



nelson  
**ENGLISH  
FOR QCE**

**1 + 2**

Elli Housden  
Virginia Ayliffe  
Grace Loyden



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Nelson English for QCE U1&2

1st Edition

Elli Housden

Virginia Ayliffe

Grace Loyden

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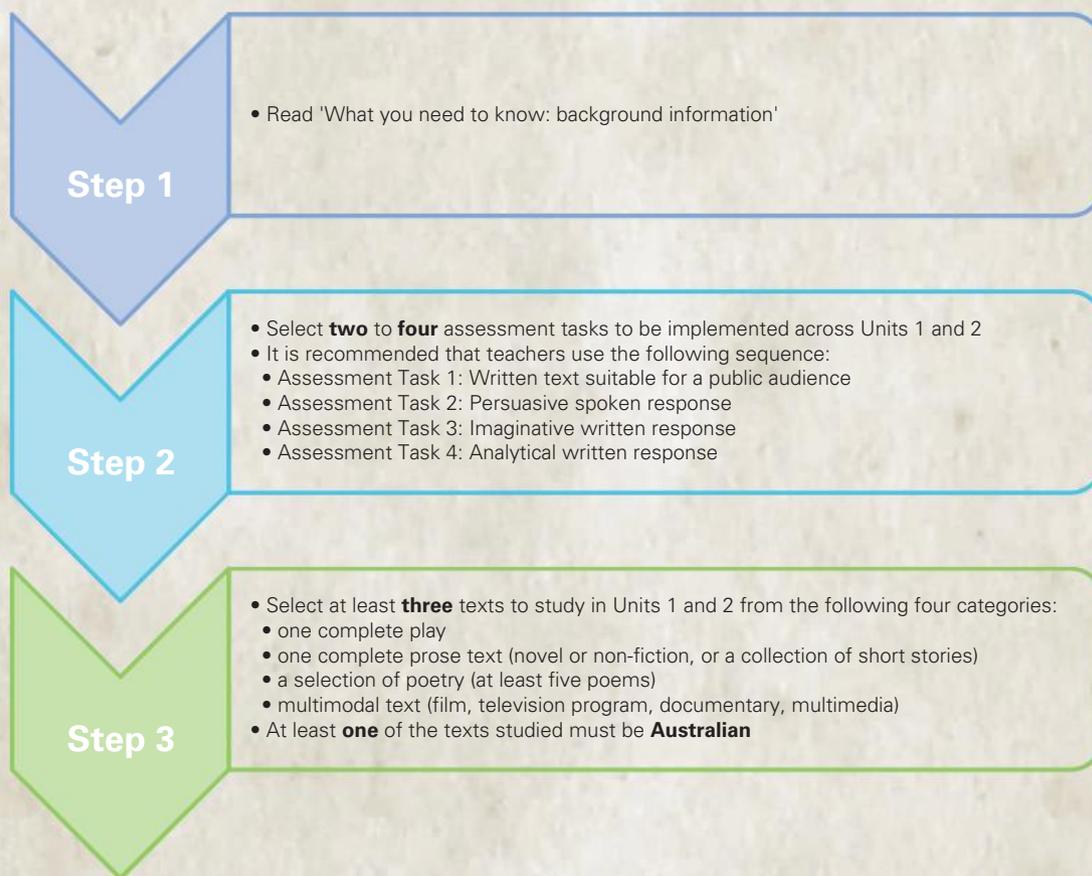


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# Introduction

This textbook is designed to be used as a complete organisational and curriculum resource for Units 1 and 2 of the General Senior Syllabus: English. Teachers and students will be able to work from this textbook to fulfil mandated syllabus objectives and cover subject matter, as well as engage with foundational learning experiences and practise for assessment required in Units 3 and 4.

A full teaching and learning plan is provided on the website accompanying this book but an outline of the recommended design process is below.



The text selections in this textbook have been aligned to suit the curriculum design of the syllabus and arranged to provide teachers with a logical structure. **Chapters 11, 12, 19 and 20 provide ideas for possible assessment tasks that are consistent with the advice provided in Units 3 and 4.**

<b>What you need to know: background information</b>	1 Understanding genre 2 Terminology: words you need to know 3 Analysing texts 4 Characterisation 5 Aesthetic features and stylistic devices	Use these chapters to revise key skills and terminology
<b>Unit 1: Perspectives and texts</b>	6 <i>The Crucible</i> (play)* 7 <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> (novel) and <i>The Good Doctor</i> (TV series) 8 <i>Blackfish</i> (documentary) 9 <i>Jasper Jones</i> (novel) and <i>Jasper Jones</i> (film) 10 Satirical cartoons, <i>The Rabbits</i> (picture book) and <i>Animal Farm</i> (novella)	Choose two chapters from this section
<b>Unit 1 assessment</b>	11 Assessment focus: writing for a public audience 12 Assessment focus: persuasive spoken responses	Use these chapters as a guide when completing assessment
<b>Unit 2: Texts and culture</b>  <b>To align with Syllabus text selection requirements, all texts in these chapters are Australian</b>	13 <i>The Drover's Wife</i> (play)* 14 <i>The Secret River</i> (TV series) 15 <i>The Dry</i> (novel) 16 <i>The Happiest Refugee</i> (non-fiction) 17 <i>Lion</i> (film)* 18 Australian poetry	Choose two chapters from this section
<b>Unit 2 assessment</b>	19 Assessment focus: imaginative written responses 20 Assessment focus: analytical written responses	Use these chapters as a guide when completing assessment

\* included on prescribed text list

## Warnings

- Teachers are advised that some of the texts discussed in this book contain adult themes and strong language. The authors have selected texts they consider appropriate for students at a senior school level but it is strongly recommended that teachers familiarise themselves with the texts to ensure suitability for their specific school context.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this book contains images and names of people who have died. Seeing these images or names may cause sadness and distress to the relatives of those people. We advise reading with caution and apologise for any distress unintentionally caused by the inclusion of this material.
- Readers are advised that documents written in the past, which may be quoted within this book, might use words and descriptions referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Maori peoples that reflect attitudes held at the time but which are considered inappropriate or offensive today.

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## Weblinks

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### **Disclaimer**

Please note that complimentary access to NelsonNet and the NelsonNetBook is available only to teachers who use the accompanying student textbook as a core educational resource in their classroom. Contact your Education Consultant for information about access codes and conditions.

# About the authors

## Elli Housden

Elli Housden is an experienced English teacher and a writer. She has shared her love of literature and writing with students in classrooms in Australia and the United Kingdom and published textbooks in both countries. *Senior Text Types* and *Writing and Responding* are reference texts used widely in Australian schools. *A Stack of Stories*, *Five Senses* and *Step into Stories* are anthologies of short stories, designed to foster a love of reading in secondary students, as well as improve their literary skills and writing ability. Elli is also a published poet, book reviewer and writer of YA and crime fiction. Elli is still involved in some classroom teaching at St Laurence's College, where she was formerly a member of the Senior English staff. She has been a QCS Writing Task marker and a marker in the external exam trial for English.

## Virginia Ayliffe

Virginia Ayliffe is an experienced secondary English teacher at Somerville House in Brisbane. She has worked on coaching projects and inquiry-based projects with Independent Schools Queensland and piloted and edited 'How to Teach' programs written and published by Education Queensland. She has also co-authored textbooks in the A+ National Literacy Tests and Shakespeare Unplugged series.

## Grace Loyden

Grace Loyden is the Head of English at Townsville Grammar School. She has spent much of the last decade teaching English at Spinifex State College in the outback town of Mount Isa and, as a Head of Senior English early in her career, she had a significant role in mentoring beginning English teachers in the isolated environment of northern Queensland. Grace has been a district review panellist for a number of years and was on the expert writing team for the new English syllabus. She has been a QCS Writing Task marker and has been a marker for the external exam trial for English. Grace was the recipient of ETAQ's 2016 Peter Botsman Award, recognising excellence in English education in Queensland.

The authors and publisher would like to thank Dr Anita Jetnikoff for her considered review of the manuscript and insightful contribution to the development of this resource.

# Glossary

**act** a section of a play comprised of a number of scenes

**active voice** where the subject of the sentence performs the action

**aesthetic features** refers to those aspects of texts that prompt emotional and critical reactions; as such, the aesthetic is closely tied to reader/audience positioning; aesthetic features and stylistic devices may draw upon and interplay with textual features used for other purposes

**allegory** a story that has a symbolic meaning beyond its literal interpretation; a form of extended metaphor in which objects, events and characters in a narrative are used to stand for, or refer to, events or concepts that are outside the narrative itself

**analogy** a comparison between one thing and another, typically for the purpose of explanation or clarification

**antagonist** villain or rival in a text; opposite of protagonist

**anthropomorphism** the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to a god, animal or object

**archetype** a familiar character form, such as the hero or villain

**aside** a remark made by a character on stage that is heard only by the audience, and not by other characters

**attitudes** opinions or ideas about an issue

**autobiography** a detailed account of the author's life

**beliefs** convictions that people have based on opinion rather than fact

**caricature** an image, description or representation of a person comprising the exaggerated qualities that create a comical and/or grotesque figure

**cinéma-vérité** a style of documentary filmmaking that aims to present authentic and natural action without the appearance of directorial control or influence

**cliché** an overused phrase or saying

**cliffhanger** a suspenseful ending – sometimes to a chapter or a whole narrative – that has not been resolved

**climax** the point of highest tension; the turning point in the plot or the fate of the protagonist

**cognitions** the mental processes by which knowledge and meaning are acquired

**cognitive verbs** verbs that indicate the mental operations or processes required to answer a question or fulfil a task

**cohesive devices** features of vocabulary, syntax and grammar that bind different parts of a text together; examples include connectives, ellipses, synonyms; in multimodal texts examples include establishing shots in films and icons for links on web pages

**colloquialisms** words or expressions that are used in conversation and change depending on the time period, social class or location; sometimes described as 'slang'

**complication** a problem to be solved; an issue to be dealt with, that is central to the narrative and the protagonist

**composition** the arrangement of images; a synonym for mise-en-scene; the selection and organisation of a text that creates meaning

**concepts** ideas or themes embedded in a text

**connotations** the cultural or emotional associations of individual words

**context** the environment in which a text is responded to or created; context can include the general social, historical and cultural conditions in which a text is responded to and created (the context of culture) or the specific features of its immediate social environment (context of situation)

**cultural assumptions** ideas, beliefs or attitudes about such things as gender, religion, ethnicity, youth, age, disability, sexuality, social class and work that are taken for granted as being part of the fabric of the social practices of a particular culture; cultural assumptions underpin texts and can be used to position audiences

**dramatic monologue** a 'theatrical' speech in poetic form, spoken by one person

**editing** (film) the process of cutting a film together to determine the length and sequence of shots

**empathy** to identify and share the emotions expressed in a text

**epigraph** a short quotation at the opening of a text, included to suggest its theme

**extended metaphor** uses a series of similar images to sustain a comparison between two objects

**fable** a short tale to teach a moral lesson, often with animals or inanimate objects as characters

**feminism** an ideology that advocates political, economic, social and personal equality of the sexes; the fair treatment of women by men

**figurative language** similes and metaphors that use comparisons to create images and mood

**flashback** the inclusion of a scene from the past to add more meaning to the present scene

**formal language** the correct use of grammar; a generally solemn tone; extensive vocabulary

**framing** placing subjects in a shot to focus on a particular subject or image with an appropriate background, for ideological or aesthetic purposes

**gaps** omissions like time lapses that make a text incomplete, which readers fill by making appropriate connections in terms of cultural assumptions underpinning the text and their 'common sense' knowledge of the world

**genre** the categories into which texts are grouped; the term has a complex history within literary and linguistic theory and is often used to distinguish texts on the basis of, e.g. their subject matter (detective fiction, romance fiction, science fiction, fantasy fiction) and form and structure (poetry, novels, short stories); genres are not static but change in response to a range of factors, such as social context, purpose and experimentation; some texts are hybridised or multigenic

**grammar and language structures** the application of knowledge of morphology and syntax to create and express meaning in texts, by systematic arrangement of words, phrases, clauses and sentences to express meaning in texts for particular purposes

**hook** an introductory device to capture the attention of the audience

**identities** people or characters in texts

**ideology** a system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy

**imagery** use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas or states of mind; images are pictures in words; the use of poetic techniques to create descriptions that appeal to the physical senses, creating vivid pictures in the reader's mind

**imperative mood** signified by verbs of command and instruction

**implied** suggested, but not stated

**inclusions** significant aspects of a text, deliberately included for emphasis

**informal language** words, phrases and punctuation that are associated with ordinary social situations

**interlude** a textual intervention in the body of the text

**Internet meme** an image and text, sometimes using mimicry, for humorous purposes circulated on the Internet, including social media

**intertextuality** a relationship, or some connection between texts, generally literary ones, for example, through similar or contrasting perspectives, contexts or, sometimes, direct reference

**invited reading** the intended and expected understanding of the text based on a shared understanding of the social, cultural and historical context of the text

**irony** a discrepancy between appearance and reality; what appears to be the case may actually be the opposite; irony is the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect

**juxtaposition** a literary technique that places two comparatives, or contrasting words, concepts, characters or actions in close proximity in a text to emphasise the difference between them and to create or invoke a reader response

**language** individual words that add to the meaning of the a text, including nouns, pronouns, verbs, words of modality, positive or negative connotation

**literary texts** past and present texts across a range of cultural contexts that are valued for their form, style and enduring or artistic value; while the nature of what constitutes literary texts is dynamic and evolving, they are seen as having personal, social, cultural and aesthetic value and potential for enriching students' scope of experience; literary texts include a broad range of forms including novels, poetry, short stories, plays, multimodal texts, such as films and some non-fiction; the classification of texts as 'literary' changes over time and across cultural contexts, and texts considered non-literary in some contexts are considered literary in other contexts

**marginalise** use techniques to make something less important, e.g. a character, belief or value; opposite of privilege

**memoir** factual account of selected parts of a person's life, generally told in first person

**metalanguage** language of a specific subject or area, e.g. poetry (rhyme) or film (frame)

**metaphor** figurative language that compares two objects by stating that one is the other; a non-literal description where one thing is described as if it were another

**metre** rhythmic pattern in a poem

**mise-en-scene** a French expression that means 'staging an action', whereby the placing of objects on a stage, in a shot or in an image can invoke meaning for the viewer

**modality** the use of verbs to express degrees of possibility and probability, e.g. 'might' as opposed to 'will'

**mode-appropriate features**

include:

- written, e.g. conventional spelling and punctuation
- spoken/signed, e.g. pronunciation, phrasing and pausing, audibility and clarity, volume, pace, silence
- non-verbal, e.g. facial expressions, gestures, proximity, stance, movement
- complementary features, including digital features such as graphics, still and moving images, design elements, music and sound effects

**mood** atmosphere conveyed to the audience through language choices and other stylistic devices

**motif** a prop or symbol that is used recurrently in a text to represent a character or concept in a particular way

**narrative codes** the elements of the story that work together to create the narrative

**non-literary texts** contemporary, traditional and everyday texts that use language (spoken/signed, written, visual, auditory and digital) to explain, interpret, analyse, argue, persuade and give opinions; to remember, recall and report on things, events and issues; to transact and negotiate relationships, goods and services

**nuance** a slight or subtle difference in meaning, expression, feeling or colour

**objective** not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering and representing facts

**omissions** facts that the reader can assume, deliberately left out of a text

**omniscient** all-seeing; able to be everywhere

**organise and sequence** to develop a text logically and purposefully, e.g. to arrange information in paragraphs to ensure meaning is clear

**orientation** introduction; positioning the reader into the text

**pan** to move the camera horizontally or to create a sense of movement or a wide view

**passive voice** where the subject of a sentence receives the action

**pathos** an appeal to an audience's emotion, and in rhetoric is a strategy of persuasion

**patterns and conventions** a genre's distinguishing structures, features and patterns that relate to context, purpose and audience

**person** who is telling the story: first person uses the pronoun 'I' and is usually a character telling the story; third person refers to the author or unknown narrator telling the story about the characters; second person refers to 'you', the reader, but is used in conjunction with either the first or third person

**perspective** in English, the way a reader/viewer is positioned by a text, or how a particular ideology is embedded in a text, e.g. a feminist perspective; a point of view or way of regarding/thinking about situations, facts and texts

**plot (film)** all the events shown in a film

**podcast** an audio blog that may be downloaded from the Internet onto digital devices

**point of view** a grammatical construction that identifies how the narrator is telling the story; it is usually referred to as 'person', i.e. first person, third person, second person, etc.

**postlude** epilogue; an addition to the ending of a text

**prelude** prologue or opening, introductory section before main narrative begins

**privilege** use techniques to make a character, belief or value appear more prominent and valuable

**prose poetry** poetry written in lines of prose, while maintaining poetic qualities such as imagery and figurative language

**protagonist** the central character in a text; opposite of antagonist

**public audience** readers or viewers of a text who belong to the general community; e.g. they may be readers of a blog, magazine or newspaper

**pun** a joke exploiting the different possible meanings of a word or the fact that there are words that sound alike but have different meanings, e.g. 'Denial ain't just a river in Egypt' (attributed to the author Mark Twain)

**purpose** the motive or reason for composing a text

**rap** a text that uses rhythm and rhyme in combination with contemporary 'street' language and music

**red herring** a false clue, designed to act as a decoy

**register** the use of language and detail in a text appropriate for its purpose, audience and context; a register suited to one kind of text may be inappropriate in another; the composer makes deliberate choices when constructing a text in relation to the language, subject matter, the role and relationship with the audience, e.g. the degree of formality or informality for a particular purpose or in a particular social situation

**representation** textual constructions that give shape to ways of thinking about or acting in the world; texts re-present concepts, identities, times and places, underpinned by the cultural assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, values or world view of the writer, shaper, speaker/signer, designer (and of the reader, viewer, listener)

**resolution** ending; where the issue or the problem is resolved

**rhetorical question** a question that is asked for effect; a reply is not expected

**salient feature** the component of a text that first attracts the viewer's eye; the most obvious graphic element in a visual text

**satire** the use of humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule to expose and criticise people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues

**scene** a section of a narrative text that contains continuous action

**select and synthesise** choose and arrange subject matter, evidence, quotations and other textual information and combine them into a coherent whole text

**sensory** appealing to the five senses – sight, sound, smell, touch and taste – to elicit a response from the reader

**shaped** designed or arranged; to influence or position an audience

**silences** omissions where the text does not comment but leaves readers or viewers to draw their own conclusions, based on cultural, social or contextual inferences in the text

**simile** figurative language that compares two objects using 'like' or 'as'; a comparative description where one thing is said to be like another

**slam poetry** poetry performed competitively without a script; it usually deals with contemporary issues or contents and is delivered dramatically, relying on rhythm, rhyme and sometimes humour

**soft focus** a blurred image to create, for example, a romantic or mysterious mood

**source** where a reader/viewer encounters or finds a text

**stage directions** written information in a text that explain how an actor is to move around the stage or deliver a particular line

**story (film)** all of the events shown in a film, as well as any implied events not shown to the audience

**style** the way in which aspects of texts are arranged and how they affect meaning; style can distinguish the work of individual writers, as well as the work of a particular period, or of a particular genre or type of text

**stylistic devices** aspects of texts (such as words, sentences, images), how they are arranged, and how they affect meaning; examples of stylistic devices include narrative viewpoint, approaches to characterisation, structure of stanzas, juxtaposition, nominalisation and lexical choice

**subjective** based on, or influenced by, personal feelings, tastes or opinions; opposite of objective

**symbol** a seemingly simple object, idea or other element of a text that has multiple layers of meaning, or that represents a larger idea

**symbolic codes** in drama, to create the meaning behind the scene, what it symbolises; in plays, representations of times and places, for example, through setting and props or costumes to represent people in society

**symbolism** a symbol is anything that stands for something else in a text and is used to emphasise the qualities of a character or an object; giving ideas of objects meaning other than their literal sense, e.g. black as a colour to symbolise evil

**synonyms** words of similar meaning

**syntax** the order or organisation of words in a sentence to communicate meaning

**technical codes** photographic techniques used in filmmaking, created deliberately using camera equipment

**techniques** literary devices that create the style in a text, e.g. aesthetic devices like imagery or stylistic devices like narrative viewpoint

**text** communication of meaning produced in any medium that incorporates language, including sound, print, film, digital and multimedia representations; texts include written, spoken, non-verbal or visual communication of meaning; they may be extended unified works or series of related pieces

**textual elements** the elements of a specific genre: narrative structure, concepts, identities, aesthetic features and stylistic devices

**theme** the main message(s) of a text

**thesis** the overall argument of a text

**times and places** the context of a text, its historical and social setting

**tone** in English, the voice adopted by a speaker or writer to indicate emotion, feeling or attitude to subject matter and audience, e.g. playful, serious, ironic, formal

**transpose** transform or change

**values** characteristics, qualities, philosophical and emotional stances, e.g. moral principles or standards, often shared with others in a cultural group

**vlog** a video blog or a web log; an online presentation that sometimes incorporates written text as well as video

**voice** the certain style or expression used by the narrator in a story

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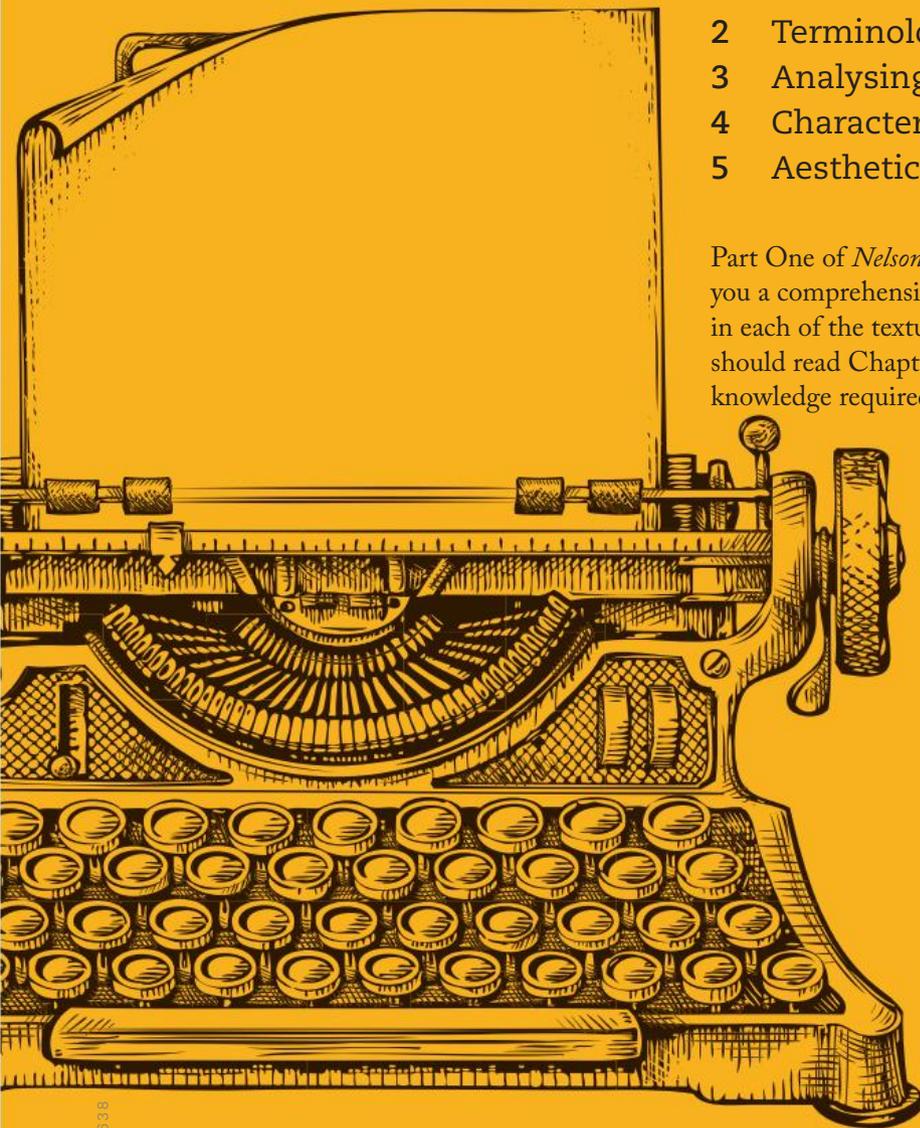


# PART ONE

## What you need to know: background information

- 1 Understanding genre
- 2 Terminology: words you need to know
- 3 Analysing texts
- 4 Characterisation
- 5 Aesthetic features and stylistic devices

Part One of *Nelson English for QCE Units 1 & 2* is designed to give you a comprehensive overview of the key theories that will be explored in each of the textual studies outlined in subsequent chapters. You should read Chapters 1–5 to develop a strong grasp of the background knowledge required to be successful in this course.



# Understanding genre

The table below provides you with a succinct outline of the genre patterns and conventions of the different **text** types studied in English and where they appear in this book. Having a clear understanding of these patterns and conventions will not only help you comprehend the texts you are studying, it will also enhance your ability to analyse the texts and develop a greater appreciation of the author's craft.

**text**  
communication of meaning produced in any medium that incorporates language, including sound, print, film, digital and multimedia representations; texts include written, spoken, non-verbal or visual communication of meaning; they may be extended unified works or series of related pieces

TEXT TYPE	GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	PERSPECTIVES THAT MAY BE REPRESENTED IN THE TEXT	WAYS IN WHICH CHARACTERISATION AND/OR REPRESENTATION OF IDENTITY ARE REVEALED	AESTHETIC FEATURES AND STYLISTIC DEVICES	EXAMPLES OF GENRE STUDY
<b>Prose (novels, novellas and short stories)</b>	A continuous narrative, featuring characters involved in a sequence of linked events, leading to a denouement at the text's conclusion. A novella is a shorter form of a novel, and a short story is a more concise narrative.	author narrator characters ideological	description language dialogue context reflection relationship narrative voice intertextuality	imagery irony metaphors mood/tone symbolism/motif personification representation grammar and syntax	Chapter 7 Chapter 9 Chapter 10 Chapter 15
<b>Poetry</b>	A poem is a compressed and highly stylised form of language and meaning. Poetry is generally written in rhythmic, and sometimes rhyming, stanzas. It is characterised by the aesthetic and stylistic use of language for emotional and critical effect.	poet speaker ideological	(in narrative forms) description language dialogue context reflection relationship narrative voice intertextuality	structure sound techniques imagery metaphor and simile mood/tone personification symbolism	Chapter 5 Chapter 18

TEXT TYPE	GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	PERSPECTIVES THAT MAY BE REPRESENTED IN THE TEXT	WAYS IN WHICH CHARACTERISATION AND/OR REPRESENTATION OF IDENTITY ARE REVEALED	AESTHETIC FEATURES AND STYLISTIC DEVICES	EXAMPLES OF GENRE STUDY
<b>Plays</b>	A play is based on a script intended primarily for viewing as dramatic performance, rather than reading. It is a narrative consisting largely of dialogue.	playwright narrator characters ideological	stage directions action dialogue description setting reflection monologue relationship intertextuality	costuming setting props dialogue mood/tone motif/symbolism dramatic irony	Chapter 6 Chapter 13
<b>Feature films</b>	A full-length film uses professional actors and is screened in a cinema, usually for commercial purposes.	screenwriter director narrator characters ideological	action dialogue setting reflection monologue relationship intertextuality	costuming dialogue editing lighting mood/tone motif/symbolism camera work mise-en-scene props/setting	Chapter 9 Chapter 17
<b>Non-fiction</b>	Literary non-fiction covers a broad range of text types, including biographies and autobiographies, memoirs, journals, diaries, essays and letters. It is literary because, like fiction, it uses aesthetic features and stylistic devices to create emotional and critical effects.	author characters ideological	description language action dialogue context relationship narrative voice intertextuality	imagery irony metaphor mood/tone motif/symbolism personification representation grammar and syntax	Chapter 16
<b>Popular culture</b>	Popular culture describes texts that reflect the perspectives, cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs of contemporary cultures. It includes television programs, video games and other forms of animation, as well as music and short films.	creator narrator characters ideological	description language action dialogue context relationship narrative voice intertextuality	Written texts: See 'Prose'  Visual: See 'Feature films'	Chapter 7 Chapter 14
<b>Documentary</b>	A documentary is a non-fiction film that records an aspect of real life for expository, persuasive or educational purposes of some kind.	screenwriter director narrator characters ideological	narration action dialogue context intertextuality archival footage interview	costuming dialogue editing lighting mood/tone motif/symbolism camera work mise-en-scene props/setting	Chapter 8

TEXT TYPE	GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	PERSPECTIVES THAT MAY BE REPRESENTED IN THE TEXT	WAYS IN WHICH CHARACTERISATION AND/OR REPRESENTATION OF IDENTITY ARE REVEALED	AESTHETIC FEATURES AND STYLISTIC DEVICES	EXAMPLES OF GENRE STUDY
<b>Media and multimodal</b>	<p>Media texts are 'spoken, print, graphic or electronic communications with a public audience' and 'shaped by the technology used in their production' and found in newspapers, magazines, on television, on radio, print and electronic media.</p> <p>Multimodal texts use a combination of two modes (e.g. spoken, written) to communicate ideas to a live or virtual audience, for a particular purpose.</p>	<p>creator expert interviewee ideological</p>	<p>This could be a combination of any of the techniques listed in other text types, depending on the text's context, purpose and audience.</p>	<p>expository structure headlines or title stills persuasive language imagery figurative language representation symbolism/motif mood/tone grammar and syntax</p>	<p>Chapter 7 Chapter 8 Chapter 9 Chapter 10 Chapter 12 Chapter 17</p>

# Terminology: words you need to know

## Using terminology in General Senior English

You will be expected to analyse and create texts using the terminology from the General Senior English syllabus. You are advised to revisit this page at the beginning of each unit of work and before completing assessment items to ensure that you understand the terminology and can use it as required.

## Defining key terms

**patterns and conventions:** a genre's distinguishing structures, features and patterns that relate to context, purpose and audience

**genre:** the categories into which texts are grouped; the term has a complex history within literary and linguistic theory and is often used to distinguish texts on the basis of, e.g. their subject matter (detective fiction, romance fiction, science fiction, fantasy fiction) and form and structure (poetry, novels, short stories); genres are not static but change in response to a range of factors, such as social context, purpose and experimentation; some texts are hybridised or multigenic

**perspective:** in English, the way a reader/viewer is positioned by a text, or how a particular ideology is embedded in a text, e.g. a feminist perspective; a point of view or way of regarding/thinking about situations, facts and texts

**representation:** textual constructions that give shape to ways of thinking about or acting in the world; texts re-present concepts, identities, times and places, underpinned by the cultural assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, values or world view of the writer, shaper, speaker/signer, designer (and of the reader, viewer, listener) <made verbatim from syllabus at permission researcher's request>

**concepts:** ideas or themes embedded in a text

**identities:** people or characters in texts who are representations of identities in (lived) cultural and social contexts

**times and places:** the context of a text, its historical and social setting

**cultural assumptions:** ideas, beliefs or attitudes about such things as gender, religion, ethnicity, youth, age, disability, sexuality, social class and work that are taken for granted as being part of the fabric of the social practices of a particular culture; cultural assumptions underpin texts and can be used to position audiences

**attitudes:** opinions or ideas about an issue

**values:** characteristics, qualities, philosophical and emotional stances, e.g. moral principles or standards, often shared with others in a cultural group

**beliefs:** convictions that people have based on opinion

**aesthetic features:** refers to those aspects of texts that prompt emotional and critical reactions; as such, the aesthetic is closely tied to reader/audience positioning; aesthetic features and stylistic devices may draw upon and interplay with textual features used for other purposes

**stylistic devices:** aspects of texts (such as words, sentences, images), how they are arranged, and how they affect meaning; examples of stylistic devices include narrative viewpoint, approaches to characterisation, structure of stanzas, juxtaposition, nominalisation and lexical choice

**select and synthesise:** choose and arrange subject matter, evidence, quotations and other textual information and combine them into a coherent whole text

**organise and sequence:** to develop a text logically and purposefully, e.g. to arrange information in paragraphs to ensure meaning is clear

**cohesive devices:** features of vocabulary, syntax and grammar that bind different parts of a text together; examples include connectives, ellipses, synonyms; in multimodal texts examples include establishing shots in films and icons for links on web pages

**language choices:** decisions about the selection of vocabulary that is appropriate to particular purposes and contexts

**grammar and language structures:** the application of knowledge of morphology and syntax to create and express meaning in texts, by systematic arrangement of words, phrases, clauses and sentences to express meaning in texts for particular purposes

**mode-appropriate features:** include:

- written, e.g. conventional spelling and punctuation
- spoken/signed, e.g. pronunciation, phrasing and pausing, audibility and clarity, volume, pace, silence
- non-verbal, e.g. facial expressions, gestures, proximity, stance, movement
- complementary features, including digital features such as graphics, still and moving images, design elements, music and sound effects

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## Assessment terminology: cognitions

**cognitions**  
the mental processes by which knowledge and meaning are acquired

**cognitive verbs**  
verbs that indicate the mental operations or processes required to answer a question or fulfil a task

Aside from comprehending and interpreting the conceptual and textual terms above, you will need to understand the meaning of the following **cognitive verbs** that are used in framing most assessment tasks.

**analyse:** dissect to ascertain and examine constituent parts and/or their relationships; break down or examine in order to identify the essential elements, features, components or structure; determine the logic and reasonableness of information; examine or consider something in order to explain and interpret it, for the purpose of finding meaning or relationships and identifying patterns, similarities and differences

**argue:** give reasons for or against something; challenge or debate an issue or idea; persuade, prove or try to prove by giving reasons

**comment:** express an opinion, observation or reaction in speech or writing; give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation

**consider:** think deliberately or carefully about something, typically before making a decision; take something into account when making a judgment; view attentively or scrutinise; reflect on

**create:** bring something into being or existence; produce or evolve from one's own thought or imagination; reorganise or put elements together into a new pattern or structure or to form a coherent or functional whole

**decide:** reach a resolution as a result of consideration; make a choice from a number of alternatives

**define:** give the meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity; state meaning and identify or describe qualities

**describe:** give an account (written or spoken) of a situation, event, pattern or process, or of the characteristics or features of something

**determine:** establish, conclude or ascertain after consideration, observation, investigation or calculation; decide or come to a resolution

**discuss:** examine by argument; sift the considerations for and against; debate; talk or write about a topic, including a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses; consider, taking into account different issues and ideas, points for and/or against, and supporting opinions or conclusions with evidence

**examine:** investigate, inspect or scrutinise; inquire or search into; consider or discuss an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue

**explain:** make an idea or situation plain or clear by describing it in more detail or revealing relevant facts; give an account; provide additional information

**identify:** distinguish; locate, recognise and name; establish or indicate who or what someone or something is; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognise and state a distinguishing factor or feature

**interpret:** use knowledge and understanding to recognise trends and draw conclusions from given information; make clear or explicit; elucidate or understand in a particular way; bring out the meaning of, e.g. a dramatic or musical work, by performance or execution; bring out the meaning of an artwork by artistic representation or performance; give one's own interpretation of; identify or draw meaning from, or give meaning to, information presented in various forms, such as words, symbols, pictures or graphs

**reflect on:** think about deeply and carefully

**select:** choose in preference to another or others; pick out

**show:** provide the relevant reasoning to support a response

Glossary terms in blue are from the Nelson English for QCE 1&2 General Senior Syllabus  
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# Analysing texts

## shaped

designed or arranged; to influence or position an audience

## context

the environment in which a text is responded to or created; context can include the general social, historical and cultural conditions in which a text is responded to and created (the context of culture) or the specific features of its immediate social environment (context of situation)

## style

the way in which aspects of texts are arranged and how they affect meaning; style can distinguish the work of individual writers, as well as the work of a particular period, or of a particular genre or type of text

## purpose

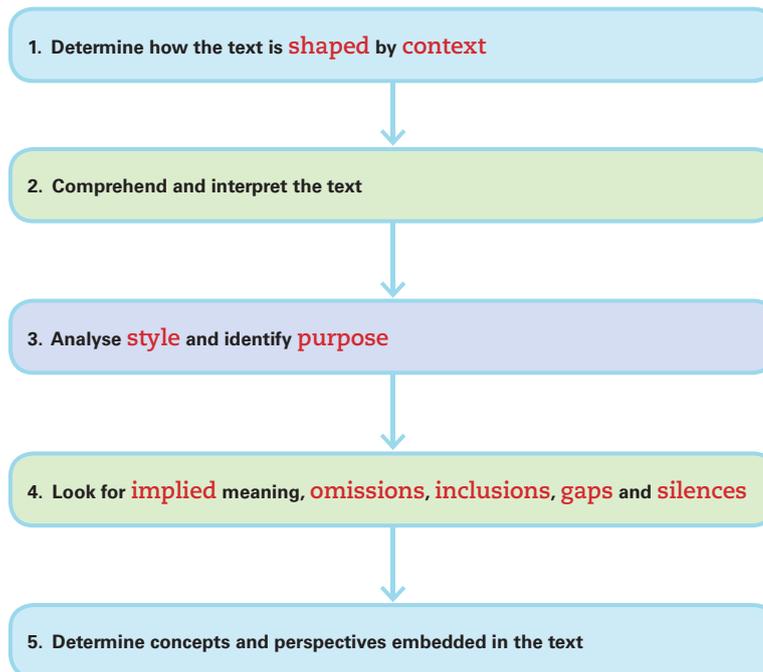
the motive or reason for composing a text

## implied

suggested, but not stated

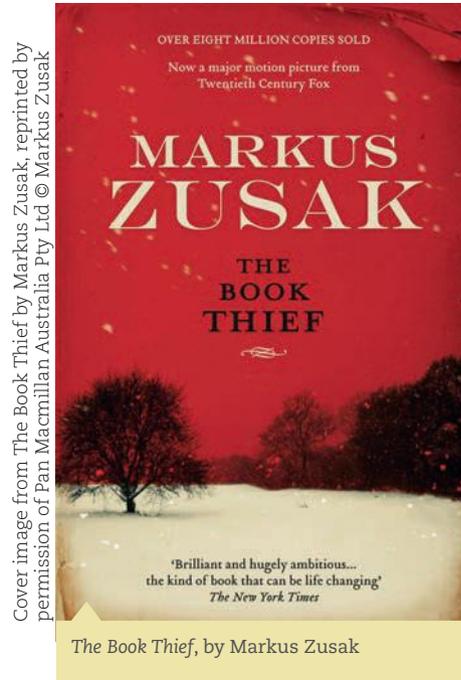
## A step-by-step process of analysis

This is the process you need to follow for effective analysis of texts:



# Example of the analytical process

Below is an extract from *The Book Thief* (2005), by Australian author Markus Zusak, set in Germany during the Second World War. This section describes Liesel, the protagonist, a young girl who has just parted from her mother and arrived at the home of her new foster family.



Cover image from *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak, reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd © Markus Zusak

**omissions**  
facts that the reader can assume, deliberately left out of a text

**inclusions**  
significant aspects of a text, deliberately included for emphasis

**gaps**  
omissions like time lapses that make a text incomplete, which readers fill by making appropriate connections in terms of cultural assumptions underpinning the text and their 'common sense' knowledge of the world

**silences**  
omissions where the text does not comment but leaves readers or viewers to draw their own conclusions, based on cultural, social or contextual inferences in the text

The Hubermanns lived in one of the small block houses on Himmel Street. A few rooms, a kitchen, and an outhouse shared with neighbours. The roof was flat and there was a shallow basement for storage. It was not a basement of adequate depth. In 1939, this wasn't a problem. Later, in '42 and '43, it was. When air raids started, they always needed to rush down the street to a better shelter.

In the beginning, it was the profanity that made the greatest impact. It was so vehement and prolific. Every second word was Saumensch or Saukerl or Arschloch. For people who aren't familiar with these words, I should explain. Sau, of course, refers to pigs. In the case of Saumensch, it serves to castigate, berate or plain humiliate a female. Saukerl (pronounced 'saukairl') is for a male. Arschloch can be translated directly into arsehole. That word, however, does not differentiate between the sexes. It simply is.

'Saumensch du dreckigs!' Liesel's foster mother shouted that first evening, when she refused to have a bath. 'You filthy pig! Why won't you get undressed?' She was good at being furious. In fact, you could say that Rosa Hubermann had a face decorated with constant fury. That was how the creases were made in the cardboard texture of her complexion.

Liesel, naturally, was bathed in anxiety. There was no way she was getting into any bath, or into bed for that matter. She was twisted into one corner of the closet-like washroom, clutching for the nonexistent arms of the wall for some level of support. There was nothing but dry paint, difficult breath and the deluge of abuse from Rosa.

'Leave her alone.' Hans Hubermann entered the fray. His gentle voice made its way in, as if slipping through a crowd. 'Leave her to me.'

He moved closer and sat on the floor, against the wall. The tiles were cold and unkind.

'You know how to roll a cigarette?' he asked her, and for the next hour or so, they sat in the rising pool of darkness, playing with the tobacco and cigarette papers, and Hans Hubermann smoking them.

When the hour was up, Liesel could roll a cigarette moderately well. She still didn't have a bath.

Extract from *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak, reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd

## Responding

Read the following table in response to the extract on the previous page. The analytical process has been modelled for you.

1. CONTEXTUAL FEATURES	
a. What does the extract reveal about:	
i. the physical environment	i. The extract describes a modest house, identical to others on the street. The washroom is closet-like.
ii. the historical era	ii. The historical era is identified as 1939, the beginning of Second World War. There is reference to the need to retreat to an air raid shelter in times of bombing.
iii. the social/cultural background of the text?	iii. The social background suggests a family of limited economic means as the Hubermann's share their 'outhouse' 'with neighbours'.
b. Does the context of the passage suit the content? How do the contextual features affect the tone of the passage?	b. The contextual features complement the tone of the passage, hinting at the grimness of war and a basement that was an inadequate air raid shelter.
2. COMPREHEND AND INTERPRET	
a. Summarise the extract briefly.	a. Liesel arrives at the Hubermann's, her foster parents' house.
b. Explain the structure of the extract in terms of plot development.	b. The extract describes the house, and the mood and time of the novel's setting. It then describes the interaction between Liesel and her foster parents on their first evening together.
c. Characterisation/narration:	
i. The extract is written in third person but the action is seen through Liesel's eyes. What is revealed about Liesel?	i. Liesel is anxious in her new surroundings and is affected by the 'profanity' and 'deluge of abuse' from her foster mother.
ii. Describe the Hubermanns.	ii. The Hubermanns are a complete contrast to each other. Rosa is fierce and controlling, shouting obscenities, and Hans is patient, with a 'gentle' voice.
iii. Identify three key quotations that best reveal character in the extract.	iii. 'Liesel, naturally, was bathed in anxiety.' 'Rosa Hubermann had a face decorated with constant fury.' 'Leave her to me.' Hans shows compassion and entertains Liesel.
3. STYLE AND PURPOSE	
a. Identify images that create a visual effect or appeal to the senses.	a. 'they sat in the rising pool of darkness, playing with the tobacco and the cigarette papers ...' "Saumensch du dreckkigs!" Liesel's foster mother shouted that first evening, when she refused to have a bath.'
b. Explain how these word choices affect the tone of the extract.	b. These images create contrasting moods, the one angry and aggressive and the other calm. The reference to pigs and the use of German language intensifies the mood.
c. Examine how the sentence structure is used in the text. Discuss the effects of sentence types and sentence length on the overall impact of the extract.	c. Sentences where the narrator describes and explains tend to be longer than the sections with action and dialogue. This creates variety.
d. Identify the tense used and decide why it has been chosen by the author.	d. The past tense is appropriate for a novel set during Second World War.



**4. IMPLIED MEANING, OMISSIONS, INCLUSIONS, GAPS AND SILENCE**

a. Omissions	a. Omissions: The reader might wonder why Rosa would want to foster a child.
b. Inclusions	b. Inclusions: The German swear words have been repeated to reveal Rosa's character.
c. Gaps	c. Gaps: Nothing is mentioned in detail about the hour Liesel spent learning to roll cigarettes.
d. Silences	d. Silences: The relationship between the Hubermanns is cause for speculation, given their contrasting personalities.
e. Implied meaning	e. Implied: At the end of the extract, Hans has managed to overcome Liesel's anxiety.

**5. THE PERSPECTIVE EMBEDDED IN THE TEXT**

a. Select a sentence that reveals the perspective of the narrator, or the central character's perspective on the situation described.	a. Liesel 'was twisted into one corner of the closet-like washroom, clutching for the nonexistent arms of the wall for some level of support.'
b. Identify the issue being explored in the extract.	b. The issue involves Liesel's loss of her own family and placement in a new home with strangers.
c. Define the overall purpose of the extract.	c. The purpose is to create an insight into Liesel's new life at the beginning of the war.
d. Why is this likely to be a key passage in the novel?	d. It's a key passage because it represents a turning point for Liesel and creates suspense.

Extracts from *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak, reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd.

## Analysing a poem

Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967) was a British war poet and soldier who was decorated for bravery in the First World War. Sassoon questioned the mindless patriotism of soldiers as a result of his firsthand experience of the horrors of war in the trenches. This experience led to him being admitted to a psychiatric hospital where he met fellow anti-war poet Wilfred Owen. Both wrote many famous and revealing poems about the emotional and physical suffering of soldiers serving on the Western Front.



Alamy Stock Photo/Atomic

Australian soldiers in the trenches during the First World War

### Does it Matter?

Does it matter? -losing your legs?  
 For people will always be kind,  
 And you need not show that you mind  
 When others come in after hunting  
 To gobble their muffins and eggs.

>>

Does it matter? -losing your sight?  
There's such splendid work for the blind;  
And people will always be kind,  
As you sit on the terrace remembering  
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter-those dreams in the pit?  
You can drink and forget and be glad,  
And people won't say that you're mad;  
For they know that you've fought for your country,  
And no one will worry a bit.

Copyright Siegfried Sassoon by kind permission of the Estate of George Sassoon

## Responding

On a first reading, you are not expected to understand everything, though you will get a sense of the poem's meaning. Answer the questions below. These provide a step-by-step analysis of the text that follows the analytical process outlined earlier.

- 1 **Examine** the poem's context. Refer to the time frame, the place and the social context.
- 2 **Explain** the situation described in the poem and the images created.
- 3 **Identify** the speaker and to whom he is speaking.
- 4 **Explain** the meaning and impact of the repetition of the **rhetorical question** 'Does it matter?'.
- 5 The key to the success of this poem lies in its **ironic tone**. **Determine** what this tone implies about the attitude to injured soldiers as expressed by the speaker in the poem.
- 6 The soldier, the subject of the poem, is **marginalised** in a number of ways. **Discuss** what is implied by the omission of the soldier's 'voice'.
- 7 **Identify** the purpose of this poem and the perspective the text is attempting to convey to readers.
- 8 War poems like this were controversial when they were first published. **Consider** how people of the time, those who had never been to war, may have responded to 'Does it matter?'.

### rhetorical question

a question that is asked for effect; a reply is not expected

### irony

a discrepancy between appearance and reality; what appears to be the case may actually be the opposite; irony is the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect

### tone

in English, the voice adopted by a speaker or writer to indicate emotion, feeling or attitude to subject matter and audience, e.g. playful, serious, ironic, formal

### marginalise

use techniques to make something less important, e.g. a character, belief or value opposite of privilege

## Analysing a non-fiction text

Here is an extract from Ned Kelly's famous Jerilderie letter, written to the press in 1879. Dictated to Joe Byrne, another member of Kelly's gang, the letter is an attempt to defend Kelly against the shooting of a policeman.



An artist's depiction of the famous bush ranger Ned Kelly

Getty Images/Popperfoto

9780170421638

... and were they my own brothers I could not have been more sorry for them this cannot be called wilful murder for I was compelled to shoot them or lie down and let them shoot me it would not be wilful murder if they packed our remains in shattered into a mass of animated gore to Mansfield they would have got great praise and credit as well as promotion but I am recorded a horrid brute because I had not been cowardly enough to lie down for them under such trying circumstances and insults to my people certainly their wives and children are to be pitied but they must remember those men came into the bush with the intention of scattering pieces of me and my brother all over the bush and yet they know and acknowledge I have been wronged and my mother and four or five men lagged innocent and is my brothers and sisters and my mother not to be pitied also who was has no alternative only to put up with the brutal and cowardly conduct of a parcel of big ugly fat necked wombat headed big bellied magpie legged narrow hipped splawfooted sons of Irish bailiffs or English landlords which is better known as Officers of Justice or Victorian Police who some calls honest gentlemen but I would like to know what business an honest man would have in the Police as it is an old saying It takes a rogue to catch a rogue and a man that knows nothing about roguery would never enter the force and take an oath to arrest brother sister father or mother if required and to have a case and conviction if possible any man knows it is possible to swear a lie and if a policeman looses a conviction for the sake of swearing a lie he has broke his oath ...

Source: Jerilderie letter by Ned Kelly, 1879. National Museum of Australia  
<http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/highlights/jerilderie-letter>

### Responding

Follow the analytical process by answering these questions.

- 1 **Describe** the social and historical context in which the letter was composed.
- 2 **Summarise** the writer's argument and identify his purpose.
- 3 **Identify** aspects of Ned Kelly's character that are revealed in the letter.
- 4 **Identify** examples of style that create an insight into the author of the letter.
- 5 **Consider** what omissions, gaps or silences there may be in the text.
- 6 **Discuss** the perspective that is embedded in the text and how the reader is positioned by the subject matter and style of the text.

# Characterisation

## extra info

**A Christmas Carol:** a novel by Charles Dickens, published in England (1843), about Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly man who is transformed by a visit from four ghosts at Christmas. Adapted to the screen many times, the latest animated version was released in 2009.

## techniques

literary devices that create the style in a text, e.g. aesthetic devices like imagery or stylistic devices like narrative viewpoint

## protagonist

the central character in a text; opposite of antagonist

## antagonist

villain or rival in a text; opposite of protagonist

Characters exist in fiction to create empathy and maintain interest, so their appeal is vital – not that we don't love to hate some characters, like Scrooge at the beginning of *A Christmas Carol*. Sometimes, the more odious the character, the greater the interest the reader has in them. Your reaction to characters will depend on your individual reading tastes and experiences. No character is created without a role or function. Even minor characters have been created with a purpose.

Characterisation refers to the **techniques** authors use to construct a:

- **protagonist**
- **antagonist**
- minor characters.

Some fictional characters seem to come to life in the real world and become more famous than real-life good guys, heroes and terrible tyrants; for example, Harry Potter. One famous historical example of this phenomenon occurred in 1893, when author Arthur Conan Doyle decided to push **Sherlock Holmes**, his super-hero detective, over a waterfall. Reader reaction was so strong that it's believed that fans in London wore black armbands in protest. The author was forced to resurrect his hero before the magazine that printed his stories went bankrupt. Just as well. Sherlock Holmes is still 'alive' in print and visual media today.



This may appear just to be a photograph of a man in a hat, holding a pipe and a magnifying glass, but to many people this is a depiction of Sherlock Holmes

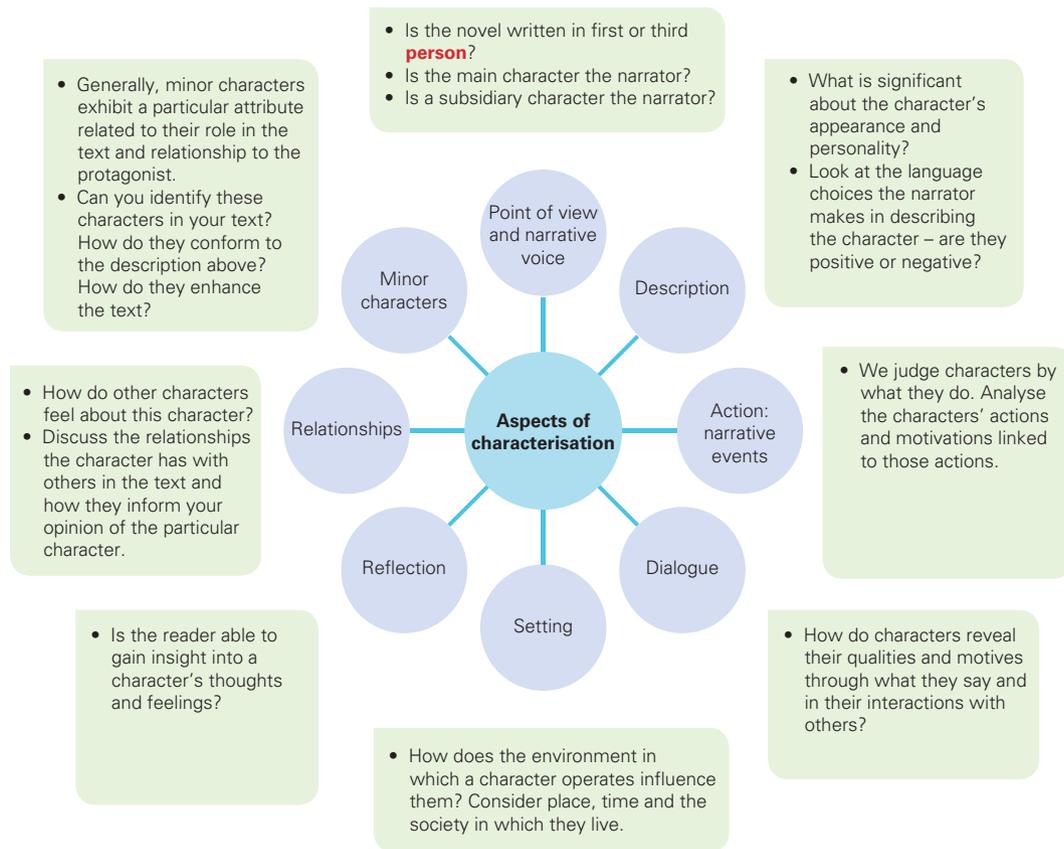
Alamy Stock Photo/age fotostock

9780170421638

There are also memorable characters who are so loathsome and irritating that they must be deemed to be successful creations. Some of these are minor characters who seem to be included in the text just to frustrate the hero or heroine, and the reader. Creating characters may look easy to a reader, but that viewpoint is deceptive.

## How characters are created

If the plot is the backbone of fiction, then characters are its heart. Characters are revealed to the reader in a variety of ways.



Aspects of characterisation

**extra info**  
**Sherlock Holmes:** iconic, fictional private detective, created by British crime writer Arthur Conan Doyle in 1887, in a novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, followed by more than 50 short stories and four more novels. Many film adaptations have been made of Holmes and his faithful sidekick, Watson, solving impossible crimes, and a recent TV series, *Sherlock* (2010), was produced by the BBC.

**person** who is telling the story: first person uses the pronoun 'I' and is usually a character telling the story; third person refers to the author or unknown narrator telling the story about the characters; second person refers to 'you', the reader, but is used in conjunction with either the first or third person

## Point of view and the narrative voice

Most novels are written in third person. Some narrators can look through the eyes and into the thoughts of all the other characters in the text.

# Omniscient narration

**omniscient**  
all-seeing; able to be everywhere

An **omniscient** narrator is all-seeing, allowing readers to gain insight into a range of characters' thoughts and emotions. There are two types of omniscient narrators: third person and first person.

## Third-person omniscient

A third-person omniscient narrator is the narrative choice often regarded as the most objective method of narration, as the writer allows readers insight into the thoughts and feelings of all major characters.

## First-person omniscient

This narrator may be a character, but they are also an external observer of the action. Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby* is an example of a first-person omniscient narrator. The first-person omniscient narrator is different from the first-person narrator, who is closely connected to the action.

## Third-person limited narration

Third-person limited narration is where the author writes in the third person, usually through the eyes of a central character. This allows the reader to know and connect with the mind of an individual character. Individual perspectives are foregrounded with a subjective view of the world.

## Multiple narration

Multiple narration involves more than one narrator, generally in alternate chapters. Narrators may tell different versions of the same event from their respective points of view or focus on separate storylines. In *The Help*, Kathryn Stockett uses three different narrators to provide different perspectives about racial issues in the American south.

## First-person narration

There is an increasing trend towards first-person narration. The central character is often the narrator in a novel, writing as 'I' in the first person. This means that the other characters and the action are seen only through this character's eyes.

This narrative style may lead you to ask yourself whether you can trust the narrator. Is the narrator telling you the truth? Some characters may seem **privileged** by the narrator, dominating the narrative and vying for the reader's sympathy. Others may seem **marginalised**, having less power or importance, even though they may be more worthy or interesting.



Boys' soap-box derby, 1939. State Library of South Australia [B 7798/54.1]

In *Unreliable Memoirs*, Clive James tells an entertaining story about a billycart race, but is it true?

### extra info

**The Great Gatsby:** a novel published in 1925 by American author F. Scott Fitzgerald. Nick Carraway narrates the story of the mysterious millionaire Jay Gatsby; the book has been adapted to film, most recently in 1974 and 2013.

### extra info

**The Help:** a novel published in 2009 by American author Kathryn Stockett. It focuses on racism in the American south in the 1960s, through the eyes of three different narrators. It was adapted into a film version in 2011.

### privilege

use techniques to make a character, belief or value appear more prominent and valuable

### marginalise

use techniques to make something less important, e.g. a character, belief or value; opposite of privilege

*Unreliable Memoirs* by Clive James is an example of first-person narration. As the title suggests, the reader is invited to question the reliability of the narrator's version of the events of his childhood. James's purpose in this non-fiction is to entertain and to 'stretch' the truth in the pursuit of humour, as he is a comedic writer. In other texts, unreliable narrators may be more sinister, or have hidden motives or a subtext that the reader must discern.

After school and at weekends boys came from all over the district to race on the Sunbeam Avenue footpaths. There would be twenty or thirty carts, two thirds of them with ball-races. The noise was indescribable. It sounded like the Battle of Britain going on in someone's bathroom ...

The Irene Street corner was made doubly perilous by Mrs Branthwaite's poppies. Mrs Branthwaite inhabited the house on the corner. She was a known witch ... It was widely believed that she poisoned cats ...

One Saturday ... I organized the slower carts like my own into a train ... From its very first run down the far side, my super car was a triumph ... Why did I ever suggest that we should transfer it to the near side and try the Irene Street turn?

With so much inertia the super-cart started slowly, but it accelerated like a piano falling out of a window. Long before we reached the turn I realized that there had been a serious miscalculation. Sir Isaac Newton would have got it right. It was too late to do anything except pray ... First gradually, then with stunning finality, the monster lashed its enormous tail.

The air was full of flying ball-bearings, bits of wood, big kids, little kids, koalas and dummies. Most disastrously of all, it was also full of poppy petals. Not a bloom escaped the scythe. Those of us who could still run scattered to the winds, dragging our wounded with us.

*Unreliable Memoirs* by Clive James, Pan Macmillan, London 2015, pp. 31-34

### extra info

**Unreliable Memoirs:** published in 1980, this is Australian author and TV presenter Clive James's humorous memoir. James entertains readers with anecdotes about his boyhood in Sydney's southern suburbs in the 1940s and 1950s.

### connotations

the cultural or emotional associations of individual words

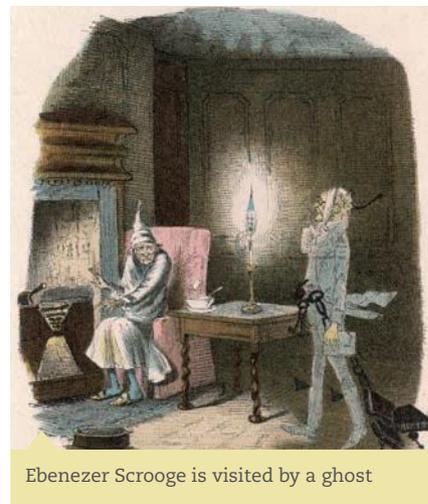
### Responding

- 1 **Consider** your personal reaction to the narrator's depiction of himself as a young boy.
- 2 This is just one version of the events of James's childhood. **Discuss** how Mrs Branthwaite's version, or other versions, may tell a different story.

## Descriptions of characters

Language is used to represent a character's appearance and personality. The physical appearance of a character influences our opinion of them. Words, even names, have powerful **connotations**. Ironically, in the case of the character below, his name is more famous than he is. You may know what a 'scrooge' is, but have you read *A Christmas Carol*?

Read the following extract from *A Christmas Carol* (1843) by Charles Dickens. The central character, Ebenezer Scrooge, is introduced.



Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by a ghost

AAP Image/Mary Evans Picture Library

Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, gasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner. Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, 1843

### Responding

- 1 **Identify** the descriptive vocabulary in the passage and use a dictionary to define each word.
- 2 Construct the following table in your book, or on your laptop or tablet, and categorise the words you have identified as to whether they describe the character's appearance or personality.

APPEARANCE	PERSONALITY

- 3 **Explain** how the language in this passage positions the reader to view Scrooge.
- 4 This passage uses a third-person narrator. **Identify** the attitude towards Scrooge that is being conveyed.
- 5 **Explain** how the term 'scrooge' in popular culture resonates with this passage.

## Narrative events

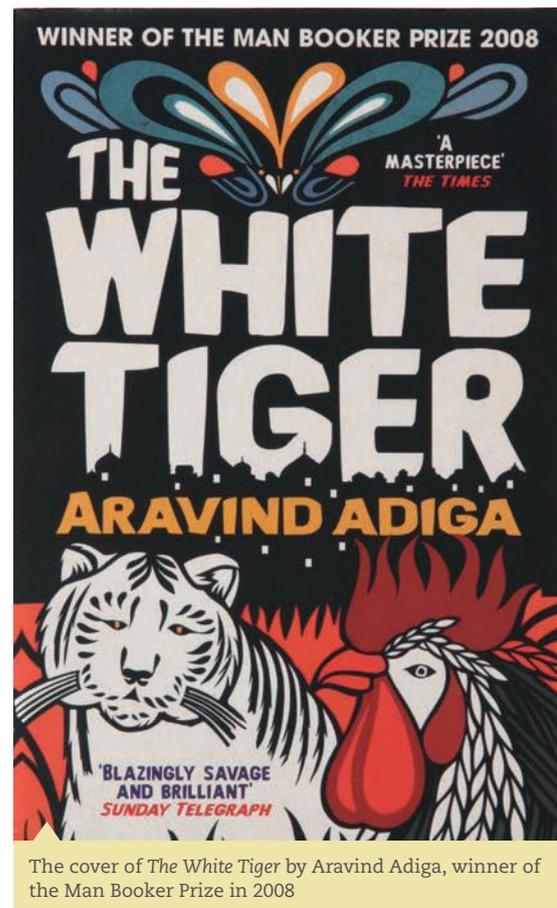
In the extract above, the writer is intervening in the narrative to position readers as to how they should 'see' Scrooge as a character. In the descriptive style, the writer does the work for readers. In the next example, however, characterisation is achieved through narrative events, which allow readers more chance to judge for themselves.

*The White Tiger*, by Aravind Adiga, is set in modern-day India. The narrator and central character, Balram Halwai, is reflecting on his time working as chauffeur for a wealthy couple. On this occasion, the wife has insisted on driving the car. Consider how the events in the passage construct a particular view of each of the three characters: the narrator, Mr Ashok and Mrs Ashok.

### extra info

#### The White Tiger:

Indian-born Australian writer Aravind Adiga's 2008 debut novel, narrated by Balram Halwai, a chauffeur in modern India who is determined to liberate himself from poverty and the caste system at any cost. Winner of the 2008 Man Booker Prize for fiction.



The cover of *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga, winner of the Man Booker Prize in 2008

Alamy Stock Photo/Ben Molyneux

9780170421638

## Characterisation through narrative events in *The White Tiger*

From the way the wheels crunched it completely, and from how there was no noise when she stopped the car, not even a whimper or a barking, I knew at once what happened to the thing we had hit.

She was too drunk to brake at once – by the time she had, we had hurtled on another two or three hundred yards, and then we came to a complete stop. In the middle of the road. She had kept her hands on the wheel; her mouth was open.

‘A dog?’ Mr Ashok asked me. ‘It was a dog, wasn’t it?’

I nodded. The streetlights were too dim, and the object – a large black lump – was too far behind us already to be seen clearly. There was no other car in sight. No other living human being in sight.

As if in slow motion, her hands moved back from the wheel and covered her ears.

‘It wasn’t a dog! It was a –’

Without a word between us, Mr Ashok and I acted as a team. He grabbed her, put a hand on her mouth and pulled her out of the driver’s seat; I rushed out of the back. We slammed the doors together; I turned the ignition key and drove the car at full speed all the way back to Gurgaon.

*The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga, Atlantic 2008, pp. 162–3

### Responding

- 1 **Summarise** the events in the extract.
- 2 **Re-read** the opening lines of the passage. What ‘thing’ do you think Mrs Ashok has struck with the car? Provide evidence to support your conclusion.
- 3 **Explain** how the characters’ actions reveal their personalities and relationships with each other.

## Dialogue

Creators of texts also use dialogue to construct representations of their characters. The following extract is from Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The narrator is Scout Finch, a young girl, recounting her childhood in the American south in the 1930s.

In this scene, Bob Ewell is being questioned in court as a witness in a rape trial. Consider how the dialogue creates a representation of characters in the scene.

[Bob Ewell] made a hasty descent from the stand and ran smack into Atticus, who had risen to question him. Judge Taylor permitted the court to laugh.

...

‘Mr Ewell,’ Atticus began, ‘folks were doing a lot of running that night. Let’s see, you say you ran into the house, you ran to the window, you ran inside, you ran to Mayella, you ran for Mr Tate. Did you, during all this running, run for a doctor?’

‘Wadn’t no need to. I seen what happened.’

But there’s one thing I don’t understand,’ said Atticus. ‘Weren’t you concerned with Mayella’s condition?’

‘I most positively was,’ said Mr Ewell. ‘I seen who done it.’

‘No, I mean her physical condition. Did you not think the nature of her injuries warranted immediate medical attention?’

‘What?’

‘Didn’t you think she should have had a doctor, immediately?’

### extra info

**To Kill a Mockingbird:** Harper Lee’s 1960 novel, set in 1930s Maycomb, a fictional town in the American south. It explores concepts of racism and growing up through the eyes of 10-year-old narrator Scout Finch, whose father, Atticus, is the town’s lawyer. The film adaptation of 1962 is a black and white modern classic, starring Gregory Peck.



>>

The witness said he never thought of it ... and if he had it would have cost him five dollars.

...

'Mr Ewell, you heard the sheriff's testimony, didn't you?'

...

'Yes,' he said.

'Do you agree with his description of Mayella's injuries?'

'How's that?'

...

'Mr Tate testified that her right eye was blackened, that she was beaten around the -'

'Oh yeah,' said the witness. 'I hold with everything Tate said.'

'You do?' asked Atticus mildly. 'I just want to make sure.'

...

'... which eye her left oh yes that'd make it her right it was her right eye ...'

'I holds with Tate. Her eye was blackened and she was mighty beat up.'

...

'Mr Ewell, can you read and write?'

...

'I most positively can.'

'Will you write your name and show us?'

'I most positively will. How do you think I sign my relief cheques?'

Mr Ewell wrote on the back of the envelope ...

'What's so interestin'?' he asked.

'You're left-handed, Mr Ewell,' said Judge Taylor.

Mr Ewell turned angrily to the judge and said he didn't see what his being left-handed had to do with it ...

From *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Published by William Heinemann.  
Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Limited. © 1960

## Responding

- 1 **Compare** the level of formality of the dialogue used to represent Bob Ewell with that used to represent Atticus Finch.
- 2 **Explain** what the dialogue reveals about each character.



Bob Ewell being cross-examined by Atticus Finch in the 1962 film of *To Kill A Mockingbird*, directed by Robert Mulligan

## Setting

Placing characters in a carefully chosen environment highlights their personalities, conflicts and issues in the plot. In the following extract, the narrator is describing the home of the Ewell family in the town of Maycomb, where *To Kill A Mockingbird* is set.

Maycomb's Ewells lived behind the garbage dump in what was once a Negro cabin. The cabin's plank walls were supplemented with sheets of corrugated iron, its roof shingled with tin cans hammered flat, so only its general shape suggested its original design: square, with four tiny rooms opening onto a shotgun hall, the cabin rested uneasily upon four irregular lumps of limestone. Its windows were merely pen spaces in the walls, which in the summer-time were covered with greasy strips of cheesecloth to keep out the varmints that feasted on Maycomb's refuse.

The varmints had a lean time of it, for the Ewells gave the dump a thorough gleaning every day, and the fruits of their industry (those that were not eaten) made the plot of ground around the cabin look like the playhouse of an insane child: what passed for a fence were bits of tree-limbs, broomsticks and tree shafts, all tipped with rusty hammer-heads, snaggle-toothed rake heads, shovels, axes and grubbing hoes, held on with pieces of barbed wire. Enclosed by this barricade was a dirty yard containing the remains of a Model T-Ford (on blocks), a discarded dentist's chair, an ancient icebox, plus lesser items: old shoes, worn-out table radios, picture frames, and fruit jars, under which scrawny chickens pecked hopefully.

One corner of the yard, though, bewildered Maycomb. Against the fence, in a line, were six chipped-enamel slop jars holding brilliant red geraniums, cared for as tenderly as if they belonged to Miss Maudie Atkinson, had Miss Maudie deigned to permit a geranium on her premises. People said they were Mayella Ewell's.

From *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Published by William Heinemann. Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Limited. © 1960

**representation**  
textual constructions that give shape to thinking about or acting in the world; texts represent concepts, identities, times and places, underpinned by cultural assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, values or world view of the writer, shaper, speaker/signer, designer (and of the reader, viewer, listener)

### Responding

- 1 Highlight the language that constructs a particular **representation** of the setting.
- 2 Use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.
- 3 **Explain** how the reader is positioned to view the Ewells in this passage. Use a quotation to support your interpretation.
- 4 **Explain** how the reader is positioned to view Mayella Ewell. Use a quotation to support your interpretation.

## Reflection

Characters can also be constructed by what they reveal in reflection about themselves and others. Reflection is the wisdom that comes from viewing an event after it has taken place. Conclusions are drawn about the experiences of the past. Reflective writing typically features past and present tense, is written in first person and involves some level of self-revelation. Consider the following extract from *All Quiet on the Western Front*, written by Erich Maria Remarque. The narrator is reflecting on how he has changed since fighting in the trenches.

I imagined leave would be different from this. Indeed, it was different a year ago. It is I of course that have changed in the interval. There lies a gulf between that time and to-day. At that time I still knew nothing about the war, we had only been in quiet sectors. But now I see that I have been crushed without knowing it. I find I do not belong here any more, it is a foreign world. Some of these people ask questions, some ask no questions, but one can see that the latter are proud of themselves for their silence; they often say with a wise air that these things cannot be talked about.

*All Quiet on the Western Front* by Eric Maria Remarque, Little, Brown and Company, Germany 1929

### extra info

**All Quiet on the Western Front:** by Erich Maria Remarque, a German First World War veteran, this anti-war novel (1929), told from the German perspective, is about the suffering and stress of soldiers on the Western Front. Adapted to film in 1930 and again in 1979.

## Responding

- 1 Highlight the parts of the extract that show the narrator has learnt something about himself.
- 2 **Explain** how the character has been developed in the extract. Base your response on language use and aesthetic and stylistic choices.
- 3 **Explain** how the audience is positioned to view the narrator based on his reflection.

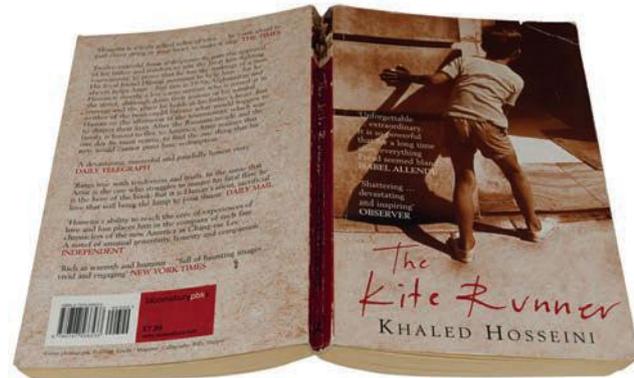
## extra info

**The Kite Runner:** by Afghan-born American author Khaled Hosseini (2003). Narrated by Amir, it tells the story of his relationship with, and betrayal of, Hassan. Set in Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion and the rise of the Taliban. Adapted to film in 2007.

# Relationships

Another way to reveal characters' qualities is through the relationships between characters. The extract below is from *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. It is about the relationship between two small boys, Amir, the narrator, and Hassan, from a lower caste, the son of the family servant. The two have been playmates since they were babies.

This extract foreshadows Amir's betrayal of his friend, an incident that haunts him into adulthood.



The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

Alamy Stock Photo/CBW

When we were children, Hassan and I used to climb the poplar trees in the driveway of my father's house and annoy our neighbors by reflecting sunlight into their homes with a shard of mirror. We would sit across from each other on a pair of high branches, our naked feet dangling, our trouser pockets filled with dried mulberries and walnuts. We took turns with the mirror as we ate mulberries, pelted each other with them, giggling, laughing ...

Sometimes, up in those trees, I talked Hassan into firing walnuts with his slingshot at the neighbor's one-eyed German shepherd. Hassan never wanted to, but if I asked, he wouldn't deny me anything. Hassan never denied me anything. And he was deadly with his slingshot. Hassan's father, Ali, used to catch us and get mad, or as mad as someone as gentle as Ali could ever get. He would wag his finger and wave us down from the tree. He would take the mirror and would tell us what his mother had told him, that the devil shone mirrors too, shone them to distract Muslims during prayer. 'And he laughs while he does it,' he always added, scowling at his son.

'Yes, Father,' Hassan would mumble, looking down at his feet. But he never told on me. Never told that the mirror, like shooting the walnuts at the neighbor's dog, was always my idea.

*The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, Bloomsbury Publishing Inc, London 2004

## Responding

- 1 **Describe** the games the two characters played as children.
- 2 **Explain** why Hassan would never tell on Amir.
- 3 **Explain** how their relationship is influenced by the social context.
- 4 What do you learn about each character as a result of their relationship?

# Minor characters

Some minor characters are the most memorable characters in fiction. For example, there is Miss Havisham from Dicken's *Great Expectations* (1861), an old lady who has stopped the clocks in her house and life since she was jilted at the altar by her fiancé many years ago. In Chapter 8, the narrator, Pip, describes how Miss Havisham still sits in her tattered yellowing wedding gown at a table adorned with a crumbling mouse-infested cake.

I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress and, like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes.

*Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, 1861

Famed for her eccentricity, this woman has a more sinister role in the novel. Revenge on males for her abandonment is achieved by encouraging the protagonist, Pip, to fall in love with her niece, Stella, and face similar consequences to those Miss Havisham suffered.

Minor characters have a significant role in the protagonist's development, and they perform an important function in the plot. Most minor characters can be categorised according to the following roles: informer, messenger, mentor or joker.

## extra info

**Great Expectations:** by English author Charles Dickens (1861). Narrated by Pip, a young boy who believes that the reclusive Miss Havisham is his secret benefactor. Adapted to the screen many times, the latest being a BBC series in 2011 and a 2012 feature film.

## Responding

- 1 **Identify** an interesting character in a text you have studied recently.
- 2 **Describe** the qualities that make this character memorable.
- 3 **Analyse** this character's role in the text and their relationship with the protagonist.

# Aesthetic features and stylistic devices

## subjective

based on, or influenced by, personal feelings, tastes or opinions; opposite of objective

## empathy

to identify with and share the emotions expressed in a text

Your response to every text is **subjective**, a matter of individual taste and preference. Some people will adore science fiction novels and others will prefer poetry or some other genre.

Aesthetic features and stylistic devices are part of this subjectivity. To be successful, a text must evoke a critical and emotional response in its readers or audience, and create **empathy**, drawing you into the text. Think of your favourite moment in a film or novel, a scene or paragraph that ‘speaks’ to you, that moves you to laughter or tears.

## Defining aesthetic features and stylistic devices

Being able to understand, identify and respond to aesthetic features and stylistic devices in texts will help you to experiment with and improve your own writing and to produce more successful texts. The ways in which aesthetic features and stylistic devices are used in texts can prompt emotional and critical responses in audiences, purposefully inviting them to respond in a particular way.

Aesthetic features include:

- poetic devices: such as alliteration, assonance, imagery, metaphor, personification, simile, symbolism
- written devices: such as imagery, irony, metaphor, motif, personification, representation, symbolism
- spoken devices: such as imagery, motif, rhetoric, symbolism
- film devices: such as costuming, editing, imagery, motif, photography, screenplay, symbolism
- dramatic devices: such as costuming, dialogue, motif, style, symbolism.

Stylistic devices include:

- text structures
- **juxtaposition**, e.g. of two contrasting settings
- approaches to narration
- the use of narrative viewpoint
- approaches to characterisation
- use of figurative devices
- use of rhetorical devices, e.g. repetition
- control of sentence length and form
- literary patterns and variations
- sound devices
- visual devices.

An author's style can be distinguished by the use of any combination of these features and devices. Aesthetic features and stylistic devices are used to capture our imagination and to influence our view of the world in both **literary** and **non-literary** texts.

**juxtaposition**  
a literary technique that places two comparable or contrasting words, concepts, characters or actions in close proximity in a text to emphasise the difference between them, and to create or invoke a reader response

# Aesthetic features and stylistic devices in literary texts

## Poetry

Examples of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in poetry include:

- mood/tone
- imagery
- figurative language: simile, metaphor, personification
- sound devices: alliteration, assonance, sibilance, onomatopoeia
- form
- stanzas
- rhyme, blank verse, free verse
- rhythm
- metre.

It is important to note that it is not sufficient to merely identify these techniques. You must be able to analyse and comment on how these language choices interact with other techniques in the poem to create an overall effect, especially on the **mood** or **tone** of the text.

## Words that describe tone or mood

Tone or mood is created through the other textual features of a text. In the table below, there are 15 examples of words that describe tone or mood. Some are positive, some are negative and some are neutral. This is just a small selection; there are many more equally effective words that describe the atmosphere and emotions aroused by a text. Expanding your vocabulary to incorporate appropriate terminology should be one of your aims in senior English.

aggressive	negative	regretful
empathetic	nostalgic	solemn
grim	objective	subjective
humorous	patronising	sympathetic
lighthearted	playful	thoughtful

**literary texts**  
past and present texts across a range of cultural contexts that are valued for their form, style and enduring or artistic value; while the nature of what constitutes literary texts is dynamic and evolving, they are seen as having personal, social, cultural and aesthetic value and potential for enriching students' scope of experience; literary texts include a broad range of forms such as novels, poetry, short stories, plays, fiction, multimodal texts such as film, and some non-fiction; the classification of texts as 'literary' changes over time and across cultural contexts, and texts considered non-literary in some contexts are considered literary in other contexts

**non-literary text**  
contemporary, traditional and everyday texts that use language (spoken/signed, written, visual, auditory and digital) to explain, interpret, analyse, argue, persuade and give opinions; to remember, recall and report on things, events and issues; to transact and negotiate relationships, goods and services

## Responding

Using a dictionary:

- 1 **Define** the words in the table on the previous page.
- 2 Find at least one **synonym** for each word.
- 3 **Consider** a text from a previous exercise. **Identify** appropriate words from the list, or select your own, to describe its mood or tone.

### mood

atmosphere conveyed to the audience through language choices and other stylistic devices

### tone

in English, the voice adopted by a speaker or writer to indicate emotion, feeling or attitude to subject matter and audience, e.g. playful, serious, ironic, formal

### synonyms

words of similar meaning

### sensory

appealing to the five senses – sight, sound, smell, touch and taste – to elicit a response from the reader

The following extracts will give you a taste of poetry and show you how poetic texts create visual and other **sensory** impressions based on individual observations.

## Imagery

Imagery, as an aesthetic feature, uses word pictures to create visual effects and mood. Below is an extract from a poem about Kings Cross, Sydney, by Kenneth Slessor, written in 1939.



William Street, Kings Cross

Alamy Stock Photo/AA World Travel Library

The red globe of light, the liquor green,  
the pulsing arrows and the running fire  
spilt on the stones, go deeper than a stream;  
You find this ugly, I find it lovely

‘William Street’ by Kenneth Slessor, Selected Poems,  
HarperCollins Publishers (Australia) 2014, with permission

## Responding

- 1 **Identify** examples of imagery in the extract from ‘William Street’.
- 2 **Explain** how the photograph of William Street above connects with the poem.
- 3 **Explain** why the poet believes the reader would find this scene ‘ugly’.

### extra info

**Kenneth Slessor:**  
(1901–1971) a proud resident of Sydney, a poet, journalist and official war correspondent during the Second World War.

**Sylvia Plath:**  
(1932–1963) an American writer of prose and poetry. Wife of English poet Ted Hughes, Plath suffered from depression and took her own life at the age of 31.

## Personification

Personification is the technique of giving an object, especially nature, human qualities. The following is an extract from ‘Mirror’ by Sylvia Plath.



Mirror images

Alamy Stock Photo/mark ferguson

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.  
 Whatever I see I swallow immediately  
 Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.  
 I am not cruel, only truthful,  
 The eye of a little god, four-cornered.

'Mirror' from *Collected Poems* by Sylvia Plath. With Permission from Faber and Faber Ltd.

### Responding

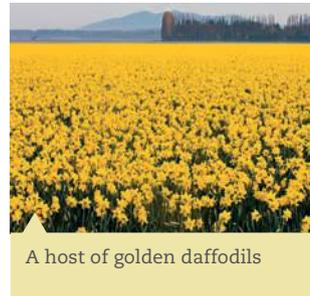
- 1 **Identify** the personification in the poem.
- 2 **Discuss** the image 'The eye of a little god' and what it suggests about the speaker.

## Simile

A simile compares two objects using the words 'like' or 'as'. Below is an extract from 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' by William Wordsworth.

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills  
 When all at once I saw a crowd,  
 A host, of golden daffodils;  
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' by William Wordsworth, *Collected Poems* 1815



A host of golden daffodils

### extra info

**William Wordsworth:** (1770–1850) an English Romantic poet, famous for poetry extolling the beauty of nature.

### Responding

- 1 **Identify** the simile in this extract.
- 2 Wordsworth compares himself to a cloud and professes to be 'lonely'. **Consider** what he is trying to emphasise about his mood in the opening lines of the stanza.

## Metaphor

A metaphor compares two objects by stating that one is the other, a stronger comparison than a simile. The extract below is from 'The Surfer' by Judith Wright.



Judith Wright used metaphors to describe the ocean in her poem 'The Surfer'

Getty Images/Alan Majchrowicz

### extra info

**Judith Wright:** (1915–2000) an Australian poet, environmentalist and campaigner for Indigenous rights.

For on the sand the grey-wolf sea lies, snarling,  
 cold twilight wind splits the waves' hair and shows  
 the bones they worry in their wolf-teeth.

'The Surfer' by Judith Wright, *Collected Poems*, HarperCollins Publishers (Australia), with permission

**extended metaphor** uses a series of similar images to sustain a comparison between two objects

### Responding

- 1 **Identify** the metaphors in this extract.
- 2 **Explain** the meaning of each of the metaphors and how they combine to form the **extended metaphor** of the 'grey wolf'.
- 3 **Describe** the mood created in these lines through the use of metaphor.

### extra info

#### Edgar Allan

**Poe:** (1809–1849)  
American writer of prose and poetry, famous for his Gothic style.

## Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words. Sibilance is the repetition of the 's' sound.

The extract below is from 'The Raven' by Edgar Allan Poe.



Alamy Stock Photo/Chronicle

An artist's imagining of 'The Raven' by Edgar Allan Poe

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me – filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
"Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door.  
This is it and nothing more.'

'The Raven' by Edgar Allan Poe, 1845

### Responding

- 1 **Identify** the sound devices (alliteration, assonance, sibilance) in these lines.
- 2 **Discuss** the appeal of sound devices in poetry.

### extra info

#### Samuel Taylor

#### Coleridge:

(1772–1834) an English Romantic poet, author of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'.

## Rhyme and rhyme scheme

Rhyme can be end (of line) rhyme or internal (within the line) rhyme. A rhyme scheme is the structure of the rhyme in the poem. The capitals in bold in the extract below from 'Kubla Khan' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge show you how to analyse the rhyme scheme in a poem.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan: **A**  
A stately pleasure dome decree **B**  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran **A**  
Through caverns measureless to man **A**  
Down to a sunless sea. **B**

So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round;  
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

'Kubla Khan Or, a vision in a dream. A Fragment' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1816

### Responding

- 1 **Identify** the end rhyme scheme used in the second half of the stanza.
- 2 Read this poem out loud and **discuss** the effect of the rhyme on its rhythm and mood.

## Rhythm

Rhythm is a combination of **metre**, the number of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line, line length, use of punctuation and other factors. The extract below is from 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes.

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees.  
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.  
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,  
And the highwayman came riding—  
Riding—riding—  
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes, 1906. With permission from The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of Alfred Noyes

### extra info

**Alfred Noyes:** (1880–1958) an English poet, most famous for his ballads.

### Responding

- 1 **Define** the term: 'highwayman'.
- 2 The opening lines set the scene of the poem with some memorable metaphors and the use of rhyme. **Describe** the rhythm achieved in the last three lines of the stanza by the use of punctuation and the repetition of the word 'riding'.

## Analysing aesthetic features and stylistic devices within a stanza

**metre**  
rhythmic pattern in a poem

The aesthetic features and stylistic devices in the first stanza of 'Mirror' by Sylvia Plath have been explained and analysed for you below.

After you have read the annotated text, read the second stanza of the poem and answer the questions.

Explain the poem briefly before analysing its style:

The silver mirror is the personified speaker in the poem. In first person and present tense, the mirror reveals itself as accurate and objective, but powerful, and precise in shape. It looks out across a room to the wall opposite that has become a familiar and emotional connection to the mirror, the view only broken by time of day or night and the presence of others in the room.

**Examine the structure and form:** The nine-line stanza is part of a lyrical poem, expressing emotion in a concise form.

**Comment on rhyme and rhythm:** Written in free verse, the stanza is a mixture of shorter and longer lines and sentences. This creates a slow, uneven rhythm.

I am **silver** and **exact**. I have **no preconceptions**.  
Whatever I see I **swallow immediately**  
Just as it is, **unmistakenly by love or dislike**.  
I am **not cruel**, only **truthful**,  
The **eye of a little god**, four-cornered.  
Most of the time I **meditate** on the **opposite wall**.  
It is **pink, with speckles**. I have looked at it so long  
I think it is **part of my heart**. But it **flickers**.  
**Faces and darkness separate** us over and over.

'Mirror' from *Collected Poems* by Sylvia Plath.  
With Permission from Faber and Faber Ltd

**Identify and discuss language choices, including figurative language:** The imagery created provides a visual effect. The mirror is 'four-cornered' and the wall opposite is 'pink, with speckles'. The setting could be any room in the house. The reference to 'silver' suggests that the speaker is valued or valuable, especially connected to the metaphor referring to 'the eye of a little god'.

**Comment on the mood or tone of the stanza:** The mood is sombre as the mirror reflects on its purpose and existence. While there is a feeling of being trapped, there is also a sense of power in lines like 'Whatever I see, I swallow immediately'.

**Make some conclusions about how the poetic devices inform the reader about the themes and concepts and the overall perspective of the stanza:** The personification of the mirror is an original technique that allows the speaker to emphasise that, although 'it' has a 'heart', the mirror is honest and reflects the truth, whether 'cruel' or kind. There are also references to time and darkness that the mirror must endure, between moments when it becomes a powerful 'eye' or reflection of the person looking into it.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,  
 Searching my reaches for what she really is.  
 Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.  
 I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.  
 She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.  
 I am important to her. She comes and goes.  
 Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.  
 In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman  
 Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

'Mirror', from *Collected Poems* by Sylvia Plath.  
 With Permission from Faber and Faber Ltd.

## Responding

- 1 **Explain** what is happening in the poem.
- 2 **Examine** the stanza to see if it is consistent in form and rhythm with the opening stanza.
- 3 **Explain** how the speaker has changed identity in the second stanza, but is still fulfilling the same role.
- 4 **Discuss** the use and meaning of the personification in the image 'those liars, the candles or the moon'.
- 5 **Discuss** the simile 'like a terrible fish' and its link to the woman in the poem.
- 6 **Describe** the mood of this stanza and compare it to the opening stanza.
- 7 **Discuss** how the phrases in the second stanza 'and reflect it faithfully' and 'I am important to her' echo phrases like 'Just as it is' and 'I am not cruel, only truthful' in the opening stanza. **Decide** whether these quotations sum up the theme or central idea in the poem.

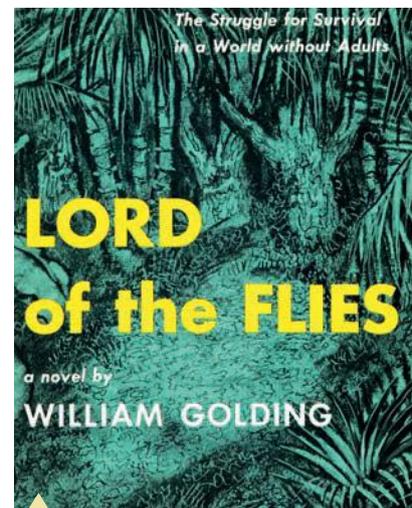
## extra info

**William Golding:**  
 (1911–1993)  
 British novelist  
 and winner of the  
 Nobel Prize for  
 Literature in 1983.

## Prose

*Lord of the Flies* (1954) by William Golding is a novel about a plane crash that occurs as a result of evacuation from Britain after a nuclear war. A group of boys are stranded on a remote Pacific island without adult supervision. As their civilisation breaks down, they resort to superstition and savagery.

This extract depicts a hunting scene where, after killing a pig, a sacrifice is made to an imaginary 'beast' that has aroused fear in the boys.



Alamy Stock Photo/The Protected Art Archive

He paused and stood up, looking at **the shadows** under the trees.

**His voice was lower** when he spoke again.

'But we'll leave part of the kill for ...'

He knelt down again and was busy with his knife. The boys crowded round him. He spoke over his shoulder to Roger.

'Sharpen a stick at both ends.'

Presently he stood up, **holding the dripping sow's head** in his hands.

'Where's that stick?'

'Here.'

'**Ram** one end in the earth. Oh—it's rock. **Jam** it in that crack. There.'

Jack held up the head and **jammed the soft throat** down on the pointed end of the stick which pierced through into the mouth. He stood back and the head hung there, **a little blood dribbling down the stick**.



>>

Instinctively the boys drew back too; and **the forest was very still**. They listened, and the loudest noise was the buzzing of flies over the spilled guts.

Jack spoke in a whisper.

'Pick up the pig.'

Maurice and Robert skewered the carcass, lifted the dead weight, and stood ready. In the silence, and standing over the dry blood, they looked suddenly furtive.

Jack spoke loudly.

'This head is for **the beast. It's a gift.**'

**The silence accepted the gift and awed them.** The head remained there, dim-eyed, grinning faintly, blood blackening between the teeth. All at once they were running away, as fast as they could, through the forest toward the open beach.

*Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, Faber & Faber London, 1954.

### textual elements

the elements of a specific genre: narrative structure, concepts, identities, aesthetic features and stylistic devices

### mise-en-scene

a French expression that means 'staging an action' whereby the placing of objects on a stage, in a shot or in an image can invoke meaning for the viewer

### Responding

In the extract, some words and phrases have been bolded. These have been selected because of the impact the language choices have on the mood of the text.

- 1 **Explain** how the language listed in the table below creates mood.
- 2 **Compose** a paragraph in which you analyse the effectiveness and appropriateness of the use of language choices in the text for aesthetic purposes.

LANGUAGE CHOICES	CREATION OF MOOD
the shadows	Suggests darkness and secrecy
His voice was lower	
holding the dripping sow's head	
'Ram ... Jam ...' jammed the soft throat	
a little blood dribbling down the stick	
the forest was very still	
'... for the beast. It's a gift.'	
The silence accepted the gift and awed them.	

## Film and multimodal texts

Below are the **textual elements** that interact to create the **mise-en-scene** in film, with the purpose of entertaining and positioning an audience, and eliciting an emotional and critical response to a visual text.

### Technical codes: photographic techniques used in filmmaking



A filmmaker uses camera equipment

Shutterstock.com/guruXOX

**symbolic codes**

in drama, to create the meaning behind the scene, what it symbolises; in plays, representations of times and places, for example, through setting and props or costumes to represent people in society

**technical codes**

photographic techniques used in filmmaking, created deliberately using camera equipment

**pan**

to move the camera horizontally or to create a sense of movement or a wide view

**soft focus**

a blurred image to create, for example, a romantic or mysterious mood

**framing**

placing subjects in a shot to focus on a particular subject or image with an appropriate background, for ideological or aesthetic purposes

**composition**

the arrangement of images; a synonym for mise-en-scene; the selection and organisation of a text that creates meaning

**marginalise**

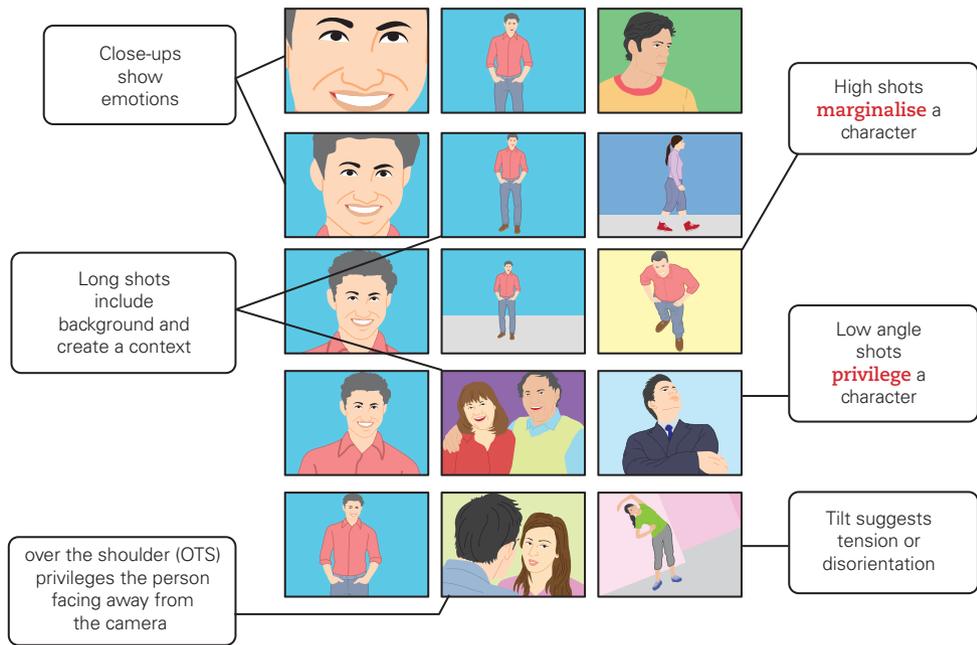
use techniques to make something less important, e.g. a character, belief or value; opposite of privilege

**privilege**

use techniques to make a character, belief or value appear more prominent and valuable

SYMBOLIC CODES	TECHNICAL CODES
set design, props and location	camera angles and movement
actors' costumes, body language	shot types and framing
dialogue	lighting
sound effects and music	special effects

CAMERA TECHNIQUES	
Angle	Up Down Straight
<b>Pan</b>	Left Right
Distance	Close Medium Far
Level	High Eye level Low
<b>Focus</b>	Soft Sharp
<b>Framing</b>	<b>Composition:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subjects</li> <li>• Objects</li> <li>• Space</li> </ul>



Shot types and camera angles

## Responding

Look at the still shot from *The Third Man* (1949), filmed by cinematographer Robert Krasker.

- 1 **Analyse** this frame in terms of the ways that the cinematographer has used:
  - symbolic codes:
    - set design
    - props and location
    - sound effects and music (if you have access to the DVD)
  - technical codes
    - camera angle
    - shot type and framing
    - lighting.
- 2 Select a significant still shot from a film you are studying or have watched recently. **Analyse** the techniques used and **compare** your choice of film to the example in terms of the techniques used to create the mise-en-scene.



Shutterstock/Rex/Kobal/London Films

*The Third Man*: A 1949 British film, set in Vienna, Austria, after the Second World War, based on the novella by British novelist Graham Greene, who also wrote the screenplay, directed by Carol Reed. Regarded by many as one of the greatest films of all time.

# Aesthetic features and stylistic devices in non-literary texts

## Speech

‘We shall fight them on the beaches’ is an extract from a speech delivered to the British House of Commons on 4 June 1940, by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The Germans had invaded Belgium and France, and Britain was beginning to evacuate troops from Dunkirk. Read this famous speech in full below.

I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our Island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty’s Government – every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation. The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength. Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall

### extra info

**Winston Churchill:**  
(1874–1965) British Prime Minister from 1940–45 and 1951–55.





**imperative mood**

signified by verbs of command and instruction

**modality**

the use of verbs to express degrees of possibility and probability, e.g. 'might' as opposed to 'will'

fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

Reproduced with permission of Curtis Brown, London on behalf of The Estate of Winston S. Churchill. © The Estate of Winston S. Churchill

**Responding**

Find examples of the following techniques in the extract:

- repetition
- inclusive pronouns
- use of the **imperative mood**
- use of **modality**
- language choices
- sentence structure.

# PART TWO

## Units 1 and 2

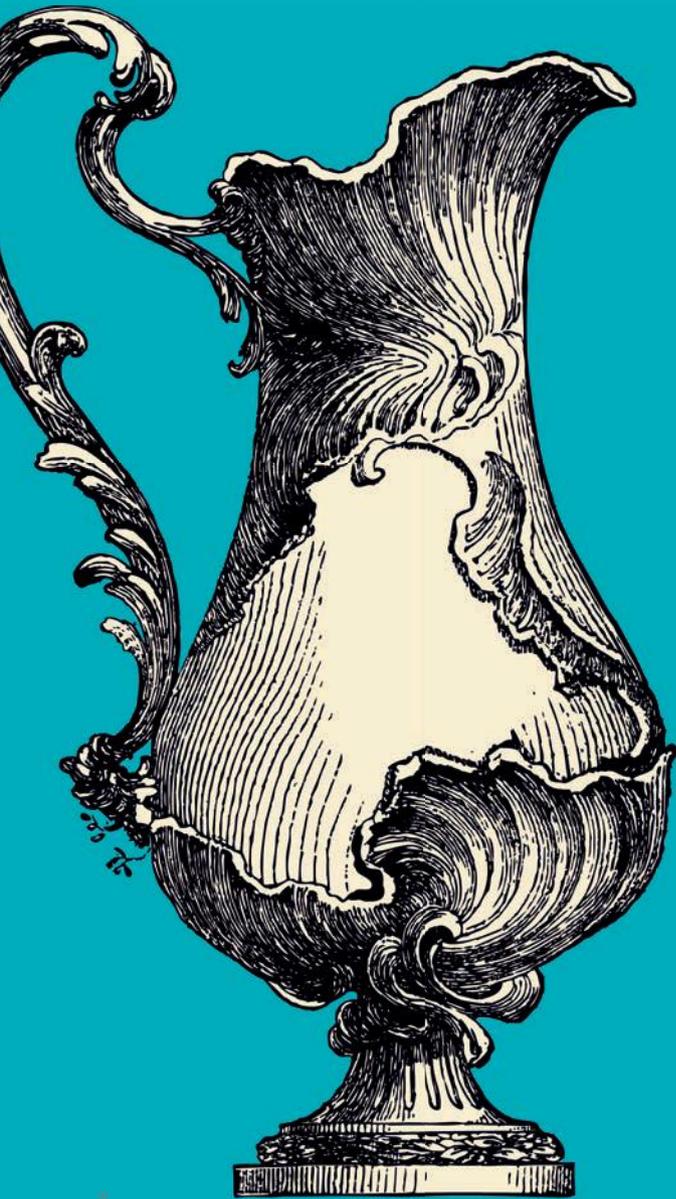
### Unit 1: Perspectives and texts

- 6 *The Crucible*
- 7 *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *The Good Doctor*
- 8 *Blackfish*
- 9 *Jasper Jones* (novel and film)
- 10 Satirical cartoons, *The Rabbits* and *Animal Farm*
- 11 Assessment focus: writing for a public audience
- 12 Assessment focus: persuasive spoken responses

### Unit 2: Texts and culture

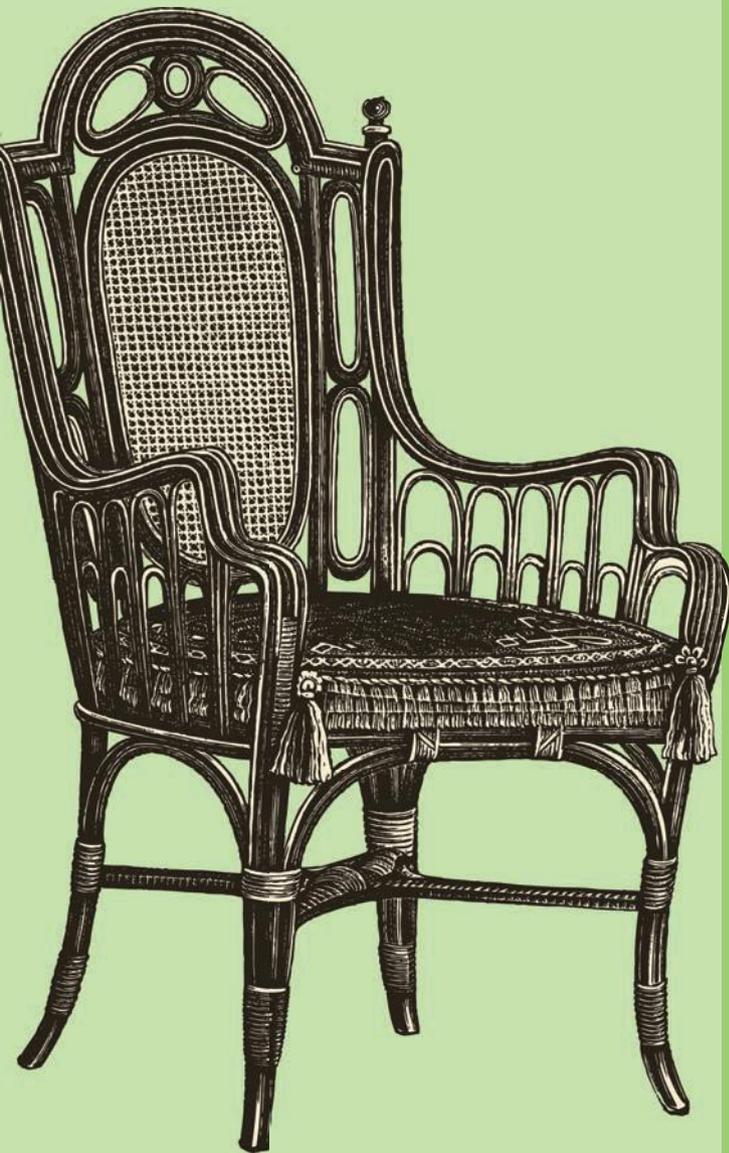
- 13 *The Drover's Wife* (play)
- 14 *The Secret River* (TV series)
- 15 *The Dry*
- 16 *The Happiest Refugee*
- 17 *Lion*\*
- 18 A selection of Australian poetry
- 19 Assessment focus: imaginative written responses
- 20 Assessment focus: analytical written responses

Part two of *Nelson English for QCE Units 1 & 2* provides opportunities to study a range of literary and non-literary texts from different genres. The texts have been selected to address the syllabus requirements. It is expected that you study in depth two chapters from each unit.



# U1

## Perspectives and texts



### Unit objectives

Students will:

- 1 use patterns and conventions of genres to achieve particular purposes in cultural contexts and social situations involving public audiences
- 2 establish and maintain roles of the writer/speaker/signer/designer and relationships with a range of audiences, including public audiences
- 3 create and analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a range of texts
- 4 make use of and analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a range of texts and invite audiences to take up positions
- 5 use aesthetic features and stylistic devices to achieve purposes and analyse their effects in texts
- 6 select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives
- 7 organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes
- 8 use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of texts
- 9 make language choices for particular purposes and contexts
- 10 use grammar and language structures for particular purposes in written, spoken and/or multimodal texts
- 11 use mode-appropriate features to achieve particular purposes.

Adapted from English 2019 v1.4 General Senior Syllabus,  
p. 4. English 2019 v1.4 General Senior Syllabus  
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# The Crucible

## Assessment possibilities

As part of your studies in English, you are required to explore individual and/or collective perspectives of the world through engaging with a variety of texts.

The play *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller invites audiences to examine cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs in a specific historical context. You will be expected to analyse the perspectives and representations of concepts and identities in texts.

You might be asked to analyse how:

- audiences are positioned to view the protagonist in the play
- characters' attitudes, values and beliefs affect audiences of the play
- gender constructs are represented in the play
- the play invites you to view the social disharmony in Salem.

In creating a speech based on the play, you might be asked to present:

- a seminar segment that explores an issue in the play, such as integrity or social justice
- a speech that discusses the allegorical significance of the play and its links to McCarthyism
- a persuasive speech in response to media focus on issues of leadership and ethics
- a pitch for a documentary on how historical literature has contemporary relevance.

## Introduction to *The Crucible*

The world of witchcraft has fascinated and frightened society for centuries. And thanks to Harry Potter and Co., our fascination with all things 'occult' has grown even larger – think of how Halloween has grown in popularity in Australia in the last decade. *The Crucible* is set in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692, against the backdrop of a society possessed by fear and superstition. Accusations of witchcraft and the presence of the Devil are tearing a small community apart.

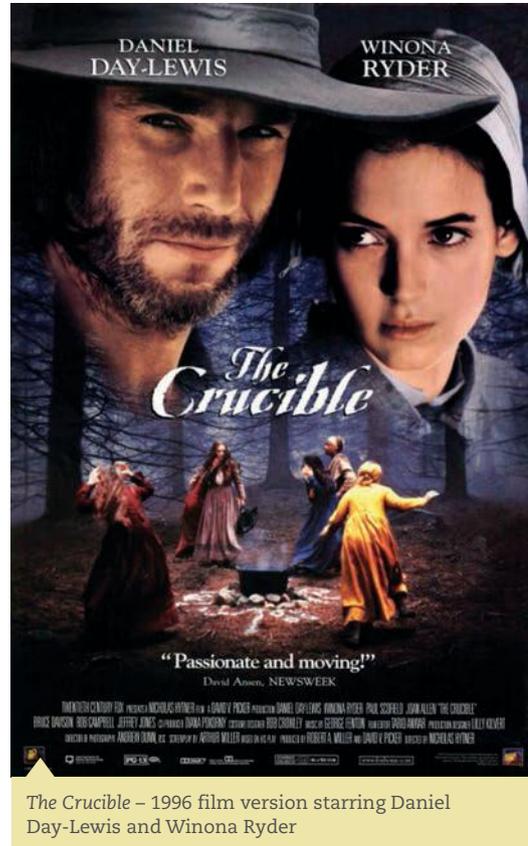
Even after the Middle Ages ended, the common beliefs about witches involved:

- riding and meeting in secret by night
- a pact with the Devil
- a formal denial of Christianity and desecration of the Eucharist/Holy Communion and the Crucifix
- participation in orgies
- sacrificial infanticide
- cannibalism.

*The Crucible* (1953) is a modern classic. It is also an **allegory**. Like *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, this play is a symbolic narrative. Playwright Arthur Miller has selected a piece of history, the Salem witch hunts of 1692, to represent the ‘witch hunts’ that occurred during the 1950s, the so-called era of McCarthyism in which he wrote the play. The title of *The Crucible* is also symbolic. A crucible is a melting pot, a container in which substances like metal are mixed together and melted under high heat.

### allegory

a story that has a symbolic meaning beyond its literal interpretation; a form of extended metaphor in which objects, events and characters in a narrative are used to stand for, or refer to, events or concepts that are outside the narrative itself



Alamy Stock Photo/Collection Christopher

The Crucible – 1996 film version starring Daniel Day-Lewis and Winona Ryder

## Author

The playwright Arthur Miller (1915–2005) was born in New York. Miller wrote two successful plays in the 1940s: *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*. He wrote *The Crucible* in the 1950s, during the era of the Cold War that followed the end of the Second World War. This period in history was characterised by the emergence of the USA and the former USSR as rival superpowers. During this time, the USA was fiercely anti-communist. This fear of communism created suspicion about anyone in the US, especially those in government or prominent positions, who might be sympathetic to this ideology or to the Russian cause.

Both of Miller’s earlier plays were directed and produced by his friend Elia Kazan. Kazan had been involved with the Communist Party, and in 1952 he was called before Senator Joseph McCarthy’s House (of Congress) Committee on Un-American Activities inquiry. Kazan testified, giving the committee the names of those Hollywood identities he knew had been involved in the Communist Party with him years earlier. Miller spoke with Kazan after he had testified. After this, their friendship ended and they didn’t speak for over 10 years.

This is the context that prompted Miller to go to Massachusetts, where he researched the witchcraft trials of 1692. Afterwards, he wrote his allegorical play *The Crucible*, which was first performed in 1953. Not long after, in 1956, Miller was asked to testify before McCarthy’s Committee. Married at the time to Hollywood actress Marilyn Monroe, he refused to bring trouble on his friends by naming those who might have links to the Communist Party. His defiance of McCarthy led to a conviction for contempt of court, which was later overturned by the Supreme Court.

## Responding

Miller wrote *The Crucible* to expose the injustice of persecuting individuals for perceived beliefs without hard evidence and to show how mass hysteria can be used to conceal hidden motives and resentments.

To understand the era in which Miller lived and wrote, you will need to research the following terms:

- McCarthyism and Senator Joseph McCarthy
- HUAC = House Un-American Committee
- the Hollywood 10 and McCarthyism.

To understand the era in which the play is set, suggested reading includes:

- the Salem Witch Trials
- background information about witchcraft in England and Europe in medieval times, which also provides insight into churches' reactions to the threat of the supernatural.



The Salem Trials



Senator Joseph McCarthy (1954)

Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection  
Historical

## Time and place

The play is set in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692, in a community of Puritans descended from those who sailed from England in 1620 aboard *The Mayflower* to escape religious persecution and to set up a new settlement in a new land. Despite their common ideologies, the community becomes riven and splintered by bickering over disputes about land ownership and other long-standing issues. After 70 years in the new land, the inhabitants have survived both attacks by local Native American tribes and harsh climatic conditions. The settlement is a theocracy where strict religious rule is imposed and conformity to a pious lifestyle is a requirement.

In Act 1 of the play script, Miller provides a narrative commentary in six parts of the text that provides background information. Even though this is not generally a part of the performance, this commentary informs the director about what his or her audience needs to understand about the context of the play and the new characters as they enter the stage.

**intertextuality**  
a relationship, or some connection between texts, generally literary ones, for example, through similar or contrasting perspectives, contexts or sometimes direct reference

## Contemporary relevance

*The Crucible* is an allegory in the sense that Miller uses a historical example to comment on a prominent issue in the era in which he lived: an earlier historical era is used to represent one that occurred 250 years later.

The fact that the play is still widely studied in schools throughout the world is an indication of its contemporary relevance and universal themes. You have only to look at this image to see a contemporary **intertextual** link.



Woman on a Ducking Stool, Accused of Witchcraft, illustration from a collection of chapbooks on esoterica (woodcut) (later colouration), English School / Private Collection / The Stapleton Collection / Bridgeman Images

'If she drowns she's a refugee, if she floats she's an economic migrant.'

## Responding

Look closely at the image on the previous page.

- 1 **Explain** the caption: what is happening here and why. (You may need to research the punishments for 'witches' in the Middle Ages.)
- 2 **Explain** how familiarity with the play helps you to understand the connection between the past and the present.
- 3 **Discuss** the cartoonist's perceived perspective on the issue of refugees.
- 4 **Consider** your personal response to this cartoon. Do you find it humorous or offensive?
- 5 **Consider** how a person's cultural origins might influence their reaction to this image.

# Textual elements

## narrative codes

the elements of the story that work together to create the narrative

## symbolic codes

in drama, to create the meaning behind the scene, what it symbolises; in plays, representations of times and places, for example, through setting and props or costumes, to represent people in society

The table below explains the aspects of the play genre according to two codes: the elements used to construct the narrative and the stylistic devices and techniques in the narrative. These are the aspects of the play for close study, those that underpin the text and position the audience.

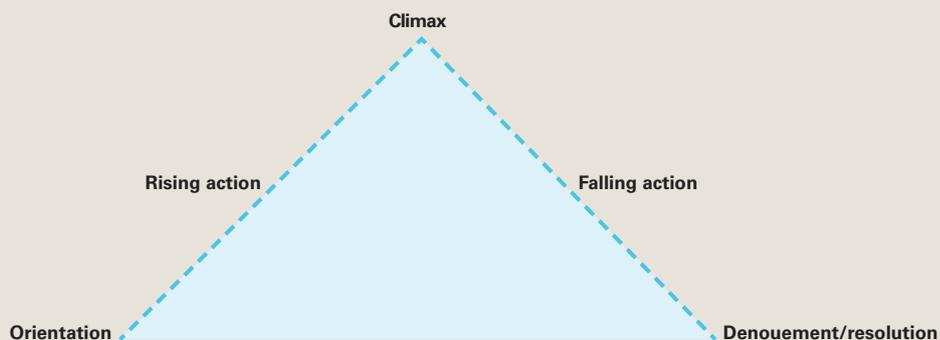
NARRATIVE CODES	SYMBOLIC CODES
contextual elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• time</li><li>• place</li><li>• society</li></ul> narrative structure characters/actors author perspectives and representations of ideas, people and places	dialogue the cast stage directions in play script interior stage sets costuming sets and props lighting music/sound

# Narrative structure

The play is written in four Acts. You will need to read the play with attention to detail, especially if you are responding to it in an analytical essay or a similar genre that requires close reading.

## Responding

As you complete each act, plot the key events onto a plot graph. Be selective. These events should reflect the fate of the protagonist or main character.



A play is a narrative form so it conforms to the narrative structure, which basically consists of an **orientation**, **complication** and **resolution**. (Miller describes Act 1 as an overture, a musical term meaning an introduction or prelude.) These three stages involve minor crises for the central character, each act ending in a moment of dramatic suspense and inevitably leading to the **climax**, a turning point that is generally a ‘make or break’ situation. What follows leads either to the triumph or downfall of this character. And this is what we see in *The Crucible*, with the triumph or downfall depending on your interpretation of John Proctor’s final decision.

**orientation**  
introduction; positioning the reader into the text

**complication**  
a problem to be solved; an issue to be dealt with, that is central to the narrative and the protagonist

**resolution**  
ending; where the issue or the problem is resolved

**climax**  
the point of highest tension; the turning point in the plot or the fate of the protagonist

## Conflict

You may have encountered the saying ‘Conflict is the essence of drama’ in your study of literature. This has become something of a **cliché** in the English classroom. In truth, all prose texts in the literary genre require conflict to sustain reader or viewer interest.

Remember, conflict is not just action; it can operate between characters (external conflict) and within characters (internal conflict).

### Responding

#### Internal conflict

List the characters who suffer from internal conflict in the play. Identify the conflict that each has encountered; for instance, John Proctor suffers from an internal conflict between his personal integrity and his survival.

#### External conflict

Create a table that shows the external conflict between characters in the play and the source of that conflict.

CHARACTERS	EXTERNAL CONFLICT
Elizabeth Proctor and Abigail Williams	Love for John Proctor

## Identities

**cliché**  
an overused phrase or saying

One of the most fascinating aspects of *The Crucible* is that Miller has been able to feature real people from history to present his perspectives about his contemporary society. Abigail Williams, Reverend Parris and his daughter, John Proctor and others actually existed, and played roles in the past, similar to those in the play. Miller tells us in his introduction that some minor characters have been ‘fused into one’ and that he has re-imagined others from historical documents.

## Analysing character in a key scene

One of the most effective methods of analysing character is to select a key scene and study it closely. Read the following extract from Act 3.

MARY WARREN [pointing at PROCTOR]: You’re the Devil’s man.  
[He is stopped in his tracks.]  
PARRIS: Praise God!  
GIRLS: Praise God!  
PROCTOR [numbed]: Mary, how –?  
MARY WARREN: I’ll not hang with you. I love God, I love God.  
DANFORTH [to Mary]: He bid you do the Devil’s work?  
MARY WARREN [hysterically, indicating PROCTOR]: He come at me by night and every day to sign to sign, to –  
DANFORTH: Sign what?

>>

PARRIS: The Devil's Book? He come with a book?  
 MARY WARREN [hysterically, pointing at PROCTOR, fearful of him]: My name, he want my name. 'I'll murder you,' he says, 'if my wife hangs. We must go and overthrow the court,' he says!  
 [DANFORTH's head jerks towards PROCTOR, shock and horror in his face]  
 PROCTOR [turning, appealing to Hale]: Mr Hale!  
 MARY WARREN [her sobs beginning]: He wake me every night, his eyes were like coals and his ringers [sic] claw my neck, and I sign, I sign ...  
 HALE: Excellency, this child's gone wild!  
 PROCTOR [as DANFORTH's eyes pour on him]: Mary, Mary!  
 MARY WARREN [screaming at him]: No, I love God; I go your way no more. I love God, I bless God. [Sobbing she rushes to Abigail.] Abby, Abby, I'll never hurt you more!  
 [They all watch, as Abigail, out of her infinite charity, reaches out and draws the sobbing MARY to her, and then looks up to DANFORTH.]  
 DANFORTH [to PROCTOR]: What are you? [PROCTOR is beyond speech in his anger.] You are combined with anti-Christ, are you not? I have seen your power; you will not deny it! What say you, Mister?  
 HALE: Excellency –  
 DANFORTH: I will have nothing from you, Mr Hale.  
 [To PROCTOR] Will you confess yourself befouled with Hell, or do you keep that black allegiance yet? What say you?  
 PROCTOR [his mind wild, breathless]: I say – I say – God is dead.  
 PARRIS: Hear it, hear it!  
 PROCTOR [laughs insanely, then]: A fire, a fire is burning. I hear the boot of Lucifer, I see his filthy face! And it is my face, and yours, Danforth! For them that quail to bring men out of ignorance, as I have quailed, and as you quail now when you know in your black hearts that this be fraud – God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together!  
 DANFORTH: Marshall! Take him and Corey with him to the jail!  
 HALE [starting across to the door]: I denounce these proceedings!  
 PROCTOR: You are pulling Heaven down and raising up a whore!  
 HALE: I denounce these proceedings, I quit this court!  
 [He slams the door to the outside behind him.]  
 DANFORTH [calling to him in a fury]: Mr Hale! Mr Hale!

*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, Penguin Books Ltd, Penguin Classics, London 2000

## Responding

Choose three characters featured in the scene, including John Proctor.

1 **Analyse:**

- these characters' actions – what they do
- their interaction with others – how they interact
- the dialogue and imagery – language choices
- stage directions – designed to create mood
- the role of the character in relation to concepts and issues in the text
- how the cultural and historical context of the play influences the characters' behaviour – their cultural assumptions.

2 **Explain** how these techniques combine to construct a particular representation of each character.

## Characterisation: John Proctor

In literary texts, characters are analysed according to:

- 1 their actions – what they do to advance the plot
- 2 their words – dialogue; what they say in the play
- 3 their relationship with others – what others say about them.

John Proctor is the main character and it is his fate we are following. By looking at his actions in the texts and his dialogue with others, we can analyse his character and role in the play, as well as how he is presented.

What does Proctor do?

- He commits adultery with Abigail Williams.
- He tries to make amends to his wife for his sin.
- He tries to protect his wife from Abigail's revenge, and the court's judgment, by persuading Mary Warren to tell the truth.
- He confesses to his lechery and brands Abigail's behaviour as a 'whore's vengeance'.
- He confesses to witchcraft and then tears up his confession.



Alamy Stock Photo/AF archive

Daniel Day-Lewis and Joan Allen, as John and Elizabeth Proctor in the 1986 film.

### Responding

What does Proctor say? What do others say about him? Here are some key quotations that reveal Proctor's character. Fill in the table below to explain how Proctor is constructed and represented by the quotations.

QUOTATION FROM THE PLAY	EXPLANATION AND COMMENT ON PROCTOR'S CHARACTER
PROCTOR: Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I'll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind. We never touched, Abby. (p. 29)	
PROCTOR: ... vengeance is walking Salem. We are what we always were in Salem, but now the little crazy children are jangling the keys of the kingdom, and common vengeance writes the law! (p. 72)	
PROCTOR: ... now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor. (p. 125)	
MILLER: In Proctor's presence a fool felt his foolishness instantly – and a Proctor is always marked for calumny therefore. (p. 27)	
ABIGAIL: I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart! I never knew what pretence Salem was, I never knew the lying lessons I was taught by all these Christian women and their covenanted men! (p. 30)	
ELIZABETH: He have his goodness now. (p. 126)	

*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, Penguin Books Ltd, Penguin Classics, London 2000

# Concepts

**concepts**  
ideas or themes  
embedded in a text

**Concepts** in a text reflect its author's perspectives and his or her representation of events and identities in a social and cultural context.

Miller describes his play as 'one of the strangest and most awful chapters in human history' ('A note on the historical accuracy of this play', page 11, Penguin edition). This is a strong assertion. Think about why Miller wrote *The Crucible* and the parallels he made with history.

## Responding

- Discuss** the list of concepts from *The Crucible* in the table below. Which of these ideas are foregrounded in the text? Rearrange the list in order of importance to you. Delete those concepts you consider irrelevant or too minor for consideration. There may be some overlap in your responses where you group ideas together.
- Can you add any other concepts to the list?
- In the table below, fill in the five concepts from the play that you consider most important. The first example has been completed for you. In a response to the play, you would only be expected to explore one or two concepts, so be selective in your choice of what is most significant.

CONCEPT	EXAMPLE – PROVIDE EVIDENCE FROM AN EVENT OR CHARACTER FROM THE PLAY	EXAMPLE – A QUOTATION FROM THE PLAY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE
Fear	The play opens with the girls discovered by Reverend Parris, dancing in the woods at night with Tituba, the servant from Barbados.	Parris: 'That my daughter and my niece I discovered dancing like heathen in the forest?' (page 19) Dancing is forbidden in Puritan society. Betty's reaction is an indication of her fear of punishment.
Mass hysteria		
Lust, including land lust		
Integrity and morality		
Reputation		
Revenge		
Virtue		
Abuse of judicial power		
Power of religion		
Hypocrisy		
Superstition and the supernatural		

*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, Penguin Books Ltd, Penguin Classics, London 2000

# Language and style

An unusual, but not unique, aspect of this play is Miller's extensive use of authorial comment to provide background detail for the reader. Whether he intended this information to be conveyed in a performance is doubtful, although it certainly clarifies and enlarges the narrative, as well as heightening our perspective about the events that unfold.

There are six examples of this technique in Act 1, each introducing a character as they enter the play. This narrative commentary breaks into the middle of the action in a scene, interrupting the action and dispelling the tension.

Clearly, Miller also wanted his audience and the future directors of the play to be fully informed about his characters and their society and history. This is the orientation phase of the play and the scene is being set.

Miller did not use this technique beyond Act 1. He gives no insight, for example, into Deputy-Governor Danforth, who plays such an instrumental role in the court proceedings.

### Responding

Select one of the authorial commentaries in Act 1.

- 1 **Summarise** its contents.
- 2 **Explain** how it represents the characters who are introduced.
- 3 How does the commentary reveal the cultural assumptions, attitudes, values or beliefs of the society of Salem?
- 4 **Explain** how the commentary you have selected represents concepts in the play.

There is also an afterword at the end of the play, entitled 'Echoes down the corridor', which provides information on the fate of the surviving characters, the eventual rescinding of charges against those executed and excommunicated, and the final abandonment of the trials.

## Dialogue

As the play is set in 1692, more than 300 years ago, it is not surprising that the dialogue should reflect the times and the preoccupation of the society in which it is set. Notable, for example, is the use of the verb 'to be'. Abigail insists to her uncle at the beginning of the play that: 'There *be* no blush about my name'. There is also the use of verb agreement, as when Mary Warren cries out, asserting that 'He [Proctor] *wake* me every night', and 'He *want* my name'. Characters like Danforth and Hale speak more formally and correctly.

## Imagery

The imagery and figurative language in the play is colourful and dramatic. Aside from reflecting on individual characters, the language reveals the preoccupation with religion and witchcraft, and the simmering emotions at play in Salem. Frequent reference to God and the Devil, to Heaven and Hell, the symbolic use of the colours black and red, and images of fire are found throughout the play.

HALE: ... If she is truly in the Devil's grip we may have to rip and tear to get her free. (p. 42)

HALE: Theology, sir, is a fortress; no crack in a fortress may be accounted small. (p. 65)

DANFORTH: ... We burn a hot fire here; it melts down all concealment. (p. 81)

MARY WARREN: He wake me every night, his eyes were like coals and his ringers [sic] claw my neck, and I sign, I sign ... (p. 104)

*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, Penguin Books Ltd, Penguin Classics, London 2000

### Responding

- 1 **Discuss** the language choices in each quotation, and the mood created by these images.
- 2 **Explain** how these language choices reveal the preoccupations of the Salem society and the motivations of the characters.
- 3 **Identify** some other examples of dialogue and imagery that reflect the cultural context of the play, and the attitudes, values and beliefs of individual characters.

## Extension

The syllabus advises that students 'should have opportunities in Units 1 and 2 to experience and respond to the types of assessment they will encounter in Units 3 and 4'.

In Unit 3, Textual connections, summative assessment is an extended written response based on two texts connected by the representation of a concept, identity, time or place, and written for a public audience. One of the texts must be a literary text from the prescribed text list.

To prepare for this task, you may like to research or view texts that have links to the textual elements of *The Crucible*. For example, you could view the feature film *Goodnight and Goodluck*, about Ed Morro, the maverick radio host in the McCarthy era. Or you could research articles about McCarthyism, such as 'Social media witch-hunts are no different to the old kind – just bigger' – from *The Guardian* (2016) by Malcolm Gaskill.



Related article

# *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time and The Good Doctor*

## Assessment possibilities

As part of your studies in English, you are required to explore individual and/or collective perspectives of the world through engaging with a variety of texts. The novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon allows audiences to examine the representations of concepts and identities. Considering these representations in relation to a separate, but connected text, such as *The Good Doctor*, allows us to think about how different attitudes about the same concept might be conveyed.

You might be asked to:

- analyse the representation of a particular character in two different texts
- offer a perspective about the social significance of concepts represented in the texts, such as how audiences can be positioned to view a society that does not always accommodate diversity
- position audiences to think about one – or both – of the texts in a particular way
- explore the influence and role of a television series in reinforcing and shaping attitudes, values and beliefs

In creating a speech inspired by one or both of these texts, you will need to consider your own response to the representation of concepts and identities in the novel and television series. You might be asked to write and present:

- a speech that shapes a representation of an issue in the novel, such as family structures or cultural assumptions about people who are not neurotypical
- a seminar that shapes a perspective about the treatment of a particular issue in the novel, such as inclusion
- a film critique that addresses the significance of the television series for audiences and the broader society
- a pitch for a documentary that will shape the representation of a particular concept, such as social inclusion or the usefulness of coming-of-age films in developing the wellbeing of a teenage reader.

# Connecting concept: individual experiences and perspectives of the world

Both *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *The Good Doctor* feature protagonists who view the world in remarkable ways. As readers and viewers, we engage with these texts and explore how the perspectives of others can bring intelligence, joy and humour to our own lives.



AAP Image/AP/Zach Hyman

The *Sesame Street* cast now includes Julia, a character with autism

## Social context

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* tells the story of Christopher Boone, who has trouble interpreting social situations and, although it is not explicitly stated in the text, demonstrates behaviour consistent with autism. *The Good Doctor* tells the story of Dr Sean Murphy, a doctor with autism. For a long time, stigma has been associated with autism, but society is gradually becoming more inclusive towards people who experience its symptoms. Consider the following article about the inclusion of a character with autism in the well-loved children's television show *Sesame Street*.

### Bravo, Sesame Street – your character with autism will erode ignorance

It is commonly held that kids can be cruel, but it's not a phrase I have ever used, largely because I regard it as a spectacular understatement. Children can be, and frequently are, awful, vile, contemptible and vicious, along with many other things that I cannot put in a family newspaper.

I learned this from growing up with a brother who has autism. There were a few exceptions, but in the large part the children in our village were not equipped to understand or accept abnormal behaviour, and so resorted to mockery and imitation – behaviour that, thankfully, my brother's severe disability precluded him from being hurt by, though that didn't preclude me being affected by it.

They would imitate the hooting noises he made and flap their hands, and there were frequent slurs of 'mong', 'spaz' and 'retard'.



Even now, over a decade later, the use of the latter in casual conversation – often by otherwise kindly and affable people – feels like a punch in the gut.

The extent to which the discourse around autism has moved on even in the past decade is encouraging.

My mother, who works as a supply teacher, tells me that things are much better these days, though there is no doubt that bullying continues. Children with autism and other special needs are treated with more kindness, she says, and accepted as part of the school community. No doubt this can partly be put down to an increase in diagnosis and awareness (one in 68 children in the US now has an autism spectrum disorder – ASD – diagnosis), but also, I think, the steady cultural acceptance that, in many aspects not limited to our brains, not everyone is born the same.

Which is why I am overjoyed that Sesame Street has introduced an autistic muppet, called Julia (who will be operated by a woman, Stacey Gordon, who has a son with autism). This has a personal resonance, because my brother adores the Muppets and Sesame Street, and I would have loved [for] him when he was little to have been able to watch one of his favourite programmes and see aspects of himself reflected back.

... Julia will not just help children with autism who watch it, but all children. It will help to enlighten them about specific behaviours. For instance, when Julia is introduced to Big Bird, she ignores him. He is upset, until the other Muppets explain that she just does things a little differently. Similarly, she jumps up and down when she is excited, but instead of excluding her, the other children incorporate it into their games.

The extent to which the discourse around autism has moved on even in the past decade is encouraging. When my brother was diagnosed, I was given a cheap illustrated pamphlet designed for the siblings of children with autism. Now there is a whole genre of books dedicated to explaining autism to children (and making those with ASD feel less alone), from *Jasper and the Magpie* to *Everybody is Different*, *My Brother Charlie* and *I See Things Differently*. You may note that many of these books have male characters, and much of the cultural conversation around autism ignores the (hugely under-diagnosed) girls who have it. So a female Sesame Street character with autism is a wonderful thing.

We still have a long way to go when it comes to autism understanding and acceptance, and getting to people when they are young will help avoid the kind of bullying that autistic people can suffer (a US-based 2012 study found that 63% of children with ASD had been bullied, and were victims three times more frequently than their non-autistic siblings).

... Bravo to Sesame Street for echoing those sentiments and bringing them to a new generation of children. I can't wait to introduce my brother to Julia.

'Bravo, Sesame Street, Your Character with Autism will Erode Ignorance'  
by Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett. Copyright Guardian News and Media Ltd 2018

## Responding

- 1 **Determine** the **invited reading** of the article.
- 2 **Explain** the effect of the author's personal anecdotes on the strength of her argument.
- 3 The author of this article uses inclusive pronouns (e.g. 'we', 'our', 'you') to create a particular relationship with her audience. Identify three examples of this technique and suggest its effect.
- 4 **Identify** the use of empirical evidence and explain its effect.
- 5 **Consider** your own experience with children's television programs. What did you observe of the characters' backgrounds and experiences? In your opinion, did the range of characters provide you with a wide view of the world?
- 6 **Suggest** the impact of the decision made by the producers of *Sesame Street* to include a character with autism.

**invited reading**  
the intended and expected understanding of the text based on a shared understanding of the social, cultural and historical context of the text

# Introduction to *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* was written by Mark Haddon and published in 2003. It is a novel about a teenage boy, Christopher Boone, who discovers his neighbour's dog has been murdered. It could be considered a mystery story; however, while attempting to solve the mystery of the murdered dog, Christopher matures and learns a great deal about himself and the world around him. It is written in first person from Christopher's perspective, which allows the reader to consider the world in a very unusual way.

## Authorial context

Mark Haddon was born in England in 1962. He studied literature at university, but before he became a successful writer, he worked with people with disabilities. As well as being a writer of fiction, Haddon is an illustrator and poet. When *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* was published in 2003, it received the prestigious Whitbread Book of the Year award.

## Setting

The novel is initially set in Swindon, in England. During the course of the story, Christopher travels to London on a train. This train journey is very daunting for Christopher, who struggles with large crowds and unfamiliar places.

In a play adaptation of Haddon's novel, the action occurs in a giant, dimly lit box. Examine the photograph opposite.



Photo by BrinkhoffWögenberg

Christopher and his mother Judy in a scene from the play version of *A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

### Responding

- 1 **Describe** the mood of the scene.
- 2 **Identify** the prominent features in the scene and suggest why the director has chosen to exaggerate the size of some objects, and underestimate others.
- 3 **Examine** the characters in the photograph. What does their posture, body language and distance suggest about their relationship?
- 4 Which character do you think is Christopher?
- 5 What sort of map is projected in the scene's background? How does this connect with the action on stage?

### Preparing to read

In Chapter 1 you will find helpful information about the conventions of a novel. Familiarise yourself with these conventions, as you will be required to examine them in more depth.

#### Read for pleasure

Mark Haddon describes *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* as a 'murder mystery novel like no other'. A murder mystery usually adheres to the following conventions:

- a realistic and specific setting
- opening scenes that foreground dominant attitudes, values and beliefs
- a plot that starts with the crime, followed by clues, evidence and solutions
- the investigation involves a number of **red herrings**
- a closing scene that provides a resolution to the crime and explanation of ambiguous clues
- social equilibrium is usually reinstated at the end of the story.

To aid your eventual analysis of the novel, you might like to use sticky notes during your first reading to identify the use of these conventions. Remember, a close analysis of a literary text involves several readings!

#### Read for meaning

To consider the text more closely, take notes that contain:

- an overview of the plot
- a graph plotting the tension of the story
- a brief description of the central characters and five key quotations that you feel exemplify their attitudes, values and beliefs.

**red herring**  
a false clue,  
designed to act  
as a decoy



Reading notes

# Textual elements

## Plot

While reading the novel, the audience learns that Christopher loves Sherlock Holmes, a very famous detective series by another British author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Mark Haddon uses intertextuality. He draws on the Sherlock Holmes story called ‘The Adventure of Silver Blaze’, which is about a valuable racehorse that has been stolen from its stable. During the famous story, Sherlock Holmes discusses the matter with a police officer, who asks:

‘Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?’  
 ‘To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.’  
 ‘The dog did nothing in the night-time.’  
 ‘That was the curious incident,’ remarked Sherlock Holmes.

*The Adventure of Silver Blaze* by Arthur Conan Doyle, 1892

### Responding

- 1 **Suggest** why Sherlock Holmes thought it unusual that the dog in the night-time did nothing when the racehorse was being stolen.
- 2 **Explain** how this relates to Mark Haddon’s story about the murdered dog.
- 3 How, then, might this use of intertextuality enhance a reader’s engagement with this story?

We learnt in the previous section that *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is a murder mystery. Complete the following table using sections in the novel marked by sticky notes during your first reading. The first section has been completed for you. You might find that there are several passages for each section that could come from a number of chapters.

SECTION	RELEVANT PASSAGES
Realistic and specific settings	‘It was 7 minutes after midnight. The dog was lying on the grass in the middle of the lawn in front of Mrs Shears’ house.’ (Chapter 1)  ‘It was nice in the police cell. It was almost a perfect cube, 2 meters long by 2 meters wide by 2 meters high. It contained approximately 8 cubic meters of air. It had a small window with bars and, on the opposite side, a metal door with a long, thin hatch near the floor for sliding trays of food into the cell ...’ (Chapter 23)
Opening scenes that foreground dominant attitudes, values and beliefs	
Plot that starts with the crime, followed by clues, evidence and solutions	
Red herring(s)	
Resolution of the crime and explanation of ambiguous clues	
Restoration of social order	

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, by Mark Haddon, first published by Jonathan Cape, 2003

## Responding

- 1 Read over the passages you have noted in your table. Highlight passages that:
  - a show Christopher's unique perspective of the world
  - b make a comment about other characters' attitudes about Christopher.
- 2 **Examine** the red herrings. Suggest how they might trick or mislead the reader.
- 3 The numbering of the chapters in this novel is unusual. Can you observe a pattern at all? You might like to re-read Chapter 19 to help you form your response.

# Characterisation

## The author's use of language and its effects on characterisation

The narrator's perspective in the novel is a key textual element. In *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, the narrator is Christopher, who is also the protagonist of the story. Mark Haddon has constructed Christopher's point of view using a creative range of grammatical techniques.

Read the following extract and complete the associated questions to deconstruct the representation of Christopher.

I find people confusing.

... The first main reason is that people do a lot of talking without using any words. Siobhan says that if you raise one eyebrow it can mean lots of different things. It can mean 'I want to do sex with you' and it can also mean 'I think that what you just said is very stupid.'

Siobhan also says that if you close your mouth and breathe out loudly through your nose it can mean that you are relaxed, or that you are bored, or that you are angry and it all depends on how much air comes out of your nose and how fast and what shape your mouth is when you do it and how you are sitting and what you said just before and hundreds of other things which are too complicated to work out in a few seconds.

From *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*  
by Mark Haddon. Published by Jonathan Cape.

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### voice

the certain style or expression used by the narrator in a story

### point of view

a grammatical construction that identifies how the narrator is telling the story; it is usually referred to as 'person', i.e. first person, third person, second person, etc.

### active voice

where the subject of the sentence performs the action

### passive voice

where the subject of a sentence receives the action

## Responding

- 1 **Consider** the following elements of **voice** in relation to the characterisation of Christopher:
  - a **Identify** the **point of view** being used in this extract and explain how it affects the reader's relationship with Christopher.
  - b **Describe** Christopher's tone and provide an example to justify your description.
  - c **Determine** whether Christopher mainly uses **active** or **passive voice**. Explain how this contributes to the representation of Christopher.
  - d **Describe** Christopher's vocabulary. Is it narrow or extensive? Is it colourful or straightforward? Explain how Christopher's vocabulary shows his understanding of the world.
- 2 In this extract, Christopher is explaining why he finds it hard to interpret body language. Can you relate to Christopher's experiences? Does his explanation resonate with your own feelings?
- 3 This extract omits the second reason why Christopher finds people confusing. Locate this passage in your novel and summarise the rest of his argument.

Christopher's narration enables audiences to view characters and events in certain ways. Read over the following extracts that construct a representation of Christopher's father.

1	At 1.28am a policeman opened the door of the cell and told me that there was someone to see me. I stepped outside. Father was standing in the corridor. He held up his right hand and spread his fingers out in a fan. I held up my left hand and spread my fingers out in a fan and we made our fingers and thumbs touch each other. We do this because Father wants to give me a hug, but I do not like hugging people, so we do this instead, and it means that he loves me. (Chapter 31)
2	Father had never grabbed hold of me like that before. Mother had hit me sometimes because she was a very hot-tempered person, which means that she got angry more quickly than other people and she shouted more often. But Father is a more level-headed person, which means that he doesn't get angry as quickly and he doesn't shout as often. So I was very surprised when he grabbed me. (Chapter 47)
3	I had to get out of the house. Father had murdered Wellington. That meant he could murder me, because I couldn't trust him, even though he had said, 'Trust me,' because he had told a lie about a big thing. (Chapter 167)
4	'Christopher, look ... Things can't go on like this. I don't know about you, but this ... this just hurts too much. You being in the house but refusing to talk to me ... You have to learn to trust me ... And I don't care how long it takes ... If it's a minute one day and two minutes the next and three minutes the next and it takes years I don't care. Because this is important. This is more important than anything else'. (Chapter 233)

From *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. Published by Jonathan Cape. Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Limited. © 2003.

### Responding

- 1 Contextualise each extract by **explaining** where it fits into the plot.
- 2 **Summarise** how Christopher's relationship with his father changes over the four passages.
- 3 The style is different in Extract 4. **Explain**.
- 4 In your opinion, what kind of person is Ed Boone? Are his actions justifiable?

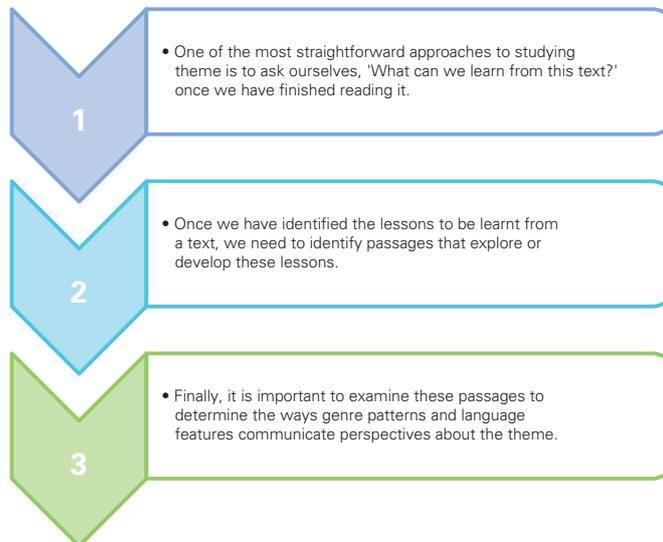
## Theme

**theme**  
the main message(s)  
of a text

Analysing literary **themes** is an important aspect of studying texts, as it helps us learn about unfamiliar concepts or see concepts, identities, times and places in a fresh way.

### Steps for analysing theme

One of the themes in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is the influence of logic versus emotion. Christopher grapples with this throughout the novel. He is unable to sense people's emotions, but instead relies on what others tell him about reading social cues.



Consider the following extract from Chapter 107, where Christopher explains why *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is his favourite book. After listing all of the reasons why he likes it, he then explains aspects of the novel that he doesn't like.

And sometimes Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (who is the author) describes people like this

*There was something subtly wrong with the face, some coarseness of expression, some hardness, perhaps of eye, some looseness of lips which marred its natural beauty.*

And I don't know what some *hardness, perhaps of eye means*, and I'm not interested in faces.

*Hound of the Baskervilles* by Arthur Conan Doyle, 1902 George Newnes and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, by Mark Haddon, first published by Jonathan Cape, 2003

**INTERTEXTUALITY:**  
By using an example from Christopher's favourite novel, which is about a character who thinks in a very logical way, like him, Haddon accentuates Christopher's reliance on logic and reason.

**EXPLANATION:**  
Christopher often explains things that would already be obvious to the reader, because he cannot understand implied meanings.

**EXPLANATION:**  
Christopher clearly explains to the reader that he has trouble reading emotions.

**Responding**

- Select** a series of passages that develop the theme of logic versus emotion. You might like to refer to the following chapters:
  - Chapter 3, where Siobhan uses cartoons to help Christopher interpret emotions
  - Chapter 47, where Christopher is referring to his logic behind 'Super Good Days'
  - Chapter 109, where Christopher explains why he doesn't feel sad about his mother's death
  - Chapter 163, where Christopher compares people to computers
  - Chapter 181, where Christopher realises he can tell a joke
  - Chapter 199, where Christopher explains why people believe in God.
- Analyse** the passages by identifying how the author constructs an argument about logic versus emotion.

## Symbolism

Writers of literary texts often use **symbolism** to represent complex concepts and themes. It is not always obvious to the reader and often it is easier to identify the use of symbolism in a text once you have finished reading it.

A recurring symbol in a text is referred to as a motif. Often, the significance of the symbol evolves throughout the development of the plot, and a character's engagement with the symbol represents their personal growth.

In *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, there are a number of symbols that eventually become motifs. Consider the significance of the red and yellow cars.

**symbolism**  
a symbol is anything that stands for something else in a text and is used to emphasise the qualities of a character or an object, giving ideas of objects meaning other than their literal sense, e.g. black as a colour to symbolise evil

BEGINNING OF NOVEL	END OF NOVEL
CHAPTER 89	CHAPTER 233
The next day I saw 4 yellow cars in a row on the way to school which made it a <b>Black Day</b> so I didn't eat anything at lunch and I sat in the corner of the room all day and read my A level Maths course book. And the next day, too, I didn't speak to anyone and for the whole afternoon I sat in the corner of the Library groaning with my head pressed into the join between the two walls and this made me feel calm and safe. But on the third day I kept my eyes closed all the way to school until we got off the bus because after I have had 2 <b>Black Days</b> in a row I'm allowed to do that.	And the next morning I looked out of the window in the dining room to count the cars in the street to see whether it was going to be a <b>Quite Good Day</b> or a <b>Good Day</b> or a <b>Super Good Day</b> or a <b>Black Day</b> , but it wasn't like being on the bus to school because you could look out of the window for as long as you wanted and see as many cars as you wanted and I looked out of the window for three hours and I saw 5 red cars in a row and 4 yellow cars in a row which meant it was both a <b>Good Day</b> and a <b>Black Day</b> so the system didn't work anymore. But if I concentrated on counting the cars it stopped my thinking about my A level and the pain in my chest.

From *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. Published by Jonathan Cape. Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Limited. © 2003.

## Responding

- 1 **Describe** Christopher's logic behind his Good Day system.
- 2 **Compare** and **contrast** Christopher's attitude in the two extracts.
- 3 **Explain** how Christopher has matured by the end of the novel.
- 4 **Suggest** what concept or world view is being symbolised by cars.
- 5 Some other symbols in the novel are dogs, stars and the A Level maths exam. **Identify** passages from the beginning, middle and end of the novel that show the significance of these symbols, and suggest how they symbolise Christopher's development.

## Introduction to *The Good Doctor*

The television series *The Good Doctor* is about Sean Murphy (played by Freddie Highmore), who is a surgeon with autism. Sean relocates from a quiet country town to work in an inner-city surgical unit. In this very popular medical drama, the character of Sean's displays many similarities to Christopher Boone in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Sean is extremely intelligent and uses logic to solve complex medical cases, but he is also socially awkward and has trouble reading the emotions of others.



Freddie Highmore as Sean Murphy in *The Good Doctor*

Getty Images/Disney ABC Television Group/Eike Schroter

# The generic conventions of a TV series

A television series consists of a number of episodes about a central group of characters. Each episode can be watched independently; however, many audiences like to watch all episodes in a series. An episode features an entertaining plot, which can be analysed in a similar way to prose fiction.

The big difference in analysing a TV series is that the narrative is presented audiovisually using a range of film codes. Refer to Chapter 1 for a list of aesthetic features and genre conventions relevant to film texts.

## Setting

A medical TV drama is usually set in a hospital and the narrative portrays characters who have to respond to challenging, and sometimes horrific, medical problems.

## Plot

An episode of a medical drama will typically feature the presentation of a patient to the hospital who has complex health needs, and the main characters usually need to apply problem-solving skills that sometimes involve trial and error. Episodes often present the characters with emotional situations. The following narrative structure is often applied to an episode in a medical drama:

- equilibrium – the episode starts with the characters in a habitual, natural state
- disruption of equilibrium – a problem is presented that disrupts the normal state, often a patient experiencing a life-threatening health problem
- recognition of the disruptions – the characters attempt (perhaps more than once) to diagnose the problem. Sometimes their initial diagnosis is incorrect
- attempt to repair disruption – the main characters work to treat the patient, which often coincides with the characters having to learn something about themselves
- a reinstatement of equilibrium – the episode concludes with patient's needs being addressed.

Sometimes, a television episode will feature a *dual plot*, where two stories are being told at the same time. The scenes alternate between the two narratives, and they usually feature two different sets of characters.

### Preparing to view

It is important to begin viewing a film text with the correct mindset. You are not watching it purely for entertainment! You will be required to analyse the director's purpose, and how this purpose is achieved through the use of aesthetic features. To do this, you need to concentrate.

## Responding

This activity involves viewing season one, episode nine, 'Intangibles' (2017). In this episode, Sean attempts to learn strategies to read people's emotions, in much the same way as Siobhan tries to help Christopher in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

During the first viewing you should aim to enjoy the episode, and notice when you feel an emotional or critical response to events in the episode's narrative. You might like to jot these down, but try to experience it as a general audience member.

- 1 **Identify** the dual plot – which characters have to solve which problem?
- 2 **Describe** any similarities between Sean Murphy and Christopher Boone.
- 3 This episode portrays characters who have different perspectives towards a patient's case. **Describe** these perspectives.

# Textual elements

## Narrative structure



Reading notes

View the episode a second time and analyse its narrative structure. It will help if you can download the appropriate worksheet on the website accompanying this book. Use your responses in your worksheet to answer the questions below.

## Responding

- 1 Write a paragraph that explains how the narrative of the TV episode privileges Sean's perspective. Ensure you have a clear topic sentence that directs the reader through the response, a controlled development of your explanation and a concluding sentence.
- 2 Apply this table to a second episode of *The Good Doctor*. **Consider** whether it follows the generic structure of a TV episode, and whether it privileges Sean's perspective.

Now that you have identified how the narrative has been constructed and ordered in the television episode, it is possible to examine how personalities and motivations of characters elicit emotional or critical responses from audiences.

## Characterisation

In a Hollywood film, there is usually one character who drives the action. However, in a TV episode, several characters keep the plot moving. These characters can have different perspectives, attitudes, values and beliefs from each other and it's usually these differences that cause dramatic tension within an episode. Download the worksheet 'Analysing characterisation in a TV episode' from the website accompanying this book and use it to observe how the text constructs character. Refer to your responses on the worksheet to answer the following questions.



Analysing characterisation in a TV episode

## Responding

### editing

(film) the process of cutting a film together to determine the length and sequence of shots



Analysing editing in a TV series

- 1 Consider the time-on-screen and camera shots used to portray the protagonists. How do they differ to the remaining characters?
- 2 Tension and excitement can be created by the use of quick shots and regular cuts, whereas a slower-paced film uses longer shots with fewer cuts between them. This is described as **editing**. Describe the pace of this episode using the data you collected in your table.
- 3 Choose one protagonist. Write an analytical paragraph that deconstructs how the editing accentuates the protagonist's development in the narrative. Ensure you have a clear topic sentence that directs the reader through the response, a controlled development of your explanation and a concluding sentence. You might like to use the following table to help you.

Topic sentence	Episode 9 of the television series <i>The Good Doctor</i> is edited to show _____ changes from _____ to _____.
Brief description of the protagonist's goal	
Explanation of how the camera distance reinforces the construction of the character's goals	
Linking sentence	Therefore, the audience can see that [insert protagonist]'s perspective is accentuated by the director's editing.

## Mise-en-scene

**Mise-en-scene** is a French term that refers to how all the visual elements within each scene work together to create meaning. The mise-en-scene positions audiences to feel certain emotions when viewing that scene.

**mise-en-scene** a French expression that means 'staging an action', whereby the placing of objects on a stage, in a shot or in an image can invoke meaning for the viewer



Image A

Getty Images/Disney ABC Television Group/  
Jack Rowland



Image B

Getty Images/Disney ABC Television Group/  
Jack Rowland

**Responding**

1 **Compare** and **contrast** the mise-en-scene used in Image A and Image B on the previous page.

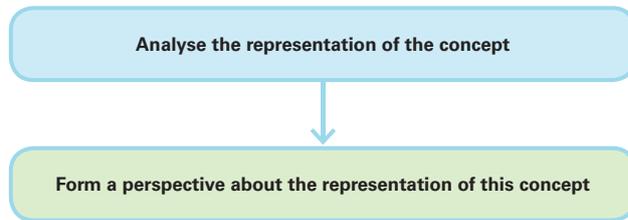
	IMAGE 1	IMAGE 2
<b>Setting</b>		
<b>Lighting</b> Suggest what is implied by the lighting		
<b>Costume</b> Explain how the costuming symbolises the characters' status		
<b>Props</b> Explain how the character's interaction with props contributes to the narrative of the episode		

2 **Consider** the protagonist who you analysed in the previous Responding activity. Scan through the episode and select a scene from the beginning, middle and end of the episode to represent how the protagonist's perspective develops. Complete the following table.

	IMAGE 1 BEGINNING	IMAGE 2 MIDDLE	IMAGE 3 END
<b>Setting</b>			
<b>Lighting</b> Suggest what is implied by the lighting			
<b>Costume</b> Explain how the costuming symbolises the characters' status			
<b>Props</b> Explain how the character's interaction with props contributes to the narrative of the episode			

# Comparing the representations of concepts

At the beginning of this chapter, you considered how different characters have unique perspectives and unusual ways of looking at the world. Now that you have explored two different texts in great depth, it is important to analyse the connections between the perspectives that are being conveyed in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *The Good Doctor*. To do this successfully, it is helpful to apply the following process.



## Connecting concept: individual experiences and perspectives of the world



Photo: Joan Marcus

Christopher Boone



Getty Images/Disney ABC Television Group/  
Jeff Weddell

Sean Murphy

**Responding**

- 1 **Compare** and **contrast** Christopher Boone’s and Sean Murphy’s attitudes towards life, using the table below.

HOW IS CHRISTOPHER DIFFERENT FROM SEAN?	IN WHAT WAYS ARE THE TWO CHARACTERS SIMILAR?	HOW IS SEAN DIFFERENT FROM CHRISTOPHER?

- 2 Use your notes from the table to write a comparative paragraph summarising your interpretation.
- 3 **Summarise** the aesthetic features and stylistic devices used to construct these representations.

	CHRISTOPHER BOONE	SEAN MURPHY
Aesthetic features and stylistic devices used to construct character		
Effect of aesthetic feature and stylistic devices on characterisation (use the list of analytical verbs in Chapter 2)		

- 4 **Consider** your own opinions about these representations. For example:
- Were you emotionally stirred by these characters?
  - Were the characters, and their decisions and reactions, thought-provoking?
  - What can society learn about how texts represent unique or unusual perspectives?
  - What can audiences learn about how unusual perspectives can show extraordinary insight?

# *Blackfish*

### Assessment possibilities

As part of your studies in English, you are required to explore individual and/or collective experiences and perspectives in a variety of texts in a range of contexts. When you analyse how an issue is represented, you will learn how a documentary can shape the audience's beliefs and attitudes and evoke cultural and social change. In the documentary *Blackfish*, the director's negative perspective about orcas living in captivity has contributed to the ending of breeding programs and orca performances in some marine parks.

In responding to *Blackfish*, you may be asked to write a text for a public audience whereby you:

- analyse how effectively the issue of marine mammals in captivity is represented in *Blackfish* and another text of your choice
- analyse how documentaries, including *Blackfish*, can shape audience beliefs and effect significant cultural changes
- examine the relationship between humans and the natural world in documentaries, including *Blackfish*.

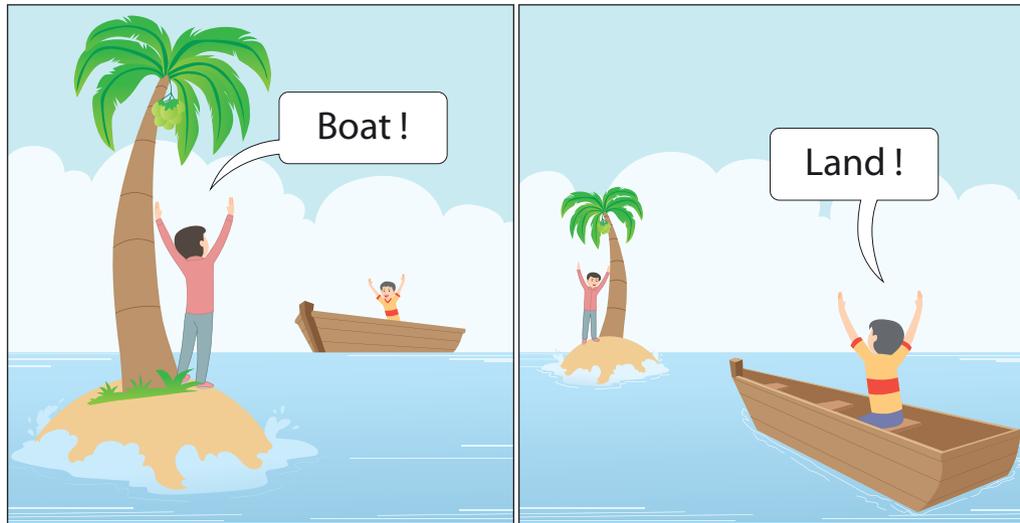
Alternatively, you may be asked to present a persuasive speech inspired by your study of *Blackfish*. You will need to form your own opinion of the representation of an issue that emerges from the documentary and use a range of persuasive strategies to convince your audience of your perspective. Integrating appropriate multimodal techniques may be required to enhance your speech and fulfil the task requirements.

You may draw on an issue in the documentary *Blackfish* to offer your own perspective in a persuasive speech. Alternatively, you could consider:

- the responsibility of documentaries to be fair and balanced in their representations
- the importance of documentaries to evoke change by shaping public sentiments.

# Introduction to *Blackfish*

The perspective in a text is the way a reader/viewer is positioned by a text, which may influence how he/she respond to identities, ideas or events. If a character is marooned on an island, the reader will view him sympathetically and view a boat as an opportunity to escape, whereas land may appear to be a haven if the reader considers the event from the perspective of the character cast adrift in a boat on an endless sea.



Perspective

Consider this cartoon from the perspectives of the person on the boat and the person on the island

Our perspective of a real-life idea, event or person may be influenced by the documentaries we watch. The word ‘documentary’ appears to denote objectivity and factual reporting. However, if we look at the range of films classified as documentaries, we might find that there can be an element of storytelling, persuasion and entertainment.

To develop a thorough understanding of how meaning is created in a documentary, we can concentrate on:

- identifying the conventions of the text type
- exploring the representation of the key issue and important identities in the documentary
- identifying and interpreting information in the documentary that has been included, emphasised and omitted
- considering perspectives within the texts that have been privileged and exploring attitudes, values and beliefs that contribute to this privileging
- determining the effect of this representation on the audience’s response.

## Responding

Consider what you already know about documentaries and answer the following questions.

- 1 What do you think are the differences between a documentary and a feature film?
- 2 Answer whether you agree or disagree, and state why, to the following statements:

STATEMENT	AGREE/DISAGREE	WHY
A documentary should be entertaining.		
Documentaries are important to challenge our social world.		



**objective**  
not influenced by  
personal feelings  
or opinions in  
considering and  
representing facts

STATEMENT	AGREE/DISAGREE	WHY
A documentary should be <b>objective</b> .		
A documentary should change the viewer's attitude.		
A documentary should be true-to-life.		

- 3 In the table below, highlight any of the documentaries you have seen and add any others with which you are familiar.

Bowling for Columbine	Supersize Me	The Cove
An Inconvenient Truth	Nanook of the North	Planet Earth
The Grizzly Man	The March of the Penguins	What the Health
Bra Boys		

- 4 Choose one documentary that is particularly memorable and record the qualities of the documentary that resonated with you.  
5 **Explain** why those qualities contributed to your appreciation of the documentary.

## Scriptwriter and director

*Blackfish* was inspired by an article by Tim Zimmermann, who reported on Tilikum, the largest orca in captivity, after he killed his SeaWorld trainer, Dawn Brancheau, in 2010. Zimmermann's feature article developed into a documentary through collaboration with the director Gabriela Cowperthwaite.

## Time

The timeline of the film spans from Brancheau's death in 2010 to the inquest in 2013. However, it also features archival footage from Tilikum's capture off the coast of Iceland in 1983. The film reflects a popular anti-captivity message supported by documentaries such as *The Cove* (2009) and the activism of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals).

## Contemporary relevance

*Blackfish* raises awareness about the real experience of a species living outside its natural environment and addresses the conflict between science, entertainment and environmental responsibility. It challenges alternative arguments regarding captivity, which advocate for the protection and propagation of species to ensure genetic biodiversity and programs to reintroduce species to the wild.

What makes this documentary different is that, with a low budget and unprecedented social media support, it was able to bring about social change. The documentary and its social media campaign cut public attendance at SeaWorld theme parks, halved their net profits and ended captivity programs and whale performances. The groundbreaking airing of opinion on Twitter and Facebook and subsequent change as a result of 'people power' resulted in the term the 'Blackfish effect', which means the enforcing of critical and measurable change through a film, social media and an existing activist group. Even Pixar changed the ending of *Finding Dory* (2016) to reflect the perspective of *Blackfish* and popular opinion.

### extra info

**The Cove:** an American documentary, released in 2009, directed by Louie Psihoyos, documents dolphin hunting in Taiji, Wakayama, Japan. It aims to inspire action to bring about the end of mass dolphin killing and to warn of the hazard of mercury poisoning from eating dolphin meat.

## Responding

Consider these questions about watching orcas or their smaller relatives, dolphins.

- 1 Have you ever seen and enjoyed the performance of an orca or dolphin in a film or at a theme park?
- 2 **Identify** some of the benefits of training these mammals in facilities such as SeaWorld.
- 3 **Explain** some of the drawbacks of keeping these mammals in facilities such as SeaWorld.

## Place

Where and when the documentary is filmed influences how we respond to the message. Footage in real places and in real time and archival footage contribute to the perception of the text's authenticity. *Tilikum*, the orca at the centre of the documentary, is filmed at various locations, including Reykjavik, Iceland; Victoria, British Columbia, Canada; and Orlando, Florida, USA.

The documentary also uses footage from marine parks and orcas in the wild. The contrast between these contexts juxtaposes the carefree life of a wild mammal and the contrived and regulated life of a marine-park mammal.

The natural environment is represented as a desirable place associated with freedom, truth and beauty. Even when filming former trainers, the director uses the background to present these former employees of SeaWorld in a positive light, encouraging the viewer to agree with their personal reflections and advocacy for orca freedom.



Getty Images/FilmMagic/D Dipasupil

A still from the interview with former SeaWorld trainer Jeffrey Ventre

## Responding

- 1 **Consider** how the natural environment is used in the interview with the former SeaWorld trainer Jeffrey Ventre. Jeffrey Ventre first appears at 1:53.
- 2 **Determine** how the colours of the environment and the trainer's clothing influence your response.
- 3 **Examine** why this is an effective context for the interview. (You may like to compare the context with a formal interview set inside with blank walls.)

## Textual elements

A director shapes a viewer's opinion, in part, by exploiting the aesthetic features and stylistic devices of film, such as camera angles and proximity of the subject, voice-over, narrative structure, editing and the techniques of the particular style of documentary (see page 3 in Chapter 1 and pages 31–2 in Chapter 5 for more information). Presenting an issue involves choosing what to film and how to film it. It also involves determining the style of the documentary and that, in itself, positions the viewer.

# Style

The director arranges the images, voice-overs, interviews and other textual features in order to affect the meaning of the documentary. Arranging the text according to the conventions of an expository documentary may position the audience to respond in a critical way, whereas the conventions of a participatory documentary may position readers to have an emotional or visceral response.

## Responding

**Research** the six main styles of documentary and list the three key features of each style.

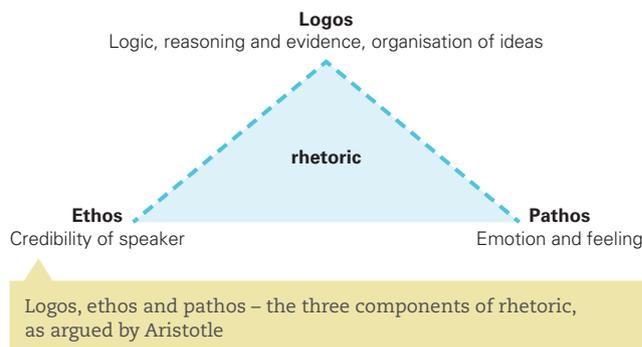
- Poetic
- Expository
- Observational
- Performative
- Participatory
- Reflexive

- 1 **Decide** which style is used for *Blackfish*.
- 2 **Consider** why the director has used this style.
- 3 **Determine** which qualities of this style of documentary best shaped your opinion about the issue of orcas in captivity.

# Structure and sequencing

The persuasiveness of a documentary is influenced by the sequence of ideas and how tension is created. The editing of scenes works together with the structure and sequence of the information in the entire film to influence how you will respond to the story. As a viewer, you should consider how you are being persuaded by the dramatic effect of any rising tension and attempts to elicit an emotional response.

Aristotle, in his famous work *Rhetoric*, argued that in order to be persuasive, a speaker or writer should exploit logos, ethos and pathos to convince his/her audience. The organisation or sequencing of events are carefully considered in the creation of a documentary to influence the audience.



## extra info

**Amar:** directed by Andrew Hinton, this is a short observational documentary made in 2011. Set in India, the film follows a day in the life of a 14-year-old Indian boy who is as dedicated to his education as he is to supporting his family as the main breadwinner.

## Sequencing styles

### Linear sequencing of ideas

A linear configuration will present an idea in a logical order, such as chronological order. The documentary may be a day in the life of a person. There is no climax and it is often observational. The short film *Amar* is an example of linear sequencing. In this nine-minute documentary, a day in the life of a young boy is recorded.



Amar

### extra info

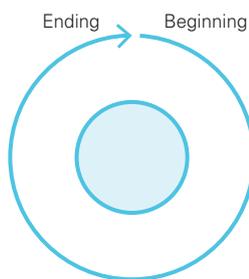
**Kwa Heri Mandima:** created by Swiss director Robert-Jan Lacombe, it is a short documentary made in 2010. He recounts, through photographs and clever storytelling, his family's departure from a remote village in Zaire.

A second type of linear configuration can have rising tension, a climax or a revelatory moment and a resolution. Depending where the climax is, there can be a gradual rise to a revelatory moment or the narrative may conclude at the climax. The short film *Kwa Heri Mandima*, a 10-minute documentary using photos and home video, ends at a revelatory moment.



### Non-linear sequencing of ideas

In this type of documentary, the end and the beginning tie the story together. The director takes the audience on a journey where the end returns to the opening sequence or introductory idea. The short film *Photograph of Jesus* is a 7-minute documentary by Laurie Hill, which documents the unusual requests received by a photo archive worker.



### extra info

**Photograph of Jesus:** released in 2008 in the United Kingdom, this is a documentary that uses stop motion to document the questions asked of archivists at the Hulton Archive/Getty Images, which houses over 60 million images.



### Responding

- 1 **Decide** how the content of *Blackfish* is sequenced. Map key points of the documentary on the relevant shape above.
- 2 **Discuss** whether the sequencing of the subject matter has shaped your opinion of the issue(s) presented.

## Sources of footage

To prompt an audience response to the issue, a documentary director can support the structure and sequence of ideas with varied footage. This is true of *Blackfish*, where footage from a range of sources is used to represent the issue of orcas in captivity.

### Responding

In the table below are examples of sources of footage used in *Blackfish*. Consider how each has influenced your response to the message of the film.

SOURCE	NOTE FREQUENCY WITH TALLIES	EXPLANATION OF EFFECTIVENESS IN BLACKFISH
Interview	E.g. IIII	Interviews with former employees provide real-life testimony. The trainers appear to be advocates of releasing the animals because of their experience. Sometimes filming is against a natural backdrop. The trainers appear to side with the argument that orcas that are free are not exploited or human killers.



SOURCE	NOTE FREQUENCY WITH TALLIES	EXPLANATION OF EFFECTIVENESS IN BLACKFISH
News broadcast		
Archival footage		
Official documents		
Court drawings		
Underwater security footage		
Eyewitness camera		

## Shot types

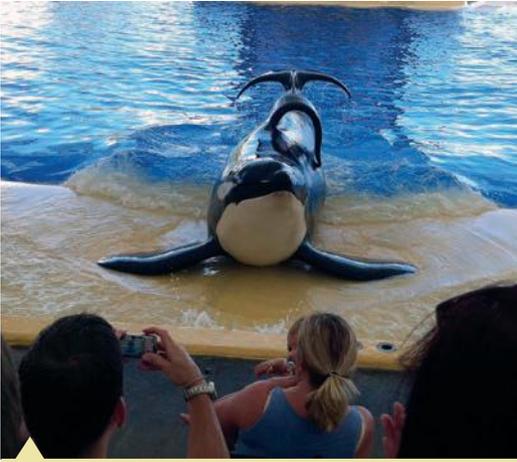
Whether filming new footage for a documentary or selecting archival footage, the shot type, including the proximity of the subject and the movement of the camera, contributes to our feelings about the issue.

### Responding

- 1 When watching the film, **identify** the shot types and tally when they are used. Use a table like the one below.

SHOT TYPE	TALLY	NOTEWORTHY EXAMPLE
E.g. Extreme close-up		

- 2 **Examine** how the consistent use of a particular shot type positions viewers to understand the message.
- 3 **Discuss** how the director's choice of camera angle, proximity, composition of the shoot (mise-en-scene) and colour positions viewers to respond to the issue presented. You may also like to refer to Chapter 5, which analyses camera techniques.



What is this shot from *Blackfish* communicating to the viewer?

## Editing

The shot type is complemented by the editing of the documentary. Editing is the process of shot selection, omission and sequencing in order to present the director's point of view. This process of cutting images and creating a succession of images can influence engagement with the film and helps to shape your understanding of the issue.

### Responding

- 1 **Review** the first minute of *Blackfish*. Look at the table below, which details the opening sequence. **Reflect** on and record your emotional response to images and audio.

OPENING MINUTE	EMOTIONAL RESPONSE OF THE VIEWER
Cut 1 Visual: Black/blue screen Date and place – 'February 24, 2010 SeaWorld Orlando' in white appears on black in a formal font. Audio: Eerie faint music, then we hear a phone conversation and a dispatcher says: <i>Orange County Fire Rescue</i> .	Uneasy and unsettled
Cut 2 Visual: Cut to cobalt blue water background. <b>Cinéma-vérité</b> as though a camera is being handheld underwater, cobalt blue colour. Audio: Phone sound, unidentified woman: <i>Uh, 6600 Sea Harbour Drive</i> .	
Cut 3 Visual: Cut to black/blue screen. Audio: Phone sound unidentified female: <i>Um, Shamu Stadium</i> . Dispatcher: <i>Okay</i> . Music is louder.	
Cut 4 Visual: Cut to blue pool. Image of human legs kicking in a black wetsuit in top-left foreground and orca tail and torso underwater in background top middle. Low angle shot. Dominant image in the screen in blue water. Wall in background. Audio: Unidentified female: <i>We actually have a trainer in the water with one of our whales, the whale that – they're not supposed to be in the water with?</i>	
Cut 5 Visual: Fade to black. Audio: Dispatcher: <i>OK. We'll get somebody en route and ...</i> Unidentified female: <i>Enter gate number 3, the Shamu stadium</i> . Dispatcher: <i>Gate 3</i> .	

#### cinéma-vérité

a style of documentary filmmaking that aims to present authentic and natural action without the appearance of directorial control or influence



OPENING MINUTE	EMOTIONAL RESPONSE OF THE VIEWER
<p>Cut 6            Visual: Screen lightens to blue, orca in foreground, head and body turning to swim towards the background.            Audio: Music lightens to more whimsical higher octave sounds. Fade to black.</p>	
<p>Cut 7            Visual: Blue screen – orca middle ground, middle shot swimming towards camera, then an image of bubbles, a whale turning and a small human spinning in the bubbles.            Audio: Unidentified female: <i>Orange County Sheriff's Office</i>.            Unidentified male: <i>We need SO to respond for a dead person at SeaWorld. Uh, a whale has eaten one of the trainers.</i> Fade to black – music darkens.</p>	
<p>Cut 8            Visual: Whale front scene with what appears to be the black form of a human in its mouth.            Audio: Eerie music and voice-over still heard of unidentified male saying: <i>eaten one of the trainers.</i></p>	
<p>Cut 9            Visual: Fade to a whale below a trainer in a wetsuit in the middle ground.            Audio: Unidentified female: <i>Uh, a whale has eaten one of the trainers.</i></p>	
<p>Cut 10            Visual: Fade to black.            Audio: Unidentified female: <i>A whale ate one of the trainers?</i>            Unidentified male: <i>That's correct.</i>            Silence.</p>	
<p>Cut 11            Visual: Cut to whale gathering speed bottom-right corner of shot, black form of trainer in middle ground, middle left, in a seeming curled position to left. Orca comes from beneath. Trainer and whale lurch out of the water in the middle foreground, trainer jumps. All is reflected in a mirror on a stage in the middle ground.            Audio: Applause and music is loud triumphant (trumpets).</p>	
<p>Cut 12            Visual: Fade to black with 'BLACKFISH' in the centre as title appears. Title ripples.            Audio: Applause and triumphant music reaching crescendo.</p>	

*Blackfish*, directed by Gabriela Cowperthwaite, Magnolia Pictures, 2013

- 2 **Consider** the selection of events, images and audio in the editing process. Why might the director have chosen a call to emergency services (the Orange County Fire Department) as opposed to a news report of the death as the opening soundtrack?
- 3 **Determine** why the director may have chosen to begin the film with a death rather than sequence ideas chronologically, starting with the capture of the orca 30 years prior.
- 4 **Analyse** how the editing in this opening sequence cues how viewers will respond to the remainder of the film.
- 5 **Discuss** whether a film can be considered an objective representation of an issue.

# Identities

How audiences respond to the orcas, trainers and SeaWorld is determined by how these identities are represented. How we respond to, and feel about, the orcas and trainers is similarly influenced by how they are filmed. When watching, you should make notes about:

- shot selection
- footage type
- camera shot and angle.

*Blackfish* has been accused of being a thriller as opposed to a documentary, as the representation of identities include a victim, perpetrator and witnesses. It is structured, some reviewers contest, to dramatise and sensationalise the issue and uses tension to build suspense and provoke a particular viewer response.

By presenting the issue in this way, viewers may more readily support the director because they:

- identify with the victim
- agree with the testimony of a believable witness
- fear the perpetrator.

Though Tilikum is accused of being responsible for three deaths, he is represented as a victim of SeaWorld, the perpetrator, and the former trainers are the witnesses.

## Responding

Find examples in *Blackfish* for the following representations and describe how they position viewers to respond to each of the identities.

	VICTIM (ORCAS)	WITNESS (FORMER TRAINERS)	PERPETRATOR (SEAWORLD)
Representation	Vulnerable	Honest and trustworthy	Traitorous
Example	Whale is referred to by name (Tilikum), not species, which personalises the story	Archival footage of real experience with whales and therefore can report the truth	SeaWorld representative does not appear on camera and therefore appears untrustworthy
Example			
Example			
Example			
Audience response			

You should also consider the language used to describe characters. In *Blackfish*, Tilikum is attributed with human qualities. This is known as **anthropomorphism**.

## Responding

- 1 **Consider** why the documentary might make references that anthropomorphise Tilikum.
- 2 **Examine** the image, right. Describe how the shot is composed and how it influences the viewer's attitude towards Tilikum. Make specific references to:
  - shot selection
  - footage type
  - camera shot and angle
  - belief about the orca and his relationships with the trainers.



Tilikum in *Blackfish*

Alamy Stock Photo/AF archive

### anthropomorphism

the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to a god, animal or object

# Language

The language used in the documentary can influence how we respond to the invited reading. Reports on the purpose of the documentary, the language used in the film and reviews are persuasive and subjective.

The following synopsis from the *Blackfish* website outlines the documentary.

Blackfish tells the story of Tilikum, a performing killer whale that killed several people while in captivity. Along the way, director-producer Gabriela Cowperthwaite compiles shocking footage and emotional interviews to explore the creature's extraordinary nature, the species' cruel treatment in captivity, the lives and losses of the trainers and the pressures brought to bear by the multi-billion dollar sea-park industry.

This emotionally wrenching, tautly structured story challenges us to consider our relationship to nature and reveals how little we humans have learned from these highly intelligent and enormously sentient fellow mammals.

<http://www.blackfishmovie.com/film/#about>

## Responding

### pathos

an appeal to an audience's emotion, and in rhetoric is a strategy of persuasion

- 1 **Identify** the words which suggest that the documentary is not an impartial, documented perspective of orcas.
- 2 **Identify** what appeals to **pathos** are used in the synopsis.
- 3 a **Identify** the language and terms used by the trainers that reflect an emotional relationship with the orcas, as opposed to a scientific and objective one.  
b **Identify** the words in the table below that would present a more objective view of the problem of orcas in captivity.

species	psychosis	orca	families
relationship	mammal	jail cell	calves
blackfish	aquarium	apex predator	pods
babies	Tilly	thriller	malicious

- 4 Read the following quotations and **identify** any subjective, emotive terms or persuasive strategies that may influence your opinion about orcas.

**John Jett:** When you look into their eyes, you know somebody is home.

**Jeffrey Ventre:** Can you imagine being in a small concrete enclosure for your life when you're used to swimming 100 miles a day?

**Dean Gamersall:** They try to sugar-coat it by saying he comes out in the front pool every once in a while. Now he's doing shows. You know what he does in his show? He does a few bows. And then he goes back into his little jail cell. That's his life.

*Blackfish*, directed by Gabriela Cowperthwaite, Magnolia Pictures, 2013

- 5 How do the quotations above support or challenge your beliefs about the orcas in captivity?

## Responses to *Blackfish*

Research articles have been written in response to *Blackfish*. These responses are equally persuasive in order to advance their opinion about the film.

Some are critical about the highly emotive and unscientific representation of the issue. This is particularly true of SeaWorld's response on the SeaWorld Cares website, where the company outlines 69 deficits in the film. Other media outlets praise the film for its ability to connect audiences with orcas through anthropomorphism.



Opinionative writing focuses on how the documentary achieves its purpose to shape audiences' attitudes about orcas in captivity through Tilikum's story and critically evaluates its effectiveness.

**Responding**

Read the review of *Blackfish* at the time of the film's release.

- 1 **Identify** the persuasive devices being used as an appeal to logos, ethos or pathos.
- 2 **Research** other articles, including those found on the SeaWorld Cares website response to *Blackfish*, to uncover the range of opinions about the documentary. Use the questions below to guide your analysis.
  - a **Identify** the concepts raised about animals in captivity.
  - b **Identify** the concepts raised about documentary making.
  - c **Compare**, according to the articles, SeaWorld's and the director's perspectives on the life of Tilikum and orcas in water parks.
  - d **Discuss** whether you think it is acceptable for a documentary to be subjective and persuasive.

**Orca abuse exposed once and for all.**

'If you were in a bathtub for 25 years,' says an uncommonly lucid *Fox News* talking head, 'don't you think you'd get a little irritated, aggravated, maybe a little psychotic?' This, in a nutshell, is what director Gabriela Cowperthwaite's gripping, revelatory *Blackfish* is about: why, if the six-tonne bull orca Tilikum, familiarly known as 'Tilly', had a direct fin in the deaths of three people and caused injury to a few more, is the animal still performing at Florida's SeaWorld Orlando to this day? And what caused – and may yet cause in future – the whale to attack humans?

ETHOS: use of proper noun to show credibility

PATHOS: graphic description to appeal to emotion

**at once fascinating and horrifying**

Yet what lifts this film significantly above the garden-variety televised nature doco – 'When Orcas Attack!' – is Cowperthwaite's meticulous research, an abundance of archival footage (much of it generated by SeaWorld itself or furnished by numerous former trainers) and those ex-employees themselves, articulate and passionate talking heads who exhibit by turn various stages of emotion ranging from nostalgia, wonder, mortification and regret over their roles in the popular shows featuring the whales performing various tricks for rewards of food and praise.

LOGOS: expert testimony and real-life footage as logical supporting evidence

'When I look in their eyes,' says one, remembering the intelligence of his aquatic charges, 'you know someone's home.' This is a major plank in Cowperthwaite's platform, the idea, reinforced by various professionals in the field, that orca whales are complex, emotional and intelligent social creatures, and that separating them from their close-knit families and communities can lead them on a flume to loneliness, confusion, frustration and psychosis that can result in the kind of violence exhibited by Tilikum and other captive animals.

There's plenty of video evidence to back this up, beginning with Tilly's capture off the coast of Iceland in 1983. Eight years later, during his stay at the now-shuttered Sealand of the Pacific outside Victoria, British Columbia, the whale, along with two other females in the pool, killed a young swimmer, stripped the clothes off her body and held her underwater for hours.

In 1999, a young man who had hidden in SeaWorld after closing was found the next day on Tilly's back, his clothes also stripped away and his genitals either bitten or ripped off. Then, in 2010, a capable and well-liked 40-year-old trainer named Dawn Brancheau was literally pulverised by Tilly;



this tragedy provides the narrative through-line of the film, and the post-mortem from the video of the event, narrated by various trainers who were her colleagues and friends, is at once fascinating and horrifying.

There would even have been a third death, had not trainer and experienced diver Ken Peters kept his head when the whale repeatedly dragged him to the bottom of a deep tank by his feet; again, the entire event is captured on video from multiple angles.

So why is Tilly still there? Money, of course. Though nobody from the SeaWorld organisation agreed to be interviewed for the film, it is on the record that the whale is used for breeding purposes. What's more, park officials continue to deny the whale is dangerous, shifting blame for the deaths on the victims themselves.

Cowperthwaite, along with editor and co-writer Eli Despres, shows an admirable skill with structure and pacing, taking a subject the more cynical non-animal person might find unengaging and bestowing upon it the urgency of a polished thriller. The film is aided enormously by the string-based score of composer Jeff Beal, an emotive yet largely non-intrusive musical bed.

Though never specifically mentioned in the film, the 'Tilikum' comes from the Northwest US-based dialect Chinook Jargon, and means 'friends' or 'common people'. What is explained is the meaning of the title *Blackfish*, which is what First Nations people and coastal fishermen in the Northwest called the whales, respectful of a perceived great spiritual power. Seen in this light, the treatment of these animals, as one former trainer says in an expression that may seem trite out of context but is as spot-on as that Fox host's, 'is not okay.'

'Orca Abuse Exposed Once and For All', by Eddie Cockrell © SBS 2013

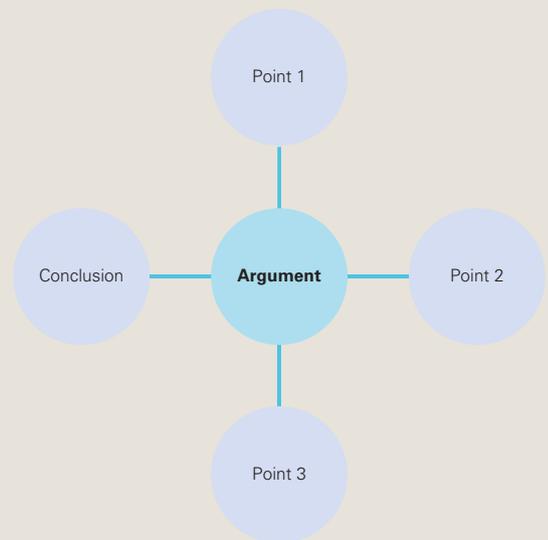
## Extension

- 1 Write a statement in 500 words or less arguing that *Blackfish* is too biased to be considered a documentary. Share your response with your class to receive feedback. You will need to be careful in your selection of ideas to include and precise in your language choices to stay within the 500-word limit.
- 2 Write an email to the Film Classification Board and defend the documentary status of *Blackfish*, despite it being labelled a thriller. Break your email up into clear topics about the components of the text type and how *Blackfish* fulfils the necessary criteria to be a legitimate documentary.

OR

Argue the opposite perspective. *Blackfish* is really a thriller and not a documentary. You will need to research the components of a thriller. Consider what strategies of persuasion you will employ in order to sway the position of the Board.

Plan your response



# *Jasper Jones* (novel and film)

## Assessment possibilities

*Jasper Jones*, by Craig Silvey, allows audiences to examine the representations of concepts and identities and explore how these can be accentuated or restricted by a film adaptation.

In responding to *Jasper Jones* – both the novel and the film – you will need to analyse how authors convey perspectives and representations through textual choices.

You might be asked to:

- analyse how audiences are positioned to view a character in the novel
- analyse how the film adaptation extends the representation of a particular character from the novel, such as Ruth
- analyse how aspects of a particular character from the novel have been silenced in the film
- analyse how the film conforms with – or resists – representations of concepts in the novel, such as the treatment of Indigenous Australians.

In creating a speech inspired by *Jasper Jones*, you will need to consider your own response to the representation of concepts and identities in the novel and film. You might be asked to write and present:

- a speech that shapes a representation of an issue in the novel, such as domestic violence or the prominence of sport in Australian culture
- a seminar that shapes a perspective about the treatment of a particular issue in the novel, such as a social acceptance
- a film critique that addresses the significance of the film adaptation in the repertoire of Australian film
- a pitch for a documentary that will shape the representation of a particular concept, such as anti-intellectualism or bullying in Australian culture.

# Connecting concept: omissions, inclusions, emphases and marginalisation in texts

In 2009, Craig Silvey published *Jasper Jones*, which is set in a small mining town in Western Australia in the 1960s. The protagonist, Charlie Bucktin, is forced to confront his own attitudes about race when Jasper Jones begs Charlie for help. The story has been described as the Australian version of Harper Lee's famous novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which deals with similar themes of racism and courage.

The novel was adapted for film by director Rachel Perkins in 2017. Like any adapted text, the film *Jasper Jones* is not quite the same as the original novel. Some characters have been given greater (and lesser) attention, for example. The vital question is not whether the film is better than the book, or vice versa. Instead, it is more important to consider how the novel's meaning changes in the film adaptation, and why these changes have been made.

To develop a thorough understanding of how meaning is adjusted in an adaptation, we can concentrate on:

- identifying and comparing the generic conventions of the novel and the film
- exploring how representations of characters and their perspectives are constructed in a novel and a film
- identifying and interpreting information in the film that has been included, emphasised and omitted
- considering perspectives within the texts that have been marginalised and exploring attitudes, values and beliefs that contribute to this marginalisation
- determining the effect of these representations on the texts' invited readings.

Artwork Random House, from Jasper Jones by Craig Silvey. Published by Windmill Books. Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Limited. © 2010.

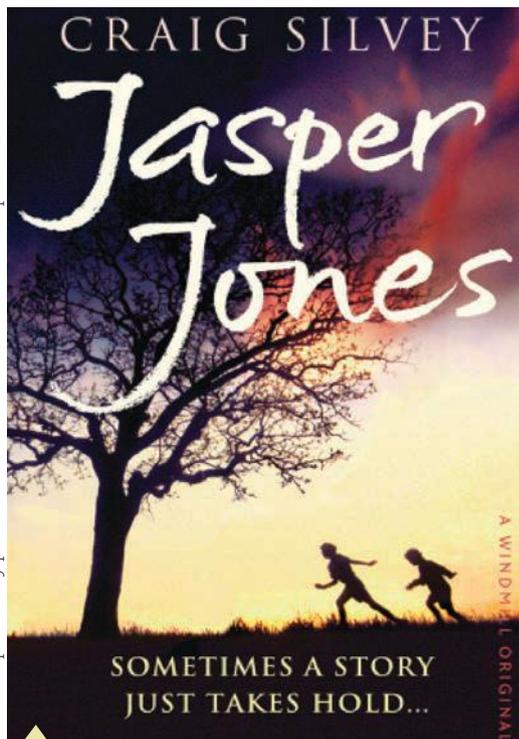


Image A: Original novel cover

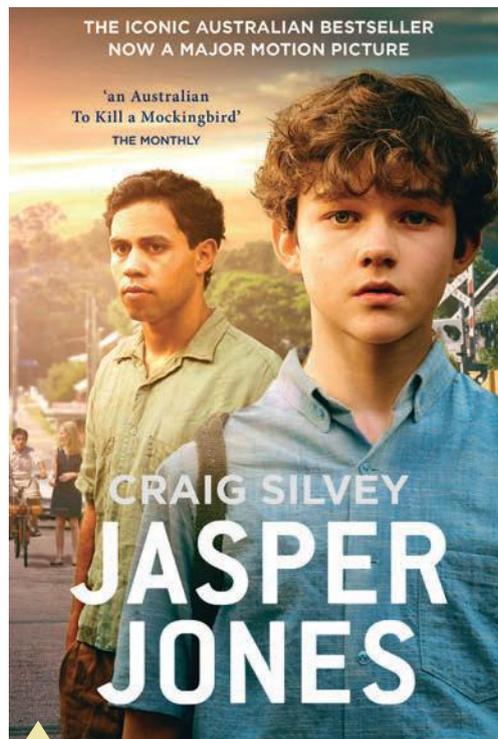


Image B: A 'tie in' novel cover, showing an image from the film adaptation

Jasper Jones by Craig Silvey, Allen & Unwin 2009. Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

## Responding

Consider images A and B on the previous page. Answer the following questions to speculate what the film adaptation accentuates.

- 1 **Describe** the tone of both images.
- 2 **Describe** the scene in Image A.
- 3 **Identify** the prominent features in Image A. Explain how this differs to Image B.
- 4 **Compare** the use of colour in both images. You might like to make reference to the use of light and shade.
- 5 Based on these images, **suggest** what elements might be consistent between the two texts, and which elements might be further emphasised in the film adaptation.

# The novel

## Social context

It is not always easy reading a novel that is set in a time period before we were born, because we don't always have the background knowledge about the history, people and locations. Before reading *Jasper Jones*, it would be helpful to research the sociocultural context of rural towns in Australia during the 1960s.

The following extracts provide us with some insight into the kind of society Charlie and Jasper are living in.

1. Corrigan is a town whose social currency is sport. That's where most kids find and hold their own. The mine employs most people, and the power station herds in the rest, which means there isn't much class divide. And so kids have established a hierarchy based on their skill with a ball, rather than their clothes or their family car. (Chapter 1)
2. I skim over the newspaper headlines and read about how Americans are saving the Vietnamese and more Australian troops might be sent there soon. (Chapter 3)
3. 'You just watch yourself, son. You don't know a ... thing. None of youse do. You're everythin what's wrong with this country. Use your eyes! The rats are here and they're breedin, mark my words ...' (Chapter 6)
4. Jasper Jones has a terrible reputation in Corrigan. He's a Thief, a Liar, a Thug, a Truant. He's lazy and unreliable. He's a feral and an orphan, or as good as. His mother is dead and his father is no good. ... I'd heard Jasper Jones described as a half-caste, which I'd never really understood until I mentioned it one night at the dinner table. (Chapter 1)
5. After the meeting, in the open vestibule of the hall, there were trestle tables stacked with urns and plates of baked goods. The parents milled about and spilled out of the entrance, slapping the hands of their children. It was a chance for Corrigan to gossip en masse, for rumours to flap and slip from the lips of high-eyebrowed wives, to be refuted and scorned by their husbands. (Chapter 5)

*Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey, Allen & Unwin 2009. Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

## Responding

- 1 **Describe** what the town of Corrigan might be like, based on these extracts.
- 2 **Predict** what issues or hurdles Charlie and Jasper might have to overcome.
- 3 While you might not have made the connection during your first reading, Extracts 2 and 3 are connected. What important world event is being referred to in these extracts, and how might this event have influenced Australians' attitudes at the time? You might need to do some research to answer this question.
- 4 In your opinion, are some of these behaviours, attitudes and values still prevalent in contemporary society? **Explain**.

## Authorial context

Craig Silvey grew up in a small town in Western Australia and published his first novel at just 19 years of age. After the release of *Jasper Jones*, Silvey was named by the *Sydney Morning Herald* as one of the Best Young Australian Novelists of 2010.

When Silvey reflected on why he wrote *Jasper Jones*, he said:

I've always been attracted to Southern Gothic fiction. There's something very warm and generous about those regional American writers like Twain and Lee and Capote, and it seemed to be a literary ilk that would lend itself well to the Australian condition. So I finished up with this strange little amalgam: a coming-of-age, regional mystery novel, stuffed inside a nervous little love story, garnished with family drama and adolescent escapism and anguish. And then there's Jeffrey Lu, who, I have to say, I wish were my best friend. I think Jeffrey might well be my proudest literary creation.

*On Writing Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey. Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

## Responding

- 1 Silvey states that 'American writers like Twain and Lee and Capote' always appealed to him. **Research** these authors and **describe** their well-known texts.
- 2 *Jasper Jones* is described as Australian gothic fiction, similar to American 'Southern Gothic' fiction. This is an unusual genre, and it has some distinguishing characteristics:
  - The narrative is usually set in an isolated, rural location. The harsh and unforgiving Australian landscape appears to loom over the characters.
  - The main characters are usually uncomfortable for a large part of the narrative, because they have broken from the normal way of doing things.
  - There is often a sense of hopelessness that the characters are forced to overcome or address in some way.**Consider** how these characteristics apply to the scene in the photo, from the film.
- 3 Craig Silvey says *Jasper Jones* is a novel that is about coming of age, mystery, romance, family drama and adolescent anguish. Allocate each of these aspects a specific highlighter or sticky note, and mark significant events that relate to these aspects as you are reading the novel.



A scene from the film *Jasper Jones*

Image courtesy of Bucktin Productions Pty Ltd

## Preparing to read

In Chapter 1 you will find helpful information about the conventions of a novel. Familiarise yourself with these conventions as you will be required to examine them in more depth.

### Read for pleasure

*Jasper Jones* is filled with drama and **cliffhangers**. During your first reading, you should aim to enjoy the excitement of the story. You might like to underline or mark passages in the novel that you find provocative, alarming, funny, etc. Remember to action the instructions in Item 3 in the previous Responding activity!

#### cliffhanger

a suspenseful ending – sometimes to a chapter or a whole narrative – that has not been resolved

### Read for meaning

To consider the text more closely, organise your notes to contain:

- an overview of the narrative structure
- a graph of the tension in the narrative
- a brief description of the central characters and five key quotations that you feel exemplify their attitudes, values and beliefs.

# Textual elements

The narrative perspective is very important in *Jasper Jones*. The story is told from 14-year-old Charlie Bucktin's perspective. Because the story is told from Charlie's viewpoint, the audience is provided with a limited perspective; we cannot learn anything that Charlie does not know and we see things from the viewpoint of a teenager. But while it is a fundamentally subjective view of the world, Charlie's maturity and intelligence provides the reader with a wide lens through which to view the action. Consider Charlie's perspective about the treatment of Jasper Jones during and after a football game.

COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE: Charlie also uses slang that accentuates his 'Aussie' voice

DETAIL: Charlie is extremely observant and provides the reader with fine details about events and situations. Access to such detail gives Charlie's voice a reassuring and authoritative quality

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

It's hard to understand. **The folks who watch Jasper play, who barrack for him like he was one of their own, are the same ones who might cut their eyes at him should he walk their way a few hours after the game.** (Chapter 2)

*Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey, Allen & Unwin 2009.  
Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

VOCABULARY: Charlie uses sophisticated vocabulary for a 14-year-old

REFLECTION: Charlie's mature and insightful reflections allows the author to position audiences to feel sympathetic – it is difficult to be resistant towards Charlie's viewpoint

## Responding

- 1 **Explain** how Charlie feels about the locals' treatment of Jasper Jones.
- 2 Go beyond the extract to **explain** how Charlie's feelings can be applied to the treatment of Jeffrey Lu.
- 3 **Describe** your own emotional response to this scene. Consider how your response is influenced by Charlie's view of the situation.



- 4 Rewrite this passage from the perspective of another character in the novel. **Consider** your tone and use of language.
- 5 During your initial reading of *Jasper Jones*, you marked passages that represented themes of coming of age, mystery, romance, family drama and adolescent anguish. Select a passage from the novel that addresses each of these themes. Copy out each passage and annotate it in order to **analyse** the narrative viewpoint, as demonstrated in the example on the previous page. Ask yourself:
  - a What vocabulary does Charlie use to show us his attitudes, values and beliefs? Does he use formal or informal language?
  - b What level of detail does Charlie provide in each situation? Is it enough to provide the reader with an objective or comprehensive understanding?
  - c Do you agree with Charlie's reflections and perspectives represented in each passage?
  - d Are there situations where Charlie is not as objective, or more emotionally invested? What does this tell us about Charlie's character?

## The author's use of language and its effects

Craig Silvey uses language in creative ways to construct **nuanced** representations of characters. When a character uses **formal language**, it is implied that they are more educated and sophisticated. When a character uses **informal language** or **colloquialisms**, it is implied that he or she is less educated and less cultured.

**nuance**  
a slight or subtle difference in meaning, expression, feeling or colour

**formal language**  
the correct use of grammar; a generally solemn tone; extensive vocabulary

**informal language**  
words, phrases and punctuation that are associated with ordinary social situations

**colloquialisms**  
words or expressions that are used in conversation and change depending on the time period, social class or location; sometimes described as 'slang'

Image courtesy of Bucktin Productions Pty Ltd



Jack Lionel



Charlie Bucktin

Image courtesy of Bucktin Productions Pty Ltd

### Responding

- 1 Re-read the conversation between Charlie and Jack Lionel in the scene where Charlie sneaks into Jack's yard to steal peaches (Chapter 9).
- 2 You might like to copy the conversation onto a separate page to make annotations.
- 3 Using different colours, highlight word choices that you feel are examples of:
  - a formal language
  - b informal language
  - c colloquialisms.
- 4 **Compare** the type of language used by Charlie and Jack.
- 5 As a teenager, Charlie uses some unexpected language at times. What effect does this have on the reader's understanding of Charlie's dilemma?

- 6 **Explain** how the images of Charlie and Jack reinforce their vocabulary.
- 7 Select passages that feature dialogue from the following characters, and apply the same level of analysis to determine how their language constructs a particular representation of them:
  - a Jeffrey Lu
  - b Jasper Jones
  - c Wesley Bucktin
  - d Warwick Trent.

## Characterisation

Silvey uses our understanding of race to create complex representations of characters. Consider the representations of Jeffrey Lu.

### Responding

- 1 Read the passage in Chapter 1 where Charlie describes how Jeffrey Lu is 'ruthlessly bullied'.
- 2 In the form of a paragraph, **analyse** how the reader is invited to view Jeffrey. Use quotations from the passage to support your interpretation.
- 3 **Explain** why Jeffrey's heritage would influence the way he is treated by his peers.
- 4 **Suggest** what is implied about Charlie's own values and decision making.
- 5 In your opinion, does Charlie endorse or critique the treatment of Jeffrey and his family? What techniques does Silvey use to construct this viewpoint?

## Motif

Silvey uses the motif of peaches to symbolise the maturation of Charlie's character. Consider what the peaches symbolise in the following scenes.

Chapter 1	But the rarest and most revered feat is to snatch a peach from the large tree that grows by the flank of the cottage like a zombie's hand bursting from a grave. To pilfer and eat a peach from the property of Mad Jack Lionel assures you instant royalty. The stone of the peach is kept as a souvenir of heroics, and is universally admired and envied. I wonder if we're here to steal a peach. I hope not.
Chapter 2	I'd have Superman's swagger if I couldn't get hurt, but I've got the Charles Bucktin slouch. Because I bruise like a peach.
Chapter 9	In truth, it isn't nearly as satisfying as I thought it would be. I finally have a peach, but my victory feels a little hollow. Still ... the peaches do feel good. I'm proud to be clutching them, because I know what it took, and it felt as though a weight had shifted as soon as I had them in my hands.

*Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey, Allen & Unwin 2009. Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

### Responding

- 1 **Explain** what the peaches symbolise to the children of Corrigan.
- 2 **Describe** Charlie's attitude towards the peaches at the beginning of the novel. Compare this to Charlie's attitude at the end of the novel.
- 3 **Suggest** what the peaches symbolise about Charlie's maturation.
- 4 Throughout the novel, Charlie and Jeffrey argue whether Batman is superior to Superman. **Examine** the following passages:
  - 'Batman. Easy. The greatest superhero of them all.' (Chapter 2)
  - I watch him walk. Straight-backed, chest full of air. And I see it now, just how counterfeit his confidence is. It's a noise, a distraction, hot air. It's Batman's cape, it's my father's comb-over. (Chapter 7)
  - That's what courage is. Bruce Wayne is still afraid, but he gets it done, because he's bloody Batman. (Chapter 7)
  - I was the hero. (Chapter 9)**Suggest** what Batman symbolises about Charlie's courage, or lack of it.

## Extension

### attitudes

opinions or ideas about an issue

### values

characteristics, qualities, philosophical and emotional stances, for example, moral principles or standards, often shared with others in a cultural group

The following activities will allow you to engage more deeply with this text.

- 1 Throughout *Jasper Jones*, Craig Silvey refers to several famous novels, including *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. This is known as intertextuality. **Compare** the narrative structures of the two novels.
- 2 **Compare** the **attitudes** and **values** of different characters towards fairness, honesty and loyalty. Use the following table to help you.

	RUTH BUCKTIN	PETE WISHART	WARWICK TRENT
Fairness			
Honesty			
Inclusion			

- 3 *Jasper Jones* is set in 1960s Australia. It raises concerns about the Vietnam War and the White Australia policy. **Research** these topics and explain how they contribute to characters' perspectives in the novel.

## The film

The film *Jasper Jones* was shot in Pemberton, Western Australia. This town was chosen because it looks very much like a 1960s rural Australian town. The people of Pemberton were very excited about the filming of *Jasper Jones*; they offered their homes and cars for the project and many even appeared as extras in the film.

Pemberton is not the same, however, as the Corrigan represented in Silvey's novel. Corrigan is described as dry and suffocatingly hot; interestingly though, the film represents Corrigan as being lush and green.



Image courtesy of Bucktin Productions Pty Ltd

Charlie Bucktin and Jeffrey Lu in the lush and green Corrigan landscape of the film

# Authorial context

Craig Silvey adapted his novel for screen in conjunction with screenwriter Shaun Grant. When Silvey was asked whether it was difficult to adapt the novel to a screenplay, he said: 'I was really ready for that challenge ... the curious thing about being a novelist is that you never quite feel like you've finished a manuscript. You always want to change things – you have fresh insights about your characters, you want to improve it, and so writing the screenplay for me was an opportunity to change that.'

The film was directed by Rachel Perkins, who is one of Australia's most prominent filmmakers. Perkins is also the daughter of Aboriginal activists Eileen and Charles Perkins. Perkins' notable film and television work include:

- *Radiance* (1998)
- *One Night the Moon* (2001)
- *First Australians* (2008)
- *Bran Nue Dae* (2009)
- *Mabo* (2012).

When interviewed about her motivation for selecting and directing films that foreground Australian Indigenous perspectives, Perkins said she has 'a personal responsibility to make films or to use media as a vehicle to tell my people's story and to create change'. If you have seen any of Rachel Perkins' previous films, you would recognise this motivation. However, she decided to take a different approach in her construction of *Jasper Jones*. In a newspaper interview, Perkins explained: 'the adaptation of this book is a departure [from my previous work] ... in the film, we don't even go into Jasper's position in society. In fact, we don't even mention that he's Aboriginal. We just don't want to bang people over their heads about that.'



Rachel Perkins, director of *Jasper Jones*

Leon Mead, with permission

## Responding

- 1 Craig Silvey explains that he wanted to develop characters beyond what is shown in the novel. Which characters would you explore further, if you were writing a screenplay? What would you like the audience to know about them? How would their perspectives add dimension to the *Jasper Jones* story?
- 2 Rachel Perkins states that the film does not explore Jasper Jones' Aboriginality and the influence this has on the way he is treated by other characters. **Evaluate** the extent to which Jasper's Aboriginal heritage influences the narrative in the novel.
- 3 **Suggest** whose perspectives will be emphasised in the film, if Jasper's is suppressed.

## Preparing to view

Because you are investigating how the film *Jasper Jones* re-presents characters and perspectives from the novel, it is important to have a sturdy appreciation of the novel before viewing the film.

Ask yourself:

- Which scenes did you find particularly powerful or significant?
- Which characters resonated with you, or affected you, in some way?
- What aspects of Silvey's style did you find compelling?



**Viewing for pleasure**

During the first viewing you should aim to enjoy the experience and notice when you feel an emotional or critical response to events in the film's narrative. You might like to jot these down, but try to experience it as a general audience member. Have the following questions in your mind as you view the film the first time:

- Who is the hero in the film adaptation?
- Which relationships are emphasised in the film?
- Do certain characters have a stronger voice in the film than in the novel?

## Textual elements

### The generic conventions of a film

There are many similarities between films and novels:

- They both feature a central plot and characters.
- Films and novels rely on images and symbols to enhance their narratives and raise thematic questions.
- Many novels are adapted for film.

At the beginning of this chapter, it was explained that deciding which text is better – the novel or the film adaptation – is not the purpose of this study. Rather, we are more concerned with how the film re-presents perspectives from the novel, and what the audience can appreciate about this re-presentation.

You might like to refer to Chapter 5 for some helpful information about film conventions.

#### Responding

When analysing a cinematic adaptation of a novel, there are certain elements to look for. **Consider** the following table.

CONVENTION	QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS
Narrative	Is the general narrative the same?
	Who is the film's protagonist?
	What is the protagonist's goal?
	What obstacles must the protagonist overcome?
	In what way does the protagonist change?
	How does the film end?
	Have significant scenes been omitted?
Perspective	Is there any impact on the plot because of scenes that have been left out?
	Are there additional scenes that have not been described in the novel?
	Are there a narrator?
Characterisation	Is there a voice-over?
	Are there any characters missing from the film?
	Are characters' personalities consistent with the novel?
	Do characters' physical appearances meet your expectations?
	Are prominent characters in the novel also prominent in the film?
	Have minor characters been given a greater voice in the film? How does this affect the film's meaning?
	Do characters have idiosyncrasies or gestures that are not part of the novel?
Have relationships between characters changed?	

CONVENTION	QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS
Setting	Is the film's setting(s) compatible with the novel's representations of times and places?
	Does the setting capture the genre of the novel?
	Are there some scenes where the setting is different from what is described in the novel?
	Has the setting been re-contextualised or updated?
Symbolism and motif	Does the film make use of symbolism and motifs from the novel?
	What symbols are missing from the film?
	Has the film incorporated new symbols and/or motifs?



Character  
analysis

- 1 Use the table above to guide your analysis. For your response to each question, ensure you note the time cue, so that you can refer back to pertinent scenes when forming your extended response. You might even like to take screenshots of significant moments that support your interpretation.
- 2 Select three characters to analyse. **Compare** and **contrast** the novel's and film's representations of them using the worksheet located on NelsonNet.

# Satirical cartoons, *The Rabbits* and *Animal Farm*

## Assessment possibilities

As part of your studies in English, you are required to explore individual and/or collective experiences and perspectives in a variety of texts in a range of contexts. In satirical and allegorical texts such as cartoons, *The Rabbits* and *Animal Farm*, the writers and illustrators create perspectives of a range of issues by exaggerating ideas, characters and contexts to challenge and potentially influence the viewers' perspectives, values and beliefs. By examining how the representation of an issue in a satire or allegory is created through aesthetic features and stylistic devices, you will learn how these texts can make you laugh at your own behaviour or challenge and shape how you understand some historical events.

In responding to these texts, you will need to analyse them closely to show your appreciation and understanding of how they position you with regards to cultural and historical events and identities.

You may be asked to write a text for a public audience whereby you:

- analyse how effectively satirical or allegorical texts challenge or reflect a contemporary issue
- analyse how satirical or allegorical texts can shape a reader's understanding of a historical event
- review the value of satirical or allegorical texts in shaping an audience's belief or understanding.

Alternatively, you may be asked to present a persuasive speech inspired by your study of satirical and allegorical texts. You will need to form your own opinion of the representation of an issue that emerges from the text and exploit a range of persuasive aesthetic features and stylistic devices to convince your audience of your opinion. Multimodal strategies may be required to enhance your speech where you may offer your perspective of an issue regarding:

- satirical and allegorical texts and how they are powerful
- creative texts such as satires and allegories in informing our understanding of history
- satire and whether it insults rather than informs.

# Connecting concept: creating meaning through allegory and satire

## allegory

a story that has a symbolic meaning beyond its literal interpretation; a form of extended metaphor in which objects, events and characters in a narrative are used to stand for, or refer, to events or concepts that are outside the narrative itself

## satire

the use of humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule to expose and criticise people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues

To develop a thorough understanding of how meaning is created through **allegory** and **satire** in a cartoon, picture book and novella, we can concentrate on:

- identifying and comparing the generic conventions of allegory and satire
- exploring how representations of characters and their perspectives are constructed in a cartoon, picture book and novel
- identifying and interpreting representation of social, historical and cultural contexts and events
- considering perspectives within the texts that have been privileged and exploring attitudes, values and beliefs that contribute to this privileging
- determining the effect of these representations on the texts' invited readings.

Consider the way humans are represented in the cartoon on the right.



A satirical cartoon on contemporary culture

## Responding

- 1 **Review** the cartoon above and justify whether or not it is humorous or serious.
- 2 **Examine** the cultural value being mocked and debate whether the cartoon is an effective representation of human behaviour.

## Analysing cartoons

To interpret, understand and respond to a cartoon, you need to consider the perspective of the cartoonist by analysing:

- the context: the issue, the time and the place that the cartoonist is examining
- the comment: the cartoonist's representation of an event – social or political
- the tone: the humour; its darkness, seriousness, cleverness or criticism
- the components and composition: visual language (colour, the relative size and position of objects, their selection and omission).

## Context

Cartoons exaggerate incidents and human qualities to draw attention to the weaknesses and sometimes absurdities of human interactions and behaviours within a context. This exaggeration highlights a cartoonist's response to a human trait, current news event or the actions or qualities of a political leader. The cartoonist's perspective uses humour, which can also have an edge or dark undertone, to challenge the values, attitudes or beliefs underpinning the actions and qualities.

## Cartoonists

Numerous cartoonists have gained fame for their observations and exaggerations of politics and social events, which may contradict or challenge the preferred belief. As their perspective may criticise and mock a community in order to question it, they can face grave danger in some societies. A French satirical cartoonist was killed in 2015, allegedly for his drawing that offended an extremist group. Mexican caricaturist Eduardo del Rio was kidnapped and excommunicated for his satirical representation of some of Mexico's powerful leaders. However, most cartoonists are appreciated for their wit and skill at being able to use humour to encourage audiences to reflect on human weaknesses.

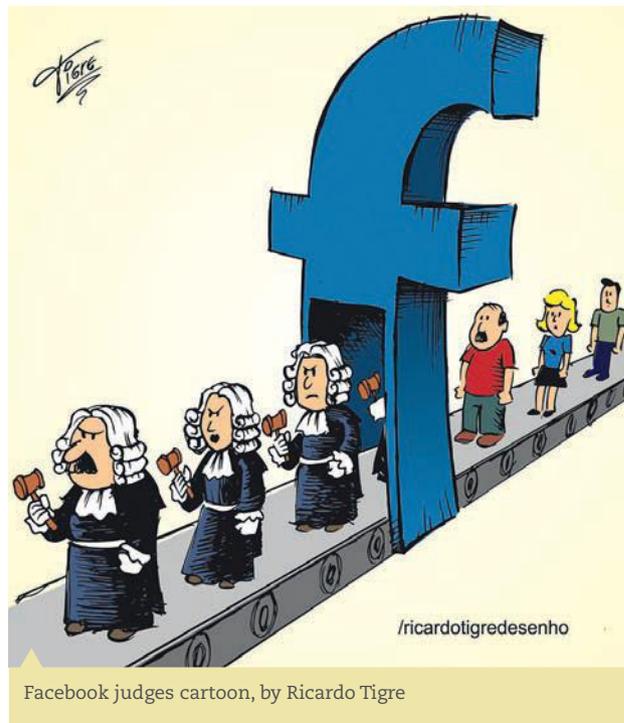
In the cartoon on the right, del Rio, known as Rius, comments on the social and economic balance that is achieved in a society when the rich get richer and the poor remain poor.

## Contemporary relevance

Cartoons that use satire to present opinions are found in newspapers, circulars and printed magazines and in online publications. **Internet memes** have become a popular form of political satire, so much so that, reportedly, Hilary Clinton commissioned her own memes to generate support for her campaign for the United States' presidency against Donald Trump.

The perspective of a cartoon is one that can shape public opinion of current social events, political actions or human behaviour. Political or satirical cartoons address observable character weaknesses in humans and the folly that can be recognised in their choices and interactions. It is a form of mockery that allows the reader to find humour in behaviour while simultaneously challenging a concept, quality, action or manner.

Look at the cartoon to the right, which uses symbolism and exaggeration to comment on social media.



**Internet memes** an image and text, sometimes using mimicry, for humorous purposes circulated on the Internet, including social media

Cartoon by Tigre

## Responding

- 1 **Identify** the icon in the image.
- 2 **Identify** the type of person who goes into the letter on the conveyer belt.
- 3 **Identify** what sort of person comes out on the other side of the letter.
- 4 **Discuss** what the cartoonist reveals about using social media.
- 5 **Determine** whether the cartoonist's perspective of information sharing on social media is positive or negative. How do you know?
- 6 **Decide** whether or not this is a fair comment.

# Textual elements

## pun

a joke exploiting the different possible meanings of a word or the fact that there are words that sound alike but have different meanings. 'Denial ain't just a river in Egypt' (attributed to the author Mark Twain)

## irony

a discrepancy between appearance and reality; what appears to be the case may actually be the opposite; irony is the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect

A cartoon comprises a single image that is easily decipherable. It is often complemented by minimal written text, which may appear as a caption below the image or on the image as thought bubbles, dialogue or words imposed on the image, like a meme.



Damien Cifelli

This cartoon depicts the artist's opinion of the effect of globalisation on travel and our encounters with other cultures

## Responding

- 1 **Identify** and list the historical landmarks.
- 2 **Identify** and list the companies.
- 3 **Discuss** how the reader is influenced by the placement and relative size of the brands.
- 4 **Justify** what you believe is the cartoonist's perspective on world travel.
- 5 **Determine** the cartoonist's attitude towards globalisation.
- 6 **Discuss** whether this cartoon is a fair comment about contemporary life.

# Language

The language in satirical cartoons is simple, direct and not obscured by description. The cartoonist will use **puns**, exaggeration, **irony** and **analogy** to create humour, emphasis and comment.

Similarly, to be effective, the image of the cartoon should be familiar or identifiable and direct, so the point is made clearly. Images in cartoons and picture books rely on colour, the relative size and placement of objects or characters in the image, the composition of the image, facial expressions and the use of **caricature** to persuade the reader to accept the illustrator's point of view.

## analogy

a comparison between one thing and another, typically for the purpose of explanation or clarification

## caricature

an image, description or representation of a person comprising the exaggerated qualities that create a comical and/or grotesque figure

The words on the cartoon are 'CONSUMPTION', symbolised by the size of the man, representing the American government. 'SAVE OUR PLANET', where the letter 'O' appears as the Earth, is a recognisable environmentalist slogan.

The conclusion drawn by the reader could be that Americans, and their government, have supported extreme self and national indulgence. Consumption has been at the expense of long forgotten, worthwhile, healthy ideals of preserving the planet.



© Clay Bennett

The central character in the image is a large man from the waist up. He is wearing a hat, pants and shirt, and is holding a very small shirt. The man is a satirical representation of Uncle Sam, the national personification of the American government. National personification is the anthropomorphism of a government and its people.

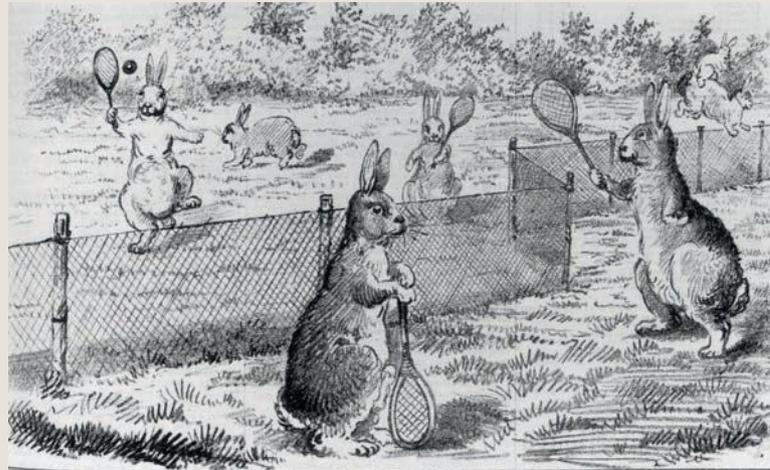
Colours of red, white and blue are easily identified as the colours of the American flag. The colour green represents the environment and this particular shade may also symbolise illness.

## Introduction to *The Rabbits*

You can compare the qualities of a cartoon to those found in the picture book *The Rabbits*, written by John Marsden and illustrated by Shaun Tan. *The Rabbits* won the Children's Book Council Picture Book of the Year Award in 1999. It uses the strategies exploited by a cartoonist, in a longer narrative, to create a perspective of a historical event in Australia's history.

Published in 1998, *The Rabbits* is a representation of the arrival, and subsequent impact, of the First Fleet of 1788 on Australia's original inhabitants. The text and images are an allegory of colonisation and the settings include urban, pastoral and outback contexts in Australia. European rabbits arrived with the First Fleet and their numbers quickly escalated, despite efforts to control their spread, such as the rabbit-proof fence from Mount Gipps to Goombi in Queensland, started in 1893. Early reaction to the fence is shown in the cartoonist's representation of the fence's probable use.

## Responding



**STEVENSON'S WIRE FENCE.**  
Mr. Stevenson, M.L.A., suggested that the Government should erect a wire fence along our New South Wales border in order to check coming invasion of rabbits. The artist depicts the probable use the bunnies would make of the fence.

A satirical cartoon from 1884 in response to a proposed rabbit-proof fence to prevent the spread of rabbits into Queensland

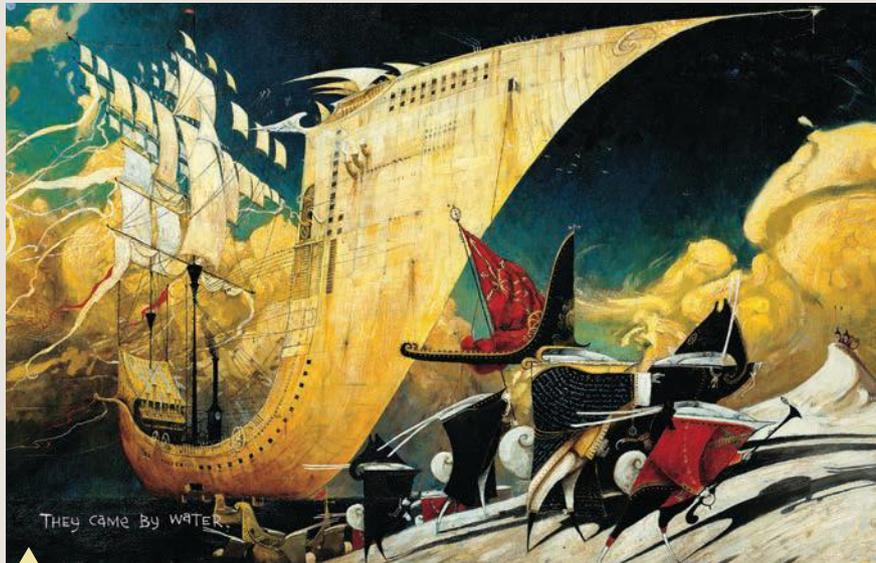
Cartoon in response to Mr Stevenson's (M.L.A.) suggestion for the erection of a rabbit fence between New South Wales and Queensland to check the invasion of rabbits appearing in *The Queensland Figaro*, 2 August 1884, p. 129. Courtesy State Library of Queensland

- 1 **Review** the stylistic devices in the cartoon above. What do we learn about rabbits from this cartoon?
- 2 **Explain** why rabbits might be the ideal animal to represent colonisers.

## Contemporary relevance

*The Rabbits'* perspective, in the current context of growing political and judicial recognition of the Eurocentric view of Australia's history, challenges many recorded accounts of the arrival and impact of the British on the country and its original inhabitants. The text offers a simplified, symbolic and powerful alternative to the historical narrative that has dominated understandings of Australia's past.

## Responding



They came by water

*The Rabbits* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan, Lothian Children's Books, an imprint of Hachette Australia, 1998



The Founding of Australia. By Capt. Arthur Phillip R.N. Sydney Cove, Jan. 26th 1788, Original (oil) sketch (1937) By Algernon Talmage R.A. Courtesy Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

The Founding of Australia. By Capt. Arthur Phillip R.N. Sydney Cove, Jan. 26th 1788

- 1 **Analyse** and **compare** the two images. Draw a table, noting their similarities and differences.
- 2 **Compare** the captions of the images. How do the words influence the reader's response to each image?
- 3 **Discuss** which image presents the more popular view of history and how you have drawn that conclusion. You may like to consider the style of art, the colour, and the selection or omission of identities as well as the image's context.
- 4 **Discuss** what conclusions you can draw about the power of art (including an artwork's title) to shape beliefs about history.

## Textual elements

### Narrative

When reading *The Rabbits*, you should keep notes on the critical characters, what happens to them and how tension is developed in the narrative. Sometimes, the dramatic moments reveal the true nature of a character.

After reading, organise your notes to include:

- a list of characters, their most noteworthy quality and the identities they satirise from Australia's history
- a list of the critical plot points in the narrative
- a graph of the critical points to indicate rising tension in the plot.

# Language

A satire's purpose is to exaggerate aspects of human behaviour and action to highlight human shortcomings or vice and foolishness. The language is sparse. When analysing each page, note:

- changes in tense
- syntax and sentence type
- use of pronouns
- verb choices.

REPETITION:  
emphasis on the  
extent of the invasion

Rabbits, Rabbits, Rabbits.

Millions and Millions of rabbits.

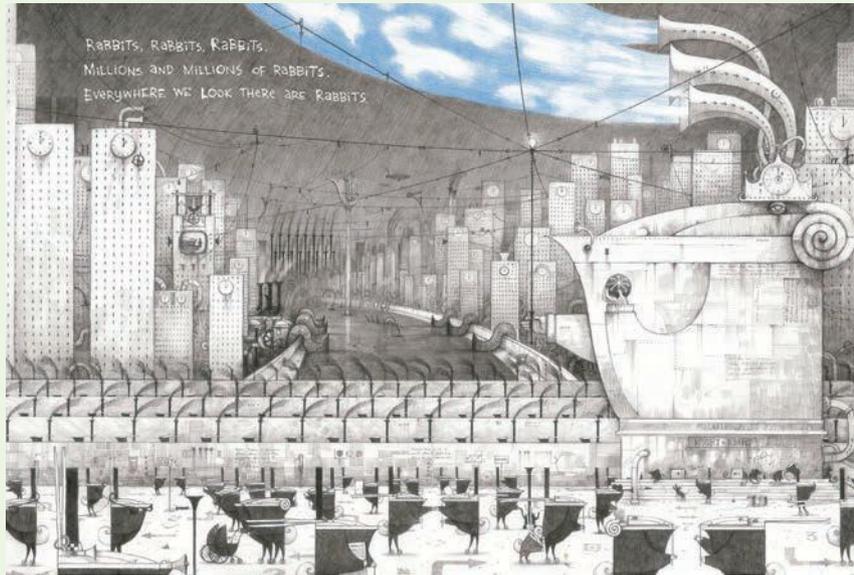
Everywhere we look there are rabbits.

*The Rabbits* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan, Lothian Children's Books,  
an imprint of Hachette Australia, 1998

SENTENCE  
FRAGMENT: draws  
attention to the  
nouns, which are  
the rabbits

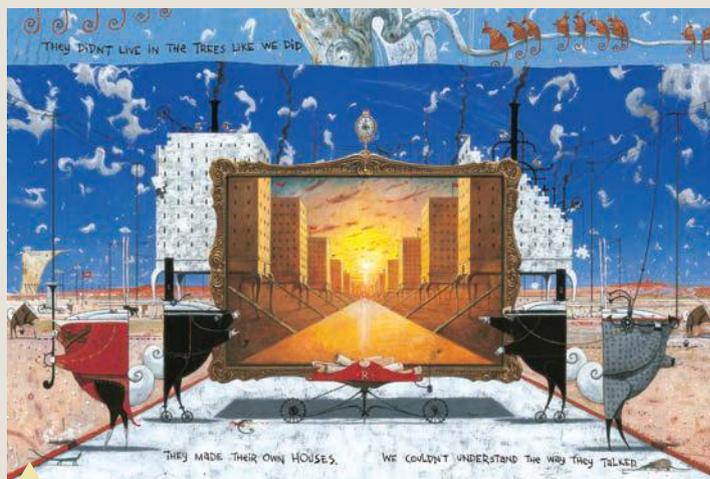
INCLUSIVE PLURAL  
PRONOUN: includes  
reader in the  
observations of the  
narrator and evokes  
sympathy for the  
growing minority or  
non-rabbits

SIMPLE VERBS: keeps  
message simple and  
clear



*The Rabbits* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan, Lothian Children's Books, an imprint of Hachette Australia, 1998

## Responding



The Rabbits by John Marsden and Shaun Tan, Lothian Children's Books, an imprint of Hachette Australia, 1998

They didn't live in the trees, like we did

Referring to the image and text above and opposite, answer the following questions.

- 1 **Identify** all the pronouns. Discuss how the author has used these pronoun references to shape your understanding of the key identities in the narrative.
- 2 What conclusion do you draw from the narrator's use of simple sentences?
- 3 Although it is a picture book, **determine** why the text is valuable as a representation of Australia's history.

## Images

To complement the written text, Tan uses caricatures to represent people, identities and ideas. He uses animals to teach a lesson (a **fable**), and he exaggerates their human qualities to mock human failures (satire).

### fable

a short tale to teach a moral lesson, often with animals or inanimate objects as characters

## Responding

- 1 **Identify** caricatures that appear in the text. **Describe** their appearance and the qualities exaggerated.

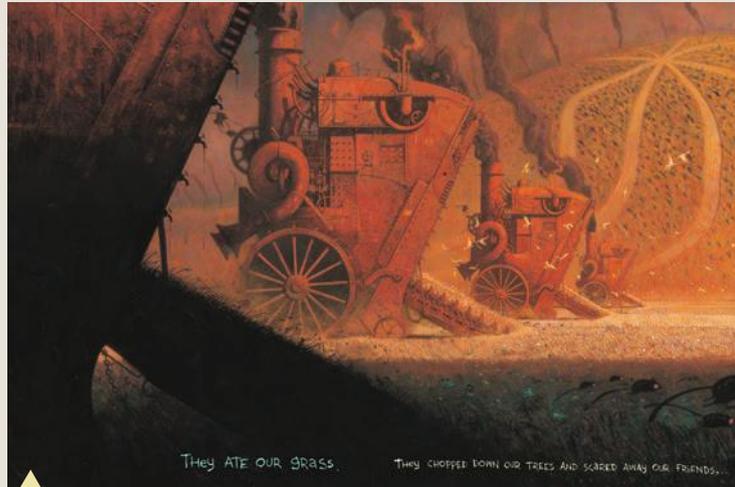
CARICATURE	COLOUR, LINE, SIZE, COMPOSITION	EXAGGERATED QUALITY

- 2 **Describe** the readers' attitude towards the caricature as a result of its representation.
- 3 **Comment** on the purpose and effect on the reader of the following symbols:
  - Union Jack with arrows
  - clocks
  - scientific and mathematical measuring and calculating tools
  - kites
  - colour.

## Representation of concepts

*The Rabbits* creates a perspective of the impact the British have had on Indigenous Australians and the Australian environment. Through the creation of the text, the author and illustrator represent the negative social, cultural and environmental impacts of colonisation.

## Responding



The Rabbits by John Marsden and Shaun Tan, Lothian Children's Books, an imprint of Hachette Australia, 1998

They ate our grass

- 1 **Identify** the impacts of the arrival of the rabbits on the native inhabitants of the land, under the following headings:
  - social
  - cultural
  - environmental.
- 2 **Analyse** the strategies used by the creators and determine how the reader is invited to respond to the scene above and the idea it is commenting on.

## Introduction to *Animal Farm*

*Animal Farm* is a satire, allegory and fable that offers a perspective of history and human behaviour from the time of the Russian Revolution. Before you read the text, it is useful to know something about the key events and identities from the Russian Revolution so that you can understand the concepts in a deeper way.

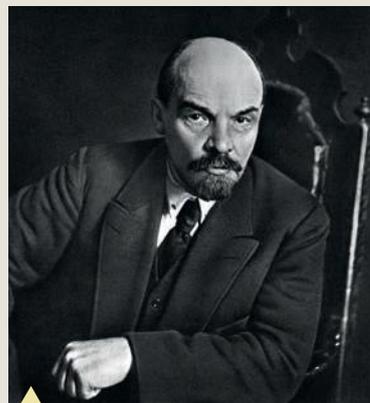
## Responding

- 1 **Research** and plot on a timeline the key events that triggered the Russian Revolution.
- 2 **Investigate** the role, actions and fates of the following figures of the Russian Revolution.



Alamy Stock Photo/IanDagnall Computing

a Tsar Nicholas II



Alamy Stock Photo/Heritage Image Partnership Ltd

b Vladimir Lenin





c Leon Trotsky

Alamy Stock Photo/David Cole



d Joseph Stalin

Alamy Stock Photo/David Cole

## The author

George Orwell, the English author and former soldier who fought fascism in the Spanish Civil War and was a member of the Burma Police, is famed for his essays, novella *Animal Farm* and his longer work of dystopian fiction *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Orwell's writing reflects his political beliefs and his understanding of the exploitative nature of leaders.

## Context

Published in 1945, after its rejection as a fairy story that was too violent to be a children's story, Orwell's *Animal Farm* is an allegory that presents a critical perspective of the Russian Revolution and subsequent totalitarian rule under Stalin in the late 1920s. His satirical representation of the characters that comprise a society of leaders and followers reveals his view of the inevitable corruption of political **ideology**, the nature of political leaders and their inclination to exploit and torment their followers for their own gain. *Animal Farm* reveals, in particular, the willingness of followers to slave for a common good because of their susceptibility to propaganda.

**ideology**  
a system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy

## Contemporary relevance

The novel continues to be read, over half a century after its creation, because there is always a dream of a better life among the masses, dictators continue to rise to power and the masses are vulnerable to exploitation and brute force.

*Animal Farm* warns that some leaders, like pigs, are intelligent but ultimately greedy. Followers are represented as hard-working and dedicated, but ultimately naive: unaware of their exploitation.

Evidence of the contemporary relevance of Orwell's *Animal Farm* can be found by comparing current totalitarian regimes and their leaders to the rule of Napoleon in *Animal Farm*.

## Responding

**Research** the regime of Kim Jong-un, the supreme leader of North Korea. As you read *Animal Farm* you may be able to list parallels between his leadership and that of Napoleon and his control of the animals in the novella.

## Time and place

*Animal Farm* was partially inspired by an incident where Orwell observed a young boy in a cart pulled by a carthorse.

I saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge cart-horse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat.

*Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* by George Orwell, Secker and Warburg London 1945

## Responding

- 1 **Compare** the lives of the proletariat in Russia under Stalin to Old Major's representation of the animal's lives in Chapter 1.
- 2 **Explain** why a farm setting with animal characters is an effective way to represent the Soviet Union in the first half of the 20th century.

## Textual elements

### Identities

**anthropomorphism**  
the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to a god, animal or object

The author uses animals to represent key characters (an example of **anthropomorphism**) in order to exaggerate and mock human behaviour. The text simplifies the events, identities and ideas of the revolution and positions the reader to view certain political beliefs and leaders in a negative way. Readers are also positioned to question the choices of followers.

In order to understand the difference between an allegory and a satire, consider the role of Mollie, as detailed in the table below.

CHARACTER	ALLEGORICAL REPRESENTATION	SATIRICAL REPRESENTATION	READER POSITIONING
Mollie – Jones' white mare	The aristocracy or bourgeoisie in Russia prior to the revolution	'At the last moment Mollie, the foolish, pretty white mare who drew Mr. Jones's trap, came mincing daintily in, chewing at a lump of sugar. She took a place near the front and began flirting her white mane, hoping to draw attention to the red ribbons it was plaited with.'	The description uses adjectives such as 'foolish' to explain Mollie's lack of intelligence and verbs such as 'mincing' and 'flirting' to reveal the genteel actions of those who don't work hard. Thus, the reader is positioned to view the bourgeoisie as indulged and self-centred.

*Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* by George Orwell, Secker and Warburg London 1945

## Responding

- 1 **Identify** the characters who represent these historical figures, find descriptions of them in the novel and describe how the reader is positioned to respond to the representation through the satirical elements. Look at the model opposite for Mollie.

CHARACTER	ALLEGORICAL REPRESENTATION	SATIRICAL REPRESENTATION – USE DESCRIPTION OF APPEARANCE OR ACTIONS IN THE NOVEL	READER POSITIONING
	Tsar Nicholas II		
	Russian Orthodox Church		
Mollie	Bourgeoisie	See table opposite	See table opposite
	Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin		
	Leon Trotsky		
	Joseph Stalin		
	Leader of communist propaganda in Russia		
	Critics of the regime		
	Devout Russian workers		
	Proletariat		
	KGB		
	Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt		
	Adolf Hitler		

- 2 **Discuss** how the representations, through choice of character, description of personality and/or actions, have influenced your understanding of:
- leaders
  - followers.

## Representation of concepts

The novella satirises leaders and followers, as well as some political ideologies such as socialism, capitalism, communism and totalitarianism. Orwell uses caricatures to represent these ideologies. His negative attitude towards certain political ideologies is echoed by the negative portrayal of a number of characters. For example, many leaders are represented as pigs. A Western connotation of the word ‘pig’ is greed. Therefore, the reader may surmise that the author believes that leaders are self-indulgent rather than generous.

In Chapter 2, the pigs, who are an allegorical representation of the Politburo (the government of Russia), teach themselves to read and write and study Old Major’s speech. They create the ideology that will underpin the society of *Animal Farm*. They call this ideology ‘Animalism’. They reduce the principles of Animalism into seven commandments. These commandments are a manifesto.

## Responding

- 1 List the seven commandments outlined in *Animal Farm*.
- 2 **Explain** what the commandments guard against.
- 3 **Consider** the last paragraph of Chapter 2 and discuss how the author shows that Animalism is flawed from the outset.
- 4 Conduct an Internet search on each of the ideologies in the table. **Identify** the character that Orwell uses to represent that ideology. By listing the character's values, you will be able to **suggest** what the author thinks about each ideology.

IDEOLOGY	CHARACTER REPRESENTING THE IDEOLOGY (ALLEGORICAL REPRESENTATION)	CHARACTER'S VALUES (SATIRICAL REPRESENTATION)	READER POSITIONING
Absolute monarchy			
Socialism			
Communism			
Totalitarianism			

## Language

The story is told by a third-person omniscient narrator. The language that Orwell uses is simple and direct; this is much like the style of cartoons. He avoids description, to allow the reader to consider the characteristics of humans he is mocking, rather than having the reader feel sentimental. There is very little dialogue between characters. In particular, there is a specific focus on the language of propaganda and how persuasive strategies can be used to exploit an audience. In Chapter 3, after the rebellion, Squealer is obliged to explain to the animals where the milk and apples have gone.

**INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:** rhetorical device to appeal to audience's need to be valued

**RHETORICAL QUESTION:** a device that eliminates questioning by ensuring there can be no other answer than the one the speaker wants

**ANSWERING QUESTION:** here the answer to the question is also using an external enemy to evoke fear in the audience

'Comrades!' he cried. 'You do not imagine, I hope, that we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege? Many of us actually dislike milk and apples. I dislike them myself. Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples (this has been proved by **Science**, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. **We pigs are brainworkers.** The whole management and organisation of this farm depend on us. Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! Yes, **Jones would come back!** Surely, comrades,' cried Squealer almost pleadingly, **skipping from side to side and whisking his tail**, 'surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back?'

*Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* by George Orwell, Secker and Warburg London 1945

**INFORMATION PRESENTED AS FACTS:** whether true or not, these are used to sway the audience's opinion

**SHORT SENTENCE:** here the sentence is to the point, simple and appears, therefore, to be a fact

**CHARACTERISATION:** Squealer's manner and delivery is appealing because it is energetic and slightly threatening

## Responding

- 1 From the extract, **determine** why the pigs want to persuade the animals to accept Squealer's point of view.
- 2 **Explore** what Orwell reveals about education and language.
- 3 Reread the following extract from Chapter 9, about the death of Boxer. **Identify** and label the examples of propaganda.

'It was the most affecting sight I have ever seen!' said Squealer, lifting his trotter and wiping away a tear. 'I was at his bedside at the very last. And at the end, almost too weak to speak, he whispered in my ear that his sole sorrow was to have passed on before the windmill was finished. "Forward, comrades!" he whispered. "Forward in the name of the Rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right." Those were his very last words, comrades.'

Here Squealer's demeanour suddenly changed. He fell silent for a moment, and his little eyes darted suspicious glances from side to side before he proceeded.

*Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* by George Orwell, Secker and Warburg London 1945

- 4 Re-read Chapter 10. **Examine** how the lives of the animals have changed since Jones left and since Squealer delivered his 'milk and apples' speech.
- 5 **Consider** how Orwell has positioned you to agree with Benjamin that '... things never had been, nor ever could be much better or much worse – hunger, hardship, and disappointment being, so he said, the unalterable law of life.'
- 6 a Put these significant events in the novella into chronological order:
  - Battle of the Cowshed
  - Old Major's speech
  - Trade with Fredrick and Pilkington
  - Moses returns
  - Building windmill
  - Milk and apples speech
  - Windmill collapses
  - Seven commandments
  - Animals expel Jones
  - Snowball expelled
  - Napoleon leads
  - Pigs move into the farmhouse
  - One commandment
  - Frederick and his men destroy windmill
  - Pigs become human
  - Moses leaves.
- b **Analyse** how the structure and sequencing of ideas has positioned you to respond to revolutions, leaders and followers.

## Extension

The following are ideas for public and persuasive texts.

- 1 **Compose** the text of a speech for a vlog (an informal video reflection for an online audience). Use the statement 'We shouldn't be surprised about the recent action of (insert your event)\_\_\_\_\_ because we have been warned about the destructive nature of (insert your quality or behaviour such as greed)\_\_\_\_\_ before.'  
In your script, you should break up your points to illustrate when and how the quality has been destructive. Use as evidence *Animal Farm* and *The Rabbits*.
- 2 **Create** the text of a speech for an audience of your choice, persuading them to believe that art and literature has an important role to play in shaping either our understanding of history OR our nature.
- 3 In Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, the absence of a jester (Yorick the jester dies prior to the events in the play) indicates to the audience that something is not right in the state of Denmark. A jester can speak freely in the name of entertainment. By mocking the king or queen, he encourages the ruler to reflect upon his or her folly in behaviour and political decisions. He has no position in the social hierarchy, as the Joker does not in the deck of cards, and he is able to speak in a way that enlightens and challenges all people through exaggeration and humour. Satire, too, helps us to mock and question our behaviour.  
Write an open letter to a publishing house or to a state censorship committee, arguing the importance of satirical texts.

# Assessment focus: writing for a public audience

## Perspectives and texts

As a result of engaging with the texts in Unit 1, you can now:

- explore individual and/or collective experiences and perspectives of the world through engaging with a variety of texts in a range of contexts
- examine how perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places are constructed through textual choices such as language, medium, style and text structures
- explore how meaning is shaped through the relationships between language, text, purpose, context and audience.

You are now ready to respond to a variety of non-literary texts and literary texts, and create texts of your own for a variety of purposes and audiences. The purpose of this writing is to analyse the perspectives and representations in texts and how these shape your own and others' ideas and perspectives.

## An introduction to texts written for public audiences

Not so long ago, it was quite unusual for the everyday person to write for a **public audience** as there weren't many opportunities to do so. Unless writers published their writing with the help of publishing companies, most people who wrote for a public audience were journalists who wrote for newspapers. Now, however, many people write for a public audience via the Internet. Writers might regularly post articles critiquing films they have seen, or they might write a series of blogs about current affairs or lifestyle topics. Some people create their own websites and blogs to publish their writing, while others might share their writing on social media. Others contribute articles to be published on websites like *The Huffington Post* or *The Conversation*. Websites such as these feature texts from thousands of different writers from all over the world, who write about a range of topics.

**public audience**  
readers or viewers of a text who belong to the general community; e.g. they may be readers of a blog, magazine or newspaper

Many writers choose to share their thoughts about their emotional or critical responses to literary texts. Consider the following headlines.

### Books at MIFF: how The Dressmaker was adapted into a film starring Kate Winslet

by Mark Poole, Senior Media Studies Lecturer, RMIT University

*The Conversation*: 31 July 2015

### Christos Tsiolkas, the 'blasphemous' artist and Barracuda

by Jessica Gildersleeve, Senior Lecturer in English Literature, University of Southern Queensland

*The Conversation*: 6 July 2016

### Review: Wonder Woman reinvigorates tired superhero conventions

by Liam Burke, Senior Media Studies Lecturer, Swinburne University

*The Conversation*: 30 May 2017

#### Responding

- 1 Conduct an Internet search to discover information about the texts referred to in the article headlines (i.e. *The Dressmaker*, *Barracuda* and *Wonder Woman*).
- 2 **Suggest** what the articles might be about.
- 3 **Explain** what audiences can learn from the authorial information provided.
- 4 **Propose** why these topics may be of interest to readers of *The Conversation*.

## The purpose of writing for a public audience

Writers of texts for public audiences do so to create meaning. It might be to convince readers to think a certain way about a book on the bestsellers list or it could be to provide audiences with information about which film to view at the cinema on Boxing Day. As part of your studies in Unit 1, you will write a text for a public audience that could:

- share how your personal response to texts is shaped by your individual context
  - for example, you could be asked to write an article considering how contemporary teenage audiences might view the experiences of Charlie Bucktin in *Jasper Jones*, who is forced to consider his own beliefs towards racism in 1960s Australia
- analyse how a text might be read in different ways
  - for example, you might be prompted to write a newspaper column exploring whether *The Crucible* is as relevant today as it was when it was first performed
- examine how concepts, identities and/or groups are represented in texts
  - for example, you might be required to write a blog analysing the representation of animal trainers in *Blackfish*
- explore how writers convey perspectives and representations through textual structures, conventions, style and language
  - for example, you might be requested to write an essay analysing the way voice is used to construct a representation of Christopher Boone in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and consider how audiences are invited to view Christopher
- examine ways that perspectives and representations are conveyed through argument, rhetoric, tone, register, style and language to influence audiences
  - for example, you might be asked to analyse the way a writer constructs a review of a literary text you have studied and consider your own response to the writer's critique.

You might also be asked to analyse two different texts to help you prepare for the first task of Unit 3. You could:

- analyse the connectedness between a character in *The Crucible* and the representation of a modern political situation such as ‘Social media witch-hunts are no different to the old kind - just bigger’ by Malcolm Gaskill in *The Guardian* in 2016 (Chapter 6)
- analyse and compare the representation of people who are not neurotypical in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *The Good Doctor* (Chapter 7)
- analyse the representation of the treatment of animals in captivity in a documentary such as *Blackfish* and a news article (Chapter 8)
- analyse the power of the film adaptation to provide extra dimension to the representation of characters in *Jasper Jones* (Chapter 9)
- analyse the effect of satire in *Animal Farm* and *The Rabbits* (Chapter 10).

### Preparing to write

This type of assessment task requires two key components:

- an analysis of *how* perspectives and representations are constructed in texts
- a compelling and stylised article that has a clear thesis and argument.

#### Before you write

This chapter shows you how to write a text suitable for a public audience in response to a text you are studying. You should incorporate your analysis gathered in Chapters 6–10.

There are two parts to this process:

- 1 Reading, comprehending, interpreting and analysing the text(s) you have been studying in class.
- 2 Forming an argument in response to an assignment question and styling your argument as a text suitable for a public audience.

## The importance of analysing

It is impossible to write a sophisticated extended response that is grounded in literary analysis if you haven’t engaged deeply with the text(s) studied in class.

To make sure you are ready to prepare a response to a text, ask yourself the questions in the table on the following page.

Once you can answer these questions, you are ready to form an analytical response suitable for a public audience. You will notice that the questions in the table use the following cognitive verbs many times:

- *identify*: distinguish; locate, recognise and name; establish or indicate who or what someone or something is; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognise and state a distinguishing factor or feature
- *describe*: give an account (written or spoken) of a situation, event, pattern or process, or of the characteristics or features of something
- *explain*: make an idea or situation plain or clear by describing it in more detail or revealing relevant facts; give an account; provide additional information
- *select*: choose in preference to another or others; pick out
- *assess*: measure, determine, evaluate, estimate or make a judgment about the value, quality, outcomes, results, size, significance, nature or extent of something.

These are very important skills in the subject of English, and when you put all of these skills together you are *analysing a text*. For this assignment, your analysis of a text is worth *9 out of 25 marks*. This is why it is essential that you have a deep knowledge of the text(s) you have been studying.

#### extra info

This aspect of the task is assessed by the criterion: Knowledge application

### point of view

a grammatical construction that identifies how the narrator is telling the story; it is usually referred to as 'person', i.e. first person, third person, second person, etc.

### perspective

in English, the way a reader/viewer is positioned by a text, or how a particular ideology is embedded in a text, e.g. a feminist perspective; a point of view or way of regarding/thinking about situations, facts and texts

### source

where a reader/viewer encounters or finds a text

### register

the use of language and detail in a text appropriate for its purpose, audience and context; a register suited to one kind of text may be inappropriate in another; the composer makes deliberate choices when constructing a text in relation to the language, subject matter, the role and relationship with the audience, e.g. the degree of formality or informality for a particular purpose or in a particular social situation

PLAYS, PROSE, FEATURE FILM, TV EPISODE	POETRY	NON-FICTION DOCUMENTARY, SPEECHES, ESSAYS, MASS MEDIA TEXTS
<b>CAN I:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the text's genre?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recall biographical information about the poet and their personal context?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the <b>source</b> of the text?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the text's <b>point of view</b> and <b>perspective</b>?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>read the poem aloud, with full consideration of line length, metre, rhyme and punctuation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>record the text's bibliographic details?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe the text's setting?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the form of the poem?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the text's genre?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain how the setting contributes to the action of the narrative?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe the text's subject matter?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain the cultural, social, historical and political contexts of the text at the time it was produced?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe the text's plot and/or narrative structure?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the poet's purpose?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain the cultural, social, historical and political contexts of the text at the time of reading/viewing it?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe characters' personalities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>define complex or unusual vocabulary?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain the text's purpose?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe characters' physical appearances?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpret the meaning of the poem?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suggest the text's target audience?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the main problem a character faces?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe the poet's tone?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the thesis of the text?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe characters' actions and motivations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain the stanza structure of the poem?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the author's argument?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe the relationships between characters?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain the line length, metre and rhyme scheme?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe the author's tone?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify symbolic objects associated with different characters?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain the significance of the poem's ending?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the text's <b>register</b>?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify literary themes in the text?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain the significance of the poem's title?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>determine whether the text is literal or figurative?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe the author's style?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>select examples of significant aesthetic features?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assess the reliability of the text?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>select examples of significant aesthetic features?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the use and effect of symbolism?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>select examples of significant aesthetic features?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify examples of intertextuality?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the use and effect of motifs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suggest the implications of the text?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain my own response to the text?</li> <li>explain how this text has influenced my own world view or perception about a particular concept, identity, time or place?</li> <li>consider other possible interpretations of the text?</li> </ul>		

## The genre of texts suitable for a public audience

### extra info

This aspect of the task is assessed by the criterion: Organisation and development

Texts written for a public audience tend to be slightly different from a formal essay and they are more flexible in their style. It is important to demonstrate your understanding of the genre patterns and conventions of a text suitable for a public audience, as this aspect of your response is worth *8 out of 25 marks*.

You will be assessed against how discerningly you:

- use patterns and conventions of an article/column/blog/essay to achieve particular purposes in a specific context
- establish and maintain the role of the writer and relationships with an identified public audience
- select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives
- use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of a text

QCAA, General Senior English syllabus, p. 30

## Organisation and sequencing of subject matter in a text suitable for a public audience

- An attention-grabbing headline intrigues the reader and prompts them to click on the link to read the article.
- An image can fascinate the reader and relate to the article's thesis.
- A byline clarifies the article's thesis; audiences don't have a great deal of time to devote to reading a long-form news article so they like to know what they will learn from reading it.
- An authorial background declares the writer's credentials and role.
- A short introduction hooks the reader and links the texts being analysed to a newsworthy event.
- Background information about the author of the studied text could be included.
- There might be a brief synopsis of the studied text (without the ending being revealed!).
- A series of short paragraphs can develop the writer's argument.
- The paragraphs might be organised into sections through the use of subheadings.
- A boxed quotation can emphasise a key point for the reader to remember.
- More images might be interspersed throughout the text, especially if the text is about a film.
- A concluding statement should reiterate the significance of the argument to the reader's own situation.

## Selection of subject matter for a text suitable for a public audience

- Evidence (direct and indirect) from the studied text must be used.
- Quotations must be integrated into a carrier sentence.
- Evidence from the studied text must be interpreted in relation to the assignment question.
- Anecdotal evidence may be used.
- Empirical evidence may be used to enhance the argument.
- Experts may be quoted.

## The textual features of a text suitable for a public audience

Texts written for a public audience feature a particular style. The style of your response is worth *8 out of 25 marks*.

You will be assessed against how discerningly you:

- use aesthetic features and stylistic devices to achieve particular purposes
- make language choices for particular purposes and contexts
- use grammar and language structures for particular purposes
- use written features, e.g. conventional spelling and punctuation, and complementary features, including digital features – e.g. graphics, still and moving images, other digital design elements – if appropriate to achieve particular purposes.

### extra info

This aspect of the task is assessed by the criterion: Textual features

## The language of a text suitable for a public audience

- Contractions may be used.
- Inclusive pronouns are used to position the audience.
- Figurative language may be used – the tone should be compelling.
- Language should be persuasive and emotive.
- Linking words should be used, e.g. furthermore, additionally.
- Comparative words should be used, e.g. unlike the film.
- The register should be academic but also conversational.
- Specialised language may be used, e.g. *mise-en-scène*, *motif*.

## The grammar of a text suitable for a public audience

- Correct English is expected most of the time.
- References to the studied text are made in present tense.
- Rhetorical questions may be used with restraint.
- Complex sentence patterns, with shorter sentence patterns, may be used for emphasis.
- Key names or places might be hyperlinked to enhance the reader's engagement.

# Sample response – an analysis of a novel

In Year 11, you may be required to respond to a single text.

The following text is an example of a literary analysis written for a public audience. The student was asked:

In *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, how are audiences invited to view the concept of 'connection'?

STRUCTURE: attention-grabbing headline

### Finding Connection in Unexpected Places: *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*

STRUCTURE: a byline that clarifies the article's thesis

Mitch Albom's novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* teaches us that we can find meaning in accidental interactions.

STRUCTURE: authorial background

Grace Loyden  
Freelance writer

CONTENT: direct evidence from text used as an epigraph

*'Each affects the other and the other affects the next, and the world is full of stories, but the stories are all one' (p. 106).*

Language is infinitely powerful. The written and spoken word have, quite earnestly, interrupted and agitated and accelerated the shape of the modern world.

LANGUAGE: linking words create cohesion

But the English language has limitations.

There are words that simply do not yet exist. Words that will represent very tangible and profound phenomena. Phenomena that, without words attached to them, may go unnoticed by unsuspecting English-speakers.

STRUCTURE: engaging introduction that links the article to a newsworthy event

Consequently, people are designing words. These words are catching on.

This year's shortlist for the [Oxford Dictionaries' Word of the Year](#) features words coined from popular culture, including 'broflake' and 'youthquake' (the overall winner).

Hyperlinks used to enhance reader's engagement



I particularly like ‘sonder’, which refers to the realisation that each person you randomly pass on your morning jog, or share an elevator with, or queue behind at the grocery checkout, lives a life as epic as yours. You might only encounter this person once, but for a brief moment your lives are connected and occasionally you are mindful enough to notice this.

Sonder.

STRUCTURE: background information about author of text studied

Bestselling author Mitch Albom explores the implications of these encounters in his novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, and forces his audience to reflect on such moments in their own lives. Eddie is an elderly, second-generation maintenance man at a vintage amusement park who dies saving a child from a malfunctioning ride. Upon entering heaven, Eddie discovers that he must meet five people:

‘There are five people you meet in heaven,’ the Blue Man suddenly said. ‘Each of us was in your life for a reason. You may not have known the reason at the time, and that is what heaven is for. For understanding your life on earth’ (p. 26).

CONTENT: direct evidence from text used to develop thesis

LANGUAGE: figurative language is used to enhance the argument and add pleasure to the reading

Here we realise that Albom’s creativity is enlightening. Albom’s poignant storytelling is a commanding symphony of bold characters who reconnect with Eddie and illuminate his ultimate epiphany.

Upon witnessing Eddie’s epiphany, I could not help but recognise that our indifference to random people could be our most tragic flaw. Sonder that.

GRAMMAR: imperative used to consolidate relationship with audience

CONTENT: indirect evidence provides context for the upcoming analysis

Albom is unashamedly dramatic in introducing audiences to the notion that strangers can be forever and secretly linked. The first person Eddie meets in heaven is the Blue Man – how he becomes blue is for you to read – who prompts Eddie to recall the funeral of an amusement park worker he attended as a child. It is revealed that Eddie accidentally and unknowingly killed the worker with the wayward throw of a baseball. With precision, the Blue Man explains: ‘[t]hat there are not random acts. That we are all connected. That you can no more separate one life from another than you can separate a breeze from the wind’ (p. 32).

STRUCTURE: a series of short paragraphs develop the argument

VOCABULARY: language of literary analysis

Such careful imagery characterises Albom’s writing and demands speculation about the significance of accidental encounters in our own lives. Albom uses Eddie’s meeting with the Blue Man to further define our inherent – and unnoticed – connection with strangers. The Blue Man states: ‘... the human spirit knows, deep down, that all lives intersect. That death doesn’t just take someone, it misses someone else, and in the small distance between being taken and being missed, lives are changed’ (p. 32).

CONTENT: indirect evidence provides context for the upcoming analysis

GRAMMAR: rhetorical questions used with restraint

Clearly, so many of our daily decisions and actions are the result of hundreds of little lotteries aligning, and the Blue Man’s words challenge me to question: *What have other people missed out on, as a result of my day-to-day decisions? Have I accidentally compromised somebody else’s chance to have a fulfilling life?* Albom’s intention here is not to force us to feel guilty for the good fortune we have; it is simply to prompt us to be mindful of those people who could have a long-term consequence as a result of connecting with us for a brief period of time.

LANGUAGE: linking words direct the reader through the argument

Finally, the character of Ruby adds poignant dimension to the repertoire of characters who reinforce the message that our capacity for meaningful connections never seem fully realised. Ruby, who inspired the building of the amusement park where Eddie worked, and where his father worked, suggests that ‘[t]hings that happen before you are born still affect you ... [w]e move through places every day that would never have been if not for those who came before us’ (pp. 69–70).

LANGUAGE: continuation of figurative language

Seldom do we take a moment to pause and acknowledge that the orchestration of earlier lives lived fully resonate deeply with our own.

STRUCTURE: boxed quote emphasises a key point for the reader to remember

Taking the time to associate our present circumstances with somebody else's hard work is a humbling experience. Ruby applies her insight to Eddie's life by revealing that children eventually realise that 'their stories, and all their accomplishments, sit atop the stories of their mothers and fathers, stoned upon stones, beneath the waters of their lives' (p. 71). Eddie finally comes to acknowledge that his distant father actually loved him fervently, and that the legacy of this love pulsed inaudibly throughout Eddie's life.

GRAMMAR: references to the text are in present tense

LANGUAGE: persuasive and emotive

'Seldom do we take a moment to pause and acknowledge that the orchestration of earlier lives lived fully resonate deeply with our own.'

LANGUAGE: continuation of figurative language

*The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is a remarkable composition, with characters soaring in and out of a weighty melody at crucial times. These characters offer each other solace and resolution, while also positioning us to reflect on our own attitude towards being present and appreciating others. The novel's satisfying coda provides a heartening call to action for us all: connect authentically with others and find value in doing so. Sonder.

STRUCTURE: concluding statement reiterates the significance of the argument to the reader's own situation



Alamy Stock Photo/LeighSmithImages

Ruby's Pier is the setting of the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*

## Responding

- 1 State the article's **thesis**.
- 2 **Identify** and list the author's arguments.
- 3 **Describe** the author's tone.
- 4 **Describe** your own feelings while reading this article.

### thesis

the overall argument of a text

## Forming a thesis

The thesis of a text is perhaps its most important feature. When audiences finish reading a text, they need to have a clear idea of what the author wanted them to learn. Whenever you write an analytical response in English, you are required to have a clear thesis.

A thesis that is capable of facilitating a high score has several characteristics:

- It is identifiable within the first quarter of the response.
- It responds to all aspects of the assignment question.
- It can be stated in one sentence.
- It is specific, rather than general.
- It is coherent, which means it can be applied to the entire text studied.
- It is grounded in literary analysis.

Let's further consider each of these characteristics in relation to the following possible assignment question.

**In the play adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, how is the audience re-positioned to view Siobhan?**

Firstly, this question requires a thorough understanding of the novel and the play adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. It is impossible to form a discerning response without having engaged deeply with both texts.

**Here is a possible thesis that responds to this question.**

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* positions the audience to view Siobhan as empathetic and supportive.

The table below evaluates the strength of this thesis.

CRITERIA	DEMONSTRATED?	COMMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responds to all aspects of the assignment question</li> </ul>	✘	The assignment question asks <i>how</i> audiences are re-positioned to view Siobhan. This question is therefore asking students to identify the characterisation techniques used to re-present Siobhan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to be stated in one sentence</li> </ul>	✔	The thesis statement is straightforward and concise. It is clear in its expression.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific, rather than general</li> </ul>	✘	The thesis statement does not indicate that the response will be focused on the play adaptation. However, the reference terms <i>empathetic</i> and <i>supportive</i> are quite precise.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coherent, which means it can be applied to the entire text studied</li> </ul>	✔	It is logical to describe Siobhan as <i>empathetic</i> and <i>supportive</i> as she demonstrates these qualities throughout the text.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grounded in literary analysis</li> </ul>	✘	There is no evidence of the response being substantiated by an analysis of the author's style. The thesis statement indicates the student has comprehended the text without analysing it.

Here is another possible thesis in response to the assignment question:

The play adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* re-presents Siobhan's meaningful relationship with Christopher through the use of perspective and motif.

CRITERIA	DEMONSTRATED?	COMMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responds to all aspects of the assignment question</li> </ul>	✔	The thesis clearly indicates what techniques have been used to develop characterisation in the play.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to be stated in one sentence</li> </ul>	✔	The thesis statement is straightforward and concise. It is clear in its expression.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific, rather than general</li> </ul>	✔	The thesis statement indicates the response will analyse the play adaptation. Greater specificity is achieved by including the phrase <i>meaningful relationship with Christopher</i> .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coherent, which means it can be applied to the entire text studied</li> </ul>	✔	Christopher's relationship with Siobhan is meaningful throughout the text. The descriptor <i>meaningful</i> is applicable to the entire narrative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grounded in literary analysis</li> </ul>	✔	It is obvious the student has engaged deeply with both texts to be able to form this conclusion. <i>Perspective</i> and <i>motif</i> are literary techniques used to construct meaning in texts, and it's clear what sort of evidence will be used to substantiate the student's response.

At first glance, the original thesis statement might have seemed like an effective one; however, the subject of English is chiefly concerned with the analysis of texts rather than just comprehending them.

An overview of a response that develops the second thesis might look like the following.

<b>Beginning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open the article with an engaging anecdote that establishes the relevance of the topic.</li> <li>• Introduce the novel and explain the intent of the play adaptation.</li> <li>• State thesis.</li> <li>• Provide a brief preview of the article's argument.</li> </ul>
<b>Middle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish how Siobhan is constructed in the original novel.</li> <li>• Indicate how Siobhan's character has been accentuated in the play.</li> <li>• Explain how the play's perspective has shifted to emphasise Siobhan's involvement in Christopher's life – 1 <i>example from novel</i>, 2 <i>examples from play</i>.</li> <li>• Explain how the playwright has manipulated the motif of Christopher's book to reveal Siobhan's relationship with him – 1 <i>example from novel</i>, 2 <i>examples from play</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>End</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a brief summary of the argument.</li> <li>• Explain the significance of the adaptation on the original novel's meaning, and how transforming the novel in this way adds to the conversation about social inclusion.</li> </ul>

# Assessment focus: persuasive spoken responses

This chapter focuses on the creation of a persuasive speech. You will be required to compose and deliver a persuasive speech on a contemporary social issue through a reasoned argument in order to convince an audience. Your argument should add to the public dialogue regarding the issue. You should also consider how you can support your response with multimodal elements to suit the context and audience.

## An introduction to persuasive speaking

You will need to choose a specific text type and relate it to a context that suits your purpose and your contemporary social issue.

### Text type and purpose

Here are some possible choices:

- Persuasive speech – any speech with the express purpose of convincing an audience of a point of view.
- Keynote speech – a speech that sets out the central theme of a conference.
- Vlog – a speech accompanied by video (usually posted on the Internet) with the purpose of convincing the audience (comprising subscribers or non-subscribers) of a point of view.
- Podcast – a digital audio file posted to the Internet that may advance a particular viewpoint in order to persuade the listener.
- Pitch – a speech designed to sell an idea, concept or storyline to an audience.

# Audience

You will be directed, in your task, to deliver your persuasive speech to a nominated audience or to select your own audience. You will need to appeal to the audience in order to be persuasive. You must pitch your argument so that it is relevant and engaging for those people.

This will influence the:

- selection of your issue and your perspective on it
- selection of your subject matter and its organisation
- language choices
- aesthetic features and stylistic devices.

When you write your speech, you need to consider factors such as your audience's:

- age
- gender
- interests
- level of education
- cultural diversity
- attitudes, values and beliefs.

Remember that audiences may be specified or unspecified. An unspecified audience might include online subscribers and non-subscribers to vlogs.

## Responding

- 1 **Consider** the following types of audiences that would be interested in speeches.
- 2 **Identify** the topics or issues that may emerge for these audiences.

AUDIENCE	ISSUES	
A political rally		
A professional organisation		
An activist group		
A special interest group		
A ceremony such as a memorial or commemoration		
Seminar attendees, which may include teenagers		
Viewers of media segments for special interests such as Q&A, <i>Media Watch</i> , <i>The Project</i>		
A committee funding a potential film from a documentary pitch		
Local or school committees, parents, friends, guardians		

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# Selecting a contemporary social issue and creating a perspective

## Topics

A topic is a general area of inquiry. Look at the media's representation of issues over the past year. Look at how the following broader topics have emerged in the media. Choose a topic that you are interested in researching or about which you have some knowledge or interest.

- Gender
- Power
- Race
- Religion
- Age
- Class
- Environment
- Technology

## Issues

An issue is a problem or concern about that topic.

For example, imagine that the topic is 'power'. In the documentary *Blackfish*, orcas in captivity are powerless to choose freedom and, as a result, suffer. Therefore, the *topic* is 'power' and the *issue* is 'the suffering of captive marine mammals'.

### Responding

Using a graphic organiser such as a mind map, brainstorm issues relevant to animals in captivity.

## Forming the argument

From the issue, and a consideration of its representation in texts such as popular media, documentaries and other texts, the speechwriter needs to decide what they think of the representation.

The writer may:

- agree with it
- partially agree with it
- challenge it.

What the speechwriter thinks about the representation is his or her *opinion*.

For example, if there is agreement with the negative representation of the consequences of keeping orcas in captivity, the speechwriter may decide to convince a relevant audience that there is a reason to outlaw orca captivity.

## Thesis

The thesis in a persuasive speech is the contention: the opinion that the speaker will be convincing the audience to share.

The thesis needs to be:

- an idea, stated as an assertion
- a reasoned response to the assessment task
- an interpretation of the topic
- the central contention of the speech – the statement of what the speaker wants the audience to believe
- stated as a single sentence in the introduction.

It should be:

- contentious and worth arguing (there is no point persuading the audience of something with which they already agree)
- precise and clear.

For example:

- Although there may be scientific benefits for society, animals suffer when they live in captivity.
- Any creatures that don't live in the wild, including domesticated animals, suffer.
- Corporations that require animals to perform directly cause their suffering.

## Organising and sequencing of subject matter

Plato, in *Rhetoric*, reveals that 'logos', the organisation of a persuasive text, could determine, in part, the effectiveness of your speech. The ideas need to be clearly organised and signposted throughout, especially as the audience may be asked to listen to the speaker and simultaneously view some sort of visual presentation, such as a video or a PowerPoint presentation.

### Planning and organisation

Follow this basic plan as a guide to organise the subject matter and the development of the argument in a speech.

- Opening
  - grabs the audience's attention
  - states the thesis or point of view
  - establishes the importance of the topic and contextualise key ideas in the thesis
  - outlines the key topics.
- Paragraphs or clearly sequenced ideas
  - begin with a signpost and topic sentence that advances the thesis
  - use points and examples that substantiate the topic
  - may include a refutation of a counterargument
  - summarise key points of the paragraph.

- Conclusion
  - finishes with a summary of key points
  - includes a statement of the thesis
  - ends by using a persuasive device and perhaps links to an idea in the introduction or requires a call to action.

## The difference between a point and an example

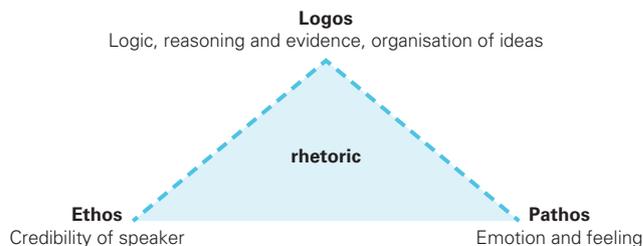
Points are opinionative statements that need exploration and evidence (e.g. ‘Marine mammals in captivity suffer from pneumonia’).

Examples are explicative or illustrative: e.g. ‘According to a 2016 investigation by the *San Antonio Express-News*, 60 per cent of orca deaths at SeaWorld’s three parks were caused by infection. The report also found that, in the past two years, eight whales and dolphins have died at the San Antonio park, and in the past 30 years, 150 infection-related deaths occurred at the park’s three locations’ (SeaWorld’s Last Captive-Born Baby Orca Dies, by Sarah Gibbens, July 25 2017, National Geographic <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/sea-world-killer-whale-orca-calf-dies-sp/d/>).

## Aesthetic and stylistic features of persuasive speaking

Aristotle argues that to be persuasive, a speaker should also exploit ethos (the credibility of the speaker) and pathos (appeals to emotions of the listener), in conjunction with logos, in order to convince his or her audience.

The words and language strategies should support logos, ethos and pathos in order for the speaker to induce the audience to accept his or her point of view. Read the following famous opening of a speech by Elizabeth I and note the annotation.



Ethos: speaker’s credential as leader is established through possessive personal pronoun ‘My’ and relationship with audience as subject through the word ‘people’

### *Elizabeth I ‘Speech to the Troops’ at Tilbury, 1588*

‘My loving people,

We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit our selves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery; but I assure you I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear.’

Logos: establishes and addresses the audience

Pathos: appeal to the need to belong to a group

## Responding

Read the following opening lines from other famous speeches and highlight and label examples of ethos, logos and pathos.

### William Wilberforce, 'Abolition speech', 1789

'When I consider the magnitude of the subject which I am to bring before the House – a subject, in which the interests, not of this country, nor of Europe alone, but of the whole world, and of posterity, are involved: and when I think, at the same time, on the weakness of the advocate who has undertaken this great cause – when these reflections press upon my mind, it is impossible for me not to feel both terrified and concerned at my own inadequacy to such a task.'

### Martin Luther King, "I have a dream" speech, 28 August 1963

'I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.'

## Persuasive language strategies

Other language devices help the speaker persuade the selected audience.

## Responding

Read the following list of language devices and **define** five with which you are unfamiliar.

- Analogy
- Anaphora
- Antithesis
- Colloquialisms
- Compound words
- Cliché
- Cumulation
- Devices of sound: alliteration, assonance, rhyme
- Exclamatory sentences
- Figurative language
- Humour
- Hyperbole or understatement
- Idiom
- Imperative
- Intensifiers
- Inversion
- Intertextual allusion
- Parallelism
- Point of view
- Present tense
- Puns
- Rhetorical question
- Repetition
- Sarcasm
- Slang
- Tricolon

## Grammar and language structures in persuasive speech

When composing a persuasive speech, be considerate of the following aspects of speechwriting:

- 1 **Register:** the appropriate level of formality for the audience, subject, purpose and context.
- 2 **Tone:** the appropriate tone, which should reflect the seriousness or lightheartedness of the subject and the formality of the occasion.
- 3 **Pronouns:** second person plural, 'you', to address the audience or inclusive pronouns 'we' and 'our'. To personalise the speech, use first person: 'I', 'me', 'my', 'mine'.
- 4 **Contractions:** use contractions for a conversational or familiar tone, except to make an emphatic point. For example: 'We *will not* tolerate this situation anymore.'

- 5 **Vocabulary:** to appear credible and be persuasive, ensure that you use the appropriate terminology, jargon or **metallanguage** of the topic. For orcas in captivity, terms such as ‘apex predator’, ‘dorsal fin’ and ‘migratory habits’ are relevant and specific.
- 6 **Syntax, punctuation and simplicity:** for fluency and emphasis ensure that you use complex sentences. These sentences need to be carefully punctuated for pauses, and interspersed with simple sentences so that the pace of the speech varies for emphasis.

**metallanguage**  
language of a specific subject or area, e.g. poetry (rhyme) or film (frame)

**syntax**  
the order or organisation of words in a sentence to communicate meaning

## Cohesive devices

These words connect paragraphs to create a smooth development of ideas from paragraph to paragraph.

COMPARATIVE WORDS	CONTRASTING WORDS	CONCLUDING WORDS
similarly in comparison in addition also as well as furthermore	however while whereas although despite but	overall therefore thus finally clearly in conclusion

For cohesiveness and the linking of ideas, you may also employ:

- extended metaphor
- extended analogy
- links between the introduction and conclusion.

### Responding

Use the lists above and conduct an Internet search to create lists of aesthetic features and stylistic devices that help a persuasive speaker to appeal to logos, ethos and pathos.

LOGOS	ETHOS	PATHOS
Table of statistics	Speaker qualification	Rhetorical question
		Inclusive pronoun

When you have written your own speech, you should annotate your script to check where you have appealed to logos, ethos and pathos. This will help ensure that you have used a range of strategies to persuade your listener. You can use a table such as the one above to record and define the strategies you have used.

## Sample of a persuasive spoken response

Read the opening and first body paragraph of the keynote speech of an animal rights conference, noting the annotations pertaining to structure.



SEQUENCING AND DEVELOPMENT:  
Speaker – appeals to ethos because of her title, which alludes to the credibility of the speaker

Place where the speech is delivered reveals the speaker's authority

Ingrid Newkirk, President of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals)  
2017 Animal Rights Conference, 4 August 2017  
Hilton Mark Center, Alexandria, Virginia, USA

LANGUAGE:  
Anthropomorphism ('animals' interests')

**Introduction**

Right now, there is an exhibition in North Carolina that's called 'Race: are We So Different?' And it is making some people extremely uncomfortable. Its theme is that race is an invention of privileged humans. **Whereas** the exhibit producer says, 'There is no biological evidence that supports human racial categories. They're there because they're advantageous to certain people and they allow oppression of other people.' And **similarly, animals' interests** are being ignored because allowing their oppression is advantageous. And that will continue as long as people are allowed to get away with the idea that only humans deserve consideration of their interests. If that goes unchallenged when they say things like, 'Yes, yes, but they're not human,' then our movement will not prosper.

SEQUENCING AND DEVELOPMENT:  
Audience, time and place

Grab audience's attention through contemporary relevance of issue and analogy

SEQUENCING AND DEVELOPMENT:  
Thesis statement

**Body paragraph 1**

Other interests are often inconvenient and we've seen that down through history. You remember that women in the United States had their interests in voting ignored until 1920s. **The suffragettes went on hunger strikes, they were imprisoned and they were force-fed. Much the same way geese are force-fed today with funnels stuck down their throats** – all because they wanted the vote. And men laughed at them and said, 'No, no, no, you don't understand. They're not men. They haven't the brains to vote,' and of course back then men honestly did believe, as humans do about other animals today, that they themselves were vastly superior to women. They were so superior and they had such stupid ideas about women that women weren't allowed to **ride bicycles or run races** lest they would be unable to bear children. And always my favorite is that women weren't allowed into medical school because they might faint at the sight of blood. Just think about that. Women were a nuisance and they were **'bird-brains'** and today pigeons are considered nuisances and **tiny-brained** creatures. But, actually like women they're very clever and they're important. I just actually heard a little while ago on the BBC that pigeons are as accurate as human doctors in detecting breast cancer and they do it from images for **Pete's sake**. The authors of the book 'Portraits of Violence' use this real 1950s shoe ad [shows women's shoe ad] to point out how oblivious people are at any given time to discrimination other than discrimination they directly relate to.

SEQUENCING AND DEVELOPMENT: Point

LANGUAGE:  
Comparison ('The suffragettes went on hunger strikes, they were imprisoned and they were force-fed. Much the same way geese are force-fed today with funnels stuck down their throats')

SEQUENCING AND DEVELOPMENT: Topic sentence to show the importance and relevance of the issue

SEQUENCING AND DEVELOPMENT: Evidence

SEQUENCING AND DEVELOPMENT: Point

LANGUAGE: Cohesive devices

Conversational and varied ('and', 'whereas', 'and similarly')

LANGUAGE:  
Alliteration ('bird-brains', 'ride bicycles or run races')

LANGUAGE:  
Compound words ('tiny-brained')

LANGUAGE: Cliché ('for Pete's sake')

SEQUENCING AND DEVELOPMENT: Summary and reference to argument

The authors suggest that we need to challenge ourselves, to, quotations: 'try to detect those things which have not yet been talked about, those things that at the present time show the fragility of our system of thought, of our practices, those bold, scary, uncomfy things.'

Ingrid Newkirk, 2017 "Why We Must Agitate for Animal Suffrage"  
<https://www.peta.org/blog/must-agitate-animal-suffrage/>

## Responding

Answer the following questions regarding the speech for PETA.

- 1 Write a list of the different types of evidence used by the speaker.
- 2 **Explain** whether the evidence is credible.
- 3 Write a list of examples of how the speaker links sentences.
- 4 **Discuss** whether the response is engaging.

# Multimodal elements

Multimodal texts are the combination of two modes delivered at the same time to persuade a live or virtual audience of an idea. An idea expressed verbally may be complemented by an image, music, written text or other mode that significantly contributes to the response.

In her speech at the 2017 PETA conference, Ingrid Newkirk accompanied the following spoken text with the relevant images. The images selected, their timing and her use of pause to allow for reflection on the images is important in advancing her point of view.

Look at the extracts below to view how images have been used in the speech.

SPEECH	IMAGE
<p>'You remember that women in the United States had their interests in voting ignored until 1920s. The suffragettes went on hunger strikes, they were imprisoned and they were force-fed.'</p> <p>Ingrid Newkirk, 2017 "Why We Must Agitate for Animal Suffrage" <a href="https://www.peta.org/blog/must-agitate-animal-suffrage/">https://www.peta.org/blog/must-agitate-animal-suffrage/</a></p>	 <p>Alamy Stock Photo/imageBROKER</p>
<p>'Much the same way geese are force-fed today with funnels stuck down their throats - all because they wanted the vote.'</p> <p>Ingrid Newkirk, 2017 "Why We Must Agitate for Animal Suffrage" <a href="https://www.peta.org/blog/must-agitate-animal-suffrage/">https://www.peta.org/blog/must-agitate-animal-suffrage/</a></p>	

## Responding

- 1 **Consider** why it is effective to combine the spoken and the visual text in this instance.
- 2 In the speech, the speaker says, 'women weren't allowed to ride bicycles'. Why wouldn't this be an image you would choose?
- 3 **Discuss** the problems of using a visual image for every point made or example used in a speech.

# Using technology

## vlog

a video blog or a web log; an online presentation that sometimes incorporates written text as well as video

## podcast

an audio blog that may be downloaded from the Internet onto digital devices

## hook

an introductory device to capture the attention of the audience

Complete some online research and create a list of advice on how to create effective **vlogs** and other video presentations, as well as **podcasts** and PowerPoint presentations.

For electronic submissions of persuasive speeches, you may be required to use a program such as:

- Screencast-o-matic
- Nimbus Screenshot.

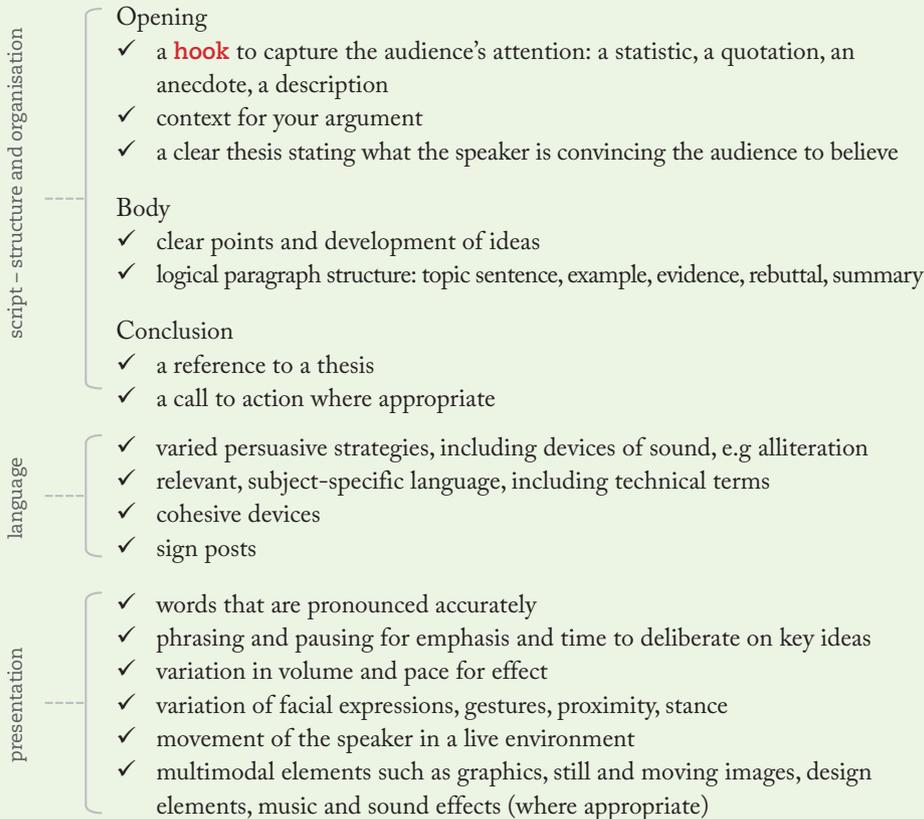
These online programs allow you to:

- record your computer screen on which you may project a PowerPoint or relevant image
- record your face or upper body, depending on your proximity to the screen
- upload your presentation to a relevant site nominated by your teacher or save it to a relevant device.

When presenting in this context, you will need to use the technology responsibly and effectively. Some aspects of presentation you will need to consider using and practising include:

- your proximity to the camera to show facial expression or gesture
- the modulation of your vocal qualities for emphasis and fluency, which may need to be more exaggerated because gestures will be limited
- sustaining eye contact by looking at the camera
- your ability to coordinate the projection of the PowerPoint presentation.

To engage an audience and be successful, a persuasive speech should include the following.

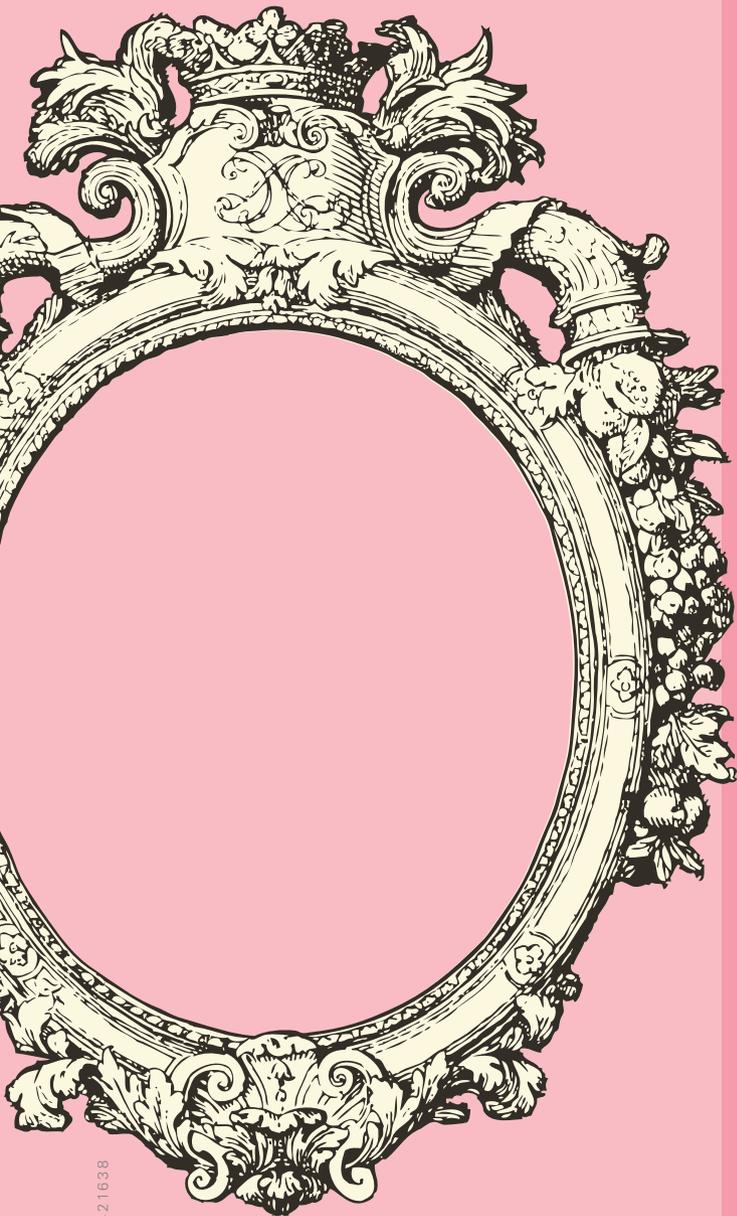


## Extension

Using the strategies presented here, plan a response to an issue that has emerged through your study of one of the texts in earlier chapters of this book. **Develop** a thesis and organise a persuasive speech.

# U2

## Texts and culture



### Unit objectives

Students will:

- 1 use patterns and conventions of imaginative and analytical genres to achieve particular purposes in cultural contexts and social situations
- 2 establish and maintain roles of the writer/speaker/signer/designer and relationships with audiences
- 3 create and analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places through an exploration of texts and culture
- 4 make use of, in their own imaginative texts, the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin texts and invite audiences to take up positions, and analyse these ways in texts created by others
- 5 use aesthetic features and stylistic devices to achieve purposes and analyse their effects in texts
- 6 select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives
- 7 organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes
- 8 use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of texts
- 9 make language choices for particular purposes and contexts
- 10 use grammar and language structures for particular purposes in written, spoken and/or multimodal texts
- 11 use mode-appropriate features to achieve particular purposes in imaginative and analytical texts.

Adapted from English 2019 v1.4 General Senior Syllabus,  
p. 4. English 2019 v1.4 General Senior Syllabus  
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# *The Drover's Wife* (play)

## Assessment possibilities

As part of your studies in English, you are required to explore cultural experiences of the world in a variety of texts. Leah Purcell's *The Drover's Wife* is an absorbing play that re-presents Henry Lawson's canonical Australian text.

According to one critic, Lawson's story examines 'the cruel, violent relationships that existed between men and women back then, awakening us to our inheritance of that domestic culture that continues to scar us as a society' (Frank Moorhouse, *The Australian*, October 2017).

In responding to *The Drover's Wife* by Leah Purcell, you will need to analyse the relationship between language, representation, identity and cultural context by uncovering cultural assumptions, attitudes and beliefs.

You might be asked to:

- analyse how other characters' attitudes, values and beliefs affect Yadaka
- analyse how Purcell's *The Drover's Wife* conforms to, or challenges, cultural assumptions constructed in Lawson's short story
- analyse how *The Drover's Wife* resonates with contemporary Australian attitudes, values and beliefs
- analyse the representation of the men in *The Drover's Wife*
- analyse how audiences are invited to view particular characters, such as Drover's Wife or Yadaka.

In creating texts inspired by *The Drover's Wife*, you will need to consider your own response to the play and experiment with new forms of creative texts, such as digital stories. You might be asked to:

- create a new scene to be inserted into *The Drover's Wife*
- create an epilogue for *The Drover's Wife*
- rewrite a section of *The Drover's Wife* from the perspective of another character to reveal omissions and privileged information
- rewrite a section of *The Drover's Wife* as a short story.

# Introduction to *The Drover's Wife*

In 1892, Henry Lawson published a short story entitled 'The Drover's Wife', which is set in the unforgiving Australian outback and details how a courageous and resilient mother guards her four children from a five-foot-long snake. Her husband – who is, as the title suggests, a drover – is noticeably absent. The story is regarded as a significant work of Australian literature.

Leah Purcell, an Aboriginal Australian writer, staged a play in 2017 that challenges the dominant reading of Lawson's text and offers a harrowing epilogue. Your enjoyment of Purcell's play will be enhanced if you are familiar with Lawson's famous short story.



Russell Drysdale, *The Drover's Wife* c.1945, oil on canvas, 51.5 x 61.5cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. A gift to the people of Australia by Mr and Mrs Benno Schmidt of New York and Esperance, Western Australia through the American Friends of the Australian National Gallery 1987. With permission from The Estate of Russell Drysdale.



## Cultural context

It is becoming quite popular for authors to manipulate aspects of well-known texts so that contemporary audiences might see their representations of concepts, identities, times and places in new and innovative ways.

Even though Lawson's original story is quite old now, its messages are still relevant to the way some contemporary Australians live their lives. In his song 'The Drover's Wife', Australian singer and songwriter Luke O'Shea describes how he heard Lawson's story when he was a boy. At that time, Luke O'Shea vowed he would never make his own wife live in the same way the drover's wife was forced to in Lawson's story.

When I was young Lawson told me a story  
About a rose of Australia, sun-browned and strong  
And he spoke of the hardships and the struggles of a mother  
As she raised up her children on her own, while he was gone

Blarst me – if I ever go droving  
Damn me – if I fall in love and then leave  
For I know it's not right – to turn the woman I love  
Into the drover's wife

Now as I grew my father he was a salesman  
And many's the time he'd spend weeks on that road  
And I think of the hardships and the struggles of my mother  
As she raised up us children on her own, while he was gone

Blarst me – if I ever go droving  
Damn me – if I fall in love and then leave  
For I know it's not right – to turn the woman I love  
Into the drover's wife



>>

Now I'm a man and I'm putting bread on the table  
 I'm touring the country – seldom I'm home  
 And I think of my wife – oh the love of my life  
 How she's raising our children on her own, while I am gone

Blarst me – for forever I'm droving  
 Damn me – for I fell in love and I leave  
 And I know it's not right – to turn the woman I love  
 Yes I know it's not right – I've turned the woman I love  
 Into the drover's wife.

'The Drover's Wife' lyrics by Luke O'Shea, with permission



'The Drover's Wife',  
 Luke O'Shea

## Responding

**salient feature**  
 the component of a text that first attracts the viewer's eye; the most obvious graphic element in a visual text

- 1 **Consider** the screenshot from Luke O'Shea's music video. Identify the **salient features** in the image. You might like to view the music video, which you can find on his website.
- 2 **Propose** what is happening in this image, using an extract from Luke O'Shea's song to support your interpretation.
- 3 **Describe** Luke O'Shea's attitude towards the actions of the drover in Lawson's story.
- 4 **Explain** what Luke observed as a child about his father's actions. Compare these actions to the drover's.
- 5 **Determine** what Luke has realised about his own actions now that he is a husband and father. Does this new understanding justify the drover's extended absence?
- 6 **Explain** what contemporary audiences might learn about employment and its effect on relationships, as a result of listening to Luke O'Shea's song.



A still image from the music video for 'The Drover's Wife' by Luke O'Shea

Still from the video 'The Drover's Wife' (control, Luke O'Shea)

Clearly, Henry Lawson's 'The Drover's Wife' features in Australian culture and folklore and the text enjoys enduring significance.

## Authorial context

Leah Purcell is a Goa-Gunggari-Wakka Wakka Murri woman and is an actor, writer and director. In the introductory pages of her play, Purcell describes how she grew up with Henry Lawson's story, and it is a similar description to Luke O'Shea's. When creating her play, Purcell wanted to weave her great-grandfather's personal story through it to accentuate more recent understandings of the experiences of Indigenous Australians at the time of Lawson's writing. Purcell was able to access her great-grandfather's personal papers as well as recorded history.

# Ideological context

Postcolonial texts are becoming increasingly prevalent in Australian literature, and authors are being recognised for their comments on Australia's history as well as contemporary relationships and issues. Authors such as Kim Scott, who wrote *Benang* and *That Deadman Dance*, and Alexis Wright, who wrote *The Swan Book* and *Carpentaria*, as well as Leah Purcell, are regarded as significant Australian authors who tackle these complex themes.

You have probably engaged with a range of postcolonial texts without even realising it. Consider the following images from well-known Australian films.

Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore collection Ltd



Alamy Stock Photo/RGR Collection



Alamy Stock Photo/AF archive

Have you seen *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002), *Australia* (2008) or *Bran Nue Dae* (2009)? What about them makes them 'postcolonial'?

## Responding

- 1 Brainstorm a list of texts you have encountered that feature postcolonial concepts, such as the representation of first contact or the representations of Indigenous Australians. You might like to group the texts into categories; for example, film, novel or TV series.
- 2 **Consider** the messages that these texts are making about Australian history and legacy of this history in contemporary Australian life.

# Historical context

Literary and non-literary texts can reflect or challenge social and cultural perspectives. The original 'The Drover's Wife', by Henry Lawson, could be viewed as an **allegorical** account of European settlers trying to survive in a harsh environment. Settlers were eventually viewed by Indigenous Australians as hostile and aggressive. Lawson's story alludes to the relationship between two contrasting cultures by describing how a 'stray Blackfellow' helped the drover's wife build a woodpile



Getty Images/Photolibrary

While Henry Lawson set his 'The Drover's Wife' in the outback of Australia, Leah Purcell uses the Snowy Mountains as the setting for her play

## allegory

a story that has a symbolic meaning beyond its literal interpretation; a form of extended metaphor in which objects, events and characters in a narrative are used to stand for, or refer to, events or concepts that are outside the narrative itself

and ‘thanked her, and left with head erect and chest well out. He was the last of his tribe and a King: but he built the woodheap hollow’. This dynamic is further explored in Purcell’s play.

Henry Lawson’s short story is set in the Australian outback; however, Purcell set her play in the alpine country of the Snowy Mountains. The Snowy Mountain region includes the highest mountain in Australia, Mount Kosciuszko. The Snowy Mountains formed part of the Australian identity in Banjo Paterson’s well-known poem ‘The Man from Snowy River’, which tells the story of a group of riders pursuing a valuable horse that has escaped. The harsh country defeats all the riders, except ‘The Man from Snowy River’, whose courage and skill became legendary.

## Social context

Leah Purcell’s play is uncompromising in its re-presentation of Lawson’s classic story. She has chosen to create a **feminist** and postcolonial retelling that leaves audiences with a harrowing impression of the experiences of women and Aboriginal people during colonisation. Purcell uses dialogue, narrative and stage directions to challenge our ideas about our history.

### feminism

an ideology that advocates political, economic, social and personal equality of the sexes; the fair treatment of women by men



Leah Purcell as Drover’s Wife

Leah Purcell. *The Drover’s Wife*, Belvoir. Photo by Brett Boardman.

## Personal contexts

Individual readers and viewers will respond to texts in different ways. Here, we consider the personal responses of literary critics to Purcell’s play.

### Critical responses to *The Drover’s Wife*

‘Leah Purcell has made a bold and exciting contribution to Australian playwriting and, arguably, to Australia’s identity. She has repurposed colonial tropes and reinvented an existing form to insist that we consider a new exploration of our culture ... This is a work to challenge our sense of ourselves and of our place.’

– NSW Premier’s Literary Award judges’ comments

‘This re-imagining of a classic Australian short story explodes out of the blocks with a moment of stark brutality and never lets up ... *The Drover’s Wife* subverts, re-inspects and interrogates our histories through powerful storytelling.’

– Victorian Premier’s Literary Award judges’ comments

‘Purcell has embraced the full violence and terror of Lawson’s frontier myth, as well as the violence and terror he never would have committed to word.’

– *Daily Review*

‘Beautifully written, thoughtfully made, persuasively performed, and infused with the raw emotion of lived experiences ... The entire post-settlement history of Australia has collapsed into an act of theatre.’

– *Time Out*

## Responding

- 1 Create a word cloud by identifying the evaluative verbs used in the reviews. For example, the first review suggests Purcell *repurposes*, *reinvents*, *insists*, *considers* and *challenges*.
- 2 **Examine** your word cloud. After reading these words, consider your expectations of the play. Suggest what you think the play will be about and how it might be different from Henry Lawson's short story.
- 3 The reviews indicate that audiences of this play might be challenged by its representation of the Australian myth. **Describe** the common narratives of early Australian literature.

## Setting

Purcell draws inspiration from the setting in the original short story. Read the following extract to gain an impression of Lawson's representation of place in 'The Drover's Wife'.

The two-roomed house is built of timber, slabs and stringy bark, and floored with split slabs. A big bark kitchen standing at one end is larger than the house itself, verandah included.

Bush all around – bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple trees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye save the darker green of a few she-oaks which are sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilisation – a shanty on the main road.

The drover, an ex-squatter, is away with sheep. His wife and children are left here alone.

'The Drover's Wife' by Henry Lawson, 1892

## Responding

- 1 **Define** the following terms from the extract: slab, range, stunted, undergrowth, shanty.
- 2 Conduct an Internet search to collect pictures of the native Australian flora described in the extract.
- 3 Locate a picture, or series of pictures, that you feel exemplifies the landscape represented in the orientation of Lawson's story. Alternatively, you might like to sketch your own impression of the setting.
- 4 **Describe** the mood of the images and compare it with the mood conveyed in the extract.
- 5 **Describe** Lawson's attitude about 'the drover'. Use a quotation from the extract to justify your interpretation.

## Strategies for understanding a transformation

A transformed version of a text features differences – both obvious and subtle – so that the original text's meaning is modified. For instance, a Hollywood film adaptation of a novel might accentuate the significance of minor characters or adjust the setting.

What is important to remember is that when we study a transformation we are not necessarily interested in which version is better. Instead, we should focus our attention on (a) how does the meaning of the original text change, and (b) what effect does this change achieve?

For this reason, it is crucial to understand the genre conventions, as it is these conventions that communicate the text's meaning to audiences.

**act**  
a section of a play  
comprised of a  
number of scenes

**scene**  
a section of a narrative  
text that contains  
continuous action

**stage directions**  
written information  
in a text that explains  
how an actor is to  
move around the  
stage or deliver a  
particular line

**aside**  
a remark made by a  
character on stage  
that is heard only by  
the audience, and not  
by other characters

# Features of a play

It is important to remember that a play is designed to be observed, rather than read.

Like a novel or a film, a play tells a story about characters and events. A play script is organised into **acts** and **scenes**. The drama usually develops in chronological order.

A script is arranged on the page in a particular way. The character who is speaking is indicated on the left-hand side of the page, and their dialogue follows. **Stage directions** and **asides** provide important background information.

A playwright must rely on the director's vision of the play to enliven its setting, as usually only a minimal description of the setting is included. In the opening pages, Purcell suggests *The Drover's Wife* is 'an Australian Western for the stage'. Hollywood Westerns are traditionally set on the American frontier – sometimes described as the 'wild west'. There are usually scenes of violence between the heroes and villains, and this violence usually restores social order. The final scene of a Western often sees the hero riding away once the dilemma has been solved.

## Responding

- 1 **Predict** what this play will be about using your knowledge of the genre of Western films.
- 2 **Consider** the following extract from Purcell's play:

### Setting

A two-room shanty, in the dense scrubland of the Alpine country of the Snowy Mountains.

A chopping block sits in the middle of the stage.

An axe buried deep in it.

*The Drover's Wife* by Leah Purcell, copyright © Leah Purcell  
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[www.currency.com.au](http://www.currency.com.au)

- a Conduct an Internet search to collect pictures of the alpine country of the Snowy Mountains.
- b **Describe** the mood of the images.
- c **Suggest** how such a setting might be 'brought to life' on stage.
- d **Compare** these images to those you curated in the previous activity.
- e Imagine yourself in the audience and viewing this scene. **Predict** the significance of the chopping block and the axe.

## Preparing to read

In Chapter 1, you will find helpful information about the conventions of a play. Familiarise yourself with these conventions as you will be required to examine them in more depth.

### Read for pleasure

*The Drover's Wife* has been described as a thriller. While relatively short in length, it contains gripping scenes and a startling turn of events. Initially, this play is best read with the aim of enjoyment and in one sitting. You might like to read it out loud in a group, with each speaker being allocated a specific character. Or, you might like to read it quietly to yourself.

To aid your eventual analysis of the play, it is advisable to use a highlighter or sticky notes to remind yourself of scenes you found particularly powerful.

### Read for meaning

To consider the text more closely, organise your notes to contain:

- an overview of the narrative structure.
- a graph of the dramatic tension in the play
- a brief description of the central characters and five key quotations that you feel exemplify their attitudes, values and beliefs.

# Textual elements

The dramatic elements of a script can be analysed for their effect on the play's meaning. Select a scene from *The Drover's Wife* that you find to be of particular significance. This might be because it is entertaining, compelling or shocking, for example. Annotate the chosen scene by identifying the following dramatic elements:

- scene number
- characters relevant to the scene
- stage directions
- props mentioned in the action of the script.

## The playwright's use of language and its effects

MCNEALY: Thomas McNealy, my lady.  
DROVER'S WIFE: Ain't no lady, just a drover's wife. State ya business.  
MCNEALY: Looks like ya might've scored ya 'self a reward.  
DROVER'S WIFE: What're ya on 'bout?  
MCNEALY: Felon on the run. Crimes committed. Murder, missus, murder. Murderer. Here on ya door step.  
DROVER'S WIFE: Murder? Who?  
MCNEALY: Where've ya been, lady?  
DROVER'S WIFE: Mindin' me business. Whose murder?  
MCNEALY: A white woman like you. On her own with her children. Mountain country.  
DROVER'S WIFE: Who?!  
MCNEALY: A one Mrs Ulla Hossnaggle and her wee ones. A couple of days back now. Other side of the range.

DROVER'S WIFE is taken aback by this.  
... Horrific. Rape, strangulation, the boys sodomised, and the girl drowned ... Life slipping away from piercin' sapphire blue eyes ... So I'm told. The lengths people go to for detail. Me, faint at the sight of blood I do. Broad daylight, brazen bastard. Those wee children. I think of yours, the wee girl, so cute.

*She steps closer, her grip firm on her rifle.*



Drover's Wife (Leah Purcell) and McNealy (Tony Cogin) in *The Drover's Wife*

Leah Purcell and Tony Cogin. *The Drover's Wife*. Belvoir. Photo by Brett Boardman.



&gt;&gt;

DROVER'S WIFE: What'd ya know about my children?  
 MCNEALY: Now, good lady –  
 DROVER'S WIFE: My children? What do you know about my children!  
 MCNEALY: Well, ya know the swaggy's trail, round and round we go.  
 But these parts, missus, hard to see whose comin'. Mountain behind ya, dense flora in front of ya, and I'd be lyin' if I said I hadn't passed here a few times.  
 Kept my distance, looked in though.  
 That's all. Truth missus.  
 DROVER'S WIFE: I wouldn't trust ya as far as I could spit.

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### Responding

- 1 **Identify** any word choices that you consider to be out of the ordinary or charged with meaning.
- 2 **Consider** the connotations of words; for example, 'Ain't no lady, just a drover's wife'. Explain what these words suggest about the characters in this scene.
- 3 Purcell also uses informal language to construct her representation of Drover's Wife and McNealy. **Identify** examples of informal language and explain how it affects the audience's understanding of these two characters.
- 4 **Describe** the tone used by Drover's Wife in this passage. This passage is from the opening scene; how might the tone used by Drover's Wife in this scene develop the dramatic tension of the play?
- 5 The playwright uses **syntax** deliberately to create a representation of McNealy. **Describe** McNealy's manner of expression and explain what it is suggesting about his character at this point in the play. What insight does the audience gain about McNealy's motivations and values?
- 6 During this conversation, McNealy's comments on the recent murder reveal attitudes towards Aboriginal Australians at this time and place in Australia's history. **Identify** the comments (and the deliberate language used) and **explain** how the play's narrative subverts these beliefs. Use an extract from the play to support your explanation.
- 7 Select two more scenes (or extracts from scenes) and apply the questions above to guide your analysis. Your selection should aim to cover the middle and end of the play.

**syntax**  
 the order  
 or organisation of  
 words in a sentence  
 to communicate  
 meaning

## The playwright's use of character

Purcell uses our understanding of gender and race to create subtle representation of characters in this scene. Drover's Wife is acutely aware of her precarious situation and the arrival of two suspicious men, Yadaka and McNealy, causes a series of devastating events. Looking carefully at the characters in texts may allow you to detect the author's position on important issues, such as gender and race.

### Responding

- 1 **Identify** three or four examples in the play that reveal the attitudes, values and beliefs of Drover's Wife, Yadaka and McNealy. Note whether their views or values change as the drama unfolds. Make sure you identify where these changes occur and what events inspire the changes.
- 2 **Determine** the techniques Purcell uses to illuminate these attitudes, values and beliefs. For example:
  - a what the characters say (dialogue)
  - b how the characters express themselves (language, pronunciation, syntax)
  - c what the characters do (action).

&gt;&gt;

- 3 Use this evidence to form succinct paragraphs about each character. Provide clear explanations about how the above techniques are used by Purcell to convey attitudes, values and beliefs about race and gender.
- 4 **Discuss** the reasons why *Drover's Wife* is not given a name in this play.

See below for an example of an analysis of Purcell's characterisation of Danny.

**SCENE FIVE**  
*YADAKA and DANNY both enter with their shirts off. They both carry the last of the logs.*

**DANNY** Last ones. Ma will be happy. We felled a tree and been haulin' wood since dawn. I'm so hungry I could eat a whole rump of that bullock to meself.

*They share the moment, but YADAKA is more about the business at hand. They stop and get themselves a drink of water.*

*We see YADAKA's scars (from being whipped) across his back.*  
**DANNY** watches *YADAKA* closely as they have a break.  
 Been meanin' to ask ... those scars there. Are you a bad man then?

*Beat.*

**YADAKA** I was about Joe Junior's age.  
**DANNY** Oh ...  
**YADAKA** I went to work for a man ... said I stole his gold dust. He was just too drunk to remember where he hid it.

*DANNY comes over, pulling down the top of his pants. There is an old belt buckle scar on his hip.*

**DANNY** That's a good one.  
 I sidestepped Da on one of his drunken rampages. That's what Ma calls them.  
 See, he's got a bad bow leg, broke it when he was little, wasn't fixed proper. Ma reckons his da probably did it.  
 Anyway, he can't run good, so he cracked his belt like a whip at me, buckle end.  
 Da didn't mean it.

*Awkward beat. DANNY is quick to change the subject.*

**YADAKA** Those spears out back there, pretty big.  
**DANNY** Spears?  
**YADAKA** Seen ya bring them up to the house after we buried little Daisy ... Before we split these logs, can ya teach me to throw one?  
**YADAKA** They're not to be played with.  
**DANNY** I won't say nothing ...

*The Drover's Wife by Leah Purcell, copyright © Leah Purcell  
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**ACTION:** The stage directions here imply that YadaKa and Danny are working well as a team, and that they view each other as equals

**CONNOTATION:** suggests that Danny is open-minded and inquisitive. Clearly, Danny has already formed his own opinion of YadaKa

**INFORMAL LANGUAGE:** Danny's poor grammar again reinforces his limited education. This accentuates not only the family's isolation but also the sacrifices that family has had to make to survive

**TONE:** Danny's tone is inquisitive and straightforward. It suggests that Danny is observant and keen to learn, but it also suggests that Danny is very resilient

**CONNOTATION:** Suggests Danny is skilled at keeping secrets

**INFORMAL LANGUAGE:** enhances the extent of Danny's work ethic and associated hunger

**INFORMAL LANGUAGE:** Danny's tendency to contract his words suggests that Danny has not had any formal schooling

**CONNOTATION:** Suggests there has been a generational cycle of abuse in this family

**CONNOTATION:** Danny is quick to defend his father here. This might be because he knows he should not be sharing personal information with YadaKa, or he could be frightened of what would happen if someone found out about the physical abuse Danny has suffered

**FORMAL LANGUAGE:** in contrast to Danny's use of slang and poor grammar, YADAKA's language is quite formal. His tone implies that YADAKA has had some sort of formality in his upbringing, and it also reinforces his nobility and integrity

## motif

a prop or symbol that is used recurrently in a text to represent a character or concept in a particular way

# The playwright's use of motif

The axe and spear are significant props, or **motifs**, in Leah Purcell's play.

## Responding

- 1 The way each character uses the axe changes. **Consider** what the axe symbolises in the following scenes:
  - Scene 1, where Yadaka saves Drover's Wife from McNealy
  - Scene 4, where Drover's Wife liberates Yadaka from his collar with the axe
  - Scene 5, where Yadaka is sharpening the axe and chopping wood
  - Scene 7, where Drover's Wife uses the axe to defend Yadaka
  - Scene 9, where Drover's Wife uses the axe to cut down Yadaka's body
- 2 Locate the scenes where the spear is used in the stage directions and **determine** what it suggests about the relationships between characters.

## Extension

The following activities will allow you to engage more deeply with this text.

- 1 The director of the first production of *The Drover's Wife*, Leticia Cáceres, stated that the play is a 'feminist re-imagining of Henry Lawson's short story by the same name'. A feminist reading of a text involves exploring the roles of men and women in the text and examining how equal the relationship between them is. **Compare** the representations of men and women in Lawson's short story and Purcell's play.
- 2 Purcell manages to craft an entire play based on a gap in Lawson's short story. **Examine** the comments made by the Drover's Wife in Lawson's short story to determine her attitude towards him and his absence. **Consider** how – or whether – these comments validate Purcell's epilogue.
- 3 Tony McAvoy SC, the first Indigenous Australian to be appointed to senior counsel, suggests that 'our nation is unwilling to examine the realities of British invasion of the continent'. He argues that Purcell's play 'could have easily been cast as having gone that one step too far'. **Suggest** the extent to which you believe Purcell's narrative is too extreme in its representation of postcolonial conflict in Australia.
- 4 In your opinion, what is the effect of the play's ending on the audience's emotions? How is the audience positioned to feel about the experiences of the character and the re-presentation of the Australian myth?
- 5 **Explain** how Purcell's play is an example of the 'Australian Western'.
- 6 Henry Lawson is quoted as saying: 'It is quite time that our children were taught a little more about their country, for shame's sake.' What can audiences learn about our country from both of these texts?

# *The Secret River*

## (TV series)

### Assessment possibilities

As part of your studies in English, you are required to explore cultural experiences of the world in a variety of texts. In the TV series of *The Secret River*, Australia's history at the point of early contact between the convicts, settlers and Aboriginal Australians is represented through haunting images of the Hawkesbury area and the compelling narrative of an emancipated convict. The text provides an alternative perspective to the popular cultural narrative of the early contact between the British and Australia's Indigenous inhabitants.

In responding to *The Secret River*, you will need to analyse the relationship between language, representation, identity and cultural context by uncovering cultural assumptions, attitudes and beliefs.

You may be asked to write an essay where you:

- analyse how other characters' attitudes, values and beliefs influence William Thornhill
- analyse how *The Secret River* conforms to, or challenges, the Australian historical narrative
- analyse how *The Secret River* depicts the characters' relationship with the landscape
- analyse the representation of the Australian landscape in *The Secret River*
- analyse how audiences are invited to view and respond to particular characters, such as William Thornhill or Grey Beard.

In creating texts inspired by *The Secret River*, you will need to consider your own response to the TV series and experiment with new forms of creative texts, such as digital stories. You may be asked to:

- create an alternative final scene of *The Secret River* as a TV series script
- create the text for an omniscient narrator as a prologue and epilogue of the TV series for *The Secret River*
- rewrite a section of *The Secret River* where you reveal the perspective of another character in the form of an interior monologue to reveal his or her thoughts about a particular scene, action or character.

To develop a thorough understanding of how meaning is created in film through its representation of culture, identities, relationships and culture, we can concentrate on:

- identifying the generic conventions of the film
- exploring how representations of characters and their perspectives are constructed in a film
- identifying and interpreting information in the film that has been included, emphasised and omitted
- considering perspectives of culture within the texts that have been marginalised and exploring attitudes, values and beliefs that contribute to this marginalisation
- determining the effect of these representations on the text's invited readings.

# Introduction to *The Secret River*

*The Secret River* offers an alternative to the popular historical narrative of the early contact between the British colonists and Australia's Aboriginal people. One of the most popularly recorded relationships is the one between Governor Arthur Phillip and Bennelong, a Wangal man.



Bennelong, a Wangal man

Neagle, James & Collins, David & Cadell & Davies. (1798). [Bennelong] Retrieved April 23, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135681648>

## Responding

Conduct an Internet search and uncover the following:

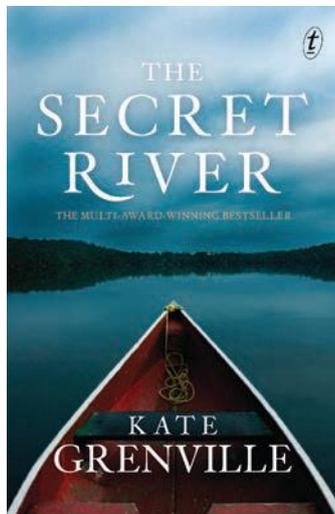
- how the relationship between Phillip and Bennelong began
- the positive representation of early relations between Phillip and Bennelong
- how Bennelong is celebrated or remembered today.

Not all historical records offer positive reflections of the relationships between the Indigenous Australians and the settlers. For example, some prominent landmarks, such as Murdering Creek Road on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, attest to the massacre of local Indigenous Australians. In Bundaberg, Bourbong Street – declared as the site of the deaths of a number of Indigenous Australians – is a name derived from 'Bierra bong', which means plenty or many death.

## Responding

Conduct an Internet search and uncover:

- a negative account of the relationship between Governor Arthur Phillip and Aboriginal people
- who Pemulwuy is and how he is acknowledged today
- why Bennelong is more popularly regarded than Pemulwuy in written history.



With permission from Text Publishing

The *Secret River* was originally a book by Kate Grenville. The cover of this edition features an image from the TV series, in what is known as a 'tie-in'.

In fiction, there is an interest in exploring alternative perspectives of these early relationships that written history has overlooked.

In this chapter, we will view and respond to the TV series *The Secret River*, which explores the complex relationships between the convicts, British settlers and Australia's Aboriginal people.

## Responding

Before watching the TV series, consider the two characters in the image on the previous page.

- 1 **Describe** the mood or tone created by the colours in the image.
- 2 **Explain** what conclusion can be drawn from the fact that the characters are not looking at each other.
- 3 **Analyse** the tilt of head and facial expression of each character. Determine how this reveals the nature of each character.
- 4 **Consider** if there is anything else in the image that might influence how you will respond to the TV series.

## Author, screenwriter and director

Author Kate Grenville's interest in the British colonists' early contact with the Dharug people was triggered by her participation in the Reconciliation walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge in 2000, and her early research of her family history as a descendant of Solomon Wiseman.

The title of her novel is taken from anthropologist WEH Stenner's 1968 Boyer Lecture, which referred to 'the secret river of blood in Australian history'. The adaptation of the novel for the screen was written by Jan Sardi and Mac Gudgeon and the TV series was directed by Daina Reid. Like the novel, the adaptation shows 'historical fiction is not just about dramatising the past, but about tackling a contemporary culture of forgetting' (Stella Clarke, 2011).

## Context

Set in the colony of New South Wales from 1805 to 1824, in the original settlement in Sydney and on the Hawkesbury River, the two-part TV series traces some of the stories of convicts and settlers, and their aspirations for freedom and the opportunity to forge a new life in a new world by acquiring land.

In the TV series, this story of Australia's history is shown from the perspective of a condemned felon and transported convict, Will Thornhill. His desire to be his own master and to own land compels him to commit terrible crimes against the Dharug people. His belief that he can acquire land on the Hawkesbury is based on the British enactment of the International Law 'Terra Nullius', a term meaning 'nobody's land', that sanctioned the colonisation of mandated, unowned land. The land was considered unowned and able to be acquired when there was no clear authority or government, buildings or townships or fences, and that it was unsettled and there for the taking.

## Terra Nullius

The belief that it is acceptable to acquire 'no man's land' can be observed in the painting on the right. Fox's representation of Cook's arrival depicts the dismissal of Indigenous Australians and the assumption that the continent is Terra Nullius.



Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, 1770, by E Phillips Fox, 1902

E. Phillips Fox, *Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, 1770*, oil on canvas, 192.2 x 265.4 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gilbee Bequest, 1902 (119-2)

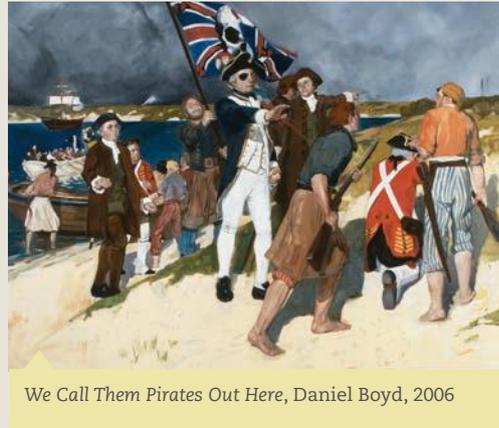
## Responding

- 1 **Discuss** how the planting of the flag implies that the land is owned by no one.
- 2 In the background are two Aboriginal Australians. Consider their marginalised position in the picture and their relative number and size and determine what this reveals about the process of land claims.
- 3 **Consider** why the event is depicted in bright colours under a bright blue sky.
- 4 **Examine** the way Cook is represented. How does this image support the view of the British's peaceful arrival and claim of the land?

In 2006, Daniel Boyd challenged Fox's representation of Cook's arrival.

## Responding

- 1 **Compare** Boyd's painting with *Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, 1770*.
- 2 **Consider** what the change of flag reveals about the artist's perspective of Cook's arrival.
- 3 **Decide** why you think Boyd omitted the two Indigenous Australians.
- 4 **Consider** how the omission of the Indigenous Australians is significant in explaining a representation of Australia's early history.
- 5 **Discuss** the comment about Terra Nullius Boyd is making by changing the image in this way.
- 6 **Consider** the contrast in the representation of Cook in this version.
- 7 **Discuss** the impact the title of each painting may have on the audience.
- 8 **Discuss** how Boyd has addressed the 'culture of forgetting'.



*We Call Them Pirates Out Here*, Daniel Boyd, 2006

Daniel Boyd, *We Call Them Pirates Out Here* 2006 oil on canvas, 226 x 276 x 3.5cm, Museum of Contemporary Art, purchased with funds provided by the Coe and Mordant families, 2006, image courtesy and © the artist.

## Contemporary relevance

The characters and events in *The Secret River* are reflective of historical events, and they offer a view of the early relationships between British settlers and Indigenous Australians.

Growing recognition in political, legal and social contexts of the death, displacement and destruction of the culture of Australia's First Peoples makes this TV series timely. Its depiction of the tensions between those who moved into the Hawkesbury area and assumed the land of the local Aboriginal people gives voice to a silenced aspect of Australia's history.

## Responding

- 1 In the table below, **summarise** what we learn about the nature of the early settlers and Australia's history.

NATURE OF EARLY SETTLERS IN THE TV SERIES	AUSTRALIA'S HISTORY
Ambition	Life in Sydney Cove for a convict's family was constrained by a social hierarchy
Violence	The Rum Trade controlled commerce in the colony

- 2 In Episode 2, the British settler Loveday reads a report from the colony's newspaper to his Hawkesbury neighbours. It reveals the prevailing attitude that violence against Indigenous Australians is both condemned and condoned.



He reads:

‘While it is hereby acknowledged that the black population of the colony appears to have manifested a spirit of animosity and hostility towards the British inhabitants, in the Hawkesbury region in particular, the killing of natives is strictly forbidden and will be punished with the utmost severity of the law. However, on occasion of any native coming armed or in a hostile manner to property belonging to a British subject ...’ ... ‘... said subject is not required to suffer his property to be invaded or his existence endangered, and may pursue and inflict such punishment as the circumstances merit.’

Episode 2, *The Secret River*, ABC

- Identify** the words that are used to refer to Aboriginal people.
- Identify** the words that are used to refer to the colonists.
- Discuss** how reports such as these influenced beliefs about Indigenous Australians. You may like to consider the genre, subject matter, audience, word choices and the formal tone of the writing in your response.

## Place

Who owns the land, how it is treated and how it is related to is an ongoing legal, cultural, personal and spiritual question. In the TV series, the audience views the characters grappling with these questions and the cultural conflicts between colonists and Indigenous Australians.

Since colonisation, maps have attempted to chart the language, tribal or nation groups of Indigenous Australians. The maps below indicate the area in which the TV series is set.



The Sydney Basin area of Australia is where the events of *The Secret River* take place

### Responding

- List the conclusions you can draw about the British claim of Terra Nullius, based on these maps.
- In the TV series, Will Thornhill says to Grey Beard, ‘This is my place’. **Discuss** what you understand about that statement after looking at these maps.

In the extract below, from the novel *The Secret River*, the author, Kate Grenville, describes what Will Thornhill sees and feels when he first sees the place he calls Thornhill Point.

'A chaos opened up inside him, a confusion of wanting. No one had ever spoken to him of how a man might fall in love with a piece of ground. No one had ever spoken of how there could be this teasing sparkle and dance of light among the trees, this calm clean space that invited feet to enter it ... It was a piercing hunger in his guts: to own it. To say mine, in a way he had never been able to say mine of anything at all. He had not known until this minute that it was something he wanted so much.'

(p. 106)

'He could not forget the quiet ground beyond the screen of reeds and mangroves and the gentle swelling of that point, as sweet as a woman's body.' (p. 121)

*The Secret River* by Kate Grenville, Text Publishing Co., Melbourne 2013

In the TV series, William Thornhill finally stakes his claim on Thornhill Point on the Hawkesbury. He runs to the highest point, drives a long stick into the ground (much like a flag), spreads his arms wide and declares, 'Mine. Mine. William Thornhill's!'

### Responding

- 1 **Determine** how British values about land are expressed through:
  - comparing land to a woman
  - repeating the words 'want' and 'mine'
  - relating the desire to own the land to hunger.
- 2 **Explain** how William Thornhill's statement 'Mine. Mine. William Thornhill's!' and his gesture in the image confirm the British belief about land.



Image licensed from ABC Library Sales  
Courtesy of Ruby Entertainment

William Thornhill stakes his claim on Thornhill Point in the ABC TV series *The Secret River*

The Aboriginal Australians' affinity with their land is observed by Thornhill. By the end of the novel (a scene replicated in the TV series), the omniscient narrator suggests that his connection to the land is superficial.

'[Thornhill] watched Jack's hand caressing the dirt. This was something he [Thornhill] did not have: a place that was part of his flesh and spirit. There was no part of the world he would keep coming back to, the way Jack did, just to feel it under him. It was as if the very dirt was a consolation.'

*The Secret River* by Kate Grenville, Text Publishing Co., Melbourne 2013

### Responding

- 1 **Discuss** what revelation about place is revealed in the extract above.
- 2 **Discuss** what alternative perspective of history is reflected in this observation about place.

# Textual elements

## Narrative

The way in which the story unfolds, and from whose perspective it is told, influences how events are understood and how the audience responds to the characters.

### Responding

Plot the narrative structure of the TV series *The Secret River*. When you plot events from different points of view, note how the perspective influences how you understand early Australian history.

- 1 Plot the story from the point where Thornhill first sees the land, until he is King of the Hawkesbury, from his perspective.



- 2 Plot the story from the Dharug people's perspective, from the arrival of William Thornhill and his family to the end of the final episode.



- 3 **Consider** what conclusions you can draw about the recording of history when you compare the perspectives above.

## Identities

The non-Indigenous characters in the TV series represent differing attitudes, values and beliefs towards the land and its original inhabitants.

### Responding

In the table below note how these characters reflect the different representations in *The Secret River*.

CHARACTER	ATTITUDE, VALUES AND BELIEFS REGARDING THE LAND	ATTITUDE, VALUES AND BELIEFS REGARDING THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF THE HAWKESBURY	ATTITUDE, VALUES AND BELIEFS REGARDING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
Will Thornhill	Covetous		
Sal Thornhill			
Dickie Thornhill			
Thomas Blackwood			Mutually respectful
Smasher Sullivan		Inhumane	

## Stylistic devices in visual texts

When we watch a TV series or film, we rely on the director to bring to life the characters in the story, to create an authentic setting in time and place and to represent the critical themes underpinning the narrative. The following is an example of how the director, Daina Reid, uses the stylistic devices available in a visual text to evoke a response from her audience in the TV adaptation of *The Secret River*.

SCENE: Will Thornhill and his family encounter Grey Beard in the bushland of Thornhill's Point

CAMERA ANGLE: Eye level

COLOUR: Grey skyline; green bushland



A still from a scene from *The Secret River*

Image licensed from ABC Library Sales Courtesy of Ruby Entertainment

CAMERA SHOT: Middle (mid) shot

SHOT COMPOSITION:

Will to the right in the middle ground.

Grey Beard further to the right and closer to the middle ground than Will

Sal, Willie, Dick far left foreground.

### framing

placing subjects in a shot to focus on a particular subject or image with an appropriate background, for ideological or aesthetic purposes

## Analysis of a scene

The **framing** of the scene above gives a greater portion to the side of the Thornhills. Conversely, the Dharug Elder has the smaller portion of the frame. Coupled with this, the more wooded, seemingly established bush adds to the power of the Thornhills and indicates their growing control of the landscape.



The Thornhills travel by boat from the settlement to Thornhill's Point

Image licensed from ABC Library Sales Courtesy of Ruby Entertainment

### Responding

- 1 Look at the image of the boat journey. **Describe** the framing of the scene and analyse its effect. Use the following headings to structure your description and analysis:

- the scene
- camera angle
- camera shot
- shot composition
- colour.

You may also be able to listen to the music and analyse how it influences your reaction to the scene.

- 2 Select a critical scene and review one minute of filming. List the cinematic devices used and **explain** how each one challenges or reinforces your understanding of Australia's early history.

## Language

The conflict between the settlers and the Dharug is exacerbated by language differences. The imperiousness of William Thornhill and some of his neighbours is influenced by a belief in the superiority of their culture and language.

Mimicry is a way of identifying who is superior and who is weak. The language that is taught and copied is the one deemed valuable. The copying of Will's speech should reveal his dominance; however, the dialogue in the following scene challenges this representation of colonial interactions.

## Responding

Read the extract from Part 2, when Will Thornhill confronts the group of Dharug people and the Elder named Grey Beard is teaching Dickie to make fire.

- 1 **Explain** the significance of the repetition of 'no'.
- 2 **Review** how Grey Beard mimics Thornhill in the repetition of his name. How might Grey Beard's mispronunciation of Thornhill's name confirm Thornhill's belief in his superiority?
- 3 **Discuss** why Thornhill asks if Grey Beard understands.
- 4 **Examine** what is revealed about Thornhill when he links the learning of his name to his point about the land being his.
- 5 **Explain** how the audience knows that when Grey Beard says 'my place', he understands the meaning of the words 'my place'.
- 6 **Explain** why the audience may suspect that Grey Beard has been mocking Thornhill throughout the exchange.
- 7 **Discuss** how this scene challenges popular views of the interactions between Indigenous Australians and early settlers.
- 8 **Discuss** how this scene confirms or challenges your understanding of Australia's early history.

**REPETITION:** emphasises the point and highlights the frustration of the character

**INFORMAL LANGUAGE:** used to demonstrate level of education

**REPETITION:** note that it is accurately said both times. Is used to shape the viewer's belief about Grey Beard

THORNHILL: Me, Thornhill. (pause) Me Thornhill.  
 GREY BEARD: Me, Dorn'ill.  
 THORNHILL: No. No, no, no. No. No, no, no. I'm Thornhill. I'm Thornhill.  
 It's me name. Do you understand?  
 GREY BEARD: Me, Dorn'ill.  
*Laughter of small group of Dharug people*  
 GREY BEARD: *Speaks in Dharug language (no subtitles)* Me, Dorn'ill.  
 THORNHILL: No, no. I'm Thornhill. I'm Thornhill. Look. See, this ... this is the river. You understand? Now, this is the point. Now all of this, that's mine. Alright? It's mine now. You can have the rest, but ... but this is my place now. My place. You understand?  
 GREY BEARD: My place.  
*Laughter of small group of Dharug people*  
 GREY BEARD: My place.  
*Laughter*  
 THORNHILL: Oh, no, see, that's where you're wrong, Jack.

**SIMPLIFIED GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION:** used to show that the speaker is simplifying language to communicate with a non-English speaker

*The Secret River, ABC*

## Responses to the TV series of *The Secret River*

The following extract is from a review of *The Secret River* by Graeme Blundell.

... Bruce Young's photography is a luscious scenic tapestry of muted colour and light, often verging on the abstract. His cameras capture both the hollowness and openness of space, the oppressive immovableness of the landscape, as well as the illusion of freedom offered by the river.

>>

Reid and her estimable collaborators (the production design of the distinguished veteran Herbert Pinter is especially impressive) gets the spell of the bush just right, that matrix of sentiments and ideals, that almost religious mystique that would in time become a symbol of a distinctive national character.

The struggle with the recalcitrant land has rarely been dramatised with such resonance: the loneliness of bush life and the way the early settlers who came to change and subdue the land were themselves changed by it in the end, and compelled to submit to its demands.

And the sense of the Aborigine as spiritual superior is palpable through the series, majestically conveyed in the mesmerising performance of Trevor Jamieson as Gumang, or Grey Beard, the most senior elder of the Dharug tribe, all meaning invested in sacred land. All the performances are splendid. Jackson-Cohen's Will is a man of shy, courteous modesty and he allows us to maintain our empathy for him even when we know of the heinous events that must unfold around him. Snook is an inspired actress; she can turn her face into a dozen different ones: beautiful, pain-riddled, ethereal and earth-motherish.

Hulme flaunts his virtuosity once more with his Blackwood, an enigmatic and surprising figure who has found redemption in a new land, a performance of muted sadness and grace.

And the writer and musician Tim Minchin is brilliant as the bitter and vengeful Smasher Sullivan, driven by his profound hatred of the Hawkesbury Aborigines, wonderfully and disturbingly malevolent. I was reminded of something Mark Twain said about this country, that it does not read like history but like the most beautiful lies: 'It is full of surprises, adventures, and incongruities, and contradictions, and incredibilities; but they are all true; they all happened.'

'Kate Grenville's *Secret River* gets the TV treatment on ABC'  
by Graeme Blundell, *The Australian*, 13/6/2015

### Responding

- 1 **Identify** why the reviewer believes the director captures the struggles faced by the Dharug and the settlers.
- 2 **Identify** the qualities of the film that the writer believes influences the viewers.
- 3 **Determine** which arguments in the review you agree with and why.
- 4 **Explain** how Mark Twain's observation challenges or confirms your understanding of Australia's early history.

### Extension

- 1 Paul Daley in his review of the series for *The Guardian*, in 2015, stated: 'Good art challenges preconceived cultural narratives regardless of client discomfort.' **Discuss** the discomfort that has been felt in considering Australia's history in the TV series.
- 2 Daley's article is entitled '*The Secret River* review – have we really moved on?' He asks,
 

'So why pick at this nasty scab? Why not leave it well alone as it has been for the past 200-plus years?' **Debate** this point of view.
- 3 Write a letter from Dickie to his father explaining why you have decided to live with and care for Blackwood.

# The Dry

## Assessment possibilities

As part of your studies in Senior English, you are required to explore cultural experiences of the world in a variety of texts. Jane Harper's *The Dry* is a compelling story representing Australian bush culture and its influence on people's decision making.

In responding to *The Dry*, you will need to analyse the relationship between language, representation, identity and cultural context by uncovering cultural assumptions, attitudes and beliefs.

You might be asked to:

- analyse how other characters' attitudes, values and beliefs influence Aaron Falk
- analyse how *The Dry* conforms to, or challenges, the crime fiction genre
- analyse how *The Dry* resonates with other mystery texts set in the Australian outback
- analyse the representation of the Australian landscape in *The Dry*
- analyse how audiences are invited to view particular characters, such as Aaron Falk or Mal Deacon.

In creating texts inspired by *The Dry*, you will need to consider your own response to the novel and experiment with new forms of creative texts, such as digital stories. You might be asked to:

- create a new chapter to be inserted into *The Dry*
- create an epilogue for *The Dry*
- rewrite a section of *The Dry* from the perspective of another character to reveal omissions and privileged information
- rewrite a section of *The Dry* as a play or film script.

## Introduction to *The Dry*

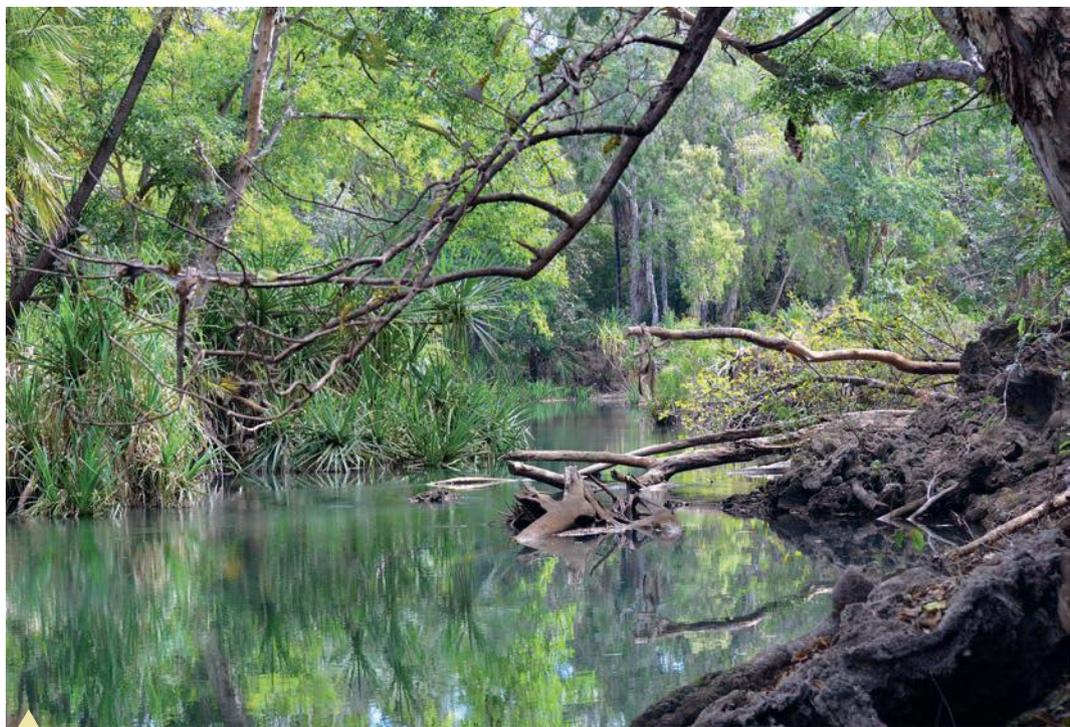
In 2016, Jane Harper published a crime fiction novel entitled *The Dry*, which is set in a remote country town suffering a devastating drought. The narrative follows Federal Police investigator Aaron Falk, who returns to his childhood town to attend the funerals of Luke, Karen and Billy Hadler, who have died in an undisputed murder–suicide. Falk soon discovers there is more to the case, and in attempting to solve the crime, he has to confront his own involvement in a tragedy that occurred 20 years previously.

Like many Australian novels, *The Dry* depicts the trauma experienced by those living in drought. Many parts of Australia often suffer from drought, and often the community's water supply cannot meet the residents' needs. Drought can ravage the landscape, destroy farms and cause immense distress to people living in these areas.

Compare the following images, which show the same location, before and during a drought.



Alamy Stock Photo/Blue Gum Pictures



Alamy Stock Photo/Karen Black

The bottom image shows rural Queensland after the wet season and the top image shows it after a long drought

9780170421638

## Responding

- 1 Look at both images carefully. **Identify** the **salient features** that you notice first.
- 2 Imagine drawing three horizontal lines across the images to create even thirds. **Describe** the **composition** of the images: which elements are emphasised in each third? How does the composition differ between the images?
- 3 **Describe** the tone of the two images.
- 4 **Explain** what the images suggest about the different seasons in Australia.
- 5 Visual texts quickly make an impression on us through the use of colour. **Suggest** what the colours in each image symbolise.

## Historical context

The effect of drought on both the Australian landscape and the people living in it has been a long-standing feature of Australian literature. Consider the poem ‘The Alphabet of Drought’, written by Emily Mary Barton and first published in 1910, after her death. In this poem, Barton set herself the challenge of writing a rhyming poem in iambic tetrameter, in which each line starts with a new letter of the alphabet.

### The Alphabet of Drought

All these months of heat and drought,  
Baked within, and burnt without;  
Cattle dying in our regions,  
Drifts of dust and insect legions;  
Every pool a mass of mire.  
Fogs that mock each morn’s desire;  
Groups of clouds, suggesting rain,  
Heaven-attracted, off again;  
I, one cheerful plant have seen,  
Just as ever bright and green;  
Keeping still its steady bloom,  
Lightsome leaf and keen perfume –  
My morning shower, treasured well,  
Never upon its leaflets fell;  
On fern and fuchsia all was shed,  
Perchance to save them; they are dead.  
Quiescent Nature lies asleep.  
Refusing o’er their dust to weep;  
So that my heart was faint with grief,  
Till, musing o’er that shining leaf,  
Untiring, ever-spreading root,  
Virtue-laden flow’r and fruit;  
With types of love and trust combined.  
Xylographed my anxious mind –  
Yes, like thee I would endure,  
Zygophillum, the brave and pure.

‘The Alphabet of Drought’, in *Straws on the Stream*,  
by EM Barton, published by W.E. Smith, 1910

### salient feature

the component of a text that first attracts the viewer’s eye; the most obvious graphic element in a visual text

### composition

the arrangement of images; a synonym for mise-en-scene; the selection and organisation of a text that creates meaning

## Responding

- 1 Refer to the analysis of ‘Mirror’ by Sylvia Plath in Chapter 5 or read the steps in analysing a poem in Chapter 18 to **analyse** this poem.
- 2 **Identify** the poet’s purpose.
- 3 **Describe** the emotions that are represented in this poem.
- 4 **Explain** how the poem connects with the images in the previous activity.

Poets are not the only ones to construct representations of the ruthless Australian landscape. The following films have also depicted this common theme.

Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore collection Ltd



*Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) is an adaptation of Joan Lindsay's book published in 1967. It is a haunting tale of a group of schoolgirls who vanish in the bush.



australscope/Alistair/CRAWFORD PRODUCTIONS

*Fortress* (1985) portrays the courage and ingenuity of a teacher and her students, who are kidnapped by a band of masked criminals and taken into the Australian bush.



Alamy Stock Photo/Entertainment Pictures

*Wolf Creek* (2005) is a horror film about a group of backpackers pursued by a madman through the Australian outback.

### Responding

- 1 Brainstorm a list of texts you have encountered that feature the Australian landscape. You might like to group them into categories; for example, 'film', 'novel', 'TV series', etc.
- 2 Once you have created your list, **identify** the genre of each text; for example: 'drama', 'crime', 'horror', etc.
- 3 **Consider** why audiences might be so captivated by the representation of the Australian landscape in dramatic and tense narratives.
- 4 **Predict** the role of the Australian landscape in *The Dry*. Use information from the novel's cover to inform your inferences.

## Authorial context

Jane Harper was born in Manchester in the United Kingdom and moved to Australia when she was eight years old. She became an Australian citizen as a teenager, and travelled between Australia and the UK upon graduating. Harper became a journalist but wrote creatively in her

spare time. Her debut novel, *The Dry*, is the winner of the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for an Unpublished Manuscript and eventually won the Gold ABIA Book of the Year award at the Australian Book Industry Awards in 2017.

## Learning about crime fiction patterns and conventions

Chapter 7 explores the patterns and conventions of a murder mystery or crime fiction novel. Crime fiction is extremely popular, and these sorts of texts follow the ageless interaction between killer and victim. The intrigue and suspense appeal to audiences who like dramatic and unexpected endings. The genre is strangely addictive, and readers get a glimpse of the sinister, depraved and macabre, which is usually far different from their own lives.

Typically, the narrative documents the efforts of the sleuth – in this case, Aaron Falk – who applies an investigative method based on logic, reason and attention to detail. The investigator's perspective is usually foregrounded and readers are positioned to feel sympathetic towards them as they uphold society's ethics and morals. Some literary critics suggest that crime fiction also reflects the anxieties of the time period and highlights social problems, concerns and alarms, rendering the genre both entertaining and realistic.

Modern crime fiction has shown a shift in the characterisation of the protagonists. In early versions of the genre, with characters such as Sherlock Holmes, the detective is analytical and retrospective, and applies logic to allay fear and distress. The character uses open-ended questions to offer insights into their personality and the atmosphere is usually dark and gloomy. Now, however, the protagonists are typically represented as determined advocates of justice who, while emotionally frail themselves and often dealing with broken relationships, are committed to identifying the murderer. Male detectives are usually depicted as being somewhat jaded by their experiences, and generally single or divorced. Female detectives, however, are commonly portrayed as brutally competent, but alone.

### Responding

- 1 Brainstorm a list of crime fiction texts you have encountered or are familiar with. These could be films, television episodes or novels.
- 2 **Identify** the texts' protagonists and describe their personalities. **Determine** whether they match the information provided in this section.
- 3 Read the following extract from *The Dry*, during which the narrator provides a representation of the protagonist, Aaron Falk.

An image of Falk's own bedroom flashed into his mind. He mostly slept in the middle of the bed these days. His bedspread was the same navy blue he'd had as a teenager. No-one who had seen it in the past couple of years had got comfortable enough to suggest something more gender-neutral. The cleaning service that came to his flat twice a month often struggled to find enough to do, he knew. He didn't hoard, he didn't keep much for sentimental reasons and he'd made do with whatever furniture he'd been left three years earlier, when his two-person flat had become home to just one.

Extract from *The Dry* by Jane Harper reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd © Jane Harper 2016

How is the reader positioned to view Falk? Use evidence from the extract to support your interpretation.

- 4 **Evaluate** the extent to which this representation of a crime fiction protagonist is consistent with the conventions described above.

# Learning about place

Set in the fictional town of Kiewarra in rural Victoria, *The Dry* relies heavily on the setting to build tension. Even the novel's title – *The Dry* – connotes the impact of the drought. Consider the following extracts from the novel:

<p><b>Extract 1</b> The drought had left the flies spoilt for choice that summer. They sought out unblinking eyes and sticky wounds as the farmers of Kiewarra leveled their rifles at skinny livestock. No rain meant no feed. And no feed made for difficult decisions, as the tiny town shimmered under day after day of burning blue sky. (p. 1)</p>	<p><b>Extract 2</b> The country roads seemed even longer on the drive back to the pub. Falk flicked on his high beams and they carved a cone of white light into the gloom. He felt like the only person for miles. Nothing ahead. Nothing behind. (p. 30)</p>	<p><b>Extract 3</b> The huge river was nothing more than a dusty scar in the land. The empty bed stretched long and barren in either direction, its serpentine curves tracing the path where the water had flowed. The hollow that had been carved over centuries was now a cracked patchwork of rocks and crabgrass. Along the banks, gnarled grey tree roots were exposed like cobwebs. (p. 105)</p>
<p><b>Extract 4</b> The cockatoos were shrieking in the trees when Falk left the station. They called each other home to roost in a deafening chorus as the early even shadows grew. The air felt clammy and a line of sweat ran down Falk's back. He wandered along the main street, in no rush to reach the pub waiting at the other end. It wasn't late, but few people were about. Falk peered into the windows of the abandoned shops, pressing his forehead against the glass. (p. 102)</p>	<p><b>Extract 5</b> Falk stepped cautiously, the patchy sunlight playing tricks on the ground. He wasn't completely sure what signs he should be looking for, and felt sick at the thought of missing them. He hadn't done a full-scale bush search since his police training. But he'd spent enough time among these trees when he was younger to know they dragged you in far more easily than they let you go. (p. 313)</p>	

Extract from *The Dry* by Jane Harper reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd © Jane Harper 2016

## Responding

- 1 Conduct an Internet search to find an image that you feel captures the setting and mood of each of the extracts above.
- 2 **Determine** whether you feel the extracts construct a plausible representation of the Australian landscape.
- 3 A crime fiction novel usually features a setting that exists independently of the rest of the world and is distinguished by its own social customs and behaviours. What kind of place do you think Kiewarra is?

## Setting

Harper's novel is scathing in its representation of insular and narrow-minded small towns. It is the prejudices and assumptions of the residents of Kiewarra that drive the narrative. Harper often uses dialogue to construct this representation. Read the following extract to gain an impression of identities in the novel.

'Gretchen.' Mandy was losing patience. 'A word?'  
Gretchen looked her straight in the eyes. She made no attempt to move.

'The sooner you say it, Mandy, the sooner I can tell you to mind your own business and we can all get back to our Sundays.'

Mandy stiffened. She glanced over her shoulder to where a gang of mothers with similar hairstyles were watching from behind sunglasses.

'All right. Fine. I – we – don't feel comfortable with Aar – with your friend – being so close to our children.' She looked straight at Falk. 'We'd like you to leave.'

'Noted,' Gretchen said.

'So he'll leave?'

'No,' Falk and Gretchen said in unison.

Falk actually thought it was about time he headed to the station to find Raco, but he wasn't about to be pushed around by Mandy bloody Mantel. Mandy's eye's narrowed. She leaned in.

'Listen,' she said. 'At the moment it's me and the mums asking politely. But it can easily be the dads asking not so politely if you'd find that message easier to understand.'

Extract from *The Dry* by Jane Harper reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd © Jane Harper 2016

### Responding

- 1 Use adjectives to **create** an initial description of Aaron, Gretchen and Mandy.
- 2 **Describe** the mood of the scene.
- 3 **Describe** Mandy's attitude about Aaron Falk.
- 4 **Describe** the community of Kiewarra.

### Preparing to read

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the features of a novel. Familiarise yourself with these conventions, as you will be required to analyse them after you have read *The Dry*.

#### Read for pleasure

Because *The Dry* is a crime fiction novel, you will know before you even start reading the book that Aaron Falk has a mystery to solve. While you are reading the novel, enjoy the puzzles the characters have to unravel, and notice your own assumptions about characters and clues. If a particular character or piece of evidence strikes you as significant or especially interesting, mark it with a sticky note so that you can come back to it.

You might also like to log your predictions as you are reading the text, so that you can unpack the narrative structure more insightfully later on. This is a simple activity that merely involves completing this table as you read.

CHAPTER	YOUR MAIN SUSPECT	REASON

#### Read for meaning

To consider the text more closely, organise your notes to contain:

- an overview of the narrative structure. Create a summary of the plot using the following subheadings:
  - Establishment
  - Crime
  - Evidence – including the false trails or 'red herrings'

- Solutions
- Punishment
- Social equilibrium
- a graph of the tension in the novel
- a list of the information provided about the victims and who provides it
- examples of cliffhangers that involve the heroic protagonist in a tricky situation
- a brief description of the central characters and five key quotations that you feel exemplify their attitudes, values and beliefs.

## Textual elements

The narration of *The Dry* is one of its significant aesthetic features. The novel is narrated in third person, which gives the appearance of being objective; only Falk's perspective is privileged. There are three aspects of the novel's narration that are particularly noteworthy: the level of detail, the use of dialogue and the integration of **flashbacks**.

### flashback

the inclusion of a scene from the past to add more meaning to the present scene

## The level of detail

The narrator provides great detail about the evidence as it is presented to the characters, so the reader feels active in trying to solve the case. Consider the narration in this crucial scene.

They stared at the footage, skipping over long stretches during which no-one came or went. The school receptionist emerged ten minutes after Karen, then nothing happened for about forty minutes. Eventually the teachers started heading to their cars one by one. Whitlam identified each as they appeared. The caretaker returned, put his bag in the boot and drove away just after 4.30 pm.

Eventually Whitlam's car was the only one left in the lot. They sped ahead on the tape. Shortly after 7 pm, Whitlam himself appeared on screen. He was walking slowly, his head down and his broad shoulders were slumped forward. In the seat next to Falk, the teacher exhaled. His jaw was clenched tight as he watched the footage. (p. 207)

Extract from *The Dry* by Jane Harper reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd © Jane Harper 2016

### Responding

- 1 What does the narrator notice that Falk does not?
- 2 **Describe** your impression of Whitlam in this scene.
- 3 How is the villain disguised in this scene?

# The author's use of dialogue

The narrator also provides the reader with a great deal of dialogue. This establishes the objectivity of the narration but also positions the audience to view the action through a narrow lens that hides important clues. Consider the use of dialogue in the following scene.

'You've got half a library in here,' Falk said, scanning the contents of the shelves, which ranged from cricket to harness racing, biographies to almanacs. 'You're obviously a fan.'

Whitlam bowed his head in mock disgrace. 'My post-grad was in modern history, but to be honest, all my research focused on sports history. Racing, boxing, origins of match fixing, et cetera. So all the fun stuff ... I'm sorry about Sandra,' Whitlam said. 'She wasn't finding it easy to adjust to life here anyway. The idea of a relaxing country escape hasn't quite worked out like either of us thought. And this terrible business of the Hadlers has made everything worse ...'

'What happened to the Hadlers is so rare, though,' Falk said.

'I know, but –' Whitlam glanced at the door. The hallway outside was empty. He lowered his voice. 'She's hypersensitive to any kind of violence. Keep it to yourself, but I was mugged back in Melbourne and it ended – well, badly.' (pp. 186–7)

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## Responding

- 1 Revisit Chapter 21. **Describe** your impression of Whitlam in this scene.
- 2 **Reflect** on your own reading experience. Did you log any information at this time that suggested Whitlam could be a suspect?
- 3 Why do you think Falk missed the significance of this information?
- 4 While reading a crime fiction novel, the intellectual involvement of the reader heightens when characters are disguised. Locate three other examples of where the narrator uses dialogue that misrepresents characters to create suspenseful false trails.

# The integration of flashbacks

Harper incorporates flashbacks to provide the reader with contextual information. This contextual information spurs the readers' assumptions about characters. Consider the following flashback from *The Dry*.

Mal Deacon's ute filled the rear-view mirror for more than a hundred kilometres along the road out of Kiewarra. Aaron's father Erik drove with one eye on the reflection and two hands clenched on the wheel.

Aaron sat mutely in the passenger seat, still reeling from his hasty goodbye to Luke and Gretchen. The Falks' household goods clunked and shifted in the back. Whatever they'd managed to fit in. Far behind them, their farmhouse had been locked up and secured as tightly as they could manage. The sheep flock had been divided between any neighbours willing to take them on. Aaron was afraid to ask out loud if the arrangement was for now, or forever.

Just once, near the start of the journey, Erik had slowed right down to encourage Deacon to pass. As if this were a normal drive on a normal day. Instead, the dirty white ute had advanced steadily until it shunted the back bumper with a jolt that sent Aaron's head snapping forward. Erik didn't slow down again. (pp. 219–20)

Extract from *The Dry* by Jane Harper reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd © Jane Harper 2016

## Responding

- 1 **Identify** the information that is provided to the reader that otherwise would not have been disclosed.
- 2 **Determine** whether the flashback justifies Falk's suspicion of Mal Deacon.
- 3 **Identify** the important clue provided that could reveal the circumstances of Ellie Deacon's death.
- 4 Locate flashbacks that provide significant information about Luke, Ellie and Gretchen. If these scenes weren't included, what information would be missing from the narrative?

## The author's use of language and its effects

The opening scene of a novel is very important because the author must work quickly to give the reader an impression of the characters, setting and main dilemma. Consider the following extract from the first chapter of *The Dry* and note the annotations in the margin.

**AESTHETIC FEATURE:** symbolism used to (a) establish Falk as an outsider by comparing cars, and (b) suggest Falk is not motivated by social status

**AESTHETIC FEATURE:** personification of the sun

**CHARACTERISATION:** represents Falk as cautious, introverted and lacking adventure

**CHARACTERISATION:** consolidates the representation of Falk as a city-dweller

Falk parked his sedan next to a ute that had also seen better days and killed the engine. The air conditioner rattled into silence and the interior began to warm immediately. He allowed himself a moment to scan the crowd, although he didn't really have time. He'd dragged his heels the whole way from Melbourne, blowing out the five-hour drive to more than six. Satisfied no-one looked familiar, he stepped out of the car.

The late afternoon sun draped itself around him like a blanket. He snatched open the back-seat door to get his jacket, searing his hand in the process. After the briefest hesitation, he grabbed his hat from the seat. Wide-brimmed in stiff brown canvas, it didn't go with his funeral suit. But with skin the blue hue of skimmed milk for half the year and a cancerous-looking cluster of freckles the rest, Falk was prepared to fashion faux pas.

Pale from birth with close-cropped white-blond hair and invisible eyelashes, he'd often felt during his thirty-six years that the Australian sun was trying to tell him something. It was a message easier to ignore in the tall shadows of Melbourne than in Kiewarra, where shade was a fleeting commodity. (pp. 3–4)

**AESTHETIC FEATURE:** imagery of an air conditioner rattling

**CHARACTERISATION:** tells the reader subtly that Falk is reluctant to be at the funeral, and wary of who he will meet

**AESTHETIC FEATURE:** simile

**PERSPECTIVE:** reinforces the hot climate

**AESTHETIC FEATURE:** the metaphor of the shade as a fleeting commodity enhances its value and provides the reader with context for the novel's title

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In this passage, Harper's style foregrounds the significance of the harsh Kiewarra climate and quickly establishes Falk's sense of otherness. From the outset, Falk is constructed to be an outsider and at odds with the community.

## Responding

- 1 Read the following extract with the intention of analysing Harper's style.

Falk sat on the edge of the bed, listlessly watching a medium-sized huntsman perched on the wall. The early evening temperature had dropped only fractionally as the sun disappeared. He'd changed into shorts after a shower and his damp legs prickled uncomfortably against the cheap cotton bedsheet. A stern sign from an egg timer next to the showerhead had ordered him to keep ablutions to three minutes. He'd started to feel guilty after two.

The dull sounds of the pub thudded up through the floor, the occasional muted voice ringing a distant bell. A small part of him was curious to see who was down there, but he felt no desire to join in. The noise was punctuated by the muffled smash of a dropped glass. There was a short pocket of silence followed by a chorus of derisive laughter. The huntsman moved a single leg. (p. 22)

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- 2 **Describe** the kind of pub Falk is staying in. Highlight evidence from the extract that constructs this representation.
- 3 **Explain** the impact of the drought in this scene.
- 4 **Identify** examples of sensory language in this scene, particularly relating to sound.
- 5 Select two other scenes where the huntsman is mentioned. What is Falk doing during these scenes? What might the huntsman represent?

## Characterisation

Harper positions readers to view characters in certain ways so that the false trails pursued by Falk seem plausible. For example, in the beginning, it is concluded that Luke Hadler is the murderer of his wife and child. Consider how the following flashback encourages us to accept this inference.

The rabbit was only a baby, shivering in Luke's hands. His fingernails were thick with grime. They often were. For Kiewarra's eight-year-olds, weekend entertainment was limited. They'd been running fast through overgrown grass, racing to nowhere, when Luke had stopped dead. He bent down among the long stalks and a moment later stood, holding the tiny creature aloft. Aaron ran over to see. They'd stroked it, each telling the other not to press hard.

'He likes me. He's mine,' Luke said. They argued about names all the way back to Luke's house.

They found a cardboard box to put it in, and loomed over to examine their new pet. The rabbit quivered a little under their scrutiny, but mainly lay still. Fear masquerading as acceptance.

Aaron ran inside to fetch a towel to line the cardboard. It took him longer than expected and when he re-emerged into the bright sun, Luke was still. He had one hand in the box. Luke's head snapped up as Aaron approached and he snatched his hand out. Aaron walked over, uncertain of what he was seeing, but feeling the urge to delay the moment when he would look inside.

'It died,' Luke said. His mouth was a tight line. He didn't meet Aaron's gaze.

'How?'

'I don't know. It just did.'

Aaron asked a few more times, but never got a different answer. The rabbit lay on its side, perfect but unmoving, its eyes black and vacant. (p. 31)

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## Responding

- 1 **Describe** how the reader is positioned to view Luke in this scene.
- 2 **Explain** how this representation might be consistent with the initial assumption that Luke murdered his family.
- 3 This flashback shows Luke's tendency to protect himself by lying. **Explain** why this example signposts Luke's later decision making.
- 4 **Describe** how the reader is positioned to view Aaron in this scene.
- 5 The killing of rabbits reveals important clues about certain characters. **Analyse** the significance of rabbits, by looking carefully at Chapters 7, 12 and 37. **Examine** how certain characters' interactions with rabbits enhance the author's characterisation.
- 6 The lighter is a significant symbol in Jane Harper's novel, and the ways characters interact with this symbol changes. **Consider** what the lighter symbolises in the following scenes:
  - Chapter 14, where Falk finds his forgotten lighter in a secret hiding place near the rock tree
  - Chapter 40, where Whitlam uses the lighter as self-protection
  - Chapter 42, where Falk returns to the rock tree to find the lighter.
- 7 The river is also a significant symbol in the novel. Locate the scenes where the river influences Falk and Ellie.

## Extension

The following activities will allow you to engage more deeply with this text.

- 1 In his review of *The Dry*, Michael Robotham stated: 'You will feel the heat, taste the dust and blink into the glare. *The Dry* is a wonderful crime novel that shines a light into the darkest corner of a sunburnt country.'
  - a **Identify** passages in the novel that position the reader to 'feel the heat, taste the dust and blink into the glare'.
  - b **Suggest** what Robotham is referring to when he says 'the darkest corner of a sunburnt country'.
- 2 In 1928, American writer SS Van Dine created a list of rules for writing detective stories. He stipulated, 'a crime in a detective story must never turn out to be an accident or a suicide. To end an odyssey of sleuthing with such an anti-climax is to hoodwink the trusting and kind-hearted reader.' How does this rule apply to the unravelling of Ellie's death? Are the circumstances of her death ever fully realised?
- 3 By close reference to at least three scenes, **demonstrate** how *The Dry* is a social condemnation.
- 4 View one of the films mentioned earlier in the chapter. **Consider** any similarities in the representation of Australian identities and culture.
- 5 Refer back to your analysis of 'The Alphabet of Drought'. **Describe** how the meaning of Barton's poem resonates with *The Dry*?

# The Happiest Refugee

## Assessment possibilities

As part of your studies in English, you are required to explore cultural experiences in a variety of texts. In the memoir *The Happiest Refugee*, Australia's cultural context is explored through the experience of Anh Do, a refugee from Vietnam living in Australia. His identity as a refugee and his appreciation of his adopted homeland challenges some contemporary cultural assumptions about people seeking asylum, who are often reported negatively in the news. Do's experiences are presented in a humorous, sensitive and thoughtful way. This representation offers readers an alternative, personal perspective of an often nameless, faceless journey endured by thousands.

In responding to *The Happiest Refugee*, you will need to analyse and explore the relationship between language, representation, identity and cultural context by uncovering and analysing cultural assumptions, attitudes and beliefs.

You may be asked to write an essay where you analyse:

- how other identities, attitudes, values and beliefs influence Anh Do
- how *The Happiest Refugee* conforms to, or challenges, the popular belief of the experience of refugees in Australia
- how *The Happiest Refugee* depicts the people featured in the text and their relationships with a new culture
- the representation of refugees
- how audiences are invited to view and respond to particular identities and their relationships, such as Anh Do and his father.

In creating texts inspired by *The Happiest Refugee*, you will need to consider your own response to the memoir and experiment with new forms of creative texts, such as digital stories. You may be asked to:

- create an alternative final scene of *The Happiest Refugee* as a script suggestion for an upcoming film version of the book
- create a reflection in the voice of Anh Do of a fictitious, challenging situation in which he finds a positive lesson
- rewrite a section of *The Happiest Refugee* where you reveal the perspective of another identity in the text and explore their thoughts about a particular experience or person.



To develop a thorough understanding of how meaning is created in a memoir we can concentrate on:

- identifying the generic conventions of a memoir
- exploring how representations of the self, others and cultural context are constructed in a memoir
- identifying and interpreting the memories that have been included, emphasised and omitted
- considering perspectives within the texts that have been marginalised and exploring attitudes, values and beliefs that contribute to this marginalisation
- determining the effect of these representations on the text's invited readings.

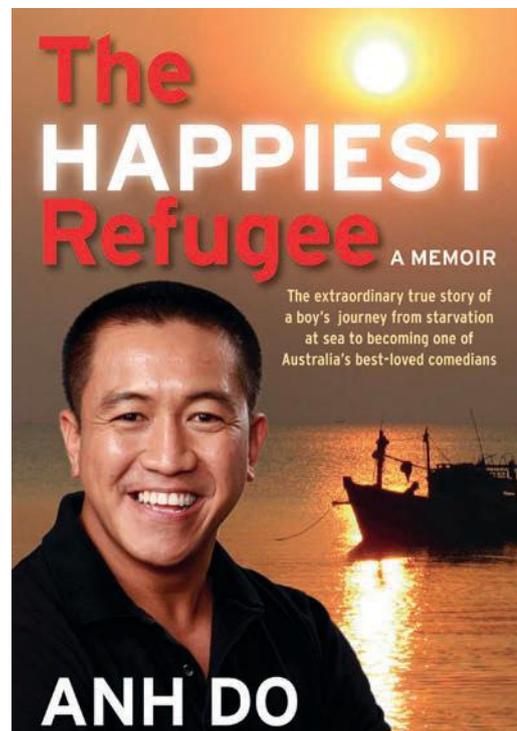
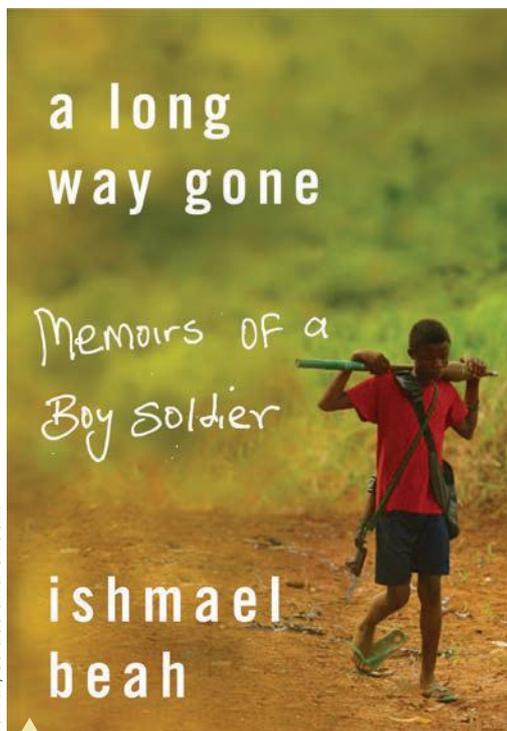
## Introduction to *The Happiest Refugee*

A memoir is an individual's selective and partial reflection on their life, which reveals who they are and what is valued by them. What is included, and therefore privileged, unveils to readers the nature of the narrator and what they consider important.

### Responding to memoirs

Both of the titles below are the memoirs of refugees. Analyse the cover images of these memoirs and answer the following questions.

Cover design of *A LONG WAY GONE: MEMOIRS OF A BOY SOLDIER* by Ishmael Beah. Design by Jennifer Carrow, photograph by Michael Kamber / Polaris. Copyright © 2007 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux.



*The Happiest Refugee* by Anh Do, Allen & Unwin, 2010. Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah and *The Happiest Refugee* by Anh Do

## Responding

### tone

in English, the voice adopted by a speaker or writer to indicate emotion, feeling or attitude to subject matter and audience, e.g. playful, serious, ironic, formal

- 1 What do you think will be the selected detail of the life of each writer?
- 2 What assumptions about the story of the individual do you make when you read the words 'boy soldier' and 'refugee'?
- 3 From the covers (the words and visual language) of the memoirs, determine:
  - the critical event in the writer's life
  - the **tone**
  - the purpose
  - the likely conclusion.
- 4 **Consider** why your assumptions about boy soldiers and refugees might be challenged in these memoirs.
- 5 **Discuss** how the title, *The Happiest Refugee*, challenges or confirms what you already know about refugees.

## Context

To gain a better understanding of the cultural perspectives and attitudes towards refugees in Australia, research some of the following topics:

- the number of refugees in Australia
- the countries of origin of refugees in Australia
- the reasons why they have sought refuge in Australia
- the experiences of people who have arrived by boat (sometimes called Suspected Irregular Entrance Vessel [SIEV])
- famous Australian refugees
- negative news headlines about refugees.



The image shows the front page of 'The Sunday Mail' newspaper. At the top, there are several headlines: 'EXCLUSIVE PARENTS HIRE POLICE PATROLS TO GUARD TEEN PARTIES P4-5', 'SCHOOLS CHALLENGING WOULD YOUR CHILD PASS THE TEST?', 'WIN FREE FUEL', and 'SHARE IN \$20,000 WORTH OF PRIZES'. The main headline is 'Refugee crisis hits home: As Christmas Island overflows, boat people are enjoying shopping trips in Queensland'. Below this is a large photograph of a boat with people on it, and the text 'THEY'RE HERE'. At the bottom, there is a small headline: 'WIN A FAMILY TRIP TO DREAMWORLD AND WHITEWATER WORLD'. The newspaper's name 'the Sunday Mail' is prominently displayed at the top.

This front page article illustrates some of the prevailing attitudes towards refugees in Australia

## Responding

- 1 Front pages of newspapers can reveal popular attitudes. **Analyse** the front page of *The Sunday Mail* above.
- 2 Anh Do reveals the power of attaching positive ideas to words such as 'refugee'. How might this news heading (a reference to a line from *Poltergeist*, a movie about a family whose house becomes haunted) challenge any positive representations of 'boat people'?
- 3 A variety of terms are used to refer to refugees in Australia. Not all of these terms have positive connotations, yet they have influenced how refugees are perceived by society and the media. The following are a list of synonyms for the word 'refugee'.

alien	fugitive
displaced person	outcast
emigrant	outlaw
evacuee	renegade
expatriate	runaway
foreigner	boat person
defector	expellee
deserter	homeless person
escapee	stateless person

Highlight those words that have negative connotations and **discuss** with a partner why these words are negative and the contexts in which they may be used.

A refugee, according to the definition from the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, is:

Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, [a refugee] is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it ...

*Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status: Under the 1951 convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.*  
© 2011 UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org/3d58e13b4.html>

## Author

Published in 2010, *The Happiest Refugee* emerged into a political climate where the news headings ranged from those concerning the Cronulla race riots to the death of 50 refugees when their boat capsized on the rocks of Christmas Island. Yet, rather than reflect on the negative images, experiences and language of the life of refugees, Anh Do is an optimist who draws positives from the social, cultural and economic challenges facing refugees in Australia.

### Responding

- 1 **Research** the extraordinary life of Anh Do and list what you believe to be his greatest achievements.
- 2 **Identify** what he acknowledges as his greatest achievements.

## Time and place

Do was born a year before the Vietnam War ended in 1975. For about 10 years, a civil war had raged between the communist North under its leader, Ho Chi Minh, and the democratic, but notoriously corrupt, South Vietnam. Australia was drawn into the conflict in 1965 to support its American allies, despite the fact that opinion was divided over involvement in the war itself, and conscription was introduced to bolster the numbers of regular troops.

When the Whitlam Labor government was elected in 1972, Australian troops were withdrawn from this increasingly unpopular war. The South Vietnamese and Americans were defeated when the southern capital, Saigon, fell to the North Vietnamese Army in 1975. Approximately 500 Australian troops, 50 000 Americans and over 1 million Vietnamese lost their lives in this conflict. This was the political



Anh Do

Newspix/Hollie Adams

9780170421638

situation that Anh Do was born into and, like many others, he and his family were accepted as refugees into Australia after the war ended.

Reflecting on his 36 years from 1974–2010, Do explores the challenges of communist Vietnam and the perilous boat journey of 40 Vietnamese refugees in a 9 metre by 2.5 metre boat. A two-year-old Do, and his extended family and close friends, faced storms, pirates, near starvation and eventual rescue and transport to a refugee camp in Pulau Bidong, an island in the Malaysian archipelago. In August 1980, they eventually found themselves in a migrant hostel in the western suburbs of Sydney, Australia.

### Responding

**Research** answers to the following questions about the Vietnam War.

- 1 Outline the causes of the Vietnam War.
- 2 What was Australia's involvement?
- 3 Why was the war contentious in Australia?
- 4 What was the prevailing Australian attitude towards Vietnam veterans at the end of the war?
- 5 Why may the experience of Vietnamese refugees have been especially complex, given Australian attitudes towards the war?

## Social context

Today, Vietnam is a popular tourist destination for Australians and Anh Do has made a TV series about travelling back to his homeland. However, the story was very different in Saigon (renamed Ho Chi Minh City) in 1976 after the expansion of communist North Vietnam into the South. Though it marked the end of the Vietnam War, it was the beginning of the exodus of South Vietnamese refugees escaping communist rule and the forced labour endured in communist re-education camps. Do recounts some of the horrors experienced by his uncles in these camps. Many citizens, including the Do family, left by boat to seek refuge, with 40 000 eventually crowding on Pulau Bidong in 1979. The island is not much larger than a football field.

Australia had instituted a strict immigration policy, which excluded non-white migrants, after Federation in 1901. This White Australia policy was finally dismantled in 1975, and the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 made it illegal to select immigrants on the basis of race. 'Boat people', as they were called, from camps such as that on Pulau Bidong, began arriving in Australia from 1978. By 1985, 70 000 refugees, predominantly from Vietnam, had settled in Australia.

### Responding

- 1 **Research** the impact of communist rule on South Vietnam.
- 2 List the experiences of some of the uncles in the re-education camps.
- 3 **Discuss** why the Do family believed they must make a treacherous journey in a boat.
- 4 Follow the weblink to the National Museum of Australia website and read more on the journey. You may want to explore the interactive journey of a refugee boat.



## Contemporary relevance

Anh Do's memoir represents a positive view of refugees and of life for refugees in Australia. He highlights the gratitude of his family, their willingness to work hard, and their desire to be involved in and contribute to Australian life in a positive and meaningful way. Do's attitude towards the groups who support refugees is overwhelmingly positive.

People smuggling, which is a lucrative illegal activity, has become a particular focus of recent Australian governments that have pledged to challenge those who arrive illegally. However, the issue is a complex one where governments are criticised for providing no legal avenues for refuge and a lack of humanity.

This compassionate perspective of refugees is less visible in current news reports, which focus on the contentious issues associated with detention camps and representations of people who arrive by boat.

## Responding

**Analyse** the cartoon from *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 2012.

- 1 **Discuss** with a partner the representation of:
  - those seeking refugee status
  - the Australian Embassy in Kabul
  - illegal people smugglers.
- 2 Find some examples of headlines that reflect both positive and negative attitudes about refugees in Australia.



Cartoon by Cathy Wilcox, with permission

This cartoon, by Cathy Wilcox, appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on 15 July 2012, as a comment about the inability of Afghans to apply for refugee status 'through the front' in response to Tony Abbott's comments about 'boat people' coming through the 'back door'

## Concepts

The memoir explores the challenges faced by refugee families. Some of these experiences include:

- the journey to a new country
- attitudes towards refugees
- the challenges of employment
- the difficulties of financial instability
- the disintegration of the family unit
- the consequences of the Vietnamese Communist Re-education Camps.

It equally reflects the positive impact of the following:

- the power of a positive attitude
- the value of an extended family
- the opportunities of a lucky country
- the importance of reconciliation
- the benefits of embracing a new culture.

## Responding

- 1 Find an anecdote in the memoir that reflects the challenge of being a refugee that is underpinned by a positive message.
- 2 **Examine** how this anecdote has contributed to your understanding of refugees and Australia.

# Textual elements

In order to present his representation of the life of a refugee in Australia, Anh Do exploits the textual features of a memoir to represent himself as a former refugee who has integrated successfully into Australian society.

Anh Do's memoir possesses some of the following characteristics.

KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION	ORGANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT	TEXTUAL FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• authentic voice through expert, first-person testimony</li><li>• reflection of real-life and first-hand knowledge and experience of life as a refugee in Australia</li><li>• acknowledgement and naming of experts</li><li>• recounting of other expert or first-hand knowledge or experiences</li><li>• use of photographs to authenticate written text</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a usually chronological timeline</li><li>• anecdotes, recount, reflection and selection of events relevant for perspective</li><li>• narrative elements, including action, rising tension and the emergence of a hero</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• first-person narration</li><li>• dialogue</li><li>• present and past tense</li><li>• proper nouns (people, places and events)</li><li>• colloquial language</li><li>• idiom</li><li>• grammatical errors</li><li>• figurative language</li></ul>

## Narrative voice

The memoir of Anh Do is celebrated for its positivity, humour and inspirational qualities. With non-English-speaking parents and living in a working-class area of Sydney, Do has a vernacular that echoes the idiom of colloquialisms of culture, time and place. He is also highly educated, and is therefore articulate and sophisticated. Though his humour is complex, because it requires an understanding of culture, cultural conflicts and language, he has an ability to relate to the ordinary man in the street in his straightforward, conversational and self-deprecating style. Also, like many comedians, his success in storytelling relies on timing.

Read the following extract, where Anh Do reflects on his campaign speech for school captain at primary school.

I went home and said to Mum and Dad, 'You have to help me write a speech to become school captain'.

'Six! Anh needs your help to write his speech.'

Uncle Six had done a couple of years of school in Australia, and at the time he was the best at English in our whole household, but this didn't mean he was any good. Together we wrote my speech and on the day of the assembly I was ready to wow the school armed with a migrant's second-year English speech.

That morning I was first to speak.

'Hello School Peoples.'

'I am Anh.'



I could hear a few snickers from the other classes, but I was determined to go on.

'I will try for my hardest to be very friendly boy, and I will always saying hello to all you school peoples ...'

Everyone started laughing. The worst thing was when I looked down, I even saw teachers laughing. I looked across at my own teacher and she wasn't laughing, but I could see her trying not to laugh!

I was so mad at her. I froze. I didn't know what to do. It was almost like time stood still. In that moment I just totally blanked out and forgot what to say next.

The only people who weren't laughing were my little classmates. They were on my side. Just then I heard a tiny girl's voice:

'C'mon, Anh.'

I looked down and there was Karen, an 11-year-old face full of support. A few of her friends joined in.

'Keep going, Anh.'

'I ... I ... should be school captains because I want to helping the students ...'

I stood as still as I could, just blanking out everyone, every noise, every snicker and laugh, and saying everything that I had to say like a monotone robot. Soon it was over. Thank God. My first ever public speaking experience.

I look back on it now and I can't blame people for laughing. Bloody Uncle Six must've skipped the classes where they taught plurals and adjectives.

*The happiest refugee* by Anh Do, Allen & Unwin, 2010.  
Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

## Responding

**Identify** the textual features in the extract that reveal Do's unique voice. You may consider:

- use of anecdote
- self-deprecating humour
- misspelling of words and grammatical errors in direct speech to show English as an additional language
- colloquial terms
- figurative language.

Importantly, Do shows that success for a Vietnamese refugee means acknowledging his past but belonging to the culture in which he lives in the present.

In the latter part of the memoir, Do's comedy act is accidentally booked for an event for diggers from the Second World War, Korea and Vietnam. Many in the audience had experienced horrific battles and lost friends in these wars. This makes Do's experience in this venue a tense one, but he is able to show how he can fit in.

He recalls:

I decided to bring forward all the material that would prove to them I was just an Aussie kid. So I did a number of jokes about bull terriers and Datsuns and housing commission estates, and slowly I was getting a few chuckles. Then I moved on to footy jokes, farming jokes and kiwi jokes. Slowly, slowly, I won them over. The old guys finally realised that if they closed their eyes, this Vietnamese kid was actually just an Aussie comedian up there talking about his working-class childhood.

*The happiest refugee* by Anh Do, Allen & Unwin, 2010.  
Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

### Responding

- 1 **Describe** how Do positions the reader to respond to this event.
- 2 **Examine** what Do reveals about what Australians value.
- 3 **Explore** what is exposed about social class in Australia.
- 4 **Consider** what this extract reveals about how to fit in to a new cultural context.

## Language

The cultural diversity in Australia is reflected in how Anh Do writes about life in the new country. He quotes characters and uses colloquialisms and proper nouns to show rich variety in Australian life.

He records his mother's broken English by writing phonetically to show the challenges of a second language, the humour in some mispronunciations and the endearing qualities of those who overcome the barriers of language to be understood.

'My son lup your dotter berry much. Anh tek care of Suzie like he tek care of us. He will lup her like he lup his family.' (p. 157)

*The happiest refugee* by Anh Do, Allen & Unwin, 2010.  
Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

He uses prevalent derogatory terms to reveal experiences of racism.

'I'm going to smash the gook.' (p. 105)  
'Geez, you're funny for a slope'. (p.183)

*The happiest refugee* by Anh Do, Allen & Unwin, 2010.  
Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

Simile, colloquialism, interior reflection and conversational tone show the colourful nature of Australian characters and an attitude of giving things 'a go'.

I went on the show and with a bit of **beginner's luck**, won the trophy for the best performance. I've since been invited back three times and people have often asked me whether it gets any easier. The answer? No. **Hell, no**. And oh my sweet lord, no.

Just as I'd started thinking, *Right, I've done a gig in front of two hundred war veterans, I've done Thank God You're Here, nothing will ever scare me again*, Andrew rang.

'Anh, they want you to be on *Dancing with the Stars*.'

**I felt like I was my old corella**, Pacino, and **Andrew had just said 'Pool'**

## Responding

**Select** your own passage from the text and underline the language used that reflects the author's voice and indicate what you have learnt about Australian culture.

## Narrative sequencing

The beginning and ending of the memoir frame the narrative. This squaring around important people and events helps the reader to understand what is important and how far Anh Do has come in order to call himself the happiest refugee. The memoir begins with a prologue and is followed by 12 chapters that use anecdotes mostly in chronological order.

Anh Do indicates that his memoir is highly emotional. The prologue features Do's mad dash to see his estranged father and the first chapter tells of the harrowing boat journey to Australia. Overall, the memoir shows Anh Do's ability to make the best of the challenges of a refugee and a family man.

## Responding

- 1 Plot on a timeline the 12 chapter topics, which signify the 12 markers of Anh Do's life.
- 2 Show Anh Do's representation of his father in the following table.

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES	NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

- 3 **Consider** how Anh Do is able to view his father in a positive light.
- 4 Using examples, **demonstrate** how the stories of his uncles enrich the reader's positive reaction to Anh Do and refugees.
- 5 In the conclusion, Anh Do redefines what it means to be a 'boat person'. **Examine** how he challenges the label of refugees who make the journey to refuge, in part, by boat.
- 6 **Discuss** how the final lines conform to, or challenge, your understanding about popular reports of refugees.

I look across the water and am mesmerised by the beauty of this magnificent setting. My parents set off on a boat trip many years ago to provide their children and grandchildren a better life. And here we are, thanks to them, enjoying this perfect day.

In that moment I know I am happy. I look up to the blue sky and give thanks.

*The happiest refugee* by Anh Do, Allen & Unwin, 2010.  
Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

## Identities

Anh Do reflects on the impact family, friends and other people have had on his positive outlook. Significant figures offer him advice, which forms the basis of how he deals with challenges he faces.

## Responding

- 1 In the table below, record the advice Do deems valuable.

CHARACTER	ADVICE
Mother	
Father	
Grandma	
Dave Grant	
Mrs Borny	

- 2 **Choose** one piece of advice and show how it has shaped Anh Do's life.
- 3 Do tells stories of the actions of people he admires. As a result, the reader learns more about who Do is through what he values. In the table below, note an action of each person. What does Do value about this action?

CHARACTER	ACTION	WHAT DO VALUES
Mother		
Father		
Khoa		
Phil Keenan		

- 4 **Select** an action that has had a significant impact on Anh Do and show how his observation of that action shaped one of his life choices.

## Extension

- 1 **Explain** what you think makes Anh Do the happiest refugee.
- 2 Write a speech entitled 'What a great country' and outline what Australia has to offer refugees.
- 3 A memoir is selective and partial. Editing and omissions are also an important part of the whole story in a text. **Identify** what Anh Do left out of his memoir and explain how that may have changed your view of his life.

# Lion

## Assessment possibilities

As part of your studies in English, you are required to explore cultural experiences of the world in a variety of texts. The Australian film *Lion* is a powerful narrative depicting the life of an Indian boy who is lost from his family and adopted by an Australian couple.

In responding to *Lion*, you will need to analyse the relationship between language, representation, identity and cultural context through uncovering cultural assumptions, attitudes and beliefs.

You might be asked to:

- analyse how other characters' attitudes, values and beliefs influence Saroo
- analyse how *Lion* employs characterisation to invite audiences to view identities and concepts in particular ways
- analyse how aesthetic features and stylistic devices enhance the invited reading of the film
- analyse the assumptions about culture in the film.

In creating texts inspired by *Lion*, you will need to consider your own response to the film and experiment with forms of creative texts. You might be asked to:

- create a short story that responds to the representation of a concept, identity or place in the film
- create a monologue from a character in *Lion* that offers new insight into the character or other aspects of the film
- create an epilogue for *Lion*
- rewrite a section of *Lion* from the perspective of another character to reveal omissions and privileged information.

## Introduction to *Lion*

**autobiography**  
a detailed account of  
the author's life

The film *Lion* is an adaptation of Saroo Brierley's **autobiography**, *Lion: A Long Way Home* (2013). When Saroo was a small boy, he became lost on a train in India. He survived for weeks on the streets of Kolkata, before being sheltered in an orphanage and adopted by an Australian couple.

In the opening pages of his autobiography, Saroo reflects on his experience of growing up in Australia. Consider the following extract from the novel's orientation.

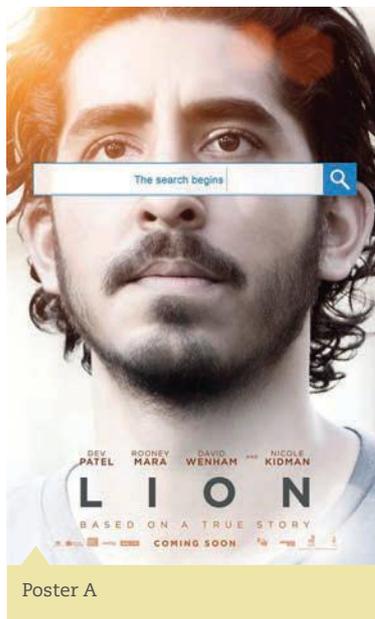
Mum had decorated the house with Indian objects – there were some Hindu statues, brass ornaments and bells, and lots of little elephant figurines. I didn't know then that these weren't normal objects to have in an Australian house. She had also put some Indian printed fabric in my room, across the dresser, and a carved wooden puppet in a brightly coloured outfit. All these things were sort of familiar, even if I hadn't seen anything exactly like them before. Another adoptive parent might have made the decision that I was young enough to start my life in Australia with a clean slate and could be brought up without much reference to where I'd come from. But my skin colour would always have given away my origins, and anyway, she and my father chose to adopt a child from India for a reason.

*Lion: A long way home*, by Saroo Brierley, published by Penguin 2016.

### Responding

- Using evidence from the extract above, **explain** how audiences are positioned to view:
  - Saroo
  - Saroo's adoptive mother.
- The extract above appears in the opening pages of Brierley's novel. **Suggest** why Saroo wanted to foreground these details.

Representations in films can be interpreted by audiences in a variety of ways, and the ways in which viewers choose to respond to these representations can reveal their own attitudes, values and beliefs. Consequently, film marketers construct a range of advertising texts to promote their films to appeal to the broadest market possible. The two posters below were used to promote the film and they use symbols from the film to construct specific representations of the film's meaning.



Poster A

Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore collection Ltd



Poster B

Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore collection Ltd

### Responding

- Describe** the tone of Posters A and B.
- Compare** the use of colour in both images. You might like to make reference to the use of light and shade.
- Compare** and **contrast** the elements used in the two posters.
- Predict** what you think the film will be about.

## Context

The first half of *Lion* is set in India during the 1980s, and this part of the narrative reveals how Saroo becomes lost. There are images of many children who are homeless and without parents. It is currently believed that there are approximately 11 million abandoned children in India. Some children are abandoned because families are too poor to provide for them, or their parents have died from diseases such as AIDS or tuberculosis. The tsunami in 2004 also resulted in significant numbers of orphaned children. Indian authorities and aid agencies have indicated that many orphaned children are kidnapped in order to be sold for adoption and sometimes slavery.



The location of India on a map of the world

Saroo Brierley is growing up in a small rural village. He becomes lost on a train after his brother leaves him temporarily to find employment. Unable to escape the train, Saroo travels one thousand miles to Kolkata and because he cannot speak Bengali, five-year-old Saroo is unable to explain what has happened to him. Saroo is forced to live as a street urchin until he finds himself in an orphanage.

### Responding

- 1 On a map of India, locate Saroo's village of Khandwa.
- 2 Conduct an Internet search to investigate village life in India during the 1980s. In what sort of accommodation did people live? What technology was available? **Describe** the living conditions for poor residents of India.
- 3 **Research** attitudes towards poverty-stricken children in India.
- 4 Conduct the same search to investigate the lifestyles of Tasmanians in the 1980s.



Saroo and his brother Guddu lived a life of poverty in Khandwa, India

Alamy Stock Photo/Entertainment Pictures

# The film's creators

The director of a film is the person who is ultimately in charge of the artistic/creative aspects of a film. The director combines all artistic aspects of the film to create an overall vision.

## Responding

Before viewing a film, it's helpful to have some background knowledge of the director. Conduct an Internet search to uncover the following:

- Is this director known for other films?
- What is the public's opinion of his or her work?
- Is the director distinguished by a particular style?
- What has been the critical response to the film I am about to view?

The director of *Lion* is Garth Davis, who is also Australian. Originally, Garth Davis was more well-known for his painting and happened upon film directing quite by accident.

The author of a film is called a screenwriter and the script is called a screenplay. The screenwriter of *Lion*, Luke Davies, was first made prominent by his poetry. Born in Australia,



Getty Images/AFP/JUSTIN TALLIS

Screenwriter Luke Davies



Getty Images/FilmMagic/Walter McBride

Director Garth Davis

Luke struggled with a serious heroin addiction in his youth, but overcame that and pursued his goal to become a poet and screenwriter.

## Preparing to view the film

The purpose of this unit is to explore cultural experiences of the world by engaging with a film. *Lion* is a film that follows a boy who spends his early childhood in India, but soon comes to grow up in Australia. Observing the challenges Saroo experiences in negotiating his cultural identity allows us to investigate and ask questions such as the following.

- What attitudes, values and beliefs do various characters have in relation to culture and cultural assumptions?
- How and why does the film invite audiences to view cultural perspectives in a particular way?
- As individuals, how do we respond to the meaning of the film? What have we learnt about perspectives and representations of cultural identity?

Having these questions nearby as you view the film for the first time will inform your reactions to the film and subsequent analysis.

## Responding

- 1 **Select** one of the images below from *Lion*. **Determine** what comment is being made about the plight of poverty-stricken children in India.
- 2 Write a paragraph analysing how the still image constructs this representation, using features of mise-en-scène. For example:
  - lighting
  - wardrobe
  - set design
  - symbolism.



Image A

Still from *Lion*, photographer Mark Rogers



Image B

Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore collection Ltd

## Responding

Critical reviews of the film have emphasised its emotional appeal:

It is an effective, pleasurable melodramatic film – I challenge anyone to see it without reaching for the tissue box. The performances are excellent, with 8-year-old Pawar, lighting every scene with his delightful smile, the standout.

*'Lion is a well-made melodrama with a rather disturbing message'* by Ari Mattes, *The Conversation*, 9 January 2017 <https://theconversation.com/lion-is-a-well-made-melodrama-with-a-rather-disturbing-message-70279>

There's something unbearably potent about the image of a tiny, fragile child alone in a vast empty space. The audience fills the frame with dangers of our own making, crowding in on the little lost figure at the centre of the shot. From the moment director Garth Davis places his camera high above a desolate railway station to capture five-year-old Saroo (the remarkable Sunny Pawar), vulnerable and separated from his older brother, we are emotionally snared by this story.

*'Lion review - India's wandering star'* by Wendy Ide. 22 January 2017. Courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd

During the first viewing of *Lion*, you should aim to enjoy the film, and notice when you feel an emotional or critical response to events in the episode's narrative.

- 1 As you view the film, note down the time cues that relate to scenes you found particularly compelling. These scenes will most likely be the first ones you analyse. For example:

TIME CUE	CHARACTERS INVOLVED	DESCRIPTION

- 2 **Discuss** your responses to various scenes in the film with your classmates.
- 3 **Compare** the range of personal responses to the film. Investigate the extent to which these responses are influenced by individual contexts.

# Narrative structure

Now that you have viewed the film for pleasure, it is time to view the film actively. It is recommended that you view the film at least three times. A film study requires as much scrutiny as a novel, but it is far more convenient to flick to a page in a book than it is scan through scenes of a film! The more familiar you are with the film, the better your response in assessment conditions.

## Responding

Download the worksheet *Summarising the narrative of a film* from NelsonNet.

- 1 View *Lion* again, completing the table at the same time. You may need to pause the film to take your notes.
- 2 **Summarise** the narrative structure of the film by creating a graph, plotting the tension of the story.
- 3 **Describe** each of the main characters – Saroo, Giddu, Lucy, Sue Brierley – by succinctly stating their main actions, and provide a quotation (either stated by or about the character) that you feel epitomises their attitudes, values and beliefs. Note: you might find it helpful to analyse Saroo as a child and Saroo as an adult.



Summarising the narrative of a film

You will have observed that *Lion* is structured in two parts: Saroo's life as a young child, and Saroo's coming of age as an adult and his decision to locate his biological family. This is the film's **plot**. However, there is more to the **story**. For example, the audience is not shown a great deal about Saroo's life from the time his adopted brother, Mantosh, joins the family to when Saroo is an adult moving out of home to study in Melbourne. These events undoubtedly influence the characters later on in their lives, and the terse relationship between Saroo and Mantosh is indicative of this.

### plot (film)

all the events shown in a film

### story (film)

all of the events shown in a film, as well as any implied events not shown to the audience

## Responding

- 1 It is important to examine omissions, inclusions, emphases, and privileged and marginalised information in texts.
  - a What aren't we told about Mantosh's adoption story? What do we suspect has happened to Mantosh?
  - b Why is Lucy's character included in the film? What effect does she have on Saroo?
  - c Saroo has an adoptive mother and father. Which parental relationship is emphasised, and why might this be the case?
  - d Saroo's life experiences are privileged in the film. If the film privileged Saroo's biological mother's perspective, what attitudes, values and beliefs might we be privy to?
- 2 Because *Lion* is based on a true story, greater detail about Saroo's life is available to audiences. We are, for example, able to research more information about what happens after the reunion in India. Conduct an Internet search to discover what happens after the events depicted in the film.
- 3 You will have discovered that finding Saroo, and the subsequent media attention, has significant effects on Saroo's biological mother, Munshi. **Consider** the following details provided by a journalist who interviewed Munshi:

The next day, when I call her again, Munshi refuses to speak. She tells a local reporter who is at her house that someone from the film team called a woman in the village to tell Munshi that she should refuse to speak to the media. She sounds angry. Before she shoos the reporter out, she says: 'I will only speak when my son is here. My son is more important to me than money. The media are making a mockery of my life.'

Saroo Brierley, the inspiration for the film *Lion*: 'My mother saw my face after 25 years' by Rory Carroll. 25 February 2017. Courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd

- 4 **Describe** how audiences are invited to view Munshi in the film. **Explain** how you feel about this representation, and your initial response to it, given her sentiments described by the journalist above.

# Textual elements

## Narrative point of view

Just as novels, short stories or poems employ techniques to represent different points of view, so do films.

In a film, narrative point of view is achieved by a mixture of sound and visual techniques. The camera shots in *Lion* allow audiences to view the narrative in a variety of ways:

- Long, aerial shots position the audience to act as an omniscient observer – we are able to see the broader geographical locations (e.g. cities versus rural spaces in India) and move about a range of settings.
- Medium shots position the audience to act as invisible observers during emotionally compelling scenes – we are able to be a ‘fly on the wall’ by observing everything taking place within a scene.
- Close-ups position the audience to see the world from characters’ unique perspectives – we are able to experience the world as if we are the characters in the film.

### Responding

- 1 Scan through the film carefully to locate a range of shots – long, medium and close-up – that shift the narrative point of view.
- 2 Use them to complete the table below.

INDIA		AUSTRALIA	
SHOT TYPE	POINT OF VIEW	SHOT TYPE	POINT OF VIEW

- 3 **Suggest** how audiences are being positioned to view culture and cultural differences in these scenes.

**archetype**  
a familiar character form, such as the hero or villain

## Identities

In a Hollywood film, there is usually one character who drives the action. There are several **archetypes** of characters who appear continually in literary texts. These include:

- the hero/heroine – one of the most commonly known archetypes, who typically has a range of character strengths that enables them to win a physical or emotional battle of some kind
- the sidekick – the loyal companion who serves as moral support for the hero
- the mentor – a character whose age and intellect establishes them as a source of strength for the hero
- the virtuous woman – a character who represents a high level of morality and selflessness
- the martyr – a character whose personal suffering leads others to rescue or deliverance
- the reprobate – a character who refuses to follow convention and comments on life from an outsider’s perspective.

## Responding

- 1 **Determine** which character archetypes from the previous list apply to *Lion* and refer to specific scenes that support your interpretation.
- 2 Download the worksheet *Analysing characterisation in a film* and use it to observe how the text constructs character. Refer to your responses on the worksheet to answer the following:
  - a **Consider** the time-on-screen and camera shots used to portray the protagonist.
  - b Tension and excitement can be created by the use of quick shots and regular cuts, whereas a slower-paced film uses longer shots with fewer cuts between them. **Identify** two different scenes that represent the protagonist in different ways. **Describe** the pace of these scenes using the data you collected in your table.
  - c Write an analytical paragraph that deconstructs how the editing accentuates the protagonist's development in the narrative. Ensure that you have a clear topic sentence that directs the reader through the response, a controlled development of your explanation and a concluding sentence. You might like to use the following table to help you.



Topic sentence	The editing of the film invites audiences to view _____ as _____ and _____.
Brief description of the protagonist's goal	
Explanation of how the camera distance reinforces the construction of the character's goals	
Linking sentence	Therefore, the audience can see that [insert protagonist]'s perspective is accentuated by the director's editing.

## Motif

**Motif** is a subtle technique that is often employed in film texts. The way a character engages with a motif often symbolises their development as a character.

**motif**  
a prop or symbol that is used recurrently in a text to represent a character or concept in a particular way

## Responding

- 1 Use your summary notes to **identify** where the following motifs are significant:
  - railway tracks
  - trains
  - butterflies.



Alamy Stock Photo/  
Lifestyle pictures



Alamy Stock Photo/  
Lifestyle pictures



Alamy Stock Photo/  
Entertainment Pictures

Railway tracks, trains and butterflies are all motifs for Saroo

- 2 **Determine** the effect of these motifs on the film's meaning.

## Exploring contexts

One of the pleasures of engaging with literary and non-literary texts is that we are able to explore how the personal, social, historical and cultural contexts in which these texts are produced influence their meaning. We are able to challenge our world view and experience other times, identities and places in creative ways.

- Personal contexts: the reader's personal experiences inform the way in which they read and respond to a text.
- Social contexts: aspects of society relate to the meaning of a text.
- Historical contexts: aspects of the historical period relate to the meaning of a text.
- Cultural contexts: aspects of a character's identity and way of life relate to the meaning of a text.

## Responding

- 1 A reader's personal context can be very different from the context in which a text was originally written. For example, people who viewed William Shakespeare's plays during the 16th and 17th centuries had very different experiences to those viewing his plays at the La Boite Theatre in Brisbane in the 21st century! **Consider** your own experiences of growing up, and your relationships with your family. How do these experiences affect your response to Saroo and his story?
- 2 **Compare** and **contrast** Indian and Australian societies. **Explore** class structure and how class boundaries are enforced. **Explore** how children are treated within these class structures.
- 3 **Explore** how Indian and Australian societies have changed since the 1980s. How would contemporary viewers judge the actions and experiences of the characters in this time period?
- 4 **Explore** the cultural assumptions in *Lion*. Which cultures are depicted in the film? Is the film critical or sympathetic towards the cultures it represents?

## Exploring attitudes, values and beliefs

The attitudes, values and beliefs of characters are revealed through characterisation techniques. Refer to Chapter 4 for a detailed list of characterisation techniques in films. Examining characters' attitudes, values and beliefs helps us detect the director's position on the issues behind the conflict being portrayed.

## Responding

- 1 **Select** three characters from the film. **Identify** their attitudes, values and beliefs towards the concept of 'belonging'.
- 2 **Determine** which characterisation techniques from Chapter 4 mobilise these attitudes, values and beliefs.
- 3 **Suggest** how *Lion* challenges contemporary attitudes, values and beliefs towards the concept of 'belonging'.
- 4 Write an analytical paragraph in response to the following prompt: In *Lion*, how are audiences positioned to view the concept of 'belonging'?

## Extension

- 1 The film *Lion* is essentially a film adaptation of Saroo Brierley's novel. Read his novel and comment on the film's effectiveness as an adaptation.
- 2 *Lion* has been criticised in some ways. Consider the following evaluation:

The opening sequences, with overhead shots of the Indian countryside contrasting with images of a train cutting into it, gesture towards the **dialectical** relationship between rural poverty and **urban** development.

However, instead of following this through to its logical conclusion – that is, a critique of **capitalist globalisation** and its **attendant economic** inequality – it **veers** towards **sentimentalism**, sticking to the **saccharine** path paved by hundreds of Hollywood 'overcoming the odds' pics before it

'Lion is a well-made melodrama with a rather disturbing message' by Ari Mattes,  
*The Conversation*, 9 January 2017 <https://theconversation.com/lion-is-a-well-made-melodrama-with-a-rather-disturbing-message-70279>

- 3 Copy the passage into your book – leave lots of space surrounding it to make annotations.
  - a **Define** the vocabulary in bold.
  - b **Explain** the reviewer's argument.
  - c **Evaluate** the extent to which you agree with the reviewer's feelings, using evidence from the film's narrative to support your response.

# A selection of Australian poetry

## Assessment possibilities

### invited reading

the intended and expected understanding of the text based on a shared understanding of the social, cultural and historical context of the text

As part of your studies in English, you are required to explore cultural experiences of the world in a variety of texts, including a focus on Australian texts. By engaging with the texts in this chapter, you will perceive how cultural assumptions, attitudes and beliefs influence text choices and position audiences for particular purposes.

You might be asked to select a poem to:

- analyse representations of concepts and identities
- examine how an **invited reading** is constructed through poetic devices
- compare with cultural assumptions, attitudes and beliefs in another text
- analyse representations of Australian values in texts.

In creating texts inspired by the poetry, you may be asked to:

- transpose a poem into another literary form
- challenge the cultural assumptions in a poem
- compose a monologue that reflects the perspectives in a poem
- create a play script that reshapes the cultural context of a poem.

## Introduction

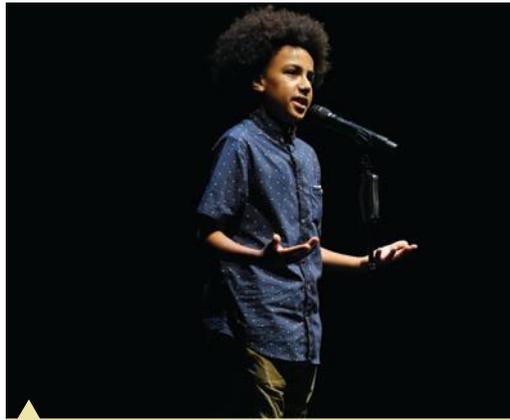
Australian poetry is popularly associated with bush ballads of the 19th century, like *The Man from Snowy River* and *Clancy of the Overflow* by AB ‘Banjo’ Paterson (1864–1941), who also created *Waltzing Matilda*. These poems described rural settings and rural issues. However, the poets featured in this chapter are 20th and 21st century poets. Their texts show how the content of Australian poetry has broadened, from songs and ballads about the outback to more varied subjects linked to the issues of the era, notably war, nature and themes revolving around the relationship between postcolonial society and Indigenous Australian peoples.

# Poetry in the 21st century

Poetry, as a genre and especially in spoken form, is one of the oldest forms of literature. And today, more people are listening to song lyrics, another form of poetic expression, as modern technology makes music more portable than ever before. Performance poetry is also alive and well, and teenage **rap** groups are thriving. Rap has many of the qualities of conventional poetry. However, rap is only one example of modern music and lyrics. You can access genres like rap and **slam poetry** on the Internet.

Also, the annual Australian Poetry Slam competition attracts wide interest each year, with finalists performing at the Sydney Opera House.

Follow the weblink above or visit the Australian Poetry Slam website to watch 2017 National Champion Solli Raphael's performance called 'Evolution'. It begins like this and needs to be read aloud:



Solli Raphael, 12, was the youngest ever winner of the Australian Poetry Slam, in 2017

Photo: Clare Hawley



Australian Poetry Slam

**rap**  
a text that uses rhythm and rhyme in combination with contemporary 'street' language and music

**slam poetry**  
poetry performed competitively without a script; it usually deals with contemporary issues or contents and is delivered dramatically, relying on rhythm, rhyme and sometimes humour

Bang!  
That's the sound of revolution it should lead to confusion  
But thanks to your contribution we've found a solution  
for the word Evolution.  
Now to get evolution you need to do something that's new  
like inventing a psychotic robotic barbeque or an  
Antibiotic 'azotic' beef stew to get rid of the flu  
And make you feel new ...

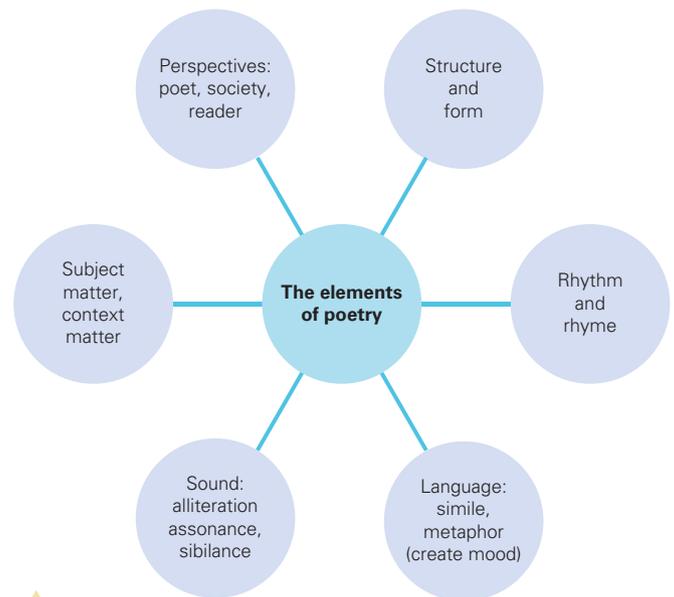
Solli Raphael, 'Evolution', 2017

**dramatic monologue**  
a 'theatrical' speech in poetic form, spoken by one person

This is a **dramatic monologue** that is meant to be heard rather than read, because of the rhythm and rhyme that are so fundamental to making poetry appealing. Performance poetry is entertainment, returning poetry to a role it fulfilled in earlier societies in history.

## The elements of poetry

When we analyse poetry to unlock its meaning and significance, we look at its elements, techniques or devices. You will need to understand these terms in order to use them as analytical tools and to refer to them in an essay response.



Elements of poetry

## Steps in analysing a poem

Follow the step-by-step plan provided for a comprehensive and thorough analysis of a poem.

# Example analysis: 'At Cooloola' by Judith Wright

Copy or photocopy the poem onto an A3 sheet of paper, so that you have plenty of room to make your notes.

## Part A: Research the poet's background

Research the poet's background to discover:

- the lifespan of the poet
- where they were born/grew up
- significant life events
- social/historical influences on the poet's attitudes, values and beliefs
- the year of the poem's publication
- public reaction to the poet.

For example:

Judith Wright 1915–2000

Australian poet, environmentalist and campaigner for

Indigenous rights

Born in rural NSW

Lived in Queensland on Mount Tamborine

Founding member of the Wildlife Preservation Society

'At Cooloola' was published in 1954

Record these notes in the top-left corner of your page.



The blue crane features in the opening line of Judith Wright's 'At Cooloola'

Alamy Stock Photo/QZ Photo

9780170421638

## Part B: Familiarise yourself with the poem and try to understand its meaning

### At Cooloola

The blue crane fishing in Cooloola's twilight  
has fished there longer than our centuries.  
He is the certain heir of lake and evening,  
and he will wear their colour till he dies,

but I'm a stranger, come of a conquering people.  
I cannot share his calm, who watch his lake,  
being unloved by all my eyes delight in,  
and made uneasy, for an old murder's sake.

Those dark-skinned people who once named Cooloola  
knew that no land is lost or won by wars,  
for earth is spirit: the invader's feet will tangle  
in nets there and his blood be thinned by fears.

Riding at noon and ninety years ago,  
My grandfather was beckoned by a ghost –  
a black accoutred warrior armed for fighting,  
who sank into bare plain, as now into time past.

White shores of sand, plumed reed and paperbark,  
clear heavenly levels frequented by crane and swan –  
I know that we are justified only by love,  
but oppressed by arrogant guilt, have room for none.

And walking on clean sand among the prints  
of bird and animal, I am challenged by a driftwood spear  
thrust from the water; and, like my grandfather,  
must quiet a heart accused by its own fear.

'At Cooloolah', Judith Wright, in *Collected Poems*, HarperCollins, p. 140

#### Responding

- 1 Read the poem to get a general impression of its meaning.
- 2 Number each line of the poem.
- 3 In red pen, mark the boundary punctuation ( . , ; : ) by using a forward slash (/).
- 4 Then read the poem aloud a number of times, pausing at the boundary punctuation rather than at the end of the line. This is how the poet intended you to read it.
- 5 As you become more familiar with the poem's phrasing, vary your intonation to add meaning to the words.
- 6 Identify unfamiliar words, or words that seem to be charged with meaning.
- 7 Annotate the poem with a definition for each unfamiliar term. When referring to your dictionary, consider the various definitions of the word, and consider its use in the context of the poem. The first definition might not be the best fit, as poets often use vocabulary in creative or innovative ways. Sometimes you might need to fuse two or three definitions to form the best match.
- 8 Provide a brief (1 or 2 sentence) synopsis of the poem.
- 9 It is at this point that you might like to refer to secondary readings about the poem. You can use a Google search, but your school library catalogue and intranet may have access to some excellent journals of literary analysis.

# Part C: Analyse the features of structure and form

The following table provides the information required to analyse the structure and form of a poem.

## Responding

- 1 Read the table below and **analyse** the structure and form of 'At Cooloola', highlighting or noting features that are relevant to the text of the poem.
  - a Look at the characteristics of each type of poetry and decide which of these forms best describes 'At Cooloola'.
  - b **Examine** the line lengths in 'At Cooloola'. Are they regular or irregular?
  - c **Classify** the stanzas in 'At Cooloola' according to their length.
  - d **Identify** the rhyme scheme in the poem.

FORM	
NARRATIVE POETRY ballad, epic, idyll	LYRICAL POETRY ode, elegy, sonnet
Narrator as the speaker	A single speaker
Detached tone	Emotive tone
Setting, characters and plot	May include elements of a story
Metred verses structure	May be structured or free verse
Tells a story	Expresses thoughts and feelings
Usually in third person	Any point of view may be used
Dramatised crisis or climax	Spontaneous development
Sense of the passage of time	Emphasis on immediacy
Logical conclusion leads to a theme	Meaning may be symbolic and obscure
DRAMATIC POETRY monologue, dialogue, soliloquy	
One or multiple speakers	
Dramatic tone	
Conveys the speaker's motivation and personality	
Unrhymed, but may be metred	
Involves introspection	
First person	
Takes the form of a speech	
Conveys a sense of urgency	
May be musical or chant-like	

LINE LENGTH	
Regular line lengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular line lengths result from a fixed number of syllables per line.</li> </ul>
Irregular line lengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irregular line lengths result from the number of syllables in each line varying according to the poet's creative choices.</li> <li>When line lengths vary, the poet has much greater freedom over how to end each line.</li> </ul>

STANZAS	
A stanza is a group of lines that share an idea or set of images; stanzas are separated by a space. Stanzas in poetry are equivalent to paragraphs in prose.	
Couplet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A two-line stanza</li> <li>It is unusual for a poem to consist entirely of couplets, but rhyming couplets can be joined together to form longer stanzas.</li> </ul>
Tercet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A three-line stanza</li> <li>Tercets can be joined to form a six-line stanza (a sestet).</li> </ul>
Quatrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A four-line stanza</li> <li>Quatrains can be joined to form an eight-line stanza.</li> </ul>



**imagery**

use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas or states of mind; images are pictures in words; the use of poetic techniques to create descriptions that appeal to the physical senses, creating vivid pictures in the reader's mind

**simile**

figurative language that compares two objects using 'like' or 'as'; a comparative description where one thing is said to be like another

**metaphor**

figurative language that compares two objects by stating that one is the other; a non-literal description where one thing is described as if it were another

**RHYME**

Rhyme is produced when the last syllables of two words have matching sounds. Lines rhyme when matching syllables occur at the end of the lines.

- Rhyme was an important aid to memory when poetry was primarily an oral tradition.
- Rhyme serves to group lines together, generating cohesion and structure.
- Rhyming lines are usually successive lines, or separated by one of two other lines.
- Patterns of rhyme are conventionally notated by using lower case letters. The first line is 'a' and subsequent lines use successive letters of the alphabet.

Rhyming couplet

Indicated by 'aa':

In the room the women come and go a

Talking of Michelangelo. a

(from 'The love song of J Alfred Prufrock', by TS Eliot)

Quatrain

A quatrain in which the second and fourth lines rhyme but the first and third lines do not, and is described as 'abcb':

Break, break, break, a

On thy cold gray stone, O Sea b

And I would that my tongue could utter c

The thoughts that arise in me. b

(from 'Break, Break, Break' by Lord Alfred Tennyson)

Half-rhyme

Occurs when the sounds are similar but not exactly matched.

Internal rhyme

Occurs when the rhyme exists within a line rather than at the line ends.

## Part D: Analyse the language, imagery and symbolism

**motif**

a prop or symbol that is used recurrently in a text to represent a character or concept in a particular way

- Language: individual words that add to the meaning of the poem: pronouns, verbs, words of modality, positive or negative connotation
- **Imagery:** The use of poetic techniques to create descriptions that appeal to the physical senses, creating vivid pictures in the reader's mind.
- **Simile:** A comparative description where one thing is said to be like another.
- **Metaphor:** A non-literal description where one thing is described as if it were another.
- Symbol: A seemingly simple object, idea or other element of a text that has multiple layers of meaning, or that represents a larger idea.
- **Motif:** A recurring symbol.

**Responding**

1 Language:

a **Identify** the pronouns in the poem and explain their significance to the text's overall perspective.

b **Consider** the reasons why the poet has selected these words:

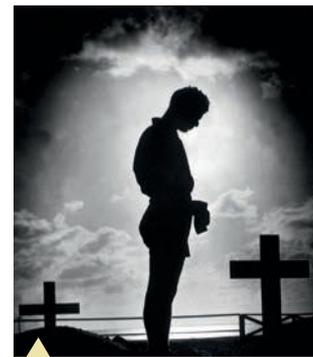
- stranger
- unloved
- uneasy
- oppressed
- challenged
- invader
- accused

- 2 Imagery: **Discuss** the following images and their effect on the tone of the text:
  - 'earth is spirit'
  - 'White shores of sand'
  - 'clear heavenly levels'
  - 'old murder's sake'
  - 'oppressed by arrogant guilt'
- 3 Metaphor: **Discuss** the effect of figurative language choices on the tone and point of view in the poem:
  - 'certain heir'
  - 'sank ... into time past'
  - 'the invader's feet will tangle/in nets there'
- 4 Symbolism: **Discuss** how symbolism is used through the representation of the following images:
  - 'blue crane'
  - 'a ghost'
  - 'a driftwood spear/thrust from the water'
- 5 Tone is created by the combination of poetic devices, notably language. **Analyse** the development of the tone of the poem and how it positions the reader to respond to the incident described and the issue explored in the text.

## 'Beach Burial'

### by Kenneth Slessor

Kenneth Slessor (1901–1971) was a notable Australian poet, journalist and official war correspondent during World War II, where the poem below is set.



Getty Images/Archive Photos/  
Interim Archives

A soldier visits a World War II burial site

#### Beach Burial

Softly and humbly to the Gulf of Arabs  
 The convoys of dead sailors come;  
 At night they sway and wander in the waters far under,  
 But morning rolls them in the foam.

Between the sob and clubbing of gunfire  
 Someone, it seems, has time for this,  
 To pluck them from the shallows and bury them in burrows  
 And tread the sand upon their nakedness;  
 And each cross, the driven stake of tidewood,  
 Bears the last signature of men,  
 Written with such perplexity, with such bewildered pity,  
 The words choke as they begin –

'Unknown seaman' – the ghostly pencil  
 Wavers and fades, the purple drips,  
 The breath of wet season has washed their inscriptions  
 As blue as drowned men's lips,



Dead seamen, gone in search of the same landfall,  
 Whether as enemies they fought,  
 Or fought with us, or neither; the sand joins them together,  
 Enlisted on the other front.

'Beach Burial' by Kenneth Slessor, *Selected Poems*,  
 HarperCollins Publishers (Australia) 2014, with permission

### Responding

- 1 The sombre mood of the poem is created by the language choices and other aesthetic features. **Identify** the figures of speech below and explain why they are effective in creating the poet's perspective and representation of the sailors.

'the convoys of dead sailors come'

'sob and clubbing of the gunfire'

'As blue as drowned men's lips.'

'in search of the same landfall.'

'the sand joins them together.'

'Beach Burial' by Kenneth Slessor, *Selected Poems*,  
 HarperCollins Publishers (Australia) 2014, with permission

- 2 The purpose of a poem is often revealed or made most explicit in the final stanza. **Explain** the poet's point of view in 'Beach Burial' and how he has represented war and those who enlist to serve their country.

## 'Homecoming' by Bruce Dawe

Bruce Dawe's (1930–) poetry is popular and well-regarded for its Australian themes and accessible content. This poem is set in the context of the Vietnam War (1965–75), in which Australia was involved.



AAP Image/Australian Department of Defence/PR Handout Image

Bringing them home

## Homecoming

All day, day after day, they're bringing them home,  
they're picking them up, those they can find, and bringing them home,  
they're bringing them in, piled on the hulls of Grants, in trucks, in convoys,  
they're zipping them up in green plastic bags,  
they're tagging them now in Saigon, in the mortuary coolness  
they're giving them names, they're rolling them out of  
the deep-freeze lockers — on the tarmac at Tan Son Nhut  
the noble jets are whining like hounds,  
they are bringing them home  
– curly heads, kinky-hairs, crew-cuts, balding non-coms  
– they're high, now, high and higher, over the land, the steaming chow mein,  
their shadows are tracing the blue curve of the Pacific  
with sorrowful quick fingers, heading south, heading east,  
home, home, home — and the coasts swing upward, the old ridiculous  
curvatures  
of earth, the knuckled hills, the mangrove-swamps, the desert emptiness...  
in their sterile housing they tilt towards these like skiers  
– taxiing in, on the long runways, the howl of their homecoming rises  
surrounding them like their last moments (the mash, the splendour)  
then fading at length as they move  
on to small towns where dogs in the frozen sunset  
raise muzzles in mute salute,  
and on to cities in whose wide web of suburbs  
telegrams tremble like leaves from a wintering tree  
and the spider grief swings in his bitter geometry  
– they're bringing them home, now, too late, too early.

'Homecoming', Bruce Dawe, with permission.

### Responding

You may need to follow the steps at the beginning of the chapter for analysing a poem, before answering the questions below:

- 1 **Compare** the form of 'Homecoming' with that of 'Beach Burial'.
- 2 **Examine** the use of the third-person pronouns in the opening lines: 'they're', 'they' 'them'. **Identify** the people referred to, and the effect of the repetition.
- 3 **Comment** on the use of figurative language and the mood evoked by these images:
  - 'they're zipping them up in green plastic bags'
  - 'the noble jets are whining like hounds'
  - 'the steaming chow mein'
  - 'the knuckled hills, the mangrove-swamps, the desert emptiness ...'
  - 'telegrams tremble like leaves from a wintering tree and the spider grief swings in his bitter geometry'
- 4 Bruce Dawe has been described as an anti-war poet. **Discuss** how this poem reflects this point of view.

# 'Circular Breathing' by Jaya Savige

Jaya Savige (1978–) is a contemporary Australian poet, born in Sydney and brought up on Bribie Island. His poem is dedicated to fellow Queensland poet Samuel Wagan Watson.



With permission

Jaya Savige is a contemporary Australian poet

## Circular Breathing (for Sam Wagan Watson)

There's a man with dreadlocks playing the didgeridoo  
in the Piazza di Santa Maria, and everyone is listening.  
Kids sit by the fountain swapping smokes for laughs,  
tourists lick gelati as they pass illicit markets,  
belts, handbags, sunglasses, all made in \_\_\_\_\_,  
the place scratched off. Nuns halt, then the Carabinieri,  
white gloves, black steel-capped boots glistening.

The crowd hems the young musician in,  
Faces glazed with wonder: from where could this  
strange music have come? Surely not this hemisphere.  
A drone as deep as yet unexcavated ruins, far older  
even than the Forum: Armani, Ray-Ban, Dolce  
& Gabbana, all sink at once into equivalence.

He doesn't do the kangaroo, the mosquito or  
the speeding Holden. Just the one warm dark lush hum,  
the clean energy of circular breathing, lungs  
and instrument the sum, familiar as the accordion  
yet strange, as though not for money, nor just for fun,  
but for reasons unknowable – some vast unhurried Om.

I want to bolt up the stairs of that fountain  
And claim that sound as the sound of my home –  
But stop when I recall how rarely I slow to hear  
The truer player busking in King George Square.  
Memory kinks my measured walk into a lurch.  
My stomach fills with fire. Far above cold stars wheel  
Around the spire of Rome's oldest Christian church.

'Circular breathing' by Jaya Savige, *Surface to Air*,  
University of Queensland Press, 2011.

## Responding

- 1 **Explain** the title of the poem.
- 2 **Discuss** the significance of the setting of the poem. Consider the piazza, the people and the 'illicit markets'.
- 3 **Compare** the listeners' reaction to the didgeridoo to that of the poet.
- 4 **Discuss** the effectiveness of the language choices in the following examples:
  - 'A drone as deep as yet unexcavated ruins, far older even than the Forum'
  - 'Armani, Ray-Ban, Dolce & Gabbana, all sink at once into equivalence.'
  - 'Just the one warm dark lush hum, the clean energy of circular breathing, lungs and instrument the sum'
  - 'not for money, nor just for fun, but for reasons unknowable – some vast unhurried Om.'
- 5 **Discuss** how the poet reveals his point of view on the experience in the final stanza of the poem.

# 'A one ended boomerang' by Samuel Wagan Watson

Samuel Wagan Watson (1972–) is a contemporary Queensland poet of Munanjali, Birri Gubba, German, Dutch and Irish descent.



Samuel Wagan Watson promoting the Brisbane Writers Festival with Rosemary Cameron, Festival Director, and Rhiannon Phillips, Festival Manager

Newspix/Adam Smith

## a one ended boomerang

*For once you have tasted flight you will walk the earth with your eyes turned skywards, for there you have been and there you will long to return.*

–Leonardo da Vinci

An hourglass constricted, the whore inside of me who is watching the clock, monitoring the time, this wasted time to get off, get going, lunar cycle gauge of tide and meridian. How I can hear the sand slip downward in my body clock? I need to be here, could be there, and not long ago the only place you wanted me to be was by your side ... maybe?

I am a pencil that cannot sharpen,

ink that slides off paper,

outside of our time, I am lost,

a one ended boomerang.

'a one ended boomerang', Samuel Wagan Watson, *Poetry*, May 2016  
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/89024/a-one-ended-boomerang>, with permission.

**prose poetry**  
poetry written in lines of prose, while maintaining poetic qualities such as imagery and figurative language

**epigraph**  
a short quotation at the opening of a text, included to suggest its theme

### Responding

- 1 'A one ended boomerang' begins as a **prose poem** and has an individual form. **Discuss** the shape of the final four lines and their effect on the meaning of the poem.
- 2 **Analyse** the 'hourglass' image and how it fits into the meaning and mood of the poem.
- 3 **Consider** who the poem is addressed to, and how the reference to 'you' might explain the title of the poem.
- 4 **Discuss** the relevance of the **epigraph**, from Leonardo da Vinci, to the point of view expressed in the poem.

### Extension

- 1 Using 'Beach Burial', 'Homecoming' or 'Circular Breathing', or a poem of your choice, **explore** the theme of war or racial conflict in a written response for a public audience.
- 2 Using 'At Cooloolah' or a poem of your choice, **compose** a narrative text about the Australian landscape – as an alien force or as a source of sanctuary.

# Assessment focus: imaginative written responses

## Texts and culture

As a part of your studies in English, you will be required to write an imaginative written response based on a text studied in Unit 2.

Some examples of this task include a:

- short story
- monologue
- narrative intervention
- dramatic script for stage.

The remainder of this chapter will analyse extracts from the texts selected for close study in other chapters and show you how you can use them as a stimulus for your own writing. It may help to refer to chapters that focus on the texts discussed below, as well as earlier background chapters on characterisation, aesthetic features and stylistic devices to remind you of how to analyse and use these devices and skills.

## An introduction to writing an imaginative response

In Units 1 and 2, you are required to study a range of literary texts, selected from the following choices: a novel, a play and a selection of poetry and possibly a feature film or TV series. Based on the close study of these texts, you are required to write one creative or imaginative response in Year 11 and one in Year 12. You are likely to be more successful in your creative writing if you enjoy the texts that have been selected carefully for you. The more you read for pleasure, the more likely you are to become a proficient writer. Try to engage with the characters in your texts, analyse the style of the writing and appreciate how the text attempts to draw you into its world and invite you to its point of view.

# Planning the imaginative response

Use the table below as a guide to planning and drafting an imaginative response for any of the four imaginative text types suggested by the syllabus.

TEXTUAL FEATURES	CONSIDER THESE ASPECTS OF THE WRITING PROCESS
genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure you are familiar with the patterns and conventions of the genre on which you will be assessed.</li> <li>You may wish to transform your response into a different text type than the original one.</li> </ul>
point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide how your point of view will support or subvert that of the original text.</li> <li>Consider how your point of view will be represented through your choice of concepts, identities, times and places.</li> </ul>
narrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide who will be your narrator and consider:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whether your narrator will also be a character in your text</li> <li>if you will use first person</li> <li>if your narrator will be reliable or unreliable.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Consider your narrator's cultural background and beliefs and how these will affect the text and position readers.</li> </ul>
subject matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide on the invited reading you want your readers to accept from the content of your text.</li> </ul>
organisation and sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan the organisation and sequencing of your subject matter.</li> <li>Note the suggestions below for a narrative structure.</li> </ul>
language choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how you will ensure that your language suits your cultural context. Will you need to conform to the original text?</li> <li>You will need to balance dialogue with description/stage direction, action and reflection.</li> </ul>
aesthetic features/style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide whether imagery and figurative language are appropriate to enhance your text.</li> <li>Consider other stylistic devices you might use to create point of view and mood.</li> </ul>
grammar and language structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider your use of person and tense.</li> <li>Be aware of the use of parts of speech: action verbs, apt use of pronouns, selective use of adjectives, adverbs and connectives.</li> <li>Sentence structure should be varied but appropriate to your purpose.</li> <li>Tone and degree of formality should be appropriate to the purpose and cultural context of your text.</li> </ul>

## Example 1: short story

A short story can be crafted, whereby the central idea has sprung from the text studied. For example, it may **transpose** the representation of an identity, place or concept to a different context to that of the studied text or it may challenge or reinforce a value, attitude or belief in the text studied.

The following extract is from *The Happiest Refugee* by Anh Do, analysed in Chapter 16. This text is a **memoir** full of anecdotes about Anh Do's life in Australia.



Anh Do, comedian and author of *The Happiest Refugee*

Newspix/Hollie Adams

**transpose**  
transform or change

**memoir**  
factual account of selected parts of a person's life, generally told in first person

At the start of every year St Aloysius gave you a list of textbooks you needed for the semester. Between my brother and me the cost came close to a thousand dollars. Mum simply didn't have the money, and after a while I stopped showing her the list.

'I've got to buy some books, Mum.'

'How much do you need?'

'One hundred, two hundred, whatever you can spare.' I didn't want her to see the list and be burdened by the knowledge that she didn't have enough. It would have devastated her to know that I was missing the required books.

Lucky for me I had my good mate Phil Keenan. Phil was the only kid in school who knew I didn't have all the books.

'What classes have you got today?' he would ask. When it was English, for example, he would lend me his books for my period and I would return them to him in time for his class. I always had to be thinking about how to plan the day, when to meet up with him, how to make sure the other boys didn't catch on. This concern totally overtook my life; it was all encompassing and completely annoying ...

Sometimes I would get caught out. If Phil was away I would go to English without a book. When the teacher asked where it was I would lie and say, 'I forgot it'. I was too proud to admit I couldn't afford my own book.

It may seem very trivial, but I would say it was one of the things that hurt the most over my whole school life, when I saw the disappointment in my teachers' eyes when they would give me detention for wearing the wrong thing or for forgetting my textbooks. Of course they had to do it – because those were the rules. And they couldn't understand why Anh, who they knew was such a good kid, would every now and then seem to break the rules almost deliberately. I could have gotten off by simply telling them the truth – 'My mum doesn't have the money' – but that was never going to happen.

*The happiest refugee* by Anh Do, Allen & Unwin, 2010.  
Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

## Responding

### Analysing the anecdote

- 1 Fill in the gaps in the table to **analyse** the structure of the extract.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE
Orientation – setting the scene	Anh and his brother are enrolled in a private school.
Complication – an obstacle or problem	
Resolution – a solution	
Crisis – problem not totally solved	
Reflection – reflects on the situation and adds a point of view	



### The narrator

- 2 **Discuss** what Anh Do reveals about himself.
- 3 Complete the table by adding words that describe Do's behaviour for each quotation. The first one has been completed for you.

QUOTATIONS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS
'I didn't want her to ... be burdened by the knowledge that she didn't have enough.'	protective, caring, loyal, thoughtful
'I always had to be thinking about how to plan the day.'	
'one of the things that hurt most over my whole school life ... the disappointment in my teacher's eyes ...'	
'that was never going to happen.'	

*The happiest refugee* by Anh Do, Allen & Unwin, 2010.  
Reproduced with permission of Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd

### Identities and relationships

- 4 The only other people in the anecdote are Anh's mother and Phil Keenan. **Identify** the dominant qualities that the narrator emphasises about them.

### Context

- 5 In this extract, little is revealed about St Aloysius in terms of a description of the school, other students or teachers. **Consider** ways that you could add to the memoir by thinking about what has been omitted. For example, we have no insight into how Anh Do's brother coped at school with the financial problems outlined in the text.

List three additions you might ask the author to make to this text if you were the editor of the book.

### Language choices and stylistic devices

- 6 The extract from *The Happiest Refugee* is in a recount style, explaining an event from the past and reflecting on it. The language is in a simple and straightforward **register** and is appropriate to the topic. Words like 'burdened', 'devastated', 'all encompassing' and 'trivial' contribute to the mood of frustration and concern that the narrator felt.

**Select** the word from the list of pairs that best describes the style of this extract and the mood it creates:

- positive/negative
- simple/complex
- subjective/objective
- emotional/detached
- concise/wordy
- conversational/confessional
- lighthearted/serious
- personal/impersonal
- inviting/uninviting
- optimistic/pessimistic

### Grammar and language structures

- 7 While written in simple language, Anh Do's memoir is grammatically correct in its use of vocabulary and sentence structure. Consider how the mixture of recount and dialogue enhances the text.

### Concepts and perspectives

- 8 Before you compose your own text, you need to decide on your purpose. **Consider** your attitude to the text you are writing. Think about the extract from *The Happiest Refugee* and then complete this sentence: 'The purpose of Anh Do's anecdote about his school days was ...'

#### register

the use of language and detail in a text appropriate for its purpose, audience and context; a register suited to one kind of text may be inappropriate in another; the composer makes deliberate choices when constructing a text in relation to the language, subject matter, the role and relationship with the audience, e.g. the degree of formality or informality for a particular purpose or in a particular social situation

## Writing suggestion

Use the memoir as a stimulus to create a short story about school days, based on your own experiences or a representation of the topic.

Your story could be written for a teenage magazine or an online blog about an incident from your school days when you had to resolve an issue or some sort of conflict. Anh Do's conflict was about money. Your chosen conflict may be of a different nature.

It could be, for example:

- a conflict with a fellow student or a teacher
- a conflict with authority, e.g. disobeying school rules
- a conflict on the sporting field
- a conflict of identity – something that marked you out as different from the rest of the student body.

## Checklist for writing a short story

- *Genre*: focus on a single incident, outlining a conflict and how it is, or isn't resolved.
- *Structure*: follow the basic narrative structure to plot the story:
  - orientation – introduction and background
  - complication – problem or issue to be solved
  - rising action and further crisis – heightened tension as the problem continues/worsens
  - resolution – problem resolved in some way – positive or negative.
- *Identities/characters*: select a limited number of characters vital to your plot.
- *Context*: select one place and time setting.
- *Language choices and style*: use vocabulary appropriate to your text. Your story should be a mixture of:
  - action
  - description
  - dialogue
  - reflection.
- *Grammar and language structures*: should be correct and appropriate to the purpose of your text.
- *Purpose and point of view*: before you draft your story, you will have considered your point of view and purpose. This may change and be adapted to your text as you create it, but you should be clear about your purpose by the time your initial draft is completed.

## Example 2: monologue

Choose a monologue from a character in a text that offers new insight into the character or other aspects of the text. A monologue is a long speech, often delivered while the character is alone on stage, or as an **aside**.

On the following page is an example of a monologue from Scene 6 of the play *The Drover's Wife*, by Leah Purcell, studied in Chapter 13. Read the extract and answer the questions.



Leah Purcell performing as the title character in her play, *The Drover's Wife*, at the Belvoir Theatre

Leah Purcell. *The Drover's Wife*, Belvoir. Photo by Brett Boardman

### aside

a remark made by a character on stage that is heard only by the audience, and not by other characters

DROVER'S WIFE: He was away for eighteen months once; I think it one of his Queensland drives. I was sixteen. Three months pregnant with our first child when he left. Our first drove as husband and wife.

My da dyin'. Died. I buried him down the back. That same gin helped me.

Cried a river, she did. Wailed like the howlin' wind in a storm. She frightened me a little ...

It's not like she knew him.

Not long after my precious newborn, Jack, died, six months old.

I rode for nineteen miles looking for help with my dead son in my arms ... buried him down the back too.

Then, my two cows died not long after. I truly was alone then ...

*The Drover's Wife* by Leah Purcell, copyright © Leah Purcell  
Reproduced by permission from Currency Press Pty Ltd, Sydney Australia  
[www.currency.com.au](http://www.currency.com.au)

### Responding

Leah Purcell has created a short monologue where the Drover's Wife reflects on her troubled past. Since the death of her father and first-born son, recent events have brought more tragedy into her life.

- 1 **Discuss** what is emphasised about life in the bush.
- 2 Outline the qualities that are revealed about the Drover's Wife through the dialogue.
- 3 The word 'gin' is an offensive slang word used in the 19th century to describe an Indigenous woman. **Identify** what is emphasised about the Aboriginal woman mentioned in the extract that is explained later in the text. Note the examples of simile and metaphor used by the Drover's Wife.

## Writing suggestion

Compose a monologue to be placed as Scene 10 at the end of the play, where the Drover's Wife is reflecting on the events in the play, especially on her realisation of her Indigenous identity. The monologue should be about resolution or coming to terms with the conflict in the play, especially the racial conflict. You could also consider some of the following topics:

- the trust that Yakada built up with the Drover's Wife and his tragic death
- the love between her father and her Indigenous mother, which was forbidden and shameful in the era in which the play is set
- her hopes for her children, especially Danny and his initiation into manhood
- her own future as an Aboriginal woman.

## Checklist for writing a monologue

- *Genre*: follow the conventions of the original text
- *Structure*: follow a structure suited to the monologue:
  - Orientation: set the scene. At the end of the play, the Drover's Wife has decided to search for 'her people'.
  - Complication: Think of the obstacles that have stood in her way.
  - Reflection: What are her thoughts about the recent past and the future?
  - Resolution: Is she making the right decision?
- *Context*: maintain consistency with the original narrative, unless you are offering a resistant or alternative viewpoint
- *Language choices and stylistic devices*: add stage directions to dialogue where appropriate

- *Narrative style*: write in first person, in dialogue. Note that the Drover's Wife has used figurative language in the monologue above for dramatic purposes
- *Purpose and point of view*: try to create an appropriate text that creates a point of view and a mood to complement the original text and its point of view

## Example 3: narrative intervention

An intervention adds to the narrative by offering a different perspective or filling a gap or silence in the original text. The following extract is from *The Dry* by Jane Harper, studied in Chapter 15.

### Prologue

It wasn't as though the farm hadn't seen death before, and the blowflies didn't discriminate. To them there was little difference between a carcass and a corpse.

The drought had left the flies spoiled for choice that summer. They sought out unblinking eyes and sticky wounds as the farmers of Kiewarra levelled their rifles at skinny livestock. No rain meant no feed. And no feed made for difficult decisions, as the tiny town shimmered under day after day of burning blue sky.

'It'll break,' the farmers said as the months ticked over a second year. They repeated the words out loud to each other like a mantra, and under their breath to themselves like a prayer.

But the weathermen in Melbourne disagreed. Besuited and sympathetic in air-conditioned studios, they made a passing reference most nights at six. Officially the worst conditions in a century. The weather pattern had a name, the pronunciation of which was never settled. El Nino.

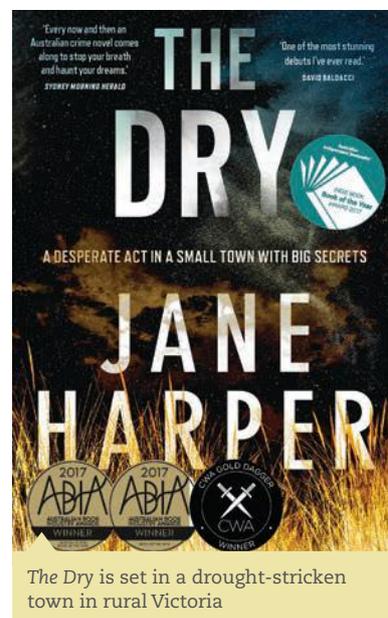
At least the blowflies were happy. The finds that day were unusual, though. Smaller and with a smoothness to the flesh. Not that it mattered. They were the same where it counted. The glassy eyes. The wet wounds.

The body in the clearing was the freshest. It took the flies slightly longer to discover the two in the farmhouse, despite the front door swinging open like an invitation. Those that ventured further beyond the initial offering in the hallway were rewarded with another, this time in the bedroom. This one was smaller, but less engulfed by competition.

First on the scene, the flies swarmed contentedly in the heat as the blood pooled black over tiles and carpet. Outside, washing hung still on the rotary line, bone dry and stiff from the sun. A child's scooter lay abandoned on the stepping stone path. Just one human heart beat within a kilometre radius of the farm.

So, nothing reacted when deep inside the house, the baby started crying.

Extract from *The Dry* by Jane Harper reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd © Jane Harper



Cover image from *The Dry* by Jane Harper reprinted by permission of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd © Jane Harper

## Responding

*The Dry* by Jane Harper is a debut novel in the crime genre. This prologue sets the scene for the grim discovery of a crime scene.

- 1 **Explain** how the prologue reflects the title of the novel.
- 2 This third-person narration is seen through the point of view of the blowflies. **Consider** how this technique affects the mood of the extract.
- 3 The prologue is an evocative text. It is an apt example of how aesthetic features can work to provoke an emotional and critical reaction in the reader. **Select** three examples of **imagery** or **figurative language** that create mood in the extract.

## Writing suggestion: a postlude chapter

A narrative intervention is either a **prelude**, **interlude** or **postlude** addition to the text and will generally replicate its style.

The extract from *The Dry*, on the previous page, is a prologue. It is an evocative introduction to the main narrative and it sets up the conflict in the novel. Now that you have analysed the style and perspectives of the prologue (prelude), focus on adding an epilogue (postlude) to the novel.

Aaron Falk has solved the crime but the novel ends rather abruptly. Has he resolved the conflict in the text?

Compose an epilogue to fill the gaps left at the end of the novel. Consider:

- whether Falk is in Kiewarra, or on the road back to Melbourne
- how he feels (He's just read Ellie's diary entry.)
- when he reflects on recent events, what he is thinking
- whether he will add to the plot about the fate of some of the characters
- whether he will go back to Kiewarra or return to his life in Melbourne.

Or you could focus on the reaction of the town of Kiewarra to recent events:

- the revelation that the schoolmaster is the criminal
- the fire that could have destroyed the town
- Aaron Falk's role in solving the crime
- how the town will be able to recover as a community
- the future of Kiewarra in its drought-stricken state.

## Checklist for writing a narrative intervention

- The original text is written in third person. You may change this narrative style if you wish to use Falk's voice or the voice of another character.
- Maintain consistency with the original narrative, the context, the characters and language choices, unless you are offering a resistant or alternative viewpoint.
- Use action, description, dialogue, reflection and background information as appropriate.
- Create an appropriate mood and a clear purpose for your intervention.
- Remember that an epilogue is part of the resolution of conflict.

## Example 4: a scene from a play script or screenplay

Write a dramatic script for stage, radio/podcast or screen, in which the central idea has sprung from the text studied. Read the following script from Episode 2 of *The Secret River* TV series, studied in Chapter 14.

*The Secret River* is based on the novel by Kate Grenville and is set in the colony of NSW in the early 19th century.

### imagery

use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas or states of mind; images are pictures in words; the use of poetic techniques to create descriptions that appeal to the physical senses, creating vivid pictures in the reader's mind

### figurative language

similes and metaphors that use comparisons to create images and mood

### prelude

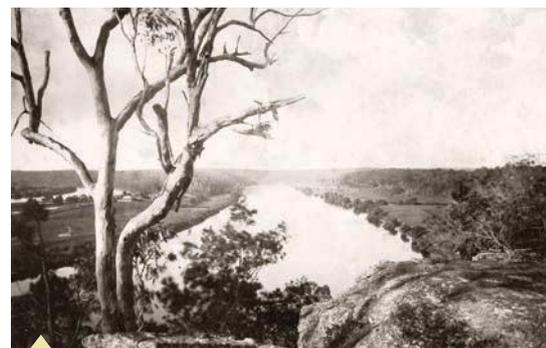
prologue or opening, introductory section before main narrative begins

### interlude

a textual intervention in the body of the text

### postlude

epilogue; an addition to the ending of a text



The Hawksbury River, the setting for much of the events in *The Secret River*, as it appears today

Alamy Stock Photo/Pump Park  
Vintage Photography

SAL: Will! We've got the start of a good pile. More money than I thought possible in the time. Now we go to the Cove, to the town, and we earn enough to go back home. Back to London.  
WILLIAM: London? Go back? Back to London?  
SAL: I don't feel safe here.  
WILLIAM: London's foreign as a fish, Sal. It means nothing to me. Nothing. I mean, Willie's got a shred of it, it's better he didn't. And Dickie and Mary, what do they know of it? And me? Dragging my stinking past around like some dead dog. No. No, I won't do it to them and neither will you. Look, I know you got me that pardon.  
SAL: It weren't for nothing, Will.  
WILLIAM: It was for nothin', Sal.  
SAL: No.  
WILLIAM: It always will be forever. A hundred acres. Here! A hundred acres! That's my pardon. And there aren't no other darn freedom like it. Now I know what it meant to you.  
SAL: You promised, Will.

Episode 2, *The Secret River*, ABC

### Responding

William Thornhill asked his wife to give him five years to establish their property on the Hawkesbury River, and then he would take her back to London. When the local Dharug people begin to threaten the local settlers over land issues and other conflicts, Sal reminds her husband of his promise.

- 1 **Explain** the conflict that is evident in this extract.
- 2 **Discuss** the point of view of each character.
- 3 **Identify** and **consider** the contrasting style of speech of the two characters in this extract.

## Writing suggestion

*The Secret River* explores the conflict between William Thornhill and his wife, Sal, over the future life of their family in the colony.

Compose a dialogue between Sal or William and their sons, Willie and Dickie, about Sal's desire to return to England and their father's determination to stay in the colony. Remember that the two boys have different attitudes towards the presence of the local Dharug people. You could introduce Will into your text too, to create further conflict.

You could consider some of the following:

- Sal has tried to keep her memories alive through songs and stories.
- Willie was born in England.
- Dickie mixes happily with the Dharug people.
- Willie works with his father and has killed a snake.
- Will is determined to make a successful life for himself and his family on his newly acquired land.

## Checklist for writing a play script

- *Genre*: follow the conventions of the original text
- *Structure*: follow narrative structure:
  - Orientation
  - Complication: the conflict between the parents
  - Crisis: perhaps a disagreement between the two sons
  - Climax: a turning point where perhaps someone changes their point of view, or is resigned to the situation
  - Resolution: whether the problem is solved in some way or is an ongoing conflict

- *Context*: maintain consistency with the original narrative in reference to time, place and identities, unless you are offering a resistant or alternative viewpoint
- *Language choices and stylistic devices*: add stage directions to dialogue where appropriate. Consider using asides where the character speaks ‘to the audience’ or a monologue to end the text. Maintain the style of dialogue evident in the extract
- *Purpose and point of view*: create an appropriate mood to complement your text and its point of view



### Preparing to write



You will need to make sure that you have analysed the base text you are using as a springboard for your writing thoroughly and that you understand its structure, style and purpose.

Answer these questions to brainstorm and organise your thoughts.

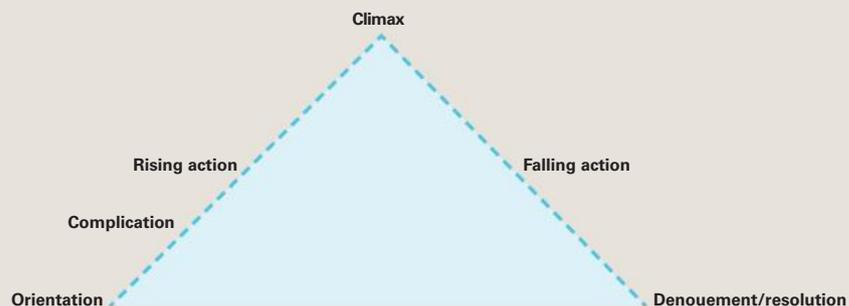
- 1 Name the text that you are using as a stimulus for your imaginative writing.
- 2 **Explain** the invited reading about the conflict in the text that you are basing your imaginative writing on:
  - Anh Do’s school days and money issues
  - the identity issues and future of Drover’s Wife
  - the resolution of conflict at the end of *The Dry*
  - the conflict between Sal and Will in *The Secret River*.
- 3 Outline the perspective you wish to convey in your imaginative response and how it fits with or challenges the stimulus text.
- 4 **Describe** your major character(s) under the following headings:
  - Appearance
  - Body language
  - Personality
  - Dialogue/vocabulary
- 5 Provide an overview of your storyline:
  - Orientation
  - Complication
  - Rising action/crisis/crises
  - Climax
  - Falling action
  - Resolution

### extra info

This is a conventional plot graph. However, you can reshape it to your purpose. You may end your story on the climax. There may be no resolution.

### extra info

For more insight into plotting your imaginative response, consider viewing the YouTube clip by the late Kurt Vonnegut (1922–2007), a famous American author, on the ‘Shape of Stories’.



- 6 Find a visual image that resembles your setting and use it to help you **describe** the setting in your imaginative response. Use sensory language that captures the visual elements as well as the mood you want to create in your writing. Think about how you can integrate the setting into your text.
- 7 **Identify** your tense and point of view:
  - first person
  - third person
  - present tense
  - past tense
- 8 **Suggest** a title for your imaginative response that links to the stimulus text.

# Assessment focus: analytical written responses

This chapter focuses on writing an analytical response to a literary text. This is an important response to help you prepare for the summative external assessment in Year 12. You will need to communicate an informed, critical perspective of a prescribed text for an audience that demonstrates a deep understanding of the text's construction.

## Analysis and evaluation

When writing an analytical essay, you are:

- examining the textual devices and aesthetic features of the text and noting how these influence your perspective and understanding of representations of concepts, identities, times and places
- understanding that texts are underpinned by attitudes, values and beliefs
- investigating and scrutinising the text to show the significance and validity of your perspective
- justifying your perspective with valid evidence and assertion
- focusing closely on textual construction and NOT on the life and times of the writer or characters
- presuming the reader knows the text and NOT retelling the story.

## Writing for an informed audience

When you compose your essay, you need to remember that your reader has a deep understanding of the text.

This means:

- your thesis will need to be contentious and worthy of argument
- your response should be validated by detailed and direct quotation and/or reference to the text
- your evidence will need to reflect an appreciation of the whole text and not just the opening chapters, lines or minutes
- your language and grammar will need to be sophisticated, literary and analytical
- your tone should be formal and academic.

# Examining a question

When reading a question, you read actively, by identifying what you are asked to do and the aspect of the text you are required to analyse.

- 1 Highlight the cognitive verbs that direct you to what you have to do. These include words such as:
  - analyse
  - examine
  - identify
  - explore
  - explain
  - discuss.
- 2 Underline words that indicate the subject you are analysing closely. These are often opinions, contentions or ideas that you will need to agree or disagree with or define as they are represented in the text.
- 3 Circle verbs that reveal what you will analyse regarding what a text does. These include words such as:
  - positions
  - represents
  - challenges
  - reveals.
- 4 Ask yourself what the question wants you to interpret and analyse in reference to the text.
- 5 Reframe the question in your *own words*.
- 6 *Brainstorm* what the question is asking you to explore. Perhaps it is a technique, or an attitude or value.
- 7 Formulate a clear *answer* or *perspective* of the question and state this in your thesis.

# Forming a thesis

A thesis that is capable of facilitating a high score has several characteristics. It is:

- identifiable within the first quarter of the response
  - able to respond to all aspects of the question
  - able to be stated in one sentence
  - specific, rather than general
  - coherent, which means it can be applied to the entire text studied
  - grounded in literary analysis.
- Your thesis should:
- reveal how you have interpreted the *significance* of the subject matter in relation to the assessment question
  - reveal your *interpretation* of, *perspective* of or *answer* to a question or subject, not the subject itself. The subject might be the film, novel or play, but a thesis offers the reader a way to understand how the stylistic devices and aesthetic features inform the readers understanding of the poem, film, play or novel.

## Responding

**Identify** which of the following is a contentious thesis and state why it is or why it is not an effective thesis.

THESIS	WHY IT IS EFFECTIVE	WHY IT ISN'T EFFECTIVE
1 <i>The Dry</i> is about a detective who solves a murder in the present and the past.		
2 While satire can challenge and inform an audience, it can be culturally insensitive and therefore ineffective.		
3 Though the director attempts to be objective, the film is emotive and unsubstantiated.		
4 The protagonist learns to overcome her fears.		
5 I liked the main character the most because he is relatable.		

## Sample questions

Read the following questions that refer to *The Secret River*. Before looking at the example below, review the analysis of the TV series in Chapter 14. The questions reflect the type and the tone of a question to which you may be required to respond.

1. **Analyse** how the director of *The Secret River* positions audiences to understand that ambition is divisive.
2. **Explore** how the relationship between the early settlers and the Dharug people is represented in the miniseries.
3. **Examine** how the director of *The Secret River* uses aesthetic features to reveal the power of fear over the lives of individuals.

## Exploring Question 1

- 1 Analyse how the director of *The Secret River* positions audiences to understand that ambition is divisive.

- 1 Define key terms.
  - Analyse – to study or scrutinise closely
  - How – refers to ways or devices like textual features that authors/directors use to reveal their perspectives, cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs
  - Position – attempts to influence the viewer's point of view
  - Ambition
  - Divisive
- 2 Explore the elements of the question in detail.
  - Write a list of characters who are ambitious and identify their ambitions.
  - Note the **aesthetic features** and **stylistic devices** a director can use to position an audience to shape its understanding of ambition.

- The director creates a cultural context in *The Secret River* for ‘ambition’. Ambition in early Australian settlement could be:
  - to obtain freedom, land or status
  - ensuring the security of a family
  - to preserve a way of life.
- A director can:
  - represent the ambition of characters through narrative development (what happens in the story)
  - represent how a community may react to an individual’s ambition
  - represent the consequences of an individual’s ambition
  - use strategies such as dialogue, camera techniques, editing and music.
- Note the aesthetic features and stylistic devices that a director uses to position an audience to view something as divisive by:
  - revealing changes in a relationship
  - revealing changes in an environment
  - revealing changes in mood
  - using strategies such as dialogue, camera techniques, editing and music.

3 Possible thesis statement.

This answers how the audience is positioned } **Through the representation of relationships**, the director positions her audience to view the early settlers’ ambition to succeed as having financial and social benefits in the new colony of Australia; however, these were at the expense of desirable connections with family and the Aboriginal people.

} This qualification shows that ambition in the cultural context of the text has more than one point of view. It shows the issue is contentious. Some writers include this statement in the opening comments and not in the thesis.

**Responding** With reference to the text you have studied, **create** a thesis for the following question using the template provided.

Question	How is the reader or viewer positioned to respond to the protagonist’s values in <i>The Secret River</i> ?
Rewrite the question with specific reference to your text	
Highlight words that direct you to what you have to do	
Underline words in the subject you are analysing closely	
Put the question in your own words	
Brainstorm what the question is asking you to explore	
Formulate a clear answer or perspective of the question and state this in your thesis	

---

# Organising and sequencing subject matter

An analytical essay, in response to a literary text, is organised so as to best advance and support the established argument or thesis. Paragraphs must be clearly indicated through appropriate spacing.

The first quarter of the analytical essay should include the following:

- Title
- Creator/author/director
- An outline of the text's purpose and subject matter that is relevant to the thesis
- Outline of the essay's key topics.
- The clear development of your thesis, through close analysis of the text, should be in paragraphs that include:
  - cohesive or linking devices and a topic sentence that advances the thesis
  - points that explore the topic in detail and substantiate your perspective with textual evidence and quotations
  - a summary of key ideas of the paragraph.
- The final paragraph should include:
  - summation of the argument relative to your thesis (you may want to review your concluding sentences of body paragraphs to help build this)
  - a final, formal observation of the text relevant to the question.

## The difference between a point and an example

Points are statements that need exploration and evidence.

The characters' familial relationships are represented as flawed.

Examples are explicatory or illustrative.

The close-up of Sal's face that is unflinching and steadfast indicates to the audience that Sal is aware that she must remain silent about her husband's secrets, if she is to maintain the security of her family.

### Responding

Write three points relevant to the text you are studying and a relevant example to support each point.

# Integrating textual evidence

Using evidence from the texts substantiates your perspective of the text.

Quotations and evidence are used to:

- demonstrate your knowledge of the text
- add authority and validity to your assertions and perspective of the text
- show that you can support your assertion and perspective.

Quotations and evidence are NOT used to:

- state facts
- provide detail
- recount the text.

Look at the examples below from an extract at the beginning of *The Secret River*, when convict William Thornhill arrives in the colony of New South Wales and is being assigned to a master. His family has also come by ship to the colony and seeks to claim Thornhill.



An artist's impression of the colony of New South Wales around the time of the events depicted in *The Secret River*

Alamy Stock Photo/Chronicle

SAL: This letter – it's all you need to know.

OFFICIAL: Says here, William Thornhill is to be assigned to his wife.

SAL: Take a look at who signed it too.

BRITISH OFFICER: A woman accompanying her felon of a husband? I've never heard of it.

SAL: Well, now you have!

ALEXANDER KING: Signed by Lord Hannebery.

BRITISH OFFICER: Takes a special whore to get special favours.

Episode 1, *The Secret River*, ABC

When analysing, evidence may take the form of:

- 1 a summary of events, scenes, characters or ideas
  - Summaries synthesise *longer* events or descriptions and they are used to explain a point.

As proof of her determination to keep her family together, when Sal first arrives in the colony, she seeks to have her husband assigned to her, which is granted when she produces a letter of authority from Lord Hannebery.

- 2 paraphrasing an event, scene, character or idea
  - Paraphrasing is used to show the conclusion drawn by the writer through a *shorter* description of a character or event. In the example below, the writer has drawn the conclusion that the officer is 'unimpressed' and 'incredulous' by analysing the direct speech.

A determined Sal shows, to an unimpressed and incredulous British officer, the letter signed by Lord Hannebery, which proves that her husband, a felon, is to be assigned to his wife.

- 3 using direct quotation
- Quotations need to be interpreted to reveal an understanding of the relationship between the point and evidence. The analysis needs to reveal the significance of the textual reference.

Point to be proven

Direct quotation as evidence

The strength of Sal's character is revealed to the audience when the official states: 'a woman accompanying her felon of a husband? I've never heard of it'. His acknowledgement of her gender, presumed weak at this point in history, and his scepticism of her joining her husband in the colony as it is unheard of, reveals to the viewer Sal's determination to maintain her family's security despite the hardship involved.

Analysis of words in quotation to prove Sal's strength. Note words such as determination, which indicates strength

- 4 integrating a quotation
- When integrating a quotation into your own sentences, you have the opportunity to vary how you use evidence, to vary the complexity of your sentence structure, to analyse in an efficient way and to carry your argument forward.

Point

Quotation acknowledging that it is unconventional to accompany a husband

The audience is positioned to view Sal as unconventionally strong when the official observes he'd 'never heard' of a woman accompanying her husband to the colony and that she is a 'special whore', using her sexuality to gain a rare authority to have a felon such as William Thornhill 'assigned to his wife'.

Analysis of her strength

Textual quotation as evidence of Sal's power

## Omitting words

### Changing quotations

If you want to change the tense or add a word for clarity, tone or tense in a quotation, you need to use square brackets [ ].

BRITISH OFFICER: Takes a special whore to get special favours.

Example: '[it would take] a special whore to get special favours.'

### Shortening quotations

In longer quotations, you may want to omit words in the quotation. You need to use an ellipsis (...).

SAL: Take a look at who signed it too.  
 OFFICIAL: A woman accompanying her felon of a husband, I've never heard of it.  
 SAL: Well, now you have!  
 ALEXANDER KING: Signed by Lord Hannebery.  
 BRITISH OFFICER: Takes a special whore to get special favours.

Example: 'A woman accompanying her felon of a husband ... [is a] special favour.'

# Language for analytical essays

Earlier in the chapter, cognitive verbs that usually begin questions were discussed. Below are several lists of terms that will help you in building a vocabulary for the analytical essay.

- 1 List question-specific words
  - write synonyms for key words and phrases in the question
- 2 List genre or text-type specific words
  - When listing these terms, note that there are general terms common to all plays, but a Shakespearean tragedy has specific vocabulary, such as ‘tragic hero’
  - Novels (e.g. plot, protagonist, narrator)
  - Plays (e.g. act, scene, line)
  - Films (e.g. set, camera angle, mise-en-scene)
  - Poetry (e.g. stanza, line, form)
- 3 Verbs that analyse the author’s/director’s purpose or intention.

advocates	defends	perpetuates
affects	demonstrates	persuades
affirms	depicts	portrays
alludes to	details	positions (the reader/audience)
appeals to	develops	privileges
argues	differentiates	promotes
articulates	effects	proposes
asserts	elevates	provokes
balances	elicits	raises
builds	emphasises	recalls
bolsters	employs	reduces
captures	endorses	relates
categorises	establishes	reinforces
challenges	evokes	represents
classifies	expands	responds
collates	expresses	reveals
compares	foregrounds	shows
concludes	frames	states
condones	generates	strengthens
condemns	highlights	substantiates
constructs	identifies	subverts
contrasts	illustrates	suggests
conveys	implements	supports
correlates	implies	underlines
creates	informs	validates
critiques	integrates	verifies
criticises	interprets	

- 4 List words and phrases to help create cohesion between ideas and paragraphs.
- **Words or phrases for addition:**
    - another
    - in addition to
    - furthermore
    - likewise
    - moreover
    - similarly
  - **Words or phrases for opposition or contrast:**
    - although
    - alternatively
    - besides
    - in contrast
    - despite
    - however
    - nonetheless
  - **Words for sequencing:**
    - following
    - previously
    - prior
    - simultaneously
    - next
  - **Words and phrases for drawing a conclusion:**
    - accordingly
    - consequently
    - hence
    - moreover
    - overall
    - as a result
    - thereby
    - therefore
    - thus
  - **Phrases for links between evidence and analysis:**
    - for example
    - for instance
    - in this case
    - on this occasion
    - in this situation
    - to demonstrate
    - to illustrate
- 5 Avoid informal grammar and vocabulary such as:
- cliché and slang
  - contractions: ‘do not’ instead of ‘don’t’
  - first person: ‘I’, ‘me’
  - addressing the reader through the second person: ‘you’
  - offering the text a star rating or your personal opinion of the text
  - stylistic fragmentary sentences
  - links to contemporary cultural examples, e.g. ‘It is just like the movie I saw’.

Read the following example of an analytical paragraph. This text refers to the novels by Kate Grenville on which the TV series is based.

# Example: analytical writing

Analytical concepts	Text	Textual conventions
Uses evaluative and analytical terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reframe</li> <li>• fictional representation</li> <li>• focusing</li> <li>• explicitly</li> </ul>	<p>In both <i>The Secret River</i> and <i>Sarah Thornhill</i>, Grenville has sought to reframe the stereotyped fictional representations of the early colonial home, focusing on the convict domestic and treating the house in a more nuanced and complex manner. She does not, of course, wholly abandon the traditional image of the house as a prison in which white settlers, and particularly settler women, are trapped. In <i>The Secret River</i>, soon after the Thornhill family take possession of what becomes known as Thornhill's Point, the local Aborigines imprison them in their tent behind a wall of spears, to which the family responds first by building a hut which provides them with greater security and then by clearing the ground and fencing the area around the hut in a way that establishes it as a self-created prison. Here Sal Thornhill, whose passionate wish in the early part of the novel is to return to London, is explicitly figured as a prisoner, confined to the tent and hut while her husband, Will, farms and trades. She has a place where 'like any other prisoner, ... she marked off each day' of her imprisonment (155). Later, when the family build their grand house, Cobham Hall, it is explicitly figured in carceral terms, as a fortress with stone walls and drawbridge, surrounded by a hillside 'stripped of every bush' and intended to keep out 'everything except what was invited in' (329 and 332). The Thornhills are imprisoned both by the land, 'where the cliffs waited and watched' (345), and by fear of Aboriginal reprisals for the massacre in which Will Thornhill participated. When Will looks out from his prison home he sometimes 'thought he saw a man there, looking down from the clifftop. ... Never took his eye off the one he was sure was a human, staring down at him in his house' (348).</p>	Clear assertions of opinion in topic sentence – 'reframing the stereotyped, fictional representation ... treating the house in a more nuanced and complex manner'
Demonstrates an understanding of the use of language to represent character and setting ('prison' and 'confined', 'explicitly figured as a prisoner')		Use of vocabulary specific to and associated with text and cultural context ('colonial', 'convict', 'white settlers', 'Aborigines', 'spears', 'London', 'massacre', 'drawbridge')
Ability to recognise patterns and structures that are used to construct representations ('antitheses')		Use of points and evidence (paraphrasing and quotation to substantiate points)
Recognition of symbolic elements of text		Language of imprisonment
Varied and complex sentence structures		Formal tone established through vocabulary choices (no abbreviations or colloquial terms)
Analytical terms ('explicitly figured')		Use of compound words and figurative language to add depth to vocabulary ('self-created', 'prison home')
Linking words ('here', 'later')		<p style="text-align: center;">             'Depicting the Colonial Home: Representations of the Domestic in Kate Grenville's <i>The Secret River</i> and <i>Sarah Thornhill</i>' by Martin Staniforth. <i>Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature</i>, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2013)           </p>

## Responding

Follow the instructions in the annotations below to annotate another extract from the essay 'Depicting the Colonial Home: Representations of the Domestic in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* and *Sarah Thornhill*'.

### ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS

List the evaluative and analytical terms

List references to the construction of representations

Grenville plays to this idealised image, investing the Thornhills' hut with positive values, and contrasting it with their previous homes. The hut is 'a loose container of yellow light', a place of safety with 'the fire leaping up the chimney and the lamp on the table' (265). It is a place where the Thornhill children 'were flourishing on the river as they had not in Sydney' (195). And it provides, for all its shortcomings and fragility, a place of reassurance for the male pioneer, so that when Will returns from Sydney, 'each time he rounded his point and saw the smoke calmly rising out of his chimney, the fowls pecking away around the yard and the children running down the slope to meet him, he felt a flush of relief' (196-97).

'Depicting the Colonial Home: Representations of the Domestic in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* and *Sarah Thornhill*' by Martin Staniforth. *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2013)

### TEXTUAL CONVENTIONS

List words associated with an idealised image

List linking devices

List specific vocabulary of the text

Highlight quotation

## Assessment checklist

structure

- ✓ A clear opening that:
  - o contextualises the questions
  - o states the thesis or purpose of analysis
  - o outlines the argument
- ✓ Logical organisation of analysis in paragraphs that:
  - o include a topic sentence
  - o elaborate on points
  - o use examples and quotations to substantiate points
  - o analyse evidence showing how the evidence substantiates points
  - o link ideas
- ✓ A conclusion that summarises the analysis and restates the thesis

language

- ✓ Use analytical terms that:
  - o indicate the purpose and intention of the author
- ✓ Use words that:
  - o maintain a formal analytical tone
  - o are precise
  - o show a close understanding of the text type
  - o link ideas
- ✓ Use punctuation that:
  - o indicates a variety of sentence structures
  - o indicates how to integrate and reference quotations

Assessment checklist

## Extension

Using the plan and advice above in 'Organising and sequencing subject matter', formulate a response to a question from a chapter of a text you have studied in Unit 2.

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## OVERVIEW

*Nelson English for QCE*, the complete course books written for the new QCAA Senior English syllabus. The Units 1 & 2 book provides opportunities for students to engage with and respond to a variety of classical and contemporary literary and non-literary texts, together with a thorough grounding in the background knowledge and types of assessment they will encounter throughout the course.

Part one of the Units 3 & 4 book introduces the assessment encountered in Year 12. Part two provides 22 study guides to texts on the prescribed text list, including all eight external assessment texts. Part three offers four additional in-depth studies, which can be worked through in full or used as a model when studying others, and detailed content to further prepare students for assessment.

Together, the books provide a comprehensive and flexible approach to Senior English in Queensland.

## Key Features

- Annotated examples and model responses to demonstrate analysis of texts and clearly communicate concepts
- Regular activities for students to explore the three interrelated areas of study: texts in context, language and textual analysis and responding to and creating texts
- Questions use the cognitions of Marzano and Kendall's new taxonomy of educational objectives, when appropriate
- Margin glossary definitions to clarify the meaning of terms in-situ.