

## 5 The Structure of Texts

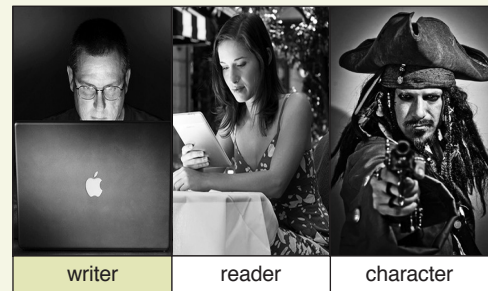
### A Definition of the Writer's Viewpoint

You need to know about *viewpoints*. Here this doesn't mean *opinion* or *attitude*, nor does it refer to your own thoughts on the value of a text. It means the **writer's** approach to the **reader** and the ideas being presented in the written text. Each different kind of viewpoint has its own advantages. Discover what they are.

#### First Person Writing

You can find this type of writing in short stories, novels, plays, poetry, song lyrics and non-fiction books such as autobiographies. You can recognise this type of writing because the **writer**, who is in the spotlight, makes '*I*' statements or sometimes talks about '*we*' or '*us*'. The **purpose** of the writing is to make the **audience** i.e. the reader, feel that the text is personal to them. The writer wants you to see things from the **central character** or **individual's** point of view. We are let into their thoughts and feelings.

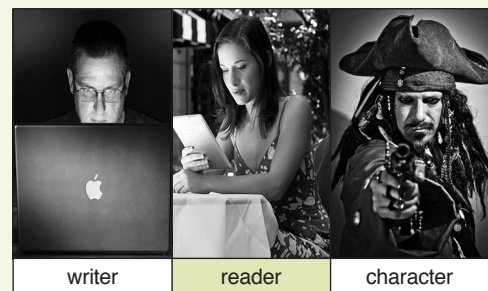
The writing can also read as if it is an eye-witness account - which it may well be in the case of non-fiction writing. In the case of first person writing the reader has to actively decide whether or not they think the central character is telling the truth!



#### Second Person Writing

You can find this type of writing most commonly in plays, poetry, song lyrics, non-fiction books such as instructional self-help books and advertising. You can recognise this type of writing because the **reader** who is in the spotlight is constantly referred to by the writer who makes '*You*' and '*Your*' statements.

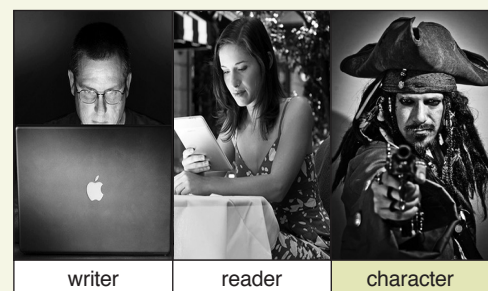
The **purpose** of the writing is to make the **audience** i.e. the reader, feel that the text is direct, that the reader is challenged by the writer to respond to questions and commands or in the case of plays to reflect on the impact of the dialogue on the characters.



#### Third Person Writing

You can find this type of writing most commonly in short stories, novels, and non-fiction books such as biographies, history texts, or books about the natural environment, geography, science, the arts and crafts, or sports. You can recognise this type of writing because the text is written from the **central character's** viewpoint. That character refers to others as '*he*', '*she*', and '*they*' and makes statements on behalf of the writer.

The **purpose** of the writing is to make the **audience** i.e. the reader, feel that the text is objective and accurate. The viewpoint is like that of a camera, recording speech and action with accuracy and without emotion. It gives a convincing, factual, neutral feel to the writing. The reader, as the audience, is actively involved in deciding what is significant to the story and what is trivial or misleading. This is particularly true in the case of mysteries or crime novels.



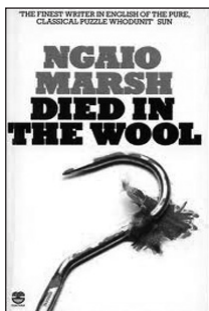
#### Omniscient Narration

You can find this type of writing most commonly in short stories and novels. You can recognise this type of writing because the writer will make statements from a '*helicopter*' position, as if they can see into people's hearts, minds, and houses all at once. It tells the reading audience what the character is thinking or doing at any moment. This writing technique is also known as the '*Eye of God*'. If you are told by the writer what the characters are thinking, the **viewpoint** is said to be *omniscient*. Thus even if the character is silent you can find out what they are thinking and what is motivating their behaviour. The **purpose** of this technique is to give the **reader** a feeling for the themes that the writer wants to express and to challenge the reader's own perceptions and feelings.



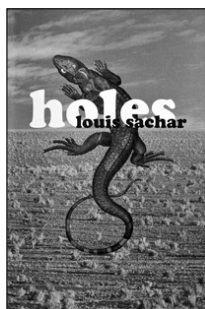
## Task 7 Recognising Types of Complication

1 Match the following types of plot complication that these writers use to attract interest, with the blurbs from a range of popular novels. There are two examples for each type of complication. The first has been done for you.



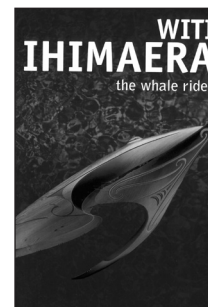
A murdered body is discovered on a farm, packed in a bale of wool and Roderick Alleyn must find a wild, woolly killer.

*Died in the Wool* by Ngaio Marsh



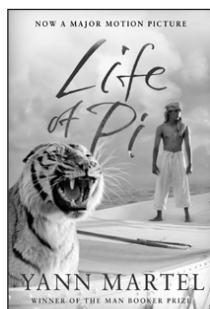
Stanley Yelnats has had awful luck his whole life: he's overweight, kids tease him, his family is poor, and now he's accused of a crime he didn't commit! Stanley blames his great-great grandfather for stealing a pig from a gypsy who put a curse on Elya and all his descendants.

*Holes* by Louis Sachar



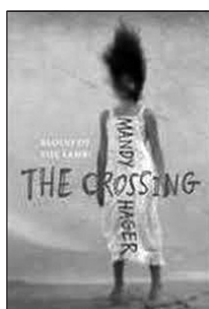
The whale rider was Kahutia Te Rangi. Ancestor of the people of Te Tai Rawhiti, he travelled from Hawaiki, the place of the Ancients, to the East Coast of New Zealand. Then there was Kahu. The first great-grandchild of the whanau, she was loved by all her relatives except the one whose love she needed most - her great-grandfather.

*The Whale Rider* by Witi Ihimaera



After the sinking of a cargo ship the only survivors from the wreck on a solitary lifeboat are a sixteen-year-old named Pi; a hyena, a zebra, a female orang-utan and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger.

*Life of Pi* by Yann Matel



Life inside the ship is not as Maryam dreamed, and she is faced with the unthinkable : obey the leaders and very likely die, or turn her back on every belief she once held dear.

*The Crossing* by Mandy Hager

mystery

conflict

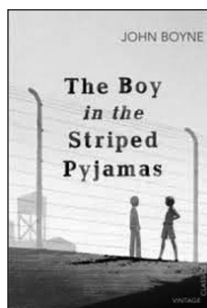
surprise

suspense



Finn is sent away to an exclusive boarding school to remove him from the small-town gossip machine. But there's someone who knows Finn's secret... Blackmail and lies ... will Finn ever face the truth?

*Snakes and Ladders* by Mary-Anne Scott



Nine year-old Bruno has been moved from a comfortable home in Berlin to a house in a desolate area where there is nothing to do and no one to play with. Until he meets Shmuel, a boy who lives a strange parallel existence on the other side of the adjoining wire fence.

*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* By John Boyne



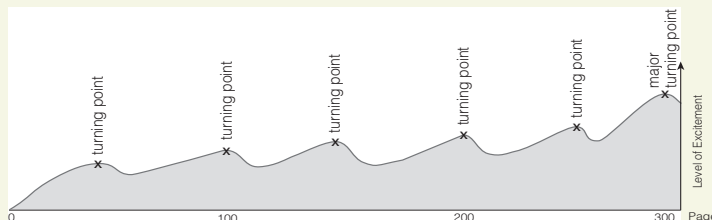
A fifteen-year-old girl named Tamar inherits a box containing a sequence of clues and coded messages from her grandfather. From the past another Tamar emerges - a man involved in the terrifying world of resistance fighters.

*Tamar* by Mal Peet

### Task 9 Graphing Turning Points in the Plot

The best definition of a **turning point** is the one given on page 10. The words can mean a point in a short story, novel, play or indeed a film where things change from better to worse and it ends badly for the main character, (e.g. in a tragedy such as Shakespeare's *Macbeth*). Alternatively, things can change from worse to better in a story that finally ends well (e.g. in a comedy such as Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Another name for **turning point** is climax.

In a short story there is only room for one turning point. In an extended text such as a novel there are minor turning points along the way. We could show this kind of plot structure in a 300 page novel as a graph.



- 1 We could compare this structure of turning points, culminating in a final story-ending major climax, with a close sports match such as the one that occurred in the sailing competition for the America's Cup in 2013 between Team New Zealand sailing the 72 foot catamaran, *Aotearoa*, and their opponents on Oracle Team USA in San Francisco.

**The beginning of the battle :** Both teams wanted to win the cup. Whichever team won 9 points first would win the oldest sport's trophy in the world – The America's Cup.

**What happened next :** The sailing took place over a period of 15 days. There were minor turning points for Team New Zealand which won races on days 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 winning a total of 8 points and needing only one more point to win the cup!

There were minor turning points for Oracle U.S.A., which started 2 points behind because of a penalty, (i.e. below the line) but won races on days 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 15. For the New Zealand fans the competition was a nail biting cliff hanger event!

**The final climax :** Oracle Team USA won The America's Cup. At the end it felt to the New Zealand fans as if Team New Zealand had been robbed of the America's Cup by one point.



On the graph below plot the peaks and troughs for Team New Zealand and Oracle Team USA as the interest and excitement grew and the 'tragedy' for New Zealand's team unfolded. Where the Team New Zealand line and the Oracle Team USA lines intersect is a minor turning point. The final day represents the major turning point.

Team NZ's Battle for the America's Cup (San Francisco 2013)



## Character vs Personality

Personality	Character
What people see when they observe your behaviour, as in your social behaviour.	What exists behind the 'mask' regardless of whether or not you are being observed.
Derived from the Latin word <i>persona</i> meaning a mask worn on stage e.g. to indicate a happy (comic) or sad (tragic) person.	Describes a person's essential behaviours and inner qualities. Character includes personality.
Adjectives used to describe personality focus on our exterior observable traits such as; happy, bubbly, even tempered, outgoing, loving, welcoming, extroverted, careful, noisy, selfish, sinister, introverted, mean, nasty, evil, addictive, greedy.	Adjectives used to describe a person's character include; honest, trustworthy, courageous, responsible, independent, clean-living, thrifty, democratic, adventurous, curious, ambitious, suspicious, jealous, murderous, treacherous, spiteful, dishonest.
Sometimes the personality we show on our 'mask' is different from our real feelings behind it. For example people can 'put on' a happy face for the sake of appearances when they are actually feeling sad or unhappy.	Character is a package of hopes, fears, habits, beliefs held in our brains and hearts. It sums up what we as individuals think and believe and how we behave regardless of whether or not anyone is watching us. It also includes what other people say about us.
The word <i>personality</i> belongs in real life but not in describing people captured in fiction or non-fiction.	The word <i>character</i> belongs in real life as a description of a person's behaviour. But <i>a character</i> is also a person captured by a writer in fiction e.g. short stories, novels, plays and non-fiction, biographies and autobiographies.

Here are the key **methods** writers use to develop their characters in a work of literature (text). The author of a short story, novel, play, non-fiction work, focussing on a central person (e.g. biography or autobiography) will :

1. Explain what the character is thinking and feeling (e.g. In a drama script this is done through soliloquies or asides.)
2. Show us what the character does. (Describe a person's actions.)
3. Tell us what the character says about a situation and about other characters.
4. Tell us things about the way the person behaves or thinks.
5. Enable other characters to comment on the behaviour of the central character and vice versa.

## Task 12 Character Clues from the Text

- 1 Read these pieces of text which create the character of *Finn*, the central character of the New Zealand novel, *Snakes and Ladders* by Mary-Anne Scott. In each box write the number from the list above to show what method the author is using to develop the character in the reader's mind.
  - a) *"Duggie has slid down a snake and you've been given a chance to climb a ladder."* (Valerie to Finn) ■
  - b) *"I'm going home," Finn said. The words were a surprise, even to him. "My old man's being sentenced – and I'm going to be there."* ■
  - c) *As Finn drove out of Waimea he was disgusted to see new trees snapped.* ■
  - d) *Finn was through! He sprinted the last few meters to score under the posts.* ■
  - e) *It took him a while - and a lot of attempts – before he established that she was asking him out for Saturday night.* ■
  - f) *An overactive imagination had always been a problem for Finn and he couldn't help thinking that this little fishing trip was a Mafia-type ploy to dispose of him.* ■
  - g) *He watched them rolling dice in a warped game of snakes and ladders: each person trying to land on a snake and be made to drink.* ■