Frankenstein's Garden

article by Zoë Disher | photo by Alamy
AC9E5LE01 EN3-UARL-01

Learning Intention:

I am learning to identify cultural aspects of literary texts so that I can better understand intertextual references.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify cultural contexts of a famous literary text.
- I can identify intertextual references.
- I can make connections to other famous literary texts.

Essential knowledge:

For more information on context, view The School Magazine's video on Context.

For more information about related texts, view The School Magazine's video on Intertextuality.

Oral language and communication

Display the following questions on the board:

Who is Frankenstein's monster?

Where have you seen references to Frankenstein's monster before? (e.g. movies, tv shows, books, Halloween costumes)

What words/phrases do you associate with Frankenstein's monster?

Give students one minute to complete a low stakes writing task answering the questions. If students haven't come across Frankenstein before, have them write who they think Frankenstein is.

Once the minute is up, display an appropriate image of Frankenstein's monster on the board and discuss answers. Give a summary of the book Frankenstein by Mary Shelley. An example is below:

Frankenstein is a classic novel about a man called Victor Frankenstein, who uses body parts from different people to build a monster. He gives life to the monster, but the monster is lonely and angry and causes a great deal of destruction.

Understanding text:

Prior to allowing students to view Frankenstein's Garden, read the title and ask them to predict what the article might be about. Read the article as a class, or, if you have a digital subscription, listen to the audio recording.

Ask students:

Why did the author connect plant grafting to the novel Frankenstein? (Connecting two different plants is similar to connecting body parts.)

Explain that this literary connection is called intertextuality.

Pose the following two thesis statements to the class. If students strongly agree with the question, have them move to the front of the classroom. If they strongly disagree, they can move to the back of the classroom. Anyone who has a more balanced opinion can move somewhere in the middle, closer to the agree or disagree side depending on their thoughts. After each statement, select students from each side to discuss their thinking.

Statement one:

A reader needs to know of the novel Frankenstein to understand the article.

Statement two:

Your knowledge of Frankenstein's monster elevated your understanding of the article.

Note: Students may debate whether it's necessary to know of Frankenstein to understand the article, as there is a short summary of the novel at the beginning of the article.

Creating text:

Once students have returned to their seats, ask if they know of any other classic literature like Frankenstein. Write them on the board. Some examples that students may be aware of:

Dracula (Bram Stoker)

War of the Worlds (H.G. Wells)

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (C.S. Lewis)

Nineteen Eighty-Four (George Orwell)

The Lord of the Rings (J.R.R. Tolkien)

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Mark Twain)

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (Lewis Carol)

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Roald Dahl)

The Secret Garden (Frances Hodgson Burnett)

Oliver Twist (Charles Dickens)

A Christmas Carol (Charles Dickens)

The Time Machine (H.G. Wells)

The Wind in the Willows (Kenneth Grahame)

Little Women (Louisa May Alcott)

Heidi (Johanna Spyri)

Anne of Green Gables (Lucy Maud Montgomery)

Charlotte's Web (E.B. White)

Peter Pan (J.M. Barrie)

Ask students to identify examples from real life that they can connect to one of these books. This could be a text-to-world connection like Frankenstein's Garden or a text-to-self connection. For example, vampire bats could connect to Dracula (text-to-world), or a student's grandparent might have a hidden garden in their backyard (text-to-self). Have students write the title of the classic novel and their connection on a sticky note or index card.

Extension: Students can write their own article about their literary connection. Research may be required for text-to-world connections.

Assessment for/as learning:

Students help set up a display of the sticky notes or index cards. They can sort the connections into groups – for example, text-to-self connections on one side and text-to-world connections on another, or connections that relate to the same classic novel grouped together. Discuss the connections as a class and ask if their knowledge of the classic novel helped understand each connection.

Finding El Dogado?

story by Duncan Richardson | illustrated by Greg Holfeld

AC9E5LY05 EN3-RECOM-01

Learning Intention:

I am learning to use comprehension strategies such as visualising and summarising so that I can design an information text on an invented world.

Success Criteria:

- I can use information in a text to create images of the setting.
- I can use information in a text to summarise the setting.
- I can consider the audience's perspective and context when designing a travel brochure.
- I can create a travel brochure using the correct structural features.

Essential knowledge:

For more information on context, view The School Magazine's video on Context.

For more information about lenses in which we view the world, view The School Magazine's video on Perspective.

Oral language and communication

Pose the following questions to the class:

- What is a travel brochure? (A short text, including images, giving information about a holiday destination, usually on a single folded piece of paper)

- What is the purpose of a travel brochure? (To give information about a place and make the destination seem appealing to the reader)

- What types of features might you expect to find on a travel brochure? (A map, images of the place, information about the culture/food/activities, contact information etc)

View examples online of travel brochures, such as Canva's travel brochure templates.

Understanding text:

Explain that students will be creating a travel brochure of the setting in the story, so while they're reading, they should take note of things that they could include for their brochure. They can also use the illustrations for guidance.

Read the story as a class, or, if you have a digital subscription, listen to the audio recording. After reading, discuss with students what details they noted from the text about the setting.

Some points:

- a moon is mentioned rising over distant hills

- a variety of animals live there

- mention of a clearing suggests they are in a forest

- rabbits are food

Review part one of El Dogado in Orbit issue 5 2024 to find extra information.

Points:

- looks like Earth from space (green and blue)

- the clouds make signs

- grassy plain with small clumps of trees

- oxygen and climate similar to Earth

- smells like Earth

- no humans

Creating text:

Ask students the following questions:

1. Now that you've read the story, who do you think your target audience will be for your travel brochure? (Dogs who want to be free from humans)

2. How do you think you can make your travel brochure enticing to your target audience? (Phrases like: "Human-free!", "Countless trees to sniff!", "A paradise for dogs!"; images of wide grassy fields, short bushes and forests; rhetorical questions like "Have you ever wanted to escape your dreary, human-filled existence?")

3. What sort of things from the story might you omit from your travel brochure? (The curse, the Hounds)

Give each student an A4 sheet of paper. They can fold it into thirds or in a different creative way. Ensure they identify the front cover for display. Ask students what they could put on the front cover (sample answer could be "Come to El Dogado, where the friends are plentiful and the humans are gone!" with a picture of open fields). Inside, discuss what else students could add, such as:

- more images

- brief textual information about the landscape

- a map of either the planetary system or of the landing place from the narrative

- the cuisine (rabbits)

- the friendly locals

- the nice weather/hospitable atmospheric conditions

- contact information (email, phone number, website) for a travel agent

Remind students that the purpose of a travel brochure is to entice readers to visit, so they should use lots of persuasive words and phrases, such as "wonderful", "absolutely" and "there's no place like it". Ensure students also consider the context of their audience – a bored or sad dog that's looking to get away, either for a holiday or to move – when creating their brochure.

If you have digital options, students can create their brochure using a program such as Canva.

Assessment for/as learning:

When complete, students swap travel brochures with a peer, who checks that the brochure includes information from the narrative, enticing images and text that considers the target audience's perspective and context.

A generic marking rubric can be found on Read Write Think's website. Students can use this for guidance during the task or self-assessment.

Retreat!

poem by Beverly McLoughland | illustrated by Queenie Chan

AC9E5LY07 EN3-OLC-01

Learning Intention:

I am learning how to vary my expression when reading aloud so that I can deliver spoken text fluently.

Success Criteria:

- I can explain how punctuation and other poetic techniques affect the way text is said aloud.
- I can consider variations in expression when reading aloud.
- I can read a text fluently using expression.

Oral language and communication

Pose the following question for students:

What markings could we use to show readers how to read aloud a text?

Answer: Punctuation.

Discuss the use of various punctuation such as commas, exclamation marks and em-dashes, as well as font changes such as italics and bold. Have students describe and use examples of what they need to do with their voice for each punctuation mark.

Understanding text:

Display the full poem of Retreat! on the board. Read the poem aloud while having students listen silently. Choose appropriate words to emphasise and places to pause. After reading, ask students if you read the passage exactly as the punctuation dictated. Students should recognise that you made your own choices in certain parts, and that you may have paused at the end of a line, which is not necessarily the end of the sentence. Explain that poetry also uses line breaks to indicate pauses.

Explain that the class will be working together to creating their own markups on the poem according to how you initially read it. Students should consider tone, pitch, pace and volume when deciding on their markups. Invented markups could include a jagged line around the word "retreat" to show saying it loudly, squiggly connecting lines between "head and tail" and "legs and feet" to show saying it quickly or an enclosed bubble around "stony gift" to show saying it breathily as if in awe. Finish the markup and read it again, ensuring students are satisfied with how the expression of the poem is represented.

Creating text:

Cover or hide your markups and put students into pairs. Have each student read aloud the poem to their partner in whichever way they choose. Partners can give feedback and suggestions on the reading. Pairs then discuss and decide which way they would like to mark up the poem to show how to read it aloud.

Give students time to practice before presenting their poem to the class, reading together as a pair and using the agreed markups. If you have a digital subscription, students can record themselves reading Retreat! and play it back.

Assessment for/as learning:

Have students respond to the following question:

"In your own words explain how punctuation and other poetic techniques affect the way text is read aloud."

Ask children to use an exit ticket strategy to record this reflection.

Basil's New Experience

story by Wendy Graham | illustrated by David Legge

AC9E5LE03 EN3-UARL-01

Learning Intention:

I am learning to analyse different perspectives in a text so that I can explain how a text would change with a different point of view.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify the point of view in a text.
- I can describe the events of a text from other characters' perspectives.
- I can explain how a text would change depending on the point of view.

Essential knowledge:

For more information on context, view The School Magazine's video on Context.

For more information about lenses in which we view the world, view The School Magazine's video on Perspective.

For more information on viewpoints, view The School Magazine's video on Point of View.

Oral language and communication:

Read the title Basil's New Experience. Ask students to write down predictions based on the following questions:

Who is Basil?

What is the new experience?

Understanding text:

Read the first two sentences of the narrative (My favourite family member, Max, has arrived home from school. I leap up, overcome with joy.) and ask students to revise their predictions if they wish. Read the third sentence of the narrative (Is he about to get my leash and take me for a walk?) and ask students:

Who is Basil? (Dog)

Who owns Basil? (A family)

Who is Max? (Someone from the family – students might predict that Max is either a child or a parent)

Ask students why the author might have decided to use a dog's point of view rather than Max's. Guide them back to the title if they're unsure. Students should connect the fact that

Basil is the one who will have the new experience, therefore he is the one who would have the best point of view to tell the story. Ask students to predict what Basil's new experience might be now that they know he's a dog.

Read the rest of the story aloud to the class, or, if you have a digital subscription, listen to the audio recording.

When the story's finished, ask students:

- Why was Basil the best narrator for the story? (It was his experience/it made the story funny/it gave a fresh perspective on dog classes)

- Who else could have narrated the story? (Dad)

- How might Dad's context and perspective change the narrative? (The tone will become frustrated rather than funny)

Creating text:

Put students into groups of two or three and give each group an A3 sheet of paper. Have students divide the paper into thirds. In the centre of the paper, students write the title Basil's New Experience inside a circle. Explain that groups will be completing a Circle of Viewpoints task (slides 3-4), looking at the narrative from other characters' points of view. Groups choose three characters to examine the events of the text from their context and perspective. Explain that while the narrative doesn't give us exact details about the characters, students can make inferences based on the clues in the text. For example, if Max is Basil's favourite family member, he probably loves Basil and plays with him a lot, whereas Sarah is easily frustrated by Basil's playful nature and doesn't have as strong a relationship with him.

Groups are to make four or five points for each character, writing from the character's perspective of the events of the narrative. Students can be creative with their ideas, as long as it matches the information from the narrative.

For example:

Sarah – We have such a naughty dog. I wish we had a cat instead!

Dad – I knew buying Max a dog for his birthday would result in trouble!

Flash – Hooray, that cheeky dog from next door is back! Play, play, play, play, play!

Once the class have completed their circle of viewpoints, groups compare their answers and discuss similarities and differences.

Extension: Students write the events of the story from another character's point of view.

Assessment for/as learning:

As an exit slip, students complete the following template:

If the narrative was written from _____'s perspective, the story would change because _____.

I See the Sea

poem by Jackie Hosking | illustrated by Caitlin O'Dwyer

AC9E5LE05 EN3-CWT-01

Learning Intention:

I am learning to experiment with vocabulary and language features so that I can create a descriptive text from a specific perspective.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify how word choice influences perspective.
- I can purposefully select a point of view for a text.
- I can use language features to describe a setting.

Essential knowledge:

For more information about lenses in which we view the world, view The School Magazine's video on Perspective.

For more information on viewpoints, view The School Magazine's video on Point of View.

For more information about connotations and imagery, view The School Magazine's video on Connotation, Imagery and Symbol.

Oral language and communication

If you have a digital subscription, complete the interactive activity Perspectives of the Beach and discuss how word choice can convey a narrator's feelings about a setting, rather than telling the reader outright.

Otherwise, discuss with the class how the following two sentences have the same general meaning but different connotations:

The sun warmed the tennis courts.

The sun scorched the tennis courts.

Ask students how the change in adjective changes the perspective of the tennis courts. Ensure they understand that the first sentence suggests the narrator is enjoying themselves, while the second sentence suggests the narrator is having a terrible time. Explain that when it comes to word choice, even with synonyms, the connotations are important when setting a scene.

Understanding text:

Read I See the Sea as a class, or, if you have a digital subscription, listen to the audio recording.

Ask students to identify how the narrator feels about the beach (calming, soothing, happy), and what words suggest this. Answers: the colours being mixed with gemstones, unfurl, glinting, sparkling, foamy, caressing.

Brainstorm as a class who the narrator might be. Students could suggest a range of perspectives such as a child, painter, elderly person, crab, dog, rock formation. Ensure they understand that the gentle tone of the poem means a calm narrator, and that it's set on the shore therefore can't be a deep-sea creature.

Creating text:

Explain that students are to choose a perspective from their brainstorm and write a descriptive scene set at this beach from the narrator's point of view. They are to keep the tone of their narrative the same as the tone of the poem. Ask students how they might use the descriptions in the poem to write their own imagery. Some examples are below.

Simile

The mention of unfurling waves could lead to a descriptive sentence such as: "The waves unfurled like a frond on a fern."

Metaphor

The different shades described could lead to a descriptive sentence such as: "The ocean was an artist's palette, mixing all shades of blue and green."

Personification

The mention of soft foamy fingers caressing the shore could lead to a descriptive sentence such as: "The soft foamy fingers stretched out to touch my bare toes."

Give students time to write their short story, using the below checklist to remind them what to do:

- Choose an appropriate point of view for the tone

- Keep the tone calm and gentle by selecting appropriate vocabulary

- Use imagery (language features) to describe your setting

Assessment for/as learning:

Use the RISE (Reflect, Inquire, Suggest, Elevate) model for peer feedback. More information can be found on the RISE model webpage's guide to peer feedback.

The School Magazine also has a marking rubric for imaginative texts that students can use to guide their writing and/or for teacher assessment.

Skiing Through Time

article by Mina | illustrated by Fifi Colston | Photos by Alamy

AC9E5LA02 EN3-VOCAB-01

Learning Intention:

I am learning to ask clarifying questions to identify authority and bare assertions so that I can take into account differing opinions and ideas in my own writing.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify how a text asserts its authority.
- I can question bare assertions of a text.
- I can make statements taking into account differing opinions and ideas.

Essential knowledge:

For more information about lenses in which we view the world, view The School Magazine's video on Perspective.

For more information about authority, view The School Magazine's video on Authority.

Oral language and communication

Display the following two sentences on the board:

1. It is the best sport in the world.

2. Many people believe it is the best sport in the world.

Ask students what the difference is between the two sentences. Students might recognise that the second sentence takes into account other people's opinions, while the first sentence is a single, subjective opinion.

Ask students what types of texts they might find each of the sentences. For example, the first sentence may be found in a recount, narrative or persuasive text, while the second sentence may be found in an article. Explain that the first sentence would be found in a text where the narrator/author is speaking for themselves, while the second sentence is speaking in a broader context.

Explain that the second sentence also relies on authority – that the author has knowledge and sources for this statement. Brainstorm with the class questions the reader might have to clarify the statement, such as:

- How has this information on people's opinions been gathered? (By a poll, the amount of people watching/playing the sport, some other way?)

- What does "many" mean? What percentage, and what was the sample size?

- Is this opinion from a certain country, or is it worldwide?

After brainstorming these questions, explain to the class that taking into account differing opinions and ideas gives more authority to their non-fiction writing, and that they should ask themselves these types of clarifying questions when composing texts.

Understanding text:

Before reading Skiing Through Time, instruct students to make note of any statements that take into account differing opinions or ideas. Read the text as a class, or, if you have a digital subscription, listen to the audio recording. Discuss statements that students noted, such as:

- Skiing is an exciting winter sport enjoyed by many people around the world.

- some historians believe they even had competitions in which the best skiers could win prizes.

- skiing… remains a popular pastime for people around the world!

Creating text:

Explain that students will be writing a short article about the history of a different sport, using language that takes into account other opinions. For example, rather than the statement "Tennis is the most interesting sport in the world", they should consider other opinions. Clarify that the opinions don't have to be different from their own, but they have to come from another source, and that this source can be a single authoritative reference or general support (such as "many people believe that"). Remind students that while general support is appropriate, specific facts and statistics give more authority to their text.

Give students time to research the history of their sport. Some useful websites to get students started include:

International Tennis Federation's History of Tennis

Britannica's History of Basketball

Olympics' History of Volleyball

Britannica's History of Field Hockey

Historic UK's History of Golf

The Croquet Foundation of America's History of Croquet

To prevent students from copying the wording of the articles provided, ensure they include the same type of information as Skiing Through Time, such as:

- How the sport originated

- How the sport spread through the world

- How the sport is different now from its original form

- How popular the sport is today, whether worldwide or in certain countries

To help guide their writing, students can use the rubric for informative texts provided by The School Magazine.

Assessment for/as learning:

Students swap their writing with a peer reviewer, who can use a highlighter or coloured pencil to circle instances of language that take into account other opinions. Peers should be looking for phrases such as "many people believe that", "it is often thought that", "historians consider" and "[this website] states that".