

## Imaginative Years 7 - 9: Narrative

### The Average 70 minute lesson

In this deceptively bright environment, I feel the pain of it all. The pain of waiting, watching and wondering when it will be over. Having others around me should help me feel comforted, knowing they are going through the same thing, so why does it still feel like I'm alone?

In this jail-like atmosphere there is to be no speaking by anyone but the non-negotiable leader. As he says, 'rules are rules'. This 'no speaking' rule is like doing a prison sentence which will be served out in my own head. Once I dared to speak without being spoken to first, and I paid the price. I was sentenced to solitary confinement for the rest of the ordeal. Maybe this is why I feel so alone?

I look at the clock. Damn, still ages to go. I try to concentrate on the lecture being given at the front of the room, but the brightness of outside the window persuades me to look to the side. I direct all my attention to what is going on outside this room, where the trees are blooming and the birds are chirping. After some time though, I finally start to zone back into the world of the trapped, which, unlike the heaven of outside, includes me. Once I've finally snapped back into the real world I realise the leader is calling my name. His eyes locked with mine. Suddenly he makes a movement that threatens my sense of hope and with a few more quick sharp movements, the blinds are closed. Suddenly the room is engulfed by darkness. The rest of the group look at me with menace in their eyes, because it was their hope too that I had just sacrificed. I feel as if I could be ganged up on at any second. Maybe this is why I feel so alone? He turns the lights on and announces the next order of business, reading aloud.

This is the most blood pumping part of the ordeal. The leader starts reading, before I've even found the correct page and as I scramble around flicking through the pages I start to feel hot already. I find the page and look for where he's up to. Two pages?! He's already read two pages? I must be slower than I thought, or he, further than he seems. I start to relax after the fourth page because I know it's still a while till he calls on one of us. I start to worry as he slows down on the twelfth page until he finally calls out the name of the person sitting beside me. I feel a sharp pain in my throat only calmed by knowing it's not my name he just called and then I begin my plan. Calculating who will pass on to whom, what likelihood it is that they will pass to me, how many lines is a suitable minimum to read, and working out how to breathe at the same time as speaking. The pain in my throat gets sharper after each pass and my body heat is rising dramatically until finally it's me that is called. My

Starts with a description of the setting to provide imagery for the reader

Alliteration helps to emphasise the uncomfortable atmosphere and mood

First person narration style gives us insight into the character's thoughts and feelings

Series of sentences using figurative language comparing school to prison positions the reader to feel empathy with the character

Description of the outside world using sensory writing creates a contrast with the classroom environment

Metaphors highlight the way the character feels about their situation

Referring to the teacher as 'the leader' creates a sense of anonymity and positions us to view them as the antagonist of the story

The repeated question creates a thread which connects each paragraph to a central idea

Vivid description of the scene and the narrator's reaction create a sense of desperation and fear

The inner-monologue of the narrator gives us further insight

Using a variety of sentence structures creates dramatic effect. Longer sentences are used show the anxious thought process while short sentences are used to make particular ideas stand out

heart gives a lurch as I struggle into pronouncing the first word. One sentence done, but not enough, keep reading! Another sentence, it should have been enough but now I am in the middle of the paragraph, I can't stop now. I skip and mispronounce words as they begin to turn blurry, and I can barely breathe. This forces me to take a deep breath in the middle of a sentence. I feel eyes on me. By the end of it I am barely speaking and it's more like I'm making noises that sound faintly of words. Finally, I pass. I feel my body cool and my heart start to slow down. Thank God that ordeal is over. It's only now that I realise I haven't heard a word of what anyone has said, including myself since the leader passed. I was so obsessed over screwing up my reading, that I really had no idea what I was reading about! To catch up, I quickly skim-read over the text and get back to the point where we were up to. Am I the only one who gets so over obsessed and begins to over-analyse? Maybe this is why I feel so alone?

As we finish the text the anxiety fades. Now to the last part of the ordeal: the hell you must lug home. As the leader hands us our little piece of hell I glance at the clock. Two minutes, great! We all begin to pack up our supplies and head for the door, but the leader is not done with us yet, he tells us to sit down and wait but before he can finish his sentence, the siren rings! He no longer has the power over us as we leave the classroom, leaving him halfway through his sentence and helpless. Whew, that was a long history lesson.

Use of exclamation point adds to the atmosphere of heightened anxiety

The narrator is constantly describing what they feel. The writer has created a contrast between the feelings while reading and when it is over

Repeated question brings us back to the thread which holds the piece together- loneliness

The 'siren' is another reference to prison but this time signals change

The fear is replaced by a mood of relief as the story concludes

From:

Student work sample from *Craigieburn Secondary College* 2013.