

Character perspective

Stage 4

Overview

Purpose

This literacy teaching strategy supports teaching and learning for Stage 4 students across all key learning areas. It targets specific literacy skills and suggests a learning sequence to build skill development.

Teachers can select individual tasks, or a sequence, and embed into their teaching and learning program according to their students' needs. While exemplar texts are provided throughout this resource, it is recommended that teachers select texts which are relevant to their students and curriculum.

Learning intention

Students will learn to identify character feelings, perspective and motivation in narrative texts.

Syllabus outcome

The following teaching and learning strategies will assist in covering elements of the following outcomes:

- EN4-RVL-01: uses a range of personal, creative and critical strategies to read texts that are complex in their ideas and construction
- EN4-URA-01: analyses how meaning is created through the use of and response to language forms, features and structures
- EN4-1A: Responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure
- EN4-2A: Effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media and technologies
- EN4-3B: Uses and describes language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts

[NSW English K-10 Syllabus \(2022\)](#)

Visit the [Leading curriculum K-12 website](#) for more information on the syllabus implementation timeline

Success criteria

The following Year 7 NAPLAN item descriptors may guide teachers to develop success criteria for student learning.

- identifies a character's motivations in a narrative
- identifies a character's perspective in a narrative
- identifies a character's role in an information text
- identifies how a character is portrayed in a narrative
- identifies how a character is portrayed in an imaginative text
- interprets a character's feelings in a narrative
- interprets a character's motivations in a text

Literacy Learning Progression guide

Understanding Texts (UnT9-Un11)

Key: C=comprehension P=process V=vocabulary

UnT9

- identifies different interpretations of the text citing evidence from a text (C)
- selects reading/viewing strategies appropriate to reading purpose (e.g. scans text for evidence) (P)
- analyses language and visual features in texts using metalanguage (e.g. cohesion, interpretation, figurative) (V)

UnT10

- synthesises relevant information from a variety of complex texts (C)
- analyses how text features are used to support or conflate the point of view in the text (e.g. strategic use of images such as a cartoon in an editorial) (C)
- selects reading/viewing pathways appropriate to reading purpose (scans text for key phrase or close reading for learning) (P)

UnT11

- explains assumptions, beliefs and implicit values in texts (e.g. economic growth is always desirable) (C)
- strategically adjusts the processes of reading and viewing to build meaning according to the demands of tasks and texts (P)

[National Literacy Learning Progression](#)

Evidence base

- Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2017). [Effective reading instruction in the early years of school](#), literature review.
- Oakhill, J., Cain, K. & Elbro, C. (2015). Understanding and teaching reading comprehension: A handbook. Routledge.
- Quigley, A. (2020). Closing the reading gap. Routledge.
- Scarborough, H.S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickson (Eds.), Handbook for research in early literacy (pp. 97-110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Alignment to system priorities and/or needs: [Five priorities for Literacy and Numeracy](#), [Our Plan for NSW Public Education](#), [School Excellence Policy \(nsw.gov.au\)](#).

Alignment to School Excellence Framework: Learning domain: Curriculum, Teaching domain: Effective classroom practice and Professional standards

Consulted with: Strategic Delivery, Teaching Quality and Impact

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Reviewed by: Literacy and Numeracy, Teaching quality and impact

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Teaching strategies

| Task | Appendices |
|---|---|
| Voice | |
| Analysing character in picture books | |
| Exploring character perspective through visual stimulus | Appendix 1 - Cartoon graffiti |
| Analysing character perspective in imaginative texts | Appendix 2a – ‘A Pocketful of Rye’ Teacher guide and text excerpt Appendix 2b – ‘A Pocketful of Rye’ Student copy Appendix 3 - Feelings, motivations and perspective – graphic organiser Appendix 4: Text examples |

Background information

Perspective

A lens through which the author perceives the world and creates a text, or the lens through which the reader or viewer perceives the world and understands a text. Readers may also temporarily adopt the perspectives of others as a way of understanding texts.

Point of view

The position from which the information and events of a text are intended to be perceived by its audience. Point of view is constructed through the narrator, voice or images of the text and by characters or voices presented within it. Point of view should not be confused with the term ‘perspective’ or with notions of opinion.

Modality

Aspects of language that suggest a particular perspective on subjects and/or events. Modality forms a continuum from high modality (always, must) to low modality (might, could). Aspects of language that suggest a particular perspective on events, a speaker or writer’s assessment of possibility, probability, obligation, frequency and conditionality. Modality forms a continuum from high modality (for example *obliged to, always, must*) to low modality (for example *might, could, perhaps, rarely*). Modality is expressed linguistically in choices for modal verbs (for example *can, may, must, should*), modal adverbs (for example *possibly, probably, certainly, perhaps*), modal nouns (for example *possibility, probability, certainty*) and modal adjectives (for example *likely, possible, certain*).

Values

These are the ideas and beliefs in a text. They may be reflected in characters, through what they do and say; through the setting of the text, reflecting particular social views; and through the narrative voice of the

text, perhaps through authorial comment. Values are specific to individuals and groups, and a text may contain a number of conflicting values.

Reference: English K-10 Syllabus © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2012 and 2022.

Where to next?

- Analysing character
- Author perspective and bias
- Inference

Overview of teaching strategies

Purpose

These literacy teaching strategies support teaching and learning from Stage 2 to Stage 5. They are linked to NAPLAN task descriptors, syllabus outcomes and literacy and numeracy learning progressions.

These teaching strategies target specific literacy and numeracy skills and suggest a learning sequence to build skill development. Teachers can select individual tasks or a sequence to suit their students.

Access points

The resources can be accessed from:

- NAPLAN App in Scout using the teaching strategy links from NAPLAN items
- NSW Department of Education literacy and numeracy [website](#).

What works best

Explicit teaching practices involve teachers clearly explaining to students why they are learning something, how it connects to what they already know, what they are expected to do, how to do it and what it looks like when they have succeeded. Students are given opportunities and time to check their understanding, ask questions and receive clear, effective feedback.

This resource reflects the latest evidence base and can be used by teachers as they plan for explicit teaching.

Teachers can use classroom observations and other assessment information to make decisions about when and how they use this resource as they design teaching and learning sequences to meet the learning needs of their students.

Further support with [What works best](#) is available.

Differentiation

When using these resources in the classroom, it is important for teachers to consider the needs of all students, including [Aboriginal](#) and EAL/D learners.

EAL/D learners will require explicit English language support and scaffolding, informed by the [EAL/D enhanced teaching and learning cycle](#) and the student's phase on the [EAL/D Learning Progression](#).

Teachers can access information about [supporting EAL/D learners](#) and [literacy and numeracy support](#) specific to EAL/D learners.

Learning adjustments enable students with disability and additional learning and support needs to access syllabus outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers. Teachers can use a [range of adjustments](#) to ensure a personalised approach to student learning.

[Assessing and identifying high potential and gifted learners](#) will help teachers decide which students may benefit from extension and additional challenge. [Effective strategies and contributors to achievement](#) for high potential and gifted learners helps teachers to identify and target areas for growth and improvement. A [differentiation adjustment tool](#) can be found on the High potential and gifted education website.

Using tasks across learning areas

This resource may be used across learning areas where it supports teaching and learning aligned with syllabus outcomes.

Literacy and numeracy are embedded throughout all syllabus documents as general capabilities. As the English and mathematics learning areas have a particular role in developing literacy and numeracy, NSW English and Mathematics syllabus outcomes aligned to literacy and numeracy skills have been identified.

Text selection

Example texts are used throughout this resource. Teachers can adjust activities to use texts which are linked to their unit of learning.

Further support with text selection can be found within the [National Literacy Learning Progression](#) Text Complexity appendix.

The [NESA website](#) has additional information on text requirements within the NSW English syllabus.

Teaching strategies

Voice

1. Review understanding of perspective, point of view and narrative voice, discussing with the class that character voice/perspective may represent/reflect values in a text. Discuss understanding of first second, and third person voice as ways of describing points of view (second person voice is rarely used in narrative). First person is the 'I/we' perspective, second person is the 'you' perspective and third person is the 'he/she/it/they' perspective.
 - First person examples include: "I prefer to leave early next time." and "The shoe is mine!"
 - Second person examples include: "You feel enraged..." and "The shoe is yours."
 - Third person examples include: "He prefers to leave early." "The shoe was Peter's." "Her essay was brilliant."
2. As a class, create a [graphic organiser](#) to distinguish first, second and third voice. Using a text relevant to a current unit of learning, read and model how to identify voice, adding text examples to illustrate first, second or third person.
3. [Think-Pair-Share](#): students read an excerpt from a text relevant to a current unit of learning. Students discuss with partner: "Whose voice can be identified in the text: first person/third person narrator and/or character?" Students share their text and findings with the class, providing text examples to support their discussion.
4. Students read a range of persuasive, imaginative and informative texts in stations around the classroom. Based on evidence from the texts, students identify the narrative voice in each text and vote using a tally chart. They share and reflect with whole class to determine answer: this text is written in first person as it is the point of view of the narrator and uses the pronouns "I" and "we".

Analysing character in picture books

1. Review understanding of feelings, perspective and motivation using a [graphic organiser](#) such as a Venn diagram, mind map, or KWL chart. Discuss ways illustrators might indicate these through images.
2. Freeze Frames: students are allocated a picture book to analyse. In groups, students select one character and discuss what feelings the character has, what motivation they have for their actions and the perspective they bring to the text. Students create three freeze frames through a physical dramatic pose sequence, or writing key ideas for each frame, to indicate the character's feelings, motivation and perspective. Students lead discussion with class about the character and their interpretation using evidence from the text to justify ideas.
3. Read a picture book relevant to a current unit of learning with students. Discuss the purpose, audience and message of the text. Draw attention to any visual and language features which may reveal elements of characterisation and perspective, such as: reading path, salient image, vectors, demands and offer, framing, colour, lines and modality. Students discuss which characters they

made a connection with or (empathised with) providing examples from the text which shaped their response.

4. **'Hot Seat'**: provide students with a text that features real or imagined characters. For example, a narrative extract, a biography or an interview. Students analyse the text, searching for clues that could reveal character traits, vocabulary/dialogue, mannerisms, attitudes and beliefs. Students then act as that character in the 'hot seat', with the class interviewing them to determine perspective, motivation and feelings.

Exploring character perspective through visual stimulus

1. **Brainstorm**: choose a variety of photos of individuals or groups of people on a chosen theme, such as 'captivity' or 'courage'. As a class, students brainstorm vocabulary linked to the theme, before discussing the character traits of the individuals or groups. The class could consider how the 'characters' are portrayed in the images as well as interpret their feelings, motivations and actions. Explain to the class that it is important to consider author intent and bias, and how the portrayal of the 'characters' in the photos may reveal the photographer's perspective of the people, event or situation.
2. **Think-Pair-Share**: using the images provided students discuss what might be happening, predict what may happen next, and identify key 'characters' in the text. Encourage students to explore different perspectives in the text. For example, choosing one 'character' from an image we could interpret their perspective in very different ways. (Refer to image 1 in [Appendix 1: cartoon graffiti.](#))

| Crowd member – perspective 1 | Crowd member – perspective 2 |
|--|---|
| Dolphin show is highly entertaining. | Dolphin show is sad and depressing. |
| It is a wonderful example of the relationship between trainer and animal. | The animals have been forced to train for a 'reward', over and over again. |
| Dolphins are athletic and 'laughing' – they clearly enjoy performing. Marine parks are wonderful for the dolphins. | Dolphins are simply mimicking the behaviour of a wild dolphin, and should be free in the ocean. |

3. **Conscience Alley**: the class divides into two lines facing each other with space for one student to walk down the centre. Each side of the alley has opposing views of a situation or event. (For example, animals should/should not perform in captivity.) When the student walks down the alley, the two opposing views convince the student one at a time with their perspective of the situation or event. Once complete, the student decides which group has convinced them the most.
Alternate task: Use the same process with an image, or series of images, relevant to a current unit of learning.
4. **Cartoon Graffiti**: provide students with a range of visual texts, such as: picture books, photos from information reports, or still shots from films (or refer to [Appendix 1: cartoon graffiti.](#)). Students add first person thought bubbles to the 'characters' in the visual stimulus to indicate feelings, motivation and perspective. For example:

| Stimulus | First person thought bubble | Perspective |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Image 1 Appendix 1 | <i>Maybe this time I will be the one, the fish will be mine!</i> | Dolphin – competitive, hungry, jealous |
| Image 1 Appendix 1 | Please, please catch the fish. I don't know what will happen if you fail again. | Dolphin trainer – worried, frightened – is his job on the line? Show may be cancelled. Concerned for the dolphins - 'retirement'? |

To support [higher order thinking](#), model how to write a range of sentences in third person that reveal the author's perspective of the characters in the image, for example,

| Stimulus | Third person sentence | Author perspective |
|--|--|--|
| Image 1 (Appendix 1): dolphins performing in a marine park | The dolphins performed their routine, swimming around the pool, watched by a crowd. | <i>(Neutral)</i> |
| Image 1 (Appendix 1): dolphins performing in a marine park | The performing dolphins leaped and laughed their way around the pool, delighting the crowd.' | The dolphins enjoy the routine as much as the crowd, it is wonderful entertainment. |
| Image 1 (Appendix 1): dolphins performing in a marine park | The dolphins performed their 'tricks', soullessly swimming around the narrow confines of the pool; the mindless crowd clapped, oblivious to their suffering. | The dolphins are demeaned by this act, deprived of their freedom. They should not be in captivity. The crowd is ignorant and lack empathy for these wild animals. |

In pairs, students choose their own visual stimulus and write sentences in third person to describe a character's actions: one should be neutral, one should be positive and one should be negative.

Students share their examples with the class, explaining how they changed language to reveal their positive or negative perspective towards the character(s).

Analysing character perspective in imaginative texts

1. Discuss the importance of creating rich, authentic and engaging characters in imaginative texts, before issuing students with an excerpt from a text relevant to a current unit of learning (or refer to [Appendix 2b: "A Pocketful of Rye" text excerpt](#).) Read aloud with the class.
2. Using the 'think aloud' strategy, model how to determine a key character's feelings, perspectives and motivation. Highlight words and phrases that indicate character traits, mannerisms, emotions, attitudes and beliefs. (Refer to [Appendix 2a – 'A Pocketful of Rye' Teacher guide and text excerpt](#) to support this discussion.)
3. [Think-Pair-Share](#): issue students with a range of text excerpts relevant to a current unit of learning (or refer to [Appendix 4: Text examples](#)). Students read then record the feelings, motivations and perspectives of characters on a graphic organiser ([Appendix 3 - Feelings, motivations and perspective – graphic organiser](#)). Students then develop a character 'profile' summary based on the evidence in the text. They might predict the personality traits of the character, their actions and

reactions, relationships and attitudes towards others, their values and beliefs. (This could take the form of an annotated poster, mood board, sketch, collage.)

Gallery walk: students display their annotated text, graphic organiser and character profile. They describe their chosen character to the class and justify how they drew their conclusions based on the evidence in the text.

For *extension*: students read excerpts from further in the text to determine whether their character 'profile' matched the author's characterisation. As a class, discuss the differences and similarities, and why they think their predictions were met, or not.

Appendix 1

Cartoon graffiti



Photo by Chris Richmond on [Unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com)



Photo by Omar Ram on [Unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com)

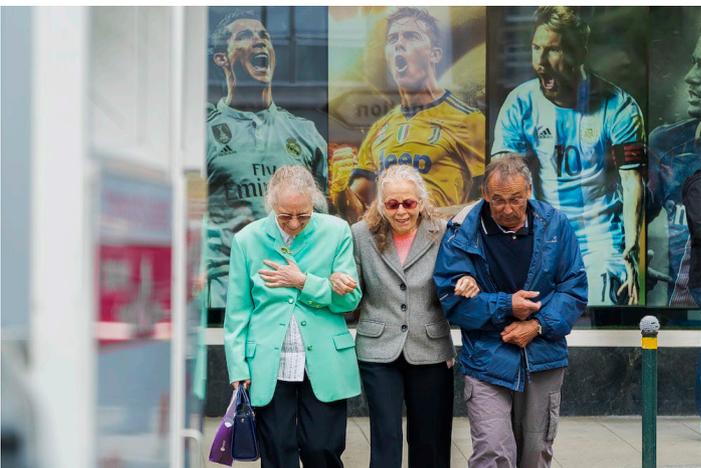


Photo by Phillipe Leone on [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)

Appendix 2a

Teacher guide: A pocketful of Rye

A Pocketful of Rye, Agatha Christie Harper Publishing, 1953

| Text | Teacher guide |
|--|---|
| <p>Inspector Neele sat in Mr Fortescue's sanctum behind Mr Fortescue's vast sycamore desk. One of his underlings with a notebook sat unobtrusively against the wall near the door.</p> <p>Inspector Neele had a smart soldierly appearance with crisp brown hair growing back from a rather low forehead. When he uttered the phrase 'just a matter of routine' those addressed were wont to think spitefully: 'And routine is about all you're capable of!' They would have been quite wrong. Behind his unimaginative thinking, and one of his methods of investigation was to propound to himself fantastic theories of guilt which he applied to such persons as he was interrogating at the time.</p> <p>Miss Griffith, whom he had once picked out with an unerring eye as being the most suitable person to give him a succinct account of the events which had led to his being seated where he was, had just left the room having given him an admirable resume of the morning's happenings. Inspector Neele propounded to himself three separate highly coloured reasons why the faithful doyenne of the typists' room should have poisoned her employer's mid-morning cup of tea, and rejected them as unlikely.</p> <p>He classified Miss Griffith as (a) Not the type of a poisoner, (b) Not in love with her employer, (c) No pronounced mental instability, (d) Not a woman who cherished grudges. That really seemed to dispose Miss Griffith except as a source of accurate information.</p> <p>Inspector Neele glanced at the telephone. He was expecting a call from St Jude's Hospital at any moment now.</p> <p>It was possible, of course, that Mr Fortescue's sudden illness was due to natural causes, but Dr Isaacs of Bethnal Green had not thought so and Sir Edwin Sandeman of Harley Street had not thought so.</p> <p>Inspector Neele pressed a buzzer conveniently situated at his left hand and demanded that Mr Fortescue's personal secretary should be sent to him.</p> <p>Miss Grosvenor had recovered a little of her poise, but not much. She came in apprehensively, with nothing like the swanlike glide about her motions, and said at once defensively:</p> <p>'I didn't do it!'</p> | <p>Define terms/phrases- sanctum, sycamore, unobtrusively, propound, highly coloured reasons, doyenne, poise.</p> <p>Inspector Neele</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has "underlings" – position of authority.• "...smart soldierly", "...crisp" – regimented, past in war?• "...matter of routine" – follows the book.• "...routine is about all you're capable of" - Not overly well-liked?• "...unimaginative" -• "...succinct account – not here to waste time• Matter of fact "dispose" of a person• Conveniently situated at his left hand – why convenient? <p>Feelings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• authority• power <p>Motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• solve the crime• maintain his reputation• follow rules• efficient• prove himself <p>Perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crimes need to be solved every day, this is just another crime that may well be natural causes. An efficient approach to get to the results quickly is what is needed.• Views on women – discuss |

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Appendix 2b

Student copy: A pocketful of Rye

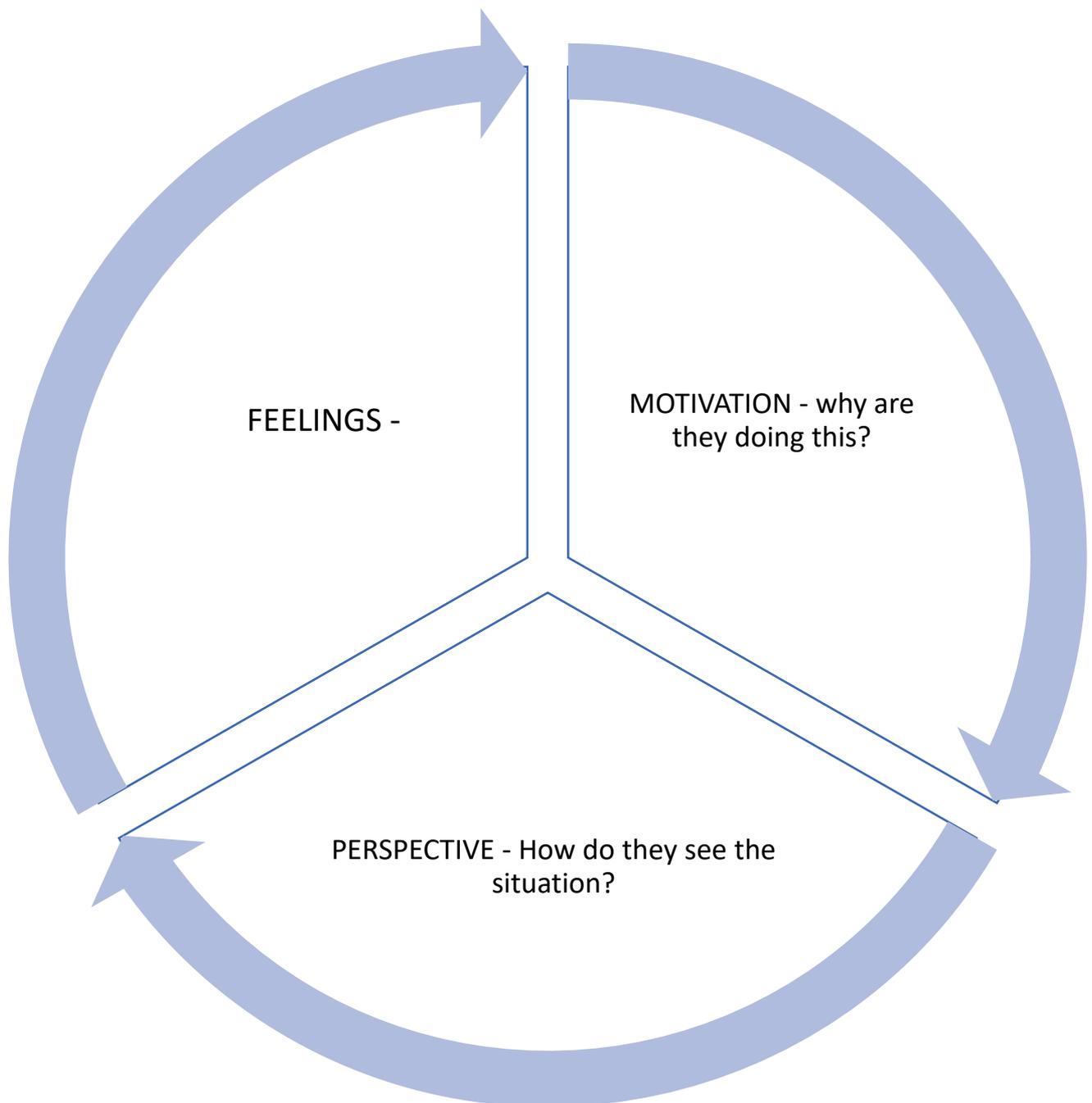
A Pocketful of Rye, Agatha Christie Harper Publishing, 1953

| Text | Tasks |
|--|--|
| <p>Inspector Neele sat in Mr Fortescue's sanctum behind Mr Fortescue's vast sycamore desk. One of his underlings with a notebook sat unobtrusively against the wall near the door.</p> <p>Inspector Neele had a smart soldierly appearance with crisp brown hair growing back from a rather low forehead. When he uttered the phrase 'just a matter of routine' those addressed were wont to think spitefully: 'And routine is about all you're capable of!' They would have been quite wrong. Behind his unimaginative thinking, and one of his methods of investigation was to propound to himself fantastic theories of guilt which he applied to such persons as he was interrogating at the time.</p> <p>Miss Griffith, whom he had once picked out with an unerring eye as being the most suitable person to give him a succinct account of the events which had led to his being seated where he was, had just left the room having given him an admirable resume of the morning's happenings. Inspector Neele propounded to himself three separate highly coloured reasons why the faithful doyenne of the typists' room should have poisoned her employer's mid-morning cup of tea, and rejected them as unlikely.</p> <p>He classified Miss Griffith as (a) Not the type of a poisoner, (b) Not in love with her employer, (c) No pronounced mental instability, (d) Not a woman who cherished grudges. That really seemed to dispose Miss Griffith except as a source of accurate information.</p> <p>Inspector Neele glanced at the telephone. He was expecting a call from St Jude's Hospital at any moment now.</p> <p>It was possible, of course, that Mr Fortescue's sudden illness was due to natural causes, but Dr Isaacs of Bethnal Green had not thought so and Sir Edwin Sandeman of Harley Street had not thought so.</p> <p>Inspector Neele pressed a buzzer conveniently situated at his left hand and demanded that Mr Fortescue's personal secretary should be sent to him.</p> <p>Miss Grosvenor had recovered a little of her poise, but not much. She came in apprehensively, with nothing like the swanlike glide about her motions, and said at once defensively:</p> <p>'I didn't do it!'</p> | <p>Highlight words and phrases that indicate character traits of Inspector Neele.</p> <p>Based on these examples, consider the main character's:</p> <p>Feelings:</p> <p>Motivation:</p> <p>Perspective:</p> |

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Appendix 3

Feelings, motivation and perspective – graphic organiser



Appendix 4

Example texts

Roald Dahl 'Boy' (1984)

'First Day', pp. 86-88

On the first day of my first term I set out by taxi in the afternoon with my mother to catch the paddle-steamer from Cardiff Docks to Weston-super-Mare. Every piece of clothing I wore was brand new and had my name in it. I wore black shoes, grey woollen stockings with blue turnovers, grey flannel shorts, a grey shirt, a red tie, a grey flannel blazer with the blue school crest on the breast pocket and a grey school cap with the same crest just above the peak. Into the taxi that was taking us to the docks went my brand new trunk and my brand new tuck-box, and both had R. DAHL painted on them in black.

A tuck-box is a small pinewood trunk which is very strongly made, and no boy has ever gone as a boarder to any English Prep School without one. It is his own secret store-house, as secret as a lady's handbag, and there is an unwritten law that no boy, no teacher, not even the Headmaster himself has the right to pry into the contents of your tuck-box. The owner has the key in his pocket and that is where it stays. At St Peter's, the tuck-boxes were ranged shoulder to shoulder all around the four walls of the changing-room and your own tuck-box stood directly below the peg on which you hung your games clothes. A tuck-box, as the name implies, is a box in which to store your tuck. At Prep School in those days, a parcel of tuck was sent once a week by anxious mothers to their ravenous little sons, and an average tuck-box would probably contain, at almost any time, half a home-made currant cake, a packet of squashed fly biscuits, a couple of oranges, an apple, a banana, a pot of strawberry jam or Marmite, a bar of chocolate, a bag of Liquorice Allsorts and a tin of Bassett's lemonade powder. An English school in those days was purely a money-making business owned and operated by the Headmaster. It suited him, therefore, to give the boys as little food as possible himself and to encourage the parents in various cunning ways to feed their offspring by parcel-post from home.

'By all means, my dear Mrs Dahl, do send your boy some little treats now and again,' he would say.

'Perhaps a few oranges and apples once a week' – fruit was very expensive – 'and a nice currant cake, a large currant cake perhaps because small boys have large appetites do they not, ha-ha-ha ... Yes, yes, as often as you like. More than once a week if you wish ... Of course he'll be getting plenty of good food here, the best there is, but it never tastes quite the same as home cooking, does it? I'm sure you wouldn't want him to be the only one who doesn't get a lovely parcel from home each week.'

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Text extracts

'Wonder' by R.J Palacio (2012)

Part One

Ordinary

I know I'm not an ordinary ten-year-old kid. I mean, sure, I do ordinary things. I eat ice cream. I ride my bike. I play ball. I have an Xbox. Stuff like that makes me ordinary. I guess. And I feel ordinary. Inside. But I know ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. I know ordinary kids don't get stared at wherever they go.

If I found a magic lamp and I could have one wish, I would wish that I had a normal face that no one ever noticed at all. I would wish that I could walk down the street without people seeing me and then doing that look-away thing. Here's what I think: the only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way. But I'm kind of used to how I look by now. I know how to pretend

I don't see the faces people make. We've all gotten pretty good at that sort of thing: me, Mom and Dad, Via. Actually, I take that back: Via's not so good at it. She can get really annoyed when people do something rude. Like, for instance, one time in the playground some older kids made some noises. I don't even know what the noises were exactly because I didn't hear them myself, but Via heard and she just started yelling at the kids. That's the way she is. I'm not that way.

Via doesn't see me as ordinary. She says she does, but if I were ordinary, she wouldn't feel like she needs to protect me as much. And Mom and Dad don't see me as ordinary, either. They see me as extraordinary. I think the only person in the world who realizes how ordinary I am is me.

My name is August, by the way. I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse.

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Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte, Penguin Books, First Published in 1847

Chapter 1

THERE was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further outdoor exercise was now out of the question.

I was glad of it; I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons; dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John and Georgiana Reed.

The said Eliza, John, and Georgiana were now clustered round their mamma in the drawing-room: she lay reclined on a sofa by the fireside, and with her darlings about her (for the time neither quarrelling nor crying) looked perfectly happy. Me, she had dispensed from joining the group, saying, 'She regretted to be under the necessity of keeping me at a distance; but that until she heard from Bessie, and could discover her own observation that I was endeavouring in good earnest to acquire a more sociable and childlike disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner – something lighter, franker, more natural, as it were- she really must exclude me from privileges intended only for contented, happy little children.'

'What does Bessie say I have done?' I asked.

'Jane, I don't like cavillers or questioners; besides, there is something truly forbidding in a child taking up her elders in that manner. Be seated somewhere; and until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent.'

A small breakfast-room adjoined the drawing-room, I slipped in there. It contained a bookcase; I soon possessed myself of a volume, taking care that it should be one stored with pictures. I mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement.

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The Potato Factory

Bryce Courtney, Penguin Books (1995)

Chapter 1

Ikey Solomon was so entirely a Londoner that he was a human part of the great metropolis, a jigsawed brick that fitted into no other place. He was mixed into that mould mortar, an ingredient in the slime and smutch of its rat-infested dockside hovels and verminous netherkens. He was a part of its smogged countenance and the dark, cold mannerisms of the ancient city itself. He was contained within the clinging mud and the evil-smelling putrilage. Ikey was as natural a part of the chaffering, quarrelling humanity who lived in the rookeries amount the slaughterhouses, cesspools and tanneries as anyone born in the square mile known to be the heartbeat of London Town.

Ikey was completely insensitive to his surroundings, his nose not affronted by the miasma which hung like a thin, dirty cloud at the level of the rooftops. This effluvian smog rose from the open sewers, known as the Venice of drains, which carried thick soup of human excrement into the Thames. It mixed with the fumes produced by the fat boilers, fell mongers, glue renderers, tripe scrapers and dog skimmers, to mention but a few of the stench-makers, to make London's atmosphere the foulest-smelling place for the congregation of humans on earth.

...

Ikey Solomon was the worst kind of villain, through in respectable company and in the magistrate's courts and assizes he passed himself off as a small-time jeweller, a maker of wedding rings and paste and garnet brooches for what was at that time described as the respectable poor. But the poor, in those areas of misery after Waterloo, had trouble enough scraping together the means to bring a plate of boiled potatoes or toasted herrings to the table. If Ikey had depended for his livelihood on their desire for knick-knackery, his family would have been poorly served indeed.

In reality, he was a fence, a most notorious receiver of stolen goods, one known to every skilled thief and member of the dangerous classes of London. In Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham young pickpockets, footpads, snakesmen and the like referred to him in awed and reverent tones as the Prince of Fences.

Ikey Solomon was not a man to love, there was too much the natural cockroach about him, a creature to be found only in the dark and dirty corners of lie.

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