**Essential terms for Reading Unfamiliar Texts**

You will find this achievement standard much easier to pass if you learn these terms. It might seem hard at the moment but you have already come across lots of these words in Year 9 and 10. Everything is divided into **verbal** language features or techniques and **visual** language features or techniques. Happy studying!

**j0078622 j0078705**

**VERBAL FEATURES (Language techniques) (found in all four types of text: speeches, static images, poetry, prose/extracts from articles/fiction/nonfiction)**

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| **Term** | **Definition** | **Example** | **Purpose/Effect** |
| **Adjectives** | Describing words | cheap, fast, good | A describing word, always favourable if used in advertisements |
| **Alliteration** | 2 or more words that start with same consonant | big bad wolf | Can create a tone or make a phrase easier to remember or capture the sound of the thing being described |
| **Anecdote** | Short stories used to help illustrate a point | Describing your own experience of coping with the pressure of exams in a speech or piece of writing about exam techniques | Help the audience get a clearer picture or understanding of your main point. Also used to add humour |
| **Antonym** | Word meaning the opposite | Easy is an antonym for hard | Used for contrast and for irony or sarcasm |
| **Assonance** | The deliberate repetition of the same **vowel** sound followed by a different consonant sound | I am wise enough to fight my fears nightly  (the ‘i’ sound is repeated) | This can create a musical effect or be used to emphasise the imagery |
| **Cliche** | A dull expression that has lost its originality and humour because it has been used so much – it is often a simile or a metaphor | It is as hot as an oven in here | Used because it is familiar to the audience or because the speaker/writer can’t think of a better way to put the idea across. |
| **Colloquial language** | Relaxed and informal language that is used in common conversation | Buzz off | Gives an informal feel or tone to the piece and is easier for people to identify with |
| **Comparative** | An adjective that compares 2 things | bigger, better | Used to make the thing described sound better than another. |
| **contraction** | Shortened form of a word | e.g. (for example) I’m (I am) | Used to create and informal tone. |
| **Emotive language** | Language that attempts to play on people’s emotions | The playground was littered with decaying food scraps and torn plastic wrappers as lazy students hung around gossiping. | Used to stir up emotion in the reader/listener, to convey your attitude to someone or something ( angry, happy, disapproving, enthusiastic…) |
| **Examples /statistics** | Factual information to back up what you are saying | Only 26% of students passed the test! | Used to support your point or give weight to your argument. They can sway people to agree with you. If they are ‘shocking’ they can help capture your audience’s / readers’ attention and keep them reading/listening |
| **Hyperbole** | A deliberate exaggeration – saying something by expressing it in an extreme way | I’ve got a tonne of homework | Used to emphasise a feeling or to bring humour to a situation |
| **Imperative** | A phrase used to express an order or command | **Try** now, **Phone** 0800… , **Be** **quiet** | Used to encourage the reader/viewer to act on the advice |
| **Jargon** | Technical terms or specialised language associated with a certain activity | Megabyte (computers)  Deuce (tennis) | A quick and accurate way to communicate information but is only helpful if the jargon is understood by the target audience. Sometimes used to show off rather than to communicate |
| **Listing** | Including many examples in a list | It is important to bring your towel, toiletries, a change of clothes, a comb and your backpack | Makes an argument stronger. Conveys a lot of information in a short space. Is boring if used too much |
| **Metaphor** | A form of comparison where one thing is said to be another | The yellow bee, his **holsters packed with bread,** rides the blue air | Used to make a piece of writing more interesting or vivid – emphasises an aspect of the thing described and perhaps helps us to see it in a new way, gives the writing originality |
| **Onomatopoeia** | When the sound of the word imitates or suggests the meaning or noise of the action described. | The buzz of the chainsaw | Help the reader /listener experience what is happening by recalling the sound that something makes. |
| **Personal pronouns** | Words used to take the place of people’s names | I, we, you, my, our, your  **You** are the ones who can make a difference  **We** need to work harder | These make the speech more personal and help the audience feel involved or included. It creates a sense of unity between the writer and the reader. ‘You’ makes the audience feel you are speaking to them directly – we/our are inclusive pronouns linking the speaker/writer to the audience |
| **Personification** | When a non-living thing is given living characteristics | The vine is **strangling** the tree | To bring a passage alive by using a human characteristic with which the reader can identify. |
| **Pun** | An expression that plays on different meanings of the same word or phrase | The board of Wrigley’s met to **chew** over the problems they were having with the new gum. | Used to draw attention to a word or to create a humourous effect |
| **Repetition** | Using words or phrases more than once. | It was cold that night, very very cold | Used to help the audience remember what is being advertised or to emphasise a point |
| **Rhetorical Question** | A question that doesn’t have to be answered. | Have you ever wondered what it would be like to win Lotto? | Used to involve the audience by getting them thinking. |
| **rhyme** | The repetition of similar sounds usually at the end of the line | She left the **room,**  She forgot the **broom** | Used to hold lines of poetry together or to help us remember |
| **rhythm** | The beat of the words. It can be regular or irregular | This is the night mail crossing the border,  Bringing the cheque and the postal order (captures the sound of a train | It is used to help the flow of the writing or to make it easier to remember or to capture the beat or sound of something |
| **Sibilance** | Repetition of the ‘s’ sound | The surf swept up the shore swiftly | To reproduce the sound of the sea or the sound of a snake |
| **Simile** | An expression that compares things using like or as. | As popular as the latest Harry Potter book | Used to help the audience imagine what something is like. Adds colour and variety to the writing |
| **Slang** | Words or expressions that belong to a particular group of people. In most cases slang is unacceptable in formal situations | ‘You looked so **bad** at the ball’  He’s a **blender**  **whatever** | Used to make the target audience feel involved because it is the way they speak |
| **Slogan** | A catch phrase often linked to a company or product | Just do it (Nike) | Used to sum up a key aspect of the company and to help people remember the company |
| **Superlative** | Words describing a person or place as being the most… | Highest, tallest, nicest | Used to show the thing or person described is superior to everything/everyone else |

**j0078735 BUT WAIT THERE’S MORE… j0078727**

**VISUAL FEATURES FOUND IN STATIC IMAGES**

**Layout techniques**

This refers to the way the words and pictures of an image have been put together. Nothing is positioned on a page accidentally but rather everything is placed in order to create a unity of ideas and **let the viewer’s eye move naturally from the most important feature to the least. We read from left to right and top to bottom – layout often reflects this.**

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| **Technique** | **Definition** | **Purpose/Effect** |
| **Balance** | Images aim to give a balanced effect by dividing the space into thirds, quarters or halves with each section needing similar proportions or elements. | Makes the image look professional, more appealing and well planned |
| **Borders** | Some are simple straight lines while others can be intricate carved patterns. | Used to create an edge to an image. It focuses the viewer’s eye on the page. It can reflect the image’s content eg koru shapes on a poster advertising a Maori film |
| **Box** | A box or an area of colour behind a block of text | Attracts the eye to is and shows it as belonging together but a separate part of the total image |
| **Direction** | The layout makes you use your automatic left-to-right and top-to-bottom scanning habit and the way you follow the gaze, gesture or apparent movement of the subject. | Layout techniques can lead your eye through the image to make sure you sight all the key bits. |
| **Dominant image** | Close your eyes when the image is in front of you and the first thing your eye focuses on when you open them again is the dominant image. | Used to grab a viewer’s attention so that they will look at the rest of the static image more closely. |
| **Empty space** | Can be found around words and pictures | Used to draw attention to words or images |
| **Perspective** | The image might be 2D or 3D | Used to make an image look flat or to give it depth. Embossing or shadowing in a 2D image can build depth |
| **Proportion** | When the graphic elements are in correct ratio to each other e.g. a person’s head should match the size of the body | Sometimes proportion is distorted to create a dramatic or a humorous effect |

**j0078753VISUAL TECHNIQUES**

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| **Alignment** | Whether texts or images are centred or start on the left or the right of the page | Can be used to attract attention or to give a sense of harmony and balance to the image |
| **Allusion** | Part of the image is based on a well-known person or story. | This instantly calls up ideas that help state the message and attitudes that suit the creator’s purpose. |
| **Bold lines** | Outlining something in black | Used to frame the image and keep the viewer’s eye focussed or to give the feature definition |
| **Bubble /balloon** | Oval shape enclosing the spoken words or thoughts of the person pictured – little circles before the oval with the words mean it is a thought bubble and it is important not to confuse the two | They let the artist show who said or thought the words and is a less cluttered way of giving the info than just words. |
| **Bullet points** |  | A way of giving a lot of information in an easy to read format |
| **Caricature.** | Drawing of a person that exaggerates certain features eg the nose or eyebrows | Used to make people laugh, the person is usually instantly recognisable and it can be used to suggest the person’s mood or attitude |
| **Clothing** | Clothes, jewellery and props and the way they are drawn, | They can all suggest the occupation, social class, lifestyle and personality of the person pictured |
| **Colour** | **Green/white**: nature, natural, clean, fresh  **Blue**: calm relaxing  **Red**: violence, danger, love  **Purple**: royalty, exclusiveness  **Gold**: richness, value  **White**: purity  **Yellow**: spring, youth, sunshine, energy, cheerful  **Grey:** boredom, bad weather  **Black:** death, sophistication, elegance | Colours are often chosen for their symbolic value. Some colours are brighter and more eye catching or can help represent a particular idea. Creates impact, grabs attention. Affects mood, emotion. Can convey an idea or message without words. |
| **Contrast** | Using two colours or juxtaposing (putting side by side) a picture with an area of text | Used to catch attention and to highlight differences eg the before and after pictures for beauty products |
| **Cropping** | Cutting bits off a picture | This catches the eye because the resulting image is odd. It focuses you strongly on the bit that is left. |
| **Ellipsis** | Series of dots….. | Used to draw the eye or to make the viewer pause. Can be used to connect TWO ideas |
| **Facial expressions** | These can be happy or sad, angry or romantic, thoughtful or enthusiastic | Used to convey emotions associated with the product being advertised or the person portrayed |
| **Lettering / font** | Can be upper (capital letters) or lower case, italic or bold, different fonts or sizes or colours | Needs to be easy to read and appropriate for the information. Larger lettering is usually for the most important information and smaller lettering for the least important information |
| **Lines** | These can be drawn lines, like the ones following a moving object or natural ones like the skyline | They can be used to indicate speed or to lead your eye from one part of the text to another. |
| **Logo** | A visual design that is associated with a group or product or place e.g. the golden M shape for McDonalds | Used for easy recognition of a company |
| **Montage** | Placing one element to partly cover another | This adds depth and interest to the text and is used to emphasise the element on top and often to lead the eye to another element. |
| **Reverse Print** | White text on a dark background (reversing the normal black text on a white background) | Used to make the lettering standout |
| **Size** | Images and words can be small of large | The larger something is the more important it is |
| **Stereotype** | A mental image about a group of people eg blondes, rugby players, Frenchmen |  |
| **Superimposing images** | This is when one image is placed over another or over text in such a way that they can both still be seen | Creates more interest in the image for the viewer because it creates layers of meaning. A way of attracting attention. |
| **Symbols** | Things that represent something else e.g. a heart symbolises love, a silver fern symbolises New Zealand | Used to convey information, ideas or information quickly, to help viewers make connections |
| **Unusual images** | Pictures that you would not usually associate with the product/place | Used to make viewers stop and look more carefully. |
| **Well known /popular faces** | Pictures of people who are easily recognised | Used to endorse the product being advertised or to suggest you will be like that person if you use the product. |

TYPES OF PUNCTUATION

A new paragraph is used when:

* there is a change of topic
* there is a change of speaker
* time has passed
* there is a change of place
* there is a change of character

Brackets are used ( )

\* to give extra information within a sentence

\* to enclose asides

\* to give reference information, for example page numbers

\* to indicate stage directions in a script

Dashes are used –

\* as brackets

\* to show a sudden change of thought

* to lead to the unexpected
* to mark an incomplete or interrupted sentence
* to introduce or follow a list
* to separate a repetition
* to mark an afterthought

Question mark ?

* to show that a direct question has been asked

Exclamation mark !

* to show strong feeling
* sometimes to show it was said loudly – depends on context

Dots….

* to make the reader pause or to show the speaker paused

Colon:

* used to introduce a list of things or people
* for quotations or speeches in playscripts
* for division of time, Bible references, play references

Semi-colon ;

* used to break up long sentences
* separate lists of phrases or clauses

Speech marks “ “

* used to show the actual words spoken by someone
* to draw attention to the words within the speech marks and suggest they have a different meaning.

**There is a lot of information here but many people fail this achievement standards because they don’t know the difference between verbal and visual features or they cannot name the language features found in the text.**

**HOW CAN I LEARN THESE TERMS?**

* Make cards with the term on one side and the definition on the other
* Test a friend and get them to test you
* When you pass a billboard or see an advertisement mentally identify a couple of the visual and verbal language techniques.
* Write a list of those you can remember
* Study the ones you have trouble remembering
* Ask your teacher for help with the ones you still don’t understand
* Practise, practise, practise.

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**Other language terms I should know**

Carry this booklet around and if your teacher uses another term that isn’t in here write it down here to help you remember it.