

# Helping your child with the new Curriculum:

## 3-6 Understanding and responding to literature Glossary

This week the glossary will be focussing on Understanding and responding to literature.

### What is literature?

The study of literature is central to the subject of English. Literature studied in Stages 2 and 3 includes a wide range of fiction and nonfiction texts from diverse contemporary, historical and cultural contexts, in both print and digital forms. Wide study of literature enables students to share experiences about and beyond their lives. It can help to foster empathy, encourage critical thinking and nurture enjoyment of reading.

### Why is understanding and responding to literature important?

The study of literature supports students' reading and writing skills through learning syntax, discourse and vocabulary. It enables students to develop an understanding of how authors craft sentences and structure text in purposeful and effective ways. Studying literature provides opportunities for students to engage in sustained discussions, fostering the development of oral language and vocabulary knowledge. Through close and wide reading of literature, students explore a range of familiar and new experiences, times, places, people and cultures.

### Reading, writing and oral language connections

Reading, writing and oral language are reciprocally related and mutually support and enhance one another (Berninger et al. 2002; Graham and Hebert 2011; Parodi 2007; Abbott et al. 2010; Kim and Scatschneider 2017). Writing about a text that is read can also help to build a richer representation of the content of a text (Duke et al. 2011; Graham and Hebert 2011). In addition, writing and engaging in structured conversations about literature can actively involve students in learning, as they are encouraged to identify and articulate what is relevant in a text, as well as reflect upon and evaluate what they read. Stage 2 and 3 students should discuss texts together to develop coherent and critical understandings.

### Concepts in texts

Students should be given regular opportunities to engage with a variety of literature that includes strong examples of:

- Narrative
- Characterisation
- Imagery, symbol and connotation
- Genre
- Theme
- Perspective and context
- Argument and authority

These concepts can be used as lenses through which to study literature.

<b>literature</b>	An evolving category of text that is broadly seen by its audience to hold enduring personal, social, cultural or aesthetic value. Literature comprises a dynamic range of fiction and nonfiction texts from diverse historical and cultural contexts.
<b>Critical thinking</b>	Critical thinking is the systematic evaluation of information to make reasoned judgements. It requires skepticism, objectivity, and the ability to discern connections between ideas. Through this process, thinkers challenge assumptions, recognise biases, and assess the validity of arguments or solutions.



<b>syntax</b>	Syntax is how we order the words in a sentence to produce a certain meaning. Syntax skills help us understand how sentences work—the meanings behind word order, structure, and punctuation.
<b>discourse</b>	Discourse in the classroom is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of communicative skills</li> <li>• Reflective in nature</li> <li>• Cooperative and collaborative</li> <li>• Create inclusive learning</li> <li>• It brings clarity</li> <li>• Power belongs to both teachers and students</li> <li>• Teacher and students bring their own agenda to the classroom</li> <li>• It leads to further interactions</li> </ul>
<b>vocabulary</b>	Vocabulary refers to words that students can recognise, understand and use for communication.
<b>Text structure</b>	The internal organisation of a text.
<b>Close reading</b>	Close reading is the thoughtful critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, precise understanding of the text's form, craft, meanings, etc
<b>Wide reading</b>	Wide reading is reading independently, with the ability to choose one's reading material from various genres, formats, and difficulty levels.
<b>Oral language</b>	A system through which spoken words can be used to express, receive and understand information, ideas and feelings.
<b>representation</b>	The way ideas are portrayed and represented in texts, using language devices, forms, features and structures of texts to create specific views about characters, events and ideas. Representation applies to all modes: spoken, written, visual and multimodal.
<b>narrative</b>	An account of events or experiences, which are real or imagined. In English literary theory, narrative includes a story (what is narrated) and a discourse (how it is narrated). Narrative can present as an explicit sequencing of events (type of text) or it can be an implied or inferred component in a text.
<b>characterisation</b>	The technical construction and representation of any personality or person-like figure in text, including features such as their appearance, actions, words or thoughts.
<b>Imagery, symbol and connotation</b>	<p><b>Imagery:</b> Use of figurative language to represent objects, characters, actions or ideas in such a way that they appeal to the senses of the reader or viewer.</p> <p><b>Symbol:</b> An object, character or entity that can be understood to represent a larger idea, action or feeling. Depending on context, audience and purpose, symbols can have commonly agreed or reinforced associations, or they can be dynamic. Symbols can operate within texts, or they can serve as meaning-making devices of language in the real world.</p> <p><b>Connotation:</b> The nuances or implied meaning attached to language, beyond that of its literal or dictionary meanings. Connotations may be positive, negative, or neutral.</p>

<b>genre</b>	The categories into which texts are grouped based on similarities in premise, structure and function. The 'genre' of a text describes larger recurring patterns of subject matter and textual structures observable between texts, such as typical plots, characters and setting. 'Genre' can also describe categories of form and structure in texts.
<b>theme</b>	An overarching or recurring idea that describes attitudes or values that are perceived in a text. A theme may range from the understood 'moral' of a text to philosophical observations that the audience makes about the events, characters and experiences depicted in a text. A text may have more than one theme.
<b>Perspective</b>	A lens through which the author perceives the world and creates a text, or the lens through which the reader or viewer perceives the world and understands a text. Readers may also temporarily adopt the perspectives of others as a way of understanding texts.
<b>context</b>	The range of personal, situational, social, historical and cultural circumstances that shape how texts and their representations are conceived, constructed, understood and interpreted.
<b>argument</b>	A stated position about an idea. The way in which various dimensions of a text (such as theme, perspective and style) can be understood to represent a particular position on an issue.
<b>authority</b>	Authority of a text – How trustworthy, authentic or valid an audience may find the representation of ideas, experiences, perspectives and arguments in a text. Authority over a text – The varying degrees to which the meaning of a text is controlled or constructed by its creator(s) and by its audience.