that you have read or discussed. Here are a few ideas to start you off:

Typical male hero	Typical heroine
Strong	Beautiful
Rescues the princess ...	Needs to be rescued ...

What kind of heroine is Rapunzel?

Consider how Rapunzel is portrayed in the fairytale by constructing a Character Map like this:
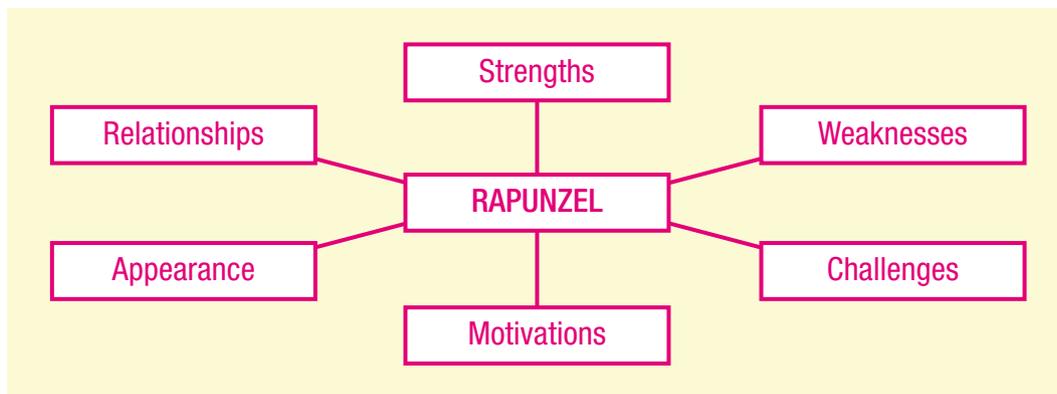
Then, construct a similar Character Map for the Prince.

Evaluate

Compare your Character Map with your list of 'typical' hero and heroine attributes. Is Rapunzel a 'typical' heroine? Is the Prince a 'typical' hero?

Create

In small groups, create your own fairytale hero or heroine that *breaks* the mould! What attributes would you give them to ensure that they weren't a 'typical' fairytale hero or heroine?

Here are some ways that you could present your new character:

• Draw a portrait of your character. Include plenty of details and label important information. (You could also do this on a computer using Paint or Photoshop.)

- Search online for images to represent the various attributes that you have given your character. Create a collage using words and images that represents them.
- Have one of your group members act as your character in front of the class. The rest of your group could interview the character to reveal their characteristics. A fun way to involve the whole class is to hold a talk show (or forum) entitled 'Fairytale misfits'. The talk show guests are the characters you have created. Audience members can ask questions to learn more about the characters.

stereotypical characters ones that conform to 'type' and who are presented in a conventional, expected way

REFLECT ON

1   Are male characters and female characters portrayed differently in fairytales? How?
2   Do you think that the books you read or the films you view also feature any **stereotypical characters**, such as male heroes and female heroines?
3   Does it matter? Why?

RAPUNZEL'S REVENGE

When writers are inspired by fairytales they often try to challenge established portrayals of the characters, such as Rapunzel being typically portrayed as a heroine who needs to be rescued. Shannon Hale and Dean Hale may be attempting this in their graphic novel, *Rapunzel's Revenge.*
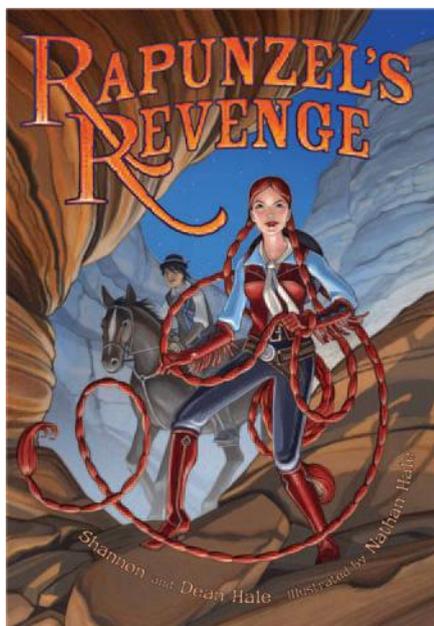
The front cover of *Rapunzel's Revenge* and the poster on the back cover

Activity 5.9 Images

Carefully examine the front and back covers of *Rapunzel's Revenge* and compare them to the covers of the other versions of the *Rapunzel* tale.

1   What similarities and differences do you notice?

2   What do the covers make you feel or think?

3   How do the covers and the title, *Rapunzel's Revenge*, influence your expectations of the book?

When we open a new book for the first time, we already have certain expectations of how the story will unfold. You will have noticed this already from your work on book covers. It could be argued that the images on the covers of *Rapunzel's Revenge* owe more to the **Western** genre than to fairytales. What do you know about Westerns?

Western a film or novel set in what was known as the 'Wild West' of the United States of America (states west of the Mississippi river); it typically features cowboys and explores themes like justice and the law

LOOK CLOSER

View the Looney Tunes episode entitled 'Bugs Bunny Rides Again' (1947). You will find it on the Internet. It contains many **clichés** from the Western genre. As you view, keep a list of all the Western clichés that you can identify. Pay close attention to the language, characters, settings and events. Share and compare your list with your classmates.

clichés phrases, characters, plots or events etc. that have become so common and expected that they are no longer meaningful

REFLECT ON

1   Are there any similarities between Westerns and fairytales?

2   How are they different?

3   Why do you think Shannon Hale and Dean Hale decided to bring these genres together in *Rapunzel's Revenge*?

4   Do you think it will be a successful combination?

Activity 5.10 Make predictions

Apply your knowledge of fairytales and Westerns to predict what will happen in *Rapunzel's Revenge*. You will need a handful of sticky notes.
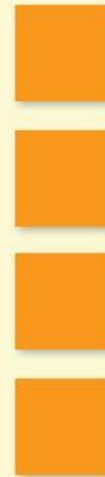
1 Before you begin reading, jot down 3–5 predictions about how this version of the *Rapunzel* story will unfold (make predictions about the characters, plot events and setting).

2 Record your predictions on sticky notes.

3 Share and compare your predictions with your classmates by grouping your sticky notes under subheadings on the board or on a large poster to form an Affinity Diagram.

What will happen in *Rapunzel's Revenge*?
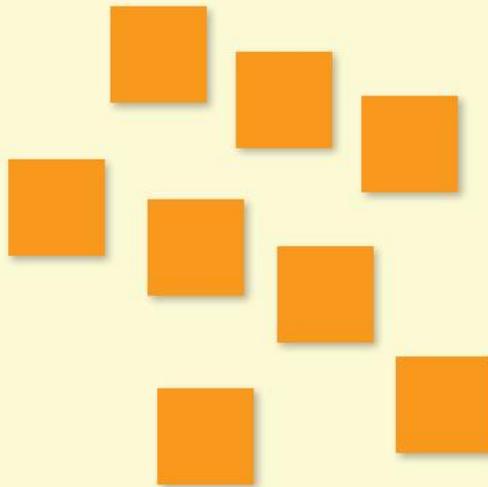
Characters   Plot   Setting

REFLECT ON

1 To what extent has your prior knowledge of the *Rapunzel* fairytale influenced the predictions you made about *Rapunzel's Revenge*?

2 Could this have an impact your understanding or enjoyment of *Rapunzel's Revenge*?

3 To what extent does your prior knowledge impact on your understanding or enjoyment of *Rapunzel's Revenge*?

 ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1**

THE ROLE OF THE READER

When writers are re-writing well known stories, they must ensure that the connections between their revision and the original story are apparent to the reader. This is how intertextuality works.

The way we interpret a text has quite a bit to do with who we are as readers and people. Have you ever viewed a film or talked about a book with your friends and discovered that you noticed different things? The way we read depends on all kinds of things – our **values**, our interests, our reading history, our experiences, and so on.

For example, if you are interested in Westerns, you might appreciate the setting of *Rapunzel's Revenge* more than someone who has not viewed a lot of films set in the Wild West. If one of your most important values is family, you might be more interested in the relationship between Rapunzel and her mother. If you have experienced what it is like to travel, you may have a deeper understanding of the moment when Rapunzel climbs the villa wall and looks out at the world beyond.

values the 'big things' (like friendship, honesty, freedom, success) that are most important to us and may help influence the choices we make in life

Relevant experiences:
I have never been to America … or anywhere else outside Australia. I can understand why Rapunzel was so keen to learn more about the world, because I am too!

Reading history:
My favourite series is *The Sisters Grimm* by Michael Buckley.

Interests:
I am really interested in the environment. I love working in the garden.

Values:
I really care about doing the right thing by the planet, which is why Mother Gothel's abuse of the environment had a huge impact on me.
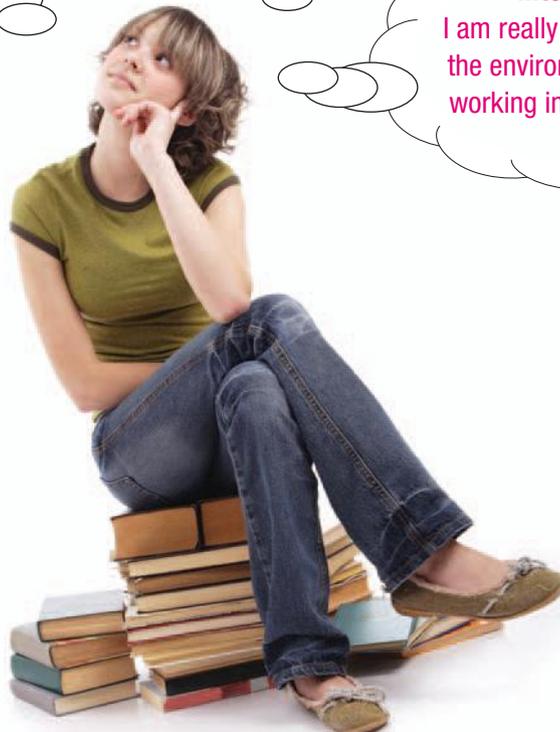
Visual map of a reader

Activity 5.11 Portrait of a reader

Create a reader's portrait of yourself. You could use the model on the previous page or make up your own design.

Drawing conclusions:

What do you bring to *Rapunzel's Revenge* that might influence the way you read and interpret this text?

READING GRAPHIC NOVELS

Rapunzel's Revenge is a graphic novel. Graphic novels are texts that use both words and images to tell the story. The page layout in a graphic novel is very similar to the pages of a comic book. There has been some debate about what the distinction is between comic books and graphic novels, indeed, whether there is any difference at all. Generally, the term 'graphic novel' is used to describe a longer text using the format of a comic book.

You might remember reading and responding to the graphic novel version of *Coraline* in Chapter 4. Now you can build on that knowledge for a closer look at a graphic novel's features here.

The list of features will provide you with some terms that you can use to describe how the story is told in *Rapunzel's Revenge*. You could start by comparing the opening panels of *Rapunzel's Revenge* with the opening paragraphs of *Rapunzel* by the Brothers Grimm.

FEATURES OF GRAPHIC NOVELS

Graphic novels can be categorised by the following features:

Background

Our eyes are typically drawn to the figures in the panels, but remember to look carefully at the background for important details.

Captions

Text boxes that contain narration that is used to set the scene or develop the plot. They are usually rectangular or a different colour to separate them from the speech balloons.

Frame

The lines, or borders, around each panel.

Graphic weight

Images with graphic weight capture your attention and stand out from the rest of the page. Using bright colours or different shades of colours are some ways that graphic novelists can add graphic weight to an image.

The opening pages of *Rapunzel's Revenge*

The opening pages of *Rapunzel's Revenge* introduce us to Rapunzel, who is the **protagonist**. Although the graphic novel begins with the same words 'once upon a time', which remind us that we are reading a fairytale, the focus is on a little girl, not the adult figures of the married couple and the witch. We learn as much about this little girl through the panel illustrations as we do through the captions.

protagonist the main or central character who drives the story forwards

Read the opening pages carefully and discuss the affect of the following details in small groups:

- the splash panel (the full-page panel which begins the story)
- the captions
- the background
- the graphic weight (which details catch your eye?)
- the contrasting perspectives
- the range of panel shapes and sizes
- the figures (look closely at what their facial expressions and body language convey)
- the actions (suggested through the order of the panels).

READ AND ANALYSE >>

Activity 5.11 Making connections

1   As you read *Rapunzel's Revenge* by Shannon Hale and Dean Hale, keep track of the connections that you find to the story of *Rapunzel* by the Brothers Grimm.

2   Draw up a table like the one below that will help you keep track of your ideas. You may find more connections that you wish to add.

3   Analyse how the changes that Shannon Hale and Dean Hale have made have impacted on the meaning of the Brothers Grimm story (as adapted by Andrew Lang).

Fairytale element	*Rapunzel, by the Brothers Grimm*	Textual evidence	*Rapunzel's Revenge, by Shannon and Dean Hale*	Textual evidence	How do the changes affect the meaning?
Rapunzel's hair	Rapunzel's hair is used by both the witch and the prince to climb the tower.	'Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair.'	Rapunzel uses her hair to escape from the tower. She also uses it as a whip, a harness, a rope, etc.	A series of panels in Part One depict Rapunzel learning to use her hair in a variety of ways, such as flicking away a spider, swinging in the tree tops and lowering herself down the tree.	Rapunzel is not being told how to use her hair – she figures it out for herself. This changes the way that the character is depicted – she is assertive and manages to save herself, rather than waiting for someone else to do it!

Fairytale element	*Rapunzel,* by the Brothers Grimm	Textual evidence	*Rapunzel's Revenge,* by Shannon and Dean Hale	Textual evidence	How do the changes affect the meaning?
The tower					
The wall					
Rapunzel's mother					
The witch					
The prince					
The garden					

EVALUATE >>

Activity 5.12 Making meaning

Evaluate the affect of the changes the writers have made on the meaning of the fairytale by answering the following questions:

1. Which version of the *Rapunzel* story do you prefer? Why?
2. Do you think that the changes in *Rapunzel's Revenge* have made the fairytale more relevant to readers your age? How?
3. If you were writing a new version of the *Rapunzel* fairytale, which element would you decide to change? Why?

You may want to start a discussion about this issue on your class wiki or class discussion board.
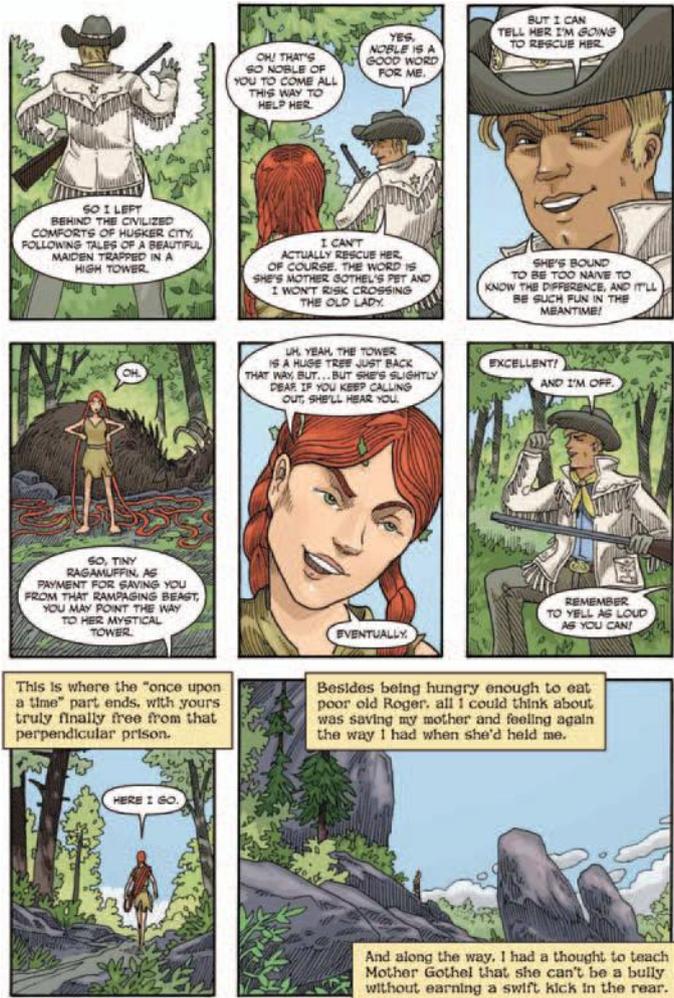
IT'S ALL IN THE DETAIL

Reading a graphic novel is a complex process – there is so much that we need to pay attention to. Sometimes, the visual images work to support the words that the characters say, and sometimes we need to hunt for contradictions between the words and the images. Study this sequence of panels from *Rapunzel's Revenge*, in which Rapunzel is 'rescued' by a fairytale prince. Focus on how the words and images work together to **revision** the moment when the Prince rescues Rapunzel in the Brothers Grimm version of the fairytale.

revision to change a text in some way, in order to alter the meaning

Rapunzel is 'rescued' by a fairytale prince

Activity 5.13 Close analysis

Some ideas are already included for you in the table below. Can you fill in the gaps with some specific features of the graphic novel? Copy the table on the following page, leaving space to add any new details you notice.

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Language	Example	Visual	Example	Effect or interpretation
Onomatopoeia	'Crack'	Graphic weight	The cowboy is in the foreground wearing a white, highly decorative shirt, which stands out against the darker forest background.	The cowboy appears suddenly – without warning – and 'takes over' Rapunzel's escape attempt. His clothing is designed to remind the reader of a 'knight in shining armour'.
Syntax (broken sentences)	'Ow! What in the-' 'Am I ... am I alright?'		A close up of the cowboy's face is inserted between two panels of Rapunzel.	Rapunzel appears to be confused and shocked by the presence of the handsome cowboy. He appears to be completely in control. This is evident from the way she clings to his hand and is speechless.
	R: 'I was until someone shot my new pet pig.' **C:** 'You're welcome!'	Figure: body language	The cowboy stands straight and tall with a hand on one hip and the other hand on his gun.	
Tone	'So, tiny ragamuffin ...'		'Roger', Rapunzel's wild boar, is in the background behind the small figure of Rapunzel.	
Fairytale reference	'... following tales of a beautiful maiden trapped in a tower'	Figure	The cowboy's back is to the reader.	
Emphasis (created by the separated speech bubbles)	'Eventually'		Close up of Rapunzel's face.	
Fairytale reference	'This is where the "once upon a time" part ends ...'	Isolated figure		

THE PROTAGONIST'S JOURNEY

first-person narrative
a narration by a character from their point of view where the character refers to him or herself as 'I'

Rapunzel's Revenge is narrated by the central character, so it is a **first-person narrative**. Our experience of the text is shaped by Rapunzel's (or Punzie's!) point of view. Over the course of the events in the graphic novel, Rapunzel evolves from a young girl to a capable young woman. As a consequence, we learn more about her values, relationships and perspectives (her way of looking at the world).

The protagonist's journey is one aspect of the original fairytale that the writers of *Rapunzel's Revenge* have chosen to develop in some detail. This is a strategy that many writers of revisioned fairytales use, especially when the character was not developed as an individual character with distinct personality traits in earlier versions of the tale.

EVALUATE >>

Activity 5.14 Chart the protagonist's journey

Choose 6–8 panels from *Rapunzel's Revenge* that you think could represent key moments, or 'milestones' in Rapunzel's journey (moments when she undergoes some kind of change, or transformation) then respond to the questions that follow. Number the panels to keep track of your responses and make sure that you can justify your choices.

1   In what ways has Rapunzel's journey in *Rapunzel's Revenge* by Shannon Hale and Dean Hale changed from her journey in the earlier version by the Brothers Grimm?

2   In your opinion, what changes or additions have made the biggest impact on Rapunzel's identity, or in other words, what she is like as a character?

TYPICAL FAIRYTALE PLOT AND EVENTS

Many people who have studied fairytales from around the world have been struck by the similarities between fairytales from different cultures. This is partly because many of the same plot events seem to occur in fairytales.

BRAINSTORM

How many typical fairytale plot events can you think of?

These similarities were an important part of Vladimir Propp's (1895–1970) study of folk and fairytales. He studied many stories from his homeland, Russia, in an effort to

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determine whether there were any key qualities that all folk and fairytales shared. He concluded that there were actually thirty-one generic events that you could expect to see in a fairytale. Look back at your brainstorm. How many events did you have?

Activity 5.15 Plot events in *Rapunzel's Revenge*

Copy and complete this table which contains a shortened list of Vladimir Propp's fairytale events. Working with a partner, see how many you can find and describe from *Rapunzel's Revenge*.

Remember: For some events there may be more than one example to consider.

Common fairytale events	Example from *Rapunzel's Revenge*
The hero is prohibited to enter a certain place, but they violate this order.	Rapunzel is forbidden to climb the wall surrounding Gothel's villa but she does so anyway and is shocked by what she sees.
The villain causes harm to a family member of the victim.	
The villain deceives the victim to take possession of the victim or their belongings.	Interestingly, this could apply to both Rapunzel and her mother. Rapunzel's mother stole greens from Gothel's garden which resulted in her punishment – Rapunzel was taken from her as a baby. It also applies to Rapunzel when Gothel uses Brute to trap Rapunzel and imprison her in the 'creepy tree'.
The hero leaves home.	
The hero is tested in some way.	
The hero meets someone who will be able to help them overcome the villain.	
The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.	
The hero and villain engage in direct combat.	
The hero is branded (wounded or marked in some way).	
The villain is defeated.	
The hero is rewarded.	

Jack Zipes is another expert on fairytales. He says that these shared plot events help to make fairytales so memorable and simple for people to reproduce in a variety of forms, particularly during the days when fairytales were passed on by word of mouth.

LAYER UPON LAYER

Contemporary revisions of fairytales, like *Rapunzel's Revenge*, don't always draw on one fairytale. They often refer to multiple fairytales, in order to create a magical atmosphere or to add humorous hints for clever readers to find. The *Shrek* films are great examples of this technique.

USING MULTIPLE GENRES

Rapunzel's Revenge is not only inspired by the fairytale genre. The Western genre has had a significant impact on the graphic novel's narrative, setting, language and characterisation. The hero in a Western is often a cowboy, or wanderer, who rides into a troubled town and tries to 'set things right'.

Re-writing a fairytale by placing it in a different genre is a strategy that many writers use. One example of this is the film *Hoodwinked* (2006), in which the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* is turned into a crime thriller. In fact, re-casting texts, particularly film texts, into different genres is becoming an increasingly popular creative activity on the Internet.

A **mashup** is created by blending two or more texts to create a new text. Popular forms of mashups include song mashups and video mashups. A video mashup is a digital text that combines footage or sound from more than one film to create something new. A popular version is the re-cut trailer, in which the footage is reordered or changed and creates a **parody** of the original version.

mashup a blending of two or more texts to create a new text

parody a 'spoof' created to poke fun at the original text

LOOK CLOSER

1 Search online for the 're-cut' trailer of the film *Mary Poppins*.
2 Compare it to the original film trailer in order to determine what has been added, deleted or reordered to change the genre.
3 Referring to the re-cut trailer, what kind of film do you think *Mary Poppins* is?
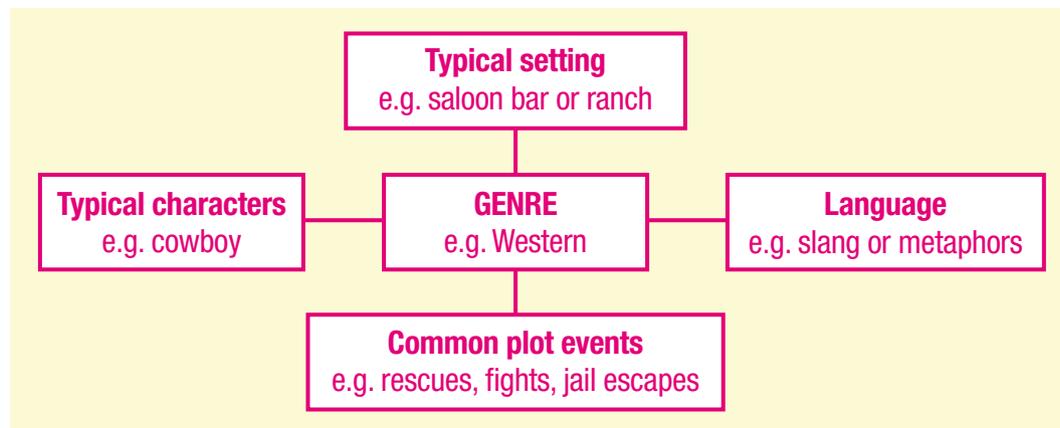
INVESTIGATE AND CREATE >>

Activity 5.16 Genre map

Using the Genre Map as a starting point, examine the impact of the Western genre on *Rapunzel's Revenge*. You may like to do some further research into the Western genre before you begin.

Remember to include examples from the text to show how the characteristics of the Western genre are used in the text.

You may like to use a computer program like Inspirations or a website like: **www.mindmeister.com** to create your mind map.

Typical setting e.g. saloon bar or ranch

Typical characters e.g. cowboy

GENRE e.g. Western

Language e.g. slang or metaphors

Common plot events e.g. rescues, fights, jail escapes

WHO IS THE HERO IN *RAPUNZEL'S REVENGE*?

Think back to your discussions about 'typical' fairytale heroes and heroines. The 'typical' roles of male and female characters in traditional Westerns are similar. The hero, particularly in early Westerns, is often a cowboy who rescues the heroine before dispensing justice.

Of course, this is just a stereotype of the Western genre. Often, the female characters in Westerns display enormous strength while dealing with the harsh environment that they have to live in.

LOOK CLOSER

1   Who is the hero in *Rapunzel's Revenge*?
2   Do you think that Rapunzel and Jack's relationship is an equal partnership? Why?
3   Is Rapunzel and Jack's relationship one that you would expect to see in a typical Western or fairytale? Why?
4   Do you think that the authors of *Rapunzel's Revenge* maintain or challenge the traditional portrayal of male and female characters in a Western? (Remember: consider all of the characters, not just Rapunzel and Jack.)

FAIRYTALES IN THE REAL WORLD

Fairytales do not only appear in the books we read and films we view for entertainment. Sometimes, we may not even know they are happening all around us, unless we pay attention. Directors of documentaries and reality TV shows often use typical fairytale structures to turn their footage into interesting stories.

An example of a fairytale narrative from reality TV is a talent show called 'Britain's Got Talent'. The story of contestant Paul Potts on this show was shaped to remind the viewer of a 'rags to riches' or 'Cinderella story' in which an ordinary person achieves something spectacular and completely unexpected.

LOOK CLOSER

Search online for the clip of Paul Potts singing 'Nessun Dorma'. View the clip.
1   How many clues have been left behind to remind the viewer of a fairytale?

Another space in which a fairytale can be said to 'step off the page' and into the real world is in advertisements. References to fairytales are sometimes used in TV commercials.

LOOK CLOSER

View the following two TV commercials:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NAeMGn8m14

www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnwHS3wc1B8

1 Which fairytales are used in these commercials?

2 How you do know? List the clues that are provided.

3 Do you think this is an effective strategy to sell products? Why?

INTERACT AND CREATE >>

Activity 5.17 Create your own advertisement

In a small group, create an advertisement for a new product, incorporating a reference to a fairytale. Your advertisement should include a product name and slogan (a catchy phrase that helps people to remember your product).

Your advertisement could be in the form of:

- a design for a print advertisement in a magazine
- a jingle (catchy song) for a TV commercial
- a script for a TV Commercial

Present (or perform) your advertisement for the class.

ARE THERE ANY NEW STORIES LEFT TO WRITE?

Jack Zipes thinks that stories are more than just words for our entertainment. He argues that stories are tools that we can use to make our way through the world. He also suggests that no fairytale is completely original – that every writer borrows from and builds on the ideas of the writers that came before them. Neil Gaiman, the author of the poem 'Instructions' and a writer who often has fun with fairytales in his writing, reflects on the way that fairytales connect us to our past. How would you respond to these ideas?

Read what Jack Zipes and Neil Gaiman say:

> No tale or fairytale is ever new. We are always retelling and building on experience and wisdom to navigate our way through a world not of our making.

Jack Zipes (2002)

Of course, fairytales are transmissible. You can catch them, or be infected by them. They are the currency that we share with those who walked the world before ever we were here. (Telling stories to my children that I was, in my turn, told by my parents and grandparents makes me feel part of something special and odd, part of the continuous stream of life itself.)

Neil Gaiman (2006), *Fragile Things: Short Fiction and Wonders.*

Information
What information do I have?
What are the facts?
What information do I need?

Manage the thinking process
What thinking is needed?
Where are we now?
What other questions should I ask?

Difficulties and problems
What is wrong with this?
Will this work?
Is it safe?

Feelings and hunches
How do I feel about this?
What do I like about the idea?
What don't I like about this?

Creativity
What new ideas are possible?
What is my suggestion?
Can I create something new?

Benefits and values
What are the good points?
Why can this be done?
Why is this a good thing?

Edward de Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats' strategy asks you to think about how different thinking is needed in different situations

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Activity 5.18 Group discussion

Think about the fairytales that you have encountered in this chapter and the discussions that you have had with your classmates about the fairytale genre. Choose one of the following statements (the one that interests you the most):

Statement 1: 'No one writes original fairytales anymore.'

Statement 2: 'Fairytales are just for entertainment, nothing more.'

Now hold a discussion in groups of six using Edward de Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats' strategy. Each discussion member must play a different role.

After your discussion, summarise your findings in a table like the one below.

Thinking Hat	Discussion summary
White Hat: Information What information do we have and need?	
Yellow Hat: Benefits and values What are the benefits of this point of view? What is the potential?	
Blue Hat: Manage the thinking process Set the focus and lead the discussion. Make sure everyone gets to contribute and sticks to their role.	
Red Hat: Feelings and hunches Respond to the discussion with what you feel about the topic. You don't need to justify your feelings or hunches.	
Black Hat: Difficulties and problems Where are the weaknesses in the argument? What problems could arise?	
Green Hat: Creativity Generate as many ideas as possible. Consider the alternatives and the possibilities.	

REFLECT ON

Write a personal reflection in response to the topic that your group discussed. You may wish to post them on your class wiki or individual blogs to share and invite further discussion.

Now it is time to draw on everything you have learned about fairytales to create your own graphic novel inspired by a fairytale.

CREATE YOUR OWN GRAPHIC NOVEL OR GRAPHIC SHORT STORY

You could draw the panels by hand or use a website like Pixton (**www.pixton.com/uk**) or Comiqs (**comiqs.com/editor**).

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

1 Which fairytale (or tales) do you wish to re-write? Why? What do you want to change?
2 Is there a character from a fairytale that you think has been treated unfairly? How could you present the character in a more favourable light?
3 How could you use Vladimir Propp's list of fairytale events to help you to structure your narrative?
4 How will you use your knowledge about graphic novels to create your text?

Need some help getting started?

You could use a brainstorming strategy like SCAMPER to generate ideas for changes that you could make to the original fairytale. SCAMPER is a great tool that helps you to find different ways to ask, 'What if?'

SCAMPER	Example
Substitute	What if the Ugly Duckling saw an aeroplane fly overhead, instead of a flock of swans?
Combine	What if Little Red Riding Hood met Hansel and Gretel in the woods?
Adapt (or make an adjustment)	What if a fairytale was told from the perspective of a minor character, like one of the dwarves in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*?
Modify	What if the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* was set in an inner-city hotel?
Put (to other uses)	What if Little Red Riding Hood's cape was actually a superhero disguise?
Eliminate (a feature)	What if Rapunzel didn't have ridiculously long hair?
Rearrange (or reverse)	What if Cinderella didn't want to marry the Prince?

Remember to consider the features of graphic novels and your work on *Rapunzel's Revenge* to think carefully about the effect of your layout, images, text bubbles and captions. Don't worry – you don't need to tackle everything at once! You could write a script for your graphic novel first and then design the visual images.

Remember that good writers:

- take the time to brainstorm and consider lots of possibilities
- plan their writing
- are prepared to take risks and try out crazy ideas (It doesn't matter if it doesn't work – just choose another idea!)
- share their writing with others to get another perspective
- revisit their writing and look for ways to improve it.

REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

You have just revamped your own fairytale. What do you know that you didn't know before?

Write

- Three things that you have learned from the texts that you have explored in this chapter (like *Rapunzel's Revenge* and 'Instructions').
- Three things that you have learned about the process of rewriting fairytales from writing your graphic novel.
- Three things about fairytales that you want to think and learn more about.

Like many writers you have just produced a text inspired by a fairytale. Has this changed or developed your perspective on fairytales? How would you respond to these statements now?

- 'Fairytales are just for kids.'
- 'Fairytales have no relevance to our lives today.'
- 'Writers who use fairytales don't know how to be original.'
- 'We still have so much to learn from fairytales.'

Decide whether you agree or disagree with these perspectives. Whatever you decide, make sure that you can justify your point of view with examples from the texts you have explored and the texts you have created in this chapter.

Create

Respond to these statements in an individual blog post, on a class discussion board or in a class debate or discussion forum.

READ MORE

Are you interested in reading more texts based on fairytales? Here are some further suggestions:

Picture books

Babette Cole (1987), *Prince Cinders*, London, Puffin Books

A revision of *Cinderella*: Cinderella is actually a prince with three big brothers who are bullies.

Graphic novels

Shannon Hale and Dean Hale (2010), *Calamity Jack*, Bloomsbury, London

(The sequel to *Rapunzel's Revenge*, featuring her best friend Jack.)

Novels

Donna Jo Napoli (2004), *Bound*, Simon & Schuster, New York

(A revision of *Cinderella*: set in ancient China.)

Short stories

Neil Gaiman (2008), *M is for Magic*, Bloomsbury, London

(Many of the stories in this collection are revisions of folk or fairytales.)

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MEANWHILE SOMEWHERE ELSE: THREE FILMS FROM IRAN

[6]

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- view and respond to three foreign language films by Iranian filmmakers

- reflect on the role that film plays in the creation and expression of cultural identity

- contrast and evaluate the structures and features of Iranian films with mainstream Hollywood films

- identify the impact of images, sound and dialogue in shaping personal responses to key ideas in film texts

- explore the features of documentary film and recognise differing viewpoints of the world, cultures and individual people as they are represented in these texts

- apply your knowledge to create your own short film and experiment with text structures and language features.

culture a shared and learned system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shapes and influences who you are and your place in the world

- How do films help us to understand another country, its **culture** and its people?
- Why do we enjoy viewing films set in places very different from where we live?
- What is your favourite film from another country where the first language is not English?
- What did you learn about that country, its culture and its people?
- What are some of your favourite films that tell stories about the lives of children and where they live?
- Have these films taught you anything about your own life?

REFLECT AND INTERACT >>

Activity 6.1 Where do we come from?

Nearly 25 per cent of Australians are born overseas and 44 per cent of them have at least one parent born overseas. Many Australian residents proudly observe cultural practices of their home country, such as dress, food and religious beliefs, and speak a language other than English at home. We are all able to enjoy this multicultural world we live in.

Draw up your own version of the following table and complete it by asking other members of your class about their backgrounds. Also ask them about cultural practices, such as those in the second column.

Name of country of origin	Cultural practices (e.g. dress, food, religion and language)

As an ongoing task you may wish to compile a class portrait, collecting as much information as possible from as many class members as possible. Publish this information on a class wiki.

FILM AND YOU

What Australian films have you seen? Have you seen *Rabbit Proof Fence* or *Australia*? They tell stories that are specifically Australian. If you have seen either of these films, or another Australian film, write a short paragraph about what they tell you about Australian experience.

Often it is through film that we learn about somewhere else. Films also invite you to compare your own life with that of characters from other places, times and cultures. Through the camera lens, a film can literally hold up a mirror to lives and experiences we may never otherwise have access to. Film is a visual medium that not only entertains, but also has the power to educate and inspire.

REFLECT ON

1   Make a list of the ways in which films affect you. For example, one way film can affect you is to put you in other people's shoes so you see the world through their eyes.

2   In pairs, discuss a film you have both seen and discuss the ways it created a sense of seeing a world through another person's eyes.

Films also trigger memories and prompt reminders of previous experiences. We may associate our memory of a film with a certain time in our lives or with a particular relationship. Do you remember the first film your parents took you to see when you were a child? Do you remember the first film you went to see with your friends? Are these films associated with special events in your life, such as birthdays or summer holidays?

A BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE IRANIAN FILMS

- *Children of Heaven*, Majid Majidi, 1997 **PG**
- *The Colour of Paradise*, Majid Majidi, 2000 **PG**
- *Afghan Alphabet*, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 2001 **G**

Just like it is in Australia, film is a part of the cultural heritage of Iran. The three films for viewing and analysis in this chapter will provide you with an insight into another culture and allow you to explore some of the concerns of contemporary Iranian films.

Children of Heaven is the simple story of a brother and sister who share a pair of runners for school and of the events that unfold when the sister loses her shoes.

The Colour of Paradise explores the world of the visually impaired ten-year-old Mohammad and the struggles he faces in his daily life. It is characterised by love and hostility.

The final film is a short, personal documentary. *Afghan Alphabet* is set in a refugee camp on the Iran–Afghanistan border. The film follows the life of a boy, who, while he is not allowed to go to school in Iran, decides that he will sit outside the classroom and learn second-hand.

These films tell stories that you might not otherwise have heard or seen. They tell stories in ways that take you out of your own world and place you in a new environment. The films will immerse you in worlds that are uncertain, harsh, and yet ultimately full of kindness and beauty.

Activity 6.2 Films about other places

Set up a class wiki and make a class list of films or books you have viewed or read that introduced you to other cultures and experiences. You can keep adding to the wiki throughout the year. Give each film a rating from 1 star to 5 stars and post it on a class discussion board.

A LONG WAY FROM HOLLYWOOD

What are some of your favourite Hollywood films? Are you a *Harry Potter* fan? Perhaps *Twilight* is more to your taste? Think about why you like these films. Do you have a favourite **genre** – action, horror, science fiction, comedy? Popular and widely viewed Hollywood films (mainstream films) are a good starting point for understanding film, but they are very different from the Iranian films you will view. They have a 'Hollywood' look and feel to them.

FEATURES OF HOLLYWOOD FILMS

Hollywood films can be categorised by the following features:
- They often use the 'star system', which means that they use well-known actors or introduce a new 'star', and most of the film's marketing focuses on the star rather than the storyline
- They often use digital special effects (think of the mythical creatures of *Avatar*)
- They are marketed globally and are released with much publicity
- They often have lots of action and pace
- They have a series of obstacles that the central character has to overcome by making moral choices about what is the right and wrong thing to do
- They encourage the viewer to identify with particular characters
- They have sympathetic and unsympathetic characters
- They often have a love story
- They often have happy endings
- They often have a strong message or a point of view about life.

genre a type of text or category of texts that uses particular conventions

Activity 6.3 Hollywood storytelling

Choose a film that you have seen at the cinema or at home or view the trailer of a Hollywood film, such as *Avatar* (you will find it online). Identify as many of the characteristics of a Hollywood film as you can using the list of features on p. 197. Copy and complete this table with your list.

Name of film	Characteristics

Have you ever viewed a foreign language film with subtitles? Perhaps the three films to be explored in this chapter will be your first foreign language films. You might find it a challenge at first but, for each of these films, the images are so full of meaning that you can understand a lot of the story through them. You will notice that there is not a lot of dialogue.

In recent years, Iranian films have received international acclaim. Many Iranian films have been picked up by Western distributors, such as Miramax and Sony and screened for Western audiences. *Children of Heaven* was nominated for Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards in 1997.

REFLECT ON

In pairs, think about why Hollywood films are so popular and why Iranian films are so rarely seen by Western viewers.

Iranian cinema has flourished in the past twenty years despite the restrictions on the content of films. There is a Ministry for Islamic Culture and Guidance, which sets strict guidelines for films.

For example, there is little violence in Iranian films and sexual content is banned. There are strict **censorship** laws in Iran, which, for example, affect how women can be filmed. Women cannot be depicted in the home without their heads being partially covered, so many scenes are shot outdoors.

The Western media's portrayal of post-revolution Iran from 1979 painted a picture of fanatical personal and religious codes of behaviour. Recent Iranian cinema has expanded our views about Iran to challenge stereotypes and has moved away from standard devices, such as dramatic plot, action and romance to focus on everyday

censorship control of what can be shown on television and cinema screens, or published in print

experiences and simple, location-based stories. Children are ideal subjects for these types of films. Ali, the young hero in *Children of Heaven* demonstrates unusual strength and resourcefulness for a nine-year-old. The use of children as central characters invites the viewer to question the adult world and its values.

These three Iranian films present a very different side to Iranian life and culture by depicting childhood innocence and rural landscapes to produce a poetic image of Iran. Iranian films have a strong human perspective and focus on personal stories.

GETTING READY TO VIEW THE IRANIAN FILMS

Before you view *Children of Heaven*, *The Colour of Paradise* and *Afghan Alphabet* there are some additional ideas you should explore about culture and identity. We will look closely at some aspects of Iranian culture, including life for young people and we will review the function of trailers and what they tell you about the story.

The three Iranian films that you will view and explore are films about the lives of children set in a world that might be unfamiliar or new to you. Think about what it might be like to live somewhere else. When you view films or read books set in places different from your own, you are invited by the filmmaker or the author to enter another world. We are naturally curious about what it might be like to live in a different world. You or your parents might have travelled overseas or come to Australia as migrants. Or perhaps you have a favourite country that you would like to visit.

WRITE AND REFLECT >>

Activity 6.4 Strange places

Write a journal entry based on the questions below about a time you left the familiarity and comfort of your own world. This might be when you stayed with grandparents or friends.

1 Have you ever been in a place that is strange and unfamiliar? Where?

2 What do you think it would be like to live in a place that is unfamiliar and unknown?

3 How do you think you would cope if you were suddenly moved to a different culture?

4 What things might you need to know about the new culture in order to function in your daily life?

5 What would you miss most about your home?

CULTURE AND IDENTITY

If you had to describe Australia to someone who has never been here, what would you say about our country? What do you think is special or unique about Australia?

Although there are some things that are common to all cultures, each has unique characteristics that are specific to a time and place and for the people who live in that time and place. There are many elements to each person's culture, such as those already identified, like religion, dress and food.

There is no single Australian culture either. Australia is made up of many nationalities, including the 25 000 Iranians living here. Understanding, recognising and embracing the worlds and cultures that make up the Australian population is a good starting point for the three films.

REFLECT ON

In small groups consider the following questions:

1   What is special about your culture?
2   What makes up your identity? (Think about family, interests, friends, dress, physical characteristics, languages spoken and anything else that makes you unique.)
3   What influences contribute to your culture and identity?
4   Why do you think that people who have immigrated to Australia might describe themselves as Italian–Australian or Iranian–Australian?
5   What do you know about Iranian culture and people?
6   Do you have Iranian–Australian friends, or know any Iranian families?

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT IRAN

Let's find out more about Iran. The activities in this section should provide you with a picture of Iran, which will help you to understand the films.

Despite its location in the Middle East, Iran is a largely Persian country with a culture and history that differs from its Arab neighbours. One of these differences is that the most common language is Iran is Farsi, not Arabic. Iranians predominantly practise the religion **Islam**, but there are also other religions practised within Iran. Iran has been an Islamic Republic since 1979. But Iran, like most countries, is diverse.

Islam one of the world's major religions, which follows the teachings and writings of Muhammad, a prophet of God; these sacred writings are contained in the Qur'an

RESEARCH >>

Activity 6.5 Finding out about Iran

Search online for information about Iran. The BBC news website is a good place to start.

Present a brief portrait about the country to the class. Use the following headings to structure your report. You might add your own headings to the report:

- population
- ethnic groups
- religions
- political system
- education and literacy rates
- arts and literature.

Many Iranians have come to Australia as refugees. Many of them believe that they cannot live in Iran for fear of being imprisoned for their opposition to the Islamic government, or because they practise other religious faiths.

Visit the website of the Refugee Action Council of Australia (**www. refugeecouncil.org.au**) and see what you can find out about asylum seekers from Iran. See if you can arrange for a speaker to come to your school.

LOOK CLOSER

Search online for the 'Peace and Friendship Drawings by the Children of Iran'.
What do these images and drawings tell you about the hopes, fears and dreams of Iranian children?

A SAMPLE OF IRANIAN CULTURE

A sample of modern Iranian culture depicted in the animated film *Persepolis* (2007) will increase your understanding of Iran.

Persepolis is an animated feature which was made in 2007 and is about Iran's most recent history. It will give you more information about Iran to add to what you have already developed. While it is rated **M**, and some of the issues such as the political situation might be difficult to understand, it is a coming-of-age narrative with a strong personal story and appeal. It will provide you with personal insight into life in Iran in recent times.

Persepolis is directed by an Iranian woman, Marjane Satrapi, who has drawn and co-directed this film version of her *Persepolis* graphic novels. The film follows the illustration style in the book.

Persepolis tells the story of a girl growing up in Iran from the 1970s to the 1990s, during a very troubled period. *Persepolis* is the Greek name for the ancient capital of Persia, now Iran. Viewing this film, or reading the graphic novel, will give you a better understanding of this period and its troubles.

The outspoken and rebellious Satrapi, whose educated family demonstrated against the **Shah of Iran**, was sent to Austria at fourteen years of age in 1983 to ensure her protection from the Islamic government which followed.
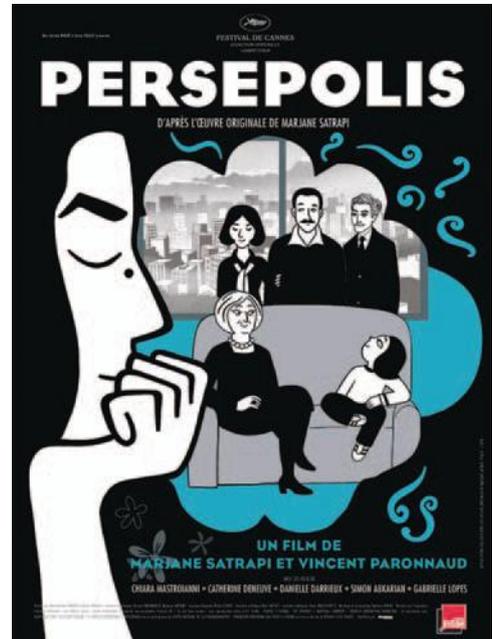
Shah of Iran like a king, the Shah ruled Iran until 1979 when he was forced to flee Iran and an Islamic government was installed

VIEW AND SPEAK >>

Activity 6.6   View the trailer and film of *Persepolis*

Search online for the trailer for *Persepolis*.

1   What do you think are the purposes of a trailer?

2   What sense do you get of life in Iran in this period?

Your teacher may also let you view the film in class. If so, prepare a presentation of your favourite moments and explain why they made an impact on you. Consider the following:

1   How is colour used? Why are the opening and closing scenes in colour? Why is the rest a **flashback** and in black and white?

2   What is the impact of the stylised drawings?

3   What is the impact of the humour?

4   What does the film say about Iran in this period?

flashback a scene or scenes that take the narrative back in time from the current point the story has reached

YOUNG PEOPLE IN IRAN

Sixty-six per cent of the population of Iran is under thirty years of age. Their hopes and fears are captured in the Iranian films you will view.

Iranian girls wearing the chador

REFLECT ON

Search online for videos about young people in contemporary Iran (Try searching for 'heart warming' children's stories from Iran on YouTube.)

1   Which of these stories did you find engaging and informative?
2   They might have made an impact which was not engaging or informative. If they did make an impact, why did they make an impact?

VIEW MORE

You might also enjoy these films about young people living in different countries:

Not One Less (1999) is a Chinese film directed by Zhang Yimou.

Osama (2003) is an Afghani film directed by Siddiq Barmak.

You can also explore the website of the Children's Film Society of India to see the films being made for and about young people in India (www.cfsindia.org).

Activity 6.7 Every picture tells a story

When you look through an album of photos there is always a story or a moment in time captured in the photographs.

Look carefully at the following photographs taken of Iranian young people and write an imaginative background story of 150 words for each photograph. Consider the following: Who are they? How old are they? Where are they? Why are they here? How do they feel about being here?
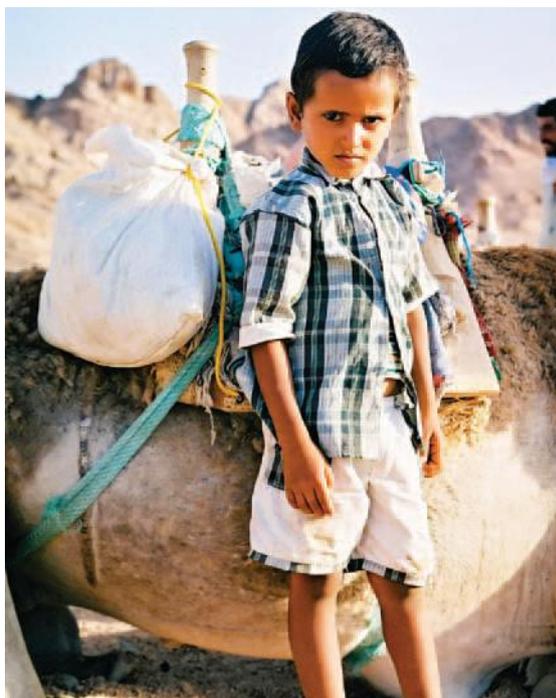
REFLECT ON

Make a list of at least five new ideas about Iran and its culture that you have learned so far.

TRAILERS

Before you view the three films and the stories they tell, view the trailers for each film. Trailers introduce you to the story without giving away too much of what happens. You see trailers of films every time you go to the cinema. You looked at the purpose of trailers earlier with *Persepolis*. Often a trailer will reorder the events of a film, but it will always focus on the key events or moments. You will find trailers for *Children of Heaven* and *The Colour of Paradise* online.

Activity 6.8 Making predictions from trailers

What expectations are set up by the trailers? Copy the table below and write down predictions about the themes of *Children of Heaven* and *The Colour of Paradise*. Make notes about what you think the characters will be like and what messages you think are being made in each film. You have already been given a few clues in this chapter. Come back to your notes later and compare your predictions with what happens in the film.

Children of Heaven	The Colour of Paradise
Theme	Theme
Character	Character
Message	Message

CHILDREN OF HEAVEN (1997) AND THE COLOUR OF PARADISE (2000)

THE POWER OF IMAGES

Images, dialogue and sound can have an immediate impact when you view a film for the first time. View *Children of Heaven* and *The Colour of Paradise* and record your first impressions.

Activity 6.9 Memorable moments

To help you understand the films' broader ideas start by identifying and recording the memorable moments in each film. Copy the table following and write down about five images or impressions from each. There is an example from *Children of Heaven* and *The Colour of Paradise* to start you off.

What: image, sound, dialogue	Why: the reason the impact was profound	How: the ways in which emotional effects are created
Children of Heaven		
Ali and Zahra swap notes regarding the shoes as they pretend to do their homework	The sequence reveals their sense of duty to each other and their parents, who they want to keep out of their dilemmas	This sequence reminds us of childhood moments when there is a fear of being found out
The Colour of Paradise		
Mohammad rescues the baby bird	The sequence reveals Mohammad's struggle as well as his single-mindedness and kindness	There is a great tenderness in this sequence because Mohammad reveals deep respect for another living creature despite the dangers that he faced while putting the bird back in the nest

CLOSE READING OF THREE KEY SCENES

Now it is time to move from general impressions to a closer analysis of how the filmmaker constructs the effects. Refer to the *Glossary of Film Terms* to help you.

- Remember that the opening sequences introduce characters, flag ideas and set up expectations for the viewer.
- The endings of films often reveal personal growth and/or self-knowledge as well as speculation about life ahead.
- Sequences in which a 'lightbulb' moment for one of the characters occurs are also worth close study. A 'lightbulb' moment occurs when a character 'sees the light' and has a better understanding of themselves and the world.

You will be aware of many of the techniques used by filmmakers from viewing films. But be careful to think about how the techniques are used to create particular emotional effects on the audience.

REFLECT ON

What is a close-up and why do filmmakers use this type of camera shot?

CHILDREN OF HEAVEN

The opening scene of any film is important. As a class, view the opening scene of *Children of Heaven* and use the following prompts to build up a picture of the film. You will share and compare your ideas with other class members. This can be done in small groups or as a whole class. The time codes of these scenes will let you know where to start the scene and where to finish. The scenes are like stories within stories.

There is also a running sheet on Cambridge GO that takes you through the sequence of events in the film. This will be helpful when you choose your own scenes for analysis.

Scene 1: *Lost shoes* (0.00–7.40)

Zahra from *Children of Heaven*

- How does the opening of the film set up the narrative?
- Why does the filmmaker choose to frame and focus on the work of the cobbler?
- How is the sense of place presented by the filmmaker?
- The effect of the close-ups of the bread oven and the angled shot looking down at Ali
- The sense of Ali's character and what he has to cope with in his daily life
- How does the greengrocer treat Ali?
- How does the opening show Ali's anxiety?
- How is the tension over unpaid rent revealed? Think about the first person narrative that is recorded here. The disagreement is overheard, not seen
- The family's living conditions
- The framing of Ali at the door
- The beaming face of his sister, Zahra, and its impact on Ali
- The conversation and tears over the lost shoes, and the revelation of feelings about the loss being discovered by their mother.
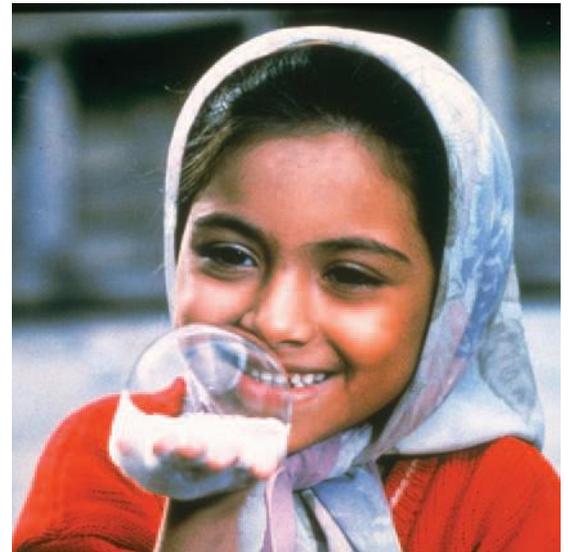
Scene 2: *The daily grind* (24.30–29.40)

- How is the inner anxiety of both Ali and Zahra in this sequence revealed?
- The creation of suspense
- The device of the race against time and its effects
- How Zahra's flight from the school is filmed by the filmmaker
- The ways in which the elusive shoe in the drain is filmed and how Zahra's panic is shown
- The use of the soundtrack for one of the first times in the film and its impact
- The intervention and the act of kindness
- The shot of Ali waiting
- The conversation which reveals the tension between Zahra and Ali
- The showdown with the teacher and Ali's reactions.

Scene 3: *Race day* (68.10–81.40)

- Why does the filmmaker cross-cut or swap between Ali's race and Zahra running through the streets?
- How are suspense and anticipation are built in the sequence?
- The conversations that echo in Ali's mind as he runs
- The use of slow motion and the sound of breathing in the creation of the silent world of the runner
- The filming of the final stretches of the race
- The post-race photograph and Ali's facial expression
- The order of the shots including the shots of the father and Ali's arrival home
- The final shots of Ali bathing his blistered feet and the sounds of the harp and the movements of the goldfish
- The choice to finish the story at this point.

Ali running the race

THE COLOUR OF PARADISE

Read the following observations, and see if you can find evidence and examples (the actions and words of characters) in the film that either support these observations or contest them. You can test out whether or not you agree with them and make a note of your findings. You can alter the observations, or add different observations, but you must support them with evidence from the film.

Observation 1

The Colour of Paradise explores the troubled relationship between Mohammad and his father, a grieving and bitter widower. This film starts with the child's world and expands its vision to include the emotional complexities of the adult world and the father's inability to accept a blind son.

Do you agree? Do you have any evidence or examples?

Observation 2

The world is experienced through the senses of Mohammad, especially his sense of touch. You can see what he cannot see. And this world is full of near blinding colour for the viewer. Mohammad's soul is so attuned to the world that he can feel the souls of those around him. His relationship with his grandmother is deeply moving.

Do you agree? Do you have any evidence or examples?

Observation 3

Mohammad is attuned to the world through his hands and translates the world into whispered words to himself as he runs his fingers over stones and along leaves, deciphering their meaning. His sister, who he hasn't seen for a long time, has grown up and this is revealed when he describes her face and notes the change in its contours. His grandmother's hands are still youthful. She is a kindred spirit.

Do you agree? Do you have any evidence or examples?

As a class, view the opening scene of *The Colour of Paradise* and use the following prompts to build up your picture of the film. This can be done in small groups or as a whole class, and the time codes will let you know where to start the scene and where to finish. (You will find a running sheet that takes you through the sequence of the events in the film on Cambridge GO. This might be helpful when you are choosing your scenes for analysis.)

Scene 1: *A world without colour* (00.00–5.00)

- How does the filmmaker cue you into the world of the blind character at the beginning of the film?
- The importance of the voiceover which talks about 'the seen and the unseen'
- The use of the background conversation
- First impressions of Mohammad and the other boys
- The kind of world that they inhabit
- The close-ups of the faces and hands in the classroom and the impact on you
- The significance of the text that is being translated into Braille, given that the students are blind or visually impaired.

Scene 2: *Mohammad's act of kindness* (7.59–14.04)

The film has many emotional moments, particularly when Mohammad waits patiently for his father to come and get him. In this early sequence he is the last student to be picked up.

- The role of Mr Rahmani, his teacher, in comforting Mohammad and the sense of their relationship
- The shots of the dormitory and the way in which it shows Mohammad's plight
- The fluid camera movement in the sequence in which Mohammad rescues the fledgling that has fallen from the nest
- The ways in which Mohammad's other heightened senses are portrayed by the filmmaker, especially the role of hands
- The use of sounds and the effects they create
- The use of close-ups
- The filming of the struggle climbing up the tree
- The significance of this moment for Mohammad especially in the light of his father's arrival and his sense of abandonment.

Mohammad and his sisters run through the field

Mohammad rescues the fledgling bird

Scene 3: *Heaven on earth* (79.00–87.45)

Discuss these prompts in groups or with the whole class and think about how the ending is different from a Hollywood film.

- The ways in which this action sequence is filmed
- The father's initial reaction and what is going on inside his mind
- The absence of sound when Mohammad first falls into the water
- The use of the hand-held camera to capture frenzy and panic
- The father's inaction and action
- The birds in flight
- The overhead shot of father and son
- The call of the bird
- The meanings of the ending, especially the movement of the hand and the play of light.

KEY SCENES FOR YOU

Now that you have looked at three key sequences, think about any other key scenes in *Children of Heaven* and *The Colour of Paradise* that have made an impact on you. Make a list.

REFLECT AND INTERACT >>

Activity 6.10 Scenes of importance for you

Share your list of important scenes that made an impact on you with the class. Make a class list.

Then split into four groups to complete the following activity, which will help you understand how the language of film makes its meanings.

Choose four of the sequences that the whole class found important and in groups of four make notes under the following headings:

- Describe the sequence (What happens? Who is in it?)
- Camera work (You can refer to the *Glossary of Film Terms* to help with this.)
- Editing and the order of shots
- Use of music, sound and even silence
- How you feel about the sequence.

KEY IDEAS IN *CHILDREN OF HEAVEN*

Activity 6.11 Key ideas

Here are some of the ideas that *Children of Heaven* explores. Copy the table and add your own ideas to the list.

Then identify two sequences from the film in which each idea is fleshed out or illustrated. (The running sheets on **Cambridge GO** will help with this.)

Key ideas	Sequences
The strength of family bonds	
Sibling tensions and how they are resolved	
The importance of being honest	
Coping with loss	
The role of school in the children's lives	
The difficulty of life when you are poor	
Expressing gratitude and kindness	
Innocence and resilience of childhood	
Definitions of love	

KEY IDEAS IN *THE COLOUR OF PARADISE*

Activity 6.12 Key ideas

Here are some of the ideas that *The Colour of Paradise* explores. Copy the table and add your own to the list.

Then, for each idea identify two sequences from the film in which the idea is fleshed out or illustrated. (The running sheets on **Cambridge GO** will help with this.)

Key ideas	Sequences
The value of education	
Family relationships	
Death and its impact	
Nature and its beauty	
Love	
The world of the vision impaired	

CHARACTERS

Describing characters helps you to better understand a film's ideas and messages. Characters are central to how you connect with films like *Children of Heaven* and *The Colour of Paradise.*

 ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1**

Activity 6.13 Characters

Write a character profile for two of the following characters in *Children of Heaven*:

- Ali
- Zahra
- Ali and Zahra's father
- Ali and Zahra's mother.

In your character portrait include details about all or some of the following:

- weaknesses
- strengths
- appearance
- relationships
- motivations, such as desires, goals, hopes, dreams
- challenges.

DESCRIBE AND WRITE >>

Activity 6.14 Characters

Write a character profile for two of the following characters in *The Colour of Paradise*:

- Mohammad
- Mohammad's father
- Baharieh and Hanieh, his sisters
- Mr Rahmani
- Mohammad's grandmother
- Ali, the blind carpenter.

In your character portrait include details about all or several of the following:

- weaknesses
- strengths
- appearance
- relationships
- motivations, such as desires, goals, hopes, dreams
- challenges.

Activity 6.15 Role-play

You should now have a clearer understanding of the characters in the *Children of Heaven* and *The Colour of Paradise*. Use this information to create a role-play based on one of the characters from either of these films.

- Form groups of six.
- One person will be the character and the rest of the group will ask the character about their motives and actions during the film.
- Each group member will take a turn at role-playing a character from *Children of Heaven* or *The Colour of Paradise*.
- The person who is role-playing a character will be asked about their thoughts and feelings and the rest of the group will ask the questions.
- The group should formulate relevant questions for each character before starting the role-play. Here are some examples. You can do the same for characters not included here.

Questions for Mohammad from *The Colour of Paradise*

1   What made you place the fledgling bird back in its nest?
2   Did you think about the dangers when climbing the tree?

AFGHAN ALPHABET (2001)

INTRODUCTION TO DOCUMENTARY FILM

What do you know about documentary films? Brainstorm a list of some of the documentary films you have viewed at school and at home. Think about a documentary that you have seen and how it is different from a feature film. Some of you might prefer viewing documentary films that are about real lives and events to viewing feature films.

Afghan Alphabet is a documentary and is very different from the other two Iranian films. It is set in Iran in the refugee border camps, where 2.5 million Afghani people have crossed the border in the past twenty years. It is a documentary made by an important Iranian filmmaker, Mohsen Makhmalbaf.

In December 2001, thousands of children fled the war in Afghanistan and managed to reach a school run by **UNICEF**, in Iran. They went to school for the first time after years of life dominated by the doctrine of the Taliban. The Taliban is a strict Islamic group which governed Afghanistan with tight control until 2001. During this time, women were forbidden to go out in public without a male and had to cover their faces

UNICEF the United Nation's Children Fund is one of the world's largest development agencies and is devoted to working exclusively with children and their communities

and bodies. In the film, one of the girls is not willing to remove her burqa (a garment which covers the face and body of a woman) even though she is now free to do so. She fears she will be punished for her 'sin'.

READ MORE

A simple explanation of what happened in Afghanistan can be found at the PolitiFact website: **www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2009/oct/12/afghanistan-war-simple-explanation**

Earlier you considered the ways in which documentary films are different from feature films. However, there are also similarities between documentary filmmaking and feature filmmaking. Documentary and feature filmmakers carefully select images and sounds to create a story and a message. Think about the ways in which the images are ordered, the ways in which the camera 'looks at' the subjects, and the use of text and voice-over to support the **point of view**.

Afghan Alphabet is a good example of how documentaries present a particular view of the world through the choice of material, editing, framing, etc.

point of view the viewpoint of an author, audience or character in a text; it can be either a subjective (first-person) or objective vantage from which the world is observed; the subjective viewpoint would be through the eyes of a character; the objective viewpoint would be observing a character from a distance

FEATURES OF DOCUMENTARY FILM

- Documentary film can be categorised by the following features:
- presents a way of understanding the world
- explores human strengths and weaknesses (integrity, honesty, fears, hopes, anxieties, etc.)
- seeks to tell the 'truth'
- educates, informs, persuades and brings about changes in attitudes and values
- uses familiar contexts; the sounds and images we see on the screen are recognisable from the world around us
- makes claims about what happened or is happening in the world outside the film itself
- constructs an argument about the world from these assertions or claims, using an interplay of argument and evidence
- uses structure, time and place, events and character in similar ways to feature films.
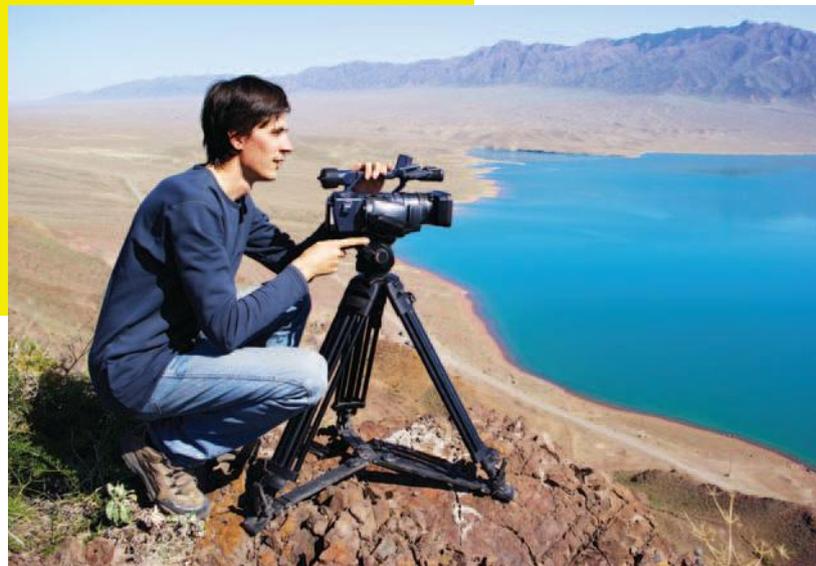
Activity 6.16 Discussing *Afghan Alphabet*

Discuss with a partner what you understood and what you didn't understand in the documentary. As a class, discuss the ways in which your eyes were opened to another world

OR

Discuss ways in which your attitudes and values were challenged or changed by *Afghan Alphabet*. Give reasons for your opinions.

Activity 6.17 Documentary structure

Documentaries have an episodic structure. Episodes are like mini-stories which when combined make up the complete story.

What are some of the episodes in *Afghan Alphabet* and why do you think they were included? Copy and add to the following table to help you explore the structure of *Afghan Alphabet*.

Episode	Reason for inclusion
The film opens with an Afghani boy on crutches. He is making his way to a school where students are reciting lessons and learning life skills.	The filmmaker outlines the tragedy of perpetual oppression and its impact on a generation of children whose schools have been closed down by the Taliban and who have been forced to flee to border camps on the northern and western borders of Iran and Afghanistan.
The boys are educated at the mosque where they learn the Qur'an (the holy book of Islam). Several of the boys are asked about God and the Qur'an by the filmmaker, Mohsen Makhmalbaf.	There are dangers associated with teaching in this repetitive way.

 ENGLISH FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM **BOOK 1**

OPENING AND CLOSING SCENES

THE OPENING

View the first six minutes of the film again. The filmmaker makes it clear from the start that he has something to say to you, the viewer. He follows the Afghani boy to the door of the school where he sits and listens and learns.

LOOK CLOSER

1 What do you learn of his life and the circumstances in which he lives?
2 How does the filmmaker invite the viewer to identify with him?
3 What is the importance of the lyrics of the verse which accompanies the images of such a life of hardship?

THE ENDING

The ending reveals that the Afghani girls who are lucky enough to go to schools in the camps still have many barriers to overcome. The ending is long and the length of time taken by the girl who is unwilling to reveal her face might be difficult to understand.

REFLECT ON

1 Why do you think the filmmaker is so persistent in his efforts to get the girl to reveal her face?
2 Do you think the filmmaker overstepped the mark in trying to persuade her to reveal her face?
3 Why might the filmmaker have chosen to end the film with the frozen image of the girl?

Now it is time to draw on what you have learned through viewing the Iranian films *Children of Heaven, The Colour of Paradise* and *Afghan Alphabet* to write and create your own texts. The films used a variety of filmmaking techniques that you have explored, discussed and written about. Here are some suggested activities for you to choose from.

CREATE YOUR OWN SHORT FILM

Use the filmmaking skills of the class to make your own short film (five minutes).

Using a digital camera and simple software, such as iMovie or Movie Maker, the class could make a short documentary for overseas viewers revealing what life is like in your school or community.

You will need to storyboard and script the film, choose images, text and subject matter, allocate roles and responsibilities for the filmmaking process, and choose and order camera shots. These processes have been modelled in the films, and descriptions to help you can be found in the *Glossary of Film Terms*.

STORYBOARD YOUR IDEA FOR A NEW TRAILER

Write a storyboard for your own trailer for one of the films that you have viewed. Think about the elements that may be missing from the other trailers you have seen and include them in your own. This is your response to and interpretation of the film.

Present your storyboard to the class as a PowerPoint slide show.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES FOR EACH FILM

Children of Heaven

- Create a two-column table comparing your own life with that of Ali and Zahra. In one column make a list of the features of their lives, including their relationship with parents, teachers and each other, home life, standards of living, and interests and dreams. In the other column list the same things, but for yourself.
- Present a sequence from the film to the class and speak about what you liked about the sequence, and how and why it affected you.
- 'Above all, Ali and Zahra reveal the very best in human beings.' Present a short talk to the class on what you think are the good qualities that you see in Ali and Zahra.
- Write a diary entry from the point of view of either Ali or Zahra on the day after the race.

The Colour of Paradise

- The ending of the film, which you looked at earlier, has two possible interpretations. Write your own interpretation of the ending of the film.
- In one of your classes wear a blindfold for fifteen minutes. At the end of the fifteen minutes write about what the experience of not being able to see was like.
- Mr Rahmani, the teacher, writes a report on Mohammad. What do you think he would write in this report?
- Present a sequence from the film to the class. Speak about what you liked about the sequence, and how and why it affected you.

Afghan Alphabet

- Conduct a short interview with the young boy on crutches who you meet at the start of the film. Think about the questions that you would ask him.
- What is life like in a refugee camp? Write about an ordinary day from the point of view of one of the boys who does not attend school.
- With the help of your teacher, research the Taliban in Afghanistan. What are some of the ideas and beliefs that the Taliban stand for? Present this as a multimodal presentation to the class.
- If you could wave a magic wand, what would you do about the lives of children in refugee camps in Iran? Make a wish list of five things you would change.
- The filmmaker has a strong argument that he is trying to put forward. What is this argument and what visual evidence does he present to support it?

REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

Reflect on what you have learned about Iran by viewing these films and respond to the following questions. You may wish to write brief responses, respond through an individual blog post, a class discussion board, or as a class debate.

- How do films help us to understand another country, its culture and its people?
- Why do we enjoy viewing films set in places very different from where we live?
- How are the three films you viewed different from the ones you typically might view in the cinema with your friends or family during the holidays?

CONSOLIDATE:

Write a letter to one of the filmmakers and tell them what you have learned from viewing their film.
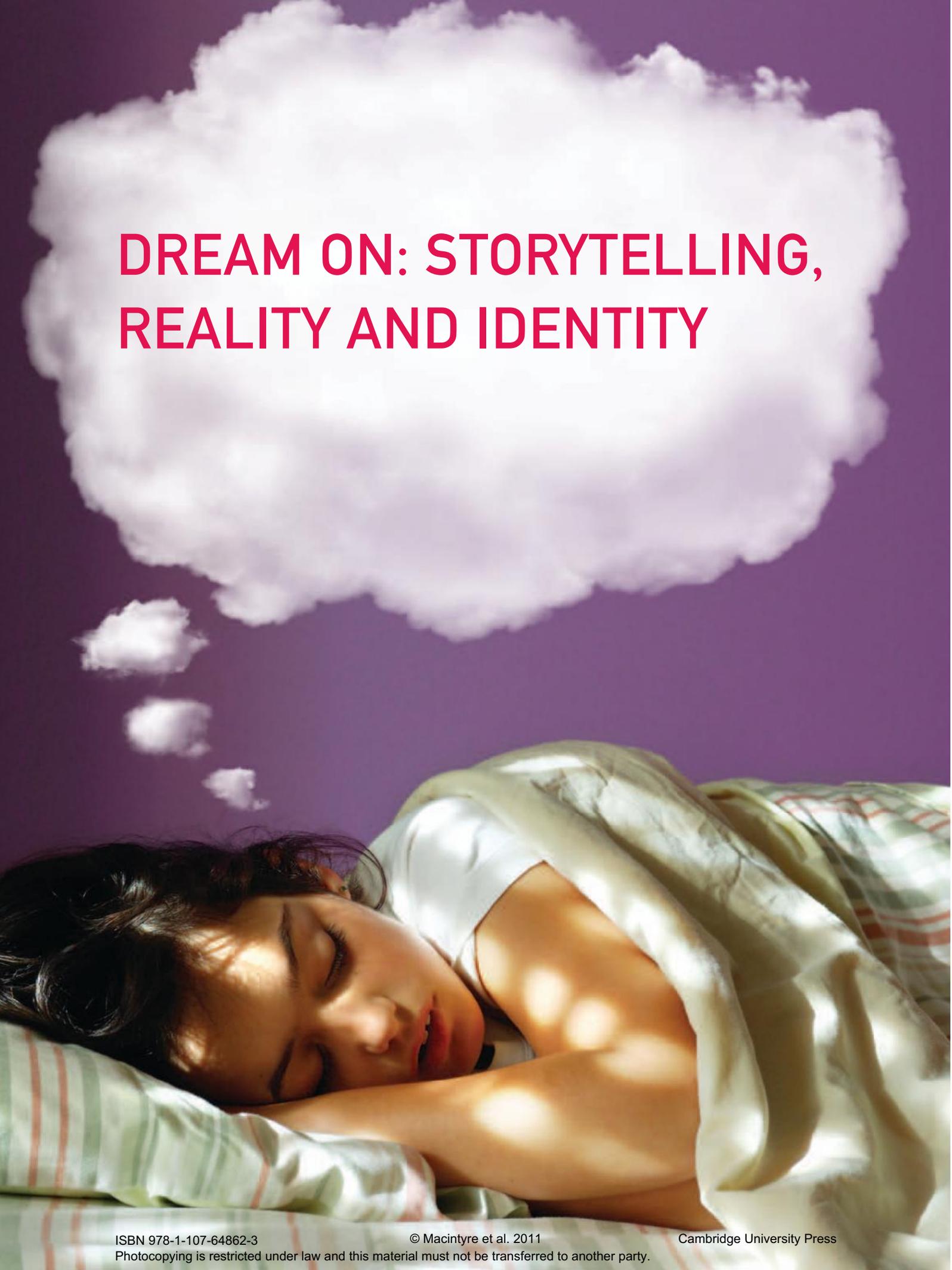
DREAM ON: STORYTELLING, REALITY AND IDENTITY

[7]

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- read, view and respond to dream narratives in a variety of texts, including reality TV

- identify variation in text structures and their impact on audience responses to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

- think critically about and evaluate the effectiveness of dream narratives within reality text formats and the effect of technology to create meaning in these texts

- plan, rehearse and deliver presentations with others to present a point of view

- apply your knowledge of dream narratives to write and create your own reflective and informative texts.

- What roles do dreams play in your lives?
- Do you have a recurring dream? How do you think it relates to your day-to-day life?
- How are your dreams shaped by what you see, hear and read in different kinds of texts, including what you see on TV or at the movies?
- Why are dreams so often used in modern day texts?
- What kinds of dreams do you have for your future?

REFLECT AND RESPOND >>
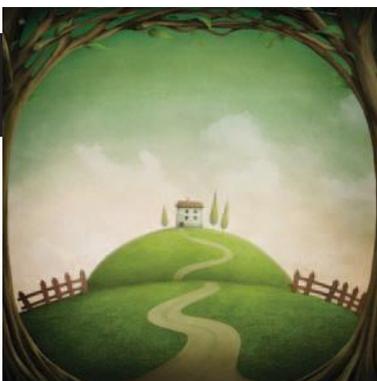
Activity 7.1 What do you already know about dreams?

1 In small groups, in five minutes of free writing time, write down as many words and ideas that come into your mind when you hear the word 'dream'.

2 Share your list of words and ideas with others in the group. Were there many different ideas about dreams? What words and ideas did you have in common? Group these together and give each group a label that suggests how they are linked.

3 Share the key ideas from each group of students to create a class map of what you know about dreams. Discuss different kinds of dreams, whether dreams are good or bad, and the roles that dreams play in people's lives.

REFLECT ON

In small groups discuss your responses to the following questions:

1 What do you dream about?

2 Do you think you can control your own dreams and make things happen in them?

LITERARY DREAMSCAPES

The unconscious dreams you have when you sleep and the real dreams you have about yourself and the people you love can be seen as closely connected. Some of these dream narratives may also be represented in literature. We can learn many things about dreams from the way in which they have been written about in different literary texts. We will explore some of these now.

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND (1865)

Many novels have included dreams. One of the most famous of these novels is *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) by Lewis Carroll. In this novel, a young girl called Alice follows a white rabbit down a rabbit hole into a land where she has many fantastical adventures. In this world, everyday events are turned upside down. Alice wakes up at the end of her adventures to find that it has all been a dream.

Have you read *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*? Have you viewed one of the many film versions of the book, such as the most recent 3-D film, *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) directed by Tim Burton and starring Johnny Depp as the Mad Hatter?

Here are three illustrations that might remind you of what you have read. They are from the original version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which was illustrated by John Tenniel.

LOOK CLOSER

1 Examine these images of Alice from the original novel. How would you describe Alice from these images?

2 Do you have a sense of what happens to Alice in her dreams?

READ AND INTERACT >>

Activity 7.2 Exploring ideas

In pairs reflect on what you do and don't know about *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Create a KWL Chart (what we know) like the one following to help you do some online research about the book and its author. Add questions to the middle column and responses to the other columns.

What do we <u>know</u> about *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*?	What do we <u>want to know</u> about *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*?	What have we <u>learned</u> about *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*?
Lewis Carroll wasn't the author's real name. There was a real Alice. The most recent movie of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was made in 2010.	What was Lewis Carroll's real name? Why do you think he changed his name?	

Use the **L** ('what have we learned?') part of the chart to create a PowerPoint presentation or poster to share each group's findings with the whole class.

A MAD TEA-PARTY

Let's read two excerpts from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to investigate how Lewis Carroll creates a fantastical world of dreams.

The first excerpt is the opening of one of the most famous episodes in the book, the Hatter's tea party. You might remember this from the illustration above. Do you know what a Hatter is? Do you know why the Hatter is referred to as 'mad'?

READ MORE

See what you can find online about hat-making in the nineteenth century and the reasons why many hat-makers were considered 'mad' (by the definitions of the day).

There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the other two were using it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. 'Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse,' thought Alice; 'only as it's asleep, I suppose it doesn't mind.'

The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it: 'No room! No room!' they cried out when they saw Alice coming. 'There's *plenty* of room!' said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table.

'Have some wine,' the March Hare said in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. 'I don't see any wine,' she remarked.

'There isn't any,' said the March Hare.

'Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it,' said Alice angrily.

'It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited,' said the March Hare.

'I didn't know it was *your* table,' said Alice: 'it's laid for a great many more than three.'

'Your hair wants cutting,' said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.

'You should learn not to make personal remarks,' Alice said with some severity: 'it's very rude.'

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he *said* was, 'Why is a raven like a writing-desk?'

'Come, we shall have some fun now!' thought Alice. 'I'm glad they've begun asking riddles—I believe I can guess that,' she added aloud.

'Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?' said the March Hare.

'Exactly so,' said Alice.

'Then you should say what you mean,' the March Hare went on.

'I do,' Alice hastily replied; 'at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know.'

'Not the same thing a bit!' said the Hatter. 'Why, you might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the same thing as "I eat what I see"!'

'You might just as well say,' added the March Hare, 'that "I like what I get" is the same thing as "I get what I like"!'

'You might just as well say', added the Dormouse, who seemed to be talking in his sleep, 'that "I breathe when I sleep" is the same thing as "I sleep when I breathe"!'

'It *is* the same thing with you,' said the Hatter, and here the conversation dropped, and the party sat silent for a minute, while Alice thought over all she could remember about ravens and writing-desks, which wasn't much.

Source: Carroll, L. (1895), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

READ AND EVALUATE >>

Activity 7.3 Dreams and reality

1. With a partner, read the excerpt closely and discuss the possible real-life experiences that this part of Alice's dream might be based on.
2. Consider why Alice has such trouble with the table manners of her companions.
3. As a class, discuss how the author changes the context, language, events and behaviours usually involved in these experiences to create a more fantastical quality to the scene.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland was written when inventors were beginning to explore **cinematography** and this scene can be said to contain many visual elements. It begins with a long shot of the scene and then zooms in to the table for a close-up of the Hatter and the March Hare leaning on the Dormouse. There is also a lot of dialogue which could easily be developed into a script.

CREATE >>

Activity 7.4 Explore the cinematic qualities of the novel

1. Create a storyboard and a script for the Mad Hatter scene.
2. Think about how you would shoot it so that the dreamlike quality of the scene is brought to life. Next to your storyboard cells, write words and ideas from the text that each cell is trying to capture.
3. On the script write some **director's notes** about how the actors should play the scene.
4. Perform this in a ***Reader's Theatre** for the class.

THE MOCK TURTLE'S STORY

In the second excerpt, Alice meets a very strange creature called the Mock Turtle who begins to tell her about his school days. In this scene, Lewis Carroll uses **wordplay** and **puns** to create a sense of strangeness.

J.K. Rowling is a modern writer who uses wordplay and puns to create a fantastical world.

The *Harry Potter* novels are full of wordplay and puns. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, one of the spells is 'Tarantallegra', which is a spell to make the victim's legs jerk. The spell combines 'tarantella', which is a lively dance, 'tarantula', a huge spider with many legs; 'allegro', a musical term which means fast; and 'allegra', which means happy.

'When we were little,' the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, 'we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle—we used to call him Tortoise—'

'Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn't one?' Alice asked.

'We called him Tortoise because he taught us,' said the Mock Turtle angrily. 'Really you are very dull!'

'You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question,' added the Gryphon; and then they both sat silent and looked at poor Alice, who felt ready to sink into the earth. At last the Gryphon said to the Mock Turtle, 'Drive on, old fellow! Don't be all day about it!' and he went on in these words:

'Yes, we went to school in the sea, though you mayn't believe it—'

'I never said I didn't!' interrupted Alice.

'You did,' said the Mock Turtle.

'Hold your tongue!' added the Gryphon, before Alice could speak again. The Mock Turtle went on.

'We had the best of educations—in fact, we went to school every day—'

'*I've* been to a day-school, too,' said Alice; 'You needn't be so proud as all that.'

'With extras?' asked the Mock Turtle a little anxiously.

'Yes,' said Alice, 'we learned French and music.'

'And washing?' said the Mock Turtle.

'Certainly not!' said Alice indignantly.

'Ah! Then yours wasn't a really good school,' said the Mock Turtle in a tone of great relief. 'Now, at *ours,* they had, at the end of the bill, "French, music, *and washing*—extra—."'

'You couldn't have wanted it much,' said Alice; 'living at the bottom of the sea.'

'I couldn't afford to learn it,' said the Mock Turtle with a sigh. 'I only took the regular course.'

'What was that?' inquired Alice.

'Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with,' the Mock Turtle replied; 'and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision.'

'I never heard of "Uglification,"' Alice ventured to say. 'What is it?'

The Gryphon lifted up both its paws in surprise. 'What! Never heard of uglifying!' it exclaimed. 'You know what to beautify is, I suppose?'

'Yes,' said Alice doubtfully: 'it means—to—make—anything—prettier.'

'Well, then,' the Gryphon went on, 'if you don't know what to uglify is, you *are* a simpleton.'

Alice did not feel encouraged to ask any more questions about it, so she turned to the Mock Turtle, and said 'What else had you to learn?'

'Well, there was Mystery,' the Mock Turtle replied, counting off the subjects on his flappers, '—Mystery, ancient and modern, with Seaography: then Drawling—the Drawling-master was an old conger-eel, that used to come once a week: *he* taught us Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils.'

'What was *that* like?' said Alice.

'Well, I ca'n't show it you, myself,' the Mock Turtle said: 'I'm too stiff. And the Gryphon never learnt it.'

'Hadn't time,' said the Gryphon: 'I went to the Classical master, though. He was an old crab, *he* was.'

'I never went to him,' the Mock Turtle said with a sigh. 'He taught Laughing and Grief, they used to say.'

'So he did, so he did,' said the Gryphon, sighing in his turn; and both creatures hid their faces in their paws.

'And how many hours a day did you do lessons?' said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.

'Ten hours the first day,' said the Mock Turtle: 'nine the next, and so on.'

'What a curious plan!' exclaimed Alice.

'That's the reason they're called lessons,' the Gryphon remarked: 'because they lessen from day to day.'

Source: Carroll, L. (1895), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Activity 7.5 Wordplay

1 Read the excerpt individually and then read it aloud with a partner, speaking the Mock Turtle and Alice's lines only. How does reading the lines aloud make a difference to your understanding of the Mock Turtle's story?

2 Working with your partner, underline as many examples of wordplay as you can find. Discuss how the humour works in different sections and then write some notes using annotations, like this:

> This is a pun: 'Tortoise' sounds like 'taught us'.

We called him **Tortoise** because he **taught us**.

> It's very odd to go to school in the sea and to be taught by an animal, especially one this slow and quiet.

3 Compare your ideas with another pair and choose your favourite example from your analysis to share with the class.

4 What did you enjoy about reading this excerpt? Is it clever, funny or odd? Do the jokes still work?

5 Imagine you could change your school day into something as extraordinary as the Mock Turtle's school days. What would does your school look like? Who would the other students be? What would your day be like? You might want to view scenes from any of the 'Harry Potter' films to get some ideas for jokes and wordplay.

Activity 7.6 Your dream school day

Referring to the examples in Activity 7.5 write 100 words about your dream day at school.

REFLECT ON

1 Are Alice's dream adventures fantastical, friendly, nightmarish, or all three?

2 Compare Alice's dreams with your own. Have you had any dreams where people engage in strange conversations like the one we read?

3 How do Alice's dreams compare to your dream day at school?

IT'S A MAD FILM WORLD

The adventures of Alice have enthralled readers since 1865 when the book was first published. Creating the dream world of 'Wonderland' has also attracted filmmakers, with the first film version produced in 1900. Each generation of directors captures Alice's dreams in different ways.

Viewing the trailers for Disney's film *Alice in Wonderland* and the most recent Tim Burton version released in 2010 will help you explore how dreams are represented visually. Both films are produced by Disney, but 50 years apart. The first, released in 1951, is an animation. In 2010, Disney released a version in which a nineteen-year-old Alice returns to 'Wonderland' (now 'Underland') to discover that her experiences there were real. Note how both films have shortened the title and removed 'Adventures'. Why do you think this is so?

LOOK CLOSER

Search online for the original Disney trailer from 1951 and the trailer for the 2010 film directed by Tim Burton. View them both.

1 What do you learn about Alice from these trailers?

2 How is the idea of a dream represented in each of these trailers?

3 Which of these trailers draws you further into the story?

© Disney

Alice falls down the rabbit hole in the 1951 film.

We will now look more closely at the way in which the fantasy space of 'Wonderland' is represented by exploring how a specific scene from the book is visualised in both films. The scene is the Hatter's tea party. In your viewing, look carefully at the way the scene is represented in terms of the different genres – animation versus live action. What are the major differences you find?

Activity 7.7 Bringing a scene to life

View 'Chapter 6: Cheshire, The Hare and the Hatter' from the 2010 version and then view the same scene from the earlier movie.

Copy and complete the table to make your notes. The ideas below will guide you.

Prompts	2010 version	1951 version
What is the setting for the scene? How would you describe 'Wonderland' based on this setting?		
Which characters are in the scene and which character seems to be the most important?		
What happens in the scene?		
What does Alice look like and what does she do and say? How does this scene build her character?		
Describe the Hatter: What does he do and say? How does this scene build his character?		
What colours are used in this scene? How do they contribute to the scene?		
What music and songs are used? How do they contribute to the scene?		
How would you describe Alice's adventures based on this scene?		

1   In small groups, transfer your notes into a Venn diagram like the example following.

2   As a class, discuss the similarities and differences in the different versions of the scene.

2010		1951
Differences	Similarities	Differences
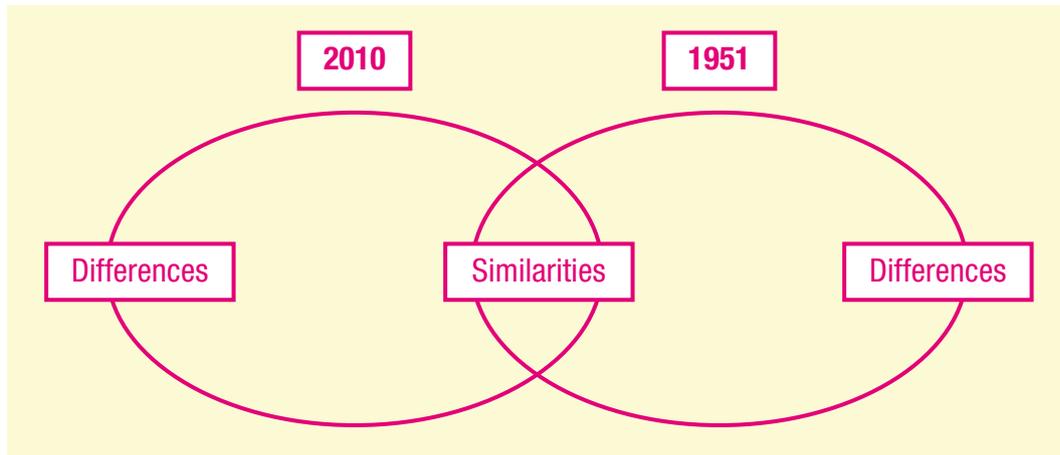
REFLECT ON

1 Why do you think some aspects of the scene have been changed and some have remained the same?
2 Which version of the tea party do you prefer? Give reasons for your choice.

LOOK CLOSER

Refer to the original illustrations by John Tenniel at the start of this chapter and compare the illustrations with your notes about these scenes.

1 The visual representation of this scene has changed a lot over 150 years. Why do you think this is so?
2 Identify the intended audience for each version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.
3 In what ways has the audience changed for these films over the years?
4 What do you think the differences between these versions reveal about the changing interests of film audiences?

DREAMWALKER (2001)
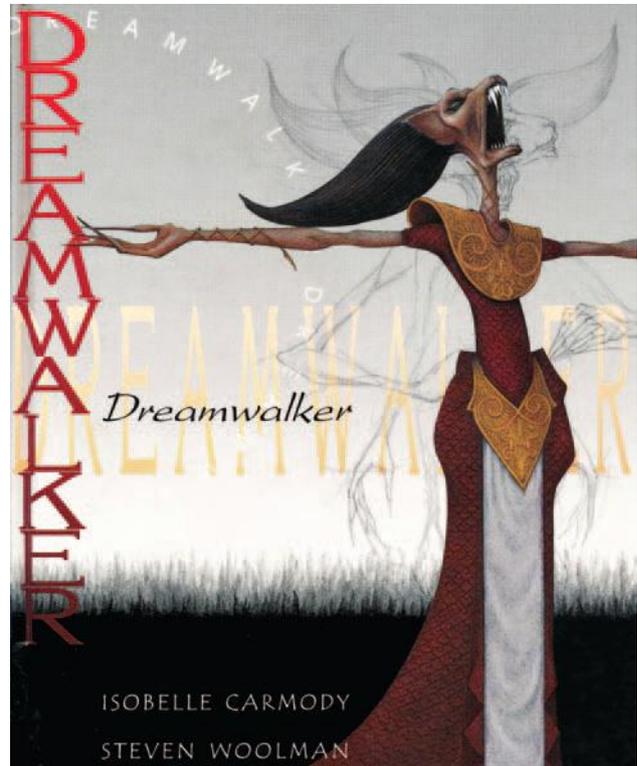
Sometimes when we dream we might feel we can control what happens, and sometimes these dreams are so vivid they appear to be real – so much so, that when we wake up from the dream, it's hard to focus on the real world.

In the graphic novel *Dreamwalker* (2001), written by Isobelle Carmody and illustrated by Steven Woolman, the text, images and ideas work together to pose questions about dreams and reality, and how much control we have over our dreams.

Explore the image on the front cover of *Dreamwalker*. Look at the colours, the figure and the placement of the title.

1   What do these design elements tell you about the type of dreams that will be in this text?

2   How might these compare to the dreams in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*?

3   Who do you think the title refers to?

The cover of *Dreamwalker*

protagonist the main or central character who drives the story forward
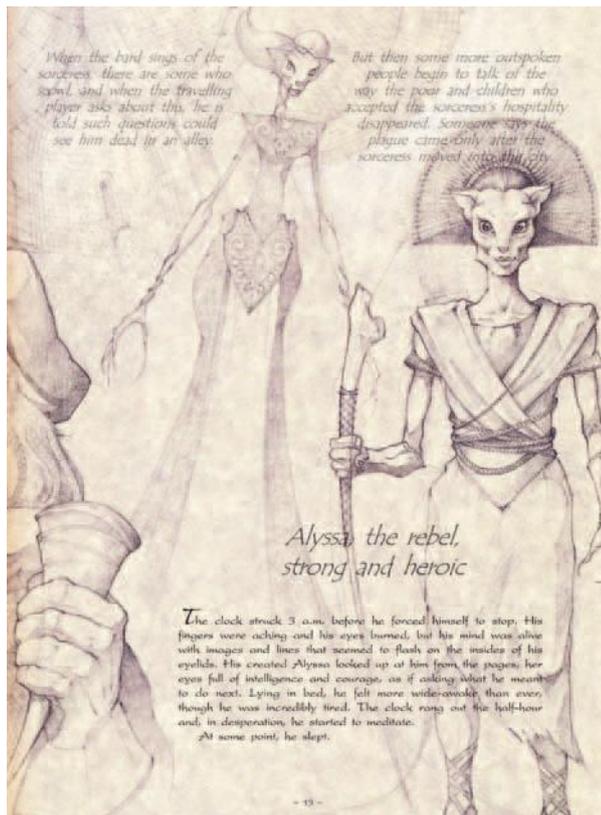
Ken's drawing of the Sorceress and Alyssa

Dreamwalker begins with the **protagonist**, Ken, waking from a bad dream. When he wakes, he takes control by drawing the creature from his dream who he calls the Sorceress.

Each night Ken dreams of more characters, and in his waking moments he builds a fantasy story around them in which an evil sorceress is draining a fantastical kingdom of its powers. This image shows you Ken's drawing of the Sorceress and another of the main characters, the rebel, Alyssa.

Steven Woolman uses many of the illustrative techniques you have already explored in your in work in Chapter 5 when you looked at *Coraline*. You can apply your knowledge of these techniques to explore the ways in which Ken draws Alyssa as strong and heroic,

and the Sorceress as evil. Ken decides who the characters are and what happens in his dreams, but his version of his dreams is challenged later in the novel, when he meets the characters he has created. They claim that they are real and *he* is from a dream.

The chapters that follow in *Dreamwalker* go further into this dark world as Ken and the rebels fight the Sorceress.

Ken comes face to face with his creations

LOOK CLOSER

1 In pairs, analyse and compare the images in each section and discuss how Steven Woolman creates a sense of the two different worlds through his illustrations.
2 Based on your analysis, discuss which world you believe is more real and why.

Who is dreaming?

On *Dreamwalker's* final page, the reader is brought into the worlds of the text through the final image.

LOOK CLOSER

1 Whose hands do you believe are in the image? How do you know? (Consider the different style of illustration used here.)
2 How does this last image connect the worlds of the text, the book and our world?

Activity 7.8 If you could control your dreams …

In the last chapter, Ken says to Alyssa, 'We're only stories to one another. We're real to ourselves.'

1   What do you think this means in terms of the characters, the dream worlds, the book, and your own responses to the story?

2   Imagine you can choose and control your dreams. What would you wish for? How would your dreams affect your life and the lives of others?

3   In groups, conduct a SWOT analysis ('Strengths', 'Weaknesses', 'Opportunities', 'Threats') about the implications of being able to choose and control your dreams.

READ MORE

Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* (1989–1996) is a comic book series which was turned into a graphic novel series. It chronicles the adventures of 'Dream of the Endless', a character who rules over the world of dreams. Like *Dreamwalker*, it explores the idea of who controls your dreams.

FUTURE DREAMING

You have explored some of the questions literary texts raise about the dreams we have when sleeping. Let's turn our attention to the dreams you might have about your goals and your future. This is the kind of dreaming you do when you are awake – dreams or daydreams about the past, present and future. To help draw these ideas together, let's look at the picture book *The Violin Man* by Colin Thompson.

THE VIOLIN MAN (2003)

The Violin Man is an Australian picture book that tells the story of Oscar, who plays his violin every night for people queuing to enter a theatre. The old violinist lives in a world of lost dreams, especially of his daughter and of becoming a great violinist. When one of Oscar's dreams comes true, he has to decide between the real world and the world of his dreams.

These pages from *The Violin Man* will help you explore how the text and images work together to reveal Oscar's dreams.

Oscar's world in *The Violin Man*

Activity 7.9 Identifying dreams

In small groups, explore how the author has created Oscar's world.

1   Identify and then group as many dreams as you can find in these pages. What does Oscar dream about?

2   How many dreams can you identify that feature his daughter, or are dreams that might be connected with her? What feelings do you get about how much she meant to him? Refer to specific details in the images that prompt you to feel this way.

3   Discuss what the dreams tell us about Oscar's life and his world.

4   Every image featured in the book contains the small pink creatures. What are they doing in these pages? What do you think their roles are in the book?

5   In your groups, use your ideas to create a 100 word **backstory** for Oscar.

6   Share your stories with the class.

backstory the events that have happened to a character in a novel, play or film before the events of the story begin

1 What do the images tell us about Oscar's life and dreams that would be difficult to express only in words?

2 At the end of the story Oscar goes back to playing the violin outside the theatre. Why do you think he prefers the world of his dreams to the real world? Are there any clues in the images you have explored about the world Oscar chooses and why?

Jessica Watson

MAKING YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE

Do you have any dreams about what you would like to do in your life? How do these dreams about the future influence what you do today? Do you make lists about what you want to achieve? Do you have a plan for how you will get there?

How do real-life dreamers talk about themselves and their dreams? Jessica Watson is a real-life dreamer who made her dream come true.

On 18 October 2009, then sixteen-year-old Jessica Watson left Sydney to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world. Even before she began her voyage, the attempt was controversial because she was so young. On 15 May 2010 she sailed into Sydney Harbour having successfully completed her epic voyage and fulfilled her personal dream.

VIEW AND EVALUATE >>

Activity 7.10 Jessica's dream

View this TV news story about Jessica Watson before she left Sydney: **www.jessicawatson.com.au/_webapp_374291/Network_Ten_Exclusive**.

As a class, discuss the following questions:

1 What is the backdrop to the story?

2 What images of Jessica are selected?

3 What do other people say about her?

4 What does the reporter say about Jessica?

5 What is she allowed to talk about?

6 What does she do?

7 Evaluate what the story is presenting as Jessica's dream. How do you think it is trying to make you feel about her solo trip?

In this entry from the blog she wrote while sailing, Jessica tells about the experience of living out her dream.

'ALMOST AROUND THE CAPE AND WHY I AM SAILING AROUND THE WORLD'

Monday, February 22, 2010

So anyway, while sitting out in the sunshine and hand steering today, I did a bit of thinking (dangerous thing to do I know!). Seeing as we're now over half way around the world, I thought it might be a good time to have a bit of a re-think about exactly what I am doing out here and whether or not my expectations have changed at all.

When I first dreamt of sailing around the world, the first thing that caught my attention was curiosity about whether or not it was even something that was achievable. It wasn't so much the action and adrenaline parts that appealed to me, but thinking about all the details and finding ways to minimize the risks. I wanted to challenge myself and achieve something to be proud of. And yes, I wanted to inspire people. I hate that so many dreams never actually become anything more than that, a dream. I'm not saying that everyone should buy a boat and take off around the world, but I hope that by achieving my own dream, I'm showing people that it is possible to reach their own goals, whatever they might be and however big or small.

Now that I'm out here, I'm also finding that a big part of it is just about having fun and making the most of every day. And the other amazing thing is that it's no longer just my dream or voyage. Every milestone out here isn't just my achievement, but an achievement for everyone who has put so much time and effort into helping getting me here.

Also, I'd like to say that I'm not doing this to prove a point, but that wouldn't be completely true. For almost 6 years my family lived on our motor boat travelling and based at different marinas on the east coast of Australia. When you live on the water, it's sort of like an unwritten law that when another boat is pulling in, you stop to give a hand and take their lines. But being a 'little girl' meant that more often than not, my offer of help would be completely ignored, while the line was passed to the fully grown man next to me. I found this incredibly frustrating as I knew that I was just as capable of handling the lines as anyone else. I hated being judged by my appearance and other people's expectations of what a 'little girl' was capable of.

So yes, I hope that part of what I'm doing out here is proving that we shouldn't judge by appearance and our own expectations. I want the world to know exactly what 'little girls' and young people are actually capable of!

Source: Official Jessica Watson blog: **www.jessicawatson.com.au**

Activity 7.11 Writing about your dream

1. Read the blog entry carefully.
2. List the words and phrases Jessica uses to describe herself, her dream and what she is doing.
3. Use these words and phrases to create a **lexical chain** (see the example below) that builds up a picture of Jessica's dream and how she is achieving it.

lexical chain
a sequence of related words in a text, used to demonstrate how a writer uses similar words to create a character or build an argument in a text

Words and phrases about herself	Words and phrases about her dream and what she is doing
'I wanted to challenge myself and achieve something to be proud of.'	'… by achieving my own dream, I'm showing people that it is possible to reach their own goals'.

4. In small groups, use the lexical chain you created to discuss how Jessica sees herself. How does Jessica's story differ from the version presented by the news media?

LOOK CLOSER

1. Read some of Jessica's other blog postings. Consider what blogging allows her to do that is different from writing or talking about her dreams in other media.
2. In your groups, research and read some of the stories about Jessica since her return to Australia.
3. Choose three stories and analyse how they present Jessica – as an ordinary girl, as a hero or as a celebrity? How do you know? Consider the language used to describe her and her journey.

DREAMING REALITY

Language and the structures of different texts can shape and even manipulate our understanding of dreams. Your exploration of the media's presentation of Jessica Watson's dream in comparison to her own descriptions will have raised some important questions for you about the importance of *how* things are said in relation to what is being said.

Now let's investigate how television has shaped and presented the stories of 'ordinary' people achieving their dreams in a genre of television known as reality TV.

Activity 7.12 What do you know about reality TV?

1 Share what you know about reality TV.

2 In small groups, copy and complete the following table with as many examples that you can think of. If you identify other types of dreams, add them to your list.

Type of dream	Examples	Participants	Dream	Obstacles	Prize
Winning money or prizes					
Career change					
Becoming a celebrity chef					
Sporting success					
Giving money to a charity	'Dancing with the Stars'			A competition	
Self-improvement or makeover					
Finding romance	'The Farmer Wants a Wife'	Country guys and city gals	To find a partner		Marriage and a family
Being an entertainer	'Australia's Got Talent'	Anyone	To be famous		Money and a contract

3 Look back at your notes for Activity 7.1 (What do you already know about dreams?) and use a Venn diagram (see example following) to map out the similarities and differences between the dreams presented in reality TV and your own dreams.

4   As a class, discuss these similarities and differences, focusing on how your dreams might be shaped by what you see in reality TV, and why viewing ordinary people achieve their dreams on television is so popular.

| Dreams in your own lives | Dreams on reality TV |

Differences   Similarities   Differences
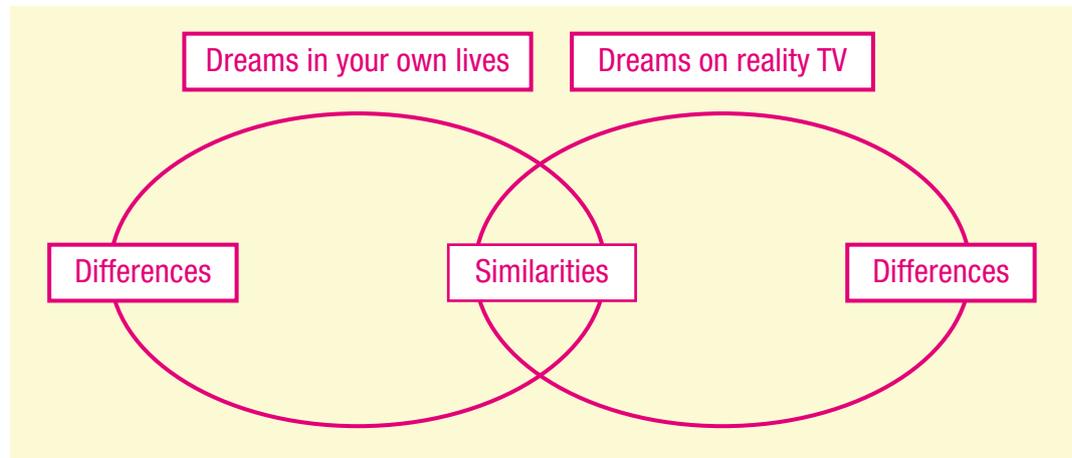
REFLECT ON

Refer to the completed Venn diagram.

1   Do you view reality TV? If so, why? If not, why?

2   If you do view reality TV, write about how you personally feel your own dreams may be shaped by reality TV.

EXPLORING THE KEY FEATURES OF REALITY TV

In the rest of this chapter you are going to explore some of the key features of reality TV.

Working in a small group, you will become part of an **expert panel** researching and sharing your findings about one specific reality TV program with the rest of the class.

Your first task is to choose the program you will investigate. You will find ideas for this in the table you completed for Activity 7.12. You now need to record an episode of your program, so that you can use it and refer to it as you work through the rest of the chapter with your fellow expert panel members.

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Cambridge University Press

CONTESTANTS

Have you ever really thought about how contestants for reality TV programs are selected? Some programs have public elimination rounds to select participants. Why do you think they do this?

LOOK CLOSER

1 Who are the participants in the reality TV program you are exploring?

2 What types of people do they represent (e.g. the battler, the single parent)?

WRITE AND INTERACT >>

Activity 7.13 Contestant profile

1 In your expert panel group, choose one contestant each and create a profile of that contestant in the reality program that you are investigating.

2 You may have to use the website associated with the TV program, or research newspaper and magazine articles to find out more information.

3 Use the headings in the character profile table below to help you. Add any extra characteristics that are important for your program.

Age:	Gender:
Appearance	
Personal dream	
Family background	
The story of their lives to date	
Why were they selected?	
Reason for participating in the show	
Behaviours during the show	
Audience response to the contestant	

4 Once you have completed your individual research, share your profiles with the rest of your expert panel.

5 Can you identify any patterns in the type of contestants chosen – what similarities and differences do they have?

6 As a panel, create a profile for the ideal contestant for the program that you are investigating.

1   As a class, discuss why you think people want to participate in reality TV programs.

2   Would you like to be a contestant on any of these programs? What is the attraction?

3   What do you think reality TV programs offer that the real world doesn't? Is it just celebrity or fame, or is it something else?

Susan Boyle's audition

The dream

In 2009, Susan Boyle became a worldwide phenomenon when she appeared on the TV program 'Britain's Got Talent' and wowed the judges and the audience with her performance of a song called 'I Dreamed a Dream'.

The YouTube video of her performance was the most viewed video on YouTube in 2009 with over 120 million hits! Search online for the original, full version and view it for yourself.

VIEW AND ANALYSE >>

Activity 7.14 Shaping Susan's story

1   View Susan's appearance on 'Britain's Got Talent' again.

2   Pause it so you can analyse the four segments of her story:

- Pre-audition
- Before she begins to sing
- Susan's performance
- The judging.

Use the questions following to help you do this.

Pre-audition:	What images of her are selected?
	What is she allowed to talk about?
	What does she do?
	What do other people say about her?
	How do you feel about Susan based on this segment alone?
Before she begins to sing:	What does she do?
	What is she allowed to talk about?
	What do other people say about her?
	How do the judges react to her?

	How does the audience react to her?
	How do you feel about Susan based on the first two segments?
Susan's performance:	What happens when she starts to sing?
	Why is her choice of song important?
	How do the audience and judges respond to her?
	How do you feel about Susan at the end of this segment?
The judging:	What happens at the end of her performance?
	What do the judges say?
	How do they assess her performance?
	How do you feel about her performance now?

Respond to the following questions:

3 Is Susan treated differently as her story unfolds?

4 Why do you think these particular scenes and shots of the judges and Susan have been chosen? How has careful editing contributed to the representation of her story?

5 Why do you think that her performance was such a hit on YouTube?

LOOK CLOSER

In your expert panel group, choose one of the participants from the reality TV episode you have recorded.

1 View the segments in which they appear and analyse them based on the questions above. You will need to change the questions so that they are appropriate for your program.

2 Share your analysis with the rest of the class.

After the dream

We don't always know if the winners of reality TV programs continue to be successful after the show has finished. Sometimes the success of participants goes beyond their wildest dreams, and sometimes it's a disaster. On the following page is an excerpt from a magazine article in which Susan Boyle describes her year.

APRIL 11, 2009: MY BIG TV DEBUT

The day my audition was aired on TV and the day my life changed forever. I was sitting at home watching the show alone. I came onto the telly and I heard lots of shouting outside my window. When I opened the front door my neighbours were outside my house jumping for joy. We ended up having a bit of a street party. It was special.

MAY 2009: BECOMING A STAR

The hype that went on I didn't really get — strangers writing to me every day, everyone was really nice to me … And it ended up with TV stations from all over the world camping out on my street waiting for interviews. I talked to Oprah, Larry King and The Today Show

BEGINNING OF JUNE: THE MELTDOWN

I was exhausted. I felt under immense pressure and needed to rest. I just needed a few days away from it all …

JULY 7: UNVEILING MY NEW LOOK'

My first ever photo shoot and for Harper's Bazaar in the USA, which never in my wildest dreams did I think I'd be pictured for … It's a big adjustment wearing beautiful couture gowns. It's like looking at a different person to the one I was this time last year.

AUGUST: MAKING MY ALBUM

The record is underway… The whole thing has been coming together beyond my wildest dreams, really. … I still pinch myself that I'm actually doing this. The studio feels like home.

SEPTEMBER 12: OFF TO AMERICA

My first ever trip to America and I cannot tell you how excited I was. I went to LA and there were great crowds waiting for us at the airport. Nothing that a woman like me was used to. It was quite something to be in Hollywood …This is a world I'd never seen and never dreamt that I would get to see.

NOVEMBER 23: REALISING THE DREAM

A date which I will never ever forget… the dream I dared to dream has become a reality, and the promise I made to my mother fulfilled — my first album is released. Who would have thought so much would have been achieved in just 11 months. Well certainly not me. In such a short time life has taught me that things are worth waiting for, and it has taught me also to keep going no matter what your difficulties are.

Source: 'The Sunday Mirror', http://www.mirror.co.uk/celebs/news/2009/11/22/susan-boyle-s-diary-from-the-day-she-first-wowed-judges-on-britain-s-got-talent-115875-21839736/

LOOK CLOSER

Read the excerpt from Susan's Boyle's diary and answer the following questions:

1 How far do you think Susan's year was successful for her personally and professionally?
2 What were the hits and challenges, and what was unexpected?
3 How does the diary structure work to create a personal perspective of her year?
4 Why do you think the magazine editor used this format?

REFLECT ON

1 Compare Susan Boyle's diary entries with Jessica Watson's blog entry.
2 Which do you think is more effective in creating a sense of the dream and the journey? Give reasons for your opinion.

REFLECT AND WRITE >>

Activity 7.15 Winners and losers

Take on the persona of a winner or a loser on the reality TV program you have been analysing. Write a 100-word reflective piece considering the following questions:

1 What have you learned from your experiences on the show?
2 What do you think will happen to you now?
3 Have your dreams come true?
4 Do you have new dreams? Have your dreams changed?

RESEARCH AND EVALUATE >>

Activity 7.16 Evaluating the reality TV experience

1 In your expert panel groups, research online to find information about the winners and losers of the program that you are studying.
2 Look for **first-person narrative** accounts as well as articles written about the winners and losers that might have appeared in newspapers and magazines. How do they feel about their experiences now?
3 Evaluate the different ways their stories are presented. What is the effect of a story written in the first person compared to one written about the person by someone else? Does the story have a different meaning depending on who is telling it?
4 Create a short PowerPoint presentation and share what you have found with the class.

first-person narrative
a narration by a character from their point of view where the character refers to him or herself as 'I'

WHOSE REALITY IS IT?

opening credits a list of the key actors, director and producers shown at the beginning of a TV program or film, which often includes images from the program and music

Reality TV can be said to create its own version of reality. Exploring the **opening credits** of most reality TV programs is a good place to begin analysing this premise.

Activity 7.17 Shaping reality

As a class, view the first ten minutes of a current reality TV program and then respond to the following questions.

1   What is in the opening credits? What actions, images and music are used? How do these create a sense of the world of the program?

2   What happens in the opening ten minutes? What do people do? What do they say? What is the dream for the participants in this episode?

3   What do the opening few minutes tell you about what is important in this program?

4   After viewing it, talk about how the different elements in the opening ten minutes come together, so that the audience believes that this world is real.

LOOK CLOSER

In your expert panels, use the questions from Activity 7.17 to write about the reality TV program you are studying. Discuss your responses with the rest of the class.

Is it real?

One of the criticisms of reality TV is that it isn't really 'real'. The events don't take place in real time; they are edited, so that a week of events can be shown in a few minutes. Events are shaped and designed by the directors and editors. The worst charge against these programs is that they are all fake because of the production features used to put the programs together.

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These features include:

1 **Voice-over:** comments by a celebrity or the host of the program telling the audience what is going on, and what they are supposed to be feeling about the events.

2 **Forced conflicts:** putting people into situations where they are forced to fight, for example, parents competing against their children in an elimination contest such as 'Biggest Loser', or the judges fighting with each other on 'Australian Idol'.

3 **Heavy editing:** the selection of only those parts of events that will make good television. For example, a week of rehearsal for 'Dancing with the Stars' is cut down to two minutes of airtime.

4 **Unreal events:** participants are forced to do things that they normally wouldn't do in real life. For example, in a recent controversial 'Survivor' challenge, the contestants were made to eat rats.

5 **Scripted scenes:** participants receive a script beforehand, which tells them what to say and do.

VIEW AND ANALYSE >>

Activity 7.18 Production features

1 In your expert panel groups, choose a segment from your recorded episode and view it carefully to identify any of the production features commonly used in reality TV.

2 Share your findings with the class.

You might also:

3 Create an alternative voice-over commentary for a segment of your program which presents the same visuals, but from a different perspective (e.g. a winner, a loser, a sponsor, someone who hates reality TV, a fan).

4 Share your scene with the new voice-over commentary with the rest of the class. Has their response to the scene changed because of this new voice-over commentary?

REFLECT ON

Evaluate the following:

1 How 'real' is real?

2 Is the use of these production techniques wrong? How could you defend their use?

3 What would a reality TV program be like if these techniques were not used?

Sponsoring the dream

In Australia, most reality TV programs are on free-to-air commercial TV, which means that there are many opportunities for organisations to **sponsor** the program and to advertise products for sale that are associated with the program.

sponsor supports a person, organisation or activity by giving money, encouragement or other help

Product placement is big business during reality TV advertising

A good example of this is the sponsorship of 'MasterChef Australia' by a leading supermarket chain. In this way, sponsorship and advertising can create links between the reality presented on the program and the audience's day-to-day life.

Activity 7.19 Advertising reality

In your expert panel groups, revisit the episode of the show you recorded and view the advertisement breaks. Copy and complete the table below.

	Length of ad break in minutes	Sponsor/ product	Target audience e.g. who is featured in the ad	Number of ads	Which ads are repeated?	Number of repeated ads
Pre-show						
Ad break 1						
Ad break 2, etc.						
After final credits						

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As a group, discuss your findings using these questions:

1   Who are the sponsors and the main advertisers?
2   What are they selling?
3   Who is the target audience for the advertisements?
4   Is there a range of advertisements or are many of them repeated?
5   How do they contribute to the program and how do they link events in the program to day-to-day life?

LOOK CLOSER

Explore the website for your reality TV program.

1   Are there any ads or links to sponsors on the website?
2   What else is on the website? Is there anything else you can buy?
3   How does the website support the program?
4   How does the website encourage you to view and get involved in the program?

Now it is time to apply your knowledge about dream narratives, storytelling and identity. Through the activities you have completed in this chapter you have gained the skills to demonstrate your knowledge in various ways. Here are some activities for you to choose from.

KEEP A DREAM JOURNAL

For one week, keep a record of what you dream about when sleeping.

Every morning, write down as much detail as you can remember about what you dreamed that night. At the end of the week, revisit your notes and explore the following questions:

- Have you had any recurring dreams?
- Are there any recurring characters in your dreams?
- Have your dreams been happy or unpleasant?
- Can you find any connections between what has been going on in your real life that week and what you have been dreaming about?

WRITE A FANTASY DREAM STORY

Write a fantasy short story (300 words) about a dream, like *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, where your character goes on a journey that changes them in some way.

You may want to use one of the dreams you recorded in your dream journal as the starting point for your fantasy story.

CREATE A PODCAST OF YOUR DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE

What do you dream about for yourself for the future? Write a reflective speech in the first person of 150 words. Record your speech and publish it as a podcast on a class wiki.

How do your dreams for the future compare to those of your classmates? Are there any common dreams?

CREATE A PROMOTIONAL PACKAGE FOR A NEW REALITY TV PROGRAM

In small groups, create a promotional package to submit to a TV station. Your package will include a video or website for a new reality TV program based on the dreams of teenagers. It should inform the audience about the reality TV program and generate interest.

Some of the tasks involved in creating the promotional package may include:

- identifying the relevant dreams of your audience
- thinking about the kind of reality TV program it is going to be, and making decisions about the kind of dream your program will focus on
- explaining your dream concept and the dream you are creating
- researching the kinds of participants who will be suitable for your program and developing a profile of the ideal contestant
- designing the setting for the program and context in which they are placed
- creating the kinds of events that will make up each episode
- identifying potential sponsorship and advertising opportunities
- creating a storyboard and filming a short video representing your program
- designing a simple website to represent your TV program.

REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

What have you learned about different kinds of dreams and how they have been represented in different ways in different kinds of texts?

What role does reality TV play in creating and promoting these dreams?

How much of reality TV is about selling dreams through advertising and associated products?

GLOSSARY

A

abstract noun
names emotions, ideas, or feelings – things that you cannot see or touch, such as 'loyalty', 'love' or 'curiosity'

adjective
a word that tells us something or describes something more about the noun (see also **descriptive adjective**, **distinctive adjective** and **quantitative adjective**)

alliteration
the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words that are close together

analogy
the illustration of an idea by means of a more familiar idea that is similar to it

animation
the rapid display of a sequence of images of 2-D or 3-D artwork, or models positioned in order to create an illusion of movement

annotate
to highlight important information and add words or symbols

antagonist
the opponent, or enemy, of the hero

anthology
a specially selected collection of poems, stories, songs or other writing

archival footage
film or video material obtained from a historical collection

assonance
the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds in words that are close together

atmosphere
the mood or emotion created by images

B

backstory
the events that have happened to a character in a novel, play or film before the events of the story begin

ballad
a poem in narrative form that tells a story in a simple, direct and dramatic manner; it originated in the thirteenth century, was popular until the nineteenth century and was often set to music and sung

blog
a site that is maintained by an individual or group that contains regular updates of words, pictures, videos and other material, where users are able to share and publish their opinions and discuss various subjects on the site, while readers are allowed to view and comment on the entries

blurb
the information or advertisement on the cover of a book, film, CD or DVD, which briefly describes the content and gives praise

C

censorship
control of what can be shown on television and cinema screens, or published in print

cinematography
the art and technique of filmmaking, including scene composition, lighting, camera choices (angles and movement) and the integration of special effects

classic
a model, an important and excellent example

cliché
a phrase, character, plot or event, etc. that has become so common and expected that it is no longer meaningful

close-ended question
a question that can be answered briefly, often with a single word like 'yes' or 'no'

collective noun
refers to groups or collections of people, things or animals, such as 'choir', 'team' or 'family'

common noun
names general things around you that you can see and touch, such as 'chair', 'computer' or 'school'

connotation
the idea or feeling implied or evoked by a word, for example what you think about or feel when you read or hear the word

contemporary writers
writers who are published within our time

culture
a shared and learned system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shapes and influences who you are and your place in the world

D

dark humour
humour that sees the funny side of something that we usually take seriously

descriptive adjective
the most common form of adjective, such as 'beautiful', 'generous' or 'angry'; all colours are descriptive adjectives

digital story
a very short personal film a person can make for themself; also known as a 'mini-movie'

distinctive adjective
an adjective that differentiates one noun from another: 'this', 'that' and 'either'

doppelganger
a ghostly double of a person, or an evil twin whose appearance usually has sinister outcomes

Dreaming
the time that the Aboriginal people believe the earth was created in, along with the people, animals and plants

E

endpapers
the leaves of paper at the front and back of a book, which are pasted to the inside of the covers to attach the binding

establishment shots
the full details of a place from a distance, usually before the camera zooms in to show more detail and character

F

fan fiction
fiction which uses characters and settings from books, films, TV programs, games and comic strips written by fans of the original work; it often plays out scenarios not in the original work

first-person narrative
a narration by a character from their point of view where the character refers to him or herself as 'I'

flashback
a scene or scenes that take the narrative back in time from the current point the story has reached

foreshadowing
occurs when an author gives clues through details, characters, or incidents about what is going to happen later in the story

G

genre
a type of text or category of texts that uses particular conventions

Gothic horror story
a story of suspense and horror that makes us fearful; it contains supernatural events and characters, and has a sinister, claustrophobic atmosphere

graphic novel
a text that uses both words and images to tell a story often in a comic strip layout

H

haiku
a short, evocative poem that captures a moment of awareness and often deals with the seasons of the year

hip-hop
often used interchangeably to describe rap music; hip-hop also describes the entire culture around the music, including urban style and fashion. It has gained significant mainstream success since the early 2000s with artists such as Kanye West, Jay-Z and M.I.A.

hyperbole
when exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect

I

imagery
descriptive language that can be said to create pictures in our heads when we read; imagery evokes the senses – hearing, taste, touch, smell, sight

intertextual reference
when a writer refers to another text (film, picture, book, poem, etc.) within their own text

intertextuality
the way in which texts are connected to each other

Islam

one of the world's major religions, which follows the teachings and writings of Muhammad, a prophet of God; these sacred writings are contained in the Qur'an

J

Japanese anime

a style of animation originating in Japan, heavily influenced by the manga (Japanese comics) style and typically featuring characters with large eyes and other distinctive features

L

lexical chain

a sequence of related words in a text, used to demonstrate how a writer uses similar words to create a character or build an argument in a text

line break

refers to the end of a line of poetry, when the reader turns to the start of the next line; they help to create meaning in the poem and influence how the reader reads the poem

M

manga

a Japanese form of comic

mashup

a blending of two or more texts to create a new text

meme

(pronounced 'meem') an idea, activity, image/video or off-beat story which is shared online from person to person, like a virus

metalanguage

the terms or language we use to describe the structures and features of language

metaphor

a comparison of one thing to another where it is described in terms of being something else without the use of 'as' or 'like'

micro story

a very short story that may vary in length from under 10 words to up to 100

monologue

a speech given by one person

montage

the product created by selecting, editing and piecing together fragments of pictures, written text or music into a new whole

multimodal

a text that combines language modes (reading, viewing, writing, creating, speaking and listening) and processes, for example, the production of visual, audio, spoken and non-verbal forms of expression through a range of technologies

N

narrative

the relating of stories of events or experiences, imaginary (fiction) or real (non-fiction), including what is narrated and how it is narrated

narrative mode

describes a set of methods an author uses to tell a story; features of narrative mode include narration, point of view, voice, structure and tense

narrative structure

the framework and order of a story

noun

naming words used to identify people, places, animals, abstract ideas or things

O

onomatopoeia

words that sound like the thing they are describing or that sound like they look

open-ended question

a question that encourages a full, meaningful answer

opening credits

a list of the key actors, director and producers shown at the beginning of a TV program or film, which often includes images from the program and music

oral tradition

stories or other messages which are passed down by oral means, such as songs, speech, folk tales, ballads or chants. By this means, societies with no formal writing systems pass on important aspects of their culture and identity from one generation to the next. Texts within the oral tradition often contain rhyme, rhythm and repetition of key words and phrases, which help people remember them.

P

parable
a simple story which has a moral or a message

parody
a 'spoof' created to poke fun at the original text

parts of speech
parts of speech are the categories into which we place words according to the function they play within a sentence, including nouns, verbs and adjectives

pastoral
relating to country life or the countryside

patois
a regional dialect

personification
when human characteristics are given to inanimate objects, such as a chair, animals, or to abstract ideas

photorealist art
a style of painting that resembles photography in its meticulous attention to realistic detail

photostory
a story or narrative told mainly through photographs rather than written text

point of view
the viewpoint of an author, audience or character in a text; it can be either a subjective (first-person) or objective position from which the world is observed: the subjective viewpoint would be through the eyes of a character and the objective viewpoint would be observing a character from a distance

portmanteau words
a blend of two words and their meanings into one new word

proper noun
names something specific, such as 'Daniel', 'Darwin' or 'Christmas'

protagonist
the main or central character who drives the story forwards

proverb
a well-known and often repeated simple saying that expresses a belief or truth, based on common sense or practical experience

pseudonym
a name used to mask a person's true identity, also called an alias or pen name

pun
the humorous use of a word or words which look or sound alike but have different meanings; a play on words

Q

quantitative adjective
an adjective that relates to numbers or amounts, for example 'both, 'several' and 'half. All numbers are quantitative adjectives.

quest
a journey that someone undertakes in order to achieve a specific goal

R

rap
a genre of music originating in New York City in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with its roots in African music it initially featured spoken or chanted lyrics set to tough musical rhythms and often conveyed a strong social message

renga
a form of Japanese poetry which traditionally uses many linked haiku to reflect the passing of the seasons

repetition
the use of repeated words or phrases for emphasis

resonate
to reinforce or echo

revision
to change a text in some way, in order to alter the meaning

rhyme
the correspondence of sound between words or the ending of words

rhyme scheme
the ordered patterns of rhymes at the end of lines in a poem

rhyming couplet
two consecutively rhyming lines within a poem

rhythm
the pace or the beat of the poem

role-play

involves taking on the role of specific characters in a specific setting or situation

S

scenario

an outline of a story giving details about scenes, characters, events, etc.

science fiction

a genre which speculates on future worlds in which humans are no longer in control of what they have created; it plays on fears of science and technology

Shah of Iran

like a king, the Shah ruled Iran until 1979 when he was forced to flee Iran and an Islamic government was installed

shape poem

sometimes called an 'emblematic poem' where words are formed into a particular shape related to the subject of the poem

simile

a comparison between two different things, actions or feelings using the words 'as' or 'like'

sound devices

the devices poets use to draw attention to the sounds that words make, including, rhyme, alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia

special effects

photographic, artistic, animated or computerised effects that are filmed to approximate reality or produce a sense of the surreal

sponsor

supports a person, organisation or activity by giving money, encouragement or other help

stanza

the division of a poem into groups of lines

stereotype

a widely held but oversimplified image or idea about a particular type of person or thing

stereotypical character

one that conforms to 'type' and who is presented in a conventional, expected way

syllable

a unit of pronunciation uttered without interruption: the word 'write' has one syllable, the work 'haiku' has two syllables, and the word 'poetry' has three syllables

symbol

something that stands for or represents something else within a text

synonym

a word or phrase that means the same, or nearly the same, as another word or phrase

T

tableau

a scene in which all the actors freeze in one position; a series of tableau is called a tableaux

texts

communications in various media; texts can be written, visual, spoken or multimodal and in print or digital form

third-person narrative

a narration by someone or something that is not a character in the story and characters are referred to as 'she', 'he', 'it' or 'they'; this is the most common narrative mode in literature

U

UNICEF

the United Nation's Children Fund is one of the world's largest development agencies and is devoted to working exclusively with children and their communities

V

values

the 'big things' (like friendship, honesty, freedom, success) that are most important to us

verb

doing words that show an action being taken, such as 'write,' 'sing' or 'learn'

W

wordplay

jokes about the meanings of words in a clever way

C

camera angle
the position of the camera in relation to the subject being filmed; if the camera is above the subject, it is at a high angle; if the camera is beneath the subject, it is at a low angle

cinematographer
the camera operator who plans a scene (usually with the director) and then shoots it

cinematography
the art and technique of filmmaking, including scene composition, lighting, camera choices (angles and movement), and the integration of special effects

close-up
a shot of a character's head or face, for example, that fills the screen

composition
the arrangement of the actors, three-dimensional objects (manufactured and natural), and other visual components that form the image within a frame

crane shot
a shot taken from high above the characters and the action by using a mechanical crane

cut
abrupt change (break) from one continuous set of images to another

D

deep-focus shot
a shot with the visual field in sharp focus: foreground, background, and everything in-between

director's notes
notes, ideas or instructions written by the director and given to actors to help them work out how to play their part in the scene

dissolve
slow fading out of one shot followed by the slow fading in of another where the images are superimposed at midpoint

E

editing
act of putting together (splicing) images of film that have not been shot sequentially

establishment shots
the full details of a place from a distance, usually before the camera zooms in to show more detail and character

F

fade
transitional effect (also called fade-out/fade-in) where the last image from the previous scene fades to black then gradually, as the light increases, becomes the first image of the next scene

frame
like composition in its concern with the elements within a shot; however, here the emphasis is with the borders of that shot

freeze frame
the effect of freezing the action into a still photograph on the screen

full shot
a medium long shot that shows a complete person from head to foot

G

genre
a category of motion picture, such as the Western, comedy, melodrama, and action epic, etc.

H

hand-held shot
a shot that follows a character moving – usually through a crowd – using a handheld camera and characterised by a jumpiness not present in a mounted camera

L

long shot
a shot taken at considerable distance from the subject

M

medium shot
a shot of a person from the knees or waist up

mise-en-scène
literally, 'put in the scene' (French), refers to all the theatrical elements necessary in composing a scene to be filmed: props, sets, lighting, sound effects, costumes, make-up, actors' placement (blocking)

montage
a series of abruptly juxtaposed shots using short, edited sequences and music, often interrelated by theme and/or events, denoting the passage of time

motif
an image, object, or idea repeated throughout a film usually to lend a thematic or symbolic effect

N
narrative (film)
the storyline or sequential plot of a film

P
pan shot
a shot taken from a mounted camera moving horizontally on a fixed axis

prop
a three-dimensional object used by an actor or present on a set

R
reaction shot
a shot of a character's reaction to what has been said or done in the previous shot

S
scene
a series of shots unified in action or established location and time (setting)

score
the music composed for or used in the film

sequence
a series of interrelated scenes that establish a certain prolonged effect with a decided beginning, middle and ending

set
a site prepared for filming to occur

shot
a basic unit of filming, which is the unedited, continuously exposed image of any duration made up of any number of frames

sound effects
sounds other than music or dialogue that are part of the overall sound design; this can often include the use of silence

special effects
photographic, artistic, animated or computerised effects that are filmed to approximate reality or produce a sense of the surreal

T
tilt shot
a shot taken from a mounted camera moving vertically on a fixed axis

tracking shot
a shot of a subject filmed by a camera mounted on a moving vehicle

V
voice-over
narration off-screen while a series of shots unfold on-screen

W
Western
a film or novel set in what was known as the 'Wild West' of the United States of America (states west of the Mississippi river); it typically features cowboys and explore themes like justice and the law

Z
zoom shot
an ongoing shot through a stationary camera where through the continuous action of the lens, a long shot can very rapidly convert to a close-up as zoom in; a close-up reverting to a long shot is a zoom out

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