



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Creating Connections: A Narrative Writing Workshop

Professional Learning
2024/2025
Afternoon Session

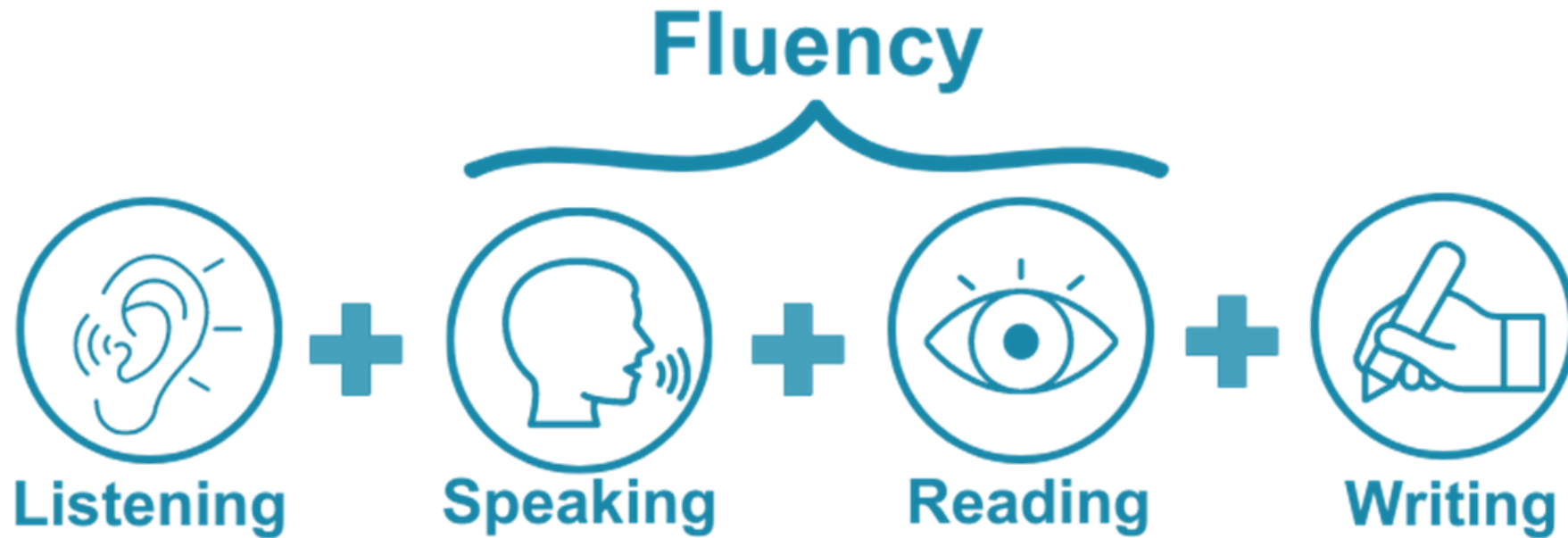




Our Focus For This Session Is...

- linking listening and speaking to narrative writing
- to explore techniques for creating immersive structures and crafting compelling and memorable characters.

Using an Integrated Language Approach



Synergy = the whole is more than the sum of the parts



The Continuum of Learning

Primary Language Curriculum 2019

...engage with and create a wide variety of oral and written texts, **children develop a greater awareness of author voice**. In exploring and using language in the curriculum, they will be **required to listen to and present narratives** and factual accounts of increasing complexity and abstraction.

(p17)

Junior Cycle English Specification 2018

students are actively involved in the **integrated skills of oral language, reading and writing** and in discussing and comparing a wide variety of texts and forms of English

(P4)

...engage frequently with **literary narratives** and will **compose imaginative narratives** of their own

(P8)

Leaving Certificate English Syllabus 1999

...should be able to indicate aspects of the narrative which they found significant and attempt to explain fully the meaning thus generated

(p11)

...**outline the structure of the narrative and how it achieves coherence** within its genre (p12)

Consider how the link between oracy and narrative writing are fostered across the continuum of learning.

Our Understanding of Narrative Writing



A *narrative* is a story that you write or tell to someone, usually in great detail. A *narrative* can be a work of poetry or prose, or even song, theatre, or dance

(Vocabulary.com)

“Students should encounter a wide range of texts which have predominately a narrative function. This should involve students in encountering narratives of all kinds, eg. short stories, novels, drama texts, autobiographies, biographies, travel-books and films.”

(Leaving Certificate Syllabus, p.12)

The Value of Oral Storytelling or the Oral Tradition



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Niall De Búrca - The Power of Storytelling



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Transferring Knowledge: Oral Storytelling & Narrative Writing



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Oral Storytelling



Narrative Writing



Student Dimension: Being a Learner

Building on the junior cycle experience, students begin developing as senior cycle students, embracing opportunities and strategies for learning that work best for the student now and into the future.

Developmental Indicators

- being more open to the use of effective strategies for learning.
- beginning to acquire knowledge and skills relevant to senior cycle.
- expressing their own ideas more clearly while engaging with other people's ideas.



Question 7

Following your study of English for Junior Cycle, you have been asked to give a talk to a group of young readers about:

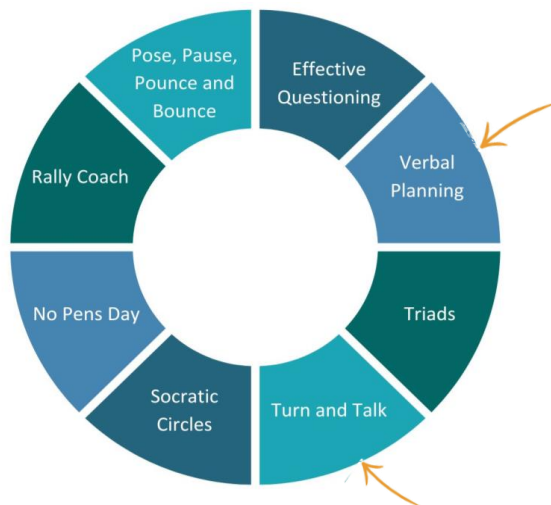
The Art of Good Storytelling.

Write the text of the talk you would deliver, discussing at least three aspects of the art of good storytelling in either the prescribed Shakespearean play or one of the novels that you have studied.

Junior Cycle Final Examination 2023
English – Higher level



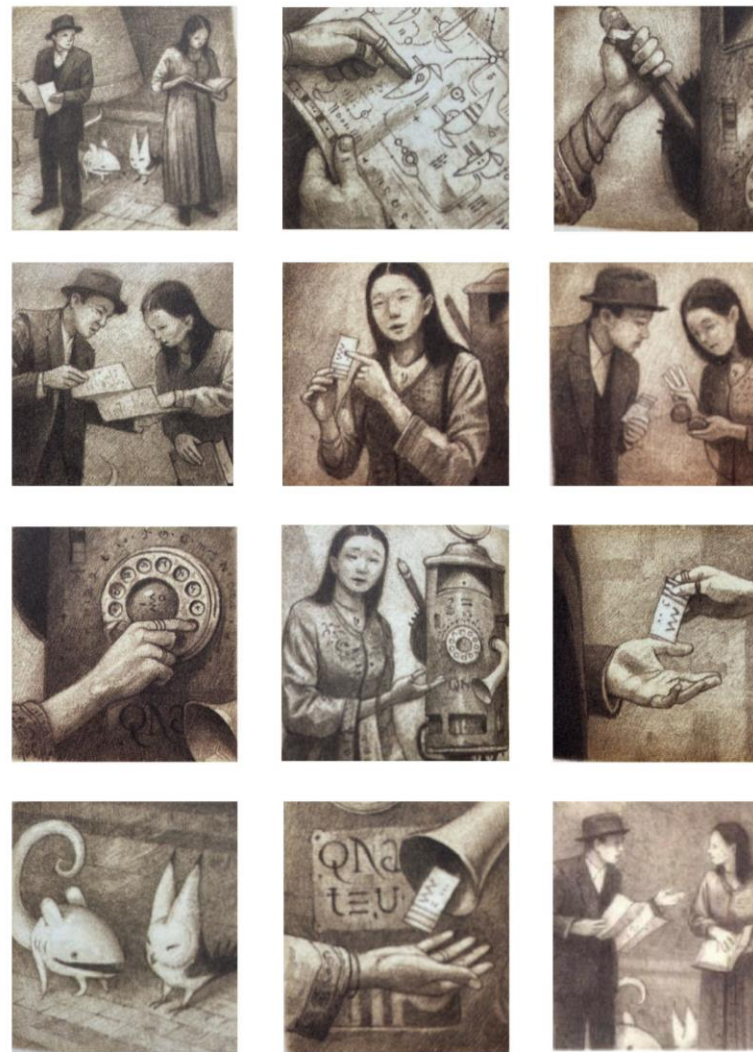
Activity – 7 mins



Turn and Talk:

Arrange these images/panels to create a narrative.

- Specify your audience.
- What is the impact of having no text on this piece?
- What does it do to the story?
- Consider how this oral activity might work in your own context to support planning for narrative writing?



Structure of Our Session



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Creating Story Structure



Developing Character



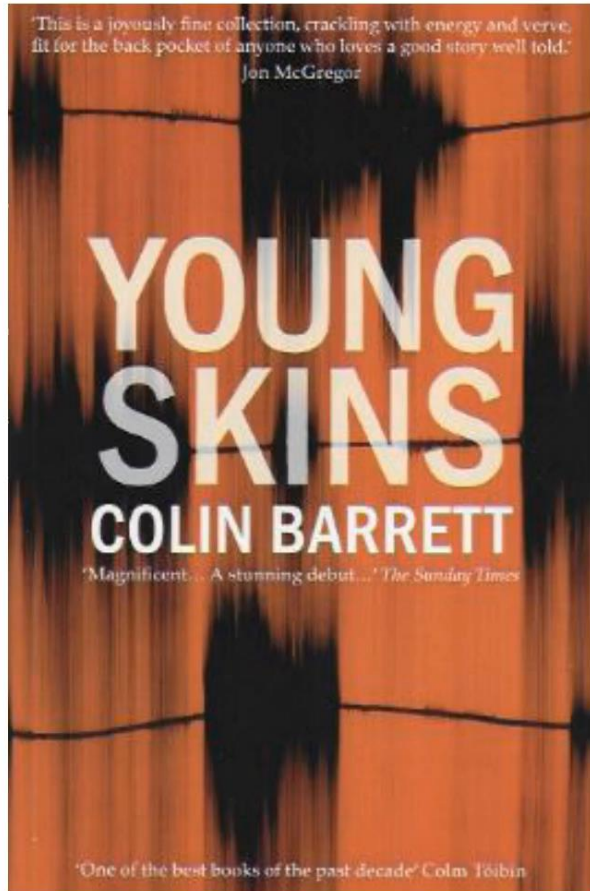
Different Inspirations for Narratives



Colin Barrett



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Some Considerations for Writing Short Stories



DETAIL

Show rather than tell
Make every word count. Include variety in structure



FOCUS

Focus on a single idea or theme. This helps to maintain clarity or coherence



PLOT

Craft a strong beginning , middle or end following a linear narrative

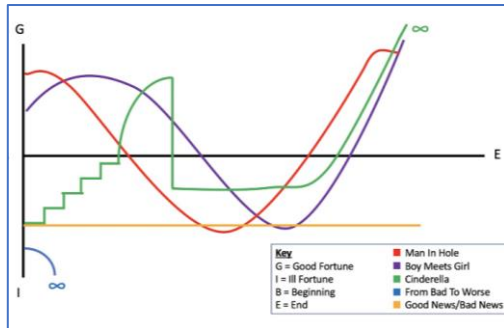


CHARACTER

Every character should serve a purpose and be memorable in some way.



Possible Ways to Structure the Narrative



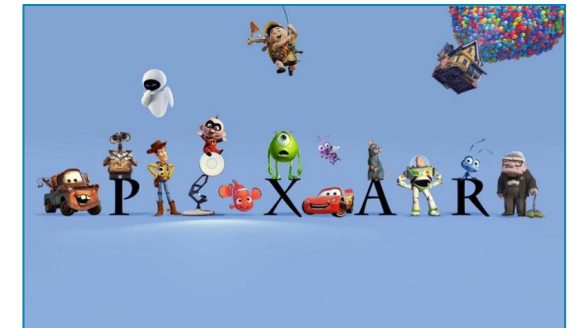
Kurt Vonnegut

Vonnegut posited there are five basic types of story structures



Freytag's Pyramid

Freytag's Pyramid breaks the story arc of a drama into five distinct sections

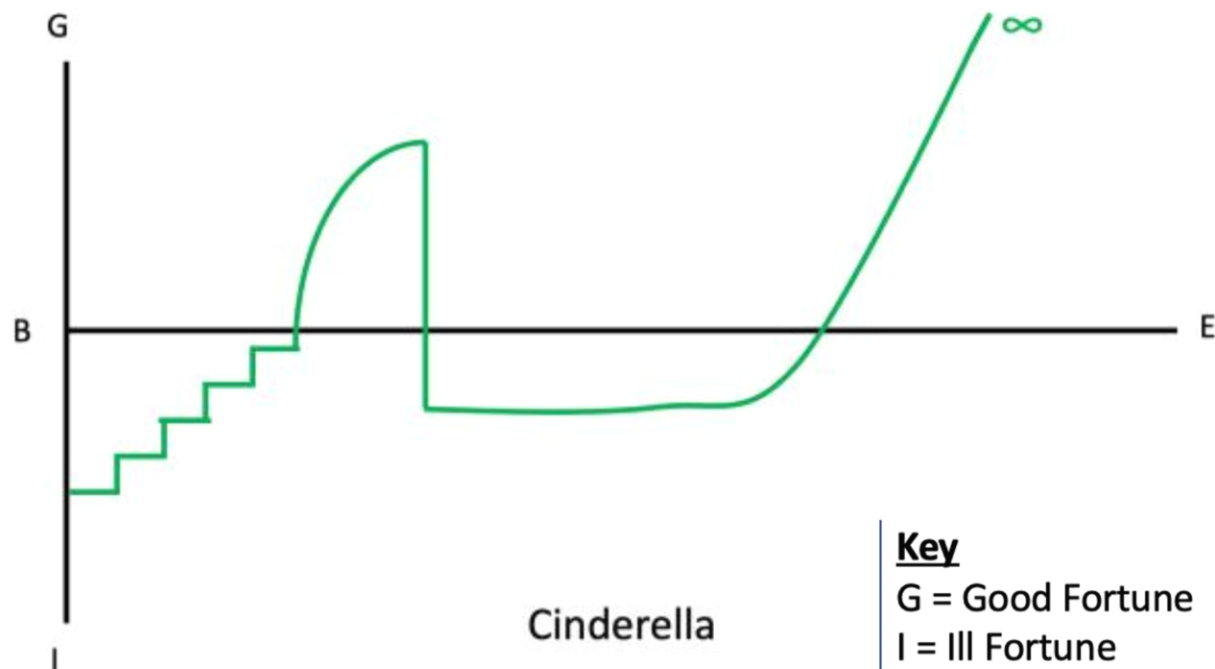
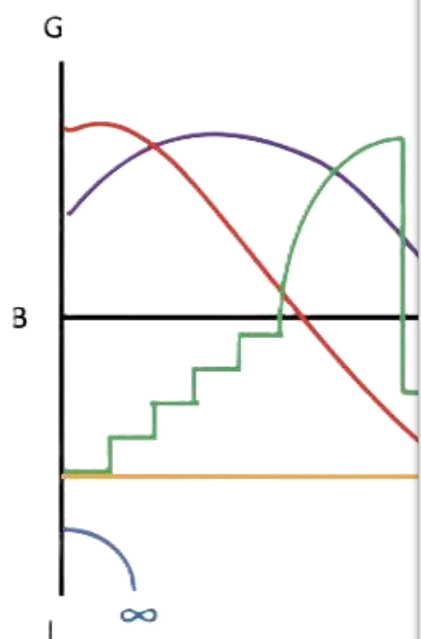


Pixar

The writers and animators at Pixar have a simple outline for writing stories



Kurt Vonnegut



Key
 G = Good Fortune
 I = Ill Fortune
 B = Beginning
 E = End

There are five basic
 types:

These
 News

on a grid.



Freytag's Narrative Pyramid



Freytag's Pyramid is a narrative structure that breaks the story arc of a drama into five distinct sections

- Exposition
- Rising Action
- Climax
- Falling Action
- Denouement



Pixar Story Structure

Set a strong structure for your story and add in the details afterwards



Once Upon a Time
Set the stage

01



Every day...
Describe the hero's
daily routine

02



But one day...
Something that upsets
your hero's routine

03



Because of that...
The character's journey

04



Because of that...
New journeys the
character takes

05



And finally...
Resolution of the story

06



Courtesy of Pixar in a Box



Writing Activity - 10 mins



Verbal Planning/Turn and Talk:

Discuss the narrative structure you think supports one of these six-word prompts.



Choose one prompt and develop it into a **100-word** narrative (approx.) and apply it to one of the three narrative structures.



In that moment,
they were free.

Lost compass,
found path,
journey begins.

Alien invaded,
demanded to meet
president.

Silent footsteps
echoed
in empty streets.

Consider how this oral activity might work in your own context to support planning for narrative writing?

Exploring Narrative Structures Through the Final Assessment



Man in Hole

The main character gets into trouble then gets out of it again and ends up better off for the experience.



All well-written stories have a shape or structure. One popular shape for a story is called the Man in Hole shape. Study the graphic image below which illustrates the three steps that a typical Man in Hole story takes. Complete the task that follows.

Starting with Step 1 below, outline a plot summary for a story using the three steps presented in the Man in Hole graphic above.

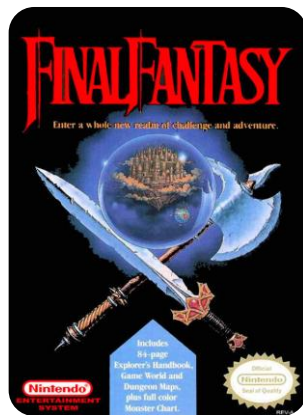
Step 1: It was an ordinary day for Alex until...

Step 2:

Step 3:

Junior Cycle Final Examination 2023
English – Higher level

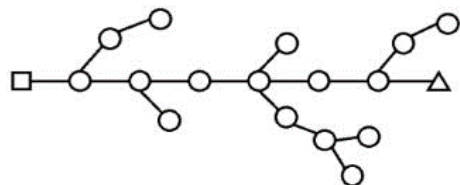
Motivating Through Prior Knowledge



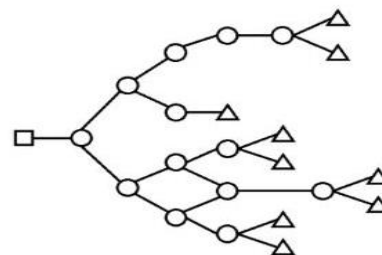
Linear Narrative



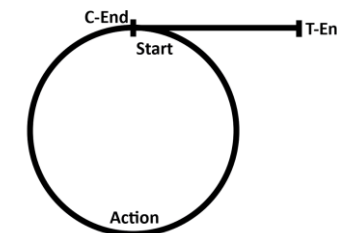
String of Pearl Narrative



Branching Narrative

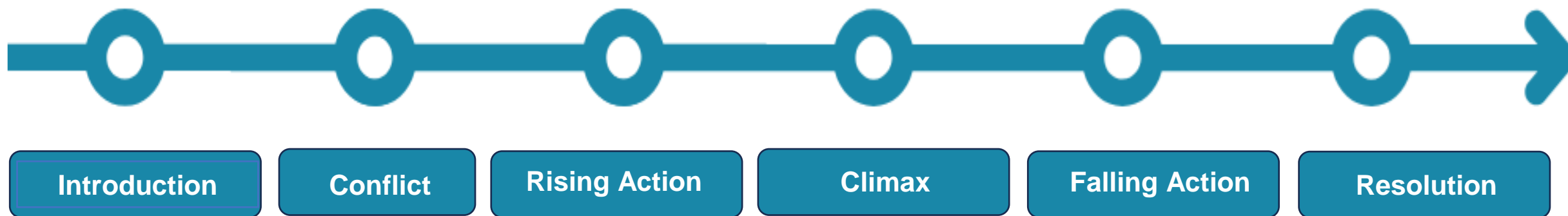


Circular Narrative





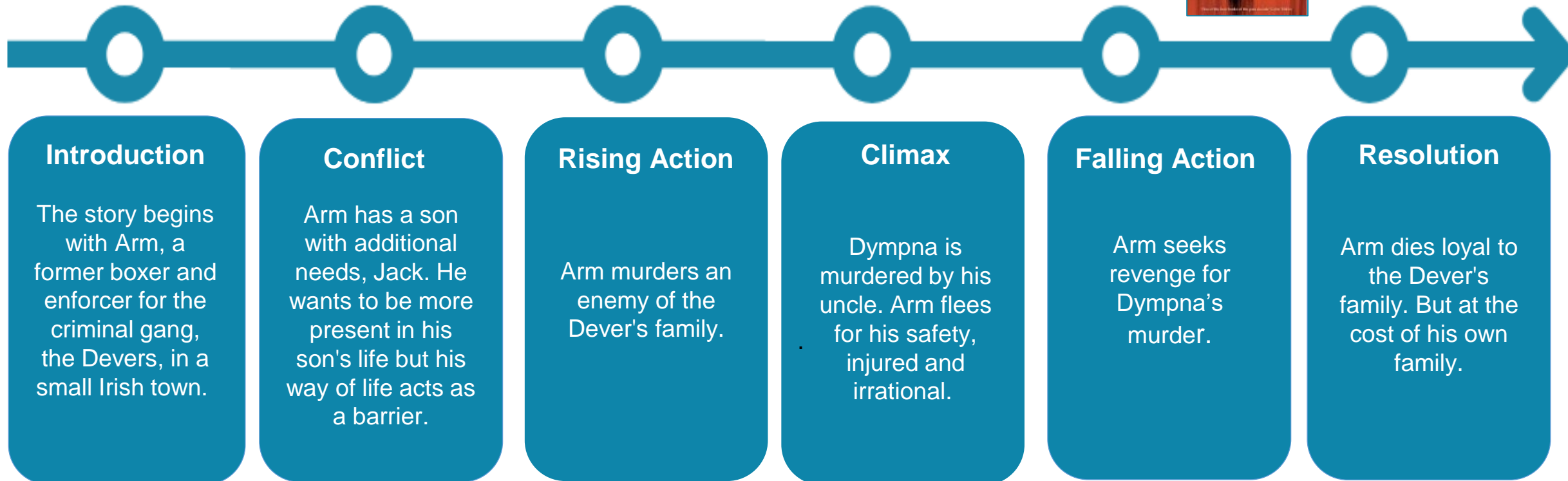
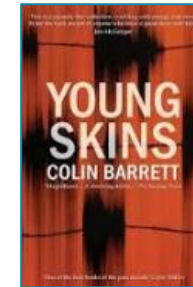
Application of the Linear Narrative



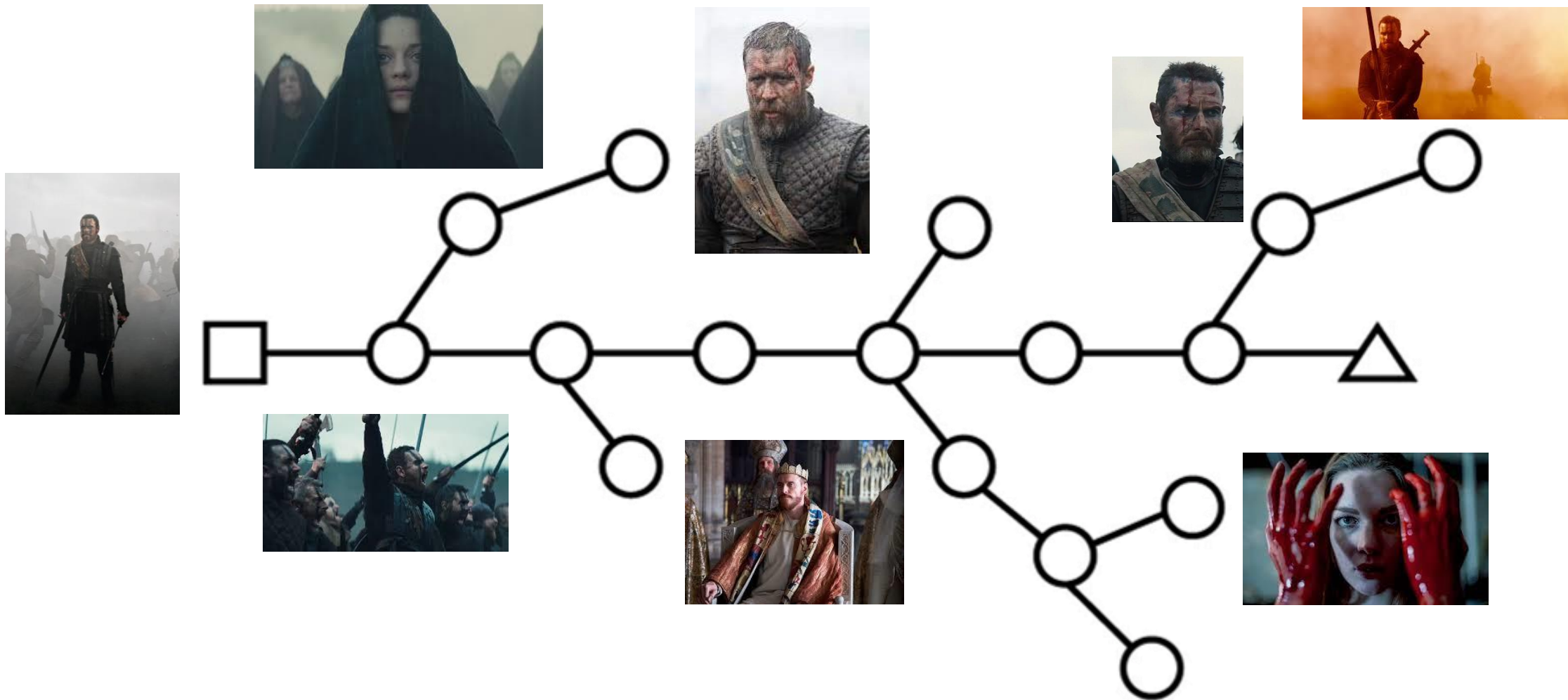
Application of the Linear Narrative



Calm with Horses by Colin Barrett



Application of the String of Pearl Narrative



Structure of our Session



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Creating Story Structure

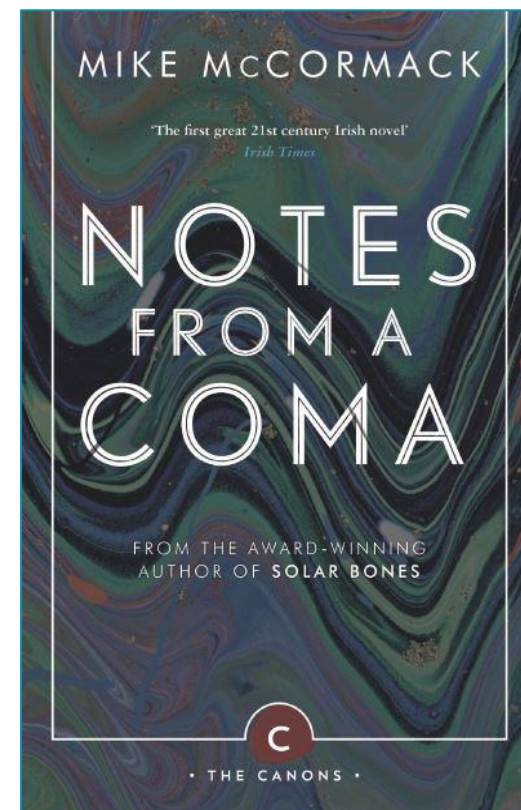


Developing Character





Mike McCormack on creating characters



Developing Character Profiles



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Identify **one** way that you encourage students to develop characters and/or character profiles in their writing?



Imitation as Inspiration

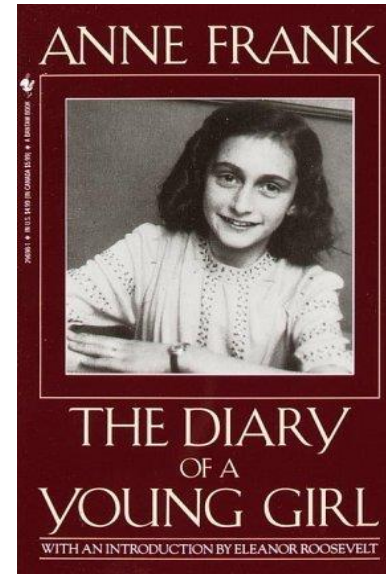
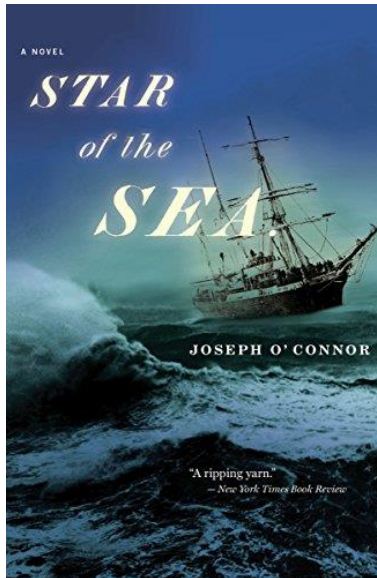


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Identify

an extract or text that appeals to you.



- ✓ Learn to read like a writer
- ✓ Notice the author's writing style, character development
- ✓ Discover your writing voice and style

The Evolution of Imitation: Building Your Style,
Craig A. Meyer

Crafting Characters from Poetry



Aunt Helen

Miss Helen Slingsby was my maiden aunt,
And lived in a small house near a fashionable square
Cared for by servants to the number of four.
Now when she died there was silence in heaven
And silence at her end of the street.
The shutters were drawn and the undertaker wiped his feet—
He was aware that this sort of thing had occurred before.
The dogs were handsomely provided for,
But shortly afterwards the parrot died too.
The Dresden clock continued ticking on the mantelpiece,
And the footman sat upon the dining-table
Holding the second housemaid on his knees—
Who had always been so careful while her mistress lived.

T.S. Eliot





Creating Character Profiles

Determine the character's role

- Protagonist: the main character or hero
- Antagonist: the villain
- Sidekick
- Orbital: neither good or bad guy but prominent throughout
- Love interest
- Confidante

Layer in emotional characteristics

- Personality
- Attitudes
- Introverted or extroverted
- Spiritual worldview
- Political worldview
- Motivations
- Fears
- Internal struggles
- Secrets
- Desires

Character involvement in the story

- What do they want?
- What are their needs and desires?
- What or who stands in their way?
- What are their choices?
- What if they fail?
- What sacrifices will they have to make?
- What heroic qualities do they need?

Physical stics

style
 g features
 (cars/tattoos)

Involvement story

ey want?
 eir needs and

 o stands in

 eir choices?
 / fail?
 ices will they
 ke?
 c qualities do

A character profile is a detailed portrait of a character you have created for a work of fiction.

Adapted from How to create a character profile, Jerry Jenkins, 2022



Writing Activity – 10 mins



Turn and Talk:
Re-read the poem *Aunt Helen* and discuss the essence of the character.



Effective Questioning:
Using prompt questions, create a more detailed portrait of her character.

Determine the character's role

- Protagonist: the main character or hero
- Antagonist: the villain
- Sidekick
- Orbital: neither good or bad guy but prominent throughout
- Love interest
- Confidante

Decide on the basics

- Full name
- A nickname
- Age
- Current hometown
- Occupation
- Skills
- Hobbies
- Short/long term goals
- Habits

Establish physical characteristics

- Height
- Weight
- Body type
- Hair colour/style
- Ethnicity
- Distinguishing features (birthmarks/scars/tattoos)
- Quirks

Layer in emotional characteristics

- Personality
- Attitudes
- Introverted or extroverted
- Spiritual worldview
- Political worldview
- Motivations
- Fears
- Internal struggles
- Secrets
- Desires

Create a past

- Birthdate
- Birthplace
- Accent
- Family members
- Childhood
- Education
- First-hand jobs
- Accomplishments
- Failures

Character involvement in the story

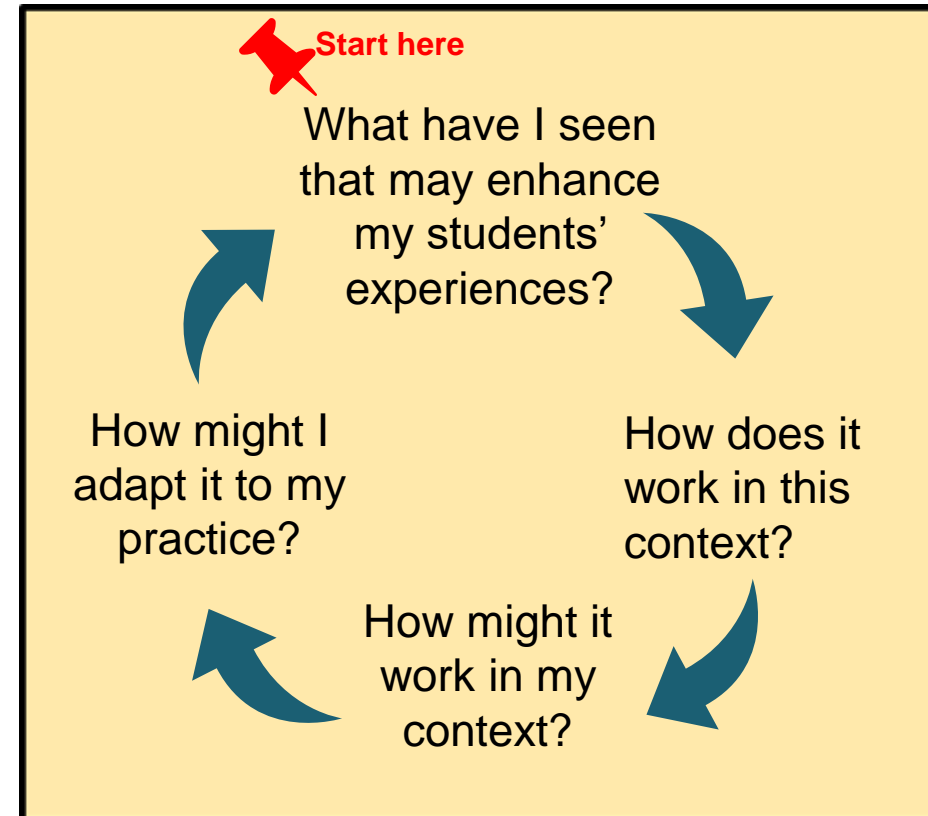
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- What or who stands in their way?
- What are their choices?
- What if they fail?
- What sacrifices will they have to make?
- What heroic qualities do they need?

Consider how this oral activity might work in your own context to support planning for narrative writing?

Reflection



Take a moment to reflect on the various strategies discussed and how they can support your classroom.



Adapted from Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning (1984)

Reflecting on our Day



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Integrating oracy skills and fostering students speaking and listening abilities.



Practical strategies for pre-reading, reading, and post-reading engagement in the classroom.



Linking oracy to narrative writing and approaches to creating structure and character.

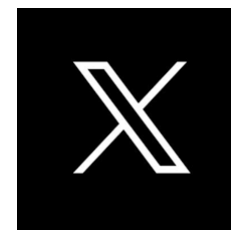
Additional Supports



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A Final Thought...

“The best stories are told authentically, from the heart and off the tongue...Shifts and changes in language are to be celebrated.”

- Phillip McMahon, playwright

