Creating Conflict
Structuring Fiction Writing

Key Stage 4 Revision Programme

Pupil Name

Handbook Designed by Dr E. Massie
**Timetable** – you are encouraged to make yourself a timetable so that you are completing one tutorial a week. Spreading out your learning will help to embed the learning into your long-term memory!

**Timetable – Tutorials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutorial</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Baseline assessment)</td>
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<td>6 (Final assessment)</td>
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<td>7 (Feedback)</td>
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**Timetable – Homework Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutorial</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>Page</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Rationale</td>
<td>P4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of Keywords</td>
<td>P5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQA Mark Scheme</td>
<td>P6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial 1</td>
<td>P8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial 2</td>
<td>P9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial 3</td>
<td>P17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial 4</td>
<td>P24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial 5</td>
<td>P31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial 6</td>
<td>P38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial 7</td>
<td>P40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>P41</td>
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</table>
Course Rationale

This course has two important purposes.

1) It will help you prepare for AQA English Language Paper 1, Section B, which asks you to write an extract of creative writing in response to a set stimulus.

On average nationally, students only score half of the possible 40 marks for this question. The marks are divided between the content of the story (24 marks) and the technical accuracy of the writing (16 marks).

The examiner’s report targets two key areas for improvement in students’ responses:

- Students do not spend enough time planning and so create unstructured – often unnecessarily long – stories.
- Students have been taught set techniques, which create formulaic responses. An example of this is that students use esoteric (uncommon and understood only by a small number of people with specialised knowledge) vocabulary incorrectly, having been taught to always replace more common words with “ambitious” language.

The mark scheme and the examiner’s report emphasise that responses are valued for their creativity and authenticity, which they suggest can be undermined when students are taught prepared creative writing techniques by rote.

This course, then, focuses on the broader notion of using conflict to structure your fiction writing. It will give you key tools to explore the effect of your writing on the reader, including:

- point of view
- character development and causality

Rather than teaching you “by rote”, it will guide you in developing your own voice as a creative writer, while giving you examples from a wide range of published literature to which to respond.

2. This course will also help you to hone your creative writing skills in general, a skill that can become a hobby and / or that can develop into a personal project. There are few opportunities in the curriculum to let our imagination loose, and this course is an opportunity to think outside the box and use our brain differently. Some research shows that creative activities help reduce stress and help us become more mind...
Subject Vocabulary

Look out for the words below as they come up in the tutorials. Please refer back to this page to remind yourself of their meaning if you are unsure. You are also encouraged to add other words to the list that you come across. Look them up online and write down their definition and use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>In a sentence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronological</td>
<td>arranged in the order that things happened or came to be</td>
<td>The teacher showed the students how to create their history timeline to show the events in chronological order</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dramatic irony</td>
<td>When an audience and / or reader understands what is going on in a situation whilst the characters are unaware of what is happening. Example: A man thinks his girlfriend is acting strangely because she’s about to propose, but the audience knows that she is planning to run away with another man, intensifying emotions.</td>
<td>This artistic skill of dramatic irony plays an important role in developing the dramatic plot, and deepening the theme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flashback</td>
<td>part of a film or book that goes back in time to something that happened before the main story began</td>
<td>He recalls flashbacks of his normal self playing with his daughter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metanarrative</td>
<td>A narrative when the reader is made aware that what they are reading is a story written in the past. For example: 'if you are reading this note, I have gone to Australia&quot;.</td>
<td>The author has incorporated metanarrative in their writing, which creates more distance between the reader and the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>a story or description of a series of events</td>
<td>It’s moving narrative of wartime adventure</td>
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<td>Perspective</td>
<td>the way you think about something</td>
<td>Why don’t you think about this from a child’s perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Point of view</td>
<td>An opinion</td>
<td>You have to be willing to understand other people’s points of view</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unreliable narrator</td>
<td>A narrator who gives inaccurate or misleading information to the reader</td>
<td>The story is told by an unreliable narrator – what we were told at the beginning of the story turned out to be completely false.</td>
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</table>
**AQA Mark Scheme**

**AO5 Content and Organisation**
Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Skill Descriptors</th>
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<td><strong>Level 4</strong></td>
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<td>19-24 marks</td>
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<td>Compelling,</td>
<td>Upper Level 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convincing</td>
<td>22-24 mark</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Register is convincing and compelling for audience</td>
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<td>□ Assuredly matched to purpose</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Extensive and ambitious vocabulary with sustained</td>
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<td></td>
<td>crafting of linguistic devices</td>
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<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
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<td>□ Varied and inventive use of structural features</td>
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<td>□ Writing is compelling, incorporating a range of</td>
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<td>convincing and complex ideas</td>
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<td>□ Fluently linked paragraphs with seamlessly integrated</td>
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<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
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<td>Convincingly matched to purpose</td>
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<td>□ Extensive vocabulary with conscious crafting of</td>
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<td>linguistic devices</td>
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<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Varied and effective structural features</td>
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<td>□ Writing is highly engaging with a range of developed</td>
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<td>complex ideas</td>
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<td>□ Consistently coherent use of paragraphs with</td>
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<td>integrated discourse markers</td>
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<td><strong>Level 3</strong></td>
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<td>Consistent,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>16-18 marks</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Register is consistently matched to audience □</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistently matched to purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing,</td>
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<td>chosen for effect with a range of successful linguistic</td>
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<td>devices</td>
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<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Effective use of structural features</td>
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<td>□ Writing is engaging, using a range of clear connected</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ideas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Coherent paragraphs with integrated discourse</td>
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<td>markers</td>
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<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Upper Level 2</td>
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<td>7-12 marks</td>
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A magazine has asked for contributions to their creative writing section.

EITHER

Write a story about a festival, as suggested by this picture:

OR

Write a story about a celebration that goes wrong.
Tutorial 2 – Point of View: Who is speaking?

What is the Purpose of Tutorial 2?
- Understanding the function of eyeline
- Using non-human eyelines
- Combining multiple eyelines to create conflict

Objective 1: Understanding the function of eyeline

Key words: eye line, perspective, point of view, narrative

We are going to learn about eye line. This is an important tool for writers, because the perspective a story is told from (narrated) can change how readers see your story and feel about the characters in it.

✓ Annotate the picture / write notes to describe:

1. What are the characters feeling?
2. What can they see?
You are going to read some extracts from novels. Imagine that these descriptions were photographs. Who would be taking the picture? Whose eye line is it described from?

a) The wind lifted Lutie Johnson’s hair away from the back of her neck so that she suddenly felt naked and bald, for her hair had been resting softly and warmly against her skin.

b) My father’s family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

c) Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the western spiral arm of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun. Orbiting this at a distance of roughly ninety-two million miles is an utterly insignificant little blue green planet whose ape-descended life forms are so amazingly primitive that they still think digital watches are a pretty neat idea.

We’ve tried to arrange the photographs chronologically, though the passage of so many years has made it difficult. A few are fuzzy but revealing nonetheless. Exhibit #1 shows the Lisbon house shortly before Cecilia’s suicide attempt.
Assessment

Write a sentence describing the moment the picture is taken, from the eye line of:

a) The man running away.
b) The mother of the boy holding the stick, who hears about it that evening.
c) The kneeling soldier.
d) The person taking the photograph.
All of these stories are written from the perspective of a non-human narrator.

1. Can you guess who or what the narrator is?
2. Why has the writer chosen to use this narrator?

a) I used to sleep on the bonnet of a silver van in the parking lot of an apartment building. Why there? Because no one would ever shoo me away. Human beings are basically huge monkeys that walk upright, but they can be pretty full of themselves. They leave their cars exposed to the element, but a few paw prints on the paintwork and they go ballistic.

b) I could introduce myself properly, but it’s not really necessary. You will know me well enough and soon enough, depending on a diverse range of variables. It suffices to say that at some point in time, I will be standing over you, as genially as possible. Your soul will be in my arms. I will carry you away gently.

c) Over the last seven years in Istanbul, I’ve changed hands 560 times, and there’s not a house, shop, market, bazaar, mosque, church or synagogue I haven’t entered. As I’ve roamed about, I’ve learnt that much more gossip has been spread, many more legends told and lies spun in my name than I’d ever suspected.

Practice

For each event, think of a non-human narrator to tell the story. Write a sentence justifying why they would make an effective narrator for your story.
a) Car crash
b) Six-year-old’s birthday party
c) Funeral
d) A first date

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Assessment

Choose one of the pairings above and write the opening three sentences of the story.

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Page | 14
Reflect: Was it effective? Why? Why not?

Objective 3: Combining multiple eyelines to create conflict

Key words: split narrative

Sometimes writers combine different eye lines in their novels, to show different characters’ conflicting perspectives. An example of this is the split narrative, where two or more different narrators talk about the same event.

1. Who are the narrators below?
2. Why is it important that the reader hears both their perspectives?

Amy made me believe I was exceptional, that I was up to her level of play. That was both our making and undoing. Because I couldn’t handle the demands of greatness. I began craving ease and averageness, and I hated myself for it, and ultimately, I realized, I punished her for it. I turned her into the brittle, prickly thing she became.

Nick loved me. A six-o kind of love: he looooooved me. But he didn’t love me, me. Nick loved a girl who doesn’t exist. I was pretending the way I often did, pretending to have a personality. I can’t help it, it’s what I’ve always done: The way some women change fashion regularly, I change personalities. So I had to stop. Can you imagine finally showing your true self to your spouse, your soul mate, and having him not like you?
You are writing a story based on the image below, using a split narrative. Which two eye lines would you choose for your story? Why?

![Image of a street scene with a man lying on the ground]

**Assessment**

Write ten sentences of a split narrative story based on this photograph.

Five sentences from the eye line of one character; five from the eye line of another.

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Books to read if enjoyed the extracts from this lesson:

The Travelling Cat Chronicles, Hiro Arikawa
The Collector Collector, Tibor Fischer
My Name is Red, Orhan Pamuk
The Street, Ann Petry
Gone Girl, Gillian Flynn

Also... look at photographs by Don McCullin for themes of conflict and war
Tutorial 3 – Point of View: When are they speaking?

What is the Purpose of Tutorial 3?

- Placing a narrative in time
- Using time to create conflict
- Practising point of view

Objective 1: Placing a narrative in time

Fiction often contains three different time frames:

1. Plot time = the time in which a fictional event is meant to have taken place
2. Narrator time = the point of time when the fictional narrator supposedly tells the story
3. Reader time = the point of time when the actual reader reads the work

We are going to focus on the gap between plot time and narrator time. The difference between these time frames can be used to create conflict in a narrative.

Practice

You are writing a story, which involves a key event: Sam, the main character, is left by their partner Jen.

✔ For each point on the timeline (on the next page), write a sentence (add a textbox over the green box to do it in this workbook) that would most appropriately express how Sam would talk about the break up. The first one is done for you.
There was a thin child, who was three years old when the word war began. She could remember, though barely, the time before wartime when, as her mother frequently told her, there was honey and cream and eggs in plenty. She was a thin, sickly, bony child, like an eft, with fine hair like sunlit smoke.
What effect does this use of time have on the reader?

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Objective 2: Using time differences to create conflict

By playing with time, authors can create **conflict** to drive their stories forward and engage the reader.

✓ Match the examples and definitions below to some well-known techniques that can be used to create conflict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Key word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reginald wasn’t to know then, that in fours years time his beloved house would be rubble.</td>
<td>The narrator is speaking from the future, and tells the reader things the main character doesn’t know.</td>
<td>Flashback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of course, I have not been entirely honest about Edward, but then this is my story.</td>
<td>The reader is made aware that what they are reading is a story written in the past.</td>
<td>Unreliable narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are reading this message, then I am already dead.</td>
<td>The main character is reflecting on an event from the past and relating it to the reader.</td>
<td>Metanarrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was born in 1961, and so grew up admiring the mystique of mini skirts and paisley prints.</td>
<td>The narrator knows everything about the key event, but withholds information from the reader.</td>
<td>Dramatic irony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• In what way does each of these techniques create conflict? How might this engage the reader?

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Practice

Read the extracts below. Annotate them to explain:

1. Who is the narrator?
2. What is their temporal relationship to the key event being described?
3. Which technique is being used?
4. What effect might this have on the reader?

- What kind of story is being told? How might the use of time connect to it?

a) Long ago in 1945, all the nice people in England were poor, allowing for exceptions. The streets of the cities were lined with buildings in bad repair, or in no repair at all, bomb-sites piled with stony rubble, houses like giant teeth in which the decay had been drilled out, leaving only the cavity.

b) I want my learned readers to participate in the scene I am about to replay; I want them to examine its every detail and see for themselves how careful, how chaste, the whole wine sweet event is if viewed with what my lawyer has called, in a private talk we have had, "impartial sympathy." So let us get started. I have a difficult job before me.

Assessment

Choose one of the techniques we have just looked at and use it to write three sentences of a narrative about a bank robbery,
**Objective 3: Practicing point of view**

You are now going to put together what you have learnt in the past two lessons to create short pieces of writing that play with point of view in order to create **conflict**.

**Practice**

Roll a **dice** to pick an event, timescale, and an eye line for the narration.

If doing this offline, select one event, one time and one eyeline.

Write the opening to a description of this event.

- Use one of the following techniques:
  - flashback
  - unreliable narrator
  - metanarrative
  - dramatic irony

- Did this narrative provide enough **conflict** to engage the reader? If not, how might you change it?

- Use one of the following techniques:
  - flashback
  - unreliable narrator
  - metanarrative
  - dramatic irony

- Did this narrative provide enough **conflict** to engage the reader? If not, how might you change it?
If possible, get in touch with a fellow student who is taking this course, and send each other your stories. You are going to swap, read, and then review each other’s writing.

Focus on:
✓ whether their opening engages the reader to read on
✓ where the conflict lies in their narrative

Alternatives for offline use:
- Encourage someone at home to write a story too using the instructions in the workbook, then use the feedback table to give them feedback!
- Read your story a couple of days after you have written and give yourself feedback
- Read your story out loud – this could help provide a new perspective on your story and you may notice how it is written differently to when you only read it
- Ask a family member to read your story and give feedback

WWW       EBI

- Go back and craft your work in green pen.

Books to read if enjoyed the extracts from this lesson:
Ragnarok, A. S. Byatt
Girls of Slender Means, Muriel Spark
Selected Stories of Sylvia Townsend Warner, Sylvia Townsend Warner
Lolita, Vladimir Nabakov
**Tutorial 4 – Building a character**

**What is the Purpose of Tutorial 4?**
- Using objects to build a character
- Finding conflict in characters
- Practising character description

**Do now!**

Make a list of ten objects. We will use these later:

**Objective 1: Using objects to build a character**

It can sometimes be hard to think about how to get started with creating a character and making them seem real.

To get around this, we can try to build our character from the ground up, starting with details about the world around them.

✓ If you found these items in a person’s bag, what kind of inferences might you make about their personality and life?

✓ What about this description of a character’s handbag from a novel? What does it tell you about them?
The bag was all but empty. A layer of grey fluff and something like biscuit crumbs lay along the bottom, and besides this there was a pink bus-ticket and a folded-up old envelope in her mother’s writing.

**Practice**

Write a short character profile for each example below. Think about who would own these objects, and what they might reveal about them.

![Image a) multiple people](image1)

**a)**

![Image b) gun, sunglasses, troll](image2)

**b)**
Look at the list of objects you created at the start of our tutorial. Answer the questions below about who your character might be.

a) What time period are they living in?
b) Where are they at the moment?
c) Are they happy? Why? If not, why not?
d) Who do they love most in the world?
Objective 2: Finding conflict in characters

Introducing conflict in a character.

Ron Weasley, Harry Potter
What he wants: is to be a hero, like Harry, and be considered special.
What he needs: is to realize that he is already a hero and Harry’s equal.

Practice

Think of three characters you have come across in fiction (this can include films or television). What is the conflict that drives them?

Character 1: ____________________________
What do they want? ____________________________
What do they need? ____________________________

Character 2: ____________________________
What do they want? ____________________________
What do they need? ____________________________

Character 3: ____________________________
What do they want? ____________________________
What do they need? ____________________________
Read the profile of your character from section A of this tutorial.

What is the conflict that your character faces? Is there a gap between what they want and need? Write down your responses

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Objective 3: Practicing character description

Read the description below of a character doing an everyday activity, washing their face.

✓ Highlight any words that you think gives us information about what that character is like.

Within doors Dolly bent over the wooden washstand, whitening her black eyebrows with frothy lather, her nose bright pink, and dripping with soapy water. As her face came out from behind the sponge each side, it wore a reproachful, stupefied expression.

Dolly finished washing, arranged her black hair with the rust-red strips in it neatly. She dipped something that looked like a limp orange biscuit into a pink bowl on the dressing-table, and afterwards dabbed and smeared it all over her reproachful-looking face, leaving the skin covered over evenly with the light corn-coloured powder.

Is there anything unusual about this description?
What might you guess is the internal conflict of this character?

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Practice

Replace the underlined words in these descriptions below to change the reader’s impression of the character.

- What key conflict can be hinted at by the words you choose?

a) Agatha stood up slowly and walked over to the window. Outside the air was fresh. Her eyes widened as she took in the view. Behind her, a clock ticked, a sharp, insistent sound. Agatha frowned slightly and went back to her seat.

Agatha stood up slowly and ____________________________over to the window. Outside the air was fresh. Her eyes ________________________as she took in the view. Behind her, a clock _____________________, a _____________________, ________________________sound. Agatha _________________________ slightly and ________________________back to her seat.

b) He chopped the carrots efficiently, sliding them over to one side when he was finished. Next the celery. Steam billowed around his head, and he paused to wipe the sweat on his brow. The dish must be perfect, if not... He shook his head slightly and bent over to continue his work.
Assessment

Write a description of your character making a cup of tea.

Consider:

✓ What objects do they have around them?
✓ What do they want?
✓ What do they need?
✓ What verbs and adjectives can give information to the character about the reader?
• Books to read if enjoyed the extracts from this lesson:

Cheerful Weather for the Wedding, Julia Strachley
Tutorial 5 – Title

What is the Purpose of Tutorial 5?

- Imagining the cause and effect of a moment in time
- Including complications in stories
- Planning plots using cause and effect

Do now!

And then...

You will be making up a story on the spot, saying the story out loud. If possible, connect to someone online taking this course. One person will randomly select a card, and will use this card to start the content of the story. Take it in turns to randomly select a card (Appendix A) and add to the story. Tell each other which card you have selected.

Alternatives for offline use:
- Ask someone at home to play this game with you
- Time yourself for 4 minutes and come up with a story on your own, seeing how many cards you can get through (randomly choosing them)

Write down whether it was it a good story. Why? Why not?

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_______________________________________________________________________________________
Objective 1: Imagining the cause and effect of a moment in time

✓ Look at the two plans for a story below. What are the differences between them?

- A girl walks through a wood to take food to her sick grandmother.
- She goes off the path, because she sees some beautiful flowers she wants to pick for her grandmother.
- She arrives at her grandmother’s house and gives her the flowers and the food.
- She goes home again.

- A girl walks through a wood to bring food to her sick grandmother.
- Earlier that morning, her mother told her not to leave the path.
- She ignores her mother and goes off the path, because she sees some beautiful flowers to pick for her grandmother.
- A wolf has been following her, and, while she is picking the flowers, runs ahead and eats the grandmother.
- The girl arrives at her grandmother’s house, where the wolf has dressed itself in the grandmother’s clothes.
- The wolf tries to eat the girl, but she escapes and runs home.

Practice

What could be the cause and effect of this moment in time?
Assessment

Now try on your own!

Cause

Effect
If this picture was the moment in the story that something important changed for the main character, write down what would it be and why?

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_________________________________________________________________________________
A complication is a moment in a story when something prevents the main character from getting what they want or need. Turning points are key moments in stories as they create **conflict** and **move the story line forward**.

Often turning points follow patterns, such as:

- Right person, right place, wrong time
- Right person, right time, wrong place
- Right time, right place, wrong person

✓ Think about the fairy-tale ‘Cinderella’. Which of these patterns do we find in this story?

**Objective 2: Including complications in stories**

**Practice**

In a sentence, describe a situation that could involve the following complication:

a) Right person, right place, wrong time

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

b) Right person, right time, wrong place

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_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Cc) Right time, right place, wrong person

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_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
Pick one of your ideas from the practice exercise above and write the opening and closing sentences to that story.

Opening:

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Close:

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Objective 3: Planning plots using cause and effect

Now we will try to put in practice what we have learnt this lesson.

Practice

Replay the game from the starter. This time:

- students work in pairs and select eight cards
- in pairs, students devise their own plot, including at least two complications
- students can choose whether they resolve these complications for the characters, or leave them open to create a more unsettled ending

Our plot line:

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
Which point of view will your story be narrated from?

Remember to think about:
- Time (when did the key events happen/ when is the story being told)
- Eye line (who is telling the story/ where are they standing in relation to the main characters)

Assessment

Write the opening paragraph of your story.
Plenary

Do we feel that our plot lines have developed from the opening of the lesson?

Is this an effective opening to your story? Why/why not?

- If you enjoyed the photographs from this lesson, research:
  - Street photography
  - Garry Winogrand
  - Elliott Erwitt
A magazine has asked for contributions to their creative writing section.

EITHER

Write a story about a festival, as suggested by this picture:

OR

Write a story about a celebration that goes wrong.
## Reflecting on Uni Pathways Online

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<th>What did you most enjoy about Uni Pathways Online?</th>
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<th>What did you find challenging about the programme?</th>
<th>How did you overcome these challenges?</th>
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Appendix
Course Title
Key Stage 4 Programme
researchersinschools.org