



WestWords

Western Sydney's Literature Development
Organisation for Young People



Writing Place

Student Activities

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Representation of place and people	4
Representing place and people in factual texts	7
Representing place and people in literature	13
<i>The Incredible Here and Now</i> – Felicity Castagna	13
<i>The Sky So Heavy</i> – Claire Zorn	17
Representing place: building up detail	20
<i>The Tribe</i> – Michael Mohammed Ahmad	20
Representing place from different points of view	22
<i>Great Western Highway</i> – Anthony Macris	22
Representing Place through sensuous language and images	23
<i>Five Bells</i> – Gail Jones	23
Representing place through people	25
<i>Five Bells</i> – Gail Jones	25
Representing place through narrative	27
Western Sydney University Advertisement	27
<i>Chinese Straight</i> – Maxine Beneba Clarke	29
Glossary	41
Guided discussion questions	42
Characterisation	44
Creating characters	44
Describing the self	45
Whose Story?	45
True Story Podcast	46
<i>Kenny's Coming Home</i> – Ned Manning	49
Keys to conflict	49
Knowing your character	53
Predicting conflict	54
How real is realism?	54
Representing an idea or a feeling	54
Performance	54
<i>We drove to Auburn</i> – Fiona Wright	55
Introducing the anthology	56
Understanding the poem	57
Recognising and challenging assumptions	57
Dramatic monologue	58
Theme	58
Free verse	60
Writing your own poetry	60
52 Suburbs Poem: <i>The Kirribilli Woman Drives Again</i>	62
<i>Urban Sprawl</i> – Lachlan Brown	63
Becoming familiar with the poem	63
Synthesising what you know	64
Imagery	64
Responding to the poems	64
Visual representation	65
From Image to Collaborative Poem	65



WestWords

Western Sydney's Literature Development Organisation for Young People
Expanding minds and changing worlds through literature

WestWords engages children and young people in Western Sydney by encouraging an appreciation of story and storymaking in a variety of forms and by promoting the understanding of the importance of books in the lives of young people. WestWords is committed to providing an environment where the stories of the communities of western Sydney and the places they come from are celebrated.

A guiding philosophy of WestWords is a belief in the power of literacy (written, oral and visual), self expression and creativity to change lives and the experience of communities. We believe that engagement with reading and writing allows young people to develop their imagination, give voice to their stories and experiences and hone skills in written expression and illustration. We do this through workshops, residencies programs as well as providing resources and opportunities for young people as well as those who support them.

[For further information: westwords.com.au](http://westwords.com.au)

This resource, written by the English Teachers' Association NSW has been commissioned by WestWords.



Representation of place and people

In this unit you will explore the concept of representation using representations of place. You will consider what place means and how it is represented in different texts, especially in literary texts. You will learn the importance of place and how

- place can be represented
- different modes represent place
- authors make an imagined place into something we can see and feel
- place becomes a marker of identity.

Knowing the terms

1. Is place the same in each of these statements? Discuss in pairs.

- What's your place like?
- Home is the place I love most.
- There is a place for me in the world.
- How do you place yourself in terms of career?
- Place the magnifying glass over the insect.
- The event that took place was violent.
- In the first place I want to remind you that I am not your servant.
- Jane accepted first place for athletics.
- Knowing your place in society means you behave properly.

2. Can you think of any other ways of understanding place?

3. Classify place. In which statement above is place about:

- Location?
- Social standing?
- Competition?
- Order?
- Events?

How do you define place?

Your place

- Where do you come from?
- What are the aspects of your place that you identify with?
- What aspects of that place do you feel are different to you?
- How important is place to you?
- When you talk about place is it your present home or your past?
- Is it the same place your parents come from? Does this mean their present home or their past?

Find a map of where you live. Give it to someone to look at:

- What do they learn about your place from a map?
- Tell the person next to you how to get to your place from school so they can trace your route on the map. Did you explain clearly?

Find an image of the same place (take a photo if you can't find an image). Give it to someone to look at:

- What do they learn about a place from an image?

Find a paragraph about your place on the internet (possibly on a council website).

Give it to someone to look at:

- What do they learn about a place from the website description?
- What other types of texts can you look at to find out about place?
- Which source captures most honestly what the place is about: map, images, website?

Different ways of seeing places

Explain your place using these categories

Geographical:

Cultural:

Social:

Economic:

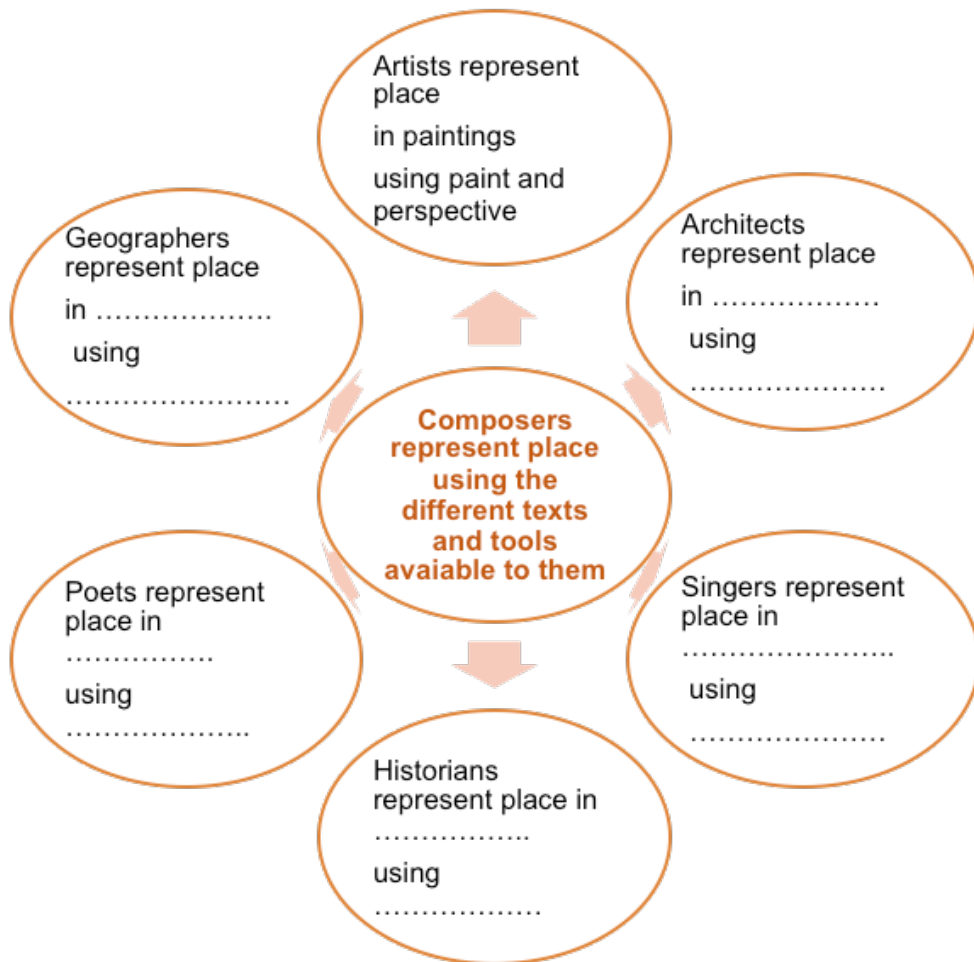
What is representation?

What does it mean to represent?

In what ways do we represent places? (think of painting/ stories/ maps etc).

Every subject has its own way of representing place and its own texts it produces. Complete this diagram and then consider other ways place is represented. The first circle is done for you. What other circles could you add to the diagram?

The representation wheel



Place as a point of reference

What is the extract below saying about place?

I would like there to exist places that are stable, unmoving, intangible, untouched and almost untouchable, unchanging, deep rooted; places that might be points of reference of departure, of origin: My birthplace the cradle of my family the house where I may have been born, the tree I may have seen grow (that my father may have planted the day I was born), the attic of my childhood filled with intact memories...Such places don't exist, and it's because they don't exist that space becomes a question, ceases to be self evident, ceases to be incorporated, ceased to be appropriated. Space is a doubt: I have constantly to mark it, to designate it. It's never mine, never given to me, I have to conquer it.

Georges Perec, Species of Spaces and other Pieces, Penguin Classics, 1974 p.91

Know the following:

Vocabulary: stable; intangible; points of reference; self-evident; incorporated; appropriated; designate

Metaphors: cradle of my family; the attic of my childhood; space is a doubt

1. What does the author mean by places being a point of reference, of departure, of origin?
2. Why does the author say that these places (of childhood and family and memory) don't exist?
3. What is the difference between the words place and space in the above extract?
4. What does the author mean when he says he has to 'conquer' his space?

Newspaper representations

The following statements appeared in an article 'Defining western Sydney' in the Sydney Morning Herald:

Preconceptions

"It's a shortcut," said Dr Gabrielle Gwyther, a sociologist, "for certain preconceptions..."

Dr Gwyther says that western Sydney took on connotations as a place for the less cultured and privileged in the 1960s and 1970s when new migrants and lower income Australians moved into tiny fibro houses, or public housing estates. But she argues the west has grown too vast and complicated for one label, except in the minds of those who never visit.

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/defining-western-sydney-20140404-3646u.html#ixzz3tmuiFeuG>

- What preconceptions do you think the place Western Sydney conveys?
- What are some of the expected features of Western Sydney (paragraph 2)
- What do 'those who never visit it' think of Western Sydney?

Representing place and people in factual texts

Maps use grids and place names to show place; photos use images to show place; newspapers use facts to report events and describe places where they occur. In this unit you will explore the way different composers discuss place with a focus on Western Sydney. If you live in a different place then you can use these ideas to explore your own sense of place.

Representing geographically



Maps show locations in relation to other places. They allow us to understand size and other significant features. Use the above map to answer the following:

- What are the main places in Western Sydney according to this map? What other places might you include that aren't shown here?
- Which roads feed into the area?
- What natural landscapes do you find nearby?
- Comment on the size compared to Sydney.
- What places or features do you think the map should have added?

Representation through maps

Maps represent places using such things as grids, lines, colours and shading to show different areas. They offer an aerial view.

What do the different colours on this map represent?

yellow	
green	
white	
grey	
lines represent	

dark yellow/orange	
blue	
purple	
any other colours	
green boxes	

Complete in your own words: If we are using maps then place is about

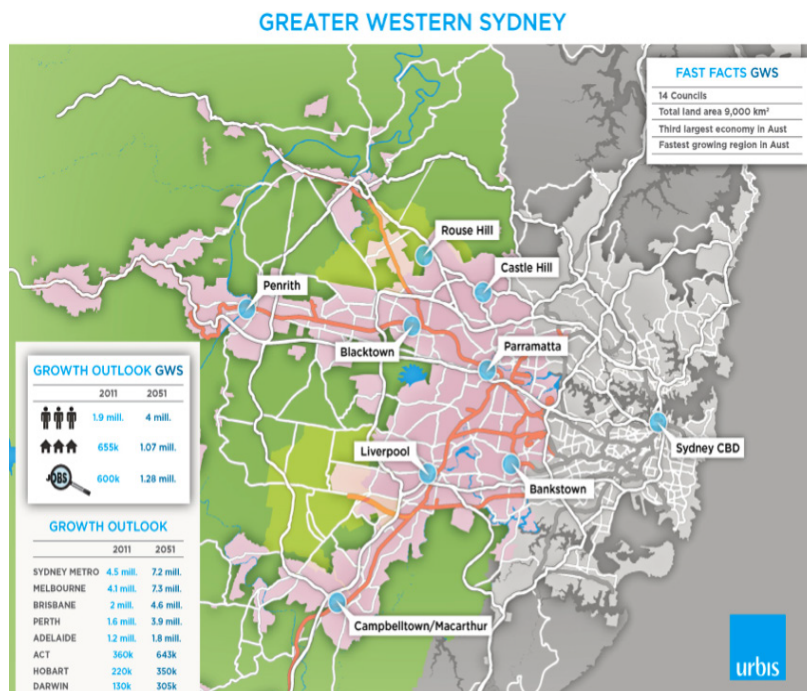
.....

Different maps give different representations

Each of these maps below is about Western Sydney but it represents the region differently.

While maps are accurate, they are not objective. Things are chosen to be included in maps and chosen to be excluded. These choices reflect the purpose of the map and sometimes a cultural bias.

Explain what the purpose and audience is for each map and how this affects the representation.



http://www.urbis.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/sydney_gws_low-res.jpg



<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/81/63/c0/8163c074937e4fe4281048f698e044a2.jpg>

Geography can also be represented in words.

- Find a description of a place in a geography textbook. Imagine the map to go with the description and then try to draw the map, if you can.
- Which representation do you find easier to follow: the map or the words?
- Which one gives the most information?
- What is the purpose and the audience of each text (map or textbook)?

Summing up

Complete this sentence:

If we are using maps to understand how place is represented then place is about:

.....

Representing historically

The Aboriginal people of western Sydney are part of a living and vibrant culture that has adapted to the invasion and occupation of the region by people from other cultures. The Dharuk and Gandangara peoples arrived about 40,000 years ago.

Waves of immigration across the colony and state brought a range of ethnically different groups, with their own folk practices, customs, eating habits, ways of building, and systems of belief. British and Irish arrived in convict ships after 1788. Small numbers of other ethnic groups arrived as convicts, even Negroes, one of whom, 'Black Caesar' was one of the early bushrangers.

Other waves, which came to the colony, included small groups of Europeans, mainly from Central Europe such as Germans. They were small in numbers but they had a large impact especially on farming practices.

Waves of immigration have washed across western Sydney, from the Dharuk, to the British, and then to southern Europeans, followed by Asian and Middle Eastern people who changed the food habits. The shopping centre of Cabramatta is a good example. In the inter-war period, people of British stock conducted most of the shops, including the 'ham and beef' shops. By the 1950s, the 'ham and beef' shops had been replaced by delicatessens, conducted by Slavs from Eastern Europe and the Balkans as well as Germans, selling a range of delicacies not available elsewhere. They were later replaced by Vietnamese immigrants, who have now given it a new character that most people associate with the town centre.

Adapted from: Australian Historical Theme:

*Tracing the Evolution of the Australian Environment (Australian Historic Themes, AHC, Canberra 2001)
<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/ThematicHistoryWesternSydney.pdf>*

Questions/activity

- Use the information in this historical account to draw a rough timeline to show the different stages of history of the region. This does not have to have exact dates.
- History is often about conflict: what events in the above account are about conflict and how did this affect the history of the region?
- Writing about history is usually unadorned; however, this extract repeatedly uses the metaphor of waves of immigration: In pairs draw a mind map of the feelings and ideas associated with the word 'waves'.
- Discuss how are these may be affected by the word washed in the sentence:
Waves of immigration have 'washed' across Western Sydney.
- How has the use of a more poetic language affected the writing of history in this passage?

Looking at sentences

Historical sentences often add more information.

Here are explanations of how the longer sentences work:

Sentence expansion	Types of sentence
Small numbers of other ethnic groups arrived as convicts.	simple sentence
Small numbers of other ethnic groups arrived as convicts, even Negroes.	simple sentence
Small numbers of other ethnic groups arrived as convicts, even Negroes, one of whom, 'Black Caesar' was one of the early bushrangers.	complex sentence made up of two sentences

Main sentence	Small numbers of other ethnic groups arrived as convicts.
Extra information	even Negroes.
Joining clause	one of whom,
Second sentence	'Black Caesar" was one of the early bushrangers.

Here is a different type of sentence addition:

They were later replaced by Vietnamese immigrants, who have now given it a new character that most people associate with the town centre.

This complex sentence is made up of three simple sentences which are joined by removing some words and adding others.

Main sentence	They [... ..] were later replaced by Vietnamese immigrants	→ They were later replaced by Vietnamese immigrants, who have now given it a new character that most people associate with the town centre.
Second sentence	Vietnamese immigrants have now given it [... ..] a new character	
Third sentence	Most people associate it [... ..] with the town centre	

Use the brackets to write what the words 'they' and 'it' refer to in each sentence.

Activity

Combine sentences a. and b. into one sentence

1.
 - a. *Other waves, which came to the colony, included small groups of Europeans, mainly from Central Europe such as Germans.*
 - b. *They were small in numbers but they had a large impact especially on farming practices.*
2.
 - a. *In the inter-war period, people of British stock conducted most of the shops, including the "ham and beef" shops.*
 - b. *By the 1950s, the "ham and beef" shops had been replaced by delicatessens, conducted by Slavs from Eastern Europe and the Balkans as well as Germans, selling a range of delicacies not available elsewhere.*

Summing up:

Complete this sentence:

If we are using history to understand how place is represented then place is about:

.....

Reading websites

Regional Profile

Official websites use objective language to represent places. They offer evidence through facts: numbers and words. They also use columns, dot points, short paragraphs and colour to break up information. Subheadings and website tools such as a top ribbon and drop down boxes control the way information is found.

WSROC ABOUT WSROC ISSUES & PROJECTS MEDIA & RESOURCES JOINT PROCUREMENT

Regional profile

Western Sydney is a big place; ranging from Auburn to the Blue Mountains and from Liverpool to Hawkesbury with a total land area of about 5,400 square kilometres, including national parks, waterways and parklands. The region has substantial residential, rural, industrial, commercial, institutional and military areas.

A unique place:

- One of Australia's largest and fastest growing regional populations
- Home to a diverse and dynamic ethnic mix, the region is considered as one of the most multicultural in Australia.
- A strategic distribution hub for goods throughout Australia with a significant transport and logistics sector.
- A strong professional services sector with major commercial centres including Bankstown, Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith.
- Home to unique natural environments and important historical attributes.

Check the [WSROC Region Community Profile](#) for a demographic analysis of the region and its suburbs based on Census results and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures.

Key-statistics:

Demographics

Greater Western Sydney is home to 1.9 million people, with approximately 1.6 million living in the WSROC area.

The population of the region is expected to grow by another 1 million over the next twenty five years.


In 2011 over 40% of the population had been born overseas, with the highest concentrations in the Auburn (60%) and Fairfield (55%).

A large percentage of new migrants to Australia settle in Western Sydney.

Media Releases


Media release, December 8, 2015 The Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) has welcomed the announcement of 1,800 public sector jobs for Sydney's western suburbs. WSROC President Cllr Tony Hadchiti applauded the initiative, particularly following the loss of so...

[More](#)



Media release, December 8, 2015 The Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) has welcomed the NSW Government's confirmation of the first two legs of the Western Sydney Light Rail network. WSROC President Cllr Tony Hadchiti said "It is exciting..."

[More](#)



Media release, 4 December, 2015 In a letter to federal Ministers Hunt, Truss and Fletcher, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) President, Cllr Tony Hadchiti, points out that the Draft Environmental Impact

<http://www.wsroc.com.au/media-resources/regional-profile>

Note the description of the extent of Western Sydney and how it unpacks the ideas. For the activities in the table, you will need to use one of the maps of Western Sydney from the previous section on maps.

Statement	Function of statement	Activity
Western Sydney is a big place	Topic sentence	Why is size important?
ranging from Auburn to the Blue Mountains and Liverpool to Hawkesbury	Evidence: using place names	Add these places to your map
Area of about 5,400 square kilometres –	Evidence: using numbers	What is the effect of giving statistics like this?
including national parks, waterways and parklands	Evidence: Listing natural benefits	Identify the national parks, waterways and parklands on your map
The region has substantial residential, rural, industrial, commercial, institutional and military areas	Evidence: Listing economic benefits	Find out what these words mean and give examples of each that you find in your area

- What makes the region unique?
- What does demographic mean and what features does this list highlight?
- What is the purpose of this text?
- Who is the target audience?
- What has the designer done to attract the audience?

Summing up

Complete this sentence:

If we are using council websites to understand how place is represented then place is about:

.....

Images



- In what kind of text might you place this photo?
- What purpose does it have?
- How does it make you feel about the place?
- Why has the photographer chosen to use an aerial shot to display this area?
- Consider the framing: what has been included and what has been left out?
- Consider the shading: describe the lighting and the effect of the lighting.
- Focus: what is the camera focusing on?

Summing up

How does the photographer choose to represent this place?

Integrating Task: A Photo Essay

Like people, places have an identity and can show different sides: the private and the public. Create two photo-essays of your suburb: Call these essays 'Our place' and 'My place.'

One photo essay (Our Place) will be public places that everyone shares: what would companies and councils want to show about the suburb?

The other photo essay (My Place) will be private places: the places where you or other people are themselves.

Use about 5 photos for each. You can find the photos on the internet or take them yourself. Display your photo essays on the class wall.

Be prepared to justify your choice of images.

Representing place and people in literature

In this unit you will be exploring place and people through a few different texts. You will be looking closely at representation and what this means. You will closely analyse a few extracts from texts to see how the language works to represent place or people.

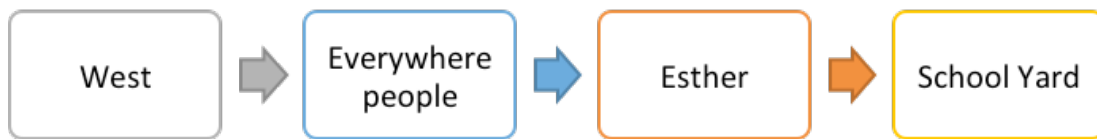
The Incredible Here and Now – Felicity Castagna

Giramondo Publishing, Sydney, 2013

This book is written from the point of view of a boy whose brother has died. His mother is not coping and the family is feeling lost. The book shows the strength of family and friendship in overcoming difficult times. In terms of place it is very much about the community that exists in a place like Western Sydney and the way each person handles the difficulties of life.

The first four chapters

- What does the title *The Incredible Here and Now* suggest the story might be about?
- What we see in the first few chapter headings is that place and people are the focus.



- Look at this list of the other chapter headings. Draw a table and indicate what each chapter is about judging from the title: place, people, events, actions, ideas or other. What seems to be the emphasis in the book according to the chapter headings?

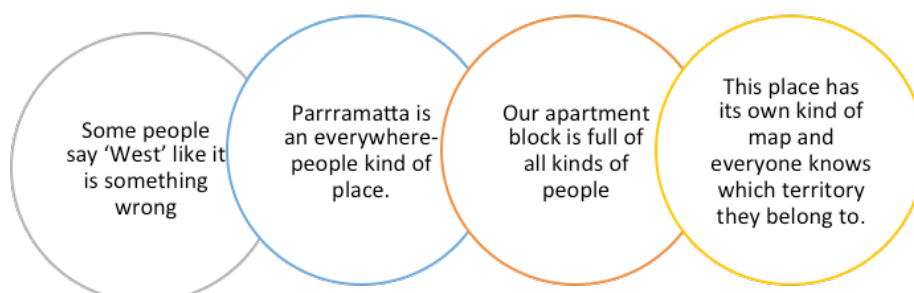
Titles:

Last Day of School, School Holidays; Roundabouts; Making Pancakes; No More Space for Pigeons; Postie-bike; The Fast and the Furious; Driving East; Chicken; Esther's Son; Dom, Mum and Me; Hair Art; Ice Skating; Concrete; Fist; Do you Know the Meaning of Words?; First Day; New World; The Other Side; This Place; My Father's Hands; Aunty Leena; Staring; Shadi and the Pool; Communion; Girl with No Names; Wallpaper; Walking in Different Ways; Laughter; Shadi, his Cousin and His Other Cousin; Granville Servo; Sounds; Walking Instead; Hooters and Horses; Aunty Leena Says It's Good for Me; Poppy's Stories; Mc Donald's is the Centre of the Universe; Above; Night Swimming; Assembly; Gifts; Bach; Coke; Bread-shop Man; Toilets; Above and Below; Looking for God; Essential Information; Out there; Riots ; Mo Knows; Caught; Nowhere to Go; Dom in a Box ; Photos; Poof; Mo in the Window; Anger; You Do What You Have To Do; Park Bench; On Not Seeing Mo; An Outing with Aunty Leena; Jo the Gangster; Learning Insults; Never Sure; School Break; Shoes and Toes and Feet; Visiting; Socks; Boxing; Eels; Shadi's House; Esther's Walls; Last Meeting; No one can Tell That Woman What to do; Dreams ; The Incredible Here and Now

Be creative:

Work in groups and organize the titles (use at least ten) into a poem that is about the 'incredible here and now'; try not to use any extra words but add a few if you have to. (This is often called a 'found' poem as you find the lines in another text.)

Chapter beginnings



Opening lines are important. They set up the ideas to follow. The opening chapters of Castagna’s book locate the story within Western Sydney as a place which is different to Sydney as a whole. The first lines of the early chapters move the reader from a space outside the book into the schoolyard, an important setting for the main character.

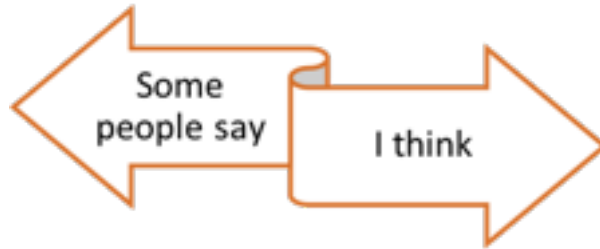
Here is a way of mapping the book’s beginning:

Ch. 1 Outside Western Sydney	Ch. 2 Official centre of Western Sydney with <i>everywhere people</i>	Ch. 3 The domestic personal space with <i>all kinds of people</i>	Ch. 4 The school space with groups who each have a <i>territory</i>
Negative perceptions	Public place connects people	Private place connects people	The character’s environment with people

Except for chapter 1 the central element of place in these beginnings is people. Authors have to create the identity of a place in a way that allows the characters to grow and to develop. The characters are often defined by place but they can also challenge their space and show that even in a place that is strongly identified there can be space for individuality.

Below are extracts from the first few chapters. Read these closely and answer the questions to see how the author establishes the identity of the place before she begins her story.

Chapter 1
West



Some people say ‘West’ like it is something wrong, like ice-cream that fell in a gutter. I think the West is like my brother’s music, too much bass so you end up dancing like your body parts don’t fit together and laughing all at the same time. That’s what West is: shiny cars and loud things, people coming, people going – movement. Those who don’t know any better, they come into the neighbourhood and lock their windows and drive on through, never stopping before they get somewhere else. But we know better. We know the boys sag their pants because they look good that way, and the fat greedy-looking guy is yelling from the balcony because his girls haven’t come back from the park yet, and the men smoking hookahs at the café on the corner are only smoking stuff that smells like apples and telling each other lies like men in every other place do.

I never thought that anything bad could happen here and then it did.

Felicity Castagna, The Incredible Here and Now, Giramondo Publishing, 2013 p.1

- Who are ‘some’ people?
- Explain why the simile (*like ice-cream that fell in a gutter*) conveys a negative view.
- Explain if the simile (*like my brother’s music, too much bass so you end up dancing like your body parts don’t fit together and laughing all at the same time*) conveys a negative or positive view.
- Why is the last sentence in its own paragraph?

The table below shows how the language sets up a contrast between assumptions of outsiders and those who live in the area.

Perceptions of world outside the suburb	Perceptions of those inside the suburb	Their reality
Some people say	I think	That’s what the West is
Those who don’t know better	But we know better	We know

Read the chapter 1 extract and then decide if the text agrees or disagrees with the following statements. Justify your answer.

	True or false according to the text	Proof for this view from the text
Opinions from the outside differ to opinions from the inside		
Opinions from the outside are negative		
People in the West are loud		
People in the West are dangerous		
The individual is always part of a bigger group		
All men are the same in all places		

Chapter 2
Everywhere People

Parramatta is an everywhere-people kind of place. People always coming and going. There's the Indian kids down the road who think they invented cricket and the Pakistani kids next door to them who are always trying to tell them they're wrong. Some people, they come from the city and some all the way from Penrith. My family, they're from somewhere else a long time ago but we've been West since the convicts landed in Parramatta Cove. Poppy says that the Raffertys in the street behind us are too loud because they're part Irish and part Italian and part Lebanese: Poppy says that's about as loud as people can get.

Mum says, when people ask you where you're from you should say, here, because here is where you're at. This is my mother, who says that all people from all places are good people except, maybe, the Hare Krishnas across the street who keep her awake on Sunday nights with all that wailing, but I like it because it makes me feel like I'm going to some far off place as I fall into sleep, like I'm West but I'm everywhere all at the same time.
Felicity Castagna, The Incredible Here and Now, Giramondo Publishing, 2013 pp.3-4

1. Does *everywhere-people* mean:
 - a. **the** people are like people everywhere else
 - b. **the** people come from everywhere
 - c. **the** people can fit in everywhere
 - d. When people mix with people from all over the world in one place they become everywhere people

Justify your answer

2. What, according to the extract, are the characteristics of each group:

Indian:

Pakistani:

Irish:

Italian:

Lebanese:

Hare Krishna:

3. Explain the phrase *here is where you are at*.
4. What is the main idea about life in the West in this brief passage?

Chapter 3
Esther

Our apartment block is full of all kinds of people: like the lady downstairs with the name that sounds too long, who keeps vegetables in big tubs on her balcony and plays sad music on Sunday afternoons, and Omar upstairs who won't say where he comes from but I know it's not here because he showed me a picture once, of him in some desert place. There's George in the apartment behind us. He's spent his whole life in the same area, never been anywhere - never saw the point.

Felicity Castagna, The Incredible Here and Now, Giramondo Publishing, 2013 p.5

Each person has a different relationship to place. Explain and give details of the difference in the way they feel about where they are and where they have come from.

Person	How they feel about where they are now	How they feel about where they come from
Lady downstairs		
Omar upstairs		
George behind us		

Be creative

Imagine why these people feel this way about their present and past homes. Write their backstories.

Chapter 4
School Yard

This place has its own kind of map and everyone knows which territory they belong to. Everyone knows you don't screw with the boys who sit on the steps on the way into the courtyard: the ones with the fat arms and legs whose uniforms are always tearing apart where the stitches are. Anyone with any brains know you don't ask them to move even if they are always in the way. Eli Hanssen disappeared for three days once after he asked one of them to let him past, everyone knows that.

On the other side of the yard: there is the fat group who spend their whole lunchtime eating, the maths losers reading their textbooks and the emo retards who play Dungeons and Dragons. They're all only slightly better than the Year Sevens who play handball against the back wall and scream 'Yes!' every five minutes like they're at an Eels game and actually watching something exciting.

In the alcove outside the science block – that's where people do things they want to hide like smoking cigarettes and looking at the magazines they stole from underneath their fathers' closets. That's where you go if you want to act like you don't give a shit about anything and if you dyed your hair black and pierced your own ear.

Me and my best friend Shadi, we spend most of our time at the edge of the football field. Dom's group and also Shadi's cousin's group sit not so far away and because of this we're allowed to sit close but not too close to the area where all the Year Elevens and Twelves are even though we're still only in Year Ten.

Shadi's cousins sit with the Lebs. The Islanders sit a little further away than that on the other side of the field and Dom sits with the everything elses. Shadi and me, we watch everyone for most of lunchtime in between some eating and talking, but mostly we're just watching. When they leave next year we'll take over the spot. Then it'll be me and Shadi eating meat pies and chucking footballs across the field, and me and Shadi drumming, and me and Shadi talking crap and rolling each other down the hill when there's nothing more doing.

Felicity Castagna, The Incredible Here and Now, Giramondo Publishing, 2013 pp.7-8

The chapter begins with the metaphor of a map. Why is this a metaphor?

Read the passage closely and draw a map of the schoolyard identifying the areas where everyone sits. Creatively add characteristics of each group.

Composing

1. Think about the area you live in – use the beginnings of chapters 1-3 as a model and write your own creative descriptive piece (re-read the chapters) so you are aware of the structure.

Some people say (your suburb)

is like

I think (suburb) is like

That’s what (suburb) is:

Those who don’t know any better, they come into the neighborhood and
.....

But we know better.

We know

and

because

and

and

like men in every other place do.

[suburb] is.....kind of place

Our apartment block/street is full of all kinds of people:

2. Now describe your school using the chapter 4 opening:
This schoolyard has its own kind of map and everyone knows which territory they belong to.

Summing up

- Explain the relationship between place and people as you understand it.
- How has Felicity Castagna represented Western Sydney?

To answer this question you need to say how she sees Western Sydney and how she has captured this idea through her language.

The Sky So Heavy – Claire Zorn

University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2013

In *The Sky So Heavy* Australia has had a nuclear attack which has devastated the city of Sydney and the Western suburbs. Fin who lives in the lower Blue Mountains, part of greater Western Sydney, tries to find his mother who is in central Sydney.

In this dystopian world we see inequality of distribution of resources as people try to get into the centre of Sydney where resources are being held. People from other areas of Sydney are treated as refugees and denied access. The setting for the opening of the book is an ordinary domestic community of houses.

Extracts 1 and 2: Before the nuclear war

Not a tourist place

I lived in the Blue Mountains, about an hours drive west of Sydney. Between here and the city there were acres and acres of suburbia. The main difference between this place and the suburbs used to be that we had a national park instead of housing estates. Plus it was whiter up here than a loaf of Tip Top – still is, I guess. There’s a highway that snakes up through the mountains with townships most of the way along it. Tourist brochures used to really push the whole ‘village atmosphere’ thing, which really only meant that the trains came less often and there was only one McDonald’s. My town wasn’t high enough up to be a touristy place though; it was the place you drove through to get somewhere else, somewhere with better views and more kangaroo key rings.

Claire Zorn The Sky So Heavy, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2013 p.3

A natural place

Our school was one of those classy places built in the seventies: brick buildings with tiny windows and ceiling fans instead of air-conditioning. The rooms smelt of pee and mildew, and were carpeted in industrial polyester carpet the colour of baby vomit. What that place lacked in style it made up for in location: the grounds were carved into the top of a mountain ridge and overlooked a valley of bush. Instead of the standard tree-less bitumen grounds of most schools, we had acres of grass and trees (too many trees – the science block fried in a bushfire three years ago.) The room I was in for homeroom was right on the edge of the bush. In summer it was a sweatbox and the air was so shrill with cicadas Mr Effrez would swear at them and shut the windows. In winter it was quiet and we were lucky each period was only forty-five minutes because any longer sitting in one spot and you’d freeze your arse off.

Claire Zorn The Sky So Heavy, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2013 p.13

Extract 3: After the nuclear war

A devastated and isolated place

It seemed like the world was in hibernation. There were no birds calling, no breeze ruffling the trees, no cars passing down the street, no kids squealing, no lawnmowers. It wasn’t like the pause before a breath. It was like the whole world had suffocated. I lifted my face to the cold unfamiliar face of the sky and walked up the hill.

I wondered where else it was snowing. Was it snowing in the city? Was it snowing in Perth? Adelaide? It was impossible to gauge the seriousness of the whole thing without any information from the outside world; like being blindfolded in deep water and not knowing where the edge was.

Claire Zorn The Sky So Heavy, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2013 p.60

Extract 4: When they cross the barricades into Sydney

An orderless place

There are more people on the streets here than on the other side. They congregate on corners but don’t give us more than a glance. They mustn’t be as hungry. The streets are icy but drivable, walkable ...

It’s incredible how much things have degenerated after three months without proper infrastructure. The most noticeable thing is the rubbish, piled on footpaths outside apartment buildings...

Claire Zorn The Sky So Heavy, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2013 p.195

Extracts 1 & 2

1. What are the features of a touristy place according to Extract 1?
2. What are the negative and positive features of living in a natural surrounding according to Extract 2?
3. What tone is the character conveying when he uses the word classy? (see tone chart below for ideas of tone.)

Extract 3

4. Extract 3 lists a series of negatives. Copy these and classify them as urban or natural sounds.
5. It wasn't like the pause before a breath. It was like the whole world had suffocated. Why is this simile effective (think about the associations of breath and suffocate)?
6. I lifted my face to the cold unfamiliar face of the sky: explain the different way face is used here and consider why the author chose to use face for both the person and the sky.
7. How does the character convey a sense of isolation?
8. like being blindfolded in deep water and not knowing where the edge was. Explain why this simile is effective.

Extract 4

9. What are the signs of change that the character notes?

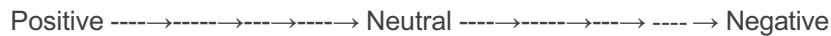
All Extracts

10. Use the tone chart below to choose words that describe the different tone of each of the extracts (tone is the feeling the character conveys through the language)

Tone words: resentful, happy, critical, puzzled, thoughtful, quiet, ironic, ecstatic, resigned, sarcastic, flippant, dismissive, angry, exuberant, wondrous, dismissive

Firstly, look up the words.

Then add them under the three headings: Positive / Neutral / Negative



Summing up

What we see in these representations of place in Zorn's book is that place can be depicted in negative or positive words. It can be a sign of change that has an impact on the character. Place is not stable but changes according to circumstances.

Composing

Imagine your place before and after a nuclear disaster.

Write a description of a place you live in or near, or write a description of your school. Then imagine what might happen if a nuclear war breaks out. How would the physical appearance of your place change? Describe the same place as if it has been under attack.

Representing place: building up detail

The Tribe – Michael Mohammed Ahmad
Giramondo Publishing, Sydney, 2014

The Tribe offers stories about a family of Lebanese Muslim origin living in Sydney. It is divided into three sections: The House of Adam, The Children of Yocheved and the Mother of Ehud. This first extract focuses on childhood and the sense of family.

Most of my Tayta's children still live with her in a house that belonged to my grandfather. His name was Bani Adam. Every day my father reminds me that it was my grandfather's house, he says, 'We are Baat Adam,' which means, 'We are the House of Adam.' The house is in Alexandria. People sometimes think because we're Arabs, that I mean the city in Egypt, but the Alexandria we're from is actually a suburb in Sydney's inner-west. It has no sides. It's joined on left and right to our neighbours' houses. This is normal in Alexandria. It's a small yellow-brick double-storey house across the road from Alexandria park and Alexandria Oval. It's on Copeland Street. Next door, on the right-hand side is a hair salon that belongs to an Aussie guy named Chuck. One minute down the road is Erskineville station. Down behind us is my school, Alexandria Public School.

...

There's a yellow-brick fence as you enter through the rusted gate to the house. The gate is the same height as a regular door and it's painted dark orange. Three steps and you're at the front door. The door is made from old, thin wood, painted brown. When it opens, you'll find my mum and dad's room on the right hand side of the corridor. I'm not allowed in there unless they are in there too. My dad says it's disrespectful to go into your parents' room. Sometimes he'll take a nap in the afternoon and I might go and lie down next to him. I can't sleep though. There's too much light coming in from the window above his bed. I just lie there and stare at the three old wardrobes lined up in front of me. I used to think they were entirely made out of wood until I noticed them peeling at the corners. One time after my dad fell asleep, I crept over and peeled the plastic back just far enough so I could see what was underneath. I discovered a dry wood material that reminded me of cornflakes. Even the handles of the wardrobe are fakes. I used to think they were made of gold until they started peeling too. Inside the wardrobe are my mum's many dresses and my dad's few shirts and pants. Up the top is where Dad keeps The Holy Qur'an. Sometimes at night when I am scared, Dad will rest it under my pillow to keep me safe. The Qur'an is so big it elevates my head above my siblings. I wake up with a sore neck every time.

Michael Mohammed Ahmad, The Tribe, Giramondo Publishing, Sydney, 2014 pp.3-5

Which sentences from this extract are evidence of the statements that appear below?

Explanation	Evidence
The passage establishes sense of continuity	
It starts with sense of foreignness ('otherness') and goes on to challenge assumptions.	
The reality of the narrator's home is prosaic	
The narrator uses simple sentences to reinforce the sense of ordinariness	
Identity is like a veneer – a false exterior	
Religion is regarded as a protection	
Religion makes you superior	
Religion is difficult	

Why are there different views on religion presented here?

Writing a paragraph on representation using this extract

Here is a way of writing about the extract but it needs a topic sentence. Write the topic sentence and add quotations from the text as examples where needed and also add explanations where space has been left.

Topic sentence:

Ahmad uses simple sentences (.....) and descriptions to create a sense of the ordinariness and Australianness of the family which contrasts to our expectations when he traces the line of family. His opening sentences establish the 'foreignness' of the family which is quickly dispelled when he identifies the suburb as the Alexandria

The description of place that follows (It has... ..) acts as a metaphor for place and identity, suggesting that it is fluid without boundaries. The constant movement between Australian and Arab features (.....) as identifiers shows the struggle to

Place is therefore represented as a site of inner conflict for migrants who have to negotiate between their cultural roots and their place of living.

Representing place from different points of view

Great Western Highway – Anthony Macris

University of Western Australia Publishing, Perth, 2012

In any map of Sydney/Western Sydney the features that stand out are the roads. Roads bypass the west, or lead to the west. They become arteries that feed into the west and take people away from the west. The highway can also act as a metaphor for progress, for the future or as a boundary preventing movement.

The author Anthony Macris uses the road as a pathway into his narrative. A trip down the highway becomes a trip through memories. The story follows two characters, Nick and Penny who live at different ends of Parramatta Road (inner West and Western Sydney, respectively) and whose walks meet in the middle.

Extract: Nick

Parramatta Road, Nick had recently read in the local newspaper, had the honour of being one of the ugliest stretches of road in not only Sydney but all of Australia. How could such an eyesore, the article lamented, have been allowed to develop unchecked so close to the heart of such a spectacular harbour city? How could this stretch of the Great Western Highway, a road of major importance since colonial times, have been allowed to degrade to this degree? The article wasn't wrong. Parramatta Road was an assault on the senses in every way. Its architecture was pure chaos, a mess of cheap modern low rises and nineteenth century style buildings that had been subjected to every kind of abuse for over one hundred years, from countless sloppy paint jobs to resolute neglect.

Anthony Macris, Great Western Highway, University of Western Australia Publishing, Perth, 2012 p.14

Extract: Penny

As she approached her home she could see the streams of head- and tail-lights flowing up and down Parramatta Road. Up ahead on the corner squatted Strathfield Car Radios, indifferent host to the billboard of the woman in the underwear. Penny paused at her front gate and looked up. Directly above the model's ghostly white face the flashing lights of an airplane, one red, one green, pierced the low-lying cloud. As it steadily descended through the glowing vapour, Penny could make out its slim metal belly and tilting wings, the tail emblazoned with either a kangaroo or maple-leaf logo, she wasn't sure which. The roar of its engines filled the night sky as she pushed open the creaking front gate and hurried inside, ready to start cooking dinner for two.

Anthony Macris, Great Western Highway, University of Western Australia Publishing, Perth, 2012 p.118

These are both texts about urban Sydney and the sprawl that stretches along Parramatta Road.

1. What are the features of urban life that each person sees?
2. Point of view is about seeing through a character's eyes. How does the author capture the point of view of each person?
3. What feelings does each have as they walk through their urban space?
4. Are there any natural features in the place they are walking through?

Composing using your senses

1. Nick feels the road is an 'assault on the senses' but he focuses on one sense: the visual (the sense of sight).
 - a. What senses is Penny using?
 - b. Which words convey the senses in each passage?

Extend the first extract to describe more of an 'assault on the senses':
think of smell (olfactory) sound (auditory) touch (tactile).

2. Does an urban landscape always have to be a negative experience?

Composing

Write a passage about an urban landscape you know but write it in a positive tone using the senses. You might want to attach a photograph of the place you write about or it can be imagined.

Rewrite the same scene negatively from a different character's point of view.
Write about what decisions you made to represent place differently.

Representing Place through sensuous language and images

Five Bells – Gail Jones

Vintage Australia, Sydney, 2012

The novel *Five Bells* centres on Circular Quay, a place with a great physical and cultural impact and the centre of tourism from many parts of the globe. Four different people come to the Quay from different places. One of the characters Pei Xing, a Chinese woman, however, is not a tourist but lives in the western suburbs in Bankstown, which has its own strong cultural identity and brings together different nationalities, not as tourists but as residents. This representation of Bankstown acts as a contrast to the representation of Circular Quay: both are places of convergence for different groups of people but the purpose for each place is very different.

Often writers give us insights into places by contrast so think of how each place is contrasted as you read.

Mark any

- Words with positive or negative connotations and
- Sensuous images

Pei Xing and Bankstown

Beyond the window above the sink lay the broad sprawl of Bankstown and the outer western suburbs. Mighty trucks were rumbling along the freeways with homicidal speed; there were houses of dubious design, with utes on the front lawns and chunky letterboxes made out of bricks; there were factories and steelworks and a huge hardware store, the size of a jumbo jet hangar, spread over an entire block. A mattress factory and a glass factory stood absurdly side by side. Aussie Mattresses. Down Under Glass.

At the train station Mr Nguyen was settled in his glass booth. Ignoring the ticket machines that looked like the robots of an unfortunately boxy future era, Pei Xing preferred her friend, and a hasty chat.

'Mrs Chang!'

Mr Nguyen!' She folded her umbrella.

'Hot enough for you?'

It was a rhetorical question. Pei Xing had teased him before about the battery-run miniature fan that he held to his face. It was of pastel pink plastic and was shaped like a rocket ship. It blew his fringe backwards into a glossy back fin.

'You sound Australian Mr Nguyen.'

'I'm trying,' he responded. 'The usual?'

Pei Xing and Circular Quay

There it was, jade-white, lifting above the water. She never tired of seeing this form. It was a fixture she relied on. The shapes rested, like porcelain bowls, stacked one upon the other, fragile, tipped, in an unexpected harmony.

Gail Jones, Five Bells, Vintage Australia, Sydney, 2012 p.11

Pei Xing waited in the queue and bought a ticket for the ferry. The man in the booth did not recognise her, though she had been his customer many times. She was glad it was one of the old ferries, green and yellow and wooden, like something she might have seen as a girl on the Huangpu River: the newer white ones, sleek and gleaming, were simply not the same.

Gail Jones, Five Bells, Vintage Australia, Sydney, 2012 p.11

Pei Xing and Bankstown	Pei Xing and Circular Quay
<p><i>The train station was noisy and busy, all brutalist steel, echoing with voices and the severe acoustics of hard tubular spaces. Rubbish blew along the platform, a McDonald's carton for fires, a jangling aluminium can. Without hesitating, Pei Xing picked up both and deposited them in a metal garbage bin hanging from a pole. Waiting passengers watched suspiciously and with blank incomprehension.</i></p> <p><i>The train from Liverpool approached, slowing its roar, screeching to a halt; and when Pei Xing boarded, something that persisted as a trace from early morning returned as a complete image.</i></p> <p><i>Once she had sought her father at his desk.</i></p> <p>....</p> <p><i>Perhaps love rested more in images than in words. There was no memory of him speaking, at this time, or even acknowledging her presence. It was a quiet, folded moment, entirely her own.</i></p> <p><i>Two young men wearing hoodies despite the heat sat directly opposite Pei Xing and began talking in loud voices. One wore a pattern of human skulls on his fleecy jacket; the other had the tattoo of a Chinese character, fate, just visible on his neck. Odd to see these characters appearing as fashion on the skin of young men. Decoration Chinese. Empty Chinese. Pei Xing looked out the window and watched the buildings of Bankstown slide away.</i></p> <p><i>Gail Jones, Five Bells, Vintage Australia, Sydney, 2012 pp.40-43</i></p>	<p><i>Pei Xing had been there many times before, but she loved the elevated train, rattling through a grid of ironwork that resembled the old Waibadu Bridge, and the press of crowds, and the echoing noise as people descended to the quay. Westerners, she had heard, were lonely in crowds; but this seemed so wrong, somehow as there was a vitality, a chi, mobbing between every body, a collective spirit, a complication. Jostling, touching, feeling the population in movement, this was a beautiful thing. No one saw her, she knew; just a non-descript grey-haired woman, and an Asian at that.</i></p> <p><i>Can't tell us apart.</i></p> <p><i>All Ching-Chong- Chinaman.</i></p> <p><i>Her parents would not have understood this: living in Australia, finding a home here.</i></p> <p><i>Gail Jones, Five Bells, Vintage Australia, Sydney, 2012 p.8</i></p>

Find examples from each extract to compare:

Feature	Bankstown	Circular Quay
Depiction of people		
Descriptions of place (add a few images)		
Memories		
Chinese images/ allusions		
Emotions		

From your choices consider how, through her representations of Bankstown and Circular Quay, Gail Jones builds up an attitude towards place. Think about:

- Selection of details
- Evocative language and
- How the differences between the two places highlight the representations of each.

Five Bells is written in third person but has a changing point of view moving between characters. The extracts in this resource are from the point of view of Pei Xing showing how she sees her suburb and Circular Quay.

Find evidence that:

- Pei Xing is clearly seeing her surroundings from a Chinese perspective
- The images are often connected to Chinese objects or ideas
- Circular Quay is physically more attractive
- Pei Xing's relationships with individuals are much stronger in Bankstown.

Representing place through people

Five Bells – Gail Jones

Vintage Australia, Sydney, 2012

Places are also about people and it is often through the description of those who inhabit a place that the place itself is represented. What we see is that Circular Quay is a more beautiful and interesting place but Bankstown is where people come together.

Consider the following passage and what Gail Jones is saying about Western Sydney people.

In the shopping centre beside the railway station there were dozens of small businesses with signs above the doorways in Vietnamese and Arabic; these Pei Xing found particularly enchanting. She loved to look directly into the faces of the people on the street: men with powerful forearms and forthright eyes, and women in hijabs and scarves walking together in friendly clusters. The children all looked plump and smiling and for some reason reminded Pei Xing of nutmeg. There were Vietnamese at the fishmongers on the corner, a meeting place of sorts, and casual groups at the Pho shop, who all seemed to know each other. This version of Australia was Asian and Arab. These people moved in an aura of their own, not afraid to claim space; and among them were other populations, migrant as she, each pulled from another history and cast up at the bottom of the world. On the street Pei Xing always felt cosmopolitan. She felt she was moving among friends in a spacious new world. She thought people from the Middle East, especially, were very exotic. She tried not to stare.

Conspicuous beneath a sun umbrella, Pei Xing walked the streets of Bankstown to catch an early train. She looked at the signs above the stores and saw again how beautiful a script Arabic was, how different from Chinese characters, and from English translations. There were cursive waves and dots and ultra precise dashes, like flags. There were suggestions of Mecca and arched windows and the spaces a mosque might contain. How might 'snow', she wondered, appear in Arabic script? How might desert people write the word 'snow'? Would it be imagined as flying sand?

It had occurred to Pei Xing more than once that she might like to learn Arabic, so that she could speak fluently to her neighbours and chit chat with the small children who played in the stairwell of their ugly block of flats. She could address the women in headscarves and ask what they thought of this place, and where they worked, and what kind of food they ate and how it was prepared. Her son Jimmy had tried to persuade her to move to the suburb of Ashfield, to the large Chinese community in which he lived. But Pei Xing liked it here, near the western Sydney University. Here she had a little work teaching her own language, and here, one day, she might yet learn Arabic.

Gail Jones, Five Bells, Vintage Australia, Sydney, 2012 p.40

1. How many nationalities can be found in this place? What distinguishes each one?
2. *This version of Australia was Asian and Arab* – what is this sentence saying about Australia?
3. Why is Pei Xing thinking about snow when she thinks about how Arabs might speak?
4. Pei Xing is a great thinker but she also wants to communicate – look at the verbs to see what she is wanting in this passage. Look at the verbs in blue (connected to Pei Xing) and, using the table below, categorise them according to each paragraph.

Acting/Doing	Saying	Sensing (Thinking)	Sensing (Feeling)	Relating (Verb 'to be': is, was, am etc)	Existing (Verb 'to be': are, is, was, were)
Paragraph 1					
Paragraph 2					
Paragraph 3					

In contrast we see that the verbs in red which are about the other people are about acting.

5. Another way of understanding what is happening in this passage is to trace the modals (auxiliary verbs). Words such as 'might' indicate possibility. They are imagined ideas.
How many times is 'might' used? Who is the modal referring to? What is this conveying?

Representations of People

In this passage the diversity of humanity is represented and the point is made that, through thinking and learning, there are possibilities for communication and connection.

Composing

Think of a busy place you go to where lots of different groups converge (the playground/ supermarket/ cultural festival/ beach etc.). Write your own passage about the scene, the different people who you see there and the way they move around the space.

Representing place through narrative

Western Sydney University Advertisement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buA3tsGnp2s>

Narrative is story. It refers to the rhythm of the story that keeps us interested. Story is one way we convey important ideas, knowing that the narrative structure will engage listeners, readers viewers to understand and accept the message.

The essential feature of narrative is structure, with a beginning, middle and end. The purpose of the story is to show change: a movement from one state of being to a new state of being. The passage to growth is often associated with place.

Mapping a narrative

View the advertisement for Western Sydney University.

The text overlaying the video sums up Deng’s story. Use this to help you map the narrative arc.

Understanding Filmic representation

Watch the video about Deng Thiak Adut and complete the table.

Film Analysis Table:

Text	Image	Camera shots	Editing	Setting
Deng Adut Graduate				
At six, Deng was taken from his mother.				
Marched 233 days to Ethiopia.				
Forced to fight with the Rebels.				
At twelve he was shot in the back.				
Smuggled out of Sudan				
The UN got him out.				
Western Sydney took him in.				
At fifteen, he taught himself to read.				
A free man, he chose to live in his car.				
A law degree enables him to protect others.				
Deng continues to fight.				
Deng Adut Refugee				
Deng Adut Refugee lawyer				
Western Sydney University Determination Unlimited				
Western Sydney University Optimism Unlimited				
Western Sydney University Courage Unlimited				

- Camera: What does the camerawork and editing add to the narrative?
- Music: Accompanying the film is a song. How does the rhythm and beat add to the meaning of the film? How relevant are the lyrics?
- Place: The film moves between a few settings/ places. What features of each setting does the film try to capture?
- Feeling: How do you end up feeling by the end of this film? What do you think you are intended to feel?
- Representation of place: How is Western Sydney depicted? What kind of place is it?
- Why do you think that the Western Sydney University has chosen to advertise itself in this way?

Composing

Write a reflection on how the advertisement made you feel about Western Sydney. Did it challenge your assumptions about the place? How did it do this?

Glossary

Podcast: *Oxford English Dictionary*

noun: a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar programme, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player. Origin early 21st century: from iPod, a proprietary or brand name for a personal audio player.

Lord of the Flies

a 1954 novel by William Golding about a group of British school boys marooned alone on an island following an aeroplane crash. Their attempts to form their own society and govern themselves descend into cruelty, chaos and violence.

Looking for Alibrandi

the 1992 young adult novel and coming of age story by Australian Melina Marchetta about the second generation migrant experience in Sydney. Josephine Alibrandi has an Italian family heritage and the reader sees her encounter prejudice in her final year of high school. She breaks the nose of Carly Bishop, her Anglo Australian tormentor, with a text book.

Hating Alison Ashley

1984 pre-teen novel by Australian author Robin Klein. Set in a primary school the novel deals with the friendship rivalries between girls and the pressures of growing up. Unlike *Shu Yi*, the novel ends in reconciliation.

Puberty Blues

a 1981 Australian film based on the 1979 novel *Puberty Blues* that was by Gabrielle Carey and Kathy Lette when they were 15 years old. Set in the beach culture of the Sutherland Shire in Sydney it features two 13 year old girls who attempt to become popular by hanging out with the 'Greenhill gang' of surfers. The novel was open about the misogyny, racism and culture of casual sex and extensive drug and alcohol use in this social setting.

Banana Boat

a brand of sun protection and skin care products

Pantene

a brand of hair products

blacksplaining

in this context blacksplaining means to explain black culture to a person, usually white, who is ignorant about it. The term has other meanings and can mean to discount the responsibility black people may be perceived to have for issues affecting their community.

golliwog

a golliwog or golly was originally a character from nineteenth century children's books and was depicted as a rag doll with black skin, red clown lips and frizzy black hair. Golliwogs became popular and acceptable children's toys for a time and were used in marketing and children's books, including those by Enid Blyton. Gradually golliwogs were seen to be racist and anti-black caricatures. In Australia Arnott's Biscuits sold Golliwog Biscuits from the 1960s until the 1990s when the name was changed to Scalliwags. Shortly after the product line was discontinued. The term golliwog became a generic term for black people and is used as a racist insult.

Overview

In *Chinese Straight* Maxine Beneba Clarke recounts how, as one of the few black students at her high school, she sought to transform her appearance so that she would feel more accepted in her school community. Maxine seeks to transform her afro frizz into the Chinese straight hair of her dreams and this results in a disastrous experiment with hair straightening at a Granville salon prior to a pool party fraught with social hierarchies. This podcast explores the complex relationships of body image, identity, peer pressure and racism.

Guided discussion questions

About the podcast:

- Where is this true story set?
- When did this true story occur?
- What does the listener learn about the character or identity of the writer and reader Maxine Beneba Clarke? List five facts we learn about her in this podcast.
- What does *Chinese Straight* mean?
- How does Maxine Beneba Clarke seek to change herself? Why does Maxine Beneba Clarke wish to metamorphose or change?
- In what ways can the manner in which hair is styled, cut, coloured or worn reflect and individual's social status or identity? How might the ways you have worn your hair reflect your own identity?
- Maxine Beneba Clarke is the writer and reader of this podcast but the listener hears a range of voices. Make a list of all the different voices or characters the listener hears in *Chinese Straight*.

Close analysis

1. *My name is Maxine Beneba Clarke and this story is a true story from high school called Chinese Straight.* How does this opening shape your initial response to the podcast? How might it make you listen to the podcast differently?
2. *Our state high school was a cluster of buildings cowering in a suburban clearing. Wooden desks gouged with wonky initials. A roaring canteen trade in chocolate Billabongs, iced pink donuts and meat pies.* This podcast opens with a clear orientation for the reader. What does the listener learn about the setting of this story from this collection of images?
3. The podcast opens with an instrumental track featuring electric guitars and electronic instruments. What kind of world does this choice of music evoke? Describe the particular mood or atmosphere that is created by naming a specific emotion.
4. *Our state high school was a cluster of buildings cowering in a suburban clearing.* What does the verb cowering mean? How does the use of personification in this line help to evoke the narrator's experience of school?
5. *The playground pecking order made Lord of the Flies look like tea party play.* What is a pecking order? Where might you also see a pecking order? What does the verb choice of pecking suggest about the school environment in which the story is set? This line uses a literary allusion to William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies*. Look at the glossary if you are not familiar with this text.
6. *Among the girls it was Looking for Alibrandi meets Hating Alison Ashley meets Puberty Blues. Not an easy place for book geek black girl me.* In this line of the true story Maxine Benaba Clarke lists a series of literary and popular culture book titles (two of which are also films). Look at the glossary if you are not familiar with these texts. What does this accumulation of literary and popular culture allusions suggest about the community of girls in this high school?
7. *Every second girl was an Allison, Kylie, Kelly. And me? I was Maxine.* What type of culture or world is suggested by the first three names? How might names create or suggest identity? How might your name suggest your identity to others? What connotations do these first three names have? How is the name Maxine different? What is the effect of this contrast?
8. *For awkwardly ordinary eighties girls in mid adolescence, the swan metamorphosis still seemed within reach. There were one or two grade eight girls who'd proved it was possible: knock-kneed buck-toothed, freckle-faced things who emerged from mousy pigtailed, braces and growth spurts as if they'd just walked off the set of a Pantene commercial. These precious few fuelled every misfit's fantasy.*

What is a swan metamorphosis? Make a list of texts that you know that feature a swan metamorphosis or transformation.

What is a misfit? Why does Maxine Beneba Clarke use this noun to describe herself?

Where do you think that Maxine Beneba Clarke has found the idea that she could become popular by changing her appearance?

9. The accumulation of compound adjectives such as 'knock-kneed' and 'freckle-faced' is used throughout this true story podcast. What might these adjectives suggest about the way Maxine Beneba Clarke thought about her identity when she was in Year 8?
10. *I knew it would take an awful lot for broad-nosed, coffee-toned, b-cup, study-freak me to make the grass-greener leap. But I was still convinced there were things I could do which would bring me closer, at least, to popularity.*
What is the meaning of the idiomatic phrase *the grass is always greener*? Using the understanding of this phrase explain what a grass-greener leap might be?
11. What is meant by the idiomatic phrase *the black grapevine*?
12. The instrumental music begins again at: *A torturous months-long pestering campaign later, it was agreed that the salon visit could function as an early birthday present.*
Why do you think the sound designer chose to begin the instrumental music again at this point after a short period of restricting the audio to the voice of the reader?
How does the instrumental music change at this point?
13. *In Grade 4, my hair had been trimmed so short I wasn't able to fit it into a ponytail. For months, I'd worn it in a short afro. The other kids had nicknamed me 'golliwog'.*
Throughout the podcast Maxine Beneba Clarke recalls past experiences. The narrative does not remain in the present and she uses flashbacks to recall past experiences.
What is a golliwog? Why did her peers give her the nickname golliwog? Look at the glossary if you are unfamiliar with this term.
What is her classmate's purpose in using this colloquial language?
14. *In Grade Seven, the elastic band holding my ponytail had broken in the middle of class, entire afro springing free. Oh my God. She looks like she just stuck her finger in an electrical socket. Fuzzy Wuzzy. Scarecrow. Steel wool. Toilet brush.*
Maxine Beneba Clarke continues reading but shifts to the voices of her class mates at this point in the narrative. She lists a series of pejorative names given to her because of her hair.
Why do you think she uses one word sentences at this point in the true story? What is their effect?
15. *It's supposed to, darling. Just a few more minutes, sweetie. It'll be worth it.*
Despite *Chinese Straight* being a true story that happened to Maxine Beneba Clarke this podcast features the voices of many other people. It frequently uses reported dialogue.
What impression of Greek Charlie is gained from his dialogue?
Names are important in this true story. What does Greek Charlie's name reveal about the world of this text?
16. *By the time Charlie massaged the neutraliser into my hair, the damage was done. In the back middle of my newly straightened hair was a round pink patch the size of a fifty cent coin, where the chemicals had burnt clean through both hair and skin.*
Describe the sound effect chosen by sound engineer James Cecil to evoke the chemical burn caused by the hair straightening.
This type of aural image is often described as visceral. What does visceral mean? What did you feel as you heard this sound effect?
Is this sound effect realistic? What is the effect of this sound effect? What is its purpose?
17. Describe the sound effects that are used to evoke the transition or flash forward to the pool party. How do these sound effects affect the listener's experience of the story? How might they function to immerse the reader in the experience being described?
18. *Go on, get in! It's such a hot day.*
Why does Maxine Beneba Clarke decide to swim in the pool? Provide at least two factors that might motivate her.
19. *Incredulous tittering had already started down in the pool.*
Comment on the use of the sound effect of laughter after the narrator has already explained the girls at the party are laughing at her in disbelief. What might be its purpose?

20. *I took a deep breath, not knowing where to start backsplaining the difference between anglo hair and afro hair.*
The verb choice of 'backsplaining' is an example of a portmanteau a word that joins two words to become one. What two words do you think come together in the portmanteau 'backsplain'?
What does Maxine Beneba Clarke need to 'backsplain' to the white people at the pool part about anglo hair and afro hair?
21. *'Oh my God. She is SO weird.'*
'Did she just say she only washes her hair every few weeks? That's gross.'
'Seriously, why did you even invite her? It's embarrassing.'
How does the reader alter her voice when she is presenting this reported dialogue? Describe the tone of her voice by using precise adjectives.
22. We don't feel like being in the pool anymore.
Describe the sound effect chosen when the girls at the party decide to scramble out of the pool. Is it a realistic sound effect? What else might it represent other than the sound of girls leaving a pool?
23. The podcast ends very suddenly with the reported dialogue of the unnamed birthday girls' mother. There is a pause before the theme music of the *SBS True Stories* series is heard.
What did you think of this choice of ending for the true story? Is it sudden or unexpected?
Why do you think Maxine Beneba Clarke chose to conclude her true story at this point?
24. The choice of instrumental tracks shifts and changes a number of times throughout the podcast. Identify where these changes occur and how the shifts in track might indicate a change in the narrative or a change in mood.
25. This true story is set in the 1980s. How do elements of the sound design such as the use of synthesisers and electronic instruments evoke this historical period?

Characterisation

Creating characters

One of the key reasons we become interested in stories is that we can identify with the plight of a character. The writer of *Chinese Straight* constructs a narrator who invites our empathy through her lively self description and a desire that we have each felt at some time, to be more like others to be accepted in the in-crowd. Here first description of herself is:

I knew it would take an awful lot for broad-nosed, coffee-toned, B-cup, study-freak me to make the grass-greener leap.

<http://www.sbs.com.au/programs/true-stories/podcast/episode-2/chinese-straight>

Which of the compound adjectives refer to the narrator's physical description and which refer to an aspect of her character?

Listen to the story again and note words, phrases, actions and attitudes that help you

- build up a character study of the narrator
- understand the character of the birthday party girl's mother
- recognise the character of the birthday party girl.

Write a brief character description of each and consider the following questions:

- Which of the characters are flat (having one feature necessary for the story, stereotypic) and which are rounded (more fully drawn and individualised)?
- To what extent does each character represent social attitudes and values?

Describing the self

Character, plot and setting are basic elements of narrative or storytelling. Often when writers are creating a story about their own lives they forget to develop the most important character of all – the first person participant narrator in storytelling, themselves!

The two activities below invite you to develop a character sketch, first using compound adjectives and then using common nouns

- Use the four compound adjective self-portrait by Maxine Beneba Clarke as a model for your own description of yourself.
- You might also include her use of an accumulation of compound adjectives to develop a self-portrait that you include in your own true story.

Compound adjective self-portrait:

1. -
2. -
3. -
4. me!

Common noun self-portrait

Not an easy place for book-geek-black-girl me.

Compose a four-word self-portrait inspired by Maxine Beneba Clarke's writing by listing four common nouns or a combination of nouns and adjectives.

You might choose one noun that is colloquial language or slang, such as geek.

You might include this self-portrait in your own true story.

Four common nouns self-portrait:

1.
2.
3.
4.

Whose Story?

As a slam poetry and spoken word performer Maxine Beneba Clarke is extremely interested in the voices of characters. Even though *Chinese Straight* is narrated by a character in the story the presence of other characters' voices is noteworthy.

You will notice the how the character of Greek Charlie is developed by his repeated noun choices of 'sweetie' and 'darling' when he addresses the narrator.

Retell Maxine Beneba Clarke's *Chinese Straight* from the perspective of one of the following:

- the mother hosting the pool party
- the birthday girl who has grudgingly invited Maxine to the pool party
- the hairdresser Greek Charlie
- Maxine's mother or father
- one of the other girls at the party

Your retelling should be about 600 words or 5 minutes in length. Make sure you include elements of character description to encourage readers or listeners to take an interest in your character.

You might like to retell this story in the form of a monologue.

True Story Podcast

Write your own true story intended for online publication as a podcast and include: a logline pitch, an episode description, a graphic and a sound design.

Your story should be no longer than five minutes or about 600 words.

The subject matter of your story should be an experience at school or high school.

You can find Story Telling Tips on *The Moth* website: <http://themoth.org/tell-a-story/storytelling-tips>

Possible topics for a True Story Podcast

The teacher might choose not to have students mirroring the subject matter of high school in the *True Stories* podcasts. They might elect one of the topics below as an alternative or allow students to choose or create their own.

- Out of my comfort zone
- How I learned to...
- The No Good, Very Bad, Terrible, Worst Day Ever
- If could change anything about that day...
- Moving too fast
- A secret
- A Family Dinner
- Getting what you deserve
- How to be...(good, bad, disappointing, embarrassing, forgiven, or choose your own word)
- An awkward situation

The Spoken Word

Podcasts are written to be heard. Make sure your language sounds natural to the ear while still having a tight narrative structure.

What is a logline pitch?

A logline is a one-line summary of a screenplay or script. They can run two or three lines or sentences, but no more than that. Sometimes logline pitches are called elevator pitches.

Imagine that a person only had the time to pitch an idea to a producer in the time it takes to get from the first to the second floor in an elevator.

Loglines are commonly used in film and television production but are increasingly used for literature. Some publishers run Twitter pitch competitions in which new authors tweet a 140 character pitch in the hope that this will lead to a contract.

Why do you need a logline pitch?

- Loglines keep you focused as you write.
- They help clarify purpose and audience.
- They keep you and your teacher on the same page and helps you work as a team.
- They help others to know what you are striving to create so that they are better able to assist you and offer meaningful feedback.

An effective logline pitch

- clearly identifies the setting (time and place) of the story
- quickly identifies the genre or genres in play e.g. horror, romance, action
- uses clichés or well known phrases to describe the main characters e.g. a small town girl with big city dreams, a vengeful alien who is the last of his species
- captures the beginning, middle and end of the story
- leaves the audience wanting to know more, no major spoilers.

There are many websites that provide examples of logline pitches. Research and share logline pitches for your favourite feature films.

<http://www.bestscreenwritingbooks.com/logline-examples/>

Write a logline pitch for:

- a text that you already know well, such as a text you have already studied in English this year.
- Maxine Beneba Clarke's *True Stories* podcast *Chinese Straight*.
- your own *True Story* podcast. Include a draft title for your podcast in this pitch.

Share this pitch with your class.

Elements of a Podcast

1. Title
2. Text Description
3. Audio content
4. Graphic Art
5. Sound design

Title

A title is an important element of any story. A title may help the reader to predict the subject matter or genre of a story. The title may be ironic. Sometimes the title introduces the reader to a key motif or symbol in the story.

Finding a title

- Once you have completed the first draft of your true story podcast take a paper copy and read through it highlighting or underlining words or phrases that sound like a title. You might also highlight words that are important objects or symbols in your true story.
- Transcribe these words and phrases into a list in a new document or on another sheet of paper.
- Make a short list from the transcribed list of possible titles. You may find your final title on this list.
- Be prepared to play 'Justify your title'. You have one minute to do this.

Text Description or Episode Description

Each podcast series or podcast episode will usually be supported by a text description of its content. An episode description is a summary of the content of the podcast, but usually will not contain spoilers.

Such text descriptions are often described as a form of click bait. This is online material such as a headline or taster that encourages the internet user to click through to the main content. The text description may use sensationalism to encourage this click through.

Text descriptions of podcast episodes often open with clinch or hook sentences. These stimulate a sense of curiosity and raise questions in the mind of the online user that can only be satisfied by streaming or downloading the podcast. Text descriptions often conclude with a cliff-hanger, a dilemma or conflict that is not resolved in a story or episode. The reader has to continue with the next episode to learn if and how the resolution is provided.

These descriptions are typically only a paragraph in length, usually no more than fifty words and provides key words for a search engine.

SBS *True Stories* Episode Description:

High School, a time of metamorphosis for most of us. For award-winning poet and author, Maxine Beneba Clarke the transformation brings hope that the school-yard taunts will be over. It seems just within reach, but can she really change herself?

http://www.sbs.com.au/programs/true-stories/podcast/episode-2/chinese-straight?cid=cxenseab_a

This episode description

- identifies with the audience (us) with a hook then
- relates a common experience and then
- closes with a rhetorical question, enticing the reader with an open question of possibilities.

Audio Content

Write an episode description for your own 'True Story' podcast, using this model.

It should be no longer than 2-3 sentences. A 50-word limit must not be exceeded.

The purpose of your episode description is to evoke curiosity in your online viewer and encourage them to click on and then stream or download your podcast.

Graphic Art

Podcasts are aural texts but they are always downloaded from websites so an episode may be accompanied by illustrations or photographs or a graphic logo design for the series

Representation:

Imagine your podcast is to be streamed from the website of SBS. Design an image or illustration to accompany your podcast on such a website.

- Your illustration should be a simple line drawing.
- It should seek to represent the mood or atmosphere from a moment in your true story.
- The colour background that you select for your image or illustration might symbolise or represent a feeling evoked by the story.

Sound Design

Sound design is the process of choosing, locating, manipulating or creating audio elements for a text that has audio features. It most commonly involves the manipulation of previously composed or recorded audio, such as sound effects and dialogue. In some instances, it may also involve the composition or manipulation of audio to create a desired effect or mood.

Create a written summary of your own sound design for Maxine Beneba Clarke's podcast *Chinese Straight*. Use the table below to help organise your ideas.

You might complete this activity in pairs or in small groups.

Sound Design Table for SBS *True Story* podcast *Chinese Straight*

Dialogue (begins at.../ concludes at...)	Sound /voice effect/score	Effect	Time Stamp (duration, at x mins x secs)

Kenny's Coming Home – Ned Manning

The Australian Script Centre (trading as australianplays.org), 1992

Keys to conflict

Drama derives much of its interest from conflict. Characters in drama have different objectives and these often conflict with the objectives of other characters in the play.

In your group, read this extract from scene 1 of *Kenny's Coming Home* and note any points of potential conflict between the characters. Each member of your group should choose one of the characters as a focus.

DAD You heard about Derek?

MUM Derek?

DAD Dropped dead playing squash.

MUM Poor Cynthia.

KIM Poor Derek, he's the dead one.

DAD Couldn't have happened at a worse time for the Party.

MUM She won't know what to do with herself without all those functions to attend.

DAD This is, of course, an opportunity for the Party to pick a candidate more in touch with...

KIM The people?

DAD With the economic climate. Poor Derek, bless his soul was like your Aunt, thought the Whitlam fiasco was a success.

MUM Well to a certain extent it was.

DAD Yeah, just ask Malcom Fraser.

MUM I'd say recognizing that China existed wasn't a bad start.

DAD Bloody hot eh? Drying the garden out.

MUM Not to mention Vietnam.

(DAD goes to the window and looks out)

DAD Damn and blast! That rotten dog's been into the garden again.

(DAD climbs out the window)

MUM What?

DAD My zucchinis!

(DAD sings: The Zucchini Song)

DAD SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT IT'S SO EASY
TO GROW THE PERFECT ZUCCHINI
OH IT NEEDS A LOT OF LOVE 'N' CARE 'N' ATTENTION
NEEDS A LOT OF LOVE IN ANOTHER DIMENSION

MIX IT UP WITH GARLIC
AND A TOUCH OF ONION
THINLY SLICED AND A PINCH OF CINNAMON.
ZUCCHINI

2. MY MANGLED FRIEND I AM SO SORRY
THE PERFECT PROOF OF WATERING POORLY
OH IT NEEDS A LOT OF LOVE 'N' CARE 'N' ATTENTION
NEEDS A LOT OF LOVE IN ANOTHER DIMENSION
JUST ENOUGH WATER AND JUST ENOUGH SUNSHINE
JUST ENOUGH LOVE TO CREATE THE PERFECT VINE.

CHORUS AND EVERY SEED I PLANTAND EVERY INCH YOU GROW
EVERY SPROUT THAT SHOWS
WITH EVERY GARDEN HOSE
I'LL BE WATCHING YOU.

(REPEAT CHORUS JOINED BY MUM AND KIM)

(AUNT DOROTHY enters wheeling a shopping trolley. If possible she should have dog inside along with a few cartons of beer and a carton of Craven A cigarettes. She is Dad's older sister and has had a beer or two.)

AUNT D Evening all. Bad luck about Derek eh? Maybe they'll get someone with enough guts to stand up the economic bloody rationalists. You know who I'd like to see stand don't ya? Kenny.

MUM Kenny?

AD Be ideal. Young, popular, charismatic, enough mongrel.

KIM Kenny's in Adelaide AD.

AUNT D So? Adelaide isn't another planet is it'?

MUM I think he's quite happy where he is.

KIM God knows why, married to that tight arse.

MUM Kim!

KIM Well she is. Bloody North Shore snob.

MUM Kenny's happy that's all that matters.

KIM If that's what it takes to be happy I'd rather be dead.

AUNT D What's Artie doing.

(DAD appears at the window with an armful of zucchinis.)

DAD Here, shove them in the fridge, they'll perish in this heat.

AUNT D Artie! You'll ruin your good suit. What'll the neighbours think?

(DAD has a quick, paranoid look around.)

DAD No-one's around are they?

MUM No dear.

DAD Here. That's the last of them. If I catch that dog it's dead meat.

AUNT D Dead meat!! Who are you kidding?

DAD I mean it.

AUNT D Yeah, yeah.

(She exits whistling with shopping trolley)

DAD There, before our very eyes, goes an example of the living dead. Well, what about Derek eh?

MUM What about Derek?

DAD Well, you know.

MUM No.

KIM I think I know what's coming up.

DAD How'd you like a spell in Canberra?

MUM Canberra?

DAD The National Capital.

KIM I thought as much.

MUM Canberra? I could think of nothing worse.

DAD Hey. Come on now. its a beautiful city, beautifully planned, marvellous facilities...

KIM They've got a Party called "The Sun Ripened Tomatoe Party".

DAD Kim, please.

KIM They have, they've also got a "Party That Doesn't Want To Be A Party".

MUM Bureaucracy gone mad!

KIM And they've got the biggest, most inefficient local government in the history of the Universe.

MUM And the highest suicide rate.

DAD And The National Parliament. Reckon you might soon change your mind as the wife of the Member for Lindsay.

MUM You're joking.

DAD Never been more serious in my life.

MUM You might have got me to move out here but Canberra?

DAD Come on, don't you see? It's all falling into place.

KIM I told you.

DAD I mean, I feel terrible about Derek but the fact of the matter is that he wasn't cutting the mustard. Chances are he would have been replaced before the next election anyway. He didn't understand the need for change. Too hidebound by dogma. We have to be flexible as a Party. We need to sniff out what the electorate wants and give it to them. No-one gives a stuff about social change. What we've got to do is to maintain that middle ground.

KIM Don't let AD hear you say that.

DAD Your Aunt is a dinosaur.

KIM I think I'm going to spew.

DAD Now hang on. I might as well lay my cards on the table.

AD enters

AUNT D Who's for a drink?

DAD Dorothy I've got something to say to the whole family.

AUNT D Will I need a strong one?

KIM A double I'd say.

DAD I have decided, after careful consideration, to throw my hat into the ring.

AUNT D He's joining the circus.

MUM I think so.

DAD You all know that there has always been a desire in the family to serve the Labor Party in any way we can. To answer the call, so to speak. Well, I believe the call has come. I want you to know that I make this decision with the best interests of the Party at heart.

AUNT D The poor bugger's still warm in his grave and already you're jumping into his shoes.

DAD I am going to need your support, your understanding and your patience. I'm going to ring Kenny. He could play a vital part in the campaign. I reckon with him on board I'll be damn near unbeatable. Imagine the publicity he'll bring.

KIM Kenny's in Adelaide Dad.

DAD He can take a couple of weeks off.

MUM Yes, well...

DAD It's all settled then.

AUNT D I don't believe my ears are hearing this.

DAD Come on Dot, this is what Dad always dreamt of, this is why we moved out here, this is the chance of a lifetime. Well??

(A stunned silence)

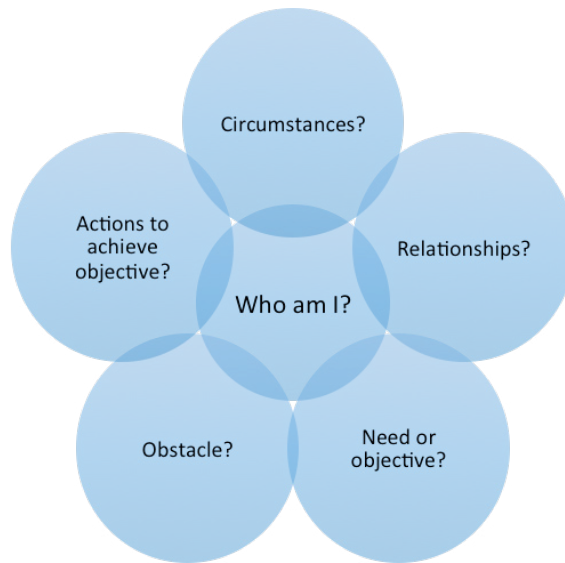
DAD I knew you'd all agree. Ha, ha! I suppose I'd better do something about that garden, can't have the candidate setting a bad example.

(End Scene)

Ned Manning, Kenny's Coming Home, The Australian Script Centre (<http://australianplays.org/script/ASC-73>), 1992 pp.15-22

Knowing your character

Form new groups based on your choice of character and map your character's role in the drama by completing the graphic below.



Language as character

Look at these speeches by Dad:

You all know that there has always been a desire in the family to serve the Labor Party in any way we can. To answer the call, so to speak. Well, I believe the call has come. I want you to know that I make this decision with the best interest of the Party at heart.

Ned Manning, Kenny's Coming Home, The Australian Script Centre (<http://australianplays.org/script/ASC-73>), 1992 p.21

I mean, I feel terrible about Derek but the fact of the matter is that he wasn't cutting the mustard. Chances are the he would have been replaced before the next election anyway. He didn't understand the need to change. Too hidebound by dogma. We have to be flexible as a Party. We need to sniff out what the electorate wants and give it to them. No-one gives a stuff about social change. What we've got to do is to maintain that middle ground.

Ned Manning, Kenny's Coming Home, The Australian Script Centre (<http://australianplays.org/script/ASC-73>), 1992 p.20

Bearing in mind that this discussion is taking place within the family, underline the expressions that you think could be used in

- a political slogan
- a preselection speech (preselection is the process to select a candidate to stand for a party in an election).

How sincere do you think Dad is in wanting the best for the people he would represent in his electorate?

How does the language of your character contribute to their role in the scene?

Compiling what you have learned

Return to your original group, share your information and complete this table

Character	Scene objective	Super objective (for the play as a whole)
Kim		
Mum		
Dad		
Aunt D		

Discuss

- how each character may be represented through behaviour, tone and gestures
- what attitudes and values are implied by the information in the relationships graphic
- how power relationships between the characters are suggested in their behaviour towards each other.

Predicting conflict

The play is called *Kenny's Coming Home*.

- What questions does this set up about
 - the subject matter
 - the importance of Kenny to his family and acquaintances
 - the conflicts in the play?
- Knowing what you know about the characters, their objectives and potential obstacles, speculate what complications or conflicts might arise in the play and share these with the class.
- Write a reflection on how your work on your character and his or her relationships has developed your original ideas about the keys to the conflict in the play.

How real is realism?

Representing the real

Real life can at times be very ordinary. When writing, images, performances or films appear realistic, they are far from ordinary and everyday. They are actually very carefully crafted to ensure that the ordinary and everyday are made interesting and engaging.

Consider the extract from *Kenny's Coming Home* and note what is realistic or life-like about the play and what needs to be artfully arranged to represent reality successfully on stage.

Features of a play	Realistic elements	Artifice
Setting		
Plot		
Characterisation		
Thematic concerns		
Dialogue		
Acting style		

Set up a stage area with furniture representing the layout of the family room and rehearse the scene taking into account how and where you will be moving and acting.

Representing an idea or a feeling

At the beginning of this extract we enter a world that we accept for the time being to be real, an accurate depiction of the world. But sometimes a playwright aims to represent a different kind of truth, an idea or a feeling, something that cannot be expressed through the actions of characters. This can be done in many ways including

- Song
- Caricature
- Dance
- Freeze frame
- Soliloquy
- Multimedia

In your group, choose one of the complications that were predicted in the class and decide

- what idea or feeling this illustrates
- how the idea or feeling could be communicated by anything but dialogue or action.

Prepare a presentation in which you use some non-realistic device to represent an idea or feeling that you want the scene to convey. You will need to write a short script, discuss how you will stage it and rehearse the presentation.

Performance

Perform one of your prepared scenes – either the official scripted version or your own representation of an idea or feeling based on an imagined complication of the play.

We drove to Auburn – Fiona Wright

We drove to Auburn

*It certainly felt like a Food Safari, such a long way from Kirribilli.
I'd googled Moroccan grocers, there wasn't anything,
so I'd figured Turkish would do. Auburn. We drove to Auburn.
I didn't know it's so economically challenged.
The shops had no windows. No proper signs.
The coffee tasted bitter. But we bought orange-blossom water.
And pomegranate syrup. So much cheaper than over here.
Although we had to pay for petrol. It's a long way from Kirribilli.
They served our pastries on a plastic plate.
The waiter wouldn't tell me what they are. He just said biscuit,
and sweet. And I'm intolerant of tree nuts, anyway.
We spent sixty dollars on wholesale Turkish Delight.
I know it's not to theme,
but we can have it with our sticky later on.
I think my off-the-shoulder embarrassed them. It's a long way
from Kirribilli. There was a Torture Rehabilitation Clinic
right next to the delicatessen.*

Fiona Wright, *Knuckled*, Giramondo Publishing, Sydney, 2011

Glossary

Turkish

(adjective) the word used to describe the official language and nationality of the country of Turkey.

pomegranate syrup

a sticky and sweet fruit syrup made from pomegranate juice. It is used in both Moroccan and Turkish cuisine. The round and red pomegranate fruit is filled with clusters of juicy and fleshy seeds. Pomegranates have been grown in Asia, the Middle East and the Mediterranean for thousands of years.

orange-blossom water

the by-product of distilling orange blossoms or flowers for their essential oil. The clear liquid has a strong aroma and in North African culture is used in cooking, especially to flavour to desserts such as baklava. In traditional Moroccan culture guests will have their hands washed in orange-blossom water when they visit.

wholesale

to buy goods at wholesale means to purchase large quantities at low prices. Usually goods are bought wholesale by shop owners who then sell them on to the public at a higher price to make a profit.

Turkish Delight

known as rahat lokum in Arabic, this is a sweet, pink gel confectionary made of sugar and starch that is popular throughout the Middle East. Turkish Delight might be flavoured with rose water, nuts such as almonds or pistachios, or with dried fruits, spearmint or cinnamon. It was first introduced to British culture in the nineteenth century.

sticky

colloquial term for a dessert wine, a sweet wine with high sugar content that is often served at the end of the meal with a dessert.

off-the-shoulder

an item of clothing such as a dress or blouse that exposes the shoulders of the wearer.

Torture Rehabilitation Centre

STARTTS, the NSW Service for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors, is a not for profit organisation with one of its centres located in Auburn. The website of this organisation reveals that it:

...provides culturally appropriate and cutting edge psychological treatment and support to help people heal the scars of torture and refugee trauma and rebuild their lives in Australia. STARTTS helps people and communities from refugee backgrounds, including asylum seekers, who were forced to leave their country due to persecution in the context of political conflict, organised violence and human rights violations...

<http://www.startts.org.au/about-us/>

Introducing the anthology

Knuckled

A significant proportion of reviewers commented on how much they liked the title of Fiona Wright's debut collection. Adam Ford, reviewing *Knuckled* for *Cordite Poetry Review*, observed:

...and can I just start by saying that Knuckled is a great title for a book of poems? It's a word that's easy to understand, one that immediately brings images to mind (hands, fists, gnarled trees, walking-sticks) but also one that you don't hear that often. It's also a fabulous word to say out loud over and over again.

<http://cordite.org.au/reviews/adam-ford-reviews-fiona-wright/>

Writing on their *Metre Maids* poetry blog E. Kristin Anderson and Amber Beilharz interpreted the title the following ways:

The title of the collection mirrors the sparse language... Knuckled, as in curled tightly, a fist, the way fruit grows, a certain type of ugliness and something which is, at best, unafraid of itself.

<http://www.metremaids.com/2012/12/31/reading-roundup/>

knuckled: definition: (verb)

to rub or press something (especially the eyes) with the hands

Pair and Share Discussion Questions

- What is a knuckle? What does it mean to be knuckled?
- What connotations or word associations do you have for the title *Knuckled*?
- What feelings are evoked by this title?
- What ideas are evoked by this title?
- How might this title represent the nature of the poetry to be found in Fiona Wright's collection?
- How might this title help you to predict the nature or subject matter of this collection? What might the poetry be like? What might the poems be about?

Connotation

A connotation is the idea or feeling which a word invokes for a person in addition to its literal or main meaning. For example the word home may have connotations of warmth, family or love.

Uses of the term 'knuckled'

Mix and match the following terms with their meaning

Term	Meaning
white knuckled:	to set yourself to work in a disciplined and determined manner
throwing knuckles:	a punch to the mouth
knuckle under:	to be primitive or uncivilised
too near the knuckle:	a form of tough and violent boxing that involves who fighting gloves
knuckle sandwich:	to be very frightened or excited, as on a theme park ride
dragging your knuckles:	push up exercise where the knuckles of a clenched fist are placed on the ground
knuckle push ups:	childhood game or game of chance
bare knuckle fighters:	something too explicit or too close to the truth for comfort

- What ideas or feelings are associated with these terms?
- What are some of the connotations of the word *knuckled*?
- Based on the connotations of the word, what can you expect from the poems in an anthology entitled *Knuckled*?

Understanding the poem

- Listen to Fiona Wright reading her poem from the *Poetica* radio documentary: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/poetica/knuckled/4489006> (6mins 16secs).
- Then listen to the reading following a printed hard copy of the poem.
- Locate Kirribilli and Auburn on a map. If you have internet access in your classroom you might use Google Maps or Google Earth to do this.

Kirribilli and Auburn are 24.2 km apart and it takes about 30-45 minutes, depending on the time of day, to travel between the two suburbs by car.

Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where is the poem set? 2. Who is the speaker of the poem? 3. What is the purpose of the speaker or persona's journey to Auburn? What evidence in the poem tells the reader this? 4. The speaker of the poem is female. What evidence in the poem reveals her gender to the reader? 5. In what ways is the speaker different to the inhabitants of Auburn? What evidence in the poem illustrates her difference? 6. The title of the poem reveals that the speaker did not travel to Auburn alone (note the use of the plural pronoun we) but her companions are not identified. Who do you think she may have taken as her companion or companions?
Inferences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. How do you think the narrator of the poem might have felt while she was in Auburn? Name the emotions she might have been feeling. 8. Describe your view of what you think the persona would look like and be wearing the day she visits Auburn. Consider her hair, accessories, make up, clothing, handbag and shoes. 9. What sort of car do you think the speaker of the poem might drive? Justify your choice. 10. Like most dramatic monologues this poem has an implied sense of audience. Who do you think is listening to the speaker's monologue about visiting Auburn? 11. How are the experiences of shopping and visiting a café revealed to be different in Auburn from the same experiences in Kirribilli? What evidence in the poem highlights these difference?
Cultural knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. What does the speaker mean when she says that Auburn is so economically challenged? This expression is a euphemism; a mild or indirect expression used to blunt the impact of subject matter considered to be impolite or confronting. 13. Why do you think the poet has written economically challenged in italics? How do you think the persona might say these words? If you were reading this poem to an audience how might you deliver this line? Describe your tone of voice. 14. Why do you think the persona thinks her off-the-shoulder might have embarrassed the residents of Auburn? How does this reveal the persona is an outsider in Auburn? 15. In this poem the voices of the inhabitants of western Sydney are almost entirely silent. We only hear two words spoken by people from Auburn and these are reported by the persona. What are these words? Why do you think these words were included in the poem? 16. The speaker repeats in a refrain that It's a long way from Kirribilli. In what ways in the poem is Auburn shown to be different to or a long way from Kirribilli?

Recognising and challenging assumptions

An assumption is something that people generally believe to be true or certain to happen, but without proof. A text may challenge the assumptions that people have about its subject matter.

- The speaker of this dramatic monologue travels to Auburn in western Sydney. What assumptions might readers have about Auburn and the type of experience she might have there?
- Are the assumptions you have about Auburn seen to be proven or disproven in the poem?
- The speaker of the poem is from Kirribilli on the lower North Shore of Sydney. What assumptions about this suburb and its inhabitants might the reader bring to this poem?
- Are your assumptions about Kirribilli confirmed or challenged by the poem?

Dramatic monologue

From the Greek monos meaning alone or solitary and logos meaning speech, a dramatic monologue is a poem written in the form of a speech by an individual character.

This form of poem tells a story which gives the reader a sense of the single speaker's life history and character. Often dramatic monologues provide a great deal of psychological insight into the speaker.

A dramatic monologue is also known as a persona poem. The poet adopts the voice of a character or fictional identity other than their own. The voice of the poem is not the poet's.

The audience of a dramatic monologue is implied and there may be a sense of a listener. Some writers of dramatic monologues include interlocutory phrases where the speaker can be seen to respond to a listener. The listener may have a very different response to what the persona says from that of the reader of the poem.

Dramatic monologues are one person's speech and so the reader is left to interpret what the persona reveals about themselves. The poet does not intrude to provide analysis or commentary on the world of the poem.

Knowing the persona

Create a visual representation of 'woman from Kirribilli', the persona of Fiona Wright's poem *We Drove to Auburn*.

You should include written text (perhaps in the form of quotations from the poem) and visual images, which may be hand drawn or cut from magazines or online.

Think carefully about how you would represent this woman and her world as you plan this representation.

Share your representation with your group.

Review your understanding of the persona of the poem through whose eyes we see Auburn and discuss the following questions in your group:

- To what extent did you 'buy into' her view of Auburn in your first readings of the poem? Give examples.
- At what point did you question the partiality of this view of Auburn? Give quotations and explain what made you suspicious?

Which side are you on?

Decide whether you agree or disagree with this statement:

We Drove to Auburn says more about the persona than the suburb.

Choose one point to support your side of this argument. You need to explain your view supporting your statements with a quotation from the poem.

Go to one end of the room to stand with those who agree with you. Convert others to your opinion by presenting your point or cross the floor yourself when you are convinced by the arguments of the opposition.

Theme

At its simplest level theme can be explained as the message of the text. The events in a story are its 'subject matter' and the theme is the deeper meaning that may be applied to all people. So in this poem the subject matter centres on a woman who is going to a place she is unfamiliar with in order to buy food. The meaning, the theme, is about what this shows about our understanding of different people.

Theme or subject matter?

Look at these statements and decide which are about subject matter (S) and which are about theme (T):

Statements	T or S?
A woman goes to Auburn to find exotic foods	
We often have assumptions and misconceptions about places	

Statements	T or S?
Kirribilli is very different to Auburn	
We find ourselves identified by where we live	
The woman thinks the place is not very well organised and doesn't even have signs	
Prejudice finds ways of confirming itself	
The woman thought her clothing embarrassed them	
Tolerance means understanding that the world is filled with different perspectives	

Activity: Find another poem and list subject matter and themes showing the clear difference.

The unifying power of theme

The theme is what links all the parts of a text and gives it a sense of completeness, of integrity. Here is an example of how this works:

Theme: Prejudice finds ways of confirming itself

Evidence:

Content/ subject matter:

A woman a wealthy suburb is travelling from to a less privileged area to purchase cheaply some of its exotic flavours to enhance a dinner party for friends. She is blind to the discomfort she causes by her dress and attitude and can only find the suburb and its inhabitants deficient. She notices but does not appreciate the significance of the Torture Rehabilitation Clinic in the midst of the daily life of the suburb.

Tone:

The woman uses a flippant, dismissive tone in recounting the experience to friends in the assumption that they share her attitudes

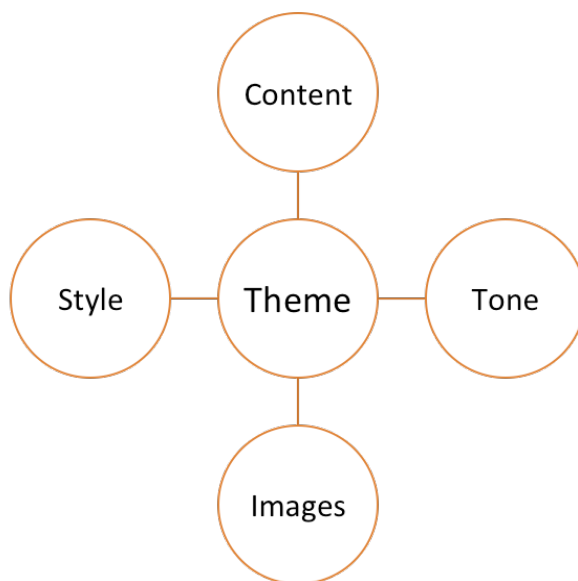
Images:

Fragmented snapshots of what she sees and experiences, bluntly stated show she has no coherent understanding of the rich colour and meaning of her journey.

Style:

The poet is imitative of the spontaneous and unrevised nature of spoken language in her choice of everyday diction, truncated sentences and the use of free verse. The persona's choice of words shows she is dismissive and critical of the people supporting the theme of prejudice confirming itself.

Complete this diagram finding evidence for another theme of your choice.



Free verse

Line breaks

What is line break?

Poet and educator Amy Ludwig Van Derwater observes how one of the differences between poetry and prose is that they look different on the page. Poems tend to have shorter lines than paragraphs and they are surrounded by white space. In *A Poetry Handbook*, poet Mary Oliver says, 'prose is printed (or written) within the confines of margins, while poetry is written in lines that do not necessarily pay any attention to the margins, especially the right margin'.

The place where a poet chooses to end one line and begin another is known as a line break. Often a poet will end the line of a poem before the end of a sentence or before the punctuation. For example, a line may end before the full stop or at the point of a comma.

Mary Oliver, *A Poetry Handbook*, Mariner Books, San Diego, USA 1995. p.35

Line breaks can be used by the poet to control the flow by which the reader encounters ideas and images. By placing a word at the start or end of a line can draw emphasis to a word and its meaning.

Line breaks help the reader to know how to read a poem, both out loud and inside their heads. A line break can slow or increase the pace of a poem. It can also change the sound of a poem.

Poets can also use line breaks in order to position readers into multiple understandings or to create ambiguity in their writing.

De-lineated Poem

Mona St is another poem by Fiona Wright. It is reproduced here without line breaks:

You forget about it, sometimes. The open-cut of this place, how each day feels as sticky and measured as cough syrup. A curly child dips from her mother's black sleeve like a teabag. You forget the metallic tang of vanilla deodorant and chalk dust, the open cut of adolescence. Outside the Sports Club blue backpacks bob and murmur and station wagons herringbone the one-way streets. You forget, sometimes, writing hours of lamplit letters, as if you could pin yourself against them. The classroom doors swollen under the humidity of hormones. Chewing brittle fingernails, skipped lunches. The buses grunt towards a funeral parlour that offers NRL-themed coffins, biodegradable and carbon-neutral. You learn to forget the things that jostle and bruise inside blue backpacks and are never unbattered again.

Have one of your group read it out aloud before discussing the following questions.

- What type of text is the de-lineated version of the poem? What names could you use to describe it? Justify your choice of label for this de-lineated version.
- Do you think this version still looks like a poem? Do you think it could be a poem? Give reasons to justify your point of view.

In pairs, decide where you think the line breaks should be and rewrite the poem accordingly.
pairs, decide where you think the line breaks should be and rewrite the poem accordingly.

Writing your own poetry

Write *We drove to...* poem, after Fiona Wright

In an interview for *The Disappearing* public poetry project Fiona Wright observed how the power of poetry lies in 'looking at things differently'. <http://redroomcompany.org/poet/fiona-wright/>

In this activity you will compose your own poem inspired by Fiona Wright's *We drove to Auburn*. It will explore how the perspective of an outsider can offer a particular or different perspective on a place that is well known to you.

This poem will acknowledge Fiona Wright as a model for your own writing and include a dedication: after Fiona Wright. Many contemporary Australian poets write poems that pay tribute to the influence of other poets and include such an acknowledgement.

Instructions

Compose your own dramatic monologue that explores a specific place from the perspective of an outsider.

- This outsider might have their assumptions about this place challenged or confirmed by their journey.
- Choose a destination for this journey that you already know well. This destination may be in Western Sydney.
- Consider the purpose of the trip before you begin writing. It may differ to that of the speaker of Fiona Wright's poem.
- Use the scaffold below to help you organise your ideas into a poem. You must use the sentence starters in your poem, but might play with the order in which they appear.

Length: no more than 20 lines (Fiona Wright's poem is 17 lines)

Use the *Poem Analysis and Planning Handout* to help you develop your ideas for your own poem.

Poem Analysis and Planning for Student Writing

Fiona Wright's *We drove to Auburn* / Student's own *We drove to...* poem, after Fiona Wright

Aspect of poem	Fiona Wright's 'We drove to Auburn'	My poem
Speaker/ persona's identity/ character		
Speaker's home	Kirribilli	
Speaker's destination	Auburn	
Time setting of poem:		
Purpose(s)/ nature of speaker's journey		
How is the speaker an outsider in their destination?		
Implied audience or listener of the dramatic monologue		
How is the persona changed by their journey? What might they have learnt? What assumptions may be confirmed or challenged?		
What theme or values do you want to express through the poem?		

Scaffold for 'We drove to...' poem, after Fiona Wright:

Title:

We drove to... (insert your own place name here)

Dedication:

after Fiona Wright

Sentence starters:

Incorporate these sentence starters into the body of your poem to help you draft your own poem.

- It certainly felt like...
- I didn't know...
- I know it's not...
- No...
- I think my...

You might like to incorporate Fiona Wright's refrain: *It's a long way from...*

Drafting process: PowerPoint slides

Compose your *We drove to...*, after Fiona Wright using PowerPoint as a drafting tool.

This approach uses PowerPoint to create a digital record of your drafting process. The poet cuts and pastes and edits successive drafts of the poem in new PowerPoint slides. Your teachers and peers can use the Notes section of PowerPoint to offer constructive criticism of your drafts. Alternatively, you can use the Comments bar in the Review function from the Tool Bar for adding this form of feedback. You can also write a short reflection (perhaps in dot point) about your process of composing and final product in your final slides

Thanks to poet Lachlan Brown for this approach to drafting poetry. It works particularly well with short poems such as haiku or senryu.

Instructions:

- 1) Open a new PowerPoint file and save it with a title beginning with *We drove to* poem and ending with your name e.g. *WedrovetoJamesLi*.
- 2) Label the title slide or Slide One as: *We drove to...*, after Fiona Wright Poem. Include your name underneath the title.
- 3) Make a new slide (you can use CTRL+M to do this) In Slide Two type Draft 1 into the title section where you see, Click to add title. Begin your first draft of this poem in the body section of this slide.
- 4) Make a new slide (Slide Three) and label it Draft 2 in the title section. Cut and paste the text of your first draft of your poem from Slide Two into the body section of Slide Three. Continue drafting and editing your poem in Slide Three.
- 5) Continue the process. Cut and paste the altered draft in Slide Three into the body of Slide Four. The Title of Slide Four will be Draft 3.
- 6) Keep going until you have written five drafts of your poem.
- 7) Cut and paste Draft Five into a Word document and then play with the shape of the poem on the page in this format.
- 8) Write a reflection in dot points on both your process and your completed poem in the final two slides of your PowerPoint.

Activity

Imagine you are the persona of Fiona Wright's poem *We Drove to Auburn*. After your successful trip to Auburn you have decided to explore other suburbs of Sydney.

Compose a new poem in the form of a dramatic monologue where your character explores a suburb of Sydney of your choice. This could be the suburb where you live.

Think carefully about the purpose of the journey to this place. It may differ to the purpose outlined in the poem *We drove to Auburn*.

Your poem should be no more than 20 lines.

Research

You might like to look at the entries in the *52 suburbs* blog to inspire your writing:

52 Suburbs Poem: The Kirribilli Woman Drives Again

Many people who live in Sydney rarely venture outside their local suburb. Crossing the Sydney Harbour Bridge can be a significant barrier to people exploring new suburbs in Sydney. Louise Hawson, the founder of the 52 Suburbs blog, realised she was a stranger in her own city and so set herself a mission to explore a new suburb each week. Her task was to find the beauty in the 'burbs. She visited 52 suburbs in Sydney between September 2009 and October 2010. Auburn was the tenth suburb she explored.

<http://www.52suburbs.com.au/2009/11/suburb-no-9-auburn.html>

or look at the Census Quickstats page for your chosen suburb:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/census?opendocument&navpos=10>

Urban Sprawl – Lachlan Brown

in Lachlan Brown (2012), *Limited Cities*, Giramondo.

Becoming familiar with the poem

In pairs, read the poem out loud to each other twice, paying particular attention to

- the form of the poem and
- the use of punctuation to mark pausing.

Make notes answering the following questions.

1. How is the poem structured?
2. Why do you think it is structured like this?
3. What punctuation is favoured in this poem?
4. Where is this punctuation used? Is there a pattern?
5. What is the effect of the poet's choice of using the punctuation like this?

Working towards meaning

Resources:

- A copy of the poem for each person
- Highlighter pens and pens of many different colours
- Butcher paper.

What it is saying

Split from your partner to form a new pair.

The purpose of this exercise is to identify images, ideas or feelings that you can relate to or are recognisable in the poem.

With your partner, mark the poem in the following ways.

- Draw a double asterisk next to key ideas.
- Highlight interesting sounds of words with one particular highlighter colour.
- Highlight with a different coloured highlighter interesting and/ or evocative imagery that captures your attention or is recognisable.

From this work, make some early statements about what the poem is saying and note them down.

How it conveys an outlook on the world

Split from your partner again so no pair from the last activity stays the same. Form a group of four, with all new people.

- Tell your new group what you have already discovered from the poem.
- Discuss the interpretation.

In your new group, mark the poem in the following ways.

- Draw boxes around words, sounds or punctuation that might suggest the tone.
- Does it shift or change anywhere in the poem? If so, where? Put a box around this and highlight it with a different colour to the highlighters you have used in the previous activity.

The world it represents

Individually, do a Google search on images of Macquarie Fields and on news articles on the Macquarie Fields riots.

- Do you recognise any of these images or concerns in the poem, *Urban Sprawl*? What are they?
- Share your findings with your group and discuss this question.
- How does an understanding of the context of the poem help you understand why Lachlan Brown made particular poetic choices in his representation of his connection to place?
- Why do you think Brown wrote the poem? What is his purpose?

Organise your findings into a mind map. You could use paper, padlet.com or Inspiration.

Synthesising what you know

Each member of your group needs a pen of a different colour. On a sheet of A3 or butchers' paper, brainstorm and draw a mind map in answer to these questions.

- What has your group identified as being the key ideas or themes of this poem?
- How do the mood and tone reinforce the key ideas or themes in the poem?
- Draft some strong and clear sentences to express these ideas.

Patchwork Paragraph

In this activity you will be answering the following two questions in a paragraph.

- What has your group identified as being the key ideas or themes of this poem?
- How do the mood and tone reinforce the key ideas or themes in the poem?

You must each contribute at least one sentence in your specific pen colour drawing from the mind map you have created. Edit your paragraph so it reads smoothly.

Share your paragraph with another group.

Imagery

Imagery is a rich source of suggested meanings. Each one of us has a different interpretation of images because we have had different life experiences.

In your groups consider these phrases from Lachlan Brown's poems and complete the ideas with images of conventional beauty.

- A day as brilliant as
- The clear sky curves overhead like
- The timetable stretches like
- A morning flecked with

Locate Brown's images to compare to these conventional images. What is the effect of the actual images in the poem?

How does Lachlan Brown challenge you to think differently about particular images?

Give two examples of where this occurs in the *Macquarie Fields, Spring's edge 2004* and explain how he does this.

Responding to the poems

In this section you will complete some activities and then write your own response to the Macquarie Fields poems.

Task 1: Statements, evidence and effect

Poetry essays need evidence to prove what they are saying. For every statement we make about the text we need proof. This proof/evidence can be quotations, or paraphrases. Some statements are elaborated over a few sentences, that is, explained in more detail.

In this activity take the given paragraph and underline the ideas/statements that are made. Then highlight the evidence for each statement. Then circle the effect on the audience. Alternatively you can use a table with statement, evidence and effect columns. If a statement is missing evidence then try to find the evidence from the poem. If a statement is elaborated then look at what each sentence does to build up meaning

Lachlan Brown's use of imagery has a way of bringing to life spaces that we often assume are devoid of life. The title of this poem, *Urban Sprawl*, connotes negativity, but even in the first line it is apparent that Brown can see the liveliness of this place. It is a liveliness that the rest of society would otherwise miss. It is the way that Brown challenges the stereotypes of places and spaces through his use of imagery that is invigorating. It is not just the images in isolation, but it is the placement of these images syntactically that breathe new possibilities into everyday images. The simple 'corrugated iron' that is followed by the ampersand, 'grinning billboards', another ampersand plus 'a day as brilliant as a fire escape' provides an ambiguity and a playfulness. There is the sense that the poet is engaging us in a game

of making meaning, inviting us to be participants viewing this space with new eyes. We may not have considered describing a day 'as brilliant as a fire escape' but the ambiguity of the line leaves potential for multiple meanings. For some readers the monotone, industrial image is removed and replaced with a theatrical and vibrant red.

Task 2: Topic sentences

Write paragraphs using the topic sentences below.

1. Brown invites the reader to be a participant in the persona's experience.
2. Lachlan Brown's use of imagery has a way of bringing to life spaces that we often assume are devoid of life.
3. The persona is sharing strong emotional responses in this poem.
4. Brown has a way of making the most unlikely comparisons work.

Visual representation

You will be creating your own piece of artwork in response to *Urban Sprawl*.

Part 1:

Read Lachlan Brown's 'Urban Sprawl' then compose a visual representation that is a direct personal response to the poem and attempts to capture what the artist thinks is the tone, thought and feeling behind the poem.

This artwork needs to be suitable for display in the up and coming exhibition titled 'Our Places and Spaces'. To be selected in this exhibition, emerging artists need to respond to a poem that captures the essence of their local area.

You should choose a key motif or metaphor from the poem to form a central image. Other aspects of imagery must also be considered and added as visual elements to enhance the quality of the finished product. The completed visual representation should be clearly identifiable as an artwork that is connected to the chosen particular poem.

Part 2:

Compose a 250-word reflection statement that explains and justifies the choices you have made as a composer of this visual representation. Make sure you convey clearly why you chose to use certain images, materials, colour, aspects of lighting and layout. When doing this, make strong links to the ideas about the value of place that Lachlan Brown communicates in the poem. Explain how the aesthetic qualities of the poem or other elements of language or structure have influenced your decisions as a visual artist and why.

From Image to Collaborative Poem

In this activity you will be composing a poem based on images of your area.

Take some photos of images in your area that you see on your daily route to school. These images could be images of elements that are, perhaps, unappealing or to which you feel ambivalent.

Bring these images to school, share these on a digital or physical wall and discuss them in class.

Choose two of the images on the wall and using imagery and connotative language, write an appealing (and accurate) description of the images. You should not have any image chosen by another student.

Compile selections of these descriptions to create a collaborative poem that sends a positive message about your experience of your suburban or country space. Refine your poem considering

- Sense
- Sound
- Image