

ABOUT THE STANDARD

- ◆ Unfamiliar texts at level 2 requires you to use and build on the same skill-set that you developed for unfamiliar texts at level 1. The key difference is that at level 2, you need to show that you can reach that next layer of analysis and comprehension.
- ◆ Again, its all about using language techniques to understand and argue something about the author's purpose. So, if you haven't already, we recommend you get up to speed by first checking out our video for unfamiliar texts level 1. Even if you did this external last year, it's always good to have a recap.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- ◆ Before you start to answer the question, you must annotate the text and identify the language features used. The texts used for level 2 will be packed with language features.
 - ◆ One way to make sure you're finding all the language features is to think "Small, Medium, and Big".
 - ◆ Small is the language features that you can find at a sentence level e.g. smilies, listing, short sentences.
 - ◆ Medium is what you can find at a paragraph or stanza level e.g. an extended metaphor that runs across several sentences, or an entire stanza that lacks punctuation and is a stream of conscious
 - ◆ And Big is what you find when you zoom out and look at the whole text, this could be the structure of the text: maybe in the first half of the poem the writer seems hopeful and optimistic but in the second half is filled with regret, or maybe you will notice that every paragraph starts with an 'I' statement
- ◆ When you're annotating the text, you should also be looking to find the big ideas of the text. If you get stuck, have a look at the question in the answer booklet and use that for inspiration as to what the 'big ideas' might be.
 - ◆ For example, if the question is "analyse how the writer explores his connection to the beach setting", then as you're annotating the text look for ideas that show how the writer feels about the beach. If you notice that lots of language features are being used to show the writer is remembering past events, then one big idea could be 'reflection'
 - ◆ Remember - there could be lots of different 'big ideas' in the text, and sometimes different ideas will be in different parts of the text
 - ◆ Once you've annotated the text, write down a quick list of the possible big ideas that you've found e.g. reflection, loneliness, hope
- ◆ At level 2, the exam booklet doesn't split the achieved questions apart from the Merit/Excellence questions - they're combined together and you get one big space to write out your answer. This means that it's up to you to structure your response.
- ◆ The easiest and clearest way to do this is to build your own structure based on the question that they ask you. To get merit/excellence, your answer to each question should include 2-3 paragraphs and each paragraph should start with a clear and direct thesis statement about what you are trying to prove.
 - ◆ How can you do this? Lets take for example the question "analyse how the writer explores how people cope with a flood". First, look back at the possible big ideas that you've already written down

- ◆ Pick 2-3 of these which you think are quite strong in the text and which are communicated through a variety of different language features
- ◆ Then, combine the wording of the question with your big ideas and this becomes the 'thesis statement' for each paragraph.
- ◆ For example, the thesis statement of your first paragraph might be "the writer explores how people cope with a flood by looking at how people reflect on the past", and for your second paragraph it might be "the writer explores how people cope with a flood by looking at how they are optimistic for the future"
- ◆ Then, you just have to make sure that the rest of the paragraph proves what you say it will in your thesis statement. For this, you can just use the paragraph structure that your teacher has taught you for writing essays.
- ◆ It might be PEEL or it might be SEXY, either way, it should include a thesis statement, an explanation of that statement, language features as examples, explanations of the effect of these features, and some wider linking at the end.
- ◆ Writing about different language features and the effect they have is crucial for getting merit/excellence.
 - ◆ Make sure you use a variety of different language features where possible in each paragraph. It's also important to show the marker that you can identify different types of language features. Yes, similes and metaphors are different - but if you can use one example of figurative language along with one example related to the structure or the tense of the text, then that will be way more effective.
 - ◆ This is really important because it shows that you can weave different language features together in the same line of argument. This could look like saying, "this metaphor shows that NZ is like a gardener, tending to poems to let them grow", then next you would say, "the listing of famous NZ poets also shows the idea of growth as it shows that the popularity of poetry in NZ is on the rise".
- ◆ One of the easiest ways to go from Achieved to Merit, is to make sure that you're explaining the effect of language features in the context of the poem, rather than just explaining the general effect of that feature or describing its effect.
 - ◆ It's one thing to say that personification is used to make inanimate objects seem alive, but it's much more effective to say that the author used personification to make the tornado appear more terrifying as using personification helped depict the tornado in a way that made it seem like it could literally chase after you.

OVERALL

- ◆ In order to pass Unfamiliar Texts at level 2, you need to be showing the marker that you can identify different types of language features and that you can use them to back up your argument about the big ideas of the text
- ◆ You also need to show that you can relate these language features to the author's overall purpose by describing the effect of the language feature - basically just always be asking yourself, why did the author choose to do this and what effect has it had on the poem
- ◆ We've covered some important strategies and things to remember, but we haven't covered everything.
- ◆ As we said at the start of this video, we really recommend going through the last 3-4 years of exam papers, and also using the StudyTime Walkthrough Guide and Checklist to really check and consolidate your knowledge and feel 100% prepared!