



Year 7 Short Stories

‘eric’
Shaun Tan
Lesson 2

Lesson Focus

- To develop our vocabulary and understanding of words and meaning.
- To develop a sense of empathy with the character of Eric and understand the narrator and their views.
- To explore the concept of being an outsider and how this applies to Eric and how we can find evidence in the text to support this.

Lesson Outline

Activate



Activate: exploring key words and their meanings and connotations

Explain



Explain: using extracts from the text explore what it means to be 'an outsider' or 'to belong'

Practise



Lesson Practice: Exploring the feelings and emotions of the main character, Eric.

Reflect



Reflect: Exploring how the character of Eric is presented as an outsider in the story.

Review



Some years ago we had a foreign exchange student come to live with us. We found it very difficult to pronounce his name correctly, but he didn't mind. He told us just to call him 'Eric'.

We had repainted the spare room, bought new rugs and furniture and generally made sure everything would be comfortable for him. So I can't say why it was that Eric chose sleep and study most of the time in our kitchen pantry.

"It must be a cultural thing," said Mum. "As long as he is happy."

We started storing food and kitchen things in other cupboards so we wouldn't disturb him.

But sometimes I wondered if Eric was happy; he was so polite that I'm not sure he would have told us if something bothered him.

A few times I saw him through the pantry door gap, studying with silent **intensity**, and **imagined what it might be like for him here in our country**.



Here is the opening of the story. Reflect on what you have learnt so far about the narrator and the character Eric. What do the pictures tell us about Eric's character.

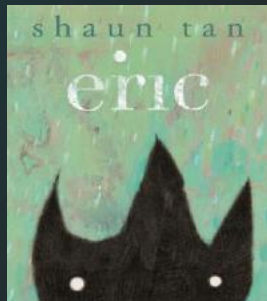
Complete the next table. You will have approximately 10 minutes to do this.



	The Narrator	Eric
What are the obvious things you learn?		He had a difficult sounding name.
Can you make any inferences about the narrator/Eric ? What clues are in the language to suggest qualities and characteristics about the individuals?	Disappointed that Eric was not quite what they expected This is shown when the narrator says that Eric chose to study in their kitchen pantry and not in the rooms which has been painted.	
What clues do the pictures give you about Eric and his character- what he looks like		

Write 5 points for the narrator and for Eric.

Try and include evidence from just the beginning section to prove your points. You can use both the language and the pictures to help you build a picture.
(5 minutes)





Key words:

belonging

outsider

- We have re-read the beginning of the story and thought about the narrator and Eric who were starting to get to know each other. The narrator says:
- 'A few times I saw him through the pantry door gap, studying with silent intensity and imagined what it might be like for him here in our country.'



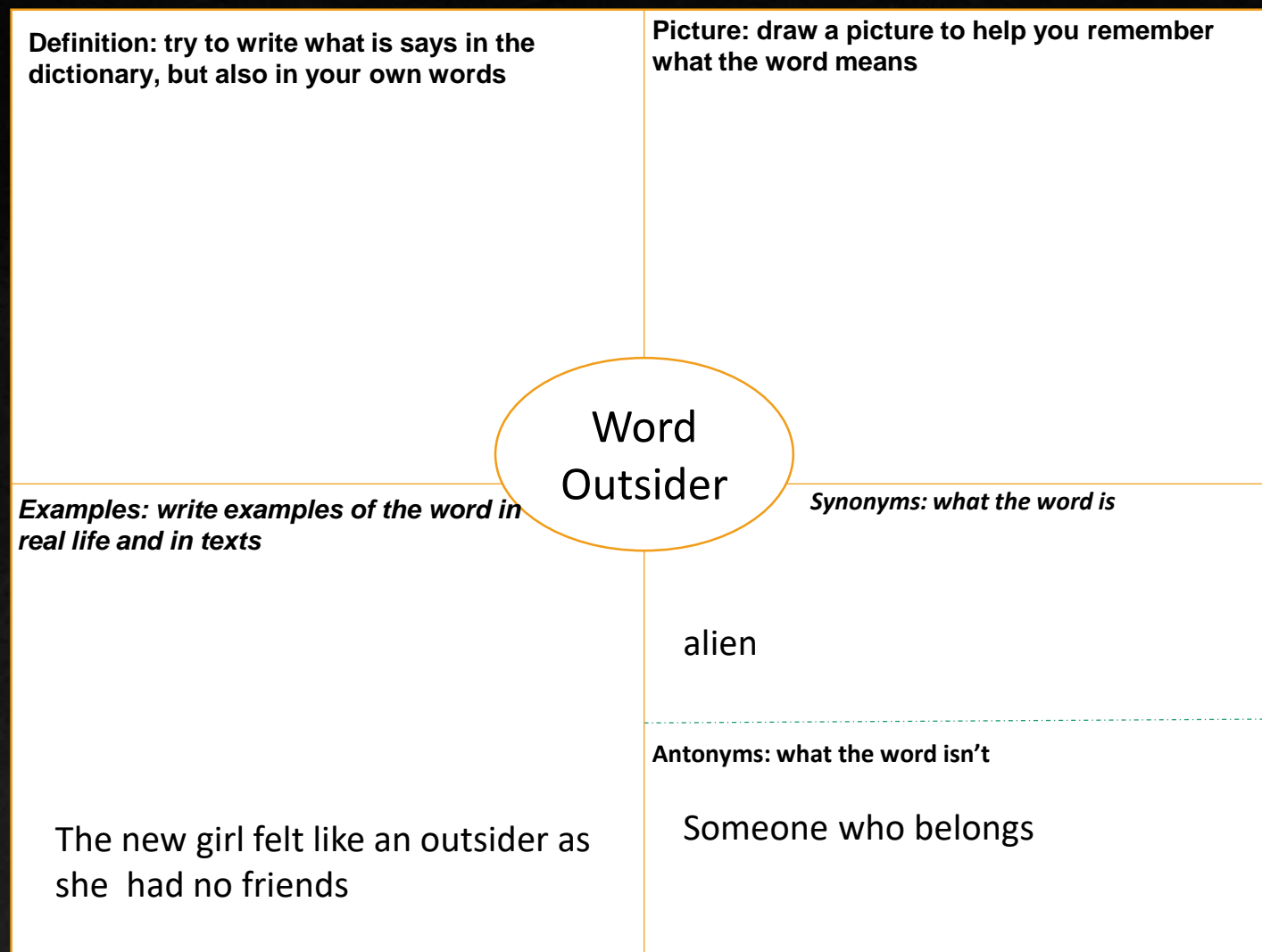
Look at the pronoun 'our'. What do you think that suggests about the narrator and his attitude to Eric?



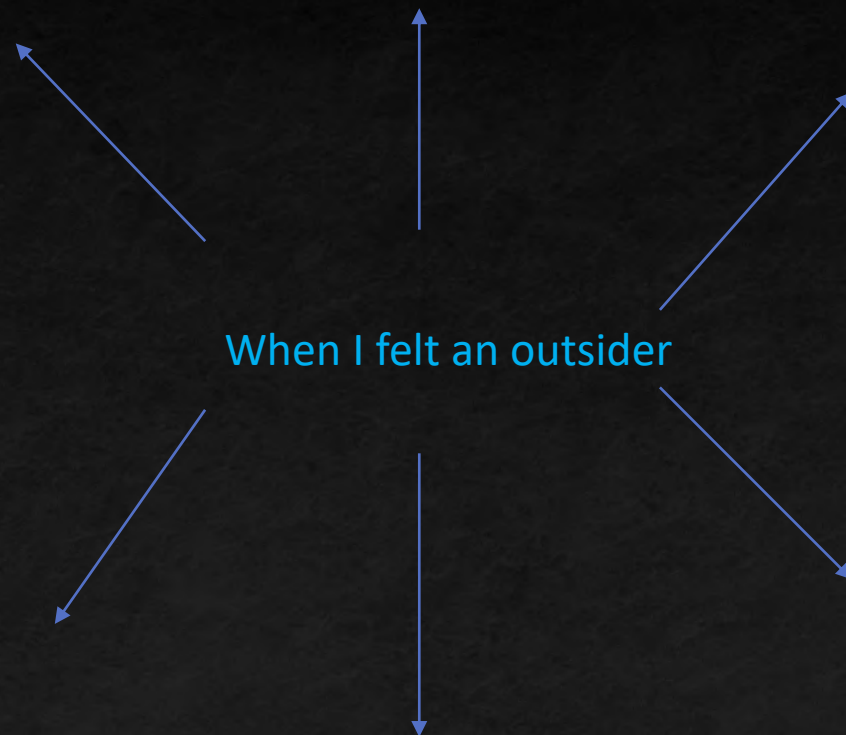
Create two Frayer diagrams – one for ‘outsider’ and one for ‘belonging’

What do you notice about the two words?

You have 10 minutes to complete the task



Have you ever felt like an outsider? When did you feel like an outsider or do you know someone who may have felt like an outsider. Write down all the occasions you may have felt like this.



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If you have ever felt alone or isolated or in a strange unfamiliar setting then you can show **empathy** with Eric. This means you have a shared experience and understand exactly what it is like.
(5 minutes)



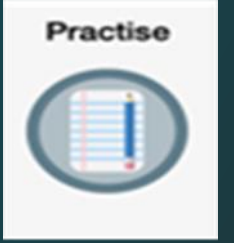
- Pages 2 and 3
- 1. What do you think it feels like to be called by a different name or if someone cannot pronounce your name?
- 2. What do you think is meant by ‘it must be a cultural thing.’ What does culture mean in this context?
- 3. The writer repeats the use of “foreign” – ‘foreign exchange student’ and ‘foreign visitor.’ What connotations does the word foreign have and how does it support the sense of Eric being an outsider.



We are going to use the ideas of being different and being an outsider and apply them to the character of Eric.

Using the short piece of text.
Write the answers to the questions.

(10 minutes)



- Standing in Eric's Shoes: Think about Eric who has arrived at a strange house in a different country. How do you think he would be feeling?
- Write down the words and phrases which come to mind which show his feeling and thoughts. Complete the different shape boxes on the next slide.

(10 minutes)

Extract – eric as an outsider ..



How would Eric
be feeling ?

What would
Eric be
thinking?



How would Eric react to
others? What gestures and
actions would he make?

What would
Eric say to
himself?



Practise



Complete the thought bubbles





- Using the planning sheets and your notes from lesson one and lesson two, write two paragraphs which show how the writer presents the character of Eric.

(If you wish to challenge yourself , you may want to include evidence from other parts of the text as well.)

Extending our understanding of character.

(20 minutes)



Today we have reflected on Eric as an outsider and how he struggled to fit in.

Do you think the narrator and his mother understand him?

Do they try to understand him?

What advice would you give them to get to know Eric better?

