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VCE Units 1 & 2

ENGLISH
YEAR
11

STUDY DESIGN 2023
—
Robert Beardwood with
Leon Furze & Ben White

VCE Units 1 & 2

ENGLISH english

YEAR year

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Course overview

		Area of Study 1: Reading and exploring texts	Area of Study 2: Crafting texts
Unit 1	**English**	You will study: • one text selected by your school. You will write: • a personal response to the text.	You will study: • three mentor texts. You will write: • two texts • a description of your writing processes.
	EAL	You will study: • one text (or extracts from a text) selected by your school. You may produce: • a personal response to the text OR a note-form summary of key connections and ideas within the text.	You will study: • three mentor texts. You will produce: • two texts • a set of annotations on your texts, identifying the qualities of effective writing.
		Area of Study 1: Reading and exploring texts	Area of Study 2: Exploring argument
Unit 2	**English**	You will study: • one text selected by your school. You will write: • an analytical essay on the text.	You may produce: • an analysis of the use of argument and persuasive language and techniques in persuasive text/s OR a set of annotated persuasive texts. You will produce: • an oral presentation of a point of view on a local or national issue.
	EAL	You will study: • one text (or extracts from a text) selected by your school. You may produce: • an analytical essay on the text OR a detailed mind map of vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas in the text.	You may produce one or more of: • a note-form summary of key arguments and supporting arguments in persuasive text/s • an annotated visual text/s identifying key persuasive techniques • an analysis of the use of argument and persuasive language and techniques in persuasive text/s. You will produce: • an oral presentation of a point of view on a local or national issue.

Introduction

Insight's *English Year 11: VCE Units 1 & 2* is a comprehensive textbook for the VCE English Study Design: 2023–2027.

The main new part of the Year 11 course is Area of Study 2: Crafting texts, in Unit 1. In Unit 3 there is a corresponding area of study, Creating texts. These areas of study give you the opportunity to develop your writing skills in a range of forms and styles, using mentor texts as sources of inspiration and as models of effective writing. In Chapter 10 we have suggested five key ideas that can be used as the basis for class study; even if you are not working with one of these key ideas, the chapter provides practical approaches to developing ideas and writing strategies that you can apply to your own pieces.

This book provides core knowledge that you will use throughout VCE English, with clear explanations of all key concepts and metalanguage and a glossary of metalanguage (Appendix 3) for Area of Study 1. It also includes a number of practical features.

- Activities in each chapter enable you to apply knowledge, use metalanguage and consolidate your understanding as each concept is introduced. They will also help you to refine your writing skills in short-answer or paragraph-length responses, focusing on specific concepts before you need to synthesise your knowledge in extended responses such as your assessment pieces.

- Opportunities for working in pairs or groups are indicated in the activities by the 'GROUP' icon. Many other activities also lend themselves to discussion and collaborative learning.

- Flow charts, mind maps, tables and diagrams present information visually; you can use these same visual tools to create your own summaries and to outline processes.

- Chapters 4, 5, 11, 17 and 18 explain what you need to do to complete your assessment tasks, and include useful sentence starters, checklists for editing and proofreading, and annotated high-level responses.

- QR codes throughout the book enable you to access extensive bonus material, including short videos, templates, links to relevant websites and additional sample responses.

- In Appendix 1: Completing timed assessment tasks, and Appendix 2: Writing and editing toolkit, you will find numerous practical tips and strategies for improving your writing and performing at your best in a SAC or exam.

The VCE English course requires a variety of skills, both in understanding texts created by others and in creating your own. *English Year 11* is designed to help you develop those skills systematically so that you can write confidently and effectively in a wide range of situations – skills that will be valuable not just in your English exams, but throughout your life.

Robert Beardwood, Leon Furze and Ben White

Reading and exploring texts

Area of Study 1: Reading and exploring texts involves you reading, understanding and analysing texts.

You will study two texts, one in Unit 1 and another in Unit 2. In both cases, you will look closely at how the authors use vocabulary, text structures and language features: to represent characters, settings and events; and to explore ideas, concerns and tensions. You will use your close reading skills to understand the text on a literal level, and also to infer a range of wider meanings. Your understanding of these texts will be enhanced by knowledge of the context in which they were produced, and of the role your own context plays in shaping your responses to the texts.

In these two units you will write in detail about your set texts, but in slightly different ways. Your essay for formal assessment in Unit 1 will be a personal response to the text, in which you will explore connections between the text and your own experiences and understanding of the world. This personal response will use the first-person voice and elements of reflection, as well as the techniques and vocabulary of close analysis.

In Unit 2, you will write analytical essays, using formal language and the third-person voice, focusing on textual features and the ways in which the author constructs meaning. Each of these essays will respond to a set topic and have a clearly structured argument, supported by textual evidence, to present your view of the text and its meaning.

HOW TO READ FOR MEANING

IN THIS CHAPTER

▸ Reading, re-reading and note-taking

▸ Inferred meanings

▸ Symbols and motifs

▸ Ideas, concerns and tensions

▸ Different interpretations

Studying, analysing and interpreting a text means understanding it on several levels, as well as incorporating your own responses and ideas. This requires sustained thinking about the text and letting your ideas evolve as you read, discuss and write essays on it. Although understanding the text on a literal level – who does what, when, where and to whom – might be straightforward, the text's real significance will lie in its implications and suggestions. In other words, the meanings that you *infer* reveal the deeper messages of a text, and will form the basis of your own interpretation of what it is really about.

Reading, re-reading and note-taking

Before you can respond to a text you will need to know it very well. Firstly, read or watch the text for enjoyment. This initial reading is all about gaining an understanding of the storyline and the characters. Aim to do this before you start studying the text in class. Next, re-read or watch the text more slowly, and try to spot things you missed the first time. In a printed text, make notes in the margins, highlight short passages and/or use sticky labels to signal:

- significant scenes
- useful quotations
- important dialogue
- turning points
- the climax
- elements you do not yet understand
- anything else you think is relevant.

Use different colours for different elements, such as green for quotes, yellow for characters and orange for turning points. Make your text your most valuable resource.

In addition, create a set of notes in a notebook or computer file so your observations and ideas are all in one place. (For a film text, you will need to write all your notes like this.) In these notes you can include more detail than you can write in the margins of your text. Even just the process of summarising information will help you to remember the details, assisting your recall in assessment situations. Use the following headings, adding others if you wish.

- Plot summary
- Character profiles
- Important scenes
- Ideas and concerns
- Quotations

As you continue to study the text, transfer the most significant quotations and annotations from the text itself into your file of notes under appropriate headings. Add any useful ideas, questions and quotes that arise in class discussions.

Scan the code or click here to download summary sheet templates for the plot and characters of a text.

Inferred meanings

Using the strategies above will mostly lead you to summarise information that is explicitly described in the text. However, most of the important messages that you take from a text are inferred meanings. This means that you, as the reader, make inferences, draw conclusions and 'read between the lines' to understand what the text really means and the messages its author might be trying to deliver.

Sentence-level and text-level meanings

Inferred meanings work at all levels of a text, from a word or sentence to the whole narrative. For example, in the following five sentences from *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon, the narrator, Christopher, gives a very literal description of his feelings about dogs. However, the reader can infer much more than this from what Christopher says.

> I like dogs. You always know what a dog is thinking. It has four
> moods. Happy, sad, cross and concentrating. Also, dogs are faithful
> and they do not tell lies because they cannot talk.

The *explicit* meaning that Christopher likes dogs is supplemented by the *inferred* meaning that Christopher places a high value on loyalty and honesty. The reader can also **make connections** with what they have previously learned, such as a connection between the statement 'You always know what a dog is thinking' and Christopher's explanation on the previous pages of how difficult he finds it to understand people's emotions from the expressions on their faces. Together, these literal descriptions enable the reader to make inferences about Christopher's personality and the challenges he faces in his everyday life.

It is also possible that a reader will infer, from Christopher's emphasis on moods, loyalty and honesty at this early point in the narrative, that much of the novel will be concerned with complex emotions, infidelity and the telling of lies – which is in fact the case.

At the level of the **whole text**, the reader also infers meanings in order to understand the broader ideas and concerns being explored by the author. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, for instance, King Duncan and Banquo arrive at Macbeth's castle and comment on the peaceful surroundings and the birds ('martlets' or swallows) that are nesting on the castle walls:

> KING: This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
> Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
> Unto our gentle senses.

> BANQUO: This guest of summer,
> The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
> By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath
> Smells wooingly here.

The pleasing air, the contentedly nesting birds and the religious associations of 'temple' and 'heaven' combine to create an image of natural, familial and spiritual harmony. However, the audience knows from the previous scene that Macbeth and his wife are thinking about murdering King Duncan. This scene, and its natural **imagery**, establishes that something larger is at stake: to murder the king would be a strike against the natural order. Indeed, on the following morning, even before the murder has been discovered, one of the lords describes the wild weather:

> LENNOX: The night has been unruly: where we lay
> Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,
> Lamentings heard in'th' air, strange screams of death.

The audience can now infer that Duncan's murder is far more than the death of a king; it throws both the human world and the natural world into disarray. In the end, Macduff kills Macbeth: on a literal level this is an act of revenge, but on a more abstract level – the inferred meaning – it is the defeat of evil that enables order to be restored.

Irony

An important source of inferred meaning in a text is irony. In an ironic statement, the real meaning – inferred by the reader – is the opposite of the literal meaning. The famous opening sentence of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* is an example:

> It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession
> of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

Austen's real meaning is that this isn't a 'truth' at all, but merely a widely held opinion, and that not every wealthy single man might want to get married. The suggestion that this is held to be a 'truth' also conveys Austen's critical view of people who make assumptions about what others want, especially when their assumptions also suit their own agendas.

Gaps and silences

Gaps and silences in a text also leave the reader to infer meanings that aren't directly expressed. An intriguing silence in the play *Twelve Angry Men* results from the racial identity of the accused boy never being specified. At one point, the 10th Juror expresses his hostility towards the defendant and the community to which the boy belongs:

> These people are born to lie. Now, it's the way they are and no intelligent man is gonna tell me otherwise. They don't know what the truth is. Well, take a look at them. They are different. They think different. They act different.

These statements express the character's firmly held beliefs, but the audience can infer that he is extremely prejudiced and that his view of the accused's guilt or innocence is unreliable. Moreover, the bluntness and arrogance with which the 10th Juror expresses his views characterises him as an extremely unsympathetic character, whose attitudes the playwright implicitly rejects – another of the inferred meanings of this passage. The play's silence in relation to the boy's racial identity conveys to the audience that the playwright's concern is not with any particular form of prejudice, but with the quality of prejudice itself.

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Explore inferred meanings

ACTIVITY

1   Find a sentence or group of sentences in your text in which something is stated in a plain, direct fashion. What additional meanings can you infer from these sentences? Think about what is suggested or implied about a character, setting or situation.

2   Find a short passage of detailed description or imagery. (For a film, look for a close-up shot or sequence of shots.) What qualities or values are suggested by this passage? Think about the associated meanings (connotations) of particular words or images, and whether the thing being described or shown might be representative of a larger group (such as the martlets representing families in general in the *Macbeth* example on the previous page).

3   Identify an example of irony in your text, either in dialogue or the narrative voice. Explain the literal meaning and the intended (implied) meaning.

4   Find a gap or silence in your text – where something is clear to the audience although it isn't said. It could be at a particular point in the text or across the whole text. What is said and what is left out? Why do you think this information has been deliberately omitted by the author? How does the gap or silence contribute to your understanding of the text?

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Symbols and motifs

As the discussion of inferred meanings shows, understanding the literal meaning in a text is only the beginning of understanding what a text is really about. Another important source of meaning is the use of symbols and motifs. As you read, look for repeated images and ideas – these are clues to an author's real concerns.

Symbols are objects that carry a larger, more abstract meaning. Common symbols with widely understood meanings include:

- a crown as a symbol for the monarchy

- a red rose as a symbol for love

- a dove as a symbol for peace.

Symbols can also gain their meanings through associations with other elements of the text. An example is the image of the mockingbird in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. When Atticus says 'it's a sin to kill a mockingbird' he is, on a literal level, simply stating an opinion about the treatment of mockingbirds, harmless birds that live in the area. The reader, though, can make connections with the innocent characters in the novel, such as Boo Radley and Tom Robinson, and infer that what the novelist is really suggesting is that it is wrong to harm anything innocent. This adds a layer of meaning to the text that goes beyond our interest in what happens to individual characters; the wider concerns of justice and social acceptance are central to the novel's meaning.

Motifs are repeated images or concepts. They may or may not have symbolic meanings, although you can assume that they will be linked to key ideas and concerns in the text. In William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies*, the conch shell, Piggy's glasses and the fire are motifs that also have symbolic meanings. The reader infers these meanings through the objects' associations with the boys' activities and values. The conch is used to call meetings and to show who is authorised to speak at a given moment, so it represents civilisation and social order. The actions of Jack, who leads a rebel group of boys who prioritise hunting over meetings, cause the destruction of the conch, symbolising his rejection of civilised values. The motif of fire is more ambiguous: it is associated with both civilisation and savagery, depending on how it is used and valued by the boys.

Explore symbols and motifs

ACTIVITY

1 Find a symbol in your text. What is the object or image, and what is its symbolic meaning?

2 List all the examples of this symbol you can find in your text, and explain how the symbol is being used to present an idea.

3 Identify a motif in your text and give three or four examples of where it is used. What are this motif's associations or meanings?

Ideas, concerns and tensions

A text's ideas and concerns are what give it wider meaning and relevance. Thinking about a text's wider meaning requires you to understand how it connects to the world, and to individual readers or viewers. This is where inferential reading comes in – you work outwards from the literal details to abstract concepts and broader viewpoints.

An idea is a concept or thought; common examples of ideas that texts explore include love, family, identity, prejudice, war, freedom and justice. (The word 'theme' is often used to refer to ideas explored in a text.)

The term 'concern' can be used as a synonym for 'idea', or to refer to a more specific concept or issue that an author wishes to highlight for considered reflection. For example, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* explores the **ideas** of love, family, truth and trust, but one of its central **concerns** is the difficulties faced by people with disability trying to fit into a world not designed for their needs.

There are three main ways in which an idea or concern can be expressed:

- as a single word, such as 'justice'
- as a phrase, such as 'the difficulty of achieving justice'
- as a complete sentence, such as, 'Justice is difficult to achieve when power is held only by a few.'

Authors use all of a text's features, such as characters, plot, narrative voice and language, to present and explore ideas and concerns. Sometimes they offer a clear point of view, such as when they implicitly criticise certain kinds of behaviour and endorse others. At other times a text can consider two or more sides of an issue without expressing a view one way or the other – it might simply show the complexities of human nature and behaviour.

Tensions arise in a text on a literal level from conflicts within the plot, and on an inferential level from the exploration of ideas and values. They can exist between characters or between opposing groups; they can also result from a character's internal conflict as the character seeks to balance competing values and/or goals. Tension can also be created as we sympathise with a character and hope that they can overcome obstacles and achieve their goal.

For example, in Craig Silvey's *Jasper Jones*, Charlie finds himself in conflict with his parents, and both Jasper and Jeffrey experience racial prejudice. Yet the inner conflicts Charlie experiences are central to what keeps the reader interested in the story. He knows it is wrong to keep the location of Laura's body a secret, but he wishes to protect Jasper from harm; he desperately wants to prove his bravery to his peers, but to do so he has to pick up peaches that are covered with insects, which terrify him.

Mind map for ideas, concerns and tensions

Usually texts have several main ideas and a number of sources of tension. The mind map below shows some of the central ideas and concerns in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. To illustrate each idea there is a short quote that reveals a clear tension.

Identity
'What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet'

Romeo and Juliet

Fate
'A greater power than we can contradict / Hath thwarted our intents'

Conflict
'Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean'

Duty
'I think she will be ruled / In all respects by me'

Love
'My only love sprung from my only hate'
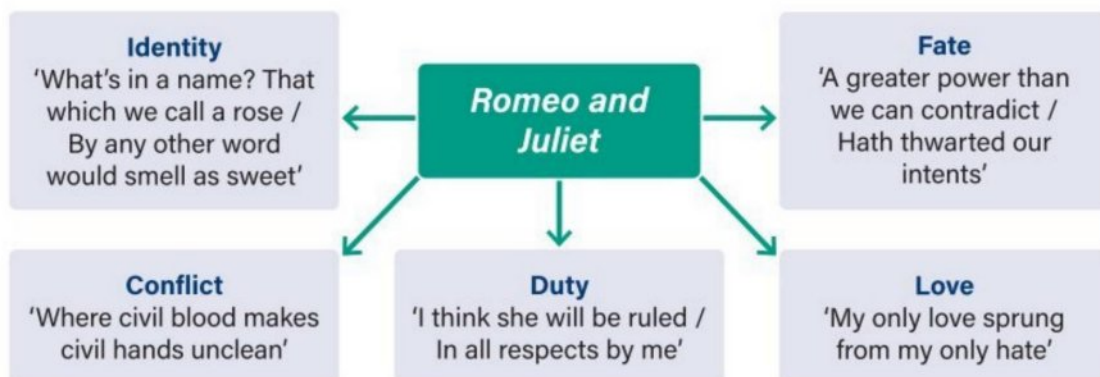
Different perspectives on an idea

Authors explore ideas from different perspectives, using a range of characters and situations to consider different points of view and tease out implications and consequences. Although the author might well have a particular belief or opinion, most imaginative texts explore ideas and concerns in a way that leaves readers free to form their own views and judgements.

The mind map below shows some of the different aspects of the central idea of fate in *Romeo and Juliet*. A map like this arises from inferential reading, and it is unlikely that any two readers would describe exactly the same aspects or choose identical quotes.

Foreshadowing suggests fate is predetermined.
- The Prologue refers to the lovers' deaths, indicating that they are doomed from the start.
- Juliet worries that 'My grave is like to be my wedding bed'.

Fate is just a result of human actions and isn't predetermined.
- Miscommunication and bad luck play a role in events.
- The lovers' impatience partly causes their deaths.
- Mercutio does not blame fate for his death – he blames the conflict between the two families.

Fate in *Romeo and Juliet*

Fate is an unalterable cosmic force, symbolised by the unchanging stars.
- Before going to the masked ball, Romeo feels that 'Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars, / Shall bitterly begin his fearful date / With this night's revels'.
- Friar Laurence declares, 'A greater power than we can contradict / Hath thwarted our intents' – he doesn't suggest that he knows what this greater power is, but he admits his own powerlessness.

Fate is against Romeo and Juliet, yet they defy it.
- They are 'star-crossed lovers' but they marry anyway.
- Romeo says he is 'Fortune's fool'. Yet later he declares, 'I defy you, stars', showing his rejection of the idea that his fate is beyond his control.

Create mind maps for key ideas and concerns

ACTIVITY

1 Identify five or six of the main ideas in your text, expressed as single words or short phrases. Draw a mind map similar to the one for *Romeo and Juliet* on page 8, with the key ideas arranged around the title of the text. Under each idea, write a brief quote that reflects the author's exploration of that idea.

2 Create a mind map showing different perspectives on one of the central ideas in your text. Use the one above for the idea of fate in *Romeo and Juliet* as a model. In each box, make notes on any ways in which the author explores an aspect of or perspective on the idea, and include some short quotes.

Different interpretations

An interpretation is an explanation of what a text means, supported by evidence. It is not simply an opinion about whether the text is 'good' or 'bad'; it is an account of what it is essentially about and the view of the world it presents.

Any text can be interpreted in different ways; no two people will 'read' a text in exactly the same way. We are each affected differently by a text's characters, events and ideas; we each bring our own experiences, from life and from our reading, to help construct our *own* interpretation.

It can be difficult to form your own view of a text and to separate your ideas from the many others you will encounter. Try using these tips.

- Draw on your own responses to the text, even if initially they are largely emotional. These will reflect your own unique combination of life experiences and your cultural and social contexts.

- Read the text several times. When you re-read, you will notice things that initially escaped your attention – subtle hints and suggestions that you can expand on by using your inferential reading skills. These are the less obvious features of the text that your interpretation can draw into the foreground, enhancing the originality of your writing.

- Read what other people have written about the text; even short online reviews can be useful. They will give you a sense of the main ideas readers have discussed and their attitudes towards the text. Do you agree with what has been said? Can you think of other points to make?

- Talk to others who have read the text. Class discussions, in particular, can be extremely useful in clarifying your ideas – they provide a live exchange of views and show up points of difference between your own responses and those of others.

CONTEXTS AND VALUES

IN THIS CHAPTER

> Social, historical and cultural contexts
> Contexts of culture and situation
> Contexts of production and reception
> Values

Context refers to the factors and influences that help to shape both the creation of a text and its reading or reception. All texts reflect, to some degree, the time and place of their creation. By understanding the relationship between a text and the context in which it was produced, you will deepen your understanding and interpretation of the work. In addition, developing a stronger knowledge of the context of reception will help you to gain more awareness of the role of your own context in shaping your reactions to and opinions on the text.

Social, historical and cultural contexts

The three main broad types of context are social, historical and cultural.

Social	• The **social context** refers to the features of a society and their impact on people's lives. • An aspect of social context is the division of society into social classes and how this influences individuals' work and education opportunities.
Historical	• The **historical context** refers to the ideas and practices prevalent in the relevant historical period. • Political leaders, the arts, social movements, wars, scientific knowledge and discoveries are all important aspects of the historical context.
Cultural	• The **cultural context** refers to ways of living and how these are represented in the media and the arts. • Cultural contexts are shaped by education as well as nationality, ethnicity and religion.

When you are studying a text you should have some knowledge of the social, historical and cultural contexts of its creation. This becomes especially important when one or more of these contexts is very different from your own. Ideas regarded as 'normal' in one context might well appear strange, wrong or even offensive to someone in a different context.

Contexts of culture and situation

The three broad contexts discussed in the previous section can be grouped together as the **context of culture**. To varying degrees, they affect everything that happens in a particular society.

In contrast, the **context of situation** refers to the specific circumstances around a text's creation or reception. These can include:

- events occurring at a particular time and place
- the specific circumstances around the publication or reading of the text
- the author's or reader's own personal context.

The author's **personal context** can have a strong influence on the meanings constructed by a text; likewise, the reader's personal context will influence their responses to and interpretation of a text. Personal context incorporates a number of factors that shape a person's outlook, interests and concerns.

sexual orientation

gender

economic status

age

family make-up

religious beliefs and affiliation

Personal context

educational background

employment

ethnicity and cultural background

health

A good example of a text shaped by the author's personal context is George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

On the surface, *Animal Farm* is the story of a group of pigs that take over a farm and then rule it through a dictatorship, taking all the farm's produce for themselves. It is partly whimsical in style; the title page even calls it 'A Fairy Story'. However, if you probe a little into the author's life then you will arrive at a deeper, and very different, understanding of the text.

George Orwell was a dedicated socialist; he fought against Fascist forces in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and believed in the socialist world view – the idea that the ownership of property and the means of production should be communal rather than private, and that there should be greater equality in society. However, Orwell's experiences in Spain exposed him to the ruthlessness of the Communist forces and gave him firsthand experience of the power of propaganda. As a journalist in wartime London he became increasingly aware of Joseph Stalin's brutal dictatorship in the communist Soviet Union (USSR), and of the difficulty of publishing anything anti-Soviet at a time when Britain was in an alliance with the USSR in a war against Nazi Germany.

Written in 1943–44, *Animal Farm* is an allegory for what had happened in the Soviet Union, and more generally for how communism had betrayed the original ideals of socialism. The novel begins with the animals trying to make the socialist vision a reality: the pigs take over the farm, ending the farmer's oppression and exploitation of the animals, and everyone is happy. But the pigs become increasingly dominant, self-interested and controlling, and the other animals begin to suffer, mirroring events in the USSR. When we read the text knowing something of Orwell's own experiences and of the wider historical context, our view of it moves from it being a simple fairy tale to being a polemical (argumentative) work on the failings of Stalin's USSR.

Of course, there were other important contextual factors around the publication of *Animal Farm*. During the war, British publishing houses were reluctant to take on a novel that was implicitly highly critical of the USSR's leaders. However, *Animal Farm* was eventually published in 1945, coinciding with the end of the war, and was extremely popular by the end of the 1940s – when the Cold War had begun and Western nations were much more critical of Stalin's rule.
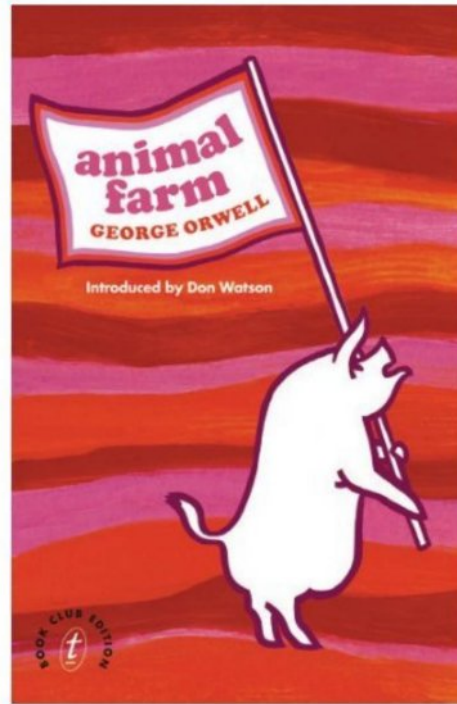
Contexts of production and reception

The **context of production** refers to the circumstances around the creation of the text, from its writing through to its publication. The context of production also includes the medium for which the text was intended. For example, *Twelve Angry Men* was originally written as a television play, then was adapted for the stage, then made into a film. Each 'production' of the text had a different context, even though they all occurred in the 1950s.

The **context of reception** refers to the circumstances around the text's readers or viewers. Again, this includes the medium in which it is consumed. A novel might have been originally published as a print book but now be available as an ebook; a film might originally have been released in cinemas but now be more often viewed at home on television or other devices.

In the case of texts produced many years ago, the context of the initial reception is likely to be quite different from our own. For example, Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960. Its central concern of racial injustice reflects the historical context, as the United States was in the early years of the Civil Rights Movement. Socially and culturally the text also reflects its time and the likely perspectives of its first readers, with the narrative voice belonging to a white middle-class girl, while the characters who are marginalised through race or class are largely denied a voice. As we read the text now – in our own context of reception – we are aware of its resonance with the Black Lives Matter movement, but also of elements that we would now regard as problematic: the use of racist language, for example, or the characterisation of Mayella Ewell as someone who asserts she has been raped but whose testimony should not be believed.

Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch and Mary Badham as Scout in the 1962 film *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The text explores racism and prejudice, but at its centre is a white middle-class family – reflecting the likely context of the audience for both the novel and the film. Atlaspix / Alamy Stock Photo

Develop your understanding of context

ACTIVITY

1 Do some research into the context of production of your text. Where and when was it created? What are some important features of the historical period and the society in which it was produced?

2 The context *represented* in your text is also important. This might be the same as its context of production, but it might be quite different – as in a novel or film about an earlier period. Make notes on the historical, social and cultural contexts depicted in your text.

3 **GROUP** As a class or in small groups, brainstorm the factors that make up your context of reception as you study a text in class. Think about the broader factors – the context of culture – as well as things specific to your school and even your English class – the context of situation. In what ways does your context of reception differ from the text's context of production?

4 What aspects of your own personal context are relevant to the way in which you respond to and interpret your text? Think about things such as characters, settings, situations and events, and the wider ideas and concerns the text explores. (This activity is relevant to your personal response to a text, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.)

Values

Values are qualities, ideas and beliefs that are considered right or desirable in a society or culture. They are part of the context in which a text is produced, and of the context in which a text is received.

While a text will reflect the broader values of its context of production, it will also reflect its author's values, which might differ from the values that are or were widely accepted in the author's society. Texts often contain a message about the values the author feels are important to lead a good life, or about qualities they think are undesirable. In presenting this message, the author might be suggesting that society has lost sight of certain values, or that it should place more emphasis on other values.

Values underpin ideas of what it means to be ethical and moral. These ideas are rarely clear-cut, and they often involve tensions and compromises. Here are some of the common values you may encounter in your texts.

- honesty
- self-reliance
- equality
- freedom of expression
- compassion
- integrity
- selflessness

- tolerance
- justice
- loyalty
- trust
- honour
- courage
- empathy

Authors present and explore values through the characters and events of the text. Characters presented in a positive light usually share the author's values; characters presented in a negative light often have qualities that are rejected by the author. The plot and narrative structure of the text often reveal the author's view of human nature and the values they believe their audiences should endorse and protect.

For example, in Shakespeare's *Othello*, Iago is deceitful and cruel; his actions lead to the deaths of Othello and Desdemona. In contrast, Cassio is loyal and honest. At the end of the play, Cassio is rewarded by becoming governor of Cyprus, while Iago faces torture and imprisonment for the rest of his life.

The conflicting values of Iago (Kenneth Branagh) and Othello (Laurence Fishburne) create tension and drama throughout *Othello*. Album / Alamy Stock Photo

Identify values in your text

1 Choose five characters from your text – some main, some minor.

2 Based on what they say, think and do, summarise the views that each character expresses on important ideas raised by the text. How do these views reveal each character's values?

3 Make a note of the consequences of the characters' behaviour. Do some characters achieve their goals? Are some punished for their thoughts and actions?

4 Which values do you think are endorsed or approved of by the author? Justify your answer.

You may find it helpful to record your answers to these questions in table format; create a table like the one below to summarise your ideas and the textual evidence you find.

Character	Important views	Values	Key actions and their consequences	Author's attitude or viewpoint

FEATURES OF TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

> Novels and short stories
> Film
> Drama
> Nonfiction
> Graphic novels
> Poetry

This chapter explains the key features of the main types of texts you might study in Area of Study 1, with activities you can apply to your set text. You will refer to these features in your personal and analytical text responses as you analyse the ways in which an author has used vocabulary, text structures and language features to shape their text and create meaning.

Novels and short stories

Novels and short stories are fictional narratives – they tell stories about characters who grapple with conflicts and seek to overcome challenges. They can be set in the past, the present or the future; the location can be somewhere familiar or an entirely imagined place.

Plot and structure

The plot or storyline of a fictional narrative is the sequence of events in the text. The structure of a narrative is created by its tensions and conflicts, which ebb and flow throughout. The plot of a linear narrative is usually structured around the following key points.

- **Crisis points** are where the tension reaches a peak.
- **Turning points** are where decisive changes occur.
- The **climax** is the point of greatest tension, and usually occurs near the end of the narrative.
- The **denouement** (a French word meaning 'untying') follows the climax; it provides answers to questions and untangles narrative threads.
- The **resolution** is the final part of the narrative, where the tension relaxes and conflicts are ended.

Flow chart of key plot points

You need to thoroughly know the plot of your novel or short stories: what happens, when it happens and who is involved. A flow chart is a good way to summarise the key plot points. The one below shows the main events leading up to the climax of the plot in Craig Silvey's novel *Jasper Jones*.

> In 1965, while living in Corrigan (a fictitious town in WA), Charlie Bucktin and Jasper Jones find Laura Wishart dead, in a clearing in the bush; they hide her body in a dam.

↓

> Charlie goes to the library to research local murders; his mother punishes him for disobeying orders to stay near home by making him dig a hole in the backyard, then fill it in again.

↓

> Charlie and Jasper secretly go back to the clearing; on his return home Charlie is grounded for two weeks.

↓

> Charlie's friend Jeffrey Lu plays a match for the Corrigan cricket team, scoring the winning runs; Charlie and Eliza (Laura's younger sister) watch from the sidelines and share a kiss.

↓

> Jeffrey's father's prized garden is destroyed by local men in a racist act of vandalism; Charlie's father and some neighbours fight the vandals.

↓

> On New Year's Eve, Charlie and Jasper go to the house of Mad Jack Lionel, whom Jasper suspects of killing Laura …

Rising and falling tension

The way in which an author creates a sequence of crisis points and turning points, with moments of relaxation and reflection in between, creates a pattern of rising and falling tension. The graph on the following page shows a typical plot pattern in which the narrative tension gradually builds towards the climax.
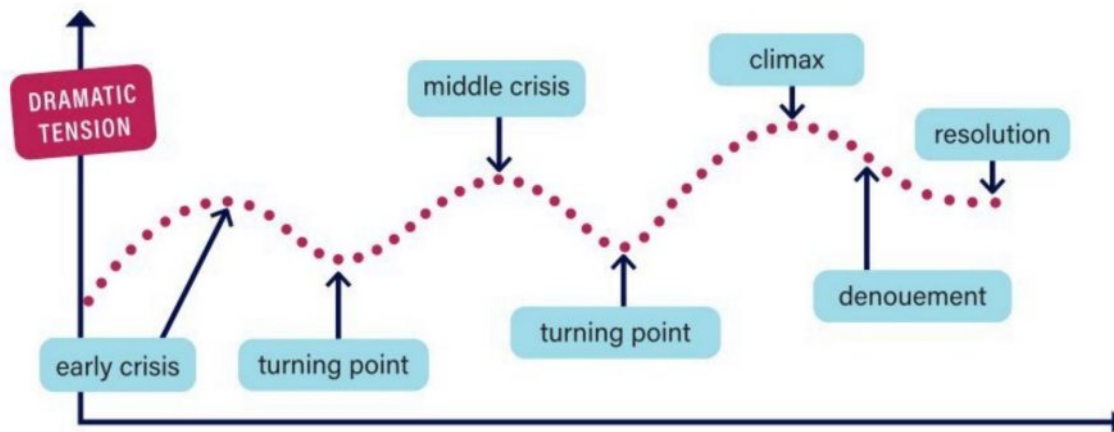
Outline a plot

1 Create a flow chart to outline the plot of a novel or short story you are studying. Record the major events in the order in which they happen.

2 In small groups, compare your selection of events with that of your classmates. Justify your own selection with evidence from the text. Revise your flow chart if needed.

GROUP

3 Identify the main elements of narrative structure in your text: crisis points, turning points, climax, denouement and resolution. Create a graph using these terms to plot the rise and fall of tension.

Linear (chronological) and nonlinear structures

When events are presented in **chronological order**, the reader will usually see a gradual change in the main character's behaviours and attitudes. The rising tension and moments of crisis keep the reader's attention because they want to find out what will happen and how challenging situations will be resolved.

Sometimes a narrative follows a linear or chronological structure with minor variations. For example, Larry Watson's novel *Montana 1948* follows the events of David Hayden's childhood in a mostly chronological order. However, it is framed by a prologue and an epilogue told from the adult David's point of view at a much later point in time. Watson also uses several flashbacks, in which David recalls events (such as shooting a magpie) that occurred before the main storyline.

In a **nonlinear structure**, events are arranged in an order that is significantly different from the chronological sequence. Here are some nonlinear possibilities.

- **A circular structure:** The narrative begins and ends at the same (or nearly the same) point in time. For example, *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini begins at a point near the end of the time frame covered by the novel. The adult protagonist recalls events in his childhood, adolescence and early adult life, seeking to understand how he got into his current situation. In the final few pages, the narrative reaches the point in time at which the novel began, and provides a partial resolution.

- **A multi-voiced narrative:** Events are presented from different perspectives to create a contrast between characters and their circumstances. For example, the events in Fred D'Aguiar's *The Longest Memory* are described from the perspectives of several major characters, whose accounts are placed in a non-chronological order. As events appear very different when described from different characters' points of view and at varying points in time, the reader faces the challenge of trying to make sense of the narrative.

- **Flashbacks:** Although flashbacks are often used in linear narratives, in some narratives the flashbacks contain most of the story. For example, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's story 'The American Embassy' has numerous flashbacks that are presented in reverse chronological order, gradually explaining how the protagonist has come to be standing in a queue at the embassy.

Understand structure

ACTIVITY

1 Use the definitions above and on the previous page to help you identify the structure of your text. Is it mainly linear or mainly nonlinear? (If you are studying a collection of short stories, do this for three or four stories.)

2 What effects are created by flashbacks in your text?

3 Write three sentences about how the author has used structure to present ideas, concerns and tensions.

Setting

The setting is the place and time in which the action of the narrative takes place. Novels can have several settings and describe events over a long period of time; a short story usually has a single setting and a limited time frame.

Settings create the world in which the characters live. The author describes a physical environment as well as a social and cultural context for the characters. The way in which settings are described also helps to create a mood or atmosphere for the narrative.

Understand setting

ACTIVITY

1 Describe the main setting (time and place) of your text. If there are several important settings, list them.

2 **GROUP** In small groups, create a visual presentation of the setting. You might choose to draw a picture or create a collage, either by hand or using computer software. Annotate your presentation with quotes from your text that refer to the setting.

3 How do the characters relate to the main setting in which the action takes place – positively or negatively? What can you infer about the characters from their attitudes towards their setting?

Narrators

The 'voice' that tells the story in a novel or short story is usually either a first-person or third-person narrator.

First-person narrators

A first-person narrator is also a character in the text. They tell the story from their own point of view using first-person pronouns such as 'I' and 'we'. Since the narrator is speaking from inside the world of the text, they communicate a strong and immediate sense of what it is like to live in that world. On the other hand, the reader must infer what the other characters are thinking and feeling from what the narrator says about them.

The fact that events and other characters are presented from this one character's subjective viewpoint can cause readers to question the reliability of the first-person narrator. An **unreliable narrator** gives a prejudiced or biased account of characters and events, or they might omit details simply because they are unaware of things that are happening around them. This is particularly true of child narrators. Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Christopher in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* and Charlie in *Jasper Jones* are first-person narrators with varying degrees of reliability.

Third-person narrators

A third-person narrator tells the story from outside the world of the text, referring to characters in the third person ('they', 'he', 'she'). The term **omniscient narrator** describes a narrator who knows everything about the world of the text and can give readers insight into the thoughts and feelings of various characters.

However, in some texts the third-person narrator only presents the story's events and characters from the protagonist's perspective, and so does not convey any more information than a first-person narrator. This is known as the **third-person limited** narrative perspective.

ACTIVITY

Understand your narrator

1 **GROUP** Choose the column relevant to your text in the following table and complete the four tasks in small groups.

First-person narrator	Third-person narrator
Choose a passage in your text where the narrator is commenting on another character or describing an event. Annotate this passage, highlighting key phrases and making notes on how the narrator presents a point of view.	Choose a passage in your text where the narrator is commenting on a character or describing an event. Annotate this passage, highlighting key phrases and making notes on how the narrator presents a point of view.
Discuss how the narrator influences your response to the character or event.	Discuss how the narrator influences your response to the character or event.

First-person narrator	Third-person narrator
How reliable is the narrator? Do you believe everything the character says about themselves and the world around them? Do they omit any important information?	Is this passage written from a reliable, objective perspective, or from a certain character's perspective? Why do you think this?
Find a passage later in the text. Are the same attitudes and values evident in the narrator's descriptions? Has there been a change in outlook or understanding?	If possible, find a passage in which the narrative point of view shifts from showing the viewpoint of one character to that of another. What is the effect on your response to these characters?

2 Consider the implications of changing the narrator. Choose a key incident or crisis point in your text and consider how the narrator positions the reader to view it. Might it be viewed differently if described from a different perspective?

3 Write a short passage from the point of view of a minor character summarising how they view events and situations in the text. Focus on the way in which this character's viewpoint and opinions might differ from those of the narrator.

Characters

Characters are fictional depictions of people, and they are essential to an author's presentation of human experiences. Characters think and act in ways recognisable to us from our own experiences, even if their particular situations are dramatically different.

We learn about characters through:

- how they are described
- what they say and think
- what they do
- how they interact with other characters
- what other characters say about them.

Characters experience a range of situations and relationships in the course of a narrative. As a result they can – and often do – change.

For example, the main character in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer Scrooge, is visited by three ghosts who confront him with examples of his reprehensible behaviour. Scrooge is forced to reflect on his life in the past, present and future and to acknowledge the pain he has caused others. Finally he vows to mend his ways and to embrace the 'spirit of Christmas'.

Protagonists and main characters

The protagonist is the central character in the narrative. When two or more central characters are equally important they are referred to as the main characters.

An author will develop the protagonist and main characters in detail, adding complexity and giving them positive and negative qualities. Over the course of the narrative, the reader comes to know these characters and to understand how they think and why they act as they do. This leads the reader to sympathise with the main characters, even if they don't always agree with or approve of the characters' behaviour.

Minor characters

Minor characters are not developed in as much detail as main characters, but they still play important roles in the narrative. Minor characters can:

- embody certain attitudes and beliefs that the author wishes to examine

- act as messengers or helpers for the main characters

- be catalysts for change in the main characters, such as by bringing out the best or worst in the protagonist.

Improve your understanding of characters

ACTIVITY

1 Create character summary cards on your computer or in your notebook based on the tables below. Fill them in, using a selection of main and minor characters.

Main character
Name:
Three words to describe them:
Most important relationship:
Most important thing that happens to them:
Main way in which they change:
Five key quotations:

Minor character
Name:
Three words to describe them:
Main function in the text:
Most important thing they tell us about a main character or key idea:
Key quotation:

2 **GROUP** Compare notes with a partner or present your summary cards to the class and discuss your answers to the following questions.

a Was there general agreement about each character's most significant qualities and relationships or functions, or was there some variation?

b How much agreement was there about the most important thing that happens to the main characters?

c How do you account for any differences in interpretation?

3 Consider whether anything is missing from your character summaries. Are there any important facets of a character that you need to add to your summary cards?

4 Create a collage on a poster to represent your main characters visually. Draw your own illustrations or use pictures from magazines or the internet to represent the characters' likes and dislikes, their main qualities, the events that happen to them and how they change as a result. Present your poster to the class and explain why you have included each image OR write a sentence for each image, explaining its inclusion.

Links between stories

Analysing a single short story is not very different from analysing a novel, except that the events and descriptions are much more condensed. However, in addition to discussing the stories as individual narratives, you must also look for connecting links and points of difference between the stories within a collection.

Many collections have similar types of characters or relationships in their stories. For example, recurring character types might include outsiders, children, people who have experienced loss and people on the cusp of a new phase of life. Relationships commonly explored in short stories include marriages and parent–child relationships. Some collections have recurring characters. For example, in Alice Munro's collection *Runaway*, the character Juliet features in three of the eight stories.

Most short story collections have ideas or images that are common to several stories. For example, images of entrapment, illness and death appear throughout the horror stories of Edgar Allan Poe. Stories can also be linked by their settings, or by similar situations and challenges faced by the characters. For example, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck* contains several stories in which characters with Nigerian backgrounds attempt to create new lives in the United States.

Film

A film tells a story using moving pictures and a soundtrack. Like a novel or a short story, a film can present a fictional narrative using characters and settings, placing events in an order that creates rising and falling tension.

To study a film text successfully, it is necessary to explore and understand the visual and sound elements as well as the usual story elements. View the film you are studying in full at least twice. Revisit key scenes several times: the opening and closing scenes, the introduction of main characters, turning points, crisis points and the film's climax. Initially your focus will be on *what* happens, but as you watch scenes repeatedly you will start to notice *how* the filmmakers have created and combined shots. This is what produces the 'look and feel' of a film – in other words, the film style.

There are four elements of film style: cinematography, mise en scène, editing and sound. In most films these elements combine almost seamlessly, so that you do not notice them individually. A close analysis of a scene, however, will explain how these elements of film style work together to tell a story.

Cinematography

The cinematographer is the person who, under instruction from the director, sets up all the shots in the film. Various camera distances and angles are used to create different effects; some of the main shots are described below and on the following pages.

Extreme close-up

Creates a magnified image that brings the viewer very close to an object or part of an object.

Close-up

Shows the subject matter in detail; often used for faces, a significant object or important text.

Medium shot (or mid shot)

Shows most or all of one or two people with some background, placing characters in a context.

Long shot

Shows the physical environment, with people appearing further away from the camera than in a medium shot.

Aerial shot

Shows the setting from far above, establishing a sense of place.
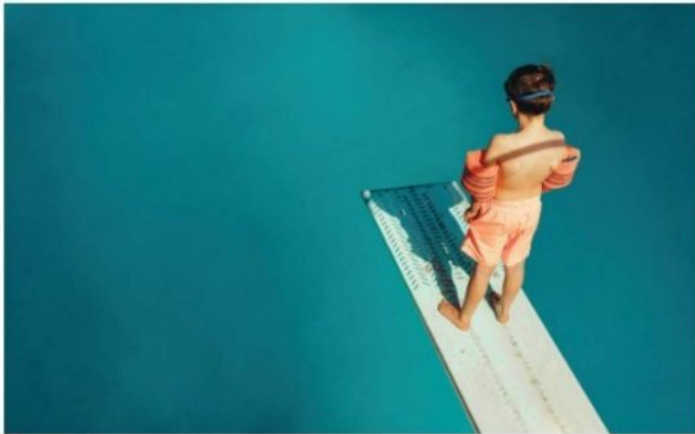
Tilt-down shot (or high-angle shot)

Looks down at the subject, showing it from above.

Tilt-up shot (or low-angle shot)

Looks up at the subject, showing it from below.

Panning shot

The camera rotates from left to right (or right to left).

Zoom shot

The focal length of the camera lens changes continuously so the viewer seems to move towards (or away from) the subject.

Analyse cinematography

1 Identify three different shot types in the film you are studying. For each shot, describe what is in the frame.

2 Write two or three sentences for each, explaining why you think the director chose to use this sort of shot at this point in the film. What does it suggest about a character or a situation? What effect does it have on the viewer? Does it illuminate a tension or a key idea being explored by the film?

Mise en scène

Mise en scène means 'putting on stage', and refers to everything that can be seen within the frame at a given point in a film. Setting, acting style, costumes and lighting are the four visual elements of mise en scène.

Visual element	What to look for	Effects
Setting is the physical location of any scene.	• If outdoors, is the setting vast and intimidating, or attractive and welcoming? • If indoors, are the rooms large and comfortable, or small and constricting? • Does the setting establish a country or region?	• The setting puts characters in a context. • In conjunction with lighting and sound, a setting can help to create a mood. • The setting might contain elements that the main characters value or reject, contributing to tension and conflict.
Acting style includes facial expressions and body language.	• Is the acting style natural, exaggerated, understated or measured? • How does this help to create a character's social status, personality and attitudes?	• Key character traits can be established through exaggeration and repetition. • The actor's use of facial expressions and body language can indicate the nature of a relationship.

▶ Characters' **costumes** include clothes, hairstyles, make-up and personal props.	• How do costumes reflect the historical period and the characters' social and cultural contexts? • How are specific items used to reveal aspects of characters?	• Clothes, hairstyles, make-up and props can reflect a character's social status and personality. • Visual elements such as colour can establish types and groups of characters.
Lighting refers to the colour, intensity, source and direction of light.	• What colour is the lighting? • How intense is the lighting? • Is the scene evenly lit, or are there areas of bright light and/or shadow?	• Lighting can be used to suggest a character's state of mind. • The degree of clarity of the light (from clear to hazy or murky) adds to the mood. • A spotlight can draw attention to a significant character.

Read the annotations to this shot from *Gattaca* (written and directed by Andrew Niccol) to see how you can analyse elements of mise en scène.

Lighting: The low-level lighting creates generally dark interiors, suggesting entrapment. Irene's face is relatively well-lit, consistent with her central role in the film.

Setting: Muted colours and featureless interiors suggest a world without variety or interest. The workers' computers dominate the space, reflecting the work-focused culture.

Acting style: The actor looks straight ahead, appearing determined, serious and possibly defiant.

Costumes: Dark clothes contribute to the sombre mood, while Irene's hair is tied back tightly, reflecting the controlled emotions in this society. Her red lipstick hints at passion and Irene's ultimate refusal to follow social conventions.

Uma Thurman as Irene in *Gattaca* (1997). Moviestore Collection Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

Analyse mise en scène

ACTIVITY

1 Describe an important setting in your film.

2 How does the director shape your impressions of the setting? Consider the physical features of the setting, the lighting and the camera shots used.

3 Select one of the main characters and focus on that character in an important scene. Describe their costume (including any personal props such as jewellery) and their acting style in this scene. How do costume and acting style work together to create the character?

Editing

Film editing is the process of selecting and combining shots to tell a story. Much editing is invisible: the audience is barely aware of the sequence of shots or the ways in which they are joined. The use of sound (such as dialogue or the music soundtrack) also contributes to the illusion of continuity.

Three common types of edits are:

- **cuts**, in which one shot ends and the next begins immediately
- **dissolves**, in which one shot briefly overlaps with the next
- **fades**, in which one shot dissolves into black before the next shot begins.

One common use of a cut is in a shot/reverse-shot. In this type of edit, the film cuts back and forth between two points of view. For example, it is often used to show two people having a conversation.

A more obvious type of edit is crosscutting, which uses cuts to link shots that show action taking place in different locations. A film will typically use crosscuts to move back and forth between related or simultaneous events; more rapid crosscuts can quickly increase tension and suspense. Crosscuts can also be used to link events occurring at different times, such as in the film's present and in a flashback.

Sound

Sound consists of dialogue, music and sound effects; sometimes a narrative voice-over is also used. Sound plays an important part in the telling of the story, contributing to the mood of a scene as well as the plot. Sound works with other film elements to shape our understanding of the film's visual meaning. For example, a shot of a child screaming in a park can lead us to think the child is in danger. However, the same sound (a child's scream) used with an image of a dog about to be hit by a car or a group of children playing rowdily will have very different effects.

Diegetic sound is sound that comes from within the world of the film and can be heard by the characters. **Non-diegetic** sounds can only be heard by the audience; the music soundtrack is a common example, but if the music is created or heard by the characters themselves then it is diegetic sound.

The following are some common types of sound in a film.

- **Narrative voice-over** is the voice of a narrator, who is often also a character in the film. The narrator talks directly to the audience, giving extra information that might be difficult to show visually.

- **Music** is one of the most powerful elements in a film. It can build suspense and express sadness, triumph or joy. A sudden change from one style to another can create tension or bring relief. Music can also help establish a social or cultural context for the characters.

- **Sound effects** are sounds that match the visuals. For example, the sound of a car door slamming will be paired with a visual of the action.

It is also important to realise when there is no sound – silence is a significant element of a

soundtrack and should always be analysed for effect. For example, silence in a jungle or on a battlefield effectively signals impending danger, while a character standing alone and in silence might indicate a time of reflection or understanding.

Analyse a scene

Choose a two-minute section of the film you are studying. You could choose the opening two minutes, as it is interesting to explore how a film establishes important ideas and tensions. Watch the selected section a number of times and then answer these questions on the elements of film style.

Scan the QR code or click here to see a sample analysis of a scene from Ridley Scott's 1982 film *Blade Runner*.

1 Shots and edits

a How many shots can you count in this section of the film?

b What kinds of edits are used to combine the shots? Are the edits hardly noticeable to the audience, or have they been made deliberately noticeable? What is the effect?

2 Cinematography

a Identify as many camera distances and angles as you can (see pages 25–7). Why do you think these camera distances and angles have been used?

b Does the camera move in this section of the film? If so, who or what does the camera follow? How does this focus our attention on certain characters or events?

c What is left out of the frame as a result of camera position and movement?

3 Mise en scène

a Look closely at one shot and describe the four elements of mise en scène.

b What information does this shot give you about characters and their situations? What questions does it prompt you to ask about them?

c What is the mood (peaceful; tense; exciting) suggested by the shot, and how is it suggested?

d Turn the sound off and watch the shot again. To what extent is the mood created purely by visual elements?

4 Sound

a Comment on the music. What effect does it have on the audience? Would different music alter the mood?

b What sound effects are used? Do they blend seamlessly into the action or do they stand out?

Drama

Drama shares many features with other narrative genres. It involves characters, settings and elements of narrative structure such as crisis points, a climax and a resolution. Unlike a novel, though, a play is intended to be seen as a live performance. You will probably study a play by reading the print text (the script), and you might also read the parts aloud in class. However, if it is possible to see a stage production of the play you are studying, make every effort to do so, as you will gain a much richer understanding of the text.

While the printed script remains the same, different productions will interpret and stage the work differently and each live performance is unique – the actors' delivery of their lines and the interaction between the actors and the audience vary each time. In this sense, a play script is not a static text; it allows for different approaches and interpretations.

Understand characters in a play

ACTIVITY

GROUP

1 Complete character summary cards for the main characters in your play (see page 23).

2 In pairs, conduct an imaginary interview with an important character. One of you should devise five or six questions about the character's feelings, motivations, decisions and relationships, while the other answers the questions as the character.

Plot and structure

Most plays are structured in a way that creates rising tension, leading to a climax and then a resolution. The **exposition** of the play is its opening section: it establishes the setting and characters, and sets up the situations and conflicts that the play will develop.

Plays are usually divided into **acts**, each of which may include several **scenes**. Acts group the play's events into broad sections. For example, in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*:

- Act 1 establishes the characters and the dramatic premise – that Macbeth wishes to become king.

- Acts 2 and 3 develop the narrative tension.

- Act 4 contains a turning point – the protagonist loses the support of the people; opposing forces gather strength and support.

- Act 5 presents the climax and resolution – the protagonist fights then dies, and peace is restored.

Macbeth's murder of King Duncan increases the narrative tension in Act 2 of *Macbeth*. Ray Fearon and Tara Fitzgerald in a Globe Theatre production of *Macbeth*. theatrepix / Alamy Stock Photo

An act generally covers a limited period of time, even if the scenes require a change of setting. For example, the following are the settings of the scenes in Act 3 of *Macbeth*.

- Scene 1: Forres: the castle
- Scene 2: The castle
- Scene 3: A park near the castle
- Scene 4: Hall in the castle: a banquet table
- Scene 5: A heath
- Scene 6: Forres: the castle

As we move back and forth between the action within the castle, the action outside the castle and the witches on the heath, each scene overlaps in time with the scenes before and after. This gives the narrative continuity and shows different points of view on concurrent events.

The length of time that passes between acts can be long or short depending on the time period covered by the play. In *Macbeth*, only a few hours pass between Acts 1 and 2; yet in *Othello*, the Venetian fleet sails thousands of kilometres to Cyprus between the first two acts.

A quite different structure is used in Reginald Rose's *Twelve Angry Men*. Presented in two acts with no scene divisions, the play's action takes exactly the same amount of time as the jury's deliberations, and there is no break in the time line between the acts.

Understand the plot and structure of a play

ACTIVITY

1 Create a flow chart to summarise the plot of your drama text (see page 18).

2 Plot the main structural elements of the play on a graph (see page 19). Label the graph to show the exposition, crisis points, turning points, climax, denouement and resolution.

Stage directions and stage sets

Stage directions (usually shown in italics) provide information about three main aspects of the production:

- **the set**, including props and lighting; for example, a stage direction could specify, '*An old wooden table and chairs are centre stage*' or '*A spotlight illuminates the doorway*'

- **the presentation and performances of characters**, such as their physical appearance, costumes, movements, entrances and exits, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice; for example, the stage directions might describe a character as '*walking stealthily towards the veranda*', '*speaking furiously*' or '*frowning*'

- **sound**, including music; for example, stage directions could say '*Children shriek downstairs*', '*The watchman can be heard tapping*' or '*Music rises*'.

Because the staging and the performances of the actors are crucial to the audience's experience, the stage directions in the script must be read closely and considered in any analysis of the play.

Ben Mendelsohn (Lewis) and Barry Otto (Roy) performed in the play *Cosi* by Louis Nowra, before also starring in the 1996 film adaptation, shown here. AF archive / Alamy Stock Photo

Explore stage directions

ACTIVITY

1 Select a main character from your play. Find examples in the stage directions that:

  a describe the character's appearance

  b describe the character's movement

  c describe the character's costume and/or changes of costume

  d describe props and/or backdrops relevant to the character

  e describe sound and/or lighting effects that contribute to the portrayal of the character

  f indicate how the character should deliver a line.

2 Choose a significant speech that lacks detailed stage directions and write the directions yourself, keeping in mind the stage set and any appropriate sound effects or music.

3 In small groups, select a key scene and perform it to the class, following the stage directions carefully but without using your voice or any other sound. The class should try to guess which scene you are miming.

GROUP

Dialogue, soliloquies and asides

In a play, there is usually no narrative voice to describe places and characters or to explain characters' thoughts and motives. This means that the play's dialogue, with the aid of stage directions, has to provide background information, establish the tensions and concerns of the narrative, create the characters and move the plot forward.

A **soliloquy** is a speech delivered by one character alone on the stage. It communicates the character's thoughts and feelings to the audience and allows for ideas to be explored, but does not usually advance the plot. In *Macbeth*, the famous soliloquy, 'Is this a dagger which I see before me' (in Act 2, Scene 1) allows Macbeth to share with the audience his horror at the fact that he is about to murder King Duncan.

Asides are brief comments to the audience that do not interrupt the action of the play. They reveal thoughts and feelings that a character wishes to conceal from others who are also present onstage. Macbeth's asides when he is told he will become Thane of Cawdor (in *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 3) reveal to the audience his ambition to become king.

Both soliloquies and asides strengthen the connection between characters and the audience. It is understood that a character is being entirely honest in a soliloquy or aside, even though they may be deceitful or manipulative in their conversations and relationships with other characters. This means that **inferred meanings** can be very important in drama: a character might say one thing to another character, but because they have said something completely different in an earlier soliloquy, the audience can infer that the character is being deceptive and has ulterior motives.

Explore soliloquies and major speeches

If your play includes soliloquies, choose one soliloquy and answer the following questions. If there are no soliloquies, answer these questions for one of the longer speeches in your play.

1 Who is speaking?

2 What does the speech contribute to your understanding of the character?

3 What do you learn about the speaker's attitudes towards other characters?

4 Does the speech provide information or insights that might not otherwise be presented by the play? If so, how do these influence the audience's reactions to subsequent events?

5 How does the speech help to develop the ideas, concerns and tensions of the play?

Nonfiction

Many nonfiction texts have the same structural features as fictional narratives; for example, they tell a story in which tensions lead to a climax and some sense of resolution. However, the crucial difference between nonfiction and fiction is that nonfiction describes real individuals and actual events, as accurately and truthfully as possible.

Types of nonfiction narratives

The following are the main types of nonfiction texts that you might come across in your reading.

- **Biographies** are written in the third person and record the most significant events of a person's life, usually in chronological order. A biography generally aims to have a neutral, detached tone and is written in a formal style, while giving readers new insight into the subject.

- **Autobiographies** are written in the first person and recount significant events of the author's life and times. There is no requirement for the writer to be neutral – an autobiography can present personal views and strong opinions, and can be written in a conversational style.

- **Memoirs** are also first-person records of memories, but usually cover only a certain period or series of events in the author's life, rather than their whole life. A memoir often has a specific focus or concern. For example, in *I Am Malala*, Malala Yousafzai recounts events in her childhood with a strong focus on girls' right to an education and the oppressive rule of the Taliban in Pakistan.

- **True crime** writing describes the events surrounding a well-known crime or series of crimes, often featuring a court case. Examples include Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* and Chloe Hooper's *The Tall Man*.

- **Journalistic nonfiction** includes book-length accounts of travels or investigations, such as Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild* and Anna Funder's *Stasiland*.

In addition, some nonfiction texts are collections of shorter pieces, such as memoirs or essays. For example, the books in Black Inc.'s *Growing Up* series are collections of memoirs that are connected by the life experiences and identities of the writers.

Time lines and subjects

Many features of fictional texts such as novels and short stories are also important in nonfiction texts. Common features include narrative structure, tensions and conflicts, narrative voice, setting and context.

In life writing (such as autobiographies and biographies), the main 'character' is usually referred to as the subject, and the plot or order of events is called the time line. Nevertheless, similar strategies can be used to analyse the features of both nonfiction and fiction.

Create a time line

ACTIVITY

Using a flow chart (see page 18) or other graphic, create a time line to record the significant events in the nonfiction text you are studying. (If your nonfiction text consists of a number of short pieces, select one or two pieces for this activity.) Note that the text might not describe events in the order in which they actually occurred. However, you should place them in chronological order in your time line.

Label the time line to show which events correspond to the following structural elements: crisis points; turning points; climax; denouement; resolution.

Point of view and selection of events

To a large extent, nonfiction texts tell the 'truth'. However, any account of events is told from a particular point of view, and will emphasise certain aspects of events and individuals. Inevitably, it will also leave out some details and perspectives. Even biographies are written from a certain viewpoint or angle; although they might aim to remain detached, biographers will have an opinion about their subject and can never be entirely neutral. For example, some biographies of Ned Kelly portray him as a hero, others as a villain.

In nonfiction texts that offer firsthand or personal accounts, the author's memory of the facts is influenced by their particular point of view. For instance, the events of Elie Wiesel's *Night* are narrated by a Holocaust survivor; if a German SS officer recounted the same events, their recollections would probably be quite different.

Context and setting

To understand an author's viewpoint in biographical or autobiographical writing, do some research about the life and times of the subject. If you are studying Wiesel's *Night*, you should research concentration camps in World War II and the lives of other survivors. If you are studying Najaf Mazari and Robert Hillman's *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif*, you need to know something about the history of the various wars in Afghanistan, life in an Australian detention centre, and the process of applying for asylum in Australia.

Understand context and setting

ACTIVITY

1 Describe the opening scene of your text. What situation and which individuals are described at the beginning of the narrative? Why do you think the author decided to begin in this way?

2 In what time period is the text set? What is the main setting?

3 How does the subject of the narrative relate to the setting – positively or negatively? Include some textual evidence in your response.

4 Research the historical, social and cultural context in which the events of your text take place. How was the subject of the text affected by this context?

5 Research any particular places or significant people referred to in the text. How does the author view these places and people – fondly? With bitterness? Explain why you think this is the case.

Graphic novels

A graphic novel uses a combination of images and words in a comic-strip format to tell a story. The narrative voice of a graphic novel is expressed through captions, as well as through the images themselves. Dialogue is in the form of speech balloons, while thought bubbles can be used to show characters' unspoken reflections on what is happening around them.

The drawings can be in colour or black and white; they can combine realistic representations of people and places with more abstract or surreal elements. Detailed depictions of settings and of characters' appearances, facial expressions and clothing convey not just information but also attitudes and emotions. A graphic novel's values are expressed largely through the ways in which characters are portrayed in the images, as well as through the narrative in the captions.

Text and image complement each other, conveying thoughts and emotions as well as furthering the plot. Sometimes there is a gap or contradiction between words and image. For example, in the following spread from Shaun Tan's graphic novel *The Lost Thing*, the narrator's comment that his parents 'didn't really notice it at first' is at odds with the red creature's

gigantic size. The implied meaning here is that the parents lack awareness of what doesn't immediately concern them – a meaning that the reader can only infer by thinking about text and image in combination.

Scan the code or click here to read or listen to Shaun Tan's discussion of his use of words and pictures in his graphic novels.
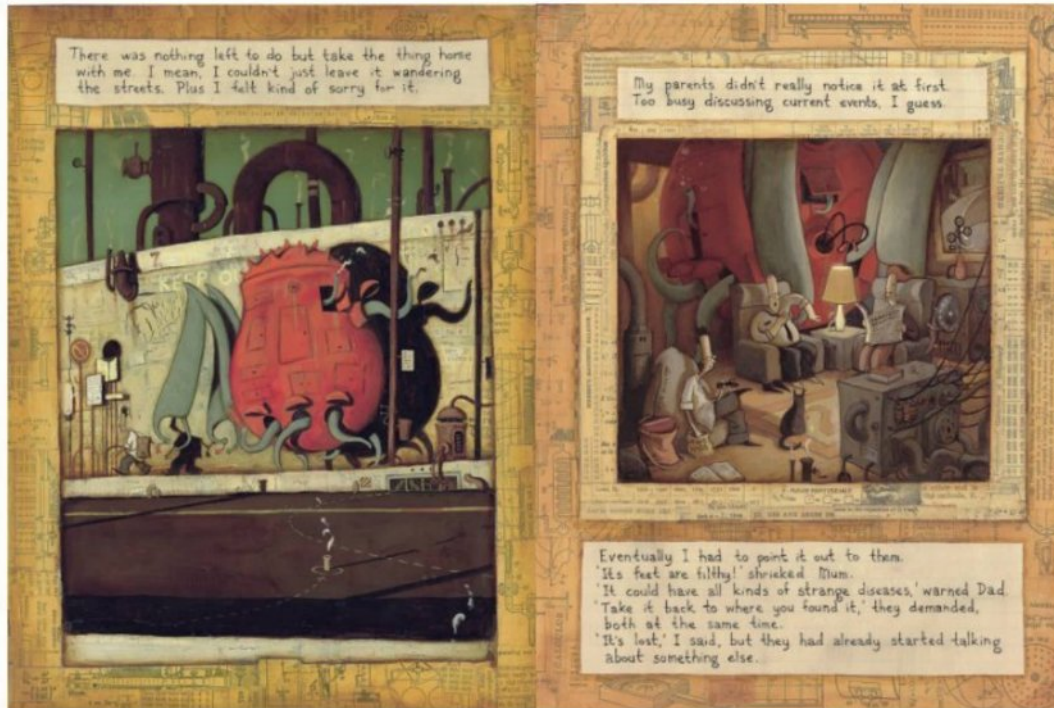
In Shaun Tan's graphic novel *The Lost Thing* (2000), even the frames contain detailed drawings.

Analyse features of a graphic novel

1   Write a brief description of the style of drawings in the graphic novel you are studying. Include three or four adjectives that you could use in your analytical writing about this text.

2   How do the drawings help to create the world of the text? Think about how they reflect elements of the historical, social and cultural context.

3   Is the story mainly told through the characters' dialogue and the illustrations, or are the captions equally important? Explain your answer.

4   Select one panel for close analysis and write a short paragraph explaining how image and text work together in this panel. Incorporate a discussion of the use of colour or shading, any prominent features of the illustration (e.g. a character's facial expression), the kind of text included (e.g. caption or dialogue) and how the text is presented (e.g. large or small font, capitals or lower case).

ACTIVITY

Poetry

Poets use language differently from prose writers. Poems are not necessarily written to tell a story or to convey a single, clear message; instead, they often explore ideas and emotions. Rather than using grammatically correct sentences and paragraphs, poets often play with sounds and imagery.

Analysing a poem means looking very closely at all its elements – individual words, patterns of words, sounds, images, structure and form – and seeing how they fit together to create a coherent whole. You may not see immediately what a poet is conveying and you might need to re-read the poem a number of times. It is a complex process, so the best way to approach poetry analysis is to break it down into a series of steps.

ACTIVITY

Research the poet

Before you begin a close analysis of a poem or collection of poems, research the life, opinions and published work of the poet you are studying to gain a better understanding of the context in which their poetry was written.

1 Find out where and when the poet was born and where they live or (if they are no longer alive) lived.

2 Identify the most important experiences in the poet's life.

3 What main beliefs or views does/did the poet hold (e.g. about society, relationships and art)?

4 Which are their most important or famous poems?

Annotating a poem

It is extremely helpful to make a copy of the poem you are studying and annotate it (write notes on and around it), or mark up an electronic copy with text and highlighting. Use different colours to identify notes about different aspects, such as sound patterns, the speaker's voice, imagery, word choice and form.

You can follow the process explained in the following sections to annotate the poem 'Index Australis' by Evelyn Araluen, reproduced on the next page, or to annotate a poem you are studying. Your notes will be an excellent basis for any response you need to write, whether it is personal or analytical.

Evelyn Araluen's collection of poetry and prose *Dropbear* was published in 2021.

Sound and meaning

Sound patterns often play an important part in the construction of a poem. The first step in poetry analysis should be reading the poem aloud. Pause slightly at the end of each line, but also pay close attention to the punctuation and let it guide your reading. Listen to the sounds and be attentive to any patterns, rhythms, repetition or interesting midline pauses.

As an example, read aloud the poem 'Index Australis' by Evelyn Araluen, listening to the sound patterns as you read. Alternatively, read out a poem you are studying.

Index Australis

Straya is a wild straggly abyss
with one fence struck through
a line of tin dogs guarding the coal from the flies
Straya is brown and sharp
when you watch it through the car window
through the convex humming screen

Straya in sepia 35 mm with sweat rolling across a tan
with that thin shirt sticking to skin
Straya trailing tin foil through red dirt
on its way to the pool party in the inland sea
the doof in the desert the biggest baddest bash
since time immemorial
everyone wants to rave in the oldest earth on earth

No law against that, no laws for nothing
in the age of entitlement
in the Decolonial Dundee
and well may we say, we will decide
who and how
well may we be not lectured and well
may we do it slowly

But darl, this is a drama not a document
Straya is a man's country
and you're here to die lovely against the rock
to fold linenly into horizon
and sweat beautiful blonde on the beach

Baby, don't you know this is a weeping song
and you'd be so beautiful in that brown creek

After you have read or listened to a poem, make notes using the following guidelines. Don't be afraid of 'getting it wrong' – this part of the process is all about jotting down your initial ideas and questions.

- Mark any repeated sounds (alliteration, assonance, rhyming or repeated words).
- Note whether the poem has a consistent beat or rhythm.
- Indicate where the pace speeds up or slows down, and think about which words this draws attention to.
- Write down the thoughts and feelings that the poem raises.
- Note anything that you didn't understand and look up the definition of any words you don't know.

Speakers and listeners

In a work of fiction, the story is told by a narrator; in a poem, the narrator is called the speaker or persona. Remember that the speaker is a character, not the poet themselves.

There is also sometimes an implied listener in a poem, someone whom the speaker is addressing. This might be a particular character, such as a partner or nemesis (enemy or opposing force), or it may be a broad group, such as adult Australians.

Read the poem again, considering the characterisation of the speaker and the implied listener.

- Make notes in the margin about your impression of the speaker – are there hints about their age, gender, background, attitude, views or values? Highlight words and phrases that support your view.

- Make a list of words to describe the main tone of the poem and summarise your initial thoughts about what the speaker's opinions might be.

- Make notes about your impression of the implied listener (if there is one), and highlight words and phrases that support your view.

- Consider any other individuals in the poem. How are they described? How are we positioned to feel and think about them? Highlight relevant words and phrases.

Sample annotations

Here are the first six lines of 'Index Australis', with annotations based on the prompts for 'Sound and meaning' and 'Speakers and listeners'.

statements about Australia suggest the speaker knows the country well

repeated 's' sounds – like snakes in the outback?

slang word for Australia, based on a casual pronunciation – repeated in lines 4, 7, 9, 22

Straya is a wild straggly abyss
with one fence struck through
a line of tin dogs guarding the coal from the flies
Straya is brown and sharp
when you watch it through the car window
through the convex humming screen

comical image; humorous, sarcastic tone; possible political message critical of those who value coal

second person 'you': who is being addressed? – suggests a shared experience of driving/ looking

fairly steady rhythm/ beat creates forward movement (the underlined syllables are stressed)

Poetic language: figurative language, imagery and diction

Poetry often uses figurative language and imagery, because these techniques enable a poet to convey detailed and layered ideas in just a few words.

Imagery, usually involving one or more of the five senses, helps to create setting, atmosphere and mood. **Figurative language** is the general term for words and phrases being used in a non-literal way; examples include metaphors, similes and personification. These techniques also create images, and make connections between different objects and ideas.

For example, in 'Index Australis' the phrase 'fold linenly into horizon' uses the made-up word 'linenly' to create an image of fabric merging into the landscape. The stanza begins with the direct address 'But darl', suggesting (and critiquing) stereotyped representations of women as passive in the Australian landscape, as if they are no more substantial than the linen they wear.

The careful selection of words, or **diction**, is crucial to a poem's meaning as well as its tone and sound. Poets often use words with multiple meanings or significant **connotations** (associations) to create layers of meaning. Think about the connotations of 'darl' and 'baby' in 'Index Australis'; these are colloquial terms of affection, usually directed at women, that can sometimes be patronising or belittling.

Allusions can be another important source of meaning. In 'Index Australis' the phrase 'well may we say' echoes the famous words of former prime minister Gough Whitlam on the day of his dismissal ('well may we say God Save the Queen because nothing will save the Governor-General'), while 'we will decide' echoes former prime minister John Howard's 2001 election slogan 'we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come'. These allusions make it clear that Araluen is examining, in a manner that is both humorous and critical, the nature of Australia's political leadership over time.

To focus on the use of language, make further annotations to your poem following these steps.

- Highlight the metaphors, similes and examples of personification. Next to each, write a short explanation of what it means and how it adds to the ideas and emotions of the poem.

- Highlight any interesting images, and comment on how they add to the atmosphere, mood and ideas of the poem.

- Underline any words that have important connotations, and note these connotations near the words. How do the connotations connect with other words and images in the poem?

- Circle any phrases that you know are (or think might be) allusions to other texts or statements, and make brief notes on the references. (If you are not sure, check them by doing an internet search.)

Analyse figurative language, imagery and diction

ACTIVITY

In a poem you are studying, select five words or phrases that you find striking or that create strong images.

1 Identify any poetic techniques, such as metaphor, simile or personification, that are used in these words or phrases.

2 Explain the meaning of any figurative language used in these words or phrases.

3 List any words that have important connotations, and write down both the denotations (the literal or dictionary meanings) and the connotations for these words.

Use your answers to these questions to add to your annotations of the poem.

Poetic forms and structures

It is important to consider the form of the poem (the overall structure and type of poem) and how the poet has used organising techniques or patterns, such as stanzas. Think about what effect these choices of form and structure have on the meaning and impact of the poem.

Poets also use internal structures to convey their ideas, using punctuation, rhyme and metre to group or separate words and phrases. Use these guidelines to understand how form and structure are used in your poem and to make further annotations.

- Circle words or phrases that the punctuation emphasises by isolating them from the rest of the poem.

- Look for rhyming patterns at the ends of lines and consider how these might affect the pace or draw attention to certain words.

- Look for a consistent rhythm: start by dividing each line into syllables to see if there is a regular pattern in the number of syllables in each line.

- Consider how a change in the rhythm might draw your attention to particular words and phrases, or correspond to the poem's meaning at that point.

- Check whether the poem is written in a recognised poetic form. If it is, consider how the traditions of the form have been used and/or subverted (changed to question the original) in this poem. For example, a sonnet is traditionally a love poem, but sometimes a poet uses a sonnet to reject the idea of romantic love. If your poem doesn't have a recognisable form or regular line or stanza lengths, it might be written in free verse, as 'Index Australis' is.
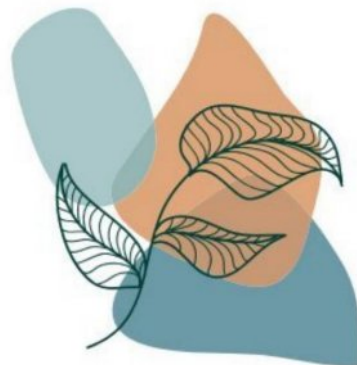
Interpreting a poem

Most poems can have a range of interpretations. This is part of what makes poetry so interesting. However, after you have looked at each aspect of the poem you are studying, you should be able to answer the following questions.

- What is the central idea that the poem explores?
- What is the speaker's position on or view of the central idea?
- What is the implied view of the poet?
- How do the poet's choices of language and form help to convey the main message and feeling?

Analyse and interpret

1 Referring to your annotations, explain what you discovered about the main elements of the poem by writing one paragraph on each of these: sound; the speaker's voice and the implied listener (if there is one); figurative language, imagery and diction; form and structure. Each paragraph should:

- describe a feature or technique in the poem
- explain how the feature or technique works
- explain how the feature or technique helps to convey the ideas and feelings of the poem.

2 Write a paragraph explaining what you think is the central idea or message of the poem. Justify your view using material from your answer to question 1.

PERSONAL TEXT RESPONSES

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Identifying connections
- Planning your essay
- Writing your essay
- Building your skills
- Editing and proofreading checklists
- Sample responses

For Unit 1, Outcome 1, you need to make personal connections with a text. This involves more than just understanding the meaning of the text; you will also have to consider how the text relates to your own life – your memories, experiences and personal views on the world. Exploring personal connections to texts might also mean giving a personal response to the issues, ideas and values in texts, or reflecting on how you would respond to a conflict or tension in the text.

Identifying connections

To identify your own connections with the text, focus on the following areas.

Your major life experiences

Your ideas and values

The plot and storyline

Your relationships

Personal connections

The characters and their relationships

Challenges you have faced

Challenges the characters face

The places you have lived in and visited

The author's ideas and values

The setting/s of the text
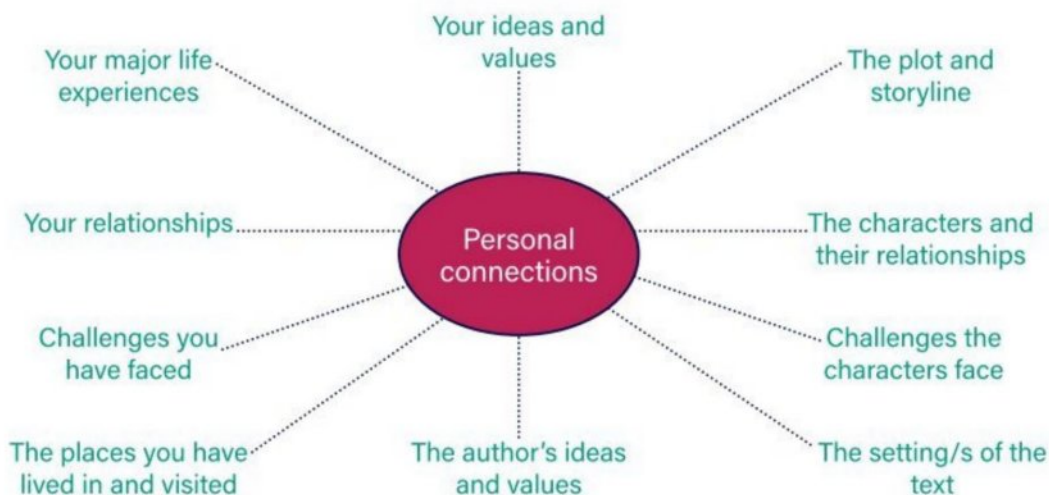
Scan the code or click here for a video overview of the personal response task.

Identify personal connections to the text by looking for overlaps and similarities between the different areas in the diagram on the previous page. For example, what aspects of your own experiences reflect the experiences of the characters? Have you experienced any major life events that reflect key moments in the plot? What are your values and your ideas about the world, and how do they compare with those presented in the text?

You can use a table or a Venn diagram to organise your ideas. The following table incorporates four broad areas of a text.

Text: *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald		
Feature	**In the text**	**In my life**
Characters, people and relationships	Jay Gatsby – young, rural background, became very wealthy.	Me – young, from a rural background in Victoria.
	Daisy Buchanan – attractive and charming but fickle and shallow.	Reminds me of 'influencers' on social media.
Plot and important moments	Nick Carraway moves from Minnesota to New York and has conflicting feelings about the lifestyle.	I moved from the country to the city at the start of secondary school, and had to adjust to a very different way of life.
Ideas and values	The divides between classes and between the rich and the poor.	The divide between people from the city and people from the country.
Settings and places	East Egg and West Egg, the Valley of Ashes.	Rural Victoria, Melbourne, and different parts of Melbourne (richer and poorer areas).

The following Venn diagram is more targeted than the table above, and focuses on ideas and values. It uses the text *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.

In the text
- Censorship
- The threat of technology
- Dystopian society

Key connection
The threat of technology such as social media and phones taking over people's lives

In my life
- Social media
- Use of phones and devices
- Being controlled by adults – parents, teachers, government
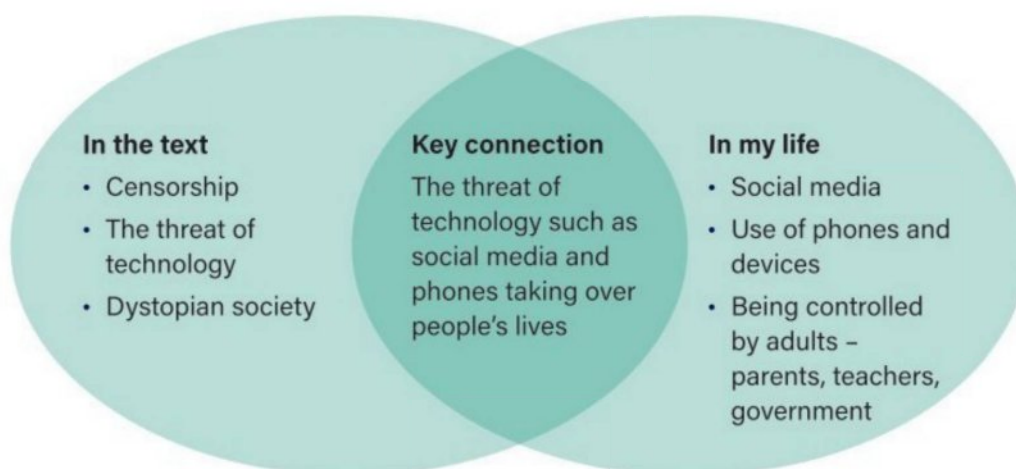
ACTIVITY

Discuss ideas and values in your text

Everybody's perspective on a text is unique because everybody's personal context is different. For example, one person in your class might think that the most important idea in a text is *justice*, but another might think that *friendship* is a more prominent concern.

GROUP One way of exploring the range of ideas and values in your class is to hold a **fishbowl discussion**. This kind of group discussion gives people an opportunity to present and discuss their perspectives, and highlights the fact that there is no single right answer when it comes to analysing texts and making personal connections.

Prompt: What is the most important idea or value in the text, and why?

1 Arrange the classroom in two concentric circles with six to twelve chairs in the inner circle, and the rest in the outer circle.

2 Students in the inner circle should discuss the prompt, making sure that every student has the opportunity to contribute. When addressing the prompt, you should explain why you think the idea is important based on your *personal connections* to the text. For example, you might have a strong sense of justice and therefore believe that the author's values around justice, fairness and equity are important.

3 Students in the outer circle should take notes on the discussion, recording the inner circle's conversations.

4 At the end, a representative from the outer circle should summarise the discussion in a short speech to the whole group.

Planning your essay

Your personal response to a text will reflect on connections between the text and your own life; it will also explore and analyse elements of the text. These elements include:

- the ideas, concerns and tensions presented in the text
- characters, settings, plot, point of view and voice
- the author's use of vocabulary, text structures and language features.

The Study Design does not state that you must respond to a set topic or prompt, but it is possible that your teacher will ask you to do this. Even if you are given the freedom to choose your own focus, you may find it useful to write a prompt.

Prompts for writing

A prompt for your personal response can be based on any of the elements discussed in the first part of this chapter: character, setting, plot, ideas and values. Prompts based on ideas and values are likely to provide the best basis for your essay.

Here are a few example prompts based on key ideas in *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.

- Discuss the ways in which technology can be used for control in both *Fahrenheit 451* and your own experience.

- In *Fahrenheit 451* and your own life, does freedom require knowledge?

- Explore your personal connections with *Fahrenheit 451* in your response to the following prompt: 'Are we living in a dystopian society?'

- Is censorship ever a good thing? Reflect on your personal experiences and *Fahrenheit 451*.

- 'People find meaning in books.' Discuss this idea with reference to *Fahrenheit 451* and your personal connections with the novel.

You might also be asked to respond to a more general prompt that requires you to find your own focus. For example:

- Reflect on an important element of your life, using the ideas and concerns in *Fahrenheit 451* as your inspiration.

ACTIVITY

Write your own prompts

Write three prompts for the text you are studying, based on the ideas and values you share with the text. Use the examples above as a guide, or develop your own format.

Structuring your essay

There are many ways to structure a personal essay. Two of the most common are the **block** and the **integrated** approaches. For simplicity, the following explanations and examples focus on ideas and values, but there are many kinds of connections you can reflect on – including characters, settings, situations and conflicts.

The block essay

In the block essay, each body paragraph is self-contained and focuses on either the text or your own life.

- **Introduction:** Point out the ideas and values in the text and explain your own thoughts on them, responding to the prompt if you have one.

- **Body paragraph one:** Analyse the text; for example, explain how certain characters or moments from the plot reveal the author's ideas and values.

Advantages and disadvantages of the block approach

+ Is simple to plan and write

+ Has a clear structure

− Can be disjointed

− Can make it difficult to discuss connections

!

- **Body paragraph two:** Reflect on a time when you had (or developed) similar ideas and values to those discussed in paragraph one.

- **Body paragraph three:** Analyse different elements of the text from those discussed in paragraph one.

- **Body paragraph four:** Reflect on a time when you had (or developed) similar ideas and values to those discussed in paragraph three.

- **Conclusion:** Pull together the points you have made about both the text and your life, addressing the prompt if you are using one.

The integrated essay

In the integrated essay, each body paragraph explores both the text and your own life.

- **Introduction:** Point out the ideas and values in the text and explain your own thoughts on them, responding to the prompt if you are using one.

- **Body paragraphs one to three:** Analyse a different aspect of the text in each paragraph and relate it to your own life. For example, consider how certain characters or moments from the plot reveal the author's ideas and values, and compare these with related aspects from your own life. Since each body paragraph will discuss both the text and your personal experiences, they are likely to be longer than those in a block approach.

- **Conclusion:** Pull together the points you have made about both the text and your life, and address the prompt if you are responding to one.

Advantages and disadvantages of the integrated approach

- + Can make clear connections
- + May be more sophisticated than the block approach
- − Can be confusing or overly complex
- − Can be more difficult to plan and write than the block approach

Plan your essay

ACTIVITY

1 Begin by collecting your notes on the text, including the personal connections you identified and any relevant quotes about characters, settings, plot, ideas and values.

2 If you choose to use a prompt, write or find one to respond to.

3 Choose a structure – block or integrated.

4 In dot points, plan each paragraph. Where appropriate, include some short quotes from the text.

Writing your essay

Whichever structure you choose when planning your essay, you will need to address the same aspects of the text. The following outline shows both block and integrated approaches, using the example of *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald and the following prompt:

Is the American Dream a lie? Reflect on your personal experiences and *The Great Gatsby*.

Introduction

The introduction refers to the prompt, the text, and the writer's personal life and context.

The 'American Dream', a phrase first used in the 1930s, reflects the idea that anyone, from any background, can achieve greatness through hard work and perseverance. Although F Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* was written in 1925, it explores the idea of the American Dream, and suggests that the Dream may in fact be a lie. In Australia we have our own version of the Dream, the ideals or 'Aussie values' of 'a fair go' and 'mateship'. But like the American Dream, some aspects of the Australian Dream are problematic. In *The Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway moves to New York and

Makes a connection between the American Dream of the text and the Australian Dream of the writer's context.

finds himself confronted with the uncomfortable truth of the American Dream. Similarly, when I moved from rural Victoria to Melbourne, I experienced firsthand how the Australian Dream can sometimes be a lie. However, unlike Fitzgerald, I ultimately believe that if we hold on to our values we can make the Australian Dream a reality.

> Connects the text and the writer's experiences through the linking word 'similarly'; outlines ideas for the body paragaphs to explore.

Body paragraph: block approach

Using the block approach, a body paragraph will refer mainly to either the text or the personal life of the writer, but not both in detail. If there is a prompt, the topic sentence should address it. The following example shows the first few sentences of a body paragraph focusing on the text.

In *The Great Gatsby*, the American Dream is destroyed by greed and excess. When the narrator, Nick Carraway, first moves from Minnesota to New York, he is already somewhat cynical as a result of his time in World War I. Like many Americans in the 1920s, Carraway is searching for meaning in his new life. However, in New York he does not find the spirit of individualism and the pursuit of happiness that is the key to the American Dream. Instead, at 'gleaming, dazzling parties' thrown by Gatsby, Carraway experiences the greed and excess that marks the downfall of American society ...

> The topic sentence indicates that this paragraph will focus on the text.

> Refers to a feature of the text – the first-person narrator.

> Uses a direct quote as evidence.

Body paragraph: integrated approach

In an integrated approach, each body paragraph discusses both the text and the writer's life in roughly the same amount of detail.

Both the American Dream and the Australian Dream can be threatened by greed and excess. When I first moved from rural Victoria to Melbourne, one of the first things I noticed was the frantic pace of life. Like Gatsby's 'gleaming, dazzling parties', my new friends constantly wanted to whisk me away to see shows, go to concerts or attend some of the many events held every weekend. All of these events – Gatsby's parties and my hectic Melbourne social life – were just a distraction from the important things in life. Back in the regional town where I grew up, I was always engaged in fundraisers and events for causes like farmers' health, drought relief and supporting the rural community. I expected to find something similar when I moved to the city, but at first it seemed as though everyone was preoccupied with their own image and status. Fitzgerald suggests the negative aspects of this lifestyle through imagery such as 'foul dust [that] floated in the wake of [Gatsby's] dreams'; I seemed to feel my own 'foul dust' that closed down my interest in helping others ...

> Considers both the text and the writer's context.

> Quotes can be used as evidence and also to signal aspects of personal experience.

> Explores a language feature (imagery) in the text and identifies a personal connection.

Conclusion

Regardless of which essay structure you use, the concluding paragraph highlights the connections between the text and the writer's personal experiences and outlook.

While Fitzgerald's opinion of the American Dream is cynical and harsh, my own opinion of the Australian Dream is much more mixed. There are some aspects of city life, like the frantic pace and the constant focus on appearances, that I believe distract us from dreams of equality and community. As in *The Great Gatsby*, people can be misled by the race for riches and shallow success. But through engaging in local community groups, working with people with shared interests and becoming involved in volunteering, I have also seen opportunities to make my Australian Dream come true. In this, my experiences contrast with those of Nick Carraway, who despairs of 'careless people' like Tom and Daisy, and laments the loss of Gatsby, whose dream 'was already behind him'. My dream is, without doubt, just ahead of me.

Sentences in the conclusion make clear personal connections with the text and use comparative language to indicate similarities and differences.

The conclusion ends with strong comments summing up the discussion and addressing the prompt.

Write your essay

ACTIVITY

1 Begin with a plan and, if using one, a prompt. Gather your quotes and evidence from the text.

2 Write a clear introduction that mentions shared ideas from both the text and your personal life. For example, you may choose to focus your essay on similar characters and events from the text and the real world, or similar settings and places, or similar ideas and values.

3 Write your body paragraphs. If you are using the block approach, make sure that you are clearly discussing *connections* and not just listing aspects of the text and your life. If you are using the integrated approach, make sure your writing does not become confusing or hard to follow; use clear topic sentences and linking words.

4 Write the conclusion, ensuring that you have addressed the prompt (if there is one). End with a clear point that makes a connection between your life and the text.

Building your skills

Use the strategies in this section to build the skills you need to write a personal response to a text. Also see Appendix 2 (pages 228–31) for general writing and editing tips.

Personal connections

To describe personal experiences, memories, ideas and values, you will use the first-person 'I', just as you would in a reflective essay or memoir. However, you need to avoid going into too much detail about your own experiences; the point of your writing is to explore connections with the text. The following strategies will help you to improve your selection and description of personal connections.

Dig deep

The more you explore your own life and experiences, the more likely you are to find connections with the text. Try exercises such as brainstorming to write down as many ideas as possible about your past. Explore memories of major life events, places you have travelled and people you have met.

Keep a diary or journal

Reflect on your ideas and experiences by keeping a diary or journal. This will help you to organise your thoughts and make sense of what has happened in your day, or in earlier parts of your life. You might find that connections with a text flow naturally from this process. It can also be good for your mental health. Journal writing is an effective way of getting regular writing practice, helping with all areas of English and any of your other subjects that have strong written components.

Use sentence starters

When linking your personal experiences to a text, you might find some sentence starters useful, such as those in this table.

When I first discovered / experienced / understood / noticed …
The … (aspect of the text) reminds me of a time when I …
In my own life, I have …
Throughout my life I have found that …
I share several values with … (character), such as …
I have encountered people like … (character) in my own life; for example, …
In a similar way to … (character/s), I have found that …
Reflecting … (author)'s ideas and values, I too personally think that …
The setting of … (place name) reminds me of a place I lived in / visited when …
Although my experience was different, I learned a similar lesson when …
I have had conflicts and challenges in my life, similar to …
Unlike … (character)'s experience in … (text), my own life has taught me …

Analysing the text

There is a strong analytical component to this task, in addition to its personal reflective elements.

Develop your analytical metalanguage

Metalanguage is the term for the words used to describe and write about language. In the sample paragraphs earlier in this chapter, the terms 'narrator' and 'imagery' are metalanguage for writing about textual features. To write about structure, you might use terms such as 'climax' and 'resolution'. See the glossary at the end of this book (Appendix 3) for a list of useful metalanguage.

Use comparative language

To make connections between your experiences and the text, it is a good idea to use words and phrases that compare and contrast. This will enable you to explore differences as well as similarities, adding interest and complexity to your writing. Practise using words and phrases like those in this table.

Comparing	similarly	likewise	in the same way	comparably	also
Contrasting	however	unlike	on the other hand	in contrast	whereas

Editing and proofreading checklists

As with every piece of writing you do in VCE English, your personal response will benefit from editing and proofreading. The checklists below will help you to spot and fix any flaws and weaknesses in your personal response. When you are writing practice essays you will have enough time to draft and rewrite. In these situations, read your essay multiple times, using a different checklist each time. You might need to do some rewriting at each stage, such as improving topic sentences or working more personal connections into the discussion.

When you are doing a timed assessment task, you will probably only be able to check the 'Language' checklist and make corrections to smaller details such as spelling and punctuation. You might also improve some word choices, such as the connective language you use to link your own experiences, beliefs and values with the characters, events and ideas in the text. In addition, you should check that you have met any criteria your teacher has given you for this task.

Structure

☐ The response has a clear introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion.

☐ The introduction outlines a main argument or contention.

☐ The body paragraphs have clear, engaging opening sentences that (if necessary) clearly relate to the prompt.

☐ Each paragraph focuses on a single idea.

☐ Your arguments develop over the course of the essay, building to the conclusion.

☐ The essay has a concluding paragraph that addresses the prompt (if necessary) and summarises your thoughts.

Ideas and techniques

☐ You have explored the author's ideas and values.

☐ You have commented on word choices, language features and text structures.

☐ You have discussed aspects of the characters, settings and plot.

☐ You have made personal connections to the ideas and features above.

Language

- ☐ Each sentence is clear and grammatically correct.
- ☐ Punctuation is correct, including the use of commas, apostrophes and capital letters.
- ☐ Sentences are varied in structure for pace and impact.
- ☐ You have used some metalanguage when discussing the text.
- ☐ You have used connective language to link ideas.
- ☐ You have avoided clichés, overused phrases and informal language.

Sample responses

The following personal responses to texts demonstrate different approaches to this task. They are not intended to serve as models or to represent 'perfect' responses. Every reader will connect to a text in a different way, and personal responses will vary widely. Read the sample responses in this section and look for any aspects that could be useful and effective in your own personal response to a text.

Sample response 1

Scan the code or click here to see planning notes for the following sample response.

This response is on the novel *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, and addresses the following prompt:

Discuss the ways in which technology can be used for control in both *Fahrenheit 451* and your own experience.

Throughout history, technology has been blamed for countless problems. In *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury warns against technologies like television and mass media, suggesting that they can be used as a means of controlling people's lives. Similarly, we are constantly bombarded with warnings about social media use, smartphone and video-game addiction, and the danger of sharing too much personal data online. But it is not technology that controls us; it is how we use it. In *Fahrenheit 451*, people allow themselves to lose touch with reality and what is really important. If we are not careful, we run that risk in our lives today. Companies can use technology to control us if we let them, and technology can be a distraction. However, we can retain control over our lives if we use technology appropriately, and it will never be a true replacement for reality.

Powerful companies can only control us with technology if we let them. In *Fahrenheit 451*, many aspects of the people's lives are controlled by technology. The Hounds are the ultimate surveillance tool: the 'chemical balances and percentages' of the citizens are kept in a 'master file' which the

Identifies the text and the author.

Discusses the ideas and values of the text and how the novel connects with the prompt.

Makes a clear connection to the student's life, using comparative language (e.g. 'similarly').

Outlines a clear contention and signposts the body paragraphs.

Begins the paragraph with a clear topic sentence that outlines the argument of the paragraph.

Hounds can use to track them. Although this might seem far-fetched, there are already many technological tools being used like this today. Every time I make a post on social media, I reveal something about my likes, interests and opinions. At home, Alexa records everything I say, and even if I'm away from home the smartphone in my pocket is always listening. This 'digital fingerprint' is just like the data kept on people in *Fahrenheit 451* because it can be used to identify and track my movements across the internet. There have also been concerns recently that all this data in the hands of big companies like Google and Meta has taken power away from governments. This is echoed in *Fahrenheit 451* when Beatty points out to Montag that the control 'didn't come from the Government down … Technology … carried the trick'. I am personally concerned by how much data these companies hold about me, and so I am making efforts to reduce my time spent on social media. I have deleted many of my accounts, and I am selective about what I like and share.

As well as being a tool for control, technology can be a force of distraction that makes us lose control of our own lives. Mildred, Montag's wife, is an example of a citizen obsessed with technology. She calls the people on the television her 'family' and pressures Montag to add an expensive fourth wall so that she can experience 'all kinds of exotic people's rooms'. Her obsession even extends to lying in bed with the 'Seashells' in her ears, filling her 'unsleeping mind' with 'an electronic ocean of sound'. Even though *Fahrenheit 451* was written decades ago, many of the technologies remind me of devices I use every day. I don't have four huge walls of television at home, but we do have one large living-room television and subscriptions to Netflix, Amazon Prime, Stan and several other streaming services. Television shows and movies are easy to access, and always available. And at night, just like Mildred, I put on headphones and sometimes even fall asleep listening to music, audiobooks or podcasts. All of these technologies make me worried that I do not have as much control over my own life as I would like to think. Faber tries to minimise the distracting control of technology by making something he could 'blot out with the palm of [his] hand', but the smartphone I keep by my bedside is the same size as Faber's 'postal card' television, and no less distracting than Mildred's television walls. Montag finds it hard to argue with 'full colour, three dimensions, and … those incredible parlours', and I can relate to the feeling that it can be almost impossible to ignore the constant stream of pings and notifications from all of my devices.

However, despite the potential of technology to control our lives, it will never be a true replacement for reality. I remember the first time I used a virtual reality headset. Honestly, I was underwhelmed. The technology has a long way to go before it can compete with real experience. Granger instructs Montag to 'see the world', and I agree. During the chase scene, Montag has to remind himself that 'this was no fictional episode' he could watch on a television screen. Our lives are not meant to be lived through a screen, a virtual reality headset or a pair of Seashell earbuds. In *Fahrenheit 451*, books

Directly links the idea from the text to personal experience in this integrated structure essay. In a personal resonse, it is appropriate to use personal pronouns such as 'I', 'my', 'us' and 'our'.

Refers to the world around the student and the student's own life and views.

Words and phrases (e.g. 'as well as') are used to connect arguments and paragraphs.

Uses short inline quotes that clearly relate to the prompt and the topic sentence.

Makes a personal connection with the text, referring to a specific character and situation.

are seen as the cure for a life lived through technology. Bradbury writes that people can experience things in books that they might have no chance to experience in real life. He also writes that books 'can get us half out of the cave', dragging us away from technology and back towards real experience. I believe that disconnecting from technology – including reducing time spent on devices and resisting distractions – will put us back in touch with the real world.

> Discusses the author's view, and compares it to the student's own view.

Ultimately, technology is not evil. Although it can be used to control us, we can still use technology and not be used by it. Technology can enhance our lives but should not replace the real world. The characters in *Fahrenheit 451* find themselves in a dystopian society because they have allowed technology to replace human interactions, relationships and real experience. But in the real world, we are in control.

> Concludes with a clear statement and a position on the prompt.

Sample response 2

This personal response to a text is based on Louis Nowra's play *Così*. It addresses the following prompt:

Which element of *Così* resonates most strongly with you? Discuss with close reference to *Così* and your personal connections with the play.

When I first read Louis Nowra's *Così*, I was worried about the portrayal of 'mad' characters (as they are often termed in the play) in such a comic light. But I have come to think of the characters as representing aspects of all of us, not as mere illustrations of pathological conditions; the play offers a more holistic view of human behaviour rather than focusing on (or in fact even naming) their illnesses. As Justin, the social worker, says, the patients are simply 'normal people who have done extraordinary things, thought extraordinary thoughts'. I recognise parts of myself in all of them. I have experienced anxiety which has led me, like Ruth, to focus on order and routine as a strategy for feeling safe despite worries. And I have found myself, like Roy, relying on the heightened realities of theatre and art as part of my search for the meaning of existence and what really matters. This element of the play is the one that resonates most strongly with me.

> Introduces the text and author, using the first person to indicate the personal exploration of the text.

> Identifies direct parallels between the text and personal experience, using characters as a focus.

The power of art is one of the central ideas in the play, and is most vividly evoked by Roy in his descriptions of the 'harmony of the spheres' – a conception of opera and theatre in which the trials and traumas of the world can be tamed and understood, and even transformed into something that lifts us above the ordinary. I've believed in theatre's ability to do this since I started drama classes as a child. As the characters in *Così* do, I have spent much time in rehearsal rooms working with others to create something that might help shed light on the world around us. And as in Nowra's play, those rehearsal rooms have sometimes been filled with difficult personalities who make the process hard work – creative passion like Roy's can often lead people to become blind to the needs and feelings of those around them.

> Identifies a key idea in the text, opening up a discussion of personal values in relation to the text.

> Connects personal experiences to the world of the text.

That passion, though, is what is needed to bring a production to fruition. As we see in Lewis and the patients' case, art is so often underfunded and under-resourced, and we seem, as a society, unwilling to support what is sometimes seen as 'an emotional indulgence for the privileged few'. Recently my local professional theatre company lost all its state government funding and therefore is unable to continue to create work. When the opera is put on hold after Doug's readmission to the closed ward, the characters quickly pull together to find solutions, in an illustration of the way that theatre and art can teach and encourage people to pool resources, share ideas, and find collaborative and creative solutions. But in real life, when art is thwarted by external circumstances it's not always possible to carry on, and we lose not just the pure enjoyment of art, but also its capacity to comfort, educate and inspire audiences.

> *Identifies a concrete event in the student's own life that connects with the text and leads to an exploration of a key idea (the value of art to society).*

> *Points out a difference between the play and the student's observations and understanding of the world.*

Lewis and his housemate Nick violently (even physically, at one point) disagree on the view of art as indulgence. For Nick, theatre should exist only as a way to attack the system and fight political inequality. At one point in his life Lewis agreed, but as he works with the patients on the opera, he begins to see theatre as having a different purpose: to transform and empower individuals and to bring together a disparate group of people. In producing *Così Fan Tutte* he comes to respect the more domestic and intimate social value of theatre – indeed, in this way theatre changes *him* as well as the patients. Nick is uncompromising in his principles, refusing to support Lewis and completely dismissing the opera as frivolity. However, I don't believe that a separation between these two purposes of drama necessarily exists. Theatre can be escapist entertainment (which is what it is for characters like Julie and, to an extent, Zac, who 'can't stand real things') and also convey important concepts and provoke discussion. For example, the opera explores the idea of fidelity, and indeed this concern is reflected in the affairs Lewis and Nick have. Often, a play can be both entertaining *and* thought-provoking. In fact, *Così* is a perfect example – while it is a comedy, it manages to provoke us to think about the value of art and the meaning of 'madness'. Another example is a play I saw in Thailand, where a small theatre company toured to regional areas to deliver a message about stamping out domestic abuse. The audience laughed uproariously at the comedic script, and yet at the same time they were given information and social resources to help address an issue that was plaguing remote rural communities at the time. Art, here, was both entertaining and purposeful; both Lewis and Nick would have been able to find value in it.

> *Begins the paragraph with textual detail (characters and a key tension in the text).*

> *Shifts the discussion to a parallel personal experience, summarising an incident from the student's own life in order to strengthen their interpretation of the play.*

> *Explicitly connects the student's personal experience to the play in the final sentence of the paragraph.*

Although the patients of the asylum, in their bizarre, unbalanced and uninhibited behaviours, all provide fodder for the play's black comedy, they are humanised through their involvement with the art that is at the centre of the plot. We see Ruth come out of her shell, able to discuss her experience of abuse, stand up for herself in small ways as never before and, at the end of the play, even leave the asylum for a productive pursuit outside the institution. The opera has measurably helped her mental health. Julie, too, is given a sense of freedom by the play ('I prefer this to the ward'); she is

> *Makes a link between the genre of the play and the ideas explored through the characters.*

> *Refers to an aspect of the play's structure that helps to deliver its affirmative message about art.*

ultimately able to leave the institution and, at least for a short time, go back to her life on the outside.

Nowra wrote *Così* as part of a trilogy that is loosely autobiographical in nature, examining aspects of his own personality and experience, and through the characters and challenges in the play we are encouraged to do the same. Nowra in his youth had found himself in a position like his protagonist, directing theatre with institutional inmates, and found it transformative. His thesis in this play is that art (specifically performance) is a necessary element of a healthy society, and by setting the play in an asylum, he shows directly how theatre can change individuals. For me, the play did this when I first saw it performed: it ignited in me a passion for theatre that I continue to pursue.

> Broadens the response to consider the author's personal context, and how this relates to the play's purpose and the student's sense of personal connection.

> Restates the key idea the student has chosen to explore, as well as their own personal connection with and response to the play.

Sample response 3

This personal response is based on Cate Kennedy's short-story collection *Like a House on Fire*. It addresses the following prompt:

Discuss how family relationships can impact our sense of self. Refer to both *Like a House on Fire* and your own experience.

A defining characteristic of human beings is that we are inherently social animals. From the moment of birth, we crave connection, a place to belong where we can define who we are and our place in the world. Through the characters in her short-story collection *Like a House on Fire*, Cate Kennedy highlights how the pressures of modern society and our own emotional frailties can undermine our sense of who we are, and suggests that people have the destructive ability to sabotage their familial relationships. In particular, Kennedy suggests that we often forget to communicate, at times when maintaining strong social connections is essential to our wellbeing. Kennedy homes in on the power of family to be not only a source of comfort but also a source of conflict, and suggests that it is in small moments that are rich in meaning that we are able to find solace. Such revelations prompted me to reflect upon how my own sense of self is defined by the people around me, and how my own emotions can impact upon my interactions with my loved ones. These reflections guided me to an important understanding: that to be happy in this life we must prioritise connection over perfection.

A failure to communicate underpins the breakdown of most relationships. In my own life, I have too often chosen to adopt silence as a strategy when I have encountered conflict, believing that in doing so I was saving myself from further harm. Yet what I failed to recognise was that silence is a form of communication. Kennedy powerfully conveys this through two of her middle-aged male protagonists – Frank Slovak in 'Flexion' and the father in 'Like a House on Fire'. In dealing with the physical consequences of his

> The opening sentences establish the central idea being explored in the response.

> The introduction indicates the line of argument, helping to ensure the response is coherent and cohesive.

> A direct connection is made between the text and the student's personal experiences.

> The focus in this topic sentence is on a broader idea. This allows the student to move easily between the text and their own experience. The student then develops the idea introduced in the topic sentence and makes direct links to personal experience.

accident, Frank is so intent on preserving his facade of masculine stoicism that he is 'unbending' and a 'hovering' presence that does everything to 'stay in control' even during the accident. Kennedy cleverly conveys, through her third-person subjective narration, that Frank's wife reads his 'rigidity' with resentment, believing 'It would kill him … to show pleasure or relief or excitement'. Similarly, the 'immobilisation' caused by the protagonist's injury in 'Like a House on Fire' is representative of his emotional paralysis, which prevents him from communicating. Instead, he goes 'to the spot' in the centre of his lounge room 'like a beaten dog' and creates such tension in his home that his wife begins to treat him with the 'professional, acquired distance' that she uses in her work. The responses of these men to their injuries is both understandable and typical of many people: we invest so much of our sense of self in our physical abilities that when our bodies betray us, our pain causes us to recoil from the very thing that can be a soothing balm for our suffering – our relationships.

Many of Kennedy's stories show how family life can be a source of tension that influences our sense of connection. Like most people, I have endured many family events such as Christmas lunches and birthday dinners where we are pressured to force a smile and engage with people we may not necessarily like. Kennedy suggests that such difficult family situations are often a consequence of families having forgotten how to communicate with each other. This is masterfully conveyed through the suffocating, 'dim and airless' setting of 'Whirlpool', while in 'Static' the living room is full of 'deoxygenated silence'. In these stories, the desire for perfection, as symbolised by the family photo in 'Whirlpool', clearly becomes a constricting element that prevents individuals from being their true selves. Such tension, Kennedy implies, is destructive. This is most apparent in 'Ashes', where Chris' regret for the lack of communication he had with his father, and his frustration with his mother for her 'nauseating … revisionism' as she embellishes the past, leave him feeling angry and bitter. Kennedy highlights an illness that plagues so many modern families. Individuals become so concerned with how their life appears to the outside world that they forget that this quest for perfection places unfair and often damaging burdens on others. One only needs to look at the rates of depression and anxiety in young people, and particularly those in the LGBTQI+ community, to recognise that when we are unable to be our true selves, the consequences can be catastrophic.

Yet, as in life, within Kennedy's stories there is hope. Moments of love and tenderness seem to be the healing balm that can bring calm to turbulent emotions and help people to reconnect. This is not the love that is so often portrayed in Hollywood films – no one needs to rush to meet their partner at the top of the Empire State Building. Instead, it is those small non-verbal gestures of tenderness that say 'I love you' and 'I care for you' and thus help us through the tough times. The memories of my childhood that stay with me are of moments when my parents stroked my hair when I was sick, or held me while I cried about the latest school drama. Kennedy understands

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The seamless integration of quotes helps to ensure a fluent response. The discussion of how Kennedy uses narrative point of view to shape the reader's response demonstrates a clear understanding of the text's features.

The discussion returns to the broader concept being explored in the paragraph.

This analysis shows the ability to infer meaning from the text by making links between different stories in the collection. There is further analysis of how Cate Kennedy uses specific textual features to develop meaning.

Here the discussion moves from textual features to broader ideas and concerns. This allows the student to draw upon evidence from the real world to support the contention.

Referring to common experiences such as cuddling parents helps the reader to connect with the student's point of view.

this. Whether it is the action of Frank's wife in 'Flexion', when she 'finally reaches over and takes his hand', or the gesture of the protagonist in 'Like a House on Fire' when he reaches 'up to pull the elastic band and grips' from his wife's hair and feels the 'small heat build between [them]', Kennedy reminds her readers that we communicate in both word and deed, and that one small step can be, as Neil Armstrong said on the moon, a 'giant leap' when it comes to remembering who we are and where we belong in this life.

There is no denying that life can be hard. It throws challenges at us, such as injury and loss, and these challenges can often cause paralysis that extends beyond the physical and undermines our sense of self. Yet, as Cate Kennedy reveals, when we close ourselves off from the world, we also close ourselves off from the love and compassion that we, as social creatures, need. Humans are not meant to be alone, and it is when we remind each other that we are not, and affirm that we belong to a loving (albeit imperfect) family unit, that we can be secure in our knowledge of ourselves and where we belong.

> The conclusion draws together the key ideas of the body of the essay to present a final proposition that directly responds to the essay prompt.

ANALYTICAL TEXT RESPONSES

IN THIS CHAPTER

> Analysing the topic
> Planning your essay
> Writing your essay
> Building your skills
> Editing and proofreading checklists
> Sample responses

For Outcome 1 of Unit 2, you will write a formal essay that analyses your set text, in response to a topic. An analytical essay enables you to show your detailed knowledge and understanding of a text, drawing on well-chosen textual evidence to support your interpretation and your 'answer' to the topic.

The analytical essay is an important element of senior English, and will also be required in two Year 12 English SACs. For this reason it is worth developing your essay-writing skills in Year 11 as much as you can.

Analysing the topic

Your essay will respond to and in some way 'answer' a topic set for you by your teacher. There are several regularly used topic formats and each places specific demands on you as an essay writer.

The first step in your response is to carefully analyse the topic and break it down into parts, to understand what you are really being asked. The example below shows the typical parts of a topic; the following sections show you ways to address each part in your response.

content word – the essay must focus on the character of Lisa

'Lisa is the real hero of *Rear Window*.'
Do you agree?

content word – the essay must discuss the concept of a hero

direction words – you need to answer this question

limiting word – the essay needs to explore what 'real' means in the context of the film
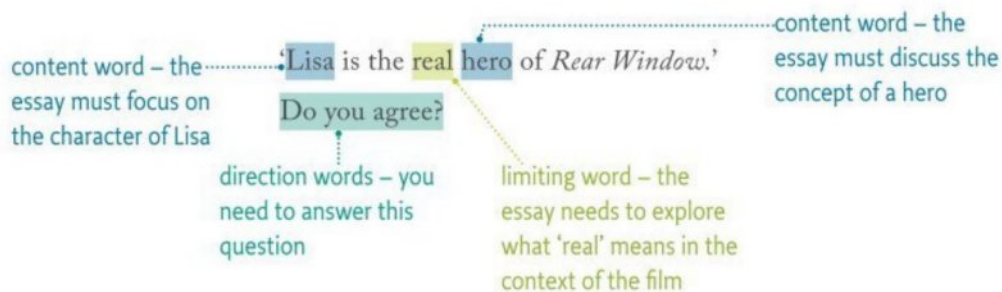
Content words

The content words tell you the main elements you must focus on in your essay. Sometimes these are characters (such as 'Lisa' in the example on the previous page), and sometimes they are ideas or values (such as 'hero'). They are usually nouns or noun phrases.

Some topics have a tension between two concepts.

'*Macbeth* depicts a battle between chaos, and order.'
Discuss.
content words

This topic asks you to discuss chaos and order in *Macbeth*. However, an equally important content word is 'battle': you need to consider the tension or conflict between chaos and order in the play. What sort of a battle is it? Is it just physical conflict, or can inner conflict also be considered? Order is restored at the play's end, but at what cost? Discussing chaos and order separately will not respond to the topic or resolve the tension within it.

content words
'Macbeth's downfall is due more to his belief in fate than his ambition to be king.'
Do you agree?

This topic has a format typical of 'do you agree' topics – you are asked to decide between two alternatives. You can agree with the statement in the topic (yes, Macbeth's belief in fate *is* the more important factor in his downfall), disagree with it (no, his ambition is the more important factor) or find a position in between (both factors are equally important).

Limiting words

Limiting or qualifying words adjust the meaning of other terms in the topic. Common limiting words include 'only', 'always', 'never', 'mostly' and 'often'. Sometimes an adjective is used to qualify the meaning of a noun: for instance, '*real* hero', '*gradual* realisation'.

limiting word
'All the characters are affected by Macbeth's immoral actions.'
Discuss.

A response to this topic must address the word 'all'. You might not refer to every character in the play, but you would need to consider a range – servants as well as the nobility, women as well as men, children as well as adults.

Verbs

The verbs in essay topics are important but can easily be overlooked. In the following topic, 'characters' and 'life's challenges' are key content words, but equally important are the verbs 'struggle' and 'cope'.

content word – the essay needs to discuss more than one character
'The characters in Kennedy's short stories struggle to cope with life's challenges.' Discuss.
verb – cope = deal with, handle, manage

content words – what kinds of challenges do they face?

verb – struggle = battle; strive; try without succeeding

An adequate response might discuss the characters and their challenges in a few stories, but a stronger response would also explore what it means to 'cope' and *how* the characters 'struggle' – in other words, the ways in which they try, and fail, to overcome challenges.

The verb in a topic can also describe the text's presentation of an aspect of human experience.

'Kennedy's short stories reveal the crises of everyday life.'
Discuss.

verb – reveal = uncover, unveil

Other verbs that can have a similar role in essay topics include 'show', 'demonstrate' and 'suggest'. Although their meanings are similar, they have slightly different emphases that will be recognised in stronger responses. The verb 'reveal', for instance, implies a process that is gradual rather than immediate. Your response would need to consider *how* these crises are shown in the stories.

Finally, a verb can describe a relationship between two things. Look for verbs and verb phrases such as 'leads to', 'causes' or 'results from'.

'It is the characters' selfishness that leads to their relationship problems.' Do you agree?

verb – leads to = results in, causes

Here the *causal connection* between the characters' selfishness and their relationship problems needs to be central to the response.

Quotations

When a quotation from the text appears in the topic, you must address it in your response. You don't necessarily need to do this at the start of your essay; you could refer to it in one of the body paragraphs or even in the conclusion. However, at some point you need to show your understanding of the context of the quote in the text, why the quote is significant and how it is relevant to the topic.

Here are two topics on *Jasper Jones* using quotes from the text.

"My point is this: the more you have to lose, the braver you are for standing up."
'There is more than one kind of courage in *Jasper Jones*.'
Discuss.

quote – who says or thinks this? what is it referring to specifically in the text?

content word

"Holding something doesn't make it yours."
How is this idea explored in *Jasper Jones*?

In both topics, the quote presents a point of view on a key idea in the text. In the first topic, the quote is followed by a separate statement – this is the main statement that the essay needs to take a position on (agree, partly agree, or disagree). In the second topic, the quote itself supplies the statement; the content words come directly from the quote. You are not given the option of agreeing or disagreeing; the topic presents a direct question which you must answer.

Direct questions

A direct question can take a few different forms, including:

- How does ... ?
- How is ... ?
- Is this ... ?
- Why does ... ?
- To what extent is ... ?

In each case the topic will include an idea or an observation about the text that you need to accept. For instance, for the previous topic on *Jasper Jones*, you need to accept that 'holding something doesn't make it yours' *is* an idea explored in the text, and explain *how* it is explored.

'How' questions require you to discuss textual features such as vocabulary choices, structure, narrative voice, language features and aspects of the text's form and genre. Metalanguage is invaluable in responding to these sorts of topics.

Here is another example on *Jasper Jones*:

direction words ......→ How does *Jasper Jones* use narrative voice to demonstrate the impact of prejudice?

verb — *use*
verb — *demonstrate*
content words
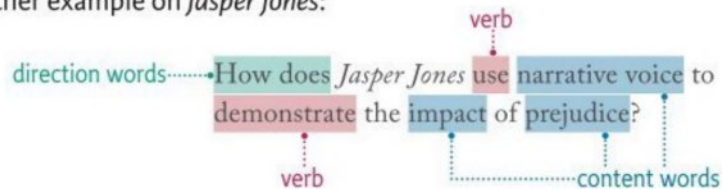
In this topic, 'narrative voice' identifies a textual feature that must be addressed. It would not be enough simply to discuss the impact of prejudice on characters in the text; you need to consider how the novelist has used the narrative voice of the thirteen-year-old narrator, Charlie Bucktin, to demonstrate these impacts. To do so, you would use metalanguage such as 'first-person perspective', 'tone' and 'style' to analyse the narrative voice.

Understanding topic formats

ACTIVITY

1 Read the sample topics below and:

- circle the content words
- underline the direction words
- highlight any limiting words
- highlight the verbs in another colour
- highlight any quotes in a third colour
- rephrase each topic in your own words.

a "It's just that we're talking about somebody's life here. I mean, we can't decide in five minutes."
'Only the 8th Juror truly cares whether the accused receives a fair trial.'
Do you agree? (*Twelve Angry Men*)

b 'Medea's actions can never be justified.' To what extent do you agree? (*Medea*)

c 'All the main characters in *Jasper Jones* are outsiders in some way.' Do you agree?

d *'Romeo and Juliet* demonstrates that there is much more to love than the feelings between two people.' Discuss.

e "But that's not the way I am and there's nothing I can do to change that."
How does *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* explore the difficulties of dealing with change?

f How are film techniques used in *Rear Window* to suggest that all appearances are unreliable?

2 Write five topics on your text, using the varied formats shown on pages 61–3. Include some with quotations and some direct questions.

Planning your essay

A plan for your essay will help you to construct a clear response to the topic and a consistent, logical argument. A brief plan includes:

- the main contention
- a topic sentence for each body paragraph
- brief notes on the textual evidence you will use in each body paragraph.

When you have time to draft and then refine your essay, you can draw up a fairly detailed planning sheet (see page 65). In a timed assessment task it is worth writing a short plan to jot down your main ideas, as this will help you stay on topic and write a clearly structured essay.

After you have carefully analysed the topic, the first step in any essay plan is to come up with your main contention or overall argument.

Develop a main contention

Your main contention is your overall response to the topic. It states your point of view and explains why you hold this view.

- If the topic contains a direct question (including 'Do you agree?'), the main contention states your answer to this question.
- If the topic contains a statement and the direction word 'Discuss', your main contention will state whether you agree, disagree or partly agree / partly disagree with this statement and why.

To develop a main contention, try starting by writing your ideas down in a simple form like this:

I think that ... because ...

Then write your main contention in more formal language.

Another approach is to write down different points of view and see which one you feel you can argue for more convincingly. Remember, there is never any 'right' or 'wrong' answer.

Consider this topic on the film *Gattaca*:

> 'Vincent achieves his goal, but this is due more to
> good luck than to his innate qualities.'
> Do you agree?

Here are three different main contentions:

- Vincent only achieves his goal because luck enables him to escape detection; his innate qualities are never tested or questioned. (agreement)

- Vincent only achieves his goal because his talent, determination and self-belief enable him to overcome every obstacle in his path. (disagreement)

- Vincent does have some luck at crucial moments, but his intelligence and the strength of his dream also help him to achieve his goal. (partial agreement)

Each main contention could be supported with evidence from the text. Ultimately, it is your view of the text that needs to come through in your response.

Write a plan

If you have time, create a detailed planning sheet before you start writing your essay. This will help you to organise your ideas in a logical way, and to sort textual evidence into the relevant body paragraphs.

Scan the code or click here to download a planning sheet template for an essay with three body paragraphs. You can easily modify it if you would like to include four or more body paragraphs.

Scan the second code or click here to download a sample planning sheet for an essay on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

Test your overall argument

ACTIVITY

1 Select a topic on your text. This could be one you have been given in class, one in this textbook or one you have found in another resource.

2 Analyse the topic by identifying the content words, direction words, verbs, and any quotations and limiting words. What is each element asking you to do?

3 Write down your main contention – a one-sentence response to the topic.

4 Write a topic sentence for each of your three or four body paragraphs. Each sentence should present a different argument or reason that supports the main contention. Check for any sentences that repeat the same point or make a contradictory point.

5 Create a short paragraph by joining together your main contention and topic sentences. Does this paragraph form a cohesive response to the topic? Is there a fairly smooth flow from one sentence to the next? If so, then your argument is logical. If not, try to remove or resolve any contradictory or repetitive elements.

Writing your essay

An analytical essay is a formal piece of writing that presents a clear argument supported by evidence and logical thinking. The standard five-paragraph essay contains an introduction, three body paragraphs and a conclusion. You can write more than three body paragraphs but remember that each paragraph should thoroughly explore one main point.

There are many ways to write an essay. In this section, you will see both the commonly used TEEL structure and suggestions for moving away from TEEL. Structures like TEEL will help you to set your ideas down in a logical and ordered fashion. They will be useful as you develop your essay-writing skills, but once you have mastered the basics you should begin expanding on the formula and developing your own personal style and approach to essays.

Introduction

Your opening paragraph should contain a clear response to the topic and a general outline of your main arguments. The introduction does not have to be very long or detailed. If you are writing under timed conditions it is important that you move quickly on to your main arguments. Even if you have the time to draft and refine the essay, you should avoid including too much content in your introduction.

The introduction should:

- begin with a contention that directly responds to the topic
- signpost the arguments in your essay
- include basic details such as the author's name and the title of the text.

Strong contentions

Aim for a contention that allows for multiple angles and in-depth analysis. Consider the following contentions for this topic on *Macbeth*:

'It is Macbeth's "vaulting ambition" that leads to his downfall.' Do you agree?

Weak contention: 'Macbeth's vaulting ambition leads to his downfall.'

Medium contention: 'Macbeth's "vaulting ambition" motivates him to murder King Duncan, therefore leading to his downfall.'

Strong contention: 'While Macbeth's "vaulting ambition" contributes to his downfall, many other factors compel him to act both violently and immorally, ultimately leading to his tragic demise.'

Notes:

- The weak contention simply paraphrases the topic.
- The medium contention provides an argument to support the contention.
- The strongest contention presents multiple angles on the topic and is more complex, allowing for in-depth analysis.

Sample introduction

The following introduction from a student essay responds to this topic on *Station Eleven*:

'*Station Eleven* demonstrates the enduring power of art.' Discuss.

Simply surviving is not enough, and in Emily St. John Mandel's novel *Station Eleven,* even though much is lost after the collapse, art remains. Mandel uses the Travelling Symphony in the novel to demonstrate the endurance of the performing arts, providing people with a space to reminisce about the civilisation they lost. Mandel also uses the *Dr. Eleven* comic books to illustrate how people take something unique and personal away from art. Ultimately, as long as humanity exists, art will exist with it.

> Includes the name of the author and the title of the text.

> Begins with a clear contention that responds to the topic.

> Signposts the main arguments to be developed in the body paragraphs.

Body paragraphs

The body paragraphs are the most important part of your essay. They demonstrate your knowledge of the text and should follow a logical order that leads the reader to agree with your contention.

A body paragraph should:

- develop a single argument about the text
- have a sentence (or two) that clearly states the argument
- use evidence from the text
- stay on topic and support your overall contention.

The TEEL structure

TEEL – Topic sentence, Evidence, Explanation, Link – is a common approach to structuring body paragraphs.

Topic sentence	*Write an opening sentence that sums up the main focus of the paragraph.*
Evidence	*Give specific examples and quotations from the text.*
Explanation	*Explain how your evidence supports the statement you made in your topic sentence.*
Link	*Create links to the topic sentence and back to the essay topic itself.*
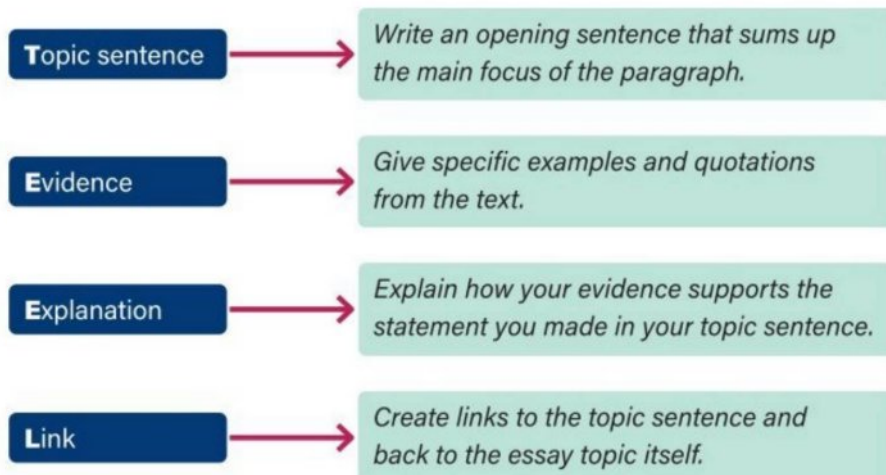
The following body paragraph, responding to the topic on page 66, follows the TEEL structure closely.

Macbeth's initial meeting with the witches influences many of his subsequent thoughts and reactions. It means, for instance, that when Ross addresses him as Thane of Cawdor, he thinks almost at once of becoming king: 'the greatest is behind'. This signals that Glamis and Cawdor (two out of the three titles referred to by the witches) are, for him, simply stepping stones to the throne. Macbeth's ambition is evident here, just as it is in his aside, when he refers to his 'thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical'. Already he has considered murdering Duncan, but his desire to become king is now strengthened by the witches' prophecy and its early partial fulfilment. Without this prophecy, Macbeth would lack the sense that the throne was somehow his rightful destiny. This feeling, soon to be powerfully endorsed by Lady Macbeth, leads Macbeth to act against the moral order, which is a crucial factor in his eventual demise.

Topic sentence indicates that the paragraph will focus on Macbeth's initial meeting with the witches.

Provides evidence, including a short quote.

Explains the significance of the evidence in the previous sentence.

Provides further evidence.

Explains how the evidence supports the argument about the witches' influence on Macbeth.

Links the evidence and explanation to the topic.

Alternatives to TEEL

There are many ways to write a successful body paragraph. One alternative to using a formula like TEEL is to find examples of quality writing and use them as models. This means breaking down examples to identify what makes them work and using these components in your own writing.

Look at the following example of a body paragraph on the *Station Eleven* topic on page 67. The annotations show how a student might analyse the techniques used in this body paragraph and make notes on them.

Although art may not be necessary for basic human survival, people need it to find meaning in life. Mandel demonstrates that 'survival is insufficient' through the endurance of the arts. These creative and expressive endeavours are what engender meaning for people. Mandel emphasises the role of the arts both before and after the collapse. This is illustrated by both Arthur Leander and the Travelling Symphony performing *King Lear*. Arthur is 'the king [standing] in a pool of blue light', while after the collapse *King Lear* is 'rehears[ed] all week', highlighting its timelessness. Mandel shows that art provides people with 'moments of transcendent beauty and joy' and a sense of normalcy. The novel suggests that art is likely to exist as long as people can experience it. Art connects people and history by fulfilling a human need for something more than just 'going through the motions of [their] lives'. *Station Eleven* demonstrates the enduring power of art, as it remains after the collapse, playing a central role in giving people a sense of meaning in life.

Begins the opening sentence with an 'although' statement; clearly linked to topic.

Uses a quote to further explain the opening sentence.

Focuses on the author's intent with phrases such as 'Mandel emphasises'.

Uses quotes mainly in the middle of the paragraph.

Concludes with a sentence that reinforces the opening sentence.

These annotations, and the techniques they identify, are then used as the basis for writing a body paragraph on *Macbeth*. Compare the two paragraphs, noting in particular how the student has used sentence starters and vocabulary choices.

Although Macbeth was always ambitious, it is his initial interactions with the witches and other characters that influence many of his subsequent actions. Shakespeare demonstrates how a 'vaulting ambition' can be steered and strengthened by the intervention of others. The playwright emphasises that ambition alone does not lead to Macbeth's tragic downfall, but that once the idea is sown by the witches, small moments can escalate quickly. When Ross addresses him as Thane of Cawdor he thinks immediately of becoming king, and it is a short step from those thoughts to the 'fantastical' thoughts of murder that are later reinforced by Lady Macbeth. Without the witches' prophecy, Macbeth would lack the sense that the throne is his rightful destiny. *Macbeth* demonstrates that simple ambition can be turned towards destructive outcomes through interactions with others.

Conclusion

The final paragraph of your essay is your conclusion. Like the introduction, the conclusion should be succinct and on topic. Throughout your body paragraphs you should have explored a number of main arguments. The conclusion is your opportunity to synthesise those arguments and reinforce your initial contention.

A conclusion should:

- synthesise the contention and supporting arguments
- resolve the tension in the topic.

Resolving the tension in the topic

Essay topics almost always have a tension – an implied question or argument – that needs to be resolved. This could be from an 'either/or' scenario (which is often the case in a 'do you agree?' topic), or a topic that asks you to discuss an issue and decide on an ultimate answer.

Consider the two topics discussed earlier in this chapter.

> '*Station Eleven* demonstrates the enduring power of art.'
> Discuss.

- Firstly, there is tension in the statement. *Does* the novel demonstrate this?
- Next, there is tension in the idea that art endures. *Does* art always endure?

> 'It is Macbeth's "vaulting ambition" that leads to his
> downfall.' Do you agree?

- The tension in a 'do you agree?' question comes from the implied either/or. In this case, either vaulting ambition leads to Macbeth's downfall, or it doesn't.
- By the time you reach the conclusion, you should have argued strongly one way or the other.

Use words and phrases like 'ultimately', 'thus', 'hence' and 'therefore' to make your final resolution of the topic clear.

Sample conclusion

Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* demonstrates the enduring power of art because, even though many things are lost after the collapse, art is something that remains. Mandel highlights that mere survival is insufficient and people need something greater in life. She also discusses how the beauty of art gives people a way to connect to the past. *Station Eleven* highlights that, because art is open to interpretation, people who encounter it will each take away something different. Ultimately, Mandel reveals that art endures because it is a central part of the human experience; therefore, as long as humanity exists, art will be there.

> Re-uses the content words from the question, making it clear that the response is on topic.

> Clearly restates the contention.

> Provides a short synthesis of the main arguments from the body paragraphs.

> Ends on a clear point that resolves the tension in the topic.

Building your skills

Use the strategies in this section to build the skills you need to write an analytical response to a text. Also see Appendix 2 (pages 228–31) for general writing and editing tips.

Use sentence starters to analyse, not describe

A common flaw in student essays is that they tend to describe *what* happens in a text, rather than analysing *how* the author has constructed the text and why they have constructed it in this way.

Try using these sentence starters, and start keeping a file of your own, to help you focus on how and why your text has been constructed in a particular way.

Writing about characters

By portraying … (character) as …, … (author) suggests …
… (author) characterises … (character) as …, leading the reader / audience to view … (character) as …
The … (adjective) relationship between … and … embodies the idea that …
In facing the challenge of …, … (character) reveals their qualities / values of …

Writing about vocabulary and language features

By using words such as … and …, …. (author) creates a mood / atmosphere / feeling of …
The images of … convey the idea of …
The film's frequent use of … (shot type) leads the audience to feel that / have a heightened awareness of …
The symbol / motif of … foregrounds … (author)'s exploration of …

Writing about plot and structure

As a result of …, … (character) decides to …, revealing that …
The conflict between … and … comes to a head at the narrative's climax, which is effectively a battle between …
The narrative resolution is achieved through …, leaving the reader with the impression / feeling that …
By ending with …, the text suggests that …

Writing about ideas, concerns and tensions

The tension / conflict between ... and ... suggests that ...
... (author) highlights / emphasises / demonstrates that ...
By making ... a central concern of the text, ... (author) makes the reader aware of ...
Through the exploration of ..., the text presents the idea that ...

Use linking words

Your essay should read as an integrated piece of writing in which the ideas and arguments work together to create a convincing interpretation of the text and response to the topic.

If the response has been carefully planned, the ideas should flow logically. A further way in which you can create a sense of unity and flow is by using appropriate linking words or phrases. The following words and phrases will help you to connect your points and show the direction your argument is taking.

Words to discuss a similar idea	Words to present a different idea	Words to show a consequence
furthermore	contrastingly	as a result
likewise	conversely	consequently
in the same way	however	for this reason
moreover	on the other hand	so
similarly	whereas	therefore

Use precise words

Having a wide vocabulary and using it effectively and precisely will improve the clarity and insightfulness of your writing, as well as add variety. The following word bank contains a list (in the left-hand column) of common adjectives that could be used to describe characters; they have general meanings but lack precision and impact.

General word	Words with more precise (not identical) meanings			
strong	omnipotent	powerful	resilient	unyielding
weak	gullible	passive	submissive	subservient
good	admirable	compassionate	honourable	virtuous
evil	immoral	malevolent	malicious	nefarious
quiet	circumspect	contemplative	introverted	reflective
loud	boisterous	bombastic	extroverted	exuberant
true	loyal	dependable	devoted	steadfast
false	conniving	duplicitous	manipulative	scheming
happy	cheerful	delighted	ecstatic	joyous
sad	depressed	despondent	disconsolate	melancholy
nice	amiable	benevolent	magnanimous	selfless

Build your skills

1 Select three of the sentence starters on pages 70–1 and write three sentences about your set text.

2 Create three new sentence starters that will help you to analyse how your text presents ideas, concerns and tensions. Aim to incorporate metalanguage specific to the form of your text (e.g. novel, play, film).

3 Select a linking word from each of the three columns in the linking words table (page 71), and include all three words in a short paragraph about your text.

4 Find an extra word for each of the rows in the word bank of precise vocabulary (page 71) and record them in your notebook. Aim to find words that you can readily apply to your text (e.g. to particular characters).

5 Think of two common or general words you have used in essays that aren't included in the word bank. For each of these words, find five words with similar but more precise meanings.

Editing and proofreading checklists

In an ideal scenario, outside of examination conditions, you will have time to plan, write a first draft, edit, rewrite and proofread your essay before submission. Quality writing almost always goes through this process. Drafting allows you to get all your ideas down on paper without worrying too much about the final product. It is also a vehicle for shaping your thoughts on the text – sometimes new and interesting ideas and connections occur to you while you are writing.

Use the following checklists to home in on specific issues and potential weaknesses. If you have time to draft and rewrite, check the points under 'Structure' and 'Ideas and techniques' to refine your argument and essay structure, then use the 'Language' checklist to do a final proofread. Don't try to check all three categories at once: do at least three separate readings, looking for different things each time.

In a timed assessment task you will probably only have time to check the 'Language' items and correct any spelling and punctuation errors, but you might also be able to improve some of your word choices by replacing common and general words with more precise ones. Use of metalanguage is an important part of analytical text responses, so check that you have included some specific vocabulary related to the form of your set text: terms for film style if it is a film, and so on.

Structure

☐ The essay is clearly structured and consists of an introduction, at least three body paragraphs and a conclusion.

☐ The introduction states the main contention and indicates the main reasons or points of argument.

☐ Each paragraph focuses on a single idea, which is stated in a clear topic sentence.

☐ The argument develops over the course of the essay, building to the conclusion.

☐ The concluding paragraph contains a concise statement of the main contention, summarises the discussion and gives a clear response to the topic.

Ideas and techniques

☐ The essay presents a clear and consistent response to the topic.

☐ You have commented on ways in which the author has used vocabulary, structure and language features to construct meaning.

☐ You have considered some of the main ideas, concerns and tensions in the text, relevant to the essay topic.

☐ You have demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the text, and selected relevant evidence to support your points.

☐ You have incorporated short quotes into your sentences.

Language

☐ Each sentence is clear and grammatically correct.

☐ Punctuation is correct, including the use of commas, apostrophes, capital letters, and quotation marks for direct quotes from the text.

☐ Sentences are varied in structure for interest and impact.

☐ The analysis includes metalanguage relevant to the form of your text.

☐ You have used linking words to connect ideas and show the development of your argument.

☐ You have used formal language and avoided informal expressions and clichés.

☐ You have written in the third person (avoiding the first-person 'I') and in the present tense.

Sample responses

The analytical text responses in this section were written by Year 11 students.

Sample response 1

This essay is on William Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* and responds to the following topic:

'Macbeth, though a tragic hero, is a criminal.' To what extent do you agree?

William Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* portrays its titular character, Macbeth, as a doer of many evils, but the playwright characterises Macbeth with aspects of tragic heroism, forcing the audience to view him more as a tragic hero than a criminal. Shakespeare suggests Macbeth's criminal behaviour through his acts of self-interest and ambition, but demonstrates that these are the result of his tragic flaw – blind trust. Moreover, Macbeth's actions of

> Responds to the topic, presenting a contention that partly agrees and partly disagrees with the statement in the topic.

> Shows an understanding of the play's genre.

betrayal reveal him to be a man with overpowering criminal characteristics, but the playwright also shows that he possesses another element of tragic heroism, hubris, which prompts him to commit those deeds. Furthermore, Macbeth's identity as a tragic hero is visible as he faces the punishment for his actions at the conclusion of the play.

Macbeth is characterised as a criminal as a result of the acts he commits out of his 'vaulting ambition', but the playwright constructs him as a hero who has fallen victim to his own flaws. Macbeth's criminal thoughts are evident from the very first scene of the play where he has invested himself in the witches' prophecies. His need to acquire the throne stems from this initial meeting, and the seed that has been planted is nurtured by his own ambitions, leading him to evil actions. Macbeth's self-interest is also evident when he instructs the murderers of Banquo that he must be unsuspected, simply because there is the 'love of … [people] that [he] must keep'. This lack of remorse for his actions emphasises his criminal nature and inhumanity. However, Shakespeare portrays a multi-dimensional protagonist who is not only a criminal but also a hero who has fallen as a result of his hamartia – the tragic flaw that leads to his eventual downfall. Macbeth's tragic flaw is his blind trust and ability to be manipulated, both by the witches and by Lady Macbeth. In later scenes of the play, Lady Macbeth and the witches are seen to endorse Macbeth's treachery and his blind trust in them results in his downfall. His humane and sensitive qualities are demeaned by Lady Macbeth who instantly resorts to calling him a 'coward', thereby attacking his masculinity and forcing him to exert his superiority through criminal behaviour. Therefore, by allowing Macbeth to fall victim to his flaws, Shakespeare demonstrates that while he may be a criminal, he is also a tragic hero.

Macbeth's acts of betrayal, of both his countrymen and his king, contribute to him being portrayed as a criminal, but this, too, can be seen as an aspect of his identity as a tragic hero. Macbeth, although initially to not as great an extent, can be viewed as displaying the same qualities as that of the original Thane of Cawdor when he first allows his 'vaulting ambition' to take hold of his life. Shakespeare's choice to introduce Macbeth as soon as Duncan exclaims of the treason of the 'man on whom [he] built an absolute trust' foreshadows Macbeth's betrayal as he, too, is planning on breaking the king's trust. In ending Duncan's life and gaining the throne, Macbeth does not stay true to the countrymen who trusted him as he resolves to reign simply for personal benefit as opposed to the betterment of the country. These acts allow Shakespeare to characterise him as an evil criminal, but he also suggests that Macbeth is a criminal because of tragic heroism. Macbeth's criminal nature stems from his hubris – a disrespect for the natural order of society. It can be seen that Macbeth opposes what is commonly believed and solicits the supernatural, the unnatural, for guidance. This disrespect is further exaggerated through the views that the people of the Jacobean era had towards witches, as they were ostracised from society for their witchcraft. Macbeth is continuously seen to be calling upon 'spirits' and

Annotations (right margin):

Signposts that betrayal will be a focus of discussion.

Signposts that events at the play's conclusion will be a focus of discussion.

Draws attention to the ways in which Macbeth is constructed as a tragic hero, continuing this line of argument from the introduction.

Incorporates a brief quote, making slight changes (indicated by square brackets) to smoothly incorporate the quote into the sentence.

Continues to examine the concepts of criminality and tragic heroism, working to resolve the tension in the topic by consistently arguing in favour of seeing Macbeth primarily as a tragic hero.

Clearly links back to the topic at the end of the paragraph.

Signals the paragraph's focus on betrayal.

Illustrates the play's exploration of betrayal with this well-chosen quote.

Refers to the context of Shakespeare and the play's original audiences, explaining its role in shaping the play's meaning.

the 'thick' and 'seeling night' to assist him, instead of relying on 'heavenly' soliciting as King Edward, the epitome of kingship in *Macbeth*, does. This disrespect for what is believed to be the natural order of life eventually leads to Macbeth's criminality, allowing Shakespeare to allude to the fact that while he is a criminal, Macbeth is also a tragic hero.

> Links back to the topic – however, the repetition of this wording from the end of the previous paragraph weakens the effectiveness of the writing.

Furthermore, Macbeth's final criminal act portrays him to be both evil and inhumane, but even in this, Shakespeare demonstrates that he is, although tragically, a hero. Macbeth's murder of King Duncan during his sleep elucidates the extent of Macbeth's criminal thoughts, as he chooses to subdue the old king when he is most vulnerable. The moment that Macbeth chooses to murder the king to whom he owes 'loyalty' and 'service' allows Shakespeare to comment on his nature as a treacherous criminal, a man who commits 'secret murders'. Moreover, Macbeth's impassioned exclamation to 'seize Fife … [Macduff's] wife, babes' and anyone else from his family line seems to be the point at which his crimes are most vile and vicious, as he has no personal gain from doing so, but chooses to kill the innocent simply in anger. However, Shakespeare suggests that even this unjustifiable action adds to Macbeth's identity as a tragic hero. In order to have 'revenge burn' within Macduff, Macbeth must have had to attack him in a very personal manner. It is this final act of cruelty which allows Macbeth to meet his nemesis – the punishment for his hubris. Ultimately, Macbeth faces the consequences of trusting the supernatural blindly by dying at the hands of a man 'not born of woman' as equivocated by the witches. The completion of Macbeth's murder allows Shakespeare to elevate him from simply being a criminal to a tragic hero who has faced the consequences of his actions.

> Indicates that the play's conclusion will be considered in this paragraph, as signposted in the introduction.

> Discusses elements of Macbeth's criminal nature, then argues that they are more convincingly seen as elements of his identity as a tragic hero.

> Continues to engage with elements of tragedy as part of the overall argument.

Ultimately, Shakespeare explores the narrative of a tragic hero who could be viewed as a criminal because of his evil acts. Shakespeare does not justify Macbeth's crimes, but presents the idea that he is more a tragic hero than simply a criminal as a result of elements of tragic heroism existing in him. Macbeth's actions of self-interest, betrayal and inhumane murder allude that he is a murderous criminal who is the villain in *Macbeth*, but Shakespeare portrays these qualities in Macbeth to be a result of his hamartia and hubris. The end of Macbeth's life further elucidates that he is, in fact, a tragic hero whose identity has been misinterpreted because of his treacherous crimes, ultimately suggesting that Macbeth is more a tragic hero than a villain.

> Acknowledges that Macbeth can be seen as a criminal, i.e. doesn't attempt to argue completely against the topic, allowing for a complex view of the text and of Macbeth's character.

> Synthesises the arguments and evidence presented in the body paragraphs.

Sample response 2

This essay is on the novel *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel. It responds to the following topic:

'*Station Eleven* demonstrates the enduring power of art.' Discuss.

Emily St. John Mandel's novel *Station Eleven* demonstrates the enduring power of art because even though a lot is lost after the collapse, art is something that remains. The reason the arts endure is that they give people meaning, as survival in itself is not enough. Mandel uses the

> Presents a clear contention in response to the topic.

> Signposts the argument that the arts are a source of meaning.

Travelling Symphony in the novel to show the endurance of art, providing people with a space to reminisce about the civilisation they lost. Mandel also uses the *Dr. Eleven* comic books to illustrate how people take something unique away from art; therefore, as long as humanity exists, art will exist with it.

> Indicates that the Travelling Symphony will be a focus of discussion.

> Indicates that the comic books will be a focus.

Although art may not be necessary for basic human survival, people need it to find meaning. Mandel demonstrates how 'survival is insufficient' through the endurance of the arts. Mandel focuses on art as a major theme in the text, revealing how basic human survival is not enough. Instead, creative and expressive things such as art are what engenders meaning for people. Mandel celebrates the arts in *Station Eleven* as she emphasises their role both before and after the collapse. Mandel illustrates this by having both Arthur Leander and the Travelling Symphony perform *King Lear*; Arthur is 'the king [standing] in a pool of blue light', while after the collapse *King Lear* is 'rehears[ed] all week', highlighting its timelessness. Mandel shows how art provides people with 'moments of transcendent beauty and joy' and a sense of normalcy. The novel suggests that art is likely to exist as long as people can experience it. Mandel argues that art endures because it is not reliant on modern technology, celebrating how the arts can connect people, making them more than just 'iPhone zombies'. Art connects people and history, and Mandel illuminates how art fulfils people's need to have something more than just 'going through the motions of [their] lives'. *Station Eleven* demonstrates the enduring power of art as it remains after the collapse, playing a central role in giving people a sense of meaning in life.

> Topic sentence picks up the importance of meaning as signposted in the introduction.

> Connects with 'enduring' in the topic, ensuring that the evidence is connected to the argument and that the discussion stays on topic.

> Shows how Mandel explores the need for sources of meaning in life with well-chosen quotes.

The Travelling Symphony exists because of the collapse, and this demonstrates to the audience the enduring power of art. The Travelling Symphony travels around the greater lakes regions of the former United States, performing Shakespeare and other theatrical performances long after the collapse. The Symphony's audiences 'seemed to prefer Shakespeare to their other theatrical offerings'. Mandel constructs the Symphony and its audiences in this way to signify how 'people want what [is] best around the world'. After the collapse, art becomes a motivation for the members of the Travelling Symphony as 'survival is insufficient'. Mandel endorses the arts in the text as it is one of the few parts of civilisation that remain after the collapse. The arts continue to thrive despite the loss of 'almost everything', showing that 'there is still such beauty', hence Mandel values the arts as integral to humanity. Through the Travelling Symphony, Mandel conveys the power of the arts. The Travelling Symphony symbolises the enduring power of the arts as they continue to perform and bring people together long after the collapse of civilisation.

> Explains the significance of the evidence provided.

> Continues to engage with the concept of endurance, often using words such as 'remain', 'continue' and 'long after' to avoid repetition.

Mandel recognises the reason art endures is that everyone has a different perception of what it represents. Mandel demonstrates this with Miranda's comic books. The *Dr. Eleven* comics show that although many people may not 'understand [her] project' or what she is 'actually going for', it's her work and what she gets from it that matters. Mandel reiterates the idea that people 'don't have to understand it [the comics]', rather it is Miranda's

> Provides a different perspective on the topic, considering why art might endure.

interpretation of it. Mandel celebrates this idea of the arts' enduring power as despite 'what was lost in the collapse', the *Dr. Eleven* comic books do survive. Mandel reveals to the audience that despite art often being used as an escape, people often bring art into their own reality; in the case of Miranda, 'Station Eleven is all around [her]'. Through Miranda, Mandel conveys how art and reality intertwine; 'Miranda is drawing Leon Prevant's reception area before she realizes what she's doing'. This reveals to the audience that much of art's enduring power comes from the way it allows those from the present to connect with the past.

> Explains how a character is used to present a key idea. Throughout the essay there is an understanding of how the novelist is working with characters and events to explore ideas about art and its place in human experience.

Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* demonstrates the enduring power of art because even though many things are lost after the collapse, art is something that remains. Mandel highlights that survival is insufficient and how people need something greater in life. Mandel also discusses how the beauty of art gives people a way to connect to the past. *Station Eleven* highlights how, because art is open to interpretation, people who encounter it will each take something different away. Mandel reveals that the enduring power of art is due to the arts being instinctive to humanity; therefore, as long as humans exist, art will be there with them.

> Restates the main contention and clearly responds to the topic.

> Ends with a strong statement about the text's wider message about humanity, which is a logical extension of the essay's argument.

Analyse a text response

GROUP Select one of the essays on the previous pages and answer the following questions. Use the annotations to help you. You could discuss your answers to these questions in pairs or small groups.

1 What is the main contention? Is it stated clearly in the introduction?

2 Identify three reasons or arguments used to support this main contention.

3 Underline three pieces of textual evidence used in the essay. Does the writer clearly explain their relevance to the topic and main contention?

4 Mark up the TEEL elements in one of the body paragraphs. A good way to do this is to use a different coloured highlighter for each element. (Some sentences might contain a combination of evidence and explanation, so highlight these elements separately.)

5 Identify three linking words or phrases used in the essay. These can be connecting sentences within paragraphs, or linking one paragraph with another.

6 Identify three words or phrases that the writer has used to explain how the text is exploring ideas, concerns and tensions.

7 Identify three word choices that you think could be improved, and suggest replacements.

8 Are any sentences unclear or too wordy? If so, select two or three and rewrite them so they are clear and concise.

Crafting texts

Area of Study 2: Crafting texts is all about your writing. It gives you the freedom to explore different styles and forms of writing, and to develop your own voice.

You will study three texts in depth, but not with the purpose of analysing their ideas and points of view. Rather, you will look at how their authors have used language and structure to achieve their purpose in a given context, and for a particular intended audience. In studying your mentor texts, you will find ways of using language and shaping ideas that you can deploy in your own writing.

It is also likely that you will explore a key idea – a broad concept that is addressed at some level by your mentor texts. Class discussions and your own reading and thinking will help you to generate and refine your ideas. First and foremost, though, you will learn about the qualities of good writing, and construct your texts to be as effective, coherent and purposeful as possible.

CHAPTER 06 AUDIENCE

IN THIS CHAPTER

> Identifying your audience
> Understanding your audience
> Communicating with your audience

The audience refers to anyone who is viewing, reading or listening to a text. Every single text – a movie, a television show, a novel, a play, a podcast or even a TikTok – is created with a specific audience in mind. Although your teacher or assessor will read your work, to do so they will assume the role of *your* chosen audience. For example, if your writing is intended to be read by children of primary school age, your teacher or assessor will look at it through the eyes of a primary school student. It is important that you have a strong understanding of your intended audience so you can write appropriately and effectively for that group.

Identifying your audience

The first step on your crafting texts journey is to identify your audience. Who are you going to be writing for or speaking to? This might be one person (in a letter or email) or it could be millions (in a blog or social media post). Once you have a good idea of who will be reading or listening to your work, you can then fine-tune your writing.

Identify your audience

Begin to identify your audience by answering the following questions.

1 What are you writing about?

2 Who would be interested in this topic?

3 Is there more than one audience who might be interested in this?

4 What other texts exist that are like my idea? Who are their audiences?

ACTIVITY

Understanding your audience

Once you have decided who you will be writing for, you need to think about your audience's particular needs and interests. What do they like and what do they dislike? What motivates them and makes them interested? What might prevent them from engaging with your text? One way to approach this is to put yourself in their shoes and create a stereotype – a simplified idea – of who your audience is.

For example, if you are going to write a text that farmers might read, stop and think about what a typical farmer would care about. They would probably care about the impact of weather; they probably won't care that an inner-city pub is the new go-to hot spot. These are just generalisations, but making generalisations is a useful first step in understanding your audience.

Here is another example. Let's assume that you are going to craft a text for an audience of young children. What are some of the things that young children like in books or television shows? You might stereotype this audience as enjoying humour, short easy-to-read sentences (in a written text), plenty of illustrations, easy-to-identify characters and a simple plot (e.g. goodies versus baddies).
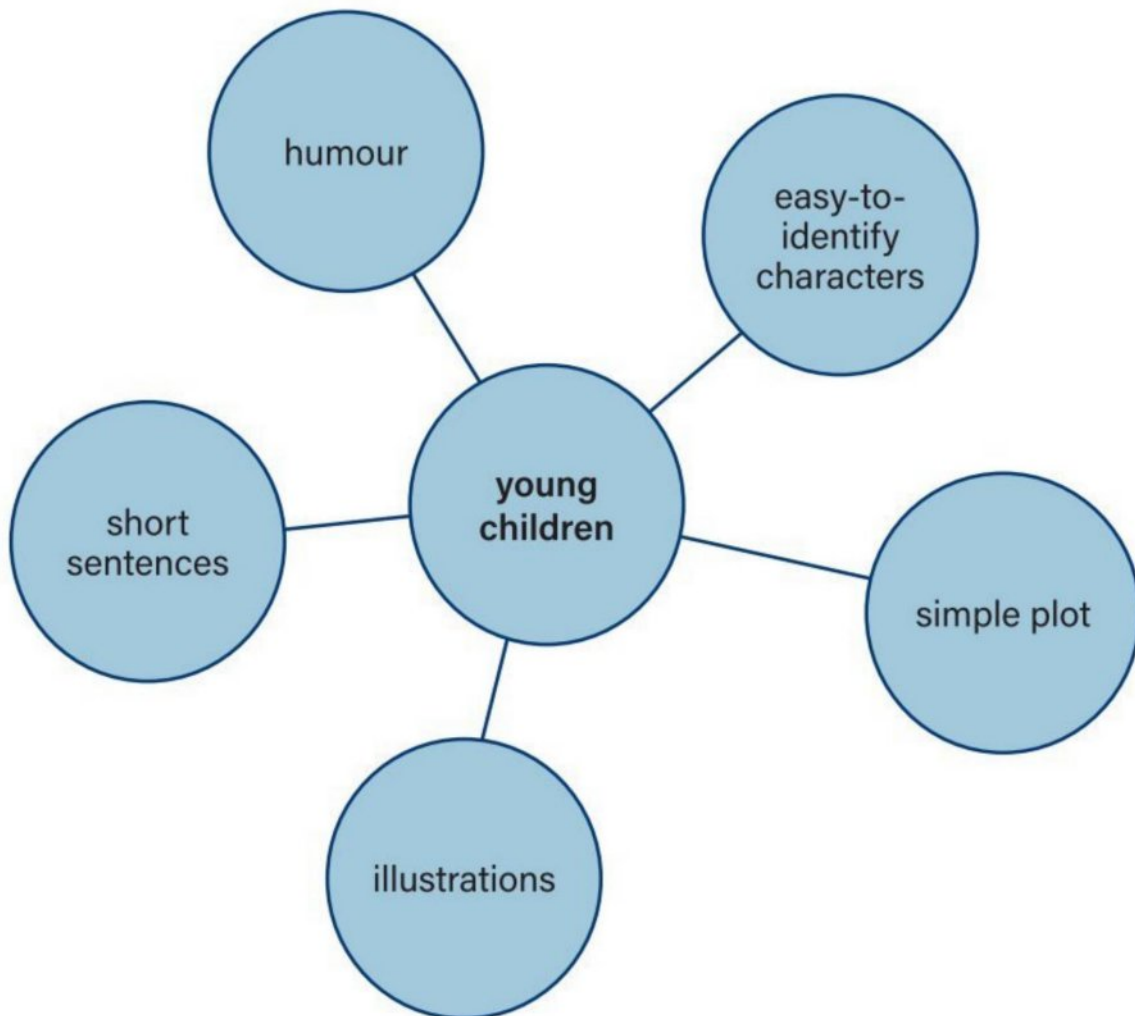
Stereotype your audience

Draw and complete the mind maps for the audiences below. Remember: you are only generalising at this stage – just getting the big ideas down.

teenagers

adults
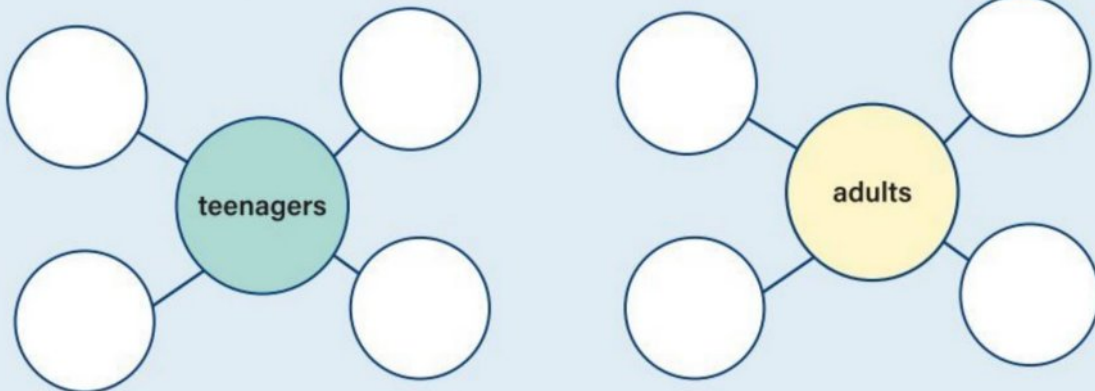
Refining your understanding of your audience

When crafting your texts, it won't be enough to just say your audience is 'everyone' or 'all Australians'. You will need to refine your idea of who you are writing for.

In other words, you need to consider the demographic of your intended audience. Demographic doesn't just mean 'age'; it also takes into account, for instance, employment, education, gender, religion and ethnicity. Take the broad demographic of adults aged between eighteen and twenty-five. Some will have full-time jobs; others are at university or TAFE. The diagram below shows just some of the different concerns that these young adults might have.

young adults
- working
  - pay
    - take-home pay
    - hourly rate
  - roster
    - fair
    - paid overtime
- studying at uni
  - student politics
    - protests
    - joining uni organisations
  - grades
    - lectures & tutorials
    - assignments & exams
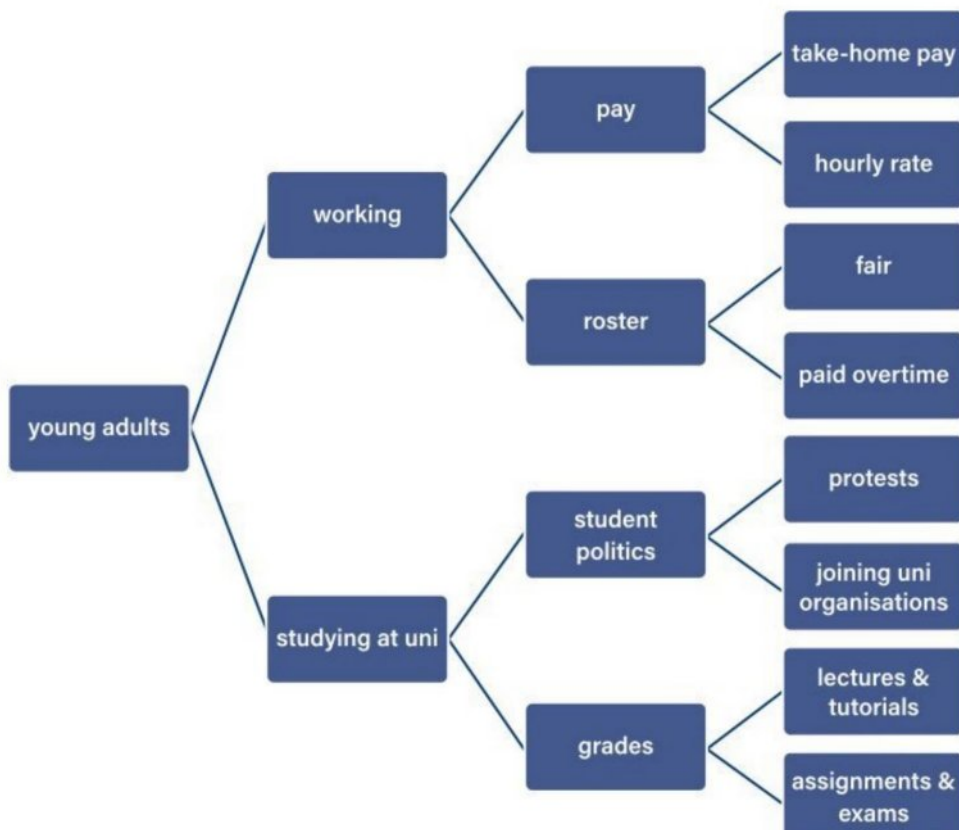
Because of differences such as these, the interests of a broad demographic can vary widely, and that in turn affects how you will reach a particular group with your text. If you were writing a persuasive text for young adults who work, you probably wouldn't include statistics about attending university lectures. If you were appealing to people who go to university, you might focus on appealing to the importance of time management and meeting assignment deadlines.

Refine your understanding of audience

ACTIVITY

Draw and complete flow charts for the two demographics below. You can add as many extra boxes as you need. Some suggestions have been included to get you started.
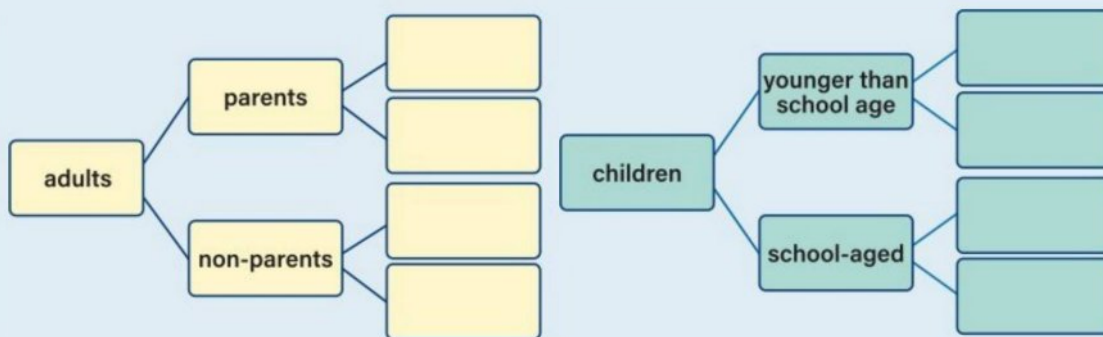
adults → parents / non-parents → [ ]

children → younger than school age / school-aged → [ ]

Now that you've seen how to unpack these demographics, consider how you might refine your understanding of *your* chosen audience. This may involve some research on your part. For example, if you are going to address the Australian Government, which government department would be interested in your text? Does that department have a stake in this issue? Who is the minister? If you ask yourself these and similar questions as you're working, you'll be able to adapt your writing to suit your audience's needs and interests.

Communicating with your audience

The real importance of understanding your audience is that you can craft your language choices and subject matter for those particular readers or listeners. Take all the information you have found out about your audience and apply it to your writing. When you are studying your mentor texts, think about how their creators have used language and structure in a way that best matches the texts with their intended audiences.

Examine the link between visual language and audience

ACTIVITY

Language choice isn't just relevant to written language; it's also about visual language. Look at the covers of the two editions of JK Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* on the next page. One is aimed at children (the initial audience of Rowling's work), and the other is aimed at adults (a secondary audience). The publisher has used different covers to appeal to these two audiences.

ACTIVITY
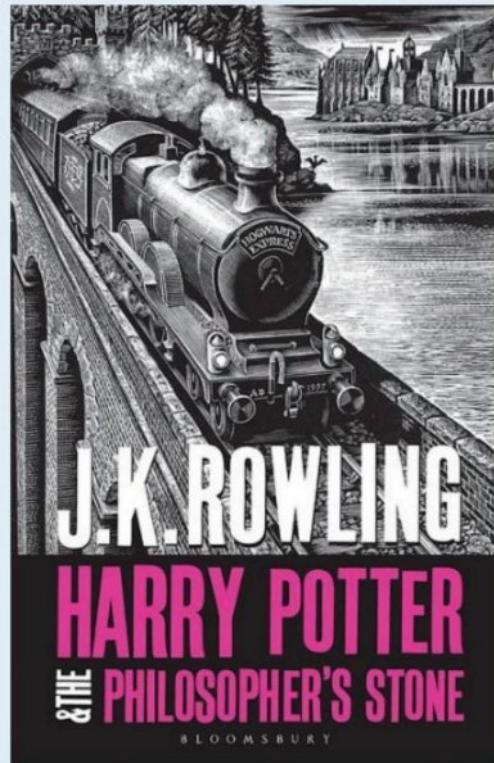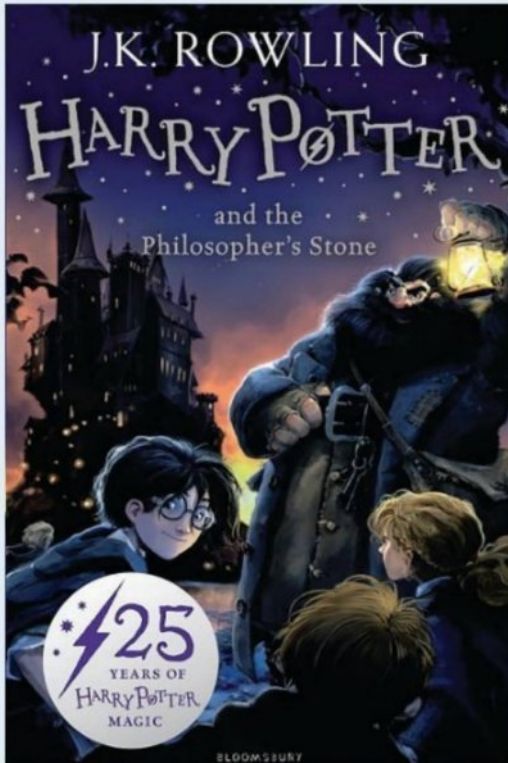
1 What are your initial impressions of each cover? What do you see, think and wonder about for each one? Create and complete the following table.

	See *What do you see?*	**Think** *What do you think it means?*	**Wonder** *Do you have any questions?*
Children's edition			
Adult edition			

2 How does each cover appeal to the intended audience?

Language register

When you are crafting your text it is important to write in the appropriate register for your audience. Okay fam? This is a textbook aimed at teenagers, so the word 'fam' could be considered an appropriate choice. If it was aimed mainly at adults, you might write 'okay family'. Which sounds a bit weird, tbh. These are all examples of using a particular **language register**.

The diagram below shows some common language registers with appropriate text types and a description of the author–audience situation or relationship. Notice that the closer the author and the audience are, the more casual the language choices are likely to be. Also notice that radio shows are listed as examples in which the author/speaker is 'friends' with the audience – this is the effect the speaker wants to convey rather than their actual relationship. They don't know the audience, but they want the audience to feel as if they are friends.

Formal	**Standard**	**Casual/informal**
essays academic writing business emails	classroom conversations everyday emails	everyday conversations radio shows, social media

author–audience situation

author doesn't know the audience personally	author knows the audience; there is a relationship – friendly	author/speaker knows the audience – friends

Below are examples of language choices in the three different registers.

Formal	Standard	Casual/informal
Please forward any and all research material as soon as possible.	Can you send me all the research, please?	Hi, can I get that research now? Thanks.
It was pleasing to see the teachers and students working together so well today.	It was nice to see the teachers and students getting along today.	Good vibe at school today.

Put register into action

For each of the following three scenarios, write statements in formal, standard and casual registers, and identify an appropriate audience for each statement.

1 Tell someone that Australia has won a medal in the Olympics.

2 Tell someone that the house next door has been broken into.

3 Tell someone that the weather is extreme.

Present your answers in tables like the one below.

Register for scenario 1	Audience	Statement
Formal		
Standard		
Casual/informal		

CONTEXT

In this area of study, you will need to consider the context your mentor texts were written in, and how that context shaped the author's use of structure and language as well as the ideas they explore. In addition, you will need to take your own context into account as you craft texts for an intended audience and purpose.

Understanding context

All texts are products of their time. Compare the action films of the 1980s with the latest blockbuster: how do those special effects hold up? Compare some of the stand-up comedians of the 1990s with those of today: are the jokes still funny, or are they now considered offensive? These different responses result from the different context in which we are 'reading' these texts, compared to the context in which they were created. (These contexts are known as the context of production and the context of reception – see pages 13–14 for further explanations and examples.)

Similarly, there will no doubt be texts written about the COVID-19 pandemic (including, possibly, texts that you will write), and those who lived through this event will be able to identify and understand the meaning of these texts. A shared understanding will be operating between the author, the text and the reader because of the social, historical and cultural contexts that they all share. Social and cultural practices such as Zoom meetings, working from home (WFH), mask wearing, social distancing and QR code check-ins all became commonplace over a short period of time. Moreover, these and other phrases have become part of everyday language. But what of future readers who come across literature set in this time? How will they react? Their responses will be shaped by their own contexts – such pandemics might become commonplace, or perhaps (due to effective vaccines, say) future readers might not have personally experienced one.

Scan the code or click here for a video overview of contexts.

In other words, to understand a text thoroughly we need to know something about its social, historical and cultural contexts. This is particularly true when the text was created in a different historical context from our own, as language, social conventions and customs all change dramatically over time. A text created many years ago can now seem outdated or even strange. Placed in its correct context of time and place, however, the text begins to make more sense. Here is a context map for Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* as an example.
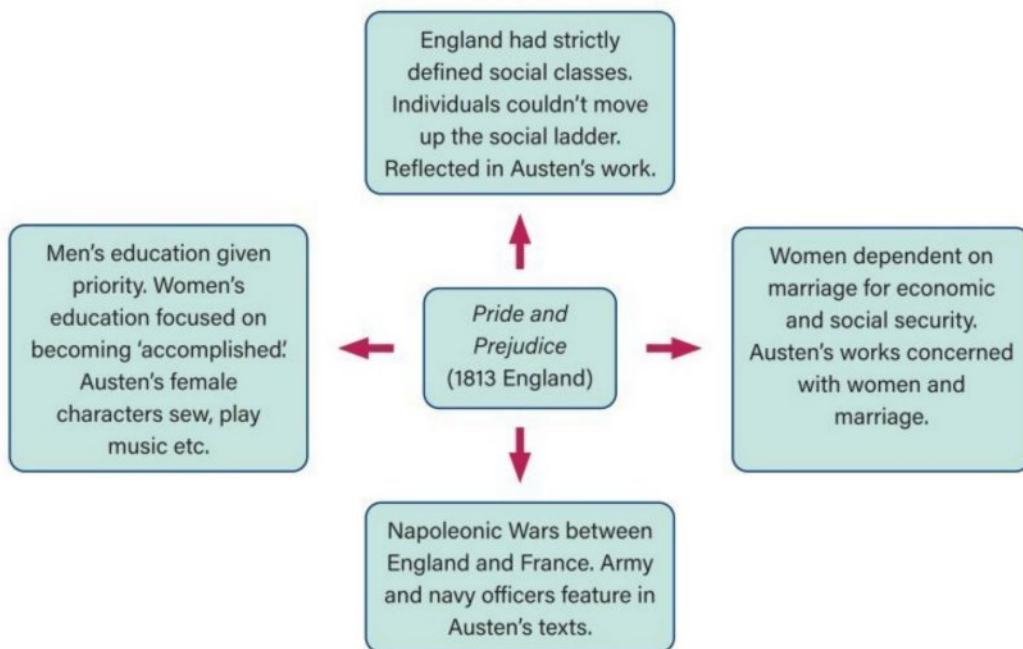
Context definitions

» Social contexts relate to social conventions and expectations.

» Historical contexts relate to the key events and discoveries of the time.

» Cultural contexts relate to customs, traditions and beliefs.

England had strictly defined social classes. Individuals couldn't move up the social ladder. Reflected in Austen's work.

Men's education given priority. Women's education focused on becoming 'accomplished'. Austen's female characters sew, play music etc.

Pride and Prejudice (1813 England)

Women dependent on marriage for economic and social security. Austen's works concerned with women and marriage.

Napoleonic Wars between England and France. Army and navy officers feature in Austen's texts.

Jane Austen was a keen observer of her society, and her novels are generally concerned with intelligent women who are marginalised to some degree. This isn't simply a product of Austen's imagination; it's a reflection of the society she lived in when she was writing.

Identify contexts

Answer the following questions to improve your understanding of the context of one (or more) of your mentor texts.

1 Research the period in which the text was created. Draw up a table of details such as key events, political leaders, social attitudes, types of work and entertainment, and the dominant issues of the time.

2 Identify the key events and circumstances that the author has drawn on or refers to in the text.

3 Create a context map for your mentor text, like the one for *Pride and Prejudice* above.

4 How do these events and circumstances help to shape the text's meaning? For example, is information presented in a certain way to influence your responses to characters and situations? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

ACTIVITY

Focusing on the author's context

You've probably heard the old saying 'write what you know'. That's essentially what authors do; they draw on their experiences to give their writing credibility and conviction. While this may not be overt in a text, the author's personal context is always present.

Life experiences

An author's work will generally reflect their life experiences, and the values, attitudes and beliefs they have developed over the course of their life.

The table below shows some of the ways in which two authors' life experiences and personal views are evident in their work.

Author	Margaret Atwood
Texts	e.g. *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *Oryx and Crake* (2003)
Life experiences, views and interests	• Atwood's father was an entomologist (a scientist who studies insects) and much of her childhood was spent in forested parts of Canada. • She holds strong views on the environment.
How her experiences are reflected in her work	• A number of her works address environmental conservation and the relationship between people and the environment. • She has written texts about the relationship between people and animals.

Author	Robbie Arnott
Texts	e.g. *Flames* (2018), *The Rain Heron* (2020)
Life experiences, views and interests	• Arnott grew up in Tasmania. • He is fascinated by Tasmanian landscapes.
How his experiences are reflected in his work	• Arnott's novels are set in Tasmania or remote landscapes reflective of Tasmania. • His novels are concerned with relationships between people and the natural world.

Scan the code or click here to watch an interview with Robbie Arnott in which he discusses different kinds of contexts for his novel *The Rain Heron*.
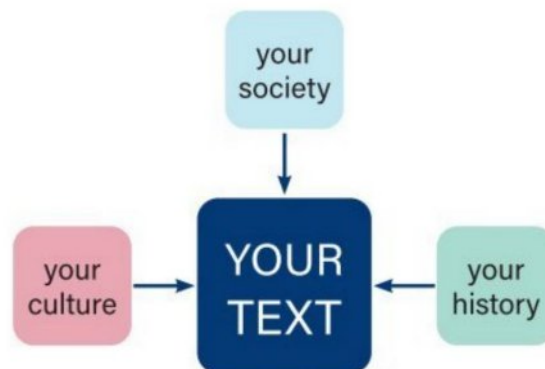
Research contexts

1 Research each of the authors on the previous page and complete a table for each that shows key elements of their social, historical and cultural contexts. (See page 11 for more explanation of these three types of contexts.)

2 Research the authors of your three mentor texts and create tables like the ones on the previous page for Margaret Atwood and Robbie Arnott.

3 In a small group, discuss your findings from question 2. How does knowing about the authors' contexts affect your readings of their texts?

Your experiences

As you craft a text for a specific audience and purpose, you will inevitably be influenced by your own background – your experiences and the attitudes and values you have developed. The novelists discussed on the previous page have written imaginative texts to express ideas and have woven in their personal experiences and views; they have also been influenced by broader social and cultural factors, such as widely held concerns about climate change. While their texts are entertaining, there is also a message at the texts' core.

This is something that you can do with your text. By exploring your personal experiences, you can weave in a setting, a character or a message that is important to you. Ultimately, you are seeking to create a relationship with your reader, and drawing on your experiences, values and beliefs can lead to more authentic and meaningful communication.

your
society

your
culture → YOUR
TEXT ← your
history

Research your own context

1 In pairs or small groups, create a mind map that explores how you are affected by your social, historical and cultural contexts. Base your diagram on the one above. Here are some questions that may help you:

a What's happening around me? Am I living through big events? Are they local, national or global?

b What is considered acceptable behaviour? What is not considered acceptable?

c How do people communicate with each other?

d How do people access information?

2 How can knowing and understanding your own context help you to craft your text? For each of the four purposes below, write a summary of an idea for a text, and identify one aspect of your context that will influence your writing. (See Chapter 8 for explanations of these four purposes.)

Purpose	Text idea	Aspect of your context
Express		
Explain		
Reflect		
Argue		

Your mode and medium

Another important part of your context is the mode you are creating your text in, and the site or medium where it will be produced. In this area of study the emphasis is on the written mode, but you also need to think about how your words will ultimately reach your reader. If you are writing the script for a podcast, for instance, your intention will be for it to be read aloud, recorded and then downloaded by the listener. (Their context of reception, in turn, might include them going for a walk, or driving somewhere, while they listen to the podcast.) If you are writing a blog post, then the blog website, which is likely to be highly visual and interactive, forms part of the context for that post.

Mode, medium and form

» The mode is the process of communication: writing, speaking, reading, listening and viewing.

» The medium is the channel of communication, e.g. a novel could be produced in print or as an ebook; a feature film could be screened in a cinema or streamed to your television.

» The form of a text is its type or genre; novels, plays, poems, letters, podcasts and blog posts are all forms of texts.

When thinking about context in this way you will also be thinking about your audience, and appropriate language choices for this context. For instance, language in a newspaper feature article for a wide readership will need to be accessible and fairly formal; in contrast, language in a personal letter for a private reader can be more informal and may include words and references only you and your reader will understand.

Consider your mode and medium

Answer these questions to better understand the context of one of your created texts.

1 What is the form of your text?

2 Which mode or modes (written or spoken) are you using?

3 What medium will it use (e.g. will it be published on a website or in a print newspaper)? Note that you might not actually publish your text or produce it in its final form, but you need to imagine where it *could* be published.

4 How are you shaping your text for this mode and medium? Think about your language choices, the structure of the text and your use of the typical features of the form you are writing in.

PURPOSE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Understanding purpose
- Crafting texts to express
- Crafting texts to explain
- Crafting texts to reflect
- Crafting texts to argue

There are many reasons why people write. Writers have at least one specific purpose they hope to achieve with their work; they select each aspect of their writing according to this purpose. This chapter discusses four main purposes that writing can have. These are not completely distinct, and can overlap in various ways. When you're crafting your texts for this area of study, keep in mind why you're writing, and ensure your choices of vocabulary, structure and language features are always helping you to achieve your purpose.

Understanding purpose

The purpose of a piece of writing is its intent: what the author wanted to achieve. All writing has a purpose – even personal, reflective writing. For example, diary writing might have the purpose of putting thoughts and feelings down on paper, expressing strong emotions or recording memories.

Writing is not always personal, of course, and the purpose of your writing might be related to your audience. You may wish to make your reader feel a strong emotion, such as joy, sadness, guilt or fear. Or you may want your reader to take action by doing something, such as buying a product, joining a club or signing a petition.

Your purpose will inform the vocabulary, structures and language features you use. For example, if you're writing to express ideas and emotions, you probably won't fill your text with numerous facts and figures – your audience could become bored. On the other hand, if you're intending to argue that your point of view on an issue is the correct one, then facts and figures are important kinds of evidence to use in support of your argument.

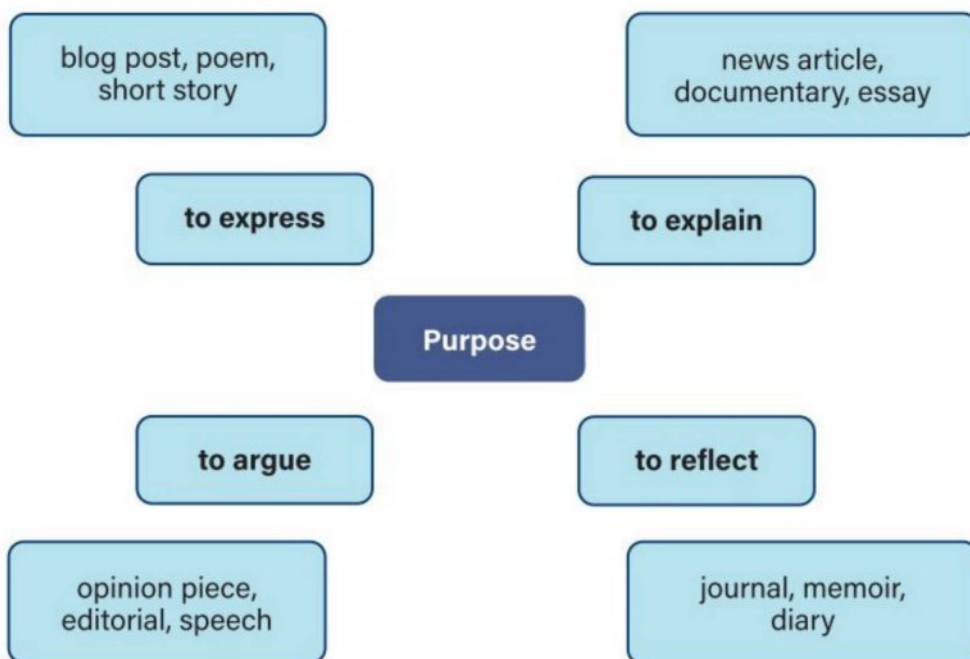Scan the code or click here for a video overview of audience and purpose.

The style and language register you use will be connected to your purpose. Your language when you are writing to explain is likely to be more formal and measured than when you are writing to express; your tone in a piece of reflective writing is likely to differ from your tone in a persuasive piece.

The diagram below summarises the four purposes discussed in this chapter, and gives a few typical text types for each purpose. Note, however, that many text types can be used for different purposes: an essay, for example, can be used to reflect, to explain or to argue.

It is also common for a text to have more than one purpose. A documentary, for example, might *explain* various aspects of a controversial issue or a challenging situation, and also *argue* the case for a particular course of action.

> **Tone and style**
>
> » The tone is the mood or feeling being expressed.
>
> » The style of a text is the way it is written, e.g. plain, poetic, colourful.
>
> » The language register, an aspect of style, is the level of formality, from formal to informal or colloquial.

blog post, poem, short story	news article, documentary, essay
to express	**to explain**
Purpose	
to argue	**to reflect**
opinion piece, editorial, speech	journal, memoir, diary

Crafting texts to express

Many of the texts you encounter in your everyday life are intended to explore and share ideas, experiences and emotions. The television shows and movies you watch, the novels you read and the social media posts you interact with are all expressing their creators' view of some aspect of the world and human nature. They often have the related purpose of providing entertainment — they are crafted with the intent to amuse and delight, to arouse emotions and sympathies, or to appeal to fantasy and imagination.

When writing to express, your goal is to keep your audience interested and engaged in the story you are telling. An effective short story, for instance, might feature a well-structured plot, inventive characterisation and sharp, realistic dialogue. A novel may employ a cliff-hanger at the end of a chapter or weave humour into a story that also has moments of tension and sadness.

To make your writing to express as compelling and interesting as possible, include as many of the following elements as you can.

Example of writing to express

In this excerpt from near the beginning of Louis Sachar's novel *Holes* (1998), the author is painting a picture for the reader and setting up the narrative. It begins to establish the characters and introduces tension, generating reader sympathy for the character Stanley and expressing ideas of isolation and cruelty.

He didn't have any friends at home. He was overweight and the kids at his middle school often teased him about his size. Even his teachers sometimes made cruel comments without realizing it. On his last day of school, his math teacher, Mrs. Bell, taught ratios. As an example, she chose the heaviest kid in the class and the lightest kid in the class, and had them weigh themselves. Stanley weighed three times as much as the other boy. Mrs. Bell wrote the ratio on the board, 3:1, unaware of how much embarrassment she had caused both of them.

Stanley was arrested later that day.

> Reveals the harsh life that Stanley experienced prior to being sent to Camp Green Lake.

> Develops characterisation of the two boys and the teacher.

Explore writing to express

ACTIVITY

1   In your mentor texts, identify elements that you can use as inspiration for your own writing. Write short quotes or brief descriptions in a table like the one below.

Characters and characterisation	Setting	Dialogue	Strong start; strong finish	Varied rhythm and structure

2   Create an outline for a narrative that explores an aspect of the key idea you are studying. Using bullet points or a table, describe how your narrative will begin, its main source of tension or conflict, what will happen at the climax and how the main conflict will be resolved.

Crafting texts to explain

Writing with the purpose to explain is sometimes called expository writing or informative writing. It seeks to inform the audience, offer reasons and make connections.

When an author's purpose is to explain, they wish to improve an audience's understanding of a topic. Writing to explain takes many forms, from simple instruction manuals to long, in-depth texts outlining complex ideas. This textbook is essentially a text that explains, as are your other textbooks. Writing that explains can also take the form of essays, research papers, reports and presentations.

Although writing to explain relies heavily on facts, it also relies on the author's understanding of the subject matter to connect cause and effect and to draw conclusions. In doing this the author will use their judgement and logical reasoning. This means that there is a subjective element and even an element of argument in expository writing, although persuading the reader to agree is not the primary purpose.

When crafting an expository text, use clear, concise language and a logical, flowing structure. Build your text by placing the most important information at the start. Include several ideas and arguments, research your topic and consider all sides. Finally, appeal to your audience's sense of reason rather than their emotions. Your purpose is to get them to respond with their head not their hearts.

The following diagram summarises some effective approaches to writing a text that explains.

Problem and solution
- Identify the problem, provide details to explain it, then outline a solution.

Cause and effect
- Explain why something happened and what its effects will be.

Compare and contrast
- Discuss the similarities and differences between two things.

Definition and classification
- Provide a complete, systematic description of the topic.

How-to / Process
- Tell the audience about a task or process and how to complete it.

Example of writing to explain

The following excerpt is the first half of an article published on *The Conversation*, about the extreme rainfall in eastern Australia during February and March 2022. Its authors describe *what* is happening, then offer an explanation of *why* it is happening. The authors' expertise in the field (as academics in relevant university departments) and their use of specialised language and concepts make their explanations credible; they also seek to use terms an educated reader can understand and follow, appropriate to the readership of *The Conversation*.

THE CONVERSATION http://theconversation.com/au

The east coast rain seems endless. Where on Earth is all the water coming from?

Published: March 7, 2022 2.40pm AEDT

At any one time, Earth's atmosphere holds only about a week's worth of rain. But rainfall and floods have devastated Australia's eastern regions for weeks and more heavy rain is forecast. So where's all this water coming from?

We recently investigated the physical processes driving rainfall in eastern Australia. By following moisture from the oceans to the land, we worked out exactly how three oceans feed water to the atmosphere, conspiring to deliver deluges of rain similar to what we're seeing now.

Such research is important. A better understanding of how water moves through the atmosphere is vital to more accurately forecast severe weather and help communities prepare.

The task takes on greater urgency under climate change, when heavy rainfall and other weather extremes are expected to become more frequent and violent.

Big actors delivering rain

The past few months in eastern Australia have been very wet, including the rainiest November on record.

Then in February, heavy rain fell on already saturated catchments. In fact, parts of Australia received more than triple the rain expected at this time of year.

Authors:

Chiara Holgate
Hydroclimatologist, Australian National University

Agus Santoso
Senior Research Associate, UNSW Sydney

Alex Sen Gupta
Senior Lecturer, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UNSW Sydney

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Provides information about what's happening.

Hyperlinked words enable readers to locate extra information if they want to, without overcomplicating the explanation for the general reader.
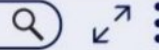
Uses logical language ('by ... we worked out ...'), typical of explanations.

Makes a prediction about the future, based on understanding of the science.

Subheadings and dot-point lists are typical of reports and research papers.

Provides context for the situation.

THE C🔴NVERSATION `http://theconversation.com/au` 🔍 ↗ ⋮

So what's going on?

In the theatre that is Australia's rainfall, there are some big actors – the so-called climate oscillations. They're officially known as:

- El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO): this cycle comprises El Niño and its opposite, La Niña. ENSO involves temperature changes across the tropical Pacific Ocean, affecting weather patterns around the world

- Southern Annular Mode (SAM): the north-south movement of strong westerly winds over the Southern Ocean

- Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD): changes in ocean temperatures and winds across the tropical Indian Ocean.

Like swings in a character's mood, each climate mode has positive, negative and neutral phases. Each affect Australia's weather in different ways.

La Niña brings wetter conditions to eastern Australia. The IOD's negative phase, and SAM's positive phase, can also bring more rain.

Asks a simple question (such as a reader might ask) then provides an answer, ensuring the explanation is relevant to the reader's interests and needs.

Uses informal language in places, helping to make the explanations more accessible for a wide readership.

Provides technical details and specialised vocabulary, reflecting the scientific nature of the subject matter and the authors' expertise in this field.

Begins to give an explanation for the extreme rainfall.

Explore writing to explain

ACTIVITY

1 Examine your mentor texts for elements of expository writing. Even if a text's overall purpose is not to explain, it is likely that you will find phrases and sentences that inform or give reasons. Make a list of useful expressions and word choices you could use in your own expository writing.

2 Using the key idea your class is studying, identify three topics on which you could write an expository piece. For example, for the key idea 'Writing about nature' you could list topics such as 'the local environment', 'the beauty of nature' and 'different attitudes towards nature'.

3 For one of the topics you listed in question 2, outline three contrasting approaches to writing an expository text based on the five approaches in the diagram on page 93.

Crafting texts to reflect

Reflective writing is about you, the author. Reflective writing and thinking involve looking back on an experience, trying to make sense of it and thinking about how it has shaped your understanding of other experiences and events. You might also think about the lessons you learned and perhaps what could have been done differently to change the outcome. When you write reflectively you can gain insights and also give the reader insights into their own experiences.

For this area of study, if you choose to craft a reflective text it is likely that you will look at a key idea through the lens of your personal reflections. In other words, you will explore your key idea in a very personal way. For example, if you're writing on the key idea of identity, you could reflect on an experience that helped to shape or change your own identity.

When writing reflectively, the following process will help you get your ideas on the page in a clear, coherent structure. Known as the DIEP model, this process can be applied to any mode of reflective writing.

Describe
- What happened?
- What did you do or find out?

↓

Interpret
- What does the experience mean to you?
- Why?

↓

Evaluate
- How significant or valuable was your experience?
- Why?

↓

Plan
- How will you apply what you have learned?
- What do you hope to achieve as a result?

Example of writing to reflect

Below is an extract from Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*. She wrote most of the diary while she and her family were hiding in an attic in Amsterdam to avoid being captured by the Nazis during World War II. This example of reflective writing shows the 'describe' and 'interpret' elements of the DIEP process.

October 9th, 1942

Dearest Kitty,

Today I have nothing but dismal and depressing news to report. Our many Jewish friends and acquaintances are being taken away in droves. The Gestapo is treating them very roughly and transporting them in cattle-trucks to Westerbork, the big camp in Drenthe to which they're sending all the Jews. Miep told us about someone who'd managed to escape from there. It must be terrible in Westerbork. The people get almost nothing to eat, much less to drink, as water is available only one hour a day, and there's only one lavatory and sink for several thousand people. Men and women sleep in the same room, and women and children often have their heads shaved. Escape is almost impossible; many people look Jewish, and they're branded by their shorn heads.

If it's that bad in Holland, what must it be like in those faraway and uncivilized places where the Germans are sending them? We assume that most of them are being murdered. The English radio says they're being gassed. Perhaps that's the quickest way to die.

I feel terrible. Miep's accounts of these horrors are so heartrending [...] Fine specimens of humanity, those Germans, and to think I'm actually one of them! No, that's not true, Hitler took away our nationality long ago. And besides, there are no greater enemies on earth than the Germans and the Jews.

> The writer reflects on what is happening to people she knows and knows of.

> Provides details of what is happening in the outside world, placing the writer's situation in a wider context.

> Reflects on her own feelings in response to events.

> Begins to interpret the significance of these events, and to reflect on her own identity.

Explore reflective writing

1 In a small group, identify features of reflective writing in each of your mentor texts. Do any of them have reflection as their primary purpose?

2 Describe three experiences you have had that relate to the key idea you are studying. Make brief notes on the connections between each experience and the key idea.

3 For one of the experiences you described in question 2, create a plan for a piece of reflective writing. Indicate how you will address each element of the DIEP model in your reflective piece.

Crafting texts to argue

A text that presents an argument with the aim of convincing others to agree is known as persuasive writing. You will analyse persuasive writing in more depth in Area of Study 2: Exploring argument. In Area of Study 2: Crafting texts, the focus is on presenting your own argument on an idea or issue.

Your argument will consist of a central contention or point of view, and supporting reasons backed up by evidence and logical reasoning. For instance, some possible positions you might take in relation to the key idea 'Writing about crisis' (see Chapter 10) are shown below.

Writing about crisis

- The world overreacted to COVID-19.
- Human beings must act to stop climate change.
- The world should abolish nuclear weapons.

To construct an argument in support of any of these positions, you would need to do some research, find the relevant facts and identify several strong reasons for holding this position.

An effective argument depends first and foremost on a thorough knowledge of the subject. This flow chart shows the keys to a successful piece of persuasive writing.

Topic
- Pick a topic you're interested in. Writing or speaking on a topic you care about is much easier than tackling a topic that doesn't really matter to you.

Audience
- Know your audience; research their interests and expectations.
- Tailor your language, arguments and persuasive techniques to your specific audience.

Contention
- Develop a strong contention – your point of view.
- Bring your arguments and reasons back to your contention.

Credibility
- Establish and build your credibility with your audience.
- If you are adopting a persona, make sure it is one you understand.

Know the issue
- Research both sides of the issue.
- Find and use up-to-date information and opinions.

Avoid an 'info dump'
- Use a range of persuasive techniques, not just facts and figures.

Example of writing to argue

The following excerpts are from an opinion piece published in *The Age* in January 2022. The author presents an argument in favour of the four-day working week.

Scan the code or click <u>here</u> to see the complete version of this opinion piece. How do the images add to its impact?

Reworking the week: Let's lose a day and find more time for life

Feeling burnt out before the year has barely begun? I hear you. [...]

Usually, our nation wakes from our standard summer stupor – caused by a combo of too much Christmas pud and cricket – by Australia Day. This is the time for a fresh start; a new year, new resolutions, new goals, new attitude. For students, new uniforms and pencil cases packed with new pens and pencils. But frankly, hands up who wants to just lie on the beach and pull the towel over their heads and wish the world of work away?

[...]

In New Zealand, American company Unilever is currently running a one-year trial paying its 81 employees five days' pay for a four-day week, according to *The New York Times*.

It was announced in Britain this week that a four-day working week pilot will begin in June with about 30 companies signing up. The six-month program will see firms allowing staff to work 32 hours per week with their compensation and benefits unchanged. The plan is to study the impact of shorter working hours on businesses' productivity and the wellbeing of their workers, as well as the impact on the environment and gender equality.

So come on Australia! Let's wake from our real stupor. It is time for a national "restructure" of the working week. If we can beat the Poms in the cricket, surely we can give the four-day working week a go too. Let's beat them at battling burnout.

Helen Pitt

Annotations (right margin):

Opens with a conversational style and friendly tone; includes anecdotes about summer and Christmas in Australia, making the topic relevant to the audience.

Uses direct address and a rhetorical question to engage the audience.

Presents evidence of what is happening elsewhere, citing a reputable source, *The New York Times*. The style becomes more formal and the tone more serious; the argument places the issue in a global context, giving it more weight.

Suggests that Australia is falling behind the rest of the world, using an implicit comparison between Australia and Britain, leading the reader to feel that Australia needs to catch up by trying something similar.

Ends with an appeal to patriotism and a call to action.

Explore persuasive writing

ACTIVITY

1 Using your key idea, develop some positions or points of view that you would argue for.

2 Develop main reasons to support each of these positions, and write your contentions.

3 Using some of the persuasive strategies in the opinion piece above, write two different opening paragraphs of a persuasive piece for one of your positions, each targeting a different audience.

CHAPTER 09
TEXT TYPES

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Short stories
- Podcasts
- Recounts
- Diary and journal entries
- Scripts
- Memoirs, autobiographies and biographies
- Letters
- Blogs
- Essays
- Speeches
- Opinion pieces
- Feature articles
- Hybrid texts

In your study of English, you will encounter a variety of text types. Different texts are suited to different audiences, contexts and purposes. For example, if you wanted to argue a point you might choose to write an opinion piece or a persuasive speech. If you wish to tell a story you might choose to write a short story or a script.

However, sometimes it is useful to combine text types or to use them in interesting ways. For example, when George Orwell wanted to write a political piece about the threat of communism, he could have written an essay. Instead, Orwell chose to write a fable, *Animal Farm*, and his choice of this genre of fiction led to a text that is both persuasive and entertaining.

This chapter discusses twelve broad kinds of texts that you might encounter as mentor texts or that you might choose to write. For each of these text types you will see examples, features and conventions, as well as suggestions and activities to help you develop a piece in that form. Chapter 10 provides more examples and advice on how to emulate the writing of specific authors, in relation to a key idea.

Short stories

Short stories are generally considered to be stories between 2000 and 20 000 words in length – anything shorter than that is flash fiction or micro fiction, and anything longer is a novella or a novel. Other than the length, there are features and conventions that make short stories different from other works of fiction.

Short stories often focus on a single incident, scene or situation. Unlike a novel, a short story might only have a single setting in which all the action takes place. A short story will also typically focus on just one character, whether the story is told from that character's point of view (in the first person) or from the point of view of an external narrator (in the third person). Occasionally, short stories evoke a particular mood or feeling without having a specific plot or storyline. These types of short stories are sometimes called vignettes.

Short stories make excellent mentor texts. Because they are short, it is possible to study a few short stories on a topic and look for similarities and differences between them. It is also sometimes easier to identify elements of an author's voice or style in a short story than it is in a longer work, because the language is so condensed.

If you choose to write in the form of a short story, draw on the effective features of short stories that you read, as well as on the notes about structure below. Aim to create a self-contained piece of writing that has a strong sense of unity and is compelling from the first word to the last.

> **Features and conventions of short stories**
>
> » Are of a limited length – usually between 2000 and 20 000 words
> » Have a limited number of characters
> » Usually have only one plot line
> » Are often based on a specific theme or mood
> » May follow specific genre conventions (e.g. detective fiction, horror fiction, science fiction)

Narrative structures for short stories

Short stories do not need to follow the same narrative conventions as longer texts such as novels. However, most short stories do have characters and a story arc, and authors can choose from a number of different narrative structures.

Linear/chronological narrative
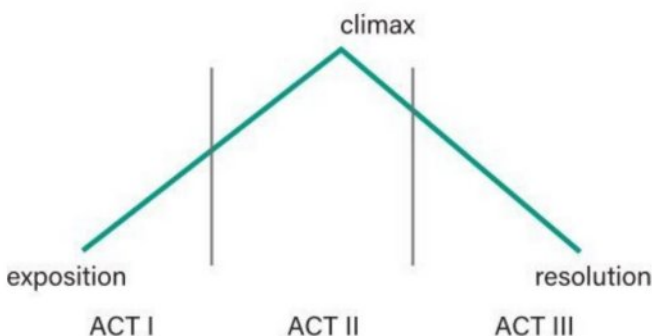
A linear or chronological narrative has a traditional 'three-act' or 'beginning-middle-end' structure. This kind of short story typically follows the action and storyline of one character.

In medias res
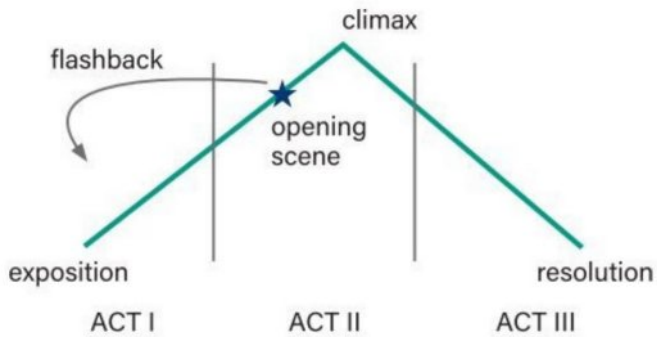
'In medias res' means 'in the middle of things'. Short stories sometimes begin in the middle of the action, before a flashback or memory fills in some of the backstory.

Frame narrative
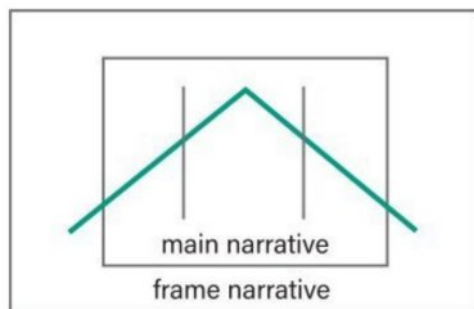
In a frame narrative, the main story is 'framed' by another. For example, it may be a story-within-a-story where the narrator is speaking to an audience and retelling a story. This structure is particularly common in the Gothic genre.

Circular narrative
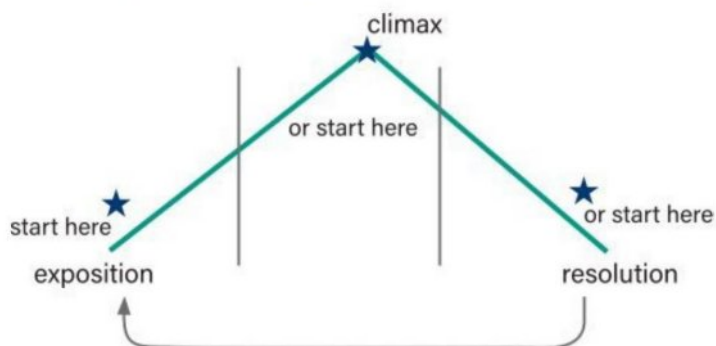
A circular narrative can begin at any point in the plot; often the first scene is at the climax or the resolution rather than the exposition. By the end of the narrative, the character's journey has come full circle.

Abstract / no structure

Some short stories have no clear narrative structure. This can include fragmented stories that jump back and forth in time or memory, and stories that evoke a mood or feeling but have no obvious structure.

Example: 'The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas'

The following excerpt is the opening passage of Ursula Le Guin's short story 'The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas'. This is an example of a short story centred on a situation rather than a main character and a plot. The city of Omelas, which has fairytale qualities, is revealed to be founded on a dark secret: the city can only thrive if a single specific child is kept in misery. The title alludes to the few people who choose to walk away from this disturbing situation.

The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas

With a clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to the city Omelas, bright-towered by the sea. The rigging of the boats in harbor sparkled with flags. In the streets between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-grown gardens and under avenues of trees, past great parks and public buildings, processions moved. Some were decorous: old people in long stiff robes of mauve and grey, grave master workmen, quiet, merry women carrying their babies and chatting as they walked. In other streets the music beat faster, a shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing, the procession was a dance. Children dodged in and out, their high calls rising like the swallows' crossing flights, over the music and the singing. All the processions wound towards the north side of the city, where on the great water-meadow called the Green Fields boys and girls, naked in the bright air, with mud-stained feet and ankles and long, lithe arms, exercised their restive horses before the race. The horses wore no gear at all but a halter without bit. Their manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green. They flared their nostrils and pranced and boasted to one another; they were vastly excited, the horse being the only animal who has adopted our ceremonies as his own. Far off to the north and west the mountains stood up half encircling Omelas on her bay. The air of morning was so clear that the snow still crowning the Eighteen Peaks burned with white-gold fire across the miles of sunlit air, under the dark blue of the sky. There was just enough wind to make the banners that marked the racecourse snap and flutter now and then. In the silence of the broad green meadows one could hear the music winding through the city streets, farther and nearer and ever approaching, a cheerful faint sweetness of the air that from time to time trembled and gathered together and broke out into the great joyous clanging of the bells.

> The short story begins with a rich and evocative description of the fictional city of Omelas.

> The narrator can see everything happening in Omelas. There are no central characters in this story, which encourages the reader to view the situation from a distance.

> Adjectives such as 'mud-stained' and 'restive' help create the scene.

> At first the narrative seems to be in the third person, but here the use of 'our' indicates that the narrator, too, lives in Omelas.

Explore short stories

ACTIVITY

GROUP

1 Le Guin's story has no central characters and no clear narrative structure. In a group, discuss what effect you think this has on the telling of the story, and how it influences your reading of it.

2 How does the opening of Le Guin's short story lead the reader to believe that Omelas is a perfect, utopian society? Write down any specific words or phrases you think contribute to this effect.

3 Use the opening of the story as your starting point. Finish the story (700–1000 words) by turning the seemingly utopian Omelas into a dystopian nightmare.

Podcasts

A podcast is an audio text that is usually streamed or downloaded from a particular podcast website or app. The word podcast is a portmanteau – a joined-together word – made up of the words 'iPod' and 'broadcast'.

You can find a podcast on just about any subject. Podcasts can be fiction or nonfiction, ongoing and updated regularly or run as limited series. They are often focused on a specific idea, issue, hobby or interest. For example, you might listen to a podcast about news or current affairs, sport or music, short stories or a serialised novel. Some have been running for a long time and have millions of listeners. Podcasts can range from being very simple – such as a three-to-five-minute news item – to much more complex. For example, some fiction podcasts feature multiple voice actors as well as music and sound effects, and follow a narrative structure just like a television series or novel. Careful editing brings the various elements together into a fluent, coherent narrative.

To use a podcast as a mentor text, it might be helpful to get a transcript of the podcast, or to make your own. A transcript is a written copy of the podcast made after its production. A script is the text used to create the podcast and includes directions for any music, sound effects, ad breaks or other common features and conventions. Some podcasts, such as those featuring interviews, do not follow a close script. Even with interviews, however, it is likely that the podcaster had prepared a list of questions for the interviewee, and possible that the interviewee prepared their answers beforehand.

If you choose to write a podcast, aim to produce a script for one episode of a podcast series. Your episode can be fiction – like an episode of a radio show – or nonfiction. Whichever you choose, be sure to follow podcast conventions involving sound, music and production, like the example below.

> **Features and conventions of podcasts**
> » Can vary in length; usually no longer than one hour
> » Are usually recorded in series or seasons
> » Often use short sound effects called 'stings' to separate segments
> » Often feature recognisable intro or section music

Example: VCE English Podcast

This script for the opening of a fictional podcast on VCE English demonstrates many of the typical features of the form. Read the script then do the questions that follow.

[Sponsor message: The VCE English Podcast is **sponsored by** Insight Publications' *English Year 11* – check out Insight's latest English textbook for up-to-date information on the new VCE English Study Design]

[Opening **music jingle** and sound effects]

Intro: Welcome (2 minutes)

Podcasts are often free, so they might be supported by advertising by a related company. This could also hint at whether the podcast is biased.

Podcasts typically open with recognisable music and a consistent introduction from the podcast producer or main speaker.

Welcome to the VCE English Podcast, the number one podcast for students in Victoria studying English. This week we'll be discussing Robbie Arnott's *Flames*, one of the texts available for study in Unit 3, Area of Study 1.

As always we love to hear your feedback, so please subscribe to the podcast, join the mailing list and send us an email at podcast@VCEEnglish.com.

Alright, let's get into it!

[Segue: musical sting]

Topic #1: Overview of the text (5 minutes)

Flames was Robbie Arnott's first novel, and established him as an up-and-coming new Australian writer. Set in Tasmania, the novel is mysterious, darkly funny and Gothic, and …

> As a form of online media, podcasts generally encourage interaction with the audience. They usually have a more informal register than other media forms.

> A segue is a transition between sections in the podcast, and is often accompanied by music or a 'sting'.

Explore podcasts

ACTIVITY

1 Visit a podcast website or app and listen to a few podcasts on subjects you're interested in. Identify the common features between the podcasts.

2 Take an idea you have been working on, perhaps inspired by one of your mentor texts. Brainstorm ways you could produce a podcast – fiction or nonfiction – based on those ideas.

3 What are the advantages of choosing a podcast script for one of your written pieces? What are the disadvantages or potential drawbacks?

Scan the code or click here for a video overview of podcasts.

Recounts

A recount is a story about past events. Recounts may be fictional or nonfictional and can be as simple as one person telling a friend about their holidays. A recount is often written in the first person (I, me, my), or it can be a third-person account, such as a journalist's account of another person's experience. Clarity is a key aspect of a recount: the author must try to present a clear picture of what happened.

Features and conventions of recounts
- » Tell a story of an event in the past
- » Can be written in a variety of forms, e.g. story, monologue, report
- » Are often written in first person with a reflective tone
- » Focus on providing clear details

Example: 'Laugh, Kookaburra'

This recount is an excerpt from the personal essay 'Laugh, Kookaburra' by the US humorist David Sedaris, first published in the *New Yorker* magazine. Scan the code or click here to read the complete essay.

I first heard [the song "Kookaburra"] in the fifth grade, when our music teacher went on an Australian kick. She taught us to sing "Waltzing Matilda," "Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport," and what we called, simply, "Kookaburra." I'd never heard such craziness in my life. The first song, for instance, included the words "jumbuck," "billabong," "swagman," and "tucker bag," none of which were ever explained. The more nonsensical the lyric, the harder it was to remember, and that, most likely, is why I retained the song about the kookaburra – it was less abstract than the others.

I recall that after school that day I taught it to my sister Amy, who must have been in the first grade at the time. We sang it in the car, we sang it at the table, and then, one night, we sang it in her bed, the two of us lying side by side and rocking back and forth. "Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree …"

We'd been at it for half an hour, when the door flung open. "What the hell is going on?" It was our father, one hand resting, teapot style, on his hip, and the other – what would be the spout – formed into a fist. He was dressed in his standard around-the-house outfit, which is to say, his underpants. No matter the season, he wore them without a shirt or socks, the way a toddler might pad about in a diaper. For as long as any of us could remember, this was the way it went: he returned home from work and stepped out of his slacks, sighing with relief, as if they were oppressive, like high heels.

The first-person voice and past tense are typical of recounts.

Details make the experience concrete and convincing; the author places the reader in the position of being his younger self.

The repetition of 'we sang it' (the rule of three) conveys the children's enjoyment of the song.

Sedaris creates a humorous image of his father with precise details, including dialogue.

Sedaris broadens out from the specific experience to reflect on his family.

Explore recounts

ACTIVITY

1 Identify three moments from your own life about which you could write a recount in the style of David Sedaris. For each moment, write a brief description of what happened.

2 Sedaris uses humour as well as vivid descriptions. Choose one of the moments from question 1 and write three humorous descriptions associated with that moment.

3 Clarity is important in recounts. Complete the planning for your own recount by writing notes on who else was involved, and when, where and why the event took place.

Diary and journal entries

Diary and journal entries are very reflective forms of writing. They are autobiographical, but are not necessarily about the most important events in a person's life. Diary entries are sometimes mundane, but they reveal deeply personal aspects of the author's life and thoughts.

Diaries are usually nonfiction – such as *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank – but the diary form can also be used in works of fiction. The popular children's series *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney and Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* are examples of fictional diaries.

You can use the diary form in a variety of ways. You may choose to write a diary or journal entry from the point of view of a well-known person related to the key idea you are discussing in class. You could also include a short diary entry within a longer creative piece, such as a diary entry by a character in a short story. Because diary entries are personal, they are perfect for providing insight into a character's thoughts and feelings.

> **Features and conventions of diary and journal entries**
> » Are written in the first person (I, me, my)
> » Are personal and reflective
> » Are often private and confessional
> » Have the date at the top of each entry

Example: *Dracula*

Bram Stoker's famous novel *Dracula* (1897) is written as a series of journal entries and letters by several of the main characters. The following excerpt is from Chapter 8.

Mina Murray's Journal

18 August. – I am happy today, and write sitting on the seat in the churchyard. Lucy is ever so much better. Last night she slept well all night, and did not disturb me once. The roses seem coming back already to her cheeks, though she is still sadly pale and wan-looking. If she were in any way anaemic I could understand it, but she is not. She is in gay spirits and full of life and cheerfulness. All the morbid reticence seems to have passed from her, and she has just reminded me, as if I needed any reminding, of *that* night, and that it was here, on this very seat, I found her asleep. As she told me she tapped playfully with the heel of her boot on the stone slab and said: –

'My poor little feet didn't make much noise then! I daresay poor old Mr Swales would have told me that it was because I didn't want to wake up Geordie.' As she was in such a communicative humour, I asked her if she had dreamed at all that night.

The date and the first-person voice are typical of the diary form.

Diary entries often contain some reference to the act of writing.

Description enables the author to represent other characters.

Reported conversations enable other characters' experiences to be related.

Explore diary entries

1 Keep a diary for one week; write a summary of your actions, thoughts and feelings each day.

2 At the end of the week, review the diary and select the most important or interesting parts. Expand these into longer entries, adding more description.

3 'Fictionalise' your diary entries: add imaginary details and dialogue, embellish characters and situations and turn your diary entries into a piece of fiction (700–1000 words).

Scripts

A script is the written 'instructions' for a play, movie, television show or other audio or audiovisual text. Scripts generally include much more than just the spoken words. For example, a script for a television show might include directions to the actors on how to perform, or information about the set design. A script for a podcast might include information on sound and music (see pages 104–5 for more information on podcast scripts).

Using scripts as mentor texts can be challenging and rewarding. You may wish to find scripts for television shows and movies you are familiar with and follow the final production alongside the script. Often, you will find that the final production deviates from the script – perhaps because the actors have been allowed to improvise, or because the director has made decisions after the filming to edit or change the final version.

Writing a script will require you to imagine what the final production will look or sound like. To be realistic, your script will need to follow specific conventions for formatting and layout. Different rules are used by different industries, but scripts still have many features in common. For example, you will need to separate the spoken parts from the stage directions, incorporate any lighting, music and sound effects appropriate to your chosen form, and write the script clearly so that it is easy for the actors or performers to read.

> **Features and conventions of scripts**
> » Use specific formatting conventions, e.g. aligned or centred text, italics, capital letters
> » Include stage directions, music, sound effects as well as dialogue
> » May include a short synopsis of the scene or an initial description of the mood
> » Are readable and easy to follow

Example: television script

Use this fictional script as an example of how to format scenes for a television show. Film screenplays use similar conventions.

```
INT. GENERIC CLASSROOM. TABLES IN ROWS – DURING
LESSON.

Carla Jones, tapping her pencil on the desk,
stares out the window. Mr. Mitchell is droning on
in the background about statistics.

                    CARLA (V.O.)

     The day started badly and got worse. How
     I made it this far – all the way to fifth
     period maths – I'll never know. I should
     have just called it quits at recess.

Mr. Mitchell notices Carla staring out the window
and moves to stand next to her desk, still
talking about statistics.
```

The setting is capitalised. INT. stands for 'interior' – an inside scene. Outside scenes are EXT. (exterior).

Stage directions are written in normal font, aligned to the left.

Character names are centred, and the speaking parts are indented from both left and right sides. Voice-overs are indicated by (V.O.).

```
                        MR. MITCHELL

        … and with the application of probability
        theory, an incredibly important branch of
        mathematics, we find – sorry, Ms. Jones, am
        I keeping you up?

                           CARLA

        Hmm? Oh, sorry! No, I was just …

                        MR. MITCHELL

        Just appreciating the view of the carpark?

                        CARLA (V.O.)

        Great. Just what I need. A burst of the
        classic Mitchell sarcasm to snap me back
        to reality.
```

> Most dialogue in film and television is realistic, so conversations are often broken up by interruptions and sentences can be incomplete.

Explore scripts

ACTIVITY

1 Research different script formats online. Make notes on the similarities and differences, such as between play, television and film scripts.

GROUP

2 Choose an issue or idea you have been discussing in class. In a small group, brainstorm ways to write a script about the issue in three forms: play, movie and podcast.

3 Choose one of the three forms you brainstormed in question 2, and write a script of 700–1000 words, including stage directions.

Memoirs, autobiographies and biographies

Memoirs and autobiographies are written by the author about their own life. A memoir – sometimes written as a diary or including diary extracts – can be more personal than an autobiography, which may take a big-picture look at the author's life. A biography is also the story of a person's life, but is written by someone else.

Memoirs and autobiographies are personal and reflective texts. They give insight into a person's life either by focusing on a pivotal, important moment or period (in a memoir), or by covering a series of moments across the author's life, usually starting in childhood and working towards the time of writing (in an autobiography). Biographies tend to have a more formal, detached style; they involve extensive research and – if possible – interviews with the subject and people who have known the subject.

Using a piece of life writing as a mentor text provides an interesting opportunity to take a specific angle on your key idea. If your idea is very broad – for example, identity or the future – it can be useful to find a single, personal focus that will give the issue a human side.

Your written pieces won't be as long as a full-length book, so if you choose to write a biography you will need to select a particular moment or period from the subject's life. If you are writing about your own life, choose an important, pivotal event.

> **Features and conventions of memoirs, autobiographies and biographies**
> » Are written by the subject (memoir/autobiography) or about the subject (biography)
> » Focus on one important moment or a series of moments
> » Bring together multiple stories to show the broad 'theme' of a person's life

Example 1: *The Happiest Refugee*

Read the following excerpt from Anh Do's memoir *The Happiest Refugee*, published in 2010. Following it is an excerpt from a biography. Complete the activity at the end of the section to explore some of the advantages and disadvantages of each form of life writing.

> I'm flying down the Hume Highway at 130 kilometres an hour. I've lost control a few times but the *brrrrrr* of those white guide things on the side of the road keeps me on track. A steering wheel wet from tears is a very slippery object. I am sobbing uncontrollably.
>
> *Will he even recognise me? If he doesn't, I'm going to just turn around and walk the other way.*
>
> I haven't seen my father in nine years. Since I was thirteen in fact. I watched him walk out the door one night and haven't seen or heard from him since, except for one strange phone call late at night on my eighteenth birthday. He was drunk and I hung up. I hated him when he was drunk … I feared him even.
>
> Now, here I am at the age of twenty-two rushing headlong to see him. I'm quite a lot taller than when he left. And, more importantly, stronger. I can take him now … easy. I'm torn between fantasies of a happy reunion with this guy and beating him up.

Do uses various techniques, such as an interior monologue (in italics), onomatopoeia ('brrrrrr') and ellipses (…), to make his writing sound casual and conversational. This helps to present some confronting situations in a more accessible manner.

The first-person voice and a reflective tone are typical of the memoir genre.

I'm considering the different ways I could headbutt the little Vietnamese prick. As soon as he opens the door – *Bang*! Try and get him before he has a chance to do anything. Blood would pour from his nose and he'd be sorry. I'd make him pay for everything. For pissing off. For forcing Mum to look after three kids on an illiterate Vietnamese migrant's wages of less than ten bucks an hour. But I also miss him dearly.

> Do's memoir is narrated in an honest and direct style, presenting his personality as relatable and friendly.

Example 2: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

This excerpt is from a biography by Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. It was published in 2010, nearly sixty years after the subject's death.

PROLOGUE

The Woman in the Photograph

There's a photo on my wall of a woman I've never met, its left corner torn and patched together with tape. She looks straight into the camera and smiles, hands on hips, dress suit neatly pressed, lips painted deep red. It's the late 1940s and she hasn't yet reached the age of thirty. Her light brown skin is smooth, her eyes still young and playful, oblivious to the tumor growing inside her – a tumor that would leave her five children motherless and change the future of medicine. Beneath the photo, a caption says her name is "Henrietta Lacks, Helen Lane or Helen Larson."

> Skloot begins with a physical description drawn from an old photograph.

> The author foreshadows the main points of the text early in the prologue: the subject's tumour and her lack of recognition (reflected in the uncertainty about or absence of her name) despite her contribution to modern medicine.

No one knows who took that picture, but it's appeared hundreds of times in magazines and science textbooks, on blogs and laboratory walls. She's usually identified as Helen Lane, but often she has no name at all. She's simply called HeLa, the code name given to the world's first immortal human cells – *her* cells, cut from her cervix just months before she died.

Her real name is Henrietta Lacks.

Explore memoir and biography

1 Anh Do's memoir is very personal and written about his own family. Rebecca Skloot's biography is written about a subject who died long before the text was published. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches? Write notes in a table like the following.

Text type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Memoir		
Biography		

2 Based on the advantages and disadvantages of the text type and your own personal interest, choose either a memoir or a biography. Create a document for your research, including:

a key events in the subject's life

b key people who had an impact on the subject's life

c major world events that had an impact on the subject.

3 Write an account of one important event in your subject's life (700–1000 words).

Letters

Like diary entries, letters are often personal and reveal the writer's thoughts and feelings on an issue or event. Unlike diary entries, they are written with a specific audience in mind, such as a friend, a loved one, a colleague, or perhaps an editor of a newspaper or magazine.

Letters vary in format, but generally begin with a salutation such as 'Dear …' or 'To Whom It May Concern', followed by an outline of the writer's intent. For personal letters to a friend or family member, the letter may be a recount of recent events – a way of staying connected to a loved one. In a letter to the editor, the writer might be arguing for or against something that has recently been published in the newspaper or magazine.

To use letters as mentor texts, choose ones that are not too simple or short. It will be difficult to gain much understanding of language or structure from a letter that only takes a shallow approach to an issue or idea. To use the letter form as the basis of one of your written pieces, you could consider writing a series of letters back and forth between correspondents, or including a letter at the end of a longer article such as an editorial or feature piece, responding to it.

> **Features and conventions of letters**
> » Are written for a specific audience
> » Are often personal, revealing the thoughts and feelings of the author
> » Can be informal (e.g. a personal letter) or formal (e.g. a letter to an employer)
> » Usually have short paragraphs
> » Usually begin with a salutation ('Dear …') and end with a sign-off ('Yours, …')

Example: letter to the editor

In this fictional example, a newspaper has recently published an article in which the council is asking all members of the community to recycle their food scraps. Read the letter then complete the activity.

A load of rubbish

In response to Councillor Jakobsen's recent request (*The Tribune*, 14/12) that the residents of Bygrove Shire pay more attention to what is going into our food bins, I have three questions.

Firstly, have you actually seen the size of the food bins? The council has provided us with what is possibly the smallest plastic container I have ever laid eyes on. The wheelie bin that comes as part of my child's very realistic doll's house is larger. How are we expected to fit more than a mouthful of food scraps into this tiny receptacle?

Secondly, who determines when this miniscule container is collected? Who decided that Friday morning would be the best time? Are we to go a full weekend – with the BBQs and parties we hold off until a Saturday night – and then the entire following week without having our bins emptied? The streets of Bygrove will soon be plagued by flies!

Letters to the editor usually have a brief headline signalling the topic or issue.

The letter begins with a clear indication of the issue and a reference to a recently published article.

The paragraphs are short and logically ordered, including transition words at the start of each paragraph.

The points made in this letter are deliberately over-the-top and exaggerated – part of a strategy to mock and belittle the councillor's request.

Thirdly, how are we expected to separate the meat from the vegetables, as you advised? I make a delightful bolognaise. I carefully sauté the vegetables before adding the meat, but the whole thing blends together over a four-hour cooking period. Am I then to extract the meat from the leftovers via some mysterious feat of reverse-engineering?

In future, I suggest councillors stay away from writing articles in the local press and stick to their day jobs.

A Resident
North Bygrove

> The writer's name and suburb/town are placed at the end of the letter.

Explore letters

1 The letter above is persuasive and presents an argument supported by several reasons. However, it is not necessarily a good mentor text as it takes a very personal view of the issue. Write a letter on a related issue (recycling, food waste, climate change) that takes a big-picture view of the problem, using established facts and evidence.

2 Choose an issue, topic or event you have studied and identify a key stakeholder – a person heavily involved in the issue. Write a letter to that person expressing your opinion on the issue. Make sure your purpose is clear – it might be writing to express, to inform or to argue.

3 Write a series of letters back and forth between two people discussing the issue you used for question 2. Aim to write 700–1000 words in total.

Blogs

The word 'blog' is an abbreviation of 'weblog', literally a 'log' or journal on the internet (web). The first blogs were written in the 1990s and were generally brief pieces of text containing links to other websites the authors found interesting. Since then, the blogging industry has grown, and many authors make a living from writing blog posts and online articles.

Blogging shares many of its features and conventions with traditional print journalism but brings in elements of digital texts, including embedding multimedia (such as videos) and offering ways to share the content. Blogs can also be much more interactive and audience-driven than traditional forms of writing. Some bloggers even use their platforms to raise awareness of important world-changing issues. Blog post topics are extremely varied: they can range from highly specific special interests to more general topics such as sports and current affairs. There are also many kinds of blogs, including opinion pieces, video blogs (vlogs) and listicles – such as the '5 best X ever' kinds of blogs, which are very popular. Scan the code or click here to see a video overview of blogs.

Blog posts make effective mentor texts since they are often about the same length as the pieces you will need to write, and they tend to focus on an issue or idea, just as your own writing will. They are a modern and engaging format to write in.

> **Features and conventions of blog posts**
> » Are generally short – around 700–1000 words
> » Often mirror conventions of traditional journalism
> » Are most commonly nonfiction but can be fictional
> » Generally have an informal, approachable style
> » Have a strong awareness of audience

Example: listicle

5 Reasons You Need to Stop Using Your Smartphone Right Now

We live in an age of instant gratification. Picture the scene: you're out to dinner with friends, and one of them asks a question about a movie that came out five, maybe six years ago.

Suddenly there's a cone of silence around the table as all six members of the group retreat briefly into their own private worlds, tapping away at phones.

Blog posts usually have an attention-grabbing headline. Sometimes the headline is 'clickbait', placed on the home page of the website and deliberately designed to be provocative or intriguing, to make you click the link.

Images are often used to make the blog post more attractive and appealing, and to highlight key ideas.

The situation probably sounds familiar, right? But is it enough to make you give up your smartphone habit and rejoin the physical world? Probably not. So, here's 5 more reasons to stop using your smartphone right now.

#1 – Your phone knows *way* too much about you

Have you ever stopped to think about how your phone always seems to know exactly what you want *before* you even know you want it? There's a lot of money – billions of dollars – invested in *big data* and the algorithms that predict your phone use.

#2 – That constant stream of notifications is ruining your mental health

When that little red number pops up on your screen, your brain lights up with reward chemicals like dopamine. Check your phone often enough and it becomes addictive. When the notifications stop, your brain suffers.

#3 – Your phone might be bad for your physical health

The jury is still out on the potentially harmful effects of the heat and radiation from a phone's battery. While many people believe that these effects are minimal, there is still some concern that we do not understand the long-term impact. Phone use can also be responsible for aches and pains from poor posture and repetitive strain injuries.

#4 – They're bad for the environment

The rare metals and components needed to produce smartphones are in increasingly short supply. Recycling old phones doesn't cut it, and every year the mining industry has a huge impact on our planet.

#5 – The real world, you know, exists …

Probably the biggest negative impact of phones is that they distract us from the real world around us. Whether it's viewing impressive scenery through a smartphone or chatting to friends on a messenger app while ignoring the people we are with, there's no arguing that phones have changed, and even diminished, the way we interact with reality.

> Blogs often use inclusive language and personal pronouns. Using we, us, our, my, you and your creates a familiarity with the audience.

> Rhetorical questions make the reader think about their own phone usage and continue to build the author–reader relationship.

> Listicles are split into short sections with subheadings; sometimes the items are spread across multiple web pages to keep readers clicking through content.

> Hyperlinks enable readers to go to other websites for additional information.

Explore blogs

ACTIVITY

1 Listicles often end with a short concluding statement. Write a conclusion for the listicle above.

2 **GROUP** Listicles are well suited to promoting interests and hobbies. In a small group, find a subject you are all interested in and come up with between five and ten key features that could be written as a listicle. Write the listicle as a group or individually.

3 Blogs can be on serious issues that are being covered in the mainstream media. Choose a current issue related to the key idea you are studying and express your views on it in around 700 words. Include at least one image and some hyperlinks to related online articles.

Essays

In school, essays are usually the end point of a text study or a research task. You will be familiar with the type of essay that has an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion, and includes quotes from the text you have been studying or from experts in the field. But the essay is also a well-respected form of text in areas outside the world of education.

Essays can fall into a broader category of writing called creative nonfiction. In creative nonfiction, authors blend the features of nonfiction – research, evidence and facts, compelling arguments, real-world issues – with elements of creative writing such as evocative and rich descriptions, figurative language, strong characters and narrative arcs. This style of essay can be found in long-form journalism such as feature articles in newspapers and magazines (print and online), and in collections of essays.

A writer's purpose in writing an essay can vary widely. Some essays are quite reflective and expressive – the excerpt on page 106 from David Sedaris' essay 'Laugh, Kookaburra' is an example of this style. Other essays can be more argumentative, presenting an opinion or interpretation supported by evidence and reasoning, with the intention of persuading the reader to agree with the point of view presented. Essays in the category of creative nonfiction will generally have more than one purpose, seamlessly combining expressive, expository, reflective and/or argumentative qualities.

When you explore essays as mentor texts, you will encounter examples that go far beyond the standard five-paragraph structure. The style and structure of the essays will vary depending on who writes them and where they are published. But all essays will be underpinned by a passion for the topic, solid research, and imaginative and entertaining writing.

If you choose to write a creative nonfiction essay you will need a compelling issue to write about, and the ability to blend elements of creative writing into your response.

> **Features and conventions of essays**
> » Are based on research, facts and evidence
> » Are longer than other forms of journalism
> » Use a reasonably formal register
> » Can contain elements of creative writing, e.g. figurative language
> » Reflect on important issues

Example: 'Fail better'

The following excerpt is the third section of a ten-part essay by English author Zadie Smith. Authors often choose to write essays on issues that are personally important to them. In this case, the essay is a reflection on the writing process and on failing.

Fail better

Saturday January 13, 2007
[...]

3. What writers know

First things first: writers do not have perfect or even superior knowledge about the quality or otherwise of their own work – God knows, most writers are quite deluded about the nature of their own talent. But writers do have a different kind

> There is a playfulness and humour to the writing. The author is critical of writers – herself included – but uses 'tongue-in-cheek' humour.

of knowledge than either professors or critics. Occasionally it's worth listening to. The insight of the practitioner is, for better or worse, unique. It's what you find in the criticism of Virginia Woolf, of Iris Murdoch, of Roland Barthes. What unites those very different critics is the confidence with which they made the connection between personality and prose. To be clear: theirs was neither strictly biographical criticism nor prescriptively moral criticism, and nothing they wrote was reducible to the childish formulations "only good men write good books" or "one must know a man's life to understand his work". But neither did they think of a writer's personality as an irrelevance. They understood style precisely as an expression of personality, in its widest sense. A writer's personality is his manner of being in the world: his writing style is the unavoidable trace of that manner. When you understand style in these terms, you don't think of it as merely a matter of fanciful syntax, or as the flamboyant icing atop a plain literary cake, nor as the uncontrollable result of some mysterious velocity coiled within language itself. Rather, you see style as a personal necessity, as the only possible expression of a particular human consciousness. Style is a writer's way of telling the truth. Literary success or failure, by this measure, depends not only on the refinement of words on a page, but in the refinement of a consciousness, what Aristotle called the education of the emotions.

Zadie Smith

The essay references other authors, texts and ideas that are likely to be familiar to the intended reader (well-read, possibly university educated).

A fairly sophisticated vocabulary is typical of the essay form.

Smith uses elements of creative writing, such as this colourful metaphor to describe an aspect of style.

Short, simple sentences are used to create variety and separate Smith's long, complex sentences.

Explore essays

1 The essay excerpt above reflects the ideas and perspective of the author. Smith writes on something she is passionate about: the difficulties of being a writer. Brainstorm and list some hobbies, passions or skills of your own that you could write an essay about.

2 Highlight or make notes on any elements of creative writing you see in this essay, such as figurative language, symbols and descriptive language.

3 Choose one of your topics from question 1 and write an outline for an essay.

Zadie Smith

Intimations
Six Essays
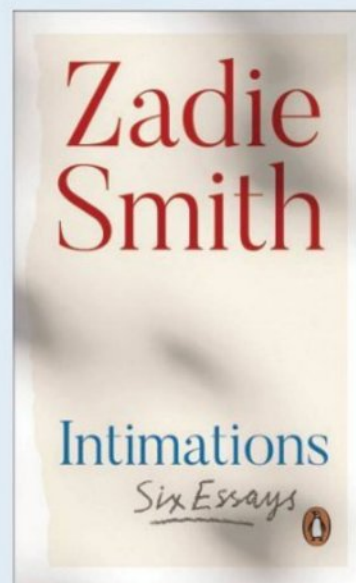
Zadie Smith's collection *Intimations* (2020) uses the essay form to explore responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns.

Speeches

A speech can be a highly persuasive form of text; it can also be entertaining and informative. The best speeches captivate an audience and draw on the experiences and emotions of audience members to pull them into the speaker's world. Speeches might use visual aids such as slides, photographs or short videos, but the power of the speech relies on the written text and the manner in which the speaker delivers it.

To write an effective speech, you will need to research your topic and develop an angle or approach that will be both entertaining and compelling. This means that a speech is a good choice of text type if the issue is one about which you are already passionate and have a certain amount of background knowledge. Quality research might include looking up stories that you can use as anecdotes, drawing on your own experiences, and finding facts and statistics that support your argument.

Speeches are designed to be delivered orally. They should be written in a way that makes them clear and powerful when spoken aloud. This might include using shorter, more impactful sentences, and repetition. The rule of three, in which ideas are grouped together in a trio, such as 'I came, I saw, I conquered', is a form of repetition commonly used in persuasive writing and speeches.

Remember that speakers should vary their pace and intonation, so include features (such as rhetorical questions) that will help them to do this. You might even include in the script some instructions on how the speech should be delivered – places to pause, for instance, or to use a more urgent tone.

Features and conventions of speeches

» Vary in time from a few minutes up to an hour or more
» Are clear and compelling
» Often use persuasive techniques and appeals
» Express a view on something the speaker is passionate about
» May indicate tone, pitch and other notes on delivery in the written text

Example: Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize speech

The following excerpt is from Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize lecture, given when she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. Scan the code or click here to see the full text of her speech.

I have found that people describe me in many different ways.
Some people call me the girl who was shot by the Taliban.
And some, the girl who fought for her rights.
Some people call me a "Nobel Laureate" now.
However, my brothers still call me that annoying bossy sister. As far as I know, I am just a committed and even stubborn person who wants to see every child getting quality education, who wants to see women having equal rights and who wants peace in every corner of the world.

Repetition is used throughout the speech, e.g. 'some people call me ...'

This anecdote helps to make the speaker relatable, and provides a moment of humour in a serious speech.

The rule of three is used in the repeated phrase 'who wants'.

Education is one of the blessings of life – and one of its necessities. That has been my experience during the 17 years of my life. In my paradise home, Swat, I always loved learning and discovering new things. I remember when my friends and I would decorate our hands with henna on special occasions. And instead of drawing flowers and patterns we would paint our hands with mathematical formulas and equations.

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

> The move from the personal to the broader theme of education marks the main point of the speech: education is powerful.

> Yousafzai shifts back and forth between personal stories and broader arguments, sustaining her relatable persona.

> Repeating the personal pronoun 'we' reinforces the feelings of friendship and community. Yousafzai also appeals to strong emotions such as love and pride; these emotional appeals emphasise the positive effects of education.

Explore speeches

ACTIVITY / **GROUP**

1 Malala Yousafzai's speech focuses on the importance of education, and she uses personal stories about her own love of education throughout. In a small group or as a class, discuss a topic or issue related to the key idea you are studying, and contribute personal stories that are relevant to it.

2 Yousafzai makes effective use of repetition to reinforce her ideas throughout her speech. Write three examples of phrases you could repeat in a speech on the topic you discussed in question 1.

3 Look at the table of persuasive techniques and appeals on pages 195–9. Plan a speech on the topic you used in question 2, making a note of where you will use various persuasive techniques or appeals.

Opinion pieces

An opinion piece presents a strong opinion on a topic or issue, supported by evidence. It may be written by an in-house journalist or by a person associated with a relevant industry. For example, the writer of an opinion piece in a sports journal might work for the publication or might be an academic in the sports industry or a sportsperson. An opinion piece is generally written by someone who has strong views on the issue and has a personal or professional interest, or both.

Opinion pieces are written to present an argument with the intention of persuading the reader to agree with the author's point of view. Some publications will indicate if the author is a stakeholder in the issue, for example because of where they work, and therefore might be presenting a biased point of view. Others will not include this information, and the reader will need to find this out for themselves.

Opinion pieces can be found in traditional print journalism (newspapers and magazines) and in online publications. If you choose to write an opinion piece, you should research your topic to ensure that you can find enough evidence to support your argument, and develop a clear and credible point of view.

> **Features and conventions of opinion pieces**
> » Have an introduction-body-conclusion structure
> » Establish the issue and the writer's main argument early in the text
> » Are well researched and supported by evidence
> » Use persuasive language and techniques

Example: 'Farmers shouldn't have to compete with solar companies for land'

The following excerpt is the opening of an opinion piece by Madeline Taylor, a Climate Councillor at the Climate Council. It was published on *The Conversation* and argues that there is a need for policies that support farmers while also achieving action on climate change and the development of renewable energy.

Farmers shouldn't have to compete with solar companies for land. We need better policies so everyone can benefit

Published: December 17, 2021 6.09am AEDT

The opinion – we need better policies – is clearly stated in the headline.

When it comes to solar energy, Australia has a huge natural advantage with an abundance of sun and vast, flat expanses of land. This makes it relatively easy to build solar farms across the continent.

Some proposed projects, however, overlap with arable land. As a result, solar companies and farmers are often in competition, with conflicts already arising in Canberra, Queensland and Wagga, the South Riverina and Greater Hume in New South Wales.

But these are familiar battlegrounds. Such tension has played out over many decades with agricultural communities facing serious environmental, social and health impacts from coal and coal seam gas projects.

We can avoid history repeating itself if we urgently set the right policies and laws in place. The pressing task for law and policymakers now is to ensure Australia's clean energy transition sees solar development occur with co-benefits for local communities, and protects productive agricultural land.

Madeline Taylor
Senior Lecturer, Macquarie University

> The article begins by contextualising the Australian solar industry, before moving on to the problems created for farmers.

> This article, like many online articles, includes hyperlinked words that readers can click on to read other articles with extra information.

> Sentences and paragraphs tend to be short so it is easier for the reader to take in the main points and ideas.

> The writer uses inclusive language ('we') and alarmist language ('urgently', 'pressing') to engage the reader and encourage them to feel both concerned and affected.

Explore opinion pieces

ACTIVITY

1 Choose an issue you are passionate about that has two sides. Brainstorm everything you currently know about both sides of the issue. Summarise your information in a table like this one.

Issue:	
Side 1:	**Side 2:**
<reasons and evidence for side 1>	<reasons and evidence for side 2>

2 Choose a side to argue, and research additional evidence to reinforce what you already know. Try to find facts and statistics, quotes from important people in the field/industry, and emotional or 'human' stories that back up your argument.

3 Write a compelling headline for your opinion piece, or write the entire opinion piece (700–1000 words).

Feature articles

Feature articles provide more detail on a topic or issue than a news report, providing background information, facts, evidence and personal testimony. Because of their generally balanced approach to an issue they can include contrasting and even conflicting points of view, and are less overtly persuasive than opinion pieces. Nevertheless, they are generally shaped to promote the writer's personal slant or perspective.

When exploring an issue in depth, feature writers can introduce variety so the amount of facts and figures, or the seriousness of the subject matter, doesn't become overwhelming. The author might use personal anecdotes and make occasional humorous observations; their own voice and experience in researching the issue can provide a thread that connects the various statements by experts and stakeholders. An effective feature article can be structured like a narrative, as the author outlines problems, gains a stronger understanding of the underlying factors and works towards possible solutions.

If you are writing a feature article, do your research thoroughly and keep an open mind so you can include different voices and perspectives. You can use your own journey towards understanding as part of your writing.

> **Features and conventions of feature articles**
>
> » Provide detailed background information on an issue
> » Present different perspectives and viewpoints
> » Are thoroughly researched and supported by evidence
> » Are primarily informative; can be persuasive

Example: 'Instapoetry'

The following excerpt is from an online feature article published on the *HuffPost* website. It begins with personal reflections then moves on to discuss the experiences of others and expert opinions.

Instapoetry: The Unexpected Instagram Trend That Boosts Mental Health

Data shows social media can negatively impact well-being, but this activity is helping users turn their feeds into something meaningful.

By Sonya Matejko

24/12/2021 05:45am EST

It was a Tuesday, and my anxiety was at an all-time high. I was scrolling mindlessly through Instagram, absorbing each post quickly. I saw my friend's babies, an old colleague's wedding, someone's new puppy and a political commentary or two. Somewhere in my endless consumption, I also came across a poem that caught my attention enough for my mechanical thumb to pause.

Feature article headlines are attention-grabbing and also give some information about the issue.

The feature article shares elements with other traditional forms of journalism, such as a brief description in the subheading and a by-line with the author's details.

← → C (Search 🔍) ↓ ↗ ⋮

The words spoke to the root of my anxiety, which was based in a lingering feeling that I wasn't deserving of the things I wanted most. "Why even try?" my anxiety asked. But this poem offered me another perspective. It hit me hard — as if it was written just for me at that moment. Most of all, it (and the hundreds of comments beneath it) reminded me that I wasn't alone.

As a writer, I know firsthand the power words can have. Yet, as someone in a relationship with a stage-five clinger that I like to call anxiety, I also know that you often need to hear it from someone else in order for it to connect. So, I look for relief and repose from other writers, creators and poets.

While reports and studies show that Instagram can be harmful to mental health, I'd argue that there are a few silver linings — and that the rise of Instagram poetry is one of them. Poetry, as an art form, can be a connective thread that soothes sadness, adds hope on hard days and reminds us of our humanity.

Feature articles are generally well researched with a serious tone, although, as this article shows, elements of humour and the first-person voice can be used.

The style is conversational, and the register less formal than in a text such as an editorial.

Hyperlinked words enable readers to find extra information, without the author having to clutter their text with facts and other evidence. Note the concession – an admission of the harms caused by social media – typical of the balanced approach of feature articles.

Explore feature articles

ACTIVITY

1 Brainstorm a list of issues you are passionate about that could be researched and written about in a feature article.

2 Do some research for one of these issues to find facts and opinions you could use in the article. Organise your material in a table like this one.

What is the issue or central problem?	
Background to the issue – what happened in the past?	
The current context – what is happening now?	
What are people suggesting should be done?	
Are there any alternative suggestions?	
What is your conclusion?	

3 Feature articles often begin with a 'hook' that makes the reader interested in the issue. It might be an anecdote to personalise the issue, or some alarming statistics. Write an engaging hook you could use at the start of a feature article on the issue that you researched in question 2.

Hybrid texts

Hybrid texts blend one or more text types together to create an interesting or unique form. Using the text types discussed in this chapter, here are a few examples of hybrid texts you could use in your own writing.

- A **podcast episode** that is a self-contained **short story**.
- A **recount** told in a **letter**.
- A **script** for a televised **speech**.
- A **blog post** presented as a **diary entry**.
- A **memoir** read aloud as a **podcast episode**.
- An **essay** written for a **blog**.
- An **opinion piece** contained within a **short story** (as part of a frame narrative).
- A **biography** presented as a **long-form essay** on a **blog**.

Hybrid texts will contain elements and conventions of the text types they blend together. For example, a hybrid text made up of a diary entry and a blog may contain the personal, reflective language of the diary as well as the understanding that the audience consists of online readers who will 'like' and 'share' the text. Consider how writing a diary for the blog audience is different from writing a personal diary intended only for yourself.

Hybrid texts can be very successful as they have the potential to be unique and interesting. Many writers blend the conventions of forms and genres to produce their personal styles. Once you have read a few examples of different texts on your chosen idea or issue, you may notice that they are actually hybrids of two or more text types.

> **Features and conventions of hybrid texts**
> » Blend together the conventions of other text types
> » Might cross over genres as well as forms
> » Are often deliberately constructed to be unique or surprising

Explore hybrid texts

ACTIVITY

1 GROUP In a small group, choose two of the examples of hybrid texts in the list above and discuss how an author might blend the conventions of the text types. Which conventions would be kept? Which would have to be abandoned? Refer to the sections earlier in the chapter for the features and conventions of each text type.

2 Select an idea or issue you have been studying. Which two or more text types could you blend to make a hybrid text about this idea or issue?

3 List the conventions of your two favourite text types (at least five conventions for each). Use this brainstorm as the basis for planning a hybrid text of 700–1000 words.

Scan the code or click here to view a video explaining hybrid texts.

KEY IDEAS AND MENTOR TEXTS

In Year 11 it is likely your teacher will choose a key idea that will help to frame and focus your writing. You will study three mentor texts in depth, and you might also read other texts as examples of effective writing.

The mentor texts will present different viewpoints and perspectives on your key idea, and they will influence and inspire your own writing. They could include excerpts from book-length texts, complete short texts such as short stories and poems, and nonfiction pieces such as articles and essays. You will examine the use of vocabulary, text structures and language features in your mentor texts and draw on these in your own writing.

Overview of the key ideas

This chapter presents five key ideas with annotated examples of mentor texts; it also includes activities that show how the mentor texts can be used as models and springboards for your own writing. Use these in combination with the mentor texts provided by your teacher, the suggested mentor texts for each key idea in this chapter, or texts that you find for yourself. (Remember that you won't need to read a complete novel – select an excerpt in consultation with your teacher.) The broader the range of mentor texts you use, the more likely you will be able to craft a well-rounded and engaging text.

The five key ideas covered in this chapter are:

- **Writing about crisis** – an exploration of personal and global crises
- **Writing about futures** – an exploration of future thinking and possibilities
- **Writing about identity** – an exploration of selfhood, formative influences and personal motivations
- **Writing about nature** – an exploration of the natural world and environment
- **Writing about the past** – an exploration of local, national and global histories.

Even if you are studying one specific key idea, such as writing about futures (or even an idea not covered here), it is worth reading through all the key ideas in this chapter. Each will offer different ways of developing ideas and written pieces, drawing on a range of text types, which might prompt you to take your writing in interesting and exciting new directions.

Scan the code or click here for a video overview of how you can use mentor texts in this area of study.

Writing about crisis

A crisis is a period of intense difficulty or danger. Crises can happen at individual, local, national and global levels. A crisis might happen at a crossroads or turning point: the point at which something potentially dangerous becomes a real threat.

Writing about crisis involves an exploration of 'tipping points' in personal, national and global histories. Crisis can also be ongoing – like the climate crisis – or something looming on the horizon.

In your exploration of crisis, you will come across texts that deal with issues and topics such as:

- natural disaster (e.g. floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis)

- economic disaster (e.g. recession, stock market collapse, job losses)

- global disaster (e.g. climate change, pandemics, war)

- personal crisis (e.g. life-changing decisions, serious illness, or the personal impact of any of the above).

Possible mentor texts for writing about crisis

» *A Constant Hum* by Alice Bishop (short stories)

» *Dry* by Neal Shusterman and Jarrod Shusterman (novel)

» *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel (novel)

» *Fire Flood Plague: Australian writers respond to 2020*, ed. Sophie Cunningham (essay collection)

» 'It's not climate change – it's everything change' by Margaret Atwood (essay), https://medium.com/matter/it-s-not-climate-change-it-s-everything-change-8fd9aa671804

» *More Deadly Than War: The Hidden History of the Spanish Flu and the First World War* by Kenneth C Davis (nonfiction)

» 'The empty space where normal once lived' by Bathsheba Demuth (essay), https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/08/covid-19-and-climate-change-have-same-root-cause/615844/

Developing ideas: causes and consequences

Exploring the causes and consequences of crises is an effective way to approach your writing about this key idea. Choose a crisis and examine the issues and events that led up to it, then look at the consequences and outcomes. For example, the following chart shows causes and consequences for the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2007 and 2008, when many banks and other financial institutions suffered heavy losses and in some cases went bankrupt.

Causes		Crisis		Consequences
Risk-taking Too much borrowing Lack of regulation	→	The Global Financial Crisis	→	Job losses Changes to regulations

Explore causes and consequences

1 Identify a natural disaster that has occurred in the last five years and summarise its causes and consequences, using a diagram like the one above for the GFC.

2 Select one cause or consequence of the crisis, and brainstorm ideas of what you could write about and the text types you could use. For example, you could describe the perspectives of people involved, the settings or some of the key events. Create a mind map like the one opposite.

ACTIVITY
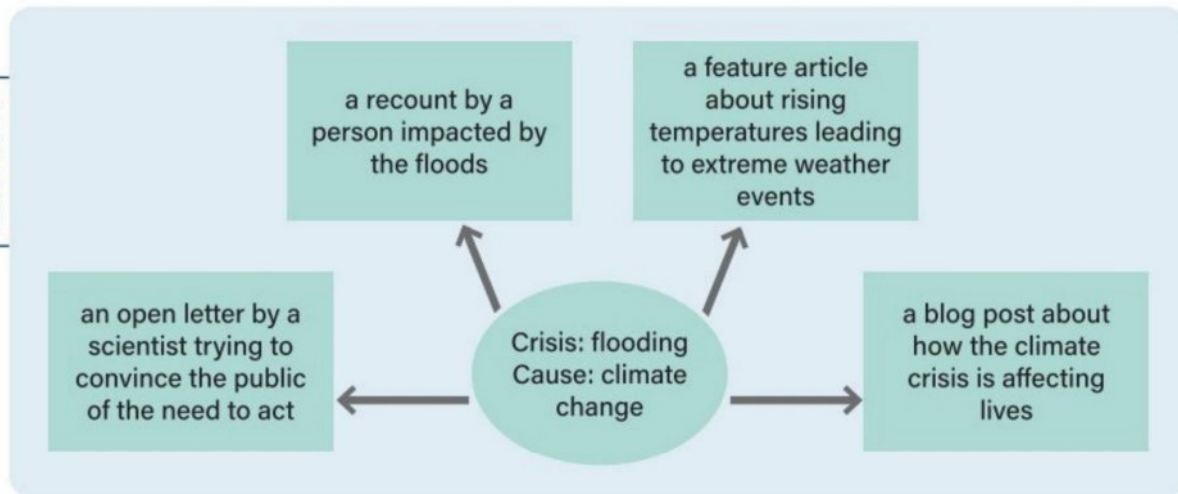
Annotated example: *Signs and Wonders*

» Text: *Signs and Wonders: Dispatches from a time of beauty and loss* (excerpt)
» Author: Delia Falconer
» Date: 2021
» Form: book-length creative nonfiction
» Audience: well-educated readers of literature with an interest in current issues
» Purpose: multiple (to express, to explain, to reflect)

I have lived near the harbour for twenty years. In autumn I watch for fish fry in the water and the swifts that wheel like tiny warplanes above the naval dockyards. In summer, migratory koels call out from the trees in my local park with a grinding yearning. There have been surprises over the years: a fairy penguin off the end of the point and, once, a large stingray gliding up the middle of the canal on a high tide. But mostly I am looking for familiar creatures: the microbats that flit at dusk over the water or the flying foxes that land heavily in the Moreton Bay figs, though their numbers have declined and their squabbling in the tree outside our apartment no longer keeps us awake at night.

Walking to Mrs Macquarie's Chair in the Domain, I like to scan the small bay in Woolloomooloo for fish. But one day, in 2018, there was nothing to see in the flat green water, not even the usual mullet that nose around the marina's floating pontoons or the ubiquitous smooth toadfish with fins like tiny propellors. A few years earlier, I would have put this down to the seasonal variation of schools in the Harbour – but this time it felt different. I found myself wondering if there were no longer any fish to see.

What if they were disappearing, I wondered, like the small frogs that were such a common sight after rain when I was a child, or the greengrocer cicadas we used to catch in the playground? In 2014, the World Wildlife Fund had released a widely circulated report, which concluded that we had killed more than half of the world's wildlife over the last half-century – not only exotic animals but common creatures like giraffes, bats and even insects. That afternoon in Woolloomooloo I realised I had been ticking off checklists of animals on my walks to counter a growing sense of loss.

Falconer establishes a personal, reflective tone from the beginning of the book.

Descriptive writing, including figurative language (such as this simile), is a strong feature of this text.

The idea of significant change is approached gradually, firstly from a personal perspective.

References to published findings give a factual basis to the discussion and broaden it from the personal to the global.

These days everything seems to carry a terrible symbolic weight, of potential catastrophic absence. Swimming at Nielsen Park, in Sydney Harbour, an ancient river valley filled by melting Ice Age waters that stabilised seven thousand years ago, I've found myself wondering how high the water will rise again when the ice caps melt. 'Every bird I see these days, every bee,' my children's godmother R says, 'I wonder if it's the last.' 'Are wombats endangered? Are echidnas?' my son asks, as we drive through the city's urban fringes.

> The descriptive writing often has a strong emotional impact, achieved here through the use of adjectives.

> Occasional pieces of dialogue add variety and give another dimension to the author's personal journey.

And yet, within the span of one's own experience, it's hard to measure causes and effects, let alone grasp quite how quickly things are turning. As the world becomes more unstable in the grip of vast and all-pervasive change, it's difficult to discern exact chronologies, relationships, and meaning. In this unfolding context, even small things take on terrifying and uncertain connotations.

> The sense of a rapidly unfolding crisis becomes stronger, establishing the book's focus.

It is as if, I found myself thinking as I scoured the water for fish that first day, we're entering a new era of signs and wonders.

Using creative nonfiction as a mentor text

Delia Falconer's text is an example of creative nonfiction, a form in which elements of nonfiction are blended with storytelling techniques and (often) moments of personal reflection. The following are some of the techniques she uses throughout the book.

- Imagery and description: the author paints vivid pictures for her readers to visualise.

- First-person reflection: Falconer relates her personal responses to local and global events, as well as to other works of literature relevant to her topics.

- Intertextuality: there are many references to other texts, which Falconer comments on and connects to her concerns. For example, 'These awe-inspiring events remind me of Edgar Allan Poe's story "A Descent into the Maelstrom" …'

- Facts and statistics: Falconer uses historical details and numerical data to give her reflections a strong basis in fact. For example, 'In the northern hemisphere spring of 2018 – calving season – an estimated 200,000 critically endangered saiga antelope were found dead in Kazakhstan.'

Draw on the mentor text

ACTIVITY

1 Brainstorm examples of crises that you could write about, and select one that you feel a strong personal connection with. Think of an experience you have had that is related to the crisis, and write notes containing some detailed descriptions of your experience.

2 Do some research to find facts, statistics, expert opinions and quotes from works of fiction and nonfiction that are relevant to your chosen crisis.

3 Write a creative nonfiction piece in the style of Delia Falconer, combining personal reflection with some of the facts you have found.

Writing about futures

Writing about futures might mean writing on your future, our collective future, or a very distant future. Because the future is not set in stone, this might include speculative futures that imagine a 'What if …?' scenario, or futures that are closer to the reality we currently experience.

When writing about futures, you will need to consider whose future you are writing about. As for many of the key ideas in this chapter, your writing might be on an individual, local, national or global scale.

In your exploration of writing about futures, you will find texts such as the following.

- Dystopian narratives: where something in the future has gone wrong, usually as a result of a continuation or worsening of something in the present.

- Utopian narratives: where everything is perfect, and humanity is flourishing.

- Narratives about personal futures: where people imagine what their individual lives will be like in the near or distant future.

- Narratives about global futures: where the author presents an idea of what Earth or humanity will look like in the future.

- Science fiction: where authors explore the vast range of science-based possibilities for ourselves and possibly other inhabitants of our universe.

- Texts written in the past about an imagined future, which may or may not have been proven true.

> **Possible mentor texts for writing about futures**
> » *After Australia* ed. Michael Mohammed Ahmad (short story anthology)
> » *Things We Didn't See Coming* by Steven Amsterdam (short stories)
> » 'Abundance is our future' by Peter Diamandis (TED Talk), https://www.ted.com/talks/peter_diamandis_abundance_is_our_future/transcript
> » *Op-Eds From the Future* by various authors, https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/future-oped
> » *V For Vendetta* written by Alan Moore, illustrated by David Lloyd (graphic novel)

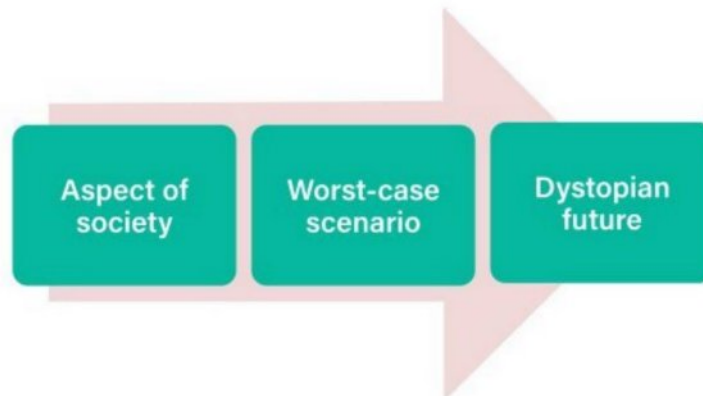## Developing ideas: extrapolating from the present

One common way authors explore the future is by extrapolating current events and imagining what would happen if things got worse, or better, or stayed the same. This is particularly true of dystopian fiction, where an author might look at a situation currently happening in the world and create a 'worst-case scenario'.
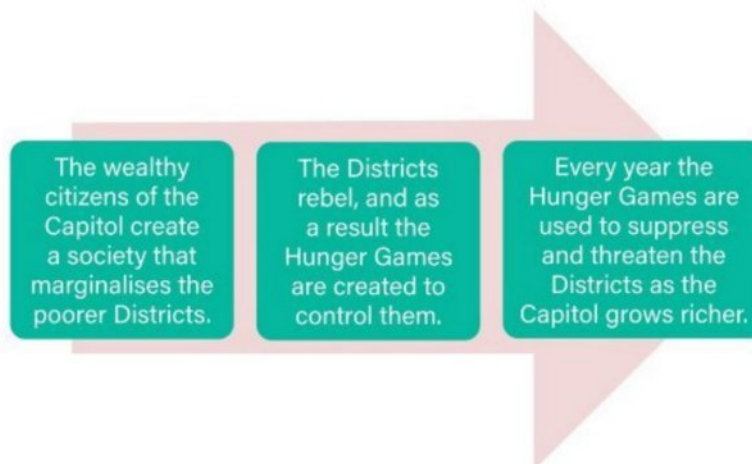
Here are some examples:

- *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner is set in a not-too-distant future in which teenagers have been transported to an elaborate stone maze filled with lethal creatures. Dashner's dystopia explores what happens when people are held against their own will, and what people will do in order to survive.

- *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell looks at the totalitarian and socialist regimes of Orwell's time (in the 1940s) and imagines what could happen if these power structures continued.

- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins takes ideas about technology, social class and limited resources, and extends them into the dystopian world of the Capitol and the Districts.

All of these texts follow the same pattern:

Aspect of society	Worst-case scenario	Dystopian future

For example, the premise for *The Hunger Games* could be represented like this:

The wealthy citizens of the Capitol create a society that marginalises the poorer Districts.	The Districts rebel, and as a result the Hunger Games are created to control them.	Every year the Hunger Games are used to suppress and threaten the Districts as the Capitol grows richer.

Explore possibilities

ACTIVITY

1 Brainstorm several current real-world situations that have the potential to develop into a worst-case scenario.

2 Choose one of the situations and imagine a possible future that might result if the worst-case scenario came true. Create a diagram like the one above for *The Hunger Games*.

3 Outline a story that is set in a dystopian future, based on the worst-case scenario you selected in question 2. Make notes on how the story will begin (the exposition), the main tension or conflict, the climax and the resolution. Will you imagine a future in which the dystopian world ends and a new, fairer society takes its place? Or will the worst-case scenario remain unchanged?

Annotated example: 'The Pedestrian'

» Text: 'The Pedestrian' (excerpts)
» Author: Ray Bradbury
» Date: 1951
» Form: short story
» Audience: American readers, 1950s
» Purpose: to express

To enter out into that silence that was the city at eight o'clock of a misty evening in November, to put your feet upon that buckling concrete walk, to step over grassy seams and make your way, hands in pockets, through the silences, that was what Mr. Leonard Mead most dearly loved to do. He would stand upon the corner of an intersection and peer down long moonlit avenues of sidewalk in four directions, deciding which way to go, but it really made no difference; he was alone in this world of A.D. 2053, or as good as alone, and with a final decision made, a path selected, he would stride off, sending patterns of frosty air before him like the smoke of a cigar.

> Dystopian stories often begin by making a clear statement about the future they are set in: here we are told the year (2053) and the sense of isolation is conveyed by the descriptive writing.

[…]

"What is it now?" he asked the houses, noticing his wrist watch. "Eight-thirty P.M.? Time for a dozen assorted murders? A quiz? A revue? A comedian falling off the stage?"

> As Leonard passes the houses and wonders what people are watching on television, the sense of isolation continues to grow.

Was that a murmur of laughter from within a moon-white house? He hesitated, but went on when nothing more happened. He stumbled over a particularly uneven section of sidewalk. The cement was vanishing under flowers and grass. In ten years of walking by night or day, for thousands of miles, he had never met another person walking, not once in all that time.

> Nature is reclaiming the streets, signalling the extent to which people are retreating to their houses.

[…]

The police, of course, but what a rare, incredible thing; in a city of three million, there was only one police car left, wasn't that correct? Ever since a year ago, 2052, the election year, the force had been cut down from three cars to one. Crime was ebbing; there was no need now for the police, save for this one lone car wandering and wandering the empty streets.

> Leonard is shocked by the arrival of the police. The television screens that now dominate people's lives have resulted in a reduced crime rate – but at what cost?

[…]

"I guess you'd call me a writer."

"No profession," said the police car, as if talking to itself. The light held him fixed, like a museum specimen, needle thrust through chest.

> Dystopian texts often have a bleak sense of humour.

[…]

He put his hand to the door and peered into the back seat, which was a little cell, a little black jail with bars. It smelled of riveted steel. It smelled of harsh antiseptic; it smelled too clean and hard and metallic. There was nothing soft there.

> Unlike the natural world slowly reclaiming the footpath, there is nothing soft or natural about the police car.

[…]

> They passed one house on one street a moment later, one house in an entire city of houses that were dark, but this one particular house had all of its electric lights brightly lit, every window a loud yellow illumination, square and warm in the cool darkness.
>
> "That's my house," said Leonard Mead.
>
> No one answered him.
>
> The car moved down the empty river-bed streets and off away, leaving the empty streets with the empty sidewalks, and no sound and no motion all the rest of the chill November night.

> The short story ends with no resolution – Leonard is driven past his house and taken away in silence.

Using dystopian fiction as a mentor text

Bradbury's short story is a classic example of dystopian fiction. The author looked at trends in society in the late 1940s and early 1950s, particularly the rapidly increasing consumption of television and media, and asked: What if …? The crisis he anticipated was one of social fragmentation and increased feelings of isolation and loneliness – a crisis made explicit in his novel *Fahrenheit 451*.

Some of the techniques used in this short story that are common in dystopian fiction include:

- bleak descriptions of the environment, with 'misty' weather and 'gray phantoms' flickering in the households

- depictions of loneliness and isolation, both of the central character and the citizens of the future in general

- descriptions of dangerous technology – in this case, the televisions in people's houses have come to dominate their lives

- satire: the story mentions that 'there was no need now for the police' and after a recent election the force had been reduced to one car. This might seem like a good thing, but really Bradbury is criticising the way his society and the politicians of the time viewed crime and law enforcement.

Draw on the mentor text

ACTIVITY

1 Imagine a society in which a negative aspect of today's world is much worse. Describe the crisis that results. (It doesn't need to be set in the future, though it can be.)

2 Plan a dystopian short story about this crisis. Outline a clear beginning, middle and end. Refer to the excerpts from 'The Pedestrian' and the section on short stories in Chapter 9 (pages 101–3) for ideas that will help you to structure your story.

3 Brainstorm the language you will use to describe your dystopian world: aim for language that is bleak, depressing or unsettling.

4 Write a draft of your short story.

Writing about identity

Writing about identity includes exploring the paths that have led us to where we are now, and those that we *intend* to take to wherever we go next. This key idea includes biographical and autobiographical stories, as well as the question: Who gets to tell the story?

When writing about your identity, you might consider writing about your own individual milestones and achievements, or the impact of key events on your life. You could also look at how personal stories of other individuals are told.

When writing about identity, you might explore:

- autobiographies and memoirs

- biographies

- 'stories about stories', such as an exploration of a person's right to protect their personal story, or the right of authors to tell stories about others

- stories with a strong personal voice, including works of fiction.

> **Possible mentor texts for writing about identity**
> » *The Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger (novel)
> » *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas (novel)
> » *Wild Cat Falling* by Mudrooroo (novel)
> » *Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia* ed. by Anita Heiss (memoir anthology)
> » *The Happiest Refugee* by Anh Do (memoir)
> » 'How Social Media Shapes Our Identity' by Nausicaa Renner (essay), https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/how-social-media-shapes-our-identity
> » *Roller Girl* by Victoria Jamieson (graphic novel)
> » *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui (graphic memoir)

Developing ideas: looking inwards and outwards

Writing about your identity requires **introspection** – looking inwards and reflecting on your life, your memories and the things that form your whole self. It also requires looking outwards to the people, circumstances and events that have shaped you. In other words, you need to **contextualise** your identity. Looking at contexts is just as important when you are thinking about others' identities. (See Chapter 2 and Chapter 7 for explanations and examples of different types of contexts.)

The following activity helps to contextualise your personal identity. You could use a similar process to write about the life of another person.

Explore circles of context

ACTIVITY

1 Draw a set of three circles as shown in the diagram on the right. Make the diagram large enough for you to write notes in the three areas – the two outer rings and the centre circle.

2 Think about the major world events that have happened in your life. Whether they had a direct impact on you or not, they may have shaped the world you grew up in. Write notes on global events in the outside ring of the diagram.

Global context
Local context
Personal context

3 Think about events that happened closer to home, locally or possibly nationally. Which major events had an impact on you as you grew up? Which events have affected your life recently? Write notes in the middle ring of the diagram.

4 Finally, think of major events in your personal life. Write notes on these in the centre circle.

5 Select the global, local and personal events that you believe have had the most impact on your life so far. Either arrange them in a time line as inspiration for a later piece of writing, or write a short reflective piece that connects the events and explains how and why they had an impact on you.

Annotated example: 'Abo Nose'

» Text: 'Abo Nose' in *Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia* edited by Anita Heiss (excerpt)

» Author: Zachary Penrith-Puchalski

» Date: 2018

» Form: memoir

» Audience: Australians, First Nations Australians, teenagers and young adults

» Purpose: to express and reflect

I am Koori – my tribe is Yorta Yorta.

> Penrith-Puchalski begins with a clear statement of identity.

I didn't know I was black till I was seven years old. I didn't know that people would eventually cross the street to avoid walking on the same path as me. I didn't know that people would define me as 'not looking *that* Aboriginal', as if it were a compliment. I never foresaw that people would think they understood my story before they heard a word pass through my lips.

My mum and dad would tell me how I believed Mum was chocolate, Dad was vanilla and I was caramel. Me and my sister were half-Koori and half-Polish – black Poles, as my mum and dad lovingly referred to us.

> The memoir goes back to the author's early childhood; the narrative jumps between a few memorable events and conversations.

A boy named Shawn told an *Abo* joke while we were in Italian class in primary school. I laughed along with the joke because I didn't know what that word meant and I didn't want to appear stupid. I had never heard that word before so I eventually asked my teacher what it meant and she became agitated; she scolded him and threatened him, but still I never knew what this word *Abo* meant.

I grew up in a very affluent area where there were white people with million-dollar houses. I grew up in the smallest house on my street. Commission houses with red bricks: everybody knew the red-brick houses meant you were a poor commission-housing kid. If our tiny house wasn't obvious enough, the faded second-hand clothes made it clear.

> The author reflects on the impact of poverty on his childhood.

Me, my sister and the other commission kids formed a group and would play at the park till Mum shouted from our backyard, hundreds of metres away, 'Kyrrah, Zack, DINNER TIME!' We would ignore the first call but the second one we would *definitely* answer, otherwise Mum would walk to the park herself and we would all cop it. All the kids were scared of my mum. She is an unapologetically black woman with all that alludes to. She embarrassed us deeply. I wished she was less aggressive and more gentle in order to get more white kids to play with me. No white parent understood her defiance. Every black parent did.

> Penrith-Puchalski relates some powerful memories; his reflections as an adult add an extra layer of understanding and complexity.

My mother is Indigenous, and my father is Polish. He drove taxis, and she was an artist. I had always noticed the way that people looked at them: my mum – a visibly black woman with her dark hair, dark eyes, dark skin and even darker beliefs about the world – paired with a very white man who had blue eyes and blond hair and who was very passive. Sometimes people would ask how they 'ended up' together, as if she was a last resort and somehow trapped him. 'That's the story white people predict,' my grandmother would eventually tell me as an adult. 'They don't see us as beautiful – they're trained not to.'

> As well as telling a story about identity, Penrith-Puchalski offers a commentary on racism in Australian society.

Using a memoir as a mentor text

Zachary Penrith-Puchalski's reflective piece speaks of the complexities of identity and race in a way that highlights social and cultural issues. Often, writing about identity is used as a vehicle for commenting on the bigger picture: in other words, personal stories offer a way of exploring important and complex issues, with identity as the connecting thread.

In 'Abo Nose' the author uses features common to the memoir form to explore his own identity as well as the identities of those around him.

- The reflection is structured as a typical narrative with a beginning, middle and end. The tension rises towards a climactic moment that occurred when the author was seventeen.

- Serious issues are interspersed with humourous observations, such as the author's commentary on his mother's stubborn behaviour.

- Deeply personal thoughts and feelings are used as a way to explore bigger societal issues, such as racism in Australia.

Draw on the mentor text

ACTIVITY

1 Brainstorm a list of key events and important memories from your life. If you completed the 'circles of context' activity on pages 133–4, you could use those events and memories.

2 Arrange the events and memories on a narrative arc, with early events and memories building up to a climactic, important moment in your life that had a strong impact on your identity.

3 Use your narrative arc to write a short reflective piece like that by Zachary Penrith-Puchalski.

Writing about nature

Writing about nature means exploring the natural world and our relationship with it. Nature can be both beautiful and destructive; it can provide joy and heartache. Humans have a complex relationship with nature, sometimes appreciating the natural world, and at other times causing it harm.

In exploring writing about nature, you will read, view and hear texts that address issues and topics such as:

- sources of natural beauty, from landscapes to individual plants and animals
- the destructive force of nature, such as storms and droughts
- the impact of human activity on nature
- why humans need the natural world.

Possible mentor texts for writing about nature

- » *Salt* by Bruce Pascoe (stories and essays)
- » *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens (novel)
- » William Wordsworth's poetry
- » 'Beneath our feet' by Deborah Wardle (essay), https://www.natureaustralia.org.au/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/australia/Beneath-our-feet_Deborah-Wardle.pdf
- » 'On the margins of the good swamp' by Sue Castrique (essay), https://www.griffithreview.com/articles/on-the-margins-of-the-good-swamp/
- » *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* by Hayao Miyazaki (manga)
- » *The World of Edena* by Jean 'Mœbius' Giraud (graphic novel)

Developing ideas: reflecting on the sublime

When exploring writing about nature you may come across the term **sublime**. This concept from the Romantic era encompasses the powerful emotions that come from observing the natural world. The sublime balances sometimes contradictory emotions: wonder, astonishment and awe are entwined with feelings of being overwhelmed or even terrified.

One way to approach your writing about nature is to think of times when you have experienced complex emotions in response to the natural world.

The Romantics

The Romantic era in literature and the arts spanned from the late 1700s to the mid 1800s and was popular across much of Europe and North America. Romantic authors included John Keats, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Shelley. The Romantics wrote a great deal about nature and the power of the natural world.

Explore the sublime

1 Draw a Venn diagram. In the overlapping area at the centre, place a natural event or occurrence you are familiar with. On the left, identify positive emotions you have about this event, such as amazement or wonder. On the right, identify negative emotions such as fear.

2 Using the words from both sides of the Venn diagram, write a short reflective piece describing how the natural event or occurrence made you feel, and why.

Annotated example: 'The Sea of Sunset'

» Text: 'The Sea of Sunset'

» Author: Emily Dickinson

» Date: 1860s

» Form: poetry

» Audience: personal (for herself and those close to her), readers of poetry and other literary works (after publication)

» Purpose: to express and reflect

The Sea of Sunset

This is the land the sunset washes,
These are the banks of the Yellow Sea;
Where it rose, or whither it rushes,
These are the western mystery!

Night after night her purple traffic
Strews the landing with opal bales;
Merchantmen poise upon horizons,
Dip, and vanish with fairy sails.

Using a poem as a mentor text

Using a poem as a mentor text does not mean you also have to write a poem yourself. Poetry is an excellent vehicle for exploring many aspects of language use, including imagery, structure and word choice.

In this short poem, Dickinson uses conventional poetic techniques such as regular patterns of rhythm and rhyme. In addition, she uses the following techniques that could also be used in other forms of writing:

• the metaphorical 'washing' of the land by the sunset

• the use of evocative colours, such as 'Yellow Sea', 'purple traffic', 'opal bales'

• the personification of nature – the sunset is referred to as female ('her purple traffic') and it 'strews the landing'

• figurative language to describe the dreamlike merchantmen who 'poise upon horizons' and 'vanish with fairy sails' – the sailors on the horizon of the sea.

Draw on the mentor text

ACTIVITY

1 Choose a natural occurrence to base your piece on, and decide on a form (e.g. short story, article, reflection).

2 Brainstorm a list of descriptive words around your natural occurrence, including colours.

3 Add figurative language such as metaphors to your brainstorm.

4 Incorporate your descriptive and figurative language into a written piece about nature.

Writing about the past

Writing about the past might involve personal, local, national or global histories. It can involve writing about your own past, or someone else's. Writing about the past can be fiction or nonfiction, or a blend of the two – some very popular texts create a fictional story out of a real historical event.

When writing about the past, an important question is: Who is telling the story? Students of history will be familiar with the idea that texts written about the past are at least partly **subjective** – they are often based on a person or group's opinions about the past, and do not simply present concrete truths.

> **Suggested mentor texts for writing about the past**
> » *A Room Made of Leaves* by Kate Grenville (novel)
> » *Freedom Swimmer* by Wai Chim (novel)
> » *Pirate Boy of Sydney Town* by Jackie French (novel)
> » *Flowers in the Gutter* by KR Gaddy (nonfiction)
> » *Maus* by Art Spiegelman (graphic novel)
> » *The First Scientists: Deadly Inventions and Innovations from Australia's First Peoples* by Corey Tutt (illustrated nonfiction)

In your exploration of the past, you will come across texts that include:

- personal histories, written by the people involved and written about them by others
- fictional and nonfictional accounts of important moments in history
- contentious and problematic texts that tell stories of the past from a particular angle or perspective
- attempts to unravel the mysteries and uncertainties of the past, and to present the truth as much as possible.

Developing ideas: Whose story is it?

Exploring writing about the past requires an understanding of who is telling the story and why they are telling it. Each writer will include and omit details to suit their purpose and their intended audience, and according to their sense of what is important to the story they wish to tell. This can lead to gaps, silences and biases in the writing. You can explore some of these gaps in your own writing by finding an untold story or unusual perspective on events.

Explore the author, audience and purpose

ACTIVITY

1 Select one of your mentor texts and create a table like the one below. Provide as much detail as possible. You may need to do some research to find the answers.

Who is it written by? *Check the author and publication details.*	Who is the audience? *Identify the target audience of the text.*	Why was it written? *What is the author's purpose?*
e.g. *Pirate Boy of Sydney Town* by Jackie French, published by HarperCollins in 2019	Older children and young adults (aged 10+), Australians	To entertain and to inform readers about lesser known aspects of Australia's colonial history, such as piracy and slave trading.

2 Write a short reflection on how credible you find this story about the past. Support your position using the information you found for the table in question 1.

# Annotated example: *Pirate Boy of Sydney Town*

» Text: *Pirate Boy of Sydney Town* (excerpt)
» Author: Jackie French
» Date: 2019
» Form: novel
» Audience: Australian young adults
» Purpose: to express and inform

The barn smelled of the roasted ox on its spit outside, of cider, smoke and sweat. Faces gleamed in the lamplight, their plates piled high with meat. The giant platters of roast potatoes, parsnips and buttered cabbage were almost untouched. A man could eat cabbage from his garden any day, but only on this one night of the year could he eat all the meat he could scoff, then take a parcel of beef home to the wife and little'uns too, along with a head cheese maybe for the toothless old folk.

Mama sat at the head of the table, Old Barney at her left hand and Sidney, the head groom, at her right. Ben sat at the other end, where Father would have been if business didn't keep him in London most of the year.
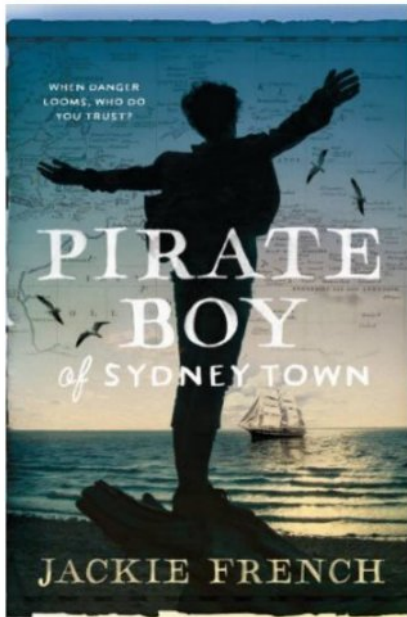
When at last everyone had eaten their fill of meat, Mama nodded to the servants. The platters were replaced with apple pies, plum puddings, great wheels of cheese – for who'd want apple pie without a hunk of cheese? – jugs of clotted cream and custard. There were spoons for those who preferred them to Adam's cutlery, their fingers; and fresh jugs of cider lined the table.

Old Barney stood. 'And now, folks, it be time to lift your glasses to the mistress and to Master Ebenezer, to thank 'em for another Harvest Home!'

> Historical fiction – the genre of this novel – uses real-world research to inspire fictional or semi-fictional stories.

> The author's language helps to convey the time period – this part of the novel is set in 1809.

> Detailed descriptions of food make the historical setting realistic and convincing.

> In historical fiction, the settings, actions and dialogue must all reflect the time period.

Using historical fiction as a mentor text

Pirate Boy of Sydney Town is an example of historical fiction. The author, Jackie French, has written a number of historical novels for children and young adults, including *Hitler's Daughter* and *They Came on Viking Ships*. Novels like these blend reality and fiction by using careful research, much like the research you would carry out for writing a nonfiction piece, in combination with imagined characters and events.

The techniques and conventions used in this piece of historical fiction include the following.

- The dialogue reflects how the characters may have really spoken in the 1800s. The dialogue could be based on novels written at the time as well as diaries and letters from the period.

- Descriptive, evocative language adds colour to the scenes; for example, 'Faces gleamed in the lamplight ...'

- The novel is based on well-researched facts, including places, people and dates.

- The setting is believable and evocative of the 1800s, including 'props' such as the 'jugs of cider' and the context of the harvest celebration.

Draw on the mentor text

ACTIVITY

1 Identify a historical event (in Australia or elsewhere) you are interested in.

2 Do some research online to obtain important facts relevant to the event. Try to use multiple reputable sources for your information.

3 Find personal stories to add colour to your writing. Make notes of people's names, the place or places they lived in and what happened to them. Look for quotes, anecdotes and interesting accounts of real people's lives.

4 Create a fictional character based on your research. Write a profile of the character including their name, age, appearance and personality. Describe their role in a narrative you could write about them.

CRAFTING YOUR RESPONSE

IN THIS CHAPTER

> Pulling it together
> Reflecting on the writing process
> Editing and proofreading checklists
> Sample responses

This chapter guides you through the process of crafting your own texts, helping you to maintain an awareness of your audience, purpose and context. It also explains the reflective commentary, in which you reflect on the choices you made during the writing process, and which forms part of the assessment task for the 'Crafting texts' area of study.

The annotated sample responses at the end of this chapter provide examples of texts crafted for a specific purpose. Read the annotations to see how each text uses vocabulary, structure, language features and text conventions to produce a coherent and effective piece of writing.

Pulling it together

As you are planning and drafting your written pieces, you will be focusing on creating well-structured, engaging texts that are enjoyable and rewarding to read. You will also need to show an awareness of the context of your pieces, their intended audience and the purpose you are hoping to achieve. The following sections help you to pull together your understanding of these core concepts and address them in your writing.

Context

The context of a text is everything that is happening around it and that helps to shape both the text and its reception. Broadly, there are historical, social and cultural factors that affect everyone in a society, as well as more specific factors that vary from person to person. (See pages 11–14 for more on the different types of context.)

When crafting your texts, you must consider your own context and the context of your audience. You also need to think about the context in which you envisage your texts being published, produced or presented. This includes the mode (e.g. written or spoken), the medium (e.g. print or digital) and the type of publication or website (which in turn can determine the target audience).

Of course, you might not actually produce a podcast, deliver a speech or create a website for your blog post, and the assessment of your texts will be focused on the writing. Nevertheless, you will need to show your awareness of the way in which your text is intended to be delivered and received, for example by including notes in your podcast script to show where music or sound effects will occur, or by making your speech easy to read aloud and to listen to.

Link your writing with your context

1 List four aspects of your context that are reflected in the texts you have written or are developing. List two from your context of culture (your wider historical, social and cultural context) and two from your own personal context.

2 Explain how one of the factors you listed for question 1 has influenced your writing.

Audience

The intended audience of your texts is determined by you. Although you will be submitting your writing to your teacher or assessor, they will assume the role of whichever audience you decide on. You will need to think about the expectations of your audience so you can shape your writing appropriately; your task as the writer is to engage your audience and guide them through your material.

Link your writing with your audience

1 List five topics you may wish to write about or are developing texts on. The topics should be relevant to the key idea you are studying.

2 For each of these topics, write a paragraph that describes the audience you would like to address and the kind of impact you want to have on this audience. Consider how you would like your audience to think or feel about the topic, and the kind of language that would present the topic in a way that is interesting and relevant to them.

Purpose

The purpose of your text is its end goal – what you are aiming to achieve. The four broad purposes for your writing are summarised in the table opposite (see Chapter 8 for detailed explanations and examples). Your purpose might be much more specific than these – for example, writing that argues might seek to encourage the audience to act in a certain way; writing that expresses might aim to entertain, terrify, unsettle or reassure them.

Any of the four broad purposes can be combined to create a text that has more than one purpose. You could, for example, create a reflective text that argues for a particular point of view.

Express	Explain	Reflect	Argue
Writing to express could explore storytelling to engage with experiences and ideas.	Writing to explain could explore causes and consequences of actions and events.	Writing to reflect could explore experiences of personal discovery and understanding.	Writing to argue could explore a point of view, take a stand or propose solutions.

Consider your purpose

1 For the following text types, develop topic ideas that combine two or more of the above purposes.

   a a short story

   b a letter to the editor

   c a personal letter

2 Using one of these topics, create a mind map exploring how each purpose might influence your writing. Consider the audience and any potential language choices you need to make.

3 For a text you are developing or have written, decide whether its main purpose is to express, explain, reflect or argue. Now see if you can state your purpose in a more specific, precise way. What do you want your readers to feel, think or do?

Text type

Once you've settled on a purpose for your writing, you can select an appropriate text type. Different text types suit different purposes. If you're looking to express you might decide to write a short story; a reflective purpose might suit a personal essay.

Chapter 9 covers a number of different text types and their conventions in depth, but below is a summary to start you thinking about how you might approach your text.

Express	Explain	Reflect	Argue
blog	blog	autobiography	editorial
play script	essay (expository)	memoir	essay (argumentative)
podcast script	feature article	diary / journal entries	letter to the editor
poem	podcast script	essay (reflective)	opinion piece
short story	report	speech (monologue)	speech

Consider your text type

1 For one of your created texts, list five features or conventions of the text type you chose to use.

2 Explain how you could use (or have used) each of these features or conventions to help you achieve your purpose.

Language

The vocabulary choices you make as you craft your text will be determined by your purpose, your intended audience and your context. The authors of your mentor texts have all carefully chosen their language to create a distinct effect on the audience they expect to read their work; as you study these texts, examine the authors' language choices and note any words and phrases you feel would be effective in your own writing.

Language choice is also about the register or formality of the words you choose. As you are writing, think about how your audience will respond to your language, and how appropriate your language register is for the context you are writing for and the purpose you want to achieve.

ACTIVITY

Link your language choices to audience, purpose and context

1 For one of the texts you are crafting, write a short paragraph explaining which language register you will use and why it is appropriate for your audience. (See pages 83–4 for an explanation of language register.)

2 What is the purpose of your text? Read through your draft. Think of three words or phrases and three language features you haven't used that would help your piece achieve its purpose, then add them into your draft.

3 Which text type are you writing and where do you envisage your text being published, produced or presented? List three elements of the language you have used in your text that are appropriate to this context.

Reflecting on the writing process

A key part of this area of study is writing a reflection on the process of crafting your texts. Like the mentor texts you study, your own texts will be deliberately constructed; you will include certain elements and choose particular words for specific reasons. Your reflective commentary is your chance to explain these reasons.

Essentially, the reflective commentary is an analysis of your own work – you will be explaining your use of language and structure in terms of the purpose, audience and context of your writing. The *how* and *why* of your choices are important. You can also reflect on aspects that you found challenging and on things that you found inspiring and useful – such as your mentor texts.

Your reflective commentary is all about you and your writing, so you will be able to write in the first person ('I chose', 'my decision') and to use language that shows your strong engagement with the writing process.

Scan the code or click here to download a summary sheet that you can use to make and organise notes for your reflective commentary.

The following sentence starters will help you to describe your writing processes, and avoid simply describing the writing itself. You can vary these to suit your particular text type.

I decided to write a ... (text type) because it allowed me to ...
I chose to use the words ... (examples of vocabulary choices) in order to make my reader understand / feel / interested in ...
By opening with a ... and moving on to ... I hoped to lead my reader towards a ...
To make my writing more colourful / engaging / persuasive, I used ... (language features)
I found inspiration for my piece by reading ...
By closely studying ... (mentor text) I was able to see a way to ...
I knew my audience of ... would need ... so I included ...
My purpose was to express the idea that / inform my audience about / reflect on the experience of / argue the case that ...
Although I knew how to begin and end, I found it hard to approach the middle sections in a way that would ...
To solve the problem of ... I decided to ...

Explain authorial choices

ACTIVITY

Using one of your mentor texts, assume the role of the author and write a paragraph explaining your authorial choices. Aim to cover two or more of the following elements: vocabulary, text structures, language features, and conventions of the text type. Your explanations should be in terms of what you see as the author's purpose and their intended audience.

Sample reflective commentary

The following reflective commentary accompanies the persuasive speech on pages 154–5.

For my speech, I adopted the persona of someone who was close to finishing their university degree. The speech addresses the key idea of writing about futures, and I wanted to capture the uncertainty about the future that so many school leavers feel. The persona I created is a few years older than me, which enabled me to explore not just the options available but also the reality of having finished school and experienced a few years of work as well as further study. This persona also suited the context of my audience, who I thought would react better to someone near their age than to someone older.

> Discusses the choice of a persona.

> Relates the choice of persona to the target audience.

The purpose of my speech is to convince students who are finishing high school of the benefits of taking a gap year. I used a range of arguments and strategies to help sway their opinion on this issue. I opened the speech by addressing them directly in a very relaxed, conversational way, so that they would feel comfortable with the speaker and receptive to the speaker's message. I then moved on to discussing the students' current situation, emphasising that the topic would be directly relevant to their lives.

> Discusses purpose and audience.

Throughout my presentation I adopted language that would appeal to my audience. I used casual, colloquial language such as 'uni' instead of the more formal 'university', and everyday expressions such as 'I was over it'. The reason for this was to engage with the audience and to make my point about the value of a gap year more approachable, and therefore more realistic and plausible.

Considers the choice of language register, supported with examples and an explanation of why this language register was used.

I used supporting arguments that my audience would find appealing and thus convincing. I included information about increased government payments because income is always a concern for students who are trying to juggle work and study commitments. I also included statistics about first-year dropout rates and shared an anecdote about not really knowing the correct university course to choose, since Year 12 students would hope to avoid problems such as these. I ended my speech with a warning that if students do go to uni without really knowing what they want, then it could result in them having a HELP debt without the benefit of a qualification. By presenting several problems my audience might easily face in the near future, I was able to offer the idea of taking a gap year (or two) as an attractive and effective solution.

Discusses the use of supporting arguments and evidence, consistent with the purpose of arguing for a position.

In keeping with the informal language style, I envisage this speech being delivered in a lighthearted manner, appropriate to the audience and context.

Considers aspects of delivery, showing an understanding of the mode (spoken).

Examine the reflective commentary

ACTIVITY

GROUP Answers to the following questions can be discussed in pairs or small groups.

1 Find three places in the reflective commentary where the writer refers to the use of structure in the speech. Is the use of structure clearly related to the writer's purpose?

2 In the third paragraph of the reflective commentary the writer discusses language choices. Read the speech on pages 154–5 and find some examples of other language elements (e.g. word choices, persuasive language features) that could have been commented on.

3 Although this commentary identifies a number of relevant features of the speech, it doesn't include many comments on the writing process itself. Think of some statements you could include to show a stronger engagement with the process of drafting and refining the speech.

Editing and proofreading checklists

The process of writing, from planning through drafting, refining and completing, is at the centre of this area of study. This means that your editing skills are particularly important. When you have the opportunity to draft and rewrite, you should scrutinise your work as critically as you can, and take advantage of any feedback you receive from your teacher or other readers, to add clarity and interest to your writing.

The following checklists will help you to focus on specific elements – don't try to check for every element on a single read-through, as you are bound to miss some. The general tips on writing and editing in Appendix 2 (pages 228–31) are also applicable here.

Content

- ☐ The text explores an aspect of your key idea.
- ☐ The idea that you are seeking to express is clear and understandable to your audience.
- ☐ Your text follows the conventions of your chosen text type.
- ☐ The content is appropriate for its context, including the context in which it might be published, produced or presented.

Structure

- ☐ The text is cohesive and well organised.
- ☐ The beginning engages the reader and sets up the text's main concerns.
- ☐ The ending leaves your reader with a strong impression or feeling.
- ☐ The structure is consistent with the text type.
- ☐ The structure helps the text to achieve its purpose.

Language

- ☐ Your language choices are appropriate to your purpose, audience and context.
- ☐ Sentence structures are varied and effective.
- ☐ Your vocabulary is varied and precise.
- ☐ Punctuation (e.g. capital letters, commas) is correct throughout.
- ☐ Grammar is correct throughout (dialogue or narrative voice can be exceptions, if everyday speech is being represented).
- ☐ Spelling is correct throughout.

Sample responses

This section includes annotated examples of responses for each of the four purposes discussed in Chapter 8. Read the annotations to see how vocabulary, text structures and language features have been deliberately used and, in some cases, how mentor texts have provided models and inspiration.

Writing to express

Telling stories is one of the most common forms of writing and communicating. Stories express hopes and fears, portray diverse people and situations, and help us to make sense of our experiences. Keys to successful storytelling include using a wide vocabulary effectively to bring characters, settings and situations 'to life', and creating a compelling narrative structure.

The following short story addresses the idea of writing about crisis. It could be published in a small magazine, either print or online. A primary mentor text for this story was Alice Pung's short story 'In a Heartbeat' (2017), which also uses a letter format, second-person address and an informal, youthful narrative voice. The fantasy fiction of writers such as Rick Riordan and Cassandra Clare also influenced the vocabulary and world-building in this story.

Scan the QR code or click here to view another sample response in the form of a short story.

I'm supposed to tell you that I'm sorry for what happened, but the truth, Rue, is that I'm not. I know, not a great start to an apology letter. Zana's side-eyeing me, like she knows I'm not writing what she wants. But after everything I put you through, I'm not going to lie to you as well.

What you need to know is that Zana and I go way back. Since we first boarded at school together and she would refuse to leave her lake, sitting at that tiny waterfall, twisting her little golden curls, looking more like some kind of cherub than the deadly rusalka she's supposed to be. But that's how long I've known her for, as long as she's been on dry land.

She was beautiful even then. She would be, descended from sirens and mermaids, and at first I didn't care for her. I remember thinking she wouldn't want anything to do with a witch like me. Not a cool witch either, with the black cat and magic wand and everything – when you come from a family of crones, banshees and river hags, you pretty much resign yourself to loneliness from the beginning. I never expected her to notice me, let alone want to be my friend.

But she did. She smiled at me and said she liked my mud cloak, and she thought it was cool that I could summon bats and talk to frogs. When other kids invited her to parties, she'd only go if I was invited too. She could have been popular. Everyone – the selkies, the pixies, even the sprites – wanted to be her friend. But instead, she hung out in the marshlands with me.

We became inseparable, and it stayed like that all through school. We would practise spells together, brew potions, read the future, anything, so long as it was the two of us. Graduation was coming up and we made plans to go see the human world together. We were going to be friends for life.

And then you came along.

I barely noticed when you transferred at the start of senior year. What's so fascinating about some shapeshifting wolf girl? Enormous and hairy, shedding all over the school corridors, you ate your lunch raw and probably had fleas to boot. But she was captivated. All she wanted to do was hang out with you and your freaky transformations. I suppose there's no accounting for taste for a girl like her – she'd chosen a bog witch for a best friend, after all. When it came to other magical creatures, it seemed, the weirder the better.

Suddenly, all plans were off. She wasn't sure if she wanted to travel to the humans anymore, could Rue come? Did I mind if Rue came with us to enchant mushroom rings? Sorry, she couldn't come to my ghast summoning, it was the full moon and she'd been invited to hang out with Rue's pack. For the first time since I was a very small child, I felt alone. I felt invisible.

The direct second-person address, contractions ('I'm', 'Zana's') and informal phrases ('side-eyeing') establishes a youthful, conversational style. This helps to suggest both the age and personality of the narrator.

The writer creates a sense of intrigue through the narrator's implication that they have wronged the letter's intended reader, Rue. The reader is prompted to wonder what the narrator has done, and why.

The use of stereotypical fantasy tropes (e.g. mythological creatures, references to animals such as black cats, bats and frogs) helps to quickly create a setting and establish the main characters' relationship.

The fantasy elements are combined with familiar concerns of modern teen life, a typical convention of much YA urban fantasy.

Having established the narrator's world and what they care most about (the stakes in the narrative – the friendship with Zana), the writer signals the disruption to the narrator's peaceful life, introducing the conflict with the threat to what has been established as important.

I don't know what either of you expected me to do. Did you think I would just let you make me disappear? Did you forget what I am? Curses and vengeance are what I was born for, Rue.

It was a night of the full moon, and you were both off playing fetch or whatever it was you guys did together. You're already a shapeshifter, so the actual spell was very simple. A bit of chanting, a clump of your fur, several strands of hair, and – *voila*! The way she *shrieked*.

She knew it was me. She came at me immediately, plunging through the marsh waters. Drenched in mud and weeds, eyes burning crimson, she emerged at the side of my hut, more like some kind of eldritch horror than even I could have managed. But best of all – the spell had worked like a dream. You stood shivering in wolf form beside her, bald as a naked mole-rat and half as dignified. And she, with deep brown fur still sprouting patchily across her face and arms, looked every bit the monster she was.

I'd given her all your fur. Beautiful Zana, coated in wolf hair.

She smashed through my hut demanding I reverse the spell, and went into hysterics when I said I didn't know how. She made so much commotion, one of the selkies was frightened into calling campus security.

For destroying a hut and casting a fur transplant, even I had to admit our penalty – writing out campus rules until morning – was pretty light. Zana didn't seem that relieved, though. After she'd exhausted herself trying to tear me to shreds, she just stared down at her parchment, motionless, eyes smouldering like hot coals.

'Thought you liked wolves,' I'd said cockily. The miserable silence was starting to make me uneasy. 'More than you like witches, anyway. I was doing you a favour.'

She acted like she hadn't heard me. But after I'd written about four pages, she slid her parchment across the table in one swift movement. In her elegant, looping scrawl, she hadn't written the campus rules.

I'm sorry I missed your ghast summoning.

I stared down at the page, then back up at her.

The rusalki are a noble people, ethereal and unchanging, and Zana had never fitted in easily among them. But Zana never cared what others thought of her, and she never apologised for anything. Even when her own family looked on in disappointment, even when her fellow water spirits ostracised her. It was how she'd chosen to live her life. It was how she'd become friends with me.

'It's temporary,' I told her, after a long pause. She wasn't good at being a rusalka, but maybe I wasn't that great at being a bog witch either. 'You'll both be back to normal by morning.'

The fire in her eyes seemed to settle, and she's looking at me again, embers glowing warm.

Annotations (right margin):

This paragraph sets up the reader's expectations for the climax of the story and promises to resolve the questions posed in the first paragraph.

The plot reaches its climax through the narrator's curse and Zana's volatile reaction. By presenting this crisis as an outcome of the preceding build-up of resentment and jealousy, the writer has created an emotional journey for the characters that has a clear peak following a section of rising tension, corresponding to the three-act structure.

Short sentences, with occasional sentence fragments, create variety and impact.

This story's resolution is influenced by Pung's 'In a Heartbeat', in which the resolution focuses on the reconciliation between the narrator and her mother.

The image of Zana's fiery eyes is referenced several times in the story. This motif is continued but subtly changed in the final line to convey a sense of warm affection; this shift suggests Zana's emotional journey in the latter half of the story and leaves the reader with a sense that the relationship will be repaired.

Examine the short story

1 Describe the likely intended audience for this short story. Give three pieces of evidence from the story to support your answer.

2 Writing to express often explores ideas and aspects of experience. What are three ideas or aspects of experience in this short story that the writer has explored?

3 Effective short stories contain strong descriptive writing that evokes a scene or a feeling in a few words. Find a descriptive sentence in this short story that you find especially effective and explain why you think it works so well.

Writing to explain

If your purpose is to explain something to your audience, you will want to leave them with new knowledge and understanding. Facts and information are essential, but a fluent, uncluttered style and a clear structure are also key elements of successful writing to explain.

The following sample response addresses the key idea of writing about nature, and is in the form of a destination article. The writer explains the nature walks that are available in the Grampians National Park in western Victoria.

Which Way? Walking the Grampians

The Grampians National Park is situated approximately three hours' drive from Melbourne. The park is part of the Gariwerd cultural landscape. Hands down, the best way to experience the Grampians is by exploring it through one of its many nature walks and hiking trails.

One of the most popular walks is the Grampians Peaks Trail. It is a 160-kilometre-long hiking trail that starts at Mount Zero in the northern Grampians and ends in Dunkeld in the southern Grampians. It takes about thirteen days (twelve nights) to experience the whole Peaks Trail. There are hike-in campgrounds available to walkers as they traverse the mountain peaks, expansive panoramic views and rugged ridgelines. This walk isn't for the faint-hearted.

If you're after something a little easier, then perhaps the Pinnacle walks are for you. These are not as difficult as the Peaks Trail and offer a number of options that vary in distance and difficulty. The easiest walk is from the Sundial Carpark, located in the centre of the park, and goes up the Pinnacle via Devil's Gap. This is the best walk for young children and beginner walkers. If you're after something a little more challenging, then the walk that departs from the Wonderland Carpark is for you. It takes in the Grand Canyon (not the American one!) and continues up to the Pinnacle, where you'll pass unique rock formations.

> Informative texts often begin with a headline or title to gain the reader's attention and indicate the topic.

> Writing to explain should have accurate and detailed facts, relevant to the text's purpose and the reader's interests and needs.

> The writer has targeted, and directly addresses, an audience of people who enjoy outdoor activities.

If you fancy yourself as a rock climber, then the Mount Stapylton Loop Walk is your best option. This begins at the Stapylton Campground and takes you through the flat bushland before making a gradual climb towards the rugged landscape of Mount Stapylton. Along this walk you will encounter the natural amphitheatre of Flat Rock and the impressive Taipan Wall – where you might spot rock climbers ascending the wall. If that's not your cup of tea, then you can continue along the walk to Mount Stapylton, but it can get steep.

> The use of the second person to directly address the reader contributes to a conversational style; this can help prevent informative writing from becoming too dry.

These are just some of the walks that you can take when visiting the Grampians National Park. There are many more available, with different degrees of difficulty. Prior to setting out on any walk, however, you should be well prepared.

> Writing to explain may use features from imaginative writing, such as figurative language and clichés. The publishing context will determine how informal and colourful the writing can be.

All walkers, regardless of their ability, should take with them a map of the trail, adequate water and food, and a fully charged mobile phone. Before you set off, download the VicEmergency app or bookmark the VicEmergency website to keep informed of any emergencies.

Examine the destination article

ACTIVITY

1 Describe the intended audience for this piece as precisely as you can. Which features of the article make you think this?

2 Describe a possible publication type where you think this article could appear. Explain your choice.

3 The broad purpose of this piece is 'to explain'. What do you think the writer's more specific purpose in writing this article might be?

Writing to reflect

When writing to reflect, you are trying to make sense of and possibly learn from an event or experience, both for yourself and for your readers. Reflective writing is personal, so you can use the first person. The language does not need to be formal or technical, but an authentic voice and a strong engagement with the reader are features of successful reflective writing.

Reflective writing is well suited to addressing the key idea of writing about the past. The following sample response is a hybrid piece of writing: it combines elements of writing to reflect and writing to express. It is mostly in the form of a memoir but ends with an imaginative section to extend the student writer's life story into the future and create a sense of resolution or closure. A mentor text for this piece was the memoir *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah.

Scan the QR code or click here to view another reflective piece.

I was five years old when my family and I moved to Australia. For the longest time, I was known as the dumbest kid in my primary school (in one of Melbourne's less affluent south-eastern suburbs). I was fluent in French, Hindi and Creole, but I couldn't speak a lick of English, which, in white Australia, cast me as an immediate outsider. To my classmates and teachers I was the foreign simpleton who everyone assumed was Indian. No one bothered to learn that I was actually from the island nation of Mauritius. To the sea of white faces before me, I guess it was all the same.

It was like I was living in two worlds. One full of family love, a cacophony of talking, laughing, singing, all in a melange of languages (though this would soon cease after the move); the other silent, punctuated only by the racial slurs muttered by my peers.

I tried and I tried to pick up English, but it was so unlike the other languages I knew, the words so boxy and unfamiliar in my non-Anglo mouth. My parents couldn't understand it – I had been the cleverest kid in Mauritius.

'Qu'est-il arrivé a Cédric?' they would ask, ultimately figuring that the barometer for clever was clearly set higher here than in the idyllic oasis of Mauritius, and that maybe my genius had been incorrectly diagnosed.

Looking back at it now, the reason why I struggled so much to learn English is clear to see. I had learned French and Hindi and Creole in the loving embrace of home, surrounded by family and community, where language was used to share in collective joy. English, on the other hand, was nothing but a sterile language, a reminder of all that we had left behind for a supposedly 'better future'. Of course, as a child, I had no inkling of this. I simply thought I was stupid, just like everyone around me kept saying. It's scary how easily young kids can internalise negative messages like that, and how they can stay with you for a lifetime.

Eventually, I cobbled together some form of understanding that vaguely resembled the English language. It wasn't perfect, and no one ever mistook me for a native speaker, but it was enough to get by.

Little did I know how important it would be in the next chapter of my life.

◆

I moved back to Mauritius when I was twenty-two. By that time, I knew I wanted to be an entertainer or TV presenter. Before deciding to make the move, my friends and family kept telling me how lucky I was to be in Australia, in one of its largest cities no less.

'Imagine you still lived on that tiny island in the middle of nowhere,' they'd say. 'No chance you'd make anything of yourself there.'

The opening sets the scene and establishes the theme of being an outsider.

A short, impactful statement draws the reader in and indicates the primary tension of the piece.

Phrases from other languages (here, French) are integrated into the story at various points to highlight the background of the writer and to characterise other individuals.

Reflective language highlights how the author is not only recounting the past, but also analysing the reasons for certain actions and behaviours.

Although much of the piece is specific to the life of the author, here a general statement is used to show the wider implications of the events being recounted.

A connective phrase is used to indicate the upcoming shift in time.

This shift in time allows for a longer period to be covered; this extends the narrative beyond the present (of a teenage writer) by using a narrative of imagination and revealing the narrator to be well into adulthood.

But as much as Melbourne had come to feel like home, there was always something pulling me back. An invisible thread that weaved through skyscrapers, passed through the dusty plains of the Nullarbor, swam across the Indian Ocean and drew me to a place that's better known for once upon a time being home to the dodo bird.

So I went back. Packed my bags and left Australia, crushing my parents' dreams for me in the process.

To this day, it's the scariest thing I've ever done. I didn't know anyone in Mauritius at the time. My aunt had given me the name and address of a distant cousin, so I prayed that he could help me. This distant cousin, Pierre-Yves was his name, lived at the very tip of the island in Cap Malheureux. Thankfully I didn't believe in omens, otherwise that name alone ('the Miserable Cape') would have been enough to scare me away.

Mauritians are known for their generosity of spirit, and Pierre-Yves was no different. He let me stay on his couch for almost a year while I tried to turn my dream into a reality. I dropped off résumé after résumé every few months at the local TV stations, but to no avail.

'*Ti kouto koup gro ziromon*,' Pierre-Yves would tell me after each failed attempt. A peculiar little Creole expression that translates to 'A small knife cuts a big pumpkin' – in other words, be bold.

So I kept persisting until finally I got my lucky break: a call from a national Mauritius Broadcasting Company (MBC) channel focused on children's programming. They wanted someone fluent in French, English and Hindi to host an entertaining educational morning kid's program and thought I'd be the perfect fit.

This was it. The role I was born to play. I had been given the chance to give to the next generation what I was deprived of as a child. It was truly a full circle moment.

> Descriptive language adds variety and interest, in contrast to the less colourful language used to relay concrete details of the writer's life.

> The reflective style and tone of the earlier part of the piece is sustained.

> The writer draws on the way in which the mentor text applies general principles of a people to specific characters.

> A phrase specific to the culture of the writer is used to highlight the shift in setting. Note how French is used in the first half of the story (set in Australia), while Creole is used after the writer has moved back to their country of origin.

Examine the reflective piece

ACTIVITY

1 Underline or highlight three sentences that are typical of reflective writing.

2 List three effective vocabulary choices in this piece and explain why they are effective. In your answer, refer to the writer's purpose and subject matter.

3 In this piece, the narrator doesn't just describe the past; they also explore how the past has shaped who they are. Find a sentence in the piece that connects past and present, and explain its significance.

Writing to argue

The purpose of persuasive writing is to convince the audience to agree with the writer's point of view. Sometimes the purpose can also be to convince the audience to take action or change their behaviour in some way. When you are writing to argue you will present a strong case using evidence and logic, as well as persuasive techniques such as emotive appeals and repetition. To present an effective argument you will also order your points in a way that reinforces the strength of your case.

This sample response addresses the key idea of writing about futures. It is the transcript of a speech by a young university student who is talking to an audience of Year 12 students. The context for the speech is a careers day at which various invited speakers are contributing advice and information.

Hey, how's everyone doing?

So you're getting to the end of high school. Your teachers are going on about your final SACs and the practice exams. You've probably heard from your careers teacher by now that it's time to start applying for university, or to plan some other pathway. Everyone's talking to you about your future. Well, that's good. You should be thinking about that. Actually, *are* you thinking about your future? I know I wasn't when I was your age.

As I was coming to the end of high school, like you are now, I was a bit lost. What was I going to study? Was uni for me? Like you've probably been told not to do, I just entered a random uni course into VTAC – Sports Science if you're wondering – and figured I'd work it out when the time came. I did the exams, studied all night, crammed, went to 18ths instead of studying, and ended up with an alright ATAR. Didn't blow anyone's socks off, but it got me into my random uni course. Good. Everyone's happy. What next?

Your future is up to you. That's why I'm here to talk to you about considering taking a gap year. A gap year is a great idea because, apart from not having any deadlines or assignments to worry about, it gives you a chance to actually figure out what you're going to do with your life. Maybe not your whole life, but the next part of it. I took a gap year; in fact, I took two. And it was the best thing I ever did.

I decided that the right thing for me was not to go straight to uni. I was over it. The assignments, the deadlines, the lessons, the teachers. Instead, I found a full-time job in hospitality, and it worked out perfectly. Why? As well as earning money that I could then spend on things I wanted, I made a whole lot of new friends. On top of that, when I finally did go to uni, I learned that, because I was earning enough money to be considered an independent student, I was able to get more money from the government. Love that.

Once I did make it to uni, I actually decided that the course I originally applied for wasn't for me. I spoke to people in a few different departments and was able to change courses. I ended up doing an engineering degree.

Opens with a question to get the audience's attention and present a friendly, relaxed persona.

Uses colloquial language appropriate for the audience, signalling that the speaker can relate to the audience's concerns.

Continues to establish relatability and credibility with the audience, sustaining a relaxed, conversational style.

Three short sentences, including a rhetorical question, help to create a shift to a more serious tone and the main point the speaker wants to make.

Presents the main contention in the middle of the speech.

Uses a sentence fragment for impact.

Presents an argument supporting the main contention: independent students qualify for more government support if they meet certain income thresholds.

I did some research, and found out that apparently 20% of first-year uni students drop out because they don't want to study anymore, or because they don't like the course they chose. Some don't drop out until after the census date – which means they now owe the government money. A HELP debt with no degree? No thanks.

> Presents another argument: the drop-out rate for first-year university students is high because they haven't firmly decided what they want to do.

So, listen to your teachers, they know best. I have to say that. And do all the right things with your study and your exams, and don't go to too many parties. Apply on VTAC, but really think about what you're applying for. Speak to your careers teacher. And seriously consider a gap year. You earn money, you make friends, and you don't have any assignments. Remember: your future is yours to design.

> Uses repetition at the end of the presentation to leave the audience with a strong impression of the benefits of taking a gap year.

Examine the speech

ACTIVITY

1 The audience for this speech is students in Year 12. What language choices does the writer make in order to appeal to this audience? Do you think these would be effective for the writer's purpose and context?

2 What changes would you need to make to this speech if it were to be delivered as part of a series of formal presentations to the parents of Year 12 students?

3 The writer presents their main contention in the middle of the speech. Is this an effective choice? Justify your answer with reference to the speaker's purpose and audience.

Exploring argument

In Area of Study 2: Exploring argument you will strengthen your understanding of how arguments are constructed and presented to persuade readers, listeners or viewers to agree with the point of view being put forward.

Persuasive texts vary widely in their specific purpose and use of language; they also come in a wide range of forms, depending on where they are published, broadcast or posted, and the intended audience. The following chapters cover many persuasive text types, explaining their features and the elements that can be used to position an audience and influence their thoughts and feelings on an issue. In some cases, short persuasive texts on a single issue are grouped together so you can see how contrasting arguments and points of view are presented.

You will create two kinds of texts in this area of study: an analytical text in which you explain how the creator of a text has used argument and language to persuade; and a persuasive text in which you present your own point of view in oral form. Both these texts will be underpinned by your understanding of the tools, techniques and strategies that can be used to argue and persuade.

UNDERSTANDING ARGUMENT AND PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

IN THIS CHAPTER

> Audience, purpose and context
> Main contention
> Argument
> Language

Many elements of an argument combine to persuade a reader, listener or viewer to agree. Those elements are chosen by the writer according to their purpose, the context of the persuasive piece and the particular audience the writer is trying to persuade. In analysing a persuasive text you will be aiming to understand *why* the writer has made these choices and *how* the audience is likely to be positioned and influenced. This chapter looks at some fundamental concepts in isolation; Chapters 13–16 will consider how they work in combination.

Audience, purpose and context

The **audience** is anyone reading, viewing or listening to a text. The writer of a persuasive text will have in mind a particular audience whose thoughts, feelings and/or actions they hope to influence.

The writer will also have a clear **purpose** in mind. They might wish to persuade the reader to buy a certain product, sign a petition, vote for a particular political candidate, donate money to a cause or just agree with the point of view being expressed.

The **context** is the place and time in which a text is published or delivered. The place could be a newspaper, a media company's website, a social media platform or a community meeting. Context also refers to the broader circumstances around the issue being debated – where and when it arises, what else is taking place at the time and the factors that have shaped and continue to shape people's opinions on and attitudes to the issue.

The context will partly determine the **text type** or **form**. A persuasive text published in a print newspaper will be in one of the typical newspaper text types, such as a letter to the editor, opinion piece or editorial (see Chapter 13). The same newspaper's online version will have other text types available, such as blogs and online comments.

Understand audience and purpose

ACTIVITY

1 Match the purpose to the most likely audience.

Purpose	Audience
To convince people to vote for you in local council elections	The state government minister for transport
To make public transport free	The parents of a school's students
To encourage the audience to help a school eliminate litter in its grounds	People who live in a shire

2 For each matched purpose and audience above, choose the most appropriate text type from the following options. Write a sentence for each explaining your choices.

formal letter   opinion piece   podcast   speech

post on a Facebook page   email   flyer dropped in letterboxes

Main contention

The **topic** or subject of a persuasive piece will be the broad **issue** under discussion. It can usually be expressed in a word or a few words. The **main contention** presents the writer's point of view on an issue. It is often expressed in a single sentence early in the written piece or speech, and it can also be captured in the headline or title of an article. Alternatively, the main contention can be stated in the middle or near the end of a piece, or it might be *implied* by the attitudes and opinions the writer expresses.

To show that you understand the main contention of a piece, aim to express it in a single sentence. The following letter to the editor, published in *The Age* in early 2022, expresses a point of view on the Victorian Government's proposed Suburban Rail Loop.

Loop will especially benefit country travellers

The Suburban Rail Loop is a vital piece of public transport infrastructure, solving the current problem of our existing radial train network. Public transport, that is not road-dependent and hence unreliable due to traffic, is the future.

Moving people around the outer suburbs, rather than into the CBD and out again, the 90-kilometre rail loop will link Frankston to Werribee via Melbourne Airport. For country travellers, we will be able to link through Clayton. In 30 years' time, most Victorians will likely wonder how we ever managed without it.

Leone Thiele, Cape Paterson

Can you identify the main contention in this letter to the editor? Is the contention clearly expressed, or is it implied?

To write about a main contention, firstly aim to express it in your own words. For example:

The Victorian Government should build the Suburban Rail Loop because it will help people in the suburbs and regions move around more easily.

Next, state how the writer is presenting it.

The writer argues calmly but confidently that the Suburban Rail Loop should be built because it will help people in the suburbs and regions move around more easily.

Understand a main contention

The following letter to the editor also presents a point of view in favour of the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL), though using a slightly different argument.

All the great cities have cross-city connections

Roshena Campbell flippantly says the Suburban Rail Loop "would make it easier for a Monash academic to start their day with a swim in Black Rock and end it with dumplings in Box Hill, but that doesn't quite make the case" (Opinion, 31/3).

Any great city with a well-designed public transport system has cross-city connections and loops. Think Paris, Vienna or Tokyo. These are essential for commuters and the conduct of business, as are outer-ring roads for the movement of freight.

Elizabeth Grgacic, Fitzroy North

1 What is the main contention of this letter?

2 What emotion or emotions does the opinion piece encourage the reader to feel?

3 The letter begins by rejecting what the writer of an opinion piece has said about the SRL. How does this help to establish the main contention of the letter?

4 Write a statement that identifies the main contention and describes how the writer is presenting it.

Argument

A writer's main contention needs to be supported by an argument. A well-reasoned argument consists of one or more points connected logically to the writer's main contention.

Writers carefully choose their supporting reasons and the order in which they will present them. They might start with the most important reason, or they might start with an anecdote to reveal their personal experience with the issue and engage the audience. Another approach is to begin with a reason or reasons for rejecting the opposing point of view – known as rebuttal. (For further discussion of argument structure, see 'Structuring strategies' on pages 192–3.)

When selecting and arranging supporting reasons for their argument, writers take into account their purpose and audience, as well as the context in which they are writing.

Understand argument

1 Identify the main contention and two supporting reasons in the following letter.

2 The writer's argument includes a rebuttal (rejection) of the Victorian Government's case for building the SRL. How do the rhetorical questions in the third paragraph contribute to this rebuttal?

3 Do the writer's credentials (as a retired traffic engineer) help to support his argument? Explain your answer.

The government has not justified need for rail loop

Transport Infrastructure Minister Jacinta Allan says, "Victorians endorsed the [Suburban Rail Loop] at the ballot box and the business case shows it stacks up" (*The Age*, 1/4). Infrastructure Victoria and most Labor politicians knew nothing about the project – which was conceived in secret by Daniel Andrews and a chosen few – when it was announced three months before the 2018 state election.

No business case was prepared prior to the announcement, and it took at least 18 months to produce a Utopia-like one. The proposed suburban rail loop is a huge con. If we need all five rail lines to be connected, there are far cheaper solutions. Most of the so-called hubs already contain high-density, mixed-use development. The two university precincts can be connected to the adjacent rail networks and density increased if required.

Were any alternatives to the loop considered? If not, why not? Has a demand for a direct public transport connection between Cheltenham and Box Hill been proven? I suspect that the next farce will be the very expensive "hearings" to justify the project, which pretend to give councils and the public their say. The terms of reference will be so narrow that tough questions cannot be asked. A fee fest for the lawyers.

Des Grogan, retired traffic engineer, Sorrento

Language

A persuasive writer or speaker uses language not only to communicate ideas and information, but also to convey and arouse emotions. Words can be combined to create specific persuasive techniques, many of which are explained in the table on pages 195–9. Remember, too, that words are often accompanied by images, or by a speaker's gestures and facial expressions.

Tone

Tone is the mood or feeling of a piece of writing. It reflects the writer's attitudes or emotions towards the topic. A useful way of identifying the main tone of a piece of writing is to consider how it would sound if it were read aloud.

A writer will use a particular tone to generate a specific emotional response in the reader. Although tone is not in itself a persuasive element, the tone used to present an argument – along with persuasive techniques and strategies – can certainly have a persuasive effect on the audience. An aggressive tone might be used to present an attack on an opposing viewpoint; writers who want to present their view as balanced and fair will often use a calm tone. Shifting the tone within a piece can also be an effective way to manipulate an audience's sympathies and attitudes.

The following table contains a selection of useful words for writing about tone. These are all adjectives that you can use in a sentence like this one:

In an <u>assertive</u> tone, the writer argues that ...

Alternatively, many of these adjectives have equivalent adverbs that you can use in a sentence like this:

The writer argues <u>assertively</u> that ...

Positive	Neutral	Negative
assertive	authoritative	accusing
confident	calm	admonishing
earnest	concerned	aggressive
encouraging	considered	arrogant
enthusiastic	dispassionate	bitter
optimistic	measured	condescending
playful	reasonable	contemptuous
proud	restrained	cynical
respectful	serious	mocking
soothing	thoughtful	outraged
sympathetic	unemotional	sarcastic

Identify tone

1 Describe the main tone of the letter by Des Grogan on page 160. Highlight three words or phrases that help to create this tone.

2 Use your answer to question 1 to write a sentence about Grogan's main contention and the tone he uses to present it. A useful sentence structure could be:

   In a ... tone, Grogan argues that ...

3 The tone of the letter shifts during the second paragraph. Why do you think the writer used a different tone here compared to the tone in the rest of the letter?

4 How does the writer's main tone help him to present his point of view on the SRL?

5 Look again at the letters in favour of the SRL on page 159. What are their main tones?

Word choices and connotations

Writers choose their words carefully to evoke certain reactions in the reader. One of the ways they do this is by selecting words with particular connotations. Connotations are the extra meanings or associations attached to a word, beyond its literal meaning.

For example, the word 'home' literally means the place where a person lives. But 'home' also carries emotional associations of comfort, support and refuge. By contrast, the word 'house', which has a similar literal meaning, does not carry those same associations.

Consider word choices

1 A cline is a graded scale. Word clines place words on a continuum from the least to the most extreme meaning. For example, here is a word cline for describing the weather:

balmy	warm	hot	scorching

Create a word cline by placing the following words in order, from least to most disturbed:

agitated   placid   chaotic   unsettled   still

2 Select an adjective in a piece of persuasive writing. Using a thesaurus, find four similar words that would fit the context and arrange them in a word cline from weakest to strongest.

3 **GROUP** Read the three sets of sentences below containing positive, neutral and negative statements about meat. Working in pairs or small groups, explain the different impacts the words in bold could have on the reader.

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Meat is a **tasty, highly nutritious** food.	Meat is a **common type** of food.	Eating too much meat can lead to **life-threatening illnesses**.
Meat is a **vital** source of income for our **precious** farmers and regional towns.	Meat comes from the **farming of livestock**.	Eating meat involves **cruelty to animals**.

4 Create your own positive, neutral and negative statements about each of the topics below.

   a The sport of boxing

   b A four-day working week

   c Starting the school day at 9.30 am

5 For each of the following hypothetical scenarios, create a statement that will evoke in the reader the emotion shown in brackets.

   a The government has announced that the GST will be raised to fifteen per cent. (anger)

   b New research shows that most of Australia will be classified as desert by 2040. (fear)

   c International Students' Day will become a public holiday in Australia. (delight)

Visual language

In nearly all media texts, images such as photographs, illustrations and cartoons are used to deliver messages, elicit emotions, attract attention and influence the audience's point of view on topics and issues. Visual language also refers to elements such as:

- colour
- font styles and sizes
- logos
- borders, frames and lines
- headings
- layout.

Understand visual language

On the next page is an excerpt from a six-page fact sheet describing how the Cheltenham train station will become part of the proposed Suburban Rail Loop. Read and look at it carefully then answer the following questions.

1 There are four logos on this fact sheet excerpt. What messages do these logos convey?

2 The main image has the appearance of a photograph but the words 'concept only' in the top right-hand corner indicates that the image has been artificially created. What effect does the photograph-like quality of the image have on the viewer?

3 The dominant colour on the page is green. What might have been the intention behind the choice of this colour and the limited colour palette?

4 The people in the image are relatively spread out and seem to be walking at a relaxed pace. What impression of the train station does this create?

5 The text in the bottom half of the page uses four different styles and sizes. How does the selection of colour and size, and the use of bold, influence the reader's response to this text?

6 Which line of text do you think comes closest to expressing the main message of the page?

7 How do all the elements of the page work together to influence viewers' attitudes towards the new Cheltenham train station and the Suburban Rail Loop?

Underground station at Cheltenham
## Making travel easier, delivering jobs

Suburban Rail Loop will shape our city and state for future generations, ensuring Melbourne remains one of the world's most liveable cities.

To be delivered in stages, the 90-kilometre Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) will link every major rail line from the Frankston line to the Werribee line, via Melbourne Airport, improving access to housing, jobs, schools, universities and hospitals for all Victorians.

SRL East will connect our growing health, education, retail and employment precincts in Melbourne's east and south east between Cheltenham and Box Hill.

Built as a standalone 26-kilometre underground rail line that is integrated with our existing public transport network, SRL East includes new underground stations at Cheltenham, Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley, Burwood and Box Hill.

SRL East will slash travel times, create new jobs, housing, and public spaces, enable more direct journeys for regional Victorians and enhance walking, cycling and green spaces.

SUBURBAN RAIL LOOP AUTHORITY

VICTORIA'S BIG BUILD **VICTORIA** State Government
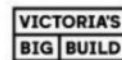
Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

WRITTEN PERSUASIVE TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

> News articles
> Editorials
> Opinion pieces and blog posts
> Letters to the editor and online comments

Written persuasive texts appear primarily in printed newspapers and magazines, as well as on the websites of a wide range of organisations, including mainstream media companies. They present a point of view on events and issues that are of interest to a wide readership. While news articles can subtly present a point of view while also attempting to be objective in their reporting, texts such as editorials and opinion pieces are overtly persuasive, presenting a clear opinion backed up with arguments and evidence.

This chapter describes several common types of written persuasive texts, and explains how they can be used to present a point of view on an issue and position an audience to agree.

News articles

News articles are short, factual reports that inform the reader about events of public concern. They often include comments from eyewitnesses, authority figures and stakeholders, as well as relevant facts and figures. If there is debate or controversy, a news article will usually include comments from both sides in order to present a balanced picture.

The recognised purpose of a news article is to inform rather than to persuade. However, it can subtly present a point of view on an issue through the writer's selection of evidence and quotes from authority figures and people affected by the events being reported – statements that can convey strong opinions and/or emotions. It is often accompanied by an image that inclines the reader to feel sympathy or antipathy towards certain individuals or viewpoints reported in the article.

Features and conventions of news articles

» Inform the reader about current events
» Have an attention-grabbing headline and a by-line with the reporter's name
» Begin with the most important details, and place less significant comments and facts near the end
» Use short sentences and paragraphs
» Usually have a neutral tone and take a balanced approach
» Use standard or formal language
» Use the third-person voice

← → C   Search   🔍   ↓ ↗ ⋮

Royal Children's Hospital no longer allowed to train doctors in providing children's emergency care

Leanne Wong

The Royal Children's Hospital is one of the country's largest paediatric hospitals. ABC News: Darryl Torpy

The Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne has been stripped of its accreditation to train doctors in providing urgent medical care to children, following a dispute over its training program.

Accreditation for paediatric emergency medicine is granted by the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM), which dictates hospitals must meet strict requirements in order to be recognised as a training site.

In a statement to the ABC, the ACEM cited concerns over the "inappropriate structure of the RCH education programs to cater for all registrars" and "shortcomings in relation to learning opportunities" as being behind the decision to withdraw the hospital's accreditation.

But the Royal Children's Hospital said it had "differing views" to the ACEM over accommodating the different skill levels of trainees.

"Our assessment of trainees when they come to the RCH is that many require additional paediatric emergency medicine knowledge and skills," a hospital spokesperson said.

"ACEM does not share this view."

"We have agreed to work with ACEM on implementing a model where both organisations' expectations and standards can be met, with patient safety and the quality of care the absolute priority."

The Royal Children's Hospital is one of the country's largest and busiest paediatric hospitals.

Its loss of training accreditation comes as Victoria's healthcare system is put under increasing pressure with a growing elective surgery waitlist and fatal triple-zero call delays.

On April 6, the ACEM notified the Royal Children's Hospital that its accreditation as a training site for doctors enrolled in the fellowship training program (FACEM) would be withdrawn, effective immediately, after a two-year review process.

The hospital has since submitted a new application to receive provisional accreditation, which is currently being reviewed by the ACEM.

There are now just four hospitals in Victoria that are accredited to train doctors in paediatric emergency medicine: the Northern Hospital, Sunshine Hospital, Monash Medical Centre and the Austin Hospital.

In order to complete emergency medicine training and be recognised as a specialist emergency physician as part of the ACEM's program, trainees must undertake training at both non-major referral and major referral training sites.

With the Royal Children's Hospital's loss of accreditation, Monash Medical Centre is now the state's only major referral training site.

But both the ACEM and Royal Children's Hospital insist the current cohort of trainee doctors will not be disadvantaged.

"Trainees who have signed a contract to work at RCH in 2022, prior to this withdrawal of accreditation, will have their time honoured and counted towards their FACEM training, should they wish to complete their training at RCH," an ACEM representative said.

"ACEM emphasises the decision to withdraw accreditation did not relate to concerns over the quality of patient care that has been delivered to patients and families."

The Royal Children's Hospital said the withdrawal of its training accreditation will have no impact on patient care.

ABC News

Analyse a news article

ACTIVITY

1 Summarise the two points of view expressed in the article.

2 Give two examples of neutral language used to present the story in a factual manner.

3 The writer of this news article has chosen to include general information about the pressures on the Victorian healthcare system. Do you think this information is essential to the article, or has it been included to present a particular point of view? What effect might this information have on the reader?

4 Do the accompanying photograph and caption help to support a particular point of view? Why or why not?

5 Write a paragraph explaining to what extent you think the news article presents a point of view on the issue. Justify your answer with evidence from the text and photograph.

Editorials

Editorials are written by a newspaper's senior editor or group of senior editors to express the newspaper's collective point of view on an issue. They are often designed to sway public opinion and the opinions of decision-makers in society.

Newspaper editorials were traditionally written in a formal register, but over time they have tended increasingly to use a more informal style with contractions (e.g. 'it's') and occasional colloquialisms (e.g. 'kick our reliance' in the editorial below).

Features and conventions of editorials

» Clearly state the newspaper's official position

» Aim to persuade the audience to agree

» Include relevant background information, and often present opposing arguments and perspectives on an issue

» Use an authoritative tone and may use specialised language

» Can use 'we' or 'our' but never 'I'

Leave the car keys at home. We need to get back on public transport

March 23, 2022

One of the most striking features of the COVID-19 lockdowns in Melbourne was the quiet. With little traffic on the roads, the city went eerily silent. That is now a distant memory as many people prefer to use their car over public transport.

Melbourne traffic is almost back to pre-COVID-19 levels – the proof is in the congestion – despite large numbers of people still working from home and the cost of fuel heading well north of $2. It has been a much slower return to public transport.

Passengers leave a tram in the CBD on Sunday.
Credit: Chris Hopkins

The latest data from the Transport Department shows the network experienced its sharpest increase in patronage since 2020 last Thursday. The figure hit 63 per cent of the pre-COVID baseline – a 9 per cent rise from the same time the previous week but still far behind the return to cars.

Fear of catching COVID-19 is clearly a major factor in people's hesitancy. But the risk is not what it seems. Professor Catherine Bennett, chair of epidemiology at Deakin University, believes being inside a shop or cafe for longer than 15 minutes could pose a higher risk of transmission than being on a train, tram or bus, where face masks are still mandated.

It's an argument that needs to be heard loud, clear and often. Environmental advocacy groups have spent years trying to convince people to leave their cars at home when getting around the city. If we are to kick our reliance on fossil fuels, and rescue our roads from gridlock, leaving our vehicles in the garage will play a big part. Close to a million Tesla electric vehicles may have been sold last year, but it will be at least a decade before the new technology dominates the car market.

The state government has made a start at luring people back to public transport. Fares were frozen last year and increases this year were below inflation – they rose 2.3 per cent for the city and 1.1 per cent in the regions. The government also temporarily reduced off-peak fares to minimise crowding earlier in the pandemic.

The Victorian Greens want to go further. They are calling for public transport to be made free for an initial one-month period and for that to be regularly reviewed depending on prices at the bowser. While free anything usually attracts a crowd, some question whether offering public transport at no cost is worthwhile. Public Transport Users Association spokesman Daniel Bowen said the people most affected by high petrol prices lived in suburbs with poor public transport services and would not be helped by the Greens proposal.

So if not free, then what? Dr Jonathan Spear, chief executive of independent advisers Infrastructure Victoria, suggested this week that there was room to lower fares for some underused public transport services. With people tending to avoid the office on Mondays and Fridays, maybe there is room for discounts on particular days.

Appealing to the hip pocket, however, is not a panacea. After being encouraged for so long to keep a safe distance from each other, for some the thought of getting on a crowded train is anathema. Bringing patronage up again will take time, but it could be fast-tracked by a concerted campaign by the state government and public transport operators to encourage people to leave the car keys at home. It would be a win for the environment, a way of relieving our congested roads and, quite possibly, a chance to save a few dollars.

The Age

Analyse an editorial

1 In your own words, write the main contention of the editorial above.

2 Is the main contention stated clearly in the editorial, or is it implied? Explain your answer.

3 Identify three examples of persuasive language in the editorial, and explain their likely effects on the reader.

4 Identify the main tone of the editorial. Provide two or three examples of the writer's word choices that help to create this tone. How does the tone support the writer's argument?

5 How does the photograph support or complement the written text of the editorial?

6 Find an editorial on a topic that interests you and bring it to class. In small groups, exchange the editorials so that no one has the editorial they brought in. Identify the main contention and the main tone of the editorial you receive, then choose three examples of persuasive techniques or language and explain why you feel they are effective. Next, swap editorials and repeat the exercise, until you have looked at all the editorials in the group. Compare your answers with those of your classmates.

7 Select one of the editorials you analysed in question 6. Write five sentences on how the main contention, tone and persuasive techniques work together to persuade the reader.

Opinion pieces and blog posts

An opinion piece usually gives one person's point of view on an issue, although some opinion pieces are co-authored. They are often written by experts in a particular area, or by someone with standing in the community (e.g. a politician); they might also be written by a journalist or freelance writer.

In a print newspaper, opinion pieces, letters to the editor and the editorial are usually placed on the same page or spread. In an online newspaper these persuasive texts, along with blog posts and online comments, are found on the opinion pages of the website.

Opinion pieces and blog posts are also published online by media organisations such as the ABC and Nine Entertainment, and on a wide range of websites. (For more on blogs, see pages 114–15.)

Features and conventions of opinion pieces and blog posts

» Present a clear point of view on an issue
» Aim to persuade the audience to agree
» Use a range of persuasive language and strategies
» Can use fairly formal language in opinion pieces, although blog posts tend to be more informal
» Often use personal pronouns such as 'I', 'you' and 'our'
» Can use specialised language, especially when the writer is an expert in a relevant field

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Opinion: Inflexible school hours are haunting busy parents

NSW is open to changing school hours to better suit the needs of students and working parents, so why isn't Victoria following suit?

Susie O'Brien

NSW is looking at changing the hours schools operate in a bid to better cater for working parents.

Why isn't Victoria following suit given that this was first on the agenda nearly a decade ago?

Rigid school hours, often from 8.30am to 3.30pm, have been a curse for many parents for decades.

It means that in the morning, we're trying to get kids to school at the same time as we need to get to work.

And in the afternoon, many of us are forced to stop working at 3pm to pick up kids.

With the return of many white-collar workers to offices across the state this week, the inflexibility of school hours is once again haunting busy parents.

A uniform starting time for most schools across the state also means hundreds of thousands of parents are clogging our roads at the same time.

NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet recently opened the issue up for debate. He challenged policy makers, parents and schools to "think outside the box" and bring "revolutionary ideas" to the state.

Schools should be given the ability to set the hours that suit their communities and students.

Last year my son's primary school staggered the start and finish time by 15 minutes depending on students' last names. It made for a much more streamlined drop-off and pick-up process and much less congestion around school streets.

As the Herald Sun reported in 2020, school traffic makes trips on some major roads ten times longer.

Current Victorian Department of Education rules give schools very limited options in setting school times within a narrow window each morning and afternoon.

There is little flexibility, little freedom and few options for schools to cater for the particular needs of their community.

This needs to change. Schools across the state cater for diverse populations and backgrounds. It's time to take this into account, and not just force everyone to be the same.

At the very least, it would be a good idea to allow high schools to start later – perhaps 10am – in order to better cater for the sleep needs of teenagers? This would also mean less congestion on roads and public transport.

Back in 2014 Liberal Education Minister Martin Dixon backed more flexible starting times for government students if schools wanted it. Some schools were pushing for a 9.30am start while others wanted to have three schedules to cover a 10am to 5.15pm school day.

If it's supported by teachers and parents, why not? It could be the best thing to happen to schools and parents in a decade or more.

Surely it's better to be revolutionary, than stuck in a rut.

Herald Sun

Analyse an opinion piece

1 In your own words, write the main contention of the opinion piece on the previous two pages.

2 Describe the main tone used by the writer. List three words or phrases from the opinion piece that help to generate this tone.

3 Is the same tone used throughout the piece, or does the tone vary? Discuss the effect of the use of tone, and support your discussion with short quotations from the text.

4 Who do you think the main audience for this article might be?

5 What do you think the writer's main purpose was in writing this opinion piece?

6 Identify three reasons used by the writer to support her argument.

7 Underline or circle three examples of particularly persuasive language. What response is each example intended to elicit from the reader?

Letters to the editor and online comments

Letters to the editor and online comments provide a voice for the general public, and create a public forum for an issue to be discussed and debated. They also enable people with expert knowledge or personal experience to contribute to a debate. Letters and comments often respond to other letters or comments, as well as to the original article, either agreeing or disagreeing with the previous writer.

In a letter to the editor, the writer's name and suburb are usually printed at the end of the letter (although they can be withheld at the writer's request if the subject matter of the letter is very personal). This, along with the fact that the letters published in a newspaper or magazine are selected by an editor, means that the opinions presented are usually based on facts and reason, and are expressed respectfully.

The language used in the following letter to the editor reflects the writer's professional status and personal experience of the issue.

Features and conventions of letters to the editor and online comments

» Present a clear point of view on an issue
» Aim to persuade the audience to agree
» Are usually short and to the point
» Can use formal language in a letter, but online comments mostly use more informal language (e.g. abbreviations)
» Often use personal pronouns such as 'I', 'we' and 'our'
» Often convey strong emotions

Rural Doctors Shortage

The article highlighting the failure of the Tasmanian Department of Health to support the Scottsdale GP teaching practice was timely (*The Examiner*, April 10). Rural communities often find themselves with insufficient or even no GPs and have to rely heavily on emergency services or travel long distances to access GP care. The shortage of rural GPs is predicted to worsen over the next few years as general practice in Australia has been put on its knees by Labor and [the] Coalition's incomprehensible and totally unjustified five-year Medicare freeze.

New medical graduates are turning their back on general practice and choosing specialities with a more secure financial future.

Although state governments need to work with general practice to reduce emergency care demand, it is the federal government that is responsible for funding general practice, and so far neither party has shown even remote interest in trying to rebuild general practice and make it attractive to Australian medical graduates.

Dr Donald Rose
Summerdale Medical Practice

The Examiner

In contrast, online comments might not be moderated (supervised and controlled) and the writers' anonymity can mean that opinions are expressed in a blunt and forthright manner. The fact that they follow the article or comment they are responding to means that they don't need to repeat background information and the writer can simply state their opinions and observations.

The following three online comments are responding to Susie O'Brien's opinion piece 'Inflexible school hours are haunting busy parents', which advocates a more flexible approach to school hours and possibly later start and finish times for secondary schools. You can read the opinion piece on pages 170–1.

COMMENTS

Suzanna

Kids have more energy in the mornings, so early starts work much better for their concentration. Secondly, 3.30pm finishes also mean they get to enjoy some outside time or sports practice after school before dinner and homework. It doesn't make sense to run the school day until 5pm or 6pm to suit us parents, and would just mean they get super tired due to such a long day. What we really need is the continued flexibility with our employers and we seemed to have got that with COVID. Let's harness the COVID flexibility to ensure that mothers and fathers can raise their children and still work. It isn't all about us adults, but about the kids.

Phascogale

Hmmmmmmm. Where I live there is a grand total of one school bus my kids can take to school. If you miss it, there isn't another one and clearly school isn't within walking distance. It caters to both primary and secondary. They also cover multiple schools and not just one per bus.

There is minimal public transport. Buses are 2–3 hours apart – they run maybe three times a day. None of those times line up with any sort of school start. Plus it would mean another bus to try and connect with.

Somehow I don't think staggered school times are going to work very well for regional/rural areas.

GLENN

5 am is much better to start school. Then I can drop the kids off before work.

What a stupid idea to start school at 10. A school run could start at 8 and not be finished until after 1030.

Herald Sun

Analyse a letter to the editor and online comments

ACTIVITY

1 What are the main contentions of the letter to the editor and the three online comments? (Note that in the comments, the main contention is not necessarily stated explicitly.)

2 Identify one reason offered by each writer for their point of view, and one example of persuasive language in each piece. Explain how each example of persuasive language is working to position the reader and influence their response to the writer's argument.

3 How do argument and language work together in the letter to the editor to persuade the reader to agree with the writer?

4 What is the main tone of each of the three online comments? How is each writer's use of tone related to their purpose?

5 Write your own online comment in response to Susie O'Brien's opinion piece (pages 170–1). Before you begin, decide on your main contention and one or two supporting reasons. Note down the main tone you will use and at least three words or phrases you will use to achieve your intended effect.

6 **GROUP** Exchange comments with a partner. Can your partner identify your contention and main supporting reasons, as well as the main tone you wanted to create? If not, make changes to your online comment. Write three sentences on the overall effect your partner's comment had on you, the reader.

VISUAL PERSUASIVE TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

> Cartoons
> Photographs
> Graphs, infographics and tables

Visual persuasive texts use images (and sometimes words) to comment on issues and events. Although they often accompany written persuasive texts, they can also function independently to provide information and suggest a point of view. Compared to written text, images often have a more immediate emotional impact on viewers, who are also invited to interpret what they see, based on their own knowledge and experience. Images such as photographs and graphs can appear to represent an objective 'reality', but they are often created in a way that conveys a perspective or angle on the subject matter.

This chapter describes the main types of visual texts that can be used to present a point of view, and explains some of the main effects of visual language that can be used to position and persuade a viewer.

Cartoons

Cartoons use images with few words (or no words) to take a humorous approach to a serious issue. In newspapers they usually offer an opinion on an issue in the news, often depicting well-known figures as caricatures (people drawn with highly exaggerated features). A cartoon can appear straightforward, but the drawing usually includes very complex details and sometimes subtle messages.

Features and conventions of cartoons

» Present a critical but humorous perspective on an issue
» Often use exaggeration
» Can include speech balloons, thought bubbles, captions and other written text
» Often use irony and/or sarcasm

When analysing cartoons, consider the impact of the following elements:

- text in speech balloons and thought bubbles

- captions or other written text

- the use of colour to capture emotion or to convey a symbolic meaning (e.g. green = nature)

- objects with symbolic meanings

- stereotypes, caricatures and clichés

- the use of shading in black-and-white cartoons

- facial expressions

- background details that help to present the setting or context for the issue.

Study this cartoon by Peter Broelman then answer the questions in the activity.

Analyse a cartoon

1 What is the issue on which the cartoonist is presenting a point of view?

2 Describe the main message or contention being presented by the cartoon.

3 Describe how the text in the speech balloons contrasts with the text on the signs to create irony. How does this position the audience to view the issue?

4 Look closely at the positioning and body language of the people in the cartoon. How do they contribute to the cartoonist's message?

5 Write a short paragraph analysing how visuals and text work together to comment on the issue.

Photographs

Photographs have an immediate impact. They can convey information, tell a story and evoke an emotional response from the viewer without any written text being present. They can also draw attention to an article and suggest a perspective on the story or issue.

When analysing a photograph, consider the impact of the following:

- composition – the arrangement of elements within the frame

- how close or far away the subject appears to be

- the camera angle – for example, the camera might look up at the subject to suggest their power or status, down on the subject to suggest their vulnerability, or straight on at the subject to suggest equality

- areas of light and shadow that direct the viewer's attention to a particular part of the image and/or create a mood

- the use of focus to draw the viewer's attention to certain parts of the subject – for instance, by blurring the background setting or, alternatively, presenting it in sharp focus to suggest its importance

- the use of framing to include certain objects and exclude others

- how much or little of the background is shown

- colours in the image, including the associations these colours have, and whether the colours are natural or have been enhanced

- any digital manipulation (editing) of the image to disguise or emphasise certain features of a person or their environment

- the use of a caption to influence the viewer's response to the photograph and the related issue.

The photograph on the next page was taken at a Black Lives Matter protest in Melbourne on 6 June 2020, during one of the city's lockdowns in response to COVID-19. Examine the photograph then answer the questions in the activity. Scan the code or click here for additional contextual information about the event.

Features and conventions of photographs

» Present a subject in a certain way, using a range of visual features such as colour, focus, framing, lighting, angle and distance

» Can have a caption that adds information or reinforces a perspective on the subject

» Can be digitally manipulated

» Often accompany a written article

Photo © Adam Calaitzis / Dreamstime.com

Analyse a photograph

1 Who or what is the main subject of the photograph?

2 What emotions does the photograph elicit from the viewer? Are they positive or negative, or does it depend on how the photograph is interpreted?

3 What point of view or message does the photograph present? Support your answer with close reference to features of the photograph such as composition, written text, colour, light, focus, camera distance and framing.

4 Write your own captions for this photograph, including one that would encourage viewers to regard the subject sympathetically, and one that is more negative in tone.

5 Scan the QR code or click on the link on the previous page to read about the context for the photograph. Before you had this additional information about context, what was your initial reaction to the photograph? Did your reaction change when you had a better understanding of its context? Explain how knowledge about the context of the photograph might change a viewer's response to it.

Graphs, infographics and tables

Multimodal images such as graphs, infographics and tables combine visual and written language. They are effective ways of presenting information – especially numbers and statistics – clearly and concisely. They make it easier for the viewer to recognise patterns and trends, which are generally discussed in more detail in an accompanying article.

Graphs, infographics and tables are based on data, so give the impression that the conclusions they lead viewers to are factual and objective. Nevertheless, there are various ways in which they can present a particular interpretation of data to support an argument. The scale and/or range of the axes of graphs can be selected to emphasise a particular trend; colours can add an emotive element. Tables present data in a less obviously manipulated way. However, the way in which data is sorted into categories in order to be turned into a table (or a graph) can introduce subtle distortions and biases. Remember, all data presented in media texts is selected and organised to support a particular viewpoint.

An infographic combines visual elements such as illustrations or photographs with text and numbers, and a graph can be overlaid on an image. This means they can have a strong emotional impact that comes from the associated images, which influences the viewer's response to the actual data and the argument being presented.

The infographic on the next page appears on the Food Policy page of the City of Melbourne website. It presents a snapshot of Melbourne's food story, drawn from existing statistics and community consultation data, showing what food means to people in Melbourne. The website states that this information has informed the development of the city's food policy.

Features and conventions of graphs, infographics and tables

» Present information (especially numerical data) visually

» Can create striking effects through design elements such as colours and fonts

» Often combine visual language, words and numbers

» Can present a point of view on the data being presented, especially when supplementing a written text

Analyse an infographic

ACTIVITY

1 What is the primary purpose of the infographic on the next page?

2 How does the structure of the infographic (the way it is divided into sections and the order of those sections) help to achieve this purpose?

3 What effect do the visuals have on the viewer? Do they add to or distract from the statistics being presented? Do they present those statistics in positive, neutral or negative terms? Think about elements such as illustrations, colours and fonts.

4 What message is conveyed by the pie chart? How does it contribute to the overall message of the infographic?

5 Write a paragraph explaining how written and visual language and the layout of the infographic work together to present a point of view on Melbourne's food scene.

WHAT DOES FOOD MEAN TO YOU?

WE ASKED THE COMMUNITY:

1 'WHAT DOES FOOD MEAN TO YOU?' – THE FOUR MOST FREQUENT RESPONSES WERE:
- **23%** Enjoyment, tastes great and is an indulgence
- **22%** Means of survival
- **21%** Is healthy and nutritious
- **12%** Socialising, sharing, connecting with others

2 'WHAT IMPORTANT FOOD ISSUES WILL WE FACE IN THE FUTURE?' – THE TOP RESPONSES WERE:
- **21%** Food insecurity / not enough food
- **16%** Poor quality food
- **13%** Unsustainable food production practices
- **11%** Poor health related to low quality convenience foods

STRENGTHS ➡

MELBOURNE IS WORLD RENOWNED FOR THE QUALITY OF ITS FOOD AND ITS LIVEABILITY AND WE WANT TO STAY THAT WAY.

AUSTRALIA'S 'FOOD CAPITAL' – EATING OUT IN MELBOURNE IS THE TOP THING TO DO FOR BOTH INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC TOURISTS

THE FOOD SECTOR IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO MELBOURNE'S ECONOMY – IN 2009-10 THE FOOD SERVICES INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTED OVER **$700 MILLION** TO THE ECONOMY AND EMPLOYED **30,000 STAFF**

CHALLENGES ➡

OUR FOOD SYSTEM IS FACING SERIOUS CHALLENGES, AND THE WAY THAT WE RESPOND WILL SHAPE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CITY OF MELBOURNE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME.

5% of the adult population do not have enough food

94.5% of the adult population do not eat enough vegetables

46% of the adult population do not eat enough fruit

40% OF HOUSEHOLD RUBBISH IS **FOOD WASTE**

FAST FOOD MORE AVAILABLE CONVENIENT AND AFFORDABLE THAN HEALTHY FOOD

FAST FOOD SECTOR IN **MELBOURNE** CBD HAS GROWN BY **OVER 50%** IN THE PAST TEN YEARS

1 IN 3 CITY USERS CONSUME FAST FOOD WHEN THEY ARE IN THE CITY
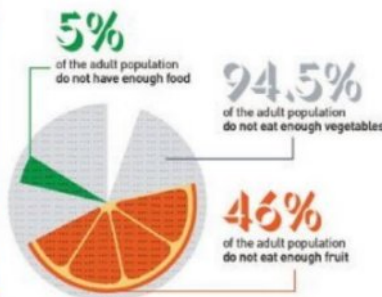
FOOD POLICY ➡

THE CITY OF MELBOURNE IS COMMITED TO A FOOD SYSTEM THAT IS SECURE, HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE, THRIVING AND SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE.

POLICY THEMES

A STRONG, FOOD SECURE COMMUNITY
HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES FOR ALL
A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM
A THRIVING LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY
A CITY THAT CELEBRATES FOOD

OUR ROLE

While the City of Melbourne can't bring about this change alone, there are areas where we can make a contribution.

We see our role as:
» Education and community development
» Leadership and advocacy
» Building and strengthening partnerships
» Regulation and infrastructure management
» Research

FIND OUT MORE BY VISITING
MELBOURNE.VIC.GOV.AU/FOODPOLICY

CITY OF MELBOURNE

AUDIO AND AUDIOVISUAL TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

> Television news and current affairs
> Radio programs
> Podcasts
> Websites
> Speeches

This chapter looks at a variety of persuasive audio and audiovisual texts, which have become more common as the mainstream media has increasingly moved online over the last three decades.

In audio texts such as talkback radio programs, speeches and podcasts, the spoken word comes to the fore. Spoken texts can be particularly persuasive because the speaker can use all the qualities of their voice, such as volume, pitch, tone and pace, to reinforce their meaning and enhance the impact of their language. Other sounds, such as music and sound effects, are similarly crucial to the ways in which listeners are positioned to respond.

Persuasive audiovisual texts include television news and current affairs programs as well as video segments that appear in these programs, are embedded in online articles or are hosted on video-sharing platforms such as YouTube. They combine audio elements with still and moving images. Visual elements such as 'talking heads' and live or archival video footage help to present a point of view on an issue using spoken, written and visual language, while a host or panel can further influence the audience's thoughts and feelings on an issue.

Television news and current affairs

Television news and current affairs programs usually consist of a newsreader, program presenter or panel in the studio combined with compelling live and recorded video content to present information and points of view on current events and issues. These elements help to position an audience and present an angle on a particular story.

While segments on current affairs programs usually present a clear point of view on an issue, news segments generally aim to be more impartial. Nevertheless, a news story often suggests a particular response as being 'normal' and shapes the audience's reactions.

As in written media texts, language choices are central to the presentation of a point of view in audiovisual texts. The following are some additional important elements of visual and aural language to consider when analysing a news or current affairs program.

- **The set:** The newsreader, program presenter or panel usually sit behind or stand beside a desk. What does this arrangement suggest about the role of these people?

- **The backdrop:** This is placed behind the newsreader or presenter to provide a visual context. What colours or images are used, and what mood do they create? Does the backdrop (which might change in the course of the program) add to the presentation of a story in any way?

- **Light, colour and sound:** Is the lighting dim or bright, and what mood does this create? Is the set colourful and busy to suggest a lively, dynamic environment, or does it use a limited colour palette to convey a sense of calm focus? What does the signature music suggest about the program's approach?

- **Newsreaders, presenters and guests:** What is their manner, and what does this convey to the viewer about their attitude towards the subject? Their clothes, make-up, age, voice and body language all contribute to the message being presented.

Video segments in news and current affairs programs are integral to storytelling and to the presentation of a point of view. Live or recorded footage can make it seem as though the viewer is witnessing events as they happen. In fact, both the footage and the stories are carefully selected and edited. This is especially true of packaged stories, like those seen on programs such as *The Project* or *A Current Affair*, which blend together commentary, testimonials and footage.

The following are some of the important elements to look for when analysing a video segment of a news or current affairs program.

- **'Talking heads' and eyewitness accounts:** The experts, spokespeople and eyewitnesses who are interviewed by journalists are selected to give the story credibility and authenticity. Whose viewpoints are sought, and how much time is given to alternative perspectives? Do the journalist's questions suggest a particular line of argument? Is an expert opinion included? Why, or why not?

- **Location footage:** Images of the location of an event give the story a strong sense of immediacy and truthfulness. If the reporter is shown to be present at the scene, the story's credibility is enhanced, especially if it is supported by eyewitness accounts. If the reporter's commentary accompanies this footage, it is likely to strongly influence the audience's response to and interpretation of the images.

- **Editing:** Various elements of a video segment are deliberately selected, combined and sequenced to present information and perspectives in particular ways. How does the segment begin and end? What is the balance between the reporter, experts and eyewitnesses or others who are affected by the issue? Have any important perspectives or facts been omitted?

- **Sound:** This includes aspects of the speakers' voices (especially tone, as it conveys emotions and attitudes), as well as sound effects and music. Are there sound effects that create a stronger sense of realism or enhance an emotional aspect of the story? If music is used, why do you think that particular piece of music was chosen?

Property Purgatory

Scan the code or click here to view a segment about home ownership and rental prices on *The Project*. The segment includes a testimonial from a young worker named Claire Wastell and an interview between the panel and Eliza Owen from CoreLogic Australia, the leading provider of property data and analytics in Australia and New Zealand. After viewing the text, answer the questions in the activity.

Analyse a current affairs program

ACTIVITY

1 What is the main issue being considered by the segment? Do you think enough background information is provided to give viewers a clear understanding of the issue?

2 What is the main contention of the segment? Is it explicitly stated by one of the presenters or guests, or is it implied?

3 What mood is evoked in the video? How is it evoked and how does it work to support the main contention?

4 Copy the table below and complete the right-hand column by commenting on the effect of the audio and visual elements on the audience.

Element	Effect on the audience
Set	
Backdrops	
Light, colour and sound	
Presenters and guests	
Expert opinion	
Editing	

5 Write a detailed paragraph outlining the purpose of the video and explaining how the audio and visual elements are used to achieve this purpose.

Radio programs

Like television, radio productions also involve the careful selection and editing of stories. One exception is radio talkback programs, which are live to air and feature unprepared and unscripted conversations between radio presenters and the listeners who call in to express their views. Many radio presenters – particularly talkback hosts – also openly express their own opinions on the issues being discussed.

Consider the following questions when listening to a radio program. (Obtaining a transcript can help you to better understand the audio content.)

- Whose viewpoint is being presented? Are any significant voices missing from the story? (For example, a program on increasing the pension age might feature interviews with experts such as economists, and with people already on the pension, but not with people under the pension age who will eventually be affected by any change to the law.)

- Does the presenter convey or openly express a point of view on the issue or story? If so, how? What effect does this have on the listener?

- Is the presenter open to hearing alternative points of view (e.g. from callers on a talkback program)? Or does the presenter seek to impose their own view on others in the discussion? (Be aware that presenters sometimes 'play devil's advocate', taking the opposite view to their caller or guest to challenge and test their argument. In doing this, the presenter is not necessarily expressing their own personal view on the issue or trying to shut down the discussion.)

- What persuasive techniques are used in the presentation of a story or discussion of an issue? Do any speakers use techniques such as analogies, anecdotes, repetition, rhetorical questions or emotive language? Are there any attacks on individuals or groups? Are there interviews with experts or people affected by the issue?

- What sounds (other than speech) can be heard? Are there any sound effects (e.g. a news report including background sounds from a reporter's location)? Is music used to create a particular mood?

When you are listening to an audio text it is important to realise that some meanings are conveyed by **paralinguistic** elements. These are non-verbal elements that can convey attitudes and emotions and have a range of other effects, as summarised in the table below.

Paralinguistic element	Persuasive effect
Intonation – the variation in pitch (the note of the voice) as someone talks	Speakers vary their pitch depending on the response they seek to elicit from their audience. For example, a higher pitch can be used to add additional emphasis to a rhetorical question, while a lower pitch can be used to underscore that a particular argument is serious and should be carefully considered by the audience.
Pace – the speed at which a person speaks	Speakers will often vary their pace throughout a discussion to emphasise certain points. For example, a speaker might slow their pace to highlight a key word or concept, or they might increase their pace to create a sense of urgency or alarm.

Pauses – breaks in the flow of the speech or conversation	Intentional breaks are often used immediately after a speaker states an important point, giving the listener time to consider what has been said. If used sparingly and at appropriate moments, pauses can help listeners to recall particular arguments after the conclusion of a speech.
Rhythm – a strong, regular, repeated pattern of sounds	Created through a regular pattern of stresses, a steady rhythm in speech can convey confidence and certainty, encouraging listeners to view the speaker's argument as strong and well-founded. Additionally, a steady rhythm can help the listener to follow the speaker's ideas more easily.
Stress or emphasis – how forcefully or loudly certain words, or parts of words, are said	Stress can be used to emphasise important words and give extra weight to repeated words. This encourages listeners to give more attention to these terms and reflect on why they are so important to the speaker's argument.
Tone – the mood or feeling created by word choices, delivery and other persuasive techniques	Tone helps to convey the writer's attitude towards the topic, and can evoke a specific emotional response from the listener. For example, an urgent tone might position listeners to be fearful and want immediate action on the issue.
Volume – how loudly a person speaks	Speakers often increase the volume of their voice to emphasise an important point, making the audience regard this particular point as worthy of consideration. Contrastingly, a speaker might speak quietly to encourage the audience to listen more closely, or in conjunction with a calm, reassuring tone.

Analyse radio news and talkback programs

ACTIVITY

1 Listen to the news on a commercial radio station (such as Nova 100 or Triple M Melbourne), and then listen to the news presented on a non-commercial radio station (such as ABC Radio National or triple j). What differences do you notice between the presenters, the stories and the opinions conveyed? Make notes on elements such as tone, pace, intonation and word choices as well as on the content of the stories.

2 Listen to a talkback host (such as Neil Mitchell on 3AW or Virginia Trioli on ABC Radio Melbourne) and make notes on the way in which they present issues and explore them with callers. Do they make their own opinion clear to the audience? Do any elements of their dialogue suggest that they are trying to persuade the audience to respond in a certain way?

3 Listen to a radio program (such as a talkback or current affairs program) and explain how two of the paralinguistic elements listed in the table above help to present the speakers' points of view.

Podcasts

Although they are a relatively new form of audio content, podcasts have grown rapidly in popularity over the last decade; there are now podcasts on almost every subject imaginable, and many of them are persuasive in nature.

When analysing podcasts that present a point of view on an issue, consider the following key elements.

- **Speakers:** Is there only one speaker, such as the regular presenter, or are there also guests, such as experts, eyewitnesses or concerned parties? If there are guests, how do the various speakers interact with one another – are they friendly or adversarial?

- **Speech:** What tone of voice do the speakers use? Does the tone shift at any point and, if so, why? Consider pacing and volume – do these shift at key moments? For example, does the speech become louder and faster to evoke excitement, or softer and slower to create a sense of anticipation?

- **Music:** What is the atmosphere created by the choice of music? If there are lyrics, do they communicate a particular message? Does the music complement or contrast with the spoken content of the podcast?

- **Sound effects:** Are sound effects used to create a mood, convey a sense of realism or evoke a particular emotion in the listener? Are they used as a backdrop to the spoken content, or do they function on their own to tell a story?

- **Continuity:** Does the episode stand alone or does it need to be considered in relation to the rest of the series?

Scan the code or click here to listen to an episode from the sixth season of the ABC's podcast series *Australia, If You're Listening*. Listen to the first ten minutes or, if you have time, listen to the episode in full, then answer the questions in the activity.

Analyse a podcast

ACTIVITY

1 What is the main message or point of view conveyed by this podcast?

2 Identify two main ways in which the presenter aims to persuade the listener to agree with this message or point of view.

3 Select three speakers. For each speaker, describe the main tone of their voice and explain how this helps to convey their opinion or attitude.

4 Find examples in the podcast of two of the paralinguistic elements in the table on pages 184–5 and explain how they help to present a speaker's point of view.

5 Write a short paragraph analysing how the various elements of this podcast are used to persuade listeners to agree with the point of view on climate change being presented. Consider the language used by the speakers, how they speak and the way in which their voices combine to produce an overall effect.

Websites

Audio and audiovisual elements are often embedded in web pages, helping to increase both user engagement and the persuasive impact of the website. They often work as an addition to, or in conjunction with, written text. Commonly, creators will upload standalone videos to video-sharing platforms such as YouTube.

Scan the code or click here to view a video from Cancer Council Australia, which appears on the organisation's official YouTube channel.

Some elements of this audiovisual text that an analysis could focus on are discussed below.

- **The speakers:** There are only two speakers in this short video, each of whom has been carefully selected to support its purpose. As an Associate Professor at the University of Sydney specialising in tobacco control policies, Becky Freeman lends credibility to the discussion of e-cigarette use. Tom Reynolds, as a father of three, plays a more emotional role, with footage of him also showing his children. This serves to highlight who could be harmed if the rate of e-cigarette use among young people continues to rise.

- **Clothes and settings:** Becky Freeman is wearing formal clothing and appears against the backdrop of a university, highlighting the professional stature of the institutions she is aligned with (the University of Sydney and the Cancer Council) as well as the importance of the issue. Tom Reynolds, on the other hand, is dressed more casually and is shown in a home setting, reinforcing his role as an everyman who viewers can relate to.

- **The written text:** Given the limited amount of written text in most videos, any text a video creator chooses to include will carry additional weight. In this video, the only statistic given is provided in written form, highlighting the seriousness of the issue and presenting the connection between e-cigarette use and smoking for young people as a well-established fact.

- **A call to action:** The video ends with Tom asking viewers to join the pledge and help to reach 'a cancer free future'. His tone is sincere and hopeful, as he looks directly at the camera and addresses the viewer.

- **A website address:** Appearing at the conclusion of the video, the URL for the Cancer Council website prompts the viewer to follow Tom's advice and take the #cancerfreepledge.

ACTIVITY

Analyse a video from a website

Select a persuasive video from a website or use the Cancer Council video discussed above, and answer the following questions.

1 What is the main message or point of view conveyed by the video?

2 If the video is embedded in a web page with additional written and visual content, how does the video support or add to the other content on the web page?

3 Describe the tone that is used by the speakers and/or in any written text in the video.

4 Identify three elements of the video (e.g. written text, colours, music, speakers, settings) and explain how they position the viewer to support or agree with the point of view being presented.

Speeches

Speakers can use a range of techniques to convince an audience to agree with their point of view. The following are three of the main aural and visual elements that a speaker might use to enhance their presentation of an argument.

- **Voice:** Speakers can use volume, pace, tone, pitch and intonation to convey emotions and attitudes. For example, they may talk loudly and emphatically to attack an idea or point of view, or they may speak in a calm tone to suggest that they are arguing logically and rationally.

- **Body language and facial expressions:** A thump on the lectern can communicate conviction or anger, and two raised hands can communicate pride or victory. Facial expressions convey attitudes and emotions; looking directly at the audience strengthens the connection between speaker and audience.

- **Appearance:** Clothes, hairstyles and personal props can all have an impact on the audience and help to generate an impression of the speaker and their beliefs. For example, wearing a suit conveys seriousness and authority, while casual clothes might reflect the speaker's opposition to authority or establishment figures. Logos and slogans on a speaker's clothing, as well as the colour of their clothes, can convey ideas, beliefs and attitudes.

Speakers also tend to use certain persuasive language devices to position their audience and to present their arguments in ways that are easy for listeners to follow and remember. Common examples include:

- humour and anecdote
- inclusive language
- repetition
- rhetorical questions.

For more on persuasive techniques and strategies, see Chapter 16.

Greta Thunberg speaking at the Youth4Climate conference in Milan, Italy in September 2021. Independent Photo Agency Srl / Alamy Stock Photo

The following transcript is of part of a speech by Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg given at a Youth4Climate conference in Milan. Scan the code or click here to view the complete speech, then read the excerpt and the annotations highlighting persuasive elements of the words and the manner in which they are delivered.

[...]

Net zero by 2050 ... blah, blah, blah

Net zero ... blah, blah, blah

Climate neutral ... blah, blah, blah

[pause]

This is all we hear from our so-called leaders ... words ... words that sound great, but so far have led to no action. Our hopes and dreams drown in their empty words and promises. Of course we need constructive dialogue, but they've now had thirty years of blah, blah, blah and where has that led us?

[....]

> The repetition of this mocking phrase after quoting politicians' common promises highlights how empty such promises have been.

> A pause is used to emphasise the previous statements, allowing the audience to consider their significance.

> These words are delivered in a gloomy tone, emphasising the emotional weight of the issue.

> The tone shifts to anger and incredulity at the uselessness of governments in addressing climate change.

But, of course, we can still turn this around. It is entirely possible. It will take drastic annual emission cuts unlike anything the world has ever seen. And as we don't have the technological solutions that alone can deliver anything close to that, that means we will have to change.

We can no longer let the people in power decide what is politically possible or not.

We can no longer let the people in power decide what hope is.

Hope is not passive. Hope is not blah, blah, blah. Hope is telling the truth. Hope is taking action. And hope always comes from the people.

> Hopeful language delivered in an optimistic and proactive tone conveys Thunberg's unwavering belief in positive change.

> The gesture of finger-pointing is used in rhythm with the words, underlining the gravity of the task facing the audience.

> These words link back to earlier in the speech, but Thunberg now contrasts the negativity of empty promises with hope, using the rule of three for the positive message about hope.

Analyse a speech

ACTIVITY

Select a video of a speech that you find both interesting and persuasive, and answer the following questions.

1 What does the speaker's presentation convey to the audience about the purpose and message of the speech? Consider the speaker's appearance, dress, voice and body language.

2 Who is the main audience for the speech? Which elements of the speech suggest that this is the main audience? Can you identify any other possible audiences?

3 What is the setting for the speech? What impact might this setting have had on the way the speech was delivered? How might it have influenced the audience's response to the speech?

4 What is the main tone of the speech? Does the tone change at any point? If so, what do you think the intended effect on the audience might be?

5 Which persuasive devices can you identify in the language used by the speaker? What is the intended effect of each on the audience?

6 Comment on the likely overall effect of the speech on the audience. Consider the way in which visual and aural information, and a variety of persuasive techniques, operate together to influence the audience's thoughts and feelings on the issue.

PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

IN THIS CHAPTER

▸ How arguments are constructed

▸ Summary table of persuasive techniques

▸ Analysing the cumulative effects of argument and language

An argument is a clear contention justified by supporting reasons and evidence. Constructing a strong argument involves making careful choices about the order in which reasons and evidence are presented, as well as about the best use of language and persuasive techniques to convince the audience to agree.

This chapter outlines a number of key persuasive language techniques and explains, with specific examples, their likely effects on the audience. It is important to remember, however, that persuasive techniques don't operate in isolation, but work together with the tone and style of the language, the selected reasons and evidence, and the structure of the text, to create an overall effect.

For this reason, although it is useful to practise identifying and writing about individual techniques to build your skills, ultimately you need to take a holistic approach. This means looking at the piece as a whole and considering the cumulative effects of argument and language.

How arguments are constructed

An argument is a clear opinion supported by reasons. A contention presented without a reason – for example, 'Melbourne should charge a congestion tax' – is not an argument; valid and logical reasons must be put forward to justify the statement.

Of course, writers will take different approaches to presenting and supporting their contentions, and some might present stronger arguments than others. When analysing a writer's argument, you need to pay attention to the way in which they structure their argument, their potential biases and the persuasive techniques they use to position the audience to agree with their point of view.

Main contention and supporting reasons

A good argument consists of:

- a main contention
- reasons that support and justify the main contention.

The main contention presents the writer's point of view on an issue. Consider the following example.

> The City of Melbourne urgently needs to impose a congestion tax on drivers, to improve traffic flow and enhance the liveability of our historic city centre. Our city's streets are gridlocked during business hours, wasting valuable time with a significant cost to the economy. In addition, having so many cars on the roads creates air and noise pollution, not to mention the contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. As overseas experience has shown in cities such as Singapore, London and Stockholm, a congestion tax works. The money raised could be spent on improving pedestrian and cycling routes around the city, making it a safer and vastly more enjoyable space for everyone. A congestion tax is an idea that has been tried and tested and, for Melbourne, its time has come.

> States the main contention at the start.

> Provides a first reason – cost in time and money.

> Gives a second reason – impact on the environment.

> Provides a third reason – it has worked overseas.

> Adds a fourth reason – benefits to pedestrians and cyclists.

> Reiterates the main contention.

Identifying the contention and supporting points is not always so clear-cut. In some texts the contention is implied (suggested rather than stated directly) by the writer's attitudes and opinions.

> How much longer are we going to put up with Melbourne's gridlocked streets? It's impossible to drive in or out of the city in a reasonable time. And it's equally as unpleasant for pedestrians – just try crossing the road or even having a conversation. Congestion taxes have been used overseas and are proven to work, so why not here?

This comment does not include a clearly stated contention. Rather, it consists of a list of statements and questions that, taken together, strongly imply the writer's viewpoint: that there should be a congestion tax in Melbourne.

Structuring strategies

Writers make careful decisions about how to arrange their arguments in order to create particular effects. Structuring strategies include:

- starting with the strongest supporting reasons and ending with the weakest
- starting with specific information or one particular case and ending with general information

- starting with personal experience and ending with universal examples

- beginning with rebuttal then presenting the preferred alternative

- ending with rebuttal to clinch the argument

- placing the main contention in a strategic position (at the start, in the middle or at the end)

- starting with the problem then moving towards the solution

- using subheadings to break up the text and signal the main points to the reader

- glossing over or downplaying information that undermines the writer's case.

To understand the intended effects of an argument's structure, look at where the main contention is placed and the order in which the main supporting reasons are presented. Consider the structure of the argument in this letter to the editor.

Time to get plugged in

With oil reserves diminishing and petrol prices rising rapidly, it's time to make electric vehicles (EVs) much more affordable and convenient. Sure, sales of EVs are increasing, but in Australia they still only amount to around 2% of new car sales. Compare that to around 13% in China and 17% in Europe. While countries such as Norway provide generous incentives to buy EVs, Victoria has introduced a law that imposes a tax on EV drivers. Once again, Australia is being left behind – a nation of fossils, hooked on fossil fuels.

The writer begins with a clearly stated contention expressed in an assertive but moderate tone. This creates the impression that the writer is clear-thinking and confident in their view. Following the contention with supporting reasons and evidence indicates that the argument is based on sound logic and an up-to-date knowledge of the issue.

Now consider the effect of rearranging the argument so that the contention is placed at the end of the letter.

Once again, Australia is being left behind – a nation of fossils, hooked on fossil fuels. While countries such as Norway provide generous incentives to buy electric vehicles, Victoria has introduced a law that imposes a tax on EV drivers. Sure, sales of EVs are increasing, but in Australia they still only amount to around 2% of new car sales. Compare that to around 13% in China and 17% in Europe. With oil reserves diminishing and petrol prices rising rapidly, it's time to make EVs much more affordable and convenient.

The argument has the same reasons and evidence, but by beginning with the statement about Australia being left behind, the letter becomes more of an attack on government policies, and has a more outraged tone than the previous letter. Placing the main contention at the end presents it as the solution to a problem, which can be an effective way of structuring an argument. However, readers who are attached to their petrol cars might reject the label 'fossils' in the opening sentence and not be receptive to the writer's reasons.

Analyse argument structure

Select a written persuasive text and answer the following questions to understand how it is structured and the effects of the writer's structural choices. You could use the opinion piece by Susie O'Brien on pages 170–1 or the one by Alan Duffy on pages 201–3, or choose a text on an issue you are studying.

1 Summarise the writer's contention in your own words.

2 Identify the supporting reasons and write them out in order of most important to least important.

3 Look closely at where the contention is stated or most clearly implied, and how the main reasons are ordered. Why might the writer have chosen to present the contention and supporting reasons in this order?

4 Identify one structural change you could make to the piece in order to create a different effect on the reader. Consider the paragraph order, main contention placement, and the sequencing of examples and evidence. Write a paragraph that describes your change and the specific effect you think it would have.

Summary table of persuasive techniques

Use the table in this section as a quick reference to build and consolidate your understanding of persuasive techniques and how they are used to persuade the reader, viewer or listener. (Note that, for simplicity, the term 'writer' is used to represent all kinds of text creators, speakers, presenters and so on.)

While the table is a useful summary, it can also be helpful to think of the various techniques as belonging to a few broad groups. One way to do this is to use the three traditional categories for discussing rhetoric, or the art of persuasion.

- **Logos** is the use of techniques that appeal to the audience's sense that logic and reason are reliable and truthful. It employs devices such as statistics, formal language and jargon.

- **Ethos** is the use of information and evidence that establishes credibility and character. Writers include features such as anecdotes, endorsements and references to their qualifications and/or professional status.

- **Pathos** is the use of appeals to the audience's emotions. Techniques such as hyperbole, emotive language and figurative language are used, along with the various 'appeals to …' in the table.

Persuasive technique	How it influences the audience	Example
Ad hominem attack An attack on a person rather than on their opinion or reasoning.	• Often uses emotive language to create a strong negative depiction of a person or group. • Undermines the opposition's credibility, positioning the audience to dismiss their ideas or viewpoint.	It has given people an insight into somebody who has hidden himself from public view for months. Now you understand why. He is clearly not up to the job and not prepared for the job. (Minister Peter Dutton on then Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese)
Alliteration The repetition of consonant or vowel sounds at the start of words.	• Gains the audience's attention by adding emphasis, especially in headlines. • Draws attention to the key words that can have a positive or negative impact.	Plodding beast blunders through Potter-verse (headline of a negative review of *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore*)
Analogy A comparison between two things that helps the audience to draw conclusions about their similarities.	• Explains a complex point in more familiar terms, usually with a clearly positive or negative slant. • Can help to make the contention look simple and obvious by linking it to something that the audience knows well or can grasp easily.	… in the curriculum … to make room for more problem-solving, they took out some of the core and key skills required to effectively carry out the process of problem-solving … It's a bit like giving someone some timber and rope and ask[ing] them to build a life raft, but you've never taught them how to tie a proper knot. (Professor Warnaar, University of Queensland)
Anecdote A story about someone or something that the writer has experienced or heard about.	• Lends weight/credibility to the writer's viewpoint, inclining the reader to trust the writer's opinion as being well informed. • Gives the issue a more human angle, making it seem more relevant or real.	Our public transport system needs fixing. Last Saturday I saw two buses go past without stopping because they were too full; later I caught a train but had to get a replacement bus for half the journey. We deserve better.
Appeal to being up-to-date Engages with people's desire to be part of the in-crowd and not be left behind.	• Encourages the audience to want to adopt new technologies and practices, or to reject existing ones. • Can make change seem less intimidating.	The Grand Prix in its current form is terribly last century. Wake me up when it is 100 per cent electric and half of the drivers are women. (David Myer, letter to the editor)

Persuasive technique	How it influences the audience	Example
Appeal to family values Draws on the assumption that families, especially traditional nuclear families, are inherently good.	• Invokes the audience's desire for emotional security and a protective, nurturing environment for children. • Can work implicitly when antisocial behaviour is blamed on dysfunctional families.	Our kids have never had so many options but they're missing out on precious family time – having dinner together, watching TV as a family, playing board games. These experiences are the foundation of wellbeing and belonging.
Appeal to fear and insecurity Arouses fear and anxiety by suggesting that harmful or unpleasant effects will follow.	• Plays on people's fears, eliciting a strong emotional reaction to the issue rather than a logical, reasoned response. • Inclines the audience to want to lessen the threat to themselves or society by taking the writer's advice.	Most countries are now experiencing unprecedented climatic conditions – wildfires, floods, collapsing coastlines, thawing permafrost. The scary thing is that this is only the beginning. We need urgent, drastic action to halt and reverse this mounting crisis.
Appeal to financial self-interest Suggests that people should pay the least amount possible, either individually or as a society, and that public funds should be used appropriately.	• Positive impact: the audience feels pleased about getting value for money. • Negative impact: the audience is annoyed about paying too much or about the misuse of money.	The Premier must stop spending taxpayer dollars to fund his own political advertising.
Appeal to justice and fairness Draws on the belief that everyone has the right to be treated equally and fairly.	• Encourages the audience to feel that action should be taken to avoid injustice. • Places any practice that treats people fairly in a positive light.	It is time to lift the JobSeeker rate. We simply can't have a section of our community living in poverty while others live in jaw-dropping luxury.
Appeal to loyalty and/or patriotism Suggests that audience members should be loyal to their group and/or love their country.	• Invokes feelings of pride, a shared identity and a common purpose. • Can be used to attack a practice or points of view as being inconsistent with the group's values.	I'd like to see an end to offshore detention centres – it would end the weight of shame and disgust that so many of us, as Australians, have carried on our shoulders.

Persuasive technique	How it influences the audience	Example
Appeal to tradition and custom Suggests that traditional customs are valuable and should be preserved.	• Inclines the audience to resist change and to favour past or existing traditions. • Comparisons with 'modern' lifestyles can make the audience feel that social cohesion is being lost.	Good Friday used to be primarily a day of quiet, if not spiritual, reflection. Now there are two AFL games on Good Friday. As wonderful as the games may be, couldn't we have kept a few days in the year free from sport, showbiz and commercialism?
Cliché A common and overused phrase quickly understood by a wide audience.	• Reassures the audience through familiarity. • Often has a comic effect, either reducing tension or producing a sarcastic, critical tone as part of an attack.	The government's answer to these issues is to bury its head in the sand.
Creating a dichotomy A description of an issue in terms of two opposing sides, one 'good' and the other 'bad'.	• Positions the audience to see the writer's viewpoint as obvious or self-evident. • Uses loaded language to characterise the two sides in strongly positive and negative terms.	We can choose to lock in emissions and deepen the energy crisis, or we can use this moment to take an earnest step towards a safer, cleaner future. (Christophe McGlade, International Energy Agency)
Emotive language Language that has a strong emotional impact, and uses the positive and negative connotations of words to influence the audience's response.	• Encourages the audience to respond on an emotional level. • The audience's emotional response positions them to share the writer's viewpoint.	The iconic koala is now officially listed as endangered, following years of ruthless land clearing, savage droughts and catastrophic bushfires. Sadly, the fate of the koala now rests entirely on the will of the government to protect precious habitats.
Exaggeration, overstatement and hyperbole An exaggeration of the actual situation for dramatic impact.	• Attracts the audience's attention through a surprising or extreme claim. • Can generate humour to make the audience regard the writer's viewpoint positively.	If Easter eggs and bunnies were in the shops any earlier they would be keeping Santa Claus company.
Facts and figures The use of numerical data, official information and research findings to suggest a rational or scientific basis for a point of view.	• Makes the writer's viewpoint seem objective rather than subjective/personal. • Can create a convincing but potentially misleading impression through selective use of data.	A serious rental problem has emerged, with rental vacancies dropping from 5.2% last year to just 1.8% in March. In the outer suburbs it is even worse, with just 0.4% of rental properties available.

Persuasive technique	How it influences the audience	Example
Figurative language The use of words and phrases in a non-literal way (e.g. metaphors, similes).	• Creates a striking image, often working on an emotional level through the connotations of words or the associations of the image. • Can capture the audience's attention by being more engaging than dry description.	What must be remembered … is that the ATAR is not an assessment of competence in the traditional sense. It's a rank. Each student is placed in a great, snaking line, the front of which often meanders through suburbs like Toorak and Darling Point while the tail recedes into a murky hinterland … (Brendan Murray, *Mamamia*)
Generalisation A sweeping statement that suggests what is true for some is true for most or all.	• Appeals to a widely held belief or assumption. • Can manipulate the audience's view by simplifying a complex issue.	Checking in is quick and easy – everyone now knows what a QR code is and how to scan it with a smartphone.
Inclusive language The use of 'we', 'our', 'us' etc. to include the audience in the same group as the writer.	• Appeals to a desire for a sense of belonging, and positions audience members to want to share the same ideas as others within the group. • Invokes the audience's desire not to be 'left out' or regarded as an outsider.	If we want to influence the outcome, we must all make our voices heard. The more signatures on this petition, the greater our chances of success.
Irony and sarcasm Language use in which the real meaning is the opposite of what is literally stated.	• Inclines the audience to disapprove of the situation or view being criticised. • Can subtly align the audience with the writer's viewpoint, which is presented as superior by implication.	It would be a good thing if federal elections were held every six months because, miraculously, as one is about to be called, things happen that should have happened years ago. (Michael Nolan, letter to the editor)
Jargon Specialised language used by experts in a field of knowledge.	• Can help to convey the writer's expertise in a field. • Can suggest objectivity or fact-based opinion, adding credibility.	Vaping devices use electricity to heat liquid and deliver an aerosol vapour made up of a wide range of chemicals that can include food flavourings, preservatives, synthetic coolants and, most notably, nicotine. (editorial, *The Age*)

Persuasive technique	How it influences the audience	Example
Puns and plays on words Words with multiple meanings, used to imply multiple ideas with the one phrase; can play on a word with the same or a similar sound but different spelling (e.g. whole/hole).	• Often attracts the audience's attention, especially in a headline. • Can generate humour to endorse or mock an idea or group. • Can present a point of view on a topic through the positive or negative connotations of the 'double' meaning of a word.	'The hole story: New details of West Gate Tunnel progress revealed' (headline for a story about the construction of the new tunnels under Yarraville)
Reason and logic The use of language and reasoning to show a logical or causal connection between facts and ideas.	• Suggests that the writer's viewpoint is true and not just their opinion or emotional response. • Positions the audience to feel that opposing viewpoints lack substance. • Often used with a detached tone and/or formal style to suggest authority.	Many parents believe that a private school will give their children a better education, but numerous studies have found no conclusive evidence for this. Rather, the evidence points to the child's socioeconomic background having the most influence on their academic success.
Repetition Using a word or phrase several times.	• Emphasises the main point or key term. • Often used in speeches to reinforce or highlight a point, and to make it more memorable.	It is right to make a stand, it is right to take action, and it is right to do it now.
Rhetorical question A question with an implied but unstated answer.	• Encourages the audience to (mentally) supply the answer and see things from the writer's perspective. • Implies that the answer is self-evident and therefore opposing viewpoints can be rejected. • Can be combined with an emotional appeal and/or inclusive language.	Do we really want a parliament full of politicians who have memorised the price of everything but don't understand the value of anything, who can reel off endless statistics but who don't seem to care about the human and environmental costs of those numbers? (Ian Powell, letter to the editor)

Analysing the cumulative effects of argument and language

Analysing the way in which argument and language are used to persuade requires more than just identifying reasons or persuasive techniques. The key to an effective analysis is an understanding of how argument and language work together to create an overall, or cumulative, effect on the reader. Analysing an argument as a whole means looking at *how* the argument is shaped and expressed to form a cohesive piece of persuasive writing, and *why* the writer has shaped and expressed it in this way.

The strategies outlined below will help you to look for and write about the cumulative effects of an argument's structure and the writer's selection of evidence, persuasive techniques and vocabulary.

Think about purpose and audience

A writer's main contention is directly linked to their purpose, so start by identifying the contention. Then think about what the writer's purpose is, and the sorts of responses they might want to evoke in the audience to achieve their purpose. Throughout your analysis, relate the effects of words and phrases to the writer's main contention and overall purpose. Thinking about purpose will help you to answer 'why' questions – *why* has the writer given this reason / chosen this word / used this image? – which are key to an effective analysis.

It is also helpful to consider who the writer's intended audience might be, as the writer's purpose will often be tied to a specific audience, and they will select evidence and examples that will be relevant and meaningful to this audience. In addition, certain persuasive techniques, word choices and language registers will work more effectively with some audiences than with others.

Consider the argument's structure

The structure of an argument and the order of the supporting reasons play an important role in positioning readers. Look at how the argument begins and ends, where the writer places the main contention and where they rebut opposing viewpoints. A well-structured argument will lead the audience on a journey, by the end of which the writer's point of view will appear well-founded and convincing.

Changes of tone are key structuring points; they often signal the introduction of a new reason or a shift in the overall approach, such as from attempting to evoke negative emotions to attempting to evoke positive ones, or from being highly emotive to very logical. Look at how language choices produce this shift, what the effect on the audience might be and why the writer has chosen to turn the argument in a new direction.

Analyse how persuasive techniques work together

Consider the opinion piece by Susie O'Brien on pages 170–1. O'Brien creates a dichotomy between the NSW Government, which is looking at changing school hours and has 'opened the issue up for debate', and the Victorian Government, which provides 'little flexibility, little freedom and few options'. Her language for describing the situation in Victoria is peppered with negative terms such as 'rigid', 'clogging', 'limited' and 'stuck in a rut'. Although her tone

is generally matter-of-fact, positioning readers to regard her as reasonable and practical, this regular use of negative language steadily builds a picture of the Victorian authorities as inflexible and indifferent to the hardships of 'busy parents', whose everyday needs can and should be met.

The mixture of a first-person singular pronoun ('my son's primary school', conveying O'Brien's own experience of the issue) and several first-person plural pronouns (e.g. 'our roads') draws together writer and reader as part of a single community with shared and valid concerns. Rhetorical questions reinforce this sense of shared concerns and contribute to an incredulous tone, further characterising the government as uncaring and even a bit slow to understand.

Overall, O'Brien encourages the reader to feel that a problem – which many might regard as frustrating but inevitable – can actually be fixed, and that the Victorian Government needs to adopt the approach of its NSW counterpart.

Consider cumulative effects

ACTIVITY

Read the following opinion piece then answer the questions to understand the cumulative effects of argument and language.

Recycle like our planet depends on it

Alan Duffy

Our mobile phones are a treasure trove of rare and precious metals, from the cobalt in lithium batteries to the gold and palladium in the circuitry. They are a miracle of chemistry and engineering.

Just as miraculous is the way in which these ingredients got there, formed in the cataclysmic events of dying stars and mined at vast expense and effort across all corners of the Earth.

Those supplies from space are all we have. The Earth will not be getting any more soon, even with the most optimistic visions of space mining asteroids or even our moon. We need to preserve what we have and ensure that we reuse everything we can from our devices.

The latest research shows that Australians have 4.2 *million* broken phones just lying around in homes and businesses across the country. Rather than think of these as junk to throw out, they are in fact an enormous stockpile of valuable resources that we can recycle and use in new products.

In fact, 95 per cent of the phone can be recycled: from the glass screens; to the cobalt in the batteries, and more. This is no happy accident but rather years of design and engineering effort to make phones easier to recycle in the first place, and the recycling process more effective at the end of the device's life.

I was able to see this process first-hand at a recycling centre recently, with phones stripped down to their basic components, and any data-carrying parts immediately broken and ultimately shredded to ensure complete data security. What I saw was only a few weeks' worth of collected and returned phones and accessories, and the scale of the opportunity to reuse the resources from so many devices is truly staggering.
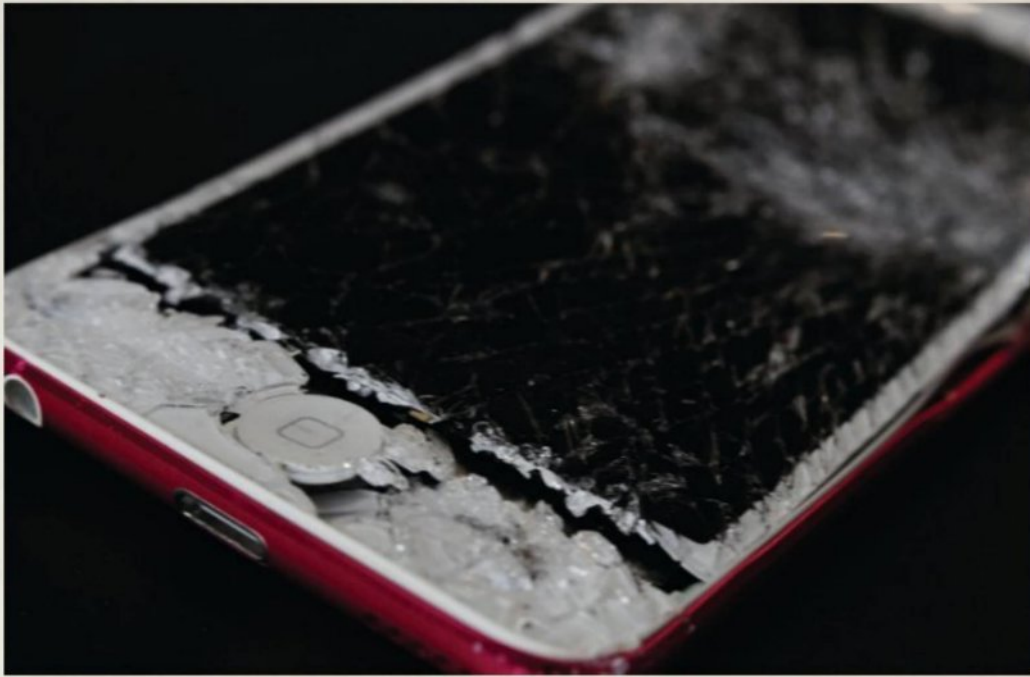
Old and broken mobile phones can be recycled: from the glass screens; to the cobalt in the batteries, and more.
Photo by Laura Rivera on Unsplash

The growing demand for cobalt as we move to electric cars gives us even more reason to reuse what we have already mined through recovering the cobalt in damaged and old lithium ion batteries such as the ones in your old mobile.

Now imagine we could recycle *all* these broken phones with none left in dusty cupboards and long-forgotten drawers. It might seem like I'm being ambitious but when I asked Australians last year, we managed to collect and recycle 800,000 phones – that's an entire blue whale's weight of devices.

As a society I believe we're up for this challenge as it does so much more than just clean up your office. By reusing the materials from all these old phones we prevent the need to mine *new* material, conserving 8274 tonnes of mineral resources – or over 1300 African elephants, to put that in perspective.

This also means we will save 1621 tonnes of CO_2 emissions from entering the atmosphere through that mining effort, equivalent to planting 42,000 trees.

The world is not receiving any new metals or precious materials, and we are seeing our existing reserves used at a staggering rate, which makes this reuse of what we have extracted so critical. Once Australians have experienced how easy it is to recycle their phones, you'll start to wonder what else in your life that you buy can, and should, be that easy to recycle as well.

This is a vision known as the *circular economy*, in which the things we buy are designed to be easily recycled into new products, rather than going straight to landfill contaminating groundwater, the soil, and using up precious resources.

The challenge is immense. A 2019 study found that only one sixth of the 54 millions of tonnes of e-waste that year was recycled, the rest went to the tip. There's now so much e-waste in landfill that CSIRO is exploring biomining them using bacteria to break down and liberate the metals rather than chemical leaching.

ACTIVITY

Wonderful as these ideas are, the simplest and best approach is to stop those phones, accessories, cables, and all the other e-waste from ever going to landfill in the first place.
Our world's past was forged in the embers of ancient stars but its future depends on you and that old or broken phone.

Professor Alan Duffy from Swinburne University of Technology is an astronomer, science communicator and ambassador for MobileMuster.

The Age

1 What is the main contention of the opinion piece? At what point or points in the piece is it expressed? Or is it implied rather than stated explicitly?

2 What reasons does the writer present in support of his viewpoint? How are these reasons ordered?

3 What is Professor Duffy's purpose in this opinion piece? How would you describe his intended audience?

4 The tone shifts several times in this piece. Identify two places where the tone changes and explain how these shifts contribute to the writer's argument.

5 Identify three persuasive techniques used by the writer. For each of these techniques, write down a sentence from the opinion piece in which that technique is used, and explain the likely effect on the reader.

6 Does the writer mainly try to influence the reader's emotions, or does he try to persuade through logic and reason? Or does he use a combination of the two approaches? Explain your answer.

7 What is the intended effect of the image on the reader? How does it contribute to the persuasiveness of the written piece?

8 Write two paragraphs on the way in which argument and language work together to create an overall persuasive effect.

WRITING AN ANALYSIS

IN THIS CHAPTER

▸ Reading and annotating the task material

▸ Planning your analysis

▸ Writing your analysis

▸ Editing and proofreading checklists

▸ Sample issue and analysis

Part of your assessment in Unit 2, Area of Study 2 will involve the analysis of argument and language in a media text or texts. Your analysis will explain and 'unpack' the ways in which language and argument work together to position the audience to agree with the point of view being presented.

There are three main steps in writing your analysis: annotating, planning and writing. The following sections show how to complete these steps. At the end of the chapter, an annotated opinion piece and sample analysis model an approach to this task, and show how the annotations can feed directly into the analysis.

Reading and annotating the task material

The first step in preparing your analysis is to collect all the information you will need. Firstly, read, view or listen to the text (or texts) for meaning and the general shape of the argument. Then read, view or listen again, this time carefully looking for the main supporting points or reasons, the order they are placed in and the emotions and reactions the text aims to evoke in the audience.

For a written text, annotate the text as you are reading (except if you are using the reading time in an exam, when you will need to wait until writing time commences to make annotations). You can do this by highlighting, circling and underlining words and phrases in the text as well as by writing notes in the margins of the text. If you are doing this on paper you can use a variety of pens and highlighters; in a Word document or PDF you can annotate with the 'comment' functions in the software you are using.

For an audio or audiovisual text, make notes as you are listening or viewing and, whenever possible, listen to or view the text several times.

Annotating is a skill – it requires using a system you are familiar with as well as an ability to read a text on several levels. There are many ways to annotate a text; find the method that works best for you. Here are some general tips.

- **Look at the text as a whole:** On first looking at a text, notice the layout of text and image/s on the page, and any headings and subheadings that break the text into sections.

- **Make notes in the margins:** Jot down the main contention, the reasons being presented and the main tone of the piece.

- **Zoom in:** Look for patterns, repetition and the sequence of ideas.

- **Get even closer:** Look for individual words that are particularly surprising, interesting or effective.

- **Ask questions:** In the margin, note any questions that arise. Later, you can return to the questions and see if they have been answered by another part of the text.

- **Use your own symbols and system:** In the example annotated opinion piece later in this chapter (pages 213–15) you will see symbols such as !, V and ? identifying important points, vocabulary and questions. Create your own set of symbols such as these.

The following three sections provide more detail on how you can annotate your text. The annotations are grouped into three broad categories:

- structure

- argument

- language.

In the annotated opinion piece on pages 213–15 you can see examples of annotations that fit into these three groups.

Annotating for structure

The structure of the text refers to both its physical layout and the sequence in which the ideas and arguments are presented.

- Look at the visual arrangement of the text, noting the size and placement of any images. Note whether any images have been placed in important positions such as at the very start of the text.

- For a longer written text, identify the introduction, body and conclusion. How has the writer chosen to begin and end?

- Identify 'white space' and other major breaks in the text. These often indicate places where the writer changes their tone, introduces a new reason or presents additional evidence. (In an audio text, a pause can have a similar effect.)

- Look for headings and subheadings that divide and organise the content. These often express the main reasons or ideas.

- If the text is visual (e.g. a cartoon or photograph), look at the size and placement of the main elements of the image.

Annotating for argument

In persuasive texts the argument consists of a main contention supported by several reasons. Often, the writer will make the structure of their argument clear by discussing each supporting reason in a separate paragraph; alternatively, one reason might be raised in more than one part of the text. Annotations that show the main reasons for the writer's point of view will make it easier for you to analyse the argument.

- Underline or circle the contention and rewrite it in your own words. The contention is often expressed in the headline and/or the introductory paragraph; sometimes it is not clearly stated until the end of the piece. If the contention is implied rather than stated explicitly, write the implied contention as concisely as you can.

- Clearly identify the main reasons or points of argument. You could highlight or underline each reason in a different colour, draw a box around each reason, or summarise the reason in a margin note and draw a line connecting it to the relevant part of the text.

- Number the reasons. This will make it easier to analyse the text at a later stage.

- Look for rebuttal – where an opposing argument or point of view is being rejected. This might be associated with one of the writer's main reasons, or it could be a separate reason.

- If the text is visual, make notes in the margin about the point of view being presented by the cartoonist, illustrator or photographer.

- For an audio text, listen for signposting words such as 'firstly', 'as a result' and 'in conclusion' that indicate how the speaker has constructed their argument.

Annotating for vocabulary and language features

To make annotations about vocabulary and language features you will need to drill down to the fine detail of a text – the writer's word choices and use of persuasive techniques (see Chapter 16 for definitions and examples of these). A useful system for annotating is to highlight/circle/underline words and phrases with the same colour you use for the reason that is presented at that point in the text.

- Highlight any interesting words or phrases that stand out. Make a note of why you highlighted the word – did it have a strong impact on you?

- In the margin, write the main tone of the piece. Circle some words that help to create this tone.

- Look for any shifts of tone and make a note on the text where these occur (often when a new reason is introduced, or there is a shift from presenting an argument to rebutting the opposing view).

- Highlight any persuasive techniques, such as repetition, emotional appeals, facts and statistics, figurative language or the rule of three. Make a note of the intended effect on the reader. You won't be able to discuss all these techniques, but identifying them will help you select the most relevant ones for your analysis.

- Write a symbol (such as a question mark) near any words you do not understand. If you have time later, find a definition.

Planning your analysis

Once you have gathered all the required information, you need to begin organising your ideas. If there is time, organise your annotations by summarising them in an information sheet. This will enable you to group together ideas and examples in preparation for writing an analysis.

Scan the code or click here to download an information sheet template.

Once you have an idea of which elements of the text you are going to write about, you need to create a plan for your analysis. It might only be brief, especially in a timed assessment task, but it will help you to analyse the argument and language in a coherent fashion and to avoid simply giving a recount of what the writer has said.

The outline below shows a typical breakdown of the paragraphs in an analysis.

Introduction One paragraph	• Briefly introduce the issue. • State the writer's contention in your own words. • Include the name of the writer, the source of the text, the text type (e.g. opinion piece, blog post) and the date it was published. • Identify the main tone of the text and the overall approach. • Refer briefly to any visual material.
Body paragraphs Three to five paragraphs	• Identify a focus for the paragraph. • Give examples. • Explain the likely effects of the selected examples and how they work to persuade.
Conclusion One paragraph (optional)	• Briefly explain the overall effect of the writer's argument and persuasive language.

A brief plan would include:

- the writer's main contention
- the text's main tone
- the focus for each of your body paragraphs
- notes on the examples you will use.

Structuring your analysis

The way you structure your analysis can have a significant impact on its fluency and cohesiveness. Here are three ways to organise your ideas and information into paragraphs.

- **Reason by reason:** If you annotate the text using the process on pages 205–6, you can devote each body paragraph to analysing the way in which each reason is presented and argued. Make sure you explain the effect of each reason and how it helps the writer to achieve their purpose.

- **Paragraph by paragraph:** Analyse each paragraph of the text in order. If there is more than one text, analyse the shorter text after you analyse the main one. Be careful not to simply paraphrase or rewrite what the writer has said; try to identify the intent behind each paragraph and its role in the writer's argument.

- **Beginning with structure, then focusing on language:** This approach involves moving from the general, big-picture effects of the text to the particular effects of language use. You might base your first paragraph on the structure of a writer's argument and the main techniques used (e.g. emotional appeals, reason and logic). Subsequent paragraphs would then look more closely at the language and analyse the specific effects that word choices and persuasive techniques have on the reader. Here is an example of a paragraph near the beginning of a response organised in this way.

The writer's argument moves from the general to the particular, beginning with a calm, fact-based discussion of the recent introduction of new laws; then moving on to case studies; and finally, with a more personal and emotive approach, describing individual experiences. The writer thus aims to gradually increase the reader's sense that the legislation, rather than being a theoretical decision by a far-removed government, is likely to directly affect their own lives. This, in turn, is likely to elicit feelings of concern and the desire to take action.

Structuring body paragraphs

Here are two ways you can approach your body paragraphs. Both cover essentially the same elements of analysis but have different emphases.

Option 1: The *What? How? Why?* approach.

- Explain *what* the writer is saying. Keep this brief – don't provide a recount.

- Explain *how* the writer is saying it. Do particular word choices have an impact? Does the writer appeal to the emotions, or instead emphasise facts, figures and logic?

- Explain *why* the writer has chosen to say it in this way. What are the likely effects on the reader? How does this help the writer achieve their purpose?

Option 2: The PEE approach.

- P = Persuasive element. Explain one key element of the writer's attempt to persuade the reader to agree. It could be a reason or point of argument, a structural element, a persuasive strategy or the choice of particular words.

- E = Example/s. Give some examples of this persuasive element, explaining where the examples occur in the piece and what their place is in the writer's argument.

- E = Effect. Explain what the reader is likely to think or feel, how they are being positioned or influenced to agree with an argument and how this is helping the writer to achieve their purpose.

Scan the code on the left or click here to see a short video explaining the importance of identifying the audience when analysing a persuasive text. Scan the code on the right or click here to see a video outlining an approach to writing an analysis of argument and persuasive language.

Writing your analysis

This section gives you sentence-level strategies for writing an analysis of argument and persuasive language. The emphasis is on sentences that maintain your focus on *analysis* – explaining how argument and language are working to present a point of view and to persuade an audience to agree.

Writing about the effects of persuasive techniques

The table below contains sentence starters for writing about how argument and persuasive language can influence the reader or audience.

The writer ...	The reader ...	The persuasive technique ...
evokes the reader's sense of outrage by ...	is encouraged to feel ...	positions the reader to ...
seeks to create a negative response by ...	is positioned to share the writer's opinion by ...	elicits the reader's sympathy by ...
proposes a solution to ...	is likely to be provoked to anger by ...	appeals to the reader's sense of ... in order to ...
uses emotive language to ...	is included in the debate by ...	encourages the reader to believe ...
exaggerates the situation in order to ...	is intended to ...	works to engage the reader's support by ...

Writing about the effects of visual language

Your analysis should include close discussion of any images associated with the text or texts. Here are some sentence starters that contain useful phrases for writing about the effects of various visual language features.

The cartoon contrasts the powerful with the powerless by exaggerating the individuals' relative sizes, which has the effect of ...
The cartoonist shows their contempt for the individuals at the centre of this issue, using thought bubbles / a caption / speech balloons to reveal ...
By placing the subject in focus at the centre of the photograph, the photographer positions the viewer to feel ...
The photograph captures the natural environment in detail, showing rich greens and blues, encouraging the viewer to feel ...
The graph shows earlier data in shades of blue, changing to purple for more recent data then red for the latest, eliciting feelings of ...
By presenting high numbers in large bold fonts, the infographic draws the viewer's attention to ...

Written persuasive texts often include images; if this is the case for the article you are analysing, consider the relationship between words and images. Usually the visual material will support or present a similar point of view to the written text, but there might be subtle

differences between the messages they convey. In other cases, the image might be a separate text from the written piece and might offer a quite different point of view on the issue. The table below contains some useful words and phrases for comparing and contrasting the persuasive effects of images with those of written texts.

To discuss a similarity between an image and a written text	To discuss a difference between an image and a written text
The image ...	The image ...
supports, reinforces, echoes, reiterates, delivers a similar message to, bolsters, confirms, corroborates, consolidates	undermines, contradicts, conveys an alternative message to, places pressure on, counters, challenges, questions, opposes
... the point of view expressed in the article.	... the point of view expressed in the article.

Writing about the impact of structure

Structure is a crucial part of any argument, and you should discuss the effects of at least some elements of structure as part of your analysis. Consider the following points.

- **Placement of the main contention:** Is the main contention stated at the outset of the piece? Or does it appear towards the end of the piece, as the inevitable conclusion of the writer's discussion? Is it clearly stated, or only implied? Why might the writer have chosen to present their contention in this place and manner?

- **Use of headings:** What does the main heading suggest about the writer's point of view and/or their main approach? Do subheadings indicate a logical structure or an examination of different angles on an issue?

- **Order of supporting reasons:** Does the writer present their main points in order of strongest to weakest? Or do they save their strongest point till last to leave a powerful impression on the reader?

- **Placement of rebuttal:** Are reasons for rejecting alternative points of view placed near the start so that the audience rejects alternatives at the outset, or is rebuttal woven throughout as part of a compare/contrast structure (see page 211)?

- **Shifts in tone:** A change in a writer's tone may signal the shift to a different approach in their argument. For example, they may begin with a personal story presented in a sad and emotional tone designed to arouse the reader's sympathy, before moving to a more matter-of-fact tone to present evidence and statistics.

As always, your analysis should focus on *why* the writer made the choices they did.

By moving from a touching anecdote, expressed in a sympathetic tone, to the results of surveys carried out by university scholars, the writer creates the impression that their argument is both based on lived experience and endorsed by research. This positions the reader to see the broader consequences of the issue and to accept the writer's argument that a response from authorities is needed.

Writing about the combined effects of argument and language

Your analysis needs to explain the ways in which argument and language interact to position the reader. Often, certain approaches to argument are associated with particular persuasive techniques. For instance, an appeal to group loyalty may be presented using inclusive language, while an ad hominem attack might be delivered in highly emotive language with a mocking tone.

When writing about language used to **support an argument** you can phrase your sentence like this:

> *The writer's use of ... (language/technique)* **supports** *their argument that ... (argument being presented).*

Here are some alternatives to 'supports'.

advances	enhances	strengthens
bolsters	promotes	sustains
develops	reinforces	underlines

Sometimes a writer will use a **compare/contrast** approach to consider their own and opposing viewpoints side by side. To do so they will **create a dichotomy**, using words with positive associations for their own argument, and words with negative associations for opposing arguments.

To discuss the writer's use of a compare/contrast approach, you could use words such as the following.

compares	contrasts	juxtaposes	opposes

For example:

> *The writer favourably* **compares** *their preferred model with the alternative, positioning the reader to feel the solution is straightforward and obvious.*

You can vary the sentence structure by using the '-ing' form of these verbs.

comparing	contrasting	juxtaposing	opposing

Using the -ing form of the verb can be a good way to immediately connect a writer's persuasive strategy with their intended effect. For example:

> *By* **juxtaposing** *the benefits of their preferred model with the supposed downfalls of the alternative approach, the writer encourages the reader to feel the alternative is simply not viable.*

Editing and proofreading checklists

There will be times when you have the opportunity to carefully annotate a persuasive text, then plan, draft, refine and edit your analysis of argument and language; this will be the case when you are completing a practice task at home or in class. However, when you are writing the analysis under time constraints you might only have five minutes to plan and five minutes to edit.

In either case, it is worth allocating time to planning before and editing after you write your analysis. Annotating the persuasive text (or texts) before you start writing will help you to clarify your ideas and identify evidence you can incorporate into your analysis. Then, once you have written a draft, the editing process will help to ensure that your expression is clear, your thoughts are logically organised and you have addressed all parts of the task. Use the checklists below to assess your analysis and revise it where necessary.

Structure

- ☐ The introduction gives the key details of the text (writer, publication details, text type) and states the writer's main contention.
- ☐ The introduction refers to the main tone of the piece or the writer's overall approach to persuading the audience.
- ☐ Each body paragraph has a clear focus and does not repeat points from a previous paragraph.

Analysis of argument and persuasive language

- ☐ Each body paragraph discusses the effects of argument and language choices on the audience and relates these effects to the writer's purpose and main contention.
- ☐ You have discussed the impact of context, purpose and audience on the writer's choices of argument and language.
- ☐ You have discussed the tone of the text and related it to the writer's purpose and argument, and identified and analysed the likely impact of any shifts in tone.
- ☐ Each body paragraph includes a variety of short examples or quotes.
- ☐ You have analysed the impact of visual and/or audio elements and their relationship with any written text they are associated with.

Language

- ☐ Every sentence is clear and grammatically correct.
- ☐ Spelling is correct (especially of names of people and places in the text).
- ☐ Punctuation is correct, including the use of commas, apostrophes, capital letters, and quotation marks for direct quotes from the text.
- ☐ You have used linking words to make your analysis fluent and coherent.
- ☐ You have used relevant metalanguage to analyse persuasive strategies and their effects.
- ☐ You have used formal language and avoided informal expressions and clichés.
- ☐ You have written in the third person (avoiding the first-person 'I') .

Sample issue and analysis

This section is in two parts:

- an annotated opinion piece that includes an image
- an annotated sample analysis of how the writer uses argument and language to present a point of view.

Although you might not be studying the issue being addressed by the opinion piece, look closely at the approach and the vocabulary used in the annotations and the sample analysis. You can make use of these in your own analyses of persuasive texts.

Annotated opinion piece

The following opinion piece presents a point of view on the issue of the date of Australia Day. The annotations are typical of the sorts of notes you might make on your own persuasive text.

Scan the code or click here to read and view some contrasting points of view on this issue. The web page includes an embedded video.

This country has a habit of forgetting history, let's keep the date

Wesley Enoch
January 25, 2022

Year after year we ask the same question about Australia Day. How can we celebrate our national day on January 26?

Some say change the date. Some see it as a tradition we should never change. We have been having this same debate since 1988, or at least 1994 when it was first legislated we had to have Australia Day on January 26. Do you remember when this wasn't the case and Australia Day was just whatever long weekend we could arrange at the end of summer? The last burst of holiday before we went back to school and work.

Well, here's something provocative – I don't want to change the date. As a Quandamooka man living on country I think we should be reminded of our colonial history, and the heartbreak that means for our people, every day. I don't want to brush away the past 234 years and somehow forget what happened. This country has a habit of forgetting its history.

No – I want the date of our National Day to stand as a spur to discuss our history and remember the trials and tribulations of Indigenous Australia. Changing the date is easy, confronting our past is the harder thing to do. How can we commemorate the painful past and still celebrate our hopes for a better future?

ARGUMENT: Contention – keep the date.

LANGUAGE: Rhetorical question – raises important issue.

LANGUAGE: Some say / Some see – alliteration and repetition used to outline the debate.

LANGUAGE: Dates presented as facts; establish a context.

ARGUMENT: Writer is a stakeholder; gives relevance and credibility to his point of view.

(V) heartbreak is a powerful word to use here.

? why not?

ARGUMENT: Writer wants to keep the date.

LANGUAGE: Short simple sentence for impact.

LANGUAGE: No/ Yes at starts of paragraphs is interesting.

! key point; the writer states his purpose.

LANGUAGE: No/ Yes at starts of paragraphs is interesting.

Yes – it may make some people feel uncomfortable but unless we can find our way through the heartache, injustice and suffering that has brought us to this present time we will never fulfil our potential as a nation. Our future will always feel limited if we choose to limit our understanding of our fullest past.

! key point.

Poet and activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal wrote: "Let no one say the past is dead, the past is all around us and within." Unless we can bring ourselves to speak the truth-telling required and the humanity to hear it, I don't want to change the date.

We are entering a new phase of Australian history where the 35-year promise of Treaty is again heard on the radio and seen on the television. A time when sovereignty is being discussed with vigour in the corridors of power and the Uluru Statement from the Heart calls out to enshrine a Voice to Parliament.

ARGUMENT: Shift in argument; changes focus from the past to the future.

(V) legacy ties in with idea of the past going into the present and future.

This is the (legacy) of the Reconciliation movement. The symbolism of walking across bridges 20 years ago has led us to the brink of real change. These are things to celebrate and acknowledge, the hard work of our elders and the vision of those who have gone before us.

ARGUMENT: Shift in argument – need for optimism.

The history of Survival Day concerts across the country is testament to our ability to find optimism in the face of hardship and to encourage more change. Hope should not be a panacea that replaces real change, but optimism should be present every day to demonstrate to our children that change is possible.

Noel Pearson talks of the three grand narratives of our country: the First Nations' narrative of the longest continuous cultures on Earth, the Second Nations' stories of the arrival of the British and the colonial project, and the Third Nations' stories of Australia as the most successful multicultural, multiethnic nation on Earth.

LANGUAGE: An appeal to authority adds credibility.

VISUAL: Flag on ground represents 'Australian land'. Colonial flag not Indigenous flag. Feet wearing thongs symbol of (White) Australia.

If we change the date prematurely we lose the spur to discuss and debate the meaning of what it is to be Australian. Credit: iStock

Our national day is an amalgam of these three narratives, it is our lived experience, our neighbourhoods, classrooms, and workplaces. These three narratives intertwine and have earned the right to be acknowledged as part of our national character – we are a country of blackfellas and refos, wogs, whitebreads, skips and just-off-the-boaters.

LANGUAGE: Structure of sentence is repetitive, interesting; emphasises shared experience w. inclusive language.

(V) slang terms are confronting, irreverent; do they put everyone on a level playing field?

If we change the date prematurely we lose the spur to discuss and debate the meaning of what it is to be Australian. We need to find a way to celebrate our discomfort.

! repeats one of the main points.

There is a new tradition forming on the evening of January 25 as we gather to reflect on the Indigenous history of this country. At Sydney Festival there is The Vigil and in Canberra this year Nainmurru Nguurruu – caring for the campfire.

These events are about quiet contemplation, and reflection, thoughtfulness and honouring over 60,000 years of living on this Land. We must find ways of reflecting on all our history not just selected parts. We need to find ways to respect the three narratives as part of our broader storytelling.

LANGUAGE: Repetition of sentence beginnings (We must / We need) creates an emphatic tone and sense of urgency.

We need to find new ways to celebrate who we are in a way that builds connections between communities and families.

The themes of reflect, respect, celebrate are open enough for everyone to find their own pathway. For me reflecting our full history, respecting and celebrating my family, elders and survival. How will you reflect, respect, celebrate?

LANGUAGE: Ends on a call to action, a persuasive technique that prompts the reader to reflect on and possibly modify their behaviour – if they do, the author achieves his purpose.

Wesley Enoch is a writer and director. He hails from Stradbroke Island (Minjeribah) and is a proud Quandamooka man. He is the QUT Indigenous Chair of Creative Industries.

The Age

Annotated sample analysis

Proud Quandamooka man Wesley Enoch presents a provocative and challenging perspective on the debate about Australia Day. In an opinion piece written for *The Age* on the eve of another Australia Day, Enoch contends that we should keep the date of 26 January as a constant reminder of the pain and suffering of Australia's colonial history, and as a way of prompting ongoing discussion about Indigenous history. Arguing that the date should be kept even though it makes us uncomfortable, Enoch refers to prominent Indigenous figures and includes an attention-grabbing visual to support his contention.

Introduction includes the name of the writer, the publication, the context, the text type and the writer's main contention.

The introduction signposts some of the discussion to come in the body paragraphs.

Enoch begins with a series of rhetorical questions and anecdotes designed to prompt the reader to think about their own position on the date of Australia Day. The article opens with the important question: 'How can we celebrate our national day on January 26?' Often this question is met with

Discusses LANGUAGE use – a rhetorical question – and explains how it frames the issue.

two opposing and mutually exclusive views, which Enoch articulates with the repetitive 'some say' and 'some see'. He then takes this divisive way of thinking about 'the date' and makes it more inclusive, using the words 'we' and 'you' and painting an image of a shared childhood in a time when the debate did not even exist to highlight how the tension has grown over the years. Enoch positions the reader to ask themselves where they stand on the issue of the Australia Day date, before moving on to his contentious main argument.

> Points are always linked back to the intended effect on the reader.

Enoch presents his main argument – that we should keep the date – as a challenge to the 'easy' answer of changing it from 26 January. After referring to his stance as 'provocative', he immediately refers to his Quandamooka heritage in order to highlight his position as a stakeholder in the issue. By structuring his argument around his own views as an Indigenous man – an identity that makes it likely that he would be opposed to keeping the date – Enoch makes it more difficult for the reader to argue against him. Throughout the article he uses evocative words such as 'heartbreak' to describe the feelings of the Indigenous community, but he argues that this is no reason to 'limit our understanding of our fullest past'. Enoch argues that it is precisely because of this heartbreak that we need to 'speak the truth-telling required' and not change the date.

> The response uses short inline quotes to highlight key words and phrases, persuasive techniques and reasons / points of argument.

Enoch refers to numerous prominent Indigenous figures and significant events to add weight to his argument. Referring to the statement by the famous Indigenous poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal, 'Let no one say the past is dead, the past is all around us and within', Enoch adds weight to his assertion that the past is relevant and worth discussing. He then bolsters this argument by writing about prominent Indigenous figure Noel Pearson's 'three grand narratives' and the value of a multicultural Australia. The argument about the importance of remembering history is further supported by the inclusion of an image of the commonwealth Australian flag painted on the ground, surrounded by feet including a pair of iconic Australian thongs. The image adds to the picture that Enoch is creating of Australian land as a multicultural space to stand on. Towards the end of the article Enoch refers to 'The Vigil' in Sydney and 'Nainmurru Nguurruu' in Canberra to highlight that many events occur around 26 January that can be used for 'quiet contemplation, and reflection'. By referencing Indigenous leaders and events that also place a high value on the past, Enoch adds further credibility to his argument that we should keep the date because it keeps Australia's history in the foreground.

> The response demonstrates an understanding of how the ARGUMENTS build throughout the text.

> Phrases like 'towards the end' indicate an understanding of the STRUCTURE of the piece.

Ultimately, Enoch begins as he started, with a rhetorical question asking the reader what they will do on 26 January. This call to action is a persuasive device designed to elicit not only thought, but meaningful reflection and celebration of a day that provokes necessary tension and discussion.

> Explains the effect of LANGUAGE use.

> The analysis concludes by discussing the final points of the text and reinforcing the contention.

Analyse an analysis of argument and language

ACTIVITY

GROUP Read the opinion piece on pages 213–15 and then read the analysis a couple of times. The following questions ask you to examine the analysis with a view to identifying elements you can use in your own work. You can answer the questions individually or use them as the basis for group discussion.

1 Does the introduction clearly identify the issue and outline Enoch's main contention? Is there anything you would add or delete?

2 Select a body paragraph and see if it conforms to one of the two structures outlined on page 208 – the *What? How? Why?* structure or the PEE structure. Can you find all the elements of one of these structures? If not, what is missing? Does this weaken the analysis? Or does the paragraph use a different structure that you could use in an analysis?

3 Find a sentence that connects Enoch's use of language to an argument he is making. Does the analysis explain the likely effect on the reader?

4 Identify an example of metalanguage in the analysis. Does the writer do more than simply label a technique, by going on to analyse its likely effect?

5 Does the analysis include sufficient explanations of *why* Enoch has made certain choices about argument and language?

6 There is no discussion in the analysis of who Enoch's likely intended audience is. Who do you think this audience might be? How might this audience have been considered in the analysis of Enoch's opinion piece?

PRESENTING A POINT OF VIEW

IN THIS CHAPTER

> Developing a point of view
> Delivering an oral presentation
> Sample points of view

As part of your study of persuasive texts and media issues in Unit 2, you will present your own point of view on an issue being debated in the Australian media. To do this, you will need to develop a sound understanding of the issue, including the arguments on either side, and decide what your own position is.

Your point of view will be delivered as an oral presentation, and your teacher will let you know which form this presentation can take. You might deliver it as a speech to your class; alternatively, you might present a speech as part of a debate, or participate in a panel discussion. In all these cases, the effectiveness of your presentation will depend on your ability to argue a convincing case and to rebut the arguments on the opposing side.

Developing a point of view

A media issue is created when an aspect of a broad topic is debated in the media and the wider community. For example, energy generation is a broad topic; an aspect of it that is debated is whether there should be more use of renewable energy sources.

There will always be different points of view on any given issue. Even when people are in broad agreement, their reasons for adopting a position can vary widely, and individuals can be affected by the issue in quite different ways. Some underlying factors that lead to different viewpoints are:

- personal experience of a particular issue
- individual background – family, culture, specialised knowledge, ethical or moral beliefs, political leaning
- being a stakeholder with a vested interest in an issue.

When you are developing your own point of view, you will look at the various arguments on either side, assess their merits, and incorporate (or rebut) them in your own presentation.

Summarise points of view on an issue

This activity shows you how to gather information and summarise the main viewpoints on an issue.

1 Create a table like the one below. You can also scan the code or click here to download a fillable template. Write a brief description of the issue in the top row and then summarise one of the main points of view on the issue in the second row.

The issue:	
Main point of view:	
For this point of view	**Against this point of view**
Writer and text type: Reasons given:	Writer and text type: Reasons given:
Writer and text type: Reasons given:	Writer and text type: Reasons given:

2 As you read, view and listen to media texts on this issue, list all the opinions for and against the main point of view you have identified. For each article, provide the name of the writer and the text type (e.g. 'Susie O'Brien, *Herald Sun* blog post') and a brief statement of the main reason/s the writer gives to support their point of view.

3 Analyse the information in your table by answering the following questions.

   a What are the factors that influence each writer's point of view?

   b Who are the experts on this issue?

   c Who is affected by this issue?

   d What facts, statistics and anecdotal evidence do the writers provide?

   e Which side would you support in this issue? Explain why.

Next, use the guidelines in this flow chart to develop your argument.

Main contention
- Write down your main contention. (See pages 158–9 for an explanation of main contentions.)

Reasons
- Decide on the main reasons you will present to support your contention.

Evidence
- Collect evidence for each of your reasons.
- Evidence can include facts, examples, anecdotes, statements by authority figures, research findings and so on.

Rebuttal
- Identify one or two of the strongest reasons for the opposing viewpoints and decide how you will rebut (argue against) them.

Delivering an oral presentation

When you deliver a point of view as an oral presentation, you will use your voice, facial expressions and body language, in addition to argument and persuasive language, to influence and persuade your audience.

If your oral presentation is part of a discussion, some of what you say will be in response to what others say, so this part of your presentation cannot be written in advance. Nevertheless, you can prepare for this by making notes that summarise the key facts and relevant arguments you might draw on.

Structural features

If you are writing a speech, you will need to keep the aural and visual elements in mind and incorporate them into your text. Here are a few basics to help you structure your writing effectively. For a debate or discussion, the conventions are slightly different; however, most of these structural elements are still relevant.

- Present a clear, strong contention near the start of your presentation.
- Begin by making the topic relevant to your audience, and use your knowledge of the audience to appeal to their interests and sympathies.
- Ask your audience direct questions to engage them.
- Use signposting words such as 'firstly' and 'secondly' to help the audience follow your argument.
- Repeat key words and phrases.
- End strongly, perhaps with a repetition of your contention or with a statement prompting the audience to take action.

Delivery guidelines

Practise delivering your presentation to improve your fluency and confidence. You could deliver the speech to your family and ask for their feedback; stand in front of a mirror; or record yourself giving the speech and then watch the video. Are you looking up and out at the audience, or are your eyes constantly focused on the page? Are you talking too quickly or too slowly? Is there enough variation in your voice to make the speech interesting and engaging for your audience?

Aim to avoid reading your speech word for word; instead, place your main points and key facts on cue cards. Know your content well so that you can just glance at your cards occasionally, maintaining as much eye contact with your audience as possible.

The table on the next page summarises some useful delivery tips.

Cue cards	Voice	Body language
Use numbered cue cards, with writing on one side only.	Vary the pitch of your voice and emphasise the important points for an expressive delivery.	Look directly at your listeners as much as possible.
Write dot points, rather than your whole speech in full. It's easier to connect with your audience if you're not reading from a script.	Make sure the tone of your voice is appropriate to the subject matter and the emotions you want your audience to feel.	Remember the value of gestures, but keep them natural. They should enrich, not detract from, what you are saying.
Use abbreviations and symbols (such as arrows) to minimise the amount of text on each card.	Slow down. Pauses are vital. (You could write 'PAUSE' in appropriate places on cue cards, to remind you.)	Think about your posture and facial expressions – be positive and engaging.
Know the meaning and pronunciation of all the words you use.	Do not make sentences too long or you may find yourself running out of breath.	Your conclusion is the most important part – know it off by heart so that you can look at the audience as you deliver it.

Sample points of view

This section contains two point-of-view texts on the issue of clothing consumption and sustainable fashion. You can also view a third text as a digital resource.

The first point-of-view text is a speech on op shops. If you would like to explore this issue further, scan the first code or click here for an article in favour of op shops, and scan the second code or click here for an article questioning the ethics of op shops.

The second point-of-view text is the opening speech from a debate.

Analyse the points of view

ACTIVITY

GROUP The questions in this activity ask you to consider the sample point-of-view texts that follow, and identify effective elements that you could use in your own presentation. You can discuss your answers in small groups or answer them individually.

1 Find three examples of persuasive language or techniques. How do they work to present the speaker's argument and position the audience to respond?

2 Identify an example of language that uses logic and reasoning. What is the speaker's tone at this point? What is the audience likely to think and feel?

3 Identify an example of emotive language. What emotion or emotions is it likely to evoke?

4 Find one example of language that you think would work well in an oral presentation, and one example of language that might not work as well. Explain your answers.

5 Do you find one of the speeches more persuasive than the other? If so, what makes it more effective? Which elements could you use in your own oral presentation? Alternatively, if you find the speeches equally effective, note an element from each that you could use.

Sample speech

This speech presents a point of view on the issue of op shops.

Good afternoon, everyone. Today I would like to talk to you about something that I hold very close to my heart, and something that, in recent years, has become one of my absolute favourite pastimes:

Op-shopping.

> Begins with a direct address to the audience, creating a connection.

> Introduces the topic but doesn't immediately establish the issue.

That's right, op shops are cool now, and flooded with people like me, hunting for our next vintage statement piece, or the next staple that would have cost $50 retail, but now costs just $8 at your local Salvos.

With our generation's focus on sustainable living, and our newfound awareness of how disastrous the fast-fashion industry is for the environment, op-shopping seems like a quick fix for issues that feel increasingly out of our control. Now, instead of consuming copious amounts of clothes made in unethical and wasteful ways, we can shop in a way that is both environmentally sustainable and great for our pockets.

The problem is, easy fixes are never seamless, especially when they're aimed at fixing complex and often non-obvious issues.

> Takes a problem–solution approach to presenting an argument.

Two pitfalls I would like to discuss are how gentrifying op shops disenfranchises the people these stores were designed to help, and how op-shopping may not be as good for the environment as it seems. Finally, I would like to suggest some ways in which we can enjoy a good op-shop in a responsible and ethical way.

> Outlines the speech to help listeners grasp the main points and follow the speaker's reasoning.

Op shops were created to help the impoverished, and provided agency to people who needed inexpensive clothes. Despite how charitable these stores were, op shops were heavily stigmatised, and shopping from them was associated with poverty. We are now seeing a huge shift in this perception, but with this has come a shift in pricing. Items that used to be affordable to people who couldn't buy them firsthand no longer are, undermining the purpose of these shops' existence.

Recently, I've seen op shops placing high-quality items on 'designer' or 'vintage' racks and inflating their pricepoint to double or triple that of regular items. These racks often contain items that are more durable, or that can be worn in more formal settings, like workplaces. However, it is now even harder for people who actually need these shops to find affordable, well-made clothing that can help them succeed in life. It seems unfair that those of us who can afford to buy these items firsthand are stripping op shops of all their good clothing, especially when people are buying out op shops to turn a profit.

> An anecdote conveys personal experience of the issue.

Furthermore, the environmental benefits of op-shopping are being undermined by people using op shops to justify further spending and over-consumption. This is something my friends and I are definitely guilty of, as it's so easy to justify buying more clothes when everything is pre-loved and seems so relatively cheap. Even though we're not directly contributing to the high turnaround of the fast-fashion industry, this mindset still contributes to further waste.

> Continues to show a close personal involvement in the issue, including its ethical challenges, adding credibility to the argument.

I didn't know this until recently, but did you know that most op-shop clothing goes to landfill? Apparently, only a staggering ten per cent of donated clothing ends up in the store; the rest is often thrown out before it's even made it to the clothing racks. Many people donate clothes that are damaged or poorly made, expecting op shops to sell them. Instead, these items end up in the same place as other unwanted clothing – the trash. Op shops cannot afford to sift through other people's junk, so donating can end up causing more harm than good.

> Uses a statistic to support the argument about op shops being ethically compromised.

Despite this imperfect system, there are a number of things we can do to op-shop ethically. Firstly, we should be mindful of what we're donating, making sure that the clothes we want to pass on are wearable. If you have rips and holes in old favourites, maybe try repairing or upcycling them yourself before giving them away. YouTube is a fantastic resource for this!

> Moves from the problem towards the solution.

> Signposts the elements of the proposed solution.

Secondly, think about what you're buying, and whether you actually need it. Just because something is cheap and pretty doesn't mean you should have it – overconsumption is still overconsumption, whether you're buying first- or second-hand, and unnecessarily buying up all the big-ticket items isn't fair for those who cannot afford them elsewhere. You can still have a good shop without purchasing something from every store you visit.

Lastly, avoid making charity stores a hustle, and think of other ways you can creatively increase the value of the clothes you already have. Painting an old pair of jeans or embroidering a jacket you never wear are things you can do to upcycle and avoid buying clothes you don't need.

> Signals to the audience that the speech is coming up to the conclusion.

Op-shopping is one of my favourite pastimes, and I genuinely believe it can be a fantastic way to shop in a sustainable and considered way. If you can avoid these pitfalls, it is a great way to help the environment, and find some amazing clothes in the process.

> Two clear, firm statements sum up the speech and deliver a positive message.

Happy shopping everyone!

Sample debate

If your oral presentation is in a form such as a debate or panel discussion, you will need to know and follow different conventions from those for giving a speech to your class. The main difference is that in a discussion or dialogue you need to respond to what others say; this means listening very carefully and coming up with counterarguments 'on the spot', as well as responding respectfully.

In this section there are two sample speeches – the opening speech for each side in a debate. (The first speech for the negative team is available as a digital resource.) A common form of debate involves two teams with three speakers each, who take turns to argue for opposite sides of a topic. The affirmative team argues in favour of the topic, while the negative team argues against it. A 'presidential' style of debate, on the other hand, is between only two speakers who take it in turns to present arguments, respond to each other's statements and even ask each other questions.

Scan the code or click here to view guidelines for a debate between two teams of three speakers.

Topic: That Australians are buying too many new clothes.

First affirmative speaker

Good afternoon.

Australians are serious shopaholics. Every year, each of us buys around 27 kilograms of clothing, and discards around 23 kilos of it. While we may be able to get away with buying so much cheap clothing due to the affordability of the fast-fashion industry, the environment cannot. We in the affirmative team believe that Australians, as a nation, need to stop buying so many new clothes.

> Begins by establishing some context for the debate.

> States the team line.

I will firstly argue that it is imperative that we stop excessive clothing consumption, to prevent environmental destruction. I will then discuss how the Australian Fashion Council's solution of a 'circular clothing economy' is unviable with such high levels of clothing consumption. Our second speaker will debate the ethical issues associated with supporting the fast-fashion industry that is responsible for much of Australia's textile overconsumption, and the moral consequences of pandering to extravagance. Finally, our third speaker will sum up our arguments and rebut the arguments of the negative team.

> Outlines the team split – the arguments to be presented by the first two speakers.

But before we get into it, I would like to define some key terms of this debate. We would like 'too many' to be understood as an unacceptable and unsustainable excess. In this debate, 'new' refers to clothing that is produced from raw materials, not including recycled or upcycled clothing and materials. Lastly, 'buying' will refer to the process of acquiring clothing from both national and international companies. While this debate will be framed in an Australian context, and we will be discussing Australian consumers, we will not exclude global commercial traders from this debate.

> Defines the key terms in the debate topic.

We believe that the most damaging aspect of clothing consumption in Australia is the fact that so much of the clothing we purchase ends up in landfill. Of course, the production process is often harmful in and of itself. It requires huge amounts of water and energy, and manufacturing methods often damage the environment in other ways too, due to a lack of rigorous environmental controls in the countries where these clothes are made. Yet arguably it is at the end of our clothes' lifetime that the most damage is done. The vast amount of textile waste has been attributed to the fast-fashion industry, which produces on-trend clothes designed to be discarded. And the more we purchase these new, trendy items, the more we feed into an unsustainable and environmentally harmful system.

> Presents the first main reason.

In 2020, it was found that Australians produce a total of 800 000 tonnes of textile waste each year, making us the second-highest consumers of textiles in the world. The environmental impact of this waste is devastating, especially considering that 60 per cent of the clothes that end up in landfill are made from non-biodegradable materials. And the more we buy, the larger this problem grows.

> Presents supporting evidence for the first main reason.

To put this into a wider perspective, the kind of environmental damage caused at either end of this clothing's life cycle is something we as a nation, and as a species, can no longer afford to overlook. With the United Nations' announcement that climate change is the 'biggest threat modern humans have ever faced', we can no longer get away with complacency when it comes to managing our environmental impact. We have a responsibility to act now, in any way we can, before it's too late. Reducing clothing consumption and wastage by limiting our purchases of new clothes is a massive step in the right direction, and one that will not reduce our quality of life.

Builds from the Australian context to a wider one, escalating the importance of the issue and the need for people to change their behaviour.

Now that we have established the scope of this problem, we must ask what is being done, and how effective these initiatives are. The Australian Fashion Council recently held its first round table to discuss how textile waste can be reduced. Their solution to clothing waste was to create a 'circular clothing economy', whereby we repurpose, resell or recycle all textiles to avoid throwing them out.

Moves on to the second main reason – other solutions to the waste problem are ineffective.

While we, the affirmative, do believe these solutions are admirable and ideologically well placed, we do not believe this country has the resources necessary to manage the sheer volume of clothing currently going to waste. In other words, it doesn't really address the underlying problem – our insatiable demand for new clothes. Australia only has 3000 charity stores to facilitate the reselling of clothing, which, considering our current turnaround of clothing, is not nearly enough to support a circular clothing economy. This is compounded by the fact that only ten per cent of the clothing donated to these organisations is sold – the rest goes directly to landfill.

Makes a concession, enabling the affirmative team to present themselves as reasonable and fair.

Refers back to the topic.

Even if we were able to expand the number of organisations capable of sorting and reselling clothes, most of the new clothing being purchased in Australia is only designed to last for a limited amount of time. Fast-fashion companies like Shein make clothes that are only designed to last for six wears. Even if this clothing were to end up in an op shop, its poor quality would mean that no one would want to buy it.

Uses logical language to show the argument is reasoned.

While there are some good initiatives out there to try and combat textile waste, they are simply not equipped to process and recycle most of what we throw out. The only way forward is to reduce the number of new clothes we purchase, and to invest instead in clothing made to last years, rather than weeks.

Links to the topic.

Every purchasing decision comes at a cost. While buying numerous cheap new clothes every few months may seem like an affordable way to keep up with the latest fashions, the environment can no longer afford to foot the bill.

Ends with a memorable line that reinforces the team's argument.

Scan the code or click here to read the speech by the first speaker on the negative team.

Appendix 1

Completing timed assessment tasks

In Year 11 English you will complete several assessment tasks. Some of these will take place in your classroom, during your regular class time. You might also sit a mid-year exam (after Unit 1) and/or an end-of-year exam (after Unit 2). Your school will decide on the number and type of these assessments. See the course overview on page vi for a summary of the pieces of work you are required to complete to pass each unit.

Preparation strategies

The following tips will help you to revise and prepare for an assessment task.

Create summaries for text response essays

To write a high-quality text analysis in an assessment situation you need to know the text well enough to refer to it in detail from memory.

- Create summaries of the plot, characters and other key elements of the text, using the guidelines on pages 3–4, 18–19 and 23–4.

- Memorise short quotes. Group them into categories: some for main characters, some for key ideas and concerns.

Practise writing

Write several practice pieces in the lead-up to the SAC or exam.

- For text response essays, find topics on your text and create plans that include main contentions, topic sentences and relevant textual evidence.

- For Unit 1, Area of Study 2: Crafting texts your teacher will let you know how much choice you have about the text type and subject matter. Make sure you write in a form that you are very familiar with and know the conventions for.

- For an analysis of argument and persuasive language, analyse recent media texts that you find online or in the print media.

Look at teacher feedback

Re-read any work your teacher has corrected and look carefully at any feedback you received. If it includes suggestions for improvements, try to make use of these to rewrite part of the response and ask your teacher to check your revised version.

Time yourself

Find out how long you will have to write each response and practise writing complete pieces in that time. Make sure you know whether you will be typing or writing by hand, and practise writing in that way. You should also practise the steps you will take before writing, such as:

- annotating the essay topic to identify all the key terms

- creating a brief essay plan, or an outline for your creative text

- annotating the persuasive text or texts.

Time management

In an assessment task, the ability to manage your time well is crucial. An exam will usually include two or three questions; if you spend too long on one question you run the risk of not leaving enough time for others. Even in a SAC you need to ensure you can complete all elements of the task: an essay will need to have a conclusion, and an analysis of argument and language will need to discuss visual elements, and possibly audio or audiovisual elements, as well as the written text/s.

Work out a schedule

For each assessment task your teacher will tell you in advance how many pieces you need to write, the number of marks each piece is worth, and how much writing time you will have. This information will enable you to work out a schedule or time line ahead of your assessment.

If you need to write two or three pieces, allocate time to each piece according to how many marks it is worth. For example, in a mid-year exam for Unit 1 you might have to write an analytical essay for Area of Study 1 and a text for Area of Study 2. If it is a two-hour exam and each piece is worth the same number of marks, allow an hour for each piece.

For a single piece, divide up the available time into sections such as:

- plan
- introduction
- body paragraphs
- conclusion
- proofread.

Use your reading time well

In an exam you will probably have reading time – usually fifteen minutes – in which you can read but not write. Read the paper carefully during this time. You can make several decisions while you are reading:

- If there is a choice of topics or questions, decide which one/s you will answer.
- If you need to choose a text type for a question on the 'Crafting texts' area of study, decide which one you will use.
- Decide on the order in which you will answer the questions.
- If you are analysing a written persuasive text in Unit 2, try to work out what the writer's main contention is and where it is most clearly stated.

Make a plan

Before you start writing your actual response to a question, create a brief plan or outline. This will keep your writing on task and help you to create a complete, well-structured piece of writing.

Proofread

Leave some time at the end of the SAC or exam to proofread: about five minutes per response. Check that you have answered the question thoroughly and correct any errors such as missing words, incorrect spellings or punctuation mistakes.

Appendix 2

Writing and editing toolkit

Although you will write in different styles and with varying purposes in Year 11 English, there are some general writing and editing strategies that you can apply to all your writing tasks.

Writing tips

The following tips will help you to improve the fluency and precision of your writing.

Develop a wide vocabulary and use words precisely

Effective vocabulary choices are at the heart of good writing. A wide vocabulary will give you more options, so that you can choose the best possible word for conveying your meaning. Try these strategies for expanding your vocabulary.

- Create word lists and add to them regularly – say, three new words per week. Add words that you come across in your studies or your wider reading.

- Generate word banks of near-synonyms. See page 71 for an example; create your own version, listing different common adjectives or verbs. Strong, precise verbs can add impact to your writing, especially imaginative writing.

- Use your vocabulary. If you add three new words to a word list or word bank, aim to use them somewhere in the writing you do that week.

- Use a dictionary frequently to check the accepted spellings and definitions of words that are new to you.

Vary your sentence structure

Quality writing makes use of simple, compound and complex sentences; it also includes sentences of different lengths to create variety and to achieve particular effects. Short sentences are good for making concise, impactful statements. Longer sentences are useful for providing detailed information, making connections and building an argument.

While there will be times when a short, simple sentence works well, too many close together will create a disjointed style. Consider the two examples below from a personal response to a short story.

> Cate Kennedy describes an awkward family photo in her story 'Whirlpool'. I remember difficult family photos in my childhood. The image of a whirlpool sums up the emotions I experienced.

> Like Cate Kennedy's account of an awkward family photo in her story 'Whirlpool', my own recollections of family photos contain a complex mix of emotions, well captured by Kennedy's image of a whirlpool.

The first example consists of three separate simple sentences with no conjunctions connecting them; the writing lacks fluency and cohesion. In the second example, the three observations are combined into one complex sentence that connects the story, the central image and the student's personal experience.

Build an argument or a narrative

Any kind of writing, whether fiction or nonfiction, benefits from having an organised structure and a sense of logical progression. In an essay, the standard structure – an introduction followed by several body paragraphs and then a conclusion – forms a coherent whole. The introduction establishes the argument to be made, then each paragraph should add a new layer to the argument, so that by the time you reach the conclusion the reader is likely to share your perspective, or at least understand it. Be clear about what you are arguing for and why, so that there is a thread (a line of argument) running through the essay.

When writing an imaginative text such as a short story, although the writing style and the effects you are aiming to achieve will be quite different from those in an essay, you should still try to create a cohesive structure and sense of forward movement. The story's opening sets up the situations and conflicts that will unfold, raising questions in the reader's mind; the climax and resolution should create a sense of closure, resolving tensions and answering questions.

Be concise

Often, students are tempted to think that *complicated* means *sophisticated*. This is generally not the case. Try to make the most sophisticated points you can in the simplest way possible, not the simplest points in the most complicated way. Compare these examples: the first is overly complex and difficult to follow, while the second conveys the same information concisely and clearly.

> *It is evidently possible that Jane Austen's implementation of ironic statements in her novels is an overt criticism of the functions of the society in which she finds herself.*

> *Austen uses irony to provide a critique of her society.*

Use inline quotes

When you quote from a text, try to include the quote 'inline'. This means incorporating the quote into your own sentence. For example, compare the following two uses of a quote from Peter Jackson's film version of JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. In the first, which is not inline, the student has put the entire quote into its own sentence and then explained it. In the second, the explanation and the quote are part of a single sentence. The second example is more fluent and cohesive.

> *'There's some good in this world, Mr Frodo, and it's worth fighting for.' This shows that Sam is able to encourage Frodo to keep going, even though they are struggling.*

> *Encouraging Frodo to push through their struggles, Sam tells his friend that 'there's some good in this world' and 'it's worth fighting for'.*

Avoid comma splices (run-on sentences)

A comma splice occurs when two sentences (or main clauses) are joined together with a comma. (The resulting sentence is known as a run-on sentence.) For example:

Jason is the father of Medea's two children, he betrays her by becoming engaged to Glauce.

In analytical writing, which should always be grammatically correct, you should avoid comma splices. Ways to fix this error include changing the single sentence to two separate sentences, using a semicolon in place of the comma, and adding a conjunction. For example:

Jason is the father of Medea's two children, yet he betrays her by becoming engaged to Glauce.

However, in imaginative writing sometimes it is acceptable to use a comma splice. Although a run-on sentence is not grammatically correct, writers can use it as part of a conversational style or an attempt to represent the process of thinking (sometimes called 'stream of consciousness'). This example is from Margaret Atwood's novel *Alias Grace*:

I am a model prisoner, and give no trouble. That's what the Governor's wife says, I have overheard her saying it.

Here the comma after 'says' is technically incorrect, but it helps to suggest the flow of thoughts through the narrator's mind.

Avoid sentence fragments

As with comma splices, sentence fragments can be used in some forms of writing but should be avoided in formal analytical writing. For example:

Medea is cruelly betrayed by Jason. The father of their children.

The second 'sentence' is not grammatically correct, since it lacks a verb. You could make the fragment into a complete sentence by adding a subject and a verb, such as 'He is', or by combining the fragment with the first sentence:

Medea is cruelly betrayed by Jason, the father of their children.

In fiction and poetry, though, fragments can be used for effect, and they can be employed in dialogue to reflect everyday speech. They can also have a place in nonfiction. This example is from Anh Do's memoir *The Happiest Refugee*:

He reaches across the plastic table and slaps me on the face. Just toyingly, but hard.

The sentence 'just toyingly, but hard' is a fragment because it lacks a subject and a verb. Making it a standalone sentence like this (rather than incorporating it into the previous sentence to make it grammatically correct) emphasises the force of the slap and helps to convey Do's discomfort and shock.

Editing tips

Editing and proofreading are vital – and often neglected – stages in the writing process. In VCE English you will be writing in different styles, including analytical, imaginative and persuasive. You should edit and proofread everything you write for submission.

When you **edit** your work you are looking for big-picture issues: the clarity and fluency of your writing; the quality of the content; the structure of your argument or narrative. When you edit you will often find that sentences or even whole paragraphs need to be rewritten. When you **proofread**, you should have finished rewriting and just be looking to improve or correct individual word choices, spelling, grammar and punctuation.

As you re-read your work, make notes on it to indicate the sorts of changes that you need to make. If you are using Word, the 'Track Changes' function is a useful tool. However, you will probably find that you edit more effectively on paper (hard copy), and since your assessment tasks are likely to be handwritten, it is a good idea to handwrite your practice pieces too.

Here are some tips to help you edit and proofread more effectively.

Let it breathe

If you have time, avoid the temptation to proofread immediately to 'get it done'. Once you have finished your draft, let it sit for a few days before your first edit. When you come back to it, you will have forgotten some of what you have written and when looking at it with fresh eyes you'll be less likely to miss mistakes.

Read it aloud

Reading aloud is the single best way to identify grammatical issues and awkward phrases. Speaking and listening are skills learned in infancy, much earlier than writing, and require very different thought processes. When you read aloud, you will often find that you stumble or stop when you reach parts of your writing that need fixing. Read your work aloud using a paper copy and with a pencil or highlighter in your hand, and mark phrases that need revising.

Work with a partner

Another person will spot errors that you miss. Share your work with a friend, classmate or member of your family. Even better, have them read your work aloud to combine this proofreading tactic with the one above. Make notes while you are listening.

Use a checklist

A checklist helps you to focus on different aspects of your writing. Don't try to do everything at once; use the checklist several times and focus on a different feature each time. There are checklists in this book on pages 52–3 (personal text response), 72–3 (analytical text response), 147 (crafting texts) and 212 (analysis of argument and persuasive language).

Proofread your work in a timed assessment

In a situation such as a SAC or exam you won't have time to do extensive rewriting. However, it is worth managing your time so that you leave five minutes to read through your work before you hand it in or move on to the next question. In this time you will be able to correct flaws and errors such as excessive repetition and incorrect spelling and punctuation.

Appendix 3

Glossary for Area of Study 1

act The major sections into which a play is divided. Each act can consist of several scenes.

aerial shot A film shot looking down on a subject or landscape from far above.

alliteration The repetition of consonant or vowel sounds at the beginning of words close together.

allusion A reference to another text or well-known statement.

antagonist The character who opposes the protagonist (main character or hero).

aside A short speech that a character in a play delivers directly to the audience. Other characters remain onstage but the audience understands that the other characters cannot hear the aside.

assonance Repetition of vowel sounds in words close together.

autobiography The story of a person's life written by that person.

biography The story of a person's life written by another person.

blank verse A form of poetry (also used in Shakespearean drama) in which lines have ten alternating unstressed and stressed syllables (i.e. iambic pentameter) and do not rhyme.

chorus A group of actors in a Greek tragedy who are not characters in the play. They comment on the morality of the characters' actions and decisions.

cinematography The use of a camera to capture images on film in order to tell the story. The key elements of cinematography are camera distance, camera angle and camera movement.

climax The point of greatest intensity in a narrative.

close-up A film shot that shows the subject matter in detail, seemingly from nearby; often used for a face or significant object.

connotation An implied or associated meaning of a word or image.

context The historical, social and cultural circumstances surrounding a text and its reading or viewing. The context in which a text is produced is the **context of production**; the context for its reading or viewing is the **context of reception**.

crisis point A point of significant conflict or tension in a narrative.

crosscut A type of film edit in which the film cuts or 'crosses' between two scenes. The viewer infers that the two scenes are occurring simultaneously.

cut A type of film edit in which one shot ends and the next begins immediately, usually with the sound continuing over the cut.

denotation The literal or dictionary meaning of a word.

denouement The section of a narrative that follows the climax; it provides answers to questions and untangles narrative threads. (From French, meaning 'untying'.)

dialogue A conversation between two or more characters.

diction The careful selection of words to create a particular style of writing or speaking.

diegetic sound Sound that belongs to the world of a film or play; it can be heard by at least some of the characters.

director The person who interprets the script, makes the creative decisions, tells the actors what to do and runs the film shoot / play rehearsals.

dissolve A type of film edit in which two shots overlap briefly, then one shot fades into the next.

edit In film, a way of joining two shots. Editing also involves making choices about which shots to omit, along with the order and length of shots in the final cut (version) of the film.

exposition The opening section of a text; it introduces characters and settings, and sets up the situations and conflicts that will be developed.

fade A type of film edit in which the screen fades to black between shots.

fiction Any piece of writing, usually in prose, that is imaginative and not intended to be a factual account of real people or events.

framing In film or a still image, the way in which subjects are positioned within the scene. Framing determines how much of the setting is visible, which individuals will be included in the shot and which elements will be outside the frame.

free verse A form of poetry in which there is no regular pattern of rhythm, rhyme, line length or stanza length.

genre The category to which a text belongs (e.g. horror, romance).

imagery The use of images and descriptions that engage several or all of the five senses.

long shot A film shot that shows the setting or background, with characters or significant objects appearing as small details within the setting.

main character/s The character/s around whom the story and events revolve; the character/s the writer is most interested in.

medium (*plural* **media**) The channel or form of communication (e.g. print media, digital media).

medium shot A film shot that shows a person from the waist up, with some background visible.

memoir A recount of events experienced by the author, usually covering a certain period of their life.

metaphor A figure of speech that describes one thing as if it is another thing, e.g. 'the black cloak of night'.

minor characters The less important characters who do not play a significant role in the story.

mise en scène A French term meaning 'putting on stage'. It refers to all the visual elements within the frame of a shot or visible onstage: acting style, setting, costumes and lighting.

mode The manner or process by which a text is delivered or received. The five modes are writing, reading, speaking, listening and viewing.

monologue A long speech delivered by a single character.

montage In film, a series of very short scenes or shots, often overlapping and usually set to music, indicating the passage of time.

motif A repeated image or concept usually linked to key ideas in a text; it may have a symbolic meaning.

narrative A story that may be true or fictional.

narrative structure The way in which the elements of the text are arranged. Events may be described chronologically (linear structure) or out of chronological order (nonlinear structures).

narrator The voice or character that tells the story.

non-diegetic sound Sound that does not belong to the world of a film or play. A film's music soundtrack is usually non-diegetic as the characters cannot hear the music.

nonfiction A category of texts that describe real individuals and actual events as accurately and truthfully as possible.

panning shot A film shot in which the camera moves continuously in a horizontal direction to record a panorama or to follow a moving person or object.

personification The attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects or abstract ideas.

playwright The writer of a play.

plot The storyline of a narrative.

props In plays or films, items (furniture, ornaments etc.) in the set, and (personal props) objects used/handled by characters.

protagonist The central character.

resolution The section of a narrative in which conflict is resolved.

scene In drama, a division of an act, usually representing one location or a short period of time.

screenplay The script for a film or television show. It includes some directions regarding setting, lighting, soundtrack, mise en scène etc.

screenwriter The author of a screenplay. Sometimes the screenwriter is also the director; for example, Andrew Niccol wrote and directed *Gattaca*.

set In drama, the backdrops, furniture and other props on the stage.

setting The place and time in which the action of a narrative takes place.

shot A continuous, uninterrupted section of a film. Most shots do not last more than ten seconds.

shot/reverse-shot A film edit that cuts back and forth between two points of view, e.g. alternating close-ups of two speakers in a conversation.

simile A figure of speech using the words 'like' or 'as' to compare two things, e.g. 'my fingers were as cold as icicles'.

soliloquy In drama, a speech made by a character alone onstage.

speaker/persona The voice of a poem; the individual who seems to be addressing the reader or listener.

stage direction An instruction regarding the set or an aspect of the actors' appearance or performance. Usually printed in italics in a play script.

subplot A minor storyline within the main story.

symbol An object that represents something with a larger abstract meaning (e.g. a dove as a symbol of peace).

tilt-down shot A camera angle looking down at the subject from above. Also called a high-angle shot.

tilt-up shot A camera angle looking up at the subject from below. Also called a low-angle shot.

turning point A point in the narrative at which decisive change occurs.

voice-over Spoken commentary or narration from an unseen speaker in a film or other video text.

zoom shot A film shot in which the focal length of the camera lens changes continuously, creating the impression of moving in towards (or out away from) the subject.

Acknowledgements

VCE Units 1 & 2

ENGLISH YEAR 11

English Year 11: VCE Units 1 & 2 is a comprehensive textbook for the VCE English Study Design: 2023–2027. It includes detailed guidelines for each area of study, including strategies for analysis, approaches to developing written pieces, and sample responses for all assessment tasks. It contains an extensive section on Area of Study 2: Crafting texts, showing students how to develop ideas, draw on vocabulary and techniques used in mentor texts, and shape texts for particular audiences, purposes and contexts.

THE BOOK FEATURES:

- A highly practical approach to skill development including mind maps, flow charts, sentence starters, word banks and step-by-step processes

- Activities to put knowledge into practice at every stage

- Clear definitions and explanations for all key knowledge and vocabulary

- Guidelines for writing personal responses as well as analytical responses to texts for Area of Study 1: Reading and exploring texts

- A wide variety of text excerpts to demonstrate the text structures, features and conventions of text types used in Area of Study 2: Crafting texts

- A range of recent media texts covering relevant and lively issues for Area of Study 2: Exploring argument

- Bonus digital resources, accessed via QR codes and weblinks, including video overviews, summary and planning templates, and additional sample responses.

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