



Poetic Writing: Character

LEVEL 1i 1ii 1iii **2** 3 4 5

I Like My Grandad's Hair

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

Because The Learning Context and Integrating Reading and Writing sections for the character exemplars are so closely related, they have been combined in a shared introduction, which applies to all the character exemplars. It suggests the approach Renata's teacher may have taken to working with the class on character writing. It also suggests ways in which teachers can integrate character writing with reading.

Teacher-student conversations

When Renata had finished writing his first draft, the teacher conferenced with him:

- Teacher: You have some wonderful ideas about your grandfather. He sounds as if he's really fussy!
- Renata: Yeah! He won't let you do anything!
- Teacher: Can you tell me something about how he looks too?
- Renata: Well, he has those things lumps that stick out of his leg. Man, they're ugly!
- Teacher: I think you mean varicose veins.
- Renata: Yeah.
- Teacher: Can you add that somewhere?
- Renata: Yeah, I'll put that in here [points].

He then added this detail to his writing.

WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Renata towards the next learning step, the teacher could help him to focus on:

- Voice
- including personal response to observations.
- Structure
- beginning to sequence observations so that there is some logical order to them.
- Sentences
- exploring ways of joining together more simple sentences as compound sentences.
- Language features
- beginning to use imagery such as metaphor and simile where appropriate.
- Punctuation
- more consistent use of capital letters and commas.

This could be done by:

- modelling texts with examples of these language features
- discussing and identifying language features that writers use for effect
- "walking Renata through" the experience in order to focus on detail.

CURRICULUM LINKS

English in the New Zealand Curriculum

Level 2: Writing Functions

Poetic Writing: Students should write on a variety of topics, shaping ideas in a number of genres, such as letters, poems, and narrative, and making choices in language and form

Levels 1 and 2: Reading and Writing Processes

Exploring Language: Students should explore choices made by writers, and identify and use the common conventions of writing and organisation of text, which affect understanding.

Thinking Critically: Students should identify and express meanings in written texts, drawing on personal background, knowledge and experience.

REFERENCE

Ministry of Education. (1994). *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.



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WHAT THE WORK SHOWS: Renata has succeeded in presenting a detailed character study giving an impression of his grandfather from clues to his character. These are carefully placed for the reader to bring his/her own impression together. What does the writer really think about his grandfather?

Student's first draft

Deeper features

Voice

Sincerity of voice apparent.

Ideas

Focuses on specific aspects with some supporting detail and comment that are personally significant.

Sentences

Uses mainly simple and compound sentences.

Attempts complex sentences.

Varies sentence beginnings.

Vocabulary

Uses a range of vocabulary, including common (metaphorical) expressions.

Language features

Relates anecdotes to support characterisation.

My Grandad

I like my Grandads short grey hair. Out of all the cars my granddads had they have all been in mint condition.

Were not aluod to sneeze in my Grandads car.

He always byes me the Dearest ice-creams.

He lives in Rotorua.

Once we were at my brothers party. My brother got my Grandad to hold his baby boy. my Grandad put a paper towel on his lap so the baby didn't get his pants dirty.

he has got veins that you can see in his legs.

his house is very old.

When he does the lawns I ask if I could help he says no because he mows his lawn in a certain way.

Surface features

Grammar

Uses most grammatical conventions with support.

Learning to master use of tense (past/present).

Punctuation

Uses capital letters and full stops with some consistency.

Spelling

Spells high-frequency words correctly.

Demonstrates good understanding of most basic spelling patterns in English.



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