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VCE® Units 3 & 4

ENGLISH YEAR 12

STUDY DESIGN 2024

Robert Beardwood & Leon Furze
with Nicole James, Melanie Napthine,
Melanie Van Langenberg
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Course overview

		Area of Study 1: Reading and responding to texts	Area of Study 2: Creating texts
Unit 3	English	You will study: • one text selected from Text List 1. Assessment: • an analytical essay on the text (40 marks).	You will study: • three mentor texts selected from Text List 2, aligned with one of the key ideas in the Framework of Ideas. Assessment: • two written texts (20 marks each) • a commentary reflecting on your writing processes (20 marks).
	EAL	You will study: • one text selected from Text List 1. Assessment: • an analytical essay on the text (30 marks) • short-answer responses OR note form summaries showing comprehension of an audio or audiovisual text (20 marks).	You will study: • three mentor texts selected from Text List 2, aligned with one of the key ideas in the Framework of Ideas. Assessment: • two written texts (20 marks each) • a set of annotations reflecting on your writing processes (10 marks).
		Area of Study 1: Reading and responding to texts	**Area of Study 2: Analysing argument**
Unit 4	English	You will study: • one text selected from Text List 1. Assessment: • an analytical essay on the text (40 marks).	Assessment: • a written analysis of the use of argument and language in persuasive texts, including one written text and one audio or audiovisual text (40 marks) • an oral presentation of a point of view on a national or international issue (20 marks).
	EAL	You will study: • one text selected from Text List 1. Assessment: • an analytical essay on the text (40 marks).	Assessment: • a written analysis of the use of argument and language in persuasive texts, including one written text and one audio or audiovisual text (40 marks) • an oral presentation of a point of view on a national or international issue (20 marks).

Introduction

Insight's *English Year 12: VCE Units 3 & 4* is a practical and comprehensive guide to the English/EAL Study Design for 2024–2027. It explains in detail the key knowledge for each area of study, providing concise, accessible definitions and examples. It also places a strong emphasis on practical strategies for developing and consolidating skills. Numerous flow charts, mind maps, word banks and sentence starters help with the planning and writing stages of all assessment tasks.

The new area of study, Creating texts, is addressed in the following ways:

- understanding how audience, context and purpose shape a writer's choices of language and structure (Chapters 7 and 8)
- understanding the importance of style and voice in writing (Chapter 9)
- using mentor texts as models for effective writing (Chapter 10)
- working with a key idea from the Framework of Ideas (Chapter 11)
- developing, refining and polishing a written piece (Chapter 12).

Chapter 12 also includes sample responses in different forms and styles, and for different purposes.

In addition to the print text, bonus digital resources can be accessed via the QR codes placed throughout this book (or, in the digital version, via hyperlinks). These resources include sample responses, video tutorials and templates for summarising and organising information. The links also enable access to online audio and audiovisual texts for analysis in Section 3.

At the time of publication, exam specifications and a sample exam for the end-of-year exam had not been released by the VCAA. For this reason, the exam chapter will be available online from March 2024.

The 2024–2027 Study Design for English/EAL expands the opportunities for writing and reading, allowing for imaginative and reflective styles of writing in addition to the analytical and persuasive styles that have been part of the course for many years. We hope you find the course challenging and rewarding, and that this book provides an invaluable guide and reference.

Robert Beardwood & Leon Furze

SECTION 01

Reading and responding to texts

IN THIS SECTION

In both Unit 3 and Unit 4, Area of Study 1 is Reading and responding to texts. In each Unit you will study a text in detail and write analytical essays about the ideas, concerns and values expressed by that text. Your essays will also show your understanding of the ways in which the author has crafted their text, selecting vocabulary, creating a structure and using language features to express and explore ideas.

Chapters 1–4 are designed to enhance your understanding of the texts you study, and to strengthen your reading skills as well as your analytical writing. They explain the various features of texts that authors can use and shape to convey ideas and to move readers in particular ways. They also show you how to read closely, and to read for implied and symbolic meanings as well as literal meanings. The various activities will enable you to apply the suggested strategies, leading you to engage with the texts you are studying in a deeper and more meaningful way.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on essay writing, explaining the steps required to prepare for, plan and write a coherent and fluent essay on a text in response to a given topic.

CHAPTER 01

READING AND VIEWING STRATEGIES

reading and viewing strategies

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Active reading
- Guided reading
- Close reading
- Inferential reading

This chapter explains a variety of strategies for reading texts with greater insight and understanding. These strategies will help you to go beyond descriptive statements in your writing about a text, and lead you into more analytical and interpretive discussions.

Scan the code or click **here** to watch a video introducing effective reading and viewing strategies.

Active reading

Active reading means more than just reading for leisure or skimming a text. It includes techniques such as predicting and pre-reading, asking questions, annotating, summarising and synthesising. The main goal of active reading is to generate purposeful notes on and ideas about the text being studied. (Note that throughout this chapter, 'reading' is used to mean reading or viewing. The strategies can be applied to a film, for instance, by watching clips and then annotating stills or screenshots.)

Techniques for active reading

- **Predicting and pre-reading.** This technique involves previewing the text and making predictions about what it will contain. This can help you focus on what you will learn from the text and how this learning will be useful later on.
- **Asking questions.** You should always ask questions while reading – questions concerning what the text is about, what the main ideas are and how these ideas relate to your own experiences. This helps you to engage with the text and make broader connections between it and the world.

- **Annotating.** Annotation involves underlining, highlighting and adding notes to the text. This will help you to identify important plot points, key ideas and quotes that you can later use to support your own writing and analysis. The process of annotating a text also helps you to remember it better. See page 9 for some tips on how to annotate your text.
- **Summarising.** Writing a summary involves condensing the text and creating a shorter version, such as a plot summary of a novel or film. This can help you to understand the main ideas and remember the key characters and events.
- **Synthesising notes.** This technique involves combining different types of notes, such as quotes and observations, to create a more complete understanding of the text.

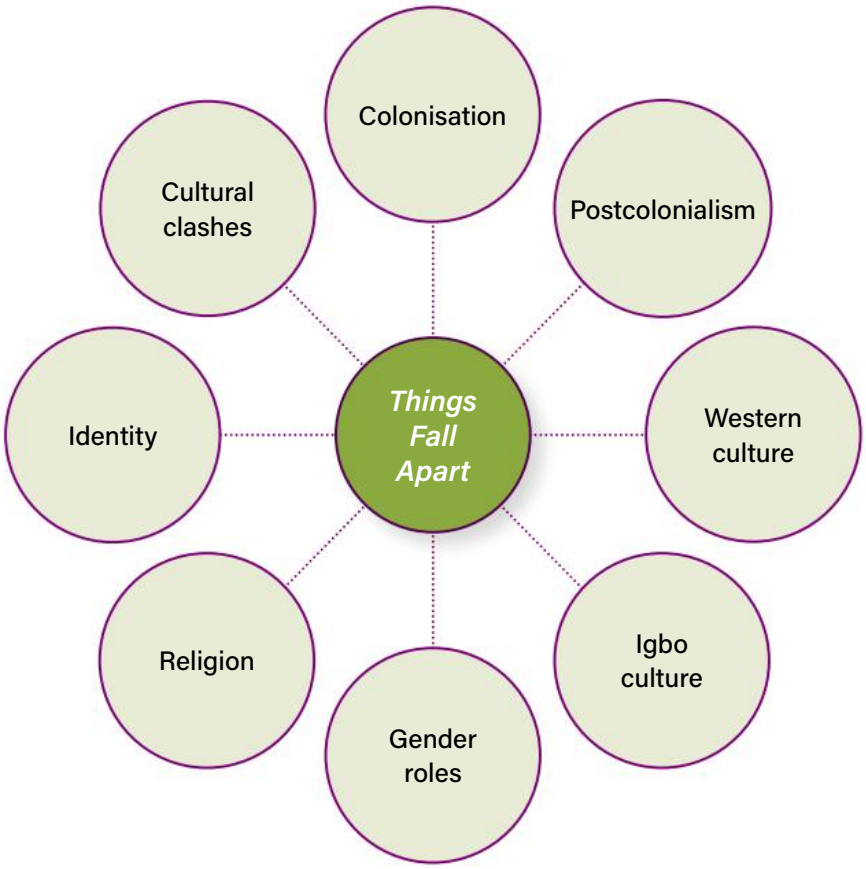
Using graphic organisers for active reading

Graphic organisers are excellent tools for active reading as they allow you to display your notes in a way that makes the connections, key quotes and other important information very clear. Two distinct kinds of graphic organisers are explained below.

Mind maps

A mind map is a visual tool that can help you to organise your thoughts and ideas about the text. It has a central idea or topic (which can simply be the name of your text) around which the additional ideas are arranged in a circle. A mind map can be used to brainstorm ideas and to show connections between different aspects of a text.

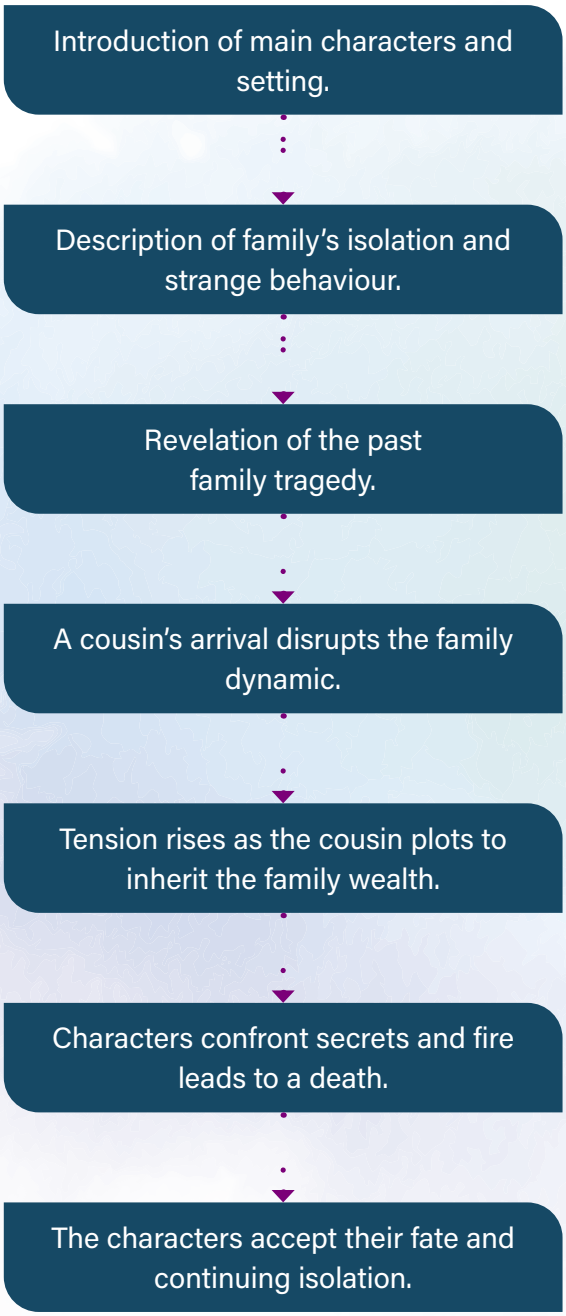
The mind map below shows key ideas and concepts in Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*.



Flow charts

A flow chart shows the structure of a text or the sequence of steps in a process. In text analysis, it can show how the different parts of a text relate to each other, how an author has ordered events and ideas, and how each section of a text contributes to its overall meaning and impact.

The flow chart below summarises the plot of Shirley Jackson's novella *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*.



Practise using active reading techniques

ACTIVITY

Use the following questions to develop your active reading skills at different stages in your study of a text: before reading, while reading and after reading.

Make predictions (before reading)

1 What (if anything) do you know about the text?
2 What do you know about the context of the text?
3 What do you think this text is about?

Create a mind map of your text (while reading)

1 What are the main ideas in the text?
2 How do they relate to each other?
3 What connections can you make between the text and your own experiences?

Create a flow chart of the text's structure (after reading)

1 How is the text organised?
2 What are the main sections of the text and how do they relate to each other? Place them in the sequence in which they occur in the text. Alternatively, place the events of the narrative in chronological order (which might not be the order in which they are described).
3 How does the text's structure contribute to its meaning?

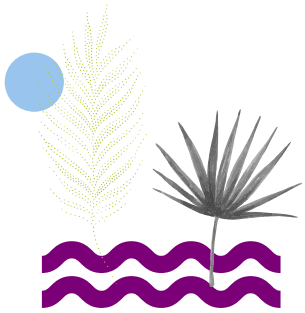
Summarise the text in one sentence (after reading)

1 What is the main idea being presented or explored by the text?
2 What is the main message conveyed by the text?

Guided reading

Guided reading is a reading strategy that involves the teacher (or a teacher's aide, a parent or even another student) modelling reading techniques, scaffolding reading and steering a student towards independent reading.

It involves predicting and discussing the text before reading, conducting think-alouds during reading and then collaborating on the text's analysis after reading. It often follows a model of 'gradual release of responsibility', where the guidance decreases and the student's independent reading increases.



Think-alouds and asking questions

A think-aloud is a teaching technique where the person analysing the text (often the teacher) annotates an extract or a movie still in front of the class and 'thinks aloud' while they write notes. Think-alouds can be a useful reading technique because they show one person's perspective and ideas about the text, in a way that models an approach that can be used by others.

You can do think-alouds with a partner while you are working through the text, or you can ask a teacher or another mentor to go through the process with a section of text you are struggling with.

It is also important to ask meaningful questions about texts. Confident readers often subconsciously question or 'interrogate' texts while they are reading. This might involve questioning the author's intent or the meaning of the text.

Questions to ask about a text

- What is the author's purpose in using a particular word or phrase in this sentence?
- How does this passage contribute to the central ideas and concerns of the text?
- What emotions or feelings does this passage evoke in the reader?
- Are there any symbols or motifs present in this passage, and how do they relate to the text as a whole?
- What is the significance of the language and imagery used in this passage?

Questions are great material for a think-aloud. Try working with a partner or teacher and having them say or write down the questions that come into their mind as they read a passage or view part of the text. Alternatively, you could go through the process of thinking aloud yourself.

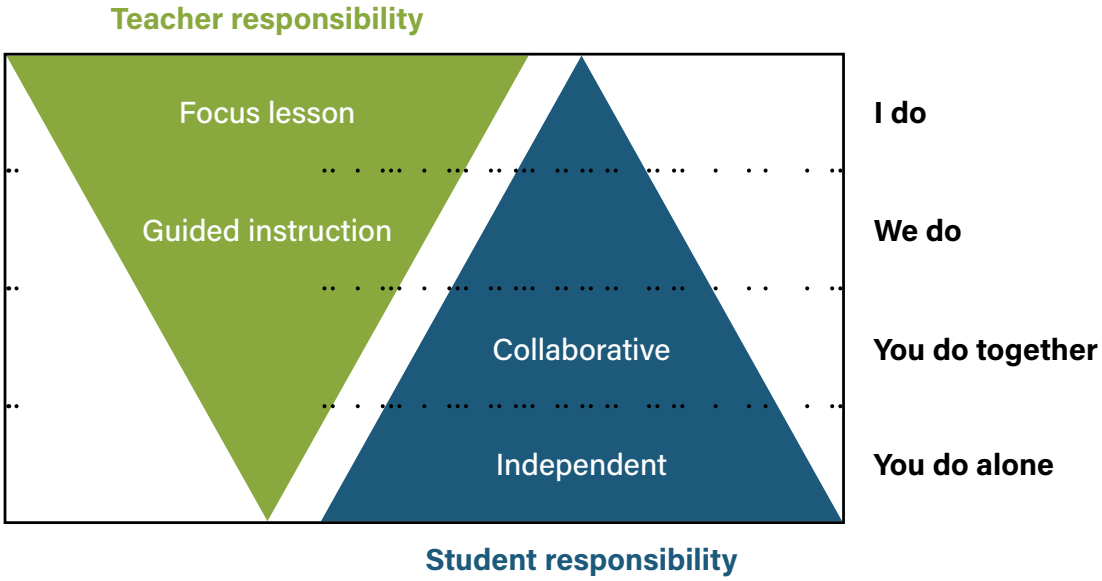
Class discussions

Class discussions are an important part of guided reading. The more everybody contributes to a class discussion, the more thorough the analysis of the text will be. The teacher may begin by modelling some good discussion practices such as think-alouds or asking questions, but then it's over to you to continue the discussion. Here are some ways you can contribute to a class discussion about the text.

- Share your thoughts and opinions on the themes, characters and plot of the text.
- Ask questions to gain a deeper understanding of the text or to clarify any aspects that are ambiguous.
- Provide textual evidence to support your points and arguments.
- Listen actively to the contributions of your classmates and respond respectfully to their ideas.
- Make connections between the text and your own experiences or other texts you have read.
- Share insights and observations you have made while reading the text.
- Reflect on the author's purpose, message or use of literary devices in the text.
- Consider different perspectives and interpretations, and the social and cultural context of the text.

Gradual release of responsibility

In senior English, the ultimate aim is for you to independently read and analyse a text. One model that teachers often use is called the gradual release of responsibility, a phrase attributed to academics David Pearson and Margaret Gallagher. Sometimes, this is referred to as 'I do, we do, you do together, you do alone'. The following diagram, based on the work of Pearson and Gallagher, illustrates this process.



- The first stage of the model is 'I do'. In this stage, the teacher or expert models the skill or strategy for the students. This could include reading a passage aloud and annotating it as an example or walking the class through a problem-solving process.
- The next stage is 'we do'. In this stage, the teacher and students work together to practise the skill or strategy. This could include a class discussion or group activity where the teacher is still leading, but the students are actively participating.
- The third stage is 'you do together'. The students work in pairs or small groups to apply the skill or strategy with guidance from the teacher. The teacher is still available to provide support and feedback.
- The final stage is 'you do alone'. The students are now able to independently apply the skill or strategy with minimal support from the teacher. The teacher may still provide guidance and feedback, but the students work independently to demonstrate their understanding.

This is a good way to learn how to analyse complex texts. It's also something you can do yourself in study groups or even just with a partner. If you and your partner have different skills (for example, your partner is good at analysing texts, and you're good at creative writing) then you can share skills in this way.

Practise peer-guided reading

ACTIVITY

To begin with, choose a short excerpt from the text you are studying.

1. Work with a partner or small group to conduct a think-aloud as you read through the excerpt together. As you read, make note of any questions or observations you have about the text.
2. Once you have finished reading, take turns in the group leading a discussion about the text, using the questions and observations from your think-aloud as a starting point. As you discuss, take note of any new insights or understanding that you gain from your peers' perspectives.
3. Finally, as a group, decide on a specific aspect of the text that you would like to focus on for further analysis and independent reading. Take turns leading the discussion and analysis as you read and re-read the text, gradually releasing responsibility for understanding and interpreting the text to each member of the group.

Close reading

Close reading is a style of reading activity that involves the repeated reading of a short text or extract, annotating the text to reflect your thinking, asking questions to guide analysis and discussion, and conducting extended discussion and analysis. If you have ever read a short piece of text in class and highlighted, annotated and discussed it to the point where you feel like you simply can't squeeze any more from it, then you've done close reading.

How to annotate

- In addition to using a highlighter to mark important words or phrases, use a pen or pencil to record specific thoughts and observations in the margins.
- Create your own symbol system to quickly identify key ideas or important information in the text.
- Constantly ask yourself questions about the text to deepen your understanding and actively engage with the material.
- Keep a record of your questions for future reference and to guide further analysis and discussion.

Common annotation symbols

- ! or * important point
- ? question
- T theme or topic
- KI key idea
- C character
- KQ key quote

Make sure that you're doing more than just colouring in:
annotating includes writing detailed notes around the text you are studying, and not just highlighting key phrases.

Common close-reading tasks

The beauty of close reading is that it allows you to unpeel all the layers of the text. There are many things you can look for when doing a close reading. You might wish to read a text or extract once looking for key ideas, then re-read it looking for character, then read it a third time looking for symbolism or language use. Having multiple exposures to the same piece of text gives you a better chance of finding subtle and nuanced meanings.

Here are some of the things you could look for when you are engaged in close reading.

What to look for	Definition/description
Ideas and concerns	The main ideas, concepts or concerns in the text.
Symbolism	The use of symbols to represent ideas or concepts.
Character development	The growth and change of a character throughout the text.
Relationships between characters	The connections and interactions between characters.
Author's writing style and techniques	The language style and specific techniques used by the author to convey meaning and create an impact.
Social and cultural context	The societal and cultural influences on the text.
Historical context	The historical events and circumstances that influenced the creation of the text.
Vocabulary	The specific choices of words by the author and their impact on the meaning of the text.
Imagery and figurative language	The use of descriptive language and figurative language (e.g. metaphors) to create mental images and comparisons.
Irony and sarcasm	The use of language to convey the opposite of what is expected or is literally stated; can be used to mock or criticise.
Tone and mood	The overall feeling and atmosphere created by the text.
Narrative structure and plot development	The way the story is structured and unfolds.
Repetition and patterns	The repetition of words, phrases or ideas to create a specific effect.
Allusions and references to other texts or events	References to other texts or events that add meaning or depth.
Author's purpose and message	The message the author is trying to convey or the point they are making through the text.
Impact of the text on the reader	The way the text affects the reader emotionally and intellectually.

Perform a layered close reading

ACTIVITY

In this activity you will analyse a short excerpt from a text by looking at multiple aspects of the text, including its main ideas, its use of symbolism and the author's writing style. Remember that developing the skill of close reading is a gradual process, and the more you practise, the better you will become.

1 Select and carefully read a short excerpt from your text, focusing on the overall ideas and concerns. Make notes and highlight relevant phrases and sentences.

2 Re-read the passage, this time focusing on the symbolism used. Take note of any symbols or motifs that stand out to you and briefly describe what they may represent.

ACTIVITY

3 Re-read the passage again, this time focusing on the author's writing style and techniques. Take note of any literary devices or language techniques used in the text and how they contribute to the meaning.

4 Once you have finished three or possibly four readings, discuss your observations and reflections with a partner. Share your observations with each other and see if there are any similarities or differences in your interpretations.

5 Finally, write a short reflection on the activity and what you have learned about the text through the layered close reading process.

Inferential reading

Inferential reading is a complex strategy that involves using cues in the text to make meaning. It often requires multiple readings of sections of a text, drawing on prior knowledge and making connections to other evidence in the text. Basically, making inferences draws on all of the strategies covered so far in this chapter.

Being able to infer meaning is an important and necessary skill for analysing a text. It involves looking beyond the obvious and the literal to understand the author's real meaning, or the wider meaning being conveyed by the text. Being able to infer also improves your ability to analyse features such as character, plot and setting.

Inferring from character

When reading a text, it is easy to become caught up in the literal details of what a character says and does. However, inferring allows you to go beyond surface level description and understand the deeper motives and intentions behind a character's actions. This can be done by looking at the character's establishment, development and relationships.

Establishment refers to how a character is introduced and what the reader initially learns about them. This can include physical descriptions, personality traits and background information. By analysing this information, you can start to form an understanding of the character and make predictions about how they will act in the story.

Development refers to how a character changes and grows throughout the text. This can include how their actions, attitudes and beliefs change, as well as how they interact with other characters. By looking at a character's development, you can start to understand the ideas and concerns that the author is exploring.

Relationships refers to how a character interacts with other characters in the text. This can include their feelings towards other characters, as well as the ways in which their actions and words affect others. By analysing a character's relationships, you can start to understand their role in the story and what they represent.

Inferring from setting

Inferring from setting means looking beyond the physical description of a place and analysing how it relates to the characters and ideas in the text. Setting can be used to reflect aspects of characters' personalities, or to tie in with ideas and concerns in the text.

For example, if the story takes place in a small town, this could suggest a sense of community and connectedness among the characters. It could also be associated with isolation or a limited world view. On the other hand, if the story takes place in a big city, this could suggest a sense of alienation or the need to find a place in a complex world. By analysing the setting, you can start to understand the author's intentions and what they are trying to say about the world.

Inferring from plot and structure

Inferring from plot and structure means looking beyond the surface-level details of the story's events and analysing how the author has used them to create meaning. This can include looking at the ideas and concerns that characters are grappling with, and the conflicts and tensions that arise. It also involves looking at how the author has used structuring devices such as foreshadowing, motifs and symbols.

For example, if the story has a nonlinear structure, this could suggest that the author is trying to convey a sense of confusion or disorientation. On the other hand, if the story has a linear structure, the author could be trying to convey a sense of order and predictability. By analysing the plot and structure, you can start to infer the wider concerns being explored in the text and what the author might be trying to say about them.

Create an inference diary

ACTIVITY

In this activity you will develop your skills at inferring meaning from different features of a text. Begin by selecting a short passage or excerpt from the text that you are currently studying. This passage should contain features that you can infer meaning from, such as character development, setting and plot.

1. As you read the passage, use the strategies of active reading, guided reading and close reading to actively engage with the text. Ask yourself questions, make predictions, and identify key ideas and concerns.
2. Next, take a few minutes to reflect on what you have read and make note of any inferences you have made about the characters, setting and plot.
3. In your inference diary, write down your inferences and explain how you arrived at them. Use evidence from the text to support your claims.
4. Repeat this process for different passages from the same text over the course of a week, each time making new inferences and adding to your diary.
5. After a week, re-read the passages and your inference diary. Reflect on how your understanding of the text has changed over time, and how your inferences have developed.
6. Share your inference diary with a partner or small group and discuss how your inferences compare to their own. Use this as an opportunity to learn from each other and build a deeper understanding of the text together.

CHAPTER 02

IDEAS, CONCERNS AND CONTEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Identifying ideas and concerns
- Historical contexts
- Social and cultural values
- Writing about ideas, concerns and values

The ideas and concerns that a text explores are what the text is really about. Of course, a text is also about the characters, places and events it describes. However, it goes beyond these to address wider issues and concepts that exist in the world outside the text – the world that readers live in. By exploring these ideas and concerns from various perspectives, texts can influence the way readers think about them, possibly changing their attitudes, beliefs and values.

Identifying ideas and concerns

An **idea** is a thought or opinion. In a text, the central ideas can be stated explicitly (clearly or obviously) but they are more often presented implicitly (by implication or suggestion). When you write about a text's ideas and concerns you are making things explicit when they are only implicit, and by doing so you are *interpreting* the text.

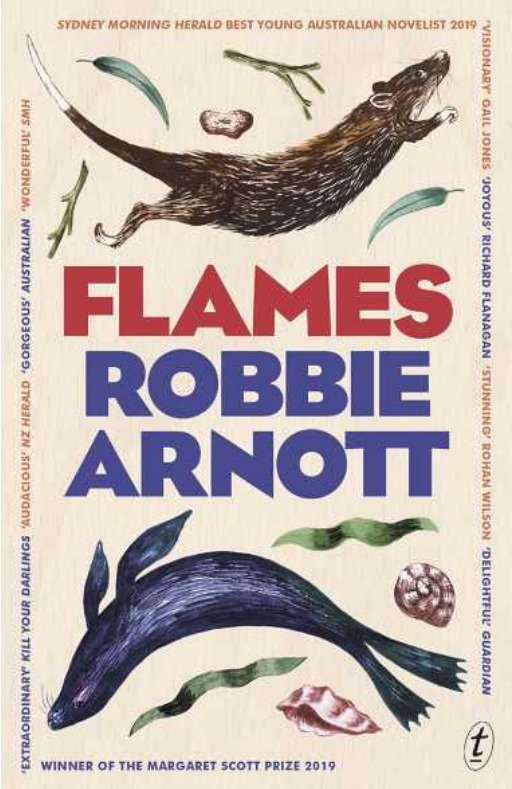
Three main ways of expressing an idea are:

- as a single word, such as 'conflict', 'nature' or 'family'
- as a phrase, such as 'the difficulty of resolving conflict', 'the beauty of nature' or 'the importance of family'
- as a contention, such as 'compromise is needed to resolve conflict', 'the beauty of nature is worth preserving' or 'a stable family gives people a sense of belonging'.

A **concern** is similar to an idea but can be thought of as being more specific. If an idea in a text is the beauty of nature, a concern might be the loss of natural environments due to deforestation and climate change. A text will usually express a point of view or opinion on such concerns.

Titles and covers

The first clues to a text's main ideas and concerns are given by its title and, for a book, its front cover. (For a film, promotional posters and DVD cases serve a similar function.) It is important to keep in mind the distinction between a text's subject matter and the wider, more abstract ideas and concerns it explores.



The title and cover of Robbie Arnott's novel Flames *offer some clues to its ideas and concerns, as well as arousing the potential reader's curiosity. The word 'flames' suggests fire, while the images of animals, leaves and branches signal an interest in the natural world. The shells and seal also suggest that water settings might be used. In fact, all of these elements are present in the novel, and the reader gradually discovers their significance and the kinds of connections that exist between them.*

Less obviously, there is a tension between the idea of fire (from the title) and the idea of water (from the cover imagery). This tension runs through the novel and is crucial to the tense and dramatic scene at the novel's climax.

Common ideas and concerns in texts

Some ideas are frequently explored by imaginative texts such as novels, plays and films. The following table summarises some of these common ideas and concerns.

Broad idea	Ideas and concerns	
Growing up	• childhood innocence • finding an identity	• fulfilling dreams • facing challenges
Gender roles	• gender and power • unequal opportunities	• the nature of gender • social and cultural expectations
Love	• different kinds of love • changes in love (beginnings and endings)	• love and social conventions • effects of love
Family	• different kinds of family • benefits and challenges of family life	• family and identity • family bonds and responsibilities

Broad idea	Ideas and concerns	
Justice	• importance of justice • relationship between justice and the law	• causes of injustice • difficulty of achieving just outcomes
Prejudice	• types of prejudice • effects of prejudice • overcoming/ending prejudice	• the roles of social and cultural context in developing and overcoming prejudice
Power	• types of power • uses and misuses of power	• resisting power • distribution of power in a society
Survival	• challenges to surviving • qualities that aid survival	• the role of fate or chance • surviving against the odds
Conflict	• types of conflict • causes of conflict	• resolution of conflict • conflict and morality
War	• causes of war • effects of war	• reality of war versus how it is represented
Nature	• impact of human activity • sources of beauty and inspiration	• fragility of nature • interconnectedness of nature

Identify ideas and concerns

ACTIVITY

Choose one of the texts you are studying and consider the following.

1 Does the title of your text help you to identify any of its main ideas or concerns? Is the link obvious or subtle?

2 Look at the cover of your text. For a film, look at the cover of the DVD or a promotional poster. Does this suggest any main ideas, or merely the subject matter? Explain your answer.

3 Refer to the table of common ideas and concerns above. Does your text include any of the broad ideas in the left-hand column? If so, state two or three related ideas and concerns in your text, similar to those suggested in the right-hand column of the table. If not, identify a broad idea in your text and describe two or three more specific ideas and concerns.

Conflicts and tensions

Closely related to a text's ideas and concerns are the conflicts and tensions that run through it. These are often underpinned by conflicting ideas and values, enabling the author to explore issues by pitching ideas and forces against one another.

Conflicts are present in all narrative texts; the question of how and when these conflicts will be resolved sustains the reader's interest and curiosity.

Tensions can cause conflict as well as result from it, and they rise and fall throughout a narrative. Crisis points, turning points, the climax and the resolution are all ways in which a narrative develops conflicts and tensions, sometimes intensifying them and sometimes resolving them. (See page 25 for more about these key points of tension in a narrative.)

The following table summarises some common conflicts and tensions in texts.

Type of conflict or tension	Examples
Inner conflict	• conflicts of conscience • desire to escape / to gain freedom • tension between responsibilities and personal desires • dreams versus reality
Interpersonal conflict	• tensions between family members/lovers/friends • conflicts within a workplace/community
Conflict between groups	• war • political contests • tensions due to prejudice and discrimination • movements to achieve equal rights or protest against inequality
The individual versus the society	• resistance to government repression • resistance to social expectations and conventions
Contest of ideas	• good versus evil • right versus wrong • fate versus free will • moral challenges
Journeys	• physical journey to find someone or something, with obstacles faced along the way • quest to find peace/happiness/understanding

A conventional narrative is structured to gradually increase in tension as a conflict becomes more intense, leading to the climax. After this, the conflict is largely or entirely resolved and the tension reduces.

However, many nonlinear narratives (see page 24) don't have this structure. The following example discusses the way in which conflict and tension are used in the nonlinear narrative of Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.

The notion of conflict in Chronicle of a Death Foretold *is apparent from the opening sentence:*

> *On the day they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on.*

The reference to a murder suggests an intense disagreement or hatred. The question arises: who will commit the murder, and why? Normally such a question creates tension, which is only relieved near the end of the narrative when identities and motives are finally revealed. In Márquez's novel, though, this information is conveyed by the end of the first chapter. Nevertheless, several sources of tension run through the text, perhaps the strongest of which is the fact that the townspeople, many of whom were forewarned of the Vicario brothers' intentions, did nothing to stop them. There are other tensions, too, such as the brothers' strong sense of family honour being set against the appalling nature of the crime, and the doubt surrounding Santiago's wrongdoing. The early revelation of the murder details creates a sense of inevitability, yet the many descriptions of missed opportunities to prevent the murder, and even of characters' apathy and indifference, create suspense, intrigue and even horror.

Identify conflicts and tensions

ACTIVITY

1. List five conflicts or tensions in your text. Be as specific as you can. Use the table of common conflicts and tensions opposite as a starting point.
2. Identify a crisis point or turning point in your text. What things (e.g. people, groups, ideas) are in conflict at this point? Does the tension increase or decrease from here?
3. What is the main conflict that leads to the narrative climax? To what extent is this conflict resolved in the climax and the denouement that follows? Do any tensions remain at the end of the text?
4. If you are studying poetry, select one poem and identify words or images that are strongly contrasting, or that suggest opposing ideas. What tension is being developed or explored through these language choices?
5. Write a paragraph about two or three of the main conflicts and tensions in your texts. Use the example above as a guide.

Historical contexts

Historical context refers to all the events and circumstances of a particular time period and place. These include key leaders of the time, technological and scientific developments, and the general features of society. When an author creates a text, they do so within their historical context, and the dominant attitudes, beliefs and values of their time shape their exploration of ideas and concerns in the text.

Historical context is a **context of culture**: that is, it covers the society as a whole. In addition, the **context of situation** – the specific circumstances around the creation of a text – also influences the author's presentation of ideas and concerns. Elements of the context of situation could include aspects of the author's life (their education, relationships, cultural background and so on) as well as details relating to the publication or performance of the work.

Context of production

The historical context in which a text is produced is known as the context of production. Authors such as Sophocles (in ancient Greece), Shakespeare (in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century) and Austen (in the early nineteenth century) were working in very different times from each other and from our own time, and their work reflects this.

Although understanding a text's historical context is vital to understanding its meaning, remember that authors don't simply reproduce the dominant beliefs and expectations of their time. For example, works such as Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* and Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* are highly critical of the limits to women's agency and independence in the conservative patriarchal societies in which the authors lived.

As you collect information about a text's context of production it can be useful to summarise it. One way to do this is to create a context map like the one below.

Context of reception

A text's context of reception is the context in which that text is read or viewed. Just as a text's context of production influences its construction and meaning, the reader's historical context shapes their response to and interpretation of a text. When you are studying a text produced in a different historical context from your own, be aware of the changes that have occurred as time has passed.

> *Sophocles' Oedipus the King, written over two thousand years ago, suggests that fate is determined and the gods have active roles in people's lives – ideas that were common in Sophocles' time but are not widely accepted now. Oedipus' gradual realisation of his fate, and of the terrible crimes he has unknowingly committed, might be something that we now regard as impossible or implausible. However, if we set aside our contemporary context and place ourselves in the world of ancient Greece, it becomes possible to see Oedipus' determined quest to uncover the truth for the sake of his city, and his deep remorse for the errors of his past, as very recognisable and sympathetic qualities.*

Analyse the historical context

ACTIVITY

1 Research the period in which your text was created: the key events, political leaders, social attitudes, forms of work and entertainment, and dominant religious beliefs and practices of the time.

2 Identify the key events and circumstances that the author has drawn on or refers to in the text. Create a context map for your text, based on the one opposite for *My Brilliant Career.*

3 What impact do these events and circumstances have on the text's meaning? For example, does the text present a point of view on pressing issues and concerns of the time?

4 Does the text use features and conventions that are no longer commonly used (such as the chorus in Greek drama)? If it does, how do these shape your responses to characters and events? If not, in what ways does the text's construction reflect its historical context?

5 How does your own historical context influence your response to the text? Write a paragraph outlining some of the similarities and differences between the context of production (the author's historical context) and the context of reception (in this case, your own historical context), and how these affect your understanding of the text.

Social and cultural values

Values are qualities that a society regards as worthwhile. They are widely accepted within a particular society, and underpin the conventions and laws that bind a society together.

Values shift over time, so social and cultural values are closely connected to the historical context. In fact, they form a crucial part of that context.

Values provide a basis for people's everyday decisions and judgements about right and wrong behaviour. There are many different values; this list includes some of the most widely held values in Western societies.

- compassion
- dignity
- equality
- freedom of speech
- honesty
- integrity
- justice
- loyalty
- industriousness
- patriotism
- religious freedom
- respect for others
- responsibility
- tolerance
- trustworthiness

The role of culture

Different cultures can emphasise different values. For example:

- Some cultures regard individual freedoms and rights as extremely important, while others might have higher regard for loyalty to the group.
- Patriotism is a strongly held value in some cultures but might be regarded more cautiously in others.
- Equality is valued in some cultures, whereas conforming to a strong hierarchy or class system can be seen as more important in other cultures.

As a result of these sorts of differences, the values you hold may contrast with those of someone who lives in another society, or who lives in the same society but has different religious beliefs or cultural practices. Texts can explore such variations and contrasts.

Individuals tend to absorb the values and priorities of their culture as they grow up, although their experiences can lead them to question those values and priorities. Members of a minority group might hold the values of their culture and question the values of the mainstream or dominant social groups. The values that people hold are not fixed: individuals can change their values as a result of their experiences and education.

Values in texts

In narrative texts, characters embody values through their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and actions. We respond to characters largely by responding to the values they hold – or to the fact that they appear to have no values. This applies to individuals in nonfiction narratives, too, since a person's attitudes and beliefs are usually central to the author's interest in writing about them.

In poetry, values are conveyed by the speaker or persona (see page 43). The way the persona 'views' the world suggests a set of attitudes and beliefs, which are usually implicit rather than explicit.

Characterisation

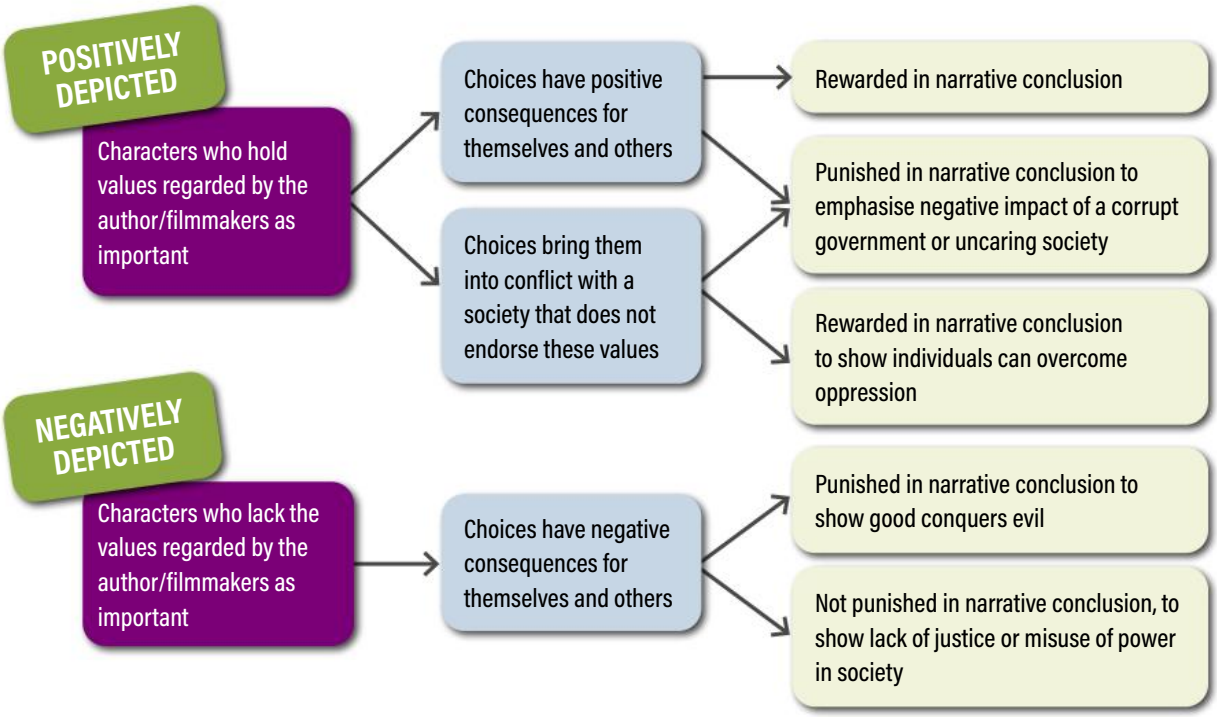
A text can present values by strongly associating them with particular characters. Some of the ways this can be done include:

- a third-person narrative voice describing the attitudes and beliefs of each character
- a first-person narrator describing their own attitudes and beliefs
- actions and relationships showing a character's values through what they do rather than what they say – for example, through their loyalty, integrity or kindness
- costumes and personal props of characters in drama and film – for example, excessive jewellery indicating selfishness; plain, unadorned clothes reflecting humility
- the name of a character, suggesting traits and attitudes they embody.

Narrative structure

A text will also present values through the narrative structure.

- Characters' values are tested at crisis points and the narrative climax, and they can shift at turning points.
- The narrative conclusion often shows the consequences of the characters' values, or of the dominant values in a society. In this way, the text presents a view on the characters' values and the values of the society, as the following diagram illustrates.



Identify values presented in a text

ACTIVITY

1. Identify five values that are held by the main characters in your text. For each value, give a textual example, such as a quotation or an action taken by a character. Indicate which values are held by which characters.
2. Do any characters act in ways that contradict their basic values? What are the reasons for this (e.g. greed, ambition, fear)? What are the consequences (e.g. internal conflict, interpersonal conflict, unhappiness, remorse)? Is your view of the character altered as a result?
3. Do any characters change their values? Why?
4. Which values does the text suggest are most important? State which characters possess these values and which characters do not, giving a brief quotation or explanation for each.
5. Construct a diagram showing the association of values with two or three main characters and how the text suggests approval or disapproval of their values through what happens to the characters. Use the diagram above as a guide.

Writing about ideas, concerns and values

The word bank on the next page contains twenty useful verbs for discussing the ways in which a text presents ideas, concerns and values.

- Avoid using the same few terms repeatedly throughout your response; use synonyms to vary your word choices.
- The words in the 'positively' and 'negatively' rows are effective when a text expresses a viewpoint on an idea or concern.
- Create a version of this word bank to which you can add more verbs for writing about ideas, concerns and values.

Alternatives to 'presents'				
conveys	explores	implies	shows	signifies
demonstrates	illustrates	indicates	signals	suggests
Alternatives to 'presents positively'				
advocates	endorses	promotes	recommends	supports
Alternatives to 'presents negatively'				
challenges	condemns	critiques	exposes	questions

As well as using a range of these verbs, aim to vary the ways in which you begin sentences about ideas, concerns and values. Simply repeating the phrase 'the text shows that ...' will look formulaic and simplistic, and won't clearly link textual evidence to your analytical and interpretive comments about the text. Try using **sentence starters** like the ones below, as they lead you to include an explanation of *how* the text presents an idea. They will also help you to use different sentence structures, adding variety and fluency to your writing.

- (Author) presents the character of ... as ... in order to convey the idea that ...
- By revealing ..., ... (author) signals that ...
- The text explores the tension between ... and ..., suggesting that ...
- Endorsing the idea of ..., the text resolves the conflict between ... and ... by ...
- The positive portrayal of ... challenges the view that ...
- In the climax, through which the text condemns the idea that ..., the characters discover that ...

Use the word bank

ACTIVITY

Practise using the vocabulary in the word bank by completing the following exercises for a text you are studying. You can use the suggested sentence starters or alternatives; aim to use some complex sentences.

1 Write five sentences about ideas, concerns or values presented by the text. Refer to the first two rows of the word bank above, and use a different verb for 'shows' in each sentence. For example, 'The text suggests that personal freedoms should never be sacrificed.'

2 Write three sentences about ideas or values presented positively in the text. Use verbs from the third row of the table. For example, 'The text endorses the freedom of the individual as a fundamental right.'

3 Write three sentences about ideas or values presented negatively in the text. Use verbs from the fourth row of the table. For example, 'The text challenges the idea that personal freedoms should sometimes be sacrificed for the greater good.'

CHAPTER

03

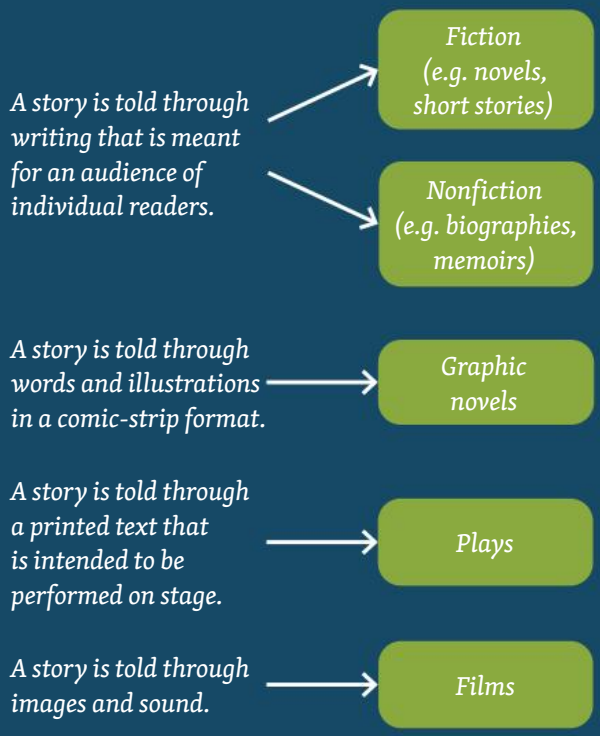
FEATURES OF NARRATIVE TEXTS

features of narrative texts

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Plot and narrative structure
- Narrators and narrative viewpoint
- Characterisation
- Setting
- Short stories
- Drama
- Film
- Graphic novels
- Nonfiction

Storytelling is a powerful way of inviting readers and viewers into other lived experiences; it expands people's understanding of humanity and the wider world. Fiction and nonfiction narratives can be created in a variety of forms, including prose, drama (plays), film and graphic novels. These are summarised in the diagram below.



Authors and filmmakers make purposeful decisions in the crafting and construction of stories, observing features and using techniques that are unique to their chosen form. This chapter will help you understand these features and techniques and how they help to create meaning through the construction of characters and plot, and by conveying core ideas, concerns and tensions.

Plot and narrative structure

The term **plot** refers to the events of a story. Authors construct narratives in ways they think will best capture their audience's attention, present an engaging story and guide their audience to feel invested in how the events unfold and resolve for the characters.

Analyse plot

ACTIVITY

1 Construct a table with two columns. Use a computer document for this so you can add additional columns in question 3 and then continue to write notes as you study the text.
   a Column 1: 'significant moments'. List at least ten of the most significant plot points from the text you are studying. Include a brief summary of what happens as well as page numbers or time codes.
   b Column 2: 'characterisation'. For each of the significant moments in column 1, comment on how it adds to your understanding of key characters.

2 Use your table to identify points in the narrative where there are shifts in time. Note these shifts in the table. What is the purpose of these temporal shifts? Do they emphasise connections between the past and the present? Do they create a sense of foreboding or provide important backstory?

3 Add two columns to the right of the table.
   a Column 3: 'ideas/concerns/tensions'. Comment on how each significant moment enhances your understanding of the central ideas, concerns and tensions in the text.
   b Column 4: 'key quotations'. Find and explain quotations that support your observations.

The **narrative structure** is the arrangement of plot points. The sequencing of the plot is crucial as it guides the reader's comprehension of the story, understanding of characters and engagement with the central ideas.

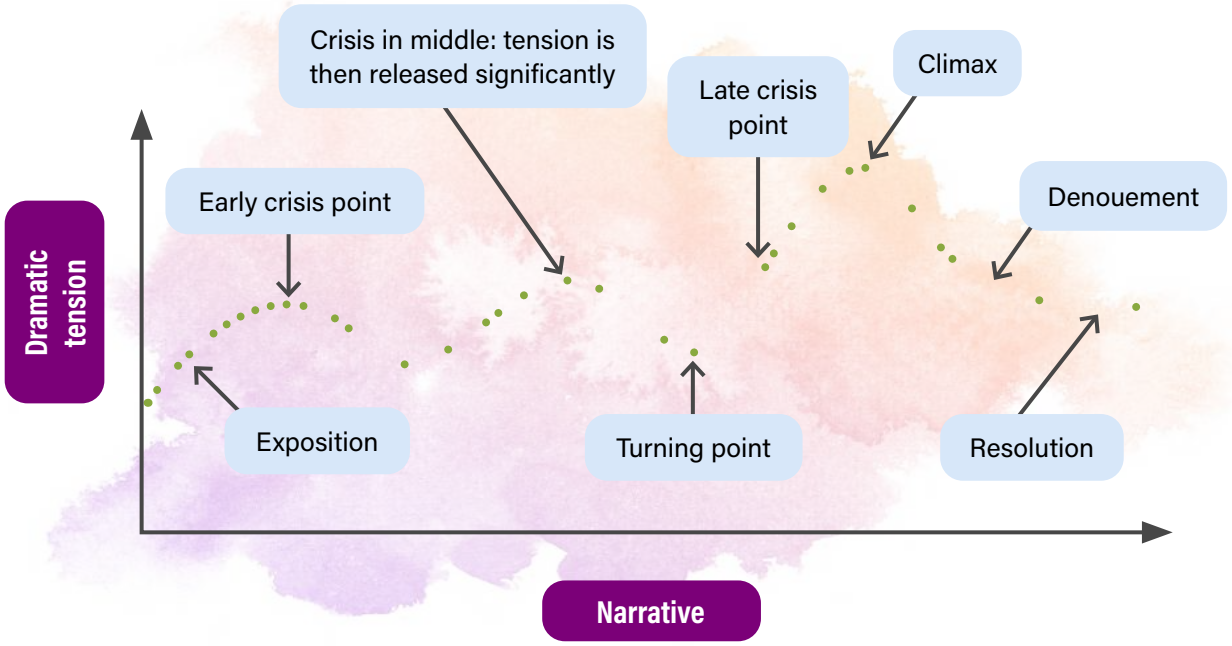
The narrative may order the plot points chronologically or nonchronologically.

- A chronological or linear plot is presented from the earliest moment to the most recent. The audience thus experiences the events in the same order in which they occur for the characters.
- A nonchronological or nonlinear plot is presented out of order, with the story moving backwards and forwards in time. In presenting a story in a nonlinear manner, an author is able to emphasise the impact of the past on the present, drawing direct connections between events that occur at different times.

The term 'temporal shift' refers to a significant change in time, whether it is chronological or not.

Narrative structure can also be understood in terms of the rising and falling tension throughout a narrative. It includes the following key points or sections.

- The **exposition** introduces the main characters, the setting and the central conflict.
- **Crisis points** are moments when a character is presented with a problem or challenge that tests their values and beliefs.
- **Turning points** are decisive changes in the course of events. They often coincide with, or closely follow, a crisis point.
- At the **climax** the tension rises to its highest point; the main conflict between characters and/or ideas reaches a peak and must be resolved.
- A sense of closure is created in the **denouement** when all, or most, aspects of the story are explained and answers to mysteries are revealed. The French term 'denouement' translates as 'untie the knot'.
- The **resolution** brings the narrative to a close, and the key tension or conflict of the story is resolved.



Note that in a nonchronological narrative the plot points do not all occur in chronological order. For example, a turning point might be the revelation of something that occurred in the past, or the exposition might be set at a later time than the majority of the story.

While the graph above shows three crisis points, a long narrative such as a novel or film will generally include a number of crisis points of varying magnitude that build towards the climax. The rising and falling tensions are designed to reveal the evolution of a character's traits and values, as well as guide the reader's appreciation of the challenges and triumphs that form the character arc from the beginning to the end of the story.

Analyse key points in narrative structure

ACTIVITY

Make a copy of the graph on the previous page. If you are studying short stories, make a copy of the graph on page 32 and complete this activity for several stories.

1 Identify and explain the moments in your text that correspond with each label on the graph. Add the page number or time code.

2 Consider the moments you have labelled as crisis points. What do they reveal about the characters involved? How do these moments change them?

3 How does the climax bring the major conflicts and tensions of the story to a peak? What is at stake?

4 How does the resolution resolve the central conflicts of the story? How have characters (or ideas) evolved in order to reach this point?

Narrators and narrative viewpoint

The **narrator** is the character or voice who is telling the story. There are two main forms of narration.

- Character-bound narration occurs when the story is being related by a character within the story.
- External narration is when the story is being told by an omniscient voice that is located outside the story.

The **narrative viewpoint** is the perspective or lens through which the story is being perceived. A narrative viewpoint will be:

- character-bound when the narrator is a character involved in the story
- external (omniscient) when the narration is not connected to a character involved in the main action of the story
- external (character-bound) when the perspective is aligned with a particular character or several characters but is not voiced by the characters themselves.

The features of these narrators and viewpoints are summarised in the table below.

Narrator / narrative viewpoint	Pronouns	Effects
Character-bound	First-person singular and plural: I, me, us, we	• The story is related through the voice of an individual who is part of the action of the story. • The reader's knowledge relies on a single character's subjective view, and is therefore limited. • The narrative provides a rich, detailed understanding of the narrator's personality, beliefs, vulnerabilities, complexities, motives and aspirations. • The tone and style of the narrative reflect the personality, background and social context of the narrator.

Narrator / narrative viewpoint	Pronouns	Effects
External (omniscient)	Third-person singular and plural: he, him, she, her, they, them	• The narrative voice is located outside the text, and appears all-knowing. • The narrative provides a more detached and objective account than a character-bound perspective, putting the reader in the position of observer rather than participant. • The tone and style will generally be more formal, thus presenting the omniscient voice as reliable and truthful. • The reader is encouraged to form their own judgements and appreciate the complexities in the situations and issues explored.
External (character-bound)	Third-person singular and plural: he, him, she, her, they, them	• The narrative can introduce different perspectives or convey information available to some characters but not others. • It can show different sides of a conflict or problem. • The narrative can create a contrast between how characters see themselves and how they are viewed by others.

Character-bound narration

The following example analyses the impact of using a character-bound narrator in Trevor Noah's memoir *Born a Crime*.

> *In his memoir* Born a Crime, *Trevor Noah positions his readers to feel a powerful resonance with his life experiences, using the character-bound narrative voice typical of a memoir. Noah discloses early that his violent stepfather 'put a bullet in the back of [his] mother's head', but leaves her fate to be revealed only at the end of the text. Having built an impression of the unyieldingly fierce nature of the bond between himself and his mother, Noah's presentation of the volatile home environment that he escaped as a youth places dread and fear in the mind of the reader. Noah describes 'the most terrifying moment of [his] life' as he is bashed by his stepfather, and his confusion and rage as he grapples with his mother's decision to have another child. His first-person narrative places the reader within the action of the story, and the reader shares the horror and dread Noah feels as he receives the phone call in which he hears, 'Mom's been shot'.*

External omniscient narration

The paragraph on the next page analyses the effect of using an external omniscient narrator in conveying the complexity and nuance of characters.

In utilising an external omniscient voice as the narrator of Pride and Prejudice, *Jane Austen allows the reader to become privy to the emotions, opinions and motivations of a number of characters – thoughts and feelings that are unknown to other characters. The narrative initially positions the reader to agree with the impressions formed by Elizabeth and others that Darcy is proud, disagreeable and 'above being pleased'. However, the use of an external omniscient narrator means that, despite Elizabeth being unaware, the reader learns that Darcy 'had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her' and that he feels the 'danger of paying [her] too much attention'. Thus, the complexity of the enigmatic Darcy is apparent to the reader, however inscrutable he is to the people with whom he interacts.*

Matthew Macfadyen as Darcy in the 2005 film version of *Pride and Prejudice*, directed by Joe Wright. Credit: PictureLux / The Hollywood Archive / Alamy Stock Photo

External character-bound narration

An external narrator can be removed from the action of the narrative but be attached to the perspective of a character. The following paragraph analyses the effect of this narrative viewpoint in Matt Ottley's graphic novel *Requiem for a Beast*.

Matt Ottley's multimodal narrative Requiem for a Beast *is, in part, narrated by an external voice that is bound to the character of the young stockman. As a result, Ottley's reader is sympathetic to the insecurities and uncertainties of 'the boy' as he 'ride[s] his trepidation' in 'the last round of the season'. He is surrounded by men vastly more experienced than he as he faces the looming threat of 'that bull', one that had 'nearly killed a man'. In focusing on the boy's perspective, perceived through the voice of an external narrator, the reader is aware of the boy's intense fear as he comes face to face with the bull, a symbol of the boy's inner demons. However, the narrative also makes the reader aware of the pervasive violence of this environment, and presents the brutal killing of the bull in a more objective manner than a first-person narrative might have.*

Analyse narrative viewpoint

ACTIVITY

1 Write a paragraph analysing the effect of the narrative viewpoint in the text you are studying. Use the examples on the previous two pages as a guide for your writing.

2 Think about what the narrator does *not* reveal. Select two characters whose perspectives are not presented and explain how this affects your perception of them. For example, are you less sympathetic towards these characters than you are towards characters whose perspectives are presented?

3 Does the narrative viewpoint shift at any stage? What is the effect of this shift? How do the different perspectives complement one another?

Characterisation

Characterisation is the way in which an author constructs a character. In creating compelling, complex and nuanced characters, authors guide readers and viewers to feel invested in the story, its outcomes, the character arcs and the narrative's ultimate messages.

Knowing the characters

While you will give most of your attention to the protagonist and the other main characters of the text, it is important to have a thorough understanding of all the characters, even those with relatively minor roles. How the main characters interact with one another and with the minor characters reveals a great deal, with each character playing an integral role in the author's exploration of ideas and values.

Record key information about main characters

ACTIVITY

1 Construct a table with three columns, leaving room to add two more.
   a Column 1: 'main characters'. List all the central characters in your text.
   b Column 2: 'demographics'. For each central character add details such as their age, where they live and their connections to other characters.
   c Column 3: 'qualities'. List as many adjectives as possible to describe each main character. These may be derived from quotations as well as the characters' relationships and actions.

2 Add two more columns.
   a Column 4: 'key quotes'. Write at least five short quotes for each main character; select quotes that show important qualities and values. The quotes can be things the character says, things said about the character by other characters, or things said about the character by the narrative voice.
   b Column 5: 'authorial choices'. What choices has the author made in creating each main character? Consider how they act at crisis points, turning points and the climax, as well as the qualities you listed in column 3.

In column 4 and column 5, analyse how the quotations and choices enhance your understanding of the characters.

Analysing and interpreting characters

Authors use their characters to reveal the complexity of humanity. An author's construction of a character's behaviour, attitudes and choices enables the text to endorse or challenge a variety of views and values within society. A sophisticated response to a text will go beyond merely describing aspects of a character, and will convey an understanding of how characterisation and narrative structure work together to explore ideas, concerns and tensions.

Two effective ways of analysing the connections between characterisation and narrative structure are:

- looking at how characters act at crisis points
- tracing a character's evolution (their 'character arc') over the course of the narrative.

Characters and crisis points

Characters are tested at moments of crisis, revealing their values through their decision-making. The following example considers how the protagonist of Yōko Ogawa's 1994 novel *The Memory Police* reveals her values as she is confronted with loss and danger.

> *In* The Memory Police, *the inhabitants of a small island experience not simply the gradual loss of objects, but the loss of their memories of these objects. Those who retain their memories of disappeared objects are in danger of arrest by the Memory Police. When the narrator, a novelist, discovers that her editor, R, is one of those who still has all his memories, she arranges for him to hide in a small room within her home, despite the great danger this puts her in. Her dedication to her editor's safety reveals not just her affection for him but also her resistance to the authoritarian rule of the Memory Police and her commitment to the idea of memory, without which her role as a novelist becomes increasingly meaningless. Throughout her narrative, she shows her selflessness and devotion to others at every stage, despite the constant threat posed by the Memory Police, making her own eventual disappearance all the more affecting.*

Character arcs

Like real people, characters in texts are not static; they develop and evolve, often changing dramatically over the course of the narrative. These changes can be reflected in their interactions with others, in how they see themselves, and in their attitudes and beliefs.

In Stephen Johnson's 2020 film *High Ground*, the character Gutjuk changes in response to events and as he gains a greater understanding of the conflict between First Nations people and the colonising white forces in Arnhem Land.

> *In the opening scenes of* High Ground, *Gutjuk is a young First Nations boy yet to learn the ways of his people, or of the wider world. During a hunt he alerts a wallaby, showing his innocence and inexperience. However, when he returns to his family he becomes caught up in a massacre that leads to his being rescued by a white policeman, Travis, and raised by a white family on a nearby mission. As a result, he is given the name Tommy and learns to speak English. He also becomes close to the woman who has brought him up, without fully belonging to the white world.*

Twelve years later, in a series of violent acts and tense encounters, Gutjuk meets again with his uncle, Baywara, and becomes caught between the two sides of a bitter conflict. He becomes aware of the ruthlessness of the white colonisers, and increasingly sympathetic to the violent means used by his uncle and the young woman Gulwirri to resist and repel the whites. At one point he frees two white men and burns their bullets, signalling his opposition to unnecessary violence. At the end of the film, however, he rejects the name Tommy and prepares to shoot Travis, suggesting that he now accepts the need for violent retribution. Finally, he leaves the mission with Gulwirri, firmly establishing his solidarity with the cause of First Nations people.

Analyse and interpret characters using narrative structure

ACTIVITY

Refer to the graph you completed for the activity on page 26 when completing the questions below.

1 Select a crisis or turning point that involves one of the main characters.

   a Explain the challenge or choice confronting the character. Does the narrative suggest that one choice is better than another?

   b Is the character forced to choose between their own interests and the interests of others? If so, which do they choose and why?

   c How does their decision convey their commitment to, or rejection of, a person or idea?

   d What does the character learn or gain from this crisis and the decision or choice they make in response to it? What do they lose?

2 Identify a significant change in one main character.

   a Explain the nature of the change.

   b What are the underlying reasons for this change? For example, new information is gained; experiences force the character to revise their beliefs; the character grows up.

   c Which of the character's qualities or values are unchanged?

   d Write a paragraph analysing how the character evolves over the course of the narrative. Make reference to the narrative structure as well as authorial choices. Use the example based on *High Ground* above as a guide.

Setting

The setting is the place and time in which the action of a narrative occurs. The narratives of novels and films usually have multiple settings; short stories and plays often have a single setting. The setting is not simply the physical environment, but a combination of many different factors. These include:

- geographical location
- historical context
- social context
- cultural context.

When settings are established in an effective way, the reader becomes immersed in the world of the story and the characters are grounded in a reality that is imaginable and relatable to the reader. The role that contexts play in building these worlds is explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

Explore the significance of settings

ACTIVITY

1 Construct a table with three columns to summarise the main settings of the text you are studying.

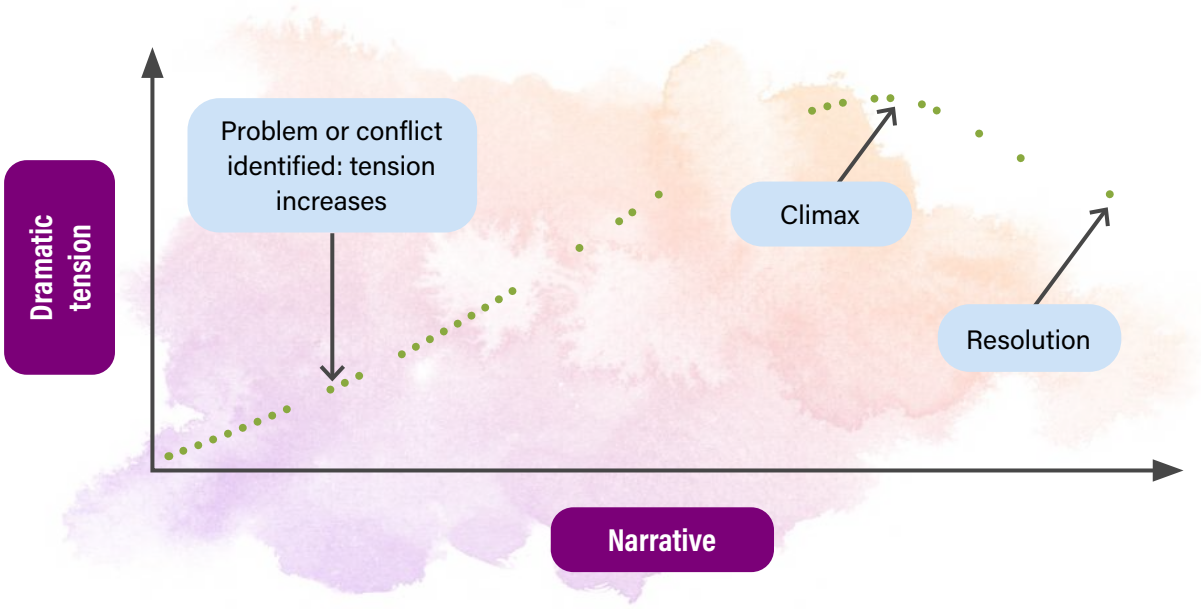
- a Column 1: 'settings'. List all the main settings used in your text. Provide as much detail as you can, e.g. place names; interior as well as external settings. Include times, e.g. dates or years if known; month or season of the year.
- b Column 2: 'qualities'. List words that describe the main qualities of each setting.
- c Column 3: 'characters'. List the characters who occupy each of these spaces and note how each of them feels when they are in it. What do these feelings reveal or suggest about the character?

Short stories

The features of narrative discussed so far in this chapter are all relevant to short stories. However, compared to an extended narrative like a novel or film, in a short story the time frame will usually be shorter, there are fewer settings and characters, and the main characters undergo less growth and change.

Concentrated story structure

The narrative structure described on page 25 is presented in a much more concentrated manner in a short story, which usually commences with a moment of conflict or tension. The graph below illustrates the concentrated story structure for this shorter form of narrative.



Links between stories

When studying a collection of short stories, you need to develop a detailed understanding of each story as a carefully crafted narrative on its own as well as understanding what connects the stories as a whole. Stories within a collection may be united by a number of factors such as:

- their exploration of various facets of an emotion, event or place
- recurring elements such as a character, a setting or a particular image or metaphor
- a linking idea (e.g. family, growing up) being explored from a variety of narrative perspectives.

The title of the collection will usually give an indication of what the unifying feature is.

The following example analyses a connection within Tessa Hadley's short story collection *Bad Dreams and Other Stories*.

> *Underscored by subtle tension and foreboding, many of the stories in Tessa Hadley's* Bad Dreams *are united by their exploration of the discomfort of various young women as they deviate from their norms. In 'An Abduction', fifteen-year-old Jane agrees to take a ride with three unfamiliar boys. Hadley presents a young girl who is inexperienced yet excited by the desire and longing she feels, emotions that represent a departure from the 'listless' girl of mere hours earlier. Like Jane, who is sure that 'she should be more thoroughly embarked on her teenage life', Laura, in 'Experience', chides herself for having 'never lived'. Though several years older than Jane, Laura experiences a similar sense of despair about the deficit she feels in her life when compared to the lives of her peers. After a chain of uncharacteristically impulsive actions, Laura realises 'to [her] surprise' that she feels 'hard, bleak, grey, satisfactory freedom'. Through these and other characters, Hadley presents the liberating feeling that can accompany moments of risk and spontaneity.*

Explore links between stories

ACTIVITY

Answer the following questions for a collection of short stories you are studying.

1. What does the title of the collection suggest about its main concerns?
2. List the main settings of each story. Are there any recurring settings? Look for types of settings rather than actual places, e.g. domestic settings, beaches, parks, city streets or cafes.
3. Do any characters appear in more than one story? If so, how do these stories portray different stages or aspects of the character's life?
4. Can you identify a motif or recurring idea in two or more of the stories? For example, windows, curtains and mirrors are motifs in *Bad Dreams*. What do the motifs you have identified stand for or suggest about the characters?
5. Write a paragraph analysing the connections between two or three stories. Use the above example as a guide.

Drama

In the same way as novels and short stories, plays are crafted using plot, narrative structure, characters and settings. In addition, plays have a number of special features such as soliloquies and stage directions. A play is written in the form of a script. When studying a play, remember that, despite the fact that you are reading and analysing a written text, the playwright's intention is for their work to be performed on a stage. For this reason, the visual and aural elements of a performance are central to your understanding of the text as a whole.

Exposition in drama

The term 'exposition' refers to the opening section of a play. It introduces the main characters and the current situation, which usually involves a source of tension or conflict. In addition, the play's script will use stage directions to detail the way in which the playwright intends the stage to appear. This could involve descriptions of the stage set, lighting, costuming and the actors' positioning on the stage (known as 'blocking').

The following example analyses the function of the exposition of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*.

> *In the exposition of Oedipus the King, Sophocles seeks to establish the dire circumstances the people of Thebes find themselves in as they confront a devastating plague. The exposition also reveals the core values that underpin the respected Oedipus' protection and reign over his people. In evoking a city that 'reeks with the smoke of burning incense, rings with cries for the Healer, and wailing for the dead', Sophocles immediately introduces the panic and turmoil that permeates the city. The audience is thus aware of how the 'raw, wailing miseries of Thebes' compromise stability, morality and dignity and, therefore, they are aware of the need for strong leadership. In then presenting Oedipus as a king who 'pit[ies his] people kneeling at [his] feet' and ardently professes that his 'spirit grieves for the city', Sophocles positions the audience to recognise Oedipus as a king fully committed to the needs of his people.*

Soliloquies and asides

A **soliloquy** is a significant speech given by a character alone on stage. An **aside** is a shorter speech than a soliloquy; it is delivered by a character when they are not alone, but only the audience is able to hear what the character says.

Soliloquies and asides are significant as they present opportunities for greater authenticity than when the character is interacting with others. These speeches achieve the same aims as narration in a novel or short story – the playwright can reveal the inner workings of a character's thoughts, emotions and motivations and give otherwise unseen complexity to the character.

Stage directions

Stage directions are the playwright's instructions to the director, set designer, costume designer and actors. They provide information about how the narrative is to be staged and performed, and sometimes guidance on how a character or situation can be interpreted.

Usually printed in italics and placed within square brackets [*like this*], stage directions can indicate the following elements of performance and staging:

- the appearance of the set, including props and furnishings
- the use of lighting and sound
- the costumes and physical appearances of characters
- the movements, gestures and physical interactions of characters
- the tone and/or pace with which actors deliver their lines.

The following example analyses how Jane Harrison's stage directions enhance an understanding of the character Gladys in *Rainbow's End*.

> *Jane Harrison's use of stage directions in* Rainbow's End *guides readers in understanding the values and motives of the play's central characters. The introduction of Errol into the narrative permits certain vulnerabilities of the other characters to be exposed. Having taken a 'wrong turn somewhere', Errol finds himself tentatively and nervously attempting to sell the* Encyclopedia Britannica *to Gladys Banks. The stage directions present the tenderness of her handling of the volume and the way in which she 'flicks through the book with interest', signifying the respect and esteem with which she regards such prized symbols of knowledge. Harrison also includes lighting directions to further this understanding of Gladys' longings. With the lighting changing to indicate the beginning of a short 'dream sequence' of 'Dolly in a robe and clapboard hat' before the lighting 'fades back to reality', readers are privy to deeply held aspirations that Gladys harbours but is 'fearful' of sharing with others.*

Analyse features of drama

ACTIVITY

1. Re-read the exposition of a play you are studying. What do you learn about the main character? How is the central conflict or tension of the narrative established? How does the playwright position the audience to respond to this initial situation?
2. Identify any soliloquies or asides in the play. What do you learn about the character who delivers each of these speeches? If your play doesn't contain soliloquies or asides, select a long, significant speech and explain what you learn about the character who delivers it.
3. Select a scene that includes stage directions. Write a paragraph analysing how the stage directions enhance your understanding of particular characters or key ideas, concerns and tensions. Use the above examples as a guide.

Film

Along with plot, narrative structure, character and setting, the key features that filmmakers use to construct a story are mise en scène, cinematography, editing and sound.

Mise en scène

Mise en scène is a French term that translates as 'placing on stage'. It refers to all the visual elements that appear in a frame. The key elements of mise en scène are illustrated below using a still from Stephen Johnson's 2020 film *High Ground*.

The bright natural **light** contributes to the vast landscape; the character on the left is slightly in shadow, suggesting an element of mystery or something being hidden.

The characters' **costumes** are drab and well-worn, reflecting the struggle they are engaged in. They also blend with the earthy tones of the landscape.

The **setting** is the natural landscape of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, representing the frontier of British colonisation.

The **acting style** for both characters is restrained, and their facial expressions reveal little of their thoughts and feelings.

Simon Baker as Travis and Jacob Junior Nayinggul as Gutjuk in *High Ground*. Credit: Savage Films

Cinematography

Cinematography is the process of capturing still and moving images on film. A cinematographer will use a variety of camera positions and angles, as well as different focal distances, to create contrasting and engaging shots. These shots and scenes will ultimately be combined to construct the narrative. The choices a cinematographer makes (in close consultation with the film's director) involve the distances, angles and movements of the camera.

Camera distance

The following table summarises four common camera distances, and explains some of their typical effects. The effects depend greatly on how the cinematographer and director choose to use a particular shot, as well as how it is framed – what is included (inside the frame) and what is excluded.

Type of shot	Description	Effects
Close-up shot	Shows a person or object at a short distance; often shows a person's face; fine detail can be seen but little or no background.	• Can draw the audience's attention to facial features and expressions, emphasising characters' emotions. • Can suggest the importance of an object.
Medium shot	Shows people from the waist up, with background details clearly visible.	• Often shows the nature of a relationship between two people. • Reveals more of a character than just their face, since body language, costumes, setting and lighting are all visible.
Medium long shot	Shows the whole body of a person and the surrounding setting.	• Can show interactions between several individuals. • Places characters in a social and cultural context as well as a physical setting.
Long shot	Presents people as smaller figures within the setting.	• Gives a strong sense of the environment in which people live. • Can suggest the relative insignificance or powerlessness of people within a landscape.

Gloria Swanson as Norma in a medium long shot from Billy Wilder's 1950 film *Sunset Boulevard*. Credit: Allstar Picture Library Limited / Alamy Stock Photo

Camera angle

This refers to the direction in which the camera points.

- In an **eye-level shot**, the camera is positioned on the same level as its subject, looking directly at a person or object.
- A **low-angle shot** is produced when the camera is positioned low and points up to look at the subject. It can emphasise the subject's power and authority.
- A **high-angle shot** shows the subject from above, suggesting their vulnerability or lack of power.

This high-angle shot from *Sunset Boulevard* suggests Norma's vulnerability, even as she attempts to recover some of her former glamour and status. Credit: Pictorial Press Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

Camera movement

The camera can move in two main ways. It can rotate horizontally or vertically but not actually change position; or the whole camera can move (possibly with some rotation as well).

- A **pan** is when the camera unit itself remains stationary but the camera rotates on a horizontal plane. This can be used to follow a character's movement, or to show the setting by panning from left to right (or vice versa).
- A **tilt** occurs when the camera rotates on a vertical plane. This allows for the audience's gaze to follow a subject as it moves up or down, or to view the height or depth of an object or landscape.
- A **track**, or **tracking shot**, occurs when the whole camera moves along with the action, eliciting a feeling of being actively involved in the scene.

Editing

Editing is the process of selecting shots and joining them together in a meaningful sequence. The following are three important editing techniques.

- **Crosscutting** allows a film to tell the stories of several characters. The editor crosscuts from one scene to another to allow two or more storylines to be advanced.
- **Matching the scenes** allows crosscuts to occur smoothly, encouraging the audience to see connections between the experiences of different characters. Matches can be created through similar objects, patterns or colours appearing in the two scenes.
- A **montage sequence** is composed of a series of brief shots, often accompanied by music. It can depict a relatively long passage of time through a selection of images showing significant events in a character's life. It can also portray a rapid series of thoughts and images passing through a character's mind.

Another important aspect of editing is how quickly one shot is replaced by the next. **Quick editing** (or fast cutting) occurs when successive shots are only short; this can help to increase the tension or to convey the speed at which events are unfolding. In contrast, **slow editing** is when each shot lasts for a longer time, and can be used when a character is reflecting or there is a period in which there is little action taking place.

Sound

A film's soundtrack has two main components.

- **Diegetic sound** refers to sounds that occur within the world of the story. This includes dialogue as well as sounds made by the characters and by other things that exist in that world (such as traffic noises, barking dogs and so on). This helps to create an authentic and relatable scene.
- **Non-diegetic sound** refers to the sounds that are included in the post-production stage of making a film. They are sounds such as the music soundtrack or voice-overs, which are heard by the audience but not by the characters. Non-diegetic sound helps to create mood and atmosphere, heightening the emotional resonance of a scene.

Analysing characters in film

Characters in a film can be analysed by considering the interaction between characterisation and narrative structure, as explained on pages 30–1. In addition, it is important to consider how the filmmakers use features unique to film to create complex and evolving characters. This means considering elements of the mise en scène, cinematography, editing and sound.

The following example analyses the way features of film are used in Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* to create a minor but important character.

> *Having created Max as a character whose history and motivations are a mystery, director Billy Wilder makes a number of significant revelations about Max towards the end of* Sunset Boulevard. *When Joe returns to Norma's after an evening of writing, he parks his car and turns to see Max standing in the darkened garage. By lighting only one side of Max's face, Wilder emphasises the mystery of this man – the use of shadow highlights that aspects of Max's past remain unknown, adding to the sinister*

undertones of this scene. The non-diegetic music that accompanies Joe's drive into the garage stops abruptly as he parks the car. Wilder makes the dialogue the only sound as Max reveals that he is the one who 'made [Norma] a star' having 'directed all her early films'. The absence of any other sound adds gravity to Max's revelations. The non-diegetic music that immediately follows Max's third revelation – that he was Norma's 'first husband' – has a movement from high to low pitch, through which Wilder intends to elicit a response of shock and mild horror from his audience.

Analyse features of film

ACTIVITY

Answer these questions for a film you are studying.

1 Revisit your table from the activity on page 29, adding more detail regarding the mise en scène, cinematography, editing and sound in the column labelled 'authorial choices'.

Scan the code or click here for an example of what this table might look like.

2 Using the example above as a guide, write two or three paragraphs analysing the way the director has used features of film to enhance meaning. You can focus on a character and/or a key scene.

3 Consider the narrative viewpoint of key scenes in the film. How is the viewpoint created through cinematography and editing? Does the viewpoint shift? If so, what is the effect of this?

Graphic novels

A graphic novel is a multimodal form of storytelling that combines text and images in the form of a comic strip. Contrary to what the word 'novel' suggests, a graphic novel can be fiction or nonfiction; it can be a collection of short stories or a single long narrative.

Like other forms of narrative, a graphic novel has a plot, a narrative structure, characters and setting. It uses unique visual features to tell the story. A graphic novel is usually arranged as a sequence of **panels** that are read in a row from left to right, and from top to bottom. Images and text are **nested** within the border of a panel. The space around each individual border is called the **gutter**. Though the action of a panel is usually contained within the border, sometimes authors break into the gutter or do away with the border altogether. This is usually to emphasise the intensity of an emotion, the significance of an action or the magnitude of a moment.

Text is presented in numerous ways, including the following.

- **Speech balloons** present dialogue between characters; these are things that are said aloud.
- **Thought balloons** present the thoughts of a character; these are unknown to other characters but are revealed to the reader.
- **Text boxes** convey narrative information such as comments on the action being portrayed in the visuals, and details about time and place.

Analyse features of a graphic novel

ACTIVITY

Answer these questions for a graphic novel you are studying.

1 Is the narrative mainly conveyed through the visuals or the written text? What is the effect of this?

2 Select four or five key panels. Write a paragraph on how image and text work together in order to create meaning. Consider the kind of text (speech, thoughts or text boxes); whether scenes are nested within the border of each panel or some text or image breaks into the gutter; the use of colour or shading in the visuals; and the use of different font types and sizes in the text.

Nonfiction

Nonfiction narratives tell true stories about real individuals and actual events. They can take the form of prose, plays, films or graphic novels.

Narrative fiction can also relate the stories of real people or events; however, it often embellishes moments, adds new characters or alters time lines to enhance the drama or to emphasise a particular message. In narrative nonfiction, the writer is limited to describing what they know, or have reasonable grounds to believe, to be reality.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that nonfiction may still contain elements of bias or prejudice, thus colouring what is being presented as fact. Although authors must remain true to the facts of a story, their representation of characters and events may be affected by their personal involvement in events and the nature of their relationships with other individuals being depicted. These factors will, in turn, shape the author's selection of information for inclusion (or omission) and how positively or negatively they represent each individual in the narrative.

Some of the main genres of nonfiction narrative are summarised in the following list.

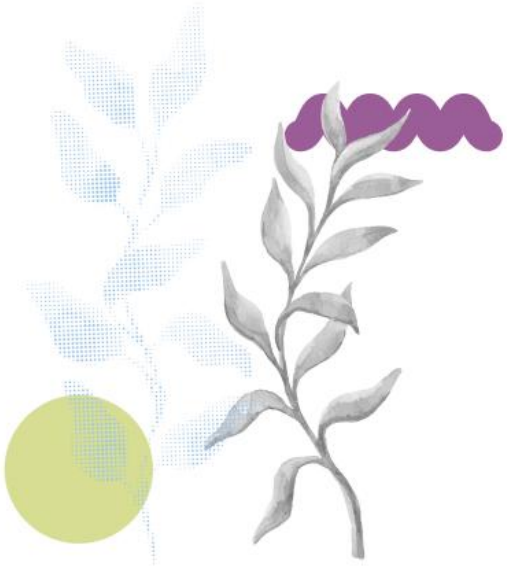
- **Biography** is the story of a person's life, usually from childhood until at least middle age, written by someone else (the biographer). Most biographies are written in a formal style and with a high degree of objectivity and balance.
- **Autobiography** is the story of the author's own life. It is usually very subjective and presents the subject's views and opinions on a range of issues, in addition to more factual material.
- **Memoir** is an account of part of the writer's life, often with a focus on social and cultural contexts.
- **Journalistic nonfiction** (or literary journalism) draws on journalistic techniques such as interviews, archival research, attending events such as criminal trials and visiting key locations. Although narratives in this genre can be written in the first person, the focus is on other people and events.
- **Travel writing** is a form of narrative nonfiction in which the writer gives an account of their travels. The writer might also reflect on other aspects of their life or compare the communities they encounter on their travels with their own society, enhancing the journey's relevance to and interest for the reader.

Analyse features of nonfiction

ACTIVITY

Answer the following questions for a nonfiction text you are studying.

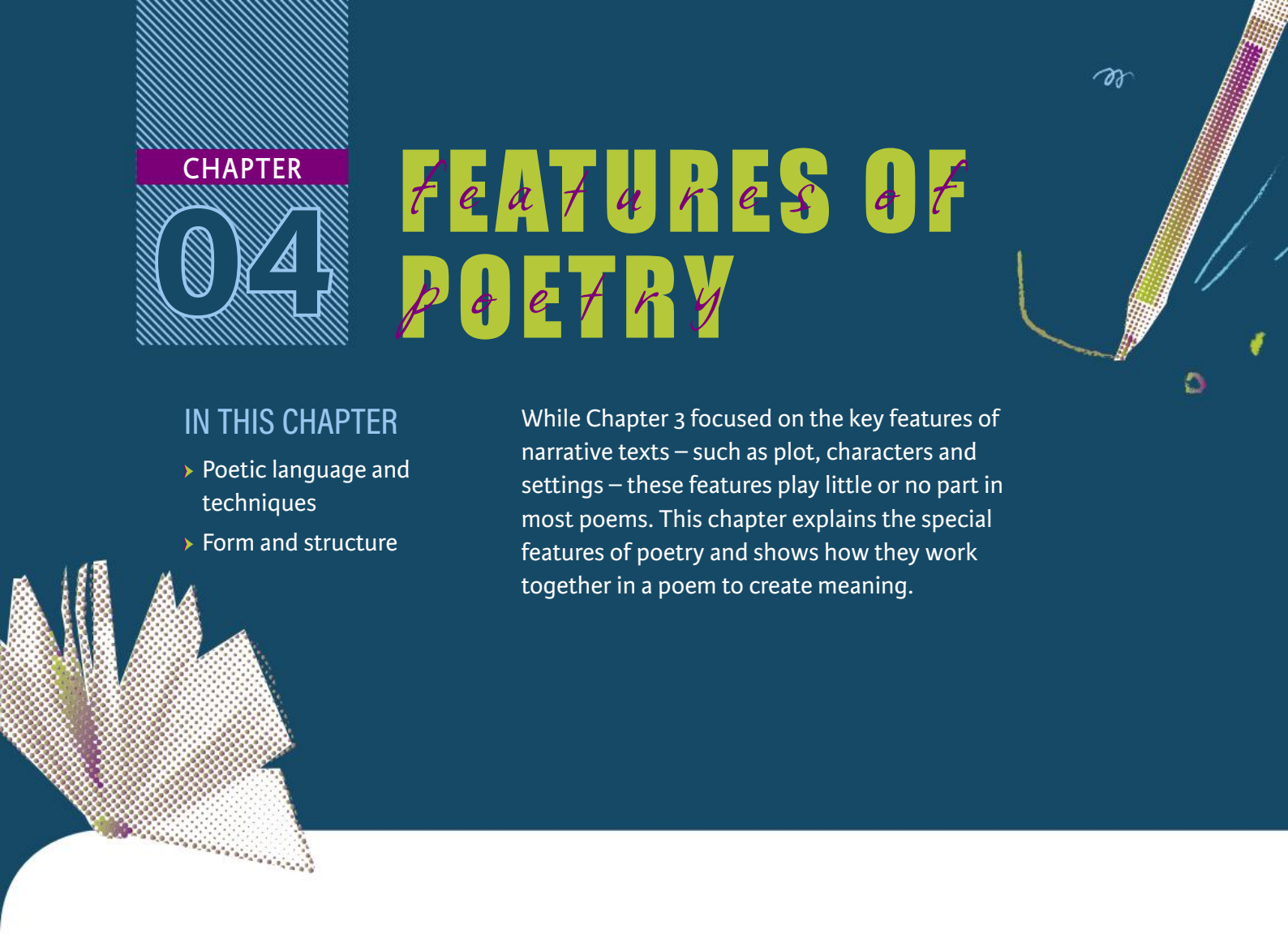
1. Who is the narrator? Is the narrator also the main subject of the narrative, or is the focus on one or more other individuals?
2. How reliable is the narrator? Is their version of events and of other individuals objective, or can you detect some bias? This does not need to be conscious bias; it might just be the author's subjective view of events and individuals, their lack of complete knowledge or the ways in which they themselves have been affected by the events they describe.
3. Consider the narrative structure. Are events presented in chronological order, or are they described in a different sequence? What effect does this have on your impression of events and individuals?
4. How does the writer choose to end the narrative? Does this provide a sense of closure and resolution, or are some sources of tension and conflict left unresolved?
5. Are there supplementary materials such as maps, photographs or interview transcripts included in the text? Why do you think these were included? How does this make you feel about the reality of what has been conveyed?



CHAPTER 04

FEATURES OF POETRY

features of poetry



IN THIS CHAPTER

- Poetic language and techniques
- Form and structure

While Chapter 3 focused on the key features of narrative texts – such as plot, characters and settings – these features play little or no part in most poems. This chapter explains the special features of poetry and shows how they work together in a poem to create meaning.

Poetic language and techniques

Poets use poetic techniques in order to write in an extremely compact fashion, and to create complex ideas, images and meanings. Your analytical writing about poetry can be strengthened by your reference to poetic techniques, but make sure you do more than simply identity a technique. Discuss the effects of poetic techniques and language features on the reader and explain how they contribute to the poem's meaning.

Speaker/persona

The speaker or persona of a poem is the equivalent of the narrative voice in a novel. This speaker may use the first person (I, me) or they may adopt a more detached, third-person (they, he, she) perspective. The use of language, the thoughts and feelings expressed, and the way of looking at the world all convey qualities of this persona.

The persona's voice and viewpoint – including their attitudes and values – should not be automatically equated with those of the poet. It may be that the poet has created a persona to expose the flaws in certain attitudes, or that they are trying to imagine how someone of a different gender or cultural background would reflect on relationships or identity.

Analyse the use of persona

ACTIVITY

1 Select a poem that presents a strong point of view on a situation or issue. How much do you learn about the persona from reading the poem? For example, do they have an obvious gender? Do they seem old or young? Are they impulsive or reflective? Are they approving or critical of what they are describing? Give brief explanations for each quality you can identify.

2 Consider several poems written by the poet you are studying. If a particular type of persona is used more than once, discuss the similarities of the viewpoints presented. If a range of personas is used, discuss the different perspectives offered by the poet.

Rhythm and rhyme

Poets may use rhythm and rhyme to give poems a regular pattern and a sense of forward movement. These elements also enhance a poem's impact when it is read aloud.

Rhythm in poetry results from the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. The poet can produce a regular beat or pulse if the pattern is consistent. For example, Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 uses alternating unstressed and stressed syllables; here is the first line, with the strong or stressed syllables underlined.

> Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

In contrast, an irregular rhythm results when there is no steady, repeating pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. This is often the case when the poet writes in free verse; see page 47 for an example.

Rhyme occurs when the same sound occurs at the end of two or more lines. If two successive lines rhyme, they are known as a rhyming couplet. Shakespeare's sonnets usually end with a rhyming couplet. For example, these two lines conclude Sonnet 18:

> So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
> So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sometimes rhyming lines are separated by one or two other lines. The stanzas in Wordsworth's poem 'To My Sister' have the rhyming pattern *abab* since the first and third lines rhyme and the second and fourth lines rhyme. This is the first stanza:

> It is the first mild day of March.
> Each minute sweeter than before,
> The redbreast sings from the tall larch
> That stands beside our door.

Not all poems have strict rhyme or rhythmic schemes. The important thing when analysing a poem is to notice where regular rhymes or rhythms are used, and where variations occur, and then explain how these features influence a reader's response. See the section on form and structure on pages 46–7 for more on rhythm and rhyme.

Figurative language

Whereas literal language uses the literal or 'dictionary' meaning of words, figurative language uses figures of speech such as metaphors and similes. It compares objects and sensations to other things to create images, engage the reader's senses and make unexpected connections. Figurative language also makes use of the sounds of letters and words to enhance the meaning and impact of a poem.

Look for the following features of figurative language in poetry.

Technique	Definition	Examples
Alliteration	The repetition of consonants, especially at the start of words within the same line.	• 'A slumber did my spirit seal' (Wordsworth)
Assonance	The repetition of vowel sounds.	• 'And watch the white eyes writhing in his face' ('Dulce et Decorum Est', Wilfred Owen)
Connotation	The suggested or implied meaning of a word, which adds an extra layer of meaning.	• 'My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun; / Coral is far more red than her lips' red' (Sonnet 130, Shakespeare) – the connotations of 'red', 'sun' and 'coral' add to the meaning and impact
Metaphor	A figure of speech that describes one thing as if it is another.	• 'Fame is a bee. / It has a song – It has a sting –' (Emily Dickinson)
Onomatopoeia	The use of a word that has a sound similar to the sound of the thing it is describing.	• 'the memory of salt crackle underfoot' ('Mapping and Companionship', John Kinsella)
Personification	A figure of speech that gives human qualities to inanimate objects or abstract concepts.	• 'Death, be not proud, though some have called thee / Mighty and dreadful' (John Donne)
Simile	A figure of speech that compares two things using 'like' or 'as'.	• '[Yarning] could be fast and furious / Like a cascading waterfall' ('Simply Yarning', Charmaine Papertalk Green)
Symbol	An object that stands for a larger or more abstract entity.	• 'Does the road wind up-hill all the way? / Yes, to the very end.' ('Up-Hill', Christina Rossetti) – the road is a symbol of life's journey

Analyse figurative language

ACTIVITY

Select one poem for close study, and complete the following exercises in relation to that poem as a whole or to one or two key stanzas.

1 Identify any examples of alliteration or assonance in the poem. For one or two of these, explain the effect on the reader. For example, it might draw attention to key words, generate a particular tone, reinforce meaning or emphasise the rhythm.

2 Identify examples of simile, metaphor, personification and symbolism.

   a For a simile, explain the similarity or likeness between the two things. Is this an unusual comparison? What does it suggest about the first thing?

   b For a metaphor, explain the comparison being made.

   c For an example of personification, describe the qualities that the object is 'given' in this image.

   d For a symbol, explain what the symbolic object is representing and what is being suggested. (In the example of a symbol in the table, Rossetti is suggesting that life is full of challenges.)

3 Write two or three paragraphs on the use of figurative language in the poem. Include as many language features as you can, and aim to show how they work together. Use your answers to questions 1 and 2 as the basis for your analysis.

Form and structure

The way in which a poet uses form and structure is crucial to the meaning and impact of a poem. Structural features include the use of even or uneven line lengths, the number of lines in each stanza (and whether this varies), and the sequence of ideas and images. The poem's beginning and ending are also important.

A poet might choose to write in an existing, defined form, such as a sonnet, ode or elegy. Some poetic forms (such as the sonnet) use traditional patterns of rhyme and rhythm. Other forms of poetry (such as the ode and the lyric) are defined mainly by the ideas and feelings they express.

Blank verse

Blank verse is an important poetic form, partly because it has been so widely used and partly due to its flexibility. It can be used in a short poem or a very long one. The only two 'rules' that define blank verse are that the lines are ten syllables long with alternating weak and strong beats, and the lines are unrhymed.

The first two lines from Wordsworth's 'The Ruined Cottage' illustrate the pattern.

> 'Twas summer and the sun was mounted high;
> Along the south the uplands feebly glared

Blank verse creates a rhythm that is similar to that of speech, which gives the poem fluency and makes it easier to read or listen to. It is often used in long poems that tell a story, such as 'The Ruined Cottage'.

Note that each of the two lines in the example above ends with a slight natural pause. This isn't an essential feature of blank verse, but it is a common one.

Free verse

Poetry without a regular pattern of rhythm and rhyme is known as free verse. The lack of rules means that line and stanza lengths can vary widely. The poet can make choices about how the poem sounds and how it looks on the page, enabling them to create a range of effects.

The short stanza below from 'Night Parrots Affront' by John Kinsella shows some of the common features of free verse. There are no rhyming lines and no regular rhythm, and the lines run on smoothly (without a pause at the line ends). The indenting of the word 'absence', which creates an absence or silence at the start of that line, is an element of the flexible layout that poets can use with free verse.

Rain falls lightly
And holding off
absence
is the night parrot
affronting accomplices

Analyse form and structure

ACTIVITY

Answer as many of the following questions as possible to analyse the form and structure of any poem you are studying.

1 Does the poem have a well-defined form, such as a sonnet?
If so, find out as much as you can about this form. Look for ways in which the poem uses typical features of this form (e.g. number of lines, rhyme scheme, typical subject matter) and explain the effects of any variations.

2 Is the poem written in free verse?
If it is, describe some of the effects of this. Is the poem creating a sense of play? Do some very short lines draw attention to particular words? Do the lines run on smoothly as if the persona is telling a story or free-associating?

3 Does each stanza have the same number of lines?
If so, what is the effect of this regularity on the reader – is it calming or reassuring?
If not, what is the effect of irregular stanza lengths – is the poet representing random thoughts or a sense of disorder?

4 Look at the poem's opening lines and explain how they draw the reader into the poem.
Do they present a clear, striking image? Do they establish a setting or situation? Do they raise questions? Do they begin to tell a story?

5 Look at the poem's final lines and discuss how they form an appropriate conclusion.
Do they bring the poem to a convincing close? Or do they end 'up in the air', on a note of mystery or wonder?

CHAPTER 05

ANALYTICAL TEXT RESPONSES: PREPARATION AND PLANNING

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Identifying key elements of the topic
- Selecting evidence
- Developing arguments
- Planning the response

An analytical text response is a formal written essay that demonstrates your knowledge and understanding of the text. It should also present your contention in response to the topic, supported by logical argument and evidence from the text.

This chapter outlines an approach to preparing and planning an analytical text response, taking you from the initial analysis of the topic to a detailed essay plan.

Scan the code or click **here** to watch a video on planning an analytical text response.

Identifying key elements of the topic

To effectively analyse a topic, break it down into its constituent parts. Use the following steps as a guide.

- Identify content words. These are the words that specify what the essay should cover.
- Identify direction words. These words (sometimes called task words) tell you how to approach the essay and indicate the type of answer you should provide. For example, the direction word 'discuss' implies that you need to consider both sides of the argument and form a point of view.

Common direction words

- **Discuss:** Look at both sides (agree/disagree) and present your point of view.
- **Explore:** Consider different aspects of the topic.
- **Do you agree?:** Reach a yes/no conclusion.
- **To what extent (do you agree)?:** Reach a conclusion that can be more nuanced than a yes/no answer.
- **How ...?:** Explore how the author has constructed the text using vocabulary, language techniques and structure.

- Look for limiting words. Adjectives or adverbs such as 'limited', 'always', 'essential' and 'inevitably' will have a significant impact on your response. Take these words into account when forming your opinion.
- Rephrase the topic. Use a dictionary or (if you have access to one) a thesaurus to create synonyms for the key words in the topic. This will help you to rephrase the topic by putting it in your own words. It can also be helpful to turn a statement into a question, then try to answer that question.

The following example shows how these steps could be applied to a topic on Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career*.

'In *My Brilliant Career*, Sybylla is foolish for pursuing her dreams.'

Do you agree?

The content words tell you to focus on the character Sybylla, the quality of being foolish, and the idea of following dreams.

The direction words are 'Do you agree?'

The first step is to **identify the content words** in the topic. These words indicate what you need to discuss in your essay. In this case, the content words are 'Sybylla', 'foolish' and 'pursuing her dreams'. Your response needs to consider *all* the content words, not just some.

Next, **identify the direction word or phrase**. In this case, the direction words are 'Do you agree?' This means you need to form an opinion on whether or not you believe Sybylla is foolish for pursuing her dreams.

Then, **look for limiting words**. There are no limiting words in this topic. An example of this topic with a limiting word might be:

'In *My Brilliant Career*, Sybylla is only foolish because she pursues her dreams.'

Do you agree?

The limiting word 'only' implies that Sybylla isn't foolish in any other way.

Unlike the first topic, the topic with the limiting word 'only' invites you to consider in detail whether Sybylla is foolish in *other* ways, in addition to (or instead of) being foolish for following her dreams. Whatever view you take, it is essential to engage with the limiting word.

Finally, **rephrase the topic.** Possible rephrased topics could be:

- It is silly for Sybylla to pursue her aspirations. Is that really true?
- Is it fair to say that Sybylla's decision to try to achieve her ambitions is misguided?
- Can it be argued that Sybylla's pursuit of her dreams is irresponsible?
- Does trying to achieve her desires make Sybylla an unwise person?

The following table shows some additional questions you might ask as you analyse a topic, depending on the topic format and the number of elements it has.

What to ask yourself	What to do
Is there something in the topic that's not always true?	• Thinking about exceptions is important because it reminds you that you can say, 'Yes, but ... ' or 'No, but ... ' • Use these qualifications to add depth and complexity to your response.
Is there a quotation from the text?	• Identify where the quotation is from in the text. • What is it telling you? Can you think of other quotations that suggest something different?
Are there two or three parts to the topic? e.g. 'In Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, the hero's tragic downfall is the result of both fate and free will.' Discuss.	• Address all parts of the topic. • This topic requires you to discuss (1) the role of fate, (2) the role of free will (personal choices and decisions) and (3) Oedipus' tragic downfall (with an implicit reference to the genre of tragedy). A response that focuses on just fate or free will, or that omits discussion of the concept of a tragic downfall, would only partly address the topic.
Does the question ask about the way in which a story is told or a text is constructed? e.g. How does *High Ground* condemn the violence of the colonial frontier?	• Beware – such questions can contain a trap for the unwary! • For example, a response to this topic might make the mistake of discussing violent events in the film without considering *how* the film presents a view about these incidents or about the violence of colonialism.

Analyse a topic

ACTIVITY

This activity guides you through the process of analysing a topic for a text you are studying.

1. Find a suitable essay topic. This might be a topic you have been given in class, a topic from a past VCE exam, a topic in a study guide or a topic you have written yourself.
2. Annotate the topic to identify content words. What is the topic asking you to write about?
3. Identify the direction words. How should you approach the topic? What is it asking you to do?
4. Identify limiting words. Does the topic contain any negative or limiting words which might constrain your response?
5. Rephrase the topic. In your own words, write the topic in at least three different ways.

Selecting evidence

Throughout your study of the set text, you should be annotating, doing some close reading and taking notes. Over time you will collect evidence that can be used to support your point of view on many different topics and discussions of the text. You will need to refine this evidence to support your arguments in response to a particular topic, selecting only the quotes and textual details that are relevant to your contentions.

When you are developing a response to a given topic you might choose to look for evidence first, and then build your argument around the evidence. Alternatively, you may choose to develop your contention first and then hunt for evidence that supports your arguments. Either approach is fine.

Here is a step-by-step process for finding and selecting evidence that will support your response to a given essay topic.

- **Start with your annotations.** If you have annotated the text, start by looking through your notes for any quotes or passages that relate to your topic.
- **Refer to your notes.** If you have taken notes on the text, go back through them and look for any key points or quotes that support your initial thinking about the topic.
- **Use a graphic organiser.** Consider using a graphic organiser, such as a table or chart, to help you organise your quotes and evidence. This can help you see patterns and connections between different pieces of evidence. The activity below shows you one way to do this.
- **Re-read the text.** Finally, consider re-reading the text to look for additional evidence or to make sure you haven't missed anything important. As you read, take note of any quotes or passages that relate to your topic.

Organise your evidence

ACTIVITY

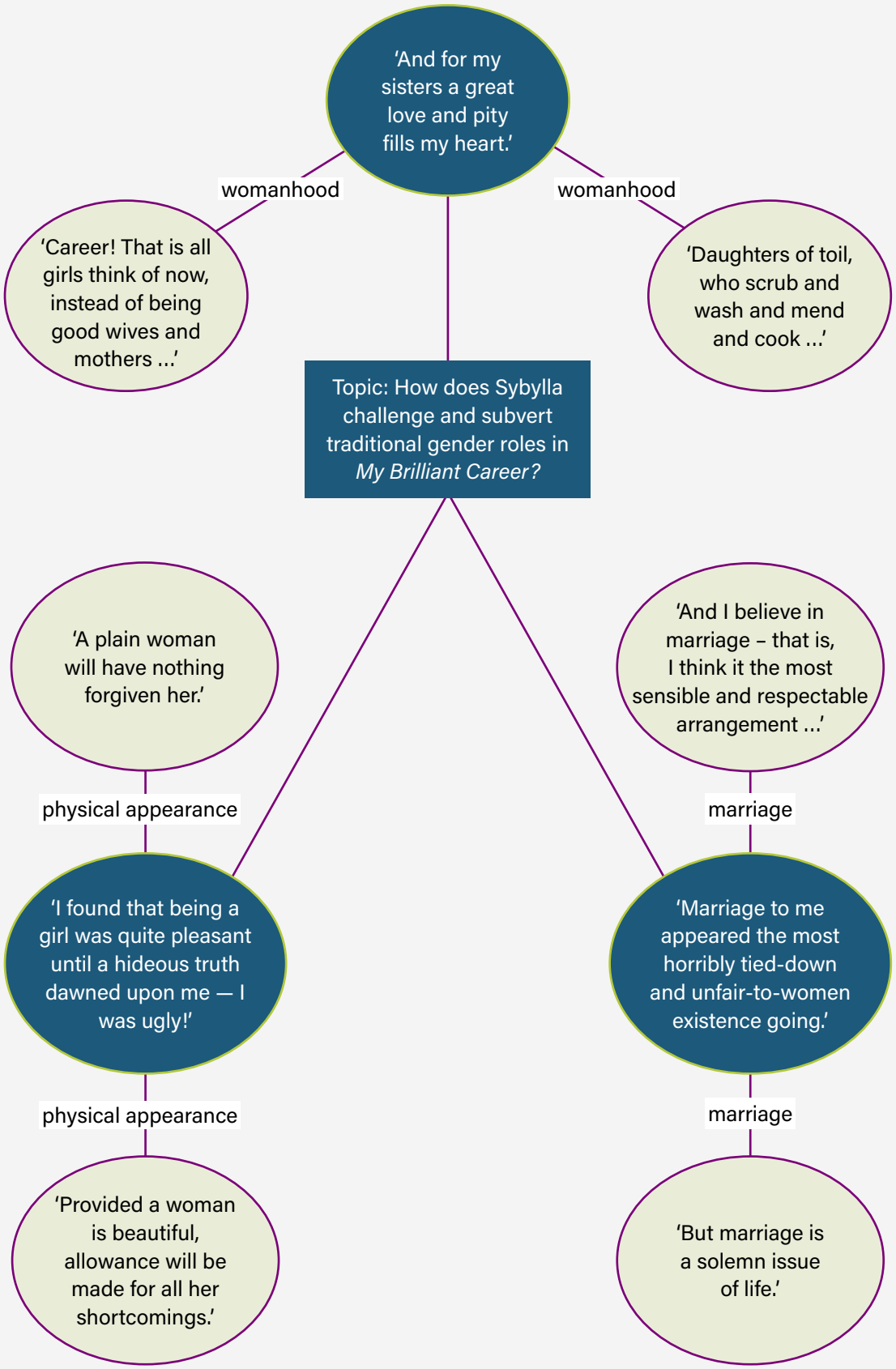
In this activity you will use a graphic organiser to help identify patterns and connections between different pieces of evidence.

Scan the code or click here to download an editable template for the graphic organiser.

1. Write the essay topic in the centre of the graphic organiser.
2. Identify at least three pieces of evidence from the text that relate to your essay topic. These can be quotes or other details (events, characters' attitudes and beliefs etc.).
3. In each of the three main circles, write a quote and/or a brief description of the evidence.
4. Around the main pieces of evidence, try to find two or three related quotes.
5. Along the lines, briefly describe the connections between the pieces of evidence.
6. Add more evidence to the graphic organiser as needed, drawing lines and connections between the different circles to help you identify patterns and relationships between the pieces of evidence.
7. Use the completed graphic organiser to help develop your arguments and the ideas for your body paragraphs.

On the next page is an example of what a graphic organiser might look like, using a topic, quotes and concerns from *My Brilliant Career*.

ACTIVITY



Developing arguments

Throughout your response you will need to develop your **contention**, supported by clear **arguments**.

Contention

Contention refers to the main idea or position that you are trying to argue in your response. It is the point that you want to prove or demonstrate through your analysis of the text. Your contention should be clear and focused, guiding the structure and direction of your response.

Argument

An argument is a series of claims, backed up by evidence and reasoning, that support your contention. Your argument should be logically structured, with each claim building upon the previous one to create a compelling case for your position. It is important to consider both sides of the argument and anticipate counterarguments, effectively addressing them in your response. This is especially true of 'do you agree' topics, but is also important for 'discuss' and 'to what extent' topics.

Developing a clear contention

Your contention should be in your introduction – sometimes it even makes sense to have your contention as the opening sentence. It must be clearly linked to the topic, and can be one-sided or two-sided depending on how closely your view of the text matches the statement contained in the topic.

For example, consider this topic on Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*:

> 'In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo's descent into violence is a direct result of cultural loss and colonisation.' Do you agree?

The following is a **one-sided contention:**

> *Okonkwo's descent into violence in* Things Fall Apart *is a direct result of cultural loss and colonisation.*

In contrast, here is a **two-sided contention:**

> *Okonkwo's descent into violence in* Things Fall Apart *can be seen to result from cultural loss and colonisation; however, his personal flaws and insecurities also play significant roles in his downfall.*

Staying on topic in a contention

It is important to note that while challenging the topic is acceptable, this does not mean you can go *off* topic. You must always address all of the content in the topic, even if you are arguing against the statement it contains.

For example, consider this topic on Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold:*

> 'Ideas of justice and morality are heavily intertwined in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.' Do you agree?

On-topic contentions	Off-topic contentions
The idea of justice is more prevalent than the theme of morality in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.	The events in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* have nothing to do with the ideas of justice and morality.
The ideas of morality and justice are shown to be inseparable in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.	The author's personal beliefs about love drive the narrative in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.
Justice and morality are presented as separate entities in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.	The setting of the story shapes the ideas in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.
The ideas of justice and morality are only superficially connected in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.	The characters in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* are not influenced by ideas of justice and morality.

Note that in the off-topic contentions above, the student is trying to force the direction of the essay away from the actual topic. This can often happen if you have a 'pre-prepared' (memorised) response, and it should always be avoided.

Structuring your arguments

Once you have decided on your main contention, you will need to decide on the structure of your arguments. This step-by-step process will help you to develop a strong, logical and cohesive argument structure.

- **Understand the topic.** Refer back to the start of this chapter and follow the steps for analysing a topic. Make sure you understand what the topic requires.
- **Research and gather evidence.** Once you understand the topic, gather evidence to support your contention. You might decide on your contention first, then find the evidence; or gather evidence first then work out your contention. Refer to your notes and annotations. Find evidence that can be used to support your contention from different angles; if all your evidence supports your contention in the same way, you will end up simply repeating the same point throughout your essay.
- **Analyse the evidence.** Once you have gathered your evidence, ask yourself how it supports your contention and look for any counterarguments or weaknesses in your evidence. This will help you to refine your arguments and make them stronger. It will also enable you to develop a more nuanced and complex response, especially for a 'do you agree' topic.
- **Prioritise and group your points.** When developing your arguments, prioritise your strongest and most relevant points, making sure you have evidence to support them. Then think about how you can present them in a logical order. Group together your points and evidence so you can form the body paragraphs of the essay.

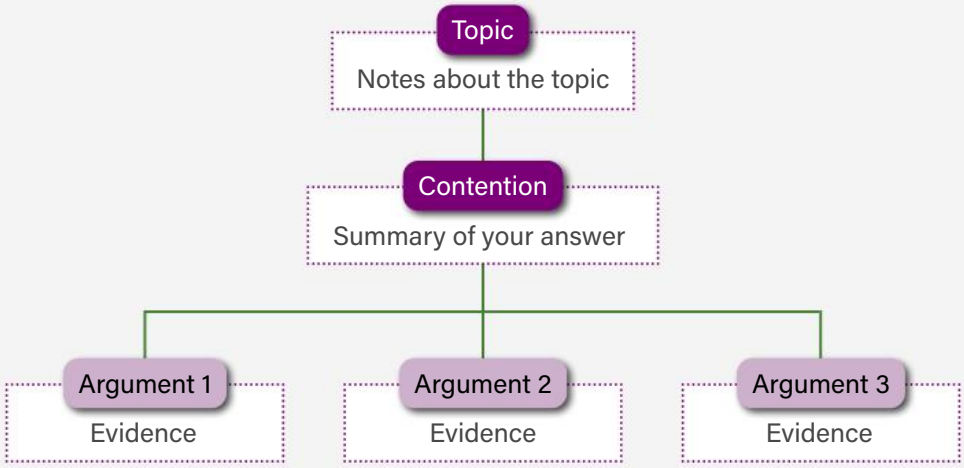
ACTIVITY

Develop strong arguments

In this activity, you will use a flow chart to develop strong, logical and cohesive arguments for your response. You can use a topic you have been given in class or one you have found while studying your text. The format of the flow chart is shown below.

Scan the code or click here to download an editable template for this flow chart.

1. Write the topic at the top of the flow chart. Add notes on the topic, such as synonyms for content words, direction words and any limiting words.
2. Develop a clear contention. Write a clear and concise statement of the main idea or position you are arguing in your response.
3. Write a brief summary of your answer – one or two sentences that show how you will respond to the topic.
4. Identify key arguments. Use the flow chart boxes to write down your key arguments.
5. Prioritise and refine your arguments based on relevance and strength. You might change the order of the arguments to make your essay flow better.
6. Add evidence to your arguments. Write down quotes and other textual evidence from your notes or from the activity earlier in this chapter.



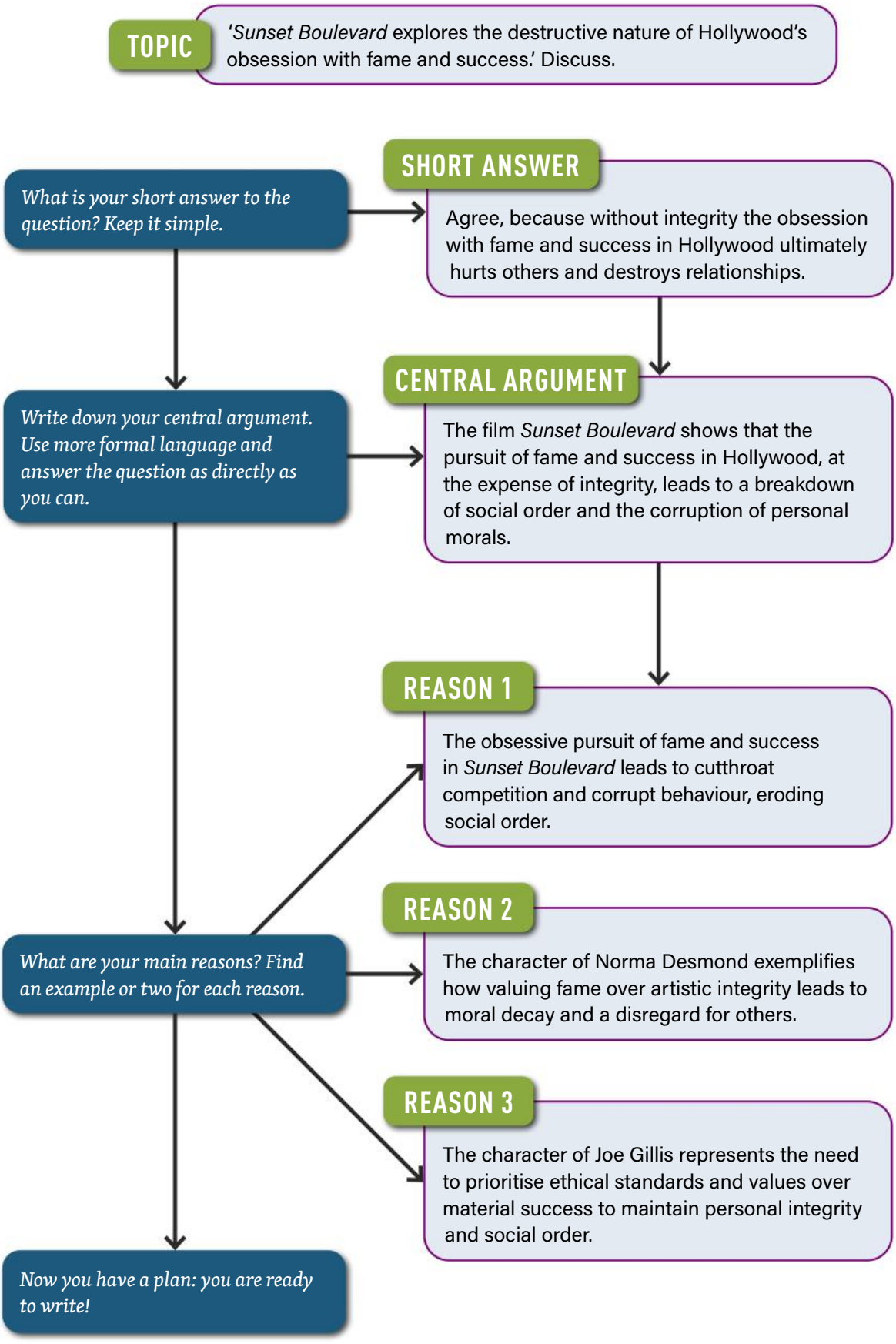
Planning the response

If you have completed the activities throughout this chapter, you should now have:

- an analysis of the topic
- a selection of evidence
- a clear contention
- a series of arguments.

This is everything you need to write a plan of the essay.

The following flow chart summarises the planning process; the example on the right shows a plan for an essay on Billy Wilder's film *Sunset Boulevard*.



CHAPTER 06

ANALYTICAL TEXT RESPONSES: WRITING THE ESSAY

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Writing the introduction
- Writing the body paragraphs
- Writing the conclusion
- Refining the essay
- Sample essays

While Chapter 5 explained the vital processes of preparing and planning, this chapter explains the key elements of writing a successful essay. It includes guidelines for crafting an effective introduction, developing strong body paragraphs and writing a compelling conclusion.

It also covers the importance of editing and revising to refine the essay and ensure that it is clear and coherent. Effective writing is a crucial component of demonstrating your comprehension and analysis of a text, and the strategies and techniques covered in this chapter will help you achieve this goal.

Writing the introduction

The introduction gives your reader their first impression of your work, and it is essential to engage and hook their interest from the start. An effective introduction will establish your essay's response to the topic and clearly state your contention, providing a roadmap for the arguments that will follow.

A good way to begin the introduction is to **state your clear and focused contention**. Your contention summarises the overall argument you will make in the essay, and should be specific and original. It should also provide a clear response to the topic. Avoid broad generalisations and overly simplistic statements.

For example, consider this topic and sample contention on Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*:

> 'In *Much Ado About Nothing*, deception reveals the dark side of human nature.' Discuss.

In Much Ado About Nothing, *Shakespeare uses the idea of deception to both create a comedic plot and reveal the darker aspects of human nature.*

Avoid providing too much context in your introduction, as it can become overwhelming and detract from your main argument. Instead, provide only the background information necessary to contextualise your argument.

Set in Italy during the Renaissance, Much Ado About Nothing *follows the romantic entanglements and mistaken identities of a group of nobles and soldiers.*

Finally, **signpost the arguments to come in the body paragraphs**. This creates a roadmap for the reader to follow and helps to establish the logical structure of your essay.

Deception is used in many ways to reveal the darker sides of human nature in Much Ado About Nothing, *including its role in the plot, its significance in relation to gender roles, and its relationship to the value of honour.*

Sentence starters for introductions

Here are some useful sentence starters for introductions. They lead you to focus on the main ideas and/or characters identified in the content words of your topic. Several of them also work as 'signposts', identifying topics that will be developed in the body paragraphs.

- In ... (title), ... (author) explores the idea of ... (theme/idea) through ... (technique/character/setting)
- ... (title) by ... (author) contends/argues/suggests that ...
- Set in ..., ... (title) examines/explores/questions ...
- The central idea of ... (concept/idea) in ... (title) is related/relevant to ...
- At the centre of ... (title) is the tension/conflict between ...
- The viewpoint/perspective of ... (character) reveals to the reader/audience that ...
- Throughout ... (title), ... (author) utilises/exploits/employs ... (technique) in order to ...
- ... (character) embodies the qualities of ... through their ...
- ... (character) demonstrates this idea / these values by ...
- Similar/Opposing qualities are displayed by ..., who ...
- The relationship between ... and ... can be seen as representing the tension between ...
- While the actions of most of the characters suggest that ..., the behaviour of ... demonstrates ...
- The journey/transformation from ... to ... highlights the values of ...
- Ultimately, ... (title) highlights/reveals/exposes ...

Vocabulary banks for introductions

The following vocabulary list may be useful when writing introductions.

Vocabulary	Definition
Analysis	A detailed examination of the elements or structure of something, usually as a basis for discussion or interpretation.
Argument	A set of reasons and evidence put forward to support a contention.
Concept	An abstract idea or general notion such as love, deception or loyalty.
Concern	A matter of interest or importance, particularly one that causes tension or uncertainty.
Contention	A statement that expresses a position or opinion on a particular topic or issue.
Idea	A thought, concept or notion.
Interpretation	An explanation of or way of understanding the meaning of the text.
Issue	A topic or problem that is the subject of discussion, controversy or debate.
Motif	A recurring element, object or concept that has symbolic significance in the text.
Perspective	A particular attitude towards or way of regarding something; a point of view.
Values	The beliefs or principles that an individual or group considers to be important or desirable.
Viewpoint	A position or perspective from which something is considered or evaluated.

In addition to the terms in the table above, you will need to use words that connect your thoughts and create a logical argument. The connecting words in the following word bank will help you to link together the elements of your introduction.

although	however	therefore
as	if	though
as a result	in addition	thus
because	in order to	ultimately
before	likewise	until
consequently	otherwise	when
for example	similarly	whereas
furthermore	since	while
hence	specifically	yet

Writing the body paragraphs

The body paragraphs are where your arguments are developed and supported. Use the following guidelines to write well-structured body paragraphs. Remember to link to your topic by using content words, or synonyms for them, in your topic sentence and/or your analysis of evidence.

Use the following three steps to create well-structured body paragraphs.

Step 1: Start with a clear topic sentence.

The topic sentence should clearly state the argument to be presented in the paragraph. If the topic sentence isn't the first sentence in a body paragraph, make it the second or third sentence.

> *The use of deception in* Much Ado About Nothing *reveals some troubling aspects of gender roles and relationships.*

Step 2: Support the topic sentence with evidence from the text.

The evidence used to support the argument should be relevant and specific. It can be a direct quote or a paraphrase of a passage from the text. However, keep the amount of paraphrasing (retelling the plot) to a minimum.

> *Early in the play Don Pedro suggests that he will woo Hero on Claudio's behalf, foreshadowing much of the deception later in the play.*

When you include a direct quote, use an inline quote – that is, integrate the quote into your sentence and enclose it in quotation marks. Use direct quotes sparingly and keep them fairly short.

> *Early in the play Don Pedro tells Claudio, 'I will assume thy part in some disguise', foreshadowing much of the deception later in the play and demonstrating how quickly people can become embroiled in a web of lies and deceit.*

Step 3: Analyse the evidence to explain how it supports your argument.

The analysis of the evidence should explain how it supports the argument made in the topic sentence. It should be focused on the argument and avoid straying off-topic.

> *Don Pedro's deception suggests a lack of respect for Hero, since it disregards any feelings she may have for her suitor and her right to know the truth. It shows how quickly people can become embroiled in a web of lies and deceit, and how quickly the truth can be suppressed when the interests of powerful men are at stake.*

Tips for strong topic sentences

- Be clear and concise. State the main point of the paragraph, avoiding vague, general expressions.
- Stay focused. Stick to one point in each topic sentence; trying to cover multiple points in one paragraph can confuse the reader.
- Make a claim. This claim should be arguable and demonstrate a clear understanding of the text.
- Link to the contention. This will connect the paragraph to the overall argument and to the topic.
- Use transition words. These help connect your topic sentence to the previous paragraph and create a logical flow of ideas.

Avoiding common mistakes

Writing an analytical essay can be a challenging task, and even the most experienced writers make mistakes. Here are some tips for avoiding common errors in your body paragraphs.

- **Avoid vague language.** Use specific and precise language to convey your ideas, avoiding vague words such as 'things' or 'a lot'. For example, instead of saying 'there are a lot of things going on in the story', you could say, 'the story has multiple plotlines that intersect with one another'.
- **Support claims with evidence.** Avoid making unsupported claims or sweeping statements that cannot be backed up by evidence. For example, instead of saying 'The author clearly shows that a tragic ending is inevitable' without any evidence, you could say, 'The author's use of foreshadowing in Chapter 2 suggests that a tragic ending is inevitable.'
- **Use relevant evidence.** Make sure the evidence you use supports your argument and relates directly to the topic. Avoid using irrelevant evidence that does not contribute to your analysis. For example, if the topic is on the use of symbolism in a text, use evidence that contains some of the text's symbols and then explain their meanings. Examples of descriptive language that does not include any symbols are irrelevant to your response.
- **Avoid summarising.** Analytical essays should not contain summaries of the text. Avoid simply giving a recount of the plot and instead focus on analysing and interpreting the text. Using the vocabulary in the sentence starters and vocabulary banks in the next section will help you to do this.
- **Use metalanguage effectively.** Metalanguage can add depth and insight to your analysis, but make sure you use it effectively. This means using the correct metalanguage for the technique you are discussing, giving specific examples from the text and explaining how this technique helps to create meaning.

Sentence starters for body paragraphs

The following are some useful sentence starters for body paragraphs. Note how they lead you to *analyse* evidence, not just list it. They also help you to make connections by exploring similarities and differences, and by identifying unifying threads and ideas.

- As is shown by ... (textual evidence), ... (what the textual evidence suggests or implies)
- This is significant/revealing because ...
- Furthermore/Moreover, ... (textual evidence) also supports the idea that ...
- In contrast / However, ... (textual evidence) implies/reveals that ...
- Although ... (counterargument), ... (argument)
- The sense of ... pervades the opening of the text, suggesting that ...
- The image/motif of ... symbolises the idea of ...
- It is at this point that the tension between ... and ... becomes explicit, showing the need for ...
- This is seen most clearly when ..., highlighting ...

Vocabulary banks for body paragraphs

The following word bank contains some useful metalanguage for writing body paragraphs. In addition to these terms, aim to include some of the metalanguage specific to the form of your text (film terminology, poetic techniques etc.).

Vocabulary	Definition
Allusion	An indirect reference to a person, place, event or literary work with which the reader is assumed to be familiar.
Connotation	An idea or feeling that a word invokes in addition to its literal meaning.
Denotation	The literal or primary meaning of a word.
Flashback	A shift back in time to give an account of an earlier event or period.
Foreshadowing	A warning or indication of a future event in a story.
Imagery	Descriptive or figurative language, especially in a literary work.
Irony	A literary technique in which the intended meaning of a word or situation is opposite to its literal or usual meaning.
Metaphor	A figure of speech that describes one thing as if it is another.
Personification	A metaphor that attributes human characteristics to something non-human, such as an object, animal or idea.
Simile	A figure of speech using 'like' or 'as' to compare two things.
Symbolism	The use of objects or images to represent wider ideas or abstract qualities.

As well as using metalanguage to identify the language techniques and structural features an author is using in a text, you need to explain the *effects* of these techniques – how they convey meaning and shape the audience's responses. Here are some useful verbs for writing about these effects.

affects	illustrates	reinforces
characterises	impacts on	reveals
demonstrates	implies	subverts
exemplifies	portrays	underscores

Writing the conclusion

A complete essay needs a concluding paragraph that sums up the discussion. It should not introduce new information, but rather summarise the key arguments and restate the contention. Aim to draw together your ideas so that you present an overall interpretation of the text and clearly respond to the topic.

The following are three key elements to include in an effective conclusion.

- Restate the contention in different words from those used in the introduction. Ensure this restatement responds to and 'answers' the topic.
- Summarise the main arguments of the essay in a clear and concise manner.

- Provide a final statement that leaves a lasting impression on the reader. This can be a general statement about the overall meaning or message of the text, but it should also have clear relevance to the topic.

  In conclusion, deception in Much Ado About Nothing *reveals the darker sides of human nature. Through the characters of Don John and Borachio, Shakespeare highlights the potential for deceit to have tragic consequences. Additionally, the play's portrayal of gender roles raises questions about the societal expectations placed upon men and women. Ultimately,* Much Ado About Nothing *serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of deception and the importance of honesty and integrity. As the characters learn, acknowledging the truth may be painful, but it is always the best course of action.*

Sentence starters for conclusions

These sentence starters will help you differentiate your concluding paragraph from your introduction. Remember that your concluding sentences must explicitly address the topic and in some way answer or resolve the topic.

- In conclusion, it is clear that ... (restate contention)
- Overall, the evidence supports the idea that ... (restate contention)
- Given these points, it is evident that ...
- Taken together, the arguments presented demonstrate that ...
- Thus, it is evident that ...

Vocabulary bank for conclusions

The following word bank contains useful words and phrases for summarising and concluding your ideas.

as a result	in light of	therefore
clearly	it is evident that	these reinforce
consequently	on the whole	this demonstrates
finally	overall	this emphasises
given these points	taken together	to sum up
in conclusion	the evidence supports	ultimately

Refining the essay

Your first draft of an essay won't be perfect. If you are writing it under timed conditions you won't be able to do extensive rewriting, but if you do have the opportunity to draft and edit then it is worth refining your work. This process will help you improve your writing, from vocabulary choices to sentence and paragraph structures. This section gives you some practical strategies and guidelines for the writing and editing stages.

Overcoming writer's block

Writer's block can be frustrating and anxiety-inducing, but it is a common experience for many students when writing an essay. However, there are strategies you can use to overcome writer's block and get back to writing. Here are some tips that can help you when you are writing an essay over a number of days.

- **Take a break.** Sometimes, the best thing you can do is step away from your writing and take a break. Go for a walk, listen to music or do something completely unrelated to your essay. This can help clear your mind and reduce stress, allowing you to come back to your writing with a fresh perspective.
- **Brainstorm ideas.** If you are struggling to come up with ideas, try brainstorming. Write down everything that comes to mind, without worrying about whether it's good or bad. This can help you generate ideas and get your creativity flowing. If you are a visual thinker, you can place your ideas in a diagram, using boxes and arrows to group and connect words and phrases.
- **Freewrite.** Similar to brainstorming, freewriting involves writing continuously for a set period of time (e.g. ten to fifteen minutes) without worrying about grammar or structure. This can help you generate ideas and get into a 'flow state', which can be helpful in overcoming writer's block.
- **Talk to someone.** Sometimes, talking to someone about your essay can help you to clarify your ideas and find a way to put your thoughts into words. This could be a friend, a family member or a teacher.
- **Break the task into smaller parts.** If the task of writing an entire essay seems overwhelming, try breaking it into smaller parts. Focus on writing one paragraph or even just one sentence at a time. This can make the task seem more manageable and less daunting.

Revising and editing

Once you have written an essay, it is important to revise and edit for clarity and coherence, and to ensure your essay responds to the topic. Here are some tips for refining the content and approach of your essay. Use the proofreading checklist in the next section for your final check before handing in your work.

- Check that your contention is clearly stated in the introduction and supported throughout the essay. Usually the contention appears near the start of the introduction, but if you re-read your essay and realise that your introduction does not include the contention, consider placing it at the end of that paragraph.
- Look at the beginnings of the body paragraphs. They should have clear topic sentences that flow in a logical order and begin in different ways.
- Re-read the conclusion in isolation and check that you have clearly responded to the topic. If the topic asks a question, does the conclusion answer it? If the topic asks you to discuss a statement about the text, have you presented a clear point of view on that statement? You might need to add some content words from the topic, or synonyms for them, to leave your reader convinced that you have fully addressed the topic.

- Clarify any confusing or ambiguous language. Your essay should be clear and easy to understand. If there are any parts that are unclear or contradictory, revise them to make the meaning more apparent.
- Ensure that there is a logical flow of ideas. Your essay should have a logical and coherent structure, with each paragraph building on the previous one. Check that the ideas flow smoothly and that the transitions between paragraphs are clear. You can add linking words to show connections and improve transitions. You might also consider changing the order of body paragraphs to create a more logical sequence of arguments.
- Strengthen the arguments with additional evidence or analysis. If you find that your arguments are weak or unsupported, consider adding more evidence from the text or doing additional analysis to strengthen your points.
- Use precise language. Avoid using vague or general words. Use words with specific meanings to show your understanding of the text, convey your ideas and strengthen your arguments.

Proofreading checklist

- ☐ Is your vocabulary varied and precise? Have you used the most appropriate words and synonyms?
- ☐ Are your sentence structures varied and not too simple?
- ☐ Is the language style formal, rather than conversational or colloquial?
- ☐ Have you avoided the first-person 'I' and used present tense where appropriate?
- ☐ Have you used linking words and phrases to show the logical development of your ideas?
- ☐ Are your statements about the text supported by textual evidence?
- ☐ Does each paragraph link to the topic?
- ☐ Does your conclusion provide a clear answer or response to the topic?
- ☐ Are your spelling, grammar and punctuation all correct?

Sample essays

This section contains two sample annotated essays. They demonstrate the key features of analytical writing on a text, from vocabulary choices through to paragraph structures. Even if you are not studying these particular texts, read the annotations to check for elements you can use to strengthen your own writing.

Scan the code or click here to find additional sample essays on VCE English/EAL texts.

Essay 1

This essay responds to the following topic on Shirley Jackson's novella *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*:

'The characters in *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* lack a conscience.' To what extent do you agree?

Shirley Jackson's novella *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* presents a world where the sinister and gloomy hallmarks of its Gothic style are mirrored in the questionable principles of its central characters. Allowing their desires for personal gain and comfort to usurp any moral sense of right and wrong, Merricat, Constance and Charles all fail to exhibit any level of good conscience. Merricat's determination to preserve her ideal world means she shows little remorse for her murderous thoughts and actions, aided by the docile Constance. Similar selfishness is shown by Charles, who barely conceals his mercenary motivations beneath a show of altruism. Ultimately, it is the townspeople who are revealed to possess a good conscience as they eventually show repentance for their cruel behaviour.

Merricat and Constance both endeavour to preserve a world that is amenable to their insular needs, allowing this to take precedence over their morality. Seeing her sister as 'the most precious person in [her] world', Merricat had no qualm in murdering her family in order to create her reclusive world. She shows little remorse for her actions, having curated a haven that leads her to muse on 'what place would be better for [the sisters] than this?' Merricat shows a strong aversion to anything that will unsettle this utopia. Symbolically, her pet cat is named Jonas, meaning dove, with connotations of peace. In emphasising that Jonas was 'fretful … all during those days when the change was coming', Jackson draws attention to the impending disruption to the peace that Merricat cultivates so obsessively. Noticing the influence Charles wields and the disruption this will cause, Merricat entertains visions of 'beat[ing] at him' and 'stamp[ing] on him after he was dead, and see[ing] him lying dead on the grass'. She, self-righteously, sees this as due justice for the intrusion, rather than fundamentally amoral. Constance's acquiescent nature makes her equally lacking in good conscience. In choosing to name her 'Constance', Jackson characterises her as embodying the steadfastness and faithfulness that is associated with the name's meaning. It is Constance's dedication to her beloved Merricat that prevents her from challenging her sister's behaviour and 'never want[ing] to speak about' the murders, feeling 'wicked' for 'reminding [Merricat] of why [their family] all died', rather than condemning the murders themselves. This earnestness to preserve their perfect world means that Merricat and Constance allow themselves to abandon their morality.

Showing a similar disregard for moral principles, Charles is manipulative and conniving in his efforts to benefit from the Blackwood wealth. Charles quickly convinces Constance that 'as soon as his father died Cousin Charles

Seamlessly incorporates a definition of the key term 'conscience', adding clarity to the interpretation and understanding of the topic.

Shows that an argument is being built and transitions smoothly from one idea to the next.

Continues the argument. The introduction contains three signposts – the behaviour of Merricat and Constance; the greed of Charles; the repentance shown by the townspeople. Each signpost is substantiated in a body paragraph; the third argues against the statement in the topic.

The topic sentence signals a clear relevance to the first of the signposts in the introduction, and establishes the focus for the paragraph.

Shows understanding of the author's craft and intent.

Refers to a specific moment in the text that shows Merricat's lack of conscience, then analyses its significance and relates it to the topic, maintaining relevance.

hurried here to help'; however, Jackson firmly establishes doubt in the reader's mind as to the true altruism of Charles' intentions. With Charles' response that 'as a matter of fact … my father left nothing' when questioned about the expected fortune he would inherit, Jackson positions the reader to be suspicious of his motives. Charles' treatment of Merricat is revealing of his malicious, manipulative nature. He makes threatening remarks to Merricat in wondering, 'come about a month from now … who will still be here? You … or me?', but he keeps these thoughts hidden from Constance. In masking his nastiness, Charles shows his awareness that it is wrong to treat his youngest cousin in such a cruel manner. Nevertheless, his preoccupation with the Blackwood wealth is eventually exposed, as he bemoans the damage to a gold watch chain not because of any sentimental value but because 'it's worth money' and could have been sold. Jackson builds on this when, in the midst of panicking about the burning mansion, Charles screams for Constance to 'put the money in a bag' rather than attempt to 'carry the safe'. Charles' greed diminishes all sense of right and wrong.

In the end, it is the townspeople who reveal the strongest sense of conscience, showing genuine remorse for their misdeeds and unkindness. Early impressions are given of the spite directed towards the Blackwood family when Merricat makes her trips into town. Aside from the general passive-aggression from the adults, Jackson presents the most severe attacks as being childish taunts in the form of a rhyme: 'Merricat, said Constance, would you like a cup of tea? / Oh, no, said Merricat, you'll poison me'. In doing so, Jackson minimises the extent of the immoral attacks to which Merricat claims to be subject. Jackson guides readers to feel further scepticism regarding Merricat's perceptions of the townspeople's cruelty, and the credibility of her biased, character-bound narration, when a kindly visitor to the sisters remarks that she knows 'nine-tenths of that feeling is nothing but [her] imagination'. In the same moment Merricat is also advised that if she would 'go halfway to be friendly there'd never be a word against [her]'. The most reprehensible of the townspeople's behaviour is when, as the Blackwood mansion burns, they delight in its destruction and, afterwards, laugh as they vandalise the remaining rooms and property. However, the remorse demonstrated by what gradually becomes the regular delivery of food, 'always left on the front doorstep, always silently and in the evenings', accompanied by notes apologising for a range of misdemeanours, reveals the existence of a collective conscience. Despite their unconscionable behaviour, then, the townspeople redeem themselves through their contrition.

In the end, Jackson presents a world where many behave with prejudice and self-serving qualities, but she also emphasises the ability of people to show remorse as a sign of good conscience. Her immoral characters are left isolated, with the sisters alone in their 'castle' and Charles adrift in his quest for status. The townspeople, however, thrive, even expanding their borders to the Blackwood estate.

Makes a clear connection to the topic, highlighting the relevance of the analysis and chosen example.

Smoothly integrates short quotes into the analysis.

Uses relevant metalanguage to show understanding of how the text has been crafted to elicit certain responses from the reader.

Qualifies the essay's overall agreement with the topic statement and supports the counterargument with evidence.

The conclusion does not repeat the introduction, but focuses on authorial intent and the text's ideas, concerns and values, relevant to the topic.

Essay 2

This second essay responds to the following topic on Sophocles' play *Oedipus the King*:

'Oedipus is not a tragic hero.' Discuss.

Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* was first staged in the 5th century BCE, with the nature of its central tragedy indisputable. King Oedipus experiences a tremendous downfall, with a tragic truth dismantling his status. In addition, the play culminates in death and agonising trauma that leaves Oedipus intensely distressed. However, Oedipus is not a tragic hero in the Aristotelian framing of the term. Whereas for Aristotle a tragic hero's downfall is predicated on the hero's hamartia – a fatal flaw or weakness – Oedipus' unequivocal suffering results from fate, not hamartia. Sophocles thus warns that it is impossible to control one's destiny.

The magnitude of Oedipus' downfall, from king to exile, creates a catastrophic reality for him. In the play's exposition, while the people of Thebes grapple with 'a plague [that] has struck the city', Oedipus is elevated to godlike status as his people 'beg [him], best of men' to 'raise up [their] city'. Sophocles establishes Oedipus as a king wholly committed to the protection of his people; his 'spirit grieves for the city' and labours 'over many paths of thought' to remedy their crisis. In this way, the audience, aware of the fate that is to befall the hero, is reminded of the high esteem and influence from which Oedipus will descend. As Oedipus seeks to avenge Laius' death, the gods' remedy for the plague, Sophocles presents Oedipus' honourable nature through the repeated use of dramatic irony. Oedipus declares, 'I curse myself as well … if by chance he proves to be an intimate of our house', and then, 'may the curse I just called down on him strike me!', unaware that he himself is the murderer. Despite this, Sophocles presents the hero as a man who is noble, principled and honest. Thus, when Oedipus realises his crimes, the magnitude of the tragedy is intensified. Oedipus' realisation that he is his 'father's killer, [his] mother's–' – words he cannot bring himself to say, beyond 'it's unholy' – serves to make the tragedy of Oedipus 'a horror even his mortal enemy would pity'. Therefore, Oedipus' fall from being a man of honour, accolade and esteem, to being a man of disgrace and pity, is indeed tragic, but this does not make him a tragic hero.

The distressing nature of Oedipus' downfall is compounded by the loss and self-inflicted injury he must endure at the end of the play. When Thebes was in strife, Oedipus looked to Creon as a 'prince' and his 'kinsman'; Creon assures Oedipus that he is 'not the man to yearn for kingship'. When Oedipus acts to appease his people, as a man of integrity, he says he will not punish Creon, 'even if it does lead to my ruin, my death or disgrace, driven from Thebes for life'. The audience, knowing the hero's fate, can appreciate the sad irony in these words, as they are partially realised when

Shows that an argument is being built, with smooth transitions from one idea to the next.

Continues to build the argument. An effective introduction establishes a line of argument, with each signpost building on and connected to the previous. Each point of argument is substantiated in the body paragraphs.

Seamlessly integrates a definition of a defining quality of a tragic hero, and explains how Oedipus differs.

Begins the first body paragraph with a topic sentence that clearly links to one of the signposts in the introduction – Oedipus' terrible fall from high social status.

Demonstrates an understanding of the playwright's craft and intent.

Creon is quick to send Oedipus into exile at the play's end. This betrayal pales in comparison to the agony of Oedipus' realisation that he himself is 'the curse, the corruption of the land' and it is with utter torment that he retreats into the palace crying 'cursed in my birth, cursed in marriage, cursed in the lives I cut down with these hands!' He feels that everything in his legacy has been tainted. Sophocles has a messenger relate the gruesome self-mutilation with which Oedipus punishes himself, rather than have him '[rip] off [Jocasta's] brooches … and lifting them high … [dig] them down the sockets of his eyes' in view of the audience. By suggesting that this act is too gruesome to depict on the stage, Sophocles intensifies its magnitude and impact. Alongside this trauma, Oedipus laments the loss of his beloved Jocasta. Therefore, Oedipus' inquiries reveal tragic truths that precipitate his downfall, but his actions, not being due to hamartia, are not those of a tragic hero.

Integrates the quote in a seamless manner.

Shows awareness of the playwright shaping his text to achieve a particular impact on the audience, as well as understanding of the play as a dramatic form.

Despite his undeniable misfortune, the tragedy of Oedipus is brought about by fate rather than a fatal flaw. An Aristotelian tragic hero possesses a fatal flaw that brings about his demise, but Oedipus' downfall is not a result of his pride, pomposity or curiosity, rather events that an ancient Greek audience would understand to be beyond his control. 'Spurned' by Apollo, Oedipus was shadowed by the Delphic curse that he was 'fated to couple with [his] mother … bring a breed of children into the light' and 'kill [his] father'. Sophocles emphasises that Oedipus strove to avoid his 'doom' by not returning to Corinth, not realising that the truth of his parentage lay in Thebes. Even upon learning of Polybus' death, Oedipus refuses to 'come home' as he lives in fear of the prophecy, given that Merope lives. In staging the play with a 'stone altar stand[ing] at the centre of the stage', Sophocles presents a perpetual reminder of the role of the gods in the fortunes of the citizens of ancient Greece. The maligned prophet Tiresias, frustrated by Oedipus' disbelief, agrees that 'it is not [Oedipus'] fate to fall at my hands. Apollo is quite enough'. Thus, regardless of Oedipus' character and integrity, it is 'Apollo's oracle' that determines his fate. Oedipus is not, therefore, a tragic hero in the Aristotelian understanding of the term.

Uses textual evidence to support the point of argument stated in the topic sentence.

Ends each body paragraph with sentences that clearly relate the paragraph's analysis to the topic.

Ultimately, regardless of the terrible trauma that befalls Oedipus through the truth of his lineage, the customs of which he is in gross breach and the deaths and mutilations that result, he is not a tragic hero. His tragedy is brought about by fate, rather than hamartia. Throughout the play, Sophocles highlights that Oedipus is a mere mortal who has no control over his destiny.

Assessment sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Description of task: _____

_____

_____

Assessment criteria	**Level of performance** (Tick to indicate level)
1. Exploration and analysis of the dynamics of a text; its ideas, concerns and conflicts; its historical context; and the social and cultural values in the text	low ⟷ high
2. Exploration and analysis of the impact of vocabulary, text structures and language features	low ⟷ high
3. Construction of a response that responds explicitly to the set topic	low ⟷ high
4. Use of textual evidence to support ideas and analysis	low ⟷ high
5. Use of structure, paragraphing and analytical language, including relevant metalanguage	low ⟷ high
6. Use of the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English	low ⟷ high

Teacher comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

very low	low	medium	high	very high
1–8	9–16	17–24	25–32	33–40

This is NOT an official assessment sheet; the suggested criteria above are adapted from the key skills in the VCE English/EAL Study Design and the published performance descriptors. Refer to the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/english-and-eal/Pages/Assessment.aspx for official advice and performance descriptors.

Scan the code or click here for a PDF of this assessment sheet.

AREA OF STUDY 1 **UNIT 4, OUTCOME 1**

ANALYTICAL RESPONSE TO TEXT

Assessment sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Description of task: _____

_____

_____

Assessment criteria	**Level of performance** (Tick to indicate level)
1. Exploration and analysis of the dynamics of a text; the explicit and implicit ideas it presents; how its historical context and social and cultural values contribute to meaning; and how values are conveyed	low ⟷ high
2. Exploration and analysis of the impact of vocabulary, text structures and language features	low ⟷ high
3. Construction of a response that responds explicitly to the set topic	low ⟷ high
4. Use of textual evidence to support ideas and analysis	low ⟷ high
5. Use of structure, paragraphing and analytical language, including relevant metalanguage	low ⟷ high
6. Use of the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English	low ⟷ high

Teacher comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

very low	low	medium	high	very high
1–8	9–16	17–24	25–32	33–40

This is NOT an official assessment sheet; the suggested criteria above are adapted from the key skills in the VCE English/EAL Study Design and the published performance descriptors. Refer to the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/english-and-eal/Pages/Assessment.aspx for official advice and performance descriptors.

Scan the code or click here for a PDF of this assessment sheet.

SECTION 02

Creating texts

IN THIS SECTION

In Unit 3 Area of Study 2, the assessment task requires you to complete two written pieces and a reflective commentary on the writing process. You will have a great deal of freedom in your writing – you will be able to make choices about the form, style and content of your pieces. This freedom means that you have to come up with your own ideas, which in turn requires targeted research, considered reading and careful planning.

You will also need to think about how you shape your writing for a particular audience, context and purpose. These three factors influence the vocabulary you use, the tone and style of your writing, your use of language features (such as figurative language or persuasive language) and the way you structure your text. To create a polished, coherent and effective piece of writing you will write drafts, respond to feedback and apply critical and creative thinking skills to edit and refine your text.

This section explains the knowledge and skills you will need and gives you practical strategies for creating your own original and distinctive pieces of writing.

CHAPTER 07

CONTEXT AND AUDIENCE

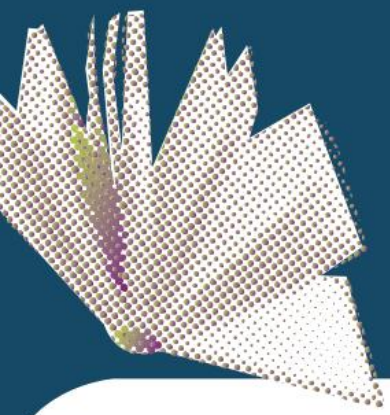
context and audience

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Understanding context
- Understanding audience
- The role of mode and medium

Every published text has a context for its publication: the society and culture it forms part of; the historical period it belongs to; the ideas, issues and debates happening at the time; the particular circumstances around its production. Equally, there is an audience for each text, although a writer might have a broad, rather than a very specific, idea of who this audience will be.

When you are studying a mentor text, look for the ways in which the text's context and audience have shaped the writer's choices regarding language and structure. Similarly, when you are writing your own text, think about who you are writing for and the context in which you are producing it. Your decisions about language and structure should be shaped by and appropriate for that audience and context, in addition to being guided by your purpose for writing. (For more about purpose, see Chapter 8.)



Understanding context

As Chapter 2 explained, social and cultural contexts strongly influence the ideas and concerns explored in a text, as well as its language features and vocabulary. Societies and cultures vary widely, and they also change dramatically with time – the issues and ideas of 1900, for example, were very different from the issues of our own time.

Two main types of context are the **context of culture** and the **context of situation** (see page 17). While the context of culture is broad, the context of situation is specific. An important aspect of the context of situation is the author's personal context – their life experiences, their motivations for creating the text, their values and interests.

Contexts of mentor texts

You will be looking to your mentor texts for models of effective writing. However, another useful way of looking at mentor texts is to see how they are shaped by the contexts in which they were created. Important contextual factors include:

- the place where the text was created (the country/city/town/region)
- the time period in which it was created
- the author's life experiences, interests and concerns
- the publishing context (see 'The role of mode and medium' on page 76 for more on this).

Your own context

Just as the authors of your mentor texts were influenced by their contexts, you are also shaped by your context as you read and write.

As you read a text – whether it is a mentor text for the Creating texts area of study, or a text for either of the other areas of study – your responses will be shaped by your own background, and the place and time you live in.

When you write a text, these contextual factors are even more influential. Contemporary issues, changes in society and your own life circumstances will have a bearing on what you want to write about, the language you use, the ideas you explore and the opinions you express.

Explore context

ACTIVITY

1 Research the cultural context in which each of your mentor texts was created. Find out about:
   a when it was written or performed
   b where the author was living when they created the text
   c key elements of the society in which the text was created.

2 Research the situational contexts for your mentor texts. Find out:
   a important aspects of the author's life and work that are relevant to the text
   b where the text was published (e.g. for a short story, this might be in a magazine or a book-length collection)
   c any interesting or controversial facts around the text's publication or performance.

3 Describe your own context by answering the following questions.
   a What contemporary issues do you find intriguing or interesting? What ideas or things are important to you?
   b What issues do your peers talk about and prioritise? To what extent do you share their views?
   c Which aspects of your learning do you most enjoy? What are you motivated to learn more about, and why?
   d What are some experiences that have shaped your identity and values?
   e Which dominant social values do you agree with? Are there any you feel should be challenged?
   f What topics are you interested in exploring in your own writing in this area of study?

Understanding audience

The audience is the group of people who are reading, listening to or watching a text. Some of the qualities that define an audience are:

- age
- cultural background
- educational background
- field of employment
- interests and concerns.

An author usually has a sense of the type of audience they are writing for, although often it is a very broad audience for which it can be hard to identify specific qualities. A short story writer, for instance, might be writing for a general audience without knowing which magazine the story will end up being published in, or what the likely background and demographic characteristics of their readers will be. In contrast, sometimes audience members share with the author a particular interest or concern, and the author will have a very clear idea of who they are writing for. A speaker at a community forum objecting to a new housing development, for example, is likely to be addressing an audience with the same interests and desires, and with shared experiences of living in the area.

Audience can be closely related to context, especially the mode and medium in which a text is published. A city newspaper will have a readership that is quite different from the intended readers of a children's picture book, for example, and the audience that listens to a speech at a school assembly will be different again.

In your writing, your intended audience might be specified in the task material. It is possible that this audience will be very broad, in which case you need to aim to engage a wide range of readers. On the other hand, it is possible that your audience will be quite specific, and you will need to take their likely interests and background knowledge into account as you craft your text.

Explore audience

ACTIVITY

1 For each of your three mentor texts, describe the intended audience as precisely as you can. The information about context you found in the previous activity will help with this.

2 How has each author chosen vocabulary, language features and text structures relevant and appropriate to their audience?

3 If you are writing for a general adult audience, what are some factors that will influence your authorial choices?

4 Identify a specific audience about which you have a good understanding. (This could be your classmates, for instance.) Describe three qualities of this audience that you could target in your writing, and how you will target them.

The role of mode and medium

The mode and medium of a text are important parts of its context.

Mode refers to the processes of communication. The five modes are writing, reading, speaking, listening and viewing. Mode forms an important part of the context of production since it shapes how a text will be crafted. For example, a short story is constructed differently from the script for a monologue, which is different again from the screenplay for a short film, even if the plot and characters are the same.

When you are creating a text in this area of study you will be writing it, but you need to keep in mind the mode in which the text would be delivered. If you are writing a speech or monologue, for example, you will incorporate and make allowances for the elements of the spoken mode – the need for the speaker to take breaths, to have places where they can vary their tone and pace, and to have the opportunity to directly address the audience. A podcast, too, will have aural elements that need to be scripted and integrated into the text.

Medium refers to the channel of communication – that is, *how* a text reaches its audience – and is closely related to mode. A written text can be communicated through words printed on a physical page, or through electronic means such as via a computer, phone or tablet. A speech is often delivered to a live audience, but can be recorded and viewed online. The context of reception varies significantly when the medium changes. (For more information about the context of reception, see page 18.) For example, think about the differences between watching a movie in the cinema, watching it on a large screen in your loungeroom and watching it on a tablet with headphones on. Similarly, the experience of reading a novel is different from that of listening to an audio book, since the speaker's voice, accent and intonation will shape meaning and affect the listener's response to the text. In this case, both the mode and the medium change.

The mode and medium also affect the audience. The intended audience of a speech delivered in parliament will be other members of parliament. However, when it is viewed online it will have a broader, and likely much larger, audience.

Explore mode and medium

ACTIVITY

1. Write notes about the mode and medium of each of your mentor texts. If one of your mentor texts is a video, you might also be studying a transcript of that video, so note the different modes – one text requires listening and viewing, and the other involves reading – and how these modes affect your understanding of and responses to each text. If your mentor text is a short story, you might be reading it in print or online.
2. How have the creators of your mentor texts crafted them to suit the intended mode and medium? Look at word choices, language features and text structures.
3. Which mode and medium do you feel most comfortable writing in and for? What are the features that appeal to you? How will this shape your writing?

CHAPTER 08

PURPOSE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Writing to express
- Writing to explain
- Writing to reflect
- Writing to argue

Your purpose in writing has two related components: why you want to write, and what you want your audience to feel, think or do as a result of reading your text.

The four distinct purposes outlined in the VCE English/EAL Study Design are discussed in the following sections. It is very possible that your writing will have more than one of these purposes, as is also the case for most published writing; there is also significant overlap between these purposes. The most important thing is to be clear about what you want to achieve in your written piece. This will help you to make effective choices regarding form, structure, vocabulary and language features.

Writing to express

When you are writing to express, you are using your imagination and creativity to explore and convey ideas.

Novels, short stories, plays, poems and films are all classic forms of writing to express. They involve imagined characters, places, situations and events through which writers explore the many facets of human behaviour.

Imaginative texts contain tension and conflict as characters seek to achieve their goals, and as their values and beliefs are tested. Often these tensions come to a peak in the narrative climax and are then resolved – but not always. If you are exploring ideas in this way you might choose to leave some things unresolved, so the reader continues to ask questions and wonder.

These verbs describe some of the things you will be doing as you create writing to express.

construct	dramatise	plot
create	imagine	relate
describe	narrate	resolve

Writing to explain

When you are writing to explain, you are looking at cause and effect, logical progressions and the language of reason. Whereas writing to express involves the imagination, writing to explain involves facts and logic.

However, there is a creative element to writing that explains, which is also known as expository writing. As you investigate origins and causes, you will make connections that could be hypothetical rather than definite. You might be describing multiple perspectives on a topic, each of which could be considered valid even though they are conflicting. You might also be imagining a consequence or future situation as part of your explanations.

Poetic language can be as much a part of expository writing as the language of facts and logic. There can also be a personal element of writing to explain, as the discussion presents the writer's view of the topic.

These verbs describe some of the things you will be doing as you create writing to explain.

analyse	explicate	instruct
conclude	hypothesise	reveal
dissect	inform	unpack

Writing to reflect

When you are writing to reflect, you are focusing on the past, and the ways in which the present has been shaped by the past. It is primarily an autobiographical form of writing, using the first-person voice and the past tense.

While the focus is on the past, the writer is reflecting from the perspective of the here and now, so the present tense is also used. A series of connections can be drawn between past and present, and there can also be a reflection on lessons learned, perhaps moving from personal experiences to draw conclusions about broader human experiences.

Reflective writing is a personal form of writing, and invariably involves writing about feelings and psychological responses. Descriptive language, imagery and a variety of sentence types enable the writer to convey their experiences meaningfully and memorably to the reader.

These verbs describe some of the things you will be doing as you create writing to reflect.

connect	meditate	reconsider
consider	ponder	reconstruct
describe	recall	remember

Writing to argue

When you are writing to argue, you are presenting your point of view with the aim of convincing others to agree with you. Argumentative writing often combines elements of logic and reasoning with emotive language and appeals. However, there is a wide spectrum of argumentative writing, from the kind of argument you construct in a text response essay – in which you avoid expressing strong emotions – to the more passionate arguments you might hear from politicians and protesters.

Persuasive language and techniques such as emotional appeals and rhetorical questions (see pages 190–5) are often used in writing that presents a strong point of view, but rigorous, fact-based arguments are also essential. First-person and third-person voices can be used, depending on how much the writer wants to make their personality and personal experiences part of their argument.

Structure is an important feature of an effective argument. The text should begin and end strongly, establishing the topic at the outset and presenting a clear point of view at least at the end, if not also at the beginning. The middle sections of the text should present supporting reasons and evidence. See pages 196–9 for a variety of ways you can structure an argument.

These verbs describe some of the things you will be doing as you create writing to argue.

contend	dispute	prove
debate	justify	reason
defend	propose	refute

Explore purpose

ACTIVITY

1 Using the four defined purposes discussed in this chapter – to express, to explain, to reflect and to argue – identify the main purpose of each of your mentor texts. Give reasons for your answers.

2 For each mentor text, identify an element of vocabulary, language features and structure that the author has used to achieve their purpose.

3 Are there some aspects of purpose not covered by the four defined purposes in this chapter? For instance, the author of a persuasive piece might want readers to take an action of some kind (e.g. signing a petition, voting a certain way, becoming vegetarian). Or, the writer of a reflective text might hope to encourage readers to reflect on how they have dealt with experiences in their own past. Can you think of any similar aspects of purpose that apply to your mentor texts?

4 For a written piece you have drafted or are currently developing, describe your purpose as accurately as you can. Does it align neatly with one or more of the four purposes? What choices are you making in order to achieve your purpose? Can you improve any aspects of language or structure?

CHAPTER 09

STYLE AND VOICE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Understanding the elements of style
- The role of voice in texts
- Style and genre
- Developing your own voice as a writer

This chapter explores the roles of style and voice in writing. **Style** is the combination of language features such as word choice, sentence structure, syntax (the arrangement of words), figurative language and imagery. **Voice** is the unique style of an author – it is how you can tell one author's writing from another's. Voice is also the individual persona we 'hear' when reading a text, including the point of view or perspective.

It is important to understand that all authors have a voice, even you. Authors' voices are constantly shifting and developing, and there is no 'correct' voice in writing. There are, however, voices and styles which are particularly suited to different genres.

The explanations and activities in this chapter examine the individual elements of style, as well as how they work together. They show you how to analyse an author's style and voice, and how to develop your own voice so that your writing is truly unique.

Understanding the elements of style

This table shows the main language features that authors use to create the style of a particular text.

Feature	Definition	Example	Explanation
Syntax	The arrangement of words and phrases to create sentences.	'The dog, quickly running through the park, chased after the frisbee.'	In this example, the syntax features the embedded clause 'quickly running through the park'.
Word choice	The selection of specific words to convey meaning and create a certain tone or atmosphere.	'The howling wind whipped through the deserted streets.'	The adjectives 'howling' and 'deserted', as well as the verb 'whipped', create a sense of danger and contribute to the threatening atmosphere.

Feature	Definition	Example	Explanation
Register	The level of formality or informality.	'We had a real cool time – catch you next week.'	The informal language use in this example reflects casual speech, and conveys familiarity and friendliness.
Imagery	The use of descriptive language to create vivid mental images for the reader.	'The sunset was an explosion of colours, painting the sky with strokes of pink and orange, while the salty, tangy smell of the ocean infused the air.'	The vivid visual and olfactory imagery paints a clear and evocative picture for the reader.
Figurative language	The use of language in a non-literal sense to create imagery, add emphasis, or convey meaning more creatively.	'He was a towering inferno of anger.'	Figurative language may include metaphors like this example, or similes, personification, and other techniques.
Tone	The attitude or feeling expressed by the author towards the subject or the audience.	'The sky that day, so many years ago now, was a deep shade of purple as the sun set behind the mountains. The warmth of the day still lingered, but a chill was starting to creep in as the night approached. If only I could go back in time to that moment of peace and tranquillity.'	The tone of nostalgia is created through the vivid descriptions and the positive, longing references to the past.

Syntax

Syntax refers to the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences. It is related to the grammatical structure of a sentence and plays a significant role in determining the style of a writer. Understanding the syntax used by an author can help you to identify patterns in their writing and to see how they are creating a rhythm and flow in their sentences. It can also help you to see how they are generating tone and atmosphere, which are important aspects of their voice.

For example, consider the syntax of the sentence in the table above: 'The dog, quickly running through the park, chased after the frisbee.' There are many ways to change the syntax of this sentence – and changing the syntax changes the style, emphasis and impact of the sentence.

Sentence	Explanation
Quickly running through the park, the dog chased after the frisbee.	This variation places the phrase 'quickly running through the park' at the beginning of the sentence, immediately creating a sense of action and movement.
The dog was quickly running through the park because it was chasing the frisbee.	This variation adds 'cause and effect' with the word 'because', but is more wordy. It might be suitable in a nonfiction text.
Chasing after the frisbee, the dog quickly ran through the park.	This variation places action at the end of the sentence, emphasising the motion of the dog.

Word choice

Word choice refers to the selection of specific words to convey meaning and create a certain tone or mood. For a nonfiction text, the words an author uses can indicate their level of education, their cultural background and their attitude towards the subject. In imaginative writing, the words an author gives to a character are an essential part of that character's identity. Understanding an author's word choices can give you insight into their voice and how they want the reader to perceive their message.

Word choice in writing is also closely related to purpose, audience and context. The purpose of a piece of writing strongly influences the vocabulary used, such as the use of emotive language in a persuasive piece compared to the highly descriptive language in a text written to express or explain. The intended audience influences the writer's choice of language, with simpler language being appropriate for a general audience and more specialised terminology for an expert audience. The context of a piece, including the historical or cultural setting, will also influence an author's word choices.

Register

Register is an important aspect of style, and refers to the level or complexity of language. The three main registers are **formal**, **informal** and **standard**. A writer will use a particular register according to their context, purpose and audience. The text type will also affect the language register. For example, a newspaper editorial might use formal language while an online comment by a reader might use informal language.

Formal language is characterised by:

- the absence of contractions (e.g. 'you will' instead of 'you'll'; 'it is' instead of 'it's')
- the absence of slang, very casual language and colloquialisms
- longer and more complex sentences
- more sophisticated and varied vocabulary.

A speech on an official occasion or a letter of application for a job are likely to use formal language, which also tends to have a serious tone (see pages 83–4 for more on tone).

Informal language is characterised by:

- the use of contractions (see above)
- the use of slang, casual language, idioms and colloquialisms
- shorter, simpler sentences
- less complex vocabulary.

Everyday speech tends to be informal, so it is often used in imaginative fiction and scripts for dialogue. Pieces written in the first person might also use informal language to generate a feeling of rapport or relatability with their audience.

Another element of language connected to the informal language register is the use of **non-standard** English. This includes the use of colloquialisms and idioms, as well as expressions that are grammatically incorrect but widely used in casual speech. This example is from First Nations actor and writer Meyne Wyatt's monologue in his play *City of Gold*:

> *C'mon man we was flora and fauna before 1967, nah actually we didn't even exist at all.*

Wyatt's use of non-standard language enables him to create a compelling voice and persona and also to mock the historical treatment of First Nations Australians.

The **standard register** lies between formal and informal registers. Classroom conversations between teachers and students, or in the workplace between colleagues, are likely to use the standard register.

Imagery

Imagery is the use of descriptive language to create vivid mental images. This can include the use of sensory details – visual (sight), auditory (sound), tactile (touch), olfactory (smell) and gustatory (taste). Imagery can help to create a specific atmosphere, to evoke a sense of time and place and to convey meaning more effectively. It also plays a significant role in creating a unique style for the author. When analysing an author's style, look for their use of (or lack of) imagery and how it contributes to the impact of the text.

Figurative language

Figurative language refers to the non-literal use of language to create imagery, add emphasis and convey meaning more creatively. It includes metaphors, similes, hyperbole, personification and symbols. Figurative language adds depth and layers of meaning to a text, and it can also be used to create a specific tone or atmosphere. Examining an author's use of figurative language can help you to see how they have created their style and voice, and how their text is exploring wider meanings and issues.

Tone

Tone refers to the attitude or feeling expressed by the author towards the subject or the audience. The tone can be created by the choice of words, the use of imagery and figurative language, the register and the overall style of the text. Understanding an author's tone can give you insight into their voice and how they want the reader to perceive their message.

The word bank below explains a number of common tones.

Tone	Description
Serious	expressing a grave, important or significant matter in a solemn manner
Humorous	causing laughter or amusement; comical
Sarcastic	using irony and mockery to show contempt or derision
Witty	displaying clever humour and quick thinking
Cynical	expressing doubt or distrust in the sincerity or goodness of human motives and actions
Confident	showing self-assurance or belief in oneself and one's abilities
Ironic	using language to convey a meaning that is opposite to its literal meaning
Satirical	using irony, sarcasm and ridicule to expose and criticise people's vices or flaws
Melancholic	expressing a feeling of pensive sadness
Mysterious	having an enigmatic quality that arouses curiosity or speculation
Dreamy	having a hazy or fanciful quality
Passionate	showing intense feelings or strong belief
Rebellious	defying or resisting authority or convention

Identify style and voice

ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will analyse a text and identify the literary features that contribute to the author's unique style and voice. Use one of your mentor texts or another text you are drawing on for the Creating texts area of study.

1 Begin by reviewing the six elements of style discussed above: syntax, word choice, register, imagery, figurative language and tone. Make sure you understand the definition and purpose of each element.

2 Next, read through the text that you will be analysing. Look for specific words, phrases or sentences that illustrate the use of each element of style.

3 Create a worksheet based on the table below to record your findings.

Feature	Example from the text	How it contributes to style and voice
Syntax		
Word choice		
Register		
Imagery		
Figurative language		
Tone		

4 Share your findings with the class. Discuss how the use of each element contributes to the author's style and voice.

5 As a class, discuss how the text's style contributes to its overall meaning and impact on the reader.

The role of voice in texts

Voice is like an author's fingerprint: unique to them, and identifiable by its specific features. These features include stylistic elements such as those discussed in the previous section. Voice may also be influenced by an author's choice of narrative point of view: first person, third person or – less frequently – second person.

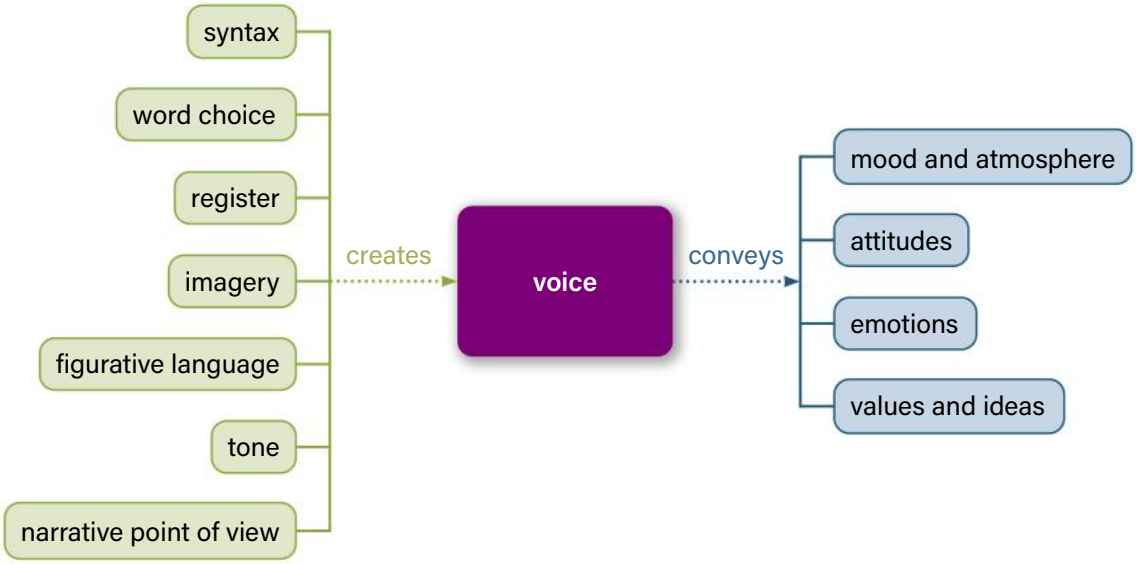
An author's voice can be influenced by their lived experiences and by the literary works that they find moving and inspiring. They can also deliberately craft their voice in order to achieve a certain effect, such as making a personal connection with the reader or conveying political or social views in a way intended to make the reader agree with them.

Tips for identifying an author's voice

- Pay attention to point of view.
- Look for consistent literary devices.
- Note the tone and how it changes.
- Research the author's background.
- If possible, compare the text with other works by the author or in the same genre.

The relationship between voice and literary elements

Understanding how voice in literature is produced by the author's use of features such as imagery, tone and point of view can give you a deeper appreciation of how an author creates a specific atmosphere and influences readers to respond in particular ways.



Think of the stylistic elements and the narrative point of view as 'inputs' and the atmosphere, mood, attitudes, emotions, values and ideas as 'outputs'. Voice is what takes all of the inputs and combines them to express emotions and ideas in a unique way.

Analysing different perspectives

Understanding the different points of view used in texts can help you see how an author is trying to engage with the reader and create a certain perspective.

Perspective	Description	Example
First person	The narrative point of view is limited to one character's observations, thoughts and feelings.	'I walked down the street, feeling hopeful and determined.'
Second person	The narrator addresses the reader directly, creating a sense of involvement.	'You walk down the street, feeling hopeful and determined.'
Third person limited	The narrative point of view is limited to the thoughts and feelings of one character.	'He walked down the street, feeling hopeful and determined.'
Third person omniscient	The narrative has access to the thoughts and feelings of all characters.	'John walked down the street, feeling hopeful and determined. Meanwhile, his wife watched from the window, planning the day ahead.'

Perspective can combine with other aspects of style. For example, imagine a first-person story narrated by a character using short, sharp sentences and little figurative language. Compare that to a narrator whose storytelling is much more descriptive and uses metaphors and imagery. For example:

> *I walked down the street. The sun was very hot.*

compared to:

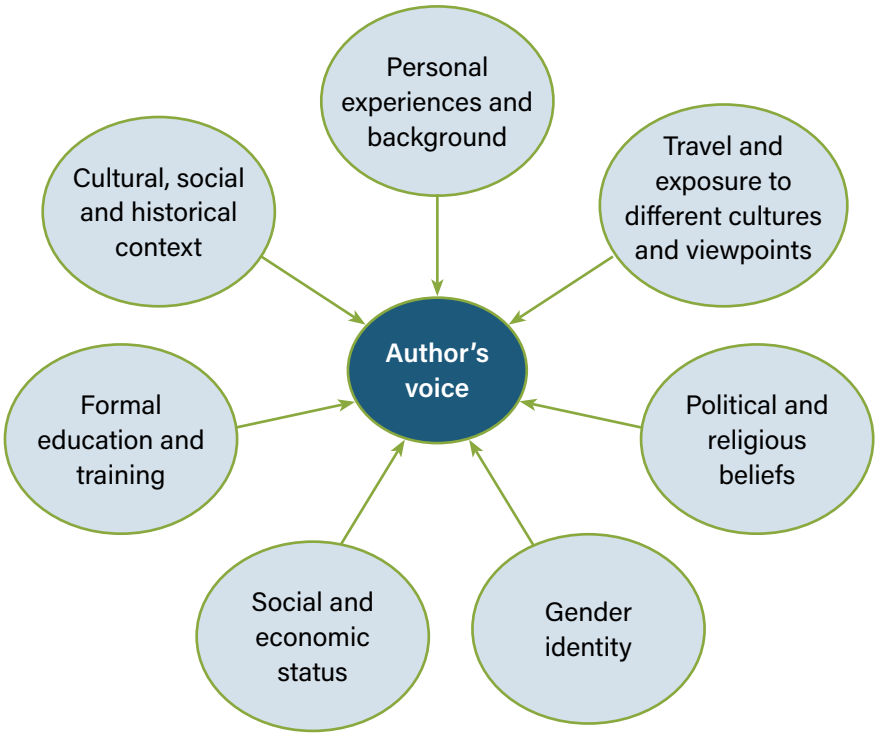
> *The sun beat down on me as I sauntered along the busy avenue, the hustle and bustle of the city a symphony to my ears.*

Neither voice is inherently 'better' than the other; the author will use the voice that best suits the genre of the text and the effects they are seeking to achieve.

The role of personal experiences and background

By understanding how an author's life and experiences influence their writing, you can gain a deeper appreciation of the themes and messages in a text. For example, if an author has had personal experiences with a certain issue, they may construct their voice to convey their perspective on that issue through their writing. Understanding this connection between an author's life and their writing can provide a deeper level of insight into a text and the author's purpose in writing that text.

To identify the factors from an author's life that come through in their writing, you might have to do a little research. You don't need to understand every aspect of an author's life, but it can be very useful to have some biographical information.



Using voice to comment on societal issues

An author can construct a voice in a way that enables them to comment on social, political and cultural issues. Analysing an author's voice in relation to these issues can help you to see how a text is using certain elements of style and voice in order to convey particular ideas and values. You might wish to use some of these same elements in a text you are writing to explain or to argue.

The following table shows some of the aspects of voice that an author might use to comment on social, political and cultural issues.

Social	Political	Cultural
Dialect and colloquial language to portray a specific social group.	Satire to comment on political issues.	Symbolism and imagery to convey cultural beliefs and customs.
Imagery to portray poverty and class struggle.	A first-person narrator to convey a political ideology or comment on political events and decisions.	Historical references to convey cultural heritage.
Characterisation to comment on race and gender relations.	Rhetoric (persuasive language and techniques) to encourage the reader to adopt a particular political viewpoint.	Specific word choices to portray cultural identity and diversity.

Analyse the use of voice in fictional texts

ACTIVITY

This activity is focused on analysing the use of voice in fictional texts. It includes a close reading exercise, where you are asked to examine a specific passage in a text and identify elements of style that contribute to a character's voice. This exercise will help you to understand how an author's stylistic choices contribute to a unique and distinct voice in their writing.

1 **Create a voice map.** For your chosen fictional text, create a mind map highlighting the different perspectives and narrators in the story. Place the main narrator or character in the centre, with the other voices around the outside. If there are multiple speakers, limit them to those with the most significant impact on the story.

2 **Find key quotes.** For each narrator or perspective, find five key quotes that demonstrate their unique voice, perspective and relationship to other characters. Keep them short – fewer than ten words where possible – so that you can memorise them for assessment tasks.

3 **Do a close reading for style.** Choose a passage from the text that you find particularly interesting or striking. Annotate the passage by identifying elements that contribute to its style, such as figurative language and imagery. Consider the tone and mood of the passage and how it contributes to the overall meaning of the text. Write a short analysis of the passage and its stylistic choices. Share your analysis with a partner and discuss how the passage contributes to your understanding of the voice and the story as a whole.

Style and genre

Style and genre are closely intertwined. The way an author writes can give clues to the type of story they are telling, and certain genres are known for their characteristic styles. In the activity opposite, we will explore the relationship between style and genre by examining some typical stylistic elements of different literary genres.

Here are five examples of common fictional genres and the stylistic elements typical of texts in each genre.

Genre	Typical stylistic elements
Romance	descriptive language, emotive language, lush imagery
Horror	suspenseful language, eerie imagery, foreshadowing
Science fiction	futuristic language, technical jargon, speculative concepts
Historical fiction	period-specific language, historical detail, use of primary sources
Detective fiction	suspenseful language, description, matter-of-fact style

Analyse the relationship between style and genre

ACTIVITY

1 Select a mentor text you are currently studying.
   a Identify the genre the text belongs to.
   b Research typical stylistic elements associated with that genre.
   c Read through a passage of the text, highlighting examples of those stylistic elements.
   d Write one or two paragraphs analysing how these stylistic elements contribute to the tone and atmosphere of the text and how they create a sense of genre.
2 Select a text from a different genre.
   a Identify the genre of the second text.
   b Research typical stylistic elements associated with that genre.
   c Read through the second text (or a passage from it), highlighting examples of those stylistic elements.
   d Write one or two paragraphs analysing how these stylistic elements contribute to the tone and atmosphere of the text and how they create a sense of genre.
3 Compare and contrast the stylistic elements and their effects in the two texts. How do the authors use style and voice to shape the reader's experience and understanding? What are the main differences between the texts? What, if any, are the similarities?

Developing your own voice as a writer

Throughout VCE English you are required to write many different types of texts, including essays and imaginative pieces. You'll find that the more you write, the more your voice develops. Here are some additional tips for developing your voice as a writer.

- **Read widely and regularly.** The more you read, the more you will be exposed to different styles, genres and voices. Aim to read texts from different authors, periods and cultures.
- **Pay attention to the language and style used in the texts you read.** Take note of the words, phrases and sentence structures that catch your attention. Try to understand why they are effective and how they contribute to the overall meaning of the text.
- **Experiment with different writing styles and genres.** Try writing in different voices and using different perspectives. Write in different forms, such as poetry, short stories and essays. The more you experiment, the more you will learn about what works for you as a writer.
- **Practise writing in different voices to develop your unique writing style.** Experiment with various perspectives, tones and language registers to find your authentic voice.
- **Seek feedback on your writing voice.** Share your work with friends, family or a writing group. Listen to their constructive criticism and use it to refine and enhance your voice.

- **Study the craft of developing a distinct writing voice.** Take a class, read books on writing or watch videos that focus on techniques for creating a unique writing voice.
- **Take risks with your writing voice.** Writing is about creativity and exploration. Challenge yourself to go beyond your comfort zone and experiment with different writing styles.
- **Expand your vocabulary to add variety and impact to your writing.** Try keeping a journal where you add ten new words to your vocabulary each week – these can be words you come across in any of your reading, viewing or listening. Then aim to include some of these new words in your writing.
- **Enjoy the process of discovering your writing voice.** Remember that writing is about expressing your personality and your ideas. Don't get bogged down in trying to be perfect; instead, have fun and play with language to develop a unique writing voice.

Develop your voice

ACTIVITY

1. Select a piece of your own writing that you feel represents your current voice as a writer.
2. Identify three specific elements of your writing that you believe contribute to your voice. These could be word choices, sentence structures or the use of figurative language.
3. Analyse how each of these elements contributes to the tone and mood of the piece.
4. Reflect on how these elements might be used in different genres or for different audiences. How might you adjust them to better suit the purpose and audience of a particular piece?
5. Experiment with making small changes to these elements in a new piece of writing, which could be for a different genre, purpose or audience. How do these changes affect the tone and atmosphere of the piece? How do they change your voice as a writer?
6. Write a short reflection on your experience with this activity and what you learned about developing your voice as a writer.

CHAPTER 10

USING MENTOR TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Language features
- Style
- Structure
- Characters, setting and plot
- Purpose, audience and context

Studying mentor texts is an important part of the writing process in the Creating texts outcome. Mentor texts provide you with examples of various text forms, language features, styles and structures that can be used as inspiration for your own writing. They also enable you to see how successful writers have approached different writing challenges and how they have shaped their text according to their purpose, audience and context. Finally, mentor texts will help you explore the broad idea your school has selected from the Framework of Ideas (see Chapter 11).

Scan the code or click **here** to watch a video on how to use mentor texts as models for effective writing.

Language features

When studying mentor texts, one of the key elements to focus on is the author's use of language. By examining the author's choice of words and literary devices, you can gain insights into how to effectively convey meaning and create a desired tone.

This section shows how you can use a series of guiding questions to study an author's use of language. Anton Chekhov's short story 'Gooseberries' – a mentor text for Writing about country – is used as an example. The excerpt on the next page is the opening paragraph of the story.

Analysing language features: what to look for

- **Imagery:** The use of language to create mental pictures, often invoking one or more of the five senses.
- **Metaphor:** A comparison of two things to create an image in the reader's mind.
- **Simile:** A comparison of two things using the word 'like' or 'as' to create an image.
- **Personification:** An image that gives human characteristics to something non-human.
- **Symbolism:** The use of symbols to represent ideas or concepts.

The whole sky had been overcast with rain-clouds from early morning; it was a still day, not hot, but heavy, as it is in grey dull weather when the clouds have been hanging over the country for a long while, when one expects rain and it does not come. Ivan Ivanovitch, the veterinary surgeon, and Burkin, the high-school teacher, were already tired from walking, and the fields seemed to them endless. Far ahead of them they could just see the windmills of the village of Mironositskoe; on the right stretched a row of hillocks which disappeared in the distance behind the village, and they both knew that this was the bank of the river, that there were meadows, green willows, homesteads there, and that if one stood on one of the hillocks one could see from it the same vast plain, telegraph-wires, and a train which in the distance looked like a crawling caterpillar, and that in clear weather one could even see the town. Now, in still weather, when all nature seemed mild and dreamy, Ivan Ivanovitch and Burkin were filled with love of that countryside, and both thought how great, how beautiful a land it was.

Adjectives describing the weather create tone and mood.

These professions suggest a social context and add to the detailed observations.

The setting is created through description, which also adds to tone and mood.

Adjectives create a sense of space and stillness.

The simile reinforces the sense of stillness and of human activity being dwarfed by the landscape.

Guiding questions

Use the following questions to guide you through an analysis of the language features in a text or text excerpt. The passage from 'Gooseberries' is used for the sample answers.

- What is the **tone** of the narrative, and how is it created through word choices and language features?

  Sample answer: The tone of the narrative is reflective and contemplative. This is created through the use of sensory descriptions, such as 'still day', 'heavy' and 'mild and dreamy'. The author also uses long, descriptive sentences that slow down the pace of the narration and allow the reader to feel immersed in the setting and the characters' thoughts and feelings.

- What language features are used to convey the **setting**?

  Sample answer: The setting of the story is a vast countryside in overcast weather. This contributes to the mood of the story, which is one of nostalgia and longing for something that is out of reach. Language features used to create the setting include imagery, such as 'clouds hanging over the country', and the simile 'like a crawling caterpillar' to describe a distant train.

- How is language used to describe the **characters or individuals** in the text, and what are the likely effects on the reader?

  Sample answer: The two characters in the excerpt are first described in terms of their professions – a veterinary surgeon and a high-school teacher. These professions suggest the social class the characters belong to, and are reflected in the narrative's precise and observant language, with a focus on details and descriptions of the natural world. Although the characters themselves are not described in detail, phrases such as 'they could just see' give the reader the feeling that they are seeing the landscape just as the characters perceive it, while the words 'love' and 'beautiful' reveal the strong connection the characters have with the landscape.

- What **descriptive language** is used and what are the connotations of any adjectives and adverbs?

  Sample answer: The descriptive language uses many adjectives that emphasise the sense of space and stillness. The landscape is 'vast' and 'endless', suggesting a place almost beyond human comprehension; in comparison, the train's 'crawling' evokes the idea of a baby, defenceless and vulnerable.

Analyse language in a mentor text

ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will analyse a mentor text to identify and explore the use of adjectives in creating mood, tone and character. Choose a mentor text that makes effective use of adjectives, such as a short story. (You can easily adapt this activity to focus on another word class, such as verbs, or on a language feature such as the use of figurative language or imagery.)

1 Read the text (or a significant passage from it) and identify all the adjectives.

2 Group the adjectives according to the nouns they describe or modify and explain the effect of the adjectives on the meaning and tone of the text. Create a table like the following to summarise your findings.

Noun	Adjectives	Effect
weather	still, heavy, grey, dull	These adjectives create a sense of stillness and of waiting for (or wanting) something to happen.

3 Select five adjectives from the mentor text. What are the connotations of each adjective, and how do these connotations contribute to the mood and atmosphere of the text?

4 Identify any patterns or repetitions in the use of adjectives. Why has the author used this pattern? What effect does it have?

5 Write a brief analysis of the use of adjectives in the mentor text, including specific examples and their effects on the meaning and tone.

Style

Another important aspect to consider when studying mentor texts is the author's style. Style refers to the use of language to create a certain tone, mood, atmosphere and voice. By looking at the styles of different mentor texts, and identifying elements that you find effective or appealing, you can further develop your own writing style and create a unique voice. (See Chapter 9 for a detailed discussion of style and voice.)

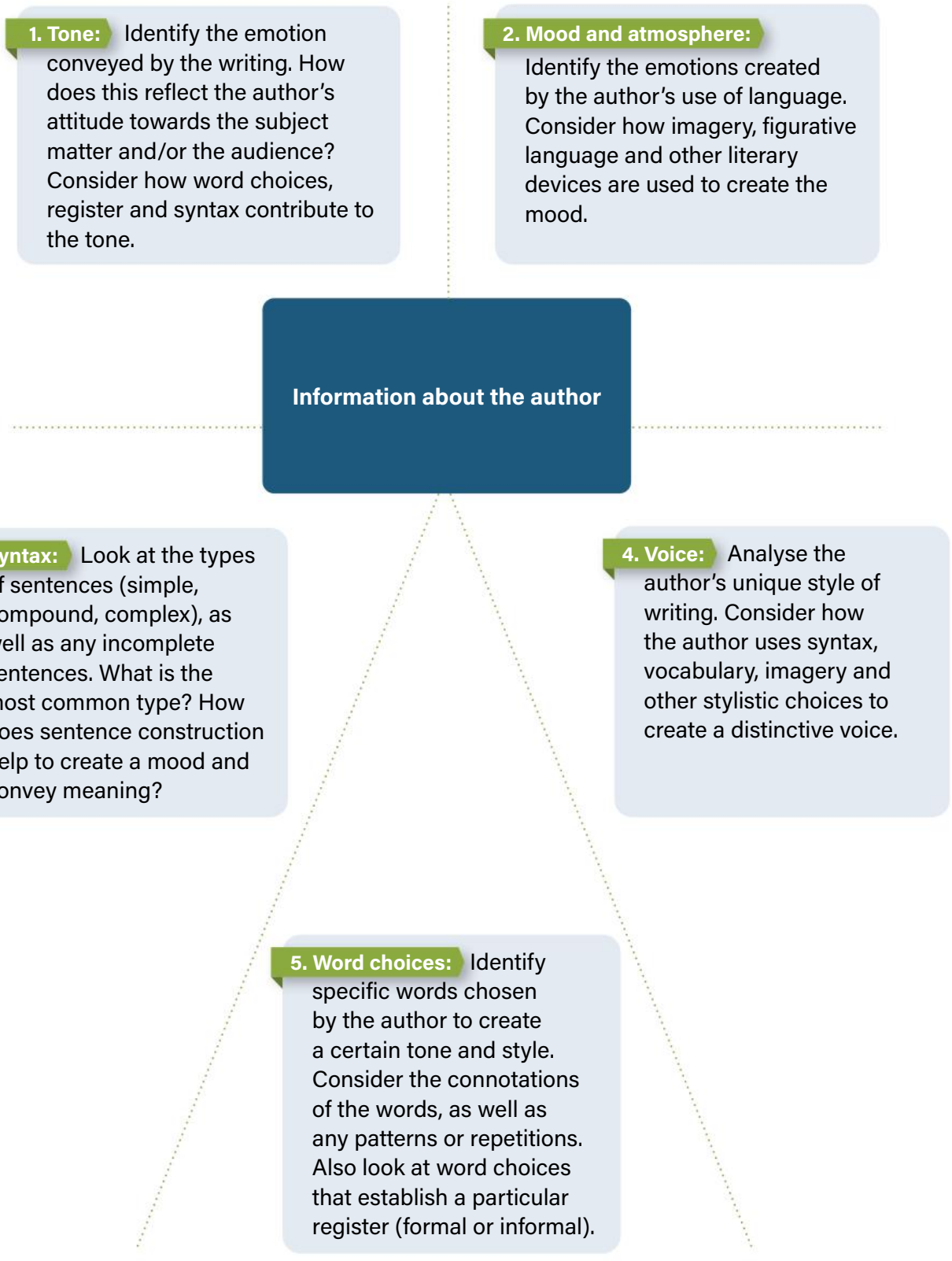
Analysing style: what to look for

- **Word choice:** The specific words chosen by the author.
- **Register:** The level of formality or informality.
- **Syntax:** The arrangement of words and phrases to create different types of sentences.
- **Imagery and figurative language:** The use of description, metaphors, symbols etc.
- **Tone:** The emotion conveyed by a text, showing the author's or narrator's attitude and feelings.
- **Mood and atmosphere:** The emotions and feelings evoked in the reader by the author's use of language.

Analysing style using a graphic organiser

You can use the following graphic organiser to help analyse the language style in a mentor text.

Scan the code or click here to access a fillable version.



Kurt Vonnegut's short story 'Harrison Bergeron' – a mentor text for Writing about protest – is used as an example. Below are the opening three paragraphs of the story.

THE YEAR WAS 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.

Some things about living still weren't quite right, though. April, for instance, still drove people crazy by not being springtime. And it was in that clammy month that the H-G men took George and Hazel Bergeron's fourteen-year-old son, Harrison, away.

It was tragic, all right, but George and Hazel couldn't think about it very hard. Hazel had a perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn't think about anything except in short bursts. And George, while his intelligence was way above normal, had a little mental handicap radio in his ear. He was required by law to wear it at all times. It was tuned to a government transmitter. Every twenty seconds or so, the transmitter would send out some sharp noise to keep people like George from taking unfair advantage of their brains.

A satirical tone is created from the start – statements that are seemingly illogical are stated as plain facts.

Word choices create an ominous mood, contributing to the dystopian setting.

Complex sentences help to create a conversational style.

Short, blunt sentences reflect the strict rules governing people's lives.

Descriptions of the limitations imposed on the characters create an oppressive atmosphere.

The following graphic organiser shows how the boxes might be filled using the opening of Vonnegut's short story.

Kurt Vonnegut (1922–2007) was an American author known for his irreverent and darkly humorous novels, such as *Slaughterhouse-Five*.

1. Tone: sarcastic and critical. Vonnegut uses irony to comment critically on a society that values conformity over individuality.

2. Mood and atmosphere: bleak and oppressive. Vonnegut creates a bleak world where people are forced to wear 'handicaps' and are policed by government agents.

3. Syntax: mostly simple and compound sentences create a direct, matter-of-fact style that emphasises the society's strict rules.

4. Voice: distinctive and satirical. Short, declarative sentences (e.g. 'They were equal every which way') create a sense of urgency.

5. Word choices: precise and effective. The adjectives 'clammy' and 'tragic' convey a sense of danger, while 'some sharp noise' suggests the government's ruthless control of its citizens.

Analyse syntax in a mentor text

ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will analyse the syntax of a mentor text to explore the use of sentence structure in creating a style and conveying meaning.

1. Choose a mentor text, such as a short story or essay, that makes use of a variety of sentence structures.
2. Read the text and identify examples of simple, compound and complex sentences. Also identify any incomplete sentences (sentence fragments).
3. How does the author's use of sentence structure contribute to the style and meaning of the text? Consider the pacing, rhythm and emphasis created by different types of sentences.
4. Identify any patterns or repetitions in the use of sentence structure, and explore their impact and significance.
5. Rewrite a passage from the mentor text using different sentence structures, and compare the effects of the original and revised versions.
6. Write a brief analysis of the use of sentence structure in the mentor text, including specific examples and their effects on the style and meaning of the text.

Structure

The structure of a text means the way information and events are organised and presented. By studying the structure of your mentor texts, you can identify effective ways to organise your own writing and create a clear and coherent narrative.

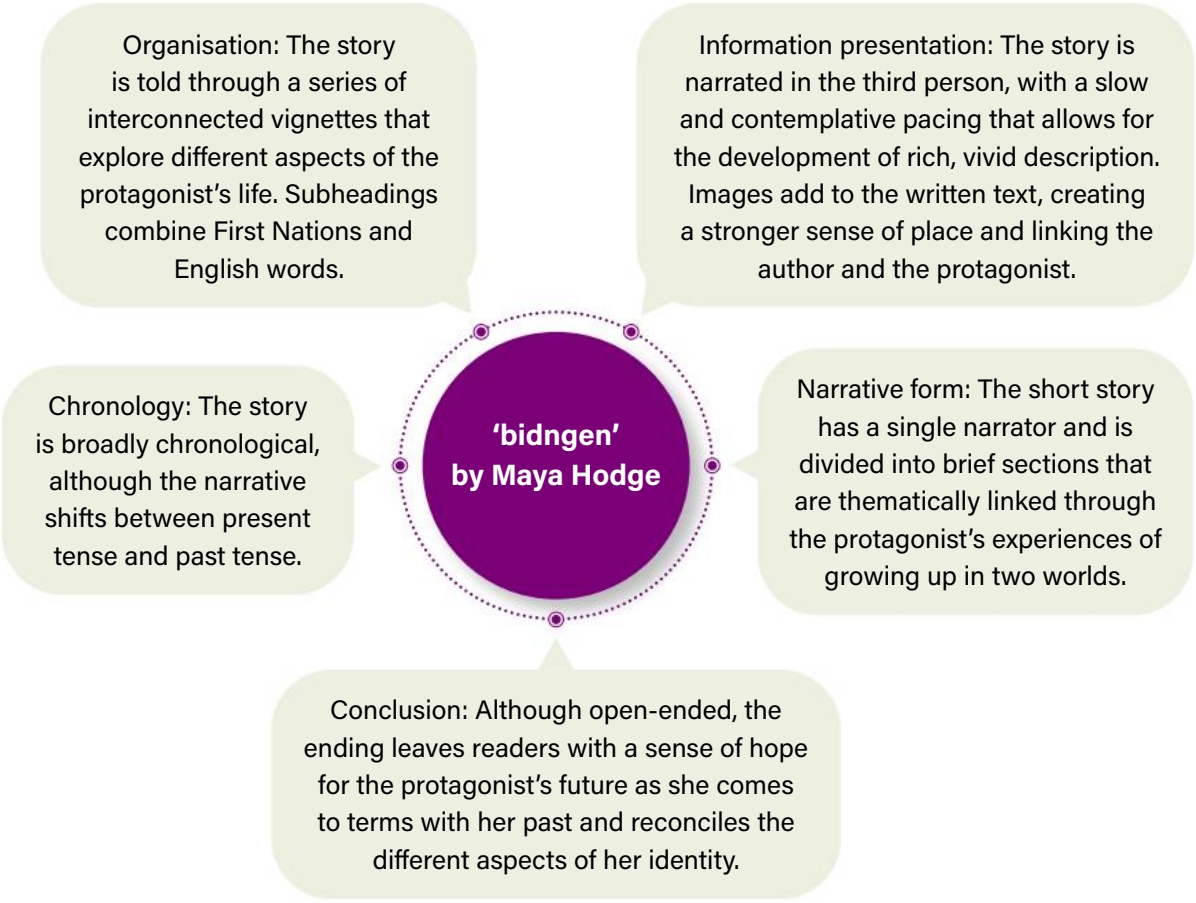
To explore the structure of a text, you could use a mind map like the one opposite. A mind map allows you to identify the different structural elements, so you can see how each has a distinct impact on the shape of a text and on the reader's experience.

This example is based on the story 'bidngen' by Maya Hodge, a mentor text for Writing about personal journeys.

Scan the code or click here to read 'bidngen'.

Analysing structure: what to look for

- **Organisation:** The way in which the text is arranged, including the use of plot devices (such as foreshadowing and flashbacks) or structuring elements (such as subheadings).
- **Information presentation:** How the author presents information, including the use of point of view and narrative voice, or visual elements such as bullet lists and images.
- **Chronology:** The order in which events and information are presented, compared to the order in which they occurred (either in reality or within a fictional world).
- **Narrative form:** The way in which a story is told, including the use of multiple narrators or perspectives.
- **Conclusion:** The way in which the text ends, including the answering of questions and the resolution of tensions and conflicts.



Identify structural elements in mentor texts

ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will identify and analyse the structural elements in a mentor text.

1. Choose a mentor text that is rich in structural elements, such as a text with an interesting organisational structure or an unusual chronology.
2. Read the mentor text and analyse its organisational structure. Ask questions such as: How is the text structured? What plot devices are used? Are there clear subsections or does it flow continuously from beginning to end?
3. Analyse the presentation of the information. Ask questions such as: What point of view is used? How is pacing used to create tension or suspense? What types of imagery are used? Are visual, audio or audiovisual elements part of the text?
4. Consider the chronology of events. Ask questions such as: Is the narrative linear (events told in chronological order) or nonlinear (out of order)? What are the effects of this?
5. Identify the narrative form. Ask questions such as: What type of text is it? Is it narrated from a single perspective, or are there multiple narrators? How does this affect the reader's understanding of the story or subject matter?
6. Analyse the ending of the text. Ask questions such as: How is the story wrapped up? Is the ending open-ended, leaving unanswered questions? Are conflicts resolved? How does the conclusion affect the reader's understanding of the text and its message?

Characters, setting and plot

When studying mentor texts that are narratives, pay close attention to the elements that make up the story, such as the characters, setting and plot. By analysing how these elements are constructed and used in mentor texts, you can begin to learn how to develop complex and believable characters, create rich and evocative settings, and construct compelling and satisfying plots in your own writing.

This section shows how you can use a series of guiding questions to study the way in which an author constructs characters, settings and plot. Penni Russon's short story 'All That We Know of Dreaming' – a mentor text for Writing about play – is used as an example. The following excerpt is the first two paragraphs of the story.

Analysing characters, setting and plot: what to look for

- **Characters:** The individuals in the story, including their personalities, relationships, motivations and goals.
- **Setting:** The time and place in which the story occurs.
- **Plot:** The sequence of events that make up the story, including the introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.
- **Conflict:** The struggle or problem that drives the plot.
- **Tension:** The underlying questions and tensions that produce the conflict; often between characters, but sometimes within characters.

It was the children who woke me this morning, tiptoeing in and out, peering at me sleeping. I could hear them talking in the hall, or rather I perceived a ceaseless humming that gradually became their voices. I rolled over and played possum until the youngest of the three sisters, Mimi, settled on the end of the bed, weighing down my legs, watching me. At night sometimes I hear her, somnambulating from room to room, rustling curtains, scratching her fingernails against the walls, bumping into furniture. She dreams with her eyes open. I have forgotten how to dream.

After some rapid whispering amongst themselves, the children refused to tell me where you had gone. So I left the breakfast unmade to show them I would not tolerate their tricksiness and went down to the orchard to check the pears. The little silver car – mine – sat in the carport, like some kind of domesticated pet. Your car was gone. The morning was dazzling and damp; a fine mist hovered over the opposite hills.

Establishes an interior domestic setting.

Introduces the characters – the three sisters and the narrator (I/me).

Creates tension and introduces a possible conflict: the children 'refused to tell', and someone has left without explanation.

The setting moves to an outside scene, suggesting a rural location. The 'fine mist' adds to the sense of mystery.

Guiding questions

Use the following questions to guide you through an analysis of characters, setting and plot. The passage from 'All That We Know of Dreaming' is used for the sample answers.

1 What kind of **character** is the **narrator**?

Sample answer: The narrator is an observant person who takes notice of the little details around them, such as the children's whispering and Mimi's 'somnambulating'.

2 Who are the **other characters** and what are they like?

Sample answer: The other characters present are the three girls who might be the narrator's daughters. Their 'rapid whispering' suggests they are close to one another and creates a distance between them and the narrator. There is also the person who is missing, about whom almost nothing is known. Their mysterious disappearance suggests they, too, are somewhat secretive.

3 What is the **setting**?

Sample answer: This part of the story takes place in a house near an orchard, and is set in the morning.

4 What is the **conflict** in this part of the story?

Sample answer: The narrator is searching for someone who is missing, and the children are refusing to tell the narrator where the person went.

5 What is the **tension** in this part of the story?

Sample answer: The tension comes from the narrator's sense of being left out of the loop, as well as the mystery surrounding the person who is missing and the reason why they left.

Explore characters, setting and plot

ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will analyse the characters, setting and plot in a mentor text that is a narrative, such as a short story or memoir.

1 Select one of your mentor texts that has well-developed characters, an evocative setting and a compelling plot.

2 Identify the main characters and describe their personalities, relationships, motivations and conflicts.

3 Describe the setting of the text, including the time and place, the physical surroundings and any aspects of the social and cultural context that are evident.

4 Outline the plot, including the introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution. (For a work of nonfiction, look for similar elements that create rising and falling tension.)

5 Describe the central conflict and describe how it drives the plot.

6 Identify the underlying tensions in the story and explain how they relate to the characters, setting and plot.

7 Identify one aspect of characterisation, setting and plot that you found effective. What made it effective? Describe how you could incorporate this aspect in an original piece of writing.

Purpose, audience and context

Understanding the purpose, audience and context of a text will help you to understand why the author has made certain choices of vocabulary, style and structure. It will also lead you to identify elements that you can use to shape your own writing for a particular purpose, audience and context. (You can read more about purpose, audience and context in Chapters 7 and 8.)

Analysing purpose, audience and context: what to look for

- **Purpose:** The reason why the text was written, and what the author hopes to achieve.
- **Audience:** The group of people for whom the text was intended.
- **Context:** The historical, cultural and social context in which the text was created or in which the text is read or viewed.

Scan the code or click here to watch a video on purpose, audience and context.

Purpose, audience and context checklist

Use the following checklist to identify the key elements of a text's purpose, audience and context.

Purpose

- ☐ What is the author trying to achieve through this text?
- ☐ What is the main message of the text?

Audience

- ☐ Who is the intended audience for this text?
- ☐ What assumptions does the author make about their audience?

Context

- ☐ What is the context for the text's publication or delivery?
- ☐ What is the historical, cultural and social context of the text?
- ☐ What events or factors led to the creation of this text?

The example of a completed checklist on the next page uses Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk 'The Danger of a Single Story', a mentor text for Writing about personal journeys.

Scan the code or click here to watch the talk and read the transcript.

Purpose

- ☑ The speaker's purpose is to make the audience aware of the 'danger of a single story' and of the ways in which a narrow view of others can lead to a limited and incomplete understanding of the world.
- ☑ The main message of the text is that people need to be aware of the limitations of their perspectives and the stories they read and hear, and that they should seek out diverse and complex narratives about other peoples and cultures.

Audience

- ☑ The talk is aimed at a broad audience interested in social and cultural issues; it is also partly directed at people who work in the Western media.
- ☑ The speaker assumes that the audience may have limited exposure to stories and perspectives outside of their own, and may not be aware of the ways in which Western literature and media can perpetuate stereotypes and misunderstandings.

Context

- ☑ The talk is part of the TED Talk series, delivered to a live audience and also delivered as video and text on TED.com.
- ☑ The talk was given in 2009, in the context of ongoing debates about race, identity and representation in media and literature.
- ☑ The speaker was motivated by her own experiences of reading and writing to demonstrate the ways in which a single story can limit our understanding of the world, and how exposure to diverse narratives can broaden our perspective.

Unpack purpose, audience and context

ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will analyse the purpose, audience and context of a mentor text to gain a deeper understanding of how they affect an author's choices and decisions in their writing.

1. Identify the main purpose of the text. Is the author trying to inform or persuade the reader? Are they reflecting on experiences or expressing ideas and feelings? You might identify more than one main purpose. How does the author achieve this purpose or these purposes?
2. Consider the intended audience for the text. Who is the author writing for? What are the features of this audience? Consider factors such as age, gender, level of education and interests. How does the author tailor their message and language to this audience?
3. Analyse the context of the text. What historical, cultural or social factors influenced its creation? What mode is the text delivered or published in? How is the text shaped by this context?
4. Identify three word choices, language features or text structures that contribute to the text's effectiveness. Why are they effective choices?
5. Use your analysis to inform your own writing. Review a piece you have written or are currently drafting. Consider how appropriate or effective your choices of words, language features and structure are for your purpose, audience and context. Identify three ways you can improve your piece. What can you use from the analysis of your mentor text?

CHAPTER 11

EXPLORING THE FRAMEWORK OF IDEAS

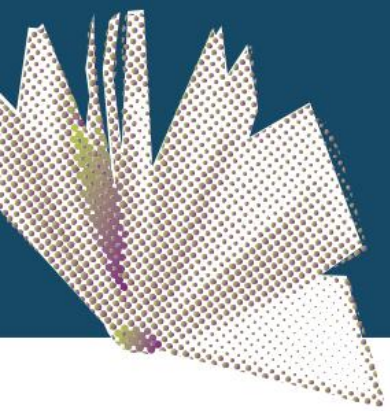
exploring the framework of ideas

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Writing about country
- Writing about personal journeys
- Writing about play
- Writing about protest

The Framework of Ideas is a set of four broad ideas outlined in the English/EAL Study Design. Your school will select one of these ideas as the basis for discussion and as a common thread that connects your mentor texts and your written pieces.

Each broad idea is open to a range of perspectives and will invite many different questions and lines of inquiry. This chapter shows some of the ways you can explore your key idea and craft pieces of writing. Although the chapter has a different section for each idea, the strategies and activities in each section can easily be adapted and applied to the other ideas.



Writing about country

Country is a very broad idea that encompasses not just the physical landscape but also people's interactions with the land. In exploring country you will also be considering people's feelings of belonging to a place. Experiences of displacement and migration affect how people relate to a place, both through living there and through memories of former homes. Connections to place are related to histories of possession and dispossession. Feelings of belonging to a place are linked to identities – national identities as well as regional and local ones.

Questions to ask about country in your mentor texts

- Who has a stake in the country, or feels a sense of belonging to it?
- Who is excluded or marginalised? Why?
- Is the country a real or imagined place?
- What are its physical, cultural and social features?
- What are the borders or boundaries around the place? Who do they keep in or out?
- What type of journey is required to reach it?

A 'country' can also be an imagined place or even a metaphorical one. Utopias and dystopias are speculative places that can reveal much about the things we value or fear. Experiencing a life-changing event, such as the loss of a loved one, has been described by some as leaving a familiar place for a new, unfamiliar territory.

Understanding country

In thinking and writing about country, you will be exploring the related ideas of land and landscapes, geographical and political boundaries, identity and belonging.

Landscape

An important aspect of the notion of 'country' is the physical environment, which is often associated with the natural environment. In Australia there are coastal landscapes, where most people live, and landscapes of the continent's interior, such as rural and desert landscapes. Other parts of the world have their own unique landscapes, sometimes with notable geographical features such as mountains, rivers or forests.

In contrast to these natural landscapes are the built environments of towns and cities, full of roads and buildings. Trees, gardens, parks and yards provide small patches of nature, carefully controlled by human activity.

Different landscapes shape the lives of their inhabitants in unique ways. For example, those who live in remote environments might be more likely to develop independence and self-sufficiency, while those in densely populated urban environments must learn to navigate crowds, noise and competing visual and aural stimuli.

Some groups of people, including many Australian First Nations peoples, value a close connection to the land on which they live. Many view this connection as involving a serious responsibility to take care of the land and its flora and fauna. This relationship can be contrasted with the idea of land as something over which humans have ownership and rights.

Country and nation

One of the most commonly understood meanings of 'country' is a land mass separated from others by political – and sometime physical – borders. The people within this country often, though not always, share a dominant language, as well as important aspects of culture and social arrangements.

A country can be the site of conflict. This conflict might be:

- internal – between different groups with competing values or practices
- external – between the country and an outside group, perhaps another country, and often centred on land disputes.

Identity

People's identities are often closely associated with the place they live in, or come from, as well as with a nation or nations. Nationality and language are important markers of identity, and help to forge bonds between people that foster a sense of belonging.

The inhabitants of a country can be associated with particular characteristics or stereotypes, which may be embraced by some and rejected by others. Think, for example, of the idea of the 'typical' Australian, who is considered to be down to earth, informal, egalitarian and outdoorsy. For some Australians, such a perception might be a source of pride, while for others it is exclusionary and unrelatable.

Explore Australian identity

ACTIVITY

This activity focuses on a debate about Australian identity. The word 'mateship' is often described as a core Australian value. However, it has also been criticised as being too closely associated with masculine friendships to be truly inclusive. When then Prime Minister John Howard wanted to include the term in the preamble to the Australian constitution in 1999, a national debate was incited.

1 Research this debate by finding three to five news articles or opinion pieces written about it at the time. What were the main objections to including this word in the constitutional preamble? What reasons were presented by those in favour of including it?

2 Do you think ideas about Australian identity have changed since 1999? Why or why not?

3 Do you feel that mateship is a core Australian value? Is it uniquely Australian? Does it still have relevance in today's Australia? Why or why not?

4 Write a short persuasive text outlining your opinion about the term 'mateship' and its connection to Australian identity.

Strategies for writing about country

When writing about country, think about the multiple meanings of the term, and the ways in which landscapes can both shape and be shaped by those with a connection to them. Here are some strategies to help guide your writing.

Find personal connections with place

- Think about places with which you have a personal connection. Consider where you live now and places you have lived in the past.
- Consider, too, places in which your extended family and your ancestors live or have lived, and how connections to a place can be passed down through families.
- Make notes about places you have visited, and the impact they had on you.
- Think about places you have always wanted to visit. Why do you want to go there? What aspects of these places interest you?

Research others' connections with place

- Look into the connections of particular groups of people to specific places. For example, you might consider the Sentinelese, Torres Strait Islanders, Gaelic-speaking Irish people, Norfolk Islanders or the Awá of Brazil; or religious groups such as Catholics and their connection to Rome and Vatican City; or Muslims, who have a connection with Mecca.

- In what ways is the place important to the group connected to it? How did the connection first come about? How is it maintained?
- How has contact with other peoples affected the group's relationship with place? What is their general attitude to outsiders? Why might this be?

Think about different perspectives

- Consider the range of meanings a single place or country can have for different people and groups. For some it will be home, and an integral part of their identity. Some of these people might feel a deep and fond connection to the land, while for others it might be associated with more negative feelings – as a place in which they grew up unhappily, for instance, or as the site of civil conflict.
- For yet others, the same place might be unfamiliar. They may be visitors or immigrants, and might respond to the differences from their own home with feelings ranging from fascination and excitement to resignation and even fear.
- Consider also the perspectives of others on a place you know very well, such as your home suburb. How might people who have known this place at different times – fifty or one hundred years ago, for example – feel about it? How might the experiences of people occupying a different social position from you differ from yours? What might be a visitor's first impressions of the place? What about those who have moved there from other parts of the country or world?

Think about travelling through country

- Rather than focusing on a particular location, consider the experience of travelling through a place. Think about how a collection of impressions can add up to an overall understanding of a country or region, and evoke particular feelings about it.
- Consider how accurate this interpretation or understanding of a place might be. What assumptions do we make and what gaps do we fill in when we don't know a place well? If you have ever moved a long distance – to a different country or state, for example – think about how your first impressions of your new home differ from your later, deeper knowledge of the place.
- Think about places you have travelled in. What associations do these places have for you? How much are these associations shaped by your specific experiences during your travels?

Respond to the thoughts of others

ACTIVITY

This activity will help you to think about the different understandings of the term 'country' and its various meanings for different groups of people.

1 Do an internet search for quotations relating to country. Make a list of all the different understandings of country – for example, a nation, a rural area, a state of mind – that these quotations suggest.

2 Choose one quotation and plan a story based on the idea it expresses.

ACTIVITY

3 Respond to the following prompt in any form you choose, by writing continuously for five minutes. Don't worry about planning or polishing your work; simply write down any thoughts or feelings that occur to you in response to the stimulus.

'Maybe your country is only a place you make up in your own mind. Something you dream about and sing about. Maybe it's not a place on the map at all, but just a story full of people you meet and places you visit, full of books and films you've been to.'

Hugo Hamilton, *The Speckled People*

Exploring country through the mentor texts

This six-step process leads you through an analysis of a mentor text (or a supplementary text engaging with the same broad idea of country). It moves from identifying and understanding how the author has used the idea of country as an element of their text to creating your own writing about country. (For a detailed discussion of ways in which you can use mentor texts, see Chapter 10.)

Step 1: Annotate the text.	Closely read the text and annotate to show any instances of writing about country. For an audiovisual text, write notes and record the relevant time codes.
Step 2: Identify the forms of country.	Identify the notions of country presented in the text, such as country as a physical place; the connection between place and identity; and the ways in which borders act to include and exclude people.
Step 3: Analyse the purpose of country.	Consider why the author chose to include these references to country. Which characters or individuals have a relationship with a particular place? How is their sense of self shaped or challenged by this place?
Step 4: Brainstorm connections.	How do the elements related to country connect to the overall theme and message of the mentor text? How do they help the author achieve their purpose?
Step 5: Reflect on personal experiences.	Write a short reflection on your own experiences connected to the notion of country and how they relate to those described in the mentor text. Think about differences as well as similarities.
Step 6: Synthesise your findings.	Combine your observations and reflections in a short written piece. What did you learn about ideas connected to country and how they relate to the mentor text? How can you apply what you learned to your own writing?

Developing ideas about country

The following suggestions will help you to think about a wide range of understandings and aspects of 'country', and how you might explore these in an extended piece of writing.

Create a pinboard or collage

- Search the internet to find images of a variety of countries, landscapes and environments. Choose ten to twelve images that you find especially evocative.
- Make notes about each image. What intrigues you about this place? What kinds of people might live there? How might they feel about the place? Would you like to visit or live there? Why or why not?

Imagine countries

- Imagine an ideal country (a utopia). What would it look like? Think about the physical landscape or landscapes, as well as its social and cultural features. Are any elements of your utopia achievable in the real world? How?
- Now imagine the worst of all possible worlds (a dystopia). What are the characteristics of this place?
- Discuss your ideas with a partner or in a small group. How do your ideas about utopian and dystopian worlds differ and in what ways are they similar? Do your ideas about the qualities of an ideal world change after you compare ideas with others?

Immerse yourself in a landscape

- Choose either a familiar or an unfamiliar natural environment. It might be a local park, a beach or even just your own backyard. Visit this place and spend some time getting to know it well.
- Take notes about what you see, hear, feel and smell. Find interesting adjectives for each of these sensory impressions.
- Take photographs – some zooming in on tiny details, such as the texture of a leaf, and others that offer a panoramic view.
- Describe this place to someone who has never been there, either by writing a few paragraphs or in a short conversation.

Developing your writing about country

Use the following ideas to develop pieces of writing about country.

Notion of country	Writing idea
Country as a political entity	Write a feature article that explores a real-world conflict related to a border dispute or land ownership. Include the perspectives of those on both sides of the conflict, as well as the experiences of those unwillingly caught up in it.
Country as a rural space	Write the transcript of a podcast episode that focuses on different aspects of rural life. The episode might include interviews with people who have varied relationships with the land, including some who have always lived rurally and some who have moved to a rural location. Include references to possible sound effects, such as animal noises, the wind or the rushing of a river.

Country as a shaper of identity	Write an open letter, to be published in a national newspaper, expressing your point of view on the ways in which accepted ideas about the Australian national character and Australian values do or do not reflect your own ideas and experiences. Consider the perspectives of other groups in Australia who might feel either included or marginalised by dominant ideas about national identity.
Country as a travel or migration destination	Write a series of travel diary entries exploring how a trip to an unfamiliar place changed your understanding of both yourself and the wider world. Include sensory detail that will bring this place vividly to life for the reader and allow you to examine how it affected you emotionally and socially.
Country as a metaphor	Write a short story in which the concept of country is used as an extended metaphor. The 'country' you explore might be a relationship, an enclosed environment such as a hospital or prison, a social group or an emotion such as grief or joy. Think carefully about the connections between a physical country and the subject you are exploring.
Imagined countries	Write a scene from a dystopian film in which civilisation has been changed utterly by a cataclysmic event. What are the consequences for those who remain in this world? How might they go about rebuilding society? What changes might they want to make so that such a crisis doesn't occur again?
Interior landscapes	Write a monologue in which the protagonist of a play reflects on the ways in which their interior 'landscape' has changed, perhaps over a number of years or as the result of a significant life event. Your protagonist should share what they have learned, as well as specific events, relationships and situations.

Writing about personal journeys

Writing about personal journeys means exploring our physical world as well as the internal worlds of ourselves and others. Reading and crafting texts about journeys offers us the opportunity to consider new places and perspectives, and to discover something new about ourselves.

Personal journeys involve stories that reflect a wide range of experiences, including challenges, growth and self-discovery. Writing about personal journeys can be a powerful way for you to share your unique experiences with others. It is important to consider your purpose for writing about a personal journey. This may be to argue for change. It may be to express or to reflect on the thoughts and feelings associated with the journey. Or it might be to explain a phenomenon that is not well understood by those who have not shared your experiences. At their core, personal journeys all reflect something fundamental about life.

Questions to ask about personal journeys in your mentor texts

- Is the journey a primarily physical one or an internal psychological or emotional one? Or is it both?
- Is the journey to a real or an imagined place?
- Is the journey goal-oriented and intentional, or accidental?
- How is the protagonist or writer changed by their journey?
- Who else is changed or affected by the journey and its consequences?
- Over what period of time does the journey take place? How does the context for the journey shape its outcome?
- How might others relate to or learn from this journey?

Understanding personal journeys

A personal journey might involve travel to a physical place, or it might involve psychological or emotional growth or change. Often the two are linked; a journey to a new place can lead to new discoveries and insights. Interior journeys may take place over a long period of time, or happen in response to a significant event.

The most important element of a personal journey is that it involves some sort of change. In other words, the individual or group undertaking the journey is fundamentally altered by it.

A central question as you begin exploring this key idea is: whose journey is being explored?

- Some journeys involve an **individual person's experience**. Their journey might be epic and arduous, or it might involve small, incremental change.
- Some journeys involve small or large **groups of people**. For example, those who have migrated to Australia share a physical journey and might find that they are altered by this in some similar, fundamental ways. However, they might also find their interior journeys to be unique and varied.
- Journeys can be **shared**. Telling one's story or hearing that of another can be a powerful and even life-changing experience in itself.

Individual journeys

Personal journeys can be highly individual and specific. Everyone's story is unique, and each one is valuable and can offer insights to others. It is the method of relating the personal journey that can transform it into something universal and impactful. Whenever someone travels some distance, whether literally and geographically, or metaphorically and imaginatively, they will gain some new knowledge or understanding of themselves and the world around them. The sharing of these insights in ways that are meaningful to others is central to your study of this key idea.

Shared journeys

When a group of people share a journey, they are likely to find themselves changed in some similar ways. For example, individuals who have endured a shared crisis, such as a natural disaster, or undergone a significant change, such as the birth of a child, might feel a bond or connection with those who have shared the experience. They might reflect on the ways that such an experience alters people generally, focusing on what such responses to change reveal about being human.

However, they might also find that, despite these commonalities, there are also ways in which their journey is ultimately personal and unique. Everyone has their own set of prior experiences and personality traits that mean they will respond in their own particular way to a journey, even when it is experienced with others.

Personal journeys across time

All of us might be described as being on a personal journey through time, accumulating experiences and acquiring knowledge as we age. Think about the ways in which the passage of time alters people – both individuals and groups of people. Are there any universal experiences you can identify that result in predictable changes? Or is the passage through time different for every individual?

You might also imagine what it would be like to travel in time – how would you manage if you were taken on a journey either into the future or back into the past? What would be the greatest challenges? What would be most interesting or exciting? Are there particular time periods you would like to visit if it were possible? Why?

Strategies for writing about personal journeys

When writing about personal journeys, think about different ways in which individuals or groups might undertake personal journeys, across place, time and understanding. Here are some strategies to help guide your writing.

Identify significant journeys in your own life

Think about both physical and psychological journeys you have undertaken. Try making a list of three to five of the most important journeys you have been on. These could be to a familiar or unfamiliar place; or they might involve a metaphorical journey – from ignorance to knowledge, for example. What did you learn? What aspects of the journey enabled this learning?

Think about stories you know well

Consider the plots and themes of novels, plays and films. How does the protagonist change during the text? What are the key events and turning points that lead to this change? What commonalities can you identify in terms of the sorts of events or situations that lead to change?

Look at how many of these stories follow the pattern of the Hero's Journey. The Hero's Journey is a common pattern or template in narrative texts that involve an individual (the hero) embarking on a journey that ultimately transforms them. The basic stages of this journey include:

- the departure, at which point the hero leaves their familiar world
- the initiation, when the hero faces challenges in, and comes to understand, an unfamiliar world
- the return, at which point the hero returns to the familiar world, changed by their experiences.

Can you apply the Hero's Journey template to a journey of your own?

Scan the code or click here to read more about the Hero's Journey narrative pattern.

Research real-life journeys

Find out about some well-known journeys about which others have written. People to consider include early Australian explorers such as Ludwig Leichhardt, Charles Sturt, and Burke and Wills; David Livingstone, who explored large parts of Africa; Gertrude Bell, an influential traveller in Iraq and Jordan; undersea explorer Jacques Cousteau; chef and travel writer Anthony Bourdain, who connected with those from other cultures through food; writer Robyn Davidson, who trekked through central Australia with camels; and Scottish man Dean Nicholson who has become famous for cycling around the world with a stray cat.

What are the individual aims of these people? Do they achieve them? Do they achieve something else as well as or instead of their primary goal? Did their journeys go as planned? If not, why not?

Write a biographical account

ACTIVITY

This activity involves exploring the personal journey of a figure you admire.

1. Choose a real-life individual whom you admire for their resilience and personal growth as a result of overcoming adversity. They might be alive now or have lived a long time ago; they might be a public figure or have a personal connection to you. Write a paragraph explaining why you admire this person.
2. Create a time line and plot the steps of your chosen individual's personal journey. What was the inciting incident or situation that they had to overcome? What steps did they take to do this? Where did they end up?
3. Write between two and four paragraphs, using information from your time line, explaining what this person went through and how they ultimately emerged changed by their experiences.
4. What lessons can be learned from this person's experiences? Write a paragraph explaining how their journey might offer insight or assistance to others.

Exploring personal journeys through the mentor texts

The six-step process outlined on the next page leads you through an analysis of a mentor text (or a supplementary text engaging with the same broad idea of personal journeys). It moves from identifying and understanding how the author has used a personal journey as an element of their text to creating your own writing about personal journeys. (For a detailed discussion of ways in which you can use mentor texts, see Chapter 10.)

Step 1: Annotate the text.	Closely read the text and annotate to show any references to personal journeys, including physical and metaphorical journeys. For an audiovisual text, write notes and record the relevant time codes.
Step 2: Identify the forms of personal journeys.	Identify the different forms of personal journeys presented in the text, such as everyday journeys; journeys through time; and journeys towards new understandings.
Step 3: Analyse the purpose of personal journeys.	Consider why the author chose to include these types of personal journeys. Which characters or individuals are 'travelling'? What is the purpose of the journey? What are the outcomes?
Step 4: Brainstorm connections.	How do the elements of personal journeys connect to the overall theme and message of the mentor text? How do they help the author achieve their purpose?
Step 5: Reflect on personal experiences.	Write a short reflection on your own experiences with personal journeys and how they relate to those described in the mentor text. Think about differences as well as similarities.
Step 6: Synthesise your findings.	Combine your observations and reflections in a short written piece. What did you learn about personal journeys – your own and those of others – and how they relate to the mentor text? How can you apply what you learned to your own writing?

Developing ideas about personal journeys

The following suggestions will help you to generate and explore a range of ideas about personal journeys, and to develop them in a coherent piece of writing.

Use the Hero's Journey template to map personal journeys

- Consider again the Hero's Journey narrative structure discussed on page 110. Try mapping a personal journey of your own against this template.
- Identify the starting point of your story: the familiar world or place you left (whether literally or figuratively).
- Identify the unfamiliar place to which you travelled. What is this place like? Why did you go there? Is it a literal place, or is it better understood as a state of mind or new emotional territory?
- In what ways did your journey transform you? What lessons might others learn from your experiences?

Delve into your past

- Look at old photographs and diary entries, if you have them. Consider how you have changed over time, and what has caused these changes.
- Speak to your parents or others who have known you for a long time. Ask them to identify ways in which you have come a long way since they first knew you. What do they attribute these changes to?
- Do others' perceptions of the literal and metaphorical journeys you have undertaken match your own? If not, why might this be?

Interview others

- Personal journeys are universal – everyone has undergone one, and likely more than one. Talk to family members, friends and acquaintances about their most significant personal journeys and how they were changed by them. Keep your questions open-ended, to allow for your interviewees to interpret 'personal journey' and 'change' in whatever way they like.
- Take notes as you interview. Later, you could compile these into a report or set of observations about universal aspects of personal journeys.
- Reflect on how your own understanding of the idea of a personal journey has been expanded by your conversations with others.

Explore images

ACTIVITY

This activity will help to stimulate your thinking about personal journeys and some ways in which you might write about them.

1 Do an image search for 'personal journeys'. Choose one image that you find especially evocative.

2 Brainstorm all the words and phrases the image calls to mind. This can contribute to a vocabulary list that will be useful in your writing about personal journeys. You can continue to add items to this list throughout your study of this key idea.

3 Swap images with a partner. Take it in turns to discuss each image and your interpretation of it. What ideas do you think each conveys about a personal journey? How do your and your partner's interpretations of the images differ and in what ways are they similar?

4 Compose a text in any form that explores the thoughts and feelings your chosen image evokes about personal journeys.

Developing your writing about personal journeys

Use the following ideas to develop pieces of writing about personal journeys.

Type of personal journey	Writing idea
Regular journeys, such as to and from school	Write a personal reflection on the ways in which a regular journey has helped to shape your days and your self. Explore the connections between place, identity and a sense of belonging, considering how we are influenced by the physical spaces in which we spend time and between which we travel.
Travel to a different place	Write a persuasive speech about the merits of travel. Choose a specific target audience and shape your speech accordingly, including appropriate argument and persuasive language techniques. Focus on the ways in which experiencing new places can lead to personal growth as well as an enriched understanding of the wider world. Alternatively, you might like to write a speech arguing the opposite – that is, that a person can gain insight, access to different perspectives and broad knowledge of the world without ever leaving their home.
Journeys through time	Write a speculative fiction piece in which a character travels either to the distant future or the distant past. Explore what this journey teaches them about the inherent and unchanging aspects of humanity and the ways in which particular historical and cultural settings shape human behaviour and thought.
Journeys of self-development	Write a fictional memoir from the point of view of someone looking back on events. Perhaps they made a decision or took an action (or failed to act) in some way that they now regret. Consider how they have developed and changed due to the passage of time and their life experiences.
Journeys of groups of people	Write a feature article about the experiences of a migrant diaspora. Include interviews with a range of people from this group and showcase a variety of experiences. Reflect on the broader insights these people's experiences offer about the impact of significant journeys.
Spiritual journeys or quests for meaning	Write a scene from a satirical play in which the main character – perhaps an influencer or public figure – searches endlessly for meaning in many different ways and places, yet fails to find it due to their inability to look within themselves, rather than at their external world, in order to find satisfaction.

Writing about play

Play is an exciting and wide-ranging idea that can be relevant to anything from games and sports to acting and the creation of literature, musical works and images.

Through exploring the idea of play, you will discover the variety of ways it is used in different cultures and/or throughout history. You may think about the ways in which concepts such as collaboration, connection, boundaries and rules are used (or not) in play.

You will also consider how play and play-acting can represent the 'real' world, and can be used to minimise or mitigate threatening events or actions.

Questions to ask about play in your mentor texts

- What forms of play are present?
- How does the play relate to identities and relationships, or to the larger issues and themes in the text?
- What are the rules and constraints of the play, and how do they impact on people's behaviour?
- What emotions and sensations do individuals experience during the play?
- Does the play allow individuals to experience new perspectives or understand the world in new ways?

Understanding play

Play is a form of self-expression and exploration. It enables individuals to experiment with different roles, emotions and behaviours in a controlled environment. Play can take many forms, such as physical, creative or imaginative play.

- **Physical play** refers to activities that involve the body, including sports and games.
- **Creative play** involves using self-expression and creativity through activities such as drawing, painting and building.
- **Imaginative play** is when people use their imagination to create stories and scenarios, such as pretending to be a doctor or a superhero. Dreams and daydreams can also be seen as types of imaginative play.

The importance of play

Play is essential for children's development as it helps them to explore and learn about the world around them. It promotes cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. Through play, children learn about themselves and others, develop problem-solving skills and find ways to express themselves. Play helps children to develop a sense of self and to understand their place in the world.

Play also has a positive impact on adolescents and adults. Not only does play help to make an activity enjoyable, but it also enables people to develop important skills such as teamwork and creativity.

Play and emotions

Play can also help people to understand and express their emotions. Through play, people can learn to identify and express their feelings, and to cope with difficult emotions by regulating their behaviour.

Using play to understand real-world problems

Play can be used as a tool for exploring and understanding real-world problems and issues. For example, role-playing games can be used to simulate different scenarios and situations, allowing individuals to practise decision-making and strengthen their problem-solving skills.

Similarly, creative play can be used to explore and express feelings and attitudes related to real-world issues, such as poverty and injustice. Through play, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of complex issues and develop empathy and compassion. Additionally, using play to act out real-world problems can be a way for people to come up with creative solutions and brainstorm new approaches.

Brainstorm real-world problems

ACTIVITY

This activity will help you explore and understand real-world problems through brainstorming and creative play.

1. Divide into small groups and choose a real-world problem or issue that you want to investigate, such as poverty, injustice, inequality, homelessness or climate change.
2. As a group, brainstorm different scenarios or situations related to the chosen issue. Be creative and think outside the box.
3. Once you have a list of scenarios, choose one to act out as a group. Use props and costumes if available.
4. After the role-playing activity, discuss as a group the different emotions and feelings that came up during the activity. How did the issue affect the individuals in the scenario?
5. As a group, brainstorm potential solutions to the issue. What actions could be taken to address the problem?
6. As a group, present your findings and potential solutions to the class. Be prepared to discuss and receive feedback from your peers.

Strategies for writing about play

When writing about play, think about different ways in which individuals engage with play, and the different impacts it might have. Here are some strategies to help guide your writing.

Organise your thoughts

- Identify the type of play you want to write about (physical, creative, imaginative).
- Consider the purpose of play in your writing – is it for character development, expression, problem-solving or something else?
- Brainstorm the central ideas and values you want to explore in your writing. You probably won't write a long essay on the broad topic of play – find a focus and explore its implications.

Consider different perspectives

- Explore how play is perceived and experienced by different individuals and cultures.
- Think about how play is represented in different kinds of texts (such as movies, books, music, visual art).
- Consider how play has evolved over time and how it is changing in the digital age.

Write with a critical lens

- Consider the limitations and challenges of play as well as its benefits.
- Think about how play can be used to address real-world problems and issues.
- Write with a critical and analytical lens, exploring the strengths and weaknesses of play.

Exploring play through the mentor texts

This six-step process leads you through an analysis of a mentor text (or a supplementary text engaging with the same broad idea of play). It moves from identifying and understanding how the author has used play as an element of their text to creating your own writing about play. (For a detailed discussion of ways in which you can use mentor texts, see Chapter 10.)

Step 1: Annotate the text.	Closely read the text and annotate to show any instances of play. For an audiovisual text, write notes and record the relevant time codes.
Step 2: Identify the forms of play.	Identify the different forms of play presented in the text, such as make-believe, role playing, games or exploratory play.
Step 3: Analyse the purpose of play.	Consider why the author chose to include these instances of play. Which characters or individuals are 'playing'? What is the purpose of the play?
Step 4: Brainstorm connections.	How do the elements of play connect to the overall theme and message of the mentor text? How do they help the author achieve their purpose?
Step 5: Reflect on personal experiences.	Write a short reflection on your own experiences with play and how they relate to those described in the mentor text. Think about differences as well as similarities.
Step 6: Synthesise your findings.	Combine your observations and reflections in a short written piece. What did you learn about play and how it relates to the mentor text? How can you apply what you learned to your own writing?

Developing ideas about play

An effective piece of writing will develop and explore ideas logically and coherently. Ideas can be developed in many ways, such as through narrative structure, character development, a recurring motif or a logical argument.

To help with planning and developing your ideas you can use tools such as narrative story arcs and flow charts. The following examples show ways of doing this in relation to the idea of play.

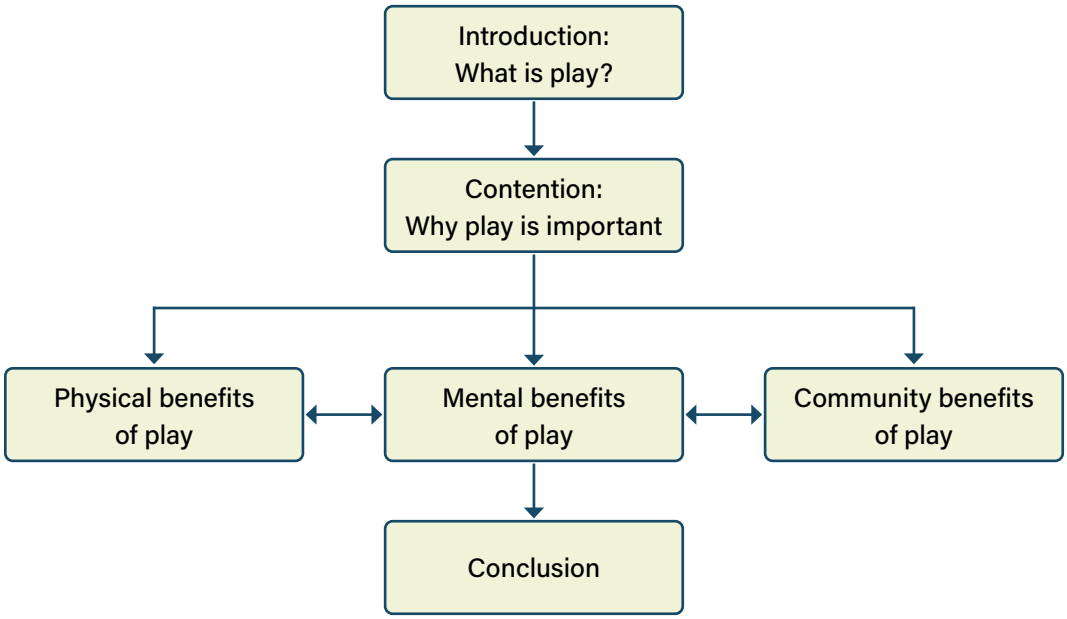
Narrative story arc

A narrative story arc diagram for a sport-themed fictional story could feature the following components.

1. **Introduction:** This section sets the stage for the story, introducing the protagonist and their world. It establishes the protagonist's relationship with play, particularly sport, and outlines their motivations and aspirations.
2. **Rising action:** In this section, the protagonist faces obstacles and challenges in their pursuit of success in sport. The conflicts and tensions begin to mount, and the protagonist's determination and commitment to their sport are tested.
3. **Climax:** The climax is the moment of highest tension or conflict in a story. In this sport-themed story, the climax could be the final event of a major championship in which the protagonist competes. The outcome of the competition will determine whether the protagonist achieves their goal.
4. **Falling action:** The falling action takes place after the climax and shows the aftermath of the competition. The consequences of the protagonist's actions, win or lose, are revealed and explored. The protagonist begins to reflect on their experiences.
5. **Resolution:** The resolution is the conclusion of the story. The protagonist's relationships with others, and their relationship with sport, have evolved. The protagonist has learned important lessons and grown as a person.

Flow chart

A flow chart might be used to show the development of ideas in a persuasive piece about the importance of play.



Visualise your ideas

ACTIVITY

This activity will help you to visualise the development of your ideas, whatever form you choose.

1. Decide on the form and purpose of your writing, e.g. fiction or nonfiction; to express / explain / reflect / argue.
2. Based on the form and purpose, choose an appropriate visual format. Imaginative writing might use a narrative arc, while writing with a logical structure (such as writing to explain or to argue) might use a flow chart or a similar diagram. Comparative writing could use a Venn diagram.
3. Use your diagram to map out how the idea of play will develop over the course of your text.

Developing your writing about play

Use the following ideas to develop pieces of writing about play.

Type of play	Writing idea
Physical play	Write a scene in which characters engage in a physical activity, such as a sport or a dance, and reflect on the emotions and sensations they experience. Explore ways in which this physical play relates to the characters' identities and relationships, as well as broader issues and ideas.
Imaginative play	Imagine a world in which the rules and constraints of reality do not apply. Write a scene in which characters engage in imaginative play and explore the possibilities and limitations of their imaginations.
Creative play	Experiment with using unconventional and unusual writing techniques to create a scene in which characters engage in creative play. Reflect on how this play allows the characters to express themselves and how your techniques also require the reader to engage in some creative play.
Exploratory play	Write a scene in which characters engage in a physical exploration of their environment, whether it be a new place or a familiar one seen in a new way. Consider how this play allows the characters to understand and interact with their world in unexpected ways.
Simulation play	Write a scene in which characters engage in a simulation, such as role-playing people living in a different place or time. Explore how this play allows the characters to experience new perspectives and understand the world in new ways.
Rules-based games	Write a scene in which characters engage in a rules-based game, such as chess or cards. Explore how this play reveals the characters' motivations, values and relationships.

Writing about protest

Writing about protest can be a powerful way to explore conflict, what it means to protest, the value of protest and the outcomes of protest.

You will be able to explore some personal stories of protest, struggle and war. You could also examine established figures such as Martin Luther King Jr, Rosa Parks and Vida Goldstein, and more marginalised figures such as First Nations warrior Pemulwuy and African American civil rights activist Claudette Colvin. You might also investigate contemporary figures such as Greta Thunberg and movements such as Black Lives Matter.

By studying these examples, you will gain a better understanding of the origins and consequences (both short-term and long-term) of protest movements.

Questions to ask about protest in your mentor texts

- What is the cause or issue being protested and why is it significant?
- Who is participating in the protest and what is their motivation for doing so?
- What is the form or type of protest (e.g. peaceful demonstration, march, sit-in)?
- What is the intended outcome or goal of the protest?
- How is the protest being received by those in power and by the general public?
- What are the potential consequences or repercussions of the protest, both positive and negative?

Understanding protest

As you explore the idea of protest, you will find a rich tapestry of events and experiences that have shaped our world and continue to shape it today. From the personal stories of individuals who have stood up against injustice to the collective power of groups fighting for change, protest has a deep history and ongoing relevance. Through your mentor texts you will encounter a range of ideas and experiences that shed light on what it means to protest, the value of protest and the outcomes of protest.

Types of protest

- Demonstrations: the gathering of people in a public place to show their support or opposition to a cause.
- Marches: public demonstrations in which a group walks through a city or town in a public display of support.
- Sit-ins: protests in which participants occupy a physical space in a nonviolent way (though generally against the wishes of authorities) to protest an issue.
- Boycotts: the intentional avoidance of using, buying or dealing with a person, product, organisation or country, as an expression of protest.

Causes

- Political: protesting government policies or actions, or demanding political change (such as a change of leader or government).
- Social justice: protesting against discrimination and inequality or advocating for marginalised groups.
- Environmental: protesting to protect the environment and raise awareness about environmental issues.
- Economic: protesting to address issues around economic injustice, such as workers' rights and fair wages.

Legal versus illegal protests

- Legal protests: demonstrations that comply with the laws and regulations set by the government.
- Illegal protests: demonstrations that violate laws or regulations, such as disrupting traffic, committing acts of vandalism, or behaving violently towards others.

Nonviolent versus violent protests

- Nonviolent protests: demonstrations that are peaceful, without causing physical harm or damage to people or property.
- Violent protests: demonstrations such as riots or armed conflict, which involve physical harm or damage to people or property.

The value of protest

- Brings attention to important issues and injustices, so that they can be addressed.
- Provides a platform for marginalised voices to be heard.
- Helps bring about social, political and economic progress.

The risks of protest

- Legal consequences: participants in illegal protests may face fines, arrest and imprisonment.
- Physical danger: even nonviolent protests may lead to violent conflict or just the dangers that result from large numbers of people being in a confined space.
- Personal and professional repercussions: participating in protests may harm an individual's personal and professional reputation or lead to job loss.

Historical examples of protest

- **The civil rights movement:** an American movement in the 1950s and 1960s that included peaceful protests led by Martin Luther King Jr to end segregation and discrimination against African Americans.
- **The women's suffrage movement:** a series of mostly nonviolent protests during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to secure women's right to vote, led by figures such as Susan B Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the United States, and Lydia Becker and Emmeline Pankhurst in England.
- **The Arab Spring:** a series of nonviolent and violent protests across the Middle East and North Africa in 2010, calling for political change and social justice.
- **The Stonewall riots:** a series of spontaneous, violent protests by members of the LGBTQIA+ community in response to a police raid on the Stonewall Inn in 1969.
- **The environmental movement:** ongoing protests by activists seeking to protect the environment and address issues such as climate change and deforestation.
- **The Black Lives Matter movement:** a global protest movement in response to police brutality and systemic racism against Black people, with origins in the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin.

Research a real-world protest

ACTIVITY

This activity will help you to understand the key features of a protest movement. Your findings will give you a stronger understanding of the complex factors in any real-world protest and can also form the basis of a piece of writing.

1 Select a protest from the present or the past. When and where does or did the protest occur? Who are some of the main leaders of the movement?

2 Identify the broader issue (e.g. voting rights, discrimination, pay, moral rights). What are the two sides being debated? What are the protestors trying to achieve?

ACTIVITY

3 What kinds of actions are used by the protestors (e.g. demonstration, march, sit-in, boycott)?

4 Are the protesters' actions legal or illegal? If they are illegal, what are the reasons for this?

5 Are the protestors' actions nonviolent or violent? Does this impact on their effectiveness?

6 If the protest occurred in the past, what positive outcomes did it achieve? Were there any negative consequences? If it is happening in the present day, what changes (positive and negative) has it already brought about?

Strategies for writing about protest

When writing about protest, it is important to think through the different sides of the issue, the factors that have caused people to protest and what is at stake both for those individuals and the wider society. Here are some strategies to help guide your writing.

Identify personal connections to protest

- Reflect on your own experiences and beliefs related to protest.
- Consider how your personal history and identity shape your views on activism and social justice.
- Research a specific protest or social movement to deepen your understanding.

Increase engagement with and ownership of your writing

- Write in a style and tone that is authentic to you and reflects your unique perspective.
- Use descriptive language and concrete examples to make your writing vivid and relatable.
- Discuss the impact that the protest or cause has on individuals, communities and society as a whole.

Find inspiration in the arts

- Look to poetry, music and other forms of art that address protest and social justice.
- Analyse how artists use language, imagery and symbolism to convey their message.
- Draw on these works as inspiration for your own writing and incorporate elements that resonate with you.

Exploring protest through the mentor texts

The six-step process shown on the next page leads you through an analysis of a mentor text (or a supplementary text engaging with the same broad idea of protest). It moves from identifying and understanding how the author has used protest as an element of their text to creating your own writing about protest. (For a detailed discussion of ways in which you can use mentor texts, see Chapter 10.)

Step 1: Annotate the text.	Closely read the text and annotate to show any instances of protest. For an audiovisual text, write notes and record the relevant time codes.
Step 2: Identify the forms of protest.	Identify the different forms of protest presented in the mentor text, such as marches, sit-ins or acts of civil disobedience.
Step 3: Analyse the purpose of protest.	What is the purpose of the protest? Why did the author include this instance – what is revealed about a character or individual? What do we learn about the society?
Step 4: Brainstorm connections.	Think about how the elements of protest connect to the overall theme and message of the mentor text.
Step 5: Reflect on personal experiences.	Write a short reflection on your own experiences with protest and how they relate to those described in the mentor text.
Step 6: Synthesise your findings.	Combine your findings into a short piece of writing. What did you learn about protest and how it relates to the mentor text? How can you apply what you learned to your own writing?

Developing ideas about protest

The following suggestions will help you to explore and expand your ideas about protest, and to develop them in a coherent piece of writing.

Weaving ideas of protest into a narrative

When exploring the idea of protest in a narrative, consider how it can shape and affect the characters. Think about the motivations for their actions and how the protests in the story can bring about change, either on a personal or societal level. Also consider the setting in which the protest takes place and how it adds to the overall atmosphere of the story.

Developing characters through protest

The act of protesting can serve as a catalyst for character development. Think about how a character's involvement in a protest can challenge their beliefs and force them to grow psychologically and emotionally. Additionally, consider how a character's experiences with protest can reveal aspects of their personality and their relationships with other characters.

Writing about protest in nonfiction

Research is key when writing about real protests. Using several sources, gather information about a specific protest, including its history, goals and main participants. Consider how this protest helped to shape society and bring about change. Additionally, think about different perspectives on the protest and present a balanced view.

Writing persuasively about protest

If you are writing persuasively about protest, consider your audience and the message you wish to convey. Make a clear argument and support it with facts and evidence. It is also important to consider counterarguments and address them in your writing. Remember that persuasive writing requires a strong and clear voice, so be confident in your beliefs and use language that effectively conveys your message while engaging your audience.

Analyse the use of protest in a narrative

ACTIVITY

This activity shows you how to analyse the use of protest in a narrative.

1. Select a story or novel that incorporates the idea of protest. How does the protest in the story shape and affect the characters? Analyse their motivations and the role the protest plays in bringing about change, either on a personal or societal level.
2. Write one or two paragraphs on how the protest serves as a catalyst for character development. Consider how the characters' involvement in the protest challenges their beliefs and leads to changes in their behaviour or values. Also, think about how the characters' experiences of protest reveal aspects of their personality and their relationships with other characters.
3. In small groups, combine your ideas on the role of protest in narratives and discuss a number of stories and novels. If a particular type of protest is used more than once, discuss the similarities in the way the protest is presented and its impact on the characters. If different types of protest are used, discuss the different perspectives offered by the authors and the effects on the characters. What are some effective ways in which an author uses protest in a narrative that you could incorporate into your own writing?

Developing your writing about protest

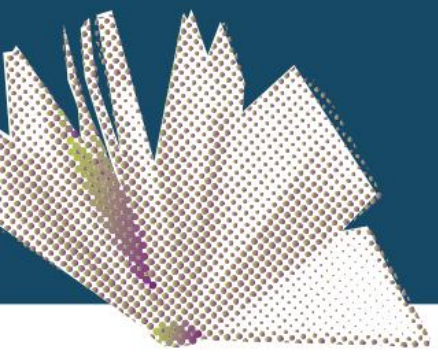
Use the following ideas to develop your writing about protest.

Type of protest	Writing idea
Peaceful demonstrations	Write a fictional story about a character who joins a peaceful demonstration for a cause they believe in, and the challenges and triumphs they face along the way.
Civil disobedience	Write an essay exploring the concept of civil disobedience and its impact on society, using examples from history and current events.
Strike action	Write a fictional story about a group of workers who go on strike to protest against unfair working conditions, describing their struggles and sacrifices.
Boycotts	Write a feature article examining the effectiveness of boycotts as a form of protest, and the impact they have on corporations and governments.
Occupations	Write a script about a group of activists who occupy a public space to bring attention to a social issue; the characters' dialogue will describe their experiences and convey the nature of the relationships between them .
Rioting and looting	Write an analysis of the reasons behind rioting and looting during protests, and the impact this behaviour has on the protest movement and the wider society.

CHAPTER 12

CREATING YOUR RESPONSES

creating your responses



IN THIS CHAPTER

- Choosing the right form
- Planning your writing
- Drafting your response
- Editing your response
- Writing a reflective commentary
- Sample responses

This chapter leads you through the process of creating your written pieces. It begins by exploring the possibilities of different text types and styles, so you can determine the most appropriate form for your writing. It explains the importance of prewriting strategies as well as the processes of outlining, drafting and editing. It also provides guidelines for writing an effective reflective commentary.

The last section of this chapter contains four sample responses, demonstrating approaches to writing in different forms and for different purposes.

Choosing the right form

There are many different text types and styles that you can use to express your ideas. Choosing the appropriate form for your response is essential because it will influence the way your message is received by your audience, and therefore how well your piece achieves its purpose. The right form can also help you structure your text effectively and present your ideas in a clear and coherent manner.

Exploring different text types and styles

To choose the right form and style, you need to consider the purpose of your response, its context and its intended audience. For example, if you are writing a persuasive piece for a general adult audience, you would choose a persuasive text type such as an opinion piece, use persuasive language and structure your argument in a logical and coherent way. If you wish to explore ideas in an imagined world for young adult readers, you could write a short story using relatively uncomplicated yet descriptive language.

To help you select the right form for your response, the table opposite provides some suggested purposes for different text types.

Text type	Good for ...
Blog post	reflecting on a topic
Opinion piece	arguing a point
Short story	telling a story
Poem	expressing emotions
Script	creating a dialogue and narrative
TED Talk	delivering a persuasive speech
Podcast	discussing a topic in an interview
Review	critiquing or analysing a subject
Personal essay	sharing a personal experience
Feature article	exploring a topic in detail

Keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive list, and there are many more possibilities for each of these text types as well as other text types.

Choosing form based on mentor texts

Choosing a form based on a mentor text can be a useful way to identify the most appropriate style for your response. A mentor text can inspire and motivate you, as well as demonstrating the features of effective writing in a particular form. When considering a mentor text as the basis for your own writing, it is important to think about the purpose of your response, its context and your intended audience.

Choose a mentor text that resonates with you and your ideas. Look for a style of writing that you enjoy reading, and try to identify the features that make the text effective. Think about its tone, structure and language features, and how these elements work together to convey the author's message.

The following steps will help you to choose a form based on your study of mentor texts.

Step 1: Identify a selection of mentor texts that you find inspiring, motivating or particularly well written. Look at a variety of text types, such as short stories, poems, opinion pieces, podcasts and speeches. Remember to include the three main texts you are studying, but try to add some different text types or styles of writing.

Step 2: Read and analyse each mentor text carefully. Identify the purpose, audience and context of each text, and think about how the author uses language and structure to convey their message.

Step 3: Consider how the mentor texts relate to the idea you are studying. Choose the mentor text that best aligns with your purpose and message.

Step 4: Identify the features that make the mentor text effective, such as its use of imagery, persuasive language or narrative voice. Use these features as inspiration for a piece of writing in the form of the mentor text you selected.

Choosing form based on ideas

Choosing a form that works well for your ideas is essential to conveying your message effectively. For example, if you are writing about personal journeys, you may choose a form that allows you to tell a personal story. If you are writing about protest, you may choose a form that enables you to present an argument and engage your audience in an issue. Of course, you might also wish to write a persuasive text about personal journeys, or a reflective piece about protest – it all depends on the ideas you wish to explore and how you want your audience to respond.

The table below suggests three different forms for each of the four key ideas.

Idea	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3
Writing about country	essay reflecting on cultural identity and place	short story imagining a rural landscape	podcast discussing a relationship with the land
Writing about personal journeys	memoir telling a personal story	narrative essay sharing a personal experience	short story depicting a fictional journey
Writing about play	poetry/songs expressing emotions	monologue presenting different points of view through role-playing	feature article giving an in-depth exploration of play
Writing about protest	opinion piece arguing for change	feature article explaining and examining a controversial issue	speech reflecting on an experience of protest

Bringing it all together

To make a final decision on form, you need to bring together the purpose, audience, context, mentor texts and idea. Write a few sentences about how your choice of form enables you to present your ideas and achieve your purpose. These notes will be useful when you come to write your reflective commentary.

Here are a few examples based on the Framework of Ideas and listed mentor texts.

Idea	My chosen form	Why I chose this form
Writing about country	feature article – cultural reflection	I want to reflect on cultural identity and explore the relationship between identity and the land. The feature article form allows me to delve deeply into the topic. I was inspired by Anton Chekhov's 'Gooseberries' and Maxine Beneba Clarke's chapter from *The Hate Race*.
Writing about personal journeys	podcast – personal reflections	The podcast form allows me to share personal reflections with an audience interested in similar ideas. I was inspired by the personal voices of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk and Walter's speech from *The Inheritance*.

Idea	My chosen form	Why I chose this form
Writing about play	short story – fictional narrative	I enjoy creative writing, and the short story form allows me to create a fictional narrative that explores the idea of play. I was inspired by Tim Winton's article 'About the Boys' and Virginia Gay's monologue.
Writing about protest	opinion piece – critical analysis	I want to analyse an issue and argue a point of view. The opinion piece form allows me to deliver a persuasive message with an analytical component. I was inspired by Kurt Vonnegut's 'Harrison Bergeron' and Mark Gillespie's essay.

Compare forms

ACTIVITY

In this activity you will compare different forms for the idea you are studying, to help you choose the appropriate form for a response.

1. Identify three different forms that would be suitable for the key idea you are studying. Find one or two mentor texts in each form. Consider using your three set mentor texts for this first step.
2. Compare and contrast the three forms in terms of their structure and typical language style.
3. Consider the audience and context that might apply to each form and how these might affect the message and impact of your writing.
4. Write a brief analysis of each form, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each and how well they align with the idea you are writing about.
5. Based on your analysis, select the most appropriate form for your own response and justify your choice.

Planning your writing

Before you start writing, it's important to plan your response carefully. This will help you to organise your ideas, structure your writing effectively and avoid writer's block.

Understanding the writing process

The writing process involves several stages, including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Each stage is important, and skipping any of them can result in a less effective response. Prewriting is especially important, as it helps you to generate and organise your ideas before you start making firm decisions about the form and structure of your piece.

Prewriting checklist

- ☐ Define the purpose and audience of your response.
- ☐ Brainstorm and generate a range of ideas.
- ☐ Organise your ideas into categories or themes.
- ☐ Use graphic organisers or other tools to visualise your ideas.
- ☐ Identify any research or additional information that may be needed.

Planning checklist

- ☐ Review your prewriting notes and select the most important or interesting ideas.
- ☐ Choose an appropriate form.
- ☐ Follow up on any additional research or sources that may be needed.
- ☐ Determine the structure of your response and the order in which you will present ideas.
- ☐ Consider the language, style and tone that will be most appropriate for your form, purpose, context and audience.

Outlining checklist

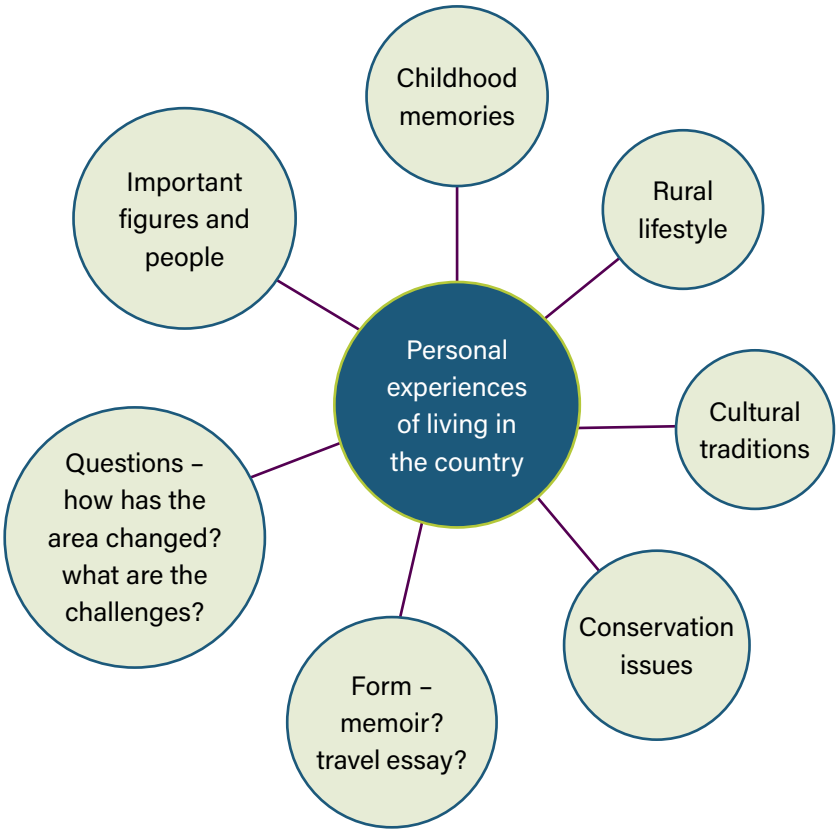
- ☐ Identify what you will include in the introduction, body and conclusion. For an imaginative text such as a short story, think about how you will begin, what will happen at the climax and how you will resolve tension. If your response is in a form such as poetry, consider how you will structure your poem or collection of poems.
- ☐ Create headings and subheadings to organise your content. (You might not include these in the final piece, but they will help your writing stay focused.)
- ☐ Ensure your outline follows a clear and logical order.
- ☐ Check that the ending of your text will be effective and appropriate to the form – e.g. a resolution of tension in a short story, a clear statement of conclusions in an essay, a call to action in a persuasive piece.
- ☐ Review your outline to ensure that it reflects your purpose and audience.

Prewriting strategies for generating and organising ideas

One of the most effective prewriting strategies is brainstorming. Brainstorming allows you to generate a number of ideas quickly and organise them into categories or themes. You can use a graphic organiser, such as a mind map or concept map, to visualise your ideas and their relationships.

Example: ideas brainstorm for Writing about country

The mind map opposite shows some initial ideas for a piece based on personal experiences of living in the country. The focus of the piece, 'personal experiences of living in the country', is placed at the centre, then the thoughts and ideas generated in the brainstorm are placed around the outside. The map includes topics as well as questions for further exploration. Note that the possible forms for this piece are not limited to a reflective essay or memoir; a travel essay offers an interesting alternative approach to this set of ideas.



Outline and structure your writing

ACTIVITY

Once you have generated your ideas, create an outline or structure for your response. This will help you to organise your ideas effectively and ensure that your response is clear and coherent.

1 Review your brainstorming notes or graphic organiser and select the most important ideas.

2 Organise your selected ideas into logical groups or themes.

3 Arrange the groups or themes into a logical sequence. Think about how you will begin, what will be in the main body, and how you will end.

4 Create a detailed outline of your response, including headings and subheadings.

Drafting your response

During the drafting process, look for ways to use narrative techniques and language features to make your writing effective and engaging. Developing your voice is also crucial, as it will help to make your writing stand out and connect with your reader. Additionally, incorporating feedback from others during the drafting process will improve the clarity and coherence of your writing.

Scan the code or click here to watch a video on drafting and refining a text.

Language features for effective writing

The effective use of language features makes a text more engaging, informative and memorable. Here are some common techniques that you can incorporate into your writing.

Language feature	Description
Imagery	Using vivid descriptions to create mental images, often appealing to one or more of the five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch).
Figurative language	Using non-literal language such as hyperbole, metaphors, similes and personification to add layers of meaning.
Varied sentence structures	Using different types of sentences (simple, compound, complex) to create flow and rhythm.
Varied punctuation	Using punctuation to create emphasis, drama, suspense and so on; in dialogue, dashes and ellipses (...) can indicate pauses, hesitation and uncertainty.

These features can be useful in both fiction and nonfiction. In creative nonfiction, for example, you might use figurative language and imagery to make your writing engaging and immersive for the reader while also being informative.

Here are five sentences that might appear in a **personal essay**, and use the language features in the table above.

The sky was a canvas painted with shades of orange and pink.

- This sentence uses imagery and metaphor to describe the sunset and create an image in the reader's mind. This works well in a personal essay as it helps the reader to visualise the scene and connect with the writer's experience.

Her words were like a knife, cutting deep into my soul.

- This sentence uses a simile to convey the emotional impact of the words. It could be effective in a personal essay that explores a difficult emotional experience.

The city was a living, breathing organism, pulsing with energy and life.

- This metaphor gives the city the qualities of a living thing, while the commas create a rhythm that echoes the idea of 'pulsing'. These language features could be effective in a personal essay that explores the writer's relationship with a particular urban environment.

Suddenly, the lights went out.

- A short, sharp sentence can have a dramatic impact, especially after a series of longer, more complex sentences such as those above. It can shift the tone or signal a change in the direction of an argument.

The wind whispered secrets through the trees: a mysterious language that made me feel like an eavesdropper in a foreign land.

- This sentence uses personification to describe the wind and create a sense of mystery or intrigue. The colon creates a pause, varying the rhythm and, by dividing the sentence, reflecting the separation between the narrator and the natural world.

Developing your voice and style

A distinctive voice is an essential aspect of effective writing. Your writing should reflect your unique perspective and personality, and finding your own style will help give your writing an authentic quality that enhances the connection between you and your reader. See Chapter 9 for more information on voice and style.

ACTIVITY

Use freewriting to explore voice and style

In this activity, you will explore and develop your writing voice and style using a strategy called freewriting.

1. Set a timer for ten minutes.
2. Choose a prompt or topic to write about.
3. Write continuously for the entire ten minutes, without worrying about spelling, grammar and punctuation.
4. Read over what you have written, underlining or highlighting any phrases or sentences that stand out to you as having a strong impact or prompting further ideas.
5. Use some of these phrases or sentences as inspiration to write a more focused and structured piece of writing, such as a personal essay or short story.
6. Re-read and revise your writing, focusing on developing your voice and making your style consistent. Consider your use of language features such as figurative language, imagery, varied sentence structures and punctuation. Can you make more or better use of these?

Incorporating feedback during the drafting process

Receiving feedback on your writing can be challenging, but it is a helpful and essential part of the writing process. Your first drafts will be unpolished and possibly incomplete, but at this stage it can be difficult to see exactly what to change and how to change it. Feedback allows you to see your writing from another perspective and identify areas for improvement.

Asking for feedback

Think carefully about who you ask to give you feedback, and what specifically you would like them to comment on. You will also need to give them some background information so they know what you are trying to achieve.

- Consider the best person to give you feedback for the stage you are at. You can, of course, always ask your teacher, but you might feel that feedback from a classmate or family member will also be helpful.
- Explain your purpose, context and audience to the person reading your work. This will help them to decide whether you are crafting your text appropriately, and to comment on aspects such as word choices and structure.

- Provide your reader with some specific questions to answer. This will make their feedback more targeted and useful to you.
- Give your reader enough time to consider your work and to think about what changes would improve it.

Incorporating feedback

Using feedback effectively will help you to produce a stronger final response. It is not necessarily a straightforward process, however. The feedback might take the form of questions for you to consider, or comments on something that isn't working well – leaving you to come up with answers and solutions. Here are some tips for incorporating feedback as you redraft your writing.

- Start by thanking the person who provided the feedback. This shows that you appreciate their time and effort in reviewing your work.
- Read the feedback carefully and try to understand the perspective of the reader. Consider whether the feedback is constructive and relevant to your goals. Will the suggested changes help you to achieve your purpose? Are they appropriate for your intended audience?
- Prioritise the feedback by deciding which changes are essential and which ones are optional.
- Revise your draft based on the feedback, addressing the specific points that were raised by your reader.
- Review your revised draft and check that the feedback has been incorporated smoothly and effectively.
- Consider asking for additional feedback once you have revised your piece, to ensure that the changes have improved your response. You could go back to the person who gave you the feedback, or try someone different for a new perspective.

Understand standard and non-standard language

ACTIVITY

In this area of study, you are encouraged to use both standard and non-standard language. Depending on what is appropriate to your form, purpose and context, this means you can use slang, dialects and other informal language in your writing. This activity explores ways to incorporate both types of language into your response.

1 Choose a mentor text that makes use of both standard and non-standard language, such as a short story, personal essay or monologue.

2 Read the text and highlight examples of standard and non-standard language. Note how the author uses each type of language and the effects it creates.

3 Identify the purpose and audience of your own response. Consider where it might be appropriate to use non-standard language and where standard language might be more appropriate.

ACTIVITY

4 Experiment with using non-standard language in your writing. Consider how it affects the tone and style of your response.

5 Share your writing with a peer or teacher and ask for feedback on your use of language. Consider whether your use of standard and non-standard language is appropriate for your purpose and audience.

6 Reflect on the feedback you receive and revise your response as needed to incorporate standard and non-standard language effectively.

Editing your response

Editing is a crucial step in the writing process that involves refining and improving your work. The initial rounds of editing involve carefully re-reading your work as well as asking others to provide feedback. The activity below shows how you can run a peer-editing workshop. Editing takes place after you have drafted your piece and decided on things like form, structure and style; it is all about making your writing more effective and better targeted to its context, audience and purpose.

Conduct a peer-editing workshop

ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will work with your peers to edit and revise your writing. This workshop-style activity is designed to help you improve your writing by receiving editorial feedback and incorporating it into your work.

1 Pair up with a peer and exchange your written pieces for editing.

2 Use the VCAA Performance Descriptors for Unit 3, Outcome 2, the assessment sheet on page 150 or criteria provided by your teacher to evaluate each other's responses.

3 Focus on identifying areas for improvement such as grammar, punctuation, word choices, sentence structures, fluency and coherence. You might choose to do this multiple times, using a different colour for each pass (e.g. yellow highlights for grammar, pink for punctuation, blue for word choices).

4 Provide constructive feedback by highlighting specific areas and making suggestions for improvement.

5 Discuss the feedback with your partner and ask any clarifying questions you may have.

6 Revise your written piece based on the feedback you received.

7 Swap pieces again and repeat the process, incorporating any new feedback into your piece.

Scan the code or click here for a downloadable editing checklist.

Proofreading for grammar, spelling and punctuation

Proofreading is the final step in the writing process, and involves checking your work for errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. You can also make minor changes to improve word choices, but avoid doing too much rewriting at this stage. Use the following checklist to help you proofread your work.

- ☐ Correct any spelling errors. If you are using a computer, use a spellchecker to identify any possible errors (remembering that spellcheckers are not always accurate). If your piece is handwritten, use a dictionary to double-check the spelling of any words you are uncertain of.
- ☐ Look for common errors, such as using the wrong word or confusing homophones.
- ☐ Check for correct punctuation (especially apostrophe use) and capitalisation.
- ☐ Read your work aloud to catch any errors you may have missed, such as missing or repeated words.

Writing a reflective commentary

In your reflective commentary you will discuss the writing process and the choices made during that process. Reflecting on *why* you made these choices, and how effective you think they were, is key. Think about what was challenging, what worked and what didn't, and what could have been done differently.

Consider the following aspects of your writing in reflecting on your authorial choices:

- the purpose and audience of the response
- the form and genre
- the language features
- the impact of mentor texts on your writing
- the drafting and editing process and the role of feedback in shaping your decisions.

The following is a partial example that demonstrates some of the above elements. See pages 137–48 for four complete examples of responses with reflective commentaries.

> For my response on personal journeys, I chose to create a podcast in the form of a series of personal reflections. I was inspired by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk on 'The Danger of a Single Story' and Walter's speech from *The Inheritance* because they have such strong and passionate voices … I wanted to share some of my unique experiences with a broad audience, and felt that the podcast form was a great fit because it allowed me to engage with this audience in a personal and authentic way.
>
> During the writing process, I made some deliberate decisions about the vocabulary, text structures, language features and conventions that I used, such as … (examples from the piece). I wanted to create a sense of intimacy and connection with my audience. My first drafts were too serious and impersonal, so I revised my text using a more conversational tone and incorporating personal anecdotes to make my message …

Analyse the effectiveness of language features

ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will reflect on the effectiveness of language features used in your writing. You can use a similar process to evaluate other authorial choices, such as those relating to form and structure.

1 Choose a piece of writing you have completed and read through it.
2 Identify the language features you have used, such as imagery, figurative language, non-standard language and different types of sentences.
3 Analyse the effectiveness of these features. Consider how well they contribute to the meaning and impact of your writing.
4 Reflect on any changes you could make to improve the effectiveness of your writing, such as adding more descriptive language, reducing the wordiness of the writing (by deleting some adjectives and adverbs, for instance) or varying the sentence structures.
5 Revise your writing based on your reflections. Make notes on the changes you make, including the reasons for making them. You can draw on these notes when you write the reflective commentary.

Scan the code or click here to watch a video on writing a reflective commentary.

Sample responses

The four sample responses in this section provide examples of writing about the four key ideas in the Framework of Ideas. They also show writing in different styles and forms, and for different purposes. Each responds to a specific task instruction, which includes stimulus material, and is accompanied by a reflective commentary. Look for aspects you can use in your writing, even in pieces on different key ideas or in different forms.

Scan the code or click here to see additional sample responses on the Framework of Ideas.

Sample response 1: Writing about country

This short story expresses and explores ideas about place and identity.

Task

Drawing on the writing you have drafted, explored and completed over this unit of work, create a written text that explicitly incorporates one or both of the items of stimulus below.

Stimulus 1:

> 'We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.'
>
> – Aldo Leopold

Stimulus 2:

Response

My feet sank deep into the dark, wet sand. Hard at first, and then slowly, as the tide enveloped my ankles, space was made for me in that gritty earth. This was how I used to start a fishing trip with my dad, searching in the shallow tide with my feet, hoping to find the telltale lump that means live bait. For a time, I felt bad for the pipis. They didn't ask to be holed up in there, nearly crushed by feet and then put on a hook. But it was better than buying live bait at the store, better for the environment anyway. 'Greener,' my dad had said.

Starts the piece with a connection to the land and to another character; establishes ideas that will be explored throughout.

So instead, we chose to find that small life that existed along the shoreline. My hands and feet buried in the granular earth, digging for shells and flesh. But the shoreline could bite back, too. I recall digging for pipis one day, feeling the dirt scrape against me and the earth make way for my small chubby fingers, when broken pieces of shell pressed against me but didn't quite have the courage to break skin. I would later find dozens of tiny cuts crosshatched on my hands, but those small hurts were inconsequential to a child on a mission.

Uses personification to give the natural world a sense of agency.

But now, with my legs submerged nearly to the calf, and that childhood left so far behind, my feet could find nothing left in that earth. A small part of me wondered whether, if my father had come with me to the beach, or even if he hadn't already passed on, the pipis would have stayed to be found.

Perhaps, like the pipis that I could no longer find on that shoreline, it was time to move on from this in-between space. Sand and sea and me. The

shoreline existing only as a precipice between worlds – a space for those who belong to neither place. Some come here and cannot survive – it is not their place. Some come here and find the only place they could ever call home.

Pipis.

Bluebottles.

Hermit Crabs.

Room for one more?

So much life is found here. Creatures that keep to the shoreline and find a way to exist. Gulls circling the grey sky, tiny fish darting around the rock pools, scuttling crustaceans attempting to outrun the tide. They exist in the grey spaces of the world. No. They thrive in the grey. It is possible to be abundant in spaces that others could never inhabit. This doesn't make you less than, it doesn't make you hard to find or impossible for others to follow. If you carve the path into the in-between lands others will follow, and perhaps there you can find a country for people who love grey.

I wiggled my feet; I felt had to start moving them or I would take root in the sand. The earth clung to me, and I slowly manoeuvred myself around in the sand. There was a great sucking noise as I eventually wrenched out my feet. The waves washed over them once more, the tide taking much of the sand that had been my muse.

I couldn't bring myself to put shoes back on. It was a short walk back into town, and after all that my feet had found, putting a barrier between myself and the land didn't feel right.

Trekking back home I found shorelines everywhere. In-between spaces all around, with different parts of this world finding a place to live. A roofing gutter that held a bird's nest, fences with moss growing over them, ceramic pots that once held indoor plants, still with a smear of dirt on the bottom. Each of these spaces held life and land, and while life may have vacated for a time, it would return. The in-between spaces could sustain a bond for a long time. This land could and would sustain me.

I skipped over fragmented pavements with flowers forcing their way through the cracks, making my way back to my dad's home. My home now. The beach with its craggy rocks and gentle tide felt more his than the bricks and mortar ever would. But perhaps this could be another in-between space. In-between my life and his. In-between the beach and the city. Me, on the verandah, in-between lives.

Taking a deep breath, I walked across the decking, searching my pockets for the door key when I felt a small sharpness underfoot. A lump that my bare feet knew very well. The small, slightly cracked, but very familiar shape of a pipi shell.

- Changes the prose style through a series of short, sharp sentences, transitioning to a broader exploration of ideas.

- Identifies and poetically describes several types of in-between spaces while also evoking the narrator's walk into the town, enhancing characterisation.

Reflective commentary

While writing this piece I found there were several challenges, which I feel I navigated well so that I ended up with an interesting and immersive read. The main challenge, although it was also a source of inspiration, came from using elements of the mentor text 'Split' by Cassie Lynch. These were elements that I found striking and effective but not easy to incorporate into my own writing. 'Split' is a highly imaginative piece, with a lot of creative imagery and pathetic fallacy (giving human feelings to nature). Because of this it is also quite abstract at times and has a fairly loose narrative. I tried to lace my own piece with elements of the natural imagery in 'Split' while also attempting to give it a more easily followed narrative structure. When considering this, I looked to the image stimulus to inspire a clear narrative. The narrative I chose was of a person who has recently lost their father, walking along a beach that they used to visit together, reminiscing about their times there before heading back home. I also drew inspiration from 'Split' in the way that Lynch gives the land a sense of personhood and agency. I tried to use this technique in the passages about searching for pipis, in phrases such as 'broken pieces of shell pressed against me but didn't quite have the courage to break skin'. In this way I tried to mirror Lynch's use of pathetic fallacy, which I found very effective and moving, while still making the sequence relevant to my own narrative.

In a way this piece is a reflection of 'Split', but I wanted to focus more on where places come together than on where they divide. I focused on a shoreline because I felt this was the clearest example of a place where different parts of nature collide and create a new kind of space. The image stimulus also has elements of different spaces colliding, as the sand is meeting not only the sea, but also the sky. All of these elements are in shades of grey, further cementing my motif of things that are 'in-between'. Writing about country to me means writing about the many forms of life that can exist in the shared spaces of the earth. This piece is a reflection on the importance of the places we visit and how they become vital to our relationships and identity.

- Reflects on the ways in which the mentor text influenced the writing.
- Discusses specific elements of the mentor text, using relevant and effective vocabulary.
- Notes one way in which the stimulus material was incorporated.
- Discusses a structural choice.
- Considers the use of a particular language technique and gives an example.
- Considers the development of ideas in the piece.

Sample response 2: Writing about personal journeys

In this personal reflection, the writer explores both personal experiences and the nature of Italian Australian identity.

Task

Create a written text that incorporates the following stimulus:

> 'It's like everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story.'
>
> – Patrick Rothfuss, *The Name of the Wind*

Response

The difference between us is prosciutto

The spectrum of 'us-ness' fluctuates from Italian to Italian. You have the cannoli-eating, fresh-pasta-making, parmesan-by-the-kilo-loving Italian Aussies and then you have the others. The ones that buy custard in the carton, who are only Italian when asked about their dark hair and olive skin. All part of the one migrant collective, all hailing somewhere from that same long boot.

I was with my friend and he was talking about his dad. One of those rare Italian Aussie boys whose father was actually born in Italy. Not a grandfather that came on a boat like mine but a first-generation boy. And although we share the thick dark hair, bushy eyebrows and overbearing aunties, I realised we are on two different ends of the spectrum that is our heritage.

I only realised this when we were talking about the deli up the road from my house. It is a Foodworks but you'd only know that by the bright orange sign out the back in the carpark. Inside, it is an Italian nonna's paradise. Pickled eggplant, every delicious stinky cheese in bulk, and prosciutto you watch them slice into thin, melt-in-your-mouth strips right in front of you.

When my friend said the word prosciutto I could tell he was different to me. He said it with the sing-song accent, the pronunciation something like prue-shoot-tow. There's the difference between him and me. I say it like a white Aussie. It sounds uncomfortable in my mouth, foreign. He sounds like it is his.

And maybe that's what the spectrum of Aussie Italians all boils down to; how we say the word prosciutto. It is the difference between those that embrace their heritage and those that have been taught to only recognise themselves as Italian when asked 'what are you'. My family is in the second camp.

When my grandad came to Australia, he didn't speak English. He was small for his age even when he was six, had massive round glasses and the kind of stinky food in his lunch box that other kids made fun of. When he was in the first grade, his mum (my nonna) was called into the school and told to stop giving my grandad a hot water bottle filled with red wine for lunch. Of course, she didn't speak English so he kept on getting his hot red wine buzz every day at school. Nonna didn't understand the Aussies and they didn't understand her.

It was my grandad that decided to not be Italian anymore. But it was harder to escape the culture than he thought. He still had the recognisable Italian last name, but he learnt English and stopped speaking in his native tongue.

When he married my grandma, she transformed from an Irish woman to custard-carton Italian. She made cannelloni and fresh bruschetta. She played solitaire late into the night sipping on limoncello. She loved being Italian. She didn't speak the language except for some choice swear words that would be whipped out during heated card games.

Uses a series of compound adjectives to help create a distinctive voice as well as a humorous tone.

Uses non-standard English ('that' instead of 'who') to create a conversational style.

Uses a sentence fragment and colloquial phrasing to develop the voice; these expressions give the reader the sense that the writer is reflecting from an 'in-group' position.

Introduces a personal anecdote that connects the wider context of the piece (being Italian Australian) to personal experience.

Uses the first-person voice and past tense to sustain the reflective style.

Reflects on the difference between the writer's personal experience and that of their friend.

Connects the writer's personal experience to the larger theme of what it means to be Italian Australian.

Uses a humorous anecdote to further illustrate differences between white Australians and Italian Australians.

Relates family experiences to Italian Australian customs; makes a link to the opening paragraph ('custard-carton') to create coherence.

Every generation, something slips out. The love of bulk parmesan and swear words Aussies don't understand are the only Italian that has been retained properly. My friend is different. He speaks the language and has Tupperware filled with various tomato sauces. He doesn't shy away from the question 'what are you' but says he is Italian like it is obvious. And it is. You ask his name and you can tell right away.

Our families decided how Italian we would be. And I think it all boils down to how we say prosciutto.

Returns to the initial anecdote about the friend to bring the piece to a logical close.

Reflective commentary

In this reflective piece I wanted to explore my cultural identity as well as relate my personal experience to the wider Italian Australian experience. Developing my response from the stimulus quote, I reflected on the sociocultural story told about Italian Australians. I have connected my experience of being Italian Australian (my own 'story') to the identity constructed by the wider community – for example, by exploring the ways in which different people pronounce 'prosciutto'. I was also influenced by the mentor text 'The Red Plastic Chair is a Vietnamese Cultural Institution, and My Anchor' by Amy Duong. Duong reflects on her own cultural identity as a Vietnamese Australian and sees the red plastic chair as a 'cultural institution'. Duong uses the red plastic chair as an anchor within her piece to weave through family dynamics and stories of growing up within a white-washed Australian landscape. I decided to use a similar technique, but using prosciutto as an equivalent Italian 'cultural institution'.

Discusses form and purpose; explains the central idea explored in the piece.

Explains how the stimulus material is incorporated.

Explains how a mentor text influenced the writing.

I used personal anecdotes throughout my piece to ground the reader in my world and to construct a distinct narrative voice consistent with the identity being explored. Non-standard English and colloquial language help to foreground this narrative voice and enhance the conversational style of this piece of reflective writing. I decided to compare my experience to my friend's to show the complexity and nuances of a shared cultural identity. I also drew on my grandfather's experiences to add the perspective of another generation, showing the effects of generational change and creating a more layered narrative. Presenting myself as someone with 'in-group' status enabled me to reflect on the different ways there are to be an Italian Australian from an 'insider' perspective, hopefully engaging the interest of a wide audience.

Reflects on word choices and language features.

Considers audience and purpose.

The use of non-standard English is an important feature of this reflective piece. The narrative voice and my Italian Australian identity are highlighted in the ways I express myself, e.g. 'the ones that buy the custard in the carton' (rather than the more grammatically correct 'the ones who buy'). Informal expressions such as 'all boils down' and 'hot red wine buzz' contribute to a conversational style, generating a feeling of connection with the audience. These vocabulary and syntax choices reinforce the qualities of the narrative voice as well as the reflection on 'Otherness' in a white Australian context.

Gives a more detailed discussion of language choices, with examples.

Sample response 3: Writing about play

This sample response is in the form of a podcast script that explains various aspects of play.

Task

Drawing on the writing you have drafted, explored and completed over this unit of work, create a written text that explicitly incorporates the following stimulus:

> 'All sorts of skills grow through play: social perception, empathy, creativity, flexibility, belly laughter, humility, sense of humour, initiative, moving on from mistakes, listening, honesty, inclusiveness, problem-solving. Sociodramatic play offers a channel for increasing self-discovery and vitality.'
>
> – Darcia F Narvaez, 'How to play as an adult'

You can determine the purpose, audience and context of the written text.

Response

Introduction

[*Background music fades in*] Welcome to the podcast that explores the many facets of human experience, from creativity to childhood memories to the reasons why we play. I'm your host, and today we're going to dive deep into the world of play, and why it's such an essential part of being human. [*Music fades out*]

Uses the typical conventions of podcasts, including segments, music and sound effects.

Segment one

What do you remember about playtime as a kid? Was it structured or unstructured? Did you have set games to play or did you make it up as you went along? One of the best things about play is the freedom it gives us to explore and experiment. When we play, we're not bound by the same rules that govern our daily lives.

Keeps the idea of play at the centre of the text.

[*Sound effect of children playing in the background*]

In fact, studies have shown that play is not just fun, but critical for our overall health and wellbeing. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, playtime can help children develop cognitive, physical, social and emotional skills. But play is not just important for children, adults can benefit from it as well. It can help reduce stress, boost creativity, and even improve our problem-solving skills.

[*Sound effect of someone laughing and having fun*]

Play can come in many forms. It can be as simple as taking a walk in nature, playing a board game with friends or trying out a new hobby. And the best part? It doesn't have to be structured or planned. Play is all about being spontaneous and embracing the moment.

But why is play so important for human development? The answer lies in how we learn. Children learn through play because it's a natural and enjoyable way for them to explore and make sense of the world around them. As adults, we often forget the importance of play in our lives, but it's never too late to rediscover it.

[*Sound effect of someone trying something new*]

So, the next time you find yourself feeling stressed or stuck in a rut, try incorporating some play into your day. It might just be the thing you need to boost your mood and increase your overall sense of wellbeing. [*Music fades in*]

Segment two

Play isn't just important for our individual wellbeing, it also has social benefits. When we play with others, we learn important skills like communication, teamwork and empathy. And while competition can sometimes lead to negative behaviours such as aggression or boasting, it's important to remember that play can also be a space for mutual curiosity and tenderness.

Draws subtly from the mentor text 'About the Boys' by Tim Winton.

[*Sound effect of people laughing and having fun together*]

Think about the last time you played a game or sport with friends. Chances are, you were able to build connections and strengthen relationships in the process. Play can help break down barriers and bring people together. [*Music fades out*]

And it's not just in our personal lives that play can make a difference. Many companies are now incorporating play into their workplaces, recognising the positive impact it can have on employee morale, creativity and productivity.

[*Sound effect of a busy office*]

So, whether you're playing a game of table tennis in the break room or taking part in a team-building exercise, play can be a powerful tool for creating a positive work environment. [*Music fades in*]

Segment three

But what about those who struggle with the idea of play? For some, the idea of being spontaneous can be daunting. But it's important to remember that play doesn't have to be perfect or structured. It's all about giving yourself permission to let go and have fun.

The idea of letting go / having fun is influenced by the monologue from *Cyrano* (another mentor text).

[*Sound effect of someone taking a deep breath and relaxing*]

And while it's natural to feel self-conscious or silly at first, remember that everyone starts somewhere. The more you practise and embrace play in your life, the more comfortable and natural it will become. [*Music fades out*]

Conclusion

In conclusion, play is a vital part of our lives. It's essential for healthy human development; it can help us build connections with others; and it's a powerful tool for boosting creativity and productivity. So, don't be afraid to let your playful side shine through. Whether you're a child or an adult, play has something to offer everyone. [*Music fades in*]

That's it for today's episode of the podcast. We hope you enjoyed learning about the many benefits of play. Don't forget to subscribe and leave us a review if you liked what you heard.

Reflective commentary

I was excited to explore the various ways in which play impacts our lives. My audience for this podcast is broad, encompassing anyone who is interested in the topic of play and its importance in our lives. The stimulus quote gave me some key concepts to work with and expand on, including empathy, creativity and problem solving.

Explains how the stimulus material was incorporated into the response.

To begin my research, I turned to some mentor texts including an excerpt from a speech by Tim Winton titled 'About the Boys', as well as his novel *The Shepherd's Hut*. These texts provided me with a wealth of information on the topic of play, including its social and emotional benefits, and how it can be used as a tool for personal growth and development.

I drew on the techniques and language features used in these mentor texts in writing my podcast script. For example, I used some of the storytelling techniques employed by Winton in *The Shepherd's Hut* to engage my audience and keep them interested. I also incorporated the playful and humorous tone of Chelsea Roffey's 'An Open Letter to Doubting Thomas' to create a more relaxed and enjoyable listening experience.

Uses this paragraph and the next to reflect on the use of mentor texts, referring to specific elements and the purpose for using them. Some elements are ideas-related, while others relate to tone and style.

In terms of form, I chose to create a podcast with three distinct segments. The first segment focuses on the benefits of play for healthy human development, drawing on research findings to support my arguments. In the second segment, I explore the social benefits of play, drawing on personal anecdotes and stories to illustrate my points. Finally, in the third segment, I address the challenges that some people face when it comes to incorporating play into their lives, and provide practical tips for overcoming these obstacles.

Reflects on the use of structure.

As I was writing the podcast script, I made use of various conventions of the podcast form, including the division into segments as well as sound effects and music to enhance the listening experience. For example, I used the sound of children playing in the background during the first segment to create a more immersive experience for my listeners. The sound of laughter also enabled me to incorporate the concepts of 'belly laughter' and 'sense of humour' from the stimulus quote.

Discusses the use of conventions of the podcast form.

Reflecting on my writing process, I am proud of the ways in which I incorporated techniques and ideas from the mentor texts, as well as the stimulus quote, into my podcast. However, I also recognise that there is always room for improvement. In future writing, I will aim to be more intentional in my use of language features and storytelling techniques, with a view to creating an even more engaging experience for my audience.

Overall, the process of creating this podcast has been an enlightening experience. It has taught me the value of becoming familiar with mentor texts and incorporating into my own writing the elements that I find effective. I also came to appreciate the importance of being intentional in my use of language and storytelling techniques. I hope that my podcast has been informative and engaging for my audience, and that it has inspired them to incorporate more play into their lives.

Sample response 4: Writing about protest

This sample response is in the form of a speech by a Year 12 student who argues for a change to some school rules.

Task

Create a written text that responds to the following stimulus:

> 'Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.'
>
> – Congressman John Lewis

You can determine the audience, context and purpose of your piece.

Response

Good afternoon everyone,

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for allowing us to be here today. I know that it is unusual to have student council members attend a school board meeting, so I appreciate the invitation and the welcome that we have received. For anyone who doesn't know me, my name is Amelia Dodson and I am the new school captain for Kilburn Senior College. I am here with my fellow student council members to begin discussions on a project that would reshape learning at our school.

Establishes the context and audience.

I ran for school captain because I felt that significant and necessary changes need to occur for our students to be their best. We have long held honesty, integrity and high academic results at the core of our school values. But I worry that we have become complacent about the latest advice surrounding studying and homework habits. I come to you not just as the head of the student council, but also as a Year 12 student who is honestly worried about achieving my goals for the final year of school. So much is riding on this, why wouldn't I give myself and my cohort every chance to succeed?

The speaker places herself within the debate, as Emmeline Pankhurst does in her speech 'Freedom or Death'. This creates the character of the speaker as someone who is an agent of change but currently struggling within the system as it stands.

Once in the senior years, we are trusted to go into the Study Hall for free periods. This hall is locked down into a tense atmosphere of silence and stress. Students hardly feel that they can go to the bathroom or ask a question, let alone settle into a long and sometimes arduous study session. We feel watched by the teachers who supervise, and are quickly pulled into line if we should accidentally create too much noise or distraction.

Starts the main argument by outlining problems with the existing system, using emotional language and effective imagery.

I am arguing for an official and immediate change – from Study Hall to Open Learning Annex. While traditionally long periods of silent study may have worked for enforcing good habits, recent academic research has shown that this is simply no longer the case, and our school's infrastructure needs to reflect this.

States the purpose of the speech, offering a solution to the problems previously outlined (a problem-solution approach to argument).

There are so many different study methods for different kinds of students – it seems so obvious! Visual learners, night owls, sprinters! All of these nicknames are designed to help people understand how they best learn. But at school we are given a one-size-fits-all treatment.

Appeals to the audience's 'common sense'.

Enough.

Students in the new Open Learning Annex will be allowed to bring in headphones and listen to music, eat and drink, sit in a bean bag and get comfortable. They will be allowed to come and go as they please, and take breaks as necessary. They will be allowed to quietly discuss their group projects and engage fully with their work. The Open Learning Annex will be a place where each student can go and study in a judgement-free environment, where they are able to work in the way that suits them best – alongside the teachers who will no doubt be there to support them.

Repetition ('they will …') reinforces the speaker's message and conveys her sense of conviction.

I know it doesn't sound like the perfect system; after all, many students have found the Study Hall useful as it is. However, there are other places like this on campus – empty classrooms and libraries that can actively encourage quiet study. We are asking for just one place for students who need to listen to music, or take small breaks, or walk around as they consider their latest essay. We need a space for alternative learning styles.

Makes a concession to an opposing point of view, then rebuts it – an effective persuasive technique.

At the forefront of this exercise is trust. We students understand that teachers are there to enforce the rules of the school. For the most part, we feel that we are complying and committed to the rules that help advance our learning. However, for this to work we are asking to be trusted to do the right thing. We know that some of you may feel that when students are left to their own devices they will take advantage of the situation to do less. This is not the case. We are asking for the opportunity to do more. I am confident in myself and my peers that we would use this opportunity to invest in our education here at Kilburn Senior College, and create good study habits for our education opportunities to come.

Turn the Study Hall into an Open Learning Annex. I implore you to take this issue seriously and give it the consideration that it deserves. We exist as an institution of learning, and we need to make spaces that accommodate every kind of student. We need to turn the Study Hall into a shared space for diverse

Reaffirms the goal as the speech comes to a close, leaving the audience with a clear understanding of what is being sought.

learning styles. I believe that this is the future of learning, and we can be the ones to pave the way for Kilburn Senior College and give each student the very best shot at achieving success. We, as the student council and the school board, have the opportunity to hear the voices of all students and act now before the academic year is up.

I will now happily take any questions.

Reflective commentary

This piece is a speech made by the student council leader to the board of her school, advocating for the Study Hall to be turned into an Open Learning Annex – that is, a room dedicated to alternative learning styles.

I used Emmeline Pankhurst's famous speech 'Freedom or Death' as a mentor text for this speech. 'Freedom or Death' inspired members of the suffragette movement, and was designed to encourage militant action for their cause. While Amelia is not advocating for such extreme action, there are parallels to the way that she argues for her cause. Pankhurst is famous for her use of direct argumentation – which means that she is clear and purposeful in the argument, and states her position without apology. I tried to mimic this in the short, sharp sentences that Amelia uses to break up her speech. Something as simple as a declaration of 'enough' makes clear her frustrations and strong desire for change. I placed this word on a line of its own to reflect the way that the speaker would emphasise it, and most probably pause briefly, in her delivery.

Considers the choice of sentence structure.

Shows understanding of a speech as an oral form involving non-verbal elements.

I aimed to consistently use highly emotive language and repetition to strengthen my argument. An example of emotive language occurs in the description of the Study Hall – 'a tense atmosphere of silence and stress'. I juxtaposed this with the more positive and appealing description of the proposed Open Learning Annex which would have beanbags and music. I used repetition during this passage also, emphasising what students would be allowed to do and declaring the proposed space to be 'judgement-free'. After this I included a line about the presence of a teacher in these situations, thus assuring the audience that the role of teachers had been kept in mind while making this plan.

Supports the reflection with brief examples.

I thought that an audience of adult board members would be likely to question the value of relaxing the rules around a school study space, so I added a segment on trust. This would enable Amelia to strengthen her connection with the audience and also reassure them that she is fully aware of what she is asking of the school board. Further, this felt like the best way to incorporate the idea contained in the stimulus quote. While Amelia's speech would be likely to create some 'good trouble', she would see it as 'necessary trouble' as the benefits would be worth it. By acknowledging what is at stake, Amelia would encourage her audience not only to feel more engaged with her arguments, but also to see her emotional ties to the school and commitment to education – keeping them united to a common cause.

Explains how the argument has been crafted to suit the given audience.

Reflects on how the speech responds to the stimulus quote.

Responding to stimulus material

It is possible that for your assessed pieces of writing you will be prompted to respond to stimulus material. This stimulus may take various forms, such as a quote or a short passage from a text, an image, or even a combination of image and text. The effective interpretation and incorporation of this stimulus into your written pieces is a crucial skill that can elevate your responses. Below are several strategies to incorporate stimulus material into your writing.

- **Direct incorporation:** Use the quote or image directly in your response. For instance, include the quote within your argument to strengthen your perspective. For an image, work a description of what is shown into your narrative.
- **Character expression:** In an imaginative piece, you could have a character express a sentiment or idea equivalent to the idea expressed by the stimulus material.
- **Reflection:** Reflect on the stimulus, considering its deeper implications. Use this reflection as a launching point for your piece.
- **Argument:** Use the stimulus as a basis for an argument. Discuss its relevance to your key idea, agreeing, disagreeing or proposing a nuanced view.
- **Explanation:** Explain the meaning of the stimulus, focusing on its potential interpretations and considering their implications and significance.
- **Contrast or paradox:** If appropriate, draw a contrast or paradox between the stimulus and your main argument or narrative, sparking interest and engagement.

Remember, the aim is not merely to use the stimulus but to integrate it meaningfully and naturally into your work. How you use it will be guided by the demands of the task and the nature of the stimulus, as well as your purpose and the form you choose to write in. Effective engagement with stimulus material can enrich your writing, adding depth and demonstrating your ability to think critically and creatively.

Scan the code or click here to see examples of stimulus material and approaches to incorporating them into written pieces for each of the four Framework ideas.

Assessment sheet

AREA OF STUDY 2 **UNIT 3, OUTCOME 2**

TASK 1: WRITTEN TEXT CONSTRUCTED IN CONSIDERATION OF AUDIENCE, PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Description of task: _____

_____

_____

Assessment criteria	**Level of performance** (Tick to indicate level)
1. Use and development of ideas	low ⟷ high
2. Creation of a text with a stated purpose and an understanding of context and audience	low ⟷ high
3. Use of vocabulary, text structure and language features	low ⟷ high
4. Exploration and use of voice appropriate to purpose, context and audience	low ⟷ high
5. Use of standard and non-standard conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling	low ⟷ high

Teacher comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

very low	low	medium	high	very high
1–4	5–8	9–12	13–16	17–20

This is NOT an official assessment sheet; the suggested criteria above are adapted from the key skills in the VCE English/EAL Study Design and the published performance descriptors. Refer to the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/english-and-eal/Pages/Assessment.aspx for official advice and performance descriptors.

Scan the code or click here for a PDF of this assessment sheet.

Assessment sheet

AREA OF STUDY 2 **UNIT 3, OUTCOME 2**

TASK 2: COMMENTARY REFLECTING ON WRITING PROCESSES

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Description of task: _____

_____

_____

Assessment criteria	**Level of performance** (Tick to indicate level)
1. Reflection on the process of creating a text and the implications of authorial choices	low ⟷ high
2. Explanation of the use of vocabulary, text structures, language features, conventions and ideas	low ⟷ high
3. Use of vocabulary for effective and cohesive writing about writing processes	low ⟷ high

Teacher comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

very low	low	medium	high	very high
1–4	5–8	9–12	13–16	17–20

This is NOT an official assessment sheet; the suggested criteria above are adapted from the key skills in the VCE English/EAL Study Design and the published performance descriptors. Refer to the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/english-and-eal/Pages/Assessment.aspx for official advice and performance descriptors.

Scan the code or click here for a PDF of this assessment sheet.

SECTION 03

Analysing argument

IN THIS SECTION

In Unit 4 Area of Study 2, there are two assessment tasks. Task 1 is to write an analysis of argument and language in at least two persuasive texts, of which one will be written and another will be an audio or audiovisual text. Task 2 is to present your own point of view on an issue, in the form of an oral presentation.

This section explains the knowledge and skills needed for analysing and creating persuasive texts. It also contains many examples of persuasive media texts to help you practise and refine your skills. Chapters 14–16 explain the key features of written, visual, audio and audiovisual texts, while Chapter 17 outlines a range of specific persuasive techniques and strategies that can be used in many different persuasive text types.

In all these chapters, remember that your purpose in understanding the elements of a persuasive text is to know *how* they can be used, *why* the creator of a persuasive text might have used them, and *how* they might position, move, sway and ultimately persuade an audience to agree with the point of view being presented.

CHAPTER 13

ARGUMENT AND PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- The key concepts of argument
- Purpose and audience
- Counterarguments
- Tone

In constructing an argument, a writer will aim to persuade their intended audience to agree with the point of view being presented. Their argument will be framed by an overarching contention and will move through various supporting points; their language will be tailored to their argument and they will use a tone that communicates the way they feel about the issue. Ultimately, by employing a range of language techniques, the writer's goal is to prove that their opinion is logical and reasonable, and that any opposing arguments are weak and flawed.

This chapter will help you to understand the main features of persuasive writing. It will guide you through the essential features that writers can use to present a point of view, and that you will also use when you create your own persuasive text on an issue.

The key concepts of argument

A writer's point of view is constructed through an **argument**. An argument consists of:

- the writer's **contention**, which summarises their opinion on the given issue
- **supporting points** that are logically developed to justify the contention
- **evidence** to support the points being presented.

It is important to understand the difference between contention and argument. While the writer's contention may be 'The Australian government should be doing more to combat climate change', the argument should provide justifications for *why* this is the case.

Consider the following assertion in relation to the contention on the previous page:

> *It's not good enough that politicians aren't doing anything about climate change.*

That in itself is not an argument; it is only adding to the writer's contention as another statement of opinion. However, consider this statement:

> *The current energy policies are not evolving quickly enough to keep up with the changes in our climate.*

This statement presents a coherent reason as to *why* the government's efforts are inadequate.

If the contention statement raises questions for the audience, then the **supporting points** should provide possible answers to these. In response to the same issue, possible supporting points could be:

- policies are not changing
- there are not enough options for using renewable energy
- the number of climate-related natural disasters is increasing.

Equally important to the construction of the argument is its **sequence** and **structure**. A writer will develop their argument progressively and purposefully, ensuring that they are building upon their ideas to produce a measured, logical point of view. Structuring their piece with intent can support their attempt to persuade an audience.

A cartoon can also present a contention in response to an issue; it relies on visual language, although many cartoons also use words. © Chappatte in Der Spiegel

Issue and context

When analysing a persuasive text it is important to know what **issue**, or topic, the writer is debating or expressing a view on. Understanding the **context** is equally important. When considering the context, think of it as the set of events and decisions that have given rise to the issue and to the writer's decision to enter the debate.

For example:

- The broad issue for the above example is climate change; a more specific issue could be the need for human behaviour to change to deal with climate change.
- The context may be that the government has withdrawn their promised policies to tackle climate change.

The context for a media text is also the mode and medium of its publication. For example, an editorial in *The Age* might be published on the same day as a speech is delivered at a public forum; although the broad context is the same, the arguments presented, and the language used to present them, will reflect the different contexts for these two persuasive texts.

Identifying the contention

The contention of a text is easiest to locate once you have established the issue and context. It will commonly be found in the early stages of the article, often within the first two paragraphs. It might even be alluded to or stated outright in the title or headline. However, the writer may also reiterate their contention at the conclusion of their text – this can also be a point of reference when analysing persuasive texts.

The contention might not be stated explicitly in a persuasive text. Instead, the writer's supporting points, selection of evidence and tone might all work together to *imply* the contention. Below are two example contentions – one is explicitly stated, the other implied.

Explicit contention	Implicit contention
A total ban on plastic straws is unfair to people with complex medical needs.	Disposable plastic straws enable people with complex medical needs to safely enjoy drinks without assistance, but straws made from sustainable alternatives, such as paper, provide challenges.

When identifying the contention, you will need to differentiate the contention from the supporting points and use this to provide a well-defined contention statement in your analysis.

Identify contention and supporting points

ACTIVITY

Carefully read the two excerpts on the next page and complete the questions for each text.

1 Write the contention as a clear statement.

2 Identify the supporting points.

ACTIVITY

Excerpt 1:

> There's a lot of debate in the public at present about the voice referendum, and in particular about what the voice might be able to achieve. Will it be practical enough? Is it radical enough or too radical?
>
> One of the incredible achievements of the voice proposal is that it offers a substantial and practical change that has been tailor-made to fit within, while also improving, Australia's Westminster system of democracy.
>
> We, the Australian people, should adopt a similar guiding principle. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have given us a chance to improve our democracy, and achieve practical, beneficial impacts not just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but for everyone else as well.
>
> Gabrielle Appleby and Ron Levy, *The Australian*

Excerpt 2:

> **Never-ended choppers**
>
> It was not the noise from the cars at this year's grand prix that I objected to. At least the residents in the surrounding suburbs get a let-up from their racing.
>
> Unfortunately we had no respite from the constant buzzing of the ongoing helicopters flying overhead, travelling to and from the event. At one point on Sunday, I counted about 30 in a few minutes. It was one after another. Is there a decibel noise level that they have to adhere to? Fair go.
>
> Anthony Straker, letter to the editor, *The Age*

Purpose and audience

The **purpose** of the text is the reason the persuasive piece has been produced and what the writer's desired outcomes are – what they want their audience to think, feel or do. Examples of purposes could be:

- to influence the audience to take action
- to convince the audience to take a side on an issue
- to lead the audience to contemplate a moral or ethical concern.

The purpose of a text is closely connected to the writer's **intended audience**: the group of people who the piece is aimed at and who the writer wishes to influence. The audience may be an individual (such as the specific writer of a piece being responded to) or a large group

who have experience with a particular issue. The writer of a persuasive text should have a strong understanding of who their text is targeted at so they can develop their argument to deliberately appeal to their audience.

Sometimes the writer will be a **stakeholder** in the issue: someone who is directly affected by the issue and has a vested interest in it. When a text is written by a stakeholder, it is possible to see the text as misleading or unreliable due to the element of self-interest. The writer might have a powerful emotional attachment to the issue, or perhaps they stand to benefit financially from it. However, they may also have in-depth or expert knowledge of the issue, further enhancing the weight of their argument.

For example, a supporter of the Greens political party might write an opinion piece strongly objecting to the lack of policy from the current government, while the CEO of a coal-mining organisation could respond in support of the government as the lack of progress may mean their industry will remain viable for a longer time. Both are stakeholders whose arguments will be well-informed as well as heavily influenced by their professional affiliations and responsibilities.

Identify purpose and audience

ACTIVITY

Consider the following examples of persuasive texts. What is the purpose of the piece and who might the intended audience be?

Example text	Purpose	Intended audience
A nurse has written an opinion piece arguing why people need to use their local doctors first.		Parents of young children
A newspaper editorial presents the view that concerts are too expensive, and people should just watch them online.	To highlight the exorbitant amount that major musical acts charge for their concerts around Australia.	
A member of an Aboriginal community has produced an opinion piece arguing that there should be more First Nations members of parliament.		
A parent has commented on a school's Facebook page, complaining that the new canteen menu is not healthy enough.		

Counterarguments

An effective persuasive text will include counterarguments as part of a well-rounded argument. These enable the writer to acknowledge opposing viewpoints and argue against them. A good counterargument enhances the writer's credibility as it shows their knowledge of the issue; it also strengthens their argument by showing weaknesses in alternative viewpoints.

A counterargument can be presented at different places in a persuasive text.

- It may be used at the end of the piece, after the writer has established their own position and argument. This approach can enable the writer to reaffirm their contention in a final statement.
- It may be included in the initial stages of the writer's argument. This approach is often used in shorter pieces or direct responses to a point of view, such as in a letter to the editor.

A counterargument will usually involve the writer pinpointing and exposing flaws in particular elements in an opposing argument, including underlying assumptions and the quality of the supporting evidence. An opposing argument can also be refuted through a direct attack on an opposing party, using emotive language to discredit those who argue for an alternative point of view. The aim of this approach is for the writer to present themselves as having the most reliable opinion on the issue and to paint the opposition as the inferior source.

Tone

The tone of a writer's language conveys their attitude towards the idea or issue they are discussing. Rather than thinking of tone as a technique, consider it to be the emotion or feeling that underpins the writer's points. The tone is likely to shift throughout the text as the writer considers various aspects of the issue and the arguments on either side.

In written texts, tone is created by vocabulary choices and phrases; in spoken texts, tone is also created through the speaker's voice (its rhythm, emphasis, intonation and so on) as well as their gestures and facial expressions.

Different types of tone are relevant to different approaches to an argument. For example, a writer might employ an angry, attacking tone when disagreeing with another writer or expert. Alternatively, an optimistic tone can be used to inspire hope in an audience. When analysing the tone used, it is helpful to think about the adjectives the writer has used and the connotations associated with these words.

A shift in tone can be observed when a writer is aiming to engage their audience through their different points of argument. A text about the negative effects of junk food might begin with a mocking tone that condemns a fast-food stop on the way home from work, but may end with a cautionary tone that highlights the long-term implications of junk food consumption.

Analyse tone

ACTIVITY

The following letter was written in response to online blogger Josie Jones, who commends TikTok for allowing people to share their creativity. Read it carefully then answer the questions.

> Ah, TikTok. The home of **motivating** dance challenges. The leading source of air fryer hacks to try. An **inspirational** platform for budding make-up artists looking to share their **beautiful** creations.
>
> But while Gen-Z **idolises** the platform for **energising** the **mundane**, it has proven to be nothing more than a time-sucker among people I know. All I see are my friends **mindlessly** scrolling through videos, learning **useless** skills, **burning** their eyes out in the process. And this is all happening while we're out for a friendly coffee!
>
> Josie Jones, you clearly have no idea how TikTok is **destroying** my social circle, one **tragic** video at a time.

1 Review the words in bold and label them for their connotations: positive, negative or neutral.

2 What is the writer's tone at the beginning of the letter? Use evidence to explain your answer.

3 What is the writer's tone at the end of the letter? Use evidence to explain your answer.

4 Mark the point where you think the tone begins to shift. Which words cause the tone to shift here?

5 What is the effect of this shift in tone? How does it help to convey the writer's message?

CHAPTER 14

WRITTEN PERSUASIVE TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- News articles
- Editorials
- Opinion pieces
- Letters to the editor
- Online comments
- Blog posts
- Reviews

The main persuasive texts in newspapers, either in print or online, are written texts. Images play an important role, but the written text dominates the page or the screen. Opinion pieces, editorials and letters to the editor are overtly persuasive. News articles can present information in a more objective manner, but often present a point of view on current events and issues and subtly influence the reader's response.

Two other written text types that typically present a clear point of view are blog posts and reviews. Although these are not issues-driven in the same way as opinion pieces and editorials, they nevertheless use the features of persuasive texts to construct an argument.

News articles

The aim of a news article is to present information about a current event or issue. While the subject matter is generally approached in a measured, unbiased manner, sometimes the journalist's or publication's opinion is implied by the way the content is presented or even by the headline. Photographs are often included to illustrate the key content, and can provide a more emotive perspective. Quotes from eyewitnesses or experts add to the impact of the piece.

The news article on the next page reports on youth gangs and burglaries in Victoria, and on police responses.

A news article:

- has a headline and a by-line
- provides the key facts
- usually has a formal tone
- uses short sentences and paragraphs
- is written in the third person.

Youth gangs behind Victoria's aggravated burglary crime wave

Some of Victoria's worst young crims are on double-digit sets of bail after being repeatedly detained by police and released.

Mark Buttler

Dozens of the young offenders driving the state's wave of aggravated burglaries have been arrested more than 10 times in the past year.

The *Herald Sun* has been told the worst of the young crims – many of whom do it for fun or notoriety rather than monetary gain – are on double-digit sets of bail after being repeatedly detained by police and released.

The youths, aged between 12 and 24, are among more than 600 on a statewide youth crime watchlist. Those listed – among them a core of 280 recidivist offenders – are monitored by officers attached to Operation Alliance, which runs across Victoria.

It is believed one boy who has come under scrutiny as part of another special police operation code-named Bird is on 12 sets of bail.

Bird has been working to curb the level of aggravated burglaries by youth gangs in the southern suburbs by sending out 10 police units a night patrolling for troublemakers.

That work comes as the state government prepares to lift the age of criminal responsibility to as high as 14.

Some police are concerned that will open up a greater field of young people able to offend without being charged, potentially exposing them to exploitation by older offenders.

Police say they are confronting a new generation of youth offenders with no fear of consequences, and that would not improve if the age of responsibility was raised.

"Why wouldn't you keep doing stuff that's fun? They're doing it for the social media notoriety," one investigator said.

Another officer told the *Herald Sun* the amount of work put into the young offenders was a drain on other elements of police work.

The youths often do not offend in their own areas and think nothing of crossing Melbourne in stolen vehicles to commit crimes on the other side of town. "Touch wood, no one's been killed yet," one investigator said. "They steal the cars, commit crimes in them, then dump the cars."

Their driving – commonly in powerful European cars – is often dangerous, weaving in and out of traffic at high speed on major roads. Police are usually unwilling to do more than monitor from a distance or the air because those behind the wheel are unlicensed and with little driving experience outside video games.

Introduces the issue. While the article is matter-of-fact in tone, 'wave' suggests the overwhelming number of burglaries.

Uses colloquial language to reinforce that these are young offenders.

References the police efforts to deal with this crime wave. This helps the reader to recognise that this is a criminal issue and must be dealt with by law enforcement, appealing to the reader's desire for safety.

Social media has lent them a new level of communication and the forum on which to brag about their exploits. "I've never seen youth crime like this. You'd say it's an epidemic," one investigator said.

In the year to September 2022, there had been 164 aggravated burglaries committed by children aged 10–14, up from 91 the year prior. The number of aggravated burglaries is also up on pre-pandemic levels, with just 60 offences recorded in the year ending September 2018.

Police believe they are making headway with some of those on their radar.

Almost 150 of those on the Alliance watchlist severed ties with gang life last year and one-third did not reoffend.

Herald Sun

Suggests a disease that is spreading and out of control, which creates concern and a desire for action to be taken.

Repeating 'aggravated burglaries' throughout the article emphasises the serious criminal nature of these acts.

Reinforces the fact that the number of burglaries is increasing; 'just' emphasises the previously low number.

Analyse the news article

ACTIVITY

1 Identify an example of factual information and an example of persuasive language. What do you think is the effect of using both of these elements in the article?

2 Explain how the author has used the following language techniques, and give an example of each:

- a evidence
- b anecdotes
- c statistics.

3 Do you think a bias is evident? Explain your answer, using examples from the article.

Editorials

An editorial is written by the editor or a senior writer of a newspaper. The opinion presented reflects the publication's stance on a particular issue or event. The contention is clear, although it may be located at the end of the piece, rather than the beginning. The language is usually formal and the writer will employ persuasive techniques, particularly logic and reasoning. An editorial often provides essential information and background so it is accessible to all readers, even if they haven't been following the issue. Different perspectives may be included to ensure the viewpoint is balanced and considered, and to acknowledge that the newspaper's readership will have a variety of opinions.

An editorial:

- » provides a clear opinion on a current issue
- » often includes background information and different perspectives
- » generally uses formal language and a serious tone
- » can use the first-person 'we' and 'our'.

The following editorial presents a point of view on the state of professional women's cricket in Australia, focusing on pay differences between men and women.

Huge achievements for women's cricket team, but challenges remain

Briefly but clearly indicates the issue and context.

Hats off to the Australian women's cricket team, unarguably one of this nation's greatest sporting success stories. The players' achievements on the field, led by captain Meg Lanning, have been extraordinary by any measure. They are ranked number one in the world, virtually unbeatable, and on Sunday became T20 champions for the third time in a row, vanquishing South Africa at Newlands in Cape Town.

Establishes the extent of the team's successes, foreshadowing the contention that female cricketers are worthy of equal pay.

Meg Lanning and Ashleigh Gardner celebrate winning the 2023 ICC Women's T20 World Cup.
Credit: Mike Hewitt / Getty Images

The photograph reinforces the team's success.

The Age's Greg Baum writes: "They've played in a way that has changed the status and perception of women's cricket forever and made some of them household names, and they've compiled a record that puts them in the conversation about the greatest Australian sporting teams."

Their success is not contained within the boundary ropes of the grounds they grace. What a milestone it was when, earlier this month, Ashleigh Gardner secured a contract worth $558,000 at the inaugural Women's Premier League auction in India. Granted, it has not put Gardner – yet – into the same financial league of the best-paid male cricketers and footballers, but it is nevertheless a sum of money that women cricketers from generations past would find extraordinary. After winning the 1997 World Cup in India, according to fast bowler Caitlin Fitzpatrick, players were each presented with an invoice for $1800 to help cover costs.

Includes a surprising example of financial demands from an earlier time (an invoice rather than a payment), highlighting the improved payments of today.

Fitzpatrick said: "But because of all the media around what we had done, a Bendigo publican stepped forward and said, 'Nope, that's not good enough,' and said he would pay for it. So, this guy we had never met wiped the debt for all of us. It was fantastic."

Ashleigh Gardner is still something of an outlier among a handful of Australian women to sign contracts worth more than $100,000 in the WPL. Her payday nevertheless reflects a hard-fought professionalisation of the women's game in Australia, spurred on by the landmark deal in 2017 that meant the pool of payments to elite women players increased from $7.5 million to $55.2 million.

Practically, that meant the difference between pay packets that were little more than a contribution towards training expenses and something approaching a living wage, substantially more for those representing our country.

Cricket Australia, often the target of much criticism, deserves some credit here for supporting and prosecuting these developments alongside the players' association.

Again, there is still a vast gulf between the earnings for elite women and men, but the difference between playing as amateurs and being paid professionally cannot be overstated. Alyssa Healy described Australia's T20 World Cup squad as the greatest sporting team she has ever been a part of. Another milestone was reached this month: more than 20,000 girls aged between five and 12 are now registered to play cricket in Australia, no doubt inspired by the success of Australia's women's team and – critically – supported by authorities and sponsors, notably long-term partner the Commonwealth Bank.

As women's cricket matures into a sustainable sport, thanks to the efforts of players and administrators past and present, old challenges still remain as new ones emerge.

The pay gap, principally a function of sponsorship, television rights and gate receipts, endures. Despite some gains, elite women still play fewer matches than the men; more hours playing means more match fees, better skills development and greater media exposure.

A handful of players – among them Gardner, Ellyse Perry, Beth Mooney and Tahlia McGrath – now find themselves suddenly in a different financial league to their teammates thanks to the bounty of the Indian WPL; that may create hitherto unknown pressures on what has so far been a team of battlers in the same boat.

"It is a little bit awkward because everyone's earning different types of money and everyone's being auctioned at different amounts," admitted Gardner.

Meanwhile, the effort put into developing the sport at a grassroots level must continue, even if easy wins are harder to come by. The hardest work has been done. No doubt more remains ahead.

The Age

- Shows readers that it is now possible for female cricketers to be financially rewarded for their achievements.
- Shows the growth of women's cricket through statistics and 'another milestone'.
- Highlights ongoing problems and gaps between men's and women's cricket, positioning the reader to feel changes are needed.
- Reminds the reader of the contention with a subtle call to action.

Analyse the editorial

ACTIVITY

1 Summarise the contention of the editorial in one sentence. Where is it most clearly stated?

2 How would you describe the main tone of the editorial? How does this tone help to convey the writer's point of view?

Opinion pieces

Opinion pieces are written in direct response to an issue. They can be written by a regular writer for the newspaper or magazine, or by an expert on the issue. The writer will often use overtly persuasive language to sway the audience towards agreeing with their stance. In an opinion piece, you will often see personal pronouns such as 'you', 'I' and 'we' to encourage the reader to feel that they and the writer are on the same side of the issue.

The opinion piece below presents a point of view on changes made by publishers to Roald Dahl's famous children's books. See pages 214–16 for another article on this issue.

An opinion piece:

- presents a clear contention
- often uses emotive language as well as evidence and reasoning
- can use formal or informal language
- can use first- and second-person pronouns.

New Age rinse applied to Roald Dahl classics is an abomination

Oompa Loompas are now "small people", not "small men", characters are no longer "fat" but "enormous". The New Age rinse of Roald Dahl's classics is an abomination.

Susie O'Brien

Words matter and Roald Dahl's words matter more than most.

Recent moves to give this icon of children's literature a New Age rinse are an abomination.

As Dahl himself might say, it's a snozzcumerbing gobblefunk that's left me bogmuddered.

A sensitivity committee has cast its evil eye over his best-loved works and decided that some of the most famous words ever written need a modern makeover.

What a disgrace.

I'll bet this sad little group of people have never had a book published in their lives, and yet they think they can do it better than Dahl.

Thanks to this committee of language cleaners, Oompa Loompas are no longer "small men" but "small people", Augustus Gloop is no longer "fat" but "enormous" and Mrs Twit is no longer "ugly and beastly" but just "beastly". Roald Dahl's books have sold more than 250 million copies worldwide.

In their hands, Miss Spider no longer has a "black head" and even the word idiot is outlawed. The term "eight nutty little idiots" now reads "eight nutty little boys". Some of these changes don't even make any sense. Why would Miss Trunchbull no longer be a "female" but a "woman" instead? While I think some tweaks to classics can be justified – removing the n-word, for instance – there is no reason for these changes to be made. Removing racial slurs and epithets make a material difference to a group of people. But these recent changes are the

Quickly establishes O'Brien's point of view on the issue; 'New Age rinse' mocks the language changes, while 'abomination' condemns them.

Uses language similar to that in Dahl's *The BFG*, appealing to readers who enjoy the books.

Short, sharp sentences emphasise O'Brien's position, adding sarcasm to the more humorous tone used elsewhere.

Makes a concession to present her stance as considered and reasonable.

result of non-existent offence based on complaints that haven't ever been made.

Wouldn't you think the critics would care more about the content of Dahl's book, such as the Twits who try and destroy each other, George who tries to poison his grandmother and the Witches who try and get rid of all the world's children?

Sadly, no.

Kids are smart enough to know what's appropriate and what's not, and we need to give them more credit for this.

Fiddling with words and phrases undermines the historical integrity of these works. [These changes] affect the meaning and context of the entire book. And they clean up words that are naughty, subversive and deliberately inappropriate.

There's a reason why generations of kids have loved Roald Dahl's books. Credit: Anna Rogers / Newspix

There's a reason why a Dahl book sells every 2.6 seconds. They are bad, nasty and mean, and this is why kids love them.

When the same politically correct wand was waved over Enid Blyton works some years ago, the books stopped selling and publishers reverted to the original words.

Uses a comparison to bolster the argument against changing Dahl's language.

Kids want to read about the Famous Five solving a murder at Smuggler's Island, not the Famous Five getting sensitivity training and doing some composting.

How do kids these days learn about history if they can't see what previous times were like for children of other generations? The reader is immediately transported back to a time that no longer exists, and that's part of the magic.

This cultural cleansing is happening far too often.

Other classics under attack include Tarzan, Sherlock Holmes, Grimms' Tales, Dr Seuss, and numerous nursery rhymes such as Baa Baa Black Sheep.

With every rewrite of a children's book or rhyme, a piece of history disappears and we all end up poorer for it.

Herald Sun

Analyse the opinion piece

ACTIVITY

1 What is O'Brien's contention? Use evidence from the article to support your answer.

2 Identify and analyse three or four examples of persuasive language used to reinforce the contention and create the tone of the piece.

3 How does the inclusion of the photograph add to the message and impact of O'Brien's article? Refer to specific features of the image in your answer.

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor offer a personal, mostly subjective viewpoint on an issue. They present a direct response to an issue or another person's text, such as an editorial or opinion piece published on a previous day. Letters are usually short (around 100–150 words) and employ a variety of tones and language techniques. The writer will choose vocabulary and evidence that immediately create an impact on the reader in the few words available to them.

The following two letters present arguments opposing a change to the Australian constitution to enable the creation of a First Nations Voice to Parliament. (See page 156 for an excerpt from a text presenting a view in favour of this change.)

A letter to the editor:

- includes a by-line with the writer's name and suburb
- is written by a member of the public
- is overtly persuasive, and often highly emotive
- often uses the first-person 'I' to emphasise the personal nature of the opinion.

In 1967 we had two referendum questions. The issues were very clear and while one question attracted a majority no vote the other, giving federal governments the power to legislate specifically for Indigenous people, had an overwhelming yes vote. In both cases we knew exactly what we were voting for and also knew the advantages for Indigenous people would depend on the wisdom of parliaments into the future. A yes vote in the coming referendum would tie the actions of future governments to words in the Constitution and could conceivably at times prevent future governments and parliaments from using their wisdom. Surely a voice legislated by parliament would be a safer option, unless we adopt the view that future leaders can't be trusted. The voice itself might come to rue the day it tied itself to words in the Constitution.

David Morrison, Springwood, NSW

The Australian

There is so much controversy surrounding the proposed voice in our Constitution that I am one reader who is totally confused regarding the prospect. As a published author of ATSI [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] history I think the need for constitutional recognition is long overdue, but I would urge the Prime Minister to forget the complex voice change and simply propose placing the recognition in the preamble. In this way I am sure he would have the backing of the majority of citizens. But I fear that the voice will not be successful and we would have a wasted opportunity yet again to do something worthwhile. Then it is up to parliament to make policies to help the remote communities working with their Indigenous representatives who have been elected.

V. Donovan, Corinda, QLD

The Australian

Analyse the letters

ACTIVITY

1 For each of the letters above, write a short paragraph outlining:
   - a the contention
   - b one or two supporting points
   - c the persuasive techniques that support the argument. Remember to explain how the writer uses the techniques and how they are intended to affect the audience.

2 In around 200 words, write your own letter in response to the editorial on pages 163–4. When writing your letter, carefully consider:
   - a your contention
   - b your tone (which might shift)
   - c the supporting points
   - d persuasive language that will have an impact on your readers.

Online comments

Similar to letters, comments offer readers the chance to respond to an online article or blog post, or to a previous commenter's post. They use deliberately persuasive language and will regularly use textspeak (e.g. initialisms such as 'btw', 'lol') to present their argument. The comment will be accompanied by the author's name or their online handle/pseudonym.

The comments on the next page are in response to an opinion piece in *The Age*, which argued for motorists to change to electric-powered vehicles.

An online comment:

- is short and direct
- often uses informal language, including abbreviations and colloquial expressions.

COMMENTS

Scott55

While some people will be motivated to switch to electric vehicles because of climate change the majority will wait until better vehicles are available and the price is right, both for the purchase price of vehicles and the cost of fuel. Since the pandemic the prices of petrol, diesel, oil have increased significantly and show no signs of returning to their former levels. In a short time the majority will be buying EVs because financially it just makes sense.

Tony McIntyre

Electric vehicles, wind turbines, solar panels. Make us all feel good but in reality will make little change to Australia's CO2 emissions. With our massive population growth rate CO2 production will go up regardless. Human beings are in plague proportions and we are devouring the earth's natural resources in a way that makes locusts look like amateurs. First world countries like Australia are the worst as we consume so much. If you really want to reduce emissions have one less child.

Analyse the online comments

ACTIVITY

1 For each of these comments, explain the contention and the main supporting points.

2 What are the main differences in the language used in the letters on pages 167–8 and the comments above? What persuasive techniques are common to both?

Blog posts

A blog is a series of posts by a writer or organisation on a particular topic or issue, with the aim of sharing ideas and experiences with interested readers. Each post presents a point of view on a particular aspect of the overall blog subject area. Blog authors, or 'bloggers', will have a target audience in mind and will use persuasive strategies to directly appeal to this group. They can be influenced by sponsorships from companies, which will directly influence the point of view being expressed and the information included.

The excerpt on the next page is taken from travel blog *The Travel Quandary*.

A blog post:

- presents a point of view on a topic relevant to the blog
- can use formal or informal language, depending on the personality of the blog writer and the target audience
- is typically around 700–1000 words long.

Search

The hard-to-reach places or spots that require a longer drive usually are the hidden gems, and we found Stanley Tasmania to be no different.

Stanley has a permanent population of around 550. This quaint township in Tasmania's north-west is the main fishing port in this part of Tasmania and is fast becoming a tourist destination for its well-preserved colonial buildings now converted to quaint B&Bs and the distinctive geological formation known as The Nut.

One half of the Travel Quandary was somewhat sceptical about this destination on our 17 days Tasmanian road trip itinerary. But, with some terrific weather conditions and a slower pace from our previous stops, the fewer things to do in Stanley Tasmania turned out to be the perfect pit stop that both of us needed and thoroughly enjoyed.

WHAT TO SEE AND DO

[...]

See Fairy Penguins from Godfrey's Beach Penguin Viewing Platform

Penguin tours in Bicheno are well known and popular but it wasn't until we arrived in Stanley that we discovered that Little Penguins (also known as Fairy Penguins) nest here too.

At the base of Eagle Rock and below Stanley Cemetery, the well-constructed penguin viewing platform allows visitors to observe the penguins at dusk, arriving back to their nests after a day out at sea.

There is a sign at the entrance of the viewing platform that outlines the yearly rhythm of the world's smallest penguin breed. The small birds usually return home at nightfall with red lights helping to guide their path. Be patient, turn your camera off flash and pack a warm jacket – the wait is worth it and the viewing is free!

Begins with a conversational, informative style that is not obviously persuasive.

Includes adjectives with positive associations to convey the writer's enjoyment of this location, while maintaining the informative approach.

Uses subheadings to group similar sorts of information – a typical blog feature.

Makes simple, clear points in short paragraphs to make the information easy to comprehend and follow.

Analyse the blog post

ACTIVITY

1 Who do you think is the intended audience for this blog? Identify and annotate the language features that suggest the likely audience.

2 What do you think is the writer's purpose in writing this particular blog post?

3 Working with a partner, write a paragraph that analyses the contention, supporting points and persuasive language used in the excerpt.

4 How does placing the heading over the large image at the top of the blog post help to present the writer's point of view?

Reviews

A review is a criticism or appreciation of a particular product or service. Although the review will include some factual information, ultimately it will use persuasive language to present the reviewer's point of view, which can be very subjective. Reviews include a final recommendation, which may come in the form of a rating or a statement. Like blog posts, reviews can be sponsored and this will influence the writer's stance.

A review:

- evaluates the quality of a product or service
- provides evidence to support the point of view
- can use formal or informal language, depending on the publication and target audience.

Search

Review: This celebrity burger chain needs more than star power to shine

Surfers Paradise, QLD $$$$$ Cuisine: American Critic's rating

(User reviews)

Anooska Tucker-Evans

This hamburger joint will need more than a celebrity namesake to succeed in a flooded market. They're the famous American family who turned their love for burgers and serendipitous name into a global fast-food franchise.

Now A-list celebrity Mark Wahlberg and his brothers, chef Paul and fellow actor Donnie, have brought their culinary concept to Queensland. Fittingly, the siblings have launched in the Gold Coast's tourist hotspot, Surfers Paradise, in the flashy redeveloped Paradise Centre, which opened in September just a fry flick from the beach.

Establishes an informal, chatty style from the beginning, engaging the reader and triggering their curiosity through the reference to a celebrity.

Search

Wahlburgers is as prominent as Marky Mark's cheese-grater abs in his '90s Calvin Klein commercials, with neon green chairs lining the covered, L-shaped deck and a glowing sign that reads Surfers Paradise emblazoned across the back wall.

The rest of the emerald-hued interior is awash with black and white Wahlburger family photos and TV screens playing sport, while an engraved panel sits above the well-stocked bar displaying a list of Mark's movie titles. Diners are welcomed and told to sit anywhere and order on their phone using a QR code, but to wave someone down if they need help.

Just make sure you don't require assistance discovering what ingredients are in certain dishes, with our eager-to-please but uninformed waiter unable to tell us what was in a particular salad dressing despite repeated attempts and even a visit to the kitchen to ask. Said salad dressing is also as tasteless as the cringe-worthy *Daddy's Home 2* film Mark starred in.

Despite drowning every leaf, corn kernel and dice of tomato in the salmon and crispy tortilla salad ($23), the supposed ranch is completely void of the honey and lime flavouring it promises. Thankfully, the well-seared salmon on a mess of leaves is more than generously seasoned, providing minimal redemption.

Presents factual details using colourful language to convey the reviewer's opinion on the food.

What could also do with a flavour boost is the venue's version of an Aussie burger ($19). It takes chef Paul's classic burger with a beef patty, lettuce, tomato, onion, pickles, American cheese and "Wahl sauce" and adds beetroot, pineapple and a fried egg. What's missing though is the chariness of a flame-grilled beef patty – scorched and bar-marked – and some good ol' tomato sauce for that salty-sweet acidity.

Search

Perhaps the "Aussie chicken schnitty" burger ($18.50) would be better, or one of the other 13 burgers, including the crispy fish bun creation, a vegetarian option and two vegan numbers.

The restaurant's line-up of loaded fries includes a chicken salt and Vegemite aioli incarnation, and a spicy cheese and bacon rendition ($15.50) as mild as a Darwin winter.

What Wahlburgers does well though is milkshakes, with an apple pie concoction ($12) like a liquid version of American diner nostalgia.

Customers can even order it spiked with Melbourne moonshine as one of the five boozy thickshakes available, alongside some budget-friendly wines, twists on classic cocktails, alcoholic and non-alcoholic spiders and beer.

Wahlburgers is a venue built on the name of its famous owners, but it will need more to succeed in the flooded Queensland burger market than a bit of celebrity pulling power.

Concludes with a clear evaluation of the restaurant's quality.

delicious.

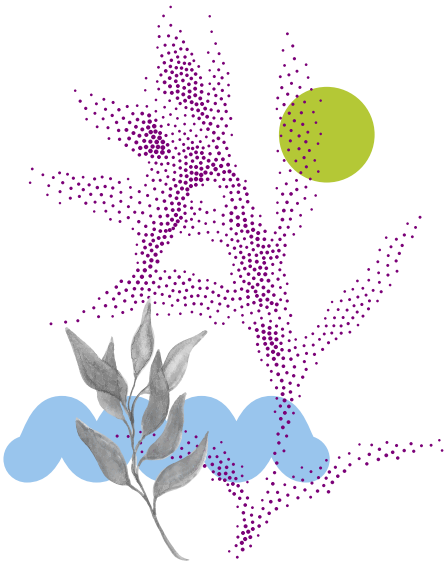
Analyse the review

ACTIVITY

1 Does this review recommend Wahlburgers? Identify some of the language features (e.g. word choices, figurative language) that convey the reviewer's opinion of the restaurant.

2 How does the tone of this review differ from the tone used in the blog post on page 170? Why do you think this might be?

3 To what extent does the photograph reflect the writer's opinion of Wahlburgers? Support your answer with evidence from the review.



CHAPTER 15

VISUAL PERSUASIVE TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Cartoons
- Photographs
- Infographics and graphics

As Chapter 14 shows, many written persuasive texts are accompanied by images, particularly photographs. These images can be persuasive in their own right, and they can also be used as stand-alone texts that present a point of view and have specific impacts on a viewer. This chapter examines four types of visual persuasive texts that are frequently used in the media.

Cartoons

Cartoons use images and sometimes text to express a point of view. Often found in the opinion section of a newspaper (both print and online versions), cartoons express a point of view on a serious topic through humour and satire. They commonly exaggerate key individuals in an issue through caricature. Although a cartoon may seem to present a simplistic view on the surface, further examination can reveal a more complex message.

The cartoon opposite by Warren Brown was published in the *Herald Sun* in 2022. It refers to the impact of the war in Ukraine on the cost of fuel in Australia.

A cartoon:

- uses an illustration to present a person or situation
- may contain text, e.g. as dialogue or in a caption
- uses humour
- often has a satirical tone.

1. The colours are relatively bright considering the seriousness of the issue. This is an example of how a cartoonist can engage an audience through colour and light, making a complex or confronting issue more accessible.
2. The text in the speech bubbles uses irony to comment on how the army tank is affecting the petrol tank.
3. The placement and size of the tank immediately draws the eye to it; the car and the petrol bowser are less prominent. This could be a comment on the scale of the effects the conflict was having on the world at this time.
4. The large, rugged tank is juxtaposed with the small, bright blue car. This contrast may reflect the serious nature of the war and what the soldiers are enduring, in comparison to the everyday lives of people far from the conflict.
5. The tank has driven over the fuel hose, providing a metaphor for the way in which the Ukrainian conflict is creating difficulties for people in Australia.

Analyse cartoons

ACTIVITY

1 The above cartoon responds to rising fuel costs due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

a What is the contention being presented by the cartoon?

b Using your knowledge of visual language, describe the contrast between the army tank and the car with the people.

c How does colour affect the overall tone and impact of the cartoon?

ACTIVITY

2 Consider the graphic and cartoon below. Both images comment on the effects that inflation has had on Australians: Image A is focused on the impact of escalating interest rates on homeowners, while Image B depicts the threat posed by inflation to older Australians.

a Identify the contention for each image. What is the common theme between the two?

b Describe the visual elements. What makes these images effective in delivering a message?

Image A (graphic by Dionne Gain)

Image B (cartoon by Mark Knight)

Photographs

Photographs present a particular perspective on an issue or news story using visual elements only. They generally accompany an article in a news publication or magazine; they are also present in advertising, social media, billboards and so on. When included with an article, they often highlight a key message or point conveyed by a writer. This can be done through elements such as:

- subject matter
- lighting and colour
- positioning and framing
- focal point and angles.

A photograph:

- uses visual language
- may be accompanied by a caption explaining the content and context
- presents a real place and/or people
- can be modified with editing software.

The photograph below was taken when numbats were released into a NSW national park that had recently been cleared of foxes and cats. Look closely at the photograph, then answer the questions in the activity.

Wildlife ecologist Dr Laurence Berry, NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean and Jo Gorman, NPWS Lower Darling Area Manager, release a numbat within a fenced area of Mallee Cliffs National Park. Credit: Janie Barrett / Fairfax Media

ACTIVITY

Analyse a photograph

1. Describe the tone of the photograph. What elements contribute to this tone?
2. What do you think is the purpose of this photograph?
3. Write a contention that sums up the point of view being presented by this photograph. What kind of article might the photograph accompany?
4. Write a short paragraph that analyses the visual elements of this photograph. Explain how they contribute to the effect of the image, supporting the purpose and contention.

Infographics and graphics

Infographics and graphics are visual texts used to present complex information in a clear manner. Infographics include numerical information such as statistics as well as some written text, whereas graphics are essentially visual. The purpose of depicting information in such a way is to provide a clear visual for an audience to quickly understand what may be wordy or dense if it were presented as paragraphs of text or tables of numbers.

An infographic:

- presents information using illustrations, diagrams, words and numbers
- influences the viewer's response through visual elements such as colour, font sizes and layout.

It is important to recognise that an infographic will usually present facts in a way that delivers an overall message, often with an emotive element. The selection of colours, fonts, borders and icons all contribute to the impact of the visual. For example, an infographic might convey a positive message about a current situation by using reassuring colours such as greens and blues. Alternatively, it might have a more serious message, presenting a warning or an argument for change by using reds and oranges. Furthermore, the information presented may only provide a snapshot of the issue as that is what the creators of the text want you to focus on.

The infographic on the next page shows differences in health care and health outcomes between cities and remote areas. It was created by the National Rural Health Alliance.

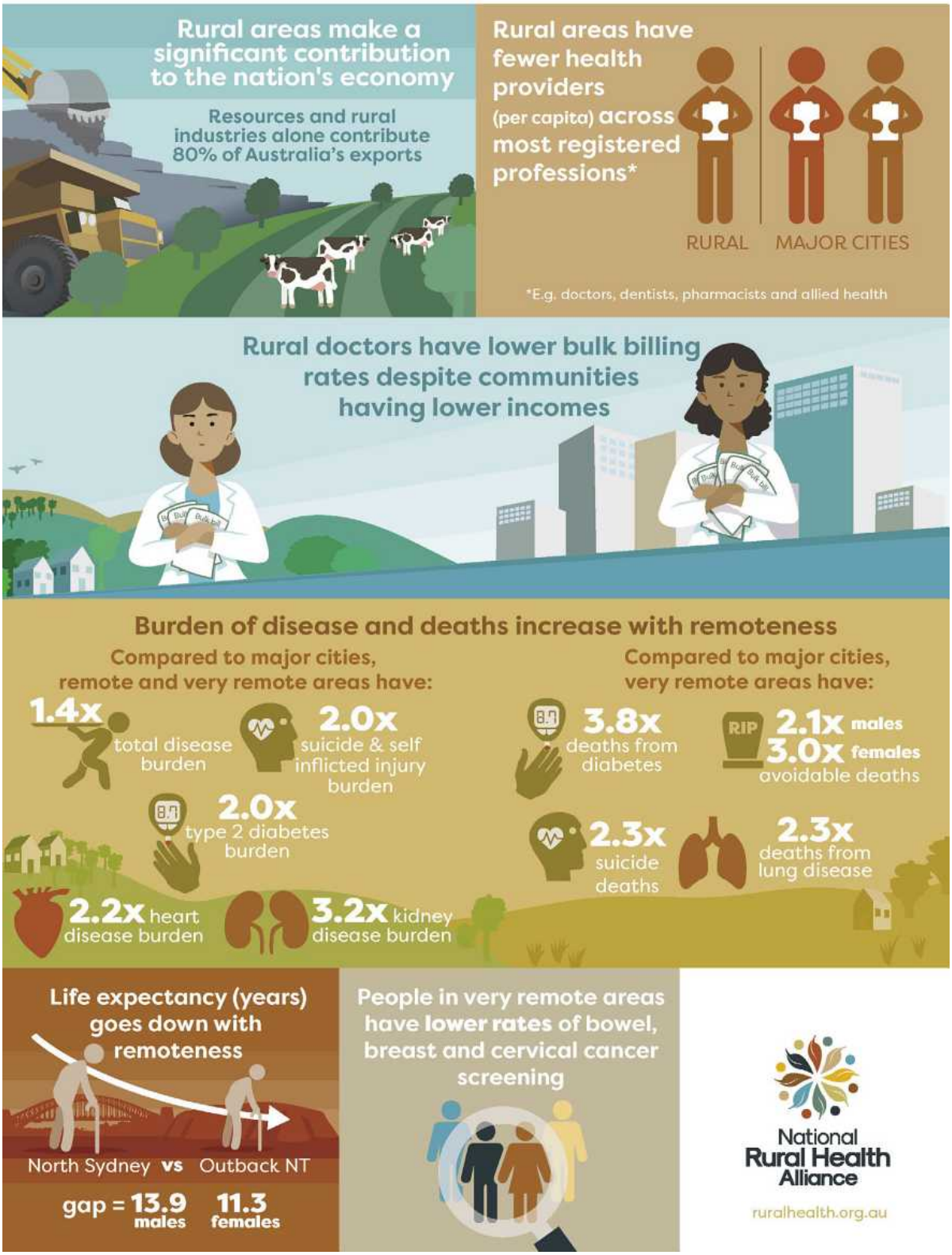
Scan the code or click here to access a list of references for the information contained in the infographic.

Analyse an infographic

ACTIVITY

1. What is the main contention of the infographic? Is this stated explicitly, or is it implied by the combination of text, statistics and images? Explain your answer.
2. What do you think is the main purpose of the infographic? Why?
3. What are the main colours used? How do these relate to the subject matter and the point of view being expressed?
4. How do visual elements (including layout and typography) help to emphasise the contrast between health in cities and health in remote areas?

THE CASE FOR BETTER HEALTH CARE:



CHAPTER 16

AUDIO AND AUDIOVISUAL PERSUASIVE TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Radio programs
- Podcasts
- News and current affairs programs
- Websites
- Speeches

Audio and audiovisual texts can include a very wide range of persuasive devices. All the persuasive effects of words can be supplemented by the effects of sound (in audio texts) and also of still and moving images (in audiovisual texts), all of which contribute to the presentation of a point of view. When you are analysing an audio or audiovisual text, look for the ways in which all the elements work together to engage, position and persuade the audience.

Scan the code or click **here** to watch a video on how to analyse an audio text.

Radio programs

Radio programs cover a wide range of topical issues, and can vary from being primarily informative to being highly opinionated and persuasive. News and current affairs radio programs are more informative, whereas in talkback radio the participants present points of view using argument, evidence, personal testimony and often emotive language. The live nature of much radio allows for quick responses to emerging issues, while the unscripted nature of talkback radio can result in a dynamic and sometimes heated exchange of views.

Consider the following elements when analysing the use of argument and persuasive language in a radio program.

A radio program:

- relies on the spoken word
- is usually anchored by a presenter or small team of presenters
- is often live to air
- can include interviews with guests as well as calls and text messages from listeners
- can include on-location reporting to respond to events as they are happening
- can have background music and sound effects.

- **The host.** Who is the main presenter? What aspects of their personality are revealed by their manner, tone of voice and interactions with guests or callers? For example, do they come across as authoritative, curious, friendly or combative? Are they relaxed or formal? Do they aim to persuade listeners to agree with their point of view, or do they encourage listeners to form their own view?
- **Language.** What is the main style of language used – is it formal, informal or somewhere in between? Is the language complex and specialised (e.g. suggesting expert knowledge of a topic), or more accessible (e.g. helping to highlight the relevance of the issue to the audience)? What is the predominant tone used and what attitudes and opinions does this suggest? Does the language vary between the host and any guests or callers?
- **Voice.** Listen for aspects of speakers' delivery, such as pacing, pauses, intonation (rising and falling pitch) and volume. Do these convey an emotion, add emphasis or allow listeners time to absorb information and ideas? Filler words such as 'um' and 'er' can indicate hesitation or uncertainty; discourse markers such as 'you know', 'right', 'well' and 'anyway' can signal a shift in direction or focus.

Analyse a radio program

ACTIVITY

Choose a radio program and listen to around twenty minutes, then answer the questions. You can use one of the suggestions below, all of which can be accessed online, or select your own. Look for an issues-driven program.

- RN Breakfast on ABC Radio National. This program covers a wide range of topics relevant to current events and issues, and often features conversations between the host and a guest.
- 3AW Mornings with Neil Mitchell on 3AW Melbourne. This program features interviews, talkback and roving reporters.
- Melbourne Mornings with Virginia Trioli on ABC Melbourne. Like Neil Mitchell's program, Trioli's combines interviews, discussion and talkback.
- The Conversation Hour with Richelle Hunt on ABC Melbourne. This panel-based discussion program covers issues of the day.

1 Identify an issue being discussed. What points of view are presented? Is one perspective or opinion privileged or are opposing arguments also included? Does the host support a particular point of view and try to discredit opposing arguments? Or is the issue debated in a balanced way? Does the host take the position of 'devil's advocate' by arguing for one side or the other in order to provoke debate?

2 Identify a persuasive technique used by one of the speakers. What point of argument does it help to present and how does it influence the listener to agree?

3 Describe the main tone used by each of the speakers. Do they share a similar tone or are there significant differences between the speakers? How does the tone help to convey each speaker's point of view?

4 Identify an aspect of the delivery of one of the speakers, such as tone of voice, volume, emphasis, pace or pausing. What is the effect of this element? How does it contribute to the speaker's argument?

Podcasts

Podcasts have grown in popularity in recent years and can be found covering almost any topic. Although the structure and subject matter can vary greatly – interviews, in-depth investigations, narratives, news and current affairs, for instance – nearly all podcasts use persuasive techniques to engage the target audience. These techniques can be either subtle or obvious depending on the content and aim of the podcast. When analysing podcasts, consider the following common elements.

A podcast:

- is usually pre-recorded
- is part of a series or season
- is hosted by a main presenter or team of presenters
- can feature interviews and expert opinions
- often uses background music and sound effects to create a mood.

- **Format.** How is the podcast structured? Is one person speaking the whole time, or is there a dialogue between two or more presenters? Does the podcast focus on one topic and flow continuously from beginning to end, or are there several segments? Is the podcast entirely scripted or do the presenter(s) and/or guest(s) speak extemporaneously ('off the cuff')?
- **Speakers.** Does the podcast feature a main speaker or presenter, or multiple presenters? If there are guests, such as experts on a topic or people affected by an issue, what do they bring to the discussion? How do multiple speakers interact with one another?
- **Speech and language.** What tone is used by the speaker or speakers? Does their pitch or pacing place emphasis on particular points? Do they use a conversational style to create a connection with the audience, or is a more formal style used to convey objectivity? Do the tone and style shift during the podcast? If so, what is the effect of this?
- **Sound effects, sound bites and music.** What sound elements (other than speech) are included in the podcast? Are they background elements or are they a focus? For instance, a narrative-based podcast may use sound effects and music to create atmosphere. In a podcast containing an interview, music may be used to signal a break in the discussion. Sound bites can contain points of view on an issue or information central to the debate.

See pages 216–19 for an analysis of a newspaper article and a podcast.

Analyse a podcast

ACTIVITY

Listen to the triple j Hack segment from May 2023 on reactions to the proposed Tasmanian football stadium. The segment features presenter Dave Marchese, journalist Kimberley Price and guest Tammy Tyrell, Senator for Tasmania. Then answer the questions to analyse the ways in which argument and language are used to present points of view.

Scan the code or click here to listen to the podcast. The segment on the Tasmanian football stadium runs from 0:46 to 11:12.

ACTIVITY

1 What points of view on the stadium are presented? Are more viewpoints presented in favour, or against? What proportion of the segment is devoted to each side of the argument, and how might this influence listeners' opinions on the issue?

2 Price's report uses sound bites in addition to her own reporting. How do these influence listeners to respond? Do they create a sense that Price is presenting an objective and balanced report on the issue, including arguments and opinions on both sides, or does she subtly position listeners to agree with one side? What makes you think this?

3 What mood or feeling is evoked by the background music that accompanies Price's report? How does this contribute to the impact of her words?

4 Price's report is followed by an interview between Marchese and Senator Tyrell. In this interview, Marchese presents Tyrell with several arguments in favour of the stadium, inviting her to refute them. Does this format influence the objectivity of the segment? Why or why not?

5 What kind of language is used by Tyrell and Marchese during the discussion? Does this suggest they are on the same 'side' of this issue? How might listeners respond to this?

News and current affairs programs

Although news and current affairs programs appear to be highly factual and objective, their content is carefully selected and edited. While traditional news bulletins provide an overview of local, national and international events, current affairs programs cover fewer stories in greater depth, allowing for analysis of the issues underpinning news events. Both program formats can, either subtly or overtly, include persuasive language and arguments.

News and current affairs programs:

- respond to current events and issues
- can present the facts and also (especially in current affairs) a point of view
- combine studio footage with on-location footage and reporting
- are generally hosted by a main presenter or small panel of presenters.

When considering the persuasive effects of news and current affairs programs, important elements include the following.

- **Set and backdrops.** What is the visual context? Traditional news program sets usually feature the presenter(s) sitting at a desk, contributing to an impression of objectivity and authority. In less formal programs, such as discussion-based programs, the presenter(s) might be seated on a couch or armchair, inviting the viewer to see them as more accessible and relatable. The backdrop might show a studio location, the actual location of a speaker in another place or a generic background image, each of which can subtly shape the audience's understanding of the subject matter.
- **Sound and lighting.** Is the opening music dramatic and serious, or happy and uplifting? Does background music accompany a story? Does the studio lighting create a serious atmosphere, or a more casual one?

- **Newsreader(s) or presenter(s).** Consider the emotions and attitudes conveyed by voice, facial expressions, body language, clothing and props. Does the presenter's manner help to convey a particular point of view on the story?
- **Panel or 'talking heads'.** Are any other people present or consulted? Are eyewitness accounts or expert opinions included? How much time is given to different perspectives or 'sides' on the topic – is it a balanced presentation? How do the contributors interact? Are their interactions friendly or hostile? Formal or informal?
- **Location footage.** Does video material show the location of an event? Footage can directly connect the viewer to an event, adding credibility and suggesting that an objective truth is being presented. Look at elements such as framing (what is and isn't shown), camera angles, camera movement and editing to see how the footage might be contributing to the expression of a point of view.

Analyse news and current affairs

ACTIVITY

Watch a Sky News segment featuring presenter Sharri Markson and panellists Cory Bernardi and Matt Canavan, who are discussing the installation of wind turbines in regional areas. Then answer the questions.

Scan the code or click here to view the clip.

Matt Canavan, Sharri Markson and Cory Bernardi in the Sky News segment on wind farms.

1 What points of view on wind turbines are presented by Bernardi and Canavan? Does Markson remain a neutral host, or does she side with one of her guests? Justify your answer.

ACTIVITY

2 While Markson and Bernardi appear to be in studio locations, Canavan is in Queensland for a community meeting on the issue of wind turbines. How might his location affect the way in which viewers respond to his argument?

3 What is Markson's role in presenting the main points of view on the issue? How does she do this? What do her appearance, use of body language and voice convey? How would you describe her interactions with Bernardi and Canavan?

4 What are the similarities and/or differences in the points of view presented by Bernardi and Canavan and the ways in which they present them? Think about the use of humour, for instance, as well as facial expressions and informal language.

5 The video includes some stock footage of wind turbines. Why might this have been included? What does it add to the points of view being presented?

Websites

Websites combine written text with a wide range of visual, audio and audiovisual material, including photographs, illustrations, videos, music and advertising. Embedded audiovisual material, usually in the form of short videos, has become increasingly common on webpages as a means of presenting information and ideas in an engaging format. Some websites also have a series of slides, sometimes accompanied by music, on the home page.

A website:

- is created by an organisation, business or individual to promote ideas, services and products
- is usually highly designed, featuring fonts, graphics, images and layout to capture and retain the viewer's interest
- can use written words, visual elements and sound to present information
- positions the viewer to approve of or agree with the ideas and viewpoints presented.

News websites can contain video clips from the news and current affairs programs with which the websites are associated. These clips often feature a reporter and relevant photographs or footage that illustrate elements of the story. They might also show studio presenters discussing the issue in a way that positions viewers to agree with a particular point of view.

Other websites, such as those created by organisations and businesses, can use video material with a combination of text and images. In addition to being placed on the website, these sorts of videos are often hosted by video-sharing platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo.

When analysing audiovisual material contained within a webpage, consider the following elements.

- **Speakers.** Do speakers address the audience directly, or talk to others? Is there an unseen speaker who provides a voice-over? If the speaker(s) are visible, what aspects of their appearance (e.g. clothing, facial expressions, body language) help to convey their point of view? How do particular features of their speech shape the viewer's response?

- **Settings.** Is the setting indoors or outdoors? Is it on location or in a studio? How is the setting related to the subject matter and the point of view being presented?
- **Cinematography.** If a camera has been used to create the visual content, look for elements such as camera angle, distance and movement. How is the viewer being positioned to see the subject matter? If the visual content is computer-generated, you can ask similar questions, using terms such as 'perspective' and 'focus'.
- **Colour and lighting.** Is the subject matter well-lit and clear, or are there shadows? What are the main colours used? Do these colours have particular associations with the subject matter? What do their connotations suggest about the topic? Do lighting and colour help to create a mood that positions the viewer in a particular way?
- **Written text.** Videos and slide shows can contain written text with key facts and statistics, helping viewers to take in essential details quickly and easily. How does the selection and presentation of these details reinforce the main message?
- **Concluding moments.** The end of the video might contain a link or contact details so the viewer can seek further information. Logos and other branding can reinforce the authority or credibility of the organisation behind the website.

Analyse audiovisual material from a website

ACTIVITY

Answer the following questions to analyse a video on a website. As an example, you can use Sustainability Victoria's 'Recycling is changing for the better' video.

Scan the code or click here to view the video.

1 In one or two sentences, summarise the point of view presented by the video.

2 What are the main vocal qualities of the speaker or speakers? Think about pace, tone, pitch and intonation. What attitudes or emotions do they convey, and how are they conveyed by the combination of words and delivery?

ACTIVITY

3 Identify one or two places where a speaker's words closely align with the visual content. What effect does this have?

4 What are the main colours present in the video? How do these help to support the main message?

5 Describe the main settings. In what ways do these help to reinforce the point of view being conveyed, as well as the video's relevance to the audience?

6 If there are sound effects or background music, how do these add to the mood? What are they likely to make viewers think or feel about the message being presented?

7 Describe any written text that appears in the video. Does this summarise or elaborate on the argument being presented? Does it contain a call to action? How does it complement the visual elements of the video?

8 Describe the website where this video is embedded. What is the main focus of the website? How does the video help the creators of the website to achieve their purpose? Think about the messaging as well as the likely audience for both the video and the website as a whole.

Speeches

Speakers use a range of verbal, aural and visual techniques to persuade an audience. Consider the following questions when analysing a speech, and be aware of them when delivering your own oral presentation. (For detailed guidelines on presenting a point of view on an issue, see Chapter 19.)

A speech:

- is presented by a single speaker
- is usually presented live (though can be pre-recorded)
- is usually delivered to a particular audience in a specific context
- often presents a clear point of view supported by argument and evidence
- often uses persuasive techniques, such as rhetorical questions and repetition, appropriate to an audience of listeners.

- How does the speaker use **tone**, **pace** and **pitch**? For example, a calm voice can suggest a measured approach to an issue, while an exasperated tone might aim to appeal to the audience on an emotional level. The speaker's pitch might rise when they ask a question of the audience, or lower when they wish to signal the importance or seriousness of a point.
- Does the speaker **pause** occasionally? This technique encourages the audience to reflect more deeply on the speaker's words in certain places, through the emphasis of key phrases and essential points of argument.
- Is **repetition** used to highlight particular ideas or make parts of the speech more memorable? This can reinforce the main points being presented, encouraging the audience to give them more consideration.

- How does the speaker use **body language** and **gestures**? Look at their use of the space they occupy. Do they stand behind a lectern on a platform or do they move around freely, sometimes moving close to the audience? The former might give an impression of authority, while the latter might suggest the speaker wants to emphasise the relevance of their speech to the audience.
- What choices does the speaker make about their **appearance**? For instance, a politician wearing a suit is presenting themselves as capable of occupying a position of responsibility, while a scientist wearing casual clothes might be emphasising their relatability and reinforcing the accessible nature of their speech.

Analyse a speech

ACTIVITY

Watch the TED Talk speech 'How to Feng Shui Your Fridge – and Other Happy Climate Hacks' by behavioural scientist Jiaying Zhao. In this presentation, Zhao explains what people can do to help combat climate change while also finding happiness in taking those actions. Then answer the following questions to analyse how Zhao uses argument and language to present her point of view.

Scan the code or click here to view the speech.

1. Who is the main audience for Zhao's speech, and which techniques are used to appeal to that audience? Does she encourage audience interaction or contribution? Why do you think she takes this approach?
2. What does Zhao's appearance suggest about the impression she wishes to convey to the audience? How is the audience likely to respond to this?
3. How does Zhao deliver her argument? Does she alter her pitch when stating a key point, or pause for emphasis? What is the main tone she uses? Does it vary at any point and, if so, what is the intended effect?
4. Identify a point at which Zhao uses body language in a purposeful way. How does this contribute to the presentation of her argument?
5. Consider the structure of the speech. When does Zhao put forward her contention? In what order are her main arguments presented? Does she repeat any points? How is this structure intended to engage the audience and position them to agree with Zhao's point of view?

CHAPTER 17

PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

persuasive strategies and techniques

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Table of persuasive techniques
- Structuring strategies
- Cumulative effects

When presenting their point of view on an issue, a writer can draw on a wide range of strategies and techniques that will position readers to agree with them. Some of these relate to structure, while other techniques are related to specific language choices. The writer's tone and style establish an approach and reveal emotions and attitudes, while devices such as anecdote, metaphor and repetition have more specific effects.

When you analyse a persuasive text, aim to look at how these strategies and techniques are working together to create *cumulative* effects – in other words, take a holistic view of the text.

Table of persuasive techniques

The following table summarises some of the most common language techniques used in persuasive writing. Use this table as a quick reference: ensure you are familiar with the terminology and understand how each technique can position a reader to agree with a writer's viewpoint. This will give you an effective vocabulary and a set of tools for analysing any persuasive text.

- The 'How the technique persuades' column gives some general suggestions about how and why the technique might be used. However, you should always look closely at how persuasive techniques are used in a particular text and discuss the effect they have in that specific context.
- The 'Example' column gives a brief example of the technique being used to present a point of view. Note that in many of these examples you will be able to identify more than one technique at work.
- There is a brief sample analysis of each example, explaining how the technique works to present a point of view, and how it is likely to influence a reader. These analyses model the kind of writing you will do in your own analysis of persuasive texts.

Persuasive technique	How the technique persuades	Example
***Ad hominem* attack** Belittling or denigrating an individual or group.	• Positions the reader to think badly of the person or group and therefore to dismiss their ideas or viewpoint. • Often uses emotive language to create a strong negative depiction of a person or group, and hence of the argument they are presenting.	'That industry leaders are accusing their opponents of "acting recklessly and heartlessly" is nothing more than a vacuous dummy spit, driven by their refusal to accept that times and opinions have changed.'
Sample analysis: A dismissive tone underlines the writer's disregard for industry leaders who are refusing to 'accept that times and opinions have changed'. By using the term 'dummy spit', the writer positions the reader to see the industry leaders as childish and silly, and to disregard their opinion.		
Alliteration Repetition of a consonant at the start of words.	• Gains attention; adds emphasis; often used in headlines. • Draws attention to key words. • Not persuasive on its own but can be when used with other techniques such as puns.	'Disunity does us disservice' (headline)
Sample analysis: The use of alliteration in this headline creates an awkward rhythm that grabs the attention of the reader. The reader is positioned to support the writer's disapproval of the way society is operating.		
Analogy Comparison between two things that leads the audience to draw conclusions based on the similarities between them.	• Puts a complex issue in more familiar, straightforward terms so that the audience can relate to and understand it. • Can simplify an issue, presenting it so that the writer's position appears to be obviously true.	'To be able to see changes that can be made and not do them, is like putting your feet on the brake and the accelerator at the same time and then wondering why the car isn't moving.'
Sample analysis: By comparing inaction to doing something illogical, the writer makes the situation appear ridiculous. The reader is encouraged to see that action can and should be taken.		
Anecdote Short account or story: often entertaining; provides a human angle that engages the reader; can convey information.	• Positions the reader to respond emotionally, e.g. with fear or pleasure. • 'Rings true', thus positioning the reader to take notice and accept information.	'There is such a rudeness in customers nowadays. It was bad when I worked at a restaurant years ago, and it has only gotten worse since COVID.'
Sample analysis: Using a personal anecdote presents the writer as someone who has knowledge as well as experience of this issue. The reader is positioned to see the writer as credible and trustworthy.		

Persuasive technique	How the technique persuades	Example
Appeal to a sense of justice Plays on our belief that we all have the right to be treated fairly and we should strive for outcomes that are just.	• Positions the reader to agree that 'the punishment should fit the crime'. • Arouses feelings of anger when somebody is punished too harshly or a criminal 'gets off' lightly. • Can arouse feelings of sympathy or the desire to redress unfairness.	'If it wouldn't stand at the local footy club, it shouldn't stand just because the player is a lot more well-known. As they say, what is good for the goose is good for the gander.'
Sample analysis: The writer appeals to the reader's sense of justice by pointing out that all players should abide by the same rules. The appeal is reinforced by the use of a cliché, inclining the audience to feel that the 'well-known' player should not be receiving preferential treatment.		
Appeal to authority Uses the opinion of an authority figure or an expert to impress the audience or prove a point.	• Reassures the reader that the writer's viewpoint is shared by someone with expert knowledge. • Influences the reader to respond positively and agree.	'Top Australian energy expert Tara Beckett believes our energy sources need to change quickly if we are to have any chance of dealing with climate change.'
Sample analysis: The writer's reference to an expert adds weight to their position and encourages the reader to agree that the recommended change is necessary.		
Appeal to common sense Refers to practical everyday knowledge that is accepted as obvious and therefore 'true'.	• Pressures the reader to agree by implying that anyone who disagrees lacks common sense and cannot see what is self-evident.	'So let's cancel cancel culture once and for all and replace it with real solutions to real problems.'
Sample analysis: The writer appeals to the reader's common sense by undermining cancel culture and referencing 'real problems' that need to be dealt with. The reader is positioned to reconsider what is important and to feel sceptical about the values of cancel culture.		
Appeal to family values Suggests that traditional family life provides the essential values for a healthy, stable society. Usually takes the nuclear family for granted.	• Leads the reader to view traditional nuclear families as the most desirable kind of family. • Can position the reader to blame destructive or antisocial behaviour on parents who are not heterosexual married couples.	'People don't just buy houses; they buy homes – places to raise children, care for family and create memories.'
Sample analysis: The writer appeals to family values to suggest that there is a strong emotional value attached to a home, which is likely to make the reader feel that houses are worth much more than just their economic value.		
Appeal to fear and insecurity Suggests that people's safety, security or freedom are at risk; often exaggerates a situation to present a 'worst-case scenario'.	• Pressures the reader to feel that solutions are needed urgently, so they should agree with the proposals. • Also persuades the reader to believe that the writer has readers' best interests at heart by wanting to protect them.	'If things don't change soon, the information of everyday Aussies will be easy pickings for hackers to sell on the black market.'
Sample analysis: The sentence appeals to the reader's fear of being unable to protect themselves. The implication that something might 'change soon' positions the reader to be interested in any solutions the writer might offer.		

Persuasive technique	How the technique persuades	Example
Appeal to financial self-interest Suggests that our financial wellbeing is under threat because we are being overcharged or 'ripped off'.	• Incites strong emotions, e.g. anger at being overcharged or because money is being misused. • Positions the reader to reject the views of those who want to raise prices, fees etc.	'Considering that mobile coverage drops out if you go too far from the city and the run-around you get if something doesn't work, these greedy telcos are already making a pretty penny while not doing much. So now why do they want to charge even more?'
Sample analysis: The reader is encouraged to feel outraged that telecommunication companies are providing poor services but are wanting to charge customers more. By combining the appeal to financial self-interest with a rhetorical question, the writer leads the reader to question the legitimacy of the companies' behaviour.		
Appeal to loyalty and patriotism Assumes a commitment to the group and a love of one's country.	• Positions the reader to agree with (and possibly take part in) actions that will benefit the nation or the group. • Can arouse feelings of anger or fear that position people to take action to support a cause or a group.	'Backing the underdog and giving people a fair go is the backbone of the Aussie spirit, and nothing shows that more than the little family business taking on the international superstore.'
Sample analysis: The writer's appeal to 'the Aussie spirit' encourages Australian readers to support the local family business over the international one.		
Appeal to tradition and custom Appeals to a sense of security based on the belief that rituals and traditions are valuable and should be preserved.	• Encourages the reader to resist change, and to feel that links with the past should be retained. • Can position the reader to view 'modern' lifestyles as inferior and damaging to the social fabric.	'I'd much rather keep a governor-general to act as a constitutional umpire in rare moments of crisis than have a president who could become a political competitor.'
Sample analysis: The writer appeals to tradition and custom by juxtaposing the security of knowing how things work with the unknown of change. By comparing a governor-general to an umpire who ensures rules are followed and order is maintained, the writer positions the reader to feel the existing (traditional) system is the safest option.		
Cliché Overused phrase that a wide range of readers can quickly grasp and understand.	• Reassures the reader with a familiar expression that can position them to accept an idea because they are lulled into an uncritical mindset. • Often has a comic effect, which can produce a lighthearted, amusing tone, or a sarcastic, critical tone.	'But if the department heads know in their heart of hearts this is going to be too hard a sell then they need to tell this exec to put a sock in it – quickly.'
Sample analysis: The writer employs the clichés 'heart of hearts', 'too hard a sell' and 'put a sock in it' to imply the department heads need to take action. The clichés suggest that the situation is clear-cut and the writer's recommended course of action is self-evidently correct.		

Persuasive technique	How the technique persuades	Example
Connotations and loaded words Connotations are meanings associated with or implied by words, as opposed to literal or 'dictionary' meanings.	• Associated meanings of words arouse feelings and attitudes that position the reader to like/dislike or accept/reject an idea, person, proposal and so on.	'Car maker crashes during safety review' (headline)
Sample analysis: By using the loaded word 'crashes' in a metaphorical sense, the writer connects the potential lack of safety with a deadly outcome. The reader is encouraged to see the car maker as negligent or incompetent.		
Emotive language Deliberate use of strong words and phrases to arouse the reader's feelings and so manipulate them to agree.	• The reader is positioned to react very emotionally and to agree with the writer's viewpoint before reason comes into play.	'It's time now to give those lazy people in council resting on our past glories an almighty wake-up call. Our wonderful city needs it.'
Sample analysis: The use of emotive language in this sentence encourages readers to feel both proud of their city and angry with the council. The positive emotions of 'wonderful' and 'past glories' contrast with the negative ones associated with the 'lazy' workers in need of a 'wake-up call', suggesting that those in council are not deserving of their jobs.		
Evidence (including statistics, graphs and diagrams) The use of facts and figures to provide rational, scientific 'proof' as the basis for a substantiated point of view.	• Positions the reader to view the writer's argument as more convincing because it appears to be objective and reliable. • Beware – facts and figures can be used selectively, by omitting evidence to the contrary.	'According to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency the pay gap is 13 per cent (the lowest on record). Men's average weekly full-time earnings are $1907 and women's are $1603.'
Sample analysis: By including figures and statistics from a reputable agency, the writer presents themselves as knowledgeable and well informed. The reader is likely to agree with the point being made as it is clearly supported by the data.		
Exaggeration, overstatement and hyperbole Presents an extreme view of a situation for dramatic impact and to provoke strong emotional responses.	• Exaggeration positions a reader to respond emotionally and so be more likely to accept or reject a viewpoint. • Can generate humour, positioning the reader to approve of the writer's viewpoint.	'Who's to say they'll stop at banning icy poles during summer? Next thing it'll be hot pies at the footy, fish and chips at the beach, or chocolate during Easter.'
Sample analysis: The use of exaggeration positions the reader to see the banning of icy poles as potentially leading to the banning of other common food traditions and therefore to respond with disbelief.		

Persuasive technique	How the technique persuades	Example
Generalisation A sweeping statement that suggests what is true for some is true for most or all.	• Appeals to commonly held beliefs, prejudices and views. • Positions the reader to regard and judge others in a narrow, stereotyped way.	'Everyone takes the bank's comments with a grain of salt. Banks don't have a lot of credibility after the last few years.'
Sample analysis: The generalisation that 'everyone' holds a certain view of banks encourages readers to accept that banks are not trustworthy.		
Inclusive language Uses 'we', 'our', 'us' etc. to include the readers in the same group as the writer. Assumes that everyone in the group shares the writer's viewpoint.	• The reader is positioned to agree with the writer because inclusive language appeals to their desire to belong to the group, or plays on their fears of being left out or regarded as an outsider.	'When will we learn that booing is unacceptable, that the players and umpires are human just like those of us in the stands and that we are all flawed in our own ways.'
Sample analysis: By using 'we' and 'our', the writer presents the players, umpires and crowd as all part of one group and positions the reader to feel that booing is wrong.		
Irony A feature of language in which the literal meaning is the opposite of the intended meaning.	• The reader is positioned to share in the writer's ridicule (and rejection) of an idea or object. • The writer can also influence the reader to agree through a sarcastic and/or humorous tone that is clever and engaging.	'Because, naturally, in light of unreliable flights, uncomfortable seats and missing luggage, what we really need is another budget airline cramming in as many people as possible as cheaply as possible.'
Sample analysis: The writer's sarcastic tone and list of problems positions the reader to see the introduction of another cheap and unreliable airline as ridiculous and unnecessary.		
Metaphor and simile Compare two different things, suggesting a similarity between them. A simile uses 'as if' or 'like'; a metaphor does not.	• Creates a striking and memorable image, often with emotional impact that can influence the reader's viewpoint. • Because the images can be more engaging and original than dry description, they can position the reader to support the writer's viewpoint.	'It's taxi warfare out there and the scared and baffled casualties are the customers.'
Sample analysis: The writer's metaphor, which is also an instance of hyperbole, conveys the challenging nature of the situation and positions the reader to feel concerned and possibly even alarmed.		

Persuasive technique	How the technique persuades	Example
Pun A play on a word that suggests double or multiple meanings (e.g. 'Bombers' meaning both the football team and WWII aircraft). Often plays on a word with a similar sound but different spelling (e.g. racket/racquet).	• Grabs the reader's interest and attention, especially through the use of humour. • The 'double' or secondary meaning of a word usually has a positive or negative connotation – this helps to influence the reader's response to the issue.	'Shining a light on the toll of night driving' (headline)
Sample analysis: The phrase 'shining a light' references the need for lights while driving at night, while also suggesting that there is a problem associated with night driving that needs more attention.		
Reason and logic Used to link ideas and develop an argument supporting the writer's point of view. Can take into account the opposing viewpoint in order to show why the writer's argument is superior.	• Positions the reader to accept the writer's viewpoint as objectively true because it is not just personal opinion or emotional reaction. • Persuades the reader through a well-argued case that can stand up to scrutiny. • Often used with a calm tone and/or formal style.	'Surely the logical solution is to build the pools, leave them there permanently at the end of the games, and then use the new grants to make them indoor pools.'
Sample analysis: The writer implicitly refers to the waste that would result from removing pools built for the games, positioning the reader to reject this as an outcome. The sequence of actions is presented as logical and reasonable, inclining the reader to feel this suggestion is a desirable alternative.		
Repetition Using the same word or phrase several times.	• Increases the impact of a main point or key term and so engages the reader's attention. • Can produce a more urgent or insistent tone, encouraging the reader to agree.	'Everybody knows it. Everybody is uncomfortable. Everybody wants it to change.'
Sample analysis: The repetition of 'everybody' creates the sense of a universally held belief, which the reader is likely to feel they should share.		
Rhetorical question A question with an implied but unstated answer.	• Suggests that the answer is self-evident and therefore the reader must agree with it. • Directly addresses the reader as a way of eliciting their agreement.	'In what world is hours of extra work and time for no pay something fair and necessary for students?'
Sample analysis: The rhetorical question encourages the reader to question what students are having to deal with and to suspect that they are being exploited. The emotive language of 'in what world' is likely to elicit feelings of outrage at an injustice and to prompt a belief that students should be paid for their work and time.		

Structuring strategies

Just as writers make specific language choices to enhance the effectiveness of their arguments, they also carefully construct their arguments in particular ways. This section looks at some common structuring strategies and their possible effects on the reader.

Placement of the main contention

The writer's placement of their main contention is strongly influenced by the form in which they are writing. It is also influenced by the writer's overall purpose and how they think the audience is likely to respond to their arguments and their point of view on the issue.

Stated at the beginning

In a short text such as a letter to the editor, writers often outline their contention early and structure their argument around their strongest supporting point. Sometimes the title or headline of a blog entry or editorial will state the writer's main contention. A speech will often begin with a clear statement of the speaker's point of view, so that listeners know what the speaker's position is and can then listen for the supporting reasons and evidence.

Stating the main contention at the beginning can convey the writer's sense of conviction and grab the audience's attention, enticing them to follow the argument.

Stated at the end

Longer texts, such as feature articles, opinion pieces and editorials, might clearly state the main contention in the final paragraph, following a reasoned discussion. This can give the impression that the writer has carefully considered both sides of an issue before arriving at their point of view, inclining the reader to accept the contention as based on a thoughtful, balanced approach.

Repeated

A main contention can be stated more than once. For example, a writer might state their contention in the opening paragraph, then restate it in the conclusion. This is typical of an essay structure, for instance. Alternatively, the writer might link supporting points back to their contention throughout the piece, conveying the impression that their argument is consistent, well reasoned and strongly supported by evidence.

Implied

The main contention is sometimes implied, rather than explicitly stated. A writer might adopt this strategy in order to lead the reader through various examples and reasons for and against a point of view. The reader can thus be positioned to arrive at the same point of view as the writer, in a way that suggests it is the inevitable conclusion of the discussion.

Order of supporting points

The order in which supporting reasons or points of argument are placed will shape the reader's response.

- Placing the points from **strongest to weakest** can make the piece highly persuasive from the beginning. This can have the effect of immediately gaining the reader's attention and approval, before the writer consolidates support for the argument with further reasons, examples and evidence.
- Alternatively, **building towards the strongest reasons** can leave the reader with a powerful impression at the end of the piece. This can be an especially effective strategy with an audience likely to be neutral towards or hostile to the writer's position. Such an audience might be alienated by a strong, assertive opening, and more likely to be convinced by an argument developed methodically and progressively.

Order of specific and general information

Arguments often consist of a mix of specific and general information. Specific information might include anecdotes, case studies or research findings. General information relates to the broader picture and might include statistics showing an overall pattern. The way in which a writer moves from specific to general information (or from general to specific information) can influence how the audience responds to the argument as a whole.

- A writer might **begin with a specific piece of information** or a particular case, and then move to a general discussion of the underlying principles and wider consequences. This approach can suggest that the writer's conclusions are valid since they are based on tangible, real-world evidence.
- **Beginning with an anecdote** or a discussion of their own **personal experience** is a way for writers to engage the audience's attention by seeming both relatable and knowledgeable. It can also make the issue more relevant to the audience. This strategy is often used in speeches. The writer or speaker is then likely to move to a discussion of broader patterns or typical situations, before arriving at a contention.
- Alternatively, a writer might **begin with a discussion of the broader ideas** underpinning their contention, before supporting these with specific information or evidence. This could be an effective approach if the writer needs to establish the context and explain their purpose from the outset.

Creation of a dichotomy

The word 'dichotomy' refers to a division into two parts or ideas. A common persuasive tactic is to describe an issue as a debate between two opposing sides: a 'good' side and a 'bad' side (or a 'for' and an 'against' side). Simplifying an issue in this way excludes other perspectives, leading the audience to feel that they must agree with one side or the other.

In creating a dichotomy, a writer will use language that is strongly loaded with positive connotations to characterise their own point of view, and negative language to present the opposing view. Creating a dichotomy thus positions the audience to align themselves with those, including the writer, on the 'right' side of the debate.

Use of headings, subheadings and visual material

Breaking up a text into sections helps the audience to absorb and navigate the information and ideas being presented. This can be especially important in a spoken text. Podcasts, for instance, are often divided into segments, while someone delivering a speech might use signposts such as 'firstly', 'for example' and 'in conclusion' to help listeners follow how the argument is unfolding.

- The **headline or title** of a piece can summarise the writer's point of view or suggest their approach to the topic. Increasingly, headlines for online news articles pose a question, make a provocative statement or spark curiosity. This encourages online readers to click on the link to read the full article and spend more time on the media company's website.
- **Subheadings** break up a longer text and signal key points of argument. Subheadings can create the impression that the writer is approaching the subject in a logical and systematic way and examining multiple aspects of an issue. The use of bullet points or lists can similarly suggest a logical and comprehensive approach. (See the article at the end of this chapter for an example of the use of subheadings.)
- The **placement of images** in relation to a written text – such as at the top or in the middle, or in a specific order if there is more than one image – can contribute to the overall effect of a piece. A photograph can emphasise the emotive aspects of an issue, possibly complementing the writer's use of reason and logic, or reinforcing a number of emotional appeals. On the other hand, presenting key information in the form of graphs, charts or tables can imply that the writer's argument is based on sound evidence.

Selection of information

Writers will include facts and details that support their argument and help them refute opposing arguments. Some selection of information is inevitable since it is never possible to include every fact or piece of evidence relevant to a debate. However, sometimes this selection process involves **omitting relevant information** that doesn't support the line of argument. For example, a writer might declare that a council survey shows 80 per cent of respondents would like to use an app to access council services, and that therefore the council has the residents' support for developing such an app. However, they might omit the fact that the council only distributed the survey via text messages and social media platforms. As a result, those who tend not to use technology, and might be unlikely to wish to use an app, were effectively excluded from the survey.

Although in general when you are analysing argument and persuasive language you should focus on what is *included* rather than what is *excluded*, always be aware of how writers have selected their material. Thinking about what is omitted can be especially useful when you are developing your own point of view on an issue and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of others' arguments.

Placement of rebuttal

Rebuttal is the use of argument and/or evidence to disprove an opposing point of view. A writer might devote considerable space to rebutting opposing arguments, or they might include very little explicit rebuttal.

Rebuttal is usually incorporated into the overall argument in one of three main ways: at the beginning, near the end or integrated throughout.

- Including rebuttal **at the beginning** can pre-empt an audience's objections to the writer's arguments, positioning them to reject opposing viewpoints and accept the writer's conclusions. In a debate, it is usual for a speaker to begin by rebutting the previous speaker's arguments before presenting their own.
- In longer texts, rebuttal is often placed **towards the end**, after a writer has outlined the reasons for their own position. This can suggest that the opposing arguments are relatively minor and easily discredited by the reasons and evidence already presented. The rebuttal would probably be followed by a conclusion that emphatically restates the writer's main contention.
- When the rebuttal is **incorporated throughout**, the writer regularly compares and contrasts their point of view with opposing positions and arguments. This enables the writer to take a considered approach, persuading the reader through the accumulated weight of evidence and reason.

Cumulative effects

As well as analysing the effects of specific examples of persuasive techniques and structuring strategies, you need to discuss how these elements all work together. That is, as the argument is developed, the supporting points, pieces of evidence and language choices combine to create cumulative or overall effects.

For example, in a text that begins by outlining a problem, language with negative associations might be used to describe current attempts to solve the problem. The writer could also use appeals to fear or to financial self-interest to position the audience to feel affected by the issue and interested to know if there is a solution. In this way, the writer prepares the audience for the next part of the argument – the proposed solution, which might be supported by statistics and logical reasoning. The tone could shift from alarmed (acknowledging the issue) to outraged (criticising attempts to solve it) to enthusiastic (presenting the writer's proposed solution). All of these strategies work together to leave the audience feeling the necessity of taking action and the validity of following the writer's proposal.

The following article was published by *The Conversation* in May 2023, following the Victorian government's announcement that the logging of native trees in state forests would end in 2024, brought forward from 2030. It uses a number of structuring strategies and persuasive language techniques, and includes several striking photographs. Read the article carefully then complete the activity to analyse the cumulative effects of its arguments and persuasive language.

Scan the code or click here to see the online version of the article. Note that in the following version, some images have been replaced for copyright reasons.

Search

THE CONVERSATION

After the chainsaws, the quiet: Victoria's rapid exit from native forest logging is welcome – and long overdue

Credit: Phillip Mallis/Flickr, CC BY-SA

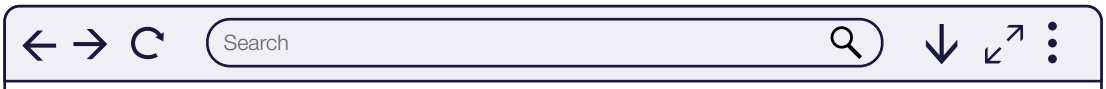
David Lindenmayer
Professor, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University
Chris Taylor
Research Fellow, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University

By the end of the year, Victoria's trouble-plagued native forest industry will end – six years ahead of schedule. The state's iconic mountain ash forests and endangered wildlife will at last be safe from chainsaws. And there will be no shortage of wood – there's more than enough plantation timber to fill the gap.

Tuesday's announcement by Premier Daniel Andrews is excellent news for forests, the state's economy, and its threatened species. We congratulate the Victorian government for this decision.

Ending native forest logging is long overdue. For decades, we've known of how much damage it does to biodiversity. Logging vast areas of Victoria's native forests over the past several decades has pushed many once-common animals, such as the greater glider, to become endangered.

Even now, the last remaining logging areas proposed under the state's Timber Release Plan overlap directly with the areas of highest conservation value for biodiversity.



Our research has catalogued the damage done to produce low-value products such as woodchips and paper pulp. The industry never made economic sense. The state-owned logging company, VicForests, has been running at a loss for many years. The industry can switch to our abundant plantations of eucalyptus and pine.

What damage did native forest logging do?

The vast majority of areas slated for logging provide habitat for more than 50 threatened and rare species. We know that the more forests are logged, the less likely we are to find species such as the critically endangered Leadbeater's Possum. Logging pushes species into decline. Common species become threatened and threatened species move closer to extinction.

The lead author of this article has been part of a team conducting ecological monitoring and research in Victoria's forests for almost 40 years.

We have seen the damage first-hand. We've watched old forests of high conservation value be clearfelled when they should not have been. We've watched essential habitat such as large old trees, with their all-important nesting hollows, become rarer and rarer.

We have seen extraordinary animals such as the Southern Greater Glider go from the most common species identified in night surveys to so scarce they're now endangered.

We have seen once intact landscapes become dominated by highly flammable young forest at risk of extremely severe wildfires.

And we watched in dismay as logging fragmented landscape. Now up to 70% of Victoria's critically endangered mountain ash forests are either severely disturbed by wildfire and logging or within 200 metres of such areas.

Native forest logging never made sense

Almost all (86%) of felled native forests in Victoria are turned into low-value products such as woodchips, paper pulp and boxliners.

In 2018, we estimated sawn timber equates to just 14% of the volume of logs cut from native forests.

By contrast, more than 80% of all sawn timber in Victoria comes from plantations. Native forest timber does not help build houses.

Bringing forward the end of native forest logging from 2030 will be a major boost for climate action – equal to removing 730,000 petrol or diesel cars from our roads every year. This single decision gives Victoria – and Australia – a far greater chance of meeting their emissions reductions targets.

In its last annual report, VicForests announced a loss of A$54 million and a loan of $80 million. It's now propped up only by the Victorian Treasury.

Search

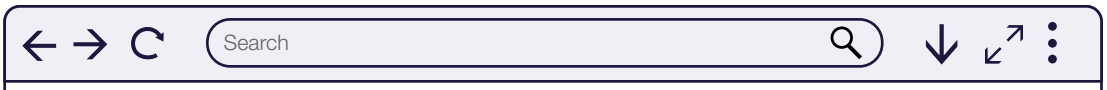
Even before these losses, the Victorian Parliamentary Budget Office showed the state would be $190 million better off without it.

Logging practices left little behind to support native plants and animals, and could contribute a lot of ash and sediment to streams if it rained. Credit: David Lindenmayer

How can we help forests recover?

Ending logging will take pressure off our forests. But we can't simply walk away from heavily damaged areas. Many areas have never properly regenerated after logging or repeated fire.

Mature forests produce higher quality water for Melbourne and more of it than logged areas. Credit: David Lindenmayer



In north-eastern Victoria, years of logging have warped the composition of tree species in the forest; many areas are dominated by trees that are largely unsuitable as food sources for koalas and greater gliders.

The urgent task is to restore forests across Victoria while managing fire and invasive species such as deer.

That's not all. We will still need wood and paper. Ending native forest logging requires getting things right in Australia's plantations.

At present, we export up to 95% of all plantation eucalypt logs we grow for processing overseas. That's a missed opportunity for local jobs.

Even now, the plantation sector is crying out for more workers in haulage and processing. This sector offers comparable jobs for workers leaving the native forest sector. But there will be other jobs: forest restoration, firefighting, feral animal control, carbon stock management and more. Getting the transition right is important.

The exit from native forest logging must now be coupled with the declaration of a Great Forest National Park in the Central Highlands region. The region has been a hotspot for native forest logging in recent decades.

It's almost ten years since the state's then-environment minister Lisa Neville promised this park would be declared. Once established, the new park should be co-managed with First Nations peoples to ensure Aboriginal self-determination, as well as good opportunities to work on Country.

Today is a day for celebrating. At last, Victoria's government has acted for the future. Preserving our native forests is worth much more in carbon storage, water production and tourism than they ever were as woodchips.

Victoria's move is a clarion call for other Australian states still doggedly logging their precious forests.

Analyse cumulative effects

ACTIVITY

1. What are the main points made by the writers? List them in the order they are made.
2. Overall, the article begins positively, then moves to consider some negative aspects of logging native forests, then concludes more positively. What is the likely effect on the reader of structuring the article in this way?
3. The article opens with positive statements about the government's decision. How do words such as 'excellent' and 'congratulate' in relation to the decision, as well as emotive words such as 'iconic' and 'endangered' in relation to the forests and wildlife, help to convey the writers' point of view on logging native forests?

ACTIVITY

4 How does the use of inclusive language ('our native forests', 'we can't simply walk away') work in conjunction with the writers' status as university researchers to demonstrate their personal as well as professional engagement with the issue? How is this likely to influence the reader's response to the argument?

5 The writers use emotive language ('watched in dismay', 'extraordinary animals') as well as the language of logic and reasoning ('the more forests are logged, the less likely ...'). What is the effect of these two types of language working together?

6 The writers use statistics and costs to make an economic argument about logging native forests. What is the argument and how does the numerical data help to support it?

7 Near the end of the article the writers make a 'call to action', outlining steps they would like the government to take. How do these help to solve problems identified earlier in the article? How does this problem-solution argument structure support the writers' point of view?

8 Three photographs are included in this article. Considered separately from the written text, what effects are these images likely to have on readers?

9 Discuss the effects of using these images at particular points in the article and how they work in combination with the written text in those places to present a point of view.

10 Write two or three paragraphs explaining the cumulative effects of argument and persuasive language (including visual language) in the article. Draw on your answers to the previous questions and use linking words and phrases to create an extended piece of writing.

CHAPTER 18

WRITING AN ANALYSIS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Planning your response
- Writing your response
- Sample response

This chapter draws together the knowledge and skills covered in Chapters 13–17 and explains how to write an extended analysis of argument and persuasive language in media texts. It includes numerous sentence starters to help you analyse the connections between argument and language (with 'language' including written words, images and audio elements, depending on the text type). It also gives you strategies for planning and structuring your response, so that your analysis is fluent and consistently foregrounds the persuasive intent of the text you are analysing.

Planning your response

In order to craft an effective analysis of a persuasive text or texts, it is essential to have ways of identifying, selecting and organising the material you will use. This section covers the processes of identifying and organising the key elements of a persuasive text in preparation for writing your analysis.

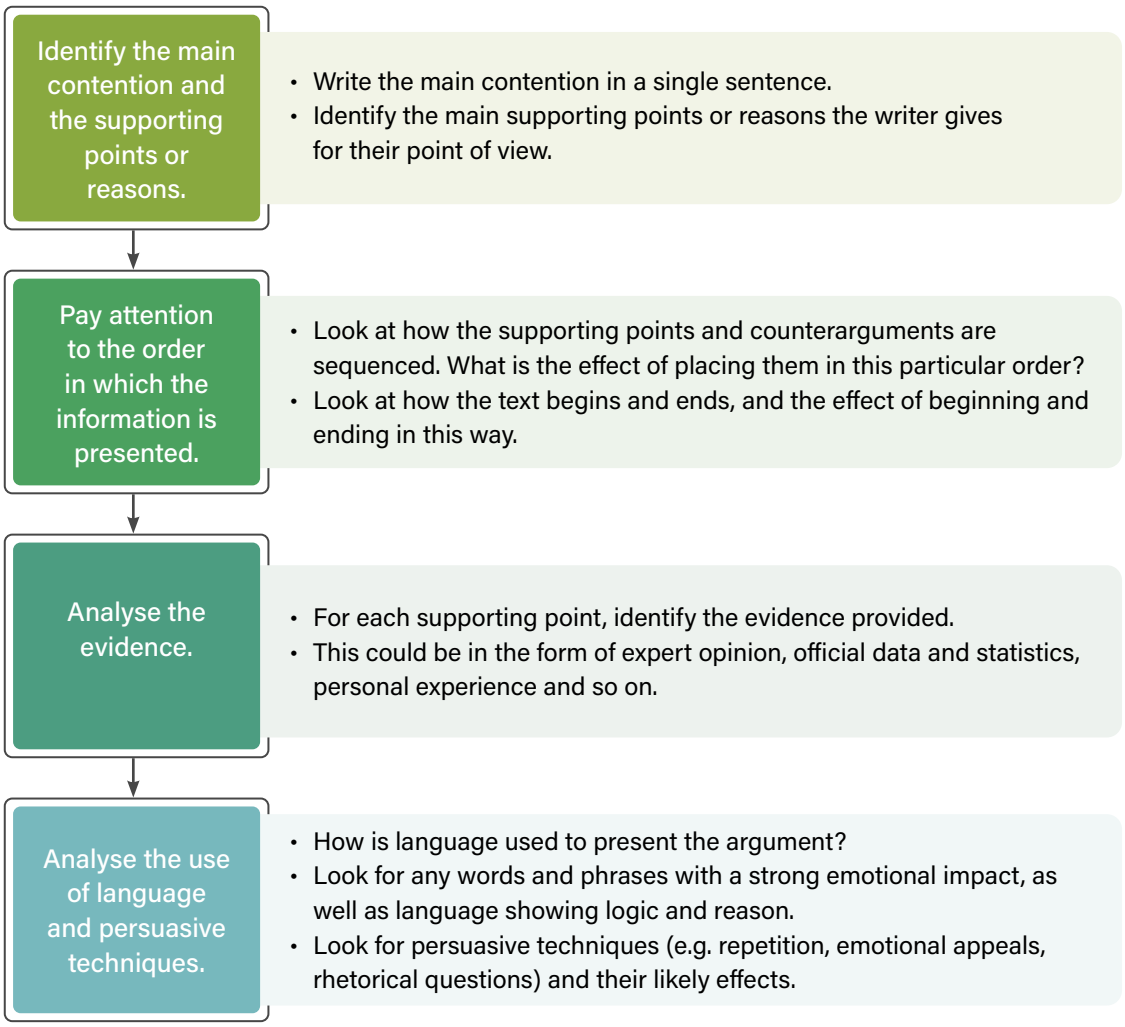
Identify key details

Before starting to write your analysis, it is important to identify the key details about the text to help you develop a comprehensive understanding of its content. The following steps will help you prepare for a successful analysis of a persuasive text.

- Read through the text once, looking for the main contention, the broad shape of the argument and the general persuasive approach.
- Read the text a second time, paying attention to the main supporting points, the evidence included and any specific word choices that elicit emotional reactions.
- If there is visual material, note whether it is a stand-alone image or an image that is part of a written text. Look at elements such as colour, light, focus and framing.
- If you are analysing an audio text, pay attention to the tone, volume and other audio elements that contribute to the overall message and impact.
- If you are analysing an audiovisual text, look for elements such as mise en scène, cinematography and editing, as well as sound.

Organise information

After identifying the key details, the next step is to use that information to begin developing your analysis. This flow chart gives you some guidelines for sorting and grouping the information.



One way to make notes is by annotating a written text. For example, number the main supporting points, underline the evidence and highlight words and persuasive techniques. For an audio or audiovisual text, you may be given a transcript on which you can make similar annotations.

If you have time, create an information sheet to record key details about the text, including its writer/creator, publication context, audience and other relevant information. Refer to any background information you have been given, since this often provides details of the writer or speaker's purpose, context and audience.

Scan the code or click here for a template you can use to summarise information about a written persuasive text.

Writing your response

Once you complete planning and gathering information, the next step is to write your analysis. This section explains what to include in your introduction and how to write a body paragraph.

In the analysis of argument and language it is not necessary to write a concluding paragraph. If you wish to do so, summarise your discussion by looking at the overall persuasive approach of the text or texts. In your Unit 4 SAC there will be at least two texts to analyse, so if you do make some concluding remarks make sure you refer to all the texts. Do not give your point of view on the issue or try to evaluate which text is the most persuasive.

Introduction

Crafting an effective introduction is essential to demonstrate to your assessor that you understand the texts you are analysing and the nature of the task. It will also help you to write a focused and clearly structured analysis. Here are some key elements to include in your introduction; in some sentences you will be able to combine two or three elements.

- **Identify the issue:** What is the issue that the persuasive text is offering a point of view on?
- **Give details:** Who is the writer or creator and what is the title of their text? Who is the intended audience?
- **Provide context:** Where was the piece published, broadcast or delivered?
- **State the main contention and purpose:** What is the writer's point of view on the issue? What do they want to achieve?
- If there is an additional text, such as a visual, audio or audiovisual text, introduce it briefly.

By including these things in your introduction, you create a roadmap for the rest of your response and a foundation for a clear and coherent analysis.

Body paragraphs

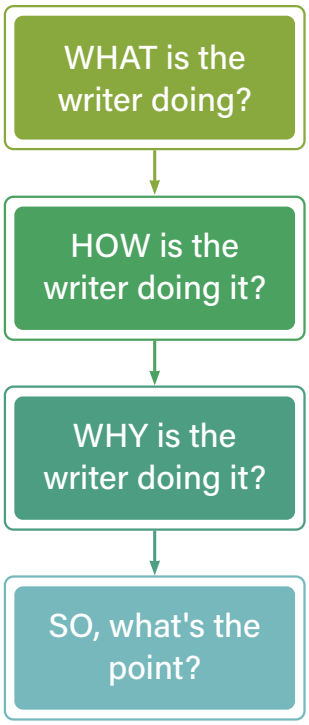
The body paragraphs form the majority of your argument analysis. Your discussion should be clearly organised, with each body paragraph having a topic sentence, close reference to the text and explanations of how the text is working to persuade the audience, supported by examples.

WHAT, HOW, WHY, SO

Although there are many possible structures you could follow when writing your body paragraphs, they are essentially all variations on the same theme. This section explains the WHAT, HOW, WHY, SO structure.

Step 1: Ask *WHAT* is the writer doing?

The WHAT is the key point being made by the writer at the point in the text you are analysing. It is the focus of their argument in that section of the text.



The following sentence starters can be used for addressing the WHAT:

- The writer opens their argument by ...
- ... (writer's name) turns their focus to ...
- The audience's attention is then drawn to ...
- ... (writer's name) develops their argument with the statement/question ...

Step 2: Ask *HOW* is the writer doing it?

The HOW explains the ways that the WHAT is being presented. This involves a discussion of persuasive techniques and language features, including particular word choices. (For definitions and explanations of these techniques and features, see Chapter 17.)

The following sentence starters can be used for addressing the HOW:

- The writer uses emotive language to describe ...
- The writer supports their argument with a range of evidence, including ...
- At this point the writer quotes several experts and authority figures, adding weight to the view that ...
- As the writer develops their argument, they use inclusive language and rhetorical questions to highlight ...

Step 3: Ask *WHY* is the writer doing it?

The WHY section of your paragraph focuses on the effects of the language features and persuasive techniques you've identified. What are they likely to make the audience think or feel? Why might the writer have wanted this reaction?

The following sentence starters can be used for addressing the WHY:

- The writer's use of anecdotes makes the issue seem relatable and relevant, encouraging the audience to feel ...
- Positioning the audience to see the issue as urgent, the writer uses words such as ...
- The writer presents this supporting point using the language of logic and reasoning, which is likely to make the audience think/feel that ...
- Beginning with counterarguments that undermine the opposing point of view, the writer inclines the audience to think ...

Step 4: Ask *SO*, what's the point?

This is the final step in your body paragraph and should focus on bringing your analysis back to the writer's main contention and purpose. Relate your analysis to what the writer is ultimately wanting to achieve. Although there can be overlap between the WHY and SO elements of your analysis, think of the SO as explaining the combined effects of language and argument, or of several persuasive features.

The following sentence starters can be used for addressing the SO:

- The overall effect of presenting the argument in this way is ...
- By eliciting feelings of concern and alarm, the writer positions the audience to hope for ...
- Moving from discussing specific examples to identifying the broader problem leads the audience to ...
- The audience is left with an impression of the urgent need to ...

See the annotations to the first body paragraph of the sample analysis on pages 216–17 for an example of the WHAT, HOW, WHY, SO elements.

Writing about persuasive language

Writing about persuasive techniques requires a deep understanding of how language can be used to influence an audience. To create a strong analysis, use a variety of sentence structures and analytical techniques to explore the text. By doing so, you can identify specific techniques used by the writer and explain how these techniques work to persuade the reader.

To get started, try using the following strong sentence openings to analyse persuasive techniques in the text.

- Appealing to the reader's sense of ..., the writer intends to ...
- By employing ..., the writer creates a ...
- By using ..., the writer is able to ...
- The writer appeals to ... in order to ...
- The writer uses ... to establish the credibility of ...
- The writer's argument is strengthened by their use of ..., which ...
- The writer's appeal to ... positions the reader to feel ...
- The writer's use of ... is designed to evoke feelings of ...
- The use of ... helps to establish a connection with the audience, which in turn ...
- Through the use of ..., the writer seeks to motivate the reader to ...

By using these sentence starters, you can create a well-written and fluent analysis of your text. Remember to support your analysis with specific examples from the text, and to explain how each technique works to persuade the reader.

Practise writing about persuasive techniques

ACTIVITY

1 Identify three examples of persuasive language in a text you are analysing. Drawing on the sentence starters on the previous page, write a sentence analysing each example.

2 The following pool of words is useful for writing about how the audience is being positioned by the writer's use of argument and language.

addressing	eliciting	evoking	motivating	shocking
alarming	empathising	inspiring	moving	startling
appealing	engaging	involving	provoking	targeting

Select three of these words and use each of them in a sentence about a text you are analysing.

Writing about tone

The tone of a text helps to convey the writer's attitude towards their subject. Tone is created primarily by word choices but can be reinforced by sentence structure and other elements of style. As you read or listen, pay attention to the words the writer uses to describe their subject.

> *The writer's alarmed tone in his essay on climate change, created by adjectives such as 'devastating', 'catastrophic' and 'apocalyptic', conveys his high level of concern and sense of urgency.*

A writer will also use tone to influence the reader in certain ways. For example, if the writer adopts a sarcastic or mocking tone, they may be attempting to discredit an opposing view. If they are using a serious tone and a formal, academic style of writing, they may be trying to establish their credibility or authority on a particular topic.

> *The politician's confident and authoritative tone gives the audience the impression that she is competent and capable of solving problems.*

Try using the following sentence starters to write about tone. Note that these sentence structures don't simply lead you to identify the tone; they also connect tone to the writer's argument and/or purpose.

- The writer's use of ... language creates a ... tone that ...
- By using a ... tone, the writer sets out to ...
- A shift in tone from ... to ... signals a change in ...
- The writer's ... tone suggests that they feel ... about/towards ...
- Through the use of a ... tone, the writer conveys a sense of ...
- The overall tone of this piece is ..., and is created by ...
- The ... tone positions the audience to feel ...

Practise writing about tone

ACTIVITY

1 For a media text you are analysing, identify the main tone used. Write two sentences about the writer's use of tone and how it helps to present their point of view on the issue. Use the sentence starters on the previous page, or variations on them, as a basis for your writing.

2 Consider whether the writer's tone shifts at any point in the text. If it does, write a sentence that explains where and how the tone changes and the intended effect on the reader.

Writing about visual material

Images that present a point of view on an issue can accompany a written text, or they can stand alone. Your analysis should make clear which of these situations is the case. If the image is associated with a written text, part of your analysis should explain how the image supports or possibly questions the arguments in the written text.

Look closely at how visual language is being used to elicit a feeling or present the subject in a certain way. When writing about visual material you can use or adapt the following sentence starters.

- Placing ... at the centre of the image draws the viewer's attention to ...
- The background details show ..., suggesting that ...
- The framing of the image draws attention to ...
- The use of light in this photograph emphasises ...
- The cartoonist's exaggeration of ... presents the subject as ...
- The colours/shading create/s a ... mood, which positions the viewer to feel ...
- The contrast in the image between ... and ... is significant because ...
- The emotion conveyed by the image is ...
- The image provides visual evidence to support the writer's argument that ...
- The use of this image strengthens the writer's position by ...
- By including this image, the writer illustrates their point that ...

Practise writing about visual material

ACTIVITY

Choose an image from a newspaper, magazine, news website or social media platform. Using the sentence starters above, or variations on them, write five sentences about how the image presents a point of view and has a likely effect on the viewer.

Writing about audio material

Audio texts such as radio talkback shows, speeches and podcasts can be powerful forms of communication and persuasion. Listen for elements such as background music and sound effects, as well as the speaker's use of tone, pitch, pace and intonation. These are all likely to have effects that work on an emotional level as well as in combination with the language choices and arguments being presented.

When writing about audio material you can use or adapt the following sentence starters.

- The background/introductory music establishes a ... mood, creating a sense of ...
- The use of sound effects enhances ...
- The order in which the audio material is presented creates a sense of ...
- The tone of the speaker's voice is ..., which leads the listener to feel ...
- By leaving pauses at key places in their presentation, the speaker highlights the significance of ...
- The intonation of the speaker emphasises ...
- The speaker's delivery conveys their ... feelings, emphasising their view that ...
- The interaction of the speakers conveys their ... relationship, positioning the listener to think/feel ...

Practise writing about audio material

ACTIVITY

Select an audio text such as a podcast or speech. You can use a short excerpt (up to five minutes) for this activity. Use the sentence starters above, or variations on them, to analyse how the text presents a point of view and positions the listener to agree. In addition to analysing language use, remember to refer to the impact of sound elements such as the tone, pitch, pace and intonation of a speaker's voice, as well as any sound effects and music.

Writing about audiovisual material

Audiovisual texts can use a variety of persuasive techniques to influence viewers' thoughts and emotions. These include the effects of moving images and sound as well as the persuasive effects of language techniques and word choices.

When writing about audiovisual material you can use or adapt the following sentence starters.

- The set/setting establishes a feeling of ...
- The use of cinematography foregrounds ...
- The use of lighting creates a ... mood, which contributes to ...
- The lighting highlights / emphasises / draws the viewer's attention to ...
- The ... music creates a ...
- The way in which the shots are edited together leads the viewer to think/feel ...

- The colour scheme gives the audience the impression that ...
- The shots are framed in a way that highlights ...
- The way in which the individuals talk to one another conveys a sense of ...
- The speaker's facial expressions and hand movements reinforce their view that ...

Practise writing about audiovisual material

ACTIVITY

Practise writing about audiovisual material by finding a short online video from a newspaper or news website. Use the sentence starters above to write analytical sentences about the persuasive elements of the text. Look for the visual elements of each shot as well as how the shots are sequenced and combined.

Writing about language and argument together

When analysing a persuasive text, it's important to consider how language is used to present an argument and how argument and language work together to position the reader to accept a particular point of view. Showing an understanding of the relationship between language and argument is essential to a strong analysis.

The following word bank contains useful verbs for writing about the ways in which language is used to present and endorse an argument.

advances	fortifies	strengthens
bolsters	highlights	supports
consolidates	makes plausible	sustains
develops	promotes	underscores
enhances	reinforces	validates

For example:

> *The writer's vivid imagery enhances their argument by creating a powerful emotional connection with the reader.*

A writer will also seek to criticise (or rebut) the arguments on the other side of a debate. This next word bank contains useful verbs for writing about rebuttal.

attacks	discredits	nullifies
condemns	dismisses	refutes
counters	disparages	rejects
critiques	exposes	repudiates
denigrates	negates	undermines

For example:

> *The use of statistics and research findings discredits the opposing point of view.*

ACTIVITY

Practise writing about argument and language working together

Using any persuasive text, identify some of the connections between the writer's argument and the language they use to present it. Using four different verbs from the two tables on the previous page, write four sentences about the use of language in the text to present or rebut an argument.

Sample response

This section contains a complete sample analysis of two media texts. The texts present points of view on recent changes to Roald Dahl's children's fiction. One is a newspaper article, and the other is a podcast.

Scan the code or click here to view the online version of Kerrie O'Brien's newspaper article, published in *The Age* on 20 February 2023. It contains a number of images as well as a short video segment from the *Today* show. Matt Golding's cartoon is reproduced on page 216.

Scan the code or click here to listen to the podcast hosted by Osman Faruqi on 22 February 2023.

Newspaper article

The written text of the article by Kerrie O'Brien, including one of the accompanying images, is reproduced below.

Erasing history or keeping up with the times? The great Roald Dahl debate

Kerrie O'Brien

Is it a matter of keeping classics relevant or political correctness gone mad? That's the crux of the polarised reactions to news Roald Dahl's publisher Puffin, together with Netflix, is changing language in some of his most iconic works.

Works being re-examined with a contemporary lens have led to hundreds of changes to the English author's books, including the Oompa Loompas in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* being made gender-neutral instead of male, the words "fat" and "ugly" being culled, and more inclusive terminology being used throughout.

What to some seems like benign intervention to keep classic books relevant is damned by others as censorship and revisionism. Acclaimed author Salman Rushdie is incensed by the changes, describing the updated language as blatant censorship.

"Puffin Books and the Roald Dahl estate should be ashamed," he tweeted.

Denise Chapman, a lecturer in literacy at Monash University, agrees with Rushdie.

"We can't erase it: we have to be able to know our history. This artwork is history," she says.

As an African-American woman, Chapman says it's a challenging topic, citing *Huckleberry Finn* as another example of a problematic text.

Where The Wild Things Are was also a touchpoint, Chapman says, as people were concerned the character of Max was disobeying his parents.

"We are always going to have books that upset people, that contain ideas that people don't like or don't agree with, that we all agree are absolutely wrong, but if we hide these books it doesn't make it go away. In fact, it prevents us from preparing children to engage with this idea that we agree is wrong and that they will eventually face," she says.

"Is this really about inclusivity? If so, then why aren't we seeing more representation on [publishers'] staff, of authors with lived experiences that would allow for a greater range of representation of thought and information."

On the other hand, best-selling author Andy Griffiths argues that the changes do not affect the fundamental stories Dahl was telling, and that we should not cancel the author, rather congratulate him that his characters and books continue to capture our imaginations. He sees the tweaks to the language as logical and indeed justified.

Dani Solomon, manager of Readings Kids Shop in Carlton, is with Griffiths, saying the changes are minimal and help keep the books relevant, "while maintaining the irreverence and the spirit of silliness".

"The thing that makes Roald Dahl's books so great isn't that people are referred to as fat or awful or horrible, it's that they're great. The stories are fun, the kids always win and none of that has changed, it's just a few words here or there," she says.

To her mind, updating language to meet current social expectations is different to altering the plot. According to Solomon, making changes to classics such as *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, which dates back to 1911, or *Huckleberry Finn* would be a different issue.

"It's easier to make little changes to things like fantasy or [things] that are not meant to be taken seriously, like in Enid Blyton there's a magic tree or Roald Dahl, there's bucketloads of wonderful insanity. Little changes don't change that, whereas *Huckleberry Finn* is a snapshot of its time and it's important to preserve those sorts of things. Maybe if it comes to it have a little disclaimer so parents can have those conversations with their kids.

"Nothing is black and white, there's not one rule for every single book. It's more nuanced than some people on Twitter think it should be."

Solomon makes the point that Dahl's books invariably have an underlying lesson. "They are also deeply moral, not even subtly moral, they're hit-you-over-the-head-with-a-brick moral and that hasn't changed. If something was written today that was that obvious with a lesson moral, the editor might say tone it down a bit."

PEN America chief executive Suzanne Nossal said, "literature is meant to be surprising and provocative. That's part of its potency. By setting out to remove any reference that might cause offence you dilute the power of storytelling".

Analysis

In an article published in Melbourne's *The Age* newspaper on 20 February 2023, Kerrie O'Brien discusses the changes made to Roald Dahl's classic works as well as various responses to these changes. Addressing an audience likely to consist mainly of educated, inner-city adults, she offers a nuanced exploration of the issue, inviting the audience to consider if these changes are the result of a successful effort to update the language of Dahl's work or whether they constitute a disturbing form of censorship. Maintaining an informative, neutral tone throughout the text, and presenting a balance of views for and against, O'Brien subtly presents the point of view that there should be a more cautious approach to rewriting classic children's books. Her opposition to such changes is more strongly presented in her contribution to an episode of *The Drop* podcast hosted by Osman Faruqi on 22 February.

Opening her newspaper article, O'Brien sets the stage for the debate by framing it as a matter of 'keeping classics relevant or political correctness gone mad'. This choice of language immediately captures the audience's attention by presenting the issue as polarising and contentious. O'Brien

- Identifies the publication and the writer, and introduces the issue.
- Indicates the likely audience.
- Indicates the tone and overall approach.
- States the main contention.
- Briefly introduces the second media text.
- Begins the paragraph by considering WHAT the writer is saying.

then introduces some of the 'hundreds of changes' being made to Dahl's works, including making the Oompa Loompas gender-neutral, removing the words 'fat' and 'ugly', and using more inclusive language. O'Brien's own language is mostly plain and objective, although the emotive word 'culled' to describe the removal of some words subtly positions the reader to see this as a confronting and almost violent change. Focusing first on the arguments from those opposed to changing Dahl's texts, O'Brien quotes acclaimed author Salman Rushdie, who describes the changes as 'blatant censorship'. Similarly, O'Brien quotes literacy lecturer Denise Chapman, who argues against attempts to rewrite literature: 'we can't erase it: we have to be able to know our history'. Citing these two professionals adds weight and credibility to O'Brien's discussion of the issue, establishing arguments in opposition to the changes and positioning the reader to see the changes as excessive and even dangerous.

Countering the censorship argument, O'Brien presents arguments in favour of the changes, continuing her balanced approach. Again citing experts, in this case bestselling author Andy Griffiths and bookseller Dani Solomon, O'Brien provides counterarguments to the view that altering Dahl's language is a form of censorship. Griffiths contends that the changes are 'logical' and 'justified', while Solomon suggests that updating language to meet current social expectations is different from altering the plot. In discussing Griffiths' view, O'Brien refers to the changes as 'tweaks', a word that, in contrast to 'censorship', downplays the impact of the rewriting and positions the reader to regard Griffiths' argument sympathetically. By fairly considering both sides of the issue and refraining from explicitly stating her own opinion, O'Brien demonstrates the complexity of the debate. By presenting herself as willing to listen to arguments for and against, she encourages her readers to remain open-minded and to see the concerns on both sides as credible and legitimate.

Matt Golding's cartoon offers some comic relief from the passionate opinions presented in the article. The cartoon depicts several characters, all of whom are frowning, throwing books into a fire. The main character is saying, 'it's a book-burning of selectively edited classic children's books', while the burning books create a bright fire set against the dark surroundings. This image offers a satirical take on the issue and positions the reader to see those who oppose the changes as overreacting and even as slightly ridiculous, since their extreme reaction of throwing books into the fire is juxtaposed with the mild-sounding description 'selectively edited'.

Immediately below the cartoon, however, and concluding the article, O'Brien quotes Suzanne Nossal, the chief executive of PEN America – an organisation that supports and defends authors' rights to free expression. Nossal's statement that 'literature is meant to be surprising and provocative', and that removing potentially offensive references may 'dilute the power of storytelling', restores the article's serious tone. It also concludes the article

Considers HOW the writer is using language and moves on to WHY; homes in on a particular word choice and considers its likely effect on the audience.

Considers WHY these quotes are being used.

Considers SO by looking at overall effects of the language and argument strategies in the first part of the article.

Considers a language choice and the way it helps to present a counterargument.

Devotes a paragraph to considering the image that forms part of the article; notes its relationship to the written text.

Examines visual as well as verbal elements of the cartoon.

with a note of caution (by a respected authority figure) against changing an author's writing, reinforcing similar arguments presented at the start of the article. Structuring the article in this way leaves the reader with the strong impression that such changes are more likely to weaken the power of writing than to strengthen it.

Considers the structural choice of beginning and ending the article with 'against' arguments.

Explains the impact of structure and how it helps to convey a point of view.

Two days after O'Brien's article was published in *The Age*, she was a guest on Osman Faruqi's culture podcast *The Drop* discussing the same issue. While for the most part Faruqi doesn't offer a clear point of view on the issue, generally maintaining the tone of an interested observer and interviewer, O'Brien ultimately contends that these changes amount to censorship. Both presenters create an affectionate picture of Dahl's books, and give the reader the strong impression that the books simply reflect the values of the time in which they were written and that recent changes to their language are 'problematic'.

Transitions smoothly to the second text, enhancing the fluency of the response.

The podcast opens with some background music in a smooth digital lounge style, giving it a polished, professional and approachable feel. Faruqi then offers some context and background on Roald Dahl's works, highlighting their popularity and the success of a number of film versions. This information serves as a foundation for the ensuing discussion and debate. Faruqi uses a moderate, even tone to present these factual details, avoiding emotive language or any indication of his own view on the issue. By setting up the issue in this fact-based manner, Faruqi encourages the audience both to listen with an open mind and also to regard whichever view the presenters ultimately take on the issue as reliable and convincing.

Considers the role played by the introductory part of the podcast in 'setting up' the listener for the points of view to be presented later.

After being introduced, O'Brien is invited to share her personal relationships with Dahl's books. The presenters reminisce about some of their favourite moments from Dahl's books and their film adaptations, and O'Brien discusses reading the books with her children. The conversation is casual and personal, with the presenters using informal expressions such as 'yeah right' and 'the kids' stuff', and occasionally laughing. The effect is a relaxed, engaging feeling that helps to create an emotional connection with listeners, who may share similar experiences. Although both presenters acknowledge the darkness and intensity of Dahl's children's fiction, they balance this with phrases such as 'a bit of fun' and 'the good kids win', suggesting there is little in the books that is too challenging or offensive, and subtly positioning listeners to be sceptical about the need for any changes to the language.

Examines the tone and style of the discussion, including non-verbal elements (laughter), and the effect on the audience.

Discusses language choices and the way in which they contribute to an argument.

The discussion then moves into the details of the changes to books such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and the tone becomes more serious and earnest as consideration is given to the reasons why changes have been made. Expressions such as 'gender inclusivity' give the discussion more weight and sophistication; the presenters laugh less often and adopt a more serious vocal

Identifies a shift in tone and explains how it relates to a shift in argument.

tone. When O'Brien refers to changes that 'address [the] denigration of women in lowly roles', the word 'denigration' is likely to encourage listeners to see Dahl's works as having some troubling elements and thus to be more sympathetic to the changes. However, this is a temporary concession to the 'for' side of the debate, and O'Brien moves quickly to say that questions of language or representation are essentially due to the books being 'products of their time'– the 1950s – and that 'the more I think about it [changing the language of Dahl's books], the more problematic I find it'. Similarly, in a discussion of those she interviewed for her newspaper article, O'Brien quickly rejects the view of Andy Griffiths – who asserts his own books are often revised – since he is a 'living author'. To embark on rewriting the works of the past, she claims, is to enter a 'slippery slope' of 'Orwellian' censorship. These strong and alarming assertions are likely to arouse and heighten listeners' anxieties about the consequences of rewriting works from the past, especially when O'Brien raises the prospect of such changes being extended to all works of art, including literature, film and songs. They also evoke the nightmarish world of Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – a world in which texts are continuously re-created 'to fit a particular picture', a scenario that is, for O'Brien, 'the last thing we want'. Her voice takes on a more urgent and insistent tone as she makes these strong assertions, and Faruqi's murmured agreements add to the sense that the presenters have reached a unified position.

Ultimately, O'Brien comes down on the side of Salman Rushdie, seeing changes to Roald Dahl's children's fiction as a form of censorship that should be resisted. In her article she seeks to balance the two sides of the argument, allowing her interviewees to state their views and her readers to form their own judgement. In her contribution to Osman Faruqi's podcast, though, she moves from a considered and often personal view of the novels through to a position where she strongly opposes the changes as well as the broader project of rewriting texts from the past to make them fit present-day attitudes and language use.

Identifies a concession to the argument in favour of the changes, including a key language choice.

Explains how the structure of O'Brien's argument, which evolves from the previously balanced approach to the issue, gradually positions the reader to see the 'against' view as more convincing.

Identifies two terms with strong negative associations that consolidate O'Brien's position in opposition to the changes, and explains how they develop the argument.

Discusses the role of vocal tone and non-verbal elements, maintaining awareness of the fact that this is an audio text.

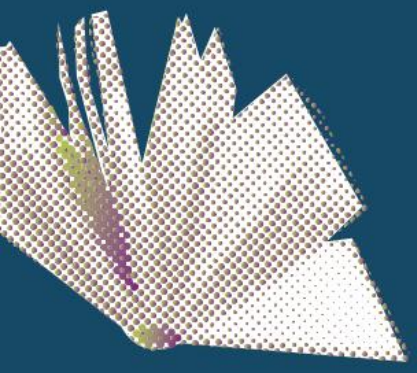
Concludes the discussion with a short paragraph that refers to both texts. While not an essential part of this analysis task, a short concluding paragraph can provide an effective overview and summary of the points made.

CHAPTER 19

PRESENTING A POINT OF VIEW

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Planning your presentation
- Presenting a speech
- Presenting a structured dialogue
- Presenting a debate
- Preparing for your presentation
- Sample speech



In both professional and academic settings, it is likely that you will have to deliver speeches or other presentations. Although many people feel overwhelmed by the prospect of delivering an oral presentation, mastering this skill will make you more confident whenever you are addressing an audience. A well-organised and effectively delivered oral presentation can have an immediate impact on your listeners. It also provides you, the speaker, with the opportunity to employ many of the persuasive techniques that you identify and analyse in your study of persuasive media texts.

There are several ways in which you can deliver your oral presentation, including a speech to your class (with or without visual elements such as slides), a structured dialogue or a debate. This chapter explains the key features of these formats. In addition, it is possible that your school will allow you to present in a recorded format, perhaps in the form of a podcast or a short video. Check with your teacher to see what is possible and what the expectations are.

Planning your presentation

An effective presentation depends on thorough planning and preparation. The planning stage involves selecting an issue, then researching the background details and the points of view that have been expressed on it. Only then will you arrive at a position that is based on a strong understanding of the topic and supported by solid reasons and evidence.

Choosing an issue

Choosing an appropriate issue is the first step in preparing for your presentation. It is important to choose a topic that you are interested in. This will allow you to begin your preparation already knowing something about the issue, and you will be motivated to do some research and find out more about it. Then, when you come to present, it is always easier to talk about something you care about than something you have no interest in. When you are passionate about your topic, your enthusiasm and knowledge will come through in your presentation and help to engage your audience.

It is also important to choose an issue that is being debated in the media, and for which there are at least two clear sides – often framed as 'for' and 'against'. This means you will be able to find relevant information and also weigh up the various arguments that are being presented.

Sample issue: road-user charge for electric vehicles

The issue considered throughout this chapter to illustrate elements of a successful presentation, and for a sample SAC response, is that of a road-user charge for owners of electric vehicles (EVs). The topic of EVs has recently gained traction in Australia as petrol has become much more expensive and the country transitions away from fossil fuels.

A controversial aspect of the use of electric vehicles in Victoria has been the introduction of a user-pays charge, known as the Zero and Low Emission Vehicles (ZLEV) charge. Those in favour of the charge, which is administered by VicRoads, say that it helps to fund essential road maintenance and infrastructure. Those opposed argue that it deters people from buying electric vehicles, when we should be encouraging as many people as possible to do so.

Main contention

Your main contention, expressed in a single sentence, sums up your position on the issue and is the foundation of your argument. By clearly identifying your position, you can focus your preparation on what is important for your presentation – the points and evidence in favour, as well as the counterarguments you will refute.

Identify your main contention

ACTIVITY

Write down your main contention or central argument in one sentence:

I think X because Y.

For example:

I think owners of electric vehicles should pay a road-user charge because all road users should make a contribution to road maintenance and infrastructure.

Purpose and outcome

After establishing your issue and point of view, you will need to conduct research, reading widely and identifying arguments on both sides. This may lead to your gaining new information that changes your position.

Scan the code or click here for a template you can use to summarise information about media texts that express a point of view on your chosen issue.

To make sense of the information you gather, it is essential to have a clear goal. What do you want your audience to think, feel or do by the end of your presentation? Your presentation's intended outcome must be practical and appropriate for your intended audience. For example, when arguing in favour of an electric vehicle road-user charge to an audience of your classmates, it is unreasonable to assume that there is anything they can do to alter the reality of this charge. However, you can encourage them to see its benefits and perhaps to consider the advantages of having an electric car as one of the first cars they own.

Decide on your purpose

ACTIVITY

Set an expected outcome for your presentation by completing the sentence:

When I finish speaking, my audience will ...

For example:

When I finish speaking, my audience will understand why an EV road-user charge is fair and reasonable, and agree that it is a necessary part of moving away from petrol.

Presenting a speech

If you are presenting a speech, your goal is to influence your audience's beliefs, attitudes or behaviours in relation to your issue. To achieve this objective, you must engage your audience through various strategies and techniques. These include aspects of your delivery, such as your facial expressions, body language and eye contact with the audience, as well as the tone, pace and intonation of your voice.

Key features

A speech depends largely on the spoken word, reinforced by visual cues such as gestures and any images used as part of the presentation. Elements that help the audience to follow the line of argument include **repetition** and **signposts** (also known as **transition markers**, e.g. firstly, additionally, for example, finally). The speaker can highlight important points by using non-verbal elements such as **emphasis** (speaking more loudly and forcefully in certain places) and **pauses** (to let an important point 'sink in'). These elements also help to add **variety** to the speech, which is key to holding an audience's attention and interest. Some other features your speech should have are listed on the next page.

Clear purpose

- A speech should have a clear and specific purpose, which the speaker communicates from the beginning.
- The purpose must be realistic and achievable, given the audience's needs, interests and values.

Convincing argument

- The speaker should present a compelling argument for their position on the issue.
- This argument should be based on strong supporting points, sound evidence, credible sources and logical reasoning.

Emotional appeal

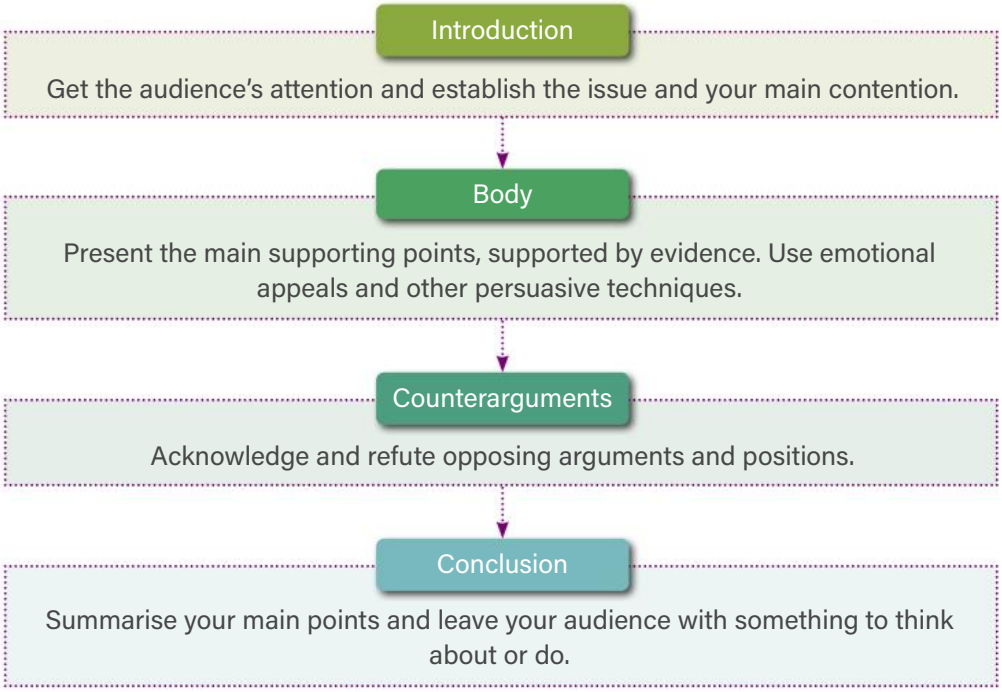
- A speech should also appeal to the audience's emotions, values and beliefs.
- The speaker can use anecdotes and personal experiences, as well as emotive language, to connect with the audience on an emotional level.

Call to action

- A speech should end with a clear call to action or take-away message. This is a statement that motivates the audience to perform a particular action, change their behaviour or simply feel a strong sense of agreement with the speaker's point of view.
- The call to action should be specific, realistic and achievable.

Structuring your speech

A speech should be structured in a way that captures the audience's attention, presents a compelling argument and ends clearly and memorably. Here is a possible structure for your speech.



Presenting a structured dialogue

Presenting as part of a group can be an effective way to deliver a persuasive speech, as it allows for a dynamic exchange of ideas and perspectives. One way to present as a group is through a structured dialogue, in which two or more speakers engage in a conversation about an issue and offer a clear point of view on it.

Key features

A structured dialogue has many of the same features as a speech: it requires a clear, well-supported argument, presented coherently and persuasively. Unlike a speech, though, there is an interactive element that can't be entirely planned for. As a result, each speaker needs to listen carefully, draw on their overall knowledge of the issue and respond respectfully.

Clear roles

- Each speaker should have a clear role and responsibility in the presentation.
- This could involve taking turns discussing different aspects of the argument, or playing devil's advocate to present opposing views and then rebut them.

Coordination

- The group should coordinate their presentation to ensure a cohesive and well-structured argument.
- This involves rehearsing the dialogue together, developing shared talking points, and agreeing on a point of view or common call to action.

Active listening

- Each speaker should actively listen to the others and respond to their points.
- This will help to create a dialogue that engages the audience and demonstrates the group's collective knowledge and expertise on the issue.

Body language

- Non-verbal communication is an essential part of group presentations.
- Speakers should maintain eye contact with the audience, and with each other.
- Speakers should also use appropriate gestures and facial expressions, and be aware of their posture and stance.

Structuring a dialogue

The flow chart opposite shows one way a dialogue could be approached. It assumes the discussion is by a small group rather than by the whole class.

Introduction

The speakers introduce themselves and establish the purpose of their presentation.

Dialogue

The speakers engage in a conversation about the issue, presenting their arguments and responding to each other's points. This could mean each person presents a supporting point, speaking for an equal amount of time.

Counterarguments

The speakers acknowledge and refute opposing arguments and positions.

Conclusion

The speakers summarise their main points and present a clear statement of their position on the issue.

A panel discussion

Another form a group presentation may take is a panel discussion. In a panel discussion, a group of speakers, often experts in their field, engage in a conversation about a particular topic. Each speaker presents their viewpoint, experiences and knowledge about the topic. The discussion is moderated by a facilitator who ensures the conversation flows smoothly and remains on topic.

Panel discussions are often used in conferences, seminars and other public events. They can be an effective way to engage the audience, present multiple perspectives and create a dynamic exchange of ideas.

The panel for an episode of the ABC's *Q+A*.

Presenting a debate

Another effective way of presenting points of view on an issue is through a debate format. A debate is a structured discussion that involves two opposing sides arguing for and against a particular proposition. This format can be useful for presenting two strongly contrasting perspectives on an issue, testing the arguments on either side and engaging the audience in critical thinking.

Key features

A debate contrasts two opposing points of view, so there is little scope for additional perspectives. Each team argues for one point of view and rebuts the arguments of the other team. It is a genuine contest of ideas – unlike a dialogue, in which the group can prepare all their points in advance, a debate requires the speakers to 'think on their feet' and come up with rebuttal points during the course of the debate.

As in other oral presentations, the speaker's use of tone, pace and pitch, as well as their use of body language and eye contact, are essential to an effective speech. In an adjudicated debate, marks are awarded for these non-verbal elements.

Clear proposition

- The debate should have a clear and specific proposition that the teams can argue for or against.
- The proposition should be debatable, relevant and engaging for the audience.

Preparation

- Both sides should have adequate time to research and prepare their case, including their team line or main contention.
- This could involve developing points of argument, finding evidence to support the team's position, and anticipating counterarguments from the other side.

Rules and procedures

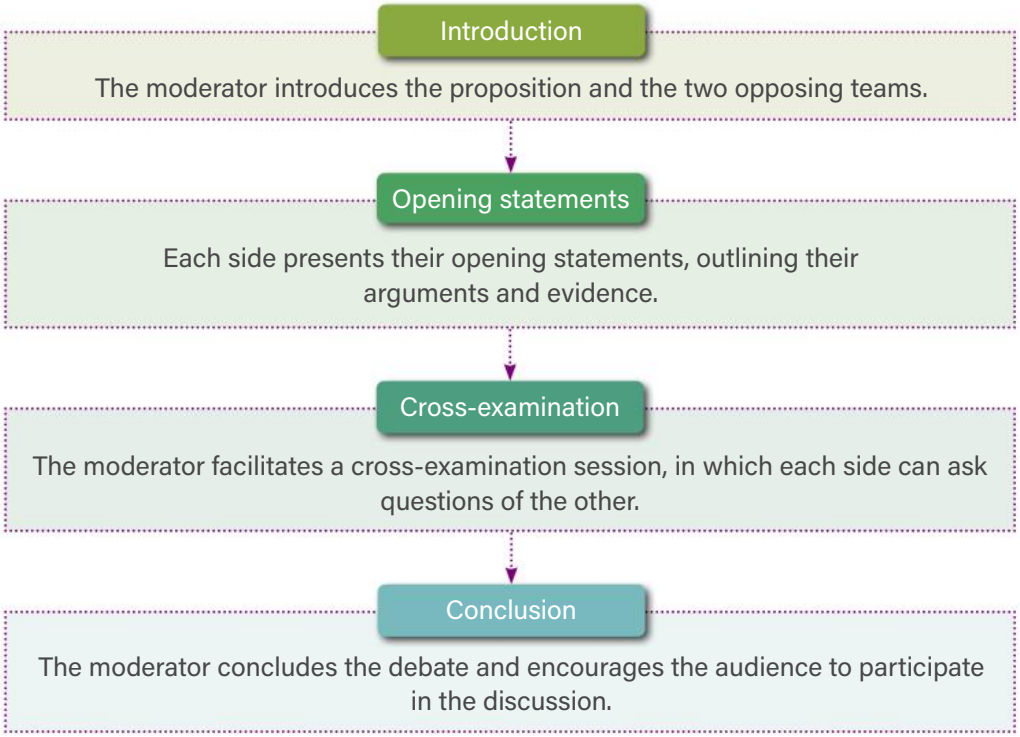
- The debate should have clear rules and procedures that will outline how it will be conducted.
- These should include rules about how long each speaker has to present their arguments, and the extent to which the audience can participate (such as by asking questions).

Rebuttal

- Each side should have the opportunity to rebut the other's arguments.
- This could involve presenting counterarguments, challenging the other side's reasoning or presenting alternative perspectives.

Structuring the debate

Here is one possible structure for a debate. It differs from the debates run by organisations such as the Debaters Association of Victoria through the cross-examination element, which makes it more similar to the sorts of debates held by political leaders before elections.



Preparing for your presentation

Regardless of the form in which you will deliver your response, it is important to prepare thoroughly and practise your delivery. This will help you become familiar with the content, work on your timing and know where and how to modulate your voice to achieve the strongest impact on your audience.

In addition, if you are presenting as part of a team, you will need to meet with your team members to share ideas and allocate roles and responsibilities.

Use the following suggestions to make the most of your practice sessions before you deliver or record your presentation.

- **Practise in front of a mirror.** Stand in front of a mirror and deliver your response. Pay attention to your body language, facial expressions and eye contact. Make notes on any areas that need improvement – for example, you might need to write 'pause' into your notes at certain places, or you might need to stop reading your speech as much so you can look at your audience more. Repeat this exercise with the aim of becoming more confident and fluent each time.
- **Record your speech.** Using your phone, tablet or other recording device, record yourself delivering your presentation. Listen to or watch the recording and note any areas for improvement. These could be visual aspects or aural ones such as tone, pacing and articulation. Do you need to speed up or slow down? Do you need to speak more clearly? Record yourself again, making adjustments, and see if you have improved.
- **Share with your peers.** Share your recorded presentation with your classmates and ask for feedback on your content, delivery and overall effectiveness. Take their suggestions into account and make any necessary revisions.

- **Perform for family members.** Deliver your presentation to your parents or other family members. Ask for their feedback and incorporate their suggestions into your response as needed.

Practise your final version several times to ensure you feel confident and comfortable with the content of your presentation as well as every aspect of your delivery.

Sample speech

The following sample oral presentation is in the form of a speech delivered by a Year 12 student to their class. It presents a point of view on the issue of a road-user charge for Victorian owners of zero and low emission vehicles (ZLEVs).

Scan the code or click here to access a number of articles that provide background information on electric vehicles and the Victorian government's electric vehicle tax.

Good morning everyone,

I'm sure we've all thought about the car we'd love to own and drive, and equally I'm sure we've all wondered how we're going to afford the costs of running and maintaining our car. Especially in these times of rising petrol prices and the need for us all to be more environmentally responsible. So I was alarmed recently when I learned that the Victorian government is actually charging car owners for driving an electric car! It seems, on the face of it, the exact opposite of what is needed. However, I did some research and today I'd like to share my findings with you, and to convince you that the road-user charge for electric vehicle owners is not simply fair and reasonable, but a very necessary part of our transition away from petrol to lower emissions technologies.

Firstly, although it looks like an unfair additional cost, it's not really. It's just that the equivalent cost for petrol car drivers – known as the fuel excise – is hidden in the cost of petrol. Currently it's about 48 cents per litre. You might not think you're paying it when you fill up at the petrol station, but you are. If you put 40 litres in a car, you're paying over $18 in tax. So how does that compare to the charge for an electric vehicle – or EV for short? In Victoria this is known as a ZLEV road-user charge – that's ZLEV for Zero and Low Emissions Vehicles – and it's currently 2.6 cents per kilometre. If you drive 100 k's, that charge would be $2.60. In comparison, let's say you use 7 litres per 100 k's in your petrol car – which is not too bad. (SUVs use much more than this.) That's $3.36. So the EV charge is less than the fuel excise for the vast majority of petrol-fuelled cars on the road. It's not an additional charge, it's an alternative charge, and it's more than fair.

- Uses an opening salutation consistent with the form (a speech), the context and the audience. Beginning with 'ladies and gentlemen', for example, wouldn't be appropriate for this context and audience.
- Provides context for the issue in a way that foregrounds its relevance to the audience.
- Introduces the issue and indicates why it is controversial. The speaker's point of view is not yet revealed, creating a question in the audience's mind.
- Presents the main contention and the purpose for the speech.
- Signposts the first stage of the argument.
- Provides evidence using numerical information and logical reasoning ('if you drive …', 'in comparison …').

Secondly, let's think about where that money goes. The fuel excise goes to the federal government to maintain roads and the infrastructure around roads. As petrol cars become more efficient and use less fuel, the total amount of fuel excise collected by the government will fall. And as more and more people buy EVs, it will fall further. And further. Currently it adds up to around $15 billion. Can you imagine what would happen to our roads if everyone stopped driving petrol cars? That's where the ZLEV charge comes in – it's to ensure the continued source of funds to keep our roads in good condition, to improve the safety of our roads, and to build roads for new and growing suburbs and towns. And it's only fair that ALL road users contribute, not just some. By sharing the cost around, it's more affordable for everyone.

Is the ZLEV levy a disincentive to buying an EV? Yes it is. But you could also say that fuel excise is a disincentive to driving anywhere in a petrol car. It's just part of the cost of living. There is also an argument about the risk of the ZLEV road-user charge going into private hands. Currently in Victoria it's collected by VicRoads, which is now partially privatised. But the funds raised will go to improving Victorian roads as well as building much-needed charging stations, which we're only going to need more of. That's a public benefit, not a private one. The more electric cars we have on the roads, the cleaner the air we breathe, the quieter our neighbourhoods and the lower our greenhouse gas emissions. Whether the scheme is run publicly or privately, or both together, the whole community benefits.

Can I afford to buy an electric car? Not just yet. Like most of us, my first car will be second-hand, and there aren't too many second-hand EVs just yet, and very few cheap new ones. But there will be. And we will still need roads to drive them on. The ZLEV road-user charge is a fair and reasonable way to ensure everyone helps to pay for our roads, now and well into the future.

Thank you.

Signals a second supporting point; guides the audience along as the issue is explored further, conveying an in-depth understanding of the issue.

Uses repetition to emphasise the point.

Uses a rhetorical question to create a sense of alarm in the audience.

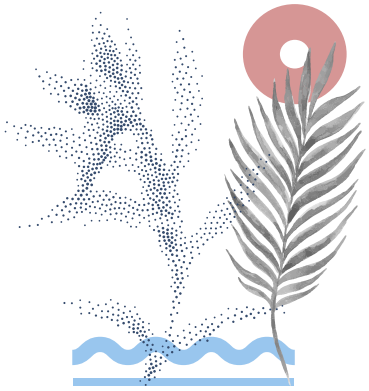
Uses the 'rule of three' ('to keep ... to improve ... to build') for emphasis – this is also known as a tricolon.

Moves on to consider counterarguments, and presents reasons to reject them.

Uses a short, sharp sentence to draw a clear, simple conclusion from some complex discussion.

Draws the speech to a close by returning to the relevance of the issue for the speaker and their audience (similar to the opening of the speech).

Ends by restating the main contention and leaving the audience with a clear message.



AREA OF STUDY 2 **UNIT 4, OUTCOME 2**

TASK 1: ANALYTICAL RESPONSE TO ARGUMENT

Assessment sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Description of task: _____

_____

_____

Assessment criteria	**Level of performance** (Tick to indicate level)
1. Identification and analysis of the intent and logical development of argument	low ⟷ high
2. Identification and analysis of language used to position or persuade an audience	low ⟷ high
3. Identification and analysis of the way in which arguments and language complement one another	low ⟷ high
4. Identification and analysis of the use of evidence to support arguments	low ⟷ high
5. Identification and analysis of the use of visual and/or audio features to support arguments	low ⟷ high
6. Use of structure, paragraphing and analytical language, including relevant metalanguage	low ⟷ high

Teacher comments: _____

_____

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_____

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_____

very low	low	medium	high	very high
1–8	9–16	17–24	25–32	33–40

This is NOT an official assessment sheet; the suggested criteria above are adapted from the key skills in the VCE English/EAL Study Design and the published performance descriptors. Refer to the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/english-and-eal/Pages/Assessment.aspx for official advice and performance descriptors.

Scan the code or click here for a PDF of this assessment sheet.

AREA OF STUDY 2 **UNIT 4, OUTCOME 2**

TASK 2: ORAL PRESENTATION OF A POINT OF VIEW

Assessment sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Description of task: _____

_____

_____

Assessment criteria	**Level of performance** (Tick to indicate level)
1. Application of intent and logical development of an argument	low ⟷ high
2. Use of evidence to support argument	low ⟷ high
3. Use of language to position or persuade an audience	low ⟷ high
4. Use of arguments and language that complement one another	low ⟷ high
5. Construction of a voice appropriate to context and audience	low ⟷ high
6. Use of structures and features of a spoken point of view text	low ⟷ high

Teacher comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

very low	low	medium	high	very high
1–4	5–8	9–12	13–16	17–20

This is NOT an official assessment sheet; the suggested criteria above are adapted from the key skills in the VCE English/EAL Study Design and the published performance descriptors. Refer to the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/english-and-eal/Pages/Assessment.aspx for official advice and performance descriptors.

Scan the code or click here for a PDF of this assessment sheet.

CHAPTER

20

THE EXAM

the exam

Chapter 20 will be available online following the release by the VCAA of exam specifications and a sample exam for VCE English. The exam chapter is expected to be available from March 2024.

THIS CHAPTER WILL INCLUDE:

- the exam format and criteria
- strategies for addressing the task requirements and criteria
- strategies for effective preparation
- advice on managing time in the exam.

Scan the code or click **here** to access Chapter 20: The exam.

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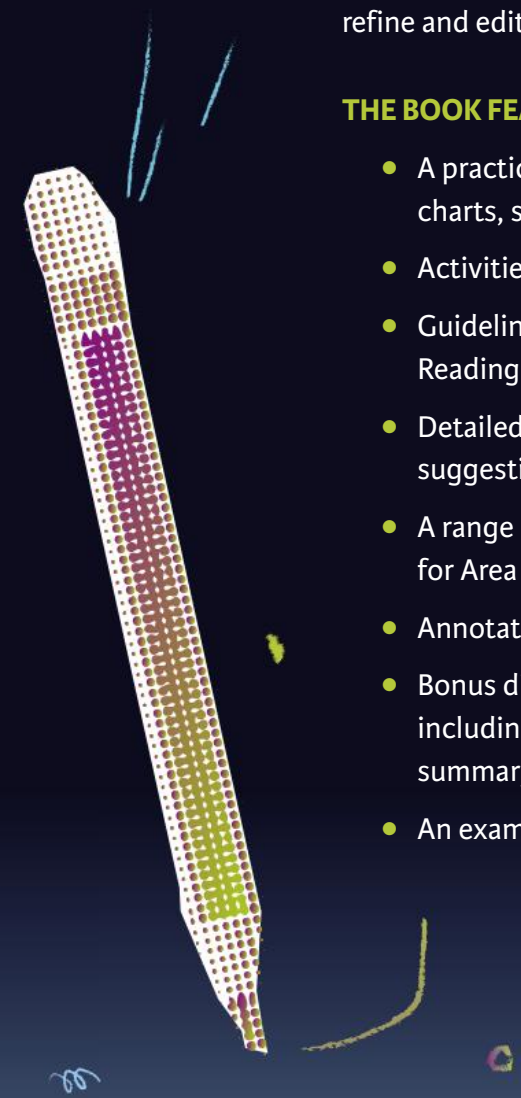

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