Infusion of Thinking Skills and National Education in the Teaching of Narrative

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Abstract: This paper aims to take a closer look at the common difficulties faced in the teaching and learning of the narrative text type in many secondary schools in Singapore and proposes a revised five-step methodology to make the whole learning processes more systematic, focused and meaningful, with the infusion of critical thinking skills and National Education values taken into consideration. The resulting acquisition of micro narrative writing skills and key essential understanding helps to equip pupils to deal with the complex task of coming up with effective narrative texts with greater ease and confidence. In an attempt to illustrate the steps involved in the revised approach more clearly, fifteen annexes which are excerpts extracted from the six complete modules of narrative worksheets, have been attached at the end of this paper.
Keywords: Narrative, 5-step Approach, National Education, Thinking Skills

Proposed approach in the teaching of narrative

In an attempt to address the inadequacies in some of the common approaches adopted in the teaching of narrative, a revised approach comprising six cohesive modules is proposed. This revised approach consists of five main steps i.e. **scaffolding**, **analysis**, **modeling**, **deconstruction** and **reconstruction** to guide pupils systematically through the narrative writing processes. It also includes the infusion of critical thinking processes through critical inquiry, inferential process, compare and contrast exercises etc. that enable pupils to better appreciate the functions and importance of key language features and structural components to the effectiveness of narrative texts. Besides that, the revised approach also proposes the teaching of language features in context and provides pupils with the practice and the chance to apply the key language features learnt, in the bridging modules given.

The themes and issues dealt with in these six modules also help to facilitate the infusion of National Education (NE) values in the teaching of narrative text type, making the NE-infusion process seem incidental and hence helping to increase its success rate as indicated by pupils' level of receptiveness and the degree of engagement during NE-related discussions.

For such NE-related discussions to be constructive and pupil-oriented, the use of a critical thinking framework by both teachers and pupils, known as the **Richard Paul's Wheel of Reasoning** (or **Elements of Thought**), has been proposed. This revised NE approach uses the crafting and asking of essential questions, the setting of the tone of environment and the effort to assess pupils' existing knowledge, as the **scaffolding stage**. The analysis of the inputs required beforehand by the pupils, the analysis of the perspectives given and the analysis of assumptions presented, make up the **analysis and deconstruction stages**. The re-creation of own opinions after critical verbal discussions and rigorous thinking and the penning of own reflections on related NE issues in focus, form the **reconstruction stage**. The adoption of such NE-infused approach helps to empower pupils to be critical thinkers who are then in a better position to arrive at informed conclusions and formulate informed opinions since their assumptions and misconceptions will be checked by their friends and teachers in the process of the discussions.

Such provision of a suitable environment and opportunity for pupils to voice their opinions and engage in NE-related discussions prove to be essential in the face of the changing profile of the type of pupils we have. Born in affluent and peaceful Singapore, many of our pupils may find it hard to empathize with the struggle of nation-building and the importance of playing an active role in nation strengthening. In addition, many of our youngsters tend to be more well-travelled and informed, especially with the ready access to information technology and the mass media. With the increasing tendency of educated parents to adopt a consultative approach with their children, these youngsters need to be given the guidance and space to rationalize for themselves instead of being dictated on what they should believe in and how they should think. Such critical inquiry approach provides opinionated and inquisitive pupils the avenue to question their own and others assumptions and be receptive to different perspectives, hence sharpening their ability to improve the rigour of their thinking and be discerning in assessing the validity of the opinions they may be exposed to.

Common Problems Identified

Majority of the secondary school pupils in Singapore face difficulty in coming up with effective narrative texts that are able to capture and sustain the interest of readers. Many of these texts produced by pupils are deemed to be either too boring and rambling without focus or they may be incomplete with some of the key structural components, such as complication or resolution, missing. In addition, most of the pupils of average language ability have limited repertoire of vocabulary, hence hampering their attempt to create vivid descriptions in a bid to make their narrative texts interesting.

It is however not constructive to blame pupils' inability to craft effective narrative text on their lackadaisical attitude and their inherent lack of essential language skills. Teachers are often heard to attribute the cause of pupils' learning difficulty to their short attention span or lack of interest during lessons, in addition to their weak language foundation. These are indeed real challenges faced as the aptitude, attitude, learning styles and types of intelligences of pupils differ. However, undue excessive focus on pupils as the source of the problem may risk distracting EL teachers from objectively and accurately identifying other possible crucial factors that make it difficult for pupils to learn to write narrative text effectively. One such crucial factor is the need to critically evaluate the effectiveness of the existing approaches adopted in the teaching of the narrative text. There may be a certain degree of truth in the saying that a bad pupil is the product of poor teaching. The ability and willingness of EL teachers to see the need to revisit their commonly-used narrative teaching approaches mark the first major step in lessening pupils' learning difficulty.

As much as some educators may recognize the need to review the existing teaching approaches of the narrative text, the resulting requirement to revise the pedagogy may prove to be a demanding task because of numerous constraints faced. Besides having to cope with a tight schedule and meet the stringent expectations of content coverage, all educators alike find it challenging to find the time to collaborate and rigorously review their pedagogies with their fellow colleagues while struggling to fulfill other school duties. Also, in order for the collaboration to be fruitful and rigorous, teachers themselves have to be adequately equipped and committed to be active curriculum designers instead of remaining passively as curriculum implementers. Such teacher training, though essential, definitely takes time and its rigour depends largely on the strategic thrusts of their respective schools. In addition, as the teaching of text types using functional grammar approach is only a relatively recent move,

many EL teachers lack a ready wealth of well-tested resources and holistic methodologies to depend on as references in their teaching of text types in general.

In addition to the real challenges faced by EL teachers in the revision of pedagogy, the existing approaches in the teaching of the narrative text found in some of the English Language textbooks and resource books available may not adequately provide a cohesive series of essential steps to systematically and meaningfully guide pupils through the essential writing processes. Besides the lack of scaffolding, there is also an absence of critical thinking processes being incorporated to help deepen pupils' understanding of the functions and importance of key language features and the components that make up the schematic structure of narrative (i.e. structural components). Such loopholes in the existing approaches, if ignored, may inevitably result in many gaps in understanding on the part of the learners.

Indeed, it is time for EL teachers to focus on one of the key impediments to effective teaching and learning of the narrative text type – the existing teaching approaches. Despite the challenges mentioned, it is undeniably imperative for EL teachers to realize the urgency and importance of reflecting and critically re-evaluating the existing approaches in the teaching of narrative. Only then can greater light be shed on how to teach this important text type in a more cohesive, meaningful and effective way, with the provision of adequate scaffolding and scope for self-discovery for pupil learners.

Benefits of Revised Approach As Compared to Commonly Adopted Approach

Unlike the revised approach, narrative text is commonly taught by explicitly providing pupils with a list of language features and the structural components right at the beginning of the lesson **[see annex 1]**. Although some may say this method provides pupils with a scaffolding framework to refer to, it actually deprives the learners of the critical thinking processes of inferring and discovering for themselves the types of essential language features and structural components that help to make a narrative text effective. As a result, pupils are often observed to have carelessly omitted crucial structural components such as complication and resolution in their narrative texts or some have simply produced flat rambling texts without any purpose or paragraph goal in mind. Besides, there is also little or no attempt by pupils to make use of the key language features to make the story more vivid and interesting due to the lack of conviction and understanding on why these features are important and how they can be effectively used.

The revised approach, on the other hand, allows pupils to infer for themselves the impact of certain key language features (e.g. specific verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives, the use of direct speech, the choice of punctuation and rhetorical devices such as personification) on the overall effectiveness of any narrative text **[see annex 2]**. Such inferences are made possible through a series of critical questions and compare and contrast tasks consciously included in the first narrative module that aims to provide pupils with an overview of the language features and schematic structure of narrative text in general. The resulting ability to understand better why and how certain language features help to enhance the effectiveness of any narrative text created helps to reduce the tendency of pupils to carelessly omit the usage of these features or mindlessly using them without much thought and precision while crafting their narrative texts. Therefore, instead of providing the list of language features and structural components right at the beginning of the lesson, the revised approach provides such information at the end of the first module as a means to consolidate pupils' learning after the pupils have undergone a series of carefully planned processes to infer, discover and understand for themselves the usefulness of certain key language features and structural

components and their ability to enhance the overall effectiveness of the narrative text. **[see annex 3]**. In addition to the shortage of critical thinking processes, the scaffolding provided by the commonly adopted approach is inadequate to help pupils understand the uses and importance of key language features and structural components to the overall effectiveness of the narrative text. The scaffolding available is only in the form of a full-length narrative text sample with the structural components and language features being listed by the sides. **[see annex 4].** Besides that, the commonly adopted approach also assumes that all the pupils start off with a good grasp of the technical language features of a narrative text. Such baseless assumption can be seen in the requirement of the pupils to identify and list down the different types of language features detected in the whole sample narrative text given, without carefully considering the actual benefits of such a mind-numbing task requirement and the possibility of it boring, daunting or even overwhelming those without a firm grasp of the key technical language features of narrative. **[see annex 5]**

In order to make the task of learning about the language features of narrative more meaningful and manageable, the revised approach uses critical questioning, compare and contrast exercises and "bridging modules" to familiarize pupils with the types of key language features used in effective narrative text, their functions, their possible uses and their impact on the overall effectiveness of the text. This method helps to put the learning of language features in context, hence making their functions and importance more clearly felt by pupils. Two bridging modules have also been included in the revised approach to cater to pupils who do not have a firm grasp of the technical language features of narrative. **[see annex 6].** These modules aim to increase pupils' repertoire of essential language features such as specific verbs, specific adjectives and specific nouns, through the practices provided. Such reinforcement exercises are created with the awareness that different pupils have different level of language proficiency and it is hence counterproductive to make the baseless assumptions that all pupils ought to be familiar with these features as they have been writing narrative texts since primary school years. The revised approach has hence spared pupils of undue frustration and the risk of lowering their self confidence due to their inability to go through the somewhat meaningless task of only identifying the various language features in a given narrative text without understanding its use in context.

Besides superficially requiring pupils to identify and list the language features, the commonly adopted approach also requires pupils to identify where the orientation, complication, sequence of events, resolution and coda (i.e. structural components) of a given narrative text are. [see annex 5] There is no attempt at all to enable pupils to understand in greater depth what make up the various structural components, how to make them effective and why they are essential to the making of an overall effective narrative text. Due to such a gap in understanding, pupils may be more prone to carelessly omit one or two of these structural components or include them without much thought, hence undermining the effectiveness of the narrative text created.

In response, the revised approach encourages pupils to take turns to analyze the different structural components of a given sample narrative text so that more focused in-depth analysis is possible. This revised approach uses a compare and contrast approach to help pupils understand the implication of an absence of certain key structural components and uses critical questioning to set pupils thinking why there is a need to include certain structural components and how they can be crafted to enhance the effectiveness of the narrative text. It also explores in depth the ways to create effective structural components. For example, Module One deals with how the complications and resolution in narrative can be effectively

created through the use of inferential questioning and a structured conceptualization framework provided. Module Two is also specially designed to scaffold pupils to craft effective orientation of narrative text through the use of questioning and modeling of good samples. **[see annex 7]**. In addition, the provision of manageable coherent chunks of parts of the narrative text also helps to create better focus in the pupils, making the process of analyzing the language features and structural components less daunting, as opposed to the tendency of the existing approach to use the whole narrative text at a go, hence overwhelming pupils with reading difficulty and attention deficiency.

The existing approach provides pupils with sample narrative texts as references and pupils are expected to accept at face value unquestioningly that these chosen texts must be worthy to emulate. The resulting lack of opportunity for the pupils to explore and evaluate for themselves what make these chosen texts good may cause pupils to be insensitive to the function and importance of certain key features that help to make the narrative texts effective.

In order to capitalize on every possible opportunity to help pupils learn through self-discovery processes, the revised approach is not in favour of expecting pupils to accept passively that the sample narrative texts provided must be unquestionably good. Instead, this approach chooses to convince pupils of the worth of these texts given by letting them infer, analysis and deconstruct for themselves these sample texts so as to promote greater awareness of what make the texts effective. Such critical processes are made possible through a series of systematic questioning and compare and contrast approaches whereby parallel plainer versions with key language features missing are provided in manageable parts for pupils to draw comparison, especially in Module 3 **[see annex 8]**. This helps pupils to be more conscious of the effects and implication of an absence of certain key language features on the overall effectiveness of the narrative text. It also increases their receptiveness to emulate the merits of the texts given and enables pupils to be more focused on the strengths of the text samples.

The existing teaching approach also does not explicitly emphasize the importance of having a writer's purpose or paragraph goals in mind while crafting a narrative text. Without a clear purpose and paragraph goals in mind, pupils tend to ramble on without any clear objective or guideline on the choice of details to be described, the craft and the type of vocabulary to be used, hence diminishing the interest value and effectiveness of the narrative text produced. On the other hand, the revised approach acknowledges the importance of starting off with a clear overall goal of the narrative text and aligning the various paragraph goals accordingly. **[see annex 9]**. The resulting ability of the pupils to use such goal-setting process to make clearer decision on the choice of salient details and the type of vocabulary to be used is crucial in helping them produce effective narrative texts.

In the existing approach, narrative writing assignments are assigned rather prematurely without providing pupils with adequate scaffolding. **[see annex 10].** Such eagerness may be due to EL teachers being under pressure to finish teaching the required text types in the English Language syllabus within a limited time frame and the need to meet the quota for the number of written assignments. As a result, they lack the time to go through the essential writing processes beforehand and many EL teachers have to contend themselves thinking that the pupils should know how to write since they have been taught since Primary One. The pupils affected will therefore have to activate their pre-existing schema, in addition to whatever little that had been taught, to come up with an effective narrative text. It is hence not surprising to see the narrative text produced being plainly coherent and lacking the

essential elements that make it effectively interesting. By then, it is also a lot more tedious for the EL teachers to identify the specific weaknesses of their pupils as a complex range of writing skills would have gone into the creation of a full-length text. To counter such premature requirement of writing an effective narrative, a shift in paradigm is required. It is critical for the whole English Language department to reach a consensus on what matters more in pupils' work - quality or quantity.

Firmly believing in the importance of process writing and propagating the shift to do focused marking of essential micro skills, the revised approach enables teachers to set related small-scale writing assignments that are focused on different aspects that make up an effective narrative text. If required, these micro writing assignments such as the creation of different types of orientation in Module Two, the crafting of descriptive scenarios in Module Four, the reconstruction of a given narrative in Module Five, may be assessed and graded. Such micro writing tasks help teachers and pupils to benchmark their level of understanding of certain skills at regular intervals that will help to enhance the overall effectiveness of the narrative text. These focused tasks also enable EL teachers to readily identify any specific areas of weaknesses of the pupils and follow up timely with the necessary remediation measures, before progressing to the next stage of skill development. Such honing of essential writing skills in measured stages helps to enable pupils to gain greater confidence and competency in producing an effective full-length narrative text.

There is an absence of possible thinking framework in the existing approach to help pupils come up with possible narrative plots in a more structured manner. Due to such inadequacy, the pupils are usually left on their own to erratically come up with a possible plot at random, depending on their mood and inspiration, if any. Hence it is common to hear some pupils asking their teachers how to think and what to think about. It is also possible for teachers to face pupils with blank expressions and receive narrative texts with terrible or little attempt at coming up with a meaningful plot. Although some EL teachers may brainstorm beforehand with their pupils on the possible plots to explore and ways to craft the narrative text, the processes undergone are usually on an ad-hoc basis. In contrast, the revised approach sees the importance of making the conceptualization processes while coming up with a narrative plot explicit and structured enough for pupils to rely on should they need to come up with more plots on their own. Such availability of possible thinking frameworks as seen in Module Six makes pupils more confident and independent in their conceptualization process, hence increasing the possibility of teachers receiving well-conceived narrative plots that display efforts in infusing some form of social meaning or message. **[see annex 11]**

The efforts in infusing National Education (NE) values using the existing narrative approach may be limited, leaving the initiative and innovation, if any, mostly to the English Language teachers themselves. NE values are commonly infused in the existing approach by embedding certain moral message in the narrative samples used and encouraging teachers to pick up these issues and "talk about them" in the teaching process. Very often, due to the presence of serious time constraint, it is not surprising to note a handful of EL teachers either forgoing the chance to pick up on these learning points or covering them so superficially that sets one wondering if the hasty and haphazard NE-infused effort is successful at all. As much as the intention to infuse NE may be sincere, the approach however needs serious reconsideration and re-strategizing.

Recognizing the importance for NE efforts to be made subtle and seemingly incidental so as to increase the receptiveness of the pupils, the revised approach carefully selects and aligns

the themes of the narrative samples provided according to NE-related issues (e.g. impact of favouritism on family relations, erosion of moral values in the midst of westernization, regional disaster, terrorism threat etc) This helps to make the transition to discuss about certain NE-related issues much smoother without risking pupils labeling it as a contrived effort and dismissing it brashly as indoctrination. In addition, the revised approach proposes the use of critical inquiry to guide pupil-centered discussions on NE-related issues, with teachers functioning as the facilitators. Such critical inquiry process is supported by the use of a structured critical thinking framework known as the Elements of Thought **[see annex 12],** the use of Essential Questions (based on Understanding by Design and Teaching for Understanding curriculum design frameworks) **[see annex 13]** to provoke thoughts and discussions and the creation of a suitable tone of environment that is conducive for focused open discussions.

In order to overcome the concern of time constraint in carrying out NE-infused efforts, an inter-disciplinary approach may be adopted. The NE-related issues for discussions that are pre-decided may be aligned with some of the existing Civics and Moral Education (CME) topics and the rigorous discussions may hence be conducted during CME periods instead of English Language periods, especially if the English Language teachers are also teaching CME. The points and insights gathered from such rigorous discussions may even be used as valuable input and scaffolding for pupils when dealing with other text types such as expository texts since the NE issues discussed can be easily crafted as expository topics. In this way, pupils' understanding of certain NE issues can be demonstrated in their ability to form their own thoughts and stand in their line of arguments presented in their expository essays at a later stage.

Besides possibly taking the form of expository essays, another way to assess pupils' understanding of the NE issues discussed may be seen in their ability to apply the thinking framework based on the Elements of Thought taught during their critical discussions and in their written analysis and written reflection assigned **[see annex 14]**. The critical processes that pupils will undergo while questioning assumptions, taking different perspectives into consideration, bearing in mind the complexity of the issue in hand, assessing the reliability of the evidence used and evaluating the validity of any conclusion reached, will certainly help to make their thinking more rigorous and directed, hence increasing the depth and value in their NE-related discussions with minimal risk of the discussion going off tangent without control.

In addition, for dynamic pupil-driven NE-related discussions to take place in any classroom, it is crucial for the teachers to create a non-threatening environment where pupils are unafraid to voice their opinions as they know that they will not be ridiculed while at the same time, they are mindful of the importance to display mutual respect manifested in the act of active listening and critical questioning based on Elements of Thought framework. Pupils' ability to understand the importance of active listening and questioning is crucial to the sustenance of critical discussions which require pupils' attention and initiative to participate actively and constructively. The equipping of pupils with a critical thinking framework helps them to understand better what constitute a critical question, why it is important to ask a critical question and how they can ask critical questions. As critical questioning is a high-order art in itself, it is hence important to make the process of such questioning explicit and methodical for pupils to adhere to with the help of a systematic thinking framework, the Elements of Thought framework [see annex 12].

Besides the importance of listening and responding actively, teachers are also encouraged to use socratic questioning and experiential learning to make pupils infer the importance and functions of rules during discussions and the implications if rules are absent. Following that, teachers should carry on probing and get pupils to infer for themselves the types of rules that are essential in promoting constructive focused discussions and the rationale why they have been made to sit facing one another in a single ring circle. By getting pupils to rationalize the importance of rules and indicate the types of rules necessary for critical discussions, the onus is hence on the pupils themselves to adhere to the rules of the game. This helps to cut down the risk of pupils challenging the rules that they have no share in setting and hence disrupting the progress of NE-related discussions. By highlighting the rationale of the seating arrangement in the form of a circle, pupils are reinforced with the importance of displaying mutual respect and receptiveness to varying perspectives since symbolically, everyone should be equal based on their equal distance from the centre of the circle formed. With the appropriate tone of the classroom and pupil-derived rules set and the framework on the Elements of Thought taught to the pupils, teachers should next decide on the key essential questions that can be used to provoke pupils' minds and elicit response accordingly. Since the essential questions will be crafted and asked by teachers to provide space for open-ended pupil response, they are highly effective in eliciting pupils' response as they provide a ready platform for pupils to base their opinions on. Equipped with several essential questions, coupled with their knowledge of the thinking framework on Elements of Thought, teachers are hence in a better position to sustain a dynamic pupil-driven critical discussion on NE issues and ensure that such discussions are in-depth, focused and give rise to informed conclusions after going through rigorous thinking processes.

In addition to the creation of a classroom environment that is conducive, it is also imperative of the EL teachers to be aware of the type and amount of related experience their pupils possess as such awareness affects their assessment of the amount and the type of scaffolding their pupils require in order to bridge any gaps in understanding.

Such conscious effort in bridging gaps in experience is essential as it affects pupils' readiness and ability to participate actively in discussions. Adequate provision of scaffolding before discussions in the revised approach **[see annex 15]** helps to create a baseline of understanding for all the pupils involved and the teachers can hence be assured that these pupils have a certain degree of shared understanding that they can relate to during discussions without the risk of pupils feeling totally lost and hampering the progress of the discussions.

In conclusion, the proposed methodology in this revised approach in the teaching of narrative provides a cohesive series of inferential steps that helps pupils to apply their critical thinking skills and sensitizes them to national issues. This 5-step approach is applicable to the teaching of most of the other text types in the English Language syllabus and is certainly not limited to the teaching of the narrative text type. However, as no single approach can be totally foolproof and applicable across all levels and to pupils of differing attitudes and abilities, teachers certainly need to exercise discretion in its implementation and modify the level of difficulty or increase the number of similar practices required in order to meet the specific needs of their cohort accordingly. Such active teacher participation, reflection and necessary modification are crucial in an attempt to maximize the strengths of this revised

approach and as teaching is a dynamic process, constant revision and improvement of the revised approach will definitely enhance its usefulness over time.

References

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Annex 1

The commonly adopted approach in the teaching of narrative provides pupils with a list of structural components and key language features, hence depriving pupils of the thinking processes to infer for themselves what make up the narrative, why the structural and language components are important and what their impact on the effectiveness of the narrative text is.

Structure of a Narrative:

To construct a narrative story, you need to **include** these steps:

Structural Component:	Elaboration – what to include in various components:
(a) **Orientation**:	• **Who** are the characters in the story? • **When** is the story taking place? • **Where** is the action/ incident happening? • **What** is the **situation**?
(b) **Complication:**	• Something that **begins a chain of events** that influence what will happen in the story. These events will **affect one or more of the characters.** • Complication can be in the form of an action that affects others/ tension/ conflicts that take place.
I **Sequence of events**:	• Elaborate **how** the characters **react** to the complication. • This includes the **characters' feelings** and **what they do**.
(d) **Resolution**	• Elaborates on **how** the **complication is sorted out** or the **problem** in the story is **resolved**.
(e) **Coda**:	• What is the **moral** or **message learnt** from the story (optional but it will be good to have)

Language Features of a Narrative:

- **Specific Characters** (can be any name given to the characters in the story)
- **Time words** that connect events to tell when they occur
- **Verbs** to show the actions that occur in the story
- **Descriptive words** to portray the characters' appearance, personality, emotions and settings. (via the usage of **adjectives, adverbs, similes, etc**)
- **Direct Speech** as dialogues or thoughts to increase a sense of realism.

Partially Adapted from: Text Types in English 2

Annex 2(i)

A parallel version with the absence of key language features is created in the RHS version for pupils to compare and contrast with the LHS version which contains the key language features. Such contrast helps pupils to infer the impact of the presence and absence of key language features on the overall effectiveness of the narrative text.

Tasks (i) and (ii) below provide pupils the chance to reflect on the function and impact of key language features on the effectiveness of narrative text.

Tasks (iii) to (v) also help to reinforce the awareness of the function and impact of key language features on the overall effectiveness of the text. These tasks help to convince pupils why they are encouraged to use certain language features.

Below are two ways to depict the toy shop the author was in and its atmosphere. The version on the left-hand side (LHS) is lifted from excerpt (a) above and the version on the right-hand side (RHS) is altered without changing its original meaning. Use these two versions to answer (i) to (v):

LHS Version	RHS Version
"The <u>toy shop</u> was a <u>labyrinth of high shelves</u> **stuffed** with <u>colourful</u> <u>boxes of different sizes and shapes</u>. Pretty <u>blonde</u> <u>Barbies</u>, <u>lovely</u> <u>cloth puppets</u>, <u>shiny golden heroic robots</u>, the <u>latest pocket-size</u> <u>TV games</u> and <u>miniature</u> <u>grand pianos</u> were **displayed** *neatly*, **beckoning** their <u>lovers</u> to take them <u>home</u>. <u>Laughter</u> from <u>excited children</u> **filled** the <u>air</u>, along with their <u>parents'</u> <u>caring gentle</u> <u>voices</u> and <u>Christmas carols</u>."	"There **were** <u>boxes</u>, <u>toys</u> and <u>shelves</u> in the <u>shop</u>. There **were** <u>dolls</u>, <u>games</u> and <u>musical</u> <u>instruments</u>. There **were** <u>children</u> **laughing**. There **were** <u>people's</u> voices **heard**. There **was** <u>music</u> too."

i. The language features in the **LHS version** above and the key to identify them are given in the table below. State the function of each of the various language features given (i.e. what they do) and how they help to make the LHS excerpt effective. The first example has been provided.

	Language Features:	Key Used:	Function & Impact of Language Features Used:
E.g:	Specific Noun Phrase	Underlined	To show exactly the object/ place/ person being referred to so that readers know exactly the reference and can identify with it and visualize it.

Language Features:	Key Used:	Function & Impact of Language Features Used:
Specific verbs	**Bold**	
Adjectives	Dotted line	
Adverb	*Italics*	

ii. The main language features in the **RHS version** in the previous page have been identified in the table below. State the resulting impact on the readers and the effectiveness of the text.

Language Features:	Key Used:	Impact of Language Feature Used:
Noun	Underline	

	d			
Verb	**Bold**			

iii. Main language features such as specific noun (phrase), specific verbs, adjectives and adverbs are absent in the RHS version in the previous page. What is the resulting impact on the readers and the effectiveness of the text?

iv. Compare LHS and the RHS versions in the previous page and state the main difference in the types of sentences used and the resulting impact on the effectiveness of the text.

v. After examining both versions, *compare* them and *state* the impact of each version on the readers and the effectiveness of the text. *Support* your views using the function and effects of the language features dealt with in (i) to (iii).

Impact of LHS version on readers:	Impact of RHS version on readers:

Annex 2 (ii)

In order to sensitize pupils to the types of possible language features and techniques that can be used in the creation of narrative text, questions have been formulated for pupils to critically reflect on why these devices have been used and how they enhance the effectiveness of the narrative text. Below are excerpts of some of these questions found in the worksheets of the revised approach.

"*The place was undoubtedly a paradise for children, except for me*".

Is it usual for the author to feel this way? Why do you say so? How do you think the author has attracted the interest of the readers to read on?

In "*I remembered his warning*", **why** was a relatively short sentence used? Why do you think short sentences are sometimes used in narrative texts in general?

In the sentence, "*the Icy fingers of dejection were prodding me*",
a) **what technique** has been used by the author?
b) **how** is such technique usually used?
c) **why** is such technique used at times in narrative?

"*Even strangers took pity on me too, why didn't my father? Didn't he realise that he was too harsh on me?*" What do you think the **function** of such rhetorical questions is?

In "*Okay, okay ... but dad always turned me down... It's Christmas time, right? ... But...*", **why** do you think the punctuation "…" has been used?

Below is an excerpt on some of the possible uses of the punctuation "… …" in direct speech according to the function(s) it hopes to meet. Some of these examples can meet more than one purpose. Read through every example given and write down its function(s) in the first column. In addition, create your own dialogues with the usage of the punctuation "…" that effectively bring across the intended function indicated in the third column. The first example has been provided for your reference.

Function:	Examples of Usage:	Own Examples of Usage:
To show <u>speech deficiency</u>	"The day … day is ..un..usually..sunny…" the candidate uttered with difficulty, trying his best to overcome his speech deficiency while sitting for the reading test.	"Aa..a…pple" the child uttered the first word in his life despite his cleft lip, drawing much tears of joy from his parents.
	"I… I'm free…freezing…cold," Jon quivered while trudging through the thick snow.	

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	"I…I…I made…made…it for the exams?" James asked himself repeatedly with the news ringing in his confused mind which was still unable to accept the truth.	

Below are two ways to depict the point when the author's younger sister made her requests for toys and her mother's response. The version on the left-hand side (LHS) is lifted from excerpt (b) and the version on the right-hand side (RHS) is altered without changing its original meaning.

Compare the following two versions and *state* their differences in terms of:
- their <u>impact on the readers</u> and *explain* the reasons for the differences
- their <u>language features</u> as suggested by the evidence in bold and underlined

LHS Version		RHS Version	
"**Mom, this way. See what a nice mini-supermarket! With a cashier, notes and coins… I want this!"** <u>jabbered</u> my younger sister. "**Okay, child. Anything for you…**" Mom <u>replied</u>, <u>stroking</u> sister's head affectionately<u>.</u>		**My younger sister** <u>said</u> **to Mother to take a look at a mini-supermarket** and <u>said</u> **she wanted it. Mother** <u>said</u> **she would give her anything she wanted.**	
Impact on Readers:		**Impact on Readers:**	
Language Features Used:	**Key Used:**	**Language Features Used:**	**Key Used:**
	In bold only		**In bold only**
	<u>Underlined</u>		<u>Underlined</u>

Annex 3

The provision of the general schematic structure and language features of narrative text at the end of a series of inferential processes allows pupils to discover for themselves what make up the narrative and the importance of these features to the overall effectiveness of the narrative text. It also allows pupils the chance to consolidate their learning and test their knowledge of key language features learnt so far.

In a Nutshell – Gaining an Overview of the <u>Structure</u> of Narrative:

Below is an overview of the **structure of narrative** for your reference**.** The **<u>positioning</u>** of these components in any narrative depends largely on the **<u>purpose</u>** and **<u>craft</u>** of the writer.

Climax
The most exciting part of the story

Sequence of Events
Elaborate on how the characters react to the complication & includes the characters' feelings and what they do.

Resolution Elaborates on how the complication is sorted out or the problem in the story is resolved.

Orientation
Beginning that <u>may</u> include <u>who</u> are the characters, <u>when</u> & <u>where</u> the story is set & <u>what</u> the situation is.

Complication
Something that begins a chain of events that influence what will happen in the story.

Coda (Optional)
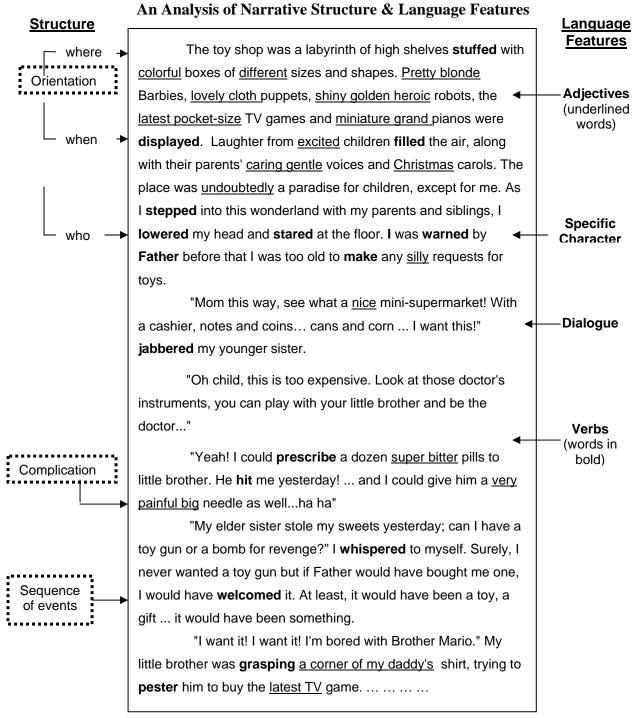Elaborates on the moral or message learnt from the story

In a Nutshell – Gaining an Overview of the <u>Language Features</u> of Narrative:
TASK*: **Familiarize** yourself with the language features of the different parts of a narrative by **joining** the language features in the left column with its corresponding function in the right column **with a line**:

Language Features	Function of Language Features
Past tense	Indicate the order in which events happened
Past/ Present/ Future/ Past participle tenses in quotation	Create dialogues/thoughts to portray the mood, values, character & attitude of protagonists.
Sequence markers	Relate a past experience/ incident
Specific nouns	Draw association with other objects/ animals with comparable qualities
Specific verbs	Add human-like qualities to inanimate objects/ animals
Adjectives/ adjectival phrases	Show exactly what object/ person/ place is being referred to
Adverbs/ adverbial phrases	To break monotony & to create desired impact
Personification	Show exactly the actions of the characters in the story
Similes/ Metaphors	To create emphasis or to reinforce a certain impression
Varied length of sentences	Provide more details on the actions involved

Annex 4

An analysis of a full-length sample narrative text is provided in the commonly adopted approach where the structural components and the language features are identified and listed for pupils. This involves the mere listing of structural components and technical key language features, without providing any scaffolding on the function of the structural and language features. Below is an excerpt.

An Analysis of Narrative Structure & Language Features

Structure

- Orientation
  - where
  - when
  - who
- Complication
- Sequence of events

Language Features

Adjectives (underlined words)

Specific Character

Dialogue

Verbs (words in bold)

The toy shop was a labyrinth of high shelves **stuffed** with colorful boxes of different sizes and shapes. Pretty blonde Barbies, lovely cloth puppets, shiny golden heroic robots, the latest pocket-size TV games and miniature grand pianos were **displayed**. Laughter from excited children **filled** the air, along with their parents' caring gentle voices and Christmas carols. The place was undoubtedly a paradise for children, except for me. As I **stepped** into this wonderland with my parents and siblings, I **lowered** my head and **stared** at the floor. **I** was **warned** by **Father** before that I was too old to **make** any silly requests for toys.

"Mom this way, see what a nice mini-supermarket! With a cashier, notes and coins… cans and corn ... I want this!" **jabbered** my younger sister.

"Oh child, this is too expensive. Look at those doctor's instruments, you can play with your little brother and be the doctor..."

"Yeah! I could **prescribe** a dozen super bitter pills to little brother. He **hit** me yesterday! ... and I could give him a very painful big needle as well...ha ha"

"My elder sister stole my sweets yesterday; can I have a toy gun or a bomb for revenge?" I **whispered** to myself. Surely, I never wanted a toy gun but if Father would have bought me one, I would have **welcomed** it. At least, it would have been a toy, a gift ... it would have been something.

"I want it! I want it! I'm bored with Brother Mario." My little brother was **grasping** a corner of my daddy's shirt, trying to **pester** him to buy the latest TV game. … … … …

Another full-length sample narrative text is provided for pupils to list down the structural components and the language features in the space provided on both sides of the text. This task does not involve much critical thinking and its ability to add much value is questionable. Below is an excerpt.

Task: Read through the following narrative text provided and identify the components that make up the schematic structure in the left column and the key language features in the right column.

Schematic Structure:	**Blabber Mouth**	Language Features:
	I am so dumb. I never thought I would say that about myself but after what I have just done, I deserve it. How could I have messed up my first day here so totally and completely? Two hours ago, when I stepped into this school for the first time, the sun was shining radiantly, the birds were singing and apart from a knot in my guts the size of Tasmania, life was great. Now here I am, locked in the stationery cupboard. Just me, a pile of examination papers and what smells like one of last year's cheese and devon sandwich. Oh no, Mrs Dunning is now trying to pick the lock with the staff-room knife. One of the other teachers is cautioning her not to cut herself. The principal is reminding her not to damage the staff- room knife.	

Annex 6

Excerpts of BRIDGING MODULES (1) and (2) are shown below. They build up pupils' repertoire and understanding of the uses and function of key language features namely, specific verbs, specific adjectives, specific nouns and their application, systematically through a series of activities shown. Teachers should use their discretion to decide which type of exercises they would like their pupils to focus more on. The examples shown are merely excerpts of the actual exercises.

BRIDGING MODULE 1: Exploring the Language Features of Narrative

I. Increasing the Repertoire of Specific Verbs in Narrative & Their Functions –

TASK: There are many precise verbs to show the manner in which certain words are said. Instead of indiscriminately using the word "*said*", brainstorm in groups for as many **precise verbs of speaking** of similar meaning as possible to replace each of the phrases underlined in the first column below.

In addition, come up with your own appropriate dialogues in the third column that effectively bring across the meaning of each of the specific verbs in focus. The first example has been provided.

Examples:	Other Synonym(s):	Own Examples of Usage:
1. "Get out and don't come back again!" Father said in a loud voice angrily.	Shouted/ yelled/ barked/ hollered/ bellowed	"Maria, get me my drink! Now!" the spoilt brat hollered across the hallway.
2. "Stop it!" Lydia said in an irritated manner.		
3. "Ah Soh's teenage daughter is pregnant!" Mr Lim said without thinking twice.		

II. Increasing the Repertoire of Specific Adjectives in Narrative –

TASK: Read through the following passage and replace the general adjective underlined i.e. "***nice***" with more appropriate and specific adjectives in order to effectively bring across the intended meaning. Fill in as many replacements of the adjective "***nice***" as possible in the spaces below. Refer to the possible answers to the first example given below for your reference.

"It's such a (1) nice day! Why don't we go for a (2) nice drive to Malaysia by car?" suggested Father. "(3) Nice idea, Dad!" Sheila exclaimed in excitement. "We can have a (4) nice time chatting in the car while enjoying a (5) nice drive there."

"The scenery is (6) nice and the people in Malaysia are generally (7) nice too," Sheila's mother added. To add to the (8) nice family atmosphere, Father said, "Then I suggest that we reserve a (9) nice hotel to check into and enjoy the (10) nice service provided. Let's return later the next day."

1.	fair/ fine/ lovely/ sunny/ beautiful	6.	
2.		7.	
3.		8.	

4. _____   9. _____

5. _____   10. _____

III. Exploring The Uses of Adjectives & Specific Nouns In Narrative –

The appropriate use of varied adjectives and precise nouns help to accentuate the mood portrayed or impression created to enable readers to visualize the object, place or person being referred to. Read through the example that show how the vague nouns underlined have been replaced with more appropriate and precise nouns that are made more vivid through the use of adjectives. Take note that although in both cases, the noun in focus is "car", the adjectives and precise nouns differ according to the context given.

Example a:	The wealthy woman strutted towards her <u>car</u> and hopped into it, drawing many envious stares from bystanders.
Considerations:	Draw hints about the possible qualities of the car from contextual clues such as the ***status*** of the woman (i,e, "*wealthy*") and ***reaction*** from the bystanders (i.e. "*envious stares*").
Conclusion:	The car to be described is <u>expensive, stylish and elegant.</u>
Revised Version:	The wealthy woman strutted towards her <u>magenta convertible BMW</u> and slipped onto its <u>handcrafted black leather seat</u>, drawing many envious stares from bystanders.

TASK: Using example (a) above as reference, fill in the blanks given in the tables below by replacing the vague general nouns underlined with more precise ones. In addition, add appropriate adjectives to enhance the mood and impression created. Indicate in the second row of every table below what you have to consider in order to decide on the salient details to further describe the nouns in focus.

NOTE: This set of exercises serves to show that although the object in focus is the same "clothing", the choice of vocabulary and salient details to be chosen differ due to different aims characters involved.

.Example 1i:	The voluptuous lady put on **clothing** that made her look sensuous, making many men around her swoon over her.
Considerations:	Draw hints about the possible details of the clothing from contextual clues such as the _____ of the lady (i.e. "*voluptuous*"), the _____ of the clothes on her (i.e. "*sensuous*") and the _____ of the men around her (i.e. "*swoon*").
Conclusion:	The clothing to be described is _____
Revised Version:	_____

	23

Example 1ii:	The gangster put on **<u>clothing</u>** that made him look threatening, causing those around him to keep away from him.
Considerations:	Draw hints about the possible details of the clothing from contextual clues such as the _____ of the gangster (i.e. "threatening"), the _____ of those around him (i.e. "keep away from him*").*
Conclusion:	The clothing to be described is _____
Revised Version:	_____ _____

IV. Exploring the Creation of Varied Sentence Structures

TASK: Using example (a) below as a reference, come up with varied ways of stringing together the given sentences, using the connectives provided. You may also use other appropriate connectives of your own in addition to the ones given as long as the original meaning of the given sentences remains unchanged.

> **NOTE**: These exercises aim to help pupils who are unable to use a variety of sentence structure explore and practise using different possible types of sentences so as to make their narrative more interesting.

a.   Joe is addicted to smoking.
      Joe refuses to listen to his father's advice.
      Joe's father advised him to quit smoking.
      Joe's father had advised him several times.

(i)   **As** Joe is addicted to smoking, he refuses to listen to his father's advice to quit smoking **despite** his father's repeated advice.

(ii)   **Because** Joe is addicted to smoking, he refuses to listen to his father's advice to quit smoking **although** his father had advised him several times.

b.   Lisa was down with fever.
      Lisa's fever was high.
      Lisa's boss had given her permission to rest.
      Lisa was insistent.
      Lisa went to work.

(i)   Although _____

_____

BRIDGING MODULE 2: **Exploring the Uses of Dialogues in Narrative**

I. The Making of an Effective Dialogue (i) – The Use of Punctuation

NOTE: Below is a series of reinforcement exercises that aims to strengthen pupils' understanding of the importance, function and uses of punctuation in dialogues found in narrative.

TASK: Compare and contrast the first and second columns below and state in the third column which one (i.e. usage A or B) is able to use the punctuation more appropriately. Give the reasons for your choice in the fourth column.

Usage A	Usage B	Choice:	Reason(s) for Choice:
"Stop there!" the master of the house commanded harshly.	"Stop there," the master of the house commanded harshly.		
"Are you hungry!" Joe asked the destitute, displaying much compassion.	"Are you hungry?" Joe asked the destitute, displaying much compassion.		

TASK: Analyze the dialogues in Usage A and Usage B columns above and answer if the following statements about the use of punctuation are true (T) or false (F).

	Principles guiding the use of punctuation in dialogues	T	F
1.	If the dialogue appears before the speaker, it starts with a capital letter. **E.g**. "*Do not put the bottle here,*" *the girl instructed.*		
2.	If the dialogue appears before the speaker, it ends with a full-stop. **E.g.** "*Do not put the bottle here.*" *the girl instructed.*		
3.	If a new dialogue appears after the speaker, it does not start with a capital letter. **E.g**. *The girl instructed,* "*do not put the bottle here.*"		

TASK: Below is an excerpt with the absence of punctuation marks and proper paragraphing. Read through the excerpt carefully and make it a coherent text by *inserting proper punctuation* and *indicating a new paragraph* using the symbol [//]

what money for transportation who do you think you are remarked stepmother as she cast a cold piercing look at meilin besides leg exercise will be good for you she added sarcastically meilin was fuming with anger but she held back her tears with a deep breath she summoned her courage and retorted if father knows how you've been treating me he'll get even with you how dare you threaten me brat stepmother hissed

Referring to the text above, how do you decide what type of punctuation to use in general?

_____

Why do you think it is necessary to indicate new paragraphing in the text above?

_____

II. The Making of an Effective Dialogue (ii) – The Use of Related Details

TASK: Compare and contrast the two versions of dialogues below and *highlight* in the examples given the different language features that help to make the dialogues more effective, *using* different keys (e.g. underline, highlight in different colours, etc). After that, *state* the ways in which the selected language features help to enhance the effectiveness of the dialogues given. The first language feature, i.e. *precise verb*, has been highlighted in bold for your reference.

	LHS Version:	**RHS Version:**
1.	"Look! Look! That's a Chinese junk. I'm sure of it. I-it had s-sailed right out of the p-pages of our h-history book," Fandi **stammered** nervously, almost choking on his words.	"Look. That's a Chinese junk. I'm sure of it. It had sailed right out of the pages of our history book," Fandi said.
2.	"That naughty grandson of mine has gone to his friend's house to play," **cried** the old man as he yawned and stretched himself.	"That naughty grandson of mine has gone to his friend's house to play," said the old man.

Key Used:	Language Features:	Impact of Language Feature(s) on Dialogues:
In bold	Precise verbs	Make it easy to visualize the way the character speaks

1. What do you think will happen to the effectiveness of the dialogues if the language features identified in the table above are absent from the dialogues?

_____

_____

V.   The Making of an Effective Dialogue (iii) – In a Nutshell

> **NOTE**: This section aims to consolidate pupils' knowledge of the use of effective dialogues in narrative after letting them go through a series of self-discovery processes.

Below are some reminders on how to create effective dialogues in narrative:

- Be clear about the **requirements of punctuation** in dialogue writing.
- Learn as **many alternatives** as possible for the **verb 'said'** which you tend to overuse. Refer to the table below for possible replacement of the verb "said" in dialogues:

| blurted | snapped | jabbered | cried | bellowed | argued | barked |
| confided | blabbered | exclaimed | shrieked | hollered | stated | sneered |

- Use reporting **verb followed by adverb or adverbial phrase** that gives more details to the actions. Below are some examples of how adverb or adverbial phrases may be used in dialogues.

  He retorted defiantly   She growled menacingly   He replied with great reluctance.

- Use **related bodily actions** to further make the way the dialogues more vivid. Example:

  "Keep low. It's the security guard!" Siva whispered in a throaty gasp, lunging forward onto the soft patch of grass beside Joe.

- Don't get too carried away (dialogue should be **less than** 10% of the story as it is **NOT** a play script). Remember to leave enough space to develop your plot/ story.
- Remember that each **new** speaker starts with a **new** paragraph
- Ensure that the **content** of your **dialogue** is **relevant, authentic & observe proper register** (don't make children speak like adults/ illiterate housewife speak like a professor).
- **Replace** the use of multiplicity of question marks and exclamation marks with a careful choice of specific verb that can bring across the intensity of the emotions desired. Example:

  Avoid: "Stop it!!!" Joe said.   **Instead**, use: "Stop it!" Joe hollered.

Annex 7

To facilitate a better understanding of what make up the various structural components of a narrative, why they are important and how to craft them effectively, a series of critical questions has been strategically formulated and placed at appropriate junctures of manageable chunks of the text to allow pupils time to do essential reflection. These critical thinking processes help pupils to go beyond just knowing what the structural components of a narrative are.

TASK: *Read through* the following excerpt that shows the beginning of a narrative with the title, "The Toy Shop" and *attempt* questions below to discover more about its structure:

Excerpt:

> The toy shop was a labyrinth of high shelves stuffed with colourful boxes of different sizes and shapes. Pretty blonde Barbies, lovely cloth puppets, shiny golden heroic robots, the latest pocket-size TV games and miniature grand pianos were displayed neatly, beckoning their lovers to take them home. Laughter from excited children filled the air, along with their parents' caring gentle voices and Christmas carols. The place was undoubtedly a paradise for children, except for me. As I stepped into this wonderland with my parents and siblings, I lowered my head and stared at the floor blankly. I remembered his warning.

Examine the excerpt above and *tick* any of the details below that has/have been dealt with totally and *state* the answers for those details that are available in the space provided:

Details Found in Excerpt:	**Answers Extracted From Excerpt (a):**
o *Where* the incident took place.	
o *When* the incident took place.	
o *Why* the author felt the way she did.	
o *What* the situation was.	
o *Who* the people involved were.	
o *Why* the author's father treated her that way	

Are there any details listed in the previous question not dealt with totally in the excerpt above? *Why* do you think the writer dealt with some details but not all in the orientation (/ beginning) of narrative?

It is said that it is important for the beginning of narratives to be ***effective*** i.e. able to attract and sustain readers' interest to carry on reading the story.
Why is it important for the beginning of narratives to be effective? What will possibly happen if the beginning of narratives is totally not captivating? (*Explore the impact on the readers, the writer and even the sales of the book at large*)

When did the author go to the toy shop in excerpt (a)? ***How*** did the author let the readers know when she went to the toy shop? ***Why*** do you think the author chose not to tell the readers directly the time or occasion when the author went to the shop?

NOTE: The following task enables pupils to be aware that the choice of salient details in the beginning of narrative depends largely on the paragraph goal/ purpose of the writer. Such judicious choice of details, coupled with the key language features used skillfully, helps to create effective beginnings. The avenue for pupils to analyse the given beginnings for their strengths also helps to reinforce pupils' idea of what makes up an effective narrative.

TASK: Based on the sample given as a reference, *identify* and *indicate* the technique(s) used to create each of the beginnings in the excerpts given. Next, *write down* the aims of the various paragraphs, *indicate* the salient details chosen to make the paragraphs more effective and *explain* to what extent and in what ways are the introductory paragraphs of narratives shown below effective in captivating the interest and attention of the target audience.

SAMPLE:

I am so dumb. I never thought I would say that about myself but after what I have just done, I **deserve** it. How could I have **messed up** my first day here so <u>totally</u> and <u>completely</u>? Two hours ago, when I **stepped** into this school for the first time, the sun was **shining** <u>radiantly</u>, the birds were **singing** and apart from a knot in my guts the size of Tasmania, life was great. Now here I am, **locked** in the stationery cupboard. There were just me, a pile of examination papers and what smells like one of last year's cheese and Devon sandwich.

Technique(s):	Flashback (/recollection)
Paragraph Goal:	To arouse curiosity of readers about the plight of the character.
Choice of details:	▪ Internal dialogues that vaguely suggest something went wrong ▪ The use of an unusual place to be in – cupboard
Extent of Effectiveness:	This beginning is effective in capturing readers' attention as the readers may be curious to find out why the author had landed up in a cupboard – an unusual place to be in and what could have caused him to be filled with remorse. There is also a dramatic contrast between what his feelings were before (i.e. he was hopeful) and at present when he feels hopeless and dread. The usage of specific verbs (those in bold), adverbs (those underlined) and varying length and types of sentences help to make the scene vivid and easy to picture in the mind.

Excerpt:

Jon **sniffed** the air and **smelled** antiseptic as he **frowned** and **listened** to the faint buzzing in his head. His eyes were **closed** tightly. He **knew** he was in a bed and covered by one sheet. Warm air **surrounded** him and he **saw** the large bright, white headlights **swirling** madly again in his mind. "What are those?" he **thought**. He **moved** his hands over his body. He had a top on but no bottom. He was naked from his waist down. Why?

Technique(s):	
Paragraph Goal:	
Choice of details:	
Extent of Effectiveness:	

NOTE: The following tasks enable pupils to go through a series of scaffolding and critical thinking processes before getting them to infer the structural components and key language features that make the beginning of narrative effective and display their understanding by creating their own beginning.

TASK: Based on the excerpts shown previously, *extract*, *categorize* and *summarize* the schematic structure and language features of the <u>beginning of narratives</u> in the table below and *provide examples* from the excerpts by *creating* your own point of reference (e.g. by underlining/ circling/ highlighting in different colours the different related language features). *Refer* to the first example given:

Schematic Structure (provide examples)	Language Features (provide examples)
1) <u>Who</u> was/ were involved (e.g.: I/ Jon/ Ben/ Lisa/ Dougie/ Meng/ Meng's father)	1) Use of <u>specific verbs</u> (refer to the words in <u>bold</u> in the excerpts above)

Consolidating Possible Techniques to Create the Beginning of Narrative:

TASK: Below are some possible techniques that may be used to create the beginning of any narrative. Based on every technique given, *come up* with a <u>beginning for a narrative</u> using <u>any topic</u> of your choice:

Techniques:	Creation of Beginning for Narrative:
a) Use **suspense/ foreshadowing** to attract readers' interest as hints on what is to come are given and there is discretion on how much information to reveal right at the beginning	Topic created:_____
b) Use an arresting **dialogue**/ thought/ dilemma voiced aloud or in the mind to arouse readers' curiosity and interest to read on.	Topic created:_____

c) Use **flashback** to recollect a decision made/ action taken/ incident that had happened and arouse curiosity of readers on how the protagonist had ended up in his/ her end-state.	Topic created:_____

NOTE: The tasks below aim to let pupils discover and infer for themselves the importance of including key structural components (such as complication and resolution) in a narrative and the implication of their absence. In addition, pupils are also provided with a possible structured framework on how to create complications in a narrative and what makes up an effective coda.

Below are two ways to depict the development of the plot. The version on the left-hand side (LHS) is lifted from excerpt (b) and the right-hand side (RHS) contains an altered version of excerpt (b).

LHS Version	RHS Version
Father had warned me sternly before not to make any silly requests for toys. Just when the Icy fingers of dejection were prodding me, a familiar voice interrupted my reverie.	Father had warned me sternly before not to make any silly requests for toys. Just when the Icy fingers of dejection were prodding me, a familiar voice interrupted my reverie.
"Mom, this way. See what a nice mini-supermarket! With a cashier, notes and coins… I want this!" jabbered my younger sister.	"Mom, this way. See what a nice mini-supermarket! With a cashier, notes and coins… I want this!" jabbered my younger sister.
"Okay, child. Anything for you…" Mom replied, stroking sister's head affectionately.	"No. Nobody is to ask for any toys, just like your elder sister," Mom replied, looking at me with an approving look.
From a distance, Father was looking on, nodding approvingly with a warm smile. At that moment, an unexplainable bitterness ate into me, causing my heart to sting.	From a distance, Father was looking on, agreeing with Mum. My sister accepted Mum's comments and I felt much better.

  i. Which version will you be more interested to read on to find out more? Why do you think so?

_____

 ii. In the RHS version, the first complication is absent. What is the effect of such an absence on the readers and the effectiveness of the text?

_____

iii. In excerpt (b), the complication is caused by external factors. There are many types of complication that can be created for narratives in general. Refer to the different ways of creation and the given sample plot outline and come up with your own plot outline including complication.

Types of complication:	Example of plot outline:	Own example of plot outline:
Due to _**internal** factors_: • own habit	Protagonist, due to his <u>bad habit of waking up late</u>, was late for a job interview.	_____ _____ _____
• own dilemma	Protagonist was <u>unsure</u> if	

	he should embezzle company funds to treat his ailing mother.	_____
• own handicap	Wheelchair-bound protagonist, suffered from low self-esteem and isolated himself from everyone around him.	_____ _____ _____
Due to ***external factors***: • caused by family	Protagonist plotted against his siblings who were competing for family wealth.	_____ _____
• caused by unexpected circumstances beyond control.	Protagonist met traffic jam and was late for his wedding ceremony.	_____ _____

Why is it necessary to include the resolution component in a narrative?

What do you think the coda of the story "The Toy Shop" is?

Why do you think the author chose to give hints on the coda of the story through describing the actions, expressions, thoughts and emotions of the protagonist instead of stating it in an obvious way such as "*The moral of the story is …*"?

The following tasks guide pupils to analyse and deconstruct for themselves given model narrative text so that they can derive a better understanding of what make it effective and model its strengths accordingly. Besides going through a series of critical questions, a compare and contrast approach is also taken whereby similar versions with key features missing are created to help convince pupils what makes up an effective narrative text.

Narrative Text Analysis and Deconstruction I:

TASK: Excerpts (a) to (d) below show the development of a realistic contemporary narrative with the title "What Women Want" adapted from the winning essay in Commonwealth Essay Competition 2004. Excerpts (ai) to (di) show the alternative version while adhering to similar storyline and title.

When analyzing the effectiveness of the paragraphs from excerpts (b) to (d), *always ask yourself* **what the paragraph goals are** and **what type of details can be best selected to attain the goals set**. *Attempt* the questions below to find out more about what help to make a narrative effective.

> **Excerpt (a):**
> The old woman sat in the **backseat** of the magenta BMW **convertible** with her **back** rigidly straightened as the **masterpiece** careened down the highway lined with **skyscrapers.** Clutching tightly to the reused plastic bag which was rustling noisily on her **lap**, she was afraid it might be kidnapped by the wind. She was not used to such **speed**. With trembling hands, she pulled the seatbelt tighter but was careful not to touch the patented leather seats with her callused fingers. "Bee Choo won't be happy," she repeatedly reminded herself as she constantly edged outwards to keep the pristine white leather **surface** away from her sweaty **back**. She definitely did not want to upset her only daughter; not when it was so rare to have time together.

What technique has been used to start the narrative shown in excerpt (a)?

_____

What is the goal of the paragraph in excerpt (a) above?

_____

_____

Analyze excerpt (a) above in terms of:
  a) the focus on the types of details and the possible reasons for doing so.
  b) the choice of words and the resulting impact on the readers.
  c) the sentence structure and length and the resulting impact on the readers
  d) the use of alternative literary devices and their possible impact on the readers.

_____

_____

_____

Does excerpt (a) make an effective beginning? Why do you say so?

_____

_____

> **Excerpt (ai) (alternative version):**
> The old woman sat in her daughter's car as it moved on the road. She sat in an uncomfortable way and she felt uneasy that she was sitting in the car. She held onto her plastic bag and she was afraid that it would fly off. She was not used to the speed of the car and she pulled the seatbelt tighter as she felt nervous. She was careful not to dirty the seat as she was afraid she would make her daughter unhappy. She was usually not out

with her daughter and she was unwilling to make her daughter unhappy when she was out with her this time.

Using excerpt (a) as a reference, analyze excerpt (ai) more closely and identify its areas of weaknesses in terms of:

    a) the type of information used and the impact on the readers.
    b) the choice of words and the resulting impact on the readers.
    c) the sentence structure and length and the resulting impact on the readers.

Is being solely grammatical with its intended ideas clearly brought across to the readers as in excerpt (ai) **enough** to make the beginning of any narrative effective? Why?

NOTE: *Subsequent excerpts that make up the remaining of the story will be provided in stages for pupils to go through the same processes. At the end of this module, pupils would have inferred for themselves through scaffolding, analysis and deconstruction on what make the given narrative text sample effective and a worthy model.*

The following tasks guide pupils to analyse and deconstruct for themselves each pair of descriptive paragraphs (one model sample and the other parallel one without key language features) so that they can understand better what make up an effective descriptive paragraph and the importance of using the paragraph goals to guide decisions on the choice of salient details and vocabulary to be used.

Analyzing Effectiveness of Description of People:

TASK: *Analyze* these pairs of excerpts and *identify* the language features that help to make the description vivid. Using excerpt (a) and (ai) as reference, *attempt* excerpt (b) and (bi).

Excerpt (a):

Subject of Description**: __An Old Garbage Collector__**

> His few strands of fine white hair topped his pale face, and his thin pursed lips, puckered and drawn in, were partially hidden by his grey-white moustache. Two deep creases ran down from beside his mouth, and the skin around his sunken eyes was furrowed into innumerable lines. In detail, his face was remarkable. It looked like it had been carved by the weather, for the skin was wrinkled and toughened like old tanned leather. His teeth, brown and broken, were uncared for. Bent over, old and withered, a torn faded shirt with sweaty marks was plastered on his back. His frail body slowly trudged up and down the aisles, in between the rows and down the sides of the dusty streets; clearing up other people's litter.

1. What is the goal of this paragraph in excerpt (a)?
   To evoke the sympathy of readers for the plight of the poor old man in focus.
2. What type of details help to attain the goal set (i.e. evoke the sympathy of readers)?
   Salient appearance of the old man that show his poverty and helpless plight
   Specific actions of the old man that show his means of survival and hardship
3. To what extent is excerpt (a) effective in portraying a clear, life-like picture of the character involved? What are the salient details chosen and the techniques used to create a vivid description?
   It is highly effective as the writer is careful with the choice of salient details to be described in depth so that they provide hints and insights into the condition, appearance, attitude and job of the character in focus. These selected details give a complete picture of the garbage collector and the details are skillfully and vividly described using a combination of techniques such as personification, similes, adjectives, adverbs, specific verbs, specific nouns and varied sentence lengths and structure. The overall effect is a clear vivid mental picture and dominant impression created of the garbage collector, hence enabling readers to be able to relate to him and be more interested to read on to find out more about him.

Excerpt (ai):

> The man looked dirty, plain and uncared for. He did not eat well and looked undernourished and old. He did not care about his looks and walked around and collected any garbage that he saw.

4. To what extent is excerpt (ai) effective in portraying a clear, life-like picture of the character if it has the same paragraph goal as excerpt (a)?
   It is ineffective as the description is too plain, vague and general without any salient details described in depth to create a dominant impression of the character. Readers are hence unable to visualize vividly how the garbage collector really looks like. This mundane and superficial description is boring and uninspiring, hence preventing the readers from engaging their imagination and becoming interested.

Excerpt (b):
Subject of Description**: <u>An Old Grandmother</u>**

> My grandmother, because she never had to leave her handcrafted leather chair to tend to the cooking, was the indisputable matriarch. She was the only fat woman in the house exuding an awe of reverence. A black mole bobbed just above the right upper lip. She had strong white teeth, an unwavering smile and a throaty chuckle. No one could fail to notice Grandmother's eyes. Dark and expressive, they revealed her feelings to the world. Whenever she heard good news or met a friend, her eyes lit up. They flashed in fury when her thoughts or commands were interrupted. Sometimes when she thought of her beloved parents fondly, those beady eyes clouded over with tears.
>
> Arthritis had made her fingers stiff and knotty. Thick blue veins ran along the back of her hands and every fingernail was chipped or cracked. However, that did not stop her from being ever ready to give her commands to the maids who would scurry to her side subserviently upon hearing their names being hollered out across the hall.

What is the goal of this paragraph in excerpt (b)?

_____

What type of details help to attain the goal set?

_____

To what extent is excerpt (b) effective in portraying a clear, life-like picture of the character? How have the salient details chosen been transformed and what are the techniques used to create a vivid description?

_____

_____

Excerpt (bi):

> My fat grandmother always sat in the living room. She had Arthritis and liked to order the maids around. All the maids were scared to disobey her and all of us respected her and let her have her way. We could tell her emotions from just looking at her eyes.

To what extent is excerpt (bi) effective in portraying a clear, life-like picture of the character involved if it has the same paragraph goal as excerpt (b)?
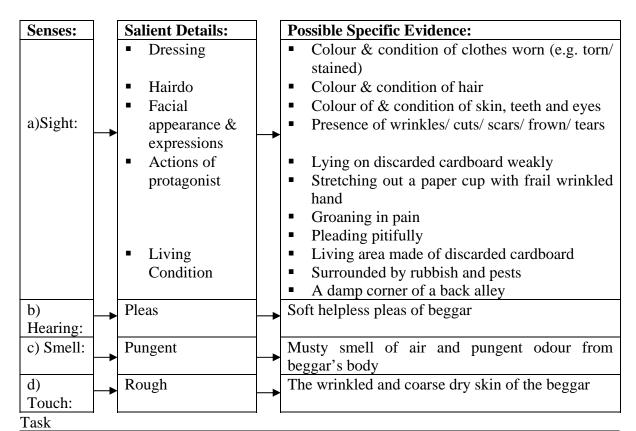
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Selecting Appropriate Salient Details to fulfill Paragraph Goal(s):
TASK: To come up with vivid description, it is important to select carefully the salient details that can help to best fulfill the paragraph goal given. Refer to the example given below and complete the task given to develop sensitivity in sieving appropriate details for description.
EXAMPLE:

Paragraph goal:	To *evoke sympathy* for an old beggar
Ask yourself:	How to evoke sympathy of readers towards the beggar? What are the senses of the readers I can appeal to?

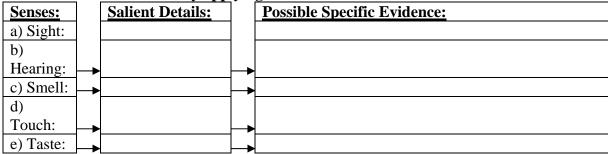**Selection of salient details by applying the 5 senses:**

Senses:	Salient Details:	Possible Specific Evidence:
a)Sight:	▪ Dressing ▪ Hairdo ▪ Facial appearance & expressions ▪ Actions of protagonist ▪ Living Condition	▪ Colour & condition of clothes worn (e.g. torn/ stained) ▪ Colour & condition of hair ▪ Colour of & condition of skin, teeth and eyes ▪ Presence of wrinkles/ cuts/ scars/ frown/ tears ▪ Lying on discarded cardboard weakly ▪ Stretching out a paper cup with frail wrinkled hand ▪ Groaning in pain ▪ Pleading pitifully ▪ Living area made of discarded cardboard ▪ Surrounded by rubbish and pests ▪ A damp corner of a back alley
b) Hearing:	Pleas	Soft helpless pleas of beggar
c) Smell:	Pungent	Musty smell of air and pungent odour from beggar's body
d) Touch:	Rough	The wrinkled and coarse dry skin of the beggar

Task

Paragraph goal:	To *evoke a sense of fear* towards a bully.
Ask yourself:	

Selection of salient details by applying the 5 senses:

Senses:	Salient Details:	Possible Specific Evidence:
a) Sight:		
b) Hearing:		
c) Smell:		
d) Touch:		
e) Taste:		

Annex 10

The commonly adopted approach in narrative teaching does not provide adequate meaningful scaffolding to equip pupils with the essential skills to understand how to craft effective narrative. In the commonly adopted approach,

STEP 1 deprives pupils of critical thinking processes to infer for themselves what the structural components and key language features of narrative are.

STEP 2 does not allow pupils to develop deeper understanding of the function, importance and impact of structural components and key language features on the overall effectiveness of narrative text.

STEP 3 involves a task that has little value with the baseless assumption that pupils start off having knowledge on technical language features. This task also merely superficially tests pupils' ability to identify key language features.

STEP 4 assigns pupils the task of writing a full-length narrative prematurely without developing essential micro skills required in the craft of effective narrative.

The above four main steps used in the commonly adopted approach is shown as follow:

Commonly adopted approach in narrative teaching:

STEP 1:	STEP 2:	STEP 3:	STEP 4:
Pupils are given a list of structural components and key language features that should be included in narrative right at the beginning.	Pupils are given sample narrative text with the structural components and key language features identified and listed.	Pupils are given another sample narrative text and are required to identify and list the structural components and key language features	Pupils are given a title and instructed to write a narrative based on the little amount of scaffolding received.

Annex 11

The following possible thinking frameworks help pupils to come up with possible plots and themes or codas for their narrative. Equipped with such structure in thinking, pupils are able to plan their plot in a more focused manner.

Where to Get Ideas for Storyline of Contemporary Realistic Narrative?

- Newsworthy articles in newspapers or TV news.
- Real-life personal experiences
- Hearsay of experiences of friends/ family/ acquaintances/ strangers

How to Plan for the Storyline of Contemporary Realistic Narrative?

The plot of contemporary realistic narrative may be planned according to the following *framework:*

(a) Create plot revolving around **spheres of influence** such as *personal*, *peers*, *family*, *society*

(b) Create plot that is **domain-based** and is usually set at present times, regardless of scale i.e. local or global. The domain may be *political*, *economical*, *cultural* or *environmental or a combination of any two domains,* depending on the writer's purpose.

(c) Create plot that is based on a particular **theme** (i.e. the use of people and events to elucidate some truth about social issue/ present reality)

Annex 12

Elements of Thought is a powerful framework for critical inquiry, making thinking rigorous, focused and meaningful. Equipped with this framework, pupils are able to sustain a dynamic pupil-driven discussion, with teacher acting as the facilitator who sustains the discussion by asking essential questions that are provocative, complex and invite multiple perspectives.

-

Framework for Critical Inquiry - Improving Quality of Thinking

elements of thought below) and imposing intellectual standards on them. Remember that critical thinking is systematically cultivated and is **self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective.**

Elements of Thought:	Questions to Ask Yourself:	Intellectual Standards:	Questions to Ask Yourself:
Purpose:	What am I trying to accomplish? What is my central aim? My purpose?	**Clarity**	Can I elaborate further? Can I give examples? Can I illustrate what I mean?
Information:	What information am I using to come to a certain conclusion? What experience have I to support this claim? What information do I need to settle this claim?	**Accuracy**	How can I check on certain claims? How can I find out if it is true? How can I verify/test if it is true?
Inferences/ Conclusions:	How did I reach this conclusion? Is there another way to interpret the information?	**Precision**	Can I be more specific? Can I give more details? Can I be more exact?
Concepts:	What is the main idea here? Could I explain this idea?	**Relevance**	How does that relate to the problem? How does that bear on the question? How does that help us with the issue?
Assumptions:	What am I taking for granted? What assumption has led me to that conclusion?	**Depth**	What factors make this a difficult question? What are some of the complexities of this question? What are some of the difficulties we need to deal with?
Elements of Thought:	Questions to Ask Yourself:	Intellectual Standards:	Questions to Ask Yourself:
Implications/ Consequences:	If someone accepts my position, what would be the implication? What am I implying?	**Breadth**	Do I need to consider another point of view? Do I need to look at this in other ways?
Points of View:	From what point of view am I looking at this issue?	**Logic**	Does all this make sense together?

	Is there another point of view I should consider?		Does what I say/ believe in follow from the evidence?
Questions:	What question am I raising? What question am I addressing?	**Significance**	Is this the most important problem to consider? Is this the central idea to focus on? Which of these facts are the most important?
		Fairness	Do I have any vested interest in this issue? Am I sympathetically representing the view points of others?

The above are suggested **critical thinking tools** that are useful to **check your quality of thoughts** in order to make your thinking **more informed, impartial, less distorted and less biased**.

Characteristics of a **cultivated critical thinker**:
-   Raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely.
-   Gathers and assesses relevant information and interprets it effectively.
-   Reaches well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against criteria and standards.
-   Thinks open-mindedly and considering alternative perspectives and assessing their assumptions, implications and consequences.

Annex 13

The crafting of Essential Questions (EQs) is important in order to help teachers facilitate a rigorous and dynamic pupil-centered NE-related discussion that is sustainable. The EQs and the related sub-questions created have to be aligned with the aims of the discussion known as the Understanding Goals i.e. what the teacher seeks to help pupils understand.

Below is a list of sample EQs that aims to help pupils appreciate the importance of efforts to preserve racial harmony. This discussion seamlessly follows the task in Module 6 that requires pupils to write a narrative with social harmony as the theme. The list of understanding goals is also provided to show how the EQs and related sub-questions help pupils develop certain critical understanding.

Understanding Goals:

At the end of the lessons, pupils will **understand** …

- why it is important to preserve racial harmony in Singapore
- why the role of the government in preserving racial harmony is important.
- why the role of the individuals in preserving racial harmony is important.
- how the individuals can play their part in preserving racial harmony
- why it is difficult for every individual to possess absolute right in freedom of speech and its implication on social harmony and stability.

Possible Essential Questions Used To Sustain a Guided Enquiry Session:

Essential Questions:	Possible related sub-questions
a. Some said the Singapore government is being overly paranoid and trying unnecessarily hard in preserving racial harmony. How far do you agree?	- Is racial harmony a real concern in Singapore/ Is Singapore government's fear of threats to the country's harmony unfounded? Why? - Is governmental intervention in the way we conduct race relations necessary? Why do you say so? - What are the implications if the government were to take minimal efforts in preserving race relations?

Essential Questions:	Possible related sub-questions
c. Since our government is going a good job at preserving racial harmony, we should just leave the task entirely to it.	• What assumptions are we making when we leave the responsibility entirely to the government? • What is the implication or consequence of leaving the efforts entirely to the government?
d. Some said it is time for our government to grant every individual the absolute right to speak his or her mind freely since Singaporeans are becoming more educated. How far do you agree?	• What is the implication of granting one "**absolute**" right? • What does it mean to have **freedom of speech**? What is the implication if such freedom is given? • What helps to shape our opinions? Is every individual able to be discerning? Why? • Does being more educated necessarily make one more discerning and informed when making judgment and decisions? Why do you say so? • What is the implication of granting freedom of speech to **everyone**? • Can Singapore afford the cost of people abusing their freedom of speech? Why?

Annex 14

The following tasks enable pupils to apply the thinking framework on Elements of Thought taught. Given the space to test pupils' ability to examine the complexities of the issues discussed, the validity of assumptions presented and the different possible perspectives to be considered, etc, the rigour of pupils' thinking is encouraged. Such critical thought processes help pupils to consciously examine their own thinking and form an informed stand on any NE-related issues discussed and be receptive to varying perspectives.

Task: Based on the issue on racial harmony discussed, below are some possible perspectives. Read through the various opinions and *analyze* the assumptions made by the people involved and *critically evaluate* whether these assumptions are fair or justifiable. *Support* your opinions using any supporting evidence gathered.

Perspective:	Point of View:	Assumptions:	Evaluation of Assumptions:
Teenage Singaporean	There is no need for Singapore government to be overly paranoid and trying unnecessarily hard in preserving racial harmony since our country is presently harmonious and will continue to be so as our government is very good.	• Our government's fear of threats to the country's harmony is unfounded.	
		• Singapore is presently harmonious and will surely continue to be so.	
		• It is normal and expected to have racial harmony in Singapore	
		• Singapore government is very capable and is able to take care of everything.	
		• There is no need for individual efforts in preserving racial harmony	

Perspective:	Point of View:	Assumptions:	Evaluation of Assumptions:
Teenage foreigner	Every Singaporean should be given the total right to freely express what they think of other races	• Every Singaporean is only accountable to self	
		• The words of the individual will not do harm to others' feelings	
		• Freedom of speech has no major impact on the society at large	
Singapore government	It is the responsibility of every individual to preserve racial harmony as it is crucial in ensuring peace in multi-ethnic Singapore that faces external threats.	• Everyone has an active role to play in the preservation of racial harmony	
		• The absence of racial harmony will affect the country adversely.	

NOTE: The writing of personal reflection on certain NE-related issues discussed provides a good avenue for pupils to pause and check their own thinking and their existing assumptions before discussion and evaluate how the critical discussion and exposure to multiple perspectives change their views, assumptions and even stand. Such inner reflection is an effective way to help pupils consolidate whatever that have been discussed during the rigorous pupil-driven discussion.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS …

Task: After the group discussion and evaluating the different perspectives given and questioning the assumptions made, ***come up with your own point of view and conclusions*** on whether the Singapore government is being overly paranoid and trying unnecessarily hard in preserving racial harmony.

Annex 15

Before dealing with any NE-related issue, besides making the transition to the discussion of NE-related issues seem incidental, teachers must also be aware of the presence or absence of any existing knowledge their pupils may use to sustain the discussion. The provision of relevant scaffolding in any form is hence critical in order to ensure that all the pupils have a certain basic level of understanding of certain NE-related issues to be discussed.

Below is an example of scaffolding (in the form of news articles [1] to [4]) provided to act as a platform to discuss NE-related issues, specifically on the importance of racial harmony in Singapore.

> NOTE: The following news article highlights the importance of inculcating proper social value in children and the need for every individual to play his role in maintaining social and religious harmony.

[1] Anti-racism fight in schools

A north Wales head teacher says children are the key to stamping out racist attitudes once and for all.

Jan Neil from Hafod-Y-Wern Junior School in Caia Park, Wrexham spoke out after five policemen - including one from north Wales resigned from their posts after making racist comments to an undercover BBC journalist.

On Wednesday, two members of North Wales Police were addressing pupils at the school about the need to combat racism.

"The two police officers who came here were absolutely gutted at the programme, they'd watched it....and they were horrified at what they'd seen," said Mrs Neil.

Five officers from the Greater Manchester, Cheshire and North Wales forces have resigned since the programme was broadcast. A further three remain suspended.

Mrs Neil believes no child is born racist and feels education is the only way to eradicate the behaviour.

Her 173 pupils celebrate the majority of religious festivals every year.

"One pupil said 'It's not what you look like on the outside, it's what you're like on the inside', we all know that to be true and as long as children can hold onto that, racism would be eradicated," she said.

"I don't think any child's born racist, I think they learn to be racist so obviously by talking to them at a very young age you're able to get them to understand that people are different."

"We make sure our literacy covers all nationalities so that the children understand and we have discussions about the news.

"We're having a multi-cultural storyteller, she's actually a lady from Ghana and these are very positive role models for the children," said Mrs Neil.

"We're educating children to take part in the whole world, not just to live here for the rest of their life so it's important that they know what the rest of the world's like.

"If they go to live in London, they have a much more diverse society there and we want our children to be able to have an understanding and a tolerance and respect for other people.

Following Wednesday's visit by officers from North Wales Police, children have been asked to write poetry about racism.

They also celebrated Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.

The festival celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance.

"It's nice to celebrate other festivals sometimes," said 10-year-old Natasha Powell.

"They have different ways and they dress up nice and sparkly," she added.

Her classmate Ceri Wareham, 10, said she enjoyed writing her poetry.

"We've been writing about racism and how you would feel if you were being abused by people in the streets.

"It helps us learn about how we should feel about other children who aren't our colour and who don't talk like us.

"You shouldn't pick on other children because it's not fair."

NOTE: The following news article provides pupils an insight into the possible consequence of racial violence that is actually happening in present day and how the misuse of technology and media can lead to social instability. This article may also lead to the discussion of the implication of absolute freedom of expression and the impact on multi-ethnic Singapore.

[2] Racial violence erupts in Sydney

Thousands of young white men have converged on Cronulla Beach in Sydney, Australia, and attacked people of Arabic and Mediterranean background.

Police and ambulance officers were pelted with beer cans and bottles, and an ambulance was attacked.

Several people were injured in the alcohol-fuelled violence, and at least 12 were arrested.

The authorities have condemned the outbreak of racial violence as "not the Australian way".

By Sunday night, the violence appeared to have spread to a second beach suburb, Maroubra, where men armed with baseball bats reportedly attacked cars.

And police said a man was stabbed in the back in south Sydney in what media reports said appeared to be further racial violence.

The clashes follow assaults a week ago on two volunteer lifeguards at the southern Sydney beach, reportedly by youths of Arabic and Mediterranean backgrounds.

Mobile phone text messages began circulating after the beatings, encouraging people to retaliate on Sunday and employing racial slurs.

'Not Australian'

Police Assistant Commissioner Mark Goodwin said innocent people had been targeted.

"The behaviour that's been seen down here at Cronulla today is nothing short of disgusting and disgraceful," he said. "It's certainly not the Australian way."

The area's Mayor, Kevin Schreiber, accused the mob of looking for a fight.

"As mayor and as a resident of Cronulla, I'm devastated by what has occurred on our beachfront," he s aid.

"It is the actions of a few, but let's not kid ourselves that people didn't come from far and wide to participate."

The president of the Islamic Friendship Association of Australia, Keysar Trad, accused the media of whipping up racial tension.

"Sections of the media took this issue far too far, and one can only surmise that the way these issues was dealt with on talk-back radio amounts to incitement," he said.

Sydney has many beaches, but Cronulla is one of a few that is easily accessible by train and is often visited by young people from the poorer suburbs of western and southern Sydney.

Area residents accuse the visitors of being disrespectful and of sometimes intimidating other beach-goers.

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NOTE: The following two excerpts taken from the book, "A Singapore Safe for All**",** give pupils an insight into the real challenges facing Singapore in the past and the delicate social fabric we have till present. They provide a good platform for teachers to discuss with pupils the importance of not taking racial and religious harmony for granted as the threat faced in the past may possibly exist or remerge today in the face of the global threat of terrorism.

[3]

Are racial and religious conflicts still possible in Singapore?

In the early 1960s, the Angkatan Revolusi Tentara Islam Singapura (ARTIS), a Malay extremist group, wanted to make Singapore an Islamic state. They got people ready to fight by spreading rumours of race riots. And in 1964 and 1969 (long after ARTIS was gone), people again fought and killed because of race.

The Nanyang Siang Pau Chinese newspaper also tried to stir up Chinese feelings against the Government in the early 1970s. It carried news that the Chinese language and culture were in danger of being destroyed in Singapore.

Religion was used again in the 1980s. The Singapore People's Liberation Organisation hatched a plan to sabotage the Port of Singapore warehouses, People's Action Party (PAP) branches, cinemas, community centres and shopping complexes.

They felt the Government treated Muslims badly and wanted to overthrow the Government.

Has Singapore ever been a target or haven for terrorists?

Four terrorists bombed oil tanks in the Shell oil refinery on Pulau Bukom in 1974 so that oil from Singapore could not go to the countries that were "unfriendly" to the terrorists' organisations. Two of the terrorists were from the Japanese Red Army and two were from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The terrorists hijacked a ferry, the Laju, with hostages. They demanded that the Singapore Government provide a plane to fly them to another country. When they got on their plane, officials from Singapore and Japan took the places of the hostages. One of these officials was Mr S.R. Nathan, now President of the Republic of Singapore. The terrorists escaped and were never caught.

In 1991, four terrorists hijacked a Singapore Airlines plane, SQ 117, from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore. They were not as lucky. When they threatened to kill the co-pilot, Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) commandos stormed the plane and killed all four of them.

Sometimes, Singapore itself is not a target, but our home is used by some as a base to fight other countries, some of whom are our friends.

In the 1980s, Singapore was used to support the objectives of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE network in Singapore raised money for the LTTE's fight against the Sri Lankan Government.

Although this local network was stopped, another one grew up in its place in 2000. In December 2001 and August 2002, a total of 36 persons were arrested for involvement in terrorism related activities. 32 of them were members of a secret group called the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Except for one, all the others arrested are Singaporeans. As of September 2002, 31 are under detention while five have been released on Restriction Orders.

Several of the detainees had been to Afghanistan where they were trained in Al-Qaeda terrorist camps.The Al-Qaeda are the alleged masterminds of the September 11 attacks in the United States.The JI members had bomb-making instructions, photographs and videos of local targets such as Yishun MRT station, Changi Naval Base and water pipelines.

Some were planning to bomb embassies in Singapore when they were arrested. This is a plot conceived by foreign terrorists. From information given by Singapore, one of the foreign terrorists was arrested in Manila.

He was found to have obtained more than one ton of explosives (TNT) for this Singapore operation.

> **NOTE**: The following news article highlights the importance of the role of the government and the community to actively promote racial and religious harmony and the efforts carried out thus far.

[4] Don't take racial harmony for granted: Swee Say
By Theresa Tan

MAINTAINING racial harmony in Singapore will be a bigger challenge in the future, as the external pressures of terrorist attacks overseas take their toll, deputy labour chief Lim Swee Say said yesterday.

Speaking at a gathering of more than 400 Chinese clan members and businessmen, he pointed out that the number of attacks worldwide increased to 700 last year.

In general, around 15 per cent of attacks take place in South-east Asia.

These attacks are also becoming increasingly lethal and causing widespread damage, he added.

Speaking in Mandarin, Mr Lim said: 'Although Singapore has successfully thwarted terrorists' plans, we can't guarantee that they won't strike in the future.'

Citing the Chinese phrase 'Bu pa yi wan, zhi pa wan yi', which means to play it safe and take precautions, Mr Lim urged his audience to take the Community Engagement Programme seriously.

The programme, unveiled by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong last month, aims to build bonds of trust so Singaporeans from different races and religions can help keep communal tensions in check should there be an attack.

Earlier this month, the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations heeded the Prime Minister's call and set up a community engagement task force.

Yesterday's talk, the first event by the task force, also saw Internal Security Department officers issue an update on the terrorism threat here.

After the presentation, audience members shared their views on how to forge stronger interracial ties, and asked what role the Chinese clans could play in the event of an attack.

Task force co-chairman Lim Fang Hua said the group intends to meet leaders from other communities and organise regular dialogues with them.

Meanwhile, on the issue of the upcoming election, Mr Lim Swee Say confirmed that the People's Action Party will be fielding candidates with strong Chinese backgrounds.

'Over the next few weeks, we are going to see more candidates. And I'm very sure that some of them will come across as candidates who are stronger, so to speak, whether in Malay, Chinese or Indian culture. 'It's a good mix.'