

Macmillan
English
QCE Units 1 and 2

Series
Consultant
Jo Genders

Margaret Miller
Robyn Colwill



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English

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Contents

About the authors.....	viii
Foreword.....	ix

Unit 1 Perspectives and texts **1**

1 Key concepts – perspectives and representations **2**

Perspectives and representations.....	4
Understanding perspectives.....	4
Understanding representations.....	9
Representations of concepts.....	13
Representations of time and place.....	15
Representations of identities.....	19
The selective nature of representations.....	22
Extended response: Positioning an audience.....	24

2 Representations of youth identity **26**

What is 'adolescence' ?.....	28
Youth identity in the late 18th century.....	28
Youth identity in 19th-century rural Australia.....	34
Youth identity in 1960s regional Australia.....	39
Youth identity in late 20th-century urban Australia.....	45
Youth identity in the 21st century.....	50
Film adaptations of novels about youth identity.....	56
Extended response: Close analysis of a film.....	57

3	Representations in biographical texts	58
	Shaping biographical texts.....	60
	Television documentaries.....	60
	The subject interview.....	64
	Feature articles.....	66
	Writing feature articles.....	75
	Extended response: Create a digital feature article.....	79
	Unit 1 Assessment	
	Assessment task 1: Written response for a public audience.....	80
4	Examining persuasive texts	82
	What is a persuasive text?.....	84
	Reading a persuasive text.....	85
	Grammar and language in persuasive texts.....	88
	Analysing a persuasive text.....	91
	Creating a persuasive text.....	94
	Extended response: Creating a persuasive text.....	97
5	Speaking persuasively	98
	The art of rhetoric.....	100
	Key persuasive techniques.....	101
	Presenting a persuasive speech.....	108
	Extended response: Analysing a persuasive speech.....	117
	Unit 1 Assessment	
	Assessment task 2: Persuasive spoken response.....	118

Unit 2	Texts and culture	120
6	Key concepts – culture and positioning	122
	What is culture?	124
	Cultural contexts and assumptions	125
	Representations of culture	128
	How do texts position readers?	133
	Positioning in fiction	141
	Extended response: Analysing voice and point of view	152
7	Responding to short fiction	156
	Culture and narrative	158
	Creating identity in narrative	160
	Historical contexts and narrative	167
	Links between texts	174
	Texts in different media	183
	Extended response: Essay on multiple texts	189
8	Imaginative writing – the narrative genre	190
	The narrative genre	192
	Short stories	192
	Elements of imaginative texts	202
	Advice from acclaimed writers	207
	Extended response: Constructing a short story	209
	Unit 2 Assessment	
	Assessment task 1: Imaginative written response	210

9	Close study of a drama text	212
	Representations of the drover's wife	214
	Reading drama texts	215
	Characters	223
	Other aspects of the play	228
	Representations of massacres	232
	Extended response: Responding to <i>The Drover's Wife</i>	237
10	Writing analytical essays	238
	The analytical essay	240
	The structure of an analytical essay	241
	Language elements of an analytical essay	247
	Creating an analytical essay	252
	Extended response: Writing an analytical essay	255
	Unit 2 Assessment	
	Assessment task 2: Analytical written response	256
	Glossary	258
	Acknowledgements	260
	Index	262

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Foreword

The Queensland Government's introduction of the new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) has seen the most significant change to senior curriculum and assessment in more than 45 years. From 2019, the current system of 100% school-based assessment will be replaced with a new senior assessment and tertiary entrance system designed to strengthen the quality and comparability of school-based assessment, and align Queensland with other Australian states with the introduction of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

More highly defined syllabuses featuring unitised core subject matter, common assessment and marking schema, along with the introduction of an external assessment, will see a change for teachers in how courses are developed, resourced and delivered. For Queensland English teachers in particular, perhaps the most significant change is the introduction of a prescribed text list for both internal and external assessment.

As we all move into this new way of working, English teachers need support and guidance in designing courses that are meaningfully connected to the syllabus, meet system requirements, and prepare their students for assessment success. Queensland teachers can be confident that *Macmillan English QCE Units 1 & 2* provides a range of quality learning experiences, activities and resources aligned with syllabus objectives and content, with practical, real-world applications of key concepts.

Macmillan English QCE Units 1 & 2 is a practical and student-friendly textbook, covering all aspects of the English syllabus. The chapters and assessment tasks within each unit provide a wealth of detail to support teachers and students throughout the course. Resources are thoughtfully curated – representing a diversity of perspectives and voices – and engage students in analytical, critical and imaginative thinking as they explore how texts can convey and transform personal and cultural perspectives, and shape perceptions of the world. This critical and creative engagement with a range of texts ensures students are confident in working with complex and challenging ideas in preparation for the external assessment.

The new requirement that eligibility for an ATAR will require satisfactory completion of a QCAA English subject further emphasises the importance of success in English.

I commend Margaret and Robyn on this truly Queensland-based textbook.

Jo Genders, July 2018

UNIT ONE

PERSPECTIVES
AND TEXTS



In this unit you will explore experiences and perspectives of the world by engaging with texts such as novels, short stories, images and multimedia articles and profiles. You will also examine how perspectives and representations of concepts, identities or groups are constructed through textual choices such as language, medium, style and text structures.

This unit allows you to explore how meaning is shaped through the relationships between language, text, purpose, context and audience. As well as responding to existing texts, you will create texts of your own for a variety of purposes and audiences.

ASSESSMENT

AT THE END OF THIS UNIT, YOUR TEACHER MAY SET ONE OR BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT TASKS:

TASK ONE

Write a media article (800–1000 words) that analyses a specific set of representations in two texts that you have studied.

TASK TWO

Write and present a five-minute persuasive speech on a contemporary social issue, inviting an audience to accept your perspective on this issue.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS UNIT WILL PREPARE YOU FOR BOTH OF THESE ASSESSMENT TASKS:

ONE

unpacks the key concepts of perspectives and representations

TWO

examines representations of youth identity in Australian texts

THREE

analyses how representations are constructed in biographical texts

FOUR

considers how persuasive texts are designed and created

FIVE

extends the coverage of persuasion to persuasive speeches and presentations

CHAPTER
ONE

KEY CONCEPTS – PERSPECTIVES AND REPRESENTATIONS

Texts are shaped, read and viewed by people who may have differing sets of values, attitudes, beliefs and perspectives. Creators of texts use spoken, written and/or multimodal language features to position their audience to think in certain ways about what’s being represented. They invite their audiences to take up a position and, by doing so, to accept the cultural assumptions being endorsed.

In this chapter, you will look at two key concepts – the perspectives or points of view embedded in a text, and the representations of people, places and things within that text. These concepts are connected; representations reflect the differing values, attitudes and beliefs that, in turn, shape the perspectives expressed by the creators of the texts.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN
CONTEXT

- explore a range of texts, including Australian texts
- explore the personal, social and cultural contexts of texts

- *The Rabbits* – multimodal text
- ‘My father began as a god’ – poem
- *The Red Tree* – multimodal text
- ‘A verse for the cheated’ – poem
- *Land’s Edge: A Coastal Memoir* – memoir
- ‘Meet the teenage artist from Jabiru blending bark painting with superheroes’ – feature article
- ‘Battle-scarred optimism from a sophisticated trio’ – review

LANGUAGE
AND TEXTUAL
ANALYSIS

- explore how texts invite readers/viewers to take up positions
- explore how cultural assumptions, values, attitudes and beliefs underpin texts

RESPONDING TO
AND CREATING
TEXTS

- consider how personal responses to texts are shaped by an individual’s contexts
- discuss how texts may be read in different ways.



Ray Mudjandi, Bishōjo Senshi Sailor Moon (Star Man)

Perspectives and representations

What does it mean to say that a text ‘has a perspective’ or ‘makes a representation’?

These two concepts – perspectives and representations – are central to how you read, analyse and understand texts. This chapter focuses on exploring these concepts in detail, so that you’re prepared for the rest of this textbook, and for your English assessments.

perspective

the way a reader or viewer is positioned by a text, or how a particular point of view is embedded in a text

multimodal

a combination of at least two modes (e.g. spoken and written), delivered at the same time, to communicate ideas and information

representation

a textual construction that gives shape to ways of thinking about or acting in the world

concept

mental representation of an abstract idea or notion

Perspectives are the specific points of view that are embedded in a text. Creators of texts draw upon spoken, written or **multimodal** language features to position their audience to think in certain ways about what is being represented. Audiences are invited to think about these points of view in the ways being promoted by the text, and to respond in a particular way.

Representations are the ways in which texts present the elements within them. Representations are not ‘natural’; they are constructed to shape our way of thinking about or acting in the world. By presenting differing representations of people, places and things, texts reflect the values, attitudes and beliefs of their creators.

Concepts are mental representations of abstract ideas that incorporate certain associations. When concepts are represented in a text, these associations are activated in the minds of the reader, viewer or listener. For example, in *Macbeth*, the abstract concept of evil is represented through the three witches, who are associated with deception, darkness and depravity. Concepts are often represented symbolically in images; a white dove represents the concept of peace, while an owl represents the concept of wisdom.

The ways in which audiences respond to texts are a reflection of their own values, beliefs and assumptions. People have very different ways of thinking about the world. They may choose to agree or disagree with the perspectives being promoted in a text, and have very differing viewpoints on the representations constructed within texts.

Understanding perspectives

Saying that a perspective is a ‘point of view’ can make it sound passive or unimportant. In fact, perspectives are a central, active element of any **text**. Perspectives are the main means used by a creator to position an audience to respond to the cultural assumptions that may be embedded in a text.

Cultural assumptions are ideas, beliefs or attitudes about things such as gender, religion, ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality, social class or work that exist within a culture. They can be relatively simple, such as ‘blue is for boys and pink is for girls’, or much more complex, such as oppression and racism.

Creators of texts underpin their work with cultural assumptions and invite the audience to accept some viewpoints and concepts while rejecting others. In doing so, audiences are positioned to view a text from a particular perspective.

Of course, invitations can be turned down. One person may interpret a text in a completely different way to someone who does not share their background, and therefore their cultural assumptions. Perspectives that you agree with in a text may be rejected by someone else. Part of analysing a text is considering how effective it is at inviting the audience to accept its perspectives.

text

communication of meaning produced in any medium that incorporates language, including sound, print, film, digital and multimedia representations

cultural assumption

a belief or attitude about something such as gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and social class that is taken for granted within a culture

How perspectives shape texts

A text typically reproduces and explores ideas, beliefs and values that exist in the creator's culture. Texts do this by constructing identities of people in a specific setting and from specific groups, in ways that may offer competing perspectives.

These perspectives are influenced by many things, including upbringing, the time in which people live, the political system under which they live, the beliefs they espouse and how they were educated. Historical factors and personal beliefs are therefore important influences on shaping perspectives and representations.

As readers and viewers, we bring our own beliefs, values, attitudes and sets of cultural assumptions to how we engage with and interpret a text. We may accept or reject the representations being constructed in that text.

Beliefs

When we talk about beliefs, we refer to the opinions that people hold and consider to be true. For example, we might believe strongly that humans are inherently good. This belief may be shaped by many factors, but it is also not something that is necessarily factual.

The beliefs of creators of texts underpin the construction of their texts. Just as our beliefs can often be tested by events in our lives, they can also be challenged by alternative perspectives and representations in texts.

Values

Values are opinions that are shared among groups within a culture and that provide a sense of social cohesion, shaping people's everyday actions, behaviours and choices. They frame our sense of what is appropriate, including our notion of what is right or wrong.

We all have personal values, but even though certain values may be particularly common within our culture, we're also aware that not everyone shares the same values. For example, some of the cultural groups within Australia might regard tradition or respect for elders more highly than individual freedoms.

While we are brought up to accept certain values, over time, we may modify our sets of values, or prioritise others as being more important.

Attitudes

We express our beliefs and values through our behaviours, actions, words and expressions. We may have positive, negative or neutral attitudes to a concept, person, place or social group.

Attitudes influence the way we treat others, and how we approach situations or make decisions. For example, if our attitude to animal welfare is positive and proactive, we may make choices to volunteer at the RSPCA or become a Wildlife Carer.

DISCUSSION

Values underpinning texts

Discuss how the values in the following table might underpin textual representations. How could they be expressed in an image or advertisement? How could they inform characterisation in a film or novel?

Freedom of speech	A sense of justice	Responsibility	Kindness
Tolerance	Self-discipline	Loyalty	Generosity
Compassion	Resilience	A 'fair go'	Equality
Integrity	Diligence	Respect	Truthfulness
Freedom of religion	A work ethic	Creativity	Resourcefulness

Perspectives in visual texts

Being able to interpret and shape perspectives in visual media, including digital media, is an extension of the skills required in written and spoken texts. Compared to written texts, visual texts require an awareness of the manipulation and meaning of images, and an appreciation of how **aesthetic features** help shape perspectives.

A number of element and features come into play when considering visual texts:

- *shape* – the actual visual outline of an object
- *form* – the boundaries of an object and its relationship to other objects
- *balance* – the ways in which colour, texture, line, shape and form, as well as the actual arrangement of objects in the image, come together to influence meaning
- *vectors* – the linear patterns or movement that the human eye follows; our attention can be drawn to a focal point through the use of line (vectors) as well as colour, balance and texture
- *framing* – what is shown, and what is not shown, through the visual construction of the image
- *gaze* – how the image directs the viewer. An image of a face staring at the viewer may create a *demand* to look directly at it, while an image like a landscape, which allows the viewer to be a more detached observer, may make an *offer* to glance about.

These features do not stand alone. They are related elements that interact with each other. The shape of an image may impact how it is framed, and the use of line and vectors will strongly affect how a viewer's gaze is directed. When considering a visual text, it's therefore important to look at the image as a whole first, then begin analysing the features and how they interact.

aesthetic feature
an aspect of text that prompts an emotional and critical reaction

DISCUSSION

The Rabbits

The following image is from *The Rabbits*, a multimodal narrative text by Shaun Tan and John Marsden that is an **allegory** for the effects of European colonisation on Indigenous Australians. The authors created a composite of words and images to shape both contemporary perspectives and historical representations.

allegory
a text that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning



from *The Rabbits* by Shaun Tan and John Marsden

- 1 What historical time is being represented? What aspects of the visual representations helped you to make this inference?
- 2
 - a Which part of the image is most prominent? Why is this being represented in this way?
 - b How does this symbolise the concept of power established between coloniser and colonised? What perspectives of colonisation are being developed by Shaun Tan?
- 3
 - a The indigenous people are presented as tiny numbats on the right-hand side of the image and the colonisers as rabbits. What is the significance of these visual representations in terms of their country of origin?
 - b Why are the rabbits wearing military uniforms?
 - c What characteristics associated with rabbits make this representation of the colonisers particularly appropriate?

ACTIVITY

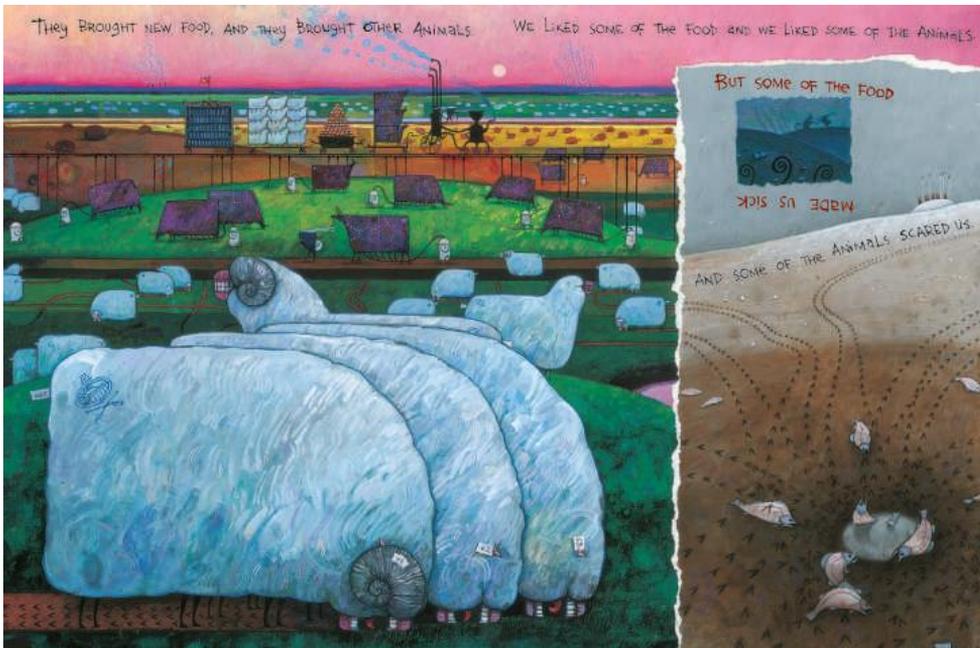
Perspective and representation in *The Rabbits*

Consider how perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, groups, time and place are developed in both of the following double-page spreads from *The Rabbits*. Then share your insights and interpretations as a class.



You'll need to consider:

- the interaction of words and images used to make representations
- how the visuals open up interpretations of the perspectives being developed
- the purposes of double orientation (or looking in two directions at once) in the larger and smaller pictures in the second spread
- the use of vectors, framing, colour and detail
- the visual symbolism used to develop representations and perspectives of the concepts of isolation and alienation.



from *The Rabbits* by Shaun Tan and John Marsden

Understanding representations

When creators produce texts, they select words and images to represent ideas, add meaning and present a version of the world to others. Through these textual constructions they are able to represent concepts, identities, groups, times and places.

When audiences interpret texts, they analyse the choices creators have made, and consider how the text's representations relate to their own view of the world.

There are two important aspects of representations:

- Representations are not images or reflections of the 'real' world; they are constructions, shaped by deliberate choices about what to represent. They always emphasise some things and ignore others.
- These choices are influenced not only by the cultural assumptions, attitudes, beliefs and values of the creator of the text, but also by those of the audience. Textual representations are 'selections' that give versions of reality that audiences accept, question or reject.

Exploring representations in texts

When we analyse how concepts are represented in texts, there are some things we should always pay close attention to:

- What is the purpose of the text?
- What is being represented? How? For whom? How do you know this?
- What medium or **mode** is used to represent the concept?
- How does the choice of language influence the construction and reading/viewing of the text? Why has the creator used a particular language style? What **register** and **tone** have been used, and why?
- What **text structure** has been used? Why? Does the chosen structure influence the audience's reading of the text?
- What **style** has been used? Why? How does this influence the construction and reading of the text?
- What has been included or emphasised? What has been left out? Why?
- Who is the target audience? How has this influenced the shaping of the concept?
- In what other ways could these concepts have been represented? How is it alike or unlike other representations?

Remember also to pay attention to the context in which a text was produced. When was it made? Why was it made? Who made it? What was the creator's history or background? What cultural, social or personal factors may have influenced its creation?

The assumptions, attitudes, beliefs and values that operate in a culture work to shape 'typical' – and sometimes stereotypical – representations of members of cultural groups. These representations tend to become established and seem 'natural' because of repeated use, even if they're not entirely reflective of reality.

For example, Australia is often portrayed as a sporting nation. Is this an accurate representation of Australia as a whole? What aspects of our country are excluded by this representation?

mode

a method of communication chosen as the way to transmit a message

register

the use of language and detail in a text appropriate for its purpose, audience and context

tone

the voice adopted by a speaker or writer to indicate emotion, feeling or attitude

text structure

the way in which information is organised in different types of texts

style

the way in which aspects of texts are arranged and how they affect meaning

DISCUSSION

Exploring representations



The ways in which you view the representation of young Australians in the image above are based in your own cultural assumptions and attitudes.

- 1 What are some ways Australians are represented in this text? What ideas about lifestyle and interests can be found? What does this picture suggest about Australians?
- 2 To what extent does this text conform to, or challenge, cultural assumptions an audience may have about the identities of young Australians?
- 3 Analyse the decisions made by the creator of this text. How do these shape a perspective of Australians? How do they invite readers to take up positions?
- 4 What cultural knowledge or understandings do you draw on to inform your analysis? For example, how does your background as an Australian influence your understanding of the image? How might a person from another country interpret it?

Model of a possible analysis

This image of young female lifesavers running confidently into the sea is a representation of Australia as a sporting, active nation – although this may be a challenge for some viewers, because there are no sun-bronzed male lifesavers here. The setting is generic in nature and it is impossible to recognise a specific coastal location because of the cropping of the image. This is clearly a contemporary scene, inferred from the swimsuits. Additionally, it is also only in the last few decades that female participation in the sport has flourished.

The women are represented as types, rather than individuals, and all are strong, confident athletes who represent youthful athleticism as they eagerly face their encounter with the ocean. The central representation developed in the image implies the competitiveness of athletes and the healthy physicality of young Australians. However, it also implies that young Australians are all white, since there are no non-white women in the image, which goes against the common representation of Australia as a multicultural nation.



ACTIVITY

Analysing representations in visual texts

Examine the two images that follow. Identify what you think each image represents and then analyse specific features of the text. Consider the choices or selections that have been made in constructing each image.



Image 1



Image 2

- 1 How does each image represent concepts, identities, times and places? Construct a table with the following headings to organise your analysis.

The ideas being expressed	The interactions	The composition
What is happening? Who is involved? What are the circumstances?	How is the relationship being developed between the viewer, the image and the creator?	How is the image composed?

- 2 Share your analysis with the class. Discuss the similarities and differences in your observations and interpretations. Support your analysis with evidence.
- 3 No **context** is provided for either image. Suggest ways in which the interpretation of these images might change because of contextual factors, such as publication in a specific magazine, an advertising campaign or a social media platform.

context
the environment in which a text is created or responded to

ACTIVITY

Comparing visual representations

Two elements that have a significant effect on how visual texts are constructed and interpreted are *framing* and *gaze* (see p. 134). These help determine how the audience views a text, and are important means of establishing relationships between the audience and the participants represented in texts.

Representations – particularly in the media – often construct Australian adolescents in limited ways. Examine the following images of two groups of young people and compare the representations of individuals and groups.

- 1 How is framing used to represent each group? How are individuals framed in each image, and what effect does that have on the representation as a whole?
- 2 How is the audience's gaze directed in each image? What elements of the image influence gaze, and what effect does that have on the representation?

It's not enough to look at what's in the image, or to draw on what you know from outside the image. You also need to analyse how that image is designed, and for what purpose.



Image 1



Image 2

Representations of concepts

As discussed at the start of the chapter, concepts are mental representations of abstract ideas that typically have sets of accompanying associations. The audience is invited to make these associations as they think about a concept and the perspectives developed through its representation in the text.

The following poem by Australian poet Ian Mudie explores representations of the concept of change in the poet's relationship with, and attitude towards, his father.

My father began as a god

My father began as a god,
full of heroic tales
of days when he was young.
His laws were as immutable
as if brought down from Sinai,
which indeed he thought they were.

He fearlessly lifted me to heaven
by a mere swing of his shoulder,
and made of me a godling
by seating me astride
our milch-cow's back, and, too,
upon the great white gobbler
of which others went in constant fear.

Strange then how he shrank and shrank
until by my time of adolescence
he had become a foolish small old man
with silly and outmoded views
of life and of morality.

Stranger still
that as I became older
his faults and his intolerances
scaled away into the past,
revealing virtues
such as honesty, generosity, integrity.

Strangest of all
how the deeper he recedes into the grave
the more I see myself
as just one more of all the little men
who creep through life
not knee-high to this long-dead god.

Ian Mudie



DISCUSSION

'My father began as a god'

- 1 How does the structure of the poem represent the concept of change? How are shifts in tense used to represent change? Give examples from the poem to support your viewpoints.
- 2 The concept of change is incorporated in the shifting perspectives that the poet has of his father. Identify where these shifts occur in the poem and suggest why they might occur at these stages in his life. Quote from the poem to support your assertions.
- 3 How is the concept of change represented as being cyclical in the poem? How do the first and final stanzas reinforce the cyclical nature of this concept?
- 4 List some associations that are suggested to you by the concept of change. Provide some concrete examples of each of these from your own lives and experience.

A ACTIVITY
Visual representations of concepts

Consider the following images from *The Red Tree*, created by award-winning Australian artist and author Shaun Tan. How do these images construct visual representations of concepts of isolation, alienation and loneliness? Note down your interpretations and then share these with the class.



Image 1



Image 2

from *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan

Representations of time and place

Representing time and place in texts is important, and not just as a backdrop for events. It also serves to construct mood and atmosphere, and contributes to the shaping of identities. It may also have symbolic or thematic significance.

Just as representations of identities are not fixed but may shift and change, so too do representations of time and place. ‘The bush’, for example, might be a place of rich potential and opportunity to some people, but be a place of servitude or imprisonment to others.

In the following poem, Brisbane poet Sam Wagan Watson represents his home town on the Sunshine Coast as a place that constrains or restricts.

A verse for the cheated

growing up on the southern fringe of the Sunshine Coast
 we often heard adults rambling on about the local economy
 and saw the bright plumage and wealth of tourists
 those who came with an odd hunger for visitation
 and soon left as tourists
 some who copped the brunt of our youthful grievances
 those buying postcards of pristine beaches
 that were nowhere near us
 and purchasing painted coral stolen from hundreds of miles away
 and branded with the tag, MADE IN TAIWAN,
 they arrived in their brand-new cars that sparkled
 upon a strip of bitumen that we regarded as a petulant beast,
 a highway that carried some of us away
 forever
 young and unaware of the finality of death
 its greedy black claws lubricated on the nectar of broken dreams

 my mate who had his licence for only a week

 ... the sister of a friend on a casual drive home

 ... an academic in the senior class, the world at her fingertips

 ... another mate taken on a motorbike

 and a friend who ended up as a plaything for the monster
 pulled from the wreckage screaming, fed on painkillers and nightmares

 all of this and the tourists taking photos of the roadside crosses
 thinking how fortunate and cool we kids looked in this haven
 how carefree it must be approaching adulthood on the Sunshine Coast

 and the recalcitrant animal
 prepared to deliver us on our future paths of success
 and to pick a few off on our way

Sam Wagan Watson

ACTIVITY

Place in poetry

- 1 What perspectives about the Sunshine Coast fringe are presented in the poem? What specific words are used to do this?
- 2 What language does the poet use to represent the tourists' behaviour? What ideas about tourists does this language suggest?
- 3 What language is used to represent the young locals, and what ideas about them are suggested? How is this different to the representation of tourists?
- 4 Another place described in the poem is the Bruce Highway. How is a sense of menace created in the representation of this highway in the poem?

DISCUSSION

Visual representations of Australia

Compare these three artworks depicting contrasting representations of time and place in Australia. Construct a table with the following headings to organise your analysis.

The ideas being expressed	The interactions	The composition
What is happening? Who is involved? What are the circumstances?	How is the relationship being developed between the viewer, the image and the creator?	How is the image composed?



Pro Hart, *The Homestead* 1988



Nicholas Olsen, *The Orange Power Pole, Spring Hill*



Colley Whisson, *Eternal Charm, Sydney – Aust*

Tim Winton is an Australian writer of novels, children's books, non-fiction books, and short stories. He is best known for his novels *Cloudstreet*, *Dirt Music* and *The Riders*, and his books have been adapted as television series, stage plays and even operas.

Winton grew up in rural Western Australia but moved around a lot as a young man, living in Italy, France, Ireland and Greece. Later he came back to Perth, and wrote the book *Land's Edge: A Coastal Memoir* about his life in WA.

In the following extract from *Land's Edge*, Tim Winton creates a representation of an Australian beach, a place that he truly associates with 'home'.

Home

An easterly wind spikes out across the broad lagoon flattening the sea and running rashes across it in cold gusts. Under the sun the water shows its mottling of deeps and shallows, black and turquoise, reef and sand, dark and light, its coming and going. The blunted swell butts against the barrier reef in feeble lines that lie down before the wind. Way out, the horizon looks like a rip-saw. At first glimpse of the Indian Ocean I stop running and feel the relief unwinding in my chest, in my neck and shoulders. Dinghies twist against their moorings. Gulls scatter before the blur of my insane kelpie. Two days off the plane, I am finally home.

The sand is cold beneath our bare feet and the dunes damp and spicy with marram grass and salt-bush. We wheel down the wind hollows between the dunes, yelling and fooling about, shaking off the confines of the house, the stalemates and frustrations of winter indoors. The sun slants finely on our necks, barely felt, lighting the hard-white beach to squinting point, to the momentary point of summer.

Down at the low-water mark, at the scalloped edges of the shore, the water is gigglingly cold. Clouds rise around our feet. The four of us hold hands and bend like a sail, raucous in the east wind, laughing with shock.

The kids fall to digging and damming and sculpting. They wet the knees of their trousers. They sniff back the gunk of their head colds and go quiet with concentration over moats and walls while I stand there in the water with my feet going numb and my mind drifting in a kind of fugue state that only comes to me here.

There is no one else around. I flinch at the sound of a school of whitebait cracking the surface a few metres away. It's alive out there. After the still, exhausted Aegean, where nothing moves but the plastic bags, it seems like a miracle. Call it jet lag, cabin fever, but I am almost in tears. There is nowhere else I'd rather be, nothing else I would prefer to be doing. I am at the beach looking west with the continent behind me as the sun tracks down to the sea. I have my bearings.

from *Land's Edge* by Tim Winton

ACTIVITY

Representations of place

- 1 How does Winton represent this beach? Locate specific words and phrases that he uses to do this. How do they create a strong visual representation of place?
- 2 Why do our attitudes to specific places play an important part in our sense of who we are, to the extent of shaping our identity? How is this evident in Winton's extract?
- 3 What places do you consider to be representational of Australia as a country? How might cultural assumptions about Australian identity play a part in your selections?

Representations of identities

Australia is often represented as one of the most vibrant multicultural societies in the world. Exposure to different cultural contexts and influences inevitably affects our sense of identity, and our responses to our lived experience.

Read the following feature article, which looks at how a young artist's identity is shaped by different contexts and influences.

NAIDOC 2016: Meet the teenage artist from Jabiru blending bark painting with superheroes

Amidst crumbed ochre and the birdsong of nearby Kakadu National Park, hooded faces are coming alive on thick pieces of flattened bark.

Working on these painted superhero masks is 16-year-old Ray Mudjandi.

'I make Ikon Bininj,' Ray said.

Bininj is the Kunwinjku word for 'man' in Ray's community of Jabiru, a slowing mining town set amidst a World Heritage-listed park with cave paintings more than 20 000 years old.

Ray is from the Western Arrernte clan and has loved cartoons, video games, Marvel comics, and characters like Superman since childhood.

His mother Rosie Mudjandi remembers Ray's early drawings and his fascination with the work of artist Johnny Lamibanda while they were living in the country town of Katherine.

'[Ray] started off with shapes and lines first. He drew me once,' Ms Mudjandi said.

'Once he drew in front of an audience. He was drawing all the dragons.'



But Ms Mudjandi has also seen her son's battles: Ray is much more of a drawer than a talker and, last year, underwent open heart surgery.

Last year Ray started going into a Jabiru community centre run by an organisation for disadvantaged kids, Children's Ground.

The centre's creative arts coordinator, Damien Kamholtz, said Ray's appearance in their backroom arts space was initially 'unofficial' and sometimes during school hours.

'Then it turned into a collaboration between the school and [the centre] where Ray comes here during school one afternoon a week,' he said.

'Ray loved drawing and making art, and that was one thing that he was doing all of the time.

'We saw it as an opportunity for Ray to spend some time with some [of the] senior bininj painters working in a traditional cultural sense.'

Two of the workshop's regular artists, Graham Rostron and Abel Naborlhborlh, both create figurative work full of everything from kangaroos to songlines and long-fingered creatures.

'All sorts of types of animals. Stories from my dad too,' Mr Rostron said.

The artists' tools include ground charcoal, stripped-stick brushes, canvas and the famous medium of bark – the scraped skin of trees heated over hot coals and then flattened over time.

Mr Kamholtz initially expected Ray to migrate towards the styles of Mr Rostron and Mr Naborlhborlh.

'Ray was watching intently and learning but at the same time drawing characters, comic books, superheroes, in between watching,' he said.

'We did some bark paintings and Ray painted a didgeridoo, but it was obvious his interest was lying with his characters.

'I guess, over time, the two have fused.'

This year Mr Kamholtz, once an artist himself down south, started helping Ray translate characters onto bark, eventually leading to cut-out creations and finally an ochre-painted mask of Ray's character Star Man.

'He's saving the world,' Ray said.

After Star Man came a dusty red T Buster, creamy gray Medicine Man, and Fish Man – a gilled character with parallels to a freshwater mermaid, *yauk yauk*, said to swim in the region's rivers.

'There is definitely correlations between the characters and narratives that the old men are painting and the ones Ray's doing, but there's also a big splash of pop culture thrown into Ray's as well,' Mr Kamholtz said.

That concept might sound familiar to fans of new ABC TV show *Cleverman*, which blends Dreaming stories with a superhero dystopia.

'Archetypal type images and expressions of good and evil have been happening forever in all cultures around the world. This is a real literal mixing of those two spaces,' Mr Kamholtz said.



'I like to see the look of pride in Ray actually [even though] he doesn't always articulate it. It's nice to be able to support him and get his vision and creation out into the world for more people to enjoy because I think it's really special.

'It's a mixture of courage, I guess, and an individual eye. Ray definitely has the eye of an artist.'

These days, the senior artists sit on the ground painting, while Ray sits at a desk creating vivid fish drawings in under an hour.

'He's trying the old style and the new style. I'm not too sure what it is,' Mr Rostron laughed.

'He's been really shy but now he's coming good. He's doing all right. He's doing his own way painting.'

Mr Rostron, who also has a stash of comic books, said maybe he would try to paint an X-Men character one day – although he is still happy with his own style.

This weekend six of Ray's masks are being unveiled in Darwin at his first solo exhibition, with the gallery's owner already buying up the whole lot for donation to the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT.

'I've seen bark paintings and innovation in bark paintings before but nothing like this,' Outstation owner Matt Ward said.

'I read comic books as a kid and loved the superhero idea, which was instantly recognisable.

'It is super contemporary and has elements of pop art but, the fact he's used a traditional medium of ochre on bark, it has a hybrid style. Who knows what it is, but everybody loves it.'

Ms Mudjandi said her son is becoming an inspiration to younger children in Jabiru, although to her, he has been that way for a while.

'He's always been a superhero, ever since [he] went through three operations,' she said. Meanwhile, Ray is thinking up a new fleet of heroes.

'I'm doing next Guardian Planet. Plant Woman. Water Man. Fire Man. Ice Man. Silver Man,' he said.

www.abc.net.au

DISCUSSION

Fusions of cultures

- How is Ray Mudjandi represented in this article? Refer to specific words and phrases to support your statements.
 - Why do you think that contemporary pop culture and ancient Aboriginal culture became sources of inspiration for him in constructing his identity as an artist?
- How are these multicultural influences on his identity as an artist reflected in his actual artistic methods and techniques?
- Representations of Western and Indigenous culture are fused in Ray's identity as an artist, and also in his creations. To what extent do you think multiculturalism can serve to broaden our sense of personal and cultural identity? Give examples to support your assertions.



The selective nature of representations

There are many and varied representations of Australia and its inhabitants, and they are put to many different uses in texts. This is because there are different attitudes, values and beliefs that underpin the perspectives and representations of Australians in texts.

The choices of what to include or leave out of any text, and whether to create a positive or negative representation, are part of the process that the author of a text makes to construct meanings. These choices invite audiences to take up positions and to respond to the perspectives within the text.

The following profiles construct perspectives and representations of a range of Young Australian of the Year recipients. They attempt to reflect the diversity of young Australians and their very different interests and achievements.

2016: NIC MARCHESI AND LUCAS PATCHETT – SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett are best mates from Brisbane who in September 2014 set up a free mobile laundry for homeless people – Orange Sky Laundry – in the back of an old van. In 2015, Nic and Lucas took their van to North Queensland to assist people in cyclone-ravaged communities. Their concept has since expanded to multiple vans in Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and the Gold Coast, and has created international interest in expanding the concept overseas. The vans are staffed by volunteers and are custom fitted with two commercial washing machines and two driers. Orange Sky also acts as a catalyst for social interactions between people from all walks of life. Nic and Lucas operate on a premise of recognising the dignity of others and treating people with respect, regardless of their circumstances, while facilitating improved standards of health and hygiene in direct and practical ways.



2013: AKRAM AZIMI – MENTOR

Akram Azimi arrived in Australia in 2000 as a refugee child from Afghanistan. He took full advantage of the opportunities that Australia offered, becoming an outstanding student, Head Boy at his high school, and topping the tertiary entrance exam scores in his class. He then did a triple major in Law, Science and Arts at University. Akram wanted to help other young Australians as his adopted country had helped him, and worked to assist young people in remote and rural communities. He set up a student initiative to raise awareness of Indigenous issues in universities, and he has worked with True Blue Dreaming to mentor young Indigenous people in disadvantaged remote communities.

**2012: MARITA CHENG – ENGINEERING VISIONARY**

Marita Cheng, the daughter of Chinese parents, grew up in far North Queensland, and is dedicated to promoting engineering and technology as viable career choices for young women, and to demonstrating the difference that these fields make to our daily lives. In pursuit of this aim, she founded Robogals Global, which has national and international chapters, running interactive robotics workshops in secondary schools across Australia. Marita studied Engineering and Computer Science at university and has been the recipient of multiple fellowships and awards. She was also a panellist on the ABC's Young Inventors program and aims to establish her own robotics company.



All information and images from www.australianoftheyear.org.au

DISCUSSION

Young Australians of the Year

- 1 Discuss how the representation of each Young Australian of the Year is contextualised in terms of their innovation or achievement.
 - 2 Compare the representations of these young Australians. In what ways do they have characteristics in common and in what ways are they different? Support your observations with evidence.
 - 3 Consider the respective challenges that had to be overcome to translate each of their visions into reality. Discuss how you are positioned by the text to adopt certain perspectives on (a) the recipients and (b) their achievements.
-

EXTENDED RESPONSE
Positioning an audience

Read the following review of a stage performance by the band London Grammar. As you read, think about how various language resources are being used, including the use of the visual image.

Battle-scarred optimism from a sophisticated trio

Four years between your first and second album is long enough to make record companies a little nervous, especially when the early success of London Grammar – youthful specialists in sophisticated pop, a sort of YA Sade – felt so pace-setting. The trio's atmospheric post-club nocturne 'Hey Now' was a streaming sensation, helping embed them in both the public consciousness and innumerable Spotify playlists. In a very short time, singer Hannah Reid, guitarist Dan Rothman and keyboard/beats major-domo Dominic 'Dot' Major became global stars, racking up more than 2m sales and pocketing an Ivor Novello along the way. An opportunistic speedy follow-up to their 2013 debut album *If You Wait* seemed fairly inevitable.

Instead, that album title looks increasingly prescient. London Grammar – whose pin-drop torch songs often seem to have shivers of anticipation hard-wired into them – have taken their time. Their second record is due in June, and this emphatically sold-out mini-tour of converted churches and historic halls is the foundational phase of what is likely a meticulously planned rollout to build on their already enviable international success.

At first, it seems, less is more. Reid silently takes the stage to sing, unaccompanied, the first half of 'Rooting for You' in a beguiling demonstration of both vulnerability and vocal fortitude. Many London Grammar tracks obsessively examine relationships that have gone the way of the Hindenburg, but this new song finds some positivity in its emotional autopsy. It retains Reid's endearing habit of embracing melodies that sometimes huskily dip into a lower register that you

might predict for her sonorous voice. When Rothman and Major finally chime in with an immaculate sonic scaffold of echoey piano and delay-pedal guitar, it confirms LG V2.0 is a refinement rather than a root-and-branch reinvention.

Despite their musical poise, all three are still in their 20s and there are some welcome flashes of goofiness. 'Flickers', perhaps the closest London Grammar get to skanking, features Major playing bongos in a way you can imagine drifting through the walls of the Nottingham Uni halls of residence where the band originated. On the luminous, swaying 'Sights', Reid misses her vocal cue, necessitating a giggly restart. Introducing a broiling new song, she outlines their conceptual approach with an arched eyebrow: 'We thought maybe we should make a second album that's less sad. Anyway, this song is called "Hell to the Liars".'

After an emphatic 'Hey Now' and the Novello-winning turbo-ballad 'Strong', the trio encore with their new album's title track, 'Truth is a Beautiful Thing', a ruminative, beat-less head trip. Reid takes to a keyboard to pick out a simple, celestial piano progression that you can imagine being sampled, David Axelrod-style, in the not-too-distant future. Their actual finale is a little more energised, a cyber-augmented version of 'Metal and Dust' that explodes into strobes and synthesised scree. The eventual, overriding sense is one of battle-scarred optimism. London Grammar offer a leavened apocalypse, perhaps the perfect soundtrack to 2017.

Graeme Virtue, *The Guardian*, 4 April 2017

Write a 3–4 paragraph response to the article, in which you analyse how readers are being positioned through:

- a the representations of the work ethic and the individual and combined talents of the band members
- b the perspectives on the group that are being created throughout the review.

Include specific examples of words and phrases used by Graeme Virtue in his review of the band, and explain how they work to position the audience.



REPRESENTATIONS OF YOUTH IDENTITY

Literary texts such as novels offer us fictional representations of young people. We spend considerable time examining, analysing, interpreting and evaluating their identities and 'rites of passage' to selfhood and physical maturity. Writers construct these representations using a range of language resources, which require close examination if we want to form opinions about how and why these representations are shaped.

In this chapter, you will explore representations of various adolescent characters in Australian novels. You will look at how readers are being positioned by the text to form perspectives on these characters through representations that are specifically shaped to evoke their sympathy, empathy or antipathy.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN CONTEXT

- explore a range of texts, including Australian texts
- explore the personal, social and cultural contexts of texts

- *The Secret River* – novel
- 'Ship from the Thames' – poem
- 'The camp fires of the past' – poem
- *My Brilliant Career* – novel

LANGUAGE AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities and groups
- explore how texts invite readers/viewers to take up positions

- 'Naked girl and mirror' – poem
- *Jasper Jones* – novel
- 'Don't call me lad' – poem
- *Looking for Alibrandi* – novel
- 'Sunday's child' – poem
- *Swallow the Air* – novel

RESPONDING TO AND CREATING TEXTS

- consider how personal responses to texts are shaped by an individual's contexts
- analyse examples of persuasive texts and written responses for public audiences.

- 'The Spirit Wind' – poem

LEVI
MILLER

AARON
McGRATH

ANGOURIE
RICE

DAN
WYLLIE

MATT
NABLE

WITH TONI COLLETTE

AND HUGO WEAVING



A KNOCK
AT THE WINDOW
THEIR LIVES
CHANGED FOREVER

JASPER JONES

DIRECTED BY RACHEL PERKINS



BASED ON THE ICONIC
AUSTRALIAN NOVEL



★★★★ "MASTERFUL..."

...BEAUTIFUL"

ROSS McRAE, THE WEST AUSTRALIAN

M Mature themes and coarse language

SCREEN AUSTRALIA PRESENTS A SCREENWEST AND LOTTERYWEST THE SOUTH WEST DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND SCREENSOUTH AUSTRALIA PRODUCTIONS AND SPECIALIST FILMS PRESENTS "JASPER JONES"
LEVI MILLER ANGELO RICCI AARON McGRATH DAN WYLLIE TONI COLLETTE AND HUGO WEAVING WITH ANGOURIE RICE
CASTING BY ANNE HARRIS COSTUME DESIGNER ROBERT WATSON MUSIC BY JAMES NEWTON HOWARD
EDITED BY ANDREW PHIPPS PRODUCTION DESIGNER VERNONIA SHEETZ
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARK HOPKINSON ANDREW REBECCA TORREN PAUL DINEGAR PRODUCED BY CHRIS SULLY
WRITTEN BY SPALAN STANLEY AND CHRIS SULLY
DIRECTED BY RACHEL PERKINS
www.jasperjonesfilm.com



What is 'adolescence'?

According to the dictionary, adolescence is 'the transition period between puberty and adult stages of development'. That makes it sound like a medical fact, but adolescence was only recognised in the 20th century. The concept of being a 'teenager' was invented in the 1950s, initially as a consumer niche market.

Adolescence is a fluid concept, but there are always social and cultural expectations about what young people are – and what they should be. It's unhelpful to apply static, stereotypical labels and categorisations to people. Individual identity is shaped by a complex interaction between **aspects** such as the time and place in which people live, race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, abilities, personality and psychological traits.

The representations of adolescent characters in the Australian novels and poems discussed in this chapter show them to be unique and complex individuals. We encounter **diverse** and **nuanced** representations of adolescent identity in different times, places and settings. Some are risk-takers and rebellious, others are more conformist and conservative. Some have lives characterised by stability, others by uncertainty. Some weather their transition to physical maturity easily, while others experience intense feelings of confusion and inadequacy.

These young protagonists are also affected differently by their relationships with others, including their family and peers. Their perspectives also shift over the course of their adolescent years.

The writers have deliberately added abstract concepts and themes into their texts. These themes typically convey key messages or broad observations that the writer is making – for example, about society and social roles, or about our strengths and weaknesses as human beings.

aspect

a particular feature of something

diverse

of various kinds or forms; different from each other

nuanced

showing a subtle difference or distinction in expression, meaning, response, etc.

Youth identity in the late 18th century

The Secret River – Kate Grenville

This extract comes from the London section of *The Secret River*, a novel by Kate Grenville. It's set in London towards the end of the 18th century, before the central character, William Thornhill, is transported to Australia as a convict. Like many youths in that time, William (Will) was forced to start work at an early age, with no schooling, simply to survive. These extracts take up the narrative when he is fourteen.

Will Thornhill

But the winter he turned fourteen, the river froze over, stone-solid for two weeks. Down on the ice there was a frost-fair, with Irish fiddlers and dancing bears, chestnut stalls and every man and woman loose-mouthed with gin. For those without the pennies to pay for the chestnuts and liquor, though, the fair was a time of being pinched hard. With the river froze over, there was no work on the ships, no work at the tan-yards.

In the little room off Mermaid Court, the Thornhills were starving. Mary was stitching away at shrouds as if her life depended on it, her fingers too cold to work properly, but the window that gave her light had no glass, so it let in the wind as well. Lizzie, taken with the quinsy, lay abed groaning and panting, John was out trying to lift potatoes from Tyrrell's stall with young Luke watching out, and there was Rob mooning about smiling, poor loon, when there was nothing to smile about.

It was Mr Middleton, that gloomy though kindly man, who saved him [...]

Mr Middleton told Thornhill that he would take him on as an apprentice. *No thieving mind*, he warned him. *Any thieving and you are out on your ear*. For the sisters Mr Middleton knew a man who needed plain sewing done, which would keep the wolf from the door.

Will is taken by Mr Middleton to the Waterman's Hall to be bound over to serve his seven years of apprenticeship so he could become a freeman of the river Thames, or a ferryman, transporting people and goods up and down the river in a rowing boat.

He swore to himself that he would be the best apprentice, the strongest, quickest, cleverest. Then when freed in seven years he would be the most diligent waterman on the whole of the Thames.

With a trade behind him, he could marry Sal and keep her. By and by Mr Middleton would need a strong son-in-law to help him in his business and, in the natural course of things, inherit it. All the closed doors of his life might spring open from this day forward.

The stairway was out of a dream, curving upwards like a coil of orange peel around a slender rail, towards the radiance pouring down from the skylight. At the top he hung back, had to be almost pulled by Mr Middleton into the grand room and stand on the Turkey rug under the glitter of the chandelier, feeling the fire blazing way, staring at the dark solemn pictures on the walls.

He stayed in the lee of Mr Middleton, who looked sterner than ever, his shoulders held back like one of the guardsman at the Palace, as he faced a vast mahogany table behind which sat half a dozen men in robes. One, weighed down with a great bronze chain over his shoulders, said, *Morning Richard*, and *how is Mrs Middleton?* And Mr Middleton spoke back in a wooden sort of voice, *Middling, Mr Piper. We can't complain*.

Thornhill had never heard anyone address Mr Middleton by his first name, or seen him like this, tight with anxiety and humility. He saw that these men sitting behind their mahogany desk were far above Mr Middleton as Mr Middleton was above him. He had a sudden dizzying understanding of the way men were ranged on top of each other, all the way from the Thornhills at the bottom up to the King, or God, at the top, each man higher than one, lower than another.

Will is strong and keen, and with strenuous effort becomes the best apprentice waterman on the river. As an apprentice, he lives with the Middletons and their daughter, Sal.

Mr Middleton was a good master. For the first time in his life, Thornhill was not always hungry, not always cold. He slept on the flags of the kitchen on a straw mattress, rising and sleeping with the tide.

The tide was a tyrant. It would not wait and if a lighterman missed the flood to get a load of coal up the river, even strong William Thornhill could not row against it, and would have to wait twelve hours to the next.

His blisters never got a chance to heal. They grew till they burst, then they formed again, burst again, bled again. The oar-handles of the *Hope* were brown with his blood. Mr Middleton approved of that. [...]

On a Sunday, Mr Middleton did not always require him to work and he and Sal found time to be together. He loved to be with her, watching the thoughts dancing beneath the skin, and would not have tried to explain it to anyone else. He had the feeling he could say anything to her, any confession, any shameful truth. She would listen, and answer with some cheerful kindness.

That first winter, she took it into her head to teach him his letters, as her mother had taught her. To please her he agreed, but he was not sure about it. Marks on paper seemed to sap the power of the mind [...]



View of the Thames off Three Cranes Wharf when frozen, Monday 31st January to Saturday 1st February 1814. (See page 10)

Winter wore away, and there it was at last, his whole name: *William Thornhill*, slow and steady. As long as no one was watching, no one would know how long it took and how many times the tongue had to be drawn back in.

William Thornhill.

He was still only sixteen, and no one in his family had ever gone so far.

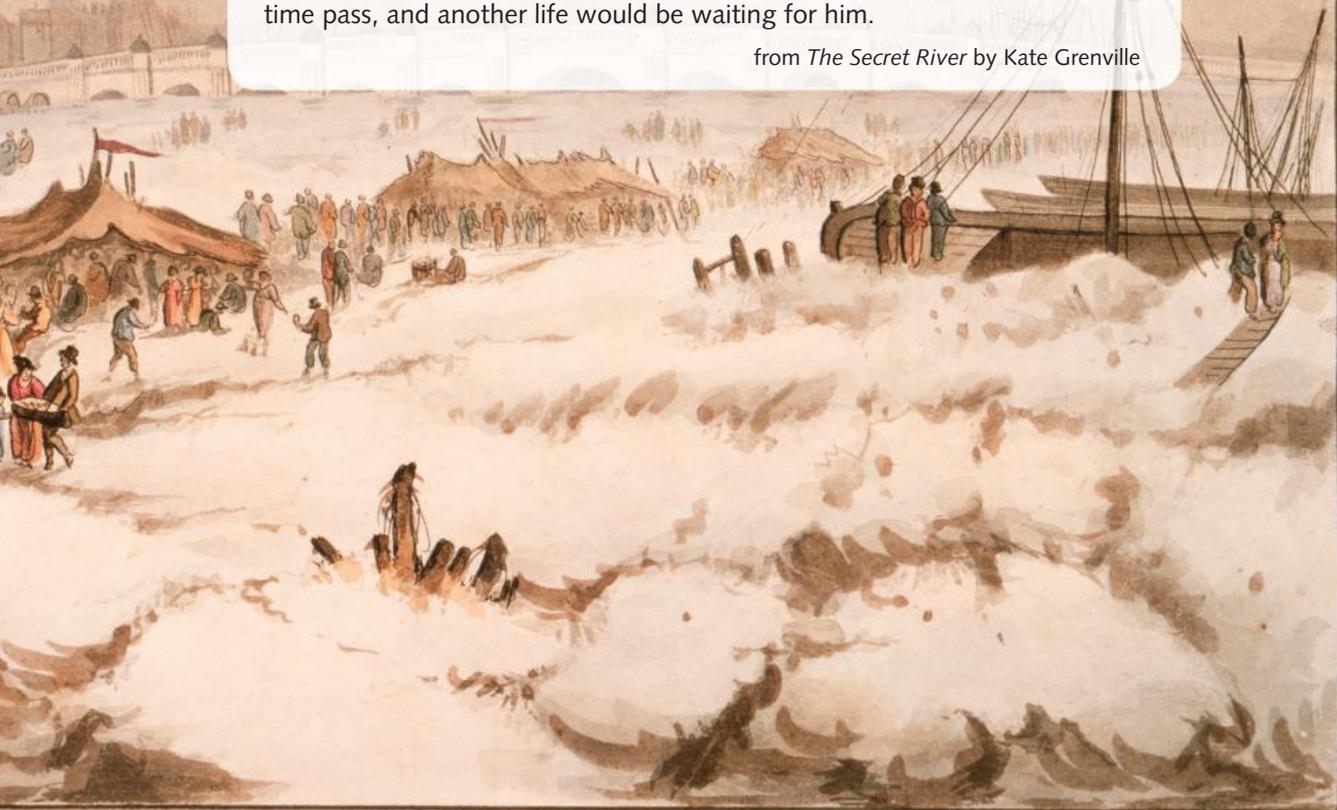
Love came upon him so gradually that it was not even given the name. As the years of his apprenticeship wore away he knew only that, out on the river where the wind cut keen through his old coat, he was warmed by the thought of her, sitting with her mother, threading the needle for her and stitching away at shirts or handkerchiefs. He marvelled at her efficient fingers, doing the edges of the white squares with tiny deft movements too quick to be seen. [...]

He stared out at the river, where the tide was beginning to swirl the water upstream, trying to find the words to say what pressed up out of his heart. *There is something*, he started, and felt a fool, not being able to go on. He started again, heard himself loud and definite, *Soon's they make me a freeman, first thing I'll do is marry you*, and he thought she might laugh, a prentice from Tanner's Lane saying such a thing, but she did not.

Yes, *Will*, she said. *And I'll wait for you.* Her eyes searched his face, serious for once. He could see her looking separately at his eyes, his mouth, back to his eyes again, reading behind the words the truth that was written on his heart. He looked into her eyes, close enough to see the tiny copy of himself there.

He longed for the seven years to run their course. He had only to let time pass, and another life would be waiting for him.

from *The Secret River* by Kate Grenville



W. & A. Hulken, 65, Cheapside, London.

Friday 5th February 1814, on which a Fair was held, attended by many Hundred Persons.


ACTIVITY
Perspectives and representations in *The Secret River*

- 1 Will Thornhill was working a six-day week as an apprentice waterman. At that age today, he would still be in compulsory full-time schooling.
 - a Identify specific words and phrases that construct his childhood as being challenging.
 - b How does Grenville invite the contemporary reader to sympathise with William Thornhill?

 - 2 When Will accompanies Mr Middleton to the Waterman's Hall to be formally apprenticed, he's overwhelmed by the grandeur of the place.
 - a Give some examples of Grenville's poetic description of this setting. Explain how this setting justifies Will's reactions.
 - b How does this setting contrast with the one developed in the opening paragraphs of the extract?
 - c What perspectives on differing social and economic classes are being developed in this **juxtaposition**?

 - 3 As he's formally apprenticed, Will observes examples of the social **hierarchy**.
 - a Locate specific words and phrases that construct Waterman's Hall and its officials as having high rank and importance.
 - b What are some of the things that Will recognises as showing class differences? Give examples from the text to support your response.
 - c How does Will's behaviour serve to demonstrate his thoughts and feelings? What words might describe his mixed feelings as he is signed over to Mr Middleton?

 - 4 Grenville uses Will and Sal to represent a particular perspective of male and female adolescent characters.
 - a What language choices are used to construct the differences between Will and Sal?
 - b Through her description of their activities, how does Grenville shape perspectives of the gendered roles of Will and Sal?

 - 5 Developing and exploring romantic relationships is shown to be a key part of adolescence.
 - a To what extent do you relate to Will's uncertainty in declaring his love for Sal? How is this uncertainty constructed by the author?
 - b How might the adolescent relationship of Will and Sal constructed by Grenville in the extract differ from those of young people today?
-

juxtaposition

the placing of two or more things close together, often as comparison or contrast

hierarchy

a system of persons or things in a graded order

Linked poems – Rex Ingamells

The following poems by Rex Ingamells, an Australian poet of the early 20th century, provide contrasting perspectives of the Australia to which Will Thornhill was transported as a convict and to which Sal accompanied him as a free settler.

Ship from the Thames

Stay, ship from Thames with fettered sails
in Sydney Cove, this ebb of tide;
your gear untangled from the gales,
imprisoned at your anchor ride.

The portly gentlemen who are
the pillars of the land come down
and greet the Newcomes voyaged far
to make a name in Sydney town.

The Redcoats, too, with shouldered arms,
marshal pale wretches from the hold,
who, cramped in tempest and in calms
have learned to do as they are told.

Flash phaetons fill the streets to-day;
inn-tables rock to sailor fists;
the Governor, while the town is gay,
checks over new assignment lists.

Aloof, the slandered and abhorred
behold from off a quarried rise,
the cause of all the stir aboard
a fiercer glitter in their eyes.

Rex Ingamells

The camp fires of the past

A thousand, thousand camp fires every night,
in ages gone, would twinkle to the dark
from crest and valley in the rolling bush,
from mulga scrub and mallee scrub, from dunes
of Central sand, from gaps in straggling ranges,
from gibber plains and plains of iron-wood,
through leaves and in the open, from the mangroves
by shore of Carpenteria, from rocks
and beaches of the Bight ... for countless aeons,
a thousand, thousand camp fires burned each night,
and, by the fires, the Old Men told their tales
which held their listeners spellbound ... Every night
among the fires men chanted to the beat
of stick and boomerangs and clap of hands,
or drone-and-boom of didgeridoo, the songs
rising and falling, trailing, quickening,
while eyes gleamed bright, through smoke drift, bodies shone
and dusked in fitful glow amid the shadows.

Rex Ingamells

ACTIVITY

Poems of Rex Ingamells

- 1 The two poems differ in form and structure. The first has a regular *a-b-a-b* rhyme scheme and is written in short stanzas. The second is free verse. How does the poet's choice of these contrasting structural patterns support their respective subject matter?
 - 2 How does the second poem contradict the perspective of 'terra nullius' that was conveniently espoused by the British government and the colonial settlers?
 - 3 Create a table to compare and contrast the images created in each poem.
-

Youth identity in 19th-century rural Australia

My Brilliant Career – Miles Franklin

Miles Franklin wrote *My Brilliant Career*, her extraordinary first novel, when she was still a teenager in the 1890s. Her protagonist and first-person narrator, Sybylla Melvin, is unconventional, with some perspectives and values that are more typical of young women six or seven decades later. She rails against the restrictions placed upon her as a young woman who wants a career other than marriage and motherhood, which was then the societal norm.

Sybylla wants to be a writer, an unorthodox ambition that shocked many readers when the novel was first published. Readers were also taken by her seeming ambivalence – for example, that she would appear to accept the marriage proposal of the handsome and wealthy Harold Beecham, but then strike him across the face with a whip when he goes to kiss her.

My Brilliant Career has become an Australian classic for its perspectives on early feminism and for its representations of colonial bush life, genuine Australian voices and the Australian landscape.

Sybylla chafed against her life on her parents' farm at Possum Gully with numerous smaller brothers and sisters ('nothing ever happened here') where she milked cows, morning and evening, while she 'longed for the arts'.



Sybylla (Judy Davis) in the 1979 film *My Brilliant Career*

Extract 1

I was fifteen – fifteen! A few fleeting hours and I would be as old as those around me. I looked at them as they stood there, weary, and turning down the other side of the hill of life. When young, no doubt they had hoped for, and dreamed of, better things – had even known them. But here they were. This had been their life; this was their career. It was, and in all probability would be, mine too. My life – my career – my brilliant career!

The Melvins slip further into poverty, exacerbated by drought. Sybylla's mother suggests that Sybylla will have to earn her own living or else help rear poultry, make dresses or take to cooking.

'Take to cooking!' I retorted with scorn. 'The fire that a fellow has to endure on that old oven would kill a horse, and the grit and dirt of clearing it up grinds on my very nerves. Besides, if I ever do want to do any extra fancy cooking, we either can't afford the butter or the currants, or else the eggs are too scarce! Cook, be grannied!'

'Sybylla! Sybylla, you are getting very vulgar!'

'Yes, I was once foolish enough to try and be polite, but I've given it up. My style of talk is quite good enough for my company. What on earth does it matter whether I'm vulgar or not. I can feed calves and milk and grind out my days here just as well vulgar as unvulgar,' I answered savagely.

'There, you see you are always discontented about your home. It's no use; the only thing is for you to earn your own living.'

'I will earn my own living.'

'What will you do? Will you be examined for a pupil-teacher? That is a very nice occupation for girls.'

'What chance would I have in a competitive exam. Against Goulburn girls? They all have good teachers and give up their time to study ... I loathe the very thought of teaching. I'd as soon go on the wallaby.'

'You are not old enough to be a general servant or a cook; you have not experience enough to be a housemaid; you don't take to sewing, and there is no chance of being accepted as a hospital nurse; you must confess there is nothing you can do. You are really a very useless girl for your age.'



ACTIVITY

Perspectives on gender in *My Brilliant Career*

In the exchange between Sybylla and her mother, how are their differing perspectives on the gendered expectations of female behaviour and roles of women expressed, both implicitly and explicitly? Provide textual evidence. Construct a table with the following headings to organise your analysis.

Mrs Melvin's perspectives	Language resources used	Sybylla's perspectives	Language resources used

Extract 2

[...] As I grew it (had) dawned upon me that I was a girl – the makings of a woman! Only a girl! – merely this and nothing more. [...] Familiarity made me used to this yoke; I recovered from the disappointment of being a girl, and was reconciled to that part of my fate. In fact, I found that being a girl was quite pleasant until a hideous truth dawned upon me – I was ugly! That truth has embittered my whole existence. It gives me days and nights of agony. It is a sensitive sore that will never heal, a grim hobgoblin that nought can scare away. In conjunction with this brand of hell I developed a reputation of cleverness [...] Never develop a reputation of being clever. It will put you out of the matrimonial running as effectually as though it had been circulated that you had leprosy.

Sybylla goes to live on a rural property at Caddagat with her grandmother and Aunt Helen, under whose guidance she comes to acquire some fresh perceptions of herself.

I was decked in my first evening dress, as it was a great occasion. It was only on the rarest occasion that we donned full war-paint at Caddagat. I think that evening dress is one of the prettiest and most idiotic customs extant. What can be more foolish than to endanger one's health by exposing at night the chest and arms – two of the most vital spots of the body – which have been covered all day? [...]

Since my arrival the face of the mirror had been covered, but this evening the blue silken curtains were looped up, and it was before this that I stood. I looked, and looked again in pleased surprise. I beheld a young girl with eyes and skin of the clearest and brightest, and lips of brilliant scarlet, and a chest and pair of arms which would pass muster with the best. If Nature had been in bad humour when moulding my face, she had used her tools craftily in forming my figure. Aunt Helen had proved a clever maid and dressmaker. My pale-blue cashmere dress fitted my fully developed yet girlish figure to perfection. Some of my hair fell in cunning little curls on my forehead; the remainder, tied simply with a piece of ribbon, hung in thick waves nearly to my knees. [...] It made me look my age – sixteen years and ten months [...] I really believe that on that night I did not look out of the way ugly.

DISCUSSION

Perspectives on appearance in *My Brilliant Career*

Sybylla agonises over her appearance and considers herself to be 'ugly'.

- 1 To what extent do you think Sybylla's concerns about her appearance are constructed by perspectives on the appearance and roles of women in her social and cultural context?
 - 2 Why might her concerns have diminished on the evening of the formal reception at Caddagat? Locate words and phrases to illustrate your opinion.
 - 3 Sybylla's character is constructed to be independent and strong-willed. How is this representation developed in this extract?
-

Sybylla receives a somewhat pragmatic and level-headed proposal of marriage from a local, wealthy landowner, Harold Beecham, whom Sybylla describes as ‘... my first, my last, my only real sweetheart ...’. Harold’s matter-of-fact proposal appears singularly unromantic to Sybylla (‘No word of love was uttered to me and none requested from me’) but she accepts, only to strike him with a riding whip when he attempts to kiss her. She leaves the gathering to collect her thoughts.

Extract 3

Seeing I was unobserved by the company, I slipped away to indulge in my foolish habit of asking the why and the wherefore of things. Why had Harold Beecham (who was a sort of young sultan who could throw the handkerchief where he liked) chosen me of all women? I had no charms to recommend me – none of the virtues which men demand of the woman they wish to make their wife. To begin with, I was small, I was erratic and unorthodox, I was nothing but a tomboy – and, cardinal disqualification, I was ugly. Why, then, had he proposed matrimony to me? Was it merely a whim? Was he really in earnest?

The night was soft and dark; after being out in it for a time I could discern the shrubs dimly silhouetted against the light. The music struck up inside again. A step approached me on the gravelled walk among the flowers, and Harold called me softly by name. I answered him.

‘Come,’ he said, ‘we are going to dance; will you be my partner?’

from *My Brilliant Career* by Miles Franklin



Sybylla and Harold Beecham (Sam Neill) in the film *My Brilliant Career*

DISCUSSION

Relationships in *My Brilliant Career*

Sybylla is just seventeen years old, and although she is constructed as having a quick wit and intelligence and a playful, feisty personality, she is also shown to be self-critical and insecure.

- 1 Locate and comment on words and phrases in the text that are used to construct Sybylla’s self-criticism and insecurity.
- 2 How does the author position us to consider that seventeen may be too young an age to consider a permanent commitment such as marriage? Give examples from the text to support your viewpoints.

Linked poem – Judith Wright

Consider the following poem by Judith Wright. In it, the narrative persona, like Sybylla, feels ambivalent when looking at her body in a mirror. Both girls struggle with their transition from girl to woman, both seem afraid of their sexual appeal and both react defiantly to the prospect of subjugating themselves to another.

Naked girl and mirror

This is not I. I had no body once –
 only what served my need to laugh and run
 and stare at stars and tentatively dance
 on the fringe of foam and wave and sand and sun.
 Eyes loved, hands reached for me, but I was gone
 on my own currents, quicksilver, thistledown.
 Can I be trapped at last in that soft face?

I stare at you in fear, dark brimming eyes.
 Why do you watch me with that immoderate plea –
 'Look under those curved lashes, recognise
 that you were always here; know me – be me.'
 Smooth once-hermaphrodite shoulders, too tenderly
 your long slope runs, above those sudden shy
 curves furred with light that spring below your space.

No, I have been betrayed. If I had known
 that this girl waited between a year and a year,
 I'd not have chosen her bough to dance upon.
 Betrayed, by that little darkness here, and here
 this swelling softness and that frightened stare
 from eyes I will not answer; shut out here
 from my own self, by its new body's grace –

for I am betrayed by someone lovely, Yes,
 I see you are lovely, hateful naked girl.
 Your lips in the mirror tremble as I refuse
 to know or claim you. Let me go – let me be gone.
 You are half of some other who may never come.
 Why should I tend you? You are not my own;
 you seek that other – he will be your home.

Yet I pity your eyes in the mirror, misted with tears;
 I lean to your kiss. I must serve you; I will obey.
 Some day we may love. I may miss your going, some day,
 though I shall always resent your dumb and fruitful years.
 Your lovers shall learn better, and bitterly too,
 if their arrogance dares to think I am part of you.

ACTIVITY

'Naked girl and mirror'

- 1 a What representations of childhood are captured in the imagery of the first stanza?
b How does **alliteration** add to the effects being created?
- 2 Of what is the girl fearful? Provide evidence from the poem to support your answer.
- 3 The narrator considers that she has been betrayed by her own bodily changes and what these signify.
 - a What words and images show how she is conflicted by the inevitability of what is occurring to her?
 - b What paradox is evident in the fourth stanza?
- 4 How is her defiance expressed in the final stanza?

stanza

a grouped set of lines within a poem

alliteration

the use of two or more words within a group that start with the same letter

Youth identity in 1960s regional Australia

Jasper Jones – Craig Silvey

Craig Silvey's 'Australian Gothic' novel *Jasper Jones* is set in 1965 in Corrigan, a small town beset by fear, prejudice and mistrust. Two of the teenage characters – Charles Bucktin (the narrator) and Jasper Jones – are confronted with a horrific death. They try to both conceal and solve the death, rather than have one of them be wrongfully accused of murder.

Central themes of the novel include the loss of innocence, the nature of courage and compassion, how people prefer to believe lies rather than confront unpalatable truths, and how racism runs like a thread that links Australia's past to its present.



Charlie and Eliza in the 2016 stage adaptation of *Jasper Jones*

Extract 1

Jasper is tall. He's only a year older than me, but looks a lot more. He has a wiry body, but it's defined. His shape and his muscles have already sorted themselves out. His hair is a scruff of rough tufts. It's pretty clear he hacks at it himself.

Jasper Jones has outgrown his clothes. His button-up shirt is dirty and fit to burst, and his short pants are cut just above the knee. He wears no shoes. He looks like an island castaway [...]

Jasper Jones has a terrible reputation in Corrigan. He's a Thief, a Liar, a Thug, a Truant. He's lazy and unreliable. He's a feral and an orphan or as good as. His mother is dead and his father is no good. He's the rotten model that parents hold aloft as a warning: *This is how you'll end up if you're disobedient*. Jasper Jones is the example of where poor aptitude and attitude will lead.

In families throughout Corrigan, he's the first name to be blamed for all manner of trouble. Whatever the misdemeanour, and no matter how clear their own child's guilt, parents ask immediately: *Were you with Jasper Jones?* And of course, more often than not, their kids will lie. They nod, because Jasper's involvement instantly absolves them. It means they've been led astray. They've been waylaid by the devil. And so as the cases are closed, the message is simple: *Stay away from Jasper Jones*.

I'd heard Jasper Jones described as a half-caste, which I'd never really understood until I mentioned it one night at the dinner table. My father is a serene and reasonable man, but those words had him snapping his cutlery down and glaring at me through his thick black-rimmed glasses. He asked me if I understood what I'd just said. I didn't. Then he softened and explained.

DISCUSSION

Representations of identity in *Jasper Jones*

Jasper Jones is the title character and also functions as an integrating device to link key characters in the novel.

- 1
 - a How is Jasper Jones's identity as a loner and outsider developed and represented?
 - b How does Silvey use the point of view of the narrator to subtly shift our initial impressions of Jasper?
 - 2
 - a Why did Charlie's father react angrily to his son's question about the expression 'half-caste'?
 - b How does this incident help to construct Silvey's representation of Mr Bucktin's identity? What perspectives of race relations are being developed?
-



Jeffrey Lu is ostracised by some of his small-minded peers because he is both Vietnamese and smart, and also because he has the capacity to make quick and witty comebacks to those who torment him. Charlie is also bullied and marginalised because of his sensitivity and intelligence, so the two boys bond as mutual 'outcasts'.

Charlie and Jeffrey in the
2017 film *Jasper Jones*

Extract 2

Jeffrey tosses a polished red ball in his hands as we make our way into town, snapping it with his wrists and his fingers, fizzing it into the air. The seam is a whirring blur.

I don't especially dislike cricket, but it requires some special sort of pathology to give it the kind of devotion that Jeffrey shows. I don't know. Maybe it's because I'm rubbish at it. I am really bad. Of course, being born without courage has proved to be a significant hindrance, but mostly it's the fact that my limbs have never acted in accordance with what I intend for them. It's like they're being controlled by some vindictive puppet master.

But Jeffrey Lu is uncanny. His skills are so impressive I'm not even envious. The things he can do with that red rock in his hands are amazing. Really. And his batting is incredible, he's so compact and powerful. Despite being roughly the size of a garden gnome, Jeffrey can manage to be intimidating. He's not so affable with the pads on and the bat in hand. He's like an animal, aggressive and focused. Or some kind of sword-wielding hero. You can't put the ball anywhere when his eye is in.

Granted, I'm not much competition for Jeffrey but I think if he ever gets the chance to play a real game, he's going to be brilliant.

Charlie is nervous when they arrive at the practice nets on the oval because the nets are occupied by the Corrigan Country side, comprising many of the tough older boys who enjoy verbally and physically bullying Jeffrey Lu.

I don't understand because Jeffrey has tried this before and it never ends without some kind of humiliation. I watch Jeffrey hover around the crease on the inside net, not taking his mark, waiting for a chance to cut in and bowl.

But the same thing will happen, I know it. Jeffrey bowls left-arm orthodox spinners, and so whoever is batting just invariably tries to hit the ball as far as they can. If they miss, which they often do against Jeffrey's bowling, the batsman will retrieve the ball, loft it, and crack it out of the nets. And Jeffrey will genially jog after it and come straight back, fizzing the ball in his fingers.

Sometimes Jeffrey mistimes his run and is more or less shirt-fronted by one of the quicks running in. For this, of course, he's angrily pushed and rebuked – sometimes among all the bowlers, who shove him around like a pinball, trip him up, kick his ball away.

Very rarely, Jeffrey will be allowed to pad up. Right at the end, when it is near dark. It's never a lenient act though. They take bets on body hits, bowling short and over the crease, as fast as they can. Jeffrey, of course, is resilient and impressive, but occasionally he'll be hit in the chest or the shoulder, and there will be a thrilled roar and an exchange of money or something valuable. Jeffrey stays down there though, on the back foot, right until they tire and walk off.

I watch Jeffrey bowl his first ball, and it's right on the spot. In fact, it dips and turns sharply, clipping the off-stump of Jacob Irving, who planted his foot and took a ridiculous swipe. Jeers and laughter erupt from the bowlers. As I expect, Irving bends and plucks the ball from the back of the net, and belts it hard and square. He spits towards Jeffrey, then claps his gloved hands together and sneers, 'Ah, me so *solly*!'



ACTIVITY

Representations of race in *Jasper Jones*

The author develops contrasting representations of teenagers in this extract.

- 1 How does the representation of the identity of Jeffrey Lu differ from that of the other members of the Corrigan team? What **characteristics** are evident in (a) Jeffrey's representation and (b) the representation of other members of the Corrigan team?
 - 2 What attitudes about race underpin the behaviours of Jacob Irving and his supporters? Quote from the text to support your statements.
 - 3 How are these representations of identity mediated through the point of view of the narrator, Charlie?
-

characteristic
a distinguishing feature
or quality

Extract 3

See, I always thought that eventually there would be a sort of grudging respect for Jeffrey's talent. Much the same as it is for Jasper. The Corrigan Colts side wouldn't win a game if it weren't for Jasper Jones. He raises the eyebrows of even the most ardent bigot on the sideline. He's a phenomenon, a cut above. It's impossible not to be impressed. He never trains, doesn't listen to the coach, doesn't play a position, just does his own thing. He doesn't own his own boots. Jasper is the toughest tackler I've seen. For someone five years younger than the rest of his competitors, he intimidates his opposition more than any beefy monster on field with fire in their eyes. Jasper has incredible hands, and amazing instincts for the game. And he has a vertical leap and a burst of speed that can have a whole crowd gasping at once.

It's hard to understand. The folks who watch Jasper play, who barrack for him like he was one of their own, are the same ones who might cut their eyes at him should he walk their way a few hours after the game. But they'll smile and cheer and shake their heads in wonderment if he takes a run through the centre or if he nails one from the pocket. His teammates too. They'll surround him and scruff at his hair in celebration, they'll applaud and pat his arse, but once the game is over, the pattern returns. He's back to being shunned by the boys and privately reviled and privately adored by the girls. Jasper hands his boots and his guernsey back, and leaves them to their change room.

from *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey

A ACTIVITY

The character of Jasper Jones

- 1 What words and phrases are used to shape the representation of Jasper Jones's individualism and his football prowess?
- 2 Why is the reception that Jasper receives on and off the field so different?
- 3
 - a What perspectives of the group identity of the townspeople of Corrigan are being developed here?
 - b To what extent does the representation of place play a part?
- 4 Why is Jasper Jones 'privately reviled and privately adored by the girls'? What is there about the representation of Jasper Jones's identity that creates this paradoxical response?



Jasper, Charlie and Eliza, from the film *Jasper Jones*

Youth identity in late 20th-century urban Australia

Looking for Alibrandi – Melina Marchetta

The first-person narrator and main protagonist of *Looking for Alibrandi* is Josephine Alibrandi, a seventeen-year-old descendant of Italian migrants who settled in Australia. Her single mother, Christina, had Josie as a teenager. They live in a terrace house in Glebe, a suburb just outside the city centre in Sydney.

The novel recounts Josie's life during her final year at St Martha's, a Catholic college she attends as a scholarship student. Over the course of the year, Josie meets and grows close to the father she has never known, Michael Andretti. She also falls in love with Jacob Coote, who attends Cook High, the local public school.

The following extract is from the closing chapter of the novel, as Josie reflects on the events of the past year and their effects on her.



Josie, her mother and grandmother, from the 2000 film *Looking for Alibrandi*

Reflections

My emancipation didn't happen like I expected it to.

I thought maybe I'd wake up one morning and see the light. Feel liberated from everything. Or maybe one particular incident would see me through it. But it happened while I was hysterically crying – again.

It was after receiving a birthday card from Jacob which I threw in the bin. I just sat there thinking back on the year and I realised that I was emancipated long ago. It wasn't at one particular point either, it was at several. The hang-ups I once had were superseded, but not with other hang-ups as much as a few sorrows.

I remember feeling socially out of it at St Martha's, yet when the fiasco of the walk-a-thon happened, I realised I wasn't. I thought my birth circumstances were a cross I'd bear for the rest of my life, but what had happened between Nonna and Marcus Sandford made me realise that it had never been my cross. I had only made it mine.

And the different cultures thing?

Well, I'm not sure whether everyone in this country will ever understand multiculturalism and that saddens me, because it's as much part of Australian life as football and meat-pies. But the important thing is that I know where my place in life is. It's not where the Sears or the Carlys of the world have slotted me.

If somebody comes up and asks me what nationality I am, I'll look at them and say that I'm an Australian with Italian blood flowing rapidly through my veins. I'll say that with pride because it's pride that I feel.

A lot has changed at home. I'm not sure why. Maybe because I've changed. Michael has moved into his home at Balmain and I stay with him a lot. The funny thing about it is that Mama will sometimes come over for dinner and the both of them amaze me. They just seemed so tuned in to each other.

They talk for hours without embarrassment or awkwardness and I wonder what is stopping them from getting closer. Maybe they're both terrified of how strong their feelings really are.

I fight with Michael a lot. Especially now that I see him so much. He can sometimes be such a male chauvinist and he doesn't think twice about criticism. Though he expects of me, not what he wants, but what he feels that I want. If I cheat myself, he says, it makes him furious. We clash because there is a generation gap.

He watches current affairs programs and considers them entertainment and he goes absolutely berserk when he catches me watching American sitcoms. He detests them.

But I love Michael Andretti more and more every day. I love him double to what I did maybe a month ago yet I see his faults now too.

And Jacob?

Well, I don't think it is my Italian background and his Australian one that is keeping us apart. I think, at the moment, we're too different. We haven't figured out what we really want from ourselves, let alone from each other.

I think that during the year Jacob got a bit more ambitious than he used to be and I became a bit less. Sometimes I'm not even sure that I want to be a barrister. But I'm not going to make that a problem or a hang-up. When my results come out I'll make my decision then. But I'm optimistic. I do believe in my heart that one day I'll be with Jacob Coote again. So I took the card out of the garbage and put it on my mantelpiece.

It's my birthday today. I'm not seventeen anymore. The seventeen Janis Ian sang about where one learns the truth. But what she failed to mention is that you keep on learning truths after seventeen and I want to keep on learning truths till the day I die.

from *Looking for Alibrandi* by Melina Marchetta



ACTIVITY

Looking for Alibrandi

- 1 Melina Marchetta makes a deliberate authorial choice to use first-person narration in her novel, and to use Josephine as her sole focalising perspective.
 - a How does this affect the roles and relationships that are established with the reader?
 - b What differences would third-person omniscient narration have on how readers respond to the text? Give reasons to support your opinion.
- 2 Another structural device used by the author is the interweaving of past and present, as Josie progressively discovers hidden fragments of her own and her Sicilian family's past. These add to Josie's emotional confusion and feelings of ambivalence and ambiguity about her cultural identity.
 - a How does Marchetta suggest that Josie's efforts to adjust to her own life as an Australian teenager are complicated by her ethnicity, and by competing Australian and Sicilian perspectives?
 - b What attitudes about multiculturalism underpin the text?
- 3 Josie discovers that her grandmother, Nonna Katia, defied the rigid and restrictive religious and social pressures and conventions of the time in which she was growing up, as had Josie's mother:

Nonna Katia [...] hadn't lived life the way I'd thought. She hadn't stuck to rules and regulations. Hadn't worried about what other people thought every second of her life. She had taken chances. Broken rules. If she hadn't Mama wouldn't have been born and I wouldn't have been born. That freaks me out.

To what extent do you think Marchetta constructs the representation of teenage rebellion against authority as an innate part of moving towards the independence of adulthood and selfhood? How does she do this?

- 4 Josie lives in Glebe, a short distance from Redfern, where her boyfriend Jacob lives with his father. Redfern has strong associations with urban Indigenous culture and people, yet Josie confides to Jacob: 'Redfern. Do you know that I've been in this country all my life and I've never spoken to an Aboriginal person?'

How does Marchetta use Josie's observation to reveal a perspective about the interactions of many Australians with those of other cultures?



ACTIVITY

Oral presentation

Intertextuality occurs when Josie refers to Janis Ian, Sting and U2 in the final chapter. She observes that these songwriters are 'modern-day poets'. Are there any contemporary singer-songwriters who you think of as 'modern-day poets'? Perhaps Paul Kelly, Gotye, Courtney Barnett or someone else?

Research your chosen musician and prepare a 5-minute audio-visual presentation in which you:

- share a specific song and lyrics with the class
- analyse how the song constructs a particular group, identity, time, place or concept
- justify why these lyrics are 'modern-day poetry'.

As well as the lyricist's themes and subject matter, consider their use of rhythm and rhyme, and of poetic devices such as alliteration, **metaphors**, **personification**, **symbolism** and **onomatopoeia**.

Linked poem – Jennifer Strauss

In the following poem, Jennifer Strauss explores a dilemma that also confronts Josephine Alibrandi: parents who are no longer in a relationship and live apart, and the impact that this has on the love and loyalties of the child. Like Josie, the girl in 'Sunday's child' lives with her mother and spends time with her father.

Sunday's child

*But the child that is born on the Sabbath day
Is bonny and blithe and good and gay.*

She is the only child of a failed marriage
And since she was not bitterly offered up
Upon the altar of their civilized disjoining
Division stays incomprehensible. Like Christmas.
Only the calendar makes it credible,
Allotting second Sundays for 'paternal access'

intertextuality

one text drawing upon or making reference to other texts

metaphor

a term or phrase that is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable, in order to suggest a resemblance

personification

the attribution of human nature or character to inanimate objects or abstract notions

symbolism

the use of symbols to represent something, or investing things with a symbolic meaning or character

onomatopoeia

a word that imitates the sound associated with the thing being described

(As if the province of the law included
A road to the heart of the matter).

Leaving his mistress sullen at the laundromat
He calls for her by car. The day's a rolled-up chart
Of Fools-gold expectations. They have,
Like Sunday lovers of past generations,
No place that's home. In zoos, in cinemas,
In parks, in restaurants, they visit,
Constrained to company manners. She's growing up.
He opens doors for her, defers to choice of ties,
Compliments her dress, asks after boyfriends. She
Learns to subdue her gawky growth, cross ankles,
Be feminine, sketch teasing hints at rivals,
And never cry till safely out of sight.
If the ice broke, they fear they both would drown.

Jennifer Strauss



ACTIVITY

'Sunday's child'

- 1 The poem opens with a quotation from an old fortune-telling rhyme. Why do you think the poet chose to use this quotation? How might it form a juxtaposition with the poem itself?
 - 2 **a** To what do the lines 'And since she was not bitterly offered up / Upon the altar of their civilized disjoining' refer?
b What ironies are contained in this metaphor? How does it work to construct a particular perspective on the marriage breakdown?
 - 3 How do the final lines of the first stanza demonstrate the disparity between legal process and human emotions?
 - 4 Explain the significance of the metaphor, 'The day's a rolled-up chart / Of Fools-gold expectations'. How is the artificiality of the Sunday access developed?
 - 5 Why does the daughter 'sketch teasing hints at rivals'? What reaction is she seeking from her father?
 - 6 From reading the poem:
 - a** What do you consider to be her real feelings towards her father and why do you think that, like Josie, she conceals these?
 - b** Why is the metaphor in the final line so evocative? How might it sum up the theme of the poem as a whole?
 - c** What perspectives on divorce or parental separation does the poem provide?
-

Youth identity in the 21st century

Swallow the Air – Tara June Winch

Tara June Winch's novel *Swallow the Air* has won multiple major Australian literary awards. The protagonist and narrator, May Gibson, explores contemporary Australian society from the perspective of a young Aboriginal woman whose journey to selfhood is physical, spiritual and symbolic.

Like other representations of young adolescents that we have considered, May experiments with different images and ways of being in the world, as she seeks to find her own identity after the tragic death of her mother. Her search is complicated by the fact that the Gibson family is fragmented by the impact of government policies on the lives of their Aboriginal forefathers and -mothers, and thus on their own lives in the present.

The novel is written using the structure of a short-story cycle, which symbolises the multiple and fragmented perspectives that characterise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history since colonisation. May's sense of being Aboriginal derives in part from her mother's telling of stories. The oral traditions of Aboriginal culture are then reflected in May's own retelling of her mother's stories.

Extract 1

When I looked into the mirror I saw a girl, lost and hollow – the same as every other fifteen-year-old, I guessed. I didn't see the colour that everyone else saw, some saw different shades – black, and brown, white. I saw me, May Gibson with one eye a little bigger than the other. I felt Aboriginal because Mum had made me proud to be, told me I got magic and courage from Gundyarri, the spirit man. It was then I felt Aboriginal, I felt like I belonged, but when Mum left, I stopped being Aboriginal. I stopped feeling like I belonged. Anywhere.

[...] Memories of my Mum cruising the coast road, her thin dark forearms resting against the bus-like steering wheel, the afternoon light flashing between trees against the deep bone dents of her eye sockets. Me, riding the front seat and staring out at the wide blue ocean, shy and hoping to catch a glimpse of a whale. The humpbacks would travel up the coast to give birth and then in the summer, with their new calves, would slowly shift back down in the warmer Pacific, playing and feeding along the deep stretch from Sydney to Woonona. Mum's stories were sad, she could only whisper their importance, instead she'd show you them, take you there. She'd show you Byamee, she'd show you his work, how it was made. Whale swimming the cool currents, cursing jellyfish, still angry about losing his canoe and being tricked by the other animals. The whale had held his pain, like Mum had. And like I have. [...]

Mum's stories would always come back to this place, to the lake, where all Wiradjuri would stop to drink. Footprints of your ancestors, she'd say, one day I'll take you there. [...]

Forty thousand years is a long time, forty thousand years still on my mind. [...]



DISCUSSION

Place and country

Learning from the stories passed on by our parents, grandparents and elders is important in our personal development as we strive to centre our own identity in place and time. May's quest to reconnect to her own origins – physically, culturally and spiritually – represents the integrating structural and thematic devices of the novel.

- 1 Why do you think her mother's stories and May's journey to discover her real identity are so closely aligned to place and country?
- 2 Winch uses intertextuality in her reference to the Dreaming story of Byamee (or Baiame). Research this reference and explain its significance in the extract.
- 3 What do you think is implied in May's observation 'The whale had held his pain, like Mum had. And like I have ...' in the context of Aboriginal dispossession of country? How are the spiritual links to country being developed in the extract?

May lives for a time in inner Sydney, where she ends up living rough on the streets. The Australian warrior Windradyne, referred to in the passage below, was a resistance fighter and leader of the Wiradjuri in the Bathurst War, a frontier war between the colonists and the Wiradjuri First Nation people.

Extract 2

Staleness oozed from the pores of plasterboard, yellow, blue and fluorescent green spilling along the symbols, words, along identity. I went and hung out with some of the streeties. The old Waterloo terrace had been our canvas, our outlet. Etching ownership out of aerosol. The falling of colour cured us. It wasn't the existing but the enduring that I needed. All of us did.

One-step forward, two-steps back, no home again. Fifth time that fortnight that the pigs came to clear us out. Living, making camp, was no right of ours. From one chipboard door to another, inviting themselves in as if enacting a progressive dinner, searching for signs of surviving. Some of us leapt out of windows like high jump horses; spray cans spun on their sides like break-dancers. They shot paint into the officer's face, his eyes bleeding his blindness. Savages. The paddy wagon cage let in the city air, thick and stifling and real.

We submitted names and far-away homes. Undressed. They gave us tracksuit suits; the brown fleece caressed my limbs. The watch-house roof fell on me like a marble domino. Small chrome sink in the corner: toilet and washbasin. Two metal bunk beds stuck out of render like forklift trays. Symmetrical bars framed the dark place where train tracks met. I drew the government-issue, cactus blanket over my face and dreamt of places, away from winter and walls.

Windradyne was angry. There was betrayal. There was war. Sharp spears through thick skin. He rose from the rivers; he was a warrior, a fighter. I felt his rage. Windradyne fought in the stories of backlash and of lore and of horror. Whispering their importance. *He bled for all us mob.*

I saw Windradyne that night; he visited the polished cement freezer box where I lay. Together we looked out past the grey glue melancholy and into the diamonds in the canvas of night. He pointed up to the clustering stars and back at me. His eyes were black deep-sea pearls; he tried to say something with them. I couldn't understand and bent my neck back up at the cradling dome. The stars scattered free and became sea birds, their wings brushing through the sky, long necks pointed upward, carving lines and unzipping the wet universe. Under its blanket was water, flowing, and blue shimmering. The water did not fall, instead it suspended.

Windradyne faded from my side and I stood lost in my thoughts as they swam through the shifting sea.

Maybe it was too much paint or too much goon. Whatever it was, Windradyne had shown me, letting me in on something important. I didn't know what it all meant. The sky showing the journey the waters make, the tracks, the beds balancing liquid from cloud to crevasse. *Follow the leatherjacket turtle tide, the water birds fly between currents.* I knew I had to get out of the city, get out of the boxes they put you in.

 DISCUSSION

Representations of place

- 1 The author creates a graphic representation of a gritty, urban setting in the first two paragraphs of Extract 2. What perspective of inner city existence is developed? Give examples of word choice and imagery that contribute to this version of the city.
 - 2 The representation of the jail cell is also stark. Give examples of descriptive images, words and phrases that are used to construct this representation. How does this position the reader to respond?
 - 3 A sense of the social and cultural impact of Aboriginal people's displacement from Country is constructed through this extract.
 - a How is this sense of disassociation and displacement created?
 - b What is the significance of the representation of Windradyne? How does Winch use word choice and imagery to evoke an alternative sense of time and place?
 - c This extract constructs a representation of May's character as one that is drifting into a life of drugs and petty crime. What perspective is being developed about the effects of the social and cultural alienation on many young Aboriginal people?
-

May leaves Sydney and meets up with, and learns from, an Aboriginal elder and activist named Isabelle by the Church but whose real name is Galing, meaning water dreaming.

Extract 3

Issy says the lake works like a heart, pumping its lifeblood from under the skin. She says there are many hearts, and with them, many valves and veins. This, she adds, as smoke dances across her shadowy lips, is all life. *Murun*. Everything is part of the heart, everything is water, and when we listen closely we can hear the shifting beneath us, the gathering above us, and within a churning. [...]

She takes a saltbush branch from the coals and draws a circle in the dust.

Issy says everything is sacred, inside the circle and outside the circle; she says that we should look after both areas the same. They are magic, she adds.

She takes the branch and outlines the circle twice, each circle a little bigger than the other, and then she draws smaller circles from the first circle inwards. She makes another circle the same, next to it and joins the two with a short line. She says that we need to come back.

[...] And it all makes sense to me now. Issy's drawings in the sand, boundaries between the land and the water, *us*, we come from the sky and the earth and we go back to the sky and the earth, bone and fluid. This land *is* belonging, all of it for all of us. This river is that ocean, these clouds are that lake, these tears are not only my own. They belong to the whales, to Joyce; they belong to Charlie, to Gary, to Johnny, to Issy, to Percy, to Billy, to Aunty, to my nannas, to their great nanna's neighbours. They belong to the spirits. To people I will never even know. I give them to my mother ...

The moon tows the tide in and out twice a day forever. When I come home the tide is flowing in, when I reach it, when it draws in across the purple slate beds of the point, through the rain and across the grit sand, soaking under my feet, salt bubbles burst at my shins. Then, I know that I am home.

We don't need words. I can smell it. I can feel it. The raindrops are gentle and cold, the beach is empty, only the salt smell of the ocean air and freshwater clouds fill the space. The wind is blowing nor-easterly, yellow and red flags flutter further down the beach, huddling no one into the safety. Gulls cruise the air, scanning the shoreline and dunes; I'm not sure what they are looking for. They have waterproof feathers, I imagine. I pull my hood down over my face.

The ocean is sad grey, except in the shallows where the water is pearl and when a wave peels up you can catch the beautiful jade flashing milky through the lips. A secret. The shore breakers tumble up the banks, tossing sand through their whitewash waves. The headland is foggy in the distance. Behind me, the escarpment is just a flat silhouette.

As I walk up towards the beach entrance, across the little raindrop dimples on yesterday's footprints, and feel the gritty warm-wet sand carry me. As the starburst eelgrass clusters roll like tumbleweeds off the dunes. As all the salt hits me. I know what the word really means, home.

My mother knows that I am home, at the water I am always home. Aunty and my brother, we are from the same people, we are of the Wiradjuri nation, *hard water*. We are of the river country, and we have flowed down the rivers to estuaries to oceans. To live by another stretch of water. Salt.

Even though this country is not my mother's country, even though we are freshwater, not salt-water people, this place still owns us, still owns our history, my brother's and my own. Aunty's too. Mum's. They are part of this place. I know now that I need to find them.

I could run away again, I could run away from the pain my family holds. I could take the yarndi, the paint, the poppies, and all the grog in the world but I couldn't run from the pain and I couldn't run from my family either.

When Billy and me lost our mother, we lost ourselves. We stopped swimming in the ocean, scared that we'd forget to breathe. Forget to come up for mouthfuls of air. We lost trust because we didn't want to touch something that was going to fall away. Like bubbles, too delicate, too fragile, too brief.

from *Swallow the Air* by Tara June Winch

DISCUSSION

Metaphor in *Swallow the Air*

- 1 Issy is an Aboriginal elder who teaches May the spiritual knowledge of the Aboriginal Dreaming. In your own words, **summarise** this philosophy.
- 2 **a** How might Issy's drawings in the dust form a metaphor or symbol of May's search for her own identity?
 - b** How is May strengthened and nourished by what she comes to understand?

summarise

give a brief statement of a general theme or major points

Linked poem – translation by Michael Charles

Read the following two poems about Aboriginal spiritual and cultural connectedness to Country. The first poem, 'Warlpa Kuurti', is written in the Western Desert language – the Wangkatja dialect – and the second poem, 'The Spirit Wind', is its translation into English by Michael Charles.

Mamurtu is a sacred site, a rock waterhole near Cundalee on the Nullarbor Plain in Western Australia. Sacred sites are related to the Aboriginal Dreaming, and are places associated with ancestral spirits. Only those who are initiated should enter these sites.



A rock waterhole similar to the one in 'The Spirit Wind'

Warlpa Kuurti

Ngalya-nyinawiya, purlka – kamu nyinaku:
nyanga ngurra tjukurritja, ini Mamurtu.
Tjutamuka winki yulanyi;
Warlpa Kuurti parra-pitjanyi.
Pala yirna purlka kirnkirnpa.
Wiya nyakuntjaku maliki ngalya-pitjala.
Ngulu mungangka tjirntungka nyinarra
nyakula;
parraringuru pitjala nyangu nyurranya.
Parna mirrkatja kurungka warnilku;
buliman parra ngurlura-wanalku;
pina pungku; mangka ilalku;
'atpa nyurrampa yilkringka katu puulku.
Ngalya-nyinawiya, purlka – kamu nyinaku:
nyanga kapi Mamurtula wiya nyurraku.

The Spirit Wind

No camp here, boss – big taboo:
this Dreamtime place, called Mamurtu.
Bloodwood trees all cryin' out:
Spirit Wind on walkabout.
That old man got magic strong.
No like stranger come along.
All time watchin', night and day;
see you come from far away.
Big mob dust throw in your face;
chase your cows all round the place;
box your ears; pull your hair;
blow your hat high in the air.
No camp here, boss – big taboo;
this rockhole water not for you.

translation by Michael Charles

ACTIVITY

Identity and heritage

We've seen that the formation of identity is tied up with our heritage and sense of belonging – to family, to friendship groups, to spiritual connections, to country or place.

Write a reflective response of 250–300 words in which you explore how factors associated with heritage and a sense of belonging have helped to shape the representation of your own identity. In your response, you might also like to consider the impact and importance of spirituality or place in the formation of your identity and sense of self.

Film adaptations of novels about youth identity

Most of the novels in this chapter have film adaptations, either as full-length feature films or as television series. *The Secret River* and *Jasper Jones* have also been adapted into successful stage productions.

These translations into film share the power of narrative or storytelling. Such adaptations are not only creative exercises in their own right; they also draw upon a wide range of **conventions** that aren't found in prose. For example, stage productions adopt the staging conventions of live theatre, including acknowledging the roles and relationships of actors and audience.

When 'reading' a film narrative, we need to pay attention to multiple visual, audio and verbal **signifiers**, the 'language' of film and the techniques of cinematography. These techniques include:

- the selection of camera angles and shot sizes
- the framing and careful composition of a shot to create the ***mise-en-scene***
- the lighting used in each scene
- the soundtrack, including use of *diegetic* and *non-diegetic* sound. Diegetic sound occurs naturally within a scene, while non-diegetic sound refers to things like voiceovers or a musical overlay.

Editing is also a critical aspect of film-making. This involves the careful selection and sequencing of shots, and the use of linking techniques between scenes such as fades or jump-cuts.

Through choices about *mise-en-scene*, soundtrack and editing, the film director shapes points of view and invites the audience to respond in specific ways.

It's unhelpful to assess the worth of a film just by how closely it matches the novel on which it is based. The film is another creation and should be judged on its own merits. Often an audience's judgment is affected by 'what came first', or which version of the text they experienced first.

Obviously, though, some viewers will compare the representations of people, places and things that they created in their minds as they read the novel, to the film-maker's versions or reinterpretations of these. These versions may or may not match, and some viewers may object if the film disrupts or alters the original plot, characters or settings.

convention

a practice or method established by general consent or usage

signifier

something that represents or is a sign of another thing

mise-en-scene

(French) the setting and design elements on the stage of a theatre production or on the set of a film



 DISCUSSION

Film adaptations of novels

- 1 When viewing the film adaptation of a novel you had previously read, did you want to 'see' what the novel would 'look like' on the screen? In what ways did the representations of people, places and things align with your own mental images of these representations, based on your reading of the novel?
 - 2 What do you consider to be the relative merits of (a) the novel and (b) the film versions of that text? Justify your observations with examples.
-

 EXTENDED RESPONSE

Close analysis of a film

In small groups, select a key sequence (set of consecutive, linked scenes) from the film you have studied. Each group should select a different set of scenes.

Construct a graphic organiser with the same headings shown in the following example to help with your preparation. Carefully review your selected set of scenes.

- 1 How are representations of setting, mood or atmosphere created?
- 2 How are representations of identities/characters developed?
- 3 How is the narrative developed?
- 4 How are perspectives of specific themes and issues developed?

Support your findings with specific examples of the use of film techniques. Be prepared to answer questions from class members at the end of your multimodal group presentation.

Film techniques	Development of representations of setting, mood and atmosphere	Development of representations of identities/characters	Development of narrative	Development of perspectives of themes and issues
Camera angles and shot selection				
Framing, composition and <i>mise-en-scene</i>				
Soundtrack – use of diegetic and non-diegetic sound				
Lighting				
Editing				

REPRESENTATIONS IN BIOGRAPHICAL TEXTS

A biographical text makes a representation of a person's life. Like every textual representation, a biographical representation – such as a documentary or a feature article – is a selective reconstruction of past and present identities, events, concepts, times and places. The text creators make decisions about what to leave in and what to take out.

In this chapter, you will examine a variety of multimodal biographical texts and consider how they shape the representations of their subjects – all young Australians. In creating a profile, a selective version of the subject is presented while some aspects are omitted – either deliberately or unintentionally. The creator's central purpose, together with the context in which the text is created, affects the choices they make about the subject matter and positions the audience to accept – or reject – the text's representations.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN CONTEXT

- explore a range of texts, including Australian texts
- explore the personal, social and cultural contexts of texts

- *Australian Story*: 'All for the family' – television documentary
- *Australian Story*: 'Channelling Mr Woo' – television documentary
- *One Plus One* – television interview

LANGUAGE AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities and groups
- explore how texts invite readers/viewers to take up positions

- 'Fantasy gets real' – feature article
- 'I nearly died, but that was fun' – feature article
- 'Interview with Fintan Magee' – interview

RESPONDING TO AND CREATING TEXTS

- consider how personal responses to texts are shaped by an individual's contexts
- analyse examples of persuasive texts and written responses for public audiences.



documentary

a presentation of a real event, person's life, etc., in the form of a television or radio program, film, etc.

Shaping biographical texts

What is involved in creating a biographical text? A **documentary** or feature article may seem straightforward, but there are many choices and factors involved in shaping its representations.

Journalists and filmmakers typically begin gathering information for their biographical texts by researching their subject. This research allows them to identify a focus or angle that will be interesting to their audience, and that will inform the direction of interviews they have with the subject and others.

Once the interviews are done, they make choices on how they will represent the subject to their audience. The length of a feature article or a television documentary confines these representations to a few short snapshots of the subject's life, so what the audience sees is a carefully curated selection. Additionally, the subject represents their personal story through the filter of their own recollections and memories, which are subjective and not always reliable.

The features of these biographical texts clearly differ. Feature articles rely heavily on the written word, supported by photographs and other images. Documentaries draw on the richer resources of film, including editing, visuals and sound. These features can be used to influence how the audience perceives the representations of the subject.

How the audience responds to such representations will be influenced by various other factors. Shifts in social practices and perspectives, their own social and cultural identities, and their associated values, attitudes and beliefs all come into play. They will therefore produce their own interpretation of a particular text and its subject.

As you can see, both the production of and response to biographical texts are affected by a range of interconnected factors.

Television documentaries

Television documentaries can be of varying lengths and purpose, ranging from one-off feature-length pieces to shorter episode formats.

While the main purpose of documentaries is to inform, they are subject to the same biases as any production. It's important to consider who made the documentary, for what purpose and for whom. For example, a documentary about the live export industry focusing on the lives of struggling graziers will provide different representations of cattle farming than one that focuses on the wellbeing of the animals. Despite having the same subject and access to the same information, the information that each director would choose to include would be very different.

In the long-running ABC documentary series *Australian Story*, each episode is a 30-minute profile of an Australian. Preparation for the episodes include background research and interviews with the subject and others, such as family members, friends and colleagues. Following this, the creators select the aspects of people, places and events that will be included in the profile.

The episode is then shot at various locations, with the director making choices about such key elements as scenes, the selection and sequencing of shots, lighting and use of

soundtrack. All these elements will build the tone and angle of the documentary, and therefore affect how the audience responds to the subject.

In this section, you'll analyse two episodes of *Australian Story*. You can view other recent episodes of *Australian Story* on ABC iView or visit the ABC website to view episodes from the show's archives.



Australian Story
episodes archive:
http://mea.digital/gen12_3_1

'All for the family'

Tyler Wright is a world champion surfer. When she was only fourteen she beat world champions twice her age and became the youngest-ever winner of a Championship Tour event. However, she was confronted with pressures associated with the serious surfing injury of her champion surfer brother, Owen Wright, and with being a young adolescent growing up 'on tour'. View her story at the *Australian Story* website.



Tyler Wright's story
(*Australian Story*):
http://mea.digital/gen12_3_2



 DISCUSSION

'All for the family'

- 1 World champion surfers such as Layne Beachley, Stephanie Gilmore and Mick Fanning are interviewed in this life profile of Tyler Wright, 2017 World Champion of Women's Surfing. Why do you think the writers and directors included these in Tyler's story? What effect do their comments have on shaping viewers' perspectives on Tyler and her achievements?
- 2 Why do you think the creators of this documentary made a choice to include flashback footage in the form of excerpts from home movies when Tyler was a child and news footage of her championship wins? How are events, times and places from the past being represented? How do these contribute to the director's representation of her identity as a young person?
- 3 Voiceovers about Tyler and her life events are used frequently as an overlay to accompany visual representation of place – of ocean and wave breaks. Why do you think this creative choice was made?
- 4 After Owen's massive double concussions and traumatic brain injury sustained when surfing the pipeline in Hawaii, one of the most dangerous breaks in the world, he was hospitalised and incapacitated for a lengthy period. How does the filmmaker represent Tyler's relationship with her brother? What is the director trying to demonstrate about her concepts of family and her priorities?
- 5 When accepting her trophy after winning the World Championship in France, Tyler chose to wear a symbolic jersey. Why do you think the filmmaker chose to include this segment? What effect does her wearing of this jersey have on the representation of her relationship with her brother?
- 6 Owen Wright staged a remarkable comeback to win the Gold Coast Quiksilver Pro in 2017. Think about these emotional news footage scenes, and others in this documentary. Suggest why the makers of this program may have decided on its unusual title: 'All for the family'.

'Channelling Mr Woo'

The child of Malaysian Chinese migrant parents, Eddie Woo's excellent Year 12 academic results could have opened doors to any career. But Eddie defied conventional expectations and his parents' wishes, opting to become a secondary school teacher. He's now not only the most well-known maths teacher in Australia but also an internet sensation, and was awarded the 2018 Australia's Local Hero Award in the Australia Day Awards.

View his story at the *Australian Story* website.

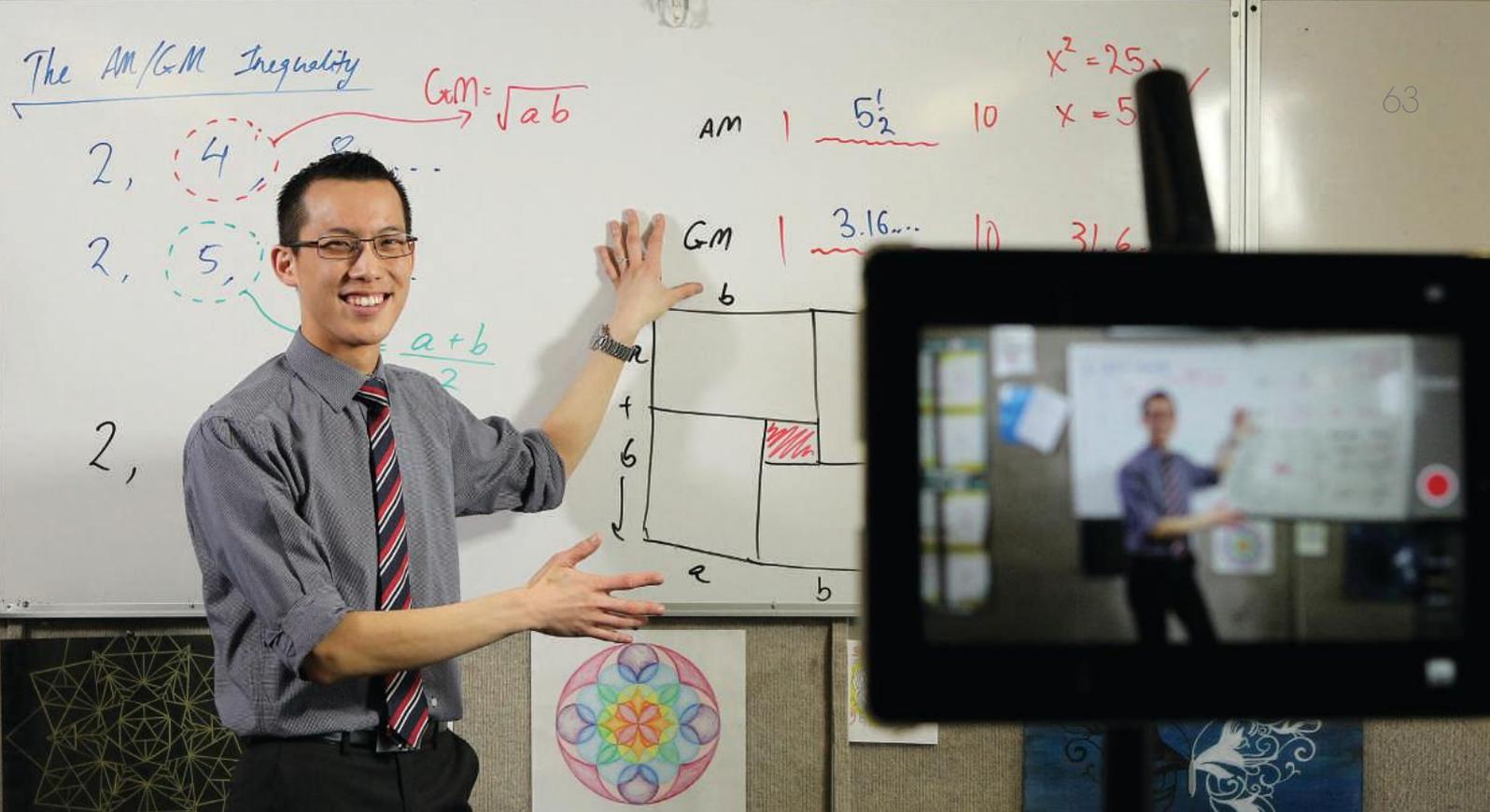
If possible, visit Eddie Woo's YouTube channel or his 'misterwootube' website and sample his free mini lessons, which students describe as 'life savers' and transforming their attitude to maths.



Eddie Woo's story
(*Australian Story*):
[http://mea.digital/
gen12_3_3](http://mea.digital/gen12_3_3)



Eddie Woo's website:
[http://mea.digital/
gen12_3_4](http://mea.digital/gen12_3_4)



Eddie Woo

DISCUSSION

'Channelling Mr Woo'

- 1 Eddie's parents wanted him to pursue a career in medicine or law, but he chose a very different career path as a high school maths teacher. Why do you think the writers chose to include the differing perspectives of Eddie and his parents? What contrasting social and cultural values do they demonstrate?
- 2 In his classrooms, Eddie has one rule, the Human Rule: 'I will treat you like humans and I expect you to treat me like a human too.' How is the audience invited to view his Human Rule? What techniques are being used to position the audience?
- 3 How does the filmmaker construct two of Eddie's teachers – Lisle Brown (Agriculture) and Alan Best (Music) – as influential? How are audiences positioned to respond to them? How does the filmmaker show that this inspirational wheel goes full circle with some of Eddie's own students?
- 4 When presenting Eddie Woo with a prestigious teaching award, Adam Spencer describes Eddie as 'the Kim Kardashian of Australian maths teaching'. What intertextual concepts of celebrity are being created by the makers of this documentary?
- 5 Eddie places artworks created by his students around his teaching whiteboard. He expresses a very specific reason for doing this. How does the filmmaker's inclusion of this segment construct Eddie's values and attitudes as a teacher?
- 6 Eddie is also shown in the documentary as a son, a father and family man. Why do you think the filmmaker chose to include these separate segments about family? Do you agree with their authorial choices?

The subject interview

The subject interview is another form of televised biographical profile. In this format, an interviewer and subject have a discussion. While there may be some extra media of the subject's life, the interview tends to be structurally simple, switching between static shots of the interviewer and the subject, with only natural sound.

The strong appeal of this form lies in its immediacy, as the interviewer and subject engage in an extended and often intimate conversation. However, this immediacy should still be viewed as a constructed representation for a public audience, as it is in any text. The subject is carefully and thoroughly researched before the interview. This research enables the interviewer to devise questions that develop the subject's responses in focused ways, while still allowing the interview to unfold naturally – or in a way that *appears* natural to the audience. As with a documentary, a focus on one or more aspects of the subject's life typically acts as a cohesive device throughout the interview.

One example of this format is the ABC's *One Plus One* series, where journalist Jane Hutcheon interviews subjects from Australia and around the world, live in the studio. Hutcheon is represented as someone who is sensitive, skilful and empathetic. This positions the audience and the interviewee to be sympathetic to her and allows her to extract worthwhile and engaging information from her guests.



One Plus One website:
http://mea.digital/gen12_3_5



One Plus One's Jane Hutcheon



One Plus One
episodes archive:
http://mea.digital/gen12_3_6

In this section you'll analyse a *One Plus One* interview with Isaiah Firebrace. You can view other recent episodes of *One Plus One* on ABC iView or visit the ABC website to view episodes from the show's archives.

One Plus One with Isaiah Firebrace

Isaiah Firebrace is a talented young Indigenous singer who won *The X Factor Australia* in 2016, and went on to represent Australia at the 2017 Eurovision Song Contest in Kiev, at the age of seventeen.

View the *One Plus One* interview with Isaiah Firebrace. As you watch, pay attention to both the subject and the interviewer. Observe Hutcheon's interviewing strategies and techniques, including how she works to construct a less-formal interview space, which allows both Isaiah and the audience to feel comfortable.



Isaiah Firebrace's interview
(*One Plus One*):
http://mea.digital/qen12_3_7

DISCUSSION

One Plus One

- 1 What do you observe about the director's construction of Jane Hutcheon's interviewing style and techniques? Pay particular attention to her body language and eye contact. In what ways is she represented as being supportive of the subject?
- 2 What focus does the director select as the cohesive device in this biographical profile? What perspectives of Isaiah Firebrace are being constructed?
- 3
 - a What aspects of Isaiah's personality does Hutcheon focus on in creating his representation in this interview?
 - b How does this position the audience to feel about Isaiah? Give examples to support your viewpoints.
- 4
 - a How do the makers of this episode develop links between Isaiah's perspectives on reality TV and *The X Factor* and on his construction of himself as an artist?
 - b How does Isaiah's context of being a reality TV star affect his representation?
- 5 Hutcheon moves through scripted and selected phases in this snapshot of Isaiah's life, from past to present to his future hopes and aspirations. What cohesive devices or ways of connecting ideas and concepts does she use to move across topics? Give examples.

Feature articles

Another form of biographical text is the feature article, whether published in print or online. As with documentaries, these also derive from research and interviews of their subject.

Feature articles are typically structured in a paragraphed format, with a title (or *header*), sometimes followed by a sub-header, and with a by-line (the writer's name). The paragraph structure of feature articles is much less strict than that of formal texts such as an essay. Writers typically use descriptive noun and verb groups that express actions, thoughts and feelings.

Biographical feature articles or profiles shift typically between the author's **exposition** (presenting a perspective of the subject) and the subject's **recount** (describing past events in the subject's life). Together, these construct a representation of the subject for a public audience.

exposition

a detailed statement or explanation

recount

a text that records events in the order in which they happened

'Fantasy gets real'

A typical feature article is journalist Frances Whiting's interview of Jessica Townsend, a Queensland author who achieved international recognition with her novel *Nevermoor*.

In the first portion of this text, common textual features of the magazine article are annotated and highlighted. The colours denote the following.

blue highlight

representations of **time**, used to locate past actions and to sequence events

green highlight

evaluative language, inviting the audience to form an **emotional** response to the representation of the subject

yellow highlight

descriptive language, inviting the audience to form an **intellectual** response to the representation of the subject

Don't get distracted by these on your initial reading of the article. After you read it once, go back and use these markers to get a deeper understanding of how the text constructs its representation of Ms Townsend.

FANTASY GETS REAL — HEADER

Sunshine Coast author Jessica Townsend's first book ignited a bidding war and will be seen on the big screen — SUB-HEADER

by Frances Whiting — BY-LINE (AUTHOR'S NAME)



Jessica Townsend,
author of *Nevermoor*

It was **5 am**, and Jessica Townsend was still in her pyjamas when her mobile phone started pinging. Sleepy-eyed, she scrolled through the messages – offer after counter-offer for the rights to publish her debut novel, *Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow*, in the US, UK and Australia. It was **October last year**, and heady stuff for the former Kawana State High School student who was sipping tea in her mother's Sunshine Coast kitchen and feeling, Townsend says, **'a bit dazed'** by it all, and not just because it was so early'.

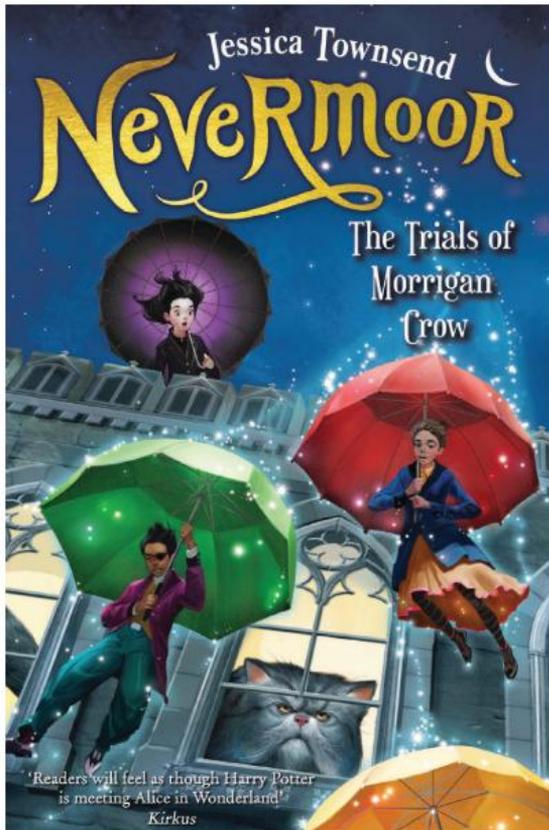
Such a reaction to a debut novel is – especially for a first-time author – **wildest dreams territory**, the stuff of fantasy. (Eight major publishers bid for the rights at auction, with Hachette eventually securing *Nevermoor*.) So it's fitting that *Nevermoor* too is the stuff of fantasy, **a stunning world of magic and mayhem** that's already drawing comparisons to Harry Potter, with the film rights snapped up by 21st Century Fox even before the book's October 10 release.

DESCRIPTIVE
NOUN
GROUPS

Townsend, 32, is both **flattered and flustered** by the Harry Potter comparisons, but much like how Potter's creator, and her literary idol JK Rowling ('The Queen' as she calls her), **meticulously planned** her multi-book series about a boy wizard, Townsend, too, has years of *Nevermoor* adventures **mapped out** – nine, in fact. No wonder the book took **so long** to percolate. She laughs. 'I started thinking about *Nevermoor* and getting ideas down when I was about 18 or 19 and it took me **about 10 years** to finish it. Part of why it took so long was that I **really wanted** to plot it out, and also because I knew that if your first book is passed on by agents, you may not get another go, so before I sent my manuscript out, I **wanted** it to be **the best book** it could be.'

She needn't have **worried**, as when Townsend did send her manuscript to the literary agencies she was most interested in representing her, four came back immediately with offers. She eventually chose the UK-based Gemma Cooper (Bent Agency), which brokered a six-figure, three-book deal for Townsend and secured an additional 25 foreign territory rights. **So what's all the fuss about?** A trip to *Nevermoor* itself may hold the answers.





Nevermoor was the first thing I wrote that I knew I would finish.

'Morrigan Crow is cursed,' Townsend says, outlining the plot. 'She's born on Eventide, the unluckiest day of the year, and one that means she is destined to die on her 12th birthday, at midnight on the next Eventide. Because she is seen as a cursed child, she is blamed for anything that goes on around her, any misfortunes that happen, but on the night before she is due to die, she is whisked away by a stranger and taken to the city of Nevermoor ...'

Townsend closes her eyes as if she herself is travelling to Nevermoor, that strange, magical city where Morrigan Crow finds herself and where it becomes clear that the stranger, the wonderfully named Jupiter North has brought her with a definite purpose. Crow discovers North has thrown her hat into the ring for a place in the city's most prestigious organisation, 'The Wondrous (WF1) Society', where she must compete in four highly dangerous trials. 'Nevermoor is filled with children, and Morrigan has to compete against hundreds of them, only they all have these extraordinary skills and she has none,' Townsend says.

And to think it all started at the Caloundra Library ...

'I loved growing up here,' Townsend says, looking out to the brilliant blue sea of Caloundra's Happy Valley beach, with its green-tipped pine trees and picnic tables. Brought up by her mother, Tina, in the family home with her four older siblings [...] Townsend says she was the sort of child who always had her head buried in the pages of a book.

'I must have driven Mum crazy,' she says. 'I'd be reading at the breakfast table, walking into school, getting in the car, crossing roads [...] it's a wonder I'm alive, really. But reading was and is just such a joy, that feeling of being transported to places and people purely through pages, it's just so magical in itself [...]'

Townsend says at school she was '100%' a nerd, and '100% happy about it'. 'I was really happy at school, I had lots of good, geeky friends, and here's the thing about nerds, we're everywhere [...] and we find each other!' Still, Townsend, with her ghostly pale skin and raven hair, admits she stood out among Kawana High's bronzed and tousled, fair-haired teenagers, the surf culture deeply entrenched among the student population; the read-a-book-a-day brigade not so much. 'No, I didn't fit into the surf thing,' she muses. 'I mean, look at me, I'm a writer, I haven't seen direct sunlight for about 20 years!'

Townsend laughs her delightful chortle, and adds that there was never any teasing about her Snow White style. 'I think my high school was pretty accepting of the fact we're all different in our own way – plus I had four older brothers and sisters to look out for me,' she says.

When Townsend wasn't reading, she was writing, filling diaries and scrapbooks with ideas and short stories: one, about a koala, was published in the Caloundra Library's newsletter. 'My Grade 2 teacher asked me to write a three-sentence story; mine was about koalas and of course it was a lot longer than three sentences (Townsend says overwriting is something she still grapples with), and my teacher sent it to the library, and then they put it in their newsletter. 'I was so excited; I was really happy to see it, and I was like, "I'm a published author!"' she laughs.

The road to becoming a real one would take a bit longer.

Crikey! That's probably what the late, great Steve Irwin would say if he knew the literary fortunes that have struck one of Australia Zoo's long-time employees. In 2002, after leaving high school, Townsend landed what was meant to be a summer holiday job at the tourist attraction's souvenir shop, 'selling T-shirts and squeaky crocs'.

Terri Irwin, spotting something special in the young girl who was always reading or writing when she wasn't flogging crocodile keyrings, asked her to create and edit a national magazine based on Australia Zoo and its animals. 'I was 20, and I had absolutely no idea what I was doing – I remember I went home and literally Googled "how to start a magazine"', Townsend says.

But somehow she did, also giving the magazine its title, *Crikey*, although a minor tussle with the media organisation Crikey saw its official name change to *Australia Zoo's Crikey Magazine*. 'It was wonderful,' Townsend remembers. 'I have a very soft spot [for] the zoo and all the people and animals in it.'

Townsend left the zoo at 22, moving to London to work as a copywriter and for the next decade she would travel between Australia and the UK (where she has an

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ancestry visa) working in copywriting and insurance sales before returning to the magazine at Australia Zoo. But the world of Nevermoor beckoned, no matter where she was. 'All through my 20s, I just kept coming back to it and back to it, it was the first thing I ever wrote that I knew I was going to finish. I never questioned it, never doubted it, because the pull of Morrigan and Nevermoor itself was so strong.'

Now she's putting the finishing touches to the second book in the series and preparing for her first book launch, with events planned for Australia, the US and UK. Pitched to what's known as the 'middle grade market' (8- to 12-year-olds), the book's publishers are hoping it makes a huge splash, given their investment in it.

Townsend says while she appreciates there is much pressure attached to the success of a debut novel, her hopes for the book are a little more grounded. 'I suppose I hope that some kid, like I was, is in the back of her mother's car with her nose in the book, unable to tear herself away. I think that would be wonderful.'

Qweekend, The Courier Mail, 30 September 2017



ACTIVITY

'Fantasy gets real'

- 1 Some of the key textual and grammatical features of a biographical text are annotated for you in the opening section of this article. Locate other examples of the use of these language features in the remaining paragraphs, and comment on their effectiveness.
- 2 What is the primary focus selected by the author to shape her representation of Jessica Townsend in this article? Locate some key words or phrases that Whiting uses in constructing her representation. What is the effect of these?
- 3 An author may choose to use a short, sharp sentence instead of a fully developed paragraph to create a certain emphasis or effect. Locate two examples of this in the article and explain the effect of these choices.
- 4 Consider the representation of Jessica Townsend's identity in the article. Think also about the depictions of time and place that contribute to that representation.

Construct a table with the following headings to organise your analysis. Provide specific words and phrases and explain how they are used in the text to shape the representation of Jessica Townsend.

Representations	Words and phrases used	How they shape this representation
Identity		
Time		
Place		

- 5 What position is the audience invited to take up about Jessica Townsend's debut novel, *Nevermoor*? What perspectives on the novel are developed? Quote directly from the article to support your statements.

'I nearly died, but that was fun'

The following feature article is a profile of Queensland stunt-rider Ryan Williams. This article has no annotations, so you'll need to determine yourself how it uses different language features and elements. As you read, consider the differences in tone, style and language to the Jessica Townsend article, and the effect of those differences.

I NEARLY DIED, BUT THAT WAS FUN

Meet Ryan Williams, stunt-riding superstar

By Richard Guillatt

Ryan Williams has an idea that is kind of cool and kind of insane – he's thinking of strapping on a pair of rollerblades, climbing up the 60-odd steps to the top of the Nitro Circus Giganta Ramp here at Cazaly's Stadium in Cairns, then shooting down its vertiginous 16-metre slope and launching himself into a skywards somersault in front of 7000 people. It's a cool idea because Williams – as his one-million plus followers on social media would surely tell you – is a scooter and BMX bike stunt-rider who's never actually attempted this trick on rollerblades, so it would be another World First and a special treat for the fans on this final night of the Nitro Circus Australian tour, in Williams's home state.

It's also kind of insane because Williams has barely ridden on rollerblades since he was a 12-year-old at Caloundra skate park a decade ago, and Cazaly's stadium is outdoors, where late afternoon winds are now gusting across the oval and a light tropical rain has spread a slippery sheen over the ramp's surface. So there's a moderate chance that Williams might shoot sideways on lift-off, cartwheel through the air at 50km/h and smash headfirst into the landing ramp, or maybe the turf, which could mean, you know, death. Or perhaps a ghastly injury, which is not as bad but still wouldn't qualify as the rollicking family entertainment the people of Cairns are here for.

'I'm scared, because of the rain,' he admits, contemplating his rollerblades in the backstage dressing room. 'I'm thinking of doing it, though.'

'Go for it, mate,' encourages fellow stunt-rider Brandon 'Schmiddy' Schmidt, who will soon hurtle down the Giganta Ramp on a roller-snowboard and perform a triple backflip. 'A world first!'

'Aw, mate,' Williams mock-groans, 'tempt me with "world first" and I'll go for it.'

[...] Fifteen minutes before showtime in Cairns, the mood among the heavily inked bad boys in the dressing room is akin to the jocular machismo of an infantry company preparing to storm an enemy dugout. As the crowd fills the stands, they prime themselves by cranking up the sound system for *Devil Wants My Soul* by South Bronx gangsta rapper French Montana, a triumph-of-the-underdog anthem that prompts some unison fist-pumping.





Stunt-rider Ryan Williams

A roadie pops his head in the door and announces: 'Wind is 19, gusts are 24 and it's dying, so by the second half we should be good.'

Tightening the axle-nuts on his BMX, Williams smiles at his girlfriend, Alex, who's sitting serenely with her back to the lockers. 'Isn't it funny,' he quips, pointing the spanner at the bike, 'that all that's stopping me from dying is these two bolts?'

Bravado is mandatory here, of course, but amid the tats and testosterone Williams strikes a note of boyish innocence. At 22, he has the goofy enthusiasm of a 16-year-old, his hair a shaggy mop and his cherubic face sporting a constant toothy grin. The youngest performer in the troupe, he's one of the few to bring along his girlfriend and certainly the only one who still lives with his mum. The more hardcore Nitro fans have mocked him over the years, not least because he came to the competition riding a *kick scooter*, for God's sake, a teeny toy among the smoke-belching Kawasakis. But in five years he's silenced them with a series of heart-stopping stunts including the Nothing Front Flip, during which he lets go of his scooter in mid-flight, flips it 360 degrees as he sails through the air and somehow gets back on for a perfect two-wheeled landing. When Williams repeated that trick last year on a BMX bike, the founder of Nitro Circus, Travis Pastrana, called him the most exciting performer in the competition, the action sports equivalent of being anointed by Jesus.

So here he is, the kid who shot himself to stardom from the concrete bowl of a suburban Queensland skate park, still mulling over that rollerblade stunt as the crowd outside roars to the thundering entrance of the motocross bikes. He picks up his helmet, gives his girlfriend a kiss and a good-luck 'Au revoir' and heads out into the arena as the MC bellows his intro.

'From the Sunshine Coast, let's hear it for Ryyyyyyyy-aaaaaan WILLIAMS!!!!'

[...] That morning, Williams had enacted a pre-show ritual and cycled over to the local skate park to meet his fans, many of whom had spent the previous evening circling the streets of Cairns on scooters and BMXs looking for him. Williams – 'R Willy' to these kids – first appeared on YouTube when he was 12, not long after he convinced his mother to buy a video camera instead of a bigger television for their flat in Caloundra. By then he was already flipping his scooter into somersaults, sliding down stair-rails and getting impossibly airborne at the local Aquatic Centre skate park, where he spent so much time that the staff started feeding him for free. Today he has 356,000 YouTube subscribers, 757,000 Instagram followers and carries a GoPro camera everywhere, posting autobiographical updates every few days [...]

At 14, Williams's YouTube videos caught the attention of Australian scooter company Madd Gear, which signed him to an endorsement deal and took him on tours of the US and Europe where he was bewildered to find himself mobbed by fans. Two years later he released a four-minute video of his greatest tricks, a gnarly compendium of flips, rail-slides, hangies and dizzying spins set to an AC/DC soundtrack. That prompted a call from Nitro Circus and by Year 12 at Caloundra High he was flying interstate on weekends to perform on the Giganta Ramp alongside the motocross and BMX boys [...] It's been a head-spinning ride for Williams, who was paid \$250 a show for his early stunts on the Giganta Ramp. His current contract runs for three years and by his estimation could earn him more than a million dollars.

[...] the fact that Williams has yet to break a bone in his five years with Nitro Circus has burnished his mystique as a genius-savant of 'air awareness'. 'It's all calculated risk,' he insists. 'It's about understanding how much time I have in the air and how fast I'll be



spinning [...] It's 100% mathematical, but it's a real-time mathematical equation, not on a piece of paper. I can see in my head and know and feel whether it's right, because I've done the jump so many times.' [...]

I spot Williams heading up the Giganta Ramp on his rollerblades. The wind is still gusting and the roadies have already wiped moisture off the slope once, but the lure of a World First is calling. 'Can you believe it – Ryan Williams is on in-lines!!!' shouts the MC, possibly not feigning shock. Williams launches himself from the top and hurtles down the slope, reaching the bottom as the g-forces push his legs apart and force him sideways, so that he's shooting up the launch ramp at the wrong angle. To avoid being shot into space upside down he flattens himself and claws the deck, grabbing the lip of the ramp and flopping over it to abort his take-off. 'Oh, my gosh!' he shouts into the nearest camera, after clambering down. 'I nearly died, but that was the funniest thing I've ever done, ever!' [...]

Donna Hoey was in the crowd at Utah watching her boy and weeping as he hoisted the championship title over his head. '[...] he was a very humble boy – still is,' she says. 'I was a single mother and he never asked for designer shoes, he always made do with just what I could afford. I always say his good karma has come back around.' A few weeks ago he sent her a surprise email with a ticket to the US and a hotel for the World Games [...]

'I remember him when he was six [...] and he was going through a rough time because I was splitting up with his dad. He said "Mum, don't worry, I'll buy you a big house one day and we can all live in it." And he was pretty true to his word.'

The Weekend Australian Magazine, The Australian, 24–25 June 2017



ACTIVITY

'I nearly died but that was fun'

- 1 What cohesive device has Richard Guillatt selected for his biographical article on Ryan Williams? What ideas about Williams are constructed in the text by the use of this device?
- 2
 - a In what ways do the journalist's word choice and use of language construct a representation of Williams?
 - b How do these choices invite the audience to take a position on that representation? Locate specific examples in the article to support your viewpoints.
- 3 Like many journalists, Guillatt uses 'grabs' or direct quotes from background interviews throughout the article. What effect do the selected quotes have on the construction of the representation of Ryan, and on the overall impact and appeal of the article?
- 4
 - a What perspectives on the action sport of stunt-riding are developed through the article?
 - b What techniques and language choices does the writer use to shape this perspective?

Writing feature articles

In creating feature articles, journalists follow a process of devising a series of prepared interview questions, although these may be changed or added to during the course of the interview. They then use this information to create and shape their article, with an angle on the subject that their article intends to develop.

The length of a magazine feature article – like the time limit of a television documentary – restricts a writer’s representations to relatively short, selective snapshots of the subject’s life. In the process of constructing the identity of their subject, and the events, times and places that were relevant to them, the writer must draw on the subject’s filtered recollections and memories.

Writers also need to consider that shifting sets of social practices and perspectives may well affect their representations of identity, events, times and places from the past, and the perspectives that they form of these in the present.

Read the following interview with Fintan Magee, an Australian street artist whose murals and large-scale street artwork features in countries around the world.

Interview with Fintan Magee

Q Where did you attend high school, and did you connect to art there?

A I went to two different high schools, Brisbane State High and Coorparoo State High (in Brisbane). Art was definitely my favourite subject, and I always enjoyed my time in art class. I also connected with my teacher at Coorparoo State High a lot, which was inspiring.

Q Are there any Australian artists who have acted as an inspiration to you and have influenced your own work?

A I love a lot of Australian art but my favourite artist from this country is Michael Leunig. When I was a kid I would read through my parents’ collections of art books and I was too young to really understand a lot of the contemporary art I was looking at. Leunig however spoke to me in a way that was universal. That’s what I love about his work – his ability to communicate to a large audience and still be poignant and poetic.

Q When did you first realise that you wanted to be a professional artist? Did you experience those ‘hard times’ typically and romantically associated with an artist’s struggle for recognition?

A I wanted to be a professional artist from a very young age. I remember there was a graffiti artist who wrote ‘nice’ came and painted a public mural on a wall in my primary school. I remember asking the teacher how much they paid him and she told me. I then spotted all the other murals he had painted around the city and added up how much money he made in my head based on the number the teacher had told me. It wasn’t heaps when you spread it out over the year, but I came to the conclusion that it was a viable way to make a living at 11 or 12 years old.



Fintan Magee



Fintan Magee,
Between Two Worlds

Q Did you explore any other commercial art forms before your focus on street murals? Why have you focused on these as your preferred art form?

A Not really, I was obsessed with murals from a young age because I came from graffiti, so painting in public came naturally to me. I never really did much commercial work. I was lucky enough to be making a full-time living from art straight out of university.

Q Are there central political and/or socio-cultural issues and themes that you draw on in the creation of your murals? How do you scope out a particular location and context? Have you created artworks that deal with Australian Indigenous issues and/or contexts? If so, where are these and what was the inspiration for these?

A I am inspired by the people I meet. I consider myself a social realist and I like the idea of celebrating regular working people in a public context. I have only ever painted portraits of two Indigenous Australians during my career; hopefully I can paint more in the future. For me it's about telling their stories the same way I would anyone else's.

Q Are you commissioned to create a mural on a specific subject in a specific place? If not, what kind of environments do you choose for your work? Why? Are there examples of how different environments influence you in different ways to produce different works of art?

A The site is usually picked by the curator of the project and it just depends on what sort of building we get permission to paint on. So, the sites I am painting on are always different and although I do get to pick and choose a little, it is largely up to the circumstances of the project. It's pretty rare that a curator will give me a subject to work with, though. I prefer to work on projects that I have creative control over and I can choose my own subject.

Q You travel to cities all over the world to create your murals. How long would you typically take to complete a large-scale mural, and can you outline the basic process that you follow? Do you produce working or small-scale versions of your work and then translate these into the full-scale mural? What are the actual logistics that are involved?

A A mural usually takes me 5–8 days to complete. I work from photographs, so the first step is usually finding a subject and photographing them. From there I do a layout in Photoshop and then paint the work onto the wall.

Q Millions of people in cities across the world see your artworks every day, far more than those who see the *Mona Lisa* or other classical works in galleries. How does this make you feel?

Well I don't know about that. While my works are often very public, there are still a lot of people that walk past them and don't pay much attention. So, to me that's humbling. It would be pretty ridiculous to act like my works get the same attention as the *Mona Lisa*. Still it can be pretty nerve-racking painting a work in public. There's a lot of pressure to get it right as it will be in public for all to see. Not every work can be successful, so it's always a little stressful. It's always very rewarding when you get it right though.

Q There's a strong narrative element in many of your works. Do you see yourself as a story-teller or someone challenging others to think, or are you primarily interested in aesthetic elements?

A I am interested in all of these things. They are all equally important to me.

Q You work on enormous spaces. How do the spatial and cultural contexts influence the choices you make in your artwork?

A Every work I do is site-specific. The first consideration is the shape and size of the space I am working on. That is the aesthetic consideration. I then do research into the community or city I am working in. That helps me develop my concept. So yeah, both the spatial and cultural context of the site I am working in is important to me.

Q What was the creative context and inspiration behind the creation of *Between Two Worlds*?

A This mural was painted in El Paso, a border city that looks over the Mexican border in the USA. The mountains behind the mural that you see in the photo are in Mexico and you can even see the border in the distance. I decided to paint the mountains upside down in the mural and paint a local Mexican worker as the main subject of the artwork.

Q What meanings do you think *Between Two Worlds* invites? That is, what ideas or concepts were you trying to represent?

A In El Paso, every day thousands of workers cross the border from Juarez, Mexico to work jobs in the US. Even though these people have visas to work and live in the US they choose to live in Juarez because it's cheaper and they can be close to their families. This means they have to cross the border twice a day before and after work. To me the mural is about existing between two worlds and etching out a living across borders. The painting also pays homage to the hard work of Mexican immigrants in the US.

Q What was the creative context and inspiration behind the creation of *Head in the Clouds*?

A The work was created in Portugal and was roughly inspired by Magritte's painting *The Lovers*; this one has no personal or political meaning. I still consider myself a social realist but also part of the 'Low Brow' movement. That means every now and then I make a work with no specific meaning in mind. Low Brow is very much a reaction or rebellion to what some view as elitism in the art world, and the emphasis on concept over aesthetics and the inability of conceptual art to communicate with a broad audience or people that haven't been educated in art or history. This means many Low Brow artists intentionally make works that don't have an artist statement or aren't conceptually developed. This is a way to deconstruct or challenge what is accepted by the art establishment.

Q What meanings do you think *Head in the Clouds* invites? That is, what ideas or concepts were you trying to represent?

A These works are very fun to make. They are in public, so people can talk about them and create their own meanings. To me this has a broader social purpose because it invites discussion and debate and allows people to be involved in the work rather than dictating its meaning to other people.



Fintan Magee,
Head in the Clouds

EXTENDED RESPONSE

Create a digital feature article

Create a digital feature article of 800–1000 words on Fintan Magee, based on the information in the interview. Make sure that your feature article takes up a particular angle on your subject, which you will develop across the course of the text.

Assume that your article will be published online in a class collection designed for an audience of young adult readers. Ensure that you adopt a register appropriate to your subject, your purpose and your audience.

Make sure that you include a few short, relevant direct quotes from the interviewee in your article.

Your digital feature article should be appropriately paragraphed, have an original header and by-line, and incorporate visuals. You need to pay careful attention to multimodal aspects such as the framing and layout, and the selection and placement of images.

Experiment with the digital layout until you are satisfied with the placement of visuals in your feature article.

ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT TASK ONE

Written response for a public audience

WORD LENGTH // 800–1000 words

TIME // 4 weeks

DETAILS // GENRE: media text

PURPOSE: to inform, represent and entertain

AUDIENCE: readers of a national newspaper's 'Students' perspectives' section

CONTEXT

In this unit, you have explored how writers construct perspectives and representations of concepts, identities and groups through textual choices such as language, medium, style and text structures. You will now use this knowledge to analyse representations in two different texts.

TASK

Write and shape a media text in which you offer a perspective on the representations in two texts, and their connections to one another.

Select two different texts from those you have studied in class. One of the texts must be a literary text. The texts must be connected by the representation of a concept, identity, time or place that is evident in both texts.

You need to select and incorporate multimodal and/or digital elements appropriate to the site of publication of your article. This includes the selection of appropriate images to inform your article.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The assessment is to be completed within four weeks of it being assigned by your teacher.
- You must plan and shape a draft prior to writing and shaping the final version of the media text.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

UNIT ONE



In your media text, you must offer a perspective on the representations in the texts, and their connections to one another. You might choose to focus on a particular:

- group (e.g. adolescents, Australians)
- concept (e.g. Australian identity, justice)
- place (e.g. the bush, suburbia)
- time (e.g. pre-war Western Australia).

The article should offer a considered perspective and should do two things:

- 1** analyse how the concept, identity, time or place is represented in the texts and in relation to its connection with the other representations; and
- 2** add to the conversation about the representations in the text.

In offering a perspective, you need to consider how you will position your readers to respond. You will do this through considered and purposeful choices in generic conventions and textual features.

Your article should take the form of a media text. This popular type of feature article is one in which the writer focuses on the analysis and interpretation of a text or texts.

Your article should include:

- an original and engaging title or header, and a sub-header that supplies some additional information
- an introductory paragraph that establishes the focus of the article, introduces both texts, and establishes your intention and purpose
- selective quotations from each of the original texts
- well-shaped, effectively linked paragraphs of similar length
- written and visual features (images) that are appropriate to the site of publication.

CHAPTER
FOUR

EXAMINING PERSUASIVE TEXTS

Texts that advocate particular perspectives or argue a case are common in print and online publications. They typically have a framework of structural and grammatical features that make a case for or against a topic. Readers are thus positioned to think about and take up the writer's perspectives on the topic.

In this chapter, you will consider how persuasive texts invite audiences to take up specific positions. These texts are typically structured around a central argument, presented in the opening paragraph, and supported by arguments and evidence in the paragraphs that follow.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN CONTEXT

- explore a range of texts, including Australian texts
- explore the personal, social and cultural contexts of texts

- 'The dangers of the "Millennial Snowflake" stereotype' – feature article
- 'We are what we consume' – essay

LANGUAGE AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities and groups
- explore how texts invite readers/viewers to take up positions

RESPONDING TO AND CREATING TEXTS

- consider how personal responses to texts are shaped by an individual's contexts
- analyse examples of persuasive texts and written responses for public audiences.



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What is a persuasive text?

persuasive

capable of changing someone's ideas, opinions or beliefs; appearing worthy of approval or acceptance

A **persuasive** text is one that promotes a clear and unambiguous position, presenting the writer's point of view on a topic. The writer develops their argument using a sequence of supporting arguments designed to position the audience to accept a point of view, or to think about something in a particular way.

Essays designed to convince readers are common texts in contemporary culture, and are found in print and online journals, magazines and newspapers. Their purpose is to explain, analyse and interpret perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, and/or times and places.

Structure of a persuasive text

An effective persuasive text usually has a framework of structural and grammatical features that work together to make a logical, coherently developed case for or against a topic.

Introduction

The introduction is where the topic is **contextualised**. It presents a snapshot of the nature and background of the subject, and the perspective being adopted is clearly established for the reader. In some essays the introduction may be a single introductory paragraph; in others it may be developed over several paragraphs.

The introduction includes a clearly defined statement of the writer's central thesis. It may also provide a preview or synopsis of the main arguments.

Thesis

Texts designed to convince their audience are typically structured around a **thesis** (the statement of the central argument), which is stated in the introduction. This thesis is then supported by arguments that are **substantiated** by evidence, logically sequenced in the body paragraphs.

Body paragraphs

Any text that makes a reasoned argument should involve a systematic sequence of well-developed paragraphs of similar length. Each paragraph focuses on elaborating a separate subtopic, using a **topic sentence** and supporting details, evidence and examples. If a subtopic is large, it may need to be broken into two or more consecutive paragraphs. These are often grouped using subheadings.

The final paragraph, or **conclusion**, is where the 'case is closed'; the central thesis of argument is reinforced, consolidated and finalised.

contextualised

placed within a framework or context

thesis

a proposition to be discussed and proved, or to be maintained against objections

substantiated

established by proof or evidence

topic sentence

a sentence that identifies the main idea of the paragraph

conclusion

a summary of the argument or information

 DISCUSSION

Persuasive texts

- 1 Why is it important that writers of persuasive texts have specialised content knowledge? Give examples from your own experience and/or from other subjects you are studying.
- 2 What is the typical structure and sequence of paragraphing in a persuasive text? In what ways does this introduce, reinforce and consolidate the perspective that the writer invites the audience to accept?

Reading a persuasive text

Persuasive texts can come in many formats – long or short, formal or informal, aimed at specialist or general audiences. Irrespective of the tone or language used, what’s important is how effectively they follow the framework discussed earlier to invite their audience to accept a certain perspective.

Read the following persuasive text, which is written as an informal feature article similar to the articles you examined in Chapter 3. It tries to convince readers that young people today do not warrant the negative **stereotyping** as an oversensitive or judgemental generation.

stereotyping
characterising something to fit a pre-established, conventional concept or idea

The dangers of the ‘Millennial Snowflake’ stereotype

This might come as a shock, but did you know that every single person born between 1982 and 2004 hates free speech? There are no statistics to back up this claim, but you know what those millennials are like: oversensitive, hyper-censorious snowflakes who aren’t happy unless they’re unhappy about something.

At least, that’s what certain parts of the media would have us believe. Just take [an] article in *The Australian*, which implies that all millennials were raised in coddling environments kept scrupulously free of any negative experiences. This coddling, the argument goes, has resulted in a generation allergic to challenge, conflict, and ultimately free speech.

I don’t know about you, but that doesn’t reflect my childhood at all. My primary school didn’t hand out participation trophies, and my parents certainly didn’t bow to my every whim – when I was growing up, physical discipline was still in full vogue at our house. My childhood was hardly Dickensian, but it was still a far cry from the bubble-wrapped fantasy land dreamt up by anti-millennial pundits.



Painting the future

The political right has taken to the snowflake stereotype with gusto. By invoking the spectre of millennial hypersensitivity, the right seek to paint those who call out racism, sexism and homophobia as whining brats.

Conservative commentators use the snowflake cliché to imply that they alone are impartial and clear-headed, to draw a line between the logical right and emotional left. But the contempt they show for young, progressive outrage rarely extends to other sources of indignation – like the Twitterstorm that hounded Yassmin Abdel-Magied after she dared to mention refugees on ANZAC Day.

The fact is, the world is full of emotional, reactionary people desperate to make their voices heard. But it's only the young and socially progressive that are denounced as the unsavoury end-result of politically correct wussification. Accusing, protesting, threatening – all totally logical. Unless you were born after 1981.



Yassmin Abdel-Magied

Taming the tykes

That said, it's not just conservative politics taking aim at millennials. Nearly every newspaper, business blog and content mill has run at least one article along the lines of 'how to manage entitled millennials' – as if we're so homogenous, so consistently manipulable that our collective psychology can be summed up in a single listicle.

I'd like to see the public reaction to a *Forbes* article that read 'How to manage those racist over-50s'. My guess is, it wouldn't be good. But then, if I said such a double-standard was 'ageist hypocrisy', it would just play right into the stereotype.

On your bike, hipster – go back to sipping your latté (as opposed to pouring the beverage over your skin and absorbing it via osmosis, like a *man*).

No room for weakness

Beyond being inaccurate (and potentially damaging to our careers), the snowflake stereotype has the potential to silence young people who may be suffering mental health problems. I, for one, certainly held back on seeking help for my depression, and continued working myself into dysfunction – all to avoid being stuck with the dreaded snowflake moniker.

Sure, there's a vocal minority within the millennial population that get off on using social justice as a source of identity. But that doesn't mean that all – or even *most* – millennials spend their days policing each other's micro-aggressions on Tumblr. Stereotyping young people this way has the potential to see very valid concerns swept under the rug along with all the Tumblrina hair-splitting.

The 'sensitive millennial' cliché seems to stem from the frequent claims that our generation is more aware of the negative impacts of discrimination than any generation before. Whether or not this is true, is tolerance a symptom of being soft, or could it be the result of greater knowledge regarding prejudice – namely, its overwhelmingly negative consequences? If indeed we are more tolerant, I think it's less a product of coddling, and more a reflection of humanity's increasing understanding of discrimination and trauma – something we owe to the researchers of last century.

Generation scapegoat

Despite our generation's diversity (both racial and philosophical), I believe we've come to serve as scapegoats for people upset by cultural complications. Think our borders are porous? Blame a millennial. Can't make racist jokes at parties anymore? Blame a millennial. Surprised that playing grab-ass in the office constitutes sexual harassment? You would have got away with it, if it weren't for those pesky millennials!

Beyond the more obvious trespasses on the rights of others, tolerance is not always an easy path to follow. It's often messy, confusing and hard to get right. It requires nuance and introspection, and it doesn't sit well with the hard-and-fast rules many of us like to live by.

But when the alternative is ignorance, fear and resentment, I'd much rather put in the extra brain-power than switch off my empathy.

If that makes me a snowflake, I suggest you bring some salt.

Joel Svensson, junkee.com, 5 July 2017



Unpacking the structure

This feature article follows a typical persuasive text structure:

- The introduction (first three paragraphs) contextualises the issue with background information. The first paragraph includes the ‘statement of thesis’ (the writer’s position on the topic or issue) through the use of irony: ‘There are no statistics to back up this claim, but you know what those millennials are like: oversensitive, hyper-censorious snowflakes who aren’t happy unless they’re unhappy about something.’
- The four body text sections (multiple paragraphs under subheadings) present one argument each. They all start with the topic sentence, followed by supporting examples and evidence.
- The conclusion (final three paragraphs) reiterates and reinforces the writer’s position or thesis. The central thesis or argument is reinforced in the second-last sentence: ‘But when the alternative is ignorance, fear and resentment, I’d much rather put in the extra brain-power than switch off my empathy.’

DISCUSSION

Unpacking the structure

- 1 How does the introduction contextualise the issue with background information? How does it state the thesis or writer’s stance on the topic? Quote examples to support your observations.
- 2 Locate the topic sentences in the four sections that make up the body of this article. How do these underpin the structure of the central argument or thesis that’s developed across the article as a whole?
- 3 Do you think the writer has successfully ‘closed the case’ and consolidated his position in the concluding paragraphs? Give reasons to support your opinion.

Grammar and language in persuasive texts

When we look closely at the textual features that shape persuasive texts and position the audience to agree with the thesis, we can see how language features are being used in specific and deliberate ways. The persuasive article you discussed above provides many examples of these features.

Cohesive devices

Cohesive devices are used to connect ideas within and between sentences so that a text is tied together as a unified whole. These devices include word choice, syntax and grammatical features.

Several cohesive devices are commonly used in persuasive texts. Some are listed below, with examples from Joel Svensson's article:

- *Specialised terms* are used to show the writer's knowledge of the field (e.g. 'hyper-censorious'; 'anti-millennial pundits'; 'Twitterstorm').
- *Synonyms* are used to avoid repetition and (at times) to make emotive appeals (e.g. 'millennials'; 'young people'; 'born after 1981').
- *Repetition* is used with other key words to add emphasis (e.g. 'snowflake stereotype'; 'snowflake cliché'; 'snowflake moniker').

Some cohesive devices are so common that they're used in almost every written text.

- *Pronouns* are used to refer to previous participants or nouns, avoiding repetition (e.g. 'I'; 'we'; 'they').
- *Text connectives* signal the development and logical connections of sentences and paragraphs (e.g. 'at least'; 'despite'; 'the fact is'; 'that said'; 'as if').
- *Conjunctions* join the clauses in a sentence (e.g. 'and'; 'but'; 'like'; 'or').

cohesive device
a feature of vocabulary, syntax and grammar that binds different parts of a text together

Evaluative language

Evaluative language is a powerful tool in texts designed to persuade or convince others. It's used to express positive or negative opinions and judgment about:

- emotions or feelings
- things, concepts, events or objects
- people's actions or behaviour.

We can see several examples of positive and negative evaluative language in the article.



POSITIVE

- 'the young and socially progressive'
- 'very valid concerns'
- 'understanding of discrimination and trauma'



NEGATIVE

- 'millennial hypersensitivity'
- 'unsavoury end-result'
- 'policing each other's micro-aggressions'

The primary purpose of persuasive texts is to convince the audience using reason and logically developed argument. Even in an informal article, obvious emotive appeals are used sparingly; they're much more common in texts such as advertisements, editorials or public speeches.

graduation

intensifying meaning by increasing the force or focus of an expression

A writer may use language to adjust the intensity of the feelings or opinions being expressed. This is known as **graduation**. It is often used to add or reduce emphasis. For example:

- ‘*nearly every* newspaper’
- ‘*all* – or even *most* – millennials’
- ‘they *alone* are impartial’
- ‘the rules *many* of us like to live by’
- ‘bring *some* salt’.

A different type of graduation is when a neutral word is replaced by a similar word that has stronger positive or negative connotations. For example, ‘desperate’ is stronger and more emphatic than ‘wanting to’.

modality

the capacity of elements of language to express confidence in the statement being made

Another tool of evaluative language is **modality**; that is, the use of terms that indicate uncertainty (e.g. using modal verbs such as *may be*) or that intensify positive or negative emphasis. This is often done through the use of adverbs; for example:

- ‘*scrupulously* free’
- ‘*hardly* Dickensian’
- ‘*rarely* extends’
- ‘*consistently* manipulable’
- ‘*overwhelmingly* negative consequences’.

Other grammatical features

There are a number of grammatical elements and languages features that also have useful functions in persuasive texts:

- *Point of view* is used to position the audience. A first-person point of view, with the use of first-person pronouns (e.g. ‘I’; ‘my’), helps to engage the audience and develop an informal relationship with them. A third-person point of view cultivates a more formal, authoritative relationship with the audience.
- *Present tense* is often used to present facts and undisputed information (e.g. ‘our generation is more aware’). This is useful in implying the factual nature of the arguments being developed. Information delivered in *past tense* seems more debatable or subject to change (e.g. ‘all millennials were raised in coddling environments’).
- *Nominalisation* turns a verb or adjective into a noun (e.g. ‘discrimination’; ‘wussification’). This makes the text and the arguments appear more authoritative.
- *Thematisation* involves the placement of a key point at the beginning of a sentence (e.g. ‘The “sensitive millennial” cliché ...’). This gives it prominence and sets up the theme for the rest of the paragraph.
- *Expanded noun groups* use adjectives or attributes to expand upon and elaborate meaning (e.g. ‘a generation allergic to challenge’; ‘emotional, reactionary people’; ‘the more obvious trespasses’).
- A range of *processes* or *verbs* are used for multiple purposes – to identify, to present reasons, to explain cause and effect and to interpret.

DISCUSSION

Comparing grammar and language use

Working in small groups, find two different persuasive texts from print or online sources. The two texts should be on the same topic but attempt to position the audience in opposite ways. For instance, one text might try to persuade readers that changes to the Australian tax system are positive, while the other argues that they are negative.

- 1 How do the two texts make use of cohesive devices? Compare and contrast the devices used in each text. Which devices are used by both texts? What is their effect?
- 2 How do the texts make use of evaluative language? Compare and contrast the language in each text. Do the texts use different types of language or do they use the same language tools in different ways?
- 3 How do the texts make use of language intensifiers such as graduation and modality? Is the effect of these intensifiers the same in each text?
- 4 Discuss any other differences in language and grammar between the texts.
- 5 From the different use of language, are you able to predict the target audience for each text? Can you assess whether each text would be likely to effectively position its target audience?

Analysing a persuasive text

More formal persuasive texts are often referred to as essays (although essays can take many forms). Persuasive essays are positioned as being more authoritative and objective, and the audience is invited to take them more seriously than they would an informal feature article.

Read the following persuasive essay, which argues that personal identity is affected by consumerism.

We are what we consume

Our identities influence and are influenced by what we consume.

Consumption exerts enough of an influence on our lives that it becomes part of our identities. We not only use consumption to construct our own identities, but we use it to infer the identities of others. Products represent our identities by the meaning attached to them. That is, we use products symbolising certain qualities to send the message to others that we also possess those qualities. Sometimes consumption can deleteriously influence our identities, by making us feel inferior or inadequate. Ultimately, consumption and identity can be closely related and in this essay I'm going to discuss how, so that you can start to understand the relationship between what you buy and who you are.

When we're making judgments about another person's identity, those judgments can be influenced by what that person consumes. So, for example, when we see a woman wearing a suit and driving a luxury car, we probably identify her as financially successful. The woman's use of those products associated with success is of course, in most cases, not an accident; she's intentionally trying to communicate success with those possessions. Why do they communicate success though? That is, how do we know that one car communicates success and another doesn't? It's because we learn through marketing and advertising what symbolises success and what doesn't.

The fact that we can make judgments about other people's identities based on what they consume shows products have meaning. As previously stated, those meanings are learned from marketing and advertising, and since we all see the same marketing and advertising messages we can often accurately infer someone's identity from that person's possessions. When constructing and maintaining our own identities, we tend to be pretty careful to select products that will send the 'right' message to others. So, for example, many men wishing to communicate a masculine identity won't wear pink or use bath products marketed to women. By sending certain messages to others with our possessions, we can also signal membership in a social group. For example, wearing a shirt with a football team's logo signals we're part of a group of fans of that team.

One meaning we learn at a young age is what identifies a 'beautiful' person. Unfortunately, this learning is heavily influenced by our consumption of media portrayals of ideal bodies, which are often unrealistic and unattainable. This can not only lead us to create identities that include negative conceptions of our own attractiveness, but it can also lead us to spend a lot of money consuming products in the hope of changing our appearance (and the corresponding part of our identities). For example, we might spend money on make-up, lotions and creams purported to make skin younger, and we might even get cosmetic surgery. Ultimately though these products rarely if ever transform us into movie stars and supermodels, and we're left unfulfilled and still feeling bad about ourselves.

In a culture so intertwined with consumption, it's inevitable that the things we own come to represent us as people. This practice can be innocuous, but it can also represent unhappiness and dissatisfaction with our identities. When we consume to change ourselves it's important to ask what we're changing and why. If there's nothing inherently wrong with what we're changing, why do it? If the reason is to become more like a fictional TV character whose appearance may have been digitally altered anyway, we might want to re-evaluate our actions.

As long as we're consumers it will be impossible to completely extricate ourselves from a consumption-based identity, but if that identity represents who we truly are and not who we've been told we should be, we'll probably be happier, more comfortable people.

 DISCUSSION

Identity and consumerism

- 1 Think about your own perspectives on the role of consumption in your lives. To what extent do you think all consumers in Western societies are subject to hyper-commercialism, marketing pitches and branding influences, regardless of their age or market niche?
 - 2 Give some examples of how brands familiar to you sell an identity as well as a product. How do they do this? What techniques do they use to construct this identity, and then to persuade consumers to adopt it?
 - 3 Consider the following statement: *The issue with consumption of brands influencing your identity is that it diminishes the things that make you unique.* Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons to support your perspectives.
-

 ACTIVITY

Analysing a persuasive text

Working in small groups, analyse the persuasive essay 'We are what we consume' by discussing and responding to the following. Your responses will be shared with the class on completion.

- 1 How does the title signal the writer's intention and the position that will be adopted and argued in this essay?
- 2 List some examples of vocabulary or terminology that demonstrate specialised knowledge of the subject matter. In what ways does this make the arguments more authoritative?
- 3 Describe the relevant subtopic/argument being developed in each of the six body paragraphs of the essay.
- 4 List four examples of expanded noun groups that you consider to be particularly effective in conveying the writer's intention and perspective. State why you think each of these expanded noun groups is so effective.
- 5 Give examples of different cohesive devices used by the writer to unify the essay. Explain how each of these add to the coherence of the essay.
- 6 Provide examples of evaluative language used by the writer to shape intended meaning through making:
 - a positive or negative evaluations of *things, concepts, events or objects*
 - b positive or negative evaluations of *people's actions and behaviours*
 - c positive or negative evaluation of *feelings or emotions*.

What patterns do you see? How might this reflect and reinforce the writer's position or line of argument as a whole?

- 7 Provide examples of modal adverbs in the text, and then describe the effects being created by the writer's use of these terms.
-

CREATING A PERSUASIVE TEXT

The process of writing and shaping any text type, including persuasive texts, typically includes four sequential phases or stages. Even spoken texts such as speeches, seminar presentations and vlogs should be developed using a written script or draft.



1 PLANNING

This important pre-writing step includes researching the topic where necessary, drawing on such strategies as foot-printing (writing on sticky notes and placing them on a text as you read), or more formal note-making and summarising. Another strong technique is using a graphic organiser to develop a coherent and systematic visual overview of your writing intentions (see p. 96). At this stage, you're generating, selecting, organising and sequencing your content.

2 DRAFTING

You now use your carefully formulated plan to shape your response into a well-developed, paragraphed format. It's at this stage that you transfer the points on your plan into logically developed and sequenced paragraphs.

3 EDITING

This is the stage where you re-examine your content and make judgments about its overall effectiveness. You also make decisions about addressing and incorporating constructive feedback on your draft version provided by others, such as your peers or teacher. Editing can involve a lot of rewriting; you need to follow through on your decisions and make the changes that the text needs.

4 PROOFREADING

This is the stage at which you carefully polish your draft by correcting any surface features – not just typos and errors, but any small changes that will improve the overall piece. If your text is in a digital or multimodal format, you might also make decisions at this stage about the placement of images and visuals.

Tools for planning

A useful sample planner or graphic organiser may look like the one below. However, you may prefer to create a version of your own or use one provided by your teacher.

Planning a persuasive text

Working title and topic	
Introductory paragraph Contextualising the issue with background information Statement of thesis: your stated position on topic or issue	
Argument 1 – subtopic paragraph	Topic sentence: Supporting points, examples, evidence: . . .
Argument 2 – subtopic paragraph	Topic sentence: Supporting points, examples, evidence: . . .
Argument 3 – subtopic paragraph	Topic sentence: Supporting points, examples, evidence: . . .
Argument 4 – subtopic paragraph	Topic sentence: Supporting points, examples, evidence: . . .
Concluding paragraph – ‘closing the case’, reiterating and reinforcing your position/thesis	

 EXTENDED RESPONSE**Creating a persuasive text**

Think of an issue or topic relating to young people on which you hold a strong viewpoint – whether you support the issue or oppose it.

Create a persuasive text, intended for online publication, that's designed to convince your audience to agree with your argument or case and invites them to adopt the perspective that you are advocating.

This text could take many forms, such as an essay, a blog post, a feature article, or an editorial. Whatever the format, you need to focus on the systematic development and argument of your case, as modelled in this chapter. (If you choose to create a spoken text, such as a vlog or TED Talk, you still need to write and shape the written text on which to base your piece.)

You should plan your response carefully so that your content is selected, sequenced and structured appropriately and effectively. Consider the structure, grammatical elements and language features typically used in a persuasive text designed to convince others. Make sure you selectively and thoughtfully incorporate these into your work.

As this will be a digital text, you should include features that demonstrate your awareness of its online publication. For example, you might need to consider the layout and creative use of visuals.

It's up to your teacher to decide whether your work is published on the school intranet or class site, or presented to your audience in an appropriate format.

SPEAKING PERSUASIVELY

In Chapter 4, you analysed the features of persuasive written texts. These texts develop a logical, well-reasoned argument, using factual evidence to convince a reader to accept the writer's central thesis. Other types of persuasive texts, such as advertising, editorials, political articles and speeches, also incorporate emotive appeals and rhetorical devices.

In this chapter, you also will examine different rhetorical devices and how they are used in persuasive spoken or performed texts. A persuasive speaker can incorporate a range of verbal and non-verbal strategies into their performances. These engage and manipulate an audience, making it more likely that they will accept the central thesis.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN CONTEXT

- explore a range of texts, including Australian texts
- explore the personal, social and cultural contexts of texts

- Nobel Lecture by Malala Yousafzai – persuasive speech
- 'The P-word' by Emily Kim – persuasive speech
- 'Locker-room culture' by Luke Macaronas – persuasive speech

LANGUAGE AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities and groups
- explore how texts invite readers/viewers to take up positions

RESPONDING TO AND CREATING TEXTS

- consider how personal responses to texts are shaped by an individual's contexts
- analyse examples of persuasive texts and written responses for public audiences.



rhetoric
the art of persuasive
speaking

The art of rhetoric

What is **rhetoric**? It generally refers to the art of persuading others through speaking, although it can also apply to written texts.

Rhetoric has been an art form for thousands of years. It was a highly respected form of communication in ancient Greece, where scholars such as Aristotle and Plato had to convince others of their philosophies through public speeches. In the modern era, it's more common to find rhetoric in speeches and presentations.

As multimodal text types such as video continue to grow in popularity as a way of providing information, the art of convincing others through argument and speaking is becoming ever more important.

Persuasive appeals

One of the core elements of rhetoric is making persuasive appeals to the audience. These appeals invite the audience to accept the speaker's argument. The Greek teacher and philosopher Aristotle identified three modes or types of persuasive appeal, which we still recognise today using their original Greek labels. These are shown in the diagram below.

Ethos is about gaining the trust of the audience by establishing the speaker's credibility. Sometimes this is done by incorporating trustworthy and authoritative sources or citing well-regarded 'experts' in a field. Speakers who have authority in an area – such as a doctor speaking about medical matters – have an advantage when appealing to *ethos*.

Logos is the use of logical and reasoned argument, similar to the persuasive texts you examined in Chapter 4. Effective appeals to logic and reason present evidence and then build upon that evidence to support the speaker's thesis. It's important to bear in mind, though, that the evidence to be presented to an audience is selected because it supports the thesis rather than question or undermine it.

Pathos is the use of emotional appeals, whether direct or indirect. These typically involve the choice of loaded words (and evocative images in a multimodal presentation), designed to sway the audience. When a person is emotionally involved, they're more vulnerable to suggestion and therefore more likely to be persuaded.

A successful persuasive speech is likely to draw on all three modes of appeal.



Key persuasive techniques

A persuasive speech or argument relies on more than just delivering information. Writers and speakers try to manipulate the audience's responses in order to persuade them, or to motivate them to take action. This manipulation is done using one or more persuasive techniques that target the audience in particular ways. An effective persuasive speech will use multiple techniques in its aim to win over the audience.

Loaded or emotive words

Emotive language uses words and word groups that are selected to sway an audience. For example, evocative descriptive language may be used to draw out a specific emotional response. Consider the effect of the noun 'desert' compared with the expanded noun group 'desolate, unyielding wasteland'. Another option is to use strong verbs and powerful adverbs to increase the impact of a verb group; for example, 'wrongfully seized' has much more emotive power than 'took'.

Consider the following two statements.

Minke whales are caught annually by Japanese whalers in the Southern Ocean for scientific research. The hunters later legally sell the whale meat to shops and restaurants in Japan.

The magnificent, endangered Minke whales are fellow mammals that are cruelly and senselessly slaughtered by ruthless Japanese whalers inside whale sanctuaries in the Southern Ocean. The loophole of 'scientific research' is blatantly abused by these barbaric commercial hunters in defiance of international law and civilised human principles, with the whale meat ending up in Japanese shops and restaurants.



You can see that the two versions have marked differences in their choice of words and their use of expanded noun and verb groups.



ACTIVITY

Emotive language

- 1 Copy and complete the following table. Then use it to compare the word choices of the writers of the statements on the previous page.

Neutral word choice	Loaded word choice	Language resource
Minke whales	magnificent, endangered Minke whales; fellow mammals	noun groups comprising attributes/adjectives
caught	cruelly and senselessly slaughtered	verb groups comprising adverbials/circumstances
in the Southern Ocean		
for scientific research		
hunters		
legally sell		

- 2 Discuss the effectiveness of loaded language. How do you think this works to position an audience?
-

Modality

Modality involves a range of grammatical tools, as we saw in earlier chapters. It can be used to vary meaning between extremes on a spectrum from ‘most’ to ‘least’. Writers and speakers of persuasive texts can modify the strength of concepts through their use of modality.

We use modal verbs every day, particularly when discussing how likely something is to happen, or the extent to which someone is obligated to do something. Consider the following incomplete sentence:

I _____ go to the party on Saturday night.

- If we insert modal verbs such as ‘might’ or ‘may’ in the sentence, this indicates a *low* possibility, or that we feel little obligation to go.
- If we insert modal verbs such as ‘can’ or ‘could’, the likelihood is increased to a *medium* level of possibility or obligation.
- If we insert modal verbs such as ‘will’, ‘should’ or ‘must’, the likelihood of attendance shifts to a *high* level.

Adverbs can also be used to demonstrate a similar range of possibility or obligation, as well as other forms of modality. For example:

- adverbs like ‘occasionally’, ‘rarely’ and ‘possibly’ indicate *low* value
- adverbs like ‘usually’, ‘generally’ and ‘probably’ indicate *medium* value
- adverbs like ‘absolutely’, ‘definitely’ and ‘certainly’ indicate a *strong* or *high* value.

Inclusive language and direct appeals

Making direct appeals in a speech – that is, asking the audience to do something – can be difficult. If a speaker seems overly assertive or aggressive, they run the risk of alienating their audience. That’s why it is important to establish common ground with the audience. This makes it easier for them to identify with the speaker and to agree with what they’re saying – which, in turn, makes them more likely to accept direct (or indirect) appeals.

To do this, the persuasive speaker engages the audience directly with the use of **inclusive language**. This helps to establish a connection between the speaker and the audience.

Pronouns can be a simple and effective way of connecting with the audience. Inclusive pronouns such as ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘you’ make the audience feel that the speaker is part of their group. This makes the audience more receptive to direct appeals; for example:

- ‘we all understand that ...’
- ‘all of us here today accept that ...’
- ‘you are all aware ...’
- ‘I appeal to all of you gathered here today’.

inclusive language
language that avoids expressions or words that exclude particular groups of people

Rhetorical questions

As discussed earlier, rhetoric is the art of persuasive speech. A rhetorical question isn't just a question in a speech, though. It is a question that is designed to produce an effect rather than an answer, and so the audience is not expected or required to answer.

Rhetorical questions are used in persuasive speech to reinforce a wide acceptance of the invited response. And as they are addressed to each of the individuals in the audience, they also serve to establish a stronger bond between speaker and listener.

Consider the following examples of rhetorical questions:

- 'Who among us here today does not believe in the right of a child to live in safety?'
- 'Should we stand idly by while these irreplaceable koala habitats are threatened by greedy developers?'
- 'Has the time finally come to make our voices heard, and heard loudly, in this battle for equality?'

You can see how answering these questions would be pointless, and also how they use inclusive language to build the relationship between the speaker and the audience.



ACTIVITY

Inclusive language and rhetorical questions

- 1 Reread the persuasive text about the Minke whales.

The magnificent, endangered Minke whales are fellow mammals that are cruelly and senselessly slaughtered by ruthless Japanese whalers inside whale sanctuaries in the Southern Ocean. The loophole of 'scientific research' is blatantly abused by these barbaric commercial hunters in defiance of international law and civilised human principles, with the whale meat ending up in Japanese shops and restaurants.

- a Rewrite the piece, incorporating some direct appeals and using inclusive language. Your new version should be roughly the same length.
 - b Compare and contrast the two versions. Which do you think is more persuasive? Why?
- 2 Think of a contemporary social, political or environmental issue on which you hold strong views. If you were creating a persuasive speech on this issue, think of two rhetorical questions that you might pose to your audience. Share both the topic and the two rhetorical questions with fellow class members, justifying why you think these would be effective in positioning an audience.
-

Citations and expert opinion

Citations are a very useful resource, linked closely to the element of *ethos*. By incorporating the support of an individual or organisation widely regarded as having expert knowledge in the field, the audience is more likely to accept the ‘truth’ of the speaker’s persuasive statements.

It is important to include the person’s role or position and the institution to emphasise the high status of the source. Their status signals to the audience that the source is authoritative, which in turn contributes to the speaker’s credibility.

When making a citation, use reporting verbs and phrases; for example:

- ‘Professor David Mason of the Faculty of Marine Sciences at James Cook University states/argues/reports that ...’
- ‘According to Professor David Mason ...’; ‘As Professor David Mason states ...’; ‘In Professor David Mason’s opinion ...’

Statistics can also be useful citations as they are usually regarded as credible (no matter how credible they actually are). While statistics are objective fact, they can be manipulated as a persuasive tool. For example, consider the statement: ‘Per capita, every Queenslanders loses \$400 a year on poker machines, when that money could be put to better use.’ This statistic turns the gambling loss of Queensland as a whole into a more relatable figure by making it **per capita**, rather than stating an overall dollar value. It may be true, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t biased.

citation

quotations from a passage, book, author, etc.

per capita

‘by the individual person’; a measurement or figure divided among all members of a population

Repetition and re-statement

Repetition is a very useful rhetorical device. Repeating key pieces of information not only reinforces them, but also adds to rhythm and rhetorical effect. However, repetition needs to be used carefully or it loses its impact. Look at the following example from a student’s persuasive speech.

We must never give up in our fight to preserve our freedom of speech, which is the cornerstone of democracy. We must protect our freedom of speech today, our freedom of speech tomorrow, and our freedom of speech for future generations.

Does the repetition of ‘freedom of speech’ make the speaker’s point, or did you get bored with it by the end of the example?

An alternative approach is to re-state information in different ways, using a variety of terms. This can help get the point across without losing the audience. One of the most famous examples of re-statement is Martin Luther King’s repetition of the words ‘I have a dream’, which acts as both a thematic and an integrating device at key points in his dramatic speech. You can find footage of this speech online; watch and listen to it to see how King repeats the key phrase, but re-states his message in different ways at other times.

Figurative language

It is difficult to persuade an audience by using just facts and literal language. Figurative language, like that found in literary texts, uses words or expressions with a meaning that's different from the literal interpretation. This language engages the audience's imagination and draws on the power of symbolism.

Metaphors and similes are two common figurative devices in persuasive speeches. These can have a striking effect and help develop the perspective the speaker wishes to convey to their audience. They can be used to strengthen both a positive or a negative effect.

A *simile* directly compares two things using 'like' or 'as'; for example:

- Deforestation is *like* a cancer in the lungs of the earth.
- Sleek and streamlined, dolphins are *as* graceful as gymnasts.

A *metaphor* says that one thing *is* another, so it is a much more powerful comparison. Compare the simile examples above with the use of metaphor below.

- Deforestation *is* a cancer in the lungs of the earth.
- Sleek and streamlined swimmers, dolphins *are* graceful gymnasts.

Another common device is *hyperbole*, where you exaggerate things to make them sound more compelling; for example:

- This *momentous* higher education policy *will work wonders to transform* the lives of *huge numbers* of young Australians in *truly amazing ways*.

Hyperbole allows the speaker not only to make their delivery more exciting, but also to reinforce a point in the strongest possible terms. However, it needs to be used carefully to avoid over-inflated assertions, which will detract from the speaker's credibility.

ACTIVITY

Figurative language

- 1 Working in pairs, think of an object or action that might form part of a persuasive issue. Create some similes and metaphors to describe these objects or actions. Incorporate these in sentences and share them with your classmates.
 - 2 Use hyperbole – or overstatement – to strengthen the impact of the following statements. Share your ideas with the class.
 - a This agreement should end the persecution of the ethnic minority.
 - b Vegetarians have lower rates of bowel cancer than meat-eaters.
 - c The installation of protective fences has lowered the killing of lambs by 85%.
 - d Exercise and diet are important to good health.
 - e Sporting heroes work to achieve their goals.
-

Selecting images

Speeches are not just an aural medium; the speaker's body language and physical performance skills have always been important in winning over an audience.

In the current century, the visual aspects of speeches are even more important as technology now allows us to easily make compelling multimodal texts and presentations. When creating a multimodal speech, it's important that the speaker selects visuals and images that are evocative. These will invite their audience to respond to their perspective and purpose. The visuals should act as powerful stimuli that intensify audience response.

At the same time, a presentation should not be overloaded with too many images. One powerful image is better than ten ordinary ones or a pair of powerful images that contradict each other and confuse the audience.



DISCUSSION

The power of images

Consider each of the images above and discuss the following questions in small groups:

- 1 With what contentious social issue is each image associated?
- 2 How does that image work to promote a powerful persuasive appeal to viewers?

Presenting a persuasive speech

Spoken language differs from written language in many ways. A speaker can employ a range of powerful *vocal resources* to influence an audience, such as tone, volume and the rhythms of speech, together with variations in the use of emphasis and pace. It's not impossible to create similar effects with written language, but it's much more difficult and rarely as effective.

Speakers can also make use of *non-verbal resources* such as gestures, shifts in facial expression, eye contact, stance and body language. These all play a part in a successful presentation and are tools that cannot be duplicated with written language. When the speech is written beforehand, the speaker may be able to add notes on what non-verbal resources to use in their delivery.

When speaking directly to an audience, the relationship between the speaker and their audience shifts dramatically, both in the immediacy of the audience's response and in the speaker's capacity to adapt their delivery to match that response. This may involve adjusting the balance of *what* is being said with *how* it's being said. Tonal shifts can be used not only to engage the audience, but also to add interest and variety to the delivery. It's essential to convey sincerity, passion and conviction to the audience.

Some fundamental aspects of public speaking also need to be kept in mind when delivering a speech, such as:

- clearly enunciating words
- practising pronunciation of tricky words
- speaking at a measured pace (neither too quickly nor too slowly)
- maintaining regular eye contact
- making sure the delivery is expressive without seeming artificial.

As you can see, there's a lot that needs to be considered when writing and delivering an effective persuasive speech. In the rest of this chapter, you will analyse examples of successful speeches written and delivered by young people, and consider how to do the same.

Malala Yousafzai

In 2012, when she was a fifteen-year-old living in Pakistan, the Taliban attempted to assassinate Malala Yousafzai because of her outspoken activism on the rights of girls to have an education. She was shot three times, with one bullet passing through her head and lodging in her shoulder. She survived the attack and was air-lifted to the United Kingdom in an induced coma. She underwent major surgery in the UK, where she lives today. She continues her work for the rights of all young people to be able to access education.

The following is an abridged version of Malala's Nobel Lecture from 2014, when she became the youngest-ever recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Malala used the opportunity to deliver a persuasive speech about the rights of all children to have an education.

View Malala's delivery of her full speech at the Nobel Prize website, then read the transcript.



Nobel Lecture by Malala Yousafzai

This award is not just for me. It is for those forgotten children who want education. It is for those frightened children who want peace. It is for those voiceless children who want change.

I am here to stand up for their rights, to raise their voice. It is not time to pity them. It is not time to pity them. It is time to take action, so it becomes the last time – the last time – so it becomes the last time that we see a child deprived of education.

I have found that people describe me in many different ways.

Some people call me the girl who was shot by the Taliban.

And some, the girl who fought for her rights

[...]

Education is one of the blessings of life, and one of its necessities. That has been my experience during the seventeen years of my life. [...] I always loved learning and discovering new things. I remember when my friends and I would decorate our hands with henna on special occasions. And instead of drawing flowers and patterns we would paint our hands with mathematical formulas and equations.

We had a thirst for education. We had a thirst for education because our future was right there in that classroom. We would sit and learn and read together. We loved to wear neat and tidy school uniforms and we would sit there with big dreams in our eyes. We wanted to make our parents proud and prove that we could also excel in our studies and achieve those goals, which some people think only boys can.

But things did not remain the same. [...] Swat, which was a place of tourism and beauty, suddenly changed into a place of terrorism. I was just ten when more than four hundred schools were destroyed. Women were flogged. People were killed. And our beautiful dreams turned into nightmares.

Education went from being a right to being a crime.

Girls were stopped from going to school.

When my world suddenly changed, my priorities changed too. I had two options. One was to remain silent and wait to be killed. And the second was to speak up and then be killed.

I chose the second one.

I decided to speak up.

[...]

The terrorists tried to stop us and attacked me and my friends, who are here today, on our school bus in 2012, but neither their ideas nor their bullets could win.

We survived.

And since that day, our voices have grown louder and louder.

I tell my story, not because it is unique, but because it is not.

It is the story of many girls. [...]

I am those 66 million girls who are deprived of education. And today I am not raising my voice, it is the voice of those 66 million girls.

[...]



Dear brothers and sisters, today, in half of the world, we see rapid progress and development. However, there are many countries where millions still suffer from the very old problems of war, poverty and injustice.

We still see conflicts in which innocent people lose their lives and children become orphans. We see many people becoming refugees in Syria, Gaza and Iraq. In Afghanistan, we see families being killed in suicide attacks and bomb blasts.

Many children in Africa do not have access to education because of poverty. And as I said, we still see – we still see girls who have no freedom to go to school in the north of Nigeria.

Many children in countries like Pakistan and India [...] are deprived of their right to education because of social taboos, or they have been forced into child marriage or into child labour.

One of my very good school friends, the same age as me, who has always been a bold and confident girl, dreamed of becoming a doctor. But her dream remained a dream. At the age of twelve, she was forced to get married. And then soon she had a son, she had a child when she herself was a child – only fourteen. I know that she could have been a very good doctor. But she couldn't, because she was a girl.

Her story is why I dedicate the Nobel Peace Prize money to the Malala Fund, to help give girls quality education, everywhere, anywhere in the world and to raise their voices. The first place this funding will go to is where my heart is, to build schools in Pakistan, especially in my home of Swat and Shangla.

In my own village, there is still no secondary school for girls. And it is my wish and my commitment, and now my challenge, to build one so that my friends and my sisters can go there to school and get quality education and to get this opportunity to fulfil their dreams.

This is where I will begin, but it is not where I will stop. I will continue this fight until I see every child, every child in school.

[...]

Why is it that countries which we call strong are so powerful in creating wars but are so weak in bringing peace?

Why is it that giving guns is so easy but giving books is so hard?

Why is it – why is it that making tanks is so easy, but building schools is so hard?

[...]

Let us become the first generation to decide to be the last that sees empty classrooms, lost childhoods and wasted potentials.

Let this be the last time that a girl or a boy spends their childhood in a factory.

Let this be the last time that a girl is forced into early child marriage.

Let this be the last time that a child loses life in war.

Let this be the last time that we see a child out of school.

Let this end with us.

Let's begin this ending ... together ... today ... right here, right now. Let's begin this ending now.

Malala Yousafzai, 10 December 2014



 DISCUSSION**Malala Yousafzai's speech**

After viewing Malala delivering her speech and reading the abridged version, discuss the speech in small groups.

- 1
 - a From viewing Malala's speech online, what vocal and non-verbal features does she draw upon in her delivery?
 - b Do you think she succeeds in engaging her audience? If so, what evidence in the audience response illustrates this?
- 2 Note the layout of Malala's speech on the page. It's not written in formal paragraphs as you would expect in an essay. Remember that effective delivery to an audience is the most important aspect of public speaking, and the speaker prepares their script or cue cards in whatever layout they consider to be most helpful. Locate some specific examples in Malala's speech and suggest how this layout would have assisted her delivery.
- 3 Locate examples of Malala's use of repetition as a rhetorical strategy, and comment on the effectiveness of these.
- 4 Identify some examples of Malala's use of rhetorical questions. Comment on their function and effectiveness.
- 5 Locate examples of her use of inclusive language to engage her audience, and comment on the effects that are achieved by these.
- 6 When Malala gave this speech, she was a similar age to you. She received a standing ovation from an audience of world leaders on the conclusion of her speech, which is testimony to its persuasive power. In your viewing of her speech, did you have a similar response? What would you summarise as being the main strengths of her presentation?

Emily Kim

The Plain English Speaking Award (PESA) is held every year for Australian students aged 15–18 years. It's an opportunity for students to extend their skills in oral communication and speech writing, and to speak to their peers on topics that they're passionate about.

Emily Kim came to Australia from South Korea as a five-year-old who spoke no English. Her first efforts at public speaking at primary school reduced her to tears. She only really engaged with public speaking in Year 10, at North Sydney Girls' High, but in 2018 Emily represented Australia in the international Final of the ESU Public Speaking Competition.

The following is an abridged version of the speech Emily delivered to win the 2017 national Plain English Speaking Award. View Emily's delivery of her full speech at the SBS website, then read the text.



Emily Kim's speech
on the SBS website:
[http://mea.digital/
gen12_5_2](http://mea.digital/gen12_5_2)

The P-word

I don't watch a lot of horror movies, but from what I've heard, most of them aren't too believable. From protagonists whose catchphrase is basically 'let's split up' to characters wanting to 'investigate' creepy sounds instead of, I don't know, running away – no real person would ever do any of these things. So once in a while I actually catch myself wondering: what if someone was to make the most realistic horror movie ever? Just out of everyday situations and people. Let me tell you what I think the most realistic horror movie ever would be called: 'The P-Word: that one time I mentioned my period in public'.

Let me ask you, what is it about mentioning periods that scares us so much? What is it that makes it so inappropriate, so taboo? Ever since I was little that was the message both implicitly and explicitly taught to me by the world – that periods are somehow too 'gross' to talk about in a way that is open or productive. I imagine that many of you are feeling a little uncomfortable right now. That's okay, I understand, because it's what we've been taught all our lives. I'm not afraid to admit that when I was younger I would cringe at the word too. But I ask you right now to take a moment to face that discomfort, and ask yourself why the notion of menstruation should make us feel awkward. Why we use euphemisms like 'that time of the month', or try to make fun of PMS, rather than talking about periods seriously and candidly.

An obvious example of the way in which we avoid any mention of periods like the plague can be seen in Instagram's deletion of a set of images uploaded by photographer Rupi Kaur in 2015, depicting women on their periods. These photographs showed at most a few spots of blood in an attempt to illustrate aspects of this shared experience – for example, the nuisance of leakage on fresh bedsheets. The reason for their deletion? Apparently, the photos didn't follow Instagram's 'Community Guidelines' – for reference, these guidelines prohibit things like sexual acts, violence, and nudity. Periods are mentioned exactly zero times. So why were the photos taken down? Who was it that decided periods are so obscene?

Periods are not something you get to choose to have. And it's almost universally agreed that having your period is not exactly fun. For many women, a length of time every month is reserved for menstruation, when we have little choice but to

buy the pricey female hygiene items that are the bare necessities of this monthly cycle. It's even worse, however, when you add in the fact that the treatment of periods as offensive or vulgar means that there's very little effective discourse about the issues surrounding menstruation. Let me illustrate to you just one of these issues, a largely unrecognised problem for some of the most vulnerable members of our society, a problem that to be quite honest hadn't even crossed my mind until I stumbled across it recently.

'I'd rather feel clean than feel full.' These are the words of a young homeless woman named Alexa. Every month she is forced to choose between a meal and a pack of pads. While *she* may choose the pads, many other women in similar situations don't, and instead, must find their own alternatives. Napkins, toilet paper, plastic bags, cotton balls, makeup wipes, socks, ripped-up old tank tops – these are just some of the things used by women on the streets who cannot buy pads or tampons for themselves. When they can't find anything, all they can do is sit still, unable to move, until something that they can use turns up. This situation becomes even more distressing when we factor in the painful cramps that many women experience on their period. Recent research has shown that period pain can be as 'bad as having a heart attack', and women who are homeless may be unable to buy the period-specific painkillers they need.

For women, this is one of the hardest parts of being homeless. And yet it's a facet of homelessness that is seldom talked about. There are currently more than 46 000 Australian women experiencing homelessness, but homeless shelters are often severely understocked when it comes to sanitary products, despite them being among the most highly requested items. While small charity organisations such as Share the Dignity do conduct donation drives specifically for female hygiene products, such charities often have less prominence in society because of our unwillingness to discuss period-related issues. The fact that periods are still considered by many to be a taboo topic prevents us from even finding out about this problem, let alone thinking up a solution. Coupled with the fact that we often also stigmatise homeless people and make assumptions about their situation, it's not surprising that the struggles of women on the streets are frequently erased from mainstream discourse.

It doesn't help that far too many of the politicians and leaders in charge of matters like distributing female hygiene products to homeless shelters have never once experienced a period, let alone while living on the streets. This limited spectrum of authority figures is also probably why our periods are taxed as though they are a choice, as though the bare necessities I mentioned earlier are actually luxuries rather than essentials for maintaining basic hygiene and health. This kind of tax not only makes it even harder for disadvantaged



Emily Kim

women to access pads and tampons, but it fuels a poisonously one-sided and distorted view of what it means to get your period. This lack of understanding is why, when an Indigenous woman in Western Australia stole \$7 worth of tampons, she was quickly charged \$500 with little extra thought given to the pervasive root cause of such a theft. We continue to brush aside issues connected to periods because there is so little proper conversation about it, and thus intensify a vicious cycle of disregarding and forgetting. And things fail to improve as important discussions such as these are often stifled or sidelined by those who have the most power to influence change.

When we stem the conversation on menstruation in this way, we choke our opportunities to help women like Alexa, and women in general. That's why productive and straightforward discourse is so crucial when it comes to period-related issues that are closely connected to many women's intrinsic sense of autonomy and self-esteem. We need to teach our girls and boys alike that acknowledging the existence of periods is fine, that you shouldn't react with disgust when someone says they need to go buy a pad, and that things like cramps can be talked about in the same conversational way we would talk about a migraine or flu. As Rupi Kaur wrote in her response to Instagram's deletion of her photos: 'I bleed each month to help make humankind a possibility. We menstruate and they see it as dirty. As if this process is less natural than breathing. As if this process is not love, labour, life. Selfless, and strikingly beautiful.'

We need to start talking about menstruation as something that is not just completely normal, but also as something that does inevitably affect the way many women live, and therefore something that needs to shape the way we make decisions about our community, to support all women, no matter what circumstances they may have been dealt at birth. Because in the end, I'm always of the belief that a person's access to basic comfort and basic dignities isn't a luxury – it's a right. Period.

Emily Kim, 14 August 2017

DISCUSSION

Emily Kim's speech

- 1 Emily chose a difficult topic that many people may find confronting. How does she address this potential alienation of her audience at the beginning of her speech?
 - 2 How does she use argument (*logos*) to make a strong case in her advocacy? Locate specific examples of her use of argument.
 - 3 How does Emily weave emotive appeals (*pathos*) into her speech? What emotions does she seek to arouse in her audience?
 - 4 **a** Emily makes an unusual appeal to consolidate the 'authority' (*ethos*) of what she is saying. Who does she quote to bolster her perspective?
b Why do you think this is both appropriate and powerful in the context of this speech?
 - 5 After viewing Emily's speech online, what do you consider to be the strengths of her actual presentation? Did she succeed in persuading you? Justify your response.
-

Luke Macaronas

After winning the 2016 national Plain English Speaking Award, Luke went on to win the hotly-contested international 2017 ESU Plain English Speaking Competition in London.

As an openly gay student attending an elite private boys' school, Luke wanted to put stereotypical masculine identity and culture in the spotlight. He also wanted to empower other young people who may not conform to traditional binaries and stereotypes.

The following is a transcript of the speech Luke delivered to win the 2016 national competition. View Luke's delivery of his full speech at the VCAA website, then read the text.



Luke Macaronas' speech on the VCAA website: http://mea.digital/gen12_5_3

Locker-room culture

When we observe little boys and girls, they cry just as much as each other. But then at the age of seven or eight boys stop crying. They're told to stop crying. They're not allowed.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys are being told to live up to a singular image of what it is to be a man. This is an ancient image that demands boys be strong, fearless, and deny their emotions.

I see it every day in the locker room, where boys pick on the weakest kid, throwing around their clothes, flushing them down the toilet, pushing their victims to tears with the all too familiar taunts: suck it up – be a man – have a cry.

And everyone else stays silent as a soldier.

Every day boys work to build this facade. An indestructible armour that satisfies the expectations of the men and the boys around them. But behind the steely exterior, the wall of pride, of strength, the performance of masculinity, that's where we bury our tears.

Because it is unacceptable to fall outside this narrow definition of male identity, we have been told to fear our differences, to hide our weakness and if we let any of it show, we are teased, we are bullied, we are bashed into silence. Psychologists have found that 79 per cent of boys report experiencing bullying over their identity alone.

So as young men grow up, we put on our masks and we suck it up.

When a man is stuck at work, with chronic back pain, anxious about meeting a deadline, instead of spending time with his loved ones, he's told by other men to grin and bear it.

When a teenage boy in my class got emotional about a recent break-up, we told him to suck it up and stop crying.

And when I told my primary school friends that I was a dancer, I was laughed at for being a girl.

This culture of hyper-masculinity has developed in the locker rooms, playgrounds and boardrooms of the world – the spaces, unchecked by authority, dominated by men, where boys copy the violent language and actions passed down by their coaches.

And it is schools constantly pushing boys to fulfil a specifically male image of strength and success that has caused severe misinformation and under-education.



Luke Macaronas

These strict behavioural codes, that equate seeking help to weakness, have caused mass under-reporting of mental illness, with suicide now the leading cause of death for men aged 16 to 30. Because guys are too afraid to speak up when they grow up and learn in places where they are bullied and bashed for appearing vulnerable and weak.

And those that deliver health information, do so through the guise of building 'better men'. The best we can muster for promoting men's health is a month when men are encouraged to grow moustaches. And have you ever heard any information about men's health, had serious discussions or even heard some statistics!

Even if we do get the bare bones of discussion, every facet of school life and male-targeted programs are specifically and narrowly male, forcing those identities that fall outside the realms of the tuff and buff to be left by the wayside.

But these stories and experiences don't end when we finish school. They shape the way men act and grow our tolerance for the expectation of male dominance, which has fuelled an epidemic of rape culture and domestic violence. The culture that told

men to be dominant, fearless and authoritarian has fuelled the idea that males are strong and women are weak, that men must be in control and women must be subservient.

Last month college fraternities led violent campaigns promoting sexual abuse. The slogan 'no means yes' was plastered on banners and chanted by fraternity members, and at Yale, boys posed for photos outside the women's centre crying 'we love Yale sluts'.

What kind of a society creates men like these?

Australia is facing its own epidemic of domestic violence.

A violence born out of the pressure placed on men to be emotionless and authoritarian, leading men to justify deplorable acts of violence. A justification that murders two women every week in Australia.

In their need for control, men, so assured of their dominance, commodify women as objects to be disciplined.

It's time to start listening to people who have experienced these problems, people like Rosie Batty, who've told us that ultimately these violent cultures are born out of the environments in which men are raised. Because we have created a single image of masculinity that doesn't allow boys to feel comfortable in their own skin, so we make them go out and prove it. And we prove it by dragging each other through the mud and tearing each other apart.

It is those environments we need to change. We need spaces in workplaces where men are comfortable speaking about their problems, we need to start conversations in classrooms about why it is okay to cry. And primary school boys, who don't always fit in, must be told that it is okay to be yourself, they need to know that they are not defined by their gender.

So why don't men cry? Because that would rust the armour, the mask of masculinity.

We need to tear the armour off our skin.

Now is the time to cry.

Luke Macaronas, 22 July 2016

DISCUSSION

Luke Macaronas' speech

- 1 a Why do you think Luke uses some slang and colloquial expressions? Who is his intended audience?
b He uses repetition of the colloquialism 'Suck it up'. Why do you think he chose this phrase?
- 2 What perspectives on **normative** male values, attitudes and beliefs is Luke contesting in his speech? What rhetorical strategies does he use to do this?
- 3 Why do you think Luke's speech held such strong appeal to the judges of the national PESA competition?

normative
relating to a social
norm or standard

EXTENDED RESPONSE

Analysing a persuasive speech

Select one of the three persuasive speeches provided in this chapter – speeches written and presented by Malala Yousafzai, Emily Kim and Luke Macaronas.

Look back to the model of persuasive appeals presented on page 100. In your chosen speech, identify some examples of the use of each of these three components. Construct a graphic organiser with the same headings shown in the following example to organise your analysis.

After identifying these examples, write a 300–400 word response to the speech, analysing how the audience is positioned through the use of *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*. Include at least one specific example of each component, as identified in your graphic organiser, and explain how they work to position the audience.

Logos – use of logic, reason	Pathos – emotive appeals	Ethos – trust or authority
----------------------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT TASK TWO

Persuasive spoken response

LENGTH // 5 minutes

TIME // 4 weeks

DETAILS // GENRE: persuasive speech

PURPOSE: to convince or persuade

AUDIENCE: to be specified by student

CONTEXT

In this unit, you have examined how perspectives and representations are conveyed to influence audiences. You will now use this knowledge to prepare and present a persuasive speech for a public audience.

TASK

You will write and present a five-minute persuasive speech to a public audience, inviting them to accept your perspective on an issue.

Select a contentious contemporary social issue in a current media text, such as a newspaper, magazine, news website or televised news and current affairs program.

Your speech adds to the public dialogue or 'conversation' about the issue and must:

- present a contention or thesis in relation to the chosen issue
- develop an argument that reflects a particular perspective
- make use of the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin perspectives.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The assessment is to be completed within four weeks of it being assigned by your teacher.
- You are to present your speech in class, along with any multimodal and/or digital elements required.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

UNIT ONE



There are three stages to writing and presenting your persuasive speech.

PREPARATION

You might consider topics about gender, power, race, religion, age, class, sustainability, animal rights ... it's your choice. However, it's vital that you select an issue about which you have genuine convictions. This should ensure that the content and delivery of your persuasive speech is personal and authentic.

While the actual audience in this task will be your class, you need to specify an audience that is suitable to the context of the speech, and prepare your speech with this audience in mind.

WRITING

Once you have selected and sequenced your ideas, develop them into the draft of your speech.

Refer to the key persuasive and rhetorical resources on pages 101–107. Choose some that you consider to be most effective, and incorporate them in your writing. Make sure that your draft reflects a balanced use of logos/ethos/pathos.

PRESENTING

You should rehearse the delivery of your speech several times at home, in front of a mirror or a family member. Make sure that you can pronounce any tricky terms and that your speech meets the five-minute time limit.

Think of how you will use vocal features such as phrasing and pausing, volume, pace and the use of emphasis. Also consider your use of non-verbal features such as gestures, shifts in facial expression, stance and body language. Make sure that these are natural and not overdone.

What tools will you use during the speech? Some speakers use a full script of their speech, while others prefer cue or palm cards. Whichever format you use, you need to familiarise yourself with the text of your speech, so that you can maintain regular eye contact with your audience.

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a vibrant red, long-sleeved, belted dress over a black skirt and black sandals, stands in the center of the frame. She is positioned in front of a large, stylized number '2' graphic. The '2' is composed of a light pink semi-circle at the top and a white rectangular base at the bottom. The background is a solid, vibrant red. The text 'UNIT' is on the left, 'TWO' is on the right, and 'TEXTS AND CULTURE' is centered within the top curve of the '2'.

UNIT

TEXTS AND
CULTURE

TWO

In Unit 2, you will explore cultural experiences of the world by engaging with a variety of texts, with a particular focus on Australian cultures. Building on your work in Unit 1, you will develop your understanding of how relationships between language, text, purpose, context and audience shape meaning and cultural perspectives.

By engaging with a variety of texts, including Australian texts, you will examine the relationship between language and identity, the effect of textual choices and the ways in which these choices position audiences for particular purposes, revealing attitudes, values and beliefs. As well as responding to existing texts, you will create imaginative and analytical texts of your own.

ASSESSMENT

AT THE END OF THIS UNIT, YOUR TEACHER MAY SET ONE OR BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT TASKS:

TASK ONE

Write a short story (800–1000 words), as a response to a visual text, that presents perspectives on identity and cultural context.

TASK TWO

Write an analytical essay (800–1000 words) that analyses issues of cultural representation and perspectives in two related narrative texts.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS UNIT WILL PREPARE YOU FOR BOTH OF THESE ASSESSMENT TASKS:

SIX

unpacks the key concepts of culture and positioning

SEVEN

focuses on how audiences respond to short fictional texts

EIGHT

considers the tools writers use for constructing those fictional texts

NINE

is a close study of a dramatic text and other related texts

TEN

re-examines the tools of writing for use in crafting analytical texts

KEY CONCEPTS – CULTURE AND POSITIONING

Texts are shaped, read and viewed by people from specific cultural backgrounds who bring with them specific assumptions and background understandings of that culture. These assumptions and understandings inform how texts are interpreted and position audiences to receive a text in a particular way.

In this chapter, you will look at how the culture of the creator of a text as well as the culture of the audience affect how the text is shaped and understood, and the way in which a text positions the audience to respond. As discussed in Chapter 1, these concepts are connected to each other – cultural assumptions underpin texts and can be used to position audiences.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN CONTEXT

- explore the personal, social and cultural contexts of texts
- investigate the relationships between language, text, purpose, audience and context

- 'Australia Day First Fleet essentials' – cartoon
- Cartoons by Judy Horacek – cartoons
- 'The Forgotten People' – speech
- 'Smoke signals' – poem

LANGUAGE AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- explore how texts invite readers/viewers to take up positions
- explore how cultural assumptions, values, attitudes and beliefs underpin texts

- Advertisements – visual texts
- 'Our blessed homeland/Their barbarous wastes' – cartoon
- *The Australian Legend* – analysis
- 'A first place' – essay
- *The Time of Your Life* – memoir

RESPONDING TO AND CREATING TEXTS

- consider how personal responses to texts are shaped by an individual's contexts
- analyse examples of persuasive texts and written responses for public audiences.

- 'The clearing' – short story

The Glass Ceiling



Don't just stand there - polish it or something.



horacek

What is culture?

culture

the attitudes, customs and beliefs, or ways of living, that distinguish one group of people from another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation

cultural practice

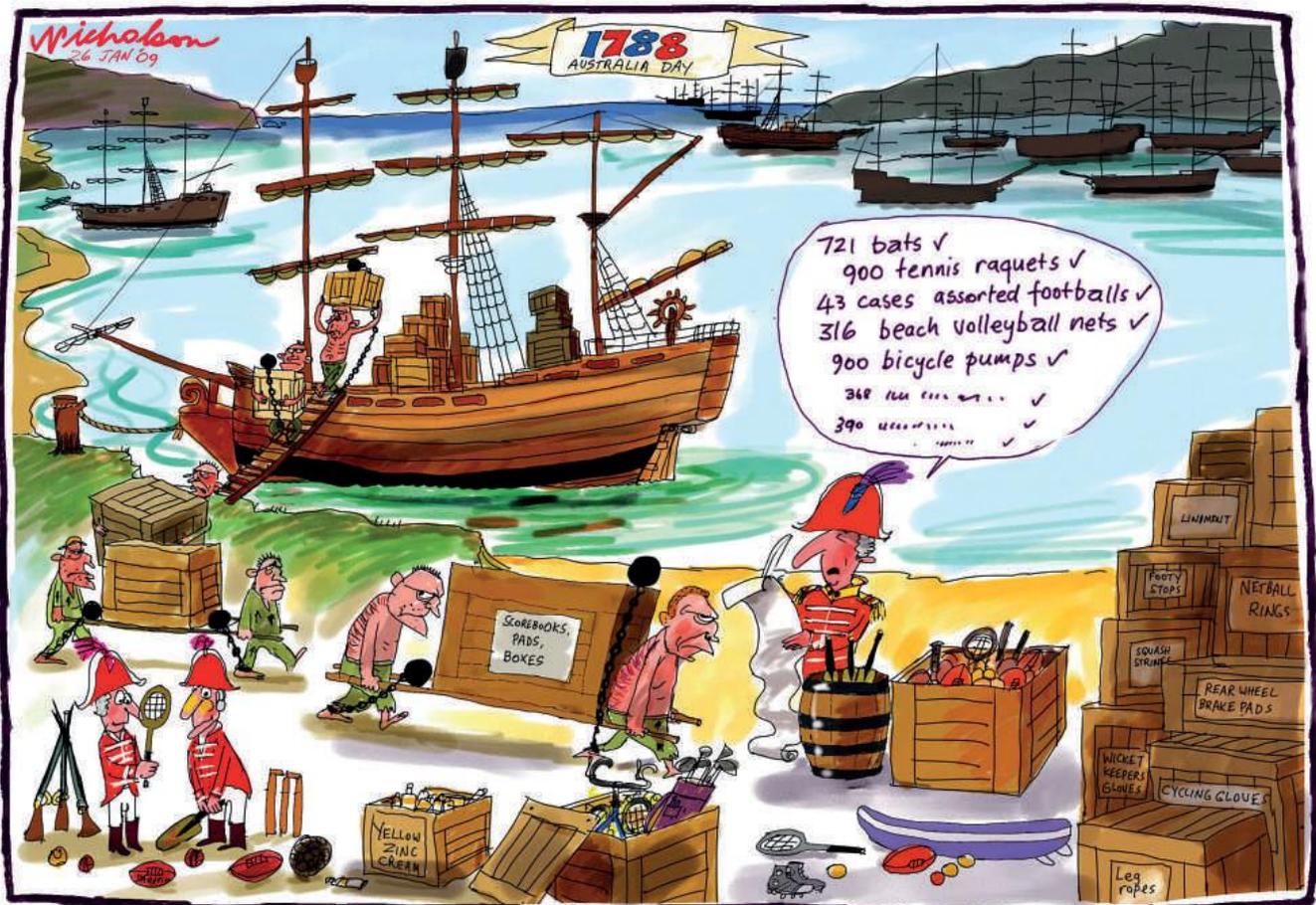
the customary things we do every day, such as shop or go to work, which are shaped by knowledge of rules or conventions

When we use the term **culture**, we are referring to the broad environment in which we live and in which meaning is shaped and interpreted according to or in reaction to the rules, conventions and social practices of that culture. This does not mean, however, that a culture consists of just one group. There are many different groups within a broad culture – such as Australia – and not all will subscribe to what may be considered as the dominant **cultural practices**.

It does mean, however, that generally people within that culture are able to read, interpret and use the signs and meaning systems of the culture. These signs and social practices can be diverse; they are also subject to shift and change over time or in different social contexts.

Consider the cartoon below:

- What is this text about?
- Who are the characters in the text?
- What can we assume about these characters from their clothing and expressions?
- Are there aspects of this text that you don't understand? If so, which aspects and why?



'Australia Day First Fleet essentials'

To interpret this Australia Day cartoon, we need to have cultural knowledge of Australian history, the First Fleet and the likely contents of the crates being brought to shore that are needed to support a colony, as well as the attitudes to sport today. We also need to understand the cultural purpose of cartoons and the purpose of **satire**. It would also help if we knew which sports were invented by 1788 and which were not. If we had all those pieces of knowledge, we would be well placed to understand the joke (if this is a joke) or the criticism (if this is a criticism).

We can assume it unlikely that the convicts and soldiers in 1788 would have been worried about supplies of sports equipment. Our response to the cartoon would depend on our personal attitudes to the cultural dominance of sport in our media as well as our opinions about Australian identity.

Even in this brief one-frame text, we draw on an understanding of the culture in which a text is produced. We read (just as we write and shape) texts through the lens of our cultural experiences, knowledge and perspectives.

satire

a literary technique employed to expose and criticise foolishness or corruption of an individual or a society by using humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule

DISCUSSION Cultural change

Reflect on and discuss the ways in which communication practices have changed in your lifetime.

Consider what these changes say about a culture where most communication occurred face to face; or one where most people communicated via phones connected by cords to a fixture on the wall; or one where many people didn't have access to phones and had to make calls from phone booths in public spaces; or one where today people have mobile phones and social media.

Cultural contexts and assumptions

Cultural context

The time, place and society in which people live obviously affect their behaviour, lifestyle and opportunities. So, when we read a text we need to consider its cultural and historical settings because all texts bear the traces of the culture in which they are produced. Depending on the text, we may also need to identify those cultural aspects that were not dominant, but rather that contested the mainstream. *Cultural context* refers to the environment in which a text is created or responded to.

As well as being shaped by the culture of the period, a text is structured according to the forms and genres that are available and valued at the time of its construction (for example, drama was a valued literary form in Shakespeare's day) and through language choices.

In other words, our understanding of how a text works is shaped by a view that is affected by cultural contexts, identities and perspectives, purposes and genres, as well as by the social situations or social environments (such as the workplace, the playground, a televised speech on Australia Day given at the Opera House in Sydney) influencing these.

Cultural assumptions

As discussed in Unit 1, cultural assumptions are the beliefs, ideas or attitudes we take as being a natural part of the social practices of a culture. They are aspects of identity that we take for granted and share widely, such as beliefs and attitudes about race, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, youth, age, disability, sexuality, work and work ethic. These aspects underpin the shaping of representations and perspectives in text. They can be used to position audiences, like in the cartoon below about the attitude towards universal access to the internet.



Assumptions are not necessarily static as they can change with time but, equally, some may become entrenched in a culture. For example, certain assumptions about teenagers may have become fixed and stereotypical and not take their differences into account.

Consider the cultural context in which we understand this cartoon by Judy Horacek, which provides a clash of prehistory and modernity. The child, who grew up in a time of global connectivity, finds it hard to imagine a world without internet connection, so he assumes that cave dwellers would have problems with access.

While Horacek's purpose here is humour, consider the assumptions behind the response. If the child had responded with surprise about humans living in caves, that would have been shaped by a very different assumption.

Examples of gender assumptions

Gender typically refers to the construction of social and cultural differences between men and women, while *sex* refers to biological differences expressed through the terms 'male' and 'female'. The terms 'feminine', 'femininity', 'masculine' and 'masculinity' are also terms to be used in discussion of gender. It is important to be precise in designating gender or biology.

Gender inequities and/or tensions are frequently represented in texts within cultures. Despite actions to overcome such inequities, casual sexism and a sense of entitlement can affect the career trajectories of women, as illustrated in the Horacek cartoon, 'The glass ceiling'.

Study the cartoon and consider the cultural assumptions shaping it, as well as how the verbal and visual language elements work to position the audience. The model response that follows shows one way in which the cartoon could be analysed.

Model of a possible analysis

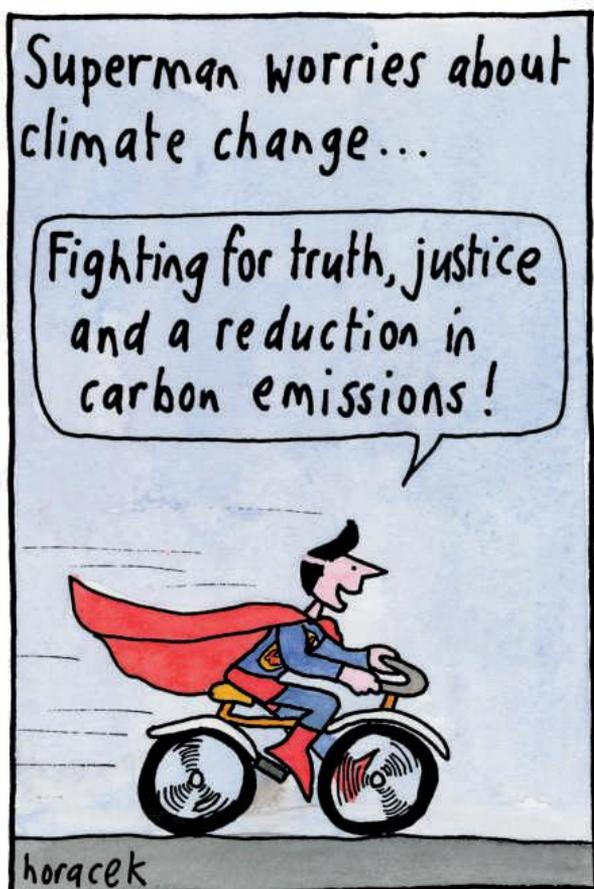
In 'The glass ceiling', Horacek comments on the casual sexism evident in the assumption that women exist to act at the behest of men. Here, the glass ceiling – a well-known metaphor for female employees' lack of success in breaking into the upper echelons of organisations – is constructed as an actual glass partition between the two workers, allowing the male to look down on the female worker and to keep her and her activities under surveillance.

The complacent sense of superiority is evident in the command he issues. Polishing the ceiling not only reduces the woman to someone who is expected to perform domestic chores – even in the workplace; it is also cruel as it could be interpreted as someone being ordered to buff their competitor's trophies.

The placement on the page further supports the disparate statuses – the man looks down on the woman; she looks up at him. Colour is subtly used to differentiate the sexes through the pink and blue clothing, while the baby-blue background implies it is a man's world. The silence, stance and demeanour of the woman, with the curved-down mouth suggestive of a range of emotions (both shock and affront), are positioning tools indicating authorial perspective.

The textual resources selected by Horacek, with the man's casual assumption about the woman's subservience, are used to comment on beliefs about gender and leadership by showing the difficulty of overcoming entrenched sexist attitudes.





Cultural change

The Horacek cartoon about gender shows how difficult it can be to change attitudes, values and beliefs that have become entrenched within the culture, especially when they serve to benefit some sectors or groups. However, attitudes, values and beliefs are not static; they can change over time and so affect the shaping of representations.

We see this effect on the representation of Superman in Horacek's cartoon where the famous superhero, mindful of changing circumstances, changes his method of transport.

ACTIVITY

Analysing cultural assumptions

Produce your own analysis of the Superman cartoon, taking account of the cultural assumptions that shape it. Consider in your response the interplay of caption, word bubble, change of means of transport and what this transport change does for the representation of masculinity.

Representations of culture

Cultural assumptions don't just reflect what our culture *says* we should believe. They also reflect what we believe about our culture as well as about other cultures.

The way in which cultures are represented in texts – whether created and experienced from within that culture or from outside it – demonstrates the creator's assumptions and beliefs about that culture. It also influences the audience's assumptions about the culture, whether they're part of it or not.

We can see this most clearly in our concepts of national identity, or what it is like to be part of a specific nation. These concepts can form the basis of stereotypes, both harmful and harmless, including the stereotypes that we believe about ourselves.

egalitarianism

a belief that all people are equal and deserving of equal rights and opportunities

cultural capital

the accumulation of social assets such as material belongings, education, skills and knowledge that an individual can draw on to give them an advantage in social life

Australian national identity

Australian national identity is typically defined in terms of ideals of **egalitarianism** – that is, the belief that we are all equal and deserving of equal rights and opportunities. From the 1900s, this has been an enduring concept in discussions of 'Australianness' – one that, at least initially, differentiated Australian culture from the inequities of the class-ridden 'parent cultures' of Great Britain. Yet, representations in Australian texts depict clear differences in socio-economic status and class, as well as access to **cultural capital** by Indigenous Australians.

The phrase ‘Australian national identity’ suggests a specific, homogenous concept. The reality is that each of us can subscribe to multiple identities shaped by our gender, class, race/ethnicity, religious affiliations, sexuality, abilities, parentage, age, and the attitudes, beliefs and values we have about these intersecting aspects of our identity. We can be conflicted and decide to prioritise different aspects of who we are at different times.

Over our colonial and (later) our national history, as Australians we have experienced divisions – between colonists and Indigenous inhabitants, between the convicts and free settlers, between Anglo-Celtic Australians and incoming waves of immigrants, and between religions. But although class, religion and race/ethnicity have been flashpoints historically, we increasingly recognise and support the idea of being ‘One but many’.

Still, there are values that we identify and hold as being typically ‘Australian’ – egalitarian people with a spirit of fair play.



DISCUSSION

Egalitarianism and class

- 1 What are your current understandings about and attitudes to this concept of egalitarianism? Do you consider contemporary Australia to be an egalitarian society? Explain your reasons.
- 2 How would you identify and categorise the attributes of current classes in Australian society?

Menzies and ‘The Forgotten People’

On 22 May 1942, at the height of World War II, Robert Menzies (then a backbencher) delivered a speech at a time of national crisis: Singapore had fallen to the Japanese, who were advancing towards Australia. This speech, now called ‘The Forgotten People’, presented his perspective that the middle class was the ‘backbone of Australia’.

The speech, once forgotten itself, is now regarded as one of the most significant Australian public addresses. Consider the ideals expressed below about the importance of the emergent middle class.

The Forgotten People

Quite recently, a bishop wrote a letter to a great daily newspaper. His theme was the importance of doing justice to the workers. His belief, apparently, was that the workers are those who work with their hands. He sought to divide the people of Australia into classes. He was obviously suffering from what has for years seemed to me to be our greatest political disease – the disease of thinking that the community is divided into the relatively rich and the relatively idle, and the laborious poor, and that every social and political controversy can be resolved into the question: What side are you on?

Now, the last thing that I would want to do is to commence or take part in a false war of this kind. In a country like Australia the class war must always be a false war. But if we are to talk of classes, the time has come to say something of the forgotten class – the middle class – those people who are constantly in danger of being ground between the upper and the nether millstones of the false war; the middle class who, properly regarded, represent the backbone of this country.

We do not have classes here as in England, and therefore the terms do not mean the same; so I must define what I mean when I use the expression 'middle class'.

Let me first define it by exclusion. I exclude at one end of the scale the rich and powerful: those who control great funds and enterprises, and are as a rule able to protect themselves – though it must be said that in a political sense they have as a rule shown neither comprehension nor competence. But I exclude them because, in most material difficulties, the rich can look after themselves.

I exclude at the other end of the scale the mass of unskilled people, almost invariably well organised, and with their wages and conditions safeguarded by popular law. What I am excluding them from is my definition of the middle class. We cannot exclude them from problems of social progress, for one of the prime objects of modern social and political policy is to give them a proper measure of security, and provide the conditions which will enable them to acquire skill and knowledge and individuality.

These exclusions being made, I include the intervening range – the kind of people I myself represent in Parliament – salary-earners, shopkeepers, skilled artisans, professional men and women, farmers and so on. These are, in the political and economic sense, the middle class. They are for the most part unorganised and unselfconscious. They are envied by those whose social benefits are largely obtained by taxing them. They are not rich enough to have individual power. They are taken for granted by each political party in turn. They are not sufficiently lacking in individualism to be organised for what in these days we call 'pressure politics'. And yet, as I have said, they are the backbone of the nation.

[...]

Now, what is the value of this middle class, so defined and described?

First, it has a 'stake in the country'. It has responsibility for homes – homes material, homes human, and homes spiritual.

[...]

Menzies concludes his speech:

But what really happens to us will depend on how many people we have who are of the great and sober and dynamic middle-class – the strivers, the planners, the ambitious ones. We shall destroy them at our peril.

Robert Menzies, 22 May 1942



ACTIVITY

Analysing 'The Forgotten People'

- 1 According to Menzies, what differentiates Australian society from that of Great Britain?
 - 2 What kind of people does Menzies suggest makes up the middle class in Australia? What separates them from other classes of people?
 - 3 Although Menzies claims that Australia is a classless society (when compared with Great Britain), he also proposes a middle class based on certain attitudes, beliefs and values. What inherent contradictions about class and classlessness are evident in these excerpts?
 - 4 How do you believe class could be defined in contemporary Australian society? Is Australia still, as Menzies believed, a classless society?
 - 5 Find three advertisements from Australian magazines (hard copy or online) that represent the modern-day Australian versions of the three classes identified by Menzies. Write your own caption and explanation below each of your selections, including what cultural assumptions shape each advertisement.
-

Competing cultural assumptions

Simple texts, such as the cartoons on pages 126–7, allows us to identify cultural assumptions fairly easily. More complex texts may present competing assumptions, even though these texts may also be quite brief.

Competing assumptions within a text require the audience to consider different sets of ideas that may contradict each other. When this is done well, the audience may gain new insight from the ideas and the **cognitive dissonance** the text creates.

The following text is an example of *haibun*, a traditional Japanese form in which a prose poem is followed by a haiku that is connected in some way to the prose. Sam Wagan Watson's representations of Brisbane during the Bjelke-Petersen era are shaped by cultural assumptions about class segregation, which intersect with assumptions about national identity and access to wealth. (Joh Bjelke-Petersen was Premier of Queensland from 1968 to 1987, a period during which the state underwent considerable economic development.)

cognitive dissonance
the mental conflict that occurs when beliefs or assumptions are contradicted by new information

Smoke signals

I remember construction cranes like herds of frozen praying-mantis, high on the steamy Bjelke-Petersen plateau above a brown snake-coiled river. It was from this view, at the age of 4, that I learnt to read the columns of Brisbane city. And from this view, I came to the segregation of *Smoke*. *Black smoke* darkened the blue-collar suburbs, covering the workers in burnt-rubber cologne. Black smoke was saved for industrial accidents, or when a lower-income family had their fibro-lined house smothered in winter flames. But white smoke; white smoke plumed from chez-nouveau, white-collar fire places. White smoke belonged to European engines with a smooth choke. White smoke stayed behind the construction cranes where I imagined a life that would never depreciate. A place where little children weren't scared of the dark. Beyond the white smoke was where I thought I would discover the *Lucky Country* ...

High-rises dictate

A crow punctuates the sky

Clouds await error ...

Sam Wagan Watson

As in 'Smoke signals', representations in texts are usually shaped by competing attitudes, values and beliefs, and from these complex interactions and relationships we are invited to draw certain conclusions about purposes and meanings.



ACTIVITY

Competing representations

- 1 **a** Draw a rectangle (about 15 × 10 cm). From lower left to upper right, draw your version of the 'brown snake-coiled river'. In the northern (upper) section of the rectangle, draw the images conveyed by the first two sentences and then those representative of the 'white smoke' culture. In the southern (lower) section of your rectangle, draw those images associated with 'black smoke'. Label your images as appropriate (for example, 'industrial accidents' or 'herds of praying mantis').
 - b** Once you have completed your drawing, show it to a partner and compare your visual interpretations. Discuss which cultural groups you think would most likely have lived in these sectors during the period of Brisbane's history depicted by Wagan Watson.
 - 2 Explain what assumptions shape Wagan Watson's competing representations of working-class and middle-class identity. Who, for example, benefits from the city development described in the first sentence? Explain also what assumptions shape the last sentence of the prose poem.
 - 3 Explain the significance of the title 'Smoke signals'. How effective is the imagery of the smoke in shaping these perspectives on inequity? Write a paragraph in which you refer to specific uses of imagery and their effect.
-

How do texts position readers?

Positioning is the way in which creators of texts influence the audience to read a text in a particular way. The texts invite readers to adopt a particular point of view of characters, social groups or the propositions and arguments of a text. Texts also promote certain reactions and can position readers emotionally, intellectually or politically, depending on the attitudes, values and beliefs that are endorsed, challenged or even ignored by the text.

Tools that can be used to position the audience include:

- details
- emphasis
- focus
- juxtaposition
- contrast
- aesthetic language
- evaluative language.

The choices made through characterisation, language, action and argument, and the underpinning attitudes, values and beliefs shaping these choices, work together to influence the reader to adopt a particular viewpoint when interpreting a text, including how they feel towards the characters in the text.



DISCUSSION

How are we positioned?

Think about your favourite book, film or TV show.

- 1 How does the writer position you to feel about certain characters in the text?
- 2 What techniques or language features do they use to position you?
- 3 Do you think your reading of the text is consistent with how most people would read it? Why?

Genre and positioning – advertising

Advertising is a persuasive genre, one where positioning of potential consumers is explicit. In fact, positioning is *expected* by the audience – we know advertisements are trying to convince us to buy something.

Graphic designers and copywriters in the advertising industry make both direct and indirect appeals to the attitudes, beliefs and emotions of the targeted market niche. They do this by manipulating, for example, our hopes, fantasies and fears to attract our interest, stimulate our desire and prompt us to take action.

The agencies that devise successful advertising campaigns are expert in using a carefully devised range of textual strategies and emotive and psychological appeals to position their target market. Developing a relationship with the consumer or target market is central to positioning.

Of course, consumers can choose to resist the advertising message and not accept the invited reading, or positioning. Nevertheless, the interaction between the viewer and the advertisement is central to persuading potential consumers to act. Thus, the language features that are used in advertisements to position the audience are primarily those that establish relationships, interactions and needs.

Common advertising strategies used to position the audience

Visual elements

Angle, gaze, distance and colour are the important visual elements of positioning that affect the way the audience relates to or interacts and connects with the image; they convey feeling, mood and power relationships.

Visual element	Angle	Gaze	Framing	Colour
Meaning	High, low or eye level	How the subjects connect with the audience or with other subjects in the image	Shot type	Saturation – heavy colour Differentiation – many colours Modulation – many shades of one colour
Strategy	Positions the audience 'physically', establishing power relationships	Makes contact Connects with the audience through making demands or offers	Establishes distance and degree of intimacy	Affects mood and evokes symbolism
Typical effect on the audience	High angle – audience is dominant Low angle – image subjects are dominant Eye level – equality or immediacy	Direct gaze engages the audience by demanding attention Indirect gaze resists audience engagement and implies distance	Extreme close-ups suggest intimacy Close-ups imply friendliness or connectedness Medium or mid-shots create more distance, but maintain sociability Long shots show little familiarity	Highly saturated colour (no grey) is intense and pure Light and dark – tonal qualities are symbolic (e.g. light = hope; dark = misery) Colour choice affects artwork style (e.g. naturalistic, pop, technological, moody)

When you analyse a photo of a person, you might determine the image is a mid-shot, is at eye level, is well lit, and makes a demand of the viewer. All these elements pull the audience into the action and invite them to engage with the subject(s) in the image.

Colour is an extremely powerful visual element. Certain colours are associated with specific values, emotions or moods in particular cultures. By using a particular colour, designers and artists can convey meaning or emotion subtly.



DISCUSSION

The power of colour

Select one of the icons in the bottom row of the colour emotion guide. Explain to a partner why you think it is an appropriate visualisation of the meaning of, or emotion associated with, the colour.

Written elements

The written elements (copy) construct interactions and relationships through the use of specific resources such as modality, mood, emotional appeals and aesthetic features. Some examples are given in the table below.

Written element	Mood	Modality	Poetic devices	Emotive language
Meaning	Command Declare Interrogate Explain	Modal verbs, adverbs and adjectives	For example, metaphor, symbol, assonance, repetition, onomatopoeia, etc.	Language that targets desires, hopes, fears, insecurities, fantasies, etc.
Strategy	Varies the mood of sentences	Uses modality	Uses aesthetic features	Makes persuasive emotive appeals
Typical effect on the audience	Directs orders to others Makes statements Expresses feelings, such as surprise, excitement	Expresses the degree of certainty or probability	Prompts emotional and critical reaction Establishes mood and atmosphere	Convinces the target market to act or to consume/ purchase

ACTIVITY

Positioning in advertising

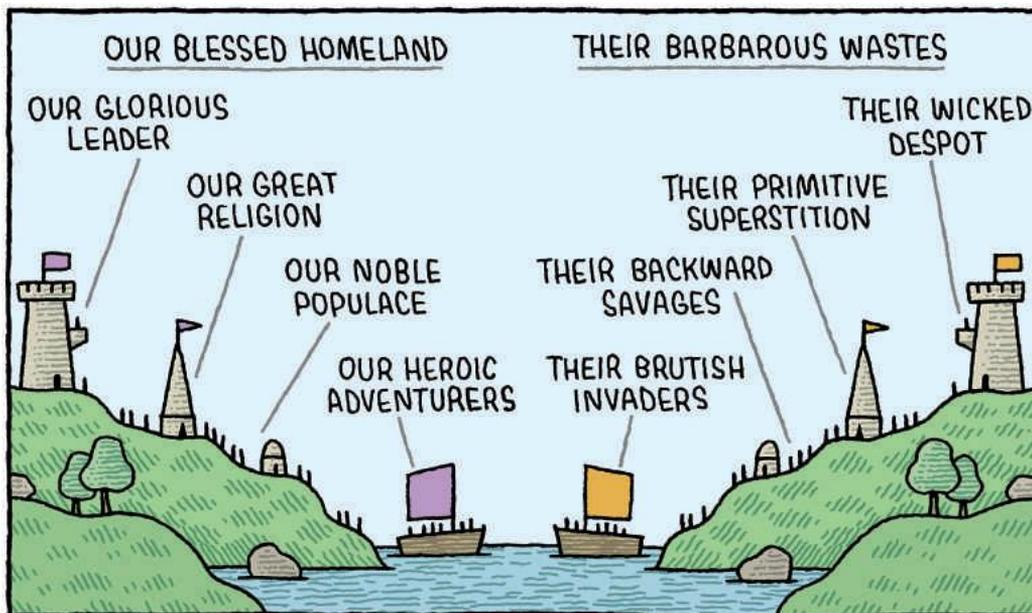


Both of the advertisements above have a very different purpose. Both employ a variety of textual strategies to position the audience to identify and accept the messages of the text and to take the desired action.

- 1 a Examine both advertisements and identify the emotive appeals being made. Analyse and explain in detail how the visuals construct these emotive appeals and thus position the target audience to accept the advertisement's appeals.
 - b To which of these advertisements do you have the strongest emotional response? Why? Think about your own attitude, beliefs and values.
- 2 Examine the angle from which the viewer sees each image in these advertisements. Analyse how angle interacts with the framing and explain the effect of each choice.
- 3 Which of these advertisements do you think is more effective? Give reasons to support your evaluation.
- 4 What written elements would you add to these images to reinforce the messages and position the audience?

Language resources for positioning

While advertisements have the benefit of drawing on visual resources to position their audience, language resources are the primary tool for positioning in any written or verbal text. This cartoon by Tom Gauld shows how language choice can position audiences to value some aspects of culture positively, and the alternatives negatively.



Despite all the positive and negative comparisons, only one thing differs between the two groups in the cartoon – the colour of their castle's flag and the sail on their ship.

This cartoon is a useful example of how one social, cultural or national group will use language positively in relation to representing themselves and their beliefs, values, attitudes and actions, and negatively to represent others in a negative way. One term that is used for these pairs of language choices is **binary opposition**, where one of the paired elements is always invested with value while the other is not. This strategy is a central device of positioning.

binary opposition
a pair of related terms or concepts that are opposite in meaning and set off against one another

DISCUSSION

Binary opposition

- 1 Find the pairs of oppositional terms in the Gauld cartoon and add them to the appropriate box below. Examples are provided to get you started.

Adjectives	Nouns
blessed/barbarous	homeland/wastes

- 2 Construct a short written or visual text in which you make significant use of binary oppositions to position your reader/viewer.

Culture and positioning – ‘Being Australian’

The selection of the information to be included in a text is also an aspect of positioning – the things the creator of a text includes, omits and emphasises have an effect on how the text is read. We should be alert to who and what might be included, and who and what might be excluded and why. Cultural context can often be a significant factor in these selections.

In the following three extracts, historian Russell Ward, novelist and poet David Malouf, and university lecturer and writer Giulia Giuffrè reflect on Australian identity. They show us quite different ways of perceiving what ‘being Australian’ means.

The Australian Legend – Russell Ward

In 1958, Russell Ward in *The Australian Legend* described representations of being Australian in the following way.

[...] the ‘typical Australian’ is a practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others. He is a great improviser, ever willing to ‘have a go’ at anything, but willing too to be content with a task done in a way that is ‘near enough’. Though capable of great exertion in an emergency, he normally feels no impulse to work hard without good cause. He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion. Though he is ‘the world’s best confidence man’, he is usually taciturn rather than talkative, one who endures stoically rather than one who acts busily. He is a ‘hard case’, sceptical about the value of religion and cultural pursuits generally. He believes that Jack is not only as good as his master but, at least in principle, probably a good deal better, and so he is a great ‘knocker’ of eminent

people unless, as in the case of sporting heroes, they are distinguished by physical prowess. He is a fiercely independent person who hates officiousness and authority, especially when those qualities are embodied in military officers and policemen. Yet he is very hospitable and, above all, will stick to his mates even if he thinks they may be in the wrong [...] He tends to be a rolling stone, highly suspect if he should chance to gather much moss.

from *The Australian Legend* by Russell Ward

'A first place' – David Malouf

In 1984, David Malouf, who grew up in West End in Brisbane, reflected on what it is to be Australian, and how identity might be based not just in a national identity, but also in affiliations with particular states, cities and home towns.

We have tended when thinking as 'Australians' to turn away from difference, even to assume that difference does not exist, and fix our attention on what is common to us: to assume that some general quality of Australianness exists, a national identity that derives from our history in the place and from the place itself.

But Australians have had different histories. The states have produced, I would want to claim, very different social forms, different political forms as well, and so far as landscape and climate are concerned, Australia is not one place. It might be time to forget likeness and look closely at the many varieties of differences we now exhibit, to let notions of what is typically Australian lapse for a time while we investigate the different sorts of landscapes the country presents us with, the different styles, social, political, educational of the states, the different styles of our cities, and even of suburbs within cities; and for those of us who are concerned with literature, for example, to ask ourselves how many different sorts of Australian writing there may be and how much the differences between them may be determined by the particular social habits and physical features of place. Is there, to come back to the present occasion, a Brisbane way of experiencing things that we could isolate in the works of writers who, even if they have not spent their writing life in the city, grew up there, and were in their first experience of the world shaped by it? Is there something in the style of mind of these writers, even in their use of language, a restlessness, a delight in variety and colour and baroque effects, in what I called earlier 'drama' and 'shifting views' that we might shape back to the topography of the place and the physical conditions it imposes on the body, to ways of seeing it imposes on the eye, and at a less conscious level, to embodiment of mind and psyche that belong to the first experience, and first mapping, of a house?

from 'A first place' by David Malouf

The Time of Your Life – Giulia Giuffrè

In her memoir, Sydney author Giulia Giuffrè, whose parents were Italian immigrants, has also reflected on this seemingly perplexing topic of Australian identity.

How am I Italian? The question is as difficult to answer as the matching question, 'How am I Australian'? I heard Manfred Jurgensen say he didn't know what being Australian meant, but he knew he was Australian. I feel I am Italo-Australian, but that very term puts the emphasis on 'Australian': a particular type of Australian, and that, I think is the emphasis of my conscious mind. This essay is the work of an Australian sensibility – I find I have to check the Italian spellings even though I 'hear' them. There are however many other less conscious levels of being, parts of oneself that cannot be articulated, deep, but not vague cultural influences, motives. I now think that national identity is not an obscure, rather sentimental feeling of affinity with a particular culture or cultures, not a mystical essence, but rather a composite of a host of little cues imbibed with one's mother's milk: a song, a scent, a language, a joke, an expletive, a gesture, a style of caressing. Myriad details build up layers in the onion-skin of personality. There is no onion apart from its layers, so too there is no cultural identity separate from the too-numerous-to-count influences of a particular national or racial culture. Because identity is so local, I have to say my Italianness was filtered through the migrant experience of living in suburban Sydney in an imperfectly sealed Italian cocoon. I was well outside the perceived mainstream of Australian life then, in the 1950s and 1960s. It was not until I left Australia that I realised how Australian I was and that Australianness could be made up of such apparently little things as loving a particular quality of bright white light, or appreciating a particular sort of ironic humour.

from *The Time of Your Life* by Giulia Giuffrè



ACTIVITY

Positioning Australian identity

After reading the three extracts, reflect on and analyse how readers are positioned by the writers' arguments about Australian identity. Construct a table with the following headings to organise your analysis, noting the following:

- 1 What concepts of identity are included?
- 2 What concepts of identity are excluded or left out?
- 3 What concepts of identity are particularly emphasised?

Texts	Inclusions	Exclusions	Emphases
Ward			
Malouf			
Giuffrè			

Positioning in fiction

While genres will differ in terms of subject matter, form and style, they all share the features of narrative fiction and the basic conventions of storytelling. However, the writer's choice of narrative genre plays an important part in positioning the reader.

Within the category of the novel there are subsets that share characteristic structural and textual features. Examples of subsets are:

- romance (e.g. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*)
- supernatural (e.g. Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*)
- historical (e.g. Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*)
- fantasy (e.g. Christopher Paolini's *Eragon*)
- science-fiction (e.g. Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff's *The Illuminae Files*).

Depending on our reading preferences, our attitudes towards these different genres will influence what we choose to read. For example, because we know the conventions of supernatural novels such as *Twilight*, we have certain expectations of the setting, the characters and the plotting. The supernatural will appeal to readers who enjoy stories of terror or horror. Such readers take up the offered positioning of vicarious fear or fright, as they engage emotionally with the characters and events.

The key tools of fiction are integral to the writer's shaping of the invited readings of the text. Such authorial choices position us as readers to be sympathetic towards certain characters and antipathetic to or judgmental of others, and so ultimately to align ourselves with the invited reading. To do this, writers selectively draw upon a wide range of techniques or textual strategies. Readers conventionally draw on these to produce meanings, to think about issues, ideas and emotions, and to accept the process of engaging with the text as active participants.

Literary strategy	Possible choices
Structure – the plot or sequence of events and the organisation of space and time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrospective or 'in medias res' (starting in the middle of the action) • Use of flashback or flash-forward • Episodic or continuous structure • Single or multiple plotlines
Point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single or multiple narrators; reliable or unreliable • First person, second person, third person limited, third person omniscient
Construction of characters and settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juxtaposition • Contrast • Comparison • Symbolism and other forms of figurative language
Foreshadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signalling possible future events with hints or clues; used to build anticipation and/or tension
Stance – the writer's perspective of or attitude to a subject or character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical • Empathetic • Biased • Objective, etc.

Literary strategies for positioning

We have looked at how the copy in advertisements can position audiences using language features. Thanks to its length, complexity and richness, writers of fiction have a number of additional resources available to position readers. We refer to these resources as literary *strategies* because they are broad and take in many different choices. A skilled writer can make use of multiple strategies, including a number of stylistic devices, to position an audience in multiple ways, even within the same text.

Some important strategies and examples of how they can be used in shaping an invited reading are listed in the table above.

DISCUSSION Changing the ending

Roald Dahl's book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* ends happily, with much better living conditions for Charlie and his family who now call the factory home. In the cartoon on the opposite page, Tom Gauld considers how some additional chapters would lead to a changed ending of the novel.

How is the audience re-positioned to see Charlie in the frames below? What contribution does each additional chapter make in changing the new ending in Chapter 39?

Literary strategy	Possible choices
Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humorous • Earnest • Sympathetic • Scornful • Philosophical, etc.
Style of writing – developed through choice of words, use of syntax and the writer's voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversational or formal • Concise or long-winded • Ornate or sparse • Polished or stream-of-consciousness • Pedestrian or surrealistic
Selection of subject matter – what to include, exclude and emphasise, and how to represent concepts, identities, times and places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis – putting a sharp focus on an aspect of the text through language choice/repetition or placement • Marginalising some characters, groups or events • Privileging some attitudes, beliefs and values
Closure – provide closure to the problems or leave text open-ended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure is decided in someone's favour, so the ending suggests what the text values and supports • Open endings do not tie up the problems neatly or resolve the conflicts in someone's favour • Interactive fiction offers multiple possibilities and gives agency (decision-making power) to the reader



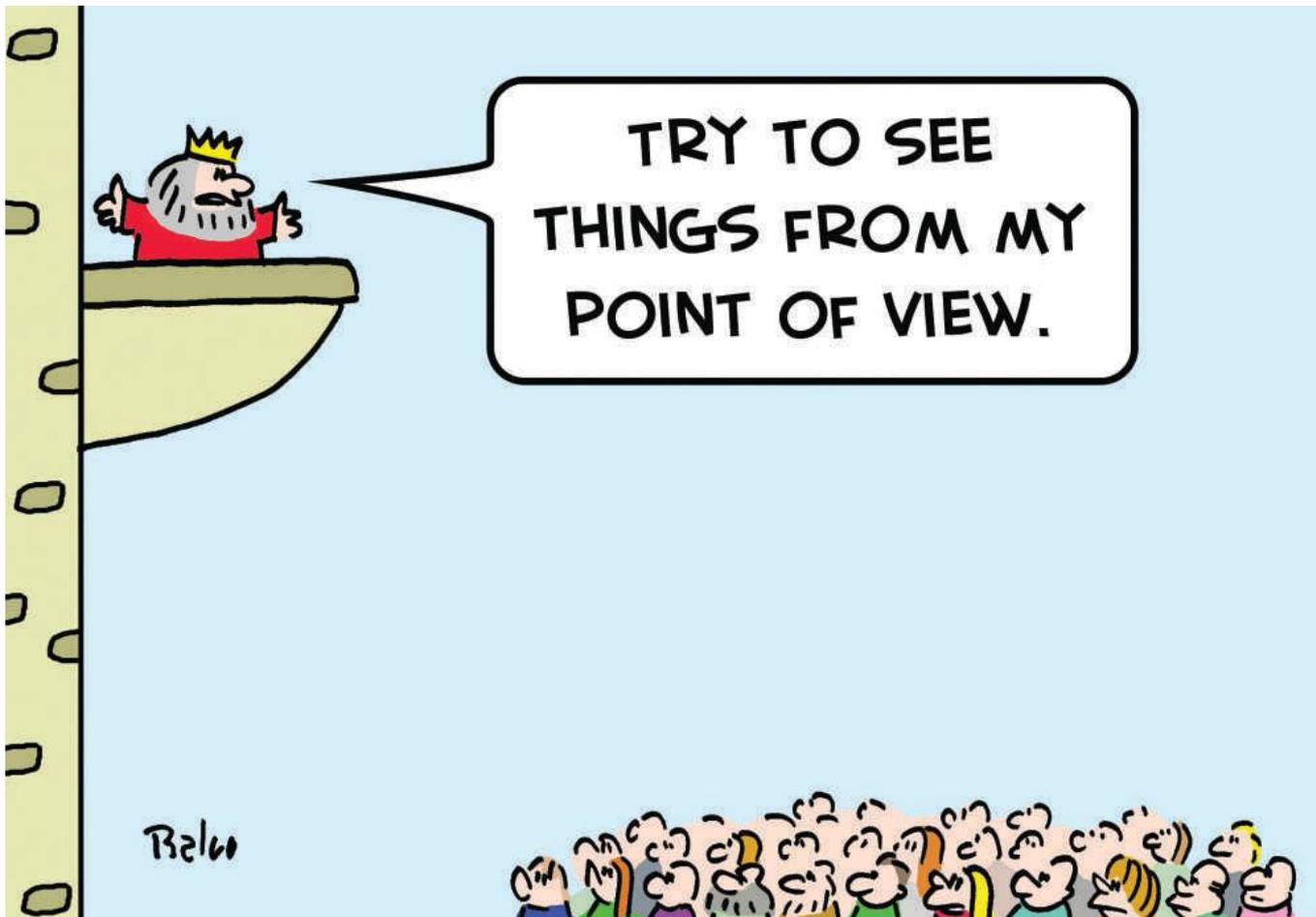
Point of view

The narrator and the perspective offered by that narrating voice are some of the most important positioning elements in literary texts. The narrator has a key role in setting up the reader's interpretation through their comments, evaluations and judgments and, in so doing, positions the audience.

Multiple narrators show that characters and their actions, attitudes, beliefs and values can be interpreted in different ways; such narrative points of view will often leave interpretation open. Narrators can be reliable or unreliable. A narrator who can't be trusted to provide 'objective' information about the story – for example, by showing bias or a limited point of view – positions readers to question and doubt what they read.

There are many points of view that may be adopted. Australian author Kate Grenville gives us good advice when considering point of view in constructing or reading a story:

- Who is telling this story?
- How much do they know?
- Are they telling the truth?



First person

First-person narration is provided by a character within the story. Such narrators can be involved as either a minor or a major character, or as an observer or onlooker. The personal pronouns ‘I’, ‘my’, ‘me’ and ‘mine’ are used by this narrator. Readers predominantly see the world of the narrative from this character’s point of view – a great asset in creating an authoritative voice.

The limitations, of course, are that the narrator cannot be everywhere or know the thoughts or motivations of other characters. To overcome these limitations, writers of this form of narration often resort to the use of other means – such as letters, diaries, sermons and confessions – to elaborate the views of others.

In ‘Conversations with unicorns’, a short allegorical story, Peter Carey uses first-person narration in a surreal story about religious and cultural difference. His narrator is the unnamed protagonist.

The unicorns do not understand.

We have had long conversations, but it is difficult for them. They insist that I have come to collect the body of one of their number, but at the same time they point out that there is no body, that it was collected by another man before I arrived. They continue to insist upon these points, laughing that I have come for something that is not there.

I have asked them why they think that I could only have come for one reason, and they have replied that this is the way it has always been; that the men have come, like vultures, when there has been a death, to take care of the body.

I have suggested to them that men are cruel, but they have denied this, saying that these men perform their God-given tasks efficiently. The men, they say, cannot be held responsible for the deaths of unicorns.

I mention guns. But they have no knowledge of guns, or, it turns out, of weapons of any sort. So I describe for them the deep trench that runs across the top of the ridge. I describe the parking lot behind the trench and the cars that arrive, filled with men and guns. They have no idea of the nature of cars or of their purpose – this is a red herring and I do not answer their questions about the nature of cars. I explain instead that the head of a unicorn is greatly prized by men who pay three thousand pounds for the privilege of shooting one.

from ‘Conversations with unicorns’ by Peter Carey

Some variations on first-person narration that writers make use of are:

- dramatic monologue (a narration in which the speaker is clearly addressing someone else, with the reader in the position of an eavesdropper)
- diary narration (in which the narrator records thoughts for their own purposes and, presumably, their own eyes)
- letter narration (where the narrator addresses another)
- interior monologue (where the narration is presented as a train of thought of a conscious mind – or stream-of-consciousness).

Interior monologue

Interior monologue is often used very effectively in short stories or as an alternative means of accessing another's viewpoint in a novel. It became very popular in the 20th century as a means of accessing a character's subjectivity. Dorothy Parker was a renowned acerbic wit in America in the early-to-mid 20th century.

Read the following excerpt, which is from the short story 'But the one on my right', in which the character, Mrs Parker, reluctantly attends a society dinner party and is placed between a very dull man on her left and one she rather fancies on her right. Conventions of good behaviour would dictate speaking first to the person on one side, then to the one on the other side, alternating throughout the meal to ensure all guests feel included.

I knew it. I knew if I came to this dinner, I'd draw something like this baby on my left. They've been saving him up for me for weeks. Now, we've simply got to have him—his sister was so sweet to us in London; we can stick him next to Mrs. Parker—she talks enough for two. Oh, I should never have come, never. I'm here against my better judgment, to a decision. That would be a good thing for them to cut on my tombstone: Wherever she went, including here, it was against her better judgment. This is a fine time of the evening to be thinking about tombstones. That's the effect he's had on me, already, and the soup hardly cold yet. I should have stayed at home for dinner. I could have had something on a tray. The head of John the Baptist, or something. Oh, I should not have come.

[...]

Well, the soup's over, anyway. I'm that much nearer to my Eternal Home. Now the soup belongs to the ages, and I have said precisely four words to the gentleman on my left. I said, 'Isn't this soup delicious?'; that's four words. And he said, 'Yes, isn't it?'; that's three. He's one up on me.

[...]

At any rate, we're in perfect accord. We agree like lambs. We've been all through the soup together, and never a cross word between us. It seems rather a pity to let the subject drop, now we've found something on which we harmonize so admirably. I believe I'll bring it up again; I'll ask him if that wasn't delicious soup. He says, 'Yes, wasn't it?' Look at that, will you; perfect command of his tenses.

[...]

Here comes the fish. Goody, goody, goody, we got fish. I wonder if he likes fish. Yes, he does; he says he likes fish. Ah, that's nice. I love that in a man. Look, he's talking! He's chattering away like a veritable magpie! He's asking me if I like fish. Now does he really want to know, or is it only a line? I'd better play it cagey. I'll tell him, 'Oh, pretty well'. Oh, I like fish pretty well; there's a fascinating bit of autobiography for him to study over. Maybe he would rather wrestle with it alone. I'd better steal softly away, and leave him to his thoughts.

[...]

I might try my luck with what's on my right. No, not a chance there. The woman on his other side has him cold. All I can see is his shoulder. It's a nice shoulder, too; oh, it's a nice, nice shoulder. All my life, I've been a fool for a nice shoulder. Very well, lady; you saw him first. Keep your Greek god, and I'll go back to my Trojan horse.

from 'But the one on my right' by Dorothy Parker

DISCUSSION

First-person narration

- 1
 - a What is the effect of using a first-person narrator in 'Conversations with unicorns'? How would the story be affected by a third-person (e.g. 'he', 'she', 'they') narration?
 - b How would you describe the voice of the narrator in this story? Give examples as evidence.
- 2
 - a Discuss the language used in the extract from 'But the one on my right'. How does it construct the identity of the narrator through her tone of voice?
 - b Readers are positioned or invited to find the dinner companion of the speaker laughable. Do we, in fact, decide to accept that positioning? Or do we make other choices? Explain your decision, giving reasons and evidence as justification.

Second person

This rarely used and challenging form of narration involving the use of 'you' is difficult to sustain over a text. In her Gothic novel, *The Frangipani Gardens*, Barbara Hanrahan uses this technique, alternating between the second- and third-person point of view.

And Granma said, 'You are the descendant of an Irish race of kings.' You must remember it when you didn't fancy the white of your egg, when it was Betsy Brown pudding for tea: when Mama looked worse and it was your fault; wasting disease they called it and, at the last, foam came out of her mouth, the doctor looked weary as he wiped it away. And Papa was a wild man, crying; he was only a child, younger than you – throwing himself on the bed, grasping her cold hand. But he hated you. It was you who did it – killed her. You were too big as a baby, Boy O'Brien. Coming out, you tore her ...

from *The Frangipani Gardens* by Barbara Hanrahan



DISCUSSION

Second-person narration

- 1 Who is the narrator? What would be the likely effect of this narration on the listener, Boy O'Brien?
 - 2 Why do you think the writer decided this was an effective choice? Consider the effect on the reader.
-

Third person

The all-seeing (omniscient) narrator is outside the action and presents us with the story of the characters as an unidentified observer. This 'god-like' narrator can access the thoughts and feelings of all characters, as well as tell us their stories. The strengths of this choice of narrator are that it suits big, sweeping novels with complex plotlines, lots of action and numerous minor characters. Through the narrator's evaluations the reader is able to develop a sense of the characters.

This mode of narration was very popular in the 19th century. The limitations of this form of narration are that readers can confuse writer and narrator or sometimes not know who is responsible for the evaluation – the narrator or a character. Modern readers tend to be less engaged by this kind of all-knowing, often judgmental, narrator who can draw on all sorts of knowledge to develop and support opinions.

Carpentaria, by contemporary Indigenous writer Alexis Wright, is a sweeping novel of life in north-western Queensland. The novel is an often-surreal epic, and one that uses the omniscient third-person narrator. At one point early in the novel, Angel, who lives like the other Indigenous characters on the fringe of a white town, incites a conflict because she wishes to deflect attention from her treasures (a clock and a Madonna) found on the dump. As a result, everyone but Angel's family moves to the other side of town.

Goodness knows. So much started then. It was hard for two eyes to keep up. Those poor people were pretty upset, and Angel had no intuition about other people, none at all. All those grim faces just glaring at her but she did nothing. After several minutes the air broke like dynamite. The air broke clean: We can't help that. *Mrs Who-Does-She-Think-She-Is*. This came out of the mouth of someone who had picked up straight away that business line of hers of *not belonging here*. She called out to everyone to decide who she thinks she is. There was going to be a war, good and proper. Gravelly morning voices sounding like someone was jumping up and down on their lungs shouted back, *She's bloody nobody, that's what*.

Everyone started slinging off about who would want to belong there anyway? The place was a mess. The place was too full of fighting all the time. Everyone was moving forward, screaming at each other. Then they started taunting, throwing sticks and stones at the ones trying to defend the peace. Nobody listened to the other because everyone was either that mad in the head or did not care whether they were defending the peace or not. Each was well and truly sick of it. Sick of Angel Day.

One big woman, dressed in a big white dress: Well! She looked like the white cliffs of Dover, and it was she who did most of the shouting, spitting out incoherent words, on and on, like she was never going to stop. She was yelling through spit, asking who that woman thought she was: *The bloody fat nobody!*

from *Carpentaria* by Alexis Wright

In a third-person limited narration, the narrator only knows what one character, typically the protagonist, thinks or feels. Although all characters are referred to in the third person as 'he', 'she' or 'they', only this one character's thoughts and feelings are accessible to the narrator, and thus the reader.

This technique is used powerfully in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*, which you read extracts from in Chapter 2. The reader, intent on following protagonist William Thornhill's journey from poverty, crime and transportation to emancipation, thus developing great sympathy for him, ultimately has this sympathy betrayed. In this way, Grenville makes the atrocities that are committed by Thornhill more shocking. The following two extracts focus on Will, the protagonist, and Sal, his wife.

Will

He almost laughed aloud, seeing it [the land of the Hawkesbury] as just the shape of his own thumb, nail and knuckle and all.

A chaos opened up inside him, a confusion of wanting. No one had ever spoken to him of how a man might fall in love with a piece of ground. No one had ever spoken of how there could be this teasing sparkle and dance of light among the trees, this calm clean space that invited feet to enter it.

He let himself imagine it: standing on the crest of that slope, looking down over his own place, Thornhill's Point. It was a piercing hunger in his guts: to own it. To say *mine*, in a way he had never been able to say *mine* of anything at all. He had not known until this minute that it was something he wanted so much.

Sal

Sal made a place she called *the yard*, a patch of earth that she scraped and swept until it was smooth. Within its boundary she made something domestic: the fireplace, ringed with stones where the kettle and the pot sat on the coals, the water barrel filled from the rivulet, a slab of log laid on a couple of stones that did duty as a table. She cooked and washed and swept, and sat on a log to mend children's clothes or grind up the hominy, just like any other housewife.

Beyond the yard she went only for a call of nature, and did not dally. Thornhill would see her come back, her glance sliding over the forest, the rocks, the cliffs, the sky until it came to the table, or the tent, or a child. Those things she could see. What was beyond was invisible to her. He watched her, the way she kept her face turned away from where the trees souged in the wind.

from *The Secret River* by Kate Grenville



DISCUSSION

Third-person narration

- 1 **a** Identify a number of different elements or segments in the *Carpentaria* extract that show that this is an 'all-knowing' narrator. Explain your choices.
 - b** How would you describe the voice of this narrator? Discuss evidence of attitudes as well as specific language choices.
- 2 Consider the two extracts from *The Secret River*. Compare how this form of narration allows the reader to access the interior life of Will but not of Sal. How does this affect the reader's engagement with each character?

Voice

When we speak about voice we are speaking about personality – either of the character or of the narrator. It is a critical element of the story – together with tone, which conveys attitude – and is closely related to style. A character could have a flirtatious personality (expressed through voice), but a dismissive tone might be evident in the narrative comment about that character. Voice also refers to the distinctive and recognisable writer's style (which is a combination of tone and authorial voice).

In a first-person narrative, the voice we 'hear' is that of the narrating character; their voice is constructed by choice of words, sentence structures and patterns, dialect (if any), punctuation, dialogue, and the sparseness or richness of language (imagery). Choices of ungrammatical structures can also be used very effectively to establish voice and construct elements that reveal things like cultural backgrounds or social positions of class, education, gender and age.

The narrating voice – whether first or third person – should not be confused with the author.

Multiple narrators

In the very lengthy novel *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville found it necessary to introduce other voices via devices such as interior monologues and sermons. In *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë's dual narration (the tenant Lockwood and the housekeeper Nelly Dean) is another form of multiple narration, assisted by letters and the insertion of very detailed conversations recollected after twenty years.

When writers choose to construct a text using multiple voices and points of view, these different perspectives often re-position the reading through each incremental section of the story. The audience's attitudes and assumptions shift as the versions of events and the representations of the characters change and develop.

Unreliable narrators

Not all narrators are trustworthy. Literature (and cinema) attests to the enthusiasm for this type of narration. Unreliability can take different forms, such as the narrator whose credibility is questionable for criminal purposes, as in the film *The Usual Suspects*.

Another possibility is a narrator whose immaturity or intellectual flaws make them a naive narrator. A naive narrator, although unreliable, puts the audience in a position of superiority or it positions them to feel sympathy. Often the naive narration is a device of irony created by the innocent voice of the character and their observations. Forrest Gump in the film of the same name is a naive narrator, as he is taken advantage of because of his mental capacity.

DISCUSSION

The naive narrator

Read this brief extract from *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes and identify the key linguistic features that construct the naivety, and thus unreliability, of the narrator. Explain the effects of this particular choice of narrator.

progris riport 1 – march 5 1965

Mr Strauss says I shud rite down what I think and every thing that happins to me from now on. I don't know why but he says its importint so they will see if they will use me. I hope they use me. Miss Kinnian says maybe they can make me smart. I want to be smart. My name is Charlie Gordon. I am 37 years old and 2 weeks ago was my birthday. I have nothing more to write now so I will close for today.

progris riport 2 – march 6

I had a test today. I think I faled it, and I think that maybe now they won't use me. What happind is a nice young man was in the room and he had some white cards with ink

spilled all over them. He sed Charlie what do you see on this card. I was very skared even tho I had my rabbits foot in my pockit because when I was a kid I always faled tests in school and I spilled ink to.

I told him I saw a inkblot. He said yes and it made me feel good. I thot that was all but when I got up he stopped me, He said now sit down Charlie we are not thru yet. Then I don't remember so good but he wanted me to say what was in the ink. I dint see nothing in the ink but he said there was pictures there other pepul saw some pictures. I couldn't see any pictures.

from *Flowers for Algernon*
by Daniel Keyes

 **EXTENDED RESPONSE**
Analysing voice and point of view

Martyn Hereward's short story 'The clearing', set in New Guinea during World War II, makes judicious use of multiple voices and different points of view. These elements contribute to the ambiguity of what is, in fact, a simple sequence of events. Read the entire story, then answer the questions that follow.

The clearing

I stepped into the clearing and the cicadas suddenly stopped singing. I wondered how they knew to do that. The silence seemed to swell inside my head. The next thing I knew I was spinning like a top, going round and round in slow motion. Then I was lying flat on my face, my mouth full of moss and bark. I wanted to laugh then but I could not move.

* * *

When Curly copped one from the Jap I could see he was hurt bad. He just lay there. I thought to myself, the poor bastard can't get up. I'm gonna have to go in there and get him. I could see where the shot had come from, clump of trees on the edge of the forest, thick and green it was. Bastards, I thought. Just sitting up there waiting. I didn't hang around, just dropped to the ground and started slithering, snake-like through the undergrowth.

When I got to the edge of the clearing I popped my head up to have a bit of a look. As far as I could see Curly hadn't moved, he was lying with his face in the dirt. There was about twenty metres between me and him so I took it careful, going slow-like and keeping my head down. There was a bit of bushy scrub and some long grass but that was about all, so off I set remembering everything from training and thinking bloody oath I never thought I'd be doing this in the middle of the bloody jungle in bloody New Guinea. I don't think there was more shots fired then, but I wouldn't swear to it for I was holding my breath and praying that the Japs hadn't seen me, course I knew they had. Suddenly I was through the grass and there was Curly, he was spluttering a bit and there was blood in his mouth but he was breathing all right. I tried to get his pack off him, but it wouldn't come free because of the way he was lying so I cut the straps and shoved it away. Then I rolled him over, slow and careful. Poor bastard had got one high up in the chest, there was blood everywhere but there was nothing I could do, so I thought bloody hell I'm going to have to drag him back to cover. I didn't know if I could. He looked at me and I think he knew who I was but he couldn't talk so I said, take it easy mate we'll have you out of here and he sort of smiled. I tried to push him but he wouldn't shift, so I knew then I was going to have to stand up if I wanted to get him moving. Well, I thought, it might as well be now as later, the poor bastard's losing blood so I said a quick prayer to God knows who, took a hold of his uniform, jumped up and dug in my heels.

* * *

There's always one, isn't there? One bright swivel-eyed bastard who insists on playing the hero and covering himself in glory. Everyone knows the orders. They're standing orders. Captain Maitland and I had made that patently clear. 'No bloody heroics,' I told them. 'We know the Japs are up there somewhere. We move slowly. We play it by the book.'

Not an easy job, damn it, especially as some of these bright boys from the country think they're straight out of the comic books. Give them a uniform and a gun and they think they're straight out of the comic books.

I've had trouble with O'Brien before. He was the one who gave me some lip the first day we arrived in this God-forsaken country. 'Ease up, Sergeant,' he said. 'This is New bloody Guinea not New South Wales.'

I thought, right you bastard, you'll keep. I've met his sort before. Bloody barrack room clowns who join up and think they know it all. If I had my way I'd break both his bloody legs. That'd send him home in a hurry. I looked across at Captain Maitland, but he didn't seem to be listening. He's a good bloke, the captain, don't get me wrong, but he's no soldier. He doesn't concentrate for one thing. I mean who else would walk into that clearing like he did? Back at camp they say he's got too much imagination. If you ask me, I don't think he's got enough.

'Get back!' I shouted at O'Brien, but he didn't take a blind bit of notice.

I got my gun out and thought to myself, the bastard has got to stick his head up soon if he's going to do any good, and then the Japs are going to blow him out of the clearing. I shouted to the rest of the men to give him cover and to take aim at the clump of trees on the far side of the clearing. We knew they were in there somewhere.

For a long while nothing happened.

Then the grass parted and Private O'Brien stood up. He was leaning backwards and trying to drag something through the bush.

'Covering fire!' I shouted, and all hell broke loose. I let off a couple of rounds myself, and I could see the smoke over by the forest. It didn't last long, I guess the Japs realised we were on to them and moved away fast. When I looked back at the clearing there was nothing to be seen.

* * *

I was quite close to the clearing when the captain was hit. It was beautiful. He raised one arm high in the air and twisted like a fast bowler appealing to the umpire or a puppet spinning slowly round as the strings went slack. There was a hollow crack as the air went out of him, then he buckled at the knees and down he went. There was no other sound. A red rose began to appear on his right shoulder like some rare medal as he fell.

It was very quiet. The jungle steamed, and the hot stench of decay weighed heavily on tree, fern and man. It was two o'clock in the afternoon.

I wiped the sweat out of my eyes.

I knew that Pat O'Brien would go in after him. Pat was like that: a doer, a scout, a tough kid from Ireland with all the hard edges still on him. His eyes were deep blue and reminded you of the oceans on a clear day and his

hair was a bird's nest after it had been raided by small boys. When you saw Pat, you smiled.

Pat made his way towards the captain, wriggling in the undergrowth. I watched the grasses sway, then stop. The forest held its breath. There was no breeze. The birds folded their wings and waited.

When the firing began I saw it all. Pat stood up with his back to us. He was bent over as if he was hauling a sack of coal across the back yard. A blaze of red greeted us from under the tall gums across the clearing. Pat was still standing. I heard Sergeant Fallon barking out orders behind me and then more gunfire. Still Pat stood, the grasses waving at his feet like the swell of the tide on Bondi beach. He seemed to be caught up in the heat, a blur, a smudge of shadow, and then he buckled up. He was thrown backwards. His legs lurched forwards, but his body snapped backwards.

I saw it all.

I had not picked up my rifle through the whole incident. Pat's legs were broken, but they were broken from the back.

* * *

I tried to tell Private O'Brien about my arm but I couldn't make any sound. I was ashamed of myself. It was odd but I couldn't feel any pain. After a while I couldn't see Private O'Brien any more. I lay there and stared up at the cloudless blue sky and wondered if we were winning the war.

Then all around me, as one, the cicadas resumed their chorus.

Martyn Hereward

Questions

- 1 Who shot Private O'Brien? Write a paragraph with evidence cited and supported by quotes from the story.
- 2 Do Captain Maitland and Private O'Brien survive? What is your evidence for this?
- 3 The story is told by four shifting narrative voices that position the reader to respond very differently to the same event. Explain how each narrator contributes new information about the events and indicates possible motives for the actions that take place. You might like to construct a retrieval grid or table to do this.
- 4 Describe the particular attributes of the language used by each speaker that allow differentiation of the character. How would you describe each character's voice?
- 5 What dominant attitudes and beliefs about war are challenged in this story?
- 6 How is the reader positioned to view Pat O'Brien's actions?
- 7 How is the reader positioned to trust or rely on the recount of the fourth narrator?
- 8 Evaluate the effectiveness of this method of narration in constructing the relationships between members of a platoon (or company) in action. In doing this, consider first whether the four narrations are interior or told to some unidentified person. If the latter is the case, to whom?



PORT MORESBY

Golden Grove

HANUDAMAVA
(GEMO IS.)

R.A.A.F. STATION
WHARVES
BATHS

PAGA HILL
Paga Point

ELA BEACH
WALTER BAY

Bogirohodobi

Murray Barracks
HOSPITAL
Badilli
GABATU
MOTU MOTU

TONG SO PIPE LINE
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

RETAINING WALL

RETAINING WALL

RESPONDING TO SHORT FICTION

In this chapter, you will read, view, analyse and discuss a variety of short texts, particularly Australian texts, and consider the cultural contexts that inform both their creation and your reaction to them.

As there are a large number of texts in this chapter, you may find it useful to take notes as you read or view them, so that you're better prepared for the activities and discussions that follow.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN CONTEXT

- explore a range of texts, including Australian texts
- explore the personal, social and cultural contexts of texts
- explore the intertextual relationships among texts

LANGUAGE AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- explore how cultural assumptions, values, attitudes and beliefs underpin texts
- question the assumptions and values in texts

RESPONDING TO AND CREATING TEXTS

- consider how personal responses to texts are shaped by an individual's contexts
- discuss how texts may be read in different ways.

- 'Cold snap' – short story
- 'The drover's wife' (1892) – short story
- *Down on His Luck* – paintings
- *The Drover's Wife* – painting
- 'The drover's wife' (1975) – short story
- 'On seeing the 100% perfect girl one beautiful April morning' – short story
- 'On seeing the 100% perfect girl one beautiful April morning' – short film
- 'The Inksect' – short film



Culture and narrative

In his novel *Fahrenheit 451*, science fiction author Ray Bradbury said: ‘You don’t have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them’. One of the ways we can interpret this statement is that cultures create and read stories about themselves, their world and their way of life. If a culture closes itself off from these stories, it forgets what it is – and maybe vanishes.

Narrative is a key means by which we develop a sense of personal and national identity. In this country, we have developed a central narrative of who we are as Australians. It mainly centres around our relationship to and connection with the ‘bush’, even though most of us don’t actually live there, and it is primarily a narrative of white men’s **stoicism**, endurance and resourcefulness.

At the same time, narrative also allows us to understand our cultural differences and diversity. More and more different voices have given representations of their cultural experience as Australians, broadening our concepts of what Australians are.

Narrative helps us understand the similarities and differences between people, both today and in the past, here and elsewhere.

narrative

a spoken or written account or story of connected events

stoicism

endurance of hardship without complaint

Background cultural knowledge

What do you know about life in Australia?

If you’ve lived here your whole life, you may know a great deal – perhaps more than you realise. If you’re a recent Australian, you’re still learning about Australian culture and life, and are probably aware of the areas where you need to learn more.

How about a simpler question: Do you know that kangaroos can be dangerous?

Many (perhaps most) Australians know that kangaroos are strong, fast animals with powerful hind legs and claws, and that they can be dangerous. They may not have learnt that fact in school or read it in a book, but they’ve picked up the knowledge at some point. We call this ‘background cultural knowledge’ – the kind of understanding of a culture that one gains by being part of that culture and being immersed in its narratives. Slang, social conventions and knowing how to dress to suit the climate could all be examples of background cultural knowledge.

A kangaroo tale

In 2017, a story about bushwalker Jackson Vincent encountering a kangaroo in Western Australia went viral, largely due to Vincent’s photograph of the ‘roo. The animal had taken to the water to escape from a perceived threat, but turned towards Vincent and his dog, puffing itself up to appear threatening.

One news report of the incident wrote that Vincent decided to take photos of the kangaroo when ‘he started coming out of the water and we realised how big he was’. Another described a two-metre high ‘bodybuilder’ of 100 kilograms ‘bathing its bulging biceps’ in the creek.

Vincent walked towards the nervous kangaroo to take photos, ignoring his background cultural knowledge of the potential danger the animal posed. It probably wasn’t a good idea, but in doing so, he created a text (the photo) that has the potential to add to modern Australians’ cultural knowledge of kangaroos.



How culture and knowledge affect texts

In reading and interpreting texts, we need to draw on our cultural knowledge. If this is background knowledge, applying it to a text should be easy, maybe even unconscious. If reading texts from another time or place, we may need to do additional research to understand aspects of that culture that are unfamiliar to us. In either case, we should carefully consider what cultural assumptions underpin a text and why.

Returning to our earlier example, one of the hazards of long-distance driving in Australia is the possibility of encountering a kangaroo. They can suddenly appear and move erratically by the roadside, or onto the road itself. It's all too common for drivers to hit a kangaroo, injuring or killing the animal, and often badly damaging their vehicle and injuring passengers.

Writing about a road trip in her autobiography, *Daddy, We Hardly Knew You*, Germaine Greer provides some advice based on her own encounter:

... if you swerve to avoid the leading end you usually hit some part of the tail, which whips the creature around and slams it into the car ... Generally it's better to hit the leading end and kill the animal outright than condemn it to a slow death, fly-blown and gangrenous and savaged by pigs. The worst thing to do is to risk your own life by braking and swerving and kill yourself and the kangaroo as well.

Despite having this cultural knowledge, Greer makes a mistake, swings the wheel and goes off the road.

On the other hand, author Eva Sallis' short story 'The kangaroo' describes a road trip undertaken by an urban, immigrant family, unfamiliar with the hazards of the Australian bush. In this story, the kangaroo swerves into the roo bar of the touring party's vehicle – but the stunned passengers are more shocked when:

the kangaroo suddenly stood up, shaking the car heavily as it rose. It stood a good two metres above the bonnet and leered through a bloody eye at them, bleeding mouth open, showing enormous yellow rat teeth ... The kangaroo raised its fists and began beating wildly at the bonnet. They could feel it kicking and tearing at the radiator.

Like Greer, the driver, Amin, makes a mistake; he leaves the vehicle to assist the stunned and injured kangaroo:

The kangaroo turned to face him, rose up high above his head and grabbed him from behind the neck with a huge black fist, sinking black claws into his nape.

Amin, unaware of the hazards of a close encounter with an enraged male kangaroo, is now in danger of being gutted. However, Amin's wife, Zeen, gets out of the car, takes off her stiletto shoes and beats the kangaroo to death with the sharp heel.

Most Australian readers would scoff at such a scenario. But Eva Sallis is an Australian writer, born in Bendigo, Victoria; her choice is purposeful and founded on as strong an understanding of cultural conditions as Germaine Greer's. So, in the context of this story, we have to consider how and why our cultural knowledge might be challenged.

 DISCUSSION

The 'swole kangaroo'

- 1 What, in your view, should Jackson Vincent have done when he encountered the 'swole kangaroo'? Why?
 - 2 What would you consider to be the purpose of Greer's autobiography? What about Sallis' story? How and why do the different purposes lend themselves to different uses of the reader's cultural knowledge?
 - 3 While the Sallis story is essentially a realistic road trip, it takes on an allegorical quality in the exchanges between Amin, Zeen and the kangaroo. If we read this as an allegory, what aspects of Australian culture might the kangaroo represent in the story?
-

Creating identity in narrative

Although characters are textual constructions, we are invited to treat them as belonging to cultural groups and having identities – like us. We piece together the various fragments of the text that shape this character, such as their:

- actions and behaviour
- attitudes, beliefs and values
- morality and ethics
- personality and mannerisms
- fears and passions
- gender, class, ethnicity, religion, education, age etc.

The character is constructed to perform a function in a text. The audience selects pieces of 'evidence' from the text and believes that in a certain cultural context this character would behave in a particular way. This process of constructing textual identities is called characterisation and is achieved either directly or indirectly.

When writing stories, you've probably been told 'show, don't tell'. 'Telling' is describing something overtly or directly, such as stating the personality of a character ('a patient child'), while 'showing' provides information that allows the reader to **infer** the personality. Such indirect characterisation is done through the character's speech, thoughts, actions, appearance and what other characters say about this character.

infer
deduce from evidence
and reasoning, rather
than from explicit
statements

'Cold snap' – Cate Kennedy

Cate Kennedy's story 'Cold snap' constructs the identities of its two central characters by drawing on attitudes, beliefs and values about class differences, people from city and country, property, money and the environment as well as age.

In interpreting this story, remember two of Kate Grenville's comments from page 144: Is the character telling the truth? And how much does each character know? Read the story carefully with these questions in mind.

Cold snap

When I go and check my traps, I see the porch lights at that lady's place are still on, even though it's the morning now. *That's an atrocious waste of power*, my dad says when I tell him. His breath huffs in the air like he's smoking a cigar. The rabbit carcasses steam when we rip the skin off and it comes away like a glove.

Skin the rabbit – that's what my mum used to say when she pulled off my shirt and singlet for a bath. Mr Bailey gives me \$3 for every rabbit to feed his dog. I take them down in the wooden box with a picture of an apple on it. In the butcher's, rabbits are \$2.50 but Mr Bailey says he likes mine better. I've got \$58 saved. I want to get a bike.

Dad reckons it's good to save up your money. The tourists who stand around the real-estate agent's windows looking serious, pointing, touching each other on the arm, he reckons they're loonies. When the lady up the road bought that house, my dad went over after the sold sign got stuck on and everybody had gone, and he took one of the palings off the side of the house and looked under at the stumps and made a noise like he was holding back a sneeze. *That lady's a bloody wacker*, my dad said. *Those stumps are bloody atrocious*.

He stood there looking at the house and rolled a cigarette. *Throwing good money after bad*, he said, and kicked the paling. I kicked it, too.

After she moved in I didn't set no more snares up there on the hill. I walked on the tracks round the lake, the tracks the rabbits make. I made myself small as a rabbit and moved through them on my soft scabbly claws. I saw everything then. Saw the places they sat and rested, the spots where they reached up with their soft noses and ate tiny strips of bark at the bottoms of the river willows. You've got to set a trap so that it kills the rabbit straight off. On the leg is no good. All night the rabbit will cry and twist, then you have to kill them in the morning when their eyes are looking at you, wondering why you did it. Mr Bailey, he tells me he can't believe I can catch them so near the town. I say you have to watch things and work out where to put the trap, that's all. He nods so small you can only just see his chin moving up and down. *You've got it there, Billy*, he says.

After he gives me the money we look at the dogs and have a cup of tea. His dogs know me and why I come. Their eyes get different when they see me.

In the morning, everything is frozen. All up the hill are the trees, and every time I look at them I think of the time in school when I was right and Mr Fry was wrong. He showed us a picture and said trees lose their leaves in autumn and the other kids started writing it down but I felt the words come up, and I said they didn't, they lost their bark.

Mr Fry said how typical that the one time I'd opened my mouth in class I'd come up with a wrong answer. I looked at the trees standing bare in the mist and thought about how I'd kept shaking my head when he told me to say I was wrong, and the other kids smiling, staring down at their hands, waiting for after school like the dogs wait for the rabbits.

When you smell the leaves, they're like cough lollies, and the bark goes all colours when it's wet. One day I was looking up at them and my eyes went funny and I flew up high and looked down at the tops of the trees all bunched together and they looked like the bumpy green material on the armchairs at my Aunty Lorna's place. I never told no one about that, not even my dad. The trees talk loud when it's windy and soft when it's quiet. I don't know what they talk about, probably about rain. When they get new gum tips, they're so full of sap they shiver in the air. Maybe they're excited. Or frightened.

But now that it's winter, the trees just look dark and sunken in, as if they're just hanging on by shutting off their minds, like my grandpop when he had the stroke and Dad said his body was just closing down slowly like something in the winter. And on the track, there's ice crystals on the clay, and when you look real close you can see the crystals are long, growing into lines, and the more mushy the clay the tighter the crystals pack in. They do it in the night, in the cold snap. You can put your foot at the edge of a puddle and just press real gently, and all these little cracks come into it, rushing outwards like tiny cracks.

Sometimes there's frost on the rabbits' fur. I brush it off with my hand. Rabbit fur smells nice, like lichen or dry moss. My mum left behind some leather gloves with rabbit fur inside, and when I put them on once I pulled my hot hands out and smelled her smell. *What are you bawling for?* My dad said. I hid the gloves just under my mattress. When I touch them they feel like a green leaf, just soft and dry and bendy and not knowing autumn's coming.

I looked up at the lady's porch lights the morning I got my new hat for my chilblains. Dad made it for me out of rabbit skins. He rubbed my ears hard with his jumper and my mouth ached with holding it shut then he pulled the rabbit fur flaps down and tied them.

See you back here with the bunnies, he said, squeezing his hands under his arms before he stoked up the chip heater. One day a boy at my school who works at the feed supply told the other kids we were so backward we didn't even have hot and cold running water at our place. He said, *It's like Deliverance down there with you-know-who*. I asked Dad what deliverance was and he rolled a cigarette and said why. The next time he wanted chook pellets he asked for them to be delivered that day and then he stoked up the chip heater so high that a spray of boiling water gushed out and hit the roof like rain and it sounded like the fancy coffee machine at the milk bar. When this boy came around with the pellets, Dad told him to empty them into the bin and then said would he like to wash the dust off his hands in the kitchen. The boy went in. I stood looking at the chooks and made myself small like them and felt the straw under my claws as I scratched around, and felt how the wheat powdered as I cracked it in my beak, and then there was a scream and the boy came running outside holding his hands out in front of him. And they were bright pink like plastic. As the boy ran past, my dad called, *Don't forget to tell your friends*.

I pushed the rabbits into a hessian bag and heard music coming out of the house with the lights on. It was violin stuff. I saw the lady who'd bought the house come out onto her porch as I cut across the ridge. She was wearing King Gees and you could see the new fold marks in them. She had hair the colour of a fox. When she saw me her face went all bright and excited even though she didn't know me, like the lady doctor who did all those stupid tests on me at school just saying stupid words and expecting me to make up more words and say them straight away and not giving me time to think it over.

She said, *Well, hello there, has the cat got your tongue?* She had lipstick on. I thought maybe she was one her way to church.

I said I didn't have a cat and her eyebrows went up.

You're up very early this wintry morning. What's that you've got in your bag? she said, like we were going to play a joke on someone. I showed her the top rabbit's head and her mouth went funny and she said, *Oh dear, Oh the poor little things. What did you want to kill them for?*

I said for Mr Bailey. I said they died very quickly and always got the traps right around their necks. She hugged herself with her arms and shook her head and said *Goodness me*, looking at my rabbit-skin hat. I turned my head slowly round so she could see better.

She asked me suddenly if I lived in the house down the hill and I said yes. Then she said what a marvellous location and what a shame the power would cost an arm and a leg to put through, otherwise she would have made an offer, and that this little place she'd picked up was such fun and a goldmine. She said all her friends from the city thought she was quite mad but she'd be the one laughing when property values went up and she'd done all the extensions. I was waiting for her to finish so I could go. I could feel the rabbits stiffening up inside their bag; I could smell them.

What your name? she asked me finally and I said Billy.

And do you go to school, Billy?

I looked at her and said you have to. Her eyes went all crinkly and happy again.

And is it a special school, just for special children?

I couldn't work her out. Maybe she didn't understand about school. I said not really then my mouth blurted out: *You got hair like a fox.*

She laughed like someone in a movie. *Good heavens*, she said. *You are a character, aren't you?*

A man in a red dressing-gown came out onto the verandah and the lady said, *Look darling, some local colour.*

Love the hat, said the man to me. I waited for them to tell me their names, but the man just complained that it was bloody freezing, and thank Christ they'd got the central heating in. The lady said yes, the whole place was shaping up well, then she looked out down the track and said, *The only problem here is there's no bloody view of the lake.* Then she said, *Billy, show Roger your bunnies, darling*, and I pulled one out and Roger said, *Good God.*

They both laughed and laughed and Roger said, *Well it looks like the light's on and there's no one home.* Which was wrong. They were both there and they'd turned the light off by now.

When I walked down the track past the sharp turn and through the cutting my boots cracked on the black ice. You can easy go for a sixer on that. People say it's invisible but it's not really. You have to get down real close to see where the water's froze then melted a bit then froze again, all through the night, till it's like a piece of glass from an old bottle. The rabbits were harder to skin because more time had passed. The skins ripped off with the sound of a bandaid like they put on your knees in the school sickroom. *Get them off,* my dad said when I came home one time with the bandaids on. He was watching me so I pulled both of them off fast and they bled again. *Call that first aid? That's bloody atrocious,* said my dad. *Get some air onto them.* I looked at my knees. They felt like the hinges inside had got stiff and rusty, like the oil in them had leaked out. Every day for the next few weeks, people drove up the hill to fix things in the house. You could hear banging and machines and then a pointy bit of new roof pushed up over the trees. The lady's friends, the ones who thought she was quite mad, came up a lot at first but then it got colder and they stopped. The lake froze over at the edges and the ducks had frost on their feathers. One day I crept up and saw the lady standing with her arms folded on the new verandah, which was covered in pink paint, just staring out at the trees. All around her garden were piles of rocks and I saw a duck standing still as anything under a tree. I went closer and she saw me.

Well, Billy, she called, and I went over and saw the duck was a pretend one.

Look at all these bloody trees, she said, sighing, *I'm sick of the sight of them.*

She had on the overalls again but they didn't look so new now. The digger had left big piles of dirt everywhere.

What are those trees anyway, Billy? she said suddenly, and I said they were gum trees and she laughed and said she might have guessed that would be my answer, even though I hadn't finished and was only sorting out what I was going to say next.

I said it was going to be another cold snap that night and more hard weather. And she said how did I know and I started explaining but she wasn't really listening, she was still looking down the gully towards the lake, turning her head like the ladies in the shop when they're buying dresses and looking at themselves in the mirror, deciding.

Three weeks after that time I was up in the trees, just listening to them and looking for good spots for snares, when I found the first sick one. When I touched its leaves I knew it was dying, like when I reached my grand-pop's hand. It was a big old tree and used to have a big voice but now it was just breathing out. And it was bleeding. All around the trunk there was a

circle somebody had cut and sap dripped out which is the tree's blood, my dad says. It was a rough chopping job and the person had used a little saw then a hatchet and I could see how they didn't know how to use the saw properly and had scratched all up and down around the cut. There was nothing I could do for that tree. I wanted to kill it properly so it wouldn't just stand there looking at me trying its hardest to stay alive.

The week after that I found another tree that was the same and then it just kept on happening, seven of the biggest trees got cut. When I looked real hard I flew up again and saw them from the top and the dying ones made a kind of line down to the lake all the way from the lady's house on the hill to the shore. Then I came back down onto the ground, and I saw how it was.

You've done it again, Billy, said Mr Bailey when I came past. I don't know what I'd do without you, two big fat ones today.

I got my money and walked up the hill towards the lady's house and I saw her through the trees planting something in the garden. Dad said she kept the whole nursery in business.

Now I got quite close to her and she pretend duck before she saw me and she jumped backwards.

Jesus, kid, just give it a break, will you? she said in an angry voice. I stood there holding the empty box from the rabbits.

Just don't creep around so much, Billy, okay? she said, getting up, I saw she had a special little cushion for kneeling on and I was looking at that cushion when she said something else.

Where did you get that box, Billy?

I said out of the shed. She laughed and looked up at the sky, I looked down at the box with the picture of the apple on it.

Out of your shed? That's a finger-joint colonial box, Billy. Do you know how much some of them are worth?

Her voice was all excited, like that lady at the school who pretended boring things were interesting on that test.

What about selling it to me, she said.

I said it was my rabbit box and she said did I have any others in the shed. I said I would have a look. She was a loony. My dad sometimes split up old boxes for the chip heater. He kept nails and bolts in them.

I know where there'll be a lot, I said. *At the Franklin's garage sale.*

Her eyes looked a little bit like Mr Bailey's dogs' eyes inside the netting.

When is it? she asked.

On Sunday. They got lots of stuff.

Like what? she said, and then said a whole list of things like *fire pokers? ironwork? cupboards?* and I just kept nodding.

Lots of that kind of things, I said. *Lots of these little boxes with writing and maps of Australia and animals like emus.*

She folded her arms and looked at me harder. *Boxes with emus and kangaroos on them? With joints like this one?*

Yep, I said, *but you got to get there real early in the morning. Like 6.30 or something. 'Cos other people come up from the city.*

She asked me where Franklin's was, and I told her.

I can get there earlier than the dealers, she said, looking down the hill at the row of trees, all secretly dying.

On Saturday I set a snare just inside in little tunnel of grass by the lake. Dad says it's bad to kill something without a good reason but I knew the rabbit wouldn't mind. The trees were very quiet now. It was going to be a black frost. When the moon came up there was a yellow ring around it like a Tilley lamp where you can take it out on a frosty night.

I couldn't hardly get to sleep with thinking. I thought of her going out there with her new saw from the hardware shop and cutting open their skin. In the night, while the rabbits nosed around with their soft whiskey mouths and Mr Bailey's dogs cried and choked on their chains over and over.

When I got up it was still dark, as dark as the steel on the monkey bars, cold metal that hurts your chest. I felt a still cold rabbit's body in the trap and I felt sorry for it. I knew she would, too. Because in the lady's head you can feel sorry and worried for rabbits but not for trees.

It looked like it was sitting up there by itself on the track, alive. All the crystals had grown in the night and now the black ice was smooth as glass all around that turn.

I went back into bed when I was finished. I felt my mum's gloves.

My dad knew I'd got up early when he came to wake me up again. I don't know how.

You'd better go out and check your traps, he said as he split the kindling.

Up the road Farrelly's tractor was pulling her big car out of the ditch. It had crumpled into one of the big gums, and leaves and sticks had been shaken all over it. Mr Farrelly said the ambulance blokes had nearly skidded over themselves on the bloody ice, trying to get in to help. *What's a sheila like her doing getting up in the bloody dark on a Sunday morning anyway,* Mr Farrelly said as he put the hooks on. *Bloody loonies.*

Under the front wheel I saw white fur, turned inside out like a glove, like my hat. I went down through the trees, touching the sick ones. On the way I stepped in a big patch of nettles. No use crying if you weren't looking out for yourself, my dad says.

I made a little fire and smoked my traps. Five more weeks and I can get a mountain bike.


 ACTIVITY

Analysing 'Cold snap'

- 1 One reviewer declared that this story is about a 'young boy [who] quietly mutinies against a city woman who has moved into his town, trying to claim patronising ownership of him as well as her land. The ending genuinely disturbs, but is entirely plausible.' To what extent do you agree or disagree with the reviewer's assessment of the story, and why? Explain in detail.
- 2 Which character's perspective is **privileged** in this story? What is your evidence?
- 3 Compare and contrast how cultural assumptions and particular values shape the construction of the rabbit catcher and the home owner. Specify details of the author's language use to explain how and why the disturbing ending is achieved.
- 4 The boy Billy is the naive narrator of this story. Explain how the 'voice' Kennedy chooses for Billy constructs the naivety of his perspective, his unusual abilities, his sympathies and antipathies as well as his actions. Is the choice of Billy as narrator effective? Why? Justify with specific evidence and explain the effect of that evidence.
- 5 How effective is Kennedy's use of foreshadowing in this story? Answer by identifying specific examples of foreshadowing and their later effects.
- 6 In America, this story was published as 'Black ice'. Explain which title you consider to be more appropriate to the overall intent of the story. Justify your answer.

privileged
promoted or endorsed
by the text

Historical contexts and narrative

Culture is as much about when as where. The culture of modern Australia is different from that of Australia in the 1890s, 1940s or 1970s, and the culture of 2050 Australia will be different again. Our cultural understanding reflects the time in which we live, although it may be informed by our cultural history.

Writers are also products of their time. Their writing is shaped by the ideas that circulate in their culture at that time – by the political debates and arguments, the fashionable texts, and social practices at a particular historical moment. Yet, two writers working within the same historical context will still produce completely different narratives about that time and place.

'The drover's wife' – Henry Lawson

In the 1890s, a time of a severe depression, Australia was moving towards federation and nationhood – becoming an independent country rather than remaining a British colony. Henry Lawson was one of the writers of the period who supported nationhood. He wrote about the bush but didn't balk at showing its challenges and hardships.

While Henry Lawson is seen as a pillar of the movement towards nationalism and Australian identity with his high regard for the Australian bushman, it is ironic that it is his story of a stoic bushwoman, 'The drover's wife', that has withstood the test of time. (Note: you'll study this story again in Chapter 9, looking at it from many different angles.)

The drover's wife

The two-roomed house is built of round timber, slabs and stringy-bark, and floored with split slabs. A big bark kitchen standing at one end is larger than the house itself, veranda included.

Bush all round – bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple-trees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye save the darker green of a few she-oaks which are sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilization – a shanty on the main road.

The drover, an ex-squatter, is away with sheep. His wife and children are left here alone.

Four ragged, dried-up-looking children are playing about the house. Suddenly one of them yells: 'Snake! Mother, here's a snake!'

The gaunt, sun-browned bushwoman dashes from the kitchen, snatches her baby from the ground, holds it on her left hip, and reaches for a stick.

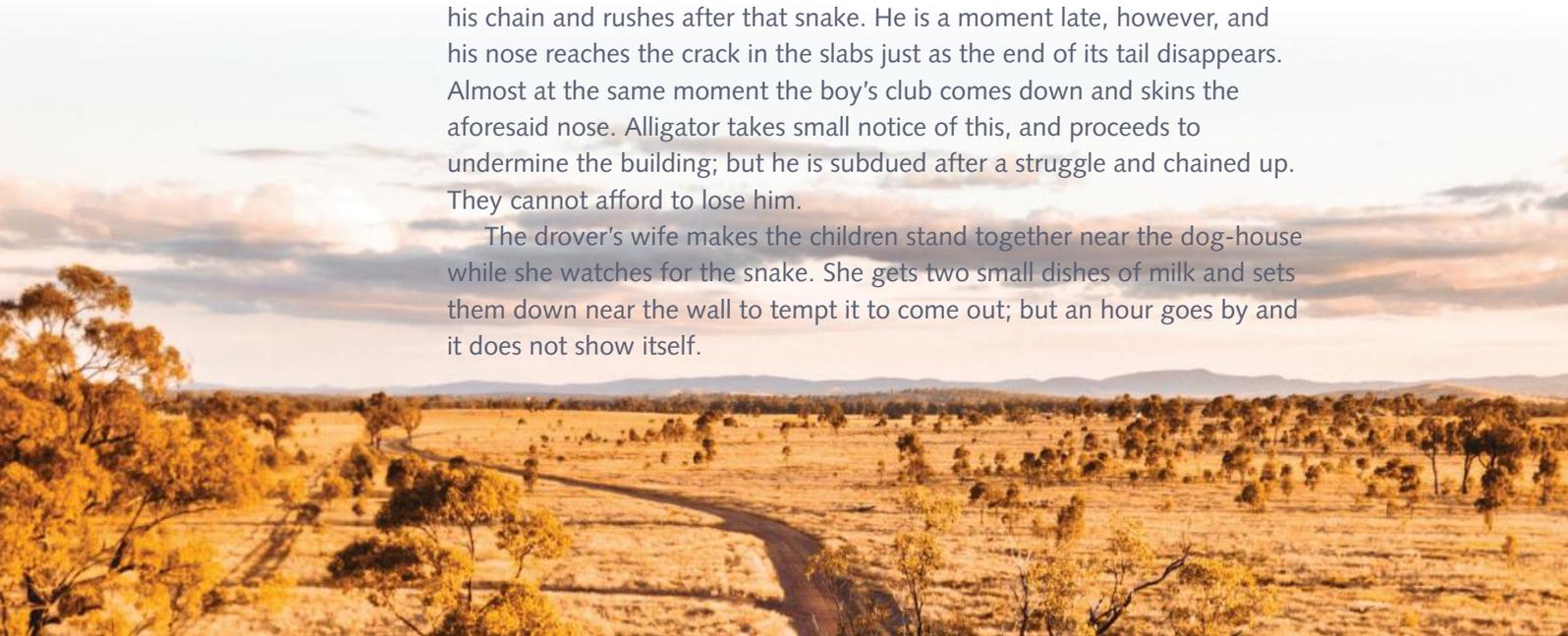
'Where is it?'

'Here! Gone into the wood-heap!' yells the eldest boy – a sharp-faced urchin of eleven. 'Stop there, mother! I'll have him. Stand back! I'll have the beggar!'

'Tommy, come here, or you'll be bit. Come here at once when I tell you, you little wretch!'

The youngster comes reluctantly, carrying a stick bigger than himself. Then he yells, triumphantly: 'There it goes – under the house!' and darts away with club uplifted. At the same time the big, black, yellow-eyed dog-of-all-breeds, who has shown the wildest interest in the proceedings, breaks his chain and rushes after that snake. He is a moment late, however, and his nose reaches the crack in the slabs just as the end of its tail disappears. Almost at the same moment the boy's club comes down and skins the aforesaid nose. Alligator takes small notice of this, and proceeds to undermine the building; but he is subdued after a struggle and chained up. They cannot afford to lose him.

The drover's wife makes the children stand together near the dog-house while she watches for the snake. She gets two small dishes of milk and sets them down near the wall to tempt it to come out; but an hour goes by and it does not show itself.



It is near sunset, and a thunderstorm is coming. The children must be brought inside. She will not take them into the house, for she knows the snake is there, and may at any moment come up through a crack in the rough slab floor; so she carries several armfuls of firewood into the kitchen, and then takes the children there. The kitchen has no floor – or, rather, an earthen one – called a ‘ground floor’ in this part of the bush. There is a large, roughly-made table in the centre of the place. She brings the children in and makes them get on this table. They are two boys and two girls – mere babies. She gives them some supper, and then, before it gets dark, she goes into the house, and snatches up some pillows and bedclothes – expecting to see or lay her hand on the snake any minute. She makes a bed on the kitchen table for the children and sits down beside it to watch all night.

She has an eye on the corner, and a green sapling club laid in readiness on the dresser by her side; also her sewing basket and a copy of the Young Ladies’ Journal. She has brought the dog into the room.

Tommy turns in, under protest, but says he’ll lie awake all night and smash that blinded snake.

His mother asks him how many times she has told him not to swear.

He has his club with him under the bedclothes, and Jacky protests: ‘Mummy! Tommy’s skinnin’ me alive wif his club. Make him take it out.’

Tommy: ‘Shet up, you little – ! D’yer want to be bit with the snake?’

Jacky shuts up.

‘If yer bit,’ says Tommy, after a pause, ‘you’ll swell up, an’ smell, an’ turn red an’ green an’ blue all over till yer bust. Won’t he, mother?’

‘Now then, don’t frighten the child. Go to sleep,’ she says.

The two younger children go to sleep, and now and then Jacky complains of being ‘skeezed.’ More room is made for him. Presently Tommy says: ‘Mother! Listen to them little possums. I’d like to screw their blanky necks.’

And Jacky protests drowsily.

‘But they don’t hurt us, the little blanks!’

Mother: ‘There, I told you you’d teach Jacky to swear.’ But the remark makes her smile. Jacky goes to sleep. Presently Tommy asks:

‘Mother! Do you think they’ll ever extricate the kangaroo?’

‘Lord! How am I to know, child? Go to sleep.’

‘Will you wake me if the snake comes out?’

‘Yes. Go to sleep.’

Near midnight. The children are all asleep and she sits there still, sewing and reading by turns. From time to time she glances round the floor and wall-plate, and, whenever she hears a noise, she reaches for the stick. The thunderstorm comes on, and the wind, rushing through the cracks in the slab wall, threatens to blow out her candle. She places it on a sheltered part of the dresser and fixes up a newspaper to protect it. At every flash of lightning, the cracks between the slabs gleam like polished silver. The thunder rolls, and the rain comes down in torrents.

Alligator lies at full length on the floor, with his eyes turned towards the partition. She knows by this that the snake is there. There are large cracks in that wall opening under the floor of the dwelling-house.

She is not a coward, but recent events have shaken her nerves. A little son of her brother-in-law was lately bitten by a snake, and died. Besides, she has not heard from her husband for six months and is anxious about him.

He was a drover, and started squatting here when they were married. The drought ruined him. He had to sacrifice the remnant of his flock and go droving again. He intends to move his family into the nearest town when he comes back, and, in the meantime, his brother, who keeps a shanty on the main road, comes over about once a month with provisions. The wife has still a couple of cows, one horse and a few sheep. The brother-in-law kills one of the latter occasionally, gives her what she needs of it, and takes the rest in return for other provisions. She is used to being left alone. She once lived like this for eighteen months. As a girl she built the usual castles in the air; but all her girlish hopes and aspirations have long been dead. She finds all the excitement and recreation she needs in the Young Ladies' Journal, and Heaven help her! takes a pleasure in the fashion-plates.

Her husband is an Australian, and so is she. He is careless, but a good enough husband. If he had the means he would take her to the city and keep her there like a princess. They are used to being apart, or at least she is. 'No use fretting,' she says. He may forget sometimes that he is married; but if he has a good cheque when he comes back he will give most of it to her. When he had money he took her to the city several times – hired a railway sleeping compartment, and put up at the best hotels. He also bought her a buggy, but they had to sacrifice that along with the rest.

The last two children were born in the bush – one while her husband was bringing a drunken doctor, by force, to attend to her. She was alone on this occasion, and very weak. She had been ill with a fever. She prayed to God to send her assistance. God sent Black Mary – the 'whitest' gin in all the land. Or, at least, God sent King Jimmy first, and he sent Black Mary. He put his black face round the door post, took in the situation at a glance, and said cheerfully: 'All right, missus – I bring my old woman, she down alonga creek.'

One of the children died while she was here alone. She rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child.

It must be near one or two o'clock. The fire is burning low. Alligator lies with his head resting on his paws, and watches the wall. He is not a very beautiful dog, and the light shows numerous old wounds where the hair will not grow. He is afraid of nothing on the face of the earth or under it. He will tackle a bullock as readily as he will tackle a flea. He hates all other dogs – except kangaroo-dogs – and has a marked dislike to friends or relations of the family. They seldom call, however. He sometimes makes friends with strangers. He hates snakes and has killed many, but he will be bitten some day and die; most snake-dogs end that way.

Now and then the bushwoman lays down her work and watches, and listens, and thinks. She thinks of things in her own life, for there is little else to think about.

The rain will make the grass grow, and this reminds her how she fought a bush-fire once while her husband was away. The grass was long and very dry, and the fire threatened to burn her out. She put on an old pair of her husband's trousers and beat out the flames with a green bough, till great drops of sooty perspiration stood out on her forehead and ran in streaks down her blackened arms. The sight of his mother in trousers greatly amused Tommy, who worked like a little hero by her side, but the terrified baby howled lustily for his 'mummy.' The fire would have mastered her but for four excited bushmen who arrived in the nick of time. It was a mixed-up affair all round; when she went to take up the baby he screamed and struggled convulsively, thinking it was a 'blackman;' and Alligator, trusting more to the child's sense than his own instinct, charged furiously, and (being old and slightly deaf) did not in his excitement at first recognize his mistress's voice, but continued to hang on to the moleskins until choked off by Tommy with a saddle-strap. The dog's sorrow for his blunder, and his anxiety to let it be known that it was all a mistake, was as evident as his ragged tail and a twelve-inch grin could make it. It was a glorious time for the boys; a day to look back to, and talk about, and laugh over for many years.

She thinks how she fought a flood during her husband's absence. She stood for hours in the drenching downpour and dug an overflow gutter to save the dam across the creek. But she could not save it. There are things that a bushwoman cannot do. Next morning the dam was broken, and her heart was nearly broken too, for she thought how her husband would feel when he came home and saw the result of years of labour swept away. She cried then.

She also fought the pleuro-pneumonia – dosed and bled the few remaining cattle, and wept again when her two best cows died.

Again, she fought a mad bullock that besieged the house for a day. She made bullets and fired at him through cracks in the slabs with an old shot-gun. He was dead in the morning. She skinned him and got seventeen-and-sixpence for the hide.

She also fights the crows and eagles that have designs on her chickens. Her plan of campaign is very original. The children cry 'Crows, mother!' and she rushes out and aims a broomstick at the birds as though it were a gun, and says 'Bung!' The crows leave in a hurry; they are cunning, but a woman's cunning is greater.

Occasionally a bushman in the horrors, or a villainous-looking sundowner, comes and nearly scares the life out of her. She generally tells the suspicious-looking stranger that her husband and two sons are at work below the dam, or over at the yard, for he always cunningly inquires for the boss.

Only last week a gallows-faced swagman – having satisfied himself that there were no men on the place – threw his swag down on the veranda and demanded tucker. She gave him something to eat; then he expressed his

intention of staying for the night. It was sundown then. She got a batten from the sofa, loosened the dog, and confronted the stranger, holding the batten in one hand and the dog's collar with the other. 'Now you go!' she said. He looked at her and at the dog, and said, 'All right, mum,' in a cringing tone, and left. She was a determined-looking woman, and Alligator's yellow eyes glared unpleasantly – besides, the dog's chawing-up apparatus greatly resembled that of the reptile he was named after.

She has few pleasures to think of as she sits here alone by the fire, on guard against a snake. All days are much the same to her; but on Sunday afternoon she dresses herself, tidies the children, smartens up baby, and goes for a lonely walk along the bush-track, pushing an old perambulator in front of her. She does this every Sunday. She takes as much care to make herself and the children look smart as she would if she were going to do the block in the city. There is nothing to see, however, and not a soul to meet. You might walk for twenty miles along this track without being able to fix a point in your mind, unless you are a bushman. This is because of the everlasting, maddening sameness of the stunted trees – that monotony which makes a man long to break away and travel as far as trains can go, and sail as far as ship can sail – and farther.

But this bushwoman is used to the loneliness of it. As a girl-wife she hated it, but now she would feel strange away from it.

She is glad when her husband returns, but she does not gush or make a fuss about it. She gets him something good to eat, and tidies up the children.

She seems contented with her lot. She loves her children, but has no time to show it. She seems harsh to them. Her surroundings are not favourable to the development of the 'womanly' or sentimental side of nature.

It must be near morning now; but the clock is in the dwelling house. Her candle is nearly done; she forgot that she was out of candles. Some more wood must be got to keep the fire up, and so she shuts the dog inside and hurries round to the woodheap. The rain has cleared off. She seizes a stick, pulls it out, and – crash! the whole pile collapses.

Yesterday she bargained with a stray blackfellow to bring her some wood, and while he was at work she went in search of a missing cow. She was absent an hour or so, and the native black made good use of his time. On her return she was so astonished to see a good heap of wood by the chimney that she gave him an extra fig of tobacco, and praised him for not being lazy. He thanked her, and left with head erect and chest well out. He was the last of his tribe and a King; but he had built that wood-heap hollow.

She is hurt now, and tears spring to her eyes as she sits down again by the table. She takes up a handkerchief to wipe the tears away, but pokes her eyes with her bare fingers instead. The handkerchief is full of holes, and she finds that she has put her thumb through one, and her forefinger through another.

This makes her laugh, to the surprise of the dog. She has a keen, very keen, sense of the ridiculous; and some time or other she will amuse bushmen with the story.

She had been amused before like that. One day she sat down 'to have a good cry,' as she said – and the old cat rubbed against her dress and 'cried too'. Then she had to laugh.

It must be near daylight now. The room is very close and hot because of the fire. Alligator still watches the wall from time to time. Suddenly he becomes greatly interested; he draws himself a few inches nearer the partition, and a thrill runs through his body. The hair on the back of his neck begins to bristle, and the battle-light is in his yellow eyes. She knows what this means and lays her hand on the stick. The lower end of one of the partition slabs has a large crack on both sides. An evil pair of small, bright bead-like eyes glistens at one of these holes. The snake – a black one – comes slowly out, about a foot, and moves its head up and down. The dog lies still, and the woman sits as one fascinated. The snake comes out a foot farther. She lifts her stick, and the reptile, as though suddenly aware of danger, sticks his head in through the crack on the other side of the slab, and hurries to get his tail round after him. Alligator springs, and his jaws come together with a snap. He misses, for his nose is large, and the snake's body close down in the angle formed by the slabs and the floor. He snaps again as the tail comes round. He has the snake now, and tugs it out eighteen inches. Thud, thud comes the woman's club on the ground. Alligator pulls again. Thud, thud. Alligator gives another pull and he has the snake out – a black brute, five feet long. The head rises to dart about, but the dog has the enemy close to the neck. He is a big, heavy dog, but quick as a terrier. He shakes the snake as though he felt the original curse in common with mankind. The eldest boy wakes up, seizes his stick and tries to get out of bed, but his mother forces him back with a grip of iron. Thud, thud – the snake's back is broken in several places. Thud, thud – its head is crushed, and Alligator's nose skinned again.

She lifts the mangled reptile on the point of her stick, carries it to the fire, and throws it in; then piles on the wood and watches the snake burn. The boy and dog watch too. She lays her hand on the dog's head, and all the fierce, angry light dies out of his yellow eyes. The younger children are quieted, and presently go to sleep. The dirty-legged boy stands for a moment in his shirt, watching the fire. Presently he looks up at her, sees the tears in her eyes, and, throwing his arms round her neck, exclaims:

'Mother, I won't never go drovin'; blarst me if I do!' And she hugs him to her worn-out breast and kisses him; and they sit thus together while the sickly daylight breaks over the bush.

Henry Lawson

 ACTIVITY

Analysing 'The drover's wife'

- 1 How is masculinity constructed in this story? How would you describe the representation of the son?
 - 2 What different versions of femininity are constructed by Lawson? How does he position readers to view the bushwoman's identity? Explain, referring in detail to specific words and phrases and the attitudes, beliefs and values shaping representations.
 - 3 Lawson's story has an important place in the 'bush tradition', valued since the 1890s for the purposes of invigorating our sense of a national identity. His story is unusual in:
 - a situating a woman so sympathetically at the centre of the story
 - b constructing such an atmospheric description of the landscape.Explain his strategies in achieving the effects of both **a** and **b**.
 - 4 The descriptions of the bush are extremely important in the stories of Cate Kennedy and Henry Lawson. What cultural meanings or significance are attached to the bush in each of these stories?
-

Links between texts

Reading two texts from the same period shows us how texts may be created in response to historical contexts. But texts may also be created in response to other texts – created in one cultural or historical context while reflecting specific texts from another context.

In art this is referred to as *appropriation*, while in literature it is known as *intertextuality*. Both terms refer to connections between texts where the meaning in one text is influenced – directly or indirectly – by the contents, events, ideas or structure of another text (or texts).

Appropriation

Appropriation in art is the use of pre-existing objects, images, sounds or other aspects of an artwork in another creative work. This is usually (but not always) done to make a comment on an aspect of the work, usually to draw attention to certain values by highlighting inclusions and exclusions.

A number of 20th-century artists made heavy use of appropriation, such as Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol and Deborah Kass. Music is an art form that makes significant use of appropriation, in the form of sampling and remixing. Artistic appropriation often draws criticism as being ‘unoriginal’, and it has been the cause of legal arguments over copyright violations.

Down on His Luck – Frederick McCubbin

Frederick McCubbin was a 19th-century Australian artist and a member of the Australian Impressionism art movement. In 1889, he painted *Down on His Luck*, which depicts a swagman – specifically an unsuccessful gold prospector – sitting by a fire and considering his life.

Like Henry Lawson, McCubbin was influenced by the emergent nationalism of late 1890s Australia. Bush workers – shearers, swagmen, bushrangers – formed the subject of bush landscapes. Australian impressionist paintings by McCubbin and others contributed to the shaping of a national identity centred on the bush. As mentioned earlier, ‘The drover’s wife’ was unusual in focusing on a female character – in art, as in literature, most attention was given to male experiences.

Down on His Luck – Anne Zahalka

Anne Zahalka is a contemporary Australian photographer/photo artist. She appropriated many colonial-era artworks in a recent exhibition, *The Landscape Re-presented 2017*. This exhibition revisited some of her earlier works from 1983, when she began examining and interrogating artworks that had been integral to the construction of a masculine, bush-centric view of Australia and being Australian.

In both 1983 and 2017, Zahalka created new works that were appropriations of McCubbin’s *Down on His Luck* painting.



Down on His Luck, 1889, Frederick McCubbin



Down on His Luck, 1983, Anne Zahalka



Down on His Luck, 2017, Anne Zahalka

DISCUSSION

Down on His Luck

Examine all three *Down on His Luck* paintings.

- 1 What Australian values would you suggest are enshrined in *Down on His Luck*, 1889? What aspects of the painting do you draw on to reach this conclusion? What prior knowledge assists your reading?
 - 2 Compare and contrast Zahalka's first appropriation (1983).
 - a What aspects of modern Australian identity/identities are represented in this painting?
 - b What aspect of McCubbin's original concept of Australian identity are being interrogated?
 - 3 Now consider the painting from 2017. What would you suggest is the artist's purpose in this appropriation? How is this different from her purpose in 1983?
-

The Drover's Wife – Russell Drysdale

Since Henry Lawson wrote his short story about the drover's wife who was left alone while her husband was away, there have been many rewritings or appropriations of the story. Russell Drysdale painted *The Drover's Wife* in 1945 after he was commissioned in 1944 to record the effects of a horrific drought.



Russell Drysdale
The drover's wife c.1945
 oil on canvas
 51.5 × 61.5 cm
 National Gallery of
 Australia, Canberra
 A gift to the people of Australia
 by Mr and Mrs Benno Schmidt
 of New York and Esperance,
 Western Australia through
 the American Friends of the
 Australian National Gallery 1987
 © Estate of Russell Drysdale

DISCUSSION

The Drover's Wife

- 1 Examine the Drysdale painting. What would you conclude from his representation of the figure of the woman? Does she appear to be a victim or a survivor? Or neither? Provide evidence to support your view.
- 2 Anna Gray, the former Head of Australian Art at the National Gallery of Australia, said this about the painting: 'Although [Drysdale's] people are often alone, as is the drover's wife, they rarely seem to be lonely; rather, they appear to be in harmony with themselves and their place. The drover's wife is not battling against the elements, or anything else. In her own way she is heroic.' To what extent do you agree with this interpretation, and why?

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is more complex and difficult to define than appropriation, because it can draw on many different forms of texts, not just other written works. A story can make references to visual art, music, speeches, advertisements, plays, and almost any other kind of text.

Intertextuality is also complex because the references can be made in many ways. For example, genre conventions (such as magic in fantasy fiction, or broken-hearted *tsundere* in high-school manga stories) are one element of intertextuality. These resonances from one text to the other can make the experience of the second text more powerful, because the reader makes the connections to the previous texts. **Pastiche** and **parody** are other popular examples for intertextual references.

In some texts, the intertextual references are overt, while in others the reader is expected or supposed to have the cultural knowledge to make the connection. In some instances, references that aren't explicit or acknowledged have led to questions of authorship and plagiarism.

'The drover's wife' – Murray Bail

Russell Drysdale's painting of the drover's wife was used by author Murray Bail in 1975 as the stimulus of his short story, also titled 'The drover's wife'. It offers a first-person narration that directly engages with both the painting and Lawson's original story, making it an excellent example of intertextuality.

The drover's wife

There has perhaps been a mistake – but of no great importance – made in the denomination of this picture. The woman depicted is not 'The Drover's Wife'. She is my wife. We have not seen each other now ... it must be getting on thirty years. This portrait was painted shortly after she left – and joined him. Notice she has very conveniently hidden her wedding hand. It is a canvas 20 x 24 inches, signed l/r 'Russell Drysdale'.

I say 'shortly after' because she has our small suitcase – Drysdale has made it look like a shopping bag – and she is wearing the sandals she normally wore to the beach. Besides it was dated 1945.

It is Hazel all right.

How much can you tell by a face? That a woman has left a husband and two children? Here, I think the artist has fallen down (though how was he to know?). He has Hazel with a resigned helpless expression – as if it was all my fault. Or, as if she had been a country woman all her ruddy life.

Otherwise the likeness is fair enough.

Hazel was large-boned. Our last argument I remember concerned her weight. She weighed – I have the figure – 12st 4 ozs. And she wasn't exactly tall. I see that she put it back on almost immediately. It doesn't take long. See her legs.

She had a small, pretty face, I'll give her that, I was always surprised by her eyes. How solemn they were. The painting shows that. Overall, a gentle

pastiche
an artistic work composed in a style that imitates that of another work, era or artist

parody
a work that mimics the style of another work, artist or genre in an exaggerated way, usually for comic effect

face, one that other women liked. How long it must have lasted up in the drought conditions is anybody's guess.

A drover! Why a drover? It has come as a shock to me.

'I am just going around the corner,' she wrote characteristically. It was a piece of butcher's paper left on the table.

Then, and this sounded odd at the time: 'Your tea's in the oven. Don't give Trev any carrots.'

Now that sounded as if she wouldn't be back, but after puzzling over it, I dismissed it.

And I think that is what hurt me most. No 'Dear' at the top, not even 'Gordon'. No 'love' at the bottom. Hazel left without so much as goodbye. We could have talked it over.

Adelaide is a small town. People soon got to know. They ... shied away. I was left alone to bring up Trevor and Kay. It took a long time – years – before, if asked, I could say: 'She vamoosed. I haven't got a clue to where.'

Fancy coming across her in a painting, one reproduced in colour at that. I suppose in a way that makes Hazel famous.

The picture gives little away though. It is the outback – but where exactly? South Australia? It could easily be Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory. We don't know. You could never find that spot.

He is bending over (feeding) the horse, so it is around dusk. This is borne out by the length of Hazel's shadow. It is probably in the region of 5 pm. Probably still over the hundred mark. What a place to spend the night. The silence would have already begun.

Hazel looks unhappy. I can see she is having second thoughts. All right, it was soon after she left me; but she is standing away, in the foreground, as though they're not speaking. See that? Distance = doubts. They've had an argument.

Of course, I want to know all about him. I don't even know his name. In Drysdale's picture he is a silhouette. A completely black figure. He could have been an Aboriginal; by the late forties I understand some were employed as drovers.

But I rejected that.

I took a magnifying glass. I wanted to see the expression on his face. What colour is his hair? Magnified, he is nothing but brush strokes. A real mystery man.

It is my opinion, however, that he is a small character. See his size in relation to the horse, to the wheels of the cart. Either that, or it is a ruddy big horse.

It begins to fall into place.

I had an argument with our youngest, Kay, the other day. Both she and Trev sometimes visit me. I might add, she hasn't married and has her mother's general build. She was blaming me, said people said Mum was a good sort.

Right, I nodded.

'Then why did she scoot?'

'Your mother,' I said thinking quickly, 'had a silly streak.'

If looks could kill!

I searched around – 'She liked to paddle in water!'

Kay gave a nasty laugh. 'What? You're the limit. You really are.'

Of course, I hadn't explained properly. And I didn't even know then that she had gone off with a drover.

Hazel was basically shy, even with me: quiet, generally non-committal. At the same time, I can imagine her allowing herself to be painted so soon after running off without leaving even a phone number or forwarding address. It fits. It sounds funny, but it does.

This silly streak. Heavy snow covered Mt Barker for the first time and we took the Austin up on the Sunday. From a visual point of view it was certainly remarkable. Our gum trees and stringy barks somehow do not go with the white stuff, not even the old Ghost Gum. I mentioned this to Hazel but she just ran into it and began chucking snowballs at me. People were laughing. Then she fell in up to her knees, squawking like a schoolgirl. I didn't mean to speak harshly, but I went up to her, 'Come on, don't be stupid. Get up.' She went very quiet. She didn't speak for hours.

Kay of course wouldn't remember that.

With the benefit of hindsight, and looking at this portrait by Drysdale, I can see that Hazel had a soft side. I think I let her clumsiness get me down. The sight of sweat patches under her arms, for example, put me in a bad mood. It irritated me the way she chopped wood. I think she enjoyed chopping wood. There was the time I caught her lugging into the house the ice for the ice chest – this is just after the war. The ice man didn't seem to notice; he was following, working out his change. It somehow made her less attractive in my eyes, I don't know why. And then of course she killed that snake down at the beach shack we took one Christmas. I happened to lift the lid on the incinerator – a black brute, its head bashed in. 'It was under the house,' she explained.

It was a two-roomed shack, bare floorboards. It had a primus stove, and an asbestos toilet down the back. Hazel didn't mind. Quite the contrary; when it came time to leave she was downcast. I had to be at town for work.

The picture reminds me. It was around then Hazel took to wearing just a slip around the house. And bare feet. The dress in the picture looks like a slip. She even used to burn rubbish in it down the back.

I don't know.

'Hello, missus!' I used to say, entering the kitchen. Not perfect perhaps, especially by today's standards, but that was my way of showing affection. I think Hazel understood. Sometimes I could see she was touched.

I mention that to illustrate our marriage was not all nit-picking and argument. When I realised she had gone I sat for nights in the lounge with the lights out. I am a dentist. You can't have shaking hands and be a dentist. The word passes around. Only now, touch wood, has the practice picked up to any extent.

Does this explain at all why she left?

Not really.

To return to the picture. Drysdale has left out the flies. No doubt he didn't want Hazel waving her hand, or them crawling over her face. Nevertheless, this is a serious omission. It is altering the truth for the sake of a pretty picture, or 'composition'. I've been up around there – and there are hundreds of flies. Not necessarily germ carriers, 'bush flies' I think these are called; and they drive you mad. Hazel of course accepted everything without a song and dance. She didn't mind the heat, or the flies.

It was a camping holiday. We had one of those striped beach tents shaped like a bell. I thought at the time it would prove handy – visible from the air – if we got lost. Now that is a point. Although I never forgot the colours and the assortment of rocks I saw up there I have no desire to return, none, I realised one night. Standing a few yards from the tent, the cavernous sky and the silence all round suddenly made me shudder. I felt lost. It defied logic. And during the day the bush, which is small and prickly, offered no help (I was going to say 'sympathy'). It was stinking hot.

Yet Hazel was in her element, so much so she seemed to take no interest in the surroundings. She acted as if she were part of it. I felt ourselves moving apart, as if I didn't belong there, especially with her. I felt left out. My mistake was to believe it was a passing phase, almost a form of indolence on her part.

An unfortunate incident didn't help. We were looking for a camp site. 'Not yet. No, not there,' I kept saying – mainly to myself, for Hazel let me go on, barely saying a word. At last I found a spot. A tree showing in the dark. We bedded down. Past midnight we were awoken by a terrifying noise and lights. The children all began to cry. I had pitched camp alongside the Adelaide–Port Augusta railway line.

Twenty or thirty miles north of Port Augusta I turned back. I had to. We seemed to be losing our senses. We actually met a drover somewhere around there. He was off on the side making tea. When I asked where were his sheep, or the cattle, he gave a wave of his hand. For some reason this amused Hazel. She squatted down. I can still see her expression, silly girl.

The man didn't say much. He did offer tea though. 'Come on,' said Hazel, smiling up at me.

Hazel and her silly streak – she knew I wanted to get back. The drover, a diplomat, poked at the fire with a stick.

I said:

'You can if you want. I'll be in the car.'

That is all.

I recall the drover as a thin head in a khaki hat, not talkative, with dusty boots. He is indistinct. Is it him? I don't know. Hazel – it is Hazel and the rotten landscape that dominate everything.

 DISCUSSION

'The drover's wife' – Murray Bail

- 1 Although Murray Bail's story rewrites and plays with a story from another historical context, it's also shaped by his own cultural assumptions about gender, identity and relationships. Consider how the time in which he wrote it (1975) might have affected his choices in this story.
 - 2 In this story, Bail counters Lawson's notion of 'the bush' as the landscape of Australian identity by showing his narrator's alienation from it. Discuss how he does this and suggest why.
 - 3 This story takes the form of a first-person monologue. How effective is this narrative choice? Discuss the 'voice' of the narrator and its effect on positioning the reader. How would this story be affected if it was changed to a third-person narration?
-

Texts in different media

How often have you seen a film based on a novel that you've already read? Was it as good as the original? Worse? Different? Did they change the story? If so, can you think of a reason why?

Different media offer different resources for telling stories. Translation from one medium to another means that creators must decide how best to tell the story in the new medium. When we examine texts translated into different media, we need to consider what choices have been made in that translation, and whether the shift has changed the context, perspectives or meaning of the text.

'On seeing the 100% perfect girl one beautiful April morning' – Haruki Murakami

Contemporary Japanese writer Haruki Murakami was influenced by a number of non-Japanese writers and by aspects of Western culture. His work often has surrealistic qualities and explores alienation and loneliness.

This short story is set in Harajuku, a suburb of Tokyo that has been described as the epicentre of street fashion since the 1970s. It is fashionable, crowded and bustling.

The story has also been adapted as a short film on multiple occasions. One version was created by a film production group called Shoko Chou, and can be found on their YouTube channel.

Read the story, then watch the Shoko Chou short film before entering a group discussion. (When reading the story, remember that April is in spring in the northern hemisphere.)



Shoko Chou's
YouTube channel:
[http://mea.digital/
gen12_7_1](http://mea.digital/gen12_7_1)

On seeing the 100% perfect girl one beautiful April morning

One beautiful April morning, on a narrow side street in Tokyo's fashionable Harajuku neighborhood, I walked past the 100% perfect girl.

Tell you the truth, she's not that good-looking. She doesn't stand out in any way. Her clothes are nothing special. The back of her hair is still bent out of shape from sleep. She isn't young, either – must be near thirty, not even close to a 'girl,' properly speaking. But still, I know from fifty yards away: She's the 100% perfect girl for me. The moment I see her, there's a rumbling in my chest, and my mouth is as dry as a desert.

Maybe you have your own particular favourite type of girl – one with slim ankles, say, or big eyes, or graceful fingers, or you're drawn for no good reason to girls who take their time with every meal. I have my own preferences, of course. Sometimes in a restaurant I'll catch myself staring at the girl at the next table to mine because I like the shape of her nose.

But no one can insist that his 100% perfect girl correspond to some preconceived type. Much as I like noses, I can't recall the shape of hers – or even if she had one. All I can remember for sure is that she was no great beauty. It's weird.

'Yesterday on the street I passed the 100% girl,' I tell someone.

'Yeah?' he says. 'Good-looking?'

'Not really.'

'Your favourite type, then?'

'I don't know. I can't seem to remember anything about her – the shape of her eyes or the size of her breasts.'

'Strange.'

'Yeah. Strange.'

'So anyhow,' he says, already bored, 'what did you do? Talk to her? Follow her?'

'Nah. Just passed her on the street.'

She's walking east to west, and I west to east. It's a really nice April morning.

Wish I could talk to her. Half an hour would be plenty: just ask her about herself, tell her about myself, and – what I'd really like to do – explain to her the complexities of fate that have led to our passing each other on a side street in Harajuku on a beautiful April morning in 1981. This was something sure to be crammed full of warm secrets, like an antique clock built when peace filled the world.

After talking, we'd have lunch somewhere, maybe see a Woody Allen movie, stop by a hotel bar for cocktails. With any kind of luck, we might end up in bed.

Potentiality knocks on the door of my heart.

Now the distance between us has narrowed to fifteen yards.

How can I approach her? What should I say?

'Good morning, miss. Do you think you could spare half an hour for a little conversation?'

Ridiculous. I'd sound like an insurance salesman.

'Pardon me, but would you happen to know if there is an all-night cleaners in the neighborhood?'

No, this is just as ridiculous. I'm not carrying any laundry, for one thing. Who's going to buy a line like that?

Maybe the simple truth would do. 'Good morning. You are the 100% perfect girl for me.'

No, she wouldn't believe it. Or even if she did, she might not want to talk to me. Sorry, she could say, I might be the 100% perfect girl for you, but you're not the 100% boy for me. It could happen. And if I found myself in that situation, I'd probably go to pieces. I'd never recover from the shock. I'm thirty-two, and that's what growing older is all about.

We pass in front of a flower shop. A small, warm air mass touches my skin. The asphalt is damp, and I catch the scent of roses. I can't bring myself to speak to her. She wears a white sweater, and in her right hand she holds a crisp white envelope lacking only a stamp. So: She's written somebody a letter, maybe spent the whole night writing, to judge from the sleepy look in her eyes. The envelope could contain every secret she's ever had.

I take a few more strides and turn: She's lost in the crowd.

NOW, OF COURSE, I know exactly what I should have said to her. It would have been a long speech, though, far too long for me to have delivered it properly. The ideas I come up with are never very practical.

Oh, well. It would have started 'Once upon a time' and ended 'A sad story, don't you think?'

ONCE UPON A TIME, there lived a boy and a girl. The boy was eighteen and the girl sixteen. He was not unusually handsome, and she was not especially beautiful. They were just an ordinary lonely boy and an ordinary lonely girl, like all the others. But they believed with their whole hearts that somewhere in the world there lived the 100% perfect boy and the 100% perfect girl for them. Yes, they believed in a miracle. And that miracle actually happened.

One day the two came upon each other on the corner of a street.

'This is amazing,' he said. 'I've been looking for you all my life. You may not believe this, but you're the 100% perfect girl for me.'

'And you,' she said to him, 'are the 100% perfect boy for me, exactly as I'd pictured you in every detail. It's like a dream.'

They sat on a park bench, held hands, and told each other their stories hour after hour. They were not lonely anymore. They had found and been found by their 100% perfect other. What a wonderful thing it is to find and be found by your 100% perfect other. It's a miracle, a cosmic miracle.

As they sat and talked, however, a tiny, tiny sliver of doubt took root in their hearts: Was it really all right for one's dreams to come true so easily?

And so, when there came a momentary lull in their conversation, the boy said to the girl, 'Let's test ourselves – just once. If we really are each

other's 100% perfect lovers, then sometime, somewhere, we will meet again without fail. And when that happens, and we know that we are the 100% perfect ones, we'll marry then and there. What do you think?'

'Yes,' she said, 'that is exactly what we should do.'

And so they parted, she to the east, and he to the west.

The test they had agreed upon, however, was utterly unnecessary. They should never have undertaken it, because they really and truly were each other's 100% perfect lovers, and it was a miracle that they had ever met. But it was impossible for them to know this, young as they were. The cold, indifferent waves of fate proceeded to toss them unmercifully.

One winter, both the boy and the girl came down with the season's terrible influenza, and after drifting for weeks between life and death they lost all memory of their earlier years. When they awoke, their heads were as empty as the young D.H. Lawrence's piggy bank.

They were two bright, determined young people, however, and through their unremitting efforts they were able to acquire once again the knowledge and feeling that qualified them to return as full-fledged members of society. Heaven be praised, they became truly upstanding citizens who knew how to transfer from one subway line to another, who were fully capable of sending a special-delivery letter at the post office. Indeed, they even experienced love again, sometimes as much as 75% or even 85% love.

Time passed with shocking swiftness, and soon the boy was thirty-two, the girl thirty.

One beautiful April morning, in search of a cup of coffee to start the day, the boy was walking from west to east, while the girl, intending to send a special-delivery letter, was walking from east to west, but along the same narrow street in the Harajuku neighborhood of Tokyo. They passed each other in the very centre of the street. The faintest gleam of their lost memories glimmered for the briefest moment in their hearts. Each felt a rumbling in their chest. And they knew:

She is the 100% perfect girl for me.

He is the 100% perfect boy for me.

But the glow of their memories was far too weak, and their thoughts no longer had the clarity of fourteen years earlier. Without a word, they passed each other, disappearing into the crowd. Forever.

A sad story, don't you think?

YES, THAT'S IT, that is what I should have said to her.

Haruki Murakami

DISCUSSION

'On seeing the 100% perfect girl one beautiful April morning'

- 1 What references do you see to Western (i.e. non-Japanese) culture? In what ways could you see this as a story with Western values or attitudes?
- 2 One of the interesting aspects of the story is the relative lack of physical description of the 100% perfect girl. Why do you think that is and what effect does this choice have on the story?
- 3 The photo below shows some of the fashions in Harajuku. Given this represents the likely trendiness/funkiness of the district from the 1970s on, what do you think the story achieves by not focusing on appearance?



- 4 Watch the film adaptation by Shoko Chou. Identify how aspects of the short story are treated differently in the film version. Analyse how the resources of film (shots, editing, music, sound, dialogue, costume, etc.) are used to construct the story.
 - 5 Discuss the effectiveness of this film translation. In doing so, take into account that film translations have to find different ways of representation. How effective, for example, is the scene where the narrator tells a friend of his meeting with the 100% perfect girl?
-

'The Inksect' – Pablo Calvillo

Digital advances in animation, especially in visual effects, have provided the resources to construct some fascinating new texts. The short animated film 'The Inksect' (2017) was written and directed by Pablo Calvillo, a Mexican-born creator. It provides a riveting animated reflection on the power and importance of books and reading, and contemplates the effects of their absence.

The film is set in a dystopian future, where fossil fuels have been depleted, books are used for fuel and humans have morphed into cockroaches. Members of an underground cell, called the Inksect, remember books and risk their lives to save them from destruction. The hero, a cockroach named Pikes, discovers literacy while being hunted.

The film draws on a wide range of intertextual references, including works by Dostoevsky, Kafka, Edgar Allan Poe, Ray Bradbury and Aldous Huxley. These references shape the characters, concepts and imagery while advocating the importance of literacy.

View the film (it's just nine minutes long).



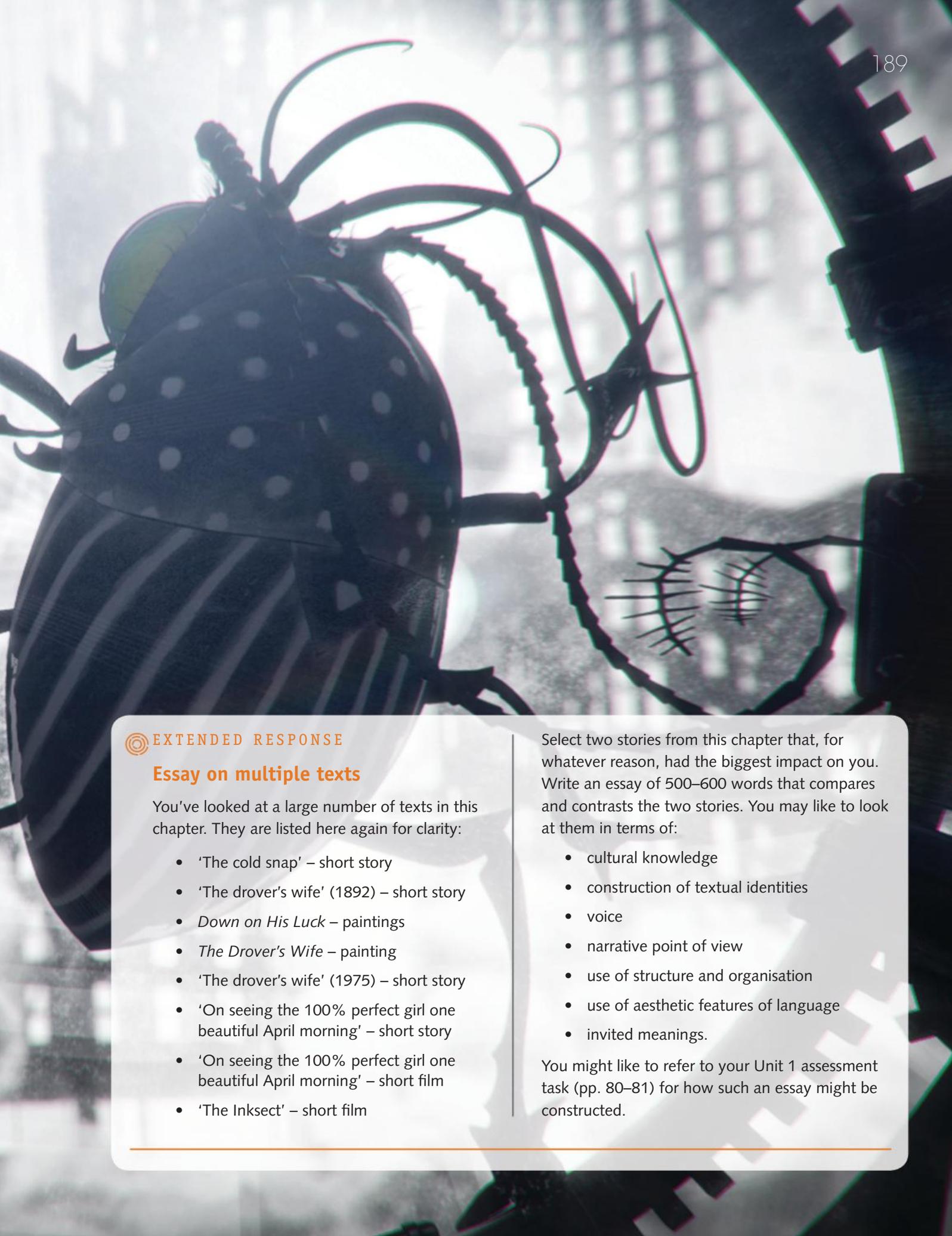
'The Inksect' short film (Vimeo):
http://mea.digital/qen12_7_2



ACTIVITY

Analysing 'The Inksect'

- 1 The film follows a traditional three-act structure, with transitions provided between the acts. Outline the events in each act and comment on the effectiveness of the transitions.
- 2 Evaluate the effectiveness of the initial narration in terms of:
 - a clarity
 - b establishing context
 - c establishing the mood and atmosphere.
- 3 This short film is loaded with intertextuality. Detail the significance of these references and explain how their use enriches the text.
- 4 Central to the construction of Pikes' epiphany in this story is the use of contrast. Explain how contrast is used effectively.


 © EXTENDED RESPONSE

Essay on multiple texts

You've looked at a large number of texts in this chapter. They are listed here again for clarity:

- 'The cold snap' – short story
- 'The drover's wife' (1892) – short story
- *Down on His Luck* – paintings
- *The Drover's Wife* – painting
- 'The drover's wife' (1975) – short story
- 'On seeing the 100% perfect girl one beautiful April morning' – short story
- 'On seeing the 100% perfect girl one beautiful April morning' – short film
- 'The Inksect' – short film

Select two stories from this chapter that, for whatever reason, had the biggest impact on you. Write an essay of 500–600 words that compares and contrasts the two stories. You may like to look at them in terms of:

- cultural knowledge
- construction of textual identities
- voice
- narrative point of view
- use of structure and organisation
- use of aesthetic features of language
- invited meanings.

You might like to refer to your Unit 1 assessment task (pp. 80–81) for how such an essay might be constructed.

CHAPTER
EIGHT

IMAGINATIVE WRITING – THE NARRATIVE GENRE

Narrative fiction, whether a short story or a series of novels, is a foundation of English literacy, studies and enjoyment. 'Fiction' is a term that covers an incredible variety of forms, styles and topics. We can use the umbrella term 'narrative genre' to attempt to find common ground among them all.

You've surely read many examples of the narrative genre and are aware of its versatility and flexibility. In this chapter, you will examine the elements of the narrative genre and use them in writing your own fiction. The focus is on writing short stories, rather than novels or other imaginative narrative forms.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN CONTEXT

- investigate the relationships between language, text, purpose, audience and context
- consider how patterns and conventions of genres are used in different types of texts

- 'The story of an hour' – short story
- 'Embroidery' – short story
- *Leaf Storm* – novel extract
- *The Little Red Writing Book* – non-fiction extract
- 'On becoming an intellectual' – poem

LANGUAGE AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- consider the use of aesthetic features and stylistic devices and their effects in texts
- analyse how language choices are used for different purposes and contexts

RESPONDING TO AND CREATING TEXTS

- use cohesive devices to develop and emphasise ideas and connect parts of texts
- use appropriate form, content, style and tone for different purposes and audiences
- use text structures, grammar and language features for particular effects.



genre

the categories into which texts are grouped

ambiguity

lack of a definite meaning in a statement or concept; open to more than one interpretation

The narrative genre

Genre in fiction can be a difficult thing to define. In academia, a literary genre is often seen as a category of form and structure – so a novel, short story, poem and essay are all literary genres. In popular culture, genre is mostly used to label a text’s subject matter or content, such as science fiction, romance, true crime or biography. To confuse things even more, booksellers often classify a text’s format or age category as a genre, so in bookstores you will see shelves or webpages labelled, for example, ‘graphic novels’ or ‘young adult’.

This **ambiguity** can make finding something you want to read, view or listen to difficult and confusing, so always consider its context when working out the meaning.

We can consider all fiction – that is, not only short stories and novels but also fictional films – as belonging to the *narrative genre*. This is obviously a very broad and general genre, from 17th century romances, Sherlock Holmes, *Wuthering Heights*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Avengers* to this week’s most popular Netflix series. At this stage of your English studies, you are likely to be comfortable with a definition such as the following:

Narrative genre is broadly dedicated to *entertaining* audiences by providing *characters* with a *problem or problems* that must be solved. *Complications* engage the audience in the narrative, while *resolutions* leave the audience *satisfied or dissatisfied*.

You will, however, also have emerging awareness of versatility and flexibility.

Short stories

A short story that is a compressed narrative is one that compresses the time of the action to focus on a critical time or crisis.

Consider Martyn Hereward’s short story ‘The clearing’ in Chapter 6. (You should have read this already. If you haven’t, go back to p. 152 and read it now.) This story presents **vignettes** of four characters at the critical moment of a patrol in New Guinea during World War II. These characters reveal their different perspectives about being a soldier. The plot is simple, the setting isn’t explored in depth and the story ends when the crisis does.

At the same time, it’s a rewarding story, one where the complexity comes from piecing together the testaments of the four different narrators. The action is simple – a soldier is shot after going to help a wounded officer – but the reader is positioned to wonder whether Private O’Brien was deliberately shot by one of his own. The reader is first puzzled, then aghast but engaged, and left wondering ‘Did what I think happened actually happen?’

vignette

a brief, evocative description or account

Structure of a short story

Stages

The conventional structure of the narrative genre typically has three stages:

- *orientation* – sets the scene, establishes the mood and introduces the characters
- *complication* – a problem or a crisis disrupts the normal life of the characters, setting off a sequence of events
- *resolution* – the complications are resolved in some way (positive or negative) and the story ends.

Sometimes a writer might make use of an optional stage called a coda – a final comment, usually with a moral purpose. It is not a feature of most short stories but can be used to effect.

These three stages are very broad and generic. An effective narrative fleshes out these stages so that each is engaging and satisfying.

Phases

Australian linguists JR Martin and David Rose suggested a series of phases that exist within these three stages of a story. These phases are the steps through which the subject matter unfolds. They state that:

To identify stages and phases we must look for shifts in the sequences of activities, from settings to problems and solutions, and from the outer world of events to the inner realm of reactions and reflections. Then we ask how these elements of the plot are realised grammatically.

In other words, phases may reflect changes in the progression of the plot, the development of the characters and the style of writing.

Martin and Rose suggest three main categories of phases: *problem*, *reaction* and *solution*. Progression through the phases of the story engages the reader's interest by developing tension (problem), intensifying the tension (reaction), and releasing the tension (solution). The reader's engagement is also achieved through characters' *reflections* on the situation (typically expressed through their thoughts or dialogue), which present perspectives on the narrative.

The table on page 194 shows the types of phases suggested in this model, as well as the functions they serve in a narrative.

Phase category	Phase type	Functions
Problem	Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locating the story in place(s) or time(s) that may vary during the story • The setting is important in establishing mood
	Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describing people, things and places • This slows action as it describes characters or setting
	Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unexpected outcome or event that causes tension between characters
Reaction	Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected events (which do not create tension) that continue the action
	Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected result (the outcome or result of events)
	Reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The character's feelings (can be expressed in speech or action) about an event or situation
Solution	Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events releasing tension – they may solve or attempt to solve problems • Some attempted solutions only make matters worse
Reflection	Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The character's thoughts about a situation
	Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The narrator draws a conclusion, summarises or comments on, for example, the moral point of the story

These phases are very flexible and do not appear in any set order in a story. They may also appear multiple times, depending on the length and complexity of the story. A phase might be expressed as a single sentence, but is usually demonstrated by several sentences. Paragraphing is an important element in identifying these phases, but within a single paragraph there may be pairings of problem–solution or problem–reaction.

Phases are not labelled or explicit in a narrative. However, a writer who thinks of a narrative only in terms of action and events is unlikely to engage their readers. Focusing on the phases may allow them to develop more interesting and subtle texts.

'The story of an hour' – Kate Chopin

Kate Chopin was a 19th-century writer and feminist, who focused on short fiction. 'The story of an hour' was first published in 1894 by *Vogue* magazine. At that time, *Vogue* was a fashion magazine, as it is now, but it also targeted educated female readers as well as 'society women'. The story reflects attitudes to female **autonomy** and release from domesticity that started to circulate among women at that time. These attitudes shape the main character's sense of liberty on learning about the death of her husband.

The complication of the story is that while she mourns his loss, she also feels an unexpected release from the constraints of marriage. (We could call this an internal complication, rather than one coming from outside forces.)

If we break down Chopin's short story, we can see the stages and phases of its structure.

autonomy
freedom from external
control

STAGE	THE STORY OF AN HOUR	PHASE
ORIENTATION (NOTE WHAT WE ARE NOT TOLD: PLACE, TIME, APPEARANCE OF CHARACTER, ETC.)	Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.	— PROBLEM (IMMEDIATELY CAUSING TENSION)
	It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of 'killed'. He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.	— EVENT (NO BUILD-UP OF TENSION)
	She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.	— REACTION (CHARACTER DEMONSTRATES FEELINGS ABOUT SITUATION)
	There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy arm-chair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.	— COMMENT (WRITER REMARKS ON 'OTHER' WOMEN) — EFFECT (CHARACTER RESPONDS TO EVENT)
	She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.	— SETTING (BEGINS ESTABLISHING MOOD)
	There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.	— DESCRIPTION (EVENTUALLY LEADS TO CHANGE OF CHARACTER'S MOOD AND ATTITUDE IN NEXT SECTION)
	She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.	— REACTION
	She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.	— DESCRIPTION
	There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But	— COMMENT (THOUGHTS OR LACK OF THOUGHTS)
COMPLICATION	she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.	— REACTION



STAGE

PHASE

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will – as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

— EFFECT
(SHE GIVES IN
AND DOES NOT
CONTINUE TO RESIST)

When she abandoned herself, a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: 'free, free, free!' The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

— PROBLEM
(UNEXPECTED
REACTION,
INCREASING
TENSION)

— REACTION

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

— COMMENT

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

— REFLECTION
REACTION
(SIGNIFICANT
CHANGE TO
CHARACTERISATION)

There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

— COMMENT
(CRITICISM OF
MARRIAGE, NOT
SPECIFICALLY OF
HER HUSBAND)

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

— REFLECTION
(ON BOTH THEIR
RELATIONSHIP AND
HER NEW SENSE OF
INDEPENDENCE)

'Free! Body and soul free!' she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. 'Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door – you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door.'

— EVENT

'Go away. I am not making myself ill.' No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

— COMMENT

How fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

— EFFECT

— REACTION
(CONTRAST
BETWEEN TIME
AND ATTITUDE TO
LIFE AND
MARRIAGE)

STAGE		PHASE
COMPLICATION	<p>Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.</p>	<p>— EVENT EFFECT (CHARACTERISATION THROUGH ACTION)</p> <p>— PROBLEM</p> <p>— DESCRIPTION</p> <p>— COMMENT (EXPLANATION OF HUSBAND'S UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE)</p> <p>— SOLUTION (TENSION IS EASED)</p>
RESOLUTION	But Richards was too late.	
CODA	<p>When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease— of joy that kills.</p>	



ACTIVITY

Reading the narrative

- 1 What attitudes, beliefs and values underpin the story of the hour in Louise Mallard's life? For example, what are the attitudes of the sister and the friend towards the news? What are Louise's attitudes to the news and to marriage? Support each answer with evidence from the text.
 - 2 What concepts are explored either implicitly or explicitly in the story?
 - 3 How important are the uses of flash-forward and flashback in this story? What aspects of the meaning of the text does the use of each develop?
 - 4 Compare and contrast the representations of the minor characters and of Louise Mallard. How does examination of the phases assist your interpretation?
 - 5 Comment on the effectiveness of the choice of narrator, explaining why the story could or could not work as a first-person narration.
 - 6 This story was first published as 'The dream of an hour'. How does that original title shape your expectations of the story? What effect does the change in title have on the story's meaning?
-

'Embroidery' – Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury is best known for his dystopian fiction, particularly his novel *Fahrenheit 451*, which depicts a world where books and reading are banned.

In this story, he demonstrates a masterly control of suspense and tension as three women, embroidering on a porch, await some unnamed event. Written in 1951, the cultural context is during the Cold War, when the world faced the threat of nuclear war. The story itself covers a time span of just ten minutes; the reader is held in suspense by the use of foreshadowing.

Read the story carefully and identify the stages of the text, as well as the phases.

Embroidery

The dark porch air in the late afternoon was full of needle flashes, like a movement of gathered silver insects in the light. The three women's mouths twitched over their work. Their bodies lay back and then imperceptibly forward, so that the rocking chairs tilted and murmured. Each woman looked to her own hands, as if quite suddenly she had found her heart beating there.

'What time is it?'

'Ten minutes to five.'

'Got to get up in a minute and shell those peas for dinner.'

'But –' said one of them.

'Oh yes, I forgot. How foolish of me ...' The first woman paused, put down her embroidery and needle, and looked through the open porch door, through the interior of the warm house, to the silent kitchen. There upon the table, seeming more like symbols of domesticity than anything she had ever seen in her life, lay the mound of fresh-washed peas in their neat, resilient jackets, waiting for her fingers to bring them into the world.

'Go hull them if it'll make you feel good,' said the second woman.

'No,' said the first. 'I won't. I just won't.'

The third woman sighed. She embroidered a rose, a leaf, a daisy on a green field. The embroidery needle rose and vanished.

The second woman was working on the finest, most delicate piece of embroidery of them all, deftly poking, finding, and returning the quick needle upon innumerable journeys. Her quick black glance was on each motion. A flower, a man, a road, a sun, a house; the scene grew under hand, a miniature beauty, perfect in every threaded detail.

'It seems at times like this that it's always your hands you turn to,' she said, and the others nodded enough to make the rockers rock again.

'I believe,' said the first lady, 'that our souls are in our hands. For we do everything to the world with our hands. Sometimes I think we don't use our hands half enough; it's certain we don't use our heads.'

They all peered more intently at what their hands were doing.

'Yes,' said the third lady, 'when you look back on a whole lifetime, it seems you don't remember faces so much as hands and what they did.'

They recounted to themselves the lids they had lifted, the doors they had opened and shut, the flowers they had picked, the dinners they had made, all with slow or quick fingers, as was their manner or custom. Looking back, you saw a flurry of hands, like a magician's dream, doors popping wide, taps turned, brooms wielded, children spanked. The flutter of pink hands was the only sound; the rest was a dream without voices.

'No supper to fix tonight or tomorrow night or the next night after that,' said the third lady.

'No windows to open or shut.'

'No coal to shovel in the basement furnace next winter.'

'No papers to clip cooking articles out of.'

And suddenly they were crying. The tears rolled softly down their faces and fell into the material upon which their fingers twitched.

'This won't help things,' said the first lady at last, putting the back of her thumb to each under-eyelid. She looked at her thumb and it was wet.

'Now look what I've done!' cried the second lady exasperated. The others stopped and peered over. The second lady held out her embroidery. There was the scene, perfect except that while the embroidered yellow sun shone down upon the embroidered green field, and the embroidered brown road curved towards an embroidered pink house, the man standing on the road had something wrong with his face.

'I'll just have to rip out the whole pattern, practically, to fix it right,' said the second lady.

'What a shame.' They all stared intently at the beautiful scene with the flaw in it.

The second lady began to pick away at the thread with her little deft scissors flashing. The pattern came out thread by thread. She pulled and yanked, almost viciously. The man's face was gone. She continued to seize at the threads.

'What are you doing?' asked the other woman.

They leaned and saw what she had done.

The man was gone from the road. She had taken him out entirely. They said nothing but returned to their own tasks.

'What time is it?' asked someone.

'Five minutes to five.'

'Is it supposed to happen at five o'clock?'

'Yes.'

'And they're not sure what it'll do to anything, really, when it happens?'

'No, not sure.'

'Why didn't we stop them before it got this far and this big?'

'It's twice as big as ever before. No, ten times, maybe a thousand.'

'This isn't like the first one or the dozen later ones. This is different.'

'Nobody knows what it might do when it comes.'

They waited on the porch in the smell of roses and cut grass. 'What time is it now?'

'One minute to five.'

The needles flashed silver fire. They swam like a tiny school of metal fish in the darkening summer air.

Far away a mosquito sound, then something like a tremor of drums. The three women cocked their heads, listening.

'We won't hear anything, will we?'

'They say not.'

'Perhaps we're foolish. Perhaps we'll go right on, after five o'clock, shelling peas, opening doors, stirring soups, washing dishes, making lunches, peeling oranges ...'

'My, how we'll laugh to think we were frightened by an old experiment!' They smiled a moment at each other.

'It's five o'clock.'

At these words, hushed, they all busied themselves. Their fingers darted. Their faces were turned down to the motions they made. They made frantic patterns. They made lilacs and grass and trees and houses and rivers in the embroidered cloth. They said nothing, but you could hear their breath in the silent porch air.

Thirty seconds passed.

The second woman sighed finally and began to relax.

'I think I just will go and shell those peas for supper,' she said. 'I ...'

But she hadn't time even to lift her head. Somewhere, at the side of her vision, she saw the world brighten and catch fire. She kept her head down, for she knew what it was. She didn't look up, nor did the others, and in the last instant their fingers were flying; they didn't glance about to see what was happening to the country, the town, this house, or even this porch. They were only staring down at the design in their flickering hands.

The second woman watched an embroidered flower go. She tried to embroider it back in, but it went, and then the road vanished, and the blades of grass. She watched a fire, in slow motion almost, catch upon the embroidered house and unshingle it, and pull each threaded leaf from the small green tree in the hoop, and she saw the sun itself pulled apart in the design. Then the fire caught upon the moving point of the needle while it still flashed; she watched the fire come along her fingers and arms and body, untwisting the yarn of her being so painstakingly that she could see it in all its devilish beauty, yanking out the pattern from the material at hand. What it was doing to the other women or the furniture or the elm tree in the yard, she never knew. For now, yes, now! it was plucking at the white embroidery of her flesh, the pink thread of her cheeks, and at last it found her heart, a soft red rose sewn with fire, and it burned the fresh, embroidered petals away, one by delicate one ...

 DISCUSSION**The structure of 'Embroidery'**

- 1 Identify the stages of 'Embroidery' – orientation, complication and resolution. What are your reasons for identifying each stage? Does everyone agree about where each stage begins and ends?
 - 2 Find at least one example of each of the phases (see p. 194) in the story; these might be single sentences or sections of paragraphs. Does everyone agree on which phase a piece of the text is? Defend your reasoning.
-



Elements of imaginative texts

A story may be laid out in phases, have a plot and characters, provide complications and resolutions – but none of those necessarily make it interesting or enjoyable to the reader. So what makes a story ‘good’?

There’s no single answer to that question. Everyone responds to fiction differently, based on their own aesthetics, cultural background, lived experience and personal preferences. But there definitely are elements of imaginative texts that generally make them more enjoyable and increase the likelihood that they will engage a reader. Of course, they are also the elements that may leave readers disengaged if they’re not executed well.

Characterisation

Almost all imaginative texts have one or more central characters, and many have a number of minor or supporting characters.

Characters are at the heart of story – readers identify with them, detest them, hope they will get their comeuppance, copy how they look or talk, reproduce their attitudes and remember their best lines for years afterwards.

Readers become engaged by characters in a text if they seem authentic and real in some way, and if they change, grow or develop through the course of the story. Characters may convey the writer’s messages and values or they may act in opposition to those values. How characters handle the challenges of the context incites our admiration or revulsion, or forces us to reconsider attitudes and beliefs. We feel sympathy, empathy or antipathy for them.

In literary texts, character can be revealed and developed directly or indirectly.

- *Direct characterisation*: the character is represented by the writer with description or comment; in other words, we are told what the character is like.
- *Indirect characterisation*: the character is represented through their actions and what they say and do. They may also be developed through what other characters say about them.

While direct characterisation is immediate and to the point, indirect characterisation tends to be more engaging to the reader.

Leaf Storm – Gabriel García Márquez

Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez was one of the leading figures of the magical realism genre and often considered a master of characterisation. This description of Señora Rebeca is from his first book, *Leaf Storm*, written when he was nineteen – a short novel where all the events take place in one room over a half-hour period in 1928.

I can hear the train whistling at the last bend. *It's two-thirty*, I think; and I can't get rid of the idea that at this moment all of Macondo is wondering what we're doing in this house. I think about Señora Rebeca, thin and looking like parchment, with a touch of a family ghost in her look and dress, sitting beside her electric fan, her face shaded by the screens in her windows. As she hears the train disappearing around the last bend Señora Rebeca leans her head toward the fan, tormented by the heat and her

resentment, the blades in her heart spinning like those on the fan (but in an opposite direction), and she murmurs: ‘The devil has a hand in all of this,’ and she shudders, fastened to life by the tiny roots of everyday things.

from *Leaf Storm* by Gabriel García Márquez

DISCUSSION

Characterisation

- 1 This is a brief but very vivid description of a character. Does the construction of Señora Rebeca rely on direct or indirect characterisation, or a combination of both? Using evidence, discuss the character and the form of characterisation. What does the character represent, judging by the evidence here?
- 2 Reread the Chopin and Bradbury stories. Discuss how characterisation is constructed in each story. What differing approaches to characterisation do these writers take and why? Justify with carefully selected evidence and well-founded arguments.

Sentences

Good writing depends on the effectiveness of the basic unit of meaning – the sentence. When writing, you should craft your sentences to affect your audience, not just to communicate information.

Be aware of the difference between sentences and sentence fragments.

- A *sentence* is a group of words with at least one independent clause – that is, a subject and a verb – that can stand on its own and make sense.
- A *sentence fragment* is a group of words without an independent clause and cannot stand on its own.

For example, in the sentence ‘We turned on the TV when we got inside’ the word group ‘when we got inside’ is a sentence fragment.

Narrative writing sometimes uses sentence fragments to extend a point from an earlier fully developed sentence. This is mostly to evoke imagery or to reflect ‘natural’ dialogue. Using sentence fragments can be effective, but it should be used sparingly as overuse tends to make a work appear ‘choppy’.

The Little Red Writing Book – Mark Tredinnick

Mark Tredinnick is an Australian poet, essayist and teacher. His text *The Little Red Writing Book* is a guide to writing that uses poetic imagery and idioms to inspire readers. In the following extract, Tredinnick uses a series of provocative metaphors to sum up the fundamental importance of the sentence.

A sentence is a miracle and a mystery.

A sentence is the way we move from making sounds to making sense, from naming to meaning. A sentence is the track from somewhere to somewhere else. It tells a story – of what it is, of what happens, of who did what, of what is done. It carries a reader from silence to understanding, from nothing to something.

A sentence is to a piece of writing what a river is to a whole catchment. Namely, everything. The part serves the whole; it is what the whole comes down to.

from *The Little Red Writing Book* by Mark Tredinnick

ACTIVITY

Types of sentences

Find at least three additional examples of each type of sentence identified in the table below. Select your examples from one of the short stories in Chapter 7. The examples provided are all from 'The Clearing' on page 152.

Type of sentence	Sentence structure	Example
Simple	An independent (main) clause or sentence containing one verb/verb group (or process)	<i>The silence seemed to swell in my head.</i>
Compound	Two (or more) independent (main) clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions (<i>and, but, yet, or, nor</i>) or by a semicolon	<i>I stepped into the clearing and the cicadas suddenly stopped singing.</i>
Complex	An independent (main) clause with one or more dependent (or subordinate) clauses	<i>When the firing began I saw it all.</i>
Compound-complex	A mix of both compound and complex sentences, containing more than one independent clause together with at least one dependent clause	<i>There was a hollow crack as the air went out of him, then he buckled at the knees and down he went.</i>

Cohesion

A text should be both coherent and cohesive. *Coherence* refers to the 'big-picture' – all the ideas in the text should hold together logically. *Cohesion* refers to the links that bind the parts of the text together. A coherent text makes sense; a cohesive text feels like a fluent, single work, and not just a collection of parts.

There are two main types of cohesion: grammatical and **lexical**.

- *Grammatical cohesion* is based on the composition of phrases.
- *Lexical cohesion* is based on the choice of words.

Each type of cohesion involves using particular devices when writing. These devices aren't difficult to use – after years of studying English, using them is probably second nature for you. But understanding their purpose and effect can help to improve your writing.

lexical
relating to the words or
vocabulary of a language

Grammatical cohesion

There are three main grammatical cohesive devices: reference, ellipsis and substitution.

- *Reference* is the use of pronouns (e.g. he, she, it, them) and demonstrative adjectives (e.g. this, that, those, these). This lets you refer back (or possibly forward) to characters, items and events in a text without naming them in full each time.
- *Ellipsis* is when words or phrases are *not* repeated, because the reader understands that they're implied. For example, consider the sentence: 'The first cat was very peaceful, the second much more aggressive.' The second clause doesn't include the words 'cat' and 'was', but we understand the reference anyway.
- *Substitution* is similar to ellipsis, but rather than a word being removed, it is replaced with another, more general word. For example, consider the sentence 'I thought about buying the green dress, but bought the blue one instead'. Here 'one' is substituted for 'dress'.

Lexical cohesion

There are two main lexical cohesive devices: repetition and collocation.

- *Repetition* is reusing the same word, or related words (e.g. synonyms) throughout the text. For example, consider the statements: 'Do you read graphic novels?' 'Yes, I read comics.'
- *Collocation* is using a set of related words that typically go together, such as 'make a wish' or 'once upon a time'.

ACTIVITY

Cohesion and coherence

Work with a partner on this activity.

- 1 Reread 'The story of an hour' (p. 195). Examine the first two paragraphs and identify how choices associated with 'break the news' hold these paragraphs together.
 - 2 Reread 'Embroidery' (p. 198). Identify the ways coherence is built across the text and the types of cohesion used.
 - 3 Discuss your work with another pair of students, and compare and contrast Bradbury's choices with Chopin's.
-

Style and tone

Style is perhaps the most difficult element of imaginative writing to define, but it is primarily the way in which a story is written. Every writer has a unique style when constructing a text – the combination of words, sentence structure, rhythm, language, details and more. Some writers use the same or similar style for all their works, while others are capable of varying their style from story to story.

Tone is easier to define. It is the writer's attitude towards the subject and the reader. Is the story meant to be funny? Passionate? Scary? Ironic? What mood does the writer create in the mind of the reader?

Tone is linked to style – the stylistic choices a writer makes will also shape the tone of the text. But tone isn't unique like style; two humorous writers will have their own style while still working in the same tone.

Some typical elements of style and tone include the following:

- word choice – simple, complex, abstract, concrete
- sentence structure – short, long, simple, complex, fragmented
- dialogue – snappy, long-winded, realistic, florid
- literary techniques – symbolism, metaphor, irony, simile, personification
- rhythm – repetition, alliteration, musicality
- connotation – vulgar, formal, friendly, sarcastic.

ACTIVITY

Comparing style and tone

- 1 Form groups of three students, each with a sheet of paper and a pen.
 - 2 Assign each student in your group one of the following stories:
 - a 'The story of an hour' (p. 195)
 - b 'Embroidery' (p. 198)
 - c 'On seeing the 100% perfect girl one beautiful April morning' (p. 184)
 - 3 For five minutes, write down everything that you notice about the style and tone of the story assigned to you. Pick out particular stylistic features: the brevity or complexity of sentences, the sparseness or lushness of imagery, choice of vocabulary, type of characterisation, dependence on dialogue or description, narrative point of view, use of contrast and so on.
 - 4 Once you've finished writing, pass your paper to the student on your left, and take the paper from the student on your right.
 - 5 Spend five minutes writing about the story you're now considering, without looking at what the other student wrote.
 - 6 Rotate papers again, and write for five minutes about the style and tone of the last story.
 - 7 As a group, discuss what you wrote down about each story, and compare and contrast the style and tone of the three stories. Were there elements you all agreed upon? Elements you disagreed on? How is each story uniquely crafted? What are the effects of the writers' stylistic decisions?
-

Advice from acclaimed writers

Short stories require a different approach to long-form fiction. As noted on page 192, short stories generally don't have complex plots, large casts of characters or series of events. Instead, they focus on theme and characterisation, bringing those out by representing a crisis in the life of a single character.

As you prepare to write your own short narrative story for assessment, consider the advice from two acclaimed short story writers of the past and how you could apply it to your own work.

Kurt Vonnegut

Kurt Vonnegut was a 20th-century American fiction writer, with a career spanning more than 50 years. He was famous for his darkly humorous work, such as the novels *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Cat's Cradle*, which mixed satire, science fiction and social commentary. Vonnegut had eight pieces of advice that he considered to be essential for writers of short stories.

- 1 Use the time of a total stranger in such a way that he or she will not feel the time was wasted.
- 2 Give the reader at least one character he or she can cheer for.
- 3 Every character should want something, even if it is only a glass of water.
- 4 Every sentence must do one of two things – reveal character or advance the action.
- 5 Start as close to the end as possible.
- 6 Be a sadist. No matter how sweet and innocent your leading characters, make awful things happen to them so the reader may see what they are made of.
- 7 Write to please just one person. If you open a window and make love to the world, so to speak, your story will get pneumonia.
- 8 Give your readers as much information as possible as soon as possible. To heck with suspense. Readers should have such complete understanding of what is going on, where and why, that they could finish the story themselves, should cockroaches eat the last few pages.

However, he later made a caveat to his advice, adding that for every rule there is an exception. He stated that the 'greatest American short story writer of my generation was Flannery Connor [who] broke every one of my rules but the first. Great writers tend to do that'.

Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe was a master of the tensely paced horror story. Poe was a 19th-century American author who was a central figure of Romanticism and horror/macabre fiction, with such stories as 'The tell-tale heart' and poems such as 'The raven'. He is generally considered to have invented the detective fiction genre with his story 'The murders in the Rue Morgue'. Poe's seven pieces of advice have formed the basis of 'rules' about short story writing for teachers for many years.

- 1 Know the ending in advance and keep it in mind as you write. This advice applies if you want the end to be ‘inevitable’ and to give a ‘plot its indispensable air of consequence’.
- 2 The story should be short and able to be read in a ‘single sitting’. Poe regarded this as important to maintain suspense and not break the ‘spell’.
- 3 Decide on your desired effect or impression on the reader. Do not use a word or phrase that is not purposeful in achieving the effect.
- 4 Decide on the mood of the story and sustain the tone. Poe believed in creating a ‘single effect’ that was established then progressively developed across the story.
- 5 Determine the theme and characterisation.
- 6 Establish the climax of the story.
- 7 Determine the setting. For Poe, only after deciding on the earlier elements should a writer choose an appropriate setting that will achieve the desired effects. He also preferred a ‘close circumscription of space’ – in other words, a small setting that would constrain the action of the story – which he saw as essential to ‘the effect of the insulated incident’.

Poe believed in following the conventions of the form, but also that the writer was free to vary, combine and adapt them for his or her own purposes.

Bringing it all together

If we go further back in time, before short stories existed as a form, Aristotle’s advice primarily in relation to drama was that ‘plot was everything’. Do you agree?

You can see from the short stories in this unit how far we have moved from Aristotle’s advice about plot. Characterisation is important to modern writers, and so are social relations. In terms of choosing a structure in which to reveal character and identity, and to reflect on the complications of human experience, you might better follow the example of Martyn Hereward, Kate Chopin and Ray Bradbury. All these writers demonstrate great subtlety and control of their short stories, all of which are compressed narratives.

In constructing your own narrative work, remember that stories don’t need to be ordered chronologically but may have circular structures, be organised retrospectively (in reverse), or incorporate flashbacks and flash-forwards.

DISCUSSION

Rules for writing

As a group, consider ‘The clearing’ (see Chapter 6), and ‘The story of an hour’ and ‘Embroidery’ in this chapter.

- 1 Which of these three stories best follows the advice of Edgar Allan Poe?
 - 2 Which of these three stories best follows the advice of Kurt Vonnegut?
 - 3 Establish your own success criteria for a short story, considering what engages you in each of the short stories. Now rank the three stories and defend your rankings to the other members of your group.
-

 EXTENDED RESPONSE

Constructing a short story

Australian poet Sunil Govinnage, who arrived in Australia from Sri Lanka in 1986, writes his poetry in either Sinhala or English.

On becoming an intellectual

'You have lost your Third World touch'

He said when I talked of Derrida and Foucault.

He thought they were Tamil Terrorists

Then I explained.

He said:

'Be pragmatic,

Look for simplicity;

Philosophy is dead and nutty.

Literature doesn't make you rich!

Try to improve your accent and

Consider doing an MBA.'

He showed me the key

To his brand new car.

I walked to the station.

Sunil Govinnage

This poem puts into conflict two worlds – the world of literature, philosophy and education with the world of materialism and business. Which world does the poet value? Consider how you reach that conclusion as a precursor to your own writing.

Write a short story (1000–1500 words) in which the central conflict or problem relates to an ideological difference. You could write your story around the ideas suggested by the Govinnage poem, or you can choose to write a story based upon two other differing sets of attitudes, beliefs and values.

You should experiment with characterisation, content, style and tone in writing your story, and use appropriate cohesive devices to develop, emphasise and connect ideas.

ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT TASK ONE

Imaginative written response

WORD LENGTH // 800–1000 words

TIME // 4 weeks

DETAILS // GENRE: short story

PURPOSE: to create, represent and entertain

AUDIENCE: readers of a short story collection targeting 17–20 year olds

CONTEXT

In this unit, you have examined the relationship between language, representation, identity and cultural context in narrative texts. You will now use this knowledge to create your own representation of these concepts within a short story.

TASK

You have two options for this task:

- 1 Construct a story using multiple narrators.
- 2 Construct a short story using the point of view of a single narrator.

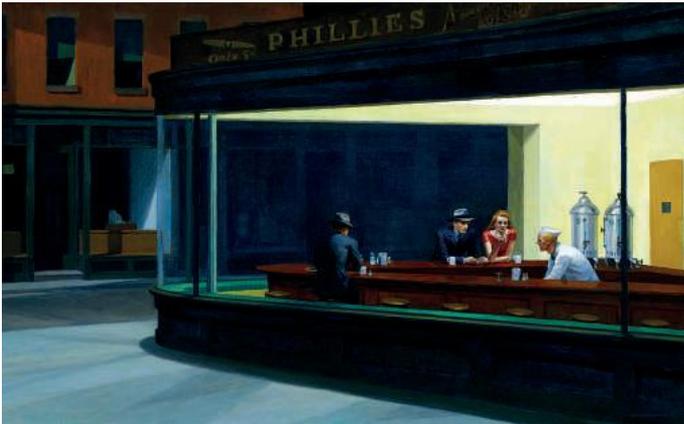
Each option is linked to a specific stimulus image on the next page.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The assessment is to be completed within four weeks of it being assigned by your teacher.
- You are to submit your story digitally to your teacher.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND STIMULUS IMAGES

UNIT TWO



Nighthawks, 1942, Edward Hopper



Christina's World, 1948, Andrew Wyeth

Option 1: Construct a story using multiple narrators

Write a short story using multiple narrators, capturing the distinct 'voice' of each one. Use the Edward Hopper painting *Nighthawks*, which depicts a downtown diner late at night, as stimulus to construct a compressed narrative.

Your story should capture the characters' sense of social isolation and alienation from the culture, as well as suggest their relationships.

Option 2: Construct a short story using the point of view of a single narrator

Write a short story using a single narrator, drawing on ideas suggested by the painting *Christina's World* by Andrew Wyeth.

Make careful choices of narrator (first person or third person/omniscient), 'voice', mood and atmosphere to develop a compressed narrative that explains why the figure is lying in the field. Think carefully about how you will construct and represent the identity of the figure.

CLOSE STUDY OF A DRAMA TEXT

Drama texts, such as plays, have both a written component (the script) and a performance component. These multimodal texts can be analysed in the same way as written texts by considering, for example, the construction of representations and cultural perspectives, the cultural assumptions embedded in the text and how they position the audience. They also challenge us to consider how they are produced and performed for their target audience.

This chapter explores Leah Purcell's play, *The Drover's Wife*, while also discussing elements of drama texts. This play is a reimagining of Henry Lawson's short story, which you read in Chapter 7. It takes a very different perspective from the original text and warrants close study to understand the purposes behind that change.

You will analyse language, representation, identity and cultural context to uncover cultural assumptions underpinning 'The drover's wife' texts. You will need to read the entire play before working through this chapter.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN CONTEXT

- explore the personal, social and cultural contexts of texts
- explore the intertextual relationships among texts

- *The Drover's Wife* – stage play
- *Bulla, Queensland, 1861* – painting
- *Ruby Plains Massacre 1* – painting
- 'The dispersals of the Native Police' – poem

LANGUAGE AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities and groups
- question the assumptions and values in texts

- 'a bent neck black and flustered feather mallee' – poem
- *Taboo* – novel

RESPONDING TO AND CREATING TEXTS

- consider how personal responses to texts are shaped by an individual's contexts
- use appropriate language, aesthetic features and stylistic devices to sustain a perspective.



Representations of the drover's wife

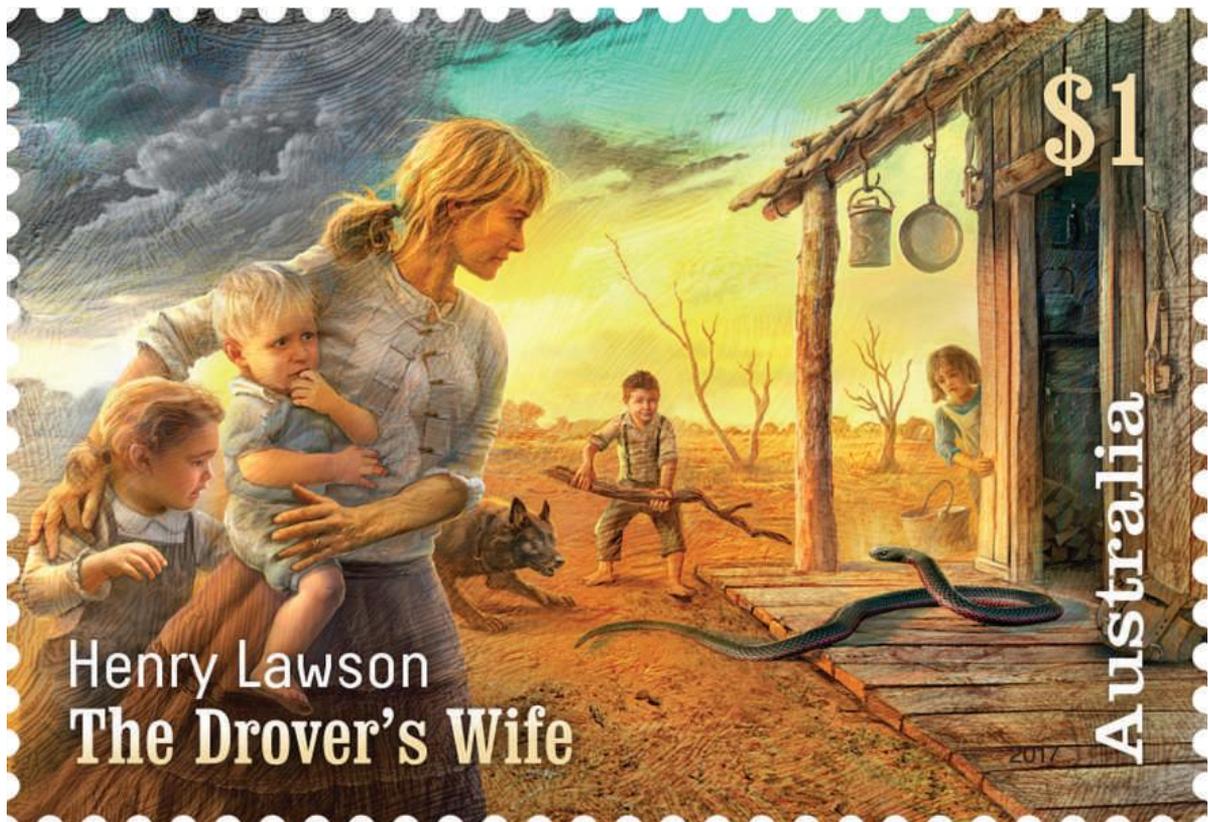
In Chapter 7 you read and considered 'The drover's wife', Henry Lawson's iconic story of life and isolation in the 19th-century outback.

Lawson grew up in a poor household in the Grenfell area and later the Blue Mountains in New South Wales. At the age of sixteen, he moved to Sydney to live with his mother, Louisa, after his parents separated.

Louisa Lawson was an early feminist who wrote an influential essay 'The Australian Bush-Woman' in 1889. Louisa described these women as 'grim, lonely, patient ... honest, hard-worked, silent, almost masculine'. She further represented them as 'independent, taciturn [and appalled] by the regularities and measured methods of town life'. She also depicted these women as unlikely to talk of their hardships even though their lives were tough and as victims of 'ill-usage' and 'prey, alone in the wilds with a brutal husband'.

Her perspective on the experience of these women, but also of their value to the emerging nation, clearly influenced her son's story 'The drover's wife'. Henry Lawson chose not to portray the brutality of husbands in his story though, preferring to depict a struggle with nature and harsh living conditions.

From those beginnings, the story of the drover's wife has endured for more than 100 years, prompted revisions and responses from writers and artists, and forged a place for itself in our concepts of Australian identity. In 2017, the 150th anniversary of Henry Lawson's birth was commemorated with the release of postage stamps showing emblematic scenes from two of his stories, including this one from 'The drover's wife'.



 DISCUSSION

Representations of the drover's wife

- 1 How does the image on the stamp represent femininity and masculinity?
 - 2 How does this representation align (or not) with your reading of Lawson's story?
 - 3 Who is constructed as heroic in this interpretation? What visual elements suggest this?
 - 4 Henry Lawson described his character as 'gaunt' and 'sun-browned', while his mother Louisa describes 'the bush-woman' as 'thin, wiry, flat chested ... lank, yet wiry, sun-cured... able to do, and almost always doing, the work of a strong man'. Compare and contrast the perspectives of the stamp's creator with that of the two Lawsons.
-

The stage play

In 2016, Leah Purcell – Queensland actor, director and writer – joined the ranks of Australian writers who have engaged with and reimagined Henry Lawson's story of the drover's wife. Purcell says that the story was a pivotal text in her childhood, one that her mother used to tell her.

Purcell wrote the play script for a dramatic retelling of the story, and it went on to win numerous literary awards. The production of the play, staged with Purcell as the drover's wife, Molly Johnson, also received many accolades.

Purcell's script was not simply an adaptation of Lawson's story, though, but a reimagining that presented her Indigenous Australian perspective. In Lawson's story, Indigenous representation is minimal, with the wood heap stacked by a deceiving Indigenous man and at least one of the children being delivered by 'Black Mary – the "whitest" gin in all the land'. Purcell's play is set at the same time as Lawson's story, in the early 1890s, but the Indigenous experience on the frontier is central in her version of the story, as is her rewriting of gender relations at that time.

Purcell's harrowing story thus explores the cultural experiences of Indigenous Australians and settlers in the 1890s, challenging the cultural assumptions in both Lawson's story and in modern Australia. Perhaps to point this out, she prefaces her script with a quote from Henry Lawson who, when he wrote his stories in the 1890s, offered the opinion: 'It is quite time that our children were taught a little more about their country for shame's sake'.

For the rest of this chapter, you will explore Purcell's script in depth as well as how multimodal drama texts like *The Drover's Wife* are produced and performed.

Reading drama texts

The process of getting a drama or play script to the stage involves intensive interpretation and rehearsal by performers to develop characterisation. When we read a play script, we need to interpret the text as well as visualise how it might be performed on stage.

This chapter presents images from the play's original production in 2016, which will help with visualisation. Bear in mind, though, that this is only one possible representation of the script; other representations are both possible and valid.

Dramatic elements

There are dramatic conventions for scriptwriting and key dramatic elements relating to performance. While the latter are the domain of actors and directors, it's important to have a sense of these elements in approaching the play *The Drovers' Wife*.

There are twelve important dramatic elements from a theatrical perspective:

- 1 *focus* – the way in which the performer assumes a character and gets into the mindset of that character
- 2 *tension* – mental pressure or emotional intensity; tension is used to focus attention or heighten involvement of the audience
- 3 *conflict* – the struggle between opposing forces in the narrative, usually focused around one or more characters; conflict for characters can be internal, with other characters or with exterior forces, and it can be expressed in many ways on the stage
- 4 *mood* – the emotional aspect of a scene or a moment in the action
- 5 *timing* – speaking, moving and reacting at the right moment for maximum effect; during rehearsal, the timing of movements, gestures and reactions are tested and used to create character, conflict and mood
- 6 *space* – not just the physical space of the stage, but the place where the action occurs within the audience's imagination
- 7 *symbol* – the use of a character, sound, prop or aspect of the set to represent an idea
- 8 *rhythm* – the pace of the narrative, which should speed up and slow down to build and release tension
- 9 *language* – the dialogue in the script, spoken by the performers
- 10 *contrast* – the use of changes in setting, space, rhythm or mood to distinguish one scene from another in engaging ways
- 11 *sound* – any use of sound outside of language, such as music or sound effects; sound can create or enhance atmosphere and mood
- 12 *climax* – the final and most powerful conflict and release of tension, usually at or near the end of the narrative.

A play script obviously provides the language, but it can also address all these elements, either within the language or through stage directions – outlining musical cues, directing movement and so on. In reading any script, pay close attention to the stage directions as well as the actual dialogue of the characters.

Different scriptwriters write stage directions in different ways. For example, Leah Purcell's script has detailed stage directions in terms of characterisation and performance. Like some other modern dramatists, she incorporates the word 'beat' where she wants attention to timing.

Setting

The setting of a drama is the place, time and area in which the narrative occurs. It's also the set created on the stage, which evokes that place and time for the audience by establishing the space in which the action occurs.

The setting of *The Drover's Wife* is stated in the script as follows:

An Australian Western for the stage.

A two-room shanty, in the dense scrubland of the Alpine country of the Snowy Mountains. A chopping block sits in the middle of the stage. An axe buried deep in it.

This setting could be evoked in many ways, and the set could contain a large number of props, backdrops and other visual cues. Nevertheless, the set as interpreted for Purcell's original performance is a bare stage, minimally dressed, with a snow gum trunk and the axe and chopping block.

DISCUSSION

Setting the scene

Examine the two images from Purcell's stage production and answer the questions.

- 1 Compare and contrast the image from the opening scene (Image 1) with the image constructed on the stamp on page 214. Refer in particular to mood and characterisation.
- 2 In Image 2, we see the bareness of the stage with the suggestion of a dwelling as backdrop. What does this image suggest about the woman's life and social status?



Image 1



Image 2



Rehearsal

During rehearsal, the timing, pace and rhythm of the performance are developed, and the performers build the focus on their characterisation. The director and designers also work on establishing mood during rehearsal, significantly through the stage design (lighting, costume, setting).

It is crucial that the available space is well used and that different levels within that space are considered by the performers. This is one form of contrast. Another form of contrast is through the stillness of reflective scenes followed by scenes of action, noise and energy. If the set is minimal, then movement and use of space must help to animate the performance.

A performer's movement, voice quality, reactions, expression and gestures are important elements in bringing characterisation to life. This photo shows Purcell wearing a fake 'pregnant belly' so that she learns to move as a pregnant woman – vital for her timing, movement and interactions with other actors.

Rehearsals can be very physical. Gestures and movements – and the symbolic meaning behind them – are devised and practised after the **blocking** of the action in the scenes. Contrast in rhythm, use of space, intensity, action and stillness will all be worked through in cast discussions and during rehearsals.

Climactic moments will also be identified and practised. The conflicts and crises are planned so that they develop through the scenes, ending with the final climactic moment when the outcome is revealed.

It is also during rehearsal that sound and lighting, entries and exits are plotted, ready for the **technical rehearsals** prior to opening.

Opening scene

As with other narratives, drama texts usually begin by orienting the audience – presenting characters, setting and the core of the story.

Scripts, of course, don't read like a short story. Conventions of scripting include the use of italics for stage directions, and the use of capitalisation and a colon to indicate the character who is speaking. If you're not used to reading scripts, note that if you are assigned a character to read, you do not read the stage directions out loud. When you finish speaking, you should read ahead to check if your character has more dialogue, and when.

blocking

when a director tells performers where they should stand and move for the proper dramatic effect

technical rehearsal

a rehearsal that focuses on the technological aspects of the performance

The following is the opening scene of *The Drover's Wife*.

Opening scene

The lights snap up.

Late afternoon.

Drover's Wife, heavily pregnant, aims her Martini Henry single-shot rifle at a badly injured Aboriginal man, Yadaka, lying on the ground. There is an iron collar around his neck.

DROVER'S WIFE: Don't you move, ya black bastard!

He doesn't.

Oh, no ya don't. You're not dyin' here! Get up and get goin'!

Beat.

Get up. Get goin'.

He doesn't move.

She lifts his torn and tattered shirt with the rifle, and there is a very infected stab wound on his lower back.

[Under her breath] Good God.

Beat.

She winces with a labour pain. Takes some deep breaths, bringing the contraction under control.

Not now, please.

[To her stomach] A few more days. Just to be sure.

She looks towards Yadaka.

Just not now.

She has a thought and looks around.

[In a loud whisper] Alligator?

Alligator!

No dog comes running.

Bloody mongrel dog.

There is a noise, she turns to see Thomas McNealy, a swagman.

MCNEALY: I have been called so on many occasions. Sorry I'm not the dog you require.

She aims her rifle at him. He quickly looks at Yadaka.

He dead, missus?

DROVER'S WIFE: You will be if ya don't state ya business, sundowner.

MCNEALY: Thomas McNealy, my lady.

DROVER'S WIFE: Ain't no lady, just a drover's wife. State ya business.

MCNEALY: Looks like ya might've scored ya'self a reward.

DROVER'S WIFE: What're ya on 'bout?

MCNEALY: Felon on the run. Crimes committed. Murder, missus, murder. Murderer. Here on ya doorstep.

DROVER'S WIFE: Murder? Who?

MCNEALY: Where've ya been, lady?

DROVER'S WIFE: Mindin' me business. Whose murder?

MCNEALY: Whole district on the lookout; be crawlin' with troopers any second now.

DROVER'S WIFE: Who was murdered?

MCNEALY: A white woman like you. On her own with her children. Mountain country.

DROVER'S WIFE: Who!

MCNEALY: A one Mrs Ulla Hosnaggle and her wee ones. A couple of days back. Other side of the range.

Drover's Wife is taken aback by this.

Niggers. Myall Abos. Savage bastards, just like him. Might be him. Wears the collar.

Horrific. Rape, strangulation, the boys sodomised, and the girl drowned ...

Life slipping away from piercin' sapphire blue [eyes] ...

So I'm told. The lengths people go to for detail. Me, faint at the sight of blood I do.

Broad daylight, brazen bastard. Those wee children.

I think of yours, the wee girl, so cute.

She steps closer, her grip firm on her rifle.

DROVER'S WIFE: What'd ya know about my children?

MCNEALY: Now, good lady—

DROVER'S WIFE: My children? What do you know about my children!

MCNEALY: Well, ya know the swaggy's trail, round and round we go. But these parts, missus, hard to see who's comin'. Mountain behind ya, dense flora in front of ya, and I'd be lyin' if I said I hadn't passed here a few times.

Kept my distance, looked in though.

That's all. Truth, missus.

DROVER'S WIFE: I wouldn't trust ya as far as I could spit.

She indicates with her rifle for him to leave.



ACTIVITY

Analysing the opening scene

- 1 How does this opening simultaneously reveal the woman's vulnerability and strength? What core attributes does she demonstrate by the end of this segment?
- 2 What perspectives are expressed about Indigenous men?
- 3 The **dramatis personae** list states that McNealy is a 60-year-old swagman. In Lawson's story it can be inferred that itinerant swagmen threatened women on isolated properties. What is the function of McNealy in this part of the opening scene?
- 4 Explain how McNealy's description of the deaths of the Hosnaggles invites us to be suspicious of him. How do his later revelations about the woman's children position the reader to further doubt him?
- 5 How could the swagman's unpleasantness affect the attitude of the drover's wife to Yadaka, the injured Aboriginal man?

dramatis personae
the characters in a
drama

Action versus dialogue

Later in the opening scene, McNealy manages to get hold of the woman's rifle and she goes to get him food. When she returns with the food, he makes a suggestive remark that is followed by extensive stage directions.

Scene 1 continued

She stabs him in the thigh.

He drops the rifle. It goes off, missing all.

He punches her. Sending her flying.

Meanwhile, Yadaka has managed to stand. He holds an axe in his hand that was concealed under him.

McNealy clutches at his thigh. Drover's Wife has fallen heavily on her stomach.

Yadaka, exhausted and in pain, lunges at McNealy. He brings the axe down onto the chopping block, missing McNealy as he scampers backwards off the block. The axe is buried deep into the chopping block.

Drover's Wife clutching at her stomach, in extreme pain.

Yadaka tries to pull the axe free but McNealy comes at him, grabbing Yadaka around the waist, pushing his fingers deep into the wound on his lower back.

Yadaka yells out in pain and collapses, pulling free the axe as he falls.

Drover's Wife manages to grab the rifle but fails to reload, dropping the bullet. She searches the ground.

McNealy runs off, limping badly.

Yadaka gives up the chase. He breathes deeply as he tries to bring his pain under control.

Another contraction collapses Drover's Wife again to the ground.

Yadaka clocks her. He gets up, axe in hand, staggers towards her.

She clocks him coming, fear etched in her face. She cowers, curling herself into a ball, throwing her arms over her head, protecting herself. A woman clearly showing signs of physical abuse.

DROVER'S WIFE: [petrified] Please, I have children.

This stops Yadaka in his tracks. He has no intention to hurt her.

Drover's Wife's body tenses, in anticipation of the impact to come.

Beat.

DISCUSSION

The purposes of action

Consider the effectiveness of this all-action segment and discuss the following questions with a partner. Justify your opinions with evidence from the text.

- 1 How does this segment contrast with the opening?
- 2 How does it construct Yadaka?
- 3 What does it foreshadow?
- 4 The axe is a key symbolic code in the play – ‘centre stage on its chopping block’. What does it symbolise?

Characters

Textual study often draws on an analysis of the function of characters in a narrative. In such an approach, characters are regarded as literary elements (like plot and setting) whose role is to serve the overall purpose of the story.

Four types of character found in many narratives are the *protagonist*, *antagonist*, *mentor* and *sidekick*:

- *protagonist*: the central character, usually one who has to learn a lesson or who has a need to change in some way
- *antagonist*: the protagonist’s opponent, whose function is to challenge the protagonist in some way – physically, emotionally or even ethically
- *mentor*: a character who points out what it is the protagonist has to recognise to achieve positive change; the mentor is sometimes called the conscience of the protagonist
- *sidekick*: a character who is supportive of the protagonist, often in an unquestioning way. In a Western, the sidekick is usually the hero’s companion.

ACTIVITY

Identifying character types

- 1 After reading the script, re-examine the text in terms of the functions of certain roles in the play. Identify what function each character has, and the textual elements such as dialogue, stage directions, actions and incidents that support your categorisation. Construct a table with the following headings to organise your analysis.

Functions	Character(s)	Actions/incidents	Dialogue	Stage directions
Protagonist				
Antagonist				
Mentor				
Sidekick				

- 2 Explain, using textual evidence:
 - a how the protagonist needs to change
 - b how the mentor effects/is responsible for the change within the protagonist
 - c how the antagonist challenges or causes harm to the protagonist
 - d how the sidekick supports the protagonist.
-

Molly

The drover's wife, Molly Johnson, is the protagonist in the narrative. However, Lawson's and Purcell's version of the story represent her in very different ways.

Lawson's story focuses on a gendered reading of loneliness, stoicism and courage amid abject poverty and hardship. She is the archetypal enduring frontierswoman who deals with drama, pain and death, and gets on with it.

Purcell's text brings into focus race relations on a brutal frontier. It also shows the threats women faced, not just from unsavoury itinerant characters, but from within their home. Her version of Molly, who refuses to be subservient and who must confront her relationship with Indigenous Australia, is thus shaped by both feminist and post-colonial perspectives.

Consider the following excerpts, where Molly explains to Yadaka how, as a pregnant 16-year-old with an absent drover husband, she was helped to bury her father by an old Aboriginal woman.

MOLLY: Cried a river she did. Wailed like the howlin' wind in a storm. She frightened me a little ... but, there was also this beauty and comfort to the sound ... It's not like she knew him ...

YADAKA: Sounds like our medicine woman, Ginny May. She talked up all her success stories. She spoke of a woman she helped with a ... 'no good man'.

DISCUSSION

Construction of Molly

- 1 How do Molly's words foreshadow a significant later disclosure about her ancestry?
- 2
 - a After the climactic rape of Molly Johnson, what shocking secret – that she thought she had kept even from her son – is revealed?
 - b What is the effect of this revelation at this stage of the story?
- 3 How are Molly's attitudes, beliefs and values at the beginning of the play, when she believes she is a white woman, different from when she realises towards the end of the play that she is not?
- 4 What are the central conflicts for the drover's wife? Are they physical, with the environment? With others? Or internal? Explain your choice/s with evidence.
- 5 What aspects of Molly Johnson's character are represented by the following two images?



Image 1



Image 2

Yadaka

While Henry Lawson wrote at length about life in the bush, it was always about the life of white settlers. Indigenous Australians had little representation in his stories and were never the protagonists; they were at best supporting characters, and they were presented using stereotypes we now recognise as racist. His story 'The drover's wife' includes mention of only one Indigenous man – a 'stray blackfellow' who cheats the woman by doing a lazy job of piling wood (see p. 172).

Purcell completely reinvents this character as Yadaka, a young Indigenous man who has escaped captivity and is trying to return to his mother's country. Yadaka provides a new perspective on the lived experience of Indigenous people in the 19th century – one that was never present in Lawson's work.

Consider the following extracts that work to construct the character of Yadaka. The first one follows Danny's comment that a decent man has boots, which neither he nor Yadaka has.

Extract 1 – Yadaka

YADAKA: Shouldn't disrespect ya da, Danny. My fathers and their fathers and all the fathers before them needed no boots to be men.

He demonstrates with dance-like moves.

They walked soft upon this earth. Tread lightly for huntin'. Bare foot—quick to take off and run, no hard hide to rub ya feet raw. It's not what you have on your feet, Danny, but how you carry ya'self, is what makes a decent man.

Looking with admiration at Yadaka, Danny nods. Yadaka goes back to sharpening the axe.

DANNY: I wanna be a decent man.

YADAKA: You are a good man, Danny.

DANNY: Ain't no man, I got no hair on me balls.

YADAKA: Pardon?

DANNY: Da reckons, ya ain't a man until ya got hairs on ya balls.

YADAKA: That's what I thought ya said.

In the second extract, Yadaka describes how his wife and her family group were the victims of a massacre.

Extract 2 – Yadaka

YADAKA: This big wind picked up, I was huntin' ... blew all around but never touchin' me. I could see the Duewungung in it as it ... [*making a hand action of spinning up*] ... straight up. No good.

I ran all the way back to camp ... didn't stop until I was holdin' 'em, my woman and children in my arms ...

Beat.

Women, children, and the old people ... all dead.

Poisoned. Waterhole.

The tribe put me out then, 'cause I wouldn't go with them for payback. I knew no good would come of it. Too many whites, too many guns now.

In this last extract, Yadaka has confessed to Molly that he did kill a trooper who ‘would’ve had [his] throat’, and also a native policeman (of whom he is contemptuous for ‘turnin’ on his own kind’).

Extract 3 – Yadaka

YADAKA: But never a child or woman. I would never just kill for the sake of it. My only charge, missus, is ‘Existin’ whilst black’. But fight for my life, I will, and make no excuses for it.

They hold each other’s stare.

DISCUSSION

Construction of Yadaka

- 1 How is Yadaka constructed in the play? How is he contrasted with the white male characters?
 - 2 Who does the play imply is the likely perpetrator of the atrocity against the Hossnagles? How is this done? Give concrete evidence from the play. Refer specifically to the extracts above.
-

Danny

In Lawson’s story, the drover’s wife has four children – two boys and two girls. Purcell’s story presents the audience with just one son, Danny; the others exist, but never appear on stage.

Consider the following extract, which comes after Yadaka has been hanged by Parsen and McPharlen, two stockmen friends of Danny’s father. Molly Johnson takes Joe Johnson’s boots and hands them to Danny.

DROVER’S WIFE: Put them on, son, a decent man has boots on his feet.

Danny looks over them, contemplating. He places them aside.

DANNY: I wanna walk like Yadaka.

She goes to him, looking at him as if for the first time; before her, a boy becoming a man.

DISCUSSION

Construction of Danny

- 1 As a group, discuss the construction of the character of 14-year-old Danny who, like his counterpart in the Lawson story, tells his mother: ‘Ma, I won’t never go a-drovin’.’ Particularly, focus on the version of masculinity represented by this character.
 - 2 What purpose does Danny play in the narrative? Support your argument with evidence from the play.
-

Other aspects of the play

The conclusion

At the end of the play, Molly Johnson has lost three of her children, who have been removed to 'the lock-up' and the care of the pastor. She has also lost her stillborn daughter, delivered by Yadaka. She's revealed to have murdered her violent husband Joe and buried him under the wood heap, she has killed a policeman and has been raped. Yadaka, who killed two policemen, is dead, hanged by Parsen and McPharlen.

The world of the frontier is shown to be a place of unrelenting violence caused by humans – a challenge to notions that it was the 'bush' itself that provided the hardships of settler life. However, Molly has discovered her parentage, and young Danny's positive appreciation of Indigenous culture means he happily accepts his new identity.

Molly, now a fugitive herself, resolves to move into the mountains with her son, using knowledge, supplies and survival skills provided by Yadaka. Still, Danny is distressed at failing to save his siblings from the control of the authorities.

Closing scene

DROVER'S WIFE: Danny, don't.

She keeps [the Killing Spear - which he intended to break] from him.

This time you will bring ya brothers and sister to safety.

She hands him the spear. He takes it, staring out to Yadaka.

She grabs her Martini Henry rifle and duffle bags.

Come.

Danny a little reluctant.

Danny, come.

Danny still not too sure. She looks out.

Feel that stillness, Danny. That sharp cold.

She takes a deep breath.

That sting in the air ...

She looks up and it begins to snow. She closes her eyes, welcoming it.

It's here ... She's speakin' to us, Danny.

Long beat.

DANNY: Ma.

DROVER'S WIFE: Gotta get my children back. That's our family. That's what family do.

DANNY: Then what?

DROVER'S WIFE: Mountains.

DANNY: The cold will kill us.

DROVER'S WIFE: There's a cave, supplies, and in the spring ... people. Come. Danny.

DANNY: Ma ...

DROVER'S WIFE: [*low, urgent, emotional*] Danny, please! We'll make it. I promise.

With his spear in his hand, Danny finally walks to his mother's side. She places an arm around his shoulders, her faithful Martini Henry by her side.

And when ya're old enough, son ...

I'll introduce you to Robert Parsen and John McPharlen.

They step out to depart.

Blackout.

from *The Drover's Wife* by Leah Purcell



ACTIVITY

Analysing the play's conclusion

- 1 Analyse the shifting attitudes of Molly in this final scene. How, ultimately, does this construct the character of the drover's wife?
- 2 What perspective on life would you say the Purcell script demonstrates – sentimental, romanticised, realistic, nihilistic, bleak, positive? Explain your answer.

Symbolism

Symbolism indicates meaning beyond the literal level. Symbols are often concrete objects used to refer to or represent abstract concepts. In drama performances, symbols are often evident in props as well as in dialogue, setting, costume, lighting, sound, gesture and expression.

Purcell's script contains a number of symbols and it's clear from the stage design that some of these form part of the set.



ACTIVITY

Interpreting symbolism in the play

- 1 Construct a table with the following headings to organise your analysis. From the play and set design, identify and interpret the symbols in the table. You can add more symbols if necessary.

Symbol	Interpretation
snow gum	
axe and chopping block	
rifle	
boots	
song	
spear	

- 2 Once you have completed the table and associated activity, select:
 - a the two most significant symbols for overall meaning of the play
 - b the one symbol that you think is most significant for character development.
- 3 In three separate paragraphs, provide clear explanations of the purpose and effectiveness of each of your three chosen symbols.

Critical reception

While a script is a written text, audiences and reviewers engage with the on-stage performance of that script. It's the complete package of script, production and performance that is ultimately understood, and critics may praise one aspect while giving a negative assessment of others. Of course, critics also bring their own perspectives and preconceptions to any production, just like any other audience member, and assess the play from that point of view.

The first production of *The Drover's Wife* was at Sydney's Belvoir Theatre in 2016. The following comments are from several critical reviews of that performance.

	Reviewer	Specific comments
1	Jason Blake, <i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'a politically charged rebuttal of the sentimental view of life on the Australian frontier ...' • '... unblinkingly bleak at times, but [with] a strong sense of mission and hope [emerging] in the final scene as Molly and Danny set out to find and take back what has been stolen'
2	Kate Hennessey, <i>The Guardian</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 'radical re-imagining' of the Lawson story • 'a tense action-packed Australian Western' that 'pauses history's half-truths and delivers our cherished classics back to us, alive with a new muse'
3	Ben Neutze, <i>The Daily Review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Purcell has injected the Indigenous perspective back into a chapter of Australia's history from which it has largely been whitewashed, forcing her audience to reconsider what they thought they knew about Australia in the later 19th century.' • 'Purcell has embraced the full violence and terror of Lawson's frontier myth, as well as the violence and terror he would never have committed to words.' • 'This might be the most important new Australian play written this year, questioning how we tell and respond to the stories of our nation's past. It feels utterly contemporary in its concerns and politics.'
4	Fiona Cameron, <i>The Music</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yadaka, 'the hero of the piece', is 'a strong counterpoint to Molly Johnson'. • 'The story doesn't waste time on romanticism or sentimentality but instead shows us the importance of family and the difference we make when we seek to help each other instead of harm.' • 'The three central characters [Molly, Danny and Yadaka] are so beautifully developed, vital and alive, that other parts of this storytelling come across as a caricature; a simply drawn pastiche of the values and views of the time.'



ACTIVITY

Analysing critical perspectives

- 1 Rank the perspectives in the reviews of *The Drover's Wife* in order of how much you agree with them. Explain your choices and rankings, with reference to the script as evidence.
- 2 Consider the review that you have ranked the lowest. Clearly elaborate the points of difference between your reading and the reviewer's.
- 3 Share your opinion with the class and identify any commonalities in your opinions. Discuss why this might be so.

Genre

At the beginning of the script, Purcell describes the story as ‘an Australian Western for the stage’. In interviews, she’s said that it was influenced by more-recent violent American westerns, including the TV show *Deadwood* and Quentin Tarantino’s film *Django Unchained*.

The American Western genre was once extremely popular, especially in film; it was the most popular genre for Hollywood film-making up until the 1960s. Today, the genre is nowhere near as popular as it once was, as attitudes towards **tropes** like ‘savage natives’ and ‘the right to colonise the frontier’ have changed significantly. Books, films and plays that present the genre now often do so in a **revisionist** way, questioning the conventions and assumptions of the old stories. For example, consider how the 2010 film *True Grit*, produced by Joel and Ethan Coen, presents a very different perspective on Western life from the 1969 version that starred John Wayne.

trope

a recurrent theme or motif

revisionist

revised attitude to a previously accepted concept

DISCUSSION

Western or not?

To prepare for this discussion, research the conventions and tropes of the American Western genre, and how recent rewritings of the Western have challenged the earlier conventional elements.

- 1 What elements of *The Drover’s Wife* would align with the conventional elements of a modern Western?
- 2 Do you consider it appropriate or justifiable to call this drama a Western? Provide evidence to support your perspective.

Representations of massacres

Purcell’s play exists as a text in its own right. However, we can gain much insight into both the play and Lawson’s original story by doing a *comparative reading* – considering and comparing each one with the other, and in the context in which each was created. Similarly, comparing Purcell’s text with other texts on related topics can give us greater insight into the play, and especially into its core themes.

The reimagining of Purcell’s *The Drover’s Wife* situates it within the frame of frontier violence. This history of violent conquest has largely been silenced in the past or was presented only from the perspective of the colonisers. Over the last 20 to 30 years, there has been heated debate about our cultural past, specifically in relation to atrocities committed on the frontier (which moved outward for 100 years).

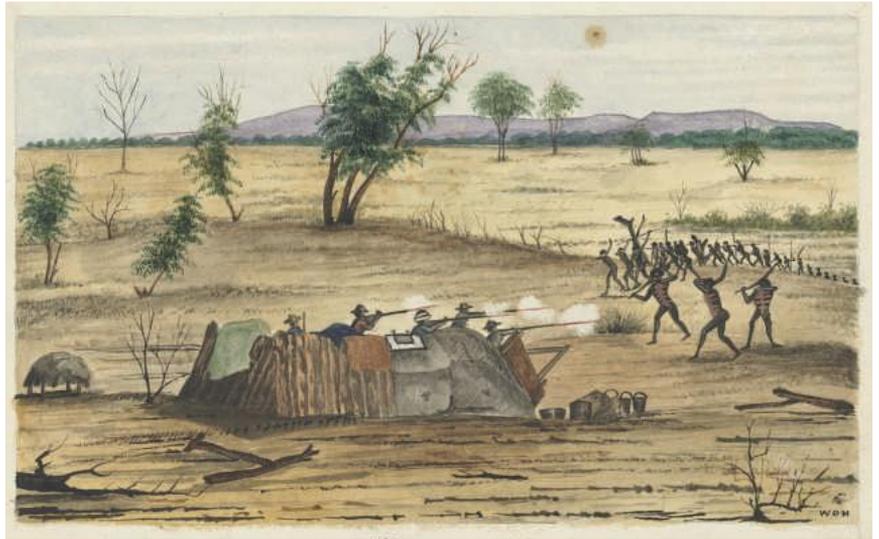
Visual representations

A number of artists in Australia’s colonial period painted representations of frontier violence, but almost always from a colonial point of view. In modern times, Indigenous artists are far more likely to create such representations, bringing their own perspective.

Explorer WO Hodgkinson's painting of frontier violence suggests a very different story from that of Indigenous artist Rover Thomas. Each of these depicts real historical events, but provides their own perspective.

Hodgkinson was a member of the Victorian Relief Expedition, a group of troopers and explorers that went searching for the missing Burke and Wills expedition in 1861. His painting shows a violent encounter the expedition had in far southwest Queensland, in which twelve Indigenous warriors were killed.

The Rover Thomas painting refers to a conflict in the 1920s between white station owners and Indigenous people on Ruby Plains station in the Eastern Kimberley, Western Australia. The station owner killed four of his stockmen who had slaughtered one of his bullocks. To mask his crime, he decapitated the victims and hid their heads in a tree trunk, where they were discovered after their people saw crows circling the spot. The artwork is unusual for its incorporation of the figurative element within an abstract representation of the station itself.



WO Hodgkinson, *Bulla, Queensland, 1861*



Rover Thomas, *Ruby Plains Massacre 1*



ACTIVITY

Comparing visual representations

Compare and contrast the paintings.

- 1 How does the representation of Indigenous Australians and colonisers differ in the works of Hodgkinson and Thomas?
- 2 Now consider the work of Rover Thomas, after reading its description. What is the effect of this painting?
- 3 Write an extended paragraph explaining how viewers are positioned to respond to these artworks. Refer to specific elements of each work.

Written representations

Recently, Indigenous writers have joined Indigenous artists to interrogate and represent their violent history. Novels such as *Taboo* by Kim Scott and *Terra Nullius* by Claire G Coleman, and the poetry of Sam Wagan Watson describe the atrocities of settlement, land taking and clearing through massacre. These works provide an Indigenous perspective to those offered by non-Indigenous writers such as Kate Grenville, Judith Wright or Martin Langford.

Martin Langford

In his poem 'The dispersals of the Native Police', Martin Langford writes about Indigenous men from distant cultural groups who joined the Native Police and were brought into districts far from their own lands. These Native Policemen operated under the direction of white officers to 'disperse' (drive away – or more likely, kill) Indigenous people that were not of their own cultural groups. (In Purcell's play, *Yadaka* expresses his contempt for such men as 'turnin' on their own kind'.)

The dispersals of the Native Police

*No-one thought that dispersal
meant anything other than killed.*
Judith Wright 'The cry for the dead'

The first thing dispersed
was the skin
of the shoulder or neck –
this in a bright spray of bright red
over seedheads and grasses.
Consciousness ended, another
unique intersection of moiety, totem,
dispersed into air.
The stiff weight of flesh
was dispersed by the dingoes and grubs.
Quietly, sunlight and rain worked away
at the unstudied angles of bones.
Still the dispersals continued:
memory, mindfulness, frayed into blanks
in the choices and shifts of white stories –
so new owners, taking the view,
might walk with a spring to their step –
might breathe deep – as if this land came free.

Martin Langford

Sam Wagan Watson

Indigenous poet Sam Wagan Watson has written about these massacres. The following is his poem 'a bent neck black and flustered feather mallee'.

a bent neck black and flustered feather mallee

deadened crow with eternal lockjaw
 a bent neck black and flustered feather mallee
 not as gracious as a magpie,
 neck bent into the wind
 and bitumen madness that claimed you
 scorched mark
 and tears
 fallen into the blackened tar and earth
 blood soaked earth through massacre
 war and plague

this is someone's land
 played host to someone's lust of
 a bent neck black and flustered feather mallee
 ants scream
 wage war
 and curse the rain
 black feathers scatter the highway
 teasing the frozen bitumen spirits
 locked in the heat and tar
 sealed forever like constant anger
 and sorrow within
 a bent neck black and flustered feather mallee

Sam Wagan Watson



ACTIVITY

Representations in poetry

- 1 The representations in Martin Langford's poem are structured around a number of notions of 'dispersal'. Explain the accumulated effect of these choices.
 - 2 What effect does the Judith Wright epigraph (initial quote) have on the representation in Langford's poem?
 - 3 Sam Wagan Watson's poem begins with the concrete image of a dead crow on the road and a reflection on the randomness of its death. It then transits into a poem that not only represents the violence of frontier deaths, but also shows the ongoing impact of colonial incursions into Indigenous lands. How effective is the move from concrete image to history, and then to emotion, in representing this subject matter?
-

Kim Scott, *Taboo*

Kim Scott is an Indigenous writer from the Western Australian Noongar people. In his novel *Taboo*, he imagines the Wirlomin, a cultural group whose ancestors were massacred on their tribal land, revisiting their land generations after their exclusion in a spirit of reconciliation between the white landowner and descendants of the victims.

From Scott's writing, it becomes clear that family, lore, place, memory, respect, and retrieving and remembering cultural practices and language are important for Indigenous Australians.

Below is a selection of extracts from *Taboo*. The text in brackets has been added here as background explanation.

Extracts from *Taboo*

Wilfred, one of the Wirlomin elders, describes what the plan is in revisiting the massacre site.

Bit of language, some songs and stories. What the old people used to do. We all belong here. Make some instruments – artefacts, people like to say. Visit the old campsites. Re-introduce ourselves to the place. Massacre country, they; lotta people reckon it's taboo; bad spirits everywhere, you know ... It is a place for ghosts, not living people.

After a pause, he refers to the white owners who have held the land since their ancestors massacred the Wirlomin.

They grown up, been living here for a while themselves. Sorry for the history, they say. Know it's our country, our ancestral country ... know we're the right people.

Nita, another elder, continues.

Not so much bush tucker now, not so much bush either ... But still got the lingo, unna? We found things written up that some of them used to tell when I was a kiddie ...

We got the stories someone wrote down for them [two old grannies], and words of our daddies and uncles long gone, and from Milton and Wilfred and me ... Been working it out, putting it together ... And [we got] ... Tilly, she was taken away but she's another one come back too.

The introductory explanation is continued by Gerry.

Wadjelas, all Australians, this is what they're gunna want to know. Some of them do already, the good and clever ones. Blackfella stuff, it's not just up in the desert [where people still lead a traditional life], it's here and we're the ones to be passing on how to really belong here ...

Gerry seemed transformed. He might have been an evangelist; you could see the passion bubbling in him, bursting out.

Can't stay away from here. If we're connected to all the old people killed, they'll be happy we're back [on traditional lands]. 'Cause in the old days hardly anyone was able to get back, and if they were here, well ... But we can bring back the language and the old stories, here, to the massacre town.

from *Taboo* by Kim Scott

DISCUSSION

Taboo and Yadaka

- 1 To what extent does the representation of Yadaka in *The Drover's Wife* align with the positive and conciliatory perspective evident in the *Taboo* passages above?
 - 2 Which, if any, of the issues and concerns mentioned by Scott are evident in the shaping of the representation of Yadaka? Explain the alignment, where there is such.
-

EXTENDED RESPONSE

Responding to *The Drover's Wife*

Select one of the following statements or questions for considered reflection, analysis and comment. Then write a considered, well-shaped and well-argued response of 700–800 words.

- 1 Although this is a contemporary retelling of the Lawson story, do you think that Lawson's statement, 'It is quite time that our children were taught a little more about their country for shame's sake', is relevant and applicable in discussing Purcell's play? In your response, refer to those silenced aspects of our history that Purcell's play acknowledges.
 - 2 How does the play interrogate and challenge the dominant discourse of Australian identity that arose in the 1890s, as the country moved to separate from British colonial rule and establish itself as an independent nation?
 - 3 If we read the play in terms of its reimagining of the original Lawson story, what does Purcell's play add to the transformations and rewritings that are reflective of our time?
 - 4 The play ends with these words by the drover's wife: 'And when ya're old enough, son ... I'll introduce you to Robert Parsen and John McPharlen.' How does the inclusion of these words affect the representation of the wife and the overall 'message' of the play? How would leaving them out affect the representation and the message?
 - 5 How does Purcell's play *The Drover's Wife* position readers to view Australian cultural identity? Elaborate your perspective in relation to this statement.
-

WRITING ANALYTICAL ESSAYS

One of the most enduring types of critical texts in English is the analytical essay – a written text that analyses another text (usually a literary text) and provides an interpretation to the audience. Analytical essays are a core text type for presenting perspectives on the written word.

In this chapter, you will examine the elements of an analytical essay and how to write effective essays. In Year 12, your end-of-year exam will require you to write an analytical essay about one of the texts you've been studying. Developing a strong understanding of this text type now will put you in a much better position for your final assessment.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

TEXTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

TEXTS IN CONTEXT

- investigate the relationships between language, text, purpose, audience and context
- explore the intertextual relationships among texts

- 'How are readers of *The Secret River* positioned to view frontier violence and cultural difference?' – model analytical essay

LANGUAGE AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- develop knowledge and understanding of strategies for convincing argument
- analyse how language choices are used for different purposes and contexts

RESPONDING TO AND CREATING TEXTS

- synthesise subject matter and substantiate own responses using textual evidence
- use cohesive devices to develop and emphasise ideas and connect parts of texts
- use text structures, grammar and language features for particular effects.



The analytical essay

An analytical essay is a written response to another text. While this chapter only looks at responses to literary texts, visual, performance or multimodal texts can also be analysed by means of an essay.

There are many different approaches to analysis, just as there are different approaches to persuasion (see Chapter 4). In this chapter, we will be approaching the analytical essay as an academic text. This means that it must be written in a formal tone, using literary terminology and academic conventions such as references. This type of essay is written for educated readers who we assume are already familiar with the text in question.

It is important to distinguish the analytical essay from two other types of responses to texts: interpretation and critical response. Each of these has different purposes and stages.

An *analytical essay* allows you to demonstrate your understanding of a text by analysing its key components at both a literary and cultural level. Its broad purpose is to analyse a topic and use arguments with supporting evidence to prove that the writer's opinion of the reading is correct, valid or defensible. It can be broken down into three stages:

- thesis
- argument
- reiteration.

You'll notice that these are very similar to the purposes and stages of a persuasive text.

An *interpretation* explains your position(s) on a literary work, usually one that is assumed to be culturally significant. It selectively uses evidence from the text to prove your interpretation of the text and how you reached it. It can be broken down into three stages:

- evaluation
- synopsis of the text
- reaffirmation.

A *critical response* is about developing your reading and interpretation of a text. This can involve questioning the propositions not only of the text but also of the topic, and reaching your own conclusions through a sustained and logical argument. Critical responses require selective but detailed textual references that support your reading, including paraphrasing and quoting. It can be broken down into three stages:

- evaluation
- deconstruction
- challenge.

For Year 11, our focus is on analytical essays that, in the argument stage, support interpretation and perspective with detailed references, including paraphrasing and quoting.

The structure of an analytical essay

Throughout the year you've considered the structure of different text types, such as persuasive and narrative texts. Analytical essays can also be considered in terms of structure, with particular attention to stages and phases. While the structure of all analytical essays generally follows the same pattern, it can be fluid in terms of the placement of elements within a paragraph or section.

Each of the three stages of an analytical essay – thesis, argument and reiteration – may contain a number of phases, or sub-stages, through which the essay progresses. For our purposes, a typical analytical essay might be structured as follows.

Stages	Phases
<p>Thesis <i>The statement of the central argument</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hook – an initial statement that captures interest or takes an evaluative stance to contextual factors; it could start with a key quote from the text that leads into the thesis • Background information (textual, cultural or historical, depending on the topic) • Thesis – the writer's position on and central argument about the topic; a direct response to the question • Preview of points of argument that support the thesis (which could mean challenging aspects of the topic)
<p>Argument <i>A series of arguments (paragraphs) that support the thesis</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic sentence that establishes the point being argued and defended in each paragraph • Elaboration(s) of the point • Exemplification – using relevant/selective evidence to support the point; it may include paraphrase, quotes and analysis of the relevance of the quote to the argument • Summary of argument/point stated in the paragraph; the sentence should clinch the argument of the paragraph • Link to the point of the next paragraph • Typically, the last body paragraph would put forward the strongest position in your analysis of the text
<p>Reiteration <i>The thesis is restated and the arguments finalised</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of arguments/points presented to support the thesis (not expressed in the same language used at the start) • Reinforcement/reiteration of the central argument (using different words to re-state your thesis) • Punchy finishing statement to neatly summarise your position or provide a challenge

The thesis of an analytical essay always depends on the context of the essay. Why are you writing it? What aspect of the literary text in question is being examined?

For example, the current unit of your studies is ‘Texts and culture’. When writing an analytical essay on a text for this unit, you should therefore focus on the cultural aspects of the text, with some reference to textual strategies, rather than listing the aesthetic aspects. Your essay should demonstrate your knowledge of cultural context and practices, your knowledge of the text *and* your knowledge of literary terminology and textual strategies.

Model analytical essay

The following model essay provides an analysis of Kate Grenville’s novel *The Secret River*, and specifically focuses on cultural aspects of the text. Read the essay, considering how it is structured and how it presents its arguments.

How are readers of *The Secret River* positioned to view frontier violence and cultural difference?

A sad fact of our history has been the silence about the violence of frontier contact in Australia over a period of 140 years. In his Boyer Lectures (1968), anthropologist WEH Stanner described this as a ‘cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale’, the ‘great Australian silence’ about the ‘secret river of blood’ that runs through Australian history. Kate Grenville’s novel *The Secret River* draws its title from Stanner’s graphic metaphor. While other writers have addressed this topic, Grenville’s construction of an initially sympathetic protagonist adds to the shock and horror of the atrocity he commits to acquire the land he desires. Massacre is the dark, secret act of William Thornhill, just as massacre (or ‘dispersal’) is the shameful secret of Australia’s colonial past. Through the representation of racial binaries, competing attitudes towards the land and an inability to communicate, readers are positioned to view the shocking and violent climax of *The Secret River* as stemming from cultural differences.

Assumptions about cultural differences are made explicit through the racial binaries that Grenville uses to construct representations of Indigenous Australians and colonists. The prologue, ‘Strangers’, told via Thornhill’s narrative perspective, emphasises cultural differences through the representation of Indigenous peoples as the unknown and unknowable ‘other’. At the time of the novel’s setting, ‘whiteness’ was equated with racial and cultural superiority, while ‘blackness’ was constructed as inferior or childlike. These cultural assumptions are clearly articulated through Thornhill’s reflections: everyone knew the blacks did not plant things. They wandered about like children, they did not plant today so that they could eat tomorrow. It was why they were called savages.’

These racial binaries are also used to construct the differing attitudes, beliefs and values of the colonists and the Indigenous Darug people towards land and its usage. For the colonists, the land is unoccupied, un-owned and able to be acquired simply by ‘dragging one’s heel’ around the perimeter of the plot; for Thornhill, ‘it was astonishing how little it took to own a piece of the earth’. Thornhill is represented as being increasingly driven by his desire for land ownership: ‘it was a piercing hunger in his guts: to own it. To say mine, in a way he had never been able to say mine of

anything at all. He had not known until this minute that it was something he wanted so much.' While white emancipists and settlers saw land as a commodity to be acquired, land, to the Darug, was a place to which they had spiritual connection. This is evident when Long Jack refuses to move away, saying, 'This me, my place'.

Yet the novel, while illustrating both Thornhill's desire and naivety ('My place now you got all the rest'), also depicts his increasing awareness that, while the Darug did not farm as Europeans did, they nonetheless used farming practices. He has an epiphany too about how the Darug use their resources to live an idyllic life 'like gentry'. Thornhill is thus represented as both embracing and challenging colonial attitudes to land and Indigenous identity.

The inability of colonists and the Darug people to communicate is constructed as one of the tragedies of this collision of cultures. The opposing parties are shown as unable to communicate about their significant differences in their approaches to land use and land ownership. The Darug make clear to Thornhill the importance of the 'yam daisies', which Blackwood further explains. Nevertheless, Thornhill persists in growing corn on the yam patch and resists the evidence of occupation. Sal Thornhill, on the other hand, reads the features of the nearby Darug encampment and understands that they have settled in the Darug's home.

What the novel arguably depicts is not so much an inability to communicate (even in different languages), but rather an unwillingness to understand. Although Thornhill and Whisker Harry communicated (through gesture) in their confrontation about the yam patch and the corn, Thornhill chooses not to take account of it because his desires as a white settler override those of the Darug. He understands that the Darug, in their dancing and storytelling, are participating in significant cultural events. Yet he chooses to align himself in a reprisal massacre against the Darug with men he detests for their outrages, so that he might maintain the life slipping away from him. →

Ningali Lawford-Wolf in the return of Sydney Theatre Company's *The Secret River*, 2016. Photo: Heidrun Löhr ©





William Thornhill is represented as suppressing his insights into the richness of Indigenous culture in order to respond to the fear-mongering racism of Smasher Sullivan because he knows that their action would go unpunished. Nevertheless, he demands silence from those complicit in the massacre that destroys local Darug life and culture. The planning, the covertness, the burning of evidence and the intimidation of witnesses, defined by Jacques Semélin (in Dovey 2017) as key aspects of massacre, are all accurately depicted by Grenville. Thornhill, betraying all the better aspects of himself, threatens, 'But not a word, any of youse. Word gets out we done it, I come and slice out the tongue that blabbed'.

At the heart of the novel are cultural conflicts shaped by competing assumptions about the value of the two racial groups – of the perceived superiority of the colonists and the perceived inferiority of the native inhabitants – and of land – as property giving status and rank or as a place to which one is aligned through spiritual connection. Grenville systematically constructs these conflicts through deploying racial binaries familiar at the time, through competing attitudes and beliefs about land and its use, and through representations of the inability of the opposing parties to communicate successfully. She depicts fear escalating as Thornhill – shown as insightful about and empathetic towards the Darug – participates in the reprisal massacre. Readers, ultimately, are positioned to see that it costs Thornhill greatly to 'own [his] piece of earth'. Grenville's novel, though a work of creative imagination, shows both the 'river of blood' that runs through our history and the way secrecy about it operated to keep this knowledge from us.


ACTIVITY
Structure of an analytical essay

After reading the essay, copy and complete the tables below. The first table breaks down the essay's structure, while the second shows how the essay writer demonstrates their knowledge.

Stage	Phase	Paragraph	Point(s) made in paragraph
Thesis	Broad reader position – 'A sad fact ...' Background – historical, textual Thesis + points	1	Violence and massacre a historical fact This violence was because of cultural differences – three are identified
		2	
		3	
		4	
		5	
		6	
		7	
		8	

Knowledge of cultural context and cultural practices	Knowledge of the text	Knowledge of literary terminology and textual strategies
e.g. Violence of frontier contact	e.g. massacres in 1814	e.g. protagonist


DISCUSSION
Thesis and audience

- 1 To what extent does the essay address the topic? The essay is selective and focuses on three key issues. Why select these three? Could you have selected others? If so, which?
- 2 How does the essay demonstrate awareness that the audience is an 'expert reader'? What effect might this have had on some decisions? For example, the writer assumes the reader knows what happens at the reprisal massacre. Why not go into detail about the actual violence?

Language elements of an analytical essay

In Chapter 8, you learnt about the language elements of narrative texts, while Chapter 4 looked at the language elements of persuasive texts. Analytical essays have their own language elements. Many of them are the same as those of narrative and persuasive texts, while others are specific to analytical texts. Understanding how these elements are used will help you write stronger and more convincing essays.

Cohesion and coherence

Cohesion is the way the construction of a text enables it to tie everything together; it is important for the overall consistency of the essay. Chapter 8 described five cohesive devices used in narrative texts. These devices are also used in analytical essays:

- *reference* – the use of pronouns (e.g. he, she, it, them) and demonstrative adjectives (e.g. this, that, those, these)
- *ellipsis* – not repeating words or phrases because the reader understands that they're implied
- *substitution* – replacing a specific word with another, more general word
- *repetition* – reusing the same word, or related words, throughout the text
- *collocation* – using a set of related words that typically go together.

As with narrative texts, understanding, identifying and using cohesive devices will make your analytical writing more engaging and your argument more compelling.

Coherence refers to the big picture that ensures a text makes sense. In an essay, it is the linking of the thesis and preview statements, and then the preview statements with relevant topic sentences. It is an important means of developing the strength of the thesis and argument.

Conjunctions and connectives

One of the key tools for improving coherence is the use of **conjunctions** and **connectives** in linking sentences. A conjunction is a single word used to link clauses within a sentence, such as 'and', 'if' or 'but'. A connective is a word or phrase that links ideas together, such as 'however', 'then', 'in contrast'. Where conjunctions join two ideas in one sentence, connectives link ideas across sentences or paragraphs. These are crucial not only in joining ideas to form specific types of sentences, but also in pointing out reasoning and developing logical relationships between ideas.

Conjunctions and connectives may be coordinating or subordinating. Coordinating connectives join compound sentences (e.g. 'She went to the party and he stayed at home. '), while subordinating connectives join complex sentences (e.g. 'She went to the party, but not the dinner afterwards. ').

conjunction
a word that links clauses within a sentence

connective
a word or phrase that links ideas between sentences

In an analytical essay, you need to use specific conjunctions and connectives to accomplish the following tasks:

- compare or contrast ideas, concepts and arguments (e.g. not only, but also, on the other hand, in contrast)
- show cause and effect or reason (e.g. so, because, in order to, since, therefore, as a result, accordingly)
- show something is conditional (e.g. if, then, only if, unless, otherwise)
- concede a point (e.g. yet, but, even though, although, whereas, at the same time, in spite of this)
- exemplify (e.g. that is, such as, in fact, for example, in summary, in short).

There are many connectives and conjunctions in the English language, more than can be listed here. Use a dictionary or thesaurus if necessary to find the appropriate terms for your writing. However, be careful not to use different terms just for the sake of variety.

Sentence structure

Just as with narrative and persuasive writing, a variety of sentence patterns should be used when writing an analytical essay. Chapter 8 described four different types of sentences: simple, compound, complex and compound-complex. Here they are again, with examples drawn from the model essay.

Type of sentence	Structure	Functions
Simple	An independent (main) clause or sentence containing one verb/verb group (or process)	A sad fact of our history has been the silence about the violence of frontier contact in Australia over a period of 140 years. Kate Grenville's novel <i>The Secret River</i> draws its title from Stanner's graphic metaphor.
Compound	Two (or more) independent (main) clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions or by a semicolon	Nevertheless, Thornhill persists in growing corn on the yam patch and resists the evidence of occupation. For the colonists, the land is unoccupied, un-owned and able to be acquired simply by 'dragging one's heel' around the perimeter of the plot; for Thornhill, 'it was astonishing how little it took to own a piece of the earth'.
Complex	An independent (main) clause with one or more dependent (or subordinate) clauses	While other writers have addressed this topic, Grenville's construction of an initially sympathetic protagonist arguably adds to the shock and horror of the atrocity he commits to acquire the land he desires.

An essay is likely to mostly contain simple sentences, which are best at getting ideas across to the reader. However, these sentences will often involve complex nouns or noun groups, rather than simple one-word nouns.



ACTIVITY

Identifying sentence types

- 1 Read the model essay again and identify two more examples of each of the above types of sentences.
- 2 Using the sentences in the previous table as models, write your own sentences following the same patterning. Construct a table similar to the one below to record the original and the new sentence. An example is given to help you.

Original sentence	Patterning	New sentence
<i>A sad fact of our history</i>	Subject Noun group/participant (fact)	<i>The local Darug people</i>
<i>has been the</i>	Verb group/process	<i>experienced</i>
[what?] <i>silence</i>	Noun/participant	<i>dispossession</i>
[about what?] <i>about the violence of frontier contact</i>	Prepositional phrase/ circumstance	<i>after the confrontations</i>
[where?] <i>in Australia</i>	Prepositional phrase/ circumstance	<i>on the Hawkesbury</i>
[when?] <i>over a period of 140 years.</i>	Prepositional phrase/ circumstance	<i>over the summer months of 1814.</i>

Graduation

Graduation was discussed in Chapter 4 as a tool for persuasive writing. Writers can grade their meaning to make it stronger or less intense in terms of the force of the statement. Graduation can also bring something into or out of focus.

There are a number of resources that writers use to adjust the force and focus of their attitude. For example:

- intensifiers (*incredibly* irresponsible)
- adverbs (*so* irate)
- adjectives (*major* change)
- comment adverbials that express viewpoint or opinion (*arguably, obviously, presumably*).

Use can also be made of the repetition or ‘scaling’ of a group of related words (e.g. annoyed/angry/furious).

Here are examples of the use of gradation in the model essay.

While other writers have addressed this topic, Grenville’s construction of an initially sympathetic protagonist **arguably** adds to the **shock** and **horror** of the atrocity he commits to acquire the land he desires.

What the novel **arguably** depicts is not so much an inability to communicate (even in different languages), but rather an unwillingness to understand.

DISCUSSION

Graduation and attitude

- 1 Identify instances of intensifying or moderating attitude in the essay, as well as the type of resource used. Discuss the effectiveness of the use of gradation in the essay, as well as why particular examples are used.
- 2 In the two sentences above, the writer uses ‘arguably’ – a comment adverb – to indicate that the statement might be open to debate. Discuss what might be challenged in each sentence and who would be challenging it.

Attribution

An analytical essay typically includes some reference to external sources. These references provide evidence to support the writer’s claim, and to show that they have knowledge not just of the text being analysed, but also of other texts and writers in related contexts.

Any reference like this should be **attributed** to the source in question. Quotes and references need to be attributed appropriately and formally, and not by using phrases like ‘The author says ...’. Acknowledgement of someone’s position is usually evident through using words like ‘state’, ‘report’ and ‘suggest’, among others.

In the model essay, the writer refers to two external sources: WEH Stanner and Jacques Semélin.

attribute

to ascribe a statement or data to a particular source

In his Boyer Lectures (1968), anthropologist WEH Stanner described this as a 'cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale', the 'great Australian silence' about the 'secret river of blood' that runs through Australian history.

The planning, the covertness, the burning of evidence and the intimidation of witnesses, defined by Jacques Semélin (in Dovey 2017) as key aspects of massacre, are all accurately depicted by Grenville.

In making these references, the writer acknowledges the words or viewpoints of those two persons. This expands the contextual background of the essay and strengthens the argument.

Note here the two different attribution strategies to acknowledging the sources:

- incorporating the cited person's words into the sentence directly
- paraphrasing the elements of the definition as cited by the person.

Both the Stanner and Semélin references use very simple attributions: In his Boyer Lectures (1968); (in Dovey 2017). Longer and more formal analytical essays, such as those written at university, will include a full **bibliography**, and attribution will be made in more detail within the text according to established systems.

It's also possible for a writer to distance themselves from the ideas proposed by the cited sources, and perhaps to question their reliability. If so, the writer citing the source would use terms such as 'claim' to cast a negative slant on the source. This kind of reference still adds credibility to the essay writer, suggesting that they have a better understanding of the topic than others.

bibliography
a list of sources referred to in a scholarly work, provided as an appendix

CREATING AN ANALYTICAL ESSAY

As you've seen, analytical essays are not simple things to write. An effective, convincing essay is not something that you can just sit down and write without thinking things through.

The process of writing and shaping an analytical essay typically includes four sequential stages, very much like those described in Chapter 4 (p. 95).



1 PLANNING

An analytical essay usually requires careful planning, based on the topic under consideration. The main focus of this planning is usually reading and rereading the literary text being analysed, with particular consideration of how the text supports your thesis. Note-taking and graphic organisers can be very effective here, especially to record quotes from the text which you plan to include in your essay. This is also the stage where you decide on the main arguments to present in your essay.

2 DRAFTING

Once you have a plan, quotes and arguments, you need to write an initial draft that presents and supports your thesis. Your essay should fit the stages and include the phases described on page 241, and be presented through coherent and cohesive paragraphs.

3 EDITING

Once you have a draft, you need to read it and consider how it could be improved. An analytical essay needs to present a convincing argument based on a clear and logical analysis; it also needs to be polished, interesting and engaging to read. Take in feedback from early 'alpha readers' and edit your work based on their feedback.

4 PROOFREADING

Finally, do one last read of the essay, correcting errors and making small changes that will improve the overall text.

Tools for planning

A graphic organiser, similar to the one presented in Chapter 4, can be useful for planning an analytical essay.

Planning an analytical essay	
Working title and topic	
Introductory paragraph Statement of thesis: your stated position on the topic or issue	
Argument 1 – subtopic paragraph	<p>Topic sentence:</p> <p>Supporting points, examples, quotes from the text and other sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Argument 2 – subtopic paragraph	<p>Topic sentence:</p> <p>Supporting points, examples, quotes from the text and other sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Argument 3 – subtopic paragraph	<p>Topic sentence:</p> <p>Supporting points, examples, quotes from the text and other sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Argument 4 – subtopic paragraph	<p>Topic sentence:</p> <p>Supporting points, examples, quotes from the text and other sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Reiteration – rephrasing your thesis and giving a finishing statement	

 EXTENDED RESPONSE

Writing an analytical essay

For this activity, you need to write an analytical essay of 700–800 words that focuses on one of the texts you have studied for this unit, whether chosen by you or by your teacher.

You need to decide on a topic for your essay – a thesis about how the text can be analysed. You will then present, argue and support this thesis through the essay. Your topic *must* reflect one or more cultural aspects of the text, rather than its aesthetic aspects. You could, however, refer to central symbols that are used to show dominant attitudes. Your essay should demonstrate your knowledge of cultural context and practices, your knowledge of the text *and* your knowledge of literary terminology and textual strategies.

You should plan your essay carefully so that it is structured appropriately and effectively. Consider the grammatical elements and language features typically used in an analytical essay. Make sure you selectively and thoughtfully incorporate these into your work, along with supporting quotes from the text and from other sources.

If confident, you may wish to go beyond the usual five paragraph essay. You might find that proving one argument requires a couple of paragraphs to do justice to the topic and your overall argument.

ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT TASK TWO

Analytical written response

WORD LENGTH // 800–1000 words

TIME // 2 hours

DETAILS // **GENRE:** analytical essay
PURPOSE: to create, represent and inform
AUDIENCE: readers familiar with the texts being analysed

CONTEXT

In the unit, you have examined the relationship between language, representation, identity and cultural context in narrative texts. You will now use this knowledge to analyse issues of cultural representation and perspectives in two related narrative texts.

TASK

Write an analytical essay addressing ONE of the following topics.

Topic A

Analyse how Bovell's inclusion of Indigenous Australian perspectives, which were marginalised in Grenville's text, affect the overall meaning of his stage play of *The Secret River*.

To complete this task, you are assumed to have studied both Kate Grenville's novel *The Secret River* (2005) and Andrew Bovell's 2013 adaptation of it for the stage.

Topic B

Analyse how the representation of Molly Johnson in Leah Purcell's *The Drover's Wife* aligns with or challenges the version of femininity in Henry Lawson's original story.

To complete this task, you are assumed to have studied both Henry Lawson's short story and Leah Purcell's re-visioning of that story in her script *The Drover's Wife* (2016).

INSTRUCTIONS

- The analytical essay is to be written under supervised test conditions, with no opportunities to access teacher or peer advice and feedback.
- The assessment will be completed in a single session with two hours of writing time plus five minutes' perusal.
- Your teacher will provide you with a set of quotations for each core text. From the relevant set, you must make appropriate choices to support your argument.

UNIT TWO

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



Your purpose in this task is to communicate an informed, critical perspective of the core text in response to either topic. The audience for whom you write will have a deep understanding of the text selected.

This assessment task is designed to be similar to what you're likely to experience in your Year 12 final examination.

PREPARATION

The most important preparation you can do for this assessment is to read both texts before the test – don't just rely on summaries or films/television series. Skim through each text before the assessment date so that they are fresh in your memory, and jot down a few thoughts and notes. You can't bring those notes with you into the assessment, but you can revisit them before the session.

WRITING

You have two hours of writing time to complete your essay. In perusal time, carefully consider the question and read the quotation sheet. Planning your essay out on the attached scaffold sheet will be time well spent.

Your essay should follow this structure:

- an introductory thesis,
- body paragraphs presenting support for your argument, and
- a final section that reiterates the thesis and summarises your analysis.

The body paragraphs will require the most time and writing, so don't get carried away with a long introduction.

Pay close attention to how long you're taking on each section and how much you're writing. Your essay should be 700–800 words (not including quotations); your teacher might allow a little wiggle room if you go over that, but not by more than 100 words. Allow yourself 5–10 minutes at the end to edit and polish your work. Write with a black pen and make sure your handwriting is legible!

Glossary

aesthetic feature an aspects of a text that prompts an emotional and critical reaction

allegory a text that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning

alliteration the use of two or more words within a group that start with the same letter

ambiguity lack of a definite meaning in a statement or concept; open to more than one interpretation

aspect a particular part of something

attribute to ascribe a statement or data to a particular source

autonomy freedom from external control

bibliography a list of sources referred to in a scholarly work, provided as an appendix

binary opposition a pair of related terms or concepts that are opposite in meaning and set off against one another

blocking when a director tells performers where they should stand and move for the proper dramatic effect

characteristic a distinguishing feature or quality

citation a quotation from a passage, book, author, etc.

cognitive dissonance the mental conflict that occurs when beliefs or assumptions are contradicted by new information

cohesive device a feature of vocabulary, syntax and grammar that binds different parts of a text together

concept a mental representation of an abstract idea or notion

conclusion a summary of the argument or information

conjunction a word that links clauses within a sentence

connective a word or phrase that links ideas between sentences

context the environment in which a text is created or responded to

contextualise to place within a framework or context

convention a practice or method established by general consent or usage

cultural assumption a belief or attitude about things such as gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and social class that is taken for granted within a culture

cultural capital the accumulation of social assets such as material belongings, education, skills and knowledge that an individual can draw on to give them an advantage in social life

cultural practice the customary things we do every day, such as shop or go to work, which are shaped by knowledge of rules or conventions

culture the attitudes, customs and beliefs, or ways of living, that distinguish one group of people from another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation

diverse of various kinds or forms; different from each other

documentary a presentation of a real event, person's life, etc., in the form of a television or radio program, film, etc.

dramatis personae the characters in a drama

egalitarianism a belief that all people are equal and deserving of equal rights and opportunities

exposition a detailed statement or explanation

genre the categories into which texts are grouped

graduation intensifying meaning by increasing the force or focus of an expression

hierarchy a system of persons or things in a graded order

inclusive language language that avoids expressions or words that exclude particular groups of people

infer to deduce from evidence and reasoning, rather than from explicit statements

intertextuality one text drawing upon or making reference to other texts

juxtaposition the placing of two or more things close together, often as comparison or contrast

lexical relating to the words or vocabulary of a language

metaphor a term or phrase that is applied to something

to which it is not literally applicable, in order to suggest a resemblance

mise-en-scene (French) the setting and design elements on the stage of a theatre production or on the set of a film

modality the capacity of elements of language to express confidence in the statement being made

mode a method of communication chosen as the way to transmit a message

multimodal uses a combination of at least two modes (e.g. spoken and written), delivered at the same time, to communicate ideas and information

narrative a spoken or written account or story of connected events

normative relating to a social norm or standard

nuanced showing a subtle difference or distinction in expression, meaning, response, etc.

onomatopoeia a word that imitates the sound associated with the thing being described

parody a work that mimics the style of another work, artist or genre in an exaggerated way, usually for comic effect

pastiche an artistic work composed in a style that imitates that of another work, era or artist

per capita 'by the individual person'; a measurement or figure divided among all members of a population

personification the attribution of human nature or character to inanimate objects or abstract notions

perspective the way a reader or viewer is positioned by a text, or how a particular point of view is embedded in a text

persuasive capable of changing someone's ideas, opinions or beliefs; appearing worthy of approval or acceptance

privileged promoted or endorsed by the text

recount a text that records events in the order in which they happened

register the use of language and detail in a text appropriate for its purpose, audience and context

representation a textual construction that gives shape to ways of thinking about or acting in the world

revisionist revised attitude to a previously accepted concept

rhetoric the art of persuasive speaking

satire a literary technique employed to expose and criticise foolishness or corruption of an individual or a society by using humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule

signifier something that represents or is a sign of another thing

stanza a grouped set of lines within a poem

stereotyping characterising something to fit a pre-established, conventional concept or idea

stoicism endurance of hardship without complaint

style the way in which aspects of texts are arranged and how they affect meaning

substantiate to establish by proof or evidence

summarise to give a brief statement of a general theme or major points

symbolism the use of symbols to represent something, or investing things with a symbolic meaning or character

technical rehearsal a rehearsal that focuses on the technological aspects of the performance

text communication of meaning produced in any medium that incorporates language, including sound, print, film, digital and multimedia representations

text structure the ways in which information is organised in different types of texts

thesis a proposition to be discussed and proved, or to be maintained against objections

tone the voice adopted by a speaker or writer to indicate emotion, feeling or attitude

topic sentence a sentence that identifies the main idea of the paragraph

trope a recurrent theme or motif

vignette a brief, evocative description or account

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Index

- Aboriginal Dreaming 54–5
- adjectives 90, 136, 138, 249
- adolescence 13, 28, 32
- adolescent characters 26, 28
- adverbs 90, 101, 103, 136, 249–50
- advertisements 6, 89, 122, 131, 133–4, 136–7, 142, 179
- advertising, positioning in 136
- aesthetic feature 6
- Alibrandi, Josephine 45, 48
- alliteration 39
- ambiguity 192
- analytical essays 48, 121, 238, 240–3, 238–56
 - model 242–3
- antagonist 223
- appeals, persuasive 100, 107, 117
- appropriation 174–5, 177–9
- argument
 - developed 89
 - last 179
 - legal 175
 - logical 240
 - main 84, 253
 - reasoned 84, 100
 - speaker's 100
 - well-founded 203
 - well-reasoned 98
- artworks 16, 77–8, 175, 233
- aspect 28
- attitude 260
- attitudes 12, 14–15, 19–20, 32, 70, 128, 130, 132, 134–9, 142, 143, 147, 151, 153, 154, 161, 166, 170, 204, 212, 219, 242, 252, 253, 255, 265
 - and beliefs 2, 4, 60, 117, 122, 156, 202
 - audience's 151
 - colonial 243
 - competing 132, 242, 245
 - differing 242
 - dominant 154, 255
 - entrenched sexist 127
 - moderating 250
 - neutral 5
 - personal 125
 - shifting 229
 - underpinning 133
 - writer's 206
- attribute 250
- audience 2, 4, 9–10, 12–13, 60–1, 63–6, 78–80, 84–5, 88–91, 97–8, 100–8, 111, 117–19, 121–2, 133–7
 - public 26, 58, 64, 66, 80, 82, 98, 118, 122
 - response 107, 111
- Australia 9, 11, 16, 19, 22–3, 62, 64–5, 67, 69–70, 116, 129–31, 158–9, 165, 167, 248–9
 - representation of 9–10, 16
- Australian/Australians 10–12
 - adolescents 12
 - history 125, 242, 251
 - Indigenous 7, 23, 65, 77, 128, 129, 148, 215, 224, 226, 228, 232, 233–6, 242–3, 245
 - identity 19, 81, 125, 138, 140, 168, 177, 183, 214, 237
 - identity/identities, modern 177
 - legend 122, 138–9
 - national identity 128–9
 - texts 1–2, 26, 58, 82, 98, 120, 156
 - young 10
- Australian Story* 58, 60–2
- autonomy 194
- Azimi, Akram 23

- background cultural knowledge 158
 Bail, Murray 179, 182–3
 Baloo 144
 bark paintings 2, 19–21
 Beecham, Harold 37
 beliefs 12, 14–5, 19, 32, 70, 94, 110, 130–4, 136–9, 141, 142, 142, 143, 147, 153, 154, 166, 170, 212, 219, 252, 255
 bibliography 251
 binary opposition 137–8
 biographical texts 1, 58, 60–1, 66–7, 69–71, 75
 blocking 219
 body paragraphs 84
 Bradbury, Ray 158, 188, 198, 200, 208
- Calvillo, Pablo 188
 Carey, Peter 145
 central argument 82, 84, 88, 241
 character's subjectivity 146
 character's thoughts 149, 194
 characterisation 133, 160, 196, 202–3, 206–9, 215–17, 219
 direct 202
 indirect 160, 202–3
 characters 223
 central 28, 160, 202, 223, 231
 minor 148, 197
 narrating 150
 Charles, Michael 55
 Cheng, Marita 23
 Chopin, Kate 194, 208
 citations 105
 cognitive dissonance 131
 cohesion 204
 and coherence 247
 cohesive devices 64–5, 74, 89, 91, 93, 190, 205, 238, 247, 258
 colonisers 7, 232–3
 colonists 52, 129, 242–3, 245, 248
 colour 134–5
 comic books 20–1, 153
 concept 4
 visual representations of 14
- conclusion 84
 conjunctions 36, 89, 204, 247–8
 connections 80–1, 103, 158, 174, 179
 connectives 247–8
 context 11
 historical 167, 174, 183
 convention 56
 creating identity 160
 credibility, speaker's 100, 105–6
 critical reception 230
 critical responses 240
 cultural
 assumptions 2, 4–5, 9–10, 19, 118, 122, 126–8, 131, 156, 159, 167, 183, 212, 215
 capital 128
 change 128
 context 125
 expectations 28
 influences 140
 knowledge 10, 125, 158–60, 179, 189
 practice 124
 practices, dominant 124
 culture 124
 creator's 5
 racial 140
 and positioning 125, 127, 129, 131, 133, 135, 137–9, 141, 143, 145, 149, 151, 153
 representations of 128
- dialogue 150, 187, 193, 206, 216, 219, 222–3, 229
 diverse 28
 documentary 58, 60–4, 66, 258
 drafting 95
 dramatic elements 216
 dramatis personae 221
 Drysdale, Russell 178–9, 181–2
- editing 56–7, 60, 95, 187, 253
 egalitarianism 128
 ellipsis 205
 emotive appeals 89, 98, 137

- emotive language 136
- empathy 26, 87–8, 202
- ethos 100
- expanded noun groups 90
- exposition 66

- feature articles 2, 58, 60, 66, 75, 79, 81–2, 88, 97
- figurative language 106, 142
- film 4, 6, 56–7, 60, 133, 151, 183, 188, 232, 258–9
 - short 156, 183, 188–9
 - adaptations 56–7, 187
- Firebrace, Isaiah 64–5
- first person 34, 45, 90, 145, 147, 150, 179
- foot-printing 95
- foreshadowing 142, 167, 198
- framing 6, 8, 12, 56–7, 79, 134, 137
- Franklin, Miles 34, 37

- generation scapegoat 87
- genre 133, 192, 232
 - conventions 179, 190
 - detective fiction 207
 - explanation 258
 - magical realism 202
 - persuasive 133
 - popular 232
- Gibson, May 50
- Giuffrè, Giulia 140
- Goodfellow, Geoff 44
- graduation 90, 249
 - and attitude 250
- grammar 89, 91, 190, 238, 258
- grammatical cohesion 205
- Greer, Germaine 159
- Grenville, Kate 28, 31, 32, 144, 149–50, 160, 234, 242, 245, 248, 251, 242, 256

- Hanrahan, Barbara 148
- Hereward, Martyn 154
- hierarchy 32
- Horacek, Judy 126–8
- Hutcheon, Jane 65
- hyperbole 106

- Ian, Janis 47–8
- identities
 - cultural 21, 47, 60, 140
 - national 128, 131, 139–40, 158, 174–5
 - representations of 15, 19, 40, 42, 75
- imagery 39, 53, 132, 150, 188, 203, 206
- images 4, 6–12, 14, 16, 79, 81, 83, 107, 132, 134–5, 137, 215, 217, 224–5, 243
 - concrete 235
 - following 7, 12, 14
 - selecting 107
 - stimulus 210–11
- inclusive language 104
- Indigenous
 - Australian perspectives 215, 231, 234, 256
 - Australians, representations of 233, 242
 - representation 215, 242
 - writers 234, 236
- Ingamells, Rex 33
- interior monologue 146
- intertextuality 179

- Jasper Jones* 26, 39–40, 42–4, 56
- Johnson, Molly 215, 224, 228, 231, 256
- juxtaposition 32

- Kamholtz, Damien 20–1
- Kennedy, Cate 160, 166
- Keyes, Daniel 151
- Kim, Emily 98, 112–14, 117

- Lamibanda, Johnny 19
- Langford, Martin 234–5
- language
 - elements 247
 - features 70–1, 88, 90, 97, 133–4, 142, 190, 238, 255
 - resources 24, 26, 35, 102, 137
- Lawson, Henry 167–8, 173–5, 178, 179, 212, 214–15, 221, 224, 226, 227, 231, 232, 237
- lexical cohesion 205
- links between texts 174
- logos 100

- London Grammar 24
Looking for Alibrandi 45–8
 Lu, Jeffrey 41–2
- Macaronas, Luke 98, 115–17
 Magee, Fintan 75–8
 Maitland, Captain 153–4
 Malouf, David 139
 Márquez, Gabriel García 202–3
 Mason, David 105
 McCubbin, Frederick 175–177
 McNealy, Thomas 220
 mentor 223
 Menzies, Robert 129–30
 metaphor 48
mise-en-scene 56–7, 259
 modality 90–1, 103, 136, 259
 model essay 249–50
 modes 4, 9, 100, 148, 259
 monologue, interior 145–6, 151
 mood 15, 57, 71, 134, 136, 188, 193, 206, 208, 211, 216–17
 establishing 194–5, 219
 Mudjandi, Ray 19–21
 multimodal 4
 biographical texts 58
 drama texts 215
 multiple narrators 151
 Murakami, Haruki 183, 186
- Naborlhorlh, Abel 20
 narration 145, 147–8, 150–1, 154
 first-person 34, 45, 90, 142, 145, 147, 150, 179, 183, 211
 narrative 158
 genre 141, 190, 192–3, 195, 197, 199, 203, 205, 207, 209
 narrator 39–40, 42, 50, 144–5, 147–51, 154, 167, 183, 187, 192, 194, 211
 multiple 142, 144, 151, 210–11
 naive 151, 167
 single 210–11
 nominalisation 90
 nuanced 28
- Olsen, Nicholas 17
One Plus One 64–5
 onomatopoeia 48, 136, 259
 opening scene 219
 opposition, binary 137–8, 258
- parody 179, 259
 pastiche 179, 231, 259
 Patchett, Lucas 22
 pathos 100
 person
 first 34, 45, 90, 142, 145, 147, 150, 179, 183, 211
 second 148
 third 90, 142, 147–50, 183
 personification 48, 206, 259
 perspectives 2
 and representations 2–5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21–3, 32, 118
 and representations of concepts 8, 26, 58, 80, 82, 84, 98, 212
 cultural 120, 212
 in visual texts 6
 understanding 9
 writer's 82, 142
 persuasive essays 91, 93
 persuasive speech 1, 98, 100–1, 104–6, 108, 117–19
 effective 101, 108
 persuasive texts 1, 82, 84–5, 87–91, 93–4, 96–8, 100, 103–4, 240, 247
 effective 84
 examples of 26, 58, 82, 98, 122
 following 85
 formal 91
 Plain English Speaking Award (PESA) 112, 115
 phases 193–8, 201–2, 241, 253
 place and country 51
 placement 79, 90, 95, 127, 143, 241
 planning 95–6, 245, 251, 253–4, 257
 Poe, Edgar Allan 188, 207–8
 poetry 16, 209, 234–5
 point of view 4, 84, 90, 133, 142, 144
 position audiences 122, 126, 137, 142

- positioning 136–7
 - advertising 136
 - Australian identity 140
 - culture 138
 - fiction 141
 - literary strategies 142
- practices, social 60, 75, 124, 126, 167
- present tense 90
- privileged 167
- proofreading 95
- protagonist 34, 50, 112, 149, 223–4, 226, 246
 - sympathetic 242, 248, 250
- Purcell, Leah 212, 215–217, 219, 224, 226, 229, 231–2, 234, 237, 256

- reader's engagement 150, 193
- reading drama texts 215
- recount 66
- reference 205
 - intertextual 179, 188
- register 9
- rehearsal 219
- representation 4
 - abstract 233
 - central 11
 - common 11
 - competing 132
 - constructed 64
 - cultural 121, 256
 - differing 4
 - director's 62
 - explore 26
 - fictional 26
 - graphic 53
 - historical 7
 - in biographical texts 61, 67, 69, 71, 75
 - little 226
 - mental 4, 13, 258
 - negative 22
 - nuanced 28
 - of concepts 13
 - of concepts 13
 - of culture 128
 - of identities 19
 - of people 2, 56–7
 - of race 42
 - of setting 57
 - of time 15, 66
 - of time and place 15–16
 - of youth identity 26–8
 - painted 232
 - selective nature 22
 - textual 6, 9, 58
 - values shaping 174
 - varied 22
 - writer's 75
- resources, non-verbal 108
- response, audience's 101, 108
- revisionist 232
- rewrites 104, 183
- rhetoric 100, 104, 259
- rhetorical questions 104
- rhythm 44, 48, 105, 108, 206, 216, 219
- Rostron, Graham 20–1

- Sallis, Eva 159
- satire 125
- scenes, opening 217, 219–22
- Scott, Kim 234, 236–7
- second person 148
- Semélin, Jacques 245, 250–1
- sentences 203, 249
 - structure 248
- setting 217
- sexuality 4, 28, 126, 129, 258
- short stories 192–3
- sidekick 223
- signifier 56
- Silvey, Craig 39, 43
- sources, external 250
- speaking persuasively 98
- speech, freedom of 6, 105
- Spencer, Adam 63
- stage directions 216, 219, 222–3
- stanza 39

- stereotypes, snowflake 86, 89
 stereotyping 85
 stoicism 158
 storytelling 56, 141, 231, 243
 Strauss, Jennifer 48–9
 structure 13, 33, 50, 84, 88, 97, 142, 188–9, 192–4, 201, 208, 241, 246, 248, 257
 style 9
 style and tone 206
 substantiated 84
 substitution 205
 subtopic paragraph 96, 254
 summarise 54
 symbolism 48
- Tan, Shaun 7–8, 14
 target audience 9, 91, 137, 212
 technical rehearsal 219
 text 4
 structure 9
 texts
 analytical 120–1, 247
 literary 26, 80, 106, 144, 202, 238, 240–1, 253
 multimodal 2, 107, 212, 240
 narrative 7, 121, 210, 241, 247, 256
 spoken 6, 94, 97
 thematisation 90
 thesis 84, 88, 96, 100, 118, 240–1, 246–7, 253–5, 257, 259
 central 84, 88, 98
 third person 90, 142, 147–50, 183
 Thomas, Rover 233
 three-sentence story 69
 tone 9, 61, 71, 85, 108, 143, 147, 150, 190, 206, 208–9, 259
 topic sentence 84, 88, 96, 241, 247, 259
 Townsend, Jessica 66–71
 trope 232
- unreliable narrators 151
- values 5
 and beliefs 22, 118, 120, 128, 132–3
 vectors 6, 8
 verbs, modal 90, 103, 136
 vignette 192
 Virtue, Graeme 24–5
 visual representations 7, 12, 14, 62, 232–3
 visual texts 6, 11–12, 121–2, 138
 voice 150
 character's 154
 multiple 151–2
 narrating 144, 150
 Vonnegut, Kurt 207–8
- Ward, Russell 138–9
 Warlpa Kuurti 55
 Watson, Sam Wagan 15, 132, 234–5
 Whisson, Colley 17
 Whiting, Frances 67
 Williams, Ryan 71, 74
 Winch, Tara June 50, 54
 Winton, Tim 18
 Woo, Eddie 62–3
 Wright, Alexis 149
 Wright, Judith 38, 234–5
 Wright, Owen 61–2
 Wright, Tyler 61–2
- young Australians 10–11, 22–3, 58, 106
 Young Australian of the Year 22–23
 Yousafzai, Malala 98, 108–11, 117
 youth identity 26
 representations of 1, 26, 29, 33, 35, 37, 39, 43, 45, 47, 49, 53, 55, 57
- Zahalka, Anna 175–7
 Zimmerman, Ian 92



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