



CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS SERIES

Edited by Hilary Janks

Language & Position



Hilary Janks

Materials for the Classroom



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the teachers who helped with successive revisions of the material: Y. Reed, P. Rule, L. Shepherd, D. Kahlberg, B. English, R. Ford and B. Tobias, and to the students at Woodmead, the Inter-church Tuition Project and Jeppe Girls' High School.

Thanks are due to the following for their kind permission to reproduce copyright material:

Denis Beckett for 'What makes the Southern Cross', *Frontline*, June 1982; *The Star* for 'The Star tells it like it is'; Nasou for an extract from *Adventure into History* by J.P. Venter, Nasou, 1967; *The Star* for two articles by Sue Olswang, 'Agony of a crash victim' and 'Ignore the third world driver at your peril'; *The Weekly Mail* and *Guardian Weekly* for A. Goldstuck 'Looking for the New South Africa? Don't bother with maps' and Reg Rumney 'Science can confirm – minibuses are a menace'; University of Chicago Press for adaptation of an excerpt from G. Luckoff and J. Johnson, *Metaphors we live by*, 1980; Southlight for use of photograph on p. 19; cartoon on p.9 'Each to his own' adapted from *Fair Lady*; Roger McGough, 'Streemin' reprinted by permission of the Peters Fraser & Dunlop Group Ltd.

While every effort has been made to trace and acknowledge copyright holders, this has not been possible in a few cases. If brought to our attention the publishers will be pleased to rectify any such omissions in future editions.

First published in 1993 by
Witwatersrand University Press
1 Jan Smuts Avenue
2001 Johannesburg, South Africa
and

Hodder & Stoughton Educational
Southern Africa
A division of Hodder Headline PLC
PO Box 3948
Randburg 2125

© Hilary Janks Illustrations by Matt Sandham Typesetting by Niamb Simons

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

ISBN 0-947054-92-8

Second impression 1995

Printed and bound by Galvin & Sales, Cape Town

Language & Position

Hilary Janks

Hodder & Stoughton

A MEMBER OF THE HODDER HEADLINE GROUP

JOHANNESBURG LONDON SYDNEY AUCKLAND

in association with

WUP

WITWATERSRAND UNIVERSITY PRESS

FOREWORD

Language and Position is the original workbook in the *Critical Language Awareness* series. It has been drafted many times. After I wrote it teachers told me how to change it so as to make it more suitable for their students. Then the teachers tried the book out with their classes. Many students and teachers in Johannesburg, Soshanguve, Mmabatho and Jane Furse spent a great deal of their time telling me via questionnaires how to make the workbooks more suitable for other students. In addition the students and teachers at Woodmead, The Interchurch Tuition Project and Jeppe Girls High allowed me to interview them. I have re-written this workbook using what they taught me and we have based the other workbooks in the series on this one.

This workbook is interested in positions. There are different positions on just about everything. I am interested in who supports the different positions. What makes them support that position and not another one? Why and how do people change the positions that they support? Do people choose to support positions or are they taught to do so at school, at home and by what they see on television and what they read? How do writers reveal or hide their positions? How do writers try to position their readers? Do we even know what our positions are?

I am particularly interested in the role played by language in shaping us, in influencing our ideas and our feelings, in constructing positions for us. I am also interested in the way we use language to create new positions and to challenge old ones. I believe that all writers want to persuade their readers to agree with them. There would be no point in writing if this were not so. I do not really believe that writing can be neutral or objective. Our job as readers is not to trust everything we read.

This workbook will help you to understand what is meant by position. There are many meanings. It will help you to become critical readers by increasing your awareness of how language is working to position you. It will help you to become oppositional – op(**position**)al – readers, readers who know how to oppose the positions of writers, who know when and how to refuse to think what writers want them to think and who know how to recognise writing that they need to oppose. The workbook will increase your awareness of language so that other people cannot easily use language to disempower you.

I hope that you will also read **this** workbook critically. The workbooks in the *Critical Language Awareness* series end with a page which asks you to think critically about the workbook but your critical watchfulness should start at the beginning not the end. A new way of looking at language is itself the beginning of a new way of looking at the world.

Hilary Janks

CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS (CLA)

This workbook is part of a series called *Critical Language Awareness*. All the workbooks in the series deal with the **relationship between language and power**. This relationship is not obvious and so the materials attempt to raise awareness of the way in which language **can** be used and **is** used to maintain and to challenge existing forms of power. There can be little doubt that power matters, both to people who have it and to those who do not. This series will try to show that because there are connections between language and power, language also matters.

In any **unequal relation of power** there are top dogs and underdogs. How people get to be on top in a society has to do with what that society values. It may be age or maleness or class or cleverness or a white skin. It is easier for those who have power to maintain it if they can persuade everyone in the society that there is nothing unnatural about these arrangements, that things are this way because that is the way they are meant to be.

If people **consent** to being powerless then the people in power need to use less **force** (armies, police, punishments) to maintain their power. Convincing and persuading people to consent to society's rules is often the job of families, religions, schools and the media. All these social institutions use language and it is largely in and through language that meaning is mobilised to defend the status quo.

But **language is also used to challenge the status quo**. By refusing to consent and by working together people can bring about change. What makes CLA 'critical' is its concern with the politics of meaning: the ways in which dominant meanings are maintained, challenged and changed.

When people use language to speak or write, they have to make many choices. They have to decide what words to use, whether to include adjectives and adverbs, whether to use the present, the past or the future, whether to use sexist or non-sexist pronouns, whether to join sentences or to leave them separate, how to sequence information, whether to be definite or tentative, approving or disapproving. What all these choices mean is that written and spoken **texts are constructed from a range of possible language options**.

However, not all the options are linguistic – many **texts are a combination of verbal and non-verbal elements**. Students are asked to think about the non-verbal choices such as photographs, pictures, gestures, graphs, which affect the meaning of texts.

Many of the choices are **social choices**. Every society has conventions which govern people's behaviour,

including their language behaviour. There are social rules controlling who should speak, for how long, when and where, and in which language. There are social norms for polite and impolite forms of speech; there are taboo words and topics. These unwritten **rules of use** govern what a speech community considers **appropriate** language behaviour.

These **social norms are a good indication of power relations** as many of them reflect the values of the people or groups in society who have power. This is particularly true when different groups do not have equal language rights. Here is an obvious example. Where teachers have more power than their students, they can call their students what they like. They can use first names or surnames only, or even insulting names that they have made up. Students, however, have to call teachers by their surnames and a title such as Mr or Ms; some students even have to call their teachers 'Sir' or 'Mistress'.

We forget that these rules of use are **social conventions** – they start to look natural and to seem like common sense. We forget that they are human constructions. It is easier to remember this when we compare the rules of different speech communities. Some groups think that it is rude to look a person in the eye when you speak to them. Other groups believe the opposite. Neither is more natural than the other. Both are conventions.

Critical Language Awareness emphasises the fact that texts are constructed. Anything that has been constructed can be **de-constructed**. This unmaking or unpicking of the text increases our awareness of the choices that the writer or speaker has made. Every choice foregrounds what was selected and hides, silences or backgrounds what was not selected. Awareness of this prepares the way to ask **critical questions**: Why did the writer or speaker make these choices? Whose interests do they serve? Who is empowered or disempowered by the language used? We hope that students will also ask these critical questions about the workbooks in the series.

What the series hopes to do is to teach students how to become **critical readers**. Critical readers resist the power of print and do not believe everything they read. They start from a position of strategic doubt and weigh texts against their own ideas and values as well as those of others. This is not opposition for opposition's sake. If CLA enables people to use their awareness to contest the practices which disempower them, and to use language so as not to disempower others, then it can contribute to the struggle for human emancipation.

Hilary Janks

SUGGESTED METHODS FOR TEACHERS

I believe that students learn by talking and writing about new ideas. Often they do not know what they know until they have tried to put their ideas into words. In large classes it is impossible for everyone to talk to the teacher, and students often benefit from telling a friend their feelings and ideas. The friend gives them feedback that enables them to revise and change their opinions before committing themselves to a final answer.

1. To achieve this students need opportunities to:

Work in pairs with the person next to them. Pair work is easy to organise and it makes everyone in the class speak to some other student.

Work in groups (from 3 to 5 students).

The teacher can give groups the same task or different tasks. For example if the students are working on an exercise, different groups can be asked to do different questions or all the groups can be asked to do the same questions. The teacher should keep track of what the groups are doing by

- moving from group to group to listen to the discussion
- seeing that all group members contribute
- asking each group to make notes and sometimes to hand in written answers.

2. **Groups and pairs should report back to the whole class.** If the groups did different questions, they have the responsibility of explaining their answers to the rest of the class so that ideas can be pooled. If they did the same questions, not all groups need report back in order to compare their answers.

3. **Teachers should try to establish a spirit of co-operation rather than competition.** Students should be encouraged to help each other and to share what they know.

4. **Students should be encouraged to listen to one another,** especially during report backs. They should decide whether or not they agree with what the other person is saying. They should also be taught to make notes when their fellow students are speaking.

5. **It is a good idea to allow students to work in their mother tongue** to give them an opportunity at the start of the group work to understand the ideas. Because group work is followed by some spoken or written presentation in the medium of instruction, what is important is that by the end of the group work students are able to express their ideas in the language of the classroom.

6. **Students should also do individual work at school and at home.** This gives them practice in using the medium of instruction and encourages independence.

7. **Both group and individual work should sometimes be written.** In large classes it is not always possible to read everything that students write. Teachers should check students' books regularly to see that they are doing the work and that they understand the lessons. Some exercises should be marked carefully. Students need teachers to respond to what they are trying to say. It is also possible to go over exercises in class and to teach students how to check their own work.

8. **Some activities can be done in less depth than the workbook suggests.** Sometimes the workbook includes more than one activity on the same idea or concept. If the students grasp the idea with the first exercise, the teacher should feel free to do the related exercises more quickly (say with a brief read through) or not at all. Different students in the class can do different exercises in more or less detail according to their needs.

9. **Some activities can be done in more depth than the workbook suggests.** If the class gets really interested in something the teacher should encourage students to find similar examples in newspapers or magazines which they can bring to class for additional discussion. Teachers and students should devise their own exercises.

10. **Teachers and students should constantly relate the issues and activities in the workbooks to their own lives and experiences.** The workbooks are only a starting point for the exploration of the language and power issues that they raise, and lessons should not simply stick to the book.

11. **Teachers should help students to apply ideas in these workbooks to all their school subjects.**

12. **Teachers can make the ideas less abstract for the students** by encouraging them to do the research, the collages and the drawings as well as the dramatisations, debates and discussions suggested.

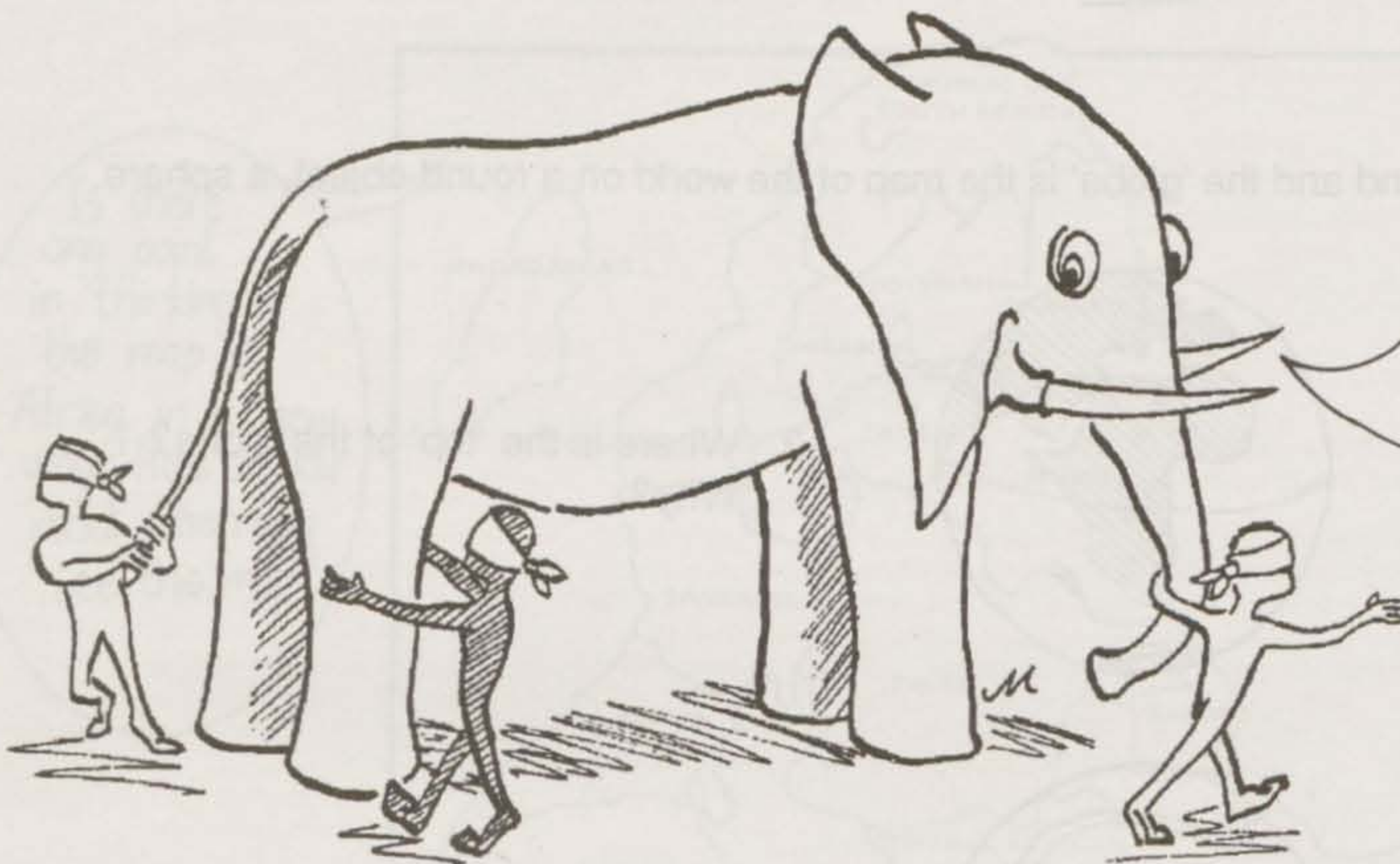
13. **Teachers should facilitate class discussions.** The workbooks deal with real and sensitive issues. Teachers need to help students to listen to one another and to try to understand the different histories and positions that other people in the class speak from. We need to hear other people and not try to convert them to our way of thinking.

14. **It is important to vary the approach used.** Different people learn in different ways. By varying the method, the teacher gives all the students a better chance of learning in ways that suit them best.

H Janks

DOES WHERE WE STAND MATTER?

The picture of the three 'blind' people and an elephant is based on a fable from East Asia. Use it to discuss how where the three people are standing is likely to affect what they 'see'.



Each person touched a different part of the elephant. Because they are blind, they do not know that it is an elephant.

How would each of them describe what they touched?

In pairs act out a disagreement based on one of the following situations in order to show that 'where one stands does matter'.

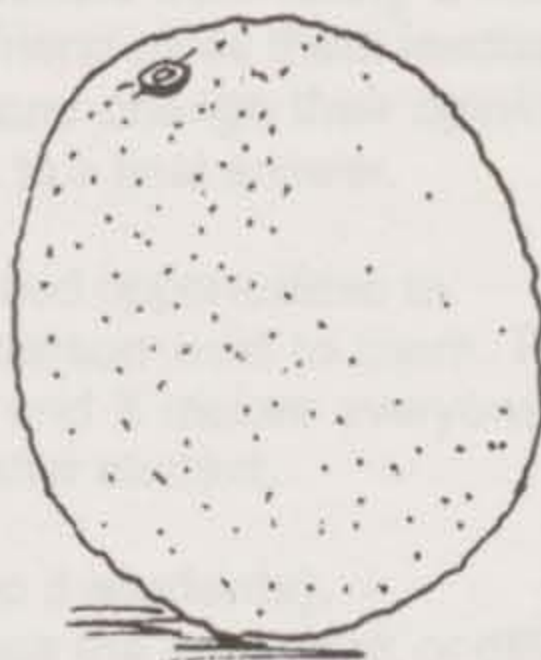
1. What spectators at a soccer match can and cannot see depending on where they are sitting.
2. What different eyewitnesses at a protest will see.
3. What different eyewitnesses of an accident will see.

What conclusions can you draw about the importance of the VIEWER'S POSITION? If different viewers see different things, are they all right or are they all wrong?

WHERE'S THE TOP?

Try to bring an orange, a globe and a tennis ball to class so that you can look at them.

An orange



1. Draw the branch and twig that originally attached this orange to its tree.
2. Where is the 'top' of the orange? Where is the bottom? Why?

The globe

The world is round and the 'globe' is the map of the world on a round object, a sphere.



3. Where is the 'top' of the globe? Why?

A tennis ball



4. Where is the 'top' of the ball?

If a ball or a sphere have no natural up and down, the decision to name **up** as 'North' and **down** as 'South' on the globe is a **convention**. What convention means here is that people agreed to this: it is not natural, it is agreed.

5. **Is the naming of East and West also a convention?**

Where in the world would you have to be standing for the Middle **East** and the Far **East** to be in the **east** at the same time as the **West** Indies are in the **west**? If you are standing in Japan where is the Middle East?

6. Who do you think drew the maps? Why do you think they drew them like this?

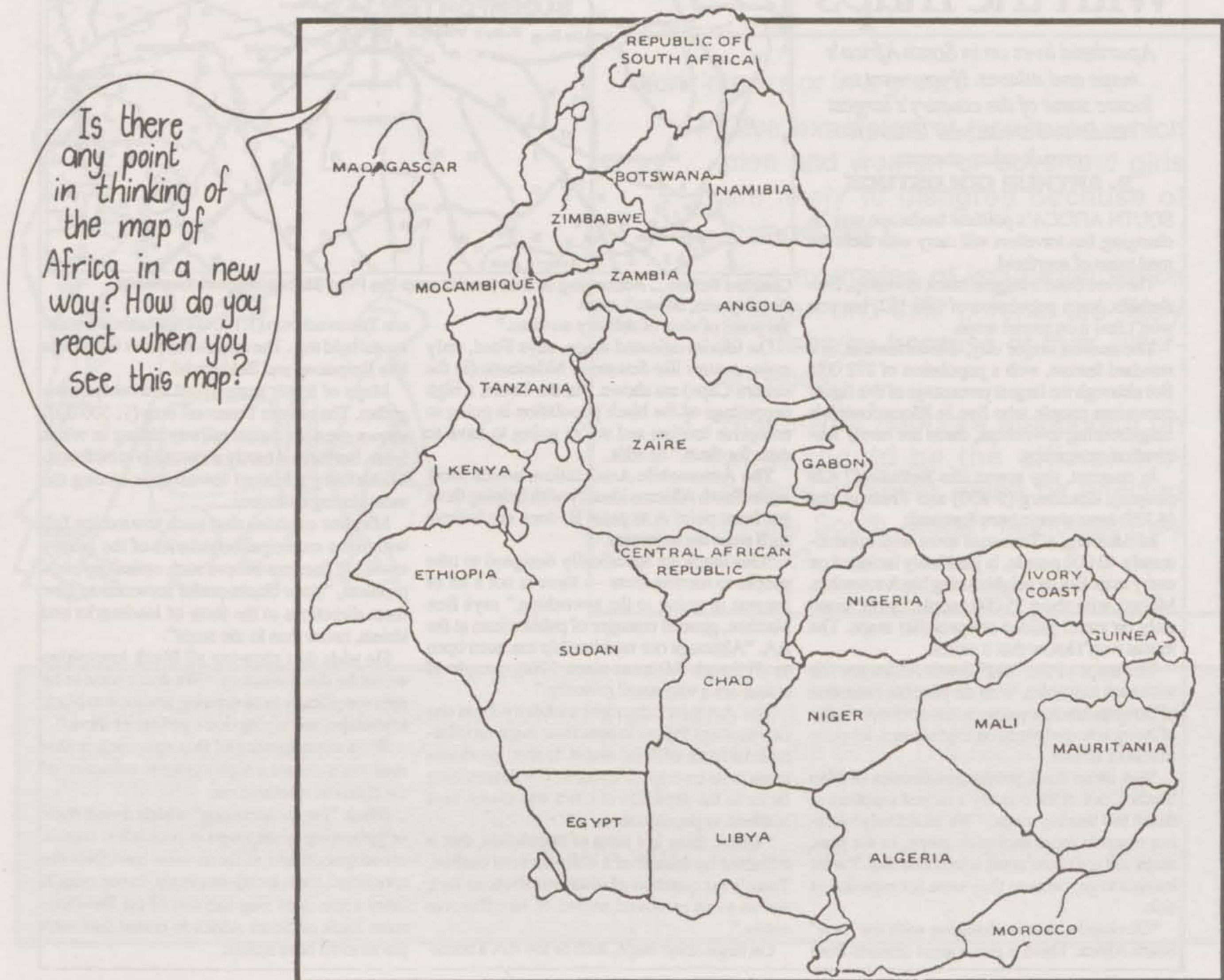
NORTH IS UP AND SOUTH IS DOWN BUT THE WORLD IS ROUND

The idea that North is 'always up' is purely a convention. It is part of our colonial heritage and may have wider implications.

We in the Southern hemisphere have been taught from the first map we were ever shown that we live 'down here', while the rest of the world lives 'up there' ...

Let us take a look at the continent from our point of view. It's somehow different right?

FRONTLINE, June 1982



It is important to remember that maps are representations of reality. They present the world to their readers as if they are the truth. In fact they are the map maker's version of the truth.

STANDPOINT OR POINT OF VIEW

Page 1 showed that what we see or know is affected by where we happen to be standing. Quite literally, **where we are physically positioned in space** can affect our understanding of the thing we are trying to know.

On pages 2, 3 and 4 we saw that conventions and politics affect the way we think about geographical positions.

The next exercise tries to explain how position also has a **social** meaning. When we talk about a person's **standpoint or point of view** this does not refer to their literal position in space. Instead we refer to what they think because of who they are and what they believe.

In this **social** use of **position**, our understanding of position in space helps us to understand what it might mean for people to maintain different 'positions' on a political, emotional or intellectual issue.



Work in pairs or in a group.

1. Give examples of issues on which men and women or boys and girls are likely to disagree because of their gender.
2. Give examples of issues on which children and their parents are likely to disagree because of their different ages.
3. How might people's standpoint on what should be the official languages of South Africa be affected by the South African language they speak?

In your discussions you probably noticed that all the girls did not necessarily have the same view just because they are girls and the same with the boys. The reason for this is that we are not *just female* or *just male*. We are also young or old, rich or poor, black or white, religious or not religious. This means that there is not necessarily one view which represents what *all* women think or *one* view which represents what all men think. *Within* our gender groups there are differences of view.

Try to think about

- differences amongst women about child care
- differences amongst parents about dating
- differences amongst people who speak Afrikaans about whether Afrikaans should be an official language.

POSITIONS BASED ON WHO WE ARE

The last exercise showed us that our point of view may be affected by our gender, our age or by our membership of a language community.

1. In small groups list all the other factors you can think of that are likely to affect our standpoint on issues in our society.

Combine the answers from the different groups in order to discover how many factors the whole class could find.

Now that you have some idea of how many different things affect our points of view, you are ready to consider the next question. This is something for the whole class to discuss. It is also worth writing about individually.

2. Can we choose to think what we think?

OR

Do the social circumstances in which we live make us think what we think?

OR

Is it a bit of both?

It may help you to think about something specific, for example: How does living in South Africa affect people's attitudes to school? to race? to the weather?

Other writers and I call these positions that we take because of who we are our **subject positions**. If you said that we can decide, with no constraints, about what we think and do, then you probably believe that we are **free agents** who can make **free choices**. If you said that we think the way we do because of our social circumstances, you probably believe that we have very little free choice and are **subjected** by the social situations into which we are born. I think **we have to try and find a balance between being free and being subjected** otherwise there is no escape, no point in struggling to change things. There is also a danger in imagining that we are completely free to change things because then we will fail to take seriously the social forces blocking us.

THE WRITER'S POSITION AND THE READER'S POSITION

We have seen how a person's view of reality leads him or her to construct what he or she says in particular ways, from a particular point of view. On page 4 we saw that the writer of the article has a different point of view from the map maker and he thinks that South African maps should be drawn differently. What we need to think about now is the relationship between the writer's point of view and the reader's. Obviously writers hope that their readers will come to share their perspective, their position, otherwise there would be no point in writing.

In the poem **Streemin** written by Roger McGough, the poet disapproves of educational streaming. Streaming separates students into different classes according to how clever they are. He has an anti-streaming position. He wants his readers to share this position so he uses language to position his readers against streaming. Let's see how this works in practice. Read the poem aloud and answer the questions in bubbles.

1. I is not the poet. Who is the 'I' in the poem?

2. How does McGough present 'I' in this stanza? How does he make you feel about 'I' at the end of this stanza?

3. How does 'I' change position in stanza 2? Do you feel the same or differently about 'I' after reading this stanza?

Streemin

Im in the botom streme
which means Im not brighth
dont like reading
cant hardly write

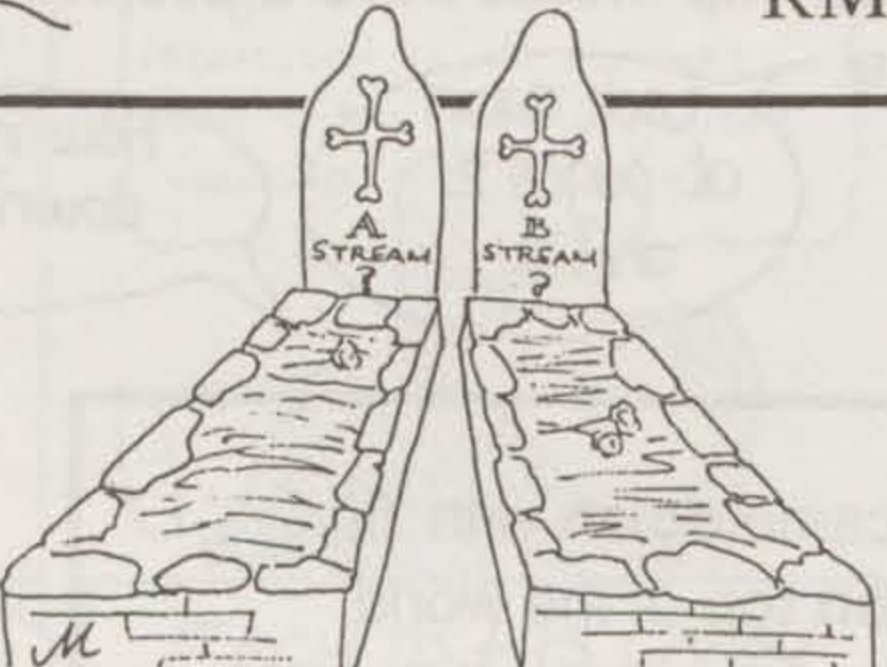
but all these divishns
arnt reely fair
look at the cemtery
no streemin there

RMcG

4. why does McGough create the character who speaks the poem— in what ways does he use this character to position you?

5. Find all the examples of 'nonstandard' English in the poem. How does McGough use them to position his character and his readers?

6. Rewrite the poem in 'standard' English. Does this improve the poem or not? Give reasons.



By examining the language of any text carefully, we can often uncover how the writer uses language to create points of view or positions for the reader. Sometimes writers do this deliberately. At other times they unconsciously choose language which best expresses their position. Readers are usually not conscious of how they are positioned by the writer.

HOW WE USE LANGUAGE TO POSITION OTHER PEOPLE

Imagine that you and your sister (or brother) have just had a fight. Your mother is very angry with both of you. She asks each of you to tell her what happened. You both agree on the facts (you both tell her essentially the same story) but each of you will use language to position your mother so that she sides with you.

In groups of three role-play the scene: there are three characters, the mother and the two children.

Remember that you have to agree on the facts. Work these out together first. Then work out what language to choose to present each child's position. The aim of the exercise is for each child to try and win the mother over to his or her position. If you script the play the choice of language is deliberate. If you decide to improvise, then when you imagine yourself into the role, the character's choice of language will be less conscious.

Once you have finished your role plays, some groups should act them out in front of the class.

A job for the audience to do

While you are watching the performances you need to concentrate very carefully on the language used by the two children. Think about how the children are using language to position their mother. These questions will help you to notice the language.

1. Did the children choose different vocabulary? Write down examples.
2. Did the children present the information in the same order?
3. What tone of voice did the two children use?
4. What other techniques did either of the children use to win their mother over to their position?
5. If one child convinces the mother that she or he was justified, try to work out how the child did so.

Compare your answers afterwards with the audience and the actors.

Because **values are often a part of the language we speak**, in choosing words we are not fully conscious of their effects. Even words referring to space such as 'up', 'down', 'high', 'low', 'rise', 'fall', are not neutral. In English 'up' words have a positive value or connotation whereas 'down' words have a negative value.



Look again
at pages 2
and 3.

How many more up/good
down/bad expressions can
you think
of?

- 1 He came **down** with 'flu.
- 2 I'm **on top** of the world.
- 3 Things are at an all time **low**.
- 4 I'm in the **bottom** stream.
- 5 We have **high** standards.

Collect
more examples
from newspapers
and magazines

Are 'up' and
'down' good and
bad in other
languages
you know?

POSITIONING

The next passage shows clearly how the writer constructs a position for himself or herself as well as a position for the reader. The passage constructs both the writer and the reader.

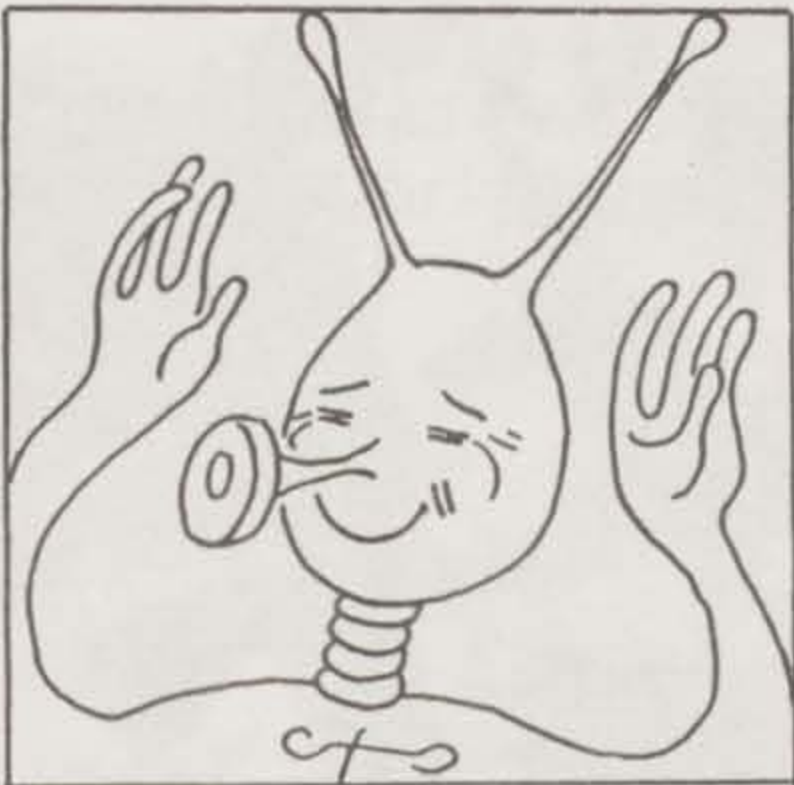
Greetings Earthling...

I am from another planet.

I have transformed myself onto this page and I am presently making love to your fingers.

I know that you are enjoying it as I can see you smiling.

1. How does the writer construct the reader here?
2. How does the writer construct itself?
3. How does the writer construct its relationship with the reader?
4. And how does the writer construct the reader here?



If you can see the position the text is creating for you, it is easier to refuse to read the text in that way, from that reading position.

So far we have looked at our actual positions in space, our geographical positions and our social positions. We have thought of how all of these affect the way in which we 'read' events and texts and how we in turn present them for other people to 'read'. On pages 7 and 8 we began to look at how people can use language to influence other people. When people use language they have to work out what their readers or listeners already know and this helps writers to decide what to tell them and what not to tell them. Writers make assumptions about their readers and these give us clues as to how the writer constructs the reader.

My readers know who Charles and Diana are, so I don't have to tell them.



My readers know and are interested in the rumours, that their marriage isn't working out.



My readers know that separate bedrooms means no sex = bad marriage.



If I say "his own", my readers will know I mean "his and hers"



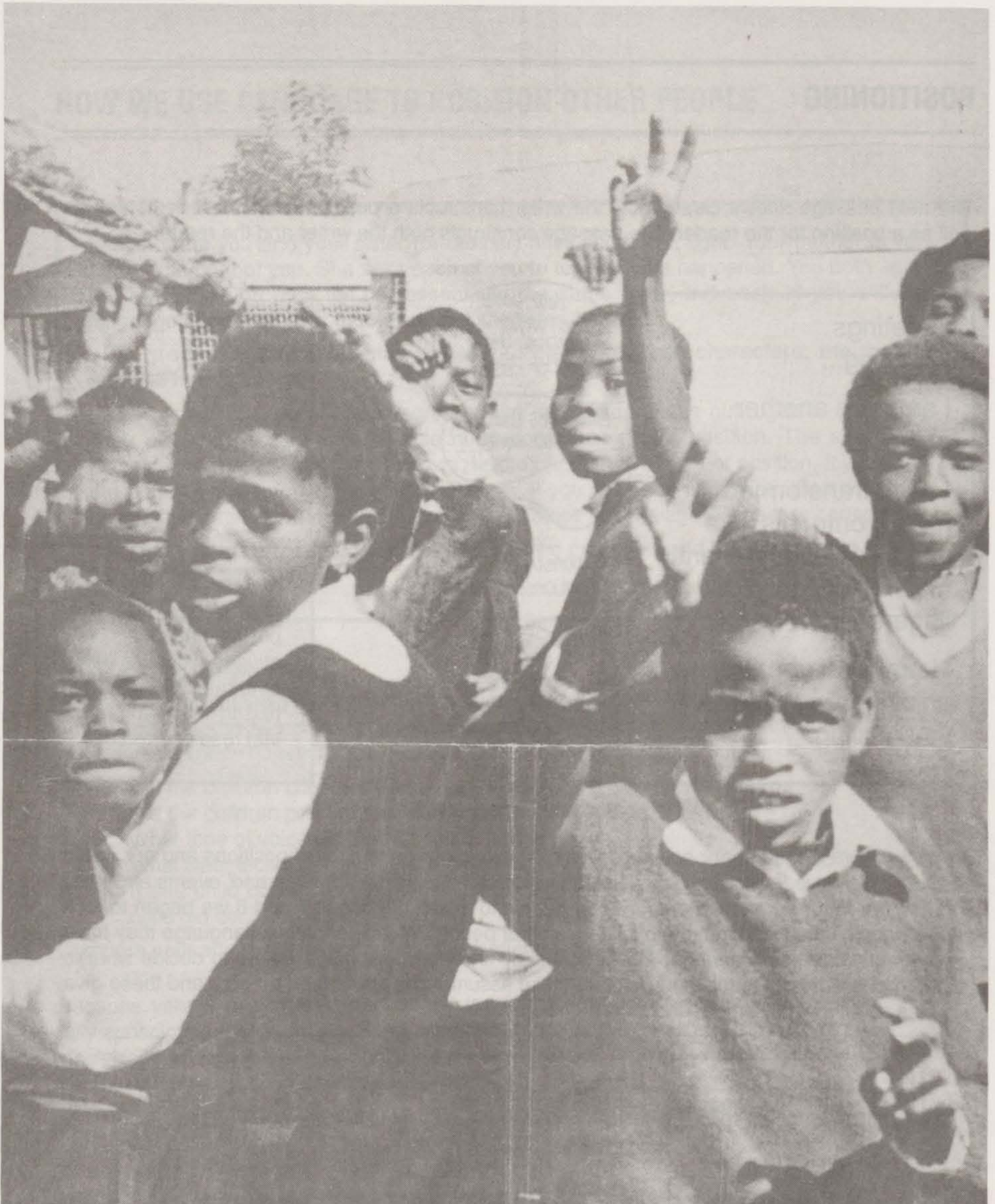
EACH TO HIS OWN

Is the rumour that Charles and Diana retire to different bedrooms at Highgrove House, the couple's 10-bedroomed mansion in Gloucestershire, finally fact?



So what is it that I'm supposed to know? ...





In the new South Africa, every one will need a pass.

What sprang to mind first?
The revival of the hated "dompas", or the
desperate need for quality education
in our country?

Whatever the answer, it just
illustrates how easily the manner in

which a report is presented can
affect the impression it makes.

An impression which may, in turn,
influence your capacity
for making sense of many
sensitive and sometimes



The Star
TELLS IT LIKE IT IS.

confusing daily issues.

Consequently, The Star's philosophy
is to provide you with information as
objectively and reliably as
possible, restricting our own
opinions to the opinions

page. In short, we try to tell it
like it is. Not how it could be or
should be. So you can decide whether
education can be correctly defined as
reading, rioting and arithmetic, or
not.

© Rupert Murdoch 794212

DO NEWSPAPERS USE LANGUAGE TO POSITION READERS?

In 1990 *The Star* ran the advertisement on the opposite page as part of their *The Star tells it like it is* advertising campaign. Cover the writing below the picture. Look at the picture and the caption written on the picture. How are they trying to position you, the reader? What do they make you think? What is the writer assuming about the reader?

The words in the box below are the same as the words under the picture. Read them and then answer the following questions. This can be done in writing, either individually or in pairs.

**THE STAR
TELLS IT LIKE IT IS.**

What sprang to mind first?
The revival of the hated "dompas",
or the desperate need for quality
education in our country?

Whatever the answer, it just illus-
trates how easily the manner in which
a report is presented can affect the
impression it makes.

An impression which may, in turn,
influence your capacity for making
sense of many sensitive and some-
times confusing daily issues.

Consequently, The Star's
philosophy is to provide you with
information as objectively and
reliably as possible, restricting our
own opinions to the opinions page. In
short we try to tell it like it is.
Not how it could be or should be. So
you can decide whether
education can be correctly defined as
reading, rioting and arithmetic, or not.

What does
The Star want
people to
believe?

What was
the 'dompas'?
What does 'hated' tell us about
the writer's position?
What position does it create for
the reader?

How is this word
helping to construct
a reading
position?

Do you
agree with
this claim?

How is
this word helping to
construct a reading
position?
How does the whole
paragraph construct the
reader?

How
objective do
you think it is
possible to be?

Find
an opinion in
this text.

What does The Star
say its slogan means?
What is implied?

'Rioting' has been
substituted for 'writing'.
Does this tell us anything
about The Star's position on
black education? How does
this word attempt to position
readers?

HOW A WRITER OF HISTORY USES LANGUAGE TO POSITION READERS

In this description of the battle of Vegkop, from a history textbook used in South African primary schools until 1980, decide who are portrayed as the goodies and who are portrayed as the baddies. Answer the following questions to see how this is done.

Is any explanation given for this behaviour? What is this behaviour likely to make the reader think of the Matabele?

What are the effects of these words?

How does the writer convey the impression that the trekkers are civilised?

Give reasons other than God's intervention to account for the trekker victory. Use information in the passage. Why is this information kept in the background? How is it kept in the background?

Matabele is the name white people made up for the Ndebele tribe.


Why is this information placed at this point in the passage: before the onset of the battle and before Celliers prays?

Why not the word 'withdrew' or 'retreated'?

How does the writer give the impression that God is on the side of the trekkers? Why is this important?

The trekkers hurried into the laager and closed the entrance. All around were the Matabele hordes, sharpening their assegais, killing animals and drinking the raw blood. Sarel Celliers offered up a prayer.

When the enemy made a savage attack, the defenders fired volley upon volley into their ranks. All helped. The women and children, including Paul Kruger, loaded extra guns and handed them to the men. After a fierce battle the Matabele fled. The voortrekkers gave thanks to God for their deliverance.



HOW A DIFFERENT HISTORIAN POSITIONS THE READER DIFFERENTLY

Who are the attackers and who are the defenders?

Ndebele is the tribe's own name for themselves. White people called them the 'Matabele'.

How does the choice of 'Ndebele' instead of 'Matabele' in this text show the writer's position?

Who won the battle?

How does this version of the battle differ from the version on page 12. What is the same?

How does this version compare with the account of the Battle of Vegkop in your school's text books?

Military prowess was of paramount importance to the trekker expedition. It had to be, for they were invading and conquering territories to which African societies themselves lay claim... Bound by a common purpose, the trekkers were a people's army in the true sense of the word, with the whole family being drawn into military defence and attack. For instance, the loading of the ... rifles they used was a complicated procedure and so the Boers used more than one gun at a time – while aiming and firing at the enemy with one, their wives and children would be loading another.

Dispossession and land seizure

The trekkers' first major confrontation was with Mzilikazi, founder and king of the Ndebele ... In 1836 the Ndebele were in the path of a trekker expedition heading northwards and led by ... Potgieter. The Ndebele were attacked by a Boer commando led by Potgieter, but Mzilikazi retaliated and the Boers retreated to their main laager at Vegkop. There in October, after a short and fierce battle which lasted only half an hour, 40 trekkers succeeded in beating off an attack by 6 000 Ndebele warriors. Both sides suffered heavy losses – 430 Ndebele were killed, and the trekkers lost thousands of sheep and cattle as well as their trek oxen. But a few days later, Moroko and the missionary Archbell rescued them with food and oxen.

Reproduced from 'Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa' © 1988 Reader's Digest Association South Africa (Pty) Ltd, 130 Strand Street, Cape Town, 8001. Used with permission.

Why were women and children drawn into the fighting?

Who was dispossessing whom? Who was seizing land from whom?

Imagine that you are an Ndebele warrior or a woman from the tribe. Write a letter in which you give your version of what happened.



We have seen how all writers tell things from their points of view. Readers have to learn to question what they read whether it is a map, a poem, a newspaper, a magazine or a school textbook.

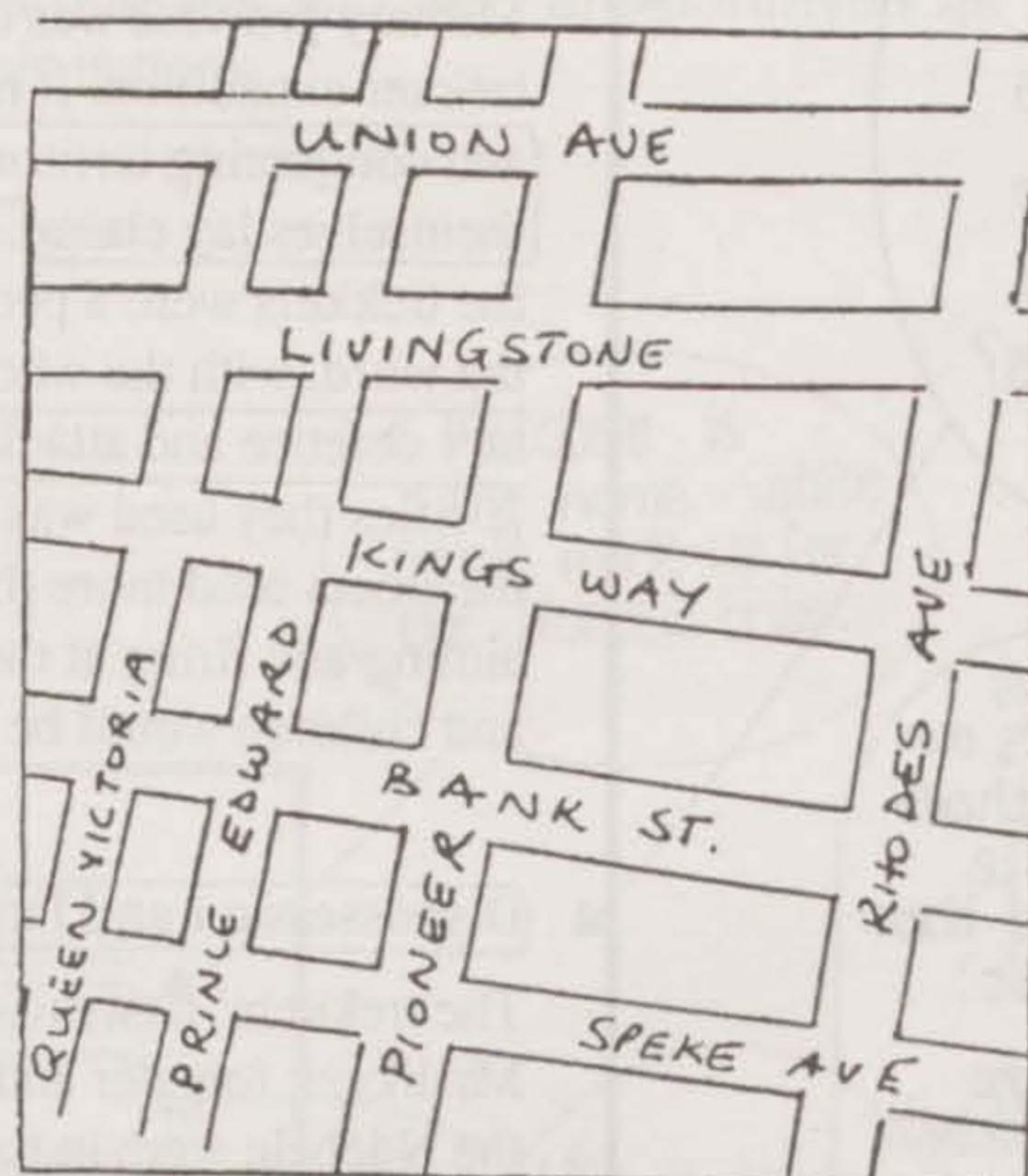
HISTORY FROM ABOVE AND HISTORY FROM BELOW

History from above is history told from the point of view of the conquerors, the ruling classes. In the case of the battle of Vegkop, this would be from the point of view of the trekkers.

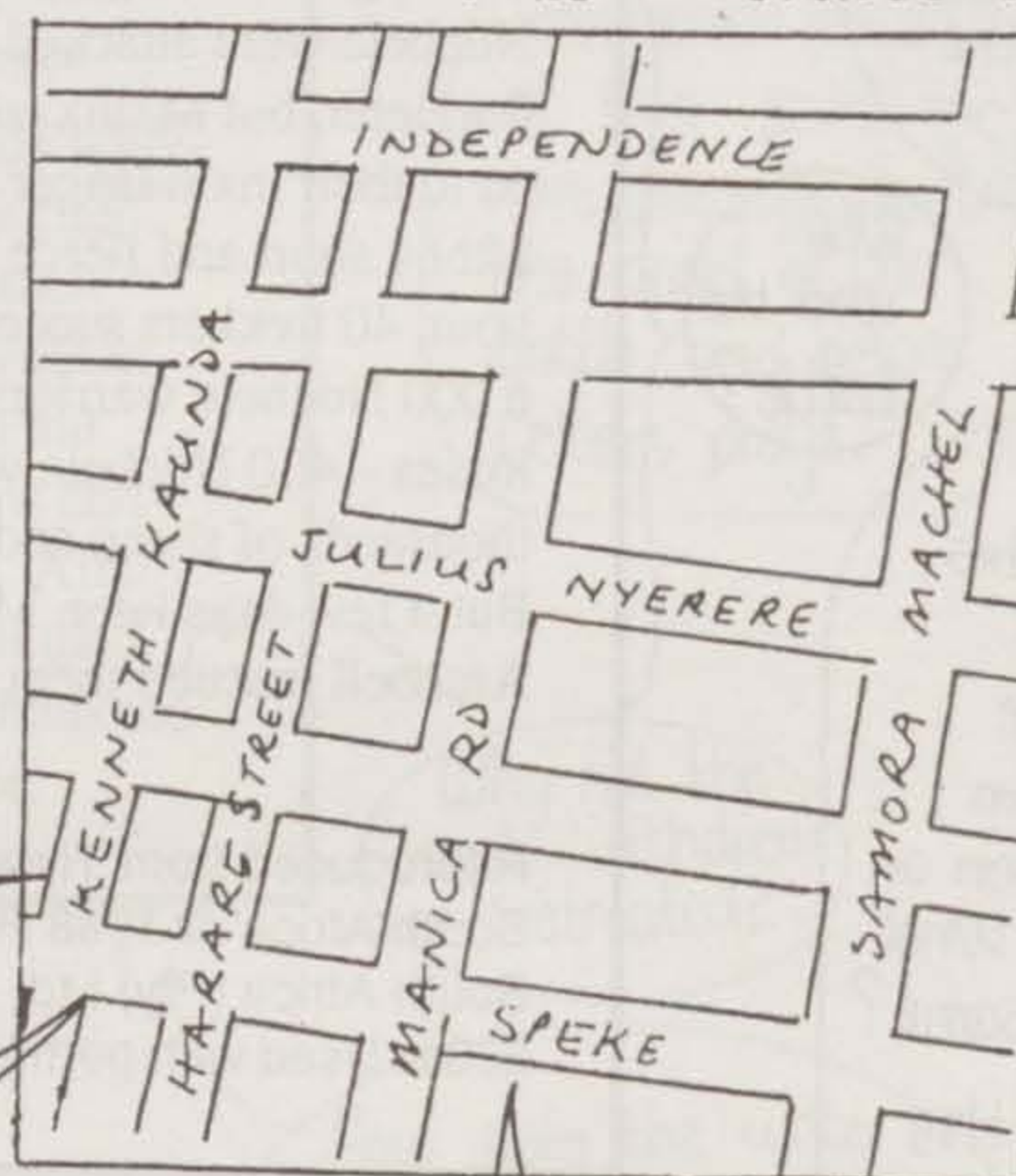
History from below is the same history, told from the point of view of the conquered, the underclasses, the oppressed. In the case of the battle of Vegkop, this would be from the point of view of the Ndebele. History from below is often referred to as people's history. ('Above', 'below', 'under': more up/down language. See page 8.)

If there is more than one version of history, which version is the true version? The historian's job is to decide what counts as evidence, to interpret the evidence and then to tell what happened in the light of his or her interpretation. Your job as the reader of history is to recognise that there is more than one version and that every writer wants to position the reader so the reader accepts that writer's version as the true story.

Maps of the same streets in Rhodesia/ Zimbabwe



SALISBURY BEFORE INDEPENDENCE



HARARE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Compare the street names.
What is the connection
between names and
history from above?

Think of
names in
your town. Should these
names be changed?
Why? Why not?

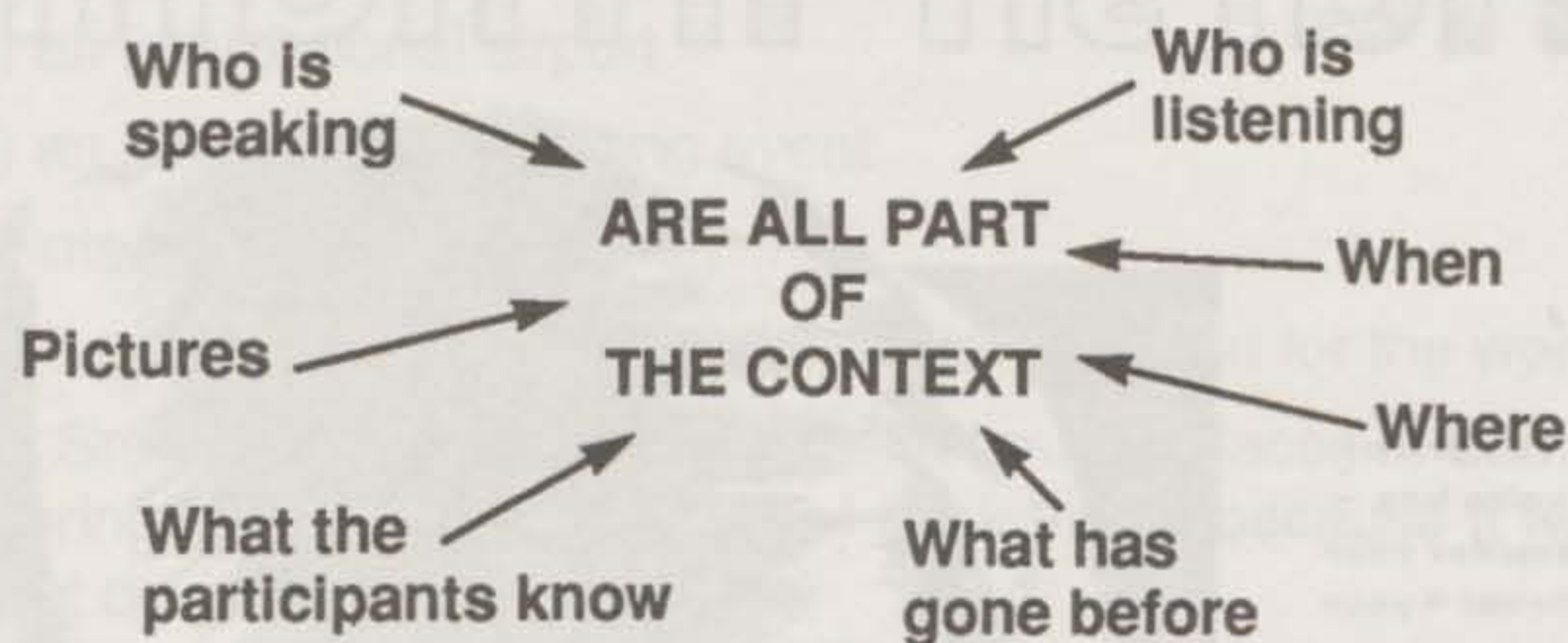
Are these names
names from below?

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

- 1 Think about South Africa's public holidays. Which ones celebrate history from above and which ones celebrate history from below?
- 2 Which holidays have been renamed? Can you explain why?

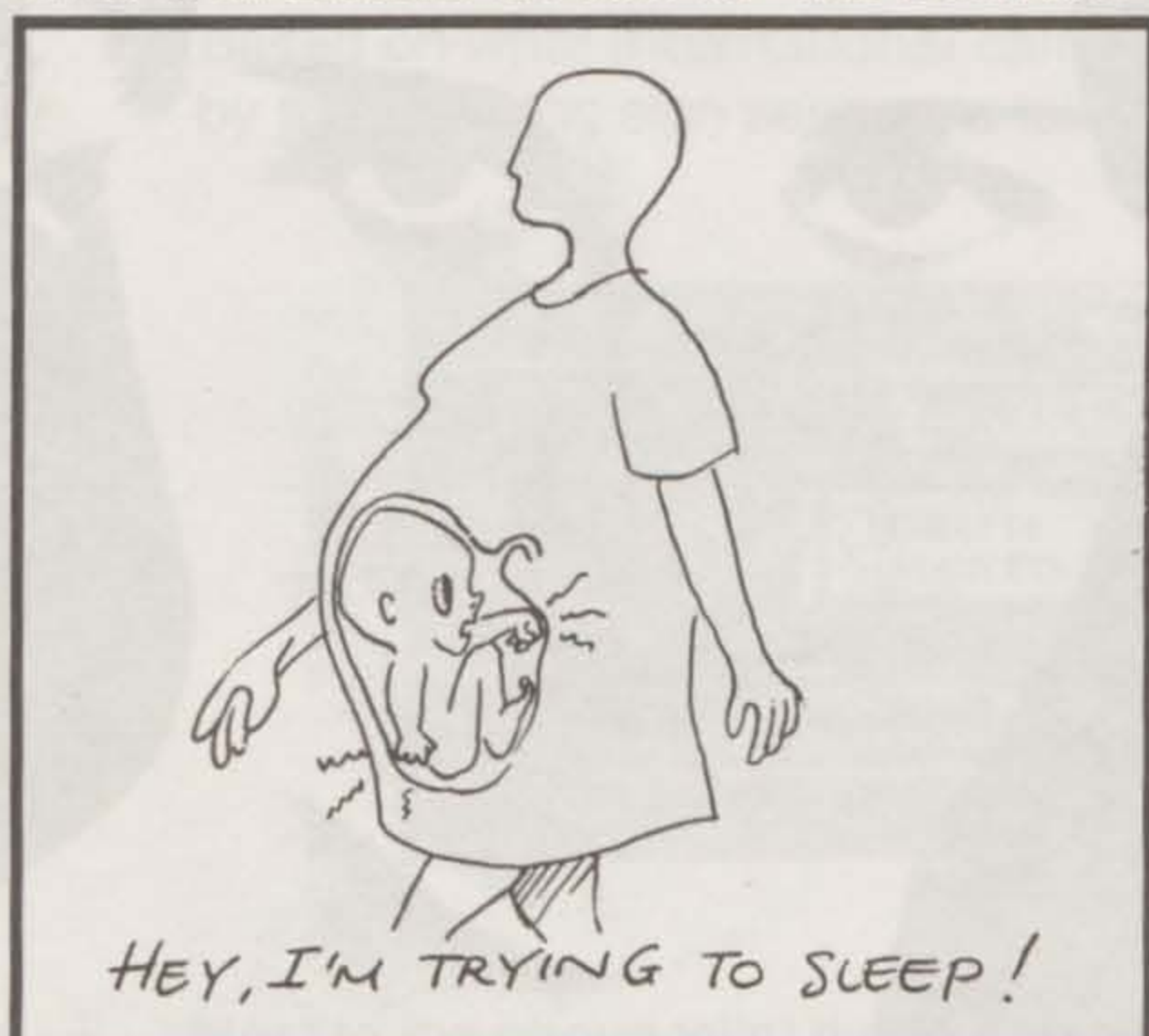
POSITIONING OCCURS IN CONTEXTS

In order to understand words we need to know who is saying what to whom, where, when and why. In other words we need to know a lot about the context in which they are used.



Words have meaning in contexts so we need knowledge of context to understand how positioning is working.

WHO IS SPEAKING IS PART OF THE CONTEXT



Redraw the speaker as a different character and say how this changes the meaning.

WHO IS LISTENING IS PART OF THE CONTEXT



Redraw the listener as a different character and say how this changes the meaning.

'WHEN' IS PART OF THE CONTEXT

- 1 On the next page you will find a cigarette advertisement written in 1931. Before you read the advertisement decide how you think it will differ from modern-day cigarette advertisements.
- 2 Now read the advertisement carefully. What is the advertiser's view of cigarettes? How are we able to resist this view now? Show how time has changed the position of the reader.

Consider your Adam's Apple!!★ Don't Rasp Your Throat With Harsh Irritants

"Reach for a
LUCKY instead"

Place your finger on your Adam's Apple. You are actually touching your larynx — this is your voice box — it contains your vocal chords. When you consider your Adam's Apple, you are considering your throat — your vocal chords.

What is the effect of modern Ultra Violet Rays upon tobacco? Dr. E. E. Free, one of America's well-known scientists, who was retained by us to study Lucky Strike's manufacturing process, addressing the Illuminating Engineering Society, said:

"The essential effect of the Ultra Violet is the production of better tobacco and of cigarettes regarded by virtually all smokers who have tested them as milder and with a lesser tendency to cause throat irritation."

Here in America LUCKY STRIKE is the only cigarette that employs Ultra Violet Rays in connection with its exclusive "TOASTING" Process — the only cigarette that brings you the benefits of the exclusive "TOASTING" Process which expels certain harsh irritants present in all raw tobaccos.



P31
© 1951
The A. T. Co.,
N.Y.C.

TUNE IN—
The Lucky Strike
Dance Orchestra,
every Tuesday,
Thursday and Saturday
evening over
N. B. C. net-
works.

"It's toasted"

Including the use of Ultra Violet Rays
Sunshine Melloes — Harsh Irritants

Your Throat Protection — against



LUCKIES are always
kind to your throat

WILLIS SHAW
NEW YORK

'WHERE' IS PART OF THE CONTEXT THAT AFFECTS MEANING

- 1 Explain the meaning of **international** in the following phrases:

- (a) an international airport
- (b) an international sporting event
- (c) international law

Each phrase provides a slightly different context for the word 'international'.

- 2 Jan Smuts Airport was one of the first public places in South Africa to desegregate its catering facilities and its toilets. I think this is because it was an international airport. What do you think?

In South Africa in the 1970s some hotels were called international hotels. These were the only hotels that were allowed to admit people of all races and to serve liquor to all races. **Where** (South Africa) and **when** (the 1970s) changed the word 'international' to include the idea of desegregation.

- 3 Based on what **international** came to mean in South Africa, what do you understand by the following sign seen on a toilet block at the Pretoria Zoo in 1985?



Next to the above toilet block was a second block with a different sign.



- 4 This next-door block changes the context again. **Now** what do you understand by the sign **International Toilets**? Who is meant to use this toilet?

WHAT WE KNOW FROM PREVIOUS TEXTS IS PART OF THE CONTEXT

In 1990 Mercedes Benz won an international advertising award for this advertisement:

The advertisement was based on a true story. A man was driving a Mercedes Benz on Chapman's Peak Drive in Cape Town. Chapman's Peak Drive is a very steep, curving road along the side of a mountain with the Atlantic Ocean below. The car went over the cliff and crashed on the rocks. Because the front and back of the Mercedes Benz are designed to fold in a crash leaving the passenger compartment unsquashed, the driver was not hurt. The advertisement emphasised this safety feature.

In the same year BMW produced this advertisement:

The BMW advertisement showed a BMW travelling down the same road as the Mercedes Benz. The BMW did not go over the cliff and the slogan for the advertisement was 'BMW beats the bends'.

BMW was forced to withdraw its advertisement on the grounds that comparative advertising is not allowed in South Africa. What this means is that advertisers are not allowed to sell their products by claiming that they are better than the products of their competitors.

- 1 What could the BMW slogan mean to a reader who had not seen the Mercedes Benz ad?
- 2 How is its meaning changed by the Mercedes Benz ad?

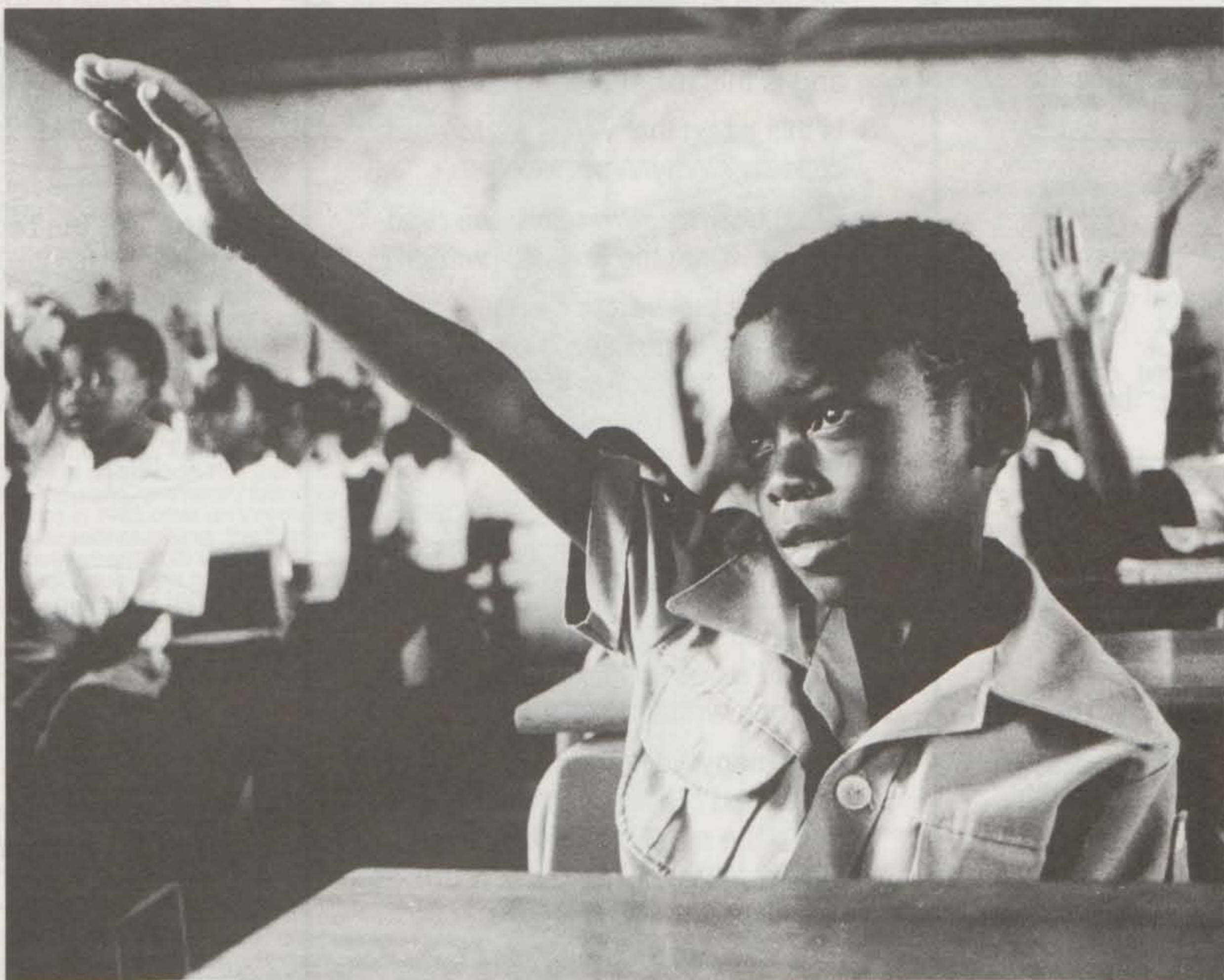


Because the BMW ad is a response to the Mercedes Benz ad, the Mercedes Benz ad is **the context which affects the meaning** of the BMW ad. The meaning of the BMW text is influenced by the Mercedes Benz text which came before it. The meaning of any text is affected by other texts that are in some way connected to it. This is known as **Intertextuality**; the meanings of different texts interact and affect one another.

PICTURES ARE PART OF THE CONTEXT

Compare this picture with the picture on page 10. I think that because this picture presents black education and black students more positively it positions the reader to think that these are children who value education. The two pictures position the reader differently.

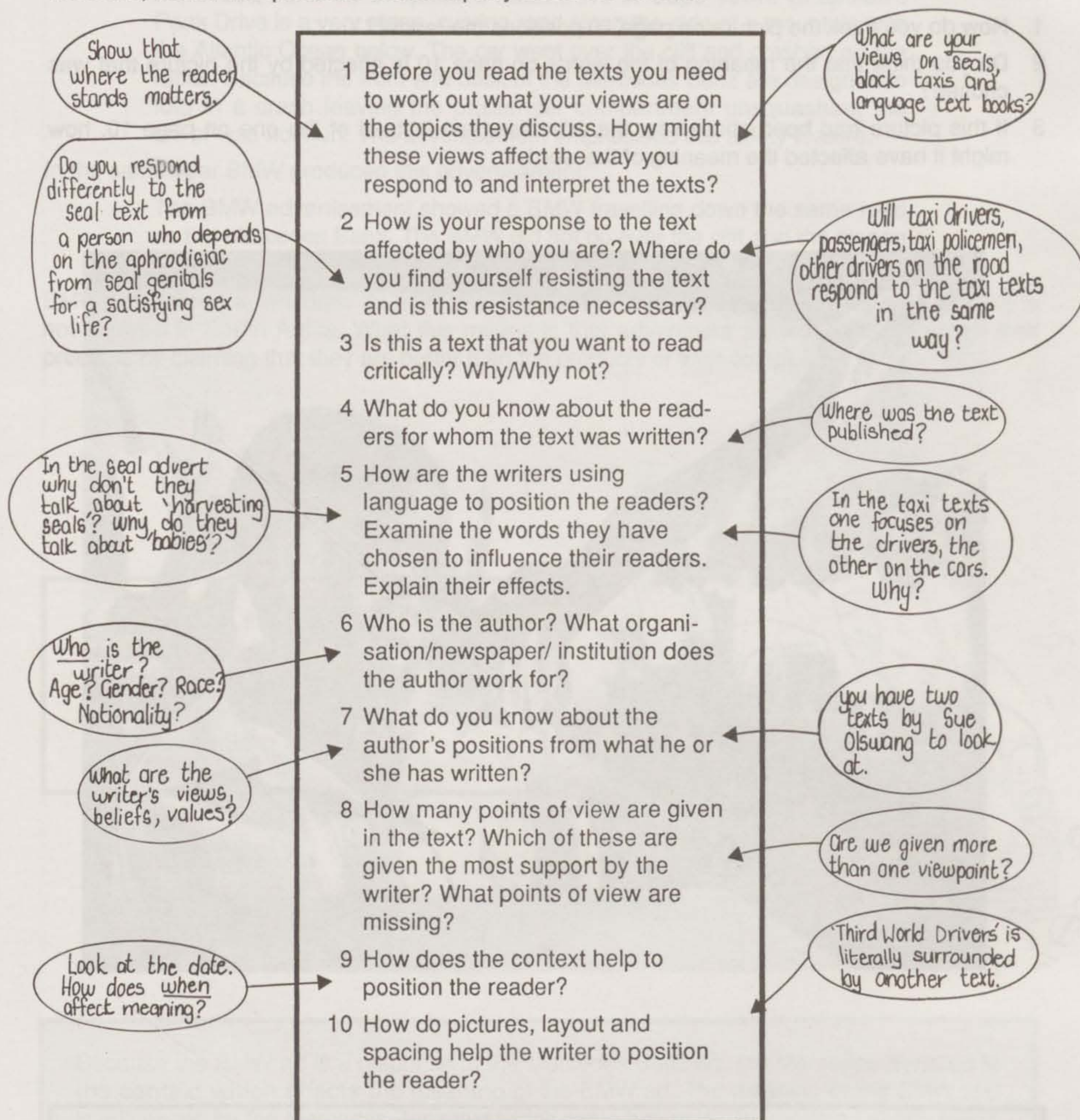
- 1 How do you think the picture on page 10 positions the reader?
- 2 Do you think that the meaning of the words on page 10 is affected by the picture that was chosen?
- 3 If this picture had been chosen for the advertisement instead of the one on page 10, how might it have affected the meaning of the words?



Bring your own articles and pictures to class. Talk about the way the reader is influenced by the context that the picture creates for the words.

USING WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT TO READ TEXTS CRITICALLY

Let us apply what you have learnt about language and position. These questions will help you to read the texts on the following pages critically. You should be able to use them on any text. However, not all the questions will be equally useful for all texts.



Write down other questions that you think will help you to interrogate these texts. Imagine that you are a police interrogator trying to discover what the texts are hiding. Try my questions and **your** questions on texts that you have chosen yourself.

ON JULY 15 THE MASSACRE OF 25 220 SEAL CUBS WILL BEGIN

On July 15, Kleinsee, a seal colony 60 kms along the coast from Port Nolloth, will host a massacre.

But, because the WHOLE carcasses of the 25 000 baby seals and almost 6 000 bull seals are going to be used, not just their genitals, the Department of Sea Fisheries and the SPCA have called it a "commercial venture".

So, how will these 30 000 or so carcasses be used? Well firstly, they'll be skinned for their fur. Secondly, they'll have their genitalia gouged from their bodies. (Hopefully, they'll be fully dead at the time). Whatever is left over will be ground up and made into pet food. Although the European Community banned the sale of sealskins in 1983 after an international outcry over seal clubbing, the South African Government in its wisdom still sees fit to condone this barbaric practise.

What's more, the SPCA have stated that the method used is actually "humane". (To give you an idea of just how humane, read the last part of this advertisement).

AT 20c A SEAL, YOU COULD SAY THE GOVERNMENT'S REALLY MAKING A KILLING

The price these 30 000 seals are paying - their lives. The price the Taiwanese Consortium is paying for their carcasses - R6197-60. A pretty fair price.

Unless of course you happen to be a seal. In fact, at 20 cents a head, it give a new meaning to the term 'wholesale slaughter'. As yet, there is no hard evidence to prove the seals are affecting the fish reserves.

According to Dr. Mike Levien, advisory director of the World Society for the Protection of Animals, the creatures play a vital role in marine ecosystems, and the culling of more than 30 000 seals will upset the ecological balance.

HOW TO KILL A NINE WEEK OLD BABY

First, you'll need a large metal or wooden club. Ideally, it should be between 1,3 and 1,9 metres long, depending on your height and strength. Your club should have a sharp projection at the hitting end, to make stunning more effective. The clubs are this long because the baby seals have the audacity to try and get away during the operation.

For best results you should work in a 2 man team. As the 'clubber', you bash the seal's head in. As the 'stabber', you then flip the still-living seal on its back and stick your knife in the place you guess the heart is.

Hopefully, you'll get it right first time.

The seal's lifeblood then soaks away.

Finally it dies.

This, according to the SPCA, is the most humane method.



THE GOVERNMENT APPROVES DO YOU?

		POST
NAME	DEPT. OF FISHERIES	
ADDRESS	PRIVATE BAG X2	
	ROGGEBAAI	
	7450	
TELEPHONE		

If you want to stop the massacre, it'll cost you a postcard, a 21 cent stamp for postage and a 20 cent stamp to save a seal's life.

Hopefully, if the Department of Fisheries receives enough postcards, they'll be embarrassed enough to stop this senseless slaughter.

But please hurry. A baby's life depends on it.

NEWS

Agony of a crash victim

THE loss of lives on South African roads is only one side of a tragic coin — the other side shows a less publicised statistic: the number of people whose lives are changed forever when they become physically disabled from the injuries they sustained in a road accident.

Mr Rudy Lombard (22) is one of these people. Able only to move his head and left arm, Mr Lombard was once an active youngster who took part in school athletics, high jump, javelin, jukskei, rugby and shot put.

Mr Lombard's participation in these sports ended abruptly on May 13 1983, when his neck was broken in a road accident, which also claimed the lives of his parents.

"I was 16 and halfway through Std 8," he told the Saturday Star yesterday,

"We were travelling to Rustenburg for a happy occasion because my parents had decided to get married again...

"I was asleep in the back of our bakkie when the accident happened. My father was negotiating a corner... when a driver, coming from the opposite direction, crossed over into our lane. We hit each other head on and I was flung out of the bakkie and right over both vehicles. I landed up in a meale field with a broken

The other side of SA's road horror statistics

neck."

Mr Lombard said he did not immediately realise just how seriously he had been injured as he was only conscious long enough to give his name and address to ambulance personnel at the scene of the accident.

SUE OLSWANG

"I woke up again soon after surgery, with my head shaved and calipers on my neck. These were to help keep my neck immobile, but I didn't fully un-

derstand the implications. It was only when I climbed into a wheelchair for the first time that I realised I had become a quadriplegic."

Determined to carry on with life, Mr Lombard returned to school after

spending most of 1983 in hospital.

"I went to the Hope School for physically disabled pupils, where I re-did Std 8 before going on to matriculate. It wasn't easy and it took an enormous amount of courage to carry on with life."

Mr Lombard said he initially moved in with members of his family, staying with different relatives for a few months here and there, but this did not prove to be the ideal situation.

"It didn't work out," he said, "because it is very difficult for a disabled person to live among 'normal' people. They tended to get frustrated and I felt like I was in their way."

"I wanted to retain my independence as much as possible, so I decided to move into a special home for physically disabled people. I then enrolled at the Access Training College for the physically disabled and today I am employed in the open job market."

Financial independence is extremely important for Mr Lombard, who does administrative work on a computer at a major banking concern. He uses a special hand splint in order to type.

"It's important to be able to earn a salary because it's expensive being physically disabled. An electronic wheelchair costs about R13 000 and the parts are expensive. Working has changed my life because you need money to keep going."

Ignore the Third World driver at your peril

SUE OLSWANG

ROAD accidents claim an average of 30 lives each day in South Africa. And a further 87 people are seriously injured every 24 hours.

"Many of those 87 seriously injured will become permanently disabled in some way — either suffering from partial or total paralysis, brain damage or the loss of a limb."

"Some accident victims recover but others find their lives permanently changed as a result of a road accident which lasted mere seconds," said Mr Eric Wise, deputy director of the National Road Safety Council (NRSC).

Mr Wise, commenting on the country's

alarming road accident statistics, which invariably climb during holiday periods when motorists rush to reach their destinations, said South Africa had large numbers of Third World drivers who travel in First World vehicles on First World roads.

He said: "The warning to First World drivers in South Africa is to watch out and be careful of Third World drivers. Ignoring the dangers can be compared to blindly jumping into a pool full of sharks because you don't believe they will go for you."

"We cannot, however, blame Third World drivers for their poor driving abilities because most have not been exposed to First World driving until now."

"The recent scrapping of certain apartheid laws has resulted in more movement among blacks; but being able to move about freely does not make First World drivers."

"The fact is that most Third World drivers have limited driving experience and it is foolish to ignore this reality."

Apart from inexperience, sheer negligence and recklessness, among all types of drivers, were also to blame for accidents.



Science can confirm: Minibuses are a menace

By REG RUMNEY

ANY pedestrian will tell you that Jo'burg minibus drivers are prone to speed in unsafe, overloaded taxis with defective tyres and ignore traffic laws. Now the pedestrians have science to support them.

The Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research roads and transport technology division yesterday announced the findings of a year-long study into the high rate of minibus collisions.

Project leader Roedolph Opperman said the latest figures available (for 1988) showed that over a year minibuses (not all of which are taxis) accounted for 915 collisions per 100-million kilometers travelled. By comparison, the figure for all other kinds of vehicles is 756.

Thirteen people were killed for every 100-million km travelled by minibuses; the figure for all vehicles is six.

In-depth studies of 91 kombi-taxi collisions found that speed (52 percent) and overloading (32 percent) were the biggest factors behind the collisions.

The study found that a traffic offence was a contributing factor in 74 percent of collisions. In 79 percent of collisions an error of judgment was a contributing factor.

There is a little good news: Pat Miller of the CSIR road transport division pointed out at the conference that despite the high figures, the rate of increase in minibus collisions is slowing down.

Other findings were:

- Only 3 percent of the kombi-taxi drivers wore spectacles, as opposed to 18 percent of drivers nationwide, suggesting either that most minibus drivers have exceptional eyesight or that many can't see where they are driving.

- Minibus drivers may be reckless, but they don't drive drunk. Only 2 percent of minibus taxi drivers had a blood alcohol level of 0,08 gm or higher while the national average for urban black drivers of light commercial vehicles (presumably those caught) is 8 percent.

- Sideswipe collisions accounted for 22 percent of the collisions and head to rear end for 21 percent, while only 3 percent were head-on collisions.

- Frighteningly, almost a quarter (24 percent) of the kombi-taxis examined had defective tyres and in 19

percent of collisions a burst tyre was the cause.

- In total, 66 percent of the collisions took place in broad daylight and in fine weather.

With the in-depth studies trained researchers visited the scene of the collision to gather evidence. The researchers also investigated 417 accidents through collecting data some time after the event.

A number of surveys were also conducted. Roadside checkpoints revealed that 22 percent of minibus taxi drivers did not wear seatbelts. Observations were that of 2 220 taxis visually surveyed 79 percent of drivers and 85 percent of front-seat passengers did not.

To study overloading among minibus taxis providing long-distance and holiday transport, taxis were surveyed at the start of a long weekend on the N1 freeway from Pretoria towards Pietersburg. Of 865 minibus taxis observed 55 percent were obviously overloaded.

Roadside surveys showed that 21 percent were not roadworthy.

The R250 000 study and a related training project were funded by the Anglo American and De Beers Chairman's Fund for R254 000

READING 'LANGUAGE AND POSITION' CRITICALLY

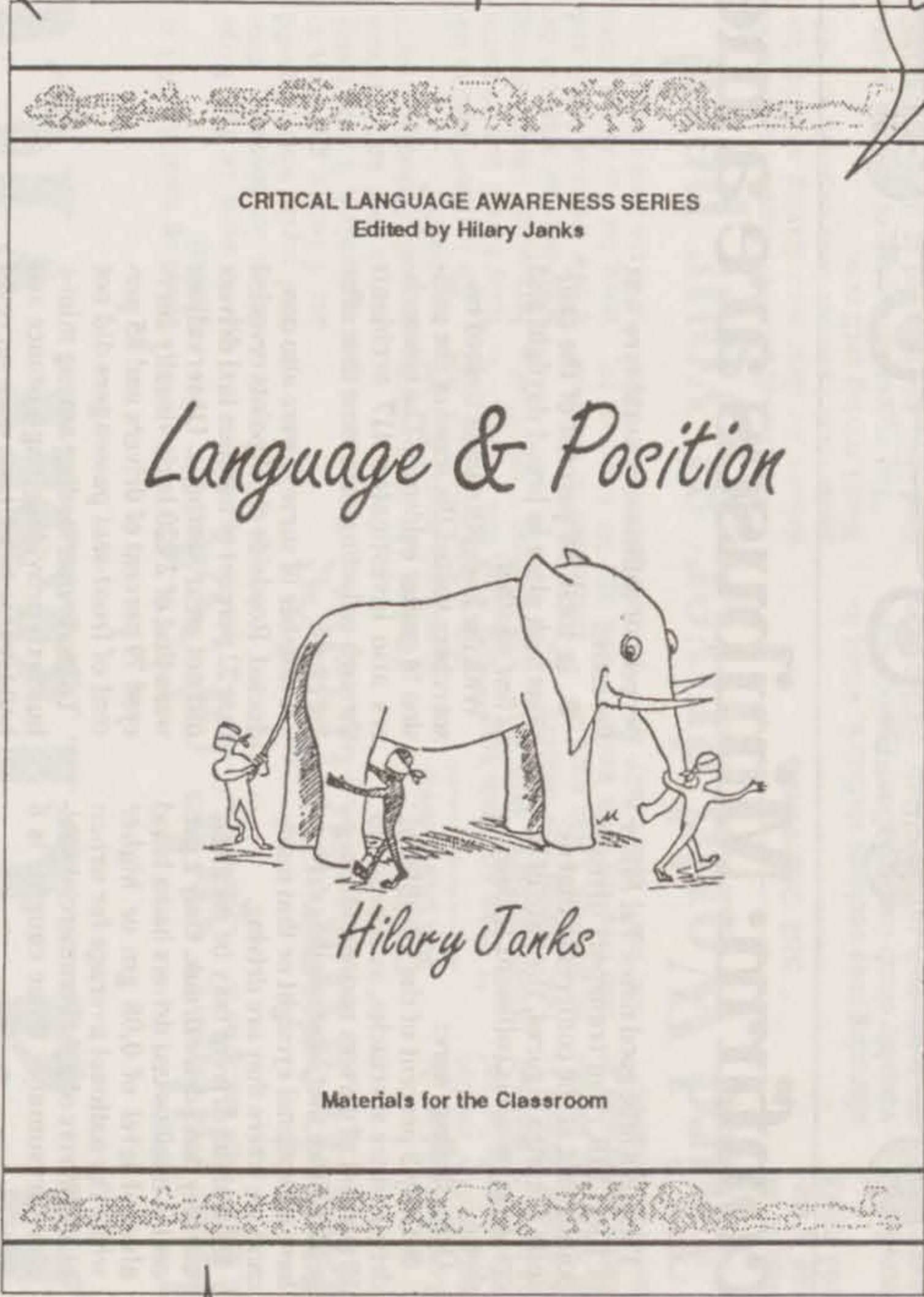
1. What was your attitude to language textbooks before using this series?

2. In what ways is this workbook the same as other school books on language?

3. In what ways is this different from other school books on language?

4. Do teachers and students respond to this book in the same way? Do boys and girls?

11. How do layout and presentation position you?



10. Think of using this book in a country other than S.A. How would that context change the reader's position?

9. Where there are different points of view in the workbook, is one point of view valued more highly?

8. Who is the author? What can you say about the positions from which she writes?

5. Find all the ways in which this workbook positions you.

6. Find examples of language that positions you.

7. Where do you find yourself resisting this workbook and is the resistance necessary? Why? Why not?



Hilary Janks qualified as an English teacher in 1972. She taught at a private school which gave her the freedom to experiment with ideas that were not readily allowed in state-controlled schools. She also worked for a year at an inner-city London comprehensive school, where her students taught her to support Tottenham Hotspurs.

Since 1977 she has worked in teacher education, preparing teachers to teach English to mother-tongue speakers of English as well as to speakers of other languages. She is particularly interested in language teaching methodology and language policy. She helped to formulate the draft proposals for People's English in 1986 and contributed to the NEPI language commission in 1992.

Her main area of teaching and research is the relationship between language and power and in how an understanding of this relationship can be taught at all levels of formal and non-formal education.

At present she is a senior lecturer in Applied English Language Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Other titles in the Critical Language Awareness Series:

Languages in South Africa by Janet Orlek
Language, Identity and Power by Hilary Janks
Language and the News by Peter Rule
Language, Advertising and Power by Stella Granville
Words and Pictures by Denise Newfield

All the writers in this series are teachers who are interested in the relationship between language and power. They have worked together with their students or other teachers to produce a workbook. I would like to encourage students and teachers to construct their own Critical Language Awareness materials and am willing to consider publishing complete workbooks as part of the series. There are so many ways of exploring language and power that the series must necessarily remain open ended.

The writers and I would also welcome constructive suggestions on how to improve the published workbooks.

Series Editor

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Hodder & Stoughton Educational
Southern Africa
P.O. Box 3948
Randburg
2125

Witwatersrand University Press
Private Bag 3
2050 Wits

CONTENTS

Foreword	ii
Critical language awareness	iii
Suggested methods for teachers	iv
Does where we stand matter?	1
Where's the top?	2
North is up and South is down but the world is round	3
How do South African map makers draw South Africa?	4
Standpoint or point of view	5
Positions based on who we are	6
The writer's position and the reader's position	7
How we use language to position other people	8
Positioning	9
Do newspapers use language to position readers?	11
How a writer of history uses language to position readers	12
How a different historian positions the reader differently	13
History from above and history from below	14
Positioning occurs in contexts	15
'Where' is part of the context that affects meaning	17
What we know from previous texts is part of the context	18
Pictures are part of the context	19
Using what we have learnt to read texts critically	20
Text to interrogate	21
Text to interrogate: Ignore the Third World Driver	22
Text to interrogate	23
Reading 'Language and Position' critically	24
Information about the author	Inside back cover

Hodder & Stoughton

WUP
WITWATERSRAND UNIVERSITY PRESS

