Context

Context is the environment in which a text is responded to or created. Context can include the general social, historical and cultural conditions in which a text is responded to and created (the context of culture) or the specific features of its immediate environment (context of situation).

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|  | **The context of culture*****Historical context*** reflects the time in which a text was created. This includes when the story is set and political/historical happenings during this time.When was the text written? What was happening at the time? An example is the values reflected in advertising promoting smoking from the 1960s. ***Political context*** reflects the environment in which something is produced indicating its purpose or agenda.What is the agenda of the creator? Why was it made? What is the political agenda of the reader?An example is an editorial in a newspaper that may be promoting a specific point of view about an issue such as euthanasia which may be read in one way by someone with strong religious views compared to someone else who believes in choice. ***Social context*** of an individual or group includes the behavior, attitudes and values that impact on their reading of a text. These might include factors such as accepted power structures, gender roles, attitudes to minority groups and religious tolerance. Who created the text? What was their role or status within society?An example is the difference between watching a movie with your parents or children and watching it with your friends.***Cultural context*** is influenced by the culture or cultures/subcultures of the society in which the text was created or read including the ways of life, the ideas, beliefs, languages, norms and customs which make up that society.What is the culture of the creator of the text and how is this culture represented in the text?An example is the way someone of an Indian background may interpret the film *Slumdog Millionaire* compared with how an Australian-based viewer may interpret the text. |
|  | **The context of situation (physical context)**The physical context is the space around the text or section of the text and how that influences the interpretation.Where is the text physically located such as a front page of the newspaper, in a free brochure collected in a café, as an email from a relative you have never heard of from Nigeria? |

An example is the difference between how a photo of a tree looks in a science book compared to the same photo of a tree framed in an art gallery.