

Task 3 Using an Omniscient Viewpoint - continued

2d) [continued]

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2e) What is the main **message idea** or **theme** that the poet, Wilfred Owen wants to convey about war in this poem?

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Meeting the Requirements of the Standard

Practise Punctuation, Spelling and Grammar

Regarding your own spelling, punctuation and grammar; to reach an Excellence level your answers must be 'fluent and coherent'. Correct spelling, punctuation skills and grammar are essential to reach this level. The use of good grammar, spelling and punctuation in English is like the use of good manners in conversation. For example, a formal conversation in a meeting flows easily if people are polite to one another, speak clearly, pronouncing words correctly, and make it clear whether or not they are speaking about something in the past, present or future. People show good manners by taking turns to speak, joining in the conversation and by stating clearly what they mean without using informal language which could cause offence or be misunderstood.

Spot Keywords

Keywords to focus on in works of literature are words featured in prominent places, e.g. the title, final sentence, words in quotation marks, or speech marks, and words that are repeated or explained or highlighted by the use of language features. Try to discover what the writer's **viewpoint** of their subject matter is by reading opinion pieces (e.g. feature articles in newspapers or magazine articles); in doing so you will learn to 'read between the lines' or even 'beyond the lines'.

Learning the Glossary of Aspects of Language

Learning the glossary of Aspects of Language on the following pages is important. You must take the time necessary to learn these. For each aspect of language you will need to know three things: the name, the meaning and the effect the aspect of language has in a text. For solo practise, cover up one column with a blank sheet of paper and practise recalling the facts which you have covered up. Once you can identify these aspects of language features in the texts that you read, then you can decide if one or more of the 'language features' (as they are also collectively referred to in this book) makes for you a significant connection between your studied/chosen texts. If that is the case then your 'language feature(s)' will become part of the 'supporting evidence' in your report.

Creating a Response to Text

In the process of creating your written report, oral report or speech, poster, podcast, or computer-aided presentation, you need to :

- Choose the **four or more texts** you will focus on carefully with guidance and input from your teacher. One of the four texts will be independently chosen by you.
- **Answer everything** - The most common reason for not passing this Standard is not covering all parts of the assignment.
- **Write or present formally** - Be clear by avoiding slang, text language and incomplete sentences.
- Provide **more than one example** and think hard about your final sentence. It could be the difference between and Achieved and Excellence.
- Write about 'the significant connection(s)' between the four or more texts that you have identified. This is your opportunity to show that you can think widely and deeply about English texts and that you are able to **express your own original viewpoint**. There is a chance to show that you understand what the writer or director was trying to do in the whole text and how the writer or director has made choices to get through to the particular audience the text is aimed at.

11 Setting

Key Components of Written, Visual and Oral Texts

In order to gather the **evidence** that will support your opinion on the connection(s) between the four or more selected texts, you need to consider the way those texts have been created or written.

All written and visual texts have some **significant** things in common : regardless of whether they are real or imagined the texts will be about :

- people (characters or individuals)
- the time that people live in (setting)
- the places people live (setting)
- the things that happen to them (plot)

These texts will have :

- a narrative perspective (e.g. an innocent narrator)
- a field of interest (e.g. an online blog)
- a genre (e.g. biography, plays, poetry, film)

Some written, visual or oral texts have more **depth** than others. The texts with depth will be seen as being **'well-written'**. They will contain recognisable themes and ideas that highlight what people and life are like. In order to pass the standard you need to be able to explain what the text made you **personally think or feel** and identify the **purpose** of the writing and the probable **audience** for the work as well.

There are five major components of texts that you need to be able to discuss (write about) in your presentation for AS 1.8 :

1. **Setting** : The **place** where the action takes place, the **time** (date, time of day, season, historical background) and the **social context** of the action, including such things as race, social status, wealth and gender.
2. **Plot** : The **story line** in short stories, novels and plays. The events that happen.
3. **Theme** : The **key idea(s)** the writer promotes. e.g. In *'To Kill a Mockingbird'* - the idea that *racial prejudice is bad*.
4. **Characters** : Major and minor, heroes and anti-heroes or individuals as they are referred to in non-fiction texts.
5. **Aspects of Language** : Ways of using language that make the text interesting and memorable e.g. *alliteration*.

A Definition of Setting

Setting is really four things : a **place**, a **time**, a **social context** and an **atmosphere**. You really can't talk about one of these without describing the others as well. These concepts are intertwined. Here is an example of a *setting description* from the autobiographical diary (non-fiction) book *'The Diary of a Young Girl'* by Anne Frank.



Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sealed-off rooms in the back of a warehouse in Amsterdam. ◆ Anne calls them <i>'damp and lopsided'</i>. ◆ Workers use the building, so silence has to be maintained (e.g. They cannot flush the toilet.) ◆ The secret entrance is a movable bookcase. ◆ <i>"The whole house is crawling with fleas, and it's getting worse each day."</i>
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1942. Mostly set at night when Frank family can move around. ◆ The Frank family have left Germany because of Jewish persecution. ◆ The Germans occupy Holland during World War II. ◆ Anne Frank writes of the Jews, <i>"The English radio says they are being gassed."</i>
Social Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Before the Nazis, Jewish families had been integrated into European communities for centuries. ◆ The Nazis wish to destroy the Jewish people. ◆ Some non-Jews in occupied countries choose to betray Jews to the Nazis. ◆ Jews are sent to be killed in concentration camps. ◆ Some non-Jews take terrible risks to protect Jews. ◆ Anne Frank writes, <i>"Every night hundreds of planes pass over Holland on their way to German cities, to sow their bombs on German soil."</i>
Atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The Frank family is forced to live in close confinement with the Van Daan family in the secret annex. ◆ Anne develops a crush on Peter Van Daan. ◆ Anne reluctantly shares her bedroom with Mr Dussel. ◆ Boring, tense, frightening. ◆ <i>"All we can do is wait, as calmly as possible, for it to end."</i>

33 Character

Task 23 Major Characters

We call the characters in a short story, novel, film, play or biography **flat** or **round**, depending on how much we come to know about them through the writing. If we only learn three or four facts about a person, they're flat. A writer will purposely supply much more information about a round character than a flat character. A playwright will often suggest aspects of a person's character and leave the actor to tease out more details in the course of acting the part using their own ideas.

Some writers **deliberately** use flat characters for effect e.g. in Action novels. We don't learn much about the central character who can be a 'mystery' man or woman, but we enjoy the ride! Generally speaking a reading **audience** loves to find out *why* and *how* people behave the way they do.

Major Characters are usually round characters. It is their actions, reactions, problems and conflicts that intrigue us and make us want to find out more. They are usually stronger, better or wiser by the end of the text than they were at the beginning. When this doesn't happen for example in the Shakespearean tragedies such as *Romeo and Juliet*, when the hero dies, there is often a moment when the central character sees what a big mistake they have made and we see it too.

1 In order to describe the way in which the author or director has developed the major character in two of your studied/chosen texts, you will need to comment on two or three of their methods as described on page 32 and record some actual examples from your studied/chosen text.

a) Choose a text you have studied either independently or in class (Text A).

Name of Text A :

Author / Director :

First character development method

Example

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Example

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Second character development method

Example

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Example

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b) Choose a text you have studied either independently or in class (Text B).

Name of Text B :

Author / Director :

First character development method

Example

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Example

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Second character development method

Example

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Example

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51 Examining the Short Story

Unpacking the Short Story

Short Stories have many of the elements of the novel including a setting, plot, characters and a theme. A short story can generally speaking be read in under an hour. There are some key differences however. Many modern short stories will start in the middle of the action rather than at the beginning with an **exposition** of the setting and characters. Short stories will typically have these **characteristics** :

- a focus on one incident
- a simple plot
- a setting consisting of one place and time and a defined social setting
- a limited set of characters
- a limited but significant amount of dialogue (conversation)
- a complication (an event that introduces the conflict)
- a crisis (where the central character has to commit to taking action)
- a defined climax or turning point
- a resolution (the point where the conflict is resolved in sad or happy ending)
- an ending that may be explicit (clearly described), implicit (suggested only where the reader has to work out what happened and why) have a twist, or be unresolved (a cliff hanger ending)

The short story can describe a 'slice of life' and the writer will reinforce a particular point of view by choosing vivid adjectives, adverbs, symbols and metaphors that help to convey the writer's theme to the reading **audience**. The writer's choice of words will convey the mood and tone of the short story.

Example

Patricia Grace is a major New Zealand novelist, short story writer and children's writer, of Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa and Te Ati Awa descent; she is also affiliated to Ngati Porou by marriage. Grace began writing early, while teaching and raising her family of seven children, and has since won many national and international awards, including the Deutz Medal for Fiction, and the Neustadt International Prize for Literature, widely considered the most prestigious literary prize after the Nobel. A deeply subtle, moving and subversive writer, in 2007 Grace received a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her services to literature.

Consider Patricia Grace's skilful use of detail in the first lines of the story 'Butterflies':

The grandmother plaited her granddaughter's hair and then she said, "Get your lunch. Put it in your bag. Get your apple. You come straight back after school, straight home here. Listen to the teacher," she said. "Do what she say."

These few details give us a lot of information that will be important for understanding the story. The way the grandmother plaits the granddaughter's hair shows that she wants the granddaughter to be seen as tidy in her appearance and that she cares for her. Perhaps she is the main caregiver rather than her mother.

The simple repetitive instructions tell us that the girl must be very young. The apple in the lunch and the instruction to "...come straight back after school" also show the love that the grandmother has for the girl.

In telling the granddaughter to "Listen to the teacher" and "Do what she say" the grandmother reveals her feelings about the importance of education for her granddaughter. The fact that the grandmother's own speech is ungrammatical makes the short passage poignant as we realise that she must have been deprived of a 'good education' herself.

Notice how many words it took to explain Grace's two lines!

Grace's work includes :

