

Question 1 - Elective 1 : Telling stories

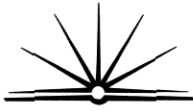
Authors, in their respective works, use various elements of narrative to interest the reader and also promote their involvement. Among the most obvious and effective features are theme, plot, time/setting and language.

The theme is the central issue of the story. In 'Animal Farm', Orwell satirically retells his perspective of the Russian Revolution. His take on communism as an all-negative idea is demonstrated brilliantly in his storytelling. Animal Farm uses metaphors and an allegoric farm with striking similarities and representations of Stalin's rule. The skillful way with which Orwell writes generate interest in the reader, leaving us looking hard for his embedded meaning and begging for more. In my text 'Bookends' by Jane Green, another involving central theme is at play. She tackles an ubiquitous aspect of adolescence, the struggles of growing up in the face of various temptations. Smoking, alcohol, drugs, relationships as well as other related issues are highlighted in a very 'real' and interesting way. She writes simply and honestly, enabling readers to connect and relate the story to themselves. This promotes reader involvement to a great extent as the reader understands what is being tackled



by the author.

In order for a book to be a satisfying read, the plot must be involving and interesting. In 'Animal Farm', the plot has a balance structure, with no 'looseness'. The dream and vision of old Major at the beginning is answered perfectly by the closing event. Orwell's superb reiteration of the irony of an unattainable Utopia strikes the reader hard, sparking an interest that is only extinguished with the conclusion of the book. The climax in 'Animal Farm' is when Snowball is chased out and Napoleon carries out his purges to guarantee the security of his rule. From then onwards, things slowly but surely fall apart and the irony of the situation is revealed, with Animal Farm going backwards, returning to a worse state than it was with Jones. In 'Bookends', Green captures the imagination of the reader with a never-idle plot, full of twists and a very shocking climax. The story is told in a chronological order, enabling character development. The climactic pinnacle of the story is when Sidney is diagnosed with AIDS, shattering every imaginable dream he and his friends hold. Such is the effectiveness of the plot that readers cringe and can't help feeling sorry for Sidney. Readers ultimately feel and love him over time, and do not want him to die.



The time and setting of a story also plays an integral role in making the story accessible. Although told as a fable, *Animal Farm* is set in a real place: a farm in England. Orwell also takes careful notice of the time and passing of seasons. Orwell goes through a lot to enable the reader to see his farm as an extension of reality, to using real newspaper names, magazine publications and even the exact ammunition of Jones' shotgun. Similarly, the story of 'Bookends' is set in suburban England, with the characters growing up in school until they reach adulthood and settle down in London. Green, in order to enable reader connection to a great extent, tries to make the story as 'normal' as possible, placing events and happenings in major landmarks of London. This ^{enables} ~~makes~~ readers to be totally immersed in another reality, not realising that they are merely reading a book.

Language and humour are used extensively in both text to interest and amuse the reader ~~and~~ as well as to develop and ~~for~~ define ideas. *Animal Farm* uses satirical writing, slapstick humour, farcical humour and above all, irony. Orwell effectively established Napoleon and Snowball as Stalin and Trotsky through descriptive and humorous writing. The irony of the situation is



defined time and time again with the careful exposition of events through witty storytelling. In 'Bookends', Green uses colloquialism and neologism to a very high level. As her characters are teenagers in the beginning of the story, she uses informal dialogue. This greatly ~~enh~~ enhances the story and enables readers to 'connect' and relate to each character in his very own way.

In summation, different techniques are employed by authors to make their story compelling and involving. These techniques effectively generate reader involvement and take literary entertainment to another level.