

English Level 7

Chapter 3 — Literature

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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.

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Ideas, points of view, characters, events and issues in literary texts across contexts

Chapter 3 · Literature · Section 3A Owns: VC2E7LE01 (Literature and contexts) **Draws on:** VC2E7LE01 .E01, VC2E7LE01 .E02, VC2E7LE01 .E04 **Excluded (§2A):** VC2E7LE01 .E03 — see the note at the end of this section. **Assumes from Level 6:** VC2E6LE01 · **Hands forward to Level 8:** VC2E8LE01

About this section

Every story comes from somewhere. It is shaped by the time it is set in, the place it grows out of, and the people it is about. We call all of that the **context** of a text. *Context* means the surroundings that give a text its meaning — the historical, cultural and social world it belongs to. In this section you will learn to spot ideas, points of view, characters, events and issues in literary texts, and to say how the context of a text shapes each one.

You will work with three kinds of text, all written for this book:

- three very short stories about **heroism**, each from a different place and time;
 - one scene shown twice — once as **written prose** and once as a **film** version;
 - two **poems** about the city and the bush, written in the voices of two different eras.
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The curriculum for this section

Content description VC2E7LE01 — Students learn to: identify and explore ideas, points of view, characters, events and/or issues in literary texts, drawn from different historical, cultural and/or social contexts by a wide range of Australian and world authors.

This may involve students:

- **.E01** exploring ideas about heroism in literary texts by a wide range of world authors
- **.E02** discussing the similarities and differences in character representations in film adaptations of novels and plays
- **.E04** exploring depictions of the city or the bush in Australian poems and short stories from different eras

§2A note. The full content description also names literary texts “by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors”. That portion, and the elaboration **.E03** (representations of characters and events in literary texts by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples), are **excluded** from this book. This section is taught through the remaining clause — ideas, points of view, characters, events and issues in literary texts from different historical, cultural and/or social contexts by Australian and world authors — and is none the thinner for it. The decision is recorded in the front-of-book note and in TOC §2A.

Theory

What the key words mean

Each of these terms is a tool. Learn the tool first, then use it.

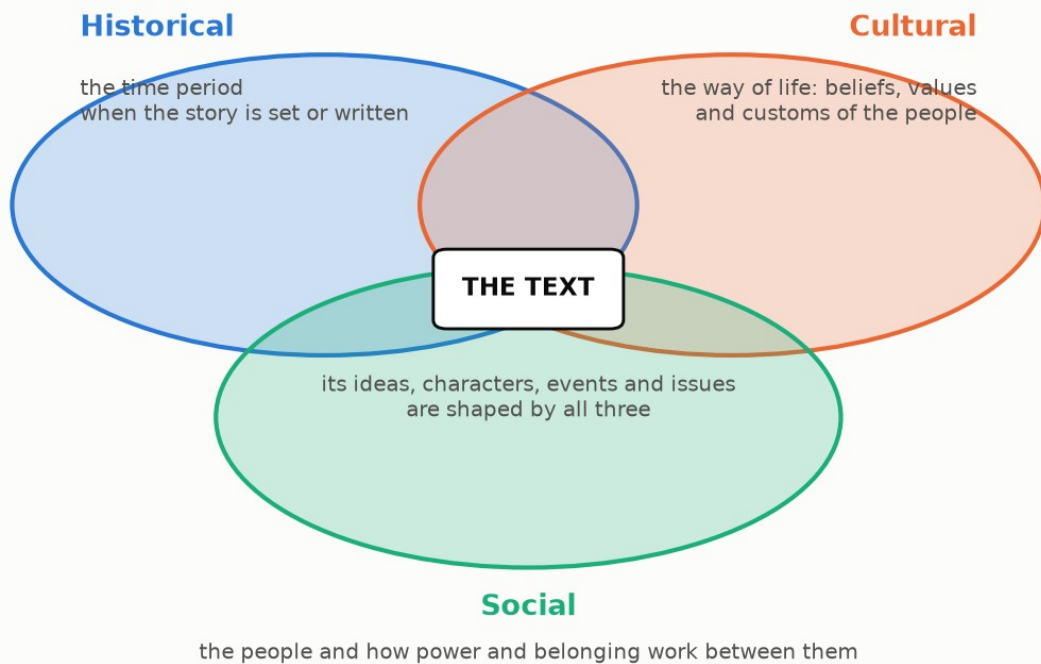
Literary text. A text written to be read as a work of the imagination — a story, a poem, a play, a novel. It is made of language chosen carefully to create meaning and feeling.

Context. The world a text belongs to. Context has three overlapping parts, shown in Figure 1.

- **Historical context** — the time period: what was happening in the world when the story is set or was written.
- **Cultural context** — the way of life: the beliefs, values, food, language and customs of the people in the text.
- **Social context** — the people and their place in a group: family, friends, school, class, and how power and belonging work between them.

The three lenses of context

Every text sits where the three lenses overlap



Three overlapping lenses labelled historical, cultural and social context, with the text placed in the middle where all three overlap

Figure 1 — The three lenses of context. Every text sits where they overlap.

Idea. The big thought a text is working on. A text about a flood might really be working on the idea of *courage*, or *family*, or *what we owe strangers*. Ideas are usually single, big words.

Point of view. This term does two jobs, and it helps to keep them apart.

1. **The telling voice** — who tells the story, and from what position. A story told with *I* is in **first person**. A story told with *he* or *she* is in **third person**. A third-person story may follow only one character's thoughts (**limited**) or may move through many minds and know everything (**all-knowing**).
2. **A position on an issue** — what a character, or the text itself, seems to think about a question that has no single right answer. When we ask “what is this text's point of view on fairness?”, we mean its position, not its grammar.

Both senses are at work in this section. Figure 2 sets out the telling-voice sense.

Narrative points of view

Who tells the story decides what the reader can know

Point of view	Who tells	What the teller can know	Example sentence
First person	Told with "I". The teller is a character in the story.	Only what that character sees, feels and knows.	<i>"I am twice her size and she pulled me out like I weighed nothing." (driver, Q11)</i>
Third person, limited	Told with "he" or "she", following one character's mind.	One character's thoughts and feelings, and what they can see.	<i>Sam could feel his heart in his ears.</i>
Third person, all-knowing	Told with "he" or "she", moving through many minds.	The thoughts and feelings of several characters, and more besides.	<i>Some in the village laughed and said a girl had no use for letters. Aiko did not answer them.</i>

The same event reads differently depending on who tells it - that choice is one of a text's biggest meaning-making tools.

Table of narrative points of view: first person, third person limited, and third person all-knowing, each with an example sentence

Figure 2 — Narrative points of view: who tells, and what they can know.

Character. A person (or being) in a text. Characters are **represented** — that is, built up — through what they say, what they do, what others say about them, and what we are told about their thoughts. *Representation* means the way a text builds and shows a character, place or idea.

Event. Something that happens in the text — a moment that changes the situation.

Issue. A question or problem the text raises that people can disagree about in real life too — fairness, honesty, loyalty, who belongs, who gets help. An issue is not a fact. It is a live question.

Why context matters

A character's choice, an event, or an issue never sits in a vacuum. The same act of bravery looks different in a war, in a schoolyard, or on a flooded creek. The same idea about the city sounds different in a poem from a hundred years ago and one from today. When you link what happens in a text to the context it comes from, your reading gets deeper. That link is the skill this section builds.

Worked example 1 — ideas about heroism (.E01)

Read the three short texts below. Each one builds a different picture of what it means to be a hero, and each one comes from a different context.

Text A — The Creek (*rural Australia, today*)

The rain had not stopped for two days. From the back veranda, Mia watched the creek rise until it licked the low bridge. Then she saw it: a small white car, half in the water, tilting.

Mia did not think. She grabbed the coil of rope by the shed door, tied one end to the iron post, and ran. The water was brown and fast and colder than she expected. It pulled at her legs. She held the rope with one hand and reached the car with the other. The driver's face was white at the window.

“Take it!” Mia shouted over the noise of the water. She pushed the rope’s end through the gap. The driver’s fingers closed on it. Step by step, hand over hand, Mia hauled him out of the car and up the bank, both of them slipping, both of them soaked, until his feet touched solid ground.

Afterwards, wrapped in a blanket, the driver kept saying, “You’re just a kid.” Mia looked at the creek and shrugged. “The creek didn’t care,” she said.

Text B — The Quiz (*a school, today*)

Sam saw it clearly. Two rows ahead, during the Friday quiz, his best friend Leo lifted his paper and let his eyes rest on Sam’s answers. Sam froze. Leo was the one who had helped Sam through the term. Leo was the one who shared his lunch, who walked with him, who never let him sit alone.

When the papers were collected, Ms Chen looked up. “Someone helped Leo during the quiz,” she said. “I’m not angry. I just want the truth.”

The room went quiet. Sam could feel his heart in his ears. He could stay silent. Everyone stayed silent. That was the rule nobody wrote down.

Sam put his hand up. “I saw it,” he said. His voice was small, but it did not shake. “I saw what happened.” He did not name Leo. He simply refused to pretend the room was empty.

Text C — The Lamp (*a village far away, long ago*)

Every day Aiko worked in the rice fields from sunrise until the light failed. Her back ached. Her hands were rough. But every night, when the village slept, she walked the long road to the little schoolhouse, where the teacher left a lamp burning for her.

She was the only girl who came. Some in the village laughed and said a girl had no use for letters. Aiko did not answer them. She bent over the page and traced each new word until it was hers.

Years passed. The girl who walked by lamplight became the woman who could read every book in the district, and who taught the village children their first letters. Nobody called it brave. But it was. It was the quiet kind.

Reading it closely

Figure 3 reproduces Text A with the reading moves marked on it. Then Figure 4 compares all three texts side by side.

Text A - The Creek - marked up

Finding the character, event, idea and context in one text

The rain had not stopped for two days. From the back veranda, Mia watched the creek rise until it licked the low bridge. Then she saw it: a small white car, half in the water, tilting.

Mia did not think. She grabbed the coil of rope by the shed door, tied one end to the iron post, and ran. The water was brown and fast and colder than she expected. It pulled at her legs. She held the rope with one hand and reached the car with the other. The driver's face was white at the window.

"Take it!" Mia shouted over the noise of the water. She pushed the rope's end through the gap. The driver's fingers closed on it. Step by step, hand over hand, Mia hauled him out of the car and up the bank, both of them slipping, both of them soaked, until his feet touched solid ground.

Afterwards, wrapped in a blanket, the driver kept saying, "You're just a kid." Mia looked at the creek and shrugged. "The creek didn't care," she said.

CONTEXT

Rural Australia, today: two days of rain, a flooded creek.

CHARACTER

Mia is built through what she DOES: did not think, grabbed, ran.

EVENT

The rescue - rope, hand over hand, up the bank.

IDEA

Heroism as physical courage: 'The creek didn't care.'

The text of *The Creek* reproduced with margin labels pointing to the character, the event, the idea of heroism, and the rural context

Figure 3 — Text A marked up: finding the character, event, idea and context.

Three texts, three heroisms

The idea of 'being a hero' changes with the context

Text	Context	Character	The event	The idea of heroism it builds
Text A The Creek	Rural Australia, today: a flooded creek, a farm shed.	Mia	Pulls a trapped driver out of a flooded car with a rope.	Physical courage: acting fast into danger.
Text B The Quiz	A school classroom, today: friends protect each other.	Sam	Tells the teacher he saw what happened, refusing the unspoken rule of silence.	Moral courage: doing the right thing when it costs you.
Text C The Lamp	A village long ago, where girls were not expected to read.	Aiko	Walks to the schoolhouse every night to learn by lamplight, for years.	Quiet, lasting persistence: bravery as a habit.

No text tells you its idea of a hero - each one shows it through a character and an event in its own context.

Comparison table of three heroism texts, listing for each the context, the character, the event, and the kind of heroism shown

Figure 4 — Three texts, three heroisms. The idea changes with the context.

How to read the table. Notice that no text says “this is what a hero is”. Each text *shows* an idea of heroism through a character and an event. Your job is to name the idea the text builds, then link it to the context. In Text A the heroism is **physical courage**; in Text B it is **doing the right thing even when it is hard** (moral courage); in Text C it is **quiet, lasting persistence**. Three different contexts, three different answers to the same question: *what does it mean to be brave?*

Worked example 2 — a character on the page and on the screen (.E02)

When a novel or a play is turned into a film, we call the film an **adaptation**. *Adaptation* means a new version of a text made for a different form. The story may stay the same, but the way the character is **represented** must change, because film shows and print tells.

Here is the same moment from Text A, first as written prose, then as the film version of the same scene.

As prose (the novel):

Mia did not think. She grabbed the coil of rope by the shed door, tied one end to the iron post, and ran. The water was brown and fast and colder than she expected. It pulled at her legs. She held the rope with one hand and reached the car with the other.

As film (the storyboard):

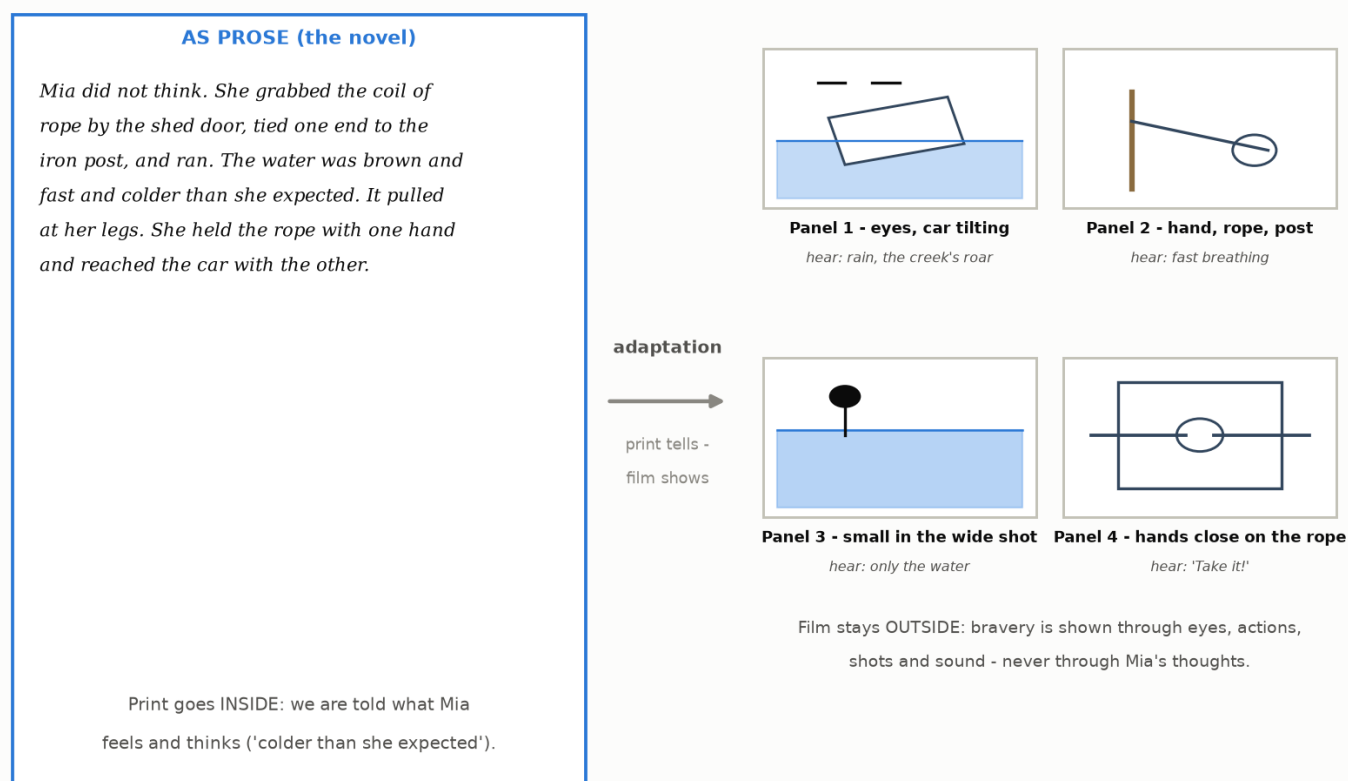
Panel	What we see	What we hear
1	Close-up: Mia’s eyes go wide. Cut to the white car tilting in the brown water.	Rain. The roar of the creek rising.
2	Mia’s hand snatches the rope from the shed hook. She knots it to the post.	Her fast breathing. The rope pulling hard.
3	Wide shot: a small figure against the huge, churning creek.	Music drops away. Only water.
4	Close-up: Mia’s hand reaching through the window gap. The driver’s fingers close on the rope.	One sharp word: “Take it!”

Reading it closely

Figure 5 lays the two versions side by side.

One scene, two forms

The same rescue as written prose and as a film storyboard



Split diagram: on the left the prose passage from the novel, on the right four storyboard panels of the same scene, with arrows linking what print tells to what film shows

Figure 5 — One scene, two forms. Print tells; film shows.

How to read it. The prose lets us *inside* Mia — “colder than she expected”, “Mia did not think”. Those are thoughts and feelings only words can give directly. The film cannot put those words on screen, so it represents the same character a different way: through her **eyes** going wide (Panel 1), through her **actions** with the rope (Panel 2), through the **wide shot** that makes her look small against the creek (Panel 3). Both versions build the same idea — a brave, quick-thinking girl — but they use different tools. When you compare an adaptation with its source text, ask: *what did the film keep, what did it change, and how does each form show the character?*

Worked example 3 — the city and the bush in two eras (.E04)

Australian poems and short stories have long pictured two places: the city and the bush. *The bush* means the open country — farms, paddocks, small towns, wide quiet land. The two poems below are original texts written for this book, each in the voice of a different era. Read how each one represents its place, and how the era shapes the feeling.

Text D — “The Bush Road” (*in an older voice, about a century ago*)

The dust lies thick on the long red road, the paddocks stretch and burn, and the homestead sits at the end of it all where the slow dark seasons turn.

A man rides out at the break of day with his dog at his right hand's side; he speaks little, and the land speaks less, and the sky is wide and wide.

It is a hard land, and it asks much of all who stay and tend it; but it gives back a steady heart to any soul who will defend it.

Text E — “City Lights” *(in a voice from today)*

The train hums under the city, and I rise into the lights — a thousand windows stacked in towers, each one holding its own small night.

Nobody knows my name here, and somehow that is the draw: a crowd you can belong to without a single law.

The bush my grandparents knew feels far as a story told; my sky is glass, my sky is steel, my sky is bright and bold.

Reading it closely

Figure 6 sets the two depictions side by side.

Two places, two eras				
Each poem builds its place from chosen details - and each era values something different				
Poem	Era and voice	The place it depicts	Details it chooses	The feeling it builds
Text D "The Bush Road"	An older voice, about a century ago	The bush: red road, paddocks, a lone homestead	thick dust, burning paddocks, a man and his dog, a sky 'wide and wide'	Hard but honest: the land rewards steady work and defence.
Text E "City Lights"	A voice from today	The city: towers, trains, a thousand lit windows	glass and steel, humming trains, a crowd you can belong to	Free and full of possibility: belonging without being known.

The older voice ties belonging to the land you work; the modern voice ties it to the crowd you can disappear into.

Comparison table of two poems, listing for each the era, the place it depicts, the details it uses, and the feeling it creates

Figure 6 — Two places, two eras. Each poem builds its place from chosen details.

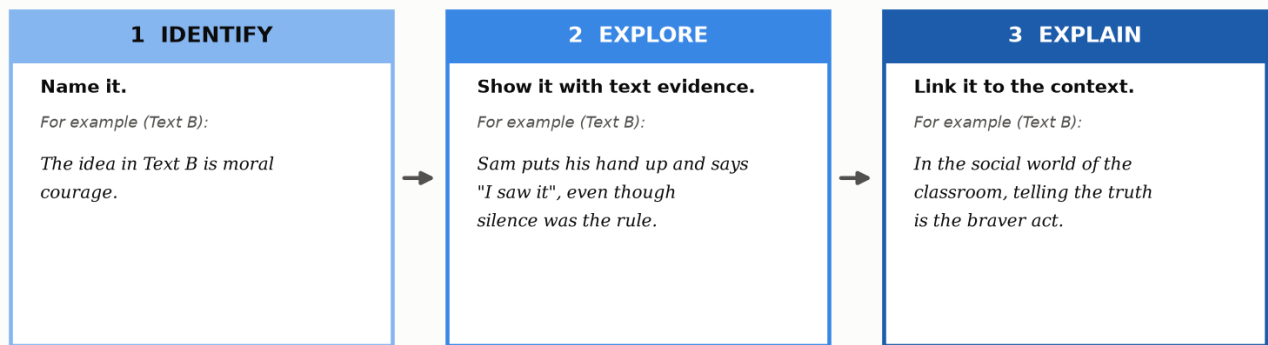
How to read it. Both poems are about *where people belong*, but they pick opposite places and build opposite feelings. “The Bush Road” uses **wide, quiet details** — dust, paddocks, a wide sky, a man and his dog — to represent the bush as **hard but honest**, a place that rewards steady work. “City Lights” uses **crowded, bright details** — towers, windows, trains, glass and steel — to represent the city as **free and full of possibility**. Notice how the older voice ties belonging to the land you *work*; the modern voice ties belonging to the crowd you can *disappear into*. The era changes what the poem values.

Your response frame

Use these three moves whenever you are asked about an idea, point of view, character, event or issue. Figure 7 shows the frame.

The response frame: Identify - Explore - Explain

Three moves for any question about an idea, point of view, character, event or issue



Use all three moves in order: name the element, prove it with the text, then tie it to its context.

A three-step response frame: Identify the element, Explore it with evidence from the text, Explain how the context shapes it

Figure 7 — Identify, Explore, Explain. The three moves of a strong response.

1. **Identify** — name it. *The idea in Text B is moral courage.*
2. **Explore** — show it with evidence from the text. Quote or point to the moment that builds it. *Sam puts his hand up and says "I saw it", even though staying silent was the unspoken rule.*
3. **Explain** — link it to context. *In the social context of the classroom, where friends protect each other, telling the truth is shown as the braver act.*

Practice

Part 1 — Reading and viewing

- Q1.** Define, in your own words: *context*, *idea*, *point of view* (both senses), *character*, *event*, *issue*.
- Q2.** Using Figure 1, give one example of a historical, a cultural and a social context for Text C (The Lamp).
- Q3.** Before you look at Figure 4, copy its four column headings (context, character, the event, the idea of heroism) into your book and fill them in yourself for Text B and Text C. Then check your rows against the figure.
- Q4.** Which of the three heroism texts (A, B or C) do you think shows the hardest kind of bravery? There is no single right answer. Use the response frame: identify your choice, explore it with evidence, and explain why the context makes it hard.
- Q5.** In Text A the driver says, "You're just a kid." What is the text's point of view (its position) on who can be a hero? Use evidence.
- Q6.** Using Figure 5, list two things the film version **keeps** from the prose and two things it **changes**. For one change, explain why film had to do it another way.
- Q7.** Copy and complete this sentence for both poems: "*This poem represents the [city / bush] as a place that ..., because the poet chooses details like ...*"
- Q8.** Which place would you rather belong to — the bush of Text D or the city of Text E? Give one reason from each poem to support your answer.

Part 2 — Writing

Q9. Write a short paragraph (5–7 sentences) that identifies the idea of heroism in Text C and explains how the historical and cultural context shapes that idea. Use at least one quote.

Q10. Write your own very short heroism text (6–8 sentences). First choose a context (a time, a place, a group of people). Then create a character and an event that show one kind of bravery. Do not name the kind of bravery — let the reader work it out, the way Texts A, B and C do.

Q11. Rewrite the scene from Worked example 2 from the **driver’s** point of view in first person (*I*). Keep the same event. What new thoughts and feelings can you show now that the teller is the driver?

Part 3 — Speaking and listening

Q12. In pairs, each person takes one heroism text. Take turns to present your text’s idea of heroism in one minute. Your partner must ask one question that links the idea to the context.

Q13. Small group: discuss the question “*Is it braver to act with your body, like Mia, or with your words, like Sam?*” Everyone gives a position and one piece of evidence. Listen and build on — or respectfully challenge — one classmate’s point.

Q14. Class share: volunteers read their Q10 heroism texts aloud. After each one, the class names the kind of bravery it shows and the context it came from.

Answers and sample responses

Q1. *Context* is the time, place and people-world a text belongs to. An *idea* is the big thought a text works on. *Point of view* is (a) who tells the story (first person or third person) and (b) a text's or character's position on an issue. A *character* is a person built up in a text. An *event* is something that happens that changes the situation. An *issue* is a live question people can disagree about.

Q2. Historical: a time and place where only some children went to school and girls were often not expected to learn. Cultural: a village where some believed "a girl had no use for letters". Social: Aiko worked in the fields all day and was the only girl who came to learn at night.

Q3. Text B — context: a school classroom today; character: Sam; event: Sam puts his hand up and tells the teacher he saw what happened; heroism: moral courage (doing the right thing when it is hard). Text C — context: a village long ago where girls were not expected to read; character: Aiko; event: Aiko walks by lamplight every night to learn; heroism: quiet, lasting persistence.

Q4. Sample (moral courage): The hardest bravery is Text B's. I identify Sam's act as moral courage. He explores it when he "put his hand up" and said "I saw it", even though "everyone stayed silent" and silence "was the rule nobody wrote down". In the social context of a classroom, where friends look after each other, risking your friend's trust to tell the truth is shown as harder than facing a flooded creek, because the cost is social, not physical. (A choice of A or C can earn full marks if the reasoning is as strong.)

Q5. The text's position is that anyone can be a hero, whatever their age. Mia is called "just a kid", and her reply — "The creek didn't care" — dismisses the idea that only adults can act bravely. The event (a child saving a grown man) is itself the text's evidence.

Q6. Kept: the rope, and Mia reaching the driver through the window gap. Changed: the prose tells us the water was "colder than she expected" and that "Mia did not think"; the film cannot put those thoughts on screen, so it shows her bravery instead through her wide eyes (Panel 1) and a wide shot that makes her look small against the creek (Panel 3). Film had to change it because it shows from outside, while print can go inside a character's mind.

Q7. Sample: "This poem represents the bush as a place that is hard but honest, because the poet chooses details like thick dust, burning paddocks, and a sky that is 'wide and wide'." / "This poem represents the city as a place that is free and full of possibility, because the poet chooses details like a thousand windows, trains, and glass and steel."

Q8. Sample (city): I would rather belong to the city of Text E, because it offers "a crowd you can belong to" without being judged, and its sky is "bright and bold". The bush of Text D "asks much" of those who stay, which sounds lonely. (A choice of the bush earns full marks with the same kind of evidence.)

Q9. Sample: The idea of heroism in Text C is quiet, lasting persistence. Aiko is not brave in one big moment; she is brave "every night", walking "the long road to the little schoolhouse" to learn by lamplight. Her historical and cultural context shapes this idea: she lives where "a girl had no use for letters" and where she must work in the fields all day. Because the world gives her nothing, her heroism is shown as the slow refusal to give up, not a single daring act.

Q10. Sample: The night the siren sounded, everyone on our street ran outside. Mrs Alvarez from number nine stood in her doorway in her dressing gown, holding a torch. She did not run. She pointed her light at the Hendersons' house and called out, "In here, all of you — the kettle's on." One by one, the frightened faces of our street followed her beam into her warm, crowded lounge. Outside, the storm threw itself at the windows, but inside nobody shook anymore. (*Context: a suburban street during a storm; bravery: sheltering and calming others.*)

Q11. Sample: The water came in fast and I could not feel my fingers. I thought I was going to die in a ditch I had driven past a hundred times. Then a hand appeared at the glass, and a rope, and a voice that was too young for what it was doing. *Take it!* I grabbed on. I am twice her size and she pulled me out like I weighed nothing. When my feet hit the bank I had nothing left to say but thank you. (*First person lets us feel the driver's fear and gratitude, which the third-person prose only showed from Mia's side.*)

Q12–Q14. These are spoken tasks. Success looks like: a clear one-minute statement of the idea, evidence from the text, and at least one question or comment that links the idea to its context.

Success checklist

You are ready to move on when you can:

- ☐ define *context*, *idea*, *point of view* (both senses), *character*, *event* and *issue*;
 - ☐ name the historical, cultural and social context of a text;
 - ☐ identify the idea of heroism a text builds, with evidence;
 - ☐ compare how a character is represented in prose and in a film adaptation;
 - ☐ compare how two poems from different eras depict the city or the bush;
 - ☐ use the Identify → Explore → Explain frame in a written and a spoken response.
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§2A exclusion note (recorded, not taught)

This section's content description and one of its elaborations name literary texts by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and Peoples. In line with the book's front-of-book note and TOC §2A, that content is **excluded**: accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than to cover the entire curriculum inaccurately. Section 3A is delivered in full through the remaining clause — Australian and world authors in historical, cultural and social contexts — using .E01, .E02 and .E04. The exclusion is reported by coverage audits as ACCEPTED, never as a gap.

Developing and justifying opinions about characters, settings and events

Section	3B · Chapter 3 — Literature: engaging with, responding to and creating literary texts
Owns	VC2E7LE02
Content description	<i>“develop an opinion about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others’ opinions and justifying a response” (VCAA, verbatim)</i>
Draws on	VC2E7LE02.E01 — <i>“establishing forums and criteria for discussing the relative merits of characters, settings and events in literary texts”</i> · VC2E7LE02.E02 — <i>“comparing personal opinions on texts and justifying responses in discussions, which may include referencing behaviours such as integrity and loyalty”</i>
Assumes (Level 6)	VC2E6LE01 — responses to characters and events in literary texts
Hands forward (Level 8)	VC2E8LE02 — opinions about the language features, literary devices and text structures that contribute to a text
Modes used	Reading and viewing · Writing · Speaking and listening

Theory

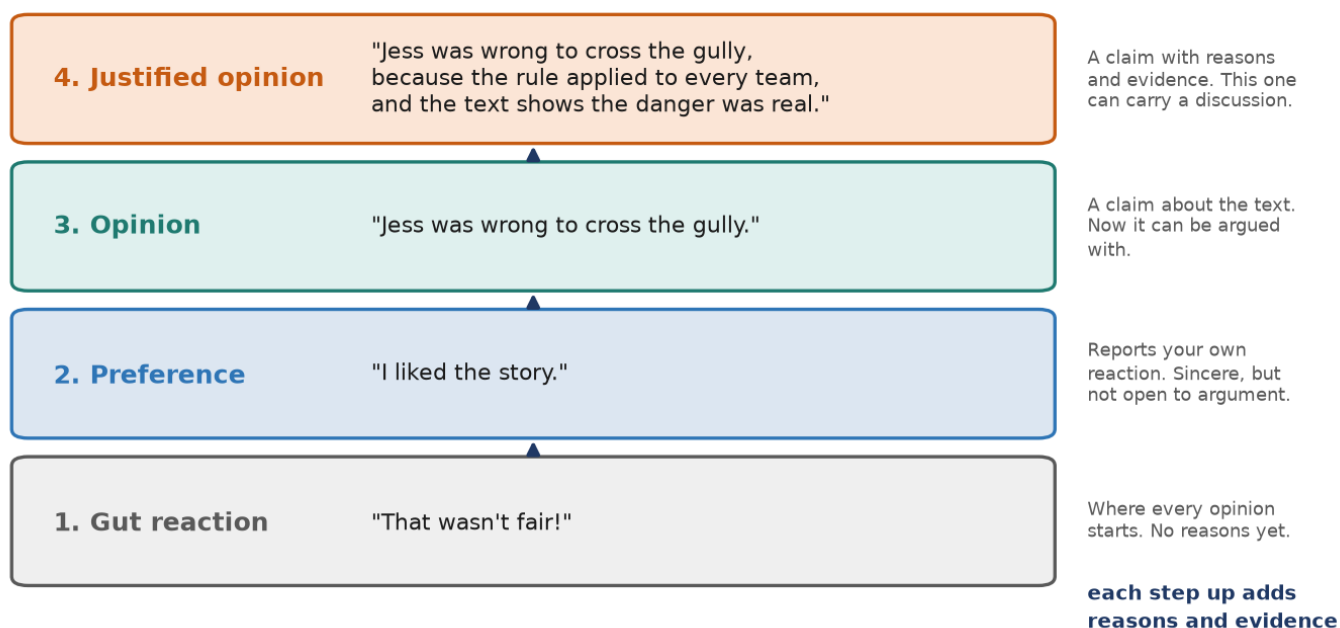
In Level 6 you responded to characters and events in the stories you read — you noticed things and said how you felt about them. This section takes the next step. You will develop **opinions** about characters, settings and events, back them with **reasons** and **evidence**, and then hold them next to other readers’ opinions to find exactly where you agree and where you differ.

Defining our terms. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *opinion* but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows, and every question here is answerable on this definition alone: an **opinion** is a claim about something in a text — what a character is like, whether a choice was right, how well a setting works, what an event changes — that you can support with reasons and evidence from the text. Keep three kinds of statement separate:

- A **fact** about a text can be checked in the text. *“Jess went through the tape”* is a fact — nobody can argue with it.
- A **preference** reports your own reaction. *“I liked this story”* is sincere and cannot be wrong, but it cannot be argued with either, because it is only about you.
- An **opinion** is a claim about the text itself — so it *can* be argued with, and that is exactly what this section is for.

To **justify** an opinion is to show why it stands: to give reasons and evidence for it. **Merit** means how good something is, or how well it works. When you compare the **relative merits** of two things, you work out which is stronger and why.

From reaction to justified opinion

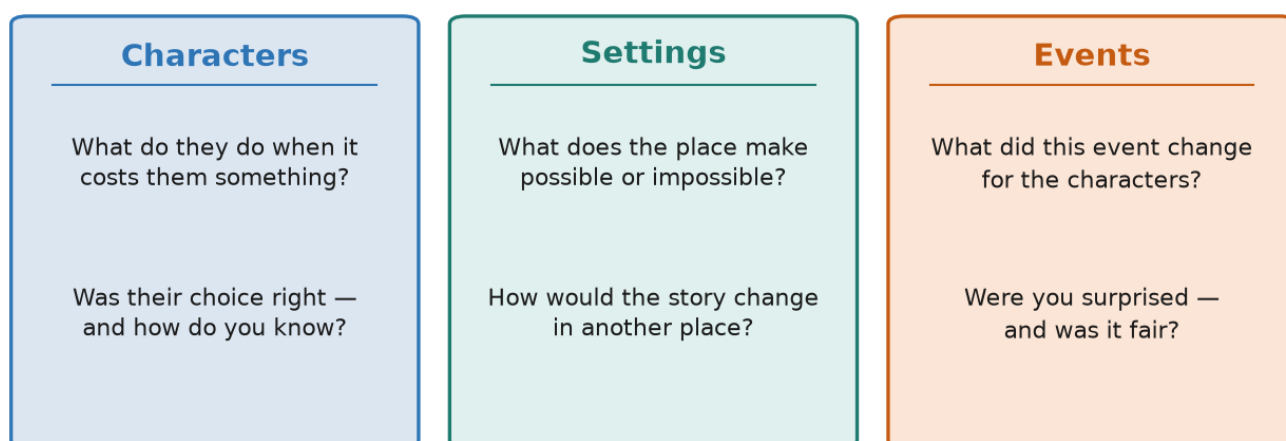


*Four-step ladder from gut reaction to justified opinion, each step labelled with an example about the story *Second Place**

Figure 1 shows how a reaction grows into a justified opinion. A reaction is where every opinion starts — but a reaction has no reasons yet, so it cannot carry a discussion. Each step up adds something the step below is missing.

The three targets. This section works on three things you can hold opinions about in any story. Figure 2 lists questions that start you off for each one.

Three things to hold opinions about



Starter questions — an opinion begins where one of these questions gets an answer.

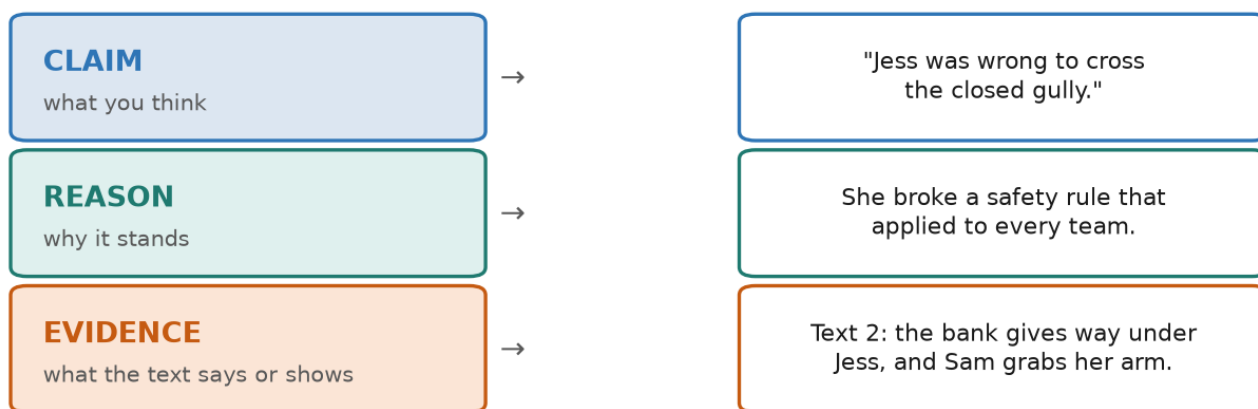
Table of the three opinion targets — characters, settings and events — with two starter questions for each

A common trap is to stop at the character and forget the other two. Settings are not just where things happen — a setting can make things possible or impossible, safe or risky. Events are not just what happens — they change what the characters must do next. Opinions about all three count here.

Justifying: claim, reason, evidence. A justified opinion has three parts, stacked like the blocks in Figure 3:

- The **claim** states your opinion in one clear sentence.
- The **reason** says *why* your claim stands.
- The **evidence** points to what the text actually says or shows — a line of dialogue, an action, a detail of the setting.

A justified opinion: claim, reason, evidence



Worked example: an opinion about Jess

The evidence sits at the bottom: without it, the claim and the reason have nothing to stand on.

Stacked-block diagram of a justified opinion: claim on top, reason in the middle, evidence from the text at the base, with a filled example about Jess from Second Place

Evidence must come from the text, not from your head. A reason that never touches the text is only a guess. Notice that “the text shows” evidence can come from what a character says, what a character does, or what the writer tells you about the place and the moment.

Criteria and merit. When a whole class discusses a text, every reader arrives with different tastes. **Criteria** make the discussion fair. A criterion (one; criteria is the plural) is an agreed standard you judge by — so readers can give different scores and still talk to each other honestly. Figure 4 gives you a starting set of criteria for characters, settings and events. You may add your own, and a good forum agrees on its criteria before it starts judging.

Criteria for discussing merit — judge by the same standards

Characters	Settings	Events
Do their actions feel believable?	Can you picture the place?	Were you surprised — and was it fair?
Do their choices cost them something?	Does it shape what can happen?	What was at risk?
Do they change, or stay the same?	What mood does it set?	What did it change for the characters?

Criterion (one) — criteria (plural): an agreed standard you judge by.

Two readers can use the same criteria and still give different scores.

That is not a failure of the discussion — it is what makes the discussion worth having.

Table of criteria for discussing the merits of characters, settings and events in literary texts, with three questions under each target

Notice something important: two readers can use the same criteria and still disagree. That is not a failure of the discussion — it is what makes the discussion worth having. The criteria keep the disagreement honest.

Forums. A **forum** is an organised discussion with agreed rules: everyone speaks, everyone listens, and every opinion must bring reasons with it. This section's forum runs on the six-step protocol (an agreed order of running) in Figure 5.

Running a forum: the six-step protocol



Every opinion must bring reasons with it — and every listener has a job.

Flowchart of the six-step protocol for running a class forum about a text

The moves in Figure 6 are how you respond to another reader without putting them down. “Differ with a reason” is the one most people find hardest — practise it before you need it.

Discussion moves: responding to another reader

Move	What it does	Sentence starter
Agree and add	Shows shared ground, then adds one more reason.	"I agree that ..., and I'd add ..."
Differ with a reason	Disagrees respectfully — and brings a reason.	"I see it in a different way, because ..."
Ask for evidence	Tests the opinion without putting the reader down.	"Which part of the story tells you that?"
Agree in part	Keeps what is shared, names the difference.	"I agree that ..., but not that ..."
Check you understood	Plays the opinion back before you answer it.	"So your point is ...?"

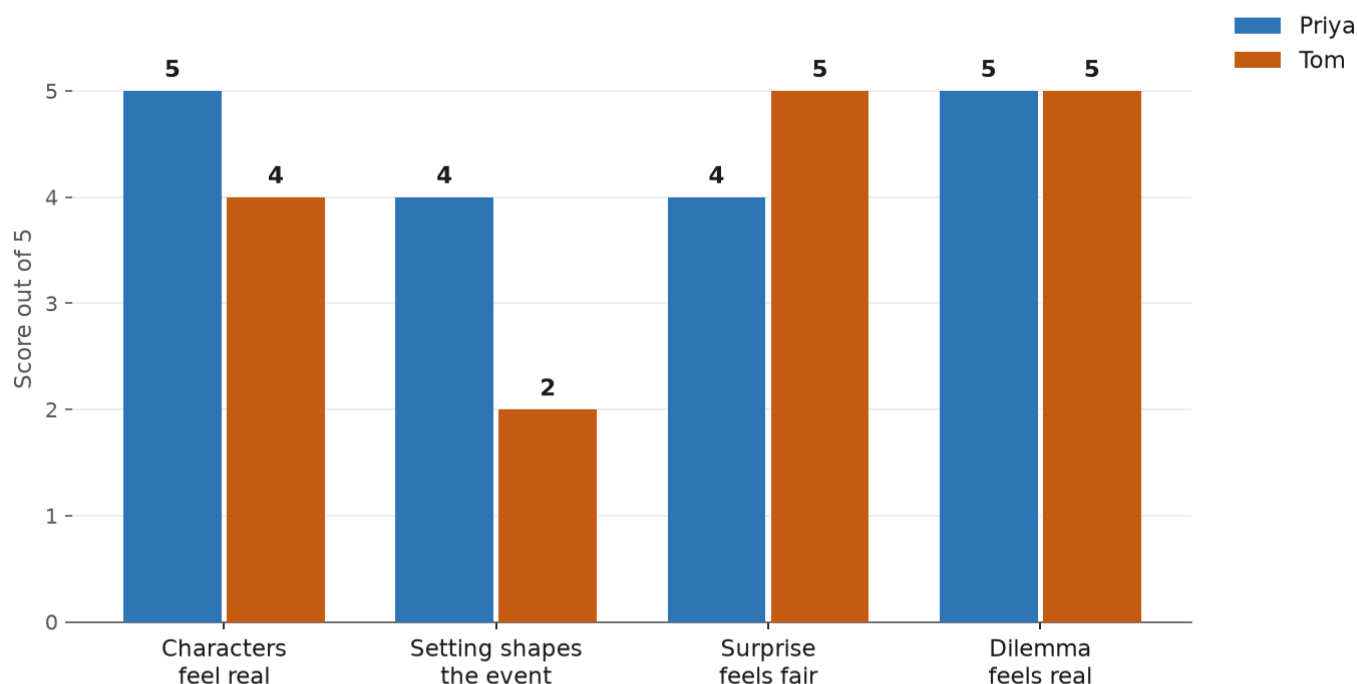
"Differ with a reason" is the hardest move — practise it before you need it.

Table of five discussion moves for a text forum, each with what it does and a sentence starter

Agreement and difference. Readers differ because they notice different things and weigh things in a different way. In this section you will meet two readers, Priya and Tom (their opinions are Text 4, below). They agree about what happened in *Second Place* — and they disagree completely about what Mia should do next. Their argument sits between two behaviours people value: **integrity** — doing the right thing even when it costs you — and **loyalty** — standing by the people you belong to. Both are good things to weigh. That is why the argument is hard, and why both readers can reason well and still land in different places.

When you compare opinions, your job is not to find a winner. It is to name exactly where the opinions agree, where they differ, and what each one weighs most. Figure 7 shows Priya’s and Tom’s scores for *Second Place* against the same four criteria — same standards, different judgements.

Two readers, one story: Priya and Tom score Second Place against the same four criteria



Same standards, different judgements — where do they agree, and where do they split?

Grouped bar chart comparing Priya's and Tom's scores out of five for four criteria on the story Second Place

The texts for this section

The three texts below were written for this section. Text 4 holds two readers' opinions about Text 1.

Text 1 — *Second Place*

Every spring, Millfield High held its orienteering carnival at Hakea Reserve, and this year, for the first time, Year 7 could enter. Mia signed up with her partner Dev. Her best friend Jess entered with Sam.

Before the start, Ms Nguyen held up the map for everyone to see. "Nine controls, orange flags, any order. Punch your card at each one. And one extra rule this year. The gully past the creek is closed — the banks are falling away and it is dangerous. Tape marks it off. The only crossing is the footbridge. Anyone who crosses the tape is out."

The whistle blew. Mia and Dev ran a clean, careful race. Between controls five and six, Mia misread the map and they lost a full minute doubling back. By control eight they were running second, and Mia could see two familiar shirts ahead of them on the track.

Then, coming down the hill from control nine, Mia looked across the creek. Two shirts she knew were climbing up the far side of the gully — up through the closed ground, not from the bridge. One of them turned, and the sun caught her face. Jess. Sam was a few steps behind her, head down.

Mia's legs kept moving, but her mind stopped. She checked the map twice. There was no other way up that bank.

At the finish, Ms Nguyen read the cards aloud. "First place, full card: Jess and Sam." Jess hugged Mia, bouncing. "Best day of my life!"

On the bus home, Jess sat down next to Mia. For a long time neither of them spoke. Then, quietly: "You saw us at the gully, didn't you."

It was not a question.

“Sam didn’t want to do it,” Jess said. “I went first, and I pulled him through after. Mia, please. The assembly is on Friday. If I lose this in front of everyone ...” She stopped. “I’ll fix it. I promise. Just — not Friday. Please.”

Mia watched the reserve slide past the window. In her bag, her own card sat with its nine neat punches, and a second-place ribbon folded in the front pocket.

Text 2 — *What Jess Saw*

Here is what the same afternoon looked like from where Jess was standing.

By control four, Jess and Sam were ahead. Then, on the drop down to the creek, Jess’s boot caught a root and her ankle rolled. She tested it. It held — but slowly. Not running fast.

The footbridge was a long way around. Jess did the sums in her head and her stomach dropped. Every team behind them would pass while they walked.

That was when she saw the tape. Ten metres of it, maybe, between her and the climb up the far side. It did not look dangerous. It looked like ground.

Jess knew the rule. She went through anyway. Halfway across, the bank gave way under her sore ankle, and Sam had to grab her arm. “What are you doing?” he said. She pulled him after her, and told herself she would explain later.

They won. For about an hour, that felt fine.

Then Jess saw Mia on the hill, stopped, looking straight across the creek at them.

On the bus, Jess said the only true thing she could think of: *I’ll fix it. I promise.* She meant it. Almost.

And that night, awake in bed, Jess found the part she had not expected. She kept thinking about the rule she had laughed at — *the gully is closed, it is dangerous* — and about Sam’s hand grabbing her arm when the bank gave way. The rule had not been about winning. It had been about the ground.

Text 3 — *The Unmapped Door*

In the cliff above the village of Kurren there was a door. It was on no map. The village rule, older than anyone’s grandmother, said this: the door stays shut.

Mara looked after the door, which, most days, meant she swept the step and said no to tourists.

One wild night, in a storm, a stranger climbed the path with a lamp. “Open it,” he said. “There is someone on the other side who needs help.”

Mara put her hand on the key. The rule said shut. The stranger’s eyes said hurry. The wind said nothing at all.

The story stops here. What happens next depends on who you ask.

Text 4 — Two readers respond to *Second Place*

Priya: Mia should tell Ms Nguyen before Friday’s assembly. Jess broke a rule that applied to every team, and that rule was there because the gully was truly dangerous — the bank nearly took Jess and Sam down with it. Every team that walked the long way to the bridge lost time playing fair. If Mia stays quiet, the wrong team takes the ribbon, and nobody learns why the rule exists. Being a good friend does not mean keeping someone else’s rule-breaking quiet.

Tom: Mia should wait and talk to Jess first. Jess already knows what she did, and she has promised to put it right. If Mia tells a teacher straight away, Jess loses her win in front of the whole school before she has had one chance to do the right thing herself. People who are shamed in front of others often shut down. People who are given the chance to own up often do. Loyalty does not mean pretending nothing happened — it means giving Jess the chance to be the one who tells.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded: from reaction to justified opinion

Turn a gut reaction about Jess into a justified opinion about her choice in Text 1.

Step	What you write	Comment
1. Notice the reaction	“What Jess did wasn’t fair.”	A reaction is where opinions start. It has no reason yet.
2. Shape it into a claim	“Jess was wrong to cross the closed gully.”	A claim states your opinion in one clear sentence. It can now be argued with.
3. Add a reason	“She broke a safety rule that every team had to follow, and her shortcut cost the other teams time.”	A reason says why your claim stands.
4. Add evidence from the text	“Ms Nguyen’s rule was read out before the start: anyone who crosses the tape is out. In Text 2, the bank gives way under Jess and Sam has to grab her arm.”	Evidence comes from the text — what it says or shows — never from your head.
5. Link back	“So the win was not really won.”	The link joins your reason and evidence back to the claim.

Example 2 — scaffolded: finding agreement and difference

Compare Priya’s and Tom’s opinions in Text 4.

Question	Answer	Comment
What do both readers agree about?	Jess broke the rule; Mia saw what really happened; something has to happen before this is just forgotten.	Look for what both readers accept — the facts and the shared value underneath.
Where is the main difference?	Priya wants Mia to tell Ms Nguyen now. Tom wants Mia to give Jess the chance to own up first.	Find the exact point where the two pieces of advice split.
What causes the difference?	Priya weighs fairness to every team most. Tom weighs loyalty and second chances most.	Different readers weigh different behaviours. Both readers are reasoning well.

Example 3 — unscaffolded: a justified opinion about a setting

How much does the setting matter in Second Place?

In *Second Place*, the setting does more than give the race a place to happen. The closed gully is what makes the whole story possible. Because the gully is taped off and the only way across is the long walk to the bridge, Jess’s shortcut becomes a real choice: she must break a spoken rule to take it. The setting also makes the choice serious — the bank gives way under Jess, and the text shows the rule was there for a real reason. If the gully had been open and safe, there would be no story at all, only a race. So the setting does the quiet work of turning a race result into a hard choice.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Sort the eight statements below into **fact**, **opinion** and **preference**. The first one is done for you.

- a. *Second Place* is set at Hakea Reserve. — **fact** (you can check it in the text)
- b. Jess is the most interesting character in *Second Place*.
- c. I liked *What Jess Saw* more than *Second Place*.
- d. Mia should tell Ms Nguyen before the assembly.
- e. Ms Nguyen reads the rules out before the race.
- f. *The Unmapped Door* is too short to be a good story.
- g. The story ends on the bus.
- h. I would have walked to the bridge no matter what.

Q2. Four readers' statements about Jess are below. Tick the ones that are **justified opinions** (claim + reason + evidence). For the others, say why they are not, and fix one of them by adding a reason and a piece of evidence from Text 1 or Text 2.

- a. "Jess is a bad person."
- b. "Jess made a wrong choice, and Text 2 shows she knew it at the time: *Jess knew the rule. She went through anyway.*"
- c. "Jess should never have been allowed to enter the race."
- d. "I just don't like Jess."

Q3. Complete the claim–reason–evidence frame about a **setting**. Choose *Second Place* or *The Unmapped Door*.

- Claim: In _____, the setting matters because _____.
- Reason: This is important because _____.
- Evidence: The text shows this when _____.

Q4. Text 2 changes what the reader knows about Jess. Find **two** details in *What Jess Saw* that make her action look different from how it looked in Text 1. For each one, finish the sentence: "In Text 1 I thought _____, but Text 2 shows _____." (*Look at the ankle. Then look at the last paragraph.*)

Q5. Read Priya's and Tom's opinions in Text 4 again.

- a. List **two** things both readers agree about. Use: "*Both readers agree that ...*".
- b. State the main difference between them. Use: "*The main difference is that Priya thinks ..., while Tom thinks ...*".
- c. Which behaviour does each reader weigh most — integrity, loyalty, fairness to every team, or second chances? Write one word or phrase next to each reader.

Q6. a. Look at Figure 7. On which criterion do Priya and Tom give the same score? On which criterion is the gap between them the largest?

- b. Now use the criteria in Figure 4 to score *Second Place* yourself. Give one score (1–5) and one reason for each of character, setting and event.

Q7. In *The Unmapped Door*: should Mara open the door? Choose **open** or **shut**, then match each reason below to the detail in the text that supports it.

Reasons: (i) The rule has kept the village safe for a very long time. (ii) A person may need help right now, tonight. (iii) Mara cannot check what is really on the other side. (iv) The stranger climbed the path in a storm, which shows how badly he wants this.

Details: (1) “The village rule, older than anyone’s grandmother, said this: the door stays shut.” (2) “There is someone on the other side who needs help.” (3) “The story stops here.” (4) “One wild night, in a storm, a stranger climbed the path with a lamp.”

Q8. Complete each forum response using a move from Figure 6.

- A classmate says Jess did nothing wrong because nobody got hurt. You disagree. Use **Differ with a reason**: “I see it in a different way, because ...”
- A classmate gives an opinion you agree with, and you have one more reason for it. Use **Agree and add**: “I agree that ..., and I’d add ...”
- A classmate states an opinion with no evidence. Use **Ask for evidence**: “Which part of the story tells you that?” — now write your own ask, about their opinion.

Un scaffolded

Q9. Write a justified opinion (5–7 sentences) about **one character** from *Second Place* — Mia, Jess, Sam or Ms Nguyen. Use the full stack: claim, reason, evidence from the text, link back.

Q10. Write a justified opinion about how a **setting** shapes what happens, in *Second Place* or *The Unmapped Door*. Use claim, reason, evidence, link back.

Q11. Write a justified opinion about the **event** in either text that you found most surprising, most fair, or most unfair. Use claim, reason, evidence, link back.

Q12. Compare your opinion on what Mia should do with Priya’s or Tom’s in Text 4. Write a paragraph naming two points of agreement and one point of difference, and say what each of you weighs most.

Q13. Forum (speaking and listening). The question: *Should Mia tell Ms Nguyen before Friday’s assembly?* Run the forum with the protocol in Figure 5.

- Each speaker states an opinion and gives a reason with evidence from Text 1 or Text 2.
- Each listener records one point of agreement and one point of difference, using the moves in Figure 6.
- Before you start, agree on two criteria from Figure 4 that the discussion will judge by.
- At the end, the class names the points everyone agrees on and the points that stay open.

Q14. Think of a story the class has read together this year. Set **three criteria** for judging its merit — one for character, one for setting, one for event — and write one paragraph judging the story against them.

Q15. Did reading *What Jess Saw* change your opinion of Jess, or did it only make your opinion firmer? Write 4–5 sentences saying what changed (or didn’t) and why. There is no expected answer — your reasons decide your mark.

Q16. Extended response, two paragraphs: **(a)** Was Jess wrong to cross the closed gully? **(b)** What should Mia do? Reason from the text in both paragraphs. You may reach any conclusion — marks are for the quality of your reasoning, not for which side you land on.

Answers

Q1. b. opinion · c. preference · d. opinion · e. fact · f. opinion · g. fact · h. preference. (b, d and f are claims about the text that can be argued with; c and h report the reader's own reaction.)

Q2. Only **b** is a justified opinion — it has a claim, and it brings evidence from Text 2. **a** judges the person, not the choice, and gives no reason. **c** has no reason or evidence. **d** is a preference, not an opinion. Example fix for a: “Jess made a risky choice, because she crossed tape that was there to keep people safe — the text shows the danger was real when the bank gives way under her.”

Q3. Answers will vary. Accept any frame where the claim is about the setting, the reason says why it matters, and the evidence points to something the text actually says or shows. Example (*The Unmapped Door*): Claim — the setting matters because the door is in a cliff above a village, so what happens at the door hangs over everyone below. Reason — a rule about the door has shaped village life for generations. Evidence — “The village rule, older than anyone’s grandmother, said this: the door stays shut.”

Q4. Answers will vary; accept any two with matching detail from Text 2. Strong examples: “In Text 1 I thought Jess cheated because she wanted to win, but Text 2 shows her ankle rolled and she could not run the long way to the bridge.” · “In Text 1 I thought Jess felt fine about it, but Text 2 shows she lay awake that night thinking about the rule and about Sam’s hand grabbing her arm.”

Q5. a. Accept any two of: Jess broke the rule; Mia saw what really happened; something must happen before it is forgotten; Jess must face what she did in some way. b. Priya thinks Mia should tell Ms Nguyen now; Tom thinks Mia should give Jess the chance to own up first. c. Priya — fairness to every team (integrity). Tom — loyalty and second chances.

Q6. a. Same score: *The dilemma feels real* (both score it 5). Largest gap: *The setting shapes the event* (Priya 4, Tom 2 — a gap of 2). b. Answers will vary; accept a score and a text-based reason for each of character, setting and event.

Q7. (i) matches (1) · (ii) matches (2) · (iii) matches (3) · (iv) matches (4). Either choice of open or shut is acceptable; marks are for matching reasons to evidence.

Q8. Answers will vary. Accept any response that uses the named move correctly. Example a: “I see it in a different way, because the bank gave way under Jess in Text 2 — somebody could have been hurt, and the rule was there to stop exactly that.” Example c: “Which part of the story tells you that Ms Nguyen would not listen to Mia?”

Q9–Q12, Q14–Q16. Open responses. See the model response and marking guide in the next section.

Model response and marking guide

Here is a fully-worked response to Question 16(a), *Was Jess wrong to cross the closed gully?* Figure 8 shows the same paragraph with each part colour-coded.

A justified opinion, taken apart

Claim	Jess did the wrong thing, and the text says so more than once.
Reason 1 + evidence	First, she broke a rule that every team had to follow: Ms Nguyen told everyone the gully was closed, and that anyone who crossed the tape was out.
Reason 2 + evidence	Second, the rule was not there to make the race harder — it was there because the ground was dangerous, and Text 2 proves it when the bank gives way under Jess's sore ankle and Sam has to grab her arm.
The other side	Some readers, like Tom, would say that Jess's rolled ankle and her wish not to let her team down make her easier to understand — and that is true. But understanding why someone made a choice is not the same as saying the choice was right.
Link back	For these reasons, Jess's choice was wrong, even though it is easy to see how she came to make it.

Every part earns its place: the claim stands on reasons, the reasons stand on evidence, and the strongest case against is named before the paragraph closes.

Model paragraph answering whether Jess was wrong, with its sentences colour-coded by part: claim, reasons with evidence, the other side, and the link back

Jess did the wrong thing, and the text says so more than once. First, she broke a rule that every team had to follow: Ms Nguyen told everyone the gully was closed, and that anyone who crossed the tape was out. Second, the rule was not there to make the race harder — it was there because the ground was dangerous, and Text 2 proves it when the bank gives way under Jess's sore ankle and Sam has to grab her arm. Some readers, like Tom, would say that Jess's rolled ankle and her wish not to let her team down make her easier to understand — and that is true. But understanding why someone made a choice is not the same as saying the choice was right. For these reasons, Jess's choice was wrong, even though it is easy to see how she came to make it.

Why this response works, part by part:

Part	What it does	Where it sits in the model
Claim	States the opinion in one clear sentence	Sentence 1
Reason 1 + evidence	A rule applied to everyone, quoted from the text	Sentence 2
Reason 2 + evidence	The rule had a real purpose; Text 2 proves it	Sentence 3
The other side	Names the strongest case for Jess, then answers it	Sentence 4
Link back	Joins everything back to the claim	Sentence 5

Marking guide for Q9–Q12, Q14–Q16

Step	What it looks like
Opinion stated clearly	One claim a reader could argue with — not a fact, not just a preference.

Step	What it looks like
Reasons tied to the text	Each reason says why the claim stands, not just what happened next.
Evidence used well	Quoted or pointed-to detail from the text — what it says or shows.
The other side engaged	The strongest case against is named and answered, not mocked or skipped.
Link back	The paragraph ends by joining reasons and evidence back to the claim.

Marks are for the quality of the reasoning, not for the conclusion reached. Two students who reach opposite conclusions about Jess, or about what Mia should do, can both receive full marks if both reason well from defined terms and evidence in the text. There is no expected side in this section — find the side your reasons take you to, and make it stand.

How literary devices, language features and images create character and influence emotions

Focus: how the choices a writer or filmmaker makes — the devices, the exact words, the voices, the images and the sounds — build characters in our heads, and steer what we feel and think about them. You will read, view, write and talk your way through these choices.

Theory

Two terms in the title, pinned down. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *literary devices* but does not define it. This section treats it as the writer's special toolkit — simile, metaphor, personification, imagery, repetition and symbols — choices that do more work than plain telling. The Curriculum also uses the term *language features* but does not define it. This section treats it as every choice a text-maker makes with words and voice: the exact verbs (word choice), who speaks and how (dialogue), and what gets repeated. Film and picture makers have their own features too — camera position, light, colour and sound.

The character-making toolkit. Here are eight choices writers use to build people out of words.

The character-making toolkit

eight choices writers use to build people out of words

Device	What it is	Small example	What it can build
Simile	compares two things using like or as	<i>"lanterns like a river of small suns"</i>	paints a feeling picture; shows how a character sees the world
Metaphor	says one thing IS another thing	<i>"her heart was a drum"</i>	carries strong feeling; shows what a character cares about
Personification	gives human qualities to non-human things	<i>"the wind tugged at her lantern"</i>	makes the world feel friendly — or against — a character
Imagery	language that speaks to the senses	<i>"the smell of fried dough and woodsmoke"</i>	puts us inside the scene, beside the character
Word choice	the exact verbs, adjectives and nouns	<i>"clutched" instead of "held"</i>	a strong verb can show a feeling without naming it
Dialogue	what characters say, and how they say it	<i>"You can still turn back."</i>	voice shows personality; replies show what a character values
Repetition	a word or phrase used again	<i>"One step. Just one step."</i>	shows what a character is holding on to
Symbol	a thing that stands for an idea	<i>the crooked, hand-made lantern</i>	small objects can carry big ideas

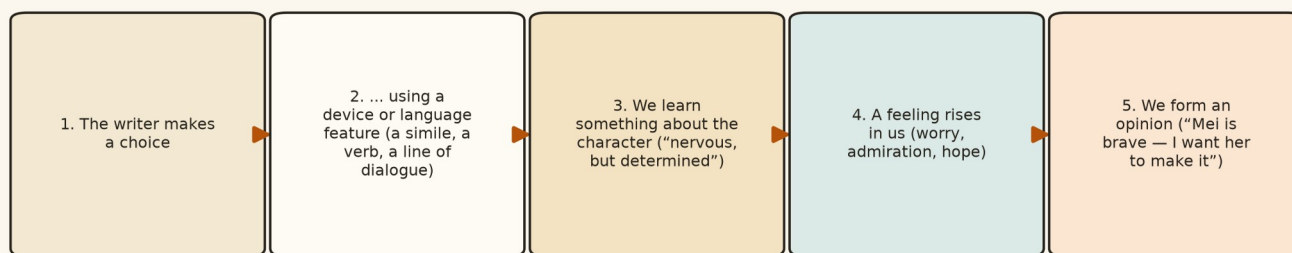
Table of eight devices — simile, metaphor, personification, imagery, word choice, dialogue, repetition and symbol — each with a short meaning, a small example from *The Lantern Tree*, and what it can build in a character

Every time you spot one of these, ask two questions:

1. What does this teach me about the character?
2. What feeling is it building in me?

The influence chain. The title says these choices *influence* emotions and opinions. That word deserves care, so here is the chain it names.

The influence chain: how a choice becomes a feeling



This is what “influence” means here: choices that shape what we feel and think. It is not mind control — once you can see the choice, you can decide what you think about it.

Five-step chain: the writer makes a choice, using a device, we learn something about the character, a feeling rises in us, we form an opinion; with a note that influence is not mind control

The chain is also a defence. Once you can see the choice, you can ask: *do I agree with what this text is making me feel?* That question is part of the skill too.

Meet the extract. The main text for this section is a short story written for it: *The Lantern Tree*. Read it once, straight through, for the story.

The Lantern Tree (*an original extract, written for this section*)

The night market hummed around Mei. Above the crowd, paper lanterns hung from the branches of the old tree like a river of small suns. Somewhere a drum beat, and Mei felt it in her chest.

She clutched her own lantern to her side. It was not the best one there — its paper wings were crooked where she had glued them twice — but it was hers, and she had made every fold herself.

“The lantern tree is for the brave,” her grandmother had told her. “You hang your light where everyone can see it.”

The wind tugged at her lantern, trying to steal it. Mei held on tighter.

“You can still turn back,” said Bo, walking beside her. His voice was quiet, but his eyes were bright. “No one would know.”

Mei looked at the tree. She looked at her crooked little light.

“One step,” she whispered. “Just one step.”

Now read the same page again, marked up. Every mark is a choice the writer made.

THE LANTERN TREE

an original extract, written for this section

The night market hummed around Mei. Above the crowd, paper lanterns hung from the branches of the old tree **like a river of small suns**. Somewhere a drum beat, and Mei felt it in her chest.

She **clutched** her own lantern to her side. It was not the best one there — its paper wings were crooked where she had glued them twice — but it was hers, and she had made every fold herself.

The lantern tree is for the brave, her grandmother had told her. **You hang your light where everyone can see it.**

The wind tugged at her lantern, trying to steal it. Mei held on tighter.

"You can still turn back," said Bo, walking beside her. His voice was quiet, but his eyes were bright. "No one would know."

Mei looked at the tree. She looked at her crooked little light.

"One step," she whispered. **"Just one step."**

Simile — "like a river of small suns" paints the festival as big, bright and beautiful. It is worth being scared for.

Strong verb — "clutched" puts fear and care into her hands without naming the feeling.

Personification — the wind "tugged ... trying to steal" the lantern. The night pushes against Mei, so holding on is brave.

Repetition — "One step. Just one step." A big fear, shrunk to a size she can manage.

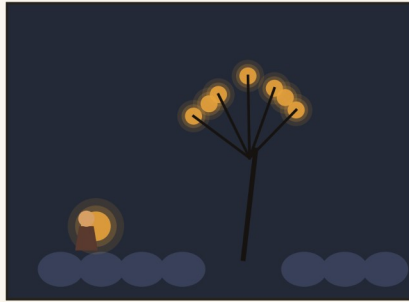
The Lantern Tree extract laid out as a book page, with four colour-coded callouts naming the simile, the strong verb, the personification and the repetition at work

Notice the pattern: not one of the callouts names a feeling directly. There is no "Mei was nervous" and no "Mei was brave." The writer builds those ideas in us out of verbs, comparisons, voices and repetition — and that is why they stick.

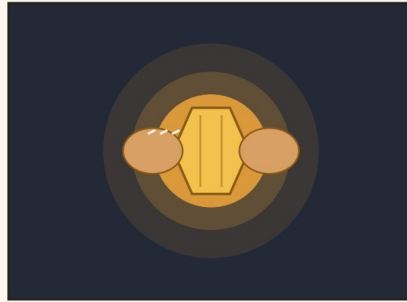
The same story, built with images and sound. Imagine *The Lantern Tree* made into a film. A storyboard is the film's plan: a strip of still pictures, each one a shot, with notes on sound. These are the camera and sound words we will use:

- A **long shot** shows the whole scene, so we see how small or big a character is in their world.
- A **close-up** fills the screen with one detail, so we cannot look away from it.
- A **low angle** puts the camera below a character, looking up, which makes them look taller, stronger or braver.
- A **detail shot** is a close-up of a thing, not a face, when the thing carries the feeling.
- The **soundtrack** is everything a film makes you hear — music, drums, wind, breath, silence.

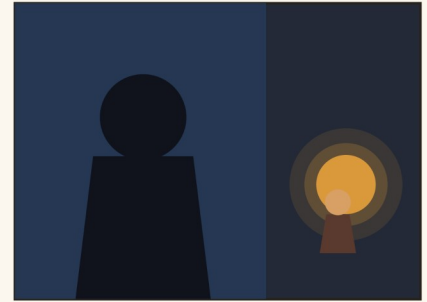
Storyboard: the same scene, now built with images and sound



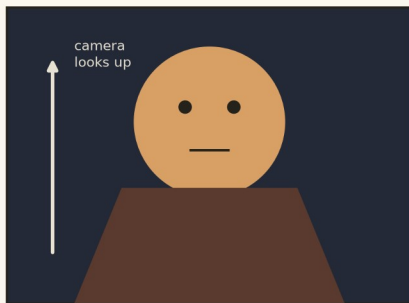
1. Long shot — Mei is small in a big, noisy crowd.



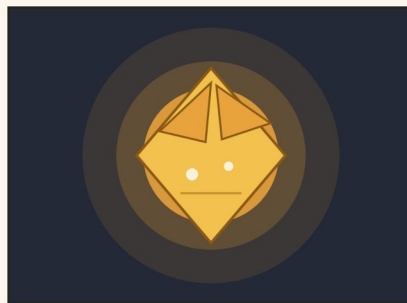
2. Close-up — her grip says “nervous” without a word.



3. Cool blue on Bo, warm gold on Mei — a different mood for each.



4. Low angle — we look up at Mei. She already looks braver.



5. Detail shot — crooked wings say “made by hand, and loved”.



6. The drums stop; only wind. The quiet pulls us in.

Six-panel storyboard of the lantern-tree scene: a long shot of the crowd, a close-up of gripping hands, cool blue light on Bo and warm gold on Mei, a low angle on Mei’s face, a detail shot of the crooked lantern wings, and a wide shot with only wind on the soundtrack

The film never says “nervous” or “brave” either. It cannot. It has no words to spend — only light, distance, angle and sound. Yet it builds the same Mei.

Same character, two toolkits: novel vs film

from *The Lantern Tree* — the novel extract and the storyboard

What we learn about the character	The novel builds it with words	The film builds it with images and sound
Mei is nervous	"clutched"; the drum she feels in her chest; "One step. Just one step."	close-up of her gripping hands; her breath on the soundtrack
Her lantern is precious	"It was hers, and she had made every fold herself"	detail shot of the crooked wings; warm glow; she shields it from the wind
Mei is finding courage	her grandmother's remembered words; the repeated "one step"	low angle looking up at her; the drums stop; she rises onto her toes
Bo cares for her, but tests her	"You can still turn back"; his "quiet voice" and "bright eyes"	half his face in cool blue; he looks away, then back at her

Neither version is "better" — each uses the tools it has to build the same person.

Table comparing what we learn about the character with how the novel builds it in words and how the film builds it with images and sound, row by row

This is the heart of comparing a novel and a film version of the same text: the *what* (the character idea) stays the same; the *how* (words versus images and sound) changes. Neither version is better. Each uses the tools it has.

Dialogue that builds character. Dialogue is named in the content description for this section, so it earns a close look. The test of dialogue is simple: if the lines only move the plot along, they are flat. If they also let us hear the person, they are built.

Dialogue that builds character

Version 1 — flat

"You can turn back," said Bo.

"No," said Mei.

"I would be scared too," said Bo.

"That's fine," said Mei.

*The words move the scene along —
but they tell us almost nothing about the speakers.*

Version 2 — built (from the extract)

"You can still turn back," said Bo, walking
beside her. His voice was quiet, but his eyes
were bright. "No one would know."

Mei did not look at him. She looked at the
tree. "One step," she whispered. "Just one
step."

What they say — "still" and "No one would know" show Bo has been thinking about it.

How they say it — a quiet voice and bright eyes: gentle, but watching closely.

What they do while talking — Mei keeps her eyes on the tree. She has already decided.

What is left unsaid — no argument, no boasting. Her quiet reply shows resolve.

Two versions of the same conversation side by side — a flat version and the built version from the extract — with four notes on what the built version adds: what they say, how they say it, what they do while talking, and what is left unsaid

Word choice. A single verb can rebuild a whole character. Swap the verb and you swap the person.

One action, four verbs, four characters

Base sentence: Mei ____ through the crowd.

walked

"Mei walked through the crowd." → plain — it tells us almost nothing about how she feels

inched

"Mei inched through the crowd." → slow, careful, nervous — she wishes she could disappear

pushed

"Mei pushed through the crowd." → hurried and elbows-first — she has somewhere to be

drifted

"Mei drifted through the crowd." → loose and dreamy — she is enjoying the night

Same action. Four verbs. Four different people — that is word choice at work.

One base sentence, "Mei ____ through the crowd," with four verbs — walked, inched, pushed, drifted — each producing a different character

Writing about it: claim, evidence, explain. When it is your turn to explain the impact of a choice, build your answer in three moves. **Claim** — say what the writer is building. **Evidence** — quote the exact words. **Explain** — say what the choice builds in the character, and in us.

Model paragraph — claim, evidence, explain

Claim

Evidence

Explain

CLAIM

In *The Lantern Tree*, the writer uses word choice and repetition to show that Mei is nervous but determined.

EVIDENCE

Mei does not just hold her lantern — she "clutched" it — and she tells herself, "One step. Just one step."

EXPLAIN

The verb "clutched" puts her fear into her hands, as if she is holding on to her courage and her lantern at once. The repeated "one step" shrinks a big, scary job into one she can do. Together, these choices make us feel worried for Mei — and proud of her — at the same time.

Name the device. Quote the words. Say what they build — in the character, and in us.

Model paragraph about *The Lantern Tree* with the claim in blue, the evidence in green and the explanation in amber, plus the rule: name the device, quote the words, say what they build

Worked examples

Example 1 — Spot the device, name the job (scaffolded)

Task: “The wind tugged at her lantern, trying to steal it.” Name the device and say what it builds.

Working	Comment
1. The device: personification — the wind is given a human job, tugging and trying to steal.	Name the device first. It focuses your sentence and picks up the first mark.
2. The job: it makes the night feel like an opponent, so Mei’s holding on reads as brave .	Always finish the job: what the choice builds in the character, or in us.

Example 2 — Build one analytical sentence (scaffolded)

Task: write one sentence about the verb “clutched”, using the frame “The writer uses ... to show ...”.

Working	Comment
1. The feature: a strong verb , “clutched”.	“Clutched” is not “held”. The exact word is the evidence.
2. What it shows: Mei is nervous , and the lantern matters to her.	Two ideas from one verb — fear and care at once.
3. Joined: <i>The writer uses the strong verb “clutched” to show that Mei is nervous and treats the lantern as something precious.</i>	Frame + evidence + job. That is the whole sentence shape.

Example 3 — Novel versus film (scaffolded)

Task: pick one character idea and show how each version builds it.

Working	Comment
1. The idea: Mei is finding her courage .	Start from the character idea, not from the device. The idea is the bridge.
2. Novel side: the repeated words “One step. Just one step.”	Quote the words exactly.
3. Film side: a low angle on Mei, and the drums going quiet.	Name the camera or sound choice exactly.
4. Joined: <i>In the novel, Mei’s courage is built by the repeated words “one step”, while in the film the same idea is built by a low angle and the drums going quiet.</i>	“While” does the comparing. One idea, two toolkits.

Example 4 — A full paragraph (unscaffolded)

Task: How does the writer show that Mei is nervous but determined? Answer in one claim–evidence–explain paragraph.

The model answer is the claim–evidence–explain paragraph shown in the model-paragraph figure in Theory. Study it with three checks:

Check	Where it happens
1. The claim names what is being built.	“the writer uses word choice and repetition to show that Mei is nervous but determined.”
2. The evidence quotes the exact words.	“clutched”; “One step. Just one step.”
3. The explain step says what the choices build in the character and in us.	fear in her hands; a big scary job shrunk to a doable one; we feel worried for her and proud of her at once.

Practice questions

A second original extract to work on.



The Storm Garden (*an original extract, written for this section*)

The sky hung over the garden like a bruise — purple at the edges, angry in the middle. Hana stood at the back door with her grandfather's old hat in her hands. It smelled of rain and rope.

"Nearly there," said Grandfather, tying up the tomato plants. "Nearly there."

The storm was shouting now. The house began to sing, every loose panel and pipe joining in. Hana put the hat on. It was too big; it slid to her nose. Grandfather did not laugh. He nodded at her, as if she had passed a test.

"Hold the frame," he said, "and I will tie."

So Hana held the frame while the wind pulled at it, and her hands learnt what his hands had known for sixty years.

Scaffolded

Q1. Read the first paragraph of *The Storm Garden*. Name two language features in it and quote the words that show each one.

Q2. The simile says the sky hangs "like a bruise". Finish these two sentences: (a) *This comparison makes the sky seem ...* (b) *So the reader guesses that Hana feels ...*

Q3. "The storm was shouting" is personification. What does shouting make the storm seem like — a friend, a stranger, or a threat? What does that make Hana's job of holding the frame seem like?

Q4. Grandfather says "Nearly there" twice. What does the repetition show about him? Use the frame: *The repetition of "Nearly there" shows that Grandfather is ...*

Q5. (*speaking and listening*) With a partner, read this pair of lines aloud — once flat, once built: flat: "Hold the frame," said Grandfather. / built: "Hold the frame," he said, "and I will tie." Then talk: which version tells you more about how Grandfather teaches, and what exactly adds that meaning?

Q6. (*viewing*) Look back at the storyboard panels for *The Lantern Tree*. Pick one camera or sound choice (panel 2, 4 or 6) and explain in one sentence what it would make an audience feel if the same choice were used on Hana in the storm garden.

Un scaffolded

Q7. Word choice. Pick the verb that best builds Hana at the frame — *held*, *gripped* or *fought* — and explain your pick in one sentence, naming what it shows about her.

Q8. The hat is too big for Hana. A symbol is a thing that stands for an idea. What idea could the too-big hat stand for? Justify your answer with one quoted detail.

Q9. (*writing*) Write a claim–evidence–explain paragraph answering: *How does the writer show that Grandfather is calm and kind?* Use at least one quotation and name the feature you are quoting.

Q10. Choose one thing we learn about Hana from the extract. Explain how the novel extract builds it with words, and how a film version could build the same idea with one image or sound choice.

Q11. Pick one device or language feature from *The Storm Garden* and walk it through the influence chain: the choice, what we learn about the character, the feeling that rises, and the opinion we end up holding.

Q12. (*speaking and listening*) With a partner, perform the whole dialogue between Hana and Grandfather twice — once as flat lines, once as built lines. Give your partner one specific thing they did well in the built read, and one thing the flat read lost.

Q13. (*writing*) Rewrite these two flat sentences as built ones, using at least two different devices or features across the pair: "The wind was strong. Hana was scared but she stayed."

Q14. “The storm is the villain of this extract.” Do you agree or disagree? Give your opinion and back it with two quotations, naming a feature in at least one of them.

Answers

Q1. Any two of: simile — “like a bruise”; imagery of smell — “It smelled of rain and rope”; word choice — “hung”, “angry”.

Q2. (a) sore, damaged, threatening, ready to hurt. (b) worried, uneasy, braced for something bad.

Q3. A threat. So holding the frame becomes a small act of standing up to something loud and angry — it makes her job seem brave.

Q4. calm, steady, reassuring; he keeps working and keeps Hana’s spirits up; he has ridden out many storms before.

Q5. The built version. “and I will tie” shows he trusts her with a real job and stays beside her; the flat version hides that teaching.

Q6. Any one, e.g. panel 4’s low angle on Hana would make the audience feel she is rising to the challenge; panel 6’s wind-only soundtrack would make us feel alone with her and lean in.

Q7. Any verb with a matched reason, e.g. *gripped* — shows fear and determination at once; *held* — shows steady, quiet trust in her grandfather; *fought* — shows the wind as an enemy and Hana as its opponent.

Q8. The idea of growing into her grandfather’s skills / one day being as capable as he is; justified by “It was too big” (she is not there yet) or “her hands learnt what his hands had known” (she is on the way).

Q9. A paragraph with a claim (calm and kind), evidence (e.g. “Nearly there” repetition; “did not laugh”; “nodded at her”; “and I will tie”) and an explain step naming the feature and its effect.

Q10. Any character idea with a words-side (quotation or feature) and a matched image/sound-side, e.g. Hana is unsure but willing: novel — the hat “slid to her nose” yet she puts it on; film — a close-up of the hat over her eyes, then her hands stepping out to the frame.

Q11. Any correct four-link walk, e.g. personification “the storm was shouting” → the storm is a threat and Hana is small against it → we feel worry → we form the opinion that staying at the frame makes her brave.

Q12. A performed read plus one specific strength named and one loss named (e.g. the built read let the pauses do work; the flat read lost the trust in “and I will tie”).

Q13. Any rewrite using two devices/features, e.g. “The wind hammered the frame, trying to tear it from her. Hana’s heart raced, but her hands said no.”

Q14. Either view with two quotations and a named feature, e.g. agree: personification “the storm was shouting” and the simile “like a bruise” paint the storm as an attacker; or disagree: the storm is only a test, and the real subject is trust — “he nodded at her, as if she had passed a test.”

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. Two features in the first paragraph: a **simile** — “The sky hung over the garden like a bruise” compares the sky to a bruise using *like* — and **imagery** that speaks to smell — “It smelled of rain and rope.” The simile builds the mood; the smell puts us beside Hana at the door.

Q2. (a) This comparison makes the sky seem sore, dark and threatening, like something already hurt and ready to hurt. (b) So the reader guesses that Hana feels uneasy and braced, as if trouble has already arrived and is standing over the garden.

Q3. Shouting makes the storm seem like a threat — loud, angry, pushing to get its way. That turns Hana’s job of holding the frame into a small act of standing firm against a bully, so the job seems bigger and braver than just gardening.

Q4. The repetition of “Nearly there” shows that Grandfather is calm and steady. He does not rush or shout; he says the same quiet words twice, to the plants and to Hana at once, the way someone does who has ridden out many storms and knows they pass.

Q5. The built version tells us more. In it, Grandfather gives Hana half the job — “Hold the frame ... and I will tie” — which shows he teaches by trusting her with real work, and he stays beside her while she does it. Read flat (“Hold the frame,” said Grandfather), the line is only an order; the teaching, and the kindness, live in the half we hand to someone else.

Q6. Model answer using panel 4: a low angle looking up at Hana while she holds the frame would make the audience feel she is rising to the challenge — the camera would do what the words do when the hat stops being too big. (Panel 6 model: cutting the music to wind only would make us feel alone with Hana in the dark, and pull us in close.)

Q7. Model answer: *gripped*. “Hana gripped the frame” shows fear and determination at once — her hands admit the storm is scary while they refuse to let go. (*held* builds a calmer, steadier Hana; *fought* builds a Hana who meets the wind as an enemy. Any of the three is right if the reason matches the verb.)

Q8. The too-big hat can stand for the idea of growing into her grandfather — his skills, his calm, his place in the garden. The detail “It was too big; it slid to her nose” shows she is not there yet, and the line “her hands learnt what his hands had known for sixty years” shows she has started the journey. The hat is a symbol because the object carries the idea without the writer naming it.

Q9. Model paragraph: *In The Storm Garden, the writer uses dialogue and small actions to show that Grandfather is calm and kind. While the storm shouts, his words stay quiet and repeated — “Nearly there ... Nearly there” — and when the too-big hat slides to Hana’s nose he “did not laugh”, but “nodded at her, as if she had passed a test.” The repeated, gentle words show a man who cannot be hurried by weather, and the nod instead of a laugh shows kindness: he protects her pride and hands her dignity. Together these choices make us trust him the way Hana does.*

Q10. Model answer: One thing we learn is that Hana is unsure of herself but willing. The novel builds it with words: the hat “was too big” and “slid to her nose”, yet she puts it on and walks out. A film could build the same idea with one image: a close-up of the hat sliding over her eyes in the door’s reflection, then a long shot of her small figure stepping out into the wind — the distance doing the work of “too big”, the stepping out doing the work of “willing”.

Q11. Model walk: the choice — personification, “The storm was shouting”. What we learn — the storm is a loud opponent, and against it Hana is small. The feeling that rises — worry for her, and a sense that staying is hard. The opinion we end up holding — Hana, who stays and holds the frame anyway, is brave. Each link hands on to the next; that hand-on is the influence.

Q12. Model reflection: In our built read, my partner let Grandfather’s second “Nearly there” land slower and quieter than the first, which made him sound steady and kind — that was the specific strength. What the flat read lost was the pause inside “Hold the frame ... and I will tie”; said flat, the trust in handing Hana half the job simply was not audible.

Q13. Model rewrite: “The wind hammered the frame, trying to tear it from her hands. Hana’s heart raced, but her hands said no.” The first sentence uses personification (the wind hammers and tries); the second uses a contrast between heart and hands, and gives the hands a voice — two features doing the work the flat sentences only reported.

Q14. Model answer (agree): I agree that the storm is cast as the villain. The personification “The storm was shouting” gives it a villain’s loud, bullying voice, and the simile “like a bruise” paints its sky as something hurt and dangerous. Every mean thing in the extract — the shouting, the pulling wind — is the storm’s doing, while every kind thing is Grandfather’s. (A disagree answer can also succeed: the storm is only the test, and the extract’s true subject is trust — “he nodded at her, as if she had passed a test” — so the storm is the exam, not the villain.)

How characters, settings and events combine to create meaning

English 7 · Chapter 3 · Section 3D Owns: VC2E7LE04 (elaborations .E01–.E02) · **Draws on:**

VC2E6LE03 (Level 6) *identify and explain the ways that characters, settings and events combine to create meaning in literary texts* All model texts, responses and diagrams in this section were written and drawn for this book.

What we are learning

Owns

VC2E7LE04 — identify and explain the ways that characters, settings and events combine to create meaning in literary texts

We learn to

identify the **character**, **setting** and **events** of a story; explain how those three elements work *together* to build meaning; analyse the **structure** of a short story and discuss the purpose and appeal of different **authorial choices** for structure (.E01); explore **traditional stories from Asia** and their features — the **oral mode**, **visual elements** and **verse** (.E02)

Draws on

VC2E6LE03 (Level 6) — that authors make choices about language, and that those choices give each author an individual style

From last year

You can already point to an author's choices and say what effect they have. This section goes one step further: you explain how the choices *combine*.

On to next year

In Level 8 you will study how texts connect to and build on other texts. This section ends with a discussion (Figure 9) that gets you ready for that idea — without teaching it yet.

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term **meaning** but does not define it. This section therefore treats a text's meaning as **what a reader understands, feels and takes away — the point the text seems to make about its characters and their world**. You will meet that definition again and again, so keep it in mind.

The big idea: three elements, one meaning

Every story is built from three working parts.

- **Character** — who the story is about, what they want, and what they do.
- **Setting** — where and when the story happens: the place, the weather, the time of day, the rules of that world.
- **Event** — what happens, in what order, and which moment turns the story.

In Level 6 you learnt that authors make choices that give them their own style. Level 7 asks a bigger question: not *what is in the story?* but *how do the parts work together?* The answer is the combine triangle.

The combine triangle — no element works alone

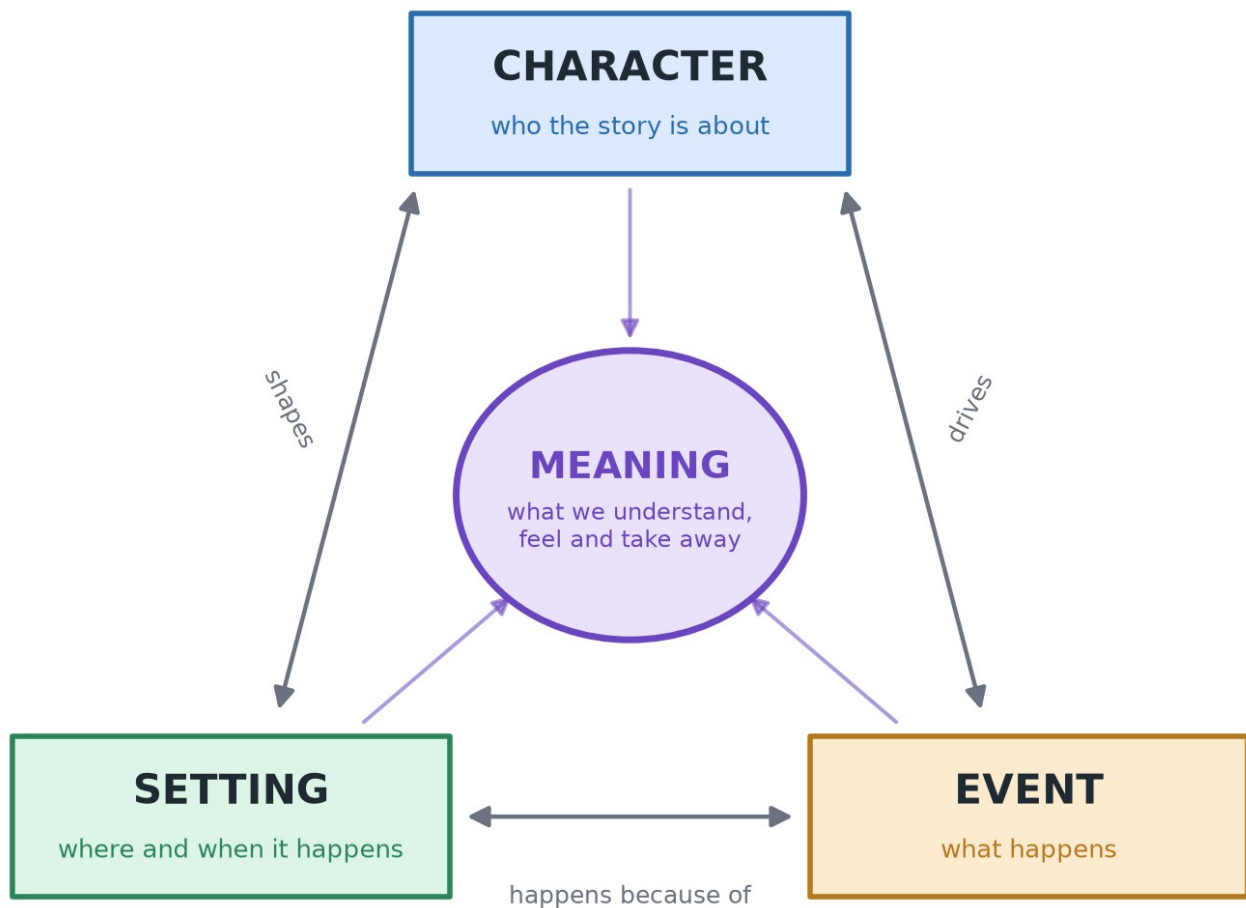


Figure 1. The combine triangle — no element works alone. The setting shapes the character; the character drives the events; the events happen because of the setting. Meaning sits in the middle because it is built by all three at once.

A useful habit: when you explain meaning, use the word **because**. “The setting matters *because* it makes the character’s choice hard.” “The last event changes how we feel *because* we know what the character wanted.” If your explanation has no *because* in it, you have probably listed the elements rather than combined them.

Two questions for every element

When you meet a new story, ask each element two questions — one to **identify** it, one to **combine** it.

Ask two questions of every element

First identify it. Then ask how it combines with the others.

CHARACTER	IDENTIFY Who is in the story? What do they want and do?	THEN COMBINE How does the setting pressure them? How do the events change them, or show what they are made of?
SETTING	IDENTIFY Where and when is it? What can we see, hear, feel?	THEN COMBINE How does this place make certain events possible — and other events impossible? How does it shape the characters' choices?
EVENT	IDENTIFY What happens, in what order? What is the turning point?	THEN COMBINE How do the events grow out of the characters and the setting? What do the events make us understand?

Figure 2. Ask two questions of every element: first identify it, then ask how it combines with the other two.

Model text 1: *Half-Tide*

Read the short story below. It was written for this book, and it will do most of the teaching in this section.

Half-Tide (made for this book)

Noor knew the rules of the rocks better than the times table: never turn your back on the sea, and never stay past half-tide.

But today her grandfather stood at the top of the path with his arms folded. “You’ll have to go without me,” he said. “These knees are done for.”

Noor looked down at the rock platform. At low tide it was a wide grey table, all pools and crevices, and the mussels hid in the cracks where the waves couldn’t reach. By half-tide the sea would be back over it, quiet and quick.

“Take the small basket,” her grandfather said. “Fill it once, and come straight up.”

She climbed down alone for the first time. The rock was slippery and the wind pulled at her jacket. She worked fast, the way she had been shown: grip the shell, twist sideways, drop it in the basket. The salt smell was strong, and the gulls screamed above her like they knew something she didn’t.

The basket was almost full when she heard it — a low bell from the harbour. One slow note. The tide-bell. Her grandfather rang it when the water started to turn.

Noor looked up. The path felt a long way off. For one breath she wanted the basket to be heavier, so she would have an excuse to stay and fill it right. Then she tipped the last shell in and climbed.

Her grandfather took the basket and counted the mussels with his eyes. “Enough for tonight,” he said. “And you came up at the bell. That’s the whole lesson.”

Noor looked back at the rocks. The sea was already spreading over them, slow and silver. In an hour, no one would know the platform was there at all.

“That’s the thing about this place,” her grandfather said, handing her the biggest mussel to hold. “It gives you what you need — if you know when to go.”

Before you analyse the story, map it. A story world usually has a built-in clock or rule, and *Half-Tide*’s is the tide.

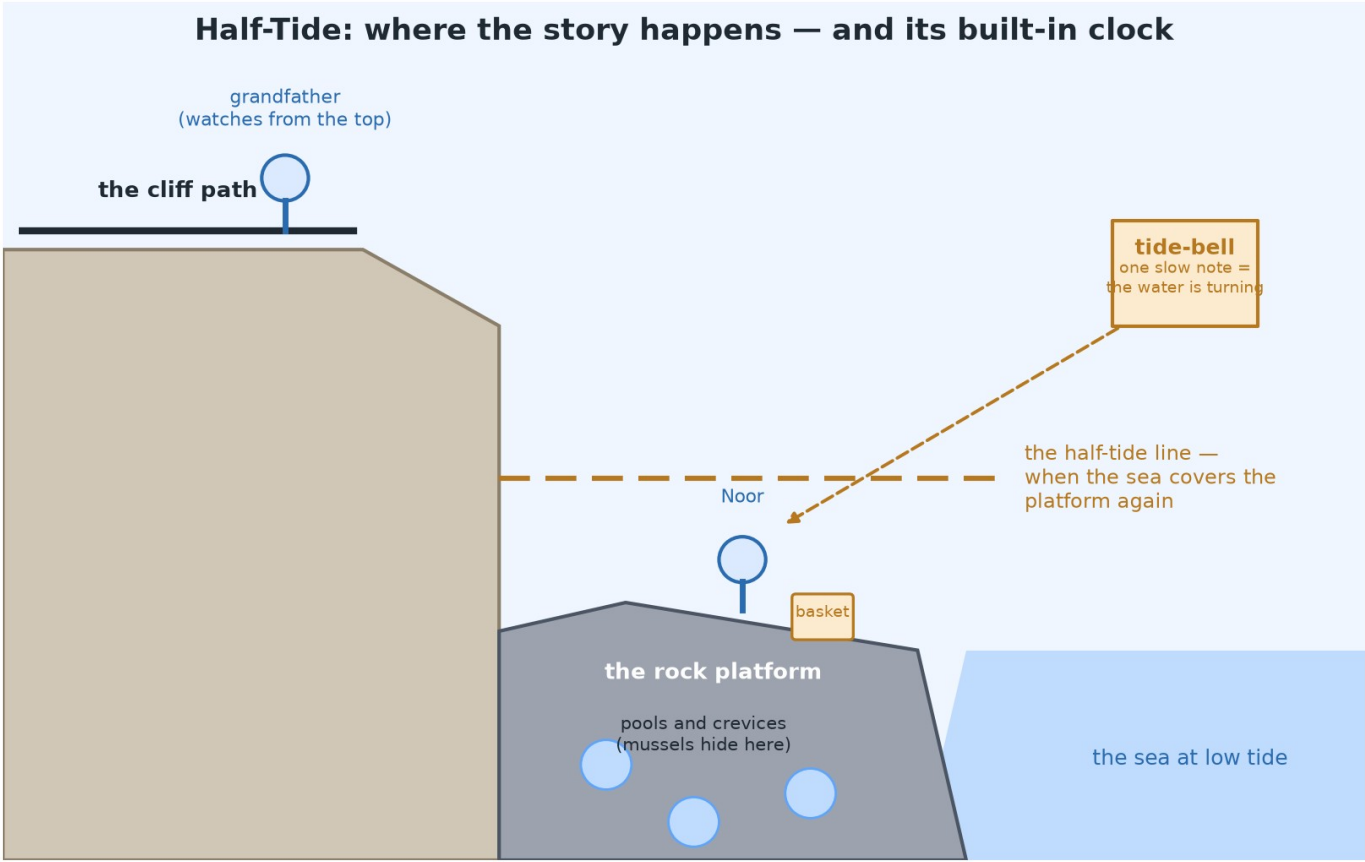


Figure 3. Where the story happens — and its built-in clock. The half-tide line is the story’s deadline: everything Noor does is timed against it.

Worked example 1 (scaffolded) — filling in a combine table

The cleanest way to combine the elements is a table. Identify each element with evidence, then write — in the third column — how it combines with the others.

Worked example 1 — the combine table for Half-Tide

Element	Evidence from the story	How it combines with the others
Character	Noor knows the rules of the rocks; her grandfather's knees are done; he trusts her to go alone	Because she knows the rules, she hears the bell as a warning, not just a sound. Because he cannot climb, the first trip must be hers.
Setting	A rock platform the sea covers at half-tide; a cliff path; a harbour with a tide-bell	The tide sets the clock for every event. The platform only exists for a few hours — so the characters can never stay as long as they like.
Event	Noor fills the basket alone, hears the bell, wants to stay, then climbs straight back up	The event grows out of character (she was taught) and setting (the tide turns). Her choice to climb is the story's turning point.
Meaning	The place gives you what you need — if you know when to go	Character + setting + event together: taking what you need and stopping in time is how people belong to a place, and how Noor grows.

Figure 4. Worked example 1 — the combine table for Half-Tide.

Notice the moves the table makes:

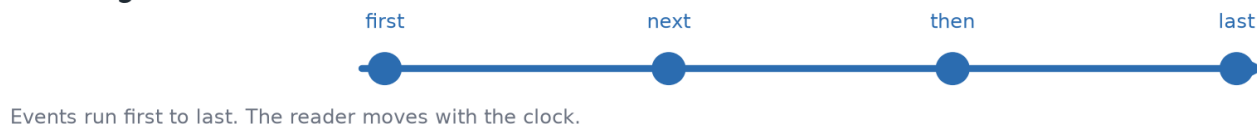
- **Every claim has evidence.** “Noor knows the rules” is not an opinion; it is in the first line.
- **Every combine cell links two elements.** “Because she knows the rules, she hears the bell as a warning” links *character* (what Noor knows) to *event* (hearing the bell) through *setting* (the tide turning).
- **The meaning row is a sentence, not a word.** “The place gives you what you need — if you know when to go” is the story’s final line in disguise. The author put the meaning in the grandfather’s mouth; your job is to show how the whole story earned it.

Worked example 2 (scaffolded) — structure, and the purpose of authorial choices

Structure is the order in which the author tells the events. Events happen in one order, but the author chooses what to show first. Here are four common choices.

Four choices an author can make about structure

1 Straight time order



2 Start in the middle of the action



3 Twist ending



4 Circular ending



Figure 5. Four authorial choices for structure. Each choice changes what the reader knows, and when the reader knows it.

Question. Which choice does *Half-Tide* use, and what is the purpose of opening with the rules?

Working	Comment
<i>Half-Tide</i> uses choice 1, straight time order: the rules, the first trip alone, the bell, the climb up. But the opening is doing choice-1 work very hard. The rules arrive <i>before</i> the trip — “never stay past half-tide” — so by the time Noor is on the rocks, the reader is already watching the clock. Tension — the worry a reader carries — is therefore built by structure: rule first, risk second. The appeal is that we get to feel afraid <i>for</i> Noor while she proves she can be trusted.	Identifying the structure is the easy half. Always name it plainly first. This is the explain half. The purpose of the order is to plant worry early. The author could have saved the rules for the end; telling us first makes every later moment tense. Naming the reader’s feeling (worry, then relief) is what turns a structure label into an explanation of meaning.

Authorial just means “by the author”. An **authorial choice** is any decision the author did not have to make — the order, the opening line, who speaks last. The question to ask is always: *what does this choice make the reader feel or understand, and why might that appeal to us?*

Worked example 3 (unscaffolded model) — the swap test

The fastest way to prove that elements combine is to change one and watch the meaning move. Swap one element, then ask: *what does the meaning lose?*

The swap test: change one element, watch the meaning move

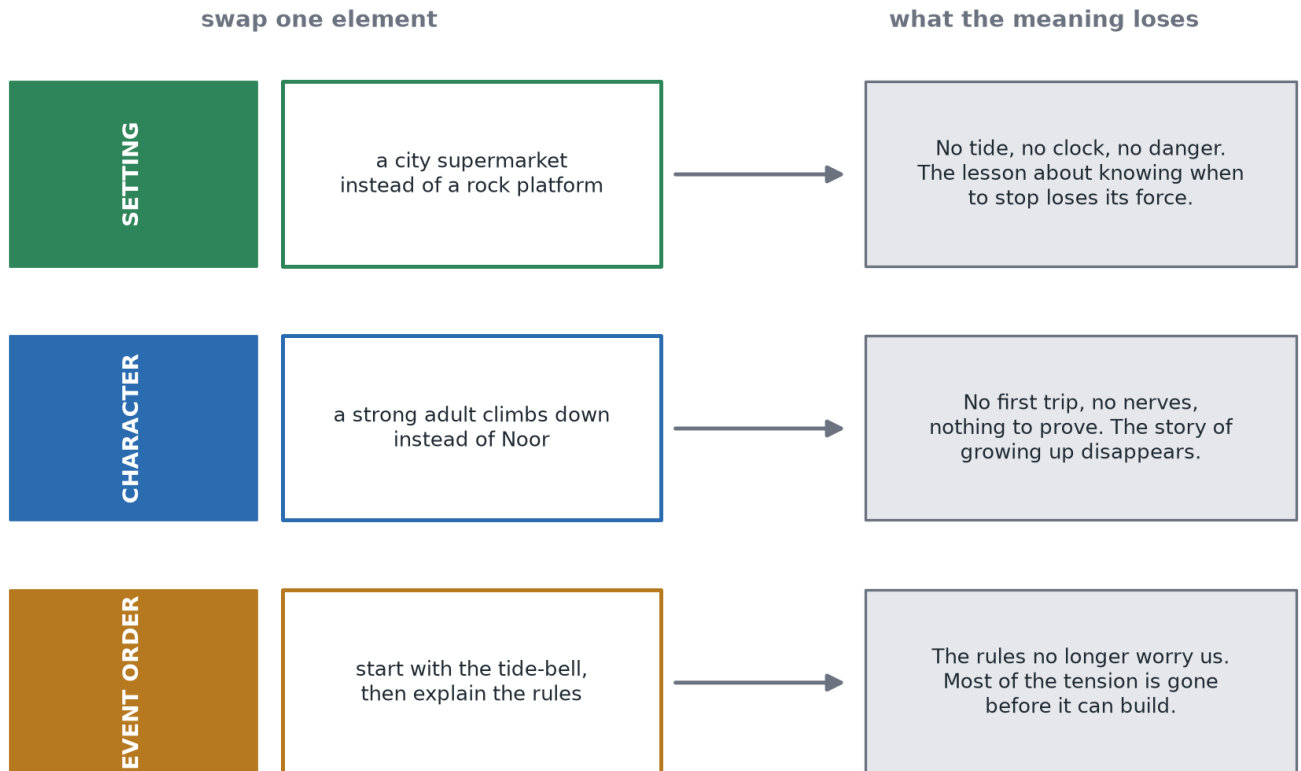


Figure 6. The swap test applied to *Half-Tide*. If you can swap an element without losing anything, that element was decoration. In a good story, every swap costs the meaning something.

A model of how to argue one row in your own words:

If the setting were a city supermarket instead of a rock platform, the story would keep its events — a child shops alone, an adult waits, a bell rings — and lose its meaning. A supermarket has no tide, so nothing covers the floor at a set time; there is no clock, no danger, and no reason the trip must be today. The grandfather's lesson, "know when to go," needs a place that literally closes twice a day. Swap the setting and the story stops being about growing up and becomes about errands.

See the shape of the argument: **swap** → **keep** → **lose** → **therefore**. The *therefore* is the combine step. It shows the setting was not a backdrop; it was load-bearing.

Traditional stories from Asia: oral mode, verse, visual elements

The curriculum offers traditional stories from Asia as one way into these skills, and it is a rich one. Many traditional stories travelled for centuries by voice before anyone wrote them down, so they carry features that printed short stories often lack. Three of those features are the **oral mode** (a story told by a voice to listeners), **verse** (a story carried in lines and stanzas, with rhythm and rhyme so it is easy to remember), and **visual elements** (pictures that travel with the story — painted screens, scrolls, puppets, panels).

Three features of many traditional stories

ORAL MODE	VERSE	VISUAL ELEMENTS
Told by a voice to listeners. It speaks to us, repeats itself, and leaves room to breathe. <i>from The Kite Maker (made for this book):</i> <i>"Come close, come close,..." "...flew it anyway, flew it anyway."</i>	The narrative travels in lines and stanzas, with rhythm and rhyme, so it is easy to remember. <i>from The Kite Maker (made for this book):</i> <i>"...and the kite climbed, and climbed, and climbed..."</i>	In many traditions the story arrives with pictures: painted screens, scrolls, puppets, panels. <i>from The Kite Maker (made for this book):</i> <i>See the three-panel strip below (next figure) — pictures that carry part of the narrative.</i>

Figure 7. Three features of many traditional stories, each shown with a line from the original verse narrative below.

Here is a complete original example in that manner: a ballad — a story in verse, built to be told aloud.

The Kite Maker *(made for this book)*

Come close, come close, and hear the tale of the kite maker by the river town, who climbed to his roof at the break of day while the busy streets went up and down.

The town said, "Kites are a waste of hands, a waste of string, a waste of day. Come down from there and do some work!" He flew it anyway, flew it anyway.

The string sang out, the paper pulled, the river shone below, and the kite climbed, and climbed, and climbed, higher than a gull could go.

The town that laughed, the town that hurried, stood in the street, and all were still; five hundred faces, one red kite, till the evening star came over the hill.

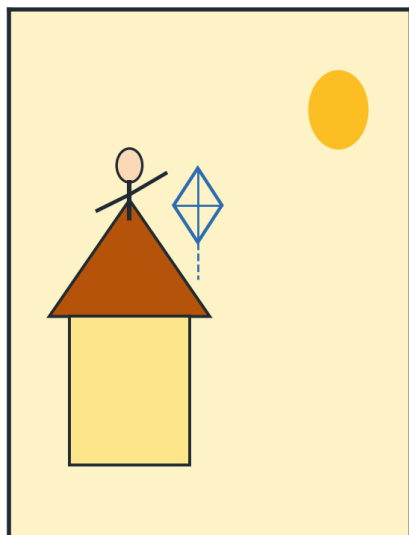
So come close, come close, and remember the tale of the kite maker by the river town: some work fills the hands, some work lifts the eyes — and the town looks up when the kite comes down.

Now notice how the features work *together* with meaning, exactly as they did in *Half-Tide*:

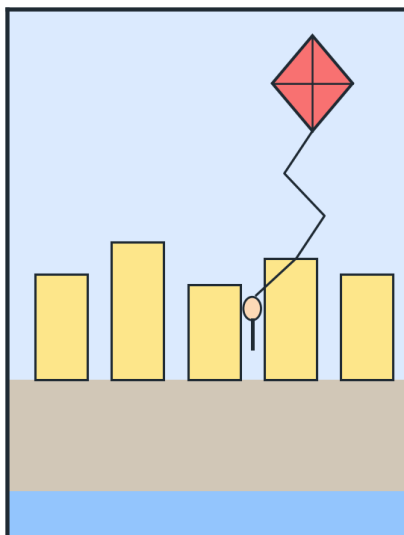
- **Oral mode.** The teller uses **direct address** — speaking straight to the listener ("Come close, come close") — and **repetition** ("flew it anyway, flew it anyway"). Both hold a listening audience: you cannot scroll back a voice, so the story repeats its grip.
- **Verse.** A **stanza** is a grouped set of lines, like a paragraph. Rhythm and rhyme ("below / go", "still / hill") make the tale easy to remember and retell, which is how oral stories survive.
- **Visual elements.** Pictures can carry part of the narrative that the words leave out.

Visual elements: an original three-panel strip for The Kite Maker

1 The kite maker works on his roof at dawn



2 The big kite climbs over the river town



3 The whole town looks up and goes quiet

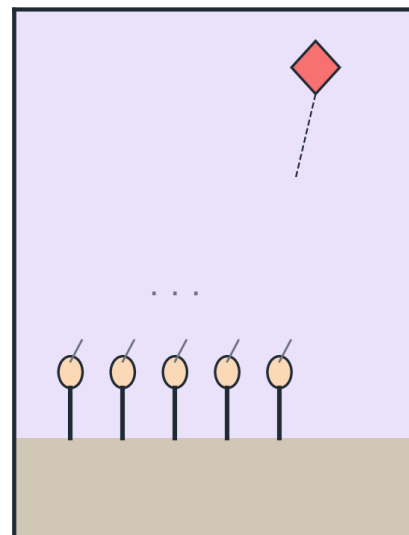


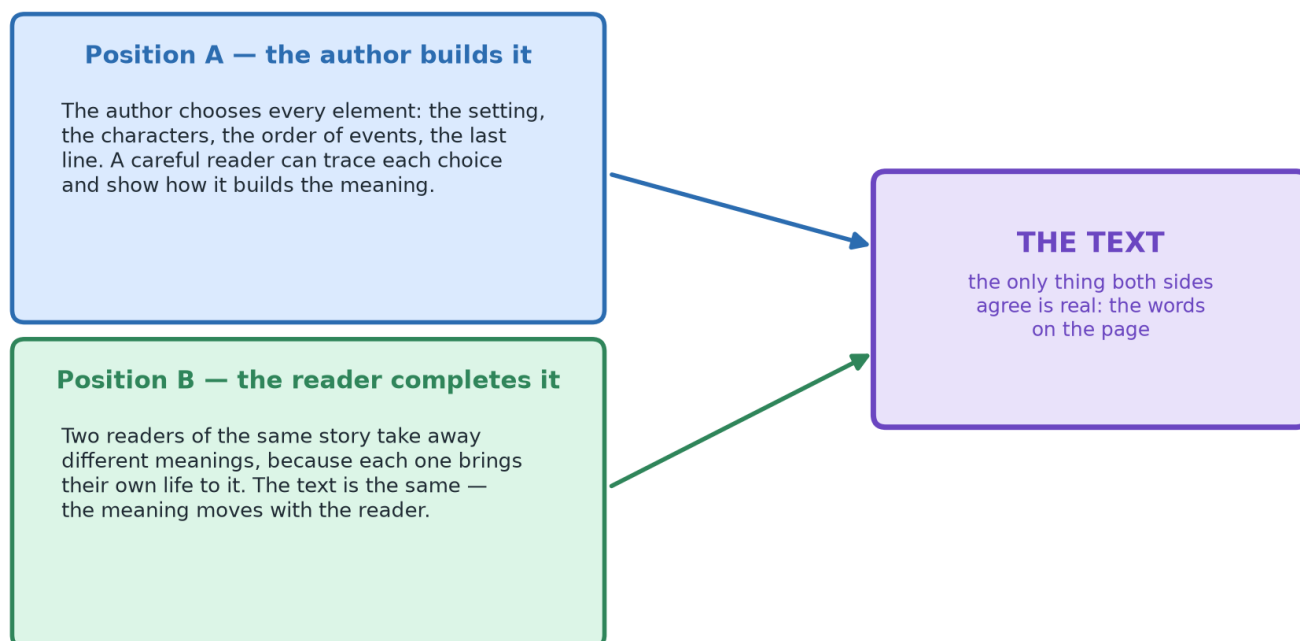
Figure 8. An original three-panel strip for *The Kite Maker*. Panel 3 has no words in it at all — the silence is drawn. That is a visual element doing the work of a sentence: “the whole town looked up and went quiet.”

The combine triangle still applies. Character (the maker, who keeps making), setting (a busy town that rates work by money), events (mockery, the flying, the silence) combine into a meaning about worth: some work fills the hands, some work lifts the eyes. The elements combine; the meaning is built.

Where does meaning live? Two strong positions

One last idea, and a genuinely contested one. Readers and scholars disagree about where a text’s meaning lives. Here are the two strongest positions, each stated at its best.

Where does a story's meaning come from? Two strong positions



A good analysis uses both: trace the author's choices, then test them against what you actually felt.

Figure 9. Two strong positions about where a story’s meaning comes from. Both agree the text is real; they disagree about who finishes the meaning.

For this section, you do not have to settle the argument. You have to use both positions well:

- **Position A in practice:** trace the author’s choices — the rules-first opening, the bell, the last line — and show how they build the meaning. This is what Worked examples 1–3 did.
- **Position B in practice:** test those choices against what you actually felt. If the author “built” worry but you felt none, say so, with evidence from your own reading.

A good explanation at Level 7 does both: *the author built X, and it works because the reader feels Y.*

Next year, Level 8 will add a third layer — how texts connect to and borrow from other texts. You are not expected to know that yet; just notice that both positions above already treat texts as things made by people and completed by readers.

Practice questions

Q1 (*Reading and viewing · Scaffolded*) — Read the micro-story below, written for this book. Using the IDENTIFY column of Figure 2, list one piece of evidence for the character, the setting and the events.

The Last Bus (*made for this book*)

Marisol waited where the highway met the dirt road. The sign said the 6:40 bus came every day, but the sky said something else: black cloud was stacking over the hills like a slow crowd. She held her grandmother’s cake box level with both hands, the way you carry something that matters. When the bus finally came, its lights were off. The door hissed open like a long sigh. The driver looked at the box. “Birthday?” Marisol nodded. “Then we had better not be late,” he said, and he switched on every light in the bus.

Q2 (*Reading and viewing · Scaffolded*) — Now the combine column. Answer in full sentences, each containing *because*: (a) How does the setting make the events matter more? (b) How does the one event — the driver switching on the lights — show what the driver is made of?

Q3 (*Reading and viewing · Scaffolded*) — Apply the swap test to *The Last Bus*: swap the setting from a lonely dirt-road stop to a busy city bus stop outside a shop. In two or three sentences, say what the meaning would lose.

Q4 (*Reading and viewing · Scaffolded*) — Structure. (a) Name the structure choice (Figure 5) used by *The Last Bus*. (b) The story tells you about the storm *before* the bus arrives. What is the purpose of that order? (c) Would the story be better opened with the driver’s line, “Then we had better not be late”? Give one reason for your answer.

Q5 (*Reading and viewing · Scaffolded*) — The oral mode in *The Kite Maker*. Find one example of direct address and one example of repetition. For each, explain what it does for a listening audience.

Q6 (*Viewing · Scaffolded*) — Look at Figure 8. (a) What does each panel add to what the verse says? (b) Panel 3 draws silence without words. Explain how the picture carries that part of the narrative.

Q7 (*Writing · Unscaffolded*) — Choose one of the four structure choices in Figure 5 that *Half-Tide* does **not** use. Write the opening (4–6 lines) of a brand-new short story that uses your choice, then add one sentence explaining your purpose: *I chose this structure because....*

Q8 (*Writing · Unscaffolded*) — Swap one element of *Half-Tide* — any swap except the three in Figure 6 — and rewrite the bell paragraph (“The basket was almost full when she heard it...”) so it fits the swapped story. Underneath, write one sentence naming what your swap made the meaning lose.

Q9 (*Writing · Un scaffolded*) — Plan and write. Copy the plan template below (Figure 10) and fill it in for a story of your own — real or invented. Then write the opening paragraph (5–8 lines). Your plan must state the meaning you are building.

My story plan — characters, setting and events

Fill in each box. Then check: do the three elements work together?

MY CHARACTER

Name: _____

What do they want? _____

MY SETTING

Where and when: _____

What makes this place press on my character? _____

MY EVENTS (in order)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

MY STRUCTURE CHOICE

Straight time order · middle-of-the-action opening

twist ending · circular ending (circle one)

THE MEANING I AM BUILDING

What I want the reader to understand, feel or take away: _____

Figure 10. The plan template. Fill it in before you write a single line of the story.

Q10 (*Speaking and listening · Un scaffolded*) — Oral retelling. Retell *The Kite Maker* aloud to a partner **without reading** — in your own words, under one minute. You must include one direct address (“Come close...” or your own) and one repeated line. Your partner checks: could they hear the three events in order, and did the repeated line land?

Q11 (*Speaking and listening · Un scaffolded*) — Pair discussion. Take Position A, your partner takes Position B (Figure 9). Each of you speaks for one minute, at your strongest, about the last line of *Half-Tide* (“It gives you what you need — if you know when to go”). Then switch sides for one minute each. Finish by agreeing on one sentence that uses both positions.

Q12 (*Reading and viewing · Unscaffolded*) — Below are two openings for the *same* story, written for this book. Identify the structure choice each one uses, then explain which opening combines with the character and setting more strongly, and why.

Opening A. Every Saturday, Dana walked her little brother to the pool. She carried the towel bag. He carried his fear. And between them they carried the secret that he still could not swim.

Opening B. The water was already over Dana’s knees when she heard her brother’s voice behind her, very small, saying the words she had hoped never to hear: “I can’t swim. I never could.”

Answers

Q1. Character: Marisol carries her grandmother's cake box "the way you carry something that matters" — careful, loving. Setting: a lonely stop "where the highway met the dirt road", with a storm stacking up. Events: she waits; the bus comes late and dark; the driver switches on all the lights so she won't be late.

Q2. (a) The setting — a lonely stop under a building storm — makes the bus's lateness feel dangerous, so a small kindness (the lights) matters hugely. (b) The driver cannot change the weather or the lateness; he switches on the lights anyway, which shows a person who answers worry with care. (*Model paragraph in solutions.*)

Q3. At a busy city stop there is no storm fear and no loneliness, so the driver's kindness becomes ordinary politeness; the meaning — that care shines brightest in lonely, dark places — loses its force.

Q4. (a) Choice 1, straight time order. (b) Telling us the storm first makes the wait tense and the bus's arrival a relief. (c) Any reasoned answer; e.g. no — the driver's line is the story's warmest moment, and using it first (choice 2) would spend the warmth before the worry is built.

Q5. Direct address: "Come close, come close" — it pulls the listener in, as if the tale is a secret being shared. Repetition: "flew it anyway, flew it anyway" — for a listening audience, the repeat hammers in the maker's stubbornness and gives the teller a beat to act out.

Q6. (a) Panel 1 shows the dawn work the verse only mentions; panel 2 shows the scale of the kite over the whole town; panel 3 shows the crowd's stillness. (b) The drawn figures all tilt their heads the same way and no speech is drawn, so the eye reads "the whole town looked up and went quiet" without a single word.

Q7. Answers will vary; a model opening is in the solutions.

Q8. Answers will vary; the swap must change the paragraph's tension, and the loss-sentence must name a piece of meaning, not just a detail.

Q9. Answers will vary; the plan must state a meaning and the structure choice must be visible in the opening.

Q10. Partner checklist: three events in order; one direct address heard; one repeated line noticed. Retellers should face the listener, not the page.

Q11. A possible agreed sentence: "The author built the last line to teach, and it teaches because the reader has already felt the worry and the climb." Any sentence that honestly uses both positions passes.

Q12. Opening A: choice 1 (straight order, rules of the Saturday stated first). Opening B: choice 2 (start in the middle of the action). Most defensible answer: B combines more strongly, because the secret is revealed inside a tense moment, so character (the brother's fear), setting (the water) and event (the confession) arrive combined; A lists them separately. A well-argued preference for A (clearer setup, gentler appeal) also passes if it uses *because*.

Fully worked solutions

Q2 — model paragraph. The setting makes the events matter more because Marisol is alone at a lonely stop while a storm stacks up, so the late, dark bus feels like bad news — which is exactly why the driver's small kindness lands like a big one. When he switches on every light, we see what he is made of: he cannot fix the weather or the timetable, but he can make one girl's birthday feel safe, and he does. The meaning is built by the combination — lonely, stormy setting + careful girl + one warm choice — and it says: care costs little and matters most in dark places.

Q4 — model response. (a) *The Last Bus* uses choice 1, straight time order: waiting, the bus arriving, the lights. (b) The purpose of naming the storm before the bus arrives is tension: once we have seen the "black cloud stacking", every minute of waiting is charged, and the dark bus arriving with its lights off feels like the storm winning — so the driver's choice to light the bus feels like the storm losing. (c) No — opening with "Then we had better not be late" (choice 2) would give away the story's kindest moment in the first line. The warmth works *because* the worry came first.

Q7 — model opening (choice 3, twist ending). *Grandpa's jacket still hung by the door, so nobody in the house said the word died. We set five places for dinner out of habit. We said grace out of habit. And then my little brother, who reads everything, said out of habit, "Grandpa always saves me the wing," and the whole table heard the word at last.*

Purpose sentence: *I chose a twist ending because the twist is the point — a family can hide a word, but a child's habit can unhide it in one line.*

Q9 — model plan and opening. Plan: **My character** — Tessa, eleven, hates being the new kid, good at fixing bikes. **My setting** — the last week of holidays, a hot street where every kid already has a group. **My events (in order)** — 1 a kid's bike chain snaps outside her gate; 2 she fixes it and says nothing; 3 the same kid returns with two more broken bikes; 4 by Friday her gate is a repair shop. **My structure choice** — 4, circular ending (close with the image of the gate). **The meaning I am building** — you belong to a place by what you give it, not by how long you have been there.

Opening paragraph: *The chain was on the footpath like a dead snake, and the kid who owned it was deciding whether to cry. Tessa knelt down before she could decide anything else. “Hold the wheel,” she said, and her hands did the talking — link, hook, turn — while the new-street smell of hot tar rose up around them. Somewhere behind her, her mother called, “Who are you talking to?” Tessa didn't answer. She was already the bike girl, and it had taken ninety seconds.*

Q11 — what “at your strongest” sounds like. Position A, strongest form: “The last line is the grandfather's, placed last by the author; every earlier choice — rules first, bell in the middle, Noor's wish for a heavier basket — is a step towards that sentence. The meaning is built, on purpose, and I can trace every beam.” Position B, strongest form: “Trace all you like — the line only lands because *I* have felt a clock in my own life, a time I stayed too long at something good. Without my life, the sentence is just weather.” Agreed sentence: see Answers Q11.

Q12 — model comparison. Opening A uses choice 1: it states the routine (“Every Saturday”), the characters and the secret, in order, before anything happens. Opening B uses choice 2: it opens in the middle of the action, water over Dana's knees, and lets the secret arrive as spoken dialogue at the tensest moment. B combines the elements more strongly because the setting (the water), the character (the brother's fear) and the event (the confession) reach the reader fused into one moment — the reader experiences the combination instead of being told about it. A is kinder and clearer, and a writer may prefer that appeal; but for combined force, B wins, because structure is doing the combining.

Before you finish

By the end of this section you can:

- identify character, setting and events in an unseen story, with evidence;
- explain, using *because*, how the three elements combine to create meaning;
- name a story's structure choice and discuss the purpose and appeal of that choice;
- describe how the oral mode, verse and visual elements carry narrative in traditional stories from Asia;
- hold two views of where meaning lives — author-built, reader-completed — and use both in one explanation.

Coverage note. This section owns VC2E7LE04 — “identify and explain the ways that characters, settings and events combine to create meaning in literary texts” — taught through the combine triangle (Figure 1), the combine table (Worked example 1), the swap test (Worked example 3) and the practice set. Elaboration .E01 — “analysing and explaining the structure and features of short stories, discussing the purposes and appeal of different authorial choices for structure” — is taught in Worked example 2 and practised in Q4, Q7 and Q12. Elaboration .E02 — “exploring traditional stories from Asia and discussing their features, for example use of the oral mode, visual elements and verse to convey the narrative” — is taught in the traditional-stories part (Figures 7–8) and practised in Q5, Q6 and Q10. The section draws on Level 6 VC2E6LE03 (authors' choices and individual style) and prepares for Level 8's study of how texts connect to other texts without teaching it. All three modes are covered: reading and viewing (Q1–Q6, Q12), writing (Q7–Q9), speaking and listening (Q10–Q11). Level 7 achievement standard: students explain ways that characters, settings and events combine and create meaning in texts from different historical, cultural or social contexts — here, a contemporary coastal story, an original ballad in an Asian traditional manner, and unseen micro-stories. All texts and figures are original, made for this book.

Independent reading. When you want to see these skills at work in published stories, look up any edition or retelling of: “The Drover's Wife” by Henry Lawson (Australia, 1892); “The Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant (France, 1884); “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry (United States, 1905); and a traditional Japanese tale such as the grateful crane story (many retellings). For each, ask the Figure 2 questions, then the swap test. (*Titles and dates checked against public bibliographic records, retrieved 24 August 2026; nothing is reproduced here.*)

Literary devices: layers of meaning and aesthetic qualities, including poetry

Chapter 3 · Literature · Section 3E Owns: VC2E7LE05 (Examining literature) **Draws on:** VC2E7LE05 .E01, VC2E7LE05 .E03, VC2E7LE05 .E04 **Excluded (§2A):** VC2E7LE05 .E02 — see the note at the end of this section. **Assumes from Level 6:** VC2E6LE04 · **Hands forward to Level 8:** VC2E8LE05

About this section

A plain sentence tells you something. A crafted sentence does more than that: it shows you something, makes you hear and feel something, and leaves you with a meaning that sits under the words. Writers build these extra layers on purpose, using tools you can learn to name. Those tools are called **literary devices**.

In this section you will learn how literary devices create **layers of meaning** and **aesthetic qualities** — the beauty, music, pictures and feeling that make a text worth experiencing. You will build the naming language, the **metalinguage**, for the sound and rhythm of poetry: end rhyme, internal rhyme, metre and alliteration. You will build criteria for judging a text's aesthetic value, and you will share and defend opinions. And you will compare a story told as prose with the same story told as film, naming the structure, devices and features of each form.

All the texts in this section — two poems, a short story scene, a storyboard and every model response — are original, written for this book.

You will work in all three language modes:

- **Reading and viewing** — close-reading poems and a prose scene, and reading a film version as a storyboard;
 - **Writing** — analytical paragraphs, your own poem, and your own storyboard;
 - **Speaking and listening** — reading poetry aloud for its beat, and discussing and defending opinions about aesthetic value.
-

The curriculum for this section

Content description VC2E7LE05 — Students learn to: identify and explain how literary devices create layers of meaning and aesthetic qualities in literary texts, including poetry.

This may involve students:

- **.E01** explaining the sound and rhythm of poetry using metalinguage (for example, 'end and internal rhyme', 'metre' and 'alliteration') and discussing how layers of meaning are created
- **.E03** determining criteria for evaluating the aesthetic value of a literary text and sharing opinions
- **.E04** comparing a film adaptation of a literary text using specific language for naming the text structure, literary devices and language features of film and novels, and sharing opinions about the aesthetic and social value of each

§2A note. The full elaboration list for this content description also includes .E02 — viewing or reading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander films, plays and poetry, and explaining the layers of meaning created by imagery. That elaboration is **excluded** from this book. This section is taught through the remaining elaborations — .E01, .E03 and .E04 — in neutral contexts, and is none the thinner for it. The decision is recorded in the front-of-book note and in TOC §2A.

Theory

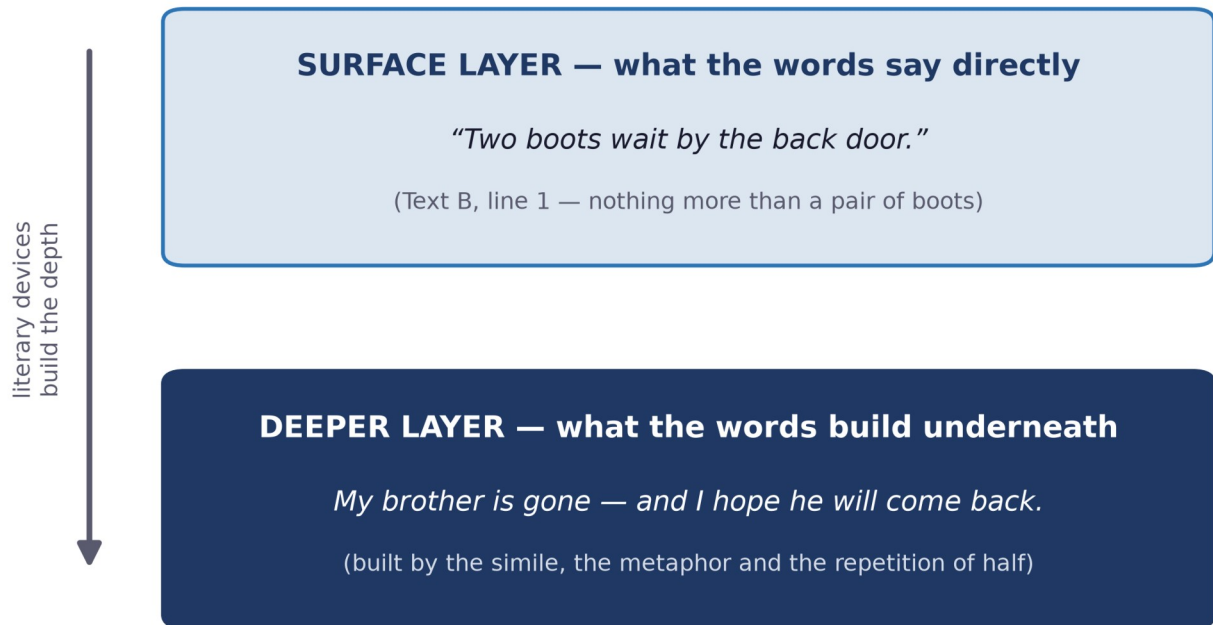
What the key words mean

Each of these terms is a tool. Learn the tool first, then use it.

Literary device. A deliberate technique a writer uses to create meaning or effect. A device is a choice, not an accident: a rhyme, a repeated word, a comparison, a pattern of beats. When you name the device, you can explain what it is doing.

Layer of meaning. A text carries more than one meaning at a time. The **surface layer** is the meaning the words say directly — what is happening. The **deeper layer** is the meaning the text builds underneath — what the text is really about, or what it makes you feel and think. Figure 1 shows the two layers with an example.

Layers of meaning — one text, two meanings at once



Point at the surface first. Then point at what it builds — and name the devices that build it.

Two stacked layers labelled surface layer and deeper layer, with an example line from a poem placed at each layer

Figure 1 — Layers of meaning. The surface is what the words say; the depth is what they build.

Aesthetic. *Aesthetic* (say it *es-THET-ik*) is a word about beauty, feeling and the experience of art. The **aesthetic qualities** of a text are the qualities its craft gives it — its music, its pictures, its feeling, its shape — the things that make it worth experiencing, not just worth reading for information. The **aesthetic value** of a text is how well it succeeds at this.

A note about the term. The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *aesthetic qualities* and *aesthetic value* but does not define them. This section therefore treats the **aesthetic qualities** of a text as the beauty, music, pictures, feeling and shape its craft gives it, and its **aesthetic value** as how well those qualities work on a reader, judged against stated criteria. Every question in this section is answerable on that definition alone.

It also helps to know what kind of term this is. Aesthetic value is not measurable like a length or a mass. Two honest positions exist, and both deserve their strongest form:

- **The craft is in the text.** Aesthetic value sits in features anyone can point to — the rhyme, the imagery, the structure — so people can argue about it with evidence, the way they argue about anything with parts.
- **The response is in the reader.** Aesthetic value lives in the experience of the person reading. A poem can be carefully made and still leave one reader cold, while a simpler poem moves another reader strongly.

This section uses both positions together: you judge a text's aesthetic value by pointing to its crafted features **and** saying what effect they have on a reader. Your opinion is marked on the strength of your criteria and your evidence — never on which text you pick.

Metalinguage. Language used to talk about language. *Metre*, *rhyme* and *alliteration* are metalinguage: they are the names that let you point at exactly what a poem is doing with sound. You met the idea in Chapter 2 (VC2E7LA08); here you collect the poetry set.

The sound-and-rhythm set (the metalinguage of poetry)

Four terms do most of the work when you explain the sound and rhythm of a poem. All four are named in elaboration .E01.

End rhyme. When the final sounds of two or more lines rhyme. In the pair *rain / again*, the rhyme lands at the end of each line. End rhyme is what listeners most often notice first; it ties lines together and makes a poem easy to remember.

Internal rhyme. When a word inside a line rhymes with another word in the same line (or with a word mid-way in another line), not at the line's end. *The gales will wail* carries its rhyme inside the one line. Internal rhyme makes the inside of a line ring, not just its edge.

Metre. The pattern of stressed (strong) and unstressed (weak) syllables in a line of poetry — the line's beat, the way music has a beat. When you read a line aloud and push some syllables harder without trying, you are finding its metre. Marking the strong beats is called **scanning** a line. A four-beat line has four strong beats.

Alliteration. The repetition of the same starting sound in words close together: *the storm bell rings in the rain* repeats the *r*; *hooks hold half* repeats the *h*. Alliteration links words by sound, and it can make a line feel fast, rough, soft or heavy.

Three more terms help you talk about a poem's shape and meaning.

Line. A row of a poem. A poem is made of lines, not sentences, and the poet chooses where each line ends.

Stanza. A group of lines in a poem, like a paragraph in prose. Stanzas often share the same rhyme pattern and beat.

Imagery. Language that builds pictures, sounds, smells, touches and tastes in the reader's mind. You met imagery, simile, metaphor and personification at Level 6; they are assumed here. Quick refresher: a **simile** compares with *like* or *as*; a **metaphor** says one thing *is* another; **personification** gives human qualities to something not human.

Figure 2 sorts these devices into two families: the sound family and the meaning family.

The device families — what each device is, and an example

SOUND DEVICES — they work on the ear	MEANING DEVICES — they work on the mind's eye
End rhyme Lines end on a matching sound. <i>"rain / again" (Text A)</i>	Simile Compares using like or as. <i>"like a pair of tired dogs" (Text B)</i>
Internal rhyme Rhyme inside one line, not at its end. <i>"The gales will wail ..." (Text A)</i>	Metaphor Says one thing IS another. <i>"the mud has dried to little maps" (Text B)</i>
Metre The pattern of strong and weak beats in a line. <i>the GALES will WAIL and the SAILS will FAIL</i>	Personification Gives human qualities to what is not human. <i>"the gate sang its rusty note" (Text C)</i>
Alliteration The same starting sound in words close together. <i>"rings ... rain" (Text A)</i>	Imagery Language that builds pictures through the senses. <i>"smelled of earth and old rope" (Text C)</i>
	Repetition A word or structure used again, for emphasis. <i>"half as loud ... half the coats" (Text B)</i>

Sound devices build what you hear; meaning devices build what you see and feel. Both build layers of meaning.

Table of literary devices sorted into two families, sound devices and meaning devices, each row naming a device, what it is, and an example

Figure 2 — The device families. Sound devices work on the ear; meaning devices work on the mind's eye. Both build layers.

Why devices matter

A device is never decoration. Each one adds a layer: sound can make a storm feel present in your mouth; a quiet image can make an empty hallway feel like missing someone. When you explain a device well, you always do two jobs at once — name what the writer chose, and say what that choice builds.

Worked example 1 — the sound and rhythm of a poem (.E01)

Here is an original poem written for this book. Read it once for the story, then read it aloud for the sound.

Text A — "The Storm Bell"

The gales will wail and the sails will fail, when the storm bell rings in the rain, but the light stands fast on the black rock's edge and it calls the sailors home again.

For the sea is wide and the sea is cold, and it hides what it will not show, so a man climbs out when the day grows dark and he makes the great lamp glow.

And the ships sail on when the night is done, and they never know his name, but the light still burns on the black rock's edge and it watches the sea the same.

Reading it closely

Figure 3 reproduces the poem with the sound devices marked on it.

Model text A — “The Storm Bell”, with its sound devices marked

An original poem for this book. Ovals: internal rhyme · underlines: alliteration · brackets at right: end rhyme.

The gales will wail and the sails will fail,
when the storm bell rings in the rain,
but the light stands fast on the black rock's edge
and it calls the sailors home again.

internal rhyme — one line rings inside itself:
gales / wail / sails / fail

alliteration (r): rings ... rain

this line returns in stanza 3 —
the work goes on and on

For the sea is wide and the sea is cold,
and it hides what it will not show,
so a man climbs out when the day grows dark
and he makes the great lamp glow.

end
rhyme

And the ships sail on when the night is done,
and they never know his name,
but the light still burns on the black rock's edge
and it watches the sea the same.

alliteration (s): ships sail

Read it aloud: four strong beats, then three, like a steady walking pace. The calm beat holds still while the storm rages.

The poem *The Storm Bell* reproduced with labels: end-rhyme pairs joined at the line ends, internal rhyme circled in line one, alliteration highlighted, and the repeated rock-edge line marked

Figure 3 — Text A marked up: end rhyme, internal rhyme, alliteration and one repeated line.

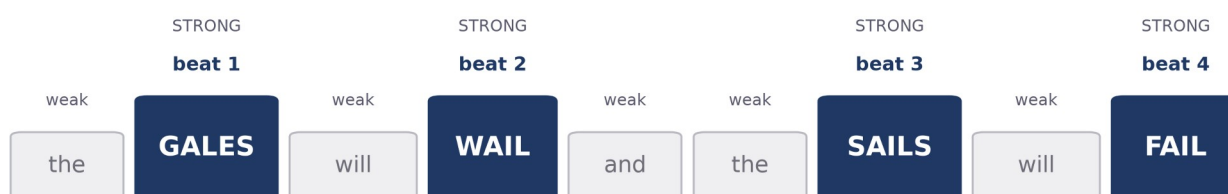
Now the metre. Read the first line aloud and let your voice find the beats:

the **GALES** will **WAIL** and the **SAILS** will **FAIL**

Four strong beats, with weak syllables between them. Figure 4 scans the line syllable by syllable.

Scanning a line — marking the metre

“The gales will wail and the sails will fail” (Text A, line 1). Say it aloud; the beats push through on their own.



Four strong beats → a four-beat line.

In each stanza of Text A, lines 1 and 3 carry four beats and lines 2 and 4 carry three.
That steady four-three pattern is the poem's metre.

weak syllable = grey box · strong syllable (the beat) = navy box

The line ‘the gales will wail and the sails will fail’ marked for metre: each syllable in a box marked weak or strong, with four strong beats counted

Figure 4 — Scanning one line: four strong beats. The poem's other lines carry four beats or three, in a steady pattern.

How to read it. The sound of this poem is doing real work. The internal rhyme in line 1 (*gales / wail / sails / fail*) makes the wind feel loud and linked, all in one breath. The alliteration (*rings ... rain*; later *ships sail*) ties the sounds of the storm to the sounds of the rescue. And the metre — four strong beats, then three, like a steady walking pace — keeps the poem calm even while the weather is not. That calm is part of the meaning: the light *stands fast*. Notice also that line 3 of stanza 1 and line 3 of stanza 3 are almost the same line — *the black rock's edge* comes back. The repetition shows that the work goes on, night after night, whether anyone thanks the man who does it.

The layers. Surface: a storm, a light on a rock, ships brought safely home. Deeper: some people keep others safe and are never thanked or even known — *they never know his name*. The sound devices build the surface layer (you can hear the storm); the repeated, quiet ending builds the deeper one (the work simply goes on). That is how layers of meaning are created: the devices build one layer, and the pattern of the whole poem builds another under it.

Worked example 2 — layers of meaning in a second poem

Here is a second original poem, written in a different way: no rhyme scheme, shorter lines, and the work is done by images rather than sound.

Text B — “The Boots by the Door”

Two boots wait by the back door, laces loose, tongues out, like a pair of tired dogs that have run all day and quit.

The mud has dried to little maps of the creek, the paddock, the hill — everywhere my brother walked before the bus came up the drive.

Now the hall is half as loud, and the hooks hold half the coats. I keep walking past the door like the boots will fill again.

Reading it closely

Figure 5 reproduces the poem with the meaning devices labelled.

Model text B — “The Boots by the Door”, with its meaning devices marked

An original poem for this book. Shading: simile and metaphor · warm marks: the repeated half · underline: alliteration.

Two boots wait by the back door,

laces loose, tongues out,

like a pair of tired dogs

that have run all day and quit.

simile — the boots as a pair of tired dogs:
worn out, spent, done for the day

The mud has dried to little maps

of the creek, the paddock, the hill –

everywhere my brother walked

before the bus came up the drive.

metaphor — the mud becomes a map
of everywhere the brother walked

Now the hall is half as loud,

and the hooks hold half the coats.

I keep walking past the door

like the boots will fill again.

repetition — the house is measured in halves;
the counting says he is gone

alliteration (h): hooks hold half — the line slows

the deeper layer: the hope that he comes back

The surface says boots. The depth says love and missing. The gap between the two layers is where the poem lives.

The poem *The Boots by the Door* reproduced with margin labels pointing to the simile, the metaphor, the repeated word half, and the alliteration on hooks hold half

Figure 5 — Text B marked up: simile, metaphor, repetition and alliteration.

How to read it. The surface layer is small and plain: a pair of empty boots by the back door. The deeper layer is built from the devices alone:

- The **simile** (*like a pair of tired dogs*) makes the boots seem alive and worn out — they stand in for the brother himself, tired after a long day.
- The **metaphor** (*the mud has dried to little maps*) turns dried mud into a record of everywhere the brother went. The boots hold his journeys.
- The **repetition** of *half* — *half as loud, half the coats* — measures the house’s missing person. Nothing says *he is gone*; the counting does.
- The **alliteration** in *the hooks hold half* slows the line down and makes the emptiness feel heavy.

The last line does the most work. *Like the boots will fill again* is not really about boots. It is the hope that the brother will come back. The surface says boots; the depth says love and missing. That gap between the two layers is where the poem lives.

One more term. When a small object in a text — boots, a lamp, a key — carries a bigger meaning, the object is doing double duty. Point at the object, then point at what it carries.

Worked example 3 — judging aesthetic value (.E03)

Elaboration .E03 asks you to **determine criteria** for the aesthetic value of a literary text, and to **share opinions**. Two jobs: build the yardstick, then use it.

Step 1 — determine the criteria

A **criterion** (plural: **criteria**) is a standard you judge against. Good criteria ask a question you can answer with evidence from the text. Figure 6 offers five criteria you can use and add to.

Criteria for judging the aesthetic value of a literary text		
Criterion	Question it asks	Example evidence from Text A
Vividness	Can you see, hear or feel the scene?	"the black rock's edge"; "the storm bell rings in the rain"
Music	Do the sound and rhythm reward the ear?	four-beat lines; end rhyme rain / again; internal rhyme, line 1
Depth	Is there more than one layer of meaning?	surface: the rescue · deeper: "they never know his name"
Craft	Are the choices careful and purposeful?	the rock-edge line returns in stanza 3 with one word changed
Feeling	Does it honestly move the reader?	the quiet ending: "it watches the sea the same"

Use these criteria, and add your own. A judgement needs a criterion, a piece of evidence, and the link between them.

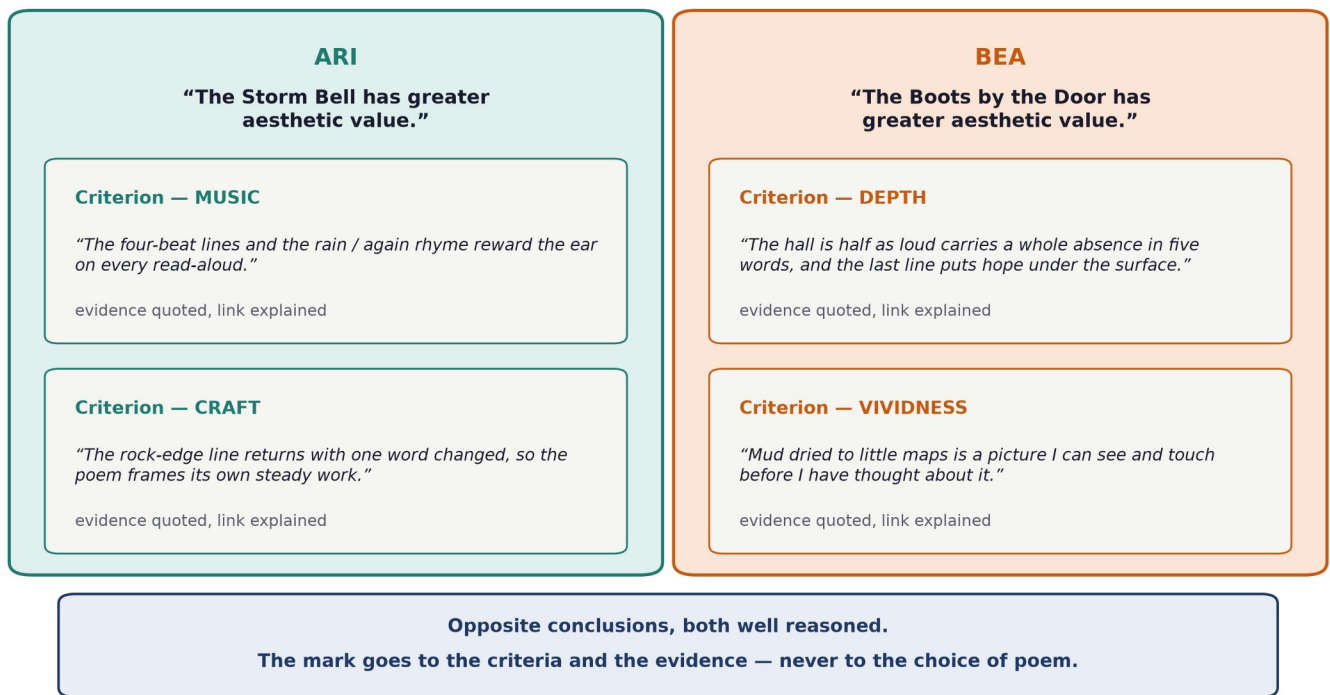
Table of five criteria for aesthetic value, each row giving the criterion, the question it asks, and example evidence from *The Storm Bell*

Figure 6 — Five criteria for judging aesthetic value, with evidence from Text A.

Step 2 — share opinions, with reasoning

Two students read Texts A and B and disagree about which has greater aesthetic value. Both responses use criteria and evidence. Read them as models. Figure 7 sets them side by side.

Sharing opinions about aesthetic value — two models



Two model opinions side by side: Ari argues for *The Storm Bell* using the music and craft criteria, Bea argues for *The Boots by the Door* using the depth and vividness criteria, with a note that both reason well

Figure 7 — Two opinions, opposite conclusions, both strong. The mark goes to the reasoning, not the choice.

How to read it. Notice what both students did right: each named the criteria being used, quoted evidence, and explained how the evidence meets the criterion. Ari’s case rests on **music** and **craft**; Bea’s rests on **depth** and **vividness**. They reach opposite conclusions — and both could earn full marks, because aesthetic value is the kind of term where the strength of the case matters more than the side you land on. If you judge a text, say which criteria matter most to you and why. If you challenge a classmate’s judgement, challenge the link between their evidence and their criterion, not their taste.

Worked example 4 — a story as prose and as film (.E04)

When a prose text is turned into a film, the film is an **adaptation** — a new version of the text made for a different form. You compared prose and film in Section 3A; here the comparison has a sharper job, matching elaboration .E04: name the **text structure**, the **literary devices** and the **language features** of each form, then share opinions about the **aesthetic value** and the **social value** of each.

Social value is the worth a text has because of what it does for people together — ideas a group can talk about, feelings an audience shares, memories a family keeps.

Here is an original prose scene, then its film version as a **storyboard** — a strip of panels that plans each shot of a film before it is made.

Text C — “The Key in the Garden” (prose)

Nan’s house had been quiet for a year. Today the family came to pack it up, and Zara’s job was the garden.

The grass had grown high over the path, and the gate sang its rusty note when she pushed it open. She pulled weeds until her fingers were brown. Then something in the soil caught the light: a small brass key, green at its edges, cold in her hand. She knew it at once. It was the key to the shed under the fig tree — the shed Nan had always kept locked.

The key turned with a click. Inside, the shed smelled of earth and old rope. On the shelf sat a tin box, and in the tin box lay a stack of letters tied in blue ribbon. On top of the stack was a photo: a girl about Zara's age, standing on this very path, holding a key and smiling.

Zara carried the box out into the sun. She did not open the letters yet. Some doors, Nan used to say, open best slowly.

Text C as film (the storyboard)

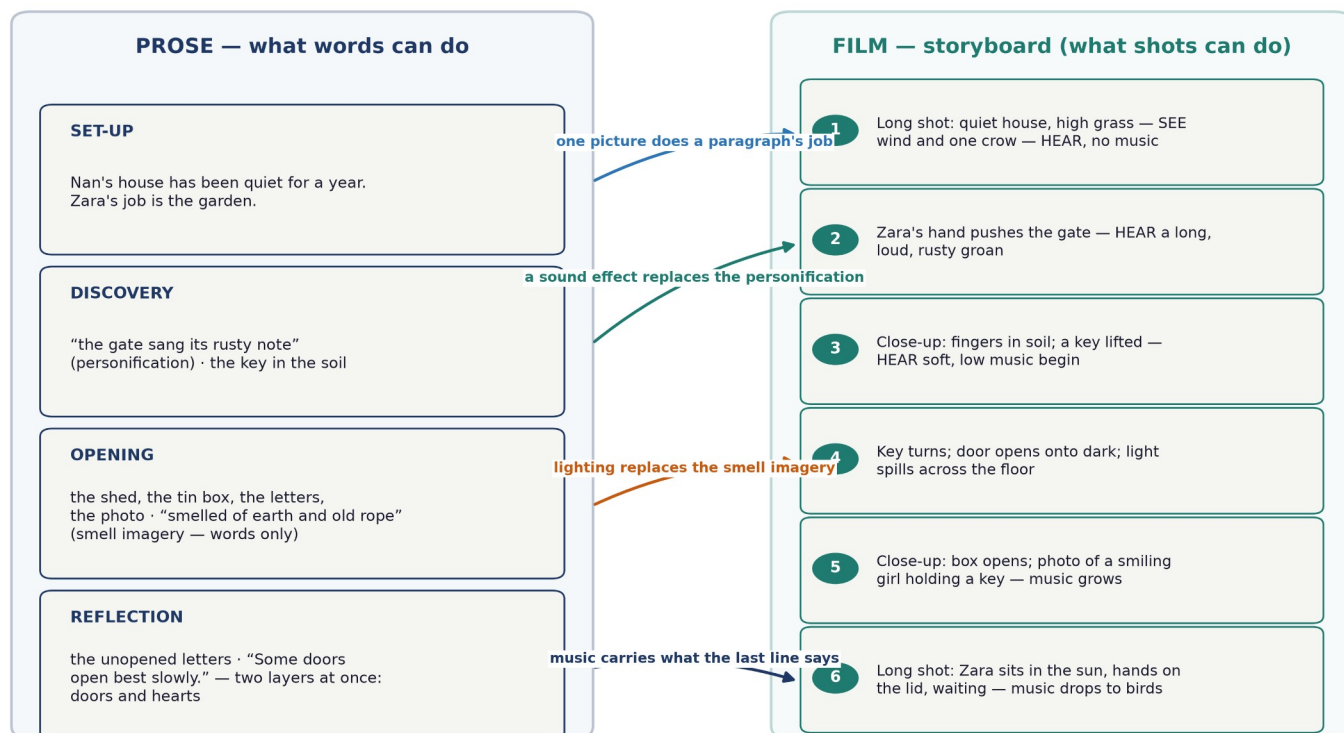
Shot	What we see	What we hear
1	Long shot: the quiet house, the high grass over the path.	Wind. One crow. No music yet.
2	Zara's hand pushes the gate open.	The rusty gate — a long, loud groan.
3	Close-up: fingers working in the soil. Something catches the light. A small brass key is lifted up.	Music begins: soft, low, slow.
4	The key turns in the shed door. The door opens onto dark; light spills across the floor.	The click. Zara's breath.
5	Close-up: the tin box opens. Letters in blue ribbon. A photo: a girl Zara's age, holding a key, smiling.	The music grows fuller.
6	Long shot: Zara carries the box out into the sun. She sits and puts her hands on the lid. She waits.	Music drops away. Only birds.

Reading it closely

Figure 8 sets the two versions side by side and names what each form uses.

One scene, two forms — “The Key in the Garden” as prose and as film

Arrows name what each form uses where the other cannot.



Both versions keep the same text structure — set-up, discovery, opening, reflection. The shape holds; the tools change.

Film language: a long shot stands far back to show the scene; a close-up moves in close to say this matters now; music and sound effects are the film's sound layer.

Split diagram: on the left the prose scene, on the right the six storyboard shots, with arrows naming the text structure parts and matching each prose device to its film feature

Figure 8 — One scene, two forms, named part by part: structure, devices and features.

Text structure. Both versions keep the same four-part shape: **set-up** (the empty house), **discovery** (the key), **opening** (the shed, the box, the photo) and **reflection** (the unopened letters). The film shortens the set-up: shots 1 and 2 do in seconds what the prose does in a whole paragraph, because a picture hands over the scene at once.

Literary devices and language features. The prose uses devices only words can use: the **personification** *the gate sang its rusty note*, the smell imagery *earth and old rope*, and the quiet wisdom of the closing line — *Some doors open best slowly* — which works on two layers at once (a real door; a heart that is not ready yet). The film cannot do smell, and it cannot speak the closing line without a voice-over, so it swaps tools: a **sound effect** replaces the gate's song, **lighting** replaces the dark of the shed, a **close-up** on the photo tells us this is the moment, and the **music** — starting low, growing, then dropping away — carries the feeling the prose carried with its last sentence.

Sharing opinions: aesthetic and social value. Sample positions:

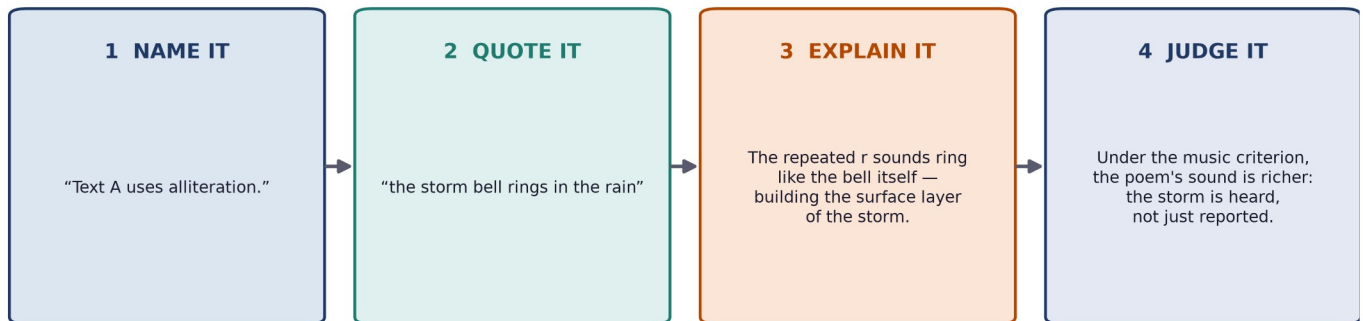
- *The prose holds greater aesthetic value.* Its last line is the best moment of either version: it says doors, and it means hearts, and it lets Nan speak one more time. No shot in the storyboard equals that layering.
- *The film holds greater aesthetic value — and more social value.* Shot 5's close-up of the smiling girl with the key lets a whole audience see the past meet the present in one image, and the shared music means a room full of people feel the moment together. That is social value: the story becomes a shared experience of remembering someone, and of not rushing grief.

Both positions are defensible. A strong comparison does not just pick a winner; it says what each form can do that the other cannot.

Your response frame

Use these four moves whenever you explain a device or judge a text's aesthetic value. Figure 9 shows the frame with a worked example.

The response frame for device questions — four moves



Moves 1–3 explain a device. Move 4 turns the explanation into a judgement of aesthetic value — name the criterion you are judging against.

Use the frame in writing, in discussion, and when reading aloud.

Four-step response frame, Name it, Quote it, Explain it, Judge it, with a worked example about the alliteration in The Storm Bell

Figure 9 — Name it, Quote it, Explain it, Judge it. The four moves of a strong response about literary devices.

1. **Name it** — identify the device. *Text A uses alliteration.*
2. **Quote it** — give the exact words. *"The storm bell rings in the rain."*
3. **Explain it** — say what layer it builds and how. *The repeated r sounds ring like the bell itself, building the surface layer of the storm.*
4. **Judge it** — say what it adds to the text's aesthetic value, against a criterion. *Under the music criterion, this line makes the poem's sound richer: the storm is heard, not just reported.*

Practice

Part 1 — Reading and viewing

- Q1.** Define, in your own words: *literary device, layer of meaning, aesthetic qualities, metalanguage, end rhyme, internal rhyme, metre, alliteration, stanza.*
- Q2.** In Text A ("The Storm Bell"): (a) list two pairs of end rhyme; (b) find the example of internal rhyme; (c) find two examples of alliteration; (d) name the line that is almost repeated in stanza 3.
- Q3.** Scan this line from Text A by marking its strong beats, as Figure 4 does: "*but the light stands fast on the black rock's edge*". How many strong beats does it carry?
- Q4.** What is the surface meaning of Text A? What is one deeper meaning? Give one piece of evidence for each.
- Q5.** In Text B ("The Boots by the Door"): identify the simile and the metaphor, and explain what each one builds.
- Q6.** Explain the repetition of *half* in stanza 3 of Text B. What does the repetition add to the deeper layer?
- Q7.** Choose any two criteria from Figure 6 and use them to judge the aesthetic value of Text A. For each criterion, give one piece of evidence from the poem.
- Q8.** Which poem — Text A or Text B — do you judge to have greater aesthetic value? There is no single right answer. State your criteria, quote your evidence, and explain the link between them.

Part 2 — Writing

Q9. Write one paragraph (5–7 sentences) explaining how one device in Text B creates a layer of meaning. Use the four-move frame from Figure 9, and include a quote.

Q10. Write your own poem of 4–8 lines. It must include: one pair of end rhymes, one example of alliteration, and one image. Under your poem, write two sentences: one stating the surface layer, and one stating the deeper layer your poem works on.

Q11. Turn the final paragraph of Text C (from “*Zara carried the box...*”) into a storyboard of 3–4 shots: for each shot, say what we see and what we hear. Then write one sentence naming one thing film does better than prose in this moment, and one sentence naming one thing prose does better.

Part 3 — Speaking and listening

Q12. In pairs, read Text A aloud twice: once for the story, once for the sound. Then mark the strong beats together and read it a third time, landing on the beats you marked. Compare: did you both mark the same beats? Discuss one place where you differed, and listen again to decide whose reading the line supports.

Q13. Small group discussion: “*Which matters more in a poem — how it sounds, or what it means?*” Everyone states a position with one piece of evidence from Text A or Text B. Then build on — or respectfully challenge — one classmate’s point by testing the link between their evidence and their claim.

Q14. Class share: volunteers read their Q10 poems aloud. After each poem, the class names one device it can hear and one deeper layer it can find. The poet then says whether the class found the layer they intended — and if they did not, what word or device missed its mark.

Answers and sample responses

Q1. A *literary device* is a deliberate technique a writer uses to create meaning or effect. A *layer of meaning* is one of the meanings a text carries at the same time — the surface layer the words say, and the deeper layer they build. *Aesthetic qualities* are the beauty, music, pictures, feeling and shape a text's craft gives it. *Metalinguage* is language used to talk about language. *End rhyme* is rhyme at the ends of lines. *Internal rhyme* is rhyme inside a line. *Metre* is the pattern of strong and weak syllables in a line — its beat. *Alliteration* is the repetition of the same starting sound in words close together. A *stanza* is a group of lines in a poem, like a paragraph.

Q2. (a) *rain / again, show / glow, name / same* — any two. (b) *The gales will wail and the sails will fail* (also *sails / fail*). (c) *rings ... rain; ships sail; day grows dark; will wail* — any two. (d) *but the light stands fast on the black rock's edge*, which returns in stanza 3 as *but the light still burns on the black rock's edge*.

Q3. but the **LIGHT** stands **FAST** on the **BLACK** rock's **EDGE** — four strong beats, matching line 1 and line 3 of stanza 1.

Q4. Surface: a storm at sea, a light on a black rock, and ships brought safely through the night. Deeper: some people keep others safe without ever being thanked or known — evidence: *and they never know his name*. A second possible deeper layer: steady, quiet work goes on whether anyone sees it — evidence: the repeated *black rock's edge* line, and *it watches the sea the same*.

Q5. Simile: the boots are *like a pair of tired dogs that have run all day and quit* — it builds the boots as worn-out and alive, standing in for the tired brother himself. Metaphor: *the mud has dried to little maps* — it builds the mud as a record of everywhere the brother walked, so the boots hold his journeys.

Q6. *Half* repeats twice in two lines: *the hall is half as loud, the hooks hold half the coats*. The repetition measures the brother's absence without ever saying *he is gone*; the house itself is counted as half-empty, which puts the missing person into every room. It builds the deeper layer of loss by counting, not by saying.

Q7. Sample: Under **music**, Text A scores highly: the four-beat lines and the end rhymes (*rain / again*) reward the ear on every read-aloud. Under **craft**, the poem is carefully made: the rock-edge line returns in stanza 3 with one word changed (*stands fast* becomes *still burns*), showing the work going on and on. (Any criterion from Figure 6 can earn full marks with real evidence.)

Q8. Sample (choosing Text B): I judge Text B higher in aesthetic value. Under the **depth** criterion, *the hall is half as loud* carries a whole absence in five words, and the last line — *like the boots will fill again* — puts hope under the surface layer. Under the **vividness** criterion, the mud dried *to little maps* is a picture I can see and touch. (A choice of Text A earns full marks with the same structure: criteria named, evidence quoted, link explained.)

Q9. Sample: Text B uses a metaphor to build its deeper layer. The poet writes that "*the mud has dried to little maps*" of the creek, the paddock and the hill. On the surface, this is just dried mud on old boots. But the metaphor turns the mud into a map, so the boots become a record of everywhere the brother went before he left. This builds the deeper layer of missing someone: the boots are not empty objects but the shape of the brother's days. Under the depth criterion, this choice gives the poem most of its feeling.

Q10. Sample:

The letter sits on the kitchen bench, unopened, white as the wall. It hums with the news it has carried here like a bee caught in the hall.

I walk past it the whole long day and I do not touch the seal, because some news you hold at arm's length until your hands can feel.

Surface layer: an unopened letter on the bench. Deeper layer: fear of news, and choosing to wait until you are strong enough to meet it. (Any poem earns full marks if it has the three required devices and the two stated layers.)

Q11. Sample storyboard: Shot 1 — long shot: Zara carrying the tin box out of the dark shed into the sun; we hear birds, no music. Shot 2 — close-up: she sits and puts her hands flat on the lid; we hear only her breath. Shot 3 — close-up: her fingers rest on the blue ribbon, still; then she folds her hands again and waits. Film does the waiting better here: the still picture lets an audience sit inside the pause. Prose does the last line better: *Some doors open best slowly* lets Nan's voice speak once more, on two layers at once, and no shot can say that without speaking it.

Q12. There is no single correct marking, but strong pairs land on *GALES / WAIL / SAILS / FAIL* in line 1 and *LIGHT / FAST / BLACK / EDGE* in line 3. A common difference is line 2 (*when the STORM bell RINGS in the RAIN* — some pairs stress *BELL* as a fourth beat). Test it by reading it both ways aloud; the version that keeps the poem’s walking pace is the one the line supports.

Q13. Sample position (sound first): how a poem sounds matters more, because the sound is what carries the poem into memory; in Text A, the beat and the *rain / again* rhyme make the poem stay in your head before you have even worked out its deeper layer. Sample challenge: that evidence shows sound helps memory, but memory is not the same as meaning — Text B has almost no rhyme, and its *half / half* repetition still carries a whole absence, so meaning can do the work on its own. (Positions on either side earn full marks if reasoned this way.)

Q14. This is a spoken task. Success looks like: the class names a real device it can hear (rhyme, alliteration, an image) and offers a deeper layer that the words support, and the poet responds honestly about whether the intended layer landed — including what to fix if it missed.

Success checklist

You are ready to move on when you can:

- ☐ define *literary device*, *layer of meaning*, *aesthetic qualities* and *metalinguage*;
 - ☐ use the sound-and-rhythm metalanguage — *end rhyme*, *internal rhyme*, *metre*, *alliteration* — to explain a poem’s sound;
 - ☐ scan a line of poetry by marking its strong beats;
 - ☐ explain the surface and deeper layers of a poem, with evidence;
 - ☐ set criteria for aesthetic value and judge a text against them;
 - ☐ share an opinion about aesthetic value with criteria, evidence and reasoning — and respectfully challenge one by testing its reasoning;
 - ☐ compare a film adaptation with its source text using the language of text structure, literary devices and features of each form;
 - ☐ use the Name it → Quote it → Explain it → Judge it frame in a written, spoken and read-aloud response.
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§2A exclusion note (recorded, not taught)

One elaboration of this section’s content description — .E02, viewing or reading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander films, plays and poetry, and explaining the layers of meaning created by imagery — is **excluded** from this book, in line with the front-of-book note and TOC §2A: accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than to cover the entire curriculum inaccurately. Section 3E is delivered in full through the remaining elaborations — .E01, .E03 and .E04 — using original Australian and world texts in neutral contexts. The content description itself is fully taught: students still identify and explain how literary devices create layers of meaning and aesthetic qualities in literary texts, including poetry. The exclusion is reported by coverage audits as **ACCEPTED**, never as a gap.

Creating texts that experiment with literary language features and devices

Chapter 3 · Literature · Section 3F Owns: VC2E7LE06 (Creating literature) **Draws on:** VC2E7LE06.E01, VC2E7LE06.E02, VC2E7LE06.E03, VC2E7LE06.E04, VC2E7LE06.E05, VC2E7LE06.E06 **Assumes from Level 6:** VC2E6LE05 · **Hands forward to Level 8:** VC2E8LE06

About this section

In every other section of this chapter you have read literary texts and thought about how they work. This section turns the table around: **you** become the writer. You will take the moves you have met in the texts you have read — the way a writer builds a character, bends time, chooses a voice, shapes a sentence — and try them out in texts of your own.

That is what the word **experiment** means here. A writer's experiment is not a lab test with one right result. It is a try-out: you borrow a move from a text you know, use it in your own writing, and then look honestly at what happened. Some experiments will work. Some will go wrong. Both kinds teach you something, as long as you stop and ask *why*. In this section your work is judged on two things: how clearly you **chose** your moves, and how honestly you can say what they did. There is no single right text to reach.

Every text you will read in this section was written for this book. Use them as models. But the same moves work with any text your class has studied — and the more you have read, the more moves you have to try.

The curriculum for this section

Content description VC2E7LE06 — Students learn to: create texts that experiment with literary language features and devices encountered in texts.

This may involve students:

- **.E01** using aspects of texts in imaginative recreations such as re-situating a character from a text into a new situation
- **.E02** creating a prequel using an imagined series of life events of a character, presented as a series of flashbacks in a scripted monologue
- **.E03** creating chapters for an autobiography, short story or diary
- **.E04** experimenting with different narrative structures such as the epistolary form, flashback and multiple narrators
- **.E05** experimenting with imagery, sentence variation, metaphor and word choice when creating a literary text
- **.E06** transforming familiar print narratives into short video or film narratives, drawing on knowledge of the type of text and possible adaptations to setting for a new mode

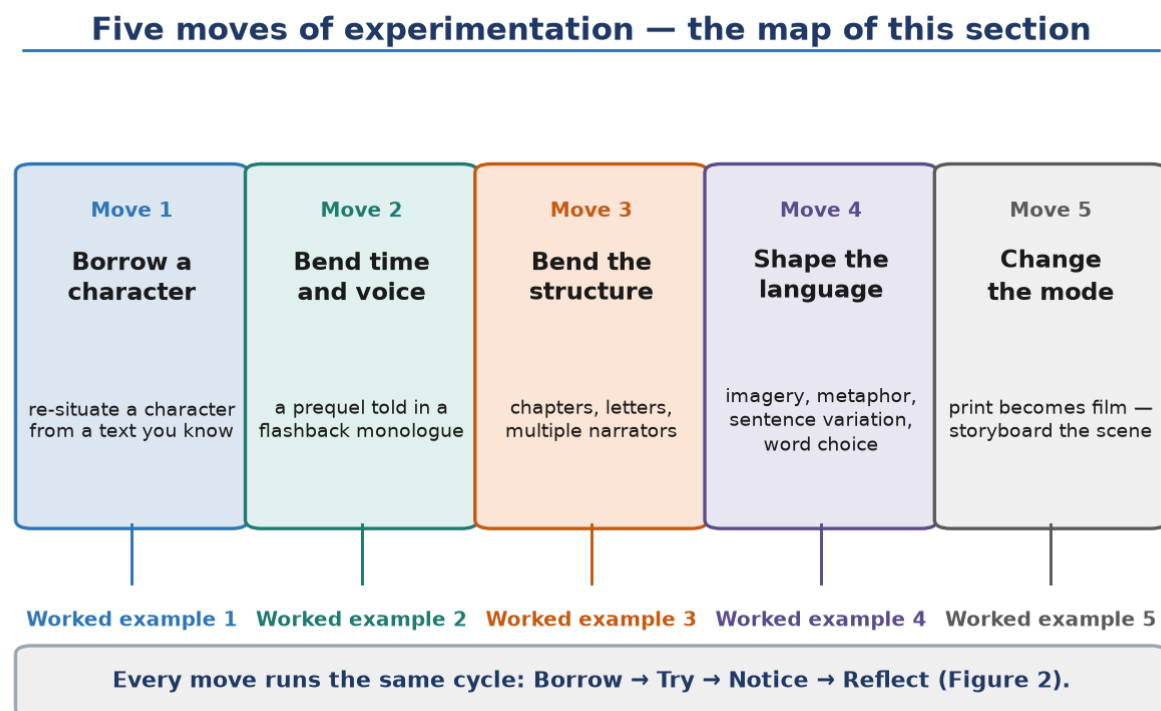
The six points above are **examples**, not a checklist. They are six of the many ways a writer can experiment. You meet all six in this section, but you may also try moves of your own.

Theory

What the key words mean

Literary language features and devices. A *device* in writing is a tool a writer chooses on purpose — the way a carpenter chooses a chisel, not the way someone picks up whatever is closest. *Literary language features and devices* are the crafted choices in a text: the words the writer picked, the pictures those words build in the mind, the length and shape of the sentences, the order the events arrive in, and the voice that tells them. You have already met many of these in this book: metaphor, simile, personification, imagery, and the ways a narrator shapes what we know. In this section you do not analyse them — you **use** them.

Narrative structure. *Narrative* means story, and *structure* means the way its parts are put together. A story's **narrative structure** is the order in which it lets things happen: straight along time's line, backwards and forwards through memory, or through letters and messages instead of scenes. Figure 1 shows the five moves this section practises, and where each one appears.



A map of five writer moves — borrow a character, bend time and voice, bend the structure, shape the language, change the mode — each linked to the part of this section where it is taught

Figure 1 — Five moves of experimentation. This section is a tour of all five.

Flashback. A moment in a story that jumps back to an earlier time, then returns to the present. Film often blurs the picture or changes the light to show a flashback; print may simply begin a new scene in the past.

Prequel. A new text that tells what happened **before** the story you already know. If a novel ends with a character as an old captain, a prequel might tell the day she first went to sea.

Monologue. A long speech by one voice. A **scripted monologue** is written for performance: it carries the speaker's words plus short instructions (called *stage directions*) for movement, pauses and light.

Epistolary form. A story told through documents — letters, diary entries, postcards, text messages, emails — instead of ordinary scenes. The word is pronounced *ee-PIS-to-lair-ee* and comes from the old word for a letter.

Narrator. The voice that tells a story. A first-person narrator says *I*; a third-person narrator says *he* and *she*. Two different narrators can tell the same event two different ways, and both can sound true.

Imagery. Language that builds pictures in the mind by speaking to the senses — sight, sound, smell, taste, touch.

Metaphor. Saying one thing *is* another thing, to give it that other thing's qualities: *the playground was a zoo*. A **simile** does the same job with *like* or *as*.

Sentence variation. Changing the length and shape of your sentences on purpose — a long, flowing sentence, then a short one. The change itself is part of the meaning.

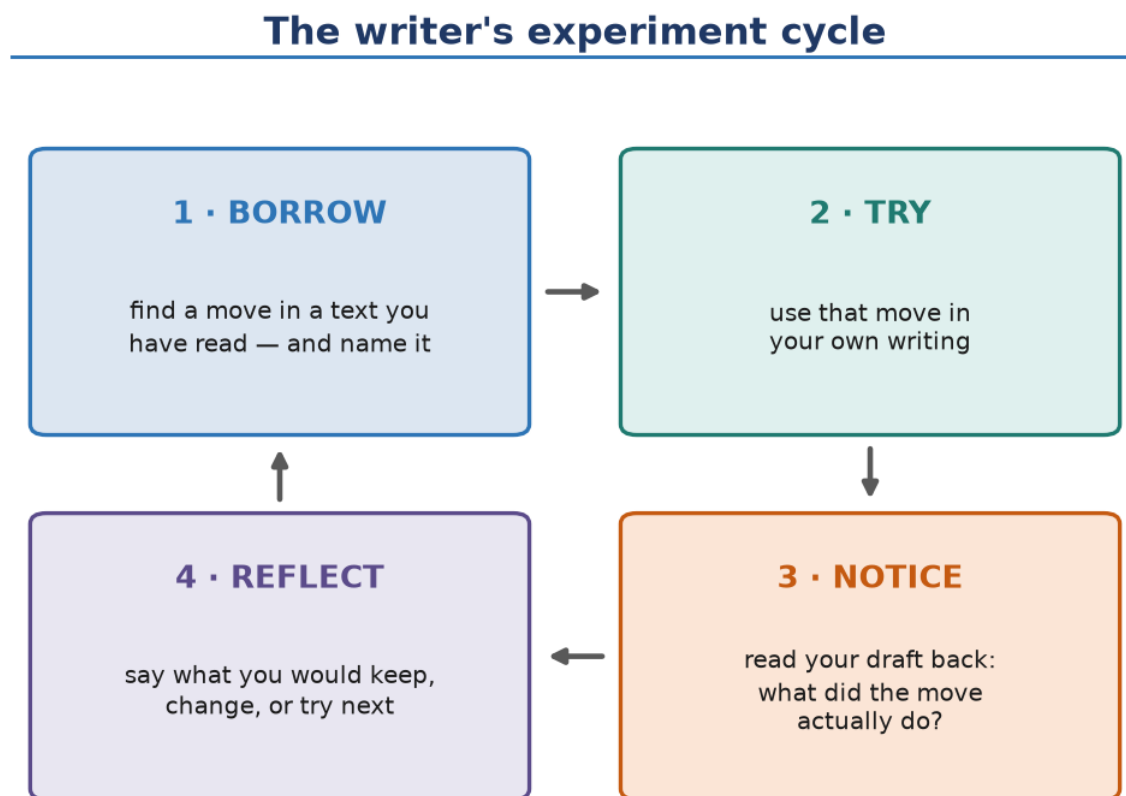
Word choice. Picking one word over another because of what it carries: *said* tells, but *murmured*, *snapped* and *gushed* each tell **and** show.

Mode. The channel a text travels through — written, spoken, visual, or a mix. Print is one mode; film is another. To **transform** a text is to move its story from one mode to another, and something must always change on the way, because each mode gives the writer different tools.

Adaptation. The new version of a text made for a different form or mode, and the choices that made it. When print becomes film, thoughts cannot be filmed directly, so the writer of the film must find actions, faces and sounds that carry them instead.

The writer's experiment cycle

Every task in this section follows the same four steps, shown in Figure 2.



The learning lives in steps 3 and 4.

A four-step cycle: Borrow — find a move in a text you have read; Try — use it in your own writing; Notice — read back and ask what the move did; Reflect — name what you would keep, change or try next

Figure 2 — Borrow, Try, Notice, Reflect. The four steps of every writing experiment.

1. **Borrow** — find a move in a text you have read and name it.
2. **Try** — use that move in your own writing.
3. **Notice** — read your draft back and ask what the move actually did.
4. **Reflect** — say what you would keep, what you would change, and what you would try next.

The **Notice** and **Reflect** steps are where the learning lives. A writer who can say “*I used short sentences here because I wanted the reader’s heart to beat faster*” understands their craft. A writer who cannot say what they did, or why, is still guessing. Keep a few notes as you draft. They will matter more than you think.

Worked example 1 — borrowing a character into a new situation (.E01)

One of the oldest moves in writing is to take a character you know from a text and place them somewhere new. The trick is to keep the **core** of the character — the traits that make them *them* — while changing the situation around them. If the character stays the same but the world changes, you get a new story for free.

Read the short text below, written for this book.

Text A — The Bee Hotel

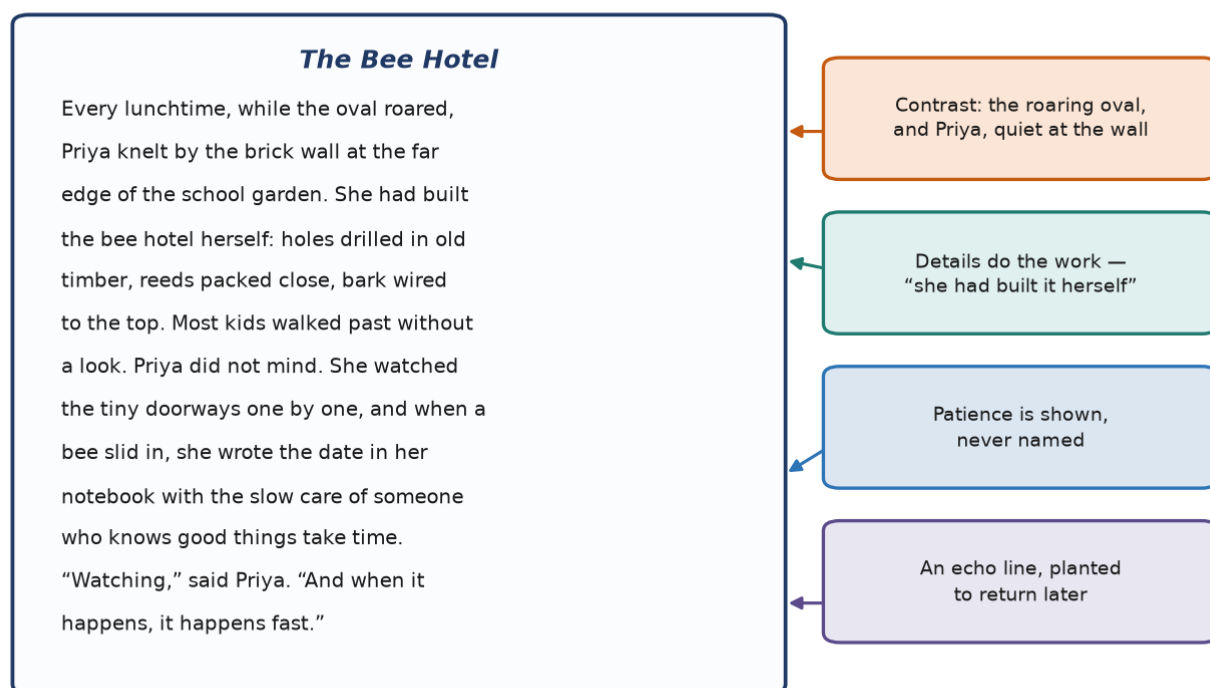
Every lunchtime, while the oval roared, Priya knelt by the brick wall at the far edge of the school garden. She had built the bee hotel herself: holes drilled in a block of old timber, reeds packed close, bark wired to the top. Most kids walked past without a look. Priya did not mind. She watched the tiny doorways one by one, and when a bee at last slid into a hole, she wrote the date in her notebook with the slow care of someone who knows good things take time.

“Nothing ever happens over there,” said Dee, bouncing her basketball. “You’re just sitting.”

“Watching,” said Priya. “And when it happens, it happens fast.”

Notice what the writer built Priya from. Figure 3 marks up the text.

Text A marked up — how Priya is built from details



The text of The Bee Hotel reproduced with labels pointing to the details that build Priya’s character: the notebook, the oval roaring while she kneels quietly, and her final line about things happening fast

Figure 3 — Text A marked up. Priya is built from details, not from labels.

The text never calls Priya *patient*. It shows patience through what she does: the drilling, the packing, the watching, the careful notebook. That is the first rule of borrowing a character — you borrow the **way they are shown**, not just their name.

Now watch the move. Text B takes Priya out of the school garden and puts her somewhere new. Her family has moved to a tall block of flats in the middle of the city.

Text B — Nine Storeys Up *(Priya, re-situated)*

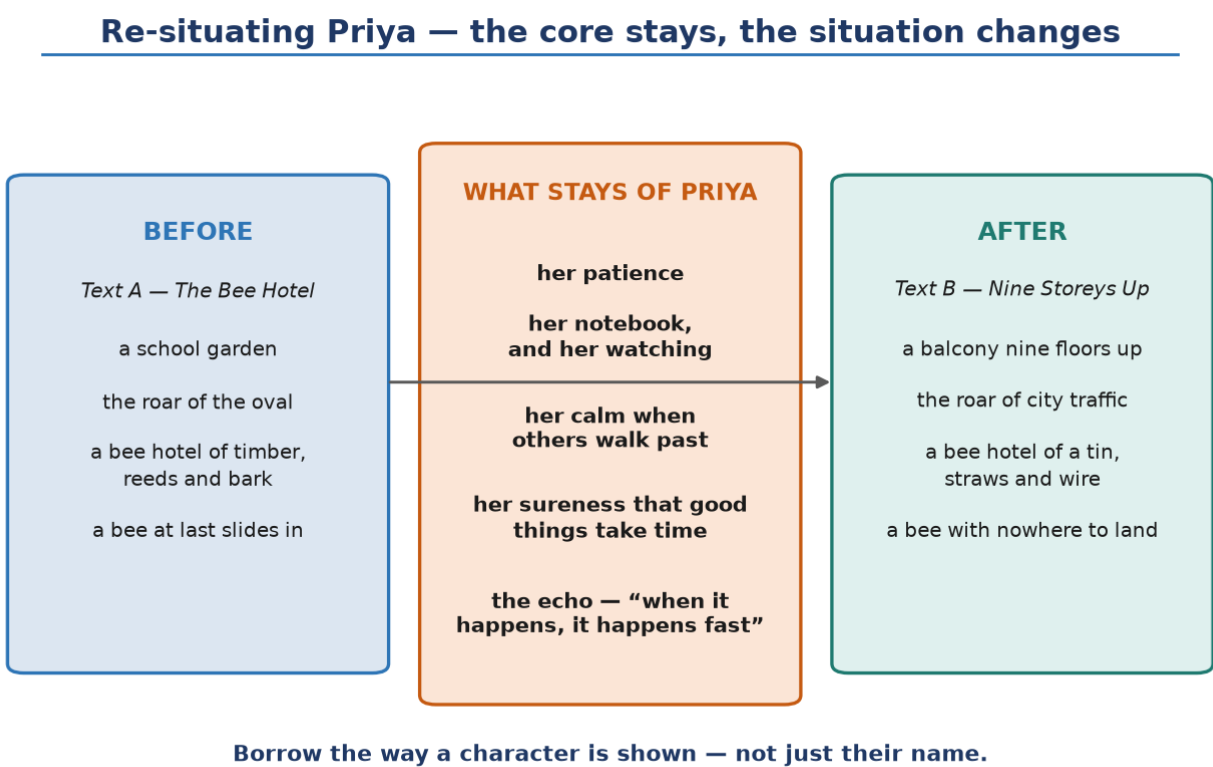
There was no garden nine storeys up. There was a balcony the size of a desk, and below it a street where the traffic never stopped roaring. Priya’s mother said the new school was good. Priya’s mother said a lot of things were good.

On the third afternoon, Priya noticed a bee bumping against the window glass, trying to reach the sky it could see but not touch. It had come up nine floors looking for something to land on, and there was nothing here but glass.

That night she took an old tin, some paper straws from the kitchen drawer, and the wire left over from picture hanging. It took her four quiet evenings. When she hung the little hotel on the balcony rail, the street kept roaring and nobody looked up. Priya did not mind. She got out her notebook.

“It happens fast,” she told the tin, “when it happens.”

Figure 4 shows what the writer kept and what the writer changed.



A two-column diagram. Left: the original situation — a school garden, an oval, a timber bee hotel. Right: the new situation — a balcony nine floors up, traffic below, a tin-and-straw bee hotel. In the middle: what stayed — Priya’s patience, her notebook, her watch-and-wait way, and the echo of her line about things happening fast

Figure 4 — The same character, a new world. The core stays; the situation changes.

Read it as a writer. Text B keeps Priya’s core: she is still the patient watcher, still with her notebook, still sure that good things take time. It changes the situation: the garden becomes a balcony, the timber hotel becomes a tin one, the problem becomes a bee with nothing to land on in a city of glass. And it borrows one small thing from Text A — the line about things happening fast — and lets it return. An **echo** is a word, image or line from an earlier text that comes back in a new one, and it is one of the simplest ways to make a new text feel built, not random.

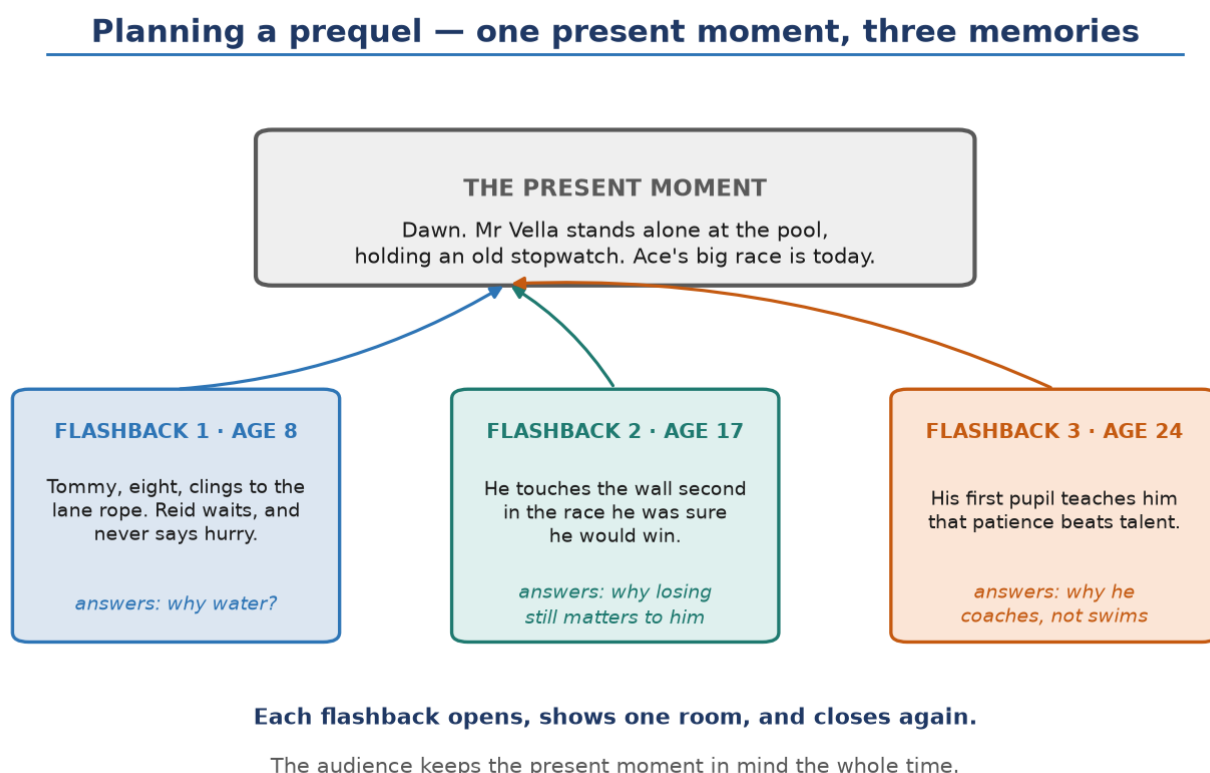
This move works with any character from any text your class has read. The questions are always the same: *What is this character's core? What is the most different place or situation I can put it into? What will stay true — and what will that truth cost them now?*

Worked example 2 — a prequel in flashbacks (.E02)

A second move is to take a character and ask: *how did they get here?* The answer is a **prequel** — the story before the story. One strong shape for a prequel is a **scripted monologue**: one voice, speaking to an audience, and each memory arriving as a **flashback**.

Imagine your class has read a story called *The Last Lap*, in which a swimmer named Ace wins the district race, guided by his quiet old coach, Mr Vella. The novel tells us almost nothing about Mr Vella's own past. That gap is a writer's gift. A prequel can fill it.

Figure 5 shows the plan before the writing.



A planning diagram. At the top, the present moment: Mr Vella alone at the pool at dawn, holding an old stopwatch. Below it, three flashback cards — age eight, clinging to the lane rope; age seventeen, touching second in the race he was sure he would win; age twenty-four, the first boy he ever coached, who taught him patience. Arrows lead from each memory back to the present

Figure 5 — Planning a prequel. One present moment; three memories that explain it.

The plan holds one **present moment** (Mr Vella alone at the pool at dawn, before Ace's big race) and three life events. Each event answers one question about him: *Why water? Why losing matters to him. Why he coaches instead of swims.* Now the writing. Text C is the opening of that monologue. Read it noticing how the script tells a reader — or an actor — when time has moved.

Text C — The Water Remembers (a scripted monologue)

MR VELLA stands at the edge of the pool. Dawn light. The water is perfectly still. He holds an old stopwatch in one hand.

MR VELLA: Forty years on these tiles. You would think the cold would give up finding me. *(He looks at the stopwatch.)* It never does.

(LIGHT RISES at the far end of the pool. A small BOY, eight years old, clings to the lane rope.)

YOUNG TOMMY: I'm not scared. I'm just thinking.

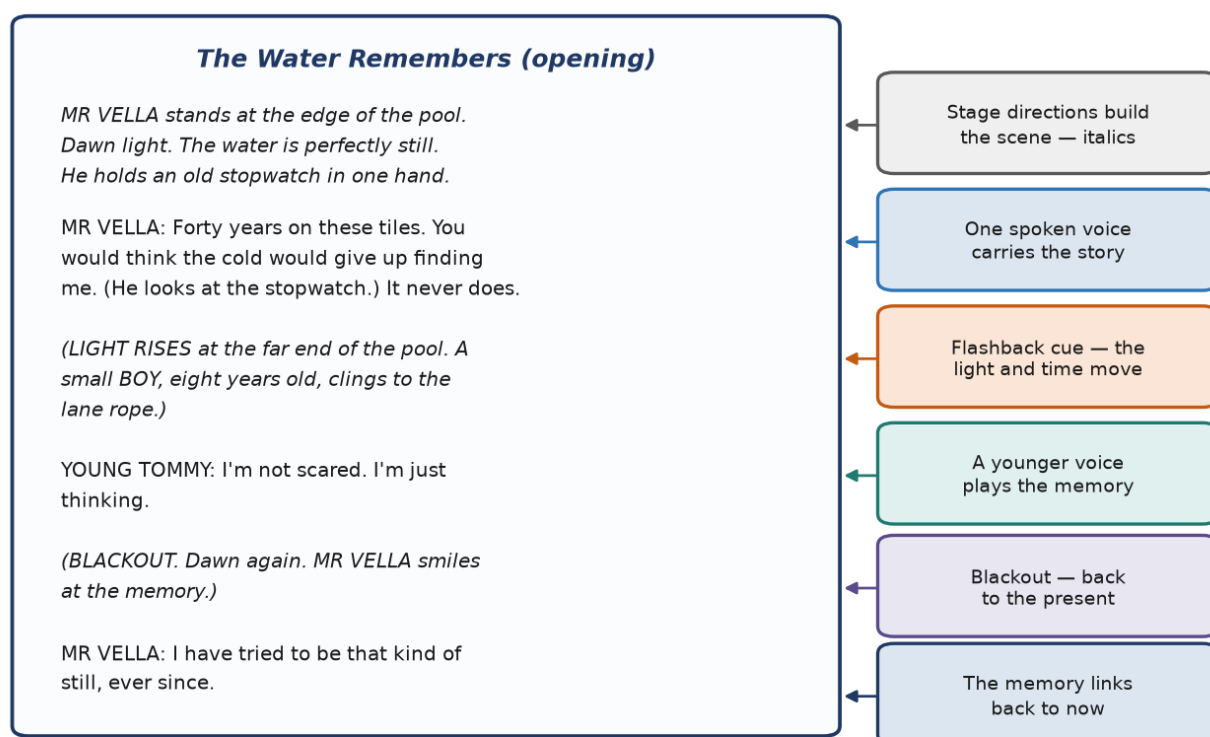
COACH REID *(voice only):* Water doesn't wait for thinkers, Tommy. Jump when you're ready.

(BLACKOUT. Dawn again. MR VELLA smiles at the memory.)

MR VELLA: I stood there four more minutes that day. I counted. Reid never once told me to hurry. *(Beat.)* I have tried to be that kind of still, ever since.

Figure 6 marks the working parts of the page.

Inside a scripted monologue — Text C marked up



A page of the monologue script with labels: stage directions in italics build the scene; the spoken voice carries the story; flashback cues change the light and time; and a memory links back to the present with the line about being that kind of still

Figure 6 — Inside a scripted monologue: directions on the page, a voice in the air, and memory doing the storytelling.

The script needs no narrator to say “this happened long ago”. The light rising, the name change from MR VELLA to YOUNG TOMMY, the blackout — those are the flashback’s signals. And notice how each memory is short. A flashback works like a door that opens, shows one room, and closes again. The audience keeps the present moment in mind the whole time, because the speaker keeps coming back to it.

To build your own: choose a character from a text your class has read, find the gap in their past, plan three life events that explain them, and give each event one scene that opens and closes.

Worked example 3 — chapters, diaries and letters (.E03, .E04)

The third move is about containers: the shapes a whole text can take.

Chapters. Long texts break into parts. A chapter in a novel is usually one scene or one step of the story; a chapter in an **autobiography** — the story of a person’s life, told by that person — is usually one period of that life; an entry in a **diary** is one day, or one feeling, caught while it is still fresh. The shape of the container changes what the writing does. Read these two diary chapters and notice how much the voice can grow between them.

Text D — The Year of the Tent (*two chapters from a diary*)

Chapter 3 — 12 March

Dad says the camping trip is “a chance to bond”. He says it like it’s a thing you can put in the car with the tent. I packed headphones. If we’re going to stand around a fire talking about “memories”, I plan to be listening to my own.

Chapter 9 — 19 March

So the tent fell down at 2 a.m. in the rain, and Dad laughed so hard he snorted, and I laughed too, and we had cold baked beans standing up under a tree because the stove was underwater. I didn’t use the headphones once. I don’t really know how to say what changed. It’s like the trip took one of my walls down and left it on the ground, and neither of us picked it up. I’m glad I didn’t pack the memories. They packed themselves.

The second chapter answers the first without arguing with it. That is what chapters are for: they let a writer show **change over time**, one step at a stretch.

The epistolary form. Now a stranger container: a whole story told in documents. Text E tells one story in three postcards. Nothing else — no scenes, no narrator. Read it and notice the work the **gaps** do.

Text E — Postcards from the Snow

Card 1 — Tuesday, Mount Buller

Dear Mum,

Made it. Room smells like wet socks and everyone is too excited to sleep. Big day tomorrow. Don’t worry, I’m wearing the warm jumper. THE warm jumper. You were right.

— Ruby

Card 2 — Thursday

Dear Mum,

So. Today happened. I’ll tell you about it when I get home. Short version: I fell, and someone helped, and I’m learning that the falling part wasn’t the hardest part. Save me some dinner for Saturday.

— Ruby

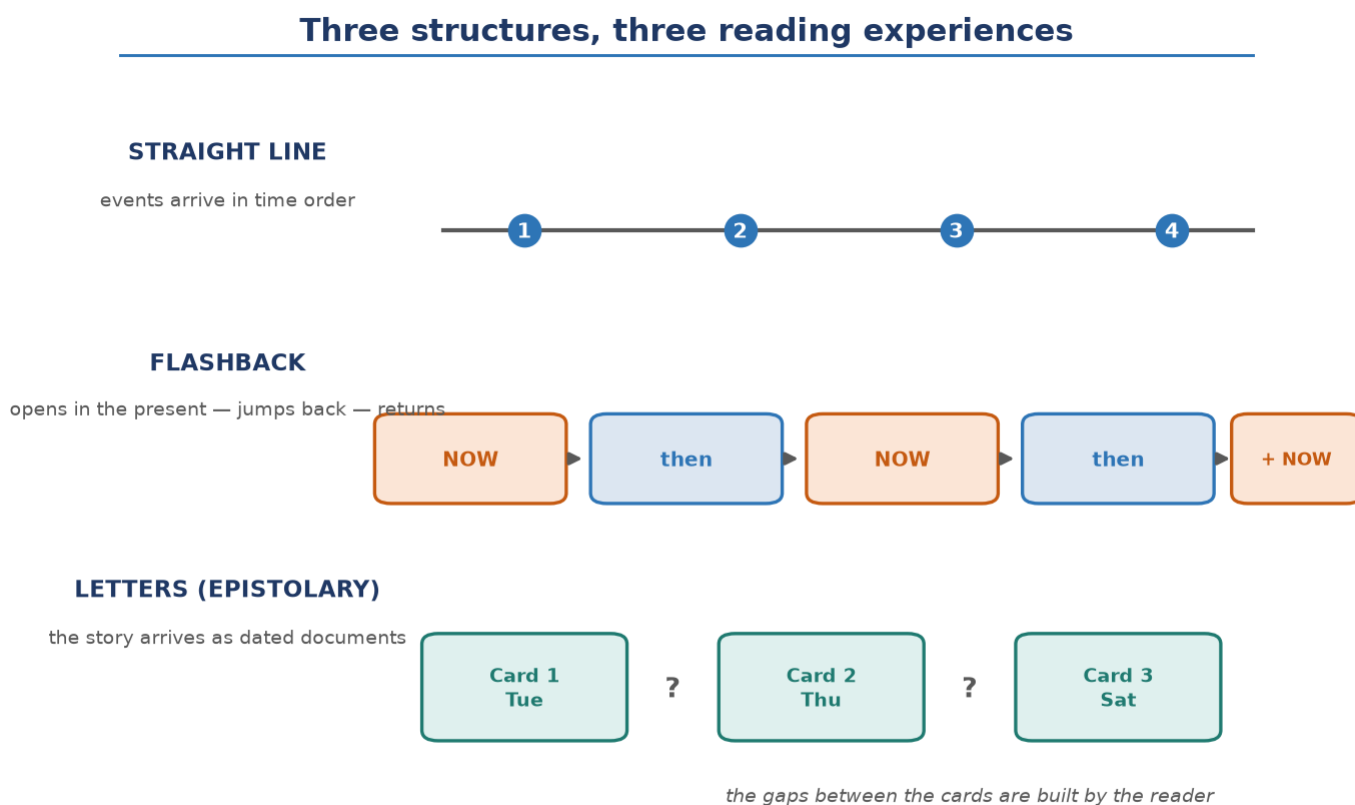
Card 3 — Saturday, the bus home

Dear Mum,

I can’t say it on a postcard. But when you meet the bus — can we walk home the long way? There’s something I want to tell you, and it needs the long way.

— R

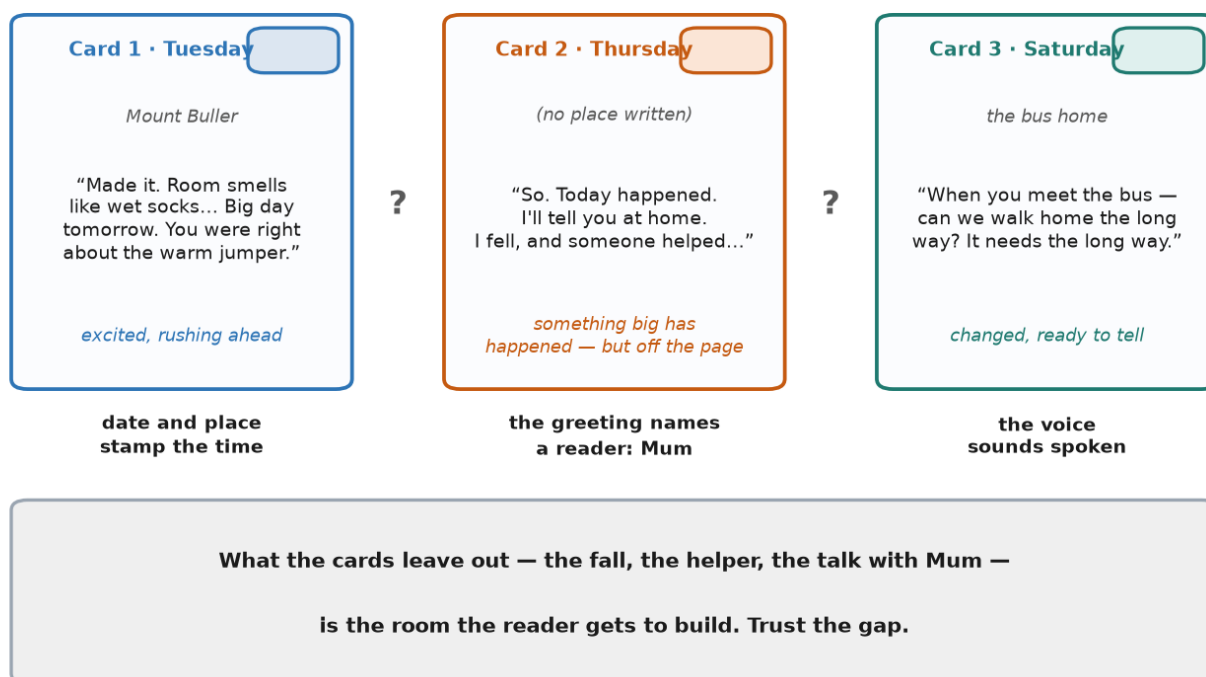
Figure 7 sets three story structures side by side.



Three timelines compared. The straight line: events in time order, 1-2-3-4. The flashback line: the story opens in the present, jumps back to earlier scenes, and returns. The letter line: the story arrives as dated documents, with blank spaces between them that the reader fills in

Figure 7 — Three structures, three reading experiences.

How the epistolary form works — the story lives in the gaps



The three postcards laid out with labels on their features: the date and place stamp the time; the greeting names a reader inside the story; the first-person voice sounds spoken; and the gap between cards leaves room for the reader to imagine what happened

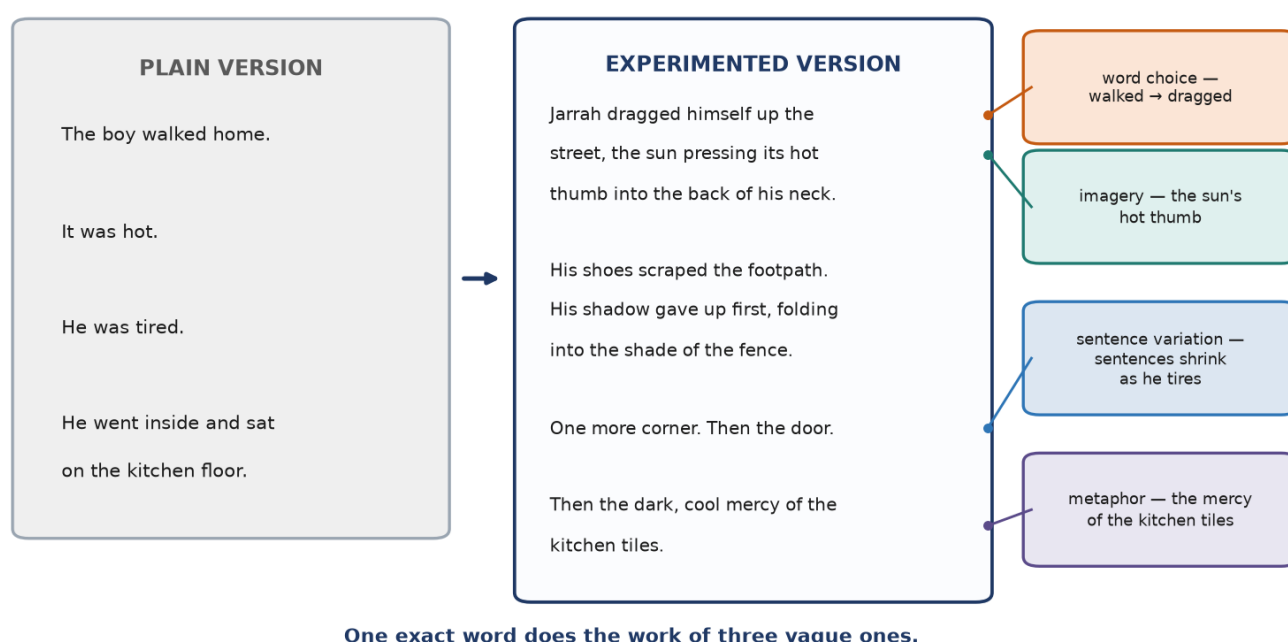
Figure 8 — How the epistolary form works: the story lives in the gaps between the cards.

A straight-line story gives the reader everything in order. A flashback story gives the present first and the past in pieces. An epistolary story gives only **documents** — and the reader must build the scenes between them. In Text E we never see Ruby fall, and we never meet the person who helped her. The writer trusts us to imagine both. That trust is the form’s power: what a letter leaves out can be as loud as what it says.

You can tell the same trick with **multiple narrators** — two voices taking turns, each sure of their own side of the story. Try both: write one event twice, once in each voice, and see what only the pair can show.

Worked example 4 — the language lab (.E05)

The fourth move is the smallest and the sharpest: changing the language itself. Figure 9 shows a plain passage and an experimented one, with every change named.



A two-column table. Left column: a plain passage about a boy walking home in the heat. Right column: the same passage rewritten, with labels marking each move — a sharper verb, sensory imagery, sentence variation, and a metaphor

Figure 9 — The language lab. Same moment, four moves.

Plain version

The boy walked home. It was hot. He was tired. He went inside and sat on the kitchen floor.

Experimented version

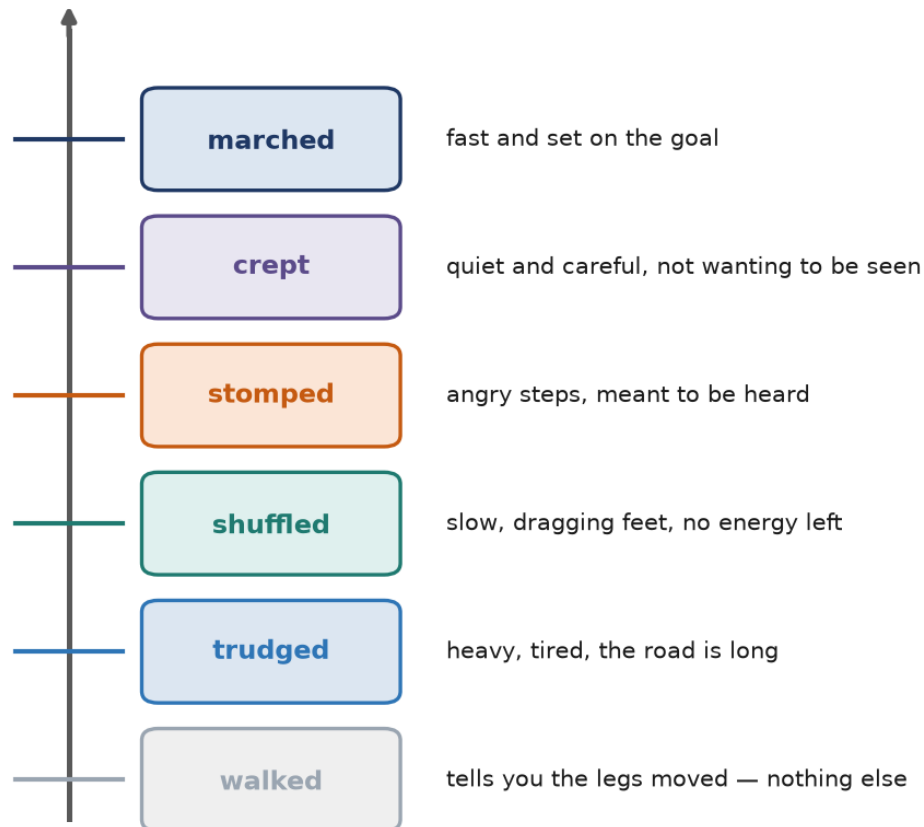
Jarrah dragged himself up the street, the sun pressing its hot thumb into the back of his neck. His shoes scraped the footpath. His shadow gave up first, folding into the shade of the fence. One more corner. Then the door. Then the dark, cool mercy of the kitchen tiles.

What changed, move by move:

- **Word choice** — *walked* became *dragged*; *hot* became *pressing its hot thumb*. One exact word does the work of three vague ones. Figure 10 shows a ladder of choices for a single plain verb.
- **Imagery** — the sun, the scraping shoes, the shade: the writing speaks to the senses, so the reader's body feels the heat, not just their mind.
- **Sentence variation** — a long opening sentence, then shorter and shorter ones: *One more corner. Then the door.* The shrinking sentence carries the tiredness.
- **Metaphor** — *the dark, cool mercy of the kitchen tiles*: the floor is not literally merciful, but calling it that hands the reader the boy's relief.

A word-choice ladder — every rung adds meaning

more precise



Pick the rung that carries your meaning — then the reader feels it too.

A ladder of word choices for the verb walked, from plain at the bottom to precise at the top: walked, then trudged, shuffled, tramped, stomped, crept, and marched, each labelled with the extra meaning it carries

Figure 10 — A word-choice ladder. Every rung adds meaning.

A warning from the lab: experiments can go too far. Stack ten metaphors in one sentence and the reader loses the path. The skill is choosing **one or two** sharp moves per moment and letting them land.

Worked example 5 — from the page to the screen (.E06)

The fifth move is the biggest: changing the **mode**. To transform a print story into a short film, a writer must learn what each mode gives — and what it refuses. Figure 11 sets the two sides out.

What each mode gives — print and film compared

PRINT GIVES	FILM GIVES
thoughts and feelings, directly — “she did not mind”	faces, places and action, shown for real
any setting a writer can imagine	sound, music and silence, all at once
a reader who builds the pictures inside their own head	but it cannot film a thought — and it can only shoot what a crew can reach

**The film maker's problem is the print writer's gift —
and the other way around.**

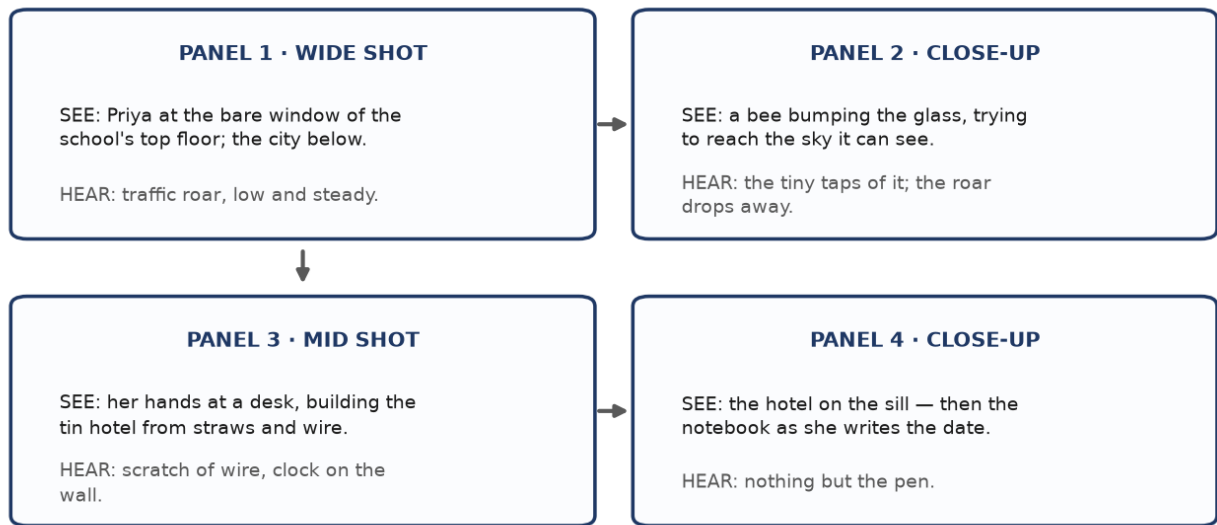
A two-column table comparing modes. Print gives thoughts and feelings directly, any setting the writer can imagine, and a reader who builds the pictures. Film gives faces, places, sound and music, but cannot film a thought directly and can only shoot what a crew can actually reach

Figure 11 — What each mode gives. The film maker's problem is the print writer's gift, and the other way around.

Watch the move on Text B (Nine Storeys Up, from Worked example 1). Suppose your class plans a 60-second film of that scene. Two decisions arrive at once:

- **Thoughts must become things we can see.** Print told us Priya's feelings directly; film must show them. The notebook becomes the answer: a close-up on her writing the date says everything the prose said in a paragraph.
- **The setting may need adapting to the new mode.** A real class cannot film nine storeys above a roaring city. So the writer adapts: the story moves to a school's top-floor window, and the “traffic roar” becomes recorded sound played under the scene. The heart of the story — a girl building a home for bees in a place with none — survives the move.

Figure 12 is the storyboard: the scene broken into shots, each with what we **see** and what we **hear**.



Setting adapted for the shoot: nine storeys of flats becomes the school's top-floor window.

A four-panel storyboard. Panel 1: wide shot of Priya at a bare high window, city sound below. Panel 2: close-up of a bee against the glass. Panel 3: her hands building the tin hotel at a desk, evening light. Panel 4: the hotel on the sill, and a close-up of the notebook as she writes the date

Figure 12 — Print to screen. Each panel is one shot; each shot is one choice.

A storyboard is a plan, not the film. But it forces the writer to ask the question print never asks: *how will the audience see this?* When you transform one of your own texts, start there — with the shot list, the sound, and the honest question of what your setting must become.

Putting it together

Every experiment in this section is one loop of Borrow → Try → Notice → Reflect (Figure 2). When you finish a piece, write a short reflection using the four questions in Figure 13. Your reflection is worth as much as the draft — often more, because it shows the writer thinking.

The reflection frame — four questions, answered honestly

1 What did I borrow — and from which text?

2 What did I try — which device, structure or mode?

3 What did I notice when I read it back?

4 What will I keep, change, or try next?

Your reflection is worth as much as the draft — it shows the writer thinking.

A reflection frame with four questions: What did I borrow, and from which text? What did I try — which device, structure or mode? What did I notice when I read it back? What will I keep, change or try next?

Figure 13 — The reflection frame. Four questions, answered honestly.

One last thing, and it matters. In this section there is no single right text. Your work is not judged on whether it matches someone else's idea of a good story. It is judged on how clearly you chose your moves and how honestly you can explain them. A strange experiment with a clear reason behind it beats a safe one with no reason at all.

Practice

Part 1 — Reading and viewing

Q1. In your own words, define: *flashback*, *prequel*, *scripted monologue*, *epistolary form*, *narrator*, *imagery*, *metaphor*, *sentence variation*, *word choice*, *mode*.

Q2. Read Text A (The Bee Hotel) again. List three things you learn about Priya that the text never states directly. For each one, quote the words that told you.

Q3. Look at Figure 4. In your book, make your own kept-and-changed list for Texts A and B: three things Text B keeps of Priya's core, and three things it changes about her situation.

Q4. In Text C (The Water Remembers), underline every signal that time has moved into the past. Then explain: how does the audience know the story has come back to the present again?

Q5. Read Text E (Postcards from the Snow). (a) Between which two cards does the big event happen? (b) List three things the writer leaves out and trusts the reader to build. (c) The signature changes from *Ruby* to *R*. What might that small change show?

Q6. Take the plain version in Worked example 4. Find and label, in the experimented version: one example of word choice, one of imagery, one of sentence variation, one of metaphor. For each, say what the move adds.

Q7. Look at Figures 11 and 12. (a) Give two things film can do that print cannot, and two things print can do that film cannot. (b) In the storyboard, which shot carries Priya’s feelings without words, and how?

Part 2 — Writing

Q8. (*Move 1 — re-situate a character.*) Choose a character from a text your class has read this year — or take Priya from Text A. Put them into a new situation as different as you can manage. Write 150–250 words. Keep two core traits, change the place and the problem, and borrow one echo from the original. Finish with the reflection frame (Figure 13).

Q9. (*Move 2 — a flashback prequel.*) Choose a character whose past is a gap in a text your class knows. Plan three life events, as in Figure 5, then write a scripted monologue of about one page: a present moment, three flashbacks that each open and close, stage directions, and a final line that links the past to the present.

Q10. (*Move 3 — chapters.*) Write two chapters for one of the following: a diary (two entries, days apart), the opening of an autobiography (two periods of a life), or a short story (two scenes that change something between them). Aim for the voice to grow between the chapters, the way Text D’s does.

Q11. (*Move 4 — structure.*) Write a short story of 200–350 words in **one** of these shapes: the epistolary form (letters, diary entries or messages), a flashback structure, or two narrators taking turns. Give your story the gap treatment: leave at least one thing out and let the reader build it.

Q12. (*Move 5 — the language lab.*) Take any passage of your own writing from Q8, Q10 or Q11 — four to six plain sentences will do. Rewrite it through the lab: sharpen at least three words (use the ladder in Figure 10), add one image that speaks to the senses, vary your sentence lengths, and place one metaphor where it earns its keep.

Q13. (*Move 6 — print to screen.*) Choose one scene you wrote in Q8, Q10 or Q11. Transform it into a storyboard for a 60-second film: four to six panels, each with what we **see** and what we **hear**. Under the storyboard, write two sentences about one change you had to make — to the setting, the thoughts, or the ending — because film is not print.

Part 3 — Speaking and listening

Q14. Perform your monologue from Q9 to a small group. Use your voice to mark the flashbacks — a pause, a change of pace or position when time moves. Listeners give feedback with two sentences: one beginning “*The moment that worked was...*” and one beginning “*Next time you could try...*”

Q15. Table read: in groups of three or four, read the epistolary stories from Q11 aloud, one reader per document. Then discuss: what did hearing the documents read aloud show you that silent reading did not?

Q16. Reflection circle: in your group, each student answers the four questions of Figure 13 about one piece of their own writing. The group asks one follow-up question each. Listening counts as much as speaking.

Answers and sample responses

Q1. Sample answers: A *flashback* is a scene that jumps back to an earlier time and then returns. A *prequel* is a new text telling what happened before a known story. A *scripted monologue* is a long speech by one voice, written to be performed, with stage directions. The *epistolary form* is a story told through documents such as letters, diary entries or messages. A *narrator* is the voice that tells a story. *Imagery* is language that builds pictures through the senses. A *metaphor* says one thing is another to share its qualities. *Sentence variation* is changing sentence length and shape on purpose. *Word choice* is picking one word over another for what it carries. A *mode* is the channel a text travels through, such as print, spoken or film.

Q2. Sample: (1) Priya is patient — “the slow care of someone who knows good things take time”. (2) She is a doer, not a complainer — she “built the bee hotel herself”. (3) She is not bothered by being ignored — “Most kids walked past without a look. Priya did not mind.”

Q3. Kept (any three): her patience, her notebook habit, her way of watching and waiting, the echo of “it happens fast”, her quiet when others make noise. Changed (any three): the school garden becomes a balcony nine floors up; the timber hotel becomes a tin-and-straw one; the oval’s roar becomes city traffic; a bee with nowhere to land becomes her new problem; her mother’s hopeful words replace the old schoolyard talk.

Q4. Sample: the flashback is signalled by the stage direction “LIGHT RISES at the far end”, by the character becoming YOUNG TOMMY, and by Coach Reid’s voice. We know the story returns to the present when the direction reads “BLACKOUT. Dawn again” and MR VELLA speaks from the edge of the pool once more.

Q5. (a) Between cards 2 and 3 — card 2 says “Today happened” while it is still Thursday, and by Saturday Ruby is carrying the story home. (b) Any three of: what Ruby was trying to do on the snow, how she fell, who helped her and what they said, how she felt afterwards, what she will tell her mother. (c) Sample: the shorter signature can suggest Ruby is tired, or closer to home, or that the big feelings are now too full for a full name. Other readings are fine if they use evidence from the cards.

Q6. Sample: word choice — “walked” became “dragged”, which carries the tiredness inside the verb. Imagery — “the sun pressing its hot thumb into the back of his neck” lets the reader’s skin feel the heat. Sentence variation — “One more corner. Then the door.” shrinks the sentences as his strength runs out. Metaphor — “the dark, cool mercy of the kitchen tiles” gives the floor the boy’s relief.

Q7. (a) Film can show faces, places, sound and music directly; print cannot be heard. Print can give a character’s thoughts and feelings straight to the reader; film cannot film a thought. (b) The last shot — the close-up of the notebook, Priya writing the date. It is her patience made visible; no words are needed.

Q8. Sample (a re-situation of Priya): There was no garden at the new house, only red dirt and a fence that leaned like it had given up. Priya missed the bees the way you miss a friend — by reaching for them and finding air. Then one morning she saw it: a single blue-banded bee, circling the letterbox as if it had lost something. That night she drilled holes in a fallen branch, slow and careful, her mother watching from the doorway. “Nothing lives out here, love,” her mother said. Priya set the branch against the fence post. “It will,” she said. “When it happens, it happens fast.” (*Core kept: patience, watching, the echo line. Situation changed: city garden to dry country town; a lost bee becomes the new problem.*)

Q9–Q13. These are creative tasks, so answers will differ. Judge them with the reflection frame: did the writer name the move they borrowed, did the try actually happen, and can they say what the move did when they read it back? A piece that chooses its devices on purpose and reflects honestly succeeds, even if it is rough at the edges.

Q14–Q16. These are spoken tasks. Success looks like: a performed monologue in which the audience can hear time move; a table read in which each document has its own voice; and reflection answers that name real choices rather than saying “it was good”. Feedback that starts with the two sentence frames keeps the talk useful.

Success checklist

You are ready to move on when you can:

- ☐ define the section's key words: *flashback, prequel, scripted monologue, epistolary form, narrator, imagery, metaphor, sentence variation, word choice, mode*;
- ☐ re-situate a character from a text you have read, keeping their core and changing their world;
- ☐ plan and write a prequel as a scripted monologue with flashbacks;
- ☐ write chapters for a diary, an autobiography or a short story;
- ☐ experiment with at least one narrative structure: the epistolary form, flashback, or multiple narrators;
- ☐ run your own writing through the language lab: imagery, sentence variation, metaphor, word choice;
- ☐ transform a print scene into a storyboard, with see/hear columns and at least one honest adaptation to the new mode;
- ☐ complete the reflection frame for at least one experiment.