



## Related Material Pack

HSC English (Standard) Distinctively Visual

*Analysis of Suitable Related Material for  
Module A: Experience Through Language*

*Elective 2: Distinctively Visual*

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# 'On the Wallaby Track'

## Close Analysis:

- Oil painting depicting a bush family 'on the wallaby track' – Australian **idiom** meaning to travel in search of work.
- The painting offers a bleak representation of a family who are depicted as homeless, camping in the bush – shown through the image of the tent in the **background**. It is an image conveying the hardships and struggles of bush life – similar to Lawson's concerns in The Drover's Wife.
- Isolated bush **setting** – **colours** are natural and rustic conveying a sense of realism – similar to Lawson's narrative realism. McCubbin rejected the methods of the emerging European abstract artists, deciding to maintain the significance of the 'subject' in art as it better conveyed a meaningful national identity. This links with Lawson's belief in the realist sketch story achieving a similar aim.
- Mother and child are the **salient** objects in the **foreground** of the image – slumped against the tree, her forlorn **facial expression** in conjunction with the use of **offer gaze** operates as an invitation into this world of poverty and hardship.
- The mother appears exhausted, unable to bestow attention upon her infant, who is depicted as trying to crawl from her lap – she is also gazing in the opposite direction to the baby, which provides a similarity to the drover's wife.
- The **direction** of her gaze creates an **invisible vector** to the bushman – her husband – in the **background** of the painting. He is depicted at a distance, **proportionally smaller** to the woman, his faced obscured as he is preoccupied with boiling the billy.
- Through the use of **proximity** (distance), the artist conveys the emotional detachment between husband and wife – a consequence of hardship.
- Also, the responder can only connect empathetically with the woman, whose facial expression clearly conveys her weariness – similar to the empathy we are

**Composer:** Frederick McCubbin

**Text Type:** Oil painting

**Publication Date:** 1896

**Suitable as ORM for:**

- Henry Lawson's short stories

encouraged to feel with the drover's wife.

- The ground separating husband and wife is represented as a pathway, creating a **visible vector** connecting the foreground to the background of the painting. This, in combination with the clearing created by the **positioning of the trees in the centre** of the background, conveys the impression of never-ending bushland. This heightens the feeling that the family are trapped in the vastness and monotony of the Australian landscape, amplifying their struggles.

### Student Activity

After viewing the painting and reading the above analysis, write a paragraph explaining how Frederick McCubbin uses distinctively visual to convey his concerns.


# 'Suburban Sonnet'

## Close Analysis:

- In this poem Gwen Harwood depicts the private world of a housewife who once played for the famous pianist Rubinstein. Now, however, the woman is trapped in world characterised by household drudgery. As such, she experiences feelings of depression and frustration.

- This image is conveyed through the **diction** in the opening lines of the poem: "She practices a fugue, though it can matter/ to no one now if she plays well or not". Here, the futility and meaninglessness in her practicing of the piano is heightened through the **alliteration** in "no one" and "not". There is a sense that the woman has been abandoned and this has rendered her talent irrelevant and purposeless.

This notion of entrapment is furthered by the image of her "two children" who sit "beside her on the floor". Rather than derive enjoyment from hearing their mother play, the children "chatter,/then scream and fight"; the escalation of their behaviour is conveyed through the **cumulative listing** and rises to a **crescendo** before the woman "hushes them".

- However, this proves only to be a momentary reprieve from the chaos of domestic life as the image is built to a climax of soured and "crusted milk" as the woman "rushes to the stove/too late". Here, the poet establishes an image of an emotionally drained woman through the use of **metaphor** in "zest and love/drain out with soapy water". This is **contrasted** with the revelation that "Once she played/for Rubinstein", suggestive of a comparatively more exciting and meaningful life. The **word order** placing "Once" at the beginning of the sentence, in conjunction with the use of the **past tense verb** "played" firmly establishes this as an experience belonging to the woman's past life; something she can only access through nostalgia.

**Composer:** Gwen Harwood

**Text Type:** Poem - sonnet

**Publication Date:** First appeared in *Poems Volume II*, published in 1968

**Suitable as ORM for:**

- Henry Lawson's short stories
- Maestro
- Seachange



# 'Exotic Rissole'

## Close Analysis:

- In his non-fiction short story, Tanveer Ahmed – a Bangladeshi-Australian, conveys a distinctively visual image of the childhood friendship he shared with Australian-born Daryl Lynch.
- Throughout the story, environment and relationships are shown to be a source of fulfilment.
- The natural **setting** of the creek is established as important to Tanveer and Daryl's relationship as their friendship flourishes there. As such, the creek operates as a **symbol** of the strength and nourishment their friendship affords them.
- This **contrasts** with the harsh and poor socio-economic suburban setting of Toongabbie.
- This is reflected in the **colloquialism** of the **gustatory imagery** in "once Lynchy had chowed down his samosas it was time to ride to the creek". Here, the use of **colloquial language** in conjunction with the **juxtaposition** of the Australian **idiom** "chowed down" and the exotic "samosas", highlights Tanveer and Daryl's sense of togetherness, despite being from different cultural backgrounds and effectively conveys an image of youthful exuberance.
- The positive image of Tanveer and Daryl's friendship is set against the broken and dysfunctional suburban culture of Toongabbie. Despite the composer using **cumulative listing** to create an overwhelmingly negative image of a suburb characterised by "the highest concentration of drug addicts, single mothers and ex-cons in all of Sydney", Tanveer and Daryl are able to foster their friendship by escaping to the creek where they would "play marbles, skim rocks across the water

**Composer:** Tanveer Ahmed

**Text Type:** Non-fiction short story

**Publication Date:** First appeared in *Growing Up Asian in Australia* edited by Alice Pung, published in 2008

**Suitable as ORM for:**

- Henry Lawson's short stories
- Maestro
- Seachange
- The Shoe-horn Sonata
- Douglas Stewart *Selected Poems*

or play French cricket” – conveying an image of an innocent childhood played out and preserved in the face of the adverse social milieu.

- The final image of Tanveer’s mother acquiescing to cook rissoles, but mixing in “pieces of chilli and turmeric paste” complements Daryl “chowing down samosas” and operates as **symbol** of the strong bond shared by the boys and their desire to relish in the culture of the other, whilst also making what is foreign their own.

## Student Activity

After reading ‘Exotic Rissoles’ and the above analysis, write a paragraph explaining how Tanveer Ahmed uses distinctively visual to convey his ideas.
