

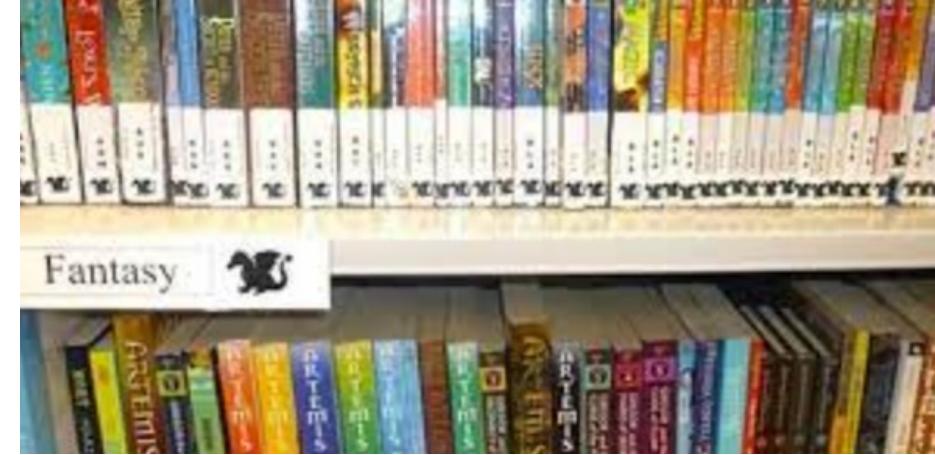
# A Review of Genre

Miss Wilkinson

# Introduction

Insight Year 12 Text pp 39-60

- Genre originates from a French term, meaning “type” or “Category”
- Because of shared features, or conventions, audiences develop expectations about different genres of text.
- Texts can belong to multiple genres, can represent a subgenre or could be a blend, resulting in hybrid genres
- Traditional genres can be challenged, manipulated or subverted enabling writers and directors to present fresh perspectives on issues and concepts they explore.



When you combine 3 genres together

GENRES	NEW SUBGENRE	HYBRID	EXAMPLE
COMEDY	ROMANCE/COMEDY (ROM-COM)	ROMANCE COMEDY BRITISH	Bridget Jones
DRAMA	DRAMA/ACTION = DISASTER	DRAMA ACTION NATURAL DISASTER	Sweeney Todd Rocky Horror Picture Show
HORROR	COMEDY/HORROR	COMEDY HORROR ZOMBIE PARODY	Shawn of the Dead
FAMILY	FAMILY/ROMANCE	FAMILY ROMANCE SCIFI	Avatar

## Manipulating Genres

*How to turn something into something entirely different*



# Why do we group texts into categories?

- Producers of texts need to appeal to target audiences
- Audiences want to be able to identify whether they will enjoy a text
- Genre gives us a way of organising and making sense of texts in the world

# Categories

1. Genre of Subject Matter
2. Genre of Form and Structure



# Genre of Subject Matter

Consider these questions:

1. What is the text about?
2. What are the intended effects on the audience?

Common genres of narratives according to subject matter:

Action	Fantasy	Romance
Bildungsroman	Folk and Fairy-tale	Science-Fiction
Comedy	Gothic	Thriller
Crime	Historical	Tragedy
Dystopian	Horror	Western



# Genre of Form and Structure

Consider:

1. What is the form of the text?

Common list of genres pertaining to form and structure:

Biography	Memoir	Print Advertisement
Blog Post	Movie	Short Story
Documentary	Novel	Song Lyric
Editorial	Opinion Piece	TV Drama
Film Poster	Podcast	Web Page
Letter	Poem	

Considering the genre of form and structure means taking the following elements into account in any analysis.

- **Audience expectations of specific text types.** What features do audiences expect when they approach a text, such as a blog post or an autobiography, and does the text meet these expectations? Does the text conform to the structures expected – such as a chronological narrative – or does it experiment with structure? For instance, films such as *Fight Club* and *Memento* intentionally play with the conventional chronological narrative structure.
- **The mode and medium of a text.** Which mode of language features is used? For example, is the text constructed using the written word, or is it a spoken text, or a multimodal text that combines auditory and visual elements? How is the text transmitted to its audience? For example, a documentary might be screened in cinemas, broadcast on television or streamed online.
- **The impact of the form and structure on the audience and their interpretation of, and responses to, the text.** Does a text surprise audiences due to its form or structure, or is it predictable and formulaic? Are the language and stylistic choices traditional or unusual? Does the filmmaker or writer forge new ground in their use of form and structure, challenging the audience to respond in new or confronting ways?

# Mode vs Medium

**Mode** refers to both the processes of communication and the types of language that we use in communicating with each other. Modes include listening (auditory), speaking, writing/creating, reading and several categories of viewing; see below.

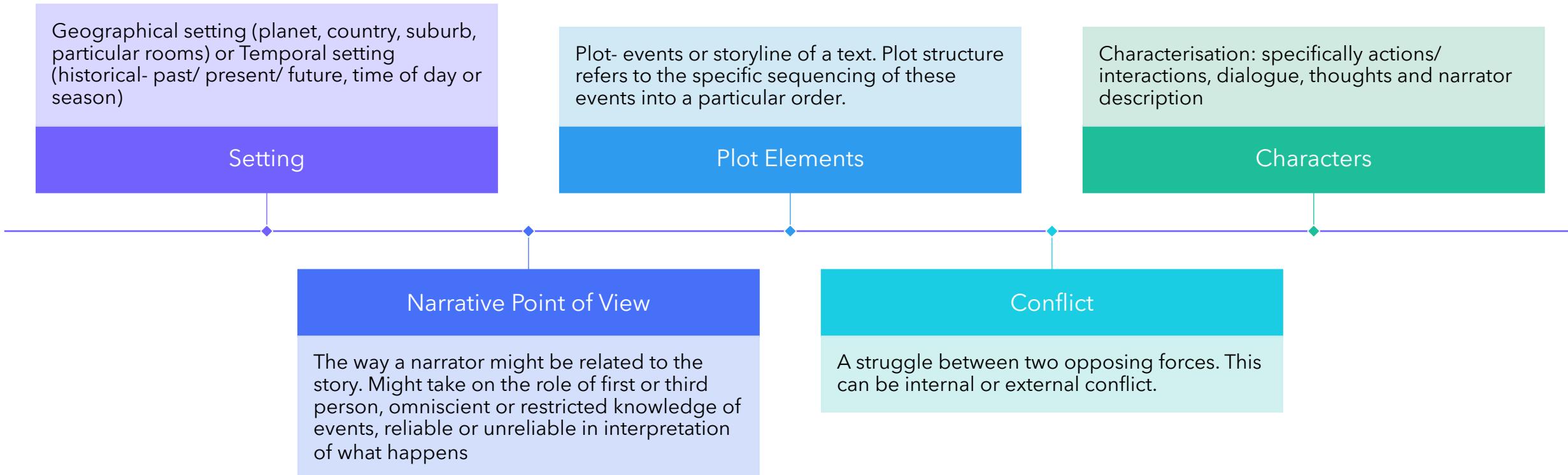
MODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE LANGUAGE FEATURES	EXAMPLE TEXTS
Written	Communication through written language	Sentence structures, lexical choice, grammar and word order, punctuation, figurative language, rhetorical devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Novel</li><li>• Feature article</li><li>• Autobiography</li></ul>
Spoken	Communication through spoken language	The same features as for written language, but when spoken aloud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phone conversation</li><li>• Podcast</li><li>• Debate</li></ul>
Auditory	Communication through sounds and the nature of vocal delivery	Music, sound effects, ambient or diegetic sound, silence; also pace, pitch, tempo, volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Music in a feature film</li><li>• Diegetic sounds in a computer game</li></ul>
VISUAL	Visual	Colour, texture, setting, saturation, costume, lighting, camera angle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photojournalism</li><li>• Film stills</li><li>• Print advertisements</li></ul>
	Spatial	Scale, proximity, layout, boundaries, foregrounding, framing, camera movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set of a dramatic performance</li><li>• Layout of a webpage</li></ul>
	Gestural	Facial expressions, gestures, posture, body movement, gaze, as well as rhythm, speed, timing and repetition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gesture during an oral presentation</li><li>• Action within a film or drama performance</li></ul>

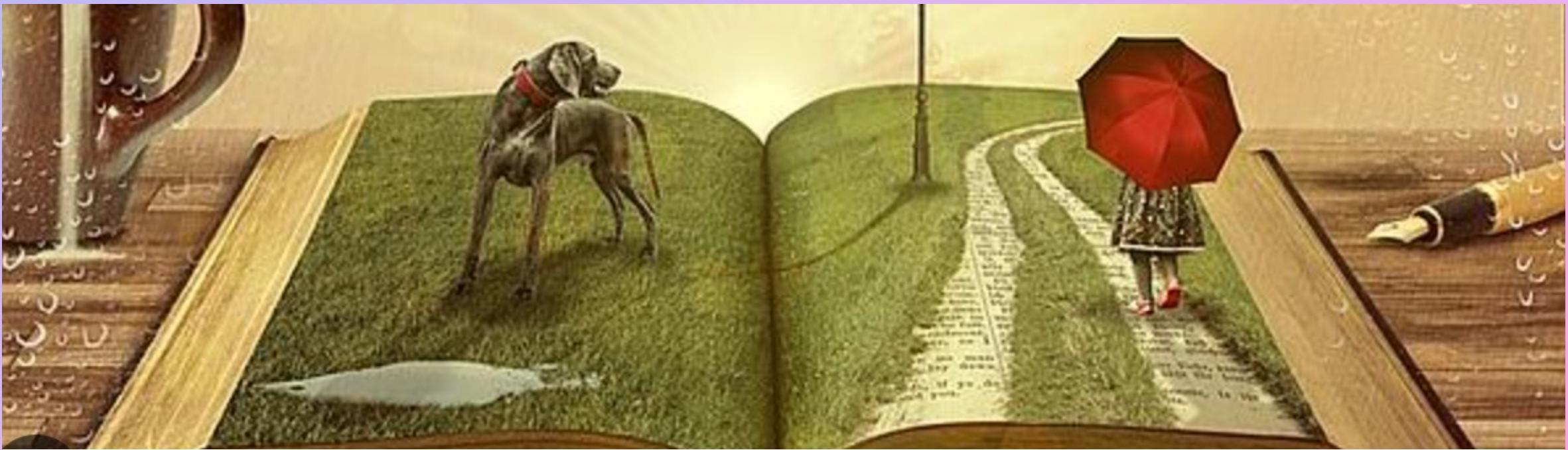
## Medium

- A resource used in the production of texts, including tools and materials used (for example, digital text and a computer, writing and a pen or a typewriter).

**Medium** (plural: media) refers to the channel of communication. For example, a written text such as a newspaper might be delivered in print or digital form. A feature film might be viewed in the cinema, on free-to-air television, or online. The particular medium can change the audience experience considerably. Think how streaming services changed television dramas, with creators structuring a series differently to account for binge-watching. Similarly, digital media platforms changed the nature of the feature article to include hyperlinks, multimodal content and reader comments.

# Generic Conventions- Narrative





# Setting

- Setting is generally constructed through the language features of:
  - Imagery (images created through descriptive or connotative language and figurative language)
  - Figurative language (metaphor, simile, personification)
  - Lexical Choice (diction/ word-choice)
- Settings are vital in creating an atmosphere and mood

# Plot Structure

Here are some common plot structures:

- **Chronological or linear:** This is the most conventional and traditional plot structure, favoured throughout the centuries. Stages in this structure are the exposition → rising action → climax → falling action → resolution (also called denouement).  
Events are depicted in the order they occur. More complex or longer texts, like novels, can have more than one rising action and climax.
- **Circular:** The narrative begins at a specific point and then we go backwards to find out how the characters got to that point. This is considered a more unconventional plot structure, along with...
- **Fragmented:** Events aren't chronological; they don't seem to fit any pattern at all. This is a very modern plot structure. Events tend to be like snapshots, and create a sense of fragmentation and chaos. It may not be used consistently throughout a text, as this would lead to too much reader confusion!
- **Parallel plots:** This is when the main plot of a story is accompanied by other story lines that eventually converge with the main plot. These other storylines are running *parallel* to the main storyline, hence the label.

- **Flashbacks:** Used within a narrative when a character experiences a memory, often involuntarily, that is relevant to the present. We momentarily go back in time and place. Sometimes these flashbacks help us understand the character's present situation more keenly. A classic example of this can be seen in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, where the narrator's flashbacks to the past, when life was about freedom and choice, contrast shockingly with her dystopian, oppressed present.
- **Alternating structure:** The narrative alternates from one storyline, to another, and back again numerous times.
- **Prolepsis:** No, this is not a disturbing medical condition. It is a lovely word for when a character imagines something in the future. It might be considered a 'flash forward'.
- **Peripety:** The turning point in a story.
- **Foreshadowing:** The suggestion of what might happen later in the narrative.
- **Framed structure:** A story within a story, often within another story. The classic example of this is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. A chap called Walton starts the narrative; he bumps into Victor Frankenstein, and his story is told within Walton's; and then the Creature gets his chance to tell his story, contained within Victor's and, at the end, Walton returns for the final say. So Victor's is framed within Walton's tale, and the Creatures is framed within Victor's.
- **Framing device:** When a single action, event or scene of significance appears at both the beginning and the end of the narrative.
- **In media res:** The narrative begins at a crucial event in the plot, and little clues and references are included in the rest of the text – sometimes also flashbacks – to inform readers of how this situation came to be. For example, in the crime genre, it might be just after a murder and the character is looking for a place to hide the weapon.

# Conflict

It is advisable to consider conflict within plot because without it, there would BE no plot, no story to tell. These are the main types of conflict.

## **Character against:**

- \* Self (Internal)
- \* Environment (External)
- \* Society (External)
- \* Character (External)

**When examining conflict, we must consider who / what is in conflict, why, and what effects these conflicts have not just on our responses, but on our interpretation of the narrative as a whole.**

### **Character against character:**

Think Harry vs. Voldemort in Harry Potter; the stepmother vs. Cinderella; Matilda vs. Miss Trunchbull in Matilda.

### **Character against self:**

The push and pull of opposing forces within a character: desires, pressures from outside, moral dilemmas etc. Think Katniss in The Hunger Games. She doesn't want to kill, but she must survive. The result? An internal character.

### **Character against the environment:**

Think of survival stories such as the father and son trying to survive an apocalyptic world in Cormac McCarthy's The Road; Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe, and The Cay by Theodore Taylor.

### **Characters against society:**

This is when a character is challenging something about their society, when they don't seem fit in or don't want to go along with everyone else. A clash of values, or a challenging of social expectations comes to the fore. Think; Offred in The Handmaid's Tale; Atticus Finch vs. the township of Maycomb in To Kill A Mockingbird.

# Characterisation

## Character change:

It is important to consider a character's journey in terms of whether they change, and if so, in what ways and why.

Characters might change in terms of:

- An adverse change: regression, deterioration, degeneration – in very simple terms, becoming worse as the story progresses.
- A favourable change: growing in moral fibre or developing in ways that add beneficially to their/others' lives, rather than adversely.

We must also consider:

- WHY they have changed: because of a relationship with someone else; a beneficial or a damaging experience; a realisation etc.
- The RESULT of their change: on them, on others, on the world of the story.

It is often through the change in characters that a writer will convey an important idea (or message) - a meaning.

<b>Characterisation technique</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>D =</b> Dialogue	We can learn a lot about what characters are like through dialogue from two different sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From the character him/herself</li><li>• From other characters.</li></ul>	Dialogue from character:  Bryson sighed as he looked down at his hands. "I don't know what's wrong with me, Mum. No one seems to like me. I would love to have friends, but I can't seem to connect with anyone. No one likes the same things I like."
		Dialogue from other characters:  Bob turned to Billy, frowning with annoyance. "I just can't relate to Bryson. He's not interested in anything except his Mac, his <i>Star Trek</i> DVD collection, and his Spiderman figurines. It's a kind of obsession."
<b>A =</b> Actions	What characters do.	Bryson sighed. Stroking his favourite Spiderman figurine with affection, he turned to the computer and stared at the keyboard. Haltingly, he stretched out a hand. And then his fingers made contact with the familiar smooth plastic of the keys and it was like coming home. No time to call Bob back, or eat, or sleep. All he needed was right in front of him. He smiled, content.
<b>N =</b> Narrator's description	This is when the narrator of a story (who may be a character, or may be an external narrator) is describing something about the character.	Bryson stared into space. Images of Bethany flashed before his eyes and he was filled with despair. Love. That's what it was. She was an angel but he knew she was so far out of reach it wasn't funny. His gaze fell on his one-hundred or so copies of <i>Star Trek</i> . Maybe Bethany would like to come over and watch his favourite episodes? No. Too soon. He didn't want to rush things and scare her away.
<b>T =</b> Thoughts	A character's thoughts are usually written in italics, and capture, word for word, what is going on in a character's head.	<i>Oh my Lord, Bryson thought as he watched Bethany walk down the street. Look at her. I would give up my whole Spiderman collection for just one look from her, one touch of her hand.</i> It was as though someone had connected his eyes to her back and he couldn't tear them away.

# Point of View

All stories are told from a narrative point of view and told through particular voices .

Narrative point of view is also considered a stylistic choice; it contributes to the style of a narrative.



**Narrative point of view:**

- This refers to the relationship of the narrator to the story; very simply, who is telling it.
- A narrator can be a character within the story, or it can be an 'external voice' telling us about what is happening.
- Who the narrator is and what narrative point of view is used will determine what we as readers will learn and see, and from whose perspective we will view events, characters and places in the story?
- The 'person' telling the story has their own way of looking at the world, their own perspective, so this is, of course, going to affect how they tell the story and what they tell.

Second person point of view	<p>The narrator addresses the reader.</p> <p>Pronouns such as 'you' and 'your' are used in <b>non-dialogue</b> parts of the story.</p>	<p>This point of view is not used very often, so when we are directly addressed as though we are part of the narrative, it can be surprising or even a bit confronting.</p> <p>It can draw us into the story, inviting more personal engagement, but depending on other aspects of construction (like language choice, syntax etc.) and the situational context of the plot, it can be so confronting that we want to distance ourselves. Thus a sense of alienation can be achieved, not unlike someone prodding us in the chest with a finger.</p>
Third person limited subjective point of view	<p>The story is narrated by someone external to it, someone nameless and unidentified, but who gives us access to the thoughts, feelings, actions, motivations, intentions etc. of ONE character.</p> <p>As with all third person narration, it can be identified through the pronouns of 'they', 'she', 'he', and 'them'.</p>	<p>As only one character's perspective is foregrounded – or favoured – this narration can also be a little bias and narrow, thus unreliable; we are not given access to a range of character perspectives.</p> <p>The subjectivity lies in the focus on just one character rather than many.</p>
Third person objective point of view	<p>Like third person limited subjective, the narrator observes 'surface' aspects of a single character, like their dialogue or actions, but never delves beneath this surface. There is no real exploration of feelings, thoughts, motivations, intentions.</p> <p>Can be limited or from the point of view of many characters.</p>	<p>This seems more impartial and neutral than other narrative points of view because of the lack of focus on subjective content like feelings and motivations. But because we do not have access to the character's inner world, we are positioned to infer information about them as it is not overtly revealed. A strong sense of distance is often created between reader and character; we never really get to know them well, unlike first person or third person subjective.</p>
Third person omniscient point of view	<p>The narrator is 'all knowing', an observer narrator that gives us access to the thoughts, actions, motivations, intentions, and feelings of many or all characters.</p>	<p>Because we have access to the inner worlds of many characters, this may seem a more balanced narrative point of view; the perspective of one character is not foregrounded or privileged. We also have access to a greater scope of information about events and characters because we see so much more through an omniscient narrator's 'eyes'.</p>

# Point of View- Continued

## Stream of Consciousness

- This is when the reader is aware of disconnected thoughts passing through the mind of the character.
- It is characterised by sentences that are grammatically incorrect or lack punctuation.
- It is often used to emphasise a character's desperation, confusion, urgency, panic, or a moment where they are not in control, especially of memories that they'd perhaps rather forget.
- Stream of consciousness can be used in both third- and first-person narrative points of view.

**When it comes to narrative point of view, here are some questions you can ask yourself to determine who is telling the story and whether there are any limitations to their version:**

Who is speaking, or telling the story: an external narrator depicting one or more characters' perspectives, or a character in the story?

Through whose eyes do we see the events? Whose perspective is missing, and thus what view of events is missing? What effect does this have?

Whose thoughts, feelings and motivations do we see? Whose are omitted? Why?

Does the narrator recount events from quite a distance, or is the recounting more intimate?

Is the narrator reliable or unreliable  
(An **unreliable narrator** is one whose credibility is compromised in some way, perhaps through being very young, or having a mental illness, or being heavily biased, or having a tendency to lie. Many critics believe it is impossible to have a reliable first-person narration because the character's perspective is so dependent on their own view of the world.)

Does who is telling the story remain constant, or do we get shifting narrative perspectives? What is the effect of having more than one perspective of events?

Does the use of narrative point of view remain constant, or does it shift? What new perspectives are offered through shifting narrative point of view?

# Voice

## Whose voice do we hear?

- Authorial voice: The 'personality' of the author / writer. Best kept for non-fiction texts like articles, speeches, expository books. We KNOW who the author is, so we know it's their voice, unlike a fiction text.
- Character or narrator voice: It is the 'sound' and 'personality' of individual characters and/or narrators. Each one has a different voice. The narrator may or may not be a character in the narrative.

## What is the voice like?

- Words that you might use to describe characters, or the tone of a text, are handy to describe what the voices you hear in the text are like. These words centre around emotions and attitudes. Tone words are extremely useful to know (see information on the next few pages).

## What is the effect of the voice?

- Responses to characters, events, topics and issues→ interpreting ideas and representations
- Interpretation and response to different perspectives being offered in the text.

- Voice refers to the persona we "hear" communicating with us.
- Voices are not accidental, and are consciously constructed for a purpose

## How voices are constructed

Language features and stylistic choices are the most significant ways through which voices are constructed, often supported by other structural or generic features, such as narrative point of view, focalisers and voice-overs. The table below shows some of the strategies used to construct voices in texts.

IN WRITTEN TEXTS	IN SPOKEN OR MULTIMODAL TEXTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Narrative point of view</li><li>Dialogue</li><li>Narration</li><li>Diction or lexical choice</li><li>Punctuation</li><li>Sentence length and type</li><li>Figurative language such as metaphor, symbolism and allusion</li><li>Rhetorical devices</li><li>Register and modality</li><li>Tone</li><li>Colloquialism, dialect, ideolect</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Voice-over or to-camera pieces</li><li>Dialogue</li><li>Diction or lexical choice</li><li>Figurative language such as metaphor, symbolism and allusion</li><li>Rhetorical devices</li><li>Register and modality</li><li>Colloquialism, dialect, ideolect</li><li>Rhythm and pace</li><li>Volume</li><li>Intonation and tone</li><li>Pauses and silence</li><li>Facial expression and gestures, which can enhance the sense of voice</li><li>Certain aspects of composition, such as framing and perspective, which can enhance the sense of voice</li></ul>

# Tone

- Whilst voice refers to the personality or individuality writers and speakers convey to the audience; tone conveys their attitudes and feelings towards a specific subject



Word bank for identifying voice

<b>BY TONE</b>	Critical	Cynical	Satirical	Warm
<b>BY REGISTER</b>	Colloquial	Formal	Neutral	Vulgar
<b>BY PURPOSE</b>	Affirmative	Condemnatory	Critical	Persuasive
<b>BY SOUND</b>	Clear	Distinct	Loud	Quiet
<b>BY IDENTITY</b>	Childlike (age)	Female (gender)	First Nations (cultural)	Middle-class (class)
<b>BY POSITION OR STATUS</b>	Authoritarian	Collegial	Dominant	Marginal
<b>BY CREDIBILITY</b>	Artificial	Authentic	Feeble	Subjective
<b>BY AUDIENCE RESPONSE</b>	Amusing	Engaging	Impressive	Objectionable

Word bank for describing tone

Aggressive	Colloquial	Disappointed	Horrified	Patronising
Amused	Conciliatory	Dismissive	Hysterical	Poetic
Argumentative	Condescending	Dispassionate	Imperious	Precocious
Articulate	Confident	Distant	Judgemental	Reflective
Bewildered	Considered	Distressed	Melancholic	Regretful
Bombastic	Conversational	Embarrassed	Mocking	Scornful
Brash	Critical	Enthusiastic	Moody	Strident
Calm	Cynical	Formal	Objective	Surprised
Coarse	Didactic	Friendly	Outraged	Thoughtful

# Narrative (Generic) Conventions

## Language and Stylistic Features

- Each of the conventions of a narrative (generic conventions) are shaped and constructed through various language and stylistic features



## Generic Conventions

- The choices that an author makes in terms of these conventions work together to create meaning:
- Themes and ideas can be presented
- Values and attitudes conveyed (whilst particular ideologies are endorsed or challenged)
- Representations of people, places, events, issues and subjects are constructed
- Perspectives are offered

# The evolution of genre

All genres have rules, and texts belonging to particular genres mostly conform to these rules. However, as contexts change, genres evolve and their conventions can be challenged, manipulated or subverted.

## Conforming

- \* Conventions are adhered to

## Challenging

- \* Questioning and testing the conventions
- \* May question how genre typically represents people, place, attitudes or values

## Manipulating

- \* Use in an atypical way to achieve an effect
- \* A text could alter an element in order to emphasise an idea
- \* Text could be adapted for a new mode or medium

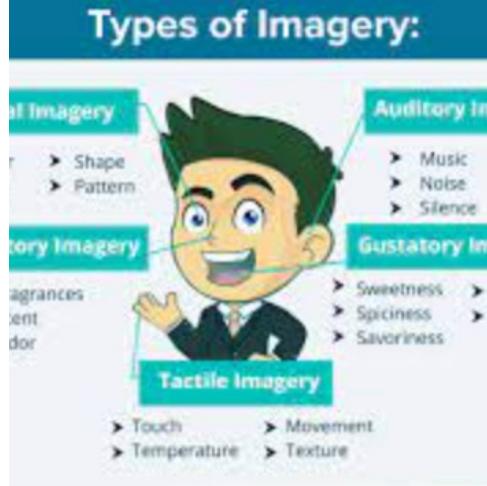
## Subverting

- \* Established conventions are intentionally undermined or reversed
- \* It can present a new perspective on an issue

# Some Language and Stylistic Conventions

**Figurative Language**

- Metaphor**: language which is used to compare two things. Similes compare two things by using 'as' or 'like'. Example: "As brave as a lion."
- Simile**: A metaphor is a phrase describing something it is not in reality. It compares two things symbolically. A simile compares two things by using 'as' or 'like'. Example: "As brave as a lion."
- Oxymoron**: features two words which are put together but make sense of the other. Example: "My grandfather is a wise fool."
- Hyperbole**: A hyperbole is a figure of speech that exaggerates the meaning of a sentence. Example: "My grandfather is a wise fool."

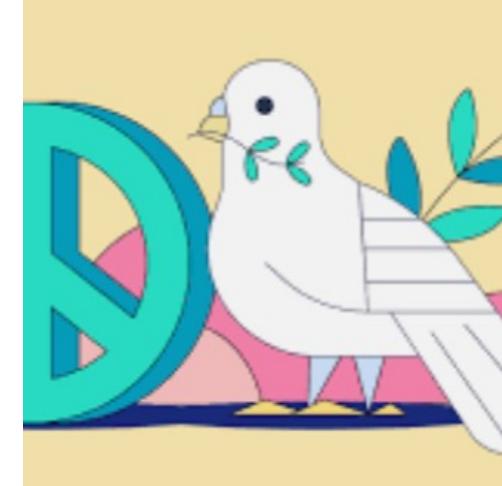


**REPETITION**: A literary device that repeats the same words or phrases to make an idea clearer.

**ASSONANCE**: The repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds in a line of poetry.

**ALLITERATION**: The repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of words in a line of poetry.

**ONOMATOPOEIA**: When the sound of a word is also the meaning of the word.



## Figurative Language

Metaphor  
Simile  
Personification  
Pathetic Fallacy  
Anthropomorphism  
Zoomorphism  
Hyperbole  
Oxymoron

## Imagery

Visual- Sight  
Auditory- Sound  
Olfactory- Smell  
Gustatory- Taste  
Tactile- Touch  
Kinaesthetic- Movement  
Organic- Emotion

## Sound devices

Alliteration  
Assonance  
Consonance  
Sibilance  
Onomatopoeia

## Symbolism

Names  
Actions  
Gestures  
Colours  
Settings  
Clothing  
Weather  
Physical Features



# RESOURCES

- Year 12 Insight Text pp 39-60
- Year 11 Insight Text pp 38-49
- SCSA Syllabus