

WEBSITE RESOURCE W6.2

Selecting texts for teaching reading

Tennent, Reedy, Hobsbaum and Gamble (2016: 22-33) in their book *Guiding Readers* offer guidelines to support teachers when they are selecting texts for classroom use, particularly when working with groups and the whole class.

To begin with they set out three principles:

1. 'Reading for pleasure' is not an 'add on'. Engagement in reading is the context in which all the teaching of reading should take place.
2. Being familiar with the text is essential. There are no short cuts to teaching reading well – teachers have to know the texts being used.
3. Texts should be chosen for the potential they offer. When making decisions about which texts to buy and use for teaching what the text offers must be considered. A text which offers multiple possibilities will be a better choice than one which doesn't.

Text potential

Tennent *et al.* go on to identify interrelated areas of potential and challenge that should be considered, all of which can be provide possibilities for learning and for foci for teaching. The best texts will lend themselves to consideration of some, though not necessarily all of the following aspects:

- Subject: what is the text about?
- Text type, purpose, and intended readership: is it written to amuse, persuade, inform, or warn? Is it a balanced view?
- Theme – the deeper meaning.
- Narrative features: from whose perspective is it written? Where is it set?
- Literary features: particular stylistic features.
- Language features.
- Grammar, syntax, sentence structure.
- Vocabulary.
- Historical, social and cultural context: where is it set and who is represented?

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- Coherence.
- Visual features: design of material.
- Making links to background knowledge. (Tennent et al., 2016: 23)

A valuable way of focusing the teaching and learning to be planned is to map the potential and challenges of texts under these areas as the teacher reads the text chosen and becomes familiar with what it offers. Figure W6.2.1 will aid decisions about which books to choose.

Tennent *et al.* (2016) provide 12 detailed mappings of text potential in the case studies contained in their book.

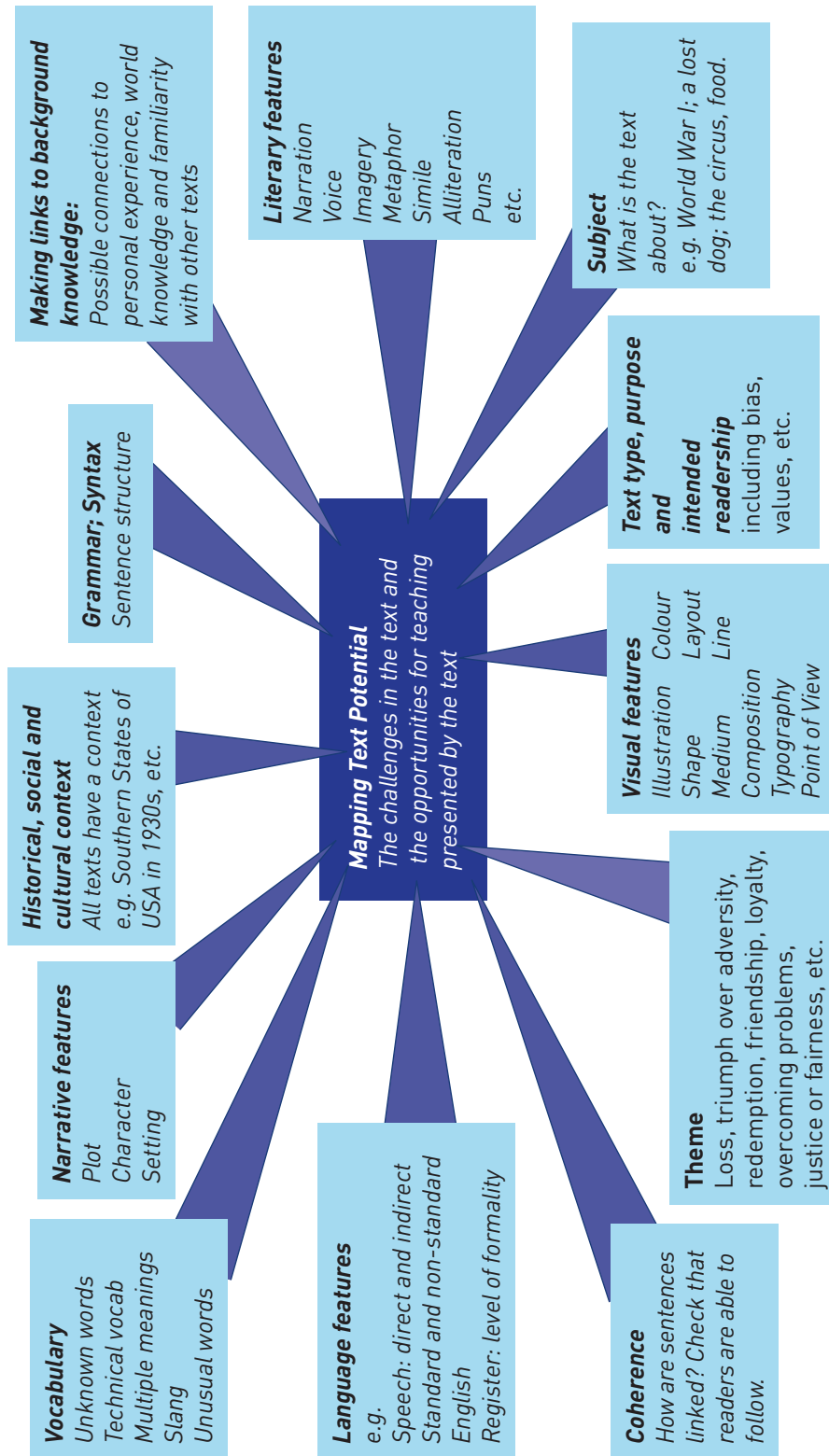


Figure 6.2.1 Text potential