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SCHOOLS
PROGRAMME

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The Glove: Teaching Notes

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1.

Part A: Years 7-13

The narrator of 'The Glove' is just a child when his brother dies, and that limits how much he can tell us about Mike. Point them to this passage:

'I don't really remember Mike. Of course there are photos but if you were to ask me about the sound of his voice or anything, I'd find it hard to be accurate.

'I remember there used to be someone else in the bedroom with me at night. A body, sleeping and breathing. This presence in the room at night was Mike, that was my brother. And now there was just a bed. I listened hard to the empty bed. Sometimes it creaked.

'Then, after two years or more, my folks shifted the bed out of the room.'

Part B: Years 7-13

Get them writing quickly, without over thinking it. I often give them prompts as they write, e.g.

Who was there?

Who did the cooking?

Were there any arguments?

Volunteers read aloud. Give feedback as a class.

Answer the questions as a discussion (in groups or as a class). Guide them to realise that it is their different perspectives – from a young child to now – that makes these (probably quite similar) occasions appear so different.

Point of View

These bullet points are just an example to get across my point, but you can run them through exercises with those questions (and more) once they start stories or have a PoV character in mind.

Part C: Years 11-13

The Totaled Car

I usually give them examples:

E.g. the parent might describe the body of the car as having a dull sheen, like the coins you hunt for at the bottom of pockets. The young woman might see the face of her boyfriend in every medic. The runaway teenager might count the number of cops. The cancer patient might describe the grass in the ditch as hypodermic needles.

When I run this at university, or with keen high schoolers, I make them withhold the situations (the money problems, the boyfriend, the crime, the diagnosis). To do this, you need to preface it with a good overview of the different points of view. I usually draw this on the board:

1 st	2 nd	3 rd
‘I’	‘You’	‘He/she/they’
Can withhold/lie	A more distanced 1 st person	Close or omniscient
Access to voice	Ironic or painful effect	Cannot lie or withhold

Then, when you set the exercise, you need to prompt them that it can only be written in first or second person (as the narrator will be withholding.)

It’s fun at the end to share in groups or pairs. They can try to pick what point of view it was written from. Have them volunteer each other to read out loud to the class, and give feedback.

2.

Part A: Years 7-13

Another good example to point them towards if they're struggling to understand this is the final anniversary of his brother's death:

'Dad looks at her and reaches for her hand. That's true, he says. And they both smile at me.

'I feel as though I can't breathe.

'I go upstairs and take Mike's softball glove out of the drawer. I put it on, then I put the glove over my face. I must look weird. I must look like I don't have a face.'

Show Don't Tell

I usually give them examples here of what it means to show emotions, personalities, and judgements. For example:

- Don't tell me you felt scared, describe the feeling of your throat swelling into your mouth. Quicken your sentences. Short, sharp stutters.
- Don't tell me he's mean, show him ignoring a waiter.
- Don't tell me the garden is ugly, describe the muddy path, the diseased tree, the piles of leaves pale as corpses.

Part B: Years 7-13

Past Self

If you get any resistance you can switch up the emotion. Anger is good because it's something people don't often say out loud (unlike, for example, something like love) but any will do.

This is a good exercise for them to use when editing their work, if they have been telling instead of showing emotions.

Assure them they won't have to read this out loud.

Part C: Years 9-13

Give Me a Reason

Now, brainstorm scenarios that might make a character mad. Try to be specific as possible. Instead of saying 'their sibling losing their possession', say 'their younger sister borrowing their favourite jumper and then leaving it on a plane'.

Write this scene, interspersing the description of what it felt like to be angry yourself.

Volunteers read aloud. Give feedback as a class.

3.

Part B: Years 9-13

Family Ritual

Students will always try to tell you that their family is ‘normal’ and their Christmases/Birthdays/Easters/Saturday nights and morning routines are ‘typical’. There is nothing ‘bizarre’ about them.

This is never true. If they see their ritual as ‘normal’ they will write it in a boring way – they will skip over the interesting details, because they won’t realise that they’re unusual. I often ask questions of the class until the differences in their rituals become clear.

This is a hard (but useful) exercise because they must juggle setting, characterisation, and plot all at once – while keeping point of view strong, as usual.

Volunteers read aloud. Give feedback as a class.

4.

Part A: Years 11-13

Volunteers read aloud. Give feedback as a class.

Read the World exercises and teaching notes created by Ruby Porter, a prose writer and poet. She teaches creative writing at The University of Auckland and was the inaugural winner of the Michael Gifkins prize for her debut novel *Attraction*.

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