

Characters

Does the author tell us:

■ **how they appear to others?**

What kinds of words are used to describe their features? Build? clothing? What does the writer want to suggest to the reader about the character's behaviour, attitude, or interests? If drama, is a particular costume suggested? Why?

■ **what they do?**

What can the reader infer about the characters from their actions and behaviour? If drama, do the stage instructions help our understanding of characters? e.g. movements, facial expressions that will tell the audience something about a character.

■ **what they say?**

Does the writer use direct speech? What does this tell us about what the character thinks, feels or is likely to do? In drama, how does each actor's speech tell the audience about their character and the other characters they talk about?



Does the author tell us:

■ **how they say it?**

How does the writer make the character speak? Are they always talking about the same thing?

Do they have a particular way of talking, e.g. dialect, tone? What is the writer saying about their background, feelings or interests?

Does the playwright indicate, through stage directions or particular words and phrases, how the character should speak? Why?

■ **what other characters say/ think about them?**

How are we made to see them through other people's eyes? Do other characters like or dislike them, admire/despise them, trust/distrust them? Do we believe what others say about them? In a play, how will particular movements, positions or facial expressions indicate the different relationships and feelings between characters?



Plot and structure

Beginnings:

- **is a setting/time period established?**
What kinds of words are used for this?
- **is a character (or characters) introduced?**
See Characters card for prompts
- **is a theme or story-line suggested?**
What effect does this have on the reader?
- **is there a narrator?**
or in a play a chorus or commentary (first or third person)?
What is their tone of voice like? e.g. urgent, anxious, relaxed, excited?
- **is dialogue used?**
What effect does it have on the reader? e.g. entertaining, tense, fast-moving, thoughtful?
- **is there a prevailing tense (past or present)?**
What effect does this have?

Middles:

- **is a problem introduced?**
How?
- **are all the characters behaving in the same way?**
Which ones have changed?
- **has the setting changed?**
How does it fit in with the plot? Give added interest?
- **are there clear links with earlier parts of the story / play?**
What are they? e.g. words or actions.
- **does the writer suggest what is to come?**
How?



Endings:

- **does the story/play come to a definite end?**
Does the writer leave the reader to guess what happens?
- **does the book end as you expected?**
or is it "a surprise" or even "a shock" ending?
- **does the end echo the opening?**
Do we return to the same theme, setting, characters, for example?
- **is there a moral/ message?**
Have the characters learned a lesson?
Does the author want to tell the reader something?

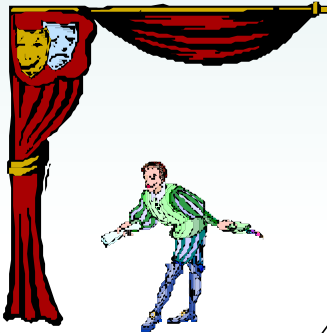


Setting and atmosphere



Does the writer:

- establish the sense of a place, weather, time?
- create a particular atmosphere?
e.g. tense? mysterious?
- give details of the setting?
How does this link with the atmosphere created?
- choose specific vocabulary to create mood?
Can you find examples of nouns, adjectives, verbs which do this?
- use images? use stage instructions?
To create effects? Are these linked to a subject or theme?
- link setting/mood to the action or character's feelings?
e.g. is a sad scene set in a rainy, windy, open space?

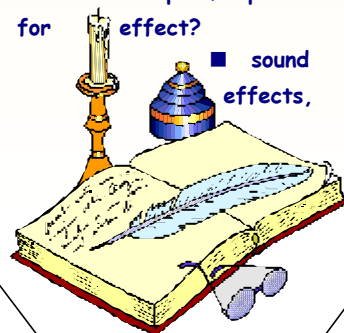


Style and language

All writers choose language to suit their purpose and audience.

Does the writer use:

- formal/ informal language?
Find an example. Why is this style chosen? What is its effect?
- mostly short or long sentences?
Think of some examples. What is their effect?
- repeated words, phrases or, in a play, sounds or movements?
- direct or indirect speech?
- complex, unusual vocabulary or simple, straightforward vocabulary and everyday words?
Why? What effect is the author after?
- one tense more than any other?
Why?
- imagery to enhance the reader's feelings, to help us visualise the scene/person?
- a direct address to the reader?
What effect does this have on us?
- a first or third person narrator and, if so, why?
- language closely linked to a theme, e.g. greed, jealousy?
Find some examples.
- a range of stylistic and rhetorical devices?
e.g. repetition, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia?
 - specific punctuation for effect?
 - sound effects,



Author's viewpoint

Does the writer:

- openly state a point of view or are we left to deduce it?
- deliberately avoid stating a point of view? And encourage us to form our own view about characters and events?
- tell the story from a narrator's point of view? Can we trust the narrator?
- give the reader several different points of view? Have more than one narrator (multiple narrators).



HOOKS!

Can you find these hooks in the opening to the text you are reading?



- Clear and simple sentences allow me to get on with the story
- Powerful verbs
- Short dramatic sentences
- Dramatic vocabulary
- Hints and suggestions
- Clear descriptions
- Complex sentences to add layers of meaning
- Use of questions to draw me into the story
- Use of an adverb to start the sentence to make it more interesting
- Alliteration/onomatopoeia
- Imagery

