

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- understand how writers organise their work for effect.

STRUCTURE

Writers often use a variety of interesting structural devices to arrange their prose or poems. In the exam, you need to be able to write about how the Anthology texts are organised, considering how structure contributes to your understanding and interpretation of the text.

ANALYSING STRUCTURE

HINT

When analysing the structure of a text as a whole, consider the following questions.

- Is the structure linear or does it involve **time-shifts**?
- What narrative links are used to suggest a movement in time?
- Is there a contrast in the tone and mood between two parts of a text when time moves?
- How much is revealed about the characters at any one time? What do you learn about the characters when time moves?

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

narrative the story or plot

time-shift moving between different periods of time

The simplest way to tell a story is in linear fashion, starting at the beginning and going on until you reach the end. When commenting on the structure of **narrative**, consider the following questions.

BEGINNINGS

- **Is a setting or time period established?** What kinds of words are used for this?
- **Is a character (or characters) introduced?** Who are they? What do you learn about them?
- **Is a theme suggested?** What effect does this have on the reader?
- **Is there a narrator?** Do they speak in a commentary (first or third person)? What is their tone of voice like? For example, is it urgent, anxious, relaxed, excited...?
- **Is dialogue used?** What effect does it have on the reader? For example, is it entertaining, tense, fast-moving, thoughtful?
- **Is there a prevailing tense (past or present)?** What effect does this have?

MIDDLES

- **Is a problem introduced?** How?
- **Are all the characters behaving the same way that they did at the beginning?** Which ones have changed?
- **Has the setting changed?** How does it fit in with the plot? Does it give added interest?
- **Are there clear links with earlier parts of the story or poem?** What are they? Are they shown through words or actions?
- **Does the writer suggest what is to come?** How?

ENDINGS

- **Does the story or poem come to a definite end?** Does the writer leave the reader to guess what happens?
- **Does the book end as you expected?** Or is it a surprise, or even a shock, ending?
- **Does the end echo the opening?** Does it return to the same theme, setting, characters, for example?
- **Is there a moral or message?** Have the characters learned a lesson? Does the author want to tell the reader something?