

Teacher Notes



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Symbols



I do: my turn to talk. This is the explanation section of our lesson where you are required to listen.



We do: this is where we discuss or work on the concepts together.



You do: your turn to be involved. You may be working in a group or on an activity individually.

Introduction to

Narrative Features



What Are Narrative Features?

Narrative features (sometimes called narrative elements) are the text characteristics which can be found in most narratives.

Some of the most important narrative features are:

- setting
- characterisation
- plot.

Let's examine each of these narrative features in more detail.



Setting

The setting locates a narrative within a time and a place. Some narratives take place within a single setting, whereas other narratives take place across a number of settings.

The setting can shape the plot of a narrative. For example, a narrative set in a castle is likely to be very different to a narrative set in the desert.



Describing the Setting

Settings must be created for the reader using descriptive language. Creating a particular mood is also important when describing setting. One of the most effective ways to describe the setting of a narrative is to use descriptive language which appeals to the five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste).

Descriptive language includes:

- adjectives and adjectival phrases (to describe nouns)
- adverbs and adverbial phrases (to describe verbs).



Describing a Setting - Example

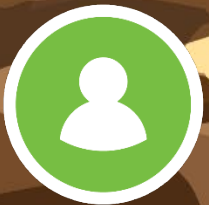
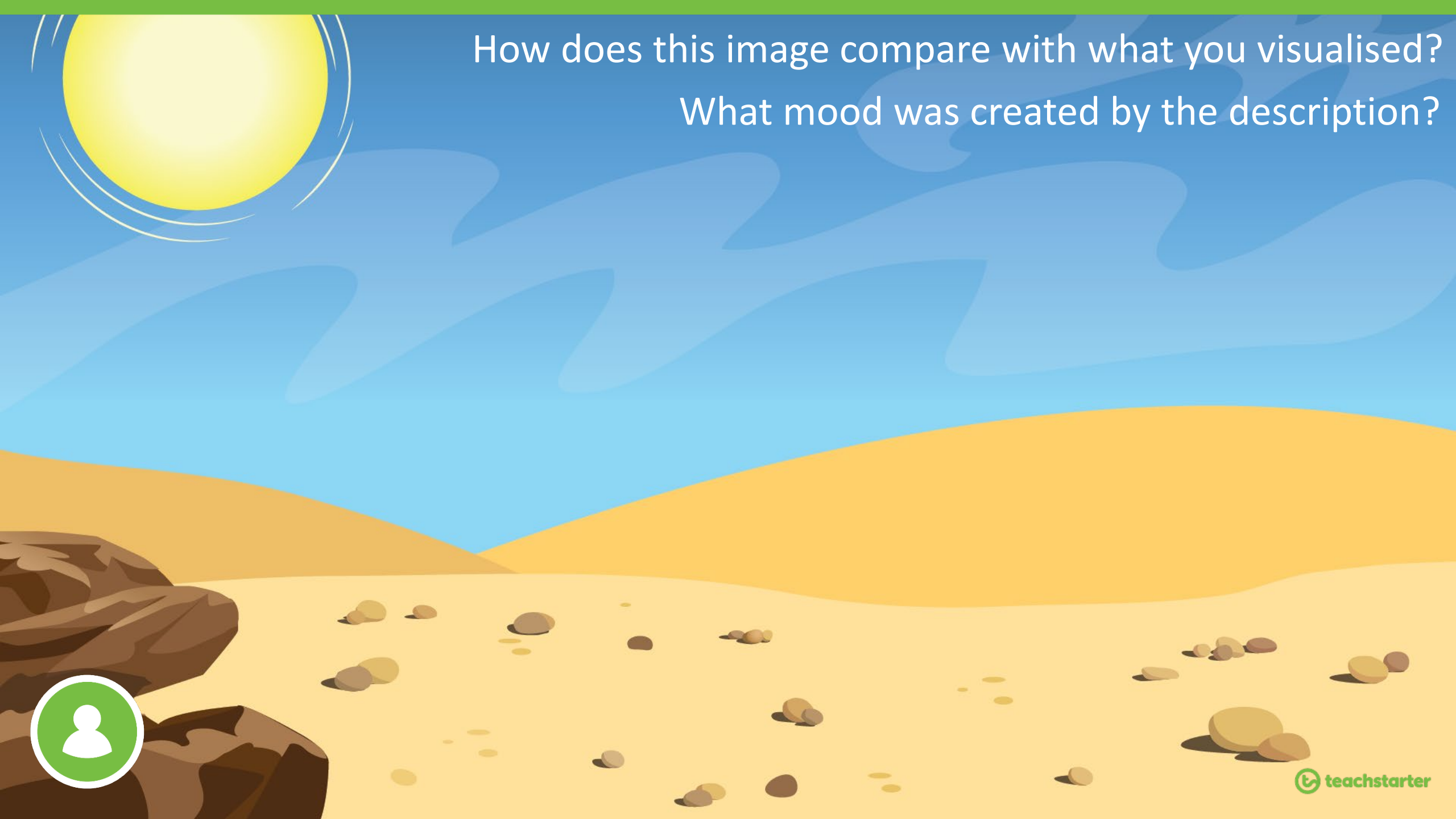
Close your eyes. Try and visualise the setting being described.

The cracked and bare earth sat despairingly beneath the hot and blazing sun. A dusty odour completely flooded the air. The gentle pattering of rain had not been heard in this silent landscape for many years now. A collection of rocks sat lifelessly on the hot desert floor. Above them, white wispy clouds scribbled patterns across the sky.

Now open your eyes.



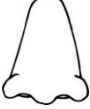



How does this image compare with what you visualised?
What mood was created by the description?



Describing a Setting - Example

Here are some phrases from the text which appeal to the five senses.

I can see... 	I can hear... 	I can smell... 	I can feel... 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the cracked and bare earth• a collection of rocks• white wispy clouds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the gentle pattering of rain• this silent landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a dusty odour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the hot and blazing sun• the hot desert floor



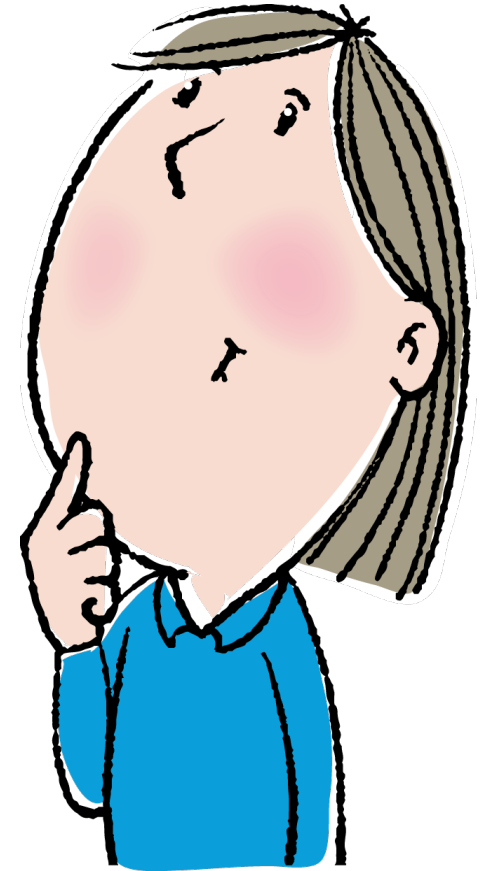
Describing a Setting - Activity

You are now going to work with a partner to write a description of the narrative setting on the following slide.

Use the [Five Senses Graphic Organiser](#) to brainstorm what you might see, hear, smell, touch and taste in this setting.

Use all of your ideas to write a paragraph describing the setting. Aim for at least five sentences.

Remember to create a particular mood.





Describing a Setting - Example

As a class, share and discuss your descriptive paragraphs. Add some of your favourite descriptive phrases to the table below.

I can see... 	I can hear... 	I can smell... 	I can feel... 



Characterisation

The main characters are the focus of a narrative. They can be people, animals, imaginary beings or magical objects.

It is important to make characters seem 'real' by describing their appearance, personality and emotions.

The process of describing the characters of a narrative is called 'characterisation'.



Describing Characters

The 'STEAL' technique can be a useful method of describing the appearance, personality and emotions of characters.

- **Speech:** What does the character say? How do they speak?
- **Thoughts:** What are the characters thoughts and feelings?
- **Effect on others:** How do people react to the character?
- **Actions:** What does the character do? How do they behave?
- **Looks:** What does the character look like?

Show your reader how your character looks, talks, thinks and feels.



Describing Characters - Example

Close your eyes. Try and visualise the character being described.

Professor Paleo sighed deeply as he wiped his plump, sweaty hands on his beige Safari suit. He was exhausted, but he was not going to give up now. The professor's pet eagle perched loyally on his wide-brimmed hat, watching his master dusting away layers of sand.

Suddenly, the excited professor jumped. His spectacles slid off the end of his nose. His moustache twitched with anticipation. "Oh my, what have we here?" he whispered, bending down again for a closer look. "Could it be?" Slowly, gently, he pulled the dinosaur fossil out of the hot, barren earth.

Now open your eyes.



Describing Characters - Example

How does this image compare with what you visualised Professor Paleo might look like?

What examples of the STEAL technique can you find in the description?

Could any additional details be added to the character description?



Describing Characters - Activity

You are now going to work with a partner to write a description of this character. It may help to place her in the setting that you have already described.

Use the STEAL technique to brainstorm a description for this character.

Use all of your ideas to write a paragraph describing this character. Aim for at least five sentences. Remember to show, not just tell!



Narrative Plot

The plot is the sequence of events that unfold in a narrative. A problem or challenge (which must be overcome by the main characters) is central to the development of a plot. This problem or challenge is called the 'complication'.

As the main characters attempt to overcome the complication, a series of events unfolds. These events lead to a point of high suspense, called the 'climax'.

The climax is the 'big moment' of the narrative. It is the point at which the main character will either succeed or fail in their task. The outcome of the climax is called the 'resolution'.



Developing a Plot

Developing ideas for a plot can be tricky. It can help to draw upon some basic story types and mould them to your own setting and characters. Some of these include:

- a battle or contest
- a journey or quest
- a change or transformation.



Developing a Plot - Example

Orientation – The Sahara desert, present day. Professor Paleo uncovers a rare dinosaur fossil. He intends to use the fossil to support his research into this little-known dinosaur.

Complication – The fossil is stolen from Professor Paleo by his nemesis, the evil Doctor Raptor. Doctor Raptor wants to add the rare fossil to his own private collection.

Events and Climax – Professor Paleo tracks Doctor Raptor across the desert. When he catches up with him, Doctor Raptor threatens to throw the rare fossil into a deep canyon.

Resolution - Professor Paleo's pet eagle swoops down on the unsuspecting Doctor Raptor and recovers the fossil. The professor's research is safe.



Developing a Plot - Activity


You are now going to work with a partner to develop a narrative plot. It may help to use the setting and characters that you have already described.

Use the [Narrative Writing Planning Template](#) to brainstorm the title, orientation (setting, characters and mood), complication, events, climax and resolution of your narrative.

Once you have finished your plan, share your ideas with your classmates.

Narrative Planning Template

Title _____

Orientation		
Setting	Characters	Mood
		

↓

Complication

↓

Events and Climax

↓

Resolution

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Writing a Narrative - Activity

Now it is time to put all of your features together to build a story.

In pairs or individually, use your plan to write a short narrative. Aim for at least one page of your workbook.

Once you have finished, be sure to carefully edit your work for errors.

Share your narrative with your classmates.

