This document supports the *Literacy Focus* *for Writing, Genre in the primary curriculum* section located in the Literacy Teaching Toolkit (Department of Education and Training, Victoria).

**Narrative**

The following is a **summary of major language or grammatical features** which might be the focus for teaching about narrative at different levels in the primary years organised under the Language sub-strands of the Victorian Curriculum. The language or grammatical features can be highlighted, modelled and taught through the use of model or mentor texts and be the focus of explicit teaching about narrative in writing (and in reading).

|  | **F-2** | **3-4** | **5-6** |
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| **Expressing and developing ideas** | **Verbs/ verb groups**  Simple verb groups, usually simple past tense forms  Predominantly action or doing verbs which tell what the characters do, actions they are involved in, e.g. ran, played, made, came  Some sensing (thinking and feeling) verbs which help the reader understand what a character might be thinking or feeling e.g. thought, wished, liked, felt  Simple saying verbs used in dialogue, e.g. said, cried  Relating verbs (being & having) sometimes used to identify a character or in the description of a character e.g. The giant **was** very big. He **had** two purple eyes. | **Verbs/ verb groups**  Expanded range of verb group structures and types; varied tenses as appropriate to the unfolding narrative e.g. They **lived** in the desert. One day they **were** **walking…**She **had** **vanished** into thin air.  Use of action (e.g. lived, were walking, had vanished), relating, sensing (e.g. saw, heard, knew, **wanted** to save, **wished** he could), saying verbs (e.g. moaned, squealed, whispered, screeched, chanted)  Relating verbs used to identify and describe characters, places, things e.g. It **was** pitch black in the dungeon. | **Verbs/ verb groups**  Wide repertoire of verb groups and tenses, e.g. the sun finally **revealed** itself, I’**m** **trying to get** some sleep, I **struggled to escape**, all he **could think about**.  More precise verb choices showing an understanding of refinement particularly to establish characters, their actions, thoughts & feelings and dialogue e.g. the sun finally **revealed** itself, I **struggled to get** free of his grip, he **tossed** the jar**,** Toby **winced** as he **crouched** in the shadows**.** |
| **Nouns/ noun groups**  Simple noun groups to refer to characters, places or things in the narrative – these typically include pre-modifiers such as articles and/ or adjectives (usually factual or common opinion adjectives) e.g. The grumpy giant, but might also include a simple embedded clause as a post qualifier modifier, e.g. the giant that lived in the castle, once there was **a gorilla that got captured** | **Nouns/ noun groups**  More complex noun groups which include pre- and/or post- modification e.g. He put **the strange buttons** in his wardrobe. **A flash of light** appeared**.** Once there was amadman **who lived in Sahara.** He started to do **every chore he could think of.** | **Nouns/ noun groups**  More complex and elaborated noun groups which include pre- and/or post- modification; selection of noun groups, (which include adjectives, adjectival phrases & clauses) to portray character, mood, setting …. e.g. Mr and Mrs Mouse were travelling within the sewerage system to find **a place that was just as comfortable as their previous place**. Mr Mouse had **enough of all the searching.** I saw **a** **kind-hearted soul in the shape of a lonely old man** **leaning on the window.** … But **the only thing that arrived** was **a massive, ugly, distorted face.** |
| **Adverbs, (adverbial) prepositional phrases**  Simple prepositional phrases of time and place, or adverbs of time and place to create setting and to locate events in time and space, e.g. Once upon a time, Before dinner, in a castle, under the tree | **Adverbs, (adverbial) prepositional phrases**  Expanded use of prepositional phrases and adverbs to elaborate on events & actions as they occur - place, time, manner, e.g. in a posher part of town, in an empty town and in the middle of nowhere, that second, one day, a few weeks ago, right in front of her, all week long, with a heavy sigh, all by herself, suddenly, sadly, fiercely, yesterday | **Adverbs, (adverbial) prepositional phrases**  Expanded & varied use of longer prepositional phrases and adverbs to elaborate on events & actions as they occur - place, time, manner, cause & accompaniment e.g. “Where am I?” I asked **again in annoyance**;  Ever since my family died I’ve been staying **with my Grandma**; I was driving **up to Sydney** **by myself in my brand new, ocean blue Ford Fiesta.** |
| **Sentences and combining ideas**  Simple and compound sentences with clauses of equal status – resembling spoken like language e.g. The angry giant ran after the boy **and** the boy was scared.  Use of unequal or dependent clauses usually of time or place, e.g. **When the boy saw the giant,** he ran away. | **Sentences and combining ideas**  Simple and compound sentences and higher incidence of complex sentences to include dependent clauses of time, manner, place, cause, condition, concession, e.g. When they arrived (time), because he was exhausted (cause), if he didn’t make it in time…(condition), Our cottage exploded **while we went shopping** (time) so we had to find somewhere to live.  Quoting and reporting clauses to represent spoken words or thoughts, e.g. ‘I’ll camp here for the night,’ he said. He knew that he was in trouble. | **Sentences and combining ideas**  Appropriate use of the range different sentence types (simple, compound, complex) to tell the narrative, explore characters’ actions and reactions.    Wide range of dependent clauses (e.g. time, manner, place, cause, condition, concession). e.g. Toby winced **as he crouched in the shadows. Even though he was scared,** he entered the house. **As he crouched in the shadows**… **Sitting there patiently, Stunned by the events**…  Quoting and reporting clauses to represent spoken words or thoughts ‘I’m so sorry,’ Toby apologised. He wondered what was happening. |
| **Victorian Curriculum Links: English** | Recognise that sentences are key units for expressing ideas ([VCELA143](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA143))  Identify the parts of a simple sentence that represent ‘What’s happening?’, ‘Who or what is involved?’ and the surrounding circumstances ([VCELA178](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA178))  Explore differences in words that represent people, places and things (nouns including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs) ([VCELA179](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA179))  Understand that simple connections can be made between ideas by using a compound sentence with two or more clauses usually linked by a coordinating conjunction ([VCELA214](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA214)) | Understand that a clause is a unit of grammar usually containing a subject and a verb and that these need to be in agreement ([VCELA261](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA261))  Understand that verbs represent different processes (doing, thinking, saying, and relating) and that these processes are anchored in time through tense ([VCELA262](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA262))  Understand that the meaning of sentences can be enriched through the use of noun/groups/phrases and verb groups/phrases and prepositional phrases ([VCELA292](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA292)) | Understand the difference between main and subordinate clauses and that a complex sentence involves at least one subordinate clause ([VCELA323](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA323))  Understand how noun groups/phrases and adjective groups/phrases can be expanded in a variety of ways to provide a fuller description of the person, place, thing or idea ([VCELA324](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA324))  Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of verbs, elaborated tenses and a range of adverb groups/phrases ([VCELA351](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA351)) |
| **Language for interaction** | **Person**  Usually first person narrative | **Person**  First or third person narrative | **Person**  First or third person narrative |
| **Evaluative language**  Attitudes expressed using simple verbs and simple adjectives to convey emotional evaluation of things (like/dislike) or to express judgement of a character’s behaviour (good/ bad) e.g. The **ugly** man stole the food.  Simple thinking and feeling verbs | **Evaluative language**  Attitudes expressed using verbs, adjectives and adverbs to convey feelings or reaction of characters, positive or negative judgement of a character or their behaviour, to appreciate the quality of characters, places and events, e.g. ‘Aren’t they **adorable**?’ He saw the **creepy** eyes. The **pounding** footsteps **echoed** through the passageway. On the inside he was **sullen**. He looked **nasty** and **sulky.** He wants **revenge.** | **Evaluative language**  Attitudes expressed using a wide range of verbs, adjectives and adverbs to convey emotional response or reaction, judgement of a character’s behaviour, to evaluate the quality of characters, places and things e.g. It was an **extravagant** summer day. The **sad, lonely** man had **some sort of effect on me.** I saw a **kind-hearted soul in the shape of a lonely old man** **leaning on the window.** … But the only thing that arrived was a **massive**, **ugly**, **distorted** face.  Choices are more precise or focussed reflecting writer’s attention to distinction and detail, e.g. a kind-hearted soul,I saw **a little smile on his face** |
|  | **Adjusting force**  Simple adverbs of intensity might be used to adjust force, e.g. The giant was **really** angry.  Exclamations, e.g. Look out! | **Adjusting force**  Verbs or adverbs/ adverbials used to soften or increase force or emphasis of descriptions or actions e.g. The leaves **rustled** in the breeze. The pounding footsteps **echoed** through the passageway. The bully’s head **snapped** **forward** **at breakneck speed.**  Exclamations e.g. ‘Let’s go and find it!’ squealed Sophie.  Repetition used for effect, to amplify or to emphasise e.g. I was really, really mad. I yelled and yelled. | **Adjusting force**  Verbs or adverbs/ adverbials used to soften or increase force or emphasis of descriptions or actions, e.g. It was **completely** unexpected. I could **scarcely** believe my eyes. The trees **started to sway fiercely from side to side.**  Emergence of elaboration through simple restatement or exemplification e.g. I was stunned, overwhelmed, unable to move. |
|  | **Dialogue**  Simple dialogue or thoughts of characters, e.g. ‘Will you be my friend?’ The giant thought he was clever. | **Dialogue**  Dialogue adds to the events in the narrative and provides some insights into characters and relationships between characters. | **Dialogue**  Dialogue contributes to the building of the narrative and provides insights into characters and relationships through characters’ words. |
| **Victorian Curriculum Links: English** | Recognise that different types of punctuation, including full stops, question marks and exclamation marks, signal sentences that make statements, ask questions, express emotion or give commands ([VCELA190](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA190))  Understand the use of vocabulary about familiar and new topics and experiment with and begin to make conscious choices of vocabulary to suit audience purpose ([VCELA237](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA237))  Understand that nouns represent people, places, things and ideas and include common, proper, concrete or abstract, and that noun groups/phrases can be expanded using articles and adjectives ([VCELA216](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA216)) | Examine how evaluative language can be more or less forceful ([VCELA272](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA272))  Learn extended and technical vocabulary and ways of expressing opinion including modal verbs and adverbs ([VCELA273](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA273))  Recognise how quotation marks are used in texts to signal dialogue, titles and quoted (direct) speech ([VCELA291](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA291)) | Show how ideas and points of view in texts are conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expression, objective and subjective language, and that these can change according to context ([VCELY317](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY317))  Understand the use of vocabulary to express greater precision of meaning, and know that different words can have different meanings in different contexts ([VCELA325](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA325))  Investigate how complex sentences can be used in a variety of ways to elaborate, extend and explain ideas ([VCELA350](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA350))  Investigate how vocabulary choices, including evaluative language can express shades of meaning, feeling and opinion ([VCELA352](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA352)) |
| **Text structure and organisation** | **Clause/ sentence beginnings**  Clauses usually begin with the subject, mostly referring to the character/s  Adverbial prepositional phrases of time or adverbial clauses used on occasion to begin a sentence to order the events in the narrative, e.g. One day… When it was over…When he got home… | **Clause/ sentence beginnings**  Dependent clauses and prepositional phrases at the beginning of sentences are used to signal a shift in the narrative, to mark a new stage or to sequence e.g. Once he had finished…, At this point …. The next day…  Paragraphs are used | **Clause/ sentence beginnings**  Wider range and variety in dependent clauses and prepositional phrases used at the beginning of sentences to create particular narrative effect e.g. In the enchanted forest on a magical land far, far away, three pixies were sleeping under a tree …After a second of wondering, they ran through the door.  Paragraphs are used |
|  | **Referring words**  Reference through pronouns used to build internal connections but not consistently clear | **Referring words**  Reference through pronouns used to build internal connections | **Referring words**  Reference through pronouns used to build internal connections |
|  | **Connective/ Conjunctions**  Clauses joined mostly by simple coordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, but, so) | **Connective/ Conjunctions**  Text connectives indicating time are used to sequence events chronologically, often at the beginning of the sentence e.g. after that, after a while, then ….  Clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, but, so) and subordinating conjunctions (e.g. when, as, while) | **Connective/ Conjunctions**  Text connectives indicating time are used to sequence events chronologically, often at the beginning of the sentence e.g. after that, after a while, then ….  Clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, but, so) and subordinating conjunctions (e.g. when, as, while) |
| **Victorian Curriculum Links: English** | Understand that texts can take many forms, and that imaginative and informative texts have different purposes ([VCELA141](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA141))  Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements ([VCELY194](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY194))  Understand that different types of texts have identifiable text structure and language features that help the text serve its purpose ([VCELA212](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA212))  Understand that simple connections can be made between ideas by using a compound sentence with two or more clauses usually linked by a coordinating conjunction ([VCELA214](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA214)) | Understand how different types of texts vary in use of language choices, depending on their purpose, audience and context, including tense and types of sentences ([VCELA246](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA246))  Understand that paragraphs are a key organisational feature of written texts ([VCELA259](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA259))  Identify features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text, and understand how texts vary in complexity and technicality depending on the approach to the topic, the purpose and the intended audience ([VCELA277](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA277))  Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts containing key information and supporting details for a widening range of audiences, demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features ([VCELY299](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY299)) | Understand that the starting point of a sentence gives prominence to the message in the text and allows for prediction of how the text will unfold ([VCELA321](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA321))  Create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas and stylistic features of selected authors ([VCELT327](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELT327))  Understand how authors often innovate on text structures and play with language features to achieve particular aesthetic, humorous and persuasive purposes and effects ([VCELA339](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA339))  Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience ([VCELY358](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY358)) |