

Unit: A sense of place

Duration: 13 lessons

English
Year 8

About the unit

This unit explores short stories by major writers from different cultures, focusing on the values and assumptions in the texts and the narrative techniques employed. Pupils then draw on their reading to write their own stories.

Prior learning

In order to complete this unit successfully, pupils should be able to draw on their knowledge and experience of:

- making presentations;
- work in a range of groups;
- the structure of stories;
- comparisons between different literary forms;
- appreciating narrative techniques and employing them in their own writing; making notes;
- the importance of standard English in public communication;
- language variation;
- how cohesion is achieved in a range of texts.

Expectations

Most pupils will: identify and comment on language choices, key events, characters, cultural setting and plot structure in stories by different authors from other cultures. They recognise the cultural distinctiveness of writing from different cultures and traditions. In writing about stories they support their views with evidence from the text. They understand the effects of different narrative techniques and distinguish between the attitudes of the writer and those of the narrator or characters in contrasting stories and appreciate how irony can be used to imply meaning. They recognise distinctions between standard and non-standard English and they plan, write and revise a short story.

Some pupils will not have progressed so far and will: understand the main characters events and themes, in short stories from different cultures. They identify stylistic features such as the use of a narrator or links between the opening and the conclusion in a story. They write a story, which reflects some aspect of their reading.

Some pupils will have progressed further and will: understand the way writers achieve cultural distinctiveness through the language choices they have made at word and sentence level. They demonstrate their understanding by analysing how writers use narrative techniques in specific ways, and by writing a short story of their own with a distinctive cultural setting.

Starters

- Loan words
- Subordinate clauses
- Vocabulary
- Standard and non-standard English
- Plus activities determined by the needs of the class

Stages

1. Identifying the cultural distinctiveness of a text

Reading and discussion of *An Astrologer's Day* from *Malgudi Days* by R. K. Narayan.

Discussion/written description of language choices and narrative techniques; narration, openings, conclusions.

Preparing a presentation of story, drawing on notes made earlier.

2. Considering the role of the narrator in short stories

Reading and discussion of *The Ultimate Safari* by Nadine Gordimer.

Consideration of the role of the narrator in the story.

Exploration of language choices, values and assumptions in the story.

3. From reading to writing

Reading and discussion of *stories* from *Miguel Street* by V. S. Naipaul.

Discussion of narrative techniques used and of the use of standard and non-standard English.

Planning and writing a story set in a real or fictitious locality.

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Resources

Nadine Gordimer: *The Ultimate Safari* (in *Jump* and other stories Penguin, 1991)

R. K. Narayan: *Malgudi Days* (Penguin, 1984) e.g. *An Astrologer's Day*; *The Doctor's Word*; *The Tiger's Claw*; *Father's Help*; *The Snake Song*; *Forty-five a Month*; *Leela's Friend*.

V. S. Naipaul: *Miguel Street* (Penguin, 1971) e.g. *B Wordsworth*, *Bogart*; *The Coward*; *Man-man*; *The Maternal Instinct*; *The Mechanical Genius*; *Hat*; *How I left Miguel Street*.

A sense of place objectives stage 1: Identifying the cultural distinctiveness of a text

Word	Sentence	Reading	Writing	Speaking and listening
W11 Figurative language	S14 Compare languages	R14 Literary conventions R16 Cultural context		S&L3 Formal presentation S&L7 Listen for a specific purpose

A sense of place objectives stage 2: Considering the role of the narrator in short stories

Word	Sentence	Reading	Writing	Speaking and listening
W7b Unfamiliar words	S11 Standard English and dialect	R7 Implied and explicit meanings R10 Development of key ideas	Wr18 Review a text	S&L12 Roles in discussion

A sense of place objectives stage 3: From reading to writing

Word	Sentence	Reading	Writing	Speaking and listening
W7c Words in context	S7 Cohesion & coherence		Wr2 Re-read and revise Wr8 Manipulate conventions	S&L11 Building on others

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Stage 1 Identifying the cultural distinctiveness of a text: Lesson 1

Starter

- Use a cut-up version of a brief biography to introduce Narayan.
- Pupils must arrange the jumbled sentences into an appropriate order. By doing so they learn that he is an Indian writer who has been writing stories for 50 years set in the fictitious town of 'Malgudi' in Southern India.

Introduction

- Teacher reads opening paragraph of *An Astrologer's Day* by Narayan with class, asking them to notice any references to eyes/sight.
- Using OHT of opening paragraph, teacher models text marking of references pupils have noticed.
- Discuss links between imagery and character of astrologer.

Development

- In groups, pupils text mark their copies of the first paragraph, focusing on language which builds a sense of character and place.
- Three groups focus on **character**, one looking at word level, one at sentence level and one at cultural references. Three similarly organised groups focus on **place**.
- Teacher works with target group(s) to focus on the cultural significance of particular words and phrases.

Plenary

Teacher draws together points reported from groups. Focus on how culturally specific language contributes to establishing of character and place.

Homework

Pupils decide on and list the similarities and differences between short stories and novels.

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Stage 1 Identifying the cultural distinctiveness of a text: Lesson 2

Starter

- Starter based on pupils' impressions of short stories as opposed to novels. Pupils have response cards with either *novel* or *short story* on them, and raise them in response to the teacher's comment on a significant feature, e.g. *length, complexity, ending, number of characters, depth of characterisation or range of settings*.

Introduction

- Clarify the function of the opening of a short story in establishing sense of character and place.
- Shared reading of *An Astrologer's Day* with the class, asking pupils, whilst reading, to focus on the changing relationship between the astrologer and the client.
- Note linguistic features at word and sentence level, e.g. *vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation*.

Development

- In class discussion, use pupil feedback to draw attention to how the writer gradually reveals the truth of the relationship.
- Ask pupils to identify explicit clues and techniques, e.g. *withholding information*.
- Give pairs of pupils five minutes to divide the story into four sections, justifying their choices about where the divisions come in the story.

Plenary

With pupils, complete a class chart for display, identifying the key structural elements of the short story. Pupils identify significant evidence from the text to support their choices about where divisions come in the story.

Homework

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Stage 1 Identifying the cultural distinctiveness of a text: Lesson 3

Starter

- Revise first, second and third person. Give out short extracts from the short stories to be studied and allow pairs of pupils a few minutes to decide on whether each extract is first, second or third person. They must explain their decisions.

Introduction

- Demonstrate to pupils how, as a reader, you recognise the role of the narrator in revealing and concealing information. Do this by 'thinking aloud' your reactions to specific passages.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having a third person narrator. 'How would the story have been different if told from the point of view of one of the characters?'

Development

- Allocate another story from *Malgudi Days* to each group of four or five pupils, taking account of differentiation. Each group reads a story, focusing on identifying cultural references and considering how effective the ending is, e.g. *is it a surprise, how does it affect your perspective on events/ characters, how does it relate to the opening?*

Plenary

Discussion of the stories and of the use of first or third person.

Homework

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Stage 1 Identifying the cultural distinctiveness of a text: Lesson 4

Starter

- Teacher introduces notetaking frame to support pupils in listening to and making notes on presentations, e.g. *title, details of 'Malgudi', theme(s), key event, role of narrator, ending.*

Introduction

- Each group prepares a reading of the opening and ending of the story read previously. They should also prepare brief comments on:
 - key events in the plot
 - the role of the narrator
 - how the writer establishes character and setting
 - how effective the ending is.

Development

- Groups give their presentations.
- Whilst watching presentations, pupils make notes on links between stories, focusing on impression of the town of 'Malgudi', themes of the stories, the role of the narrator. (Notes will be used by pupils when discussing own writing in Stage 3 of unit.)
- Opportunity for teacher assessment of pupils' understanding of how a writer creates setting, shapes story structure and uses the narrator. Also opportunity to assess speaking and listening skills.

Plenary

Pupils share the notes they have made on the presentations.

Homework

Pupils use their notes to write a series of reflective entries in reading journals on Narayan's writing, making reference to their particular story. Some pupils may benefit from being given paragraph openers.

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Stage 2 Considering the role of the narrator in short stories: Lesson 5

Starter

- Use of long and short sentences for effect.
- Pairs of pupils are given examples of long or short sentences taken from the texts being studied and asked to comment on their impact on readers.

Introduction

- Teacher reads the opening of *The Ultimate Safari* by Nadine Gordimer and discusses the title and cover page, including advertisement, drawing out the ways in which language is being used to persuade, e.g. *capitals, personal pronoun, exclamation, exaggeration, appeal to unnamed expert*.
- Discuss pupils' predictions of what the story will be about.
- Teacher demonstrates critical reading, identifying details at word and sentence level which give insight into the narrator (e.g. *age, gender, understanding of events, use of short sentences*) and the setting (e.g. *war, bandits, poverty*).

Development

- In groups, pupils read and discuss the next two pages of the story to the point where the characters reach the Kruger Park.
- Pupils mark on their text further references to the narrator and the setting, making notes in two columns on their developing impressions of narrator and setting.
- Teacher does guided reading with one group, assessing understanding and contributions.

Plenary

Review what has been learned about the character and setting from significant details in the story, drawing attention to aspects of text cohesion, e.g. *repetition*.

Homework

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Stage 2 Considering the role of the narrator in short stories: Lesson 6

Starter

- Teacher briefly reviews what pupils have understood about the story so far using true/false response cards. Pupils hold up cards as the teacher makes a statement about the story.

Introduction

- The teacher gives relevant information about the Kruger Park reads to the end of the story, pausing at '*we started to go away, again*' to ask for pupils' predictions.

Development

- In groups of three, pupils re-read the final section of the story involving the news reporter. They write a paragraph each on the attitudes towards '*going home*' revealed by the reporter, the grandmother or the narrator.
- Pupils read and discuss each other's paragraphs.

Plenary

Review the final part of the story. Discuss differences between pupils' predictions about the story at the beginning of the lesson and now.

Homework

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Stage 2 Considering the role of the narrator in short stories: Lesson 7

Starter

- Exploring the term *irony* through examples. Pairs of pupils take example cards with words and phrases used ironically and form themselves into lines of least to most ironic. They have to explain their position in the line.

Introduction

- Teacher models identification of irony on OHT by highlighting particular words and phrases from the text and leads discussion as to whether the narrator's views are the same as the author's.

Development

- In groups, pupils find examples of irony in the two stories they are studying.
- Text extracts should then be put on poster-size sheets, along with explanations of what makes them ironic.

Plenary

Ask some pupils to report their findings to the class, using the posters.

Homework

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Stage 2 Considering the role of the narrator in short stories: Lesson 8

Starter

- Starter based on connectives which are useful for comparison, e.g. *although, however, on the other hand, nevertheless etc.* Pupils are given five minutes to compare two items using as many different connectives as possible.

Introduction

- Identify a range of strategies, e.g. *table, spider diagram*, for planning a comparison of the two stories they have studied in this unit: *The Ultimate Safari* and *An Astrologer's Day*. Model writing part of the comparison, using a writing frame.

Development

- Pupils, in pairs, think of their own contrasts and to find key details or quotations in the stories to support their views, e.g. *life/death; child/adult central character; famine/plenty; town/country; life/death; first/third person.*

Plenary

Build a class list of elements of comparison and contrast.

Homework

Pupils plan and produce comparative essays on the stories.

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Stage 2 Considering the role of the narrator in short stories: Lesson 9

Starter

- Word sort, using words associated with Trinidad, India and Africa from the stories by Narayan, Gordimer and Naipaul. Pupils sort into different locations/cultural groups.

Introduction

- Introduce class to *Miguel Street* by V.S. Naipaul. Explain that the stories they are going to read come from this collection of stories set in the poor district of Port of Spain, Trinidad, where Naipaul grew up.
- Each story introduces a new character.

N.B: The stories vary in terms of complexity and appropriateness so should be selected with awareness of the needs of the group/ class.

Development

- Pupils read a story independently, making notes on the characters, the role of the narrator and the neighbourhood, choosing two key quotations, which evoke the neighbourhood.
- In pairs pupils then share their findings and read out their chosen quotations about the neighbourhood.

Plenary

Feedback from pupils' independent reading of a story from *Miguel Street*. Discussion should focus on the role of narrator and the cultural distinctiveness of Naipaul's writing.

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Stage 2 Considering the role of the narrator in short stories: Lesson 10

Starter

- Provide example cards of standard and non-standard English in dialogue.
- Pupils take a card and form themselves into groups of standard or non-standard English.
- Discuss their decisions.

Introduction

- Select an extract from one of the stories to focus on the use of dialogue. Using an OHT, identify and discuss some of the features that distinguish this dialect from standard English, e.g. *pronoun usage*, *verb formation*.

Development

- In pairs, pupils choose another short extract of dialogue from one of their stories and identify non-standard features. Pupils decide on a question they would ask the author about his use of non-standard English.

Plenary

Hot seat the teacher or a volunteer pupil, who will answer questions as Naipaul on the reasons for the use of non-standard English.

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Stage 3 From reading to writing: Lesson 11

Starter

- Sequencing exercise. Pupils are given the first paragraph of one of the stories in the form of cut-up sentences. They must arrange them in a satisfying order. Discuss opening paragraphs.

Introduction

- Teacher demonstrates planning a story through talking aloud options, reasons for decisions, drafting notes on location, key characters, key events, role of narrator. Teacher could use own writing during the course of this week to model aspects of narrative writing.

Development

- Working in pairs, pupils make plans for a story set in a real or fictitious locality. They discuss and draft notes on:
 - setting and how this will be conveyed;
 - characters and their development;
 - role of the narrator;
 - events: problem, conflict, resolution;
 - how the stories will be organised.
- A planning sheet or series of questions to focus discussion may be useful.

Plenary

Pupils share ideas on role of narrator and setting and contribute ideas to others about how they could convey their setting.

Homework

If stories are based in a real location, research may be appropriate here to add authenticity.

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Stage 3 From reading to writing: Lesson 12

Starter

- Sequencing exercise.
- Pupils are given the final paragraph of one of the stories in the form of cut-up sentences. They must arrange them in a satisfying order.
- Discuss final paragraphs.

Introduction

- Teacher models writing an effective opening paragraph to establish character or setting.
- Teacher and pupils collaborate in shared writing to develop ideas into an effective opening paragraph, focusing on the effect of language choices, at word and sentence level.
- Repeat process with closing paragraph, to demonstrate links between beginning and end of story.

Development

- Pupils write opening and closing paragraphs of own story using class writing as models.
- Pupils share writing with others in groups and incorporate group feedback into their writing.
- Teacher joins one of the groups for guided writing with a focus on first or final paragraphs.

Plenary

Class feedback on examples of effective opening and closing paragraphs they have written/read.

Homework

Pupils write first draft of story.

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Stage 3 From reading to writing: Lesson 13

Starter

- Spelling review. Pupils are given a list of spelling strategies based on the *Framework* objectives. Using words which have proved difficult for pupils during the unit, the teacher says a word which pupils, in groups, write down.
- Each group then decides on a strategy which will help them to remember the three words which proved trickiest for their group.

Introduction

- Teacher demonstrates editing and proof-reading of selected extracts from pupils' stories.

Development

- In pairs, pupils share first drafts to ensure consistency of setting, narration, and characterisation.
- Pupils redraft writing individually, checking spelling, punctuation and other features. A checklist may be useful here.

Plenary

Positive feedback on stories read and written. Summarise effective features of short stories.

Homework

Produce and proof-read final version of story.
