Talking about books

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each advanced term with its definition.

1 metafiction ____	**a** fiction that self-consciously draws attention to its own status as fiction
2 stream of consciousness ____	**b** a narrative technique representing a character's continuous flow of thoughts
3 bildungsroman ____	**c** a novel focused on a character's formative growth and moral development
4 intertextuality ____	**d** the way one text references, echoes or engages with other texts
5 narrative voice ____	**e** the distinctive personality and perspective through which a story is told
6 vernacular ____	**f** everyday, informal language as actually spoken by ordinary people
7 allegory ____	**g** a story in which characters or events symbolically represent a deeper meaning
8 epistolary ____	**h** a novel told through letters, diary entries or documents
9 anachronism ____	**i** something placed in the wrong time period, inconsistent with the setting
10 polyphonic ____	**j** featuring multiple, equally valid narrative voices or perspectives

2 Choose the most precise term for each context.

1 Fiction aware of its own fictional status is metafiction / straightforward realism.

2 A continuous representation of a character's thoughts is stream of consciousness / dialogue.

3 A novel of formative growth is a bildungsroman / a thriller.

4 A text's engagement with other texts is intertextuality / originality.

5 Everyday spoken language in fiction is vernacular / formal register.

6 A story symbolically representing deeper meaning is allegory / literal narrative.

7 A novel told through letters or documents is epistolary / third-person.

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8 A novel featuring multiple valid narrative voices is polyphonic / single-voiced.

3 Match the verbs with the noun phrases to form academic collocations.

1 subvert ____	**a** reader expectations
2 destabilise ____	**b** a fixed narrative perspective
3 interrogate ____	**c** the reliability of the narrator
4 evoke ____	**d** a visceral atmosphere
5 render ____	**e** a character's inner life
6 problematise ____	**f** the notion of a stable truth
7 foreground ____	**g** marginalised voices
8 undercut ____	**h** the story's emotional climax

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4 Complete the analysis with terms from the box.

allegory | anachronism | bildungsroman | epistolary | intertextuality | metafiction | narrative voice | polyphonic | stream of consciousness | vernacular

Literary critics examining coming-of-age fiction often invoke the tradition of the 1 _____, tracing how a protagonist's development mirrors broader social change. Formally experimental novels may adopt 2 _____ techniques, representing a character's thoughts as an unbroken flow rather than structured dialogue, or employ a 3 _____ structure, in which multiple equally weighted perspectives resist any single authoritative reading. Some contemporary authors favour 4 _____, explicitly drawing attention to the constructed nature of their own storytelling. A novel's use of 5 _____ - references to earlier texts - can deepen meaning for attentive readers while remaining invisible to others. Authors reconstructing historical settings must guard against unintentional 6 _____, details inconsistent with the period portrayed, while deliberately archaic 7 _____ can lend authenticity to dialogue. A distinctive 8 _____ - the personality through which a story is filtered - often does more to define a novel's identity than plot alone, and an 9 _____ format, built from letters or documents, can function as a form of 10 _____, inviting readers to interpret events symbolically as well as literally.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Voice, authority and the unreliable text

Literary theorists increasingly examine how narrative voice shapes a reader's trust, arguing that even seemingly authoritative third-person narration involves selective framing that shapes interpretation as much as any explicitly unreliable first-person account. A polyphonic novel, presenting multiple perspectives without clearly privileging one, can destabilise a reader's sense of since it more accurately reflects the genuine ambiguity of lived experience. Metafictional devices extend this further, drawing explicit attention to the constructed nature of narrative itself, which can paradoxically increase rather than diminish a reader's emotional investment by foregrounding the craft behind the illusion.

1 What do literary theorists increasingly examine? _____

2 What does even authoritative third-person narration involve? _____

3 What can a polyphonic novel destabilise? _____

4 Why do some critics regard this as a strength? _____

5 What do metafictional devices draw explicit attention to? _____

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6 What effect can this paradoxically have on a reader's emotional investment? _____

6 Replace the words in bold with a precise term or collocation.

1 The novel drew attention to its own status as fiction. _____

2 The book featured multiple equally valid perspectives. _____

3 The story followed the protagonist's formative growth. _____

4 The detail didn't fit the historical period at all. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 160-190 word critical commentary on how narrative technique shapes reader trust and interpretation in a novel, distinguishing observation from inference.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Include four academic collocations. [ ] Maintain a precise, balanced register.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Precise terms

1 metafiction 2 stream of consciousness 3 a bildungsroman 4 intertextuality 5 vernacular 6 allegory 7 epistolary 8 polyphonic

3 Academic collocations

1 a subvert reader expectations 2 f destabilise the notion of a stable truth 3 c interrogate the reliability of the narrator
4 d evoke a visceral atmosphere 5 e render a character's inner life 6 b problematise a fixed narrative perspective
7 g foreground marginalised voices 8 h undercut the story's emotional climax

4 Analysis

1 bildungsroman 2 stream of consciousness 3 polyphonic 4 metafiction 5 intertextuality
6 anachronism 7 vernacular 8 narrative voice 9 epistolary 10 allegory

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 How narrative voice shapes a reader's trust.
2 Selective framing that shapes interpretation.
3 A reader's sense of a single, correct interpretation.
4 Because it more accurately reflects the genuine ambiguity of lived experience.
5 The constructed nature of narrative itself.
6 It can increase rather than diminish it.

6 Precise terms and collocations

1 metafiction 2 polyphonic 3 bildungsroman 4 anachronism

Over to you

Answers will vary. Look for conceptual precision, evidence-aware reasoning and balanced evaluation.