

Conceptual narrative: Literary texts

Big ideas of English elements

What do we want our students to develop?

Identity – an understanding of the interconnectedness of Country and Place, People, Identity and Culture in texts in forming personal and social identities

Texts – an understanding of how the selection of text structures is influenced by the selection of language mode and how this varies for different purposes and audiences

Choosing and using language – how to select more specialised vocabulary to create increasingly complex texts including, choosing from a broad range of language, audio and visual features to innovate with text structures and express ideas in new ways.

See Appendix 1 which shows how these three key elements develop in sophistication and complexity across Foundation to Year 10.

What does the Australian Curriculum say?

Year 7 and Year 8

Students:

- communicate with peers, teachers, individuals, groups and community members in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments
- listen to, read and view interpret, evaluate and perform a range of spoken, written and multimedia texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade
- create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts, for example, narratives, procedures, performances, reports and discussions, and are beginning to create literary analyses and transformation of texts.

Introduction

Let's look at the concepts in Years 7 and 8 where students are developing their understanding of how texts, including media texts are influenced by context, purpose and audience.

The three key elements of Identity, texts and choosing and using language combine and are enacted through the three content strands of language, literature and literacy. All three elements are evident in this example using the questions from the Bringing it to Life (BitL) tool.

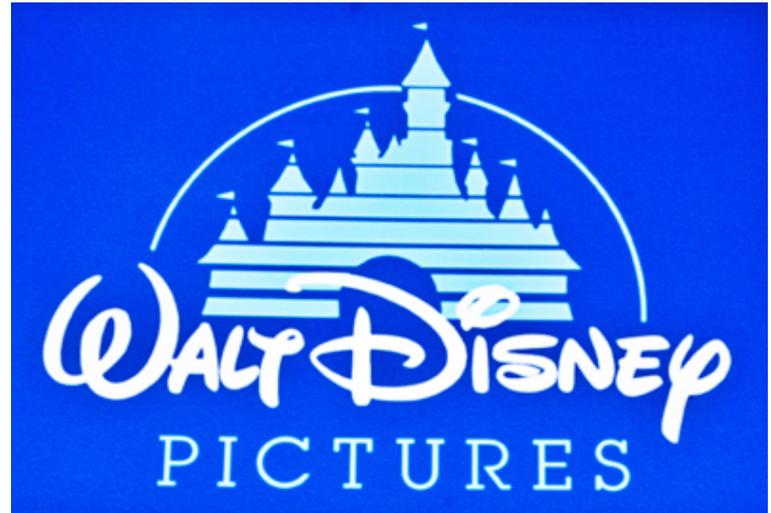


Year 7 and Year 8 example:

In 1933, Walt Disney Productions released a short animated film entitled, *The Three Little Pigs*. It became a box office sensation and the song, *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?* was adopted as the unofficial anthem of the Great Depression. This example shows how this film can be used to help students understand how the texts of popular culture often reflect the historical context that they come from.

Now, to bring the essence of being a powerful language user to life we will use the questions from the Bringing it to Life (BitL) tool with the film clip of, *The Three Little Pigs*.

The Three Little Pigs is available at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lo923T2HQ4>



Walt Disney's logo at the time of their animation of *The Three Little Pigs*, 1933, *shutterstock_233098303*, downloaded 20 March 2015

What do you already think?

Questions like these will help me to understand not only what my students already know, but what they will need to know in order to understand how this text is related to its social and historical context.

Using the BitL questions, I could ask:

- *What do you know about what was happening in America during the 1930s?*
- *What do you know about the way American citizens were forced to live at that time?*

Can you identify purposes, contexts and audiences?

These questions help students identify:

- what the purpose of the text is, for example, is it to entertain, persuade or inform?
- the context, for example, is it from another culture, is there a message about life in the text?
- who the intended audience is, for example, is it for young children? Is it for adults?

Using the BitL questions, I could ask:

- *When it was released in 1933, do you think, *The Three Little Pigs*, was meant for children or adults (or both)? Why?*
- **The Three Little Pigs*, was one of a series of short animated cartoons known collectively as the Silly Symphonies. What does that title suggest to you about the purpose and content of these cartoons?*
- *How might the context have influenced the success of, *The Three Little Pigs*, at the time and, in particular, the song, *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?**

How can you make meaning?

These questions help students think about different text processing and comprehension strategies we can use to make sense of texts that we listen to, read or view.

Using the BitL questions, I could ask:

- *Does this cartoon change the way you feel about each of the characters, the three little pigs (Fifer, Fiddler and Practical Pig) and the Big Bad Wolf? If so, how? If not, why not?*
- *How are different narrative elements – such as the characters’ attitudes and behaviour, their voices, their singing and dancing, etc – used to influence our attitudes towards them?*
- *How is humour used to shape our reactions to the characters?*

Can you make connections?

These questions encourage students to explore different aspects of the texts they listen to, read or view. They support students to think about their own, and others’ perspectives of the text.

Using the BitL questions, I could ask:

- *In the cartoon, the Big Bad Wolf destroys the homes of Fiddler and Fifer Pig, forcing them to flee and seek shelter with someone else, and attempts to kill them. What might the wolf have represented to audiences in the 1930s?*
- *In what ways do the ideas and viewpoints expressed in this film offer encouragement and reassurance to the audience?*
- *At the time, many people felt that they were personally responsible for the hard times they were experiencing. To what extent do you think this film reflects – or challenges – such a belief? In the face of hard times, what values or beliefs do you think this film endorses or reinforces?*
- *When the wolf dresses up in a sheepskin in order to lure the pigs out of Fiddler Pig’s house, what well-known story is the film referring to? Why do you think the film’s creators included this allusion in the film?*

What do you think now?

These questions encourage students to explore different aspects of the texts they listen to, read or view. They support students to think about their own and others’ perspectives of the text.

Using the BitL questions, I could ask:

- *What role do you think popular culture plays in society?*
- *Are popular culture texts popular simply because they give expression to beliefs, attitudes and values that are widely held at that time in society, or do you think they serve as a means of challenging prevailing attitudes and accepted ways of thinking?*
- *Choose a well known popular culture text, perhaps a family based sitcom like, The Simpsons, or Modern Family. Identify its core values and how these are conveyed to the audience. In the end, do you think the show can be seen as reinforcing long held values and beliefs, or as challenging them?*

In what ways could you express your ideas, experiences and information?

These questions help students to express their ideas, experiences and information to different audiences, dependent on purpose and context. They also support students to use a variety of strategies to support the audience in making sense of what they listen to, read or view.

Using the BitL questions, I could ask:

In 1933, *The Three Little Pigs*, appeared at a time when millions of people, throughout the world, were suffering great hardship as the result of a global financial crisis. Recently the world has experienced another global financial crisis.

- *Do you think the 'messages' that The Three Little Pigs promotes are applicable to our own times? If not, how might, The Three Little Pigs, have to be changed in order to make it a story for our times?*

Concluding comments

By exploring this text through these questions, we can help our students to be able to think, work with and process words, images and sounds as powerful language users. All of these questions consider the elements of identity, texts and choosing and using language through the interweaving of the three content strands of Language, Literature and Literacy.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 shows how these three key elements develop in complexity across Foundation to Year 10:

Identity – refers to the development of language to represent who we are, where we come from and where we are going, as well as, learning about the identities of others represented through language.

Texts – the concept of what a text is and how it is put together grows in complexity across F–10 and students develop understanding about the factors that influence text construction. Texts include spoken, written, visual or multimodal.

Choosing and using language – the developing skills and experiences needed to be creative, confident and accurate when choosing and using language in Standard Australian English.

These elements combine and are enacted through the interweaving of the three content strands (Language, Literature and Literacy) to develop powerful language users, the essence of English.

Identity

The identity element develops in two main ways:

- forming and expressing a sense of personal and social identity
- learning how identities are represented in, and influence, texts and their interpretations.

Students will progress along these continua at different rates and so the following descriptions at each band are only a guide, aligning with the Content Descriptions and Achievement Standards at these stages.

Foundation - Year 2

Students develop their personal and social identity by engaging with familiar texts from their own and other cultures. Students also describe their place in the world and learn to express who they are, where they live now and where they have come from through these opportunities.

Years 3 - 4

The concept of identity expands to include learning about historical, social and cultural identities, represented in a wide range of multimodal texts. Students make connections between their personal experiences and the world of texts. They learn to see language differences when communicating facts and opinions. As students develop their own preferences for mysteries, quests or humorous short stories they also learn

to give more detailed reasons for why they like them.

Years 5 - 6

Students explore different social and geographical identities through dialects and accents, for example, how people's lifestyle can vary within the same cultural group. They learn that combinations of historical, social and cultural identities influence people's attitudes towards actions, characters and events in texts.

Years 7 - 8

Students explore the interconnectedness of Country and Place, People, Identity and Culture in texts, including digital texts. Students learn that accents and styles of speech create personal and social identities. Students identify and explain different viewpoints represented in texts.

Years 9 - 10

Students engage with texts which can have inclusive and exclusive social effects and can empower or disempower people through their representations of identity. They evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts and reflect on representations of values. Students identify the range of 'real' and 'online' communities to which they belong and how language reinforces their membership.

Texts

This element has two components:

- making meaning of a range of texts that are read, viewed and listened to (Receptive modes)
- creating a range of spoken and written multimodal texts (Productive modes).

Students will progress along these continua at different rates and so the following descriptions at each band are provided as a guide, aligning with the Content Descriptions and Achievement Standards at these stages.

Foundation - Year 2

Using Receptive modes, students by the end of Year 2:

- learn about the language features and structures of texts used to describe characters, settings and events
- monitor meaning and self-correct using context, prior knowledge, punctuation, language and phonic knowledge
- identify literal and implied meaning, main ideas and supporting detail
- make connections between texts by comparing content.

Using Productive modes, students by the end of Year 2:

- use everyday language features and topic-specific vocabulary
- create texts that show how images support the meaning of the text
- create texts, drawing on their own experiences, their imagination and information they have learned
- engage in group and class discussions and make presentations.

Years 3 - 4

Using Receptive modes, students by the end of Year 4:

- explain how language features, images and vocabulary are used to engage the interest of readers
- describe literal and implied meaning connecting ideas in different texts
- respond to others' viewpoints
- listen for key ideas in discussions.

Using Productive modes, students by the end of Year 4:

- use language features to create coherence and add detail to their texts
- express an opinion on information in a text
- create texts that use images and detail to extend key ideas
- create structured texts to explain ideas for different audiences
- make presentations and contribute actively to class and group discussions, varying language according to context.

Years 5 - 6

Using Receptive modes, students by the end of Year 6:

- analyse and explain how language features, images and vocabulary are used by different authors to represent ideas, characters and events
- compare and analyse information in different texts, explaining literal and implied meaning
- select and use evidence from texts to explain response
- listen to discussions, clarifying content and challenging others' ideas.

Using Productive modes, students by the end of Year 6:

- understand how language features and language patterns can be used for emphasis
- show how specific details can be used to support a point of view
- explain their choices of language features and images used
- create detailed texts elaborating on key ideas for a range of purposes and audiences
- make presentations and contribute actively to class and group discussions, using a variety of strategies for effect.

Years 7 - 8

Using Receptive modes, students by the end of Year 8:

- understand how the selection of text structures is influenced by the selection of language mode and how this varies for different purposes and audiences
- explain how language features, images and vocabulary are used to represent different ideas and issues in texts
- interpret texts, questioning the reliability of sources of ideas and information
- select evidence from the text to show how events, situations and people can be represented from different viewpoints
- listen for and identify different emphasis in texts, using that understanding to elaborate upon in discussions.

Using Productive modes, students by the end of Year 8:

- understand how the selection of language features can be used for particular purposes and effects
- explain the effectiveness of language choices they use to influence the audience
- through combining ideas, images and language features from other texts, students show how ideas can be expressed in new ways
- create texts for different purposes, selecting language to influence audience response
- make presentations and contribute actively to class and group discussions, using language patterns for effect.

Years 9 - 10

Using Receptive modes, students by the end of Year 10:

- evaluate how text structures can be used in innovative ways by different authors
- explain how the choice of language features, images and vocabulary contributes to the development of individual style
- develop and justify their own interpretations of texts
- evaluate others' interpretations, analysing the evidence used to support them
- listen for ways features within texts can be manipulated to achieve particular effects.

Using Productive modes, students by the end of Year 8:

- show the selection of language features can achieve precision and stylistic effect
- explain different viewpoints, attitudes and perspectives through the development of cohesive and logical arguments
- develop their own style by experimenting with language features, stylistic devices, text structures and images
- create a wide range of texts to articulate complex ideas
- make presentations and contribute actively to class and group discussions, building on others' ideas, solving problems, justifying opinions and developing and expanding arguments.

Choosing and using language

The choosing and using language element develops in three main ways:

- language use progresses from everyday and familiar to include more specialised and technical vocabulary and language devices
- learning about individual text structures and their features develops into combining of structures, devices and features to create new texts
- learning to convey and express ideas develops to include the ideas and perspectives of others in texts that are increasingly responsive to audience needs and interests.

Students will progress along these continua at different rates and so the following descriptions at each band are provided as a guide, aligning with the Content Descriptions and Achievement Standards at these stages.

Foundation - Year 2

These early stages involve students learning to choose and use everyday words and images to express themselves, their experiences and their imaginings. They begin to choose topic-specific vocabulary as they learn about simple information texts. Simple texts to entertain, inform and persuade are recreated and retold. Students present to mainly familiar audiences, choosing and using appropriate language for self-expression. Students also begin to develop interaction skills, such as taking turns, as they express themselves in groups.

Years 3 - 4

The next stage involves students choosing and using more content specific words and images from an increasing range of texts and topics. The formality of the spoken situation is also now a consideration, particularly as audiences become more unfamiliar. Students learn to choose print and multimodal elements appropriate to the audience and purpose as they develop greater control over text structures to entertain, inform or persuade. For example, students might present an information report in their own words using appropriate images to add meaning. Students use their expanding vocabulary to express feelings and opinions. They have increasingly interactive discussions that take into account other perspectives. They may participate in a small group discussion, for example, to identify the similarities and differences between two texts and then consolidate the group's ideas into one coherent, representative response.

Years 5 - 6

Students choose from an increasingly content-specific vocabulary. They learn that words may mean different things in different contexts and so their choices require greater precision for accuracy. Students also now consider the expertise of the audience as well as the formality of the situation, for example, when choosing and using language for presentations. They start to experiment and innovate with text structures, adapting texts they have experienced. Students choose and combine a wider range of multimodal elements, including sound. They move beyond merely taking into account other people's ideas and start to clarify and question them, in written texts as well as spoken interactions.

Years 7 - 8

Students select from more specialised vocabulary to create increasingly complex texts. Students choose from a broad range of language, audio and visual features to innovate with text structures and express ideas in new ways. There is a focus on choosing not only to entertain, inform or persuade but also to create layers of meaning as they raise issues, report events or advance opinions. Students might be creating advertisements and choose humorous devices to entertain and engage while the main purpose is to persuade, for example. Interaction skills now demonstrate appropriate and effective choices of voice qualities, body language and multimodal elements. The emphasis is on choosing and using language to elicit particular audience responses and so the needs and interests of the audience are of particular importance. For example, students may create and write a script for a short play using verbal, visual and audio elements to create atmosphere and deepen interpretation of meanings.

Years 9 - 10

Language structures, devices and images are chosen to reflect a developing sense of personal style as students respond to issues. They make appropriate thematic links to other texts as well as interpreting and integrating ideas from other texts. Choices made are increasingly sophisticated as students focus on the complex messages they wish to communicate. They also anticipate possible interpretations of that message, influenced by the value systems of the audience. The focus is on increased precision and persuasiveness of texts. Students therefore make purposeful presentations that build on others' ideas, solve problems and justify opinions. Interaction skills demonstrate appropriate and effective choices in voice and language conventions. For example, they may make presentations on an issue to an audience who are likely to hold contrary views and so will need to draw on their language repertoire to engage and influence.