

English Level 6

Chapter 3 — Literature

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Attribution: Classbasics Pty Ltd, vwx.au

Distribution note: this document may be distributed, and whole pages may be removed from it, provided only WHOLE pages are removed (never part of a page). This allows teachers to remove tests, exams and subtopics they do not want to issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content has been excluded as accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately.

Significant effort has been made to ensure this content is legal. Please send any areas of concern to admin@vwx.au with appropriate document/legal references so errors can be verified and changes be made.

Contents

Section	Page
Responses to characters and events in literary texts drawn from historical, cultural or social contexts	2
Comparing language choices, topics, themes and plots across literary texts	16
Characteristics of literary texts that define an author's individual style	30
Sound and imagery: meaning and effect in prose and poetry	43
Creating literature: adapting plot, characters, settings and ideas; experimenting with vocabulary and literary devices	58
English Level 6 — Construction task C3	73
English Level 6 — Construction task C3: Solutions	79

Responses to characters and events in literary texts drawn from historical, cultural or social contexts

Curriculum: Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 6 · Literature strand · Content description VC2E6LE01 · draws on VCAA elaborations .E02 and .E03.

In this section you will meet characters from different times, places and ways of life. You will look carefully at what characters do and why, and you will learn to share your own **responses** to them — with reasons. Then you will use everything you have learned to write a review of an Australian film.

1. Every text comes from somewhere

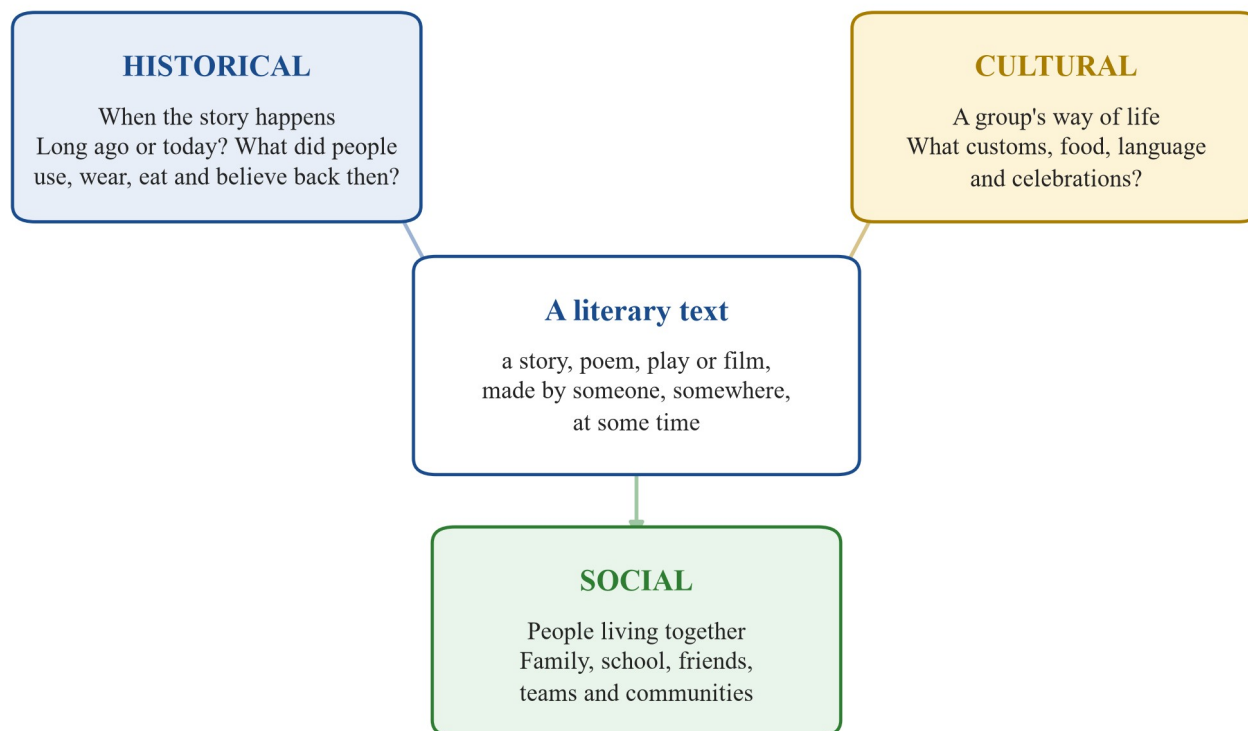
A **literary text** is a text someone made to tell a story, paint a picture with words or fire the imagination. Novels, short stories, poems, plays and films are all literary texts.

Every literary text comes from somewhere. It is written by a person, in a place, at a time — and it is usually set in a place and time too. The **context** of a text is the time, place and way of life the text comes from or is set in. The **setting** of a story is the time and place the story happens in. Context and setting work together: the world a story sits in shapes what its characters can do, what can happen to them, and what their choices mean.

There are three kinds of context to look for. They often overlap, but in most texts one is strongest.

- **Historical context** — *when* the story happens. Is it set long ago, like the goldfields of the 1850s, or in the present day? What did people use, wear, eat and believe back then?
- **Cultural context** — the way of life of a group of people: their customs, food, language and celebrations. A story set at the Spring Festival in China carries a cultural context.
- **Social context** — people and how they live together: family, school, friends, teams and communities. A story about the first day at a new school carries a social context.

Three kinds of context



In most texts the three overlap — but one is usually strongest.

Three kinds of context — historical, cultural and social — shown as three lenses around a book, each with its question words

When you know a text's context, you understand its characters better. A character who hides food in a story set during hard times is doing something different from a character who hides food in a story set today. Same action — different meaning. That is context at work.

Read these three short texts. Each one was written for this book, and each one carries a different context.

Model text 1 — Elsie and the Nugget (historical context, Australia)

The year was 1854. Elsie, twelve, lived with her father and her little brother Tam on the Ballarat goldfields, in a tent with a bark roof. Every morning, while her father was digging, Elsie washed gravel in a pan, hoping to see gold.

One cold afternoon her father walked into town to buy flour. "Keep working the wash," he said. "I'll be back before dark."

Tam was chasing a lizard. Elsie swirled the pan, and the mud washed away. Something big and yellow sat at the bottom of the pan. Not a flake. A nugget — the size of a small egg.

Elsie's heart jumped. She looked around. No one was watching. Quickly, she put the nugget in her pocket.

Then a shadow came over the claim. It was Mr Grady, who worked the claim next door.

"Found something, have we?" he said with a smile. "Hand it over, girl. That gold belongs on my side of the boundary. Your father moved the stones last week, and everyone knows it."

Elsie knew the stones had not moved. She and her father had set them themselves. But her father was far away, Mr Grady was big, and his voice was hard.

Tam came and stood beside her. He was only seven.

Elsie put her hand on the nugget in her pocket. What should she do?

Context clues to notice: the year 1854 · the goldfields · washing gravel in a pan · a tent with a bark roof · a claim marked with stones. All of these point to the historical context — life on the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s.

Model text 2 — Mei's Lantern (cultural context, the world)

Tomorrow was the Spring Festival, the biggest celebration of the year for Mei's family. In China, where Mei lived, families cleaned their houses, put up red decorations for good luck, and cooked a big meal to share.

"This year you are old enough to make your own lantern," Gran said. She put red paper, glue and a candle on the table.

Mei cut the paper slowly, the way Gran showed her. She folded it, glued the edges and tied a string to the top. Her lantern was not perfect. It leaned a little to one side.

That night the whole family walked to the square. Hundreds of lanterns glowed in the dark — fish, birds, dragons. Mei held her lantern high. It leaned to one side, but its light was warm and gold.

"Same light as all the rest," Gran said, squeezing her hand. "That's what matters."

Context clues to notice: the Spring Festival · red decorations for good luck · a meal shared by the whole family · lanterns shaped like fish, birds and dragons. These point to the cultural context — how Mei's family celebrates, and what their customs mean.

Model text 3 — New School (social context, Australia)

Ash had lived all her life in a small town where everyone knew everyone. Now her family had moved to Melbourne, and this was her first day at a big city school.

At her old school there were only forty kids. Here the playground was full of noise and running feet. Ash stood by the fence with her lunch box and watched.

A group of girls played four square. Ash knew that game. In her old town she played it every lunchtime.

One of the girls waved. "We need one more! Do you want in?"

Ash hesitated. What if she got it wrong? What if their rules were different?

“Go on,” the girl said, smiling. “We’ll show you how we play it here.”

Ash put down her lunch box and ran over.

Context clues to notice: a small town where everyone knew everyone · a big city school · a playground game with its own rules · a newcomer trying to fit in. These point to the social context — how people live together, and what it feels like to join a new group.

Context clues in the three model texts

Text	Clues in the text	Context	What it tells the reader
Elsie and the Nugget	1854 · the goldfields · washing gravel in a pan · a tent with a bark roof	HISTORICAL	Life on the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s
Mei's Lantern	the Spring Festival · red decorations for good luck · a meal shared by the whole family · lanterns	CULTURAL	How Mei's family celebrates, and what their customs mean
New School	a big city school · a playground game with its own rules · a newcomer trying to fit in	SOCIAL	How people live together, and joining a new group

Each text carries all three kinds of context. These are the strongest clues in each one.

A table of context clues taken from the three model texts, each matched to its context type and what it tells the reader

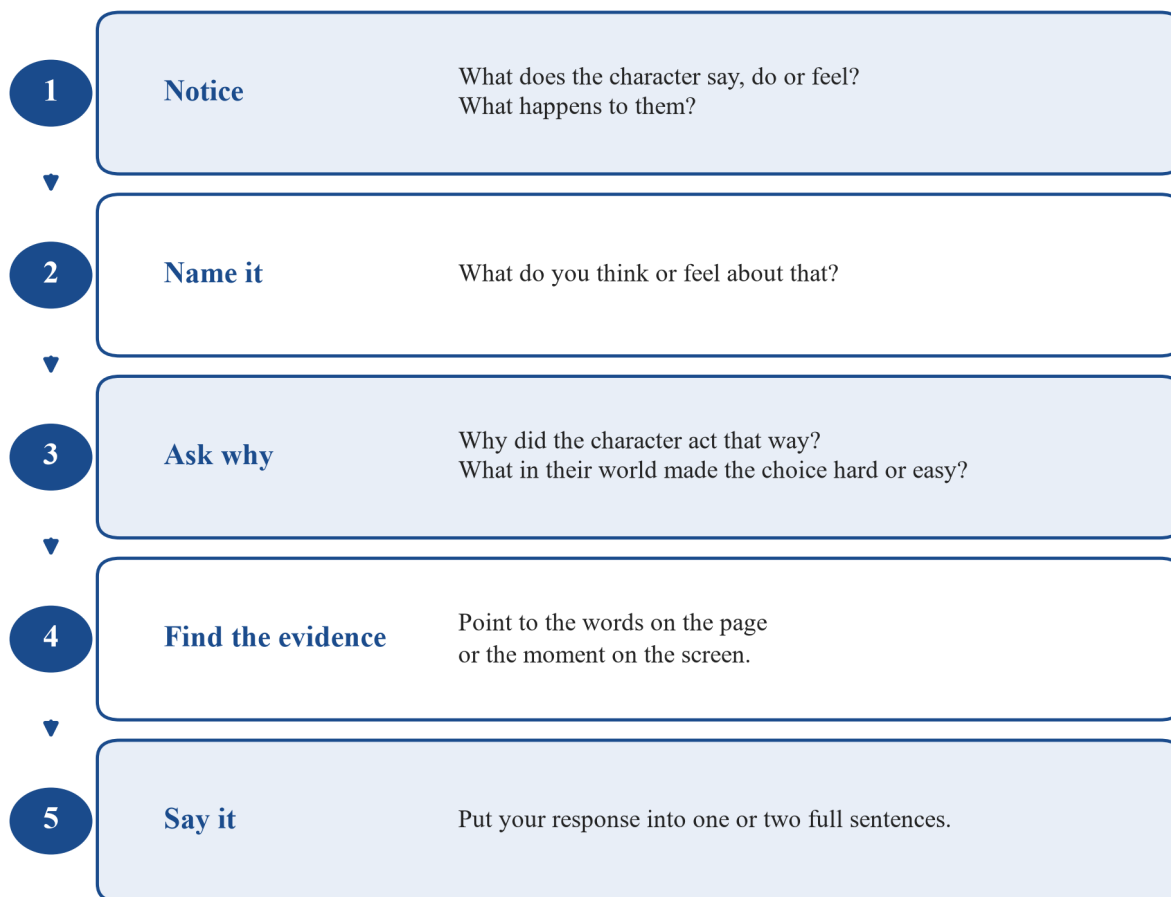
2. Your response, with evidence

A **response** is what you think and feel about a character or an event — plus your reasons. Two readers can respond to the same character in different ways, and both can be right. Feelings belong to the person who feels them: your feelings cannot be “wrong”. But a *claim* about a character — “Mr Grady is greedy”, “Elsie is brave” — is something you must back up. You back it up with **evidence**: the parts of the text you point to — the words on the page — that show why you think that way. (This is the same rule as in Section 1B: opinions are stronger when they stand on facts.)

Five steps to a strong response:

1. **Notice** — what does the character say, do or feel? What happens to them?
2. **Name it** — what do you think or feel about that?
3. **Ask why** — why did the character act that way? What in their world made that choice hard or easy?
4. **Find the evidence** — point to the words on the page or the moment on the screen.
5. **Say it** — put your response into one or two full sentences.

Five steps to a strong response



The five steps of a strong response: notice, name it, ask why, find the evidence, say it

Two readers, one event. Read this event from *Elsie and the Nugget*: Mr Grady demands the nugget, and Elsie has to decide what to do, with her little brother watching. Two students gave different responses:

Tam’s response: “I would hand it over. Mr Grady is big, Dad is far away, and Elsie has Tam with her. The gold matters, but keeping her brother safe matters more. The text says Mr Grady’s voice was hard — that sounds like a person you should not fight with.”

Grace’s response: “I would keep it and say no. The gold is hers, and she knows the stones did not move. If she hands it over, Mr Grady learns that pushing people around works. The text says she and her father set the stones themselves — that is proof.”

There is no one right response. Tam and Grace reach different conclusions because they weigh different things: safety first, fairness first. When your teacher reads your response, they are not looking for which side you land on. They are looking for a reason, and for evidence from the text. Both of the responses above have both. That is what makes them strong.

One event, two strong responses

The event

Mr Grady demands the nugget. Elsie must decide what to do — with Tam watching.

Tam — safety first

“I would hand it over.”

Reason: Mr Grady is big, Dad is far away, and Elsie has Tam with her.

Evidence: “his voice was hard”

Grace — fairness first

“I would keep it and say no.”

Reason: the gold is hers, and she knows the stones did not move.

Evidence: “she and her father set the stones herself”

Both responses are strong. They reach different conclusions because each reader weighs a different thing. What counts is the reason and the evidence.

The same event from Elsie and the Nugget with two different student responses, one putting safety first and one putting fairness first

Worked example 1 — a modelled analysis

Task: How does Elsie show courage in the story so far? What is your response to Mr Grady?

Here is one way to plan an answer. Notice how every row ends in evidence.

What I notice	What it shows	My response	My evidence
Elsie works the wash while her father is away.	She is trusted, and she does the job well.	I respect her — she is doing a grown-up job without complaining.	“Keep working the wash,” he said.
She pockets the nugget when no one is watching.	She is honest about the gold being hers, but she is also a kid who is a little afraid of losing it.	I understand why she did it. I would have done the same.	“No one was watching. Quickly, she put the nugget in her pocket.”
She does not hand the nugget over when Mr Grady tells her to.	She stands her ground even though he is big and her father is away.	That is courage. Her hands must have been shaking.	“Elsie put her hand on the nugget in her pocket.”
Mr Grady says the stones were moved, but Elsie knows they were not.	He is telling a lie to get what he wants.	My response to Mr Grady is a strong one: he is using his size and a false story to take something from two children.	“Your father moved the stones last week, and everyone knows it.” — but Elsie knew the stones had not moved.

Now read the finished response, written from that plan:

In the story so far, Elsie shows courage by standing her ground. When Mr Grady demands the nugget, she does not hand it over, even though he is big and her father is far away. The text says she “put her hand on

the nugget in her pocket” — she is scared, but she holds on. My response to Mr Grady is that he is a bully. He tells a false story about the stones, and the text says Elsie knew the stones had not moved. He is using his size and a lie to take gold from two children, and that makes my response to him an angry one.

See how the response does three jobs: it says *what the character does*, it says *what I think or feel about it*, and it *points to the words that prove it*.

3. Heroes in different settings

The Victorian Curriculum uses the word **hero** in one of its examples for this content description, but it does not define the word. Different people use “hero” in different ways — for a warrior in a story, for a nurse in real life, for a footballer on grand final day. In this section, treat a **hero** as *a character who faces something hard or dangerous and chooses to act, even when it costs them something*. Keep that definition in mind as you read, and notice when other people use the word in a different way.

Stories put heroes in all kinds of settings. Two common ones are:

- **Science fiction** — stories about worlds that could come to be, often set in the future and full of new technology: spaceships, robots, invented machines.
- **Fantasy** — stories where magic or impossible things are real: spells, dragons, talking animals.
- Heroes also appear in **realistic** stories — stories that could happen in real life, with no magic and no future machines.

Read these two short texts, written for this book. Both are hero stories. The hero is very different in each.

Kira and the Storm Sea (a fantasy hero)

Kira was born with the power to speak to storms. When a wild storm rose up out of the sea and came for her village, Kira did not hide. She walked to the water’s edge, lifted her arms, and spoke to the storm the way you would speak to a frightened horse. The storm slowed. It turned. It rolled back out to sea, and the village was safe. The people cheered — but Kira was already thinking about the next storm.

The Night the Creek Rose (a realistic hero)

Sam had no powers. He was eleven, and his job was carrying sandbags. When the creek rose in the night and water pushed into Mrs Chen’s house, Sam carried sandbags in the rain for two hours, one after another. His arms ached. His boots filled with water. He kept going.

Later, when Mrs Chen said he was a hero, Sam shook his head. “I just carried bags,” he said. “Anyone would have done it.”

But everyone knew that was not true. Not everyone would have stayed.

What changes when the setting changes? In *Kira and the Storm Sea*, the hero has a gift no real person has, and she faces a storm big enough to destroy a village. In *The Night the Creek Rose*, the hero is an ordinary kid, and the danger is real rain and real water. Kira’s courage looks like a great moment; Sam’s courage looks like not giving up, bag after bag, for two hours. The fantasy story says courage can be a gift you are born with. The realistic story says courage can be a choice anyone can make. Both stories ask you the same question: *what would I do?*

Two heroes, two settings

Kira — a fantasy hero

Sam — a realistic hero

What makes the hero special	She was born with the power to speak to storms.	Nothing — Sam is an ordinary kid.
The danger they face	A wild storm coming for her village.	The creek rose and floodwater pushed into Mrs Chen's house.
How they act	She walks to the water's edge and speaks to the storm until it turns and rolls back to sea.	He carries sandbags in the rain for two hours, one after another, and keeps going.
What the story says about courage	Courage can be a gift you are born with.	Courage can be a choice anyone can make.

Both heroes face something hard or dangerous and choose to act, even when it costs them something.

A comparison table of the fantasy hero Kira and the realistic hero Sam, row by row: what makes each hero special, the danger they face, how they act, and what each story says about courage

4. Reviews of Australian films

A **review** is a text where someone tells you what a text is about and what they think of it, so you can decide whether to read it or watch it. The person who writes a review is a **reviewer**. In this section we look at reviews of Australian films.

Reviews mix two kinds of language (you met these in Section 1B):

- **facts** — what is true about the film: its name, its year, who is in it, what happens;
- **opinions** — what the reviewer thinks: “funny”, “warm”, “the best part is...”.

A good reviewer gives you both. The facts help you know what the film is; the opinions, backed by examples, help you decide if it is for you.

Reviews also have a shape. Most film reviews have four stages (you will meet more about the stages of reviews in Section 1C):

1. **The catch** — the film’s name, its year, and one sentence to pull you in.
2. **The short retelling** — what the film is about, in two or three sentences. No spoilers! A **spoiler** is a sentence that gives away the ending or a surprise. A good review tells you enough to decide — without stealing the ending from you.
3. **The response** — what the reviewer thinks about the characters and events, with reasons.
4. **The rating and the call** — a star rating (out of five) that matches the words, and who the reviewer thinks should watch it.

The four stages of a film review

1 · The catch The film's name and year, and one sentence to pull you in.	2 · The short retelling What the film is about, in two or three sentences. No spoilers!	3 · The response What you think of the characters and events, with reasons.	4 · The rating and the call Stars out of five that match your words — and who should watch it.
--	---	---	--

A good review tells you enough to decide — without stealing the ending.

The four stages of a film review: the catch, the short retelling, the response, and the rating and the call

Model review — The Castle (written for this book)

The Castle is a real Australian film (1997). The review below was written for this book.

A little house with a big heart

The Castle (1997) is an Australian comedy about the Kerrigan family. Their house sits next to power lines and an airport, but to Darryl Kerrigan it is a palace.

When the family is told they must leave so the airport can grow, they say no. They have little money and no one important on their side — but they take their case to court, and they keep going until it reaches the highest court in the country.

The best thing about this film is its heart. The Kerrigans are funny, loud and full of love for each other. You laugh at them one minute and cheer for them the next. The story asks a big question: is a home just a building, or is it something more?

Rating: ★★★★★ — five stars. It is warm, funny and true. Watch it with your family.

A model review, with its stages labelled

A little house with a big heart

The Castle (1997) is an Australian comedy about the Kerrigan family. Their house sits next to power lines and an airport, but to Darryl Kerrigan it is a palace.

When the family is told they must leave so the airport can grow, they say no. They have little money and no one important on their side — but they take their case to court, and they keep going until it reaches the highest court in the country.

The best thing about this film is its heart. The Kerrigans are funny, loud and full of love for each other. You laugh at them one minute and cheer for them the next. The story asks a big question: is a home just a building, or is it something more?

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ — five stars. It is warm, funny and true. Watch it with your family.

— a review written for this book

The catch

The short retelling
(no spoilers)

The response
(with reasons)

The rating
and the call

Facts tell you what the film is. Opinions, backed by examples, help you decide if it is for you.

The model review of The Castle with labels showing its four stages: the catch, the short retelling, the response, and the rating and the call

Worked example 2 — a modelled composition: writing a review of Babe

Task: Write a short review of the Australian film *Babe* (1995).

Here is how one student built theirs, in three steps: plan, write, check.

Step 1 — Plan.

Stage	My plan
The catch	<i>Babe</i> (1995), an Australian film. A pig who wants a job no pig has ever had.
The short retelling	<i>Babe</i> grows up on Farmer Hoggett's farm. He decides he wants to be a sheepdog. The other animals laugh.
The response	Kind, funny, warm. <i>Babe</i> is polite to the sheep and never gives up. Some parts are a little sad.
The rating and the call	Four stars. For anyone who has been told they can't do something.

Step 2 — Write. Turn each plan point into one or two sentences:

The pig who could

Babe (1995) is an Australian film about a pig who wants a job no pig has ever had. *Babe* grows up on Farmer Hoggett's farm and decides he wants to be a sheepdog. The other animals laugh. Pigs do not look after sheep — everyone knows that.

Babe does not listen. He is polite to the sheep, he learns their names, and he tries again every day. At the big sheepdog trial, he shows the whole town what kindness can do.

This film is funny and warm, and the animals feel real. Some parts are a little sad, so watch it with someone you can talk to.

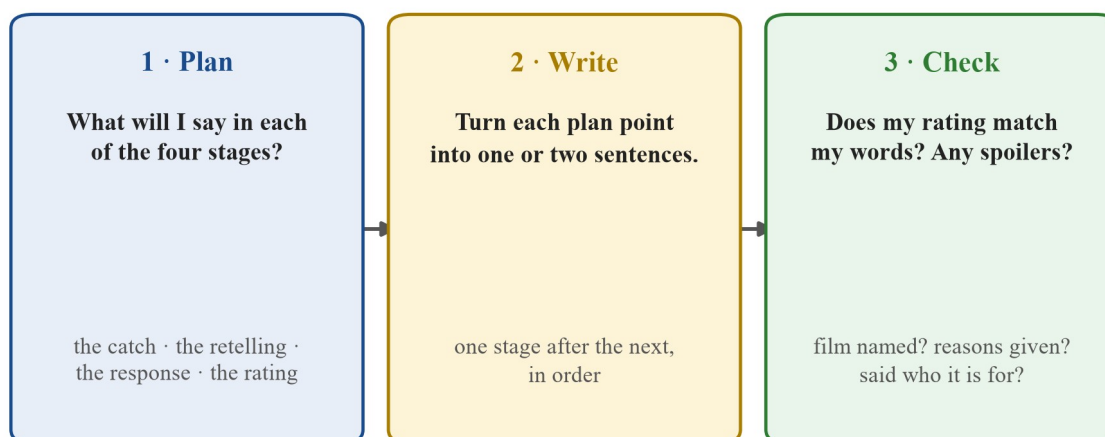
Rating: ★★★★★ — four stars. *Babe* is for anyone who has ever been told they can't do something.

Step 3 — Check.

Check	Yes
Did I name the film and the year?	✓
Did I retell the story in two or three sentences, with no spoilers?	✓ — I did not say how the trial ends.
Did I give my opinion of a character or an event, with a reason?	✓ — Babe is kind and never gives up; I pointed to what he does.
Does my rating match my words?	✓ — I said funny, warm and a little sad, so four stars, not five.
Did I say who the film is for?	✓ — anyone who has been told they can't do something.

Notice the review never gives away the ending. It tells you enough to decide — then it leaves the ending for you to find.

Building a review in three steps



Shown on the review of Babe (1995) — Worked example 2.

The three steps of building a review — plan, write, check — with the key question for each step

Guided tasks

G1 — Sort the context clues. Copy this table into your book. Put each clue in the right column: historical, cultural or social. (Some clues could fit in two columns — put them where the clue points most strongly, and be ready to say why.)

Clue	Which context?
washing gravel in a pan	?
red decorations for good luck	?

Clue	Which context?
a playground game with its own rules	?
a tent with a bark roof	?
the Spring Festival	?
a small town where everyone knew everyone	?
the year 1854	?
a meal shared by the whole family	?
a newcomer trying to fit in	?

G2 — Respond to the characters in *Elsie and the Nugget*. Answer in one or two full sentences. Remember: response + reason + evidence.

- What hard choice does Elsie face at the end of the text?
- What kind of person is Mr Grady? Point to one piece of evidence from the text.
- How does the goldfields setting make the nugget matter more than it would in a story set today?

G3 — Complete the hero table. Copy the table and fill in the empty cells. Use the two hero stories in Section 3 to help you.

	Kira (<i>Kira and the Storm Sea</i>)	Sam (<i>The Night the Creek Rose</i>)
What makes the hero special	?	nothing — Sam is an ordinary kid
The danger they face	a wild storm coming for the village	?
How they act	?	carries sandbags for two hours in the rain and keeps going
What the story says about courage	?	?

G4 — Fact or opinion? Each sentence comes from the model review of *The Castle*. Write **F** for fact or **O** for opinion.

- The Castle* (1997) is an Australian comedy about the Kerrigan family.
- The family is told they must leave so the airport can grow.
- The best thing about this film is its heart.
- The Kerrigans are funny, loud and full of love for each other.
- They take their case to court, and it reaches the highest court in the country.
- Watch it with your family.

G5 — Match the story to its strongest context.

Story idea	Strongest context
1. A girl reads her great-grandmother's diary about the long ship trip to Australia in 1912.	?
2. A boy celebrates Diwali with his family and brings sweets to share at school.	?
3. Two friends fall out when a new kid joins their group of three.	?
4. A class starts a vegetable garden to raise money for the local pool.	?

G6 — Use sentence starters. Respond to Gran in *Mei's Lantern*. Write one full sentence for each starter.

- "I think Gran is _____ because _____."

(b) “When Gran says ‘Same light as all the rest’, I think she really means ____.”

Tasks on your own

S1 — Be a context detective. Think of a book or film you know well. Write two context clues from it, and for each one say which context it points to: historical, cultural or social.

S2 — A response with evidence. Choose one character from a story or film you know. Write a response of three to five sentences. Include: what the character does, what you think or feel about it, and at least one piece of evidence (a moment or a line you remember).

S3 — Swap the hero. Take *Kira and the Storm Sea* and make it a realistic story. List three changes you would make. Think about: what takes the place of Kira’s gift? What takes the place of the wild storm? How is the village saved without any magic at all?

S4 — A mini review. Write a mini review (about four to six sentences) of a film or story you know. Use all four stages: the catch, the short retelling, the response, and the rating and the call. No spoilers!

One big task — write a review of an Australian film

You have read model reviews, planned one, and checked one. Now write your own.

Choose one of these real Australian films (or another one your teacher agrees to):

Film	Year	What it is about
<i>The Castle</i>	1997	A family fights to keep their home.
<i>Babe</i>	1995	A pig who wants to be a sheepdog.
<i>Paper Planes</i>	2014	A boy who flies paper planes all the way to a world contest.
<i>Oddball</i>	2015	A big dog who protects a colony of little penguins.

If you have not seen the film yet, watch it first — and take notes while you watch. Jot down one thing a character does, one event you remember, and how each one made you feel.

Plan before you write. Fill in this frame:

Plan your review

The catch

Film and year: _____

One sentence to pull me in: _____

The short retelling

What is the film about? (Two or three sentences. No spoilers!)

The response

Which character or event will I respond to? _____

What do I think or feel, and why? _____

My evidence from the film: _____

The rating and the call

My rating (circle it): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This film is for: _____

A planning frame for a film review, with one box for each of the four stages: the catch, the short retelling, the response, and the rating and the call

Write. Aim for 120 to 180 words. Use the four stages, in order.

Check. Before you call it finished, check your review against this list:

- ☐ I named the film and the year.
- ☐ My retelling is two or three sentences, with no spoilers.
- ☐ I responded to a character or an event, with a reason.
- ☐ I pointed to something from the film as my evidence.
- ☐ My rating matches my words.
- ☐ I said who the film is for.

Then talk. Read your review to a partner. Your partner should ask: *Did this review make me want to watch the film? What is one thing it could do better?* Make at least one change from your partner's feedback, and put a star next to the sentence you changed. (You will do more of this kind of editing in Section 5E.)

Check your answers

G1. Washing gravel in a pan — historical. Red decorations for good luck — cultural. A playground game with its own rules — social. A tent with a bark roof — historical. The Spring Festival — cultural. A small town where everyone knew everyone — social. The year 1854 — historical. A meal shared by the whole family — cultural. A newcomer trying to fit in — social. (If you put one in a different column and can say why, your reasoning may still be strong — context clues often overlap.)

G2. Answers will be different. Check that each answer has a response, a reason, and a piece of evidence from the text. For (a): Elsie must decide whether to hand the nugget to Mr Grady or hold on to it while her father is away. For (b):

strong answers point to his false claim about the stones, his smile, or his hard voice. For (c): strong answers say that on the goldfields a nugget could change a family's whole life — that is why the moment is so tense.

G3. Kira — what makes her special: she was born with the power to speak to storms. Sam — the danger: the creek rose and floodwater pushed into Mrs Chen's house. Kira — how she acts: she walks to the water's edge and speaks to the storm until it turns and rolls back out to sea. What each story says about courage: Kira's story — courage can be a gift you are born with; Sam's story — courage can be a choice anyone can make, shown by not giving up.

G4. (a) F — it can be checked. (b) F — it is what happens in the film. (c) O — “the best thing” is the reviewer's judgement. (d) O — it is the reviewer's view of the characters, backed by the film. (e) F — it is what happens in the film. (f) O — it is the reviewer's call about who should watch it.

G5. 1 — historical (1912, a ship trip, a diary from the past). 2 — cultural (Diwali, family customs, food shared at school). 3 — social (friendship, a new kid, a group). 4 — social (a class and their community working together).

G6. Answers will be different. Check that each sentence is a full sentence, and that it gives a reason, not just a word. For (b): strong answers say something like — Gran means Mei belongs with everyone else, and her lantern is just as good as any other.

S1–S4. Answers will be different. For each one, check the section it came from: S1 — two clues and a context for each; S2 — response + reason + evidence; S3 — three changes and no magic left; S4 — all four stages and no spoilers.

All model texts, reviews and student responses in this section were written for this book. The films named — The Castle (1997), Babe (1995), Paper Planes (2014) and Oddball (2015) — are real, published Australian films.

Comparing language choices, topics, themes and plots across literary texts

Curriculum trace — Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, English, Level 6

Owens: VC2E6LE02 — “compare language choices, modality, emphasis, repetition and metaphor, and topics, themes or plots in a range of literary texts”

Draws on: VC2E6LE02.E01 “exploring texts on a similar topic by authors with very different styles; for example, comparing fantasy quest novels with realistic novels on a specific theme” · VC2E6LE02.E02 “identifying differences in the use of narrator, narrative structure and voice, and language and visual features, between texts and determining how these influence readers or viewers”

Level 6 achievement standard (Reading and Viewing, excerpt): “When demonstrating understanding of texts, students explore and compare characters and events, and information and ideas, from different historical, cultural or social contexts to build literal and inferred meanings.”

Learn

1. Two texts, one big idea: topic, theme and plot

Some books feel like cousins. They are about the same kind of thing, and they keep worrying away at the same big idea, even though the stories themselves are completely different. Comparing texts means holding two texts side by side and asking: what is the same, what is different, and **what does each choice do to the reader?**

Before we can compare, we need three naming words.

Defining the terms. The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *topic*, *theme* and *plot* but does not define them. This section therefore treats them as follows, and every question here is answerable on these definitions alone.

- **Topic** is what a text is about, in a few words — the subject you could print on the cover. (“A new school.” “A journey.” “Rain.”)
- **Theme** is the big idea a text keeps coming back to — what the text seems to be saying about people or life. (“Belonging takes courage.” “Home is more than a place.”)
- **Plot** is what happens in a text, and in what order — the chain of events from the first page to the last.

A quick way to keep them separate: the **topic** is the thing you can see on the surface, the **theme** is the idea underneath it, and the **plot** is the chain of happenings that carries both.

Topic, theme and plot: three lenses on a text

The same story can be described three different ways. Each lens asks its own question.



What the text is about on the surface.
You can say it in a few words.

What is it about?

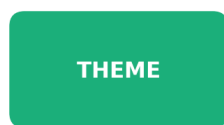
Both texts: starting somewhere new.



What happens, in the order it happens.
The steps of the story.

What happens, and in what order?

Text A: Marlow sets out for the lost city.
Text B: a child walks through the school gate.



The bigger idea the text keeps coming back to,
often about people or about life.

What idea stays with you?

Both texts ask: what does it take to belong
somewhere new?

One text, three answers. Comparing texts means holding two texts up to the same lenses.

Chart with three rows defining topic, theme and plot, each with the question to ask and a worked example

Two texts can share a topic and a theme and still be completely different, because the **language choices** — the words the writer chose — are different. That is the heart of this section: same big idea, different choices, different pull on the reader.

2. Meet the model pair

Everything in this section runs on one pair of model texts. Both openings were written for this book. Both start from the same place: someone stepping into somewhere new.

Text A — fantasy quest opening *(written for this book)*

The last light of day was sinking behind the mountains, and Marlow knew what he had to do. The map in his pocket was a hot coal, burning him to move. Step by step, he walked toward the dark line of the forest. Step by step, the wind grew colder. Step by step, the road home faded behind him. There was no turning back. Not tonight. Not ever. Somewhere past the trees, the lost city was waiting — and it had been waiting a long, long time.

Text B — realistic opening *(written for this book)*

I stood at the gate of the new school and tried to remember the one thing Dad said. “It’ll be fine.” I wasn’t so sure. The yard was full of kids who already knew each other, already had their groups, already belonged somewhere. Nobody looked at me. That was the hardest part. Or maybe the hardest part was hoping someone would. I took a breath, pushed the gate open, and walked in.

Same topic (starting somewhere new). Same theme question (what does it take to belong?). And yet the two openings pull you in completely different ways — because every choice below the topic is different. We will look at those choices through six lenses, then bring them together in a toolkit.

Two openings, one theme

Two stories that start from the same place: someone stepping into somewhere new.

Text A — fantasy quest opening (written for this book)

The last light of day was sinking behind the mountains, and Marlow knew what he had to do. The map in his pocket was a hot coal, burning him to move. Step by step, he walked toward the dark line of the forest. Step by step, the wind grew colder. Step by step, the road home faded behind him. There was no turning back. Not tonight. Not ever. Somewhere past the trees, the lost city was waiting — and it had been waiting a long, long time.

Narrator

third person — we watch Marlow from outside

Modality

high: knew, had to, no turning back, not ever

Repetition

"Step by step" ×3; "Not tonight. Not ever."

Metaphor

the map was a hot coal

Text B — realistic opening (written for this book)

I stood at the gate of the new school and tried to remember the one thing Dad said. "It'll be fine." I wasn't so sure. The yard was full of kids who already knew each other, already had their groups, already belonged somewhere. Nobody looked at me. That was the hardest part. Or maybe the hardest part was hoping someone would. I took a breath, pushed the gate open, and walked in.

Narrator

first person — "I" tells it from inside

Modality

low: tried, wasn't so sure, maybe, hoping

Repetition

"already ... already ... already"

Emphasis

short sentences do the heavy lifting

Same topic (starting somewhere new), same theme (what does it take to belong?), very different language choices.

The narrator, the modality, the repetition and the metaphors all point different ways — and that is what there is to compare.

Two panels side by side showing the fantasy quest opening, Text A, and the realistic opening, Text B, each with notes on narrator, modality, repetition and metaphor or emphasis

3. Lens 1 — modality

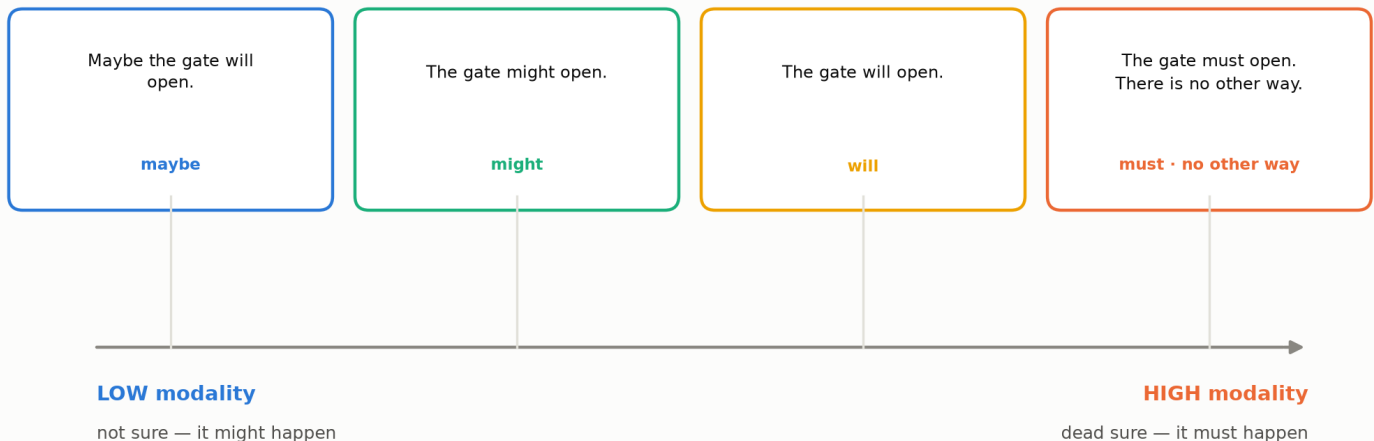
Defining the term. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *modality* but does not define it. This section therefore treats **modality** as how sure or how strong a statement sounds. **Low modality** leaves room for doubt: *maybe, might, tried, hoped*. **High modality** shuts the door on doubt: *knew, had to, must, no other way*.

Modality lives in the small words. Swap one small word and the whole sentence changes its strength: *maybe* → *might* → *will* → *must*.

Modality: how sure a statement sounds

The same event, four ways. Watch the small words — they carry the strength.

Text A (fantasy) leans high: knew, had to, “no turning back”, “not ever”. Text B (realistic) leans low: tried, “wasn’t so sure”, maybe, hoping.



Scale from low to high modality with four example sentences built on maybe, might, will and must

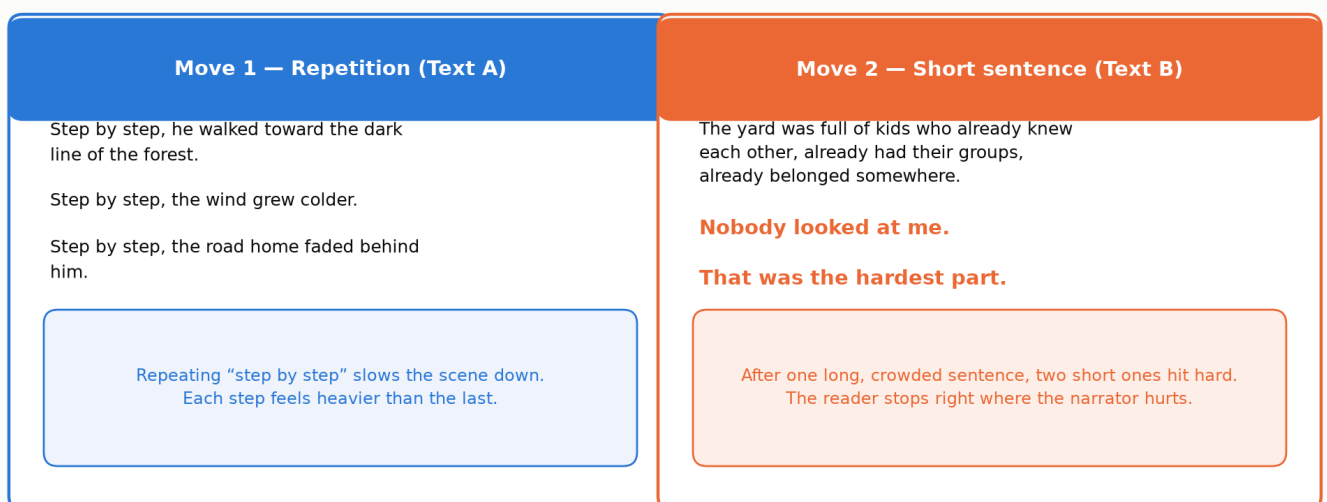
Now listen to the model pair. Text A is full of high modality: Marlow **knew** what he **had to** do; “There was **no** turning back. **Not** tonight. **Not ever**.” The reader is not invited to wonder — the reader is invited to follow. Text B is full of low modality: the narrator **tried** to remember, **wasn’t so sure**, and the hardest part was **hoping**. The reader is invited to wonder *with* the narrator, from the inside.

4. Lens 2 — emphasis and repetition

Emphasis is the spotlight of a sentence: whatever a writer repeats, or places alone, steps into the light. **Repetition** is saying a word or phrase again on purpose, so it gathers weight. (Section 1D looked at repetition as glue that holds a text together; here we look at repetition as a spotlight in literary texts.)

Emphasis: how a writer makes a moment land

Two moves from the model pair. In each one, find the words doing the pushing.



Emphasis = the spotlight of a sentence. Whatever a writer repeats, or places alone, steps into the light.

Two panels showing emphasis by repetition in Text A and emphasis by short sentences placed alone in Text B

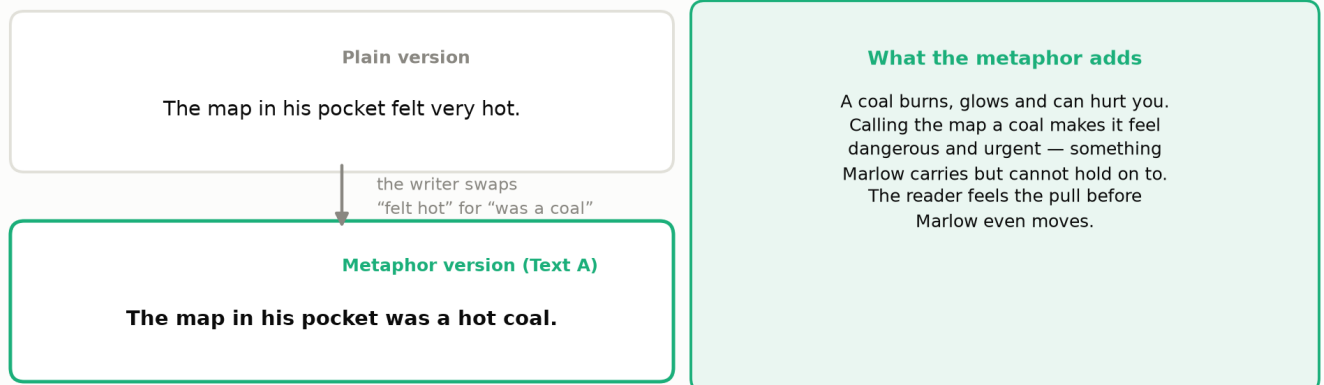
In Text A, “Step by step” is repeated three times. The repetition slows the scene down until you can almost hear the footsteps, and each step feels heavier than the last. In Text B the move is different: one long, crowded sentence is followed by two short sentences placed alone — “Nobody looked at me.” The shortness is the spotlight. After all those *already ... already ... already* kids, the reader stops exactly where the narrator hurts.

5. Lens 3 — metaphor

You met metaphor, simile and personification in Section 2D. A **metaphor** says one thing *is* another thing, so the second thing lends the first its feelings: not “the map felt hot” but “the map **was a hot coal**”.

Metaphor: one thing said to be another

From Text A. Same fact, two ways of saying it. (You met metaphors in Section 2D.)



In a comparison, do not just spot the metaphor. Say what it does to the reader that the plain words do not.

Plain version of a sentence compared with its metaphor version, with a panel explaining what the metaphor adds for the reader

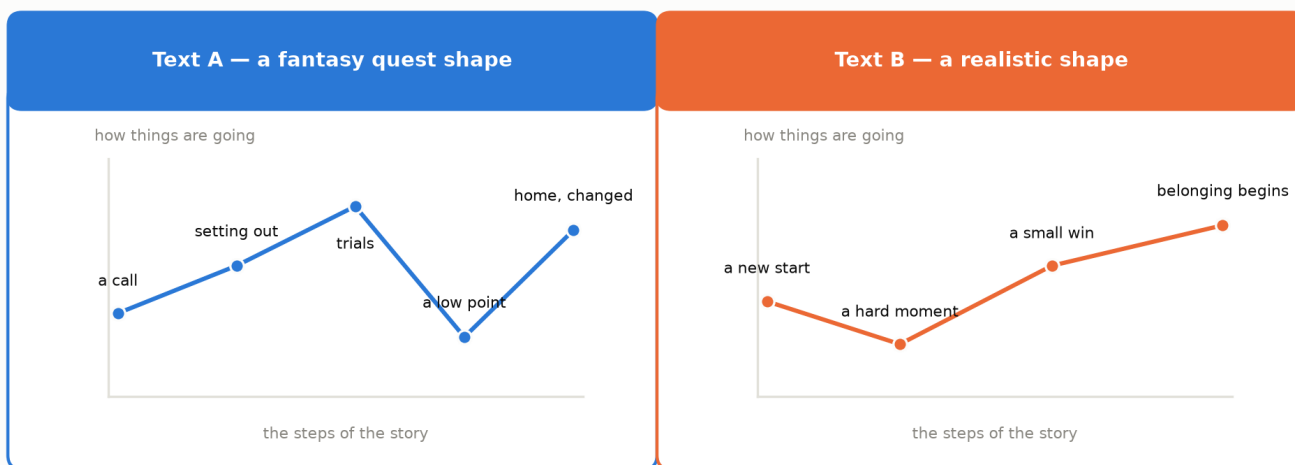
In a comparison, do not just spot the metaphor — say what it does. A coal burns, glows and can hurt you. Calling the map a coal makes the quest feel dangerous and urgent before Marlow has even moved. Text B makes its point with plain, honest words instead (“That was the hardest part”), and the pull is quieter but just as real. **Where one text uses metaphor and the other uses plain words is itself a difference to compare.**

6. Lens 4 — plot and narrative structure

The **plot** is what happens, and in what order. **Narrative structure** is how the text is put together: where the writer starts the telling, what order the events come in, and what the writer shows early or saves for later. Two stories with the same topic can have very different plot shapes.

Two plot shapes

Each opening is step one of a longer shape. A quest story and a realistic story rise in different ways.



Big swings: far places, high stakes, a hero who comes home different.

Small swings: one yard, one gate, one braver choice at a time.

Two line graphs of plot shape: a fantasy quest shape with big swings from a call to a low point to a changed homecoming, and a realistic shape with small swings from a new start to belonging beginning

The model openings are only the first dot on each shape, and already the shapes differ. Text A starts at night, at the edge of a forest, with a quest to a lost city — big swings, far places, high stakes. Text B starts at a school gate with one breath and one step — small swings, one yard, one braver choice at a time. Both shapes can carry the same theme (belonging takes courage), and that is exactly what makes them worth comparing.

7. Lens 5 — narrator and voice

The **narrator** is whoever tells the story. A **first-person** narrator is a character inside the story, telling it with “I”. A **third-person** narrator stands outside the story and uses names and “he”, “she” or “they”. **Voice** is how the telling sounds — sure or unsure, loud or quiet, playful or worried.

Narrator and voice: who speaks, and how it sounds

The same theme, told by two very different tellers.

Text A (fantasy quest)

Text B (realistic)

Who tells it?	A third-person narrator — someone outside the story, using “he”.	A first-person narrator — the character in the story, using “I”.
Words that show it	“Marlow knew what he had to do.”	“I stood at the gate ... I wasn’t so sure.”
What the reader knows	What Marlow does and where he goes. His thoughts are guessed from outside.	Exactly what the narrator thinks and fears — we are inside their head.
How the voice feels	Large and sure, like a legend told out loud.	Close and unsure, like a friend talking quietly to you.

Narrator = who tells the story. Voice = how that telling sounds. Change either one and the whole text feels different.

Table comparing Text A and Text B in four rows: who tells it, words that show it, what the reader knows, and how the voice feels

The narrator decides what the reader gets to know. With Text B’s “I”, we are inside a head: we hear every doubt as it happens. With Text A’s third-person narrator, we watch a hero from the outside, the way we watch a legend — and the voice sounds large and sure. Change the narrator and you change what the reader knows; change the voice and you change how the reader feels. That is why narrator and voice are two of the strongest lenses in a comparison.

8. Lens 6 — visual features

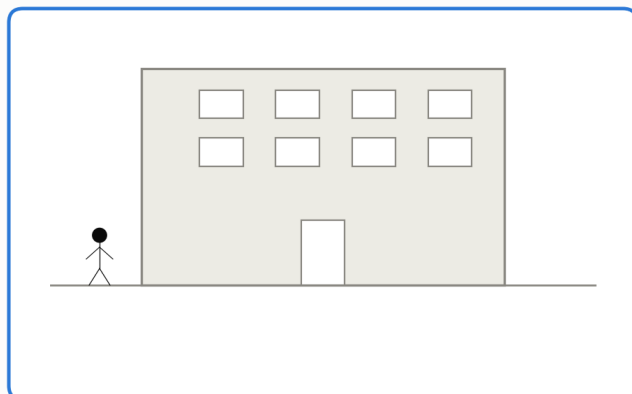
Some literary texts are visual: picture books, graphic novels, film. **Visual features** are the choices a picture or a frame makes — what is shown, what is left out, how close the view is, and where the viewer’s eye is sent. Two framing choices do a lot of steering:

- A **long shot** shows the whole scene from far off. A person looks small inside a big place.
- A **close-up** fills the frame with a face, a hand, a detail. The viewer is pushed right up against a feeling.

Visual features: the same moment, two frames

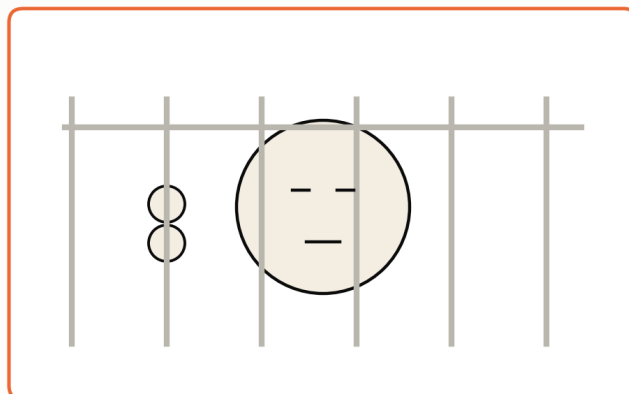
A story moment shown as moving images. What the frame shows is a choice, and the choice steers the viewer.

Frame 1 — long shot



The school fills the frame; the child is tiny.
The viewer feels how big and new the place is,
and how small one person looks inside it.

Frame 2 — close-up



The face and the gripping hands fill the frame.
The viewer feels the worry inside the character,
not the size of the school.

Same moment, two choices. Directors and illustrators make these calls all the time — and viewers are steered by them.

Two drawn frames of the same story moment: a long shot of a tiny child in front of a big school building, and a close-up of a face and hands gripping the gate bars

The two frames show the same moment — a child at the gate of a new school. The long shot makes the viewer feel the size of the place and the smallness of the person; it suits a story about a big world and a small hero. The close-up makes the viewer feel the worry inside the character; it suits a story told from the inside. **Viewers are steered by these choices in the same way readers are steered by words.**

9. The comparison toolkit

Six lenses, eight counting topic and theme. Here is the whole kit in one place.

The comparison toolkit

Eight lenses you can hold two texts up to. Pick the ones that show real differences.

1	Topic What is each text about, in a few words?
2	Theme What big idea does each text keep coming back to?
3	Plot What happens in each text, and in what order?
4	Narrative structure Where does each text start, and how is it put together?
5	Narrator Who tells each story, and what do they know?
6	Voice How does each telling sound — sure, quiet, playful, worried?
7	Language choices Modality, emphasis, repetition, metaphor — what do the words do?
8	Visual features What do the pictures or frames show, and how do they steer the viewer?

A comparison does not need all eight lenses. Two or three lenses, used well with words quoted from the texts, beat eight lenses used in a hurry.

List of eight numbered lenses for comparing texts — topic, theme, plot, narrative structure, narrator, voice, language choices and visual features — each with its key question

A good comparison does not use all eight lenses in a hurry. It picks the two or three lenses that show **real** differences between the texts, and works them well. “Well” means three moves, every time:

1. **Name the lens.** (“The two texts use very different modality.”)
2. **Quote the words.** (“Marlow ‘knew what he had to do’, but the narrator in Text B ‘wasn’t so sure’.”)
3. **Say the influence on the reader or viewer.** (“So Text A asks us to follow a hero, and Text B asks us to wonder along with a friend.”)

Quote → name → influence. If a sentence of your comparison is missing the third move, it is a list, not a comparison. (Comparing ideas to build inferred meaning is also the work of Section 5C — the same habit of mind, pointed here at literary texts.)

The habits you build here carry into the rest of the chapter: 3C compares these same choices across a whole author’s work and names it *style*; 3D listens for sound and imagery in poetry; and 3E invites you to try these choices out in your own writing.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — modelled analysis

The task. Compare Text A and Text B. Use at least two lenses, quote words from both texts, and say how the choices influence the reader.

Model response.

Text A and Text B start from the same place — someone stepping into somewhere new — but they pull the reader in different ways, and the biggest reason is who tells it.

Text B has a first-person narrator. We are inside a head from the first word: “I stood at the gate.” The modality is low — the narrator “tried to remember”, “wasn’t so sure” — so the reader is invited to wonder *with* the narrator, like a friend talking quietly to you. Text A has a third-person narrator and high modality instead: Marlow “knew what he had to do”, and “There was no turning back. Not tonight. Not ever.” The reader is not asked to wonder; the reader is asked to follow, the way you follow a legend told out loud.

The emphasis works in a different way too. Text A repeats “Step by step” three times, which slows the scene and makes the quest feel heavy and grand. Text B saves its power for two short sentences placed alone — “Nobody looked at me.” — and the reader stops exactly where the narrator hurts. Same topic, same theme question, very different pull: one text makes us watch a hero, and the other makes us feel a first day from the inside.

Why this response works.

- It names its lenses up front (narrator, modality, emphasis) instead of listing everything.
- Every claim carries quoted words from **both** texts, so the comparison is proven, not just claimed.
- It ends each thread with the influence on the reader (“asked to follow”, “wonder with the narrator”), which is the whole point of E02.
- It finishes by tying the lenses back to the shared theme — same big idea, different pull.

Worked example 2 — modelled composition

The task. Write the same small moment twice — a child waiting at the gate of a new school — and change the language choices so the two tellings pull the reader different ways. Then reflect on the change.

Model pair, written for this task.

Version 1 — first person, low modality

I waited at the gate and watched the other kids laugh in groups. Maybe I would find a place here. Maybe I would not. I held my bag a little tighter and looked for an empty spot to stand.

Version 2 — third person, high modality

Tali waited at the gate with her chin up. The yard was loud and full of strangers. Today she would walk in. Today she would start.

Writer’s reflection.

In Version 1 the “I” and the *maybe ... maybe* put the reader inside the worry; the voice sounds quiet and unsure. In Version 2 the name “Tali” and “her chin up” put the reader outside, watching; the repeated “Today she would” shuts the door on doubt, so the voice sounds sure. Same moment, different narrator and modality — a different pull on the reader.

Why this pair works. Only two lenses were changed (narrator and modality), and each change is visible in exact words. That is what makes the pair useful for comparing: the differences are chosen on purpose, and they can be quoted.

Practice tasks

With support

Q1. (E01) Topic, theme, plot. The Text A column is done for you. Fill in the Text B column from the model pair in Section 2.

Lens	Text A (done)	Text B (you)
Topic, in a few words	A journey to a lost city	?
Theme question it keeps asking	What does it take to belong?	?

Lens	Text A (done)	Text B (you)
First event of the plot	Marlow sets out toward the forest at nightfall	?

Then one sentence of your own: what do the two texts share, in one line?

Q2. (E02) Modality hunt. Label each quote **high** or **low** modality, and circle the small word that told you. The first is done.

- a) “Marlow knew what he had to do.” — **high** (*knew, had to*)
- b) “I ... tried to remember the one thing Dad said.”
- c) “There was no turning back. Not tonight. Not ever.”
- d) “I wasn’t so sure.”
- e) “Maybe the hardest part was hoping someone would.”
- f) “The lost city was waiting.”

Q3. (E01) Emphasis and repetition.

- a) In Text A, “Step by step” is repeated three times. Finish this sentence in your own words: *Repeating “step by step” makes the reader feel ...*
- b) In Text B, two short sentences are placed alone after one long one. Which two? Why do they land so hard there? Start with: *After the long sentence about the other kids, the short sentences ...*

Q4. (E01) Metaphor. Look at the metaphor lens in Section 5 and at Text A.

- a) What is the map said to be?
- b) Name two things a hot coal does that a paper map cannot do.
- c) Finish this sentence: *Calling the map a hot coal makes the reader feel ...*

Q5. (E02) Two rain poems, same topic, different voice. Both poems were written for this book.

Poem 1 (*written for this book*)

Rain on the window, / Rain on the roof, / Pitter-patter, pitter-patter, / Rain on the street. / The puddles are drums, / The gutters are horns, / Splish! Splash! / Here it comes!

Poem 2 (*written for this book*)

The rain comes softly, / like a visitor / who knows the house. / It sits on the window, / it smooths the roof, / it hushes the street, / until the whole town / holds its breath.

- a) Which poem sounds playful and which sounds quiet? Underline two word choices in each poem that told you.
- b) Each poem uses repetition of a different kind. What is repeated in Poem 1? What is repeated in Poem 2?
- c) One sentence each: how does each poem make the reader feel about rain?

Q6. (E02) Narrator and voice. Here is the table from Section 7 with two cells left empty. Fill them, then answer part c.

	Text A	Text B
Who tells it?	A third-person narrator	?
What the reader knows	?	Exactly what the narrator thinks and fears

- c) Which narrator lets the reader hear thoughts as they happen? Quote three words from that text to prove it.

On your own

Q7. (E01, E02) Two storms, two tellings. Both passages were written for this book.



Text C (*written for this book*)

The storm came over the hill like a hungry giant. The trees leaned low. The flags snapped. The first fat drops of rain hit the dust like a drumbeat. The village held its breath. The storm would not wait.

Text D (*written for this book*)

Mia checked the sky from the back step. The clouds were getting dark and low. “Might rain before lunch,” Mum said, looking up. Mia grabbed the laundry basket and ran.

Write four or five sentences comparing Text C and Text D. Use at least two of modality, metaphor and emphasis. Quote exact words from both texts, and say how each telling influences the reader.

Q8. (E02) Look again at the two frames in Section 8.

- Which frame would you pair with Text A, and which with Text B, if each opening were made into film? Give one reason for each pairing, using words from the texts.
- One sentence: how does the close-up steer the viewer’s feelings, and what does the long shot make the viewer feel instead?

Q9. (E01) Fantasy quest novels and realistic novels on one theme. Here are four real novels, named with their authors and years:

- The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkien, 1937 — a quest across wild country
- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, C.S. Lewis, 1950 — a quest into a magic land
- Holes*, Louis Sachar, 1998 — a realistic story of a boy sent to a camp
- Wonder*, R.J. Palacio, 2012 — a realistic story of a new kid at a new school

Choose one fantasy quest novel and one realistic novel you know (if you do not know any of them, swap in two texts you do know — one with a quest flavour, one realistic). Then: name one theme both texts share, and predict two differences in their language choices (use the toolkit lenses). Give your reasons from what you remember of the texts.

Q10. (E02) Where does each text start? Text A starts its telling at nightfall, at the edge of a forest, after the decision is already made. Text B starts at the gate, in the middle of the worry, before the first step. Write three or four sentences: what does each starting choice hide from the reader, what does it show, and how does that influence the reader?

Produced outcome

One theme, two tellings — your comparison. Choose a pair of texts on the same topic: the model pair (Texts A and B), the two rain poems, the two storm passages, or two texts of your own — one with a quest or fantasy flavour and one realistic. Write a comparison of about 250 words.

Your comparison must:

- Name the shared topic and the shared theme question in your first two sentences.
- Use at least **two lenses** from the toolkit (for example narrator + modality, or repetition + visual features).
- Quote exact words from **both** texts for every lens you use.
- End each thread with the influence on the reader or viewer — what the choice makes the reader feel, know or expect.

Close with one sentence of your own: which telling pulls *you* in more, and which exact words do it?

Success criteria. The topic and theme are named up front. Every claim about a difference carries quoted words from both texts. Every lens thread ends with the influence on the reader or viewer, not with a bare list of differences. The closing sentence points at exact words.

Marking note: for every open task in this section, marks are for the quality of your reasoning — how well you name the choice, quote it and show what it does to the reader — not for which text you prefer or which conclusion you reach.

Answers

Q1. Topic (Text B): a first day at a new school. Theme question: the same — what does it take to belong? First event: the narrator stands at the gate of the new school, remembering Dad's "It'll be fine." Shared line (sample): both texts are about stepping into somewhere new and finding a place in it.

Q2. b) Low — *tried*. c) High — *no, not ... not ever*. d) Low — *wasn't so sure*. e) Low — *maybe, hoping*. f) High — the lost city "was waiting": it is stated as a plain fact that cannot be argued with.

Q3. a) Sample: ... makes the reader feel the long, slow, heavy walk, as if each step costs Marlow something. b) Sample: ... land like a full stop on the hurt; after all the kids who "already belonged", "Nobody looked at me" is what the reader stops on.

Q4. a) A hot coal. b) Sample: a coal burns and glows; it can hurt you; you cannot hold it still. c) Sample: ... makes the reader feel that the quest is urgent and dangerous, and that Marlow cannot keep the map — or the quest — in his pocket for long.

Q5. a) Poem 1 is playful ("Pitter-patter", "Splish! Splash!", puddles as drums); Poem 2 is quiet ("softly", "like a visitor", "hushes"). b) Poem 1 repeats "Rain on the ..." and the pitter-patter sound; Poem 2 repeats the "it ... it ... it" list of gentle things the rain does. c) Sample: Poem 1 makes rain feel like a band arriving, something to cheer; Poem 2 makes rain feel like a calm guest who quiets the whole town.

Q6. Who tells it (Text B): a first-person narrator — the character in the story, using "I". What the reader knows (Text A): what Marlow does and where he goes; his thoughts are guessed from outside. c) The first-person narrator in Text B: "I stood", "I wasn't so sure", "I took a breath" — we hear the thinking as it happens.

Q7. Sample. Text C and Text D tell the same weather, but Text C tells it like an event in a legend and Text D tells it like a Tuesday. Text C uses metaphor — the storm is "a hungry giant", the rain hits "like a drumbeat" — and high modality: "The storm would not wait." The reader feels the storm as a monster with a will of its own. Text D uses low modality and plain words — "Might rain before lunch" — so the reader feels an ordinary day turning, and the hurry is in the doing ("grabbed ... ran"), not in the sky. Same topic, different pull: awe in C, everyday quickness in D.

Q8. a) Sample: Frame 1 (long shot) pairs with Text A — a small figure before something huge matches "the dark line of the forest" and "the lost city", a small hero in a big world. Frame 2 (close-up) pairs with Text B — the face and gripping hands match "I stood at the gate" and "I wasn't so sure", a story told from inside the worry. b) Sample: the close-up makes the viewer feel the character's worry up close, while the long shot makes the viewer feel how big and new the place is and how small one person looks in it.

Q9. Sample (The Hobbit + Wonder): shared theme — it takes courage to belong somewhere new, or to keep going when you are small against something big. Predicted differences: (1) modality — a quest novel leans high ("had to", "no turning back"-type words) because the stakes are life and death, while a realistic novel leans low ("maybe", "wasn't so sure") because its stakes are feelings; (2) metaphor — a quest novel reaches for large metaphors (a map as a hot coal, a storm as a giant) to make the world feel magical, while a realistic novel uses plainer words so the world feels like ours. Reasons should come from the texts the student chose; other pairings are fine if the reasoning quotes or remembers real moments.

Q10. Sample. Text A starts after the decision, so it hides the choosing and shows only the going — the reader never gets to wonder *if* Marlow will go, only what he will meet, which makes the telling feel like fate. Text B starts before the first step, in the middle of the doubt, so it shows the choosing and hides what comes next — the reader wonders *with* the narrator whether it will be fine. The first choice makes the reader follow; the second makes the reader stand at the gate too.

Produced outcome. Answers will vary. Check against the success criteria: topic and theme named up front; at least two lenses; quoted words from both texts for each lens; each thread ending with the influence on the reader or viewer; a closing sentence that points at exact words. A strong sample move: "Text A repeats 'Step by step' so the quest feels heavy, but Text B places 'Nobody looked at me' alone so the hurt lands in one blow — one asks us to follow, the other asks us to feel."

Characteristics of literary texts that define an author's individual style

Curriculum trace — Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, English, Level 6

Owens: VC2E6LE03 — “describe characteristics of literary texts that define an author's individual style”

Draws on: VC2E6LE03.E01 — “exploring 2 or more texts by the same author, identifying similarities (for example, subject or theme, characterisation, text structure, plot development, tone, vocabulary, voice, favoured grammatical structures and visual techniques in picture books) and describing the qualities that characterise an author's style”

Excluded: VC2E6LE03.E02 (a study focused on an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander author) is excluded per CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1 and is recorded in TOC §2A. Its id is retained as a linkage key only; this section is taught through .E01.

Level 6 achievement standard (Reading and Viewing): “When demonstrating understanding of texts, students explore and compare characters and events, and information and ideas, from different historical, cultural or social contexts to build literal and inferred meanings.”

Learn

1. Every author leaves a signature

At Level 5 you learned to say what a text is about and how it made you feel. This section goes one step further: you will learn to notice **how** an author writes. Read enough books by the same author, and you start to spot their habits — the same kinds of characters, the same kinds of feelings, the same favourite words. It is a bit like recognising a friend's footsteps. You cannot see who it is yet, but you already know.

An author's habits show up in **literary texts** — stories, poems, plays and picture books, written to be read and enjoyed. The word for this set of habits is **style**.

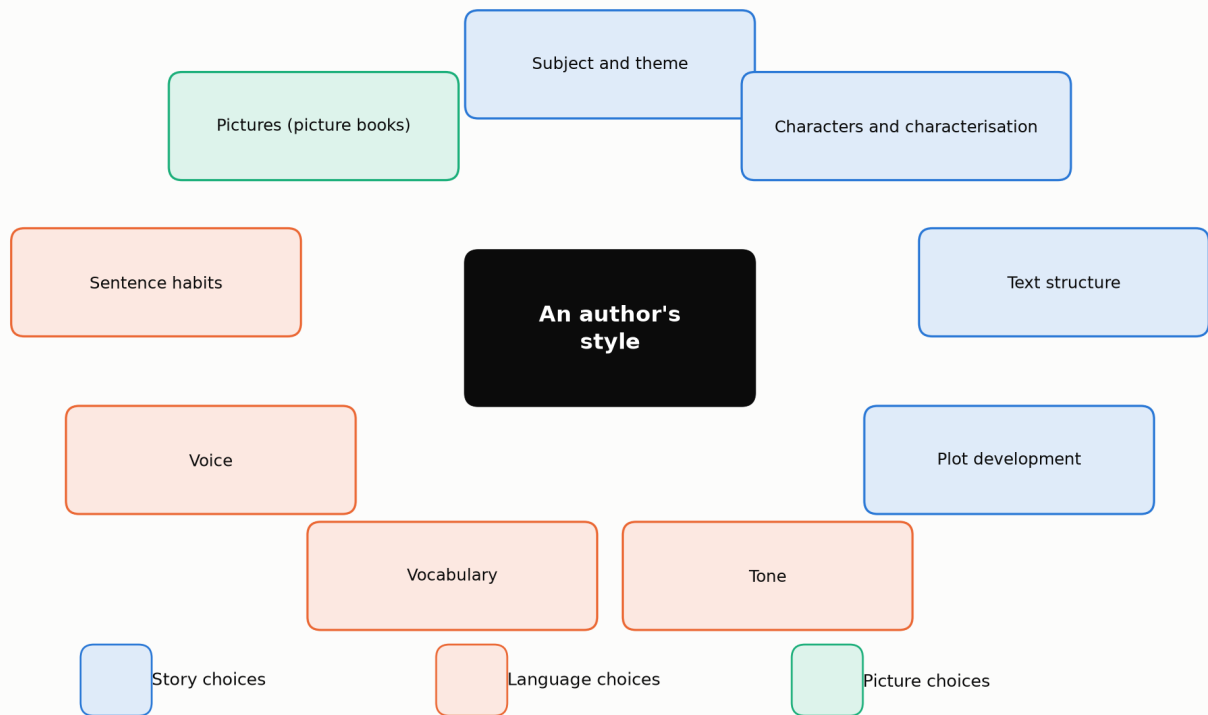
Defining the term. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *an author's individual style* but does not define it. This section therefore treats an author's **style** as the writing habits that appear again and again across that author's texts: the subjects and themes they return to, the kinds of characters they build, the way they shape their stories, the words they reach for, and the feeling their writing gives off. Style is not one text — it is the pattern you can spot across **two or more** texts by the same author, and every question in this section is answerable on that definition alone.

People do not all use the word *style* this way. Some people use it only about single words, and in picture books some people include the pictures too (this section does — see part 5). What matters is that we state our frame and keep to it.

Nine features make up an author's style. Keep them in mind as you read: they are your spotting kit.

What makes up an author's style?

Nine features to look for. Each one is a place where habits show.



Style is not one text. It is the pattern across two or more texts by the same author.

A wheel diagram with 'An author's style' in the middle and nine features around it: subject and theme, characters, text structure, plot development, tone, vocabulary, voice, sentence habits, and pictures in picture books.

2. Same moment, two writers

The easiest way to see style is to hold the event still and change the writer. Below, two writers tell the same moment — a dog runs off with a pie. The event never changes. Read both versions and notice how much changes anyway.

Same moment, two writers

The event: a dog runs off with a pie. The event never changes — only the writer does.

Version 1

The dog grabbed the pie and ran.
Dad shouted after him. The gate
banged shut, but it was too late.

Short, plain, fast — just the facts.

Version 2

One sniff, one snatch, and the pie was
gone — carried off by a brown blur with
a wagging tail. Dad's shout rolled down
the lane, but the only answer was the
soft thud of paws heading for the grass.

Longer sentences and sound words — you hear it happen.

Style is not what happens. Style is how the telling happens.

Two versions of the same moment, a dog running off with a pie, written by two different writers. Version 1 uses short plain sentences, and version 2 uses longer sentences with sound words and feeling words.

Version 1 gives you the facts, fast. Version 2 slows down and lets you hear the moment — *one sniff, one snatch* — and the shout rolling down the lane. Same pie, same dog, different style. That is the point of this section: **style is not what happens. Style is how the telling happens.**

3. The features to look for

Here are the nine features from part 1, with what each one means and the question to ask as you read. The words in bold are the tools of this section, so each one is defined here.

The nine features of an author's style

The words in the first column are the tools of this section.

Feature	What it means	Ask yourself
Subject and theme	What the text is about on top, and the big idea underneath.	<i>What is this text really about?</i>
Characters and characterisation	The people and animals in the story, built by what they say, do and think.	<i>Who does this author like to write about?</i>
Text structure	How the text is built — beginnings, middles, endings, chapters.	<i>How does this author build a text?</i>
Plot development	How the problem grows and is worked out.	<i>How does the story move from start to finish?</i>
Tone	The feeling the text gives off — playful, warm, spooky, serious.	<i>How does this text make me feel?</i>
Vocabulary	The words the author reaches for again and again.	<i>Which words keep showing up?</i>
Voice	Who seems to tell the story, and how they seem to speak.	<i>Who do I seem to hear?</i>
Sentence habits	The kinds of sentences the author loves — short punches or long flows, lists of three.	<i>What shape do the sentences keep taking?</i>
Pictures (picture books)	The choices made in colour, size and position.	<i>What do the pictures keep doing?</i>

A table of the nine features of an author's style. For each feature, the table gives what it means and one question to ask while reading.

Three of those features need a closer look, because they do the most work.

- The **theme** of a text is the big idea sitting under the story. The subject is what the text is about on top — a girl, a hill, a lantern. The theme is what it is about underneath — kindness, or bravery, or finding your way home. Authors do not often state the theme out loud; you work it out from what the characters do and what happens to them.
- The **tone** of a text is the feeling it gives off — playful, warm, spooky, serious — built by the author's word choices. Tone is a scale, not a switch. The sentences below all came from one text, but each one leans a different way.

Tone is a scale, not a switch

These sentences came from one story. Each one leans a different way.



The words choose the feeling. Name the tone, then point at the word that does it.

A horizontal scale from playful to spooky to warm to serious, with four short sentences placed along it to show how tone shifts with word choice.

- The **voice** of a text is the sense of who seems to be telling it, and how they seem to speak to you. A voice can feel close or far away, friendly or formal, calm or excited. Voice and tone work together: tone is the feeling, voice is the person you seem to hear it from.

Characterisation is one more tool word. It means the way an author builds a character — what the character says, does and thinks, and what other characters say about them. And **plot** is simply the chain of events in a story; **plot development** is how that chain grows, from the first problem to the final pay-off.

4. A style study up close: three texts, one writer

Now for the real thing. Below are two short stories. **Both were written for this book by the same writer — the person who wrote the pages you are reading.** That makes them a perfect first author study: everything you need is right here in this book.

Read Text A first.

Text A — The Lantern Path

Who leaves a lantern burning on the hill?

Every night, the same soft glow sat above the town, and every night, Nell watched it from her window. One evening she pulled on her boots, called her dog Pip, and set off up the hill to find the answer. The path was steep, the wind was cold, and the long grass whispered as she climbed. At the top she found no ghost and no stranger — only old Mr Tate from the lighthouse, keeping one small flame alive. “So nobody loses their way home,” he said, and patted the place beside him. Nell stayed until the stars came out, then walked home carrying a small warm glow of her own.

Now read Text B.

Text B — The Bread Thief

Who was taking the bread from the bakery shelf?

Every morning, one loaf went missing, and every morning, Mia blamed the mice. So she hid behind the flour bags and waited. The shop was still, the clock ticked, and the first light crept across the floor. Then came a soft pad of paws — not a mouse, but a thin grey cat, who took one roll and carried it under the step to her three kittens. Mia never told a soul. From that day she left a whole loaf out each morning, and the cat paid her back in purrs, warm against her ankle. Some debts, her nan said, get paid in purrs.

Two texts, one writer — spot the habits

Both stories were written for this book by the same person. The coloured rules mark four shared habits.

Text A — The Lantern Path

Who leaves a lantern burning on the hill?

Every night, the same soft glow sat above the town, and every night, Nell watched it from her window. One evening she pulled on her boots, called her dog Pip, and set off up the hill to find the answer.

The path was steep, the wind was cold, and the long grass whispered as she climbed. At the top she found no ghost and no stranger — only old Mr Tate from the lighthouse, keeping one small flame alive.

"So nobody loses their way home," he said, and patted the place beside him. Nell stayed until the stars came out, then walked home carrying a small warm glow of her own.

Text B — The Bread Thief

Who was taking the bread from the bakery shelf?

Every morning, one loaf went missing, and every morning, Mia blamed the mice. So she hid behind the flour bags and waited.

The shop was still, the clock ticked, and the first light crept across the floor. Then came a soft pad of paws — not a mouse, but a thin grey cat, who took one roll and carried it under the step to her three kittens. Mia never told a soul. From that day she left a whole loaf out each morning, and the cat paid her back in purrs, warm against her ankle.

Some debts, her nan said, get paid in purrs.

Opens with a question

A list of three

Light and quiet words

Warm echo ending

*The two short stories, *The Lantern Path* and *The Bread Thief*, printed side by side with coloured labels pointing to each one's opening question, its list-of-three sentence, its light words, and its warm echo ending.*

Did you feel the second story land in familiar territory? That feeling is exactly what an author's style is. The subjects are different — a hill and a lantern, a bakery and a cat — but the habits underneath are the same. Worked example 1 lists them one by one, and the style card at the end of part 6 gathers them into a single summary.

Here is a third text by the same writer — this time a poem. If style belongs to the writer, the habits should survive the change from story to poem. Read it and hunt for them.

Text C — The Small Light

Who lights the lamp when the day is done? The one who keeps small lights, one by one. She hushes the wind, she softens the dark, she glows like a whisper, she glimmers like a spark. And if you are lost on a cold, dark night, she will walk you home with her small, soft light.

(Those two comparisons with *like* in them are **similes** — you met them in Section 2D. This writer reaches for them here too.)

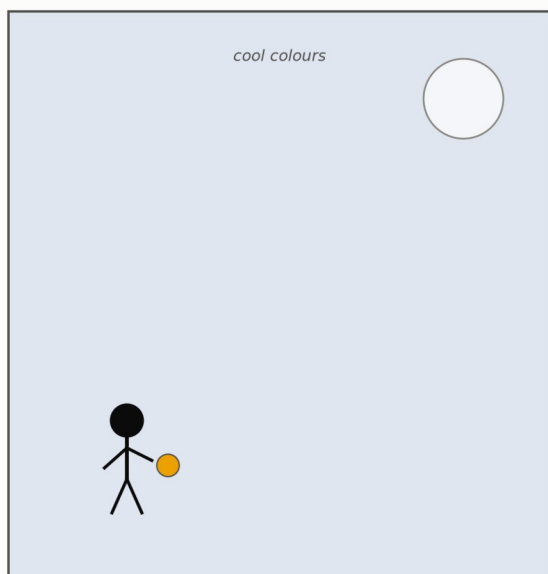
5. Style in picture books

In picture books, the pictures carry part of the style. Some picture books are written by one person and drawn by another — the artist who draws them is called the **illustrator**. But many authors write **and** draw their own books, and then the visual choices are part of the author's own style.

The **visual techniques** in a picture book are the choices made with the pictures: colour, size, where things sit on the page, and what is left out. Look at the two pages below. The sentence under both pages is exactly the same. Only the pictures change — and the story changes with them.

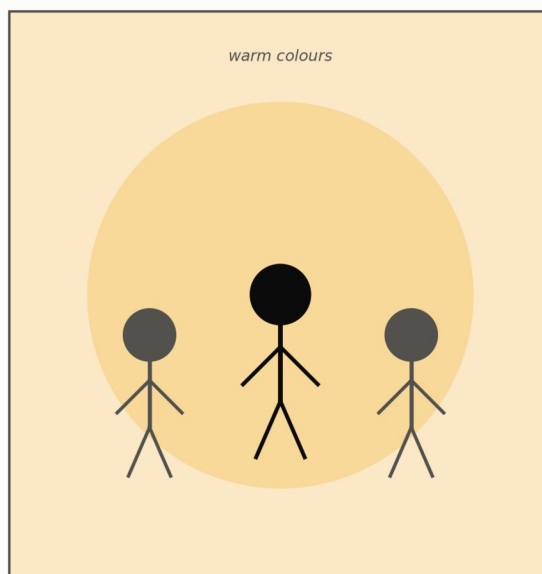
One sentence, two pictures

"Milo walked home."



The child is small. There is lots of empty space.

Feels lonely and small



The child is bigger, in the middle. Others are close.

Feels safe and loved

Two picture-book pages with the same sentence under each. The left page uses cool blue colours and shows a small figure alone in a large empty space. The right page uses warm yellow colours and shows the same figure bigger, in the middle, close to others. Labels name each visual choice and the feeling it makes.

When you study two picture books by the same author, ask the same nine questions — and add the picture questions: Which colours keep appearing? Where does the author put the main character? What gets left out? Those repeated visual choices are part of the style too.

6. From habits to a style statement

Spotting habits is only half the job. The other half is saying what they add up to. A **style card** is a table that gathers an author's habits in one place, with evidence for each one. Here is the finished card for the writer of Texts A, B and C.

Style card — the writer of Texts A, B and C

Every row names a habit and points at the evidence. No habit without evidence.

Feature	What this writer does again and again	Evidence
Opening	Starts with a mystery question.	<i>A and B both open with a question — and C does too.</i>
Subject and theme	Kindness; light against the dark; finding the way home.	<i>Both stories end with a kind choice.</i>
Characters	A young person, an animal, and a kind older helper.	<i>Nell, Pip and Mr Tate; Mia, the cat and Nan.</i>
Text structure and plot	A puzzle, a quiet choice, a calm ending.	<i>The answer to each question is a person helped.</i>
Sentence habits	Two short ideas, then one long one; lists of three.	<i>"The path was steep, the wind was cold, and..."</i>
Favourite words	Light words and quiet sound words.	<i>glow, flame, spark · whisper, hush, soft</i>
Tone and voice	Gentle, warm, a little mysterious; close to the child.	<i>We learn what Nell and Mia feel.</i>

A completed style card for the writer of Texts A, B and C, listing each style feature, what the writer tends to do, and the evidence from the texts.

With a card like that, you can write the final piece — a **style statement**. One or two sentences that sum the author up. For example: *This writer tells gentle, slightly mysterious stories about young people who choose kindness, opens with a question, builds sentences in lists of three, and loves words for light and quiet.* Every claim in that sentence points at something you can find in the texts. That is the rule: **no habit without evidence**.

These skills join up with the rest of the book. Comparing texts this way is close cousin to Section 3B. The simile-and-metaphor toolkit from Section 2D turns up inside every style you will ever study. And when Section 3E asks you to create literature of your own, you will do on purpose what this section teaches you to see: pick your habits, and keep them.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — modelled analysis

Task. Texts A and B were written by the same writer. Find the habits the two texts share, and say what each one tells you about the writer's style.

How to work. Move feature by feature down the style card. For each one, ask: what does Text A do? What does Text B do? Is it the same habit? Copy your evidence straight from the texts.

Where we look	Text A — The Lantern Path	Text B — The Bread Thief	What it tells us about the writer
Opening	Begins with a question:	Begins with a question:	This writer opens with a

Where we look	Text A — The Lantern Path	Text B — The Bread Thief	What it tells us about the writer
	<i>“Who leaves a lantern burning on the hill?”</i>	<i>“Who was taking the bread from the bakery shelf?”</i>	mystery question.
Subject and theme	A girl climbs a hill to find a light; a kind older man keeps it burning so nobody loses their way.	A girl finds the thief who takes the bread; it is a hungry cat, so she feeds it.	Different subjects, same theme under both: kindness, and light against the dark.
Characters	Nell (a girl), Pip (her dog), Mr Tate (a kind grown-up).	Mia (a girl), the cat and her kittens, Nan (a wise grown-up).	A young character, an animal, and a kind older helper.
Sentence habits	“The path was steep, the wind was cold, and the long grass whispered...”	“The shop was still, the clock ticked, and the first light crept...”	Two short ideas, then one long flowing sentence — a list of three.
Favourite words	glow, flame, stars, warm	light, still, soft, warm	Words for light, and words for quiet.
Ending	Nell walks home “carrying a small warm glow of her own.”	“Some debts, her nan said, get paid in purrs.”	Calm, warm endings that echo the opening feeling.

Watch the pattern. Every row found the same habit in both texts. And Text C — the poem — opens with a question too, uses light words (*glows, glimmers, spark, light*) and quiet words (*hushes, softens, whisper*), and ends with someone being walked home. The habits survive the change from story to poem. That is what makes them the writer’s style and not just one story’s tricks.

Style statement. *This writer tells gentle, slightly mysterious stories about young people who choose kindness, opens with a question, builds sentences in lists of three, and loves words for light and quiet.*

Worked example 2 — modelled composition

Task. Write two openings for two different stories — both in the same style, yours.

Step 1 — choose your habits first. A style is a set of choices you keep. Pick five.

Feature	My choice
Subject	Weather and animals
Theme	Helping someone smaller than you
Characters	A child, plus something small that is found
Sentence habit	Short, short, long — with a list of three
Favourite words	Sound words (tap, hum, drum, whistle)

Step 2 — write opening 1.

The rain came in on tiptoe. First it tapped on the window, then it hummed in the gutter, and at last it drummed on the whole tin roof. Zara opened the door to listen — and found a wet little kitten on the step.

Step 3 — write opening 2. New story, same habits.

The wind came in on tiptoe. First it tapped at the washing, then it hummed through the fence, and at last it whistled under the door. Tom opened the gate to look — and found a lost red scarf tangled in the grass.

Step 4 — check the habits held.

Habit	Opening 1	Opening 2
Weather subject	rain	wind
Something small is found	a kitten	a lost scarf
Short, short, long	“The rain came in on tiptoe.” then the long list	“The wind came in on tiptoe.” then the long list
List of three	tapped, hummed, drummed	tapped, hummed, whistled
Sound words	tapped, hummed, drummed	tapped, hummed, whistled

Both openings could have been written by the same person — because they were. **That is style: choices you can keep.**

Practice tasks

With help

Q1. (E01) Match each tool word (1–5) with its meaning (a–e).

1. tone · 2. voice · 3. theme · 4. characterisation · 5. plot
- a) the chain of events in a story
- b) the way an author builds a character through what they say, do and think
- c) the feeling a text gives off, built by word choices
- d) the big idea sitting under the story
- e) the sense of who seems to be telling the text, and how

Q2. (E01) Look at the two versions of the pie moment in part 2. Copy from **version 2** (a) two words that let you *hear* the moment, and (b) the two matching short phrases at the start of the first sentence. Then say in one sentence which version feels more warm, and why.

Q3. (E01) Text A leaves clues to the writer’s style. Copy one piece of evidence from Text A for each habit. The first one is done for you.

Habit	Evidence from Text A
Opens with a question	<i>“Who leaves a lantern burning on the hill?”</i>
Uses a light word	
Uses a quiet sound word	
Builds a list of three	
Ends warm, echoing the opening	

Q4. (E01) Label the tone of each sentence: **playful**, **warm**, **spooky** or **serious**. Underline the word that helped you most.

- a) The pie did not stand a chance.
- b) She stayed until the stars came out.
- c) Every night, the same soft glow sat above the town, and nobody knew why.
- d) From that day on, the loaf was left out each morning, and nobody spoke of the thief.

Q5. (E01) Three story openings are shown below. Two were written by the same writer; one is the odd one out. Pick the matching pair, and circle three clues that the pair shares.

Two of these openings share a writer

Pick the odd one out. Then find three clues that the matching pair shares.

1

The storm came in on tiptoe. First it tapped on the tin roof, then it whispered through the cracks, and at last it sang through the whole house.

2

On Saturday the market opened at eight. Traders set up their stalls, and the smell of fresh bread drifted along the rows. By nine the first shoppers had arrived.

3

The cat crept in like a shadow. First she tapped the fishbowl, then she whispered past the curtain, and at last she settled on the warm rug.

Look for: sentence shapes · word patterns · pretend-person moves

Three story-opening cards side by side. Two share a writer and one does not.

Q6. (E01) This style card for the writer of Texts A and B is half finished. Complete the three empty rows. Use the features in bold and copy your evidence from the texts.

Feature	What the writer tends to do	Evidence
Opening	Opens with a mystery question	Both texts start with a question in italics.
Characters		Nell and Pip; Mia and the cat.
Favourite words		glow, flame, stars; light, still, soft.
Ending		“...a small warm glow of her own”; “...paid in purrs.”

On your own

- Q7. (E01)** Read Text C (the poem) again. Find three habits it shares with Texts A and B, and copy the words that prove each one. Then write a one-sentence style statement that covers all three texts.
- Q8. (E01)** Take this plain event: *The bus left without her*. Rewrite it twice. Version 1 must have a **playful** tone; version 2 must have a **warm** tone. Under each version, name one word choice that does the work.
- Q9. (E01)** Now try the method on a real author. With your teacher or librarian, find **two books by the same author** from your class or school library. (Pairings that work well: Mem Fox — *Possum Magic* (1983) and *Time for Bed* (1993); Roald Dahl — *Matilda* (1988) and *The BFG* (1982); Emily Rodda — *Rowan of Rin* (1993) and *Pigs Might Fly* (1987); Paul Jennings — *Unreal!* (1985) and *Unbelievable!* (1986); Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton — *The 13-Storey Treehouse* (2011) and *The 26-Storey Treehouse* (2012).) Fill in a style card for your author, feature by feature. If your library can only find one book, compare two chapters of it instead — and say so on your card.



Q10. (E01) Two students disagree. Priya says: “*Anybody can write like a famous author. Just copy their habits.*” Jack says: “*A real author’s style can be spotted a mile off. It cannot be copied.*” Give the strongest honest case each student could make — one good reason for Priya, one good reason for Jack. Then give your own view, with a reason. (There is no single right side; you are marked on your reasons.)

Produced outcome

Be the author. You are the author in this task. Write two openings for two different stories (about 60 words each), both in **your** style. Then build your own style card from them.

Work through the checklist.

Be the author — your checklist

Two openings, two different stories, one style — yours.



Choose five habits: subject or theme, characters, sentence habits, favourite words, tone.



Write opening 1 — about 60 words.



Write opening 2 — a new story, but keep the same habits.



Complete your style card: at least five rows, and every row quotes both openings.



Write your style statement, then two sentences of reflection.

A checklist for the produced outcome: choose five habits, write opening one, write opening two with the same habits, complete the style card, and check that every card row quotes both openings.

Your style card must have at least five rows (subject or theme, characters, sentence habits, favourite words, tone — plus more if you like). Each row must quote evidence from **both** openings. Finish with a one- or two-sentence style statement about yourself as a writer, and two sentences of reflection: which habit was hardest to keep, and what you would change next time.

Success criteria. Both openings tell different stories but share the habits on your card. Every row of the card quotes both openings. Your style statement points at particular words and sentences, not at the stories in general.

Assessment note. Your teacher reads these for the quality of your spotting and your reasons — how well you name a habit and prove it with evidence — not for which story you choose to tell.

Answers

Q1. 1–c (tone = the feeling a text gives off), 2–e (voice = who seems to be telling), 3–d (theme = the big idea underneath), 4–b (characterisation = how a character is built), 5–a (plot = the chain of events).

Q2. a) Sound words in version 2: any two of *sniff*, *snatch*, *shout rolled*, *thud*. b) The matching phrases: *One sniff, one snatch*. Sample: version 2 feels more warm, because it slows down and lets you hear and almost see the dog get away, while version 1 just reports the facts.

Q3. Sample evidence. Light word: *glow* (also *flame*, *stars*, *warm*). Quiet sound word: *whispered* (also *soft*). List of three: “*The path was steep, the wind was cold, and the long grass whispered as she climbed.*” Warm echo ending: “... *walked home carrying a small warm glow of her own.*”

Q4. a) Playful — *stand a chance* treats the pie like it was in a fight it could not win. b) Warm — *stayed*, *stars came out*. c) Spooky — *nobody knew why*. d) Serious — *nobody spoke of the thief* (also acceptable: warm, with *left out each morning* as the evidence; both readings can be right if the underlined word supports them).

Q5. The matching pair is card 1 (the storm) and card 3 (the cat). Shared clues, any three: both open with a short sentence and then a long one; both use the list pattern *First ... then ... and at last ...*; both give doing-words that belong to people (*tapped*, *whispered*, *sang*, *settled*) to things that are not people; both lean on soft sound words. Card 2 is the odd one out: it reports events in time order with no list of three and no pretend-person moves.

Q6. Characters: a young girl, an animal, and a kind older helper. Favourite words: words for light and quiet. Ending: calm, warm endings that echo the opening feeling. (Evidence column already supplied in the question.)

Q7. Sample. Habit 1 — opens with a question: “*Who lights the lamp when the day is done?*” Habit 2 — light words: *glows*, *glimmers*, *spark*, *light*, *lamp*. Habit 3 — quiet words: *hushes*, *softens*, *whisper*. (Also acceptable: lists of three — *hushes*, *softens*, *glows/glimmers*; and walking somebody home, as in Text A.) Style statement sample: *This writer tells gentle, mysterious stories about light against the dark, opens with a question, and loves lists of three, light words and quiet words.*

Q8. Answers will vary. Playful sample: “*The bus waved goodbye with a cheerful puff of smoke and left her waving back at her own dusty shoes.*” — evidence: *cheerful*, *waved goodbye*. Warm sample: “*The bus rolled off into the sun, and she stood there smiling, because somebody on board was already waving.*” — evidence: *rolled*, *smiling*. The tone named must match the words underlined.

Q9. Answers will vary with the books chosen. A full answer has a style card with at least five features, evidence quoted from both books, and a one- or two-sentence style statement. If only one book was available, the card should say so and compare two chapters of it instead.

Q10. Sample cases. For Priya: habits can be listed and copied — in Worked example 2, one opening was copied so well that both openings sound like the same writer, so at least some of style is learnable habits. For Jack: a style is not just a list; it is how one person has chosen things across many books and many years, and a copy usually falls to pieces when the copier has to make a new choice the original never made. Own view: any position is acceptable if it gives a reason — for example, *the habits can be copied but the voice cannot*, or *good copying is how new writers learn, before they find habits of their own*.

Produced outcome. Answers will vary. Check against the success criteria: different stories, shared habits, every card row quoting both openings, and a style statement that names particular words and sentences.

Sound and imagery: meaning and effect in prose and poetry

Curriculum trace — Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, English, Level 6

Owens: VC2E6LE04 — “explain the way authors use sound and imagery to create meaning and effect in prose and poetry”

Draws on: VC2E6LE04.E01 “explaining how imagery builds emotional connections and engagement with the story or theme” · VC2E6LE04.E03 “describing the effects of assonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia in a poem” · VC2E6LE04.E04 “explaining the effect of rhythm in ballads”

Level 6 achievement standard (Reading and Viewing): “They explain the effects of imagery and sound devices in texts.”

Learn

1. Sound and imagery: the writer's two tools

At Level 5 you learned to talk about the effects of imagery and sound in texts, and Section 2D gave you the naming words for comparisons such as simile and metaphor. This section builds on both. You will look at the way authors use **sound** and **imagery** to create meaning and effect, in **prose** and in **poetry**.

Defining the terms. The Victorian Curriculum asks you to explain how authors create **meaning** and **effect**, but it does not define those words. This section therefore treats them as follows, and every question here is answerable on these definitions alone.

- **Meaning** is what the text tells us about — the story, the idea, the picture of the world it gives us.
- **Effect** is what a writer's choices do to us as readers — what they make us feel, picture, hear or notice.

Prose and poetry are the two big families of writing in this section:

- **Prose** is everyday writing built from sentences and paragraphs. Novels, news reports, letters and this page are all prose.
- **Poetry** is writing built from **lines** — the rows of words the poet has chosen — and it usually makes strong use of sound. A group of lines in a poem is called a **stanza**. A stanza is a poem's version of a paragraph.

Both families use the same two tools:

- **Imagery** — words that make us picture, hear, smell, taste or feel what is happening.
- **Sound devices** — choices about how the words themselves sound when they are read aloud: repeated sounds, rhyme and rhythm.

A note about *imagery*. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *imagery* but does not define it. Some books use *imagery* in a narrower way, for word pictures we can only see. In this section, *imagery* is used in a wider sense: **any words that speak to the senses** — sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch — including comparisons such as similes and metaphors. Every question here is answerable on that definition alone.

Prose and poetry: two families of writing

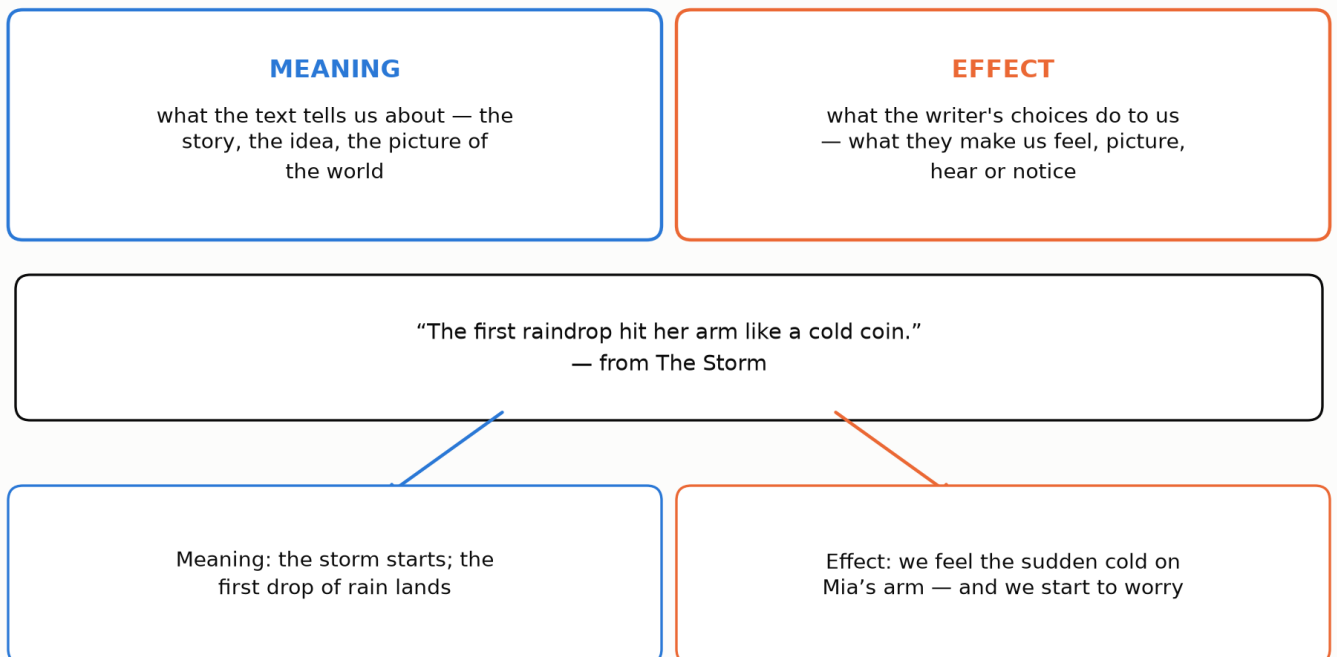
Both tell stories and paint pictures. They are built differently.

PROSE — everyday writing	POETRY — writing in lines
Built from sentences and paragraphs	lines, grouped into stanzas
On the page fills the line and wraps at the margin	short lines; the white space shapes the poem
Examples novels, news reports, letters	ballads, songs, picture-book verse
Both families use the same two tools: imagery and sound devices.	

A comparison table with a column for prose and a column for poetry, showing what each one is built from, what it looks like on the page, and examples of each

Meaning and effect: what they are

Every choice a writer makes has both. Find both, and you can explain anything.



One line, two jobs: it tells us something, and it does something to us.

A diagram with two boxes: one explains meaning as what the text tells us about, and the other explains effect as what a writer's choices do to us as readers; underneath, a line from the storm passage is sorted into its meaning and its effect

2. Imagery: stepping inside the scene

Writers build scenes the way a film does — but instead of a camera, they use the five senses.

The five senses in imagery

Imagery speaks to the senses — not just sight.

Sense	What it lets us do	Example
sight	we see the scene	<i>"a wall of cloud, grey-green and huge"</i>
hearing	we hear the noises	<i>"the flags snapped and cracked"</i>
smell	we smell the air	<i>"the gritty smell of dust"</i>
taste	we taste what the character tastes	<i>"Mia licked the sweet spoon"</i>
touch	we feel touch and warmth and cold	<i>"a hot wind swept across the oval"</i>

Examples are from *The Storm*, the prose passage in this section.

A table of the five senses in imagery — sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch — with a row for each sense showing what it lets the reader do and a short example

Most scenes you remember from stories are scenes you could step into: you could see them, hear them — even smell them. That is imagery at work, and it is how authors build an **emotional connection**: a link between you and the story. When imagery lets you feel the scene on your own skin, you start to care about what happens next. That pull into the story is what the curriculum calls **engagement**.

Read this original passage, written for this section. Read it once for the story, then read it again slowly and notice what your senses are doing.

The Storm

The afternoon turned dark without warning. A hot wind swept across the oval, carrying the gritty smell of dust, and the flags snapped and cracked against their poles. Mia looked up. A wall of cloud rolled in from the west, grey-green and huge, swallowing the tops of the hills. The first raindrop hit her arm like a cold coin. Then the rain came down hard, drumming on the tin roof of the shelter, and the thunder answered, low and slow, like something big turning over in its sleep.

What did your senses do?

- **Sight:** *a wall of cloud ... grey-green and huge, swallowing the tops of the hills*
- **Sound:** *the flags snapped and cracked, drumming on the tin roof, the thunder answered*
- **Smell:** *the gritty smell of dust*
- **Touch:** *a hot wind swept across the oval, The first raindrop hit her arm like a cold coin*

Look carefully at the last two. *Like a cold coin* is a simile (Section 2D): it makes one small raindrop feel sharp, hard and cold. *Like something big turning over in its sleep* makes the thunder sound alive. The passage never says *Mia was scared*. It does not need to. The senses stack up — dark sky, hot wind, hard rain — and your own worry wakes up for her. That is how imagery builds a feeling without naming it.

Imagery can also carry the **theme** — the big idea a story sits under. If a story's theme is *storms pass*, then imagery of clouds breaking and sun coming back does more than paint the weather. It carries the theme.

The test. Take the imagery away and see what is left:

The storm came while Mia was on the oval. It rained hard and there was thunder.

The plain version tells you what happened. The imagery version makes you feel it happen. Same meaning — very different effect.

The Storm — imagery by sense

Each highlight speaks to one sense. Read it once for the story, again for the senses.

The Storm

The afternoon turned dark without warning.

A hot wind swept across the oval,

carrying the gritty smell of dust,

and the flags snapped and cracked against their poles.

Mia looked up. A wall of cloud rolled in from the west,

grey-green and huge, swallowing the tops of the hills.

The first raindrop hit her arm like a cold coin.

Then the rain came down hard, drumming on the tin roof of the shelter,

and the thunder answered, low and slow,

like something big turning over in its sleep.

Key

sight

hearing

smell

touch

Each colour marks imagery for one sense.

The original prose passage called The Storm, with its imagery marked in colour by sense — sight, sound, smell and touch — and a key underneath

3. Sound in poetry: assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia

Poetry uses the sounds of words as part of the meaning. Here are three sound devices to learn by name.

- **Assonance** — the same vowel sound repeated in words close together. (A **vowel** is one of the letters *a, e, i, o, u*.) In *the deep green sea sleeps*, the long *ee* sound repeats in *deep, green, sea* and *sleeps*. Say it aloud: the sound stretches out, slow and smooth.
- **Alliteration** — the same consonant sound repeated at the start of words close together. (A **consonant** is any letter that is not a vowel.) In *the snake slides soft*, the *s* sound repeats. Say it aloud: the sound hisses along.

- **Onomatopoeia** — a word that sounds like the thing it names. *Buzz, crash, whisper, squeak* — say each one aloud and you can hear the sound inside the word itself.

Three sound devices in poetry

Say them aloud — the sound is the point.

Device	What it is	Example from <i>Down the Hill</i>	What it does
Alliteration	the same consonant sound at the start of words close together	<i>"Faster, faster — the fence posts fly"</i>	the f sounds hurry the ride along
Assonance	the same vowel sound repeated in words close together	<i>"The wind is free, the field is wide"</i>	the long ee opens the ride out
Onomatopoeia	a word that sounds like the thing it names	<i>"Click ... whisper ... Squeak!"</i>	we hear the ride itself

A table of the three sound devices — alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia — with a row for each showing what it is, an example from the poem *Down the Hill*, and what it does for the reader

Now read this original poem, written for this section. Read it aloud — that matters.

Down the Hill

Click, click, click — my wheels wake up, the tyres whisper, "Go, go, go." The wind is free, the field is wide, and I fly where the ferns all grow.

Faster, faster — the fence posts fly, the gravel grinds below, the paddocks blur to bands of green, and the hill begins to slow.

Squeak! go the brakes. The tyres skid. I wobble, grip and glide. The gate stands open. Home at last! I lean my bike with pride.

The sound devices are doing the work:

- **Onomatopoeia:** *click, whisper, grinds, Squeak!* The poem is full of small noises. You can hear the ride.
- **Alliteration:** *wheels wake, fence posts fly* (after *Faster, faster* — the f sounds hurry along), *gravel grinds, grip and glide*.
- **Assonance:** *The wind is free, the field is wide* — the long ee in *free* and *field* opens out, the way the ride does. *Faster, faster* — the repeated a sound speeds up.

Notice that the sounds are not just for show. They change the meaning. The *Click, click, click* at the start is slow. The f sounds in the middle hurry. The *Squeak!* at the end puts on the brakes. The sounds tell the story too.

Down the Hill — sound devices at work

Read it aloud. The sounds tell the story too.

Down the Hill

Click, click, click — my wheels wake up,

the tyres whisper, “Go, go, go.”

The wind is free, the field is wide,

and I fly where the ferns all grow.

Faster, faster — the fence posts fly,

the gravel grinds below,

the paddocks blur to bands of green,

and the hill begins to slow.

Squeak! go the brakes. The tyres skid.

I wobble, grip and glide.

The gate stands open. Home at last!

I lean my bike with pride.

Key

onomatopoeia

alliteration

assonance

Slow at the start, fast in the middle, brakes on at the end.

The original poem Down the Hill, with its onomatopoeia, alliteration and assonance marked in different colours and labelled, and a key underneath

4. Rhythm and the ballad

When a poem is read aloud, its lines carry a **rhythm** — a pattern of beats you can feel. A **beat** is a strong stress you can clap, like the pulse in a song. Say *The storm came down on Millbrook Farm* and clap it: **the STORM came DOWN on MILL-brook FARM** — four claps. That line has four beats.

Poems often use **rhyme** too: words ending with the same sound, like *rain* and *again*, or *away* and *grey*.

Defining the term. The Victorian Curriculum asks you to explain the effect of rhythm in **ballads**, but it does not define *ballad*. This section therefore treats a **ballad** as a poem that tells a story, usually in four-line stanzas with a steady beat and a rhyme on lines 2 and 4, and often with a repeating part called a **refrain**. Ballads began as songs, and many still sound like songs. Every question about ballads here is answerable on that definition alone.

Read this original ballad, written for this section. Clap the beat as you read.

Run, Bess, Run (a ballad)

The storm came down on Millbrook Farm the night the lamb slipped away, and Bess the farm dog shook her coat and set off through the grey.

Run, Bess, run, through the wind and the rain, find the lost one, bring it home again!

She heard a cry by the broken bridge where the flood waters rolled, she curled round the lamb in the howling dark and kept it safe from cold.

Run, Bess, run, through the wind and the rain, find the lost one, bring it home again!

When the sun came up on Millbrook Farm the storm had lost its bite, and Bess came home with the lamb she saved, and the world was washed in light.

Run, Bess, run, through the wind and the rain, you found the lost one — bring it home again!

What do you notice about this ballad?

- It tells a story with a beginning, a middle and an end: the lamb is lost — Bess searches through the storm — both come home safe.
- Each stanza has four lines. Lines 1 and 3 have four beats; lines 2 and 4 have three. A steady shape like that is easy to clap, easy to sing and easy to remember.
- Lines 2 and 4 rhyme in each stanza: *away / grey, rolled / cold, bite / light*.
- The refrain comes back after every stanza, like a chorus in a song — and the last refrain changes, because the story has changed.

So what does rhythm do? Here are three effects to look for:

1. **A steady beat carries the story along.** You can clap it; it moves like a song; it keeps you reading. In a ballad, the steady beat keeps the story moving.
2. **A refrain builds excitement.** Each time the refrain comes back, we know more of the story, so the same words feel bigger. The third *Run, Bess, run* feels louder than the first, because by then we know what Bess is running through.
3. **Breaking the pattern makes us stop.** If a steady ballad suddenly drops to a short, broken line, we stop — and the stop is part of the meaning. Writers break the rhythm to mark the moment when something changes. You will try this in Q9.

The shape of a ballad stanza

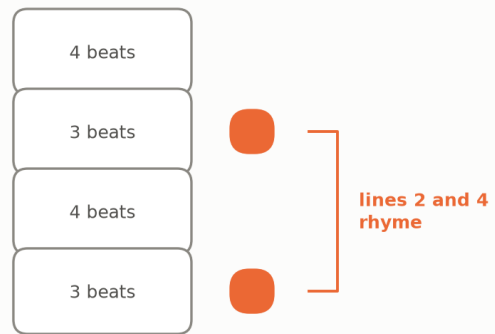
Run, Bess, Run, stanza 1 — clap the beats and find the rhyme.

The storm came down on Millbrook Farm

the night the lamb slipped away,

and Bess the farm dog shook her coat

and set off through the grey.



**Run, Bess, run, through the wind and the rain,
find the lost one, bring it home again!**

the refrain — returns after every stanza, like a chorus in a song

Four-line stanza · lines 1 and 3: four beats · lines 2 and 4: three beats and a rhyme

A labelled diagram of the first stanza of the ballad *Run, Bess, Run*, showing its four lines, the number of beats in each line, the rhyme between lines two and four, and the refrain that follows the stanza

Marking the beats

A dot marks each strong beat. Clap them as you read.

the refrain of *Run, Bess, Run*

• • • •
Run, Bess, run, through the wind and the rain,
• • • •
find the lost one, bring it home again!

4 beats,
steady as
a song

from Ballad B (Q9) — the pattern breaks

then — • **CRACK!** — the mast split right in • **two,**

the beats
stop
coming
steadily —
and we
stop

A steady beat carries us along. A broken beat makes us stop — and the stop is part of the meaning.

A diagram showing how to mark the beats in a line of poetry: the refrain of *Run, Bess, Run* with dots above its strong beats, next to a broken line with uneven beats

5. Explaining meaning and effect

Naming a device is only the first step. The Level 6 achievement standard says you should **explain** the effects of imagery and sound devices — so your job is to show what each device does. Use these four moves:

1. **Name it.** Which device is it? (Imagery for a sense; assonance; alliteration; onomatopoeia; rhythm; rhyme; refrain.)

2. **Point to it.** Quote the exact words.
3. **Say what it lets us picture, hear or feel.**
4. **Explain the effect.** What does it make us feel or notice? What does it add to the meaning?

Put together, the four moves make one strong sentence:

The onomatopoeia in “the rain came down hard, drumming on the tin roof” lets us hear the hard, fast noise of the rain on tin. This makes the storm feel close and loud, and it builds our worry for Mia.

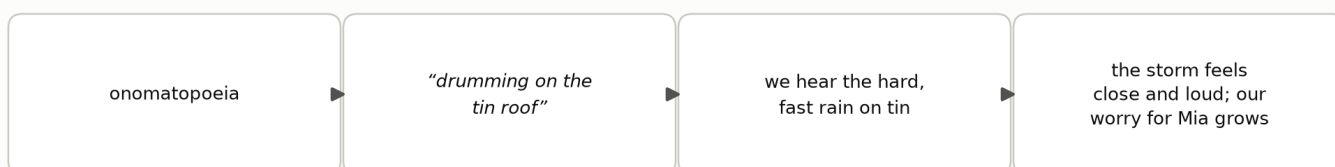
Notice that the last move does the real work. It says what the device does to us as readers — not just what the device is.

Explaining meaning and effect: four moves

Naming the device is only the first step. The last move does the real work.



Worked across one example from *The Storm*:



The last move is the explaining: it says what the device does to us as readers.

A flow chart with four steps for explaining the effect of a word choice — name the device, quote the words, say the sense or the sound, then explain the effect — with an example built across the four steps

You will use these same moves again. Section 3E asks you to write and adapt your own stories, and Section 5E asks you to try out literary devices as you edit. Sound and imagery are the tools those sections reach for.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — modelled analysis

Task: Read *The Storm* in Section 2 again. Find one example of imagery for each of three different senses, then explain the effect of one of them.

Step	What we do	What we find
1. Find sight imagery.	Look for words that paint a picture.	<i>a wall of cloud rolled in from the west, grey-green and huge</i>
2. Find sound imagery.	Look for words we can hear.	<i>the flags snapped and cracked against their poles; drumming on the tin roof</i>
3. Find touch or smell imagery.	Look for words we can feel or smell.	<i>a hot wind swept across the oval; the</i>

Step	What we do	What we find
4. Pick one and explain its effect.	Use the four moves: name it, point to it, say the sense, explain the effect.	<i>gritty smell of dust; like a cold coin</i> See below.

The explanation:

The touch imagery in “The first raindrop hit her arm like a cold coin” lets us feel the sudden, sharp cold of that first drop. The simile makes one small drop feel hard, round and icy, like a coin pressed onto Mia’s arm. This makes the storm feel real and close, and it builds our worry about what is coming.

Watch the move. Step 4 does not just name the device. It says what the device does to us as readers. That is the explaining.

Worked example 2 — modelled composition

Task: Turn this plain sentence into three or four lines of poetry. Use at least one sound device and imagery for two different senses.

Plain version: *The train came into the station.*

First, plan the choices:

Choice	What we write	What it adds
Onomatopoeia	<i>hum, sigh, screech</i>	We hear the train arrive and slow down.
Alliteration	<i>the brakes screech, spark and slow</i>	The repeated <i>s</i> sound stretches out, like the long, slow screech of brakes.
Touch imagery	<i>the platform shakes, the cold night air</i>	We feel the arrival in our bodies.
Smell imagery	<i>smells of iron and snow</i>	We are placed on the platform, in that moment.

Now the writing:

The train slides in with a hum and a sigh, the brakes screech, spark and slow, the platform shakes, and the cold night air smells of iron and snow.

Check it against the task: two senses (touch — *the platform shakes, the cold night air*; smell — *smells of iron and snow*) and two sound devices (onomatopoeia — *hum, sigh, screech*; alliteration — *screech, spark and slow*). Lines 2 and 4 rhyme (*slow, snow*).

One sentence on effect: *The alliteration in “the brakes screech, spark and slow” stretches the line out — the sound of the words does what the words say.*

From one plain sentence to poetry

Worked example 2 — same meaning, very different effect.

plain — tells us what happened

The train came into the station.



add imagery + sound devices

The Night Train

The train slides in with a hum and a sigh,
the brakes screech, spark and slow,
the platform shakes, and the cold night air
smells of iron and snow.

Key

onomatopoeia

alliteration

touch imagery

smell imagery

Two senses (touch, smell) and two sound devices (onomatopoeia, alliteration) — and lines 2 and 4 rhyme.

A before-and-after diagram showing the plain sentence about a train arriving at a station, and the same moment built into four lines of poetry with its sound devices and imagery labelled

Practice tasks

Guided practice

Q1. (E01) Read this short passage. Then copy and complete the table: write one example of imagery for each sense. The first one is done for you.

Popcorn crackled in the hot pan. The kitchen smelled of butter and sugar. Mia licked the sweet spoon and watched the golden syrup stretch in long, shiny strings.

Sense	Example from the passage
Hearing	<i>Popcorn crackled</i>
Sight	?
Smell	?
Touch	?
Taste	?

Q2. (E01) Read this passage. Underline two examples of imagery. For each one, name the sense it speaks to and the feeling it builds. The first one is done for you.

The old house waited at the end of the street. Its paint peeled in long grey strips, and the gate creaked when the wind pushed it. Inside, the air smelled of dust and cold tea.

Example: *the gate creaked* — hearing — it makes the house feel quiet and empty.

Q3. (E03) Each line below uses one of the three sound devices from this section: alliteration, assonance or onomatopoeia. Label each line. The first one is done for you.

- a) *Buzz, buzz, went the fly in the jar.* — **onomatopoeia** (*buzz* sounds like the noise it names)
- b) *The snake slid soft through the long wet grass.* — ?
- c) *The deep green sea was fast asleep.* — ?
- d) *Click, clack, went the hooves on the road.* — ?

Q4. (E03) Read *Down the Hill* in Section 3 again. Find one example of each device and quote it, then complete each sentence.

- The onomatopoeia in “...” lets me hear ...
- The alliteration in “...” makes the poem feel ... (faster / slower / smoother / bumpier)
- The assonance in “...” sounds ... (open / quick / soft / deep)

Q5. (E04) Clap the beat of each line. Count the beats, then answer the questions.

- a) *The storm came down on Millbrook Farm* — beats: ...
- b) *the night the lamb slipped away* — beats: ...
- c) *The really enormous very big storm came down on the farm at Millbrook that night* — beats: ...

Which line sounds most like a song? Which line is hardest to clap? Why do you think a ballad writer chooses the first kind of line?

Q6. (E04) Read *Run, Bess, Run* in Section 4 again.

- a) How many times does the refrain come back?
- b) Write the words of the refrain.
- c) What does the refrain do? Choose one, or both with a reason: it reminds us what the story is about; it builds excitement each time it returns.
- d) In one sentence, say why you think the writer brings the refrain back after every stanza.

Independent practice

Q7. (E01) Read this passage.

The Night Market

Lanterns swung above the market, soft as moths. The air smelled of fried dough and sweet plums. Somewhere a pan sizzled; somewhere else, a bell rang twice. Mia pressed the warm coin flat against her palm and watched the steam rise and curl into the dark.

Find three examples of imagery. Quote each one and name the sense it speaks to. Then write two or three sentences explaining how the imagery builds an emotional connection with Mia’s moment.

Q8. (E03) Read this poem.

Rain on the Window

Tap, tap, tapping at my window glass, the rain runs rivers down the street. It hums and drums and whispers low, then slides away on silver feet.

Choose two sound devices used in the poem (assonance, alliteration or onomatopoeia). For each one, quote the words and explain the effect: what does the device let you hear or feel?

Q9. (E04) Here are the openings of two ballads, written for this section. Clap the beat of each line.

Ballad A

The ship sailed out on a silver sea, the sails were full and white, the sailors sang as the bell rang out, and the town slipped out of sight.

Ballad B

The ship sailed out on a silver sea, the sails were full and white, then — CRACK! — the mast split right in two, and the wind stopped. And the night.

In two or three sentences, explain the effect of the steady rhythm in Ballad A. Then explain what happens for you as a reader when Ballad B breaks the pattern.

Q10. (E01, E03) Write two to four lines of your own about a noisy place you know (a kitchen, a playground, a train station, a sports ground). Use at least one example of onomatopoeia, one example of alliteration, and one image we can see or feel. Then write one sentence: which choice are you most proud of, and what does it do for your reader?

Produced outcome

Your ballad — and your writer's statement.

Write a ballad of two or three stanzas that tells a short story — a rescue, a journey, a storm, a match, a discovery; your choice. Bring a refrain back after every stanza. (If you would rather paint a place than tell a story, write a poem of eight to twelve lines instead — but keep a steady beat we can clap.)

Your poem must include:

- imagery for at least two different senses;
- at least one sound device: assonance, alliteration or onomatopoeia;
- a steady beat that you can clap aloud.

Then write a **writer's statement** of three or four sentences. Name each device you used, quote your own words, and explain the meaning and effect of each choice — what it makes your reader picture, hear or feel.

Use the checklist as you plan, write and edit.

The writer's checklist

Tick each box as you plan, write and edit your ballad.

☐

My ballad tells a story we can follow, stanza by stanza.

☐

My imagery speaks to at least two different senses.

☐

My sound device does its work — we can hear it when I read aloud.

☐

My beat is steady enough to clap.

☐

My writer's statement points at exact words and explains what they do.

When every box is ticked, your ballad is ready to hand in.

A writer's checklist for the produced outcome, with five checks covering the story, the imagery, the sound device, the beat, and the writer's statement

Success criteria. Your ballad tells a story we can follow, stanza by stanza. Your imagery speaks to at least two senses. Your sound device does its work — we can hear it when we read aloud. Your beat is steady enough to clap. Your statement points at exact words and explains what they do.

Marking note: for every open task in this section, marks are for the quality of your explaining — how well you name the choice and show what it does — not for which story you tell or which devices you choose. There is no right story here, but there are right reasons.

Answers

Q1. Sight: *the golden syrup stretch in long, shiny strings*. Smell: *The kitchen smelled of butter and sugar*. Touch: *the hot pan*. Taste: *licked the sweet spoon*. Any correct quote from the passage is fine.

Q2. Sample answers. *Its paint peeled in long grey strips* — sight — it makes the house feel old and forgotten. *the air smelled of dust and cold tea* — smell — it makes the house feel empty, as if nobody has lived there for a long time. (*waited* is also a fair extra point: the house waits like a person.)

Q3. b) Alliteration — *snake slid soft* repeats the *s* sound at the start of the words. c) Assonance — the long *ee* sound repeats in *deep, green, sea* and *asleep*. d) Onomatopoeia — *click, clack* sounds like the noise it names.

Q4. Sample answers. The onomatopoeia in “*Click*” lets me hear the slow first turn of the wheels. The alliteration in “*Faster, faster — the fence posts fly*” makes the poem feel faster — the *f* sounds hurry along. The assonance in “*The wind is free, the field is wide*” sounds open, the way the ride does. Any correct quote with a fair reason is fine.

Q5. a) 4 beats: *the STORM came DOWN on MILL-brook FARM*. b) 3 beats: *the NIGHT the LAMB slipped a-WAY*. c) Too many beats to clap in a pattern. Line a sounds most like a song; line c is hardest to clap, because its beats do not come at a steady interval. Ballad writers choose lines like a because a steady beat carries the story along.

Q6. a) Three times. b) *Run, Bess, run, through the wind and the rain, / find the lost one, bring it home again!* c) Both: it reminds us what the story is about, and it builds excitement each time it returns, because by then we know more of the story. d) Answers will vary; a strong answer says the refrain works like the chorus of a song — it holds the beat, it holds the hope that Bess will find the lamb, and it pulls us back into the race each time.

Q7. Sample answers. *Lanterns swung above the market, soft as moths* — sight (and a simile). *The air smelled of fried dough and sweet plums* — smell. *a pan sizzled* — hearing. *Mia pressed the warm coin flat against her palm* — touch. Sample connection: the imagery puts us right beside Mia in the market. The warm coin and the sweet smells make the moment feel safe and full of waiting, and we share her quiet excitement before she spends her coin.

Q8. Sample answers. Onomatopoeia: *Tap, hums, drums, whispers* let us hear the rain change from sharp to soft. Alliteration: *the rain runs rivers* — the repeated *r* sounds like moving water; *slides ... silver* works the same way. A strong answer quotes the words, then says what they let the reader hear or feel.

Q9. Ballad A: the steady beat moves like a song and carries us out with the ship; the smooth rhythm makes the journey feel calm and safe. Ballad B: line 3 breaks the pattern with one loud word (*CRACK!*), and line 4 falls away to only two beats. The broken rhythm makes us stop — we feel the sudden danger, and the stillness after it.

Q10. Answers will vary. A strong answer includes a sound word (such as *thud, clatter, sizzle*), alliteration, and an image we can see or feel, and the closing sentence names the choice and says what it does for the reader.

Produced outcome. Answers will vary. Check the poem against the success criteria: a story we can follow; imagery for two senses; a sound device we can hear; a steady beat; and a statement that quotes exact words and explains their effect. Sample statement: *In my ballad, the onomatopoeia in “the waves crashed, cold and cruel” lets the reader hear the sea and feel its danger. My refrain comes back after each stanza to hold the beat and keep the hope alive that the boat comes home.*

Creating literature: adapting plot, characters, settings and ideas; experimenting with vocabulary and literary devices

Curriculum trace — Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, English, Level 6

Owens: VC2E6LE05 — “create texts that adapt plot structure, characters, settings and/or ideas from literary texts they have encountered, and experiment with vocabulary and literary devices”

Draws on: VC2E6LE05.E01 “creating narratives in written, spoken, multimodal or digital form by adapting character; for example, reimagining the hero in an adventure story” · VC2E6LE05.E02 “creating an autobiography of a character from a text they have explored”

Level 6 achievement standard (Writing): “They use vivid, emotive vocabulary. They experiment with language features and literary devices.”

Learn

1. Writers borrow — and then they change

Every writer borrows. A story you love can hand you a shape, a character, a world or a big idea for a story of your own. The trick is not to copy. The trick is to **adapt**.

Defining the term. The Victorian Curriculum uses the verb *adapt* but does not define it. This section therefore treats *adapt* as follows: to take one or more parts of a text you know — its plot shape, its characters, its setting or its ideas — and change them on purpose to build a new text of your own. An adaptation is not a copy: you build the new text yourself, and at least one part must really change. Every task in this section is answerable on that definition alone.

Four parts of a story are yours to change:

- the **plot structure** — the shape of the events;
- the **characters** — who the story happens to;
- the **setting** — where and when the story happens;
- the **ideas** — what the story is really about.

You can change one part, two, three or all four. The more you change, the more the new text becomes yours.

The adapting toolkit

Four parts of a story you can borrow and change — and one way to change each

Part of the story	What it is	One way to adapt it
Plot structure	The shape of the events — what happens, and in what order	Keep the shape and change the events — or start at the end and jump back
Characters	Who the story happens to	Flip a trait, change the hero, or let another character tell it
Settings	Where and when the story happens	Move the whole story to a new place or a new time
Ideas	What the story is really about underneath the events	Land the same idea in a new world — or swap the message

Change one part, two, three or all four. The more you change, the more the new text becomes yours.

A table of the four parts of a story that a writer can adapt — plot structure, characters, settings and ideas — with a column saying what each part is and a column giving one way to adapt it.

One note to hold onto. You may change the parts, but do not lose the heart of the story. The heart is its idea, and the strongest adaptations keep the idea alive in a completely new world. Learn 4 shows how.

2. Plot structure: the shape you can borrow

The **plot** of a story is its chain of events: what happens, and in what order. The **plot structure** is the shape of that chain — how the events are ordered to build tension and carry the reader to the end.

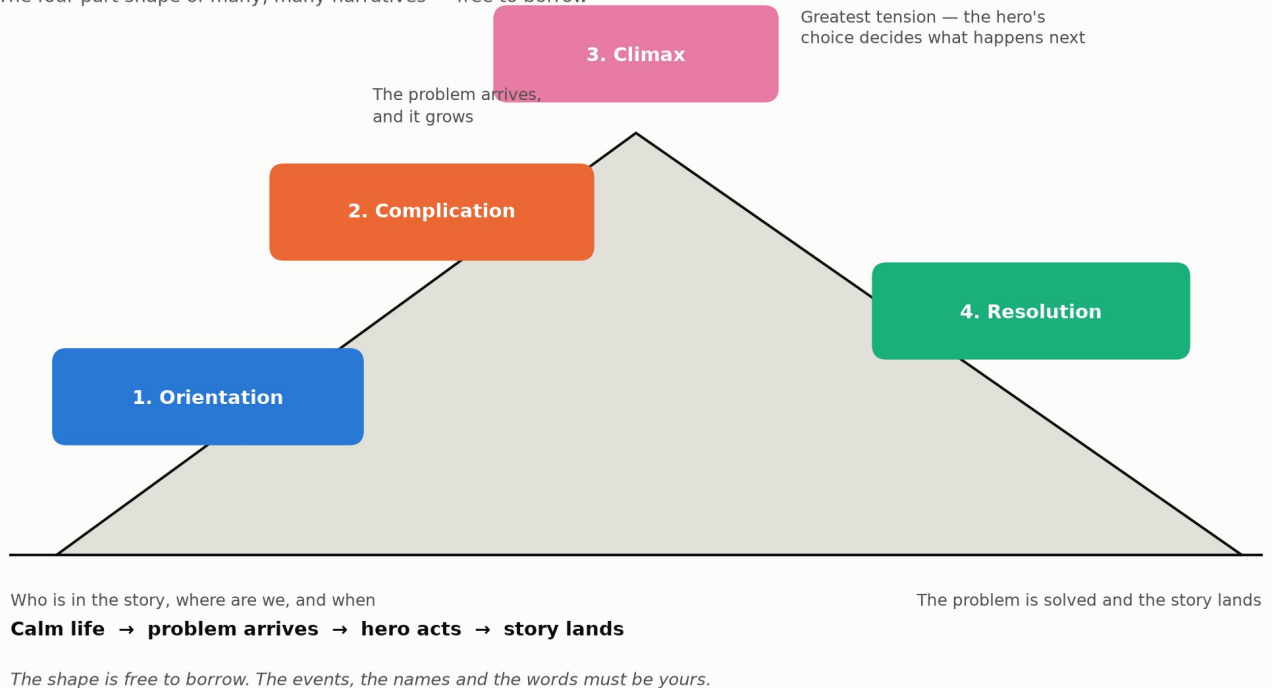
A **narrative** is a text that tells a story, and many, many narratives follow the same four-part shape. Writers draw it as a mountain:

1. **Orientation** — the opening: who is in the story, where are we, and when.
2. **Complication** — the problem arrives, and it grows.
3. **Climax** — the moment of greatest tension: the turn of the story, where the main character's choice decides what happens next.
4. **Resolution** — the problem is solved (in a happy way or a sad way) and the story lands.

These four words are the tools of this section, so they are worth fixing in your mind: orientation, complication, climax, resolution.

The story mountain

The four-part shape of many, many narratives — free to borrow



A mountain-shaped diagram labelled with the four parts of plot structure — orientation, complication, climax and resolution — with a sentence saying what each part does in a story.

Here is a short adventure story written for this section. An **adventure** is a story full of danger and daring, where a character must act to get through. Read it once for the ride. Then read it again for the shape.

The Storm at Gull Point (written for this section)

Nell lived with her father in the lighthouse at Gull Point, where the coast turns sharply and the sea runs grey and cold. Every evening she climbed the ninety steps to the lamp room, polished the great glass and filled the oil tank. The lamp was the one thing keeping boats safe in the dark.

One wild afternoon, the sky turned green-black and the wind began to howl. Nell's father went down to tie up the fishing boats, and a great wave threw him against the rocks. He was hurt, and he could not walk. Out in the bay, through the rain, Nell could see the little fishing boat *Pelican*, still far from home. The storm was growing, and the *Pelican* needed the lamp to find its way back.

Nell was scared. The tower shook, and the thunder crashed so hard her teeth rattled. But she took the matches, climbed the ninety steps alone, lit the great lamp and rang the fog bell again and again.

The *Pelican* turned towards the light. By the time the storm had passed, the boat was safe in the bay, and Nell's father was waiting at the door, leaning on a stick. "You were brave," he said. Nell shook her head. "I was scared the whole time." Her father smiled. "That is what brave is."

The **idea** of a story — also called its **theme** — is what the story is really about underneath the events. Underneath the storm and the lamp, the idea of this story is: *being brave does not mean you are not scared; it means you act while you are scared*. Hold that thought. It comes back in Learn 4.

Stage map: “The Storm at Gull Point”

Read the model story for its shape: each paragraph does one job.

From the story	Stage	Its job
“Nell lived with her father in the lighthouse at Gull Point ... The lamp was the one thing keeping boats safe in the dark.”	Orientation	Meet the hero, the place and the normal life
“One wild afternoon, the sky turned green-black ... the Pelican needed the lamp to find its way back.”	Complication	Father hurt, boat out in the bay, storm growing
“Nell was scared. The tower shook ... she lit the great lamp and rang the fog bell again and again.”	Climax	The hero acts, at the moment of greatest tension
“The Pelican turned towards the light ... ‘That is what brave is.’”	Resolution	The boat is safe, and the idea lands

Underneath the events, the idea: being brave does not mean you are not scared — it means you act while you are scared.

A stage map of the model story ‘The Storm at Gull Point’, with a quote from each paragraph, the name of each plot stage it belongs to, and the job that stage does.

Notice something: the *shape* of this story — calm life, problem arrives, hero acts, all is safe — is a shape you already know from hundreds of stories. That shape is free to borrow. The events, the names and the words must be yours.

3. Characters: changing who drives the story

A **character** is a person, or a creature, in a story. The **hero** of an adventure is the character the story follows through the danger.

A note on heroes. This section uses *hero* to mean the main character whose choices drive the story through danger. A hero does not have to be fearless or perfect. Many of the best heroes are scared — it is their choices, not their feelings, that make them heroes.

Adapting a character means changing something about them and letting that change run through the whole story. There are three dials you can turn:

- **Who they are** — age, job, family, even whether they are a person or an animal. A girl can become a boy. A lighthouse child can become an old sailor. Nell can become the lighthouse dog.
- **What they want** — the wish that pushes them forward.
- **What they fear** — and what they do when the fear shows up.

Those last two dials turn on a character’s **traits**. A **trait** is a steady way a character thinks, feels or acts — being patient, being quick to anger, being the sort of person who counts every step. Traits decide every choice a character makes, so when you flip a trait, the whole story moves with it.

Flip one dial and watch. If the hero of *The Storm at Gull Point* is not calm and steady but afraid of thunder, every moment of that climb changes — and the lamp still has to be lit. Same shape; a different heart beating inside it.

Adapting the hero: flip a trait, and the story moves

Same plot shape, same setting — a different heart beating inside it.

	NELL — the original hero	SAM — the reimagined hero
Who they are	Eleven-year-old lighthouse child	Nell's younger brother
Traits	Calm, steady, quick to act	Careful — but afraid of thunder
Greatest fear	Being too late to help	Storms and the dark
When the problem arrives	Takes the matches and climbs the ninety steps at once	Counts every step, holds the rail, talks himself forward

This is reimagining the hero (E01): keep what matters, and picture the rest in a new way.

A character-adapting diagram with two columns: the original hero Nell, and a reimagined hero, her brother Sam. Each column lists the hero's traits, their greatest fear, and what they do when the problem arrives.

This is exactly what elaboration VC2E6LE05.E01 invites: *reimagining the hero in an adventure story*. To **reimagine** means to picture something again in a new way — keeping what matters and changing how it looks, acts or feels.

4. Settings and ideas: new worlds, same heart

The **setting** is where and when a story happens — the place, the time, the weather, the light. Settings carry feeling: a grey sea and a green-black sky whisper *danger* before anything has even happened.

You can move a whole story into a new setting. When you do, the plot structure and the idea can stay — but the details must change to fit. A fishing boat cannot be lost in the snow. A lamp that guides boats is no use on a snowy mountain; there, you would light a fire, or hang a lantern in the window.

Swapping the setting: new world, same idea

Move the story — the plot shape and the idea can travel, but the details must fit.

	GULL POINT — the original	SNOWY HOLLOW — a new setting
The place	A lighthouse on a windy coast	A hut on a snowy mountain
The danger	A storm at sea	A blizzard on the mountain
Who needs help	The Pelican, a fishing boat lost in the bay	A walker, lost in the snow
The signal that saves them	The great lamp and the fog bell	A fire lit in the window, and a horn

What stays the same: the idea — you can be scared and brave at the same time. If the new setting lands the same idea at the end, the adaptation holds.

A setting-swap table placing the original setting of *Gull Point* beside a new setting, a snowy mountain hut, and listing what must change — the danger, who needs help, the signal that saves them — and what can stay the same.

And what about the idea? The idea of *The Storm at Gull Point* — *you can be scared and brave at the same time* — does not belong to the sea. It belongs just as well to a snowstorm, a first day at a new school, or a grand final. When your new setting lands the same idea at the end, your adaptation holds together. If the idea gets lost, no amount of exciting events will glue the story back.

5. Experimenting with vocabulary and literary devices

A **literary device** is a special way of using language to build pictures, feelings, sounds or rhythm in a text. You met the main devices in Section 2D. Here they are again, with fresh examples from the world of *Gull Point*:

- A **simile** compares two things using *like* or *as*: *The wind screamed like a hungry wolf.*
- A **metaphor** says one thing *is* another thing, to paint a picture: *Nell's heart was a drum.*
- **Personification** gives human qualities to something that is not human: *The waves grabbed at the little boat.*
- **Hyperbole** is a big exaggeration, used for effect — it is not meant to be taken as fact: *I have climbed these ninety steps a thousand times.*
- An **idiom** is a fixed phrase whose meaning does not come from its separate words: *The storm came out of the blue* does not mean the storm was blue. It means the storm surprised everyone.
- **Imagery** is language that paints pictures in the reader's mind. The other devices are tools for building it: *green-black sky, grey sea, golden glow.*

The literary device toolkit

Six devices, what each one does, and a fresh example from the world of Gull Point.

Device	What it does	Fresh example
Simile	Compares two things, using like or as	"The wind screamed like a hungry wolf."
Metaphor	Says one thing is another thing, to paint a picture	"Nell's heart was a drum."
Personification	Gives human qualities to something not human	"The waves grabbed at the little boat."
Hyperbole	A big exaggeration, used for effect	"I have climbed these ninety steps a thousand times."
Idiom	A fixed phrase whose meaning does not come from its separate words	"The storm came out of the blue."
Imagery	Language that paints pictures in the reader's mind	"Green-black sky, grey sea, golden glow."

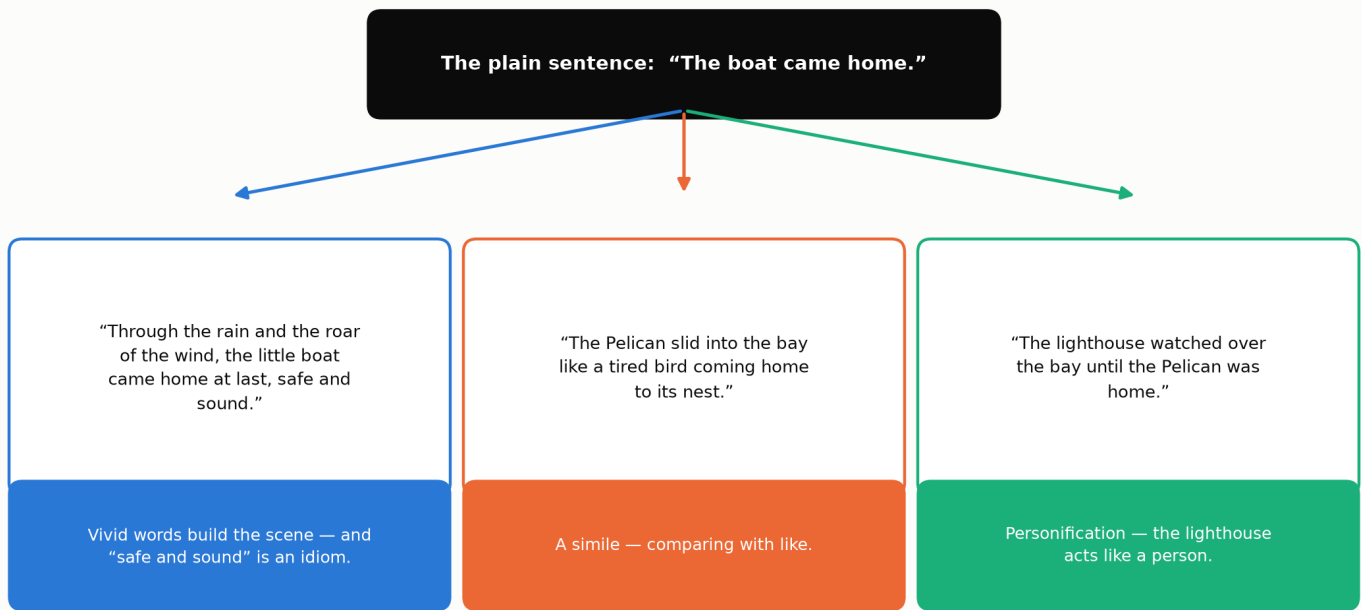
Devices are like salt on food: the right amount lifts the meal, and too much spoils it.

A table of six literary devices — simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, idiom and imagery — with a column saying what each device does and a column giving a fresh example sentence.

To **experiment** with vocabulary and devices means to try a word or a device on a sentence, see what it does, and keep it only if it fits. Start with a plain sentence, and try the same moment three ways.

Experimenting: one plain sentence, three ways

Try a word or a device on a sentence, see what it does, and keep it only if it fits.



Same moment, three textures. Pick the one that matches the feeling of your scene.

A diagram showing one plain sentence — 'The boat came home.' — rewritten three ways, one using vivid words, one using a simile and one using personification, with each device labelled.

Devices are like salt on food: the right amount lifts the meal, and too much spoils it. Pick devices that match the feeling of the scene. A scared hero climbing in the dark calls for short sentences, heartbeat words and small sounds — not a pile of devices in every line.

The toolkit in this section leans on the figurative language of Section 2D — the picture-painting family: simile, metaphor, personification and the rest — and it carries straight into Section 5D, where you will create texts for real purposes and audiences, and Section 5E, where you will re-read and edit your own and a partner's writing to make it stronger.

6. A character's own voice: writing an autobiography

So far you have changed characters. You can also let a character speak for themselves.

An **autobiography** is the story of a person's life, told by that person. The word is built from three parts: *auto-* (self), *bio-* (life) and *-graphy* (writing). It is writing about your own life. A **biography** is the same story told by someone else.

Because the character tells it, an autobiography has a first-person **narrator**. The **narrator** is the voice that tells a story. A first-person narrator sits inside the story and uses *I*, *me* and *my*. A biography uses a third-person narrator — a voice outside the story, using *he*, *she* and *they*.

When you write the autobiography of a character you have explored, which is what elaboration VC2E6LE05.E02 invites, you make three choices:

- **The big moments** — not every day of the character's life, just the moments that mattered;
- **The feelings** — what the character felt at each moment, which only they can tell;
- **The lesson** — what the character learned, which is the idea their life taught them.

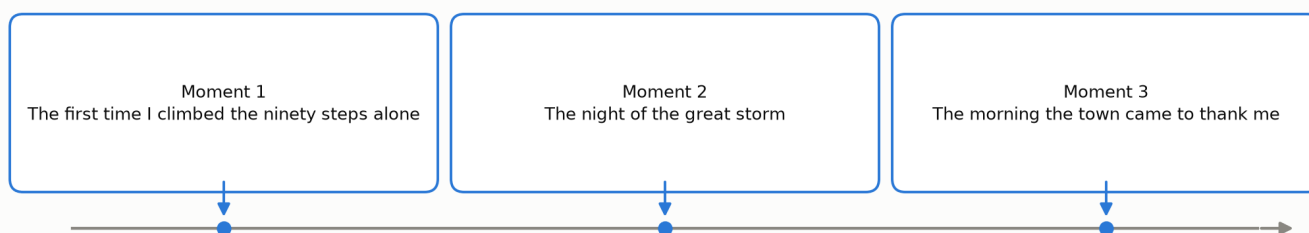
Planning a character's autobiography

First choose the voice. Then pick the big moments — not every day of the life.

1 Choose the voice

Voice	Who tells it	Example — and what it is
First person: I, me, my	The character — inside the story	"I lit the lamp alone." → an autobiography
Third person: he, she, they	Someone else — outside the story	"She lit the lamp alone." → a biography

2 Pick three big moments (Nell's life shown here)



For each moment, answer: What happened? • What did I feel? • What did I learn?

Only the character knows these feelings — and that is the whole point of an autobiography.

A planning diagram for a character's autobiography: a small table comparing first-person and third-person narrators, and a timeline of three big life moments, each with the questions what happened, what did I feel, and what did I learn.

Watch one trap: an autobiography can only know what that character saw, heard and felt. If the character was not in the room, the moment cannot go in — unless someone told them about it later.

Worked examples

Example 1 — modelled analysis

Read the two openings below. Opening A is from *The Storm at Gull Point*. Opening B reimagines the same story with a new hero.

Opening A (original)

Nell lived with her father in the lighthouse at Gull Point, where the coast turns sharply and the sea runs grey and cold. Every evening she climbed the ninety steps to the lamp room, polished the great glass and filled the oil tank.

Opening B (reimagined)

My name is Sam, and I live with my father and my big sister Nell in the lighthouse at Gull Point. I am not like Nell. Nell climbs the ninety steps without a thought. I count every step, and I hold the rail so hard my hands hurt. When the sky turns green-black, I hide under my bed. Thunder has always been my enemy.

What was adapted, what stayed the same, and which literary device is at work in Opening B?

Question	Answer	How we know
Which part of the story was	The character . The hero is now	Opening B names a new main

Question	Answer	How we know
adapted?	Sam, Nell's scared little brother, and the story is told in his own voice (<i>I, my</i>).	character and uses a first-person narrator.
What stayed the same?	The setting — the lighthouse at Gull Point — and the plot shape still to come: a storm, and a lamp that must be lit.	Both openings share the place, the ninety steps and the green-black sky.
Which device is at work?	A metaphor : <i>Thunder has always been my enemy</i> . Thunder is not really an enemy — Sam's fear turns it into one.	The sentence says one thing <i>is</i> another, with no <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> .

One adaptation can carry several changes at once: Opening B changes the hero **and** the narrator's voice. Name each change you can see, not just the first.

Example 2 — modelled composition

Now write Sam's climax: the moment the lamp is lit. Keep the plot shape of *The Storm at Gull Point*, keep Sam's fear, and try at least two literary devices.

Plan first:

Choice	What we do	Why
Keep the shape	Storm, hurt father, a lamp that must be lit	Plot structure borrowed from the original
Keep the setting	The lighthouse at Gull Point	Setting stays the same
Change the hero	Sam, afraid of thunder, telling it himself	Character adapted (E01)
Let the trait drive the action	Sam climbs slowly, counts the steps, talks to himself	A scared hero acts in a different way from a calm one
Try the devices	A simile and personification, plus one metaphor	To let the reader feel the fear

Model response

The tower shook, and thunder growled like an angry dog. My legs were jelly. Ninety steps. I counted them in a whisper, one by one, holding the rail so hard my hands ached. The wind hammered at the walls, begging to get in. "One step at a time," I told myself. At the top, my fingers shook as I struck the match. Once. Twice. Then the great lamp woke with a golden glow. Somewhere below, the fog bell began to ring, and I laughed and cried at the same time. I was scared the whole time — but the lamp was lit, and that was what mattered.

Check the devices: *thunder growled like an angry dog* is a **simile** (thunder compared with a dog, using *like*). *The wind hammered at the walls, begging to get in* is **personification** (the wind acts like a person who wants to get inside). And *my legs were jelly* is a bonus **metaphor**. The fear is in every sentence, but the job still gets done — because the shape was borrowed and the character was adapted.

Practice tasks

With support

Q1. Each change below adapts one of the four parts: plot structure, character, setting or idea. Label each one with the right part.

- a) The hero of the adventure is now a twelve-year-old girl instead of an old sailor.
- b) The story now starts at the end — the boat safe in the bay — and then jumps back to show how it got there.
- c) The storm at sea becomes a snowstorm on a mountain.
- d) The story used to say that luck saves you. Now it says that practice and planning save you.

Q2. (E01) Sam is scared where Nell is calm. Write two things Sam does in the lamp room in his own way because of his fear — and one thing he still has to do, exactly as Nell did.

Q3. Match each example (1–5) with its literary device (a–e).

Example	Device
1. The wind screamed like a hungry wolf.	a. hyperbole
2. Nell's heart was a drum.	b. idiom
3. The waves grabbed at the little boat.	c. simile
4. I have climbed these ninety steps a thousand times.	d. metaphor
5. The storm came out of the blue.	e. personification

Q4. Take the plain sentence *The boat came home*. Rewrite it once, using a literary device of your choice. Under your sentence, name the device you used.

Q5. (E02) Sort these sentences into two columns: *could go in an autobiography* (first person, *I*) and *could go in a biography* (third person, *he* or *she*).

- a) I climbed the ninety steps for the first time when I was nine.
- b) Nell climbed the ninety steps for the first time when she was nine.
- c) My hands shook, but I struck the match.
- d) Her hands shook, but she struck the match.

Then rewrite sentence b so it could go in Nell's autobiography.

Q6. (E02) Use the plan in the autobiography diagram to list three big moments for Nell's autobiography. For each moment, write one feeling Nell had that only she could know.

On your own

Q7. (E01) Reimagine the hero of *The Storm at Gull Point*. Choose one change to Nell — her age, her job, her greatest fear — or turn the hero into an animal, such as the lighthouse dog. Write the climax of the story (4–6 sentences) so that your change shows in what the hero does. Finish with one sentence naming the part you adapted.

Q8. Move *The Storm at Gull Point* into a new setting of your choice. List three details that must change to fit the new setting, and the one thing that must not change. Then explain in two sentences why the story's idea still works in your new setting.

Q9. Write a short paragraph (3–5 sentences) about a storm — a real one or one you make up. Use at least two different literary devices. Circle each device and write its name under your paragraph.

Q10. (E02) Write the opening of Nell’s autobiography (60–80 words). Use a first-person narrator, give the reader one big moment from her life, and include one feeling that nobody else could have seen.

Produced outcome

Your adaptation. Choose a story you know well — a text you have explored in class, or *The Storm at Gull Point* from this section. Create your own adaptation: a narrative of about 200 words, written, or in spoken, multimodal or digital form.

Your adaptation must:

- **adapt** at least one of the four parts — plot structure, characters, setting or ideas — and name which one;
- keep a clear shape: orientation, complication, climax, resolution;
- **experiment** with at least two literary devices that fit the feeling of your scene.

Work through the checklist, write your draft, and then re-read your text against the success criteria.

Writer's checklist: creating your adaptation

Work top to bottom. Tick each step before you move on.

1	Name the part you will adapt — plot structure, character, setting or idea
2	Keep the idea — the heart of the story must survive the change
3	Plan the shape: orientation → complication → climax → resolution
4	Choose two devices that fit the feeling of the scene
5	Write your draft
6	Re-read: can the reader feel what the character feels?
7	Edit: sense, sentences, spelling

Finish with two sentences of reflection: what did your change do to the story's feeling — and which device worked hardest?

A writer’s checklist for creating an adaptation, in seven steps: name the part you will adapt, keep the idea, plan the four-part shape, choose two devices, write the draft, re-read for feeling, and edit for sense and spelling.

Success criteria

- You name the part you adapted, and the change is easy for a reader to spot.
- Your story keeps a clear four-part shape.
- At least two literary devices lift the feeling without crowding the page.
- Your word choices build pictures and feelings, not just events.
- The reader can tell what your story’s idea is.

Finish with two sentences of reflection: how did your change move the story's feeling, and which of your devices did the most work?

Answers

Q1. a) Character — the hero has changed. b) Plot structure — the order of the events has changed. c) Setting — the place and weather have changed. d) Idea — the message underneath the events has changed.

Q2. Sample answers. In his own way: Sam counts the steps one by one instead of racing up; he talks to himself (“One step at a time”) to keep going; he holds the rail so hard his hands ache. The same: he still has to climb the ninety steps and light the lamp — the job does not change just because the hero does.

Q3. 1–c (simile: *like a hungry wolf*), 2–d (metaphor: her heart *was* a drum), 3–e (personification: waves cannot really grab), 4–a (hyperbole: not really a thousand times), 5–b (idiom: *out of the blue* means *by surprise*).

Q4. Sample: *The boat came home like a tired bird sliding back to its nest* — simile. Any sentence that uses a named device correctly is fine.

Q5. Autobiography: a and c (they use *I*). Biography: b and d (they use *Nell, her, she*). Rewritten b: *I climbed the ninety steps for the first time when I was nine.*

Q6. Sample moments. (1) The first time Nell climbed the ninety steps alone — she felt proud and a little shaky. (2) The night of the great storm — she was scared the whole time, but she kept climbing. (3) The morning the fishermen came to thank her — she felt warm inside, because she understood at last what her father meant about being brave. Any three moments from the character’s life are fine, as long as each feeling is one only Nell could know.

Q7. Answers will vary. A strong response keeps the shape (storm, lamp, rescue) while the hero’s change shows in the action — for example, the lighthouse dog barking to wake the town, or an older Nell climbing slowly with a lantern because her legs are stiff. The final sentence should name the adapted part: *I adapted the character.*

Q8. Answers will vary. Sample: setting = a hut in the snowy mountains. Changed details: the fishing boat becomes a walker lost in the snow; the lamp becomes a fire lit in the window; the fog bell becomes a horn. Not changed: the idea — *you can be scared and brave at the same time*. The idea still works because someone still has to act through fear to save someone else.

Q9. Answers will vary. Sample: *The storm came out of the blue. Rain drummed on the roof like a thousand fingers, and the old house groaned under the weight of the wind. I pulled the blanket up to my chin. It was going to be a long night.* Devices used: idiom (*out of the blue*), simile (*like a thousand fingers*), personification (*the old house groaned*). Note that *a thousand fingers* is also a hyperbole — one example can do two jobs.

Q10. Sample: *I was born in a little cottage beside the sea, with salt on the windows and gulls crying over the roof. My father says I could walk before I could talk, and that both skills took me straight to the lighthouse stairs. The night I lit the lamp alone, I was not brave. I was shaking. But I climbed anyway, and that night taught me the lesson I carry with me always: brave is not the same as unafraid. Brave is scared — and still climbing.* The response must use *I*, give one big moment, and include a feeling only Nell could know (*I was shaking*).

English Level 6 — Construction task C3

This is a school-designed check. It is not a VCAA instrument. Achievement in the Victorian Curriculum is reported against the Level 6 English achievement standard, not against a mark on this paper.

Construction task C3 — Persuasive construction

English 6 (Year 6) · Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · Assessment booklet · Task C3

Topic coverage: Persuasive writing — position statements · reasons and evidence · paragraph order · objective and subjective wording · calls to action

Codes assessed: VC2E6LY09 (developed, organised ideas) · VC2E6LA02 (objective and subjective language; bias)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Total marks

15 (each item is worth 1 mark)

Section structure

Section A — Selecting the position statement (2 marks)
· Section B — Matching reasons and evidence (4 marks)
· Section C — Ordering the paragraphs (3 marks) ·
Section D — Wording that fits (3 marks) · Section E —
The closing call-to-action (3 marks)

Timing guidance

20 minutes — about 1 minute per item, plus time to read the scenario. This is a classroom check, not an exam. There is no strict time limit; your teacher will let you finish.

Permitted materials

A pen or pencil. No other equipment is needed.

Conditions

This task builds one persuasive letter. Read the issue scenario first, then answer every item in order. Every item is about the same letter. Your teacher may read any item to you. The scenario was written for this task.

The issue scenario (read this first)

Riverbend Primary School is considering a new idea — **Walk-and-Wheel Fridays**. Every Friday, students would walk, scoot or ride to school. The school committee will decide at its next meeting. A student is writing a persuasive letter to the committee. These are the student's research notes.

Research notes

In the Term 1 survey, 90 of the school's 180 students arrived by car each morning.

The car queue at the gate takes 25 minutes on wet days.

The new bike racks near the gate hold 40 bikes.

In the Term 2 survey, students who walked said they felt more awake in first lesson.

The council offers free high-vis bands for walkers.

Section A — Selecting the position statement (2 marks)

Q1 (1 mark) Which is the best position statement for the letter? Circle the letter.

A. 'Walk-and-Wheel Fridays might be a good idea, or they might not be.'

B. 'Riverbend Primary School should start Walk-and-Wheel Fridays.'

C. 'Do you walk to school, or does your family drive?'

D. 'Once upon a time, a student walked all the way to school.'

Q2 (1 mark) What must a position statement do? Circle the letter.

- A. Give both sides of the issue equally
 - B. Ask the reader a question about the issue
 - C. State one side of the issue clearly
 - D. Retell a story about the issue
-

Section B — Matching reasons and evidence (4 marks)

Q3 (1 mark) Match each reason to the evidence that supports it. Write the letters on the lines.

Reasons	Evidence
1. 'Walk-and-Wheel Fridays would clear the gate queue.'	A. 'In the Term 2 survey, students who walked said they felt more awake in first lesson.'
2. 'Walking helps students arrive ready to learn.'	B. 'The new bike racks near the gate hold 40 bikes.'
3. 'The school is already ready for more bikes.'	C. 'The car queue at the gate takes 25 minutes on wet days.'

Q4 (1 mark) Which sentence is a reason that supports the position? Circle the letter.

- A. 'Walk-and-Wheel Fridays would make mornings calmer for everyone.'
- B. 'The new bike racks hold 40 bikes.'
- C. 'Some students live far from the school.'
- D. 'The committee meets on Tuesday.'

Q5 (1 mark) Which piece of evidence supports the reason 'Walking helps students arrive ready to learn'? Circle the letter.

- A. 'The car queue takes 25 minutes on wet days.'
- B. 'The new bike racks hold 40 bikes.'
- C. 'Students who walked said they felt more awake in first lesson.'
- D. 'Half the students arrive by car.'

Q6 (1 mark) One of these sentences does not support the position. Which one? Circle the letter.

- A. 'Walk-and-Wheel Fridays would clear the gate queue.'
 - B. 'Students arrive more awake after walking.'
 - C. 'The school already has room for 40 more bikes.'
 - D. 'The committee serves morning tea at its meetings.'
-

Section C — Ordering the paragraphs (3 marks)

Q7 (1 mark) These four cards are the letter's paragraphs, mixed up. Drag them into the order of a persuasive letter. Write 1–4 in the boxes.

Card	Order
'Second, walking helps students arrive ready to learn. In our survey, walkers said they felt more awake in first lesson.'	☐
'Riverbend Primary School should start Walk-and-Wheel Fridays. Every Friday, students could walk, scoot or ride to school.'	☐
'First, Walk-and-Wheel Fridays would clear the gate queue. On wet days, that queue takes 25 minutes.'	☐
'Join us next Friday. Together, we can clear the gate and start the day awake.'	☐

Q8 (1 mark) Which plan lists the parts of a persuasive letter in the right order? Circle the letter.

- A. 'Position, reasons, call to action'
- B. 'Call to action, position, reasons'
- C. 'Reasons, call to action, position'
- D. 'Story, joke, question'

Q9 (1 mark) The writer adds this sentence. 'Every walker will also get a free high-vis band from the council.' Which paragraph should it go in? Circle the letter.

- A. The opening position paragraph
- B. The first reason paragraph (the gate queue)
- C. The closing paragraph, to make the action easy to say yes to
- D. The second reason paragraph (arriving awake)

Section D — Wording that fits (3 marks)

Q10 (1 mark) The letter goes to the school committee. Which sentence fits that audience best? Circle the letter.

- A. 'Cars are terrible, and everyone who drives one should feel bad.'
- B. 'Whatever the committee decides, it does not matter.'
- C. 'Guess what? I walked to school once, and it was kind of fun!'
- D. 'Our survey shows half our students arrive by car, so the queue is worth fixing.'

Q11 (1 mark) Which sentence is biased? Circle the letter.

- A. 'In Term 1, 90 of the 180 students arrived by car.'
- B. 'Only sensible families walk to school.'
- C. 'The gate queue takes 25 minutes on wet days.'
- D. 'The new bike racks hold 40 bikes.'

Q12 (1 mark) The writer wants students to feel proud to walk. Which line does that job without attacking anyone? Circle the letter.

- A. 'Every step you walk is a win for you and for the school.'
 - B. 'Students who ride in cars are part of the problem.'
 - C. 'Walking is fine, I suppose.'
 - D. 'Cars travel faster than bikes.'
-

Section E — The closing call-to-action (3 marks)

Q13 (1 mark) Which is the best call to action for the school community? Circle the letter.

- A. 'You might think about walking one Friday, if you feel like it.'
- B. 'Cars cause queues at the gate.'
- C. 'The committee should tell students about the queue.'
- D. 'Join us for Walk-and-Wheel Friday — together, we can clear the gate and start the day awake.'

Q14 (1 mark) Choose the modal verb that gives the strongest push. Write it on the line.

Choose from: must · could · might · can

'If you want a calmer gate, you _____ try walking this Friday.'

Q15 (1 mark) Choose the word that fits the gap. Write it on the line.

Choose from: action · joke · heading · title

'A strong closing gives the reader a clear _____ to take.'

End of Construction task C3 — 15 marks

English Level 6 — Construction task C3: Solutions

Construction task C3 — Persuasive construction · 15 marks

English 6 (Year 6) · Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · Assessment booklet · Task C3

Codes assessed: VC2E6LY09 (developed, organised ideas) · VC2E6LA02 (objective and subjective language; bias)

Teacher copy. The matching item (Q3) scores 1 mark for all three pairs correct; all other items score 1 mark for the keyed response. Every item is objectively markable (P1). The construction items carry the full model letter and one alternative model below (P2).

Full answer key

Item	Section	Key	Notes and accepted variants
Q1	A	B	A position statement states one side clearly, and B does exactly that. A takes no side; C asks a question; D opens a story.
Q2	A	C	The position statement's job is to state one side of the issue clearly. Giving both sides (A), asking (B) and storytelling (D) are other jobs.
Q3	B	1 C, 2 A, 3 B	1 mark for all three correct. The 25-minute queue supports the clearing claim; the awake survey supports the ready-to-learn claim; the 40-bike racks support the ready-for-bikes claim.
Q4	B	A	A reason tells <i>why</i> the position is right — calmer mornings is the why. B is a checkable fact (evidence, not a reason); C leans the other way; D is off the issue.
Q5	B	C	The Term 2 survey about walkers feeling more awake is the evidence for the ready-to-learn reason. The queue (A), the racks (B) and the car count (D) support other claims.
Q6	B	D	Morning tea at meetings says nothing about Walk-and-Wheel Fridays. A, B and C each push the position.
Q7	C	1 position · 2 first reason (queue) · 3 second reason (awake) · 4 call to action	1 mark for all four in order. A persuasive letter states its position first, gives its reasons next, and closes with the call to action.
Q8	C	A	Position, reasons, call to action — the plan a persuasive letter follows. B and C scramble the same parts; D is no plan at all.
Q9	C	C	The free high-vis band

Item	Section	Key	Notes and accepted variants
			makes the action easy to say yes to, so it belongs in the closing paragraph, right beside the ask. It is not the position itself (A) and it supports neither reason (B, D).
Q10	D	D	A sentence for the committee carries a checkable fact and a clear, respectful push. A attacks; B gives up the position; C chats instead of arguing.
Q11	D	B	<i>Sensible</i> is a loaded word and <i>only</i> is a push word — the sentence tells the reader who to judge. A, C and D report what can be checked.
Q12	D	A	A warm, proud push with no target to attack. B attacks car riders; C carries no push at all; D is a flat fact with no feeling.
Q13	E	D	The call to action names the reader ('Join us'), gives the action (Walk-and-Wheel Friday) and the reason to act now. A is too soft to move anyone; B is a fact with no action; C hands the action to somebody else.
Q14	E	must	Accept <i>must</i> (any capitalisation). <i>Must</i> is the strongest push on the modal scale (must, should, can, could, might).
Q15	E	action	Accept <i>action</i> (any capitalisation). A strong closing gives the reader a clear action to take — what to do next.

Total: 15 marks.

Model letter (P2)

Full model text assembled from the keyed choices. The scenario and research notes supply the material. Each keyed choice is placed where the item puts it; the item numbers in brackets show where each keyed choice lands.

A letter to the school committee

Dear Committee,

Riverbend Primary School should start Walk-and-Wheel Fridays [Q1 — the position statement]. Every Friday, students could walk, scoot or ride to school [Q7, paragraph 1].

First, Walk-and-Wheel Fridays would clear the gate queue. On wet days, that queue takes 25 minutes [Q7, paragraph 2; Q3]. Our survey shows half our students arrive by car, so the queue is worth fixing [Q10].

Second, walking helps students arrive ready to learn. In our survey, walkers said they felt more awake in first lesson [Q7, paragraph 3; Q3, Q5]. Every step you walk is a win for you and for the school [Q12].

Join us for Walk-and-Wheel Friday — together, we can clear the gate and start the day awake [Q13]. Every walker will also get a free high-vis band from the council [Q9]. If you want a calmer gate, you must try walking this Friday [Q14 — the strongest modal closes the ask].

Yours sincerely,

A Riverbend student

Construction principles named (per item, against the achievement standard's Writing sentences).

Items	Construction principle evidenced
Q1–Q2	Developed, organised ideas for purpose — a persuasive text opens by stating one side of the issue clearly; questions, both-sides openings and story openings are set aside on purpose.
Q3–Q6	Reasons supported by evidence — every reason is matched to the checkable fact that carries it, and the off-topic sentence is thrown out.
Q7–Q9	Text structure for persuasion — position first, reasons next, call to action last; an added sentence is placed where its job fits, right beside the ask.
Q10–Q12	Objective and subjective language fit for purpose and audience — the committee sentence pairs a checkable fact with a respectful push; the biased option is spotted by its loaded word and push word; the proud line pushes without attacking.
Q13–Q15	The call to action — the closing names the reader, gives the action and the reason to act now, and the modal verb sets how hard the sentence pushes.

One alternative model (P2). Genuine variation is allowed in the call to action and in the proud line, provided the call to action still names the reader and the action, and the proud line still pushes without attacking. One acceptable alternative closing:

‘Start small — walk just one Friday, and see what a calmer morning feels like. Every step you take clears the gate a little more.’

The two body reasons may also swap places, provided *first* and *second* still match the new order.

Marks by content description

CD	Items	Marks
VC2E6LY09 (5D — create texts with developed and organised ideas)	Q1–Q9, Q13–Q15	12
VC2E6LA02 (1B — objective	Q10–Q12	3

CD	Items	Marks	
and subjective language; bias)			
Per-item CD and H5P family mapping			
Item	CD	§7 family	H5P type
Q1	VC2E6LY09	Selecting the position statement	Multiple Choice (position statement choice)
Q2	VC2E6LY09	Selecting the position statement	Multiple Choice (what a position statement does)
Q3	VC2E6LY09	Matching reasons and evidence to the position	Matching (reasons to evidence)
Q4	VC2E6LY09	Matching reasons and evidence to the position	Multiple Choice (reason vs fact vs off-topic)
Q5	VC2E6LY09	Matching reasons and evidence to the position	Multiple Choice (evidence for a named reason)
Q6	VC2E6LY09	Matching reasons and evidence to the position	Multiple Choice (odd one out)
Q7	VC2E6LY09	Ordering the paragraphs	Drag and Drop (paragraphs into persuasive order)
Q8	VC2E6LY09	Ordering the paragraphs	Multiple Choice (plan order)
Q9	VC2E6LY09	Ordering the paragraphs	Multiple Choice (placing an added sentence)
Q10	VC2E6LA02	Choosing emotive vs objective wording fit for purpose; spotting bias	Multiple Choice (wording for the audience)
Q11	VC2E6LA02	Choosing emotive vs objective wording fit for purpose; spotting bias	Multiple Choice (the biased option)
Q12	VC2E6LA02	Choosing emotive vs objective wording fit for purpose; spotting bias	Multiple Choice (emotive line without attack)
Q13	VC2E6LY09	Choosing the closing call-to-action with modal verbs for the audience	Multiple Choice (call to action)
Q14	VC2E6LY09	Choosing the closing call-to-action with modal verbs for the audience	Fill in the Blanks (strongest modal)
Q15	VC2E6LY09	Choosing the closing call-to-action with modal verbs for the audience	Fill in the Blanks (what a strong closing gives)

Achievement-standard mapping (sentences quoted verbatim from TOC §1)

- Sections A, B, C and E (VC2E6LY09) evidence Writing: *“When creating written and spoken texts for specific purposes and audiences, students explore ideas and experiment with textual details from texts”* and *“They use text structures, including repetition, to create sequence and cohesion”* — here by stating the position, matching reasons to evidence, ordering the paragraphs, and closing with a modal-verb call to action.
- Section D (VC2E6LA02) evidences the standard’s own sentence: *“They explore objective and subjective language and identify bias.”* — here by choosing wording fit for the committee, spotting the biased option

(loaded word *sensible*, push word *only*), and choosing an emotive line that pushes without attacking. As a writing task, it likewise evidences Writing: “*They use vivid, emotive vocabulary.*”

- The mode map in TOC §7.7 places the C tasks under Writing.

Score box

Section A /2

Section B /4

Section C /3

Section D /3

Section E /3

Total /15
