

Creating and Presenting: Whose Reality?

Authors and directors are in the business of creating convincing fictional realities. They aim to engage readers and viewers so that they enter imaginatively into the world of the text and the lives of the characters within it, and believe in the reality of the story. Authors use the idea that reality can be understood differently, that it can be subverted, and even that alternative realities can be created. By exploring such ideas, they open up new possibilities for the characters they create, and for the ways readers understand those they write about.

Four short stories are provided as models for your own creative writing.

Ryunosuke Akutagawa: In the Grove

Ray Bradbury: The Veldt

Ray Bradbury: The Pedestrian

Jhumpa Lahiri: 'A Temporary Matter' (in Interpreter of Maladies)

Tasks:

1. For each of the texts you are to write short responses to each of the following:
 - What fictional context (reality) has the author created?
 - How does the fictional context differ from what you would consider to be your contemporary reality?
 - What was the author's purpose in creating the fictional context? How does this fictional context allow the author to explore important ideas? What does the author want to reader to understand about the nature of 'reality' from the experience of reading the text?
2. Use one of the texts as a model for writing a creative text of your own (700–900 words).
3. Write an explanation of the choices you made in the creation of your own text using the following as guidelines:
 - Identify the text you used as your model for writing.
 - Talk about the choices you made about language, audience, purpose and context when you were planning your text.
 - Explain how your text draws on the text(s) you used as a model for your writing. (This can be interpreted quite broadly. You might, for example, have used a different style, but reflected, or built upon, the alternative reality in the model.)
 - Analyse your own choice of language and discuss the choices you have made and their intended impact on your reader.
 - Write your explanation in paragraphs and complete sentences.