

Alex Ristof

I could hardly believe that it all came down to this.

One ... final ... choice.

But it was too simple – not at all what I'd come to expect from the Professor. Had I finally proven myself? I laughed in spite of my aching bones. Nope. He'd never release his precious blueprint so easily. Not when it could save so many and ruin him forever.

A drop of sweat rolled down my neck, followed by another, escaping the sticky nest of hair plastered to my scalp. I barely flinched as the rivulets raced down my spine. Considering what I'd been through, this was like the arrival of a blowfly after being devoured by mosquitoes.

I shuddered at the memory of the murky mud slurping around my legs as I waded through that last tunnel. It was so thick with darkness, I'd wondered if I'd ever emerge. The incessant biting of my skin as water-beasts surrounded me was too foul a feeling to dwell on. I dragged myself back to the present.

It all came down to this. Not a fight or an ambush. Not a battle or a trap. But a choice.

The Professor's blueprint was finally in front of me, encased in a glass chest with a fluorescent pink force field pulsating powerfully around the chest's razor-sharp edges. Nearby lay a console, with two clearly labelled buttons.

With a closer look I discovered a message: *Your life or the formula, Georgina. You choose.*

This had to be a trap.

Who would come after me if I failed? Was the Professor testing my character, sure that I would I risk my life rather than return empty-handed?

No, he already knew my character.

With a wry chuckle, I reached out ... unsure if I'd make it back alive.

 Read the word list and the tutorial about evocative language.

Word list: incessant biting devoured thick with darkness too foul a feeling razor-sharp

Tutorial

Many words and phrases in English can be deliberately used to call up or evoke memories, feelings, ideas and images in the mind of a reader. For example, the phrase *incessant biting* can call up images of creatures constantly snapping and nipping at another animal. Similarly, the word *devoured* (meaning to swallow or eat up voraciously) can evoke images of animals savagely feasting on some food source.

The phrase *thick with darkness* can evoke a feeling of being smothered or weighed down by the absence of light. It can also evoke memories of being disoriented in darkened spaces such as tunnels and caves where there may be unseen creatures lurking. The phrase *too foul a feeling* can call up memories of feelings and sensations that are too terrible to think about. The word *razor-sharp* actually means as sharp as a razor, but it can also evoke a sense of danger.

Words and phrases that evoke memories, images, feelings and ideas are called **evocative language**. **Evocative language** can be used in many situations, but it is especially common in literary texts where it is used to create or call up a particular mood or atmosphere.

1 Read the word list again. Think about what you have read in the tutorial about evocative language. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

- a Evocative language can be used to create a particular mood or atmosphere in a text. True False
- b Evocative language is rarely used in literary texts. True False
- c The phrases *thick with darkness* and *too foul a feeling* are examples of evocative language. True False

2 Highlight five examples of evocative language in this paragraph.

That last tunnel was thick with darkness and I'd wondered if I'd ever emerge. The incessant biting of my skin by unseen creatures with razor-sharp teeth was too foul a feeling to dwell on. They would have devoured my very bones if I had not finally reached the exit.

3 Circle the correct answer to each question.

Hint: Read the tutorial if you are unsure about any of these.

- a** Which phrase can evoke an image of animals constantly snapping and nipping at another animal?
- ✧ incessant biting
 - ✧ thick with darkness
- b** Which word can evoke an image of something that ate savagely or voraciously?
- ✧ devoured
 - ✧ razor-sharp
- c** Which phrase can evoke the feeling of being weighed down by the absence of light?
- ✧ too foul a feeling
 - ✧ thick with darkness
- d** Which word can evoke a sense of danger?
- ✧ razor-sharp
 - ✧ incessant biting
- e** Which phrase can evoke memories of sensations and feelings that are too terrible to think or talk about?
- ✧ devoured
 - ✧ too foul a feeling
- f** Which idea or image can be called up by the word *razor-sharp*?
- ✧ weighed down or suffocated by the absence of light
 - ✧ danger
- g** Which idea or image can be evoked by the word *devoured*?
- ✧ savagely attacked a food source
 - ✧ razor-sharp
- h** Which phrase can be used to evoke terrible or unspeakable sensations?
- ✧ too foul a feeling
 - ✧ danger
- i** Which phrase can be used to evoke an image of something constantly snapping and nipping at another animal?
- ✧ weighed down or suffocated by the absence of light
 - ✧ incessant biting
- j** Which phrase can be used to evoke a feeling of being smothered by an absence of light?
- ✧ thick with darkness
 - ✧ devoured

👁️ Read the tutorial about using possessive apostrophes.

Tutorial

In English, we can use an apostrophe* to indicate an ownership relationship between two nouns. For example: *I was searching for the Professor's blueprint*. In this sentence, the phrase *the Professor's blueprint* means that the blueprint is owned or possessed by the Professor. The apostrophe that indicates this relationship is called a **possessive apostrophe**.

In the case of a singular noun* (e.g. *Professor*), the **possessive apostrophe** is placed immediately after the 'owning' noun and followed by a letter 's'. If the 'owning' noun is a plural noun* that already ends in 's' (e.g. *consoles*), the **possessive apostrophe** is still placed immediately after the noun but no additional letter 's' is added. For example: *the two consoles' buttons*.

If the plural noun does not end with an 's' (e.g. *children*), the **possessive apostrophe** is placed after the noun and then a letter 's' is added. For example: *the children's journey, many people's secrets and five women's stories*.

Definitions

Apostrophe: a punctuation mark used to indicate possession (e.g. *Leo's dog*, meaning the dog belonging to Leo) or indicate missing letters or numbers in a contracted expression (e.g. *He's gone*, meaning *He has gone*).

Singular noun: a noun that refers to a single person, place or thing. For example: *captain, city, boat*.

Plural noun: a noun that refers to more than one person, place or thing. For example: *horses, stories, videos, nuclei*.

1 Think about what you have read in the tutorial about using possessive apostrophes. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

- a A possessive apostrophe is never used with a plural noun that does not end in 's' (e.g. *children*). True False
- b To show possession for a plural noun that already ends in 's', an apostrophe is placed immediately after the noun but no extra 's' is added. True False
- c To show possession for a singular noun, an apostrophe is placed immediately after the noun and followed by a letter 's'. True False

2 Circle the correct answer in each pair.

- a The librarys' door was open. The library's door was open.
- b Professor Waldorf's formula has been stolen. Professor Waldorfs' formula has been stolen.
- c I looked closely at the two console's buttons. I looked closely at the two consoles' buttons.
- d Many creatures's teeth are razor-sharp. Many creatures' teeth are razor-sharp.
- e The three mosquitoes' buzzing sounded deafening. The three mosquitoes's buzzing sounded deafening.
- f The childrens' stories were very exciting. The children's stories were very exciting.

3 Add the missing punctuation to each sentence.

- a The single sirens wail disturbed the night.
- b That last tunnels entrance was terrifying.
- c The twins faces were identical, so people were often confused.
- d The laboratorys lights flickered off, allowing the force field to glow.

👁️ Read the tutorial about recognising Narratives.

Tutorial

Try to recognise the type and purpose of a text before you begin to read it, so you can make predictions about the content of a text. Narratives are quite easy to recognise, especially in short story form like *Back alive*. Narratives are usually written to entertain or amuse readers, through particular combinations of plot, characters and settings.

Back alive is a quest narrative written from a first-person narrator perspective. It involves a hero (the narrator) who has to overcome a number of challenges to reach her desired goal (e.g. obtaining the Professor's *precious blueprint*). Like many short stories, this text introduces readers very quickly to the characters and the overall setting before unfolding the key developments in the plot, including a very unpleasant trip through *the last tunnel*. The text ends without revealing exactly whether the narrator completes her quest.

Most Narrative texts, including quest narratives, contain many specific nouns, pronouns and adjectives to refer to and describe settings and characters (e.g. *the Professor, he, water-beasts* and *a glass chest with a fluorescent pink force field*). Action verbs* are used to develop the plot (e.g. *shuddered, waded* and *reached*). Saying verbs* and sensing verbs* are used to indicate what characters are saying, thinking, feeling and perceiving (e.g. *wondered* and *could believe*).

Definitions

Action verb: a verb that indicates an observable action or happening. For example: *The animals **are fed** every day.; The birds **fought** over the last crumbs.*

Saying verb: a verb that indicates that someone or something has spoken. For example: *"Come here!" **said** the teacher.; The young boy **cried out** in his sleep.; She **whispered** his name.*

Sensing verb: a verb that indicates someone's thoughts, feelings or perceptions. For example: *I **think** he's wrong.; Most people **believed** that the disaster was caused by human error.; As a child, I **despised** broccoli.; I **saw** a rainbow in the distance.*

1 Think about what you have read in the tutorial about recognising Narratives. Glance quickly over the text. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

- a *Back alive* is easy to recognise as a Narrative, written in the form of a short story. True False
- b Like most Narratives, *Back alive* contains only action verbs. True False
- c *Back alive* is a quest narrative written from a first-person narrator perspective. True False

2 Look at the title of the text. Read the predictions that other students have made about the text, based on the title. Circle the answers that you think contain the most likely predictions.

- a This text will probably be about a dangerous situation.
- b The text might be a story of an exciting escape or rescue.
- c This text might be about a dangerous mission.
- d The text is probably about the rising crime rate in large urban centres around the world.
- e This text could be about someone taking a risk.
- f This text will probably be about people who return home from hospital.

3 What form of text is *Back alive*? Highlight the correct answer.

Hint: Read the tutorial if you are not sure about this.

- a a short romantic comedy
- b a short story based on a real-life situation
- c a short story involving a quest
- d a short crime story

4 What is the purpose of the text? Circle the correct answers.

- a The purpose of the text is to engage readers in an entertaining story involving a quest.
- b The purpose of the text is to retell a series of actual events in chronological order.
- c The purpose of the text is to tell an exciting story from one person's perspective.
- d The purpose of the text is to unfold an intriguing set of events without revealing the end of the story.

5 What features of the text make it look like a Narrative? Circle the correct answers.

- a The text involves a character who appears to be involved in a quest.
- b The text contains a series of challenges that the main character has to overcome.
- c The text includes a large amount of factual information about people and their expected lifespans.
- d The text is set in what seem like unusual or dangerous places.

👁️ Read the tutorial about understanding the ideas in Narratives.

Tutorial

To understand the ideas in Narratives, you need to pay close attention to what is actually said in the text. In *Back alive*, you need to identify the narrator as the hero or protagonist* of the short quest narrative. You also need to understand that the story actually begins at the point where the protagonist is facing a final and life-threatening challenge: *One ... final ... choice*.

The narrator then tells us a little of what has already occurred in the quest to find the Professor's *precious blueprint*, including having to wade through tunnels *thick with darkness* and inhabited by water-beasts whose *incessant biting was too foul a feeling to dwell on*. Now, the narrator faces the blueprint, which is *encased in a glass chest with a fluorescent pink force field* near a console with *two clearly labelled buttons*.

A message from the Professor indicates that the narrator can choose to leave with the blueprint (*the formula*) or with her life. The narrator speculates on whether this is a trap or a test set by the Professor, who *already knew my character*. Having made a decision, the narrator explains that *I reached out ... unsure if I'd make it back alive*. The story ends at this point, leaving readers to wonder about the result of the narrator's choice.

Definition

Protagonist: the leading character in a play or novel.

1 Think about what you have read in the tutorial about understanding the ideas in Narratives. Now, read the text carefully. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

- a The narrator is the protagonist in this short quest narrative. True False
- b The narrator has faced other challenges in this quest to obtain the Professor's formula. True False
- c The narrator tells us exactly which button she presses. True False

2 What questions could you ask about this text to help you understand it? Circle the correct answers.

- a What exactly is the blueprint or formula for?
- b Why do the Professor and protagonist seem to know each other so well?
- c How did the narrator know where to find the blueprint?
- d Does the narrator have a family?

3 Read these words and phrases. Circle the ones that are actually used to describe the actions, thoughts and feelings of the narrator.

Hint: Skim the text again if you are not sure whether the writer has actually used a particular word or phrase.

- a could hardly believe
- b come to expect from the Professor
- c barely flinched
- d shuddered at the memory
- e ate a blowfly
- f waded through that last tunnel
- g discovered a message
- h unsure if I'd make it back alive

4 Read the first three short paragraphs of the text. What is actually said in these paragraphs? Highlight the correct answer.

Hint: Read each option carefully; choose the one that most closely matches what is said in the opening of the text.

- a The Professor is going to make things easy for the narrator.
- b The Professor would not give up the blueprint easily.
- c The Professor has decided the narrator is worthy of gaining the blueprint.
- d The narrator believes the blueprint will ruin many lives.

5 Read the last few paragraphs of the text. Find the sentence that best describes what the narrator thinks the Professor could be trying to do. Write it in the space provided.

 Read the tutorial about interpreting and analysing Narratives.

Tutorial

To interpret and analyse the ideas in a Narrative, you need to make connections between what is said in the text and what else you know. For example, in *Back alive*, you need to think about the themes* explored in other quest narratives you have read or seen. This will help you to understand the implied meaning in the text that this story is about the battle between the forces of 'good' (the narrator who wants the blueprint to *save so many*) and 'evil' (the Professor who will be ruined if the blueprint is discovered).

You also need to think about the plot sequence in this text, and the physically and emotionally confronting events that take place in many modern action-adventure quests that are portrayed in film (e.g. the Indiana Jones series and the Harry Potter series). This helps you to understand the implied meaning in the text that the narrator is courageous, resourceful and resilient, and therefore 'worthy' of a successful outcome in the quest, even though this result is not directly revealed to readers.

You also need to think about the concept of a moral dilemma, where someone has to make a choice between 'right' and 'wrong' conduct, with each option involving both positive and negative elements. This concept is a part of the plot structure of many Narratives, including *Back alive*. Here, the narrator's moral dilemma appears to involve a choice between saving her own life or saving the lives of many others. In the tradition of quest narratives, we hope that the narrator can achieve both.

Definition

Theme: the main idea or message of a text.

- 1 Think about what you have read in the tutorial about interpreting and analysing Narratives. Look back over the text. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?
 - a The text contains an implied meaning that the hero of a quest narrative just needs to overcome physical challenges to achieve their goal. True False
 - b The narrator is portrayed as having the 'usual' characteristics of a protagonist in a quest narrative. True False
 - c The battle between good and evil is a central theme in *Back alive*. True False

- 2 The text contains the following words: *barely flinched*, *dragged myself*, *risk my life rather than return empty-handed* and *a wry chuckle*. What impression of the narrator is being conveyed by the use of these words? Circle the correct answers.
 - a The narrator is someone who can endure physical hardships and remain brave and resourceful.
 - b The narrator is someone who is easily discouraged by difficulties.
 - c The narrator has a strong commitment to completing what she set out to do.
 - d The narrator doesn't enjoy dangerous challenges.

3 Think about the text's unstated or implied meanings about the forces of good and evil. Answer YES or NO to each of these questions.

Hint: You have to work this out. The writer doesn't say this exactly.

- a Is the Professor portrayed as representing the forces of evil? Yes No
- b Does the narrator represent the 'good guys'? Yes No
- c Does this text explore the theme of the battle between the forces of good and evil? Yes No
- d Is the narrator turned to 'the dark side' in this text? Yes No

4 Think about the text's unstated or implied meanings about the character of the protagonist in a quest narrative. Circle the statements that best express these meanings.

Hint: You have to work this out. The writer doesn't say this exactly.

- a The protagonist in a quest narrative always faces challenges, no matter how difficult they are.
- b The protagonist in a quest narrative makes the right choice for the wellbeing of others as well as themselves.
- c The protagonist in a quest narrative always looks for the easy way out of a problem.
- d The protagonist in a quest narrative is a thinker as well as a character of action.

5 Think about what the text implies or suggests about choices. Read each statement and decide whether it is likely, not likely or there is no evidence in the text to support the statement. Write your answer in the space provided.

Hint: You have to work this out. The writer doesn't say this exactly.

- a The Professor has set up the final challenge as a choice between personal safety and the wellbeing of others. _____
- b The narrator has chosen her personal safety over the wellbeing of others in the past. _____
- c The narrator will make the choice to save others, but in the hope that she will survive as well. _____
- d The narrator will refuse to make any kind of choice. _____

 Read the tutorial about evaluating Narratives.

Tutorial

To evaluate a Narrative text, you need to make a judgement about the quality or effectiveness of the text. In *Back alive*, you need to decide whether the author has created a short quest narrative that entertains the intended audience. Given the short length of the text, the author faces a difficult task, but they certainly appear to have achieved their goal of transporting readers into a fictional world of evil Professors, savage water-beasts and the fight between good and evil.

The text has an unusual structure, beginning at the brink or edge of the climax of the story. Readers are then told more about the main characters and what has happened up to this point. The text then returns to the crisis faced by the protagonist – which button to choose. Finally, a decision is made, action is taken and ... we are left to speculate on the ending of the story.

The choice to use a first-person narrator perspective creates a sense that the protagonist is talking directly to us, and drawing us into the action of the story. The language used is both descriptive and evocative, allowing us to imagine the darkness of the tunnels, the biting of the water-beasts and the glow of the force field. The use of different kinds of sentences, including sentence fragments, allows the author to control the pace of the story and to build up tension where it is needed.

1 Think about what you have read in the tutorial about evaluating Narratives. Make a judgement about the text. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

- a The author has made effective use of descriptive and evocative language to help readers picture the key settings in the text. True False
- b The story is structured in an unusual way, but this engages readers very quickly in the physical and emotional events of the plot. True False
- c The first-person narrator perspective used in the text makes readers feel they are observing events from a distance. True False

2 Think about how the plot unfolds in the text. Answer YES or NO to these questions.

Hint: You need to work out the answer, by making a judgement and/or using evidence from the text.

- a Does the text open with the major crisis or problem in the plot sequence? Yes No
- b Do we learn about how the Professor developed the formula in the first place? Yes No
- c Are readers left wondering about the exact outcome of the protagonist's actions? Yes No
- d Are we told some information about events leading up to the crisis? Yes No

- 3 Think about the effectiveness of the text. Highlight the statement that describes this.**
Hint: You need to work out the answer, by making a judgement and/or using evidence from the text.
- a The author spends too much time describing small details, so the main events are not well developed or exciting.
 - b Readers are not given enough information about the lead-up to the crisis for this story to be engaging or understandable.
 - c The author spends too long describing details about the characters' appearances and not enough time building the action.
 - d Although it is very short, *Back alive* is still a fast-paced action-packed quest narrative.
- 4 Think about the language features of the text. Circle the statements that describe them.**
Hint: You need to work out the answer, by making a judgement and/or using evidence from the text.
- a The text is written in the first person.
 - b There are many descriptive and evocative words and phrases.
 - c There are many technical terms related to scientific experiments.
 - d The text contains verbs that indicate what happens as well as what the narrator is thinking and feeling.
- 5 Read these statements that other students have made about *Back alive*. Circle each statement that you think is a fair comment on the text.**
Hint: This is not 'just' opinion. You need to use evidence from the text to make an assessment.
- a There is no flow to this story – all the events seem random and jumbled up.
 - b The story is like a movie that starts in the middle and rushes to the end.
 - c Even though we are not told very much detailed information about the narrator and the Professor, it is very easy to understand what is going on in the story.
 - d This text is easy to get into quickly because it draws so heavily on other quest narratives.

 Read the tutorial about writing Narratives.

Tutorial

Narratives are written to amuse, entertain or instruct an audience. Narratives can be written in many forms, including short quest narratives such as *Back alive* by Alex Ristof. This text is written for a teenage or young adult audience, and contains the typical 'quest' situation where a hero faces and overcomes challenges set by an adversary to reach their desired goal.

All Narratives contain three main stages: **Orientation**; **Complication** and **Resolution**. In this text, Ristof has manipulated the usual order of these stages, bringing us into the story at the brink of the climax of the **Complication** stage: *I could hardly believe that it all came down to this. One ... final ... choice*. In the next three paragraphs, Ristof orients us to the characters in the story (i.e. the narrator, who appears to be the hero, and a mysterious Professor) and to some of the situations that the narrator has already faced to get to this point in the story.

Ristof then returns to the 'choice' situation, and describes it in more detail: the *blueprint* surrounded by a *fluorescent pink force field*; the *two clearly labelled buttons*; the cryptic message from the Professor. The tension begins to rise again as the narrator considers whether this is a trap or a test. Finally, the **Resolution** stage begins: *With a wry chuckle, I reached out ... unsure if I'd make it back alive*. However, that's where the story ends, and readers are left to wonder what actually happened.

1 Think about what you have read in the tutorial about writing Narratives. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

- a *Back alive* is a short story written in the form of a quest narrative. True False
- b Narratives usually contain three main stages: Orientation, Complication and Resolution. True False
- c This quest narrative is written to teach young children about social values. True False

2 What form of text is *Back alive*? Highlight the correct answer.

Hint: Read the tutorial if you are unsure about this.

- a a romantic comedy
- b a Gothic horror story
- c a realistic short story
- d a quest narrative

3 What is the purpose of the text? Circle the correct answers.

- a The purpose of the text is to tell an entertaining short story.
- b The purpose of the text is to engage readers in a typical quest adventure.
- c The purpose of the text is to show readers how they can cope with relationship issues.
- d The purpose of the text is to tell a story that leaves readers guessing about whether the hero achieved their desired goal.

4 Someone has mixed up the order of events in the text. Number the events from 1 to 7 in the correct order.

Hint: Skim the text if you are not sure of the order in which these events occur.

- The narrator describes the last tunnel she came through.
- The narrator tells us that she is facing *One ... final ... choice*.
- The narrator discovers the Professor's message.
- The narrator describes where the blueprint is and what surrounds it.
- The narrator explains why she is suspicious about what looks to be a simple choice.
- The narrator reaches out to push one of the buttons.
- The narrator describes how she is feeling as the *rivulets raced down* her spine.

5 Read the words and phrases that another student has used to analyse aspects of the text. Draw a line to match the labels with their correct definitions.

Hint: Read the tutorial if you are unsure about this.

Labels

Definitions

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| a Text purpose | ✧ Narrative |
| b Audience | ✧ to entertain and intrigue readers with a quest narrative |
| c Text type | ✧ quest narrative, in short story form |
| d Text form | ✧ teenagers and young adults |
| e Stages of the text | ✧ Orientation, Complication, Resolution |

👁️ Read the tutorial about the language features of Narratives.

Tutorial

Narratives typically contain a range of language techniques to describe characters and settings. These include specific nouns and pronouns that refer to particular people, animals and things that are involved in a story (e.g. *water-beast*, *Professor* and *he*). Often, these nouns are described in more detail using adjectives, adjectival phrases and adjectival clauses* (e.g. *aching bones*, *a drop of sweat* and *a fluorescent pink force field pulsating powerfully around its razor-sharp edges*).

Narratives often contain figurative language* such as metaphors (e.g. *the sticky nest of hair*) and similes (e.g. *like the arrival of a blowfly*) to help to build pictures in our mind. Many Narratives also contain examples of poetic language techniques such as alliteration (e.g. *pink force field pulsating powerfully*), assonance (e.g. *ever emerge*) and onomatopoeia (e.g. *slurping*). Descriptive language is often used to evoke intense or vivid images (e.g. *thick with darkness* and *too foul a feeling*).

Most Narratives contain past tense action verbs to build up plot sequences (e.g. *laughed*, *rolled* and *reached out*), and saying and sensing verbs* are used to indicate what characters are saying, thing, feeling and perceiving (e.g. *laughed*, *could believe* and *wondered*). Adventure and quest Narratives are often told from a first-person narrator perspective (e.g. *I could ...*), and typically contain a range of sentence types to vary the pace and flow of the story, including simple sentences and sentence fragments (e.g. *Not a battle or a trap*).

Definitions

Adjectival clause: a dependent clause that describes the qualities or characteristics of a person, place, idea or thing. For example: *The man **who had the long beard** came first.; We bought the farm **that had been in his family** for over a century.*

Figurative language: language that constructs images in the mind. Figurative language includes words or phrases used in a way that differs from their everyday usage or literal meaning. For example: *Her dress shone like a diamond.*

Sensing verb: a verb that indicates someone's thoughts, feelings or perceptions. For example: *I **think** he's wrong.; Most people **believed** that the disaster was caused by human error.; As a child, I **despised** broccoli.; I **saw** a rainbow in the distance.*

1 Think about what you have read in the tutorial about the language features of Narratives. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

- a Quest narratives are often written from a first-person perspective. True False
- b There is no need to use adjectives, adjectival phrases or adjectival clauses in a Narrative. True False
- c Most Narratives contain examples of figurative and poetic language techniques. True False

2 Why are different kinds of verbs used in Narratives? Highlight the correct answer.

- a Different kinds of verbs are used in Narratives to describe nouns in more detail.
- b Different kinds of verbs are used in Narratives to indicate what happens as well as what the characters are saying, thinking, feeling and perceiving.
- c Different kinds of verbs are used in Narratives to evoke vivid images in a reader's mind.
- d Different kinds of verbs are used in Narratives to demonstrate the author's creative skills.

3 Why does this text contain examples of figurative and descriptive language? Circle the correct answers.

- a This text contains examples of figurative and descriptive language to help readers imagine the settings more vividly.
- b This text contains examples of figurative and descriptive language to help readers picture what is going on more intensely.
- c This text contains examples of figurative and descriptive language to evoke strong images in the reader's mind as the plot unfolds.
- d This text contains examples of figurative and descriptive language to impress the reader.

4 Read the words and phrases that another student has used to analyse the language features of the text. Draw a line to match the language features with their examples.

Hint: Think about how the words in each group are working or are organised in the text.

Language features

- a sensing verbs
- b action verbs
- c adjectives
- d adjectival phrases
- e alliteration

Examples

- ✧ knew, could believe, had come to expect, wondered
- ✧ of hair, of a blowfly, a fluorescent pink, two identical
- ✧ reached, return, surrounded, waded
- ✧ murky mud, foul a feeling, pulsating powerfully, rivulets raced
- ✧ foul, incessant, precious, sticky

5 Write the nouns and verbs in the correct groups.

Hint: A noun is the name of a person, place, thing or idea; a verb expresses some 'happening' or 'state'.

Word list

✧ was	✧ would release	✧ had proven	✧ spine
✧ had come to expect	✧ could save	✧ escaping	✧ arrival
✧ choice	✧ blueprint	✧ scalp	✧ mosquitoes
✧ Professor	✧ laughed	✧ rivulets	✧ flinched
✧ bones	✧ neck	✧ plastered	✧ devoured

Nouns	Verbs

Read the tutorial about verb groups containing auxiliary verbs.

Tutorial

Verbs are an essential part of clauses and sentences in English, because they express 'actions' and 'states' (e.g. *shuddered*, *would expect* and *are*). Technically, all verbs are called **verb groups**, whether they contain a single word or more than one word. In practice, however, we usually use the term 'verb' for a single word (e.g. *discovered*) and **verb group** when there is more than one word (e.g. *would expect*).

Verb groups that contain more than one word often contain an auxiliary verb* that indicates the tense or timing of the action or state expressed by the main verb. For example: *The Professor had placed the blueprint in a glass chest*. Here the auxiliary verb *had* combined with the participle* *placed* shows that this action occurred in the past. Other auxiliary verbs that shown tense or timing include *am*, *are*, *is*, *was*, *were*, *have*, *has* and *will*.

Some verb groups also contain modal auxiliaries*, such as *could*, *should* and *might*. These verbs add information to the main verb about the level of certainty or obligation involved in an action or state. For example: *I might survive this test*. Here, the modal auxiliary *might* adds a level of doubt or uncertainty about the action of 'surviving'. Other modal auxiliaries include *can*, *need to*, *may*, *will* and *would*.

Definitions

Auxiliary verb: a verb that adds meaning to or 'helps' a main or full verb. For example: *I am working today*; *They will require lunch*; *Two different companies have opened new coalmines in the Yarra Valley*.

Participle: a form of verb that can function either as a verb or an adjective. Used as verbs, participles show tense (past and present); end in *-ing*, *-ed* or *-t*; and are always preceded by an auxiliary verb (for example: *are walking*).

Modal auxiliary: an auxiliary verb that expresses a degree of probability, obligation or certainty attached by a speaker or writer to a statement. For example: *She might not like mushrooms*; *He should go with us*; *You must leave me alone*.

1 Think about what you have read in the tutorial about verb groups containing auxiliary verbs. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

- a Verb groups can only contain tense auxiliaries as well as main verbs. True False
- b Many verb groups contain tense auxiliaries such as *was*, *is* and *had*. True False
- c A verb group can be made up of one word or a group of words. True False

2 Which of these are verb groups? Circle the correct answers.

Hint: Look for groups of words that contain both auxiliary and main verbs.

- a was trying
- b had hidden
- c a glass chest
- d will be found

3 Write each of the verb groups in the correct group.

Hint: Tense auxiliaries indicate when the 'action' or 'state' occurred; modal auxiliaries express a level of certainty or obligation about the 'action' or 'state'.

Word list

✧ was shuddering	✧ might go	✧ could devour
✧ need to discover	✧ were standing	✧ have been slurping
✧ can reach	✧ was going	✧ may fail
✧ am finding		

Tense auxiliary + main verb	Modal auxiliary + main verb

4 Read the sentences. Highlight each of the verb groups.

Hint: Remember, technically, a verb group can contain a single-word verb or one that is made up of more than one word.

- a The narrator could chuckle about her predicament.
- b He would release his precious blueprint the next morning.
- c I laughed in spite of my aching bones.
- d The water-beasts were biting my skin with their razor-sharp teeth.
- e Each button was marked clearly.

👁️ Read the tutorial about the subject and predicate of a simple sentence.

Tutorial

In English, the most basic form of sentence contains one complete thought or idea. For example: *The Professor had hidden his blueprint deep in the cave.* This sentence consists of one independent clause* and is called a **simple sentence**. Simple sentences are often quite short, but they can also be quite long. All **simple sentences** contain only one main verb or verb group*.

Each simple sentence is about 'something' or 'someone' (e.g. *The Professor*). This is called the topic or **subject** of the sentence. In most cases, the subject of a **simple sentence** is a noun (e.g. *Tunnels*), a noun group* (e.g. *A drop of sweat*) or a pronoun (e.g. *He*). Usually, a **simple sentence** begins with its subject, but in some cases another word or phrase from the sentence may be placed before the subject (e.g. *Deep in the cave, the Professor had hidden his blueprint*).

The rest of a **simple sentence** contains information about the subject and is called the **predicate** of the sentence. The predicate always contains a main verb or verb group (e.g. *had hidden*). The predicate may also contain a word or a phrase that is involved in the 'happening' of the sentence in some way (e.g. *the blueprint*). It may also contain some information about where, when, how or why the 'happening' occurs (e.g. *deep in the cave*).

Definitions

Independent clause: a clause that can stand alone as a complete sentence, though it may be joined with other clauses. For example: *The frustrated girl jumped up and down.*

Verb group: the single verb or group of words that express the core meaning of a clause. A verb group may consist of a single main verb or a main verb that is preceded by one or more auxiliary or modal verbs as modifiers. A verb group may also contain the word *not*. For example: *They sold all their tickets.; They have been working hard all term.; Animals should not be used as test subjects.*

Noun group: a single word or group of words, including a main or head noun, that provides information about the people, places, things and ideas involved in a clause or sentence. For example: *The toddler's happiness was fleeting.; The young farmer cleared the land.*

1 Think about what you have read in the tutorial about the subject and predicate of a simple sentence. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

- a Every simple sentence is about someone or something; this is called the topic or subject of the sentence. True False
- b A simple sentence consists of two or more independent clauses. True False
- c The predicate of a simple sentence contains all the information about or related to the subject, including a verb or verb group that expresses what is 'happening' or going on. True False

2 Choose the subject that best completes the sentence. Write it in the space provided.
Hint: Look for the noun, noun group or pronoun that the rest of the sentence is about.

_____ was matted and damp from sweat.

- a The Professor
- b A horde of mosquitoes
- c My hair
- d They

3 Read the sentences. Highlight each of the subjects.

Hint: The subject of a sentence is who or what the sentence is about.

- a I barely flinched.
- b The murky mud slurped around my legs.
- c The Professor was attempting to test my character.
- d Nearby, two identical consoles stood in splendid isolation.
- e A drop of sweat rolled down my neck.

4 Read the subjects in Ladder 1. Draw a line to match them with the predicates in Ladder 2 to create simple sentences.

Hint: Look for predicates that contain information related to particular subjects.

Ladder 1

- a The Professor
- b The blueprints
- c I
- d The choices
- e The razor-sharp edges of the cases

Ladder 2

- ✧ were even more complex yesterday.
- ✧ am sixteen years old.
- ✧ cut her skin deeply.
- ✧ were encased in a glass chest.
- ✧ developed the formula.

Read each question carefully and circle one answer.

1 Which word is spelled correctly?

- plasterd
- precous
- surrounded
- aching

2 Which word is misspelled?

- devoured
- insessant
- pulsating
- emerge

3 Which is the correct spelling?

- flourescent
- fluorescent
- flouresnt
- fluoresent

4 Which word contains a silent letter?

- murky
- foul
- wry
- ruin

5 Which of these pairs are not homophones?

- through* and *threw*
- were* and *where*
- two* and *too*
- roll* and *role*

6 Which word in this sentence is a compound adjective?

The narrator decided that she could not risk returning empty-handed.

- empty-handed
- risk
- returning
- decided

7 Which suffix can be added to *power* to transform it into a word meaning *with great strength*?

- er
- ly
- fully
- ish

8 In this sentence, what does the verb group *had to be* mean?

This had to be a trap.

- wasn't
- used to be
- never was
- was

9 Which of the following is a synonym for *blueprint*?

- plan
- discovery
- map
- ambush

10 What type of word is *he'd*?

- a common noun
- a contraction
- a preposition
- an abbreviation

11 What is the verb in this sentence?

The Professor's blueprint was encased in a glass chest.

- was
- was encased
- encased
- was encased in

12 In which tense is this sentence written?

I shuddered at the memory of walking through that tunnel.

- present
- future
- past
- perfect

13 Which of the following is a complete sentence?

- It all came down to this.
- Not a battle or a trap.
- Not a fight or an ambush.
- But a choice.

14 Which of these phrases contains an example of alliteration?

- precious blueprint
- the sticky mess of hair
- around my legs
- pink force field

15 Which punctuation mark appears in the middle of this sentence?

I reached out ... unsure if I'd make it back alive.

- colon
- ellipsis
- semicolon
- full stop

16 Which of the following is a compound adjective?

- razor-sharp
- aching
- force-field
- identical

17 What type of sentence is this?

No, he already knew my character.

- a question
- an exclamation
- a statement
- a command

18 Which word in this sentence is a proper noun?

Was the Professor testing my character, sure that I would I risk my life rather than return empty-handed?

- character
- Professor
- life
- risk

19 What is the purpose of the ellipses in this sentence?

One ... final ... choice.

- to indicate pauses between words and thoughts
- to show the writer's uncertainty about what will happen next
- to mimic the delays and pauses in actual thought and speech
- for all of these purposes

20 What is the predicate of this sentence?

The Professor's blueprint was finally in front of me.

- was finally in front of me
- The Professor's blueprint was finally in front of me
- blueprint was finally in front of me
- The Professor's blueprint

Read each question carefully and circle one answer.

1 Which of the following best describes this text?

- ballad
- quest narrative
- romantic fiction
- Gothic horror

2 In the first sentence, to what does the word *this* refer?

- the choice the narrator needs to make
- the narrator's decision to walk through the dark tunnel
- the need to work out where the Professor has hidden the blueprint
- a desire to give up looking for the blueprint

3 What troubles or concerns the narrator in the opening of the story?

- how much her bones are aching
- whether the Professor is going to hand over the blueprint
- if the formula is worth having
- how simple it all seems

4 What has the narrator had to do to get to this point in the quest?

- climb up several mountains
- wade through a series of tunnels
- hike through murky swamps
- swim across monster-infested lakes

5 What sensation was *too foul a feeling to dwell on*?

- the sweat running down the narrator's spine
- the memory of the murky mud
- the continual bites from water-beasts
- the thick darkness

6 What does the narrator mean in this sentence?

I dragged myself back to the present.

- She focused her thoughts on what she had gone through to get to this point.
- She made a plan to get the blueprint.
- She reluctantly walked back through the tunnel.
- She forced herself to focus her thoughts on the problem currently facing her.

7 What 'barriers' protect the blueprint?

- a force field and a chest with razor-sharp edges
- a console and a force field
- two consoles
- a message from the Professor

8 What is implied in the Professor's message? *Your life or the formula, Georgina. You choose.*

- If the narrator chooses *Your life*, she will not survive to tell the story.
- If the Professor finds the narrator, he will kill her.
- If the narrator chooses *the formula*, she will forfeit her life.
- The formula is deadly.

9 What makes the narrator so sure the message is a trap?

- It seemed too simple a choice, even for the Professor.
- The Professor was happy to give up the formula to someone who could get this far.
- The Professor always gave people a choice.
- It seemed too simple a choice, based on what she knew about the Professor.

10 What can we conclude about the narrator's fate?

- She somehow made it out alive, but she didn't necessarily choose *Your life*.
- She chose *Your life*, but she still didn't make it out alive.
- She decided not to try to push either of the buttons.
- She retrieved the blueprint but it killed her.

Text type: Narrative

Vocabulary: Evocative language

- 1 a True b False; evocative language is often used in literary texts, especially stories and poems. c True
- 2 thick with darkness, incessant biting, razor-sharp, too foul a feeling, devoured
- 3 a incessant biting b devoured c thick with darkness d razor-sharp e too foul a feeling f danger g savagely attacked a food source h too foul a feeling i incessant biting j thick with darkness

Punctuation: Using possessive apostrophes

- 1 a False; a plural noun that does not end in 's' can still 'own' something else; a possessive apostrophe is used to show this. b True c True
- 2 a The library's door was open.
The word *library* is a singular noun; the possessive apostrophe needs to be placed immediately after the noun and before the letter 's'.
b Professor Waldorf's formula has been stolen.
There is only one Professor Waldorf; the possessive apostrophe needs to be placed immediately after the noun *Waldorf* and before the letter 's'.
c I looked closely at the two consoles' buttons.
The word *consoles* is a plural noun that ends in the letter 's'; the possessive apostrophe needs to be placed immediately after the noun but no additional letter 's' is added.
d Many creatures' teeth are razor-sharp.
The word *creatures* is a plural noun that ends in the letter 's'; the possessive apostrophe needs to be placed immediately after the noun but no additional letter 's' is added.
e The three mosquitoes' buzzing sounded deafening.
The word *mosquitoes* is a plural noun that ends in the letter 's'; the possessive apostrophe needs to be placed immediately after the noun but no additional letter 's' is added.
f The children's stories were very exciting.
The word *children* is a plural noun that does not end in the letter 's'; the possessive apostrophe needs to be placed immediately after the noun and then an additional letter 's' is added.
- 3 a The single siren's wail disturbed the night.
b That last tunnel's entrance was terrifying.
c The twins' faces were identical, so people were often confused.
d The laboratory's lights flickered off, allowing the force field to glow.

Reading comprehension 1: Recognising Narratives

- 1 a True b False; most Narratives, including *Back alive*, contain different kinds of verbs. c True
- 2 a Correct b Correct c Correct d Incorrect e Correct f Incorrect
- 3 a Incorrect b Incorrect c Correct d Incorrect
- 4 a Correct b Incorrect c Correct d Correct
- 5 a Correct b Correct c Incorrect d Correct

Reading comprehension 2: Understanding ideas in Narratives

- 1 a True b True c False; this is not revealed, even though it is clear that the narrator has made a decision to press one of the buttons.
- 2 a Correct b Correct c Correct d Incorrect; this is an interesting question but it doesn't help you understand the events and situation in the story.
- 3 a Correct b Correct c Correct d Correct e Incorrect f Correct g Correct h Correct
- 4 a Incorrect b Correct c Incorrect d Incorrect
- 5 Was the Professor testing my character, sure that I would I risk my life rather than return empty-handed?

Reading comprehension 3: Interpreting and analysing ideas in Narratives

- 1 a False; there is a strong implication in this text that the real measure of a hero in a quest narrative is their ability to cope with a moral dilemma. b True c True
- 2 a Correct b Incorrect c Correct d Incorrect
- 3 a Yes b Yes c Yes d No
- 4 a Correct b Correct c Incorrect d Correct
- 5 a Likely b No evidence c Likely d Not likely

Reading comprehension 4: Evaluating Narratives

- 1 a True b True c False; this perspective draws readers into the action of the story; they feel that the protagonist is speaking directly to them.
- 2 a Yes b No c Yes d Yes
- 3 a Incorrect b Incorrect c Incorrect d Correct
- 4 a Correct b Correct c Incorrect d Correct
- 5 a Unfair b Fair c Fair d Fair

Writing 1: Writing Narratives

- 1 a True b True c False; this text is written to entertain and intrigue a teenage or young adult audience.
- 2 a Incorrect b Incorrect c Incorrect d Correct
- 3 a Correct b Correct c Incorrect d Correct
- 4 4 The narrator describes the last tunnel she came through.
 - 1 The narrator tells us that she is facing *One ... final ... choice*.
 - 6 The narrator discovers the Professor's message.
 - 5 The narrator describes where the blueprint is and what surrounds it.
 - 2 The narrator explains why she is suspicious about what looks to be a simple choice.
 - 7 The narrator reaches out to push one of the buttons.
 - 3 The narrator describes how she is feeling as the *rivulets raced down* her spine.
- 5 a Text purpose: to entertain and intrigue readers with a quest narrative
b Audience: teenagers and young adults
c Text type: Narrative
d Text form: quest narrative, in short story form
e Stages of the text: Orientation, Complication, Resolution

Text type: Narrative

Writing 2: Language features of Narratives

- 1 a True b False; adjectives, adjectival phrases and adjectival clauses can be used in a Narrative to build up detailed images of the characters and settings involved in the plot. c True
- 2 a Incorrect b Correct c Incorrect d Incorrect
- 3 a Correct b Correct c Correct d Incorrect
- 4 a sensing verbs: knew, could believe, had come to expect, wondered
b action verbs: reached, return, surrounded, waded
c adjectives: foul, incessant, precious, sticky
d adjectival phrases: of hair, of a blowfly, a fluorescent pink, two identical
e alliteration: murky mud, foul a feeling, pulsating powerfully, rivulets raced
- 5 **Nouns:** choice, Professor, bones, blueprint, neck, scalp, rivulets, spine, arrival, mosquitoes
Verbs: was, had come to expect, had proven, laughed, would release, could save, escaping, plastered, flinched, devoured

Grammar 1: Verb groups containing auxiliary verbs

- 1 a False; many verb groups also contain modal auxiliaries such as *might* and *need to*. b True c True
- 2 a Correct b Correct c Incorrect d Correct
- 3 **Tense auxiliary + the main verb:** was shuddering, am finding, were standing, was going, have been slurping
Modal auxiliary + the main verb: need to discover, can reach, might go, may fail, could devour
- 4 a could chuckle b would release c laughed
d were biting e was marked

Grammar 2: The subject and predicate of a simple sentence

- 1 a True b False; a simple sentence consists of one independent clause. c True
- 2 a Incorrect b Incorrect c Correct d Incorrect
- 3 a I b the murky mud c The Professor
d two identical consoles e A drop of sweat
- 4 a The Professor developed the formula.
b The blueprints were encased in a glass chest.
c I am sixteen years old.
d The choices were even more complex yesterday.
e The razor-sharp edges of the cases cut her skin deeply.

NAPLAN*-style questions: Language conventions

- 1 aching
- 2 incessant
- 3 fluorescent
- 4 wry
- 5 *were* and *where*
- 6 empty-handed
- 7 -fully
- 8 was
- 9 plan
- 10 a contraction

- 11 was encased
- 12 past
- 13 It all came down to this.
- 14 pink force field
- 15 ellipsis
- 16 razor-sharp
- 17 a statement
- 18 Professor
- 19 for all of these purposes
- 20 was finally in front of me

NAPLAN*-style questions: Reading

- 1 quest narrative
- 2 the choice the narrator needs to make
- 3 how simple it all seems
- 4 wade through a series of tunnels
- 5 the continual bites from water-beasts
- 6 She forced herself to focus her thoughts on the problem currently facing her.
- 7 a force field and a chest with razor-sharp edges
- 8 If the narrator chooses *the formula*, she will forfeit her life.
- 9 It seemed too simple a choice, based on what she knew about the Professor.
- 10 She somehow made it out alive, but she didn't necessarily choose *Your life*.