UNIT 3

THE WRITER’S CRAFT

The BIG question
What is a writer’s ‘craft’?

Key learnings
- The way we use words affects not only what the audience understands but also how the audience feels about our communication.
- Well-crafted texts can be structured in different ways depending on our audience and purpose.
- Words and images need to be carefully chosen when crafting texts.

Knowledge, understanding and skills
Students will:
- understand how language choices appeal to the senses in poetry and prose
- learn how to use language to create mood
- examine the craft of multimodal texts such as web pages
- understand the role of sentence elements such as verbs.
‘We children are the majority in this world. We can make a difference, and never forget: one mosquito can never do anything against the rhino, but a thousand mosquitoes can make a rhino change its direction.’

The hottest day of summer so far was drawing to a close and a drowsy silence lay over the large, square houses of Privet Drive. Cars that were usually gleaming stood dusty in their drives and lawns that were once emerald green lay parched and yellowing; the use of hosepipes had been banned due to drought. Deprived of their usual car-washing and lawn-mowing pursuits, the inhabitants of Privet Drive had retreated into the shade of their cool houses, windows thrown wide open in the hope of tempting in a nonexistent breeze. The only person left outdoors was a teenage boy who was lying flat on his back in a flower bed outside number four.
— From *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J. K. Rowling

The lightning flashes:
And slashing through the darkness,
A night-heron's screech.
— Matsuo Basho

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**Craft is everywhere . . .**

The lightning flashes:
And slashing through the darkness,
A night-heron's screech.
— Matsuo Basho
What does it mean to ‘craft’?

Look carefully at the objects shown in the photo collage opposite. Some of them have won awards for their design. Many people consider them beautiful. Other people may consider them very clever and functional. Why? It’s because people consider them well crafted.

So what does the word *craft* mean? A *thesaurus* would list the following synonyms (words with similar meanings) for *craft*: *skill, expertise, artistry* and *technique*. Considerable expertise has gone into making the objects shown in the collage. Their makers have used skills and techniques to craft particular materials to achieve the end result.

Writers have a craft too, as shown in the written texts included in the collage. A writer’s materials are, first and foremost, words. Words, when crafted with skill, can create sounds and images for a reader’s brain to enjoy. Many different types of print and digital text have their basis in well-crafted words.

**Tuning in**

1 **Think and say why**: People often have strong emotional responses to well-crafted things. Which two of the objects shown in the collage are your favourites? Why do you like each one? Which ones do not appeal to you? Why?

2 **Find out**: Did you know these facts?
   - Ferrari’s famous prancing horse symbol was actually the symbol used on the biplane of a World War I Italian flying ace, Count Francesco Baracca. The count had been shot down and killed in June 1918. In 1923, the count’s wife asked Enzo Ferrari to use it as the emblem on his cars — for good luck.
   - The Eiffel Tower in Paris, designed by Gustave Eiffel, was built in 1889 for the World’s Fair. It was meant to be a temporary structure but proved so popular that it became a national landmark and France’s foremost tourist attraction.

Find out some interesting facts about the two objects you identified as your favourites. (If one of them was the Ferrari or the Eiffel Tower, find out more facts about these.)

3 **Think and then handwrite** your own definition of what the word *craft* means.

Jot down some key words first and use these as the basis for your definition. You might like to share your notes with a classmate. Alternatively, use the *Online brainstorming* weblink in your eBookPLUS to find tools that can help organise your thoughts before you write.

**LANGUAGE link**

*Word origins, word building and word use*

The word *craft* came from Old English (before 1100) through Middle English (from 1100–1500) to our language today. Words built from *craft* include *craftsmanship, craftsman* and *craftswoman*. The plural form is *crafts* except when we use the word to mean a boat, ship or aircraft: in this use of the word the plural form remains *craft*.

Like many words in English, the word *craft* can function as both a noun and a verb, depending on the context (the other words around the word).

- *The potter crafts many beautiful clay pots on his wheel.* (verb)
- *Scrapbooking and quilting are popular crafts.* (noun)

*Check the meaning of the word crafty in a dictionary. Do you think it comes from the base word craft? Explain.*
How do writers appeal to a reader’s senses in poetry? Writers use many techniques to help craft their work. A factual text whose purpose is to inform might simply give facts and supporting details. However, if the purpose of an imaginative text is to entertain or persuade, a writer will often craft words to appeal to a reader’s senses.

The words a writer chooses are essential to the writer’s craft. Even though you might think that words are something we simply see on a page or screen, writers know that they can write for senses other than just our sight. Used cleverly, words can make us not only see but hear, feel, even smell. Language can ‘talk’ to our senses; that is, it can be very sensuous. Such sensuous language helps the reader to feel as if they are in the story or text. Sensuous language also helps to create mood and asks for an emotional response from the reader. A form of poetry famous for capturing a mood and appealing to the senses is the Japanese haiku.

Haiku: short but full of sensation
As we saw in Unit 1, haiku are poems that contain only seventeen syllables: five in the first line, seven in the second line and five in the last. They are usually about nature. Despite the fact that a haiku is short, it can pack in a lot of sensuous detail and create a mood. In Unit 1 the focus was on the structure of haiku with fragments and phrases. In this section, the emphasis is on the mood of haiku and its appeal to the senses.

Fallen trees
Rainforest trees fall
and give their children a chance
to climb the sunlight.

Birds
Birds call in cities,
whispering green secrets to
ears that forget them.
Activities . . .

UNDERSTANDING haiku

Getting started
1 a Clap or count out the syllable beats in each line of both haiku to see that they conform to the haiku pattern.
   Or
   b Choose one of the haiku and write it out by hand, breaking each word into syllables; for example, Rain-for-est trees fall.

Working through
2 List all the things to do with nature in each haiku.
3 Which of your physical senses does each haiku appeal to? Justify your answer.
4 What mood or feeling is created for you in each haiku? Consider sadness, joy, hope, despair as possibilities. Explain your choice.
5 Who or what are the trees’ children?
6 Where are the birds when they are calling? Does the haiku tell you or do you have to infer it (work it out)?
7 Haiku are usually written in the present tense. Find all the verbs in the haiku and check if this is so. Rewrite the haiku in past tense. How does this change the effect created?

ANALYSING word choices

Getting started
8 Choose a word group in the haiku that you think helps you to see a picture in your mind. Draw the picture that these words help you to see.

Working through
9 Why do you think the writer has personified (given human qualities to) the trees and the birds?
10 How do the words climb the sunlight make you feel about how the ‘children’ will grow? What does it make you see in your mind’s eye?
11 Do you think that the trees that fall are being kind? Why or why not?
12 Why do you think the poet says that the secrets the birds whisper are green?
13 What do you think the word them refers to in the second haiku? Is it secrets, or the birds, or the bird calls, or something else entirely? Explain your choice.

EVALUATING haiku

Working through
14 Would the strict pattern and structure of haiku make it easier or harder to write one? Explain.
15 Do the haiku on page 62 have the fragment-and-phrase structure of the haiku in Unit 1 (see page 13)? Explain.
16 Which of the following do you think is the most important element in each haiku presented here? Discuss in small groups before deciding.
   a The keen observation of nature through detail
   b The importance of an idea
   c The importance of an emotion or feeling
   d The careful and deliberate choice of words
   e Your choice
Going further
17 In what ways do you think a haiku is like a photograph? In what ways is it not?
18 Choose one of the following adjectives and explain why it could be used to describe the craft of the haiku: concentrated, spiritual, sensual, descriptive, emotional, philosophical.

CREATING a new text

Working through
19 Create a cover for a class book of haiku. Copy and paste the text of three or four haiku that you have found into www.wordle.net and create a Wordle picture. Hint: you can even turn the haiku into short paragraphs and then paste them in.

LITERATURE link

Compressing language in poetic forms

The haiku form is a good example of how language can be compressed or concentrated to produce a dramatic effect.

The tanka is another Japanese poetry form that concentrates language, using a particular line and syllable pattern. The tanka has five lines, with a syllable pattern of 5, 7, 5, 7, 7. It is an older form than the haiku but, like haiku, it uses simple language to express ideas and emotions about nature. While the tanka was intended to be chanted as a song, the haiku are meant to be spoken crisply.

When the wind blows the falling leaves embroider the limpid waters where even the leaves still clinging are reflected in the depths.

Find another example of a tanka on the internet and see if you can write one. Find out about other Japanese poetic forms, the choka and the sedoka.
Mood poetry

Writers often use **figurative language** or **figures of speech** such as **similes, metaphors, personification, alliteration** and **onomatopoeia** when they are crafting a text. These can make words appeal more to a reader’s senses and change the literal meaning of words.

Figures of speech are used in this way in the mood poem below, which relates to a particular place. ‘The Playground’ was written by a Year Seven student called Johanna Keen in response to being in a children’s playground in spring. The coloured annotations explain the figures of speech Johanna used to capture the mood she felt in the playground. As you read, make a mental checklist of each sense to which the passage appeals.

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**The playground**

The playground is...

dinosaur-boned, spider-webbed,
A monkey’s-fun-zone
bordered by
the stern-faced garden
with its wall.

There is, just down there,
the lunar surface of the tennis court
where I sometimes play.
Tennis balls going pock, pock, pock
Birds call, far-off jets hum and
traffic murmurs with the sun;
then
a machine starts up, buzzing in
my ears
like a nagging mother,
and
I smell piney air, resinous like Sweden.
I feel the mulch
It’s scratchy, sharp;
it’s meant to be a blissful blanket
for our falling bodies.
If I could eat this place
it would taste of crisp and crunchy coconut saw

Johanna Keen
CREATING MOOD WITH YOUR SENSES

The following is an activity you can try by yourself or in a group. By the end of it you should have created your own mood poem — a personal response to a place and time and how you felt.

- Find a space somewhere outside. It could be a park, a football oval, a garden space or even a playground at the end of the street.
- Make sure you have paper and a pen with you or a mobile device such as your laptop, iPad or iPhone.

Sight

- Imagine that the world ends somewhere nearby. It might be the walls of the room, or the park border. It may be the fence around the football field or the edge of the playground. Take two minutes to write down everything you can see in that space. Remember, nothing exists outside the space so only include what is in there. If you have appropriate technology with you, take a snapshot or two.
- Try to add an adjective to add information about at least three of the things you can see. For example, is that a blue desk in front of you, or a snot-green curtain hanging on the window? Does the tree look thin, olive-green or straggly?
- Imagine that the world has grown. Now there are no boundaries and the space extends beyond the walls or fence or whatever boundaries exist. Take a minute to add to your list of things you can see.
- Add adjectives to the two things that most impress you.

Hearing

- Close your eyes. Just listen to the world for at least a minute.
- Don’t talk. Just listen.
- Now open your eyes and write down everything you could hear. But this time don’t just make a list; try to characterise the sounds. Johanna Keen, for example, heard jets that hummed overhead and a scolding mower.

Touch

- Explore the space around you for three to five minutes by touching at least three things. One rule: the things you touch can’t be alive unless they are plants.
- As you touch each thing, write a brief description of what it feels like. Take your time and try to be accurate and detailed. Use adjectives to add information and verbs that help really define how you’re reacting to the ‘thing’.

Smell

- Close your eyes again. Take a deep breath through your nose. Do it slowly.
- What did you smell? Write a description.
- If you didn’t smell anything, try again. (Hint: it’s important to keep your eyes closed and really concentrate on your sense of smell.)
- One rule: whatever you smelled, please don’t use the name of a person in your description.

Taste

Based on all the senses you’ve just used, complete this thought:
If I could taste this place, it would taste of . . .
Comparisons and connections

- While you are still in the space, turn at least one of each of your details into something else. It can be anything you perceived with your eyes, ears, touch or smell (not taste). For example, that scolding mower sounded to Johanna Keen like a nagging mother and the smell of the mulch used in the playground reminded her of Sweden, with its pine forests. When she looked at the wooden frame of the climbing trellis in the playground it reminded her of dinosaur bones.

- One way of creatively turning your sensory experiences into your very own ideas is to play some word association games with some of your ideas. For instance, imagine that Johanna Keen thought like this:

What you are actually doing is creating figurative language that will feature in your mood poem.

OVER TO YOU …

Using the length and style of ‘The Playground’ as a model, write a mood poem about your space.

- Note that you might be able to edit this text and use it for the task at the end of this unit.
- Remember that you don’t have to include every detail you recorded; like all writers, what you choose to use is up to you.
- If you word process your mood poem, use colours as in ‘The Playground’ to highlight the figures of speech you have used.
- You can also play around with different fonts. If you have a camera with you when outside, take a snapshot of your space. Alternatively, draw an illustration to go with your mood poem, or find a suitable image online that you can cut and paste into your document.

My view …

Now that you have looked at how writers can appeal to the senses, use a KWL strategy (what I Know, what I Want to Know, what I Learned) to record your thoughts on the topic of the writer’s craft. Check the definition of ‘craft’ that you wrote at the beginning of this unit and adjust it if necessary to reflect what you now know. How much has it changed?
CRAFTING LANGUAGE IN PROSE FICTION

3.2

How do prose writers evoke a response from a reader?

A writer’s overall purpose is usually to evoke a response from a reader. This is especially true of imaginative and persuasive texts. Good writers craft language to describe people, places and events in ways that may shock or surprise us or so that we read their words and say, ‘Now I see!’ or ‘That makes me feel happy/sad/angry/amused’.

The short story Alexander the Great, by Richard Yaxley, explores the impact a strange new boy has on another character named Brian. The story is a first-person narrative, and its setting is a small, unnamed coastal town in Australia in contemporary times.

One character, Alexander Roff, claims to be a descendant of the Romanovs, the last rulers of Russia, a claim that Alexander’s new classmates in Australia make fun of.

In the extracts that follow we examine a plot development when Alexander meets a classmate, Brian, at the local jetty where Brian is fishing.

There are two versions below of what happens next. The versions are very similar but key words have been changed, added or deleted.

Before you read the extracts, your teacher may ask you to complete the following Ready to Read activity.

NEED TO KNOW

first-person narrative
a narrative (story) told by a character who is part of the story, and who therefore uses words like I, we, me and my. We usually see only the point of view of this character.

setting
the time and place in which the events of a narrative take place

plot
the sequence of events that occur during a story or narrative

READY TO READ …

In pairs, take turns to read aloud versions 1 and 2. As you read, have your partner note unfamiliar words. After the readings, find the meaning of these words in a dictionary. Then read the versions silently by yourself.

from Alexander the Great
by Richard Yaxley in Shorts

Alexander has just accidentally buried his hook in his thumb.

Version 1

Alexander the Great grunted with pain.

A trickle of blood ran down his thumb. He patted it with a crumpled and dirty tissue. His thumb must have throbbed with pain but he elected to stay with me anyway and we fished together. The sun was warm on our bare backs and the water knocked against the pylons of the jetty. After a couple of hours we packed up the gear and it seemed only natural to get on my bike and pedal with him down the esplanade. It’s a long road. Then we went down past the golf course, where there were lots of golfers playing in the warm sunshine. Next we pedalled through all the new tidytown suburbs towards Dunrowan Road and his house, his Mum and Dad and I don’t know how many brothers and sisters. Finally, I hoped to get to the truth of his story.

Version 2

‘Damn it,’ said Alexander the Great.

A sliver of blood ran over his hand. He dabbed the cut with a crumpled handkerchief. It must have been sore but he stayed with me anyway and we fished together in silence for an hour or two, enjoying the kiss of the sun on our bare backs and the slap of water on pylons. After that time together it seemed only natural to hop on my bike, follow him down the esplanade, down past the golf course, through all the new Legoland suburbs towards Dunrowan Road and his home, family and, finally, the truth of his story, I hoped.
Activities . . .

UNDERSTANDING the texts

Getting started
1 How many characters are in the two versions of the text extract?
2 What activity are they engaged in?
3 Where does the scene take place?

Working through
4 The partially completed table below lists differences in language choices between the two versions. Draw up a similar table in your workbook and fill in the blank sections. You could work in pairs for this activity.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Differences</th>
<th>Version 1</th>
<th>Version 2</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Number of sentences (Hint: count the full stops.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue (direct speech)</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word choices Version 1 versus version 2</td>
<td>(a) trickle of blood</td>
<td>(a) sliver of blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) a crumpled and dirty tissue</td>
<td>(b) ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) throbbed with pain</td>
<td>(c) ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) ____________________</td>
<td>(d) stayed with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e) fished together</td>
<td>(e) ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(f) ____________________</td>
<td>(f) kiss of the sun on our bare backs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(g) the water knocked against the pylons</td>
<td>(g) ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(h) tidytown suburbs</td>
<td>(h) ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) ____________________</td>
<td>(i) his home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures of speech
(a) Personification: kiss of the sun on our bare backs
(b) ____________________

Longest sentence
45 words

Some key verbs
(a) patted
(b) elected to stay
(c) ____________________

INTERPRETING and ANALYSING the texts

Getting started
5 Which version was the more difficult to read? Why?
6 Which version was the most enjoyable from your point of view? Why?
7 Whose point of view is shown in the texts? Is it the same?

NEED TO KNOW

point of view the perspective from which a story is told. To determine point of view we can ask, ‘Whose eyes are we seeing through? Who is telling the story?’
Working through
8 Version 1 has more details than version 2. For instance, it tells us that Alexander and Brian packed up the gear and that there were lots of golfers playing in the warm sunshine.
   a Find at least two other story details in version 1 that are not in version 2.
   b Are these extra details necessary — do they help you see what is happening (visualise) or better understand the plot or characters?
9 Version 2 includes some details that are not in version 1. For example, Brian and Alexander fish together in silence. What effect do these additional words have on you as a reader? Did you need them to help you understand what is happening?
10 Version 2 has dialogue. Version 1 does not. Alexander could have said something much stronger than damn. How does the fact that he swears in such a mild or tame way in version 2 make you feel about his character?
11 Do you think version 1 includes too many unnecessary details about the ride from the jetty to Alexander’s house? Why or why not?

Going further
12 Both versions contain noun groups, or noun phrases, (see the Language link opposite) to help the reader visualise the suburbs the boys ride through on their way to Alexander’s home. How do you think the author feels about the suburbs in version 1, where they are tidytown suburbs, compared with 2, where they are legoland suburbs? What figures of speech have been used by the writer?

EVALUATING the texts
Working through
13 Below is a paragraph that gives one person’s view of why the writer of version 2 has made more effective language choices. Unscramble the key words in this paragraph, using the words in the box after the question.

To my mind the most effective version is the CEDNSO one. It chooses to include certain YKE details that help us understand important TYRSO elements like character and TTNGSEI. For example, the fact that Alexander swears in such a tame way makes us feel his foreignness; he’s not a typical Australian boy. Version 1, in my opinion, has lots of unnecessary TLSDEIA. For instance, readers already know it’s warm and we don’t need to know that lots of golfers are playing in the warm sunshine in order to help us understand the LPTO or characters better. Sometimes, good writing follows the SLES-is-ROME rule. It’s also interesting that the ROATHU of version 2 uses that very long sentence at the end — this is an interesting TYSLE choice because that long sentence gets the reader quickly all the way from the jetty to Alexander’s home — a much friendlier DWRO than ‘house’, by the way. That long sentence is in a rush (as is the reader) to try to LESVO the mystery: is Alexander really and truly related to the long dead Czar of Russia? The very long sentence rushes the reader along and adds to the SSUPNEES.

<table>
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<th>author</th>
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<th>setting</th>
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<td>style</td>
<td>key</td>
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<tr>
<td>word</td>
<td>story</td>
<td>less</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge Quest 1

Quest
Noun phrases
Concrete nouns
Abstract nouns

70 English is … Year 7
Wordsmith …

WRITING TO CRAFT MOOD

Writers of imaginative or reflective prose often rely heavily on creating a mood that will bring the reader into the world of their text. Mood can be created through a description of setting. For example, in a horror story the setting might be a dark stormy night in a forest where trees loom as menacing shadows and bats swoop around. As with poetry, figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, personification and alliteration can be used in description in prose to create mood.

1. Look at how a mood of mystery or horror has been created in the text below. Use the key to the coloured words to see the figures of speech that have been used to create this mood.

The shack was tucked tight against the scarred rockface, a hideaway beneath the granite shelf that frowned against the bruised sky. Its blank, sightless exterior gave no hint of any life within. A rotting fence, daubed with red paint, surrounded it like a bleeding wound. Haunted howling came from somewhere inside the fence’s now darkening perimeter. As the sun fled in the face of the storm’s fury, the shack, its eyes closed and unseeing, was a cold and unwelcoming host.

2. Now rewrite the following description of a cottage to create a cheerful and cosy mood, choosing figures of speech from the list at right or coming up with your own.

The stone cottage ________________. It _____________, and its chimney _________________ smoke into the sky in bursts. Striped yellow curtains, __________________, framed the windows at the front. A ___________ of flowers grew ________________, forming a bright pathway down to the __________________ stream. In the trees high above, a bird ________________ as the sun lowered its ________________ and the warm summer evening ____________.

SIMILE: as cheerful as children
METAPHORS: was a safe little harbour; riot
PERSONIFICATION: hiccupped; face; smiled
ALLITERATION: wilfully wild; stood sturdy and strong
ONOMATOPOEIA: burbling; trilled

OVER TO YOU …

Use the image at right as a stimulus to write a short prose text containing figures of speech. Use the colours from the key above to show those you have used.
Embedded clauses

The sentence below is constructed using two clauses: an independent clause (in blue) and a dependent or subordinate clause (in red). 

A rotting fence, which was daubed with red paint, surrounded it like a bleeding wound. 

A clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a 'tensed' verb. The independent or main clause that can make sense on its own is A rotting fence surrounded it like a bleeding wound. Embedded within this clause is another clause: which was daubed with red paint, which gives more information about the noun fence in the main clause. This clause uses the relative pronoun which and is known as a relative clause. Notice, however, the writer of the extract removed the words which was and just writes A rotting fence, daubed with red paint, surrounded it like a bleeding wound. This makes the sentence flow better. 

Another example of a sentence with an embedded clause is The model, whose face had been on every billboard in town, was now recognised everywhere. 

Note that some embedded clauses are separated from the main clause by commas. If the information in the embedded clause defines the preceding noun, it does not need commas: The girl who won that race is my sister. 

If the information in the embedded clause just adds information about the preceding noun, it needs commas: My English teacher, who has just come back from Switzerland, gave us all chocolates! 

Find another example of an embedded clause in the extract about the shack. 

Crafting an appeal to the senses in a short story 

The short story that follows uses simple vocabulary and short sentences. The writer’s aim was to capture a particular mood with his choice of language. The story makes use of figures of speech as it describes a very intense and dramatic moment in the life of a boy who has just been involved in an accident. 

Before you read the extract, your teacher may ask you to complete the following Ready to Read activities.

READY TO READ …

- Scan the text and rate its difficulty level for you as a reader (for example, with 1 being very difficult and 5 being very easy). Does it: 
  - contain many unfamiliar words 
  - contain easy enough words but long sentences 
  - have lots of dialogue? 
  Choose a paragraph that illustrates how you have rated the reading ease of this text. Next, read it aloud to a partner. Together, try to work out why it deserves this rating. 
- List all the unfamiliar words in your chosen passage and find out their meanings. 
- Have you ever been in a tense situation that you had to try and distract yourself from? 
- Why are there numbers next to some lines of the text?
Moments
by Stephen Kimber

‘Hold on, hold on. Don’t go to sleep. Hold on, you’ll be right.’ The voice snapped into immediacy for Daniel, like a rubber band stretched tight suddenly let go. Light hammered at his eyes.

He went to look for the voice but he didn’t like moving his head.

‘It’s okay, it’s okay,’ the voice soothed. ‘That was my torch,’ the voice said. ‘I won’t use it again. We’re coming for you. Just hold on.’

There was, Daniel realised, a lot of noise. Other voices. Cars or trucks. But they didn’t sound right. Daniel heard someone heaving on a pull cord for a chainsaw. The saw started and then choked out. The voice swore. Daniel smiled dreamily. Just like Dad.

Where was Dad? He was on the train too. And Mum. And Jen?

‘We’re going to cut you out,’ the voice said.

He focused on the voice; the voice was good.

‘I know you’re listening to me. Don’t go to sleep, hold on. We need to cut you out.’

How does he know I am listening? Daniel wondered.

Narrative texts start with an orientation to allow the reader to enter the story. (1)

The simile really helps the reader feel how sudden Daniel’s awareness of the voice is. (2–3)

The writer emphasises how the boy is using his senses. The light is bothering him. (5)

Sentence fragments suggest Daniel is gathering little sound snippets. (8)
'Wiggle your fingers,' the voice instructed. Daniel did. His right arm worked but he could get no signal through to his left. He wondered about that.

He liked moving his hand though. It reassured him. He ran his thumb over the insides of his fingers. They were slick with something. Probably blood, he suddenly thought.

He felt cold. It was his blood. Focus on something, he told himself. Where was the voice?

He felt the bumps beneath two of his fingers on his right hand. At the joints where they'd broken. He remembered the pipes where he'd been playing by himself. He was six and they were repairing the bridge near home, putting in new huge pipes for the water to run through. The pipes were slick with moisture because it had just rained. It made jumping from one to another more exciting because if you didn't go just right you'd slip and maybe hurt yourself. He remembered the sudden cold shock of slamming his hand into the rim of a pipe when he missed his jump. White-faced, he ran home. He hadn't cried. ‘Can you talk?’ the voice asked again. It cut into the memory. The moment was gone and Daniel felt alone again.

Daniel didn't want to.

‘All right, I heard you,’ the voice said.

What did he hear?

‘I am going to have to use my torch.’ Daniel closed his eyes but he could still feel the light around him.

‘Right,’ the voice called, ‘I’ve turned it off. Open your eyes. We’re going to cut you out soon. Listen to me. We are going to have to brace some structures so that the other carriage doesn’t crush the . . . You’ve been in a train wreck. Okay. Well, there’s not a lot of strength in what’s above you. Okay. Another one of the carriages is resting on this one, right . . .’

It was like a documentary. Daniel remembered Jen watching Trials of Life over and over. Sitting on the sofa, she’d sometimes mouth the words; she’d seen it so often. Mum and Dad were getting the dinner. He could smell it. Lamb chops, his favourite, and chips and salad. If he closed his eyes he could see it all. The light was pale orange through the curtains.

It was like, suddenly, all his senses were super sharp. A sudden shock of pain. Daniel closed his eyes. Rested.

‘Are you Daniel?’ the voice said. ‘I think you are. Okay, Daniel, hold on. I know you’re bleeding but it’s not bad. Okay. I know, Daniel, it’s the wrong colour to be arterial blood. I think you’ve got a head wound Daniel, probably round your ear; that’s why there’s a lot of it. I’m an ambulance officer, Daniel. Okay. It won’t be long now. Hold on.’

How did he know? Daniel wondered. He ran his right thumb over his fingers again. The blood was starting to dry. That was a good sign, Daniel thought. He wasn’t bleeding to death. He felt very cold though. He licked his lips.

Mango ice-cream on 4 Mile Beach. The beach was too pebbly, not clean and white like the ones near Daniel’s one-time home. He was on holiday. He loved those mango ice-creams. He and Jen walked down the...
beach to Douglas Street. There was an ornate sign, carved metal with ‘Olde-Englishe’ type of writing saying the street name just near the shop. Daniel liked the sign; he’d copied the style and written a few signs of his own on the drawing paper that went everywhere with him. Mum and Dad sauntered down behind them and he and Jen ran ahead. Seagulls lifted, crying.

Where were Mum and Dad? If there was a train wreck, where were they? He’d been coming back from the service bar when it happened. He suddenly remembered. The grind of brakes and being flung off his feet and the roaring, wailing, shrieking noise. And darkness.

Where was the voice when he needed it? Where were Mum and Dad? It was dark. Was it night? How long?

Where was his drink? He’d bought a drink of bottled water ‘cause he was on a health kick. No junk for me, he bluntly told his dad. They were always joking about ‘real men’.

It was dark and Daniel couldn’t be bothered opening his eyes. He was cold, very cold. He remembered when he was very little — about three — and Larry Jameson, a big boy from up the road, had put him beneath a big box and sat on it so he couldn’t get out. It was dark like a tomb and after a while Daniel had started to scream. He screamed once and nothing happened. He thought, I’m a big boy and nothing can hurt me. It was what his Dad told him.

No-one came. It was dark and it was cold on the wet grass and no-one came. He screamed again. And waited, but not so long. Then he screamed, and screamed, and screamed... To be suddenly unleashed into light, and shame. Larry Jameson’s friends had crowded around the box, silently, like ghosts, and now they pointed and laughed. Called him cry-baby, snotty-nosed baby.

‘Are you there?’ the voice whispered. It sounded a long way off. ‘We’re coming...’

Daniel suddenly flung himself against whatever was holding him, like a small boy at a box. He felt something in his head tear. Warm liquid ran down his arm.

It was like summer rain at home. Daniel smiled. There was light ahead in the darkness. He saw it.

Then he remembered Mum saying, ‘You’ll catch a chill, you’ll catch your death.’ He used to love walking in the rain. Even though he almost always turned cold.

The light went away.

He was cold now. The liquid running down his arm had slowed, was a steady drip... drip... drip. Daniel thought, ‘It’s blood. My blood.’ He saw the word, blood. BLOOD. The word sat in the back of his mind; it was a thought. The thought was a long way off. And growing smaller. It was disappearing into darkness.

He was very tired. And cold. The word was gone. What had he been thinking? What was the word? It was there, right in the back of his mind. Something black, growing. It was black, like a door opening into something else he wasn’t quite sure of. Like a surprise. He tried to smile and couldn’t, quite. Everything was black.

And then there was light. Again. Daniel smiled. He walked towards the light and it grew brighter and brighter.
LITERATURE link
The short story

Short stories have their own set of characteristics that make them different from novels, films and other forms of narratives. Generally they:
- should be short enough to read in one sitting (around half an hour) and exclude the detail you might expect in a novel.
- have fewer characters, a single or limited setting, and take place over a short time frame.

Famous short story writers include Roald Dahl, Katherine Mansfield, Edgar Allen Poe, Ray Bradbury and Stephen King.

Consider whether the short story 'Moments' follows this set of rules.

Activities ...

UNDERSTANDING short story texts

Getting started

1. Take about ten lines of the text and use the Wordle weblink in your eBookPLUS to create a picture (see page 64). What words show up as important? Do you agree that these words are important in the story?

Working through

2. How is Daniel trapped?
3. Who does the voice that talks to him belong to?
4. List any unfamiliar words and look up their meaning.
5. List any sections of the story you found difficult to understand.
6. In one paragraph, handwrite a summary of the story, recording the beginning (orientation), middle (identifying the complications) and end (identify the climax). You could chart it on a plot graph.

INTERPRETING short story texts

Working through

7. The story makes a great deal of how Daniel senses the world. This occurs in the present, when he is trapped, and in the moments of his past, when he remembers. In your notebook, draw up a table like the one below. Complete it by identifying the senses the writer appeals to, the kind of language (verbs, adjectives, similes, metaphors) and details he includes to tap into these senses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of the story</th>
<th>Senses</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. When Daniel first regains consciousness</td>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>Light hammered at his eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>strong verbs, imagery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>a lot of noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>they didn't sound right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The memory of breaking his fingers when jumping on the pipes</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>slick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>blood and wet pipes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Remembering the 'documentary' of home life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Trapped under the box by the bully</td>
<td></td>
<td>dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cold and wet grass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Why is the story entitled ‘Moments’? Suggest an alternative title and explain why it would be appropriate.
9. Why does the story sometimes use sentence fragments, such as More light (line 5) or Other voices (line 8)? Find two other examples.

Going further

10. Research the effects of sensory deprivation (removal) and sensory overload on a person. Which of his senses was Daniel deprived of in the story? Which were overloaded? How did he compensate for this?
11. Has the writer of ‘Moments’ overdone the appeal to the reader’s senses in this story? Discuss in small groups and see if you can reach a consensus. Then write a summary of what the group decided, giving reasons.
CREATING and RESPONDING to short story texts

‘Moments’ features many moments that Daniel remembers, such as the happy memory of eating ice-cream on the beach while on holiday, or the awful memory of being trapped under the box by the bully. These remembered moments take him away from his current situation.

Getting started
12 Draw up a table with two columns. Head the first column ‘Happy memories’ and in it list as many happy memories from your childhood as you can. Head the second column ‘Unhappy memories’ and do the same. If you don’t want to use your own experiences, create them based on a fictional character.

Working through
13 Take one of the happy memories from your list and write about it. Now do the same with one of the unhappy memories. Try to create a happy mood in the first memory and an unhappy mood in the second. Compare the language you have used to re-create the experiences. Is there a difference?

Going further
14 Use figurative language and language that appeals to the senses to help you compose a memory that might distract or take you away from a tense or uncomfortable situation. Try to write at least 200 words. Outline the situation you are in as your opening paragraph, then re-create the memory. You could begin the second paragraph simply with ‘I remember . . .’

LANGUAGE link

Varying sentence length and construction
A sentence is a group of words that contains at least one independent or main clause; for example, He closed his eyes. In this sentence, He is the subject and closed his eyes is the predicate.

Written texts are based on the sentence. You can make your writing more interesting to read if you vary the construction and length of your sentences.

‘Moments’ uses a mix of long and short sentences and many sentence fragments. You would not use sentence fragments in a report or explanatory text, but in creative writing you can break or bend some of the rules or conventions of sentence structure to achieve a particular effect.

Look at a passage from the class novel or wide reading book you are currently reading. Does the writer break any rules?

My view . . .

After working through this section, think about why rules exist in writing — rules concerned with grammar, spelling and punctuation. The writer of ‘Moments’ broke some of these rules. Yet rules can also help a writer to craft a text. Should a writer know all the rules before she or he breaks them? Is it good to break writing ‘rules’ in imaginative texts? Justify your opinion.
How do web designers craft web pages?

A web page is an online document that can be accessed on the internet through its unique URL or address. Web pages are designed by web designers. The copy for the web page may have been provided by a writer but the positioning or placement of text, graphics and other visual elements is decided by the web designer to achieve maximum impact and functionality. Web pages are an example of multimodal texts because they use a number of modes or ways of communicating: text, images, colour and sound, for example.

When building or ‘crafting’ a web page, web designers make decisions about what is presented to the audience and how it is presented. For instance, the age or gender of the intended audience will influence how it is crafted. So too will its purpose. For instance, is its purpose to inform, entertain or amuse?

The web page on the next page is an extract from the home page of a site promoting Aboriginal culture in the Northern Territory. Look carefully at how features are laid out and organised on the page. Before you look closely at the web page, your teacher may ask you to complete the following Ready to Read activities.

**READY TO READ …**

- What does the term *Aboriginal Culture* mean? What do you already know about this topic?
- View the web page and think about what catches your eye first: is it the words or the images?
- What ideas do you get about the subject matter from the images?
- Scan to see if the web page uses text features such as headings, bolded words and different fonts, or graphic features such as diagrams, maps and photographs.
- When you view the page online, can you hear any sound?
- Find at least three words on the web page that appear to be important to this topic.
Headings such as ‘Visit Aboriginal Australia’ help to introduce sub-topics and explain the text or images presented.

The text uses active process words or verbs such as visit, plan, discover, watch, learn.

Underlined words are links to deeper levels — second layers within the Aboriginal Culture layer.

Navigation banners at the top, which feature headers or tabs, are a common feature of websites. Notice that Aboriginal Culture is highlighted.

The quotation from an Indigenous land owner gives the site authority — its use of inclusive language (our stories, our land) suggests the site has been approved by Aboriginal groups.

Social networking site links: the internet now uses social media to promote information and activities.

Mini-sites are embedded layers within the main site.

NEED TO KNOW
social media  the online media used for social networking, such as emailing, blogging or tweeting over the internet
inclusive language  language that does not exclude or discriminate against anyone. In this case, the use of our includes all Aboriginal people.

Use the Aboriginal Culture eBookPLUS weblink in your eBookPLUS to view this web page.
Activities ...

UNDERSTANDING features of multimodal texts

Getting started
1. What is the main topic or subject of this web page?
2. What do you think is the purpose of the web page? Is it to:
   a. entertain
   b. persuade
   c. inform
   d. both inform and persuade?
   Explain your choice.
3. Who is the intended audience for this web page? Is it:
   a. Aboriginal people
   b. tourists
   c. students
   d. others?
   Explain your choice.

Working through
4. What is shown in the largest picture on this web page? Describe it in a sentence. Why do you think the web designer might have chosen this image?
5. The web designer has placed the quote from the traditional land owner over the top of this largest image. Why do you think he has done this? Write down what you believe the quote means in your own words.
6. What words on the page tell a visitor that they can get actively involved with Aboriginal culture — that you can experience it for yourself?
7. What are mini-sites and what types of content do they contain? What level or layer of content are these within the Aboriginal Culture section?

LANGUAGE link

Websites and layers (or levels) of content

In a novel, readers read across the page from left to right and down the page from top to bottom. This is called linear reading. Readers of a web page, however, can navigate or move about the document in a non-linear fashion — backwards and forwards, up and down. When surfing a web page, you can make use of a menu bar and/or a scroll bar. You will probably click on hyperlinks (which take you to other areas within the web page) and other onscreen elements. The website might have many layers of content, as in the website on page 79.

Breadcumb trails are another navigation aid for web pages. These allow readers to keep track of where they are in the overall website. Breadcrumb trails typically appear horizontally across the top of a web page, usually below title bars or headers and look like this:

Home page/Section page/Subsection page

The Aboriginal Culture web page is in fact a lower layer within the larger website or portal of the Northern Territory’s Tourist promotion site. If a website has a site map, it will show you the website’s structure.

Does the Aboriginal Culture web page have a breadcrumb trail? Research the origin of the term breadcrumb trail.
ANALYSING features of multimodal texts

**Working through**

8 Look at the opening paragraph under the heading ‘Visit Aboriginal Australia.’ How does it help to persuade or convince people that the Northern Territory is a good place to explore Aboriginal culture? Look carefully at the words used to make it sound appealing to the audience.

9 Read the first paragraph under the heading ‘Visit Aboriginal Australia.’ Why has the web designer put it in bold type?

10 The page also lets you know that you can learn more about Aboriginal culture. How would a visitor to this page do this?

11 Rank the possible purposes of this web page, listed below, from what you think is most important to least important. Then explain your ranking.
   - To entertain the person who visits this page
   - To inform people about Aboriginal culture
   - To persuade people that the Northern Territory is a good place to visit
   - To promote Australia as a tourist destination for overseas visitors

**Going further**

12 How would you change this web page if your audience was primary school children? Explain your decisions.
   - a How would you change the text? Think about sentence structure, vocabulary and ideas expressed.
   - b How would you change the images? Would you have more, fewer or a different type?
   - c How would you change the layout? Would you have more or fewer elements on the page? Would you remove the need to scroll down?
   - d How would you change the structure? Would you have more or fewer mini-sites and videos? More or fewer hyperlinks?
   - e Would you use any special effects, for example, animation?

RESPONDING to multimodal texts

**Getting started**

13 Do you think the web designer has created a web page that appeals to its intended audience? Discuss with a partner, then handwrite three sentences explaining your point of view. Can you think of anything the web designer could have added to better achieve the website’s purpose?

**Working through**

14 Use a search engine such as Google to find another website that deals with Aboriginal culture. Print a screenshot copy of the home page (enlarge it if necessary) and then annotate its structure and features using the annotated website on page 79 as a guide.

**Going further**

15 In your opinion, which web page (the one on page 79 or the one you have located yourself) is crafted more effectively and best achieves its purpose? Work out a set of criteria to assess the web page. Justify your decision with reference to both web pages.

16 What do you see as the advantages a multimodal text such as a web page might have over a page in a printed book? What might be some disadvantages? Considering both, what mode comes out ahead? Discuss in pairs or small groups.
Wordsmith ...

CRAFTING TEXTS USING VERBS

Writers have to make deliberate choices about sentence structure. An important element of a sentence is the verb.

The main verb in a sentence tells us what action, process or state of being is being expressed. Verbs usually come after the subject of a sentence. Sometimes sentences are made up of just a subject and a main verb.

She (subject) arrived (main verb). or The cat meowed.

Some verbs are made up of more than one word and are referred to as compound verbs, verb groups or verb phrases. The main verb then has a helping (auxiliary) verb.

A helping verb can tell us about whether an action is complete or continuing. A modal verb is a kind of helping verb that gives information about how probable or necessary an action is.

I might go to the movies.
You must finish your assignment.
She has arrived.
The cat is meowing.

Some sentences from the web page on page 79 do not have a subject before the main verb. For example:

Discover living Aboriginal culture, rich with traditions over 40 000 years old.
Watch traditional dances and learn to play the didgeridoo.

This kind of verb form is called an imperative. An imperative is used to give a command or make an offer or suggestion to the listener/reader, and so the subject is actually you. Instead of saying you discover, you watch, we leave the subject you out, because it is understood and the sentence then has a more direct impact on the reader. Sentences like this are sometimes called elliptical sentences.

These sentences could have been written like this:

Subject Main verb

You will discover living Aboriginal culture, rich with traditions over 40 000 years old.

Helping verb

Subject Main verb Main verb

You can watch traditional dances and learn to play the didgeridoo.

Subject of learn is still you; helping verb is still can. They are not repeated.

The first sentence could also be rewritten using a modal verb to suggest a command.

Subject Main verb

You must discover living Aboriginal culture, rich with traditions over 40 000 years old.

Modal helping verb
Why might the composer of the web page text have chosen to write (or craft) those sentences as they did? There may be a number of reasons:

- Starting the sentence with a main verb without a subject gives a sense of action or persuasion to the sentence, and makes it an offer or command. This would lead or encourage readers to take the action expressed by the main verb.
- There is limited space (sometimes called ‘real estate’) on a web page and removing unessential words or having an understood subject saves space. It may, for instance, prevent a line having to turn over.
- It sets up a consistent structure for sentences and helps create a uniform look and tone for the language on the page. This helps readers predict what they are reading and gives the text a sense of familiarity to them.

**OVER TO YOU …**

1. List four other main verbs that start sentences on the web page.
2. Choose two other sentences from the web page and rewrite them so that they have a subject and a helping verb with the main verb. Decide which version you prefer. Why?
3. Write three new sentences of your own, starting with an imperative verb, in the way the sentences on the web page do, on the topic of ‘My home’. Your purpose is to advertise your home to potential buyers. Choose one of the images below to inspire you.

**My view . . .**

*Do you think that web designers are engaged in a craft the way that writers are? Justify your opinion. What do you think are the most important skills a web designer has to use when crafting a web page? Would you now change the definition of ‘craft’ that you wrote on page 61? If so rewrite it.*
COMPOSE AND CREATE

Productive focus: writing and creating

1

Write to capture mood

Either
Create a series of four haiku related to outside environments for inclusion in a poetry anthology with a nature theme.
Or
Write a mood poem, based on the activity you did in the Wordsmith in section 3.1, for inclusion in the school magazine.
   Remember to focus on the creative use of sensuous language, similes, metaphors and so on.
Or
Create a prose mood text for a natural place, for inclusion in an environmental magazine called *Special Places*. Use the same approach as you would for a mood poem but write prose with sentences and paragraphs rather than poetry.

You could use this process to write your own haiku:

- Write down the month of the year and the season.
- Now look out the window (even better, go outside) and look carefully at the natural environment, exploring with all your senses.
- Write as many descriptive words as you can to describe your impressions: colours, scents, the feel of the sun on your back, something that startled you or makes you smile.
- Sort your words into one, two, three or four syllables. Now combine words into groups so that you have some five- and some seven-syllable groups.
- Now order your word groups into the haiku pattern.
- Adjust the words and their sequence until you are pleased with the result. Try to ensure you have captured a feeling or an idea about nature.

Some key points to remember

- Remember your purpose. With haiku, you are seeking to make a sensuous statement about a moment in time and place — one with a natural feel. With a mood poem or prose, you are aiming to establish and sustain a mood and clearly communicate how the space made you feel.
- Remember your chosen audience: nature lovers/poetry readers/other students and your teacher.
- Language can appeal to all senses, but remember that the sense of sight will naturally dominate.
- Figurative language helps us see with our mind’s eye, so use similes, metaphors and other imagery.
- Sensuous language is intertextual; it can connect a reader to, and remind them of, other texts.
Write a story section

Either

Create an orientation of at least one page for a story written in response to ‘Moments’ — one in which you use memories to distract you from a current predicament or problem. Your audience is fellow writers at a story writing workshop. Just as Daniel experienced, it might be a very stressful situation or it might be quite ordinary and everyday. Imagine, for example, that you’re sitting outside the principal’s office, not quite sure why you’ve been called there.

Or

Imagine that you are the rescue team member who has been with Daniel. Pick up the story just after ‘Moments’ ends. What happens next? You are describing events to other rescue workers or a trauma counsellor months later. You will retell some of the events in ‘Moments’ but from a different point of view: yours instead of Daniel’s.

Some key points to remember

- Remember your purpose: you want to capture a sense of how the place made you feel, OR you’re creating a setting in which something triggers a memory OR retelling from another point of view.
- You want to evoke a response from your reader, make them feel the mood of this special place OR make them interested in a character and what is going to happen to him or her.
- Remember your audience: your fellow writers, the trauma counsellor etc. Although your teacher is assessing the story, he or she is not your audience.
- Language can appeal to all senses, but remember that the sense of sight will often naturally dominate.
- Figurative language helps us see with our mind’s eye, so use similes, metaphors and other imagery.
- Sensuous language is intertextual; it can connect a reader to, and remind them of, other texts.

Use the assessment criteria rubric to guide you through your chosen task.
Design a website

Either individually or with a partner, design a website aimed at attracting students to your school. The website will be used by the principal at an information night promoting your school to prospective Year 7 students. Don't forget the key structural and navigation devices for a website studied in section 3.1.

Some key points to remember

- Remember your purpose: you’re ‘selling’ your school. Persuade other teenagers (and their parents) that it’s great!
- You want to attract other teenagers but remember that your key audience is parents.
- Size of headings is important.
- Avoid too much text, particularly on the top level (first layer) pages. Decide whether the main tone of your text will be entertaining, informative or persuasive, or a mix of these.
- Is navigation easy? Getting home, back to the first layer, needs to be available on every second-level page.
- Images matter. Choose them carefully to suit your purpose and audience. Parents will not want to see photos of the oval with litter on it.
- Can you insert sound? Perhaps get the school band to play a song.
- Video sells really well. Why not film a fly-through of your school’s best features and embed it in your website?

Self-evaluation . . .

1. What were your favourite parts of this unit? What were your least favourite?
2. What new vocabulary did you learn during this unit?
3. What writing strategies have you learned during this unit?
4. At times through this unit and in some assessment options, you were asked to work in groups. How did that affect the way you approached the task?