

### Text selected by student for assessment: Short Story

#### Learning outcomes in focus

##### Students should be able to:

**R6.** Read their texts for understanding and appreciation of character, setting, story and action: to explore how and why characters develop, and to recognise the importance of setting and plot structure

**R7.** Select key moments from their texts and give thoughtful value judgements on the main character, a key scene, a favourite image from a film, a poem, a drama, a chapter, a media or web based event

**R8.** Read their texts to understand and appreciate language enrichment by examining an author's choice of words, the use and effect of simple figurative language, vocabulary and language patterns, and images, as appropriate to the text

**O2.** Engage actively and responsively within class groups in order to listen to or recount experiences and to express feelings and ideas

**O3.** Engage in extended and constructive discussion of their own and other students' work

**W1.** Demonstrate their understanding that there is a clear purpose for all writing activities and be able to plan, draft, re-draft, and edit their own writing as appropriate

**W2.** Discuss their own and other students' written work constructively and with clear purpose

**W6.** Use editing skills continuously during the writing process to enhance meaning and impact: select vocabulary, reorder words,

phrases and clauses, correct punctuation and spelling, reorder paragraphs, remodel, manage content

#### Teaching and learning context

Linking in with Anti-Bullying Week in our school, students read the novel *Lord of the Flies* and the poem 'Back in the Playground Blues' by Adrian Mitchell. We focused on a key moment where the mountain is on fire and explored the author's use of language to evoke disaster. We also discussed the evolution of the plotline and the way the author created tension.

Students created a proposal, individually, for a piece of writing they would create from a list of pre-taught genres; discussed their ideas with their peers in small groups; created a first draft; gave and received scaffolded feedback from their peers and from the teacher. They then created a second typed draft which they shared digitally with each other and with their teacher.

#### Task

Write a piece of fiction.

#### Features of Quality

Genre awareness and control/creativity

Writing competence and word choices

Awareness of and shaping for receiver/audience

\* Students choose two texts from their collection to submit for assessment.

## Lost and Found

Branches snapped underfoot as I made my way through the forest. The afternoon sun shone through gaps in the dense foliage. I struggled through the bushes to the tallest tree in the woods, from where I could see everything in the area.

I scampered up the tree with little difficulty; it was familiar and I'd climbed it many times before. Soon I was perched on the highest branch, scouting out the path back home. I could see my town on my right, the forest continued into oblivion on my left. Behind me, in the direction I had just come from, I could see my grandmother's cottage. I was content. Everything was perfect, just as it always had been and always would be.

The first sign of danger came in the form of small tremors shaking the ground. I glanced down anxiously. Small earthquakes occurred regularly here in the Philippines; they were nothing to worry about, but every time I couldn't help but wonder... I pushed the thought to back of my mind, but it became harder as a rumbling noise began in the distance, first quiet, then growing louder.

I looked back in the direction of the town. Everything seemed normal, but suddenly the ground shook violently, huge ripples forming in the earth. I clung to the trunk of my tree in terror as other trees fell like soldiers in battle. I felt as if I was in a giant snow globe from my uncle's souvenir shop.

I stared at my town with disbelieving eyes. Shouts and screams carried across on the wind. Buildings started to crumble and fall, windows smashed and bricks turned to dust. I opened my mouth to scream, but I was paralysed with fear. Barely managing to hold onto the tree branch, I twisted around to look away. It was too horrific to watch; my own home was being ravaged. Sharp sticks and twigs dug into my back and black spots crept into my vision. The last thing I heard as everything went dark was a loud rumble from the quaking ground.

I woke to the setting sun glaring in my eyes. I could feel dread in the back of my mind and suddenly remembered everything, The screams, the dust, the tremors.

I sat in the tree for a while, feeling sad, angry, confused. Eventually, I clambered down the tree with shaking limbs. As I hit the forest floor with a thump, everything suddenly became real. Anger and confusion built inside me and I screamed, an earsplitting shriek that echoed throughout the forest. I lay down on the ground. There was no point in going back to my ruined town. Nobody could have survived an earthquake like that. I had no way of finding help, no way to survive. I might as well just lie down, give up. I wouldn't last long no matter what I did. Everything I knew and loved was gone, destroyed in front of my eyes

in the most brutal way possible. Nothing even mattered anymore and it never would.

A few hours later I felt a little better. I'd had a long time to think about my options, and had decided to try to make my way back towards the town, where there could be other survivors. Maybe my family were still alive.

My hometown was east of the woods, probably a few hours journey away. I packed up my small collection of belongings; my watch bought from the market in the town square, a blanket knitted by my grandmother and the packed lunch I had been planning to eat at the top of the tree. I had no appetite now. I then began the slow trek towards the east.

Fortunately, not many trees had fallen over in this part of the forest, so I was able to recognise the familiar territory. A lump formed in my throat when I thought about walking along this path as a young child, my parents close by my side, but I blinked away my tears and continued on my way.

After about 30 minutes, I emerged from the lush green forest into the open air. The clouds in the sky were pink tinged with orange, and the sun was sinking below the horizon. I realised that it would be sensible to stop in the clearing for the night. I wrapped my blanket around me and settled down on the ground for an agonising night of little sleep and dark twisted nightmares, revealing my darkest fears.

I rose at dawn and watched the sunrise. It seemed strange that only the previous morning, everything had been normal; I had been at home with my family. Nothing would ever be the same, I thought bitterly.

After roughly an hour of tough walking, I came to a stream, spilling over with cool, clear, thirst-quenching water. I took a long, deep drink and moved on.

Finally, my town came into sight. I nearly collapsed to the ground. Safety was so close I could almost touch it.

As I got closer, I could see the full extent of the damage caused by the earthquake, things I couldn't have seen from high up in my tree, far away from the destruction. Some buildings were completely wrecked, roofs had caved in and windows had shattered. I suddenly became afraid of what I might find when I arrived.

By the time I was standing on the main street, I still hadn't seen any signs of life and was growing more and more anxious. What if nobody had survived? What if my friends and family had all been killed? Questions flew through my mind and I started to feel dizzy.

Eventually, I reached my old house. It was the same... yet different. The windows were broken and part of the wall had caved in. I thought of all the happy memories I'd had there; learning to ride a bike, baking bread with my father, knitting with my mother. Were those

peaceful days gone forever?

I hesitated before knocking on the door. This was the moment when I found out whether my family were dead or alive. I crept silently into our tiny sitting room, praying that I wouldn't see anything terrible. The small room basically consisted of some blankets and cushions spread across the dusty floor. I could see nothing out of the ordinary here, except for the extra mess and the thick layer of dust and debris covering everything.

I continued into the kitchen, almost hoping that I would find my mother in there, preparing dinner. She wasn't, of course, but although there were no signs of life, at least there weren't any of death.

I tried to check the rest of the house, but the roof had caved in and I couldn't get through. I realised that if anyone had been in that area, they would have been killed. This struck many new fears into my mind, and I hurried back out into the street.

Scared now, I started to rush around the town, banging on all the doors frantically, shouting desperately for help. At last, after what seemed like an eternity, the door of the town hall swung open and I was confronted by a uniformed police officer. He was tall and had a bright blue uniform with a silver badge. He appeared to be foreign, probably British. The officer looked down at me in surprise.

"What's your name?" he asked kindly in weak Filipino.

"Riza Cruz," I whispered, my voice barely audible.

"Where do you live?" he asked, a puzzled look on his face.

"Number twelve, Harebell Street," I replied, and the tears I had been holding back since the disaster finally came, spilling down my cheeks and dropping onto the floor.

"But you were reported missing, presumed dead... The Cruz family were distraught to have lost their beloved daughter..." he said thoughtfully, almost to himself.

The police officer's expression changed slowly from surprise to delight. For some unfathomable reason, he was now beaming broadly. I didn't really feel that this was an appropriate time to be happy, but who knew what went on in the authorities' twisted minds? My uncle always said they were untrustworthy. I continued crying and the police officer looked awkward.

"No, no, it's OK, your family is safe!" he said hurriedly.

"They're gone forever," I wailed, inconsolable. I had no idea what this stupid man was talking about. The wall had fallen and crushed them back in my house, it must have.

“Come and see for yourself,” he replied.

He opened the door and ushered me inside. Inside the town hall I could see crowds of people milling around and looking worried. All the survivors of the earthquake appeared to be living in the large room; there were sleeping bags and blankets littered across the stone floor. I looked around fearfully, wondering if my parents could actually be alive. Maybe they hadn't been in the house when the wall collapsed?

My eyes scanned the room, and finally I saw my mother's pale, worried-looking face in the corner. I pushed and shoved through the crowd of people until I reached my parents. They wrapped their arms around me and we all cried, sobbing into each other's shoulders, reunited at last. The kind police officer who had escorted me in stood to one side, taking in this emotional scene. I even saw a tear roll down his cheek.

From that moment onwards, I knew everything was going to be all right. Our house and town were destroyed, we were homeless and even poorer than before, but we were alive and together, and that's all that really mattered. The future would be tough and our lives would be changed forever, but I knew we could get through it. Once you've survived a deadly earthquake and found your family again, it becomes clear that anything is possible. Anything can be lost, but everything can be found.

### Features of quality - teacher annotations and level of achievement

#### Teacher annotations:

**FQ1.** Genre awareness and control/creativity **FQ2.** Writing competence and word choices

There is great variety in the use of language and it is always appropriate to the genre: staccato sentences, a colourful variety of verbs, sensual details and questions.

**FQ3.** Awareness of and shaping for receiver/audience

These qualities, along with the narrator's realistic thought process and a strong sense of place, make the text engaging for the reader and ensure that the story moves at a brisk pace. There is scope to make the dialogue more believable, but this is a minor flaw which is easily addressable by the student.

#### Level of achievement:

**Best fit on balance judgement =**



Exceptional

This example represents one text from the student's Collection of Texts. The student selected this and one other text to submit for assessment. Looking at a number of examples, teachers will see a variety of different text types, in a variety of genres.

More examples will be added over time at [curriculumonline.ie](http://curriculumonline.ie)

#### Features of Quality:

##### Exceptional

The student's text shows creativity and command of the chosen genre.  
The writing is highly competent, marked by original ideas, and imaginative word choices are perfectly suited to the purpose of the text.  
The work is fully shaped for its intended receiver/audience.

##### Above expectations

The student's text shows very good control of the chosen genre.  
The writing is consistently competent, and effective word choices are very well matched to the purpose of the text.  
The work is clearly shaped with the receiver/audience in mind.

##### In line with expectations

The student's text shows good awareness of the chosen genre.  
The writing is generally competent, and word choices match the purpose of the text well.  
Content and development of ideas reveal consistent awareness of the receiver/audience.

##### Yet to meet expectations

The student's text shows little awareness of the chosen genre.  
The writing lacks competence, and word choices may be inappropriate to the intended purpose of the text.  
Content and development of ideas reveal little awareness of a receiver/audience.

The annotations capture observations by the student's teacher, using the features of quality, with a view to establishing the level of achievement this text reflects. The annotations and judgement were confirmed by the Quality Assurance group, consisting of practicing English teachers and representatives of the Inspectorate, the SEC and JCT.