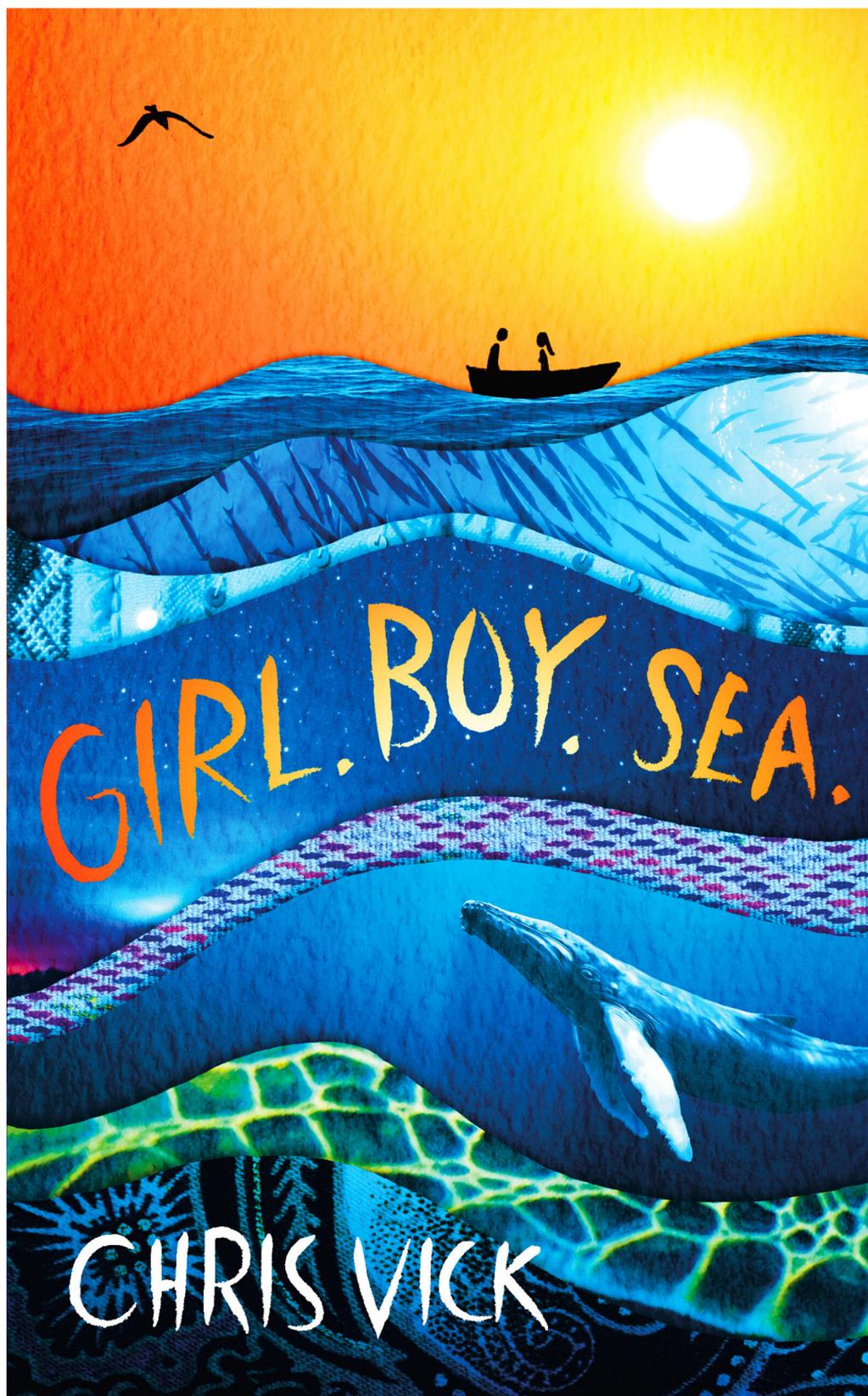


# CILIP CARNEGIE SHORTLIST 2020

## SHADOWING RESOURCES



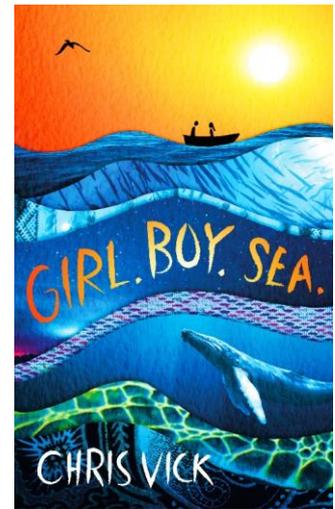
## CILIP Carnegie Medal 2020 TALKING POINTS

Title: **Girl. Boy. Sea.**

Author: **Chris Vick**

Publisher: Head of Zeus

Age: 10+



### AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP

- Are Bill and Aya people you would naturally expect to become friends? (Why, or why not?)
- Their friendship only develops gradually – are there particular moments that stand out for you, when you could see that they were definitely becoming friends, after all?
- Their backgrounds are very different, and they speak different languages – so what is it that brings them together?
- How does their friendship help them to be strong, and to survive?

### STORYTELLING

- How do you think Aya has come to be such a good storyteller?
- How does storytelling help Aya and Bill with the difficult decisions they need to make, and help them to survive?
- How do the stories help Bill to understand Aya better?
- Think of some of the techniques Aya and Shahrazad use to enthrall their readers – is Chris Vick himself doing some of the same things?

### AYA AND BILL

- Aya is strong and fearless, in the face of some terrible hardship – where do you think this strength and fearlessness have come from?
- Aya is very secretive at first – how do we (and Bill) discover the truth of her experiences?
- Has Bill changed and grown by the end of the book? Or do we just see him differently?

### SURVIVAL

- There are a lot of survival stories about refugees like Aya – why do you think the author decided to add the story of a relatively privileged British boy who has to struggle alongside her? (They have come from quite different backgrounds, but are their struggles essentially the same now?)

- How important is it for the characters' survival that they are able to remain positive and hopeful?
- Survival stories often ask questions about how far people will go in order to survive – did you ever doubt that Aya and Bill would be up to the challenge?

### **THE OCEAN**

- For much of the book, the setting is just uninterrupted ocean, for miles and miles. How does the author make this setting exciting?
- Is the ocean a positive or a negative character in the book? A beautiful place to cherish, or a dangerous one to fear?
- The author knows a lot about oceans, and marine biology – how might he be hoping to change the way we think about oceans and how we treat them?

### **REALISM**

- How does the author make you feel like you're really living on the boat with the characters while you're reading? Can you find some examples where he does this effectively?
- The book feels realistic to read – but is often described as “magical”, too – what kind of magic does it contain?
- How clear-cut are the boundaries between what is realistic or naturalistic and what is more supernatural?

### **SOME FURTHER QUESTIONS**

- What kind of book did you expect this to be from just looking at the cover?
- The title is both very simple and rather unusual – did you like it?
- As far as we know, there are no plans for a sequel to this book – but what might the author do with one, if there were?
- We readers are always on Aya and Bill's side in their struggle to survive – but does the book suggest some more ambiguous moral questions, too, where right and wrong aren't quite so obvious?

### **AND FINALLY...**

- Some books stay with you long after you've read them – they change the way you see the world. Was this one of those books, for you?
- Does it deserve to win the Carnegie Medal?

## FURTHER THINKING

CILIP works in partnership with Amnesty International and Inclusive Minds to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of human rights, inclusion and representation in children's literature. The discussion points below are intended to further stimulate reader's thinking on the themes explored in the shortlisted books.

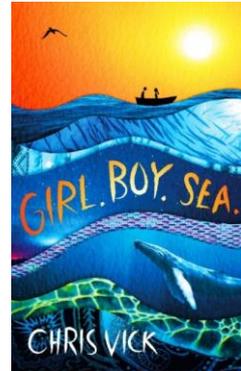
### CILIP Carnegie Medal 2020

Title: **Girl. Boy. Sea.**

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#### Discussing human rights in this story:

Equality; right to life and safety; freedom of movement; right to healthcare; right to peace and order.

- Whose story is being told? Who tells it?
- What assumptions does Bill make about Aya?
- How do you feel about what happens to Stephan?



#### Discussing inclusion and representation in this story:

- Bill and Aya are very different in some ways. Consider how they are similar and where they find common ground.
- In what ways does Aya's storytelling play an important and symbolic role?
- Why does Stephan comment that all the heroes in Aya's stories are girls? Consider why they are all female.
- 'I thought my life maybe wasn't that ordinary, no more than Stephan's life, no more than Aya's. It just seemed normal. Or had once.' Consider how normal is subjective.



# ***Girl. Boy. Sea.* by Chris Vick**

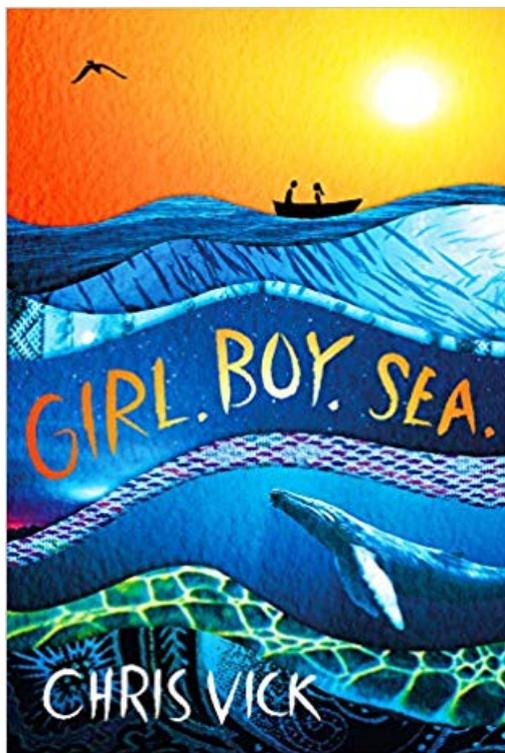
The activities in this resource can be completed as an individual, in a pair or small group. Where possible, you are prompted to discuss and share with others to add to and develop your ideas.

## **Before reading**

### **Making predictions**

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, complete the four prediction tasks, below.
- If possible, discuss your ideas with other readers.
- Keep a note of your ideas so that you can refer back to them as you read.

### **The front cover**



- Examine the book's front cover
- What do you think the book will be about? What type of book do you think it will be? (For example, does it belong to a particular genre?)
- What is the likely audience for the book?
- Does it remind you of any other books? Does it make you want to pick the book up and start to read?

## The title

The title of the novel you are going to read is *Girl. Boy. Sea.*

- What do you think of the title? What meanings and connotations can you think of for each word separately, and then for the whole title? Why do you think the words have been separated by full stops rather than commas?
- Discuss your ideas, questions and predictions about the novel, including what genre of story you might expect.

## A taster

- Read the extracts from the novel, below.
- How do they add to your ideas, questions and predictions about the novel, including what genre of story you might expect?

### 1.

Closer, I saw a nest of black hair falling from the end of the rags and dusty feet sticking out the other. Skinny legs. Bones wrapped in skin.

I was shaking. I wanted to see. I didn't want to see.

I paddled up to the barrel and prodded a foot with the oar.

'Hey!' I said. Then I thought: I'm shouting at no one. You're dead.

I grabbed at a bit of rag and pulled the barrel closer. The rags were a blanket or cloak. I lifted it with my trembling fingers. Underneath was a girl. About my age. Long thin face, closed eyes, dusk skin. She didn't seem to be breathing.

### 2.

Once, there was a wonderful country. The wheat in the fields moved like the sea in the wind, the rivers ran with crystal water. There was honey and saffron and many fine things to eat and drink. The tribes in this land were happy and at peace. Nobody was hungry. In the evening there was music and dancing and the telling of stories.

On the edge of this country there was a great desert, a place of heat and death. And beyond the desert there lived a king. He was a cruel man with a cruel army. His army took for his honour every city and land he wanted. They took diamonds, silver, crops and silks. Where this army went they left a road of bones, a path of ruins and tears. And many widows.

Yet the more the king had the more he desired.

3.

And I knew two things.

One. If Aya wanted to go, she would go. I'd stop her once, twice, maybe a dozen times.

But eventually...

I read what I had written in the notebook what seemed like years before.

*Even if they find two skeletons, not one. In this big nothing, that's something.*

And wrote:

*And what about us, Aya? Even if we make it.*

*What then?*

*What do you really think about all of this, Aya?*

*You and me, flung together by the storm. Easy to be here for each other. Okay. Not easy. We had no choice. But we are together.*

*What about when we're rescued or find land?*

*Different journeys?*

*Not this one. This one we'll travel together.*

## **The structure of the novel**

*Girl. Boy. Sea.* is structured in six main sections.

- The titles of each of the six sections are listed below in order. In brackets are additional titles within some of these sections.
- What additional ideas do these titles give you about what the novel might be about?
- Come up with a story that you think would fit this structure.

Pandora

The Sea (The Tale of Shahrazad, The Thief of the Light)

Land (The Shadow Warrior)

The Sea (The Final Tale of Shahrazad)

Nowhere

The Road of Bones

## **During reading**

We recommend reading the novel without pausing too often, then doing some more substantial work afterwards.

Keep a journal while reading, pausing to write down your reflections about each of the points below. Where possible, have a discussion with other readers before putting your thoughts down on paper.

- Thoughts about the character of Bill and your response to him as a narrator.
- Thoughts about the development of Bill and Aya's relationship.
- Thoughts about the character of Stefan and his relationship with Bill and Aya.
- Thoughts about the continued struggle and survival of the two main characters.
- Thoughts about Aya's stories, your understanding of them and their function in the novel.
- Thoughts about the different settings.

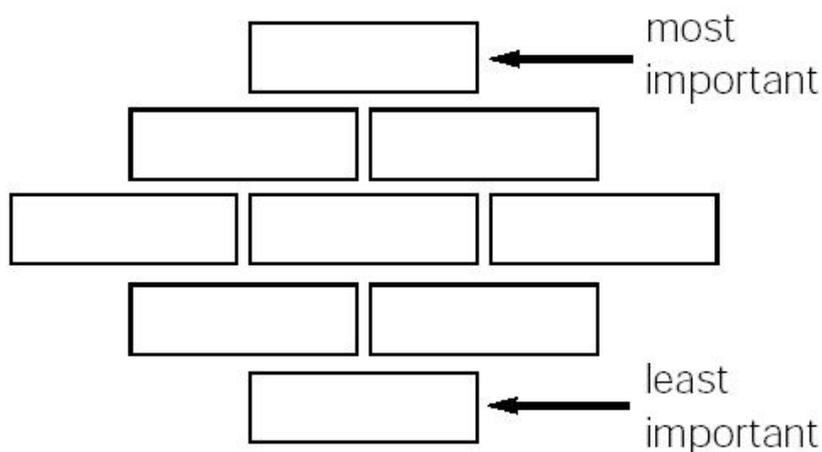
## After reading

### What is the novel about?

- Below are nine suggestions for what *Girl. Boy. Sea.* is about.
- Working on your own, in a pair, or small group, rearrange them into a 'Diamond 9' formation, as shown below.
- If possible, compare your arrangement with another pair or group and discuss any differences.

<b>Girl. Boy. Sea. is about ...</b>		
... the friendship between a young girl and a young boy.	... the importance of hope and resilience.	... how the world can be dark and dangerous.
... migrant struggles and war-torn communities.	... the power of nature.	... the importance and relevance of stories.
... overcoming human differences.	... how life-changing experiences make you a better person.	... the struggle between humans and the environment.

### Diamond 9 pattern



## Lessons for Bill

Bill intermittently writes in a journal during his time in the boat.

- Write a journal entry in the voice of Bill reflecting on what he learned from his experiences. Before you write, identify four or five areas of focus, for example, friendship.

## Editing the novel

Imagine that the editor of the novel has suggested cutting Stefan's death because 'it's far too gruesome and violent for this story, and the characters' reactions to it are troubling.'

- In role as the writer, Chris Vick, write an email to your editor, explaining why you included Stefan's death and whether or not you agree that it should be cut.

## Human relationships

- Read and discuss the opinions from three different readers about Bill and Aya's relationship.
  - Which do you agree with most? What is your own opinion about their relationship and how it is presented in the novel?
- A. I was happy to find that Chris Vick didn't make the relationship between Bill and Aya too romantic. I didn't want to see them turn out that way, because their friendship was such a brilliant part of the novel.
- B. I was disappointed that the end of the novel had Aya declaring her love for Bill. Why couldn't they just stay friends?
- C. The ending of the novel was really annoying. I wanted to see Bill and Aya reunited.

## Difficult stories

Aya tells lots of stories in the novel, but finds her own very difficult to tell.

- Discuss Aya's background – can you relate it to any other stories you've read?
- Discuss how her own story is related to the stories she tells from *Arabian Nights*.
- Discuss the impact of the stories on the two main characters.

## The sea

One reader said:

'For me, the sea is overwhelmingly the main character in this novel. Chris Vick brings it to life so vividly, and it takes on a personality.'

- What do you think of this idea? Discuss your own thoughts about the role of the sea in the novel.

## Survival

Bill and Aya face a lot of struggles during the time when they are lost.

- Find examples of some of these struggles in the novel.
- Discuss how each character responds.
- Discuss your own views about survival – is there anything you wouldn't do to survive?
- Read and discuss this extract, which is towards the end of the novel, after Bill's shark bite. What does survival mean to Bill by the end of the novel?

There's only the light. Glaring. And then I see. I see very clearly.

A mighty sultan. A coat of stars flowing behind him, a river of them twinkling in the sky. He has a scimitar in his hand, heavy and sharp. One swing could cut through a hundred men.

The sultan is a man but a demon too, with diamond blue eyes and a mouth that's wide and hungry, filled with tiny, sharp teeth and a tongue writhing like a snake. He laughs, because he knows he has won. That he will never bow. That he can never be defeated...

*I do not have a name. You also have no name. Not any more...*

'You do have a name. More than one. Murder and torture and rape and slavery and hate.

Many.'

## Adventure

Some of the typical elements of the adventure genre are: action and excitement; courageous protagonists; dark moods, evil adversaries.

- Discuss the extent to which you think *Girl. Boy. Sea.* fits into the adventure genre.

## Reading the reviews

The extracts, below, are all from reviews of the book.

- Which reviewer do you think comes closest to your own view of the book?
- Write a paragraph to express your own views about the novel. You can draw on the review extracts you have read if you wish.
- If possible, share your reviews with other readers.

Vick's writing follows the ebb and flow of the sea and he places the reader in the scene effectively, making them feel as if they too are out at sea. The structure of the sentences and Bill's narrative mimics the rise and fall of the stormy waves and then captures the hopelessness of staring out across an endless horizon.

The two characters are very well crafted and the dynamics between them is beautifully developed – slowly and gradually showing how they become closer and the effect their experience has on them and their relationship. Aya is mysterious, alluring and intriguing. She seems magical and her storytelling shows how important the hope of rescue is – almost as lifesaving as food and drink.

*Katherine on amazon.co.uk*

The relationship between Bill and Aya is told tenderly and with love. Both have faced difficult times and the way they care for each other brought me to tears so many times. Their vulnerability and immaturity shone through at times giving the reader reminders that these characters are just children. I adored the way they learned to communicate through the language barriers too.

*Kerry on goodreads.com*

Told in the timeframe of the days and nights the two spend at the mercy of the sea, sunburnt, hungry, and scared, and on the precipice of life itself, Vick interweaves their days with Aya's stories of Shahrazad and the *Arabian Nights*. The way the heroine prolonged her life at the hands of the king by playing on the king's curiosity – his desire to know what happened next, night after night. In the same way that Bill and Aya persevere: Aya by telling stories and Bill by listening. Cleverly, Vick does the same with the reader – pulling us along on the journey, making us wait for the next piece of the survival story.

*MinervaReads blog*

This tight, tense adventure blends seamlessly with folklore, but what sets it apart is the contemporary message about life in war torn countries, and the civilians who want to save their communities. They look to the world to rescue them or take them in, but Aya realises the despairing truth: she must fight herself. It's a rich and powerful story (within a story).

*Trisha at www.goodreads.com*

## Cards for literary analysis

These cards have been designed for use with any short story or novel. You can select a particular card to work with or rely on your teacher to give you a particular area of focus. You could then work through the bullet points on your card or select a few that seem most interesting or relevant for a particular text.

### Setting

- In which different settings does this story/novel takes place? What part does each setting play? Which setting is most significant and why?
- How important is setting to the story/novel as a whole? Does the setting have a particular impact on the story/novel, or could it be set almost anywhere?
- What difference would it make if this story/novel was set somewhere else? E.g. another country, a rural rather than urban setting, in space!
- How effective do you think the writer has been in creating a sense of place? Are there any particular examples of setting you think are particularly well written? If so, why?
- Is there anything particularly interesting or special about the way setting is used and presented? In what ways is it similar or different to stories/ novels that explore similar themes and ideas, or that are written in the same genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about setting. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Characters

- Who is your favourite character, and why?
- Who do you think is the most important character, and why?
- Who are the other significant characters? What different roles do they have?
- What is special or unusual about the way one or more of the characters is presented?
- Which character would you most like to be friends with, and why? Which character might significant adults want you to be friends with, and why?
- Are characters paired or grouped in any particular ways? E.g. friends, rivals, etc. What ideas are raised by these pairs or groupings?
- Are the characters typical of ones found in this kind of story/novel? Are they distinctive and individual, or stereotypes? Explain your answer.
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about characters. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Form and structure

- What do you think is interesting about the way this story/novel begins?
- What were the key moments in this story/novel? How did they shape the story/novel as a whole?
- If you had to describe the path of this story/novel, what would it be? E.g. journey from childhood to adulthood, from grief to happiness etc.
- What did you notice about the end of this story/novel? Was it what you were expecting? Did it tie up loose ends, or leave some things unresolved?
- Does this story/novel belong to a particular genre? If so, how does it fit in with other stories that you know in the same genre?
- Does the story/novel use just one form or does it include more than one E.g. letters, diary entries, poems, newspaper reports
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about form and structure. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Themes and ideas

- What, to you, are the five most important themes and ideas in this story/novel? If you had to narrow your list down to one theme or idea, what would it be and why? In what ways is this theme presented? E.g. if the theme is love, what exactly does the story/novel have to say about love?
- Does this story/novel deal with big issues that affect the whole world, or small ones that affect individual lives? Give reasons for your answer.
- Does this story/novel contain any themes or ideas that have made you look at the world in new ways? If so, what are they, and how have they changed your views?
- Does this story/novel contain any themes and ideas that explore how people should act and behave? If so, what are they and do you agree with how they are presented?
- Are the themes and ideas presented in ways similar or different to other stories you have read, including stories of the same type, or in the same genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about themes and ideas. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



## Language

- Identify one or two of your favourite passages in the story/novel where language is used particularly well? Explain how it is used.
- How would you describe the language used in this story/novel overall? E.g. poetic, plain, chatty etc.
- Would you say the language in this story/novel is original or creative in any particular way? If so, how?
- Are there any patterns in the language used? If so, what are they, and what is their effect? Are there any other patterns, such as of imagery and symbolism?
- How is dialogue used in the story/novel? Do characters, for example, speak in particularly distinctive ways?
- Is the language similar to how it is used in similar kinds of stories/novels? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about language. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



## Narrative

- How does the writer try to capture and keep the reader's attention? How successful are they in doing this?
- Is the narrative told in order from beginning to end (a linear narrative), or does it move backwards and forwards in time? What is the effect of the order in which events are told?
- Can you think of any other ways the story/novel could be told? For example, by a different character, or in a different order? How would this affect your experience of reading?
- Would you say that this story/novel is told in a particular original or creative way? If so, how?
- Is this story/novel told in a way that is typical for its genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about narrative. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Point of view and voice

- Through whose eyes do we see the events of the story/novel? Do readers get just one point of view or several?
- What do you find interesting about the point or points of view presented?
- If the story/novel is told from different points of view, how does the writer do this?
- What would the story/novel be like if told from someone else's point of view? Whose point of view would you choose, and why?
- How would you describe the tone of voice used to tell the narrative? Does the narrative draw attention to itself by using a particular tone, or is the tone pushed to the background? What is the effect of the choice made by the writer?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about point of view and voice. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Audience and overall personal response

- Who do you think this story/novel was written for, and why? Are there any other groups of people who you think should read it?
- What was your experience of reading this story/novel?
- What would you recommend about this story/novel to other people?
- Which parts of this story/novel did you most enjoy? Were there any parts that you didn't enjoy?
- Do you think this story/novel could be improved in some way? If so, how?
- What other stories (or films, TV, plays etc.) does this story/novel remind you of? In what ways?
- Who do you think should read this book and why?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about personal response and audience. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



These cards are from the *EMC Curriculum Plus Card Collection*. Each box includes eight decks of three different sets of cards – enough for pupils to work in groups of three or four.

The cards are for: Literacy Analysis; Poetry Analysis; Critical Literacy

For full details visit <https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/emc-curriculum-plus-card-collection>