

Text Structure and Language Features: Example 1

Text Structure - Review

Context - includes background information on text, e.g. author, type of work, setting and brief synopsis

Text description - describes main character/s, their relationships and key incidents

Judgement - includes opinion and/or recommendation

THE PEARL – A REVIEW

'The Pearl' was written by John Steinbeck, a famous American writer who won the Nobel Prize for Literature for his books about people who have been unjustly treated by society. It is set in the Gulf of Mexico and is about a poor indigenous Mexican family.

The plot is easy to follow. Kino is a fisherman who lives with his wife, Juana, and baby son. One day a scorpion stings the baby so Kino and Juana decide to take him to the doctor. This is a desperate move because in their hearts they know that this rich, indolent, greedy and racist man will refuse to treat their precious son. This is exactly what happens when Kino offers his payment of eight almost valueless pearls, which is all that he has.

Juana prays that Kino will find a valuable pearl, and her prayers are answered when Kino dives to the bottom of the sea and finds the biggest, most perfect pearl in the world. She and Kino believe that now their lives will be enriched in every way; however, the pearl does not bring them wealth and happiness. It attracted only evil, and in the end, death.

'The Pearl' is a book which appeals to readers of all ages because its message is simple and the plot is gripping. Steinbeck's narrative ensures that we become involved in the lives of its main characters, Kino and Juana. It is easy to side with these two young people against the forces of evil which try to rob them of what is rightfully theirs. We hate the fat, evil doctor who will not treat their son because they have no money, just as we hate the greedy pearl buyers who plot to cheat Kino when he tries to sell them his priceless pearl.

'The Pearl' makes us think about life.

Language Features

Use of present tense; past tense if work has a historical setting - may or may not use temporal sequence of events when relating key incidents

Use relating verbs, e.g. It is set in the Gulf of Mexico and is about a poor indigenous family.

Use action verbs, e.g. dives, take, treat

Use of saying and thinking verbs, e.g. was written, think

Use of feeling verbs, e.g. appeals, hate

Use of passive voice, e.g. was written, are answered

Use of modality, e.g. would

Use of technical language, e.g. synopsis, author, theme

Use of adjectives, e.g. poor, indigenous, easy, desperate, rich, indolent, greedy, racist

Use of detailed noun groups, e.g. readers, of all ages, these two young people

Use of evaluative language, e.g. hate, evil, greedy, cheat, indolent, precious

Use of persuasive language in judgement, e.g. simple, gripping, appeals, involved with, ensures

Use of compound and complex sentences

Use of title of text as sentence theme, e.g. 'The Pearl' is