# 10.1 Deconstructing Documentary

1. Fill in this table as you watch *Spellbound* to help you to deconstruct it and decide whether it is traditional or not.

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| **characters:**  spelling bee competitors:  Angela  Harry |
| **Setting(s):**  Competitors houses, spelling bee venue. |
| **How is the camera used? (i.e. what angles? Do you see the camera crew?)**  Long shots, little jump cuts to peoples. |
| **Describe the editing:**  Follows people around there lives combined with competitions and interviews. |
| **Describe how narration/ voice-over is used in the documentary:**  Very little, some interviewers questions. |
| **How are authority figures used in the documentary?**  They are not |
| **What archival footage is used?**  None |
| **Describe the music and how and when it is used. What effect is achieved?**  To fill in time |
| **What is the purpose of the documentary?**  To inform about the lives of spelling bee competitors |
| **Is this documentary traditional? Why?**  No, there is no authoritative narration s and is very subjective |

****2. **Character analysis Activity:** In pairs examine the characters and use nouns, verbs and adjectives and adverbs to describe them.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **2 nouns** | **2 verbs** | **2 adjectives** | **2 adverbs** |
| Neil Kadaka | * E.g. Achiever * Son * Brother * Indian * dutiful | * Compete * Attempt * challenge | * Studious * obedient | * Competitively * Diligently * obediently |
| Emily Stagg |  |  |  |  |
| Ashley White |  |  |  |  |
| April De Gideo |  |  |  |  |
| Harry Altman |  |  |  |  |
| Angela Arenivar |  |  |  |  |
| Nupar Lala |  |  |  |  |
| Ted Brigham |  |  |  |  |

3. **Analysis:** While watching *Spellbound*, did you have favourite characters? Did you favour some over others? Who and why? Was there anything about the way the film was constructed that made you feel this way?

4. Is *Spellbound* just about the National Spelling Bee? What other themes or issues are discussed?

**Research Activity:** (from P177 Pearson English10)

Research the Michael Apted *Seven Up (1964)* or Gillian Armstrong series *Smokes and Lollies* which followed the lives of children as they grew up in England and Australia.

* Take notes about the main themes, ethics and criticisms of the series.