

Year 8 – AP/Discovery – Spring Term – Lucky Dip – creative and descriptive writing

Narrator

Every narrative must have a narrator: Someone who exists as the voice of the story or description, the reader's lens to observe the characters and events. They are not the writer but the writer's construct, sometimes used to voice the writer's ideas and opinions and sometimes as a character in their own right. Who your narrator is and their feelings will shape their choice of language used to describe different characters and events. Always think about who your narrator is, what their narratorial voice is like and what their connection to the story and characters is.

Lucky Dip – short film

Who is the narrator?

Where is the setting and how can it be described?

Who are the main characters?

Use some of the characterisation suggestions to describe a character.

Words to include: adjectives, adverbs, interesting verbs and nouns.

Go above and beyond in your word choices!

Description

In real life we perceive the world with our five senses; smell, touch, taste, hear and see. So too must your reader. They wish to experience your fictional world, and sensory stimulation helps transport them into your character's story. This is where the power of a writer's observation and imagination mix, with amazing results. Successful description conveys important information to the reader in strategic places about • place/background • emotion and mood • tension/atmosphere • action. This can elicit emotions within your reader, creating tension, atmosphere, and a sense of immediacy (being there with the character).

Characters

Characters are the lifeblood of creative writing, driving the plot and representing the human interest element for the reader to care about.

There are two forms of characterisation:

Direct –

the narrator explicitly tells the reader details about the character; i.e.: 'Mr. Ramsay – he is absorbed in himself, he is tyrannical, he is unjust....'

Indirect –

the narrator implicitly reveals (shows) the reader the character's traits

'He dragged the last smoke from his ravelling cigarette and then, with callused thumb and forefinger, crushed out the glowing end.'

Indirect is always preferable because it involves the reader, forcing them to draw their own conclusions.

Characterisation

Characterisation can help readers infer or deduce things about a character's personality in five different ways:

1. Speech (dialogue)

Personality is revealed through language choices (intelligence and education); speed, hesitations and length (temperament); accents (origins); and topics (status).

2. Thoughts (& feelings)

Understanding personality through inner thoughts and feelings can reveal rationality, confidence, mood, intentions, motivations and other characteristics, as well as discrepancies between their inner and outer personas.

3. Effect (on others)

How do they handle themselves socially? What about the relationships they can or cannot form with others? Revealing the emotional response other characters have towards this one shows what explicit aspects of the character's personality are expressed to others.

4. Actions (& behaviours)

Behaviours are a product of inner feelings, revealing a character's drives and motivations. How they physically and verbally interact with others can demonstrate their social standing and their innate nature, i.e.: good, mean, sympathetic, aggressive or selfish.

5. Looks (appearance)

Personal hygiene, clothing, body language and facial expressions are the non-verbal cues representing 80% of communication. They may be genuine pointers to how the character feels about them self, their education, wealth, or even their natural state. It could however, be a deception at odds with their true character.