Literary devices
Stage 4

Overview

Learning intention

Students will learn to interpret and analyse a range of literary devices, including metaphor and figurative language, in varying texts.

Syllabus outcomes

The following teaching and learning strategies will assist in covering elements of the following outcomes:

- EN4-1A: responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure
- EN4-2A: effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media and technologies
- EN4-3B: uses and describes language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts

Success criteria

The following Year 7 NAPLAN item descriptors may guide teachers to co-construct success criteria for student learning.

- interprets the meaning of a metaphor in a text
- interprets the meaning of figurative language in a text
- interprets the meaning of figurative language in an information text
- interprets the meaning of literary language in a narrative extract
- analyses the effect of a literary device in a narrative
- analyses the effect of a metaphor in a narrative
- analyses the use of a literary device in a text

National Literacy Learning Progression guide

Understanding Texts (UnT9-UnT11)

Key: C=comprehension P=process V=vocabulary

UnT9

- identifies how authors create a sense of playfulness (pun, alliteration) (C)
- analyses how language in texts serves different purposes (identifies how descriptive language is used differently in informative and persuasive texts) (see Grammar) (P)
- identifies language used to create tone or atmosphere (V)

UnT10

- evaluates the effectiveness of language forms and features used in moderately complex or some sophisticated texts (See Text Complexity) (C)

UnT11

- evaluates the use of devices such as analogy, irony and satire (C)
- analyses how authors manipulate language features, image and sound for a purpose (to create humour or playfulness) (C)
- interprets symbolism in texts, providing evidence to justify interpretation (C)
- interprets and analyses complex figurative language (euphemisms, hyperbole) (V)

Teaching strategies

Tasks	Appendices
Identify and define figurative language	Appendix 1 - Literary devices match-up posters and card sort Appendix 2 – Literary devices match-up
Identifying figurative language in text	Appendix 3 – 'Bridge to Terabithia' extract Appendix 4 – Literary Devices – analysing texts Appendix 5 – Literary Devices in texts– informative text
Interpret and analyse literary devices in poetry	Appendix 6 'Fishing from the rocks' Appendix 7 – Poem analysis table
Analyse irony and satire in images	Appendix 8 – Frayer model graphic organiser Appendix 9 - Michael Leunig cartoon
Analyse personification in prose fiction	Appendix 10 - Analysing personification in prose fiction 'The Book Thief'

Background information

Literary Devices

Literary devices are used in texts to connect with the reader and convey meaning. Accomplished readers are able to recognise and interpret the use of various language devices that composers use for effect. Explain to students that composers use different language devices for particular purposes. In a persuasive text, composers might use persuasive devices such as rhetorical questions, repetition, metaphors, hyperbole and modality to persuade readers to agree with a particular point of view. In narrative texts, composers might use literary devices such as personification, similes, alliteration, onomatopoeia and imagery to engage the reader and allow them to visualise the setting and characters.

Personification

Personification is a type of metaphor where something non-human is described as if it were human or had human characteristics.

Irony

A clash between what the words say and what they mean. Irony has three forms:

- rhetorical irony – saying something contrary to what is meant, for example 'I had a great time' (I was bored)
- dramatic irony – stating or doing something unaware of its contrast with the real situation, for example where the reader or watcher knows disaster is about to befall a character who says, 'I've never been happier'
- situational irony - where events are opposite to expectations, for example, building a fence to keep a dog contained-then the dog jumping over it.

Satire

The use of one or more of exaggeration, humour, parody, irony, sarcasm or ridicule to expose, denounce and deride folly or vice in human nature and institutions. The emphatic feature of these language devices draws attention to what is being criticised.

Reference: English K-10 Syllabus © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2012.

Where to next?

- Vocabulary in context
- Inference
- Literal comprehension

Overview of teaching strategies

Purpose

These literacy teaching strategies support teaching and learning from Stage 2 to Stage 5. They are linked to NAPLAN task descriptors, syllabus outcomes and literacy and numeracy learning progressions.

These teaching strategies target specific literacy and numeracy skills and suggest a learning sequence to build skill development. Teachers can select individual tasks or a sequence to suit their students.

Access points

The resources can be accessed from:

- NAPLAN App in Scout using the teaching strategy links from NAPLAN items
- NSW Department of Education literacy and numeracy website.

What works best

Explicit teaching practices involve teachers clearly explaining to students why they are learning something, how it connects to what they already know, what they are expected to do, how to do it and what it looks like when they have succeeded. Students are given opportunities and time to check their understanding, ask questions and receive clear, effective feedback.

This resource reflects the latest evidence base and can be used by teachers as they plan for explicit teaching.

Teachers can use assessment information to make decisions about when and how they use this resource as they design teaching and learning sequences to meet the learning needs of their students.

Further support with What works best is available.

Differentiation

When using these resources in the classroom, it is important for teachers to consider the needs of all students, including Aboriginal and EAL/D learners.

EAL/D learners will require explicit English language support and scaffolding, informed by the EAL/D enhanced teaching and learning cycle and the student's phase on the EAL/D Learning Progression. Teachers can access information about supporting EAL/D learners and literacy and numeracy support specific to EAL/D learners.

Learning adjustments enable students with disability and additional learning and support needs to access syllabus outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers. Teachers can use a range of adjustments to ensure a personalised approach to student learning.

Assessing and identifying high potential and gifted learners will help teachers decide which students may benefit from extension and additional challenge. Effective strategies and contributors to achievement for high potential and gifted learners helps teachers to identify and target areas for growth and improvement. A differentiation adjustment tool can be found on the High potential and gifted education website.

Using tasks across learning areas

This resource may be used across learning areas where it supports teaching and learning aligned with syllabus outcomes.

Literacy and numeracy are embedded throughout all K-10 syllabus documents as general capabilities. As the English and mathematics learning areas have a particular role in developing literacy and numeracy, NSW English K-10 and Mathematics K-10 syllabus outcomes aligned to literacy and numeracy skills have been identified.

Text selection

Example texts are used throughout this resource. Teachers can adjust activities to use texts which are linked to their unit of learning.

Further support with text selection can be found within the National Literacy Learning Progression Text Complexity appendix.

The NESA website has additional information on text requirements within the NSW English K-10 syllabus.

Teaching strategies

Identify and define figurative language

1. Vocabulary bank: Students are asked to visualise a familiar experience e.g. sitting on the beach, walking in the bush, the feeling before a storm hits. Students brainstorm words and phrases that describe the event. Teacher displays this vocabulary and introduces more sophisticated synonyms which build on the word map, drawing connections between terms and defining words that are uncommon or unknown. This is a good opportunity to introduce more sophisticated, Tier 2 vocabulary. For example, if brainstorming 'beach', students may offer words such as water, ocean, sharks, sand, deep blue. The teacher may introduce terms such as driftwood, reflection, coarse golden sand, horizon, tide, ebb and flow.
2. *Mind map:* Students brainstorm with teacher to create a mind map where students contribute the different language devices that they know. As more information is reviewed, this can be added to the mind map.
3. Enlarge 'Language devices match-up' posters (Appendix 1 - Literary devices match-up posters and card sort) and display around classroom. Each poster contains a definition for a language device. Read the definition and see if students can identify the language device that is defined on each poster (poster 1 - metaphor, poster 2 - onomatopoeia, poster 3 - personification, poster 4 - hyperbole, poster 5 – simile). Write the language device on the posters.
4. Distribute the 'Literary devices match-up' cards (Appendix 2 – Literary devices match-up). Students read the examples on their cards and determine the language device. Students walk around the room and use Blu Tack or a similar product to stick their cards on the appropriate poster. *Additional task:* students create their own examples and add these by writing directly onto the poster.
5. Students engage in rigorous discussion to agree or disagree with placement, using accountable talk: "I can see why you might place this here, but I would argue it is more appropriate to be placed here because…"

Identifying figurative language in text

1. Students identify key literary devices in a range of texts currently linked to unit of learning. Students predict language, identify devices and analyse their effect. Teachers allocate key devices found in texts to posters around the room and students match the literary devices they find with the name, example and definition. This can be added to any text explored in class.

Alternatively:

2. Students read excerpt from 'Bridge to Terabithia' (Appendix 3 – 'Bridge to Terabithia' extract). Using highlighted examples of literary devices, students discuss with a partner and indicate prior knowledge of the literary device, why the composer used it and its effect on the reader (Appendix 4 – Literary Devices – analysing texts.)
3. Distribute an information text relevant to a current unit of learning. Students predict key vocabulary and message, audience and purpose of the text, using the table to record their ideas. (Appendix 5 – Literary Devices in texts– informative text). Students read an extract and highlight and label any literary devices. Engage in a Think-Pair-Share where students share their annotations with a partner.
4. Students discuss annotations from pairs to quads, from quads to whole class. Display the extract on the board and get students to underline and label the different literary devices.

Interpret and analyse literary devices in poetry

1. Students independently read a poem linked to current unit of learning or, alternatively, 'Fishing from the rocks' by Mia Gregson (Appendix 6 - 'Fishing from the rocks'). During second read, students highlight any literary devices evident in text. Students annotate the poem, identifying what they can infer from the devices.

Variation: as necessary, teacher provides margin notes and/or glossary to facilitate this independent reading. Various levels of support can be provided using this strategy.

2. Teacher models reading the poem aloud, paying attention to enjambment (moving over from one line to another without a terminating punctuation mark – refer to literarydevices.net) in the stanzas. Students are given a stanza to discuss and identify any literary devices using their poem annotation and the work they completed in the first part of this task. Students analyse the text and create a visual representation of the stanza. Students share back with class and teacher guides discussion to reinforce audience and purpose. Students order information and stanzas to create a class display. Experiment/evaluate: What happens if you change the order of the stanzas? Is the poem still effective? What new meanings are made? Students cut up stanzas/pictures and manipulate order.
3. Teacher models annotation of poem using questions below to guide. Students then work in pairs to complete column 4 in the table of Appendix 7 – Poem analysis table.

Key prompts:

- Whose point of view do we hear in this poem? Provide an example.
- What tone is conveyed through the dialogue?
- Identify the use of personification. What does this imagery convey?
- 'Time begins. Fishing time extending hope.' What is conveyed through the use of truncated sentence and metaphor?
- What is the effect of the enjambment in these lines?
  'around the headland
  To the threatening rocks, the swelling ocean.'

Analyse irony and satire in images

1. *Frayer model* (graphic organiser)*:* Discuss current understanding of irony: A clash between what the words say and what they mean (refer to Background information). Have students think, pair, share in small groups to discuss examples and how they match the criteria of irony. Students use Appendix 8 – Frayer model graphic organiser to synthesize understanding of irony.
2. *Venn diagram:* students use Venn diagram to compare and contrast satire and irony.
3. Students analyse a cartoon (Appendix 9 - Michael Leunig cartoon) for both satirical and ironic elements: What type of irony is evident in the cartoon? What is ironic? Students use the cartoon as a launch for a mind map by explaining the visual features that represent this ironic situation. Why is this cartoon satirical? What is being criticised? Why?

Analyse personification in prose fiction

1. Explain that personification is a type of metaphor where something non-human is described as if it were human or had human characteristics, and that personification is often used in fiction as it can make stories come alive, allowing us to see things from novel perspectives (definitely use that pun). Ask students to share any examples they can think of from novels, poems, films, TV shows or any other texts where personification is used.

2. Explain that the Australian novel 'The Book Thief' is actually entirely narrated by a personified entity, and that the book is set in Nazi Germany during World War II.

3. Read the extract from 'The Book Thief' (Appendix 10 - Analysing personification in prose fiction 'The Book Thief') with the class. Support students with vocabulary that may be unfamiliar by rephrasing key ideas as you go (or getting students to explain what they think a term or phrase means). Ensure that students understand the word 'soul', as it is essential to comprehending the extract. EAL/D students from some cultural backgrounds may not be familiar with the idea of a soul, or may understand it differently to its use in the extract.

4. Ask students who they think is narrating the story. This could be done through class discussion or through a Think, Pair, Share activity. The narrator is 'Death', sometimes called the Grim Reaper.

Encourage students to focus on how they know this and the evidence they have for it. You may want to unpack this idea of Death as an entity with agency, as it is quite culturally-specific.

5. Students answer the questions in Appendix 10 - Analysing personification in prose fiction 'The Book Thief'. The first two have been answered through the previous discussion/activity. Solutions to the other two questions can be modelled by the teacher as necessary.
    - Who is the narrator in The Book Thief? (Death)
    - What is it that shows us that the narrator is personified? (The extract is written in first person. We get an idea of his feelings and intentions, 'as genially as possible', 'carry you gently away', 'It helps me relax.)
    - What kind of 'person' is the narrator? What words or phrases in the text build that idea for you and why? (He seems somewhat sensitive and caring, or at least very respectful - different from what we might expect from 'Death'. He acts 'genially' and 'gently'; he needs help relaxing; he enjoys the colours of the sky.)
    - Find two other examples of personification in the text. What is the effect of each of them? ('A scream will dribble down the air.' The scream seems divorced from the soul. A dribble moves slowly and is something you can't usually control. 'What will the sky be saying?' This makes it seem like the sky is commenting on the situation through its colours and patterns. It's as if the situation is so important that even the sky will have an opinion on it.) To increase complexity students create their own examples of personification, based on this text or any other text relevant to their current learning.

Appendix 1

Literary device match-up - posters

A figure of speech where a word or phrase is used that is not literally possible.

Saying that something IS something else.

The formation of a word that creates the sound associated with the word.

Giving human characteristics or attributes to something that is non-human.

An exaggerated statement that is not meant to be taken literally.

A figure of speech that involves the comparison of two things, usually using the words ‘like’ or ‘as’.

Appendix 2

Literacy device match-up

I’m so tired I’m going to sleep for a whole week.	The books fell with a loud thud.	The well was as dry as a bone.
The flood raged over the entire village.	Do not judge a book by its cover.	The wind whispered through the dry grass.
Your suitcase weighs 1000 kilos!	She clicked her fingers.	Tim is as funny as a monkey.
The shadow of the moon danced on the lake.	The rock hit the water with a splash.	Lucy is as cunning as a fox.
The flowers danced in the gentle breeze.	The cat meowed.	Her cheeks are red like a rose.
I’m so bored I could die.	Thunder boomed all night.	The fire swallowed the entire forest.
He was as brave as a soldier.	It is the fountain of life.	I’m so hungry I could eat a horse!
The rustling leaves kept me awake.	I received my first pay check and now I’m rolling in dough.	I am dying of shame.

The words fled from his mind when he met her.	It’s as hot as hell.	He cried all night and all day.
It’s so cold I’m going to freeze to death.	Ding-dong!	The classroom was a zoo.
The house looked as though it was weeping.	I’m so tired I’m going to sleep for a whole week.	Her skin was as soft as a baby’s bottom.
It’s so hot I’m melting.	The cows mooed in the field.	There was a loud crash when the cars collided.
I wandered as lonely as a cloud.	Love is a battlefield.	It leaned like the Tower of Pisa.
Everyone could sense the elephant in the room.	I haven’t seen you in a hundred years.	The helicopter blades whirred in the distance.
She was as light as air.	That dress is so ugly it’s burning my eyes.	The car suffered a severe beating in the accident.
I have a million things to do.	Look at my car. She’s a beauty, isn’t she?	I’m coughing my lungs out.

Appendix 3

Text analysis: *Bridge to Terabithia*, Katherine Paterson, Crowell Co., 1977

Ba-room, ba-room, ba-room, baripity, baripity, baripity, baripity. Good. His dad had the pickup going. He could get up now. Jess slid out of bed and into his overalls. He didn't worry about a shirt because once he began running he would be hot as popping grease even if the morning air was chill, or shoes because the bottoms of his feet were by now as tough as his worn-out sneakers.

"Where you going, Jess?" May Belle lifted herself up sleepily from the double bed where she and Joyce Ann slept.

"Sh." He warned. The walls were thin. Momma would be mad as flies in a fruit jar if they woke her up this time of day.

He patted May Belle's hair and yanked the twisted sheet up to her small chin. "Just over the cow field," he whispered. May Belle smiled and snuggled down under the sheet.

"Gonna run?"

"Maybe."

Of course he was going to run. He had gotten up early every day all summer to run. He figured if he worked at it - and Lord, had he worked-he could be the fastest runner in the fifth grade when school opened up. He had to be the fastest-not one of the fastest or next to the fastest, but the fastest. The very best.

He tiptoed out of the house. The place was so ratty that it screeched whenever you put your foot down, but Jess had found that if you tiptoed, it gave only a low moan, and he could usually get outdoors without waking Momma or Ellie or Brenda or Joyce Ann. May Belle was another matter. She was going on seven, and she worshiped him, which was OK sometimes. When you were the only boy smashed between four sisters, and the older two had despised you ever since you stopped letting them dress you up and wheel you around in their rusty old doll carriage, and the littlest one cried if you looked at her cross-eyed, it was nice to have somebody who worshiped you. Even if it got unhandy sometimes.

Appendix 4

Literary devices – analysing text

Language device	What do I already know?	Why did the composer use it (effect)?
Onomatopoeia “Ba-room, ba-room, ba-room, baripity, baripity…”		
Simile “the bottoms of his feet were by now as tough as his worn-out sneakers”		
Imagery “He patted May Belle’s hair and yanked the twisted sheet up to her small chin”		
Repetition “He had to be the fastest – not one of the fastest or next to the fastest, but the fastest”		
Personification “The place was so ratty that it screeched whenever you put your foot down”		
Hyperbole “When you were the only boy smashed between four sisters…		

Literary devices: analysing texts (support)

Language device	**What do I already know?**	**Why did the composer use it (effect)?**
Onomatopoeia “Ba-room, ba-room, ba-room, baripity, baripity…”	Onomatopoeia is a device where the word makes the sound associated with it.	To convey the sound of the pickup truck.
Simile “the bottoms of his feet were by now as tough as his worn-out sneakers”	Similes are used to compare things.	To compare the character’s feet with the worn-out sneakers to show that his feet were rough and hard.
Imagery “He patted May Belle’s hair and yanked the twisted sheet up to her small chin”	Imagery is visually descriptive language.	To allow the reader to visualise what the characters are doing which draws the reader in and engages them.
Repetition “He had to be the fastest – not one of the fastest or next to the fastest, but the fastest”	Repetition is used to reinforce something so that the reader remembers it.	To emphasise that the character wants to be the fastest runner in the fifth grade.
Personification “The place was so ratty that it screeched whenever you put your foot down”	Personification is when non-human things are given human characteristics or qualities.	To show that the house is old and falling apart where the ‘screech’ sound makes it appear as though it is in pain.
Hyperbole “When you were the only boy smashed between four sisters…	Hyperbole is an exaggeration.	To emphasise that the character was the only boy in a house full of girls.

Appendix 5

Literary devices in text – informative text

BEFORE reading: predicted vocabulary	AFTER reading: vocabulary to further research

Literacy Devices What devices were used, what effect did it create and what is the example from the text?

Appendix 6

Poem analysis

Fishing from the rocks – Mia Gregson

‘Think I’ll drop a line.

Tide’s out. Weather’s mild.’

Then the flurry: the hopeful basket, the rod, the hook, the line and sinker.

‘Guess you can come with me, but stay away from the edge.’

We’re all following him

Across soft sand, past paddocks of cows, around the headland

To the threatening rocks, the swelling ocean.

To the promise of success, the flailing fish on the quivering line.

Three of us to the forbidden side of the beach.

And the long-eared dog, all excited at the daring.

‘Never go further than the edge of the beach.

Stay in the safe sandy zone.’

Time begins. Fishing time extending hope.

The kids and the dog staying away from the ocean.

Watching the waves swell over the ledge

Swirling over the jagged rocks.

And in shallow pools, at least for the dog,

Something’s in there, a matching goal.

‘Where’s the fish, Roxy, where’s the fish?’

Dad and dog search the water in vain.

Year 7 NAPLAN Reading Magazine, 2013 *ACARA*

Appendix 7

Poem analysis -Literary devices table

Literary Technique	**Definition**	**Own example**	**Example from Poem**
Tone	The voice adopted by a particular speaker to indicate emotion, feeling or attitude to subject matter. The author's attitude towards the subject and audience, for example playful, serious, ironic, formal, etc.		
Dialogue	Recorded conversation – can be direct or indirect.		
Point of view	The particular perspective brought by a composer, responder or character within a text to the text or to matters within the text.		
Personification	Attributing human characteristics to abstractions such as love, things or animals		
Truncated sentence	A short sentence that is incomplete as there are words missing e.g. ‘Hear me?’		
Metaphor	A resemblance between one thing and another is declared by suggesting that one thing is another		
Enjambment	Continuing a sentence beyond a line without pausing.		

Appendix 8

Frayer model graphic organiser

Example	Non-example
Definition	**Own example** **Device**

Appendix 9

Irony and satire cartoon

Michael Leunig ‘Self help’ (1992)

Image courtesy of Michael Leunig

Appendix 10

Analysing personification in prose fiction

Zuzak, M. (2013). The book thief. Pan McMillan, Australia.

Of course, an introduction.

A beginning.

Where are my manners?

I could introduce myself properly, but it's not really necessary. You will know me well enough and soon enough, depending on a diverse range of variables. It suffices to say that at some point in time, I will be standing over you, as genially as possible. Your soul will be in my arms. A colour will be perched on my shoulder. I will carry you gently away.

At that moment, you will be lying there (I rarely find people standing up). You will be caked in your own body. There might be a discovery; a scream will dribble down the air. The only sound I'll hear after that will be my own breathing, and the sound of the smell, of my footsteps.

The question is, what colour will everything be at that moment when I come for you? What will the sky be saying?

Personally, I like a chocolate-coloured sky. Dark, dark chocolate. People say it suits me. I do, however, try to enjoy every colour I see - the whole spectrum. A billion or so flavours, none of them quite the same, and a sky to slowly suck on. It takes the edge off the stress. It helps me relax.

Personification in ‘The Book Thief’

1. Who is the narrator in The Book Thief?
2. What is it that shows us that the narrator is personified?
3. What kind of ‘person’ is the narrator? What words or phrases in the text build that idea for you and why?
4. Find two other examples of personification in the text. What is the effect of each of them?