



## TEXT-ANALYST FOCUS QUESTIONS

### Text-Analyst (Critical)

- What kind of person, with what interests and values, produced this text?
- What are the origins of this text?
- What is the text trying to make me believe or do?
- What beliefs and positions are dominant in the text?
- What beliefs and positions are silenced or absent?
- What do I think about the way this text presents these ideas, and what alternatives are there?
- Having critically examined this text, what action am I going to take?

## QUESTIONS TO DEVELOP ORAL AND WRITTEN RESPONSES

### Text-Analyst (Critical)

Summarises findings and trades ideas with other groups

- Is the text fair?
- What would the text be like if the main characters were girls rather than boys and vice versa? Consider different race and cultural background too.
- How would the text be different if told from another viewpoint?
- How would the text be different if told in another time or place, eg. 2100 or 1900
- Why do you think the author chose this title?
- Think about why the author chose particular words and phrases?
- Are there stereotypes in the text?
- Who does the text favour or represent?
- Who does the text reject or silence?
- How does this text claim authority? (consider language, structure and content)
- Who is allowed to speak? Who is quoted?
- What kind of view of the world is being promoted in and by this text?
- What kind of person created this text?
- What is this text trying to do to me?
- Which voices, positions and interests are at play?
- Which are silent or absent?
- Who was the target audience for this text? What features of the text tell you?
- What do you think the author's reasons are for writing the text in this way?
- Why did the author describe this character in the way he/she did?
- Would the text work without the photographs?
- Where might the author have found that information?
- What do you think the author thinks about...?
- Who do you think the author is writing this text for?
- What message is the author trying to tell you?
- How does the author feel about...? Why?
- How do you feel about...? Why?
- Do you think the author is right?
- Are all articles printed in magazines, on the Internet, on TV- true or unbiased? How would the reader know?

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

### Text-Analyst (Critical)

- How can I explicitly teach the skills so that students use criteria when they select resources?
- How can I teach students critical literacy skills
- How can I teach students to critically reflect on their own work?

*Adapted from Fitzgerald State School Learning Development Centre – Literacy.  
Literate Futures: Reading p.36*

### Text-Analyst (Critical)

#### ACTIVITIES:

#### INTERROGATING TEXTS:

*Explicitly teach ways to recognise, critique and disrupt texts*

## KNOWLEDGE: (Understanding that)

- Texts are crafted according to the views and interests of the author
- Texts are not neutral, but represent particular views that can be challenged
- Different texts may present the same topics or themes differently
- Readers interpretation of texts differ
- Information or ideas are expressed to influence a reader's, listener's or viewer's perception
- Knowledge, values and practices of groups can be stereotyped in texts
- People, places, events and things can be represented in positive or negative ways by making choices in the resources
- Writers select language to show that some people have more authority than others, know each other better than others or like each other more than others



### 1. PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE, MULTIPLE OR RESISTANT READINGS:

- ☞ Compare and contrast different versions of the same news item, historic event, film, or music review
- ☞ Provide multiple interpretations of the same topic

### 2. DISRUPT THE TEXT:

- ☞ Change words, rewrite sections
- ☞ Changing pronouns that relate to a particular gender in a passage of text, or changing the culture or age of one of the characters
- ☞ Constructing a different outcome, so students realise that endings are constructed
- ☞ Change the gender of the character and discuss how this changes the story
- ☞ Draw alternative versions of stereotypes such as princes, villains and heroes

### 3. ROLE PLAY/ROLE REVERSAL:

- ☞ Use role play where students experience what it feels like to take on someone else's role; what it feels like to be marginalised
- ☞ Retell a story from a different viewpoint

### 4. VALUES CLARIFICATION:

- ☞ Identify personal values about a topic before reading and compare them with values reflected in the text
- ☞ Have students agree/disagree with the author and then justify their point of view
- ☞ Analyse, identify and talk about opinions, bias and point of view in texts

### 5. ESTABLISHING DOMINANT READING/CONTENT, LANGUAGE, TECHNIQUES USED:

- ☞ Attend to the use of language (eg. choice of words, grammatical structures, overall organization, layout and visual images) to help understand why texts are interpreted in particular ways
- ☞ Analyse devices used in advertisements and other persuasive texts
- ☞ Discuss ways texts perpetuate stereotypes and represent gender or racial issues
- ☞ Examine popular texts. Decide who the audience is likely to be and say why
- ☞ Differentiate the emotive effects and cultural meanings of images and symbols in commercial advertising
- ☞ Use questions that encourage students to think beyond the literal level eg. inferring and evaluating

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- Encourage children to discuss whether the text provides an accurate representation of their world. Eg. Who is represented in this text? Who is left out? How is subject matter represented? How the choice made in this portrayal influences the reader?
  - Foster children's awareness that a reader's contribution to the text is as critical as the writer's. Take one small passage or story, and , after silent and reflective reading, encourage a range of children to offer their personal interpretations of the text. Value all responses and encourage further discussion. Make sure you do not accept one response as the 'right' answer.
  - Encourage children to make comparisons with other texts. Read selections of texts or poems that are related in some way, eg. same author, form, character, style
  - Talk about roles, assumptions and stereotypes. Encourage critical thinking.
  - Experience with children the understanding that their view of the world may be different from the author's. Continue to encourage children to stand back from a text and consider its impact on them as readers; encourage them to talk about how they deal with that impact.
  - Encourage children to agree/disagree with the author and justify their point of view.
  - Involve children in discussions that encourage them to think beyond the literal level to...
  - ☞ The inferential level eg. 'What do mothers in the Mothers' Day catalogues appear to like and do?'
  - ☞ The evaluative level eg. 'Does this match with our knowledge of what our mothers like and do?'
  - Focus on the emotive quality of words
  - Talk about roles, assumptions and stereotypes
  - Develop "Fact and Opinion" charts. Children record facts from the text and then add their own opinions on those fact

## QUESTIONS FOR TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PURPOSE</b></p>	<p>Why did the author produce this text? That is, what objectives might the author have had in the production and distribution of his or her text?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Make a list of possible reasons/objectives</li> <li>☞ Review the text</li> <li>☞ Match up any evidence you can locate in the text that supports or challenges your interpretation of the text objectives or goals</li> <li>☞ Reflect on the process just completed. Using a graphic organiser, write a clear statement about what you feel the main agenda of the author is and list any specific evidence that supports your interpretation of the text.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AUTHOR</b></p>	<p>Who produced this text? That is, how might you represent the personality and socio-cultural standpoint of the author?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Create a profile of what you feel is the author's character, background, and interests</li> <li>☞ Review the text</li> <li>☞ Using a graphic organiser, list any specific evidence that challenges or supports your profile</li> <li>☞ Modify your profile to match the specific evidence listed.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AUDIENCE</b></p>	<p>For whom is this text written? That is, who, on the basis of the subject matter, written and visual elements used, tone, and context in which it is to be read appears to be the intended audience for this text?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ List one or more intended audiences for this text</li> <li>☞ Write a statement as to why you would expect such an audience to be interested in the text</li> <li>☞ Review the text</li> <li>☞ List any specific evidence that challenges or supports your understandings about the audience's</li> <li>☞ Reflect on the process just completed. Using specific evidence modify your list of the intended audience/s if necessary.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEANS</b></p>	<p>How does the author attempt to persuade and move the reader? That is, what sorts of evidence (anecdotes, personal observations, facts, visuals, sound etc) and figurative devices (analogies, hyperboles, metaphors and so on) does the author employ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ List the types of evidence and figurative devices you feel the author has employed in the text</li> <li>☞ Against each item on the list note the specific page of the magazine or book, scene in the film, segment of radio report etc. where this occurs</li> <li>☞ Identify one or more instance in which the author makes a claim for which he could not possibly have the evidence (for eg, a report on the feelings of a particular person). If you find such an instance, consider why the author might have included this claim.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTEXT</b></p>	<p>When and where was the text produced? That is, in what social, political and cultural context was this text produced?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ List some of the salient features of the context in which the text was produced</li> <li>☞ Reflect on your views of purpose, author, audience and means</li> <li>☞ Review the text</li> <li>☞ Identify the specific evidence in the text that suggests the impact of one or more of these trends or themes on the construction of the text?</li> </ul>

## Changing the Questions

### TEXT ANALYST – CRITICAL THINKING

Going beyond personal response questions such as, “What did you think of the story?” “What part did you like best?”, “Who was your favourite character?”, to *critical questions* such as:

- ☞ When was the text developed? Who wrote or developed it? For what purpose?
- ☞ What is the subject matter or topic? Why might the author have written this text?
- ☞ Who is the target audience? Who would be most likely to read this text?
- ☞ What kind of reality is presented? What does the author want us to *know* (about the world and the people in it)? Does this ‘fit’ with what *you* believe about the world and about people? Why/why not?
- ☞ What kind of character (adult, child, mother, father, boy, girl, wolf, witch, stepmother, dinosaur etc) has the author constructed? How could this character have been constructed differently?
- ☞ What is the text trying to make you think or feel? Do you agree with the point of view offered in the text?
- ☞ How does the author use language and pictures to position you to agree with the ideas in the text? What do the pictures suggest? What do the words suggest? Does this ‘match’ what *you* know (about the world and about people)? Why/why not?
- ☞ How could these messages be challenged?
- ☞ What people, events, points of view might have been left out of the text? Why?
- ☞ How could we re-write this text so that it ‘matches’ more closely all of our experiences and fits more effectively with what we know about the world and about people?
- ☞ How are your thoughts and feelings about the text influenced by: other texts that you have read? Your background? Your past experiences? Your race? Your gender? Etc
- ☞ What kind of values, attitudes and beliefs are represented? What worldview and values does the author assume that a reader holds? How do you know?
- ☞ How does the text represent age, culture, gender? Have assumptions been made?
- ☞ How do you interpret this particular part of the text?
- ☞ What other readings of this part of the text are possible? Who might read this text differently from you? Why?
- ☞ Who would feel ‘left out’ in this text and why; and is it a problem? Who would find that the claims made in this text clash with their own values, beliefs or experiences?
- ☞ How is the reader ‘positioned’ in relation to the author (eg. as a friend, as an opponent, as someone needs to be persuaded, as invisible, as someone who agrees with the author’s views)?



## Text Analyst – Visual Texts

### **MOVIES**

#### **What kind of a person created this text?**

- Who made this film? Why do you think the producer made this film? Did he/she change the story line (if originally a book?)

#### **What is this text trying to do to me?**

- Did the director achieve what he/she set out to do?

#### **Which voices, positions and interests are at play?**

- At what audience was the film aimed?
- Discuss the differences between boys' and girls' identification with the characters (actors) and their different criteria for rating
- Do you like the way the characters were portrayed in this movie?

#### **Which are silent or absent?**

- Who/what was left out of this movie?
- From whose point of view was the story told?
- Who might not understand this movie?
- Who might not like this movie?
- Who might find this movie disturbing/offensive/entertaining/amusing?

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

#### **What kind of person created this text?**

- Who created this photo? Why do you think the photographer took this shot?

#### **What is this text trying to do to me?**

- For whom was the text created?
- What do the visual images try to do?
- What does the photographer want you to know, feel, think and act?

#### **Which voices, positions and interests are at play?**

- Is there a hidden purpose in the creation of this text?
- Do the features of the text indicate an intended audience?
- How many interpretations of the text are possible?
- What other viewpoints or versions could be constructed? How does the text depict age/gender/culture/social status?

#### **Which are silent and absent?**

- Who appears in the photo?
- Who is missing from the photo? Why?
- Who may not understand this photo?

### **TELEVISION COMMERCIALS**

#### **What kind of person created this text?**

- Who makes TV commercials? On what authority do they advertise this product? Can anyone advertise on TV?

#### **What is this text trying to do to me?**

- Who does the creator want me to believe?
- **Which voices, positions and interests are at play?**
- Compare advertisements aimed at girls and women with those aimed at men and boys. Consider colour, camera angles, lighting, music, pacing, camera shots, speech, the language used (grammar and vocab)

#### **What views are being put forward?**

- Which audience would this advertisement appeal to most?
- What does the product promise to do?
- Is there evidence of stereotyping? If so, how?
- Who pays the cost of advertising?

#### **Which are silent and absent?**

- What is the hidden, indirect message?
- What social class, gender, age or racial group is not represented in this commercial?
- Is anyone/anything missing from the text?

### **PICTURE BOOKS**

#### **What kind of person created this text?**

- Who has produced this text? Who is telling the story?

#### **What is this text trying to do to me?**

- For whom was the text created?
- What do the visual images try to do?
- What does the author/illustrator want you to know, feel, think and act?

#### **Which voices, positions and interests are at play?**

- Is there a hidden purpose in the creation of this text?
- Do the features of the text indicate an intended audience?
- How many interpretations of the text are possible?
- What other viewpoints or versions could be constructed? How does the text depict age/gender/culture/social status?

#### **Which are silent and absent?**

- Who appears in the text?
- Who is missing from the text? Why?
- Who may not understand this text?



## Text Analyst – Visual Texts

### **ADVERTISEMENTS**

#### **What kind of person created this text?**

- Who created the advertisement? Who pays for the advertisement?
- What literacy skills would be needed to make a magazine/newspaper advertisement, a billboard, a sales catalogue?

#### **What is this text trying to do to me?**

- Who is the advertising aimed at? How can you tell? Which part is the viewer likely to take away with them to think about?
- Why should I buy this product?
- How do you know the claims about the product are true?

#### **Which voices, positions and interests are at play?**

- Is there evidence of stereotyping? If so, how?
- Which audience would this advertisement appeal to most?
- How is age/families/gender/culture depicted in the advertisement?
- Is there evidence of gender balance?

#### **Which are silent and absent?**

- Do you think the words and images are portraying the truth?
- Are the claims made by this advertisement believable?
- Is anything missing from the text?

### **MULTIMEDIA**

#### **What kind of person created this text?**

- Who created this text?
- What expertise or authority did the creator of the site/CD-ROM have?

#### **What is the text trying to do to me?**

- How truthful is the information presented?
- For what purpose was the site created?
- How do I feel about the information presented?

#### **Which voices, positions and interests are at play?**

- Are the images biased in any way?
- Which cultural/social group is being represented?

#### **Which are silent and absent?**

- Who/what is missing from the information?

### **INFORMATION TEXTS**

#### **What kind of person created this text?**

- Who created this text? Do they have authority to create this text?

#### **What is the text trying to do to me?**

- Identify ways in which the visual features might influence a certain viewer.

#### **Which voices, positions and interests are at play?**

- Identify how visual features depict age, gender and culture

#### **Which are silent and absent?**

- What is missing from the information? Identify ways in which the visual features might influence/disadvantage a certain viewer
- Does the information represent only one point of view?
- Do you believe the information to be true?
- Discover what is meant when certain visual features are used – the author's viewpoint
- Consider how different groups of students might interpret a visual feature in a different way in different contexts.
- Is the information trivialised/made more appealing by the use of cartoon drawings?