

Text Structure and Language Features: Example 2

Text Structure - Narrative Background Information

All cultures have a myth about the origin of Death, which explains their view of why people do not live forever. This myth is from the stories of the people of the Lipan - Apache Indians, in North America.

DEATH COMES TO THE WORLD

Orientation - includes setting and introduction to main characters.

Long, long ago, just at the beginning of the world, when all the trees, all the animals and all the birds were people, everyone was happy. There was plenty of food, the land was beautiful and all was well. There was no Death in the world.

Complication

This continued for many ages, until one day, the people began to discuss the fact that there was no death. Many wanted to live forever, so they thought that this was good thing, but others believed that living forever would not be good. They talked and talked and the arguments flew fiercely back and forth. After many days, Raven called loudly "I want Death to exist." Another voice replied, "If there must be Death, then we will have it, but it will not be forever. The dead will leave us and then they should return after four days."

"No," croaked Raven. "that's not right. We'll make this decision after we see what happens when we drop a stone into the water. If the pebble floats, then there will be no Death, but if it falls to the bottom, then we will have Death, and it will be forever. The dead will not return after four days." The others considered this carefully. Finally they agreed with Raven. Raven told them that they should follow him down to the water's edge.

Raven picked up the stone and hurled it into the stream. It swirled around in the clear water and dropped slowly to the bottom. As they waited for it to rise to the surface, there was a long silence from all those watching. The stone stayed at the bottom of the water. The audience sighed. "There," said Raven, "we will have Death. When our people die, they will never return."

Resolution

One terrible day, Raven awoke to find one of his children had gone to the land of Death. He began to weep bitterly. "Come back, come back, my child," he called. He went to the people and said, "I've changed my mind. People should come back from the dead after four days."

"No, you can't change your mind now," said a leader sadly. "It was your suggestion that Death should be forever. We saw the stone sink into the river and that means that the dead can never return to the world of the living."

Coda

Then Raven let out a grief-stricken cry as he realised that his child was lost to him forever.

From that time on, death and sadness have existed in the world. All people have to die and can not come back to life ever again.

Language Features

Use of various tenses, including past, present, future. e.g. continued, explains, would not be

Use of word chains to build topic information, e.g. lost, Death grief-stricken, die

Use of action verbs, e.g. falls, hurled

Use of saying verbs, e.g. croaked, said

Use of complex verbal groups, e.g. have to die, began to weep

Use of detailed noun groups, e.g. the stories of the Lipan-Apache Indians, in North America

Use of conjunctions and connectives, From that time on, e.g. finally, Then

Use of pronouns to track the subject i.e. referencing, e.g. they,

Use of adjectives, e.g. long, grief-stricken

Use of adverbs and adverbial phrases, e.g. it swirled around in the clear water

Use of ellipsis, e.g. Raven picked up the stone and (he) hurled if into the stream

Use of substitution e.g. This continued

Use of direct speech, e.g. "Come back, come back, my child," he called.

Use of reported speech, e.g. Raven told them to follow him...

Use of empty subject, e.g. There was plenty of food,

Use of complex sentences, e.g. This continued for many ages, until one day the people began to discuss the fact that there was no death.