

## DID YOU KNOW?

Some writers create interesting effects by handling time in a more fluid way and not relying on a simple beginning-middle-end structure. By using the technique of time-shift, also known as **prolepsis**, narrative can work in a non-linear way. This allows the reader to make connections between widely separated events. **Flashbacks** to the past can change the reader's interpretation of events and shifts forward can give you a glimpse of the future of the narrative.

## SUBJECT VOCABULARY

**prolepsis** suggestions of things that will happen, before they do  
**flashback** when the narrator of a story jumps out of the present in order to describe an event which happened in the past; often flashbacks are in the form of the memories of characters in the present

How a text is structured can influence your understanding of a text and your reaction to it. How and when information is revealed is important to both the plot and character development.

## KEY POINT:

## ACTIVITY 1

A01

## SKILLS

ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY, TEAMWORK

## ▲ CONSTRUCTING A NARRATIVE

Working in pairs, cut up the first part of any story into short phrases, place them in an envelope and swap them with another group. Arrange the contents of your envelope into whatever order makes the most sense. Discuss this with your partner and explain your thinking. Try rearranging the story using different structures to produce different effects.

▲ FROM *MRS DALLOWAY* BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning – fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her when, with a squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and – was that it? – “I prefer men to cauliflowers” – was that it? He must have said it at breakfast one morning when she had gone out on to the terrace – Peter Walsh. He would be back from India one of these days, June or July, she forgot which, for his letters were awfully dull; it was his sayings one remembered; his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished – how strange it was! – a few sayings like this about cabbages.

## ACTIVITY 2

A01

## SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

## ▲ ANALYSING STRUCTURE

- Mrs *Dalloway* is a novel with an unusual structure. The technique used in which the thoughts and feelings that are running through the mind of a character are described is known as stream of consciousness. You can see from this piece how structure and narrative voice are linked. Re-read the opening of the novel and answer the following questions.
- What is this passage about?
- How does the author show you what Mrs Dalloway is thinking?
- How do you feel about Mrs Dalloway at the end of the passage?

Why?