



MODULE 1 WORKBOOK

Reading for Understanding: Fiction

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PODS

Before continuing, make sure you have watched and have access to the following Pods. To find these, simply log in to GCSEPod and enter the codes given into the search bar, or click the titles below if you're using this PDF on a computer.

Title	Pod Code
1. Reading Narrative Writing	ENG-150-007
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3. Reading and Interpreting Atmospheric Description	ENG-150-010

LESSON 1

Reading Narrative Writing

Pod

- **Reading Narrative Writing**
ENG-150-007

 (Click the Pod name to watch it now on gcsepod.com, or type the code into the search bar on the GCSEPod website!)

Quiz

Watch the pod and answer the questions below. Circle your chosen answer(s).

1. What does narrative writing mean? Choose one:
 - a. Writing a story
 - b. Descriptive writing
 - c. Writing instructions
 - d. Writing to argue

2. What is a basic narrative made up of? Choose one:
 - a. Lots of description without much action
 - b. Lots of dialogue
 - c. Characters introduced, problem or conflict established, with events leading towards a resolution
 - d. Beginning, middle and end

3. To help you understand the characters in a text, what should you not pay attention to? Choose two:
- a. Their behaviour
 - b. The length of the story title
 - c. Their motivations
 - d. Their names
4. What techniques might a writer use early in the story to hook the reader? Choose two:
- a. Creating a sense of mystery
 - b. Beginning with an action-packed scene
 - c. Using lots of punctuation
 - d. A colourful book cover
5. Highlight the connective phrases. Choose two:
- a. Later on that day
 - b. He walked
 - c. Across the hall
 - d. They ran for the bus
6. Why might the writer include words that add drama to a sentence such as 'Susan sipped her tea. BOOM!?' Choose one:
- a. To hook the reader in and have an effect on them
 - b. To explain something in a different way
 - c. To connect sentences
 - d. To let us know where the story is set

7. Why do you need to pay attention to a writer's choice of words? Choose one:
- a. We don't have to look at individual words
 - b. So that we want to read on
 - c. So we know what action is happening
 - d. To help us understand/work out what the writer is suggesting or implying
8. Highlight the literary devices below. Choose two:
- a. Alliteration
 - b. Images
 - c. Personification
 - d. Bold lettering
9. How is first-person narrative written? Choose one:
- a. A narrator tells the story using 'he' and 'she' e.g.: She walked into the classroom.
 - b. The character tells the story, using 'I' e.g.: I walked into the classroom.
 - c. The character tells the story using the pronoun 'you' e.g.: You walked into the classroom.
 - d. The story has lots of characters e.g.: They all walked into the classroom.
10. How is third-person narrative written? Choose one:
- a. A narrator tells the story using pronouns such as 'he', 'she' and 'they' e.g.: She walked into the classroom.
 - b. The character tells the story, using 'I' e.g.: I walked into the classroom.
 - c. The character tells the story using the pronoun 'you' e.g.: You walk into the classroom.
 - d. The story is set a long time ago.

PRACTISE

1. Read the sentence below and highlight any words or phrases that suggest which narrative perspective the piece is written in, first-person or third-person:

The girl walked into the classroom and launched her books onto her table. It wasn't a good day. She hadn't had a good day in weeks, not since she started at this new school.

2. Read the sentence below and highlight any words or phrases that suggest which narrative perspective the piece is written in, first-person or third-person:

It was the 31st December 1999. The day I had been working towards for the past eight years. The day that was sure to change my life. In fact, if my work and predictions were right, the day that would change all our lives.

3. The source in your exam will always have a short blurb at the top of the page. It is important that you read this to help you understand the context of the story. The best way to do this is to highlight key information. Read the blurb below and highlight the key information:
 - a. When the text is set
 - b. Where the text is set
 - c. Who the main characters are
 - d. Any other information that helps our understanding

Following the outbreak of war, Sam lives at Aunt Sarah's house in the country with his mother and sister, Alice. His father hasn't returned from fighting and is presumed dead, and Aunt Sarah's house holds mysteries Sam doesn't yet understand.

4. The writer will use the opening line or paragraph to introduce you to the main character or set the scene of the text. They will also use it to hook you in as a reader. Read the opening line below. How is the writer trying to hook you in?

The door stood like a guardian at the top of the stairs to the attic.

A large rectangular area enclosed by a dotted line, intended for student responses.

5. While reading the text for the first time, it's important to highlight and annotate key pieces of information, so that you know you've understood what you've read.

As you read each paragraph you should highlight, annotate, and then pause to check your understanding. Alternatively, read through the text once in full, then read it again, this time highlighting and annotating key information. Remember, the more you read it, the more it will make sense.

Practise reading for understanding by reading the opening two paragraphs to this text.

EITHER

- a. Highlight and annotate key words or phrases that help you understand the text's main characters, action and settings, pausing after each paragraph to check your understanding.

OR

- b. Read through once without highlighting, then read a second time, highlighting and annotating the key words or phrases that help you understand the text's main characters, action and settings.

Looking up, an image of the window flashed into Sam's mind – the curling paint of the frame, the way the dust formed shapes against the glass if you stared at it long enough – and then it was gone, quick as a swallow. Next to him, the garden breathed summer through the open window, and Sam could hear the faint click of the gardener's spade as he dug a new bed next to the greenhouses. There was a squeal from below, and Sam's eyes shifted to his mother as she chased Alice across the lawn, their voices flashing between sunlight and the long shadow of the house.

When he was as small as Alice, it was Father who chased him around their small garden, hopping up the stepping stone-path, crocodile-infested grass to either side. He remembered his mother calling them in to tea from the house, smaller than this one, and somehow friendlier. His old bedroom had looked out over the back, the next street's roofs opposite and the gardens stretching to either side. Here, there were no neighbours, and the garden disappeared in trees. Sam's mother said they should be grateful to Aunt Sarah for letting them stay, but he had not wanted to move in with the old woman who sat under a blanket on the terrace despite the warmth of the day. He watched her watching Mother and Alice, and pictured the slow blink of her papery eye-lids.

LESSON 2

Interpreting Characters

Pod

- **Reading and Interpreting Characters**
ENG-150-009

Click the Pod name to watch it now on [gcsepod.com](https://www.gcsepod.com), or type the code into the search bar on the GCSEPod website!

Quiz

Watch the pod and answer True [T] or False [F] to the statements below:

Statement	T/F
1. Most stories are character-driven.	
2. In narrative writing most characters have no goals and nothing they want to achieve.	
3. Writers may give their characters a secret to engage the reader.	
4. Writers describe a character's appearance so that the reader has an image of what they look like.	
5. Characteristics and personality also let us know what a character is like.	
6. In the extract, Mary comes across as easy-going through her dialogue	
7. Readers have to empathise with all the characters to want to read on.	
8. The protagonist is the main character in the story.	
9. The antagonist is the villain or the person preventing the protagonist achieving their goal.	
10. Most stories have a number of characters, both major and minor.	

PRACTISE

1. Read the extract below and answer the questions:

a. Who is the protagonist?

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b. Which other characters are mentioned?

.....

c. Is the gardener a main character or a minor character?

.....

d. Who is older, Sam or Alice?

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Looking up, an image of the window flashed into Sam's mind - the curling paint of the frame, the way the dust formed shapes against the glass if you stared at it long enough - and then it was gone, quick as a swallow. Next to him, the garden breathed summer through the open window, and Sam could hear the faint click of the gardener's spade as he dug a new bed next to the greenhouses. There was a squeal from below, and Sam's eyes shifted to his mother as she chased Alice across the lawn, their voices flashing between sunlight and the long shadow of the house.

When he was as small as Alice, it was Father who chased him around their small garden, hopping up the stepping stone-path, crocodile-infested grass to either side.

2. What do we learn about what Sam's mother enjoys from the sentence below?

There was a squeal from below, and Sam's eyes shifted to his mother as she chased Alice across the lawn, their voices flashing between sunlight and the long shadow of the house.

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3. What do we learn about what Sam's father liked to do with Sam from the sentence below?

When he was as small as Alice, it was Father who chased him around their small garden, hopping up the stepping stone-path, crocodile-infested grass to either side.

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4. Which bits of description suggest that Aunt Sarah is old?

He had not wanted to move in with the old woman who sat blanketed on the terrace despite the warmth of the day. He watched her watching Mother and Alice, and pictured the slow blink of her papery eyelids.

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LESSON 3

Interpreting Atmospheric Description

Pod

- **Reading and Interpreting Atmospheric Description**
ENG-150-010



Click the Pod name to watch it now on gcsepod.com, or type the code into the search bar on the GCSEPod website!

Quiz

Watch the pod and answer the following questions. Choose one answer, or 'True' or 'False'. Circle your chosen answer.

- 'Atmosphere' refers to
 - the characters and what they say
 - the location of the story
 - the general mood or feeling surrounding a certain setting or description
 - the title of the text
- Writers use atmosphere to draw readers into the world they're imagining:
 - True
 - False
- Atmosphere and setting are usually introduced
 - early in a text
 - in the middle of a text
 - at the end of a text
 - in the blurb

4. References to setting should be
 - a. mentioned only in the first paragraph of the story
 - b. continued throughout the story
 - c. mentioned only at the end of the story
 - d. given in the introduction

5. Setting a scene at night will usually give it a different atmosphere to setting it in the day:
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. The weather isn't a very good tool for creating atmosphere:
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. Characters can also be used to create an atmosphere through
 - a. their entrance and exit
 - b. their observations of the setting around them
 - c. their relationships with other characters
 - d. all of the above

8. Writers of fiction often use
 - a. sensory description to engage the reader in the atmosphere
 - b. punctuation to engage the reader in the atmosphere
 - c. paragraphs to engage the reader in the atmosphere
 - d. all of the above

9. A constantly barking dog would create a atmosphere.
- a. relaxing
 - b. tense
 - c. calm
 - d. lively
10. It's not enough just to notice the techniques in use. You also need to think about
- a. what the characters say
 - b. what effects the writer intends to create
 - c. what grade you want to achieve
 - d. the barking dog

PRACTISE

1. Writers usually try to create a specific atmosphere from the very beginning of the text. Read the opening line below. What atmosphere is the writer trying to create?

The door stood like a guardian at the top of the stairs to the attic.

2. Considering the opening line and the atmosphere the writer is trying to create, which line is most likely to be the last line of this text?
- a. At the top of the stairs, breathing quietly so as not to disturb anything, Sam reached out his hand.
 - b. Sam decided he wanted an ice cream and to play with his mum and Alice, so he skipped off down the stairs.

3. Often the setting decides the atmosphere. Match up these atmospheres and settings:

Setting	Atmosphere
a) A retirement home	1. Relaxed and happy
b) The beach in summer time	2. Scary and tense
c) A dark forest at night	3. Dull and slow-moving
d) A birthday party	4. Excited and energetic

4. Read the paragraph below. What atmosphere is being created?

The garden breathed summer through the open window, and Sam could hear the faint click of the gardener's spade as he dug a new bed next to the greenhouses. There was a squeal from below, and Sam's eyes shifted to his mother as she chased Alice across the lawn, their voices flashing between sunlight and the long shadow of the house.

.....

5. Read the paragraph below. What atmosphere is being created?

She imagined him now, standing at the bottom of the stairs to the attic – the ones she had shown him when they first arrived, and warned him not to climb, knowing that, each time he passed, he would hesitate, draw closer, gaze up at the door, wondering.

.....

APPLY

This section will require a teacher to review.

Read through the whole of the text. While reading, remember to:

- highlight any words or phrases that help you understand the narrative: characters, setting, time period, action.
- consider who the main characters are and make short annotations to help you understand how they are presented
- highlight any references to setting or atmosphere and make short annotations to help you figure out the overall atmosphere the writer is trying to create

Remember: You MUST allow yourself the time to read and understand the text in order to successfully answer the reading section of your exam.

Text B

Lisa turned off the engine and wished she'd worn a better top, one that didn't stick to her back like cling-film. Ahead of her, the cars stretched out in thin metal ribbons, their colours hot and shining, like beetle-shells: midnight blue, volcanic red, tar black. In the rear-view mirror, cars and lorries snaked back behind her, windscreens blinding in the sun. She imagined touching the shimmering bonnets, and how her fingers would draw back with the pain. Somewhere, a car horn sounded, continuously, and Lisa scabbled for her phone for some music, before realising that she'd left it at home in her rush to leave.

She banged her head on the steering wheel in frustration.

Looking up, she caught the middle-aged woman in the neighbouring car looking quickly away. They were probably talking about her in that car, the woman and the driver. She imagined their conversation: "Honestly, some people – you'd think they could get a grip on themselves. I mean, it's only a traffic jam."

"Road rage, darling. People just haven't got the patience to wait these days."

Lisa pictured them, smug in their air-conditioned isolation. They probably didn't have to be in work fifteen minutes ago, probably didn't have a manager who would look at the clock, pointedly, as she rushed in, sweating and dishevelled, hovering nearby while Lisa tried to engage a busy stranger in unwanted conversation about insurance. This couple had all their insurance – car, home, life – sorted. This couple, she thought, didn't have children or, if they did, they were grown-up and gone, not lying impossibly deeply asleep when they should be dressed, breakfasted and out the door to school. This couple had probably had a pot of tea and home-made marmalade for breakfast – maybe with a half-grapefruit each – rather than a gulp of instant coffee.

Lisa's stomach grumbled.

The car horn was still going, irritating as the whine of a mosquito on a hot night.

You don't know these people, she said to herself. They might be perfectly nice: stop moaning. You sound like that car horn. The thought of a day at the call-centre, heat trapped beneath the low ceiling and bouncing down the lines, pressed down on her, making her head ache.

She hadn't slept well last night. Jim, supposedly sitting his first GCSE in three days, had arrived home long after midnight, waking her up where she'd fallen asleep on the torn couch in front of some romcom. If he hadn't made such a noise trying to lock the door behind him, she'd have thought he was a burglar – or worse, Pete, trying his luck with his old keys. Once she'd said her piece to Jim, and turned off all the lights, she lay in bed, cooking in the tiny bedroom where the day's oily heat always seemed to collect and congeal.

She hadn't had time to wake him properly this morning, yelling up the stairs before she slammed the door behind her.

Lisa rubbed her eyes fretfully, and rolled down the window on the passenger side, hoping for a breath of green air from the fields that bordered the motorway.

To her left, an oak tree stood on a ridge, the crop running carefully around its huge base: it must have been standing there for several hundred years, judging by its size, Lisa thought. When she was little, they'd had an old oak in their garden; her mother had always complained it took the light from the back windows, but Lisa had loved to climb among its broad branches and, at night, she would listen to the quietening sounds of the birds it sheltered, settling for the night.

The oak tree caught the sun across the fields now, like a beacon.

The sudden blare of a horn close by shook Lisa's gaze, and she turned back to the road: the cars in front were gone, moving away, gaps opening between them, and the cars behind her were pulling out to pass her. The couple in the car next to her would be long gone, she realised, into the rest of their pleasant day, while she sat stuck, in the middle of a road, past behind her, future ahead, with no exits, and everyone passing her.

Slowly, she switched on the engine.