Imaginative Narratives

What is an imaginative narrative?

In fiction, we tell stories about imagined worlds with made up people, events and places. We try to make our stories seem real and sometimes we may draw on real life people or events for inspiration. We want to make our audience feel that they know and care about our characters; we want them to be able to visualise the time and place that is our setting for the narrative.

Voice

From whose point of view will the story be told? As an author, you have the choice of:

- Third person narration: A narrator who is not a character in the story but is telling a story about the characters. The narrator refers to the characters by name or using the pronouns' he', 'she', 'they'. A third person narrator has the benefit of being omniscient, meaning they see everything and know what all characters think and feel.
- First person narration: A narrator who is a character in the story, often the protagonist (leading character) and is telling the story from their point of view, using the pronoun 'I'. A first person narrator has the benefit of telling a very personal story so that the reader relates to them more closely.

Language & Grammar

Setting

The setting of a narrative has two main components to consider these are time (is it present day, sometime in the past or a futuristic world?) and place (some stories have more than one setting where the action happens). As an author it is important to use language that will help the reader visualise the setting. Sensory writing is an excellent way to create imagery for the reader. By describing what you can see, taste, touch, feel and hear, you can bring the setting to life.

Characters

Many narratives are built on main characters; the protagonist (lead character or hero) and antagonist (the rival, enemy or villain of the story). However, in some cases, the 'problem' in the story is not created by a character but an antagonist such as an internal struggle (eg. trying to fit in) or external force (eg. disease or disaster). You may also have secondary characters that play a role in helping the plot develop. As an author, your job is to create characters that the reader can identify with and understand. You can do this by:

- Describing them in terms of appearance including body language and clothes
- Giving the reader insight into what they are thinking and feeling and why
- Letting the reader see how they act and react in different situations
- Including dialogue (direct speech) between the characters so we get a sense of how they interact

<u>Structure and Organisation</u>

Plot

This is the series of events that occur in the story. There are many different ways to structure the plot of a narrative but most narratives will have similar features including:

- Exposition: sets the scene and establishes the character/s and their problem
- Rising action: the tension builds, conflict arises
- Climax: the highest point of tension or drama
- Resolution: all parts of the story come together or things work out (in a 'cliff-hanger' ending this may not be the case)

Structure

Authors can choose to play with the order of these plot points in order to engage the reader, some choices include:

- Linear and chronological narrative: tells the story in order of the events from beginning to end
- Flash backs or flash forwards: these can give us insight into a character's past in order to understand their present or can show what the consequences of action in the present will be
- Circular narrative: begins at the end and then jumps back to the beginning to reveal how events lead to that ending

In short stories the author doesn't spend much time in the exposition phase, normally the story begins in the action phase and builds quickly towards the climax. There is usually only one setting for the action and fewer characters.

Exemplar Years 7 – 9

Exemplar Years 10 – 12