



## Pre-Workshop Activity

Before you take your seat.....

Summarise your understanding of science fiction in a #.

Please write your responses on the Instagram page in this classroom.

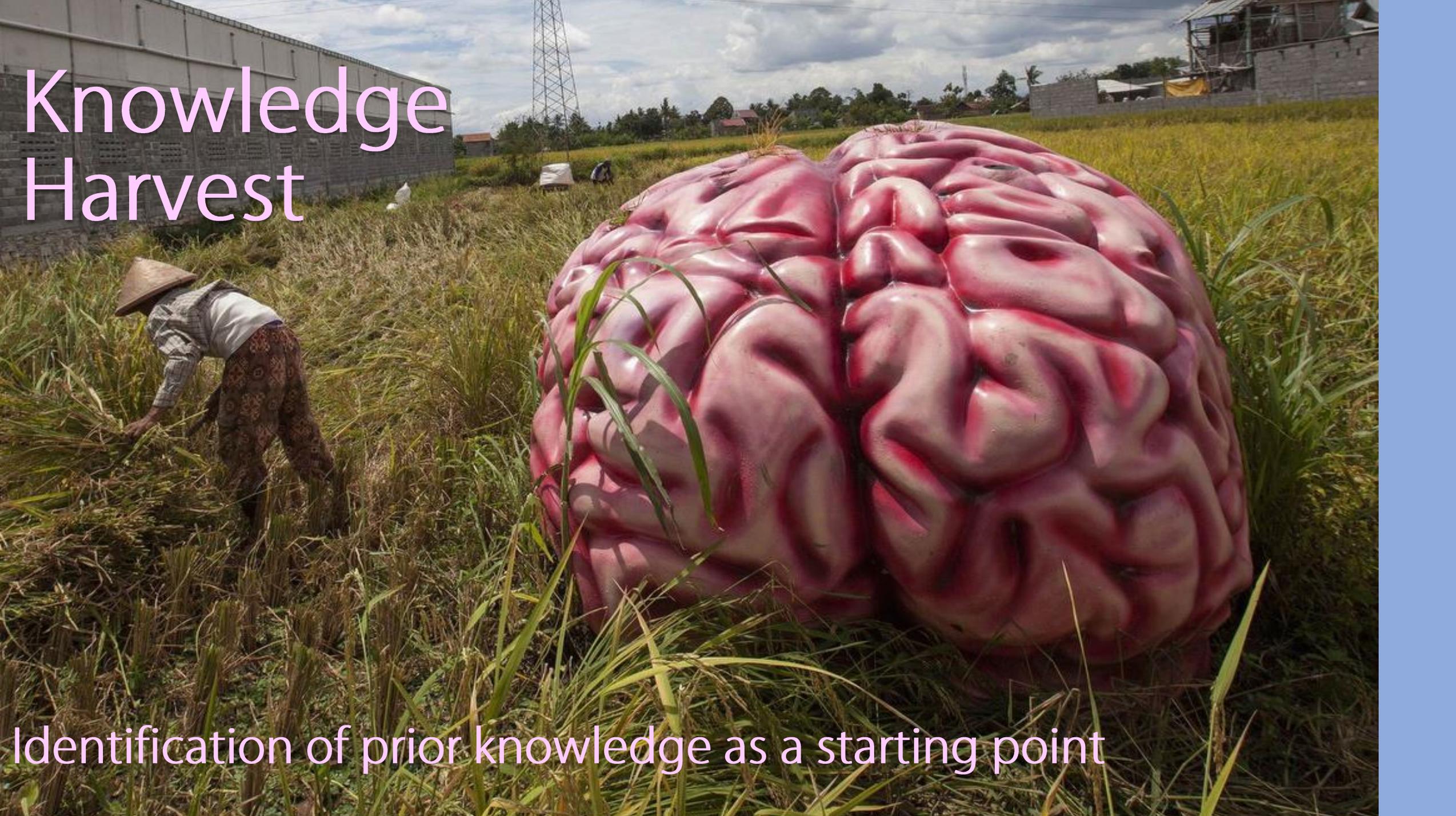
#thetruthisoutthere

#orientationactivity

#knowledgeharvest

#morethanaliens

# Knowledge Harvest

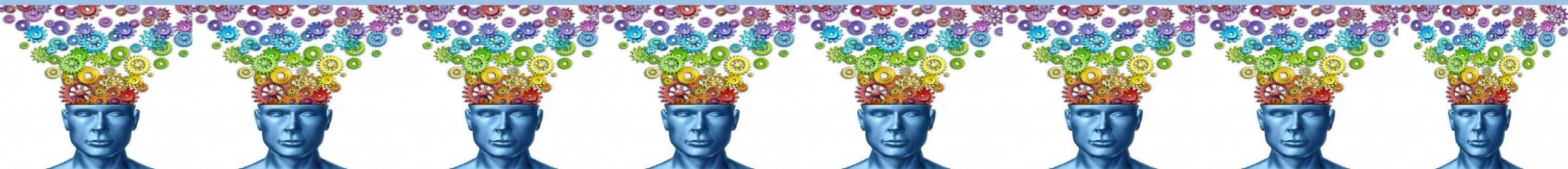
A large, pink, brain-shaped sculpture is the central focus, placed in a rice field. The sculpture is highly detailed, showing the gyri and sulci of a human brain. In the background, a farmer wearing a traditional conical hat is working in the field. The scene is set in a rural area with a long building and a power line tower visible under a cloudy sky.

Identification of prior knowledge as a starting point

# **RE-IMAGINING SCIENCE FICTION**

## **Year 8 – The Language of Creativity**

**Anna Sanderson & Kathryn Emtage**  
**ETAQ Seminar 2, May 2015**



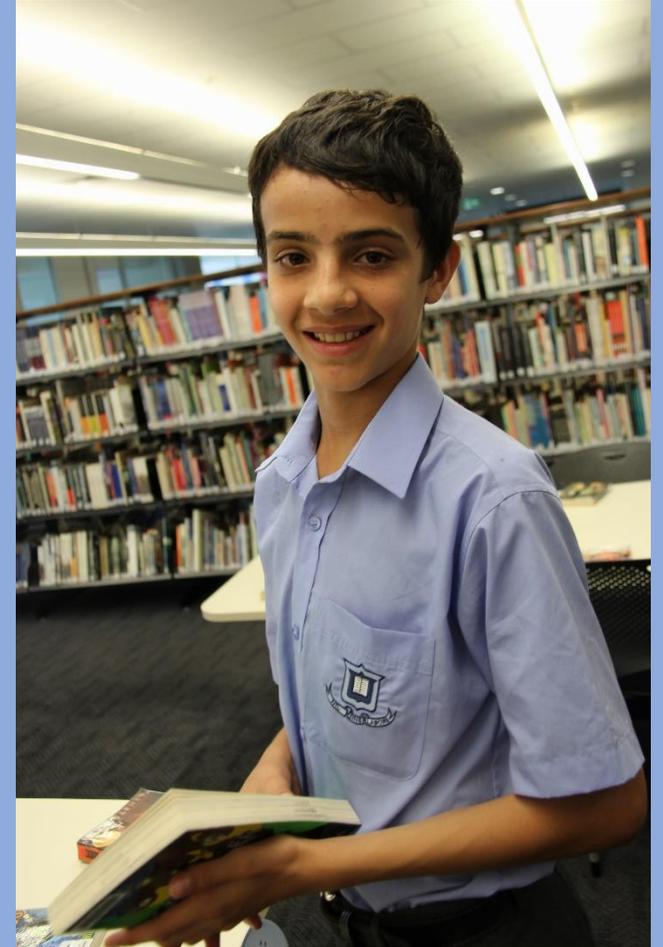
# What we think you would like to know...

- ★ Why did we choose a science fiction focus?
- ★ How did *Z for Zachariah* frame our teaching?
- ★ How was the unit sequenced?
- ★ What were the assessment tasks?
- ★ What learning activities worked well for our students?



## But first some context.....

- 2011 to 2015 signals an intense period of review for BGS English.
- introduction of 1:1 tablet program, AC: E, Year 5, Year 7 — ‘the times they are a changing’.
- English programs 6-10 reviewed with nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of each year level’s programs created new.



# So, why choose science fiction?

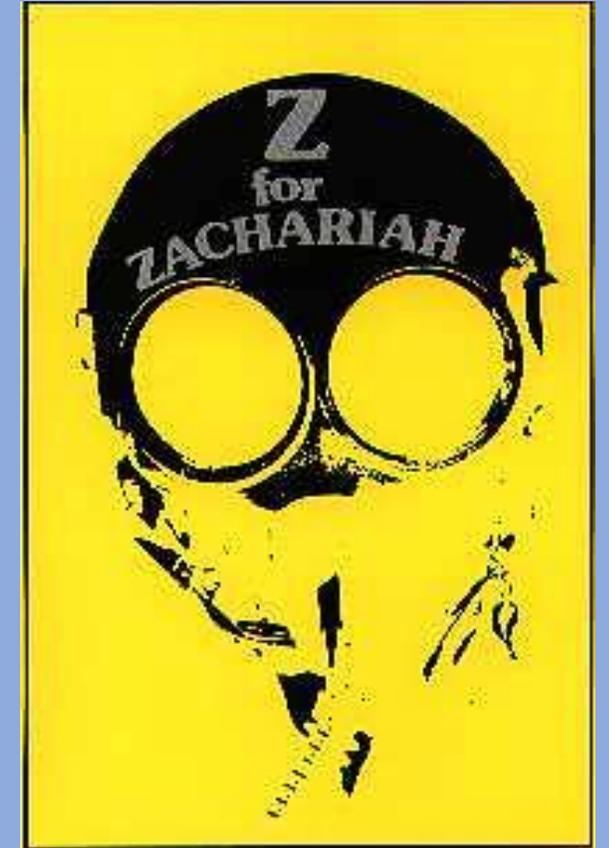
- “Literary bridge” between popular fantasy unit (Year 7) and dystopian literature (Year 10)
- Boys (stereotypically) enjoy imagining and creating alternative worlds
- Science fiction provides a “safe” place for boys to explore more emotionally mature themes
- Questions of morality v. science and an exploration of the human condition allow boys to engage with these ideas at a level appropriate to their cognitive development.



# Why choose *'Z for Zachariah'*?

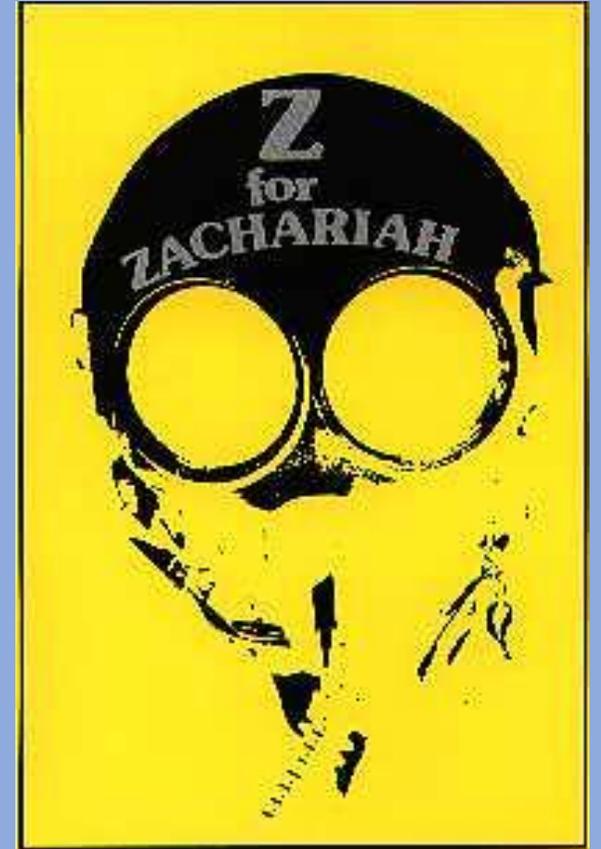
We initially had a few concerns:

- Was the novel dated? (1974)
- Would boys engage with a female protagonist?
- Were some themes too mature for Year 8 boys in Term 1?



# Why choose 'Z for Zachariah?'

- on-going relevance of O'Brien's disturbing themes (sadly, i-Gen can relate to fears about the future of the planet and the impact of nuclear catastrophe)
- hybrid fiction: sci-fi meets horror, meets crime, meets mystery, meets dystopian literature
- ironically, a novel that's 41 years old is 'new' for 13 year olds.



# Links to the Australian Curriculum: English

## Language

Investigate how visual and multimodal texts allude to or draw on other texts or images to enhance and layer meaning (ACELA1548)



Recognise that vocabulary choices contribute to the specificity, abstraction and style of texts (ACELA1547)



## Literature

Interpret and analyse language choices, including sentence patterns, dialogue, imagery and other language features, in short stories, literary essays and plays (ACELT1767)

Create literary texts that draw upon text structures and language features of other texts for particular purposes and effects (ACELT1632)



## Literacy

Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual, and audio features to convey information and ideas (ACELY1725)



Edit for meaning by removing repetition, refining ideas, reordering sentences and adding or substituting words for impact (ACELY1726)



Consolidate a personal handwriting style that is legible, fluent and automatic and supports writing for extended periods (ACELY1727)



# How was the unit shaped?

- Ten weeks
- Two assessment tasks
- Descriptive paragraph, with science fiction elements, written under exam conditions in class
- Short story with science fiction elements
- *Z for Zachariah* used to frame study of science fiction and the writer's craft



# How do we start this unit?

- Capture attention and build interest
- Break from routine classroom activity
- Shared experience → development of a line of enquiry → group reflection
- Introduce themes of discomfort, distortion, identity and control





Welcome to  
Dystopia

**We are**



**watching YOU**

**Control is Strength!**

**Uniformity is Power!**

**Obedience is Success!**

**1. Sit in your assigned seat. From now on, you will be referred to by number.**

**2. Surrender all mobile phones.**

**Your mobile phone will be mined  
for personal data.**

**3. Do not communicate with other students.**

**3.2 This includes eye contact and facial expressions.**

**Your face should be permanently 'blank.'**

**4. Maintain perfect posture.**

**5. Surrender all items that distinguish you from other students.**

**This includes watches and glasses.**

**5. Teachers are never wrong!**

**You will now receive a questionnaire.  
You have 1 minute to read over the  
questions. Do not start until instructed  
to do so.**

- 1. Where do you live?**
- 2. What is your mobile phone number?**
- 3. Where do you sit at break times?**
- 4. Who do you associate with at break times?**
- 5. What jobs do your parents have?**
- 6. Do you have a 'pet name' at home? If yes, what is it?**
- 7. Have you told a lie or been dishonest at all this week? If yes, provide an example?**

**Feeling uncomfortable yet?**

**That's the point.**

# How do we start?

- Deconstructing visuals and unpacking genre

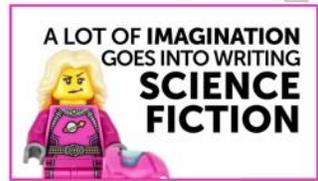
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrusqQ5JftA>

## Defining Science Fiction

Watch this short video and answer the following questions in your workbooks.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrusqQ5JftA>

1. Explain your understanding of the word genre.
2. List some of the features of the science fiction genre as represented in this clip.
3. What do each of these words have to do with science fiction: imagine, impossible, alternate world, advanced technologies, future.



**SCI-FI**  
AUTHORS WRITE ABOUT  
**WHAT IF** AND  
**WHAT**  
**COULD BE**

AND THAT CAN HELP US THINK  
ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING  
**RIGHT NOW**

In pairs, **think flexibly** and consider the above quote. Can you think of how any of these recent science fiction films, that you might be familiar with, deal with issues that are relevant to our society right now? **Choose one or two** that you have seen and prepare to discuss your ideas with the class.



# How do we start?

- **Deconstructing visuals and unpacking genre**

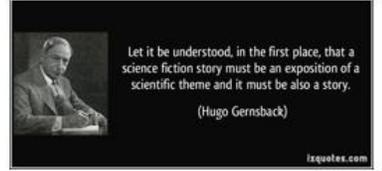
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrFpjh4KF4U> (Dr Who – Tardis)

Your teacher thinks this clip contains science fiction elements. **Defend** their decision to show it to your class as an example of the science fiction genre. (Make a **list** of the science fiction elements you observe.)

## Elements of Science Fiction

### Inductive Reasoning

Your mission is to identify 5 features that are common to the science fiction genre. Use the information in this book, as well as the stimulus that your teacher will guide you through, to define the elements that shape science fiction.



Here are some clues to help you get started. Your teacher will also show you some short clips that will further assist you to classify the 5 elements. Write your initial ideas in your notebooks and then prepare to refine them when you share them with your classmates.

Clips:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYbW1F\\_c9eM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYbW1F_c9eM) (Star Wars Trailer)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL6RRIOZyCM> (I, Robot Trailer)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dg83d4Vzilk> (Peter Parker, Spiderman)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mk9\\_340xqeU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mk9_340xqeU) (Spiderman tries out his superpowers)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrFpjh4KF4U> (Dr Who – Tardis)

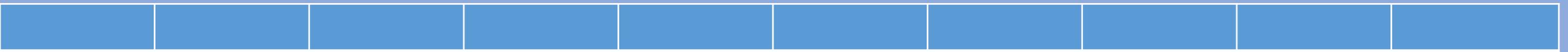
<http://splash.abc.net.au/media/-/m/520033/understanding-science-fiction>



# How do we shift the focus from zombies and aliens?

- Looking at the future
- Looking from different perspectives





# Future news

## **What would happen if...**

The world ran out of oil, coal and gas?

The sun died?

Scientists discovered how to reverse  
death?

Intelligent life was discovered on Mars?

## **What do your speculations say about the way humans behave?**

# POV

I am thinking of ... cyborgs... From the point of view of ...

I think ... (describe the topic from your viewpoint)

A question I have from this viewpoint is ... (ask a question from this viewpoint)

Defence Minister

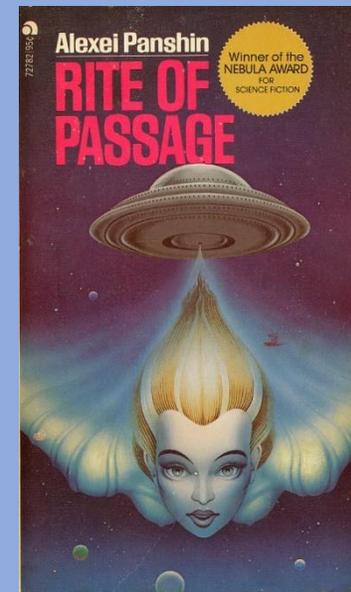
Homemaker

Robotics company executive

Cyborg

# How do we incorporate students' background knowledge?

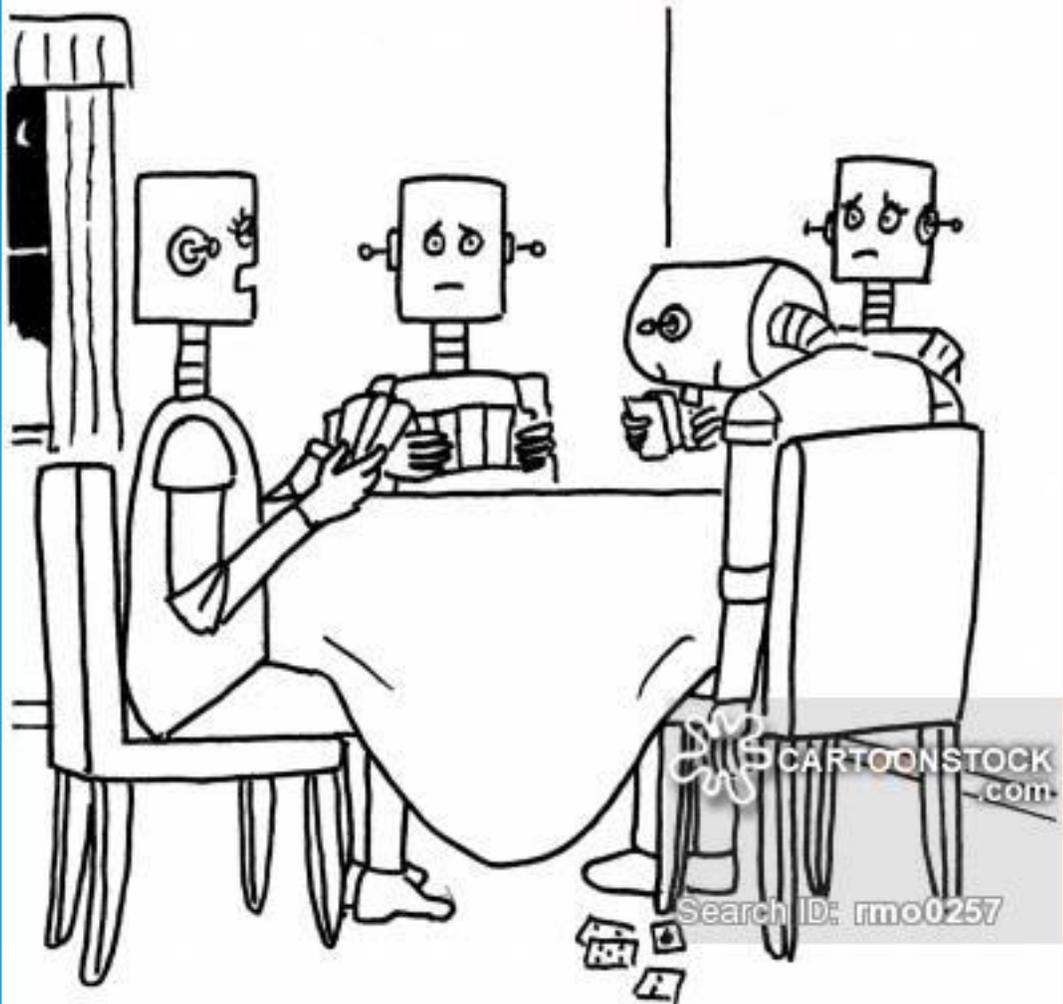
- Realistic and futuristic
- Known and unknown
- Recognisable and foreign
- Familiar and imaginative



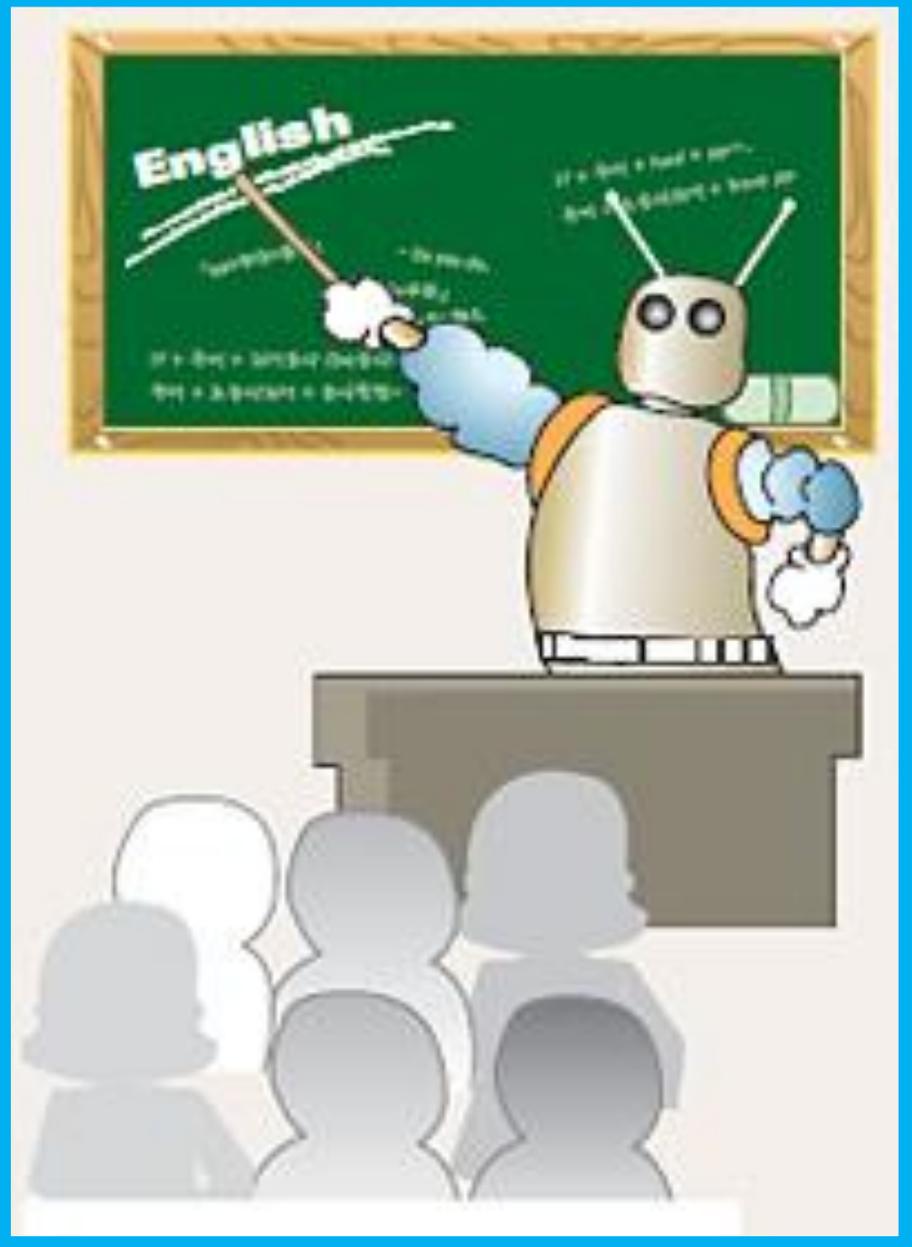
*Science fiction offers writers a unique opportunity to place familiar things in unfamiliar contexts and unfamiliar things in familiar contexts, thereby giving readers fresh insights and perspectives.*

**Alexi Panshin**





"He's not much fun in the evenings -- he's solar powered."



# How do we use the novel meaningfully?

- Let's focus on analysing language choices

*Anyway, the man on the last radio station had said he was going to have to go off; there wasn't any more power. He kept repeating his latitude and longitude, though he was not on a ship, he was on land — somewhere near Boston, Massachusetts. He said some other things, too, that I did not like to hear. And that started me thinking. Suppose a car came over the hill, and I ran out, and whoever was in it got out — suppose he was **crazy**? Or suppose it was someone **mean**, or even **cruel**, and **brutal**? A **murderer**? What could I do? The fact is, the man on the radio, toward the end, sounded **crazy**. He was **afraid**; there were only a few people left where he was and not much food. He said that men should act with dignity even in the face of **death**, that no one was better off than any other. He **pleaded** on the radio, and I knew something **terrible** was happening there. Once he broke down and **cried** on the radio.*

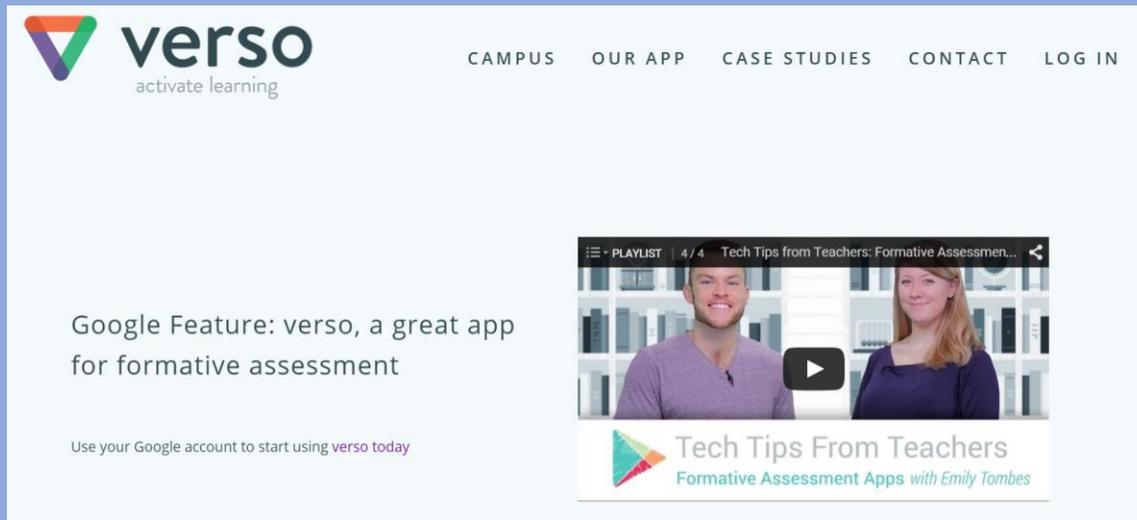
- **Highlight** the words which give this excerpt an ominous tone.
- Underline the clues that suggest there has been a nuclear war.



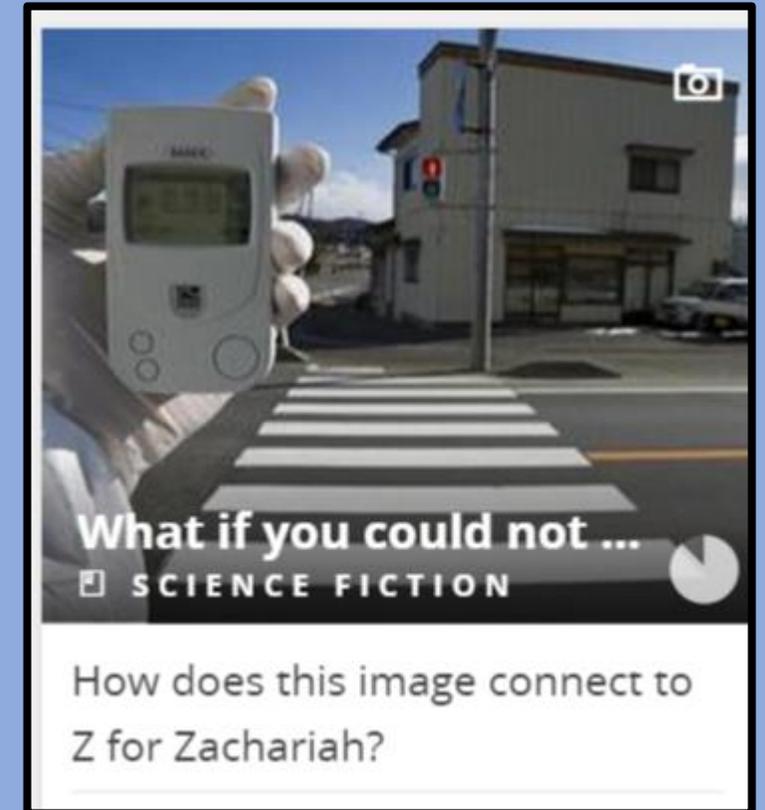
# How do we use the novel meaningfully?

- Focus on describing place

<https://app.versoapp.com/classes>

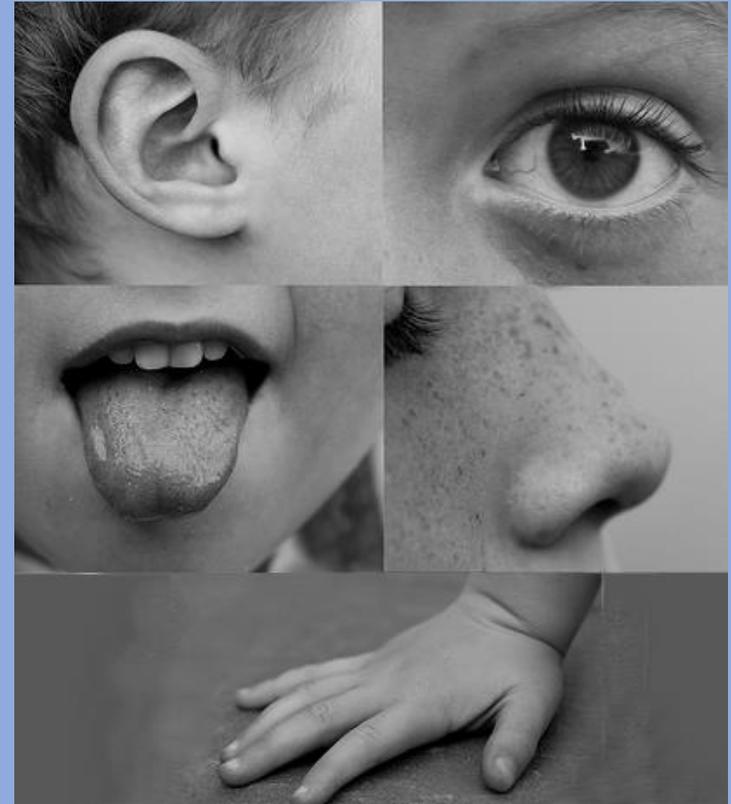


The screenshot shows the Verso app website. The logo is a colorful triangle with the word "verso" and "activate learning" below it. The navigation menu includes "CAMPUS", "OUR APP", "CASE STUDIES", "CONTACT", and "LOG IN". A video player is embedded, showing two people in a library setting. Below the video, there is a link to "Use your Google account to start using verso today" and a "Tech Tips From Teachers" section for "Formative Assessment Apps with Emily Tombes".



# What will we focus on when teaching descriptive writing?

- Gathering data through all senses
- Figurative language
- Specific word choice



# Figurative Description – A familiar place



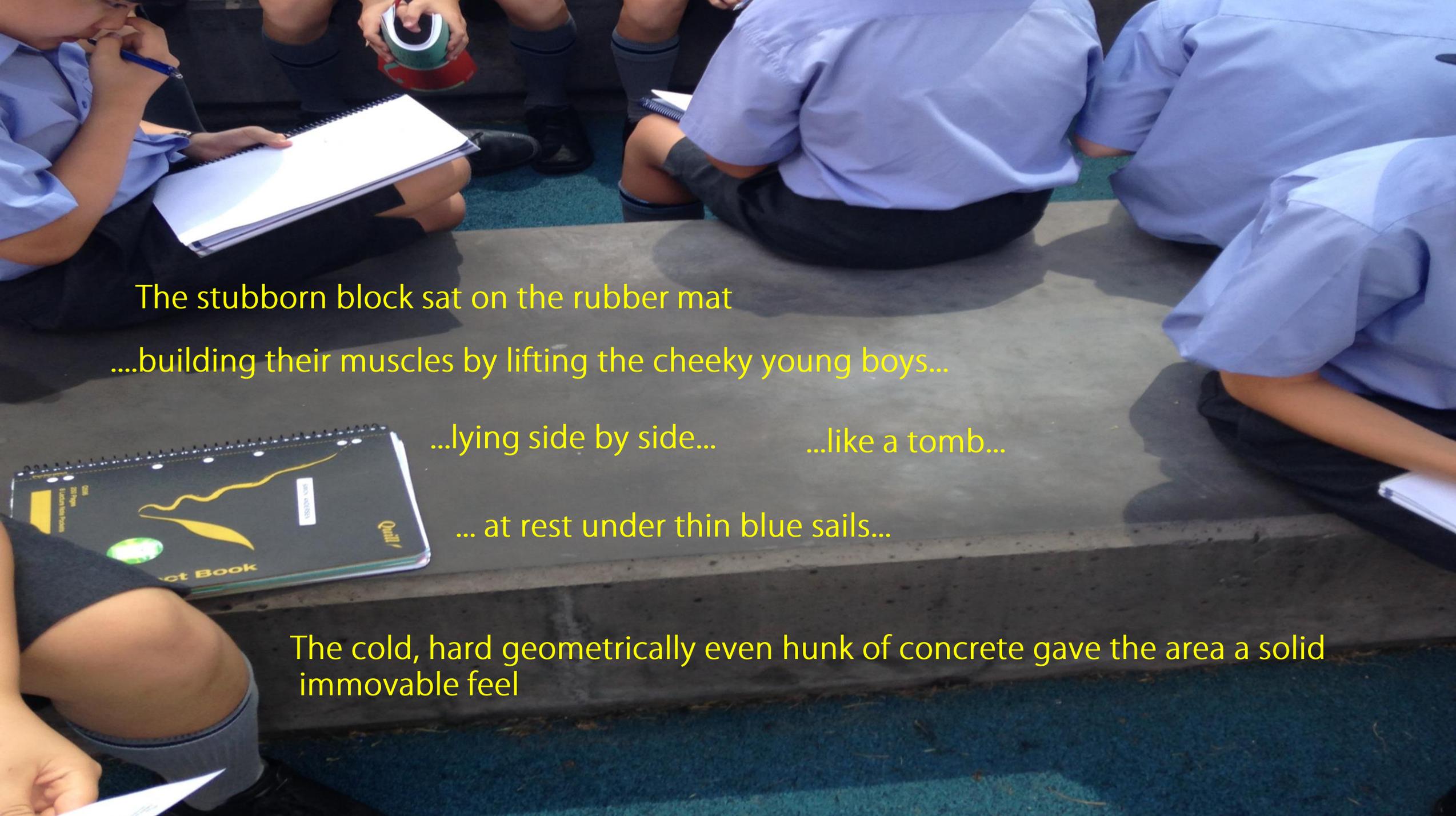
## Figurative Language Scavenger Hunt Toolkit



**Learning target:** To confidently use a range of figurative and descriptive techniques

Item no.	Success criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name it (be precise. Don't say 'tree' say eucalyptus)</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Metaphor</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simile</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personification</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alliteration</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Onomatopoeia</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensory language (hear, see, feel, taste)</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detailed <b>concrete</b> description (paint a picture)</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Powerful verbs</li></ul>



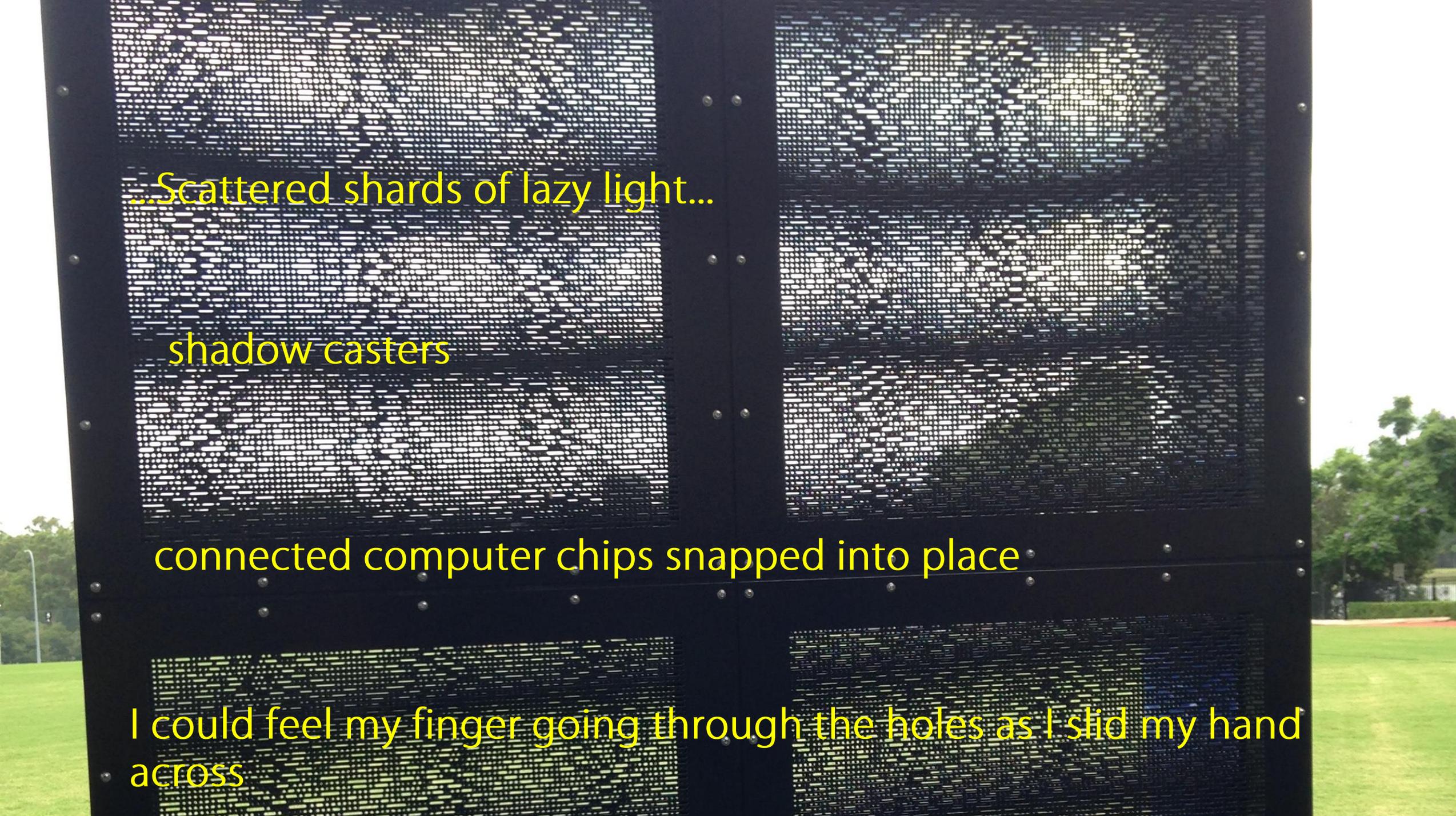


The stubborn block sat on the rubber mat  
...building their muscles by lifting the cheeky young boys...

...lying side by side...      ...like a tomb...

... at rest under thin blue sails...

The cold, hard geometrically even hunk of concrete gave the area a solid  
immovable feel



...Scattered shards of lazy light...

shadow casters

connected computer chips snapped into place

I could feel my finger going through the holes as I slid my hand across

White feathers streaked with earthy browns and greys...

The playground scavenger scouts sandwich samples..

..skeleton feet... bamboo legs

The ibis carried a long Arabian knife



Krkkk!

# What if this marble.....?



## Object Description – The Marble

Pirouetting across the room, the small ball crashes and clangs into the steel legs of the chairs in its way.

It is searching for the perfect shoe to attach itself to; an unsuspecting sock will provide a sanctuary and allow the marble to track the movements of its host. Hidden within the marble's glassy layers is a world of nano-surveillance technology.

A replica eye ball, the marble's curved edges make it the perfect spy camera. If you peer closely you will see what looks like a pupil blinking back at you; a small Jupiter coloured dot that sees beyond the horizon. The cloud coloured glass, that obscures the technology behind the orb, camouflages its potential for menace, playfully disguising the marble as a child's toy.

Like a rock weathered by the eternal currents of the ocean, the camera has no edges. Its view is all encompassing. Little do the boys know, as the marble lodges itself in their socks, that they are being surveyed with intent by a tiny object, no bigger than a fingernail, lurking in their school socks.



Thinking and Communicating with  
Clarity and Precision

out-dated game.

5/5

## Object Description - The Marble

✓ On page

2. Verb 1: Pirouetting: This verb very clearly has been specifically selected in order to portray the image of the marble rotating on a set axis at rapid rate. This is also an effective form of personification.

Verb 2: Camouflages: The word camouflage has been selected and incorporated in this text that something is being cunningly

# Our second task....Short Story with science fiction elements

## Task Description

From reading and discussing *Z for Zachariah* and a range of short stories, you have become familiar with the science fiction genre. In particular, you have learned that the elements of science fiction are merely vehicles to tell stories about the human condition – our strengths, our flaws and our incredible capacity to imagine. Driving all science fiction stories is the fundamental question: *'What if...?'*

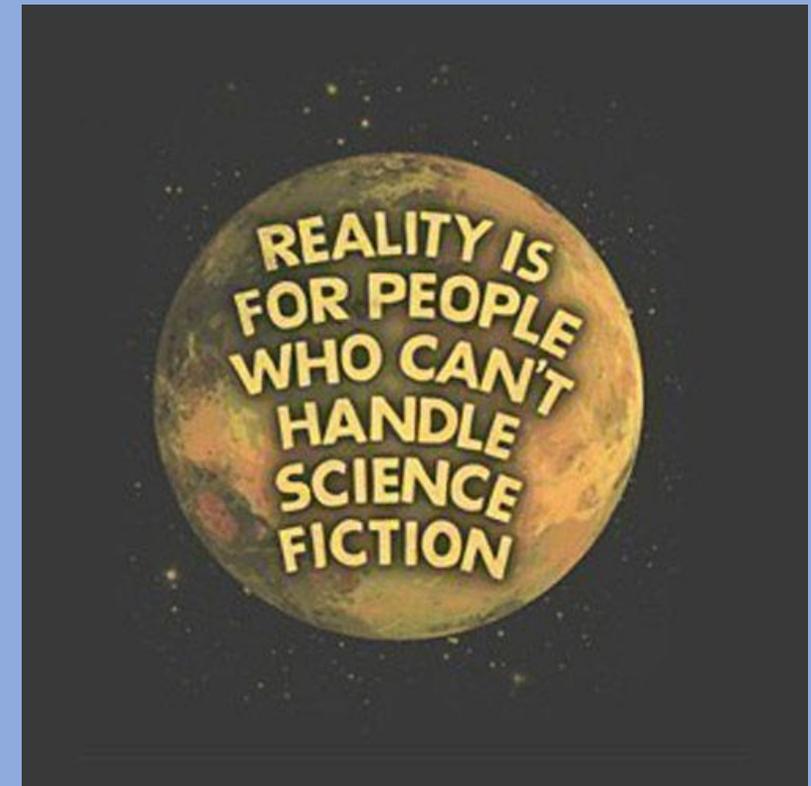
Writers of science fiction stories understand that they will have success in connecting with their reader only if their writing is clear, concise and immediately engaging. What you have learned about descriptive writing will help you to achieve this.

### TASK:

In 500-600 words, write a science fiction short story that makes us think about who we are as humans (and/or what we are capable of doing).

Your aim is to have your story published in the next edition of *Futuredaze: An Anthology of Young Adult Science Fiction*.

You may choose to write your short story from a particular character's point of view (first person) or use third person narrator (limited or omniscient).



# How do we help our students to develop credible ideas?

## Story seeds

### STORY SEEDS



Scared of that blank piece of paper?  
Looking for a way to cultivate successful science fiction story ideas?

The news media can help!

The news media offers a veritable smorgasbord of potential science fiction story ideas. Just think how many scientific and technical advancements are reported on each year.

Your job is to find and share a news story that could be used as science fiction 'story seed'. As a class we will discuss, ask questions and develop potential stories. We will use the templates below. The ideas shown as an example, 'grew' from a 'story seed' about bionic hearts. It can be found at:  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-07/biologic-heart-breakthrough-scientist-transplant-device-in-cheep/4288124>



Story seed	Character/s	Setting	Plot	Problem	Theme / big questions
Bionic heart	Patient and surgeon	Future Operating room	Surgeon is performing an operation	Will the patient survive?	What does it mean to be human? What is a machine? What is a hybrid – person or machine?

**AN Italian surgeon is set to become the first in the world to transplant a human head on to a donor body.**

The pioneering operation by Dr Sergio Canavero is to be carried out on a 30-year-old computer scientist who is suffering from a fatal muscle wasting disease.

Valery Spiridonov has admitted that the prospect of going through with the operation is terrifying.

“I am afraid, but what people don’t really understand is I don’t really have many choices.

“If I don’t try this out my fate will be very sad. With every year my situation is getting worse.”

The man from Russia, who is battling the rare genetic Werdnig-Hoffman muscle wasting disease, added: “My decision is final and I do not plan to change my mind.”



Last chance ... Spiridonov says he has no other option. Picture: Australscope Source: australscope

# Where do stories come from?

- What if a skinny person got a fat body?
- What if a fat person got a skinny body?
- What if you got an old body? A younger body?  
Could you live forever?
- What if you got a body of another race? Would your identity change? How about gender?
- Is the brain you?
- Does struggle bring development? Would humanity lose out?
- Would you rather have limited function and be entirely you?
- What does it mean to be human?



# Artist creates faces from DNA left in public

By Natalie Angley, CNN  
Updated 2010 GMT (0310 HKT) September 4, 2013



**Is your TV spying on YOU? It sounds like science fiction but many new TVs can watch you - telling advertisers your favourite shows or even filming you on the sofa. And there's no off switch!**

By GUY ADAMS FOR THE DAILY MAIL  
PUBLISHED: 12:37 EST, 26 November 2013 | UPDATED: 20:37 EST, 26 November 2013



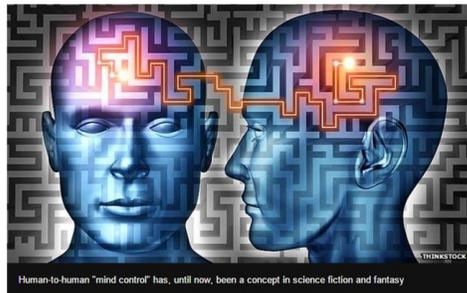
368  
View comments

You are sitting in bed in your pyjamas, drinking a c watching late-night television. Pillow talk is exchar

**Are we close to making human 'mind control' a reality?**

By Michael Millar  
BBC Business News

© 10 September 2013 | Business



Human-to-human "mind control" has, until now, been a concept in science fiction and fantasy

## Worm 'Brain' Uploaded Into Lego Robot

BY JASON DORRIER ON DEC 15, 2014 | ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, FEATURED, TECH 16,789 11

Can a digitally simulated brain on a computer perform tasks just like the real thing?

For simple commands, the answer, it would seem, is yes it can. Researchers at the [OpenWorm](#) project recently hooked a simulated worm brain to a wheeled robot. Without being explicitly programmed to do so, the robot moved back and forth and avoided objects—driven only by the interplay of external stimuli and digital neurons.



## China cloning on an 'industrial scale'

David Shukman  
Science editor

© 14 January 2014 | Science & Environment 302



The cloning methods may not be novel - but the application of mass production is

You hear the squeals of the pigs long before reaching a set of long buildings set in rolling hills in southern China.

Feeding time produces a frenzy as the animals strain against the railings around their pens. But this is no ordinary farm.

Ruin by a fast-growing company called RGI this

More from David

Chernobyl: Containing the world's worst nuclear accident

Healthy dose of hope for one-use syringes

# Brisbane bionic heart set to save lives - while missing a beat

March 10, 2015

Be the first to comment ☆ Read later

Jorge Branco

Tweet 109 Share 1.8k Share 45 Pin it submit

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BiVACOR Inc's bionic heart, created in Houston, Texas, after critical early development in Brisbane. Photo: supplied

A ground-breaking bionic heart without a pulse is hoped to be saving lives within three years.

The world-first device was designed by Brisbane engineer Dr Daniel Timms, who instigated the project in 2001 while studying at the Queensland University of Technology.

h

# STORY PLANS

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
- Ben Stone Ethiopia	Travelled to Ethiopia to find which jaw	They found out that the jaw was part of an alien	The alien could bring in new from his planet and the aliens are very aggressive.	

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
	for following the completion the change is the result is that all the people are going to be angry and the planet is going to be destroyed			

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
Ben Stone	Investigates the crime scene and finds some DNA	Investigates the crime scene and finds some DNA	Ben Stone	Ben Stone goes to jail.

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
Ben Stone	Investigates the crime scene and finds some DNA	Investigates the crime scene and finds some DNA	Ben Stone	Ben Stone goes to jail.

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
Went on a small boat	To see how Amazon are this	Amazon are this	Amazon are this	Amazon are this

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
See you get a new baby (quarry)	See is driving and gets hit by a car	See get his brain partly injured and can't walk with new	See is a new baby	See is a new baby

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
Introduces (crusher)	Crusher does and steals Time machine. He gets stuck in time	Crusher does and steals Time machine. He gets stuck in time	Crusher does and steals Time machine. He gets stuck in time	Crusher does and steals Time machine. He gets stuck in time

But they meet a new survivor

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
captured at jewelry	In police station but	captured at jewelry	captured at jewelry	captured at jewelry

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
Ben getting home				

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
Ben getting home				

CHARACTER/S	SETTING	PROBLEM	GOAL
Control	Cell/Police station	Ben (in jail)	Ben will have to get out

CHARACTER/S	SETTING	PROBLEM	GOAL
James (scientist)	on an island	re-creating dinosaurs	bring out a dinosaur

ORIENTATION	ELABORATION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
Ray	Ray struggles	Ray struggles	Ray struggles	Ray struggles

CHARACTER/S	SETTING	PROBLEM	GOAL
Pilot: Sam, Edward, Salina, Luca	Berthold	The plane is broken and they are waiting to be rescued	They are waiting to be rescued

Story seed	Character/s	Setting	Plot	Problem	Theme / big questions
Bionic heart	Patient and surgeon	Future Operating room	Surgeon is performing an operation	Will the patient survive?	What does it mean to be human? What is a machine? What is a hybrid – person or machine?

Story seed	Orientation	Elaboration	Complication	Climax	Resolution
Bionic heart	Heart transplant is in progress	Heart and operation are described in detail	Race against the clock to get the heart in on time before it becomes nonviable	Time is running out but (just in time) the heart is successfully transplanted	It is revealed that the patient is a machine. He will live but what kind of life will he have?

# What aspects of genre do we focus on?

## Orientations



*It had been **raining** for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with **rain**, with the **drum and gush of water**, with the **sweet crystal fall** of showers and the **concussion of storms** so heavy that tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been **crushed** under the **rain** and grown up a thousand times to be **crushed** again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus, and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a **raining** world to set up civilization and live out their lives.*

*Bradbury, R. (1954) "All Summer in a Day"*

1. Identify examples of figurative language. Choose two and explain how you think they contribute to the orientation.
2. Highlight two verbs that you consider to be powerful. Why did you choose these?
3. What is your opinion of the story's opening, complex sentence? Why might Ray Bradbury have chosen such a sentence?
4. What is your opinion of this paragraph?
5. After reading this opening, what questions would you like answered?

# How do we continue to authentically engage with the novel?

## Narrator's Voice and Point of View

### Narrative Point of View

*Z for Zachariah* is narrated by Ann who tells her story from a first person point of view.



1. How do you know the story is told from this point of view?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of telling a story from a first person point of view?

**Explain** what we learn about Ann's character in the following excerpts. Use the sentence starters listed underneath each quote to help you gather your ideas.

- *Dig up the vegetable garden, everything that was coming up, flatten it, and core it with dead leaves. It does not show at all. I hated that the worst, because everything was growing so well.*

This quote reveals that Ann is.....

Readers understand that....



# Hypotheticals – Imagining and Creating

## Viewing

What if a nuclear bomb was detonated over Brisbane?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xWdRNZIXlc>



# Hypotheticals – Imagining and Creating

## Imagining

- The disused Brisbane bunker.
- A survivors' group.
- What will you bring?
- Defend your choices.

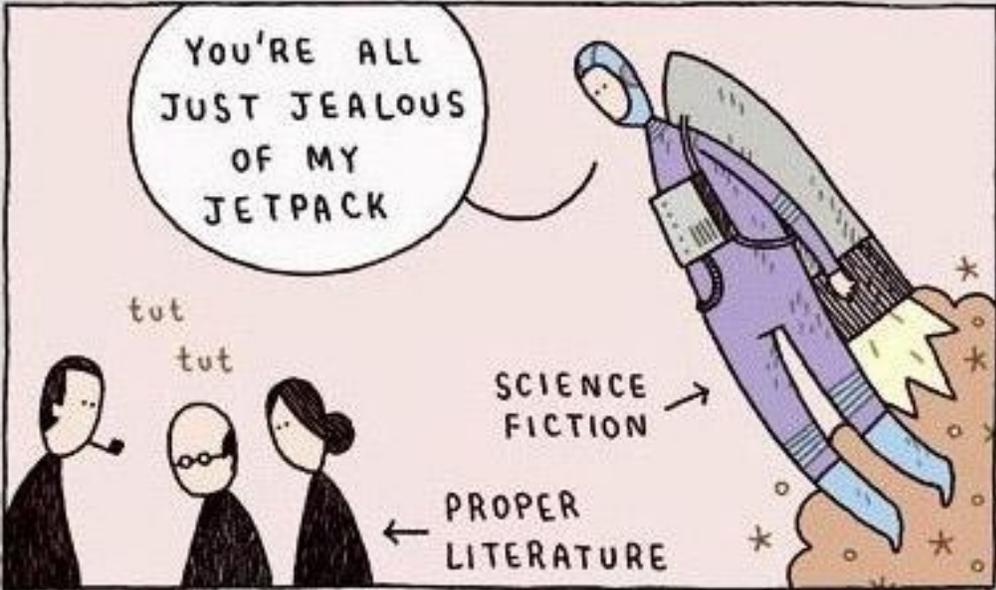
### Creating

Imagine that a nuclear bomb has been detonated in Brisbane and only small groups of people are left alive in the city. Brainstorm your answers to these ideas in the box underneath the following questions:

1. What resources would become most valuable and why?
2. What areas of the city would be the safest?
3. Who or what would pose the biggest threat to your safety?
4. How would you get clean food and water?
5. What would this mean for hygiene and sanitation?
6. Where would you try to go?



# Reflections



Science fiction is the most important literature in the history of the world, because it's the history of ideas, the history of our civilization birthing itself... Science fiction is central to everything we've ever done, and people who make fun of science fiction writers don't know what they're talking about.

(Ray Bradbury)

izquotes.com



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