

Conceptual narrative: Texts to inform

Big ideas of English elements

What do we want our students to develop?

Identity – an understanding about historical, social and cultural identities, represented in a wide range of multimodal texts

Texts – how to make meaning of, and create a range of texts that are read, viewed listened to and spoken, developing greater control over text structures to entertain, inform or persuade

Choosing and using language – make appropriate choices depending on context, purpose and audience including:

- using more content specific words and images
- consideration of the formality of the spoken situation
- presenting to more unfamiliar audiences.

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 3

Students:

- communicate with peers and teachers from other classes and schools in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments
- listen to, read, view and interpret spoken, written and multimodal texts in which the primary purpose is to entertain, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade
- create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts including narratives, procedures, performances, reports, reviews, poetry and expositions.

Year 4

Students:

- **interact** with peers and teachers from other classes and schools in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments.
- listen to, read, view and interpret spoken, written and multimodal 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 including narratives, procedures, performances, reports, reviews, poetry and expositions.

Introduction

Let's look at the concepts in information texts at Year 3 and Year 4. At this level the focus is on using various print and media texts which present new information on familiar topics and topics from other learning areas.

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 3 and Year 4 example

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 information text, *Chocolate, Riches from the Rainforest* by Robert Burleigh, published by Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2002.

What do you already think?

Before introducing the text I want to activate prior knowledge about the text, establish a purpose for engaging with the text and make predictions about the text with my students.

Ripening red pods of Arriba cacao growing on a tree of *Theobroma cacao* on an organic plantation in southern Ecuador *shutterstock_99496049.jpg* downloaded, 20 March 2015



Using the BitL questions, I could ask:

- *What do you think the book will be about?*
- *Why would you want to read it?*
- What do you already know about chocolate? What questions do you have? What can you imagine about where chocolate comes from?

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:

- *What is the purpose of this book? How do you know?*
- *Who might read this book?*

We could then focus on language features by looking at details such as the contents page and the way the book is organised:

- *How is the book laid out?*
- *Does the way it is set out suit the purpose? How?*
- *Do the colours used suit the topic? How?*
- *Does the language suit the audience? Why? Why not?*

How can you make meanings?

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.



shutterstock_253299997 downloaded, 20 March 2015

Using the BitL questions, I could ask:

- *What strategies can you use to understand this book?*
- *How can you check your understanding while you are listening to/reading this book? What strategies help you listen for, or find key points while reading?*
- *Do the illustrations add meaning? How?*
- *How does the author try and interest us in the topic?*
- *What language is used to link ideas? How?*
- *Is technical language used? Why? Why not?*

Can you make connections?

These questions help students to make connections to previous experiences, connections within texts and connections to other texts.

Using the BitL questions, I could ask:

- *How does the book connect with your own experience of chocolate?*
- *What information can you connect from different parts of the book? How did you make these connections?*
- *How is the vocabulary connected to the purpose, context and audience?*

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:

- *Who else could have given their view of chocolate?*
- *What other views about chocolate could there be?*
- *What else do you think about chocolate now that we have read this book?*
- *Do you still have questions?*
- *If you were asked to choose three significant facts about chocolate from history, what would they be?*
- *How can you share your thoughts and ideas with others in the class? How can you collaborate in groups to share your thoughts and ideas?*

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:

- *What information can you use from the book to show how people's lives have been influenced by chocolate?*
- *How can you plan and record what you are going to share?*
- *Could you use different multimedia elements to effectively show the impact on different people?*
- *Who could this information be for?*
- *Who might be interested in this information?*
- *How can you edit and improve your text?*

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 10:

- 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.