



# Poetic Writing: Character

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

## Our Caretaker

### 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 Jonathan'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

While the students wrote, the teacher moved around, reinforcing effective ideas that students were trying.

Teacher: What have you used in the very first sentence?

Jonathan: I've used the word "like".

Teacher: You have. What do we call that, when you say something is like something else?

Jonathan: A simile?

Teacher: You're right – and I think you've chosen a simile that works well here, talking about his hair being like snow.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Jonathan towards the next learning step, the teacher might help him to focus on:

Sentences

- varying sentence beginnings
- exploring complex sentences.

Language features

- exploring more use, especially of imagery.

Grammar

- developing further understanding of tense by discussing errors he has made.

This could be done by:

- modelling texts with examples of these language features
- discussing and identifying language features that writers use for effect
- giving specific feedback on his attempts at developing these skills

### CURRICULUM LINKS

*English in the New Zealand Curriculum*

#### Level 1: 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 organization 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:** Jonathan describes a person who is prominent in his school life. He successfully draws a visual image of Mr Wright, giving specific details of his physical appearance. But he also includes clues to Mr Wright's character that the reader has to interpret for her/himself.

Student's second draft

### Deeper features

#### Voice

Demonstrates sincere personal response to character.

#### Ideas

Focuses on specific aspects and details of character.

#### Structure

Sequences ideas logically: physical description, behaviour.

#### Sentences

Uses mainly simple and compound sentences.

#### Vocabulary

Uses very simple but direct vocabulary.

#### Language features

Includes direct speech to illustrate the way the character speaks, which supports characterisation.

### Our caretaker

Our caretaker has hair like snow. Mr. Wright has a white t,shirt and his pants are blue. Mr Wright's eyes are blue. He has glasses that are siver. that go to his ears. He has skin (that) is white and on his arm's he has pieces of hair. (His behaviour) Mr Wright is a very kind person and he is funny. Mr Wright picks up ribesh at school, to make it look clean. He tells me jokes and makes me laugh. He says to me "Stand in the front so I can run you over" and I laughed. He used a miching [machine] to clean Hup the leaves and he wears ear muffs.

### Surface features

#### Grammar

Most grammatical conventions correct.

Some inconsistencies with tense.

#### Punctuation

Uses capitals, full stops and speech marks consistently.

#### Spelling

Spells most high-frequency words correctly.

Shows some knowledge of common spelling patterns.



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## Our Caretaker

Student's second draft

Our caretaker

Our caretaker has hair like snow.

Mr Wright has a white t-shirt  
and his pants are blue. Mr Wright's  
eyes are blue. He has glasses that are  
silver that go to his ears. He has skin that  
is white and on his arms he has  
<sup>pieces</sup> pieces of hair. (His behaviour) Mr Wright  
is a very kind person and he is  
funny. Mr Wright picks up ~~rubber~~ <sup>trash</sup> at  
school to make it look clean. He tells  
me jokes and makes me laugh. He says to  
me "Stand in the front so I can run ~~you~~  
you over" and I <sup>then</sup> laughed. He used <sup>car machine</sup> a machine  
to clean up the leaves and he wears earmuffs.