

ENGLISH

for

Queensland

UNITS 3 & 4

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Texts:
connections and
close study

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CHAPTERS**

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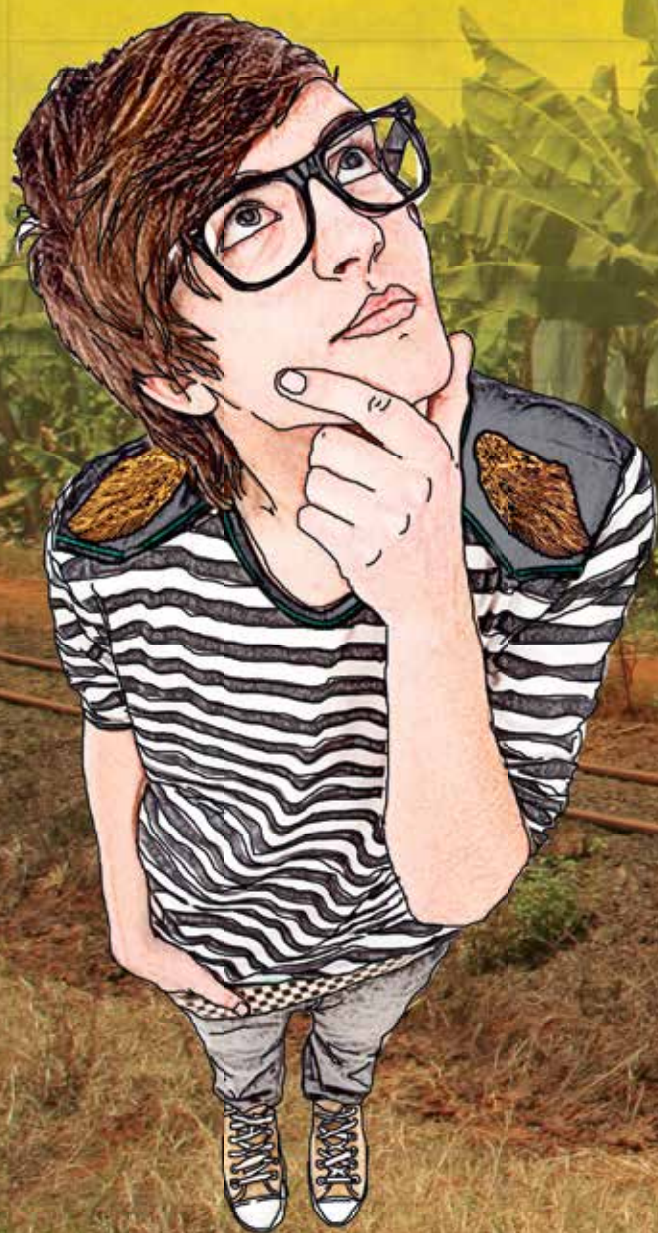
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A

STUDYING SENIOR ENGLISH UNITS 3 & 4



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1 PREPARING TO STUDY UNITS 3 & 4

Your success in English can be achieved through the consistent and systematic use of frameworks that are transferable from one situation to the next – from one text to the next. Being able to analyse and interpret one particular text is not enough.

As analysing and interpreting texts is such an important skill, the focus in this chapter is on general advice and tips for English. It details frameworks and ideas that you can adapt to just about any situation involving the comprehension and creation of stories, arguments, and literary responses.

Focus questions:

- What are text frames and how will they be useful to you when reading?
- What is the model of language that underpins a study of English?
- What are your goals (personal, academic, cultural/sporting, work-related) for this year?
- How can you set yourself up for success? What study techniques might work for you?

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

The approaches and frameworks discussed in this chapter can be applied to Units 3 & 4 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*.

This chapter features:

- a review of four frames that can be useful for making interpretations of texts
- a review of the Language in Use model that underpins the approach to interpreting and creating texts in the syllabus
- a starting point for reflecting on your own study skills coming into Units 3 & 4
- explicit links to relevant cognitive verbs
- practical strategies and skills for English (and beyond).

1.1

REVIEW OF KEY INFORMATION FROM *ENGLISH FOR QUEENSLAND UNITS 1 & 2*

Before you proceed with Units 3 & 4, it is worth reminding yourself about two frameworks that will assist you when interpreting (i.e. reading, viewing and listening) and creating (i.e. writing, speaking and signing) multimodal texts. Summarised in this section are:

- frames for interpreting texts
- the Language in Use model.

Interpreting texts using frames

Your assessment in English usually requires you to demonstrate your ability to *analyse*, *interpret* and *evaluate* various types of texts. In this book, we will use the umbrella term *interpret* to refer to all the different processes involved in reading and understanding meaning.

Interpreting texts involves using your subjective standpoint in the world to make sense of how someone else has used language to create meaning. Even when we agree with our peers about the meaning of a text, in our minds we are linking that text to a different (possibly unique) set of memories, past experiences and related texts. Sometimes this means we interpret a text differently from someone else. To ensure our interpretations are based on personal responses that have been rigorously considered, it's important that we keep the big picture in mind and always push to look at the text from different angles.

One metaphor that we recommend using to ensure that your personal response contains multiple elements of interpretation is 'framing'. By ensuring that we look at a text through multiple frames, we give ourselves a system for seeing different things and creating rich responses to the work of others. To really get a 'big-picture' understanding of a new text, you should figuratively place each of the frames shown on page 6 over the text to generate ideas about personal, structural, cultural and critical meanings. Being able to integrate and synthesise these various meanings is essential for your success in Units 3 & 4.



Critical frame



Focus: Evaluating the values, beliefs and assumptions underpinning the text

Key guiding questions:

- What does this text invite us to believe, do and feel?
- Whose perspectives have been omitted, disregarded or marginalised?
- Whose perspectives have been included, emphasised or privileged?
- What linguistic, textual or cultural conventions are challenged by this work?
- What can we create to challenge this text by adapting, intervening in or transforming it?
- At this point, have any of your personal feelings or reactions to the text changed?

Personal frame



Focus: Noticing your reaction to the text and what stands out to you personally

Key guiding questions:

- How did this text make you feel?
- What were the first things you noticed about this text?
- Can you see your own story or perspective in this text?
- Does it remind you of any other texts?

Cultural frame



Focus: Exploring how the text represents the society and culture of a particular time and place

Key guiding questions:

- When and where was this text produced?
- What social and cultural norms are represented?
- What values are promoted?
- Was this text controversial or conservative for its time?
- Does this text belong to a movement or style?

Structural frame



Focus: Analysing the way structure, language and other textual features work to give a text meaning

Key guiding questions:

- How has this text been organised?
- What genre is being used?
- How have written, spoken, visual or other features been used?
- Do any patterns stand out (e.g. metaphors, motifs/ themes and symbols)?
- How are the textual features working to give this text meaning?

1.1a Your turn

Practising the reading frames

Find a short text (a blog post, a review, a news story or an extract from a novel or play). Read it a few times, applying a different reading frame each time. With other students, reflect on the following questions:

- What did you find easy? What did you find difficult?
- If you strike difficulty with particular frames, what can you do to solve that problem? Who can you get help from with particular frames?

Language in Use

We are going to use the Language in Use model to help us make sense of some of the 'bigness' and complexity of language. A model is a way of representing aspects of the world and can be a useful thinking tool. The model allows us to think about the way language is used in different contexts relevant to Senior English (e.g. everyday, civic, literary and academic contexts).

One version of the model is presented in the diagram in Source 1. The double-headed arrows indicate a two-way influence; that is:

- the *purpose*, *genre* and *register* influence the selection of language for a text, and
- choices in *language* can affect, challenge or subvert the register and genre.

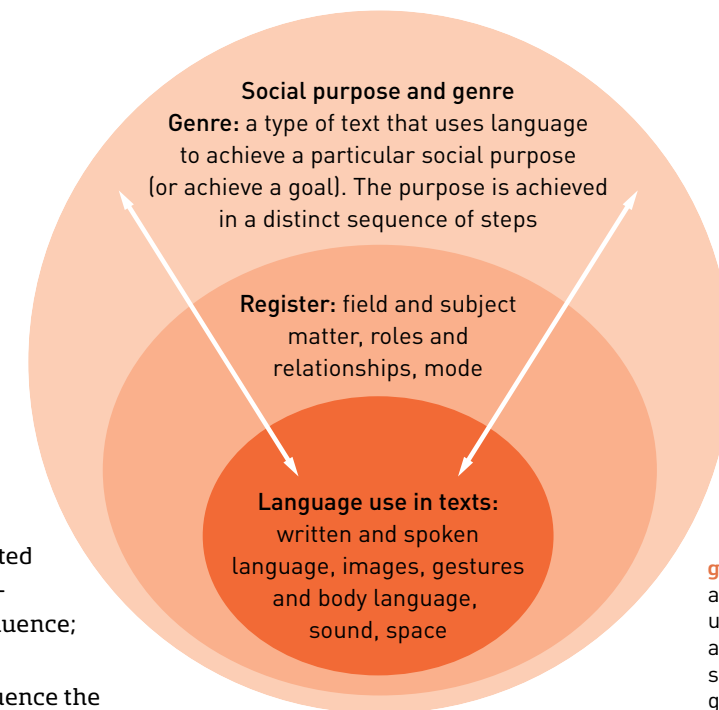
For example, a student is expected to be polite and deferential when speaking to the principal, but a student could challenge the relationship by sitting in the principal's chair, calling her 'mate' and asking the questions.

Questions to guide text creation

Whether you are writing, speaking, signing or producing a multimodal text, you should ask yourself the questions listed in Source 2 before you start. Your answers will help ensure that the text you produce is both appropriate (i.e. fit for purpose) and effective (i.e. does its job well).

Source 2 Questions to ask yourself about texts

ASPECT OF LANGUAGE IN USE MODEL	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Purpose and genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is the social purpose of the text?- Therefore, what genre (or combination of genres) would be most appropriate? (Refer to Source 3.)
Register Field and subject matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What field will you be involved in (e.g. literary criticism, journalism, civic activism)?- Within this field, what is your subject matter? Alternatively, what question do you need to answer?
Roles and associated relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What role do you need to adopt (e.g. journalist, film critic, blogger, student of literature)?- Who is your audience (e.g. the general public, an online special interest group, older adolescents, an examiner)?- What relationship should you assume between you and your audience:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- close \leftrightarrow distant- equal \leftrightarrow unequal- values aligned \leftrightarrow values not aligned?



Source 1 The Language in Use model

genre
a type of text that uses language to achieve a particular social purpose or goal in a distinct sequence of steps or stages. Also known as 'text type'

register
a collective term encompassing field and subject matter, roles and relationships, mode and medium; these variables influence language choices

field
the general area of activity (e.g. football training, literary studies, biology, civic protest) in which a text-user is using language

subject matter
the specific content or topic of a text (e.g. frogs within the field of biology or marriage within the field of literary studies)

role
the identity or part (e.g. coach, literary critic, scientist) that one adopts in a specific communication context

relationships
the power, distance and alignment of values that influence the language people use with each other in a specific context

(Continues on next page)

mode
a channel of communication – most commonly written, spoken, visual, audio (i.e. sounds), gestural and spatial

medium
the method or technique of communication used to produce a text (e.g. paper and pen, film stock, digital file, live in front of an audience), but typically not sound

ASPECT OF LANGUAGE IN USE MODEL	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Mode and associated medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is the task mainly written or spoken? Are you required to include images?- How will the text be conveyed (e.g. on paper, digitally, face to face)?
Language and other features	<p>Given the context above, what type of meaning-making resources will you need to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>language</i> (e.g. noun and verb groups, evaluative language, cohesion, aesthetic features & stylistic devices)- <i>spoken features</i> (e.g. intonation, rhythm, pitch, intensity)- <i>images</i> (e.g. gaze, colour, shot type)- <i>gestures and body language</i> (e.g. eye contact, gesture, body movement and orientation)- <i>sign language</i>- <i>sound</i> (e.g. soundscape, sound effects, silence)- <i>space</i> (e.g. bound/unbound, bonding)- some combination of the above?

The questions in Source 2 can also be helpful to consider when interpreting texts, especially when holding up the structural, cultural and critical frames. For example, when applying the structural frame, you would find it helpful to think more about the structure and features of the text in relation to the register: what do these reveal about the field of the text, the role adopted by the writer, the intended audience and assumptions about relationships?

Source 3 Key genres for Senior English

GENRE FAMILY	GENRE	SOCIAL PURPOSE	TYPICAL STAGES
Note: Optional stages are shown in brackets			
Story	recount	to recount events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- orientation- events
	narrative	to resolve a complication in a story	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- orientation- complication- (evaluation)- resolution- (coda)
	anecdote	to share an emotional reaction to a remarkable event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- orientation- complication- (evaluation)
	exemplum	to judge characters/people or behaviour in a story	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- orientation- complication- (evaluation)
	news story	to report a significant event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- lead- angles

(Continues on next page)

GENRE FAMILY	GENRE	SOCIAL PURPOSE	TYPICAL STAGES
Note: Optional stages are shown in brackets			
Argument	exposition	to argue a point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- (background)- thesis- supporting arguments- reinforcement of thesis
	discussion	to discuss two or more points of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- (background)- issue- sides- resolution
	challenge	to rebut a position on an issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- position- rebuttal
Response to text	review	to assess the value of a literary, visual or musical text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- context- interpretation of elements of text- judgment
	character analysis	to evaluate character(s) in a text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- character presentation- character description- character judgment
	compositional analysis	to analyse the elements used to compose a culturally significant work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- context- analysis- summary/judgment
	analytical essay (interpretation)	to interpret themes/ messages or aesthetics of a text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- thesis: theme identification and preview of elements- element evaluation- theme reiteration
	critical evaluation	to analyse and evaluate the themes, ideas, aesthetics or messages in a work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- text evaluation- deconstruction of text- challenge to message

1.1b Your turn

Thinking about Language in Use

Read your first assessment task sheet carefully. Then, in small groups (if possible), see how many of the questions from Source 2 you can answer. Remember, not all the information will be given to you explicitly – you might have to make inferences based on your prior knowledge and experience in English.



1.2

INDEPENDENT STUDY FOR ENGLISH: GUIDE AND TIPS

Before reading any further, stop for a moment and think about your various goals for this year.
Hint: It's a good idea to write these down and pin them up somewhere prominent in your study space.



Source 4 Questions to consider in your final year of school

In all likelihood, you will be aiming for some combination of goals; the important thing is to achieve balance in your life. And this won't happen without some planning, persistence and discipline.

The remainder of this chapter will focus (mainly) on your academic goals, and especially how you can maximise your grades in General English. We'll be focusing on three main areas:

- preparing for study: planning, and space and **time management**
- key thinking processes for English
- concentration, memory skills and overlearning.

Along the way, we'll try to address some common issues that students of English face.

Preparing for study: planning, and space and time management

In this section, we will focus on some key skills that will set you up for success. While these ideas are especially directed at your studies in English, they can be adapted for any subject.

Please note that 'reading' will be used throughout to cover reading, viewing and listening; 'writing' will be used as a convenient term to capture writing, speaking and creating multimodal texts.

time management
having the ability to use your time effectively and productively at school, at work and at home

Planning

Study in English will mainly involve engaging closely with a range of different types of texts, especially stories, arguments and literary responses. Having a clear purpose for your reading is crucial. While personal pleasure from your reading, viewing and listening is always a bonus, in English you might also be aiming to:

- obtain background information on the context of a new text or a particular author
- clarify an emotional reaction (i.e. why did I react in the way that I did to that text? Is it something in my personal or family background? How did the author use structure and language to position me?)
- identify patterns of evidence to test and justify an interpretation
- ... do something else?

Each purpose will require a slightly different approach to your study and associated reading. Here are a couple of illustrations of what this might mean.

Source 5 Planning for reading (illustrative examples)

PURPOSE OF READING	HOW YOU MIGHT APPROACH YOUR STUDY (SAMPLE ACTIVITIES)
To read a novel for personal pleasure (always a good idea on the first reading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- sit in a comfortable chair or lie down in a hammock or bed- ensure the space is as distraction-free as possible- allow yourself to be immersed in the world of the story- share your immediate reactions to the text with friends (e.g. via social media)
To identify patterns of evidence to test and justify an interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- slow down the pace of your reading- underline key passages and write annotations (e.g. on colour-coded sticky notes)- keep an open mind as you read; because of your own, unique background and experience, you might have a different perspective on a text from someone else- discuss ideas with others (e.g. via a focused chat session)

Space management

Ideally, you need a permanent, personal space of your own where you can study as free from distraction as you can. This space should have everything you need within easy reach and be kept as tidy as is possible. Study essentials might include the following:

- a room with a door you can close
- a desk and a comfortable chair
- shelving (e.g. for set texts, textbooks, other reference books) and storage (e.g. for pens, paper, paper clips, sticky notes)
- a noticeboard and/or whiteboard – for reminders, or as a calendar with due dates marked, rough ideas, or important information
- good lighting (preferably natural during the day)
- a fan (or air conditioner) and heater, depending on the season – make sure these are safe to use
- an area free from distractions (e.g. Can you charge your phone on the other side of the room, away from your desk?)
- access to the internet, with a dictionary and thesaurus bookmarked in your browser.



Time management

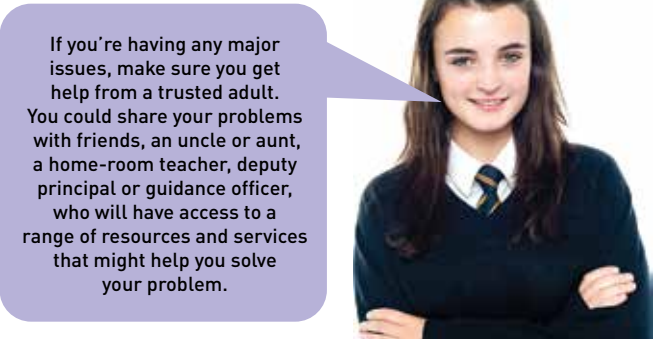
As we saw earlier, you may have a number of goals for your final year in high school: academic (and not just for English), personal, cultural/sporting and employment. Time will need to be allocated to each goal. In addition, you will need to allocate time for typical daily activities, including:

- eating (and, perhaps, food preparation)
- household chores
- moderate, daily exercise (essential)
- relaxation
- social bonding activities with family and friends
- at least 8 hours of sleep per night.

So you don't end up feeling overwhelmed, it might be useful to draw up a weekly timetable. This could be done using the calendar function in your mobile phone, or you might prefer a hard copy that you pin to a noticeboard. Important tasks can also be placed in your mobile phone's 'Reminders' app.

Once you have drafted a plan, stick to it as closely as you can. However, if you don't quite hit your targets, be kind to yourself because the plan can be reviewed at the end of each week and modified as necessary. Also, avoid overplanning – a *too* detailed plan won't leave space for the inevitable, unexpected disruptions.

There is one more important activity for which to set aside time. To maximise success in all your subjects, *daily wide-reading of self-selected texts* (these can be good-quality non-fiction, podcasts, blogs, online news stories and so forth) is essential; this can help you expand your general knowledge and develop your vocabulary (for which exposure to written language is crucial). You also need to work on your thinking processes for reading, viewing and listening (see below), but *20–30 minutes per day* of wide-reading is a very good discipline to get into.



Key thinking processes for English

By now, no doubt you have heard *a lot* about cognitive verbs. As you know, a verb is a doing, thinking, saying, feeling or being word. However, in the syllabus, 'cognitive verb' is used as a convenient term for what happens in your head as you read and produce texts; that is, your thinking processes. In the next two sections, we outline the thinking processes that will be useful for:

- reading, viewing and listening
- writing, speaking and creating.

This discussion will draw explicitly on Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority's (QCAA) official list of cognitive verbs, but will also expand on those where required.

Finally, it is assumed that most of the information and tips are prompts and reminders for you, rather than being completely new.

Reading, viewing and listening

If your task is to analyse and interpret texts, the following are some tips on when and how to apply particular thinking skills. Crucially, research shows that engagement in learning is increased for students who actively apply practical strategies such as those in Source 6. *Even when students aren't especially interested in the content, merely using the strategies diligently tends to improve engagement.*

The tips in Source 6 can be used in conjunction with the four reading frames reviewed earlier. If you're having trouble with any of these processes (including any learning needs you may have), make sure you talk to your English teacher early in the year.

Source 6 Thinking processes for reading, viewing and listening

STAGE OF READING	KEY THINKING PROCESSES TO APPLY	PRACTICAL IDEAS
Before reading/ viewing/listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>investigate</i> and <i>understand</i> the context (historical, social, cultural, political)- make <i>predictions</i> about the text- <i>determine</i> your purpose for reading (e.g. for pleasure, to obtain information, to clarify an emotional reaction, to identify patterns of evidence, to test and justify an interpretation; something else?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- conduct research, if necessary- brainstorm what you know already and what you want to know (e.g. via a KWL)- base predictions on an analysis of the cover, scanning chapter titles and headings, and your own prior knowledge/experience
During reading/ viewing/listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>identify</i> field and subject matter, roles (including 'intended' or 'ideal' readers) and relationships- <i>generate</i> questions as you read (e.g. what, where, when, how, why, what if ...?)- visualise and <i>create</i> sensory images (touch, smell, taste, hearing) in your head- <i>determine</i> connections to prior knowledge, experience and other texts- <i>explore</i> connections between various parts of the text – identify patterns and discontinuities- <i>infer</i> meanings (e.g. What aren't you told directly but can work out for yourself?)- monitor your reading and <i>apply</i> strategies to <i>solve</i> comprehension problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- read/view/listen to the text more than once- engage emotionally with the text – especially during a first read- use the probe questions for the four reading frames (see page 6)- create a double-entry diary for key passages (especially useful when re-reading)- underline key sections, annotate the text (using sticky notes if necessary)- create flow charts, graphic organisers, mind maps, story maps, sociograms etc.
After reading/ viewing/listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>analyse</i> the key features of the text, including structure and language- <i>interpret</i> the overall meaning/s of the text- <i>test</i> ideas against textual evidence and other people's interpretations- <i>determine</i> and <i>select</i> important information in relation to an assessment task- <i>evaluate</i> the text and make <i>judgments</i> about it, including in comparison to other texts- <i>develop</i> an argument in relation to the text and <i>justify</i> it with patterns of textual evidence (analytical and critical responses)- <i>apply</i> knowledge of the text to <i>experiment</i> with and <i>create</i> new texts (imaginative responses)- <i>synthesise</i> your responses and understandings- <i>reflect</i> on your personal reading experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- see the writing process in the next section- base judgments on established criteria, as well as personal and socially agreed values, attitudes and beliefs

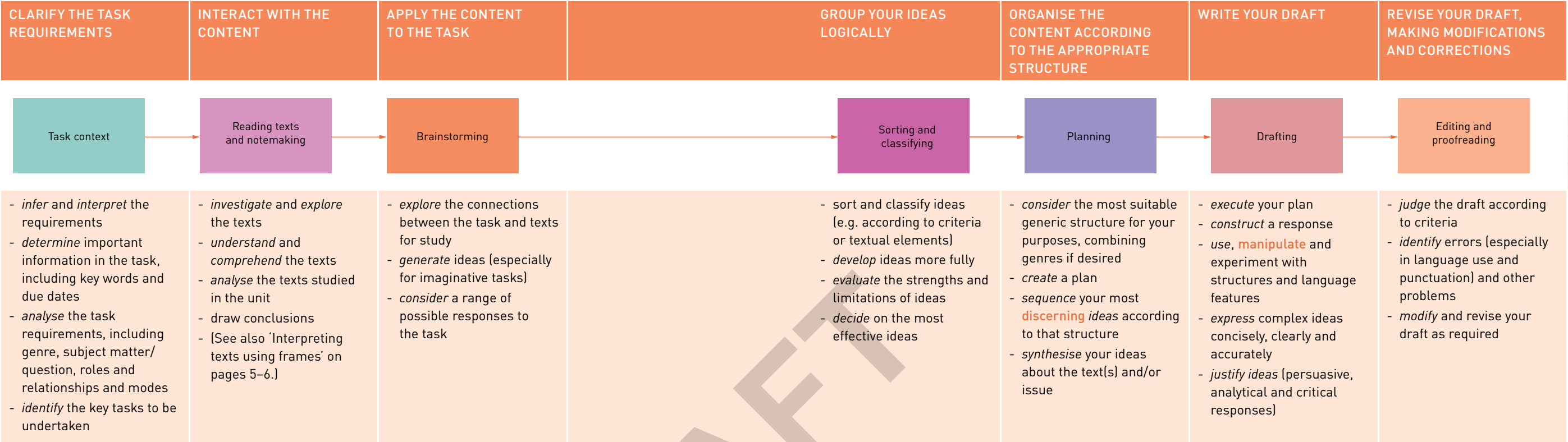
More specific tips related to reading complex novels and plays are provided in Chapter 12.

Writing, speaking and creating

Source 7 recommends a process for writing responses for assessment, either as assignments, under supervised conditions or in external exams. This writing process can be adapted as required for multimodal and spoken tasks. The bottom row of the table lists key thinking that would be useful to apply at each stage of the process. Finally, although represented in a linear manner, you can revisit stages as many times as necessary and the process can be adapted for the specific task.

It's important that you consistently follow a logical and systematic process such as the one shown in Source 7. If each stage is completed diligently, you will be able to submit your task with confidence.

Source 7
A suggested writing process for creating responses in assessment (modify as required for multimodal and spoken tasks)



infographic
a visual representation that combines information or data with graphic elements, e.g. as a chart or diagram

discerning
discriminating, insightful; showing intellectual perception and good judgment making thoughtful, astute choices selected for value or relevance

manipulate
adapt or change a genre, structure, language feature or ideas to suit one's purpose; control in a skilful manner

Concentration, memory skills and overlearning

This might seem a bit old-school, but there are times throughout the year when you will need to remember large blocks of information; for example, for supervised writing tasks (including the external exam) and live spoken tasks. Research suggests that there are two critical steps in learning content in any subject:

- 1 taking good-quality notes
 - 2 reviewing your notes thoroughly.
- Let's take a closer look at these steps.

Taking notes (encoding your learning)

The first step is to encode what you are learning and turn it into a form that makes sense to you. This might involve translating information from a text into a written set of notes using mainly words, an **infographic**, a graphic organiser or a similar visual design.

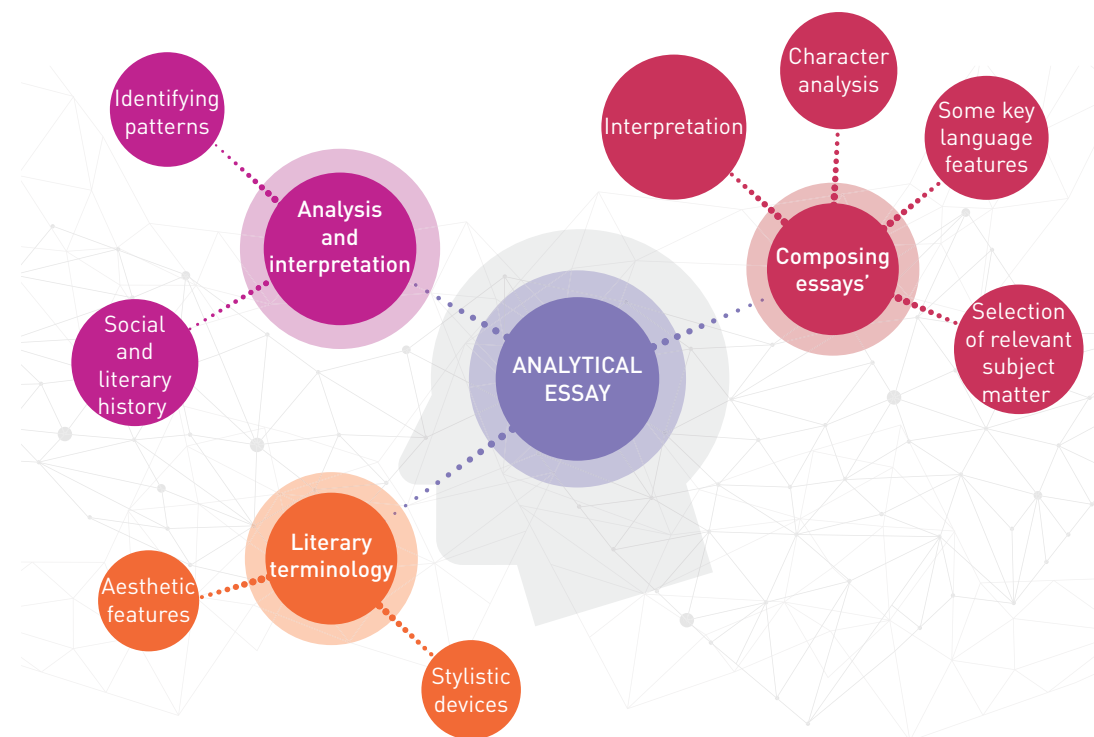
In English, you will want to make notes from two main sources. The suggested strategies identified in Source 8 can all be found easily through online research, and we will illustrate many of these at various points in the book.



Source 8 Strategies for notemaking in English

SOURCE OF NOTES	SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
Classroom talk, including explicit teaching by the teacher, and small group discussion	Try using the Cornell Note-Taking System (see Chapter 14 for more information)
Texts studied closely in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>story maps</i>: a visual means of summarising the main elements of a story.- <i>sociograms</i>: a chart of relationships between people (in the real world) or characters in stories- <i>cartographical maps</i>: try representing a setting as a map using clues from a story you are reading- <i>trading cards</i>: search for the 'ReadWriteThink' Trading Card Creator for a clever way of creating succinct notes on various aspects of stories (including setting and characters)- <i>mind maps</i>: a way of summarising and categorising information under various headings, and showing the relationships among the information (see Source 9). There are some good, easy-to-use, inexpensive apps (e.g. <i>SimpleMind</i>) available for computers and mobile phones- <i>retrieval charts</i>: special tables that allow you to systematically organise notes under consistent headings (e.g. a three-column analysis)- <i>flow charts</i>: special diagrams that help you summarise a process or sequence of information (e.g. in a factual text). Along with other types of charts, these can be created easily using SmartArt in Word (or a similar program/app)

This is just a sample of useful strategies. Find a selection that works for you.



Source 9 Sample mind map of elements involved in writing an analytical essay

Reviewing (storing your learning)

Once you have a good set of comprehensive notes, make sure you review these thoroughly and frequently. This might be as simple as reading over the notes from time to time. This is also where informal study groups work well: teaching the content to someone else can be a great way to learn new material.

If it's important to learn the notes off by heart (e.g. for a test), find some good memorisation strategies. You might like to try:

- recording the notes and playing them back
- saying the notes aloud (walking around and speaking dramatically can also help your memory)
- reproducing the notes in writing
- translating written notes into a visual representation.

In all these cases, it is important to put your notes to the side and try not to look at them unless you absolutely have to. The more times you do this, the more confident you will become. It's also worth doing some online research on other ways to enhance your memory; for example, through the use of flashcards, and a technique known as the 'memory palace'.

In addition, if you are learning lines for a script (e.g. a monologue or play intervention), you might find the following curated sites useful:

- '12 tips for learning lines' on dramaresource.com
- 'How to memorise lines fast' on backstage.com
- 'How to memorise lines: Tips from top Chicago stage actors' on chicagotribune.com.



These all contain further useful tips, including references to apps you can download.

It's worth remembering too that eating healthily, exercise, meditation and sleep can all have a positive impact on memory and recall. Finally, harness the power of **overlearning**. This is a well-known principle where once you know something well, you keep reviewing it, keep practising it, and keep memorising it. In this way, information can be easier to retrieve from your memory and this memory is likely to be more resilient. Another way of putting this is: 'use it or lose it' – in other words, if you don't make use of the things you are learning, they are likely to become much harder to retrieve from your memory.

overlearning
learning something to the point where responses become automatic and instinctual

1.2 Your turn

Preparing for effective study

Over the course of this section, we have covered a number of study skills that can be useful for you when studying English Units 3 & 4. Before embarking on your studies in English this year, take time to review the following:

- your goals (academic, personal, cultural/sporting, employment) for the year – write these down and post them somewhere prominent so you can refer to them frequently
- your study space – set this up so that (where possible) you have a private, personal space devoted to study. If this isn't possible, find an alternative space for quiet study
- your time management – based on your goals, draft a week-long timetable. Try this out and review it at the end of the week. Think about what rewards you can give yourself for staying disciplined and achieving your weekly goals
- conduct further research to find out more about some thinking and memory skills that you think might help you.

Remember, seek the early advice of a trusted adult where necessary.

FOR THE TEACHER

Check your **obook assess** for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension



Part

B

UNIT 3 TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS – CONCEPTS IN TEXTS

Chapter 4 Comparative study option 1: Aspiration

- 4.1 Representing the concept of 'aspiration'
- 4.2 'Aspiration' in *The Great Gatsby* and 'American Dreams'
- 4.3 Comparing representations of 'aspiration' in the texts

Chapter 5 Comparative study option 2: Human progress

- 5.1 Representing the concept of 'human progress'
- 5.2 'Human progress' in *Hidden Figures* and poetry by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner
- 5.3 Comparing representations of 'human progress' in the texts

Chapter 6 Comparative study option 3: *Sherlock Holmes*

- 6.1 Adaptation: *The case of Sherlock Holmes*
- 6.2 It's elementary: Updating Sherlock Holmes
- 6.3 Comparing *A Study in Scarlett* and 'A Study in Pink'

Chapter 7 Internal assessment 1: Public writing

- 7.1 Exploring textual connections
- 7.2 Structure and features of a blog post as compositional analysis
- 7.3 Writing for print or digital publication
- 7.4 Suggested tasks for assessment

COMPARATIVE STUDY OPTION 1: ASPIRATION

This is one of three options for study as part of Unit 3, Topic 1: Conversation about concepts in texts. The focus of this section is on the representation of the concept of 'aspiration' in two texts, F Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Peter Carey's short story 'American Dreams'. We will also examine public conversations about this concept in other texts, including the documentary *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream*.

Focus questions:

- What is aspiration?
- How have ideas about the concept of aspiration changed over time?
- How are representations of aspiration shaped by cultural context?
- What can we learn from texts about the concept of aspiration?
- How do texts affect our ideas about aspiration?
- How can texts affect our aspirations?
- How can we talk about the ways texts contribute to a discussion about aspiration?

This study will culminate in a piece of public writing that analyses, compares and evaluates the representations of the concept of aspiration in *The Great Gatsby* and 'American Dreams'. See Chapter 7 for a suggested culminating task for this comparative study.

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 3, Topic 1 of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*: 'Conversations about concepts in texts'.

This chapter features:

- a study of one literary text from the prescribed text list for English and EAL (required)
- a study of an additional literary text
- texts of two types: prose text (novels) and prose text (short story)
- a literary work from a different time, place and culture.

The chapter includes a comparative study of two texts:

TEXT(S)	AUTHOR	PRESCRIBED?
<i>The Great Gatsby</i> (1925)	F Scott Fitzgerald	Yes – literary Written text (complete prose text – novel)
'American Dreams' (1974)	Peter Carey	No – literary Written text (complete prose text – short story)

4.1

REPRESENTING THE CONCEPT OF 'ASPIRATION'

'To accomplish great things we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.'

(From an introductory speech at a session of the Académie Française, 24 December, 1896) – Anatole France, Works of Anatole France

The word 'aspiration' comes from the Latin *aspirare*, which means 'to strive for' or 'to seek to reach'. Aspirations are the ideas and goals that drive us, and give us hope for the future and something to aim for.

We enjoy texts that are aspirational in their nature: stories of people overcoming the odds; working, striving for a better future. In Australia, we particularly celebrate those stories that represent 'the underdog' – the characters who have the odds stacked against them but put up a good fight in the hope of success. These stories are uplifting and inspiring, showing us that individuals can overcome the trials of life and become better people, whatever it takes.

4.1a Your turn

Consider your aspirations

Hold up the personal frame and answer the following questions.

- 1 What are some of your goals for the next:
 - week? _____
 - year? _____
 - 5 years? _____
 - 10 years? _____
- 2 When people ask, 'What do you want to do when you finish school?' what is your answer?

- 3 Draw a concept map in your workbook, placing the word 'aspiration' at the centre. Brainstorm all the things you can think of that people might strive for in life.

US author Roxane Gay wrote the extract reproduced in Source 1 in an essay about heroes and aspirations in response to a high-profile police shooting in the United States.

Source 1 An extract from *Bad Feminist*

There's a great deal about our culture that is aspirational – from how we educate ourselves to the cars we drive, to where we work and live and socialize. We want to be the best. We want the best of everything. All too often, we are aware of the gaping distance between who we are and whom we aspire to be and we desperately try to close that distance. And then there are superheroes, mythical characters embodying ideals we may not be able to achieve for ourselves. Superheroes are strong, ennobled, and graceful in their suffering so we don't have to be. In *Superman on the Couch*, Danny Fingeroth writes, 'A hero embodies what we believe is best in ourselves. A hero is a standard to aspire to as well as an individual

(Continues on next page)



to be admired.’ We crave the ability to look up, to look beyond ourselves and toward something greater.

We are so enamoured of this idea of the heroic that we are always looking for ways to attribute heroism to everyday people so we might get just a bit closer to the best version of ourselves, so the distance between who we are and who we aspire to be might become narrower.

Heroism has become overly idealized, so ubiquitous that the idea of a hero is increasingly diluted. Athletes are heroic when they are victorious, when they persevere through injury or adversity. Our parents are heroes for raising us, for serving as good examples. Women are heroes for giving birth. People who survive disease or injury are heroes for overcoming human frailty. People who die from injury or disease are heroes for enduring until they can endure no longer. Journalists are heroes for seeking out the truth. Writers are heroes for bringing beauty into the world. Law enforcement officers are heroes for serving and protecting. As Franco and Zimbardo suggest in ‘The Banality of Heroism,’ ‘By conceiving of heroism as a universal attribute of human nature, not as a rare feature of the few ‘heroic elect,’ heroism becomes something that seems in the range of possibilities for every person, perhaps inspiring more of us to answer that call.’ Or maybe we have an excess of heroism because we have become so cynical that we no longer have the language or the ability to make sense of people who are merely human but can also rise to the occasion of greatness when called upon.

Roxane Gay, *Bad Feminist*, Harper Collins, 2014, pp. 331–2

4.1b Your turn

Representations of aspiration

structural



Hold up the structural frame and answer the following questions.

1 How does Roxane Gay define the concept of aspiration in the extract in Source 1?

2 What issues in our culture does Gay identify with the use of the words ‘hero’ and ‘heroic’?

3 Why do you think Gay uses the idea of superheroes to frame her discussion?

When answering the following question, hold up the cultural frame.

cultural



4 Do you think it is more beneficial for society to view heroism as something everyone can achieve, or a term only applicable to a select few?

The American Dream

A key lens through which we can understand aspiration in both Fitzgerald’s novel *The Great Gatsby* and Carey’s short story ‘American Dreams’ is the notion of the American Dream.

The beginnings of the American Dream can be seen in a quote from the United States Declaration of Independence (signed in 1776) that reads, ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness’. The term has come to represent a set of traditional US **values**, including beliefs that:

- every citizen has a right to freedom and opportunity
- hard work leads to prosperity
- everyone has an equal hope of succeeding in life
- aspirations are valid.

Over time, the markers of this success changed. Following the First World War, mass manufacturing made luxury goods cheaper and more readily available to everyone. The rise of Wall Street and the stock exchange meant that educated men could make their fortune trading money rather than working hard in traditional occupations. With the rise in secretarial work and the labour shortages following the war, many women were able to secure gainful employment for the first time.

However, the divide between rich and poor grew: while for some it was easier to attain the markers of prosperity, for others the lack of material gains served to heighten their sense of not achieving the American Dream.

4.1c Your turn

Considering the cultural significance of the American Dream

Use the cultural frame to answer the following questions.

1 Read the quote from the Declaration of Independence again. Highlight any words that are interesting or unfamiliar and write down their definitions in your workbook.

2 The ideals laid out in the Declaration of Independence applied only to those who were citizens at the time. Which groups of people do you think might have been excluded by the declaration? (You may need to briefly research the history of the United States.)

3 Why do you think the promise of the American Dream would be attractive to immigrants to the United States?

4 a What values do you think might underpin the ‘Australian Dream’?

b In more concrete terms, what might attainment of the Australian Dream look like? How would you know you have achieved it?

values

the things that are highly esteemed by people in particular communities. The term also includes the assumptions people make, and their attitudes towards various topics



4.2

ASPIRATION IN *THE GREAT GATSBY* AND 'AMERICAN DREAMS'

In this section, we are particularly concerned with how the concept of 'aspiration' is represented in two texts: F Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby* and Peter Carey's 1974 short story 'American Dreams'. We will start by looking at *The Great Gatsby* because it was written first, and because it establishes ideas about 'aspiration' that underpin aspects of Carey's story.

text
any passage of language that makes meaning. Texts can come in a huge variety of forms (e.g. a shopping list, a novel, an email, a conversation, a movie, an artwork, a maths equation, a school uniform or a cereal packet)

Considering the cultural context of *The Great Gatsby*

The Great Gatsby is commonly referred to as 'the great American novel'. Alongside other famous works like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, readers can gain a varied understanding of the ways early twentieth century America defined itself.

As it is nearly 100 years old, *The Great Gatsby* is essentially a historical novel, and approaching the **text** requires an understanding of its historical and cultural context. Once you understand this, you can better decode the **perspectives** represented in the novel.

4.2a Your turn

Social and historical contexts

Hold up the cultural frame to investigate the context of the novel.

perspective
in simple terms, a point of view or way of thinking about situations, ideas, arguments and texts. It also refers to the way the text positions a reader/viewer/listener, or how a systematic way of thinking is embedded in a text (e.g. a feminist perspective, an ecological perspective, a Kalkadoon perspective)

- 1 The context of *The Great Gatsby* is somewhat different from the world we know. To understand it, you will need to do some research. Using the internet, or the books in your school library, find answers to the following questions. Write the answers in your workbook. Your teacher might ask you to complete this activity in groups and present your findings to the class.

- a Who was F Scott Fitzgerald? Why is he a significant author?
- b How did the First World War affect the economy in the United States? You should consider both the post-war depression and the increase in consumerism.
- c How were women's rights changing in the 1920s?
- d What was prohibition?
- e What was New York like in the 1920s? Why is it called the Jazz Age?
- f Who were the Lost Generation? Why are they significant?



Source 2 A scene from the 1974 adaptation of the film *The Great Gatsby*

Physical settings in *The Great Gatsby*

Within the cultural setting, Fitzgerald makes use of a range of locations around New York as the physical settings for his novel. While these are based on real places, Fitzgerald imbues them with **symbolic** significance to reinforce the themes of his novel.

symbol
a symbol is something that stands for something else, especially something tangible (e.g. a flickering candle) that represents an abstract idea (e.g. the brevity of life)

East Egg

The eggs are two peninsulas that jut out into the bays of Long Island Sound and are shaped like eggs. East Egg is home to the wealthy 'old money' and represents tradition and the upper echelons of the class system. Daisy and Tom live in East Egg.

West Egg

Nick (the narrator in *The Great Gatsby*) describes West Egg as 'the less fashionable of the two' (1926, p. 5) eggs. West Egg is where the newly wealthy congregate, and is home to both Nick and Gatsby. While Nick can barely afford to live there, a home in West Egg represents the achievement of Gatsby's financial aspirations. West Egg signifies new money and consumerism.

Manhattan

Manhattan is the business district of New York. It is where Nick and Tom work, and where Tom keeps an apartment for his mistress, Myrtle. It is also the scene of the dispute between Tom, Daisy and Gatsby. Manhattan represents many of the evils of consumerism, financial corruption and infidelity.

The Valley of Ashes

The Valley of Ashes is a wasteland that lies between the eggs and Manhattan. It is where the rubbish of New York is dumped and burnt. George and Myrtle live here at their petrol station. It represents the decay of the American Dream, the plight of the poor, and the issues wealthy New Yorkers choose to ignore.

4.2b Your turn

Mapping key locations

Using the information above and your knowledge of the text, draw a map of the novel *The Great Gatsby*. You can research the geography of the New York region, but you should draw the map yourself. You should include:

- the key locations listed above
- the paths of important journeys made in the novel
- the locations of characters' houses, the hotel in Manhattan and Wall Street.

Compare your map with your classmates' and decide who has represented the novel most effectively.



Source 3 East Egg represents the wealthier, more elite setting in *The Great Gatsby*.



Source 4 West Egg is where the newly wealthy live in *The Great Gatsby*.



Source 5 The Valley of Ashes in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* symbolises the decay of the American Dream.

How is the story told? Narration: Voice and perspective

internal focalisation
narration that is limited to a single character inside the story

external focalisation
narration that is from a character outside the story who has no insight into characters' minds

omniscient focalisation
when the narrator is external and all-knowing, often able to get inside characters' heads

reliable narrator
someone the reader can trust

unreliable narrator
someone the reader might not be able to trust



Source 7
Nick Carraway, the narrator in the 1974 adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*

There are two key questions to ask when considering how a story is told: 'Who sees?' and 'Who speaks?' By now, you would be aware that the consciousness of the focaliser in a story can be **internal**, **external** or **omniscient**. When an identified character takes on the narration of a story, they can be considered to be **reliable** or **unreliable**.

While the character of Jay Gatsby lends his name to the title of our novel, he is not in fact the narrator. The story is told by his neighbour, Nick Carraway, using internal focalisation, and the use of 'Great' in the title is a value judgment that is reflective of Nick's point of view. Read Source 7, in which Nick introduces himself.

Source 6 Extract 1 from *The Great Gatsby*

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

'Whenever you feel like criticizing any one,' he told me, 'just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.'

He didn't say any more but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores ... Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth.

And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction – Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the 'creative temperament' – it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No – Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men.

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, pp. 1–3

4.2c Your turn

Consider Nick's role as the narrator

Hold up the structural frame and answer the following questions in your workbook.



structural

- 1 Later in the novel, Nick asserts that, 'I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known'. (p. 63) How does Source 6 establish the notion that he is an honest, trustworthy narrator?
- 2 Do you believe that Nick is capable of reserving 'all judgments'? Is any person capable of such a stance?
- 3 In Source 6, on the first page of the novel, Nick indicates that he has moved from New York back to the mid-West, a place which becomes symbolic of traditional US values, and that the events that will proceed occurred in the past. How does this affect Nick's reliability as a narrator?
- 4 The second half of the extract introduces Gatsby. Highlight all the evaluative **language** Nick uses to describe Gatsby.
- 5 Despite these positive descriptions, Nick says, 'Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn'.
 - a How does this relate to Nick's assertion that he reserves all judgment? What does this suggest about his narration?
 - b This presents something of a paradox – Nick claims to scorn everything Gatsby represents, yet he uses positive language to describe him. Why do you think this might be?
- 6 It is interesting that Fitzgerald has chosen a narrator who exists on the edge of the story. He is not the title character of the novel. What are the effects of using such a narrator? What does this say about Nick as a character?
- 7 Source 6 establishes a strong tone of admiration that pervades the rest of the novel. How do you think Nick feels about Gatsby? How does this change throughout the novel?
- 8 What judgment is Nick making when he comments on the 'foul dust' that 'floated in the wake of' Gatsby's dreams?

language
literally, a set of words and the system for using them that is common to a community of people. More recently, the term has also come to be applied metaphorically to the systematic and meaningful uses of image, sound, body language, typography, and so on

Hold up the personal frame to answer the following questions in your workbook.

- 9 Consider the title.
 - a What does it mean to be 'great'?
 - b Make a list of people you think are worthy of being called 'great'. What characteristics make them great?
 - c Compare your ideas with your peers'. What is similar? What is different?
- 10 If you were to write a novel about someone using a similar title (e.g. *The Great Darcy* or *The Great Mrs Lacey*), who would you write about? What would be your focus?

personal

Now return to the structural frame and answer the next question.

- 11 In light of the extract reproduced in Source 7, and given your knowledge of the novel, how might the word 'Great' in the title be viewed as ironic?

structural

The characters’ American Dreams

One of the first people to write about the American Dream was James Truslow Adams, in his 1931 book, *The Epic of America*. His view of the American Dream is expressed in Source 8.

Source 8 An extract from *The Epic of America*

The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.

James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America*, Little, Brown, 1931, p. 404

Adams shared concerns of authors like Fitzgerald, and others of the Lost Generation who questioned the integrity of the American Dream in a modern world. Regardless of how true it remained to the ideals of their ancestors, the American Dream continued to be an aspirational target for US society, and notably, the characters of *The Great Gatsby*.



Source 9 Leonardo DiCaprio plays the role of Jay Gatsby in the 2013 adaptation of the film.

4.2d Your turn

Develop a personal response



- While there are different ways to measure attainment of the American Dream, some key elements are consistent. What constitutes the American Dream for the following characters? How do they achieve their dreams? Make a list for each in your workbook.
 - Tom
 - Wilson
 - Nick
 - Daisy
 - Myrtle
 - Gatsby
- Compare your ideas with those of your peers and consider:
 - Which character’s aspirations most align with your own?
 - Which character’s aspirations are the most foreign to you?
 - Which are still relevant in the modern world?
- Pretend you are writing an article about each character. Try to express each character’s aspirations in a short headline (maximum of six words). Compare your headlines with those of your peers and select the best headline for each character.

Gatsby’s aspirations

Jay Gatsby is a pure **representation** of the concept of aspiration. Frustrated with his situation in life, Gatsby sets out early to better himself and achieve success: the American Dream.

Read what Nick has to say about Gatsby in Source 10.

Source 10 Extract 2 from *The Great Gatsby*

The truth was that Jay Gatsby, of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God – a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that – and he must be about His Father’s Business, the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 104

Nick’s use of ‘Platonic conception of himself’ refers to the philosopher Plato’s contentious ‘theory of Forms’ (or ‘theory of Ideas’) in which he considers the relationship between the real world and the ideal versions of reality humans can create in their minds. Essentially, this is the way we can dream or visualise versions of ourselves and attempt to become them, either by knowingly emulating our dreams, or unwittingly becoming too occupied with them. For Gatsby, this started early in his life: he planned a program of self-improvement, changed his name from James Gatz and befriended Dan Cody as a mentor and patron.

We learn in Chapter 4 of the novel that Daisy and Gatsby met prior to the events of the novel. They shared a brief romantic affair before he was sent to war in 1917, and despite promising to wait for him, Daisy married Tom before Gatsby could return.

Gatsby recounts this to Nick in Chapter 8 (see Source 11).

Source 11 Extract 3 from *The Great Gatsby*

I can’t describe to you how surprised I was to find out I loved her, old sport. I even hoped for a while that she’d throw me over, but she didn’t, because she was in love with me too. She thought I knew a lot because I knew different things from her ... Well, there I was, way off my ambitions, getting deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I didn’t care. What was the use of doing great things if I could have a better time telling her what I was going to do?

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 159

Gatsby’s aspirations from this point in his life onwards tend to focus on making himself ‘good enough’ for Daisy. He sets about amassing wealth and creating a new personal history for himself to explain his position in life. He purchases a colossal house, an ostentatious yellow car and a refined wardrobe, and sets about attracting the notice of Daisy Buchanan once again.

Daisy is central to Gatsby’s aspirations. She becomes a symbol of his dreams, and acts as a figment of his romantic aspirations, but also a marker of success. Without the love and approval of Daisy, his efforts to better himself appear to him as somewhat meaningless. This is an interesting contrast to the young boy who wrote schedules for self-improvement for his own sake.



Source 12 Daisy and Gatsby, played by Mia Farrow and Robert Redford in the 1974 adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*.

representation
the way texts construct concepts, identities, times and places, underpinned by the cultural assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, values or world view of the writer, shaper, speaker/signer, designer (and of the reader, viewer, listener)

4.2e Your turn

Consider the Platonic conception of self

Hold up the personal frame to answer the following questions.

- 1 A 'Platonic conception of self' is a person's idealised version of themselves. It may, for example, be a 'better' or 'truer' image that heightens their good qualities and reforms their defects. What features would your Platonic conception of yourself possess? In your workbook:
 - a create a representation of the features of your Platonic conception of yourself. You might like to write a list of characteristics, create a collage or draw an image, or write a creative piece such as a poem or diary entry.
 - b consider whether your Platonic conception of yourself is attainable. If so, what steps would you have to take to achieve it? If not, how close could you get to attaining it, and how?
 - c discuss whether you are comfortable with the steps you would have to take to achieve this conception of yourself. Are the steps moral? Legal? Physically possible? Explain your reasoning.

Now apply the structural frame to answer the next questions.

- 2 What features do you think were important to Gatsby in his Platonic conception of self? Explain your ideas with references to the text.

- 3 In your workbook, create a timeline or chronological list of the steps in Gatsby's transformation from a boy called James Gatz into the Jay Gatsby we meet in the novel.

Take a position

- 4 Do you support Gatsby's attempts to 'better himself'? Why or why not? Plan two to three main points for your answer in your workbook; then write a full-paragraph response.

Once Gatsby buys his house on the tip of West Egg, his hopes for Daisy are in literal view. Gatsby becomes obsessed with his view of the green light at the end of her dock, across the bay from him. Read the extracts reproduced in Sources 13, 14 and 15 and consider how this light operates as a symbol for Gatsby's aspirations.

Source 13 Extract 4 from *The Great Gatsby*

But I didn't call to him for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone – he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward – and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness.

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, pp. 22–3

Source 14 Extract 5 from *The Great Gatsby*

'If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay,' said Gatsby. 'You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock.'

Daisy put her arm through his abruptly but he seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one.

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 99

Source 15 Extract 6 from *The Great Gatsby*

And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther ... And one fine morning –

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 192

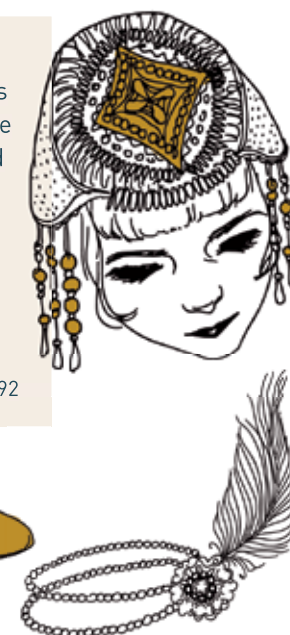
4.2f Your turn

Consider Nick's impressions of Gatsby

Apply the structural frame to answer the following questions.

- 1 The colour of the light is important in creating symbolism. Make a list of the **connotations** and your associations of the colour green. What ideas does it symbolise?

- 2 Consider the light as a symbol. Why is it significant that Gatsby is obsessed with a light at the end of a dock? What function do lights have? How do maritime lights work? Why is the light's location important?



connotations
the implied meanings of associations of a word or phrase. A kind of 'cultural baggage'; connotations vary based on a person's experiences – words can mean slightly different things for different people

Answer the following questions in your workbook.

- 3 Source 13 illustrates the first time readers meet Gatsby. Why is it significant that he is alone and looking at the green light?
- 4 Why does the green light lose its significance in Source 14?
- 5 The final line of Source 14 reads, 'His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one'. What has Gatsby lost in attaining Daisy in real life? Has he only lost a light?
- 6 Why does Nick say that Gatsby's dream is 'already behind him' in Source 15? What is he unable to grasp, and why?
- 7 Nick uses second person perspective to talk about the 'orgastic future' in Source 15. What is he talking about? How might this be a comment about the American Dream?

Gatsby's demise and the destruction of the American Dream

Fitzgerald's tale is not a happy one. In some ways, it is possible to view Gatsby as a tragic hero:

- Readers are positioned to like Gatsby and support his hopeful efforts.
- His fatal flaw could be said to be his blind ambition and inability to rationalise the fact that time has moved on and prevented his romantic attainment of Daisy.
- Readers witness his inevitable downfall and understand the restoration of order at the conclusion of the novel.

It is also possible to argue that Gatsby himself operates as a symbol of hope and aspiration. However, his hopes are unattainable from the moment Daisy weds Tom, because Gatsby hopes for a pure romance in which Daisy loved only him. He believes that if Daisy will only say that she never loved Tom, it will be like her marriage never happened. This can be seen in an extract from Chapter 6 (see Source 16).

Source 16 Extract 7 from *The Great Gatsby*

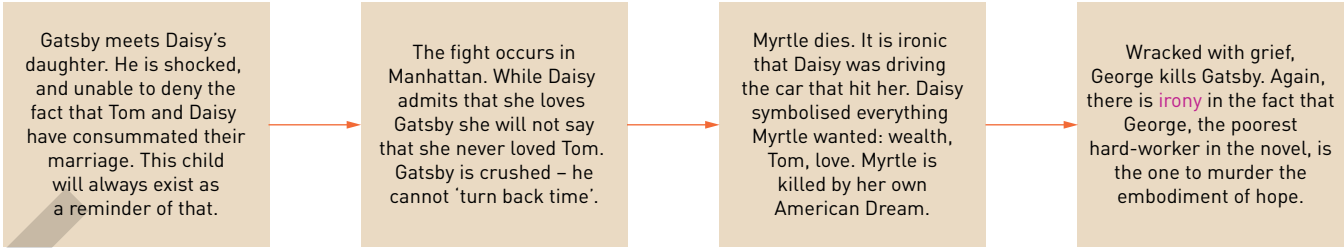
'I wouldn't ask too much of her,' I ventured. 'You can't repeat the past.'
'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!'
He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand.
'I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before,' he said, nodding determinedly. 'She'll see.'
He talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was ...

F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books, London, 1926, p. 117

It is interesting here to consider Gatsby again in terms of the American Dream. His dreams are tied up in Daisy – by elevating his status to that of the wealthy upper class, he will finally be good enough for her in a way that he wasn't in 1917. However, his methods for doing so have become warped – he is no longer the hard-working young boy he once was. Gatsby's money is gained through various illegal means. This is not the traditional ideal of the American Dream.

Gatsby's downfall begins when he is confronted with the reality of time moving on.

Source 17 Story timeline



4.2g Your turn

Fitzgerald's representation of the American Dream

Hold up the personal frame to answer this question:

- 1 What is your personal reaction to Gatsby's sentiments in Extract 7 [Source 16]? Do you think reliving the past would do Gatsby any good? What could he change?

Now hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions.

- 2 At what point do you think Gatsby realises that he is not going to achieve his aspirations? Is he still optimistic at his death?

- 3 Look back to the American Dreams you identified for the major characters in the novel in Your turn 4.2d.

a Which characters achieve their dreams in the course of the novel?

b Which characters do you think may go on to achieve them after the end of the novel?

c Which characters fail? What caused them to fail in the novel?

irony
a language technique in which what is said is not what is meant. It is often the implied meaning of the opposite of what is said



d What trends can you find? Are there particular types of dreams or characters that succeeded or failed more than others?

4 Consider the relationship between Myrtle and Daisy. Daisy seems to have everything Myrtle aspires to.

a Comment on the way Myrtle tries to achieve her aspirations. Do you think this aligns with the traditional values that underpin the American Dream?

b What is the significance of Daisy driving the car that kills Myrtle? What comment do you think Fitzgerald might have been trying to make?

Take a position

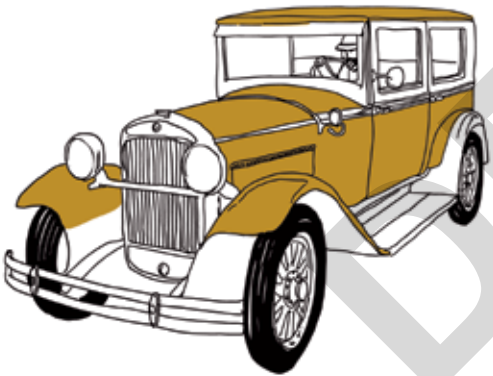
Answer the following questions in your workbook. You will need to write one to two paragraphs for each question.

5 Gatsby and Tom both represent different versions of wealth and masculinity in the novel. Consider their similarities and differences (it may help you to make a list of both). How does Tom operate as a foil to Gatsby? What values, attitudes and beliefs does Fitzgerald endorse through their contrast?

6 George is characterised as weak, snivelling and very poor, yet is arguably the most honest and hardworking character in the novel. Why is it significant that he is the one to kill Gatsby? What comment does this make about the achievability of the American Dream for those in poverty?

7 It can be argued that Gatsby had to die at the end of the novel. After the Manhattan fight he loses grip on his hope for a life with Daisy. He has nothing to live for because he is so committed to his aspirations. Do you support this reading of the text? Defend your response.

8 What is the significance of the final line of the novel, 'So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past'? What comment do you think Fitzgerald ultimately makes about the American Dream?



foil
a character whose traits are the opposite of another character's (usually the protagonist). This contrast is created to highlight the traits of the other character

values, attitudes and beliefs
perspectives that individuals or groups think are true and important, which therefore shape their world view

Colour symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*

Fitzgerald makes effective use of colour imagery for symbolic effect throughout *The Great Gatsby*. An appreciation of this symbolism can deepen your understanding of the novel and may prove to be a useful tool for your own creative writing.

We are going to consider the use of four key colours, but once you start looking for them, you will notice other colour references throughout the novel.

Green

The green light at the end of Daisy's dock is the most recognised symbol in the novel, and you have already considered its significance to Gatsby in Your turn 4.2f. However, saying that the light simply represents Daisy is an over-simplification: the green light is symbolic of hope and the future, both for Gatsby and the US people. We can gain a broader understanding of the symbolism of the colour green when we link it to other instances in the text. Nick refers to the first US settlers gazing on the 'fresh, green breast of the new world' and states in the final throes of the novel, 'Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us'. It is interesting, then, that Gatsby attaches these hopes to Daisy and her green light, as Daisy is a figment of his past, and is unattainable in the future.

Yellow and gold

While they are very similar, yellow and gold represent different ideas in the novel.

Gold is symbolic of old money. We often see these references in relation to Daisy: she is the 'golden girl'; her house is fronted with a bank of windows 'glowing now with reflected gold'; and she stops to notice the 'pale gold odour' of the flowers in the garden. The connotations around gold and wealth are obvious – for years it was one of the most stable and valuable commodities in the world.

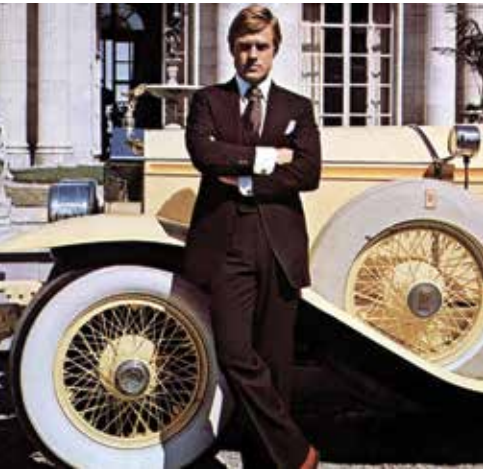
Gatsby has amassed great wealth, and he makes some shows of linking himself with the colour gold. His bedroom is largely unadorned, except for the notable 'toilet set of pure dull gold'. However, Gatsby's gold is only 'gold coloured' or 'dull gold', not the pure hue we see associated with Daisy and old money.

More frequently, Gatsby is associated with the colour yellow: the colour of new money. While Gatsby tries to elevate himself to the level of the Buchanans, he falls short: Gatsby is yellow, not quite gold. Most obviously he drives a beautiful yellow Rolls Royce.

The other obvious use of yellow is in the sign for Dr TJ Eckleberg, the long-gone oculist whose yellow glasses still stare out over the Valley of Ashes, and bear witness to Myrtle's death. While George believes they are the literal eyes of God watching over his unhappy life, it is more likely that they are a kind of warning symbol, looking upon the wasteland which symbolises the materialism (of people like the newly rich) that has destroyed the American Dream.

White

White is generally associated with Daisy. Complete the questions in Your turn 4.2h to consider the significance of white, and how all of the colours work together to enhance Fitzgerald's message.



Source 18 The colour yellow in *The Great Gatsby*



Source 19 The colour white in *The Great Gatsby*

4.2h Your turn

Consider the significance of colour symbolism

Use the cultural frame to answer the following question.

- 1 Colour associations vary around the world. What connotations does the colour white have in Western cultures?

Now, using the ideas you developed in Question 1, apply the structural frame to answer the following questions.

- 2 There are many references to the colour white throughout the novel. Explain their symbolic significance in a paragraph response in your workbook. Worksheet 4.2h on your obook assess will help you to locate these references and organise your thinking.
- 3 From the beginning of the novel, Daisy warns Nick that she is 'pretty cynical about everything' and after Gatsby's death, he realises that she is 'thoughtless' and 'careless'. In your workbook, write a description of Daisy's character. You should aim to write two to three paragraphs and support your ideas with references to the text (quotes).
- 4 Consider the symbolism of Daisy's name: What are the colours of a daisy? What does this symbolise about Daisy's character?

- 5 Consider the ways Fitzgerald uses yellow and gold. What comment does this make about the American Dream?

Construct a creative response

- 6 Now that you have a better understanding of the symbolic ways Fitzgerald uses colour, try these ideas using in your own writing.

Choose one of the prompts below and write a descriptive scene in your workbook. While your text may feature narrative elements, you should focus on writing sensory description. Write at least two paragraphs.

- Prompt 1: Write a scene set in the modern world that uses the same colour symbolism as you found in *The Great Gatsby*. You might like to rewrite one of Fitzgerald's scenes, or create your own.
- Prompt 2: Create your own colour symbols for use in a scene. You might like to give new meaning to colours Fitzgerald has used, or make use of different colours in your writing. Consider the cultural connotations of colour you already hold: you may like to emphasise these, or subvert them entirely.



Considering the cultural context of 'American Dreams'

'American Dreams' is a short story written by Australian author Peter Carey, and published in 1974. While Carey now resides in New York, he spent a great deal of time in small towns in Australia, growing up in Bacchus Marsh in rural Victoria, and moving to the Sunshine Coast shortly after this story was published. Carey makes use of a small-town setting in 'American Dreams' to draw contrasts between the United States and Australia, and question the longevity of some traditional Australian values.

4.2i Your turn

Consider the setting

Hold up the personal and cultural frames and answer the following questions in your workbook.

- 1 Give a brief recount of the places you have lived in your life. Have you lived in small towns or cities? Compare your experiences with those of your peers.
- 2 What is it like to live in a small town? If you have not experienced it, you should do some research. You might like to start with Carey's hometown of Bacchus Marsh.
- 3 'American Dreams' is about a town of 800 people. Can you find similarly sized towns?
- 4 In your workbook, make a list of what you perceive are the positives and negatives of living in the country and living in the city. Which do you think you would prefer? Why?

Read Source 20, which is an extract from the opening of 'American Dreams', and consider how it establishes the setting and the central tension for the narrative to follow.

Source 20 Extract 1 from 'American Dreams'

No one can, to this day, remember what it was we did to offend him. Dyer the butcher remembers a day when he gave him the wrong meat and another day when he served someone else first by mistake. Often, when Dyer gets drunk he recalls this day and curses himself for his foolishness. But no one seriously believes that it was Dyer who offended him.

But one of us did something. We slighted him terribly in some way, this small meek man with the rimless glasses and neat suit who use to smile so nicely at us all. We thought, I suppose, he was a bit of a good and sometimes he was so quiet and grey that we ignored him, forgetting he was there at all.

When I was a boy I often stole apples from the trees at his house up in Mason's Lane. He often saw me. No, that's not correct. Let me say that I often sensed that he saw me. I sensed him peering out from behind the lace curtains of his house. And I was not the only one. Many of us came to take his apples, alone and in groups, and it is possible that he chose to exact payment for all these apples in his own peculiar way.

Yet I am sure it wasn't the apples.

What has happened is that we all, all eight hundred of us, have come to remember small transgressions against Mr Gleason, who once lived among us.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, p. 231



4.2j Your turn

Analyse Extract 1



Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about the extract.

- 1 The opening line of the story reads, 'No one can, to this day, remember what it was we did to offend him'. How does this line immediately create tension?

- 2 Prior to the final line of this extract, Mr Gleason is not named. He is simply 'he' or 'him', though he is described in some detail. How does this introduction to Mr Gleason position readers to respond to him?

- 3 How is the rest of the town characterised in comparison to Mr Gleason?

- 4 What are your predictions for the rest of the story? What might be the significance of the title, 'American Dreams'?

Australian dreams

The significance of the title of the story 'American Dreams' is quickly introduced.

Source 21 Extract 2 from 'American Dreams'

My father, who has never borne malice against a single living creature, still believes that Gleason meant to do us well, that he loved the town more than any of us. My father says we have treated the town badly in our minds. We have used it, this little valley, as nothing more than a stopping place. Somewhere on the way to somewhere else. Even those of us who have been here many years have never taken the town seriously. Oh yes, the place is pretty. The hills are green and the woods thick. The stream is full of fish. But it is not where we would rather be.

For years we have watched the films at the Roxy and dreamed, if not of America, then at least of our capital city. For our own town, my father says we have nothing but contempt. We have treated it badly, like a whore. We have cut down the giant shady trees in the main street to make doors for the school house and seats for the football pavilion. We have left big holes in the countryside from which we have taken brown coal and given back nothing.

The commercial travellers who buy fish and chips at George the Greek's care for us more than we do, because we all have big dreams of the big city, of wealth, of modern houses, of big motor cars: American dreams, my father has called them.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, p. 232



4.2k Your turn

Analyse Extract 2

Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about the extract.

- 1 Why does the narrator's father say that the residents have 'treated the town badly'?

- 2 How is the setting of the story developed in this extract? Support your response with evidence from the text.

- 3 Why does the narrator's father describe the residents' dreams as 'American dreams'?

- 4 How do you think the sentiment of American dreams will link to Gleason later in the story?

Now use the personal frame to answer the following questions about some texts you are familiar with.

- 5 For many years, there has been a concern in our society that Australia is becoming 'Americanised' because our popular **culture** is being influenced by the United States. Consider your own interactions with popular culture.

- a Make two lists of texts you enjoy reading or interacting with: one list for Australian texts and another for US texts. You can list any text types: books, films, television shows, magazines, blogs and so on.

- b Which do you interact with most: Australian or US texts?

- c What do these texts have in common? What is different about Australian and US texts?

- d How aspirational are the US texts? What do you aspire to within the texts?



culture
the characteristic ideas, social behaviour and customs that are shared by a group of people and evidenced in the way they use different genres to create texts



The complication of the story is introduced when Mr Gleason retires and buys a block of land on a hill overlooking the town. His actions perplex the residents.

Source 22 Extract 3 from 'American Dreams'

Bald Hill towered high above the town and from my father's small filling station you could sit and watch the wall going up. It was an interesting sight. I watched it for two years, while I waited for customers who rarely came. After school and on Saturdays I had all the time in the world to watch the agonizing progress of Mr Gleason's wall. It was as painful as a clock. Sometimes I could see the Chinese labourers running at a jog-trot carrying bricks on long wooden planks. The hill was bare, and on this bareness Mr Gleason was, for some reason, building a wall.

In the beginning people thought it peculiar that someone would build such a big wall on Bald Hill. The only thing to recommend Bald Hill was the view of the town, and Mr Gleason was building a wall that denied the view.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, pp. 234–5

4.2l Your turn

Analyse Extract 3



Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about Extract 3.

- 1 Look back to your predictions about the plot of the story in Your turn 4.2j. How does this compare to your predictions?

- 2 What is the effect of the contrast between the narrator's actions and the building of the wall?

- 3 Why is the final paragraph of this extract ironic?

- 4 Why do you think Mr Gleason is building a wall around his block of land?



Now hold up the cultural frame to answer Question 5 in your workbook.

- 5 Why do you think Carey has chosen to use a cultural stereotype in characterising the builders of the wall as Chinese? What critique might this make about the global economy?

The wall stands in place long enough for the town to forget about it before Mr Gleason's death. At that time, his wife oversees the removal of the wall. Source 23 details the town's first reactions to what they find behind the wall.

Source 23 Extract 4 from 'American Dreams'

And between us and Mrs Gleason was the most incredibly beautiful thing I had ever seen in my life. For a moment I didn't recognize it. I stood open-mouthed and breathed the surprising beauty of it. And then I realised it was our town. The buildings were two feet high and they were a little rough but very correct. I saw Mr Dyer nudge my father and whisper that Gleason had got the faded U in the BUTCHER sign of his shop.

I think at that moment everyone was overcome with a feeling of simple joy. I can't remember ever having felt so uplifted and happy. It was perhaps a childish emotion but I looked up at my father and saw a smile of such warmth spread across his face that I knew he felt just as I did. Later he told me that he thought Gleason had built the model of our town just for this moment, to let us see the beauty of our town, to make us proud of ourselves and to stop the American Dreams we were so prone to. For the rest, my father said, was not Gleason's plan and that he could not have foreseen the things that happened afterwards.

I have come to think that this view of my father's is a little sentimental and also, perhaps insulting to Gleason. I personally believe that he knew everything that would happen.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, pp. 239–40

The narrator is the catalyst for the next series of complications. There are interesting overtones here of Dylan Thomas's radio play *Under Milk Wood*, which narrates the dreams of the residents before following the implications of these dreams throughout the day.

In 'American Dreams', Mr Gleason had also replicated the residents of the town in his model, going about activities that were quintessential of their routines. The narrator removes the roof from one of the model houses and finds Mrs Cavanagh and Craigie Evans in bed together – not Mr Cavanagh! Other residents see what he has uncovered. Source 24 deals with the aftermath.

Source 24 Extract 5 from 'American Dreams'

And then we all stood around in little groups and regarded the model town with what could only have been fear. If Gleason knew about Mrs Cavanagh and Craigie Evans (and no one else had), what other things might he know? Those who hadn't seen themselves yet in the town began to look a little nervous and were unsure of whether to look for themselves or not. We gazed silently at the roofs and felt mistrustful and guilty.

Peter Carey, 'American Dreams', in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, p. 241

4.2m Your turn

Analyse Extract 4

Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about the extract.

- 1 Why do you think the narrator, and others, were overcome by the 'surprising beauty' of what Mr Gleason had created? Why might it 'stop the American dreams' they were 'prone to'?



- 2 Does Mr Gleason’s creation support the narrator’s father’s belief that he ‘loved the town more than any of us’? Explain your reasoning.
- 3 How is Mr Gleason characterised in this extract? What do you think will be the ‘things that happened afterwards’?

The Americans

Word of the model’s existence quickly spreads and the site is preserved (after removal of ‘certain controversial items’). The minister for tourism addresses the town and promises that their businesses will flourish with an increase in tourism.

Source 25 Extract 6 from ‘American Dreams’

The Americans would come, he said. They would visit our town in buses and in cars and on the trains. They would take photographs and bring wallets bulging with dollars. American dollars ...

Well, they did come. And let me tell you how it has all worked out for us.

The Americans arrive every day in buses and cars and sometimes the younger ones come on the train ... On Bald Hill there are half a dozen telescopes through which the Americans can spy on the town and reassure themselves that it is the same down there as it is on Bald Hill ... To tell the truth most of us are pretty sick of the game. They come looking for my father and ask him to stare at the gears on Dyer’s bicycle ... They stand around him. Often they remember the model incorrectly and try to get my father to pose in the wrong way. Originally he argued with them, but now he argues no more. He does what they ask ...

Then I know they will come to find me. I am next on the map. I am very popular for some reason. They come in search of me and my petrol pump as they have done for four years now. I do not await them eagerly because I know, before they reach me, that they will be disappointed.

‘But this is not the boy.’

‘Yes,’ says Phonsey, ‘this is him all right.’ And he gets me to show them my certificate. They examine the certificate suspiciously, feeling the paper as if it might be a clever forgery. ‘No,’ they declare. [Americans are so confident.] ‘No,’ they shake their heads, ‘this is not the real boy. The real boy is younger.’

‘He’s older now. He used to be younger.’

... The Americans pay one dollar for the right to take our photographs. Having paid the money they are worried about being cheated. They spend their time being disappointed and I spend my time feeling guilty, that I have somehow let them down by growing older and sadder.

Peter Carey, ‘American Dreams’, in *Collected Stories*, Penguin Books, Australia, 2015, pp. 242–5

4.2n Your turn

Analyse Extract 6

Hold up the structural frame to answer the following questions about the extract.

- 1 What attitudes do the US tourists have towards the residents of the town? In your workbook support your answer with evidence from the extract.
- 2 How does this extract, which forms the closing stages of the narrative, make the title of the story seem ironic?
- 3 There are other instances of irony operating in this extract. Explain how the following features work ironically to develop the meaning of the text.
- a ‘On Bald Hill there are half a dozen telescopes through which the Americans can spy on the town and reassure themselves that it is the same down there as it is on Bald Hill.’
- b ‘And he gets me to show them my certificate. They examine the certificate suspiciously, feeling the paper as if it might be a clever forgery. ‘No,’ they declare. [Americans are so confident.]’
- 4 What is the effect of the closing sentence of the extract?

Now hold up the cultural frame to answer the following questions in your workbook.

- 5 What comment might Carey be making about the process of ‘Americanisation’?
- 6 How does Carey represent cultural stereotypes in the story? (Consider the roles of Australians, Chinese and Americans.)
- 7 Gleason’s motives for creating the model town are unclear. Below are some possible statements Carey might have been making about Australian society in the 1970s.
- a Australians should be happy with their society as it is.
- b Americans are not aspirational.
- c Australians are easy to take advantage of.
- d Australians can’t get stuck in time; they must develop.
- e Australians are too quick to follow US trends.
- Compile evidence from Extracts 1 to 6 to support each statement. Then, in your workbook, write a one-paragraph argument about which statement you believe is most applicable to the text.

4.3

COMPARING REPRESENTATIONS OF 'ASPIRATION' IN THE TEXTS

It is useful to consider Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Carey's 'American Dreams' as companion texts; while they are written from different cultural perspectives, they both explore concepts and issues surrounding the integrity of the American Dream.



Source 26
Carey Mulligan as Daisy Buchanan in the 2013 adaption of *The Great Gatsby*.

Aspiration and the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby*

Fitzgerald is critical of the state of the American Dream in post-war United States. While he never saw active service on the battlefield, Fitzgerald did enlist as a lieutenant in the First World War to fight alongside the bulk of his generation, many of whom did not return. Those who did found a United States that was unfamiliar and lacked many of the traditional values they had risked their lives for.

The young people of the United States were able to live a life their forefathers had only dreamed about: mass-manufacturing and the rise of jobs in finance and administration meant that many could afford the trappings of luxury; prohibition was failing and the black market alcohol industry (bootlegging) provided another means of making money for those willing to break the law, and supported the strong call for celebratory alcohol in the post-war years; women were 'liberated' – they had grown accustomed to earning their own money and had won the right to vote. Those who had survived the war celebrated their very right to live.

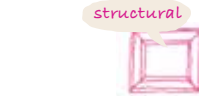
However, tensions developed within the older generations of US society. Some of those who knew what it was to work hard resented the wealth of the newly rich. For many of the working class, great riches, luxury items and the types of parties immortalised in *The Great Gatsby* would be forever out of reach. A generation of men who had served in the war were suffering under the strain of post-traumatic stress disorder, which would not be recognised until the 1950s. Some women did not want to be 'liberated' and dealt with the tension of wanting to maintain their stable domestic lives when the world was telling them to make the most of their 'freedom'.

4.3a Your turn

Fitzgerald's representation of aspiration

Hold up the structural frame and answer the following questions in your workbook.

- 1 Consider the way each of the characters in the novel symbolises particular feelings within US society by collecting evidence from the text to answer these questions:
- a What world view does Daisy represent about older generations of women in US society?
 - b What world view does Jordan represent about the liberated women in US society?
 - c What world view does Tom represent about the 'old money' in US society?
 - d What world view does Gatsby represent about the newly rich in US society?
 - e What world view does George represent about the working class poor in US society?
 - f What world view does Myrtle represent about poor women in US society? Does she represent positive or negative ideas about women's liberation?
 - g How does Nick represent traditional US values in the novel?



world view encompasses a person's experiences, assumptions and beliefs about the world, and their valuing of certain ideas and things. Broad world views are shared by groups of people within a community

Now use the critical frame and answer the following questions in your workbook.

- 2 In light of your responses to Question 1, what comment do you think Fitzgerald is making about the American Dream in post-war society? To answer this question fully, you may need to consider writing a series of paragraphs.
- 3 What comment do you think Fitzgerald makes about the concept of aspiration in *The Great Gatsby*? Write one to two paragraphs.
- 4 To what extent is this message relevant to modern audiences? Australian audiences? Write one to two paragraphs.



A comparison of Gatsby and Gleason: the dreamers

Both *The Great Gatsby* and 'American Dreams' feature a character whose dreams eclipse those of the people around them. While they are aspiring to very different things, a lot can be learnt from a comparison of the dreamers: Jay Gatsby and Mr Gleason.

JAY GATSBY	MR GLEASON
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Gatsby's aspiration is for economic power to win Daisy.– He is god-like in his own illegal empire.– Gatsby focuses on reshaping himself to overcome the challenges of society.– Gatsby's dream is for himself.– He challenges social issues and aspires to overcome them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Gleason is critical of his town's aspiration to 'Americanness'.– He fashions himself as a god-like figure by creating a replica of the town.– Gleason seeks to challenge society to change.– Gleason's dream is for the community.– He challenges social issues and aspires to overcome them.

4.3b Your turn

Comparing texts

Hold up the personal frame and answer the following questions.

- 1 Which character do you identify with more: Gatsby or Gleason? Why?
- 2 Which character do you think is more successful in changing the attitudes of those around them? Why?





resistant reading after analysing the world view(s) embedded in a text and considering possible gaps and silences, readers can consciously choose to challenge the text, interpreting it in a way that the author probably did not intend, and 'resist' the most common (or dominant) interpretation that 'typical' readers might make

3 How does an understanding of *The Great Gatsby* help readers make sense of the short story 'American Dreams'? Respond by writing a paragraph in your workbook.

4 How does 'American Dreams' contextualise *The Great Gatsby* and make it relevant for Australian readers? (You should discuss the ideas presented in *The Great Gatsby* in comparison to those in 'American Dreams'). Respond by writing a paragraph in your workbook.

Now apply the critical frame to consider how these texts relate to each other. Answer the following questions in your workbook. You will need to write at least one paragraph for each response.

5 What views of, or ideas about, 'aspiration' are left out of:

a *The Great Gatsby*?

b 'American Dreams'?

6 Consider the conversation about aspiration between the two texts (the ways they relate to each other).

a To what extent do they represent the idea that aspiration is the American Dream?

b What flaws do they highlight in this representation of aspiration?

7 A **resistant reading** is one in which readers do not accept the dominant values, attitudes and beliefs represented by the author. In what ways is it possible to take a resistant reading to the representation of aspiration in these two texts?

Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream



Source 27 A still from the documentary *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream*

One of the reasons *The Great Gatsby* is still studied all over the world is because it represents concepts such as 'aspiration' in a universal way that is still applicable to readers today. Additionally, there are parallels in the cultural setting that make its study particularly interesting.

Alex Gibney's 2012 documentary *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream* explores issues around the distribution of wealth in the United States. The film investigates the residents of two streets called Park Avenue, both in New York. One of the streets is situated in South Bronx, an area where 40 per cent of the population lives in poverty. The other Park Avenue is located in the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

The latter street is the focus of the documentary: it is home to '740 Park Avenue', the apartment building with the highest concentration of millionaires in the country. The documentary is critical of the political power concentrated in the building – many of the residents provide large donations to political parties, and the documentary implies a link between these donations and laws that help to protect their business empires.

4.3c Your turn

Consider the cultural context

1 *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream* is widely available. If possible, watch the documentary. If not, conduct research into the residents of 740 Park Avenue.

2 While *Gatsby* was written before 740 Park Avenue was built, the novel depicts the lifestyles of a similar strata of society. Conduct research into the lifestyles of the wealthy in the 1920s. You might like to start with the parties hosted by the Vanderbilt family, and continue to investigate some of the people who attended.

While Australia does not boast a single building that is as wealthy or powerful as 740 Park Avenue, similar economic issues exist in our own society. Incredibly, the top 1 per cent of the economic population possesses as much wealth as the bottom 70 per cent of the country combined. While the rich in Australia continue to prosper, the wealth of the bottom 50 per cent has continued to fall over the past 20 years. The situation for young people is particularly bleak, with concerns that millennials will be too old to pay off a 30-year mortgage once they have saved up the deposit required for a house deposit.



Source 28 The entrance to 740 Park Avenue, which features in *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream*.

4.3d Your turn

Relevance to modern Australians

Apply the personal frame and answer the following questions.

1 Do you think the dream of home ownership and financial stability is still applicable to Australians?

2 How could we define an Australian dream that is not tied to financial prosperity?





Source 29
John Howard
Australian
Prime Minister
1996–2007

Bringing your ideas together: Australian dreams

While Australia does not have a formal document like the United States Declaration of Independence, which clearly sets out the founding values of the nation, we have some similar world views drawn from our collective experiences. In 1999, the Australian Government, under then Prime Minister John Howard, commissioned the composition of a preamble to the Australian Constitution to attempt to give expression to some of these shared values.

Source 31 Preamble to the Constitution

With hope in God, the Commonwealth of Australia is constituted by the equal sovereignty of all its citizens.

The Australian nation is woven together of people from many ancestries and arrivals. Our vast island continent has helped to shape the destiny of our Commonwealth and the spirit of its people.

Since time immemorial our land has been inhabited by Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, who are honoured for their ancient and continuing cultures.

In every generation immigrants have brought great enrichment to our nation's life.

Australians are free to be proud of their country and heritage, free to realise themselves as individuals, and free to pursue their hopes and ideals. We value excellence as well as fairness, independence as dearly as mateship.

Australia's democratic and federal system of government exists under law to preserve and protect all Australians in an equal dignity which may never be infringed by prejudice or fashion or ideology nor invoked against achievement.

In this spirit we, the Australian people, commit ourselves to this Constitution.

4.3e Your turn

Comparing cultural contexts



Hold up the cultural frame and consider the following questions.

1 What similarities and differences do you notice exist between the proposed preamble to the Australian Constitution and the extract from the United States Declaration of Independence on page 7?

2 John Howard was criticised for using the word 'mateship' in this context.

a What are the connotations of the word 'mateship'?

b Who do you think might feel excluded by the use of the word 'mateship'?

3 How well does Source 31 represent your ideas about what constitutes the 'Australian Dream'?

Having considered some of the ways the concept of aspiration is represented in literature, you will have a chance to compare these representations with your own ideas in an extended piece of writing. Before you do so, you should consider and respond to the questions in Your turn 4.3f.

4.3f Your turn

Develop a personal response

Use the personal frame to answer the following questions.

1 What do you aspire to?

2 What do others aspire to?

3 What could you challenge in society to make the world better?

4 What have you learnt from the texts studied in this unit?

5 What do you want to say to the world about aspiration, hopes and dreams?

6 How will you say it?



FOR THE TEACHER

Check your [gbook](#) [assess](#) for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT 1: PUBLIC WRITING

No matter what comparison option you studied for Unit 3 Topic 1, the suggested culminating task for assessment is a 1000–1500 word piece of public writing such as an article, essay, blog post or column. The public writing must add to ongoing, informed and public ‘conversations’ about two texts, including analysis of the texts and their contexts, and comparison of the concepts and identities represented in two texts.

You must check your own school task sheet for the conditions of submitting your public writing for ‘Internal Assessment 1’ (IA1). We have provided guidance in writing a multimodal (written + images) blog post for publication online in a publicly accessible blogging platform. However, parts of this chapter may be useful to you even if you are not writing a blog post for online publication. We have also provided general support for writing a compositional analysis, which can be applied to other types of public writing as needed (e.g. a feature article).

Focus questions:

- What are the requirements of the first internal assessment task?
- How can comparing texts illuminate significant meanings and connections?
- What options does the task present for publishing and sharing your writing?
- How can you enhance your writing skills to craft a successful response for the assessment task?

SYLLABUS ALIGNMENTS

This chapter aligns with Unit 3, Topic 1 (‘Conversations about concepts in texts’) and ‘Internal Assessment 1’ of the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus*.

This chapter features:

- an opportunity to create a piece of public writing that is 1000–1500 words in length
- consideration of digital and online writing as a type of publication
- guidance in creating a compositional analysis (genre) as a blog post (genre/production medium).

7.1

EXPLORING TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Using Chapter 4, 5 or 6 (or your own school-based study) you explored how two texts are *connected* by the way they create contrasting representations of concepts, identities, times and places. This means that the public writing you do for assessment in this topic should focus on the things that connect the texts, *comparing* concepts, identities, times and places that they have in common, or *contrasting* notable differences.

In this chapter we offer information and support for writing a **blog post**; details for the task relating to each study option in this book (‘aspiration’, ‘human progress’ and text adaptation) are provided in Section 7.4. However, you must also consult your teacher and your school task sheet – which outlines specific expectations – before commencing this assessment.

Entering a public ‘conversation’ about texts

The title of Topic 1 is ‘Conversations about concepts in texts’, and it is expected that the writing you do for Internal Assessment 1 would add to a broader public conversation about the meaning and significance of your texts. If you are having trouble imagining that there is an interesting conversation happening about your chosen texts in the public domain, then you can instead think of your blog post as kicking off the conversation!

The introduction to Unit 3, Topic 1 in the *QCAA English General Senior Syllabus* outlines two ‘angles’ from which you should **respond** to the two texts you have analysed in the comparative study. They are exploring and discussing:

- the *personal, social, historical and cultural significance* of representations in different texts, and
- the *cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs* underpinning different texts.

7.1 Your turn

Starting points for conversations

- 1 Make notes on the contexts of the two texts you have studied in the table format provided below (you may need to replicate this table at a larger scale in your workbook).

ASPECT OF	TEXT 1	TEXT 2
personal significance (i.e. what it means to you)		
social, historical and/or cultural significance		
cultural assumptions (represented by Language in Use)		
attitudes, values and beliefs (represented by Language in Use)		

- 2 Look over your notes in the table above about the cultural significance and assumptions of the texts; identify two to three ideas that strike you as significant, and worth considering as a topic in your blog post.

blog post

a web-log, or ‘blog’, is a website that is designed to show a feed or selection of material that is uploaded periodically. Material can be written, spoken/signed (recorded), visual, sound/song, video or a combination of these, and it is uploaded as a ‘post’, usually with a date stamp. Think of it as writing (‘posting’) an entry in a public journal (‘log’)

respond

responding to a text involves reading, listening or viewing; a range of cognitive processes including creating (e.g. creating a personal response tied to individual memory and meaning); creating critical positions based on textual analysis; creative application and experimentation in response to texts

personal



cultural

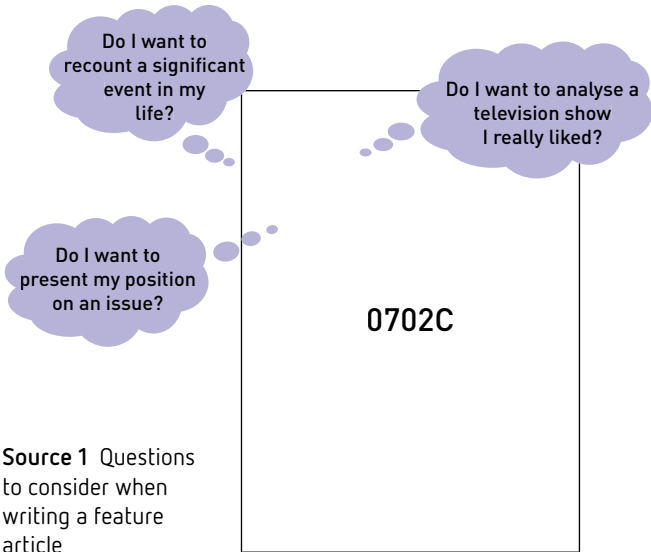


critical



7.2

STRUCTURE AND FEATURES OF A BLOG POST AS COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS



Source 1 Questions to consider when writing a feature article

compositional analysis tbc

The term 'blog' is used widely in contemporary society. Like the feature article, the blog post is not really a genre of its own (except in a very broad sense). When writing a blog post, you really need to know three things about the context:

- You are writing about something in which you typically have a keen interest. Bloggers, moreover, often belong to a community of like-minded people.
- Your audience are usually people who share a similar interest and are looking for a less formal, even friendly way to explore and develop their interest.
- The writing you produce will appear online.

Your purpose for writing a blog post can vary. In the context of this chapter, you are writing a blog post in response to a textual study and your purpose is to respond to two texts in an informed manner. Even more

specifically, you are analysing the elements used to compose culturally significant works (novel, short story, television series and so on). In the English language, the genre that has developed to fulfil this purpose is called 'compositional analysis'.

7.2 Your turn

'Blogging' your compositional analysis

Research:

- 1 Investigate the blogging platforms available in your school, class and home. What platform is easiest to access when using:
 - a the school network?
 - b the home network?
 - c a mobile device?
- 2 Does your school (or other learning context) have any guidelines or restrictions on public writing (e.g. use of real name; use of school email to create accounts; provision of intranet platform)?
- 3 Investigate your own digital footprint. Look up a guide for searching the internet for your own name to see if any text and images turn up. Record what you find:
 - text
 - image/s
 - video/s
 - profile/s
 - nothing!

intranet a private network, only available to people within an organisation; access from outside of the network typically requires a user name and password



Reflect:

- 4 What would you want out of a blogging platform (e.g. easy to use; private/public audience; own blog, or part of a group)?
- 5 Do you think it is better to write in public under a pseudonym, or using your real or full name? Explain your answer.
- 6 Consider how you might shape your digital identity through your blog writing. Do you want to make this blog look and feel like a special project, or to use it as a way to develop your online writing profile? Write a draft of 100–250 words in your workbook for an 'About' page on your potential blog for this assessment.

Typical structure of a compositional analysis

Source 2 shows the typical structure for a compositional analysis, as well as optional elements you might like to include because it is being written as a blog post.

Source 2 Typical structure of a compositional analysis

TYPICAL STRUCTURE	COMMENTS
Hook (optional)	<i>You may opt for a creative opening to establish your role/relationship with the audience.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Find a way to connect with the readers (remember, these are people who share an interest in your topic).- Think about different ways of doing this (e.g. tell an anecdote, pose some questions, offer a challenge).
Context	<i>Although this section will vary depending on the texts and topic, some key things you might include are:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>identification</i> of the title of the novel, film, story, television series etc. being analysed, as well as its creators and year of publication/release- <i>background</i> information relevant to the topic- <i>a very brief synopsis</i>, if necessary, of the texts (two sentences maximum)- <i>thematic concerns</i> related to the topic (e.g. representations of an issue, identity, time or place). You should foreshadow your final judgment- <i>preview of relevant elements</i> to be considered in the blog.


(Continues on next page)

TYPICAL STRUCTURE	COMMENTS
Analysis	<p><i>This section will demonstrate your detailed, technical understanding of the way the two texts work. Each paragraph should deal with one main narrative element (as relevant to your topic).</i></p> <p>Each paragraph should be structured logically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- claim- elaboration- evidence. <p>Remember that you must compare two texts. This can be done in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a <i>serial</i> fashion (i.e. where you examine one text at a time) or- an <i>integrated</i> way (i.e. where you compare an element – e.g. character, events, setting) in both texts within the same paragraph. This is the preferred way.<p>Whichever way you choose:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">- ensure you make appropriate critical evaluations of the texts throughout this section – go beyond simply describing the texts- provide specific evidence to support your analysis.
Summary/Judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make an <i>overall judgment</i> about the two texts in relation to the topic.- Briefly <i>summarise your analysis</i>.- If you like, finish with a <i>comment</i> that brings the analysis back to why your audience might care about this here and now.- As this is a blog post, also include something related to <i>online community building</i> (e.g. an invitation to leave comments).

Source 3 is an exemplar blog post that shows an approach to writing a comparative analysis about an adaptation. Whether you have engaged with the ‘Harry Potter’ series or not, you should be able to see the ways in which the author moves between *analysis of two texts* and *discussion of ideas*. In this exemplar, subheadings have been used to break the post into smaller chunks. Chunking is a useful convention to use for long (800 words or more) posts.

Another way of breaking up long sections of text into visually separated sections is by including images. As you read through Source 3, consider any places where you feel an image could have been added to illustrate or enhance the message in some way.

Source 3 An exemplar blog post



Abomination or masterpiece?

A retrospective look at Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1

Posted by Lindsay Williams on 24 October 2018

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1 is the best movie in the franchise by a country mile.

There.

I’ve come out and said it.

I know that this is controversial for a movie that only scored about 78 per cent on Rotten Tomatoes and a lowly 65 per cent on Metacritic. It was also loathed by many fans for **that** scene. You know the one I mean. The one that should not be named: Harry and Hermione dancing awkwardly to the croonings of Nick Cave. But, more on that later.

[Continues on next page]



As hard to believe as this might seem, the much-anticipated film was released nearly ten years ago in 2010. It was directed by David Yates, who took over the reins of the franchise with the fifth film, *The Order of the Phoenix* and resulted in marked change in visual style for the series, introducing a darker tone, appropriate for the increasingly dire circumstances in which Harry, Hermione and Ron find themselves. His direction was generally well-received by fans and JK Rowling alike and most people seemed pleased that he was asked to bring the film adaptations home.

Nevertheless, there was a mixed reaction to his decision to split the final book into two films. At worst, this was seen as a cynical exercise to squeeze more money out of audiences, who would be forced to spend their admission and popcorn money twice. And, of course, this idea has been exploited by later franchises such as *The Hunger Games*.

Looking back to reviews at the time, critics liked the visual style but were exasperated by the story and its apparent lack of real direction. We just want to get to the ending, many seemed to opine. For me, though, this movie was an opportunity to spend some last, quality time with the main characters. I wasn’t in a hurry to get to the end. At 607 pages, the book is rich and immersive, and I didn’t want it crammed into two hours on the screen.

More importantly, though, the film captures perfectly the foreboding atmosphere of Rowling’s novel. Additionally, while the third person narration of the sprawling novel allows Rowling plenty of space to explore the characters and their interactions, Yates had to find a way to achieve these same insights in concise, visual ways. That’s why new scenes such as the dreaded dance-in-the-tent-in-the-wilderness should be embraced by viewers who understand that novels and films are different and require different approaches to storytelling.

Capturing the darkness

As readers know, the Harry Potter novels become darker as the series progresses and in *Deathly Hallows*, of course, Harry must accept his impending death. Rowling brings this home using Harry as the focaliser and an omniscient, third person narrator who can reveal his thoughts. So, after Harry, Hermione and Ron escape the Ministry of Magic and are camping in the forest, readers are given access to Harry’s ruminations: he knows that Hermione and Ron can walk away at any time, but he can’t and is battling to manage both fear and exhaustion. The menacing atmosphere is also created by Rowling’s skilful use of imagery. She isn’t one for lots of figurative language, metaphors, similes and the like. Instead, she uses strong, concrete words, saturating the text with negative evaluation. Across chapters 14 and 15 for example, Rowling uses feeling nouns (fear, exhaustion, foreboding), an explosion of quality adjectives (starving, deserted and dark forest, paralysing cold, lonely, secluded, the burning scar), and specific, weather-related nouns (mist, rain, wind, isolation).

One advantage of splitting the final novel is that Yates can focus on this darkness before the story of the ultimate victory. The opening credits are more like the opening sequence for a Batman movie: the colours are completely desaturated, the titles wreathed in wispy grey cloud. One of the earliest scenes depicts Voldemort torturing and killing Charity Burbage, the Muggles Studies teacher at Hogwarts. Yates then switches to a point of view shot of Nagini eating the body: the huge, CGI snake slithers towards the camera, and then pounces, its wide, open mouth filling the entire screen.

Friendships in peril

However, in some senses, this darkness becomes a backdrop to the real focus in this movie. The world of Harry, Hermione and Ron is changing forever and, like their audience, they are growing up. Inspired by the book, the heart-breaking, opening scene shows Hermione using the Obliviate spell to remove her parents’ memories of their daughter, with even her image disappearing from photos. This sets the scene for what is to come:

[Continues on next page]



the children are entering a dangerous world where they must rely on themselves and it's the adults who need protection.

Where Rowling has only words (and the readers' imagination) to tell her story, Yates draws on the full set of resources at his disposal to establish a chaotic, dangerous world in which the characters' relationships are under strain. There's a prolonged, exciting chase scene through London which ends in the countryside and a wide shot of falling, arcing powerlines. Throughout the movie, Yates uses a desaturated colour palette, verging on black and white at times, and a lighting scheme that emphasises dark shadows. Long expository scenes from the book have been condensed through the use of disorienting montages.

Characterisation is crucial in Rowling's book with the breakdown in the relationship between Ron, Hermione and Harry an important sub-plot. Yates captures the tensions skilfully. For example, after their escape from the Ministry of Magic, the three friends are standing in the forest arguing over what is to happen next. Using a wide shot and blocking, the distance between the characters is effectively visualised: Ron and Harry are standing far apart, Harry with his back to the others. Hermione is in between the two boys. Moreover, Ron's mental deterioration is depicted through Rupert Grint's hooded gaze, the use of make-up to give him dark rings under his eyes, and a dishevelled costume.

Shall we dance?

A clever addition to the story is the crackling radio. This is not featured in the novel, but was possibly suggested by a scene in the novel where Harry tells Ron he is not a television antennae. Inside the stark canvas tent, Ron is shown crouching over the radio listening desperately for news of his family; appropriately, it's like something out of an old-time war movie and is an elegant visualisation of Ron's growing sense of despair. Moreover, the sound of the irritating radio crackle is a metaphor of the tensions between Ron and Harry.

Without the radio, one of the most controversial departures from Rowling's original story would not have been possible: the dance between Harry and Hermione. After Ron storms off, Harry and Hermione have travelled to a rocky, limestone pavement (actually located in Malham Cove, Yorkshire) under a cloudy canopy of sky that reflects their mood. It's night, the radio is playing and Yates has the actors sitting on opposite sides of the tent, the physical distance reflecting the tension. The radio can be heard in the background of the soundscape, but if you listen carefully the plaintive 'O Children' by Nick Cave is playing. Harry walks towards Hermione and holds out his hand. After some hesitation, she takes it, standing on the word 'rejoice' as the song becomes louder on the soundtrack. The two dance awkwardly at first, their faces expressing melancholy. However, the dancing becomes increasingly frenzied and they smile – until they slow down and, in an intimate gesture, put their heads on each other's shoulders for a few moments. The music gradually fades into the background, they step apart, smiles on their faces gone. It is a tour de force of direction and editing, and captures what Rowling has said in a 2014 interview with *Wonderland* magazine is the 'ghost of what could have been'.

The final judgment?

At the time, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* marked the end of the stories of Ron, Hermione and Harry. Like the readers of the series, the characters were growing up and in this book about to leave school and start on the next stage of their lives. In many ways, the story of Voldemort is simply the backdrop against which the characters forge their identities and must separate psychologically from their parents and mentors. Looking back, it's this element of Rowling's novel that has been captured so successfully by Yates and his team, using the full resources of image and sound at their disposal. Harry Potter purists may not like the liberties Yates has taken with the source material, but for me the movie is a successful and moving prelude to the high drama of the final act in Harry's story.

So, what do you think? Did you love it or loathe it? Leave a comment below. We'd love to hear from you.



7.3

WRITING FOR PRINT OR DIGITAL PUBLICATIONS

From Source 3, you can see that the written text achieves all the required elements of a compositional analysis without using any digital elements. Although we have called it a 'blog post', it could be submitted for a print publication rather than being published online.

When we talk about the difference between writing in print or online, we are talking about the medium that is being used to publish the work.

To publish your writing you can either:

- submit your work to an established title that is put out (often periodically) by a company or organisation. You will have to conform to the purpose and style of the publication
- self-publish your work (individually or with a group) in forms such as a **zine** or blog. You will have to create a broader purpose and style for your own publication.

Overall, there are more opportunities to publish your work online than in print. Access to free online content has challenged traditional print media such as magazines and newspapers to retain audiences. While many publications that only existed in print now publish in print and online, other publications began, or have moved to, an entirely online presence.

For any publication, 'being online' means having a website where its content can be found. A blog is simply another kind of website. Writing that is intended to be published on a website should be:

- **multimodal**: written language combined with images to enhance meaning
- **digital**: written language augmented using webpage editing or direct coding to create **hyperlinks** and add metadata (e.g. categories and tags).

Enhancing online writing

Blogs are multimodal, digital online publications, so blog posts can include features such as:

- **hyperlinks** to websites that elaborate on a point or expand on an example, or lend authority to information in your post by connecting readers to the source of your information
- **relevant images** that add visual appeal and, more importantly, provide visual support for a point being made in your post. These images could reinforce information already in the written text, provide a contrasting perspective or include additional.

7.3a Your turn

Enhancing a blog post for online publication

Enhance the exemplar blog post in Source 2 for an online environment by adding hyperlinks and relevant images (with appropriate captions to attribute their source). Be prepared to justify your suggestions to your classmates.

zine
a low-budget, handmade magazine that is made by one person or a small group of people, usually on a niche subject; can be produced or published in print or online

hyperlink
a section of text on a webpage that can be clicked to take you to another web page, or to bring up an embedded document or other file; hyperlinks are usually blue and underlined

Creating and sharing blogs and blog posts

WYSIWYG
an acronym for 'what you see is what you get', a name that describes how text and images can be edited together in a user interface in a way that closely resembles the final appearance; pronounced 'wiz-ee-wig'

HTML
an acronym for 'Hypertext Markup Language', code that is used to 'tag' your content and to tell a web page how to display it; a markup language that defines the structure of webpage content

You might have to develop new skills when using a platform such as a blog to write online for a public audience. Blog writing, for example, can often be done in 'WYSIWYG' editing pages, where editing text involves using toolbars. This is much the same as editing in a word processing program. However, the finer elements of your blog post can also be tinkered with if you are confident going into the HTML editor and applying your own tags and content in the code. HTML code can often be added to text in blog comment editors (e.g. to comment on your classmates' work).

```
<h1>Main title</h1>
<h2>Top level heading</h2>
<ul>
<li>Unordered</li>
<li>Lists</li>
</ul>
<b>Defines bold text</b>
<i>Defines italic text</i>
<blockquote>Defines a section that is quoted from another source</blockquote>
<a href="home.html"> Text to appear hyperlinked </a>
```

Source 4 Some basic HTML tags that you can experiment with. A longer glossary of HTML tags is included in Chapter 14.

Spreadable media

Blog posts can be shared as links on several platforms. To make your blog post more enticing to potential audiences, you should:

- have a catchy title that represents the content and is not misleading
- break up long paragraphs, especially long introductions, for easier screen reading
- add metadata – categories and tags – to organise content and maximise related search hits
- include at least one image to create an appropriate or enticing thumbnail for sharing.

If you are blogging with a group of classmates, reading and commenting on each other's posts is a great way to initiate and stimulate conversations. What strategies can you draw on to make your blog post stand out from the rest of your English class?

thumbnail
is a reduced size version of a larger image used in a text, typically used in preview screens or indexes

7.36 Your turn

Publicising your public writing

- 1 In your English workbook, write notes on:
 - a what you see as the difference between the terms 'spreadable media' and 'viral media'
 - b the experiences you have had with viral media and memes
 - c how you would define 'spam'
 - d which members of the public you envision will access your blog post. Which members of the public may face challenges with the required literacy and/or internet connectivity?
 - e whether you agree with the proposition, 'if it doesn't spread, it's dead'.Discuss what you have written with your classmates.

7.4 SUGGESTED TASKS FOR ASSESSMENT

To create a blog post for this assessment task, you will need to draw on your comparative study for Unit 3, Topic 1 'Conversations about concepts in texts'. Source 5 contains possible response options for the study in Chapter 4 (the concept of 'aspiration'), Chapter 5 (the concept of 'human progress') or Chapter 6 (the adaptation of Sherlock Holmes). As always, be sure to check your school task sheet to confirm your specific assessment requirements before completing the task.

Source 5 Contextual elements and prompts for writing a blog post

ASPECT OF THE WRITING CONTEXT	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 1:	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 2:	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 3:
	STUDY OF 'ASPIRATION' (CONCEPTUAL CONNECTION)	STUDY OF 'HUMAN PROGRESS' (CONCEPTUAL CONNECTION)	STUDY OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (CONNECTION THROUGH ADAPTATION)
Genre and social purpose	Blog post in the form of a compositional analysis		
Subject matter (What is my topic? What question/s do I need to answer?)	Critically compare the novel <i>The Great Gatsby</i> with the short story 'American Dreams'. Make sure your blog post addresses ONE of the following focus areas: 1 The way representations of aspiration respond to differing social, historical and cultural contexts 2 Cultural assumptions about class, gender or individualism across times and places 3 The purpose of novels and short stories as media for reflecting or challenging perspectives. Support your analysis with specific evidence (including quotations) from the texts.	Critically compare the film <i>Hidden Figures</i> with five poems by Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner. Make sure your blog post addresses ONE of the following focus areas: 1 The way representations of human progress respond to differing social, historical and cultural contexts 2 Cultural assumptions about gender, ethnicity or the environment across times and places 3 The purpose of films and poetry as media for reflecting or challenging perspectives. Support your analysis with specific evidence (including quotations and screenshots) from the texts.	Critically compare an episode of the BBC adaptation of 'Sherlock' with an original story by Arthur Conan Doyle. Make sure your blog post addresses ONE of the following focus areas: 1 Changing representations of truth and justice across time 2 Cultural assumptions about gender or class across time 3 The purposes of films and novels as media for storytelling. Support your analysis with specific evidence (including quotations and screenshots) from the versions of the stories.

[Continues on next page]



ASPECT OF THE WRITING CONTEXT	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 1:	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 2:	TASK DETAILS FOR OPTION 3:
	STUDY OF 'ASPIRATION' (CONCEPTUAL CONNECTION)	STUDY OF 'HUMAN PROGRESS' (CONCEPTUAL CONNECTION)	STUDY OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (CONNECTION THROUGH ADAPTATION)
Roles and relationships (What writing role am I adopting? Who is my audience? What is our relationship in terms of distance, power and alignment of values?)	Adopt the role of a literary blogger. Your readers are others interested in the ways literature impacts personal reflection and growth. You should assume the following relationship between you and your readers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Distance</i>: you don't know each other personally- <i>Power</i>: your audience is 'well-informed and knowledgeable' about the novel <i>The Great Gatsby</i> and the short story 'American Dreams'- <i>Alignment of values</i>: you may have divergent views about how the texts position audiences to conceptualise 'aspiration'	Adopt the role of a literary blogger. Your readers are others interested in the power of literature to reflect or create social change. You should assume the following relationship between you and your readers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Distance</i>: you don't know each other personally- <i>Power</i>: your audience is 'well-informed and knowledgeable' about either the film <i>Hidden Figures</i> or the poetry of Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, but might only be 'familiar' with the context of the other text- <i>Alignment of values</i>: you may have divergent views about how the texts position audiences to conceptualise 'human progress'	Adopt the role of a literary blogger. Your readers are others interested in literary adaptations and fans of the Sherlock Holmes stories. You should assume the following relationship between you and your readers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Distance</i>: you don't know each other personally- <i>Power</i>: your audience is 'well-informed and knowledgeable' about Sherlock Holmes and various adaptations- <i>Alignment of values</i>: you share a love of the Arthur Conan Doyle stories, but may have divergent views about the value of film and television adaptations
Mode (Is this assignment written, spoken or multimodal?)	Multimodal: Written with digital elements (e.g. hyperlinks and relevant captioned images). A combination of written and visual material is required		
Medium (How do I need to submit this assignment – e.g. on paper, as a digital file or URL ...?)	<i>Preferred – digital (online or offline)*</i> : Published online using an individual or group blog page, or offline as a digital file with embedded hyperlinks. <i>Alternative – print</i> : The blog post can be submitted on A4 paper, with intended hyperlinks indicated with <u>underlined formatting</u> and a numbered list of hyperlink URLs attached in an appendix *Check your school assessment task sheet for specific conditions of your task.		

7.4 Your turn

Writing your blog post: A conversation about textual connections

Using the contextual elements and prompts offered in Source 5 create a blog post of 1000–1500 words that provides a target audience with your critical perspective on two 'connected' texts.

- *Target audience*: Before writing, confirm (using your school task sheet, or perhaps decide as a class) the intended audience of your blog.
- *Medium*: Your piece must be for an online publication, either on a platform of your choice or within a whole-class site. A combination of written and visual material is required.

Interacting and reflecting

- *Interact*: When you and your classmates have published your blog posts, read each other's posts and leave comments in response. Interact with the ideas that your classmates have presented in their posts by adding a comment that relates personally to one of their insights, or extends their analysis by adding additional information.
- *Reflect*: Write down or talk to someone about your blogging experience.
- Did you find it hard to come up with something to say?

- Were you able to confidently create a digital text that used consistent and appropriate formatting?

- How difficult was it to find the right images to illustrate your blog?

- What are three pieces of advice you would give someone else doing this task about how to effectively communicate their position or perspective in a blog?

FOR THE TEACHER

Check your gbook assess for the following additional resources for this chapter:

Answers

Answers to the *Your turn* tasks in this chapter

Teacher notes

Useful notes and advice for teaching this chapter, including syllabus links

assess quiz

An interactive auto-correcting multiple-choice quiz to test student comprehension