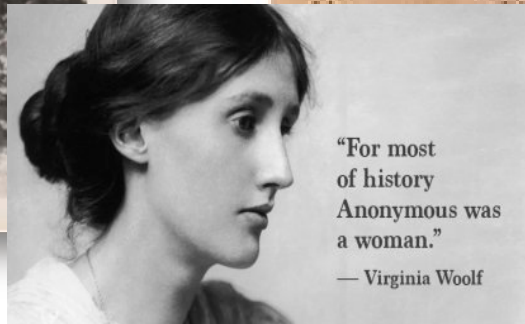


Reading to Write

CREATIVE WRITING



"For most of history Anonymous was a woman."

— Virginia Woolf

The sky was clear and blue forever the day I shot Harriet. Clear and blue and so bright. Sunlight fell through the leaves, leaving dark shadows and spots so blindingly white they forced me to look away. We had our picnic packed: some ginger cake, half a loaf of soda bread, a square of butter wrapped in wax paper. It seemed the beginning of something – this day, the sun, us being together again, making our way down the track to McPhail's.

Skylarking

by Kate Mildenhall

Openings...

What just happened???

How did the composer position us?

Shocking?

Mundane?

How does this advance the plot?

Narrative Structures

- ❖ Notions of time being manipulated in the narrative through **flashbacks** and memories. This also establishes the back story of the character(s).
- ❖ **Polyphonic narratives** – more than one narrative voice. The nature of the story through multiple perspectives.
- ❖ **Circular narratives** – begin and return to the same spot *but* a different realisation has been learnt.
- ❖ Manipulating the narrative structure by **starting with a climactic event** at the beginning of the narrative.
- ❖ **Frame narratives** – a story within a story.
- ❖ **Dialogic interaction** – begins with a dialogue between key characters.
- ❖ **Epistolary** – narrative written in a series of documents such as letters, diary entries or newspaper clippings.

Climactic points in a narrative

where your character...

Makes an Exploration – *of physical, historical or self*

Has a Rediscovery – *of relationship, past or self*

Has an Epiphany – *spiritual awakening or near-death experience*

Experiences a Eureka moment – *a bolt of lightning recognition, sudden awareness*

Has an Awakening – *which begins a slow coming-to-terms with self*

Experiences Serendipity – *a lucky escape, a fortuitous event, a positive surprise*

Has a crisis – *which leads to a new awareness of their world*

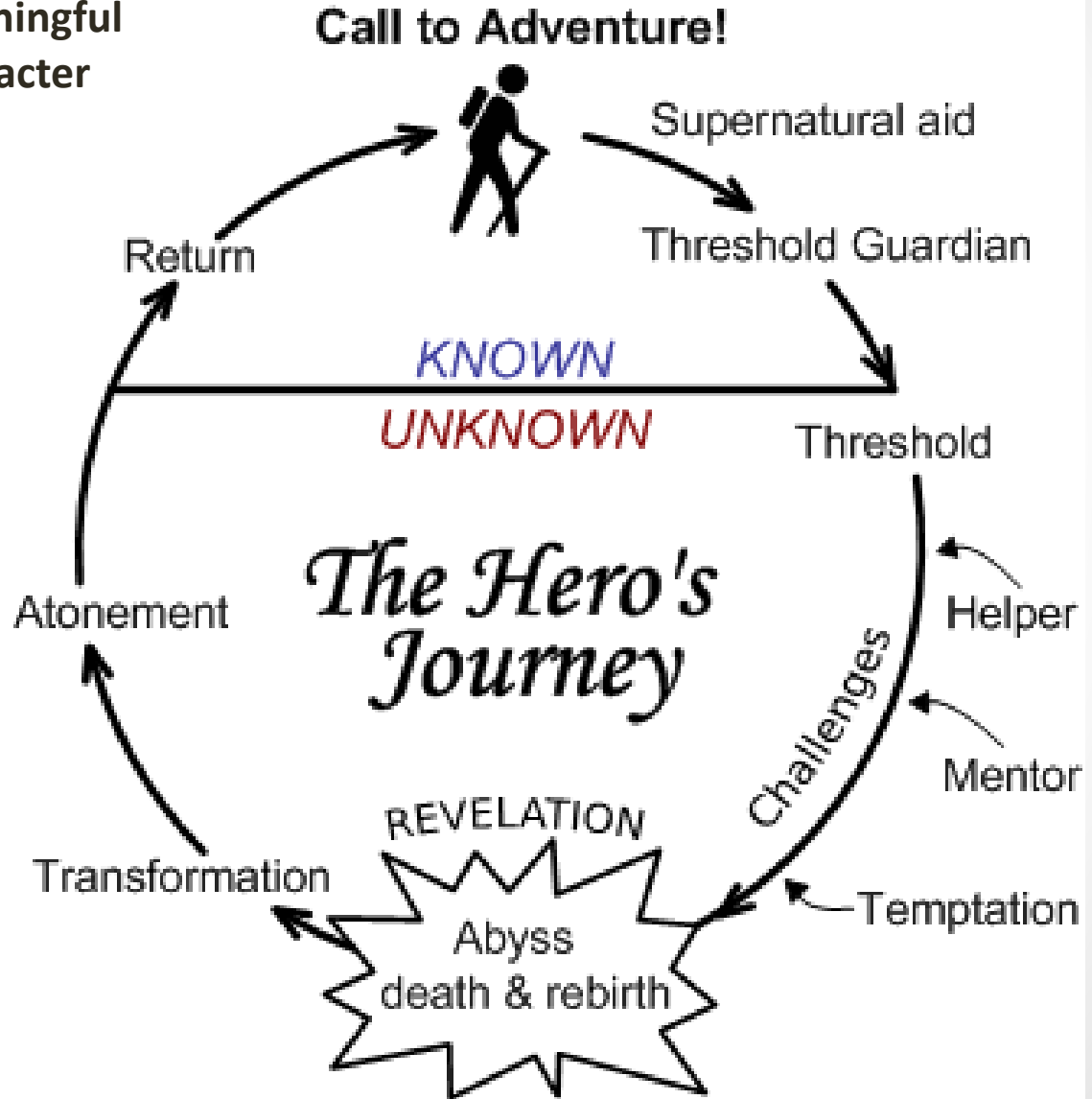
Experiences Anagnorisis – *recognizes or identifies their true nature*

Notes from the HSC Marking Centre

- **Structural complexity**
- **Cohesion**
- An **authentic**, sustained and engaging voice
- **Originality** and **perceptiveness**
- Confident and skilful control of the **mechanics of language**,
punctuation, sentence structure and paragraphing

Revisit the narrative of the Heroes' Journey

This will ensure your narrative involves significant and meaningful events which shape the character and advance your plot.



A link to *themes and major ideas* in a narrative...



Enriching points...

- Localised details – *specific which establishes authentic perspective*
- Sensory experiences – *using some of the five senses avoids ‘telling’*
- Small events – *can contribute to seismic-scale ramifications*
- Small details – *can build a bigger or richer whole (synecdoche)*
- Descriptive – *Describe rather than tell*
- Unfold and gift your reader – *don’t give everything first. Gradual shifts may be more realistic*
- Dialogue – *this can be more interactive and reveals character*
- Mood – *establishes the tone and atmosphere*

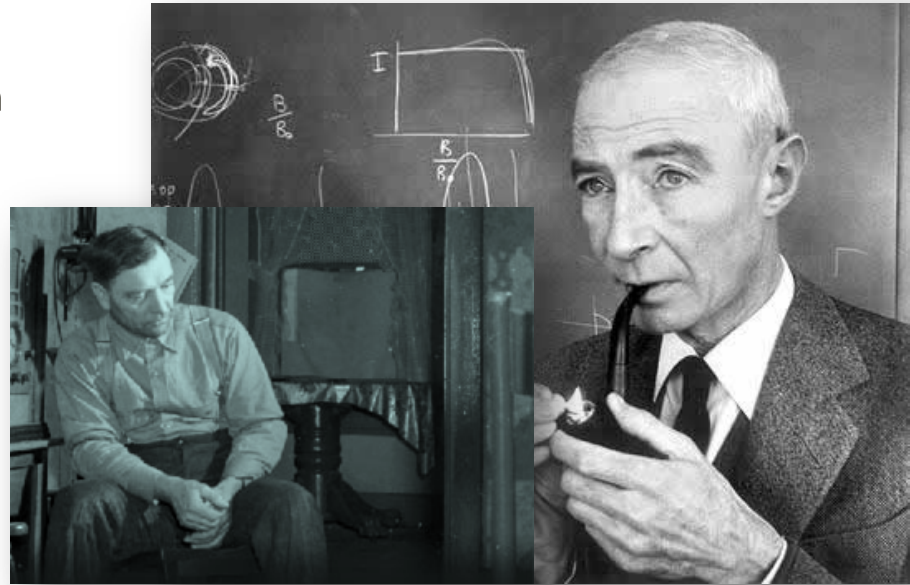
Small details build *BIG* ideas...

Your narrative might reference big concepts but in using small details it can be more evocative.

Oppenheimer and the atomic - 'We have made a thing, a most terrible weapon, that has altered abruptly and profoundly the nature of the world.'

Setting:

Oppenheimer sitting in his lounge room with his family listening to a broadcast of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. A domestic scene can hold strong pathos and impact and takes the narrative beyond the discovery of the splitting of the atom.



Objects and motifs

Objects have character and a presence. This item can become a motif in the narrative that recurs to make a point; it could be your father's old Omega digital **watch**, a scruffy **teddy bear** with a missing ear or an antique book that you found in the pocket of your grandmother's closet.

The motif of time or innocence could be evoked.

This object may be the catalyst for a reverie, a nostalgia of the character's past connection to family.

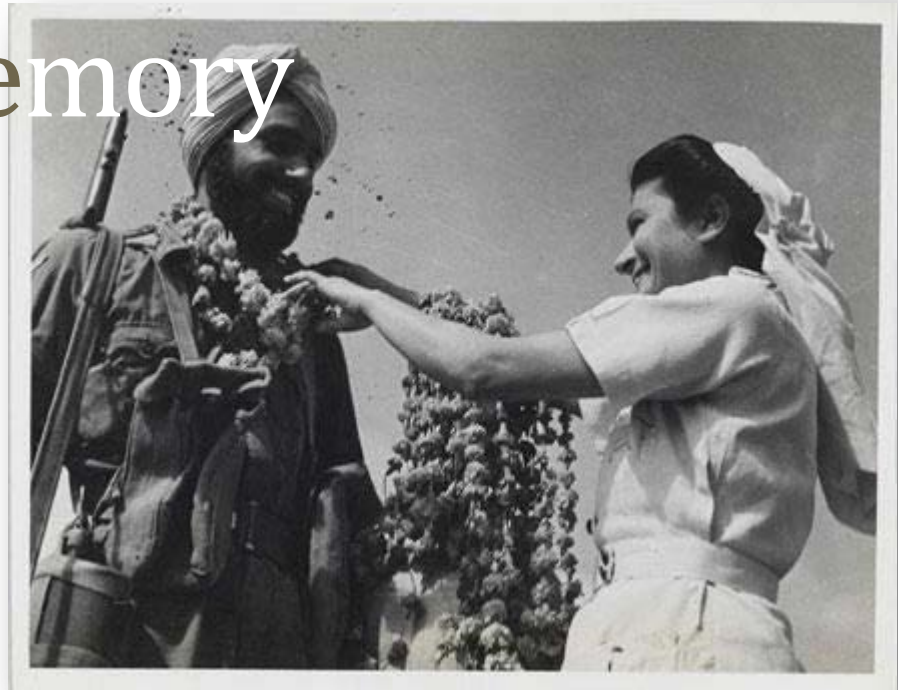
The details of the object may capture the moment when it triggered a memory of something that has been forgotten.



Objects and memory

- Photographs capture a fleeting moment from the past and only reveal a fragment of a story. They may stir our curiosity or our imagination about a person, place or ourselves.
- **The photograph is of my great, great aunt Beatrice Sydenham who was a nurse in WWII.**

'When I visited her home – it still had the spoken-about dresser with the pale blue paint. Roses were delicately painted on the wooden legs. For such a practical women this seemed a whimsy.'



Setting used to evoke Characterisation

- Mise en scene

The description of objects, rooms, buildings, desks indicate the character and **'personality'** of the personas.

Additionally, it provides interest and creates the **atmosphere.**

'It might have been the Turley's apartment itself that unsettled her. Their section of the old house comprised one huge high-ceilinged room which they used as a combined living-room and dining-room and a small kitchen, and a bathroom which had cracked porcelain fittings with blue Victorian floral patterns in the glaze, and one of those anti-quoted geyser bath-heaters which stood threateningly at one end...'

George Johnston
My Brother Jack



Setting used to evoke Characterisation

Landscape revealing aspects of character.

Tumultuous weather, and storms **conveying emotions** of angst and despair.

Foreshadows the nature of upcoming events in the narrative.



“By early evening all the sky to the north had darkened and the spare terrain they trod had turned a neuter gray as far as the eye could see. They grouped in the road at the top of a rise and looked back. The storm front towered above them and the wind was cool on their sweating faces. They slumped bleary-eyed in their saddles and looked at one another. Shrouded in the black thunderheads the distant lightning glowed mutely like welding seen through foundry smoke. As if repairs were under way at some flawed place n the iron dark of the world.”

Cormac McCarthy
All the Pretty Horses

Setting and characterisation...

- Through the frayed curtain at my window a wan glow announces the break of day. My heel hurt, my head weighs a ton, and something like a giant invisible diving-bell holds my whole body prisoner. My room emerges slowly from the gloom. I linger over every item: photos of loved ones, my children's drawings, posters, the little tin cyclist sent by a friend the day before the Paris-Roubaix bike race, and the IV pole over-hanging the bed where I have been confined these past six months like a hermit crab dug into his rock.

The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly

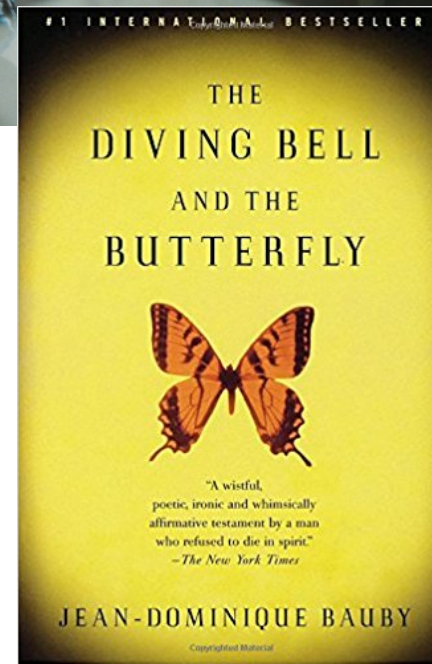
by Jean-Dominique Bauby

The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly

by Jean-Dominique Bauby

1. How is figurative language used to establish the mood in the opening paragraph?

2. What other language techniques are used in this opening to evoke character?



Opening with dialogue...

‘School – how was, today?’

‘Learning makes me feel ignorant,’ said Gabriel. ‘Has Dad rung?’

As well as the fact he didn’t know where his father was, something strange was happening to the weather in Gabriel’s neighbourhood. That morning, when he left for school with Hannah, there was a light Spring shower, and it was Autumn.

By the time they had reached the school gates, layer of snow sat on their hats. At lunchtime in the playground, the hot flood-light of the sun – suddenly illuminated like a lamp – had been so bright the kids played in shirtsleeves.

Gabriel’s Gift

by Hanif Kureshi

Gabriel's Gift
by Hanif Kureishi

1. Consider how the use of dialogue increases our understanding of the characters' relationship.
2. What other language techniques are used in this opening?



Localised details...

- *Describe* what you know well!



Addison Road Markets



I Have a Dream mural, Newtown



Murrumbidgee Road Pork Roll Shop

Writing exercise:

Using the following as elements of your plot:

- Bus stand
- Shopping centre
- School
- Local park
- Café
- Swimming pool

Incorporate details:

- Names of places
- Locations
- Time
- Weather conditions

Linking events and details

- LOST!



$A \xrightarrow{u} B \xrightarrow{v} C$

Come back to points, places, people as flashbacks, memories and dialogues.

Where you start is also the point where the narrative concludes

Found?



Questions:

- **Consider the narrative arc in Sally Potter's film Orlando. How does this contribute to our understanding about character and plot?**

