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VCE English and EAL

Units 1 + 2

HAYLEY HARRISON

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VCE English and EAL

Units 1 + 2

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We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians on whose unceded lands we have created this resource. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders past and present.

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VCE English and EAL
Units 1 & 2
Hayley Harrison

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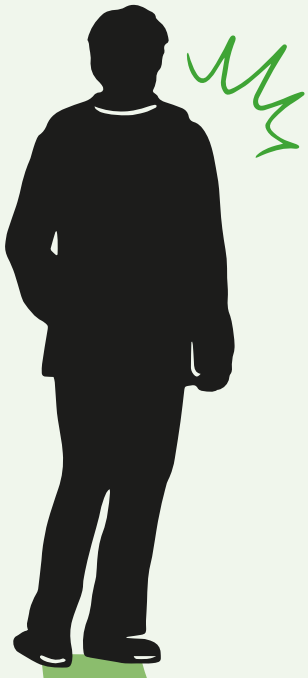
Dear student,

Welcome to the Victorian Certificate of Education! Year 11 may seem like a significant leap from Year 10 in some ways, but really, the VCE is simply about choosing subjects you want to study and working towards a two-year goal so you can achieve whatever post–high school looks like in your dreams.



I am acutely aware, however, that you may not have chosen English or EAL as a subject of desire at all. It is the only subject that is compulsory all the way through to Year 12, and for many students that is less than an ideal situation. But let me sell the subject a little and convince you that even if you weren't completely excited about studying English, you should be!

English/EAL is about communicating and understanding our world. The skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening will not only set you up for success in the subject itself, but in all your other subjects and then life beyond. The greater confidence and clarity you can communicate with, the easier life becomes because you can understand what people are saying and people can understand what you are saying. So while mastering the complexities of the English language is far from simple, it is more than worth the investment of your time and energy.

The central focus for this year is not whether you can recite every word from your set text, or memorise an essay you produced (hopefully *not* on ChatGPT). This is about having the time and space to experiment with language and work out who you are as a communicator. I honestly don't care how high your marks might be this year; what I am desperately hoping for is that you will find your voice as a writer and speaker, whatever that looks and sounds like. You will see the benefits of increasing your vocabulary and the sophistication of your **expression** in certain situations, and you will realise how the English language is as beautiful and powerful as it is complex and **unique**. Although there are rules and expectations around the way we use language, there are also **innumerable** ways to express ourselves, so this year is not about becoming a robot that can produce the same things we have read and heard before – this is about finding your unique and beautiful voice and having the confidence to let that voice be heard.

I can't wait to hear what you have to say.

What do you WANT to achieve between now and the end of Year 12?!
It all begins here, so make the most of the opportunity from the start!
Focusing on English/EAL will help in ALL your other subjects... there is a reason that this
should be your most important subject. Let's find your VOICE together...

Yours for the adventure ahead, Hayley

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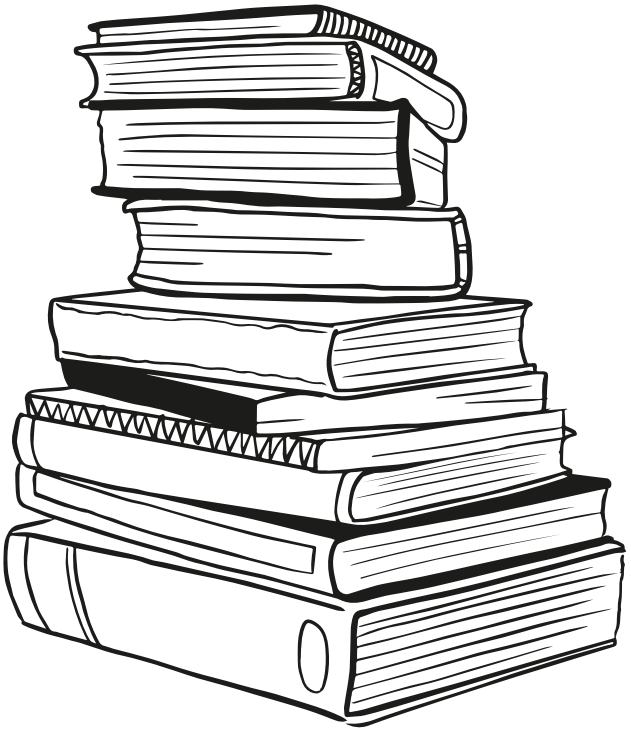


1 Find your voice in VCE English and EAL Units 1 & 2

You have been building the skills you will require to succeed in the Year 11 VCE English and EAL course since you started school. **Essentially**, this course is about deep reading, viewing and listening while having a clear approach to a specific audience and purpose when writing or speaking. This course is broken into four different areas of study where you will explore and create a variety of texts. While the outcomes and criteria are somewhat different between English and EAL, each area of study is based on the same set of knowledge and skills. In this way, you can move through this journey alongside all of the other students. This course allows you the time to experiment with language, techniques and approaches that you can then consolidate in Year 12 to find your voice and ultimate success.

Table 1.1: The journey you will take to find your voice in VCE English Units 1 & 2

English	Area of study 1	Area of study 2
UNIT 1	**Reading and exploring texts** A personal response to a set text	**Crafting texts** Two student-created texts *and* A description of writing processes
UNIT 2	**Reading and exploring texts** An analytical response to a set text	**Exploring argument** A set of annotated persuasive texts that identify arguments, vocabulary, text structures and language features An analysis of the use of argument and persuasive language and techniques in text(s) *and* An oral presentation of a point-of-view text

Source: VCE English/EAL Performance Descriptors and extracts from the VCE English/EAL Study Design, www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

!! Schools have been given a number of choices for how the EAL course might look in Year 11. These recognise the different types of EAL learners undertaking VCE, and while some students might need more time to work towards an analytical response or analysis of argument, others might be ready to jump into the expectations that are most similar to Year 12. Please make sure you speak with your teacher and clearly understand what tasks are going to be assessed as SACs and what tasks are classwork. Remember, Year 11 is setting you up with the skills and knowledge you need to find success in Year 12 – you don't have to complete Year 12 tasks this year!

Table 1.2: The journey you will take to find your voice in VCE EAL Units 1 & 2

EAL	Area of study 1	Area of study 2
UNIT 1	**Reading and exploring texts** A note-form summary of key connections and ideas within the text A graphic representation with detailed notes about personal connections with a set text A personal response to a set text	**Crafting texts** Two student-created texts A set of annotations on the student-created texts, identifying the qualities of effective writing
UNIT 2	**Reading and exploring texts** A detailed mind map of vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas from the set text A series of short-answer questions with responses that focus on the ideas, concerns and tensions in a text An analytical response to a set text	**Exploring argument** A note-form summary of the key argument(s) and supporting arguments in persuasive text(s) An annotated visual text(s) that identifies the key persuasive techniques An analysis of the use of argument and persuasive language and techniques in text(s) *and* An oral presentation of a point-of-view text A dialogue between two students discussing their different points of view

Source: VCE English/EAL Performance Descriptors and extracts from the VCE English/EAL Study Design, www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Note: You will not have to complete *all* these tasks. Some tasks might be for the classroom and others might be assessed SACs. There are a number of choices your school can make about how to assess the EAL course, so make sure you find out what the expectations are for you in each area of study.

Skills across the VCE English and EAL course

When you look closely at the key skills for each area of study, you will see a lot of similarities. Actually, you can break all the key skills down into three broad categories (see Figure 1.1):

- **Speaking and listening:** I can discuss, develop, respond and listen to ideas and feedback.
- **Reading and viewing:** I can explore, engage, analyse, comment on and summarise different text structures and features.
- **Writing:** I can plan, develop, respond, construct and review my own writing.

These are, essentially, all the skills you need to focus on and develop in every unit of work to find success in this course. The differences between areas of study are the text types and how you transfer and apply the key skills in different contexts, for different audiences and purposes.

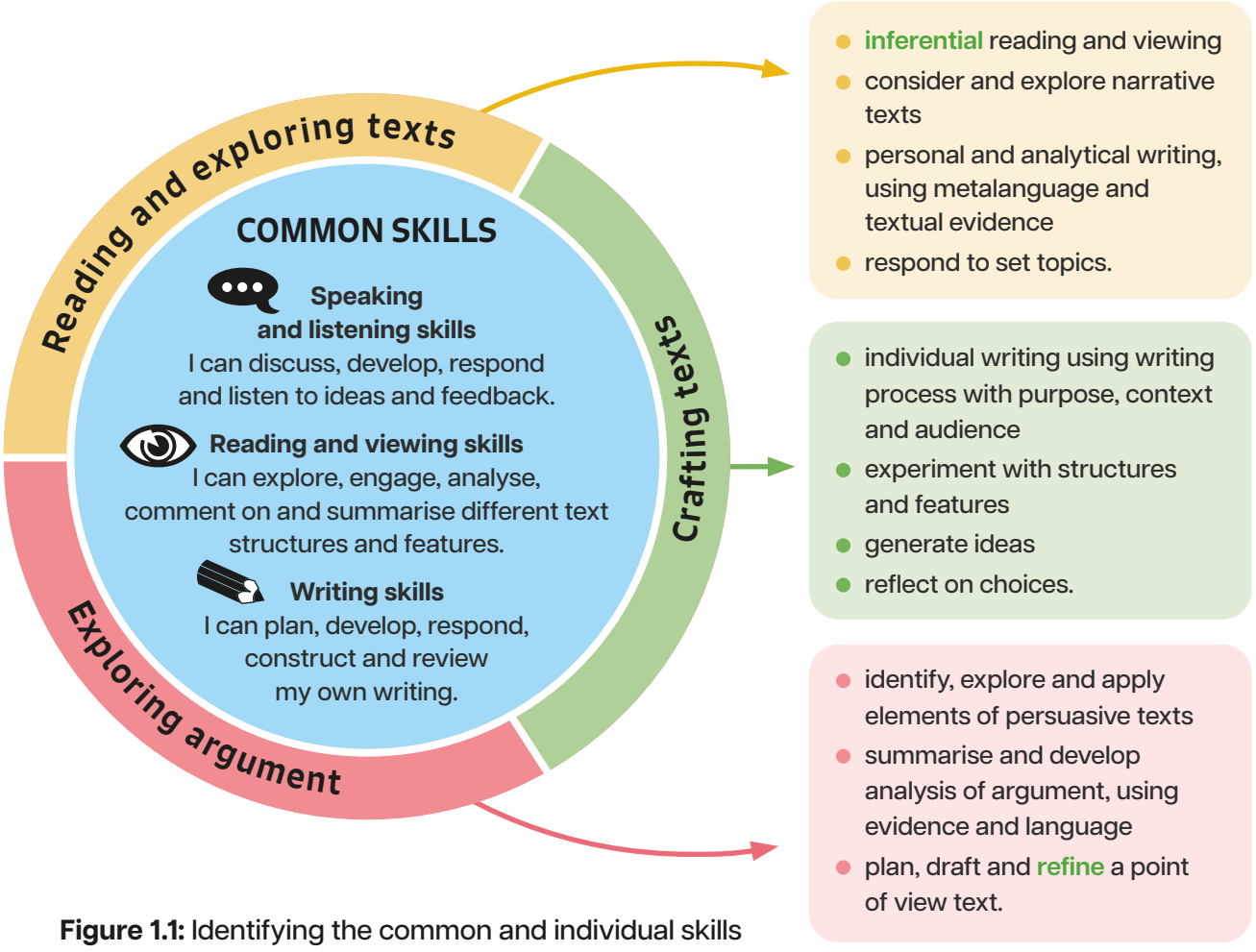


Figure 1.1: Identifying the common and individual skills of the study design

!! You speak, listen, read, view and write every day, which means you already have all the skills you need to demonstrate in this course. From here, it is about how clearly, sophisticatedly, accurately and purposefully you can demonstrate those skills – but do not worry, we have got *all* year to work on that!

Reading, viewing and listening strategies

We all process texts differently – not just because we have **varying** experiences and prior knowledge that we use to understand texts but also because of the way we think about, process and connect to texts. We use different strategies to help unpack and understand a text depending on the text type. We also actively read a narrative text very differently from how we read a recipe, a chapter from a textbook or a social media post, so we might need to use different strategies (see Figure 1.2) to comprehend different texts in different ways.

WANT TO TRY	HAVE TRIED	STRATEGIES YOU MIGHT USE TO UNPACK AND UNDERSTAND ALL TEXTS INCLUDE:
☐	☐	*word, sentence and text-level comprehension strategies (see digital student resource)*
☐	☐	*monitoring for meaning: stopping or slowing down and noticing when things do not make sense*
☐	☐	*using your prior knowledge for inferring and understanding: connecting it to other texts and situations that you know well*
☐	☐	*deciding which confusing elements to simply ignore or which to clarify depending on their importance in the text*
☐	☐	*continuing to read, listen or view, even if something is confusing, to get the whole picture and see if it then makes sense at the end*
☐	☐	*reading, viewing or listening multiple times: focusing on different elements each time*
☐	☐	*writing questions and searching for answers*
☐	☐	*identifying and connecting the purpose with the text* **explicitly**
☐	☐	*listening, viewing and reading, selectively focusing on purpose, context or the reason you are engaging with the text in the first place*
☐	☐	*using textual clues, including visuals, where they are in the text, surrounding words and phrases, genres, subheadings, etc.*
		STRATEGIES SPECIFIC TO VIEWING AND LISTENING:
☐	☐	*focusing on visuals: body language,* **facial expressions**, **gestures** *etc.*
☐	☐	*connecting the spoken elements with the visual elements*
☐	☐	*reading along as you listen or view*
☐	☐	*slowing down the speed of the listening track (if possible).*

Figure 1.2: Strategies for unpacking and understanding all texts

!! As you work through each unit, keep coming back to these strategies to help you read, view and listen to different texts. This will help you gain deeper insight and understanding and to reflect on the strategies that are most helpful and effective.

Activity 1.1: Strategise and reflect

1. What reading, viewing or listening strategies have you successfully used in the past?
2. What reading, viewing or listening strategies might be worthwhile to try?
3. What aspect of reading, viewing or listening do you find most difficult or confusing?
4. What strategy is likely to help you overcome this complication most effectively?

Level-up

Do you use different strategies depending on the complexity of the text? A simple text might require you to slow down and reread or watch it again, while a more complex text might require you to look up the meaning of certain words and ask significantly more questions to ensure you fully understand it. Know what strategies work most effectively for you in particular contexts and focus on improving the strategies that help you most in those moments when you have to work independently.

What do you bring to this subject?

One of the most important aspects of this course will be your ability to transfer skills from one context to another. No area of study will start completely from scratch, so *activating your prior knowledge and skills* means you will be able to draw from your previous experience and connect it to whatever text or task is in front of you.

Your teacher might attempt to **activate** your prior knowledge purposefully by revising previous content before starting the class, asking prompting questions or getting you to discuss content, but the more **consciously** you activate your own prior knowledge and skills the easier it will be to approach a new task. The bonus is that you will remember new content better because you can connect that new learning to previously stored memories. Figure 1.3 illustrates some ways to activate your prior knowledge.

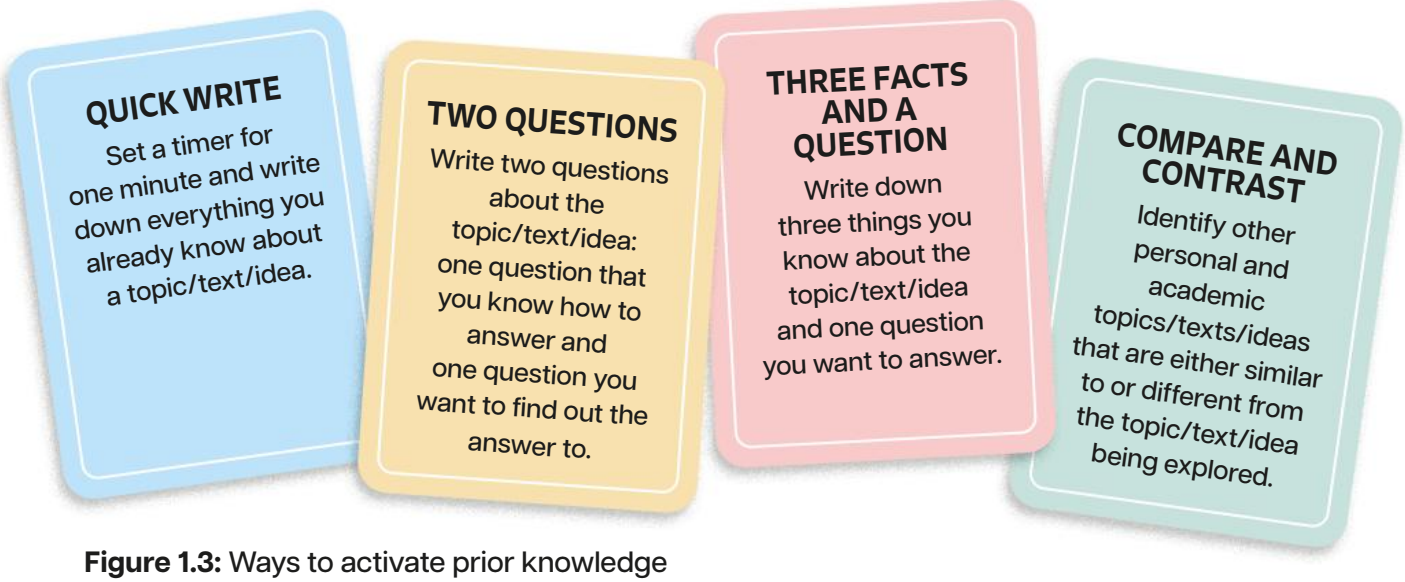


Figure 1.3: Ways to activate prior knowledge

Know yourself as a student

No matter what kind of student you have been up to this point, the VCE gives you two years to find your true potential and unlock your voice. Consciously **acknowledging** your strengths and weaknesses – in the subject and as a student – allows you to decide how to approach the year ahead actively: how to support your areas for improvement and how to extend your strengths. The past is behind you and you get to choose your future.

Graphic organisers can help you focus on where you are currently (for this example we can look at who you are as a learner – see Figure 1.4) and the steps you would need to take to get to a place you want to be (who you would like to be, or need to be, to achieve your goals this year). It also highlights the elements that will help you achieve your goal, and the blockers that will make it more difficult for you to achieve your goal.

Activity 1.2: Reflect and apply

1. What reading, viewing, listening, speaking and writing skills do you already bring with you into Year 11? What would you say is your greatest strength?
2. What are you most confident about this year for English/EAL?
3. What are you least confident about this year for English/EAL?
4. How might you focus or work on the areas you are least confident about specifically?
5. Use a graphic organiser to consider the type of learner you currently are, and what type of learner you would like to be, or will need to be, to find your voice and achieve success this year.

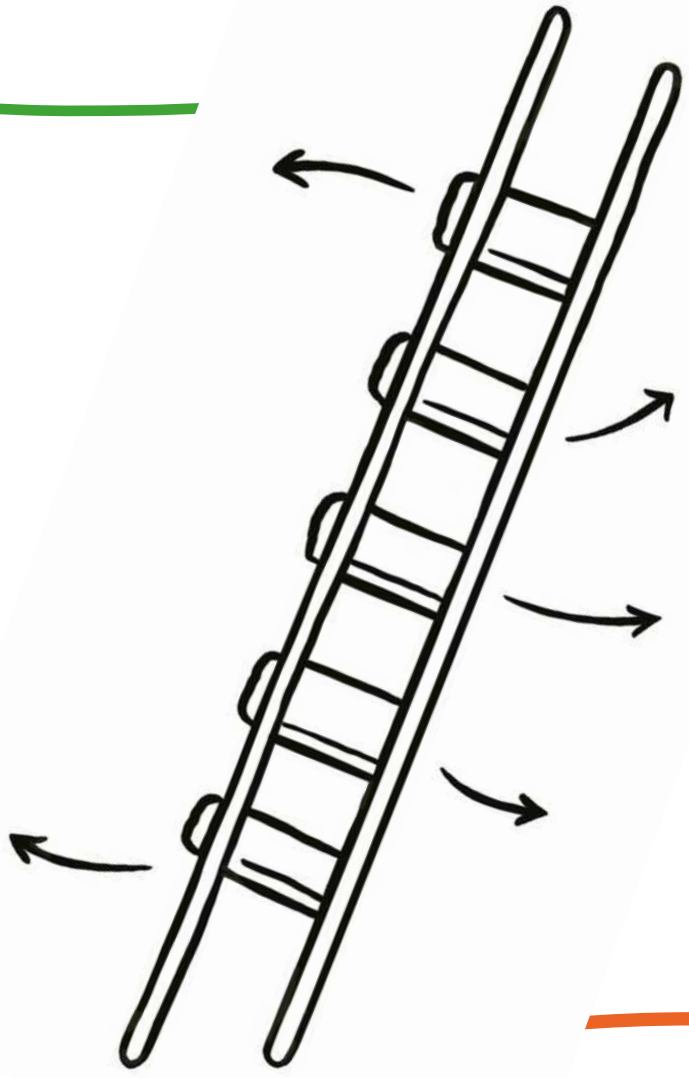
↑ Level-up

Where can you further extend the skills you already have in English? While you will definitely want to focus your learning and study on the areas that might be holding you back, you will also want to highlight and develop the skills you are most confident in. Be as clear as you can be about what you want to focus on and prioritise how it can all work together to achieve your goals this year.

!! Remember that you have the whole year to work towards your goal, so be realistic. Small, consistent steps are significantly more effective than giant shifts, changes and actions.

What will help you achieve your goals?

Who do you want to be as a learner?
What do you want to achieve this year?



What kind of lea…
What have you alread…

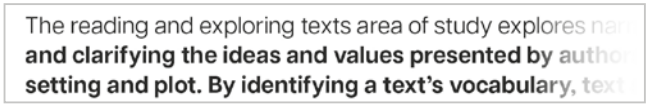
What could potentially block, or make achieving your goal more difficult?

Figure 1.4: A graphic organiser for planning your journey to becoming the learner you want to be

Features of this book

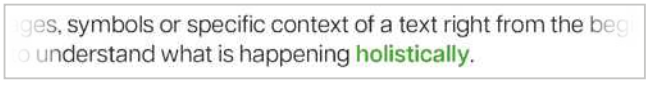
The following features will help you navigate this book.

Study design text


The reading and exploring texts area of study explores nar
and clarifying the ideas and values presented by autho
setting and plot. By identifying a text's vocabulary, text

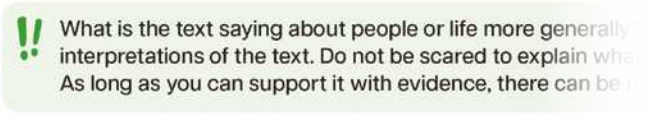
Any time a key word or phrase from the study design is used, it is presented as bold text. This allows you to connect this material to your learning overall.

Glossary terms


ges, symbols or specific context of a text right from the beg
o understand what is happening **holistically**.

Some words you may not be familiar with are presented as **green** text and have been defined in the glossary at the back of the book. This not only improves your understanding; it also helps you grow your vocabulary. Consider how you might use these words in your own writing.

Tips


What is the text saying about people or life more generally
interpretations of the text. Do not be scared to explain wha
As long as you can support it with evidence, there can be

The book includes tips and suggestions to clarify, extend or offer advice on the information being provided.

Worked examples

WORKED EXAMPLE

Worked examples have been added for each element being explored. These show you how to apply what you have read, as a model for you to then use in your own work. We know that you will be exploring and writing about very different texts, issues and ideas throughout the year, but we also know how important it is for you to 'see' what different knowledge and skills look like when they are applied in different contexts.

Activities

Activity 2.3: Analyse and apply

The activities provide questions and tasks to consolidate your understanding and apply it to your own specific text or context. Your teacher might set them as learning tasks, or they can be used as part of your study plan. Use the activities to understand where you are confident about the learning and where you need to clarify material with your teacher.

Level-up

Level-up

Each activity block includes a 'Level-up' task. These questions and activities offer specific challenges and options to students who want to take things further, extend themselves and really see how far they can 'level up' their learning in the subject!

Digital resources

Head to the *VCE English and EAL* digital Student Resource to access additional content to help extend your learning. Open the electronic version of the book and click on the digital icon to retrieve the extension material. This includes printable templates of tables and graphics used, annotations of worked examples and supplementary text options, as well as elaborated strategies and advice.

2 Reading and exploring texts – Unit 1

Reading and exploring texts is the essential focus for much of the VCE English and EAL course. Although you will undertake this area of study twice in Year 11, each occasion will result in a different outcome. This section of the textbook will set you up to succeed in Unit 1, and give you the key knowledge and skills to confidently move to Unit 2. Follow this suggested pathway to find your voice in the SAC tasks for this area of study.

Find your voice in ... reading and exploring texts

Start here!

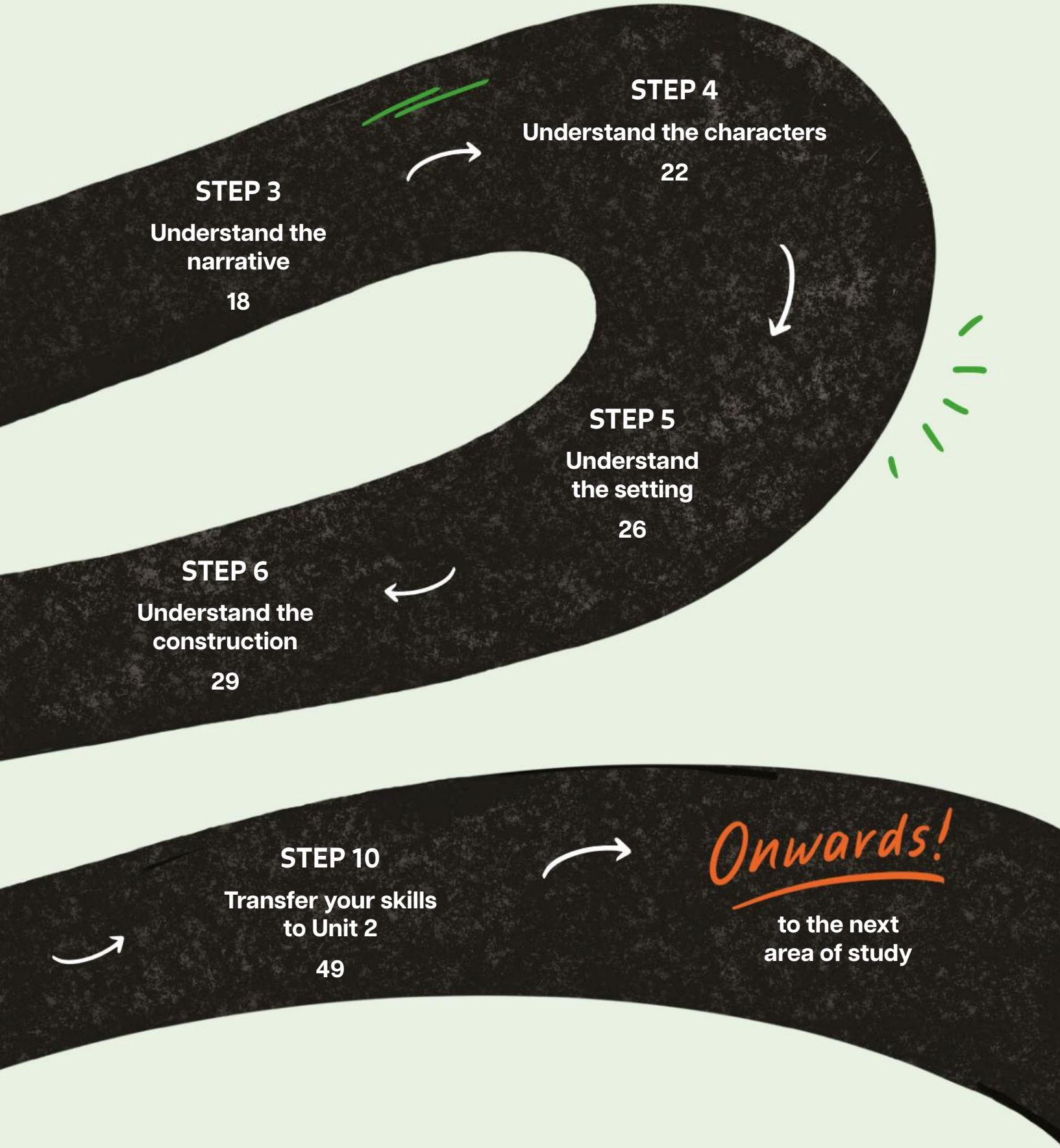
STEP 1
Identify what you already understand
12

STEP 2
Use a model text
15

STEP 7
Understand the ideas
36

STEP 8
Create visual representations
39

STEP 9
Prepare for the SAC
44


STEP 3
Understand the narrative
18
STEP 4
Understand the characters
22
STEP 5
Understand the setting
26
STEP 6
Understand the construction
29
STEP 10
Transfer your skills to Unit 2
49
Onwards!
to the next area of study

STEP 1

Identify what you already understand about reading and exploring texts

The reading and exploring texts area of study explores narrative texts – **discussing and clarifying the ideas and values presented by authors through character, setting and plot. By identifying a text's vocabulary, text structures and language features** you will consider the **impact** these have upon the way audiences connect with their **own memories and lives**. The study design sets out clearly the key knowledge and skills that you will need to show you understand and are able to do throughout this area of study. This might be in class activities and discussions, or in the final School Assessed Coursework (SAC). Exploring the key knowledge and skills at the start of the area of study means you will know what to focus your attention on and where you might need extra support along the way.

Table 2.1: Key knowledge and skills from the study design to help you find success

	Things I need to know	Things I need to be able to do
Reading, viewing, listening and speaking strategies and skills	• I have **inferential** reading and viewing strategies I can draw from to understand texts • I understand how to have small group and whole class discussions, including ways of developing constructive and collaborative interactions and building on the ideas of others • I understand the **conventions** of discussion and debate	• I can develop strategies for inferential reading and viewing • I can engage productively in small group and class discussion, including listening to others • I can develop, share and clarify ideas with peers and teachers **employing** appropriate strategies for discussion and debate
Meaning making	• I understand the ideas, concerns and tensions in a text • I understand the vocabulary, text structures and language features in a text	• I can consider and explore: – ideas, concerns and tensions presented in a text – characters, settings and plot, and point of view and voice – how vocabulary, text structures and language features create meaning

The writing process and skills	• I understand the structures and features of personal and analytical writing in response to a text • I understand the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English	• I can plan and develop personal and analytical writing about a text, including the use of appropriate metalanguage to discuss vocabulary, text structures and language features • I can use textual evidence, where appropriate, to support writing • I can use appropriate strategies to review and edit writing • I can apply the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English

Source: VCE English/EAL Performance Descriptors and extracts from the VCE English/EAL Study Design, www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Understanding the area of study

The area of study **culminates** in the assessment of **a personal response to a set text**. The task is analytical in nature in that you are asked to explore and interpret a text and respond to a question about a specific element of that text. But it is also reflective in that you are asked to consider how the text made you think and feel, where your **interpretations** of the text came from and the impact of the text upon you personally.

The EAL requirements follow the same key knowledge and skills; however, assessment might take the form of a **note-form summary of key connections and ideas within the set text or a graphic representation with detailed notes about personal connections with a set text**. These will be explained and explored in Step 8 (page 39) but whether you are studying the English or EAL course, the process of exploring your set text will be exactly the same.

Through your exploration of texts the goal is for you to understand **the role of vocabulary, text structure and language features in creating story and meaning**. Beyond the features, however, you will investigate **the ways a text can present and reflect human experiences, and how stories resonate with your own memories and life**. In this area of study you will **share your experiences, make personal connections and compare values** presented in your set texts in order **to shape your ideas and knowledge into formal essay structures**.

This area of study is the first step in your journey towards writing an analytical response to a variety of topics in the final Year 12 exam. You will explore, experiment, develop and **refine** the skills you need to achieve success in this section of the exam by completing a reading and exploring (or presenting in Year 12) response in every unit between now and then. This first step is focused on identifying key features and having something to say about the text. If you can find different interpretations of the text, and identify evidence to support these interpretations, then you can confidently know you have the time and space to **transpose** these elements into a formal response over the upcoming four assessment tasks over the next two years.

!! You do not need to know or have the skills to write a detailed and sophisticated analytical essay fit for Year 12 by the end of this area of study. Focus on the key knowledge and skills as the first step to building towards this final response. Get the foundations strong first.

Activity 2.1: Activate and reflect

1 Highlight the most important words in Table 2.1 (pages 12–13).
   a What do these statements mean to you?
   b In your own words, what is the area of study asking you to know and do?

2 Where have you written, spoken and thought analytically before? How confident are you to write, speak and think analytically?

3 Where have you written, spoken or thought reflectively before? How confident are you to write, speak and think reflectively?

4 For EAL students: Where have you written a note-form summary or created a graphic representation before? How confident are you in writing this form of text?

5 Thinking about what you have learned in your prior years of school, what knowledge and skills are you bringing with you to help you succeed in this particular area of study? Copy and complete the following table in your notebook.

6 What questions do you have about this area of study?

<table>
<tr><th>My greatest strengths and areas I am most confident about</th><th>The areas I am most concerned or confused about</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3"></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Particular actions and activities I can do to resolve my concerns and confusions</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
</table>

Level-up

What areas would you like to extend further? Being able to articulate this will make it easier to focus and find specific strategies to achieve this.

STEP 2

Use a model text

In this chapter, we will use a short text as a model to show you the process of reading, exploring and analysing a text and ways to connect to a text to build a personal response. You can then apply the same knowledge and skills to your own set text. Read the flash fiction 'The Magician', by Australian writer Jacqueline Warner.

The Magician

Frankie McGee is the biggest, meanest kid in school. Everyone is frightened of him. He swaggers around the playground, pushing and shoving and intimidating anyone who gets in his way.

Frankie pushes himself into every game or social event, which is how he comes to be standing at my front door insisting he be let into my birthday party. Not really insisting – he says I have a choice. He can come in or he can knock all my teeth out.

This party is a big deal for me. Not long in the neighbourhood, wanting the kids at school to like me, I thought a party would be a good idea. Mum has even booked a magician.

So, I let Frankie in. The other kids look dismayed but know the deal. No one ever refuses Frankie entry. He always gets his own way.

The magician arrives. Another disappointment. He looks ancient. Frail and faded in an old tuxedo that has seen better days. With trembling hands, he carefully puts together a velvet covered stand emblazoned with the words, 'The Great Waldo.'

'The Great Weirdo, more like,' sneers Frankie.

I feel my face burn.

The old man is unmoved. 'Let us begin.'

What a show it is! The old man is magic. He turns feathers into flowers and doorknobs into doves. He even pulls a white rabbit from a hat. He has us all transfixed for nearly an hour.

All except Frankie. It is boring, he says. His tricks are boring. The animals are boring, the show is boring. It goes on and on.

The Great Waldo comes to his final trick. He wheels forward a large purple box, opens it and steps inside. He bangs the sides of the box and steps back out. He scans the rows of expectant faces seeking a volunteer. A mass of madly waving arms greets him, but his gaze alights upon Frankie scoffing and sneering in the back row.

'How about you?' he gestures towards the box.

Frankie saunters cockily into the box. As he turns to face us a look of nervousness passes briefly across his face to be instantly replaced with a smirk and a smart remark.

'You shouldn't have picked me, Weirdo,' he sneers. 'I'll tell 'em how it's done.'

The Great Waldo smiles, closes the box and turns it three times. He makes a flourish with his wand and flings open the door. The box is empty! There is a collective gasp, a pause then an almighty cheer.

The Great Waldo does not make Frankie reappear and we do not ask him to.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Complete the following table, identifying the key elements of the model text.

Author	*Jacqueline Warner*
Title	*'The Magician'*
Text type	*Flash fiction*
Publication date	*2022*

2 What element of 'The Magician' do you personally connect with the most?

I connect most to the idea of feeling pressure to receive approval from new classmates. It is difficult to move school or location and start from scratch to build an identity, feel part of a group and feel accepted.

3 Describe what you like and dislike about the text and why.

I loved the simplicity of the surprise ending. I literally laughed out loud. The fact that the bad guy got what he deserved I liked – I like happy endings – but I like how many layers the last sentence created. No one at the party asks for Frankie to come back. I think I found the story a little young though. The narrator seemed much younger than me, so I felt like he was my little brother rather than a character I could connect with or relate to personally. The language was pretty simple.

4 What other events or texts you have read or viewed remind you of aspects of 'The Magician'?

Frankie is like every classic bully in so many other texts: Draco Malfoy from Harry Potter or Julian from Wonder, for example. Particularly as it is eventually uncovered that their attitudes come from their own troubles and insecurities, which I think Frankie has as well.

The Great Waldo reminds me of Dumbledore, in being so old and frail but then is powerful, wise and all seeing: the fact he understands what's going on and doesn't make a fuss, knowing what he has to do to entertain and protect the group in front of him.

! Remember, a worked example is just one version of what a response to a question or task might be. It is designed to give you a starting point, or approach, but is by no means the correct or perfect answer. This year is about finding *your* voice as a communicator, so if you want to take the questions and tasks in a different direction, feel confident to trust your instinct and then actively seek feedback to see if you are on the right track.

If you can make a personal connection with your text, you are more likely to engage with this area of study and level up to a more personalised, rather than formulaic, response.

Activity 2.2: Create and apply

1 Copy and complete the following table in your notebook to identify the key elements of your Unit 1 set text.

Creator	
Title	
Text type	
Publication date	

2 What elements of your set text do you connect with the most and why?

3 Describe what you like and dislike about your set text and why.

4 What other events or texts have you read or viewed that remind you of aspects of your set text?

Level-up

Have you read your Unit 1 text more than once already? The more times you can engage with the text the more you will notice, understand and remember significant elements throughout the year.

STEP 3

Understand the narrative

It is almost impossible to analyse and reflect upon a text if you do not understand what it is about in the first place. You do not have to understand the deeper messages, symbols or specific context of a text right from the beginning, but you do need to understand what is happening **holistically**.

Key plot events

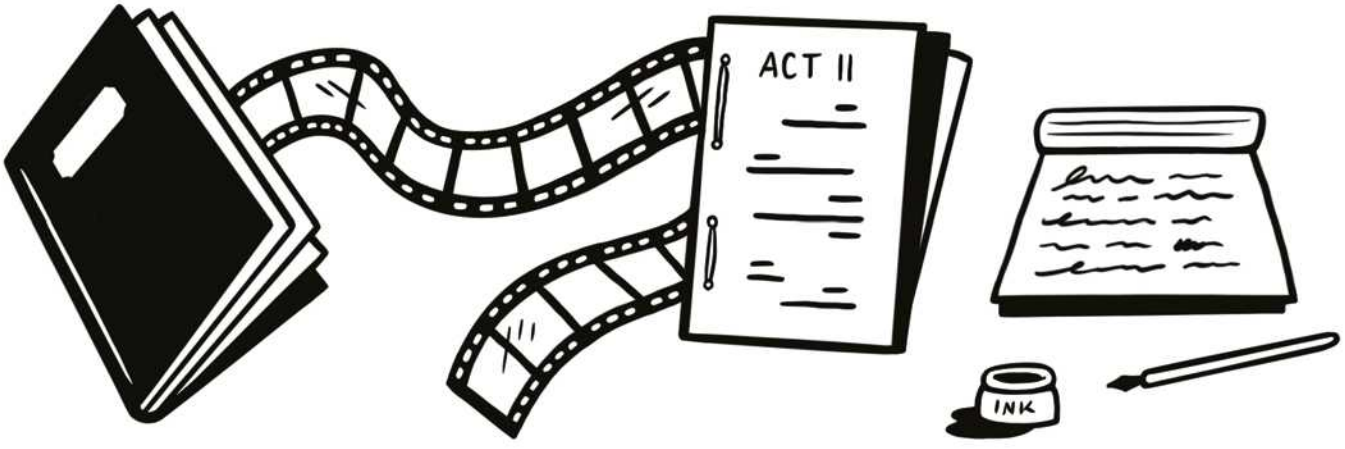
A story will be broken up in different ways depending on the text type:

- A novel can be broken into chapters.
- A film can be broken into scenes, often based around changes in location or time.
- A play can be broken into acts and each act is further broken into scenes.
- A collection of poetry or short stories is broken into individual texts; and then each text can be broken into stanzas (poetry) or paragraphs (short stories).

Recognising how a text is broken up, and then considering what occurs in each of those sections, is a great way to begin to piece together the key action that occurs across a text.

When considering the key events in a longer text, we often focus on the key action that occurs that drives the central storyline forward. For a shorter text, such as an individual poem or short story, we can focus on much more **subtle** details and events – not simply because it is shorter and easier to do, but because in a short text, every detail has so much more meaning and **relevance** as nothing **frivolous** can be included in a text of limited length.

!! When identifying key elements of a text, focus initially on the central character/s and the specific events that have consequences later in the text. It is about finding the cause and effect chain of events of the story overall.



WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Make a dot-point list of the key plot events or action that occurs in 'The Magician'.

- *The narrator is throwing a party in his new neighbourhood when the school bully, Frankie, shows up demanding to attend as well.*
- *No one is happy, but no one complains as they know what will happen if anyone speaks out against Frankie.*
- *The narrator's mum has booked a magician for the party. Initially, the narrator and the other kids are all disappointed, as he is old and looks uninspiring.*
- *But the magician turns out to be spectacular, and all the kids, except for Frankie, are enthralled.*
- *As his last trick, The Great Waldo asks Frankie to volunteer to step into the box and disappear in front of everyone.*
- *Frankie is nervous but tries to intimidate Waldo prior to the trick instead.*
- *Waldo makes Frankie disappear and does not bring him back. No one at the party asks for him to be returned.*

2 Use your dot points to **synthesise** the text down to one holistic, summarising sentence.

The school bully forces his way into the narrator's party only to disappear thanks to The Great Waldo and never to return.

How the story is told

How a story is told comes down to who tells the story and the order in which the events of the story are told. A novel, short story or poem can be told from either first, second or third perspective.

First-person perspective allows the narrator to speak from their **unique** perspective. Only expressing what that specific character sees, senses, thinks and feels allows the reader to feel they are a part of the story and understand the thoughts and feelings of the character more deeply. However, a narrator can also be **unreliable**, giving a **warped** perception of reality and truth. First-person perspective can also limit a reader's understanding of the events that occur and events that happen when the narrator is not present.

Second-person perspective is used more rarely than first- and third-person perspectives. This is where the text is written as speaking directly to the reader. It is the strongest way a text can connect to the audience; however, because it is rare it can make the reader feel uncomfortable, because they are drawn into a text without their consent.

Third-person perspective can broaden the reader's understanding by offering perspectives, thoughts and feelings of any character in the text; however, this style can either be limited, where only certain characters are revealed, or omniscient, where every or any of the characters are expressed. While third-person perspective can give the reader a wider understanding of what is happening, it can also make them feel **detached** from the action: as a viewer peering in, rather than feeling a part of the action.

A film or play may have a narrator but will then use dialogue to drive the narrative. Noticing whose perspective or point of view the text is told from is an important part of understanding the text and how we receive information throughout the story.

!! **Exploring the perspective a text is told from allows you, as a reader or viewer, to understand what information you are getting, and not getting, from the text. The perspective makes us connect or disconnect with certain characters, and allows us to view the text in a specific way, which ultimately impacts how we interpret what is happening and why.**

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 From what narrative perspective is 'The Magician' told and what impact does this have on the text?

'The Magician' is written in first-person perspective. This means that the reader fully understands the narrator's thoughts and feelings throughout the story. It heightens the opportunity for the reader to connect with the narrator and to either empathise or relate to how they are feeling or the decisions they make.

Many narratives express the story in **chronological** order, where the events are told in the order they occur. However, writers also have the choice to work in a non-chronological order – either using flashbacks to events that occurred in the past or flashforwards to events that will occur in the future. Some narratives are told completely backwards; others begin at the end and then the rest of the text circles to build back towards the original event. There are no restrictions to the structure and order in which a writer can choose to write, but each style means that while the story remains the same, how it is read or viewed can completely change. These kinds of choices are often where the best surprise endings come from. Recognising the impact of these authorial choices helps you as a reader or audience member to understand the way the narrative is connected to the story being told.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 What is the narrative structure of 'The Magician' and what impact does this have on the text?

'The Magician' is told in chronological order, where the events of Frankie arriving, The Great Waldo arriving and the show that ensues are described. The story, however, initially establishes the context of who Frankie is and the context of why the party is taking place. These are written in the present tense, so rather than a flashback they are expressing the narrator's reflections upon the events that are occurring during the story. It ends in a sort of cliffhanger, where the readers don't know exactly what happens next. By writing it chronologically, the reader can experience the same shifting feelings that the narrator does and it also allows for the greatest impact of the unexpected ending.

!! If you think about the 'story' as the chronological events that occurred and the 'narrative' as the way the story was told, then you begin to see the importance of understanding both and how you might talk about them analytically moving forward.

Activity 2.3: Analyse and apply

1 a What initial questions do you have about what happens in your text? Did what happened and why it happened make sense?

b Write down any questions you have about the plot and share them as a class.

!! Often, people will share the same confusion, so sharing questions is a great way to clarify misunderstandings. There is no such thing as a 'stupid question' – you might have just missed a minor element that has made the whole thing confusing. If you do not ask the question, then you will stay confused.

2 Create a table in your notebook by breaking down your text into its relevant chapters, scenes, acts or individual texts. For each section you have identified, dot point the key events that occur in that section.

3 Look at your table overall and synthesise it further by deciding what key events drive the plot. Aim to have between 5 and 10 points depending on the length and complexity of your plot.

*If you are studying a collection of poetry or short stories, create one sentence to summarise what happens in each poem/story (or a selection of 10 if there are significantly more than this).

4 Use these dot points to write one overall sentence that explains what your story is about.

*If you are studying a collection, write a sentence that summarises the connection and overall theme or purpose of the collection.

5 What narrative perspective is your story told from? What impact does this perspective have on the way the story is received?

6 What is the narrative structure of your story? What impact does this structure have on the way the story is received?

↑ Level-up

Once you confidently understand the main narrative of the text you can turn to any **secondary plot lines** and match them against the **primary plot line**. This can be a great way to notice subtleties within the text and start drawing from a wider range of examples to explore the **nuances** of the text.

STEP 4 Understand the characters

A story develops through its characters: their thoughts and ultimately their actions. What the characters do is **essentially** the plot of the text. But what motivates the characters – how they develop and **perceive** the world around them or the relationships they hold – are all elements of character construction that require you to make interpretations, analyse and evaluate.

The first step is to make sure you know who the characters are and their relationship with each other. Mapping the characters is a way to initially connect the relationships between characters. You can include **contextual** elements as well. Generally, the **protagonist** sits in the centre of the map and the other primary characters connect first. Secondary characters then build upon the centrally focused characters to show their connection and involvement within the story more holistically.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Create a character map showing the relationships between the characters in 'The Magician'.

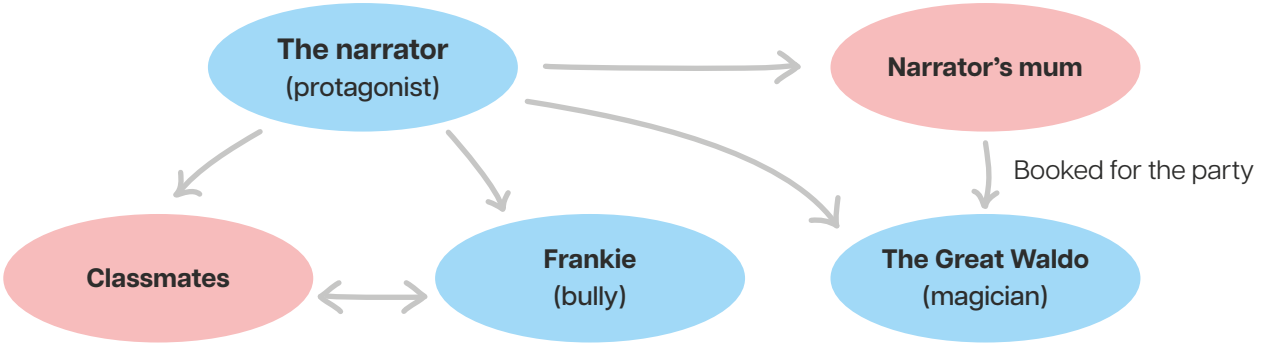


Figure 2.1: 'The Magician' character map

! Find a characteristic, action or relationship for each character to not only help you remember them but also to help you understand them better.

Once you know who the characters are, you need to form an opinion about who they are and what they do. This is about noticing **distinguishing** features and actions and interpreting how they were included or the impact they had on how you connected with the characters.

Having the language to describe these features means you can be **explicit** and accurate when you start discussing and analysing the characters. We use adjectives to describe a person and their features and adverbs to describe a character's actions, thoughts and feelings.

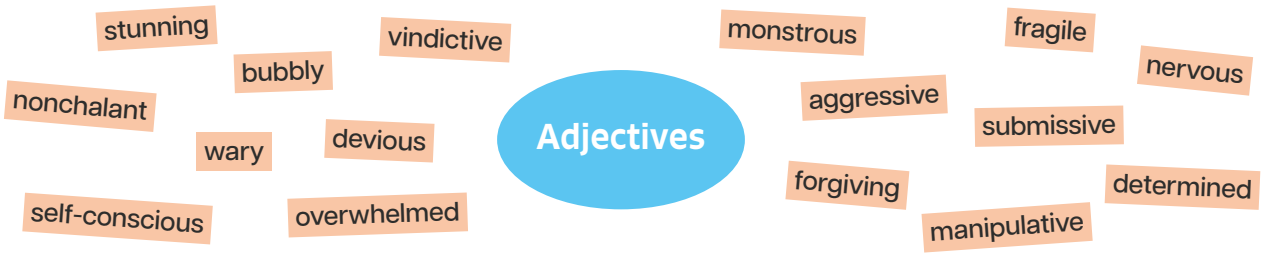


Figure 2.2: Different types of adjectives that could be used to describe a person and their features

Keep in mind that you can turn an adjective into an adverb, so you can go from describing what the character is like, to describing how the character behaved.

For example:

- Frankie was an *aggressive* character who forced his way into the party.
- Frankie *aggressively* forced his way into the party.

!! Descriptive language allows you to say more in fewer words and build the sophistication of your writing. The first time you use a new word it will feel weird. Make sure you have used it in the right context and then keep using it regularly until it feels like a natural part of your vocabulary. How many times you have to use it before it feels natural is different for everyone, so stick with it.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Complete the following table by brainstorming the key features and actions of the central characters of the text. Then brainstorm adjectives (you can use the adjective list) and adverbs to describe these features and actions.

Character	Features and actions	Describing words
The narrator	• *Throws a party to make some friends at a new school* • *Lets Frankie in even though they don't want him to*	• *self-conscious* • *submissive* • *wary*
Frankie	• *Big for his age* • *Physically aggressive* • *Sneers and complains rather than letting himself enjoy the party* • *Is nervous, but puts on bravado when asked to volunteer*	• *combative* • *belligerent* • *insecure*
The Great Waldo	• *Old and frail* • *Dresses formally in a tuxedo* • *Is a good magician* • *Chooses to make Frankie disappear and not bring him back*	• *observant* • *talented* • *confident*
The classmates	• *Disappointed Frankie is let in, but understanding* • *Transfixed by the magician* • *Eager and willing to participate in the show*	• *acquiescent* • *engaged* • *synergetic*

Analysing character

Now that you have the language to describe the characters in your set text you can use this to begin analysing them. To *analyse* something means that you pull it apart, consider all the pieces independently and then build interpretations of what this means when you connect all the pieces back together overall.

We have identified the pieces – who the characters are and what **critical** features and actions they have. Now we need to build *interpretations* of what they mean to the text overall. We need to analyse the characters.

An interpretation of a character is an idea or opinion of the character and what they might represent more holistically.

This could be about who they are. For example:

- All of Frankie's bravado was to cover his own insecurities, as seen in his moment of 'nervousness' before going into the box.

It could be about what they do. For example:

- The narrator was accepted as part of the community when the classmates understood he had to let Frankie in to the party.

It might be about the relationships between the characters. For example:

- The Great Waldo, the narrator and the classmates all understood the collective dislike of Frankie and did not have to speak out loud to each other to know how they were feeling.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 **Brainstorm different statements you could make about the characters in the text.**

- *None of the characters in 'The Magician' openly expresses their thoughts and feelings.*
- *The classmates connect with the narrator through the shared trauma of Frankie.*
- *Frankie thinks he has the most power, but he has the least power at the party.*
- *Frankie foreshadows his own demise but is not strong enough to prevent it.*
- *The Great Waldo is actually the villain of this story.*

2 **Choose one of your statements and write a paragraph explaining why you think the statement is true. Use plot and character-based evidence to support your interpretation and embed the descriptive words you brainstormed throughout.**

Statement: Frankie thinks he has the most power, but he has the least power at the party.

It would be easy to assume that the most belligerent character, Frankie, has the most power at the party. He forces his way in, uninvited, and while no one wants him to be there, no one is willing to articulate this thinking. But I find it interesting that he wanted to come to a party that he wasn't invited to in the first place. The narrator **acknowledges** *that the party was 'a big deal' that Frankie clearly wanted to be a part of.*

Frankie struggles to express his interest in the magic show, 'scoffing and sneering' throughout, and yet he is aware of how little power he has as his insecurity and 'nervousness' bubbles to the surface upon being selected, against his will, to 'volunteer' for the show. I, like the characters, felt Frankie got what he had coming to him upon the revelation of his demise at the end, but the ending also highlighted how little power Frankie did have and that he understood how easily the power could shift away from his favour and out of his control.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this response.

!! Do not worry too much at this point if your paragraph is written in the first or third perspective or even if you are following any particular structure. Get all your ideas down. Add the different elements and detail you need to include and then we can focus on specific structural elements later.

Activity 2.4: Understand and apply

1. Draw a character map that shows the relationship between primary and secondary characters in your text.
2. Which characters do you connect with the most? Which do you like, or dislike, the most? Which do you feel most empathetic or critical about?
3. Do all the characters do what you wanted or expected them to do? What frustrated, surprised or inspired you about what the characters did, thought or said?
4. Copy and complete the following table in your notebook to identify the features and actions of the characters of your set text and the language used to describe them.
5. Brainstorm some statements about the characters in your set text.
6. Choose one statement and write a paragraph using plot- and character-based evidence to support your interpretation. Practise using descriptive words throughout your paragraph.

Character	Features and actions	Describing words

↑ Level-up

How characters change and develop is a critical element of understanding the complexities of characters. Very few main characters are **static** so identifying how a character is established, and ultimately how they develop, can be great evidence to show depth and insight about your understanding of a text.

STEP 5

Understand the setting

There are two main elements of setting to consider when analysing a text: *where* the story takes place (the location) and *when* the story takes place (the time period). Once you identify these elements, you can consider how the location and time period impact the characters and what happens in the text.

Where it is set

When considering where the narrative is set you can start at the **macro setting**: the country the story is based in. Then consider the individual **micro settings**: individual houses, buildings, rooms and locations where the action occurs. The macro setting often establishes key social expectations and events that occur around the narrative, while the micro settings can be **literal** or symbolic, or might impact the characters and plot in a variety of ways.

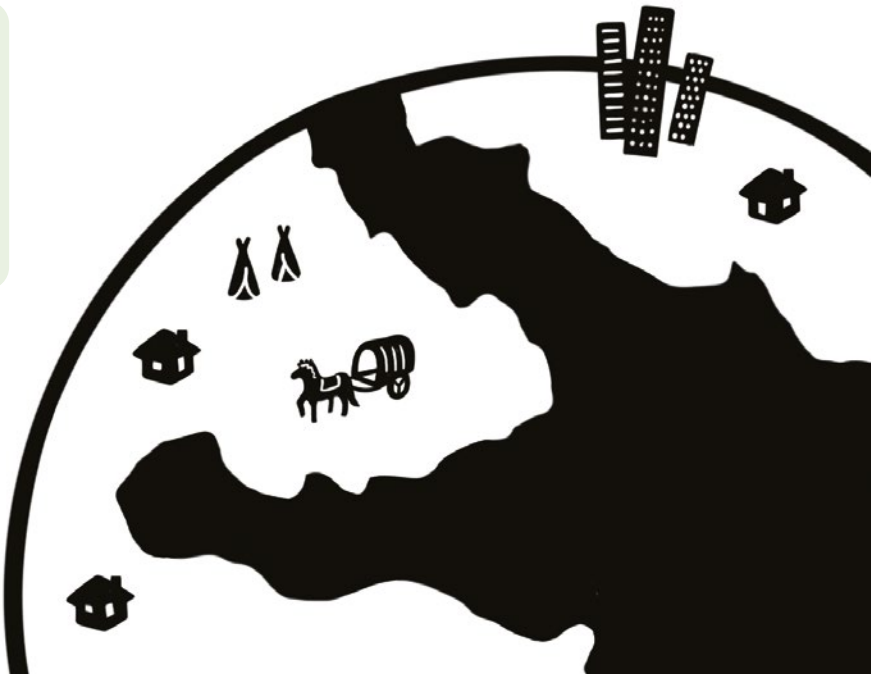
When it is set

The time period in which the narrative is set establishes many elements of the text. It impacts:

- costume, hair, make-up
- props: technological advances, transportation, furniture, etc.
- social expectations
- dialogue and language features
- external events running in **conjunction** with the narrative.

While historical-fiction texts can teach us about the features and events of the time period, creators do not have to be accurate or factual in the decisions they make – and creators who set their narratives in the future are able to ultimately create these **parameters** themselves.

!! Most texts try to maintain historical accuracy when setting their narrative in the past, but creators can either accidentally or deliberately create **anachronism** – that is, a chronological inconsistency used for effect or to assist the story.



WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify the macro, micro and time settings for the text and consider the impact these have upon the reading of 'The Magician'.

Macro setting = *Australia (assumed as it is written in Australia, but not stipulated)*

By assuming the text is set in Australia, I can relate to the macro setting confidently. I can add in sensory details of the heat and animal noises and the wider perspective of the community as I can draw on my own experiences. In my head they are speaking in an Australian accent and wearing clothes appropriate to the setting and time period.

Micro setting = *a suburban household*

The micro setting is familiar and alludes to safety. When I first read it, I assumed that the party was taking place in the backyard. I could picture balloons and the kids all sitting on the grass. But I realised that it is never expressed whether the party takes place inside or outside the house, just that Frankie is let 'in'. This highlighted for me how I was connecting to the story from my own experiences of home parties. Much of the setting was not described, but I filled in details through my own understandings of such party experiences.

Time setting = **contemporary** *(assumed through language, props and setting)*

There is nothing to indicate what time the story is set in; however, the language is fairly contemporary and the magician is described as 'ancient', in a 'tuxedo' and his 'velvet covered stand'. I think this type of story becomes somewhat timeless in that it could have been read in the 1950s and a reader would feel like it was contemporary. I imagine that it will remain contemporary in the future because there is little description around costume or technology that would age it **drastically**.

2 Brainstorm some statements you can make about the setting or context of the text.

- *The unknown, timeless setting allows any reader to connect to the situation from a point of personal connection and experience.*
- *The setting exemplifies the illusion of safety that a home has upon a person.*
- *The intrusion of Frankie into the narrator's personal home exacerbates the rudeness of the act.*
- *The magician seems even more magical as he doesn't fit comfortably in the social expectations of the contemporary setting.*

3 Choose one of your statements and write a paragraph, explaining why you think the statement is true, using plot, character and setting-based evidence to support your interpretation.

Statement: The intrusion of Frankie into the narrator's personal home exacerbates the rudeness of the act.

Warner clearly establishes the context around Frankie's combativeness from the very start, but this behaviour is exacerbated when Frankie continues his bullying tactics at the narrator's own house. There is a degree of acceptability around the classic bully character 'swagger[ing] around the playground' but for that intimidation to arrive 'standing at my front door' suddenly heightens the disrespect to a whole new level.

By setting the party at the narrator's house, with the mum and potential new friends present, the intrusion is felt that much more significantly. A home is symbolic of safety, comfort and security, and by setting the party here, it made me feel that the strong-arming from Frankie was so much more inappropriate, fearful and manipulative.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this paragraph.

!! Think about what would change about the story if it were set in a different time or place. Everything changes! Suddenly, it is easier to see the impact of the actual setting and discuss it specifically.

Activity 2.5: Understand and apply

1. Which locations in your text do you connect with the most? Which do you find most comfortable, intimidating or confusing?
2. How well did you understand and connect with the time period the text was set in?
3. Go through your narrative summary and either highlight or add in the different micro settings where the action takes place.
4. Choose the significant settings and consider what information you are given about the setting: how do they connect or add to the story or provide further information about the characters specifically?
5. Brainstorm some statements you can make about the setting of your text.
6. Choose one of your statements and write a paragraph, explaining why you think the statement is true, using plot-, character- and setting-based evidence to support your interpretation.

↑ Level-up

Do some research around key events that occurred during the time and location in which the story was set (the text's backdrop) as well as what was happening when the text was being written, and notice where any of this sits within the story or how it impacts its narrative.

STEP 6

Understand the construction

Understanding how the text has been **constructed** means you are able to consider the *text* as a constructed thing, rather than simply a story. We recognise that to *analyse* means to pull something apart, identify the pieces and consider how the pieces work together to create the text holistically. Essentially, this means that if you do not include construction elements in your analysis, you have not pulled all the pieces apart – that is, you might be analysing the *story* really well, but you are not analysing the *text*.

How texts are constructed

When looking at the construction of texts, the first step is to consider the structural features being used. This has much to do with the text type, narrative perspective and narrative structures we identified in Step 3 (page 18). Beyond the structural features, however, there are some more specific features that cross into almost any narrative text (narrative features), some features that are found in any written or spoken text (literary or language features) and other features that are generally only found in specific text types (cinematic, theatrical, graphic or poetic features). Being able to identify these features helps you to understand how the text is built and gives you the language to discuss these features more specifically and formally when explaining your analysis.

While there is an almost **inexhaustible** number of different features you can explore, identify and analyse in your texts, having a handful of relevant and purposeful features and being able to clearly see how they impact your text is the best way to start your analytical journey.

!! When exploring construction elements, you are identifying and analysing anything 'beyond the plot' – not the story but the way the story has literally been built.

Narrative features

Narrative features are seen in any narrative text, no matter the text type. They can be used in a variety of ways and impact the way the story is told and the connection the audience has with the story. Narrative features include narrative perspective and narrative structure as well those found in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Narrative features

Narrative feature	Explanation
allegory	A text that can be interpreted to have a secondary meaning; e.g. a fable
dramatic irony	When the audience knows something the character(s) do not
flashforward/back	When the story is told in non-chronological order – events from the past (flashback) or the future (flashforward) are interjected with the central storyline
foreshadowing	When an event triggers, alludes to or references something that will happen later in the story
juxtaposition	When two things (characters, events, dialogue, props, etc.) show a drastic difference. This contrast is used to highlight the specific elements of both things more distinctly
symbols and motifs	When something is used to represent a concept or idea beyond its literal meaning it becomes a symbol. When the same symbol is used multiple times throughout a text it becomes a motif.

Literary features

Literary features can be seen in any written or spoken text. They are used for creative effect and allow the audience to see things in different ways.

Table 2.3: Literary features

Literary feature	Explanation
figurative language	When a word, phrase or clause is not used in its literal meaning. Common figurative language devices include **metaphor**, **simile**, **personification**, **hyperbole**, **allusion** and **pun**
sensory imagery	A description of events using any of the five senses: describing sight, sound, taste, touch and smell Sensory imagery is often used alongside, or with, figurative language techniques
sound devices	Literary features that stress certain sounds and create musical effects. Common sound devices include **assonance**, **consonance**, **alliteration** and **onomatopoeia**
word play	Often used as a form of wit or humour. Common word play includes puns, **palindromes**, **spoonerisms**, **oxymorons**, **anagrams**, **malapropisms** and tongue twisters
syntactic devices	Different ways sentences can be structured syntactically. These could include **anacoluthon**, **enumeration**, **polysyndeton**, **aposiopesis** or the variation of sentence length for effect

Cinematic features

Cinematic features are used in anything that has been filmed. However, some elements – such as acting, lighting and sound – are also just as relevant in texts such as plays and performances.

Table 2.4: Cinematic features

Cinematic feature	Explanation
acting	Beyond analysing the characters and their actions, we can also consider how actors bring characters to life through **facial expressions**, **body language**, **gestures**, **intonation**/accent and **vocal control**.
camera	Considerations should be made around how the shot is framed (long, close up, establishing) and angled (high, low, **canted**) and any movement that occurs (**panning**, **tilting** or **tracking**).
editing	Editing can be considered alongside the narrative structure of the text; however, editing effects can also include the use of cuts and dissolves (how one shot transitions to another).
lighting	Lighting effects can impact a scene through its intensity (high key lighting creating bright light and dark shadows) and through its colour (different colours representing different emotions and creating different feelings within the scene).
mise en scène	Mise en scène refers to 'everything in the scene' . You can think of this like a frame analysis. If you stopped the film and looked at the still, what could you consider? The lighting, set, props, positioning of characters, costume etc.
sound	Sound elements can include dialogue, sound effects, music, voiceovers and silence. You can refer to sound as being either diegetic (meaning the characters in the scene can hear it) or non-diegetic (where the audience can hear the sound but the characters cannot).

Theatrical features

Theatrical features are seen in scripts for plays. Due to the performance nature of the text type there are many crossovers between film and play analysis, particularly if you are analysing a script or a performance.

Table 2.5: Theatrical features

Theatrical feature	Explanation
aside	An aside is when the character is speaking directly to the audience, or themselves, while the other characters on the stage do not appear to hear them
dialogue, including soliloquies and monologues	The specific words that are spoken by individual characters. Indicated by the character's name at the start of the line If a character speaks at length, this is referred to as a monologue. If they speak at length to no one in particular, this is a soliloquy.
props	The props are any item that is on the stage. This could be a spoon or chair – anything that supports the setting or the action of the story
setting	The physical location where the action takes place. The set from a play may be represented through a backdrop or how the stage is broken up throughout the play
stage and character directions	The directions from the writer that indicate specific information about the location, time, props or actions/emotions of the characters in the scene

Poetic features

Poetic features can be found in any written or spoken text. Certain poetic types have their own specific literary rules and language features so make sure you identify the poem type and then research the specific features.

Table 2.6: Poetic features

Poetic feature	Explanation
apostrophe	In poetry, an apostrophe refers to when a poet addresses a person or thing that is not present with an exclamation, often indicated by an 'O'.
cacophony and euphony	The way something is written can either create a smooth, pleasant sound called euphony or can create harsh, often unpleasant mixtures of sounds called a cacophony.
caesura	A break or pause in the verse to allow one phrase to finish and another to begin. It can be a natural or dramatic pauses.
enjambment	Where a sentence runs over from one line of verse to another
metre	The regular and rhythmic arrangement of syllables according to particular patterns. Measured in the number of 'feet' in each line.
repetition	The repeated use of letters, sounds or words for dramatic effect or emphasis. Common repetition devices include: • repetition of consonant sounds anywhere in multiple words in close proximity is called consonance. • repetition of vowel sounds anywhere in multiple words in close proximity is called assonance. • repetition of any sound at the start of words in close proximity is called alliteration. • repetition of any sound at the end of words in close proximity is called rhyme. • repetition of a whole word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses is called anaphora.

Graphic features

Graphic features balance visual features with language features and can be approached similarly to a film in connecting visual and spoken/written features throughout.

Table 2.7: Graphic features

Graphic feature	Explanation
graphic weight	A term to describe the way that some images or parts of images draw the eye more than others. This can be created through colour, shading, patterns, contrast, size and positioning.
panel (borderless or guttered)	An individual panel is one isolated picture. This can either be borderless (where there is no frame containing the picture) or guttered (where there is space, referred to as the gutter, between each framed panel). A splash is a kind of panel that spans the width of a page, but if it runs off the page entirely then it is referred to as a bleed.
paralinguistic features	There are a number of ways that graphic texts are able to create mood and impact without the use of words. This might include facial expressions and body language of characters, but it can also include **sound effect lettering**, emanata (teardrops, sweat, question marks) or motion lines (indicating movement).
visual composition	This is how all the pieces are placed in the frame. What is in the foreground (the element closest to the viewer), the midground (the centre of the panel, often where the eye is drawn to unless another feature captures its attention) or the background (furthest away from the viewer and often providing context or supplementary information for the scene).
written expression	Words can be either embedded into the visual text through speech balloons (what the character is saying) or thought bubbles (what the character is thinking). They can also sit anywhere around the visual, as a narrative box or captions (describing what is happening in the scene).

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify the different narrative and literary features used in 'The Magician'.

- *Changing sentence length – for example, the first paragraph*
- *Alliteration – for example, dismay/deal, ever/entry, frail/faded, man/magic, feathers/flowers, doorknobs/doves*
- *Repetition – for example, 'It is boring … his tricks are boring, the animals are boring, the show is boring'*
- *Colloquial expressions – for example, 'I'll tell 'em how it's done.'*
- *Emphasis – for example, 'What a show it is!'*
- *Juxtaposition – for example, 'saunters cockily' – 'nervousness'*
- *Irony – for example, 'I have a choice. He can come in or he can knock all my teeth out.'*

- *Anacoluthon – for example, 'Not long in the neighbourhood, wanting the kids at school to like me, I thought a party would be a good idea.'*
- *Euphemism – for example, 'an old tuxedo that has seen better days'*
- *Sensory imagery – for example, 'trembling hands'; 'sneers Frankie'; 'saunters cockily'; 'flourish with his wand'; 'almighty cheer'*
- *Metaphor – for example, 'I feel my face burn.'; 'The old man is magic.'*
- *Enumeration – for example, 'pushing and shoving and intimidating'; 'a collective gasp, a pause then an almighty cheer'*
- *Personification – for example, 'Another disappointment.'; 'A look of nervousness passes briefly across his face.'*
- *Indirect and direct dialogue – for example, 'It is boring, he says.' and 'You shouldn't have picked me'*
- *Onomatopoeia – for example, 'bang'; 'scoffing and sneering'; 'gasp'*

2 Brainstorm some statements you can make about how the text was constructed.

- *The abundance of alliteration throughout the story highlights the contrasts, comparisons and emphasis of certain character traits and descriptions.*
- *The changing sentence length and structure, including the use of anacoluthon, allows a rhythm and control of the story throughout.*
- *The numerous short sentences add a simplistic, childlike reading of the story.*
- *Through figurative language, Warner is able to add detail and description in engaging and purposeful ways.*
- *By using enumeration, particularly in the familiar tricolon way, Warner layers the ways she is able to describe and build mood throughout the story.*

3 Choose one of your statements and write a paragraph, explaining why you think the statement is true. Use plot, character, setting and construction-based evidence to support your interpretation.

Statement: By using enumeration, particularly in the familiar tricolon way, Warner layers the ways she is able to describe and build mood throughout the story.

Warner uses enumeration in a variety of ways to describe and build mood throughout 'The Magician'. Employing tricolons of details around Frankie 'pushing and shoving and intimidating' or the classmates' 'collective gasp, a pause then an almighty cheer', Warner is able to layer the information we are given about the situation and maximise the detail in an economical way. Yet, I noticed how she also enumerates in her details about the way The Great Waldo 'is magic' as 'he turns feathers into flowers and doorknobs into doves … [and] even pulls a white rabbit from a hat'. This tricolonic enumeration is further emphasised through the repetition of Frankie lamenting how 'his tricks are boring. The animals are boring, the show is boring'. I felt that by listing important elements with multiple elements of detail, Warner could keep her story as short as possible (important when writing a flash fiction) and maximise the information the readers are given.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this response.

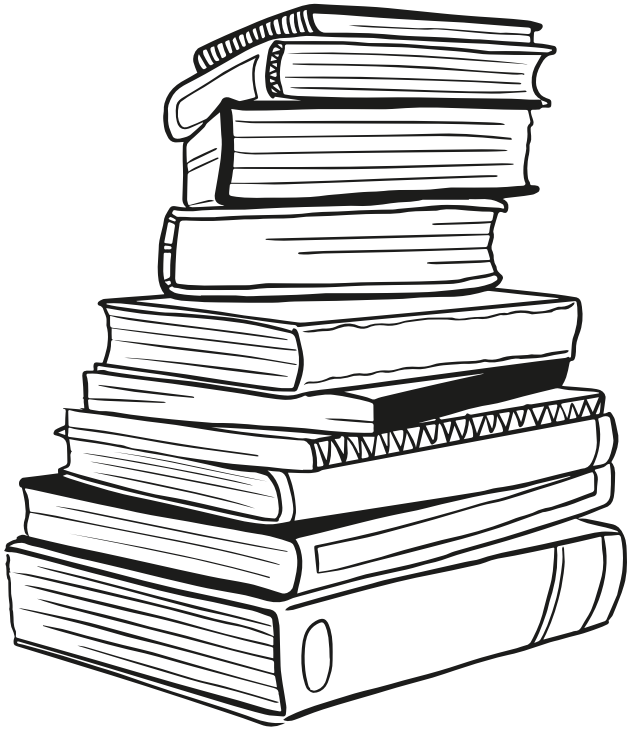
!! While you might learn technical words as nouns (e.g. 'she used a metaphor'), you can turn them into adverbs (e.g. 'she metaphorically shows'), or adjectives (e.g. 'she shows the metaphorical burn') or verbs (e.g. 'she metaphorises the humiliation'). Remember, as a writer you have choices.

Activity 2.6: Reflect and analyse

1. Brainstorm a comprehensive list of different features used in your set text. Consider narrative and literary features, as well as any relevant features common to the text type you are studying.
2. What features in your text are you most comfortable identifying independently and using as evidence?
3. What features do you tend to notice when reading or viewing a text, and what features do you only notice when specifically looking for them? Why might that be?
4. What features do you think had the most impact on your text? Why? What impact did they have?
5. Brainstorm some statements you can make about how your text was constructed and the impact this had upon the text overall.
6. Choose one of your statements and write a paragraph, explaining why you think the statement is true, using different types of evidence to support your interpretation.

↑ Level-up

Construction elements rarely – if ever – work in isolation. Looking at your list of elements, which are working in conjunction with each other and how? What impact do they have together?



STEP 7 Understand the ideas

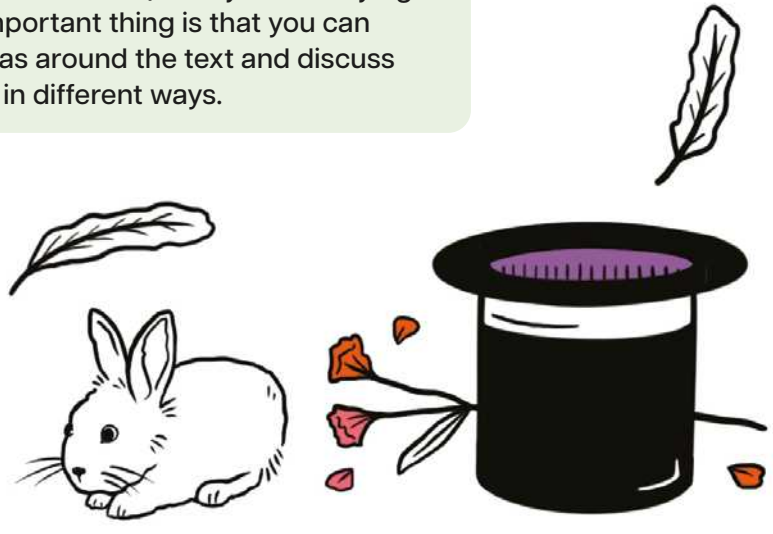
The final piece to analysing a text is to consider its *purpose* as a text. Why was it created? How are you supposed to feel as a reader/viewer at the end of the text? What are you supposed to learn, wonder, think about or feel after reading/viewing the text? Essentially we have been doing this for each of the elements in this step – building interpretations around what the text is saying and why – but this final element is about connecting these pieces to a wider understanding and impact of the text.

The ideas, conflicts and tensions

What a creator **intended** to say and how the text can be interpreted can sometimes be two different things. This comes from the fact that readers or viewers bring their own experiences to a text and will connect to certain elements in drastically different ways. Yet, as we saw through exploring the construction of the text, the creator uses different techniques for specific effect. They want you to like certain characters and find others creepy. They are hoping to make you feel scared or **whimsical** or even confused, and ultimately they want to leave an impression upon you, making you question, wonder or hope for something else within life more broadly. They want to say something – you just need to 'listen'.

First we can go back and look at the interpretations we have already brainstormed regarding the narrative, characters, setting and construction elements and **categorise** them under similar concepts. You can consider these as broad themes or topics of the text. The individual interpretations or statements about that topic are then your interpretations of the ideas, concerns and conflicts specifically being presented in the text.

!! Some people think of this broad concept as the *theme* (what topic you are talking about) and the specific details pertaining to the text as the *rheme* (what you are saying about that topic). The important thing is that you can classify the different ideas around the text and discuss how they are presented in different ways.



WORKED EXAMPLE

1 **a** Brainstorm different themes you could explore in 'The Magician'.

b For each theme, brainstorm different ideas, conflicts and concerns you could interpret the text as presenting and write these as statements alongside the relevant theme.

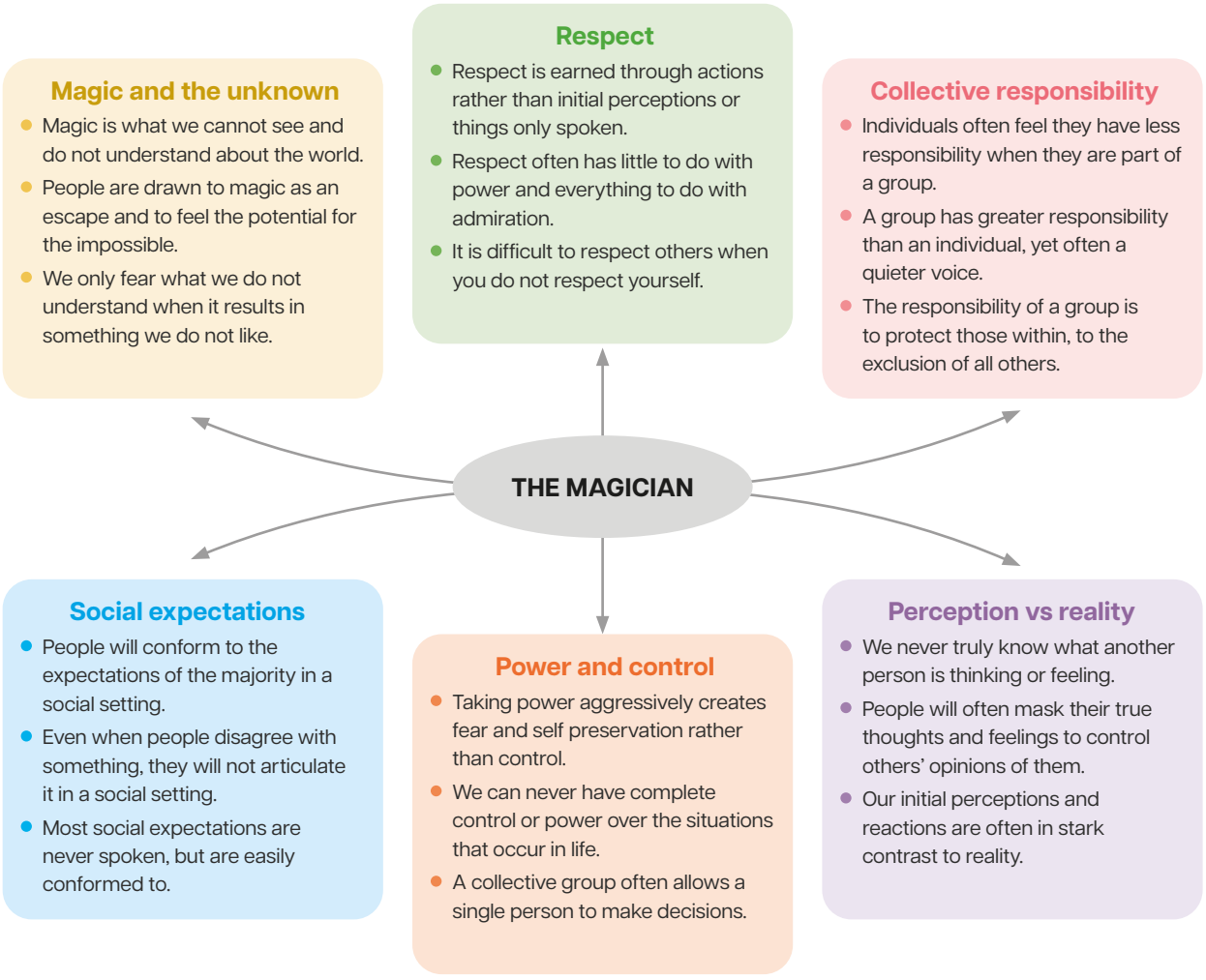


Figure 2.3: 'The Magician' – brainstorming themes and interpretations

2 Choose one of your statements and write a paragraph, explaining why you think the statement is true, using an **array** of different types of evidence to support your interpretation.

Statement: We can never truly know what another person is thinking or feeling.

'The Magician' highlights how little people speak their truth, or speak out against injustice, as a result of a collective fear of isolation, judgement or negative consequences. Due to the first person narration, we know that the narrator was just as 'dismayed' about inviting Frankie in to the party as the classmates, but at no point did Warner allow anyone to articulate their feelings to Frankie or an adult who might have assisted in this situation. Similarly, The Great Waldo clearly observes Frankie's 'scoffing and sneering' but does not say anything to explain the inappropriateness of his actions.

Rather, the magician decides to take the situation into his own hands and remove Frankie permanently. Although this seems to be a conscious and celebrated decision, I do wonder if The Great Waldo actually did not know how to bring Frankie back and that this is just another instance of someone not speaking their truth and no one asking for clarification.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this response.

!! What is the text saying about people or life more generally? This is where you build interpretations of the text. Do not be scared to explain what you connect the text with. As long as you can support it with evidence, there can be no 'wrong' interpretations.

Activity 2.7: Interpret and apply

1. Collate and categorise your prior statements about your text under different topics/themes.
2. Looking at your broad theme and the different interpretations you have already built, is there anything else you think the text is trying to say more broadly?
3. Of all the ideas you have identified, which do you think is the most important in your text?
4. What idea did you learn or connect with most while reading/viewing the text (or afterwards)?
5. Do you think that other people would interpret the text differently from the way you have? Why/why not?
6. Do you think your interpretation of the text is what the creator of the text intended? What did they do to make you interpret the text in this way?
7. Choose a statement about your text and write a paragraph using different points of evidence to support your interpretation.

↑ Level-up Think of ways that you could challenge traditional readings of the text. How might the messages be interpreted in drastically different ways?

STEP 8

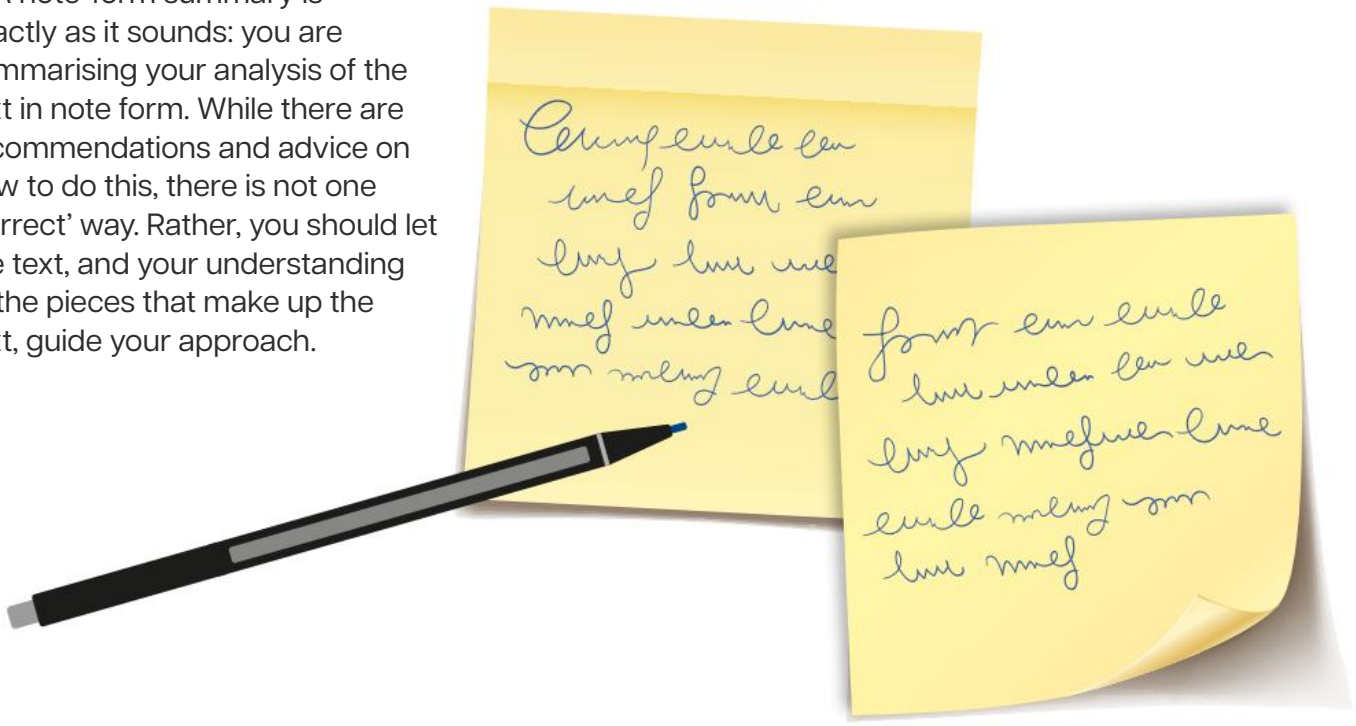
Create visual representations

One option for assessment for EAL students is to create either a note-form summary or a graphic representation of a text. These are both effective ways to process the information you have gathered thus far and step you towards either your assessment or the analytical response, depending on your teacher's decision.

Note-form summary

Although English students are not going to be formally assessed on their note-form summaries, there is a great benefit to spending time visually bringing together all the elements you have been working through. Note-form summaries can also be used as a planning tool, depending on how they are approached or their purpose overall.

A note-form summary is exactly as it sounds: you are summarising your analysis of the text in note form. While there are recommendations and advice on how to do this, there is not one 'correct' way. Rather, you should let the text, and your understanding of the pieces that make up the text, guide your approach.



WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Choose one of the themes that you identified in Step 7 as a starting point for your note-form summary. Build upon this theme by connecting different statements and interpretations, evidence that can be used to support these interpretations and your personal connections, wonderings and perspectives throughout.

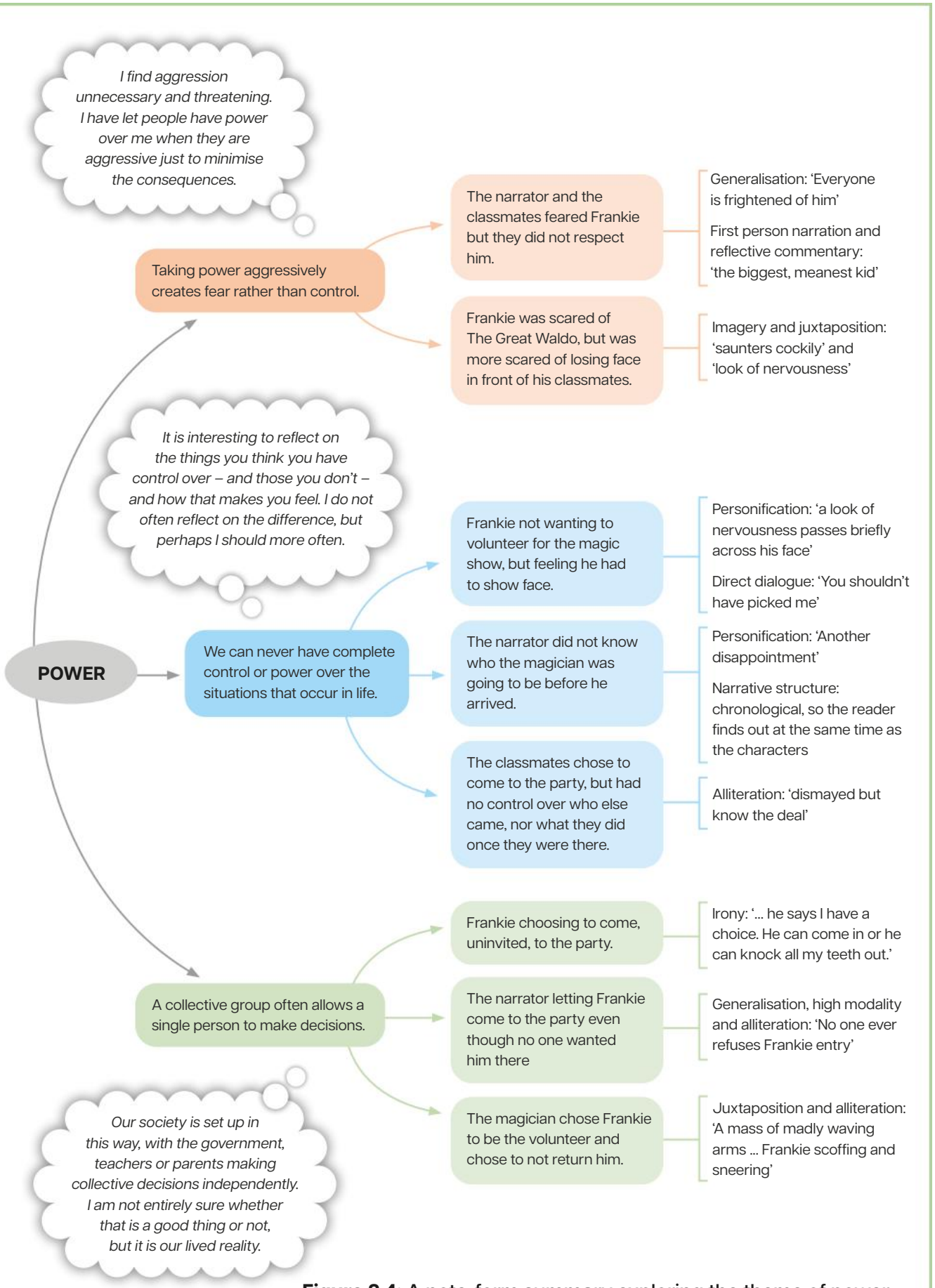


Figure 2.4: A note-form summary exploring the theme of power

Graphic representations

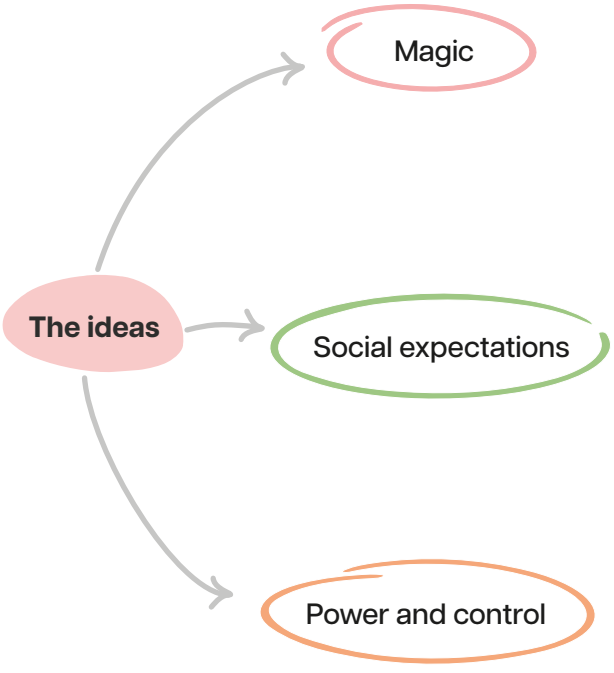
Another way to visually process your thinking is to represent it graphically. This is very broad and can be taken in numerous different ways and forms, but the concept is to visually represent your **personal connections with a set text**. It is only limited by your imagination, but allows you to create **detailed notes** around the specific elements you connect with the most.

While the note-form summary is built from the key ideas being presented, this is about beginning with your personal connections with the text and elaborating upon where they came from and the impact of them upon your interpretation of the text more broadly. This could be as simple as a concept map or table or a much more elaborate or creative response such as a comic strip, annotated picture book, infographic or any other visual representation of the text.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Visually explain your connections with the characters, plot and key ideas of 'The Magician'.

THE MAGICIAN



I think we make the world as magical as we want to and the more magic we believe in the better the world we experience. This is why I particularly enjoyed the magic realism element of the story – that magic lives among us within the least obvious people and they can bring us joy and balance overall.

So often our actions and thoughts are subconsciously driven by unwritten or even spoken social expectations. It surprised me how the story highlighted how many things in life go unsaid and that unexpected negative but also positive elements can result from this action.

Our world, no matter our age, is ruled by those with power, and those without are left to live a life that is not their true desire. I love the fact that Frankie loses his power so publicly, not because I like to see people suffer, but because I feel people who abuse the power they have should understand how quickly they can (and sometimes should) lose that power as well.

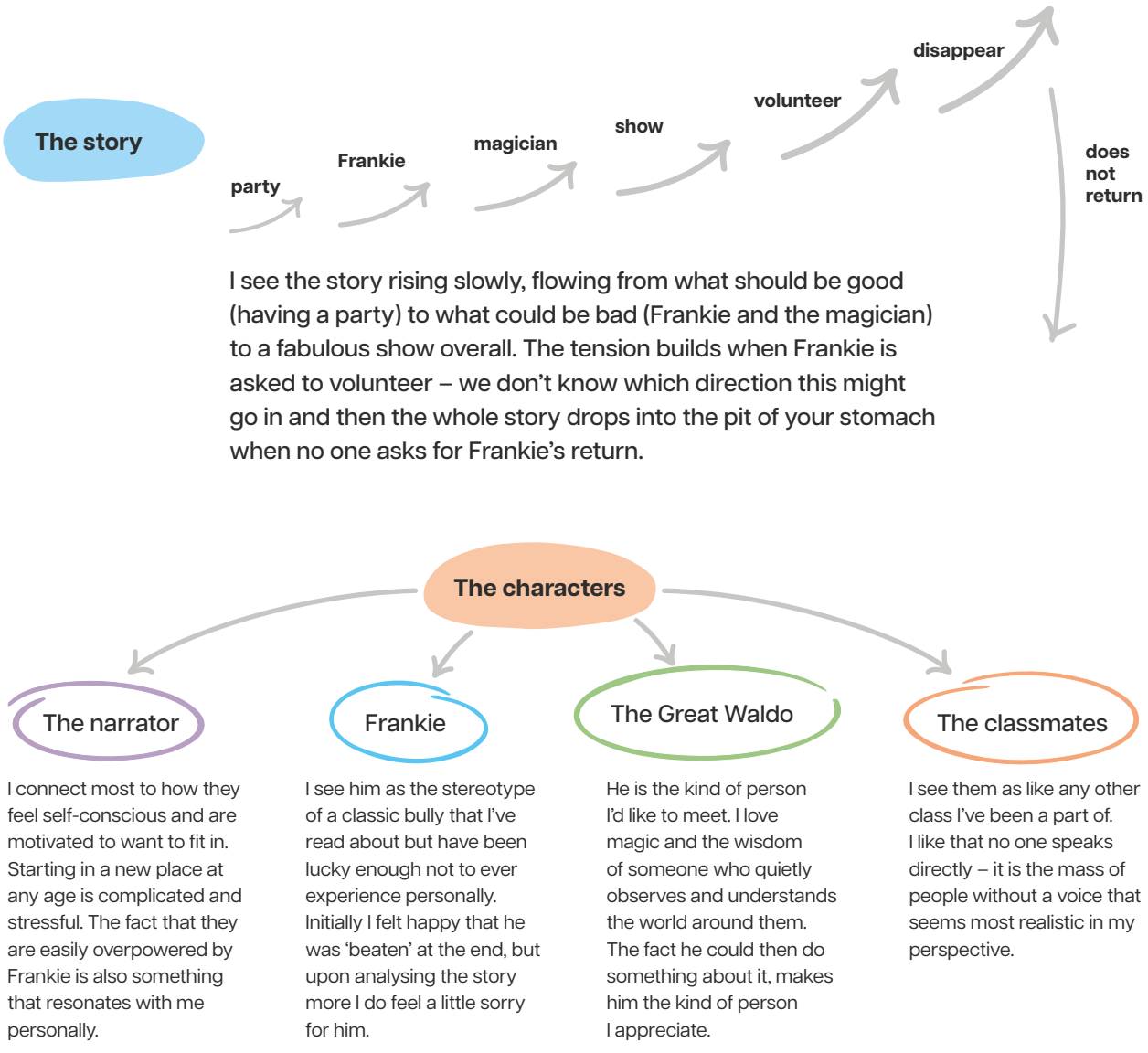


Figure 2.5: A visual representation of your personal connections with the text

!! You do not have to be the most creative or artistic person to find visually processing information powerful and effective. The bonus of trying to process the information you have gathered visually is that it is easier for us to remember. Blocks of writing can all seem very much the same, but if you can remember where on the page you wrote something, or the colour you used or how you physically connected it to another concept, you have a much greater chance of recalling it later during your SAC.

Activity 2.8: Create and analyse

1. Choose a topic or theme you explored in Step 7 to frame your own note-form summary of your set text. Remember to include:
   - different statements and interpretations about the ideas, concerns and conflicts shown in the text
   - a variety of direct evidence from the text including plot, character, setting, context and construction elements
   - personal reflections on your opinions, perspectives, questions and connections for different elements throughout.
2. Consider your personal connection with your text and then draft a graphic representation to highlight those connections. From here you might annotate your graphic representation with different elements from the text to show where your connections and interpretations have come from.
3. In what ways did creating a note-form summary or a graphic representation help you connect all the pieces of your text together?
4. What part of the summary was most helpful? The process of creating it, seeing the final product, a certain part of the summary? Why?
5. For EAL students: Do you know what the expectations of your SAC are? How confident are you feeling? What do you need to do to prepare for this more explicitly?

Level-up

Just as your analysis can be more detailed, so can your note-form summary or graphic representation. Where and how can you add further depth and detail to show a more sophisticated summary? Do not limit yourself to just adding more words. How can you add sophistication to the connections and examples you are highlighting?

STEP 9

Prepare for the SAC

Many students assume that analytical writing is looking for a 'correct' answer and that there is no place for your opinion about the text to be included, particularly because analytical writing is highly **formalised** and first-person pronouns generally discouraged. Yet this conclusion is significantly **flawed**. Good analytical writing is **entrenched** in opinion, though it is supported in a rational and logical way with direct evidence to prove the interpretations are accurate, rather than employing persuasive techniques.

The trick to analytical writing is finding something you want to say about the text and then identifying different forms of evidence to support that idea. The bonus in this particular SAC, however, is you do not just have to base your thinking on the text directly but you can also reflect on how and where you connect with the text and how you experienced it personally.

Make it personal

This task requires you to first make the text personal by asking questions such as:

- Where and how do you connect with the text?
- How do you agree and disagree with what the text is saying?
- How/what does the text make you feel/do/think?

Then you need to make the response more academic by asking:

- How do you prove that with evidence from the text?

!! One way you can maximise the process is to balance out what you think and feel with what you know and can identify in the text.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Brainstorm your response to the following topic by completing the table below.

'What are the key ways you personally connect with "The Magician"? Consider key themes, characters, structures and language features used throughout.'

What I think and feel
• *I think Frankie is misunderstood but I am still glad the 'bad guy' gets what he deserves in the end.* • *I empathise with the narrator in their attempt to fit in and feel a connection with people around them.* • *I found the ending particularly surprising. I liked how it came from nowhere and then was left, with nothing left to add.* • *I imagined The Great Waldo kind of like my grandfather: clever, observant, stoic but willing to do anything to make you happy.* • *I like that it is not overly descriptive, but rather it tells the story and the reader gets to visualise it in the way they want to.*

What I know and can identify

- *It is written in first person, so you do not know a lot about the narrator, except what they are thinking and feeling.*
- *Alliteration has been used in abundance, making connections even more obvious throughout.*
- *It is a flash fiction that is written in chronological order and ends in a cliff-hanger.*
- *The language used is fairly simplistic, almost child-like, so it sounds like the narrator is telling the story more realistically.*
- *Frankie has almost all of the direct (and indirect) dialogue throughout, giving him the loudest voice, but the least power overall.*

Different approaches to the personal response SAC

There is no one perfect way this task can or should be completed. Some schools might offer a suggested framework or approach to the structure of the task, while others might ask you to work towards a specific set of criteria but leave the structural features open for your authorial decision. The thing to remember is that you are showing your understanding of and connection with the text by supporting what you are saying with two types of evidence: your own perspective and experience as well as the text directly.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Using the information from your table, create a plan for the way you are going to structure and approach your personal response to the topic.

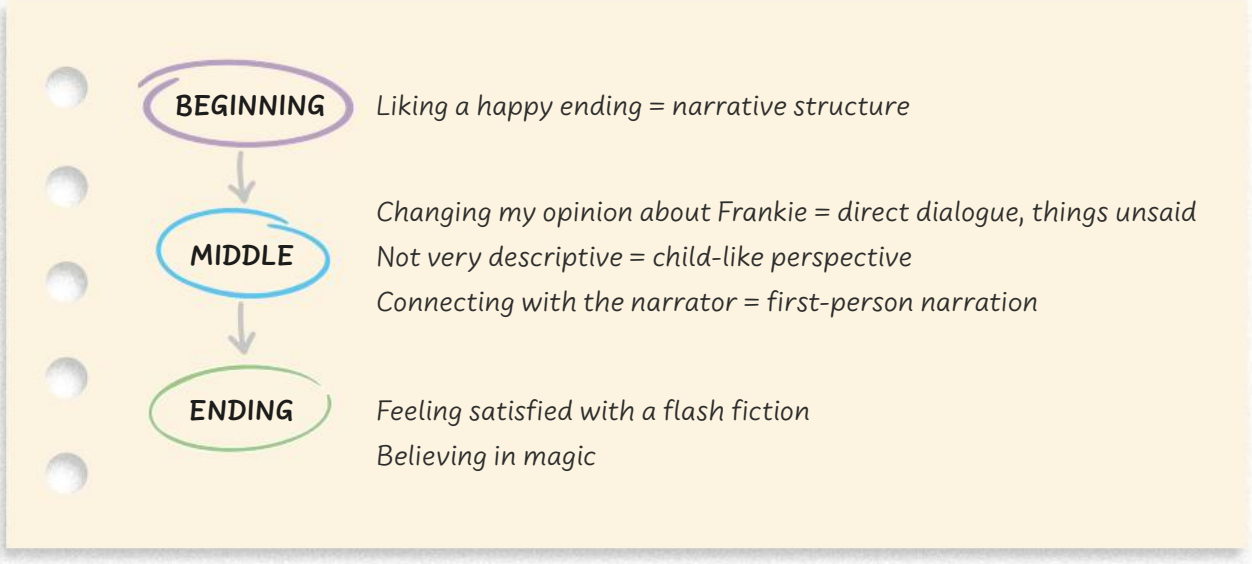


Figure 2.6: Planning the structure and approach of your personal response to the topic

2 Use your plan to draft your personal response.

I've grown up reading and watching stories where, inevitably, the good guy always wins. Life is complicated enough and my philosophy has always been, I can see bad things happen any day of the week but I should be able to trust that in a constructed world, no matter the problem, it will all turn out okay in the end and there will be 'an almighty cheer'. The guy will get the girl, the bad guy will lose, everything and everyone will live happily ever after. So upon reading 'The Magician' for the first time, it **appealed** *not only to my desire that the bad guy never wins, but the conclusion came in such an unexpected way that I found myself laughing out loud. In this way, Warner tricked me. She lured me along her seemingly simple story chronologically and then left such a dramatic cliffhanger that my brain took a beat to process and then laugh at how long it took to process what had just happened.*

It was not until I started unpacking the features and exploring the characters of the text more deeply that I found myself instinctively beginning to empathise with the bad guy, Frankie. I know this sounds contradictory because I was pleased when he was defeated in the narrative and all his victims rejoiced in his demise, but the more I thought about 'the biggest, meanest kid in school', the more I felt he was deeply misunderstood. Warner certainly gave him the loudest voice. The context around his character began the story, and beyond two lines from The Great Waldo, Frankie dominates the direct dialogue as he 'scoff[s] and sneer[s]' throughout. Frankie played the stereotypical school bully and yet the narrator notices the 'look of nervousness' on his face, a fleeting moment of vulnerability before being 'replaced with a smirk and a smart remark'. Meanwhile as a reader I found myself questioning why Frankie wanted to come to a party he was not invited to in the first place. The simple act of showing up at the narrator's doorstep seems to scream for attention and connection. Yet while his behaviour is far from condonable, I clearly have experienced too many stories where bullies are misunderstood kids with a depressing home life who are just waiting for someone to call them out and let them be better – and this is how I have ended up seeing Frankie.

The way I perceive the text, however, could have less to do with my prior experiences of classic narratives and archetypal characters and more to do with the way the story is told. There are very limited descriptions of the setting, characters or the events taking place and while this could be due to its limitations as a flash fiction, I feel it is more to do with Warner allowing her audience to connect to the characters and setting in a way that best connects to their personal experiences: the 'birthday party' is in a familiar backyard, Frankie is the 'swagger[ing]' bully from my school and the narrator is me as a child. This concept can translate to any time or person and that personal connection holds true, making a story written in the 1990s timeless enough to be printed in 2022.

This feeling of empathy towards the narrator is largely due to the first-person perspective the text is told through. We never find out whether the narrator is male or female – so they could be either. We do not find out how old they are – so they can be any age. We do not know what they look like, so they could have the same colour hair and skin and clothes as me, the reader. This allowed me to connect most directly to the narrator. All we really know for sure is that the party is 'a big deal' for a person who so desperately 'want[s] the kids at school to like' them, so they can feel a part of something larger, not be isolated but accepted, in any

way possible, and not have to navigate the world of school alone. That feeling allows the ending to have the greatest impact as we feel the same elation the narrator does at the final success of their party. A party everyone will remember.

Ultimately, 'The Magician' surprised me in more ways than simply the twist at the end. Normally I find short fiction rather unsatisfying. I don't have time to get to know the characters, I never find out what happens afterwards – it is like a trailer to a film that is never made. But 'The Magician', as a flash fiction, somehow manages to leave me feeling completely satisfied. I do not want to see the film or find out what happens after the twist. It left me with everything I needed to process, enjoy and build from. Maybe this is because it appealed to the very real part of me that wants to believe in magic – not the 'rabbit from a hat' type of magic, but the real, unexplainable magic that makes me secretly desire a world where the good guy always wins, the freaky old man turns out to be astonishing and happily ever afters do in fact exist for the shy new kid at school.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this response.

!! This is the response I most enjoyed writing, but it is reasonably informal in many of its structures and features. See the digital student resource for more formal analytical response and choose the approach that you prefer.

Activity 2.9: Reflect and plan

1 Complete a practice response by:

- **a** completing the following table in your notebook
- **b** brainstorming a plan responding to the topic: 'What are the key ways you personally connect with your set text?'
- **c** using the plan to complete a draft response to submit for feedback.

What I think and feel	What I know and can identify

2 How are you feeling about the upcoming SAC? What are you feeling most confident/least confident about?

3 What feedback have you been given through this area of study (not just from a practice SAC, but during class discussions and class work throughout)? Use this feedback to complete a table in your notebook on your strengths and areas that need improvement for this SAC.

My strengths in this SAC	My areas for further study before the SAC

4 How are you going to study in your areas for improvement? For each area of further study you identified in Question 3, plan the specific strategies and actions you will use to work on these areas, by copying and completing the following table in your notebook.

Focus area	Study activity or action

Go to the digital student resource to download these tables.

Level-up

Use your feedback from your practice SAC/response to revise your writing. It is one thing to read and understand the feedback but another to effectively apply it (into the response and then transfer the understanding into a different context). How confident are you that you can take the feedback and apply it to any context?

STEP 10

Transfer your skills to Unit 2

Although you do not have to do another personal response, you will take most of the skills you have learned from this unit and apply them to the Unit 2 reading and exploring texts area of study. For this new outcome, you will still be identifying all the features of a different set text, but you will be creating a **purely** analytical response, rather than a personal or reflective response, to a set topic.

The important thing to remember is that any topic of analytical writing needs to have a clear opinion about the text. You need to 'take yourself out' of the essay as such, and present your opinion as fact, supported by evidence directly from the text only throughout. So keeping the learning you have done through this area of study in focus will not only set you up for success in Unit 2, but you will be able to use many of the skills learned in this outcome in **subsequent** areas of study as well. Good reading and writing skills are very **transferable**, so maximise every opportunity.

!! Remember the common skills across the course. Which of these skills have you experimented with and developed over this area of study? Hold onto those as you transition to your next outcome.

Activity 2.10: Activate and reflect

1 What resources, handouts, worked examples and information have you received and worked through for this area of study that you will need for either the mid-year exam or for the Unit 2 area of study SAC?

Take the time to collate, categorise and consolidate these notes, so that when you come back to them they can be found and used as easily as possible.

2 Taking the time to reflect on the area of study will not only set you up purposefully for the next area of study, but will help you learn more holistically about yourself as a learner.

- a What parts of this area of study did you find most enjoyable, easy to understand and easy to apply? Why do you think this is so?
- b What parts of this area of study did you find least enjoyable, and difficult to understand and apply? Why do you think this is so?

3 Find your voice in crafting texts

This area of study is about finding out who you are as a writer. You will be inspired by other writers, explore different types of writing, and consider the **impact** of the context, audience and purpose of a piece of writing on others', and your own, texts. This chapter will not only help set you up for success in this area of study, but also for the **subsequent** creating texts sections in Unit 3 of Year 12. Follow this suggested pathway to find your voice in the SAC task for this area of study.

Find your voice in ... crafting texts

Start here!

STEP 1
Identify what you already understand
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STEP 6
Complete your final edit
77

STEP 7
Create annotations and descriptions
80

STEP 8
Prepare for the SAC
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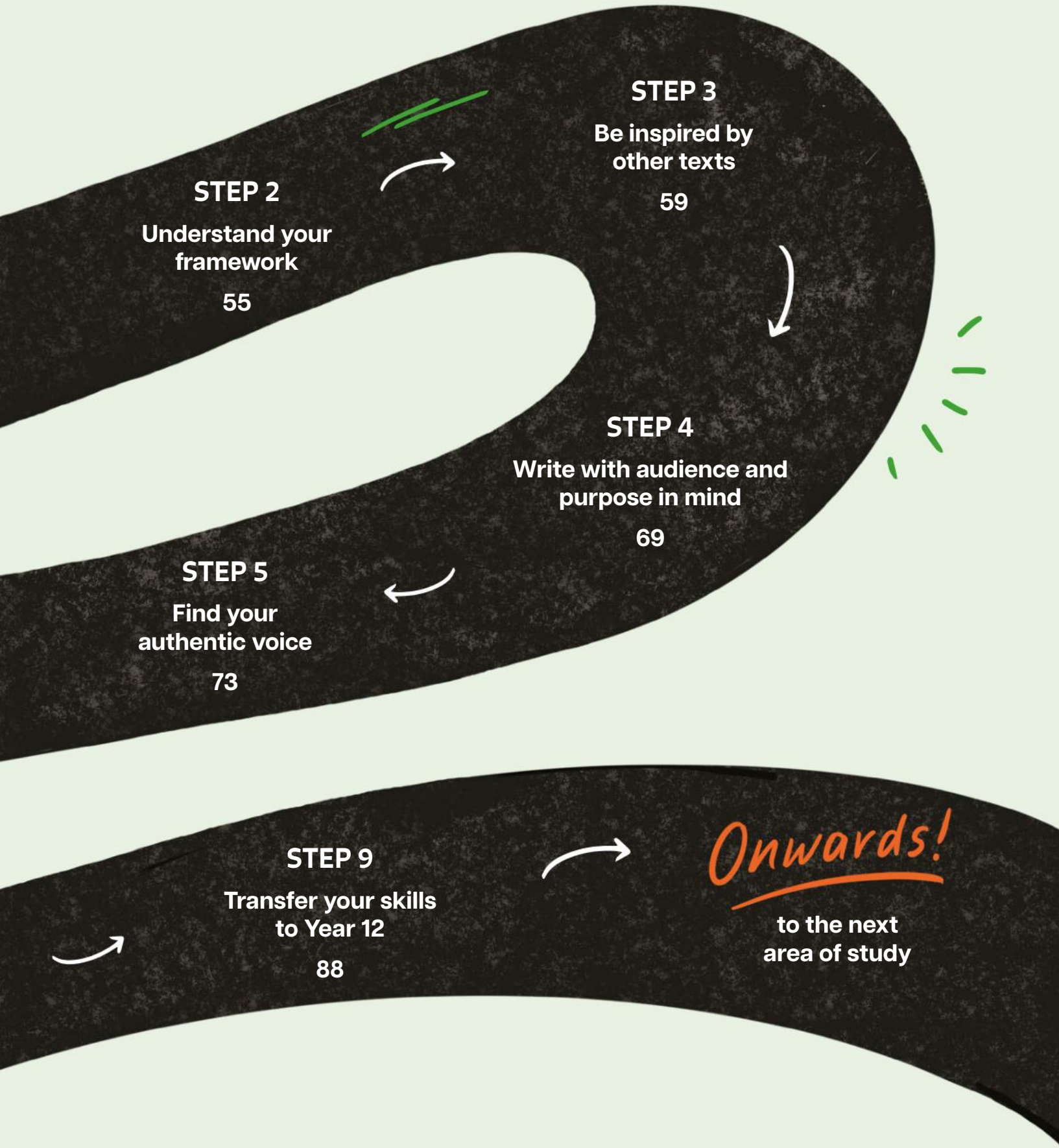
STEP 2
Understand your framework
55
STEP 3
Be inspired by other texts
59
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Find your authentic voice
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Transfer your skills to Year 12
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Onwards!
to the next area of study

STEP 1

Identify what you already understand about crafting texts

Throughout your school experience, you have been **honing** your skills as a writer. Not just in the Literacy block at primary school, or in English at high school, but all your subjects have asked you to translate your understanding, thinking and perspective into different forms of writing, for different purposes and outcomes. You are going to draw upon all these skills and understanding in this area of study.

Both English and EAL students are required to **demonstrate an understanding of effective and cohesive writing through the crafting of their own texts**. This will require you to explore other types of text, notice the structures and features being used and then consider how you can experiment with these features in your own writing. The key to this area of study is to focus on the **specific context and audience to achieve a stated purpose**, and recognise that these will change **drastically** depending on the type of writing you are doing. The final element to this area of study is for you to be able **to describe individual decisions made about the vocabulary text structures, language features and conventions used during writing processes**, which you will initially do with other texts, and ultimately do with your own writing.

Table 3.1: The key knowledge and skills from the study design to help you find success

	Things I need to know	Things I need to do
Explore and understand other texts	• vocabulary, text structures and language features used in effective writing • the ways purpose, context and audience shape writing • different language **modes** and their effects on structure and meaning • the power of language when deployed by an author to achieve their aims • the range of ideas presented in various ways in mentor texts	• recognise and comment on vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas used in effective writing
Collaborate, discuss and process feedback	• the value of collaboration and discussion	• collaborate on the processes of writing with peers and teachers through discussion and feedback

Craft texts	• writing processes including drafting, refining and considering feedback • different strategies to generate and develop ideas • standard and non-standard conventions of language, including syntax, punctuation and spelling	• plan, create, draft, **refine** and complete individual writing • develop and employ writing processes • write with a clear purpose (to express, to reflect, to explain or to argue) and an awareness of context (including mode) and audience • employ and experiment with vocabulary, text structures and language features for effective writing • explore voices appropriate to audience, purpose and context (including mode) • generate ideas, and discuss, develop and elaborate on these ideas • experiment with vocabulary for effective writing • reflect on and share the **implications** of authorial choices made in your own writing and in the writings of others • apply standard and non-standard conventions of language, including syntax, punctuation and spelling, as appropriate

Source: VCE English/EAL Performance Descriptors and extracts from the VCE English/EAL Study Design, www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Understanding the area of study

The important thing to remember about this particular outcome is that it is a writing unit. Although you will **read and engage** with many different texts, this unit, beyond any other, is a unit for you to find your voice as a writer. This is an opportunity to **apply, extend and challenge your understanding and use of imaginative, persuasive and informative texts** through your understanding of **contexts, purposes and audiences**. You will **engage in and expand on the ideas drawn from mentor texts** as a way to **extend your creativity, fluency and range**. This area of study has nothing to do with **formulaic**, analytical writing, but rather it wants you to experiment with **abstract language, non-standard conventions of language and explore informal language where appropriate**.

There is no one set way your school has to run this particular unit, so it is important you find out and understand what **parameters** and expectations there are for the SAC as the tasks are **essentially** the same for English and EAL. As such, you will be asked to **demonstrate your understanding of ideas and the application of effective writing strategies** while **articulating your writing processes** through your **commentaries, whether they are annotations or descriptions**.

What will be consistent is that you will end up submitting two texts that demonstrate your skills as a writer when creating a text for **a specific context and audience to achieve a stated purpose**. You will also need to **describe the individual decisions you made through these texts during the writing process**.

!! It is important that you understand this area of study is about working out who you are as a writer. Do you identify as a writer? If you do not, you should make that your goal by the end of this outcome.

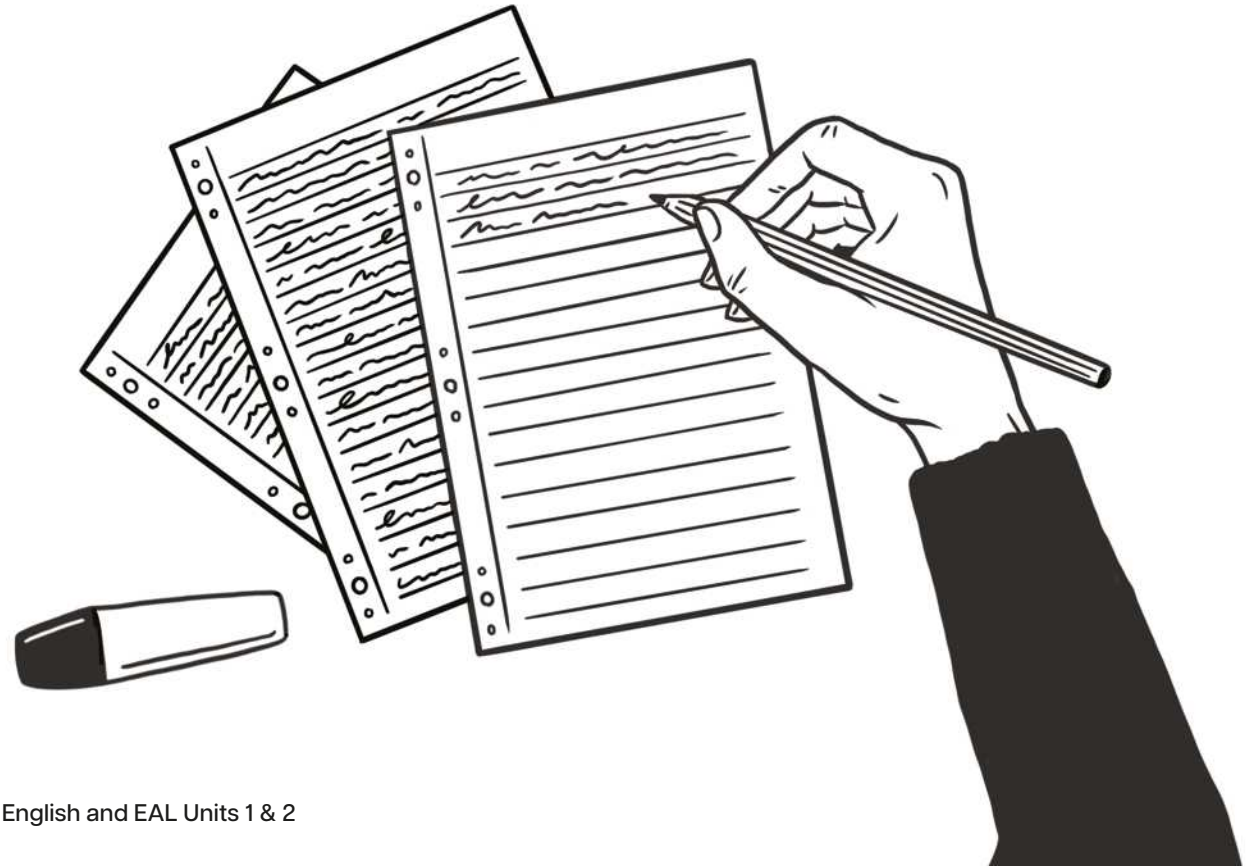
Activity 3.1: Reflect and identify

1 Read and discuss the key knowledge and skills in Table 3.1 with a partner or small group and answer the following questions.

- **a** Why do you think there are more 'knowledge' elements required in exploring other texts and more 'skills' elements required in crafting texts?
- **b** What knowledge and skill elements are you most confident in being able to achieve? Why is this so? Where have you demonstrated these skills before?
- **c** What knowledge and skill elements are you least confident in being able to achieve? Why is this so? Highlight these elements as focus areas as you move through the chapter.
- **d** Are you more confident in certain elements of particular text types or forms than others? For example, do you find exploring and/or creating imaginative texts easier or more enjoyable than persuasive texts – that is, poems more than speeches, or scripts more than articles?
- **e** What are you looking forward to most about this area of study? And what are you looking forward to least? Why is this so?
- **f** Thinking about what you have learnt in your prior years of school, what knowledge and skills are you bringing with you to help you succeed in this particular area of study?

↑ Level-up

It is one thing to acknowledge your areas for improvement but quite another to know how you can actively work to improve. What specific strategies and actions will you be using to work on your weaknesses? If you do not know, then ask and keep asking as many people as you need to, to find an approach that makes sense for you.



STEP 2 Understand your framework

The framework is a central idea that can stimulate discussion, inspiration and emotion. It is a springboard for you to explore different texts, ideas and approaches, and to consider different audiences, perspectives and contexts for writing.

For the purposes of this chapter, we are going to focus on the framework of 'family'. Your school will most likely have a different framework for this, but the same principles, activities, strategies and approaches will apply no matter what framework your school has chosen.

Ways to explore a framework

One way to begin understanding and exploring your framework is to brainstorm the potential areas of focus, exploration and discussion.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Create a network tree by first brainstorming key areas you might be able to discuss further centred around the concept of 'family' before identifying sub-categories and further areas of exploration within each branch.

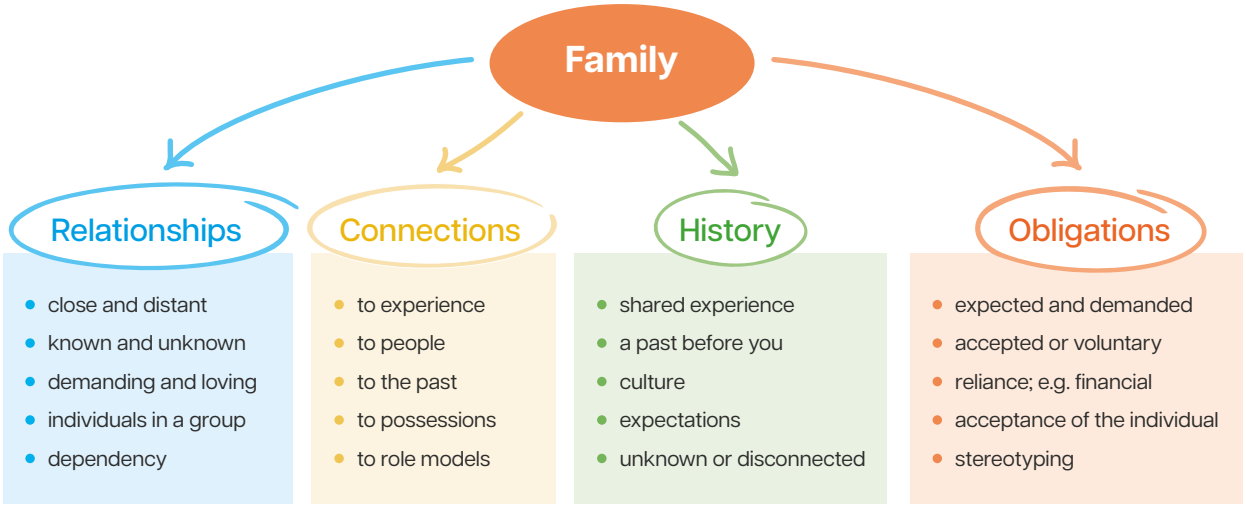


Figure 3.1: A network tree centred around the concept of 'family'

The next step is to recognise the fact that different people will have drastically different perspectives on the framework and the different areas of exploration. In the same way, a **plethora** of texts have already explored and presented perspectives on the framework that you are able to reference, draw inspiration from and consider as alternative perspectives.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Create a mood board by researching different visuals, quotes, words and other stimuli to represent the perspectives that can be considered when exploring the framework for family.

Figure 3.2: A mood board for 'family'

The final step is to find your own personal connections and perspective on the framework. This area of study is about finding your voice as a writer so you need something to write about before you can start! Choosing the aspect you find most interesting, important or **relevant** will make your writing much easier.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Explore your personal connections with the framework by answering the following questions.

a What is your personal definition of family?

Family is the collective group of people who you either identify with as being related to by genealogy or as being more than friends, but people who understand exactly who you are and connect with you as someone more than just an individual.

b Why do you think family is important (or not important)?

Family is important to feel connected to something bigger than yourself. It connects a person to history, culture and intergenerational relationships. While genetic family isn't vital for a person's success, building a family of connected people to feel a part of a group and understand self is important for a person's mental and emotional wellbeing.

c What is the most interesting thing about family in your opinion?

I find the way that we can feel love for a group of people that we wouldn't even be friends with if we had the choice, just because they are related to you, fascinating. How people can come from the same family and be completely different – that is, have drastically different perspectives, beliefs and interests.

d What would you most like to find out about family?

I'd like to explore how different families can be and why family is so important to a person's perspective of themselves.

!! To do this task, you need to choose an aspect that you find interesting and would like to explore. You are sure to find something in your framework that will intrigue you – keep searching until you find it.

Activity 3.2: Research and apply

1. Create a network tree considering the different areas of potential focus for your framework and the elements you could explore.
2. Create your own mood board for your framework. Research different images, quotes and words/phrases that demonstrate your understanding of the different perspectives in your framework.
3. Consider how you connect to your framework personally.
   - a What do you find most interesting, important and relevant about your framework?
   - b What is your perspective about the framework. What does it mean to you?
   - c What key issues are presented and could be debated about your framework?

↑ Level-up

Think beyond the obvious **interpretations** and discussions surrounding your framework. For every idea you had, is there a counter or opposite interpretation? Are you being too **literal**? What does your framework represent symbolically, figuratively or emblematically?

STEP 3

Be inspired by other texts

Before you can start writing, you must understand what makes good writing. One of the best ways to understand this varied and **subjective** concept is to look at other texts, and notice what structural and language choices they have made and the impact these have upon the text. In this area of study, you will explore a number of different texts, some in depth, and some simply to notice interesting structures or features being used for effect. The exploration of these texts, however, is quite different from the way you explored your set text in 'reading and exploring texts'. The purpose of exploring these texts is not so much to understand them, or to build interpretations around them, but rather to notice what they are doing and potentially use them for inspiration (of what to do just as much as what not to do).

Imaginative, persuasive and informative texts

While there are numerous different types of texts, styles and forms, Unit 1 requires you to narrow your focus to **imaginative, persuasive and informative texts**. Recognise that these might take the form of **short stories, speeches or monologues, essays, podcasts, poetry, songs, feature articles, memoirs and biographies**. Noticing the similarities and differences between these text types and forms, and how they explore and present perspectives around the framework you are exploring, will help you to see there is no single way to approach this writing task.

Imaginative	expressive, creative, emotive	• presenting different ideas and experiences from other perspectives • telling a story	novels, flash fiction, poems, songs, novellas, plays/ scripts, films
Persuasive	emotive, passionate, purposeful	• convincing others to see your point of view on an issue • expressing an opinion	speeches, essays, podcasts, articles, advertisements
Informative	purposeful, factual, logical	• explaining different concepts and ideas • documenting facts and information	essays, podcasts, articles, memoirs, biographies, speeches

Mentor texts

We will use three mentor texts for this chapter to explore and inspire us in different ways. One is imaginative: 'School Run' by Michael Burrows; one is persuasive: 'The "perfect family" has created an ethical and moral vaccum' by Zoë Krupka; and one is informative: 'Mum, dad and two kids no longer the norm in the changing Australian family' by Brendan Churchill. We will explore and then use these texts to inspire you to write your own texts for specific audiences and purposes.

Read the following flash fiction 'School Run' by Michael Burrows, published in the anthology, *Three Can Keep a Secret* by Night Parrot Press.

School Run

Dirty forks in the sink from last night. Bowl of warm milk on the table, all the sugary cereal picked out. Toast crumbs strewn across the counter.

They say it's going to be another scorcher today. Stay inside if you can. Crank up the aircon if you're lucky enough to have it.

'We gotta leave in five. You ready?' he yells across the house.

They shout back from their rooms. Muffled voices, something about a missing sock.

'Just wear the ones you wore yesterday. No one will know.' He's wearing the same sweat-stained shirt. No one will know.

'Two minutes, girls. Lunch is on the counter.' Packet of chips, rollup, muesli bar. Pre-packaged. Teacher will probably say it's too many 'red foods', not enough green. Like he's got the time.

He stands by the front door and yells again. 'We need to leave.'

Alice arrives first. Those tiny black shoes in her hand. Says she can't get the laces right. Says Mum used to do it for her.

'Where is Mum?' She sits in the middle of the hallway with her schoolbag twice the size of her and puts her shoes on the wrong feet.

'I told you, Mum is living with her new friend Tony. Remember? She needed space.' He swaps her shoes, talks her through the laces again, in that same sing-song voice she used.

Rosie keeps him waiting.

He opens the car door and hoists Alice up into the seat, throws her bag in the boot. His shirt sticks to his back. 'Don't touch the seatbelt, honey, it's too hot.'

Rosie hasn't done her hair. He watched a video online about how to do plaits and gave up after five minutes. Rosie rolls her eyes at him like she used to. Wise beyond her years, they used to tell each other. He remembers a moment from his own childhood he hasn't thought about in years – stealing a handful of red frogs from the corner shop when the man wasn't watching. The feeling that he was so grown up, so sure of himself. The pure bliss of getting away with it. Can't remember what that felt like now.

He pulls Rosie's hair back into a messy ponytail and ties it with one of the lackey bands that now live permanently on his wrist, marking his skin.

'Mum's not coming back, is she?' Rosie says. Stops him in his tracks.

'What's on your hands?' Her fingers are bright yellow, and there is a blue mark on her skirt. He tries to rub it off but it just smudges it further.

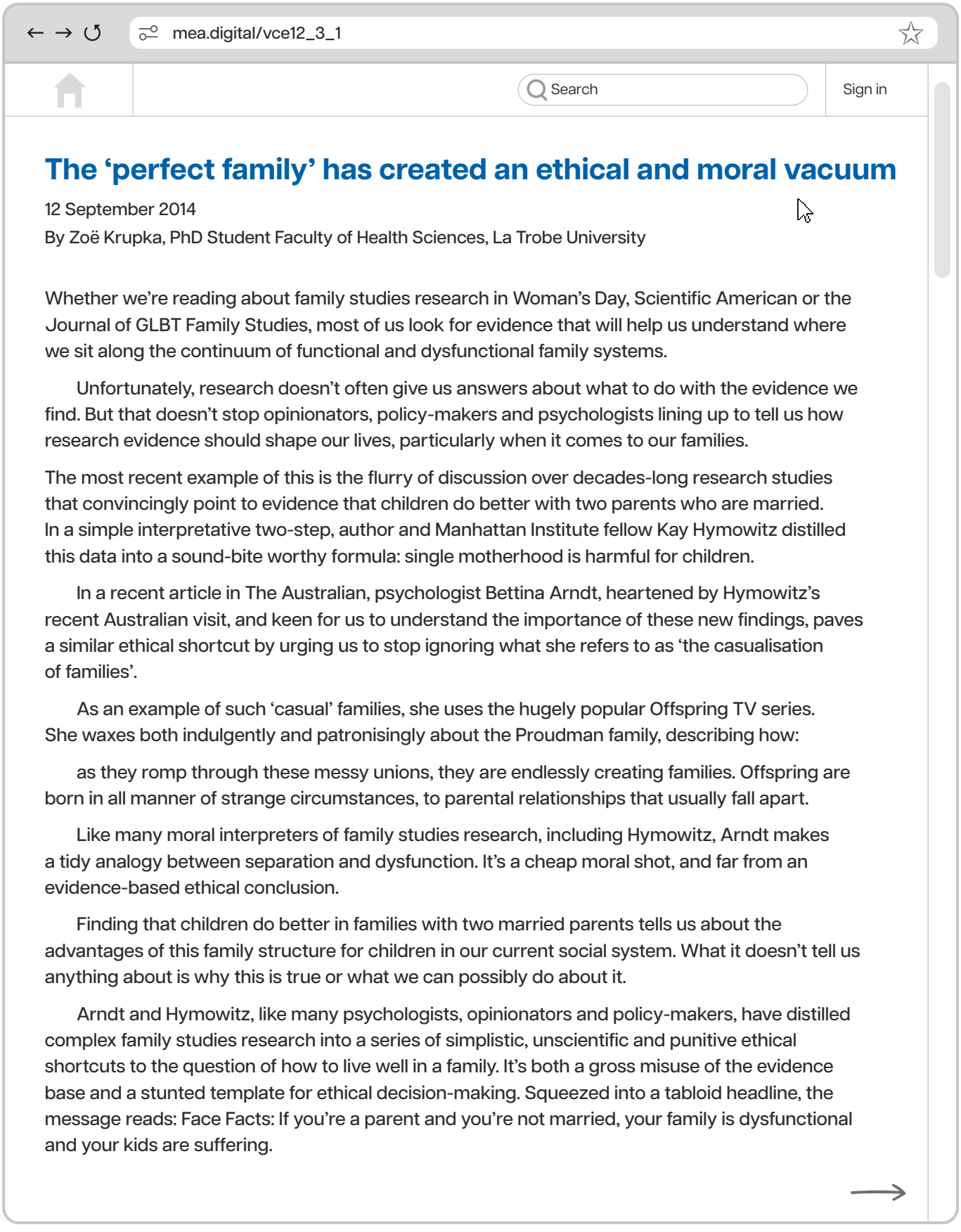
'I was drawing. Outside.'

He bundles her into the car and cranks up the aircon. Swears when he notices the time. He doesn't spot the chalk drawing until he's backing out the driveway.

The big figure with the curly blue hair and the belly, and the two smaller figures in dresses, holding his hands.

The round yellow ball of sun shining down on the three of them.

Read the following opinion article by Zoë Krupka, published on *The Conversation* website.



The 'perfect family' has created an ethical and moral vacuum

12 September 2014

By Zoë Krupka, PhD Student Faculty of Health Sciences, La Trobe University

Whether we're reading about family studies research in Woman's Day, Scientific American or the Journal of GLBT Family Studies, most of us look for evidence that will help us understand where we sit along the continuum of functional and dysfunctional family systems.

Unfortunately, research doesn't often give us answers about what to do with the evidence we find. But that doesn't stop opinionators, policy-makers and psychologists lining up to tell us how research evidence should shape our lives, particularly when it comes to our families.

The most recent example of this is the flurry of discussion over decades-long research studies that convincingly point to evidence that children do better with two parents who are married. In a simple interpretative two-step, author and Manhattan Institute fellow Kay Hymowitz distilled this data into a sound-bite worthy formula: single motherhood is harmful for children.

In a recent article in The Australian, psychologist Bettina Arndt, heartened by Hymowitz's recent Australian visit, and keen for us to understand the importance of these new findings, paves a similar ethical shortcut by urging us to stop ignoring what she refers to as 'the casualisation of families'.

As an example of such 'casual' families, she uses the hugely popular Offspring TV series. She waxes both indulgently and patronisingly about the Proudman family, describing how:

as they romp through these messy unions, they are endlessly creating families. Offspring are born in all manner of strange circumstances, to parental relationships that usually fall apart.

Like many moral interpreters of family studies research, including Hymowitz, Arndt makes a tidy analogy between separation and dysfunction. It's a cheap moral shot, and far from an evidence-based ethical conclusion.

Finding that children do better in families with two married parents tells us about the advantages of this family structure for children in our current social system. What it doesn't tell us anything about is why this is true or what we can possibly do about it.

Arndt and Hymowitz, like many psychologists, opinionators and policy-makers, have distilled complex family studies research into a series of simplistic, unscientific and punitive ethical shortcuts to the question of how to live well in a family. It's both a gross misuse of the evidence base and a stunted template for ethical decision-making. Squeezed into a tabloid headline, the message reads: Face Facts: If you're a parent and you're not married, your family is dysfunctional and your kids are suffering.

The ideal of the perfect family lurks not so quietly underneath these simple summaries of complex interpersonal and social life. It creates a kind of ethical vacuum where the question of competing factors and conflicting interests becomes invisible. In order to maintain an ideal of perfection, family studies research can be used as a kind of blunt instrument, forcing individuals to bear the brunt of more complex social forces alone.

It's a kind of terrible fairytale bargain where we're told to ignore the powerful structures at work in our lives – and are instead encouraged to make a simple exchange of our personhood for safe passage through the minefield of family morality.

It's also attractive and anxiety-reducing to contain complex social data into individualistic categories such as lifter and leaner or married and separated. But the reality, in practice, is that there is very little we can say in either the therapy or the policy room that can contain the enormous complexity of family life.

In a single family there can be many competing interests driven by economics, gender, genetics and interpersonal styles, to name a few. In the case of family separation, a relationship that was 'good enough' for the children may have been deeply inequitable for the adults. At what point can you make the call that staying together for the children is the ethical choice?

Whether it's in the policy hub or the therapy room, we need to ask ourselves the same question before we make ethical pronouncements that will directly impact peoples' lives:

Do I know this to be true?

Of course there are many things we know to be true about families. We know that gender inequality is part of the recipe for family violence. We know almost one in five Australian women have experienced intimate partner violence. We know that when children are the witnesses of this violence it has a devastating and long-term impact on them. We know that children who live in poverty suffer at every level of their existence. And we know that between 40% and 60% of women will live below the poverty line following divorce.

This tiny snapshot of research into poverty, disadvantage and family violence gives us some idea of the incredible complexity of making ethical decisions about family structure in therapy and policy work. Apart from questioning carefully what we know to be true, we also need to ask what role research can play in any given context, and if there are competing interests, we need to answer the question of who is most vulnerable.

Family studies research can offer incredible insight into the impact of how we live together in the world but it can't offer a blueprint for the perfect family structure. We can't ignore solid research evidence; we just can't pretend it's a recipe for living. It's never a simple formula of research in, public or personal policy out.

When we shirk the hard work of grappling with moral complexity in an open and fearless way, we do a kind of violence to both people and to science. Ethical thinking and practice always require exactly those two ingredients: thinking and practice.

Read the following informative article by Brendan Churchill, published on *The Conversation* website.

mea.digital/vce12_3_2

Search Sign in

Mum, dad and two kids no longer the norm in the changing Australian family

8 January 2018

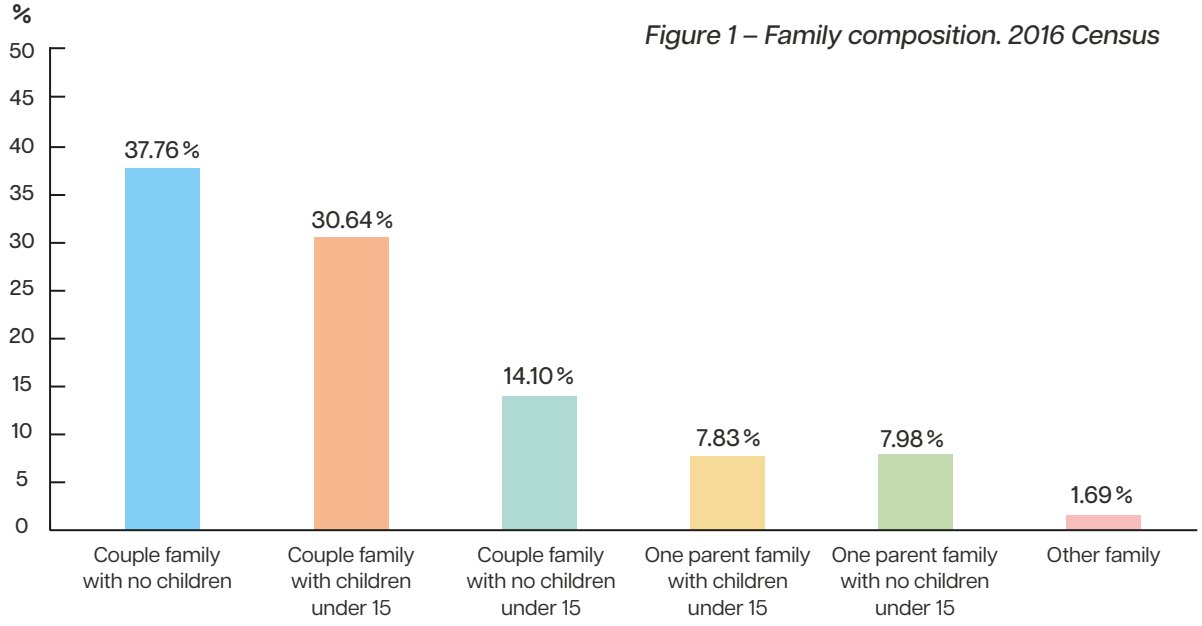
By Brendan Churchill, Research Fellow, The University of Melbourne

The image of the typical family – mum, dad, and two kids – still permeates how we define and understand the family in **contemporary** Australia. This ideal saturates our screens and newsfeeds and was at the centre of the marriage equality debate, underscoring the pervasiveness of the nuclear family as the dominant family form in our consciousness.

However, this conceptualisation masks the true nature of Australian families, which has changed significantly in recent decades. As sociologists and demographers have long known, the Australian family is as diverse and different as the country's terrain.

Drawing on data from the 2016 Census, we know there are more than 6 million families in Australia. This is a significant increase from the 5 million or so families counted at the 2011 Census.

Figure 1 – Family composition. 2016 Census



Of these 6 million families, the most-common family form (as illustrated in Figure 1) was the couple family with no children (37.76%). The next-most-common was couple families with dependent children under the age of 15 (30.64%).

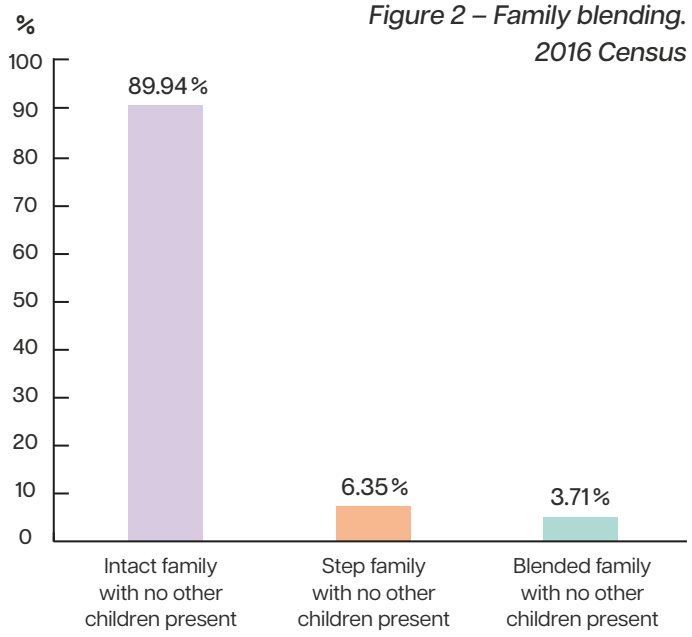
These proportions confirm that the nuclear family is no longer the most common family form in Australia. One-parent families with dependent children comprise around 8% of all Australian families.

Reflecting this move away from the traditional, nuclear family and the rise of more couple families without children, is the size of families. In 2016, around 30% of all families were two-person families. A further 27% were four-person families.

Most couple families with children in Australia are so-called 'intact families' (89.94%), consisting of at least one child who is the natural or adopted child of both partners in the couple.

However, families are becoming increasingly more 'blended', as couples dissolve (due to separation, divorce or death of a partner) and new families are formed.

Figure 2 – Family blending. 2016 Census



Blended families are a small proportion of modern Australian family forms, accounting for just over 3.7% of all families. This includes families with two or more children, at least one of whom is the natural or adopted child of both partners and at least one other child who is the step-child of one of them.

A further 6.3% of families are step-families. Here, there is at least one resident step-child, but no child who is the natural or adopted child of both partners.

Grandparent-led families are also increasingly significant.

Grandparents already play a significant role in Australian family lives through the provision of informal child care, but there are now just over 60,000 grandparent families in Australia (which is a significant increase from estimates in 2004, which found around 22,500 grandparent families). Of those, 53% of grandparent families are couple families with grandchildren and 47% are lone grandparent families.

What these data from the 2016 Census show is just some of the diversity within the Australian family. While the idealised nuclear family of the past is no more, this does not mean that the family as a social institution is in decline, nor that families in contemporary Australia are at risk. But it does mean families are changing. Our political leaders should reflect on this diversity to ensure social policies reflect these differences, so that all families are well supported.

Understanding context, audience and purpose

While it can be **beneficial** to identify and explore the common structures and features of different text types, the reality is that two texts that are the same text type can contain drastically different features depending on the context, audience and purpose. Consider an email written to the principal versus an email to your friend. Due to this fact, identifying and exploring texts' context, audience and purpose is a productive and important way to begin to understand texts.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Complete the following table, identifying the context, audience and purpose of your mentor texts.

Text	Context	Audience	Purpose
'School Run'	*Burrows entered a competition that had to include specific words, be a certain word count and include an act of stealing. He often writes more violent, depressing texts and he wanted to test himself to see if he could write a 'sweet, happy-sad story'.*	• *Parents* • *Readers who enjoy reading short fiction about everyday life and experiences* • *The judges of the competition it was entered into*	*To express the complexities of familial relationships and what can go unnoticed in the way we express love (Burrows* **consciously** *wanted to write something 'a bit more family-friendly: a touch sad but ultimately uplifting'.)*
'The "perfect family" has created ...'	*Krupka is a psychotherapist and researcher with a focus on sibling loss and '***critical** *interrogations of psychology practice' and is responding to opinions that have been published about the fact that single-parent families are harmful.*	• *Parents – particularly solo parents – who would have felt* **attacked** *by the recent publications* • *Other researchers, ensuring they provide a holistic picture of their findings*	*To persuade readers to put research into perspective and remember what we know to be true in our world*
'Mum, dad and two kids ...'	*A summary report of a larger scale research project looking at the make-up of Australian families, written for a wider, more diverse audience on an online media platform.*	*The Conversation, as a media platform, markets itself as 'a collaboration between academics and journalists, publishing research-based news and analysis'. Its audience of over 40 million users has a balance of gender, and 82% identify as non-academic, which supports their vision of sharing academic knowledge directly with the public.*	*To inform how the ways families are made up has shifted and changed and the impact that has upon Australian society more* **holistically**

Structures and features for audience and purpose

Just as we identified and explored the features in your reading and exploring text, investigating different structural and language features in others' writing can also inspire and extend your own writing skills. Noticing how different authors use different strategies and features for different effects highlights the **innumerable** options you have as a writer.

Narrative perspective and structure are not only important to consider in narrative texts. While most persuasive texts are written in first person to show the author's opinion, they can just as easily (and effectively) be in third person, or even second person. While a speech or an article might not follow a narrative arc and leave its readers on a cliffhanger, writers of other text types have innumerable choices to make when structuring their writing. Noticing how authors choose which **conventions** to follow and which not shows us the power of these structural elements in speaking to the audience and achieving the purpose of a text.

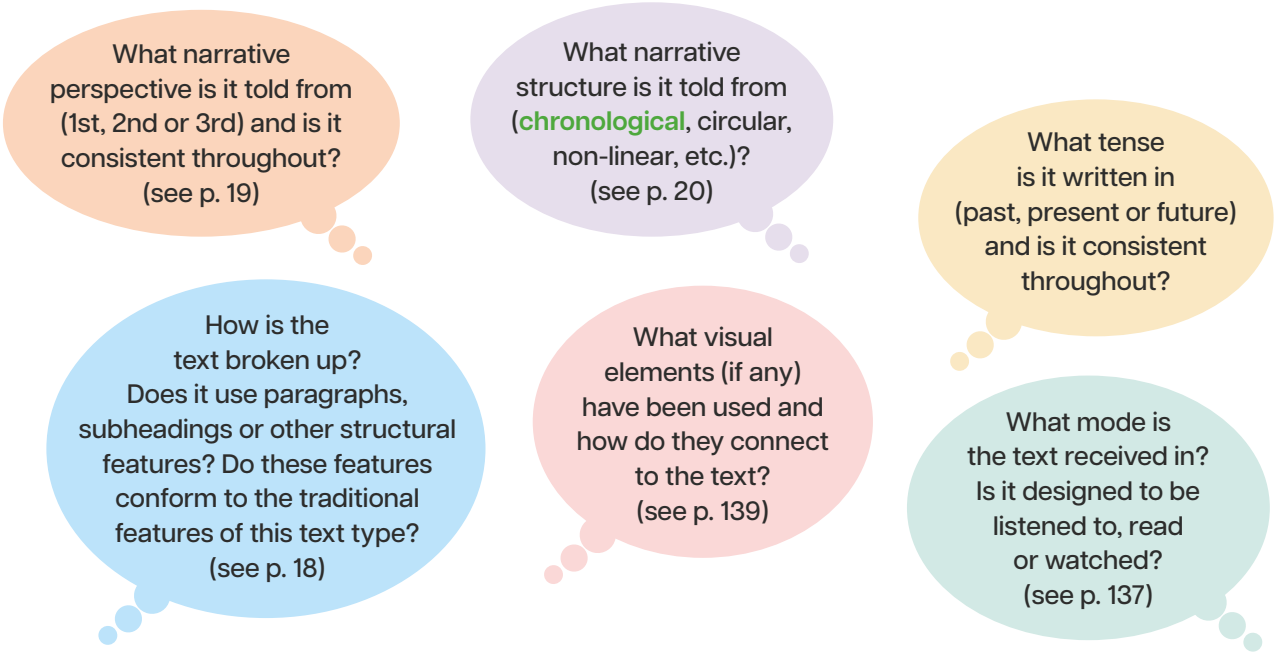


Figure 3.3: Questions to ask yourself about a text's structural features

Language features are an even broader concept than structural features because the language of the writer is what creates their authorial voice. Understanding what a text is about is one thing, but understanding how it is said comes down to the language choices of the writer, which are a **unique** expression of themselves.

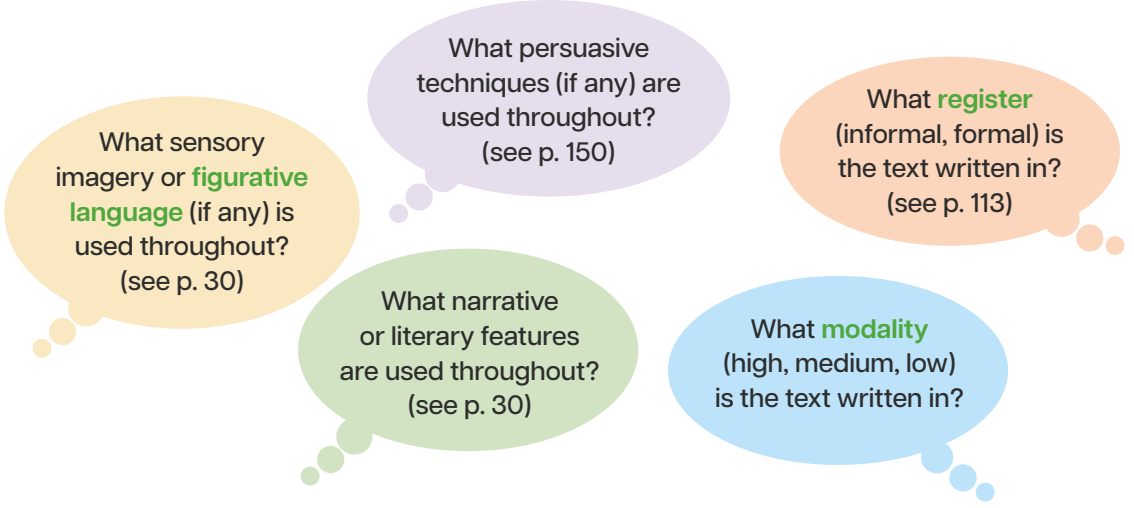


Figure 3.4: Questions to ask yourself about a text's language features

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Complete the following table identifying the key structural and language features of each text. Consider the impact these features have upon the ability of the text to achieve its purpose.

Text	Key structural and language features	The impact upon the text and its ability to achieve its purpose
'School Run'	• **Anacoluthon** *(omitting the subject from a sentence); e.g. toast crumbs strewn all over the benchtop* • *Symbolism and tone of heat* • *Third-person narration* • *Present tense* • *Direct dialogue* • *Colloquial expression*	• *Makes it relatable* • *Gives a glimpse of the different pieces of the chaos, highlighting the chaos and that feeling of not holding all the pieces together confidently* • *Highlights the suppression, overwhelm and discomfort of heat*
'The "perfect family" has created ...'	• *Technical and academic language alongside informal features (contractions, inverted commas, colloquialisms)* • **Metaphors** • **Emotive language** • *Case studies* • *Attacks and* **appeals** • **Alliteration** • **Enumeration** • *Plural, first-person narrative – 'we' – (***inclusive language***) with a second-person statement: 'If you're a parent'* • **Personification** • *Shifting modality* • **Rhetorical question** • **Repetition** • **Anaphora**: *'we know'* • *Statistics and research* • **Juxtaposition**: *'tiny snapshot – incredible complexity'*	• *Draws the reader into the opinion, while maintaining an academic tone* • *Highlights the knowledge of the author, creating trust and respect for their opinion* • *Creates imagery and evokes emotions of negativity towards those who are making false claims* • *Allows the author to shift intensity of emotion and perspective* • *Emphasises specific ideas and concepts*
'Mum, dad and two kids ...'	• *Inclusive language* • *Statistics and research-based evidence throughout* • *Bar graphs to visually represent information* • *Technical and academic language explained and used throughout*	• *Speaks to an Australian audience specifically, allowing them to reflect on their own part in the changing society* • *Makes it feel academic, trustworthy and factual, but not exclusive* • *Allows readers to connect the numbers and information with visual representations*

!! You do not have to notice everything, nor do you have to analyse anything. The idea here is to notice the elements that have the greatest impact for a text to speak to its audience and achieve its purpose.

Activity 3.3: Identify and reflect

1 Identify the context, audience and purpose of your mentor texts by copying and completing the table in your notebook.

Text	Context	Audience	Purpose

2 Identify the key structural and language features of your mentor texts. Initially, you might do this by annotating the features on the text directly or completing a passage analysis of part of the text, depending on the length of the text. Once you have explored the texts fully, **synthesise** the information by copying and completing the table in your notebook and:

- a identifying the key structures and features used throughout
- b explaining the impact of these features on the text's ability to achieve its purpose. You might connect each specific feature or you might speak about the text achieving its purpose more holistically.

3 Read, explore and discuss other supplementary texts relevant to your framework.

- a Identify the context, audience, purpose, and structural and language features.
- b Consider the way the text speaks to its audience and achieves its purpose.
- c Compare how different or similar text types shift and change depending on the context, audience and purpose.
- d Reflect on which texts, structures or features you particularly enjoy, connect with or are most inspired by and why.

Text	Key structural features	Impact to achieve purpose

↑ Level-up

There is a reason why so many writers are avid and prolific readers. Engaging in other texts continues to inspire and motivate us to write and see things in different ways. Do not limit yourself to the texts explored in class; bring in and discuss other texts you have discovered. Remember that you do not even have to read the whole text, or you might only connect with one word or phrase. The focus is on finding that connection and inspiration.

STEP 4

Write with audience and purpose in mind

This area of study is less about you writing a good speech, story or article, and more about considering in what ways you can connect with a specific audience to achieve a specific purpose. Suddenly, this changes the way you approach your writing because you need to ask yourself what is the best way you can convince your peers to change their perspective, to express your feelings about a topic, or to explain clearly why something is the way it is.

The writing process

Beyond **the two student-created texts** English students are also required to write **a description of writing processes** and EAL students will be annotating their texts **identifying qualities of effective writing**, so it is important to stay conscious of the different stages of writing as you complete your writing task.

There are many versions of the writing process and your school might have its own for you to follow. However, the process is shown in Figure 3.5 in its simplest form.

Figure 3.5: The writing process

!! Take the time to understand the stages that you would normally skip over, or that you find most difficult, and lean into the opportunity to improve your skills and confidence at every stage of the writing process.

Using inspiration in your own writing

It is one thing to identify and analyse what someone has done in their writing, as you did with the mentor and supplementary texts, and quite another to **adapt** and transfer that concept or skill to another context and purpose in your own writing. Experimenting with different structures, features and styles allows you to see what is possible as well as what you feel comfortable and **capable** of doing.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Choose a key feature from your text and experiment with different ways that technique can be used for different audiences and purposes.

a Write two examples that omit the subject for different purposes.

- *Yelling from the kitchen. Nothing protected. Chaos all around.*
  (Purpose: to entertain and reflect in a creative text exploring the reality of family)
- *Know better. Do better. Then be better: simple as that.*
  (Purpose: to persuade and inform in an argumentative text that is highlighting misconceptions of family dynamics)

b Write two sentences that use second-person narration for different purposes.

- *You wander, aimlessly, feeling the heartbeat of a past you never experienced.*
  (Purpose: to reflect and entertain in a memoir of the author's childhood)
- *You can only react to what you know, and who you are is tangled in a web of familial history.*
  (Purpose: to inform in an article highlighting the impact of a person's family history on their current perspective)

c Write two sentences that use statistics for different purposes.

- *She sat, the .5 in the 2.5 kids of her family, ever feeling the unnecessary addition.*
  (Purpose: to entertain in a fictional story about the youngest child feeling invisible)
- *You are not alone: 56% of middle children feel they received less attention from their parents growing up.*
  (Purpose: to persuade in a speech to a group of middle children who want to find their identity)

!! You do not have to write a whole text to experiment with language. Sometimes one sentence is enough to get the idea and feel of something and decide whether you like it or not.

Finding your context, audience and purpose

One of the greatest aspects of this particular area of study is that you can uncover and highlight your greatest strengths and abilities as a writer. You might struggle with, or not enjoy, analytical writing, but in this unit, you can literally write for any audience, in any way, for any reason. So suddenly the questions become: Who are you as a writer? What type of writing do you find easiest and most enjoyable to write? What do you want to write about and who do you want to read your writing?

You might not have the answers to all these questions yet, but the goal – by the end of this area of study – is for you to confidently be able to explain and celebrate who you are as a writer and what your strengths and interests are in writing.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Write an overview for a piece of writing that explores the individual in a family by identifying the context, audience and purpose.

- *Context:*
  The writer was instructed by a psychologist to complete a journal about their family. They were asked to reflect upon who the family are as individuals, seeing them as strangers rather than family.
- *Purpose:*
  To express and reflect upon what the writer assumes and what they know about their family, in the hopes they will see them in a different and more positive or empathetic light.
- *Audience:*
  Technically themselves, but also their psychologist

2 Write a short plan from your overview of the key elements to include in your writing.

- *Set up the context of the journal and the fact that the writer does not want to do it, or thinks that it will not be beneficial at all*
- *List the things that they notice for their dad, mum and brother*
- *Conclusion of the things they have learned*

3 Use your notes and plan to write a draft piece of writing.

When you asked me to spend the week watching my family and then recording what I noticed and how I felt, I honestly thought the whole thing was a waste of my time. I live with my family every day but I don't know them? You think I'll suddenly see them as something so different? But I took it seriousley because I wanted to show you were wrong and show you just how annoying my family actually is.

So here are my notes:

Dad:

- *Waits until the car has driven all the way around the corner of the street before he stops waving goodbye.*
- *does a full lap of the house, every night before going to bed, checking every window and door to make sure they are all locked up.*
- *flinches when mum and Parker yell at each other, but always steps up and support mums perspective (even when I can see he doesn't agree).*

Mum:

- *Is constantly tired. It is like her brain can't shut down for a second*
- *constantly talks as a way to process her thoughts and things she has to do and struggle to think past her own priorities.*
- *watches other people as she thinks they watch her: judging, assuming the worst, and finding the mistakes.*

Parker:

- *detatches from things that happen around him, so he doesn't have to have an opinion or get involved.*
- *Outwardly pretends to be lazy and not care, but I saw him listening and watching everything*
- *Wants more than he's telling anyone. I caught him reading a university brochure for a fine arts degree and I have no idea why.*

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this draft.

!! The more you write, the easier it will be and the better you will get. I promise! Sometimes just putting pen to paper is all you need to get started. You do not have to start from the beginning, and you do not have to finish a piece that you have started. But think of something – anything – and start writing to see where it might take you.

Activity 3.4: Brainstorm and write

1 Choose some interesting features of your mentor texts to imitate in the context of your framework. Try mimicking sentence structure, voice and different language features.

2 Copy and complete the following table in your notebook. Brainstorm some different contexts, audiences and purposes relevant to your framework.

Share these with your class and consider how many different types of texts could be created from your options.

3 Choose any combination of context, audience and purpose and write a basic plan or dot points before writing a draft. Do not worry if it does not come out perfectly the first time. Just get your initial thoughts on the page knowing we will be revising and editing the draft in Step 6.

Context	Audience	Purpose

↑ Level-up

You can use your brainstormed table to challenge yourself to write every day. Randomly select a different element from each column and see what happens. Some pieces will not go anywhere, but some pieces might just flourish! The more often you write and consider different genres and styles, the more choices and confidence you will have moving through this area of study.

STEP 5

Find your authentic voice

It is one thing to write a text and quite another to consider yourself a writer and find your authentic, authorial voice. When we write, there are almost innumerable ways to articulate a specific concept. Just as we all have our own personalities, we also all have our own voice that comes through when we write. However, sometimes in VCE, we can feel like we have to 'sound' like someone (or something) else to get the top marks. This area of study prioritises you finding, celebrating and consolidating your unique, authentic writing voice. So, what is your writing voice?

Experimenting with structural features

We noticed the impact of key structural features on the mentor and supplementary texts explored in Step 3 and we experimented with some of these elements in Step 4. The narrative voice, structure, tense and layout an author chooses for their text is critical to how the text is connected with and presented to its audience. While certain text types often follow conventional structural elements, this does not mean that you have to.

!! A hybrid text is one that blends elements of multiple text types into a unique version of a text. This area of study asks you to consider nontraditional forms and unconventional features. While you do not have to create a wholly new text, you should not feel restricted to creating something that has been created before.

Here are some elements to consider when experimenting with the structure of your writing:

- ☐ Change the **narrative perspective** for part or all of the piece (see page 19).
- ☐ Change the **order in which the events occur** or the information is presented (see page 20).
- ☐ Change the **tense**, either throughout or for sections of the writing.
- ☐ Change **where** or **the way the text is broken up**: paragraphing, subheadings, etc. (see page 18).
- ☐ Change, include or delete **visual elements** (see page 139).

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Revise some of the structural elements of your draft.

She asks you to spend the week watching your family and recording what you notice and how you feel. You honestly think the whole thing is just a waste of your time. You live with your family every day and some quack thinks you don't know who they are? That by watching you will suddenly see them as something so different? But, you take it seriously, because you want to prove her wrong and show her how annoying your family actually is. So you watch them and take notes and discover …

Your dad focuses on everyone but himself. He waits until the car has driven all the way around the corner of the street before he physically stops waving goodbye. He does a full lap of the house, every night before going to bed, checking every window and door to make sure they are all locked up. He cringes when mum and Parker yell at each other, but always steps up and support mums perspective even when you can see he doesn't agree.

Your mum is constantly tired. It is like her brain can't shut down for a moment – she is constantly talking as a way to process her thoughts, worries and tasks. She can't hear past her own priorities. She watches other people as she thinks they watch her: judging, assuming the worst, finding the mistakes. She finds Parker just as frustrating as she finds you, but because parker doesn't seem to care, she gives up quicker.

Parker doesn't know who he is. He detaches from things that happen around him, so he doesn't have to have an opinion. He outwardly pretends to be lazy and not care, but you can see him listening and watching everything. He wants more than he's telling anyone because you caught him reading a university brochure for a fine arts degree and such an act doesn't make sense.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this draft.

!! While there is benefit to deleting things when revising your work, when you are experimenting with drafts it can be good to hold onto different versions in case your revised version is not as good as your original.

Experimenting with language features

While structural choices impact the way a text is presented, it is through language choices that you are able to build your overall authorial voice. While what you are writing is obviously important – no matter the audience or purpose – how you say it makes the greatest impact on a text's ability to achieve its purpose.

When we consider language features, we need to think of more than just our word choice.

Here are some elements to consider when experimenting with the language features of your writing:

- [ ] Features of **register**: Are they appropriate to the audience? Are they consistent? Can they be extended to be more or less formal (see page 113)?
- [ ] Types of **sensory** or **figurative language** being used throughout: How often, or how effectively, have you included such elements? Do you only use one type of sense or device? Is it appropriate for the audience and purpose of the text (see page 30)?
- [ ] **Modality**: How certain or strong is your writing? Or should it be? Are you using the imperative or subjunctive mood appropriately?
- [ ] **Persuasive techniques**, **narrative** and **literary features**: Are these appropriate for your audience and purpose (see pages 149, 29 and 30 respectively)?

!! **While you might not be able to articulate exactly what your voice is, other people can recognise it in your writing. The more you write, the more confident you will be to express yourself in the way that makes the most sense to you.**

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 **Revise some of the language features of your draft.**

She condescendingly asks you to spend the week 'observing' and 'recording' what you notice and how you feel. You honestly think the whole thing is just another quack getting paid to waste your time. You live with your family every day and some 'professional' thinks you don't see what they do? That by watching them for a few days you'll suddenly see them as something other than pains in your arse? Yet, you take it doggedly seriously, because you desparately want to prove her wrong and spying on your family could be beneficial in the long run. So you watch. You take notes on the things you see and hear. But what do you discover?

Your dad focuses on everyone but himself. He stoically waits until the car has driven out of eyesight before he physically stops waving. Every night before going to bed, he dutifully completes a lap of the house, checking every window and door to make sure they are locked. His body cringes when mum and Parker yell at each other, yet still support mums perspective even when he clearly doesn't agree.

Your mum is constantly tired. Her brain can't relax or be quiet – so she incessantly talks to process the barrage of thoughts, worries and tasks consumed by her. Its like she can't hear past the whirlwind of priorities and pressures. She actively watches other people as she thinks they watch her: to judge, to assume the worst, to find the flaws.

Parker spends his life acting. He detaches from conversations and events happening around him, because if he doesn't engage, he doesn't have to make a decision. He couches it all in being nonchalant, but you can see him listening, thinking and conscious withdrawing. You caught him reading a university brochure for a fine arts degree and in that moment you realised you had no idea who he was or who he wanted to be.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this draft.

Being unafraid to break tradition

The amazing and sometimes terrifying (or frustrating) thing about language is its flexibility and **adaptability**. Not only is language constantly changing but we can purposefully break the rules for effect. This does not necessarily mean writing in a wholly new and inventive way, but it does mean finding your own unique authorial voice.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 In what ways could you push your draft into something less traditional or conventional?

- *The draft could be revised into a stream-of-consciousness.*
- *It could be flipped into an alien lifeform or setting with elements of the family being something other than human.*
- *It could be styled as dialogue, with the psychologist asking questions about what they observed throughout the week.*
- *'Parker' could actually turn out to be the narrator, reflecting upon themselves and their interaction with their parents.*
- *It could be condensed into what is then the opening anecdote to a persuasive or informative speech.*

!! You might try something that turns out not to work. That's okay. Just go back to what you had originally. Not all revisions are positive but you will not know if you do not try.

Activity 3.5: Reflect and consider

1 Focus on the structural elements of your draft. What would be the effect of changing the:
   - a narrative perspective?
   - b narrative structure?
   - c tense?
   - d way you have broken up the text?

2 Focus on the language features of your draft.
   - a Select three of the most critical sentences of your draft and experiment with different ways you might elaborate, consolidate or imitate the idea in alternative ways.
   - b Highlight the key words in your draft. How are these words defined, explained, described or brought to life?
   - c How would you describe your register? Is it appropriate and consistent for your audience?
   - d What types of sensory or figurative language have you used throughout?
   - e What other persuasive, narrative or literary features have you used for effect?

3 How could you push yourself and traditional structures and features and find your authorial voice as a writer?

↑ Level-up

We could redraft a text continually because there is no 'perfect' answer to how a text should be written. Experiment, but also know when to stop and to move to the final editing stage. Perfection does not exist, but trying to seek it can hold you back from letting your voice be heard.

STEP 6 Complete your final edit

So far we have worked extensively on drafting our work. Every time we change elements of our writing we are in the process of re-drafting or revising. While you might notice and fix grammatical or mechanical elements as you revise your writing, it is important to take time at the end to edit your work for clarity, **coherence** and accuracy.

There are a number of strategies you can use in the process of editing your writing. The following are three simple ways you might find useful to help you edit your draft.

1 CUPS

CUPS stands for Capitalisation, Usage, Punctuation, Spelling. It is an acronym you can use to help you recognise different specific elements to edit.

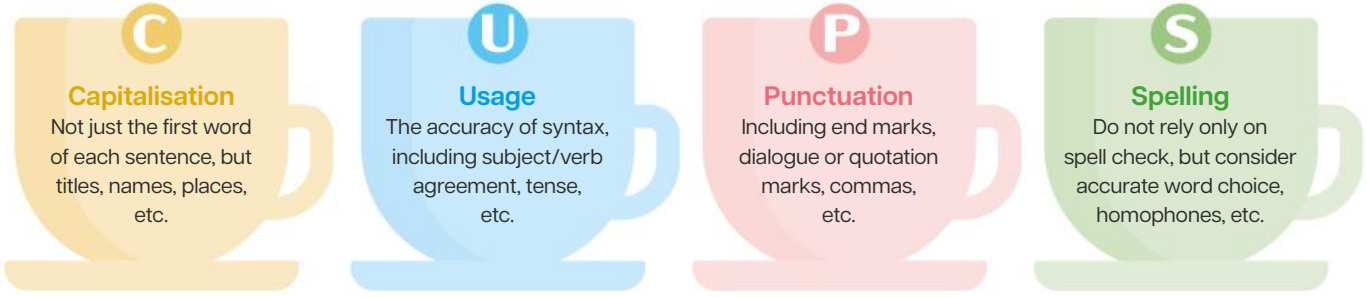
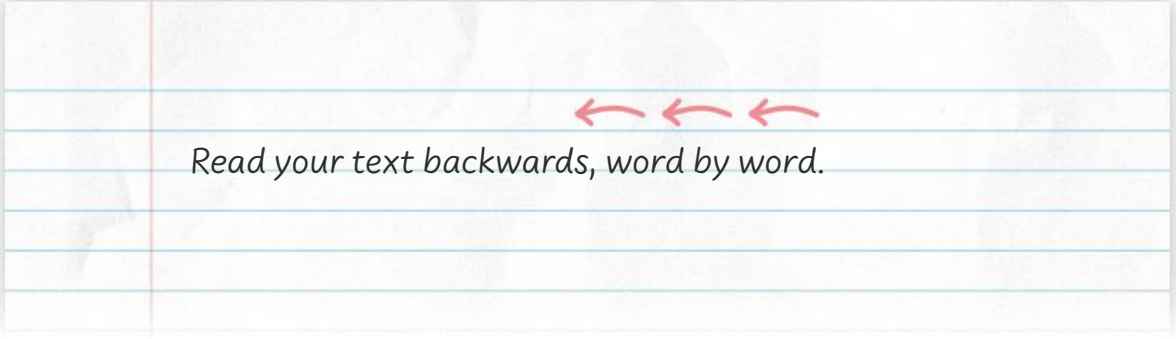


Figure 3.6: The CUPS acronym

2 Backwards reading

This is literally reading your text backwards, word by word. It means you can focus on the mechanics of the writing rather than the meaning. Sometimes our brain 'reads' what makes sense rather than what is actually there. Reading backwards allows you to see the words rather than their meaning.



3 Performance editing

This is where you read your text aloud the way you would hope someone would 'hear' it in their head – that is, you perform your text (even if it is not a speech or meant to be performed … for example, you can perform an essay!). Through the processes of not just reading it aloud but performing it, you can focus on the necessary punctuation and emphasis. You can literally hear your phrasing and how the piece flows together or where the 'sticky' parts might need some tweaking.

!! You do not have to perform your piece to a crowd. Find a quiet place so you can make the most of it and take notes along the way. But if you still do not feel confident to perform your piece, then you can ask someone else to perform it for you. That way, you can write notes about where they struggle and what needs to be edited, so that anyone can read it the way you **intended**.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Complete your final draft by editing the mechanics of your writing. Focus your attention on spelling, punctuation, syntax, capitalisation, consistent tense and so on.

She condescendingly asks you to spend the week observing and recording what you notice and how you feel about your family. You honestly feel the whole exercise just involves another quack getting paid to waste your time. You live with your family every day and some 'professional' thinks you don't see what they do: that by watching your family for a few days you'll suddenly see them as something other than pains in your arse. Yet, you doggedly take it seriously, because you desperately want to prove her wrong, and spying on your family could be beneficial in the long run. So you watch. You take notes on the things you see and hear. And you discover …

Your dad focuses on everyone but himself. When he leaves home, he stoically waits until his car has driven out of sight before he stops waving back at you. Every night before going to bed, he dutifully completes a lap of the house, checking every window, door and opening to ensure they are locked. His body recoils when Mum and Parker yell at each other, yet he instinctively supports Mum's perspective, even when he doesn't agree.

Your mum is constantly tired. Her brain can't relax or be quiet, so she incessantly talks to process the barrage of thoughts, worries and tasks consuming her. It's like she can't hear past the whirlwind of priorities and pressures. She actively watches other people as she thinks they watch her: to judge; to assume the worst; to find the flaws.

→

Parker spends his life acting. He detaches from conversations and events happening around him, because if he doesn't engage, he doesn't have to make a decision. He couches it all as him just being lazy, but you can see him listening, thinking and consciously withdrawing. You catch him reading a university brochure about a Fine Arts degree and in that moment you realise you have no idea who he is or who he wants to be beyond this theatre that is your home.

!! You cannot fix what you do not understand. Use the Editing Checklist in the digital student resource to help you notice common writing errors and ensure you recognise inaccuracies and how to fix them.

Activity 3.6: Become a writer

1 Work through your draft one last time, specifically focusing on accuracy in:

- spelling
- punctuation (including comma splices, end marks and dialogue/quotation)
- capitalisation
- tense (controlled shifts if any)
- subject-verb agreement
- length and completion of sentences (any fragments are purposeful)
- clarity, **expression** and overall word choice (sometimes less is more).

↑ Level-up

One of the hardest things to do to your writing is delete elements, but effective writing is just as much about what you do not say as it is about what you do say. Spend time considering every sentence and try reading some sentences pared back or deleted completely and then be completely honest with yourself about the final product.

STEP 7

Create annotations and descriptions

Annotating

While annotating your writing is the EAL requirement for this task, the process can be a great opportunity for English students to highlight key structural and language features and can be used as a planning tool for your descriptive writing.

> **!!** Annotating skills will help you in every area of study, and other subjects as well, so practising and developing effective annotation skills will be well worth the investment of your time and energy.

When you are annotating, remember that you can highlight, underline, circle, label, comment and connect elements across the text with arrows.

The idea is that you explain what the qualities of effective writing are by annotating such features in your own writing. In this way, you might be able to annotate things such as:

- effective structural features and decisions
- effective language features for specific effect
- elements directly speaking to the audience or working towards achieving the purpose.

In order to identify effective writing qualities in your own writing, however, you need to be confident you know what effective writing looks like. You explored several high-quality mentor texts in Step 3 but how can you classify 'effective writing'? While your annotation may focus on the very best and most effective writing elements, you are also able to highlight your abilities as an effective writer by using the writing process and understanding that your effective writing piece was a process and the final result occurred due to the struggles you had along the way.

> **!!** We will be drawing on our annotating skills heavily in exploring argument so you might like to read the information in Chapter 5 (page 126) about other strategies you can start experimenting with during this area of study, knowing you will use them again in subsequent areas.

Ultimately, effective writing connects to its audience and there are so many different ways that can happen. What might be classified as 'quality literature' does not necessarily mean that it is any more effective as a piece of writing than a blog or informal email. The criterion to assess a piece of writing as being 'effective' comes back to its ability to connect to its audience in order to achieve its purpose, whatever that might be.

Effective writing ...

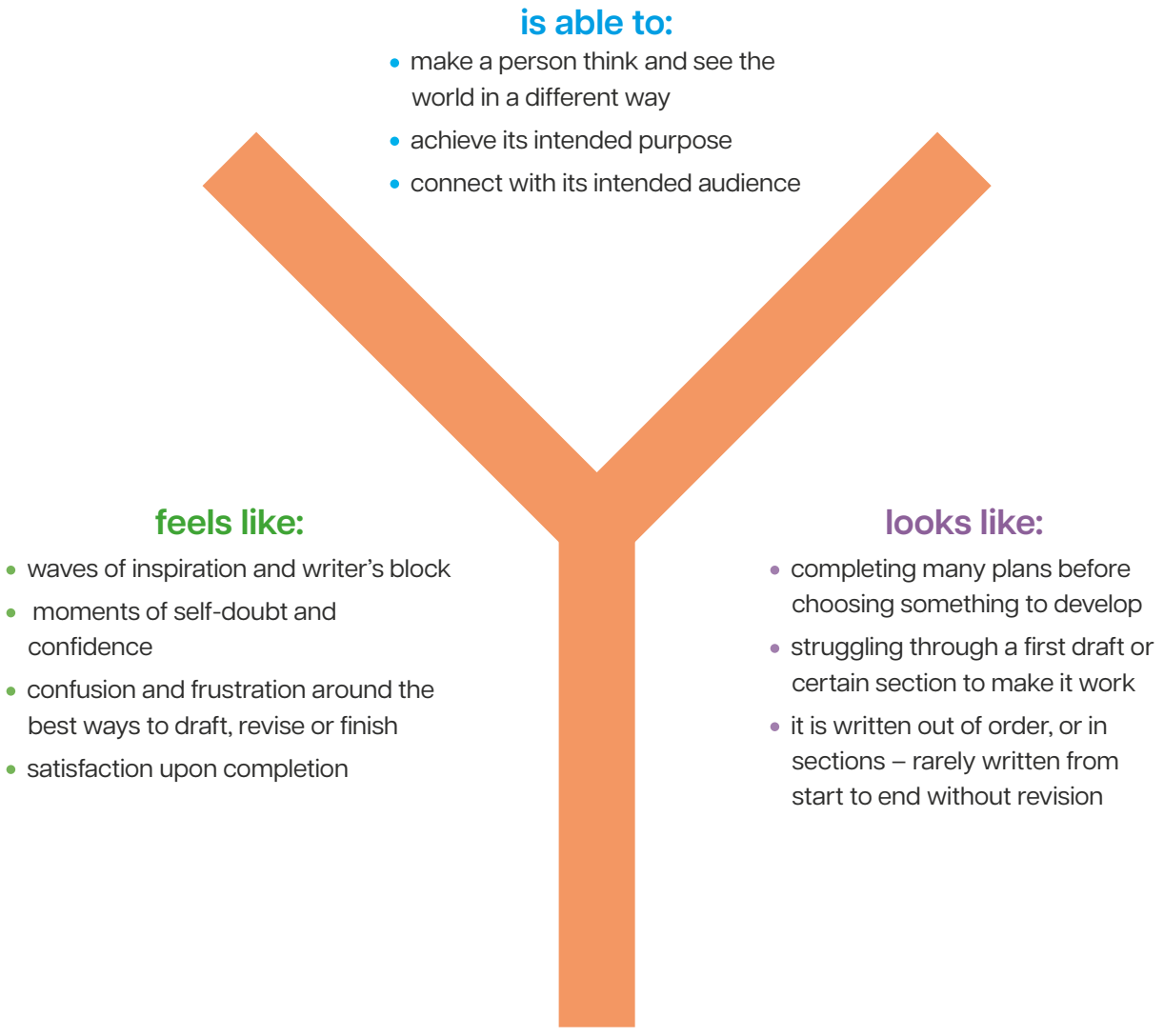


Figure 3.7: The qualities of effective writing

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Annotate your final draft of your writing by highlighting, labelling and describing features you have used that demonstrate the text is an effective piece of writing.

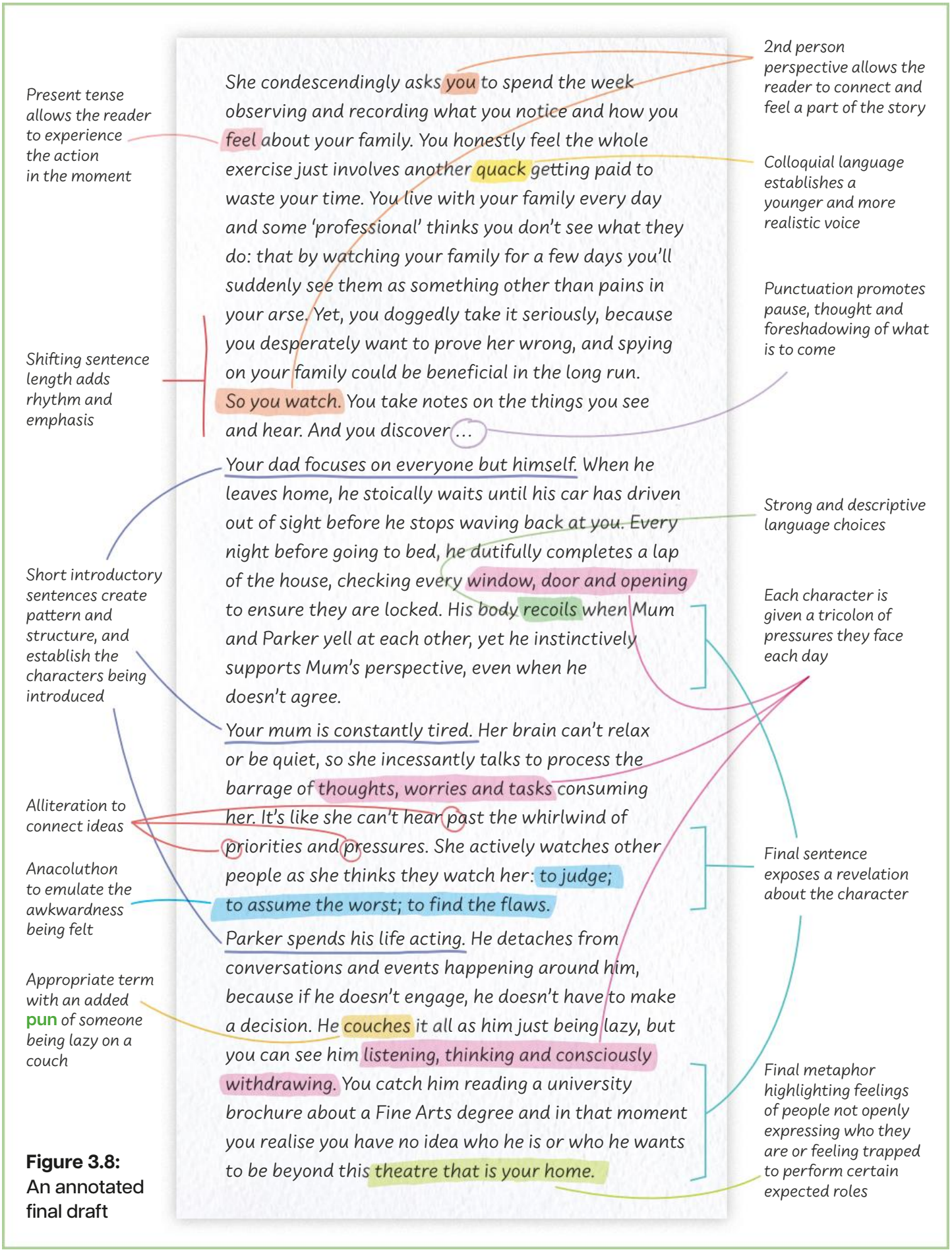


Figure 3.8: An annotated final draft

Describing

It is important that you can describe what you did, how you did it, why you did it the way you did and what the outcome was. This is because writing is a continual process that requires reflection and feedback for development. Every time we write, we understand the process better, we consolidate our vocabulary and skills, and we notice opportunities for greater clarity and effect.

There is not one specific way or formula you have to follow to complete your description for the SAC. Your school may provide you with some guidelines, frameworks or examples to direct you to their expectations, but it is important you keep in mind the audience and purpose for this task, just like you did in the writing tasks.

Things you can describe include:

- how you felt in the different stages of the writing process
- areas where you struggled or made significant changes in the drafting process
- elements specifically speaking to audience or purpose, including structural and key language features.

!! **Your description is a reflective task, so unless your school says otherwise, write this in first person – and be honest. You are allowed to have struggled at times or changed your mind. Do not pretend the final product was your first draft. Remember, you are reflecting on the whole process you went through to complete the writing, from brainstorming through to the final edit.**

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 **Write a reflective commentary describing the writing process you took that resulted in your final writing piece.**

Initially I had a clear plan of what I was going to write: a reflective journal of a teenager asked to record observations of their family members as a task from their councillor. And I was quite happy with my first draft. But when we were challenged to consider structural features that we explored in the mentor texts to experiment with, it made me see the text in a very different way. I loved what the shift – turning it from first-person to second-person narration, and from past to present tense – did to the text. When I did, it stopped it from being a simplistic diary entry, and turned it into a more sophisticated narrative approach. So I leaned into that. I took the dot points I was originally using and found a clear structure to my paragraphs: starting with a short descriptive sentence, including at least one tricolon and averaging around four lines for each character.

I continued to surprise myself through the revision process, where I could experiment with sentence structure, language features and the overall voice of the piece. The **subtle** *difference between 'constantly talking', which I had originally done, to 'incessantly talking' had a significant impact on how the mother was presented. I enjoyed playing around*

→

with punctuation and different ways that I could shift sentence length and create pause. I used dashes, ellipses, colons, commas, semicolons and full stops. I experimented with exclamation marks but they felt a little forced and too much. I surprised myself by being able to use anacoluthon, like 'School Run', to highlight the awkwardness of the mum judging others the way she thinks people judge her. It took me a number of trials to feel happy with the final sentence, but the metaphor of home being a 'theatre' seemed to **resonate** *with my overall idea that people 'perform' in expected roles though that does not mean that is who they truly are.*

I liked being able to build the characters, through the perspective of the narrator, and in such a limited number of words. I purposefully left the gender or age of the narrator out of the text, so that they could connect to different readers in different ways but I added a number of more colloquial expressions, particularly in the opening paragraph, to establish the classic 'angsty' teenager voice. Initially, the brother was just another character, but the more I worked with his paragraph, the more layers I felt compelled to add in as a way to leave the story open to numerous interpretations.

I didn't think I would have much editing to do in the final step of the writing process, but was shocked to find a number of capitalisation, punctuation, syntactic and even spelling errors that I had not noticed through the process. I found using the checklist helped me a lot because I would read the specific error and then go searching for it in my own writing to see if I had it accurate or not.

Overall, I'm surprised how different my final draft is from my original draft, but am really proud of how it has turned out. The process has made me think about my writing choices in a different way. I can now see how many options I have to choose from as a writer – each one making significant impacts upon what I'm writing.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this description.

!! **This worked example is based on one text. As the SAC requires you to create two texts, you may be asked to write your description on both texts at the same time. So, ensure you know the expectations of the task before you start writing.**

Activity 3.7: Consider and identify

1. Go through and highlight specific elements of your text that you found to be most important or impressive, or demonstrate the process you went through as a writer.
2. Dot point the way you were feeling and thinking, and the things you were doing at each of the key writing process steps: prewriting, drafting, revising/redrafting and editing.
3. Identify the aspects of your text that you think show you to be an effective writer: consider the way you connect to your audience and achieve your purpose, as well as exemplary writing features.
4. Use your responses to Questions 1 to 3 to assist you in writing either a description (if you are studying English) or an annotation (if you are studying EAL) of your completed written text.

Level-up

The processes of annotating and describing are highly useful learning experiences. If you are studying English, complete an annotation prior to writing your description. If you are studying EAL, write a description after you have completed your annotation. How did the process of both tasks make you see and reflect on your writing?

STEP 8 Prepare for the SAC

Every school will have slightly different expectations around the way the SAC is run. You know you will have to produce two written texts and a description or annotation, but there are a number of ways that schools can balance this across the area of study while ensuring the authenticity of your work and maximising the opportunity for moderation and accurate marking.

You will have the greatest opportunity to achieve success in the SAC if you:

- know the expectations:
  - How long will you have at each of the stages of the writing process?
  - What materials will you be allowed to draw from during the writing process?
  - When will the writing take place? (Often it will be drawn out over multiple periods or days, so know when and where you need to be.)
- draw from tried and tested strategies for each step of the writing process. Which activities worked the best for you during the area of study? What do you need to remember and apply during the SAC?
- actively transfer and apply the skills from your classes and learning to the SAC. This might seem obvious, but so often students complete some writing during class and then seem to forget everything during the SAC. Treat it like another class writing task and apply all the learning and development of skills you have acquired throughout.
- respond directly to the criteria. Remember that while you might be writing for a specific audience and purpose, ultimately you are writing to answer criteria that your teacher will use to grade your success overall.

One way to help you prepare for a SAC is to revisit everything you have been through and check off which elements you remember, are confident about or might need to study further. As the SAC is a writing task, you don't have to worry too much about remembering the mentor texts or any other details, but rather focus on the skills and knowledge around the writing process. Do you:

- understand and have an opinion about your Framework? This is going to be the core theme of your writing so you need to ensure you have enough to talk about no matter what prompt or writing task you are given
- know which writing structures and features you have explored that you think you might be able to draw from in your writing? While you do not have to reference the mentor texts or use any particular structures or features specifically, it can be useful to go through and remember all the quality writing you have explored for inspiration

- have a clear grasp on ways to show who you are writing to (audience), why you are writing (context) and what you are hoping to achieve (purpose)? It would be a terrible shame for you to invest in writing a fabulous piece only for it to be vague about who, why or what is controlling the text
- have clear strategies for each stage of the writing process? This includes brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising and editing. Not only will these help you to construct a quality piece of writing, but they will also form a part of your annotations or descriptions afterwards.

Activity 3.8: Explore and apply

1 Make a list of, or highlight, the key expectations for your SAC, including:
   - the time you have to complete each element
   - the resources you are allowed to bring with you
   - when and where the SAC will be taking place.

2 Explore the criteria for the SAC.
   - Go through each descriptor and identify the key words being used to describe the requirements.
   - Underline the descriptive verbs (identify, explain, etc.) and discuss with a partner what the expectations are for each level within the descriptor.
   - Consider what you need to do to achieve the score you would like. Use your practice writing task and description/annotation to score yourself against the criteria. What do you need to focus on to improve in the SAC?

3 Complete different practice pieces to see how each responds to the criteria. How might you maximise your success in this SAC?

↑ Level-up

Ask others for their opinion of your writing and ascertain how each responds to the criteria specifically. This could be teachers, but also peers, family or even AI! What are common elements the feedback is suggesting for you to focus on? What do you agree with and is there anything you disagree with or do not fully understand?

!! Be honest about how you are feeling and any questions you might still have. There is no point walking into the SAC without being 100% confident about what you are being asked to do. Even if you have asked before, if something still does not make sense, then keep asking for a different explanation until it does.

STEP 9

Transfer your skills to Year 12

You might change, develop and be inspired by different things before you reach the creating texts area of study next year, but right now it is important for you to feel confident in yourself as a writer. Reflect and engage in your successes and where you enjoyed yourself the most through this area of study.

It is important for you to reflect upon not simply the outcome of this area of study, but also on the knowledge and skills you have built as a writer. The lessons you have learned and the skills developed through this area of study will set you up for success and maximise your chances of finding your voice, not just for the Creating Texts SAC next year, but for all the subsequent writing you will do in English/EAL and all your other subjects now and in the future.

So what knowledge and skills are you taking with you into the next area of study? The key elements you should confidently be able to know and perform include:

- identifying the context, audience and purpose of other texts
- identifying the structural and language features used in other texts
- applying different strategies at the different stages of the writing process
- using the different stages of the writing process for purpose and effect
- creating texts with a specific audience and purpose
- using structural and language features that allow a text to achieve its purpose
- being confident to experiment with different structural and language features for effect.

!! **Although you will not complete this area of study again until Year 12, the skills of writing apply to literally any writing task you do in the future for English, or any of your other subjects. So spending the time and energy building your capacity to speak to a specific audience and purpose using different structures and language features will benefit you in life. Your learning does not stop once the SAC is complete.**

Activity 3.9: Reflect and consider

1 Reflect on how you went and felt in the SAC. Copy and complete the following table in your notebook.

My strengths and most confident areas	Areas I found confusing or difficult, or where I did not perform as well as I would have liked

2 If you had an opportunity to sit the SAC again, what would you do differently?

3 What do you need to do in the future to continue to develop your writing skills and build your knowledge in this area of study?

4 What strategies can you use to focus on your writing skills and how can you maximise your results moving forward?

↑ Level-up

Keep writing! Just because the SAC is over, this does not mean you should stop writing. Continue building your writer's journal or documenting different ideas for writing tasks. This can become a lifelong skill. Maintaining daily writing activities will also be hugely beneficial in building your vocabulary, expression and accuracy. You do not have to write for anyone but yourself, but just the act of putting pen to paper until it feels like second nature can, quite literally, change your life.

4 Reading and exploring texts – Unit 2

Reading and exploring texts is studied twice in Year 11, to maximise your opportunity to develop **critical** and analytical skills in exploring different types of texts. The intention of the area of study is to build upon your opinions and personal connections from Unit 1 and take a more academic and sophisticated approach to express such ideas in Unit 2. This chapter will help transfer the skills you established in Unit 1 to Unit 2 and ultimately set you up for success in Year 12. Follow this suggested pathway to find your voice in the SAC for the Unit 2 reading and exploring texts outcome.

Find your voice in ... reading and exploring texts

Start here!

STEP 1

Identify what you already understand

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STEP 5

Prepare for the SAC

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STEP 6

Transfer your skills to Year 12

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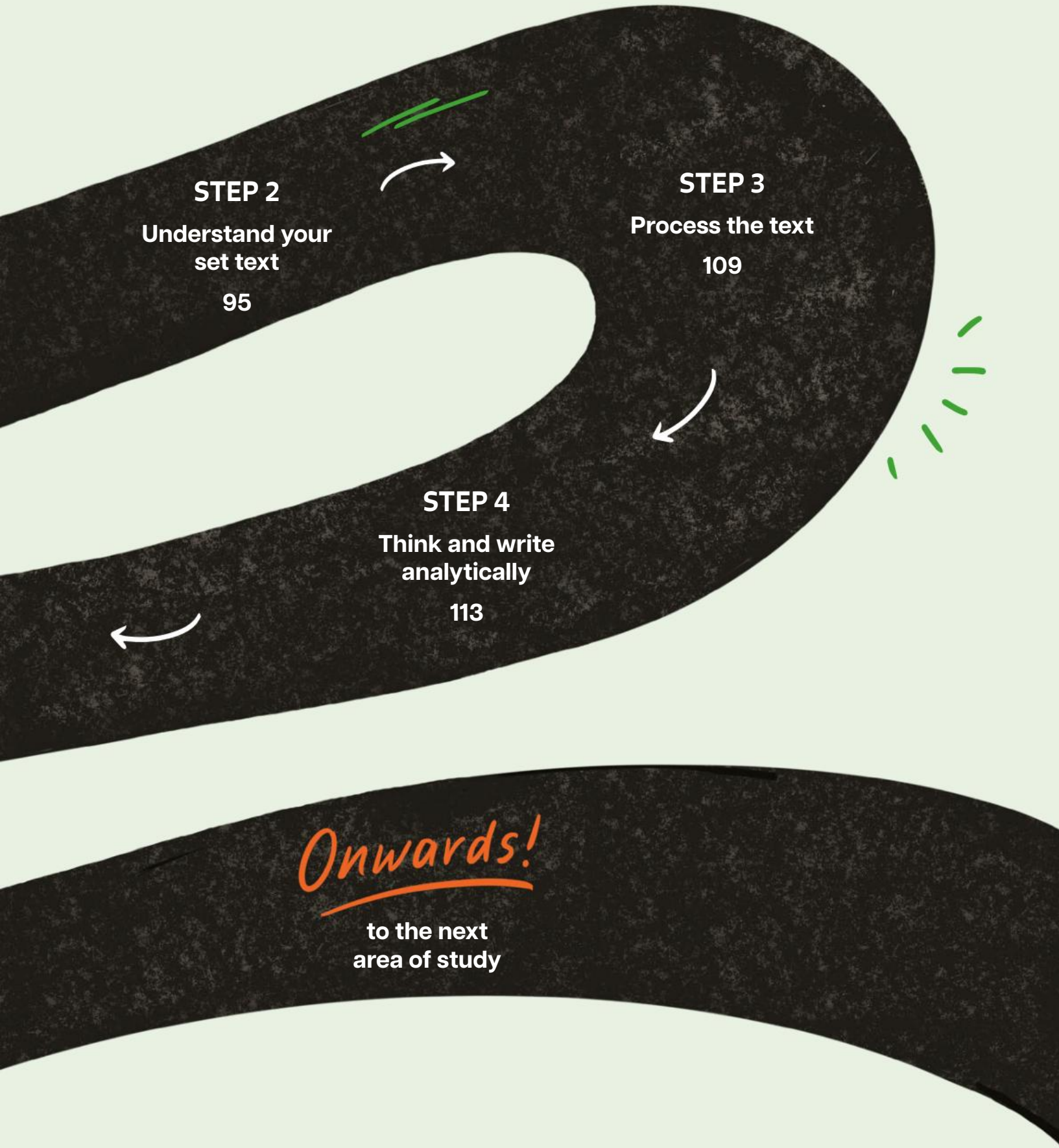

STEP 2
Understand your set text
95
STEP 3
Process the text
109
STEP 4
Think and write analytically
113
Onwards!
to the next area of study

STEP 1

Identify what you already understand about reading and exploring texts

The reading and exploring texts area of study continues in Unit 2, **with a focus on deepening your capacity for inferential reading and viewing** and **extending your writing in response to a text**. You will be studying an alternate text type in this unit but will employ many of the same strategies in your analysis as you engage with **ideas, concerns and tensions**, explore the ways **vocabulary, text structures and language features create meaning** and consider the text through your own cultural knowledge, experiences and understandings. There is an added exploration in this unit of the **historical context and social/cultural values** expressed but ultimately you will be working towards **developing analytical writing** where you can focus on **applying appropriate metalanguage and exploring organisational structures such as formal essays**.

!! Rather than think of this as a new unit, think of it as the same area of study as Unit 1, just with a different text (and a slightly more formal essay at the end).

Table 4.1: The key knowledge and skills from the study design to help you find success

	Things I need to know	Things I need to do
Reading and viewing strategies	• inferential reading and viewing strategies	• build inferential reading and viewing strategies
Exploring elements and features for analysis	• ideas, concerns and tensions in a text • vocabulary, text structures and language features in a text used to construct meaning • the historical context, and the social and cultural values in a text	• read and engage with a text for meaning • discuss and analyse ideas, concerns and tensions presented in a text • discuss and analyse the specific vocabulary, text structures and language features in a text, including the use of appropriate metalanguage, and how these aspects create meaning

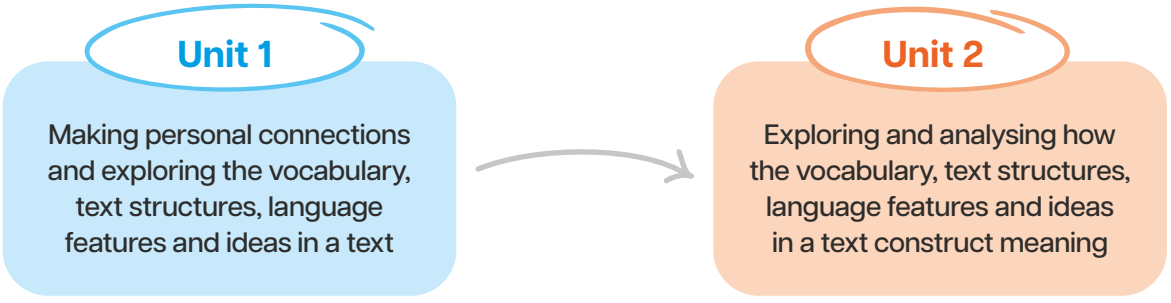
Constructing an analytical response	• strategies and techniques for constructing and supporting analytical writing in response to a text • the **conventions** of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English	• respond to a set topic • construct analytical writing in response to a text, including the use of appropriate evidence from the text • use appropriate strategies to review and edit the writing • use the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English
Speaking and listening	• the conventions of small group and whole-class discussion, including ways of developing constructive interactions and building on the ideas of others in discussion • the conventions of discussion and debate	• listen attentively and respond appropriately to others' views during discussion

Source: VCE English/EAL Performance Descriptors and extracts from the VCE English/EAL Study Design, www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Understanding the area of study

The critical difference between this SAC and the SAC you completed in Unit 1 is this is a **purely** analytical response to a set topic. While you will need to build opinions and perspectives about the text through the area of study, the resulting essay will require you to maintain a formal, academic register and follow the expectations of formal writing.

The expectation is that you build from Unit 1 to Unit 2:



This will require you to be able to identify all the key elements of a new text, build **interpretations** around what the text is saying, identify how it creates meaning and then articulate this in a formal response to a specific topic.

!! Trust that you have the skills to find all the pieces you need to analyse this text. You can now focus your energies on how to write analytically when responding to this text.

Activity 4.1: Reflect and consider

1 Complete a T-Chart in your notebook comparing the key similarities and differences between the Unit 1 and Unit 2 key knowledge and skills. Discuss in small groups and clarify these as a class.

Key similarities	Key differences

2 Look back at the table you created in Chapter 2, Step 9 (page 47) identifying your strengths and areas for improvement in Unit 1. How have you continued to work and develop your skills since this response?

3 What actions have you used, or will you use, to work on any remaining areas for improvement?

4 Copy and complete the following table in your notebook and identify the elements of your Unit 2 set text.

Creator	
Title	
Text type	
Publication date	

5 Although this is not a personal response, we can gain valuable insight by connecting with the text in different ways.

- **a** In what ways do you connect most with the text?
- **b** What aspects do you like or dislike?
- **c** What does it remind you of?
- **d** What questions do you have after your first reading?

Level-up

Did you know your Unit 1 text deeply enough? Reflect upon what you knew and understood about your Unit 1 text and what you would like to know and understand about your Unit 2 text. How will you create this deeper level of understanding? Do you need to read/view it more times? Do you need to annotate or create more sophisticated notes? What do you physically need to do to engage in this text in a more academic way?

STEP 2

Understand your set text

This area of study requires you to respond analytically to a specific topic about a different text from the one you studied in Unit 1. In order to do this, you need to understand the five critical elements of your new set text and then how to respond to a topic about the text specifically. In this step, we will ensure you have all the information, knowledge and examples you need to respond to any topic on your set text.

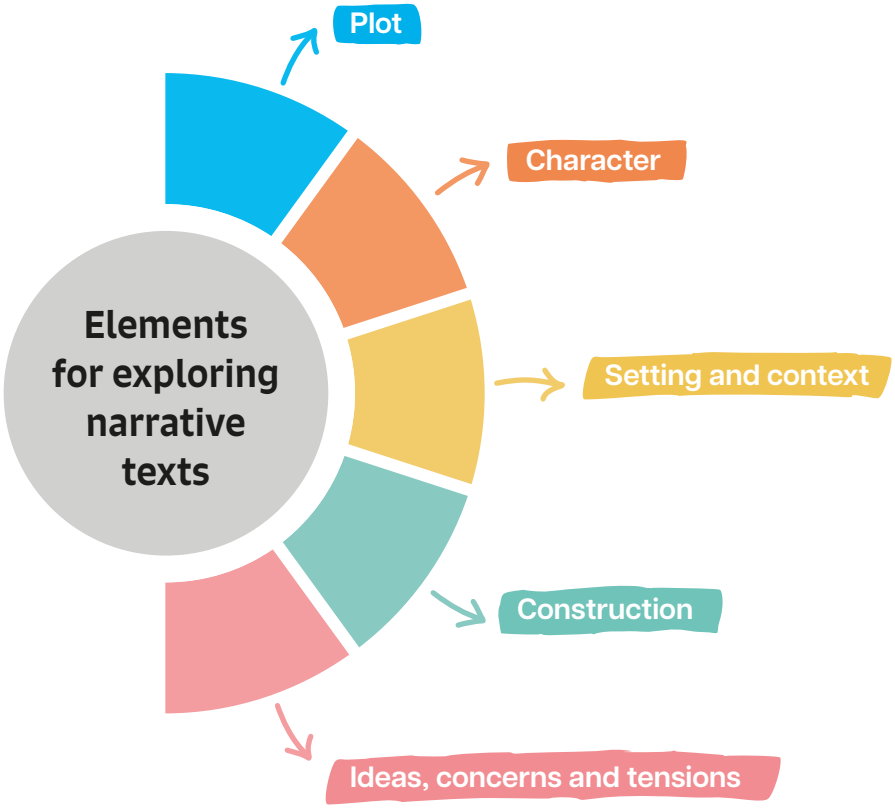


Figure 4.1: Elements for exploring narrative texts

Plot

What is your text about? As we discovered in Unit 1 (page 18), understanding the story (or the different stories, poems or elements of your text) is the first critical step in understanding the text overall. Spending the time now to explore what happens in your text ensures you can base your analysis on the events. You can then investigate whose perspective it is told from and in what order the events occur to go beyond the story into the constructed narrative.

For the purposes of this book we are going to continue analysing the model text, 'The Magician'. In this way you can see how we can dig deeper and respond more analytically to the text than we did in Unit 1.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Brainstorm a list of the key events that drove the main narrative of your text.

- *Frankie forces his way into the narrator's party.*
- *The Great Waldo initially seems underwhelming but proves his worth as a magician.*
- *Frankie is volunteered to assist in the magician's final act.*
- *To everyone's delight, The Great Waldo makes Frankie disappear and does not return him.*

Plot-based evidence is the most common and fundamental form of evidence to draw from in any analytical response. While it is critical to establish key aspects of the text, it is important that you do not fall into the trap of retelling the story rather than using the plot as evidence.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Read the following analytical paragraph excerpt noticing how it retells the story rather than analysing the reasons or effects of the actions occurring.

People are driven to act against their morals for self-preservation. The narrator knew that Frankie was 'the biggest, meanest kid in school' and that 'everyone [was] frightened of him' so he allowed Frankie to 'push' his way into their party. Although the classmates were 'dismayed', they did not verbally disapprove as they understood the narrator was simply in the same position they normally are at school.

2 Rewrite the paragraph above to focus on why the actions took place the way they did.

People are driven to act against their morals for self-preservation. It was the narrator's knowledge that Frankie was 'the biggest, meanest kid in school' and that 'everyone [was] frightened of him' that motivated him to begrudgingly invite Frankie in to his party. Yet the classmates' 'dismayed' acceptance of this decision demonstrates how they were all willing to sacrifice their morals and potential enjoyment in order to protect themselves physically and socially within the group.

See the digital student resource for annotated examples of these paragraphs.

!! Remember, the reader (or marker) knows the text just as well – if not better – than you, so you do not have to explain the story. You can refer to the story elements but focus on spending your time explaining your interpretations.

Activity 4.2: Analyse and apply

1. What elements of understanding or analysing the plot did you find most difficult with your Unit 1 text? What strategies do you have in place for focusing on these elements to improve with your Unit 2 text?
2. What questions do you have about what happens in your text? Write down any questions you have about the plot and share them as a class. Keep asking until it makes sense.
3. Create a table in your notebook, breaking up your text into its **relevant** chapters, scenes, acts or individual texts. For each section you have identified, dot point the key events that occur in that section.
   a. Looking at your table, **synthesise** the information by deciding what key events drive the primary plot (or collective themes and connections in collections of poetry or stories). Aim to get 5 to 10 points (depending on the length and complexity of the plot).
   b. Use these dot points to write one overall sentence that explains what your story is about.
4. What narrative perspective is your story told from? (See page 19 to revise this.) What **impact** does this have on the way the story is received?
5. What is the narrative structure of your story? (See page 20 to revise this.) What impact does this have on the way the story is received?
6. Write a paragraph, focusing on two connected key events that occur in your set text. Focus on using, rather than retelling, the plot, by considering why the events happen and the effect or impact these events have on your interpretation.

Level-up

Using plot as evidence is not simplistic – it is vital. But it is the way you connect the plot evidence with other elements of the text that is important. Try connecting minor, almost insignificant events that occur to impact a major event. How did this small action play a larger role in the text overall?

Character

Closely connected to the narrative are the characters that drive the story. Through the characters' actions, motivations, relationships and developments, the creator can articulate their ideas and perspectives. Audiences connect to characters in different ways and it is through these connections that creators are able to make audiences think, feel and respond to the text overall.

We refer to character actions when drawing from plot-based examples. However, we can consider other elements when using character-based evidence. These might include those shown in Figure 4.2.

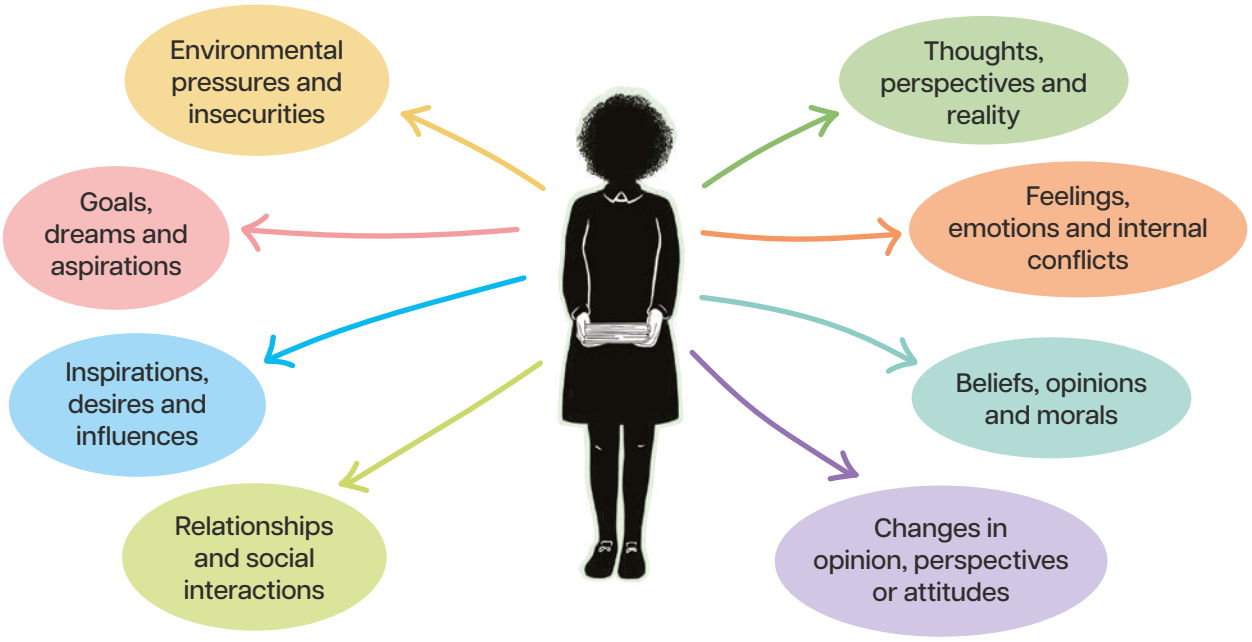


Figure 4.2: Elements of character-based evidence

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Complete the following table, identifying the characters' establishment, motivations and development.

Character	Establishment	Motivations	Development
The narrator	• *Sarcastic* • *Isolated* • *Intimidated*	*To get the other students at school to like him*	*Became part of the 'we' of the class that does not ask Frankie to be returned*
Frankie	• *A bully* • *Intimidating* • *Threatening / powerful*	*To scare others, ruin their lives, gain/maintain power*	*Gets into a situation that he can't get out of. Is 'punished' for his previous actions*
The Great Waldo	• *Old and frail* • *Out-of-date and unaware*	*To perform magic and entertain; to teach a lesson or provide retribution*	*Proves his talent as being truly magic and shows how powerful he is*
The classmates	• *Submissive* • *Disappointed with the narrator and the magician*	*To enjoy the party, and not get in the way of Frankie*	*Captivated by the magic and accepting of the magician's decision*

2 Brainstorm different topics that could be asked about the characters in 'The Magician'.

- *How does Frankie gain and lose power through the story?*
- *In what ways does the narrator have little control over anything that happens at the party?*
- *Discuss the role the classmates play in 'The Magician'.*
- *How does Warner show who has power through 'The Magician'?*

3 Read the following paragraph, noticing that it focuses on what the character is doing, rather than saying anything about the character beyond the plot. The paragraph answers the question, 'How does Frankie gain and lose power through the story?'

Frankie gains and loses power throughout 'The Magician'. He begins by asserting his power over the narrator by coercing them into letting him into the party, even though he was not invited. Frankie spends the party intimidating the magician and the other classmates and mocking everything that happens. However, he loses power when The Great Waldo selects him to participate in the show, even though Frankie does not want to. Then, once the magician has made Frankie disappear, Frankie does not have any power to bring himself back afterwards.

4 Revise the paragraph above, focusing on connecting the characters' actions with their motivations and developments.

Frankie desperately attempts to hold onto the intimidating power he has over the classmates, but is ultimately overcome by the true power the magician contains. Initially, the audience learn how Frankie asserts his power through aggression and intimidation, yet his threats never have to result in violence, as the rest of the classmates 'know the deal' and reluctantly allow Frankie to continue to 'push himself into every game or social event'. The readers notice how often Frankie 'sneers' insulting comments, outwardly dismissing the activities of an event he chose to participate in. This alludes to the assumption that Frankie wants to be accepted, but does not know how to build successful relationships effectively. By the time The Great Waldo asserts his power with a 'smile', it is too late for Frankie to redeem himself as the rest of the class celebrate in his demise and Warner allows Frankie to be punished for his prior behaviour.

See the digital student resource for annotated examples of these paragraphs.

!! Analysis is about identifying elements and explaining what they could potentially mean. Do not waste time summarising or explaining the story. Focus on the elements and what you think they might mean.

Activity 4.3: Explore and brainstorm

1. What aspect of exploring and analysing character did you find most difficult or confusing during your Unit 1 study? Focusing on these elements and ensuring you are asking the right questions to clarify misconceptions will be the best way to make the greatest gains in this outcome.
2. Create a character map (similar to the one on page 22) exploring the connections and relationships across your new set text.
3. Explore the primary characters of your set text by copying and completing the following table in your notebook.
4. Brainstorm different words you can use to describe the characters, like the examples on page 23.
5. Brainstorm potential topics that explore the characters in your text.
6. Choose a question and brainstorm one way the topic could be interpreted.
7. Brainstorm different plot- and character-based evidence you could use to support your interpretation.
8. Write the paragraph, focusing on using character-specific evidence (not just what they did, but how and why they did it).

Character	Establishment	Motivations	Development

Level-up

Consider secondary or supporting characters and their roles within the text. When we are shown very little as an audience, what we are shown becomes even more important. Sometimes, exploring the minor characters can be highly enlightening and can reveal significant ideas expressed in the text.

Setting and context

Where and when the text is set establishes social expectations, props and costumes, language features, relationships and situations to be explored throughout a narrative. These elements are important for **contextualising** what is happening and why. Where and when the text was written, however, gives another layer of social expectations, perspectives and beliefs that impact the story in much more **subtle** yet important ways.

Many texts are created in the same time period and place where the story is set. This makes it easier for the creator to understand the situation and reflect on what they are seeing in their own life experiences. But many texts are written about time periods or places that are very different from the situation and experiences the creator finds themselves in. Suddenly, the text is viewed through one **lens**, with particular values and beliefs, but set in another.

A key difference between Unit 1 and Unit 2 is the additional knowledge around the **historical context and the social and cultural values in a text**. Historical context takes into consideration the environment in which the text is set and was written. Cultural and social values are the conditions, beliefs and perceptions the text was responding to and exploring, as well as the values of the creator and the society they were living in during the text's construction.

The final element to consider is that, as readers, we bring our own lens – centred around our values, beliefs and experiences – whenever we read a text. This means that when we read a text that was written or set in a **drastically** different time period or location, we can find it difficult to connect in the same way as if we were reading something set in **contemporary** times and the same location as the reader. Or, we can interpret a text very differently from someone else due to our personal beliefs, ideas and experiences.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 What was the historical context of the text and the impact this context had on the text?

Historical context:

Although published in the flash fiction anthology Three Can Keep a Secret in 2022, the original draft was written in the 1990s as an assignment Warner was completing for the NSW Writer's School course. She was asked to choose a favourite family memory and reflected on her daughter's 8th birthday party with a magician who looked less than impressive but ended up being a great entertainer. There was also a little boy who kept calling out how he knew all the tricks. The magician chose him for his final trick, placing a card and jug of water on top of his head. When he pulled the card away, the water went all over the boy's head and the magician simply said 'Funny, that usually works!'

Originally the story was much longer, with a backstory to Waldo and an ending where Frankie returned the next day, a much nicer child. The story was drastically reduced and the ending was revised when it was printed in the anthology, with the 'punchier' ending.

Impact this context had on the text:

The narrative was loosely based on an actual event, allowing the author to relate to the characters and the situation to a much greater extent. Warner **acknowledges** *that she finds the stories 'that are most successful are the ones connected in some way to things [she has] experienced' as 'they come across more honest'. This honesty presents a text that is natural, realistic and wholesome. The timeless nature of the characters, setting and story mean that it is just as relevant in a contemporary reading as it was in the 1990s.*

2 List some of the cultural and social values inherent within the story.

- *Australian values of respect, looking after your friends and the desire for the 'underdog' to win are all present in the story. The ending is particularly 'Australian' in its tongue-in-cheek humour and the downfall of the 'villain' of the story.*
- *Although the potentially very hot climate of Australia does not permeate the story, this layer of setting adds intensity to the narrative. We can either assume that the weather was lovely and the party took place in the backyard, or it was so hot that the party took place in the comfort of an air-conditioned home.*

- *Having a 'home party' is a common Australian activity. Australian readers would bring their own memories of experiencing backyard or home parties with their classmates. Simple decorations, a table laden with party pies, fairy bread, crisps and cordial fill the reader's mind to establish the setting, without being* **explicitly** *articulated.*

3 Brainstorm some topics that could be asked about the setting or context of your text.

- *Discuss how the text is quintessentially Australian.*
- *How does the story, being set in the narrator's home, impact the events that occur?*
- *What do contemporary Australian readers bring to their reading of this text?*
- *How does the historical context impact the story?*

4 Read the following paragraph, which discusses the setting but does not analyse what it means. It answers the question, 'Discuss how the text is quintessentially Australian'.

'The Magician' is quintessentially Australian because Warner is an Australian writer so the reader can assume the story is set in Australia. Frankie is a bully and the narrator is an underdog who ends up winning friends when the bully is punished properly. The narrator is also sarcastic when he says 'he can come in, or he can knock all my teeth out'. Warner adds more humour with the cliff-hanger of an ending when no one asked for Frankie to be returned. All these things are very Australian things to include in the story.

5 Revise the paragraph above, focusing on explaining the impact of the setting and context on the text overall.

'The Magician' does not stipulate where or when the story takes place, but as an Australian writer, Warner layers the text with quintessential Australianisms and cultural values throughout. The notion of a 'cocky' bully pushing his way into a party establishes the narrator as a classic underdog. From the outset the audience are rallying against Frankie and his demise at the end rewards their desires. Warner uses **sarcasm** *as humour, another very-Australian feature. When the narrator is given a choice to let Frankie enter, 'he can come in, or he can knock all my teeth out'. Ultimately, the audience is left hanging on the idea that no one asked The Great Waldo to make Frankie reappear at the end. This dry, subtle humour captures the Australian audience and allows Warner to gift them a comedic demise to the schoolyard bully whom no one wants to see succeed in the end.*

See the digital student resource for annotated examples of these paragraphs.

!! It can be tricky to include setting evidence in topics that are not setting based, but it can really lift the sophistication of your analysis if you are able to do this! Try noticing if it is relevant to talk about where something happened or why it happened the way it did due to the context of the time period or of the creator's time period.

Activity 4.4: Research and identify

1. What did you find most difficult, confusing or frustrating about studying the setting in Unit 1?
2. Identify the macro and micro settings of your Unit 2 text. See Chapter 2, Step 5 (page 26) to revise macro and micro settings.
3. Choose significant settings and consider what information we are given and how it impacts or connects to the text overall.
4. Research and identify the historical context and social/cultural values present through the time period of the setting and the time/location in which it was created.
5. Brainstorm potential topics that explore the setting or context of your text.
6. Choose a question and brainstorm one way the topic could be interpreted.
7. Brainstorm different plot-, character- or setting/context-based evidence you could use to support your interpretation.
8. Write a paragraph focusing on not just identifying the setting or context examples but also using them to support your interpretations.

Level-up

In Unit 4 you will be asked to connect the implicit and explicit values from the context of your text. You have time to build towards this, but recognising the impact values have upon the plot and interpretations is the first step to building an insightful analysis. Go back to prior responses you have written and brainstorm how you could connect values somewhere.

Construction

While there was an expectation for you to **consider and explore** the features of a text in Unit 1, you now need to analyse these features using metalanguage **appropriately** throughout. To analyse is to break a text into the pieces that make it up and consider how these elements build towards the text **holistically**. Your Unit 2 text should be a different text type than your Unit 1 text, so you will need to go back to the tables in Chapter 2 (page 30) and consider not only the narrative and literary features but also any other relevant features of your new set text form.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify and **categorise** the different vocabulary, text structures and language features used in your text.

Vocabulary	Text structures	Language features
• **Repetition** • *Colloquial expression* • *Limited or simplistic modifiers* • *Formal register (except for dialogue)*	• *Changing sentence length* • *Short paragraphs, including single sentences* • *First-person narration* • *Contemporary Australian setting* • **Chronological** *narrative arc* • *Present tense* • *Concluding cliff-hanger*	• **Alliteration** • **Onomatopoeia** • *Emphasis* • **Sensory imagery** • **Juxtaposition** • *Irony* • *Anacoluthon* • **Metaphor** • **Enumeration** • **Personification**

2 Brainstorm topics that could be asked about the construction of your text.

- *How does the narrative perspective limit the way the reader can engage with the text?*
- *In what ways does Warner build imagery through her language choices?*
- *What is the impact of using alliteration so heavily throughout the text?*
- *How does Warner use language features to maximise the story in the shortest possible way?*

3 Read the following paragraph excerpt, which identifies rather than connects and analyses the construction throughout. It answers the question, 'In what ways does Warner build imagery through her language choices?'

Warner builds imagery in her story through her numerous language devices. She uses significant amounts of alliteration: 'dismayed/deal', 'man/magic', 'feathers/flowers', 'doorknob/doves', to name a few. She also uses a metaphor to show how the narrator could 'feel my face burn' and onomatopoeia as the magician 'bangs' the box. The main imagery she uses though is descriptive language to show that the magician has 'trembling hands' or Frankie 'saunters cockily' to show the reader how the characters were feeling or what they were doing.

4 Revise the paragraph to embed the construction for analytic effect.

Warner's imagery is built with a focus on character development rather than layers of situational imagery throughout. She exposes the personified 'disappointment' of the classmates as they first witness The Great Waldo and establishes his character through the alliterative 'frail and faded', the euphemism of his tuxedo seeing 'better days' and the sensory imagery of his 'trembling hands' and 'velvet covered stand'. All these accumulatively build the reader's initial impression of the magician to be less than inspiring, which allows the juxtaposition of the sudden alliterative realisation that 'the old man is magic' to have an even greater impact. The metaphor adds to the magic of the situation and is consolidated through the alliterative **clichés** *of turning 'feathers into flowers and doorknobs into doves',*

→

connecting to the readers' experiences of magic and bringing not only The Great Waldo to life but also the experience of the classmates as their perceptions of the magician are so quickly turned around.

See the digital student resource for annotated examples of these paragraphs.

One important element for successfully writing about the construction elements of your text is to feel confident to change the technical language to fit into your sentence. You do not have to use the word 'personification' but rather you can describe something as being 'personified', or instead of 'alliteration' something can be 'alliterative'. Do you know how you can change different features to use them in different ways?

Activity 4.5: Identify and brainstorm

1. What did you find most difficult, confusing or frustrating about studying the construction of the text in Unit 1?
2. Identify different narrative, literary and any other features relevant to your text type and categorise them by copying and completing the following table in your notebook.
3. Choose some of the most critical features and explain the impact and effect they have on the text.
4. Brainstorm potential topics that explore the construction of your text.
5. Choose a question and brainstorm one way the topic could be interpreted.
6. Brainstorm different types of evidence you could use to support your interpretation (this could be plot, character, setting and context as well as construction).
7. Write a paragraph focusing on not simply identifying construction elements that have been used but also explaining how these features support your interpretation and how they were used to build the text as we know it.

Vocabulary	Text structures	Language features

Level-up

How many features are you drawing into your analysis? Are you relying on the same ones each time? Think about how you can support the same idea in different ways through different features of the text. Remember that features rarely work in isolation, so consider how you can explore the way features work in collaboration for effect.

Ideas, concerns and tensions

Everything we analyse comes back to having an opinion and building interpretations around what the text is saying and how it is saying it. Whether we are exploring the plot, characters, setting, context or construction of the text, we can further classify these elements into broader themes; that is, statements about the text and what it is presenting about the world more holistically. These themes can then be elaborated upon by considering the specific ideas, concerns and tensions being presented about that theme.

It is one thing to come up with different interpretations about what a text is saying but another to be able to support (or prove) what you are saying with evidence from the text. Remember that you did not come up with these ideas from simply what happened in the text (the plot); you also built interpretations from the motivations or development of characters, from where and how the setting was included, as well as the values being presented. Ultimately, the only way you understood and connected to any of these things is through the way the text was **constructed**: the language choices; structural decisions; or cinematic, theatrical, poetic or graphic features used to bring the narrative to life. All the elements need to be considered when choosing evidence to support your thinking, in particular when you are discussing the ideas, concerns and tensions of your text.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Complete the following table.

Theme	Idea, concern, conflict	Presented through
Respect	*Respect is earned through actions, not words*	• *The Great Waldo not looking impressive, but his skills kept them all 'transfixed'* • *Frankie saying mean things, but not doing anything* • ***Descriptive phrases** and **language features:** 'trembling hands'; 'sneers Frankie'; 'smiles … flourish with his wand'*
	Respect comes from admiration rather than fear or intimidation	• *The classmates were scared of Frankie; they did not look up to him (**generalisation** and **high modality:** 'everyone is frightened'; 'no one ever refuses …')* • *The Great Waldo was 'unmoved' – he was confident in his skills to garner respect (increased **figurative** and **sensory language**)* • *Australian values do not respect a bully*
	It is difficult to respect others if you do not respect yourself	• *Frankie not respecting anyone: aggressive, insulting, but 'nervous' (**repetition** and **parallelism**)* • *Narrator trying to make friends through a party (**first-person narration**)*

Social expectations	*People will make decisions based on the majority's actions*	• *Everyone is initially disappointed and then enthralled with The Great Waldo (**alliteration** and **enumeration** for emphasis)* • *Setting of a home party – it is the narrator's choice as it is their party* • *No one asks for Frankie to be returned (shift to **inclusive pronoun** 'we')*
	In a social setting, people are less likely to disagree	• *No one argues about Frankie being let in* • *No one speaks up against Frankie criticising the show* • ***Generalisation** and **high modality**; **direct dialogue** for Frankie but not classmates*
	Social expectations are never spoken but understood through others' actions and reactions	• *Everyone wanting to volunteer to participate in the show: 'expectant faces'; 'mass of madly waving arms' (descriptive language, alliteration)* • *'Almighty cheer': no one wanting to speak against everyone's joy (**sentence structure**, final **cliff-hanger**)*

2 Brainstorm some topics that explore the ideas presented in your text.

- *How does Warner explore the idea of respect in 'The Magician'?*
- *In what ways does 'The Magician' explore the unspoken, yet controlling, nature of social expectations?*
- *Discuss how social expectations drive the narrative in 'The Magician'.*
- *'He always gets his own way.' Respect is earned rather than taken. To what extent do you agree?*

3 Read the following paragraph, which sets up an idea in the first sentence but does not connect the evidence being used back to the original idea. It answers the question, 'How does Warner explore the idea of respect in "The Magician"?'

Warner explores the idea of respect through the classmates' lack of respect for Frankie and their growing respect for The Great Waldo. The narrator establishes that Frankie is 'the biggest, meanest kid in school' and the classmates are understandably 'dismayed' at seeing him join the party. However, they 'know the deal' and accept his invitation, snide comments and general negativity throughout, which is why there is an 'almighty cheer' upon his demise at the end. In contrast, the classmates initially are 'disappoint[ed]' with The Great Waldo, but through his performance they become 'transfixed' and end up enjoying the show.

4 Revise the paragraph to connect the evidence back to the idea and say something about the text.

Warner emphasises the importance of respect and how it can be lost and gained dependent upon a person's actions. She compares the continued lack of respect for Frankie alongside the growing respect for The Great Waldo as a way for her readers to consider the impact a person's actions have upon the way they are perceived. Through descriptive language and negatively connotated words, Frankie is only presented as 'intimidating' as he 'sneers' and 'saunters cockily' through the party. The alliterative connection continues with his 'smirk and smart remark', which is the final validation for the reader that his irredeemable behaviour is deserving of retribution because the classmates hold as little respect for him as he does

for them. Contrastingly, The Great Waldo is established as alliteratively 'frail and faded' but the reader begins building respect for him because 'the old man is unmoved'. Through his final trick, the magician 'transfixe[s]' the audience and his actions validate his redeemable behaviour as deserving respect and admiration. This juxtaposition of characters highlights Warner's attempt to expose not only the changing nature of respect but also the power of the individual in gaining rather than demanding respect.

See the digital student resource for annotated examples of these paragraphs.

!! The better you plan to include all the pieces of an analytical paragraph, the easier it will be to bring it together. Once you start writing, it is easy to get lost in the story, but having certain technical features and context to draw into the paragraph will make you **consciously** remember to prioritise the analysis throughout.

Activity 4.6: Identify and apply

1. What did you find most difficult, confusing or frustrating about studying the ideas of the text in Unit 1?
2. Create a theme and interpretation map for your Unit 2 text, similar to the map you created in Chapter 2 (page 38).
3. Choose three of the most important themes. Copy and complete the following table in your notebook, exploring different ideas and evidence that can be used to delve into that theme.

Theme	Idea, concern or tension	Presented through

4. Brainstorm different topics about the ideas being presented in your text.
5. Choose a topic and write a paragraph, drawing from plot-, character-, setting-, context- and construction-based examples.

↑ Level-up

There are two ways to extend the way you respond to idea-based topics. One way is to ensure you say something about the topic – do not just agree or disagree with the statement. The other is to consider alternate perspectives by asking yourself, 'What is a less conventional or expected reading of the text, or how might a reader interpret or connect with the text differently from me?'

STEP 3

Process the text

We have spent considerable time identifying and exploring the elements of the text – and this is important. But it can be a significant jump to then have to use those elements to complete an analytical essay. A key and important difference between identification and analysis is how you process the information you have gathered.

While a mind map or short-answer questions are optional assessment tasks for EAL students, both tasks can be invaluable processing activities to help consolidate your understanding of the elements you have identified thus far and begin to consider what you might do and say about the information.

Mind maps

The suggested task requires **a detailed mind map of vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas**. But how this is displayed or comes together will depend on your text and potentially the expectations of your particular school or teacher. A simple concept map is a logical approach, but you will need to consider how you can best make it 'detailed' while maintaining the features of a mind map.

Here are some possible approaches to constructing a mind map:

- Begin with the ideas being presented and consider the structures and features being used to bring these to life.
- Begin with key structural or language features and connect these to different types of ideas being presented.
- Choose specific and relevant quotes or examples from the text and elaborate on the ideas being presented as well as the structural and language features being employed.
- Choose key characters and elaborate on their development with information about the ideas, structures and language features.
- Choose key settings or key plot moments and elaborate on the ideas, structures and features being utilised.

The worked example on the following page shows a sample mind map for 'The Magician'. It breaks down the structural features; ideas, concerns and tensions; and vocabulary and language features and then analyses them in more depth.

!! Remember, the purpose of a mind map is to visually connect and show the relationships between different elements. How your mind map will look will depend on where you begin it and how you elaborate and extend upon the initial information being presented.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Create a mind map of the key ideas, vocabulary, structures and language features being used holistically to construct the text.

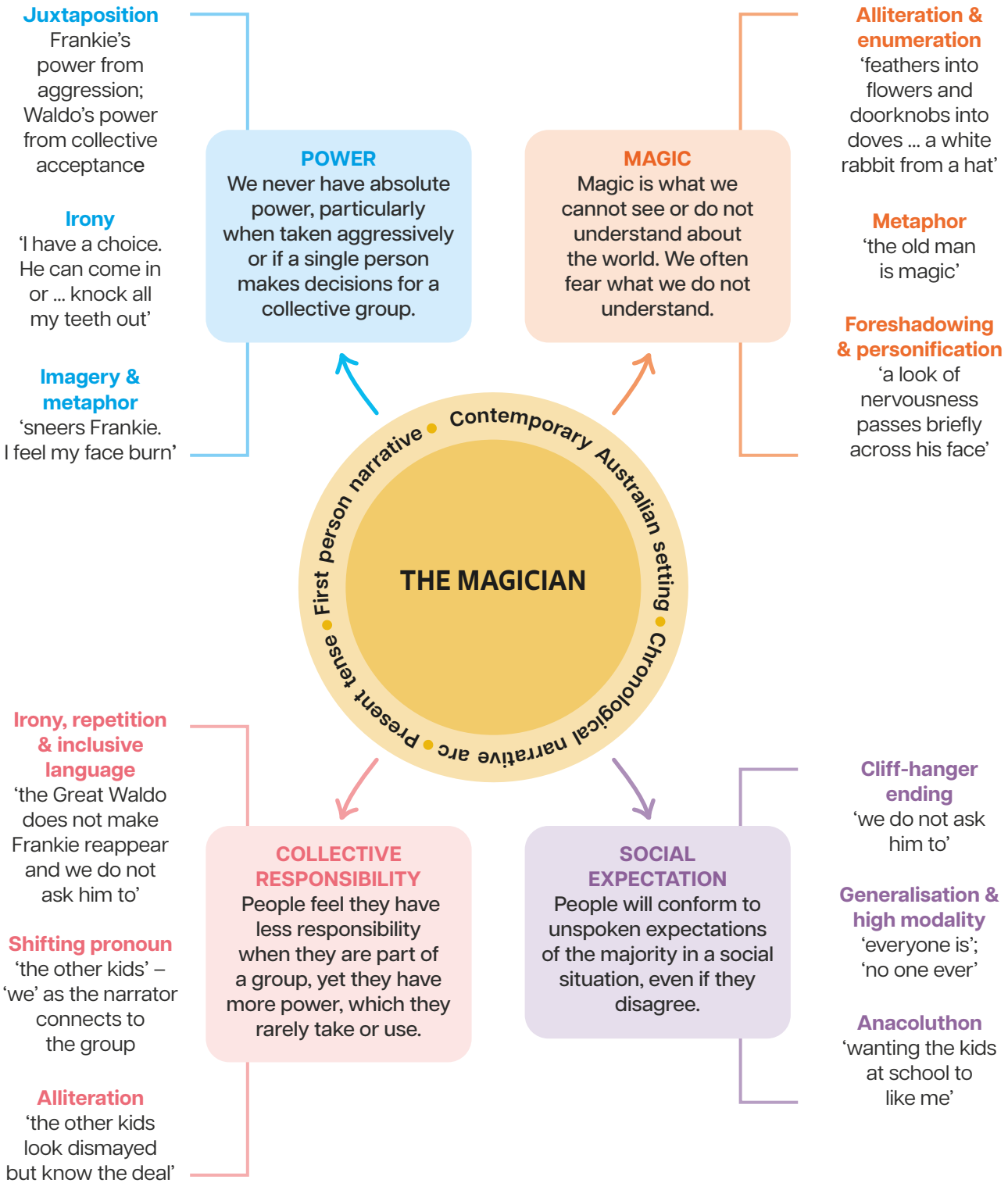


Figure 4.3: A mind map for 'The Magician'

Short-answer questions

For EAL students, an alternative to writing an analytical essay in the SAC is to respond to a set of short-answer questions. Your school will decide how many questions and what type of questions these might be, as well as the responses expected for this assessment. However, asking and answering different types of short-answer questions can be a great stepping stone to writing an extended response in the SAC. By responding to short-answer questions, you are able to consolidate your understanding and thinking of the text and begin experimenting with ways to talk about the text without worrying too much about the extended essay.

There are many different types of short-answer questions, but generally responses will be:

- a selection from multiple potential answers
- a single word, phrase or sentence
- dot points or a list of different answers
- a short paragraph made up of any number of sentences depending on the type of question
- a table or graph filled in with appropriate details
- an excerpt annotated by labelling certain elements.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Answer the following short-answer questions about the text, 'The Magician'.

1 How did Warner foreshadow Frankie's demise?

Initially, Warner foreshadowed the idea that something was going to happen to Frankie when 'a look of nervousness passe[d] briefly across his face'. It was further foreshadowed when The Great Waldo 'smile[d]', showing his confidence in the situation and that he had control over what would happen next.

2 Explain the impact of alliteration throughout the text.

Alliteration is used significantly throughout the text not only to add emphasis to certain elements but also as a way of heightening the child-like feeling of the story overall. Progressive alliteration such as 'man is magic', 'feathers into flowers and doorknobs into doves' highlights the connection between each of the words **literally** *and metaphorically changing. It is also used to juxtapose characters – for example, the classmates were an excited 'mass of madly waving arms' while Frankie was 'scoffing and sneering'.*

3 What literary features does the quote 'I feel my face burn' employ?

a Simile
b Onomatopoeia
c Metaphor
d Enumeration

4 Why is The Great Waldo initially assumed to be a 'disappointment'?

The narrator and their classmates assume The Great Waldo is going to be disappointing because he is 'ancient' and 'frail', his clothes have 'seen better days' and he sets up his feeble looking stand 'with trembling hands'.

5 List three quotes that show the changing relationship between the narrator and the classmates.

- *'Not long in the neighbourhood, wanting the kids at school to like me'*
- *'The other kids look dismayed but know the deal'*
- *'We do not ask him to.'*

6 What evidence could you use to support the idea that 'power is more easily taken than maintained'?

Frankie is easily able to take power and control from his classmates by 'pushing and shoving and intimidating anyone who gets in his way'. This tricolon emphasises his aggression and the repetition of 'pushes' in the following sentence consolidates his conscious efforts to exert power. He attempts to hold onto this power as he continually 'sneers' disparaging comments about the performance and this turns alliteratively into 'scoffing and sneering' and 'with a smirk and a smart remark' as The Great Waldo volunteers him to participate. The tricolon of fear is replaced with one of 'a collective gasp, a pause then an almighty cheer' as Frankie's power is instantaneously destroyed and passed on to his classmates, whose collective decision is to 'not ask him to' be returned.

!! Focus on the verb in a short-answer question as a priority. What is the question asking you to do? There is a big difference between 'listing' something and 'explaining' it, or a question asking 'what' verses 'how'. The more specific you can be about responding to the whole question, the more accurate your answer will be.

Activity 4.7: Brainstorm and analyse

1 Brainstorm the key vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas in your set text.

2 Choose a starting point and use your brainstorm to help draft your own mind map of your set text.

3 Brainstorm a number of questions about the ideas, vocabulary, structures and language features of your text.

a Share your questions as a class and answer each other's questions.

b What questions stimulated the most discussion or controversy?

c What questions were more difficult to answer?

d What questions allowed numerous points of evidence to be considered?

↑ Level-up

How do you process the information you gather about a text? Knowing different ways to process the information and experimenting with a variety of strategies can mean you can walk into Year 12 confidently understanding the most effective way for you to analyse texts. Do not feel there is only one way to process texts. Try completing a lotus diagram, creating a flow chart or building a comprehensive narrative map that includes all the elements.

STEP 4

Think and write analytically

The biggest step from what you were doing in Unit 1 to the expectations for this SAC is the formality of your writing. Rather than being a reflective, analytical response, this is purely analytical so there are a few areas for us to consider for controlling the analysis throughout.

Formal register features

We started to explore some formal register features in Unit 1, but what actually is 'register' and how do we increase it to become more sophisticated and academic in our writing? Increasing your register and writing in a formal, academic and sophisticated way is a key element for you to consider and consolidate as you work towards your Unit 2 SAC and beyond into Year 12.

Table 4.2 lists some of the key formal language expectations.

Table 4.2: Key formal language expectations

The dos	The do nots
Use precise vocabulary	No colloquial expressions or language
Use a consistent tone	No contractions, abbreviations or acronyms
Write in the third person	No personal pronouns
Be clear and factual; be objective	No emotional language; do not be **subjective**
Use evidence for emphasis	No exaggeration for emphasis
Write in present tense	No clichés and general words
Use full sentences with accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation	No informal spelling or punctuation (e.g. exclamation marks)

!! The bonus of working on the sophistication of your writing and strategies to increase your writing register is that it will help you in all of the writing components for every subject. Academic writing is about being specific, insightful and, ultimately, coherent, and finding your formal register will allow you to do this.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Use your understanding of formal language features to revise the following sentences to increase their register.

a The story is about a bully getting what he had coming.

The narrative centres around a stereotypical bully receiving appropriate retribution.

b I think the book is saying that people should not hide in a crowd, but say something.

Warner postulates how individuals should articulate their thoughts and feelings rather than conceal themselves in a crowd.

c The main character didn't want Frankie at the party because he would ruin it!

The **protagonist** *was fearful of allowing Frankie in to the party due to his reputation as 'the biggest, meanest kid in school'.*

Precise, objective vocabulary allows you to be specific and eventually say more, in fewer words. This is where the idea of 'depth' in writing comes from. It is not necessarily about writing more, but about saying more in the time you have. Consider the difference between:

- the two events happening were occurring at the exact same time

  and

- the events coincided.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify a more precise and analytical term for the following words:

a change

modify, reform, transform

b keep out

exclude, prohibit, ostracise, omit

c different

alternative, substitute, unorthodox

d did not want

reluctant, disinclined, unwilling, loathed

Embedding quotes and using evidence

You will need to support your ideas and analysis with evidence, using technical language and embedding quotes throughout. There are a few grammatical rules you need to follow when embedding quotes:

- When quotation marks are opened, they must always be closed.
- Only use a capital letter at the start of a quote if you are quoting a complete sentence or if the quote is at the beginning of your sentence.
- The end mark punctuation goes inside the quotation marks if it is part of the quote and outside the quotation marks if it is part of your writing.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Write three sentences showing how you accurately punctuate embedded quotes, at the start, middle and end of a sentence.

a *'Wanting the kids at school to like' him, the narrator felt compelled to manufacture a situation outside of school to connect and bond with his fellow peers.*

b *The use of high modality, as 'everyone is frightened' and 'no one ever refuses' allows Warner to hyperbolise the overwhelming feeling the narrator felt about Frankie.*

c *The juxtaposition from 'Another disappointment.' to 'an almighty cheer' demonstrates the development of Waldo as a character and the trust the classmates have in him to 'not make Frankie reappear'.*

!! Short, simple quotes are significantly easier to embed in your writing. Long quotes often disrupt your thought process and make it harder for your reader to connect the arguments you are making.

Understanding analytical topics

Your set text has so many layers of complexity. There are an almost infinite number of ways you might explore and analyse it, so to simplify the task, this area of study will present you with a topic to narrow the focus of the aspects you will discuss and analyse in the SAC.

While the topic can be presented in a number of different ways in Year 12, you can be reasonably confident that your Unit 2 topic will be a 'how'-type topic. This is because the outcome asks you to explore and analyse *how* the vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas in a text construct meaning. A how-topic can focus on many different elements, the most common being character, idea or construction, but it goes beyond this to focus on explicitly connecting different elements across the text.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify what the focus of each of the following how-topics is and the connections they are looking for across the text.

Example	Classification and focus
'A look of nervousness passes briefly across his face to be instantly replaced with a smirk.' How does Warner highlight the idea that we can never truly know what another person is thinking or feeling?	*Idea-based topic: 'the unknown' connecting a quote and the different ways the idea is highlighted in the text*
In what ways does Warner present Frankie as having the least power in 'The Magician'?	*Character-based topic: 'Frankie' connecting the idea of 'power' and the ways it is presented through the character and the text*

→

How does 'The Magician' use narrative perspective to explore the idea that group responsibility results in people suppressing their truth?	*Construction-based topic: 'narrative perspective' connecting the idea of 'collective responsibility' and the ways the text explores the idea*

!! When you pull apart a topic, do not just focus on the key words but also on what you are being asked to do (the verb) and what elements you need to connect across the essay.

Activity 4.8: Analyse and assess

1 Looking through your prior analytical writing or paragraphs, what are your strengths and areas for improvement in maintaining a formal register?

2 How familiar are you with the following formal words? Note down any you have never heard of or those that you understand but would rarely use in your own writing.

principle	assumption	approximation	emerges	liberal
incentive	allocation	hierarchy	eliminate	isolate
intensity	exhibit	implicit	explicit	attainable
distortion	controversy	persistent	meticulous	elated
tenacious	exploitive	decrepit	conceive	invoke

3 How can you increase the register of your writing? Use the points on page 113 to revise a paragraph to increase its formality and sophistication.

↑ Level-up

Building sophistication and depth does not necessarily mean writing more – neither more words nor more complicated sentences. It is about being precise, accurate and as explicit as possible. Choose a paragraph you have written and attempt to reduce the word count by about one-quarter, while maintaining the depth of evidence and ideas you are exploring. Being succinct and clear is the strongest skill you can have to cope with the time demands required of you throughout VCE.

Constructing a plan

A formal analytical response requires a balance of evidence, ideas and connection with the topic. It is important to include all these elements in your essay. However, as there are so many pieces, the best way to remember and balance these is to complete a plan.

There is no one correct way to plan. Some people only need a skeleton of the key features to support them, while others benefit from including all the evidence, technical language and quotes they want to use throughout. Practise both ways, and everything in between, and work out what you need to create an effective plan that helps you maximise your drafting process.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Complete a plan by filling in the following table.

Topic: How does Warner explore the idea of power in 'The Magician'?			
Para	**Idea**	**Seen in**	**Created by**
1	*Power is taken, rather than given. You have to take someone's power away to gain power.*	• *Frankie demanding to be invited in to the party* • *Waldo volunteering Frankie and not bringing him back*	• *Irony* • *Foreshadowing* • **Dichotomy** • *Parallelism* • *High modal verbs*
2	*Reputation can result in power, but actions will guarantee it.*	• *Frankie's reputation, rather than actions, gives him the power to demand an invitation* • *Waldo had to gain his power through actions*	• *Establishment of character* • *Generalisation* • *Juxtaposition* • *Metaphor*
3	*Leaders can change; the power remains in the collective.*	• *The classmates 'dismayed' but allow Frankie to join the party: could have chosen to rebel* • *The classmates not asking Waldo to return Frankie*	• *Collective terms for classmates* • *Alliteration* • *Narrative arc: orientation vs cliff-hanger*

!! A well-laid-out plan will help when you come to drafting your response. No one else needs to read or understand your plan, so use language, visuals or acronyms that make sense to you.

Connecting the criteria

While your school will determine the criteria and scaling for your SAC, you can confidently know the criteria will align to the key knowledge and skills for the area of study. Ensure you have explored the criteria before your SAC and understand how you can respond to each section, as well as how you can purposefully work towards maximising the way you respond to each throughout.

One way you can do this is to check how well your plan responds to the criteria. Before you even start drafting your essay you should confidently know that you are going to include all the elements you require, no matter how you bring them together.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Explain the way your plan has responded to each of the criteria.

Criteria	The way my plan responds
Discuss and analyse the ideas present in your set text	• *I have included three* **varying** *interpretations of the idea of 'power' that show different ways power is presented in the text.*
Discuss and analyse the structures and features of your set text	• *I have included numerous structural and language features to support each of my ideas.* • *I have considered the narrative evidence for each idea and matched an appropriate feature with the evidence to explore in an integrated way.*
Respond to a set topic	• *Each of my ideas directly responds to the idea of 'power'.* • *My ideas do more than highlight examples of power in the text; they present alternate interpretations around what power means in the text.* • *I have included narrative and construction-based evidence to support my interpretation as a way to answer the 'how' part of the topic.*
Write an analytical, coherent, accurate and formal response	• *I have planned for three paragraphs that include both narrative and construction-based evidence.* • *I have ensured the technical language and character names are all spelled correctly in my plan.*

!! You can check your plan against the criteria as a way to ensure you have all the elements you need to guarantee passing the SAC. Think of it like working backwards in a maths problem to prove you have the right answer. If you have all the pieces you need to include, then you just have to put them all on the page.

Activity 4.9: Brainstorm and plan

1 Brainstorm some different types of how-type topics about your text connecting ideas, characters and construction elements.

2 Choose a topic and write a comprehensive plan. You can reduce certain layers of your planning later if they are unnecessary when you are drafting, but for now, provide all the information you need to write an essay.

3 Check your plan against your criteria – have you set yourself up to succeed before you even start writing?

See the digital student resource for a planning sheet that can be downloaded.

↑ Level-up

The planning stage is such a critical stage and can be one of the most effective ways to study for this SAC. Try planning multiple topics – then choose your favourite to turn into a draft.

STEP 5

Prepare for the SAC

From here the only thing left to do is write your analytical response essay. It is important to practise doing this methodically first and ensure you know what it looks and sounds like before completing such sophisticated writing under time pressure. But once you are comfortable with writing an analytical response, you can work towards doing it under decreasing periods of time.

Structuring your response

You are likely to have come across different types of essays while studying English and other subjects such as History or Art. Different teachers will have slightly different perspectives on what makes an effective essay, including what is the best way to plan or approach an essay and what are must-do's or do nots to follow.

Year 11 is about finding your voice as a communicator and this concept applies just as much to an analytical text response essay as it does a creative narrative or an informative blog. While some elements are ideal and respond to the criteria and expectations of the task effectively, there is definitely not one single way for you to approach writing an analytical essay. Rather than go searching for some **rigid**, **formulaic** structure to follow, trust yourself to find an approach that makes sense to you and that flows from one idea to the next.

Generally, analytical essays will include the following elements.

Introduction

This will be the first paragraph and will quite literally introduce:

- **the text being analysed**: including its title, creator and elements of context such as the text type, time period or relevant historical context
- **the topic**: a clear explanation of how you are going to respond to the topic holistically. Think of this as the contention of your whole essay.
- **your ideas**: while you do not want to list your ideas without any connection, you do want to summarise the key points you will be making that will be exploring the topic and building towards your overall contention.

You may have been told to never include a quote in your introduction because you should not include any evidence in this first paragraph. But there are many ways you can use quotes, such as referring to a quote that is included in the topic, so it can be appropriate to use quotes if you manage them properly.

Body paragraphs

How many body paragraphs you write will depend on how much time you have and how much detail you want or need to go into. As a very general rule, most English essays have between two and four body paragraphs per essay.

These can vary in length and structure but will include:

- **the idea being presented**: this is generally the first sentence in a paragraph (your topic sentence) and establishes what the whole paragraph will be about. Your idea will respond directly to the topic
- **evidence to support your idea**: this can take many forms (direct quotes, examples, technical language, etc.) and will generally be **peppered** throughout the paragraph. Although you want to bring your evidence in fairly early in your paragraph, you also want to consider different forms throughout
- **analysis of how the evidence supports your idea, or what it all means**: it is all well and good to state your interpretation and give some evidence, but this is not an analytical essay if you do not analyse what it all means. Again, this needs to be 'peppered' throughout the paragraph. Every time you introduce a new piece of evidence, spend a moment to explain what that evidence means and how it impacts the text in relation to the topic
- **link back to the topic overall**: this is an opportunity for you to synthesise everything you have said in the paragraph and connect it clearly and directly back to the topic overall. Your topic sentence and linking sentences should be directly connected, but not repetitive.

NOTE: your teacher might offer you a suggested approach to your paragraph, such as TEEL (topic, evidence, explanation, link) or PEAL (point, evidence, analysis, link) or TEAEHL (topic, evidence, analysis, evidence, how, link) and none of these are wrong. However, rather than assuming that you have to include certain elements in certain positions in a certain number of sentences, focus on what you want to say about the topic, where you got that idea from in the text, how the creator made you think this way and why this answers the topic. What order that goes in, or how many sentences you need to explain it, will change every time.

A conclusion

This is the final paragraph of your essay, and while it contains a lot of the same information and ideas that your introduction had, it is in no way a repetition. While your introduction introduced your interpretation of the topic, your conclusion synthesises everything you have explored and connects this to the topic holistically. In this way your conclusion quite literally concludes your essay by:

- stating your overall contention and response to the topic directly
- synthesising all your ideas, evidence and analysis and what they mean collaboratively in response to the topic directly. You do not have to bring your evidence back in here, but rather consider what it all means and how your interpretation has come together overall.

NOTE: you might be want to extend your thinking further into the wider **implications** or bring your essay together with a holistic comment on society or literature more generally in the last sentence of your paragraph. However, this is not essential and is not something you can prepare before you know the topic. It is with sentences like this, however, that you can find your voice and stand out from more formulaic responses.

Thinking, writing and revising under time pressure

It is one thing to brainstorm, plan, draft, revise and edit an essay over the necessary amount of time but quite another to work through this writing process under time pressure (and often without any resources or support as well). Learning how to think, draft and revise under time pressure is a critical skill for finding success throughout VCE. It is certainly not the best way to write polished pieces of writing, and it does not recognise the importance of each stage of the writing process as we did during crafting texts, but each step is still vital to complete. We just need to build strategies on what this looks like under time conditions.

Strategies for brainstorming and planning under timed conditions:

- Do not restrict yourself to 'good ideas'.
- Brainstorm first, but categorise and synthesise your ideas into your plan as you go to save time.
- Get ideas down and allow yourself to change things once you see your plan overall.
- The brainstorming and planning only have to make sense to you. So, unless you need to write full sentences to formulate your thinking properly, do not waste time writing things you have to rewrite. Use dot points, **shorthand**, visuals and anything to reduce the time it takes and to maximise your thinking and planning opportunity.

Strategies for drafting under timed conditions:

- Continually come back to your plan to stay on track.
- If you have an idea for later in the essay, jot it on your plan and keep writing in the moment.
- Do not get stuck on a word or sentence that is not coming together. This is a first draft, so it is more important to get everything down than write the perfect sentence.

Strategies for revising and editing under timed conditions:

- Give yourself space between writing and reading as much as possible (sometimes this is not possible).
- Read for meaning (Does it make sense? Is it answering the criteria?) and then for mechanics (accurate spelling, syntax and punctuation).
- Know your strengths and weaknesses and focus on these to revise and support your writing.
- Focus on the criteria as a priority. Think about where and how you are responding to the criteria directly.

Responding to the expectations of the SAC

Before you start writing your draft, you need to ensure you are responding to the expectations of the task overall:

- What day and time is the SAC?
- How long will you have to sit the SAC?

!! The more you can come prepared and mentally ready for the SAC, the easier it will be. You do not want to have to ask clarifying questions on the day – it is too easy to lose your focus.

- Will you receive the topic/s prior to or on the day of the SAC?
- What materials – if any – are you allowed to take in to the SAC?
- Is there dedicated planning, writing and revising time or do you have to self-allocate over the time you have?

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 **Use your plan to write an analytical text response essay answering the topic, 'How does Warner explore the idea of power in "The Magician"?'**

Our world is driven by those in power and those who have power. The uncertainty and instability of power as an ability to act and command over others reflects the complexity of the concept and impacts each of the characters through Jacqueline Warner's flash fiction, 'The Magician'. She explores how easily a person's power can be taken away, but emphasises the way power is created through a person's actions in the long-term, rather than a power held through reputation alone. Warner ultimately explains that while leaders might enact power, it is the collective that has the power to follow or rebel against the leader. Yet, often this occurs through inaction rather than action.

Power is temporary because one person must take control from someone else in order to gain power in a situation. Initially, this power shift is seen when Frankie 'pushes himself' into the narrator's party. As soon as the protagonist 'let[s] Frankie in' they relinquish any power they had as the host of the party over 'the biggest, meanest kid in school' and while the 'choice' was ironically one-sided, the narrator allowed Frankie to gain the upper hand. This power was shortlived, however, as Warner highlights the fickleness of power through Waldo volunteering Frankie, and the way he 'smiles' foreshadowing his **intended** *acceptance of ultimate power over the bully. Warner presents the dichotomy of power, as demonstrated through the three main characters, as a way to explore the varying perspectives of power in society. Throughout, she uses the high modal verb 'is' to emphasise the actuality of the characters' actions and their approach to losing or gaining power. This parallelism allows Warner to highlight the reality that in order to gain power you must take control from someone else.*

Once gained, however, this power can initially be assumed as existing or not, and is only actualised through a person's actions. Warner purposefully orients the narrative with the establishment of Frankie's reputation. Through generalising 'everyone' as being 'frightened of him' and the reality that 'Frankie pushes himself into every game or social event', Warner highlights the power reputation can have upon the way people **perceive** *and respond to a person. The narrator knows the other kids will be 'dismayed' but relies on the fact that they 'kn[e]w the deal'. However, Frankie is overpowered by a magician who is initially a 'disappointment' before the realisation occurs that he 'is magic'. The juxtaposition of metaphors highlights the way reputation and the power it enables is ultimately built through a person's actions rather than what a person might say. This revelation is the cornerstone of the narrative's intention in exploring the impact and causes of power for any individual.*

Yet, Warner acknowledges that each individual has limited control over the power they can enact for a group of people. She exposes the truth surrounding the ultimate power a collective has over an individual through their acceptance or denial of a person's actions. The classmates are never individualised – Warner only refers to them as the collective 'other kids', 'us', 'expectant faces' and 'we'. Through the alliterative 'mass of madly waving arms' →

they physically express their approval of Waldo's actions but it is their silence in 'not ask[ing]' for Frankie's return that ensures Waldo's continued control and power in the situation. In contrast to the establishment of Frankie having all the power at the orientation of the narrative, Warner allows her narrative arc to **culminate** *in a comedic cliff-hanger emphasising Frankie's demise and the power of inaction among the classmates collectively. Through these structural decisions, Warner elicits her message of the fragility of an individual's power, which depends on whether the group they are enacting control over is willing to accept the decisions being made.*

Warner explores the changing and susceptible nature of power in her 2022 flash fiction, 'The Magician'. She exposes the reality of the way power is attributed to an individual, often through the removal of another person's power, and that while reputation can dictate the initial reaction to a person, it is through their actions that power is relinquished. Yet, 'The Magician' leaves the ultimate power in the hands of acceptance and inaction from the majority, rather than the individual enacting control over the group. This lasting interpretation speaks to the wider opportunities of the Australian community, who at times might feel powerless but ultimately have the decision to accept or refute a decision someone makes that impacts their life or those around them.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this response.

!! Do not be intimidated by 'fancy'-sounding words and phrases. While it is important to be formal and academic, it is much more important to be clear in what you are saying than overly sophisticated. My favourite mantra is 'clarity over complexity'.

Activity 4.10: Reflect and consider

1. Know the expectations of your SAC by identifying the time available, resources allowed and criteria to be responded to.
2. Copy and complete the following table in your notebook to compare the difference between the criteria for Units 1 and 2. What is the emphasis?

Criteria Unit 1	Criteria Unit 2

3. Considering your Unit 1 result and the work you have done in this area of study, what are your strengths and areas for improvement?
4. What study can you do specifically to work on your areas of improvement?
5. How confident are you in writing under time pressure? Time how long it takes you to write a paragraph and work out how many pages, or paragraphs, you should be able to write in the time you have allocated for the SAC.

↑ Level-up

Once you can confidently plan, draft and revise your writing, you can add time pressure to your study as well. Set a timer for 10 minutes to plan (or however long has been allowed for the SAC) and then stop. Make sure you have everything you need before setting the timer again (for however long has been allowed to write in the SAC) to write your draft. Stop and use the criteria to assess and revise.

STEP 6

Transfer your skills to Year 12

You will be completing this area of study (called reading and responding) twice in Year 12. You will study a different set text for each unit and the SAC will be an analytical essay on a set topic. Preparing for this area of focus will be a key opportunity for success.

While the text will change in Unit 3 and again in Unit 4, you will be building upon the analytical essay skills you have developed throughout Unit 2. Focusing on these skills (rather than the text) is the first critical step to success moving forward.

CONSIDER THE SKILLS YOU WANT TO HOLD ONTO AND DEVELOP THROUGHOUT:

- ☐ *Confidently reading and viewing texts for pleasure and analysis*
- ☐ *Identifying key features of:*
  - *the plot and what happens throughout*
  - *the characters and their establishment, motivations, development and relationships*
  - *the construction, including narrative, literary or other relevant features*
  - *the setting and context of the text itself, the time period in which it was created and the values of the creator more specifically*
  - *the ideas, concerns and tensions that can be explored throughout*
- ☐ *Reading and interpreting topics*
- ☐ *Brainstorming and planning, independently and under time pressure*
- ☐ *Structuring an analytical response and how it shifts depending on the focus of the topic*
- ☐ *Writing academically and formally*
- ☐ *Editing your work to respond to criteria*

!! Try not to feel overwhelmed by the number of elements to wrap your head around in this unit. Trust that your teacher will walk you through all the information you need to succeed next year. Just know that the more you understand all the pieces and how they work towards the final outcome, the easier it will be to absorb everything you need in Year 12.

Activity 4.11: Reflect and consider

1. What strategies, resources or advice did you find particularly useful that you can hold onto for next year?
2. What do you think is the most important element to remember from writing an analytical text response essay when starting your outcome in Year 12?
3. What advice would you give yourself before starting this unit in Year 12?

↑ Level-up

Do you know what a Year 12 essay looks like? There is a difference in expectations between Year 11 and Year 12, so you can be getting top scores in Year 11 and still have areas to focus and improve on as you move into Year 12. If you are getting near perfect marks in Year 11, make sure that you know what you need to continue focusing on as you move into Year 12. You might like to ask your teacher to mark your essay on the Year 12 criteria sheet so you can see more clearly what to focus on (you can still receive the Year 11 score you deserve, but this can be a great way for you to see what you need to do from here).

5 Exploring argument

Exploring argument shifts the analytical focus of Unit 2 from narrative to persuasive texts. You will read, listen and view different types of argumentative texts and consider the features being used to persuade their audiences. You will also consider ways you can be persuasive through communicating verbally. This chapter of the textbook will help you succeed in this area of study and set you up for success in the Unit 4 analysing argument outcome. Follow this suggested pathway to find your voice in the SAC tasks for this area of study.

Find your voice in ... exploring argument

Start here!

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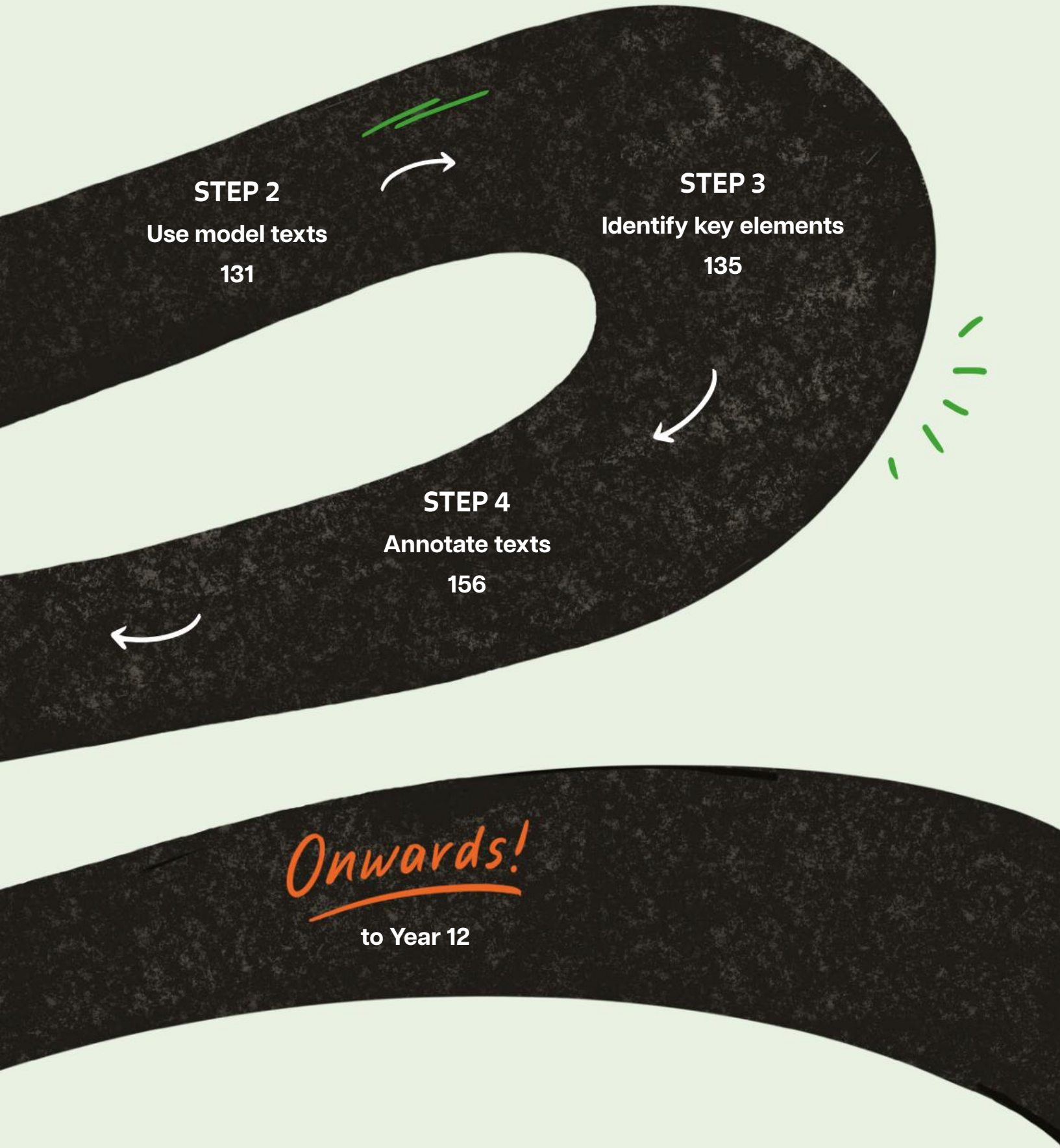
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STEP 1

Identify what you already understand about exploring argument

The exploring argument area of study unpacks the features and intentions of persuasive texts and **considers the way arguments are developed and delivered**. Through a **contemporary** **issue**, you will **read, view and listen to a range of texts** that are positioning a specific audience regarding a particular context. You will explore the **structure, language, visuals and persuasive strategies** used throughout and consider the **impact** they have upon the audience and the text's intention. You will then apply this **knowledge of argument and features** by creating a **point of view text**. Throughout this area of study, you will practise annotating, note-taking and analytical writing, as well as speaking and listening for persuasive purposes.

Table 5.1: The key knowledge and skills from the study design to help you find success

	Things I need to know	Things I need to do
Identify features and understand persuasive texts	• I have an understanding of contention and supporting arguments, including: – sequence and structure – use of supporting evidence – language – techniques and strategies • I understand the role of visuals in supporting argument • I understand the ways authors employ arguments to position **intended** audiences • I understand the elements of audio and audiovisual texts that contribute to a persuasive effect including **intonation**, volume, pace, pausing and stress • I understand the impact of context on the presentation of arguments	• I can summarise the key points in arguments using skills such as note-taking and annotation • I can identify, explore and apply: – the intent and logical development of contention and supporting arguments – the evidence used by authors to support arguments – the strategies used by authors to position an intended audience – the language used by authors to position an intended audience – the visuals used to position an audience – the ways an audience is positioned – the elements of spoken language that can contribute to persuasion including intonation, volume, pace, pausing and stress • I can use appropriate evidence to support analytical writing • I can extend individual capacity to use language confidently • I can acquire and apply **relevant** metalanguage

Speaking and listening skills	• I understand the **conventions** of discussion and debate such as active listening and questioning • I understand the features of a point of view text for oral presentation	• I can apply the conventions of discussion and debate • I can develop sound and sequential argument, including appropriate use of evidence and language • I can plan, draft and **refine** a point-of-view text for oral presentation
Writing analytically	• I understand the features of an analytical response to texts that present an argument • I understand the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English	• I can develop an analysis of persuasive texts • I can draft, review, edit and refine analytical writing using feedback gained from individual reflection, and peer and teacher feedback • I can apply the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English

Source: VCE English/EAL Performance Descriptors and extracts from the VCE English/EAL Study Design, www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Understanding the area of study

The exploring argument area of study has two key assessment outcomes: a written analysis of persuasive texts, and an application of your understanding of a contemporary issue through a spoken point-of-view text. You will explore a **range of persuasive print, digital, visual, audio and audiovisual texts** and **analyse the ways argument and language can be used to position an audience**. Ultimately, you will explore the ways features are used in texts, interpret the impact these have and then use these features to position an audience in your own writing.

There are a few assessment options schools can choose from during this area of study for both English and EAL students. They might set some tasks as supplementary outcomes – such as **a set of annotations or a note-form summary** – but these could also be set as the written component of your SAC, rather than the more detailed **analysis of the use of argument and persuasive language and techniques in texts**. We will look at all these options throughout our exploration of this chapter, but it is important that you ensure you know the expectations your school has selected for you to succeed in this area of study.

!! Each outcome is built across the entire learning process, not just the SAC result at the end of the study. Ensure you take each learning activity seriously and appreciate the opportunity to experiment, consolidate and extend your knowledge and skills throughout the unit overall, as everything is helping you develop life-long communication skills.

Activity 5.1: Analyse and apply

1 Highlight the significant words in Table 5.1 on pages 128–9.
   a Summarise the three sections down to what the reading, speaking and writing areas are asking you to know and show.
   b Where have you shown your abilities in these sections before?

2 Complete a table in your notebook to show what aspects of this area of study you are feeling most confident about and what you are feeling most confused or concerned about.

3 Thinking about your analysis and writing of persuasive texts throughout your school life, what knowledge and skills are you bringing with you and what will you need to hone more specifically through this area of study and in Year 12?

4 What actions can you embed into your classroom and study habits to work on these areas independently?

Level-up

You will not study this area again until Unit 4 of Year 12, so set up some strong and clear notes that you can hold onto. See how much you can draw from your analytical writing development so far and transfer that to this different text type and purpose.

STEP 2

Use model texts

In this chapter, we are going to use three model texts to explain the process of analysing persuasive texts. This is similar to how we used the model text in reading and exploring texts and crafting texts. We will use these texts to step through the same process you will go through when analysing different persuasive texts in this area of study. We are going to identify all the key features of each text, annotate each text, construct a note-form summary and draft an argument analysis response.

Have a look at and read the following three model texts – one written, one visual and one spoken – to **contextualise** the learning and approaches we will draw from throughout the rest of this chapter.

Model text #1: The written text

The teacher shortage plan must do more to recruit and retain First Nations teachers

18 November 2022

The federal government has recently released a draft plan to fix the teacher shortage. The plan sets out ways to increase respect for the profession and ease teachers' workloads. A key aspect of the plan also includes recruiting more First Nations teachers.

This emphasis is welcome and so far the plan includes a number of specific measures designed to recruit more First Nations people into teaching degrees and classrooms. However, there is limited detail about how these actions or measures will lead to increasing teacher numbers.

First Nations teachers are under-represented in Australian schools. 6.2% of Australian school students identify as First Nations, while just 2% of the teaching workforce identify as First Nations.

We welcome the investment in First Nations opportunities in schools, but there are many barriers to growing a First Nations teacher workforce.

According to the 2022 Closing the Gap report, 63% of Indigenous Australians aged 20 to 24 had finished year 12. This compares with 88.5% of non-Indigenous Australians in that age group.

Research has identified Indigenous students doing teaching degrees at university face racism, a lack of financial support, inflexible structures, limited access to technology, and isolation.

When First Nations teachers enter the profession, they often face overwhelming demands. It is not uncommon for First Nations teachers to be seen by non-Indigenous colleagues as the expert in everything Indigenous in a school.

So, for more First Nations teachers to be working in schools, success at school needs to be a focus. Real support for First Nations students studying teacher education at university

needs to be provided, and when First Nations teachers graduate, there needs to be similar support to ensure it is worth staying in the profession.

Broadly speaking there are two pathways for First Nations people into teaching – through teaching assistant jobs or through university.

In many remote and rural schools, there is a strong workforce of First Nations teacher assistants. Programs to help Indigenous teaching assistants into teaching degrees have suffered from funding cuts, although the Northern Territory government has recently announced it will increase professional development opportunities for remote Aboriginal teacher education. This includes school-based traineeships, grants and mentoring.

This plan is a start, but it lacks detail and a sense of national cohesion. And there is little detail about how First Nations school leavers – who mainly come from urban areas – can be encouraged to enter teaching degrees at university.

This is a crucial moment for Australia's education system. The teacher shortage could lead to current and future generations missing out on the quality education they need.

We welcome the investment in First Nations teachers. But we also fear this won't have the necessary impact unless there is system-wide reform that supports the recruitment, retention and engagement of First Nations teachers – the oldest teachers in the world.

Aleryk Fricker (Lecturer of Indigenous Education) and Glenn Auld (Senior Lecturer in Education) Deakin University

Source: Published in *The Conversation* online.

Figure 5.1: Model text #1: a written text

Model text #2: The visual text

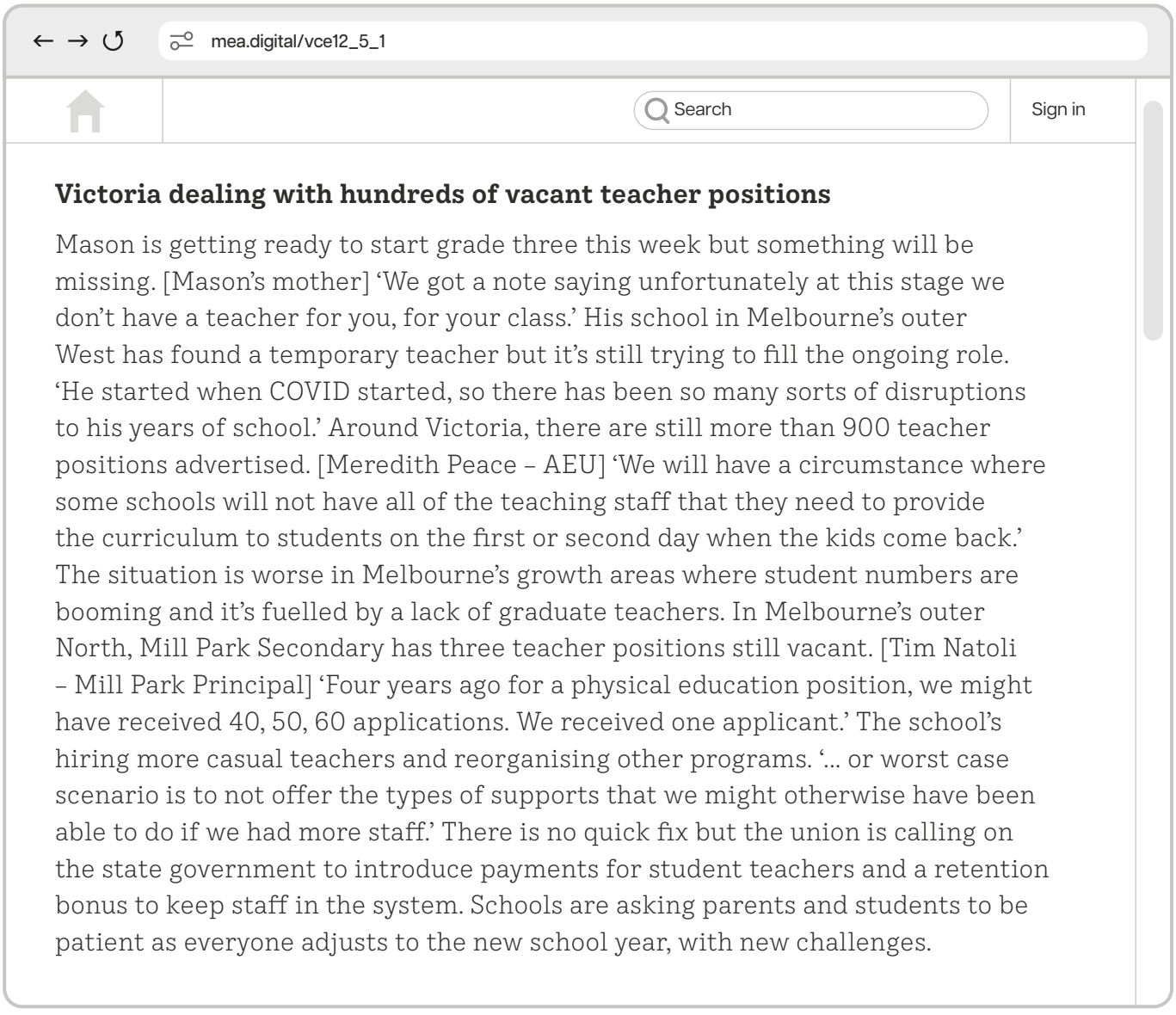
Developed by Paul Dorin and published online at *CityNews*.

Figure 5.2: Model text #2: a visual text

Model text #3: The spoken text

View the following report by Margaret Paul, screened on ABC News Melbourne, by following this link: mea.digital/vce12_5_1

A transcript of the report follows.



Victoria dealing with hundreds of vacant teacher positions

Mason is getting ready to start grade three this week but something will be missing. [Mason's mother] 'We got a note saying unfortunately at this stage we don't have a teacher for you, for your class.' His school in Melbourne's outer West has found a temporary teacher but it's still trying to fill the ongoing role. 'He started when COVID started, so there has been so many sorts of disruptions to his years of school.' Around Victoria, there are still more than 900 teacher positions advertised. [Meredith Peace – AEU] 'We will have a circumstance where some schools will not have all of the teaching staff that they need to provide the curriculum to students on the first or second day when the kids come back.' The situation is worse in Melbourne's growth areas where student numbers are booming and it's fuelled by a lack of graduate teachers. In Melbourne's outer North, Mill Park Secondary has three teacher positions still vacant. [Tim Natoli – Mill Park Principal] 'Four years ago for a physical education position, we might have received 40, 50, 60 applications. We received one applicant.' The school's hiring more casual teachers and reorganising other programs. '... or worst case scenario is to not offer the types of supports that we might otherwise have been able to do if we had more staff.' There is no quick fix but the union is calling on the state government to introduce payments for student teachers and a retention bonus to keep staff in the system. Schools are asking parents and students to be patient as everyone adjusts to the new school year, with new challenges.

Figure 5.3: Model text #3: a spoken text

!! You are unlikely to have set texts for this area of study. Rather, you will explore an overall issue and analyse numerous written, visual and audio/audiovisual texts throughout your study. While it therefore does not matter so much if you come across a text that you do not fully understand during your class study, it also means that you are likely to get an unseen text to respond to during your SAC and you need to be prepared to read, view or listen to a variety of texts, rather than explore one text in detail.

Activity 5.2: Reflect and consider

1. How often do you read, listen to or engage with news, media and opinion-based texts outside of school? This might be reading the newspaper (online or printed), watching the news, reading blogs, viewing vlogs or listening to the radio or podcasts. There are lots of ways to engage in persuasive texts and the more texts you can expose yourself to throughout the year, the easier this outcome will become.
2. What are your initial reactions to the model texts? Do they make sense or are they confusing in certain ways? Are these features that you often find confusing in other texts as well?
3. What reading, viewing and listening strategies do you use when exploring texts for analysis? (Go back and review these strategies on page 5.) Being aware of the strategies you find most helpful or having a variety of strategies to support your **interpretations** will be a **critical** step for your success when you come across different texts. Discuss the types of strategies you use with the class, or a small group. Write down the strategies you find most useful or ones you would like to trial during the outcome.

Level-up

Challenge yourself to read, view and listen to opinion-based media via different platforms. You could listen to a talk-back show on AM radio, or to a podcast; read the blog of a person exploring a topic you are studying; or subscribe to newspaper articles to be sent to you via email. The more you engage with persuasive texts, the more comfortable you will become.

STEP 3

Identify key elements

Before you can begin to interpret and analyse a text, you need to identify all the pieces that impact the text and understand these individual pieces. Once you have interpreted the pieces, then you can **synthesise** these back together to analyse the text overall.

We are going to step through 10 key elements that you need to confidently identify in any persuasive text and draw from through your analysis overall. Explore Figure 5.4 and discuss your current understanding of each of the elements with your class. Discuss the elements you have struggled to identify or analyse in the past as well as the elements you feel are most important when exploring persuasive texts, or even particular types of persuasive texts.

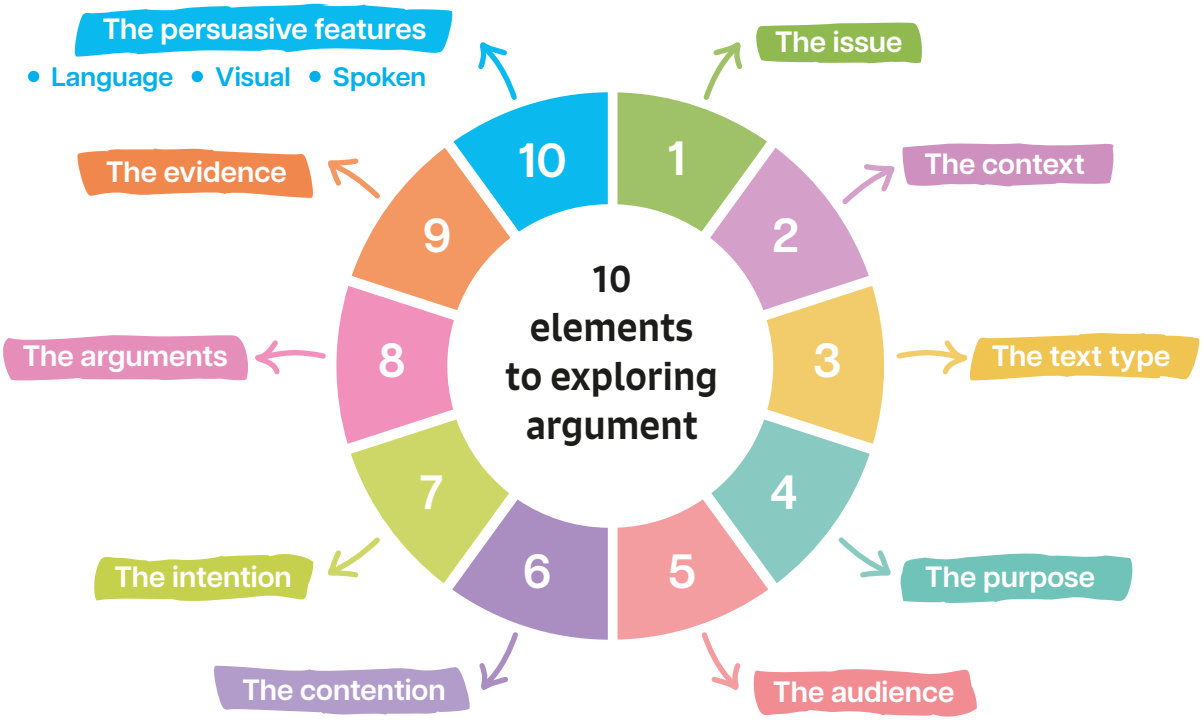


Figure 5.4: The 10 elements to exploring argument

1. The issue

Every persuasive text can be stripped back to the overall issue that it is presenting an opinion about. Identifying and understanding the wider issue more broadly, as well as the more specific ideas being presented by individual texts and speakers, allows you to contextualise the text in the issue more **holistically**. It is like thinking of the issue as the theme in a narrative analysis and the ideas as the different interpretations or ideas that people can present around them.

The issue that will be explored in this chapter will be the problem of teacher shortages in Australia. Teacher shortages have reached critical levels in the United States, the UK, Australia, Europe and Africa. The issue of supply and demand of

teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff locations, was heightened over the COVID-19 pandemic due to a lack of effective policy solutions. The Australian Federal Government projects there will be a shortage of 4000 high-school teachers by 2025, with up to 70 per cent of teachers considering leaving the profession. The opinions surrounding the issue centre around why the shortages exist, the impact this will have upon the profession and the different perspectives on what should be the focus for solving the problem moving forward.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Research the issue and identify the key perspectives and stakeholders in the conversation surrounding teacher shortages, particularly in Australia.

Teacher education is a cause and potential solution

- Teacher placements should be paid
- Teacher degrees do not adequately prepare teachers for the classroom and the realities of the profession
- 50% of students fail to finish a teaching degree
- 20% who do graduate leave the profession within three years
- Not enough people are enrolling in teaching courses. There has been a drop of 12% in the last 10 years

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- Government and policymakers
- Teachers, graduates and prospective teachers
- Students and parents of students
- Teachers' union representatives
- Principals and school leaders

Teacher wellbeing is a cause and potential solution

- Only 38% of teachers say they feel valued by the community (in comparison to 70% in Singapore)
- Unsustainable workloads is a key reason for the growing exodus of teachers, as well as pay and working conditions
- A survey of 4000 teachers found 60% reported being moderately to severely stressed (compared to 11% of the general population), 46% felt anxiety (compared to 9% of the population) and over 60% of teacher absences in the previous month were due to mental health or emotional problems
- Almost 47% were considering leaving the profession in the next 12 months and over 75% felt burned out from work either 'often' or 'all the time'
- Teaching has become more time-consuming and more physically and emotionally demanding while the pay and social rewards are often perceived as unsatisfactory
- The expectations of teachers' performance have increased over time as schools increase their reliance on standardised tests
- The AEU found over one-third of schools are being forced to increase class sizes to manage shortages, 40% are using principals and assistant principals to help fill gaps in the classroom

→

Teachers in a Monash University survey recommended:

- Reducing administrative burdens
- Providing more staff to assist with students' social/behavioural challenges
- Reducing class sizes to allow time to meet the individual needs of students
- Better pay
- Greater trust in teachers through the removal of excessive accountability requirements
- The stronger and more committed our teachers are, the better educated our society will be
- If disillusioned teachers can be convinced to stay, or if some who have left could be convinced to return, the crisis might be diminished
- Changes will only occur by improving teachers' working conditions and ensuring the public discussions and perceptions about teachers are positive and respectful
- Solutions to improve teacher preparation and long-term workforce trends are easier and cheaper, but they do not have the short-term impact that is needed and more teachers are leaving in the meantime
- If governments and administrators are able to hone in on what teachers are crying out, we might be able to stem the attrition and have the long-term benefit of the profession being seen as an attractive career

Recommended and potential solutions

The Australian Government has developed a National Teacher Workforce Action Plan that outlines five priority areas:

- Improving teacher supply
- Strengthening teacher education
- Keeping the teachers we have
- Elevating the profession
- Better understanding future teacher workforce needs

Figure 5.5: Student research and categorisation of information regarding the overall issue

!! The better you understand the issue, the easier it will be to understand and interpret the texts you will be studying. Our literacy levels, particularly comprehension skills, **drastically** increase with texts exploring topics we know well. So take this first step seriously and you will be rewarded for it through the area of study. I promise!

2. The context

The context covers a few different elements that all impact the text overall. The context is how the specific text came to be created the way it is. It focuses on the creator and their **bias**, the **mode** in which the text is presented, when the text was created, and what was happening at the time it was created. Similar to narrative analysis, the context will change the way the text is written as it will highlight the social and cultural expectations of the time when, and place where, it was created.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Complete the following table identifying the different elements of context impacting the three model texts.

Text	Mode	Context	Potential bias	Source
1	Written	*The government proposed to draw more First Nations teachers into the profession as a way to combat the teacher shortage.*	*One author identifies as a First Nations person and the other has developed research links with First Nations peoples. Both work as lecturers in Education Studies.*	*Published in an online collection of academic papers*
2	Visual (with written elements)	*The teacher shortage issue was in the media across Australia and continued to be topical. The illustrator used the children's* **rhyme** *'no more pencils, no more books, no more teachers' dirty looks' as his hook.*	*The illustrator sends his cartoons to 22 different newspapers across Australia so he needed something that was relevant in every state/territory.*	*Published in a state newspaper and online*
3	Audiovisual (spoken, visual and written elements)	*Screened days before all schools started back for a new year, the issue was being experienced across all areas of Victoria. It contextualised the issue from different perspectives: the families, the schools and the union.*	*The ABC is seen as a trustworthy, diverse and moral source of news. It wants to be actively seen to be supporting families and schools to help society at large.*	*Screened on a national TV news channel*

!! **Identifying the context, or background information, of a text allows you to consider the factors impacting the text beyond the text itself.**

3. The text type

Recognising the specific form a text takes allows you to not only use some metalanguage but also be specific with expected and unexpected structures and language, and visual or spoken features being used across different texts. We know that all the texts will be argumentative, opinion-based texts but they can be presented in a variety of different forms.

Table 5.2: Different forms of persuasive texts

Text type	Expected structures and features
Written texts	
Articles, opinion pieces	• Can be written as 1st or 3rd person • Reasonably formal, depending on the publication source • Have a clear contention and overall point of view • Often include a call to action or wider purpose other than to simply express an opinion • Often use facts and evidence, but also anecdotes, case studies or personal content to humanise the arguments • Can vary in length • May include visuals • Often include a byline about the author's context
Letters, online comments	• Include the author's name and often the suburb • Use the personal voice: 'I', 'my' • Less formal register (depending on author and context) • Succinct and concise • Purpose is generally responding to another text or situation • Often targets another author or specific person's perspective
Blogs	• Often less formal than opinion articles • Invites comments from readers or followers • Often 1st person, but can be written in 3rd person • Often use **inclusive language**, technical or specific (jargon) language, anecdotes and visuals • Often connect with previous posts, following a theme, perspective or overall point of view throughout
Visual texts	
Cartoons	• Often use humour, especially **sarcasm**, irony and satire • Often use exaggeration of size or emphasis • Often depict individuals as caricatures rather than realistic portrayals • May use captions, **speech balloons** or **thought bubbles** to provide information through text • Facial features, **facial expressions**, **gestures** and body language are all used to portray emotion • Use objects with symbolic meaning
Photographs	• May contain a caption to provide context or information about the content • Most often used to supplement and contextualise written information • Can be digitally enhanced or altered • Use visual features such as camera framing/angles, lighting and visual composition to evoke emotion and present perspective • Visual salient features are often created through colour, size or focus

→

Graphs, tables, charts	• Provide a visual display and representation of information as a way to process large quantities of information • Use statistics and data to further an author's contention and/or their arguments • Often embedded within a written text, or used within a poster or infographic more specifically • Often use colour and layout that is visually pleasing and makes comprehension as easy as possible. • Headings and labelling used to **categorise** information
Spoken (audio/audiovisual texts)	
Vlogs, podcasts, interviews, radio programs	• Either focus on individual stories, experiences and opinions or include experts and famous guests to discuss current topics • Often presented over a series of episodes, or have a specific focus for the content • Can be downloaded or streamed from a device, but the listener must seek out the content or subscribe to it • Can include sound effects, music and advertisements • A host leads the discussion, asking questions and offering opinions
Speeches, TedTalks	• Often use personal stories and anecdotes to connect with the listener • Are typically delivered by a single speaker to a live audience • Reinforce ideas through **repetition**, data and humour • Use a variety of paralinguistic features depending on the audience, content and context of the talk • Can vary drastically in content and length depending on the audience and context of the talk • May be supported with visuals and/or props
News reports, social media videos	• Use cinematic (visual) features alongside spoken features to deliver their message and share ideas • Often contain attention-grabbing introductions to hook the viewer into watching • Discuss current trending topics and issues • Present information as fact, supported with different types of evidence and may include a call to action from the audience • May contain background music and sound effects • May use text and voiceover as part of their overall message

! It is worthwhile to explore and compare the features of different text types. Noticing and being comfortable in understanding the expected structures and features means you can concentrate on what is being said in any particular text.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify the text types of the model texts and the key features being used.

The written text *= an article:*

- *An attention-grabbing and context-clarifying title*
- *1st person narration, though* **formalised** *and spoken collectively from two authors simultaneously*
- *Short paragraphs, often only one or two sentences in length*
- *Use of statistics, research findings,* **explicit** *examples and a call to action*

The visual text *= a cartoon:*

- *Exaggerated facial expressions and caricatures of people*
- *Minimal* **background** *with a focus on the text and people in the frame*
- *Props and costumes to highlight setting and context*
- *Use of humour to highlight a serious issue*
- *Simple and minimal text in speech balloons to clarify the issue and the perspective of the illustrator*

The spoken text *= a news report:*

- *Interviews with different stakeholders in the issue*
- *Use of a voiceover and captions to introduce guests*
- *Cinematic features used to emphasise the information being presented*
- *Initial personal story used to grab the audience's attention*
- *Call to action presented at the end*

4. The purpose

Generally, the purpose of a persuasive text is fairly consistent: **it is trying to persuade an audience to think, feel or do something about the issue**. It is more important for you to get specific with the text's intention (the specific thing it wants to the audience to think, feel or do – see '7 The intention' on page 144) but spending a moment to consider why the creator chose to invest their time and energy into creating the text in the first place sets you up for the next important step: identifying the audience, contention and intention.

The purpose of a text is an action: 'to do' something. This is more general than the intention of the text and is the wider reason the creator built the text. Some common purposes for persuasive texts include:

- to inform about a situation so people can make a decision
- to highlight or expose a situation – that is, the inequality or reason people should care
- to convince, persuade or sway the audience to think, feel or physically do something about a situation.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify the purpose of the mentor texts.

The written text = *to explore the reality and effectiveness of the government's plan to recruit more First Nation's teachers as a way to 'fix the teacher shortage'*

The visual text = *to highlight the impact the teacher shortages will have upon students and to consider an alternate perspective on the issue facing the country*

The spoken text = *to inform people of the impact the teacher shortage is having across the state and to emphasise the need for parents to understand the pressures schools are under while they wait for the government to do something, before the issue gets worse*

!! Do not get too caught up in the specifics at this point. Rather, focus holistically on what your text is doing: informing, exposing, persuading? All your texts will be opinion based with a level of persuasion to them. However, they will approach this in different ways depending on the audience and context.

5. The audience

The target audience is one of the most important elements for you to identify, understand and apply in your analysis. This is because persuasive texts are **communicative** in nature: they are created to connect to their audience and affect what the audience thinks, feels and does. Creators change their language features, tone and structure to maximise how they interact with their audience. If we do not take the target audience into consideration when analysing a text, we cannot fully explain the choices that were made.

Identifying the target audience also allows you to consider the relationship between the creator and the audience they are speaking to. There is a big difference between a general audience reading a national paper and a community member reading their local newspaper or school newsletter, for example. It is also important to consider whether the audience has a direct connection with the issue that impacts them or whether the issue is more general and does not impact them directly. Consider the difference between learning about the plight of an extinct animal that you have never seen or heard of, and learning about a new law regarding how much homework a school must set at Year 11.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify the specific target audience for the mentor texts and the connection they have with the issue directly.

The written text = *a wider readership, but people interested in research, academic discussion and opinions based on fact and research, specifically key stakeholders in the issue*

The visual text = *a wide, general Australian audience, particularly parents, school-aged students and teachers or school administrators*

The spoken text = *a wide, general Australian audience who may be directly impacted by having children at school, working in a school, or working within the government education sector more indirectly*

!! The more specific you can be when identifying the audience, the more insightful your analysis can be. Try referring to the audience as 'students', 'policy makers' or 'residents' rather than 'readers' or 'the audience' and notice how you can instantly be more direct and analytical in nature.

Activity 5.3: Understand and identify

1 What is the issue you will be exploring through this area of study?
   - a Who are the key stakeholders involved?
   - b What are their different opinions and perspectives?

2 Read/view/listen to a written, a visual and a spoken text all based on the issue from your class. Copy and complete the following table in your notebook and identify these four elements in these texts:
   - a The mode: written, visual or spoken
   - b The context: where and when and why the text was created
   - c Any potential bias in the creator
   - d Where the text was read, viewed or listened to.

3 Identify the text type of each text. What key features do you notice?

4 Identify the purpose of each text. Overall what is it trying to do?

5 Identify the specific target audience and consider the relationship that the audience has with the creator or the issue more directly.

Text	Mode	Context	Potential bias	Source

↑ Level-up

You want to be able to identify the issue, context, text type, purpose and audience in any text. The more texts you explore, the quicker and more confidently you can approach any text. Try identifying the features in other text types and compare how similar and different texts can be just by changing one element.

6. The contention

Finding a text's contention is about recognising the creator's overall point of view. This is **essentially** synthesising all of the arguments and evidence being used and bringing them together into one clear statement that expresses what the creator thinks about the issue specifically. Sometimes the contention is very clearly stated in the text and you can use some direct quotes or evidence to prove the contention. Remember, the contention is about bringing the whole text together, so do not limit yourself to just searching for one sentence that 'says it all' because that is often too simplistic.

!! Initially, look for what the text thinks about the issue generally and then get more specific. Sometimes you need to wait until you identify and explore the key arguments being presented before you can effectively synthesise your contention.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify the contention of the model texts and write each as a statement.

The written text = *That the current federal government plan is a positive concept, but will not have any real impact unless other system-wide reforms take place*

The visual text = *That the problems students face at school have changed drastically over time and that having a mean teacher is preferable to not having a teacher at all*

The spoken text = *That the teacher shortage is being felt across Victoria and everyone needs to be aware of how they can support schools and students during this time*

!! Being able to state the contention clearly and succinctly is a key element to finding success in this analysis. Consider it as summarising a narrative plot into one sentence. It might take some time to confidently express contentions (or you might find one text significantly easier to identify than others) but being able to succinctly summarise what a text is saying is a valuable life skill worth investing energy into perfecting.

7. The intention

A text's intention builds upon its purpose but is more specific. What exactly does the creator want the audience to think, feel or do after reading or viewing the text? Often the intention is tied to the contention: the creator wants the audience to agree with their point of view, but often the creator goes further and wants the audience to do something with this shared perspective. This is referred to as a 'call to action' – in other words, directly encouraging the audience to do something. A call to action will often come later in a text; first, the creator wants to prove their contention accurately and sway the audience to agree with their point of view and feel passionately about the issue. Once they have been swayed, the creator can use that emotion and convince them to do something about the issue directly.

Generally, the call to action will be written in the imperative mood. This is where someone gives a command, telling others to do something – for example, 'Join the fight today!' This is drastically different from the subjunctive mood, which is when someone makes a suggestion: 'Perhaps you would like join us?'

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify the intention (in contrast or extension to the purpose) of the model texts.

The written text = *to expose the potential flaws in the government's plan and ensure those in decision-making power can recognise what needs to be achieved before the proposal can find success*

The visual text = *to draw attention to the issue and consider the impact on the students, who will be the ones to suffer from continuing teacher shortages*

The spoken text = *to draw attention to how far-reaching the issue is, put pressure on the government to make the necessary decisions to combat the issue, and convince parents and students to be tolerant of the difficulties schools are facing*

The intention is important when you consider the effects of the arguments and features being used throughout a text. Essentially, everything the creator does is done to achieve their intention. So being able to identify what is being worked towards means you can connect all the pieces within the text.

8. The arguments

The arguments are the specific reasons the creator of the text is giving to prove their contention and is one way for them to achieve their intention. Essentially, the arguments all build towards the text's main contention as the contention is the synthesis of all the arguments combined. **Acknowledging** and exploring how the arguments build towards the contention is a crucial step in the effective analysis of persuasive texts.

Solely visual texts, such as cartoons or photographs, capture the issue in a moment rather than building through a sequence of arguments. They might have layers of arguments or can be interpreted in different ways, so they need to be analysed for argument in different ways from spoken and written texts.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 List the sequence or layer of arguments you can identify in the model texts.

Text	The sequence or layers of arguments being used
The written text	1 *The federal plan is welcomed but is limited in detail and specificity.* 2 *For the plan to work it should focus on finding success at school and providing support for university students, graduates and teachers across Australia.* 3 *Pathways into teaching are limited and funding is being cut.*
The visual text	1 *Students' concerns at school are not about having a mean teacher, but having a teacher at all.* 2 *Technology can simplify and extend education, but it is irrelevant if there are no teachers to teach the content.* 3 *It is the students who will be most impacted by the teacher shortages and they are the ones decision makers should be focusing on.*
The spoken text	1 *Many classrooms around Victoria will be starting school without a teacher.* 2 *The problem is worse in certain areas, due to a lack of graduate teachers to fill the roles available.* 3 *Schools are doing what they can to combat the issue but it means other areas of school funding and energy will need to be cut.* 4 *The state government needs to do more to keep teachers in the classroom and parents need to be understanding about the pressures schools are currently under.*

! Sometimes there is a fine line between arguments and evidence, particularly when the evidence is an extended case study or situation. Do not stress too much. What is the perspective of the creator? What are they saying about the issue and how are they saying it? If you interpret an argument from some evidence, then good on you for your great inferencing work!

Note-form summaries

EAL students may be asked to complete **a note-form summary of the key argument(s) and supporting arguments in different persuasive text(s)**. While it is not a formal assessment expectation for English students, the process of visually connecting the different arguments and their development towards an overall contention can be a hugely effective strategy for any student to understand the **nuances** and connections across what a text is saying. There is no single, correct way of completing a note-form summary for persuasive texts, but many of the features we used during reading and exploring texts on pages 39–40 are completely **transferable** to this task.

What is particularly useful in this activity is noting the relationship between key arguments and supporting arguments. Often this **subtlety** is easily overlooked, but by completing such a task, you will begin to see how the piece is structured and suddenly it becomes very clear how you might structure an analysis of the key arguments, rather than getting caught up trying to summarise everything the text is saying.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Write a note-form summary of the key and supporting arguments in model text #1.

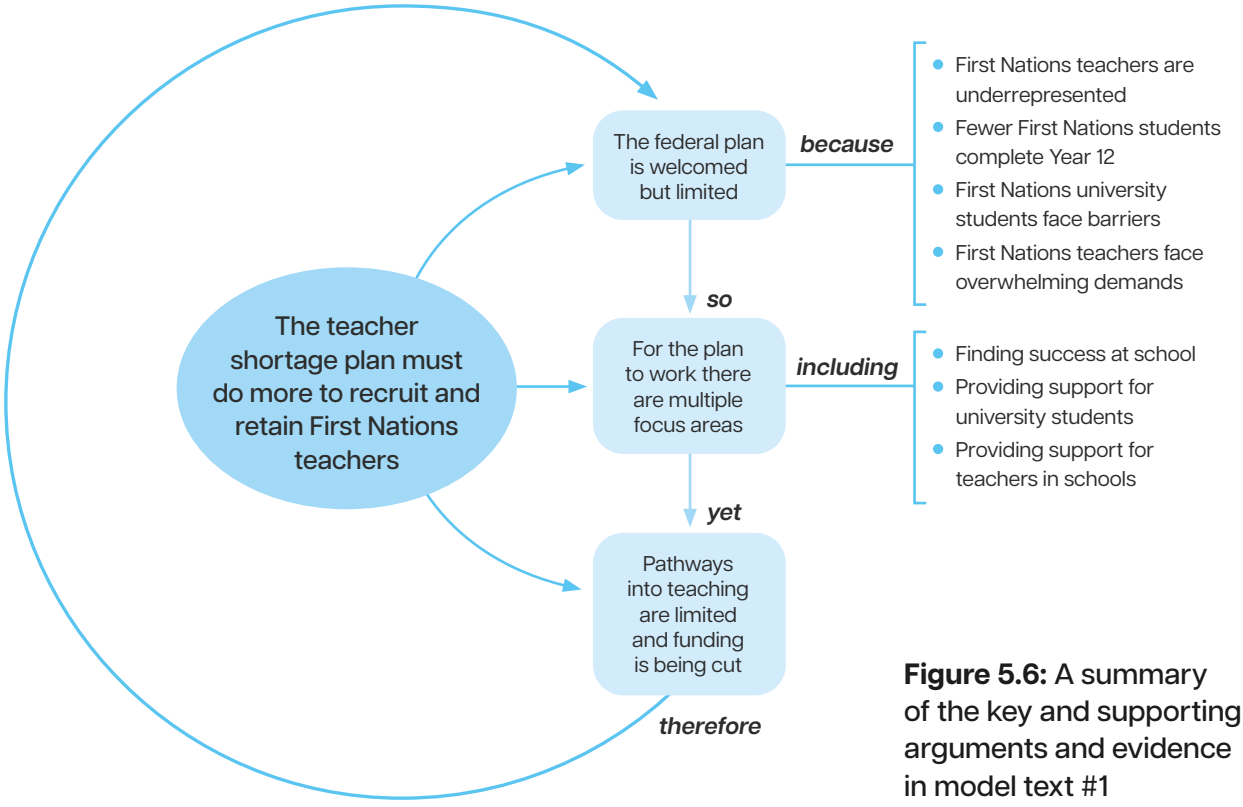


Figure 5.6: A summary of the key and supporting arguments and evidence in model text #1

!! A note-form summary can be a great way to plan your analysis, particularly if you then add another level of features being used. Notice how different texts will result in drastically different summaries.

9. The evidence

The evidence is used to support and prove the arguments as accurate. Good evidence is what makes a text persuasive as it balances the arguments and allows the audience to better understand the **implications** and reality of the argument in particular contexts. There are many different types of evidence including:

- expert opinions and testimonials
- statistical data and facts
- anecdotes and case studies
- analogies and **metaphors**
- historical, social or cultural events and expectations
- counter-arguments and rebuttals
- quotations.

Again, solely visual texts use evidence in slightly different ways. They will often present evidence by:

- capturing a scenario or a particularly familiar situation or setting
- using a recognisable icon or symbol
- **employing** contrast, exaggeration and emphasis to elements or placing things in strange contexts.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Choose two arguments you identified above and, in the table, list the key evidence being used to support these arguments in the model texts.

Text	The arguments	The evidence
The written text	• *The federal plan is welcomed but is limited in detail and specificity*	• *Multiple supporting arguments* • *'Closing the Gap' report (statistics)* • *'Research' on teaching degrees (case study)* • *Comparing First Nations and non-Indigenous colleagues (analogy)*
	• *Pathways into teaching are limited and funding is being cut*	• *Current ways First Nations people enter into teaching (case study)* • *Northern Territory opportunity (social event)*
The visual text	• *Students' concerns at school are not about having a mean teacher, but having a teacher at all.*	• *Use of common children's rhyme (parody)* • *Facial expressions (contrast)* • **Emanata** *(emphasis)*
	• *It is the students who will be most impacted by the teacher shortages and they are the ones decision makers should be focusing on.*	• *Only students in the frame (visual composition)* • *Capturing a scene of a classroom without a teacher (familiar setting)* • *Use of props (recognisable icons)*
The spoken text	• *Many classrooms around Victoria will be starting school without a teacher.*	• *Real-life examples from different stakeholders (anecdotes)* • *Highlighting the scale of the issue (statistics)* • *Comparing different schools and situations (analogy)*
	• *Schools are doing what they can but there will still be negative consequences.*	• *Mill Park example (case study)* • *Context of what has been done (historical/social evidence)*

!! Initially you might just identify different evidence and then go back to see if there is a technical word to describe that type of evidence. Notice where something is doing something first … then go searching for the language to describe it academically.

Activity 5.4: Identify and analyse

1. Identify the contention and intention for the written, visual and spoken texts you began exploring in the previous activity block.
2. Identify the sequence or layers of argument that have been used to build towards each contention.
3. Use your arguments to create a note-form summary and highlight the supporting arguments used.
4. For each argument, identify the evidence being used in the argument and then label the evidence with the type of persuasive feature it is employing.

Level-up

Sometimes it is good to skim a text and identify the key arguments and evidence being used. It is important that you begin by garnering the critical information. Then there are occasions when it is worth investing the time to really see how deep you can take your analysis of a text. Go from the big-picture arguments to the sub arguments and connect each with the evidence being used. Can you identify everything? You do not have to identify everything when you complete the SAC, but it can be a huge confidence booster to know that if you have the time and space you can find everything if required.

10. Persuasive features

Persuasive features are made up of language, visual and spoken features.

Language features

Language features can be found in written, spoken and even visual texts. Anything that uses language can draw from any number of language features in different ways for different purposes, depending on the audience, context and intention overall. Persuasive language features all work to evoke emotion, and to emphasise and present ideas in engaging or memorable ways.

Most of the language features you identified and explored in the reading and exploring texts areas of study are just as relevant in persuasive texts; they are just used for a different purpose and effect.

Table 5.3: Persuasive language features

Language feature	Explanation
alliteration	Having two or more words in close proximity starting with the same letter or sound
appeal	An attempt to produce a particular emotion or feeling in the reader: fear, injustice, disappointment, exclusion, anger etc.
attack	Purposefully belittling, embarrassing, insulting or finding flaws in a person or group
cliché	A familiar, overused expression to describe something
emotive, descriptive or powerfully connotative language	Using words that heighten emotion, clearly describe something in detail or suggest positive/negative opinions
figurative language	Describing things in a way that is not **literal**. These can be further classified into different tropes (figurative language features) such as metaphor, **simile**, **personification** or **zoomorphism**, but can also describe schemes (**syntactic** devices) such as **tricolon**, **ellipsis**, **anaphora** or **parallelism**
generalisation	Referring to a group of people or things as 'all/every' or 'most/many' without factual proof. Often linked with hyperbole
hyperbole (exaggeration)	Using exaggeration to make a point, heighten emotions, emphasise or be sarcastic
inclusive/exclusive language	Use of pronouns that either include the audience (we, us, our) or exclude the audience or certain groups (they, them, you)
puns	Creating a play on words by interchanging similar-sounding words with different meanings, often intending to be humorous
repetition	Repeating phrases, words, ideas, symbols (etc.) for emphasis and to increase the likelihood of the audience remembering critical information
rhetorical question (hypophora)	Asking a question without requiring, or expecting, an answer. If the question is then answered by the author it is called hypophora
sarcasm and humour	Using exaggeration, **irony**, puns or an untruth in a humorous way to mock someone or something
sensory imagery	Describing things through sensory experiences: sight, smell, sound, taste and touch/feeling

See the digital student resource for examples of these features.

!! There are many more language features than shown in Table 5.3, but these are the most common and recognisable ones. Ensure you understand and can identify these first and prioritise remembering them so you can then build upon them next year with other, more nuanced devices.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify some of the key written features used in the model texts and some of the effects of these on the text more holistically.

Text type	Key written features	Effects on the text more holistically
Written text	• *Formal register* • *Alliteration* • *Generalisation* • **Enumeration** • *Appeal to fear* • *Tricolon and extended tricolon* • *Repetition* • *Emotive language and the use of positive and negative connotation* • *Limited inclusive language*	*The formal register establishes an academic voice and perspective allowing the audience to trust the writers and their point of view. A number of features were used for emphasis and connection across the text, including alliteration, enumeration, tricolon and repetition. The writers' personal opinions are reflected through the emotive language, being strongly positive or negative in connotation.*
Visual text	• *Repetition* • *Parody* • *Dialogue* • *Ellipsis*	*The parody of the children's rhyme is the central focus for the cartoon and is presented through dialogue. The ellipses not only allow the audience to fill in the consequences of the situation, but emphasises the humour in the serious situation.*
Spoken text	• *Case studies* • *Alliteration* • *Statistics* • *Generalisation* • *Emotive language* • *Analogies* • *Appeals* • *Cliché* • *Repetition*	*The different case studies drive the story throughout the news report. They humanise the issue and connect with different audience members, who in turn can connect to the different situations. Emotional appeals heighten the intensity and severity of the issue. These are built using emotive language, repetition and clichés. By drawing analogies they are further able to extend and compare the issue for as many audience members as possible.*

• Visual features

Visual features can be seen in cartoons, photos, graphics and audiovisual texts as well as tables or formatting more generally. Slightly different features are used for a photo or audiovisual text than for an illustrated cartoon or infographic, but many features, such as **visual salience**, colour and lighting, are just as relevant no matter the visual text.

!! Recognise that many of the construction elements and features we explored in Chapter 2 (and again in Chapter 4) are still highly relevant features when analysing any text. We are analysing persuasive texts rather than narrative texts to understand the changing impact a specific feature can have, depending on how it is used.

Table 5.4: Persuasive visual features

Visual feature	Explanation
body language/gestures	Communicating feelings or thoughts through the placement and movement of your body and/or hands, rather than words
camera shots, angles and framing	Similar to film, the angles and framing of the shot are used for different purposes – e.g. low/high angles, close-up/ extreme long shots
captions/signs	Used to provide specific information about the setting, context or situation being presented. Always significant to the intended interpretation of the visual
colour/lighting/shadows	Different colours and the intensity of lighting (to create shadows) all work to create feelings, symbolise themes, indicate the time/season or reflect the state of mind of a character. High-key lighting = bright light and strong shadows
dialogue (speech balloons, thought bubbles)	Balloon or bubble shape drawn around the words indicates that a character is speaking or thinking. The shape can also work as a form of punctuation or to express emotion
facial expressions	The look on a person's face that shows their thoughts and feelings
focus (depth of field)	Whether the shot is completely in focus. If some of the shot is in focus but some is blurry (often the background) this is called a 'narrow depth of field'
motion lines, emanata and sound-effect lettering	Lines and symbols representing movement (motion lines), thoughts or feelings (sweat or tears – called emanata), or onomatopoeia or expletives (sound-effect lettering)
props/costume	The physical elements or clothes being worn that indicate time period, location/setting, class or situation. They can be used literally (in the reality of the scene) and/or symbolically
symbols and icons	Something that represents or stands for a particular idea or concept, usually either explicitly or in more subtle ways
visual composition	The position of objects in the frame taking into consideration the perspective of the **foreground**, **midground** and **background** of the picture
visual salience	The elements that draw the eye's focus first and the 'reading pathway' in which the eye tracks across an image. This can be created through a vector (a literal or invisible line that leads the eye from one element to another)

See the digital student resource for examples of these features.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify some of the key persuasive visual features in model texts #2 and #3 and the effect these have upon the texts holistically.

Text type	Key persuasive visual features	Effect upon the texts holistically
Visual text	• *Visual salience* • *Reading pathway* • *Caricatures and minimal background* • *Props and costumes* • *Speech balloons and signage* • *Visual composition – eye-level framing* • *Facial expressions* • *Emanata and motion lines*	*The speech balloons draw the greatest visual salience and begin the reading pathway from left to right and down into the caricatures and setting. The facial expressions highlight the emotions being expressed, allowing the viewers to empathise and connect with the perspective being presented.*
Spoken text	• *Body language, facial expressions and gestures* • *Visual salience* • *Visual composition* • *Different shots and perspectives: close-ups, cutaways, establishing shots, face-to-camera* • **Panning**, **tracking**, *cross-focus shots* • *Captions fly in the bottom left corner over interviewees* • *Narrow depth of field during interviews or face-to-camera shots*	*The interviewees draw the strongest visual salience, interspersed with different close-ups and cutaways to establish the setting of the issue. Although there is limited action in the report, movement is created through panning, tracking and cross-focus shots, mainly establishing the wider setting of the communities affected and classic classroom props indicating the everyday nature of the issue. Emphasis is drawn further from using a narrow depth of field during some interviews, so the audience is forced to concentrate on what the people are saying.*

• Spoken features

Many spoken features work collaboratively with visual features. Referred to as ‘paralinguistic features’, spoken and visual features are used beyond the literal words being spoken. When analysing audiovisual texts, you will need to consider language, visual and spoken features; however, when analysing audio-only texts, you will only need to connect the spoken features with the language features being employed.

Table 5.5: Persuasive spoken features

Spoken feature	Explanation
diction	The way someone pronounces words and the clarity of their speech
emphasis or stress	The inflection or volume given to particular words or phrases
intonation, prosody, expression	The rise and fall of the voice when speaking (intonation), changing the mood and emphasis or connotation of what is being said (expression) or the rhythm and patterns of stress and intonation (prosody)
pace	The speed at which someone speaks, often changing and used for emphasis
pause, silence	When a person stops talking for a brief moment, or there is no sound for a time
sound effects and music	Any sound that is fabricated and edited into the audio is technically a sound effect. In this way, **non-diegetic** music is considered a type of sound effect
tone, pitch	The quality of someone's voice to express a particular emotion. The pitch can be high or low, creating a 'musicality' to the voice
volume	How loudly a person speaks, often changing and used for emphasis

See the digital student resource for examples of these features.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Identify some of the key spoken features used in model text #3.

- *Consistent pace, rhythm and volume*
- *Voiceover and interview comments overlaid with cutaways*
- **Diegetic** *sound underneath voiceover*
- *Stress and slight slowing of pace to emphasise*
- *Lowering of tone and pitch*
- *Sympathetic tone*

2 What impact do these features have upon the text overall?

The diegetic sounds under the voiceover allows the audience to engage in the stories being explored while still listening to the context being explained. Generally, the tone is explanatory and higher in register; however, the overall sympathetic tone allows the audience to grasp the desired emotion they should feel about the situation facing their community. Slight variations in pace and stress emphasise key ideas and concepts but it is the thread of the voiceover from the reporter that is paramount to the success of the story achieving its intention and connecting with the audience effectively.

!! It is generally easier to pick up a person's tone and feeling when watching something with audio and visuals. Make sure you also experiment and explore with audio-only texts to see if you can pick up the subtleties of language beyond the words being used.

Activity 5.5: Explore and identify

1 Explore different texts that use written features to help present a point of view on your issue.
   - a Identify as many of the language features from page 150 as you can see being used.
   - b Notice and compare which features you see most commonly and regularly across different texts. Why do you think these features are most common?
   - c What features do you think have the most impact on the texts you have read?

2 Explore different texts that use visual features to help present a point of view on your issue.
   - a Identify as many of the visual features from page 152 as you can see being used.
   - b Notice and compare which features you see most commonly and regularly across different texts. Why do you think these features are the most common?
   - c What features do you think have the most impact on the texts you have viewed?
   - d Do you notice a difference between the types of visual texts that are used within a written text, and those that are intended to be viewed in isolation?

3 Explore different texts (audio and audiovisual) that use spoken features to present a point of view on your issue.
   - a Identify as many of the spoken features from page 154 as you can hear and see being used.
   - b Notice and compare which features you see most commonly and regularly across different texts. Why do you think these features are most common?
   - c What features do you think have the most impact on the texts you have viewed?
   - d Do you notice a difference in the types of features being used if the text is audio-only or if it is multimodal? Why might this be?

4 Which features do you find easiest to identify and which do you find hardest? Why do you think that might be and how might you go about gaining confidence in identifying more complex features in different texts?

Level-up

Go beyond the written, visual and spoken features highlighted in this chapter and identify other types of features being used in the texts you are studying. Having a strong and confident technical language allows you to be specific, explicit and formal in your analysis, increasing the effectiveness and sophistication of your writing.

STEP 4 Annotate texts

The skills of annotation cannot be underestimated in VCE. Good annotation skills will help you process any text you encounter (not only ones in this area of study and subject). Annotating a text allows you to identify key elements and process and synthesise the information. It also helps you to remember key elements as you translate your thinking into a written response.

No matter what type of text you are annotating, we can break annotating skills down into three elements. See Figure 5.7.

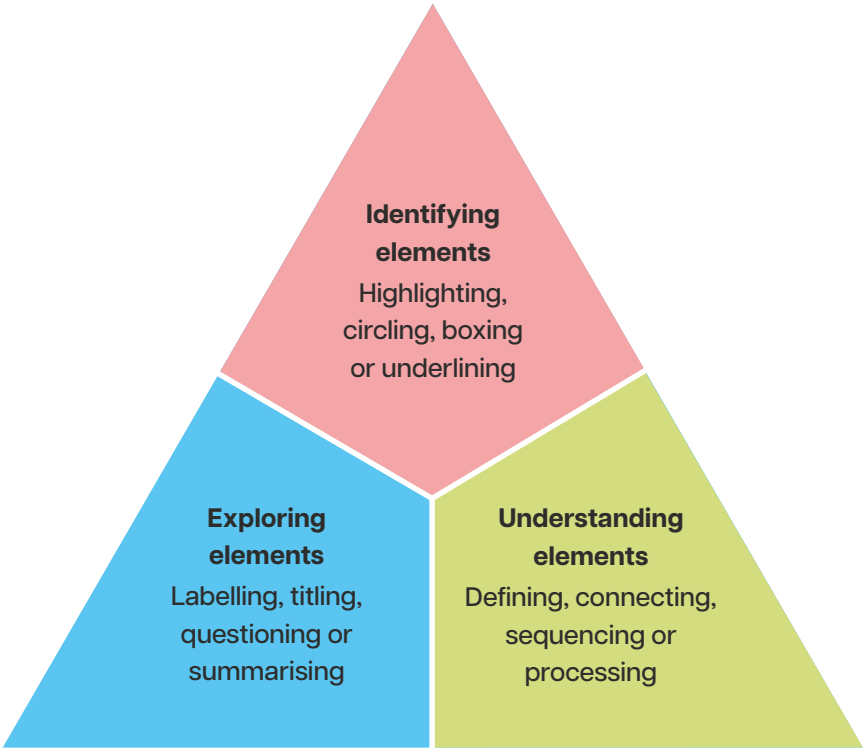


Figure 5.7: Key annotation skills and processes

Generally, we work through multiple readings of a text and annotate in this order: identify things; explore what they mean; and process our understanding of what, how or why different pieces are effective. If you are annotating under some time pressure, however, you are likely to minimise the number of times you read the text and layer your annotation specifically to the task or question you are responding to. Often, you do not have to identify and explore everything about a text, so the types of annotations and elements you are searching for and processing specifically will vary depending on the task in front of you.

Annotating written texts

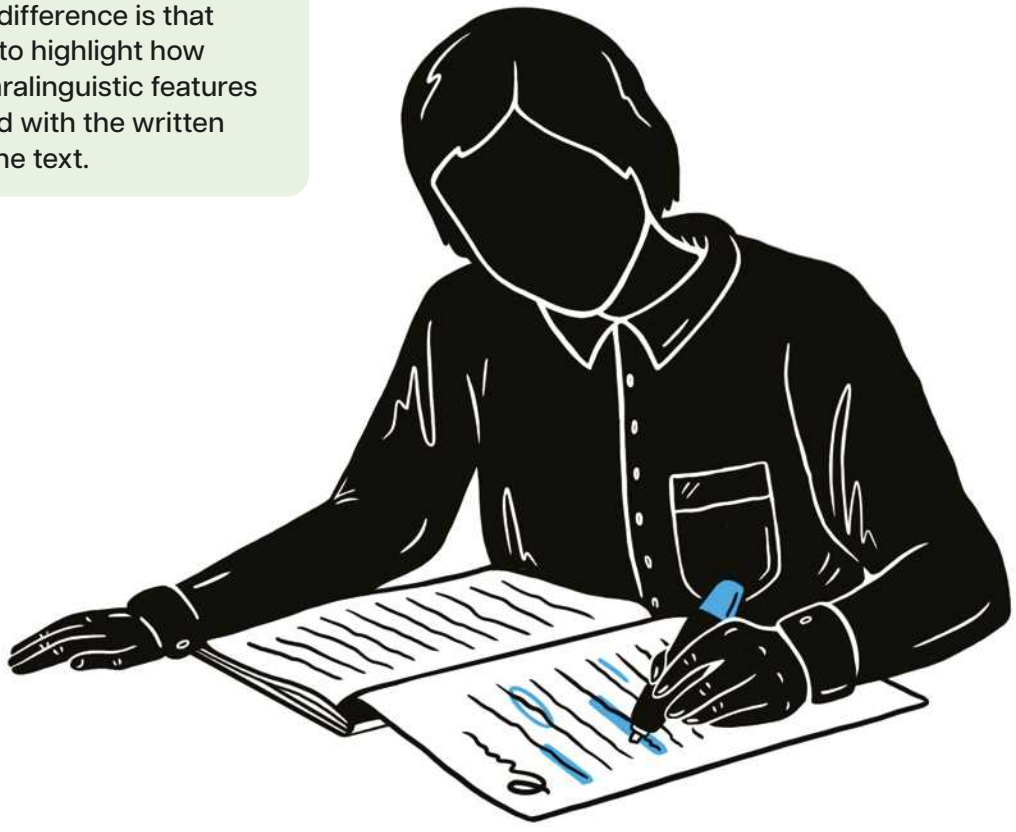
The way you annotate a written text depends partially on the time you have to unpack it. We are going to spend all the time we need to unpack our texts here, but if this were a SAC or exam situation we would potentially only focus on specific elements.

Using different annotation strategies will not only help you visually represent the information you are identifying; it will also help you process the information. That way you can begin making interpretations around what it is saying, how it is saying it and why it is saying it in that way.

Things to notice, identify and explore in written texts:

- Key arguments, their corresponding sub-arguments and the evidence being presented
- The development of argument towards the overall contention
- The connection between the arguments or evidence and the intention
- The connection between the arguments/evidence and any visual elements (if embedded in the text)
- Where and how the readers are included or referenced explicitly or indirectly
- Language features (see pages 29, 30 and 149)
- The relationship between features being used repetitively, or in **conjunction** with each other.

!! The same skills used to annotate written texts can be used when annotating a transcript of a spoken text. The key difference is that you will have to highlight how and where paralinguistic features are connected with the written elements of the text.



WORKED EXAMPLE

Annotate model text #1, identifying examples of each of the key elements of persuasive texts.

Issue

Contention

High modality

Audience: readers of *The Conversation*

The teacher shortage plan must do more to recruit and retain First Nations teachers

18 November 2022 Published in *The Conversation* online.

Alliteration

Context

The federal government has recently released a draft plan to fix the teacher shortage. The plan sets out ways to increase respect for the profession and ease teachers' workloads. A key aspect of the plan also includes recruiting more First Nations teachers.

#1 The plan is welcomed but limited

This emphasis is welcome and so far the plan includes a number of specific measures designed to recruit more First Nations people into teaching degrees and classrooms. However, there is limited detail about how these actions or measures will lead to increasing teacher numbers.

Sub argument #1

Statistics

First Nations teachers are under-represented in Australian schools. 6.2% of Australian school students identify as First Nations, while just 2% of the teaching workforce identify as First Nations.

Inclusive language

We welcome the investment in First Nations opportunities in schools, but there are many barriers to growing a First Nations teacher workforce.

Statistics

Sub argument #2

Evidence

Analogy

According to the 2022 Closing the Gap report, 63% of Indigenous Australians aged 20 to 24 had finished year 12. This compares with 88.5% of non-Indigenous Australians in that age group.

Sub argument #3

Case study

Enumeration

Research has identified Indigenous students doing teaching degrees at university face racism, a lack of financial support, inflexible structures, limited access to technology, and isolation.

Sub argument #4

When First Nations teachers enter the profession, they often face overwhelming demands. It is not uncommon for First Nations teachers to be seen by non-Indigenous colleagues as the expert in everything Indigenous in a school.

Alliteration

#2 These things should be the focus

So, for more First Nations teachers to be working in schools, success at school needs to be a focus. Real support for First Nations students studying teacher education at university needs to be provided, and when First Nations teachers graduate, there needs to be similar support to ensure it is worth staying in the profession.

Repetition and high modality

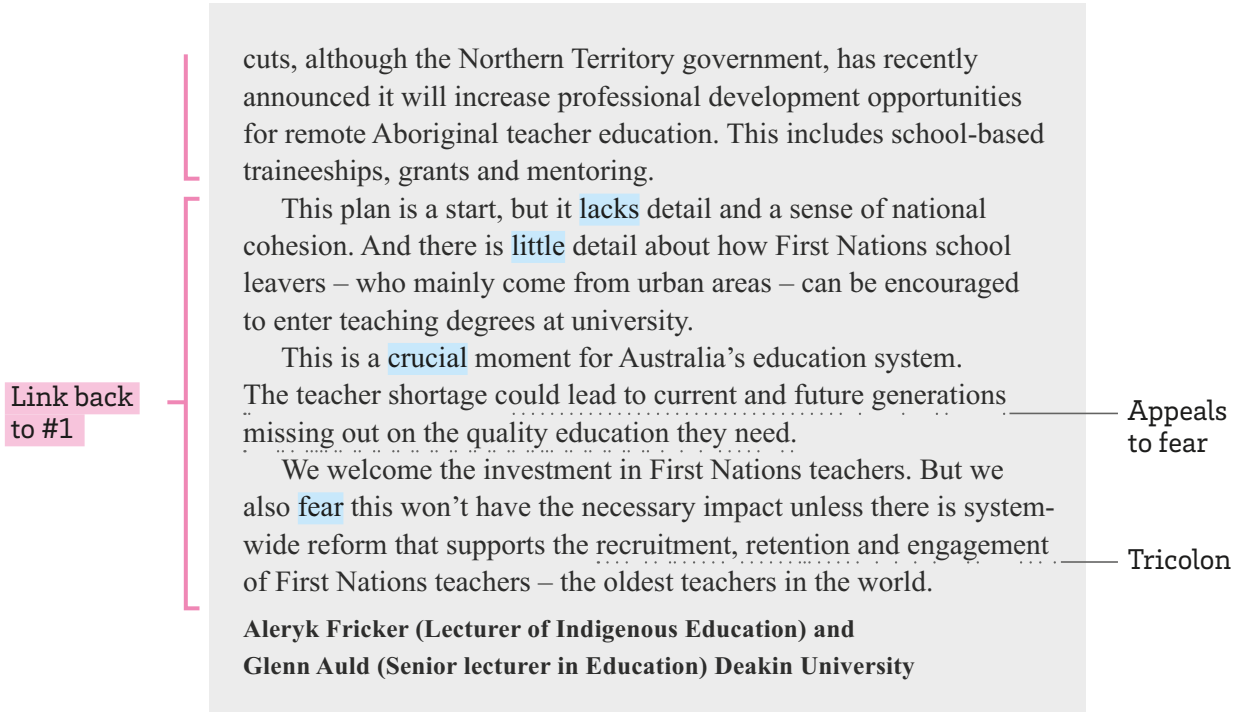
Generalisation

Broadly speaking there are two pathways for First Nations people into teaching – through teaching assistant jobs or through university.

Case study

#3 Pathways are limited

In many remote and rural schools, there is a strong workforce of First Nations teacher assistants. Programs to help Indigenous teaching assistants into teaching degrees have suffered from funding



Text type: article

Purpose: to highlight the reality of the government's plan

Intention: to expose the flaws in the plan

Arguments

Emotive language

Figure 5.8: Annotated example of model text #1

Annotating visual texts

The annotating skills of highlighting, labelling and connecting remain essentially the same for visual texts, but you are going to use the space around the visual differently. You will notice different types of features and you will process the evidence differently from a written or spoken text.

Things to notice, identify and explore in visual texts:

- Layers of argument and where they are seen
- Interpretations of elements (colours, symbols, key elements that provide further information)
- The most visually salient element and the reading pathway from there
- The connection with the written text (if embedded in another text)
- Visual features (see page 152)
- Connections between features (from characters to setting).

EAL students may be asked to complete an **annotated visual text that identifies the key persuasive techniques** as part of their assessment, but it is important that all students experiment with annotating and analysing visuals texts as part of the area of study more broadly.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Annotate model text #2, identifying examples of each of the elements of persuasive texts.

Audience: key stakeholders in the issue generally
Purpose: to highlight the issue broadly
Intention: to show the impact upon students directly
Arguments:
– technology can simplify and extend education, but it is irrelevant without teachers to teach
– the problems students face have changed drastically over time
– having a mean teacher is preferable to having no teacher at all
Issue: teacher shortages
Context: for a wide audience to explore a topical issue
Text type: cartoon
Contention: the teacher shortage is impacting our children

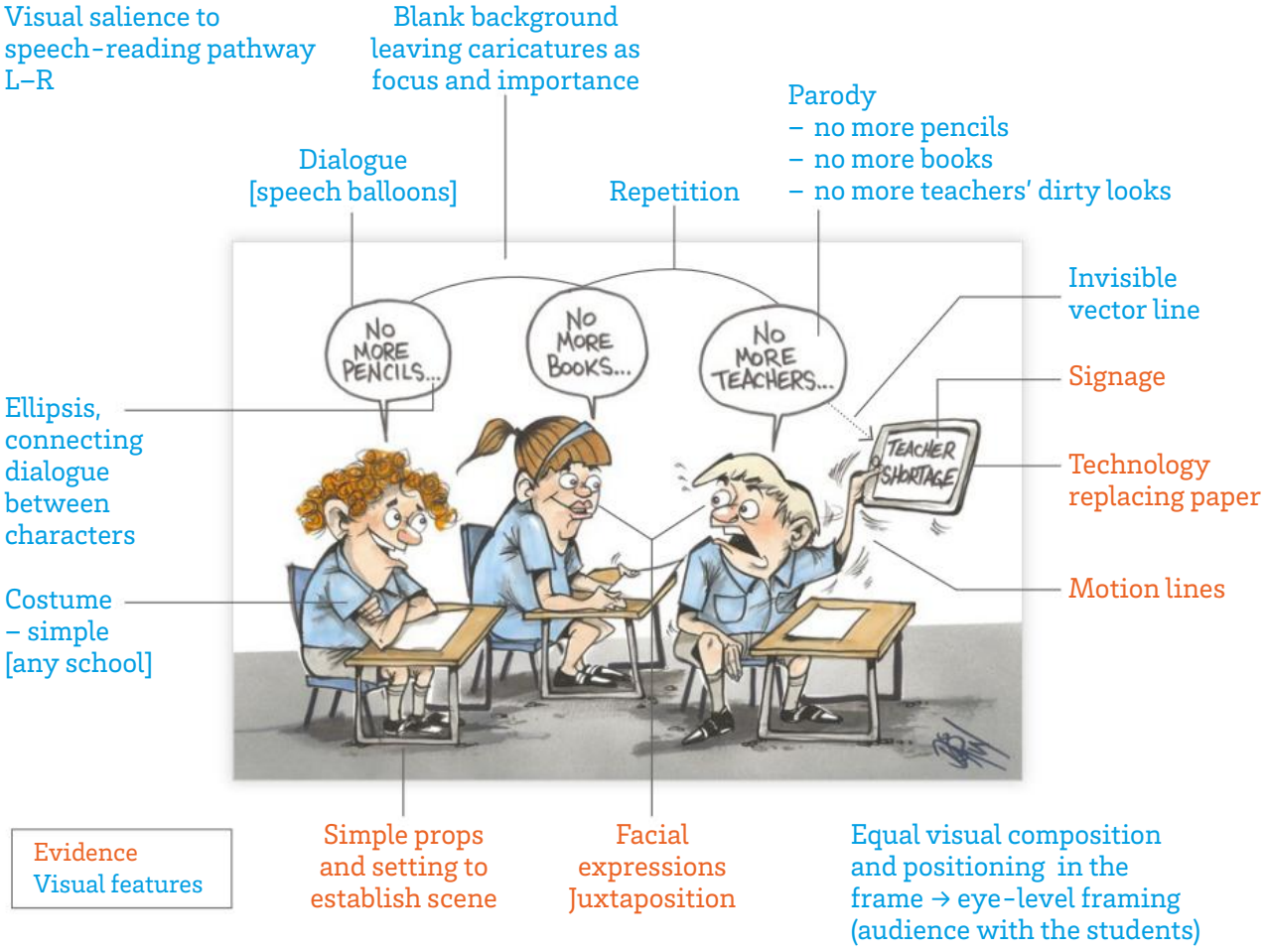


Figure 5.9: Annotated example of model text #2

You will end up writing all over a visual text, so you might like to go back and number or highlight key elements once you have finished annotating the arguments and features.

Annotating spoken texts

Annotating the transcript of a spoken text is essentially the same process as annotating any written text. However, it is the note-taking and note-making that you do while listening to the text that is something you need to consider beyond annotating this as a written text.

If you have the transcript in front of you as you are listening or viewing:

- use all the written annotation skills and focus points on the transcript
- annotate spoken and paralinguistic features on the transcript, connecting the written words with how they were spoken
- audiovisual texts will have another layer of visual features to consider and annotate as well. Connect these to the words being spoken or the silences used for effect
- draw connections between the written, spoken and visual elements of the text. How do they work together to build the overall contention and achieve the intended purpose of the text?

!! **There are triple the features to consider in audiovisual texts (written, spoken and visual) so give yourself time and space to identify each type of feature before you start considering how they are working together. You might like to colour code the three types so you can see if you are only focusing on one mode rather than considering or balancing all three in your analysis.**

If you do not have the transcript in front of you as you are listening or viewing, you still need to identify the written, visual and spoken features of the text. It is important that you work towards 'making' notes rather than 'taking' them. In this way you want to ensure that your notes are **c**lear, **a**ccurate, **c**oncise, **a**daptable and **o**rdered. See Figure 5.10 for details.

!! **You cannot write everything down that you hear and create your own transcript, so you need to process what is said as you are listening. Use symbols, arrows and connections, rather than trying to copy quotes and whole sentences. Remember, you are looking for key arguments and the most significant features that impact the text.**

Clear
You can read your handwriting and it can be understood

Accurate
You are not making things up, and you record statistics, names and facts accurately

Concise
You use key words, dot points, numbering, abbreviations, acronyms, arrows, **shorthand**, colour, drawings, diagrams and symbols rather than full sentences

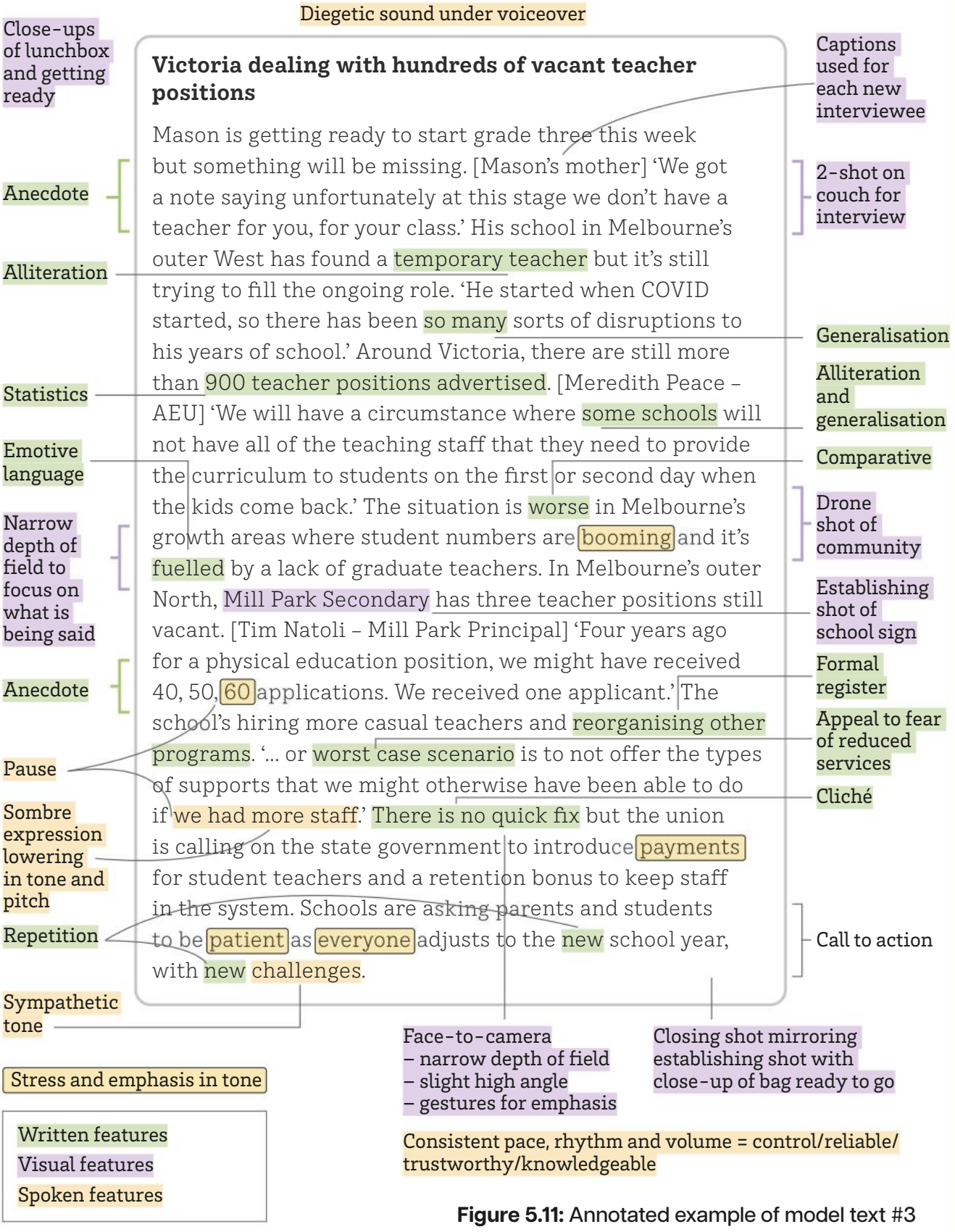
Adaptable
Your notes are being developed as they are being written and can be added to on **subsequent** views

Ordered
You sequence and categorise information, connect ideas and use subheadings, which can be done during or after viewing the text

Figure 5.10: Remember the acronym CACAO when you are making notes about a listening or viewing text.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Annotate model text #3 by identifying the written, spoken and visual elements being used throughout.



Victoria dealing with hundreds of vacant teacher positions

Mason is getting ready to start grade three this week but something will be missing. [Mason's mother] 'We got a note saying unfortunately at this stage we don't have a teacher for you, for your class.' His school in Melbourne's outer West has found a temporary teacher but it's still trying to fill the ongoing role. 'He started when COVID started, so there has been so many sorts of disruptions to his years of school.' Around Victoria, there are still more than 900 teacher positions advertised. [Meredith Peace – AEU] 'We will have a circumstance where some schools will not have all of the teaching staff that they need to provide the curriculum to students on the first or second day when the kids come back.' The situation is worse in Melbourne's growth areas where student numbers are booming and it's fuelled by a lack of graduate teachers. In Melbourne's outer North, Mill Park Secondary has three teacher positions still vacant. [Tim Natoli – Mill Park Principal] 'Four years ago for a physical education position, we might have received 40, 50, 60 applications. We received one applicant.' The school's hiring more casual teachers and reorganising other programs. '... or worst case scenario is to not offer the types of supports that we might otherwise have been able to do if we had more staff.' There is no quick fix but the union is calling on the state government to introduce payments for student teachers and a retention bonus to keep staff in the system. Schools are asking parents and students to be patient as everyone adjusts to the new school year, with new challenges.

Figure 5.11: Annotated example of model text #3

Activity 5.6: Reflect and experiment

1 Use the features you identified in Step 3 to experiment with different ways you can annotate written, visual and spoken texts.

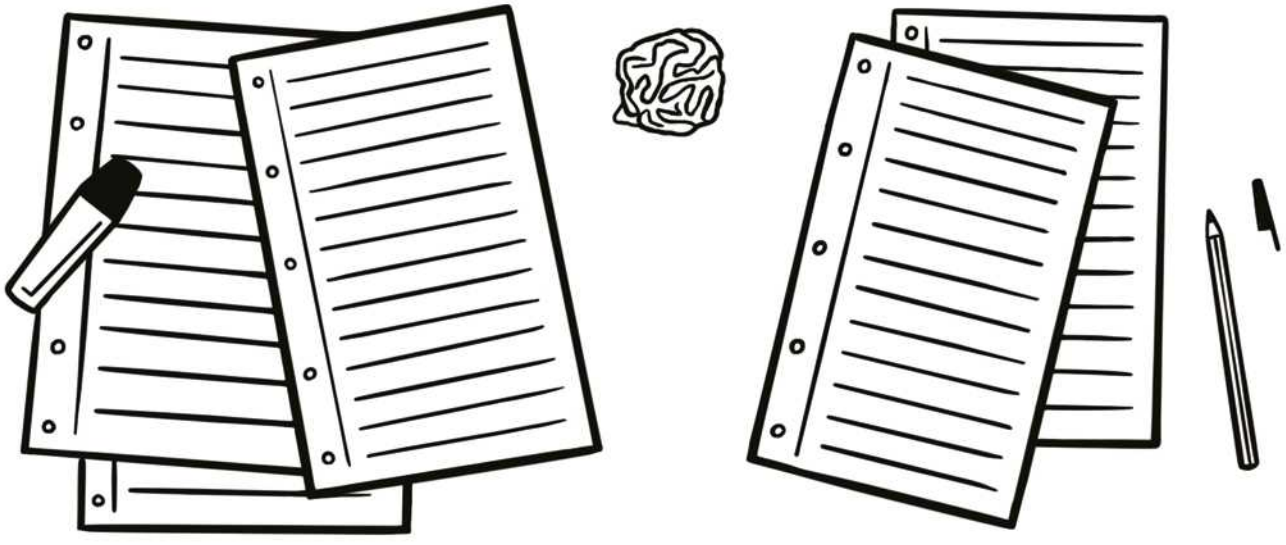
- **a** Experiment with highlighting, labelling, underlining and circling these to identify different aspects of the text.
- **b** Experiment with the order in which you annotate texts – for example, from arguments and 'big picture' elements to language and more specific elements.
- **c** Experiment with focusing on identifying and annotating one element at a time when identifying and annotating across multiple readings/viewings of the text verses focusing on identifying multiple things during a single, more in-depth reading/viewing of the text.
- **d** Experiment with using the same type of annotations for different text types, versus using different types of annotation in different contexts.
- **e** Experiment with using detailed annotations versus more simplistic annotations.

2 Reflect on your experimentations with annotations.

- **a** What strategies and approaches did you find most helpful, efficient and effective?
- **b** What strategies and approaches helped you to identify and explore features most effectively?
- **c** What strategies and approaches helped you to process and understand the text most effectively?
- **d** What strategies and approaches do you think will help you the most in drafting an analysis?

↑ Level-up

Annotating is not a simple or basic skill. It is your ability to visually **transpose** your thinking and processing of the text and through practice you will become efficient at it. Spending the time to experiment with different techniques and approaches means you can become an expert in annotation.



STEP 5

Analyse texts

Analysing written texts

You now have all the elements you need to analyse a written text. As you have annotated a text, all these elements have been processed and synthesised for you. Next you have to bring these together to construct an argument analysis response. This type of writing can be thought of as similar to an essay, but the emphasis is different from the text response essays you wrote in reading and exploring texts, mainly because you are not responding to a specific topic but to the text more holistically.

The task, no matter the text, remains the same: **analyse the written, visual and/or spoken features of the text and the effect this has upon the audience**.

Rather than think of a distinct structure for this task, you will want to follow a framework. This is because the structure of your analysis will change depending on the text you are responding to.

The structural framework for writing an argument analysis is shown in Figure 5.12.

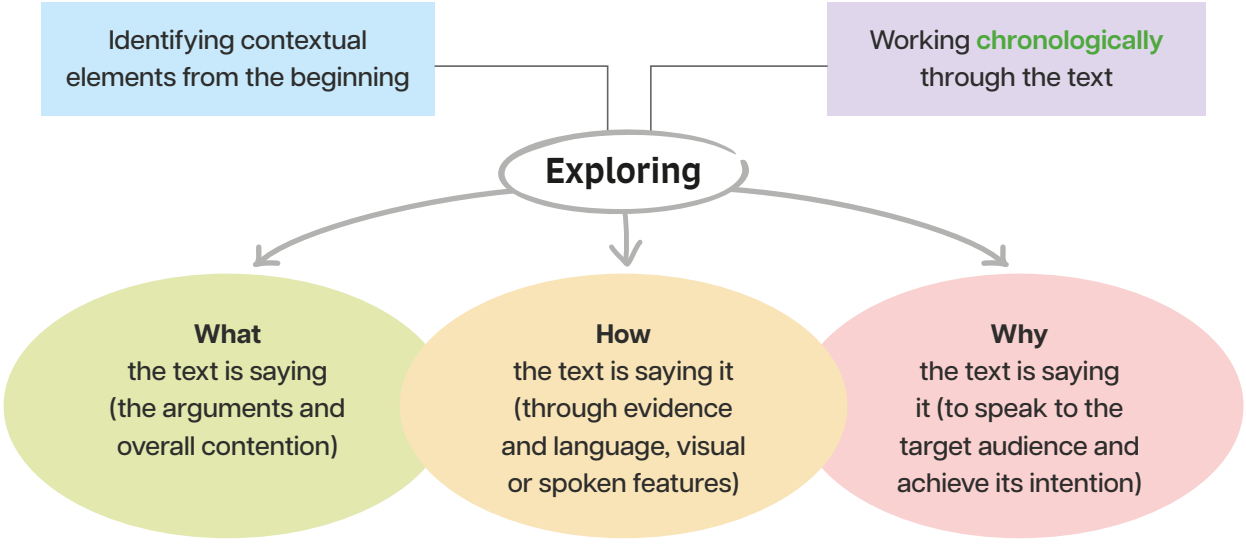


Figure 5.12: The structural framework for writing an argument analysis

An important comparison to make is the difference between writing an analysis and writing a summary or explanation of the text. To a degree, we can identify what is being said, how it is being said and even why it is being said by summarising what we identify. However, we want to identify all these pieces and focus on the creator's intentions and the potential consequences of such choices made throughout.

One way you can check you are analysing rather than summarising is to see how many and what kind of **analytical verbs** you are using. Analytical verbs show critical thinking and help to make interpretative points, form strong ideas or perspectives and ultimately keep your writing analytical in nature.

While a creator might be 'showing' you something through the choices they are making, the more specific we can be, the stronger the analysis will become. Consider the difference between a writer:

- **highlighting**: to emphasise or make you think about something
- **exposing**: to uncover something that is normally hidden so it can be seen
- **provoking**: to cause a reaction
- **alluding**: to say something in an indirect way
- **insinuating**: to say something is bad in an indirect way
- **reiterating**: to repeat something as a way to emphasise it
- **advocating**: to recommend or agree with something publicly
- **evoking**: to make a memory, idea, emotion or response occur.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 **Write a response analysing the way written features are used in model text #1 and the effect it has upon the audience.**

Aleryk Fricker and Glenn Auld co-constructed an opinion article for The Conversation titled 'The teacher shortage plan must do more to recruit and retrain First Nations teachers'. As lecturers in Education at Deakin University, they highlight the current outcomes of the federal government draft plan to fix teacher shortages while exposing its shortcomings and opportunities for improvement. Speaking to a wide but generally academic Australian audience, Fricker and Auld contend that while the plan is a positive concept it will not have any real impact unless other 'system-wide reform[s]' take place. In this way, they hope to expose the potential flaws in the government's plan and ensure those in decision-making power can recognise what needs to be achieved before the proposal can find success.

After establishing the context of the plan, Fricker and Auld begin what will become their key, and bookended, argument: that while the plan 'is welcome' there are 'limited details' regarding the reality of the proposal. This concept is repeated three times through the article, not only ensuring those in decision-making power are respected for initialising the concept but also further emphasising the need for future action. They make this key argument with multiple supporting arguments all building towards their solution of the key areas that need addressing in the plan. Statistically, Fricker and Auld highlight their concerns in only '63% of Indigenous Australians' finishing Year 12 in the first place, drawing the analogy with the '88.5% of non-Indigenous Australians' in the same age bracket. From Year 12 they move to enumerating the significant barriers facing First Nations students completing teacher degrees as well as the emotionally 'overwhelming demands' faced by First Nations teachers who are expected to be 'the expert in everything Indigenous in a school'. By building through these arguments, Fricker and Auld draw a clear conclusion that 'for more First Nations teachers to be working in schools' the three areas they explored need to be addressed. The repetition of 'needs to be' not only emphasises how the extended tricolon connects back to the elaborated ideas but also forms a logical perspective that would appeal to the academic audience and works to achieve the text's intention for readers to see the need for further action.

They segue into a slight generalisation of 'many' schools with the wording 'a strong workforce of First Nations teaching assistants' and explain how this is one pathway, beyond university, for First Nations people to enter teaching. This alternative argument simply builds to the opportunities the plan has to extend further and highlights, through emotive language, how even programs that are already underway have 'suffered from funding cuts'. While additional to the overall contention, this argument becomes the final opportunity for Fricker and Auld to convince the readership of why the issue needs attention.

Ultimately, the lecturers connect back to their initial argument and overall contention, building fear and concern for potential 'crucial' consequences Australia will have to face if readers do not actively engage in improving the plan's efficacy. Their inclusive 'we' personalises the sentiment of the formal register employed throughout and they synthesise their ideas down to a simple and slightly alliterative tricolon of 'recruitment, retention and engagement'. Fricker and Auld leave their fellow academics and the wider Australian audience with a final image of 'the oldest teachers in the world' as a way to connect to the gravity of the situation and highlight the benefit of investing the appropriate time and energy to 'fix' the problem at hand.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this response.

!! **Do not get too caught up in trying to find a formulaic structure to complete this analysis because it will change every time you receive a new text. Rather, focus on what you are including and allow the text to chronologically guide you through the response.**

Analysing visual texts

Sometimes visual elements are embedded or included as part of the written or spoken text you are analysing and, although the process of analysing them is the same, you will speak more briefly about them in these contexts. The visual elements will be used as evidence or supporting an argument generally, so you can treat them like any piece of evidence: look at the features being used, the impact upon the audience and the success of the intention. Sometimes, however, you will be given a visual text as a stand-alone text, and this will require you to focus on identifying all the elements of the text more comprehensively.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 **Write a response analysing the way written and visual features are used in model text #2 and the effect this has upon the audience.**

Paul Dorin's cartoon was published on the CityNews website on 14th of August, 2022, sparking discussions around the teacher storage issue facing every Australian state. Satirically, he highlights the true victims of the issue as students, as he humorously employs a renowned children's rhyme to highlight the problem facing schools across Australia.

→

Reaching a wide-range audience, he is able to emphasise the very real fear students viewing the cartoon face as they head into a new school year. By using students to relay his message, Dorin is able to appeal more specifically to parents and schools who are eager to do what they can protect their charges.

The familiar and repetitive children's rhyme 'no more pencils, no more books, no more teachers' dirty looks' is synonymous with joyous children leaving school for an extended holiday – but the cartoon creates a parody to juxtapose such joy with the heightened emotion of the students discovering they do not have a teacher. The emanata of sweat drops and extensive motion lines on the student on the right emphasises the intensity of the emotion, and his facial expression casts a jarring contrast to his contented, yet ignorant, peers. The familiarity of the rhyme connects with a slightly older audience who can reflect on their own school challenges and draw analogy with current students' experiences.

The blank background and simple props ensure the caricatures and their dialogue are the focus of the cartoon and the balanced visual composition allows the visual salience to begin with the dialogue as the reading pathway moves from left to right, revealing not only the issue but the humorous conclusion. An invisible vector line connects the final student's speech balloon to the punch line on the student's tablet. These key visual features all work to encapsulate for the viewer the issue and Dorin's point of view in the seriousness of the Australian predicament around teacher shortages.

A final layer is that, in the cartoon technology provides the information that the students' blank pages cannot, and adds an alternative argument of the value, but also the limitations, of technological advancements in school settings. This allows multiple interpretations and connections to be drawn in the simple cartoon and builds beyond the issue of teacher shortages but, in doing so, is able to connect a wider viewership who might be more invested in this argument.

Dorin ultimately contends that the problems students face at school have changed drastically over time and that having a mean teacher is preferable to not having a teacher at all. His intention is to draw attention to the issue of teacher shortages and allow his wider Australian viewership to consider the impact on the students, who will be the ones to suffer. However, he is also able to highlight that the advancements in technology are only as powerful as the teachers available to teach and support students throughout their schooling journey and as such he is able to promote the importance of ensuring the issue is prioritised within society.

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this response.

!! **You cannot work chronologically through a visual text, so you should start with the 'big picture'. What is the text saying? What is its overall intention? Now work through significant features as they connect to each other overall. There is no chronological flow like there is in a written or spoken text, but follow the 'reading path' of the text as much as you possibly can.**

Analysing spoken texts

The process of analysing an audio or an audiovisual text is essentially the same, and both follow the same process as analysing a written text. The only differences are the features being identified and explored and the way you can use evidence to support your interpretations of the text. The structural framework remains the same whether you are approaching a written, audio or audiovisual text.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 **Write a response analysing how the written, visual and spoken features work together to present a point of view in model text #3.**

Margaret Paul reports, on behalf of the ABC News, on the impact the teacher shortage issue is having for key stakeholders in Victoria. In an informative and concerned tone, Paul argues how the teacher shortage is being felt across Victoria and hopes to not only put pressure on the government to make the necessary decisions to combat the issue but also to convince parents and students to be considerate of the difficulties schools are currently facing.

Through an emotional appeal of young Mason, who is about 'to start grade three' but is 'missing' a teacher, Paul establishes the premise of her report, highlighting how the issue is impacting everyday Victorians. She solidifies her viewers' concerns about whether this might impact their community by vocally stressing her statistical evidence of the '900' teacher positions that are currently left unfilled. This establishes a fear tactic. Expert in the area, Meredith Peace from the Australian Education Union, generalises how 'some schools will not have all the teaching staff they need', making parents and students concerned for what this might mean for their own school. This fear is further exacerbated with the emotive language of 'booming' student numbers and the comparison to the situation being 'worse in Melbourne's growth areas'. Any stakeholders in such areas become acutely aware of the impact upon their own community and Paul hopes they will be motivated to support the issue properly.

Paul moves from individual families to the impact of the issue on schools directly. She presents the idea, through an interview with a school principal, Tim Natoli, that schools are doing what they can. Using Mill Park Secondary as a case study, she exposes that the consequences for Natoli would be to 'not offer the types of supports [they] might otherwise have been able to'. The slight pause from this revelation to the cause being 'if we had more staff' ensures viewers understand the impact of the shortage and that schools are aware that it is impacting the service they are able to provide for their students.

Through a face-to-camera shot, Paul recognises the cliché that 'there is no quick fix' to the problem but offers some solutions the union has presented as options. This synthesis of the issue is emphasised with a narrow depth of field, slight high angle and Paul's use of gestures to ensure the viewership sees her with authority and then focuses on her suggestions and ultimate plea for 'parents and students', her main audience, 'to be patient'. Her use of repetition allows the audience to connect the 'new school year' with the 'new challenges' schools, parents and students have to face. The euphemism is not lost on the audience, however, particularly through Paul's overtly sympathetic tone. By bookending the report by circling back to Mason's morning, the closing low-angle shot of Mason's school bag is able to leave the viewers with a reminder of the everyday of their lives and how it may be impacted through such events occurring around the state.

→

See the digital student resource for an annotated example of this response.

!! While balancing your analysis between what is being said, how it is being said and why it is being said, you also need to balance your focus on the written, visual and spoken features being used. That is a lot to balance in your memory, so just remember that generally the three work in conjunction with each other and if you can connect to the relationship then you should not have to worry about focusing on one element significantly more than the others.

Activity 5.7: Identify and reflect

1. Use your annotations from Step 4 to help guide you through drafting a response analysing the different features the texts are using to present their point of view.
2. Once your draft is complete, go through and identify:
   - a. where you have included the issue, context, text type, audience, contention, intention, arguments, evidence and features. You might label your draft or colour code it in different colours for each element.
   - b. the types of analytical verbs you are using to analyse (rather than summarise!) the text. Circle or highlight each analytical verb you have used and notice:
     - i. who is 'doing' the action
     - ii. how many verbs you are using
     - iii. the types of verbs you are using
     - iv. how specific the verbs are
     - v. where you are using the verbs in the sentence and paragraph overall.
3. Annotate where you are discussing what is being said (the arguments), how it is being said (the features) and why it is being said (the intention and potential effects upon the audience).
4. Underline any time you have mentioned the audience directly. Notice:
   - a. how often you mention them
   - b. where in the paragraph you mention them
   - c. if you are referring to them in exactly the same way each time
   - d. if you are saying a direct effect, or simply saying that 'therefore they will agree with what the creator is trying to argue'.
5. Reflect on the process of writing the response and the final product.
   - a. What were you most confident about?
   - b. How did your annotations help you?
   - c. Did you need any other information that your annotations did not provide once you started your draft?
   - d. How confidently have you responded to the criteria for this SAC?
   - e. Which type of analysis – written, visual, spoken or multimodal – do you find easier to control and why?

↑ Level-up

Once you feel confident identifying, annotating and analysing different types of texts, you can start putting yourself under time pressure to identify each element and complete each step of the road map we have travelled together. What happens when you do not have time to check your work or use your notes to find the language you need? Putting yourself under time pressure is the final step when preparing for the SAC and Year 12.

STEP 6

Prepare oral presentations

The second part of the exploring argument area of study is an opportunity for you to apply your **understanding of argument to create a point of view text**. This will take the form of an oral presentation for persuasive purposes and while it might be a traditional speech, your school may also allow you to speak as part of a discussion, debate or dialogue, similar to the Year 12 course. No matter what form your oral presentation takes, though, the skills of speaking (and listening) are the focus and will help you in many other areas in life.

!! Very few people in the world enjoy speaking in public. In fact, according to the NBC, 'fear of public speaking, or glossophobia, is estimated to affect 75 per cent of adults'. But, while you do not have to love the concept, practising and gaining skills to be able to speak to an audience is something you will draw from throughout your life. Think of speaking at an interview, giving an acceptance speech or being asked to speak at a wedding or funeral. I promise, it will be worth investing your time to work out some strategies to make the most of these opportunities.

The paralinguistic features you were exploring in audiovisual texts are the first part of this area of study. You are now expected to use these for effect in your own presentation. This is a similar concept to the 'crafting texts' area of study, where we identified what effective writers did and then used that as inspiration to write our own texts. You are not expected to speak or perform exactly like Martin Luther King Jr or Greta Thunberg. Rather, you are working towards finding your own voice, presence and approach to speaking in public. Ideally this approach will mean that you can be remotely comfortable in speaking because it feels genuine and appropriate for the context, audience and purpose.

Holding a dialogue

One of the potential assessment tasks for the EAL course is **a dialogue between two students discussing their different points of view**. While not an expectation of the English course, this activity is a great opportunity to practise persuasive speaking and listening, consider the different ways evidence can be used to support an argument and reflect on how differently we approach persuasive speaking from persuasive writing. All this supports the way we can respond to the key knowledge and skills and sets you up for success in the oral presentation task.

A dialogue is a conversation between two people, where they can exchange opinions on a particular subject. Dialogues involve turn taking, they might involve asking clarifying questions and they require just as many active-listening skills as speaking skills (see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6: Key speaking and listening skills

Active-listening skills
• Pay attention: do not just think about what you are going to say next, but listen in and respond to what the speaker is saying. • Show you are listening: make eye contact, have open body language, appropriate facial expressions and potential gestures such as nodding. • Provide feedback, either verbally or non-verbally, to show you have listened and are connected to what they said. • Defer judgement: wait until the speaker has finished before jumping to any conclusions. Listen with an open mind and continue listening for the whole time, rather than just the first few words. • Respond appropriately: different situations require different responses.
Accountable talking skills
• Ask questions: ensure you have fully understood what someone has said by either challenging, extending or reflecting upon what they said. – Challenge: - Why might ...? - How could ...? - When did ...? – Extend: - Will you tell me more about ...? - Maybe we could add ... - Will you give another example ...? – Reflect: - I wonder why ... - I would like to add ... - So, you are saying ... • Support your opinions: it is one thing to have an opinion, but another to support it appropriately with evidence.

!! **Generally, you cannot or do not plan to hold a dialogue with someone, but rather you draw from your personal knowledge and experience as you respond to what the other person is saying in the moment. For the purpose of this task, the better you know the issue, the easier it is going to be to hold an opinion and respond to certain perspectives 'off the cuff'.**

It is important that you know the issue and your perspective on the issue well. You might want to create some notes that you can refer to during the dialogue. You do not want to script the dialogue, but having some prompts to help you answer a question or stimulate a response is likely to make you feel more confident that you will always have something purposeful to say. Alternatively, you might prepare some questions that you could ask the other person during the dialogue. If you also predict how they might answer, this will allow you to mentally prepare for the way you can respond from there. Just be prepared that they might ask you something you have not planned for, and that is okay – in a dialogue you do not have to have the answer to everything.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Prepare notes, including some potential questions, that you can use during a discussion with a peer, as you present your point of view on the issue of teacher shortages.

- *Everyone is impacted by teacher shortages, not just teachers. Examples = schools, students, parents, future employers*
- *Who do you think is most impacted by teacher shortages?*
- *Not enough is being done to prevent the issue getting worse in the future. All the solutions are band-aid options that do not get to the core of the problem. Solutions = paying teachers for training or paying them more when teaching, reducing administrative burdens and reducing class sizes*
- *Do you think there is something that can be done that will have a real impact on the issue?*
- *The government and community members do not understand the real impact of the issue because schools are working hard to minimise the consequences for students. This is good, but means the issue is not being taken as seriously as it should be.*

Brainstorming, planning and drafting your presentation

Your school will set the expectations around your oral presentation. It might choose some different issues for you to select from or allow you to choose your own issue. It might be very specific about the way you present your point of view, or it might open it up and allow you a choice to present it in a group, as a recorded presentation, or set up as class discussions or debates. So the first thing you need to clarify is the expectations for this task for your school this year. Ask yourself:

- What issue will or can you present on?
- How long should the presentation go for?
- What perspective, audience and context surrounds the presentation?
- Will you be completing the presentation individually or in a group?
- How long will you have to prepare, and what feedback will you be offered?
- What notes, supplementary materials or props are you allowed during the presentation?

Once you know the details of what you are doing, your next step is to ensure you have the facts around the issue of focus. Brainstorming for an oral presentation starts with research, and ensuring you have the information you need to make an informed decision and build a logical perspective on the issue. The bonus of this research stage is that you can then use the information you gather as evidence when you begin planning and drafting your response.

For the purpose of this textbook, we will continue to focus on the issue of the teacher shortages, for which we already completed research on pages 136–7.

Depending on your topic, you might need to do a significant amount of research, or you might know it enough to have an informed opinion and just need to find some strong evidence to support your opinion. Here are some things to consider when researching your topic:

- Who the key stakeholders are and the different perspectives and opinions on the issue
- Key events that have occurred in relation to the issue, historically or recently
- Any research, statistics, expert opinions or other reputable sources for accurate information about the issue
- Any current policies, documentation, organisations or resources established in response to the issue.

Once you have all the information, you will need to plan out how you are going to approach the presentation. This will vary drastically depending on the type of presentation and the expectations around the presentation more generally.

!! **Even if you are giving a traditional oral presentation, remember this is not an essay. This is a spoken text, so you need to approach the task differently from other text response types.**

For the purpose of this textbook, we will work towards completing a speech that would be presented as part of a formal debate. During the assessment, teams of three will take alternate perspectives on an issue, and individually students will present their arguments with a time limit of three minutes. The worked example lists the plan for the first speaker on the affirmative side.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 **Detail a plan for your position and response to the class debate, 'Teaching hasn't become harder. Teachers have just become more entitled'.**

Speaker #1: Affirmative team:

- *Introduce the team and the main contentions, perspectives and roles in the team.*
- *Point 1 and overall connection across the team: Teachers are entitled to be treated like professionals – 'They have a right to be entitled'*
- *Point 2: The concept of teaching has not become harder. It is the administration, professional development, staff politics, demands from leadership and constantly changing environments that have made the job much harder.*

Similar to the plan, your draft will vary depending on the conditions of your presentation. You might be able to completely draft your speech, perfecting the language and the way you are expressing your ideas. Alternatively, you might be asked to prepare cue cards or notes that you can draw from during your presentation, but you will need to practise different ways of expressing these notes in the moment.

WORKED EXAMPLE

1 Use your plan to create cue cards to use during your presentation.

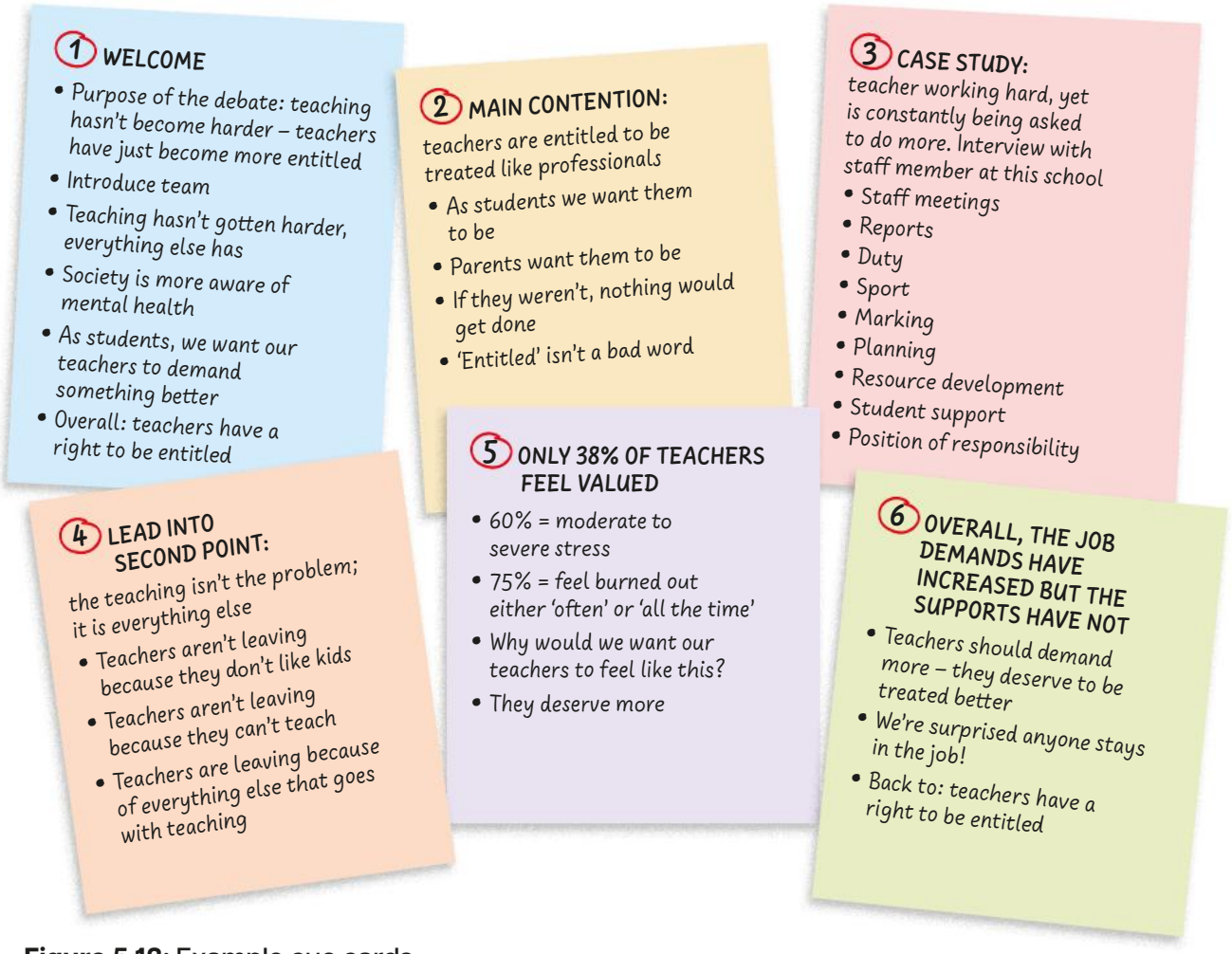


Figure 5.13: Example cue cards

See the digital student resource for an example of a drafted speech.

Rehearsing and giving your presentation

No matter what type of presentation you will be doing, it is important you realise that what you are saying is only half of the task. Practising, getting feedback and perfecting how you present will be a significant element of your success in this task. Presenting, or performing, in front of an audience does not come naturally (or comfortably) for many people. In fact, public speaking is continually one of many people's greatest fears! But just like anything, the more you practise, the better you will get and while you might not get to the point where you enjoy it so much you decide to become a professional public speaker, you can get to the point where you can confidently stand up and do what you need to get through this final task.

Part of rehearsing is knowing what you are going to say, but reading through your notes or speech is not enough. You need to practise how it is going to sound; where you are going to pause; what type of tone of voice, volume and expression

you are going to use throughout. You might look at how you are standing, or moving, at certain points and even consider the gestures and facial expressions you are using. The only way you are going to be able to practise and perfect this is by presenting it!

Here are some activities you can do to practise your presentation:

- Record yourself presenting so you can see what you look like and how you sound throughout the presentation. Not many people enjoy watching themselves back, but this is hands down the best way for you to see what is working and what you need to continue practising.
- Find a quiet space, or a room with a mirror, to practise presenting. Notice how you sound, how you are moving and parts that are not flowing together properly.
- Find a friend or family member you trust to practise with. Ask them for feedback about how easy it was to understand, how engaging it was to listen to and opportunities for improvement.
- Find somewhere loud to practise. Your whole class might stand up at the same time, all over the classroom, and start practising together. It can be utter chaos to listen to, but everyone is concentrating on themselves, so you do not have to worry about people listening in at this stage. Seeing other people move, gesture and find expression in their voice can motivate you to do the same.

!! The worst thing you can do is head into the presentation having never actually read your presentation out loud. You might be able to recite it word for word in your head, but that is very different from hearing it come out of your mouth and feeling what it is like to stand and present in front of an audience. Even if you do not put a complete plan together, take the time to practise. It is the single greatest thing you can do to prepare for this SAC.

Activity 5.8: Understand and identify

1. You have been exploring the structures and features of persuasive texts. How confident do you feel about applying these skills and this knowledge to creating your own persuasive text?
2. Identify the expectations for your oral presentation task. What do you need to do? When do you need to do it? What will you need in order to complete it successfully?
3. What are the criteria you will be assessed on? Do you know how you can respond to these criteria?
4. How confident are you in this spoken task for this area of study? What do you need to focus on to (quite literally) find your voice successfully?

↑ Level-up

Great public speaking is an artform. Spend time watching some amazing speakers, noticing what they do to keep you engaged. Experiment with some of the gestures, movements, expressions or language you find particularly appealing. This is about finding out who you are as a speaker, but that does not mean you cannot be inspired by the greats!

STEP 7

Transfer your skills to Year 12

Although this area of study is now complete, remember that you will be completing a very similar area of study in Unit 4: Analysing argument, which requires you to write an argument analysis and present a point of view presentation. Many schools also require their Year 11s to complete an end-of-year exam that would cover the content in this area of study as well – so as much as you might like to close the chapter in this book (metaphorically or literally!) you need to take a deep breath and consider what you need to hold onto and draw from in the future.

Your exam and Unit 4 outcome will be much easier if you bring with you all the information, understanding and skills you gained over this area of study, rather than having to relearn everything again next year. So take this information and firmly embed it in your long-term memory, then you can draw from it again whenever you might need it.

To help you transfer your skills to Year 12, you should:

- consolidate your notes
- reflect on your strengths and weaknesses
- connect to other learning.

Finally, add this task to your study plan once a month: Look at a persuasive text and annotate it to identify all the elements of the text. Even if you do not then write an argument analysis, the process of annotating a written, visual or spoken text requires you to keep using the unit's metalanguage, and to keep your skills of identifying and interpreting persuasive texts and your ability to annotate effectively strong. These skills will be invaluable in the coming year.

!! This area of study, more than any other, is one you can connect to life. You will come across persuasive texts throughout your career, in your home life and especially when you are deciding how to vote. Notice how often you come across them and **consciously** practise your critical thinking and analytical skills!

Activity 5.9: Reflect and analyse

1 Reflect on the analysing argument written task you will tackle in Year 12:
   - **a** How confident do you feel about completing this?
   - **b** What are the features you will need to focus on and continue to develop to succeed in this task?

2 Reflect on the analysing argument spoken task you will tackle in Year 12:
   - **a** How confident do you feel about completing this task?
   - **b** Do you think it is more difficult or easier to analyse argument when it is spoken? How will this affect your approach?
   - **c** What are the features you will need to focus on and continue to develop to succeed in this task?

Level-up

While you might not know the issue for next year, you can continue exploring and analysing persuasive texts from here through to Unit 4. Make reading, viewing and listening to persuasive texts a common task in your study timetable. Identifying key features, noticing common and significant features and exploring the way different authors connect to their audiences will set you up for success when you reach this area of study next year.

6 Preparing for Year 12

The overall challenge of VCE is that it is an **endurance** event. You have worked so incredibly hard all year, but you are looking down the path of yet another year of intensity where, suddenly, every assessment counts towards a **cumulative** score! It can be exhausting just thinking about it. But it is also important to reflect on how quickly this year has gone; how much fun you have had; how much you have learnt. You cannot predict what Year 12 is going to be like, but you can trust in how all the work you have done this year has set you up for success next year.

Know what you need to transfer to Year 12

For Year 12, you will need to hold onto, transfer and extend upon most of the skills and knowledge you **accumulated** over the course this year. In fact, the main thing that will change are the texts you study and the issues you explore. You have been consolidating each area of study upon completion; now we can **synthesise** all that into everything you need to know and do as you head into Year 12.

WHAT I NEED TO KNOW

- ☐ *The various elements to identify and explore in different types of texts, particularly narrative and persuasive texts*
- ☐ *The language used to discuss texts, including narrative, literary, cinematic, graphic, theatrical, poetic and persuasive features*
- ☐ *The different approaches available to respond to topics, prompts and questions*
- ☐ *The diverse ways to communicate in various* **modes** *for different audiences and purposes*
- ☐ *How to actively listen and respond to feedback purposefully*

WHAT I NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO

- ☐ *Be confident to experiment with various types of structures and language for different audiences and purposes*
- ☐ *Be confident to experiment with language when discussing texts and issues*
- ☐ *Be confident to experiment in ways to interpret and respond to different types of topics, prompts and questions regarding texts and issues*
- ☐ *Be confident to experiment with ways to explore and interpret different types of texts, particularly narrative and persuasive texts*
- ☐ *Be confident to express your opinion, ask questions and speak to different audiences and for different purposes*

Figure 6.1: What you need to know and do heading into Year 12

!! At this point you want to feel like you have the foundational knowledge and the skills you need to tackle any text or task ahead of you. You might need some support to put all the pieces together, and you might still be working on building the sophistication and formality of your communication, but that is what Year 12 is for! Set yourself up now and trust you will build upon it next year.

Reflect on what you have learnt and developed

At the start and end of each area of study, you reflected upon what you were and were not confident about regarding the key knowledge, skills and expectations of the outcome.

Go back to each of your reflections and reread them. Look at the areas you felt needed improvement in Unit 1, and consider how much more confident you are now about working with these and whether you have turned them into strengths. Or is there a common thread in terms of areas needing improvement that runs through all of the areas of study for you? Flag any specific element that has somehow stumped you this year.

Thinking about your reflections

1 What is the thing(s) you are most proud of this year?

2 What have you surprised yourself by being capable of doing, that you did not think you would be able to do this year?

3 What are you most confident about heading into Year 12 and why?

4 What are you least confident about heading into Year 12 and why?

5 What do you want to achieve next year? What would make you proud?

Figure 6.2: Reflect on your year.

Set yourself up for success

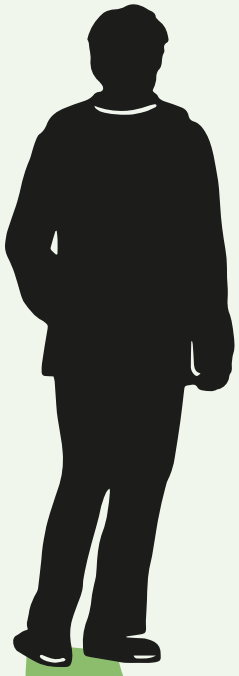
You now have a clear picture of what you need to do next year and you have reflected upon your strengths and areas for improvement moving forward. What else can you possibly do to set yourself up for the greatest chance of success next year?

Your school is likely to set some (hopefully not too **onerous** or painful) holiday homework in preparation for Year 12, but as a general rule, here are some things that will have the greatest **impact** upon you starting off the year confidently and prepared:

- Read /view your texts at least once before the school year begins.
- Keep writing in a journal, blog or writer's notebook.
- Watch/read the news.
- Watch/read for entertainment (engage in different types of texts for different audiences and purposes … remember, you are allowed to enjoy what you read and watch).
- Meditate, exercise, eat healthily, relax … look after yourself.

!! There is zero benefit to starting the year off stressed, tired and overwhelmed. So give yourself a break, enjoy the summer and come into next year rejuvenated and ready to take on a new year. Just remember to read or watch your set texts, okay? Please. Promise?

Dear student,



I am constantly in awe of the dedication, motivation and drive that I see Year 11 students demonstrate every year. The first year of VCE is a bit unusual in that it is super important and you have to work so incredibly hard to succeed … and yet everything comes down to a pass or a fail. An 'S' or an 'N'. That in itself can feel somewhat deflating. But rather than think about the score you might receive, Year 11 is about an opportunity to experiment, establish strong foundation skills and knowledge, and build the confidence you need to find success in Year 12.

Right now I want you to take a deep breath and own the work you have done this year and the effort you have put in. If you haven't taken the year as seriously as you could have, own it and do what you need to do to start next year off more successfully. If you have smashed yourself, maybe a little too hard, then own that too. Give yourself the time to recover and set yourself up to balance the work and yourself for next year. What I am saying is: no matter what this year looked like, you made the decisions that resulted in the outcome. In the same way, you have choices to make to set yourself up for next year. You get to make all the tiny decisions next year that will determine how proud you will feel of yourself when you are in this same position next year.

I have unwavering confidence in your ability to surprise yourself with how successful you can be from here. You just need to believe in yourself half as much and make the conscious decision to do the things you need to do.

My greatest advice for next year? Ask questions: ask your teacher, ask yourself, ask about the texts you are studying. Questions lead to answers and once you have the answer, then you can decide what to do with it.

Celebrate the successes you have had this year.
OWN the work and effort you have put in, whatever that looked like.
Take a deep breath and get excited for the final step of your journey through Year 11…
You have found your VOICE. Now it is time to truly reach your potential!

Warm regards
Hayley

PS: Don't forget to read/watch your set texts! Seriously … I'm not joking about that one!

Glossary

accumulate to collect or gather things over a period of time

acknowledge to accept or admit that something is true or exists

activate to cause something to start working

adapt to change your ideas, behaviours or actions to do something differently or better

adaptability the ability to adjust or change something to different conditions or situations

alliteration a series of words, in quick succession, that all start with the same letter or the same sound

allusion an indirect or direct reference to a person, place, thing or event from outside the text

anachronism a chronological inconsistency used for effect or to assist the story

a nacoluthon omitting the subject from a sentence

anagram a word or phrase formed by changing the order of the letters in another word or phrase

analytical verb an action word that shows the processes occurring when analysing

anaphora repetition of a whole word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses

aposiopesis leaving a sentence unfinished or breaking it off abruptly (e.g. 'But I don't want...')

appeal an attempt to produce a particular emotion or feeling in the reader; e.g. fear, injustice, disappointment, exclusion, anger

array a large number of different things

assonance the repetition of vowel sounds in quick succession in a series of words

attack to purposefully belittle, embarrass, insult or find flaws in a person or group

background furthest away from the viewer and often providing context or supplementary information for the scene

beneficial something that helps people or improves their lives or a specific situation

bias to be influenced into having a specific perspective due to certain situations and experiences

body language the process of communicating feelings or thoughts by the way a person places and moves their body

canted a camera shot that is tilted, often making the audience feel uncomfortable

capable having the ability to do something

categorise to divide and sort things into sets of similar features

chronological described or shown in the order in which they happened

cliché a familiar, overused expression to describe something

coherence the quality of writing that flows together logically, is consistent and makes sense

communicative having the ability to talk effectively about feelings or information

conjunction two or more things happening at the same time or in the same place

consciously to be fully aware and deliberately give your full attention to something

consonance the repeated use of identical or very similar consonants in words used close together

constructed describes something that is purposefully built as a whole from smaller pieces

contemporary current or present times

contextual the whole situation, background or environment relevant to an event or person

contextualise to put something in the general situation that it relates to, which helps it to be understood

conventions traditional and expected methods, styles or approaches

critical something extremely or the most important

culmination a process or series of events that builds towards a larger or final event

cumulative a series of events where each event makes the effect greater

detached not joined, or has no involvement or emotional interest in something

dichotomy a great difference of opposition between two things

diegetic a cinematic feature where characters in a scene can hear a sound element such as dialogue, sound effects, music and voiceovers

distinguishing special qualities or features making something easily recognisable and different

drastically extremely or greatly

ellipsis three dots used to indicate something has been omitted from a sentence, allowing the reader to fill in the gap

emanata thoughts or feelings such as sweat or tears drawn in a visual text

emotive language using words that heighten emotion

employing using something

endurance the ability to continue with an unpleasant or difficult situation over a long period of time

entrenched firmly established so it would be difficult to change it

enumeration mentioning a number of things one by one

essentially something is mainly true, in a fundamental or basic way

explicit showing something clearly and openly, without hiding anything

expression changing the mood and emphasis or connotation of what is being said

facial expression the look on a person's face that shows their thoughts and feelings

figurative language describing things in a way that is not literal

flawed something that contains a fault, mark or mistake

foreground the element closest to the viewer

formalised making something formal, academic and official

formulaic describing something as unoriginal and predictable in its structures and features

frivolous the opposite of serious and sensible; a negative connotation associated with something being useless or wasting time

generalisation referring to a group of people or things as 'all/every' or 'most/many' without factual proof

gestures the movements of a person's hands, used for emphasis and to support the meaning of what is being spoken

holistically looking at something as a whole or integrated system, rather than at its parts

honing to carefully develop a skill, technique, idea or product over a period of time, so it is exactly right for your purpose

hyperbole using exaggeration to make a point, heighten emotions, emphasise something or be sarcastic

impact the effect something has upon something else

implication what is implied, suggested or assumed to be the result of something

inclusive/exclusive language use of pronouns that either include the audience (we, us, our) or exclude the audience or certain groups (they, them, you)

inexhaustible when there is so much of something that it cannot all be used up

inferential the way a conclusion can be made by using the information you already have about it

innumerable so many, or too many to be realistically counted

intended an attempt; what is trying to be achieved

interpretation an opinion, explanation or way of thinking

intonation the rise and fall of the voice when speaking

irony something that seems deliberately contrary to what one expects; used for humorous or emphatic effect. Similar to sarcasm; however, irony is the opposite of what you would expect and sarcasm has a condescending tone meant to embarrass or insult

juxtaposition two contrasting elements placed together so their differences are emphasised

lens viewing something through a specific viewpoint, perspective or approach

literal understanding something in a plain, simple and direct way, without connotation or deeper meaning

macro setting the country the story is based in

malapropism the unintentional misuse of a word or phrase by confusing similar sounds

metaphor comparing two similar things by saying one of them is the other

micro setting individual houses, buildings, rooms and locations where the action occurs

midground the centre of the panel, often where the eye is drawn to unless another feature captures its attention

modality the way we show how much certainty, obligation, probability, importance, frequency, extent, intensity, confidence or emphasis a subject has in a sentence, using modal words such as must, might, should, could, doubtful and will

mode the particular type or form of something; e.g. written, spoken or visual mode

non-diegetic a cinematic feature where the audience can hear the sound but the characters cannot

nuances small differences in sound, feeling, appearance or meaning

onerous disliking doing something because it is difficult or unpleasant

onomatopoeia when a word is pronounced in a way that alludes to or represents the sound that it is making

oxymoron a figure of speech where contradictory (seemingly opposite or inaccurate) terms appear together

palindrome a word or phrase that is the same whether you read it backwards or forwards

panning a camera movement where the camera swivels without moving from a stationary, central position, from right to left or left to right

parallelism the repetition of a syntactic construction (word order and style) in succession for rhetorical effect; two similar elements placed together so their similarities are emphasised

parameters the factors or limits that affect the way something can be done

peppered having a lot of small things added or included throughout

perceive to notice, see or realise something, particularly when it is not obvious

personification when human traits are used to describe non-human things through figurative language techniques

plethora a large amount of something, often greater than you need, want or can cope with

polysyndeton the deliberate use of many conjunctions for emphasis and to highlight the amount (e.g. 'They sang and danced and sang and danced some more.')

primary plot line the central, main story of a narrative; generally involves the protagonist and antagonist

protagonist the main character of a text

pun a clever or amusing use of a word or phrase that has two meanings

purely entirely, the only thing to be considered

refine to improve something by making small but important changes to it

register language can be described as having different language registers. It can be static, formal, casual or intimate

relevance the importance or significance of something

repetition repeating phrases, words, ideas, symbols (etc.) for emphasis and to increase the likelihood of the audience remembering critical information

resonate when something has a special meaning or importance to someone

rhetorical question asking a question without requiring, or expecting, an answer

rhyme repetition of any sound at the end of words in close proximity

rigid something that cannot be changed or varied

sarcasm using exaggeration, irony, puns or an untruth in a humorous way to mock someone or something

secondary plot line a minor, incidental event that occurs, often involving secondary (or minor) characters; these plot lines may impact the primary story (or not), but generally if they were taken out of the narrative the primary plot line would still make sense

sensory imagery describing things through sensory experiences: sight, smell, sound, taste and touch/feeling

shorthand a quick way of writing that uses signs and symbols to represent words

simile comparing one thing to another similar thing by saying it is 'like' or 'as' the other

sound effect lettering when a word such as BANG! or OW! is written in large, bold, capital letters and set at sharp angles to highlight sound, tone or volume

speech balloon used to show what a character is saying in a visual text

spoonerism a mistake made by a speaker where the first sounds of two words are changed over, often with a humorous effect

static when a character does not grow, develop or change in any way; these characters often only have one or two personality traits that are explored in the text

subjective based on personal opinions and feelings rather than on facts

subsequent something that happened after a time that has been referred to

subtle not being obvious or very noticeable and therefore sometimes difficult to describe

syntactic the ways words are put together in order to make grammatically accurate sentences

synthesise to combine different ideas, facts or experiences to form a single idea or impression

thought bubble used to show what a character is thinking in a visual text

tilting a camera movement where the camera swivels without moving from a stationary, central position, from top to bottom or bottom to top

tracking a camera movement where the camera is mounted to some kind of track or motorised vehicle (also called a 'dolly' shot)

transferable something that can be passed, moved or used in different contexts

transpose to move from one place to another

tricolon a series of three words, phrases or sentences that are parallel in structure, length and/or rhythm

unique one of a kind

unreliable something you cannot trust

varying things that are different in size, amount or degree

visual salience the elements that draw the eye's focus first and the 'reading pathway' in which the eye tracks across an image in a visual text

vocal control the way a person can control the pace, volume, pausing, rhythm and tone of their voice to support meaning and emotion when speaking

warped a negative change or manipulation in reality

whimsical playful, unpredictable, unusual (the opposite of serious and practical)

zoomorphism giving animalistic traits or features to non-animals

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