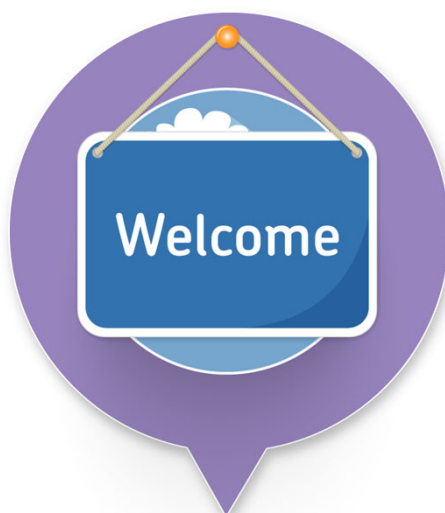


GCSE English Language Virtual communities

Autumn 2021



Welcome



Introduction and aims

This presentation explores the idea of threshold concepts, and the importance of structure for the co-teachability of GCSE English Language and English Literature.

Aims

1. To consider threshold concepts as a way of thinking about English Language and Literature
2. To consider the importance of 'structure' as a threshold concept
3. To discuss how (and when) we teach 'structure'
4. To think about narrative 'structure' in terms of time and space
5. To examine the idea of 'narrative dynamics' and apply it to a reading of a fiction text

What are the core skills for success in GCSE English Language and Literature?

Use phonics to decode words	Employ semantics and context to understand texts	Ability to spell complex vocabulary	Write for a range of genres and purposes
Understand the nuances of metaphor	Be able to analyse media texts and moving images	Manipulate sentence structures for impact	Understand and apply literary theory
Understand the generic features of fiction and non-fiction texts	Speak confidently in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes	Summarise and synthesise texts	Understand the principles of structure (narrative, poetry, non-fiction)
Use subject terminology when responding to texts	Write with grammatical accuracy	Be able to adopt a role in drama performances	Construct coherent paragraphs
Legible handwriting	Craft coherent narratives	Read with fluency	Be able to infer meaning
Ability to spell tier 1 vocabulary	Construct a coherent argument	Understand how writers represent the world	Use sophisticated vocabulary for effect
Be able to evaluate texts	Language analysis	Be able to compare texts	Create media texts

Essential

Desirable

Enrichment

Threshold concepts

A threshold concept is akin to a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress.

'Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge 1 – Linkages to Ways of Thinking and Practising' in *Improving Student Learning – Ten Years On* by Meyer J H F and Land; edited by Charles Rust. The Oxford Centre for Staff Learning and Development (OCSLD), Oxford Brookes University, 2003

Threshold concepts

- Transformative
- Troublesome
- Irreversible
- Integrative
- Discursive

Activity one

- Which of these concepts would you consider to be 'threshold concepts'?
- Choose **three**

Use phonics to decode words	Employ semantics and context to understand texts	Ability to spell complex vocabulary	Write for a range of genres and purposes
Understand the nuances of metaphor	Be able to analyse media texts and moving images	Manipulate sentence structures for impact	Understand and apply literary theory
Understand the generic features of fiction and non-fiction texts	Speak confidently in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes	Summarise and synthesise texts	Understand the principles of structure (narrative, poetry, non-fiction)
Use subject terminology when responding to texts	Write with grammatical accuracy	Be able to adopt a role in drama performances	Construct coherent paragraphs
Legible handwriting	Craft coherent narratives	Read with fluency	Be able to infer meaning
Ability to spell tier 1 vocabulary	Construct a coherent argument	Understand how writers represent the world	Use sophisticated vocabulary for effect
Be able to evaluate texts	Language analysis	Be able to compare texts	Create media texts

Writing on threshold concepts

On page 4 of your booklet, you will find recent authors that have written about threshold concepts.

How do these compare to your selection of threshold concepts in the previous activity?

Threshold concepts versus assessment objectives

Please refer to page 5 of the booklet to find assessment objectives for GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature

1. To what extent are assessment objectives informed by threshold concepts?
2. Where do the assessment objectives and threshold concepts overlap?

Let's focus on narrative structure as a threshold concept

Why structure?

- Fiction
 - Non-fiction
 - Rhetoric
 - Poetic form
 - Moving images
 - Drama texts
 - Computer games
 - Graphic novels
 - Still images
- **Analysis**
 - **Production**

Why structure?

Ian Warwick (in his essay *Some Key Threshold concepts for English* for London Gifted & Talented, londongt.org)

- **mythos (conscious construction of plot)**
- catharsis (empathy and understanding of character)
- ethos (a text's inherent values)
- mimesis (art as a distorted mirror on life)
- phronesis (the contextual significance of a text).

David Didau (*Making Meaning in English* (2021))

- metaphor
- **pattern and structure**
- story/narrative
- argument
- grammar
- context.

Why structure?

Paul T. Corrigan (in his article *Threshold Concepts in Literary Studies*): text, meaning, context, **form**, reading.

Alex Quigley (in his article *Designing a new curriculum – what are your ‘big ideas’?* for theconfidentteacher.com):

- the role of myth and the story-teller
- **narrative structure**
- genre
- the concept of power (character relationships, gender, class etc.)
- phonic decoding and vocabulary decoding
- conscious manipulation of sentence structures for effect
- generic writing structures
- a recognition and application of **complex patterns** of language, imagery and **plot**.

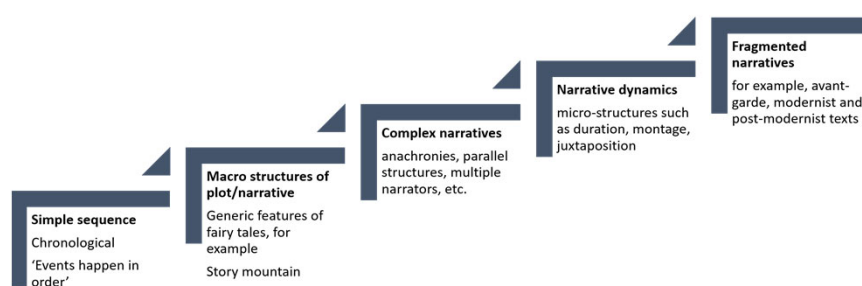
Perspectives on structure from chief examiner reports

- Read the extracts from various ‘Reports on the exam’ for GCSE English Language and Literature that can be found on page 12 of the Resource booklet.
- Consider the points made about candidates’ use of structure as a method

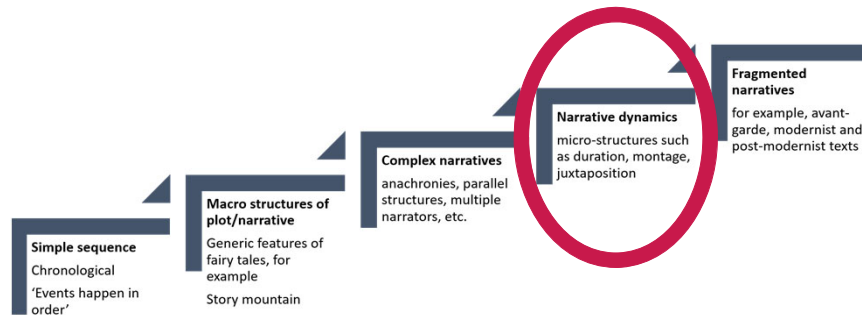
Progression in teaching structure

1. How do you ensure a continuity of academic progression from KS2 to KS3?
2. Now consider: when do you teach structure? Where does it appear in your curriculum?
3. How do you teach structure? What texts do you use?

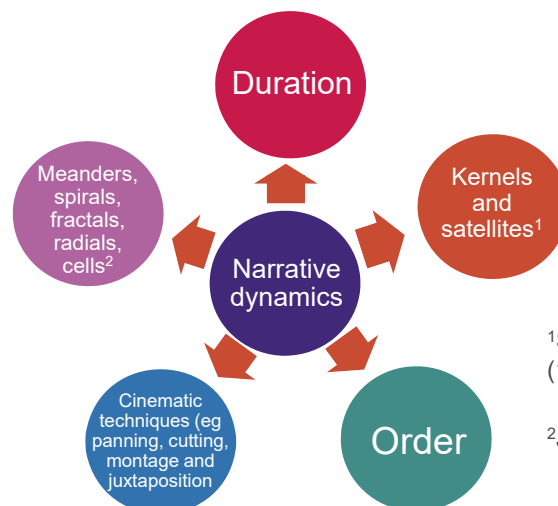
Progression ladder



Progression ladder



Narrative dynamics



¹Seymour Chatman (1980)

²Jane Alison (2019)

Narrative dynamics 1: Kernels and satellites (Chatman, 1980)

- **Kernels:** 'narrative moments that give rise to cruxes in the direction taken by events. They are nodes or hinges in the structure, branching points which force a movement into one of two (or more) possible paths ... [They] cannot be deleted without destroying the narrative logic.'
- **Satellites:** 'the workings out of the choices made at the kernels ... Their function is that of filling in, elaborating, completing the kernel; they form the flesh on the skeleton.'

Taken from Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse* (pages 53–56).

You will find an example based on *Macbeth* on page 6 of your booklet

Story and Discourse by Seymour Chatman, Cornell University Press, 1980

Kernels and satellites (Chatman, 1980)

Now consider one of the Literature texts that you teach and apply the principle of '**kernels**' and '**satellites**' to a particular scene, chapter, or sequence.

1. Decide on a particular scene within the narrative that might be characterised as a **kernel** (for example, Macbeth's decision to kill Duncan).
2. What are the authorial decisions that the writer could have made at this moment in the narrative?
3. What might have been the narrative impact of these alternative decisions?
4. What do these alternatives reveal about the reasons why the writer took the path they did?
5. What are the satellites within this kernel and what is their narrative impact?

Narrative dynamics 2: duration

Please refer to the table on page 7 of your booklet

The Silk Factory

Consider the source from the November 2020 Paper 1 Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing Insert

- Think about the 'duration' of each paragraph. How does each contribute to the narrative dynamic?
- Complete the table on page 10 of the booklet for the first 4 paragraphs of the source.

The Silk Factory

	Type of 'duration'	Example	Impact
1			
2			
3			
4			

So what?

How might the study of narrative dynamics improve student responses to language and literature?

Summary

- Threshold concepts can provide an effective framework for curriculum planning
- Structure is a threshold concept
- Teaching of macro-structure is important, but...
- Exploring micro-structures and narrative dynamics will deepen students' understanding of literary texts
- Teaching narrative dynamics through film helps students apply a visual schema to written texts

Structure: further reading

- *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, by Seymour Chatman (1980)
- *Meander, Spiral, Explode: Design and Pattern in Narrative*, by Jane Alison (2019)

Any questions?



Event materials

The electronic materials from this event will be available to download shortly. If you aren't able to download them at this time, they will be made available to you in the customer portal of our online booking system.

Once we receive notification that you have attended the course, you will be sent a certificate of attendance email. When you receive the email, please log in to your account and the materials will be available on the 'my resources' tab on the welcome screen.

Get in touch

Our friendly team will be happy to support you between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 0161 953 7504

Email: english-gcse@aqa.org.uk

Twitter: @AQAEnglish

aqa.org.uk



Thank you
