

Professional Development Programme

Exploring the Creative Use of English in the Senior Secondary English Language Classroom

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Workshop Objectives

- To introduce teachers to a variety of strategies for selecting, adapting and using a range of resources, including multimodal and language arts materials, to promote the creative use of English in the senior secondary English Language classroom
- To explore effective strategies for designing learning activities and graded materials that support students of varying proficiency levels in analysing and appreciating creative elements in texts
- To involve teachers in hands-on activities on designing learning activities that help students engage with and respond to creative texts.

Workshop Agenda

- Overview of the role of creative use of English
- Selecting and adapting various language arts materials
- Designing learning activities and tasks that encourage exploration and interpretation of creative elements
- Designing learning activities and tasks for language experimentation and development of creativity and critical thinking skills

Overview of the Role of Creative Use of English

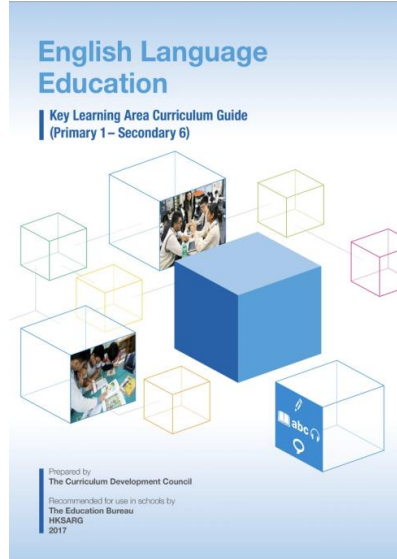
Promoting Creative Expression and Experimentation with English Language

- ❖ To add variety to the English Language curriculum, broaden students' learning experiences and cater for diverse needs and interests
- ❖ To develop students' language sensitivity, culture awareness, creativity and critical thinking skills
- ❖ To promote creative expression and experimentation with English through language arts
- ❖ To shift from learning the language to using the language to appreciating and creating the language while promoting self-directed learning

What does creative use of English look like in the classroom?

- ❖ The creative use of English is not an add-on/ a separate component, but an existing, integral part of the English Language curriculum
- ❖ Teachers should explicitly highlight and discuss the creative elements at the word and textual levels with students in various types of texts

What does creativity look like in the classroom?



*Creativity brings in **changes or transformations** and is manifested in **new ideas, acts or products**. It emerges spontaneously or through deliberate processes of divergent and convergent thinking. It involves the integration of general or domain-specific knowledge for a **meaningful purpose**. (CDC, 2017, A73)*

Discover

*Comprehension
Appreciation*

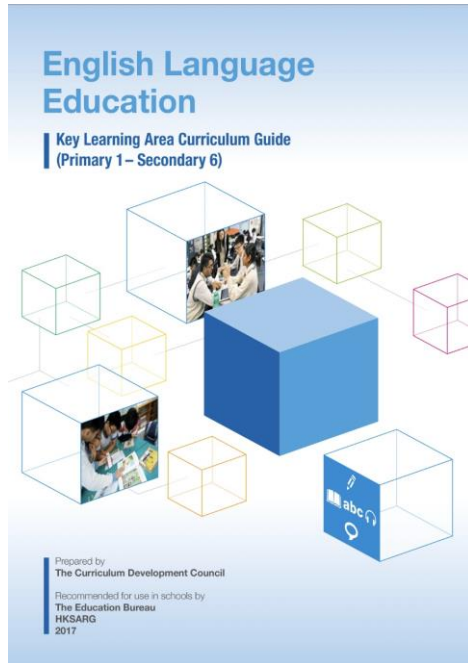
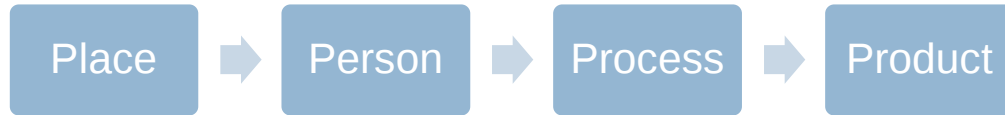
Transform

*Recreation
New perspective*

Invent

*Generation
Application*

What does creativity look like in the classroom?



- ❖ To provide a **creative and English-rich environment** (e.g. displaying posters and students' work involving the use of creative language) and **opportunities for appreciating and evaluating** each other's creative ideas and work
- ❖ To provide a wide variety of **learning experiences by exposing students to creative and imaginative texts**, engaging them in **solving real-life problems**, arousing their **interest in visual and performing arts** [...]
- ❖ To provide **opportunities for students to produce creative work and research into topics of their own interest, set learning goals** [...]
- ❖ To facilitate students' **expression of ideas, views and feelings** through various means (e.g. oral, written and performative tasks), provide **opportunities for them to introduce or justify their work, and appreciate others' creative work** (CDC, 2017, A74-75)

(1) Promoting Creative Expression and Experimentation with English Language

Six-word novels

"For Sale: baby shoes, never worn"

- Attributed to Ernest Hemingway, though unverified

- Open to interpretation and encourages creativity; students will think about **why**
 - Common Interpretations: infant loss, stillbirth, miscarriage etc.
 - Other interpretations: spare gift, misplaced items, too wealthy etc.

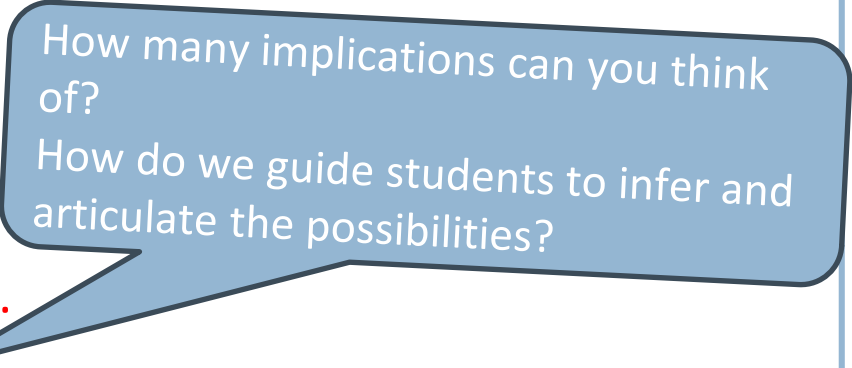
Six-word novels

The concept:

- A complete narrative/story told in exactly 6 words.
- Although told only in 6 words, it often includes a **beginning**, **middle** (conflict, twists and turns, climax, punchline), and an **end** (resolution, cliff hangers, surprise ending)
- Often implies various possibilities

Examples:

1. *Already gone, yet her shadow remains.*
2. He removed her mask; she left.



How many implications can you think of?
How do we guide students to infer and articulate the possibilities?

Activity 1.

Consider version A vs B of two students' six-word novel

Which shows more creative thinking?

Which is more experimental?

A

1. I'm fairly intrigued but never again.

2. Again, he said he'd leave tomorrow.

3. His departure provided her with freedom.

B

1. Curious. Do it! Broken. Never again?

2. "Tomorrow, I leave", he said again.

3. He left and then she flew.

Six-word novels

Awareness of linguistic features:

Curious. Do it! Broken. Never again?

Using punctuation to create pauses, emphasis, or dramatic effect.

“Tomorrow, I leave”, he said again.

Dialogue – with repetition

He left and then she flew.

Using figurative language to convey deeper meaning.

Six-word novels

Awareness of linguistic features:

"Absolutely fine," she snapped,
*How would you
end this one?*

Would've, could've, should've.
Didn't, didn't, didn't.

Choice of attitude markers

Special sentence pattern and grammar, e.g.
Parallel structure

Summer To-Do List:

- 1. Eat.**
- 2. Sleep.**
- 3. Repeat.**

Play with overall structure and visual elements

Six-word novels

Short activity:

- Create your own six-word novels.

In pairs or small groups:

1. Present your story aloud, using the appropriate tone.
 2. Encourage your classmates to share their feelings or interpretations of the story.
 3. Discuss the main idea and language features related to your story.
- *Feel free to share other brief creative tasks you've attempted in class.*

Six-word novel class activity

Whole class:

Quick chat – ask students to think aloud and establish the essential features of a 'story'.

In small groups or pairs:

Ask students to decide which of the following would be considered a story and why:

1. I go to school on foot.
2. Three strangers; best friends by graduation.
3. I got soaked by the rain.
4. Right thumb injury makes left-handed painter.

Six-word novels

A few examples from S.4 students:

- "Study hard, pass exams, achieve dreams."
- "Family dinner, laughter, love; forever together."
- "School projects, deadlines; stress and success."
- "Born to experience, not to suffer."
- "Midterms pass, stress remains; keep trying."
- "Different levels, different targets. Not me."
- "Bike, bus, taxi, Tesla, helicopter. Coffin."

What might a 15/16-year-old be referring to?

Six-word novels

Pedagogical values of the six-word novel:

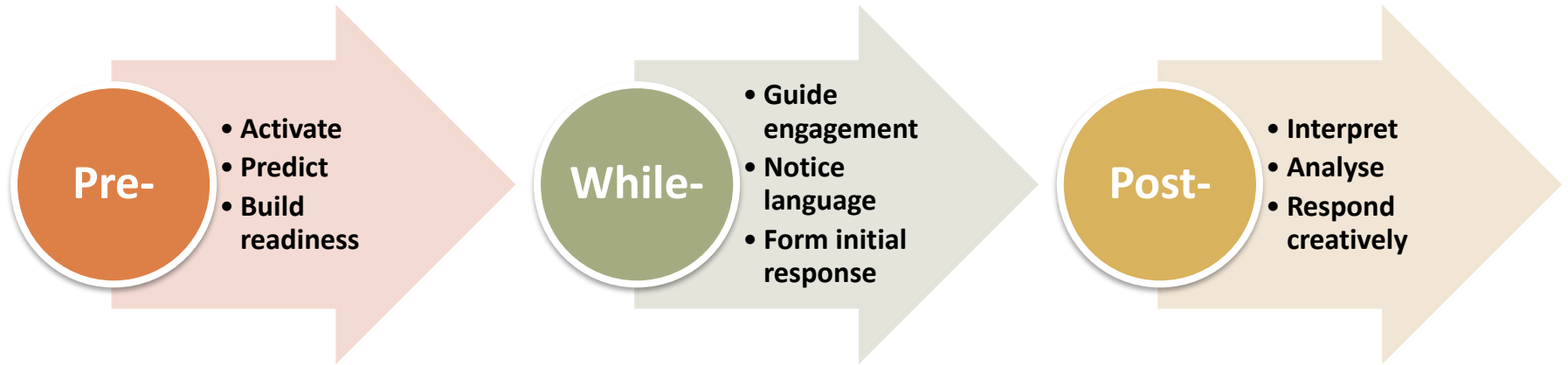
- Develops precise diction and concise expression (every word counts!)
- Facilitates critical analysis of literary elements
- Encourages observational and imaginative thinking

(2) Enriching and Extending Students' Language Learning Experiences

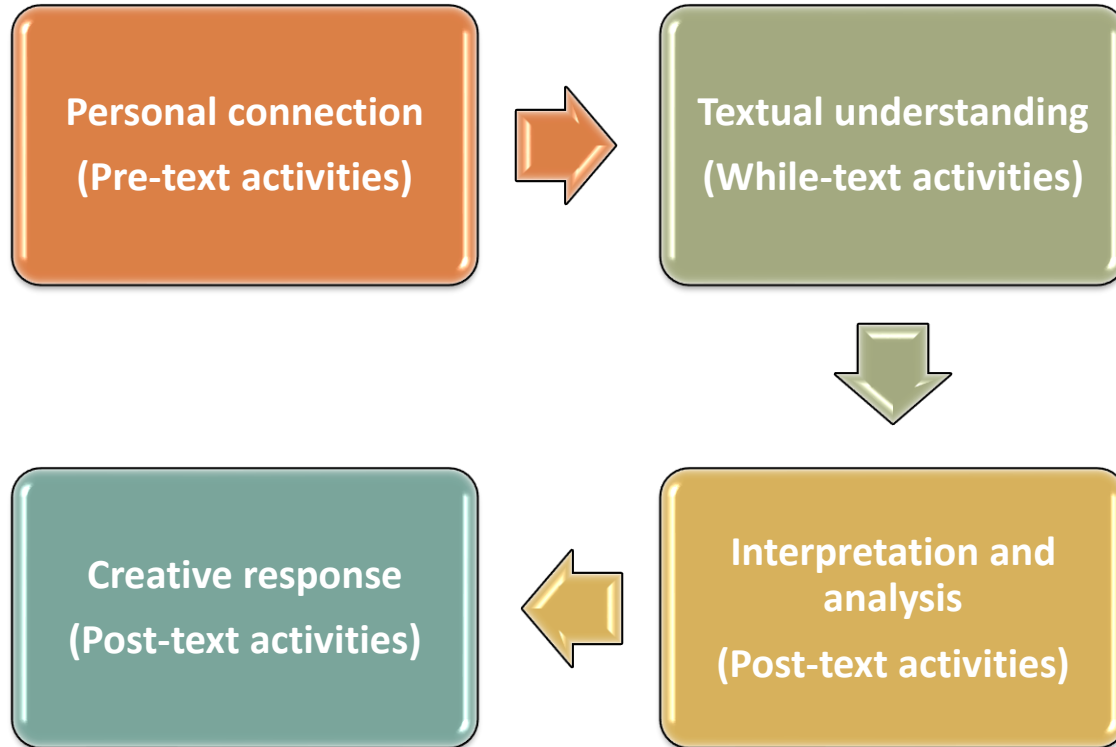
Task-Based Sequence (e.g., For a Poem)

Activity

- What pre-text activities, while-text activities and post-text activities would you design when you introduce this poem to your students?



Learning Progression in Action



Debrief

- This activity illustrates how the task-based language learning and teaching activity sequences (pre-, while- and post-text) can be used to deepen engagement (multiple levels of engagement).

Comparing Across Text Types

- **Theme:** Love and missing someone
- **Texts:**
 1. Poem
 2. Prose
 3. Poetry reading

Please exercise caution when going through texts about grief and loss so as not to unintentionally provoke distress in students

Text Types for Key Stage 1 (Primary 1 – 3)	Additional Text Types for Key Stage 2 (Primary 4 – 6)	Additional Text Types for Key Stage 3 (Secondary 1 – 3)	Additional Text Types for Key Stage 4 (Secondary 4 – 6)
• Advertisements • Captions • Cards • Cartoons and comics • Charts • Conversations • Coupons • Diaries • Directions • Fables and fairy tales • Forms • Illustrations • Instructions • Labels • Leaflets • Lists • Menus • Notes and messages • Notices • Personal descriptions • Personal letters • Personal recounts • Picture dictionaries • Poems • Postcards • Posters • Product information • Rhymes • Riddles • Rules • Signs • Songs • Stories • Tables • Timetables	• Accounts • Announcements • Autobiographies • Biographies • Blogs • Brochures • Catalogues • Children's encyclopaedias • Dictionaries • Directories • Discussions • Emails • Explanations of how and why • Formal letters • Informational reports • Jokes • Journals • Maps and legends • Myths • News reports • Pamphlets • Plays • Procedures • Questionnaires • Recipes • Telephone conversations • Tongue twisters • Weather reports • Webpages	• Book reviews/reports • Encyclopaedias • Film reviews • Interviews • Itineraries • Letters to the editor • Manuals • Memoranda • Newspaper/ Magazine articles • Presentations • Short films • Short novels • Social media texts • Talks • Trailers	• Abstracts/synopses • Agendas • Debates • Documentaries • Editorials • Essays • Feature articles • Films • Minutes • Novels • Proposals • Speeches • Resumes • Thesauri

Debrief

- This activity illustrates how language arts materials extend learning by exposing students to varied registers, text types and modes of expression.

(3) Cultivating Students' Language Sensitivity and Cultural Awareness, as well as Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills

Language Sensitivity and Cultural Awareness

Uncovering Implicit Values and Perspectives

Explicit message (literal level)	
Implicit messages (values and attitudes)	
How meaning is conveyed (techniques)	
Alternative perspectives (critical thinking)	

Debrief

- Creative use of English can cultivate students' language sensitivity and cultural awareness, as well as creativity and critical thinking skills.
- ✓ Develop students' sensitivity to figurative language, stylistic choices, implicit meanings, values and attitudes
- ✓ Encourage multiple interpretations, personal and cultural connections and evaluative and critical responses to texts and media

Selecting and Adapting Various Language Arts Materials

Materials Selection and Adaptation

- What factors should you consider when selecting and adapting various language arts materials?

**Appropriateness
of content**

Cultural load

**Maturity of
students**

Linguistic density

Pace

Clarity

**Balancing accessibility, challenge, local relevance and
global perspectives**

Possible Pedagogical Strategies

Adapting the same text for different levels through excerpting, annotation, visual or audio support, etc.

Using multimodal texts (e.g., films, visuals, sound, performance) to lower entry barriers for less proficient students, and also extend interpretive depth for more advanced learners

Involving students in text selection, sharing recommendations and personal responses

Example:

Adapting Traditional Creative Texts

The sample text (a poem) may touch on religious issues. The purpose of using this example is simply to demonstrate how to grade tasks to make the text accessible to students of diverse ability levels.

Discussion

- What support would you provide to learners of different proficiency levels?
 - a) Less advanced learners (high support)
 - b) More advanced learners (low support, high challenge)

Grade the Task, NOT the Text

Less Advanced Learners (High Support)

- Selective glossing (key words only)
- Visual + multimodal support
- Chunking the poem
- Guided questions (scaffolded)

More Advanced Learners (Low Support, High Challenge)

- Minimal glossing
- Close language analysis
- Higher-order questions
- Critical and philosophical extension
- Creative transformation

Debrief

- When we adapt a text, we are not making it simpler. We are making it more “digestible”.
- The mystery, the ambiguity, the richness, etc. must remain. That is where real language learning happens.

Selecting and Adapting Various Texts

Materials selection and adaptation from:

- Print and non-print materials including excerpts of sitcom, poem, and food review for fun and engaging activities
- Different activities for students to build their awareness in different features: sensory language, alliteration, onomatopoeia, descriptive words, action verbs

Memes - Understanding English wordplay

- A literary technique that utilizes words or phrases for humour or irony
- Constructed through different techniques including similar sounding words/phrases, metaphoric vs literal (mis)interpretation, inherent double meaning of words
- May require understanding of a context or background knowledge
- Typically brief, may require more thought

Debrief

- Fosters 21st century literacy and creativity skills
- Students can make connections with their daily life encounters to appreciate and create their own memes
- Enhances vocabulary and language retention

Selecting and Adapting Various Texts

Example Unit:
Cultural Exploration

Focus: Describing Food

1. Lead-in activity:

Sharing with classmates through brainstorming questions regarding their favourite food.

How would they describe it?

What does it look like?

What does it taste like?

What does it smell like?

What does it sound like?

What does it feel like?

Selecting and Adapting Various Texts

Utilizing a Sitcom Excerpt:

- Arouse students' interest through a multi-modal text
- Provide guiding questions to students
- Provide differentiated tasks depending on student levels (*replay video, provide transcript, pre-teach vocabulary etc.*)

Multimodal texts

Blurb Writing

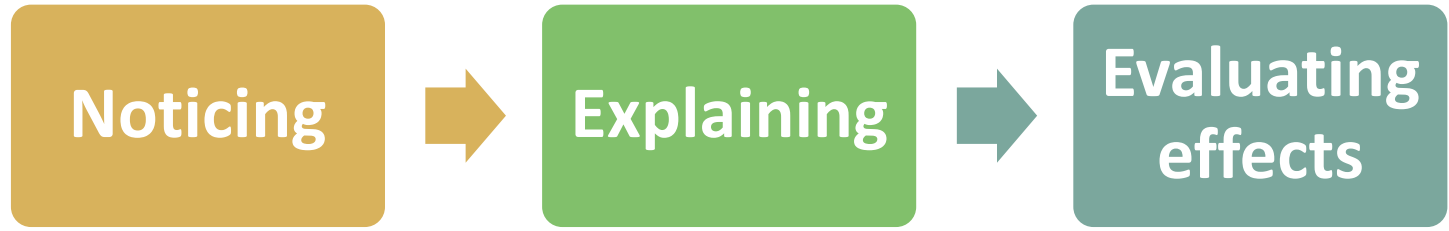
- Focusing on writing the caption utilizing various language features to complement the image

Debrief

- Text adaption from various sources allows for cultural and relevance and engagement.
- Students gain a breadth of experience when exposed to diverse text types.
- The brevity and complexity of the task/text can be altered and tailored to students' abilities to manage for cognitive load.
- Multimodal texts allow students to decode meaning from a combination of visual, spatial, and textual cues.

Designing Learning Activities and Tasks that Encourage Exploration and Interpretation of Creative Elements

Suggested Pedagogical Sequence



Task

- Design three tiers of questions that guide students from noticing to evaluating based on the short film:
 - a) Tier 1: Questions that help students identify creative elements
 - b) Tier 2: Questions that help students explain how effects are created
 - c) Tier 3: Questions that help students evaluate effects and make judgements

Discussion and Reflection

- How can we scaffold students from concrete noticing to abstract evaluation?

Stage 1 (Noticing: very concrete)

- What is the boy doing?
- What does the puppy do?
- What changes at the end?



Stage 2 (Bridge: guided explaining)

- Use prompts like:
How does ____ show ____?
- How does the puppy's behaviour show its attitude?
- How do the boy's actions show his feelings?



Stage 3 (Supported evaluation)

- Use prompts like:
Do you think ____ is important? Why?
- Do you think the boy changes? Why?
- What lesson does the film teach?

Debrief

- Text complexity ≠ language difficulty only, but also conceptual depth
- Moving from **noticing** → **explaining** → **evaluating** is a powerful pedagogical sequence for films because students must learn to “read” not just words, but **images**, **sound** and **silence**.
- Scaffolding is not about simplifying thinking. It is about **sequencing thinking**.
- Differentiation is not giving different texts. It is **giving different ways** into the same thinking process.

Reverse Poetry

A poem which has one meaning read top to bottom (generally pessimistic) and has an opposite meaning read backwards.

Promoting positive values

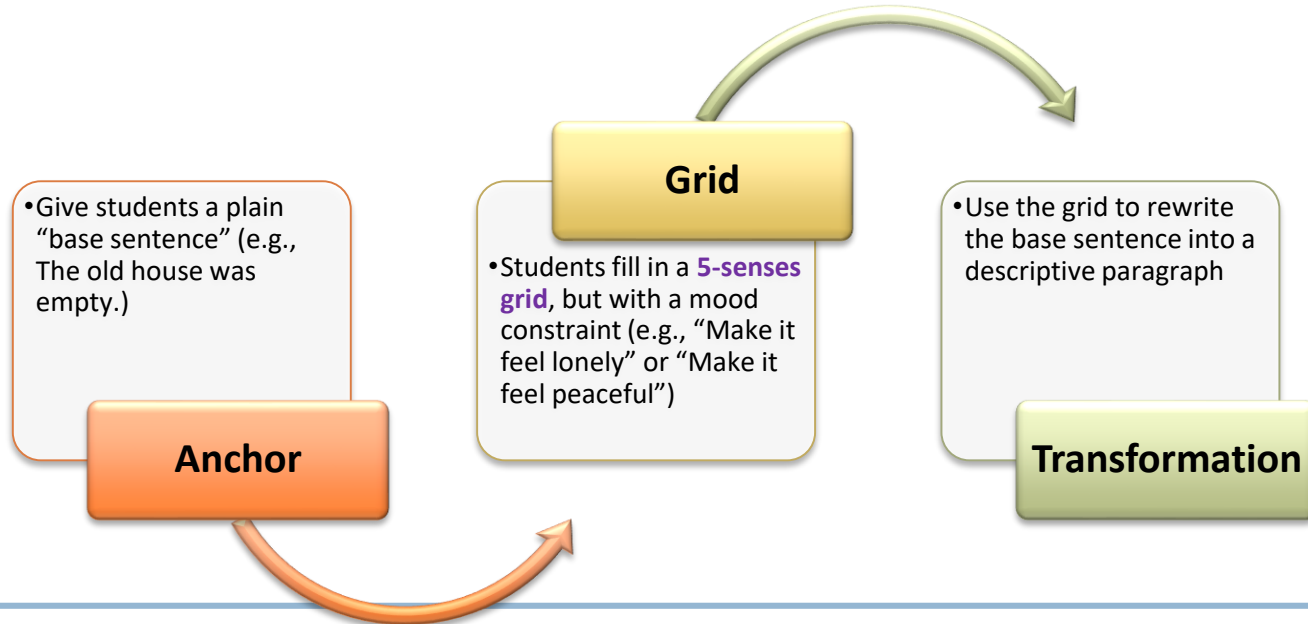
Values in Reverse Poetry

- Application in daily topics
- Reading from different perspectives
- Contextualized grammar teaching (e.g., sentence structures, connectives)
- Synonyms and antonyms
- Reading aloud → prosodic features
- Promotion of positive thinking and values education

Designing Learning Activities and Tasks for Language Experimentation and Development of Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills

Framework 1: For Descriptive Writing

- **Goal:** To move students away from simple adjectives (e.g., “The room was scary”) toward vivid, atmospheric imagery



Available resources developed by EDB

SIGHT

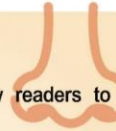


Visual words allow readers to see more clearly what is described. These words can be further categorised into groups based on size, shape, colour, etc.

Lighting:	Size:	Shape:	Colour:
shimmering	bulky	oval	dark blue
glowing	gigantic	curved	light grey
sparkling	enormous	flat	bright red
shady	tiny	pointed	pastel green

e.g. We sailed across the vast and furious ocean, pushing through the shimmering waves.

SMELL



Olfactory words allow readers to smell the aroma.

fragrant	pleasant	musty
perfumed	refreshing	stale
sweet-scented	tempting	rancid
fruity	tempting	revolting

e.g. Spring comes as the sweet-scented blossoms fill the air with their refreshing fragrance.

TOUCH

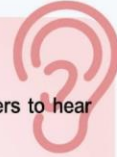


Tactile words let readers feel the texture and temperature.

fluffy	rocky	spongy
silky	soggy	coarse
prickly	gluey	scorching
spiky	foamy	icy

e.g. I love summer. The warm sun kisses my face and fluffy and wispy clouds float across the sky.

SOUND



Auditory words allow readers to hear what is happening.

humming	scratching	whispering
moaning	roaring	murmuring
groaning	deafening	screeching
rumbling	cracking	screaming

e.g. The little girl in the playground started humming a light-hearted melody in delight.

TASTE



Gustatory words turn the content flavoursome.

sugary	spicy	greasy
savoury	pungent	bland
bitter	tangy	minty
tart	mellow	juicy

e.g. The salty-sweet caramel melted on the baby's tongue. The surprising sugariness made her smile.

Creative Use of English

Sensory Language

Sensory words add *sparkles and sprinkles* to your writing as they make your readers **see, hear, smell, taste, or feel** your words!

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Available resources developed by EDB

*Creative
Use of English*

Literary Devices

PERSONIFICATION



Giving some human characteristics to something that is not human, such as animals, objects and non-living things

e.g. The school is **overjoyed** when we are back. It **spreads its arms wide** to **welcome** us.

SIMILE



Making comparisons between two things which have something in common, using the words "like" or "as"

e.g. A good teacher **is like a compass**. He always shows students the correct direction and guides them out of darkness when they are lost.

METAPHOR



Making a statement that says one thing is another, without using the words "like" or "as"

e.g. A teacher **is a gardener** who always nourishes and nurtures students, providing the most favourable environment for them to grow and bloom.

ALLITERATION



Repeating the same consonant sounds at the beginning of words that are near each other

e.g. I am thankful to the **tender** teachers who touch my heart with their hands of love. They **teach** me to **truly** trust myself and **treasure** my time and **talents**.

HYPERBOLE



Making qualities of people or things stand out by exaggerating them

e.g. My class teacher is the best teacher **in the entire universe!** She never fails to tend to our needs even when she **is drowning in work** and has **a million other tasks** to take care of.

PARALLELISM



Repeating phrases, clauses or sentences that are similar in structure and meaning

e.g. Teachers encourage **minds to think, hands to create** and **hearts to love**.



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Creative Use of English: Write with All Senses (English subtitles available)

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Sensory language enables readers to conjure up vivid mental pictures and experience what the characters experience. Tim, a

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Creative Use of English: Give Your Story an Engaging Opening and Ending (English subtitles available)

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Do you always find it difficult to come up with a powerful opening and ending for your story? With a memorable sports day as

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Creative Use of English: Spice up Your Writing with Figures of Speech (English subtitles available)

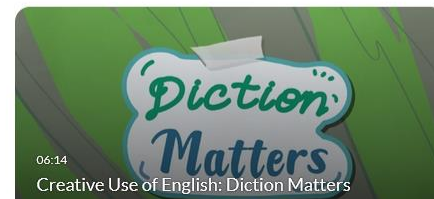
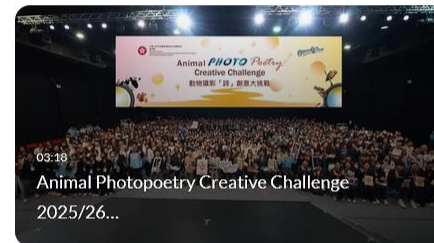
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Figures of speech, such as personification, simile, metaphor, alliteration, parallelism and hyperbole, help create emphasis and

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"Developing Students' Listening and Viewing Skills" Video Series: Survival (English subtitles available)

0 721

Details Attachments Share

The "Developing Students' Listening and Viewing Skills" Video Series, which features a story, a TV interview, a poem and a

https://emm.edcity.hk/media/%22Developing+Students+Listening+and+Viewing+Skills%22+Video+Series%3A++Survival+%28English+subtitles+available%29/1_uv2e27ps

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SOW Motivational Talk Videos – Winning Entries (JIANG Ruyi, Lucy | Senior Secondary) (English subtitles available)

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Details

Attachments

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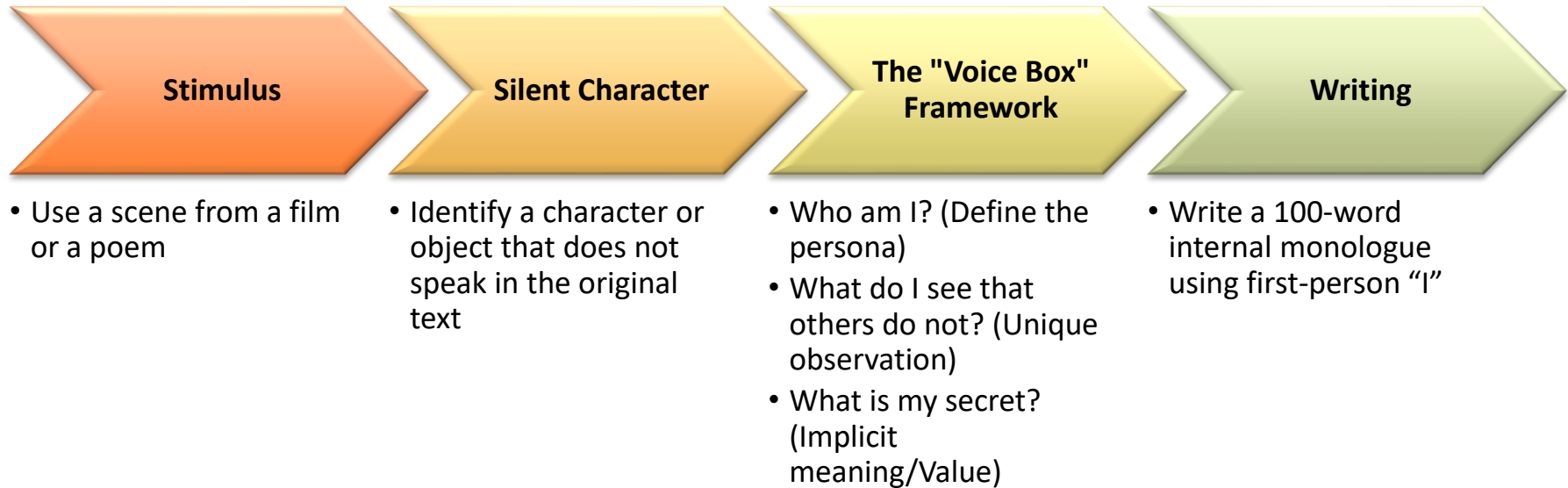
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Framework 2: For Character and Voice

- **Goal:** To develop critical thinking by exploring “untold” stories and experimenting with different registers and tones



Framework 3: For Stylistic Experimentation

- **Goal:** To help students experiment with rhythm, repetition and structure by using a “mentor text” as a skeleton

The Mentor Text

- Use a poem with a strong, repetitive structure

Deconstruction

- Identify the “Creative DNA”
- Line 1 & 2: [Subject] + [Verb/Adjective] + [Setting]
- Line 3 & 4: [Question about creation/origin]

Substitution

- Students choose a modern version

Draft

- *Smartphone,
Smartphone, glowing
blue,*
- *In the pockets of the
youth;*
- *What digital hand or
mind,*
- *Could build your screen
so bright and blind?*

Persuasive Writing

- In a school campaign, students are not just “writing”. They are creating an impact → Apply creativity to real-world problems

**Reducing
plastic waste**

**Task: What learning
activities would you design
to get your learners to
produce these 3 texts?**

A series of slogans for
posters around the
school

A social media post
written from the
perspective of the
object (e.g., a plastic
bottle) to be shared on
the school's Instagram

A 1-minute campaign
speech to be delivered
during morning
assembly

Debrief

- Creativity and creative use of English can be scaffolded (e.g., sensory grids and rhetorical structures)
- Experimenting with voice and register (e.g., use metaphors and similes to create an emotional, internal world; use puns, alliteration and the “Power of Three” to create an impact)
- Move beyond simply language accuracy. Encourage students to experiment with imagery, voice, perspective, etc. We are doing more than teaching English. We are teaching them to observe their world and to be architects of their own messages.

Conclusion

Reframing the Curriculum

Broadening Horizons: Encouraging students to **engage with a wider range of literature and media**, moving **beyond the narrow scope of exam-focused text types**.

Engaging with Authentic Language

Creative Awareness: Cultivating a "**noticing**" **mindset** where students can **identify and appreciate creative language in real-world, everyday contexts**.

Diverse Exposure: Maximizing student immersion by weaving **multiple genres** directly into the core curriculum rather than treating them as optional add-ons.

Inspiring Student Growth

Igniting Interest: Using a rich variety of stimulating materials to **spark curiosity** and inspire students to experiment with their own writing.

Purposeful Integration: Leveraging the unique potential of **different text types** to create a more **dynamic and holistic** learning experience.

Thank you!

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