

Analysing characters

Student booklet



9

English

Queensland Comparable
Assessment Tasks (QCATs)
2010

Given name:

Family name:

School:

Setting the scene: Group discussion

Characters are an important element of a good story. Stories that are character-driven often help us explore important themes and issues from different points of view.

“Point of view” is what each character sees, hears, feels and experiences during a scene in a story.



When a writer skilfully presents the thoughts and feelings of a main character, the reader is able to empathise with them.

Themes or messages can be explored through the actions, speech, thoughts and feelings of characters in a story.



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Stimulus material source (p.7): Norrington, Leonie 2002, *The Barrumbi Kids*, Omnibus Books, Norwood, South Australia.

Queensland Studies Authority PO Box 307 Spring Hill Qld 4004

Phone: (07) 3864 0299 Fax: (07) 3221 2553 Email: office@qsa.qld.edu.au Website: www.qsa.qld.edu.au

The writer's language choices can help take readers inside a character's mind to understand their motivations and beliefs, or to build empathy for a character.

Figurative language such as metaphors, similes, personification, alliteration and onomatopoeia can help evoke images in the reader's mind.

Using active voice also helps to keep the reader engaged with the characters.



- Discuss some of the memorable characters in novels you have read or studied in class.
- How did the writer help you connect with the characters?

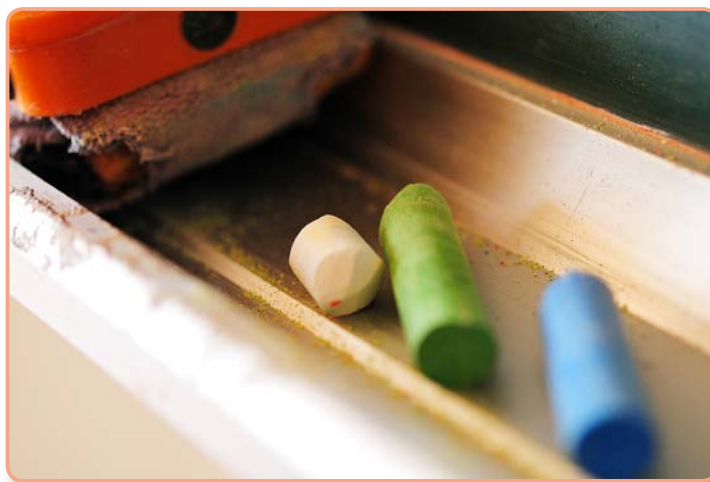
In this assessment, you will:

- make inferences about characters and setting in a text stimulus
- interpret how a writer can position a reader to view characters in a particular way
- construct a text to develop a character's point of view.

Listening

Listen while your teacher reads a passage from *The Barrumbi Kids* by Leonie Norrington.

- Reflect on how the language is used to introduce us to the character of Miss Wilson, a classroom teacher.
- Can you picture what she looks like and how she feels about the students that she teaches?
- Can you picture what Dale looks like and how he feels about school?



Chalk: ajar's photostream, "Heiwa elementary school 平和小学校 _06", <www.flickr.com/photos/ajari/3897024352/>, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic licensed photo <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>> accessed 13 Apr 2010.



Stop here: Wait for your teacher's directions.

Reading for meaning

1. List evidence from the text that shows this story is set in the Australian bush.

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2. Identify a metaphor and a simile from the text that help to create tone, mood or atmosphere.

Simile:

Metaphor:

3. Describe Miss Wilson, using evidence from the text.

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4. Paragraph 2 states that Miss Wilson “believes what she does is good”. Give two other examples from the text that explain why she believes she is a good teacher.

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5. How do Miss Wilson and Dale view each other? Explain your answer.

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6. This sentence from the text uses active voice. Rewrite the sentence using passive voice to change the subject and focus of the sentence.

Miss Wilson guards the playground during smoko and lunchtime, watching to make sure no one escapes.

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Interpreting texts

7. Who does the text favour: Dale or Miss Wilson?

Justify your answer using evidence from the text.

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8. Identify a theme or message explored in the text. Explain how this theme is explored through the characters.

Theme/message:

Explanation:

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9. Explain how the writer makes deliberate language choices to develop the relationship between the reader and Dale. Consider subject matter, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. Use examples from the text to support your explanation.

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Constructing text

Developing a character's point of view

10. Continue the story from Dale's point of view to explore how he feels about Miss Wilson and his experiences at school.



Write about 250 to 300 words.

You need to use:

- figurative language to create tone and evoke images
- adjectives and adverbs to express Dale's attitudes and emotions.

You need to maintain:

- third-person narrative
- an active voice.

Use this space to plan your ideas.

This passage from the text may help get you started:

Dale’s head is aching with frustration ... He just wants to get out of the classroom. He lifts his face and the smell of the Dry season is very clear in his nostrils. *Gotta go, but how?* He pretends to listen and take notes about the discussion while he thinks about how to get out of the school yard without being seen. What excuse can he make for being gone for the rest of the day? He’ll have to get Lizzie’s help with that! His eyes are slitted and his forehead wrinkles with concentration. He watches everyone as they talk and pretends to write down their ideas.

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Extra working space

Extra working space

Extra working space

Guide to making judgments — Year 9 English

Name

Focus: Interpret how language elements and textual features can position an audience to view characters and ideas in a particular way.

Knowledge and understanding	Interpreting texts	Knowledge and understanding Constructing texts
Uses comprehension strategies to identify evidence in the text and to make inferences about the characters and setting. Uses passive voice to change the subject and focus in a sentence. Questions 1–6	Interprets and analyses how language elements and textual features position an audience to view characters and ideas in a particular way. Questions 7–9	Manipulates language elements (figurative language, adjectives, adverbs, punctuation, spelling) and textual features (active voice, third-person narrative) to construct a text that develops a character’s point of view. Question 10
◀ Draws insightful conclusions about the characters using valid examples and clear explanations. Rewrites a sentence using passive voice to change subject and focus.	◀ Justifies how the writer’s choice of subject matter and either vocabulary or clause construction position an audience to view characters in a particular way. Well-justified explanation of how a theme or message is developed through the characters. ◀ Identifies how a theme or message is explored through the characters.	A ◀ Uses evocative language to develop Dale’s character through the deliberate sequencing of images and ideas that are cohesive in structure.
◀ Selects valid examples from the text including figurative language, and supports explanations about characters.	◀ Identifies how language choices and/or subject matter position an audience to view characters in a particular way. Identifies how an idea is explored through the characters.	B ◀ Develops characters through speech, and descriptions of actions, thoughts or feelings. Maintains active voice and third-person narrative. Well-controlled use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
◀ Chooses some relevant examples from the text including a simile and/or metaphor. Makes generalisations about characters.	◀ Makes generalisations about the language choices or subject matter in the text. Describes an idea explored through the characters.	C ◀ Uses descriptive language to explore Dale’s point of view. Maintains active voice, and controls grammar, punctuation and spelling. Structure is evident.
◀ Lists examples from the text.	◀ Restates messages from the text.	D ◀ Develops characters using descriptive language, actions, speech or thoughts and feelings. Lapses in structure, grammar, punctuation or spelling intrude but do not detract from meaning.
		E ◀ Recounts events.

Feedback

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