

# Unfamiliar Texts: From Chore to delight

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Fiction or Non-fiction?

*from Phenomena*

Two days before the last day of the holidays I lost my nerve. It was summer on the West Coast. Bush crowded down to the sea mostly. But there were quiet roads and paddocks and spitty gravel we drove over in a dull green station wagon. Mum held her hand up to the windscreen and pressed it with her fingers if a car came towards us. She wasn't waving though.

I got stuck out in the middle of the long swing bridge over the Heaphy River. Dad went over first with the baby in his pack and my big brother and sister went over on their own, yelling and laughing and bouncing on the ropes. I was right out in the middle when I just froze. I couldn't move. Mum was stuck there too with my little brother in front and me behind. The bridge bucked and rolled to the side. It was too flimsy. You shouldn't make a bridge out of ropes if there is deep water underneath and it's churning.



On the first day of the holidays a wave leapt up onto the beach at the other side of the lagoon and took away my sister's jandal. Dad ran down to the water but his feet sank into millions of tiny pebbles. He couldn't save it. The waves crashed down and sucked everything away, even the sand. 'It drops away pretty sharply,' Dad said. He said that under the water the waves rolled and rolled at the bottom of a steep wall. The jandal was probably trapped there going around and wouldn't come back up. Mum waved my sister's other jandal at us and said, 'Don't go too close!'

Then Dad caught two kahawai fish and Mum gutted them. Dad always said I had an enquiring mind; so I watched as Mum cut off the fish heads. Then I took a picture of one of them with my camera. Mum said I was too close and it wouldn't come out. Part of the innards of the fish spilled out from the ragged edge of grey and red skin. Mum said,

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Fiction or Non-Fiction?

My father and mother should have stayed in New York where they met and married and where I was born. Instead, they returned to Ireland when I was four, my brother, Malachy, three, the twins, Oliver and Eugene, barely one, and my sister, Margaret, dead and gone.

Non-fiction or Fiction?

Even though Aotearoa New Zealand is a multicultural society, New Zealanders still judge and discriminate against others because of difference. Recent attacks against Islamic centres, the vandalism of Jewish graves, anti-gay rallies, not to mention school bullying and unfriendliness, prove that NZ still has a way to go in its struggle for human rights.

Take a look around you. Most likely you are surrounded by diversity. Gay, black, Asian, redheads, comic nerds, rappers, ballerinas, rugby-heads. It's time to realise that the very nature of humanity is diversity. We do not look, feel, dress or act the same. How boring would the world be if we did? I mean, puleease, I'd rather stare at a brick wall than live in a bland world where people are not brave enough to celebrate difference.

## Fiction or Non-Fiction?

In the concrete darkness of Smith's Grain Store three candles flicker. The shadow of Annette Knowler's tiny frame morphs into a wavering monster as she passes them. To her right sits a rusty penny farthing – frozen in time; behind her, an enormous picture of a laughing clown bears downwards, watching all. Outside, wind crashes against the limestone walls and rain scratches on the ancient windows.

## Perfect imperfection

- a prime example of a student's work where the text is on top of them, rather than vice versa:

The tension grows to a dramatic climax at the end of the Little Red Riding Hood, due to the reader's sympathies having been carefully and subtly shaped to side with the wolf. We realise that the natural way of the world is that the strong prey on the weak, and that 'the big bad wolf', is a cleverly created symbol of the beauty and majesty of nature at its high point. Thus, we share the wolf's satisfaction upon asserting its dominance as the alpha predator at the top of the food chain with such 'big teeth', as it quietly digests its hard won kill.

Though the wolf feels no tension, the clever foreshadowing - the mention of the malicious axe wielding enviro-terrorist character 'The Woodsman' - creates the first hints of tension. This develops as this terrifying being 'crashes through the door' (note how the jarring onomatopoeia creates a clear sense of discord here - paralleling the fact that the natural order of the food chain is about to be hideously perverted.) As the weapon of the woodsman is revealed - a brutal axe - so often used for destruction of the natural world - the tension reaches a high point. We perceive the wolf - naturally dozy after so large a meal, will react too slowly - and fear for its fate. Tragically the tension abates only through the catastrophic ending - the wolf is brutally killed. Now tension is replaced by catharsis as we lament, once again, man's ignorant destruction of nature - nature symbolised by this glorious and unfortunate creature.

## SONNET 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;  
**But** thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,

FA	A	E	G			
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**L.R** - Be more careful with your 'On the Lines' reading - expect, predict, skim.

**L.R** - Be more careful with your 'between the lines reading - remember to use

**L.R** - Be more careful with your 'beyond the lines reading - remember to ask

**- Exact demands -** You MUST do EXACTLY what the question asks – All

**Clarity** - be sure to explain your ideas fully and precisely - 'It creates an

**EF - Exam Fitness** - Practise responding in timed conditions – and managing your time over the hour to complete all to a good standard.

**ET - Exam Technique.** Answer PART of all questions, if short of time; it's much easier to get 3 low 'Achieves' and pass the paper.

**LF - Language Features** - Revise language feature terminology - metaphor, onomatopoeia, rhetorical question etc -

**P - Purpose** - Be explicit about the writer's purpose – mention his or her name frequently – consistently give a sense that you understand how they are trying to persuade or inform or advise or provoke thought or create an image of a setting or create tension or criticise or amuse or entertain or mock or...

**L - Linking** - Strive to link the example you include to other parts of the text, to show its significance to the text as a whole.- this idea

**BWTM - But wait there's more ...** remember to Build an argument over the passage - write about how the author introduces, then develops then changes, then adds to the idea you discuss.

**Q - Quotations** - You MUST use quotations consistently - aim at least one, but hopefully 2 or more brief quotations in response to each part of the question.

**QU - Unpack your quotes** - Reach into the quotation and pick one or two keywords and discuss their relevance - 'the use of the word ..... creates a strong suggestion that ... / emphasises the idea that ....

**TE** - Pay attention to **titles and endings** of texts because these often capture the main ideas a writer is trying to express.

**W.L - Writing legibility** Improve the legibility of your handwriting - is it too small, too closed up, too condensed, too up and down? Would printing and increasing your font size help?

**P.R - Personal Relevance** - Discuss WHY the ideas explored are important or relevant - how the author attempts to make you see their implications. or the way they might change how you think about the subject, or people, or the world

**D.R - Developed response** - aim to include two or three more points about each passage to show a fuller understanding.

**A.E.Q. - Attempt EVERY question** - its very easy to get an N1 - and this adds to your score, often tipping you over the grade boundary.

**B.P. - Be Precise.** Use the most specific words possible to discuss ideas and language features. Eg. "the writer uses diction" is imprecise because it does not tell me what type of diction. Instead, state: jargon, colloquialisms, abstract nouns, second person pronouns... Never use the words "positive" and "negative" to describe aspects such as tone. Learn more precise tone words such as: affirming, appreciative, sarcastic, aggressive, reassuring, angry, affectionate...

**E.E** Engagement and enjoyment - try to make it clear you found the texts interesting and enjoyable - use an emotive vocabulary when describing them, make your personal response clear.

### **The fruits of our labour - student sample**

The purpose of this exposé is to expose the terrible conditions of workers in factories manufacturing computer components. The facts used throughout the exposé shows what true hardship and discomfort many workers in factories in China live through. The facts also make the reader much more engaged into the story because they know that it is the truth they are reading, as they are facts. An example of a fact used to empathise the suffering these factory workers go through is "That same year, 18 workers – none older than 25 – attempted suicide at Foxconn facilities. Fourteen died." This quote shows that some workers are pushed so hard they are willing to give up their lives, and many of them did. It also shows that these were only young people, all younger than 25 years of age. This helps us to understand the stress and pain these workers endure, during their days at work, which were usually twelve hour days. The author of this exposé also uses quotes to empathise the conditions endured by factory workers in China. "Managers would begin shifts by asking workers: "How are you?" Staff were forced to reply: "Good! Very good! Very, very good!" After that, silence was enforced." This is a fantastic example of the little freedom and independence the workers have. It also shows how the managing staff are trying to cover up the dark reality that the workers face, by making them sound happy and enjoying their work by saying "Good! Very good! Very, very good!". Straight after this is said though, hardship and pain is enforced once again. The use of language features also shows the dreadful working conditions of the workers, an example of this is the use of emotive language when the authors states that "Some quibbled over how unusual the Foxconn deaths were". The use of the word quibbled, would give the impression that the factory didn't want to express their feelings to vividly, and it made you think they were covering something up, which they were. It also made us think that when interviewed the factory workers didn't want to state and bad mouth the true working conditions as that would put them and their job in danger.



## Your Tricks and Tips

[illegible]

