

Distinctively Visual

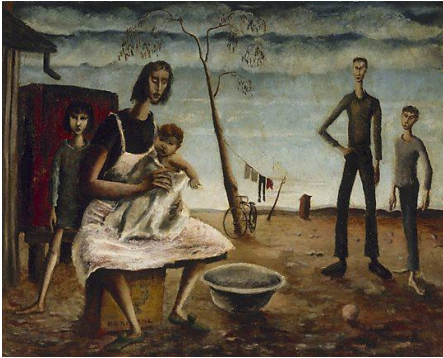


An Introduction

Module A: Experience Through Language

What does experience mean?

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/experience>



A particular instance of personally **encountering** or undergoing something

The process or fact of personally **observing**, encountering, or undergoing something

Knowledge or practical wisdom gained from what one has observed, encountered, or undergone

The language we use to describe our experiences can be quite effective in positioning others to 'see' or 'imagine' what we went through and to empathise with us as a result. When we share our perception of people, relationships and the world, we are ultimately communicating our beliefs and values. The types of language techniques we choose to use to describe or explore an experience will shape how the reader/viewer also responds to the experience being explored.

For example, if I wanted you to imagine the beach as a place of comfort and relaxation I would use phrases such as:

The soft sand pillows my foot like two warm hands.

Two boys build sandcastles whilst their parents sink into bright, comfy chairs and gaze lazily into the distance.

If I wanted you to imagine the beach as a place of danger and the site of excess partying, the language I would use would change.

The still water disguises the danger of the wild lurking beneath.

The revellers used the beach as their private waste dump: scores of beer bottles, Smiths chip packets and discarded items of clothing greet the locals as they wake up for their morning swim.

People will use different language techniques to convey their position on a place and the people that inhabit that place. Often our experience will dictate what choice of language techniques we

will use but if we can get our audience to 'see' what we 'see', we have achieved our purpose. This is where the term 'distinctively visual' becomes important.

Deconstructing the Module Rubric

*This module requires students to explore the uses of a **particular aspect of language**. It develops students' **awareness of language** and helps them understand how our **perceptions of and relationships with others and the world** are shaped in written, spoken and visual language.*

- a) Uses of a particular aspect of language : **visual**
- b) Awareness of language: **how language techniques can position us** to accept, embrace or reject people and ideas
- c) Perceptions of and relationships with others and the world are shaped: **how can language choices impact how we see others and the world and how can language choices reflect how we see others and the world?**

Elective 2: Distinctively Visual Rubric

In their responding and composing, students explore the ways the images we see and/or visualise in texts are created. Students consider how the forms, features and language of different texts create these images, affect interpretation and shape meaning. Students examine one prescribed text, in addition to other related texts of their own choosing that provide examples of the distinctively visual.

What does 'distinctive' mean?

It can mean:

- Having a special quality or distinguishing feature
- Original or individual
- Separate
- Special
- Stands out

What does 'visual' mean?

It can mean:

- Relating to seeing or sight
- Able to be perceived by the sight *and mind*

So, together...

Distinctively visual refers to the language techniques and structure the composer uses to specifically create a picture/image. In this module, we need to consider:

- a) *ways the images we see and/or visualise in texts are created*
- b) *how the forms, features and language of different texts create these images*
- c) *how the forms, features and language of different texts affect interpretation*
- d) *how the forms, features and language of different texts shape meaning*

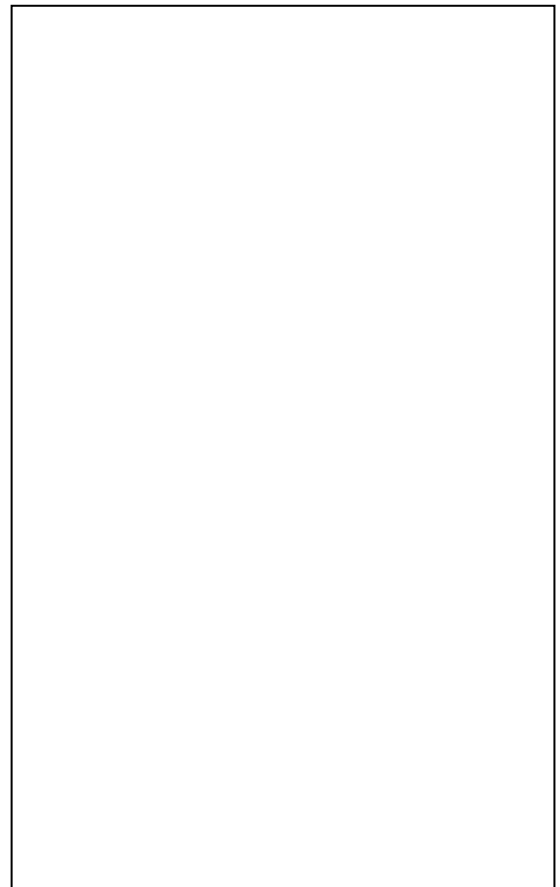
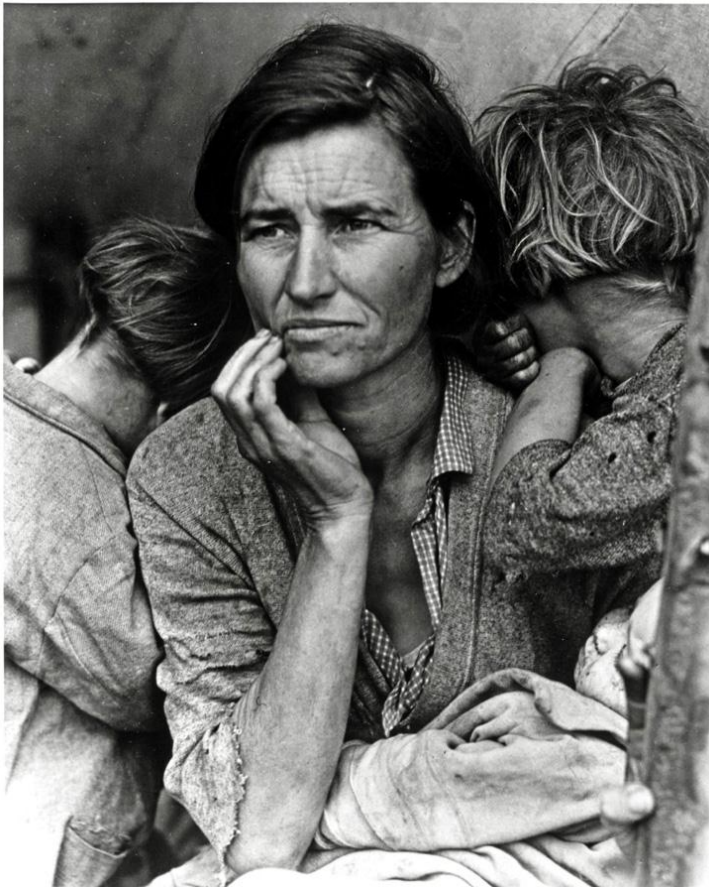
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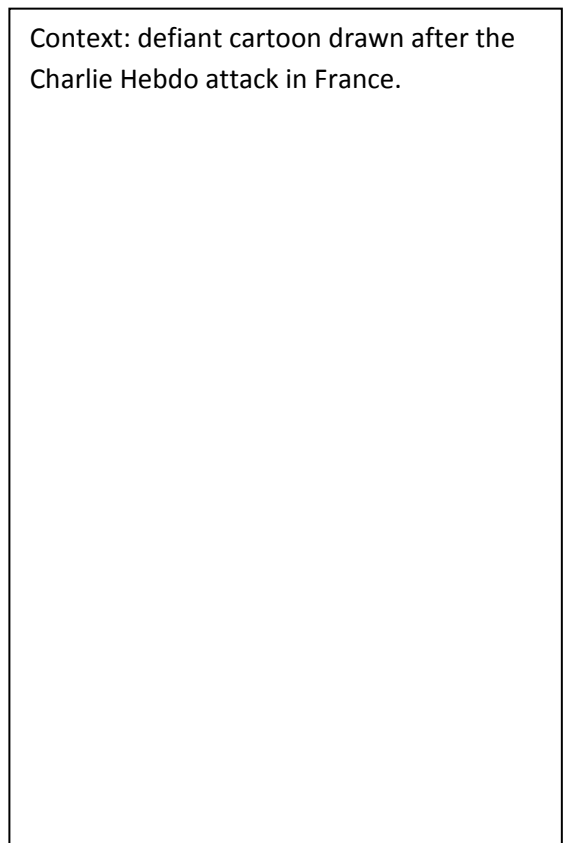
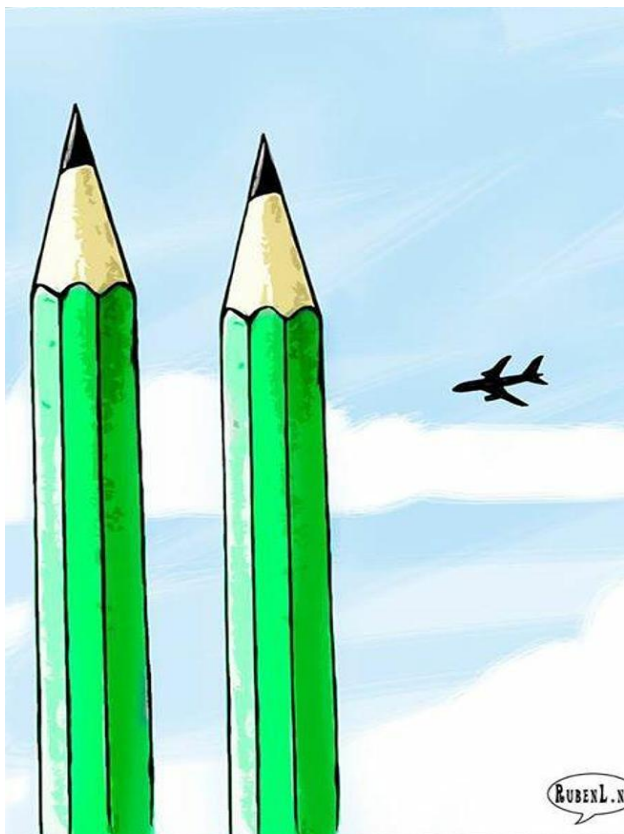
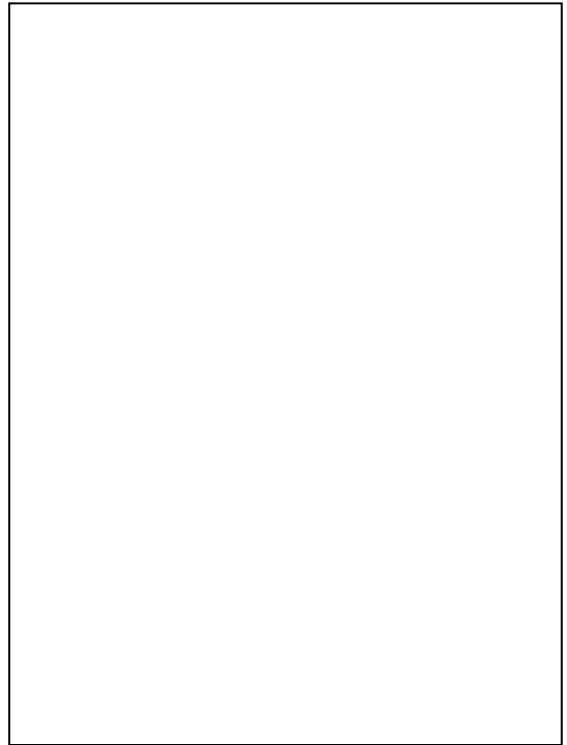
- 1. What image is the composer creating? Is the image about people, place, relationships, and the world?*
- 2. How is the composer using distinctively visual techniques and structure to create the image/s?*
- 3. Why does the composer want to create this image? What do they want to do with this information?*

Do they want to do the following?

- Persuade the responder to share their beliefs and values*
- Examine human nature and its vulnerability and weaknesses*
- Examine the anxieties and/or hopes of a particular context*
- Provoke thought about an issue or instigate action on an issue*
- Provoke thought about identity – self or national*
- Explore the impact of landscape on individuals*

Imagine you have to describe each of the images below to a blind person. Try to use language techniques (such as salience, foreground, costume, gaze, camera shot) to describe the image and the experience.





<http://www.news.com.au/world/charlie-hebdo-attack-cartoonists-stand-defiant/story-fndir2ev-1227178821108>

Mrs Pratchett and the Sweet Shop

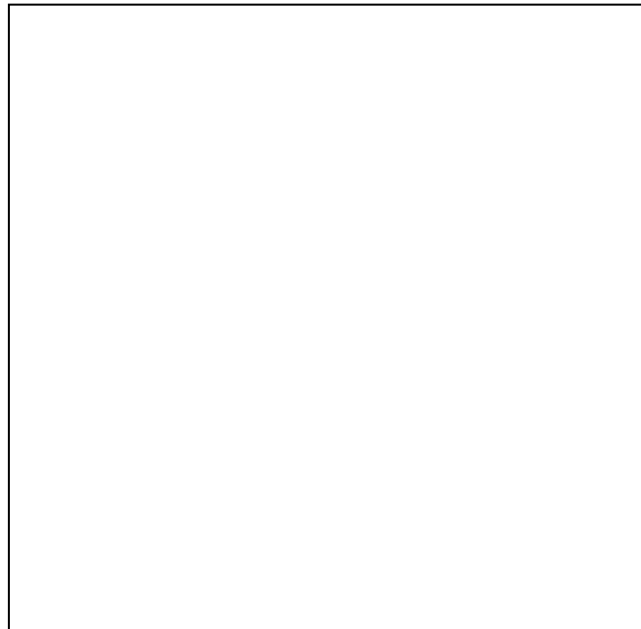
The sweet-shop in Llandaff in the year 1923 was the very centre of our lives. To us, it was what a bar is to a drunk, or a church to a Bishop. Without it there would have been little to live for. But it had one terrible drawback, this sweet-shop. The woman who owned it was a horror. We hated her and we had good reason for doing so.

Her name was Mrs Pratchett. She was a small skinny old hag with a moustache on her upper lip and a mouth as sour as a green gooseberry. She never smiled. She never welcomed us when we went in, and the only times she spoke were when she said things like, 'I'm watchin' you so keep yer thievin fingers off them chocolates! I don't want you in 'ere just to look around! Either you forks or you gets out!'

But by far the most the most loathsome thing about Mrs Pratchett was the filth that hung around her. Her apron was grey and greasy. Her blouse had bits of breakfast all over it, toast-crumbs and tea stains and splotches of dried egg yolk. It was her hands, however, that disturbed us most. They were disgusting. They were black with dirt and grime. They looked as though they had been putting lumps of coal on the fire all day long. And do not forget please that it was these very hands and fingers that plunged into the sweet-jars when we asked for a pennyworth of Treacle Toffee or Wine Gums or Nut Clusters or whatever. There were precious few health laws in those days, and nobody, least of all Mrs Pratchett, ever thought of using a little shovel for getting out the sweets as the do today. The mere sight of her grimy right hand with its black fingernails digging out an ounce of Chocolate Fudge out of a jar would have caused a starving tramp to go running from the shop. But not us. Sweets were our lifeblood. We would have put up with far worse to get them. So we simply stood and watched in sullen silence while this disgusting old woman stirred around inside the jars with her foul fingers.

Boy Roald Dahl p33-34

Use the description above to draw your interpretation of Mrs Pratchett.



Techniques Used to Convey a Visual of Mrs Pratchett

Reason for Representation- What is Dahl trying to show?	Technique and Example Effect of Technique
<p><i>Dahl's 'autobiography' recounts the experiences of childhood and, as such, his use of language is colourful and dramatic. The antagonist he faced as a child is portrayed as monstrous which can be understood when we consider that it is the perspective of a young boy with limited control and power. He aims to convey the character of Mrs Pratchett as an external threat, a woman who abuses her power, and positions the reader to respond in a similar fashion through his clever use of distinctively visual techniques.</i></p>	<p>Dahl employs a series of short sentences 'The woman who owned it was a horror' and 'She never smiled' to convey an image of coldness and distance the reader from the character. Additionally, he uses the alliterative phrases 'grey and greasy' and 'foul fingers' as well as emotive language 'loathsome' and 'disgusting' to further enhance the representation of Mrs Pratchett as a hideous, unhygienic character. The repetitive phrases 'she never' are contrasted with 'welcomed' and 'smiled' to promote an image of restriction and coldness. The colourful simile 'a mouth as sour as a green gooseberry' is utilised to continue to build this image of a monstrous 'hag', an allusion to evil characters in the fairytale genre; these references to images familiar to the reader's world work to persuade the reader to dislike the character and feel empathy towards Dahl and his friends.</p> <p>Identify more techniques used in the passage and explain their effect.</p>

Homework Task

Write a brief passage (that employs selective language techniques) which creates a picture for readers of your relationship with someone important to you. After having written this text, annotate your text to show the language techniques you have used and explain their effect.

Hard Rock Returns to Prison from the Hospital for the Criminal Insane

Etheridge Knight, 1931 - 1991

Hard Rock / was / "known not to take no shit
From nobody," and he had the scars to prove it:
Split purple lips, lumbed ears, welts above
His yellow eyes, and one long scar that cut
Across his temple and plowed through a thick
Canopy of kinky hair.

The WORD / was / that Hard Rock wasn't a mean nigger
Anymore, that the doctors had bored a hole in his head,
Cut out part of his brain, and shot electricity
Through the rest. When they brought Hard Rock back,
Handcuffed and chained, he was turned loose,
Like a freshly gelded stallion, to try his new status.
And we all waited and watched, like a herd of sheep,
To see if the WORD was true.

As we waited we wrapped ourselves in the cloak
Of his exploits: "Man, the last time, it took eight
Screws to put him in the Hole." "Yeah, remember when he
Smacked the captain with his dinner tray?" "He set

The record for time in the Hole--67 straight days!"

"Ol Hard Rock! man, that's one crazy nigger."

And then the jewel of a myth that Hard Rock had once bit
A screw on the thumb and poisoned him with syphilitic spit.

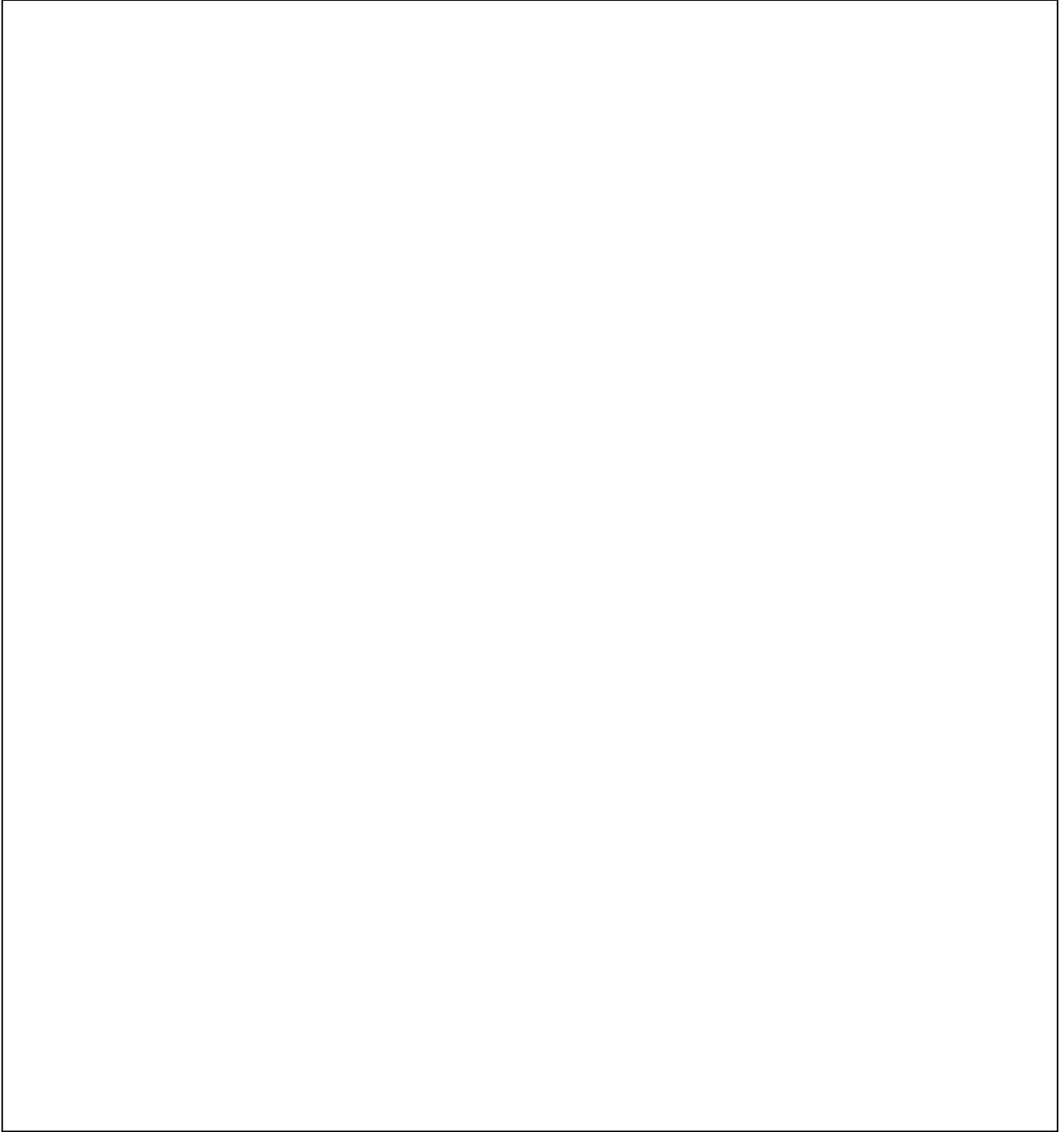
The testing came, to see if Hard Rock was really tame.

A hillbilly called him a black son of a bitch
And didn't lose his teeth, a screw who knew Hard Rock
From before shook him down and barked in his face.
And Hard Rock did *nothing*. Just grinned and looked silly,
His eyes empty like knot holes in a fence.

And even after we discovered that it took Hard Rock
Exactly 3 minutes to tell you his first name,
We told ourselves that he had just wised up,
Was being cool; but we could not fool ourselves for long,
And we turned away, our eyes on the ground. Crushed.
He had been our Destroyer, the doer of things
We dreamed of doing but could not bring ourselves to do,
The fears of years, like a biting whip,
Had cut deep bloody grooves
Across our backs.

<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/hard-rock-returns-prison-hospital-criminal-insane>

Hard Rock notes from class discussion:



Describe the main idea/s of the poem:

After class discussion on poem, fill out the following table:

<p>Distinctively visual texts:</p> <p><i>(State the idea or message of the text which is linked to experience)</i></p>	<p>The language techniques used to convey this idea are:</p> <p><i>(You must identify the technique and the effect of the technique)</i></p>	<p>Overall, when we examine these texts we realise...</p> <p><i>(What conclusions can you draw about people or relationships or the world?)</i></p>
<p><i>Examine the limitations of human existence through the experience of individuals and groups. Individual strength is contrasted with institutional strength, emphasising that we all exist in controlled spaces where we have to conform or face the consequences.</i></p>		
<p><i>Provoke thought about the ways in which heroism can be represented differently according to experience and context.</i></p>		

Compose a mini-essay on 'Hard Rock' which answers the following question:

Distinctively visual texts encourage responders to empathise with individuals. To what extent is this true? Discuss.

Composers construct texts for a variety of purposes but ultimately these texts are a representation of the composer's point of view (perspective) on people, relationships and the world. Composers will employ specific techniques to create images, which may be explicitly or implicitly visual, persuading the responder to agree with their perspective. Powerful techniques can be used to represent the world of particular individuals and, to a great extent, elicit a sense of empathy from the responder who may share similar values explored through these techniques. *The poem 'Hard Rock Returns to Prison from the Hospital for the Criminal Insane' by Etheridge Knight is a prime example of how distinctive language techniques can be employed to position a responder to emote to the experiences of others.*

*The poem visually examines the limitations of human existence through the experience of **individuals** and groups. Individual strength is contrasted with institutional strength, emphasising that we all exist in controlled spaces where we have to conform or face the consequences. Knight represents this idea through a number of techniques.*

*Additionally, empathy for the individual is encouraged through the ways in which Knight shows the disillusionment of the inmates (**the group**) when their hero is destroyed and, inevitably, their dreams as well. The language choices Knight makes to communicate this disillusionment include the use of*

Clearly, composers employ certain techniques that create powerful images where the aim is to position the responder to be impacted in select ways. Using images to explore values which are common to human experience, such as the need for control and power and the desire to maintain dreams enables the responder to imagine the experiences of others and develop connections through relating to the individual's world and context. Overall, distinctively visual texts are powerful because
