

Narrative Writing Topic

Learning Objectives:

- 1.) To recognize the criteria for the “Narrative Writing” Module.
- 2.) To practice Narrative Techniques.

I can write in a way that communicates my ideas explicitly to the reader.

I can write in a way that communicates my ideas subtly to the reader.

I can write in a way that communicates my ideas subtly to the reader using a variety of techniques.

The key to strong writing is strong reading:

We have four lessons a week together. Three lessons will be focused on practicing individual narrative techniques in different genres. There will be a focus on assessment and “writing for the mark scheme” - I am of course concerned with continuing your high grades!

However, the fourth lesson will be given over to **creative** writing and **creative** reading. Hopefully you will use the techniques we have learned to use your imagination and **enjoy** your writing. We will read narratives in many different genres.

First Task

- The golden rule for all sophisticated narrative writing is “SHOW, DON’T TELL”.
- Look at the narrative I have given you, and evaluate all the possible things that it could tell you in terms of the writer’s THEMES, IDEAS and PURPOSE with reference to the text in a P.E.E. paragraph. The text is a ZEN KOAN.

Theme: BACKGROUND ideas that run through a piece.

Purpose: The reason the writer has developed this piece (why they have written it).

Idea: Individual thoughts and feelings that you get from this piece.



Zen Koan



The Moon Cannot Be Stolen:

*A thief entered the little hut of a Zen Master,
but discovered there was nothing to steal.*

The Zen Master discovered the thief.

*"You have come a long way to visit me," he told the
proowler,*

"and you should not return empty-handed.

Please take my clothes as a gift."

The thief was bewildered,

but he took the clothes and slunk away.

The Zen Master sat naked, watching the moon.

"Poor fellow," he mused,

"I wish I could have given him this beautiful moon."

- Good: I can define an idea, a purpose or a theme in the Koan.
- Great: I can explore these themes with reference to the text.
- Even Better: I can explain why these themes are suitable to this genre of poem.

- A Zen Koan is a piece of narrative that Buddhist Monks use to attain enlightenment. They have NO DEFINED PURPOSE, NO DEFINED IDEA, AND NO DEFINED THEME: they are designed to make the reader think.
- However, they illustrate the power of narrative; this Koan encouraged lots of different responses from you all and made you think!

SHOW, DON'T TELL

- Zen Koans are full of metaphors that allude to different ideas.
- Creative Writing Task:
 - Imagine that you are the thief who has stolen the monk's clothes. I want you to write a narrative that is **symbolic** for how you think the thief would feel.
 - After every line, I want you to leave a gap and explain what you are trying to symbolize. For example...

The Thief of the Moon

- I walked alone through the rainy streets
(the thief has nobody to relate to)
and the droplets drowned out the sound of
my footsteps.
(the thief makes no impact on the world)

Mind-Map

- Which ideas have you explored? How have you explored them (i.e. what language techniques have you used)?

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- I can write in a way that communicates my ideas subtly to the reader using a variety of techniques.

2nd Task:

- Next, I want you to **adapt** the piece you have written by changing the genre. You need to re-write the text as either:

A diary entry or a letter.

Make sure you adapt your text so that it is suitable to Form, Audience and Purpose.

Peer Assessment:

- Swap books with your partner. Next to the headings
- Form
- Audience
- Purpose

Write a commentary explaining how they have adapted their original text, quoting from their work.

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Lastly...

- I know that this has been an unusual lesson to start your topic with, and we will be focusing on more “traditional” creative writing next time.
- I wanted to you to learn that there are two fundamental features that distinguish more “sophisticated” narratives from those you have written before:
 - 1.) They have multiple interpretations.
 - 2.) They can be written and adapted in any way you choose.