

English Level 9

Chapter 3 — Literature

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Representations of people and places in literary texts from diverse contexts

Think of three stories you know well — perhaps one set in your own suburb, one set long ago, and one set in a country you have never visited. Each one carries a version of its people and its places inside your head. Those versions did not arrive by accident: an author chose every word that built them. A drought farm can be written as a tragedy or as a test of character; a fishing village can be written as home or as a trap; the sea can be written as a provider, a danger, or both in the same sentence.

This section is about those choices. You will look at how literary texts **represent** — that is, build versions of — people and places, how those versions carry values and beliefs, and how the time, culture and society a text comes from shapes what it is able to see. You will work with short texts set in Australia, Japan and 1880s Cornwall, and with an Australian poem and a film scene about water.

Curriculum focus

Analyse the representations of people and places in literary texts drawn from diverse historical, cultural and social contexts, by a wide range of Australian and world authors (VC2E9LE01, Literature — Literature and contexts)

Draws on

VC2E9LE01.E01 — exploring and comparing representations of characters' values; for example, the values associated with authority, community and family in literature drawn from different cultures and times · VC2E9LE01.E03 — the ways Australian novels, poems and films represent water and characters' relationships with water

Builds on (Level 8)

VC2E8LE01 — ideas, issues and points of view in literary texts drawn from diverse historical, cultural and social contexts

Achievement-standard hook

"They discuss opinions on texts. They use evaluative and substantiative language to express individual views."
(Speaking and Listening)

Modes in this section

Reading and viewing · Writing · Speaking and listening

What we mean by *representation, context and values*. The Victorian Curriculum uses these words but does not define them. In this section, a **representation** is the version of a person, a place or a way of life that a text builds through its choices of language, structure and images — it is always a made thing, never the real thing itself. A **context** is the time, place and social world a text comes from — when and where and for whom it was written — or the time, place and social world it shows. **Values** are what a text treats as worth holding — the qualities its characters are praised for keeping. **Beliefs** are what a text treats as true; **attitudes** are the stances it takes towards what it shows. Every question in this section is answerable on these definitions alone.

Theory

1. Representation: texts make worlds, they do not copy them

Pick up any page of any story and you are looking at thousands of choices: which person to follow, which words to put in their mouth, what weather to give the day, what to leave out. A film about a school, a poem about a river, a novel about a drought — none of these *is* the school, the river or the drought. Each one is a **representation**: a version of something real, built out of chosen parts.

Because representations are built, they can be built differently. Two authors watching the same street could write two stories that seem to share almost nothing of it: one might notice the neighbours who share food; the other might notice the houses with their blinds closed. Neither author is lying. Each is selecting — and selection is the first act of representation.

There are two common ways of thinking about this, and both are worth their price.

Two views of representation.

The strongest case for the “mirror” view: a good text shows us something true about the world. When we read a story set in a drought, or a fishing village, or a lighthouse, we learn how those places and people actually are. On this view, the highest praise for a text is “that is exactly how it is” — and the test of a representation is how well it matches the thing it represents.

The strongest case for the “maker” view: no text is a mirror, because every text is full of choices. A text that seems to “just show” a place has already decided what to show, whom to follow, and which words carry the weight. On this view, the interesting question is never “is it accurate?” alone, but “what version has been made, what was left out, and what does that version want us to value?”

Both views are right in part, and this section uses both. Texts do tell us real things about real places and ways of life — and every text is also a construction, carrying the values of the time, culture and society that made it. Figure 1 sets the two views side by side.

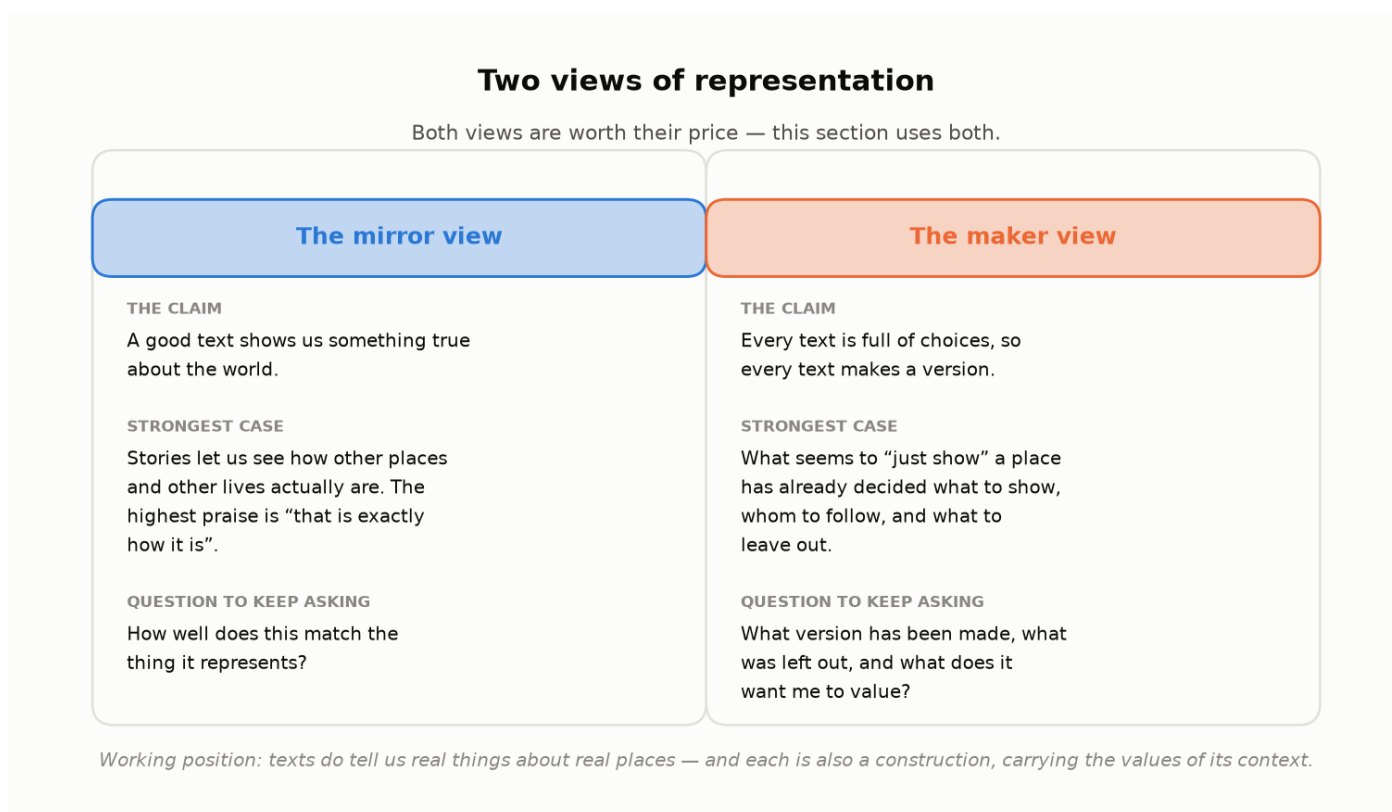


Table setting out two views of representation — the mirror view and the maker view — with the strongest case for each and the question each view asks you to keep asking

The practical skill in this section is to move between two questions:

1. **What is being represented?** Which people, which places, which ways of life does this text put in front of you?
2. **How is it being represented, and what does that carry?** Which choices of language, structure and image build that version — and which values and beliefs come with it?

2. Three kinds of context

Every text sits inside at least three overlapping worlds. They are the handles this section uses for “diverse contexts”.

- **Historical context** — the *when*. The period the text was written in, or the period it shows. A story set in 1887 carries different possibilities from one set today: different work, different technology, different rules about who may speak and who must listen.
- **Cultural context** — the *where and who*. The culture the text comes from or describes: its languages, customs, food, family forms, and what that culture treats as normal, strange, praiseworthy or shameful.

- **Social context** — the *how people live together*. The social world of the text: class, jobs, money, gender, who holds power and who serves, who belongs and who is outside.

Figure 2 puts each context beside the questions it asks. Notice that the three always overlap — the lighthouse story in Question 8, for example, is historical (the 1880s), cultural (a British seafaring community) and social (a strict working hierarchy) all at once.

Three kinds of context		
Every text sits inside all three at once — they overlap.		
Context	What it covers	Guiding questions
Historical the WHEN	The period the text was written in, or the period it shows — technology, customs of the time, rules about who could speak and who had to listen.	When is this set? What could people do — and not do — then? What has changed since, and what still holds?
Cultural the WHERE and WHO	The culture the text comes from or describes: languages, customs, food, family forms, and what that culture treats as normal, strange or praiseworthy.	Where, and among whom, is this set? What does this world treat as ordinary? What does it praise — and what does it shame?
Social the HOW WE LIVE TOGETHER	The social world: jobs, money, class, gender, power — who belongs and who is outside, who leads and who serves.	Who holds power, and who serves? Who belongs, and who is outside? What holds these people together — or apart?
The lighthouse story in Q8 is all three at once: historical (the 1880s), cultural (a British seafaring community), social (a strict working order).		

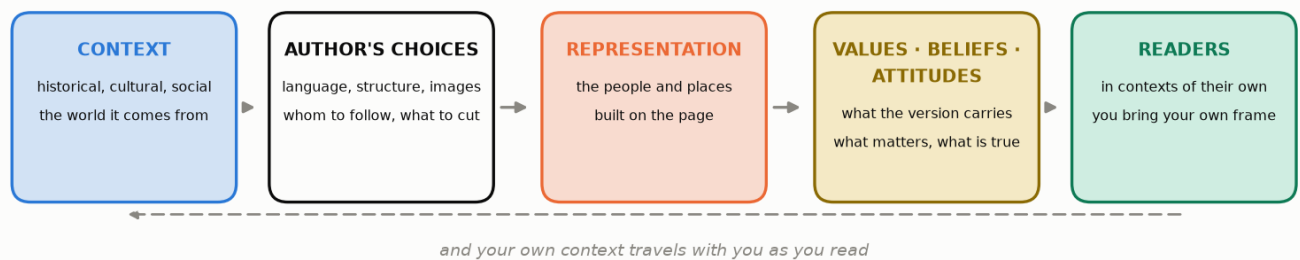
Table of the three kinds of context — historical, cultural and social — with what each one covers and the guiding questions it asks of a text

There is a direction to keep straight. Context works **both ways**:

- **Outward:** a text's own context — when, where and by whom it was written — shapes what it can imagine, what it praises, and what it cannot see. A novel written in a drought decade will watch the sky differently from one written in a wet one.
- **Inward:** you, the reader, also bring a context. Your age, your place, your family and your history decide what you notice first and what you judge quickly. Part of growing as a reader is noticing your own frame while you read someone else's.

Figure 3 shows the whole chain this section studies: context shapes the author's choices; the choices build the representation; the representation carries values, beliefs and attitudes; and readers in their own contexts respond.

The chain this section studies



Analyse any representation by walking this chain left to right — then ask what changes when a different reader walks it.

Labelled flow diagram of the chain of representation: context shapes the author's choices, the choices build the representation of people and places, the representation carries values, beliefs and attitudes, and readers in their own contexts respond

3. How people are represented

Characters are built. The building materials are:

- **Direct characterisation** — what the narrator or another character plainly says about a person: “He was a patient man.” Fast, but it asks you to take the text’s word for it.
- **Indirect characterisation** — what is shown rather than said. This is where most of the work happens, and it has five standard doors:
 - **Speech** — what the person says, and how: formal or casual, kind or sharp, talkative or silent.
 - **Actions** — what the person does under pressure. Actions are the heaviest evidence a text can offer.
 - **Looks and gesture** — posture, hands, eyes, clothes. “He stood with his hands on his hips” says something different from “he sat down on the bank”.
 - **Silence and absence** — what a character refuses to say, or what the text refuses to show, can represent as loudly as speech.
 - **Other characters’ reactions** — how the world of the text answers a person tells you what that person is worth inside it.
- **Point of view** — whose eyes the story looks through. A **narrator** is the voice telling the story. If the narrator is a character inside the story (“I”), you see the world limited to what that person knows and feels. If the narrator stands outside (“she”, “he”, “they”), the text can move between heads — or hold back, and let you judge from the surface. Whom a text chooses to follow is already a judgement about who matters.
- **What the text rewards.** Notice who gets the last word, who is forgiven, who is laughed at, who ends the story standing. What a text rewards is one of the clearest signs of its values.

You will watch all of these at work in Example 1, on the drought extract.

4. How places are represented

Places are built from the same kit, plus a few tools of their own:

- **Setting** — the named where and when: the farm, the harbour wall, the tower stairs. Setting is the frame; the choices below decide what the frame means.
- **Imagery** — language that paints pictures in the mind’s eye. The main tools:
 - **Simile** — comparing with “like” or “as” (“like a man reading a letter”).
 - **Metaphor** — saying one thing *is* another (“the sky had been a locked door”).
 - **Personification** — giving a non-human thing human acts or feelings (“the wind turned its back”).

- **Sensory imagery** — writing to the senses: the metal smell of coming rain, the scrape of a dry leaf on cracked mud.
- **Symbol** — a thing in the text that keeps appearing with more meaning than itself. Water in Australian writing is rarely only water: it can stand for waiting, luck, punishment, grace or home. (A symbol gathers meaning as a text goes on; the first time you meet it, it may look ordinary.)
- **Mood** — the feeling a place gives the reader (tense, weary, hopeful). **Tone** is the narrator’s attitude to what is being shown (warm, flat, mocking). Mood is what you catch; tone is how the text throws it.
- **Place as a force.** In much Australian writing especially, the land or the sea is not a backdrop but an actor — something that tests, starves, provides or decides. When a place acts on people, watch what it makes of them.

5. What representations carry: values, beliefs, attitudes

A representation is never neutral cargo. The version of a person or place that a text builds always arrives with ideas attached — about what matters, what is true, and how we should feel.

Three questions read them out:

1. **What does the text reward?** The qualities that win at the end — staying, sharing, obeying, daring — are the values on show. In the drought extract, nobody is praised for complaining; the text rewards quiet holding-on.
2. **What does the text treat as true?** Beliefs ride inside statements no one in the text argues with: “The sea decides who comes back” is offered as simple truth, and the story never corrects it.
3. **What stance does the text take?** Tone and mood tell you how the text feels about its own material — proud, grieving, amused, ashamed.

Values and contexts join here. The grandmother in the fishing village speaks of duty to every boat, not only her own; the lighthouse man speaks of saving ships he will never meet. Both are statements about **authority and community** — and both only make full sense once you know the worlds they come from: a village that lives or dies by the shared catch, a coastal service that exists for strangers. When you compare texts from different cultures and times, you are really comparing what different worlds ask of their people — and how their texts teach it.

6. Water as a test case: Australian texts and water

One of the curriculum’s suggestions for this content is worth real attention, because it is so Australian: the way novels, poems and films represent **water** and people’s relationships with it. Australia is the driest continent on Earth with a permanent human population, so water in Australian writing is almost never scenery. It is usually one of these:

- **Absence** — drought, empty dams, water watched and measured and waited for.
- **Gift** — the breaking of a drought; rain treated as forgiveness, blessing or homecoming.
- **Danger** — flood and sea as forces that take; the water that decides who comes home.
- **Border or meeting place** — creek, river and beach as the line between safety and the unknown, or the place a community gathers.

Figure 4 lays these out against the texts of this section.

Water in literary texts: four common forms

In Australian writing especially, water is rarely only water.

Form of water	What it usually carries	In this section
Absence drought, empty dams, water waited for	what the whole life hangs on; waiting as a way of living	The Last of the Rain (extract) Saltline, frames 1-2
Gift drought-breaking rain; water as a visitor	blessing, homecoming, a relationship mending	"First Rain" (poem) Saltline, frame 4
Danger flood, storm, open sea	the power that takes; what decides who comes home	The Harbour Wall The Light at Harrow Point
Border or meeting place creek, river, beach, harbour wall	the line between safe and unknown; where the community gathers	the harbour wall in The Harbour Wall

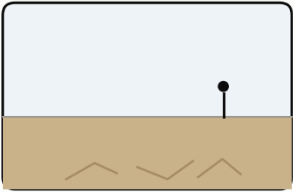
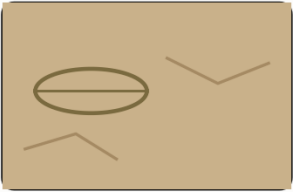
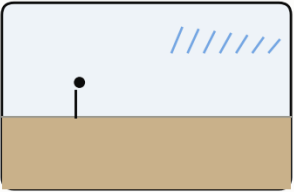
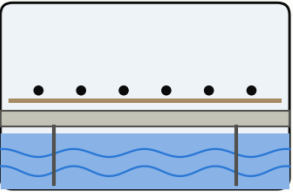
One text can use several forms at once: in *Saltline* the water is absent, then dangerous, then something like a gift.

Table of the four forms water takes in literary texts — absence, gift, danger, and border or meeting place — with what each form usually carries and where it appears in this section's texts

Film represents water with extra tools: the **shot** (what the camera shows and from where — a wide shot can make a person look small inside a landscape), the **cut** (what is placed next to what), and the **sound** (silence, roar, or a small sharp noise made huge). Figure 5 is a storyboard for a scene from *Saltline*, a short film written for this book, in which a dry creek suddenly fills. Read it as you would a poem: every frame is a choice, and the sound column is doing half the meaning-making.

Storyboard — *Saltline* (an original short film): the creek fills

Four shots. Read it like a poem: every frame is a choice, and the sound does half the meaning-making.

			
FRAME 1 — WIDE SHOT The dry creek bed under a white sky. Water is represented as absence. Sound: wind only.	FRAME 2 — CLOSE-UP The girl drops a dry leaf into the bed. Quiet made huge. Sound: one small scrape, loud in the mix.	FRAME 3 — CUT She looks up; far off, a low rumble. Water arrives as sound before sight. Sound: a low rumble grows into rain-noise.	FRAME 4 — HIGH WIDE SHOT Brown water sweeps under the bridge; the village lines the bank. The water returns to everyone. Sound: the roar — then quiet voices.

Storyboard for a scene from the original short film *Saltline*, four frames showing a dry creek filling with water, each frame labelled with its camera shot and its sound cue

Where to read next. The texts you work from in this section were all written for this book. When you are ready for full-length reading, these published Australian and world texts all put water at the centre, and all reward the reading moves of this section: Jane Harper, *The Dry* (2016), a murder mystery set in a Victorian

town broken by drought; Tim Winton, *Breath* (2008), two boys and the sea on the Western Australian coast; Dorothea Mackellar, “My Country” (1908), the poem of “drought and flooding rains”; John Masfield, “Sea Fever” (1902), the sea as a pull nothing can answer; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798), a becalmed sea as trial; and Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (2001), a boy, a tiger and the Pacific. Titles are listed for recommendation only; no extracts from them are printed in this book.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Task. Read the extract below, from *The Last of the Rain*, a novel written for this book. It is set on a sheep farm in Australia in the middle of a long drought. The analysis table that follows is completed for you: read it line by line, matching each quote to the move and to what the move represents.

The tank gauge had not moved for eleven days. Tess checked it each morning before school, from habit now, the way other people check a letterbox that never holds anything. Forty-one percent. The needle sat where it had sat all week, at the edge of the red, as if it too had stopped waiting.

Her father was already out by the dam. He stood with his hands on his hips, staring down at the cracked mud like a man reading a letter he had hoped would never arrive. The sheep had gathered on the far side, crowding into the little shade the river gums still offered. The gums themselves looked tired, their leaves hanging, the colour of dust.

“Any news?” Tess called.

He shook his head. “They’re saying rain Friday.”

They had been saying rain Friday for four Fridays.

She walked down and stood beside him. The mud pulled at her boots with little sighs. Somewhere under it, her grandfather’s old fence posts still stood, sunk in a wet winter she had never seen.

“It’s all right, Dad,” she said, though no one had asked her to say it. He looked at her then, and for a moment he looked like someone who had been carrying something heavy a very long time, and had just been told he could set it down.

Quote from the extract	Move	What it represents
“The tank gauge had not moved for eleven days”	Water represented as absence — measured in numbers, like a countdown	The drought is not scenery but the clock the whole household lives by.
“the way other people check a letterbox that never holds anything”	Simile comparing Tess’s habit to checking an empty letterbox	Hope has become routine: she keeps the check going even though it never pays.
“like a man reading a letter he had hoped would never arrive”	Simile for the father’s posture at the dry dam	The dam is bad news he must keep facing; the drought is a burden carried alone.
“The gums themselves looked tired, their leaves hanging, the colour of dust”	Personification and imagery of the river gums	The whole place, not just the people, is worn down; the land is represented as a fellow sufferer.
“They had been saying rain Friday for four Fridays.”	A short, dry sentence of its own, outside the dialogue	False hope has its own history; the family has learned not to trust the forecast.
“her grandfather’s old fence posts still stood, sunk in a wet winter she had never seen”	Detail of place carrying time	The farm remembers wetter years the current generation never lived; the drought is placed inside a longer family history.
“It’s all right, Dad” — said though “no one had asked her to say it”	Dialogue and reversed role	The child comforts the parent. The drought has made Tess grow up early, and family duty runs both

The point to copy: each line of the analysis does three things — it names the exact words, names the move those words make, and says what that move builds: about the people, the place, or the values the text is carrying.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Task. Now read the second extract, from *The Harbour Wall*, a story written for this book. It is set in a small fishing village in Japan. Then read the comparison table, which puts the two texts' values side by side. Figure 6 gives the same comparison as a single chart.

In Hamaori, every house faced the sea. Kenji's grandmother said this was because the village was built by people who knew they owed the sea a debt, and debts are paid face to face.

Each morning before the boats came in, the women of the village walked down to the harbour wall. They did not always speak. They stood together, watching the grey water, and Kenji's grandmother taught him to read what it said. "See how the boats hurry today," she would say. "The sea is impatient. We wait." Or: "The water is holding still. Tonight there will be fish."

When the boats were late, no one would eat until every boat was home. Kenji once asked why his family should wait for boats that were not theirs. His grandmother set down her rice bowl. "There are no boats that are not ours," she said. "The sea decides who comes back. We decide who is waited for."

That night, as the last engine came in across the dark water, the whole village breathed out together, and Kenji understood that the sound was a kind of prayer.

Value	<i>The Last of the Rain</i> (Australian drought farm)	<i>The Harbour Wall</i> (Japanese fishing village)	How context shapes it
Family	Tess comforts her father; the burden is held inside the household, one person at a time.	The grandmother teaches Kenji to read the sea; knowledge is handed down through the family.	On a far-apart farm, the family is the whole team — duty runs along family lines.
Community	Neighbours are absent; the drought is faced by the household alone.	"No one would eat until every boat was home" — duty runs past blood ties to the whole village.	A village that shares one catch shares one fate; the community is the unit of survival.
The water	Water as absence: measured, waited for, never arriving.	Water as presence: read like a language, feared, thanked, waited <i>upon</i> .	Scarcity teaches counting; the sea teaches respect. Both texts treat water as the power that decides life.
What is rewarded	Quiet holding-on; comfort given without being asked.	Shared watching; the shared breath at the end, "a kind of prayer".	Each text praises what its world most needs: endurance, or togetherness.

Two texts, one value at a time

Lining two texts up against the SAME value is what separates comparison from listing.

Value	The Last of the Rain (Australian drought farm)	The Harbour Wall (Japanese fishing village)
Family	Tess comforts her father; the burden is held inside the household, one person at a time.	The grandmother teaches Kenji to read the sea; knowledge is handed down through the family.
Community	No neighbours appear: the household faces the drought alone.	"No one would eat until every boat was home" — duty runs past blood ties to the whole village.
Duty to others	Comfort is given without being asked for: "It's all right, Dad."	"There are no boats that are not ours." The whole village waits on every boat.

Each text praises what its world most needs: on the drought farm, endurance; in the fishing village, togetherness.

Comparison table placing the values of family, community and duty to others side by side for the Australian drought extract and the Japanese fishing-village story

Notice the shape of a good comparison. It never just lists ("Text A does this. Text B does that."). It lines the two texts up against the *same* value — family, duty, water — and asks what each text's context makes of it. The last column is where the analysis lives.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Task. Figure 7 is "First Rain", a poem written for this book. It is the only text in this section with no completed analysis attached.

Read the poem twice — once for the sense, once slowly, noticing the images. Then write a short analysis (six to eight sentences) answering:

How does the poem represent rain, and what does that representation carry about the people and the place?

Pointers to structure your answer (no scaffold given):

- Open with a claim about what rain *is* inside the poem — a weather event, a visitor, a return?
- Choose two images and name the device in each (metaphor, simile, personification, sensory imagery). Say what each one builds.
- Finish with the people: what does the father's gesture at the end say about how this place meets the rain?

First Rain

a poem written for this book

The sky had been a locked door for months,
and the paddocks answered it in dust.
The creek kept only its shape —
a long pale scar the water used to live in.

Then one afternoon the wind turned its back on the north,
and the hills went suddenly green-black,
and the smell came first:
the old cold metal smell of water
travelling a long way to get home.

It did not start gently. It arrived
the way forgiveness does, all at once —
hard on the tin roof, hard on the dry ground,
until the ground forgot how to refuse it
and began, darkly, to drink.

Out in the yard my father stood
with his hat in his hand,
letting the sky have its say,
and the farm — patient, cracked, faithful —
leaned into the sound like a hymn.

Typeset page of the original poem First Rain, five stanzas about rain breaking a long drought on an Australian farm

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Each item below describes a fact about a text or its world. Sort each one into **historical**, **cultural** or **social** context. (Some could sit in two; choose the strongest and be ready to defend it.)

- (a) The story is set in 1887, when lighthouses were worked by hand and logged on paper.
- (b) The village shares one catch; what the sea gives belongs to everyone.
- (c) The novel was written during a decade of drought, and the reviews kept using the word “dry”.
- (d) The assistant eats after the head of the light, and speaks only when spoken to.
- (e) In the story, houses are built facing the sea because the sea is owed respect.
- (f) The poem was first read aloud at a farming show, to an audience that had been waiting for rain.

Q2. Match each piece of evidence to the value it most likely carries. Use each value once. Values: **family duty** · **community** · **respect for authority** · **endurance**.

- (a) “No one would eat until every boat was home.”
- (b) “It’s all right, Dad,” she said, though no one had asked her to say it.
- (c) Tess checks the tank gauge each morning even though it never changes.
- (d) Tom copies Mr Voss’s words into his own notebook without being told.

Q3. Read the extract from *The Last of the Rain* in Example 1 again, then answer:

- (a) Quote the words that show water is represented by its *absence* rather than its presence.
- (b) What does the simile “like a man reading a letter he had hoped would never arrive” tell you about the father’s relationship to the dam?
- (c) What does Tess’s morning habit show about what the drought has done to daily life?
- (d) In the final sentence, who is comforting whom? What does that reversal represent about this family?

Q4. Read the extract from *The Harbour Wall* in Example 2 again, then answer:

- (a) Why, according to the grandmother, do the houses face the sea?
- (b) Explain in your own words what the grandmother means by “There are no boats that are not ours.”
- (c) Give one piece of evidence that the sea is represented as powerful, and one that it is represented as something the village has a relationship with.
- (d) The story ends with the village breathing out together, “a kind of prayer”. What does that image say about how this community lives with risk?

Q5. Copy this table and complete it for the five texts of this section. Use the forms of water from Figure 4 (absence, gift, danger, border or meeting place) — some texts use more than one.

Text	Form(s) of water	What the water seems to stand for
<i>The Last of the Rain</i> (extract)		
<i>The Harbour Wall</i> (extract)		
“First Rain” (poem)		
<i>Saltline</i> (storyboard, Figure 5)		
<i>The Light at Harrow Point</i> (Q8 below)		

Q6. Look again at the *Saltline* storyboard in Figure 5.

- (a) Name the shot type in Frame 1 and Frame 4, and say what each choice lets the viewer feel.
- (b) Frame 2 uses one small sound made loud. What does that sound represent?
- (c) In Frame 4 nobody speaks. Why might the film choose silence at the moment the water returns?
- (d) In two sentences: how does this scene represent water as an event the *community* owns, not just the girl?

Q7. (*Speaking and listening.*) Work with a partner. You have both read the extract from *The Last of the Rain*. Take it in turns to finish this sentence aloud, each for one minute, without interruption: “*The hardest part of this extract is not*

the drought but... ". When your partner speaks, your job is to listen and then **build**: start your reply with "You said that... and I'd add...". Finish by agreeing on the one line of the extract you would show a friend, and be ready to say why.

Unscaffolded

Q8. Read the extract below, from *The Light at Harrow Point*, a story written for this book. It is set on the coast of Cornwall in England in 1887.

The rule of the light was simple, Mr Voss said: the light comes first, the man who minds it comes second, everything else is a luxury.

Tom had worked the Harrow Point light for three months, and in that time he had learned that the head of the light spoke in two voices. There was the voice for the logbook — dry and careful, recording wind and weather and the ships that passed. And there was the other voice, the one that came out on storm nights, when Mr Voss climbed the tower stairs at any hour to stand beneath the great lamp and watch the sea through the glass as though he had been posted there by the sea itself.

"You do not argue with the light," he told Tom once, after the boy had suggested they might leave the horn silent for one hour to spare their ears. "The light has saved ten ships this year that we know of. What it has saved that we do not know is the reason we climb."

Tom wrote the words into his own small notebook, not because he had been told to, but because he was beginning to understand that authority, here, was a way of keeping faith with people you would never meet.

Write a paragraph of six to eight sentences answering:

How does the extract represent authority, and what does it suggest authority is *for*?

Take a claim, at least two quotes, and an explanation of what each quote builds. The fully-worked solutions contain a model paragraph.

Q9. Write a comparison paragraph of eight to ten sentences:

Compare how *The Last of the Rain* and *The Harbour Wall* represent duty to others.

Line the two extracts up against the same value (duty), quote from each, and finish with a sentence on what each text's place and way of life make of that value. A colour-coded model paragraph is shown in Figure 8 and printed in full in the solutions.

A model comparison paragraph

Question 9: duty to others in the two extracts



Claim



Quoted evidence



Explanation of effect



Link to context

Both extracts represent people as shaped by water — but they honour different shapes of duty. In *The Last of the Rain*, duty is carried quietly and inside the family: Tess's father stands before the dry dam "like a man reading a letter he had hoped would never arrive", and the burden stays his until his daughter steps in with "It's all right, Dad". The value is endurance held within the household, each person taking the worry for the others. In *The Harbour Wall*, duty belongs to the whole village: "no one would eat until every boat was home", and the grandmother insists, "There are no boats that are not ours." The value is community — a shared watch that no one keeps alone. Both places are harsh, and both texts honour staying; but the drought farm turns people inward to their own house, while the fishing village turns them outward to one another. Each text's version of duty grows out of what its people face: waiting for rain, or waiting for boats.

Each quote is followed by what it builds — and the last sentence ties each value to its context.

Model comparison paragraph colour-coded to show the claim, the quoted evidence, the explanations of effect, and the sentence linking values to context

Q10. Read "First Rain" (Figure 7) once more. Write a paragraph of six to eight sentences answering:

How does the poem use imagery to represent the rain and the land that receives it?

Name at least two devices with quotes, and say what each builds. The solutions contain a model paragraph.

Q11. (*Writing.*) Now it is your turn to represent a place. Choose a real place you know that involves water in any form — a beach, a creek, a pool, a rain tank, a drain after storm. Write a description of eight to twelve sentences that represents that place *and* quietly carries one value (belonging, patience, danger, freedom, duty — or one of your own). Do not name the value in the description. Under your description, write two sentences of author's notes: which value you chose, and which two of your choices carried it.

Q12. (*Writing, film.*) Plan a scene of four shots for a short film that represents water in a place you know. Use the storyboard shape of Figure 5: for each shot, name the shot type (wide, close-up, high), say what is shown, and give the sound. Then write one sentence saying what your scene represents water *as* — gift, danger, border, absence, or something of your own.

Q13. Consider this claim:

"A text's representation of a place tells us more about the author's world than about the place itself."

Write a reasoned response. You must:

- give the strongest version of the case *for* the claim (what its defenders would actually say);
- give the strongest version of the case *against* it (what its critics would actually say);

- then take your own position — with reasons, and with a condition if you have one (“it depends on…”).

Use the definitions of *representation* and *context* from the start of this section, and at least one example from a text in this section. You are marked on the quality of your reasoning — defined terms, real examples, honest limits — not on which side you land on. Whichever side you favour, spend equal effort on the other one.

Q14. (*Speaking and listening.*) In groups of three, hold a three-minute panel discussion:

“Which text in this section represents its place most convincingly — the drought farm, the fishing village, or the lighthouse?”

Protocol: each panellist speaks once before anyone speaks twice; panellists respond to each other’s points by name (“I think Maya’s point about the dam is right, but…”); the audience notes one piece of **evaluative language** (a judgement word: *convincing, weak, earned, flat...*) and one piece of **backing** (a quote or a reason offered as support) for each panellist. Figure 9 is the discussion checklist the panel and audience are working to.

Panel discussion checklist		
Built from the Level 9 achievement standard (Speaking and Listening) that this section hooks to.		
What the standard asks for	What it sounds like in the discussion	Self-check
Discuss opinions on texts	“I think the lighthouse story is the most convincing, because ...” — a claim about a text, said out loud, in your own words.	Did I give an opinion, not just a summary?
Use evaluative language	Judgement words doing real work: convincing · earned · flat · moving · weak · true to the place.	Did I name a judgement, not just say “good”?
Use backing for each judgement	A quote or a reason holding the judgement up: “when the grandmother says there are no boats that are not ours, you can see why the whole village waits.”	Is there a quote or a reason behind every judgement?
Standard wording: “They discuss opinions on texts. They use evaluative and substantiative language to express individual views.”		

Checklist table for the panel discussion, with the three achievement-standard criteria — discussing opinions on texts, evaluative language, and backing for judgements — and what each looks like in speech

Answers

These are sample answers. For open questions, any response that meets the task is acceptable.

Q1. (a) historical — it names the period and its technology; (b) social — it describes how the village organises sharing and power over its catch; (c) historical — the decade the text was written in; (d) social — the hierarchy of work and speech; (e) cultural — a custom and the belief under it; (f) social — the audience and the occasion. Defensible re-sortings: (b) as cultural, (f) as historical.

Q2. (a) community; (b) family duty; (c) endurance; (d) respect for authority.

Q3. (a) Accept: “The tank gauge had not moved for eleven days”; “the cracked mud”; “the little shade the river gums still offered”; “They had been saying rain Friday for four Fridays.” (b) The dam is bad news he already knows and still must face; the simile makes the drought feel like a message that keeps arriving. (c) Hope has been reduced to a habit; the check continues even though it never pays — daily life is organised around a missing thing. (d) The daughter comforts the father. Family duty is shown running both ways: the drought has made the child the carer for a moment, and the text rewards her for it.

Q4. (a) Because the village owes the sea a debt, and “debts are paid face to face”. (b) Sample: in this village, every family’s fate is joined to every other family’s; no boat is a stranger’s boat, because what happens to one happens to all. (c) Power: “The sea decides who comes back.” Relationship: the grandmother reads the water like speech (“The sea is impatient. We wait.”), or the shared breath at the end, “a kind of prayer”. (d) Sample: the community lives with risk by sharing it — turning fear into a ritual everyone joins, so that waiting itself becomes an act of care.

Q5. Sample completions: *The Last of the Rain* — absence; water stands for the thing the whole life waits on. *The Harbour Wall* — danger and provider; water stands for the power that must be respected and shared. “First Rain” — gift; water stands for forgiveness and homecoming. *Saltline* — absence turning to danger/gift; water stands for an event the community witnesses together. *The Light at Harrow Point* — danger; the sea stands for the strangers’ lives the light is kept for.

Q6. (a) Frame 1 is a wide shot: it makes the girl and the creek bed look small inside the dry landscape — absence as something you can see the size of. Frame 4 is a high wide shot: it lets the viewer hold the water and the whole watching village in one image. (b) The small scrape of the leaf stands for how empty the creek is — quiet made huge so the viewer feels the missing water. (c) Sample: silence shows respect and shock together; after months of absence, the water’s own sound is enough, and the film lets it speak first. (d) The sound moves from one leaf to a roar, and the final frame fills the bank with people: the water returns to the village, and the scene ends on their faces, not the girl’s.

Q7. Teacher observation. Look for: turn-taking without interruption; replies that genuinely build on the partner’s words (“You said that... and I’d add...”); a shared final choice with a reason that quotes the extract.

Q8–Q13. See the fully-worked solutions.

Q14. Teacher observation. Look for: every panellist speaking and being answered by name; audience notes naming at least one judgement word and one piece of backing per panellist; reasoned disagreement rather than simple repetition.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1 — reasoning. The sort depends on which lens does the most work. (a) names a period and its machinery — historical. (b) describes how a society shares its catch — that is the social arrangement (it is also cultural; the strongest single answer is social because it is about who holds what). (c) fixes the text in the decade it was written — historical. (d) is a working hierarchy — social. (e) is a custom resting on a belief — cultural. (f) is about audience and occasion — social (or historical, since the occasion is long past).

Q2 — reasoning. The value is read off what the evidence *does*. (a) makes the whole village wait on every boat — community. (b) a child giving comfort at home — family duty. (c) repeating a hopeless check and keeping going — endurance. (d) recording a superior’s words unasked — respect for authority.

Q3(d) — a model development. The reversal is quiet but it carries the extract’s values. The father has been the one who faces the dam and the forecasts alone; when Tess says “It’s all right, Dad” — “though no one had asked her to

say it” — the caring role passes to her for a moment. The text rewards her for it: the father’s look is of someone “who had been carrying something heavy a very long time, and had just been told he could set it down”. Drought is represented here as something that does not only dry the ground; it rearranges the family, making children older and burdens shared. That is the value underneath: holding on is a job for everyone, even the youngest.

Q8 — model paragraph.

In the extract, authority is represented not as power over people but as service to strangers. Mr Voss’s rule — “the light comes first, the man who minds it comes second” — places duty above comfort, and his two voices show that the role is bigger than the man: one voice belongs to the logbook, the other to the storm nights, when he climbs “as though he had been posted there by the sea itself”. His refusal to silence the horn, even for one hour, is given a reason that reaches past the present: “The light has saved ten ships this year that we know of. What it has saved that we do not know is the reason we climb.” Authority here is justified by people the men on the light will never meet — the ships in the dark, the crews whose names they will never learn. Tom’s quiet act of copying the words into his own notebook shows how the representation works on the reader too: the boy is not ordered to respect the light; he is won over, and so are we.

The claim names what kind of authority is on show (service, not power). Each quote is followed by what it builds, and the paragraph ends by noticing the effect on the reader — the strongest move available in an analysis of values.

Q9 — model comparison paragraph (this is the paragraph colour-coded in Figure 8).

Both extracts represent people as shaped by water — but they honour different shapes of duty. In *The Last of the Rain*, duty is carried quietly and inside the family: Tess’s father stands before the dry dam “like a man reading a letter he had hoped would never arrive”, and the burden stays his until his daughter steps in with “It’s all right, Dad”. The value is endurance held within the household, each person taking the worry for the others. In *The Harbour Wall*, duty belongs to the whole village: “no one would eat until every boat was home”, and the grandmother insists, “There are no boats that are not ours.” The value is community — a shared watch that no one keeps alone. Both places are harsh, and both texts honour staying; but the drought farm turns people inward to their own house, while the fishing village turns them outward to one another. Each text’s version of duty grows out of what its people face: waiting for rain, or waiting for boats.

The paragraph lines the two texts up against one value (duty), quotes each text, explains what each quote builds, and ends by tying each value to its context — the move that separates comparison from listing.

Q10 — model paragraph.

“First Rain” represents rain as a homecoming after a long refusal. The drought is built from images of closedness — the sky is “a locked door” and the creek is “a long pale scar the water used to live in” — so water is first presented as something lost, not just something missing. When the rain comes, the poem gives it human will: it “did not start gently” and arrives “the way forgiveness does, all at once”, a simile that makes the rain feel like a mending relationship. The land is personified as well — it “forgot how to refuse” the water and “began, darkly, to drink” — which represents the place itself as thirsty and patient, not simply dry. The final image, the father standing “with his hat in his hand / letting the sky have its say”, gives the rain the authority of a visitor owed respect. Through these choices the poem represents water as a gift that changes the people who receive it, not only the ground.

Q11 — what a strong response contains. A description in which the value is *shown, not named*: if the value is patience, the sentences themselves should wait and return; if it is danger, the images should gather weight. The author’s notes should name the value and point to two deliberate choices (a word, an image, a sentence shape) that carry it. Any honest attempt in which the notes match the description earns the mark.

Q12 — what a strong response contains. Four distinct shots with named types, a sound plan in which silence and noise are chosen on purpose (as in *Saltline*’s leaf scrape and roar), and a final sentence that states plainly what the water is being represented as. Storyboards that copy Figure 5 frame by frame earn less than ones that make their own choices.

Q13 — model structure.

For: Every representation is built by someone standing somewhere. A drought novel written in a dry decade watches the sky the way its writer learned to; a fishing village story praises sharing because its world lives or dies by the shared catch. When we read “that is exactly how it is”, we are often recognising the author’s world wearing the clothes of the place.

Against: Texts can tell us true things about places their authors never invented and never controlled. The cracked mud, the harbour wall, the tower stairs — these hold facts about work, weather and custom that outlast the author’s own moment. If every representation only showed its maker, reading across cultures and times would teach us nothing about anyone else — and it plainly does.

Position (sample): The claim is strongest when a text writes about a place its author belongs to: then the mirror and the maker are the same person, and the line between “the place” and “the author’s world” nearly disappears. It weakens when a text is read far from its own time, because distant readers separate the place from the author’s assumptions again — which is exactly the work this section trains.

Note that the model takes a position — yours may differ, and a well-reasoned opposite position scores equally. What is marked: defined terms, both sides at full strength, a position with conditions, and honest limits.

Q14 — what a strong discussion contains.

- Every panellist makes a claim about one text and is answered by name — not a sequence of separate speeches.
 - Judgement words are used on purpose (“the grandmother’s speech is the most convincing representation because...”), not as decoration.
 - Every judgement carries backing: a quote from the extract or a reason tied to context (“a > village that shares one catch has to be written that way”).
 - The audience notes are specific: one evaluative word and one piece of backing per panellist, named when the class compares notes afterwards.
-

Section 3A · English 9 · Curriculum reference: VC2E9LE01 (“analyse the representations of people and places in literary texts, drawn from diverse historical, cultural and social contexts”), taught through the clause covering a wide range of Australian and world authors, and drawing on VC2E9LE01 . E01 and VC2E9LE01 . E03. All passages, stories, poems, the film scene and the model responses in this section were written for this book; the further-reading list names published titles for recommendation only, with no extracts reproduced.

Developing responses to literary texts: comparing initial and subsequent impressions

You are already an expert in first impressions. A new person walks into the room and, within seconds, you have a working draft of them — friendly, nervous, full of themselves, shy. You did not decide to do that; your mind just does it. Reading works the same way. A story opens, a character speaks, a poem begins, and before you have finished the first page you are already forming impressions: *this is going to be sad, I like her, this is strange, I don't trust this narrator*.

Those first impressions are real, and they matter. But they are a first draft, not the finished work. This section is about what comes next: how you test your impressions against the text itself, against a second reading, and against the ideas of other readers — and how you develop them into responses you can defend, in writing and in discussion.

Curriculum focus

Explore and develop responses, including personal responses, to literary texts, comparing initial and subsequent impressions (VC2E9LE02, Literature — Engaging with and responding to literature)

Draws on

VC2E9LE02.E01 — interrogating and making judgements about a text, comparing others' ideas against their own and reaching an independent decision or consensus about the interpretations and ideas expressed

Builds on (Level 8)

VC2E8LE02 — opinions about the language features, literary devices and text structures that contribute to style

Achievement-standard hook

"When interacting with others... students discuss opinions on texts. They use evaluative and substantiative language to express individual views." (Speaking and Listening)

Modes in this section

Reading and viewing · Writing · Speaking and listening

What this section means by *impression, response and interpretation*. The Victorian Curriculum uses all three words in this content description but does not define them, and readers do not always use them the same way. In this section: an **impression** is the feeling or opinion a text gives you at a particular moment — quick, personal, and changeable. Your **initial impression** is the one you form early, often in the first pages or lines; a **subsequent impression** is any later impression, formed after more reading, more thought or more discussion. A **response** is what you do with an impression when you put it into words — saying what you noticed, felt, judged or believed. A **personal response** connects the text to your own life and experience. An **interpretation** is a reader's account of what a text means. None of these things is the text itself; each one is the meeting point between the text and a reader. Every question in this section is answerable on these definitions alone.

Theory

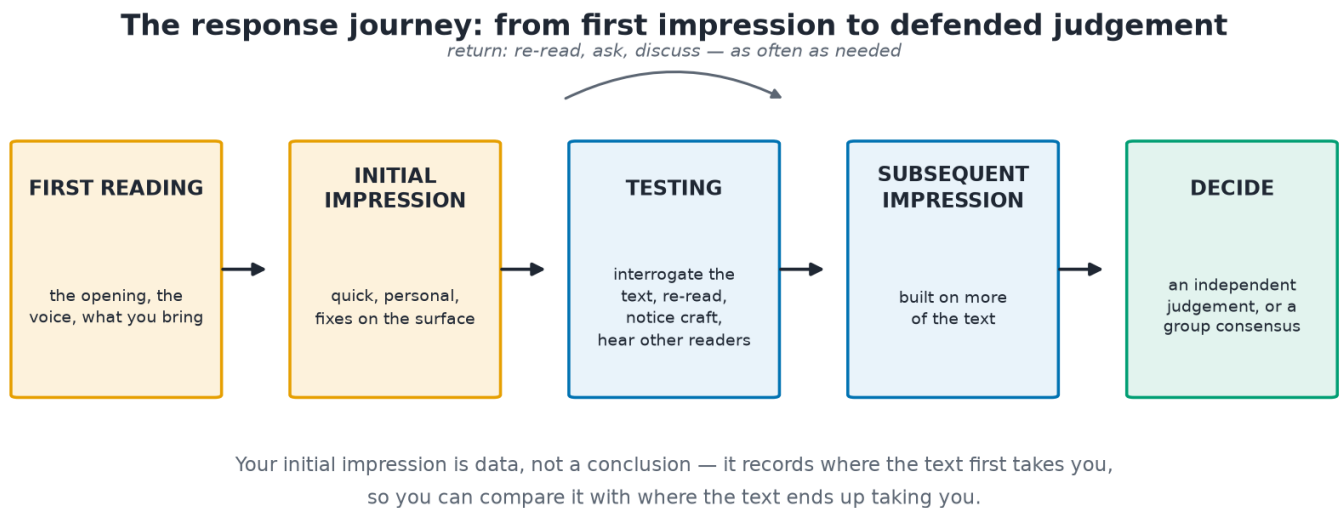
1. First impressions are real — and unfinished

Your initial impression of a text is built fast, and it is built from a few things in particular:

- **The opening.** First lines do a lot of work. A story that opens with a wedding feels like a different book from one that opens with a locked room, even if they end in the same place.
- **The narrative voice.** The narrative voice is the voice that tells the story, and the character of that voice — warm, flat, funny, secretive — colours everything it reports. A narrator who jokes in a graveyard tells you something before anything happens.
- **The kind of text you think you are reading.** If you believe you have picked up a horror story, a friendly knock at the door feels like a threat. Genre expectation is part of your first impression whether you notice it or not.

- **What you bring.** Your own experiences, the last thing you read, the mood you arrived in — all of it leans on the first pages. Two readers can meet the same text and leave with two different first impressions, and both can be honestly held.

Because first impressions are fast, they usually fix on what is on the surface: the characters rather than the ideas, the mood rather than the structure, the things a text says rather than the things it does. That is not a fault. It is just where reading starts. Your initial impression is **data, not a conclusion** — evidence about where the text first takes you, which is exactly what you will need later when you compare it with where the text ends up taking you (Figure 1).



Flow diagram of the response journey: an initial impression is formed at first reading, then tested by interrogating the text, re-reading, and hearing other readers' ideas, until a subsequent impression forms and the reader reaches an independent judgement or a group consensus

Figure 2 sets the two kinds of impression side by side so you can see the difference at a glance. Notice the last row especially: an initial impression can stay true as a *record* of how the text first landed, even after your reading has moved on. Comparing the two is the whole skill of this section.

Initial and subsequent impressions

	INITIAL IMPRESSION	SUBSEQUENT IMPRESSION
When it forms	early — often in the first pages or first lines	later — after more reading, more thought or discussion
What it rests on	a little of the text, plus what you bring	more of the text, noticed craft, and other readers' ideas
What it fixes on	characters and mood — what the text says	patterns and choices — what the text does
How it speaks	fast and certain	slower, and able to give reasons
When it changes	it stays true as a record of the first meeting	it still has to be supported — later is not the same as better
Comparing the two columns is the skill: what changed, what stayed — and why.		

Two-column table comparing initial impressions and subsequent impressions: when they form, what they rest on, what they usually fix on, and how sure they tend to be

Responses come in three main kinds, and a strong reader can do all three:

- **Personal responses** connect the text to you — your memories, your family, your places. *This poem reminds me of my grandfather's workshop.*
- **Judgements** assess how well the text does what it sets out to do. *The ending feels rushed.*
- **Interpretations** make a claim about what the text means. *The wall in the story is not keeping people out; it is keeping something in.*

They often arrive mixed together. The skill is knowing which one you are making — because each kind needs different support, as you will see in part 3.

2. What makes impressions change

Four things reliably move a first impression. You have already used all of them; this section asks you to use them on purpose.

(a) Reading on. Texts hold things back. A character who seems cruel in chapter one may be explained — or not forgiven, but explained — by chapter five. Most first impressions change simply because the reader did not yet know the whole story.

(b) Re-reading. A second reading meets the same words with different eyes. Details that seemed like scenery turn out to be clues; a line that sounded like a joke turns out to be the poem's real point. Re-reading is not repeating the first read — it is meeting the text again with everything you now know.

(c) Noticing craft. This is the toolkit you built in Level 8: language features, literary devices and text structures. Once you can name what a writer is doing — the short sentences, the repeated image, the order the events arrive in — you stop only feeling the effect and start seeing how it was made. That usually shifts the impression too, because you begin to see choices where you used to see only story.

(d) Other readers. Someone else’s reading can flip yours in a sentence. They noticed a detail you skipped, or they brought an experience you do not have. Part 5 is about how to handle other people’s readings well — testing them, not just collecting them.

Read the short story below. It was written for this section, and it is designed to do exactly what its title suggests: give you a first impression, then ask you to live with it.

The Wall at Saltgrass Bay

Everyone on our street had a theory about Mr Vella. Mine was that he had practised his scowl in a mirror until it stuck.

He lived in the last house before the dunes, behind a low grey wall he had built himself. Behind the wall he kept the one stretch of coast nobody wanted: the eroded bit, where the storms had eaten the path and left the sand looking chewed. He watched the street from his gate every morning, arms folded. If our ball went over his wall, it stayed there. Once he called out “Keep off the dune” in a voice like a gate slamming, and my brother came home convinced the man had shark’s teeth.

Then the February storm came, and the sea took half our front fence and most of the footpath. In the grey morning after, I went down to look at the damage and found Mr Vella already outside — not watching, working. He was on his knees in the wet sand, pushing seedlings into the ground one at a time, the way you would tuck in something small and asleep. Behind his wall I could see, for the first time, what he had been keeping there: crates of seedlings, coils of rope, bags of broken glass gathered off the beach, and a stake marking how far the erosion had come. On the stake was a date. It was older than me.

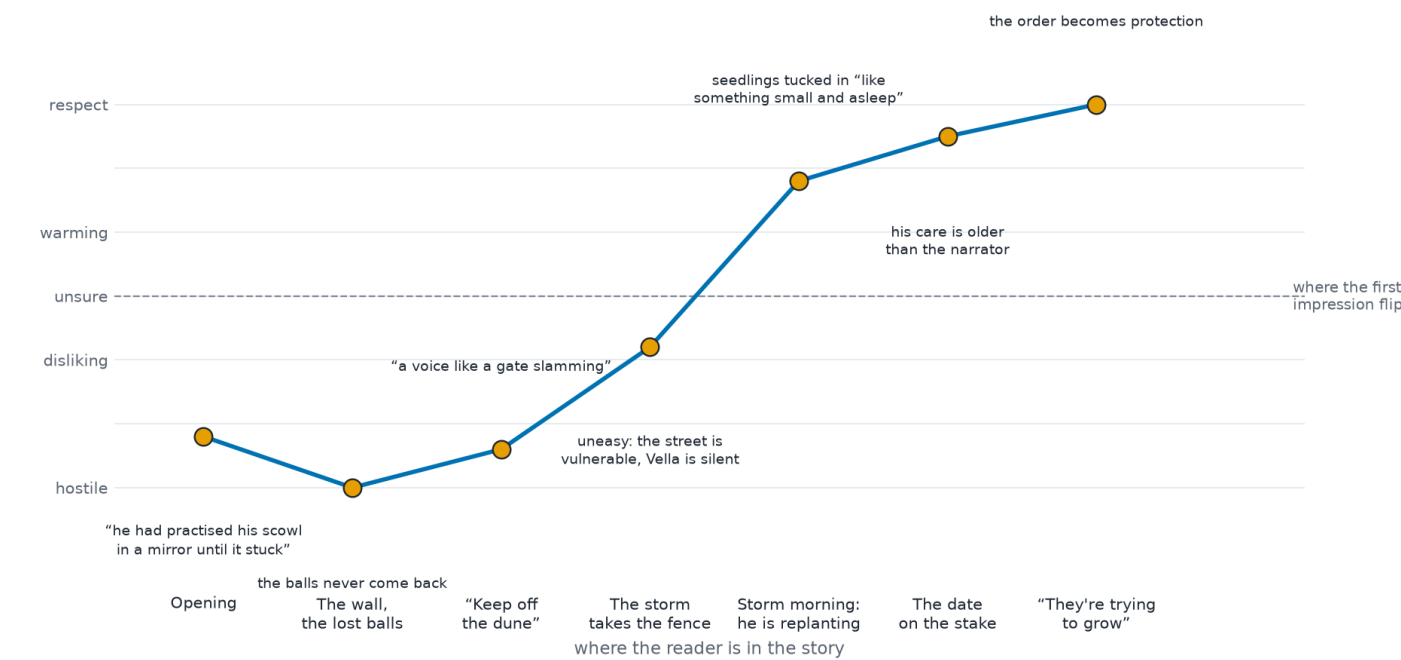
“Storm brings, storm takes,” he said, without looking up. “Somebody has to replant.”

I apologised for the ball — all the balls. He shrugged.

“Ball’s fine,” he said. “Just keep off the dune. They’re trying to grow.”

Figure 3 tracks one reader’s impression of Mr Vella across the story. Notice two things about the shape. The impression does not drift — it breaks, at the moment the reader meets evidence they did not have before. And the turn happens not because Mr Vella changes (he does not) but because the reader finally sees what he has been doing. That is the pattern to look for in any text: *what did I not know when I formed my first impression?*

A reader's impression of Mr Vella across the story



Line chart tracking a reader’s impression of Mr Vella from hostile at the start of the story, through uneasy at the storm, to respect at the final line, with the details that drive each turn labelled on the line

The same shift happens in poetry, where the words are fewer and the turn can hide in a single line. Read this poem, which was also written for this section.

Six AM

She comes home as I am leaving; we pass in the hall like two shifts of the same day. Her jacket carries the cold of the early bus, and the smell of the bakery — yeast and heat — hangs in her hair like a second weather.

I used to read her silence as a wall. The way she'd eat standing, eyes half shut. The way her alarm went off in the dark and she buttoned her coat without a word.

Now I read the same things differently. The bread on our table is her answer, arriving warm every morning before I wake. She has been saying good morning to me in the only language she has time for.

Figure 4 shows what two readings of the same poem look like side by side: notes from a first reading on the left, notes from a second reading on the right. The words never change. The reader does. You will work with this figure in Example 2 and Question 5.

The same poem, read twice: Six AM

FIRST READING	SECOND READING
<i>She comes home as I am leaving; we pass in the hall like two shifts of the same day.</i> they never meet — she is absent <i>Her jacket carries the cold of the early bus, and the smell of the bakery — yeast and heat — hangs in her hair like a second weather.</i> <i>I used to read her silence as a wall.</i> a wall — she is shut off <i>The way she'd eat standing, eyes half shut. The way her alarm went off in the dark and she buttoned her coat without a word.</i> cold and distant <i>Now I read the same things differently. The bread on our table is her answer, arriving warm every morning before I wake. She has been saying good morning to me in the only language she has time for.</i>	<i>She comes home as I am leaving; we pass in the hall like two shifts of the same day.</i> <i>Her jacket carries the cold of the early bus, and the smell of the bakery — yeast and heat — hangs in her hair like a second weather.</i> the early bus — she has been at work all night <i>I used to read her silence as a wall.</i> <i>The way she'd eat standing, eyes half shut. The way her alarm went off in the dark and she buttoned her coat without a word.</i> <i>Now I read the same things differently. The bread on our table is her answer, arriving warm every morning before I wake.</i> the bread is her message <i>She has been saying good morning to me in the only language she has time for.</i> love spoken as work

The words never change. The reader does — and that is what a subsequent impression records.

The poem Six AM shown twice side by side, with first-reading notes on the left that read the mother as distant and second-reading notes on the right that read the same details as tiredness and care

3. From reaction to judgement

There is a difference between reporting your reaction to a text and making a judgement about the text, and it is one of the most useful distinctions in English.

Some statements are **reports of a reaction**: *it bored me, I found it moving, the main character annoyed me*. These statements are about you. They are sincere — you really were bored — and they cannot be wrong in the way a claim can be wrong. But they are not yet claims about the text. Saying a film is boring tells another reader about your afternoon, not about the film.

A **judgement** is a claim about the text itself, and it can be tested: *the ending is rushed, the narrator is unreliable, the poem turns on its final line*. Judgements are the kind of statement someone can ask you to support — and in this section they must be supported, because a judgement with no support is just an opinion wearing a confident voice.

Figure 5 puts these on a ladder, from bare reaction at the bottom to a developed, independent interpretation at the top. Each rung up adds something the rung below it lacks.

The ladder from reaction to judgement



Evaluative language names the judgement. Substantiative language shows what it stands on. You need both.

Ladder diagram of five rungs of response, from reporting a reaction, to a bare opinion, to a judgement with a reason, to a substantiated judgement with evidence quoted from the text, to an independent interpretation that has been tested against other readers

Two kinds of language do the climbing, and the achievement standard for this level names both. **Evaluative language** expresses a judgement — words like *effective, convincing, flat, rushed, believable, moving*. **Substantiative language** shows what the judgement stands on — the reasons, the evidence, the quoted detail. The two work as a pair: evaluation without substantiation is an assertion; substantiation without evaluation is a list.

Figure 6 is a bank of both. You will use it in Questions 3 and 4.

A bank of evaluative and substantiative language

EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE	SUBSTANTIATIVE LANGUAGE
<i>words that make the judgement</i>	<i>words that show what the judgement stands on</i>
effective · convincing · believable	because... · this is shown when...
moving · controlled · honest	the detail of ... suggests...
flat · rushed · thin · predictable	by choosing ... instead of ..., the writer...
works well · falls flat · earns its ending	the line that settles it is...

Evaluation without substantiation is an assertion. Substantiation without evaluation is a list.

Table of evaluative and substantiative language: a column of evaluative words for judging texts and a column of substantiative sentence starters for showing what a judgement stands on

One warning, the same one that follows you through every analytical paragraph you will ever write: never stop at *it was good, it was interesting or it made me want to keep reading*. Those phrases could be written about any text ever printed, which is exactly why they say nothing about the one in front of you. Name what worked. Name what did not. Point at the words.

4. Comparing impressions: what changed, what stayed, and why

Comparing initial and subsequent impressions is not just saying “I changed my mind”. A real comparison answers four questions:

1. **What was my first impression, and what was it built on?** Name the detail or moment that produced it. (*I read the mother as distant, because she never speaks in the poem’s first nine lines.*)
2. **What is my subsequent impression, and what is it built on?** Same rule — name its evidence.
3. **What made the difference?** A later event in the story? A second reading? A detail you noticed on the way back through? Another reader’s idea? Your own experience?
4. **What survived?** Comparing is not always a swap. Sometimes the later reading replaces the first; sometimes it sits beside it. You may still feel the first pull of “the grumpy old man” every time Mr Vella folds his arms — and now hold a second, better-supported reading at the same time. Both are true; one is a record of the first meeting, the other of the whole text.

Two cautions belong here. First, a changed impression is not always a corrected one. Sometimes the text genuinely held information back — a first impression formed in chapter one cannot know chapter twenty. Sometimes the change is in you: a text read after a family event is not the same text. Both kinds of change are worth naming when you compare. Second, your subsequent impression is not automatically smarter than your first one just because it came later. It still has to be supported. Later is not the same as better; *better evidenced* is.

5. Testing your reading against other readers’

Other readers will see things you missed, because they are not you — they bring different experiences, and their eyes land in different places. That is why discussion belongs in this section and not just in the classroom’s general noise. The curriculum asks you to compare others’ ideas against your own and reach an **independent decision** — your own reasoned conclusion — or a **consensus**, a shared position the group can agree on. Notice that both destinations are allowed. Not every discussion ends in agreement, and a well-reasoned disagreement is worth as much as a consensus, as long as you can say exactly what it rests on.

Three habits make the discussion worth having:

- **Put the other reading at full strength before you argue with it.** Restate the other person's interpretation the way its owner would recognise it — not a weak version that is easy to knock down. If you cannot restate it accurately, you have not heard it yet.
- **Test every reading against the text.** The question is never “whose opinion is louder?” but “which reading can the words support?” A reading that no detail supports is not a reading of that text. A reading that survives the final line — the line it would most like to skip — is a strong one.
- **Track what moves you.** When your mind changes mid-discussion, say so, and say why: *that detail about the date on the stake — I missed it, and it changes things*. Naming the exact moment your reading moved is the most valuable sentence a discussion can produce.

Figure 7 collects sentence stems for all of this: stems for restating, for testing, for agreeing with evidence, and for disagreeing without dismissing. You will use them in Questions 9 and 13.

Discussion stems: testing readings against each other

RESTATE IT ACCURATELY “So your reading is that... — have I got that right?” “The strongest form of your idea is...”	TEST IT AGAINST THE TEXT “Which line makes you say that?” “Does that reading survive the final stanza?”
BUILD ON IT “I agree, and I’d add...” “My reading starts the same, but then...”	DISAGREE RESPECTFULLY “I see the reading, but the line where I lose it is...” “My evidence points the other way: ...”

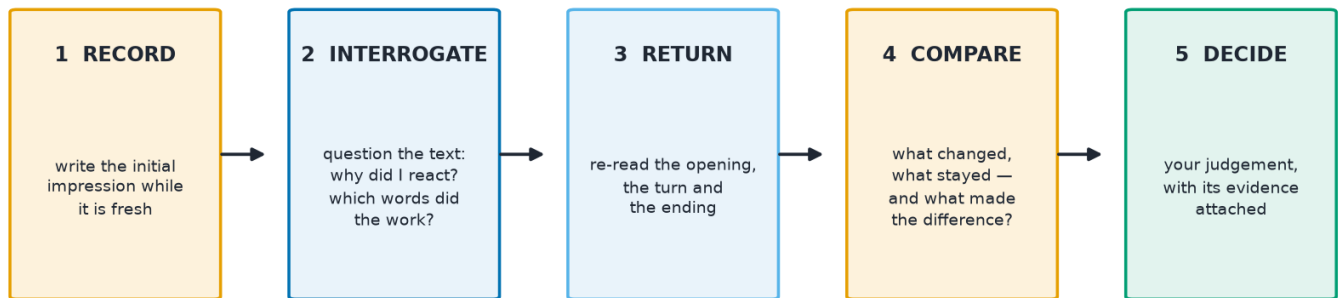
Test every reading against the text — not against who said it.

Table of discussion stems in four groups: stems for restating another reader's idea, stems for testing an idea against the text, stems for building agreement, and stems for respectful disagreement

6. The method: five moves for developing a response

Whenever a task asks you to develop a response or compare your impressions, the same five moves carry you through (Figure 8).

Five moves for developing a response



A developed response is not a betrayal of your first impression.

It is your first impression grown up — held together with the later understanding, and able to say how one became the other.

Flowchart of the five-move method for developing a response: record the initial impression, interrogate the text, return and re-read, compare the impressions, then decide on a judgement or interpretation

1. **Record.** Write your initial impression while it is still fresh — one or two lines: what you think so far, what you are unsure of, which detail you noticed first. You cannot compare a first impression with a later one if the first one was never written down.
2. **Interrogate.** To interrogate a text is to question it instead of just feeling it. Why did I react that way? Which words did the work? What did the writer choose, and what did they leave out?
3. **Return.** Re-read the key moments — the opening, the turn, the ending — now that you know more. Notice what you missed the first time.
4. **Compare.** Set the impressions side by side and answer the four questions from part 4: what was the first one built on, what is the later one built on, what made the difference, and what survived.
5. **Decide.** Reach your independent judgement or interpretation — or, in a group, your consensus — and put it into words with its evidence attached.

A final point, because students sometimes get this backwards: developing a response is not betraying your first impression, and it is not pretending the first one was stupid. Your initial impression is the text's first effect on a real reader, and that effect is part of what the text does. The developed response simply holds the first effect and the later understanding in the same hand, and can say how one became the other.

Where this section stops. What makes one text more valuable than another — the factors that distinguish value — belongs to Section 3C. The detailed analysis of devices such as extended metaphor and allegory belongs to Section 3D, and the contexts texts come from belong to Section 3A. This section is the engine room under all three: the habit of forming, testing and defending a response. In Level 10 the habit grows again, into building your own interpretation side by side with exploring how other readers interpret the same text (VC2E10LE02).

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Task. Read *The Wall at Saltgrass Bay* again above. The table below is completed for you: it follows four details from the story and shows how each one reads at first meeting, how it reads at the end, and what changes the reading. Match each row to its moment in the story as you read.

Detail from the story	First reading	Subsequent reading	What changes the reading
“He watched the street from his gate every morning, arms folded.”	He is nosy and unfriendly — keeping an eye on the street like a guard.	He is keeping watch over the dune and the replanting, the way you watch over something fragile.	The final scene shows what he has been protecting. The posture never changed; the reader's information did.

Detail from the story	First reading	Subsequent reading	What changes the reading
“Keep off the dune” in “a voice like a gate slamming”.	A rude order from a man who hates children and noise.	A real warning: the seedlings are trying to grow, and feet would undo his work.	His own last line — “They’re trying to grow” — explains the order as protection, not grumpiness.
The wall, and the balls that never come back.	He hoards things; the wall hides something mean; he keeps the balls out of spite.	The wall hides a working nursery — crates, rope, glass gathered off the beach — and the balls stayed because they landed in it.	The storm-morning scene finally shows what is behind the wall.
“On the stake was a date. It was older than me.”	(Almost missed — just a detail.)	He has been doing this alone, year after year, since before the narrator was born.	The date converts a “grumpy neighbour” into a long, quiet commitment. One small detail, and the whole first impression collapses.

The point to copy: every row names (1) the exact detail, (2) both readings, and (3) the specific thing that turned the reading around. That third column is where the real analysis lives — not “I changed my mind”, but *what evidence changed it*.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Task. Look again at Figure 4, which shows *Six AM* twice — once with first-reading notes and once with second-reading notes. The table below follows the same shift line by line.

Quote	Initial reading	Subsequent reading
“she buttoned her coat without a word”	She is cold and distant — she leaves without speaking to anyone.	She is exhausted, and the silence is tiredness, not distance.
“she’d eat standing, eyes half shut”	She is not interested in the family or the meal.	There is no time to sit: she eats whatever she can, half asleep, before she leaves again.
“I used to read her silence as a wall”	The poem is about a gap between them.	The poem is about misreading — the narrator admitting their own first impression was wrong.
“The bread on our table is her answer”	(Only decoration — bread on a table.)	The bread <i>is</i> the communication: her work at the bakery is how she speaks to her family.
“in the only language she has time for”	—	The closing line that flips the poem: the silence was never empty. It was full of work that became breakfast.

Notice the pivot. The first reading is not discarded like a mistake — the poem keeps it on the page (“I used to read...”), because the misreading is part of the story. The subsequent reading does not erase the initial one; it explains it. That is the shape a good comparison of impressions takes: *first I read it as... now I read it as... and here is what moved me*.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Task. Read the poem *The Best Ones*, then read two students’ interpretations of it.

The Best Ones

My grandmother bargains in three languages, none of them the one the stallholder speaks. She points, she frowns, she holds up two fingers, she pretends to walk away — slowly, as if she has all day, as if the mangoes are not the reason we came.

The vendor laughs and calls her back. They settle on a price neither of them means. She tells me she won. She always tells me that.

At home she divides the fruit: the best ones for my lunch box, the soft ones for herself, and she says the soft ones are her favourites. She has said this every year of my life.

Eli's reading. It's a light poem about a funny grandmother. She's dramatic at the market, she always claims she won the bargain, and the ending is just a family quirk — grandmothers saying the soft fruit is their favourite. The poem wants you to smile, not cry.

Rohan's reading. I think it's about sacrifice. The market scene is a joke on the surface, but the last stanza changes everything: she gives away the best fruit every single time, and then pretends she wanted the worst of it. "She has said this every year of my life" is the poem letting you see a pattern the child in the poem missed. It's about love that hides itself.

Write a response of six to eight sentences that compares both readings against your own, and reaches your own decision about what the poem is doing. You may agree with one student, combine parts of both, or disagree with both — but your position must point at specific lines.

Pointers to structure your answer (no scaffold given):

- Open with your own first impression of the poem in one sentence.
- Restate Eli's and Rohan's readings accurately — as they would recognise them — before you test them.
- Test both against the final stanza. Which lines does each reading handle best? Which one, if any, has to explain the last line away?
- Finish with your decision and the line that settled it.

A model opening, to show the shape — finish it yourself:

My first reading of *The Best Ones* was Eli's: a funny portrait of a grandmother who performs her way through the market. But the final stanza pushes back against that reading...

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Task. Write a paragraph of six to eight sentences comparing your initial and subsequent impressions of Mr Vella in *The Wall at Saltgrass Bay*, using the four questions from part 4 of the theory: what was your first impression built on, what is your later one built on, what made the difference, and what survived?

Pointers to structure your answer:

- Start with your first impression and the exact detail that produced it.
- Name the moment the impression turned — not "when we learned more about him" but the specific line or image.
- Quote at least twice.
- End with what survived: do you still feel the first reading at all, or did the second one replace it entirely? Which reading is better supported, and how do you know?

A model opening, to show the shape — finish it yourself:

On first reading, Mr Vella is the street's villain: the scowl, the folded arms, the balls that never come back. The detail that fixed that impression for me was...

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. The five moves of the method are out of order:

Compare the impressions · Decide on a judgement · Interrogate the text · Record the initial impression · Return and re-read

- (a) Put them in the correct order. (Figure 8 will help.)
- (b) For each move, write one sentence saying what a reader actually does at that step.

Q2. Copy the table below into your book. Find three details in *The Wall at Saltgrass Bay* that mean one thing on first reading and another by the end, and complete a row for each.

Detail	First reading	Subsequent reading	What changes the reading
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Q3. Sort the six statements below into three groups: **reports of a reaction**, **bare opinions** (judgements with nothing under them), and **substantiated judgements** (judgements with evidence attached). (Figure 5 will help.)

- (a) I didn't like the ending.
- (b) The ending is rushed: the sisters' argument is set up early and then forgotten until the last page.
- (c) The poem made me think about my own grandmother.
- (d) The narrator is annoying.
- (e) The narrator is unreliable: she tells us she is calm, but her sentences keep hurrying.
- (f) This is the best book I've read all year.

Q4. Each sentence below is a bare reaction. Rewrite it as a substantiated judgement about the text named, using one detail from that text and at least one stem from the substantiative column of Figure 6.

- (a) "The poem was boring." (*Six AM*)
- (b) "I liked him." (Mr Vella in *The Wall at Saltgrass Bay*)
- (c) "The ending was weird." (*The Best Ones*)

Q5. Read *Six AM* again.

- (a) What is a reader's likely initial impression of the mother?
- (b) Give two details from the first nine lines that support that impression.
- (c) Which line begins the turn to the subsequent reading, and what does that reading say the mother's silence really is?
- (d) The poem ends with "the only language she has time for". In two sentences, say what that language is and how the final line changes the meaning of "good morning".

Q6. Start (or continue) a reading-response journal for the text your class is studying. Make two entries:

- **Entry 1 — initial impression**, dated. Three lines: what you think of the text so far; one detail you noticed first; one thing you are unsure about.
- **Entry 2 — subsequent impression**, at least two days later. Three lines: what has changed in your reading; what made the difference (a later chapter? something someone said? a detail you re-read?); one thing from Entry 1 that you still hold.

Bring both entries to your next discussion. You will use them in Question 12.

Un scaffolded

Q7. Write an analytical paragraph of six to eight sentences answering:

How does the writer of *The Wall at Saltgrass Bay* shape the reader's changing impression of Mr Vella?

Make a claim about the writer's method, quote at least two details, explain the effect of each, and finish by naming what the shift does to the reader. Use the four-step shape from Example 1: detail, first reading, subsequent reading, what turns it.

Q8. Read the two extracts below. They are the opening and a later moment from the same novel, written for this section.

Extract A — the opening. On my first day I decided I did not like Mrs Alderton. She had one of those smiles that arrives a second too late, and she sorted the new students by surname as if we were parcels. When she read out my name she paused, just slightly, the way you pause over a word you don't approve of. I decided then that she had done it on purpose.

Extract B — term three. It was Mrs Alderton who noticed. I had gone quiet through September, and no one had mentioned it, because going quiet is a good trick for staying unseen. She kept me back once and slid a book across her desk — a novel about a girl whose brother has left home — and said only, "This one has an ending worth waiting for." I don't know how she knew. I still don't. But the pause over my name in week one, the one I had filed under dislike, turned out to be her way of learning it correctly. She does that with every name she doesn't want to mispronounce.

- (a) Identify two details in Extract A that build the narrator's initial impression of Mrs Alderton.
- (b) What is the subsequent impression the narrator reaches in Extract B?
- (c) One detail changes its meaning between the two extracts. Identify it and explain both of its readings.
- (d) Which impression is better supported by evidence, and does any part of the first impression survive? Give reasons.

Q9. (*Speaking and listening.*) In groups of three or four, discuss *The Best Ones* using the readings of Eli and Rohan from Example 3. Protocol:

- One person restates Eli's reading at full strength; another restates Rohan's. Nobody argues until both readings have been heard accurately.
- Each person then gives their own reading of the poem, with at least one line quoted.
- Test all three readings against the final stanza: which reading accounts for every line?
- Record where the group lands: an independent decision for each member, or a consensus. If you disagree, say exactly which line the disagreement turns on.
- Report to the class in three parts: the reading, the evidence, and what — if anything — moved your mind during the discussion.

Q10. Write a short opening of your own, sixty to ninety words, built for two readings: a first reading that points one way, and a second reading that the same words will support once the reader knows more. Underline the two or three words that change their meaning. Then swap with a partner: can they find the second reading without being told what it is?

Q11. Consider this claim:

“Our first impressions of characters say more about us than about the characters.”

Write a reasoned response. You must:

- give the strongest version of the case *for* the claim (what its defenders would actually say);
- give the strongest version of the case *against* it;
- then state your own position — with reasons, and with reference to at least one text from this section.

Use the definitions of *impression* and *response* from the start of this section. You are marked on the quality of your reasoning — defined terms, real examples, honest limits — not on which side you land on. Whichever side you favour, spend equal effort on the other one.

Q12. (*Extended response.*) Choose a text your class has studied this year. Write a developed response of about one page showing how your impressions of it changed between first meeting it and your later reading. Structure it with the five moves from Figure 8:

- record: your initial impression, with the detail that produced it;
- interrogate and return: what you noticed on re-reading, naming at least one language feature, device or structure from your Level 8 toolkit;
- compare: what changed, what stayed, and what made the difference;
- decide: your developed judgement or interpretation, with its evidence;
- and include one other reader’s idea (a classmate’s, your teacher’s, your family’s) and say what you did with it — agreed, tested it against the text, or pushed back.

Q13. (*Speaking and listening.*) In pairs, take turns giving a two-minute talk on: *a text I changed my mind about* — a book, film, poem, song or game. The listener’s job is to ask two substantiative questions when the talk ends: questions that ask for the evidence behind the changed mind (*what detail did you re-read? what did that comment make you notice?*), not just *why?*. Protocol: listen without interrupting; ask about the evidence, not the taste; the talker must point to something specific in the text, not only to their own feelings. Swap roles.

Q14. Personal experience can move an interpretation as certainly as a re-read can. Write five to seven sentences about a time your own experience changed how you read a text — something that happened in your life that made an old text mean something new. Name the text, name the experience, and point to the specific line, scene or moment that changed its meaning.

Answers

These are sample answers. For open questions, any response that meets the task is acceptable.

Q1. (a) Record the initial impression → Interrogate the text → Return and re-read → Compare the impressions → Decide on a judgement. (b) Samples: Record — write your first impression while it is still fresh; Interrogate — ask why you reacted that way and which words did the work; Return — re-read key moments with what you now know; Compare — set the impressions side by side and name what changed, stayed and why; Decide — state your judgement or interpretation with its evidence attached.

Q2. Any three well-explained rows. Samples: “arms folded” at the gate (guard → guardian); the unreturned balls (spite → they landed among the seedlings); “a voice like a gate slamming” (rudeness → urgency about fragile plants); the wall itself (hiding something mean → hiding a nursery). The third column must name the specific evidence that turns each reading.

Q3. Reports of a reaction: (a), (c) — both describe the reader’s own experience. Bare opinions: (d), (f) — judgements with nothing under them. Substantiated judgements: (b), (e) — each names a judgement and attaches evidence from the text.

Q4. Accept any rewrite that turns the reaction into a claim about the text with a named detail. Samples: (a) “Six AM rewards a second reading: details that first sound cold, like ‘she buttoned her coat without a word’, turn out to be tiredness, and the turn earns its ending.” (b) “Mr Vella earns respect by the end, because the detail of the stake’s date shows his care for the dune is older than the narrator.” (c) “The ending of *The Best Ones* works because the flat final line — ‘She has said this every year of my life’ — reveals a pattern the child never saw.”

Q5. (a) That the mother is distant, cold, or shut off from the family. (b) Any two of: “she buttoned her coat without a word”; “she’d eat standing, eyes half shut”; her alarm going off in the dark; the narrator reading her silence “as a wall”. (c) “Now I read the same things differently” begins the turn; the subsequent reading says the silence is tiredness and work, not distance. (d) The language is her labour — the bread she brings home. “Good morning” stops being a spoken greeting and becomes the warm bread arriving before the narrator wakes; she has been saying it every morning all along, in work instead of words.

Q6. Answers will vary; the journal is ongoing class work. Reward Entry 1 written before Entry 2 is possible (a genuine first impression, not a summary), a dated pair of entries, and an Entry 2 that names *what made the difference* rather than just reporting a change.

Q7. See the model paragraph in the fully-worked solutions. A sound answer makes a claim about the writer’s method (the story withholds what is behind the wall, so the reader forms the same wrong impression as the narrator), quotes at least two details, explains the first and subsequent reading of each, and names the effect of the shift on the reader.

Q8. (a) Any two of: the smile that “arrives a second too late”; sorting students “as if we were parcels”; the pause over the narrator’s name, read as disapproval. (b) That Mrs Alderton is quietly attentive: she notices the narrator going quiet when nobody else does, offers exactly the right book, and learns names with care. (c) The pause over the name. In Extract A it reads as disapproval — pausing “over a word you don’t approve of”; in Extract B the same pause is her way of learning the name correctly so she does not mispronounce it. (d) Sample: the second is better supported, because Extract B supplies an explanation for the detail and a pattern (“every name”). Some of the first impression may survive as a memory of how the day felt — the late smile is still odd — but the interpretation built on it (“she did it on purpose”) does not survive the evidence.

Q9. Teacher observation. Look for: restatements of Eli’s and Rohan’s readings that their owners would accept; readings supported by quoted lines; the final stanza used as the test; a clear record of where the group landed (independent decisions or consensus) and the line the disagreement turned on; reports that name what moved minds, if anything did.

Q10. Answers will vary. Reward an opening whose first reading is clear, whose underlined words genuinely support a second reading, and a partner who finds that second reading without coaching. A model opening is in the fully-worked solutions.

Q11. Marked on reasoning, not conclusion. A strong response defines its terms (impression, response); gives the defender’s case in real strength (impressions are formed from what the reader brings — experience, mood, expectation

— so two readers meeting the same character can form opposite impressions, and the difference lies in the readers); gives the critic’s case in real strength (writers build impressions purposely out of chosen details, so a first impression can be evidence about the text’s construction; also, shared first impressions across many readers point to the text, not the reader); then takes a position with reasons and a text from the section. Responses that only attack one side, or reach a conclusion without reasons, score low regardless of which side they pick.

Q12. See the fully-worked solutions for the shape of a strong response. Reward: a genuine initial impression with its detail; at least one named feature, device or structure noticed on return; a comparison that says what changed, stayed and why; a decided judgement with evidence; and another reader’s idea handled well — restated accurately, then agreed with, tested or pushed back on.

Q13. Teacher observation. Look for: talks that name a specific text and a specific change of mind; listener questions that ask for evidence rather than taste; talkers who point to something in the text (a re-read line, a noticed detail) rather than only to their feelings; respectful turn-taking.

Q14. Answers will vary. Reward a named text, a named experience, and a specific line, scene or moment whose meaning changed — with the connection between the experience and the text made explicit, not just asserted.

Fully-worked solutions

Q4 — model rewrites.

- (a) *Six AM* is quiet rather than boring: its details seem plain on a first reading — a coat buttoned without a word, a meal eaten standing — and that plainness is exactly what the poem turns, when the same details reappear as proof of care. A reader who stops at the first reading misses the turn, but the turn is what the poem was built for.
- (b) Mr Vella becomes the person you most respect in the story, because the stake with its old date proves his care for the dune has been running longer than the narrator has been alive — the detail converts a “grumpy neighbour” into a long, quiet commitment.
- (c) The ending of *The Best Ones* unsettles on purpose: the flat, repeated line “She has said this every year of my life” turns a joke about bargaining into a pattern of giving everything away, and the reader feels the switch only after the poem is over.

Each rewrite does three things the bare reaction could not: it makes a claim about the text (*quiet rather than boring, becomes the person you most respect, unsettles on purpose*), it names the detail the claim stands on, and it says what that detail does to the reader.

Q7 — model analytical paragraph.

The writer of *The Wall at Saltgrass Bay* shapes the reader’s changing impression of Mr Vella by withholding one fact — what he keeps behind the wall — until the reader has already judged him. The early details all point the same way: he watches the street “arms folded”, the narrator’s balls never come back, and his one line of dialogue arrives “in a voice like a gate slamming”. Each one reads as hostility, and the reader builds the same theory as the street does. Then the morning after the storm turns every detail over at once: the watching becomes keeping watch over seedlings, the wall hides crates and coils of rope instead of spite, and the stake with a date “older than me” proves the care has been running for years, alone. Because the reader formed the wrong impression for the same honest reasons as the narrator, the correction lands harder — the story does not just tell you Mr Vella was misjudged, it makes you feel yourself misjudging him.

The paragraph follows the shape of Example 1: it quotes the details, gives the first reading of each, gives the subsequent reading of each, and names what turns the reading. Its final sentence steps back and says what the shift does to the reader, which is where the judgement lives.

Q10 — model opening.

The letter sat on the kitchen table, still in its envelope, and Mum walked past it three times that morning without picking it up. I thought she had forgotten it. She is good at forgetting things — Dad’s birthday, the bin night, the sound of her own phone. I made a joke about it at lunch, and my friend laughed. It was only later, when I saw her hands were shaking around her cup, that I understood she had read it already, through the paper, and was not ready to say the words out loud.

The first reading is built into the narrator’s voice (*she is good at forgetting things*); the second reading is waiting in “her hands were shaking”, and the envelope the narrator never mentions opening does the work of the turn. The underlined words would be *without picking it up* and *forgetting*: first they read as carelessness, then as avoidance of news too heavy to speak.

Q11 — model structure.

For: First impressions are formed from what the reader brings — past experience, mood, expectation — before the text has done much of its work. Two readers can meet the same character and leave with opposite impressions; when that happens, the difference cannot be in the character, because the character is the same. The narrator of the Mrs Alderton extracts forms a hostile impression on day one and has to admit, term three, that the evidence was never hostile at all — the pause over the name was care, not disapproval. The impression was built by a nervous new student, not by the teacher.

Against: Writers do not leave first impressions to chance; they build them out of chosen details — the folded arms, the unreturned balls, the smile a second too late. When many readers form the same first impression of the same character, the impression is evidence about the text’s construction, not about the readers’ moods. And an impression formed fast is not thereby shallow: readers often sense in chapter one what the plot takes a hundred pages to confirm.

Position (sample): The claim is half right, and the honest answer is about which half wins in which case. When readers disagree with each other, the difference usually lies in the readers; when they agree, the cause usually lies in the text. First impressions are a meeting point — the text’s opening moves and the reader’s arriving self — and separating the two shares is the work this section teaches.

Note that the model takes a position — yours may differ, and a well-reasoned opposite position scores equally. What is marked: defined terms, both sides at full strength, a position with conditions, and honest limits.

Q12 — the shape of a strong extended response.

A strong response moves through all five stages of the method, and the joins between them are visible:

- **Record.** “When we first read the novel, I thought the main character was selfish, because she refused to...” — an initial impression with its detail, dated to the first reading.
- **Interrogate and return.** One named feature, device or structure found on the way back through: the order the chapters arrive in, a repeated image, the short sentences at a key moment, a change in narrative voice — and what that choice does.
- **Compare.** What changed, what stayed, and what made the difference — a later chapter, a re-read detail, a class discussion, the reader’s own experience. The honest answer is often “part of my first reading survived”, and that is worth saying.
- **Another reader.** One classmate’s (or family member’s, or teacher’s) idea, restated accurately, then agreed with, tested against the text, or pushed back on — with the line that settled it.
- **Decide.** The developed judgement or interpretation, stated once, clearly, with its evidence attached — not a summary of the plot.

Q14 — a model reflection.

I first read *Six AM* as a poem about a parent who is never there. A year later, after my own older brother moved out and the house went quiet, I read it again and found the opposite: a poem about presence in disguise. The line that changed for me was “the bread on our table is her answer” — first time through it looked like decoration, and after my brother left I could hear it as a definition of love: people who cannot say the thing, saying it in what they do and leave behind. The poem did not change. My house did, and that moved my reading.

The reflection names the text, names the experience, and points to one specific line whose meaning turned — which is the whole skill of the personal response, kept honest by evidence.

Section 3B · English 9 · Curriculum reference: VC2E9LE02 (“explore and develop responses, including personal responses, to literary texts, comparing initial and subsequent impressions”), drawing on VC2E9LE02.E01. All stories, poems, extracts and student voices in this section were written for this book.

How devices, language features and images shape preference about social, moral or ethical positions

Two friends watch the same game on Saturday. On the walk home, one says, “The captain had no choice — teams have to pick height.” The other says, “They cut the one player who stayed late to help.” Nothing they saw was different. The facts are the same. What differs is the lean each of them carried home — and most of that lean was built before the walk started, by whoever told the story.

This section is about that building. Every text takes sides — on who belongs, on what counts as the right thing to do, on what to do when two right things collide — and it takes those sides with tools you can name: point of view, word choice, what the story rewards, angle, colour and light. Once you can name the tools, you can watch the lean arrive. Then you can decide for yourself whether to agree with it, resist it, or hold two sides in view at once.

Curriculum focus

Analyse how literary devices and language features, and still and moving images, shape an audience’s preference about the social, moral or ethical positions presented in literary texts (VC2E9LE03, Literature — Engaging with and responding to literature)

Draws on

VC2E9LE03 .E01 — reflecting on and discussing responses to literature, and collaboratively formulating a list of factors that distinguish value

Builds on (Level 8)

VC2E8LE03 — how language and still and moving images influence an audience’s response

Achievement-standard hook

“When demonstrating understanding of texts, students discuss their responses to texts from diverse historical, cultural and social contexts, and they compare initial and subsequent impressions. They explore different responses, including personal impressions. They analyse how language and/or still and moving images and sound represent values, beliefs and attitudes and are used to shape audiences’ preferences.” (Reading and Viewing)

Modes in this section

Reading and viewing · Writing · Speaking and listening

What we mean by *position, preference and social, moral, ethical*. The Victorian Curriculum uses these words but does not define them, and outside the classroom they are contested — reasonable people use them differently. In this section we treat them as follows.

- A **position** is the side of a question that a text invites its audience to take — not a sentence the text prints, but a lean the text builds.
- A **preference** is the lean an audience finds itself holding before it has decided. It is not a verdict and not an argument — it is where you find yourself, which is exactly what texts work on.
- **Social** positions are about how people should live together — who belongs, who is included, how groups treat their members.
- **Moral** positions are about right and wrong in personal behaviour — honesty, loyalty, kindness, harm.
- **Ethical** positions are reasoned stands taken when two rights genuinely clash — when keeping a promise costs someone, or loyalty pulls against safety.

Every question in this section is answerable on these definitions alone. If your own definition differs, note it — the difference is itself worth a paragraph.

Theory

1. Every text takes a side — quietly

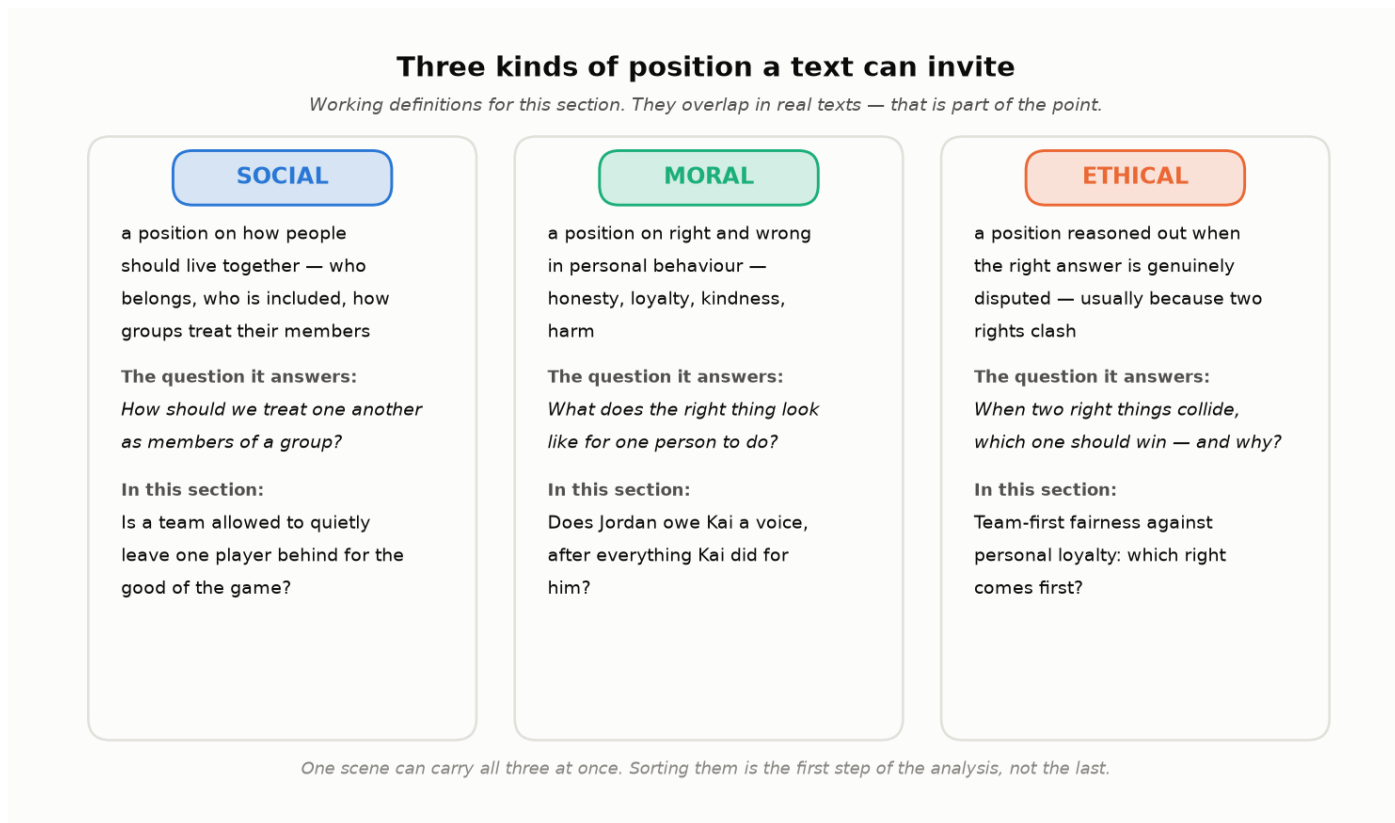
Texts rarely announce their positions. You will almost never find the sentence “the reader should side with Kai”. Instead, the position arrives built into the telling: whose eyes we see through, which words are chosen, what the story

lets happen to whom. The audience's lean — its **preference** — is shaped out of these choices, usually before the reader notices any choice was made.

That is the verb the curriculum uses: texts **shape** a preference. Not force, not trick — shape. A shaped preference can be agreed with, and it can be resisted; but in both cases you are better off knowing it was shaped. The skill in this section is tracing the push backwards, from the feeling you finish with to the choices that built it.

2. First, sort the position

Before you can trace a push, you need to know what kind of ground the text is pushing on. The curriculum names three kinds of position, and each one answers a different question. Figure 1 defines them and gives each one its test question, with an example from the model text you will meet in a moment.



Three panels defining social, moral and ethical positions, each with its test question and an example from this section's model text

The three overlap in real texts, and that is part of the point: the bench scene below carries a social question (may a group leave one member behind?), a moral one (does Jordan owe Kai a voice?) and an ethical one (team-first fairness against personal loyalty — which right comes first?) at the same time. Sorting them is the first step of the analysis, not the last.

3. Three channels carry the lean

Once a text has a position, the position has to reach you. The writer's choices travel three routes — three channels — to arrive at your preference. Figure 2 maps them.

Three channels between the text and your preference

The writer's choices travel three routes to reach the side you lean toward.

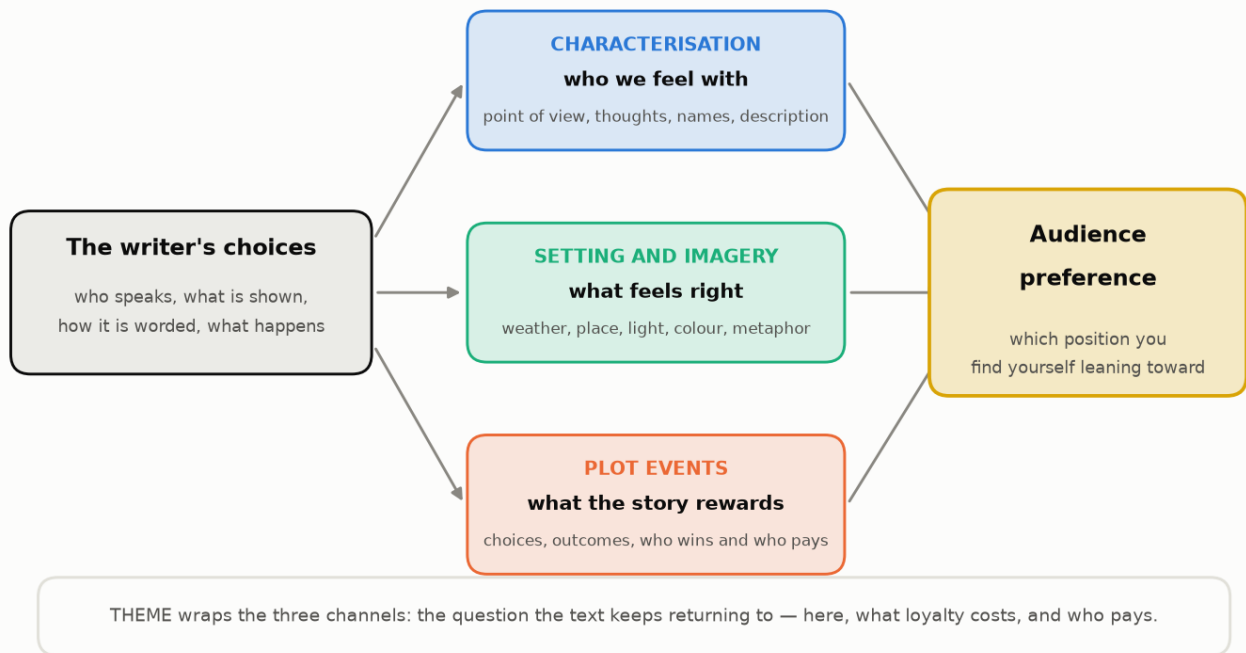


Diagram of three channels between a writer's choices and the audience's preference — characterisation, setting and imagery, and plot events — with theme wrapping all three

- **Characterisation — who we feel with.** Characterisation is the way a text builds a person: whose eyes we get, whose thoughts we hear, what the person is called, what they are shown doing. We lean toward whoever we are placed inside. A character we never hear from is a character it is easy to cut.
- **Setting and imagery — what feels right.** Weather, place, light, colour and figurative language set the mood a decision lands in. A call made in cold light reads differently from the same call made in warm light; a field that “snaps” its flags is not the same field as one that “sings” with them.
- **Plot events — what the story rewards.** Choices have outcomes, and the story decides who wins and who pays. Whatever an ending rewards is what the story, in the end, recommends. This is the loudest channel: endings argue.

Under all three runs the **theme** — the question the text keeps returning to. In this section's texts, the theme is what loyalty costs, and who pays.

4. A toolkit of devices

The channels above carry the lean; the devices are the hands that put it there. Figure 3 prints the toolkit for this section: eight language devices and the image features, each with what it is and the lean it usually produces.

A toolkit for shaping preference

Nine moves texts use to lean an audience — and the usual effect of each.

Device	What it is	How it can lean an audience	Example in this section
Point of view	whose eyes and thoughts we get	we lean toward whoever we are inside	"watching the second half start" (A)
Connotation	the feeling a word carries	one word frames a choice as decent or cold	"verdict" (A) vs "a hard call" (B)
Imagery	language that paints a picture	a shared picture makes feeling concrete	"the team moved like one body" (B)
Repetition	an idea or word returned on purpose	what returns is what matters	"Nobody ... Nobody ..." (A)
Contrast	two things set against each other	the gap tells you what to value	Tuesday's kindness vs Friday's silence (A)
Rhetorical question	a question asked for effect	puts the text's question in your head	"What was there to look at?" (implied, B)
Symbolism	an object standing for a bigger idea	one small thing carries the whole position	the empty end of the bench (A)
Modality	how certain the language sounds	high certainty closes debate early	"it was the right call" (B)
Image features	angle, colour, light, distance	lifts, shrinks, welcomes, distances	the two poster frames, Figure 7

The same device can serve any position. What matters is which position it is serving, and how.

Table of nine devices and image features with what each one is, how it can lean an audience, and an example from this section

Three of the terms are worth pinning down at first use:

- **Connotation** — the feeling a word carries on top of its plain meaning. *Cut* and *drop* can name the same event; they do not feel the same.
- **Modality** — how certain the language sounds. "It was the right call" is high modality: the debate is closed before it opens. "It might have been the right call" leaves the door where it was.
- **Rhetorical question** — a question asked for effect rather than for an answer. It plants the text's question in your head and lets it sit there as if it were your own.

One rule matters more than the list: **the same device can serve any position**. Point of view can make you feel for the captain as easily as for the player on the bench. A device is a tool, not a side. What matters is which position it is serving — and how.

5. One scene, two tellings

Time to see the toolkit at work. This section's model text is a short scene called "The Bench", written for this book. Both versions below agree on the facts:

- Kai is cut to the bench at half-time.
- Dev, the captain, makes the call.
- Jordan, who Kai helped train on Tuesday, takes Kai's place.
- The team wins.



Everything else differs — because the telling differs. Figure 4 prints Version A, told from beside Kai, with each paragraph's move labelled.

Model text 1 — "The Bench", Version A

The same facts as Version B — but told from beside Kai. Labels name the move each paragraph makes.

Kai sat at the far end of the bench, boots still laced, watching the second half start without him. Nobody had said "You're off." Nobody had had to. The coach looked at the team sheet, then at the ground, and Dev said, "We need height in the middle," which was true, and was also, somehow, a verdict.

POINT OF VIEW — locked to the bench

The wind took the flags along the sideline and snapped them straight. Around Kai, the reserve players sat in a row, each of them studying their own hands.

WEATHER AND POSTURE — the scene goes quiet with him

On the field, Dev called the play. Jordan heard him, loud and certain, and thought about Tuesday: Kai staying late, holding the bag while Jordan worked on kicking. One more set. No one watching, nothing to gain.

FLASHBACK — Tuesday builds the debt

Jordan's name was next on the team sheet. Jordan had always known that.

SHORT SENTENCES — the gain is named, and owned

Nothing here says "sympathise with Kai". The lean is built out of point of view, weather, a flashback and two short sentences.

Model text one, "The Bench" Version A told from beside Kai, with each paragraph's preference-shaping move labelled

Figure 5 prints Version B: exactly the same facts, told from beside Dev. Watch what happens to your lean.

Model text 2 — "The Bench", Version B

Exactly the same facts as Version A — told from beside Dev. The lean reverses. Labels name each move.

Dev made the call at half-time, and it was the right call. The middle was losing, the team needed height, and Kai had been a half-step slow all season. Someone had to say it. Better the captain than the coach. Better clean than cruel.

CERTAINTY — high
modality, and a contrast
that flatters

Kai took the bench without a word. Dev watched him go and felt the armband on his sleeve more than the score. "Winning is a habit," his father used to say. "So is telling people straight."

MAXIM AND AUTHORITY —
the father's words lend
weight

The second half opened up. The team moved like one body, and Dev's calls rang out clear and quick. Jordan came on at the break. No one looked at the bench. There was nothing to look at.

REWARD — the story pays
the hard call back in
victory

By full time the job was done. In the rooms afterwards, someone said it had been a hard call. Dev nodded. Hard calls were the job too.

NOMINALISATION — the
cost is packed into duty

Read closely: "No one looked at the bench. There was nothing to look at." The version that pushes hardest still leaves its seam showing.

Model text two, "The Bench" Version B told from beside Dev, with each paragraph's preference-shaping move labelled

Same facts, opposite lean. Nothing new happened between the two versions — no new event, no new character. The only thing that changed was the devices: point of view, connotation, what the flashback is allowed to remember, what the ending rewards.

Read Version B's third paragraph again closely: "No one looked at the bench. There was nothing to look at." The version that pushes hardest still leaves its seam showing — a line that insists too much. Seams like that are where analysis begins.

One more move in Version B deserves a name. Its last paragraph says "the job was done" and "hard calls were the job too". That is **nominalisation** — packing an action into a noun, so that *someone decided* becomes *the decision* and *this cost Kai something* becomes *the cost*. Nominalisation is useful and everywhere, but notice what it does here: it lets the telling pack the cost of a choice into the duty of making it, so the cost stops looking like anyone's in particular.

6. Poems and images lean too

The same shaping happens outside prose. Figure 6 prints a model poem, "Halfway", written for this book, with the device in each stanza labelled at the side.

Model poem — "Halfway"

Written for this book. Every stanza carries a device; the labels name them.

*Halfway up the hill the leader fell,
and the race went on without her —
thirty backs, thirty pairs of heels,
the ribbon waiting at the top.*

IMAGERY AND REPETITION —
the field becomes one body
moving away; "thirty"
twice counts everyone who
did not turn

*Only Sef turned.
She saw the hand on the gravel, the red scrape,
the crowd's one sharp intake of breath,
and her own feet arguing with her: go, go, go.*

PERSONIFICATION — her feet
argue with her, so
stopping costs something;
"go" three times is the
race still pulling

She stopped anyway.

ONE SHORT SENTENCE — the
turn of the whole poem
gets three words

*Some finish lines you cross.
Some you carry someone to.*

CONTRAST — two kinds of
finish line; the second
kind quietly redefines
winning

*They walked in together, last,
and the crowd stood up
like they had seen somebody win.*

SIMILE — the crowd hands
Sef the win, without
moving her a single place
up the field

The poem never says "helping beats winning". It arranges a fall, a turn, and a crowd — and lets the lean arrive.

Model poem "Halfway" with the preference-shaping device labelled beside each stanza

Notice what the poem never does: it never says "helping beats winning". It arranges a fall, a turn, and a crowd — and lets the lean arrive as if you had reached it yourself. That is what devices do at their best: the audience's preference feels earned, not pushed.

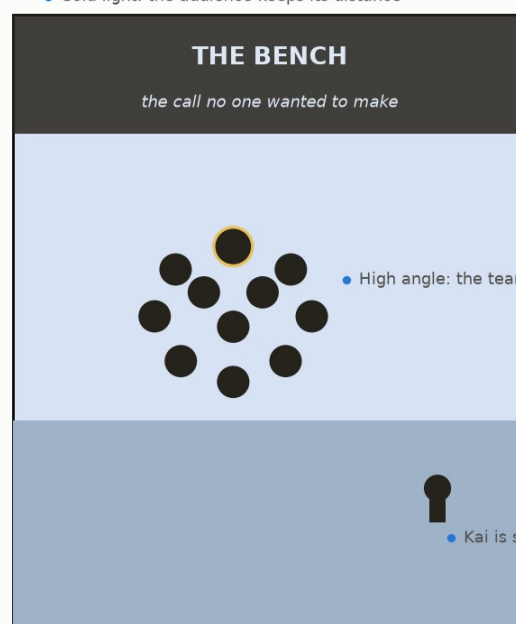
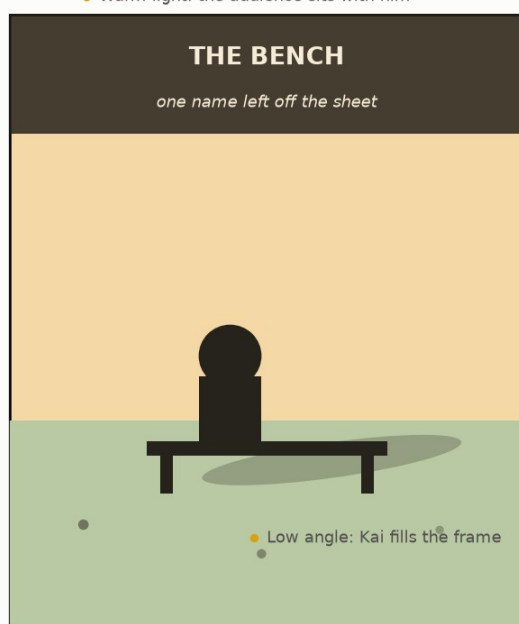
Images run the same play with their own features. Figure 7 shows two poster frames constructed for an imagined film of "The Bench" — same story, same characters, different angle, colour, light and distance.

One film, two frames: how images lean an audience

Two poster frames constructed for this section. Same story, same characters — different angle, colour and light.

● Warm light: the audience sits with him

● Cold light: the audience keeps its distance



● The pitch stretches away, empty

Frames constructed for this book. In a real film the same choices — angle, colour, light, distance — do this work in every shot.

Two constructed poster frames for the same scene — one warm and low-angle with a lone figure, one cold and high-angle with a huddle — labelled with light, angle and framing choices

A low angle gives Kai the size the scene took from him; warm light invites the audience to sit with him; the empty pitch says what is missing. The other frame does the opposite work with the opposite choices. No words needed — angle, colour, light and distance are the poem's devices in another uniform.

7. Tracing the push: a method

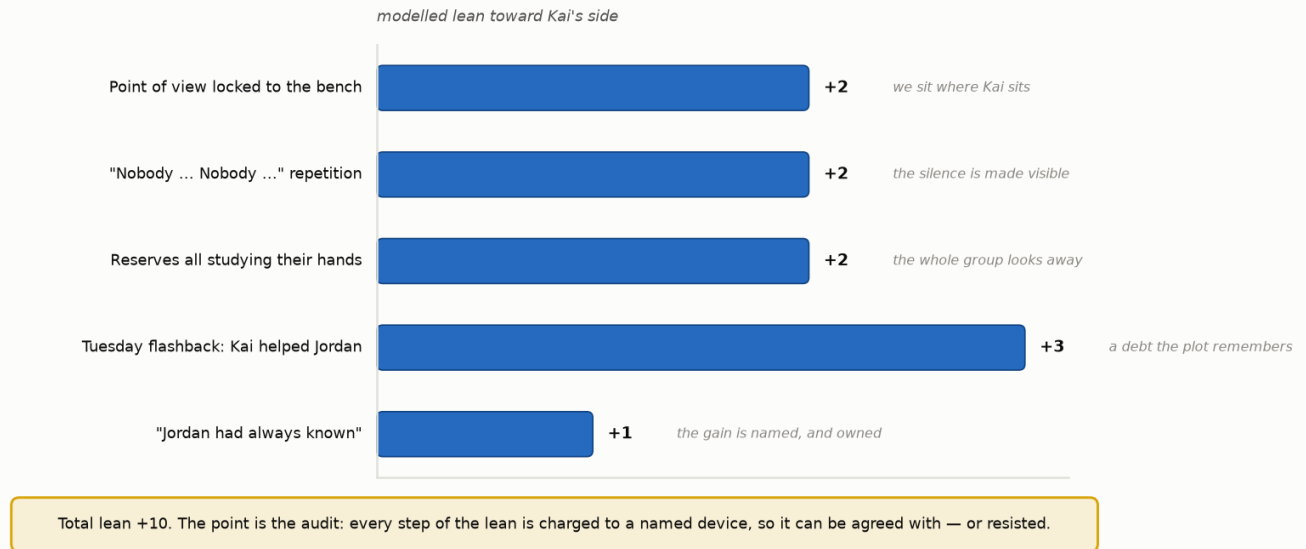
Here is the method this section practises, in five steps:

1. **Name the position.** Is the text pushing on social, moral or ethical ground? (Use the tests in Figure 1.)
2. **Find the device.** Quote the exact words, or name the image feature. No device, no claim.
3. **Describe the lean.** What does the device make easy to feel — and what does it make hard to feel? “We feel for Kai” is a start; “the flashback makes Jordan’s silence feel like a debt” is analysis.
4. **Test the other side.** What would the opposite version say? What changes if you remove the device? A push you can state is a push you can answer.
5. **Decide.** Agree, resist, or hold both sides in view — with reasons. Shaped preferences are not wrong preferences; they are preferences whose receipts you have now seen.

Figure 8 demonstrates step 3 as an audit: a modelled lean, device by device, while reading Version A.

Tracing the push: five devices, one lean (demonstration)

A modelled audience-lean while reading Version A. Illustrative values — copy the method, not the numbers.



Horizontal bar chart showing a modelled audience lean after each of five devices in Version A, with a note that the values are illustrative and the method is the point

The values are illustrative — copy the method, not the numbers. The point is the audit itself: every step of the lean is charged to a named device, so the lean can be agreed with — or resisted — one receipt at a time.

8. Judging responses: what distinguishes value

So far you have traced how texts shape preferences. There is a second question, and it is about *responses* — yours, and other people's. The elaboration for VC2E9LE03 puts the task plainly: "*reflecting on and discussing responses to literature (including characterisation, setting details, plot events, themes and literary devices used to achieve particular effects) and collaboratively formulating a list of factors that distinguish value.*"

Two things to notice about that task. First, **value here means the worth of a response** — how much it is worth listening to — not the mark it receives, and not whether it agrees with you. Two readers can lean opposite ways and both be giving valuable responses, if each one shows their receipts. Second, the list of factors is something you **formulate collaboratively**: it is built by the class and argued over, not handed down. Figure 9 gives your class a starting list to argue with.

What makes one response more valuable than another?

A starting list for the collaborative task in Q11. Your class list may reorder it, add to it, or cut it back — with reasons.

1. Evidence from the text

quotes, scene details, or image features you can point to — not just the claim

“Kai sat ... watching the second half start without him”

2. A named device or feature

the move has a name: point of view, connotation, imagery, repetition, angle, colour

the flashback to Tuesday; the low camera angle

3. An effect on the audience

what the device does to the lean — who we feel with, what we reward

places the reader beside Kai, so the exclusion is felt from inside

4. Another reading considered

the strongest version of the opposite preference, answered rather than ignored

Version B’s case for the captain is real; here is why A’s push still wins

5. Honest limits

what the reader may be missing, and what would change their mind

a viewer who has been cut from a team may lean with B instead

Value here means the worth of a response — how much it is worth listening to — not the mark it receives.

Five factors that distinguish a valuable response to literature, from evidence in the text to honest limits, each with an example

Keep the symmetry rule in view while you judge: test the responses you favour as hard as the ones you don’t. If a reading you agree with has no evidence and names no device, it is thin by the same factors that make a reading you dislike thin. You are marked on the quality of your reasoning — defined terms, real evidence, honest limits — not on which side you land on.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Task. Figure 4 shows Version A of “The Bench” with each paragraph’s move labelled. The analysis table below is completed for you. Read it line by line, matching each quote to the device and its effect on the lean.

Quote from Version A	Device or feature	What it does to the lean
“watching the second half start without him”	Point of view locked to the bench	Places the reader where Kai sits. The exclusion is felt from inside, not reported from outside.
“Nobody had said ‘You’re off.’ Nobody had had to.”	Repetition	The doubled “Nobody” makes the silence visible: no one needed to say anything, because no one was willing to.
“which was true, and was also, somehow, a verdict”	Connotation	“Verdict” belongs to a court. The selection is framed as a judgement

Quote from Version A	Device or feature	What it does to the lean
		passed on a person, not a tactic chosen for a game.
“each of them studying their own hands”	Imagery and posture	The whole row of reserves looks away. The scene itself goes quiet with Kai — shame becomes weather.
“Kai staying late, holding the bag ... One more set. No one watching, nothing to gain.”	Flashback and contrast	Builds the debt: Tuesday’s kindness set beside Friday’s silence. The reader remembers what the tellers of this version would most like forgotten.
“Jordan had always known that.”	Short sentence	The gain is named plainly and owned by the person it benefits. It reads like a confession, not a celebration.

The point to copy: every row names (1) the exact words, (2) the device those words show, and (3) what the device does to the lean — not “it makes Kai sympathetic”, but *how* the sympathy is built.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Task. Figure 6 prints the poem “Halfway”. The table glosses the move each stanza makes. Read it alongside the poem.

Quote from the poem	Device	What it does to the lean
“thirty backs, thirty pairs of heels”	Imagery and repetition	The field becomes one body moving away. “Thirty” twice counts everyone who did not turn — the race’s answer to the fall, in a number.
“her own feet arguing with her: go, go, go”	Personification	Her feet argue with her, so stopping costs something. The race is still pulling at Sef, and the reader feels the pull too.
“She stopped anyway.”	One short sentence	The turn of the whole poem gets three words. The brevity makes the choice look quiet and total at once.
“Some finish lines you cross. / Some you carry someone to.”	Contrast	Two kinds of finish line, set side by side. The second kind quietly redefines winning without ever arguing for it.
“like they had seen somebody win”	Simile	The crowd hands Sef the win without moving her a single place up the field. The poem’s preference arrives as an image, not a lecture.

Notice also what the poem refuses to do — it never states its position. It arranges a fall, a turn, and a crowd, and lets the lean arrive. When you write about this poem, your job is to show the reader the machinery behind that “arrive”.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Task. Figure 7 shows two poster frames constructed for an imagined film of “The Bench”. Same story, same characters — different angle, colour, light and distance.

Compare the two frames. In five to seven sentences, explain how each one leans the audience, and which one pushes harder on you.

Pointers to structure your answer (no scaffold given):

- Start with one sentence on what stays the same (story, characters) and what changes (angle, colour, light, distance).
- Give each frame one named image feature and its usual effect: low angle, warm light, the empty pitch — against high angle, cold light, Kai small at the edge.
- Read the two title lines as positions: “one name left off the sheet” against “the call no one wanted to make”.
- Finish with which frame pushes you harder, and why — including whether you felt yourself resist it.

A model opening, to show the shape — finish it yourself:

Both posters sell the same film, but they stand in different places. The warm frame puts the audience on the bench beside Kai, while the cold frame...

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Each scenario below is the seed of a story. Classify each seed as a mainly **social**, **moral** or **ethical** position, and give your reason in one sentence. Use the test questions from Figure 1: *how should we live together?* (social), *what is the right thing for one person to do?* (moral), *when two rights collide, which should win?* (ethical).

Scenario	Social, moral, or ethical?	Reason
(a) A story in which new arrivals eat lunch alone until one student moves her bag and shares the table.		
(b) A story in which a player secretly fouls an opponent and never confesses.		
(c) A story in which a character breaks a promise to a friend in order to stop that friend harming someone else.		
(d) A film in which one family's leftovers become another family's dinner.		
(e) A story in which a sister reads her brother's diary.		
(f) A story in which a worker reports a safety fault against her boss's orders, knowing her workmates may lose shifts.		

Q2. Match each device (1–6) to its usual effect (a–f).

1. point of view
 2. connotation
 3. repetition
 4. contrast
 5. high camera angle
 6. warm light
- (a) the subject looks small or less powerful
 - (b) we lean toward whoever we are placed inside
 - (c) one word can frame a choice as decent or cold
 - (d) the gap between two things tells you what to value
 - (e) what returns is marked as what matters
 - (f) the subject feels close and welcome

Q3. Here is a plain sentence with no lean:

The new student sat at a table in the yard.

Now here are two rewrites:

Version 1: The new student sat alone at the far end of a full yard, lunchbox unopened, watching the groups she did not yet belong to.

Version 2: The new student grabbed a free table in the busy yard, unpacked her lunch, and got on with it while everyone else queued.

- (a) Which version leans the reader toward sympathy? Which version leans the reader toward “she is fine — the yard is just busy”?
- (b) List three word choices that do the work, and say what each one adds to the lean.
- (c) Rewrite the plain sentence a third way, so the reader leans toward the yard itself — as if the yard is the one having the hard day.

Q4. Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

The wallet

The wallet sat on the seat as if it had been left there on purpose. Maya turned it over once. In the fold was a photo: a kid on a bike, grinning. She thought about the man from the bus stop — the one with the heavy bags who had said *after you* twice, and meant it.

The doors opened. The platform filled.

Maya picked the wallet up and looked for the guard’s office.

- (a) Identify two language choices that align the reader with Maya’s final action.
- (b) What does the photo inside the wallet do to the lean?
- (c) Is the position the passage invites mainly social, moral, or ethical? Name one word or phrase that carries it.

Q5. Four students respond to the poem “Halfway” (Figure 6). Judge each response using the factors in Figure 9: for each one, say whether it has value, and name the factor or factors it meets or misses.

- (i) “It’s a good poem because it is about running.”
- (ii) “When the poem says Sef’s feet were ‘arguing with her’, it makes stopping cost something — the race is still pulling at her, so her choice is worth more.”
- (iii) “The poem says you should help people. Everyone knows that, so it is not saying anything new.”
- (iv) “The crowd ‘stood up like they had seen somebody win’. That simile hands Sef the win, and it changed my mind about what the poem counts as winning — I went in expecting a poem about losing.”

Q6. Here is the start of a scene:

Sam watched the younger student drop his lunch money and walk on without noticing.

Three writers finish it differently:

Ending A: Sam picked the money up, caught him at the gate, and handed it over. The kid said nothing, just nodded. The next day he saved Sam a seat on the bus.

Ending B: Sam pocketed the money and bought snacks at the canteen. They tasted like nothing. At lunch he sat where he always sat, while the younger student went without.

Ending C: Sam ran after him, waving the money, making a show of it — “Lost something, little man?” The kid laughed with everyone else, and had lunch alone for a week.

For each ending, state (i) what the story rewards or punishes, and (ii) the preference it shapes in the reader.

Q7. (*Speaking and listening.*) Work with a partner. You will compare first impressions of “The Bench” — separately first. The achievement standard asks you to compare *initial and subsequent impressions*; this task does exactly that. Protocol:

- Each of you reads only one version (A or B). Write down (i) the lean you felt, in one sentence, and (ii) one device that caused it.
- Swap texts. Read the other version.
- Together, discuss: did your lean move? Which device only became visible after the swap?
- Agree on one sentence you can both say out loud, beginning “The lean is built by...”.

Listen without interrupting; build on your partner’s point (“So you’re saying that...”) before adding your own.

Q8. A director is filming “The Bench.” For each choice below, state the effect it would usually have on the audience.

- (a) filming Kai from a low angle as he walks off
- (b) filming the team huddle from high above
- (c) grading the scene in cold, blue-grey colour
- (d) holding one long, close shot on the empty end of the bench
- (e) letting the sound drop until all that is left is wind and flags
- (f) framing Kai small, at the edge of a wide shot of the team

Unscaffolded

Q9. Look again at Versions A and B of “The Bench” (Figures 4 and 5). Write a comparative paragraph of six to eight sentences answering:

How do the two versions lean the audience toward different positions about the same event?

Structure your paragraph with a claim, at least two quotes (one from each version), a named device for each quote, and the effect of each device on the lean. A colour-coded model paragraph is shown in Figure 10 and printed in full in the solutions.

A model comparative paragraph — Q9

Claim Quoted evidence Explanation Linking back to the question

The three novels, each with a different focus on how her cat's death might affect her relationship with her dog, are published by the same publisher, the titles' similarity to the title of the book by a dark knight whose corpse is found in a new world in a trilogy series.

One paragraph, both versions: each quote is followed by what the device does to the lean.

Model comparative paragraph colour-coded to show the claim, the quoted evidence, the explanation of effect, and the link back to the question

Q10. Write eight to ten sentences analysing how “Halfway” (Figure 6) shapes a preference about what winning means. Use at least three devices from the poem, quote each one, and follow each quote with what the device does to the lean.

Q11. (*Speaking and listening.*) In groups of three or four, do the curriculum's own task: formulate a list of the factors that distinguish a valuable response to literature. Rules: five minutes, no notes from this section, every member contributes at least one factor, one member records. Then, as a class, merge the group lists into one class list — keeping, cutting or merging factors, each time with a reason. Finally, apply your class list to the four responses in Q5: do all groups rank them the same way? Where the class disagrees, what does the disagreement tell you about the factors themselves? Figure 9 gives a starting list to argue with.

Q12. Consider this claim:

“If a text makes you lean toward one position, it has manipulated you — a good reader resists every push.”

Write a reasoned response. You must:

- give the strongest version of the case *for* the claim (what its defenders would actually say);
- give the strongest version of the case *against* it (what its critics would actually say);
- state your own position with conditions — for which kinds of texts, devices or readers the claim holds, and where it breaks.

Apply the test symmetrically: if the example of “manipulation” you reach for is a text you love, be honest about that too. You are marked on the quality of your reasoning — defined terms, real examples, honest limits — not on which side you land on. Whichever side you favour, spend equal effort on the other one.

Q13. Write the same scene twice, the way the writers of Versions A and B did. Choose a small event — someone is left out, someone is chosen, something is returned. Keep the facts identical across both versions; flip the devices: point of view, word choice, what the story rewards. Aim for 150–200 words per version. Then add a note of three sentences naming the devices you flipped and the lean each version builds.

Q14. (*Speaking and listening.*) Hold a panel discussion of “The Bench” with four roles: the director of Version A, the director of Version B, the actor who played Kai, and one critic who has seen both versions. The panel answers two questions: *Whose story is this?* and *What does your version want the audience to prefer?* Protocol:

- each speaker names at least one device their version uses;
- the actor may speak about what the devices do to the person they are aimed at;
- the critic must give the strongest version of the opposite case before stating their own.

Audience note-takers record one named device per speaker — and whether the panel tested its own favourite version as hard as the other one.

Answers

These are sample answers. For open questions, any response that meets the task is acceptable.

Q1. (a) social — the position is about who belongs and how a group treats newcomers; (b) moral — right and wrong in one person's behaviour, honesty after doing harm; (c) ethical — two rights collide: keeping a promise against preventing harm; (d) social — one group's waste beside another group's need is a question about how people live together; (e) moral — one person's choice about privacy and honesty; (f) ethical — public safety against workmates' shifts and loyalty to a boss. Accept reasoned alternatives: several seeds can be argued either way, and the reason matters more than the label.

Q2. 1–b; 2–c; 3–e; 4–d; 5–a; 6–f.

Q3. (a) Version 1 leans toward sympathy; Version 2 leans toward “she is fine”. (b) Accept any three well-explained choices. Sample: “alone at the far end” puts space between her and everyone, so the reader measures the yard by her distance; “lunchbox unopened” holds the scene still — she has not eaten; “watching the groups she did not yet belong to” names the boundary from her side of it. In Version 2: “grabbed” makes her active rather than left; “busy” gives the yard a reason not to notice; “got on with it” tells the reader to judge her as someone coping. (c) Answers will vary; reward any rewrite that moves the sympathy onto the yard. Sample: “The yard was loud and full that day, and the new student's table sat in the middle of everyone's path like the one quiet thing in it.”

Q4. (a) Any two of: the remembered man “who had said *after you* twice, and meant it” — a kindness remembered becomes a reason to act; the photo of the kid on the bike — the owner becomes a person; “The doors opened. The platform filled.” — two short sentences build the pressure of the moment; the final sentence — Maya is shown acting, not thinking about acting. (b) The photo gives the wallet a face: its owner stops being “someone” and becomes a person with a grinning kid on a bike — a debt that is easier to feel. (c) Mainly moral — the right thing for one person to do; “meant it” carries it, because kindness is noticed and repaid in kind. Accept social with reasons.

Q5. (i) Weak — no evidence from the text (factor 1), no named device (factor 2), no effect on the audience (factor 3). “About running” is the topic, not a response. (ii) Strong — quotes the poem (1), names personification (2), and explains the effect on the lean: stopping costs something, so the choice is worth more (3). (iii) Weak — agrees with the poem but never opens it: no evidence (1), no device (2), no effect (3). “Everyone knows that” is a claim, not analysis. (iv) Strong — quotes (1), names the simile (2), explains the effect (3), and also meets factor 5: the reader honestly reports their own shift (“I went in expecting a poem about losing”).

Q6. Ending A: rewards quiet kindness with belonging — the seat on the bus. Preference shaped: doing the right thing quietly brings people toward you. Ending B: punishes taking — the money buys snacks that “tasted like nothing”, and the scene sets Sam's full lunch beside the younger student going without. Preference shaped: what you take, you pay for. Ending C: the right thing done in a cruel way — the money comes back, but the kid has lunch alone for a week. Preference shaped: how you help is part of whether you helped.

Q7. Teacher observation. Look for: a first lean recorded before the swap; at least one device named by each reader; discussion of whether the lean moved after the swap; one agreed sentence. The strongest pairs notice that each version hides its devices until the other version exposes them.

Q8. Samples: (a) Kai fills the frame; the audience looks up at him and stands with him. (b) The team becomes the subject; individuals shrink. (c) The scene feels distant; the audience is kept at arm's length. (d) The absence becomes the subject — what the story is about is what is missing. (e) The quiet makes room for the audience's own feeling to arrive. (f) Kai is easy to overlook; the audience's eye is sent to the team instead.

Q9. See the model paragraph in the fully-worked solutions (and Figure 10). A sound paragraph claims that the same facts can carry different preferences, quotes at least one move from each version, names a device for each quote, and explains each effect on the lean.

Q10. See the model paragraph in the fully-worked solutions. A sound paragraph uses three named devices with quotes, and every explanation is about the lean — what the poem makes it easy to feel about winning.

Q11. Teacher observation. Look for: every member contributing a factor; factors that can actually be applied (you could test a response against them); a class list built with reasons, not just votes; an application to Q5 that refers back

to the list. The interesting outcome is the disagreement: groups that rank response (iii) differently usually disagree about whether agreeing with the poem counts as responding to it at all.

Q12. Marked on reasoning, not conclusion. A strong response defines its terms (lean, push, resist); gives the case for in real strength (some texts want a decision, not a thought; a preference you never noticed is the push that worked); gives the case against in real strength (a felt lean can be the start of thinking, not its enemy; Version B's seam shows that a push seen is a push you can answer); then takes a position with conditions. Responses that only attack one side, or that reach a conclusion without reasons, score low regardless of which side they pick.

Q13. Answers will vary. Reward: identical facts across both versions; at least two devices flipped and named in the note; each version genuinely leaning the opposite way — test it on a reader.

Q14. Teacher observation. Look for: each speaker naming at least one device; the actor speaking about what the devices do to the person they are aimed at; the critic giving the opposite case in real strength before stating their own; audience notes that record devices accurately; a closing answer to “whose story is this?” that refers to evidence, not votes.

Fully-worked solutions

Q3(b) — a model development. The lean is carried by small choices. “Alone at the far end” does two jobs: *alone* says nobody is with her, and *the far end* puts space between her and everyone else, so the reader measures the yard by her distance from it. “Lunchbox unopened” holds the scene still — she has not eaten, and the closed lid becomes a small sign of waiting. “Watching the groups she did not yet belong to” puts the reader on her side of the boundary: the groups are not unkind, they are simply closed, and the word *yet* does the heaviest work, because it keeps a door open while admitting it is shut. Version 2 swaps each choice: *grabbed* makes her quick and active, *busy* gives the yard a reason not to notice her, and *got on with it* tells the reader how to judge her — as someone coping. Same facts, opposite lean. The words chose the side.

Q9 — model comparative paragraph (this is the paragraph colour-coded in Figure 10).

The two versions tell the same facts, but they lean the audience toward different positions. Version A locks the point of view to the bench — Kai sits “watching the second half start without him” — so the reader feels the exclusion from inside it, and the flashback to Tuesday, when Kai “stayed late” to help Jordan, adds a debt that Jordan’s silence now owes. Version B locks the voice to the captain: “Better clean than cruel” frames the cutting as decency, and “the team moved like one body” pays the hard call back in victory. Whichever side a reader lands on, the preference has been shaped — by point of view, by word choice, and by what each story chooses to reward.

Each quote is followed by an effect sentence that says what the device does to the lean: the exclusion is felt from inside, the cutting is framed as decency, the hard call is paid back in victory. The final sentence links both versions back to the question — the preference has been shaped, and the shaping can be named.

Q10 — model paragraph.

“Halfway” shapes a preference about winning by refusing to argue for it. The imagery of “thirty backs, thirty pairs of heels” turns the field into one body moving away, and repeating “thirty” counts every runner who did not turn — so Sef’s stopping is measured against all of them at once. When her feet are “arguing with her: go, go, go”, the personification makes the race’s pull physical, and stopping becomes something that costs, not something that is easy. The poem’s shortest sentence, “She stopped anyway”, gives the whole turn three words: quiet, total, and hers. Then the contrast — “Some finish lines you cross. / Some you carry someone to.” — sets two kinds of winning side by side and lets the second redefine the first. By the end, the crowd “stood up / like they had seen somebody win”, and the simile hands Sef the victory without moving her a single place up the field. The poem never states its position; it arranges a fall, a turn, and a crowd, and the lean arrives as if the reader had reached it alone.

Q11 — a model class list, and how to apply it.

Figure 9 gives the starting list: (1) evidence from the text; (2) a named device or feature; (3) an effect on the audience; (4) another reading considered; (5) honest limits. A class may reorder it, add to it (for example, “the response notices something the class had not noticed”) or cut it back (“factors 4 and 5 are really one factor”) — but every change needs a reason.

Applying the list to Q5: response (ii) meets factors 1–3, and response (iv) meets 1–3 and 5 — both are valuable. Responses (i) and (iii) meet none of 1–3, so both are thin — even though (iii) agrees with the poem and (i) at least names the right topic. Agreement does not buy value; agreement without receipts is exactly what factor 1 exists to catch.

Where classes usually disagree is whether a response must meet factor 4 or 5 to be valuable, or whether 1–3 is enough. That disagreement is the curriculum’s point: the list is something to argue with, not something to receive.

Q12 — model structure.

For: Some texts do not invite thought — they close it. High-modality language (“it was the right call”) shuts debate before it opens, and a preference a reader never noticed is exactly the push that worked. On this view, a good reader treats every lean as a claim to be tested, because the devices do their best work when they are invisible.

Against: A felt lean is often the start of thinking, not its enemy: Version A’s push is precisely what lets a reader ask what loyalty costs, and a text that leaned nobody would have nothing to discuss. What is more, pushes can be seen. Version B leaves its seam showing — “There was nothing to look at” — and naming a device is already a way of answering it. Resistance that refuses every lean refuses the conversation texts are offering.

Position (sample): The claim holds when the push hides — when a text wants a decision rather than a thought, and the reader never notices the devices. It breaks when the lean is seen and answered: a reader who can name the push is not manipulated by it — only addressed. The duty of a good reader is not to resist every push but to notice every one — including the pushes made by the texts they love.

Note that the model takes a position — yours may differ, and a well-reasoned opposite position scores equally. What is marked: defined terms, both sides at full strength, a position with conditions, honest limits, and a test applied symmetrically.

Q13 — one possible pair of versions.

Version 1 (from beside the one left out): The list went up on Friday, and Mia read it twice to be sure. Her name was not there. Around her the others counted themselves in, one by one, and no one counted her — not out loud, not on purpose, which was somehow worse. She remembered the sign-up sheet, her own handwriting first on the page.

Version 2 (from beside the ones choosing): The list went up on Friday, and it was the fair list. Twelve names, twelve spots, and the selectors had gone by the rules. Someone had to miss out; better the rules than a fight. Mia had signed up early, which showed spirit, but spirit was not a spot.

Model note: Version 1 locks the point of view to Mia and lets the reader count her in and out with her; Version 2 locks the voice to the selectors and uses high-modality language (“the fair list”, “by the rules”) to close the question early. Same facts — a name left off a list — opposite leans.

Q14 — what a strong panel contains.

- Each director names at least one device their version uses, and says what it wants the audience to prefer: the director of A defends the point of view and the flashback (the audience should feel the cost); the director of B defends the high-modality language and the rewarding ending (the audience should see the necessity).
 - The actor speaks about what the devices do to the person they are aimed at — for example, that the low-angle frame gives Kai the size the scene took from him.
 - The critic gives the opposite case at full strength before stating their own (“Version A earns the sympathy it asks for — and still, the team needed height”), and says which version they would defend to a reader who had only seen the other one.
 - The panel ends by answering “whose story is this?” with evidence, not votes.
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Section 3C · English 9 · Curriculum reference: VC2E9LE03 (“analyse how literary devices and language features, and still and moving images, shape an audience’s preference about the social, moral or ethical positions presented in literary texts”), drawing on VC2E9LE03.E01. All stories, poems, posters and responses in this section were written for this book.

The effect of extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual references

A writer rarely tells you the most important thing outright. Instead, they build it out of something else. A quarrel between two friends becomes a wall going up, brick by brick. A king becomes “the crown”. A whole farm story turns out to be about greed. A single green shoot, standing in a flattened garden, turns out to be about hope. None of these choices is decoration. Each one is a tool for making a meaning that plain statement cannot make — and each one does something different to the reader.

You met literary devices in Level 8, and you learned to pick out intertextual references and say where they came from. This section takes the next step. Instead of just naming a device, you will analyse its **effect**: what the choice builds, and what it does to the audience. You will work through the five devices the curriculum names — extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual references — and you will use them yourself, in writing and out loud.

Curriculum focus

Analyse the effect of text structures, language features and literary devices such as extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual references (VC2E9LE04, Literature — Examining literature)

Draws on

VC2E9LE04.E01 — examining how different authors make use of devices such as imagery, and explaining the effect of these choices on audiences ·

VC2E9LE04.E02 — identifying examples of literary devices in a range of poems and considering how they contribute to meaning and influence the emotional responses of the audience

Builds on (Level 8)

VC2E8LE04 — intertextual references identified and explained · VC2E8LE05 — literary devices, and how sentence patterns create tone and voice

Achievement-standard hook

“They analyse the relationship between text structures, language features, literary devices and intertextual connections.” (Reading and Viewing — “When demonstrating understanding of texts, students discuss their responses...”)

Modes in this section

Reading and viewing · Writing · Speaking and listening

What this section means by *effect*, and what a *device* is. The Victorian Curriculum asks you to analyse “the effect” of these choices but does not say what an effect is. In this section, the **effect** of a device is the work it does: the idea it builds, and what it makes the audience notice, feel, understand or believe. A **device** (or **literary device**) is a deliberate choice a writer makes to do that work — a choice you can name and point to in the text. The five devices named in the content description are each defined the first time they appear, and every question in this section is answerable on those definitions alone.

Theory

The five devices are easy to blur together, so Figure 1 sets them out before we go further. Keep it open while you read: each device gets its own section below, with a model text and the effect it creates.

The five devices at a glance

Five ways a text carries more than it says — keep this open as you read

Device	What it is	Quick example	The effect it tends to make
Extended metaphor	A metaphor developed across several sentences, lines or a whole text.	"The argument built a wall" — kept going with bricks, cement and a gate.	Shows an idea growing step by step, and makes a feeling concrete.
Metonymy	Naming one thing by the name of something closely associated with it.	"The crown decided" — the crown stands for the monarch.	Compresses an idea into one concrete image, choosing which part to show.
Allegory	A whole text with a second level of meaning; characters and events stand for ideas.	A farm fable that is really about greed and sharing.	Lets a writer teach a big idea without preaching; the reader works it out.
Symbolism	An object, place or image that carries a meaning beyond its literal self.	A green shoot after a storm coming to stand for hope.	Makes a big, abstract idea small enough to hold and feel.
Intertextual reference	A text pointing to another text, story or well-known idea (an allusion is a brief one).	"David against Goliath" for an underdog match.	Imports another story's meaning and feeling in a single phrase.

Table summarising the five devices, with what each one is, a short example of each, and the kind of effect each one creates

1. From naming a device to explaining its effect

In Level 8 you learned to spot devices. Spotting is only the start. Saying "this is a metaphor" describes the tool; it says nothing about what the tool builds. The skill this section builds is the step after spotting: explaining the **effect**.

An effect has two halves, and a full answer needs both:

- **The meaning half** — the idea the device builds. What does the choice make us understand about a character, a place, a situation or a theme?
- **The audience half** — what the device does to the reader. What does it make us notice, feel, picture or believe?

A useful test is the question *so what?* If you can remove a device from a sentence and nothing is lost, it was decoration. The devices in this section are not decoration — remove one and a meaning disappears with it. Figure 9 gives you a four-step scaffold for turning a spotted device into an explanation of its effect, and you will use it in almost every question below.

2. Extended metaphor: a comparison that keeps going

You already know a **metaphor**: a way of describing one thing by saying it *is* another thing, to borrow that second thing's qualities — "the classroom was a zoo". An **extended metaphor** is a metaphor that does not stop after one phrase. It is developed across several sentences, lines or a whole text, with new details of the comparison added as it goes. The writer picks an image and then keeps drawing on it, so the image grows around the idea.

Read the passage below. The idea (a friendship growing distant after an argument) is never stated directly. Instead it is carried by one image — a wall being built — and the image is extended with bricks, cement, a hammer and a gate.

Nobody slammed a door. Nobody shouted. But after the argument, a wall went up between Priya and Tom. Each unanswered message was another brick. Each avoided glance in the hallway was another layer of cement, setting hard. By Friday the wall was high enough that they could sit in the same room and not see each other at all. Priya kept waiting for Tom to pick up a hammer. Tom kept waiting for Priya to find a gate. Neither of them noticed they were both still holding bricks.

Figure 2 marks the image and labels what each part does.

Extended metaphor: the wall between two friends

The image is highlighted; each part of it builds a part of the meaning

The passage

Nobody slammed a door. Nobody shouted. But after the argument, **a wall went up** between Priya and Tom. Each unanswered message was **another brick**. Each avoided glance in the hallway was **another layer of cement, setting hard**. By Friday the wall was high enough that they could sit in the same room and not see each other at all. Priya kept waiting for Tom to **pick up a hammer**. Tom kept waiting for Priya to **find a gate**. Neither of them noticed they were **both still holding bricks**.

The image, and what each part builds

"a wall went up"

the distance appears between the two friends

"another brick / another layer of cement"

each ignored moment adds to the distance, and it sets hard

"pick up a hammer / find a gate"

either friend could break the distance down

"both still holding bricks"

neither is blameless — and each still has the power to stop building

The feeling (a friendship growing distant) is never named — the wall image carries it from start to finish.

Model passage of the extended metaphor about the wall, with the wall-image words highlighted and each part labelled for the meaning it builds

The effect. Extending the metaphor does three things a single metaphor could not do. First, it shows the distance growing *step by step* — one brick, then another — so the reader feels the friendship slipping away a little at a time rather than all at once. Second, it turns an abstract feeling (distance, awkwardness) into something concrete the reader can picture (bricks, cement, a wall). Third, the final detail — both of them still holding bricks — hands the meaning to the reader: neither friend is blameless, and each still has the power to stop building. The audience is left wanting one of them to put a brick down. That is the effect: a feeling about a situation the writer never named.

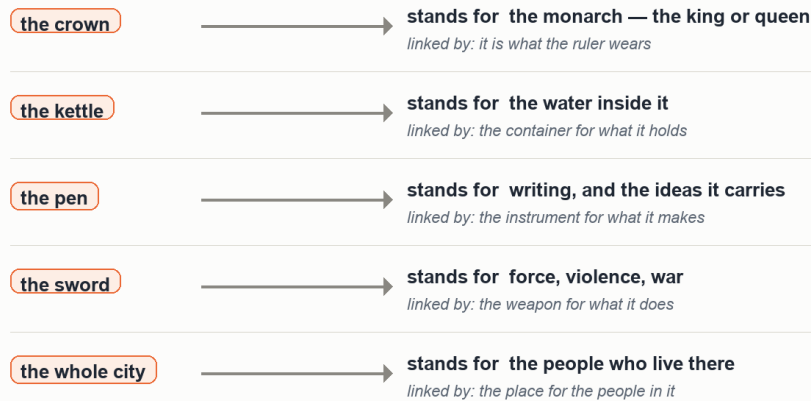
3. Metonymy: naming by association

Metonymy (say it *muh-TON-uh-mee*) is a device in which one thing is called by the name of something closely *associated* with it — not because the two things are alike, but because they belong together. Metaphor works by likeness ("she *is* a star"); metonymy works by connection (we say "the *crown*" to mean the monarch, because a crown is what a monarch wears).

Figure 3 shows several common metonymies, what each one really stands for, and the link between them.

Metonymy: naming one thing by what it is linked to

Metaphor works by likeness (she is a star). Metonymy works by connection.



Notice what each metonymy brings forward — and what it quietly leaves in the shade. “The crown” shows the role and hides the person.

Diagram of metonymy pairs, showing the word used, what it actually stands for, and the association that connects them

The effect. Metonymy compresses an idea into a single, concrete image, and it quietly chooses *which part* of the idea to put in front of us. “The whole *city* celebrated” is not about buildings — it is about the people in them, and the word *city* makes the celebration feel huge, as if even the streets were in on it. “The *pen* is mightier than the *sword*” packs a whole argument — that ideas outlast violence — into two objects. Notice that each metonymy also leaves something out: calling a king “the crown” highlights his role and hides the man. Analysing metonymy means asking both questions: what does the image bring forward, and what does it leave in the shade?

4. Allegory: a story with a second level

An **allegory** is a whole text — a story, poem or fable — that works on two levels at once. On the surface it is one story, with characters and events you can follow. Underneath, those characters and events stand for ideas — often about right and wrong, about society, or about how people behave. Reading an allegory is like finding a second level inside the building of the story: the surface is real and complete on its own, but the meaning is bigger than the plot.

Here is an original fable. Read it first as a story about two farmers, then ask what each piece stands for.

The two farmers and the creek

Two farmers shared a creek that ran from the hills, through the first farm, then the second. For years each took only the water his fields needed, and both farms stayed green.

Then the first farmer thought, “Why wait for my share? I will keep it all.” He built a wall across the creek and made a dam, so the water pooled on his land and none flowed on.

His fields drank deep that season. But the creek below ran dry, and the second farmer’s crops turned to dust. And soon the first farmer’s own water grew stale and still, for a dam that never flows turns foul. His cattle would not drink it.

When the dry season came, both farms were brown. Only when they broke down the wall and let the creek run free did the water clear, and both their fields drink again.

Figure 4 sets out the two levels side by side.

Allegory: reading the second level

The fable is a real story on the surface — and a bigger meaning underneath

Surface story — what happens

Two farmers share one creek.

The first farmer dams the creek and keeps it all.

The creek below runs dry; crops turn to dust.

The dammed water turns stale and foul.

They break the wall; the creek runs free and both drink.

Deeper meaning — what it stands for

Two people or groups share one resource.

One takes more than his share — greed.

Others are harmed by the taking.

Hoarding harms even the one who takes.

Cooperation and fairness restore everyone.

The story stands on its own. The meaning is bigger than the plot — and the reader works it out by matching the two levels.

Two-level diagram of the allegory, matching each surface element of the farm story to the idea it stands for underneath

The effect. Allegory lets a writer talk about big or difficult ideas — fairness, greed, cooperation — without preaching. The reader works the meaning out by matching the story to the ideas, and a meaning you discover for yourself lands harder than one you are handed. Allegory also lets a writer criticise something safely, by aiming the story at stand-in characters instead of real people. The effect on the audience is a kind of double reading: you follow the farm, and at the same time you feel the lesson about taking more than your share.

Do not blur allegory with the other devices. An extended metaphor develops one comparison; an allegory builds a whole second level of meaning across an entire story. A symbol is usually one object that carries meaning; an allegory is a system of them. Figure 5 keeps these apart.

Keeping the devices apart

Scope is the clue: is it a word, an image, a passage, or a whole story?

Device	What it is	How big is it?	How you read it
Extended metaphor	One thing described as another, developed across many lines or sentences.	A passage or a whole text	Follow the one comparison as it grows and adds new details.
Metonymy	One thing called by the name of something closely linked to it.	A word or a phrase	Ask what the named thing is associated with, and what it leaves out.
Symbolism	One object or image that carries a meaning beyond its literal self.	A repeated object or image	Ask what the object comes to stand for, and how the writer built that.
Allegory	A whole story with a second level of meaning under the surface plot.	A whole text	Map the story's characters and events onto the ideas they stand for.

Table keeping the big four devices apart by scope, showing what each one is, how large a part of the text it covers, and how a reader should approach it

5. Symbolism: one thing that carries more than itself

Symbolism is the use of a symbol — an object, place, action or image that carries a meaning beyond its literal self. A symbol is not a code word with one fixed meaning; it is a thing that, in context and often through repetition, comes to stand for an idea, a feeling or a theme. A flag is literally a piece of cloth, but it comes to stand for a country. In a story, a single green shoot after a storm can come to stand for hope and new beginnings.

The meaning of a symbol is built, not announced. Writers build it in three main ways:

- **Repetition** — the object returns, and each return adds to what it carries.
- **Emphasis** — the writer lingers on the object, describes it closely, or gives it a moment of its own.

- **Context** — what happens around the object tells the reader how to read it.

Return to the green shoot. Literally it is a young plant that survived a storm. But set in a flattened, drowned garden, and described standing upright while everything else bows, it gathers layers of meaning. Figure 6 stacks those layers.

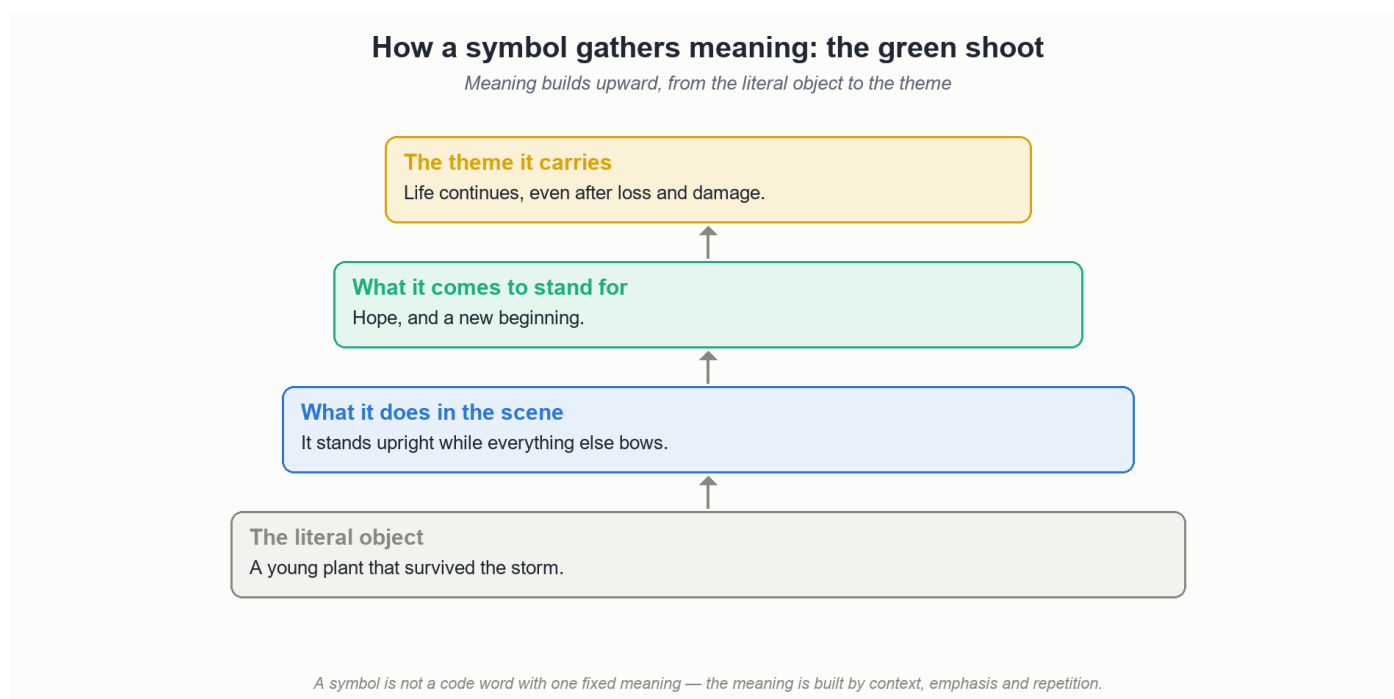


Diagram of a symbol's layers, showing how one green shoot builds from a literal plant up through survival to hope and new beginnings

The effect. Symbolism lets a writer make a big, abstract idea — hope, loss, freedom — feel small enough to hold. The reader meets the idea through a thing, not a statement, and so feels it rather than being told it. Symbols also reward rereading: once you know what the object carries, you see it everywhere it appears. When you analyse a symbol, ask what it stands for, how the writer built that meaning, and what the reader feels as a result.

6. Intertextual references: one text borrowing from another

An **intertextual reference** (also called **intertextuality**) is when a text points to another text, story, character or well-known idea. An **allusion** is a brief intertextual reference — a passing nod to something the reader is expected to recognise. The reference can be to a myth, a fairy tale, a historical event, a famous line, or a story everyone in the culture knows.

You identified these in Level 8. The Level 9 step is the effect. When a text borrows from another text, it imports that text's meaning, feeling and associations into itself — for free, in a single phrase. Read the passage below and notice how much work two words do.

Everyone said the Year 9s didn't stand a chance against the seniors. It was David against Goliath. Mia had heard that story enough times to know how it ends — the giant never sees the small one coming, and the one with nothing to lose is the one you should fear. She laced up her boots and smiled.

Figure 7 marks the reference and unpacks what it brings with it.

Intertextual reference: two words that borrow a whole story

The reference is highlighted; the boxes show what it brings into the text

Everyone said the Year 9s didn't stand a chance against the seniors. It was **David against Goliath**. Mia had heard that story enough times to know how it ends — the giant never sees the small one coming, and the one with nothing to lose is the one you should fear. She laced up her boots and smiled.

Source

The old story of David and Goliath: a small, underestimated fighter beats a giant.

What it imports

The teams are unequal — and the small one can win. We know at once which side to hope for.

Effect on us

Mia reads herself as the one who can win, so she turns from a victim into a threat. Readers who know the story feel included.

One phrase imports another story's meaning and feeling — for free. A reader who misses the reference still gets the sense from context.

Model passage with the intertextual reference to David and Goliath highlighted and the meaning it imports labelled

The effect. The reference to David and Goliath does three jobs at once. It tells us the teams are unequal, in one phrase, with no need to explain the size gap. It tells us which side to hope for, because the old story already decided that. And it shows Mia's attitude: she knows the story, so she reads herself as the one who can win — which turns her from a victim into a threat. A reader who recognises the reference feels clever and included; a reader who does not still gets the basic sense from context. Analysing an intertextual reference means naming the source, then saying what meaning or feeling it carries into the new text.

7. Imagery: the sense-language underneath the devices

Several of these devices run on **imagery** — language that speaks to the senses and builds a picture, a sound, a texture or a smell in the reader's mind. Imagery is what makes a metaphor you can see, a symbol you can picture, an allegory you can walk through. When you explain a device's effect, you will often be explaining its imagery: which sense it appeals to, and what that sense adds. Figure 8 shows these devices at work inside a poem you will meet in Example 1, with each device labelled. In Question 9 you will compare how two authors use imagery of the same subject to create very different effects on the audience.

The devices at work in “After the storm”

The highlighted lines are the devices; the panel on the right names and explains each one

After the storm

The storm spent itself by morning,

packing up its wind and rain,

and left the garden flattened,

every bright head bowed again.

But there, beside the fence post,

in the mud so thick and brown,

one small green shoot stood upright

and lifted up its crown.

It held its small flag upward

to a sky gone soft and pale —

the first word of a story

the garden would not fail.

Personification

“The storm spent itself... packing up its wind and rain” — the storm acts like a tired visitor leaving; the damage feels like the aftermath of something now over.

Imagery

“every bright head bowed” — the flowers pictured like people bowing after bad news; the reader feels the defeat.

Contrast + symbol

“one small green shoot stood upright / and lifted up its crown” — against everything that bows, one stands; the shoot becomes hope, and “crown” gives it dignity.

Metaphor

“the first word of a story / the garden would not fail” — the ending is turned into a beginning; life continues.

Each device does two jobs at once: it builds the meaning (from loss to hope), and it moves the reader's feelings along with it.

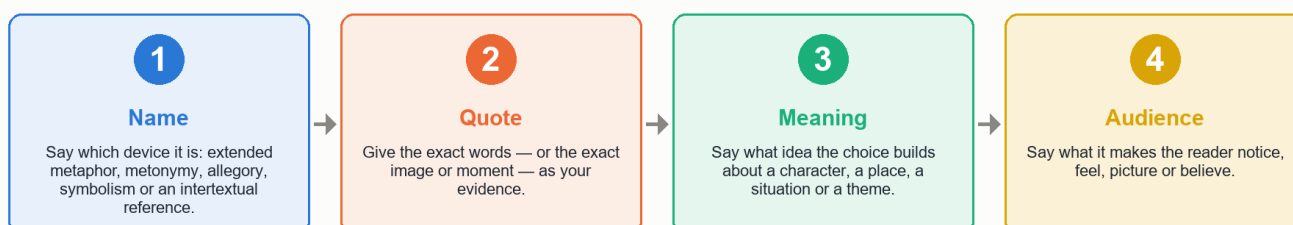
Poem with the personification, imagery, contrast and symbol, and metaphor highlighted, each matched to a short explanation of the meaning and feeling it builds

8. One scaffold for analysing effect

Whichever device you are asked about, the same four moves turn a spotted device into an explained effect (Figure 9):

From spotting a device to explaining its effect

Four moves turn a named device into an explained effect



Then ask: so what?

If you could remove the device and nothing is lost, it was decoration. These devices carry a meaning — name the idea, name the feeling.

Never stop at “it makes the text more interesting” — that could be said about any text ever written.

Flowchart of the four-step effect scaffold: name the device, quote the evidence, explain the meaning it builds, and explain what it does to the audience

1. **Name** — state the device: extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism or intertextual reference.
2. **Quote** — give the exact words (or the exact image or moment) as evidence.
3. **Meaning** — say what idea the choice builds about a character, a place, a situation or a theme.
4. **Audience** — say what it makes the reader notice, feel, picture or believe.

One warning, the same as in every analysis section: never stop at “it makes the text more interesting” or “it makes you want to keep reading”. Those phrases could be written about any text ever written, which is why they say nothing. Name the idea. Name the feeling. Then say *so what*.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Task. Read the poem below, then study the analysis table, which is completed for you. Each row names a device, quotes it, and explains how it contributes to the poem’s meaning and to the reader’s emotional response.

After the storm

The storm spent itself by morning, packing up its wind and rain, and left the garden flattened, every bright head bowed again.

But there, beside the fence post, in the mud so thick and brown, one small green shoot stood upright and lifted up its crown.

It held its small flag upward to a sky gone soft and pale — the first word of a story the garden would not fail.

Question: Identify the literary devices in the poem and explain how they contribute to its meaning and influence the reader’s emotional response.

Device	Quote	How it contributes to meaning and feeling
Personification	“The storm spent itself... / packing up its wind and rain”	The storm is given human actions, as if it were a visitor who wore itself out and left. This makes the damage feel like the aftermath of something that has now passed, opening the poem to recovery.
Imagery	“every bright head bowed”	The flowers are pictured bowed like people after bad news. The reader feels the garden’s defeat, and the poem earns the hope that follows.
Contrast + symbol	“one small green shoot stood upright / and lifted up its crown”	Against everything that bows, one shoot stands. The shoot becomes a symbol of hope and new beginnings; “crown” gives it dignity, as if the smallest survivor were royalty. The reader’s feeling tips from loss to hope.
Metaphor	“the first word of a story / the garden would not fail”	The shoot is the opening word of a new story. This turns the ending from a single event into a beginning, and leaves the reader feeling that life continues.

The point to copy: each row moves from the device (name + quote) to the meaning it builds, and then to the feeling it creates in the reader. Notice that the emotional response is not stated separately — it grows out of the meaning. That connection is the core of VC2E9LE04.E02.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Task. Two authors each describe the sea. Study Figure 10, which sets the two passages side by side with the imagery choices highlighted, then read the table below.

Two authors, one sea: the imagery decides the effect

Same subject — opposite image choices, highlighted below

Author A — inviting

The sea **lay gold in the late sun**,
calm as a held breath. Small waves
walked up the sand and back, gently,
like they were **in no hurry to be anywhere**.
Mia kicked off her shoes. **The water took her**
feet like it had been waiting for her.

Effect: the audience feels the sea is safe — and wants Mia to go in.

Author B — threatening

The sea **lay grey under a low sky**, moving
like **something restless and hungry**.
Waves **threw themselves at the rocks**,
again and again, and pulled back with
a sound **like teeth**. Tom stepped away from
the edge. **The water watched him**.

Effect: the audience feels the sea is a danger — and wants Tom to step back.

Two passages about the sea side by side, one by Author A using warm inviting imagery and one by Author B using dark threatening imagery, with the key imagery choices highlighted

Question: Compare how the two authors use imagery, and explain the effect of each choice on the audience.

Author A (inviting)	Author B (threatening)
“lay gold in the late sun” — the sea is warm, precious, calm	“lay grey under a low sky” — the sea is dull, heavy, closed in
“Small waves walked up the sand... in no hurry” — gentle, unhurried, friendly	“Waves threw themselves at the rocks... like teeth” — violent, repeated, dangerous
“The water took her feet like it had been waiting for her” — the sea welcomes Mia	“The water watched him” — the sea observes Tom like a threat
Effect: the audience feels the sea is safe and wants Mia to go in.	Effect: the audience feels the sea is a danger and wants Tom to step back.

Notice that both passages describe the same subject. The difference is not what is described but the imagery chosen — colour, movement, and whether the sea is given welcoming or hostile actions. This is VC2E9LE04 . E01 in action: different authors making use of imagery, and the choice deciding how the audience responds.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Task. Read the passage below, which builds a symbol out of a single object.

The last box sat by the door, taped shut. Everything else was already in the van. Zara stood in the empty room and the box seemed heavier than the rest. It held her old football, the one her brother had given her, and the photo from the last game. She picked it up last, and held it a moment before she carried it out.

Write an analytical paragraph of six to eight sentences explaining the effect of the symbol in this passage. Use the four-step scaffold from Figure 9.

Pointers to structure your answer (no scaffold given):

- Name the device and quote the object that carries it.
- Say what the box stands for — not just “her things”, but the idea under the things.
- Explain how the writer builds that meaning: which details tell you the box is more than a box?
- Finish with what the reader feels in the final moment, when Zara holds the box before carrying it out.

A model opening, to show the shape — finish it yourself:

The passage builds a symbol out of the last box, which stands for far more than the objects inside it...

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Task. Read the short allegory below.

A candle burned at the centre of the table and gave its light to everyone, asking nothing. A mirror at the edge of the room caught the candle's light and threw it back, brighter, so the whole room could see. "You owe me," said the mirror to the candle. "I make you bigger." But the candle only burned on, and when at last it burned low, the mirror had nothing left to throw, and the room went dark.

Write an analytical paragraph of six to eight sentences explaining how this allegory works and what it teaches. Use the four-step scaffold.

Pointers to structure your answer:

- Name the device and say why this is an allegory rather than a single metaphor.
- Map the two levels: what do the candle, the mirror and the dark room stand for?
- Explain the lesson the allegory builds about giving and taking credit.
- Finish with the effect: why does the story form make the lesson land harder than a direct statement would?

A model opening, to show the shape — finish it yourself:

The allegory works on two levels: on the surface it is about a candle and a mirror, but underneath it is about...

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Match each device to its definition. Copy the table into your book and write the letter of the correct definition beside each device. (Figure 1 will help.)

Devices: (i) extended metaphor · (ii) metonymy · (iii) allegory · (iv) symbolism · (v) intertextual reference

Definitions: (a) a whole text that works on two levels, with characters and events standing for ideas (b) naming one thing by the name of something closely associated with it (c) a reference in one text to another text, story or well-known idea (d) a metaphor developed across several lines, sentences or a whole text (e) the use of an object, place or image that carries a meaning beyond its literal self

Q2. Each sentence below contains a metonymy. For each one, say what the metonymy really stands for and name the association that links them.

- (a) "The whole city turned out to cheer the team home."
- (b) "Put the kettle on — it's cold in here."
- (c) "The pen is mightier than the sword."
- (d) "The crown has made its decision."

Q3. Read the passage below.

Grandpa's old footy boots still sat by the back door, laces knotted, mud long dry. Nobody moved them. In winter, when the kitchen filled with noise, the boots seemed to be listening too.

- (a) Identify the symbol in this passage.
- (b) Explain what the boots come to stand for, and how the writer builds that meaning. (Figure 6 will help.)
- (c) In one or two sentences, say what the reader feels at the line "the boots seemed to be listening too".

Q4. Read the poem below.

The kite

The kite tugged at my hand like a live thing, impatient for the sky, and when I let it take the wind it didn't say goodbye.

It climbed until it was a speck, a small black cross on blue, and all the string between us sang a thin, bright tune.

I held the end of something that was reaching past the day, and even when I pulled it in the sky came back my way.

- (a) Identify two different devices in the poem. For each one, quote the words that show it.
- (b) Choose one of your two devices and explain how it contributes to the poem's meaning.
- (c) Explain how the poem makes the reader feel about the kite and the person holding it.

Q5. Read the passage below.

The new student stood at the front of the hall, small and alone, and the whole school watched. But Ash had read enough stories to know this one. Somewhere in every school is a door that only opens from the inside, and the quiet kid is usually the one holding the key.

- (a) Identify the intertextual reference or story idea the passage borrows.
- (b) Explain what this reference adds to how we see the new student and Ash.
- (c) What does the reference make the reader feel or hope?

Un scaffolded

Q6. (Writing.) Write an extended metaphor of four to six sentences. Choose an idea or a feeling — loneliness, excitement, a friendship changing, a team losing hope — and describe it as something else, extending the image with at least three new details. Do not name the feeling directly; let the image carry it. Underline the words that belong to your image.

Q7. (Writing.) Choose one ordinary object — a key, a window, a pair of gloves, an empty chair. Write a short passage of five to seven sentences in which that object comes to stand for a bigger idea. Build the symbol using repetition, emphasis or context (see Section 5). Then write one sentence stating what your object stands for, so your reader's meaning matches your intention.

Q8. (Writing.) Read the poem "After the storm" again (Example 1). Write an analytical paragraph of six to eight sentences answering:

How do the literary devices in "After the storm" contribute to its meaning and influence the reader's emotional response?

Use the four-step scaffold from Figure 9. Quote at least three devices, and for each one explain both the meaning it builds and the feeling it creates.

Q9. (Writing.) Look again at Figure 10, the two passages about the sea. Write a comparison of five to seven sentences explaining how the two authors use imagery differently and what effect each choice has on the audience. Name at least one specific image from each passage.

Q10. (Speaking and listening.) Work with a partner. Read the extended metaphor passage about Priya and Tom (Section 2) aloud, taking turns. Without saying which device it is, each of you explains one part of the image and the effect it has — for example, what "both still holding bricks" makes you feel. Your partner listens, then names the device and says whether they felt the same effect. Protocol: listen without interrupting; point to exact words, not "the bit about the wall".

Q11. (*Speaking and listening.*) In groups of three or four, take turns giving one example of any device from this section — a metonymy, a symbol, an intertextual reference, an extended metaphor or a one-line allegory. You may invent it or recall one you have read. Do not say the device's name. The group guesses the device and explains its effect. After each round, discuss: which devices were hardest to tell apart, and why?

Answers

These are sample answers. For open questions, any response that meets the task is acceptable.

Q1. (i) extended metaphor → (d). (ii) metonymy → (b). (iii) allegory → (a). (iv) symbolism → (e). (v) intertextual reference → (c).

Q2. (a) “The whole city” stands for the people who live there; the association is place for the people in it. (b) “The kettle” stands for the water inside it; the association is container for what it holds. (c) “The pen” stands for writing and ideas; “the sword” stands for force and violence; the association is instrument for what it does. (d) “The crown” stands for the monarch or the monarchy; the association is the thing worn for the person who wears it. (Any well-explained association is acceptable.)

Q3. (a) The symbol is Grandpa’s old footy boots. (b) Sample: the boots stand for Grandpa himself and for his place in the family. The writer builds the meaning through emphasis (“Nobody moved them”) and context (“the mud long dry” says time has passed but no one has cleared them away), and through the detail that they are “laces knotted”, ready to be worn, as if Grandpa had only just stepped out of them. (c) Sample: the line makes the reader feel that Grandpa is still present in the family’s life even though he is gone — the boots “listening” keeps him part of the noise and warmth of the house. Accept any response that names a feeling of presence, memory or loss, tied to the boots.

Q4. (a) Any two, well quoted. Samples: simile — “like a live thing”; personification — “impatient for the sky” or “it didn’t say goodbye” or the string “sang a thin, bright tune”; imagery — “a small black cross on blue”; symbolism — the kite or the string standing for a connection. (b) Sample for personification: making the kite “impatient” and saying it “didn’t say goodbye” give it a will of its own, so it feels like a companion rather than a thing, and the reader understands the bond between the kite and the person holding it. (c) Sample: the poem makes the reader feel the kite is alive and that the person and the kite are connected by the string; the ending, “the sky came back my way”, leaves a warm feeling that the joy of the kite stays with the person even after it is pulled down. Accept any response that links the feeling to a quoted choice.

Q5. (a) The passage borrows the well-known idea that the quiet or underestimated person is the one who really holds the power or the answer — the underdog story, like David and Goliath. (b) Sample: the reference lifts the new student from “small and alone” to someone with hidden importance, and it shows that Ash reads the world through stories and expects the quiet kid to matter. (c) Sample: the reader feels hope for the new student and curiosity about what the “door” and the “key” will turn out to be; the reference makes us want the underdog story to come true. Accept any response that names the underdog idea and its effect on hope or expectation.

Q6. Answers will vary. Reward an extended metaphor that (1) keeps one image going across four to six sentences, (2) adds at least three new details of the image, and (3) never names the feeling directly. Penalise a metaphor that stops after one phrase, or that states the feeling outright. A model is in the fully-worked solutions.

Q7. Answers will vary. Reward a passage where the object clearly carries a bigger idea, built through repetition, emphasis or context, plus a clear statement of the intended meaning. Penalise a passage where the object stays just an object, or where the stated meaning does not match the passage. A model is in the fully-worked solutions.

Q8. See the model paragraph in the fully-worked solutions. A sound answer names at least three devices (personification, imagery, contrast, symbol, metaphor), quotes each one, and for each explains both the meaning it builds and the feeling it creates, ending on how the devices together move the reader from loss to hope.

Q9. See the model comparison in the fully-worked solutions. A sound answer states that both passages describe the sea but choose opposite imagery, names at least one image from each, and explains the effect of each on the audience (inviting vs threatening).

Q10. Teacher observation. Look for: students naming the device (extended metaphor); explanations tied to exact words (“both still holding bricks means neither one is blameless”); listening without interrupting; and a discussion that separates what the image means from how it feels.

Q11. Teacher observation. Look for: invented or recalled examples that genuinely fit a device; accurate guesses with the effect explained; and a discussion that identifies the hardest pairs — usually symbol vs extended metaphor, or allegory vs extended metaphor — and explains that scope is the difference.

Fully-worked solutions

Q6 — model extended metaphor.

The news spread through the school like a wave. It started small, a whisper at the back of one classroom, then it gathered height, rolling from desk to desk and door to door. By lunch it had broken over the whole yard, and everyone was caught in it. No one could say where it had started, and no one could stand out of its way. By the time the bell rang, the wave had already pulled back, leaving only the story behind, wet and shining, on everyone's lips.

The idea (a piece of news spreading) is never named as “news spreading fast”. Instead one image — a wave — is extended across the passage with new details: it starts small, gathers height, breaks over the yard, catches everyone, then pulls back and leaves the story behind. Each detail adds to the sense that the news is powerful, fast and impossible to stop, which is exactly what stating the idea plainly could not do.

Q7 — model symbol passage.

The empty chair stayed at the end of the table. Every night Mum set a place beside it without thinking, then caught herself and put the plate away. At birthdays we still left it pulled out a little, as if someone might arrive late. No one suggested moving it. The chair held its place the way it held everything else — quietly, and for longer than any of us could say.

The object is an ordinary empty chair, but through repetition (it returns in three moments) and context (a place is set beside it, it is left pulled out at birthdays) it comes to stand for a person who is no longer there and for the family's grief. The final line states the idea directly so the reader's meaning matches the writer's intention: the chair holds absence and love.

Q8 — model analytical paragraph on “After the storm”.

The poem moves the reader from loss to hope by building its devices around one small survivor. The storm is personified — it “spent itself” and is “packing up its wind and rain” — which makes the damage feel like the aftermath of something that has now passed, and opens the poem to recovery. The imagery of “every bright head bowed” pictures the flowers like people after bad news, so the reader feels the garden's defeat before any hope appears, and the hope that follows is earned. Against everything that bows, “one small green shoot stood upright / and lifted up its crown”: the contrast turns the shoot into a symbol of hope and new beginnings, and the word “crown” gives the smallest survivor dignity. Finally, the shoot is called “the first word of a story / the garden would not fail”, a metaphor that turns the ending from a single event into a beginning. Together the devices make the reader feel that life goes on — not by saying so, but by making one green shoot carry the whole idea.

The paragraph follows the four-step scaffold throughout: each device (step 1) is quoted (step 2), its meaning is explained (step 3), and the feeling it creates is named (step 4). The final sentence steps back and states the overall emotional effect of the devices working together.

Q9 — model comparison of the two sea passages.

Both passages describe the sea, but they choose opposite imagery, and the choice decides how the audience responds. Author A’s sea “lay gold in the late sun” and its waves “walked up the sand... in no hurry”, so the water feels warm, calm and friendly, and the audience wants Mia to go in. The final image — “the water took her feet like it had been waiting for her” — makes the sea seem to welcome her. Author B’s sea “lay grey under a low sky” and its waves “threw themselves at the rocks... like teeth”, so the water feels violent and dangerous, and the audience wants Tom to step back. Where Author A’s sea welcomes, Author B’s sea “watched him”, turning it into a threat. The subject is the same in both; the effect is set entirely by the imagery each author chose.

The comparison keeps both authors in view throughout, names a specific image from each, and ties each choice to its effect on the audience, which is the skill of VC2E9LE04 .E01.

Q10 and Q11 are speaking-and-listening tasks; there is no single written answer. See the teacher-observation notes in the Answers section.

Section 3D · English 9 · Curriculum reference: VC2E9LE04 (“analyse the effect of text structures, language features and literary devices such as extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual references”), drawing on VC2E9LE04 .E01 and VC2E9LE04 .E02. All poems, passages, fables and model responses in this section were written for this book.

How text structures, language features and devices create aesthetic qualities

Curriculum trace — Literature strand, sub-strand *Examining literature*, Level 9. Content description VC2E9LE05 (verbatim): “Students learn to: analyse the ways that text structures, language features and literary devices in literary texts create aesthetic qualities.” **Draws on VC2E9LE05 .E01:** “comparing texts created by the same author to determine literary style, assessing their appeal and presenting comparisons to others” **Achievement standard hook (Reading and Viewing):** “When demonstrating understanding of texts, students discuss their responses ... They analyse how literary devices, including poetic features, create meaning and aesthetic qualities.”

Note on texts: every text in this section was written for this book. *Marion Vale* and *Theo Brandt* are invented authors; studying them needs no outside knowledge and reproduces no published writing.

Theory

What “aesthetic qualities” means here

Defining the term. The Victorian Curriculum uses *aesthetic qualities* in VC2E9LE05 without defining the phrase. In this section it is used in this sense: **the aesthetic qualities of a text are the felt effects it creates in a reader — calm, tension, wonder, humour, sadness, a sense of beauty — built out of choices an author made that you can point to.** Other definitions exist (in philosophy, *aesthetic* ranges over everything to do with art and beauty, and not all of it matches this one). Every question in this section is answerable on the definition above alone.

Aesthetic qualities are noticed in two halves at once, and the two halves are different kinds of thing. The **feeling** is a report of your response: sincere, personal, and never simply “wrong”. The **choices** are in the text: you can quote them, name them and argue about them. This section trains one habit that joins the halves — *this is what I felt, and these are the choices that built it.*

The three families of choices have their own names. Define them as you meet them:

- **Text structure** — how a text is built and ordered: its opening, the order of its events or ideas, where it shifts, how it closes; in a poem, the shape of its stanzas, its line lengths and its rhyme scheme.
- **Language feature** — a choice at the level of words and sentences: word choice, sentence length and shape, sound patterns such as rhyme and alliteration, and how formal or everyday the language is.
- **Literary device** — a deliberate technique that adds a layer of meaning beyond the literal words: metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism, repetition, allusion, and the set named in Section 3D.

From an author's choices to the reader's experience

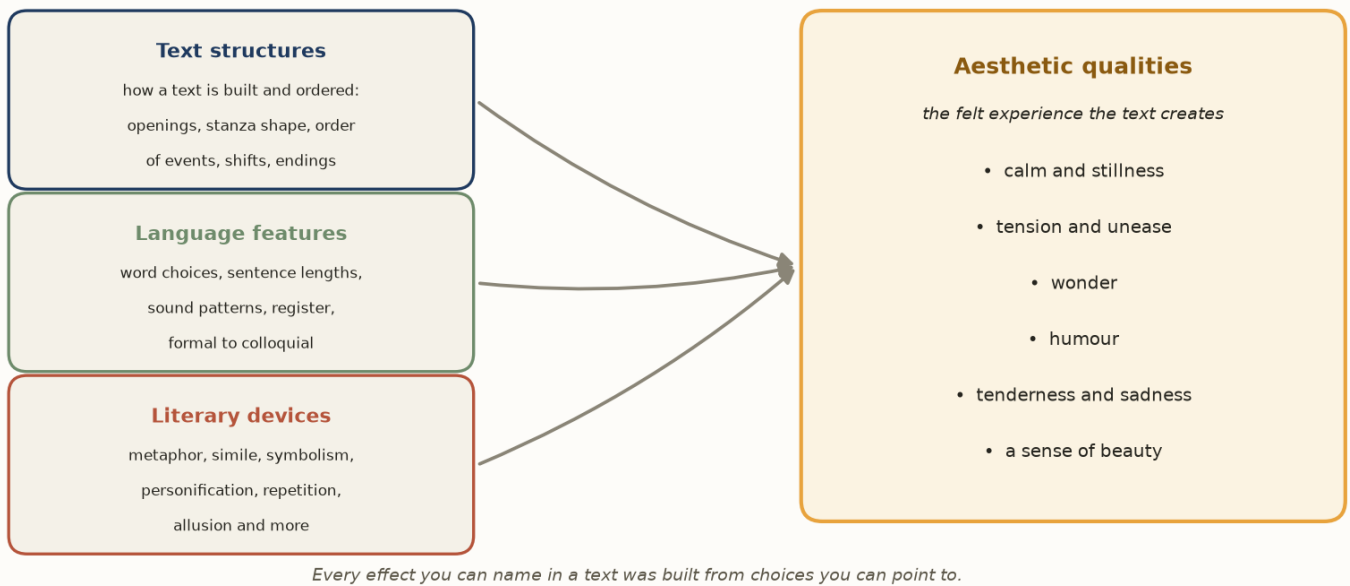


Figure 3E-1 — From an author's choices to the reader's experience. The effect is not magic; it is engineering you can inspect.

Naming the effect

Analysis stalls when the effect word is vague. “Nice”, “good” and “interesting” end a sentence instead of starting one. The more precisely you name the felt effect, the more precisely you can hunt for the choices that built it.

Naming the effect: an aesthetic vocabulary

Name the feeling precisely, then ask which choices built it.

Aesthetic quality	What it feels like in the reader	Choices that often build it
calm, stillness	your breathing slows; nothing hurries	long smooth vowel sounds; a steady rhythm; quiet scenes; gentle imagery
tension, unease	you read faster; something feels unsafe	short sharp sentences; a broken rhythm; dark or withheld detail
wonder	the ordinary world suddenly feels strange and new	startling comparisons; vivid imagery; unusual word choices
humour	you smile or laugh, sometimes uneasily	surprise; exaggeration; grand words for small things; good timing
tenderness, sadness	a soft ache; you slow down and re-read	warm memory; quiet repetition; loss held gently; soft sounds
a sense of beauty	you want the moment to last	sound patterns of rhyme and rhythm; rich imagery; a feeling of fit

These are starting points. The better your word for the effect, the sharper your analysis.

Figure 3E-2 — A working vocabulary for naming aesthetic effects.

One idea before the worked examples, because everything in this section rests on it: **the aesthetic quality lives in the handling, not the subject.** A train ride home can feel like a lullaby in one text and like a joke at your expense in another. The test is a substitution: if Vale's poem were about a basketball final, would it still feel hushed and warm?

No — the hush and warmth come from her choices, not from trains. Keep that test in your pocket; Worked example 3 runs it in full.

Worked example 1 — Tracing choices in a poem

Reading and viewing. Read the poem twice: once for what happens, once for what it *feels like* and where the feeling comes from.

Last Light on the Line — Marion Vale (written for this book)

The evening train slides home through honeyed light, its windows stringing beads of gold on glass; the day unknots its fists and fades from sight, and one by one the lit shops blur and pass.

A tram sighs somewhere over beyond the hill, the traffic’s hum sinks lower to the ground; the streets that held the daylight’s heat now chill, and everything turns down to half its sound.

I carry the day’s collected noise inside and watch my ghost ride with me in the glass; the houses open their yellow windows wide like hands let loose, and one by one they pass.

Soon I will step out into my own street and find the night arrived there first; I’ll keep this feeling — slow, unhurried, honeyed-sweet — till doors sigh open. Home. And then, to sleep.

The labelled version below shows the tracing habit in action: each tag names a choice and states the effect it builds.

Last Light on the Line

Marion Vale (written for this book)

The evening train slides home through honeyed light,
its windows stringing beads of gold on glass;
the day unknots its fists and fades from sight,
and one by one the lit shops blur and pass.

A tram sighs somewhere over beyond the hill,
the traffic's hum sinks lower to the ground;
the streets that held the daylight's heat now chill,
and everything turns down to half its sound.

I carry the day's collected noise inside
and watch my ghost ride with me in the glass;
the houses open their yellow windows wide
like hands let loose, and one by one they pass.

Soon I will step out into my own street
and find the night arrived there first; I'll keep
this feeling — slow, unhurried, honeyed-sweet —
till doors sigh open. Home. And then, to sleep.

a machine given a person's journey; creates calm

● **personification — the train "slides home"**

● **metaphor — windows as "beads of gold"**
a beautiful, delicate picture of lit carriages

● **repetition — "one by one"**
the unhurried rhythm of passing; it returns in stanza 3

● **personification + soft 's' sounds**
"sighs" makes the tram tired and gentle; hush builds

● **metaphor — the volume knob**
evening "turns down" sound; modern, quiet humour

● **metaphor — the reflection as a ghost**
a flicker of strangeness and solitude

● **simile — windows "like hands let loose"**
welcoming, generous; warmth offered to the traveller

the same warm word from line 1 — a fingerprint of style

● **"honeyed" returns**

● **fragments — "Home. And then, to sleep."**
short closing pieces settle the poem into stillness

Each tag names a choice and its effect.

Figure 3E-3 — “Last Light on the Line” with its tags.

Three of those traces, laid out the way your own analysis should run: quote first, name second, effect last.

Tracing the effect back to the choice

Three traces from "Last Light on the Line". Quote first, name second, effect last.

The choice, quoted	Name it	Family	The effect it builds
"the day unknots its fists and fades from sight"	personification and metaphor	literary devices	the day becomes a tired body letting go; the reader relaxes with it — calm
"its windows stringing beads of gold on glass"	imagery; the repeated gold-on-glass 'g' sounds	devices + features	something ordinary is made delicate and jewelled — a sense of beauty
"Home. And then, to sleep."	fragments: two tiny sentences at the close	text structure	the poem settles like a door closing — stillness and finality

The habit: never stop at "it makes me feel". Finish the sentence with "because the author ...".

Figure 3E-4 — Quote, name, effect: the trace.

Notice the direction of travel. A weak response starts at the author's intention ("the poet wants us to feel calm") and never visits the text. A strong response starts at what you felt, then walks backwards to the exact words that built it, and only then generalises. The poem's calm is not a guess about the poet's mind; it is ten-syllable lines, full rhyme, soft *s* and *l* sounds, and a day that literally lets go of its own fists.

Worked example 2 — The same author, twice: finding a style

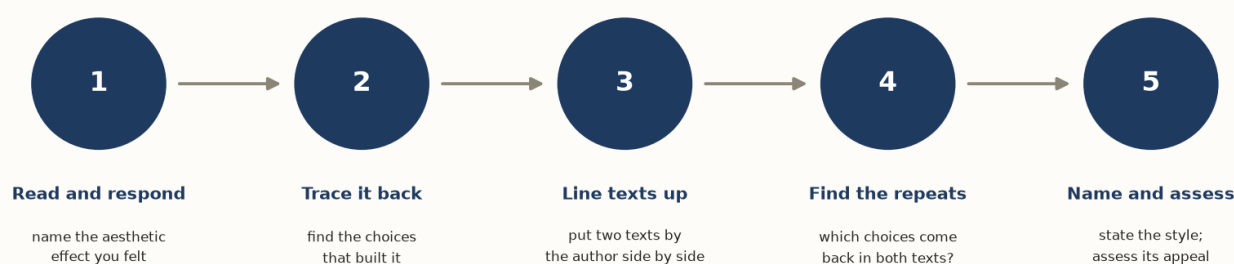
One text shows choices. Two texts by the same author show **habits** — and habits are what *style* means here. Read Vale's prose opening the way you read her poem: what happens, what it feels like, which choices built the feeling.

Six O'Clock Swim (opening) — Marion Vale (*written for this book*)

The pool opened at six, but the morning had been waiting outside the gates long before that, patient as a dog. I paid my coins and clicked through the turnstile into the hush. The water lay in its square of blue, unwrinkled, holding the whole sky in it like a kept promise. Somewhere behind the fence a sprinkler sighed. The lifeguard's chair stood empty, and the little flag on its pole almost never moved. For a while I just stood there, towel over one shoulder, letting the quiet soak in. Then the first swimmer broke the glass. The day began.

Now line the two texts up. The method is five moves, and this is exactly what VC2E9LE05.E01 asks you to do: compare texts by one author, determine the style, assess its appeal, and present the comparison to others.

Finding an author's style: five moves



Style = the choices an author keeps making across different texts. One text shows choices; two texts show habits.

Figure 3E-5 — Finding an author's style: five moves.

One author, two texts: lining Vale's choices up

Poem: "Last Light on the Line" Prose: "Six O'Clock Swim"

What to compare	The poem	The prose opening
Form and sentence shape	four quatrains of ten-syllable lines; steady, rocking build	one flowing paragraph; long gliding sentences, then short ones
Sound and rhythm	full rhyme (light/sight, glass/pass); soft 's' and 'l' sounds	no rhyme, but a measured pace; "sighed", "hush", "soak"
Imagery	warm light: honeyed, gold, yellow squares of windows	still water holding the sky; blue, gold, morning quiet
Devices	personification (train, tram, day, doors); simile; metaphor	personification (morning, sprinkler, day); simile; metaphor
Recurring moves	glass as a surface; "sighs"; "one by one" returns	glass again ("broke the glass"); "sighed" again; patient waiting
Closing move	fragments: "Home. And then, to sleep." — settles into stillness	a short declarative close: "The day began." — the same landing

What keeps returning across different texts is the author's style: here, personified surroundings, warm surfaces of glass and light, gliding sentences that land on a short close.

Figure 3E-6 — One author, two texts: the repeats are the style.

State the finding as one sentence, because that is what "determine literary style" means:

Vale's style is a personified, kind surrounding (the train, the day, the morning and the doors all behave like gentle company), surfaces of glass and warm light, long gliding sentences or lines that land on a short close, and soft repeated sounds. The aesthetic result is the same in both texts — calm, tenderness, a sense of being walked home — even though one text is a rhyming poem and the other is prose. **Style is what survives a change of form.**

Worked example 3 — Same subject, different author

For contrast, here is the night train ride home handled by another hand.

Last Train — Theo Brandt (*written for this book*)

Last train. The doors shut with a sound like a lid. Nobody looked up. A man across from me was eating chips and the whole carriage smelled of it — salt, hot fat, somebody else’s good decision. Between stations the lights kept flicking off, so we rode the dark in little pieces: now a face, now a shoe, now nothing. I got off at my stop. The night was just a night. It didn’t slow down for anybody, and I didn’t expect it to.

Same subject, two treatments

Both texts are about a night train ride home. The subject is identical; the aesthetic qualities are not.

The handling	Vale — poem	Brandt — prose
Sentences	ten-syllable lines, full rhyme, even and rocking	fragments and clipped pieces: "Last train." "Now nothing."
Word choice	warm, soft: honeyed, gold, hush, sweet	plain, everyday: chips, salt, flicking, shoe
Devices	personification that welcomes; simile that gives	a simile with an edge ("like a lid"); dry humour
Reader's position	held and soothed; the world feels kind	alert and amused; the world owes you nothing
Aesthetic quality	calm, tenderness, beauty	humour, grit, a hard-edged honesty

The aesthetic quality lives in the handling, not the subject.

Figure 3E-7 — *The subject is identical; the aesthetic qualities are not.*

Now run the substitution test from the Theory. “Brandt’s text is gritty because it is about a night train” — substitute: if it were about a night *bus*, would it still be gritty? Yes, plainly; nothing about trains does the work. “Vale’s poem is calm because it is about evening” — substitute: Vale’s *basketball* poem would not be calm. So in Vale’s case the handling carries the effect, and that is precisely what makes her a style worth naming. The two texts together prove the section’s central claim twice over.

A note on fairness before you judge either text. When you compare, put each text in its strongest form first — say what each does *well*, in its own terms, before you say which you prefer. “Vale is cheesy” and “Brandt is cold” attack weak versions neither text deserves; “Vale makes the world kind on purpose, and it works” and “Brandt refuses to flatter the reader, and that honesty lands” are positions worth weighing. You will be marked on the quality of that weighing, never on which side you land on.

Assessing appeal

VC2E9LE05.E01 also asks you to assess a text’s **appeal** — the pull it has on a reader. Appeal is in part a report of your response, so a sincere “it pulled me in” cannot be wrong; but at school an appeal claim earns marks only as far as it can be *answered* — named, traced, evidenced. The ladder below is the difference between a reaction and a judgement.

Assessing appeal: climb from reaction to judgement

each rung makes the appeal claim more answerable



Figure 3E-8 — From “I liked it” to a judgement others can weigh.

Useful sentence frames for rungs 3 and 4:

- “The text felt **calm** to me, *because* its ... (choice) ... never let me hurry.”
- “What appealed to me was the **humour**, for example when ... (quote) ... , which puts a grand word against a small thing.”
- “It did **not** appeal to me where ... (quote) ... ; the effect aimed at was ... , but for me the choice felt”

That last frame matters. A reasoned “no” is a stronger piece of analysis than a lazy “yes”.

Activities

Reading and viewing

Q1. In stanza 3 of the poem, find one choice not already tagged in Figure 3E-3. Quote it, name it (structure, feature or device), and state the effect it builds for you in one sentence.

Q2. Read “Six O’Clock Swim” with a highlighter. Mark three choices that also appear in the poem, and for each write the effect you think it builds in the prose.

Q3. Copy the trace table below and complete it with three choices of your own — at least one must be a *structure* choice (a stanza shape, an order, an opening or closing move).

Choice, quoted	Name it	Family	Effect it builds
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Q4. Read the openings of the two Vale texts side by side (“The evening train slides home...” / “The pool opened at six...”). Write one similarity and one difference in how they open, each with a quoted phrase.

Writing

Q5. Write one comparative analytical paragraph (120–180 words) answering: *what two choices that return across both Vale texts tell us about her style, and what aesthetic qualities do they create?* Plan it with the shape below before you write.

Planning a comparative analytical paragraph

Claim

state the shared style in one sentence

"Both texts show Vale's habit of ..."

Evidence — text 1

quote from the poem

"the day unknots its fists ..."

Analysis 1

name the choice, then the effect

personification turns sunset into a tired body letting go

Evidence — text 2

quote from the prose

"the morning had been waiting ..."

Analysis 2

same move, same naming

personification again: the day is a patient companion

Link

say what the repetition does for the reader

in both texts, the world feels alive and gentle — that is the appeal

One paragraph, two texts, one argument about style.

Figure 3E-9 — A comparative analytical paragraph, planned.

Q6. Of the three texts in this section, which has the most appeal for you? Write a rung-4 response of 100–150 words: named effect, traced choice, quoted evidence. If none appealed to you, say so at rung 4 — a reasoned “no” is welcome here.

Q7. Borrow exactly one of Vale’s moves (a personified surrounding, a glass-or-light surface, or a long glide to a short close) and use it in two sentences of your own about a place you know. Underneath, write one sentence naming the effect your borrowed move aims at.

Speaking and listening

Q8. Working in pairs: present your comparison of the two Vale texts aloud, in under two minutes. State the style in one sentence, support it with two quoted choices, and name the aesthetic result. Your partner’s job is to add one choice you missed and to challenge one effect claim. Swap. Afterwards, write one sentence: *the challenge that changed my thinking was ...*

Q9. Same pairs, new question: which text in this section would you put in front of a Year 7 class to teach “calm”, and which to teach “humour”? Discuss until you agree or until you can state the disagreement precisely, using rung-3 language (“because its ...”) on both sides.

Checkpoint

Mapped to VC2E9LE05, VC2E9LE05.E01, and the Reading and Viewing sentence of the Level 9 achievement standard: “They analyse how literary devices, including poetic features, create meaning and aesthetic qualities.”

C1. Name two aesthetic qualities you felt while reading “Last Light on the Line”. For each, quote one choice that built it and give the choice its family name.

C2. The poem and “Six O’Clock Swim” differ in form. Identify one choice that appears in *both* texts and explain the effect it builds in each.

C3. Vale and Brandt write about almost the same journey. Explain, using one quoted choice from each text, why the aesthetic qualities of the two texts differ.

C4. Give a rung-4 answer to: which of the three texts has the most appeal for you, and why?

C5. (Spoken, in pairs.) Deliver the two-minute comparison from Q8 to your partner. Their written note — one added choice, one challenged effect — and your one-sentence response to it complete this item.

Checkpoint guide

You are marked on the quality of the reasoning — terms named, choices quoted, effects traced — not on which text you prefer. Sample reasoning, not sample answers:

- **C1.** e.g. calm, built by the full rhyme and ten-syllable lines (structure/feature); tenderness, built by the personified day “unknotting its fists” (device). Any two felt effects with a genuine trace earn it.
- **C2.** e.g. personification (train sliding home / morning waiting); glass surfaces (windows on glass / the pool “broke the glass”); the soft verb “sigh”; a long glide landing on a short close. The explanation must say what the repeat does to the reader in each text.
- **C3.** The trace must reach the handling, not the subject: Vale’s soft sounds, warm light and welcoming simile against Brandt’s fragments, plain words and dry simile (“a sound like a lid”). A response that blames trains loses the mark.
- **C4.** Rung 4 = named effect + traced choice + quotation. Preference is free; bare preference is not marked.
- **C5.** The mark sits in the exchange: a partner’s challenge answered carefully, or a stated reason for holding your ground.

Creating texts — possibly hybrid — experimenting with structures, features, devices and voice

Every text you have read this year was a set of choices someone made: what form it wore, whose voice it spoke in, which devices did the heavy work. This section turns that around. You take a source text — a story, a poem, a play, a speech — and make a new text from it: a short film on paper, a prequel, a sequel, a retelling from the other side, or a hybrid that mixes two forms until they argue.

Creating is not copying. Every path in this section keeps something from the source and changes something on purpose, and the change is the point: it is how you show you understand what the source was doing. By the end you should be able to make a new text from an old one, and to say — in plain language, one sentence per choice — what each of your choices does.

Curriculum focus

VC2E9LE06 — create texts, which may be hybrid, that experiment with literary text structures, language features and devices, for purposes and audiences

Draws on

VC2E9LE06.E01 — taking an existing short story, poem, play or speech in print form and creating a short film · VC2E9LE06.E02 — adapting traditional and contemporary literature through textual intervention, prequel or sequel

Builds on (Level 8)

VC2E8LE06 — create texts that experiment with literary language features and devices for purpose

Achievement-standard hook

Writing: “When creating written and spoken texts, students present ideas through a point of view and/or a voice... They experiment with textual elements and include appropriate multimodal or digital elements. They review and edit their own and others’ texts for clarity and control and reflect on these processes... They use language features and literary devices to create hybrid texts.”

Modes in this section

Reading and viewing — model poem, model tale, storyboard and shot grammar (Figures 4–9) · **Writing** — hybrid texts, interventions, prequels and sequels (Worked examples 1–2; Q1–Q7, Q9–Q13) · **Speaking and listening** — pitch-and-respond protocols (Q8, Q14)

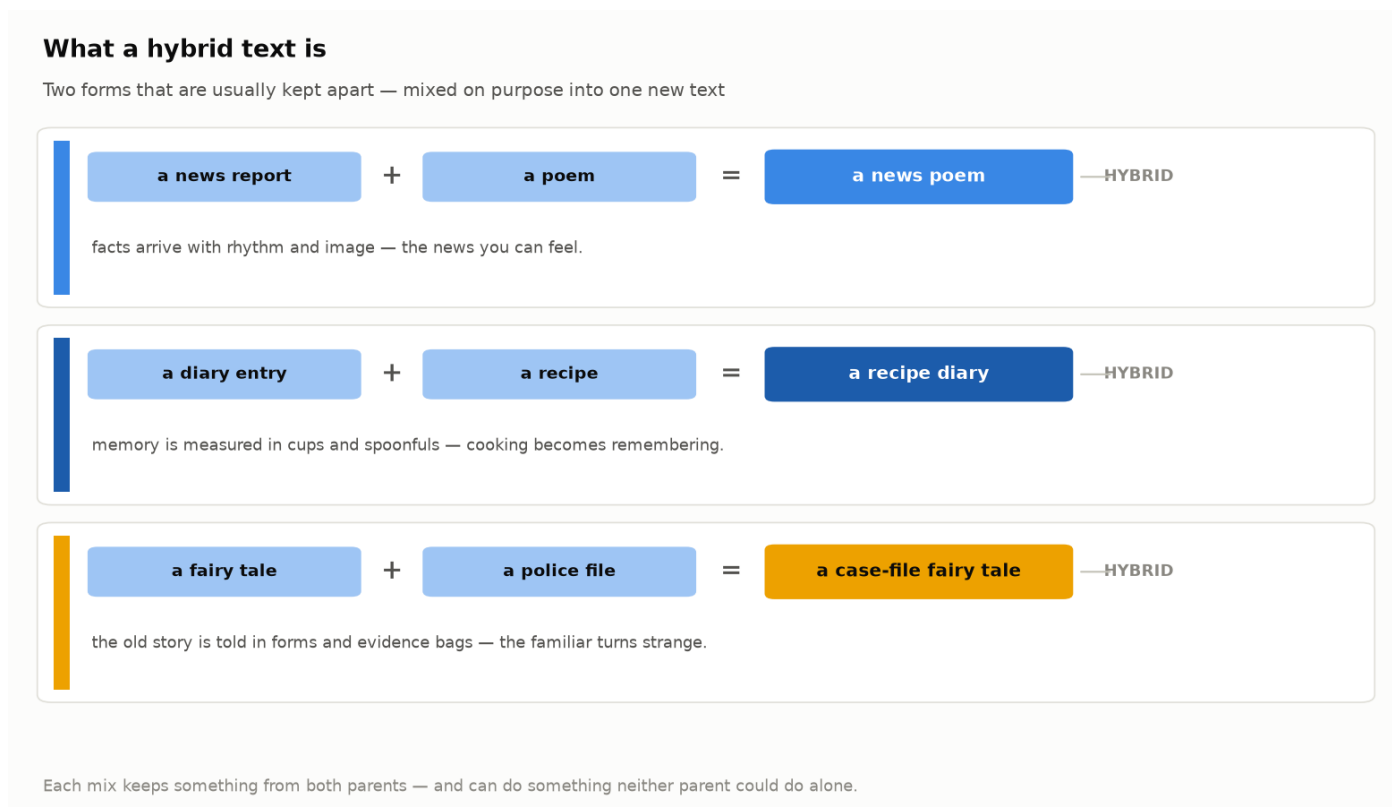
Working definitions. The curriculum uses the words *hybrid*, *voice* and *experiment* in this code but does not define them, so this book defines them operationally — by what you do with them on the page. A **hybrid text** mixes two or more recognisable forms (a poem and a news notice, a fairy tale and a police file) so that both sets of rules are still at work and pull against each other. **Voice** is the sense of a person behind the words, built from four dials you can turn: word choice, sentence rhythm, what the narrator notices, and what the narrator will not say. To **experiment** is to change a structure, feature, device or voice on purpose, so that afterwards you can describe what the change does. Reasonable people disagree about how far a text can change before it stops being an adaptation and becomes a new work; this section takes no side on that question — it asks only that every change be chosen, and accounted for.

Theory

1. Hybrid texts — when two forms argue

A **form** is a kind of text with its own rules: a news notice gives times and facts and advice; a poem gives image, rhythm and line breaks; a recipe measures; a diary remembers. When you read any of these, you know within two lines which rules you are under.

A hybrid text puts two of those rule-sets on the same page. Figure 1 shows three mixes. In each panel, neither form disappears: the facts in a news poem still check out, the lines still break; the recipe diary still measures, but the measuring is remembering. The interest of a hybrid is the argument between the forms — the moment where one form cannot carry the meaning and the other has to.



Three panels, each mixing two familiar forms into one hybrid: a news report plus a poem becomes a news poem; a diary entry plus a recipe becomes a recipe diary; a fairy tale plus a police file becomes a case-file fairy tale; each panel names the effect of the mix

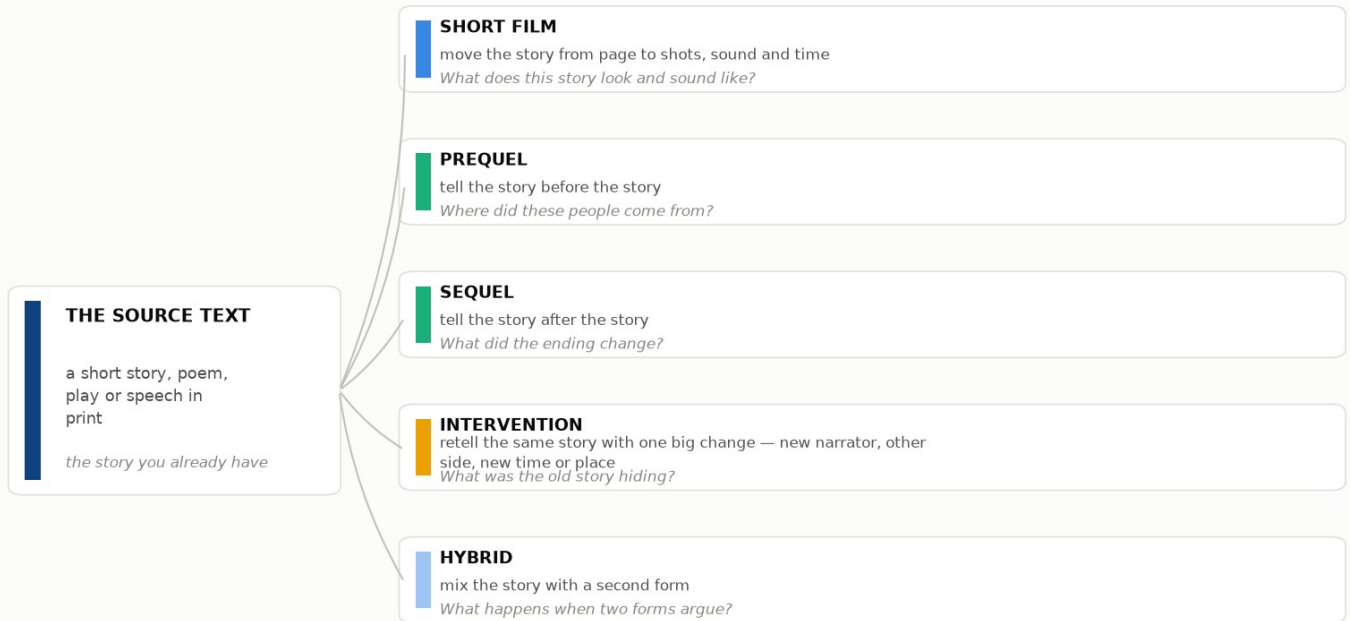
Two warnings before you write one. A hybrid is not a text with a quotation bolted to it — both forms must be doing work for the whole length. And each device in a hybrid should have a job you can name in one sentence; if you cannot say what the mix adds, the mix is decoration.

2. One source text, five paths

A **source text** is the text you start from — the short story, poem, play or speech in print. Figure 2 maps the five paths this section works with. The short-film path moves the story from page to shots, sound and fixed time. The three rewrite paths change the story's position in time or perspective: a **prequel** tells the story before the story, a **sequel** tells the story after the story, and a **textual intervention** retells the same story with one big change — a new narrator, the other side, a new time or place. The hybrid path can cross any of the other four.

One source text — five paths

Every path keeps the source's core and changes something on purpose



Short film is the first path; prequel, sequel and intervention are the rewrite paths; hybrid can cross any of them.

A source text card on the left connected by lines to five path cards: short film, prequel, sequel, intervention and hybrid; each path card gives a one-line description and the question it asks of the source

Every path answers the same two questions before drafting begins: *what is this source doing that I must keep?* and *what is it hiding that I want to show?* A path that keeps nothing is a different text; a path that changes nothing is a photocopy.

3. What travels, what must be rebuilt

When a text crosses from one form to another, some things travel cheaply and some must be rebuilt from the ground up. Figure 3 sets out the usual pattern for the page-to-film crossing, which is the hardest and most useful one to learn.

Moving a story from page to film

What usually survives the crossing — and what must be rebuilt

Element	What usually survives	What must be rebuilt
Story and plot	the events, and the order you choose to tell them in	film can re-order time with a single cut — a flashback is one edit away
Characters	who they are and what they want	inner thought must become face, action, or a voice we hear
Setting	the place and its weather	written description becomes light, colour, and sound
Images and symbols	strong images travel best of all	on the page they are read; on screen they are seen and heard
Voice	the sense of a person behind the words	the hardest to carry across — rebuilt from narrator, music and shot choices
Length	nothing carries across for free	a poem takes two minutes to read; film time is fixed, so choose what stays

Every row is a decision, not a rule: the interesting adaptations are the ones where a filmmaker breaks the pattern on purpose.

A three-column table titled ‘Moving a story from page to film’: for story and plot, characters, setting, images and symbols, voice, and length, it lists what usually survives the crossing and what must be rebuilt

The pattern that matters most is the third row of the table’s logic: inner thought does not film. On the page a narrator can say what a character is thinking; on screen that thought must become a face, an action, or a voice we hear over the picture. Voice is the hardest of all to carry across — and since voice is this section’s third key word, the next two subsections practise it twice, once in film terms and once in rewrite terms.

4. From poem to film — a worked crossing

Figure 4 is the first of two source texts written for this section: a poem, “Ninety-One Steps”, about a young woman minding a lighthouse through a storm. Read it first as a reader. Then read it as a maker, asking what it would take to put it on screen.

The source text: 'Ninety-One Steps'

A poem written for this book — the print text Example 1 turns into a film

All day the wind rehearsed on the tower,
testing the glass with fistfuls of salt and rain.
By dusk the sea was shouting, and the light
woke in the lamp room like a struck match.

Mara climbed the iron stairs — ninety-one steps —
the way her mother showed her, and her mother's mother,
counting as she climbed, the way you count
a heart that keeps a whole coast beating.

She trimmed the wick. She polished every pane.
She logged the date, the weather, then one line:
"Ship from the town came through. All well."

Below, the storm kept arguing with the rocks.
Above, her small flame answered, and answered —
and the dark went home without what it came for.

— written for this book; the poet's name is the class's to decide

Read it once for the story, once for the images — then ask what a camera could hold and what it could not.

The full original poem 'Ninety-One Steps' in a framed card: three stanzas about a storm, a climb of ninety-one steps, a lit lamp, and a logbook line reading 'All well'

Figure 5 is one answer: a six-frame **storyboard** — a plan of the film, frame by frame. A storyboard is not a drawing contest; stick figures are fine. What it must record, per frame, is three decisions: what we see (shot size), what we hear (sound), and the job the frame does in the argument of the film.

Storyboard — 'Ninety-One Steps' as a short film

Six shots, in order. Each frame names its shot size, its sound, and the job it does.

1 WIDE SHOT the tower alone against a grey, moving sea SOUND: wind rising; no music yet <i>shows how small the light is, and how big the weather</i>	2 CLOSE-UP rain striking the lamp-room glass SOUND: the hard tick of rain on glass <i>brings the storm close — we feel it on the window</i>
3 MEDIUM SHOT Mara climbing the iron stairs, one hand on the rail SOUND: footsteps on iron; her counting, almost a whisper <i>we meet her working — ninety-one steps is a job, not a poem, yet</i>	4 CLOSE-UP a match flares; the great lamp catches light SOUND: one match strike — then near-silence <i>the turning point: the answer to the storm</i>
5 LOW-ANGLE WIDE the beam swinging out over the waves SOUND: the storm 'arguing with the rocks' <i>from below, the light looks powerful — hope, angled up</i>	6 CLOSE-UP the logbook page; her pen writes 'All well.' SOUND: pen scratching; the wind falling away <i>ends on the written word — the story was always a record</i>

A storyboard is a plan, not a drawing contest — stick figures welcome; the decisions are what count.

A six-frame storyboard adapting the poem to film: wide shot of the tower, close-up of rain on glass, medium shot of the climb, close-up of the match, low-angle wide of the beam, close-up of the logbook; each frame lists its sound and its job

Notice the choices. The poem's turning point — the wick trimmed, the lamp lit — becomes a close-up with near-silence, because a close-up is where feeling lives and silence makes an audience lean in. The final frame ends on the written words "All well." because the poem itself ends on a record: the film inherits that ending rather than inventing one.

Figure 6 is the toolkit those choices were made from. Four sets of options — shot size, angle, sound, transition — and each option carries its own effect. There is no neutral shot; even "just showing" the tower is a wide shot doing the job of making the light look small against the weather.

The filmmaker's toolkit

Four sets of choices. Every choice says something — there is no neutral shot.

SHOT SIZE

wide

where we are; a small figure in a big world

medium

a person doing their work

close-up

what matters; the place where feeling lives

ANGLE

eye level

fair and equal — we meet the subject as a person

low angle

looking up: power, or threat

high angle

looking down: exposed, or small

SOUND

the world's sound

wind, rain, footsteps — the scene's own noise

sound only the audience hears

music that tells us how to feel

silence

weight; the moment the audience leans in

TRANSITION

cut

move now; the story steps forward

fade

time has passed

dissolve

two things belong together

You do not need a camera to use these — they are decisions first, equipment second. A storyboard and a phone both count.

A four-row toolkit card: shot size (wide, medium, close-up), angle (eye level, low angle, high angle), sound (the world's sound, sound only the audience hears, silence), and transition (cut, fade, dissolve), each option with its usual effect

You do not need a camera to use any of this. A storyboard and a phone camera both count; the decisions come first and the equipment second.

5. Rewrite paths — the same story, another voice

Figure 7 is the second source text written for this section: “The Bell of Aya Village”, an original tale in the pattern of old folk tales — a test, a warning ignored, and a small detail (the coin) that matters twice. It is the text the rewrite paths will work on.

The source text: 'The Bell of Aya Village'

A tale written for this book in the pattern of old folk tales — the text the rewrite paths work on

The village of Aya stood beside a wide brown river, and above its rooftops hung a bell of green bronze. The bell had no name. It rang only for flood.

For sixty years it never rang. The villagers grew used to its silence, then proud of it. 'A quiet bell is a lucky bell,' Mayor Idris said, and Noor, who was twelve and mended fishing nets, heard him say it every year at the river fair.

One autumn Noor saw that the bell's great rope had grown thin and grey where the rain had combed it. She went to the mayor. 'The rope is tired,' she said. 'It will break when we need it most.'

Mayor Idris smiled the way adults smile at weather. 'A quiet bell is a lucky bell,' he said, and gave her a coin for her nets.

Noor kept the coin. And with her own hands she hid a hammer in the straw below the tower, and waited.

The flood came on a moonless night. Noor heard the river rise before the rope did — it snapped at the first pull, the way she knew it would. But her hammer was already ringing against the bronze, and every roof in Aya emptied onto the high road before the water reached the doorsteps.

After the flood, the village named the bell Noor's Bell. The mayor spoke first at the naming, and Noor, who was mending nets again, heard him say: 'We have always listened to the river.'

She kept the coin.

Like most folk tales, this one has a test, a warning ignored, and a small detail that matters twice — the coin.

The full original tale 'The Bell of Aya Village' in a framed card: Noor warns that the bell rope is frayed, Mayor Idris ignores her, she hides a hammer, the flood comes, the rope snaps, her hammer rings the bell, and the bell is renamed after her

A **textual intervention** changes one big thing and lets the consequences run. Figure 8 models the cleanest version: the tale's naming scene retold by Mayor Idris, in his own voice. Nothing new happens — every event is already in the tale. Everything is in the voice: he opens with a denial nobody asked for, piles up duties to spread the blame, and closes in short lines that land like verdicts. Read it against the tale and you can hear both texts holding the same facts and meaning differently.

Model intervention — the same scene, the other voice

The naming scene of 'The Bell of Aya Village', retold by Mayor Idris. Same events — rebuilt voice.

I was never careless. Let that be said first, and written down. A mayor minds a hundred ropes — the ferry rope, the well rope, the rope that flies the market flag — and one child comes once, with a story about fraying. I gave her a coin. That is what mayors do.

The rope was old, yes. Everything in Aya is old. That is why we keep it.

On the night of the flood I reached the tower with the others, wet to the waist. I heard the hammer before the bell — small blows, perfectly placed, the way you strike when you have practised in secret. And climbing the high road with the village behind me, I understood two things at once: that she had been right, and that she had known I would not listen.

I spoke first at the naming. It is the mayor's place to speak first. 'We have always listened to the river,' I said, and the crowd heard thanks, because a crowd hears what it wants to hear.

Noor was mending her nets again. She watched me over the needle, and I knew she had heard the one true thing I said — which was nothing.

Voice: defending before it is accused
the first words are a shield

What he notices — too late
he sees her preparation only in memory

Word choice: piling up duties
blame is spread across 'a hundred ropes'

The one honest moment
two truths in a single sentence

Sentence rhythm does the work
short closing lines land like verdicts

Nothing new happens in this retelling. Everything is in the voice: who is speaking, what they admit, and what they cannot say.

A model intervention: the naming scene retold in Mayor Idris's first-person voice, with highlighted spans labelled denial, excuse, notices, admits and rhythm, and a margin key explaining each voice move

How is a voice built? Figure 9 gives the four dials, read two ways across the same tale: Noor's voice and the mayor's. Word choice — plain, hands-on words against official, role-first words. Sentence rhythm — short and straight against lists and second thoughts. What the narrator notices — the frayed rope against the crowd. And what the narrator will not say — Noor says the danger out loud; the mayor never says "I was wrong". The test of a real voice is simple: remove the names, and a reader can still tell who is speaking.

Voice is made of dials you can turn

The same four choices, read two ways — Noor from the tale, and the mayor's retelling

NOOR'S VOICE

MAYOR IDRIS'S VOICE

WORD CHOICE

plain, hands-on words — 'The rope is tired.'

official, role-first words — 'It is the mayor's place.'

SENTENCE RHYTHM

short and straight; says the thing once

lists and second thoughts; piles up reasons

WHAT THE NARRATOR NOTICES

the frayed rope; the sound of the river rising

the crowd; who speaks first; how he is seen

WHAT THE NARRATOR WILL NOT SAY

nothing — she says the danger out loud

'I was wrong' — the three words that never come

A reader could tell these two voices apart with the names removed. That is the test of a real voice.

A two-column comparison card titled 'Voice is made of dials you can turn': Noor's voice against Mayor Idris's voice across four dials — word choice, sentence rhythm, what the narrator notices, and what the narrator will not say

Prequels and sequels use the same dials more quietly. A prequel's job is to plant what the source harvests — it may show where a detail came from, but it must not spend its energy explaining itself. A sequel's job is to show what the ending changed, not just to repeat the ending with new events. In all three rewrite paths, the source's strongest image is the thing to keep: the coin, the count, the light.

6. The creation checkpoint

Figure 10 turns the Level 9 Writing standard into four checks to run over your own draft before you call it finished. Each check quotes a sentence of the standard and translates it into a question you can answer about your text. The fourth check — review, edit, reflect — is part of the standard, not homework after it: the standard expects you to say what you changed between drafts, and why.

Creation checkpoint

Ask these of your own text before it is finished. Each check is a sentence from the Level 9 Writing achievement standard.

☐ Point of view and voice

'students present ideas through a point of view and/or a voice'

I can name the voice my text speaks in — and a reader could tell who is speaking without being told.

☐ Experiment, on purpose

'They experiment with textual elements and include appropriate multimodal or digital elements'

I made at least one change to structure, form or device that I can name — and I can say what that change does.

☐ Devices that work

'They use language features and literary devices to create hybrid texts'

My devices are not decoration. Each one does a job I can describe in one sentence.

☐ Review, edit, reflect

'They review and edit their own and others' texts for clarity and control and reflect on these processes'

I re-read for clarity and control, and I can say what I changed between drafts — and why.

The first three checks come from the Writing standard your work is measured against; the fourth is the habit that improves all of them.

A four-card checklist titled 'Creation checkpoint': point of view and voice; experiment, on purpose; devices that work; review, edit, reflect — each card quotes the matching sentence of the Writing achievement standard and gives a student-facing check

Use the checkpoint twice: once mid-draft, when there is still time to turn a dial; and once at the end, as the basis for your reflection sentence. A reflection that says “I changed the narrator and it made the text more honest about the mayor” is worth more than a page of “I improved my writing”.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — building a hybrid, step by step (scaffolded)

Task. Mix a weather notice and a poem about the same storm as “Ninety-One Steps”.

Step 1 — name one rule from each form. The notice: times, facts, advice, a flat tone. The poem: image, rhythm, short lines that carry feeling.

Step 2 — decide what the hybrid is for. The notice tells you the storm is bad; the poem makes you feel it. The hybrid should deliver the warning twice — once to the head, once to the chest.

Step 3 — draft the notice skeleton first. Facts in order, no decoration.

Step 4 — break the skeleton at the moments the facts cannot carry. Insert two or three poem lines, and let them be the only lines that do not advise or report.

Step 5 — run the checkpoint. Are both forms still recognisable? Does each inserted line do a job the notice cannot do?

COAST WEATHER NOTICE — 18:00 A low is crossing from the south-west. Gusts to ninety kilometres an hour. Small craft warned; power lines likely to fail on the headland. The sea has been practising all week. Residents are advised to secure loose items, stay off the breakwater, and keep a torch within reach. The light on the headland is on. No further notices until morning.

Commentary. The notice keeps its rules throughout — times, facts, advice — so the two poem lines stand out exactly because they break them. “The sea has been practising all week” is personification doing the fear-work the facts cannot do, and the closing “The light on the headland is on” does both jobs at once: it is a fact in the notice’s own language, and it answers the storm the way the poem’s flame does.

Worked example 2 — a prequel opening (scaffolded)

Task. Open a prequel to “Ninety-One Steps”: the day Mara learns the count.

The moves. (1) Keep one image from the source — the counting. (2) Start at a *first time*, because prequels live on firsts. (3) Let the reader feel what the count will cost without stating it. (4) Plant, in the last line, the thing the source poem will harvest.

The first time Mara miscounted the steps, she was six, and her mother stopped her at step forty and made her begin again. The count was not a game. The count was a promise: ninety-one steps between the dark and the light, and somebody had to carry it. Above them the lamp waited, and the wind outside was learning the tower the way Mara was learning the stairs.

Commentary. The opening keeps the source’s central image (the count as duty), begins at a first time, and ends by giving the wind a human job — “learning the tower” — which is exactly the job the poem’s first line will give it years later. The prequel plants; the poem harvests.

Worked example 3 — explaining the experiment (model of the reflection move)

Task. After drafting the Worked example 1 hybrid, write the reflection the standard asks for.

Three experiments, and what they do. First, I broke the notice with two poem lines: the facts tell you the storm is bad, the lines make you feel it, so the warning lands twice. Second, I set the poem lines in the same plain type as the facts, so the two forms share one page-voice and the argument happens inside the reader instead of on the page. Third, I ended on a fact — “The light on the headland is on” — because ending the way a notice ends is what lets the feeling survive anyway.

Commentary. Each experiment is named, then given a one-sentence effect. That is the whole reflection move: choice, then job. “I improved my writing” is not in this paragraph, and never should be.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Read “Ninety-One Steps” (Figure 4). (a) The poem gives the storm human work to do — it rehearses, shouts, argues. Name this device and say what job it does in the final stanza. (b) The counting is “the way you count / a heart”. Name what the count becomes a symbol of, in one sentence.

Q2. Figure 1, third panel: a fairy tale mixed with a police file. Name one rule or habit each form brings to the mix, and explain in one sentence why that mix produces the panel’s effect — “the familiar turns strange”.

Q3. View the storyboard (Figure 5). Which frame carries the poem’s turning point? Quote the frame’s shot size and sound line, and say why each of those two choices suits the moment.

Q4. Using the toolkit (Figure 6), choose one shot size, one angle and one sound option for the moment in the poem when Mara logs “All well.” Justify each choice in one clause.

Q5. Using Figure 3, choose one element of “Ninety-One Steps” that would have to be *rebuilt* (not just carried across) in a film version, and describe your rebuild in two or three sentences.

Q6. Read the mayor’s retelling (Figure 8). Identify two voice dials from Figure 9 that it turns, and quote one span of highlighted text as evidence for each.

Q7. Write a prequel opening of three to five lines for *either* source text (Figure 4 or Figure 7). Keep one image from the source, and begin at a first time.

Q8. (*Speaking and listening*) Pitch-and-respond. In sixty seconds, pitch a sequel idea for “The Bell of Aya Village” to a partner: what the ending changed, and one image you will keep. Your partner listens for the kept image and the change, then names each back to you in one sentence. Swap. Note one suggestion from your partner you will take, or refuse with a reason.

Unscaffolded

Q9. Create a hybrid text of 150–250 words from one of the two source texts: mix the source with a second form of your choice (notice, recipe, diary, file, list, letter). Follow it with a two-sentence note: one sentence per form, saying what each form contributes.

Q10. Write a prequel *or* sequel of up to one page for one source text. It must keep one image from the source and change one thing on purpose. End with a note naming the kept image and the change.

Q11. Some readers say an adaptation always loses something of the source; others say it always adds something the source never had. Write 120–180 words that put the strongest case you can for *each* side before reaching your own view. You will be marked on the strength of the cases you build, not on which side you land on.

Q12. Plan a short-film version of one scene or stanza from either source text: a six-frame storyboard in words. Each frame names its shot size, its sound, and its job.

Q13. Take four to six lines of your own text from Q9 or Q10 and rewrite them in a different voice. Turn at least two dials from Figure 9, and name the two you turned.

Q14. (*Speaking and listening*) Group adaptation pitch. In groups of three or four, choose one source text and one path from Figure 2, and prepare a two-minute pitch: what you will keep, what you will rebuild, and one voice choice. After each pitch, listeners record one kept thing and one rebuilt thing; the pitching group ends with one sentence on what the listeners’ notes changed in the plan.

Answers

Q1. (a) Personification; in the final stanza the storm “argues” with the rocks while the flame “answers” — the storm is an opponent the light outlasts, so the device turns weather into a contest the lighthouse wins. (b) The count becomes a symbol of care passed down the generations — a heartbeat keeping the coast alive.

Q2. The fairy tale brings pattern and moral shorthand (a test, a warning, a small detail that matters twice); the police file brings forms, numbers and evidence bags. The mix turns the familiar strange because the tale’s magic is forced to sit in the file’s cold language — warmth inside a cabinet.

Q3. Frame 4: close-up, “one match strike — then near-silence”. Close-up because the turning point is small and human (a match), and feeling lives at close range; near-silence because silence makes the audience lean in at the exact moment the answer to the storm arrives.

Q4. Example: close-up (the logbook and pen are where the poem’s feeling finally rests); eye level (we meet Mara as a person doing her work, not a hero looked up at); the world’s sound — pen scratch, wind falling away (no music needed; the fact should speak for itself). Any justified triple scores.

Q5. Example: the counting is inner on the page; on screen it must be rebuilt as her lips moving on the stairs with the count as a whispered voice-over, or as footstep rhythm plus one cut to her hand on the rail at each tenth step.

Q6. Word choice — “A mayor minds a hundred ropes” piles duties to spread blame (excuse). Sentence rhythm — “which was nothing” closes in a short line that lands like a verdict. (Denial and the late “notices” dial also acceptable with quoted spans.)

Q7. Criteria: three to five lines; one kept image named or shown; a first time; the voice distinct from the source’s narrator. See fully-worked solution for a model.

Q8. Criteria: pitch states the change and the kept image within sixty seconds; listener names each back; speaker records one taken suggestion or a reasoned refusal.

Q9. Criteria: two recognisable forms for the whole length; 150–250 words; a two-sentence note giving each form a job.

Q10. Criteria: one kept image; one change on purpose; both named in the end note; the text does not just repeat the source’s ending.

Q11. Criteria: each side stated at its strongest, not as a weak version nobody holds; a personal view reached *after* both; reasoning marked, not conclusion.

Q12. Criteria: six frames in order; each frame names shot size, sound and job; the jobs add up to an argument, not a shopping list.

Q13. Criteria: four to six lines rewritten; two named dials actually turned (the rewrite would read differently with the names removed).

Q14. Criteria: pitch names keep/rebuild/voice; listeners’ notes are recorded; the group’s closing sentence shows the notes changed the plan.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1 — model answer. (a) The device is personification: the wind “rehearsed”, the sea was “shouting”, the storm “kept arguing with the rocks”. In the final stanza the job is argumentative — the storm is given a human will so that the lamp’s small flame can *answer* it, and a contest ends the poem (“the dark went home without what it came for”) instead of mere weather. (b) The count is a symbol of inherited care: counting the stairs “the way you count / a heart” makes the routine a heartbeat, so ninety-one steps stand for the whole coast being kept alive by small, repeated labour.

Q3 — model answer. Frame 4 carries the turn. Its shot size is a close-up — a match flaring, the lamp catching light — and close-up is the size the toolkit reserves for “what matters; the place where feeling lives”, which is exact for the poem’s quietest, biggest moment. Its sound line is “one match strike — then near-silence”: silence is the option that

makes the audience lean in, and withholding music lets the flame be the answer rather than a soundtrack about the answer. Together the two choices translate the stanza “She trimmed the wick” from report into experience.

Q4 — model answer. Close-up, eye level, the world’s sound. Close-up, because the logbook page is “the place where feeling lives” — the whole poem ends on two written words, so the camera must be near enough to read them. Eye level, because Mara is “a person doing their work”; a low angle would turn a worker into a monument, and the poem refuses that. The world’s sound — pen scratch, the wind falling away — because the moment’s power is that nothing is performed; a music cue here would be the film saying what the fact already says.

Q7 — model opening (for the tale). *The first winter the bell hung over Aya, it had a name, and the name was bad luck: the river bell, the widow’s bell. So the village did the only thing a village can do with a bad name. It stopped saying it, and waited for the forgetting to work, and the forgetting worked so well that in sixty years no one alive remembered that the bell had ever been called anything at all.* Kept image: the unnamed bell. First time: the naming that the source says nothing about. The prequel plants the silence the tale’s mayor will call luck.

Q9 — model hybrid (tale × police file).

CASE FILE 2214 — AYA, RIVER DISTRICT **Item 1:** one (1) bronze bell, green with age, mounted above the rooftops. Rung once in sixty years. See Item 4. **Item 2:** one (1) bell rope, thin and grey where the rain had combed it. Warning given verbally by a child, twelve, net-mender. Warning logged, not actioned. **Item 3:** one (1) coin, small denomination, given to said child “for her nets”. Child retained the coin. See Item 6. **Item 4:** flood event, moonless night. Rope failed at first pull, consistent with Item 2. Bronze bell sounded continuously regardless. Village evacuated to the high road; zero losses at doorstep level. **Item 5:** source of bell sound on arrival of officers: one (1) hammer, hidden in straw below the tower, in the hands of the child named in Item 2. **Item 6:** the coin. Kept. **Closing note:** the file records what the village already knows and will not write in a file: that the warning was the smallest person in the room, and that the room heard a hammer before it heard a child.

Note (two sentences, as the question requires). The police file contributes coldness — items, numbers, “consistent with” — which makes the ignored warning feel official instead of accidental. The fairy tale contributes the pattern underneath (test, warning, small detail twice), so the file’s dryness reads as irony, not boredom.

Q11 — model structure. *Case one, adaptations lose:* the source’s inner life is the first casualty — a film cannot film “the way you count / a heart”, it can only choose a face, and every choice closes doors the page left open; a retelling also fixes what the source left spare, and fixing is a kind of spending. *Case two, adaptations add:* a form shows the source what it could not see — the film’s beam swinging over real water gives the poem’s hope a body, and the intervention lets the mayor damn himself in a voice the tale never gave him; nothing is lost because the source remains on the shelf, unchanged, and the new text is not a replacement but a second witness. *My view:* both cases are true at different moments — loss is real inside the new text, addition is real outside it — so the honest question is not “did it lose or gain” but “can the adaptation say what it kept and what it rebuilt”, which is the checkpoint this section ends on. (*Marker’s note: a response that lands on either side scores equally; the marks sit in the strength of the two cases.*)

Q12 — model storyboard (the tale, flood night). Frame 1, wide: a black river under no moon; sound — rain only; job — the size of the threat. Frame 2, close-up: the frayed rope at the tower; sound — fibres tearing; job — what Noor saw that nobody else saw. Frame 3, medium: Noor running the dark with the hammer; sound — her breath, mud; job — she is ready before the panic is. Frame 4, close-up: hammer on bronze; sound — one small strike, then the bell; job — the turning. Frame 5, low-angle wide: the village climbing the high road behind swinging lamps; sound — the bell over the rain; job — hope, angled up. Frame 6, close-up: morning; the snapped rope end on wet grass, the coin in Noor’s hand; job — end on the two small things that did the big work.

Section 3F · English 9 · Curriculum reference: VC2E9LE06 — create texts, which may be hybrid, that experiment with literary text structures, language features and devices, for purposes and audiences. Draws on elaborations VC2E9LE06.E01–VC2E9LE06.E02; builds on VC2E8LE06 (Level 8). All texts in this section — the poem “Ninety-One Steps”, the tale “The Bell of Aya Village”, the mayor’s retelling, the storyboard, and every model response — were written for this book.

C3 — Chapter 3 check-in

This is a school-designed check. It is not a VCAA instrument. Achievement in the Victorian Curriculum is reported against the Level 9 achievement standard, not against a mark on this check.

Instrument C3 · Chapter 3 check-in · Chapter 3 booklet, after Section 3F

English Level 9 (Year 9) · Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · single-level book (no band)

Chapter/topic coverage: Chapter 3 — Literature: representation, response, preference, devices, style and creating (Sections 3A–3F)

Codes assessed: VC2E9LE01 · VC2E9LE02 · VC2E9LE03 · VC2E9LE04 · VC2E9LE05 · VC2E9LE06

Name: _____ Date: _____

Total marks	24
Section structure	Section A — Representation and values (4 marks) · Section B — Impressions and readings (4 marks) · Section C — Shaping preference (4 marks) · Section D — Devices and effect (4 marks) · Section E — Style and aesthetic qualities (4 marks) · Section F — Creating (4 marks)
Guidance time	30 minutes — about 1¼ minutes per item, plus reading time for the supplied texts
Conditions	Class check, not an exam. Closed book. All stimulus texts are supplied in this paper. Runs online (H5P, auto- marked) or on paper.
Permitted materials	Pen or pencil only.
Reading support	Your teacher may read any question or supplied text aloud to you.

Attempt every question. Each question is worth 1 mark. In multiple-choice questions, choose the **one best** answer. In mark-the-words questions, mark the exact words asked for. In matching and drag questions, place every item as instructed. Online, these items run as H5P interactions; on paper, follow the instructions in each question (underline, write, or list your answers in the space given).

Section A — Representation and values (4 marks)

Questions 1–4 assess VC2E9LE01. Read the extract, then answer Questions 1–4. Sections B and C also use this extract.

Extract — from an original novel (*original text written for this book*)

Peg found the Year 7 student sitting alone behind the bike sheds, lunchbox unopened. She did not ask what was wrong. She just sat down on the wet asphalt, right there in her good blazer, and opened her own lunch. “My mum always packs too much,” she said, though the sandwich was clearly her last. The younger girl watched her for a long moment, then moved her bag to make room. “I’m Iris,” she said. “I know,” said Peg. “Everyone knows. Welcome to our school.”

Question 1 (1 mark) — multiple choice

What does the representation of Peg mainly convey about the world of this story?

- A. Kindness is shown through quiet, practical action.
- B. New students are usually left to themselves.
- C. Lunch is the most important part of the day.
- D. Older students are expected to enforce the rules.

Question 2 (1 mark) — matching

Match each detail about Peg with the value it shows. Online, drag each detail to its value. On paper, write the number of the value beside each detail.

Detail	Value
(i) She sits down on the wet asphalt in her good blazer.	1. She protects Iris's pride by hiding the sacrifice.
(ii) "My mum always packs too much," though the sandwich is her last.	2. Being present matters more than asking questions.
(iii) She does not ask what is wrong; she just sits down.	3. She puts another person first, whatever it costs her.

Question 3 (1 mark) — multiple choice

How does the writer mainly reveal Peg's character?

- A. Through what other characters say about her.
- B. Through her actions and words, with almost no direct description.
- C. Through direct statements from the narrator about how good she is.
- D. Through the setting of the bike sheds.

Question 4 (1 mark) — multiple choice

Details such as the good blazer, the bike sheds and the packed lunch place this story in a world many readers of this school will recognise at once. Which kind of context is doing that work?

- A. Historical context — when the story happens.
- B. Cultural context — where the story happens and who belongs there.
- C. Social context — how power is shared in the story.
- D. No context is needed to read the extract.

Section B — Impressions and readings (4 marks)

Questions 5–8 assess VC2E9LE02. They refer to the same extract as Section A.

Question 5 (1 mark) — multiple choice

Which reading of the extract is **best supported** by the text?

- A. Peg planned the meeting with the teachers beforehand.
- B. Peg's kindness is deliberate: she gives away her last sandwich and hides the cost.
- C. Iris refuses the food because she is embarrassed.
- D. Peg expects something in return from Iris.

Question 6 (1 mark) — matching

Match each impression with the textual evidence that supports it. Online, drag each impression to its evidence. On paper, write the number of the evidence beside each impression.

Impression	Evidence
(i) Peg is practical.	1. “I’m Iris,” she says, after moving her bag to make room.
(ii) Peg protects Iris’s pride.	2. “She just sat down on the wet asphalt ... and opened her own lunch.”
(iii) Iris begins to trust Peg.	3. “My mum always packs too much,” though the sandwich was clearly her last.

Question 7 (1 mark) — multiple choice

A student writes: *Peg is someone to look up to, because she gives away her last lunch without being asked.* Where does this response sit on the judgement ladder?

- A. A bare reaction.
- B. A bare opinion.
- C. A judgement with a reason.
- D. A substantiated judgement with quoted evidence.

Question 8 (1 mark) — multiple choice

After class discussion, one student changes their first impression of Peg — from “showing off” to “protecting Iris”. Which statement is most correct?

- A. The later impression is better simply because it came later.
- B. The later impression is worth more because it is better supported by the text.
- C. The first impression must be kept because it came first.
- D. Neither impression matters unless the teacher agrees with it.

Section C — Shaping preference (4 marks)

Questions 9–12 assess VC2E9LE03. Read the text, then answer Questions 9–12.

Text — from a school newsletter (original text written for this book)

Some say the old oak at the edge of the yard has had its time. But this tree is the yard. Every lunchtime, its shade holds a hundred conversations. The proposal would trade all of that for eleven car spaces. Eleven — where a hundred students sit. The shade serves everyone.

Question 9 (1 mark) — mark the words

In the text, mark (underline) the **three** phrases that most clearly shape the reader’s preference — that position the reader on one side of the issue.

Question 10 (1 mark) — multiple choice

The writer follows “eleven car spaces” with “Eleven — where a hundred students sit.” What is the intended effect?

- A. It sets the small gain against the large loss so the trade looks poor.
- B. It shows that the writer is good with numbers.

- C. It gives a fair summary of both sides of the debate.
- D. It proves that the yard is overcrowded at lunchtime.

Question 11 (1 mark) — multiple choice

Which device from the toolkit does most of the work in that same sentence?

- A. Contrast
- B. Flashback
- C. Rhetorical question
- D. Nominalisation

Question 12 (1 mark) — multiple choice

The text sets one good (shade and space for students) against another good (parking that staff need). Which label fits an issue built from two rights in tension?

- A. Moral — one person's right and wrong.
- B. Social — how people live together.
- C. Ethical — two rights in tension.
- D. Practical — a problem with one clear fix.

Section D — Devices and effect (4 marks)

Questions 13–16 assess VC2E9LE04. Read the micro-passage, then answer Questions 13–16.

Micro-passage (*original text written for this book*)

The rain hammered the tin roof all night, and by morning the creek had swallowed the path. The whole valley waited.

Question 13 (1 mark) — matching

Match each device term with its definition. Online, drag each term to its definition. On paper, write the number of the definition beside each term.

Term	Definition
(i) extended metaphor	1. A brief reference to a known story, person or saying that borrows its meaning.
(ii) allusion	2. Meaning built up by repetition and context, never announced.
(iii) allegory	3. One comparison sustained across several lines or a whole text.
(iv) symbolism	4. A whole text that works on two levels at once.

Question 14 (1 mark) — multiple choice

The writer says the creek **swallowed** the path. What is the effect of this device?

- A. It makes the water seem hungry and powerful, and positions the reader to feel the landscape taking over.
- B. It shows that the path was badly built.
- C. It proves that the creek is actually alive.

D. It decorates the sentence without doing any job.

Question 15 (1 mark) — multiple choice

What job does the short sentence “The whole valley waited.” do?

- A. It stops the reader after the long first sentence and concentrates the moment into one still point.
- B. It introduces a new character to the valley.
- C. It summarises the whole story so far.
- D. It changes the time of day in the story.

Question 16 (1 mark) — multiple choice

A student writes: *The writer uses a metaphor.* To pass the “so what?” test, what must the student add?

- A. The name of one more device.
 - B. The meaning half of the effect and the audience half — what it does to the reader.
 - C. A fact about the writer’s life.
 - D. A longer quotation from the text.
-

Section E — Style and aesthetic qualities (4 marks)

Questions 17–20 assess VC2E9LE05. Read both texts, then answer Questions 17–20.

Text X (*original text written for this book*)

Before the town woke, the bakery was already alight. The ovens breathed their warm, floury breath into the lane, and the trays of rolls glowed like rows of small suns. By six, the window had fogged, and the first customers stamped their feet in the cold morning air.

Text Y (*original text written for this book*)

The bakery opened at six. The ovens had been running since four. By half past six, the first forty loaves and three trays of rolls were sold.

Question 17 (1 mark) — mark the words

In Text X, mark (underline) the **two** images — the word pictures that make the scene felt.

Question 18 (1 mark) — multiple choice

Which statement best compares the two texts?

- A. Text X builds a felt sense of a warm, busy morning through imagery; Text Y simply records the facts.
- B. Text X is more accurate than Text Y.
- C. Text Y uses more figurative language than Text X.
- D. Both texts use the same style for different purposes.

Question 19 (1 mark) — multiple choice

Which aesthetic quality does Text X mainly build in the reader?

- A. Tension and unease
- B. Humour

C. A sense of beauty

D. Calm and stillness

Question 20 (1 mark) — multiple choice

A student says Text X is beautiful **because** it is about a bakery. Using the substitution test — the aesthetic quality lives in the handling, not the subject — which response is most correct?

A. The student is right: the subject itself creates the beauty.

B. The beauty comes from the handling — the imagery and rhythm — and the same subject could be written plainly, as Text Y proves.

C. Beauty cannot be analysed, so the question does not matter.

D. Text Y is more beautiful because it is shorter.

Section F — Creating (4 marks)

Questions 21–24 assess VC2E9LE06.

Question 21 (1 mark) — drag the words (ordering)

Drag the five beats of the micro-narrative into story order. On paper, write the letters in order on the line below.

A. By Friday, forty hands had painted over the grey: a river of colour running the length of the wall.

B. Then the art room flooded, and every canvas was ruined before the show.

C. The wall beside the gate had been grey for as long as anyone at Greenfern Secondary could remember.

D. Someone pinned a blank sheet to the wall with one word: “Instead.”

E. The show opened outdoors, under the mural, and nobody missed the canvases at all.

Order: _____ , _____ , _____ , _____ , _____

Question 22 (1 mark) — multiple choice

A student will tell this story at an assembly for younger students. Which opening voice suits that audience best?

A. “You know that grey wall by the gate? Well — one week, our art room flooded, and this is what happened next.”

B. “It is proposed that the mural be considered a satisfactory outcome of the flooding event.”

C. “Grey is the absence of light; light is the presence of memory.”

D. The story should begin at the end, with no explanation of how the wall was painted.

Question 23 (1 mark) — fill in the blank

Complete the sentence with **one** item from the word box.

Word box: *orientation · complication · climax · resolution*

The beat of a story where the problem is answered and things settle is called the _____.

Question 24 (1 mark) — multiple choice

Another student retells the mural story as a poem. The poem keeps the flood but changes the ending on purpose. Which statement is most correct?

A. The poem fails, because the ending is different from the original story.

- B. The poem only counts if it copies the original story exactly.
 - C. Keeping something and changing something on purpose is how creating works.
 - D. Changing the ending makes the poem a different subject, so it is no longer creating.
-

END OF C3 — CHAPTER 3 CHECK-IN

C3 — Chapter 3 check-in · Solutions

Teacher copy. Every item is objectively markable (P1): one mark per item, exact keys below. Section F carries the model of the completed micro-narrative required by the P2 exemplar rule.

Instrument C3 · English Level 9 (Year 9) · Chapter 3 (Sections 3A–3F) Codes assessed: VC2E9LE01 · VC2E9LE02 · VC2E9LE03 · VC2E9LE04 · VC2E9LE05 · VC2E9LE06

Objective key (all 24 items)

Q	Section / family	Key	CD
1	A · MC	A — kindness is shown through quiet, practical action	VC2E9LE01
2	A · MA	(i) → 3 (puts another person first, whatever it costs her); (ii) → 1 (protects Iris’s pride by hiding the sacrifice); (iii) → 2 (being present matters more than asking questions)	VC2E9LE01
3	A · MC	B — actions and words, with almost no direct description	VC2E9LE01
4	A · MC	B — cultural context: where the story happens and who belongs there	VC2E9LE01
5	B · MC	B — Peg’s kindness is deliberate: she gives away her last sandwich and hides the cost	VC2E9LE02
6	B · MA	(i) practical → 2 (“She just sat down ... and opened her own lunch”); (ii) protects pride → 3 (“My mum always packs too much”); (iii) Iris begins to trust → 1 (“I’m Iris”, after moving her bag)	VC2E9LE02
7	B · MC	C — a judgement with a reason (no quoted evidence yet)	VC2E9LE02
8	B · MC	B — later is not the same as better; better evidenced is	VC2E9LE02
9	C · MW	Mark exactly three spans: this tree is the yard · trade all of that for eleven car spaces · The shade serves everyone	VC2E9LE03
10	C · MC	A — the small gain is set against the large loss so	VC2E9LE03

Q	Section / family	Key	CD
		the trade looks poor	
11	C · MC	A — contrast (eleven against a hundred)	VC2E9LE03
12	C · MC	C — ethical: two rights in tension	VC2E9LE03
13	D · MA	(i) extended metaphor → 3; (ii) allusion → 1; (iii) allegory → 4; (iv) symbolism → 2	VC2E9LE04
14	D · MC	A — the water seems hungry and powerful; the reader feels the landscape taking over	VC2E9LE04
15	D · MC	A — it stops the reader and concentrates the moment into one still point	VC2E9LE04
16	D · MC	B — the meaning half and the audience half of the effect	VC2E9LE04
17	E · MW	Mark exactly two spans: the ovens breathed their warm, floury breath · glowed like rows of small suns	VC2E9LE05
18	E · MC	A — Text X builds a felt sense through imagery; Text Y records facts	VC2E9LE05
19	E · MC	C — a sense of beauty	VC2E9LE05
20	E · MC	B — the beauty is in the handling; the same subject could be written plainly, as Text Y proves	VC2E9LE05
21	F · DT	Full sequence: C, B, D, A, E — grey wall → flood → “Instead” → painting → show opens	VC2E9LE06
22	F · MC	A — first-person, warm and direct, matched to younger students at an assembly	VC2E9LE06
23	F · CB	resolution (from the closed word box)	VC2E9LE06
24	F · MC	C — creating keeps something and changes something on purpose	VC2E9LE06

Why the keys are right — brief notes

Q1. Representation is a made thing that carries values (3A). Every choice in the extract — sitting down, sharing, the small protective lie, the welcome — builds one idea: in this story world, kindness is quiet and practical (A). The extract shows the opposite of B; C and D are not supported by any line.

Q2. Indirect characterisation lets detail carry value (3A's five doors). Sitting on wet asphalt in a good blazer costs Peg something and puts Iris first. The "mum packs too much" line hides the sacrifice so Iris does not feel owed. Not asking, just sitting, says presence matters more than questions.

Q3. The narrator never tells us Peg is good; we infer it from what she does and says (3A: actions and speech as doors of indirect characterisation). No other character comments on her (A), there are no direct narrator statements (C), and the bike sheds are only where it happens (D).

Q4. 3A's three contexts: historical = when, cultural = where and who, social = how people live together. Blazer, bike sheds and packed lunch are markers of place and belonging — cultural context (B). The extract gives no date to place it in time (A), and while school life is social, these particular details locate the world rather than arrange power (C); D is simply false — every reading uses context.

Q5. The best-supported reading is the one the text will hold up (3B). B is supported twice over: the sandwich is "clearly her last" and Peg hides that with a joke. No teachers appear (A); Iris moves her bag to make room, the opposite of refusing (C); nothing in the extract suggests payment (D).

Q6. Impressions must be tied to textual evidence (3B's five-move method: record the impression, then find what in the text earns it). Practicality is earned by the unbothered, direct actions; pride-protection by the invented "too much"; Iris's growing trust by her naming herself and making room.

Q7. The judgement ladder (3B): reaction → bare opinion → judgement with a reason → substantiated judgement with quoted evidence → interpretation. The student's sentence judges Peg and gives a reason, but quotes nothing — rung three (C). It is more than a reaction or a bare opinion (A, B) and stops short of quoted evidence (D).

Q8. 3B's rule verbatim in spirit: later is not the same as better; better evidenced is. The improved impression earns its place because the text supports it (B), not because it arrived second (A), not because first impressions are locked in (C), and not by teacher authority (D).

Q9. Positioning language takes the reader by the arm (3C). The three key spans do that work: *this tree is the yard* (identity claim), *trade all of that for eleven car spaces* (frames the proposal as a bad deal), *the shade serves everyone* (claims the whole community). "Has had its time" voices the other side; "a hundred conversations" is supporting detail inside the second span's sentence — neither is itself the positioning move.

Q10. The echo of *eleven* against *a hundred* is deliberate: it makes the gain look small and the loss look large, so the trade looks poor (A). It is not number-skill (B), not balance — the writer is on one side (C), and nothing says the yard is overcrowded (D).

Q11. The toolkit (3C/3D): the sentence sets eleven against a hundred — **contrast**. No earlier time is revisited (flashback), no question is asked (rhetorical question), and no verb has been packed into a noun group (nominalisation).

Q12. 3C's three tests: social = how we live together; moral = one person's right and wrong; ethical = two rights in tension. Shade for students and parking for staff are both legitimate goods in tension — ethical (C).

Q13. The four definitions straight from 3D: an extended metaphor sustains one comparison; an allusion borrows the meaning of a known reference; an allegory works on two levels across a whole text; symbolism is built by repetition and context, never announced. (Metonymy is also taught in 3D but sits above the Yr9 vocabulary ladder, so it is not gated into this item.)

Q14. Effect = the meaning half plus the audience half (3D). *Swallowed* makes the water hungry and powerful and positions the reader to feel the landscape taking over (A). It says nothing about the path's quality (B), it is not literal life (C), and it plainly does a job — it fails the decoration test in the opposite direction (D).

- Q15.** Short sentences, after long ones, stop the reader and concentrate the moment (3C/3D toolkit). No character arrives (B); nothing is summarised (C); the time of day is unchanged (D).
- Q16.** Naming the device is only the first rung. The “so what?” test demands the effect in both halves: what it means and what it does to the reader (B). More names, biography or longer quotes add no effect (A, C, D).
- Q17.** Imagery = word pictures that make the scene felt (3E). The two marked spans are the personification of the ovens and the simile of the rolls as small suns. *Already alight, fogged* and *stamped their feet* are literal reporting.
- Q18.** Same subject, different handling — that is the comparison (3E). Text X builds a felt morning out of imagery; Text Y records the facts. Accuracy is not at issue (B); Text Y uses no figurative language (C); the styles are plainly different (D).
- Q19.** Of the six taught aesthetic qualities, Text X builds **a sense of beauty**: the warm breath, the glowing rolls, the blue-cold morning handled into something lovely. Nothing is tense (A), nothing is played for laughs (B), and the stamping customers and busy ovens rule out stillness (D).
- Q20.** The substitution test (3E): the aesthetic quality lives in the handling, not the subject. Swap the bakery for any subject and Text X’s imagery would still carry beauty — while Text Y proves the same bakery can be written plainly (B). A denies the test; C gives up on analysis; D confuses brevity with beauty.
- Q21.** The full story order is **C, B, D, A, E**: the grey wall remembered “as long as anyone could remember” orients; *Then* the flood complicates; “*Instead*” answers the ruined canvases; *By Friday* the painting happens; and the show opening under the mural resolves it. Any other order breaks the “Then”, “Instead” and “By Friday” links.
- Q22.** Voice is a dial set by audience (3F). Younger students at an assembly need the warm, direct, first-person voice of A. B is bureaucratic report voice; C is dense and abstract; D withholds the story’s ground.
- Q23.** The resolution is where the problem is answered and things settle (3F’s narrative shape: orientation, complication, rising action, climax, resolution).
- Q24.** Creating is not copying (3F): keep something, change something on purpose. The poem keeps the flood and changes the ending deliberately — that is the move itself (C). A and B punish the exact change creating requires; D confuses a changed ending with a changed subject.

Model answer — Section F completed micro-narrative (P2)

The LE06 row of TOC §7.3 requires an exemplar model of the completed text. Below is the micro-narrative assembled from the five beats in the keyed order (C, B, D, A, E), lightly joined as a model of the finished piece:

The wall beside the gate had been grey for as long as anyone at Greenfern Secondary could remember. Then the art room flooded, and every canvas was ruined before the show. Someone pinned a blank sheet to the wall with one word: “Instead.” By Friday, forty hands had painted over the grey: a river of colour running the length of the wall. The show opened outdoors, under the mural, and nobody missed the canvases at all.

Notice the shape the completed text proves: orientation (the grey wall) → complication (the flood) → the turn (“Instead”) → the action (the painting) → resolution (the show under the mural). A student retelling may change any one element on purpose — the ending, the voice, the form — but must keep the structure doing its job.

Coverage map (per-item CD codes)

CD	Items in C3
VC2E9LE01	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4
VC2E9LE02	Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8
VC2E9LE03	Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12
VC2E9LE04	Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16

VC2E9LE05

Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20

VC2E9LE06

Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24

All six CDs named in TOC §7.7 for C3 are evidenced at four marks each (DJB-4: full 4-per-CD coverage). Total: 24 marks.