Shorts:
Tools, Texts & Strategies

Using the LitLinks website
as a resource for teaching writing

www.actlitlinks.com.au

Presenters:
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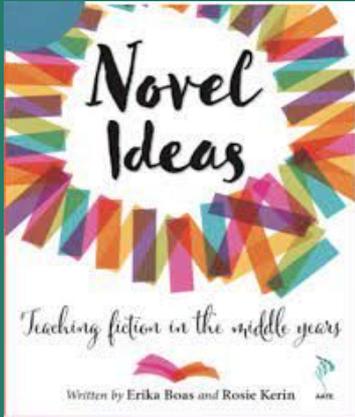
actate
ACT ASSOCIATION FOR THE
TEACHING OF ENGLISH

ACTATE Shorts Event

26th May 2022
Canberra College, ACT

"Students need to see themselves reflected within the repertoire of texts they study…"

(Boas and Kerin, p3)

Why use Litlinks Short Stories as Model Texts?

In Litlinks short stories, your students will see themselves reflected in the texts, as they are written by their peers.
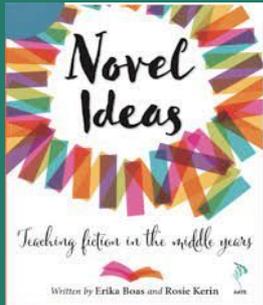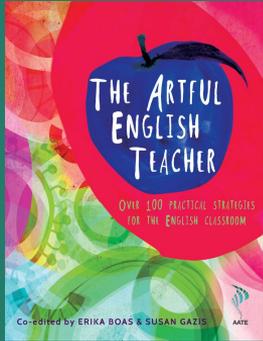
LitLinks authors are students:

- **living in the same city,**
- **from similar cultural backgrounds**
- **facing relatable issues and concerns about personal lives and the world**

It also demonstrates the 'possible'

Suggested pedagogies to use to teach narrative writing with Litlinks

- **Forensic Reading / Close Reading (*Novel Ideas,* Boas & Kerin)**

- **Teaching English through the English Textual Concepts (*The Artful English Teacher*, Boas & Gazis)**

- **Teaching the Narrative Elements (*Novel Ideas,* Boas & Kerin)**

- **Scaffolding Literacy Pedagogy and Reading to Learn Teaching-Learning Cycle (Cara Shipp 120-141 in *Novel Ideas,* Boas & Kerin)**

- **Gradual Release of Responsibility (*Novel Ideas* and *The Artful English Teacher,* Boas & Gazis)**

- **Learning-centred inquiry-based approach (*The Artful English Teacher,* Boas & Gazis)**

- **Writers Notebook (Ralph Fletcher)**

Sample Lesson

The Girl in Yellow

Practising Forensic Reading:

Teacher reads aloud to class once with expression, for comprehension.

Teacher reads a second time, this time students encouraged to annotate in blank annotations column on own copy (or highlight text).

1. **Anything of interest**

2. **Anything that seems significant**

3. **Anything confusing**

4. **Key Narrative Elements**

5. **Literary Devices**

6. **Interesting vocabulary and/or sentences**

7. **Discuss in groups; groups share 1-2 items with rest of class.**

8. **Their turn: In Writer's Notebook students practise own craft, inspired by the story (low stakes writing) or make notes about new vocabulary or something they have learned (formative assessment).**

Key Narrative Elements

(Boas & Kerin)

Annotated key narrative elements on handout are in **bold**

- **Character**
- **Plot and Structure**
- **Setting**
- **Point of View**
- **Theme**

Alone in my bedroom, I pull my Chromebook out and begin with my homework. It's long and tedious, but finally, I get to the last assignment. It's for PC and it's just a simple question, that's it. It reads "what gets your imagination running best and why?" With nothing immediately coming to mind, I shut my computer and leave the room hoping I can think of an answer later. I check my phone - still no bars or Wi-Fi!

This paragraph echoes the **orientation** and focus on **setting** – that of **stereotypical** present-day adolescent student, referencing devices and homework. There is further **rising action** with the homework question about triggering one's imagination, which links to the **theme**. The last two sentences continue the **tone** and **mood** of distraction and ennui. **Repetition** is used as the last phrase 'I check my phone - still no bars or Wi-Fi!' is an exact repeat from two paragraphs prior.
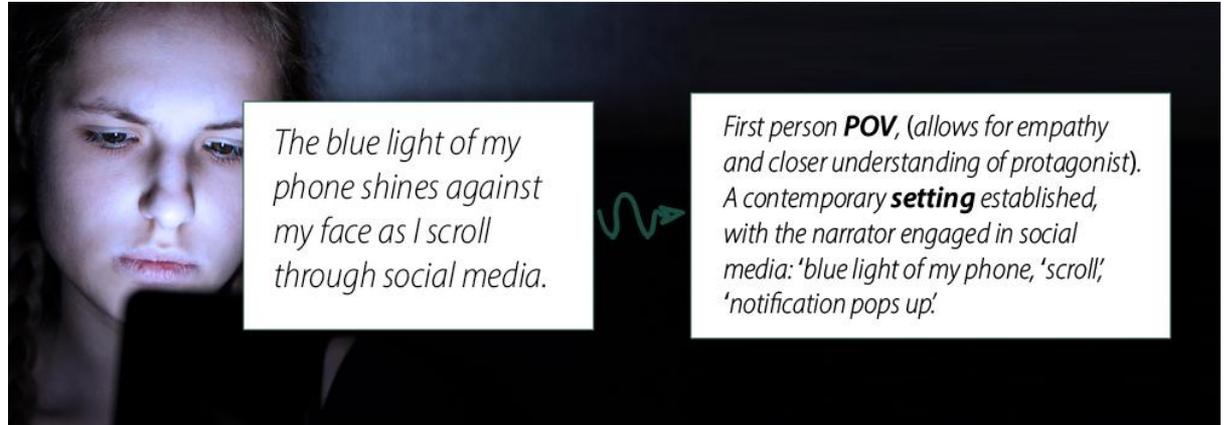
Key Narrative Elements:

SETTING

Why is setting important to a story?

How does the author create the setting in *The Girl in Yellow*?

Example:

The blue light of my phone shines against my face as I scroll through social media.

First person **POV**, (allows for empathy and closer understanding of protagonist). A contemporary **setting** established, with the narrator engaged in social media: 'blue light of my phone, 'scroll', 'notification pops up'.

Key Narrative Elements:

SETTING

Example: (para 3):

Writing Plan (Scaffolding Literacy)

Author Language	Using the model	New Language
Now on the road,	*One short phrase to shift setting / change of scene*	As the train pulled out,

Key Narrative Elements:

SETTING

Students' turn:

Continue close reading of the text to find all the references to setting (use annotated or non-annotated copy).

Use a cooperative reading strategy with students such as think-pair-share or jigsaw.

What details and descriptions do you need in your story to establish setting?

Write in Writer's Notebook:

- **Use the five senses to describe the smells, sounds, textures and temperatures.**
- **Practise 'show don't tell'.**

Literary Devices to explore in *The Girl in Yellow*

Annotated literary devices on handout are in **bold:**

- **Hyperbole**
- **Juxtaposition**
- **Foreshadowing**
- **Oxymoron**

- **Motif**
- **Repetition**
- **Onomatopoeia**

Showing the devices in context helps students understand how and why they are used.

"Put away the phone. We are here," Mum reports as we pull up to the house. Granny's house is covered in vines and is surrounded by farmland. It has a familiar and strangely comforting smell that is a combination of apple pie and compost.

Concise **dialogue** characterises the Mum's authority and power. The **description** of Granny's house is evocative, using the sense of smell. **Literary devices** are deftly used, such as **oxymoron** - 'strangely comforting', and **juxtaposition** - apple pie and compost. 'Strangely comforting' may also be interpreted as **foreshadowing** that things may not be as boringly predictable, on this visit.

Language choices to explore in *The Girl in Yellow*

Annotated language choices on handout are in **bold**

Language Choices

- **Vocabulary: strong verbs, original adjectives**
- **Language appealing to the senses**
- **Simple, complex, compound sentences** (sentence variety)

Effect created?

- **Create mood, atmosphere**
- **Help characterise**
- **Build tension, pace**
- **Create overall tone of the text**

Dialogue

- **Authentic dialogue**
- **Authentic inner monologue**

Effect created?

- **Help characterise**
- **Drives plot forward**

Using LitLinks Resources with the English Textual Concepts

Engaging personally:

Students respond to the text, explaining what they were interested in or enjoyed, and any personal significance in a text and the way it is constructed. They might comment on how they identify with characters, situations, ideas and voice; they might comment on the text's aesthetic qualities; or they might recognise and appreciate the power of language to express human experiences and communicate ideas.

Read and respond to the text:

You Speak-I Listen	Chat Charts
Story Sharing	Anticipation Guide
Think-Pair-Share/Square	Noisy Round Robin
Retellings	Choral Readings

Connecting:

Students recognising relationships between texts and between texts and students' own lives. Texts can be connected in many different ways: through identifiable links to students' own personal worlds; through exploring common experiences, stories and ideas; through sharing the same context; and through sharing the same style, genre and codes and conventions.

Make connections to the text:

Jigsaw	Before, During, After (BDA) Chart
Placemat	Where do you stand?
Affinity Diagram	

Using LitLinks Resources with the English Textual Concepts

Understanding:

Develop understanding of narrative concepts. For example at years 9-10 (Stage 5), students understand that stories represent broad aspects of humanity, society and culture, made particular and personal to interest the responder.
See http://englishtextualconcepts.nsw.edu.au/content/narrative
Students gradually generalise upon this knowledge and transfer it to new contexts.

Develop an understanding of narrative concepts:

Pros, Cons, Questions (PCQ) Charts	Perspectives chart
Main Ideas Graphic organiser	Three Level Guide
Plot Maps	Character Inferring Charts
Theme Mind Maps	Theme Tracking Charts
Venn Diagram	

Engaging critically:

Involves making judgements about a text based on systematic analysis and recognising the critical framework through which these judgements are made. For example, it could be to see the texts as reflecting reality and address issues of truth in that depiction. Or it could be to identify power relationships, who/what is marginalised, and how it suppresses or promotes certain interests.

Analyse the text:

Think-alouds	Context Chart
Character and Values Charts	Character Ranking
Style Annotations	Senses Text Annotation
Pros, Cons, Questions (PCQ) Charts	Open Mind Portrait
Author Hot Seat	

Using LitLinks Resources with the English Textual Concepts

Experimenting:

Applying knowledge and skills creatively and critically in order to develop deep understanding. Students manipulate language, form, mode and medium to express ideas, values and opinions in innovative and meaningful ways. Experimenting is a demonstration of critical and imaginative faculties and, through the interdependence of these, students engage in thoughtful recreation and innovation.

Create new texts:

Text Innovation (Changing sentences, paragraphs, the whole text)

Micro Story/Narrative

Multimodal Group Text

Choose another narrative from LitLinks and complete an annotated analysis of the writer's style.

Reflecting:

Students think about what they have learned, how they have learned, what they feel about the learning. They draw conclusions about their own learning processes and the value of their learning. Reflecting involves understanding one's own personal capacities and processes and fosters a problem exploring disposition; this encourages student curiosity leading to a recursive process of experimentation.
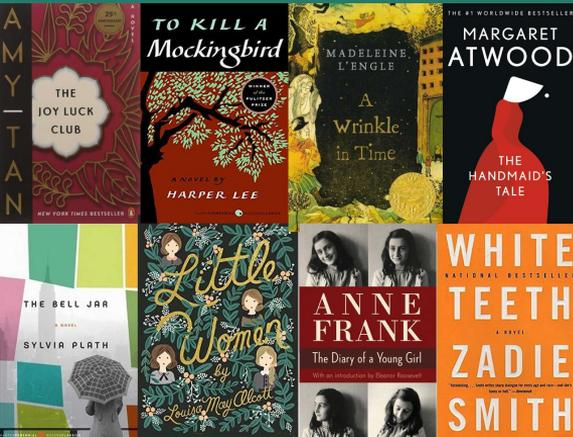
Reflect:

Gallery Walk and Feedback

Read Alouds

Posts in Discussion Forum Reflections/Discussions

3:2:1 Reflections

The Importance of Titles

A good title should be like a good metaphor. It should intrigue without being too baffling or too obvious.

Walker Percy

Connection to Australian Professional Teaching Standards APST

(Proficient)

Standard 2 - Know the content and how to teach it

Focus Area 2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area

Descriptor 2.2 (P): Apply knowledge of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area to develop engaging teaching activities.

Standard 3 - Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Focus Area 3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs

Descriptor 3.2 (P): Plan and implement well-structured learning and teaching programs or lesson sequences that engage students and promote learning.

Focus Area 3.3 Use teaching strategies

Descriptor 3.3 (P): Select and use relevant teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.

Focus Area 3.4 Select and use resources

Descriptor 3.4 (P): Select and/or create and use a range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.

Connection to Australian Curriculum English V9.0 (Yr 7) Strand:

Literature Sub-strands and content descriptions

Literature and Contexts

Students learn to identify and explore ideas, points of view, characters, events and/or issues in literary texts, drawn from historical, social and/or cultural contexts, by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors AC9E7LE01

Engaging with and Responding to Literature (Sub-strand)

Students learn to form an opinion about characters, settings and events in texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others' opinions and justifying a response AC9E7LE02

Examining Literature (Sub-strand)

Students learn to identify and explain the ways that characters, settings and events combine to create meaning in narratives AC9E7LE05
Students learn to identify and explain how literary devices create layers of meaning in texts including poetry AC9E7LE06

Creating Literature

Students learn to create and edit literary texts that experiment with language features and literary devices encountered in texts AC9E7LE07

Reach out...

Please contact us if you would like to discuss anything further with respect to this presentation. Your feedback, on using these ideas, would be welcomed and appreciated.

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Teachers who are writers make the best teachers of writing

- **Join ACTATE's Teachers as Writers group. Meetings held once a semester at the Hellenic Club. Meeting dates advertised on ACTATE website and in Rita's newsletter.**

- ***Write a short story and enter it into 2022 Litlinks' Teachers* as Writers Category**

- **Become a member of ACT Writers: www.actwriters.org**

- **Experiment with writing your own fiction purely for your own pleasure, without necessarily sharing or publishing it. It's an excellent tool for wellbeing and can help you de-stress, unwind. You get to be in complete control of the worlds you create!**

References

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Australian Curriculum v9.0: www.australiancurriculum.edu.au

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I love being a writer. I just hate the paperwork!