

UNCORRECTED PAGE PROOFS

PART B

LITERATURE

## Features of fiction

Short stories and novels are works of fiction, which means they have been created from the writer's imagination. The elements of plot; conflict and resolution; setting and the characters have been composed by the writer in order to present a compelling and readable story.

### Plot

The plot is what happens in a story. The way that events unfold has an effect on the characters and can lead to other events or to changes in a character. The way in which the events are resolved leads to the story's ending.

In novels, chapter divisions frequently mark stages in the plot. In short stories, these stages may be shown by paragraph or section divisions.

Conflict is a necessary aspect of fiction as it is in real life. Without conflict a story would be uninteresting. Conflict can occur within one person, between two people or between one group and another. Conflicts can also take place in a story that has only one character, for instance when that character faces a crisis involving animals, the weather or a natural disaster.

### Setting

The setting of a novel or short story is the particular place (or places) in which the action of the story takes place and the era or time in which it is set. Novels can have many settings as the action moves from one place to another. They can be set in the time frame of a few days or weeks, or can range over generations or even centuries. Short stories generally cover less time and have fewer settings than novels. Readers are invited into the setting by the writer's description of the sights, sounds and smells of particular places.

The language used to describe the setting affects the tone and mood of the story and encourages readers to respond in a particular way.

### Character

Characters are vital to fiction writing as without them there would be no story. We learn about fictional characters in the same way that we learn about people in real life: from their behaviour, appearance, the way they speak and think, and from what other people say or think about them. We are able to get inside the minds of some fictional characters and share their thoughts and emotions. We cannot do this in real life.

The principal characters in a piece of fiction are called the protagonist (principal character) and the antagonist (who is the adversary of the protagonist). There may be other important characters and any number of minor characters. As the novel progresses, we can come to know and care a great deal about the protagonist. Secondary characters can be important in the outcome of a novel but are frequently developed in less detail. Minor characters may be included to take the plot forward or add to the tone and colour of different scenes.

Writers do not tell us all there is to know about a character. They give hints and details that readers develop using their own imagination and experience. The language the writer uses to describe the characters influences the way we feel about them.

### Dialogue

Dialogue is the term for the spoken words of one person to another. It serves several purposes in a story: it shows character; carries the story forward; fills in gaps in the story; shows relationships and conflict between characters; sets a mood; and gives information.

### Narrative viewpoint and voice

A narrator is the voice that tells the story. The narrator of a novel or short story may be an observer, the protagonist, the antagonist or one or more characters within the story. The narrator gives their point of view about the plot and the characters.

Short stories generally have a single point of view. This means we can see into the mind of only one character. We can work out what is in the minds of the other characters from what they say and do when the main character is present or from what other characters say about them.

Some novels switch between two or more points of view. Others are written from an omniscient (all knowing) point of view, which enables readers to see into the minds of a number of characters even if they are far apart.

### Style

Most fiction is written in prose, and in either first or third person. For special purposes, writers may tell parts of a story in the form of verse, letters, diaries, journal entries, newspaper articles, lists or extracts from other texts. Visual devices such as illustrations, maps and diagrams can also be used to give information or add interest to the text.

### Fiction extract 1

In this extract, Avalon and her family have moved from the country to the city, and this is her first day at her new school.

## Destroying Avalon

*Kate McCaffrey*

I put my head around the door. There were about twenty students, sitting on desks or rocking back on chair legs, talking and laughing. They looked so much older than me and far more confident. I was still aiming for casual but I walked in stiffly and self-consciously, and sat at a desk in the front. I heard their whispers, *'She must be the new girl,' 'nice hair,' 'where's she from?' 'I heard her mum's a principal.'* I sat uncomfortably with my new, rigid school bag on top of the desk, pretending I couldn't hear anything. I rummaged through it determinedly until I found my school diary, and then made like I was engrossed in reading the school rules and policies. I hoped someone would come and talk to me. The next minute a messy body flopped onto my desk, pushing my bag to the floor and obscuring my reading.

'Hi,' he thrust his hand in front of my face, 'I'm Caleb and you are ...?'

'Avalon.' I looked up. He had long, dirty blond dreadlocks, pulled back into a leather lackey. His white shirt was open, revealing a leather necklace with a Rip Curl logo. Half his shirt hung out of his pants and his odd laces were undone. Compared to the rest of them, Caleb was a slob.

'Sweet,' he said, shaking my hand hard. It felt like my fingers were breaking. 'Hey guys, this is Avalon,' he shouted over my shoulder. I turned and smiled, a few of them smiled back and one girl waved. But some of them didn't even look at me. Immediately, I felt embarrassed and insignificant.

'Don't worry about that lot,' he said, pointing to a group of about six girls who hadn't looked my way. They were all pretty, with long straight hair and no fringes, their uniforms immaculately ironed and shoes

that looked brand new. 'They're the stuck-up snobs.' One of them heard and shot Caleb a murderous look.

'Piss off, you surfie dickhead,' she spat.  
Caleb was completely unfazed. 'See what I mean?'

## For class and group discussion

- 1 This extract is told from Avalon's point of view. What do we learn of her, through her thoughts, that the other characters would not know? What do we learn of Caleb and how do we learn it?
- 2 What sort of person does Avalon think Caleb is? Do you agree with her? Explain why.
- 3 Do you think this extract is set in a modern time or long ago? Find some words and phrases to support your answer.
- 4 Avalon judges Caleb by his appearance. Does anything in the extract support her judgement?
- 5 What does Caleb's speech tell us about him? What does Avalon's silence suggest about her?

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### Fiction extract 2

This extract also describes a country girl's first day at school in the city. The setting is a boarding school at a much earlier time in history.

## The Getting of Wisdom

*Henry Handel Richardson*

Fifty-five heads turned as if by clockwork, and fifty-five pairs of eyes were levelled at the small girl in the white apron who meekly followed Mrs Gurley down the length of the dining-room. Laura crimsoned under the unexpected ordeal, and tried to fix her attention on the flouncing of Mrs Gurley's dress. The room seemed hundreds of feet long, and not a single person at the tea-tables but took stock of her. The girls made no scruple of leaning backwards and forwards, behind and before their neighbours, in order to see her better, and even the governesses were not above having a look. All were standing. On Mrs Gurley assigning Laura a place at her own right hand, Laura covered herself with confusion by taking her seat at once, before grace had been said, and before the fifty-five had drawn in their chairs with the noise of a cavalry brigade on charge. She stood up again immediately, but it was too late; an audible titter whizzed round the

table: the new girl had sat down. For minutes after, Laura was lost in the pattern on her plate; and not till tongues were loosened and dishes being passed, did she venture to steal a glance round.

There were four tables, with a governess at the head and foot of each to pour out tea. It was more of a hall than a room, and had high, church-like windows down one side. At both ends were scores of pigeon-holes. There was a piano in it and a fireplace; it had pale blue walls, and only strips of carpet on the floor. At present it was darkish, for the windows did not catch the sun.

Laura was roused by a voice at her side; turning, she found her neighbour offering her a plate of bread.

'No, thank you,' she said impulsively; for the bread was cut in chunks, and did not look inviting.

But the girl nudged her on the sly. 'You'd better take some,' she whispered.

Laura then saw that there was nothing else. But she saw, too, the smiles and signs that again flew round: the new girl had said no.

Humbly she accepted the butter and the cup of tea which were passed to her in turn, and as humbly ate the piece of rather stale bread. She felt forlornly miserable under the fire of all these unkind eyes, which took a delight in marking her slips: at the smallest further mischance she might disgrace herself by bursting out crying. Just at this moment, however, something impelled her to look up. Her vis-à-vis, whom she had as yet scarcely noticed, was staring hard. And now, to her great surprise, this girl winked at her, winked

slowly and deliberately with the right eye. Laura was so discomposed that she looked away again at once, and some seconds elapsed before she was brave enough to take another peep. The wink was repeated.

It was a black-haired girl this time, a girl with small blue eyes, a pale, freckled skin, and large white teeth. What most impressed Laura, though, was her extraordinary gravity: she chewed away with a face as solemn as a parson's; and then, just when you were least expecting it, came the wink. Laura was fascinated: she lay in wait for it beforehand and was doubtful whether to feel offended by it or to laugh at it. But at least it made her forget her mishaps, and did away with the temptation to cry.

## Writing activities

- 1 List any unfamiliar words from the extract and try to work out their meanings from the text around them. Now list words you do not hear used these days but whose meaning you understand. Suggest words you might use in their place.

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- 2 Is Laura's first experience of boarding school a positive one? Use words and phrases from the extract in your answer.

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## For class and group discussion

- 1 The sound of the fifty-five chairs being pulled under the tables is described as 'the noise of a cavalry brigade on charge'. What does this image suggest of Laura's feelings about her new environment?
- 2 Laura says only three words in this extract but as the story is told from her point of view we know what she is thinking.
  - a What does she think about her neighbour at the dining table?
  - b What does the other girl think of Laura? How do we learn this?

- 3 *The Getting of Wisdom* was first published in 1910 and *Destroying Avalon* in 2006. To what extent can the differences between Laura's and Avalon's first impressions of school be explained by this time difference? In what ways do the extracts suggest Australian culture has changed between the two dates? You might think about how the setting of a modern group meal differs from the one described in the extract.
- 4 Henry Handel Richardson was a woman who wrote using a male pseudonym. A pseudonym is an assumed name used by an author to conceal their identity. Undertake research to find out:
- a What was Henry Handel Richardson's real name?
  - b Why might she have used a pseudonym?
  - c List any other female writers who have used male pseudonyms.

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### Fiction extract 3

This extract is from *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, a novel narrated by Junior, a Native North American teenager. The extract is set on the Spokane Indian Reservation where Junior lives. The occasion is the funeral of Junior's grandmother, which is held on the football ground to accommodate all the people who loved her.

## The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Sherman Alexie

I knew that my grandmother would have loved that send-off.

It was crazy and fun and sad.

My sister wasn't able to come to the funeral. That was the worst part about it. She didn't have enough money to go back, I guess. That was sad. But she promised me she'd sing one hundred mourning songs that day.

We all have to find our own ways to say good-bye. Tons of people told stories about my grandmother.

...

The white guy was holding this big suitcase. He held that thing tight to his chest as he talked. 'Hello,' he said. 'My name is Ted.'

And then I remembered who he was. He was a rich and famous billionaire white dude. He was famous for being filthy rich and really weird.

My grandmother knew Billionaire Ted!

Wow.

We'd all expected this white guy to be original. But he was just another white guy

who showed up on the rez because he loved Indian people SOOOOOOOO much.

Do you know how many white strangers show up on Indian reservations every year and start telling Indians how much they love them?

Thousands.

It's sickening.

And boring.

'Listen,' Ted said. 'I know you've heard that before. I know white people say that all the time. But I still need to say it. I love Indians. I love your songs, your dances, and your souls. And I love your art. I collect Indian art.'

Oh, God. He was a collector. Those guys made Indians feel like insects pinned to a display board. I looked around the football field. Yep, all of my cousins were squirming like beetles and butterflies with pins stuck in their hearts.

'I've collected Indian art for decades,' Ted said. 'I have old spears. Old arrowheads. I have old armour. I have blankets. And paintings. And sculptures. And baskets. And jewelry.'

Blah, blah, blah, blah.





## For class and group discussion

- 1 *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is a work of fiction inspired by the author's experiences growing up. It is not a memoir or autobiography as the title might seem to indicate. What do 'absolutely true', 'diary' and 'part-time' lead you to expect of the tone and content of the book?
- 2 A funeral is not generally the place for humour. Why might Alexie use it here? Give examples of the types of humour he uses.
- 3 'We all have to find our own ways to say good-bye.' Quote three sentences that refer to Indian 'ways', then compare the funeral practices in the extract with those of your own culture.

- 4 Later in the book, Junior says: 'I'm fourteen years old and I've been to forty-two funerals. That's really the biggest difference between Indians and white people.' What other differences are shown or suggested in this extract? Find words and phrases that support your answer.
- 5 Describe the types of sentences and paragraphs in the extract.
  - a What do they add to your understanding of Junior's character?
  - b What is their effect on the tone of the writing?
- 6 Why does Junior object to people like Ted collecting Native Indian art? What do you think or know about the attitudes of Australia's indigenous people to collectors of their art?

### Fiction extract 4

Lakshmi is thirteen years old and comes from an extremely poor village in Nepal to India. She has been told she will be able to work as a maid in the city and send money home to her family. In this extract she discovers she has been sold to Mumtaz's brothel and is no more than a sex slave.

## Sold

*Patricia McCormick*

I'm wiping the makeup off my face when the dark-skinned girl comes in.

'What do you think you're doing?' she says.

'I'm going home.'

Her tear-shaped eyes grow dark.

'There is a mistake,' I tell her. 'I'm here to work as a maid for a rich lady.'

'Is that what you were told?'

Then Mumtaz arrives at the door, huffing, her mango face pink with anger.

'What do you think you're doing?' she says. 'Leaving,' I say. 'I'm going home.'

Mumtaz laughs. 'Home?' she says. 'And how would you get there?'

I don't know.

'Do you know the way home?' she says. 'Do you have money for the train? Do you speak the language here? Do you even have any idea where you are?'

My heart is pounding like the drumming of a monsoon rain, and my shoulders are shaking as if I have a great chill.

'You ignorant hill girl,' she says. 'You don't know anything. Do you?'

I wrap my arms around myself and grip with all my might. But the trembling will not stop.

'Well, then,' Mumtaz says, pulling her record book out from her waistcloth.

'Let me explain it to you.'

'You belong to me,' she says. 'And I paid a pretty sum for you, too.'

She opens to a page in her book and points to the notation for ten thousand rupees.

'You will take men to your room,' she says, 'and do whatever they ask of you. You will work here, like the other girls, until your debt is paid off.'

My head is spinning now, but I see only one thing: the number in her book. It warps and blurs, then fractures into bits that swim before my eyes. I fight back tears and find my voice.

'But Aunty Bimla said -'

'Your "aunty,"' she scoffs, 'works for me.'

I understand it all now.

I blink back the tears in my eyes. I ball my hands into fists. I will not do this dirty business. I will wait until dark and escape from Mumtaz and her Happiness House.



'Shahanna!' Mumtaz snaps her fingers and the dark-skinned girl hands her a pair of scissors.

This Shahanna leans close and whispers to me, 'It will go easier on you if you hold still.'

There is a slicing sound, and a clump of my hair falls to the floor. I cry out and try to break free, but Shahanna has hold of me.

Mumtaz draws back, the jaws of the scissors poised at my neck.

'Hold still,' she says, her teeth clenched. 'Or I'll slice your throat.'

I look at Shahanna. Her eyes are wide with fear.

I stay very still, looking at the girl in the silver glass. Soon she has the shorn head of a disgraced woman and a face of stone.

'Try to escape with that head of hair,' Mumtaz says, 'and they'll bring you right back here.'

And then they are gone, leaving me alone in the locked-in room.

I pound on the door.

I howl like an animal.

I pray.

I pace the room.

I kick the door.

But I do not cry.

## For class and group discussion

- 1 Comment on the name of Mumtaz's establishment. Who is made happy in this place? Is the name an example of irony?
- 2 'I understand it all now', Lakshmi thinks. Write a short paragraph using words and phrases from the extract to explain what it is that she understands.
- 3 The extract is written from Lakshmi's point of view.
  - a Quote a sentence that shows her opinion of Mumtaz.
  - b Quote another that shows that Shahanna has no choice but to obey Mumtaz.
- 4 What is the effect of setting the last six sentences on separate lines?
- 5 After Lakshmi is locked in her room, how do her actions show her feelings?

## Fiction extract 5

In this extract, Robin is skiing in the mountains near his home and searching for his father, who he thinks may be heading for an old mineshaft.

## The Nest

*Paul Jennings*

An hour passes and no sign of my father. My legs ache from the effort of sliding one ski in front of the other on the unforgiving slopes. I pass White Mountain Cemetery where the fifty or so tombstones in a clearing wear thin

hats of snow that sparkle in the sunshine. Most of the headstones lean like frozen drunks. They're green with moss and many have inscriptions worn away by the fierce mountain storms.

Now I've broken out of the trees and I'm heading up over the bare slopes of Old Baldy. For an instant I have an image of my father's bare head but it's driven away by the sight of black clouds racing towards the peak. I must hurry. I reach the summit after half an hour more and bend my shoulders into the wind which has sprung up. It begins to snow heavily. I zip my parka collar up over my mouth and pick up speed as I head downhill into Finnegan's Forest trail. I wonder what I will find when I reach the old mineshaft.

Once again I'm surrounded by trees and am a little protected from the wind. I reach the shore of the lake. Thin, patchy ice covers the surface. Black streaks of water appear here and there like holes in a moth-eaten jumper. A bent tree is a solitary angler standing on a white shore. I drop onto the snow for a moment or two and realise how tired I am. I feel weak and my head is spinning. I'm not even sure what I'm doing here or what I expect to find.

## For class or group discussion

- 1 Think about the images of the tombstones in the first paragraph.
  - a What does the writer compare them to?
  - b What is the effect of these comparisons on the tone of the paragraph?
  - c Do these images lead you to expect the story will have a good outcome or a bad one? Explain why.
- 2 How would you describe the mood of this extract? Is it calm, threatening, frightening or is it something else? Quote words and phrases to support your opinion.

## Practice

- 1 Imagine that Robin (*The Nest*) and Junior (*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*) meet at another time and talk about their experiences. Write or act out some of their conversation, using the type of language you think each boy might use.

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- 2 Describe Avalon (*Destroying Avalon*) from the point of view of either Caleb or one of the girls Caleb calls 'snobs'.

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- 3 Imagine Caleb takes a trip back in time to Laura's first boarding school meal. Using his type of language, describe the scene and his feelings about it.

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- 4 Put Laura in Avalon's classroom. What puzzles or surprises her about this school from her future?

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- 5 Imagine Lakshmi is rescued and interviewed by a reporter from a human rights organisation. What does she tell the reporter?

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## Reading poetry

This unit will help you understand and enjoy poetry. You will read a range of poems and look at some of the techniques and devices used by poets. You will also discover how the language devices add to the meaning of the poems.

### Figures of speech

Figures of speech are expressions that make or imply comparisons between normally unrelated things. They are one of the techniques that enable poets to say a great deal in few words. The most common figures of speech are simile, metaphor and personification.

- A **simile** makes a direct comparison, which is introduced by words such as 'like', 'as', 'resembles' or 'similar to'. 'An orange as big as a soccer ball' is a simile.
- A **metaphor** compares one thing to another without using 'signal' words such as 'like' or 'as'. The omission of these words makes it clear that a comparison is being made. An extended metaphor explores a number of aspects of the comparison over several stanzas or the complete poem.
- **Personification** is a figure of speech that gives human characteristics to inanimate objects.

### Free verse

Free verse is poetry that contains few of the features of traditional poems. Free verse does not have regular patterns of rhyme, metre, lines or stanzas, and it may be laid out differently on the page from traditional poetry. Techniques that relate to sound are an important feature of free verse. These include internal rhyme, part rhymes and pauses for line and stanza breaks. Examples of free verse in this unit include 'Drifters', 'It's High Time' and the two poems from 'Ruby Moonlight'.

### Sound effects

**Rhyme** is the most obvious sound technique in poetry. Traditional poetry frequently has precise

rhyming schemes where the rhyme occurs at the end of the line. Other types of rhyme include internal rhymes within a line or in lines close by and part rhymes where only one syllable of words rhymes. Repetition of words can also act as a type of rhyme.

- **Metre** refers to regular patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables.
- **Alliteration** is the repetition of the same consonant sound in words situated close to each other in a line of poetry as in 'bright balloons'.
- **Assonance** is the repetition of the same vowel sound in words situated close to each other as in 'exciting ideas'.

### Symbols

Symbols are words or phrases that stand for something other than their usual or literal meaning. Certain words, expressions, signs, and even sounds are universally understood as symbols. Other words act as 'personal' symbols as they relate to a particular person's background and experiences.

Symbols can help a reader identify with the poet's ideas when they compare an experience, situation or emotion to something with which the reader is familiar.

A word may have different symbolic meanings even within the same poem. For instance, fire can symbolise destruction or it can be a symbol of warmth and comfort.

### Voice and tone

In every poem there is the sense of a person speaking the words. This is known as the poetic voice. The voice may be that of either the poet, or a persona or 'character' in the poem, or an unidentified observer.

The tone of a poem comes through the speaker's words and is brought about by the poet's choice of words and images. The arrangement of words into lines can contribute to the tone as it causes the reader to pause. The tone of a poem can be any of the tones used in speech, for example, sadness, anger, annoyance, nostalgia or joy. In

some cases the tone may change during the course of the poem.

Irony is a tone caused by saying the opposite of what is really meant in order to emphasise a point. It can be close to sarcasm, for instance, saying 'smart shoes' when you mean they are really old fashioned.

## POEM 1

### *Flame, the Cat*

*William Hart-Smith (1911–90)*

Flame, about its business  
Licks over all morsels  
Flame, the wild cat, paws  
With the broad pad:

How the belly sinks down  
Low upon the ground,  
Along the earth, crouching,  
Edging forward. The snarl, the spring!

Flame goes up trees,  
Needle claws in bark. That red  
And terrible cat is hunting  
Along the horizon tonight.

Flame, you have a sister  
With a kinder tongue,  
Saliva for black wounds  
And no searing smoke from her.

Mouth only sweetness, a sweet breath.  
Her flame is green leaf  
Very silent and cool,  
A green and delicate flickering.

All along black limbs, rippling  
From bole to smallest twig,  
And single green candles  
Burning on the bare ground.



## For class or group discussion

- 1 Explain the two extended metaphors that compare a fire and its aftermath to cats.
- 2 List nouns, verbs and adjectives from 'Flame the Cat' that show the fire to be destructive and terrible. Now list nouns, verbs and adjectives that show the rebirth of the burnt vegetation to be a slower and more gentle process.
- 3 What do candles symbolise in the poem?

## POEMS 2 & 3

The following two poems are from *Ruby Moonlight*. This is a verse novel, a story told in a series of connected poems which are like short chapters. It is set around 1880 in mid-north South Australia on the land of the Nghadjuri people. It tells the story of a young Aboriginal girl whose whole family is massacred. In the poem 'Wash', she mourns for her family and prepares for her new life. On her journey she sees a white man who is described in the second poem, 'Smoke'.

### Wash

Ali Cobby Eckermann (1963–)

her new life starts  
this young woman of sixteen years

she washes herself in the stream  
scrubs her skin with handfuls of coarse sand

with a stone she razors her matted hair  
it burns acrid on the cinbers

the knife slices into her thighs  
one sorry mark for each family member

she rubs ash into the wounds  
dictated by cultural ritual

blood mingles in the shallow pool  
dissolving the pain and the past

she departs among the trees  
her long shadow stumbles

## Smoke

Ali Cobby Eckermann (1963–)

From within the wattle bush hide  
she observes a smoking ash ghost

it is tall like an emu  
its face galah pink

seemingly oblivious to the rain  
it emits the strange odour

how can it smoke fire  
breathe smoke from its mouth

maybe it is a fire man  
maybe the rain is putting it out

like water on hot coals

### For class and group discussion

- 1 In 'Wash', why does the girl scrub her skin with sand, shave her hair and burn it, and cut her thighs? What is the effect of these actions on her emotions?
- 2 What do you think 'the pain and the past' mean in the lines:  
'blood mingles in the shallow pool / dissolving the pain and the past'
- 3 The line 'her long shadow stumbles' could be taken literally as a description of the girl's shadow moving on the ground. What else could it represent in the context of the poem?
- 4 Find one metaphor and one simile in the description of the man in 'Smoke'. What is the man compared to? Why might the girl see him in these terms?
- 5 How would you describe the tone of the girl's response to the white man? Is she frightened, surprised, puzzled or something else? Find words and phrases from the poem to support your answer.



## For class or group discussion

- 1 Is this poem an example of irony? What does the poet seem to be saying? What does he really mean?
- 2 Explain the metaphors in the second line and the last line of the poem. What is being compared in each?
- 3 Is this a free verse poem? Give reasons for your answer.
- 4 Olav Hauge, one of Norway's greatest poets, lived most of his life in isolation among the mountainous fjords as a farmer and orchard-keeper. How do you imagine his environment may have contributed to this poem?

## POEM 6

### *Some Days*

David Harmer (1952–)

Some days this school  
is a huge concrete sandwich  
squeezing me out like jam.

It weighs so much  
breathing hurts, my legs freeze  
my body is heavy.

On days like that  
I carry whole buildings  
high on my back.

Other days  
the school is a rocket  
thrusting right into the sun.

It's yellow and green  
freshly painted,  
the cabin windows  
gleam with laughter.

On days like that  
whole buildings support me,  
my ladder is pushing  
over their rooftops.

Amongst the clouds  
I'd need a computer  
to count all the bubbles  
bursting aloud in my head.

## For class or group discussion

- 1 Locate a metaphor, simile or example of personification in each stanza of 'Some Days'. What does each show of the speaker's feelings about school?
- 2 List verbs and adjectives that reflect the speaker's misery on bad days and his happiness on good days.
- 3 There are no rhymes at the ends of lines in 'Some Days', but there are internal rhymes—words that rhyme within lines. Can you find these? Did you notice them when you first read the poem?

## POEM 7

### *Foxes in the City Eat McDonald's*

Sherryl Clark (1956–)

In the city, foxes are like stealth bombers,  
staying low, dark on dark, barely  
a sliver of moonlight in their eyes.

They're below everybody's radar,  
making hides in stormwater drains and  
sewers, by the weed-infested creeks.

They dig, climb, slither,  
adapt to metro life like they were  
born to it. Fox yuppies

eating McDonald's burgers and KFC  
as they glide through the night  
in their sleek red fur.

There's always food on the side of the road  
so chickens in flimsy city coops  
are sport, the fox's footy fever moment,

where nothing matters but the chase,  
teeth ripping at soft underbellies, the blood-lust,  
the squawking victims, the win.

### For class or group discussion

- 1 Is this poem written in free verse? Explain why or why not?
- 2 Choose three images in the poem that you find humorous and explain why.
- 3 What is the speaker's attitude to the foxes: fear, disgust, admiration, or is it something else? Find figures of speech in the poem to support your answer.
- 4 What connection does the poet make between city foxes and a football game?
- 5 Whose voice do we hear in 'Foxes in the City Eat McDonald's'?
- 6 The poet compares foxes and stealth bombers. Find out about stealth bombers and give reasons for the poet's choice of this metaphor.



## Practice

Use these activities and your imagination to extend the ideas in the poems. You can adapt them for working individually or within a group—and your responses can be oral or in writing.

- 1 Write a piece of poetry or prose that describes a creature as a metaphor for a natural event or disaster. You can mix and match from the lists that follow or choose your own creatures and events.

- creatures: monkey, centipede, panda, whale, butterfly, mosquito
- events: flood, drought, cyclone, heatwave, tsunami

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- 2 Write a paragraph from the point of view of the father or either of the girls, in which they explain how they feel about being drifters. Use words and phrases from the poem if you wish.

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- 3 Write a monologue (a piece spoken in the voice of one person) in which the speaker is a person who would like to be a drifter but who cannot because of school, sporting or family commitments.

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- 4 Some stanzas in 'Some Days' resemble haiku, which are three-line poems with five syllables in the first and third lines, and seven in the second. Draw a map of your school on a large sheet of paper or card. Write a haiku about each place in your school and paste your poems on the map on or near those places.

- 5 The metaphors in 'Some Days' form strong images or word pictures. Show the different stages of the poem as an animation or storyboard for a film.

## Drama

Drama is a form of text intended for performance in front of an audience. The written text of a play is called a script, and the author of a play is called a playwright. It is intended that the audience sees and hears the characters and events in the play being performed, not just read them on the page. Actors embody characters and, through dialogue, action and gestures, act out the story. Plays differ from other fiction texts—such as novels and short stories—because a playwright does not usually have a narrator to tell the story and reflect on events. Therefore, many elements of a play, such as those outlined below, combine to convey the playwright's message.

### Dialogue

Usually, there is little or no narration in a play, so what the characters say is very important. Dialogue between characters is the central way that the audience finds out about the characters, and about what they think and value. The characters' dialogue also conveys most of the narrative action in a play.

### Stage directions

Stage directions are notes in a play script that provide the playwright's intentions about aspects of the play, such as the appearance of characters, their mannerisms, their speech volume, their movement on stage and the nature of the set. When the play is performed, the director decides the extent to which the playwright's stage directions are followed. Some directors will follow the stage directions closely, while others will not.

When you read a play's script, you have access to the stage directions, but an audience member watching the play does not. You should pay careful attention to the playwright's stage directions, as they can help you to understand a character, the mood of a scene or an important plot event.

Stage directions are usually provided in *italics* and/or in [square brackets].

### Characterisation

One of the most important elements in conveying a playwright's message is characterisation. Characters are fleshed out and made real through

their dialogue, their actions, their gestures, the way that they walk and how they relate to other characters. Costumes, hair and makeup also play a big part, and all these elements contribute to how we relate to a character.

At the beginning of Philip Pullman's play adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, the character Captain Walton is presented with the stage direction:

*[Enter Captain Walton, clothed in furs]*

It is then plausible to the audience when he begins by saying:

*Captain Walton:* Some time ago, I had the command of a ship on an expedition to the Arctic Circle.

Playwrights may also give their characters significant names. For example, a main character in Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* is called Blanche, which means 'white' in French. Williams' choice to name her Blanche is an ironic statement about her now faded innocence and her desire to 'blanche out' or 'white out' her past. As you read, study or watch a play, take note of the things that help you to understand a character.

### Structure

Plays are structured by scenes and acts.

- A **scene** is one passage of dialogue or action. A change in time or setting is usually set in a new scene.
- An **act** is a collection of scenes. Acts work to separate the major sections of the plot. Many modern plays have two acts, and the second act is slightly shorter.

Lines in a play are referenced in a very specific way. The act is listed in uppercase Roman numerals; the scene in lowercase Roman numerals; and the lines in numbers. For example, Act 5, Scene 6, lines 15 to 25 is cited as V.vi.15–25.

### Narrative viewpoint and voice

In a novel, somebody tells the story. This is often not true of a play. Plays usually have very little narrative voice. To help the audience understand what is happening, playwrights use some special techniques.

Playwrights use *asides* and *soliloquies* to enable a character to voice their thoughts aloud and therefore reveal themselves to the audience.

- A **soliloquy** is a speech where a character talks aloud to him or herself as they work through their thoughts about something that is happening in the play.
- An **aside** is a short speech that other characters cannot hear but that the audience can. Asides are generally shorter than soliloquies.

Occasionally plays have an actual narrator, a character who stands on stage and speaks directly to the audience. Narrators are quite common in musicals. In Greek tragedies, the chorus acts as a narrator, guiding the audience through the events on stage.

### Setting

The setting of a play—not to be confused with the set—is where the action of the story takes place; the location(s) where the characters interact. A play's setting will reflect its characters, themes and language. Oscar Wilde's comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest* has two settings: Algernon's London house and Jack's country manor house in Woolton, Hertfordshire. These settings reflect the dual and mistaken identities in the plot. They also provide a perfect setting for Wilde's satire about high-society manners.

## For class and group discussion

- 1 Discuss and make a list of possible ways that stage directions can be used to show the emotions that a character is feeling.
- 2 Discuss some alternative names for a character in a play you are studying or have recently studied. Remember to make the names appropriate for the time and place in which the play is set, as well as for the nature of the character.
- 3 Choose one character from a play you have studied. List the different ways the playwright shows the audience what the character is like.
- 4 The actor chosen to play a character is an important choice. Come up with a list of famous actors and assign them roles in a play you have studied. Why did you choose certain actors for certain roles?

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## Play extract 1

Read the extract below from the beginning of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

### *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Algernon: Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

Lane: I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

Algernon: I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately—anyone can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

Lane: Yes, sir.

Algernon: And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

Lane: Yes, sir.

[Hands them on a salver.]

## For class or group discussion

- 1 What does the audience learn about Algernon through this short piece of dialogue?
- 2 Compare the characters of Lane and Algernon. How is the audience shown that they are very different in personality and social standing?
- 3 Working with a partner, each choose a character and read out the passage of dialogue. Try to deliver your lines as though you are the character.

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## Play extract 2

Read the extract below, from Philip Pullman's dramatic adaptation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In this extract, Dr Frankenstein has just given life to his monster assembled from human corpses.

### *Frankenstein*

[The **Monster** stands there, swaying as **Frankenstein** moves back to get a better look at his creation. Then the **Monster** raises a hand and **Frankenstein** reaches up to touch it.]

**Frankenstein:** My creature! And living! Let me see you—let me look at you— ah...

[He runs his hands over the **Monster**'s limbs checking their soundness, helping him balance upright. The **Monster**'s eyes follow him, as if confused.]

Then **Frankenstein** stands back, and a first realization of what he has made passes over him. He shudders.]

But you're not what I thought you'd be ... I thought I was making an angel! D'you know that? I thought I was making something better than human! Something so precious and beautiful that everyone would love it—and look at you. Look at what I've done.

*[The **Monster** takes a lurching step towards him. **Frankenstein** backs away nervously.]*

No! This isn't what I wanted. Oh, dear God, what have I done? Is it alive after all?

*[The **Monster** makes a strange noise.]*

No! I didn't mean this. I didn't want this at all—

*[He turns away, and with a cry of fear and horror, runs out of the room.]*

No – no!

*[The **Monster** stumbles forward and falls over the body of **Clerval** lying in his way. He recovers and kneels up, and runs his hands wonderingly over **Clerval**'s face – and then, as wonderingly, over his own. He looks up and around, seeing everything for the first time. Then, with heavy grace, he gets to his feet and moves towards the open door. He stops there —looks back once at **Clerval**—then goes out as **Clerval** stirs and groans.]*



## For class and group discussion

- 1 How does Pullman use stage directions to show Frankenstein's initial reaction to his creation? What does Frankenstein first do?
- 2 How does the sentence structure of Frankenstein's first lines in this extract reinforce his initial reaction?
- 3 How does Pullman use stage directions and dialogue together to show that Frankenstein's feelings towards his creation change quickly?
- 4 Discuss your initial impressions of the monster. Do you feel scared by him, or sympathy for him? Do you see him in the same way as Frankenstein does? How appropriate do you think the name Monster is?



## Writing exercises

- 1 Write a short analysis of what the reader learns about the monster in the last stage direction here. Focus on Pullman's use of the adverb 'wonderingly' and the adverbial phrases 'for the first time' and 'with heavy grace'. What impression does this encourage in the reader?

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- 2 Write a new set of stage directions describing Monster walking out into the street after he leaves Frankenstein's room. Use adverbs and adverbial phrases as Pullman does to characterise the Monster's reactions to the world.

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## Practice

- 1 Create a character and write a page of play script that specifically shows what the character is like. Use the character's speech, vocabulary, costume, gestures and name to build the character.
- 2 Think of a novel you like and choose a character from it. Rewrite a section of the novel as a short script. Think about how you will convey the narrative sections in your script—for example, think about how you would recreate a section of descriptive narration in a play.
- 3 Take two or three pages of a play you have studied and rewrite them as they would appear in a novel. Think about the things that would be *seen* on stage that would have to be included in the narration of the new piece.
- 4 With a partner, create a glossary of words related to drama and plays. Write your own definition next to each of the words.

## Shakespeare's influence

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564 and is unquestionably the most influential playwright in the English language. Shakespeare drew on popular classical and Renaissance stories and legends, as well as his own highly original imagination, to create some of the world's best known and loved plays.

Shakespeare came to prominence in the late 1500s in London as an actor and playwright with the company The Lord Chamberlain's Men. Successful on the London stage during his life, Shakespeare's stature and reputation have grown through the centuries. He contributed dozens of new words to the English language, and many of today's most common idioms, such as 'a sea change', 'a sorry sight' and 'as dead as a doornail', originate in Shakespeare's works.

## Shakespeare's plays

There are 37 surviving plays that are traditionally attributed to Shakespeare. There are also a number of plays which may have been written by him, and some it is thought he contributed to. It is unknown how many others might have been lost.

Shakespeare's plays are generally divided into three types: comedies, histories and tragedies. His early plays were mostly comedies and histories, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, while from the turn of the seventeenth century he wrote mostly tragedies, such as *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*.

## Features of Shakespeare's plays

### Acts and scenes

Plays are structured by scenes and acts. Shakespeare's plays use the traditional Elizabethan structure of five acts.

Plays are structured by scenes and acts. Shakespeare's plays use the traditional Elizabethan structure of five acts.

- A **scene** is one passage of dialogue or action. A change in time or setting is usually set in a new scene.
- An **act** is a collection of scenes. Acts separate the major sections of the plot. Many modern plays have two acts, and the second act is slightly shorter.

Lines in a play are referenced in a very specific way. The act is listed in uppercase Roman numerals; the scene in lowercase Roman numerals; and the lines in numbers. For example, Act 5, Scene 6, lines 15 to 25 is cited as V.vi.15–25

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries plays were presented in the daylight in open-air theatres. This practical aspect influenced the content of Shakespeare's plays. Another practicality that had to be considered was that there was no curtain to 'bring down' to mark the end of a scene. Shakespeare used the characters' dialogue to show the audience that a scene had ended. Read the extract below from the end of Act I, Scene ii *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Leonato ... Go you and tell her of it  
 [Enter attendants]  
 Cousins, you know what you have to do.—O, I cry your mercy, friend. Go you with me  
 and I will use your skill. —Good cousin, have a care in this busy time.

I.ii.22–4

Leonato directs his attendants to do what they 'have to do' and then asks Antonio to come with him. This clearly marks the end of the scene for the audience.

### Stage directions

Stage directions are the notes in a play's script that provide the playwright's suggestions about aspects of the play, such as the appearance of characters, their mannerisms, their speech volume, their movement on stage and the nature of the set. Stage directions are usually provided in *italics* and/or in [square brackets].

When you read one of Shakespeare's scripts, you have access to the stage directions, but an audience member watching the play does not. You should pay careful attention to the stage directions, as they can help you to understand a character, the mood of a scene or an important plot event.

### Narrative viewpoint and voice

Shakespeare's plays usually have very little narrative voice. To help the audience understand what is happening, Shakespeare uses different methods to speak to the audience.

- a **prologue**—many of Shakespeare's plays have a prologue that sets the context and basic story of the play.
- a **soliloquy**—a speech where a character talks aloud to him or herself as they work through their thoughts about something that is happening in the play.
- an **aside**—a short speech that other characters cannot hear but that the audience can. Asides are generally shorter than soliloquies.

## Shakespeare's language

### Iambic pentameter

The dialogue of Shakespeare's plays is predominantly written in a type of verse, or patterned writing. His language creates a rhythm using the stressed and unstressed syllables of his words. Shakespeare's verse dialogue is mostly written in *iambic pentameter*, which means five pairs of syllables per line, with the first syllable in the pair stressed and the second unstressed.

Lysander 'Ay me! For aught that I could ever read,'

*A Midsummer Night's Dream, I.i.132*

Shakespeare's use of iambic pentameter creates a pleasing rhythm and also allows him to naturally emphasise important words in his dialogue. Of course, not all of every play is in iambic pentameter, much is written in normal prose—as in a novel. Prose sections are often used for poorly educated characters and in informal situations.

### Malapropisms

One of the language tools that Shakespeare used to make his comedic characters funny was *malapropism*. Malapropism is the act of misusing a word by confusing it with one similar in sound. Shakespeare often used malapropism to encourage his audience to mock characters who tried to appear smarter or more refined than they were.



"Nathan Fillion in *Much Ado About Nothing*, 2013." Italicise "*Much Ado About Nothing*".

Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing* is given the most famous malapropisms in Shakespeare. For example, in Act IV Dogberry damns Don John by saying,

'O villain! Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.'

IV.ii.53-4

Dogberry naturally means 'into everlasting damnation' and Shakespeare creates humour in his malapropism.

## For class and group discussion

- 1 In groups, research a period of Shakespeare's life from the list below. Collate your findings into a short presentation and share them with your class.
  - early life and education
  - marriage and family life
  - the 'lost years'
  - early career in London
  - successful later career
  - retirement and death
- 2 In the same groups, create a table which categorises all 37 of Shakespeare's plays into the categories comedy, history or tragedy. This will require some brief research about each play.



### Play extract 1

*Much Ado About Nothing* is one of Shakespeare's early comedies. Like many of his comedies, it is a story of young lovers overcoming obstacles, of mistaken identities, and of bumbling foolery. The extract below is from the beginning of Act V, Scene iii of *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which Claudio goes to the tomb of his lover Hero whom he believes is dead.

### *Much Ado About Nothing*

[Enter Claudio, Don Pedro the prince, and three or four Attendants with tapers, all wearing mourning; Balthasar and musicians.]

Claudio Is this the monument of Leonato?

A lord It is, my lord.

Claudio [Reading from a scroll]

*Done to death by slanderous tongues*

*Was the Hero that here lies.*

*Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,*

*Gives her fame which never dies.*

*So the life that died with shame*

*Lives in death with glorious flame.*

[He hangs the epitaph on the tomb]

*Hang thou there upon the tomb,*

*Praising her when I am dumb.*

*Now music sound, and sign your solemn hymn.*

V.iii.1–10

### For class and group discussion

- 1 What aspects of the opening stage direction provide information to the audience about when and where the scene is set?
- 2 What does the opening stage direction indicate has happened, even if you haven't seen or read the play?
- 3 What do the first two lines here—Claudio's question and the lord's response—add to the audience's understanding? What mood do they create?

### Practice

- 1 Look up the meaning of 'epitaph'. Who do you think *this* epitaph is for?
- 2 Write a short paragraph that discusses Claudio's purpose in coming to 'Leonato's tomb'. What is he there for? What does he hope the epitaph will do?

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## Play extract 2

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is about two young lovers from families that hate each other. In the following extract, Romeo has stumbled across Juliet who is talking to herself on her balcony.

### Romeo and Juliet

Juliet O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;  
Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

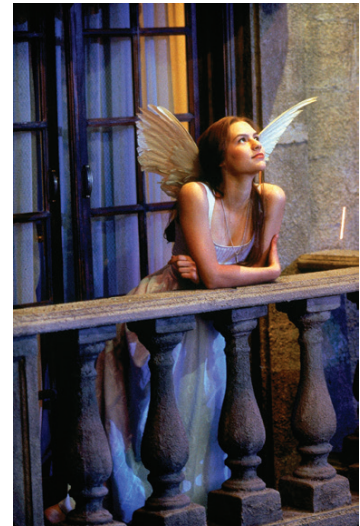
Romeo [Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

Juliet 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!

II.ii.33–42

## For class or group discussion

- 1 Discuss why you think Shakespeare has used an aside for Romeo here? Why not have him speak aloud so that Juliet can hear?
- 2 What is Juliet worried about in this scene? Research the meaning of 'wherefore' and discuss what meaning this gives her famous line 'O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?'



### Play extract 3

Below is part of Romeo's famous soliloquy from the end of *Romeo and Juliet*. Romeo has just found Juliet—apparently dead—in a tomb.

#### *Romeo and Juliet*

Romeo *How oft when men are at the point of death  
Have they been merry, which their keepers call  
A light'ning before death! O how may I  
Call this a light'ning? O my love, my wife,  
Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:  
Thou art not conquer'd, beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.*

V.iii.88–96

### For class or group discussion

- 1 How does Shakespeare indicate that Romeo is about to die? Why would he tell the audience this?
- 2 Look up the word 'ensign' in the dictionary. Which other word in the final line is similar to 'ensign'? What is the meaning of this imagery?

### Play extract 4

In Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*, three witches prophesy that Macbeth, the Thane of Glamis, shall become Thane of Cawdor and king. Macbeth is enticed by the prospect of becoming king, but frightened by what he must do to get there. The extract below shows Macbeth thinking through the possibility of becoming king, just after the prophecy that he will be Thane of Cawdor comes true.

## Macbeth

Macbeth [Aside] Two truths are told,  
As happy prologues to the swelling act  
Of the imperial theme. —I thank you, gentlemen.—  
This supernatural soliciting  
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,  
Why hath it given me earnest of success,  
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.  
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion,  
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair  
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs  
Against the use of nature? Present fears  
Are less than horrible imaginings.  
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,  
Shakes so my single state of man that function  
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is,  
But what is not.

Banquo Look how our partner's rapt.

Macbeth If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me Without my stir

I.iii.127–43

### For class or group discussion

- 1 What is the structure of Macbeth's aside here? How are his thoughts and speech split into two?
- 2 What is the meaning of Macbeth's famous line, 'make my seated heart knock at my ribs / Against the use of nature'?
- 3 What does Macbeth resolve in the final two lines of the extract? What does he plan to do?
- 4 What image do you think Macbeth is referring to when he wonders 'why do I yield to that suggestion, / Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair'?

### Practice

- 1 Mark the first part of Macbeth's aside by underlining the stressed syllables.
  - a Is this section written in iambic pentameter?
  - b Which important words does the stress of the syllables put emphasis on? Does Shakespeare use the metre to emphasise any ideas? Look particularly at the fifth line.
- 2 What do you think Macbeth means when he says that 'function / Is smother'd in surmise'?
- 3 Create a short imaginative piece that describes how Macbeth would look as he delivers this aside. Think about his clothing, his facial expressions and his body language.
- 4 Highlight two references from the extract to support the argument that Macbeth knows that he is going to act to try to become king.

### Play extract 5

In the extract below from *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act V, Dogberry goes to Leonato to reveal that the watch has caught two men who have admitted to falsely dishonouring Hero.

#### *Much Ado About Nothing*

Dogberry *One word, sir. Our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.*

Leonato *Take their examination yourself, and bring it me. I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.*

Dogberry *It shall be suffigance.*

Leonato *Drink some wine ere you go. Fare you well.*

III.v.43–50

...

Verges *And we must do it wisely.*

Dogberry *We will spare for no wit, I warrant you. Here's that shall drive some of them to a non-com. Only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol.*

[Exeunt]

III.v.57–61

### For class or group discussion

- 1 Which of Dogberry's words are malapropisms? Make a list of the malapropisms and the words Dogberry intended to use.
- 2 Make a list of other words that Shakespeare could have used as malapropisms in each case.
- 3 What do you think Dogberry really means when he uses the nonsense word 'suffigance'?
- 4 How has Shakespeare used the opening line here to show that Dogberry is grovelling to the socially higher Leonato?

### Practice

- 1 Write a short paragraph analysing the character of Dogberry as seen in this extract. Use at least two adjectives to describe his character.
- 2 What purpose do you think a character like Dogberry would serve in a play? In this extract, Leonato's daughter, Hero, has recently been falsely slandered as unfaithful to Claudio. Why would Shakespeare insert comedy here?
- 3 This unit has presented a very brief introduction to Shakespeare's plays. Choose one of the plays explored here and read it in full (you'll be surprised how quickly you can do it!). Once you are finished, reflect on the features of Shakespeare's plays discussed here: structure, stage directions, prologue, soliloquy, asides, iambic pentameter and malapropism. Are these elements featured in the play you read?

Biography and autobiography are types of writing about the lives of real people. Biography is the story of a person's life written by another person. Autobiography is a person's own account of their life.

### Features of biography

A biography is written in the third person and in the voice of the biographer. The voices of other people in the subject's life story may be given through letters or journals or quotations from interviews. Biographies may contain graphic material such as maps, photos, lists, diagrams and family trees.

Writers of biographies undertake a great deal of research and have a commitment to their subject. Biographies may be based on academic research and include footnotes or endnotes, an index and a bibliography. The author's aims in this case are to give readers accurate and substantiated information about their subject and to provide sources for other people who want to extend the research. Biographies of this type are written in a formal style.

The style of some biographies is less formal. The primary aim of these is to give information about the subject's life but some writers also aim to entertain, surprise or even shock readers.

### Features of autobiography

An autobiography, or autobiographical writing, is written in the first person and is based on the subject's own records, memories and emotions. The writing style is generally more personal and the structure less formal than that of a biography. An autobiography may also contain graphic material, letters, footnotes or endnotes and an index.

An autobiography does not simply recount the events of the subject's life. The subject chooses which events to include that are interesting and important to them. Frequently, these events are turning points in the subject's life, for example, moving to a different country.

The aims of the autobiographer depend on the nature and scope of their material. The primary aim is to recount the events of their life. Underlying this will be other aims, for instance, to entertain, amuse or to 'set the record straight'.

There is a range of sub-genres within autobiographical writing that includes memoirs, reminiscences, journals and family histories. These can cover a writer's whole life to date or can focus on significant experiences in a particular place or time, for instance, sporting achievements or involvement in a war.

### The context of the writer

Writers of biographical texts must be careful to avoid presenting a one-sided account of their subject. However, any writer's point of view is subjective, because it is influenced by their own life experiences, education and underlying values. These factors influence the choices writers make about content and language and in turn can influence their readers' responses.

#### Extract 1

The following extract is from a biography of Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. If you have not read this novel, the following details will help put the extract in context. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is about the trial for rape of an African American who is represented at the trial by Atticus Finch, the father of Scout



and Jem. Truman Capote is a childhood friend of Harper Lee who also became an important writer. The other people named in the extract from the biography are characters in the novel.

The extract is set at a time when Nelle Harper Lee had completed the first draft of the novel, originally titled *Atticus*. She sets her new draft in a town that resembles Monroeville, Alabama where she lived as a child and she bases many of the novel's characters and events on her memories of that town.

## Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee

Charles J Shields

With the core components of her novel in place, Nelle set to work revising *Atticus* in the winter of 1957. As any successful novelist must do, she needed to create a fictional reality, a unique landscape for her reader to enter. So the setting of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is Maycomb, Alabama, a town similar to Monroeville. The time is the Depression, and Maycomb County is so poor that the energy of life itself seems to be on hold. 'People moved slowly then,' Lee writes. 'They ambled across the square, shuffled in and out of stores around it, took their time about everything. A day was twenty-four hours long but seemed longer. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County.'<sup>44</sup>

Lee's time frame is a three-year period in Maycomb between the summer of 1932 and Halloween night 1935. Capote later said that the first two-thirds of the book, the portion about Scout, Dill, and Jem ... trying to coax

Boo Radley out of his house, 'are quite literal and true.'<sup>45</sup> Supporting this is the way actual incidents reported by the *Monroe Journal* during those years became part of the fabric of the story. For instance, in February 1933, when Nelle was six years old, a Mr. Dees fired a shotgun at somebody prowling in his collard patch, which parallels Nathan Radley firing a load of buckshot in Jem Finch's direction while he was retrieving his pants from the Radley's backyard.<sup>46</sup> In May 1934, a rabid dog bit two adults and two children, prefiguring the scene in the novel of Atticus shooting a mad dog.<sup>47</sup>

To populate the streets of Maycomb, Lee thought back on the inhabitants of Monroeville in the early 1930s: its officials, merchants, churchgoers, and even the local ne'er-do-wells. After the novel was published, some Monroeville folks believed they recognised themselves and neighbors. Capote made no bones about telling friends, 'Most of the people in Nelle's book are drawn from life.'<sup>48</sup>

### For class or group discussion

- 1 It is important that the reader of a biography trusts the credentials of the writer. Which details from the extract show that the writer understands the process a novel writer goes through?
- 2 The writer states elsewhere in the biography that Harper Lee refused to be interviewed by him. What is there in the extract to indicate that other sources of information were available to him?
- 3 Does the fact that there are five footnotes on one page of the text influence your view of the author of the biography?
- 4 Use the contextual information that surrounds each of the footnote numbers in the extract to suggest its possible source, for instance, a newspaper article or a letter.
- 5 From your reading of the extract, who do you think is the writer's intended audience for this book? Give reasons for your answer.

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## Extract 2

*Unpolished Gem* is the story of Alice Pung's childhood in Australia with her Chinese-Cambodian parents and her siblings. Into this is woven her other life at school. This extract is set at the end of Alice's secondary schooling. She is attending her valedictory dinner with her parents.

## Unpolished Gem

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*Alice Pung*

'Look at you. So lovely.' The comments meant nothing to me that evening. I was carrying an empty shell around that did not belong to me, positioning it in different unobtrusive places in the grand function room, the girl with the rubber mask of a face.

We were on the only fully 'ethnically-enhanced' table: Neylan's mother in her jilbab, Natalia's generous gregarious Russian parents, and Nina's glamorous Vietnamese parents. Natalia's aside, these were the parents who did not know much English, who drove taxis and sewed collars and buttons by the boxful so that they could send their children to a school such as this and watch them mingling with the upper echelons of society—the children of lawyers and doctors and professionals.

That night our parents realised something that probably shook them from their sleeping dream, the semi-dazed dream they entered when they rested from too many taxi-shifts, or when they closed their eyes from the fatigue of opening too many stitched buttonholes. They realised that their children were Watchers, just as they were. We watched everyone else, as tonight we watched our classmates in their smart suits and sophisticated frocks climb onto the stage to pose for photographs.

"Why don't you get on stage too?" my parents asked me. As if I could just jump on stage with people I had never spoken three words to all year and insert myself gracefully into their picture. And suddenly the reality must have sunk in for my parents, for

all the parents on our table, that their children were not more popular, that we did not talk to the beautiful people. It must have hit them hard — that we were still sticking by each other, sticking with each other, and not getting out, not fitting in. They had thought of this new life in simple cause-and-effect terms: that if they worked their backs off to send their children to the grammar school, then we would automatically mingle with the brightest and fairest of the state.

But to the beautiful ones, we were the non-party people, the ones with frightening parents and skirts down to our ankles. To the intellectual ones, we were the ones who never had enough time to join in debating, the boring compliant people who just studied and studied. If only they knew our lives did not revolve around study as much as theirs did—but they would never know. We may have been the dull people with no time, privacy or glamour, but we had our fierce pride.

With my camera, I migrated to my older teachers, the sanest people in the whole royal red and gold room full of colour like a watermelon turned inside out, soft and pastel and pink in some places and yet sharp and blood-red in others. The future people would get their photographs developed from this evening and see the yesterday girl, the small one standing next to them, the one wearing the funny twelve-year-old bridesmaid's dress, and five years down the track they would not remember her name.

## Practice

- 1 The opening paragraph makes it clear that Alice is not happy. Find the two metaphors that express her state of mind. What does each suggest of her feelings?
- 2 The parents had 'thought of this new life in simple cause-and-effect terms.' Use your own words to explain the causes and the effects Pung refers to.
- 3 Look at the structure of the sentence beginning 'It must have hit them hard'. (paragraph five). Comment on the way clauses are used here and the effect on the reader.
- 4 Do you think the tone of Pung's writing in this paragraph is angry, resigned, despairing, sad, or something else?
  - List adjectives and adverbs she uses to convey this tone.
  - Are Pung's descriptions of the 'beautiful people' meant to be taken literally or is she using irony (saying the opposite to what she means.) Explain your answer using words and phrases from the extract.
- 5 What might account for Alice saying that her older teachers are 'the sanest people' in the room?
- 6 In the last paragraph Pung uses vivid imagery to describe the room. What do the various colours represent in the context of the whole extract?

### Extract 3

In Mao's *Last Dancer* Li Cunxin tells the story of his life from his childhood in a very poor village in north-east China to the height of his career as one of the best male ballet dancers in the world. In this extract he describes his first ballet lesson at the Beijing Dance Academy where he has been accepted as a student.

## Mao's Last Dancer

*Li Cunxin*

That first class lasted nearly two hours, but it seemed like forever. I couldn't wait for the bell to ring so I could take those horrible shoes off and let my cramped toes stretch out. I thought about running in the streets like I did in my commune, or wrestling with my friends. I didn't want to dance. I wanted to go outside and make a snowman and throw snowballs.

Our second class that morning was Beijing Opera Movement. Our teacher was Gao Dakun. 'Hurry up, you're late!' Gao shouted. 'Spread out around the barre!' he barked. 'Beijing Opera movements are all about flexibility and suppleness. If you don't have suppleness, you can't be good in my class. Do you understand?'

We all nodded, terrified.

'Good, let's start with your legs up on the barre,' he said.

I looked at the barre in front of me. It was as high as my chest. 'What are you waiting for? Didn't you hear me? Your leg on the barre!'

I was one of the three smallest boys in our class. I tried to put my leg up but the barre was just too high.

Without another word Gao walked over to me and lifted my leg. I felt a tinge of pain in my hamstring and automatically bent my knee.

'Keep your knee straight!' He pushed my knee down on the barre. 'Now I want you to bend your body forward and try touch your toes with your head. Stay down there! Don't get up until I tell you so!' Gao ordered.

The pain was excruciating and was increasing at an alarming rate.

‘Didn’t you hear me, keep your knees straight!’ Gao shouted at Zhu Yaoping, the small boy from Shanghai who’d spoke me at dinner the night before. ‘Keep your head down!’ he told Fu Xijun, another boy from Qingdao. ‘Okay! Now, let’s change legs!’

My right leg was now in such pain that I had trouble even lifting it off the barre. I quickly glanced at the other students. I wasn’t the only one suffering.

When I lifted my other leg onto the barre, I knew what to expect this time. So I started to count. I was prepared to count up to fifty. I wondered if I was the only one counting as a way of coping with such agony, until I heard the boy next to me counting too.

## Practice

- 1 This statement by Li Cunxin’s on the opening page of the book deals with the important issue of truth in biography and autobiography.

‘This is my story. Here is my recollection of those years growing up in Mao’s China. It is my family’s history. It is my journey, from my earliest memories, through discovering dance, to my life in the West. History may record things differently, others may too, but the stories here remain as true to me now as they ever were. It is a remembrance that contains the treasures from my heart.’

- a Do you agree that there can be more than one kind of truth about a person’s life?
  - b List the types of truth he mentions.
  - c What might the author intend by the repeated use of the personal pronoun ‘my’ in this statement?
- 2 Choose two sentences from the description of the dance lesson that you think have the emotional truth of which Li Cunxin writes. Give reasons for your choices.
  - 3 Choose some details from the description of the dance lesson that might be recorded differently by a) history and b) by other members of his class. Explain why you think this.
  - 4 Would you describe the dance teacher as expert? Or is he capable, cruel, supportive or something else? Find nouns and verbs that convey or imply the writer’s feelings about this teacher.
  - 5 Find examples of language that suggest something about the following aspects of life in China at the time: material possessions, the attitude of adults and children to education, and adults’ expectations of children.
  - 6 *Mao’s Last Dancer* contains photos and a family tree. What can these features offer readers that the written text alone of an autobiography cannot?

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### Extract 4

*Growing up Asian in Australia* is a collection of autobiographical stories by different authors. In her introduction to the book, Alice Pung says: ‘our authors show what it is like behind the stereotype. Asian-Australians have often been written about by outsiders, as outsiders. Here they tell their own stories. They are not distant observers.’

In the following story James Chong prefaces his Anzac Day experience with a statement by an Australian politician about what it means to be Australian.

## 'Anzac Day' by James Chong

*'He [John Simpson Kirkpatrick, of Simpson and his donkey fame] represents everything at the heart of what it means to be Australian.'*—

Dr Brendan Nelson, then federal minister for education, August 2005

In high school I learned to play the bagpipes and went on to lead my band as the pipe-major. Every Anzac Day during high school I would march in the Sydney city street parade with my school's pipe band. It was always a big and proud day, with regiments of decorated veterans marching, some of whom had fought in the country where I was born. I was proud to be a part of this heritage and to pay respect to the soldiers who had served their country in the most difficult of circumstances. I felt at times, though, that because of my heritage and the colour of my skin, I was not allowed to be part of the Anzac tradition, which to many people defines what it is to be Australian. Maybe this was mostly adolescent angst. One

year, however, I encountered it in a very public and unmistakeable way. In 1992, a friend of my father gave us a video tape of an episode of the ABC current affairs program *Lateline*. The episode had aired just after Anzac Day, and opened with footage of the Sydney march. The camera focused on a kilt-clad piper in full highland regimental dress before zooming in on his Asian face — mine! I was intrigued and excited to see myself on television. Then the theme of the show appeared, flashed across the screen in big letters:

TRUE BLUE?

*I didn't watch the rest of the show. I was confused and a little hurt. I wasn't sure what it meant (maybe I should have watched it), but I remember a lonely feeling of exclusion.*

*'Anzac Day', Growing Up  
Asian in Australia, Edited by Alice Pung*

### Practice

- 1 A brief biography of the author of 'Anzac Day' states 'James Chong is a doctor and PhD student. He was born in Kuala Lumpur. When he was six months old, his family located in Scotland for eighteen months before moving to Australia. He lives with his wife in Sydney.' Why can it be helpful to read biographical details of the writer of a text?
- 2 Explain how the details of James Chong's life add to your understanding of the incident he describes in the extract.
- 3 Although Chong took part in the Anzac Day parade every year, he sometimes felt excluded. Quote one sentence that tells us why and another in which he tries to justify this feeling.
- 4 The theme of the television show on which he saw himself marching was 'True Blue'.
  - a Ask classmates who were not born in Australia what 'true blue' means to them.
  - b What does it mean to those who were born in Australia?
  - c What did it mean to James Chong at the time?
- 5 What is 'at the heart of what it means to be Australian' according to the then federal minister for education? How is this reflected in the episode James Chong describes?
- 6 Compare Chong's literary style with Pung's in *Unpolished Gem*. Look at vocabulary, sentence length and structure and the use of devices such as metaphors and repetition.



## Persuasive devices

Writers and speakers use a number of common persuasive devices to persuade their reader or audience. To make informed decisions about who and what to believe, you must be aware of how language is used in different ways to persuade. Some commonly used persuasive devices are:

### Emotive language

Emotive language is language designed to manipulate the audience or reader's emotions. If the writer can encourage the reader to feel sympathy for a person or an issue, then the reader is more inclined to agree with the writer or with someone who wants to help them. Conversely, if readers are made to feel angry towards a person or a group, they will be less inclined to agree with them.

### Evidence

Evidence is another common persuasive device. Some types of evidence include statistics, expert evidence and anecdotal evidence. An anecdote is a short retelling of a true past experience to illustrate a point. Evidence can be used to encourage a reader to logically agree with an argument, or to manipulate their emotions.

### Imagery and metaphor

Creators of persuasive texts can use imagery—both literal and non-literal (metaphorical)—to create a visual image in the audience's mind. For example, an editorial about a politician whose performance has been poor might say: 'In this case, the opposition leader has sunk to new depths.' The politician hasn't actually sunk, but the metaphor creates an image of sinking to a low action.

### Rhetorical questions

A rhetorical question does not require an answer. It is a question to which the reader or listener intuitively knows the answer, and an

answer is not required because it is self-evident or obvious. For example, when we read 'Do we really want more people homeless on our streets?', we know that the implied answer is 'No, we don't.' The question encourages the audience to consider the issue and accept the writer's argument.

### Repetition

Repetition is repeating words, phrases or images to create a particular effect. It can be used for emphasis, to highlight a central idea or to reinforce an important point. It helps to persuade the audience. Repetition is particularly useful in persuasive speeches; it can create a rhythmic effect, for example in Martin Luther King's famous 1963 'I have a dream' speech.

### Vocabulary choice, connotation and tone

One way that writers manipulate readers' emotions is through the words they choose to describe things or people. They carefully select words with negative or positive associations or connotations. A word's **connotation** is the meaning implied by a word in addition to its literal meaning. For example, the word *slim* has positive connotations, whereas the word *gaunt* has negative connotations.

The tone of a persuasive text is also created through the writer's choice of language, and tone can work to persuade a reader or audience. The tone of a piece of writing is the way that it 'sounds'. Tone helps to show the writer's attitude and feelings about the subject and the readers.



## Practice

- 1 Next to each of the words below, write whether the word has a positive (P) or negative (N) connotation.
- |             |     |            |     |                |     |
|-------------|-----|------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| a clever    | ___ | d arrogant | ___ | g proactive    | ___ |
| b sneaky    | ___ | e lazy     | ___ | h over-zealous | ___ |
| c confident | ___ | f relaxed  | ___ |                |     |
- 2 In each of the sentences below, exchange the bolded word for one listed in the previous task. Would you now be more or less inclined to agree with, or act on, the statement?
- a I am not going to vote for Darren Williams for mayor because of his **confident** \_\_\_\_\_ manner.
- b Going to the park will make us feel more **lazy** \_\_\_\_\_.
- c Buy today! This product has been specially designed by our **sneaky** \_\_\_\_\_ scientists.
- d When she does a job, she is **over-zealous** \_\_\_\_\_ in promoting the result.
- e Look at him, sleeping on the couch all afternoon. He is so **relaxed** \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Next to each statement, write whether the evidence given is statistical (S), expert evidence (E) or a supporting anecdote (A).
- a Dr Lewis Lewing says that drinking water is good for your health. \_\_\_\_\_
- b We know crime is on the rise because Mrs Walton from next door was robbed last week. \_\_\_\_\_
- c In the survey, 78% of students said that they believe that climate change is the most pressing issue their generation will face. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Which of the statements in the previous task provide solid and reliable evidence? Why?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 The statements below contain repetition. Next to each example, write down what is being repeated and what effect you think this might have on a reader.

Statement	Repetition	Possible effect
This team is unarguably the greatest ever; they have soared, climbing higher than anyone before them.	Image of height and flying	It makes the reader think of how high the team has 'flown', emphasising their success.
To understand crime we must understand not only the action, but we must also understand the criminal.		
The policy is fatally flawed, the idea behind it is fatally flawed, and the minister is fatally flawed as a politician!		

## Persuasive text extract 1

### ‘NEW POWER SHOCK’

TENS of thousands of electricity and gas customers already smarting from the seemingly never ending cycle of price hikes now face being hit with a bill for up to nine months’ worth of charges all at once.

The *Herald Sun* has today revealed that at least 66 000 EnergyAustralia customers, including pensioners, have been experiencing late bills thanks to the

‘transitional problems’ with a new billing system and other technical hitches.

EnergyAustralia—formerly TRUenergy—refuses to divulge exactly how many people have been affected, with the extent of the problem emerging only after frustrated consumers called the *Herald Sun* to blow the whistle. Some reported receiving bills in excess of \$1000.

...

In the meantime, as EnergyAustralia customers wait for a permanent fix, they should heed ... advice that it is their legal right to pay these bloated bills over an extended time and not feel pressured into paying them in a lump sum.

## For class or group discussion

- 1 The writer of the above editorial uses the verbs ‘smarting’ and ‘hit’ in the first sentence.
  - a How are these words similar or connected?
  - b What associations do you make with them?
  - c Are they positive or negative words?
- 2 The abstract noun ‘cycle’ of ‘price hikes’ is described as ‘never ending’.
  - a Why do you think the writer has used the word ‘cycle’?
  - b What does it imply about price increases?
  - c How is the writer trying to make the reader feel?
- 3 The editorial uses the statistic ‘66 000’ customers who have been given late bills.
  - a Does it seem high or low to you?
  - b What is the reader supposed to think about this statistic? Why?
- 4 What does the idiom ‘blow the whistle’ mean? How does the writer want the reader to feel about the electricity company? How do you know?

## Practice

- 1 Rewrite the piece above keeping the same facts and information, but take a more tolerant approach to the energy company’s prices.
- 2 Create a persuasive letter to the editor that expresses your outrage at receiving an electricity bill for a total of nine months’ worth of electricity. Persuade your reader that you should not have to pay. Use emotive language, rhetorical questions and repetition in your letter.

## WHY ARE WE BEHAVING LIKE WATER WALLIES ALL OVER AGAIN?

THE garden tap creaks with the first turn, telling of internal workings long unused and neglected. Crank it a little more and then ... nothing.

Could it be so long that the water has forgotten how to flow? There's a shudder, and here it comes, coursing down the ageing hose, which slithers like a snake across the garden path. Hose fittings strain, springing pin leaks.

The moment has arrived. Squeeze the trigger nozzle gently and feel the power released, the spray of water bouncing off the plants and into the soil.

It's been a long time since the experience of almost restriction-free watering. It should be a moment of delight, the thirsty garden drinking up the life-force of water.

Except that it's not. There's a tinge of guilt about standing here on a hot summer's night. Ten years of drought, of Target 155, of empty dams and water police have had their impact. Will it ever be like the plentiful old days when water was a friend? Do others feel the same?

No, not many, it appears. The latest figures show that with the easing of restrictions, Melbourne has decided that the good times are back, and water hour is happy hour. We are using more and more water, with average daily

consumption in recent weeks of more than 220 litres a day per person.

The theory is fine, of course. The reason our garden hoses have been turned on full is one of the hottest months of the hottest summers, which for the large part has involved rain-free open blue skies. And, of course, our dams are looking healthy, thanks to the soaking, drought-breaking rains of recent seasons. Water storages are sitting at close to 80 per cent.

Water Minister Peter Walsh rejects suggestions there has been a shift in culture: it's been hot and we are understandably using more water. His Labor opposite, John Lenders, says the government is being reckless.

As for me, I'm wrestling with the two views. Even for a land of drought and flooding rains, it's hard to come to terms with the idea that somehow, it's all back to normal, that everything's all right. Crisis? What crisis?

... Now, the new normal involves turning on the tap. That's purely the result ... of the messages from the environment (it rained) and what our political leaders tell us (we have a surplus of water, and can use it as we see fit).

It's an interesting response from an electorate that seems weary of politics and distrustful of politicians. We still listen to what they say, especially when it involves an end to restrictions and self-denial.

It was easier to embrace this new sense of abundance, until the vivid reminders of recent months of the intensity of the Australian climate: a land turned hard and dry, and the return of the menace of fire.

... Despite this government's disdain, the comforting knowledge that the desal plant is there if we need it no doubt helps us sleep during these hot, restless nights, and may also explain why we are turning on our taps.

So we should let the good times flow, right? I'm not so sure. Despite the state of our dams and a ready-and-waiting desal plant, I suspect we may have embraced abundance too soon. By the day, Victoria is getting bigger, thirstier. Put it down to feeling it in my waters, but it seems that when it comes to using more water, we should be hastening slowly. "Drought-proof" has a far too confident ring to it.

Source: Shane Green, *The Age*, 26 January, 2013



## For class or group discussion

- 1 What is the contention of Shane Green's opinion piece 'Why are we behaving like water wallies all over again?' (A contention is the central argument of a persuasive text.)
- 2 Why do you think Green begins the piece with an image of a tap not running? What imagery does this create?
- 3 How would you describe the writer's tone? Is it unusual for an opinion piece?
- 4 What connection can you draw between the tone the writer uses and his use of rhetorical questions? What impression do the repeated questions give?
- 5 What is the contention of Peter Nicholson's cartoon that accompanies the opinion piece? How is it similar to Green's contention?

## Practice

- 1 Find some examples of 'dry' imagery in Green's piece. What connection is there between this imagery and his contention?
- 2 How does the writer want his reader to *feel* if they are now using more water? How might feeling this way change the reader's actions?
- 3 Why is the cartoon from Nicholson humorous? What makes it so? Annotate the parts of the cartoon which are intended to be funny.
- 4 What is the relationship between the text and the image in Nicholson's cartoon? How do they work together to create his message about drought and flood in Australia?
- 5
  - a Collect a variety of editorials, opinion pieces and letters to the editor from a newspaper or newspapers. Working in groups, write down what each piece attempts to persuade you to do.
  - b For each piece, write down how the writer is trying to persuade you. Do they use expert evidence? Do they make you feel a particular emotion? Is repetition used?
  - c Finally, write a paragraph that summarises whether you think one of the pieces is effective and successful in its aims of persuading the audience. Does it convince readers to agree with the message being expressed? If so, how?

## Writing activities

- 1** Write a short piece analysing the connotations of the phrase 'happy hour'. What does the writer intend to bring to the reader's mind, and how would this help in his attempt to persuade?

[illegible]

- 2 Write an opinion piece of your own which responds directly to Green's piece. Using similar persuasive devices, such as connotation, repetition, allusion and rhetorical questions, argue against his argument that we should be more careful using water. Use a definite, assured voice in contrast to Green's uncertain and hesitant one.

[illegible]

# Starting points for your own writing: Literature

These starting points come from literature you might read, watch or listen to. Try looking at the literature in a different way to inspire your own stories, poems, articles or play scripts.

- 1 Choose an event that is referred to in a book or film but not described in detail. Write a detailed version of the event, making your language and style similar to that of the original work.
- 2 Use a computer to design a brochure that promotes a book, film or play you have enjoyed. Include a fifty-word statement about the qualities of the book, and an illustration of a key scene.
- 3 Write a review of a film. In your review, include:
  - the film's title
  - the name of the film's director
  - a brief explanation of the main characters and the actors playing the roles
  - an outline of the story and setting
  - the aspect of the film you found most enjoyable
  - the themes or issues with which the film deals
  - any special features of the film, such as its music, lighting or camera work.
- 4 Choose one of the main characters in a book you are studying and write about how that person develops. Start with a description of the character as we first meet him or her. Then, examine how the person changes and the main reasons for these changes.
- 5 Imagine you are a psychologist, a judge, a teacher, an employer or a historian who is asked to comment on the hero or heroine of a book as if the character were a real person. What would you say?
- 6 Imagine you are a character from a book and a reporter wants to hear your story. What does the reporter want to know about? What will you tell the reporter?
- 7 Write a magazine gossip page about the characters attending an event that is described in a book. Use pictures cut from magazines to illustrate your page.
- 8 Which character in a book or film would you most like to go out to dinner with? Which one would you least like to go out with? In each case, explain why.
- 9 Make a class newspaper about the people and events in a book you are studying. Include anything relevant to the book: maps, advertisements, news stories, gossip, fashion notes, cartoons, interviews, opinion, editorials and weather reports.
- 10 Take the role of one of the main characters in a book, and explain why you behaved in the way you did. Write this as a dramatic monologue that implies someone is listening to your words.
- 11 Write a new last chapter for a novel you have read. In your new chapter, things turn out quite differently.
- 12 Use one of these settings for a dialogue or short play:
  - backstage at a theatre
  - the car park of a casino
  - inside a tank during a battle
  - an archaeological excavation site.
- 13 Write a monologue spoken by a mother for a novel or a film. In her monologue she lists five places she is going, five things she wants her son or daughter to do while she is out, and five things they definitely may not do.