

Comprehending

Question:

How are language features used to construct the voice of the narrator in Text 1?

Text 1

Text 1 is an extract from the short story 'Mother Says' by Craig Ensor.

verb - suggests pain
contrast - pain vs feeling better.

Tonight, I am going to pierce my ears. This will make me feel better about myself.

suggests narrator is young.

The first step is to take a needle from Mother's sewing kit and some ice cubes from the freezer, then fill the washbasin in the bathroom with cold water. Then, with a felt-tip pen, I draw a little dot on each ear lobe where I want the holes to go. The dots appearing like unsqueezed blackheads. I hold the ice up to my ear until it goes numb. The needle panics in my hand. It shakes like my grandfather's hand used to shake. I take a deep breath and with one eye looking at the mirror to get the aim right, I prick the tip of the needle on the dot and, holding the needle steady, push it through my right ear lobe.

human / also reveals age of narrator
personification suggests fear.

verbs - care, concentration, determination

The flesh tears. The pain is too much.

painful verb

short syntax - increases the tension/fear.

I stop and look in the mirror and a three-inch needle is stuck halfway through my ear lobe. I pack more ice onto my ear until the numbness takes over. Then, I have another go and this time, the needle slides through my ear lobe and pops when it comes out the other side. Not my hands, but an energy inside me pushes the needle through. It's the same energy when I feel Mother's clothes against my skin. I swab the blood away with wet tissues. I take Mother's dangly sapphire earrings from her jewellery box and slip the gold rod through my hole then clip the earring shut. I shake my hair out like Mother does when she swallows a pill and the earring dangles and electrifies in the fluorescent light. Only then do I feel satisfied all over.

gentler verbs contrast the more aggressive verbs from earlier - structure.

Tasks

1. In pairs, deconstruct the question. Identify the key words in the question and define them.
2. Individually write a short answer response (approximately 175-200 words) to the question.
3. Peer assess your response with the person sitting next to you using the assessment criteria on the following page.

So... the voice of the narrator is clearly young. The voice is constructed as determined and focused on the task in hand. The voice overcomes the challenges faced by the pain of piercing their ears.