

Analysing and Creating Australian Stories : a student work ebook



Lessons and exercises based on developing skills in exploring and creating Australian stories through analysis and interpretation of perspectives and voice in creative and non-fiction Australian texts

SHELLEY MCNAMARA

Qwiller
www.qwiller.com.au

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Shelley McNamara

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Refugee voices

We are now going to look at how writers use voice to express their perspectives on current issues and in the process tell their unique Australian stories.



Below is a story written by Najeeba Wazefadost, an Afghan refugee, who arrived in Australia by boat in September 2000. She is a refugee advocate and former Amnesty Ambassador. This piece originally appeared on ABC

Unleashed.

See the link below to read her story.

<http://www.amnesty.org.au/refugees/comments/23976/>

Read over the first three paragraphs. Let's see how Najeeba uses a strong voice in the first three paragraphs to communicate her perspective on Australia's policy on refugees and asylum seekers and tell her story.

How voice is conveyed	How voice is shown in Najeeba's the first 3 paragraphs of her story
Attitude:	It is clear that Najeeba is very sensitive to the plight of people persecuted in their own country and understands the dire circumstances in which people flee their own country. She also shows an inner strength and determination to stand up for her beliefs by showing her disapproval of the Government's policies on refugees and asylum seekers.
Tone:	Najeeba immediately evokes an emotional response through words such as 'risked my life' and 'escaped my country'. Her chosen words create a sense that her life was in jeopardy and therefore as a reader we feel that she made the right decision to seek refuge in another country, such as Australia.
Personal style:	Immediately, Najeeba establishes a personal style of writing through the use of first persona narrative in order to show how she has been personally affected by being a refugee. She uses a combination of simple vocabulary, such as 'no words to comfort' and sophisticated vocabulary, such as 'endlessly scare-mongering' and 'deter asylum seekers' to show her disapproval of the government's policies on refugees and asylum seekers. She also uses a series of compound and complex sentences to show the multi-level of layers this issue can be viewed. For example 'Over time, the real human faces of the vulnerable have been turned into statistics about the number of boat arrivals.'

Complete the exercise below.

Exercise 9: Exploring refugee voices

1. Read over the remaining paragraphs.
2. Fill in the table below by identifying how Najeeba's voice is conveyed through attitude, tone and personal style in the rest of her story.

How voice is conveyed	How voice is shown in Najeeba's story
Attitude	
Tone	
Personal style	

Extend yourself

1. Write a letter to Najeeba responding to her story. In your letter show the following:

- how her story affected you personally
- how her story informed you about the plight of refugees in general and in Australia
- how her perspective in the story is of value to Australian culture.

Use your own paper.

2. Use your own voice when responding. In other words, write in a way that represents your authentic voice.