



UNIT 1 ENGLISH

# SUMMER

# MER

SCHOOL

# VCE SUMMER SCHOOL

## Unit 1 English

### **Area of Study 1**

Reading & Exploring Texts

### **Area of Study 2**

Crafting Texts

**VCE Accreditation Period**

**2023 – 2027**



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# VCE SUMMER SCHOOL HEAD START LECTURES

## STUDY DESIGN (2023 – 2027) – EDITION 1

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### ABOUT THE COVER IMAGE

#### *THE POWER OF ART*

Engaging with art is essential to the human experience. Almost as soon as motor skills are developed, children communicate through artistic expression. Throughout each stage of our lives, art plays different and important roles. The arts have the power to bring joy, stir up emotions and influence our behaviour. Art crosses all divides. It breaks down cultural, social and economic barriers and plays a big role in how humans see and interact with others, and the world in general.

Art decreases stress levels and improves mental health and well-being, particularly in patients suffering chronic or terminal illness. It has the power to educate people and convey meaning in a way that can be appreciated by every person. Furthermore, it gives us the opportunity to travel through time and learn from the beliefs, dreams, habits, thoughts, culture and lives of people in different places and times.

The arts also challenge us with different points of view, encourages communication, promotes stronger critical thinking and problem-solving skills and unlocks the potential of the human mind. It is also closely linked to academic achievement, civic engagement and social and emotional development.

The benefits of art are significant and undeniable. Use it to benefit both your mental and physical health as you journey through your VCE.



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**SECTION 1: UNIT 1 ENGLISH**  
**COURSE OUTLINE & ASSESSMENT**  
**(2023 – 2027)**

# VCE ENGLISH UNIT 1

## VCAA STUDY DESIGN 2023 – 2027

In this unit, students read and respond to texts analytically and creatively.

### AREA OF STUDY 1

#### READING AND EXPLORING TEXTS

In this area of study, students engage in reading and viewing texts with a focus on personal connections with the story. They discuss and clarify the ideas and values presented by authors through their evocations of character, setting and plot, and through investigations of the point of view and/or the voice of the text. They develop and strengthen inferential reading and viewing skills, and consider the ways a text's vocabulary, text structures and language features can create meaning on several levels and in different ways.

Students' exploration of texts involves understanding and appreciating the role of vocabulary, text structures and language features in creating story and meaning. They contemplate the ways a text can present and reflect human experiences, and how stories or aspects of stories resonate with their own memories and lives. Students are encouraged to share their experience and understanding of the world, and make connections with key ideas, concerns and tensions presented in a text. They also explore the cultural, social and historical values embedded in the text, and can compare these values with their own. It is through these moments of connection that students engage more closely with the reading experience and draw parallels with their own observations of the world.

Through participation in discussions about their own experiences and the ways they make connections with a text, students develop their own thinking and engage with the ideas of others to extend their understanding of a text. They draw on personal experience and understanding in developing writing about a text, and work to shape their ideas and knowledge into formal essay structures.

For this outcome, students will read and explore one set text. This text must be of a different text type from that selected for study in Unit 2. The text selected should reflect the interests of the students and be worthy of close study.

Students are provided with opportunities to practise and extend their writing about texts. They are given time and support to extend their writing through reflection, editing and feedback.



## OUTCOME 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to make personal connections with, and explore the vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas in, a text.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

### OUTCOME 1: KEY KNOWLEDGE

- inferential reading and viewing strategies.
- Ideas, concerns and tensions in a text.
- Vocabulary, text structures and language features in a text.
- Personal and analytical writing in response to a text.
- Small group and whole class discussion, including ways of developing constructive and collaborative interactions and building on the ideas of others.
- The conventions of discussion and debate.
- The conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of standard Australian English.

### OUTCOME 1: KEY SKILLS

- Develop strategies for inferential reading and viewing.
- Consider and explore:
  - Ideas, concerns and tensions presented in a text.
  - Characters, settings and plot, and point of view and voice.
  - How vocabulary, text structures and language features create meaning.
- Engage productively in small group and class discussion, including listening to others.
- Develop, share and clarify ideas with peers and teachers employing appropriate strategies for discussion and debate.
- Plan and develop personal and analytical writing about a text, including the use of appropriate metalanguage to discuss vocabulary, text structures and language features.
- Use textual evidence, where appropriate, to support writing.
- Use appropriate strategies to review and edit writing.
- Apply the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of standard Australian English.



## **AREA OF STUDY 2: CRAFTING TEXTS**

In this area of study, students engage with and develop an understanding of effective and cohesive writing. They apply, extend and challenge their understanding and use of imaginative, persuasive and informative text through a growing awareness of situated contexts, stated purposes and audience.

Students read and engage imaginatively and critically with mentor texts that model effective writing. Through guided reading of mentor texts, students develop an understanding of the diverse ways that vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas can interweave to craft compelling texts. They consider these texts through knowledge of the ways purpose, context (including mode) and audience influence and shape writing.

Both individual and shared reading of mentor texts provides students with opportunities for rich discussion about what constitutes effective writing. Students collaborate through classwork to cultivate their understandings of cohesive and successful texts.

Students employ and experiment with the qualities of effective writing in their own work. Considering clear purpose, context (including mode) and audiences for their writing, and through engaging with and expanding on ideas drawn from mentor texts and other reading, they extend their creativity, fluency and range. As they craft their texts, students explore text structures and language features, and ideas. They build a varied vocabulary, which can include abstract and technical language, and apply standard and/or non-standard conventions of language, including syntax and spelling, as appropriate. They are also able to explore other forms of non-standard or informal language including colloquial and idiomatic language such as slang or dialects, where appropriate.

The mentor texts can include short stories, speeches or monologues (with transcripts), essays (comment, opinion, reflective, personal), podcasts (with transcripts), poetry/songs, feature articles (including a series of blog or social media postings) and memoirs and biography and can be entire texts or extracts. Students explore and revisit the mentor texts as inspiration for developing their own writing processes, for generation of ideas, and as models for effective writing. They demonstrate their understanding of ideas and application of effective writing strategies in their crafted texts and can articulate their writing processes in their commentaries.

Teachers and students can negotiate ideas and mentor texts that best fit the context and interests of the cohort. Three mentor texts must be studied in depth. Selection of texts is a school-based decision but can be inspired by the ideas listed in the Framework of Ideas (page 23). For details on text selection, see page 13. Teachers are encouraged to augment this area of study with other print and digital texts, in consultation with their students, and to create meaningful and authentic connections with the experiences of their students to empower them to write confidently.

## OUTCOME 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to demonstrate an understanding of effective and cohesive writing through the crafting of their own texts designed for a specific context and audience to achieve a stated purpose; and to describe individual decisions made about the vocabulary, text structures, language features and conventions used during writing processes.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

### OUTCOME 2: KEY KNOWLEDGE

- Vocabulary, text structures and language features used in effective writing.
- Different strategies to generate and develop ideas.
- The ways purpose, context and audience shape writing.
- Different language modes and their effects on structure and meaning.
- The power of language when deployed by an author to achieve their aims.
- The range of ideas presented in various ways in mentor texts.
- Writing processes including drafting, refining and considering feedback.
- The value of collaboration and discussion.
- Standard and non-standard conventions of language, including syntax, punctuation and spelling.

### OUTCOME 2: KEY SKILLS

- Employ and experiment with vocabulary, text structures and language features for effective writing.
- Write with a clear purpose (to express, to reflect, to explain or to argue) and an awareness of context (including mode) and audience.
- Develop and employ writing processes.
- Generate ideas, and discuss, develop and elaborate on these ideas.
- Explore voices appropriate to audience, purpose and context (including mode).
- Experiment with vocabulary for effective writing.
- Plan, create, draft, refine and complete individual writing.
- Collaborate on the processes of writing with peers and teachers through discussion and feedback.
- Recognise and comment on vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas used in effective writing.
- Reflect on and share the implications of authorial choices made in their own writing and in the writings of others.
- Apply standard and non-standard conventions of language, including syntax, punctuation and spelling, as appropriate.

## ASSESSMENT

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate two outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

**Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the following:**

- A personal response to a set text.
- Two student-created texts such as: short stories, speeches (with transcripts), essays (comment, opinion, reflective, personal), podcasts (with transcripts), poetry/songs, feature articles (including a series of blog postings) and memoirs.
- A description of writing processes.

**For clarity see summary below:**

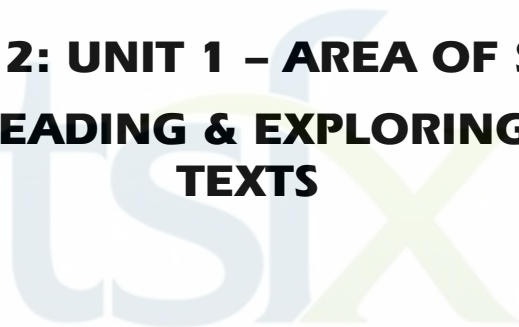
<b>Unit 1: Area of Study 1 Reading and Exploring texts</b>	<b>Unit 1: Area of Study 2 Crafting texts</b>
You will study: One text selected by your school.	You will study: Three mentor texts
You will write: A personal response to the text.	You will write: Two texts A description of your writing processes

The VCE English Units 1 and 2 Study Design does not provide rubrics for these assessment tasks. Rather, individual schools develop rubrics that are tailored to the specific demands of the school-based tasks.

VCAA do provide rubrics for Unit 3 Area of Study 2 Assessment Tasks and schools may draw on these to develop their own. These are included in later sections of the booklet.



**SECTION 2: UNIT 1 – AREA OF STUDY 1**  
**READING & EXPLORING**  
**TEXTS**



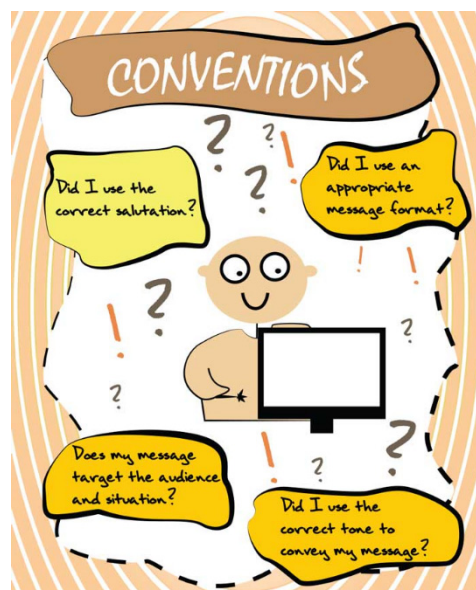
## PART 1 – CONVENTIONS OF TEXTS

In Area of Study 1 you will be study **ONE text** and the text will be allocated by your teacher. The type of text you will studying may be a:

- Novel
- Graphic novel
- Collection of short stories
- Collection of poetry
- Film
- Play
- Non-fiction (biography, autobiography memoir, true crime or journalistic non-fiction)

Most of these texts are narrative texts as they tell a story using a series of events. Poems can be narrative poems but this is not always the case.

It is important you are aware of the conventions associated with the form of text you are studying as the conventions allow you to develop a deeper and more critical understanding of the text you are studying.



Conventions are the customary practices concerning form, structure and language that audiences expect to see when reading or watching a particular type of text.

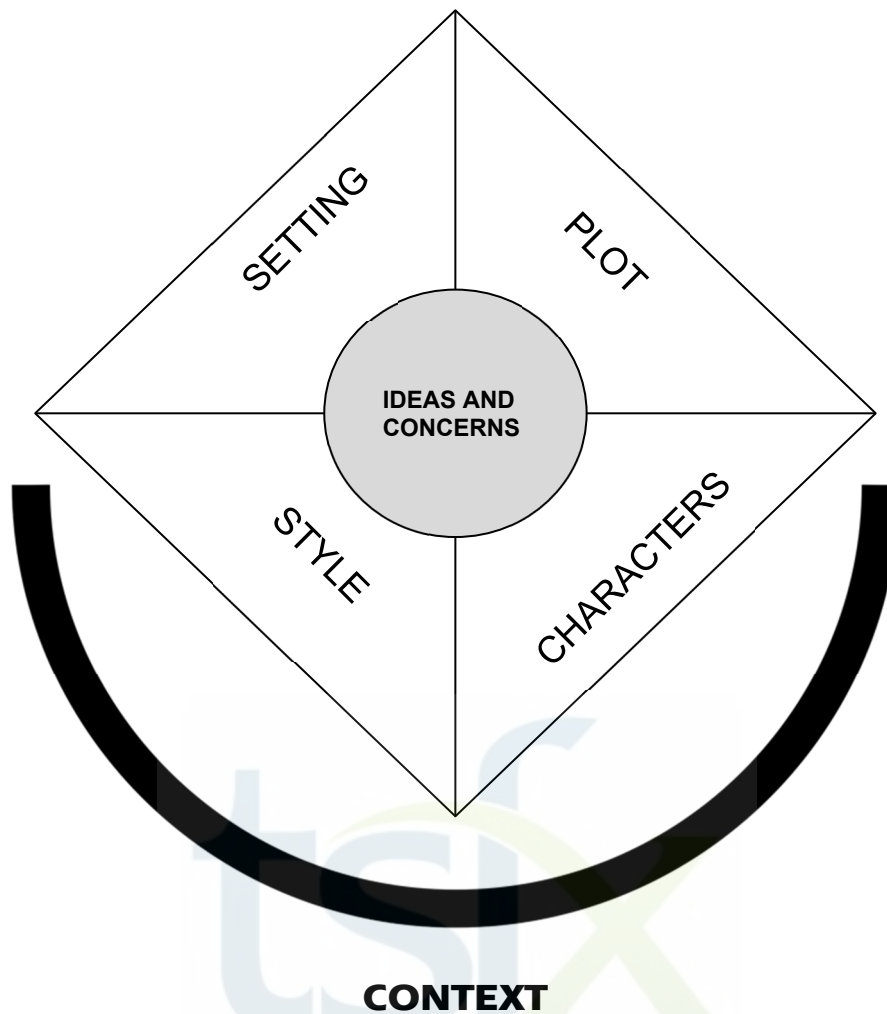
### For example:

- Plays are usually divided into acts that are made up of several scenes. Each act concentrates on different events and encompasses a single period of time. This is a common dramatic convention.
- Novels are written mainly in prose and are essentially narratives (tell a story).
- Interviews are conducted using a number of witnesses to establish information in documentaries.
- Action films will include a chase sequence to show the interaction between the antagonist and protagonist in an action film.
- One would expect to see poetic conventions such as caesuras, stanzas, meters, rhymes etc. in traditional poems.

Although there are many different types of texts, most share common narrative conventions and these are referred to as primary conventions.

Other narrative conventions that only apply to select texts are referred to as secondary conventions and these will be discussed in reference to specific types of texts later in the booklet.

## PRIMARY CONVENTIONS OF TEXTS



The primary conventions of narrative texts can be grouped into the following areas:

- Character/s
- Plot
- Setting
- Style
- Ideas and concerns
- Context

You will be required to write about your text using these terms and the metalanguage associated with these terms.

You will also be required to discuss how each of these features influence one another in the construction of the text and how they affect meaning.

**Note:**

- The context acts like a bowl that holds and shapes all other conventions.
- Setting, plot, character and language choices all help to develop and explore the ideas and concerns of the text.
- Note that not all these elements will be present in every literary text. For example, unless a poem is a ballad, it might not necessarily contain a plot.

## CONTEXT

Context or background refers to the time and circumstances under which a text is created and the influences that shaped the author's views and values about issues and themes.

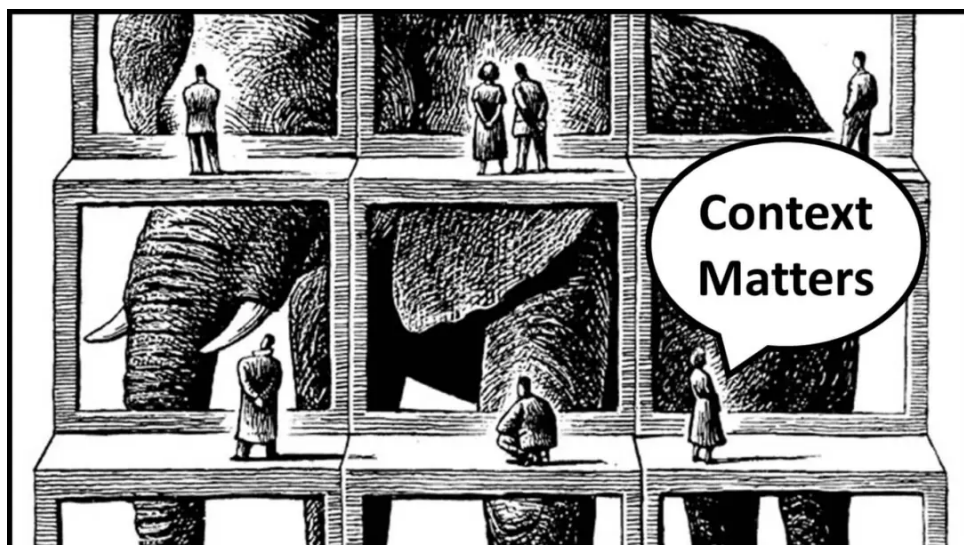
**Examples of such influences include:**

- Politics
- Social environment
- Education
- Religion
- Family
- Culture
- Economics
- People
- Life experiences



**Knowing the context of a set text and the author before you read it provides you with an insight into:**

- The background of the text and the factors that influenced the construction of the text.
- The cultural, social and historical setting at the time of the text and how it affects the issues and development of the text.



The main contexts to be aware of include:

## CULTURAL CONTEXT

*“The arts and popular interests associated with a particular time and place”*

Cultural context refers to the cultural background or practices of the characters and the circumstances that change the way different disciplines approach their work. This embodies all art forms, the sciences, and philosophies.

## SOCIAL CONTEXT

Social context describes the way people lived and what they believed in when the play was written and set.

This allows us to understand the limitations and possibilities that were available to the characters.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*“What was happening in the world when the play was written and set”*

Historical context refers to the big world-changing events that occur during a composer’s lifetime, or those that occurred earlier and that shaped the world in which the composer lives or lived. In more technical terms, historical context refers to the social, religious, economic, and political conditions that existed during a certain time and place.

Historical context asks how a particular event or movement influenced the composition of a text and enables us to interpret and analyse works or events of the past rather than merely judging them by contemporary standards.



## CONTEXT OF SITUATION

This refers to the specific context around the production and reception of a text.

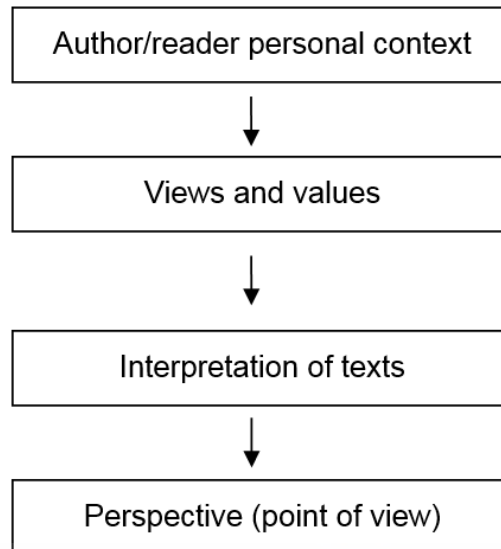
The **context of production** refers to the circumstances surrounding the creation of the text from writing to publication including the medium (the type of text). Central to this is the personal context of the author (their views and values) as it will shape their outlook, interests and concerns.

The **context of reception** refers to the circumstances around the text’s readers or viewers. This includes the reader’s personal context (the reader’s views and values).



## FROM CONTEXT TO PERSPECTIVE

You need to be aware of **BOTH** the author's perspective and the reader's perspective (your perspective). These are shaped by the contexts covered in previous pages, views and values and interpretation of the text as shown below.



## AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE

The **author's perspective** is how an author feels about the topic or ideas he or she is writing. This perspective depends on the author's interpretations of events, people, and places and arises from his or her own personal experiences and background. The narrator's dialogue with the reader reflects these aspects and may present opinions or different ideas than other characters in the story. It's therefore important to consider the author's perspective on a topic or an issue. Understanding the author's perspective helps you read analytically in order to identify the validity of information contained in the text.

The author's perspective includes the content of the text and the language used to present the text and can be determined by considering the following:

- The purpose and the intended audience
- The level and type of language
- Positive and negative connotation in word choices
- Examples in details and facts
- Bias and omissions
- Propaganda and logical fallacies
- Author's background
- Choice of structure or punctuation

## READER'S/VIEWER'S PERSPECTIVE

This is YOUR perspective – how you perceive the text and the things that influence your perception.

It is therefore very important that you carefully consider the **context of reception** and identify the views and values which shape your interpretation of the text and hence influence your perspective.



## KEY IDEAS AND CONCERNS

Key ideas and concerns are the key issues or messages which the writer is trying to get across to the reader. They are central to the purpose of the text. Setting, plot, character, style and film techniques all help to develop and explore these.

### Examples of key ideas and concerns:

- Betrayal of friends and/or family.
- Conflict: Cultural, religious, political etc.
- Conformity vs. individuality – one character standing alone.
- Courage/overcoming adversity
- Discovering identity.
- Effects of death on characters.
- Family relationships – destruction of or building of.
- Fantasy vs reality.
- Gender politics.
- Human justice vs Divine justice.
- Jealousy vs trust.
- Loneliness/isolation.
- Personal journey.
- Power and politics.
- Racial prejudice.
- Sexual harassment.
- The influence of religion on society.

A text may have several key ideas and concerns, and these are central to the purpose of the text. The writer, director, playwright or poet selects and arranges material in the text to support and develop their key ideas and concerns. They may express a key idea through the feelings or thoughts of a main character, or through conversations involving other characters. They can also be expressed by the way the author makes the reader feel and the actions or events in the story. Key ideas often come from experiences that writers have gone through or events that are going on in their lives at the time the works were produced. They usually relate to the context of production.

# SETTING

## SETTING = TIME + PLACE



Setting refers to the time and the place including cultural, geographical and historical in which the text is set. It is sometimes referred to as the “context of the text”.

The setting helps the reader visualise the characters in their environment and can create expectations and understanding about why characters behave as they do.

It is important to look at how the setting impacts on characters and to establish how the setting influences our reading of the themes and plot.

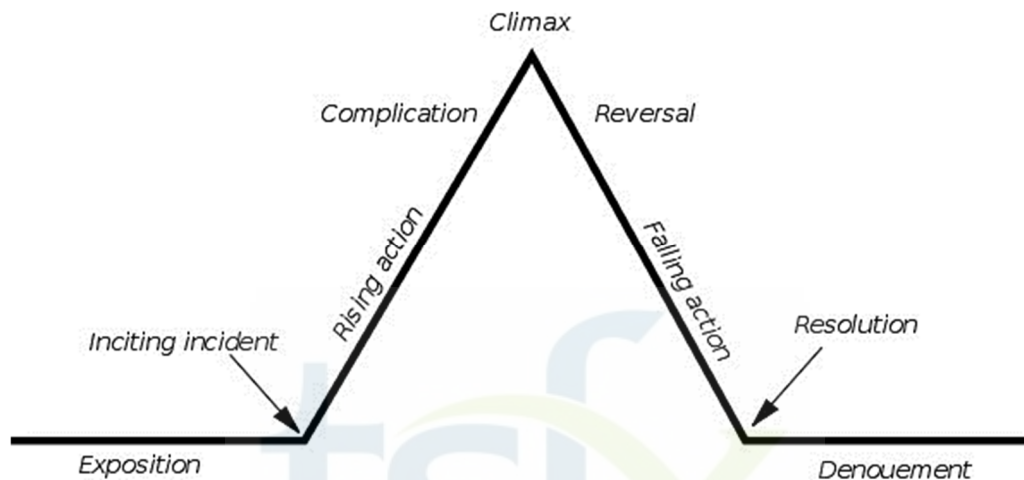
### **The importance of setting:**

- The setting influences the characters and plot.
- Locates the place the story is set.
- Helps establish historical and social contexts.
- Often impacts on key ideas and characters.
- It sets the atmosphere and mood of a story.
- Setting gives context to the characters’ actions in the story.

# PLOT

The plot refers to the events of a text and how they are structured. A plot usually has the same basic elements:

- Exposition
- Rising Action
- Complication/Conflict
- Climax
- Denouement
- Resolution



- Action:** Introduction of key characters.
- Exposition:** Background material provided so that reader feels knowledgeable about what is happening in text.
- Conflict:** Argument, fight, dissatisfaction, unhappiness etc. with another character. It can also be internal, e.g. character arguing with his conscience about something he has done or likely to do.
- Complication:** When a character is suddenly confronted by an unexpected problem or unfortunate turn of events, e.g. sudden illness.
- Resolution:** Coming to terms with problem either by self or with help of others, difficult choice has been made, e.g. friends helping you get over a death in the family.
- Rising Action:** Events that lead up to climax.
- Climax:** The 'highest point' of a single action or story, the big moment preceding events seem to lead to, e.g. the death of a villain. There can be more than one climax in a plot.
- Denouement:** The 'unknotting' – the events following the major climax. Sometimes this may occur only in the final scene.