English Stage 5 (Year 10) – resource booklet

Novel voices

This document contains the teacher-facing resources and activities that accompany the Year 10 teaching and learning program, ‘Novel voices’.

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**Updating the table of contents**

Want to update the table? Have you added content to the document and noticed the page numbers have changed? As you add content to this report, you can update the table of contents to accurately reflect the page numbers within the resource. To update the table:

* Right click on the table and select ‘Update table of contents’ (in the browser version) or ‘Update field’ (in the desktop app). In the browser version, it will automatically update the entire table.
* In the desktop app, you will then need to select ‘Update entire table’. Your table numbers should then update to reflect your changes.

# About this resource

This teacher resource booklet is not a standalone resource. It has been designed for use by teachers in connection to Year 10 resources designed by the English curriculum team for the [English K–10 Syllabus](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview) (NESA 2022). These include the Year 10 scope and sequence, Year 10 ‘Novel voices’ program and the Year 10 Term 1 sample assessment task, which includes a student work sample.

## Purpose of resource

The content in this resource booklet has been prepared by the English curriculum team, unless otherwise credited. Some of the information is collated from relevant NESA and department documentation. It is important that all users re-read and cross-reference the relevant syllabus, assessment and reporting information hyperlinked throughout. This ensures the content is an accurate reflection of the most up-to-date syllabus content. Links contained within this resource were correct as of 26 March 2024.

## Target audience

These samples are intended to support teachers as they develop teaching and learning resources for their students’ needs. The program and associated resources are not intended to be taught exactly as is presented in their current format. There are instructions for the teacher and instructions for the student throughout the resources and activities. Teachers using this resource booklet should edit and refine these to suit their students’ needs, interests, abilities and the texts selected.

## When and how to use

This teaching and learning program has been designed for Term 1 of Year 10. It provides opportunities for the teacher to strengthen class rapport, while encouraging students to explore and understand new texts and concepts, and experience new ways of learning. Teacher-facing material has been included as a ‘resource’, while student-facing material has been labelled ‘activity’ in this booklet. The resources and activities can be used as an example and adapted for the teacher’s own design of resources. The booklet also serves as an example of how resources and activities can be designed for the [English K–10 Syllabus](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview) (NESA 2022). The resources and activities should be used with timeframes that are created by the teacher to meet the faculty and school assessment schedules.

## Texts and resources

A succinct overview of the texts required for the teaching and learning program are outlined in the table below. This brief overview provides the name and details of each text, the syllabus requirement being addressed and points of note.

**For licensing reasons the resource booklet containing the complete extracts from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* is available to staff only.**

Table 1 – core texts and their alignment to the text requirements

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Text | Text requirement | Annotation and overview |
| Alire Sáenz B (2021) *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* 2nd ****edn,**** Simon & Schuster Childrens UK, United Kingdom. ISBN 9781398505247 | This novel is a highly complex text as per the [National Literacy Learning Progression (NLLP) (V3)](https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/version-3-of-national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/). It provides students with the opportunity to engage with complex issues and themes. It contains hybrid forms through a combination of prose and epistolary storytelling, with the latter resulting in multiple narrative voices and points of view. The text contains various historical and intertextual allusions.  **EN5-RVL-01** requires students to use a range of personal, creative and critical strategies to engage with complex texts. The text helps meet the [Text requirements for English 7–10](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview#course-requirements-k-10-english_k_10_2022) as it is an extended prose text, in the form of a novel. It is recognised as a multiple-award winning quality text from around the world (the United States of America) about intercultural and diverse experiences. | The novel is a bildungsroman about a 16-year-old adolescent, Aristotle, who feels intense loneliness and sadness. The development of his friendship with Dante, a boy with whom he shares a similar Mexican heritage, allows him to develop confidence in his own identity and his place within his world and within his family.  The novel is an uplifting representation of the powerful impacts of friendship, personal connections and love.  The novel contains some mature themes and may not be suitable for all audiences. This includes incarceration, representations of diverse sexualities, references to drug and alcohol use, sexual themes and expletive language. It is important that teachers read the text in its entirety and consider the suitability of the text for their contexts before selecting it as a novel to be studied.  Although the novel has many markers of a highly complex text as per the National Literacy Learning Progression’s text complexity advice, the short chapters and authentic teenage voice allow this text to be accessible for a range of readers. |
| Nowra L (2011) ‘The Index Cards’ in Kennedy C (ed) *The Best Australian Stories 2011*, Black Inc, Australia. ISBN 9781863955485 | This short story is a highly complex text as per the [NLLP (V3)](https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/version-3-of-national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/). There are multiple voices in the text – that of the narrator and that of the protagonist. The relationship among characters is complex and implied. the text and it includes the unique structural element of revealing character through a series of questions and comments with an implied response. The vocabulary used in the texts requires explicit teaching to support comprehension.  **EN5-RVL-01** requires students to use a range of personal, creative and critical strategies to engage with complex texts. The text helps meet the [Text requirements for English 7–10](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview#course-requirements-k-10-english_k_10_2022) as it is an example of short prose by an Australian author. | ‘The Index Cards’ is a short story that provides an exploration of a unique character, Gladys. The story is initially told from the point of view of Gladys’s neighbour. As the story progresses, this point of view shifts and the Gladys’s characterisation is revealed through a series of short comments and questions written on a series of index cards that are found after her death.  The text provides opportunities to explore how composers use point of view and characterisation to position a responder and how this can shift within a text. |

# Pre-reading

The resources contained in this section are designed to support teachers in preparing for this teaching and learning program.

## Pre-reading, resource 1 – exploring controversial issues

The novel *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* contains a range of issues that could be deemed controversial. It is important that these issues are explored carefully, using a syllabus-aligned approach. The table below contains a list of potential controversial issues, as well as ways to address these with your class if they arise.

The study of controversial issues is acceptable for educational purposes consistent with the delivery of curriculum and provision of school programs and activities and the [Controversial Issues in Schools policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045), the related Controversial Issues in Schools – Procedures document and the [Code of Conduct](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2004-0020). These documents are required reading for all teachers as they encourage individual thought on controversial issues that arise throughout a student’s education pathway.

When considering texts for the English classroom, it is important that teachers:

* select texts that align with the text requirements in the syllabus
* select texts that reflect the requirements of the outcomes, content groups and content points
* read the text in its entirety and consider the appropriateness and relevance of the events in the plot (for example, the prose fiction novel *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* contains a car accident, and this may not be suitable for students who have experienced personal or familial trauma associated with a motor vehicle accident)
* read the [Controversial Issues in Schools policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045) and supplementary procedures document
* consider the text’s appropriateness for the context of the school and the students.

Table 2 – exploring controversial issues

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Potential issue | Annotation | Syllabus connections |
| Sexual references  The text contains some sexual references, such as Aristotle and Dante discussing sex as part of a conversation in Chapter 12 of Part 4, and Dante writing a letter to Aristotle about masturbation in Chapter 28 of Part 4.  There is a reference to teenage pregnancy in Chapter 29 of Part 4. | The conversations about sex and masturbation are positive representations of teenage conversations on these topics. This representation normalises the thinking and questioning about where to find good advice and establish a support network.  Sexuality and sexual health are both explored in the [PDHPE K–10 Syllabus, Stage 5 content](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/pdhpe/pdhpe-k-10-2018) in both the Health, Wellbeing and Relationships content and the Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles content strands. This could be a good opportunity for cross-KLA discussion and sharing between teachers, where English teachers can develop an understanding of how to best approach these issues from their PDHPE colleagues | Characterisation – the conversations are representative of the characterisation of Dante as inquisitive, questioning and open. This characterisation serves as a foil for Aristotle’s characterisation as a teenager who is introverted and feels reluctant and afraid to have conversations where he reveals his thoughts to anybody else. |
| Drug and alcohol references and use  There are sections of the novel where alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana are referenced. These include Aristotle drinking in Chapters 22 and 31 of Part 4, references to alcohol and marijuana in Dante’s letters in Chapter 8 of Part 4, and Aristotle and Dante smoking marijuana in Chapter 10 of Part 5. Additional references are made throughout the text to drug usage by minor characters. | While Aristotle partakes in risk-taking behaviours, he minimises this risk by selecting to drink at home in Chapter 22 and by organising for somebody else to drive his car after he drinks in Chapter 31.  Students will have explored the impact of drugs and alcohol in PDHPE K–10 Syllabus, Stage 4 and Stage 5 content. This syllabus content can be found within the Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles content strand. This could be a good opportunity for cross-KLA discussion and sharing between teachers, where English teachers can develop an understanding of how to best approach these issues from their PDHPE colleagues. | Characterisation – the behaviours evidenced in Aristotle and Dante are representative of their characterisation as lifelike constructions of teenage boys who are struggling to establish a sense of identity and place in the world. This adds to the complexity of their characterisation.  Perspective and context – the drug and alcohol usage is reflective of high levels of drug usage in America in the 1980s, which led to President Ronald Reagan’s ‘War on Drugs’. |
| Expletive language  There is some expletive language used throughout the novel in character dialogue and in Aristotle’s first-person narration. | Expletive language is used sparingly throughout the text for effect. | Code and convention – the expletive language is used within dialogue, to assist in the representation of authentic character voice. |
| Sexuality and homophobia  The novel explores the 2 main characters, Aristotle and Dante, discovering their sexuality and their attraction to each other. Dante comes out to Aristotle via letter in chapter 30 of Part 4, and Aristotle’s sexuality, while foreshadowed throughout the novel, is revealed in Chapter 18 of Part 6.  It is also revealed in Chapter 14 of Part 5 that Aunt Ophelia was in a committed lesbian relationship with her partner Franny, and that she was rejected by many members of her family because of her sexual orientation.  Dante is the victim of a violent homophobic attack, which is revealed in Chapter 2 of Part 6. This incident is not graphically described in the novel and occurs outside the action of the novel. The focus is the emotional aftermath of the attack. | The revelation of both characters’ homosexuality is met with support, love and acceptance by their families, reinforcing the normalisation of diverse sexualities.  The homophobic attitudes and violence that are imbued in some minor characters may be confronting or upsetting for students who have experienced homophobia either directly or indirectly. Students should be warned about these attitudes before reading. It may also be useful when addressing these attitudes to note the setting of the novel, in the 1980s, which was a time where there was less tolerance and acceptance of diverse sexualities. | Point of view – the foreshadowing of both characters’, particularly Aristotle’s, homosexuality demonstrates an original manipulation of point of view. The audience can understand, through Alire Sáenz’s manipulation of Aristotle’s point of view and his developing relationship with Dante, that he is romantically interested in Dante before he realises this himself.  Characterisation and narrative – there is consistency and integrity in the representation of Aristotle’s parents’ acceptance of diverse sexualities, both in the main plot and in the Ophelia sub-plot.  Perspective and context – the novel captures the homophobia of the 1980s through the assault on Dante and the family’s rejection of Ophelia. |
| Violence  There are some instances of violence throughout the novel, often represented second-hand as Aristotle becomes aware of the events. Aristotle’s older brother Bernardo is revealed to be incarcerated for committing murder, and Aristotle’s father is clearly impacted by the violence he witnessed during the Vietnam War. A first-person representation of violence is included in Chapters 5 and 6 of Part 6, when Aristotle confronts and assaults one of the boys who attacked Dante. | The novel presents a clear anti-violence perspective through its inclusion of violent events and exploration of the subsequent consequences.  Representations of violence can be particularly triggering or upsetting, especially for students who have witnessed or experienced violence. The exploration of chapters that include violence should be prefaced with a warning to protect students who may have an emotional response to these representations. | Narrative – the exploration of Bernardo’s crime, and its impact on the family, is a significant sub-plot within the novel.  Characterisation – the novel focuses on how the violent actions of Aristotle’s brother, the violence experienced by his father in war, and the family’s inability to talk about either of these, have influenced Aristotle’s own violent behaviour. |
| Mental health and wellbeing  The novel explores the complexities of mental health and wellbeing through multiple characters. Aristotle describes himself as ‘miserable’ in the opening chapter, and his father appears to be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and trauma because of his military service in Vietnam. | The novel provides a positive message about the role of supportive relationships and conversations in managing mental health. It is through his relationship with Dante that Aristotle can improve his mental health and build confidence in his own identity. Similarly, the importance of talking about trauma in a safe and supportive environment is also represented through the exploration of Aristotle’s father’s PTSD.  Discussions of mental health may be particularly challenging for those students who experience mental health disorders themselves. Students should be provided with a warning prior to the exploration of any potentially upsetting content. | Theme – the alignment of thematic messaging regarding mental health support for both Aristotle and his father underpins the cohesive meaning in this text. |

## Pre-reading, resource 2 – parent and caregiver letter

**Teacher note**: the following letter has been adapted from the template provided in the ‘Suggested support for controversial issues’ document, which is located on the department’s [Leading English 7–12 webpage](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/english/leading-english-k-12/leading-english-7-12). Additional supports and templates can be found on the [Text selection notification webpage](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/leading-curriculum-k-12/explaining-curriculum-pcc/texts-used-in-classrooms/text-selection-notification). Adapt this letter as required, for example to add your school letterhead.

Dear parent/guardian,

The English syllabus integrates the study of quality texts as an important and assessable component of students’ English studies. The [Course requirements K–10](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview#course-requirements-k-10-english_k_10_2022) from the syllabus, which includes text requirements, are a mandatory requirement for English faculties to implement.

Schools make decisions at a local level for the types of texts studied in their schools. These decisions are based on student needs, community context and resources. From time to time, students in Year 10 may be required to study a text that may be considered controversial.

The selected novel for the Year 10, Term 1 program ‘Novel voices’ is *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz. This novel explores a range of topics, including sexuality, drugs and alcohol.

The study of controversial issues is acceptable for educational purposes consistent with the delivery of curriculum and provision of school programs and activities.

School staff will manage controversial issues that may arise in the curriculum. Material presented to students as part of school programs and school activities should be:

* age appropriate
* sensitive to student needs
* relevant to the curriculum
* relevant to the school’s purpose and goals
* consistent with the core values outlined in the [Values in NSW public schools policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0131#:~:text=Through%20classrooms%20and%20school%20communities%20the%20core%20values,its%20heritage.%207%20develops%20social%20cohesion.%20More%20items).

Schools are places where students are preparing for active, informed and reasoned involvement in community life through the co-operative study of social issues.

As stated above, English texts are carefully selected and are used to best illustrate the outcomes and content of the syllabus.

If you have any concerns please discuss this with the school.

Yours sincerely,

Head teacher name/signature

Principal name/signature

## Pre-reading, resource 3 – preventing public disclosures

The information and suggestions in this resource is drawn directly from the [Preventing public disclosures](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/pdhpe/planning-programming-and-assessing-pdhpe-k-12/learning-environment#/asset1) section on the [Planning, programming and addressing PDHPE K–12 webpage](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/pdhpe/planning-programming-and-assessing-pdhpe-k-12/learning-environment).

The novel *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* contains representations of many issues that are explored in the PDHPE syllabus, such as sexuality, drug and alcohol use and mental health. This may lead to students wishing to disclose or openly discuss personal experiences. The following advice will support teachers in minimising these conversations in class.

Actively discourage public disclosures by:

* keeping discussions global rather than personal
* distinguishing the difference between public and private information
* dissuading students from talking in the first person in class discussions
* encouraging students to talk in third person, for example, 'If a person ...?’, What if someone ...?'
* maintaining a professional role
* answering questions and responding to statements globally without personalising, for example
* ‘everyone … ‘
* ‘some people … ‘
* using the one step removed strategy which might include using fictitious case studies and moral dilemmas
* instead of the direct ‘What would you do if ...?’ approach, substituting
* ‘Suppose X happened to someone. What advice would you give them? What could they do?’
* 'Imagine someone was feeling ... What advice would you give to help them in their situation?'
* using conditional language, such as ‘X might happen’ or ‘Z could happen’ and not ‘this will happen’
* using the protective interrupting strategy to interrupt students who begin to disclose private information. For example, saying ‘It sounds as though you want to talk about this, why don't we talk about it after class?’ After protective interrupting, guide the discussion back to one step removed.

Students should also be provided with the opportunity to contribute in less public ways. Some students may find it difficult to contribute to class discussion and may say little in group activities. Don’t assume they are not engaged in the activities.

If a student discloses private information publicly and the teacher does suspect a student is at risk of significant harm they must inform their principal or workplace manager as per the [Child Protection policy: Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0067).

## Pre-reading, resource 4 – preparing classroom routines

The curriculum support packages provide a range of resources and activities to facilitate the explicit teaching of thinking routines. These routines are intended to support students to develop their thinking and conceptual understanding of texts. Many of these routines are drawn from [Project Zero’s Thinking Routine Toolbox](https://pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines) or from the Department of Education’s [Digital Learning Selector](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Browser?cache_id=6d77d).

It is important in Term 1 to set up routines with your class that will be used throughout the school year. As students become more familiar with the processes and procedures of these thinking routines throughout the year, there will become less of a need to explicitly explain to students how to engage with these routines.

The table below contains a summary of the thinking routines used within the resources and activities for this specific program. As teachers encounter these routines in the teaching and learning program for the first time, it is important that they set students up for success by providing clear instructions for how to engage with these routines.

Table 3 – classroom routines

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Routine | Summary | Benefits |
| [Think Pair Share](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645?clearCache=1bbe3dcd-9b8-d9df-e194-9625c2441329) | Students respond to a prompt or a problem in a range of ways. They begin by exploring the prompt or problem individually, allowing them to consider their own conceptual understanding. They then engage in a discussion with a peer, in which they share and clarify their initial response to the question and adjust their response based on their peer’s response. They finish by sharing to a larger group. This could be to the entire class, or with a larger group of students. | * Students can attempt to demonstrate their own understanding individually, before clarifying with a peer and then the class more broadly. * Students develop skills in speaking and active listening. * This routine provides all students an opportunity to think, respond and share, which is often not possible in traditional whole class discussions. |
| [Gallery walks](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/555?clearCache=66f76bb9-cde6-8e9-1585-866ca24fb5de) | Students move around the classroom to explore or contribute to a range of different items. This can be work that students have produced or a series of model texts. Students respond to questions as they explore different items. This activity could be completed individually or in small groups. | * Gallery walks provide students with an opportunity to co-create assessment criteria or assess a variety of works against agreed upon criteria. * Students have the opportunity to engage in feedback and reflection processes. * Gallery walks can encourage the creation of a collaborative classroom. * Gallery walks provide an opportunity to showcase student work. |
| [Peer feedback](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/549?clearCache=75b25355-3bcb-c681-2e1d-306714693a58) | This is a structured process through which students assess and evaluate the work of their peers. This can be a valuable tool to ensure that students receive immediate feedback on formative assessment tasks.  There are a range of strategies and approaches to peer feedback that should be drawn upon strategically, based upon the context and specific needs of both the class and the task to which the feedback is to be applied.  Further advice on and resources to support peer feedback can be found in the [Implementation resources section of AITSL’s Feedback webpage](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/improve-practice/feedback#tab-panel-2:~:text=Implementation%20resources). | * Peer feedback encourages collaborative learning and enhances students’ capacity for judgement. * As students develop the ability to assess and evaluate the work of others, this supports them to self-regulate and reflect on their own work. * Peer feedback can supplement teacher feedback. |
| [Jigsaw](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/546?clearCache=3bf7c932-d574-76a9-9790-ef945eb79cc2) | Students complete work in small groups. Students begin in ‘home’ groups, where they are each assigned one specific aspect of a topic (for example, different stanzas in a poem). Each member of the home group meets with members of other groups who have been assigned the same aspect as them. In this new ‘expert’ group, they collaboratively develop a shared understanding of their allocated aspect. Students then return to their ‘home’ groups, and each member teaches the material that they have become an expert on to their group. | * This strategy can support the differentiation of learning, or the ‘chunking’ of larger texts or multifaceted ideas. * Each student is allocated responsibility and authority to educate their peers about their specialised aspect. * Students develop skills in comprehension, cooperation and communication. * Teachers are able to strategically group students and are able to provide support and assistance to groups of students at a time. |
| Think aloud | This strategy, also referred to by Quigley as ‘Explain yourself’ (2020 p 169), involves the verbalisation and explanation of thinking. This is a strategy that can be used by teachers to model thinking processes for students. Alternately, students could be asked to demonstrate their own knowledge or understanding of something they have read or an activity they have completed through a think aloud. | * This strategy can support students to construct a mental model of what they have read. * Verbalising thoughts can reinforce the need for clear discourse markers (for example firstly, furthermore or in contrast). * When demonstrated by a teacher, this strategy can be used to support students in developing their own thinking process. |
| [Exit tickets](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/543?clearCache=b8b39f8a-bbb4-c58d-faef-a356a2919f2f) | Exit tickets are a form of formative assessment conducted at the end of a lesson, or a significant activity or learning experience. They are a quick understanding check to ascertain student learning. Examples of exit tickets have bene provided within **Phase 3, resource 3 – exit tickets**. | * Exit tickets provide a quick assessment of student learning, which can be used to determine whether the class is ready to move on or if more time needs to be spent on developing understanding. * This strategy supports students’ self-reflection on their own learning processes. * They are easily modifiable for a different purpose. |
| [What Makes You Say That?](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/what-makes-you-say-that) | This Project Zero thinking routine can be completed in different formats. This routine is straightforward – asking students the question ‘What makes you say that?’ in response to a claim that they make about texts or concepts explored in class. This could be used as part of class discussion, or as a reflective or analytical writing tool. | * This routine requires minimal planning. It can be used as part of whole-class discussion to elicit more profound thinking and responses from students. * Students consider what examples can be used to support their claims. This can help to direct the selection of relevant textual evidence to support a thesis or argument. * This routine can be used to assess or interrogate students’ prior knowledge, attitudes or beliefs when introducing a new topic. |
| [I Used to Think… Now I Think…](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/i-used-to-think-now-i-think) | This routine involves students completing the sentences ‘I used to think …’ and ‘Now I think …’ to reflect on a topic or concepts discussed in class. | * This routine supports students to reflect on the impact of learning on their own personal knowledge and understanding. * When used to reflect on texts, this routine can be used to explore the impact of authorial decisions, or concepts such as characterisation or point of view. * This routine helps to reflect upon and consolidate new learning. |

# Phase 1 – engaging with the unit and the learning community

The ‘engaging with the unit and strengthening the learning community’ phase is a brief and stimulating introduction and is intended to build the field for students. In this phase, students reflect on their reading habits and what interests and engages them as a reader. They develop the skills and vocabulary to express a personal response to a text that has intellectually and emotionally resonated with them. Students share their reading experiences and preferences with their peers and, in doing so, widen the range of sustained literary texts to which they are exposed. Students continue to develop a personal and informed voice in their written and spoken responses to texts.

## Phase 1, activity 1 – reflecting personally on characters

**Teacher note**: students should be prompted to select a fictional character from a novel to complete the questions in this activity. While the aim of this activity is to preface the type of text explored within this program, the questions have been written using the word ‘text’ to allow for students to respond to film characters if they are unable to identify and select a character from a novel. These questions could be used to connect to prior learning if students are instructed to respond directly to characters from a novel previously studied, such as Jonas from *The Giver*, which was explored in the **Year 9, Term 4 – Exploring the speculative** program.

1. Select a fictional character with whom you have been able to connect or relate personally. Answer these questions in your books:
2. Who is the character with whom you have been able to connect or relate personally?
3. Why were you able to connect with or relate to this character?
4. What structural role did the character play? For example, were they the main character or a minor character, the hero or the villain? How did their role in the narrative influence your engagement with the character?
5. Did the character have a ‘novel’ voice? What made their voice a novel or original one?
6. Did your engagement with the character increase your enjoyment of the text?
7. Select a fictional character with whom you have not been able to connect with or have disliked. Answer these questions in your books:
8. Who is a character that you have been unable to connect with or have disliked?
9. Why were you unable to connect with them or why did you dislike them? For example, was their voice something with which you could not connect?
10. What structural role did the character play? For example, were they the main character or a minor character, the hero or the villain? How did their role in the narrative influence your engagement with the character?
11. Do you think that the author intended you to dislike or not be able to connect with the character? If so, why do you think this was done intentionally?
12. Did your response to the character influence your enjoyment of the text?

## Phase 1, activity 2 – activating prior knowledge

1. You will have one minute to list as many places as possible that you can think of that you would encounter a review.
2. Leave your list on your desk. You will have 2 minutes to move around the classroom and ‘steal’ any of the suggestions found on your peers’ lists that you did not include. Add these to your own list.
3. Contribute to a class discussion that explores the following questions:
4. Have you ever written a review?
5. Have you ever read a review that has influenced you in some way?
6. What is the purpose of writing a review?
7. What is the purpose of reading a review?

## Phase 1, activity 3 – the language of opinion

**Teacher note:** the book review examples included here were written by the English curriculum team and use *The Giver* because students should be familiar with this text having studied this in **Year 9, Term 4 – exploring the speculative.** This activity can be adapted for your context using a different text with which students are familiar.

1. Read the following book reviews of *The Giver* by Lois Lowry.
2. Each of the following reviews focuses on a specific language device to convey opinion. Discuss with a peer which of the reviews is the most effective in presenting a clear opinion and explain why this is the case.

**Example 1**

If teenagers read only one book in their lives, it simply must be Lois Lowry’s *The Giver.* Set in a seemingly idyllic future *The Giver* prompts readers to question if they would be willing to pay the price of their humanity to live in a world free from pain and sadness.

Language of opinion – conditional sentence (‘If teenagers read … it simply must be…’ and ‘…question if they would be willing…’).

**Example 2**

*The Giver* by Lois Lowry is truly memorable for the ideas presented that offer a critique of real-world issues such as the importance of memory to the human experience. Readers will admire and empathise with the courageous protagonist Jonas, as they accompany him on his heartbreaking journey of discovery.

Language of opinion: emotive language (‘truly memorable’, ‘admire’, ‘empathise’, ‘heartbreaking journey of discovery’).

**Example 3**

*The Giver* by Lois Lowry is a novel that you will simply be unable to put down. I devoured this book in just a few hours as I was desperate to discover what happens to the courageous young man, Jonas, at the heart of this story.

Language of opinion: hyperbole and metaphor (‘unable to put down’, ‘I devoured this book’, ‘desperate to discover’, ‘courageous young man’, ‘heart of this story’).

**Example 4**

**I recently read *The Giver* and decided that it is a modern masterpiece that young adult readers will think about for a long time after they have turned the final, confronting page. I was absolutely invested in the chilling dystopia that Newbery Medallist author Lois Lowry creates and I recommend this as essential reading for all teenagers.**

**Language of opinion: complex noun groups including appositives (‘modern masterpiece’, ‘final, confronting page’, ‘chilling dystopia’, ‘Newbery Medallist author Lois Lowry’, ‘essential reading for all teenagers’).**

## **Phase 1, resource 1 – book review annotation**

**The table below contains an extended annotation of the first example. This resource can be used to guide a class discussion which explores the language of the first review in Phase 1, activity 3 – the language of opinion in detail**

Table 4 – review annotation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ****Example 1**** | ****Annotation**** |
| If teenagers read only one book in their lives, it simply must be Lois Lowry’s *The Giver.* Set in a seemingly idyllic future *The Giver* prompts readers to question if they would be willing to pay the price of their humanity to live in a world free from pain and sadness. | **The opening complex sentence comprises a conditional statement, set up through the opening phrase ‘If teenagers read only one book in their lives’. This is followed by the high modal ‘it simply must be’ which reinforces the strong opinion held by the reviewer.**  **The second sentence provides some information about the text without revealing the plot. The adverb ‘seemingly’ when connected to the noun group ‘idyllic future’ hints towards the conflict in the text. The reader’s interest is then piqued through the philosophical questioning suggested through ‘prompts readers to question if they would be willing to pay the price of their humanity to live in a world free from pain and sadness’. This reference to** the text’s conflict and **readers’ interest implies that the author’s opinion is that the text is one that engages the reader with a range of ideas that are relevant to their own lives.** |

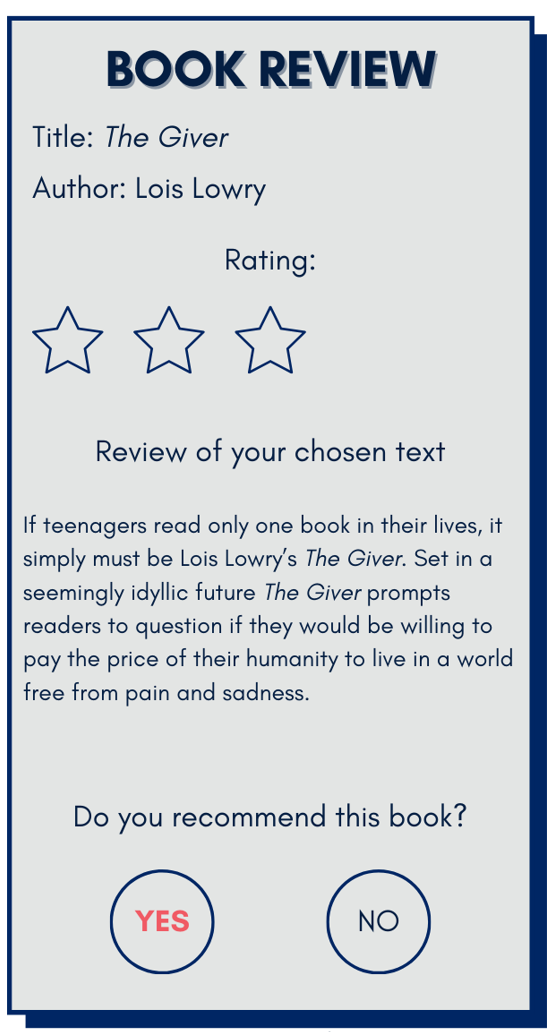
## Phase 1, resource 2 – book review template

**Teacher note: book review templates can be found and customised on Canva. All department teachers have access to this platform. After students complete Core formative task 1 – sharing and reflecting on reading experiences, you may wish to collect these book reviews and provide them to the school librarian for public display on the bookshelves.**

Figure 1 – book review template



Figure 2 – book review template example



## Core formative task 1 – sharing and reflecting on reading experiences

**Teacher note**: to facilitate this activity, you should set up your classroom strategically and provide clear instructions to your students. This could involve students sitting and then moving in 2 concentric circles, or along rows dependent on classroom layout. It may also be beneficial to complete this core formative task in the library so that the student can locate their chosen text on the bookshelf to use as a prop to stimulate discussion.

1. You will engage in a ‘speed date with a book’ activity. You will select the book that you have read and for which you wrote a 2 to 3 sentence review on the book review template provided (**Phase 1, resource 2 – book review template).**
2. You will be arranged in pairs, and you will have 90 seconds to ‘sell’ your book to your partner. Consider using your 2 to 3 sentence review to start your conversation.
3. Listen respectfully and carefully while your partner takes 90 seconds to tell you about the book that they have brought to discuss.
4. At the end of the 3 minutes spent with your partner, one of the pair will stand and move to a new partner to repeat steps 2 and 3.
5. Complete **Phase 1, activity 4 – exit ticket.**
6. **Submit your exit ticket and your 2 to 3 sentence book review to your teacher.**

## Phase 1, activity 4 – exit ticket

1. Complete the exit ticket for your speed date with a book by filling out the table below.

Table 5 – exit ticket

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question | Answer |
| Which book that you ‘dated’ would you be most likely to take on a second date? (In other words, which book would you most like to read?) |  |
| Why? |  |
| Why is sharing reading experiences with others a valuable thing to do? |  |
| To what extent might discussing your reading with others influence your future reading choices? |  |

# Phase 2 – unpacking and engaging with the conceptual focus

The ‘unpacking and engaging with the conceptual focus’ phase establishes the driving textual concepts which are the focus of the program. In this phase, students engage with the key concepts of characterisation and point of view to develop their understanding of how these work in a core text to create meaning and position audience. Students build upon prior learning to clarify and justify their personal responses to texts with which they have engaged. They will analyse a text to determine how authors create characters that provoke a response from the reader. They will explore the structural purpose of engaging, dynamic and complex characters and the varying ways that authors can manipulate language forms, features and structures to create distinctive points of view.

Students will begin to develop an understanding of the components of an analytical response, focusing on the development of a well-articulated and considered thesis statement. They will employ rhetorical language strategically to express their understanding of the relationship between characterisation and audience.

The formal assessment task is introduced in this phase and activities and resources are included to support students in understanding the expectations of the task.

## Phase 2, activity 1 – narrative point of view

**Teacher note:** the links to the YouTube videos and the relevant timestamps in this activity have been included in the program.

**‘Point of view’ describes the connection between the narrator of a story and the characters and events created by the narrative. The point of view is through whose eyes the responder perceives the narrative and this is a powerful way to position the reader. Understanding that narratives are framed by a specific point of view reminds responders that texts are a construct, and the point of view is crucial to encouraging them to adopt the values and attitudes of the character whose point of view is privileged.**

During the writing process, authors make thoughtful and deliberate decisions about how they use point of view. These decisions are made with the reader in mind and reflect how authors want characters to be interpreted and how they want the ideas they are exploring to be delivered.

1. View the videos carefully when your teacher plays them. As you view, note key points in the relevant columns below by:
2. writing a definition
3. identifying potential advantages of the point of view
4. identifying potential disadvantages of the point of view.

Table 6 – point of view video notes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Point of view | Definition | Advantages | Disadvantages |
| **First person** |  |  |  |
| **Second person** |  |  |  |
| **Third person omniscient** |  |  |  |
| **Third person limited** |  |  |  |

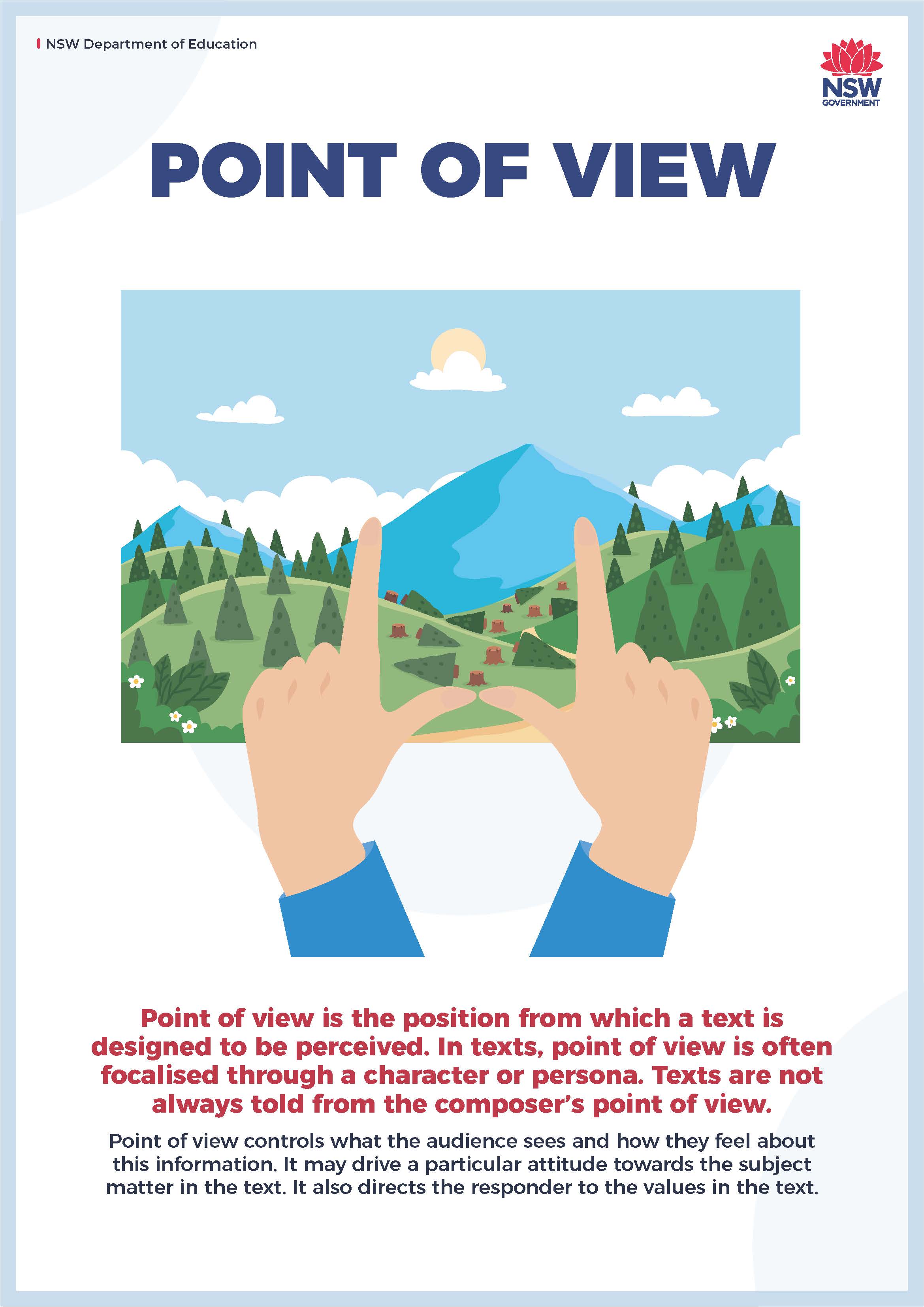
## Phase 2, resource 1 – characterisation poster

Figure 3 – character poster



## Phase 2, resource 2 – point of view poster

Figure 4 – point of view poster



## Phase 2, activity 2 – pre-reading activity

**Teacher note**: the [What Makes You Say That?](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/what-makes-you-say-that) thinking routine from Project Zero’s Thinking Routine toolbox is used in this activity.

1. In your English book, write a response to the following questions:
2. Do you have an interesting neighbour or relative who might make an interesting character to read about in a story?
3. What is interesting about this person?
4. What would you expect to read about if you were told that a text was about an experience with an interesting neighbour?
5. The words in the table below appear in the short story ‘The Index Cards’ by Louis Nowra. For the words with which you are not familiar:
6. locate the dictionary definition
7. identify the part of speech to which the word belongs
8. write a definition in your own words in the table below.

The first row has been done as a model.

Table 7 – pre-reading vocabulary activity

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Word | Part of speech (noun, verb, adverb, adjective) | Definition |
| Index cards | Noun (compound and plural) | Small cards that are used to organise and file information. The cards are usually stored in alphabetical order. |
| Zimmer frame |  |  |
| intrigued |  |  |
| hoarsely |  |  |
| cursive |  |  |
| barmy |  |  |
| demented |  |  |
| cad |  |  |
| miser |  |  |
| Wedgewood |  |  |
| undecipherable |  |  |
| gaunt |  |  |
| incoherent |  |  |

1. What connections can you see between these words?
2. With a partner, make predictions about the text you are about to read based on these words. Use the ‘What Makes You Say That?’ thinking routine to guide your discussion by answering the following questions:
3. What do you think the short story will be about?
4. What predictions can you make about the character(s) in the short story?
5. What makes you say that?
6. How does this prediction compare to the expectations of a story about an interesting neighbour that you outlined in question 1(c)?

## Core text – ‘The Index Cards’ by Louis Nowra

When I found the index cards she had been dead for a fortnight. I was about to put my rubbish in the bin on my landing when I saw the words Tell Number 14, that I want him to stop that noise. They were written on a pink index card which had fallen from a cardboard box stuffed into the bin. I pulled out the box and dozens of index cards fell out in a rainbow of colours — pink, green, white, blue and yellow. They all had writing on them, from a single word to a paragraph, in handwriting that was beautiful on most cards but on others was merely a scribble or smudge. What intrigued me, of course, is that I am number 14. For weeks Gladys had banged her Zimmer frame against my door and when I answered it she would shout hoarsely at me without articulating a word. Then she’d thrust a blue index card into my face. It said, in beautiful cursive script, Stop that music. Turn off your TV! I was never playing CDs or watching television when she’d knock on my door. Occasionally I'd invite her in to see my living room, but she’d never believe me. She'd yell incoherently, her spit splattering my face, after which she would thrust another blue index card in front of me that anticipated my reply: You are a liar! You turned the music off when you heard me at your door! lt was no wonder I thought she was barmy and there were times when I heard her thumping my door that I pretended I wasn't home. It was probably her relatives who had cleaned out the apartment and gotten rid of anything they didn’t want or couldn't sell. The cardboard box with its index cards was obviously a part of the cleanup. I glanced at some of the cards and saw that they were divided up into colour codes. Yellow cards had written instructions that were obviously daily chores (Tea. Would you run the bath? Time for lunch? I need to have a nap) with three cards containing just a single word (Yes. No. Please.). Blue cards contained abuse directed at me. White, pink and green were more informal questions and statements that seemed directed towards one person, a nurse called Ken. Curious as to what had gone on with she and the nurse, I put the cards in what I thought was roughly their order and, after guessing what some words were, began to read:

Who are you?

Where’s Jean?

She didn’t tell me she was retiring.

Jean’s husband lives off her like a bludger. He used her money to drink like a fish. Now she has to care for him. She’s a wonderful woman.

How old are you? You look twelve.

I have to use these cards. Didn’t you see my files? I can’t talk. I have cancer of the tongue.

I don’t care if you have other patients, surely you should read their files before you visit them?

I don’t want a man nurse. I want a woman.

Ring them, tell your bosses I want a female. I don’t like being naked in front of a man. Nurse or no nurse.

Yes, I understand that you’re understaffed and I’m grateful for these visits as I can’t look after myself. I miss Jean. She was more than a nurse, she was a friend.

Do you hear that noise? Like an engine idling.

She’d check my blood pressure, give me painkillers, bathe me, heat up my baby food because I can’t eat solids.

How long have you been a community health nurse?

So I’m your guinea pig?

Those photographs on the top of the bookshelf are my nieces and nephews on my sister’s side. They're older now.

I used to be quite stylish. See how well cut my dress is. Look how lovely my perm is. It’s years since I had a perm.

No, I never had children. Never married. Came close once - a long time ago.

The baby food and soup are in the kitchen. It’s the only food can swallow. Not too hot either. It burns my mouth.

You don’t have to tell me — I smell lamb chops cooking in the apartment across the landing and I feel so hungry and want to eat real food.

Those are an original Wedgewood dinner service. My parents’ wedding gift. They’re worth quite a lot.

Where were you yesterday, Ken? I’m supposed to have four visits a week.

What do you mean you didn’t know? Jean was organised. You're not.

Can’t you do it right? Jean always found a vein.

You are a flatterer but one of the reasons I don’t look eighty is that I didn’t smile when I was a girl so I wouldn't get laugh lines.

I want a bath now. I feel clammy in this heat.

(Waterlogged card) Not so (hard?).

Never married. During the war I dated a Pommy. He did the dirty on me. I’ve never trusted men since. Are you married?

I wish you hadn’t told me that. Men should love women, not other men.

Do you hear that noise?

Take off your shoes. Feel the noise coming through the floorboards.

You must be deaf!

If you won’t go and tell him — then I will!

I went down there and the liar said he wasn’t playing any music.

Why hasn’t my niece come?

Phone again! Phone her again!

I’m going demented with that noise.

You look as though you've slept in a rubbish tip.

Why did your tooth fall out?

Why would you use heroin?

It’s a weakness. Take me to the bank. I'll get out $500 for you, 80 you can buy a new tooth.

He was a Pommy, that’s all. Handsome and a cad. I could have sued him for breaking his promise to marry me. You could do that, years ago. Now women are not protected from cads.

No, never. I was not a playgirl. No man for me after the Pommy.

The dentist did a nice job. You don’t look such an idiot with a new front tooth.

It's not quite a hum but one with a thump thump thump sound.

I know. I look like a concentration-camp victim.

You can laugh, but old age is dreadful.

Tie my purse to my Zimmer frame. That way muggers won't get it.

I gave you a new tooth, why are you so lazy? Take out the rubbish, please.

YOU ARE A LIAR! You didn’t ask him about the noise.

Don’t sulk.

THE NOISE IS NOT IN MY HEAD!

Why do you spend your money on nightclubs and a good time? I own this apartment. I went without.

If there’s one thing I hate it’s your smirking.

That needle really hurt. Jean could find my veins.

Where’s my niece?

She’s not interstate. She lives in Earlwood.

She would have told me if she left.

She said she did? I don’t remember.

Why are you crying?

Nonsense. Maybe you were in the wrong. I’ve lived alone for sixty-three years. You'll get used to it. Is yesterday Monday or Tuesday?

I don’t want a bath today.

Put that photo of my niece against the wall. I don’t like her anymore. She’s getting my money and yet she won’t visit.

I like history shows. They bring back memories.

I thought you were a fool. Now I know you are. Fancy not having heard of Winston Churchill.

TURN IT UP LOUD. TURN THE TV UP LOUD, SO I CAN’T HEAR THAT NOISE AGAIN.

It’s not in my head. Don't be unkind to me, Ken.

I’m afraid of dying and yet I have to. That way I will find peace and quiet.

The lift is broken again. I’m stuck here until they fix it. Last time it took three days.

It’s that dirty Egyptian miser. He runs the block and won't buy a new lift.

Where’s the Wedgewood serving plate?

I can’t have broken it. I never take it out of the cabinet. I must be going mad.

What?

I need something stronger. The pain is terrible.

I don't (feel?) so good.

NOISE!!!

I have cotton wool in my ears to stop the noise. It doesn’t work.

Don't bathe me. My body is too sore.

Every time I look at the cabinet there is less Wedgewood crockery. What is happening to it, Ken?

I don’t remember breaking them.

God take me. I’m going mad. I’m a skeleton.

Your eyes are unkind today.

Don’t laugh at me.

I thought I'd die here. I need hospital.

Call ambul ...

Doctor.

I'm dying doc

noise.

noi

no

doc

(undecipherable)

The last card was impossible to read. Not so much words as a scribble done by a drunken spider dipped in ink. I remember talking to her nurse only once, even though the cards seem to suggest Gladys sent him down to complain about the noise often. He knocked on my door to say that Gladys was convinced I was causing her intolerable pain by playing my music and TV at loud volumes. Ken was about thirty years old, gaunt with the lived-in and lined face of an ex-junkie. I showed him my apartment and he could see I wasn’t causing any of the noise Gladys thought she heard. He showed little interest in anything except for a small silver art deco sculpture of a woman's face. He picked it up, examined it quickly and announced that it was worth quite a lot. As he was leaving my apartment he turned back and said, ‘She’s a pain in the arse. The noise is all in her head. She’s driving me mad.’ With that he left. It was the first and last time I saw him. (Nowra 2011)

## Phase 2, resource 3 – facilitating a Hot seat activity

**Teacher note:** this activity has been adapted from the resource the [Hot seat card on the Digital Learning Selector.](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/569?clearCache=3ca8e2e5-cddd-4c0d-4048-fccaefcfa20f) It is designed to support students to develop their understanding of point of view and the characters in ‘The Index Cards’.

1. Ask students to write 5 questions for the characters in and the author of ‘The Index Cards’ (Gladys, Ken, the narrator and Louis Nowra). They may direct all 5 questions at one character or spread the questions between the characters and author.
2. Explain that the questions should be open questions – they should not be able to be answered with a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’.
3. Explain that the answers to the questions should not be able to be found by reading the text – the answers should require inferential reading skills.
4. Model examples of effective and ineffective questions. The following table provides some suggestions. You may like to have students write their questions on index cards.

Table 8 – Hot seat question example

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Good questions | Not so good questions |
| To Gladys:  Why do you think your niece did not visit you often? | To Gladys:  Did your niece visit you often? |
| To Louis Nowra”  How did you want your reader to feel about Gladys?’ | To Louis Nowra:  Is the title of the short story ‘The Index Cards’? |
| To Ken:  What was your first impression of Gladys? | To Ken:  What did Gladys give you money for? |
| To the narrator:  What did you learn about Gladys from reading the index cards? | To the narrator:  How many times did you speak to Ken? |

1. Collect the questions written by students.
2. Set 4 chairs at the front of the class. These will be the ‘hot seats’. Select 4 students to adopt the role of each of the characters and Louis Nowra.
3. Ask the ‘characters’ questions that have been written by the students. The students in the ‘hot seat’ must answer as the character. The responses can be a discussion starter for the whole class who may or may not agree with the answer given or who could be invited to elaborate on the answer given.
4. You may like to swap students around to allow others a chance to demonstrate their interpretation of the text and the characters.
5. Students use the ‘[I Used to Think … Now I Think’](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/i-used-to-think-now-i-think) thinking routine to reflect on how the Hot seat activity has deepened or changed their understanding of one of the characters from the text. They will record their response in their books.

## Phase 2, activity 3 – point of view and characterisation 3 level guide

**Teacher note**: the questions in this activity formatively assess literal, inferential and evaluative levels of comprehension. For more information on these 3 levels of comprehension, see the [Comprehension webpage](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/readingviewing/Pages/litfocuscomprehension.aspx#link100:~:text=in%20the%20classroom.-,Literal%2C%20inferential%20and%20evaluative%20levels%20of%20comprehension,-When%20readers%20read) of the Victorian Department of Education’s Literacy Teaching Toolkit. The NSW Department of Education’s website contains syllabus-aligned resources to support reading for [literal comprehension](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/teaching-strategies/stage-5/reading/stage-5-literal-comprehension), [inference](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/teaching-strategies/stage-5/reading/stage-5-inference-), and a text’s [main idea and theme](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/teaching-strategies/stage-5/reading/stage-5-main-idea-and-theme).

**Student note: the following activity will help you to practise supporting an argument with evidence from a text. This is a skill that you will need in your summative assessment task.**

1. Re-read ‘The Index Cards’.
2. Indicate whether the statements in the first column of the table below are true, false, or if there is not enough information given to take a stance (there will only be one of these).
3. Provide evidence from the text to support your argument. Some of these statements can be either true or false. Your use of evidence from the text is what is important.

**Literal questions**

**These questions are predominantly ‘what’ questions and require you to be able to identify information that is easily located in the text.**

Table 9 – literal questions for 3 level guide

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statement | True or false | Evidence |
| The story is written in first person. |  |  |
| Gladys is waiting for her nephew to come to visit her. |  |  |
| Gladys wants the narrator to turn off his music. |  |  |

**Inferential questions**

**These questions require you to make inferences based on the information provided in the text. It should be possible to make an argument that the statement is true or false. The value of these questions is that they require students to make an argument and support it with textual evidence.**

Table 10 – inferential questions for 3 level guide

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statement | True or false | Evidence |
| Gladys is kind to Ken. |  |  |
| ‘The Index Cards’ presents more than one point of view. |  |  |
| Gladys’s life experiences have shaped her personality. |  |  |

**Evaluative questions**

These questions require you to move beyond the text to consider what you think and believe in relation to the text. Again, there is generally no right or wrong answer – the purpose of this style of questioning is to support you to justify your thinking using evidence from the text**.**

Table 11 – evaluative questions for 3 level guide

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statement | True or false | Evidence |
| Louis Nowra wants his readers to sympathise with Gladys. |  |  |

1. Consider the use of point of view in the text and answer the following questions in your book:
2. From whose point of view is this story told?
3. Whose voice is privileged? In other words, whose point of view do readers understand by the end of the text?
4. Whose voice is marginalised? In other words, whose point of view is missing from the text?
5. How does this impact the way the reader connects with the characters?
6. Is the narrator reliable? Or unreliable? How do you know?

## Phase 2, resource 4 – experimenting with point of view sample

**Extract from ‘The Index Cards’**

How long have you been a community health nurse?

So I’m your guinea pig?

Those photographs on the top of the bookshelf are my nieces and nephews on my sister’s side. They're older now.

I used to be quite stylish. See how well cut my dress is. Look how lovely my perm is. It’s years since I had a perm.

**Sample response from Ken’s perspective**

**Questions, questions,** questions! **Every day it’s the same. Every card that comes my way is a cop shining a torch in my eyes demanding to know all my business.**

**‘6 months, Gladys … no, you’re not my guinea pig. I know exactly what I am doing – they trained us very well at TAFE so, I promise, you are in very safe hands.’**

**The crazy old girl sure has a lot of pictures around the place. Funny, I’ve never actually seen anyone from the pictures come to visit her. I wonder who they are. Maybe it’s time I asked some questions of my own. I should at least pretend to be interested.**

**‘Who are all these people?’**

**Gladys scrawls her answer and flings the card at me.**

Those photographs on the top of the bookshelf are my nieces and nephews on my sister’s side. They're older now.

Another card comes my way. I have to stifle a snort.

*I used to be quite stylish. See how well cut my dress is. Look how lovely my perm is. It’s years since I had a perm.*

I nod and smile politely all the while thinking that no perm, no matter how ‘lovely’ can disguise the genuinely unlovely person that it sits on top of.

**The table below can be used for students to annotate the sample response. In their annotations, students should focus on the language forms and features used to shape implicit and explicit characterisation.**

Table 12 – annotated point of view sample

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ****Samples response**** | ****Annotation**** |
| **Questions, questions, questions! Every day it’s the same. Every card that comes my way is a cop shining a torch in my eyes demanding to know all my business.** | **The repetition of ‘Questions’ conveying frustration implicitly constructs Ken as impatient in his interactions with Gladys.** |
| **‘6 months, Gladys … no, you’re not my guinea pig. I know exactly what I am doing – they trained us very well at TAFE so, I promise, you are in very safe hands.’** |  |
| **The crazy old girl sure has a lot of pictures around the place. Funny, I’ve never actually seen anyone from the pictures come to visit her. I wonder who they are. Maybe it’s time I asked some questions of my own. I should at least pretend to be interested.** | **Ken’s description of Gladys as a ‘crazy old girl’ is an example of explicit characterisation – he tells us that Gladys is ‘crazy’ and ‘old’. This phrase also implicitly reveals aspects of Ken’s character by suggesting that he is disparaging of his patient, dismissing her as ‘crazy’ and patronising as he refers to a grown woman as a ‘girl’.** |
| **‘Who are all these people?’**  **Gladys scrawls her answer and flings the card at me.** |  |
| Those photographs on the top of the bookshelf are my nieces and nephews on my sister’s side. They're older now.  Another card comes my way. I have to stifle a snort.  *I used to be quite stylish. See how well cut my dress is. Look how lovely my perm is. It’s years since I had a perm.* |  |
| I nod and smile politely all the while thinking that no perm, no matter how ‘lovely’ can disguise the genuinely unlovely person that it sits on top of. |  |

## **Phase 2, activity 4 – analysing character**

**Teacher note: for further support and strategies for teaching implicit and explicit characterisation, refer to the** [Stage 5 reading – Analysing characters](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/teaching-strategies/stage-5/reading/stage-5-character-analysis) resource**.**

Explicit characterisation is where the reader is directly told information about a character. Implicit characterisation is where the reader must infer (that is, make a conclusion based on the evidence provided) what a character is like.

1. In your English book, list all the ways that a reader learns about a character – for example, through their actions, the way that they speak, what other characters say about them.
2. Re-read ‘The Index Cards’ by Louis Nowra and colour code examples of explicit and implicit characterisation. For example, highlight the explicit characterisation in pink and the implicit characterisation in blue.
3. What role does syntax play in constructing characterisation in the story? Syntax refers to the way that words are arranged in a sentence. For example, the syntax in Gladys’s index cards initially often structured as subject then verb then object such as ‘I don’t want a man nurse. I want a woman’ and ‘I used to be quite stylish’. What does this reveal about her character? Compare this to the syntax used in the narrator’s voice where complex sentences are used such as in ‘For weeks Gladys had banged her Zimmer frame against my door and when I answered it she would shout hoarsely at me without articulating a word.’ What does this reveal about this character?
4. Select 3 examples of explicit and implicit characterisation that you have highlighted and use these to complete the table below. Identify the character, provide the evidence and include an explanation of what this characterisation tells the reader about the character. The first row has been completed as a model.

Table 13 – explicit and implicit characterisation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Explicit characterisation | Implicit characterisation |
| Gladys  ‘It was no wonder I thought she was barmy…’  Gladys appears to be crazy. | **Gladys**  ‘For weeks, Gladys had banged her Zimmer frame against my door and when I answered it she would shout hoarsely at me without articulating a word.’  Gladys’s actions of banging the door and trying to shout suggest that she is frustrated and hostile.  Gladys's syntax reveals her self-centred personality. She begins most sentences with ‘I’ such as in ‘I don’t want a male nurse. I want a woman’. |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## **Phase 2, activity 5 – Gladys’s character development**

Reader positioning refers to the way that a composer uses language forms, features and structures to make their responders feel a certain way about a character or issue.

1. Select 4 index cards from the story that reflect the character development of Gladys throughout the story.
2. Explain how the author’s positioning of the reader develops throughout this story. In other words, how do the reader’s feelings towards Gladys develop throughout the story?
3. Analyse how language has been used to position the reader at the 4 points in the story.
4. Identify whether the characterisation is explicit or implicit and explain which language features are used to convey this characterisation.

Table 14 – character development table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ****Index Card**** | ****Feelings towards Gladys**** | ****Language used to position reader**** | ****Implicit or explicit characterisation**** |
| ‘You are a liar!’ | She is a cantankerous old lady who is a difficult neighbour. | The tone is accusatory. The high modality and emotive language expressed through the imperative ‘you are a liar!’ is hostile. | Implicit – the reader infers that Gladys is difficult because of the accusatory tone that is used. |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

1. Using your notes made in the table above, explain how Nowra has used language forms and features to characterise Gladys as dynamic and complex.
2. Language forms you may wish to discuss include syntactical elements such as simple sentences, sentence fragments, interrogative sentences, and exclamatory sentences.
3. Language features you may wish to discuss include dialogue, juxtaposition, tone, contrast and implicit and explicit characterisation.

|  |
| --- |
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|  |

## Phase 2, activity 6 – appreciating the crafting of ‘The Index Cards’

**Student note: ‘liking’ something, such as a text, refers to personal preference; it is subjective. Appreciating is an objective acknowledgment of the value or quality of something, such as a text.**

Answer the following questions in your book.

1. Much of this story is written in simple sentences and sentence fragments that do not often link or connect. These sentences are used to construct Gladys’s characterisation – the reader pieces together the clues from the short sentences on the index cards to understand her character.
2. Describe the effect of this writing style and how it helps the reader to understand Gladys’s feelings and emotions.
3. What do the cards suggest about Gladys’s physical and mental health? How do you know?
4. What impact does the structure have on the way that readers are positioned to feel about the characters?
5. What is unique about this short story?
6. Use a Y chart to organise your thoughts and feelings about the core text ‘The Index Cards’. The headings in your Y chart should be:
7. **What I liked**
8. **What I found challenging**
9. **What I appreciated.**
10. **Try to remember your initial response after the first reading and then consider if and how this changed after looking more closely at the text.**
11. **Use the** ‘I used to think … now I think … ’thinking routine to guide a final reflection on your reading experience of the core text. Record this reflection in your English book.

## Phase 2, activity 7 – engaging with the assessment task notification

**Teacher note:** issuing the assessment task for any program of learning within the first few weeks is good practice. The research findings and learnings in the [What works best: 2020 update (CESE 2020)](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/educational-data/cese/publications/research-reports/what-works-best-2020-update) draw important connections between quality assessment and teaching and learning. As the research suggests, using data to inform instruction and differentiation should be an iterative process and should support students in all stages of their learning.

In addition to the assessment notification, which includes the task description, marking criteria, steps to success and an annotated student work sample, a range of support resources have been provided in Phase 6. While these resources are included in that phase, it is recommended that the assessment task support resources are integrated into the other phases, in a purposeful and strategic way, to support the learning needs of your students.

Integrating the assessment support resources will demonstrate to students that writing is a recursive process and establishes expectations for writing throughout the program.

You have explored the assessment notification as a class. In the table below:

1. summarise what the task is asking of you
2. create a bullet list of steps you think you will need to take to complete the task
3. identify 2 strengths that you have as a writer that will help you to complete the task
4. identify one area of weakness that you would like to work on so that you can succeed in this task – indicate how you might address this weakness. For example, ‘I will ask one of my peers to check my sentence construction’.

Table 15 – reflecting on the assessment

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Questions | Student response |
| What is the task asking you to do? |  |
| What steps do you think you will need to take to complete the task? |  |
| What are 2 strengths that you have as a writer that will help you to complete the task? |  |
| What is one area, from previous assessment tasks and writing activities, that you want to focus on improving? |  |
| What are the next 3 steps you will take to prepare for this assessment task? These may be related to the area for improvement you identified in the previous row. |  |

## Phase 2, activity 8 – word clines

**Teacher note:** this task has been designed in response to the marking criteria. Depending on which criteria format you choose, you may wish to repeat the activity with the student-facing rubric.

1. Create a word cline for each marking criteria. The first one has been completed for you in the table below.

Figure 5 – sample word cline

1. What does this word cline suggest about what you need to do to achieve an ‘A’ response? Add your thoughts to the ‘Notes’ box below.

**Hint**

You might like to look up definitions for particular words. For example, the verb ‘analyse’ is defined in the [English K–10 Syllabus – Glossary](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/glossary) as ‘Identify components and the relationship between them’ and ‘Draw out and relate implications’. The word ‘analyses’ appears in the A and B criteria but not the in the C, D and E criteria. Think about what this tells you about the response. Consider what this tells you about what you need to do.

Table 16 – reflection notes

|  |
| --- |
| Notes |
|  |

1. Repeat this process for each bullet point within the marking criteria.

## Phase 2, activity 9 – exploring the purpose of an extended response

1. In the table below, rank the statement from most true (1) to least true (4).

Table 17 – the purpose of an essay

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Statement | Rank 1 to 4 |
| The purpose of an extended response is for teachers to test who has read the text. |  |
| The purpose of an extended response is to present complex ideas about a text. |  |
| The purpose of an extended response is for students to demonstrate what they know about a text. |  |
| The purpose of an extended response is to convince readers of a particular point of view. |  |

## Phase 2, resource 5 – developing a thesis statement

The following table offers suggested strategies for supporting students to develop a thesis statement in response to the question:

* How does Nowra create characters that provoke a response in ‘The Index Cards’?

Table 18 – strategies for developing a thesis statement

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Example |
| Highlighting keywords  Build a sentence around the identified keywords with a focus on:   * writing in the passive voice * positioning the conceptual focus at the beginning of the sentence * establishing a personal response to the question by reframing the keywords of the question. | **How** does Nowra **create characters** that **provoke a response** in ‘The Index Cards’?  Characters are created in texts to emotionally move a reader in some way.  Explore how the language changes through this process. In particular note:   * movement from active to passive voice: ‘Characters are created’ to ‘Nowra create characters’ * movement of the key conceptual understanding to the beginning of the sentence ‘Characters’ * narrowing of the focus that reflects a personal engagement with the question and personal voice where ‘provoke a response’ is narrowed to ‘emotionally move a reader’. |
| Substituting synonyms | * How – in what ways * Create – compose, construct * Provoke – prompt, elicit * Response – reaction   Nowra masterfully constructs an engaging character in Gladys who elicits an empathetic reaction from the reader. |
| Creating questions  Brainstorm a series of questions in response to the question or statement. Answer the best of these questions in short sentences. Draw a thesis statement from the answers. | * What language devices are used in the core text? * What sorts of characters does Nowra create? * How do readers feel about these characters? * How do readers feel about the text? * Why does Nowra create an unlikable protagonist?   Nowra creates authentic and complex characters that evoke contradictory emotions from the reader as the story develops. |
| Use specific word limits  Students write a thesis statement of exactly 20 words. | The engaging and authentic characters that Nowra constructs challenge readers to consider that initial dislike can be replaced with understanding. |
| Use a formula such as ‘Topic plus controlling idea’  This activity can be done as a mix and match activity to support students to develop their own personal thesis. | Topic:   * Characters are created in texts.   Controlling idea:   * Engaging and complex characters are essential for a reader to connect with a narrative. * Characters emotionally move readers. * Point of view can be privileged.   Thesis statement:  Characters are created in texts to emotionally move readers.  Characters that are created in texts must be complex and engaging if the reader is to connect with the narrative. |

## Core formative task 2 – developing a thesis

**Student note:** **Core formative task 2 – developing a thesis** is designed to support you to develop a line of argument in response to a text.

1. Your teacher will model deconstructing sample question:

‘Complex characters create engaging reading experiences.’

To what extent to you agree with this statement considering your reading experience of Louis Nowra’s ‘The Index Cards’?

1. Your teacher will model using the deconstructed question to develop a thesis statement using ‘The Index Cards’.
2. Work in pairs or a small group to deconstruct a second question:

How does Nowra create characters that provoke a response in ‘The Index Cards’?

1. From the deconstruction, each member of the group will develop a thesis in response to the question.
2. Discuss with your group which is the most effective thesis and why this is the case. You may choose to edit and refine the thesis chosen by your group to improve it further.
3. The final thesis will be displayed on the classroom walls and groups will participate in a gallery walk to engage with the work of your peers.
4. Use sticky notes provided by your teacher to leave feedback using the TAG structure:
5. T – tell something that you really liked. Explain why you liked it.
6. A – ask a question to better understand the work presented.
7. G – give a suggestion to help make the work presented even better.
8. Use the feedback provided by your peers to edit and refine the thesis statement provided by your group.
9. Submit your thesis statement for teacher feedback.

# Phase 3 – discovering and engaging analytically with the core text

The ‘discovering and engaging analytically with the core text’ phase facilitates a strong initial personal connection to the text. In this phase, students are introduced to the core text through a range of different reading strategies. They draw on their learning from earlier phases to investigate key elements of narrative, point of view and characterisation by examining key extracts from the text. This will support students to gain an appreciation of the ways different elements of a novel, such as plot, setting and character, combine to create cohesive layers of meaning. They move from an initial engagement, towards a deeper analysis of how textual features can be manipulated to position the reader. Students consider how the elements of narrative structure, such as Bildungsroman and focalisation, function to engage readers.

Students will develop and refine their language analysis skills as they deepen their understanding of how writers use language to purposefully construct engaging, dynamic and complex characters. They will experiment with elements of narrative to deepen their understanding of how the structure of a novel functions.

## Phase 3, resource 1 – facilitating a gallery walk and chalk talk

**Teacher note**: this resource uses the rhetorical questions posed within the prologue of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* to introduce students to the text’s larger, philosophical ideas. If you are using a different text that does not include a prologue such as this, you may need to create your own philosophical questions connected to the text to facilitate this activity.

The instructions outlined below have been adapted from **Chapter 3 of *Tools for Teaching Conceptual Understanding, Secondary: Designing Lessons and Assessments for Deep Learning* (Stern et al 2017).** Modify the size of student groups, number of poster papers used and timing to suit the needs of your class.

**Preparation**

* The classroom space may need to be rearranged to allow for students to move around with ease.
* Source several large pieces of poster paper. Each question from the epigraph should be written on a separate sheet.
* Organise students into groups of no more than 3.

**Instructions**

1. Set up the poster papers around the classroom. Ensure the space around each poster is accessible to allow for multiple students to write on the paper at the same time. Explain that the purpose of this task is to explore ideas and outline what students can expect from the text.
2. Assign each group a poster as a starting point and establish a route that each group will follow to make their way around the room.
3. At their first poster, students should spend a few minutes thinking about the rhetorical question from the epigraph and then write a thoughtful response to the question. Students should sign their name to their response. Remind students to be mindful of their handwriting so their responses can be easily read.
4. Prompt students to move as a group to a new poster. At each subsequent poster, students should start by reading what their peers have written and then respond. Students should respond directly to one another, either by agreeing, adding on, disagreeing with a reason or asking a question. The goal is to explore each of the questions through a written conversation. You may like to have the following sentence starters displayed to support students:
5. I agree with Student X and would like to add that ...
6. I disagree, Student Y, because ...
7. Student Z’s comments makes me wonder ...
8. Once all groups have had the opportunity to respond to all poster papers, they should return to their starting point and read the peer responses.
9. To consolidate, ask one member of each group to share with the class the most common, unique or interesting ideas they found once they returned to their starting question.

## Phase 3, resource 2 – reading the core text

**Teacher note**: the reading strategies in this resource are drawn from Chapter 7: Practical strategies for closing the reading gap within *Closing the Reading Gap* (Quigley 2020). Select from these strategies strategically, taking into account the context of the students in your class, to engage with the core prose fiction text.

Table 19 – reading strategies

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strategy and description | Benefits of strategy | Suggestion for use from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* |
| Individual, silent reading  Students read the text independently and silently. This could be used in both the classroom or at home. | * Students are able to practise their reading skills, pace and fluency without being interrupted or having to interact with peers. * Independent reading at home enables additional class time to be allocated to building conceptual understanding. * Individual reading in class provides an opportunity for teachers to assess and provide support on an individual basis. | * Students could be set sections of the book to read at home between classes. This will allow the teacher to focus on key chapters or excerpts in class. * Students could read sections individually in class and complete comprehension questions as a way to formatively assess their reading skills. |
| Teacher-led whole-class reading  The teacher reads the text aloud to the class with the appropriate degree of fluency. | * Students are able to engage with the text through both reading and listening modes, and the teacher is able to model how verbal expression and intonation should be determined by the written features of the text. * A teacher reading can preface an exploration of the specific language forms and features used, and conceptual representations communicated through significant chapters or sections of the text. * This strategy is beneficial when applied to sections of a text with challenging or complex vocabulary. | * The teacher could read Chapter 1 of Part 1 and engage the class in a discussion, using **Phase 3, resource 6 – annotations of the opening chapter**, about the ways that Aristotle’s characterisation is immediately established. * The teacher could read Chapter 10 of Part 2: Sparrows Falling From the Sky, where Aristotle reads from and then writes in his journal. The teacher could model how sections from a journal could be read, and this could engender a conversation about the epistolary features of the text that become more prevalent through Part 4. |
| Student-read as part of whole-class reading  Students take turns to read sections of the text, either in a sequence around the class or via teacher selection. | * Students have the opportunity to engage in the text using a range of modes – reading, listening and speaking. * Teachers have an opportunity to formatively assess the reading skills of students. * Teacher can strategically control the reading through selection of students, or by interjecting at key points to pose comprehension questions verbally, or by commenting on specific authorial language and structural choices. | * The whole class could share the reading of the opening 3 chapters of Part 2, where Aristotle is quite sick and his parents are looking after him. This would provide an opportunity for the teacher to interject and discuss the distinct differences in the characterisation of Aristotle’s mother and father, and their relationship with their son. * The whole class could share the reading of Chapters 12–14 in Part 5. This would provide an opportunity for the teacher to explore the subplots regarding Bernardo and Ophelia. It also could provide an opportunity to explore the consistent characterisation of Aristotle’s mother as accepting, and loving family regardless of sexual orientation. |
| Paired reading  Students read sections of the text aloud in pairs. This reading could be divided by students reading alternating paragraphs. | * Students have the opportunity to develop their reading aloud skills in an environment with less focus on the reader than in a whole-class reading. * Students can explore specific sections of a text such as a dialogue-heavy section to develop an understanding of elements of characterisation such as character voice and the relationships between the characters. | * In pairs, students could read the dialogue between Aristotle and Dante in Chapter 7 of Part 1, with the student allocated to Aristotle also reading the first-person narration. This will allow for an understanding of the burgeoning relationship and ease of conversation between the characters. * In pairs, students could read the letters exchanged by Aristotle and Dante in Chapters 13 and 17 of Part 4. This will allow for a discussion about the characters’ points of view, and the impact of the epistolary form in enabling audiences access to multiple points of view. |
| Choral reading  The class reads an extract or passage together aloud and in unison. | * Students develop an awareness of reading with appropriate pace and intonation. * Less-skilled readers can practise reading aloud to develop fluency without being inhibited by being the lone voice. | This reading strategy may be more beneficial when reading a text with an expected cadence or pace, such as poetry. However, some extracts where this approach may be beneficial for this novel include:   * the opening pages of Chapter 18 of Part 4. This contains a list, written by Ari, about what his life involves. A series of brackets are used and choral reading could be used to develop awareness on how the use of brackets impacts intonation when reading text. * the opening paragraph of Chapter 1 of Part 4: Remember the Rain. This could lead to a discussion about how the repetition and anaphora of the word ‘summer’ influence the way this paragraph is read. |

## Phase 3, resource 3 – exit tickets

**Teacher note**: the exit tickets in this resource adapt some of the strategies provided in the Digital Learning Selector’s [Exit tickets](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/543?clearCache=f2fc7ddf-ac2b-bc93-48bb-b2c86d51ad0) card. These could be used at numerous times throughout the program after students use a specific reading strategy to engage with the text. Teachers can use student responses here to reflect on what specific reading strategies their students identify as being effective and which ones pose challenges.

**Rose, bud, thorn**

This exit ticket below requires students to reflect on the successes of specific reading strategies.

Table 20 – rose, bud thorn exit ticket

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question | Response |
| Strategy  What reading strategy are you reflecting on? |  |
| Rose  What is a success or a highlight of this reading strategy? |  |
| Bud  What is something you are looking forward to trying when using this strategy in the future? |  |
| Thorn  What is a challenge you experienced when using this strategy? |  |

**3-2-1**

**This exit ticket below requires students to reflect on and evaluate their learning and challenges faced in response to a reading strategy used to engage with the text.**

Table 21 – 3, 2, 1 exit ticket

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question | Response |
| Strategy  What reading strategy are you reflecting on? |  |
| 3  What are 3 things you learned about the process of reading today? |  |
| 2  List 2 questions you have about this reading strategy. |  |
| 1  Give one reason why knowing how to use this reading strategy is important. |  |

**Traffic light reflection**

**This exit ticket below requires students to reflect on the challenges and successes experienced when using a reading strategy.**

Table 22 – traffic lights exit ticket

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question | Response |
| Strategy  What reading strategy are you reflecting on? |  |
| Red light  What part of engaging with this reading strategy do you find the most challenging? |  |
| Orange light  What is one thing you can work on when using this reading strategy? |  |
| Green light  What is one thing you feel comfortable about in relation to this strategy? |  |

## Phase 3, activity 1 – reading journal

**Teacher note**: the prompts provided for reflection in this reading journal activity are examples only, and are focused on the driving concepts of characterisation, point of view and narrative. Teachers may wish to adjust these prompts as necessary dependent on the core text, or dependent on the part or chapter that is being journalled. The reading journal template provided in Figure 6 has been generated using Canva to provide students with the option to complete the journal digitally, but there are many templates available that can be provided to students.

**Student note:** *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* is split into 6 parts, so you may want to update your reading journal at the end of each part. Alternatively, you may like to update your reading journal after finishing a chapter that has a particular impact on you. A reading journal will help you to identify and note down significant moments of the text, which will make the process of locating relevant examples for the analytical response you will compose for the formal assessment task much easier. It also provides you with an opportunity to reflect on how your thoughts about and response to the novel and its characters evolve as you read the text.

Use the back of your English book, a separate small notebook or the template in **Phase 3, resource 4 – reading journal template**, to reflect on your reading experiences at key moments in the novel. Use the questions below as a guide for what to include in your reading journal.

1. Narrative development – what key events have happened in the novel since you last updated your journal? Do these events make you more invested in the story being told?
2. Characterisation – what information have we learned about Aristotle, or Dante, or the other characters since you last updated your journal? What are your opinions on the characters, and have they changed?
3. Point of view – whose point of view has been revealed since you last updated your journal? How has their point of view been shared? For example, is dialogue used to present a character’s point of view? Are there characters whose points of view you would like to understand better?
4. Form – what structural features have been used since you last updated your journal? For example, have letters or diary entries been used to provide information about the characters?
5. Evocative language – are there any particular sentences that resonate with you, or where the author has used a specific language feature that stands out? What are some specific sentences and language features that you think are important to the larger message of the novel?
6. Personal response – are you enjoying the novel at this point of reading? What questions do you have?
7. Predicting – what do you think is going to come next?

## Phase 3, resource 4 – reading journal template

**Teacher note**: A pdf version of the reading journal template is also available on the [Planning, programming and assessing English 7–10 webpage](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/english/planning-programming-and-assessing-english-7-10) alongside the Year 10, Term 1 – Novel voices documents.

Figure 6 – reading journal template

A reading journal template. Students are provided space to create notes under the following headings:
- narrative development
- characterisation
- point of view
- evocative language
- form
- personal response
- predicting.

## Phase 3, activity 2 – 3, 2, 1 chapter summary

**Teacher note**: this strategy for developing strategic readers is adapted from page 168 of *Closing the Reading Gap* (Quigley 2022). For a core text with longer chapters, this task could be divided between the students in the class for each student to complete for one chapter. For a text such as *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, which has several short chapters, this activity could be applied to key chapters read either in class or assigned for reading at home.

1. Use the table below to record information about the chapter that you have read. Complete the table by recording:
2. 3 essential points to consider or remember. These could be points connected to character, setting or plot
3. 2 key vocabulary items to know, use and remember
4. 1 main idea to understand or explain, possibly connected to the themes of the text.

Table 23 – 3, 2, 1 chapter summary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 3, 2, 1 instructions | Student response |
| 3 essential points to remember |  |
| 2 key vocabulary items to know, use and remember |  |
| 1 main idea to understand or explain, possibly connected to the themes of the text |  |

An example has been provided below for Chapter 4 of Part 1 of the text, where Aristotle and Dante first meet.

Table 24 – 3, 2, 1 chapter summary for Chapter 4 of Part 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 3, 2, 1 instructions | Modelled answer |
| 3 essential points to remember | * Aristotle meets Dante at the swimming pool and Dante offers to teach him how to swim. * Aristotle and Dante bond over literature, the shared historical references in their names and their shared Mexican heritage. * Aristotle’s friendship with Dante is not like any other friendship he has had before. |
| 2 key vocabulary items to know, use and remember | * ‘Vietnam’ (Alire Sáenz:14) – this is a reference specifically to the Vietnam war, in which Aristotle’s father fought. * ‘stupid and inadequate … mostly invisible’ (p 22) – these are words that Aristotle uses to describe himself. |
| 1 main idea to understand or explain, possibly connected to the themes of the text | * Aristotle makes multiple references to being uncomfortable around other boys and not fitting in. He mentions feeling a sense of discomfort in the showers and says when describing the lifeguards that ‘guys really made me uncomfortable’ (Alire Sáenz:16). Later in the chapter, in reference to the Boy Scouts, the narration includes ‘I always kept my distance from other boys. I never felt like I was part of their world.’ (p 22) |

## Phase 3, activity 3 – 6-word summaries

**Teacher note**: this strategy for developing strategic readers is adapted from page 168 of *Closing the Reading Gap* (Quigley 2022). This strategy could be done for specific chapters, each of the 6 parts of the book, or for the entire novel itself. The table in this activity provides instructions for students to complete this task for chapters, but the activity instructions could be easily adjusted. Additional rows can be added to the table as required, dependent on how many different summaries you want students to write. Alternately, they could write their summaries in their books.

For key chapters in the book, you will summarise the events of the chapter into 6 words. Your summaries can be literal or figurative, but they should capture the overall essence of the chapter. You could choose to use some of the language from the text in your summaries. Complete this task by:

1. identifying the chapter in the first column of the table
2. writing your 6-word summary in the second column of the table
3. **extension activity** – in pairs or small groups, select some of your 6-word summaries and read them aloud. The other members in your group then try to identify which chapter you have summarised.

Table 25 – 6-word summaries

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chapter | 6-word summary |
| Part 1, Chapter 1 | Aristotle is fifteen, bored and miserable. |
| Part 1, Chapter 2 | Mother and teenager exchange sassy dialogue. |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Phase 3, activity 4 – gist, analysis, synthesis, elaboration

**Teacher note**: the strategy for developing strategic readers is adapted from pages 170–171 of *Closing the Reading Gap* (Quigley 2022). This Gist, Analysis, Synthesis, Elaboration (GASE) strategy requires students to read a section of a text 4 times, responding to it in slightly different ways after each reading, The shorter chapters of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* provide ample opportunity to apply this strategy. This strategy would be best used when exploring a significant chapter in class. There is also an opportunity to experiment with different reading strategies here. For example for the first reading, teachers may choose to read the text to the class, followed by a student-read whole-class reading for the second reading, and then individual reading for the third and fourth readings.

For this activity, you will read a chapter 4 times, and respond to that chapter in 4 different ways.

1. The first reading is to support you to ascertain the **gist** of the text. After reading the chapter once, fill out the first row in the table by summarising what happens.
2. The second reading is to support you to **analyse** the text. After reading the chapter for a second time, identify the main language forms and features and explain how they help to communicate meaning.
3. The third reading is to support you to **synthesise** the main ideas in the chapter. After reading the chapter for a third time, explain what main ideas or messages are communicated through the chapter and how the language forms and features identified in your second reading support this communication.
4. The fourth reading is to support you to **elaborate** on the ideas that emerge in this chapter. After reading the chapter for the fourth time, elaborate on how the ideas communicated through this chapter build upon or connect to the ideas communicated through other parts of the novel.

Table 26 – gist, analysis, synthesis, elaboration

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reading instruction | Student notes |
| First reading – gist  After reading the chapter for the first time, summarise what happens. |  |
| Second reading – analysis  After reading the chapter for the second time, identify what key language forms, features and structures are used, and explain how they impact on meaning. |  |
| Third reading – synthesis  After reading the chapter for the third time, synthesise the information and language forms, features and structures by explaining the main ideas or messages that are communicated. |  |
| Fourth reading – elaboration  After reading the chapter for the fourth time, **elaborate on how the ideas communicated through this chapter build upon or connect to the ideas communicated through other parts of the novel.** |  |

## Phase 3, resource 5 – sample GASE table

**Teacher note**: the sample GASE table in this resource has been created for teacher use as an example of how to complete this sort of activity. It focuses specifically on Chapter 14 of Part 5, so would therefore not be recommended for distribution until students have read this part of the text. This specific chapter has been selected as it is the one in which Aristotle learns the truth behind his Aunt Ophelia’s relationship with her partner Franny. The acceptance by Aristotle’s parents of Ophelia and Fanny’s relationship foreshadows their acceptance of Aristotle’s sexuality in Part 6 of the novel.

Table 27 – sample GASE table

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reading instruction | Student notes |
| First reading – gist  After reading the chapter for the first time, summarise what happens. | Aristotle has a conversation with his mother and father after his Aunt Ophelia’s funeral. He asks his parents why other family members didn’t attend the funeral and his mother reveals that it was because they didn’t approve of her sexuality, nor her relationship with her partner Franny.  The chapter ends with Aristotle’s parents saying that they would like to share some photographs of his brother with him when they return home. |
| Second reading – analysis  After reading the chapter for the second time, identify what key language forms, features and structures are used, and explain how they impact on meaning. | Dialogue is the main language feature used throughout this chapter, and it is through Aristotle’s father’s dialogue ‘if it had mattered to us, do you think we’d have let you come and stay with her?’ (p 286) that the accepting nature of Aristotle’s parents is reinforced.  Emotive language is also used to convey the impact of the conversation on Aristotle. An example of this emotive language, coupled with a simile, is ‘I nodded, but there weren’t any words and the silent tears kept running down my face like there was a river inside me’ (p 286). |
| Third reading – synthesis  After reading the chapter for the third time, synthesise the information and language forms, features and structures by explaining the main ideas or messages that are communicated. | This chapter positions the responder to support the love and acceptance demonstrated by Aristotle’s parents towards people of diverse sexualities and identities. Their point of view is contrasted with and privileged above that of their family members who chose to not attend the funeral.  The chapter also focuses on the importance of open communication with loved ones and the sharing of difficult memories and experiences. This is particularly evident in the dialogue about Bernardo and Aristotle’s response to these difficult memories.. |
| Fourth reading – elaboration  After reading the chapter for the fourth time, **elaborate on how the ideas communicated through this chapter build upon or connect to the ideas communicated through other parts of the novel.** | The love and acceptance demonstrated towards Ophelia mimics the love and support that Aristotle and Dante receive from their parents. It is clear at this point of the novel that Aristotle’s parents are aware of the nature of the relationship between Aristotle and Dante, even if Aristotle is not quite aware of his own feelings yet. Their open communication of their attitude towards Ophelia would also serve the purpose of openly demonstrating their acceptance of queer identities to support Aristotle as he comes to terms with his own attraction towards Dante.  The pledge to be more open about Bernardo also reinforces the novel’s focus on the importance of conversation. Aristotle is characterised as very private and as unwilling and afraid to share too much of himself with others. The novel implies that this is partially learned behaviour from his parents’ unwillingness to acknowledge Bernardo’s existence, and his father’s inability to talk about his experiences in Vietnam. This promise to share photographs of Bernardo serves as a precursor for a more open dialogue within the family. |

## Phase 3, activity 5 – content quiz for Part 2

**Teacher note**: the questions in this quiz focus on Part 2 of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* – ‘Sparrows Falling from the Sky’. The questions in this activity formatively assess literal, inferential and evaluative levels of comprehension. For more information on these 3 levels of comprehension, see the [Comprehension webpage](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/readingviewing/Pages/litfocuscomprehension.aspx#link100:~:text=in%20the%20classroom.-,Literal%2C%20inferential%20and%20evaluative%20levels%20of%20comprehension,-When%20readers%20read) of the Victorian Department of Education’s Literacy Teaching Toolkit. The NSW Department of Education’s website contains syllabus-aligned resources to support reading for [literal comprehension](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/teaching-strategies/stage-5/reading/stage-5-literal-comprehension), [inference](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/teaching-strategies/stage-5/reading/stage-5-inference-) and a text’s [main idea and theme](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/teaching-strategies/stage-5/reading/stage-5-main-idea-and-theme).

**Literal questions**

**Teacher note: these questions are predominantly ‘what’ questions and require students to be able to identify information that is easily located in the text.**

1. The chapter starts with Aristotle becoming sick with a fever. Which 3 people keep him company in his room as he deals with his sickness?

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| --- |
|  |
|  |

1. What does Aristotle read in this section, and who wrote it?

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |

1. What information does Dante reveal to Aristotle at the end of this part of the novel?

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |

**Inferential questions**

**Teacher note: These questions are predominantly ‘why’ questions and require students to interpret the actions of characters based on the information provided in the text.**

1. **Why do you think Aristotle has bad dreams where he is looking for his father?**

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| --- |
|  |
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1. **What emotions and thoughts motivate Aristotle’s mother in the conversation where she says to him ‘you don’t have any friends’ (**p 69)**? What makes you say that?**

|  |
| --- |
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1. Why is Aristotle unable to share the contents of his dreams with Dante?

|  |
| --- |
|  |
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|  |

**Evaluative questions**

**Teacher note: these questions are ‘how’ questions and require students to consider the conceptual understandings developed from their reading of this part of the novel.**

1. Dante reveals that his favourite song is ‘The Long and Winding Road’ by The Beatles. How does this song title align with Dante’s characterisation, and how does it contrast with Aristotle’s?

|  |
| --- |
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1. How does this part of the book communicate the shame that Aristotle feels about himself?

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| --- |
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|  |

1. How is the relationship that Aristotle has with his father distinctly different to the relationship that Dante has with his? Why do you think Alire Sáenz has crafted these 2 distinctly different relationships?

|  |
| --- |
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|  |

## Phase 3, activity 6 – cloze passage for Part 3

**Teacher note**: this cloze passage focuses on Part 3 of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* – ‘The End of Summer’. It provides some information about plot and about the conceptual understandings developed within this part of the novel. Teachers may wish to use this as a guide to replicate cloze passages for the other parts of the novel, or for key chapters, or for a different core text. In the close passage below, blank spaces have been left for students to put their own answers. This increases the ability of this activity to authentically assess student understanding of the text. Teachers may wish to provide students with a word or phrase bank for students who require additional support.

1. Complete the close passage below by selecting words or groups of words that will make the sentences make sense.

**Part 3 – ‘The End of Summer’**

Part 3 begins with Aristotle waking up in a hospital room and realising \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Dante visits Aristotle regularly in the hospital. He feels a range of emotions, including \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as a result of his role in the accident. To show his gratitude to Aristotle, Dante gives him his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but Aristotle’s reaction is to throw it across the room once Dante leaves. In contrast to all of the dialogue exchanged between Aristotle and his other visitors, when his father visits they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In response to the accident, Aristotle’s mother talks to Dante’s mother, and they agree that it might be a good idea for their sons to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

When Aristotle returns home, he is filled with feelings of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In particular, he feels \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ towards Dante, although he doesn’t understand why. Some of the reasons Aristotle might feel this way towards Dante include \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

This part of the novel involves some additional significant events in relation to the narrative development. Aristotle’s parents reveal to him that they intend on getting him \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for his upcoming birthday, and this makes him feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It is also at the end of this part of the novel that Dante and the Quintanas \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and this makes Aristotle feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## Phase 3, activity 7 – intertextuality in the opening chapter

**Teacher note:** this activity positions students to see how intertextuality is used to inform characterisation within the opening chapter of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* If you are using a different text that does not include intertextuality, you may choose to focus on a different language feature to facilitate this activity. The definition and additional information about intertextuality below has been adapted from the [Department of Education website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/english/textual-concepts/intertextuality). Additional information about the different types of intertextuality can be found within Phase 2 of the [Shining a new (stage) light – Year 9, Term 2](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/english/english-curriculum-resources-k-12/english-7-10-resources/stage-5-year-9-term-2-shining-a-new-stage-light) program. The links to the YouTube videos and the relevant timestamps in this activity have been included in the program.

Intertextuality refers to the interrelationships among texts that shape a text’s meaning. There are different types of intertextuality. The one utilised in the opening chapter of the novel is explicit intertextuality. Explicit intertextuality alludes specifically to another text through quotation or reference. These allusions to other texts add layers of meaning that, in this case, assist in the characterisation of Aristotle.

In this activity you will engage with the 3 songs mentioned in the opening chapter of the novel and consider how they are used to develop our understanding of Aristotle’s character.

1. Think about the title of each song listed in the first column of the table below. Write what you think the song will be about (lyrics) and what you think it will sound like (beat, tone, instruments) based only on the title.
2. Listen to each song carefully when it is played by your teacher. As you listen, make notes in the second column.
3. Record what you now think the song is about, after listening to it, in the third column.
4. Write why you think each song has been used in the opening chapter’s initial characterisation of Aristotle in the final column.

Table 28 – intertextuality in the opening chapter

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Song title and link to video | How I think the song will sound and what it will be about based on the title | What I think the song is about after listening to it | Why I think this song has been used to initiate the characterisation of Aristotle |
| Heart – Alone |  |  |  |
| The Lone Ranger Opening Theme Song |  |  |  |
| Los Lobos – La Bamba (music video) |  |  |  |

1. Reflect on your notes in the table above and write a paragraph in your books in response to the question below:

How effective are the intertextual musical allusions in developing the reader’s understanding of Aristotle in the opening chapter?

## Core text extract 1 – the opening chapter of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*

**Teacher note**: this chapter is provided in the core texts booklet. For licensing reasons the resource booklet containing the complete materials is available to staff only.

## Phase 3, activity 8 – annotating the opening chapter

**Teacher note**: this activity is based on the opening chapter of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. This chapter is provided in the core texts booklet. The teacher should include the entire text from this chapter into the table before distributing this activity to students.

In this activity you will develop an understanding of how language features have been used by Alire Sáenz in the characterisation of Aristotle.

1. Re-read Chapter 1. It has been divided into sections in the first column of the table below.
2. Read the text in each row and note any language features you can identify in the second column.
3. Analyse the use of each language feature, focusing on how it characterises Aristotle. What does the reader learn about him? How does it help the reader get to know him? What does it make the reader think about him?

**Helpful hint**

Possible language features:

* specific adjectives and verbs used to create tone
* intertextual references or allusions
* hyperbole
* sentence structures of varying length.

Table 29 – annotating the opening chapter

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ****Chapter one**** | ****Language features**** | ****Annotation and analysis**** |
| ‘ONE SUMMER NIGHT … my open window.’ (p 5) |  |  |
| ‘My hand reached … know how long …’ (p 5) |  |  |
| ‘I was fifteen … I was miserable.’ (p 5) |  |  |
| ‘As far as I … miserable as I was.’ (p 5) |  |  |
| ‘The DJ was saying … “La Bamba” by Los Lobos.’ (pp 5–6) |  |  |
| ‘”La Bamba.” I could … was really sad.’ (p 6) |  |  |

## Phase 3, resource 6 – annotations of the opening chapter

**Teacher note**: this resource is based on the opening chapter of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. This chapter is provided in the core texts booklet. Use or modify these annotations as required with your class. You may need to explicitly teach and define some of the language forms and features identified in the middle column of the table below.

Some suggestions on how this resource could be modified for use include:

* providing a copy of the table that includes the language features
* co-writing annotations and using the gradual release of responsibility model (I do, we do, you do)
* providing annotations as a cloze exercise. Some suggested words and phrases have been bolded in the annotations
* using complex sentences to model analytical writing structures, for example the sentence starting with ‘While’ in the first annotation row could be used to model how nuanced discussion points can be created
* exploration of how noun groups and verb structures can be used to convey a strong personal voice. For example the use of ‘notable musical artists’ in the opening sentence of the second annotation row indicates a knowledge of popular culture and the use of ‘anchor’ and ‘mirror’ convey a strong understanding of why the inclusion of music is significant for contextualising time and character circumstance.

Table 30 – annotations of the opening chapter

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ****Chapter 1**** | ****Language features**** | ****Annotation analysis**** |
| ‘ONE SUMMER NIGHT … my open window.’ (p 5) | Melancholy tone, achieved through verbs such as ‘threw’, ‘lay’ and ‘poured’  Personification | The opening lines set the **tone** for Aristotle’s emotional state and attitude, with this **melancholy** tone colouring much of the first section of this novel. While Aristotle hopes for a ‘different’ world signal the desire for something more, his passiveness as he ‘**lay there’** and allows the personified heat to pour over him makes clear to the reader that he is not ready or willing to take any action to bring about a change in his circumstances. |
| ‘My hand reached … know how long …’ (p 5) | Intertextuality  Anaphora | The use of **intertextuality** through references to notable musical artists and tracks acts here to anchor us in the context of the 1980s and to **mirror** Aristotle’s circumstances. The song title ‘Alone’ and band name ‘Heart’ are thoughtful choices by the author here as we are realising that Aristotle and his heart feel **alone**. The lyrics of the song **foreshadow** the relationship with Dante that Aristotle will explore but, at this point, the idea of longing for someone is ‘not [Aristotle’s] favourite topic’ as he has ‘always got by on [his] own’. The use of anaphora in the **repetition** of ‘Not my favourite’ let the reader know he is not **satisfied** with this and that it could be a source of anger that will colour his actions moving forward. |
| ‘I was fifteen … I was miserable.’ (p 5) | Anaphora  Simple declarative sentences | Anaphora is again used at the beginning of this novel to clearly establish how Aristotle thinks and feels about himself at this time in his life. The simple declarative sentences with the repetition of ‘**I was**’ let readers know that Aristotle is unhappy, unsatisfied and uninterested. |
| ‘As far as I … miserable as I was.’ (p 5) | Hyperbole  Personification | The **hyperbole** of the sun and sky here and Aristotle’s comparison of himself to the colourless sky reinforces his melancholy outlook. His comparison of himself to these larger than life aspects of the universe also signal that Aristotle doesn’t feel as though he can do anything about his current situation, he feels **hopeless** and **lacking control** in his life. This lack of control over his life and his misery at this is a **constant** thread throughout most of the novel. |
| ‘The DJ was saying … “La Bamba” by Los Lobos.’ (pp 5–6) | Sarcasm, achieved through adjectives such as ‘annoying, obvious’ and the rhetorical question  Allusion | Aristotle’s annoyance at the DJ’s positivity and the upbeat ‘Lone Ranger tune’ is clear in his **sarcastic** commentary and his disdain at being catered to as if he were a child. Aristotle sees himself as more mature than that, he is a teenager with the weight of the world on his shoulders.  The references to ‘Waylon Jennings’, ‘Buddy Holly’ and ‘Richie Valens’ continue to serve as a reference to the 1980s and Aristotle’s strong opinion towards the mention of country singer ‘Waylon Jennings’ on a rock n’ roll station give us an insight into his taste in music. He is a rock n’ roll fan, a genre which is synonymous with rebellion, risk taking, change and rule breaking. |
| ‘“La Bamba.” I could … was really sad.’ (p 6) | Allusion  Intertextuality | It is interesting to note Aristotle’s enjoyment of “La Bamba” (made clear through his ability to ‘cope’ (p 6) with it and his physical reaction, tapping his feet and nodding his head) as its positive and upbeat lyrics and tone do not match descriptions of his emotional state. Readers can question whether he feels a positive connection through a shared heritage or the ‘typical’ teen enjoyment of rock n’ roll.  Instead of being able to simply enjoy the song, Aristotle is quickly taken into dark ruminations on Valens’s death. Aristotle’s comment on the music being over when it had just begun is a reference to Valens’s untimely death just months after his career had taken off, signalling for Aristotle that positivity doesn't last long and builds in the fear of having something good, then losing it. His **inability** to enjoy this song for what it is reflects the weight of the emotions and thoughts he carries. This makes clear that Aristotle is someone who is unable to enjoy life at face value, there is always a dark cloud over the moment. |

## Phase 3, activity 9 – characterisation in the opening chapter

**Teacher note:** this activity supports students in reflecting upon their understanding of how character is established and has the potential to position the reader. These questions focus on the epigraph and opening chapter of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* If you are using a different text, you may need to adjust these questions to facilitate this activity. You may also wish to use these questions in relation to Dante at the end of Chapter 4, or for other key chapters throughout the novel that develop Aristotle’s characterisation.

After reading the opening chapter, complete the questions below in your books:

1. At the end of the opening chapter, what do we know about Aristotle?
2. How does Aristotle see the world around him? What evidence can you find to support this?
3. How has Alire Sáenz used language form and features to establish this information?
4. What do you, as a reader, think of Aristotle?
5. How has Alire Sáenz positioned you to think or feel this way?
6. Reflecting upon the epigraph activity and your close reading of the opening chapter, how do you think Aristotle will be used by Alire Sáenz to explore the main ideas of the novel?

## Phase 3, activity 10 – getting to know Benjamin Alire Sáenz

**Teacher note:** the link to the article and YouTube video in question 1 of this activity have been included in the program.

In this activity you will learn about the author of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe,* Benjamin Alire Sáenz, and how the voice of an author is different to the voice of a text.

1. Read the first 2 questions and answers from the ‘Q&A with Aristotle and Dante’ author Benjamin Alire Sáenz’ article from the Young Writers website and view the YouTube video, ‘Benjamin A. Sáenz Aristotle & Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe’ and answer the questions below in your books:
2. What contextual factors do you think will influence Alire Sáenz's creation of authorial voice?
3. What might be some of the main ideas Alire Sáenz explores in this novel?
4. Why do you think Alire Sáenz created this text?
5. How might Alire Sáenz's voice influence Aristotle's voice?
6. In 3 to 4 sentences, summarise what you have discovered about Alire Sáenz and what impact you think this will have on the novel and the voice of Aristotle.

**Optional questions (you need to have read a significant amount of the text to answer these questions)**

1. What parallels and differences do you see between Alire Sáenz and Aristotle? How do you think the author is different to the voice of the character?
2. How and why do you think authors use their characters to represent their personal perspectives on big ideas?

## Phase 3, activity 11 – the Bildungsroman

**Teacher note:** the word ‘bildungsroman’ is translated from the German words ‘bildungs’ meaning ‘education’ or ‘formation’, and ‘roman’ meaning ‘novel’. It is usually referred to as a ‘coming-of-age’ story and focuses on a protagonist’s moral growth through childhood and young adulthood. This definition has come from Phase 3 of the **Year 7, Term 3 – Escape into the world of the novel program**.

1. Watch the YouTube video on Bildungsroman and complete the table below.

Table 31 – Cornell note taking template

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key words, comments and questions | Topic: Understanding the Bildungsroman genre  Text: Bildungsroman |
| New language and its definition (make sure the definition is relevant to the topic) |  |
| Most important ideas |  |
| Summary – what have I learnt? |  |

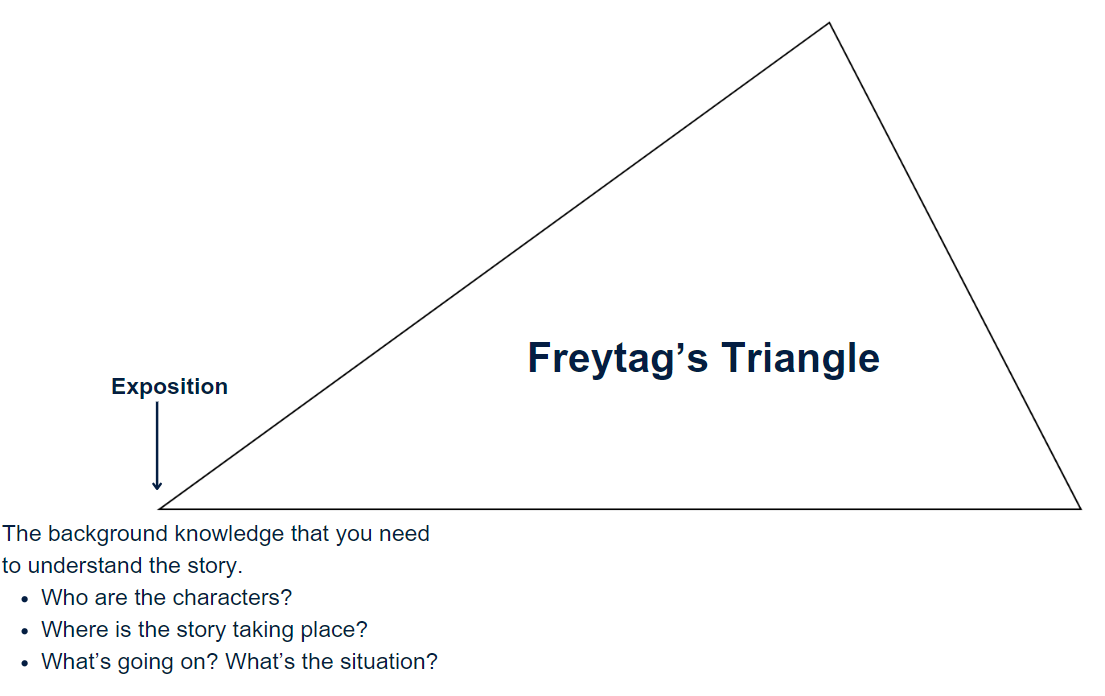
## Phase 3, activity 12 – understanding narrative structure

**Teacher note:** this activity supports students in developing their understanding of the role narrative structure serves in establishing narrative concerns and revealing characterisation. Additional resources to support the teaching or revising of character arcs can be found in **Phase 3a, activity 22 – character arcs and Phase 3b, activity 16 – character arcs** in the [Year 9, Term 4 Exploring the speculative –resource booklets part 2](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/english/english-curriculum-resources-k-12/english-7-10-resources/exploring-the-speculative-year-9-term-4) and part 3. The link to the YouTube video and the relevant timestamp in this activity has been included in the program.

In this activity you will refresh your understanding of narrative structure.

1. Watch carefully as your teacher plays the YouTube video ‘Plot structure, feat. Freytag's triangle’ and label the diagram of Freytag’s Triangle below with the different elements that make up a narrative.
2. Make notes that will assist you in remembering the purpose of each narrative element. The first one has been done for you.

Figure 7 – Freytag’s triangle



1. As you read the novel, return to the table below and record what is happening in the novel at each stage of the plot structure and how it conveys the progress of Aristotle’s character arc. The first row has been done as an example.

Table 32 – narrative structure in *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Plot structure | What is happening | Progress of Aristotle’s character arc |
| Exposition | * introduced to the 1980s context * we meet Aristotle, his mother and father (strained but loving relationship) * Aristotle is a bored and miserable teenager with no real friends (he has accepted being alone but isn’t happy about it) * Aristotle meets Dante and they strike up a tentative friendship | Awareness of the context is important to set up our expectations as readers, for example there is no social media and mobile phones are not commonplace, so we need to rethink how teenagers communicate and spend their time.  Aristotle is established as a typical melancholy teenager who is trying to navigate through life alone. He is friendless, bored and miserable.  He has loving and supportive parents but their inability to communicate about Aristotle’s older brother is a point of tension.  Aristotle and Dante’s budding friendship and Aristotle’s positivity around this relationship sets in motion the action to come. |
| Main conflict |  |  |
| Rising action |  |  |
| Climax |  |  |
| Falling action |  |  |
| Resolution or denouement |  |  |

## Phase 3, activity 13 – identifying foreshadowing, a treasure hunt

**Teacher note:** this resource supports students in developing their understanding of how foreshadowing is used in texts to establish the key concerns of the core text and indicate potential complications and character growth. Students will also explore how Alire Sáenz has used foreshadowing as a way to create dramatic irony, by allowing us insight into where Aristotle’s narrative trajectory may be headed before the character understands this himself. The following extracts have been taken from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* If you have selected a different core text, you may need to modify this task. The definition of foreshadowing in the activity below has been created by the English curriculum team. For the vocabulary building activity, students will require access to a dictionary.

**Vocabulary building**

**The terms below will help you identify how** Alire Sáenz has created foreshadowing throughout *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.*

Table 33 – vocabulary building

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Word | Definition | A sentence using the word and an example |
| Intertextuality |  |  |
| Symbol |  |  |
| Motif |  |  |

**Foreshadowing**

Foreshadowing is a language feature that composers can use as part of their development of narrative and plot. Foreshadowing involves leaving clues or hints in the earlier parts of the text to lead up to a reveal later in the text. These clues help the text’s big reveals, often during the climax in the latter stages of the text, make sense to the reader.

In *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, Alire Sáenz uses foreshadowing to create dramatic irony. Through Aristotle’s first-person point of view, the audience begins to develop an understanding of the trajectory for his character. We become aware of this before Aristotle actually realises it himself.

1. Locate and read the chapters in the novel that are referred to in the table below. A clue has been provided in the table about what foreshadowing might be included in each section.
2. As you are reading, identify and write in the third column any specific textual evidence that may be foreshadowing an event or realisation that Aristotle may make later in the novel.
3. In the fourth column, explain what this might be revealing about Aristotle to the audience at that moment in the novel, and whether Aristotle shares this same understanding.
4. In the fifth column, predict what character development this might be foreshadowing in the upcoming parts of the novel.

Table 34 – foreshadowing treasure hunt

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Search in | Clue | Section from text that demonstrates foreshadowing | What is revealed about the character to the audience that the character may not yet know about themselves? | How do you think the ideas in the extract will be developed as main ideas in the novel? |
| Part 1: The Different Rules of Summer  Chapter 4 | Aristotle cannot swim through this phase of his life yet. |  |  |  |
| Part 1: The Different Rules of Summer  Chapter 7 | In the pages of almost everyone’s lucky number you will find the start of a crush. |  |  |  |
| Part 2: Sparrows Falling from the Sky  Chapter 3 | Our parents can often tell things about us before we know them ourselves |  |  |  |
| Part 3: The End of Summer  Chapter 10 | He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me? |  |  |  |

## Phase 3, resource 7 – identifying foreshadowing sample answers

The table below is a completed version of the student activity in **Phase 3, activity 13 – identifying foreshadowing, a treasure hunt**.

Table 35 – foreshadowing treasure hunt teacher copy

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Search in | Clue | Section from text that demonstrates foreshadowing | What is revealed about the character to the audience that the character may not yet know about themselves? | How do you think the ideas t in the extract will be developed as main ideas in the novel? |
| Part 1 – The Different Rules of Summer  Chapter 4  (p 16) | Aristotle cannot swim through this phase of his life yet. | ‘Maybe life *was* just a series of phases ... I had serious problems.’ | We discover in this chapter that Aristotle has a lot of difficulty understanding males and feels a sense of discomfort around heterosexual men and with male friendships. | He meets Dante in this chapter, so I think that his discomfort around males is foreshadowing the potential challenges of this new friendship. |
| Part 1: The Different Rules of Summer  Chapter 7  (p 35) | In the pages of almost everyone’s story you will find the start of a crush. | ‘Dante you’re an intellectual. That’s who you are. Don’t be ashamed of that.’ … ‘Dante. I really liked him. I really, really liked him.’ | We learn that Aristotle is inspired and intrigued by Dante and that it goes beyond any connection that he has ever felt before. As readers, we can suspect that his feelings will extend beyond a platonic friendship, even though Aristotle does not understand this himself. | The chapter mentions ‘shame’ as a chapter and focuses on Aristotle really liking Dante, so this could be foreshadowing potential feelings of shame attached to same-sex attraction. This internal conflict could be one of the mysteries or secrets that Aristotle needs to discover how to overcome. |
| Part 2: Sparrows Falling from the Sky  Chapter 3  (pp 67–70) | Our parents can often tell things about us before we know them ourselves | From Aristotle’s mother’s dialogue:  “No matter what, Ari, my job is to care”  “I’m glad for Dante”  “I don’t think you know how loved you are” | We learn that Aristotle has struggled to make close bonds with people and with friends, and that his mother is concerned about his isolation from the world. This is something that Aristotle doesn’t quite realise yet himself. | This part could be foreshadowing how Aristotle’s mother can see that there might be more than friendship between him and Dante, and is trying to communicate that she will love and support him no matter what. |
| Part 3: The End of Summer  Chapter 10  (p 150) | He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me? | Dante’s dialogue  “Swimming and you, Ari. Those are the things I love the most.”  Aristotle’s dialogue  “I didn’t say it wasn’t true. I just said you shouldn’t say it.” | This open declaration of Dante’s can be taken in 2 ways – a declaration of love as a friend or a romantic love. The latter is suggested by the text, and Aristotle’s response is not one of denial, but one of shame. | This part could foreshadow the openness that each of the protagonists has about their attraction towards each other. |

## Phase 3, activity 14 – Aristotle’s suitcase

**Teacher note:** this activity is designed to support student understanding of how narrative structure is used to establish characterisation in *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* If you have selected a different text, you may need to adapt the activity. Students will need to return to the product they create in this activity in Phase 4. Teachers may choose to have their students create a physical suitcase (shoebox or other), a digital suitcase or a hand-drawn product.

1. Re-read Part 1 of the novel. What intertextual references, objects, symbols or motifs are employed by Alire Sáenz to establish the character of Aristotle Mendoza?
2. What do these reveal about the character of Aristotle and his place in the world?
3. If you were to pack a suitcase reflecting Aristotle’s character in the opening section of the novel, what would you include? Why?
4. Pack Aristotle’s suitcase. You could do this using a physical item such as a shoebox, or a digital document such as a PowerPoint with images, or it could be a list or drawing on a page.
5. In pairs, justify your choice of objects that you have included in the suitcase. Use evidence from the text to support your justification.
6. Write a 150 to 200 word reflection on the items you have included and how they represent the character at the beginning of his journey.

## Phase 3, activity 15 – focalisation

**Teacher note**: you may wish to adjust the nominated chapters dependent on how much of the book the class has read by the time you get to this activity.

1. Your teacher will allocate you one of the following chapters:
2. ‘The Different Rules of Summer’ (Part 1), Chapter 1
3. ‘The Different Rules of Summer’ (Part 1), Chapter 5
4. ‘The Different Rules of Summer’ (Part 1), Chapter 11
5. ‘Sparrows Falling From the Sky (Part 2) – Chapter 4
6. ‘Sparrows Falling From the Sky (Part 2) – Chapter 12
7. ‘The End of Summer (Part 3) – Chapter 1
8. ‘The End of Summer (Part 3) – Chapter 10
9. ’Letters on a Page (Part 4) – Chapter 1
10. Create a mind map in your book with the words ‘focalisation in [part name and chapter number]’ in the middle of the page. Around the outside of the mind map, make notes about the following information, relevant to your chapter:
11. Who is the focaliser?
12. What narrative voice is used?
13. What intention may Alire Sáenz have in creating this focaliser using this narrative voice?
14. What evidence supports the answers to the above?
15. Write an explanation of the effect of focalisation on the reader’s engagement with the core text.

## Core formative task 3 – exploring point of view

**Teacher note**: this task integrates **Phase 5 – engaging critically and creatively with model texts** throughout the activity. This task is designed to support students in analysing how language form and features are used to shape point of view. Students experiment with dialogue and narrative voice to deepen their understanding of how authors manipulate texts to position the reader. Through this task, students assess how the changes impact the reader’s connection to the characters. This task is designed to support a study of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. If you have selected a different core text, you may choose to adapt this task. View the [Take a Stand](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/take-a-stand) activity from the Project Zero Thinking Routine toolbox to facilitate the final activity within this core formative task.

1. With a partner, read one of the following extracts, as allocated by your teacher:
2. Part 1 – The Different Rules of Summer, Chapter 7, pages 34–35
3. Part 1 – The Different Rules of Summer, Chapter 9, pages 38–40
4. Part 2 – Sparrows Falling from the Sky – Chapter 3, Aristotle’s conversation with his mother on pages 69–70.
5. As you read, make notes of the way Alire Sáenz has used dialogue and focalisation to establish Aristotle’s point of view.
6. Using your notes, revisit the extract as required, and answer the following questions:
7. How are you positioned to see Aristotle in this passage?
8. What evidence can you find to support this view?
9. You will now rewrite the extract from a different point of view. One person will write from the point of view of the second character (either Dante or Aristotle’s mother) and the other will write in third person omniscient narrative voice. Decide within your pair who will write each version.
10. Swap your response with your partner and read through the revised text.
11. Discuss with your partner what effect the changes make, recording your thoughts on a Venn diagram. Use the following questions to guide your discussion and response:
12. How do the changes in point of view and narrative voice impact upon how you, as the reader, connect with the 2 characters?
13. What has remained the same?
14. What insights into the second character are revealed?
15. How does the second character’s point of view shape the way we see Aristotle?
16. How does third person omniscient shape the way we see both characters?
17. What insights are gained?
18. What limitations do the different points of view have?
19. What questions about the characters do you have?
20. Of the 3 versions, which do you feel is the most effective way of offering readers insights into characters? Use evidence to support your view.
21. Find another pair to discuss your responses with.
22. Use the ideas you have developed to contribute to a take a stand activity about how effectively Alire Sáenz creates point of view and positions the reader through dialogue and narrative voice.

# Phase 4 – deepening connections between texts and concepts

The ‘deepening connections between texts and concepts’ phase is centred on extending students’ conceptual understanding through analysis of the core text. They deepen their understanding of the ways narrative structure can be shaped, developing an understanding of textual hybridity through Alire Sáenz's use of devices such as dreams and the epistolary form. Students analyse how characters can serve structural roles in narrative, such as foils and drivers of action and conflict, and manipulate these ideas when creating their own texts. They work independently and collaboratively to compose texts that reflect their critical understanding of how elements of the novel create thematic messages that underpin meaning (within the core text) and the role of the audience in understanding these thematic messages.

Students continue to develop their skills in writing, focusing on the language forms and features of both a study guide and an analytical response. They continue to develop an informed personal voice as they develop skills in creating analytical paragraphs that demonstrate a sustained and cohesive progression of ideas. Students are provided the opportunity to compose and respond to feedback using individual and collaborative approaches.

## Core text extract 2 – dreams as a narrative device

**Teacher note:** this core text extract is used to support student analysis of how narrative devices, specifically dreams, are used to reveal insights into characters and foreshadow action in the core text *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* It is designed to be used to complete **Phase 4, activity 1a – dreams as a narrative device.**

**Extracts from Part 2 – Sparrows Falling from the Sky, Chapter 1 pages 60–62**

This extract is provided in the core texts booklet. For licensing reasons the resource booklet containing the complete materials is available to staff only.

**Extract from Part 2 – Sparrows Falling from the Sky, Chapter 5 pages 77–78**

This extract is provided in the core texts booklet. For licensing reasons the resource booklet containing the complete materials is available to staff only.

## Phase 4, activity 1a – dreams as a narrative device

**Teacher note:** the table in this activity provides detailed analysis of **Core text extract 2 – dreams as a narrative device**. This activity requires students to identify, examine and reflect upon the use of nominalisation in analysis. If this activity is too complex for your students, you may wish to modify the language of analysis, or use the table to guide a think aloud where you discuss and explain to the class the features of the dreams. The definitions used in this activity for nominalisation and for complex noun groups come directly from the [NESA Glossary.](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/glossary)

**Student note**: this sequence has 2 purposes. You will be exploring the way the author has used dreams as a symbolic narrative device. You will also identify the way the creator of the sample annotations has used nominalisation and complex noun groups to communicate their thematic observation and the evidence from the text they plan to explore in depth.

1. Read through the extracts from Part 2 of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* that feature dreams as a key storytelling device.
2. Read the definitions and examples of nominalisation and complex noun groups below.

**Nominalisation** is a process for forming nouns from verbs (for example reaction from react or departure from depart) or adjectives (for example length from long, eagerness from eager). It is also a process for forming noun phrases from clauses (for example 'their destruction of the city' from 'they destroyed the city'). Nominalisation is often a feature of texts that contain abstract ideas and concepts.

Using nominalisation in topic sentences adds formality to the points that are being introduced at the beginning of the paragraph.

**Complex noun groups** are a group of words representing who or what is involved in the action or condition of the verb. Noun groups may occur in the place of the subject or the object of the verb. They can include different types of articles, adjectives and nouns linked together, for example 'The run-down old inner-city terrace house is for sale'. Noun groups can also include adjectival phrases and adjectival clauses, for example 'The house with the broken windows is for sale', 'The house that we saw yesterday is for sale'. A noun group can consist of 2 or more nouns, 'Boys and girls come out to play', 'Jenny, the oldest child, came into the room'.

In the fourth annotation example in the table below, nominalisation is used in the opening sentence. The nominalised words ‘conflation’ and ‘rotation’ are used to provide information about how Alire Sáenz uses characters in the dream sequence. Complex noun groups are used to present content from the text, for example ‘fractured male relationships and role models’.

1. Underline the examples of nominalisation and complex noun groups that are used in the analysis table below. For example, underline ‘conflation’, ‘rotation’ ‘fractured male relationships and role models’.
2. Highlight the parts of the analysis where there is clear discussion about how dreams are used by Alire Sáenz to reveal Aristotle’s subconscious thoughts and fears, and how they may foreshadow events that will occur in later parts of the novel.
3. Write a paragraph in which you explain how nominalisation and complex noun groups have made the analysis in the table below sound more formal and more effective.

Table 36 – dreams as a narrative device analysis

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Feature of the dreams | Analysis |
| Stream of consciousness (pp 60–62)  (pp 77-78) | The dreams are told in a stream of consciousness manner, with many sentences starting with the conjunction ‘and’. This is done to replicate the stream of consciousness form that many dreams take, and show that Aristotle is not in control of what he is seeing. |
| Sparrows (pp 60–62) | The sparrows in the dream are a direct reference to the title of this part of the novel ‘Sparrows Falling from the Sky’. They also serve as a motif of the relationship between Aristotle and Dante and the fragility of this relationship and of Aristotle’s own self-confidence. These dreams occur directly after burying the sparrow that Dante tried to rescue at the end of Part 1 of the novel, and show the enduring impact that Dante is having on Aristotle’s psyche.  The image at the end of the dream in Chapter 5 where Aristotle dreams that ‘the sparrows were falling from the sky. And it was me who was killing them’ (p 78) emphasises the difficulties and self-doubt that Aristotle has in forming personal relationships. That it is him killing the sparrows, the symbol of his friendship with Dante, demonstrates his fear that he is going to destroy the relationship and the bond because he does not believe he has the necessary skills to connect with people. |
| Buddy Holly, Waylon Jennings, Richie Valens and the plane crash (pp 60–62) | This reference creates cohesion in the text as it connects back to the fatal plane crash that is referenced in the first chapter of the novel. The references here to traumatic events represent the traumatic events which have occurred in Aristotle’s life and that impact his ability to communicate clearly with those around him. |
| Bernardo, Dante and Dad  (pp 60–62)  (pp 77–78) | The conflation and rotation of these 3 male characters in Aristotle’s dream are reflective of the fractured male relationships and role models that he has in his life. Aristotle knows very little about his brother, other than that he is in prison for murder, because his parents refuse to talk about him. His relationship with his father is strained and tenuous as well – while Aristotle loves his father, his father’s obvious PTSD from his time in the Vietnam War has meant that they have found it very difficult to converse with one another on a deep, personal level. This inability to communicate with his father and brother is reflected in their inability to communicate across the river in his dreams.  The inclusion of Dante in the places of Dad and Bernardo respectively demonstrates Aristotle’s subconscious fear that his inability to communicate with his brother and his father is ultimately going to also impact on and destroy his friendship with Dante. He fears that because he doesn’t know how to talk to other males, he does not know how to talk to Dante, particularly considering Dante’s characterisation as a confident and voluminous speaker. Aristotle’s inability to voice his personal thoughts in relationships with other characters is further reinforced through the repetition in ‘I thought that if only I knew the right words or spoke them in the right language, then he would cross the river. And come home. If only I knew the right words. If only I spoke the right language.’ (p 77) |
| The river between El Paso and Juárez (pp 77–78) | The river between El Paso (in the USA) and Juárez (in Mexico) serves as a literal and symbolic barrier in these dreams. Firstly, it serves as a barrier that prevents Aristotle from connecting to Bernardo, and then Bernardo and his father, and then Aristotle and Dante. Just as symbolically however, the river serves as a symbolic barrier between Aristotle and his Mexican heritage, which is reinforced through the exchanges in English and Spanish. This disconnection between Aristotle and his cultural heritage is another challenge that he must overcome throughout the novel as he establishes a sense of his identity. The inclusion of this reference in the dream reinforces the subconscious pressure that Aristotle feels to develop his sense of place in the world. |

## Phase 4, activity 1b – dreams as a narrative device

**Teacher note:** this activity is designed to support student analysis of how narrative devices, specifically dreams, are used to reveal insights into characters and foreshadow action in the core text *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* It is designed to be used with **Core text extract 2** **– dreams as a narrative device**. **Phase 3, resource 3 – exit tickets** and the [Digital Learning Selector](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/543?clearCache=2fe24568-6e42-b3bb-9ded-32631569e608) both provide exit ticket templates that can be modified for this activity. For this activity, you should provide students with photocopies of the identified dream sequences on A4 paper which will give them room to annotate around the outside of the dream sequence.

**Annotating an extract**

1. For this activity, you will be working in small groups. Your teacher will allocate each group a dream sequence.
2. **Part 2, Chapter 7** (p 80) **– ‘But the dreams stayed … or a hope’**
3. **Part 4, Chapter 7** (p 169) **– ‘That night I had a bad dream … I was drenched in sweat’**
4. **Part 4, Chapter 9** (p 178) **– ‘I sometimes think … I think I’d like to do that’**
5. **Part 4, Chapter 20** (p 202) **– ‘I think I was trying … why wasn’t I one of those people?’**
6. **Part 6, Chapter 1** (p 297) **– ‘One of the times I fell asleep … By the way it made you feel’**
7. In groups, annotate your dream sequence by identifying and making notes about:
8. the way the dream reveals Aristotle’s subconscious
9. how this subconscious revelation further develops Aristotle’s character
10. how dreams are used by Alire Sáenz to foreshadow action.
11. Use your annotations to answer the following questions.
12. How do you think the events foreshadowed in this extract will unfold later in the novel?
13. How will this develop the main ideas of the novel?

**Gallery walk**

1. During your gallery walk, take note of how other groups have analysed their extract and determined the role of the dream as both a narrative device and its role in signposting future events.
2. Feedback to your class during a class discussion about the role of the dreams in *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*.

**Writing analytically using nominalisation and complex noun groups**

1. Use the feedback you receive on your annotations to answer the following questions. In your answers, try to use nominalisation and complex noun groups to maintain a formal register.
2. How does the dream provide insight into Aristotle’s subconscious fears?
3. How do you think the events foreshadowed in this extract will unfold later in the novel?
4. How will this develop the main ideas of the novel?

**Exit ticket**

1. Complete an exit ticket revealing what you have learned about Aristotle as a character, the use of dreams by Alire Sáenz as a narrative device, and how nominalisation can be used to write about a text.

## Phase 4, activity 2 – Frayer diagram

**Teacher note:** this activity is designed to support student understanding of the epistolary form and its purpose in narratives. There are 2 suggested videos for this activity; play the one most suited for your students and edit the instructions below to reflect your choice. Depending on the needs of your students, the video may need to be played twice; again, edit instructions below to reflect your choice. The link to the YouTube videos and the relevant timestamps in this activity have been included in the program.

**Student note:** a Frayer diagram is a graphic organiser that can be used to determine, clarify and analyse word meaning and structures. You will develop and deepen your understanding of the word in the centre of the Frayer diagram by completing the 4 squares with prompts that surround it. You can record your notes as dot points, full sentences or images where appropriate.

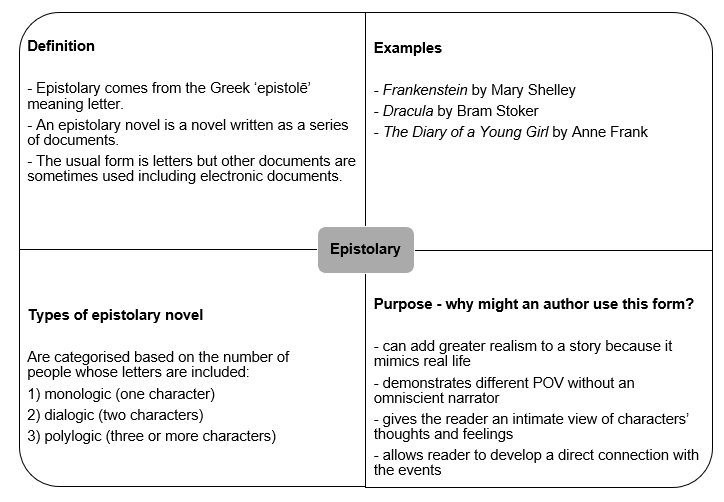
1. As you watch the YouTube video ‘Why writers use the epistolary form’ or ‘Epistolary novels: an Introduction’, take notes in the Frayer diagram below to gather and organise key ideas.

Figure 8 – understanding the epistolary form Frayer diagram

## Phase 4, resource 1 – model Frayer diagram

**Teacher note:** the figure in this resource is an example of a completed Frayer diagram for **Phase 4, activity 2 – Frayer diagram**. This could be provided to students at the end of the activity to ensure they have collected all necessary information, it could be provided as a cloze passage or it could be partially completed with sections missing for students to complete.

Figure 9 – completed understanding the epistolary form Frayer diagram



## Phase 4, activity 3 – examples of epistolary writing

**Teacher note:** the following extracts are from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* and have been selected to support student understanding of textual hybridity in the core text. If you have selected a different core text, you should use extracts from that text.

1. Read each of the following journal entries written by Aristotle and then complete the questions below for one of them.
2. Aristotle’s historical journal entry in Part 2 – ‘Sparrows Falling from the Sky’, Chapter 10
3. the subsequent journal entries about Bernardo and about Aristotle’s current experiences in Part 2 – ‘Sparrows Falling from the Sky’, Chapter 10
4. Aristotle’s journal entry in Part 3 – ‘The End of Summer’, Chapter 10
5. Aristotle’s list of what his life is like in Part 4 – ‘Letters on a Page’, Chapter 8
6. How old is Aristotle when he wrote the journal entry?
7. Describe the contents of the journal entry.
8. How does this journal entry allow us to discover more about Aristotle as a character?
9. If it is a historical journal entry, how does Aristotle respond to his writing reading it back in the present? What does this response show us about Aristotle?
10. How has Alire Sáenz used this epistolary feature to communicate some of the novel’s main ideas?

## Phase 4, activity 4 – prediction activity ‘Letters on a Page’

**Teacher note:** this activity is designed to support students in developing their understanding of textual hybridity and its use in the core text *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* This activity refers specifically to the title of Part 4 of the novel. If you have selected a different core text, you may choose to adapt this task. Students are required to use the [See, Think, Wonder](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/see-think-wonder) thinking routine for this activity.

In this activity, you will explore how Alire Sáenz has employed the epistolary form within *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* to offer different points of view, insights into characters and explore the main ideas of the novel.

1. Look at the heading for Part 4 of the novel, ‘Letters on a Page’.
2. Record your responses to the following questions:
3. What do you see?
4. What do you think?
5. What do you wonder?
6. In 3 to 4 sentences, make a prediction about how Alire Sáenz’s use of the epistolary form will:
7. give us insights into a character or characters. What will we discover?
8. offer the reader different points of view – Whose? How?
9. further develop the main concerns of the text
10. allow the reader to create a stronger connection to the text.
11. In your own words, define textual hybridity.
12. Share with a partner your thoughts on Alire Sáenz’s hybridisation of the novel form.

## Core text extract 3 – Aristotle’s letter to Dante

**From Part 4 Letters on a Page, Chapter 21, page 203**

This extract is provided in the core texts booklet. For licensing reasons the resource booklet containing the complete materials is available to staff only.

## Core text extract **4 – Dante’s letter to Aristotle**

**From Part 4 Letters on a Page, Chapter 30, pages 225–228**

This extract is provided in the core texts booklet. For licensing reasons the resource booklet containing the complete materials is available to staff only.

## Phase 4, resource 2 – annotation of Aristotle’s letter

**Teacher note:** this resource is designed to support students in developing an understanding of how the epistolary form allows the composer to demonstrate the growth of a character and reveal insights into their point of view. It is designed to be used in the classroom when showing students how the epistolary form can be used to reveal insights into characters and the main ideas of a text. It is designed to support a study of the core text *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* If you have selected a different core text, you may choose to adapt this resource. This extract is provided in the core texts booklet.

**From Part 4 – Letters on a Page, Chapter 21, p203**

Table 37 – extract from Chapter 21 of Part 4 – ‘Letters on a Page’

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Letter | Annotation |
| ‘DEAR DANTE …  approved of my driving.’ | Aristotle is a character who throughout this novel is searching for ways to take control of his life. His excitement at getting his licence conveyed through the exclamation in his opening line to Dante highlights this. This signals to the reader greater independence and foreshadows the significance of his truck as a symbol of freedom and the positive experiences he is able to have because of it.  The short sentences that Aristotle uses to recount his first driving excursion continues his brief manner of communicating – he remains a boy (man) of few words. The repetition of ‘I drove’ lets us know that he now has some control.  Sharing that his parents ‘more or less approved’ of his driving reminds readers that while at times his relationship with his parents is strained, there is still part of him that seeks their approval and recognition of his maturity. Their approval also acts as them blessing this step towards independence. |
| ‘But the best part … It was really beautiful.’ | Aristotle is not a character that is open with his emotions or deeper thoughts but the excitement of getting his licence and all that represents sees a slightly out of character sharing of thoughts and feelings in this letter. He shares the deeply private moment of laying down in his truck and watching the stars with Dante. This signals to the audience the trust and desire he has to share this important moment with someone, specifically Dante.  The line ‘It was really beautiful’ is a rare expression of pure joy and feelings of contentment. With the freedom this truck has provided him, Aristotle is finally able to enjoy a moment for what it is.  The continued use of the first-person ‘I’ is significant here as this is an experience that is purely Aristotle’s, an experience that many teenagers look forward to for the independence it represents. |
| ‘Ari.’ | Aristotle signs his letters off simply, in contrast to Dante who signs off with a personal touch and a desire to remind Aristotle of what he means to him. |

## Phase 4, resource 3 – annotation of Dante’s letter

**Teacher note:** this resource is designed to support students in developing an understanding of how the epistolary form allows the composer to demonstrate the growth of a character and reveal insights into their point of view. It is designed to be used in the classroom when showing students how the epistolary form can be used to reveal insights into characters and the main ideas of a text. It is designed to support a study of the core text *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. If you have selected a different core text, you may choose to adapt this resource. This resource is based on text provided in the core texts booklet .

**From Part 4 Letters on a Page, Chapter 30, pp 225–228**

Table 38 – extract from Chapter 30 of Part 4 – ‘Letters on a Page’

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Letter | Annotation |
| *‘DEAR ARI …*  *freaking you out yet?’* | Dante addresses concerns directly, unlike Aristotle. In this letter he immediately calls out 2 things: the lack of correspondence from Aristotle and the tension between them that Aristotle refuses to address. He does this through the mouth-to-mouth joke, which they both know isn’t a joke but rather a poorly veiled expression of desire on Dante’s end. |
| *‘So on the business …*  *“As good-looking as you?”’* | A comparison between the length of the letters exchanged highlights a key difference between the 2 characters. Dante is detailed, long-winded and emotional and Aristotle is brief, vague and unemotive.  Unlike Aristotle, Dante shares his experiences in Chicago in painstaking detail, providing Aristotle a play-by-play of his interactions with others, his thoughts on those interactions and his feelings about those interactions as evidenced in this section of the letter.  His openness about discussing his desire to kiss a boy and detailing to Aristotle how he has found acceptance in a female friend is confronting, and as readers we can imagine Aristotle’s uncomfortable but interested response to this.  There is also jealously laced through this, with the detail Dante provides acting to seek a response from Aristotle. He outlines how often he has been kissing this girl, that he is found to be good-looking and that others may desire him. |
| *‘I shrugged … Not to me, anyway.’* | Dante’s relief at sharing his feelings with the girl he has been kissing reminds us that he is a caring person who wants to do the right thing. His ability to express this and talk through his feelings with the girl speaks to his emotional awareness and maturity. This is something that Aristotle, on the other hand, struggles with.  Dante detailing the girl’s acceptance of his desire to kiss boys and making a joke about it is a purposeful inclusion. The positive response to his revelation acts to show Aristotle that there are people out there who will accept Dante and people like him. |
| *‘I want to go … “Yeah, I’m happy, Dante.”’* | Although it seems like Dante is having a great teenage experience, kissing, experimenting and partying, his desire to go home reminds us of his maturity and that he is someone who knows what he wants.  The detailed interaction with his father that he shared reminds us of his positive relationship with his family, which sets up his inner turmoil for the next part of the letter. |
| *'The thing is …, more self-respect than that.’* | As Dante unpacks his inner turmoil about coming out to his parents, the value he places on his relationship with his parents and Aristotle is clear in his fear of disappointing them.  Dante’s morality and desire to do what is right is clear as he refuses to lie about or hide his sexuality. It is clear that he has a plan and he is ready to face the consequence of living an authentic and honest life.  Dante’s fear and frustration becomes clear towards the end of this letter where he condemns feeling ‘needy’ and having to beg for love. His declaration that he has more ‘self-respect than that’ reminds us of his strong will and that he is someone who has conviction.  The fact that Dante feels he is able to speak to his father about his sexuality should not be ignored and is significant given the context of the novel and the context of the setting. This again highlights the positive nature of the relationship Dante has with his parents and reminds us that his emotional maturity comes from being brought up in a home where this was modelled. |
| *‘Yeah, I know ….*  *Your friend,*  *Dante’* | Dante’s questioning and predicting of Aristotle’s feelings in this part of the letter signals his worry about not being able to regain what he has lost in this time and distance away from Aristotle.  His statement that he is not ‘exactly best friend material' is a rare and genuine moment of self-deprecation and reminds us that while Dante is emotionally mature and confident, he is still a teenage boy looking for connection and acceptance from those he cares about.  The sign off, ‘Your friend’, in the context of this letter now seems like a hope rather than a fact. |
| *‘P.S. It would be … breaking the rules?’* | In the ‘P.S.’ Dante is almost desperate in his questioning, which is again a rare moment of insecurity for him. He reminds Aristotle of their unique connection and how important he is to him. His reminder of their ‘rules’ can be interpreted as a frustrated jab at Aristotle’s inability or lack of desire to talk about his feelings, and also an opportunity for Aristotle to respond and accept Dante with Dante having done all the work in terms of laying out why they can still be friends. |

## Phase 4, activity 5 – What does Dante’s letter reveal?

**Teacher note:** the following activity is designed to support students in developing their understanding of how characters other than the protagonist can be developed through the use of the epistolary form. It is designed to support a discussion of **Phase 4, resource 3 – annotation of Dante’s letter.** If you have selected a core text other than *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, you may choose to modify this task.

Benjamin Alire Sáenz uses the epistolary form to offer the audience insight into the character of Dante after he has moved to Chicago. Answer the following questions in your book.

1. Until the move to Chicago, how has the audience received information about Dante?
2. How does this framed view shape our understanding of Dante?
3. How does Dante’s letter reveal a more authentic version of the character?
4. How does the form of the letter allow Dante to be more vulnerable?
5. How do you think this letter supports Alire Sáenz’s overall purpose of the novel?

## Phase 4, activity 6 – analysing Aristotle and Dante’s letters

**Teacher note:** this activity is designed to support students in analysing how a hybrid point of view structure in this novel offers insights into characters and main concerns. This task is designed to explore the core text *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. If you have selected a different core text, you may choose to adapt this task.

1. In pairs, select one of the letters written by either Aristotle or Dante in Part 4 Letters on a Page and answer the following questions:
2. What is explicitly revealed about the writer of the letter from the letter’s content?
3. What is implicitly revealed about the writer of the letter from the letter’s content? In other words, what do we learn about the writer by ‘reading between the lines’ or by inferring what they mean?
4. How is the style and voice of the letter different to Aristotle’s first-person narration?
5. How do the contents of the letter contribute to your understanding of the text’s main ideas?
6. How does reading the letter allow you to connect with the letter writer further?
7. Why do you think Alire Sáenz chose to use a letter to communicate this information?
8. Find a peer who responded to a different letter than you and share with them what you learned about Aristotle or Dante from your letter.

## Phase 4, activity 7 – Who were Aristotle and Dante?

**Teacher note:** this activity is designed to support students in developing their knowledge of the historical figures Aristotle and Dante Alighieri, and how these personalities are significant in a study of the core text *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* If you have selected a different core text, you may choose to modify this task. The links to the YouTube videos and the relevant timestamps in this activity have been included in the program.

1. Using the table below, record your initial knowledge of Aristotle and Dante Alighieri.
2. Reflecting on the title and content of the core text *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, write 3 to 4 things you would like to find out about the historical figures.
3. To complete row 3, watch ‘PHILOSOPHY – Aristotle’ and ‘Dante Alighieri’ and summarise what you have learned.
4. In the final row, use the information from the first 3 rows to create a connection between the historical Aristotle and Dante Alighieri and the characters in the novel.
5. In a group of 3 to 4, create a mind map or visual representation that shows your understanding of the connections between the historical figures and the Aristotle and Dante of Alire Sáenz’s novel.

Table 39 – Who were Aristotle and Dante? Modified KWHL chart

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Prompts | Discovering Aristotle and Dante |
| What do you know about the historical figures Aristotle and Dante Alighieri? |  |
| What do you want to know about these 2 figures? |  |
| What have you learned about these historical personalities? |  |
| How do you think this knowledge connects with characters in the novel *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*? Include evidence from the text. |  |

## Phase 4, activity 8 – Aristotle’s emergence from the cave

**Teacher note:** the figure in this activity was created by the English curriculum team using Canva. The link to the YouTube video and the relevant timestamp in this activity has been included in the program.

1. View the YouTube video ‘Plato's Allegory of the Cave’.
2. Summarise in your own words, Plato’s allegory of the cave, using the table below.

Table 40 – Plato’s cave allegory

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Plato’s cave | Summary |
| Cave |  |
| Shadows |  |
| Light |  |
| Sharing discoveries |  |

1. Apply Plato’s allegory of the cave to Aristotle using the figure below by:
2. writing inside of the cave what Aristotle’s perceptions of himself, his life, his family and Dante are early in the novel
3. writing outside of the cave what he discovers as the novel progresses.
4. Make connections between the perceptions written inside of the cave and discoveries outside of the cave. Do this by drawing a line connecting the ideas. Along the connecting lines, write Aristotle’s emotional response to the discovery, the key characters involved and what triggered the discovery. Include textual evidence to support your analysis.

Figure 10 – Aristotle’s cave template

An image of a cave with a sun above. 


## Core formative task 4 – study guide

**Teacher note:** this task is designed to support students in analysing how characters can serve structural roles in narratives. Students experiment with the form of the study guide to demonstrate their understanding. Through this task, students assess how the creation of a range of characters contribute to the development of the narrative. **Phase 3, activity 11 – the Bildungsroman** and **Phase 3, activity 12 – understanding narrative structure** can be used to remind students of the roles characters can play in a narrative to drive action. A model of the study guide can be found at **Phase 4, resource 4 – sample character study guide**. If you have selected a different core text, you may choose to adapt this task accordingly.

1. Your teacher is going to allocate you one of the following characters (or pairs of characters):
2. Aristotle Mendoza
3. Dante Quintana
4. Liliana Mendoza (Aristotle’s mother)
5. Jaime Mendoza (Aristotle’s father)
6. Soledad and Sam Quintana (Dante’s parents)
7. Gina Navarro and Susie Byrd
8. Aunt Ophelia.
9. For the character that you have been allocated, complete the table below by answering the questions in each row.
10. Find the other students who have been allocated the same character as you. Combine the best parts of your responses to create one study guide entry for your character and combine these on the digital platform identified by your teacher.

Table 41 – character profile

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Questions | Student answers |
| What is the name of the character(s) you have been allocated? |  |
| What is their relationship to Aristotle or Dante? |  |
| What are some of their defining character traits? For instance, what adjectives might you use to describe them? |  |
| What are 2 important points in the novel that develop their characterisation? Provide some textual evidence to support |  |
| What role does the character(s) play in the development of the narrative? |  |

## Phase 4, resource 4 – sample character study guide

**Teacher note:** this resource provides an example of what is expected of students in **Core formative task 4 – study guide.** It is designed to support a study of the core text *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* If you have selected a different text, you may choose to adapt this resource.

Table 42 – character profile sample for Bernardo

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Questions | Student answers |
| What is the name of the character(s) you have been allocated? | Bernardo Mendoza |
| What is their relationship to Aristotle or Dante? | Bernardo is Aristotle’s older brother. However, Aristotle has no relationship with his brother as he was imprisoned when Aristotle was a small child and he is never spoken about by the family. |
| What are some of their defining character traits? For instance, what adjectives might you use to describe them? | The audience’s understanding of Bernardo is limited, which echoes Aristotle’s understanding of him. We know he committed a violent crime, but the rest of his identity is shrouded in mystery. |
| What are 2 important points in the novel that develop their characterisation? Provide some textual evidence to support | In Part 2 – Sparrows Falling from the Sky, Aristotle is plagued by dreams as he battles the flu. Alire Sáenz uses the dream in Chapter 5, where Aristotle and Bernardo are separated by a river, to show how Aristotle feels an immense sense of disconnection and loss due to not knowing his brother.  This disconnection is reinforced in the journal entry in Part 2 – Sparrows Falling from the Sky, Chapter 10 where Aristotle laments the absence of any photographs of Bernardo in the house. It isn’t until towards the end of the novel that Aristotle’s parents are able to converse with him about Bernardo. After Aunt Ophelia dies and the true nature of her relationship with Franny is revealed, Aristotle’s parents appear to become more willing to share information with him about the family, including Bernardo. In Part 6 – All the Secrets of the Universe, Chapter 7, Aristotle’s mother finally shares a photo of the brothers and reveals “He killed someone Ari. He killed someone with his bare fists.” (p 321) |
| What role does the character(s) play in the development of the narrative? | The secret of Bernardo is one of the key secrets alluded to in the title of the novel, that Aristotle must discover as part of his coming of age. Alire Sáenz reveals the impact that the silence from Aristotle’s parents, particularly his father, regarding his brother has had on his identity through Aristotle’s internal monologue on page 260. In this internal monologue Aristotle thinks ‘*I do care that you won’t talk about my brother. Damn it to hell, Dad. I can’t stand to live with all your silence*’ and ‘*You know what I’ve learned from you and Mom? I’ve learned not to talk. I’ve learned how to keep everything I feel buried deep inside of me*.’  Because of the mystery surrounding Bernardo, Aristotle’s discovery of his story and the secrets associated with it, is a subplot of the text that connects to the main plot, rather than a key component of the main plot. Aristotle learning the truth about Bernardo reflects Aristotle’s parent's acknowledgement of his growing maturity and gives him an insight into their beliefs, leading to a greater understanding of the world and how it works. |

## Phase 4, activity 9 – exploring thematic messages

**Teacher note:** there are some very useful graphic organisers on the department’s [Digital Learning Selector](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Browser?clearCache=f8e1f35d-6713-d328-7126-b57d51e1304c), such as [branching scenarios](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Browser?clearCache=f8e1f35d-6713-d328-7126-b57d51e1304c), that can be used instead of the table below.

1. Work in pairs to complete the table below, aligning each main idea to examples or evidence of characterisation and point of view from your core text. An example has been provided for you.

Table 43– aligning main ideas with examples of characterisation and point of view in the core text

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Main idea | Characterisation | Point of view |
| Example – the power of friendship to provide comfort in times of personal struggle. | Is characterised by the importance of Dante's friendship in assisting Aristotle to overcome the fact that he ‘had never really been very close to other people. [He] was pretty much a loner.’ (p 22)  ‘I do have friends, Mom ... Dante. He's my friend.’ (p 70)  ‘I felt like I was the saddest boy in the universe… And the world was ending’ (p 154) because Dante had left. | The use of protagonist, Aristotle's, first-person point of view creates a lifelike, emotional connection to his complex friendship with Dante.  ‘All this time I had been trying to figure out the secrets of the universe ... of my own heart. ... From the minute I'd met Dante, I had fallen in love with him.’ (p 358) |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. Identify and begin to analyse language forms, features and structures to communicate these main ideas.

Table 44 – analysis of language forms, features and structures in the core text

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Example or textual evidence | Language forms, features or structures | Effect on communicating the main idea | How does this create a connection between the reader and the text? |
| ‘I felt like I was the saddest boy in the universe. … And the world was ending' (p 154) | Hyperbolic emotive language through Aristotle’s first-person point of view | Emphasises the great value Aristotle placed on his friendship with Dante, and how negatively affected Ari was by Dante’s absence |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

## Phase 4, activity 10 – Think, Puzzle, Explore

**Teacher note:** this activity is designed as formative pre-assessment to determine students’ prior knowledge and experience crafting analytical paragraphs. This activity uses a visible thinking routine called [Think, Puzzle, Explore](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/think-puzzle-explore) to gain insight into questions or challenges students might have about this type of writing.

1. Use the table below to reflect on your experience with analytical writing in the past. An example has been provided for you to assist with your responses.

Table 45 – Think, Puzzle, Explore

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Thinking prompt | Student response |
| Think  What do you already know about writing analytical paragraphs? | Analytical paragraphs need to include evidence from the text. |
| Puzzle  What questions do you have about the language and structure of an analytical paragraph? | I don’t know how to include evidence in my writing without sounding weird. |
| Explore  How might you explore these questions as you begin to write analytically about *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*? | I can use the notes and textual evidence from earlier in the unit to help me compose my paragraph. |

## Phase 4, activity 11 – crafting analytical paragraphs

**Teacher note:** the sentence and word-level skills being developed in this activity use the student sample assessment response as an example for a baseline, which is then the focus for improvement. Use professional judgement to determine which grammatical features must be defined or revised for students prior to completion. Access the [Writing in Secondary Resource Hub](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/professional-learning/writing-in-secondary) to access a range of resources and strategies to support students understand and apply these features, including the [online Grammar Guide](https://schoolsnsw.sharepoint.com/sites/PR0Y5Q3H/SiteAssets/WiS/Grammar%20Guide/story.aspx). The sample ‘what a good one looks like’ (WAGOLL) referred to in this activity can be found in its entirety in **Phase 6, resource 2 – what a good one looks like**.

1. Below is a table detailing a range of grammatical devices needed to express yourself clearly and with control when writing analytical paragraphs. Within the table you will find:
2. the name and definition of the grammatical device
3. an example from a C-range student example where this device is not used
4. a revised example using the device effectively.

Table 46 – effective grammatical devices for analytical writing completed example

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Grammatical device | C-range example | Revised example |
| Nominalisation – the process of transforming a verb into a noun. Results in opportunity to add more detail to your sentence | Firstly, Aristotle is a dynamic and complex character who explores main ideas about identity and growing up. | The exploration of identity and growing up, a main idea within Alire Sáenz’s text, is embodied through the protagonist Aristotle, whose personal journey of self-discovery has expanded my own understanding of the transformative process of maturation during adolescence. |
| Cohesion of present tense – control your use of present tense, without lapsing into past tense | A repetition was used by Benjamin Alire Sáenz of ‘summer has come and gone’ (p 154) and the language device hyperbole is used to show how dramatic Aristotle is being because his close friend is leaving him. | Alire Sáenz uses repetition, ‘summer has come and gone’ to reveal Aristotle’s malaise in the aftermath of Dante leaving. |
| Precise vocabulary for effect – select the vocabulary (words) that best communicate your feelings about the text | However, when Dante leaves he keeps the friendship going through letters making the book epistolary. | Alire Sáenz’ use of the epistolary form, through Dante’s letters, sustains his friendship with Aristotle. |
| Punctuation for embedding quotes – use commas either side of your quotation from the text to embed it into your sentence. Further, avoid using the redundant phrase ‘in the quote’, as quotation marks are sufficient | The quote by W.S. Merwin on the title page for the fifth section is an example of intertextuality and it says ‘Through all of youth I was looking for you without knowing what I was looking for’ (p. 233). This quote was used by Benjamin Alire Sáenz because Ari was looking for Dante all along but didn’t know that he was into him romantically. | Intertextual reference to W. S. Merwin, ‘Through all of youth I was looking for you without knowing what I was looking for,’ foreshadows Aristotle’s eventual realisation of his romantic feelings towards Dante. |

1. Complete the blank table experimenting with these grammatical devices in your own draft sentences.

Table 47 - effective grammatical devices for analytical writing

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Grammatical device | Plan | Draft |
| Nominalisation – opening sentence (topic sentence) |  |  |
| Cohesion of present tense – use and sustain across response |  |  |
| Precise vocabulary – brainstorm some possible vocabulary choices that you can use to improve your personal voice |  |  |
| Punctuation for embedding quotes – be sure you have used commas either side and do not use phrases like ‘in the quote’ |  |  |

1. Return to your notes from **Phase 4, activity 9 – exploring thematic messages**, where you selected your ‘main ideas’. Select a ‘main idea’ to inform your first body paragraph.
2. Begin to identify textual evidence and isolate language forms, features or structures from the text that exemplify or represent the main idea you have selected.
3. Below is an example of what a good topic sentence looks like, including annotations of where this student has engaged with the question and how they have used language and structure effectively. Read the sample and use it as a model to compose topic sentences for your analytical paragraphs.

Table 48 – sample what a good one looks like (WAGOLL) opening sentence with annotations

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sample opening – WAGOLL | Annotations | Language features and structures |
| The power of relationships, especially friendships, is well documented across all genres of literature and often acts as a fundamental anchor in any plot. In *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, the characterisation of the 2 young men works to expand audience’s thinking of the significant impact friendship can have on an individual in their formative adolescent years. | This response makes clear reference to the language of the question, ‘power of friendship’ as the ‘main idea’, ‘characterisation’, ‘expand thinking’.  Vocabulary selected for precision, which results in an informed personal perspective, which links to ‘your thinking’ aspect of the question. | Evaluative language such as ‘well documented’, ‘fundamental anchor’ and ‘significant’ used effectively. Implied personal voice through reference to ‘audience’.  Consistent use of present tense and effective punctuation for cohesion.  Controlled use of language and structure for audience and purpose. |

1. Annotate and revise the opening sentence of your sample paragraph, considering where you have:
2. answered (not repeated) the question, including using the language of the question and offered some sense of how your thinking has been ‘challenged’ or ‘expanded’
3. introduced a ‘main idea’ clearly
4. incorporated your personal voice, including using modality for effect
5. used the present tense
6. used punctuation effectively.

Table 49 – student opening sentence

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Your opening sentence | Annotations | Revised opening sentence |
|  |  |  |

## Phase 4, resource 5 – Seldon Method or This does that for textual analysis

**Teacher note:** if you are not familiar with the Seldon Method, This does that, as an explicit teaching scaffold take some time to familiarise yourself with the related department materials which can be found on the [Literacy in secondary schools](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/secondary-literacy) webpage.

You are advised to use the [gradual release of responsibility model](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/effective-reading-in-the-early-years-of-school/comprehension#:~:text=Gradual%20release%20of%20responsibility%20model%20%2D%20adapted%20from%20Fisher%20and%20Frey%20(2003) to support students with this task. Use the model provided and complete a joint construction through guided practice before students complete an independent construction.

The [NESA K–10 Glossary](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/glossary) has definitions for all sentence-level and word-level terminology you may need.

**Student note:** the table below provides a model for developing complex sentences to analyse examples and evidence from your core text. Use this model as a guide to develop your own personal analysis for your analytical response. It is advised that you have at least 3 textual examples in each body paragraph in your completed assessment.

The ‘This does that’ sentence structure is one that can be used to create complex analytical sentences. The sentence structure is as follows:

* **This** – ‘this’ refers to the textual evidence – example and device being analysed
* **Does that – your ‘does that’ should begin with a synonym for the verb ‘shows’ and begin to explain the effect of your evidence within the text. Note: Phase 4, resource 6 – synonyms for ‘shows’ provides a list of suggestions.**
* **Doing that** – you should then select another synonym for the verb ‘shows’ to begin this phrase, then explain the effect in relation to the question and/or author’s purpose.

Consider the following example, broken down into the 3 different sections, in the table below.

Table 50 – sample this does that doing that sentence

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sentence section | Sample sentence |
| This | Alire Sáenz’ use of first-person point of view, ‘all this time I had been trying to figure out the secrets of the universe ... of my own heart ... From the minute I'd met Dante, I had fallen in love with him' … (p 358) |
| Does that | … reveals the emotional connection shared between the complex characters of Aristotle and Dante … |
| Doing that | … advocating for the power of friendship to provide comfort and a sense of purpose to young people struggling to form a sense of identity. |

The sentence, when put together, reads:

* Alire Sáenz’ use of first-person point of view, ‘all this time I had been trying to figure out the secrets of the universe ... of my own heart ... From the minute I'd met Dante, I had fallen in love with him', reveals the emotional connection shared between the complex characters of Aristotle and Dante, advocating for the power of friendship to provide comfort and a sense of purpose to young people struggling to form a sense of identity.

## Phase 4, activity 12 – Seldon Method or This does that for textual analysis

**Teacher note**: to support students in this activity, you may wish to provide them with some textual evidence to write about. These pieces of evidence could be drawn from the activities completed earlier in the program, such as **Phase 3, activity 1 – reading journal**, or **Phase 3, activity 4 – gist, analysis, synthesis, elaboration.** Alternately, students could be provided with the textual evidence used in the C-range student sample in the assessment notification and could then compare their sentences with the ones in the sample.

1. Complete the table by writing complex analytical sentences about how characterisation and point of view are used to explore the main ideas in the core text. Do this by:
2. composing the ‘This’ by providing textual evidence and a language feature
3. composing the ‘Does that’ by using a synonym for shows and then explain what the evidence demonstrates
4. composing the ‘Doing that’ by using another synonym for shows and explain the effect in relation to the question.

**Student note:** when using the Seldon Method or This does that for composing complex sentences, experiment with using commas to connect textual evidence and language features to the effect statement. This can result in greater clarity and control of language.

An example sentence has already been done for you in the table below.

**Student note:** be careful not to recount plot or describe the language feature. Instead, you need to focus on explaining and analysing the effect on communicating the ‘main ideas’ and how they ‘challenge and expand your thinking’.

Table 51 – Seldon Method or This does that for textual analysis

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| This | Does that | Doing that |
| Alire Sáenz’ use of first-person point of view, ‘all this time I had been trying to figure out the secrets of the universe ... of my own heart ... From the minute I'd met Dante, I had fallen in love with him' | **Reveals** the emotional connection shared between the complex characters of Aristotle and Dante, | **Advocating for** the power of friendship to provide comfort and a sense of purpose to young people struggling to form a sense of identity. |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## Phase 4, resource 6 – synonyms for ‘shows’

**Teacher note:** this resource can be printed and provided to students or used as examples for teachers to lead a group brainstorm for possible synonyms. Specific attention should be given to the connotations of each verb, making explicit to students when to select various terms for precision in students’ writing.

Table 52 – synonyms for shows

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Verb type | Examples |
| Verbs for shows with positive connotations | champion, celebrate, promote, encourage, confirm, praise, recommend, mirror, inspire, strengthen, approve, advocate, privilege |
| Verbs for shows with negative connotations | admonish, condemn, critique, challenge, expose, caution, warn, lament, argue, confront, advise against, decry, threaten, distort |
| Neutral verbs for shows | reveal, examine, imply, describe, position, outline, illustrate, communicate, allude to, present, voice, showcase, further, demonstrate |
| High modality verbs for shows | provoke, highlight, prove, question, accentuate, educate, persuade, demand, assert, make visible, focalise, exemplify |

## Phase 4, resource 7 – annotated WAGOLL paragraph

**Teacher note:** this resource has been developed to provide a model for students to apply the various features and structures required to compose an effective analytical paragraph. This can be used to complement student self-assessment, or as a model to inform guided or joint construction. The entire response that this sample paragraph has been taken from can be found in **Phase 6, resource 2 – what a good one looks like**.

**Student note:** these annotations have been provided to support you to recognise and apply the necessary control of language and structure, and explicit analysis and engagement, to the question as you begin to draft your own analytical paragraph. Use this as a model to critically read, edit and refine your own composition.

Table 53 – annotated WAGOLL paragraph

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| WAGOLL sample | Annotations | Language features and structures |
| **The power of relationships, especially friendships, acts as an anchor in any plot. In** Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe**, the characterisation of the two young men works to expand our thinking of the impact friendship can have on individuals in their formative years. Friendship, for Aristotle and Dante, isn’t just a swimming companion for the summer, it means ‘[feeling] real’. Aristotle’s characterisation as a melancholic loner who carries the weight of the world is established through anaphora, ‘I was fifteen. I was bored. I was miserable.’ As Aristotle bonds with Dante we see a shift in his internal monologue from ‘feeling sorry for himself’ to admitting to Mrs. Quintana that ‘[he] needs a friend’. The idea friendship is not easy or without challenges is highlighted by Alire Sáenz as he tests their friendship through a car accident, Dante admitting feelings for Aristotle, and Dante moving away. Aristotle ‘felt like the saddest boy in the universe’ and that ‘summer had come and gone, and the world was ending’ upon Dante’s departure. Hyperbole and repetition convey the emotional significance of the loss of this friendship, and the value he isn’t ready to admit he places on this is clear as he reluctantly engages in an epistolary exchange with Dante. This is challenging for Aristotle as he struggles to express himself in his journal, with his hard line of ‘[keeping everything] inside.’ Hence, through the realistic representation of Aristotle and Dante’s tumultuous, yet devoted, friendship, I recognise the power of friendship to provide comfort and solace, expanding my thinking about the need to nurture friendships in my own world.** | Paragraph opens with a personal voice and clear ‘main idea’, which is then connected to all aspects of the question in second sentence.  Student doesn’t just repeat the question but adds their personal understanding and evaluation – ‘expand our thinking of the impact friendship can have on individuals in their formative years’.  Range of textual evidence used to support, which is analysed effectively using the Seldon method, ‘This does that’. This paragraph has at least 5 quotes in this opening paragraph.  Language devices connected to both form and features analysed across the paragraph – characterisation, anaphora, internal monologue, hyperbole, repetition, representation.  Examples are analysed for their effect, in accordance with advice of Seldon Method or ‘This does that’ – hyperbole and repetition convey the emotional significance of the loss of this friendship, and the value he isn’t ready to admit he places on this is clear as he reluctantly engages in an epistolary exchange with Dante.  Reference to the composer, Alire **Sáenz, is sustained throughout the response, which keeps focus on the author’s use of characterisation and (later, in paragraph 2) point of view as per the question.**  This response ends with a clear and explicit link back to the question. This is not a repetition or summary, but include a personal analysis and evaluation – Hence, through the realistic representation of Aristotle and Dante’s tumultuous, yet devoted, friendship, I recognise the power of friendship to provide comfort and solace, expanding my thinking about the need to nurture friendships in my own world. | Nominalisation – the characterisation of – supports students to provide additional information to their opening sentence/s.  This use of nominalisation is sustained appropriately across the response – friendship, for Aristotle and Dante, isn’t just a swimming companion for the summer, it means “[feeling] real”.  Consistent use of present tense is maintained across the paragraph.  Cohesion is also maintained through sustained use of appropriate synonyms for shows, precise adverbs and adjectives – especially, highlighted, realistic.  Precision of vocabulary choices signifies deep understanding of the novel – formative years, melancholic loner, reluctantly.  Textual evidence embedded effectively using conventions of This does that and appropriate punctuation – we see a shift in his internal monologue from ‘feeling sorry for himself’ to admitting that ‘he needs a friend’.  A range of linking or transition words are used by this student to maintain a sustained analysis across the response – As Aristotle bonds with, This is challenging for, Hence.  The response is organised and structured to include clear opening sentences, sustained textual analysis and a final linking sentence. |

## Core formative task 5 – analytical paragraph

**Teacher note**: **Core formative task 5 – analytical** **paragraph** is designed to support students to develop and refine their understanding of the language and structure required to compose a personal analytical paragraph. This task provides opportunities for students to plan, draft and edit an analytical paragraph, in preparation for their extended analytical response assessment task. The composition of this paragraph belongs within a series of activities that will support students to plan, draft, edit and revise their analytical response.

**Teacher note:** [explicit teaching](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/education-data-and-research/cese/publications/research-reports/what-works-best-2020-update/explicit-teaching-wwb-research-update) strategies have been utilised in this task, with students using the same question from the assessment notification. This is designed to support students to effectively plan, monitor and reflect upon their work throughout the program. The [Seldon Method or This does that](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/secondary-literacy) has been used to support students to embed textual evidence and analysis in an integrated manner.

**Student note:** use **Phase 4, resource 7 – annotated WAGOLL paragraph** as a model for how you can approach your own independent construction of analytical paragraphs for your assessment task.

1. Review your responses to **Phase 6, activity 1 – how to isolate and deconstruct key terms of a question**.
2. Return to **Core formative task 2 – developing a thesis** to ensure consistency and cohesion across your analytical response.
3. Use **Phase 6, activity 4 – brainstorming thematic messages** to identify appropriate ‘main ideas’ and how these might align across your introduction and opening statements in each of your 3 body paragraphs.
4. Select one ‘main idea’ from your plan to form the basis of this analytical paragraph.
5. Develop a topic sentence using **Phase 4, activity 11 – crafting analytical paragraphs** to develop an informed personal topic sentence. Modify the advice from **Core formative task 2 – developing a thesis** for the context of this topic sentence.
6. Use **Phase 4, activity 12 – Seldon Method or This does that for textual analysis** to complete the following steps:
7. Isolate 3 to 4 pieces of evidence that demonstrate your ‘main idea’.
8. Connect each piece of evidence to a language form, feature and/or structural device used by the author.
9. Explain the effect of the device, in the text and on your understanding in the context of the question.
10. Experiment with your final linking sentence, again using the sample in **Phase 6, resource 2 – what a good one looks like,** to move beyond repetition of the question to include a personal evaluation and link back to the question. You can use the following checklist to compose your final sentence:
11. return to relevant parts of the question
12. use synonyms to restate aspects of the topic sentence and the question
13. conclude with a sentence that moves the argument forward.

## Phase 4, activity 13 – peer feedback

1. Swap your paragraph with a peer. Provide feedback using the following 2 strategies:
2. edit their work by identifying examples where they could improve their punctuation and sentence structure, or where they could more effectively use the ‘This does that’ structure
3. complete the 2 stars and a wish feedback protocol below using the questions in the table as prompts.

Table 54 – 2 stars and a wish feedback

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Feedback prompt | Student feedback |
| Star – something your peer has done well, or is working towards in a positive way |  |
| Star – something your peer has done well, or is working towards in a positive way |  |
| Wish – something your peer needs to work on as they continue drafting their response |  |

1. Reflect upon the process and feedback. Create a plan on how you will implement this feedback in the development of your remaining analytical paragraphs.

# Phase 5 – engaging critically and creatively with model texts

**Teacher note**: in this unit, Phase 5 has been integrated into Phases 2, 3 and 4. Teaching and learning activities that encompass Phase 5 have been identified in the relevant sequences.

The ‘engaging critically and creatively with model texts’ phase is centred on students’ exploration and experimentation with model texts. In this phase, students explore, respond to and experiment with models for the textual and language features necessary to complete the formal assessment task, the analytical response. With each model text, students will investigate the ways in which a composer has used elements of narrative, point of view and characterisation to create an engaging fictional world that prompts the reader to critically consider the main ideas of the text.

By responding critically and creatively to these complex texts, students explore the ways in which composers guide the readers’ experiences at the text, sentence and word levels. Students experiment with language features, syntax and vocabulary during low-stakes writing exercises where they will receive peer and teacher feedback to deepen understanding and skills.

Each core formative task in this program is used to support the completion of the formal assessment task. The teacher works with students to build skills in monitoring and planning so they can compose and edit their analytical responses written during this phase.

# Phase 6 – preparing the assessment task

In this phase, students are supported to complete the formal assessment task, composing an analytical response. The structure of this phase enables students to submit a response that best represents their learning and engagement with the feedback cycle. Students engage in a recursive compositional process involving planning, monitoring, revising and reflecting upon their work. This explicit teaching model reinforces student ownership of their response, ensuring their final assessment submission is the product of ongoing reflection.

A series of activities facilitating this process are structured into the teaching and learning program at intervals. These core formative tasks are designed to encourage student understanding of, engagement with, and ownership of the response they create during the assessment task design process. The following strategies are designed to support both the experimentation within formative tasks and the preparation for the formal summative task. They are not meant to be completed consecutively, nor are they a checklist. They should be introduced when required, running concurrently within the other phases. Some may take a few minutes in a once-off lesson, others will need to be repeated. Some may require an entire lesson. All will need to be adapted to the class context.

The teacher recognises students’ prior understanding of assessment practices but should use this phase as an opportunity to deepen awareness of aspects that may have challenged students during the preparation of other assessment tasks. These may include understanding instructions, being aware of the demands of marking criteria, or using samples to improve your response.

## Phase 6, activity 1 – how to isolate and deconstruct key terms of a question

**Teacher note:** provide students with an opportunity to isolate and deconstruct the key terms themselves, before providing the table with annotations, **Phase 6, resource 1 – deconstruction of key terms in the assessment notification.**

1. Re-read the assessment question, highlighting all key terms and instructions outlined in the task.
2. Identify:
3. Who is the audience of the task?
4. What is the context of the task?
5. What types of language might be necessary to appeal to this audience for that purpose?

Complete the following questions in your English books:

1. What do you see as the most important parts of the task?
2. What do you think you will need to do or include to succeed in this task?
3. Do you have any questions about the assessment task that require clarification?

## Phase 6, resource 1 – deconstruction of key terms in the assessment notification

The table below contains a deconstruction of the key terms and components of the assessment notification.

Table 55 – defining key terms from the assessment question

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Explanation |
| audience | Your school’s English department. |
| context | Your school English department’s annual analytical writing competition. |
| language | You should write in academic style for an audience who know the text and the style. You may choose to use formal register, passive voice, create cohesion through noun groups and connectives, and write in sentences that will be lexically dense without colloquialism. Additionally, you need to maintain the use of present tense throughout your response, without any lapses. |
| greatest power | You should make a value judgement aligned with ‘greatest power’ and what is required of you when developing a response to this question. You need to analyse whether ‘the creation of dynamic and complex characters’ is the text’s ‘greatest power’. You may consider offering an alternative suggestion, though that is not a specific requirement outlined in the marking guidelines. |
| engage | This requires another value judgement about how readers are ‘engaged’ with the ideas in the core text. In the planning stages it is important to think about what examples or evidence from the text were most engaging. |
| main ideas | These ideas stem from the key themes explored in the text, though should be more than a single word. For example, a main idea could include the power of friendship to provide comfort in times of personal struggle, or the challenges faced by individuals forming an identity in adolescence. These ideas are more impactful than friendship or growing up. |
| dynamic | This is in reference to active characters in the text who change or progress across the narrative. Examples of ‘round’ characters who participate in or are affected by the plot. |
| complex | As in the explanation for ‘dynamic’, ‘complex’ is in reference to characters who have many layers or parts and are not merely ‘flat’ characters or passive in the plot of the narrative. |
| To what extent | This requires your analysis to include a value judgement, which can be communicated through language choices such as appropriate synonyms for the verb ‘shows’, precise adverbs or adjectives within your analytical response. For example, ‘clearly’, ‘obviously’, ‘indeed’, ‘without a doubt’. |
| characterisation | You need to analyse the process by which characters are constructed, and the role they play, within texts. Considering whether the characters are lifelike constructions, asking yourself, do they drive action or conflict? |
| point of view | You must consider the position from which a text is designed to be perceived. Point of view controls how you see and feel about the ideas and characters in a text. Point of view can be focalised through a character, or it can be more omniscient. |
| challenge | This invites you to engage with the text to dispute the truth or validity of the statement. In this instance, how have you been positioned to question your thinking about the main ideas of the core text throughout the learning process? |
| expand | As in the explanation for ‘challenge’, throughout reading the core text, how has your thinking grown or expanded? |
| thinking | Synonyms for this could refer to your understanding, perspective, beliefs, and how these may have changed or grown throughout your engagement with the core text. |
| main ideas | This is in reference to the ‘main ideas’ or themes outlined above. You will determine 3 main ideas from a larger list of potential ‘main ideas’ that will form the basis of your analytical response. |

## Phase 6, resource 2 – what a good one looks like

**Student note:** the A-range sample below is an example of what a good one looks like, otherwise known as a WAGOLL. Throughout this program you will engage with this WAGOLL sample and the C-range sample attached to your assessment notification. You should notice differences between the 2 samples and should work towards using the language and structure of the WAGOLL as an example of best practice as you plan, draft and edit your own analytical response.

However, it is also important for you to understand that there are many ways to approach analytical response writing. Consult with your class teacher about the various ways to organise and structure your response, using the below model as an example.

**Question prompt and context of the task:**

Our school English department is hosting their annual analytical writing competition. You are invited to contribute a submission in response to the novel you have studied in your English class this term. The question for 2024 is:

How does Benjamin **Alire Sáenz** use characterisation and point of view to challenge and expand your thinking about the main ideas of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*?

**What is the power of characters represented in literature? Are they realistic representations crafted so we develop an understanding of ourselves and the world; develop empathy; challenge and expand our thinking, through words? Authors harness the construction of dynamic and complex characters and through their use of point of view, positioning us to change our thinking about main ideas. This power moves us to reconsider our knowledge of ourselves and our purpose, yielding the potential to make us ponder life’s questions. Benjamin Alire Sáenz’ bildungsroman novel** Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe positions us, the audience, to challenge and expand our thinking about profound questions, by presenting us with a young man’s evolving view of himself, those around him, and the world in which he lives. Through his characterisation of Aristotle and Dante, adolescents dealing with the complexity of forming their identity and recognising the power of relationships to provide comfort amidst times of struggle, **Sáenz engaged me to think about these ideas, and reassess my understanding of my relationships and identity.**

**The power of relationships, especially friendships, acts as an anchor in any plot. In** Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe**, the characterisation of the two young men works to expand our thinking of the impact friendship can have on individuals in their formative years. Friendship, for Aristotle and Dante, isn’t just a swimming companion for the summer, it means ‘[feeling] real’. Aristotle’s characterisation as a melancholic loner who carries the weight of the world is established through anaphora, ‘I was fifteen. I was bored. I was miserable.’ As Aristotle bonds with Dante we see a shift in his internal monologue from ‘feeling sorry for himself’ to admitting to Mrs. Quintana that ‘[he] needs a friend’. The idea that friendship is not easy or without challenges is highlighted by Alire Sáenz as he tests their friendship through a car accident, Dante admitting feelings for Aristotle, and Dante moving away. Aristotle ‘felt like the saddest boy in the universe’ and that ‘summer had come and gone, and the world was ending’ upon Dante’s departure. Hyperbole and repetition convey the emotional significance of the loss of this friendship, and the value he isn’t ready to admit he places on this is clear as he reluctantly engages in an epistolary exchange with Dante. This is challenging for Aristotle as he struggles to express himself in his journal, with his hard line of ‘[keeping everything] inside’. Hence, through the realistic representation of Aristotle and Dante’s tumultuous, yet devoted, friendship, I recognise the power of friendship to provide comfort and solace, expanding my thinking about the need to nurture friendships in my own world.**

**Loyalty, acceptance and determination are cornerstones of friendship. Alire Sáenz depicts complex characters, such as Dante, who proves himself a relentless friend, making clear that ‘if you [Aristotle] don’t want to write to me, you don’t have to. You have to be who you are. And I have to be who I am.’ The tenacious qualities Alire Sáenz imbues Dante with and the acceptance and understanding he shows has Aristotle finally feeling ‘perfectly natural’ when ‘talking and living and feeling’ with Dante. Rule of three highlights the joy friendship with Dante brings Aristotle. The significance of Dante and Aristotle’s friendship cannot be downplayed, it saves Aristotle from going down the same path of his incarcerated brother, enabling him to accept himself, improving his relationship with family and, most importantly, facilitating his ability to find happiness in his own skin. The complex layers Alire Sáenz exposed, and the evolution of these characters and their friendship, is inspiring for readers and allows for reflection on the significance of friendship, even if imperfect. As I reflect on this text, and the powerful friendship shared between Aristotle and Dante, my own thinking has been challenged, as I recognise the immense value fierce friendships have on transforming the lives and wellbeing of young people, such as myself.**

**Often familial relationships set the tone for relationships individuals seek out and forge for themselves; Alire Sáenz characterises this through the point of view of Aristotle. The questions left unanswered in Aristotle’s family leave him symbolically haunted by the ‘many ghosts in [their] house…ghosts inside of [him]’, expanding my thinking about how identity is shaped by familial ties, history and trauma. The honesty and transparency Aristotle is provided, about his brother’s incarceration, his Aunt Ophelia’s sexuality and his father’s experience in Vietnam, let him know he is ‘not alone’. Aristotle is overwhelmed by the love and acceptance his parents show in his feelings for Dante that he asks, ‘How can you love me so much?’ This understanding helps Aristotle go from feeling ‘unknowable’ to feeling ‘understood’ and allow him opportunity to explore a relationship with Dante without ‘[hating] himself’. Transparency, acceptance and unwavering love are unfortunately not a given in many familial relationships, especially when it comes to teenagers questioning their sexuality. What Alire Sáenz does with his insight into a complex family is show readers how quality of life can be improved when we love and support unconditionally. This prompts readers to consider the importance of eliminating prejudice and instead promote acceptance, challenging me to share love and empathy for my family, friends and the world around me. I have realised how important it is to recognise that love is love so everyone can ‘find all of the mysteries of the universe in someone’s hand’.**

**Ultimately, through detailed engagement with Alire Sáenz’ provocative bildungsroman text,** Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe**, my thinking about friendship, relationships and growing up has transformed. Through my exposure to the profound connection between Aristotle and Dante, my understanding of the power of relationships to provide comfort, or the importance of family to facilitating personal growth has expanded. The unique characterisation of these dynamic and complex characters, not only through Aristotle’s first-person point of view, but also the epistolary form, has reshaped my thinking; broadening my understanding that the point of life is to search for happiness and a sense of self, which is easier when assisted and shared with others.**

## Phase 6, activity 2 – WAGOLL reflection

1. In your group, read the sample ‘what a good one looks like’ response once. As you read the response, fill out the first column in the table below by identifying a range of things that stand out that makes this response a ‘good one’. Use the ‘Extensive’ descriptors of the student-facing rubric and marking guidelines from the assessment notification to inform your commentary.
2. In your group, read through the sample a second time. On this reading, expand upon your initial observations in the second column of the table. You could do this by using additional examples to support the initial observation.
3. In your group, complete the third column of the table by creating a success criteria for yourself – what do you need to do in your response?

The first row of the table has been completed for you. Some additional examples of what to look for as you read through the response include:

* engagement with all aspects of the question
* structure of the response into paragraphs
* use of opening sentences to establish response to the question
* use of links to refer back to the question, including a relevant and rhetorically engaging conclusion
* precise vocabulary and metalanguage including language forms, features and structure
* personal voice, including use of appropriate synonyms for the verb ‘shows’, precise adverbs and adjectives, personal pronouns for precision and effect, other rhetorical devices that demonstrate engagement with the text through the lens of the question
* relevant textual evidence or examples
* control of language and structure, such as cohesion, no lapses in tense, reference or voice, textual evidence integrated effectively, punctuation used appropriately and so on.

Table 56 – WAGOLL reflection

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What stood out on first reading of sample ‘good one’? | What stood out on the second reading? | Your success criteria – ‘aiming for good’ |
| Example: Explicitly drew connections to all aspects of the question – ‘**challenge and expand our thinking’** | **Example**: Not only repeated the language of the question, but offered a personal opinion, judgement – ‘Alire **Sáenz engaged me to think about these ideas, and reassess my understanding of my relationships and identity.’** | Be sure to use the language of the **whole** question and expand upon the question by adding own insights and perspectives |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## Phase 6, activity 3 – creating a personal thesis statement

**Teacher note:** in order to adequately complete this task, students will need access to the **assessment notification** including the **student-facing rubric** and **annotated student work sample**, **Phase 6, resource 2 – what a good one looks like** and their notes from **Core formative task 1 – sharing and reflecting on reading experiences** and **Core formative task 2 – developing a thesis.**

It is recommended that you engage in a joint construction or shared writing with students prior to their independent writing. This gradual release of responsibility is part of the support cycle for teaching writing. More information can be found in the department’s [Writing guide Years 3 to 10](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/resources-for-schools/guides).

1. Use the student-facing rubric and annotated student work sample from your assessment notification, as well as the WAGOLL sample, to complete the following questions.
2. Read the thesis statement and introduction of the annotated student work sample accompanying your assessment notification.
3. Re-read the thesis statement and introduction of the WAGOLL example.
4. Compare the opening introductory paragraphs from the student work sample assessment with the WAGOLL, using the Plus, Minus, Interesting table below to identify:
5. what language, vocabulary and structure are effective and useful in a thesis statement
6. what elements of language, vocabulary and structure are ineffective or less useful
7. any interesting observations that you make when comparing the 2 introductions. Are there any elements you would like to experiment with in your own personal thesis statement?

Table 57 – Plus, Minus, Interesting reflection on sample thesis statements

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Plus | Minus | Interesting |
|  |  |  |

1. Brainstorm possible vocabulary you can use to demonstrate your personal understanding of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* in relation to the question. Express your opinion through appropriate synonyms for the verb ‘shows’ and precise adjectives. Use **Phase 6, resource 3 – developing personal voice and precise vocabulary** as an example.

**Student note:** the purpose of a thesis statement is to outline your personal understanding and approach to a specific question. Before writing, it is important to think carefully about what the question and task is asking you to do. A thesis statement should be personal, evaluative and use the language of the question without repeating it.

1. Use the questions below to think about the assessment question and your approach to it, asking yourself:
2. Why does this text and question matter to me?
3. Why does it matter to other people around me – classmates, teachers, future readers of the text?
4. Why does it matter to the world? For example, because the main ideas transcend the text and explore themes and ideas that are common to many people.
5. How has the text and its exploration of main ideas challenged or expanded your thinking?
6. How do the main ideas you examined with a pair in a previous lesson connect to your answers above?
7. As a class, co-construct a sample thesis statement with the support of your teacher, applying your observations from engaging with the WAGOLL sample and student-facing rubric.
8. Draft a personal thesis statement to the assessment question, paying particular attention to your choice of language and how you structure your response to appeal to your audience.
9. Use the student-facing rubric and the marking guidelines accompanying your assessment notification to peer-conference with another student, using the following discussion prompts:
10. I like what you did when …
11. I agree with your point about … but then I wonder if …
12. I’m not sure I understand what you mean by …
13. How does … align with the question prompt?
14. Can you tell me more about …?
15. Edit and refine your thesis statement based on the discussion with your peer.

## Phase 6, resource 3 – developing personal voice and precise vocabulary

**Teacher note:** this resource can be provided to students or jointly constructed through a class brainstorm. Students could work individually or in small groups to create a [word cline](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/566?clearCache=e8582ada-84d1-c3c8-7935-727e3d20df4), which can be found on the department’s [Digital Learning Selector](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Browser?clearCache=f8e1f35d-6713-d328-7126-b57d51e1304c). Use your knowledge of your students and class context to determine the most suitable way to develop their vocabulary.

Table 58 – examples for developing vocabulary for personal voice using modality

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Features of vocabulary | Examples |
| Building personal voice | * Use personal and collective pronouns, including ‘I’, ‘my’, ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘us’ * Use rhetorical questions to invite the audience into your response, for example ‘What is the magical power of literature?’ * Include phrases making a judgement about the author’s purpose, for example, ‘positions the audience to …’ or ‘invites us to consider …’ * Choose positively connoted verbs to show what the author values, such as ‘champions’, ‘privileges’, ‘promotes’ * Select negatively connoted verbs to reveal the author’s criticism of an idea, for instance ‘condemns’, ‘admonishes’, ‘critiques’ |
| Verbs that show precision through choices of positive, negative or neutral connotations | * Highlights * Reveals * Demonstrates * Encourages * Challenges |
| Adjectival phrases for personal judgement | * The engaging bildungsroman novel … * Alire Sáenz’ thoughtful depiction of complex characters … * The provocative young adult fiction text … * Best friends, Aristotle and Dante, must overcome considerable hardship … * Mexican-American teenagers, Aristotle and Dante, discover the importance of … |

## Phase 6, resource 4 – annotated personal thesis statement

**Teacher note:** this resource provides an example for annotating the WAGOLL sample thesis statement, which students can apply to other parts of the response, or to the composition of their own personal thesis statement, which will be required for their final assessment task.

Table 59 – annotated WAGOLL sample thesis statement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sample thesis – WAGOLL | Annotations | Language features and structures |
| **What is the power of characters represented in literature? Are they realistic representations crafted so we develop an understanding of ourselves and the world; develop empathy; challenge and expand our thinking, through words? Authors harness the construction of dynamic and complex characters and through their use of point of view, positioning us to change our thinking about main ideas. This power moves us to reconsider our knowledge of ourselves and our purpose, yielding the potential to make us ponder life’s questions.** | This thesis statement is unique in its use of rhetorical question to begin. The personal nature of this question establishes an authentic voice.  This student goes on to list qualities of engaging characters, and makes direct reference to the question, ‘challenge and expand our thinking’.  Again this student uses the language of the question, ‘characters’, ‘point of view’, ‘change our thinking’, to support their thesis, before providing a brief list of some ‘main ideas’, ‘knowledge of ourselves and our purpose’. This list is elaborated upon as the introduction continues, seen in **Phase 6, resource 2 – what a good one looks like.** | Rhetorical question, followed by inclusive pronouns, ‘we’ and ‘us’ establishes a connection between the student and the audience, which is extended to a connection with the characters in the text.  Use of complex sentence listing various ways characters connect to readers offers personal insight and connects to the ‘challenge and expand your thinking’ component of the question prompt.  Evaluative language and precise vocabulary ‘moves us to reconsider’, ‘yielding the potential to make us ponder’ clearly demonstrates a personal voice and understanding.  Structure builds to address various aspects of the question, all of which are covered across the introduction eventually. |

## Phase 6, activity 4 – brainstorming thematic messages

**Teacher note:** this activity is designed to support students with **Core formative task 5 – analytical paragraph**, and should be integrated alongside that task as appropriate. The student instructions below can be altered to suit your student and assessment needs.

**Student note:** this activity supports you to brainstorm and determine the ‘main ideas’ of the novel, Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe, which will then become the focus of each paragraph in your analytical response. It is recommended you isolate 3 ‘main ideas’, and therefore draft 3 body paragraphs for this assessment.

1. Based on your reading and understanding of the novel, Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe, consider what you believe are the key themes of this text.
2. Complete the table below by brainstorming the thematic messages.
3. Use the examples provided to expand your ideas beyond a single word, into an elaborate phrase that articulates your understanding.
4. Begin to support your identification of these thematic messages with examples and/or evidence from the text.

Table 60 – thematic messages and examples from the text

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Thematic message or ‘main idea’ from Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe | Examples or evidence from the text |
| The impact of friendship on individuals in their formative years  Expanded example (from WAGOLL body paragraph 1) – **The power of relationships, especially friendships, acts as an anchor in any plot. In** Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe**, the characterisation of the two young men works to expand our thinking of the impact friendship can have on individuals in their formative years.** | **Examples of the impact of friendship on Aristotle**   * Dante teaching Aristotle to swim * Aristotle admitting he ‘needs a friend’ * Aristotle’s car accident – saving Dante * Aristotle feeling as though ‘the world had ended’ after Dante moves to Chicago * Aristotle’s diary entries |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Phase 6, resource 5 – synonyms for ‘in conclusion’

**Teacher note:** this resource contains examples that could be provided to students, or used as the basic for a class brainstorm where students contribute to the possible synonyms.

Table 61 – synonyms for ‘in conclusion’

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Therefore | Thus | Indeed |
| Consequently | Hence | Ultimately |
| As a result | Upon reflection | When considering |
| It has been made clear that | To be sure | As has been demonstrated |

## Phase 6, activity 5 – features of a rhetorically effective conclusion

**Teacher note:** students will need to have drafted the majority of their analytical response prior to completing this activity.

**Student note:** ensuring your analytical response concludes with a rhetorically effective conclusion is a necessary component for success in your assessment. Be sure to plan, draft and edit your conclusion as thoughtfully as you have done the other parts of your response.

Below is a table annotating the C-range sample response you have engaged with throughout this program.

1. Read through the annotations and advice on ways to improve.

Table 62 – annotated C-range sample conclusion with advice on ways to improve

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C-range sample | Annotations | Advice on ways to improve |
| In conclusion, Benjamin Alire Sáenz uses characterisation and point of view to challenge and expand my thinking about the main ideas of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.* It does that through characters like Ari and Dante and their parents and the way that their point of view is shown through the epistolary of letters and journal entries and the dialogue between the characters. This made me challenge and expand my thinking to a great extent. | This response concludes by repeating the question.  Referencing ‘characters’ and ‘point of view’ is sound, with some listing of devices used by the author.  The final line, ‘this made me challenge and expand my thinking to a great extent’, is the only acknowledgement of this part of the question.  Engaging with, rather than repeating, the question is necessary to elevate this response. Providing an overview responding to the content, rather than repeating the question, is advised. | Use a more engaging sentence starter, considering nominalisation and more precise vocabulary.  Use appropriate synonyms for the verb ‘shows’, precise adverbs and adjectives and personal pronouns to conclude with a more personal style.  Clearly demonstrate how your thinking has been challenged or expanded, rather than simply repeating this part of the question prompt.  Include the main ideas as they are referred to in the introduction, as this will ensure cohesion across the response. |

1. Use the sample ‘what a good one looks like’ to compare the language and structure with the C-range sample. Create a list of success criteria to apply to your own conclusion.

Table 63 – comparing what a good one looks like with C-range sample conclusion

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What a good one looks like | Similarities and differences to the C- range sample | Success criteria for your rhetorically engaging conclusion |
| Ultimately, through detailed engagement with Alire Sáenz’ provocative bildungsroman text, Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe, my thinking about friendship, relationships and growing up has transformed. Through my exposure to the profound connection between Aristotle and Dante, my understanding of the power of relationships to provide comfort, or the importance of family to facilitating personal growth has expanded. The unique characterisation of these dynamic and complex characters, not only through Aristotle’s first-person point of view, but also the epistolary form, has reshaped my thinking; broadening my understanding that the point of life is to search for happiness and a sense of self, which is easier when assisted and shared with others. |  |  |

## Core formative task 6 – writing a rhetorically effective conclusion

**Teacher note**: **Core formative task 6 – writing a rhetorically effective** **conclusion** supports students in composing a rhetorically effective conclusion. **This supports their preparation for the formal assessment task.**

1. **Peer-to-peer discussion**
2. In one minute, explain your thesis or answer to the question to your partner. During this time your partner should make notes.
3. In a second minute your partner asks clarifying questions. Your partner may also ask for you to elaborate on your summary or outline any evidence you intend to use.
4. Repeat this process so your partner explains their thesis to you.
5. Exchange notes so you have a copy of the peer feedback.
6. **Drafting engaging conclusion**
7. **Using any summative notes and planning documents, write a concluding paragraph articulating your final thoughts on the question.**
8. **You may like to return to Phase 6, resource 2 – what a good one looks like and the annotated student work sample in the assessment notification as model texts.**
9. **Return to peer discussion**
10. **Return to your pair from the Step 1 discussion and read your draft conclusion aloud to them.**
11. **Your peer evaluates the fluency of your paragraph and determines if your conclusion reflects the verbal explanation of your thesis/answer as presented in Step 1.**
12. **Repeat this process for the second student.**
13. **Apply feedback and review conclusion**
14. **Take time to reflect on the feedback provided by your peer and apply this to your conclusion, ensuring you have effectively summarised and concluded your analytical response, adding some personal voice and final evaluation.**

## Core formative task 7 – reflecting on and editing your analytical response

**Teacher note:** **Core formative task 7 – reflecting on and editing your analytical response** is designed to support students toengage with [feedback practices and strategies](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/professional-learning/teacher-quality-and-accreditation/strong-start-great-teachers/refining-practice/feedback-to-students/feedback-practices-and-strategies) to improve the clarity, meaning and effectiveness of their draft analytical response. The purpose of this task is to provide students with opportunities and scaffolding for self- and peer-evaluation, to improve their draft prior to submission. Students will engage in a range of feedback processes to revise and refine the depth and quality of their analytical response, using the marking criteria and student-facing rubric that accompany the **Novel voices sample assessment notification.**

**It is recommended that as well as self- and peer-evaluation, teachers collect and provide** [descriptive feedback](https://dev.education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/professional-learning/teacher-quality-and-accreditation/strong-start-great-teachers/refining-practice/feedback-to-students/types-of-feedback#:~:text=Descriptive%20feedback%20provides%20students%20with%20detailed%2C%20specific%20information,provides%20students%20with%20visible%20and%20manageable%20%E2%80%98next%20steps%E2%80%99.) **to students during the drafting process. Use discretion to determine the most appropriate time in the learning sequence to provide teacher feedback to support students to achieve their best in the summative assessment task.**

**Student note:** to successfully complete this task, you must have completed a draft of your analytical response to the assessment question prompt.

**Self-evaluation**

1. **Use Phase 6, activity 6 – self-evaluation template to reflect on your own analytical response, following the checklist provided on the template, while simultaneously editing your response.**
2. **Make necessary revisions to your response, then move on to peer-evaluation.**

**Peer-evaluation**

1. **You will be paired with a partner and complete Phase 6, activity 7 – peer-evaluation template,** providingconstructive feedback that your partner can apply to improve the quality of their response.
2. Once you have read your partner’s response, use the checklist in the template to provide some constructive feedforward.

**Student note**: feedforward is the name given to feedback when it is provided during the drafting and editing stages – rather than at the very end of a summative task. The purpose of feedforward is to apply the comments to improve a response prior to submission.

**Peer-to-peer conference**

1. Using **Phase 6, activity 8 – peer-to-peer conference prompts**, engage in a discussion about you and your partner’s analytical responses, posing questions for reflection and consideration, which will support you to refine your formal assessment task.

**Return to composition**

1. You will then be given time to make further revisions to your analytical response, drawing upon the comments on the peer-evaluation template and the peer-to-peer conference.

## Phase 6, activity 6 – self-evaluation template

**Student note:** you will need to have a completed draft of your analytical response to complete the self-evaluation template.

1. Use the following template to self-evaluate your analytical response.
2. Critically read through your analytical response, making notes for yourself in the ‘Checklist comment’ column.
3. Notes could include a tick if present and effective, or a comment about where and how you might need to revise the particular aspect of the response.

Table 64 – self-evaluation template

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Feature of your analytical response | Checklist comment |
| Personal thesis statement that:   * has a clear personal voice * uses appropriate synonyms for the verb ‘shows’, precise adverbs and adjectives to communicate personal understanding * establishes an answer to the question * outlines the name of the author, the text and some sense of textual form. |  |
| Introduction that:   * outlines the ‘main ideas’ to be discussed across the response * engages with ‘characterisation’ and ‘point of view’ * does not include textual evidence or features * ends with a personal statement of understanding about how your thinking has been challenged or expanded * sustains cohesion of tense, reference and personal voice. |  |
| Analytical paragraph (1) that:   * begins with a nominalised, personal opening sentence * introduces one main idea which will be discussed across the paragraph * uses precise vocabulary to communicate your personal understanding and opinions of the question prompt * includes multiple complex ‘This does that’ analyses – should have multiple pieces of evidence and language features analysed for effect in the text and on you the responder * sustains cohesion of tense, reference and personal voice * links back in a final sentence to the question and your personal understanding of it. |  |
| Analytical paragraph (2) that:   * begins with a nominalised, personal opening sentence * introduces one main idea which will be discussed across the paragraph * uses precise vocabulary to communicate your personal understanding and opinions of the question prompt * includes multiple complex ‘This does that’ analyses – should have multiple pieces of evidence and language features analysed for effect in the text and on you the responder * sustains cohesion of tense, reference and personal voice * links back in a final sentence to the question and your personal understanding of it. |  |
| Analytical paragraph (3) that:   * begins with a nominalised, personal opening sentence * introduces one main idea which will be discussed across the paragraph * uses precise vocabulary to communicate your personal understanding and opinions of the question prompt * includes multiple complex ‘This does that’ analyses – should have multiple pieces of evidence and language features analysed for effect in the text and on you the responder * sustains cohesion of tense, reference and personal voice * links back in a final sentence to the question and your personal understanding of it. |  |
| Rhetorically effective conclusion that:   * begins with a well-selected adverb or adverbial phrase * restates the name of the author, the text and an aspect of form * summarises the 3 main ideas explored throughout the body of your response * sustains a clear personal voice, evaluating the ways the text has challenged and expanded thinking * does not repeat the question or simply list the keywords of the question. |  |

1. Action your self-evaluation comments by editing and revising your response to improve its quality.

## Phase 6, activity 7 – peer-evaluation template

1. Use the same template from your self-evaluation to provide comprehensive feedback to a peer. Be sure that you are:
2. being positive and constructive
3. offering practical suggestions of where and how to improve
4. using the student-facing rubric supplied with your assessment notification to offer additional feedback.

Table 65 – peer-evaluation template

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Feature of peer’s analytical response | Checklist comment |
| Personal thesis statement that:   * has a clear personal voice * uses appropriate synonyms for the verb ‘shows’, precise adverbs and adjectives to communicate personal understanding * establishes an answer to the question * outlines the name of the author, the text and some sense of textual form. |  |
| Introduction that:   * outlines the ‘main ideas’ to be discussed across the response * engages with ‘characterisation’ and ‘point of view’ * does not include textual evidence or features * ends with a personal statement of understanding about how thinking has been challenged or expanded * sustains cohesion of tense, reference and personal voice |  |
| Analytical paragraph (1) that:   * begins with a nominalised, personal opening sentence * introduces one main idea which will be discussed across the paragraph * uses precise vocabulary to communicate your personal understanding and opinions of the question prompt * includes multiple complex ‘This does that’ analyses – should have multiple pieces of evidence and language features analysed for effect in the text and on you the responder * sustains cohesion of tense, reference and personal voice * links back in a final sentence to the question and your personal understanding of it. |  |
| Analytical paragraph (2) that:   * begins with a nominalised, personal opening sentence * introduces one main idea which will be discussed across the paragraph * uses precise vocabulary to communicate personal understanding and opinions of the question prompt * includes multiple complex ‘This does that’ analyses – should have multiple pieces of evidence and language features analysed for effect in the text and on you the responder * sustains cohesion of tense, reference and personal voice * links back in a final sentence to the question and your personal understanding of it. |  |
| Analytical paragraph (3) that:   * begins with a nominalised, personal opening sentence * introduces one main idea which will be discussed across the paragraph * uses precise vocabulary to communicate personal understanding and opinions of the question prompt * includes multiple complex ‘This does that’ analyses – should have multiple pieces of evidence and language features analysed for effect in the text and on you the responder * sustains cohesion of tense, reference and personal voice * links back in a final sentence to the question and your personal understanding of it. |  |
| Rhetorically effective conclusion that:   * begins with a well-selected adverb or adverbial phrase * restates the name of the author, the text and an aspect of form * summarises the 3 ‘**main** ideas’ explored throughout the body of your response * sustains a clear personal voice, evaluating the ways the text has challenged and expanded thinking * does not repeat the question or simply list the keywords of the question. |  |

1. Provide a final comment using the 2 stars and a wish model, with practical advice on what the next steps for improvement could include.
2. Action any feedback provided by your peer in this process. You may find it useful to refer back to assessment support materials including:
3. marking guidelines
4. student-facing rubric
5. sample C-range response with annotations
6. sample ‘what a good one looks like’
7. any other resources provided across this program.

## Phase 6, activity 8 – peer-to-peer conference prompts

**Teacher note:** the discussion prompts used in this learning activity have been drawn from the [Digital Learning Selector Peer discussion and conferencing](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/547?clearCache=3d3cb51b-1a76-c2d7-6ec9-56dce622fd3) resource.

**Student note:** when engaging in a peer-to-peer conference it is important that you are focused on the response and respectful in all interactions.

1. As you engage in a conference with your peer, complete the table provided.

Table 66 – peer-to-peer conference prompts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Discussion prompt | Notes from discussion |
| I like what you did when … |  |
| I’m not sure I fully understood what you meant by … |  |
| I think you have really thought about the question [here – give an example]… |  |
| I was wondering if you could … |  |
| Can you tell me more about …? |  |
| What do you think are your next steps? |  |

# References

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