

## C2.3 UNIT 10

**Exercise 1. Complete the sentences using the word from the box that suits better.**

heave	assuage	furrow	mind-boggling	penchant
falter	linger	fast friends	frieze	blot

1. Do not \_\_\_\_\_, but have confidence when you go into an interview.
2. We became \_\_\_\_\_, and i told her the truth.
3. The scandal arising out of the theft of the Dublin crown jewels in the autumn of 1907 was a further \_\_\_\_\_ on the Irish administration.
4. Have you tried asking for forgiveness to \_\_\_\_\_ your guilty conscience?
5. The reliefs of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the cellar of the Parthenon enable us to form an idea of the procession.
6. To " \_\_\_\_\_ the log," a man holds the log-reel over his head (at high speeds the man and portable reel are superseded by a fixed reel and a winch fitted with a brake), and the officer places the peg in the log-ship, which he then throws clear and to windward of the ship, allowing the line to run freely out.
7. Following in the \_\_\_\_\_ of an ordinary plough it breaks through the sub-soil to a depth of several inches, making it porous and penetrable by plant roots.
8. His salary is nothing compared to the \_\_\_\_\_ figures earned by some sportsmen.
9. Customers are welcome to \_\_\_\_\_ over coffee until around midnight.
10. I miss her intellect, her passion, her courage and her \_\_\_\_\_ for maintaining our nerves.

**Exercise 2. Order the words to form a sentence and underline the predicate phrases in each of them.**

1. desk / need / that / my / have / I / to / tomorrow. / by / report / on
2. arrived / in / the / safely. / kids / our / have / class
3. Bill / friends / brother / believe / honest. / claims / his / Tom / his / and / are

4. Tax / of / companies / pass / reform / the / oil / will / benefits / consumer. / have / on / to / all / the / of
5. Frame / to / is / mesh / will / the / plastic / covering / prevent / will / the / from / attached / the / a / that / child / a / from / bed / off floor / rolling / floor. / of / onto
6. Say / most / study / they / not / say / teachers / or / expect / their / whether / hard / to / it / , / students / hard.

**Exercise 3. Order the paragraphs to make sense of the text.**

### **Decoding narrative: conflict, stages and characters.**

#### **A**

The Russian theorist Tzvetan Todorov (1969) stated that narratives conventionally follow a structure of three stages. The narrative begins with a state of equilibrium, or order, established in the early scenes. The main characters are in a stable situation, married happily, successful at work or enjoying an idyllic childhood. Then something happens to disrupt the equilibrium, producing disequilibrium or disorder. An event occurs, unnoticed at first perhaps, which eventually turns the characters' lives upside down. In thrillers, it is usually a murder. In other genres, it can be something quite innocuous. At the end, the equilibrium is restored, although this might be at great cost to one or more of the main characters.

#### **B**

It may seem strange that the majority of human narratives have recurrent types of opposition, structure and characters. How even the British philosopher Frederick Bartlett demonstrated the importance of a schema, or picture, of a real-world situation in order to make sense of it (Bartlett, 1932). We need to know what can happen when we step into a restaurant, an office or a church. We can extend this need for a schema to fictional situations. Stepping into an unknown world, we need convention to guide us. Unless the narrative follows conventions, it will be hard for the audience to make sense of it.

#### **C**

Whenever people read a novel or watch a film, they have to decode the fictional narrative, understanding the role of each character in the unfolding drama, and seeing how the characters interrelate. This complex process poses no difficulties most of the time. It is very rare that people come out of a cinema or put down a novel and say 'What was that all about? What were all those people doing?' Human beings are experts at understanding fictional narrative, written in code, because we have encountered the code thousands of times since we first heard fairy tales. In this article, we look at three conventions of fictional narrative - conflict, stages and characters.

## D

Theories of narrative structure originated with the Ancient Greeks. According to Aristotle, all dramatic narrative is conflict, 'either in the sense of struggle within a person or ... the clashing of opposed principles' (as cited in Belfiore, 2000; p. 64). In rite-of-passage stories, for example, teenagers or young adults are taken through formative episodes, emerging as adults at the end. Conflict in other stories is usually more a clash of principles. The conflicts are governed by strict conventions, in the view of the French theorist Levi-Strauss, who suggested that all narratives have binary opposition (Levi-Strauss, 1990). In other words, there are two opposite parts. The most obvious ones are good and evil, right and wrong, strength and weakness, youth and age, but there are many others.

## E

According to the literary critic Vladimir Propp, control of narrative does not end with binary opposition and overall structure. In most fiction, the main characters perform roles, defined by convention, which Propp calls 'spheres of action' (Propp quoted in Lacey, 2000, pp. 5 1-52). Firstly, there is the *hero*, who is usually male, and a *victim*. It is the hero's role to restore the equilibrium. The *hero* may be the *victim* himself, or he may help the victim. Others have called the hero character the *protagonist*, to distinguish him from the other main character, the *villain* or *antagonist*, who causes the disruption to the equilibrium. Supposing these two central characters, other stock characters appear, although they do not all feature in all plots. There might be a *donor*, who gives the hero something real, like a letter, or something abstract, like information or advice, which helps him to return life to normal. The protagonist may have a *helper*, whose role is self-evident. Another central character is the *victim*, who is threatened by the antagonist, the villain. Many narratives have a female character, called the *princess* by Propp (ibid.). Other characters appear frequently, including the *dispatcher*, who sends the hero on the journey, real or emotional. Also, the *false hero*, who turns out to be a villain, or at least does not help in restoring equilibrium. One character can perform more than one role — for example, the *donor* can also be the *false hero*.