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EDITORIAL



Stewart Riddle

University of Southern Queensland

Welcome to the second issue of this year's Words'Worth. By the time you receive this issue, Term 3 will be upon us and the great run to the end of the year that is Semester 2 will have well and truly begun! It has been a really productive year for English teachers in Queensland already, with the AATE-ALEA conference taking place during the first week of July, NAPLAN testing done and dusted in May, as well as the very successful first ETAQ seminar in March.

As always, this issue of Words'Worth is packed with interesting and useful resources for the classroom. We have a bit of a dual focus on feature articles and poetry, which is great. Erin Geddes provides an account of her experience with using exemplars to teach feature article writing and John Acutt presents a range of resources for teaching the generic structures and language features of feature articles. Garry Collins gives us the first of a two-part special on Bushrangers and ideas for teaching through the Australian Curriculum linking to poetry, while Brett Dionysius, a highly respected poet

and English teacher, shares some of his original poems with us.

With Year 7 moving into high school, it seems timely to share some planning for effective learning in English. Our first contribution comes from Delmai George, a pre-service teacher at the University of Southern Queensland, who has done a superb job of bringing together Australian Curriculum: English along with ICT and literacy as general capabilities to plan a great unit on using games in the English classroom. Also, Deb Peden shares with us the Year 6, 7 and 8 winning entries from the 2012 literary competition. There are some wonderful gems in there that are a pleasure to read.

If you have a unit plan, resource ideas or any other piece that you would like to have published in Words'Worth, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. My contact details are:

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ETAQ PATRON'S MESSAGE

Professor Catherine Beavis

Griffith University

Dear ETAQ members,

I hope you are keeping well, as we get deeper into winter, and the middle of the year. By now, I guess, you and your students know each other pretty well. You have a good sense of what kinds of things work best, what they like — and are like —, what the challenges are, what you might try, and what you hope to do.

If you're working with junior grades Naplan should be truly behind you, freeing you up for the open waters of more adventurous things. If you're working with seniors, there's time yet before the end of the year, to build strengths, explore options, embark on new texts and territories and ideas, as indeed there is with all grades, throughout the school.

As I write, late in May, I'm thinking increasingly about the National conference that is almost upon us. By the time you read this, it may have come and gone. I hope you had the chance to get to it. The program looks wonderful, with a wide range of topics and presenters, as well as some great keynotes. This year AATE has combined with ALEA so that we have the added benefits that come from bringing together English teachers and literacy educators from both Primary and Secondary schools, as well as researchers, administrators and teacher educators working across sectors, and in educational contexts outside the school; artists, writers, actors, publishers, digital designers and more, from a range of areas in the arts, the online world, publishing and elsewhere. Looking at the program, I'm struck by the diversity of papers and workshops, in addition to keynotes and a range of other offerings: 'Standing brave in the face of rapid curriculum change: EAL/D teachers speak about critical literacy and its place in senior English teaching'. 'Teaching reading comprehension across the Australian Curriculum with EAL/D Learners: Are we brave enough to really take it on?'. 'Edmodo and Google Docs: Exploring the Brave New World of on-line learning'. 'Explicit ethics: Ethical understanding and classroom practice'. 'The Raft, the River and the Rainbow: Image inspired storytelling for the 21st century in middle years English classrooms'. 'Choosing literary films for the

literature course'. And that's just the first six! They provide an interesting map of what constitutes English currently, though of course, at the conference as in the subject, there is much more.

Conferences provide a great space for new ideas, new challenges and new resources. They provide an excellent opportunity to get a bigger perspective on issues and possibilities. They provide the chance to get a sense of what others are doing, what's new, what's interesting, good resources, fresh ideas, new takes on old concerns, and the chance to share ideas. They provide the challenges faced by students, teachers and schools and how they understand and respond to these. I was very struck at last year's ALEA conference by the observation made by one visiting luminary about how highly collegiate, warm and supportive Australian English and Literacy Educators' conferences are. It is something we should seize with both hands, and make sure we retain.

But regardless of whether you can get to conferences or not, it makes a big difference to explore and share. In many ways we are each other's best resource. Talking with colleagues, whether from your own school or elsewhere, seeing things through their eyes, getting a sense of how others do things, what their students, and ours, are like, what they need, and how to support and strengthen their literacy and English achievements, can be one of the most sustaining aspects of our own work; tackling what is difficult, revelling in what goes well, listening carefully and creating the best for our students in what we teach and they learn.

I hope you are keeping warm. Happy teaching and best wishes,

Catherine Beavis







WRITE TO TEACH WRITING: TEACHING FEATURE ARTICLES THROUGH EXEMPLARS

Erin Geddes

Forest Lake State High School

Back at uni, I had a great teacher, Ross Clarke, who said to our class that in order to teaching writing, one must write. I loved these words but for years never found the time to write. I was too busy preparing for classes, marking and reporting to do anything as frivolous as writing for pleasure. In recent years I've discovered there was one way in particular I could write that could be both productive and enjoyable: exemplar writing. In particular, feature article writing.

Why am I telling you about my dull and singular hobby which will certainly not win me dinner invitations? Because through writing our own exemplars we can save time searching online and picking apart feature articles which may not end up containing the elements we want to teach.

In English our feature articles are, naturally, of a literary nature. There are not always a lot of these online that cover precisely what we want to discuss with our students. So, a few years ago at a previous school, I had a go at writing an exemplar for my year 12s. I called it 'Parenting and Prejudice' and its angle was that Mrs Bennett from Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice' was the original Helicopter Parent, hovering and interfering with her daughters' lives and development. I had fun. I had a really useful exemplar to pick apart with students, because I *knew* what persuasive and stylistic devices were present as I had written them. And then I forgot about it.

Late last year, my Head of Department suggested the use of an exemplar for a new piece for our year 12s. Not only would the exemplar be useful to analyse, but recording the process of writing the article would be useful to our students who struggle getting started or face writer's block. I was put to the task and what you see are some of the results.

Task

(Word count was 600 – 800 words in seen exam conditions)

You are a freelance journalist who specialises in literature.

You must write a feature article for the next issue of a magazine or newspaper publication of your choice on how the values, beliefs and attitudes inherent in a particular Romantic poet's work are prophetic for today.

Process

(This is exactly what I went through with my students)

It had been years since I had studied the Romantic Era, so researching was my first step. I made sure my time frame was clear and also that I knew the difference between Romanticism and the Enlightenment.

I discovered that there is generally considered the "Big Six" of the Romantics, which included Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lord Byron, Shelley and Keats. There is also some dispute about the cannon and many arguments for the inclusion of poets such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

I found some great websites (included at end) which really explained some elements of the Romantic Era, poets or poems in an accessible way. I read these, listening to Podcasts and reading poems when they were suggested. I also read the comments as many of these offered great insight to alternative readings of the poems. One poem, 'Ozymandias' by Percy Bythe Shelley, stood out to me. I love the phrase "Look on my work, ye mighty, and despair". It's so powerful and so ironic when contrasted with the desolate desert. I decided to do this poem for the exemplar.





WRITE TO TEACH WRITING: TEACHING FEATURE ARTICLES THROUGH EXEMPLARS

Researching the poem was easy as there were numerous online support documents to assist me. This poem, containing themes of futility, time and the impermanence of man's work, seemed a little different to many common themes in Romanticism. I thought this would be a good place to start "making connections" between the poem and the modern world. I began with a serious opening, but switched to an anecdotal lead because it better suited the irreverent, humorous style I hoped to use.

I wanted my angle to be about how modern society might "get" Shelley more than Romantic audiences because we live in an astoundingly impermanent and fleeting world. I made sure that I used Word's Comment option to record choices and changes I had made (I'm sure some people would prefer to use the Track Changes option). I started on my draft, but at about 400 words had writer's block. My notes show this under the place my drafting ends:

- TV Show- Life After People
- Aftermath: Population Zero (documentary)
- Needs a modern spin
- his monument testifies against him (from poetry foundation) haters gonna hate

Not exactly eloquent, but it helped me begin thinking about how modern audiences could relate to this text. I also realised that my angle could also be refined to include my judgment; was I saying that this impermanence was a good or bad thing? Neither good nor bad? Of course, the answer to my writer's block was the internet. Not using it, but discussing it. What is more of a reflection of the short-lived nature of the world today than the internet? Based on this idea, I finished my article and then began the task of cutting down the word count, refining my language, editing and making small but deliberate changes to the final draft.

The End Product

I learnt a lot from this process. I learnt that a list of steps for students to follow doesn't always work. There's a lot of backtracking, rethinking and rewriting. This sounds obvious to English

teachers but was good to experience to remind me of the actual writing process. The raw notes, comments and annotations were kept and put into our eLearn classroom to support our explanations of the writing process. They are not included here, because no one really wants to read seven pages of notes, URLs, angry online comments and incomprehensible babble. The final feature article is included. It's not perfect. It's a shameless appeal to the generation we teach. I now see grammatical errors and many flaws that irk me, but that's ok. If a student finds them, I can always say it was put there to test them.

I got a lot of pleasure out of writing this article. I get pleasure knowing that I can point out to students exactly why the writer did what they did- because the writer is me. I was encouraged to write another feature article, this time more serious, on Morris Gleitzman's novel 'Once' for our Year Tens, who had studied it in Year Eight and were being introduced to feature articles for the first time. Once again, I can point to any part of the text and explain it confidently to students because I wrote it with them, their task and their learning needs in mind.

I'm addicted. Feature article exemplars can give students confidence and guidance, can be used to differentiate and importantly, if recorded, can be used to show the actual stages of drafting to students. I don't think I need to sell you on the utility of exemplars, but I hope that perhaps I've encouraged you to write your own more often. You may just enjoy it.

Useful Websites on Romantic Poetry

Academy of American Poets, 2012, A Brief Guide to Romanticism
<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5670>

The Guardian, 2010, The Romantic Poets
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/series/romantic-poets>

British Broadcasting Corporation, 2012, The Romantics
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/romantics/>



WRITE TO TEACH WRITING: TEACHING FEATURE ARTICLES THROUGH EXEMPLARS

DRAFT TWO

Don't Despair for the Romantics

Highlighting= references to outside texts or people

Underlines= poetic elements

My mum was a philosopher. She expounded on the lack of permanency in the world whilst washing dishes and making lunch.

"Look on my work, ye mighty, and despair!" She would say as she wiped the laminate benches with a flourish. Then my baby sister would inevitably dribble, vomit or generally expel fluids. Clean kitchen ruined for now.

Years later, I opened John Marsden's novel *Tomorrow When The War Began* and read with surprise when a character recalled her mum's tea towel with the same phrase on it. Was there a secret society of philosophical housewives with startling perspicacity into the transience of housework and the universe? Or did these lines speak to people in a relatable way? I had to investigate.

I discovered these powerful lines were from Percy Bysshe Shelley's famous poem *Ozymandias*, about the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II and his cruel and crumbled empire full of boasts that were now no more than two stone statue legs in a vast desert. I understood the main point the poet was making: time kills everything man has made, ironically in the case of the bragging *Ozymandias*. But this wasn't a poem about daffodils or arbours or Grecian urns, and that's what Romantic poetry is all about, right?

So it is somewhat odd for Shelley to discuss time and history when the nature of Romanticism meant reflecting upon nature, beauty and passion, not a meeting with a traveller who spoke of "two vast and trunkless legs of stone" and nearby "a shatter'd visage" (that's face to you non-poetic types) in a lonely part of a desert.

The beauty of this unusual poem lies in Shelley's ability to tell the history of a king and empire in a fourteen line sonnet as well as quietly passing judgement on this king, with his "wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command" (nice alliteration, Shelley). You don't see that level of economy in the painful YouTube rantings of Charlie Sheen.

Even more interesting (and let's face it, most things are more interesting than Charlie Sheen), is that Shelley has used this story as allegory. Isn't most of the work of man fleeting, just like *Ozymandias*' empire? Buildings go up, the stock markets crashes, a tsunami or flood razes a town, buildings go down. Shelley, I think you understood future societies more than you could have hoped for. Given the chance, I think modern society could understand you.

Comment [GE1]: Added in.

Comment [GE2]: Deleted start of this sentence to give a more immediate feel

Comment [GE3]: Was "were lines"

Comment [GE4]: Added in for reader clarification

Comment [GE5]: Insert a quote?

Comment [GE6]: Added italics to clarify meaning

Comment [GE7]: Added

Comment [GE8]: Comment points out poetic device whilst reminding the reader of the important tone of the article.

Comment [GE9]: This comment was added later, towards the end of drafting. I wanted to join the paragraph about the structure and economy of the poem more smoothly to the one about history

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WHAT'S A GREAT GENRE TO TEACH? THE FEATURE ARTICLE

John Acutt

Ipswich Grammar School

By John Acutt, Head of English at Ipswich Grammar School, with contributions by Brett Dionysius and Gordon Schroeder.

In recent years my colleagues and I in the English Department at Ipswich Grammar School have found the *The Feature Article* to be an excellent “go to” genre in many year levels as well as serving a purpose in Year 11 and 12 English. I also strongly recommend it to students as a good choice for the QCS Writing Task. It has a simple formula, it allows the writer to use an authoritative voice, it responds well to just about any subject matter, and in the case of the Writing Task, it allows responses that clearly incorporate themes. It also fulfils the requirement of being an acceptable text for Senior English, as Page 20

of the English Syllabus 2010 states: *Persuasive texts argue or persuade, to convince readers to accept particular perspectives or points of view. The following are examples of persuasive texts:*

- *feature article etc ..*

What follows are a number of resources that show *The Feature Article* under construction in a number of contexts that will reveal the effectiveness of the text.

Stop right there! (as they say in “Paradise by the Dashboard Light”)

Rule One, for this, and every written or spoken task tackled in English, use G.A.P.A. to plan the way ahead.

Have all of this sorted before you begin

G	Genre	A written/spoken/visual text that follows certain rules and contains certain features (ingredients). ASK YOURSELF: What is the situation I'm in? What rules must I follow? – Language Appropriateness? – Structure of text: MOST IMPORTANT
A	Author	Who are you? What is your role? What are your credentials? What is your point of view?
P	Purpose	Why are you writing this? What is the aim/message? What do you hope to achieve?
A	Audience	Who are you writing for? What methods/language will you use to get your message across to them?

Back to *The Feature Article* **Firstly an annotated plan**

Subject matter: Be very clear about the issue, the subject matter that your feature article will be about? Is there a main character to follow through the article?

Bias/angle of story: Because this is persuasion you need to strongly favour a point of view.



WHAT'S A GREAT GENRE TO TEACH? THE FEATURE ARTICLE

The Generic Structure (formula for the text) adapted by Brett Dionysius

1. Headline: _____ Be catchy, witty, suggestive of an extended metaphor _____

2. Byline: _____ Create your identity and credibility as the author _____

3. Lead Paragraph: (Who, What, Where, Why, When) - see examples under the section, Lead Paragraphs on a following page.

Quick bursts lead – a series of short, direct statements.

Contrast lead – an opening with opposites or differences.

Figurative lead – an opening figure of speech using metaphors/similes.

Allusion lead – an opening reference to literature.

Expert lead – an opening quote from an expert.

Surprise lead – an eye opening beginning.

Suspense lead – an open-ended beginning.

Question lead – an opening question to the reader.

4. The Tic-Toc:

This takes the audience back in time (or perspective), showing them the bigger issue you intend to discuss. Time reference e.g. *“It wasn’t so long that ... Before the age of the computer ... When he was a young soldier he ...”*

5. Additional details on the story:

Quote from expert/eyewitness ... Consequences that will occur ... Explore an angle ...
Mock interview

6. Additional details on the story:

Quote from expert/eyewitness ... Consequences that will occur ... Explore an angle ...
Mock interview

7. Additional details on the story:

Quote from expert/eyewitness ... Consequences that will occur ... Explore an angle ...
Mock interview

8. The Kicker:

(The kicker is the last paragraph in your article. While it is pretty formulaic it should also make an impact. The kicker of an article is almost always a quote that emotionally encapsulates the story. Usually use a quote from your main character to resonate with the readers and help the article end on a poignant note.)

You could also:

- Use figurative language to create a *tone* to your writing e.g. try to be witty, sarcastic, playful or cynical.
- Try to follow a main character throughout your story to create enmity and or sympathy with the reader.
- Insert a photo with a caption illustrating/reinforcing the bias of your story.

Secondly ... For those students who like it visual, the following page presents what the plan looks like as a finished product.



WHAT'S A GREAT GENRE TO TEACH? THE FEATURE ARTICLE

Headline



By-line

Make sure you mention your name and if you are an expert in a field. What is the big point to be made in the article? Can you provide a teaser that urges people to read on?



Lead Paragraph (see next page)

Use one of the techniques or a combination of techniques to set the scene for the article. It's at this point that a reader will decide to engage or disengage with your writing.



Tic Toc Paragraph

Provide the background to the story. Use lines that refer to time like, "Not so long ago Before this issue became a problem ... Several years ago Just last week"



Body Paragraph

Additional details.
Quote from experts or witnesses or those affected by an issue.
Speculate of consequences. Use your voice as the opinionated journalist to promote your biased point of view.
Make use of techniques to promote your view.



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The Kicker: This is the last paragraph in your article. While it is pretty formulaic it should also make an impact. The kicker of an article is almost always a quote that emotionally encapsulates the story. Usually use a quote from your main character to resonate with the readers and help the article end on a poignant or challenging note.



Tips: 1. Use figurative language to create a *tone* to your writing e.g. try to be witty, sarcastic, playful or cynical. 2. Try to follow a 'main character' throughout your story to create enmity and or sympathy with the reader. 3. Develop and extend a metaphor.





WHAT'S A GREAT GENRE TO TEACH? THE FEATURE ARTICLE

Next: using a specific example; dealing with Headlines/By-lines/*Leads*

Having a catchy lead paragraph urges the reader to plough into the article. Some simple and effective techniques can be employed.

Subject matter: The dangers faced by children because of internet predators.

Bias/angle of story: The bias will be heavily against the predators.

1. Headline:???
2. Byline: *Investigative reporter, Rohan Reilly, has spent four weeks with undercover detectives who work in the on-line protection of children on the Net. He brings us his findings today.*
3. Lead Paragraph: What "Lead Paragraph" style will you use?

Quick bursts lead – a series of short, direct statements.

It seems innocent. Kids chat, make plans, communicate. They share photos with friends. They hammer away like elves on their keyboards into the night. Their in-boxes are full. They have lots of friends. They also have lots of "new" friends wanting to have a chat. These "new" friends ask a lot of personal questions.

Contrast lead – an opening with opposites or differences.

Yesterday childhood was an innocent adventure. Kids were brought up in the caring and protected environments of homes and communities. Today however, under the noses of their parents, children invite predators, deviants and the sick of mind straight into their bedrooms.

Figurative lead – an opening figure of speech using metaphors/similes.

The world-wide web began as an instrument to link the world of communication with electronic threads. Its intention was the fast transferral of ideas and information to make the world a better place and to breakdown borders dividing the nations of the world. The web however has now become inhabited by sinister creatures who use it to lure and trap the innocent.

Allusion lead – an opening reference to literature.

In fairytales Hansel and Gretel were innocent explorers in a twisted forest who were captured by a wicked witch. Today the twisted forest is the internet and wicked witches lurk behind every seemingly innocent email.

Expert lead – an opening quote from an expert.

Senior Inspector Frank Marsden has seen all kinds of criminal deceptions but, according to him, "the lies that men tell children on-line are the lowest and most sinister of all." Frank Marsden has been working with the On-line Tactical Response Unit for four years and has made 200 arrests of men attempting to abuse children. He has a terrible tale to tell.

Surprise lead – an eye opening beginning.

Sally Hendriksen is 14 years old. She lives in suburban Brisbane and goes to a wealthy private girls' school. Sally's father is a doctor and her mother is a lawyer with one of Queensland's major firms. Last year Sally met a man from Perth in a local park and was brutally raped. She met the man on the internet.

Suspense lead – an open-ended beginning.

It's late. The parents have gone to bed. In the front room the computer screen glows and a 13 year girl is on MSN. She is talking to a stranger.


Question lead – an opening question to the reader.

What if your son or daughter was lured from the safety of your home to a rendezvous with a stranger? What if they had been forming clandestine relationships on-line with men who wish to harm them? How would you judge your ability to be a good parent?

In the sample that follows, devised by Gordon Schroeder, students are escorted through the various phases of the article in a structured and annotated table. Gordon then provides them with a blank table to assist in their own planning.



WHAT'S A GREAT GENRE TO TEACH? THE FEATURE ARTICLE

Feature Article - Plan	
1. Think about the: Subject matter: (What is your article about?) My article is about internet predators.	
2. Think about the: Bias/angle of story: (A summary of angle you will take or the overarching theme.) Will you tell the story from a positive or negative point of view? Bias by spin – bias by spin occurs when the story has only one interpretation of an event or policy, to the exclusion of the other, spin involves tone – it is a reporter's subjective comment about objective facts; makes one side's ideological perspective look better than another. My angle will be to paint the predators in a negative light, plus question the validity of the laptop roll out.	
	
The Article	
3. Headline: Make it catchy. Make it encapsulate the extended metaphor.	1 on 1 Paedophile roll-out. Paedophile portal to your child's computer. Holes in the wall. Predator's Portal. Screams in Silence <i>Think of a few – come back and pick the best one - Can you use alliteration?</i> <i>Can you use a metaphor?</i>
4. By-line: Say something about the writer and the article.	<i>Child psychologist and adviser to the Online Child Protection Unit, Gordon Schroeder, has spent the last several years researching the impact of social media on our youth: Today he reveals his results on the announcement of the government's plans to continue its laptop program in schools.</i>
5. Write a Lead Paragraph: (Who, What, Where, Why, When) Quick bursts lead – a series of short, direct statements. Contrast lead – an opening with opposites or differences. Figurative lead – an opening figure of speech using metaphors/similes. Allusion lead – an opening reference to literature. Expert lead – an opening quote from an expert. Surprise lead – an eye opening beginning. Suspense lead – an open-ended beginning. Question lead – an opening question to the reader.	Facebook, chat and texting. The modern social networking tools. Designed for communication, for breaking down the spaces. Keeping connected, in touch with your loved ones and work colleagues. Unknown to the unsuspecting public, a trap-door has been sprung; the world web is being entangled by an ancient evil. The vile, the dirty, the unspeakable: Predators. Lurking behind the screen. They enter your house with a click of a mouse.
6. Write the Tic-Toc: This takes the audience back in time (or perspective), showing them the bigger issue you intend to discuss. Provide background for your story. Use language that refers to time.	The Rudd-Gillard experiment they called it. 1 to 1 laptop roll-out to all the High School students in Australia, equity for all. After three years the program is in the final stages of implementation. What has the research indicated about this auspicious program? Are our children better off? Or has an ancient evil woven its way into the very fabric of society, unseen and lurking, waiting in the shadows, and weaving words of wicked wonder to the vulnerable flowers of our youth? Has this program opened the door to the modern predator?

WHAT'S A GREAT GENRE TO TEACH? THE FEATURE ARTICLE

<p>7. Write another paragraph. [P] Additional details on the story: [E] Quote from expert/eyewitness. [E] Elaborate [L] Consequences that will occur.</p>	<p>Detective, James Black, of the Online-Investigative-Preventative-Branch (OIPB) has mixed views on the program. "I support the ideal that our youth need to be prepared for the future and modern technology is our future, like it or not. My grave concern is that the Laptop program did not instigate enough safety protocols for our children. The lack of protocols has enabled the filth that lurks in society's hidden spaces, on the internet, an open door to those who need to be protected". Black believes the continued lack of protocols to protect our youth have led to the dramatic increase of on-line related sexual assault on both boys and girls as they fall victim to the monsters that inhabit our society.</p>
<p>8. Write another paragraph. [P] Additional details on the story: [E] Quote from expert/eyewitness. [E] Elaborate [L] Consequences that will occur.</p>	<p>John Graham, Headmaster of the prestigious private school, South Wales School, acknowledges there are some teething problems with the program but believes it is the responsibility of the parents to invest in online security at home. "The school has preventative measures to ensure the safety of students at school. We maintain and rebuild, we monitor and supervise. It is important that parents also guard against the evils that lurk in our society. It is a three-way partnership between the parents, students and school. Parents need to ensure they have safety measures in place at home as the school cannot be held responsible for any breaches outside its own security perimeter." Unfortunately Smith's comments do not ring true; it is the lack of communication between the school and the parents that leaves gaping doorways of opportunity for the predators to get in. The school provides the laptop and insists the students use them but beyond the confines of the school the students are prey to those who wait and watch in the chat rooms.</p>
<p>9. Write another paragraph. [P] Additional details on the story: [E] Quote from expert/eyewitness. [E] Elaborate [L] Consequences that will occur.</p>	<p>Chloe Smith is one parent who is a victim of the school's refusal to take responsibility of the 1 to 1 program. Late last year her only daughter, Rachael, fell victim to a known predator who had wormed his way into her daughter's world through the holes in the security of the system. Rachael was found murdered, raped and beaten after meeting up with her 'new online friend'. Chloe was scathing of the school system's lack of protocols for home use of the computers it had rolled out. "Those bastards gave that monster the key to my house when they gave her that laptop. He may have done the act, but the school basically held her down so he could do what he liked. What type of person would hide behind their responsibility? I regret the day I ever heard about 1 to 1, it had a different meaning to my little baby." Mrs Smith believes that the increase in victims is but the tip of the iceberg as schools fail to protect the ones entrusted to their care.</p>
<p>10. Write The Kicker: (The kicker is the last paragraph in your article. It should make an impact. The kicker of an article is almost always a quote that emotionally encapsulates the story. Use a quote from your main character to resonate with the readers and help the article end on a poignant note.) [PEEL]</p>	<p>In the quest to provide better educational standards for the future of our nation the government had lofty ideals, unfortunately, the red-tape that tangles up management at schools has provided a platform for the very worst in our society to have easy access to the most vulnerable. Surely the protection of the innocent should be at the forefront of all educational policies, surely the implementation of such programs should be reviewed at a greater depth than has been the case. Maybe Chloe Smith should have the last words. "How many more innocents need to be raped, beaten and murdered until those bastards listen? Rachel is gone forever, and your child could be too." In the end, will this story just be another statistic of a world moving forward too fast to foresee the future, or will Rachael's last screams finally penetrate the wall of denial of the Education Department?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert a photo with a caption illustrating some element of your story. • Use <u>figurative language</u> to create a <i>tone</i> to your writing e.g. try to be witty, sarcastic, playful or cynical. • Try to follow a 'main character' throughout your story to create sympathy or hostility with the reader. 	



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Developing a theme or an extended metaphor in a Feature Article

In the upper years (and certainly in the QCS WT), incorporating a strong theme in a piece of writing is vital.

Another example:



What if the theme was *Faith*? Jamie Oliver comes to Ipswich to launch his Ministry of Food.

Brainstorm theme ideas that could develop an extended metaphor:

Sinner	devil	crucifixion	messiah
prophet	God	idol	altar
Adam and Eve	Bible	Commandments	
disciple	Last supper	minister	chapel
priest	feast	Xmas	church
sinner	repent		sacrifice

Headline?

Ministry of Food preaches good health

Ministry of Food finds new converts

Ministry of Food saves us from our heads to our soles

By-line

Ipswich food writer, Slim Pickens, looks at the conversion of the town to a new food gospel.

Lead – Quick Bursts/Figurative

No more sinners shopping trolleys filled with Coke. No more cues at the false idol of food – Maccas. No more bellies bursting from the feasting at the altar of gluttony. Hallelujah! Ipswich is getting healthy because Jamie Oliver's holy, rock and roll, food revival show is coming to town.

Tic Toc – time reference

Expelled to the purgatory of our past are the bad eating habits, the obesity, the fatty foods and the reputation that we are the fat capital of Queensland. The fresh vegetables once rotted on the supermarket shelves while the deep fryers were working overtime. The time has come for mass repentance.

Body

Megastar chef and food prophet, Jamie Oliver has been preaching the gospel of healthy food all over the world. He has taken his crusade to the tuckshops of England and to the backwoods of America's Deep South. He believes he can convert the food heathens of our corner of his kingdom with his commandments of healthy cuisine. "I'm stoked that Ipswich is so pumped about this idea. It is going to change the lives of the people of this town," said the Minister himself. According to Oliver we will all be turned into his disciples and be well on the road to a healthy redemption.

One of the first to throw his political and personal enthusiasm behind the project was Ipswich Mayor Paul Pissasale. Pissasale is renowned for his love of Ipswich and his whole-hearted support of any project that will benefit his constituents. "This is such a positive step for the people of Ipswich. My team have been working overtime to make this possible," said the popular politician. "Jamie's enthusiasm is infectious. I encourage everyone to get involved and take some big steps towards a healthy and happy future," he urged while he expertly diced a clove of garlic. It's



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apparent with Pissasale's blessing the project is destined to succeed.

Paragraph about Premier Anna Bligh's response.

Paragraph about local mother's response.

KICKER

As he sat amongst the new faithful at the opening of the Ministry of Food, the Mayor of Ipswich looked satisfied, "If this is to be our new religion, then I'm a convert."

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The Feature Article Process – guide students through a series of planning steps.

*This has been taken from a unit about **Animal Farm**. Students must write a biased feature article based on a character or events in the novel.*

1. Choose your topic
2. For what type of newspaper or magazine are you writing? What is the political or social perspective?
 - a. Are you for the "worker" animals?
 - b. Are you against the "worker" animals?
 - c. Are you for Napoleon and his methods?
 - d. Are you against Napoleon and his methods?
 - e. Are you presenting an entirely human perspective that criticises or mocks the revolution and the ideals that have been betrayed?
 - f. Are you writing for a Russian newspaper?
 - A government propaganda newspaper
 - A publication that is critical of its government and the similar mistakes made by the leaders of Animal Farm.
 - g. Are you Snowball writing for an underground newspaper?
3. What will you call the newspaper or magazine?
The Animal Bugle, The London Lefty Times,

The Conservative Right, The British Farming Life, The Country Farmer, The Soviet Herald

4. What figurative or metaphoric connection can you make between your topic and real-life or literature or mythology. For example, what if the topic of the article was ... the dog squad.

Ask yourself what is at the heart of the topic from the point of view of the writer and the newspaper.

For those who oppose Napoleon and his methods the **dog squad** is about the complete indoctrination and brainwashing of the puppies to turn them into vicious servants of Napoleon. They are turned against their own comrades to serve Napoleon's will. The dogs represent the evil and terror of the regime. They are an example of Napoleon's methods to maintain his authority by force, violence and fear.

Alternatively, from Napoleon's perspective, the dogs' presence could be written about to serve as a warning to anyone who would oppose the regime. His propaganda machine would hold them up as loyal comrades protecting the ideals of the Revolution.

Negative views of the dogs:

General comparisons/metaphors

A group of soldiers who turn their guns on their fellow soldiers

Religious indoctrination to manipulate people's behaviour

Cults that brainwash its followers with the sole purpose of exploiting them

A cancer attacking its own body

A building deliberately weakening its own foundation

An animal or an insect colony analogy – beehive

Survival of the fittest/laws of the jungle

Positive views of the dogs:

The thin blue line

The dyke holding back the flood

The last line of defence

Horatius at the Bridge

300

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5. Write a catchy **Headline** that reveals your bias and the focus of the article.
e.g. Noble dogs stand strong for the Revolution
Canine comrades hold back dissident tide
or
Dogs join the dark-side
Domestic order goes to the dogs
Laws of the jungle rule at Animal Farm
Animal Farm turns feral/wild
6. Brainstorm ideas along these lines:
bared canines, savage, rabid, giving the dog a bone, let off the chain, law of the jungle, turning feral, biting the hand that feeds them, hunting,
cross-breeding, pure breed, pedigree, needs to be put down, taken to the pound, needs to be euthanised, treat, obedience school
7. Follow the plan for the feature article

The finished product

The Animal Bugle

Laws of the jungle rule at Animal Farm

In this exclusive feature, Leon Lenin laments how the laws of the jungle are taking over the order that was Animal Farm

Lead paragraph:
For a short time it seemed like a civilised paradise. It was a socialist utopia of peace, equality and freedom. All animals lived in harmony and brotherhood and a new civilisation had begun. Now the farm is being overgrown by weeds of the worst evil and depravity and the stench of death hangs over the fields near Willingdon. The once pristine ideals that grew so freely after the Animal Farm Revolution have been strangled by the selfish and murderous jungle of Napoleon's desires. In a scenario that represents the worst of the cruellest laws of the jungle, Napoleon has turned his dogs on the weak and innocent. Will only his kind, the cruel, survive?



Tic tac
In the months that followed the great animal revolution at Animal Farm a new society took root. It was a model of social progress and egalitarian brotherhood. With the demise of the human oppressor, Jones, the animals formed a social collective that became the model for animals everywhere to envy and to emulate. They were inspiring and happy times for all of those who worked, as equals, tilling the fields and harvesting the crops.

Body of the article
The farm however, now sinks further beneath the oppressive heel of Napoleon. His greed and ambition have corrupted the ideals of Animalism. We were all shocked to hear when news reached the outside world of the latest blow to the movement; another of the cherished Commandments had been broken – this, the most fundamental of them all – *No animal shall kill any other animal*. It has since been revealed, by reliable sources, that Napoleon raised and trained nine vicious dogs to be his personal body guards and the enforcers of his bloody commands. It is these dogs whose teeth are stained with the innocent blood of their comrades and who have brought the laws of the jungle to Animal Farm.

"No longer are all animals created equal," said the exiled Snowball from his secret hideout. "It is kill or be killed, it's survival of the fittest, obey the orders of Napoleon or die." A distressed Snowball was inconsolable when we brought him news of the latest "trials" and executions of the "traitors". "It is the end of civilisation when murder is employed to cower the population into submission," he said, "Under Napoleon's rule the farm has degenerated into a barbaric jungle where the throats of innocents are torn out to appease a tyrant's lust for power."

Snowball can see no solution to the problem in the near future. Twice the humans have tried to take back the farm and twice they have failed. According to Snowball, no one on the farm is strong enough to oppose Napoleon neither. What is more, the farms and the community nearby now help to maintain the tyrant's empire through trade.

Kicker
Tragically, the lives of the animals on Animal Farm have been held up to the microscope of the world. Once the world looked on with envy but now it cringes and turns away from the violence and brutality that is witnessed. "Tis an unweeded garden that grows to seed," lamented the heartbroken Snowball, as he wiped a tear away with his trotter.

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And finally, another example that highlights the structure and the incorporation of extended metaphor, literary allusions etc:

Et tu Brute

Simon Trotsky examines the latest assassination in the Australian Federal arena and ponders on the cutthroat business of politics.

The conspirators gathered at the Capitol late at night. Their daggers were sharp, and on the morrow they would spill the blood of Caesar. As was tradition, his body would have to be displayed before the masses and the masses would have to be appeased. What would they be told? That Rudd was ambitious? That Rudd had turned his back on the people? No. The reason for the conspirator's actions would be ... inertia. Yes, the public would believe that, or so thought the spin doctors. The growth of the empire of Rudd had ground to a halt and the new leader would promise that she could move it forward.

And so it was and with the blood still dripping from the cold metal of their daggers and the corpse of Rudd still warm and tossed roughly in the corner of the photocopying room, the conspirators, once his friends and trusted colleagues, toasted their rise to power. Their public faces wore stiff grins and the guilty flush in their cheeks was puttied over with a cold mask of political ambition.

If the camp fires of Gillard's troops were burning, somewhere over Rudd's horizon as they waited in readiness to attack, then Kevin07 did not see them and nor did he smell them. His enemies had moved in close enough to hold the dagger at his throat without raising the alarm. In hindsight it appears as though the coup d'état had been coming for some time and backroom deals were being made to

give Rudd a final chance to save himself from the executioner. Who would have thought the end would have been so swift and efficient.

Four weeks later and the country is gearing up for an election. The old Caesar is now long forgotten and Julia Gillard Caesar is riding her chariot around the country dispensing promises that her new regime will be nothing like the old regime.

1. Identify the various structural and stylistic features of the sample. Mark them and label them.

Her catchcry is "Moving Forward" and looking at her army and its efficiency, ruthlessness and armaments then we wonder who can stand in her way; surely not a budgie-smuggler wearing ex-boxer.

Long-time political observer, Laurie Barley, believes, "We have entered a new political landscape ... or rather resorted to the morality of a bygone era where power is won and held by force." Barley's view is that the Marquis of Queensbury has thrown in the towel and that no referees or rules now govern the sweet science of politics – "The gloves have come off and if

Abbott wants to enter the ring with Gillard then he is going to have to learn to fight dirty. Hit an opponent when she's not looking and don't be afraid to sink the slipper in when she's down."

Wayne Swan, Rudd's school buddy, political brother and right-hand man was, allegedly, the last Labor heavyweight to desert Rudd's corner leaving him to battle his opponents alone. "It broke my heart," revealed Swan, "but the party's interests must go before the interests of the individual. Personal friendships and loyalties must, regrettably, be pushed aside if it will serve the interests of the country."

Swan's words should serve as a warning to aspiring politicians. Trust no one, believe nothing, keep your cards close to your chest and never walk around the back of a horse. If the need to *move forward* is good for the country, or at least good for someone's career, then only the brave or the foolhardy would stand in the way.

The Bible may provide some comfort for the Rudds of this world and their loyal followers who seek some justice for political treachery, that those who live by the sword, die by the sword.

4. Does the jump from the Caesar metaphor to the boxing metaphor work? Why? Why not?

5. Plan an article from an alternative perspective of the same situation.

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YEAR 7 UNIT PLAN: THE GAME CRITICS

Delmai George

Pre-service teacher

UNIT RATIONALE

Transition to high school can often be a stressful and unsettling time for students, where unfamiliar routines and a constant flow of teachers and classrooms all cause considerable tension. On top of this young adolescents are also striving to understand who they are as they undergo significant physical, cognitive, emotional, social and moral changes (Ashman & Elkins, 2009). This ten week unit is designed for the first term of a Year 7 English class to engage students with a range of familiar popular culture media, multimodal texts and literature. It will be used to instigate social connections between students, investigate morals, values and personal choices, while developing crucial 21st century literacies skills. The unit fits well with the philosophies of the school where lifelong learning is fostered and self-esteem, personal responsibility and respect are valued attributes for students and staff. Literacy and numeracy are key objectives and are integrated across subjects using meaningful, relevant and authentic learning experiences to motivate students and prevent disengagement from learning (Ashman & Elkins, 2009).

Year 7 is an important time for teachers to connect to their students' backgrounds, interests and life experiences which will inform their pedagogical approaches and strategies to cater for the different learning styles and levels of their students (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). This is the aim of the unit "Game Critic". As learning is a complex, multi-dimensional process, continuous assessment (diagnostic, formative and summative) across the unit will reveal what students know and can do in multiple ways over a period of time (Brady & Kennedy, 2010; VCAA, 2009). Using the backward design framework (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006), assessment tasks and learning activities, with a solid literacies learning focus, are developed to reflect the content descriptors of the Australian Curriculum: English and the general capabilities of literacy and ICTs (ACARA, 2012).

The lesson sequence was developed using Cope & Kalantzis' (2009) Learning by Design framework of experiencing, conceptualising, analysing and applying to inform the knowledge processes within the four major multiliteracies dimensions of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice (New London Group, 1996). Deconstructing, analysing and synthesising textual and linguistic structures of persuasive, information and narrative texts will build students' knowledge, skills and processes to allow for transformed practice: the construction of a multimodal presentation for their game submission (summative assessment). Higher order thinking, critical and creative thinking and understanding context, author's purpose and audience are woven into the learning activities and are skills students require in order to understand the social and cultural discourses that occur with texts (Riddle, 2012). ICTs have had a huge impact on the way literacies develop (Riddle, 2012), so they have been incorporated in a variety of ways across the unit to reflect the fluid, hybrid use of language and meaning making particularly within the final assessment task.

Teenagers are bombarded with messages to 'read' and make meaning from: mobile phone text messages or twitter; social networking or blogging; television and magazine advertising; diagrams, graphs, signs and symbols; body language, dress code and cultural statements; to name a few. These hybridised forms of texts create a link between the 'author' and the 'reader', with certain assumptions, perspectives and silences evident in the discourses that occur between them, according to the context (Riddle, 2012). Therefore, students need to be explicitly taught how to read the elements of visual, audio, gestural, spatial and linguistic design to make meaning of multimodal texts; a skill necessary to function successfully in a world of rapid technological change (New London Group, 1996). Video games and their associated texts



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offer this multiplicity of design modalities requiring different types of literacies which means the player's success is derived from 'reading' in new ways.

Role playing games (RPGs), like Bethesda's *"Morrowind"* (2002) and *"Skyrim"* (2011), offer players a vast world to explore, complex storyline, multitudes of side quests and many choices to build a character and game experience that is entertaining, engaging and unique to each player (Gee, 2003). However, it is important to remember that these worlds have been constructed by an author for an intended purpose and audience (Winch, Johnston, March, Ljungdahl & Halliday, 2010), and while there are many choices available in the game, often players make those choices unconsciously. This unit is designed to look beyond the 'fun' factor of games and read, comprehend and critically analyse the elements that make up games. It provide students with an insight into how their own beliefs and values (or testing them) informs their choices and promotes motivation and self-efficacy (Ashman & Elkins, 2009). Of course not all students will play this type of game, so linking prior knowledge, careful scaffolding using carefully selected and age appropriate vignettes to illustrate themes and issues, and comparisons with other popular culture text types will occur throughout the unit. Reading and writing strategies of the Four Resources model (code breaker, text user, text participant and text analyst) are particularly useful as an explicit teaching framework for lessons when working with such complex multimodal texts in modelled and guided reading and writing sessions (Wing Jan, 2009). Modelling episodes also help to make the implicit explicit (Riddle, 2012).

The "Game Critic" unit is a flexible teaching tool, incorporating a range of text types and learning activity extensions that can be modified as needed. This can be further adapted to suit

a range of year levels, student abilities and curriculum objectives. Simple changes can be made to the literature, movies and games used in the unit, along with the summative assessment task, to tailor it to the needs of a particular class or year level (Ashman & Elkins, 2009). The forums used throughout are appropriate for a range of year levels and provide a social context for students to communicate, collaborate and share ideas, information and opinions and encourages even more literacy and writing (Riddle, 2012; Winch et al., 2010). It is also the platform for homework, which can be done on their phones while on their way home on the bus, on the library computers before or after school or at home. Providing different access points to ICTs, including the borrowing of a computer from the resource centre, ensures access for all students (Winch et al., 2010). While the forums are informal, there are certain protocols and netiquette that must be followed (Riddle, 2012) and are explicitly taught in the first lesson of term, along with other important class rules and procedures. An important component of successful implementation is the experimentation (teacher becoming an 'insider') of a vast array of digital technologies and integrating them purposefully into the learning experiences (Bradford, 2010).

The final showcase day involves sharing their presentations with interested students from across the middle school. These students will be invited to critique the presentations and vote on a number of categories, allowing students with different strengths to shine. This is an important opportunity for those students who may not otherwise get recognition (Winch et al., 2010). The unit, from the outset, is all about creating an atmosphere of excitement about learning by engaging students in relevant, meaningful experiences that show them the real value of learning literacies.



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Year Level:	7	KLA:	ENGLISH	Unit Title:	The Game Critics	Length:
Teaching & Learning Context		KLA Content Descriptions		LITERACIES as a General Capability		ICT
<p>This unit is developed for Year 7 at a rural public high school. As a Year 7-12 coeducational school of 500 students, it promotes a culture of lifelong learning and the development of self-esteem, personal responsibility and respect. The Junior School focuses on student-centred, inquiry based learning using real life situations to engage and motivate. Higher order thinking, along with the multiliteracies framework, combines for a balanced approach to the curriculum for 21st century learning.</p> <p>Year 7 integrates students from a range of feeder schools and establishes familiar routines and minimises teacher numbers to ease the transition. The timetable is structured around four 70 minute lessons and ability groups for guided reading and writing remain part of the classroom structure. As literacy is a targeted area, Year 7 English lessons are used for consolidation and extension of prior knowledge in language features, text structure and literacies using a wide range of text types.</p> <p>Learning styles, literacy and ICT skills are diverse across the class of 25, with several students at each end of the learning continuum. Three high achieving students in English, five with high ICT skills and four who are about Year 5 reading level balance the remaining students in the class.</p> <p>Targeting areas of personal, social and cultural understanding is important for students from both rural and urban backgrounds.</p>		<p>Literature: responding to literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620) <p>Literature: text structure and organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand that the coherence of more complex texts relies on devices that signal text structure and guide readers, for example overviews, initial and concluding paragraphs and topic sentences, indexes or site maps or breadcrumb trails for online texts (ACELA1763) <p>Literacy: interpreting, analysing, evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources (ACELY1723) <p>Literacy: creating texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan, draft and publish imaginative, information and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual and audio features to convey information and ideas (ACELY1725)		<p>Visual knowledge - composing and comprehending learning area texts using visuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">comprehend and compose visual and multimodal texts such as diagrams, maps and timelines, understanding their contribution to the interpretation of ideas and information <p>Grammar knowledge - expressing opinion and point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">understand and use language to evaluate an object, action or text, and language that is designed to persuade the reader/viewer <p>Comprehending texts through listening, reading and viewing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">integrate topic and textual knowledge and developed strategies, including selecting, navigating, monitoring meaning and crosschecking to read and view learning area texts <p>Composing texts through speaking, writing and creating - exploratory language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">plan, research, rehearse and deliver presentations on learning area topics, sequencing selected content and multimodal elements for accuracy and their impact on the audience		<p>Investigating - defining and planning information searches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">select and use appropriate ICT independently and collaboratively, analyse information to frame questions and plan search strategies (for example using wikis, searching databases) <p>Communicating - collaborating, sharing and exchanging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">select and use appropriate ICT tools safely to share and exchange information and to collaborate with others (for example contributing to the content of a wiki; blogging and posting to bulletin boards) <p>Creating - generating ideas, plans and processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">select and use ICT to articulate ideas and concepts, and plan the development of complex solutions (for example using software to create hyperlinks, tables and charts) <p>Creating - generating solutions to challenges and learning area tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">design and modify creative digital solutions, for particular audiences and for a range of purposes (for example modelling solutions in spreadsheets, creating movies, animations, websites and music, programming games, using databases, creating web pages for visually impaired users)

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Multiliteracies learning outline / Sequence of learning	
<i>Situated practice</i>	<i>Overt instruction</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting to prior knowledge by conducting a survey of personal preferences/choices/opinions about playing video games Game designer interview (online) to explain design elements, story and character construction for games to help with assessment task requirements View movie trailers, read book and game reviews to deconstruct persuasive language features Modelled/shared reading/viewing of excerpts from in-class texts "Bloodthirsty" and "Avatar" throughout the unit for deconstructing textural/linguistic features and structures, character traits/flaws, identifying themes/issues, plot twists and resolution View a variety of game vignettes to demonstrate how issues/themes are portrayed and how they build the story line Deconstruct the story flowchart of "Dragon Age II" to introduce the concepts of multidirectional storyline, multiple resolutions and quest twists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the four resources model to develop reading and writing strategies in guided reading/writing activities with games and a range of game-related texts (game manuals, walkthroughs, fanfiction, etc), in-class texts, and student choice texts Examine textural/linguistic features and structures of games and associated texts, movies, novels, comics, advertisements, reviews, trailers, etc and create charts for display Create mind maps of the multiliteracies design elements present in a range of texts Write a hook (the one big idea to sell a game) using an existing game and persuasive language Use tables for character creation, identification and analysis using a range of narrative texts (teacher and student selected); comparisons/reflection to acknowledge personal choices/opinions Fill in character profile template with descriptive language to show depth necessary to build a believable character Identify key themes/issues in games and model research skills for similar themes in other narrative texts and record whole class conversations on the forum Explicitly modelled/shared construction of a story flowchart using the character developed by the class, selected issues/themes and the relevant structural features of a narrative using a PowerPoint with hyperlinks
<i>Transformed practice</i>	<i>Critical framing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review a game, book or movie and post to forum - choose one review to respond to (critiquing/ opinions/agree-disagree/justification) Plan, research, rehearse and record a persuasive audio/video to get their friends to play a game they have not played themselves (group) Develop a character profile from one of the class texts using the template, place on the forum for discussion Write a short paragraph in response to the forum stimulus questions on contentious issues/events from a range of texts discussed in class (analysing/point of view/justification) Develop a story flowchart using a picture book, graphic novel or comic to share with the class (group) Rewrite the orientation to the book/comic (above) using descriptive language, correct sentences, punctuation and spelling to share with the class (group) Write a short reflection paragraph about the protagonist/antagonist's role (above) (group) Plan, draft and design a presentation to creatively express their ideas for a game design submission Sharing their presentations with the middle school cohort - celebration of individual strengths with awards and certificates of appreciation (positive reinforcement, feedback and recognition of effort) - class reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing and evaluating elements in video games - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Why play video games? What makes them appealing? ~ Do I need to know how to read and write to play? ~ Why do I choose to do what I do in games? Investigate personal choice - character creation and in-game choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ How can this help me to construct my story? Plot, hero, setting, story structure, language features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ How are these things the same/different for games, movies or novels? Compare and contrast story themes in games with other texts (movies, comics, novels, picture books, etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ What social/political/cultural issues are portrayed in games? Are there consequences? What about real life? ~ How do these themes fit with the story/sub plots/twists? ~ Can I use some of these ideas for my game? Represent information and ideas in mind maps, flowcharts, tables and online discussion forums to share, collaborate, analyse and synthesise End of unit reflection: write a letter to next year's students sharing their experiences of learning with video games (what they enjoyed, difficult concepts, study advice, etc) and add constructive criticisms/suggestions for improvement to unit (PMI)

YEAR 7 UNIT PLAN: THE GAME CRITICS

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

The summative assessment task for the unit involves composing a variety of texts from different genres and combining them into a complex, dynamic multimodal presentation. The task sheet invites students to submit a video game idea to a top design team. To complete the task, they will be required to recognise and apply the language and structural features from persuasive, informative and narrative genres and combine them to create their submission. Students will plan, draft and publish their texts using a range of ICTs and different design elements to produce a logically sequenced, easy to navigate presentation.

Authentic assessment tasks, based on real world professions (game designer), provide a positive influence on learning and motivation, and are perfect opportunities for demonstrating the importance of English, literacy and ICTs. This task incorporates validity, reliability and fairness which cover the key principles of effective assessment. To counter any bias for access to games, game scenarios and interaction with games in class will be offered along with other media and texts as stimulus. While certain structures are in place to guide the assessment, the presentation style is flexible and negotiable (Brady & Kennedy, 2010; Winch et al., 2010; Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2007). By using backward mapping, the assessments were designed in conjunction with curriculum goals to show what students know and can do, before meaningful learning activities were selected to connect to prior knowledge and scaffold their learning (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006).

Curriculum content descriptions (in bold type) from the key learning area of English, as well as the general capabilities of Literacies and ICT, provide the criteria for the rubric

(ACARA, 2012). The rubric is written in a way that self assessment can occur, as drafted texts are evaluated and adjustments made to support personal learning goals and monitor learning for success (Winch et al., 2010; Falchikov, 2005). The rubric, explained explicitly to students at the beginning of the unit, is also used for teacher judgements about student work and together with other formative tasks present a comprehensive picture of learning for interim school reporting to parents and students (Brady & Kennedy, 2010). The award categories (selected by peer review on presentation day) also provide an incentive for motivation and personal achievement outside the academic sphere.

Evidence of learning will be collected from a range of activities including scaffolding tools such as mind maps, flowcharts, templates and checklists; participation in online forums; teacher consultations and modelled, guided and individual reading/writing sessions to cater for diverse needs and learning styles (Winch et al., 2010). This is an important consideration as teachers are required, by law, to differentiate learning experiences to ensure education is equally accessible for all students (Australian Government, 2011; Brady & Kennedy, 2010). Multiple practice opportunities provide feedback for student improvement as well as data for revision of the teaching sequence and activities to cater for diversity (Winch et al., 2010; Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). Adding optional extras to the presentation accommodates the needs of extension students, while audio/video recordings offer alternatives for those students who find written work daunting or difficult.



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Year 7G Task Sheet

Term 1 English Unit

Assessment

THE GAME CRITIC *Magazine*

Is there more to video games than fun?

WANTED

The Bethesda® Game Design Team are recruiting writers for their next game

You have been invited to make a submission!

During the term, we will be analysing and evaluating a variety of literary and multimodal texts including video games - deconstructing them and completing tasks that will help you with your assessment and presentation. Take inspiration from any of the texts we use in class or those you are familiar with (e.g. your favourite movie, novel, short story, article, biography or game).

Keep these in mind as you plan your gripping plot, build believable characters and describe compelling settings!

Design a multimodal presentation

Here's what you need to include:

- a hook to sell your idea (persuasive)
- a profile of your main character (information)
- an orientation (150-300 word narrative)
- a flowchart for the story outline (sequence events)

You need to consider the purpose of each item (text structure and language) regardless of whether they are written, audio, visual or multimodal.

OPTIONAL/EXTENSION:

- other game related information (e.g. anti-hero, allies and their role/character, main character skills and abilities, quests/sub plots)

You are only limited by your imagination!

NOTE: If you are using audio or video, written scripts must accompany the presentation for marking sentences, spelling and punctuation.

Here's what you need to do:

Choose a way to present your game idea (use diagrams, tables, illustrations, text, even add music, audio or video) that will make it exciting and eye catching.

Here are some ideas:

- Poster (A2 size or a "Glog")
- Game manual (A4-print or digital)
- PowerPoint flowchart with hyperlinks
- Got a great presentation idea?

Discuss it with your teacher!

DUE: Wednesday Week 9

LET'S CELEBRATE - Presentation Showcase

Students from middle school will act as game critics and vote on the best in a variety of categories (best overall presentation, best backstory, best hero, etc)

LAST WEDNESDAY OF TERM IN THE COMPUTER LAB





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Criteria/marking rubric

	A- Excellent	B- Quality	C- Satisfactory	D- Trying Hard	E- Need Help
Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive genres, combined as a complex presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I demonstrate outstanding- use of descriptive language for a thrilling context (orientation) and a fascinating character profile use of sentence structure, spelling/punctuation use of written, visual and/or audio texts for my ideas ability to combine different genre structures into a complex presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I demonstrate well-developed- use of descriptive language for an exciting context (orientation) and an interesting character profile use of sentence structure, spelling and punctuation use of written, visual and/or audio texts for my ideas ability to combine different genre structures into a complex presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I demonstrate appropriate- use of descriptive language for the context (orientation) and my character profile use of sentence structure, spelling and punctuation use of written, visual and/or audio texts for my ideas ability to combine different genre structures into a complex presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I demonstrate some- use of descriptive language for the context (orientation) and character use of complete sentences, spelling and punctuation use of written, visual and/or audio texts for my ideas ability to combine texts for the presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was unable to use descriptive language, write some complete sentences or a reasonable context. I was unable to combine different genres.
Select subject matter and specific language, visual and audio features to convey information and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I provide easily recognised/ followed devices to guide readers through my presentation's structure in a logical, effective and imaginative way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I provide adequate devices to guide readers easily through my presentation's structure in a logical and effective way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I provide sufficient devices to guide readers through my presentation's structure in a logical way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I provide some devices to guide readers and there is some logical structure to my presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was unable to structure my presentation logically or provide devices to guide readers.
Use devices to signal structure and coherence and guide readers/viewers through complex texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I create a comprehensive flowchart which shows my ideas for a unique storyline, game twist and interesting resolution. I present my character's profile in an innovative multimodal text. The texts I use contribute very effectively to the overall meaning of the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I create a detailed flowchart which shows my ideas for an imaginative storyline with a well developed resolution. I present my character's profile in a creative multimodal text. The texts I use contribute effectively to the overall meaning of the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I create a suitable flowchart for my interesting storyline and resolution. I present my character's profile as a multimodal text. The texts I use contribute to the overall meaning of the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I create a simple flowchart showing the points of my storyline. I have completed some sections of my character's profile. I use limited texts in my presentation... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was unable to create a flowchart to show the story or complete my character's profile. I was unable to use visual or multimodal texts in my presentation.
Compose visual and multimodal texts which show their contribution to the interpretation of ideas and information in the presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use persuasive language to capture the reader/viewer's attention with an original and exciting hook. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use persuasive language to capture the reader/viewer's attention with an exciting hook. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use persuasive language to capture the reader/viewer's attention with a credible hook. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I write an acceptable hook using limited persuasive language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was unable to use persuasive language to write an acceptable hook.
Use language that is designed to persuade the reader/viewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use ICTs to - create a wide variety of multimodal texts using different design elements to express ideas design a stunning presentation to suit the intended audience/ purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use ICTs to - create a variety of multimodal texts using different design elements to express ideas design an eye-catching presentation to suit the intended audience/purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use ICTs to - create multimodal texts to express my ideas design an acceptable presentation to suit the intended audience/ purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use ICTs to - create texts which express my ideas design a somewhat appropriate presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was unable to effectively use ICTs to- create multimodal texts or design an appropriate presentation
Select and use ICT to articulate ideas using a variety of multimodal texts and design a presentation for a particular audience/ purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use ICTs to - create a wide variety of multimodal texts using different design elements to express ideas design a stunning presentation to suit the intended audience/ purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use ICTs to - create a variety of multimodal texts using different design elements to express ideas design an eye-catching presentation to suit the intended audience/purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use ICTs to - create multimodal texts to express my ideas design an acceptable presentation to suit the intended audience/ purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use ICTs to - create texts which express my ideas design a somewhat appropriate presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was unable to effectively use ICTs to- create multimodal texts or design an appropriate presentation
Comments:	Result:				



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SAMPLE LESSON PLAN OUTLINE

In week 2, the unit concentrates on the development of character profiles, with a game designer interview watched in the lesson 2 to situate the learning. Lesson 3 begins group rotations through five different learning activities, used to scaffold the character development process. This lesson is based on the content descriptors for literature and literacy in the English curriculum (ACARA, 2012). This involves using comprehension strategies to analyse and synthesise information about characters from different styles of texts, creating a variety of character profiles to share on the forum and discussing similarities and differences between students' profiles. Rotations will be completed in lesson 4, with time for comparisons and reflections to be completed in lesson 5, along with creating character profiles from one of the in-class texts "Bloodthirsty" (Meaney, 2010) and "Avatar" (Cameron, 2009). Within the multiliteracies framework (New London Group, 1996), lesson 3 covers the explicit teaching (overt instruction) of analysing character traits and flaws using descriptive language and the character profile template. This template is what students use to complete a comprehensive character profile for their summative assessment task.

The main character has the central role of influencing how the story will unfold and is a major consideration when developing a story. The character creation sequence within the game *Morrowind* (Bethesda, 2002) provides a visual platform for scaffolding student understanding of the different elements required to create an avatar for the game. First, this process is modelled explicitly (Campbell & Green, 2006), using descriptive language in the template, to record the choices made as a whole class. Because the character is created virtually, at the end of the process students can see what the character looks like. Each student has the opportunity to create their own avatar during group rotations but their focus will be on why they made specific choices, making their choices

more overt. As a text participant (Santoro, 2004), they use their prior knowledge, along with personal values and beliefs, to create unique avatars and understand how personal choice influenced their decisions.

Each learning activity uncovers a different element that students need to consider when describing character traits and flaws. As they practice analysing a variety of characters from various texts during the next few lessons, students synthesise their learning to assist the development of their main character. Beginning with themselves, students analyse their own characteristics and combine those of others in their group to create a new character profile. Then there is the opportunity to discover how characters can change traits during the course of a story, before experimenting with changing one characteristic of a well known book character to see the effect this would have on the story. Finally, students connect with the feelings of characters as they role play in a mock interview. Each activity is a milestone in developing the necessary knowledge and skills required to build a believable character for the assessment task.

The group rotations are designed so students are self-directed and active in their learning (Gee, 2003). Groups are of mixed ability to provide a support framework for those students who have a lower reading/writing ability (Winch et al., 2010). While the texts chosen are familiar to students (experiencing the known), the information being interpreted, analysed and synthesised is experienced in new way as they make meaning about different characters (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Working with familiar fairy tales which lower level readers can comprehend more easily, means they are more confident about completing the activities. Students with high ICT skills fulfil the role of technical support for those who have difficulties. A range of delivery modalities such as audio, visual, written, interactive and gestural supports students to make meaning using different learning styles (Ashman & Elkins, 2009; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).



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Year Level/s: 7	Date: Week 2, Lesson 3	KLA/s: English	Duration: 70 mins
Syllabus Outcomes/Essential Learnings or Skills (What is the broad educational goal in terms of the syllabus or curriculum?)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620)use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources (ACELY1723)			
Lesson Objective: What specific part of this broad goal does this lesson aim to develop? A good objective must indicate "Given what, Do what, How well?"			
In groups, students will actively participate in different learning activities to understand how to build a strong character profile for their story. They will select characters from a variety of textual sources and analyse important traits and flaws which make the characters believable. Students will reflect on their ideas about the characters and discuss any similarities and differences that others may have had in the group.			
Know and Do: By the end of the lesson what knowledge (content and understandings) and skills (processes) do students need to develop?			
Students need to know ...	Students need to be able to ...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a strong character profile is the foundation of a good narrativefictional characters need both good and bad traits to make them more believable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">participate in various learning activities which use a variety of textual sources to analyse important information about building a fictional characterreflect on their descriptions of the characters and identify similarities and differences between theirs and others' descriptions		
Evaluation/Monitoring and Assessment:			
Prior Knowledge: (How will I find out what the students know and/or remember?):	Formative Assessment: (How will I monitor student understanding along the way?):	Summative Assessment: (How will I provide concrete evidence of student learning?):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whole class discussion - what they already know about the character's central role in the storyline of <i>Morrowind</i> through analysing issues from a series of game vignettes over the previous weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students complete various worksheets at each learning activity to show their knowledge of the character development processObservation: whole class and during group workDiagnostic : able to formulate questions to interview characters about events in the story	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Learning activities provide practice for understanding about character traits and flaws. The character attributes template, which is used to help develop a game character for the assessment, is scaffolded during whole class character creation and in activity 3	
Resources needed:	Computer lab (15 computers) and headphones; teacher laptop with IWB; <i>Morrowind</i> PC game disc x 6; character choices sheet (Activity 1); character sketch sheets (Activity 2); Windows Media File of YouTube clips loaded onto class intranet (Activity 2 & 3); "How the Grinch stole Christmas" by Dr Seuss (narrated story) and character trait template (Activity 3); "Cinderella" (book) and data retrieval chart (Activity 4); "The Three Little Pigs" (book), EasySpeak microphone and conduct a character interview prompts (Activity 5).		

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Introduction key learnings and how they will be achieved (Consider strategies, relevance, individual/group work, clarify student understandings of task, student voice, student choice etc.)			
<p>Time Allocation: 20 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole class discussion - What do we know about <i>Morrowind</i>? Recalling different issues investigated in the game to build a sense of the story Model (whole class): Use <i>Morrowind</i> to construct a character (avatar) - choose the attributes, skills and personal details using the opening section of the game on the IWB. Complete the character trait template using descriptive words as a scaffold for learning activities and assessment task After explaining each learning activity, students move to their first group rotation (groups of 5) 	<p>What key messages will I convey?</p> <p>Characters in games, novels and movies all have certain characteristics which can make them seem real.</p>	<p>How will I organise learning activities and utilise resources?</p> <p>Computer lab booked in advance for lessons 3, 4 & 5</p> <p>Game discs and media files loaded onto computers</p> <p>Teacher laptop, with game disc, connected to IWB</p> <p>Resources for each activity in allocated areas</p>	<p>How can I make adjustments to meet individual student needs?</p> <p>Using familiar stories helps low readers to complete tasks</p> <p>Audio instructions on 'Talking Point' recorders to ensure understanding of task requirements</p> <p>Mixed ability in groups provide support framework for low readers</p>
Lesson Body - step by step outline of learning experience sequence (Consider HOTS tasks, monitoring understandings, provision and use of resources, general student responsibilities etc.)			
<p>Time Allocation: 45 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 rotations of 20 minutes (rotations completed next lesson) Activity 1 (computers x 5): Create their own character (avatar) in <i>Morrowind</i>. Use the accompanying sheet to record their choices - name, race, skills and attributes chosen, etc. Reflection on choices will be posted on the forum for homework. Activity 2 (computers x 5): Watch the clip about tips for creating believable characters. Create an annotated character sketch of themselves, detailing things that make them who they are (some suggestions given). Each student shares three things about themselves to the group, who record these on their sheet. For homework, they combine some elements from different group members together to create a new character and post to the forum. Activity 3 (computer x 5): Analyse the main character in "<i>How the Grinch Stole Christmas</i>", the character traits at the beginning of the story and again at the end using the character trait template. This illustrates how a character can have both good and bad traits and introduces the idea that a character can change during the course of the story. Write three sentences about how the Grinch changed and why and post to the forum for homework. Activity 4: Using the book "<i>Cinderella</i>", students use the data retrieval chart to record the name of the characters, what characteristics (traits and flaws) they have, and where in the book this assumption is supported (evidence). Each student for homework will change one characteristic and describe how that would alter the story (<i>Cinderella</i> is mean like her sisters; the prince is old). 	<p>What questions will I ask?</p> <p>How did you choose that name?</p> <p>Why is that race better than another race?</p> <p>How did you decide which skills or attributes your character should have?</p> <p>What are physical attributes?</p> <p>What positive or negative traits does the character have?</p> <p>Where in the book did you find this character displaying that emotion?</p> <p>If we changed this, what would happen to the character/story?</p> <p>As the character from the book, how did it feel when this happened?</p>	<p>How will I handle the transitions between activities?</p> <p>Names of group members and rotation areas up on IWB</p> <p>Timer is used for transition between activities (5 minutes to allow closing current game/reset media clips)</p>	<p>How will I know if students are achieving the learning objective/s?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> observation of participation in whole class and learning activities teacher interaction and questioning as students work through tasks completed activity sheets/recording posts to forum

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 5 (EasySpeak microphone): Conduct a character interview. Using the story "The Three Little Pigs", students decide on a series of questions to ask the characters about how they felt when certain events happened in the story. Each student chooses to role play as a reporter, the three pigs and the wolf. An audio recording of the interview is made and put up on the forum by the reporter for homework. 			What about those who need more time? Each task can be finished at home (except activity 5)
			What plans are in place for those who finish early? They can complete their homework activities (except for activity 5)
			How will I help students to synthesise learnings? Sharing positive and negative aspects of the learning activities helps students realise their similarities and differences and provide opportunities for students to help each other with tips/hints on what worked for them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion - reviewing learning/summarising/Articulating where to next (Strategies to capture learning that occurred and move thinking forward.) 	Time Allocation: 5 minutes Remove game discs from computers and log off. REFLECTION: What was the hardest/easiest part of character building? Why? How did you work through it?		

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NAPLAN ONLY MEASURES A FRACTION OF LITERACY LEARNING

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Article originally published on The Conversation, 14th May 2013

<https://theconversation.com/naplan-only-measures-a-fraction-of-literacy-learning-14078>

Students across Australia in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are currently sitting for the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests. These tests are supposedly designed to identify whether students have the “literacy and numeracy skills that provide the critical foundation for their learning, and for their productive and rewarding participation in the community.”

However, there are a number of serious concerns about NAPLAN, including causing health problems such as stress, anxiety, as well as vomiting and sleeplessness. NAPLAN has also been criticised for encouraging teaching to the test, the promotion of supplements, narrowing the curriculum and manipulation and cheating by schools.

Given these growing concerns about the impacts of NAPLAN, it is important to consider just what this expensive standardised literacy testing program actually measures.

Testing the ability to do tests

Just as I.Q. tests do little more than test someone’s ability to do an I.Q. test, NAPLAN primarily measures students’ capacity to effectively sit NAPLAN tests.

Students as young as seven are made to sit in a room up to twice a day over three days, 40 minutes at a time and use pencil and paper to complete tests with about 40 questions on them. These tests are broken into reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

The nature of the tests as one-size-fits-all means that the diverse social and cultural differences of students are ignored, while different learning

styles and ways of knowing and understanding are stymied. The tests have also been criticised of having an Anglo-Australian bias that privileges white, middle class world views.

It seems nonsensical that pencil and paper tests conducted in a couple of hours over three days can even begin to measure the complexities of literacy learning and knowledge of our young people. Yet, each May since 2008, this is exactly what the Australian government has attempted to do.

Further, despite being touted as a useful diagnostic tool for schools and teachers, there are limited benefits to improving literacy outcomes for students when the test results are released in October, five months after students have sat them. Anyone who has ever raised or taught young children will know that five months is a lifetime in the learning development of children.

More than reading and writing

The version of literacy valued by pencil and paper tests is one that fits with a skills-based traditional approach to learning, which has limited relevance in the lives of young people today. Reading, spelling, grammar, punctuation and writing are necessary and important skills, but they fall well short of the range of skills and knowledge needed for young people to thrive as literate citizens in today’s information and media rich environment.

A large amount of research has been done into new literacies over the past couple of decades. These new literacies make use of new communication technologies, such as the internet, portable computing and mobile phones, along with visual and critical literacy, gaming, art, film, drama and music.

There is enormous potential in these new literacies for young people to engage in meaning



NAPLAN ONLY MEASURES A FRACTION OF LITERACY LEARNING

making that is critical and creative. Continuing to privilege pencil and paper testing of reading and writing makes little sense when the lives of young people involve much more complex ways of communicating and accessing information through a wide variety of media.

Music as literacy?

One growing area of interest is in the intersection of music and literacy. Music has long been accepted as an important feature in the lives of young people, with popular music and youth culture intertwined since Bill Hayley and the Comets released “Rock Around the Clock”. Less known are the deep connections of music and language, and the capacity for music to act as a vehicle for literacy learning.

There are obvious links that can be made between song lyrics and language, but less obvious are the other links to learning, where

music develops auditory and metacognitive processes through singing, rhyme, rhythm and percussion. A simple example of this is through mnemonics such as the alphabet song, where pitch and rhythm work together to trigger linguistic cues.

Music links to reading in ways that we are only beginning to understand. Motivation, cueing and comprehension are all aided through music. In other words, if we want to improve our students’ reading and writing skills, we should get them singing more.

This is the kind of innovative teaching that should be done in schools to build up literacy skills in students. But with tests like NAPLAN increasingly dominating the school day and encouraging teachers to teach to the test, will there be any room left? Perhaps if NAPLAN could measure singing then things would be very different



SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS





A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I

Garry Collins

This article has been developed from one of the workshop sessions presented at the ETAQ seminar conducted at Brisbane Grammar School on Saturday 26 May 2012. The theme for this activity was "Storytelling and the power of the word" and the workshop was entitled "A bushranger's story". The description of the workshop that appeared in the seminar program is shown in the following two paragraphs.

This workshop will outline some activities for an English unit of work for the junior secondary school based on two texts about a real life historical character, the Australian bushranger Bell Hall, who was shot to death by NSW police troopers near Forbes in May 1865 at the age of 27. The two texts are the poem *The Death of Ben Hall* by Will Ogilvie and the words of the associated folk song, *The Streets of Forbes*.

The presenter's intention is that the workshop will model three main things: the integration of the Language, Literature and Literacy strands of the F-10 Australian English Curriculum; the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling in context; and the application of critical literacy concepts. (Hands up those who remember critical literacy?) There will probably also be mention of writing workshop procedures, a long-time hobbyhorse of the presenter.

As it happened, I ran out of space and time before dealing with all of the activities outlined in that workshop. What this means is that, with the Editor's indulgence, there will be a Part 2 to this piece. This one deals mainly with my regular interest (obsession?) of grammar but there are some other aspects as well.

The two texts used in the workshop are provided below.

Poem text:

The Death of Ben Hall by Will Ogilvie

1. Ben Hall was out on the Lachlan side
With a thousand pounds on his head;
A score of troopers were scattered wide
And a hundred more were ready to ride
Wherever a rumour led.
2. They had followed his track from the
Weddin Heights
And north by the Weelong yards;
Through dazzling days and moonlit nights
They had sought him over their rifle sights,
With their hands on their trigger guards.
3. The outlaw stole like a hunted fox
Through the scrub and stunted heath,
And peered like a hawk from his eyrie rocks
Through the waving boughs of the sapling
box
On the troopers riding beneath.
4. His clothes were rent by the clutching thorn
And his blistered feet were bare;
Ragged and torn, with his beard unshorn,
He hid in the woods like a beast forlorn,
With a padded path to his lair.
5. But every night when the white stars rose
He crossed by the Gunning Plain
To a stockman's hut where the Gunning
flows,
And struck on the door three swift light
blows,
And a hand unhooked the chain –
6. And the outlaw followed the lone path back
With food for another day;
And the kindly darkness covered his track
And the shadows swallowed him deep and
black
Where the starlight melted away.

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I

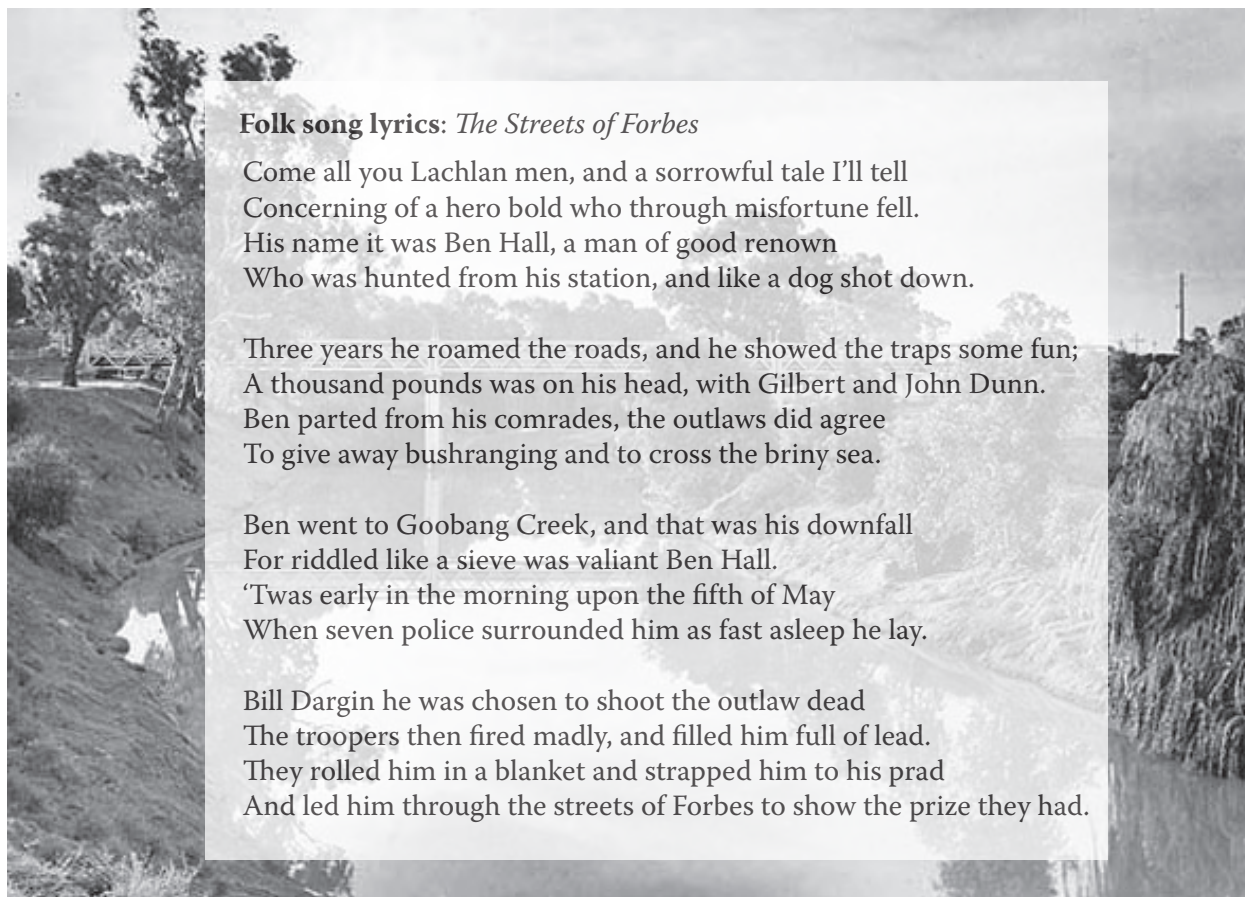
7. But his friend had read of the big reward,
And his soul was stirred with greed;
He fastened his door and window-board,
He saddled his horse and crossed the ford,
And spurred to the town at speed.
8. You may ride at a man's or a maid's behest
When honour or true love call
And steel your heart to the worst or best,
But the ride that is ta'en on a traitor's quest
Is the bitterest ride of all.
9. A hot wind blew from the Lachlan bank
And a curse on its shoulder came;
The pine trees frowned at him rank on
rank,
The sun on a gathering storm cloud sank
And flushed his cheek with shame.
10. He reined at the court and the tale began
That the rifles alone should end;
Sergeant and trooper laid their plan
To draw the net on a hunted man
At the treacherous word of a friend.
11. False was the hand that raised the chain
And false was the whispered word:
'The troopers have turned to the south again,
You may dare to camp on the Gunning Plain.'
And the weary outlaw heard.
12. He walked from the hut but a quarter mile
Where a clump of saplings stood
In a sea of grass like a lonely isle;
And a moon came up in a little while
Like silver steeped in blood.
13. Ben Hall lay down on the dew-wet ground
By the side of his tiny fire;
And a night breeze woke, and he heard no
sound
As the troopers drew their cordon round –
And the traitor earned his hire.
14. And nothing they saw in the dim grey light,
But the little glow in the trees;
And they crouched in the tall cold grass all
night,
Each one ready to shoot at sight,
With his rifle cocked on his knees.



An 1865 wood engraving of Ben Hall. Source: Wikimedia Commons

15. When the shadows broke and the dawn's
white sword
Swung over the mountain wall,
And a little wind blew over the ford,
A sergeant sprang to his feet and roared:
'In the name of the Queen, Ben Hall!'
16. Haggard, the outlaw leapt from his bed
With his lean arms held on high.
'Fire!' And the word was scarcely said
When the mountains rang to a rain of lead –
And the dawn went drifting by.
17. They kept their word and they paid his pay
Where a clean man's hand would shrink;
And that was the traitor's master-day
As he stood by the bar on his homeward
way
And called on the crowd to drink.
18. He banned no creed and he barred no class,
And he called to his friends by name;
But the worst would shake his head and pass
And none would drink from the
bloodstained glass
And the goblet red with shame.
19. And I know when I hear that last grim call
And my mortal hour is spent
I would rather sleep with the dead Ben Hall
Than go where that traitor went

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I



Folk song lyrics: *The Streets of Forbes*

Come all you Lachlan men, and a sorrowful tale I'll tell
Concerning of a hero bold who through misfortune fell.
His name it was Ben Hall, a man of good renown
Who was hunted from his station, and like a dog shot down.

Three years he roamed the roads, and he showed the traps some fun;
A thousand pounds was on his head, with Gilbert and John Dunn.
Ben parted from his comrades, the outlaws did agree
To give away bushranging and to cross the briny sea.

Ben went to Goobang Creek, and that was his downfall
For riddled like a sieve was valiant Ben Hall.
'Twas early in the morning upon the fifth of May
When seven police surrounded him as fast asleep he lay.

Bill Dargin he was chosen to shoot the outlaw dead
The troopers then fired madly, and filled him full of lead.
They rolled him in a blanket and strapped him to his prad
And led him through the streets of Forbes to show the prize they had.

Image: Bridge across the Lachlan River, Forbes 1935. Source State Records NSW (<http://investigator.records.nsw.gov.au/>)

Pre-reading focus questions and a General Capability

One of the seven General Capabilities of the *Australian Curriculum: English* (AC:E) is **ethical behaviour**. A preliminary question that could be posed to students that relates to both this General Capability and the Ben Hall story is as follows:

If a friend of yours was wanted by the police and you knew their whereabouts, what would be the morally right thing to do:

- A. inform the police?
- B. keep silent and assist your friend to stay at large?

Follow up question: What factors might influence your decision?

Part of what the AC:E has to say about ethical behaviour is the following:

- Students develop understanding of ethical behaviour as they study the issues and dilemmas present in a range of texts and

explore how ethical principles affect the behaviour and judgment of characters and those involved in issues and events. Students apply the skills of reasoning, empathy and imagination, consider and make judgments about actions and motives, and speculate on how life experiences affect and influence people's decision making and whether various positions held are reasonable.

- The study of English helps students to understand **how language can be used to influence judgments about behaviour**, speculate about consequences and influence opinions and that **language can carry embedded negative and positive connotations** that can be used in ways that help or hurt others.

Some further preliminary questions that could usefully be posed to students are:

1. Apart from actual crimes like murder, assault and theft, what are some of the most reprehensible things that people can do to others?

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I

2. Do authorities like the police always do the right thing?
3. Are people who break the law always evil?
4. How important is it for ordinary people to obey the law and support the police in apprehending criminals?
5. How appropriate is it for Ned Kelly to be considered by some as a sort of Australian national hero?

A consideration of #1 would almost certainly require some discussion of the meaning of the word "reprehensible" and a consideration of possible synonyms would also be appropriate/

Consideration of the titles of the texts

Some useful teaching re grammar and punctuation could be done with just the titles of the two texts. Depending on where the class's level of knowledge of this aspect of the Language strand, this might be brief revision or, Content Descriptions listed in lower year levels of the AC:E notwithstanding, it could be initial teaching. The two titles of course are:

The Death of Ben Hall
The Streets of Forbes

A first point to note is the principle at work as regards capitalization. Conventionally, the first word is capitalized in the same way that capitalization is used to mark the beginning of a sentence. Additionally, "Ben Hall" and "Forbes" are capitalized because they are proper, as opposed to common, nouns, the names of particular people, places and institutions. It would then be useful to ask students why the common nouns "Death" and "Streets" are capitalized while the preposition "of" is not. This provides a convenient opportunity to briefly discuss the distinction between open and closed word classes.

Word classes

The <i>definite article</i>	Death <i>noun</i>	of <i>preposition</i>	Ben <i>noun</i>	Hall <i>noun</i>
The <i>definite article</i>	Streets <i>noun</i>	of <i>preposition</i>	Forbes <i>noun</i>	

Traditional grammar just presented a list of parts of speech but functional grammar separates word classes into two categories: open classes and closed classes as shown in this table.

Open Word Classes	Closed Word Classes
nouns	pronouns
verbs	prepositions
adjectives	conjunctions
adverbs	determiners: articles, demonstratives etc

The open word classes are the **content words** that are used to represent the world and are so-called because new words can be coined to join them. The closed classes, on the other hand, are essentially **grammatical words** and new versions cannot be formed.

The principle at work seems to be that, apart from capitalization of the first word and of proper nouns, open class words are capitalized while closed class words are not. Mind you, these days, advertisers and the people who prepare the credits in movies are apt to consider it aesthetically more pleasing to use no capitals at all. Students could be asked to note examples of this practice and report back to the class in ensuing days. In recent times I have noticed the following "sans capitals" slogan on City Cats and Brisbane City Council buses: "brisbane: australia's new world city".

Further questions about the titles to pose and then discuss would be:

1. What word classes (parts of speech) are involved?
2. Are the titles complete messages?
3. What grammatical structures are they?

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I

Like most titles of books, films and the like, these are not complete messages. Well of course they're not, you might be thinking, but this observation neatly leads on to the useful consideration of the rank scale in grammar. The point here is that language and how it works can be considered at a number of different levels. When we talk about nouns, verbs and so on, we are focussing just on how individual words function in the construction of meaning. But language seldom works in individual words. More usually, meaning is constructed in connected combinations of words. Thus, the notion of the rank scale. In relation to written texts, we can identify the levels shown in the table:

Rank scale
texts
paragraphs
sentences
clauses
groups & phrases
words
morphemes

The word in this table that may be unfamiliar to some is "morphemes". Morphemes are the smallest meaningful units in language and they cannot be further sub-divided. Some morphemes can function as words, such as the definite article "the" and the proposition "of" in the titles of the two texts. These are referred to as free morphemes. Others are encountered as prefixes and suffixes. Such elements make a contribution to meaning but cannot separately function as words and are consequently called bound morphemes. The "s" that signals the plurality of each of the nouns in the rank scale table above is an example.

As we come up from the bottom of the scale, it is only when we reach the level of the clause that we see a measure of completeness about the message being conveyed. The clause is the basic

message structure in any language. The titles of the two texts are not complete messages and, in terms of grammatical structure, are noun groups.

Noun groups

Noun groups/phrases are mentioned a number of times in the AC:E. One example is the following Content Description (CD):

ACELA1508 Year 5 / Language / Expressing and developing ideas:

- Understand how noun groups/phrases and adjective groups/phrases can be expanded in a variety of ways to provide a fuller description of the person, place, thing or idea.

Two elaborations of this CD are:

- learning how to expand a description by combining a related set of nouns and adjectives – 'Two old brown cattle dogs sat on the ruined front veranda of the deserted house'
- observing how descriptive details can be built up around a noun or an adjective, forming a group/phrase (for example, 'this very smelly cleaning cloth in the sink' is a noun group/phrase and 'as pretty as the flowers in May' is an adjective group/phrase)

The structure of noun groups from the perspective of the functional grammar that significantly informs the AC:E, particularly the Language Strand, is shown in the table below. There is the potential for four different kinds of modifying information to precede the main noun and also for additional information to follow it in what is known as the Qualifier slot.

The top row in the table below shows the labels originally used by Michael Halliday, usually acknowledged as the father of functional grammar. Some of these (deictic, numerative, epithet) have the potential to be unhelpfully daunting for school students so in the second row are more classroom-friendly labels used by Beverly Derewianka in her latest book.

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I

Deictic	Numerative	Epithet	Classifier	Thing	Qualifier
Pointer which one	Quantifier how many/ much	Describer what like	Classifier what type	Head word main noun	Qualifier more info
<i>The</i>				<i>Death</i>	<i>of Ben Hall</i>
<i>The</i>				<i>Streets</i>	<i>of Forbes</i>

A point that can be immediately noted about the two titles is that the noun groups are relatively simple with much of the pre-modifying potential not utilized. In the table below, the second example has been deliberately composed to have an element in each potential slot. When compared with the song title “The Streets of Forbes”, it can be seen that noun groups can sit on a continuum from simple to complex. More complex noun groups will not necessarily mean better writing but more complex noun groups are characteristic of the sort of writing that is deemed to be successful as students move through the years of schooling.

The development of students’ writing across the years of schooling can be seen as generally moving along a continuum from more spoken-like texts at one end to more written-like texts at the other. In very general terms, simple noun groups can be seen as characteristic of the spoken end of the continuum and noun groups becoming progressively more complex as we move towards the highly written end.

Of course, what is appropriate does depend on genre, purpose and audience and, in some texts, overly complex noun groups can in fact impede communication.

Pointer which one	Quantifier how many/ much	Describer what like	Classifier what type	Head word main noun	Qualifier more info
<i>The</i>				<i>Streets</i>	<i>of Forbes</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>pot-holed</i>	<i>side</i>	<i>streets</i>	<i>that had not yet been paved</i>
<i>the</i>				<i>troopers</i>	<i>riding beneath</i>
<i>the</i>		<i>treacherous</i>		<i>word</i>	<i>of a friend</i>

The third and fourth noun group examples in the table above are taken from the poem, from Stanzas 3 and 10 respectively. The four examples now evident illustrate the two different sorts of grammatical structures that are generally to be found in the Qualifier slot. These can be prepositional phrases such as “of Forbes” or “of a friend”. Those at home with traditional grammar would probably label these adjectival clauses and indeed they are. They are prepositional phrases that are adjectival in function in that they modify, or add to, the meaning of a noun. One label focuses on the structure or form and the other on the function.

In the other two examples we see clauses in the Qualifier slot: “that had not yet been paved”

and “riding beneath”. These are clauses because they include verb groups (“had not been paved” and “riding”) and, while they could not function on their own, they do have a measure of completeness about the message being conveyed. Functional grammar calls these embedded clauses while a more traditional description would be that they are adjectival clauses. As with the phrases discussed above, they are certainly adjectival in function. What the “adjectival clause” label does not capture is that they are integral parts of the noun groups in which they occur rather than having a separate existence. A relevant CD from the AC: E about embedded or adjectival clauses is:

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I

ACELA1534 Year 7 / Language / Expressing and developing ideas

- Recognise and understand that subordinate clauses embedded within noun groups/phrases are a common feature of written sentence structures and increase the density of information

From the first verse of the song lyrics we could note the following underlined noun groups:

Come all you Lachlan men, and a sorrowful tale I'll tell

Concerning of a hero bold who through misfortune fell.

His name it was Ben Hall, a man of good renown

Who was hunted from his station, and like a dog shot down

Pointer which one	Quantifier how many/ much	Describer what like	Classifier what type	Head word main noun	Qualifier more info
	<i>all you</i>		<i>Lachlan</i>	<i>men</i>	
<i>a</i>		<i>sorrowful</i>		<i>tale</i>	
<i>a</i>				<i>hero</i>	<i>bold who through misfortune fell</i>
				<i>misfortune</i>	
<i>his</i>				<i>name</i>	
<i>a</i>				<i>man</i>	<i>of good renown</i>
<i>his</i>				<i>station</i>	
<i>a</i>				<i>dog</i>	

Some of these function to represent the participants in clauses, i.e. the people of things involved in the process conveyed by the verb group. Others, like “his station” occur within prepositional phrases which express the circumstances in which the process occurred.

As is appropriate for song lyrics, most of these noun groups are quite simple. An interesting aspect of the second one is how the adjective “bold” follows the main noun in the Qualifier slot rather than preceding it as a Describer. We would normally say: a bold hero. A general thing that can be noted about the grammar of English (and perhaps all languages) is that there are standard patterns and variations to those patterns. When the adjective follows the main noun it is often because there is a borrowing from another language involved. This is why we refer to “a court martial” as an alternative to “a military court”. On other occasions, however, a non-standard pattern is deliberately employed by a writer for literary effect. Such is the case here.

The scene of the drama

The Ben Hall story took place around the town of Forbes in NSW and his grave in the town cemetery is apparently a tourist attraction. Some information from *Wikipedia* could provide appropriate background for students and the text also offers further opportunities to consider how language choices construct particular sorts of meanings.

“Forbes is a town in the Central West of New South Wales, Australia, located on the Newell Highway between Parkes and West Wyalong. At the 2006 census, it had a population of 6,954.

The town is on the banks of the Lachlan River about 380 kilometres west of Sydney.

The district is a cropping area where wheat and similar crops are grown.

Gold was discovered in June 1861. Initially about 30,000 people moved to the goldfields, but by 1863 this had declined to about 3,500 because of the difficult mining conditions.



A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I

*One of Australia's most renowned bushrangers, **Ben Hall**, was shot dead in a gun battle about 20 kilometres to the north-west of town on 5 May 1865.*

Hall and his gang were famous for stealing 77 kilograms of gold and £3,700 from the near-by town of Eugowra in 1862. He is buried in the Forbes Cemetery."

The Lachlan River cited in the second paragraph above gets two mentions in the poem. In Stanza 1 we have: "Ben Hall was out on the Lachlan side" and in Stanza 10 we read: "A hot wind blew from the Lachlan bank". There is also another watercourse mentioned in Stanza 5:

But every night when the white stars rose
He crossed by the Gunning Plain
To a stockman's hut where the Gunning
flows,
And struck on the door three swift light
blows,
And a hand unhooked the chain –

With appropriate teacher questioning, students could be guided to deduce that the Gunning River is probably a tributary of the Lachlan.

Varying grammatical structures

The part of the Wikipedia information that we focused on in the workshop was the second last sentence and I suggest that this could also be the subject of productive classroom consideration.

- One of Australia's most renowned bushrangers, **Ben Hall**, was shot dead in a gun battle about 20 kilometres to the north-west of town on 5 May 1865.

In the first instance, students' attention could be directed to the use of commas to mark off the name "Ben Hall" from the rest of the noun group that precedes it. It could then also be noted that the order of this first part of the sentence could be altered. It could be:

- Ben Hall, one of Australia's most renowned bushrangers, was shot dead in a gun battle about 20 kilometres to the north-west of town on 5 May 1865.

Other elements of the sentence could also be

rearranged. The approach to grammar here is not about what is correct as opposed to incorrect, but about how different effects result from different choices of grammatical pattern. Different structures will construct meanings in different ways.

The original sentence is in the passive voice and does not identify who did the shooting. In active voice it could read as:

- In a gun battle about 20 kilometres to the north-west of Forbes on 5 May 1865, police shot dead Ben Hall, one of Australia's most renowned bushrangers. OR
- Police shot dead Ben Hall, one of Australia's most renowned bushrangers, in a gun battle about 20 kilometres to the north-west of Forbes on 5 May 1865. OR
- On 5 May 1865, police shot dead Ben Hall, one of Australia's most renowned bushrangers, in a gun battle about 20 kilometres to the north-west of Forbes.

Besides the choice between active and passive voice, the order of elements in the clause is also significant. The relevant CD here is:

ACELA1569 Year 10 / Language / Expressing and developing ideas

- Analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of a wide range of sentence and clause structures as authors design and craft texts

Two of the four elaborations for this CD are:

- recognising how emphasis in sentences can be changed by reordering clauses (for example, 'She made her way home because she was feeling ill' as compared with 'Because she was feeling ill, she made her way home') or parts of clauses (for example, 'The horses raced up from the valley' as compared with 'Up from the valley raced the horses')
- recognising how the focus of a sentence can be changed through the use of the passive voice (for example compare active, 'The police had caught the thief.' with passive 'The thief had been caught.')

The first elaboration is informed by the functional grammar notion of grammatical



A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I

Theme (the capitalisation is deliberate), the element of meaning that is placed first. It can be noted from the examples provided that this mechanism can operate at the level of the individual clause and also at the level of the sentence when the sentence is composed of more than a single clause. At the next level up in the rank scale, that of the paragraph, it equates to the traditional notion of the topic sentence.

The original sentence consists of 27 words (counting the hyphenated “north-west” as one) but, in terms of meaning, they don’t function as 27 separate elements. Instead, the meaning is organized into “chunks”. Once the AC:E has been properly understood and taught for a few years students should arrive in high school English classes very familiar with the different types of elements to be found in clauses. The first relevant CD in the AC:E is:

ACELA1451 Year 1 / Language / Expressing and developing ideas

- Identify the parts of a simple sentence that represent ‘What’s happening?’, ‘What state is being described?’, ‘Who or what is involved?’ and the surrounding circumstances

The two elaborations are:

- knowing that, in terms of meaning, a basic

clause represents: a happening or a state (verb), who or what is involved (noun group/phrase), and the surrounding circumstances (adverb group/phrase)

- understanding that a simple sentence expresses a single idea, represented grammatically by a single independent clause (for example ‘A kangaroo is a mammal. A mammal suckles its young’)

This view of the basic structure of the clause derives from functional grammar but, appropriately for Year 1, student-friendly labels are used in lieu of the technical labels which are in bold below.

- ‘What’s happening?’, ‘What state is being described?’ = a **Process** expressed by a verb group
- ‘Who or what is involved?’ = **Participant/s** – usually, but not always, represented by noun groups
- the surrounding circumstances = **Circumstances** – usually represented by adverb groups or prepositional phrases

Noting that our subject sentence here is technically a simple one, and with these elements in mind, its structure could be analysed as follows:

Text	<i>One of Australia's most renowned bushrangers, Ben Hall</i>	<i>was shot</i>	<i>dead</i>	<i>in a gun battle</i>	<i>about 20 kilometres to the north-west of town</i>	<i>on 5 May 1865</i>
Probe question	Who/what was involved?	What happened?	How?	How?	Where?	When?
Functional element	Participant	Process	Circ: Manner	Circumstance Manner	Circ: Place	Circ: Time
Grammatical structure	noun group	verb group	adverb	prepositional phrase	noun group	prep. phrase

One of the alternate active voice versions could be analysed as shown in the following table. Now that you have the idea, I have dispensed with the left hand column of headings.

A BUSHRANGER'S STORY: PART I

<i>In a gun battle</i>	<i>about 20 kilometres to the north-west of town</i>	<i>on 5 May 1865</i>	<i>police</i>	<i>shot</i>	<i>dead</i>	<i>Ben Hall one of Australia's most renowned bushrangers</i>
How?	Where?	When?	Who/what?	What happened?	How?	Who/what?
Circ Manner	Circ: Place	Circ: Time	Participant	Process	Circ: Manner	Participant
prep. phrase	noun group	prep. phrase	noun group	verb group	adverb	noun group

Apart from the fact that an additional participant, “police”, is now present, the other elements are all still there and generally performing the same function in constructing meaning. Of course, the order is different. The original version begins with a participant and that is what we normally do in statements. Beginning with a circumstance, is less usual (“marked” in linguistics parlance) and this choice of order gives the opening phrase more emphasis than would otherwise be the case.

Vocabulary choice

Whatever the effect of the order of the elements, it is worthwhile noting a couple of the vocabulary choices that have been made in the composition of this sentence. The ones to which I refer both occur with noun groups.

- One of Australia's most renowned bushrangers, Ben Hall, was shot dead in a gun battle about 20 kilometres to the north-west of town on 5 May 1865.

The word “renowned” is an evaluative choice rather than an objective description. It reflects a value judgement and clearly is positive. It would be useful to ask students what other describers could appear in that noun group. Some negative ones could have been “dangerous”, “notorious” or “ruthless”.

It is also significant, I would suggest, that Ben Hall is reported as having been shot “in a gun battle”. I submit that the word “battle” implies a two-sided conflict with, in this case, both sides using firearms. That might indeed be what actually happened in 1865, but it is not the representation of events provided in the

two texts. In both, the reader gets the impression that the outlaw was surprised and shot to death without any chance to defend himself. The representation of events in both the poem and the song lyrics is not what the authorities of the day would have approved.

It is this critical literacy aspect that will be mainly pursued in Part 2 if the Editor affords me space in a future edition.



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- Garry Collins taught secondary English for 35 years, mainly at Gladstone and Ferny Grove State High Schools, but also on exchange in the US and Canada. President of ETAQ since mid-2005, he is currently a part-time teacher educator in the School of Education at the University of Queensland.*

2012 ETAQ/IEUA-QNT/JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY LITERARY COMPETITION

Deb Peden

It is with pleasure that I preface the second half of the 2012 Literary Competition submissions and judging reports. As I reread them here, I am again delighted and humbled by the talent and insight expressed by the student writers and those who judged the entries.

As expressed in the last edition of *Words'Worth*, the 53rd year of the Literary Competition attracted over 700 submissions. What follows is pure cream from a very rich cup. I hope you enjoy reading what follows from some of our gifted writers. It has been a great privilege to oversee such talent. Enjoy!



POETRY FIRST PRIZE: SECTION C (YEAR 8)

Judge's report — Zenobia Frost

Few poets, if any, become millionaires from their craft. Certifiably practical folks would suggest that it's not a career for the faint of heart. But the rewards are rich. Being able to catch the moment wherein a young person arrives at poetry — or, as Spanish poet Pablo Neruda put it, poetry “arrives in search of them” — is perhaps the greatest perk of the job for me.

I recently toured north, courtesy of the Queensland Poetry Festival, and gave workshops to adults in Bundaberg and school students in Gladstone. Observing the moment when those students *clicked* to poetry and what it can evoke is something I won't ever forget. Words have power. In poetry, the power of words is concentrated. When you realise this, and begin to write with purpose, the world is at your fingertips. And that's way cooler than any millions.

You bright, young things — the entrants — have already got this figured out. You're already writing, manipulating words, and crafting poetry that has its own influence and magic. You're ahead of the game. Keep writing, keep reading, and keep honing your skills, whatever your future careers. This might just be your superpower.

I was most excited, this year, by the sheer

number of entries. Whether there are more students writing or more students feeling brave enough to submit their work, I feel that we have a victory either way.

This year, as in previous years, I was delighted by the scope of the entries. Poems covered subjects from friendship to world diplomacy, from family hardship to war, and from backyard antics to the plight of the environment. The most successful entries explored these diverse issues through language that made abstract ideas concrete, relatable, and fresh.

The key quality I searched for in a winning entry was bravery and experimentation with poetic devices, for example metaphor and rhythm. I looked for a poem with images that resonated. Next most important was presentation and proofreading — an area that saw improvement across this year's entries. This bodes well, I hope, for Queensland literacy.

Taking out third prize in “**My Favourite Time of Day**”, the poet experiments with metaphor and simile to build evocative images. Three-line stanzas maintain a steady pace, and the images unfold:

*The clock strikes twelve
And the hours of morning
Seep through the damp air that gathered
overnight.*

The second-prize winning poem, “**Desolate Island**”, has a wonderful sense of restraint — a controlled rhythm — that creates a strong, indeed desolate atmosphere. A deft hand writes:

*The lighthouse is crumbling,
The boulders returning to the sea.
The stairwell grasps towards falling stones
While the final torch continues to glow.*

“**Wheels, Wings and Marvellous Things**” snapped up first prize from the first read-through. The poet’s grasp of (and boldness with) devices, particularly rhythm and imagery, make for an epic poetic narrative told with wit and panache.

Alas, our poor old sovereign Zeus, the hero of our tale,

*Had not a wing or jetpack — all he could do was wail,
“Why can’t I soar above the world, see it all contrastingly?
Don’t care about the vertigo — or spilling all my tea!”*

From the content and the style, it’s plain that the poet is also a reader — and, of course, our first advice to emerging writers is to read, read and read some more. Furthermore, the poet is in touch with that all-important element: the humanness of the ancient gods. The result is often hilarious, and very relatable. This poet has it all covered, and the work maintains its tone throughout its length. I adore this poem; it has thoroughly earned first prize. Now, of course, your duty is to keep writing!



WHEELS, WINGS AND MARVELLOUS THINGS

Benjamin Olds
Ormiston College

I now shall tell you all a tale I heard one sun-drenched day,
A tale about an old Greek god, who was filled with dismay,
The god had one fantastic wish, I can imagine why,
What was the thing he wanted most? The ability to fly.
Alas, our poor old sovereign Zeus, the hero of our tale,
Had not a wing or jetpack, so, all he could do was wail,
“Why can’t I soar above the world, see it contrastingly?
Don’t care about the vertigo, or spilling all my tea!
If I could fly, I’d entertain myself by watching things,
That go on ‘tween the gods, the monsters, titans, men and kings.”

So Zeus upped off his large behind and strode away in search,
In search of blacksmith of the gods, Hephaestus, on his perch,
The place where the unsightly god, would craft away and feel
The brilliance of his first-rate work, with iron and with steel,
“My jolly friend!” old Zeus called out, with waves of haughty laughter,
“Can you assist me, handsome god, to get me what I’m after?”
“I am not one for flattery, but thank you anyway,”
“So Zeus,” Hephaestus questioned him, “What do you need today?”

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"I have a challenge for you, friend, a task for you to do,
And for your own sake, get it right, or this day you will rue,
I need a vehicle of flight, bedazzling to behold,
I need an awesome, mighty-fine, big chariot of gold,
A one in which I'll ride the skies and look down on the earth,
And doing this is sure to fill me with gumption and mirth!"
Hephaestus knew in some way that this project could be fun,
He smiled a hideous smile and said, "I sure will see it done!"

And thus the blacksmith of the gods invented all night through,
You cannot blame him, 'cause he had colossal work to do.
The sun rose over Zeus' land, he woke straight up and cried,
"I now shall stroll o'er to the forge, and retrieve my new ride!"
And there it was, there, emanating light and standing bold,
The greatly awesome, mighty-fine, big chariot of gold,
"'Tis wonderful!" yelled Zeus, his face, with joy, 'bout to implode,
"It is an awesome-mighty fine, big chariot of gold!"
Hephaestus grumbled, "Thank you would be nice, ungrateful pig!"
But Zeus did say no more, for he'd erupted in to jig!

"'Tis wonderful!" he cried again, but something was not right,
'Cause something there was not in place, forgotten in the night.
A long time Zeus did think about the jigsaw's missing piece,
A conversation rose around him, then he hollered, "CEASE!"
"I need the winged Pegasus to carry me on high,
'Cause otherwise I will fall down to earth and painfully die!"
The wonder horse was chained up to the chariot of gold,
And Pegasus was very skilled and sleek and very far from old!
The chariot ascended from the ground and through the clouds,
And Zeus did whoop full-heartedly with glee in a voice loud,
His dream came true, that dream of flying, right up near the sun,
But in the meantime, Zeus' misfortunes had too begun.

In his fiery lair, stood Hades, King of Underworld,
And much abuse directed straight at Zeus from him was hurled,
"I curse my brother's flying ways, his kingdom and his crown!
However, clever Hades has a way to bring him down!
Yes, I shall cast a burning fire column to the sky,
To melt the golden chariot, and cause old Zeus to die!
He shall fall a million miles or so and then shall snuff it!
Oh yes, a fall from that high up will make him kick the bucket!
Then I shall try to destroy all Olympus if I can!"
With this in mind, old Hades set about his wicked plan.

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While this was going on, Zeus was still a-soaring through the sky,
And many great a conquest, he did witness with his eyes,
He looked down over Heracles, performing his 12 tasks,
He saw young Theseus slaying the Minotaur by axe,
Medusa turned a town to stone, and Jason got his fleece,
Perseus killed the Kraken, and the Harpies wolfed a feast,
Achilles fell 'cause of his heel, Poseidon ate a whale,
And apple sellers everywhere did call, "Apples for sale!"

But suddenly, a flaming pillar tore up through the clouds,
The spectacle above the world attracted lots of crowds,
The chariot did melt away, astounded Zeus did yelp,
He fell out of chariot, and loudly bellowed, "HELP!"
A second 'fore the poor old god-king splatted on the ground,
A whinny from the sky was heard, attracting all around,
The Pegasus did swoop low down, his hooves near' touched the floor,
He swiped for Zeus and yanked him up to minimise the gore.

The god-king's life was saved, Olympus did rejoice,
And Hades sure was punished; how he was he had no choice!
The monsters all ancient Greece were set on him that day,
He lost a lot of blood and flesh... I digress, anyway;
But what became of chariot, I hear your voices ring,
The whole thing did disintegrate, apart from one small thing,
A single wheel fell down to earth, and man discovered it,
The inspiration of the automobile was a hit!
Thus from this wheel came cars and trucks and bicycles of use,
I guess you could say the human world got better 'cause of Zeus.

And so my friend, I end my tale, and so I say goodbye,
And maybe soon I'll tell you how the Cyclops lost his eye!

SHORT STORY FIRST PRIZE: SECTION C (YEAR 8)



Judge's report — Deb Peden

General Comments

It was encouraging to see a marked increase in the submissions for this category over previous years. The genres of Fantasy and Science-Fiction dominated, and the students' ability for imagination is to be commended. The entries had what is essential to short story writing: an engaging narrative hook. Structure and unity were strong points across the texts and most characters were well developed. A shift from past to present tense was a common error and punctuation in dialogue was unevenly handled: emulating published works can rectify this problem. Nevertheless, what I discovered more so this year was the delightfully imaginative stories that still retained a plausible narrative. This, together with an improved subtlety in their writing skills, reflected well on the authors and those supporting their literary abilities.

Advice for Next Year

- Edit thoroughly for punctuation mistakes, and read again to ensure continuity in the Present, Past or Future tense.
- Read your story aloud for editing purposes: hearing the cadence of the story will help determine if vocabulary, grammar, sentence length are appropriate and the story is engaging.
- Don't overuse the rhetorical question: rather, exploit your narrative ability.
- The word 'humongous' appeared in several of the scripts: this slang term for the word 'huge' does appear in several online dictionaries, however, it reflects the absence of a more creative, literary alternative on the part of the writers.

PLACE WINNERS

First Place: 'The New Queen'

This is a beautifully crafted narrative story in the genre of fantasy. *The New Queen* addressed all the criteria for an effective short story: the writer captures the reader's attention in the opening lines and the key character drives the action throughout. Selective dramatic peaks allow the reader to fill in the gaps, and suspense and tension are artfully included to allow for a concern for the protagonist and the events as they unfold. A more imaginative title and the occasional lapse in vocabulary use are the only points for improvement in this delightful tale.

Second Place: 'Two Boys'

This is a compelling story from beginning to end. What I most like about this short story is the writer's ability to foreshadow events in a subtle yet powerful way: giving the clues along the narrative path that eventually culminates in the twist in the closing sentence. The story is simply told, yet powerfully rendered in its subtlety. The naïve narrator's voice could have been a little more sophisticated, despite his boyishness. Nevertheless, effective narrative conflict is initially created through the boy's lost dog. And ultimately brought to a dramatic peak when the reader discovers that the 'two boys' in the title, are in fact, one!

Third Place: 'Phobia'

For those of us with arachnophobia, this futuristic sci-fi tale is a confronting one. The protagonist must face what they believe is their greatest fear – spiders – in order to pass a rigorous test. Some brilliant descriptive passages and a first person point of view, transport the reader to this moment in time. More cohesion between ideas would have provided a more fluid narrative. Yet, what I found particularly appealing about *Phobia* was its message: the ability to trust one's own inner wisdom, and not abdicate that to the authority of others.



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THE NEW QUEEN

Isabella Borchert-Jonker

St Rita's College, Clayfield

She stood in the meadow, staring at the sacred trees that had so recently become her kingdom, and cried. Adaira had never felt so confused. So recently a young, elegant pixie princess, she had transformed into a broken, incomplete queen. She needed to get away. Everyone was relying on her and Adaira couldn't handle disappointing them. Now that her parents were gone, she was a muddled mess of emotions and unwanted possessions, and she needed to find strength.

Adaira was never one to run away, but now, as she looked through the twilight at her pixie kingdom, she knew it was the right thing to do. In her mind, she was not deserting her people, as she would return stronger. She ran through the forest, subconsciously retracing the familiar path to the clearing that she had played in as a child. Now, even at fourteen, it seemed the only place in the world that things would make sense. She scooped up some wild berries as she ran, and thought only of the forest that, because of her fantastic gift, she was able to talk to.

Adaira could taste the rich tang of the fresh wild berries as she walked through the dense pine needles, hearing the soft crunch of them as she felt their sharp but soothing pain on her feet. She loved and knew everything about this place. The soft chirping of birds when she woke, the smell of the forest, even the peaceful air. She understood it better than she understood herself. She knew it suffered when the rain wasn't coming, and that it felt alive after a thunderstorm. As she sat on the swing that her father had made her, her composure returned and she considered what she would do now.

She would obviously have to go home. Her coronation was set in three days' time. She was an intelligent princess, and knew that some

of the pixies in her kingdom considered the coronation a test. It would decide if she was strong-hearted enough to wisely rule the kingdom. She had to become every bit the queen that her mother was.

'Watch out!'

A boy's voice rang through the air, and Adaira barely had time to think about its owner before she had to duck for cover behind a log, as a humongous foot nearly came down on her head. The last thing Adaira needed right now was a giant in her forest. Easily five feet tall, the huge figure stalked through the clearing before stopping abruptly before her swing. The giant turned to face something on the other side of the clearing, and as it did, Adaira caught a glimpse of her face. Hatred and anger swelled up inside her as she recognised the face of the woman who had killed her parents.

'Careful, there are pixies in this part of the woods and I don't want to have to deal with more than we have to until we get to their kingdom. I've already had to kill a couple of them.' The giant yelled at a male companion coming through the trees.

Tears pouring down her face, Adaira struggled to control her emotions and fiercely fought the urge to jump at the giants before her. She knew that she could use her forest magic to kill them, as they had killed her parents, but even then, it was a wicked choice, and they were over five times taller than her. Still, Adaira couldn't help but think about what she could do to the evil giants and imagined commanding a nearby oak tree to fall on top of them. Using all of her discipline, she stayed in her hiding place behind the log until the creatures were gone.



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As soon as it was safe to come out, Adaira quietly walked from behind the log. She had just remembered the voice that had warned her, when a boy of no more than sixteen walked from behind a tree. Her first reflex was to summon her power, but quickly realised that this was unnecessary. She recognised the peasant boy from her kingdom, and felt foolish for getting so defensive.

‘Toran,’ the boy said, ‘My name is Toran.’

‘You may call me Adaira, the prin – queen of Coillearnai.’

‘I come from your kingdom. I was sent to request you come back, but was disrupted by those giants. Did you notice that they were heading for the kingdom? They were talking about dealing with pixies and I believe they are trying to banish the entire kingdom from this forest. I’m worried and I think that your power is all that can protect the pixies.’

Adaira quickly changed into battle mode. She led the way back through the forest, quietly conversing with the trees. Adaira heard her kingdom before she saw it. The warning bells meant that the giants had not yet attacked, but had been sighted. The male archers assembled around the walls of the city, ready to attack.

Once close to the wall, Adaira, forgetting that Toran was a mere metre away from her, quickly changed out of her dress, and into her battle clothing. By the time that she realised that Toran had seen her undressed, she didn’t have time to be embarrassed, but simply asked if he would join her and fight. Toran almost sounded offended as he valiantly replied with the ancient warriors’ oath, ‘To protect those who need

protection, I will give myself.’

Adaira was impressed at his loyalty but doubted his fighting skills. As they ran into the city, the giants had attacked and the battle had begun. The female was setting fire to everything. She was a truly terrifying sight. Without warning, she turned around and rushed at Adaira who quickly picked up a spear to defend herself. The lady simply lifted her foot, and crushed Adaira underneath her heel.

Adaira was shivering uncontrollably as she sat up after nearly dying. How could she have doubted Toran’s fighting technique? He had somehow saved her from a heavy heel, and from the blaze that came afterwards. She turned to him, suddenly wondering if she would be allowed to marry a peasant. She caught herself, and quickly redirected her thoughts. She could not think that way right now. Adaira stood up, much to Toran’s disagreement, and started quickly hobbling in the general direction of the giant. As soon as she was close enough, she opened her mind to the forest. She gave her words of apology to a tree near to the horrible giant, and requested that it fall.

With a horribly satisfying splat, the tree landed on the giant, and ended her rampage through the city.

Afterwards, after a long nights sleep under the stars, Adaira started to think like the queen that she was, and realised that there would be a lot of work to do in re-establishing her kingdom, but Adaira at least had a completely fresh start as queen, had gotten rid of her unwanted inheritance and would, if he agreed, do it all in the arms of Toran.

POETRY FIRST PRIZE: SECTION D (YEARS 6 & 7)



Judge's report — Cindy Keong

This year's entries were a delight to read from our budding young poets. A vast array of themes were explored from life on the farm, the ruin of natural disasters, love, loss and fear. Many of the poems were rich in description and employed poetic devices that both engaged and captured the attention of the reader. Whilst there can only be one overall winner the efforts of all who entered should be commended.

PRIZE WINNING ENTRIES

1st Prize: Storm

This poem takes you on a journey into the eye of a storm at sea, its potential to destroy and swallow the lives of sailors. The reader is then challenged to see a storm that is full of destructive and lethal power as something rather beautiful and wondrous. This poem is packed full of vivid imagery, descriptions of clouds, lumbering like giants, stars being



STORM

The clouds lumbered over the black, leaden sky,
Like giants on patrol,
The thunderous lightning, the sword of the clouds,
Slashes out the light in our soul

The glistening stars, fiery gems in the night,
Have been robbed from their velvet, black cloth,
By the malicious and envious eyes of the storm,
Making the night look as drab as a moth

robbed from the velvet black cloth of the sky.
Overall an engaging piece of writing.

2nd Prize: Just An Average Day

This poem delivers the reader with a snapshot of an average day on the farm from the viewpoint of a farmer. What is captivating about this piece is the simple clarity of the images created by the poet, who has made solid attempts to not just simply describe but weave words throughout the piece that engage the other senses.

3rd Prize: Head Space

This poem, although a brief piece, is successful in expressing the poet's inner concept of fear in an engaging way. The poet has used some tight images such as *walking down night's street/ silence roams free* and *locked inside a scream* which were particularly effective in creating a sense of isolation and fear.

Parsha Mia

A B Paterson College

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The rain batters down on the damp, soggy ground,
The miserable tears of the moon,
Mourning the souls of the sailors at sea,
Their fate in the hands of the cruel monsoon

My heart's filled with terror, my soul with respect,
For nature's ingenious creations,
Her beauty and horror, so graceful and sleek
Is known to all climes and nations

The wind slaps my face, and whispers to me,
The treasures and secrets of the air,
And I suddenly realise, to find beauty in horror,
You just have to stop and stare

And then, like a light bulb, my mind flashes on,
And I see the storm with new eyes,
I listen to raindrops, their musical rhythm,
Each drop holding a new surprise

And the clouds are not lumbering, like huge clumsy giants,
They are prancing before my eyes,
Their movements are filling my heart with new warmth,
As I see through their awkward disguise

The moonlight seeps down, through the gaps in the clouds,
And dances from wave to wave,
Providing lost sailors with flamboyant light,
So they won't have to see their grave

But then the sun emerged, from behind the grey clouds,
Filling our hearts with warm fires,
And flung its gold mirrors, upon the blue sea,
To fulfil our hearts' desires

And so the clouds cleared, reluctant at first,
Each separating from its own swarm,
And we are finally freed from the fearsome clutches,
Of the graceful, but menacing

STORM

SHORT STORY FIRST PRIZE: SECTION D (YEARS 6 & 7)



Judge's report — Beryl Exley

This year entries in Section D reached new heights, both in terms of quantity and the depth of talent. There have been equally talented writers in the past, but out of all the entries submitted this year, 29 were worthy of commendation. Alas, there can only be three prize winners as well as four highly commended submissions:

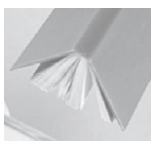
- 4th Highly Commended, *"Run!"*, showed incredible restraint with the noun and verb group, capitalising on pithy sentences to keep the action moving at an appropriate pace. Despite the unpredictably harrowing conclusion for the family that tried in vain to escape the police, it was a most satisfying read.
- 3rd Highly Commended, *"The Slayer Chronicles"*, was an outstanding entry for the way the author did not allow the dialogue to interrupt the narrative as is often the case with writers in this age group. This author also cemented their talent as an action fantasy writer with appropriately detailed descriptions of context and attention to internalised thoughts and senses.
- 2nd Highly Commended, *"Saloon Fortune"*, was a good old-fashioned show down, exceptionally well contextualised in 1874 Mexico. The author knew which characteristics to bring to the fore despite the relatively large cast. The swift cunning cowboy "Black Jack" came to life and the ensuing melee was an easy but pleasurable read.
- 1st Highly Commended, *"Before"*, though shorter than many other entries, transcended a life time of experiences and human emotions in the space of 600 words, culminating in a most devastating flood that

cruelly snatched the lives of a dearly loved Grandpa and Jane. Being lucky enough to survive does not erase the ever-lasting pain and the only way to respect this author's work is to offer a tribute of silence. This author showed skill with detailed description juxtaposed against sharp sentences as required by the plot.

- The 3rd placed entry, *"Battle of Ballistae"*, provided a first person account of a bloody encounter fought and seemingly lost, and the emotional tensions of a French weaponry soldier who abandoned his post and returned home to the continent. This author shows some skill with producing historical recounts, ensuring context and actions are appropriate for the era under consideration.
- The 2nd placed entry *"Unforgiving"*, told the tale of William Palmer and his inaugural werewolf hunting expedition on one moonlit night. Being a neophyte, William's chances of survival were slim, and despite fighting to the end, he was murdered by the beast of fear. The last thing smelt was his own blood. Thus the descriptive power and efficiency of this author's writing shows through.

Finally to the winning entry, *"Fallen Angels"*. This young author offered up a most confronting piece of work, not only because of their significant and apt vocabulary and skill with crafting a plot that withholds the identity of the two protagonists until the final seven words, but also because of the nature of the subject matter. This short story invests most of its word limit in exploring the age-old theme of love at first sight, deliberately resisting a happy ending, instead jarring the reader with acknowledgement of sin. The vision is an eruption of an ethereal flame and its consequences are left to unfold in the reader's mind as we learn about the pairing of

the wicked devil and the pure angel. As a teacher of literature and writing, I have to say I'm not too sure what this young author has been reading to settle on such a topic, but I offer my high praise for what can only be described as a beguiling read that provides vivid descriptions of setting,



FALLEN ANGELS

A beguiling sound intruded his dark dreams, whispering to him; beckoning him as if calling his name. Without hesitation, he rose, taking flight from his caliginous abode to follow its sweet trail.

He stood on the edge of the divine meadow. A playful breeze flirted with the tall, flourishing grasses, dancing amongst the abundant wildflowers which rioted across the meadow, splashing the vast landscape with their vibrant colours. The sun blazed proudly in a sparkling azure sky, showering the scene with soft warmth. A majestic Sakura commanded the centre of the valley, its broad limbs extending to shelter a clear crystalline pool, adorned by the elegant blooms of the water lilies. Under the great Sakura he could see it, the source of the miraculous sound.

Glossy curls tumbled down her back, the unbound strands glimmering golden in the sun's pure light. The loose cotton of her plain white dress danced gracefully in the spring breeze, twirling with the dainty petals of the Sakura tree as she leant forward to savour the sweet fragrance of a coral lily. Her eyes were closed; long, golden lashes brushing up against her cheeks, rosy against the pale porcelain of her unblemished skin. A pair of lush, rosebud lips was slightly parted in a tender, blissful smile.

characters and innermost thoughts. This young author has a talent far beyond the pop literature that graces the shelves of many teenagers' rooms. I expect we'll see this young author published in the not-too-distant future.

Ashleigh North

Canterbury College

The wordless melody rang throughout the valley, speaking of love and life, as if Heaven dwelled in each note. As the song reached its climax, she threw back her head and flung out her slender arms as if to embrace the pure joy of the tune, her flaxen locks fluttering behind her. Suddenly two magnificent wings erupted from her back, their ivory lengths tipped in gold, billowing behind her as she was bathed in a glorious halo of heavenly light...

The song had ended by the time she realised his presence. Slowly she peered out from under her thick lashes, hardly daring to breathe. His back was to her as she drank in his powerful visage; the thick, shaggy mane of silver hair that brushed his waist, the broadness of his back, his alabaster skin which gleamed against the heavy black fabric that shrouded him from head to toe. Most importantly, the ebony wings, tipped in silver, which were spread in full, awe-inspiring glory against the constant darkness he seemed to carry with him.

Summoning her courage, she at last managed to ask the question she had been pondering since the first time she had noticed his presence. Her voice shook, almost afraid to hear his answer. "Why, why have you been coming here?"

Slowly, he turned, closing the distance between them in a few graceful strides, until she was close enough to smell his dangerous scent. She



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froze, held captive in the silver pools of his eyes, luminescent as a full moon. “Should I tell you the reason?” His voice was filled with a raw power, as it might overflow at any minute.

Knowing the full consequences, she whispered a fervent response. “Yes.” All at once, his lips came down upon her own, her back pressing against the Sakura tree as she was hit with the full power of his kiss. She pushed herself closer against him, meeting his passion with her own. The taste of him, dangerous and

thrilling mingled with her own sweet and innocent essence, a swirling vortex of black and white forming around them as their breathing spiralled into a wild crescendo. Smoke flew around them, and the air became hotter and hotter until the pain was almost unbearable, yet they never once broke their ardent embrace. Suddenly, an ethereal flame erupted between the two, engulfing the sinful lovers as they clung desperately to each other; the wicked devil and the pure angel.



SELECTION OF POEMS

Brett Dionysius

B. R. Dionysius was founding Director of the Queensland Poetry Festival. His poetry has been widely published in literary journals, anthologies, newspapers and online. His seventh poetry collection, *Bowra* was released in April 2013. He lives in Ipswich, Queensland where he watches birds, teaches English and writes sonnets.

Klippel is about stealing a piece of iron from a Klippel sculpture at the Queensland Art Gallery on a school excursion, while *Teaching* is in memory of John Lyon. *Teaching* has been previously published in *Gangway* (Austria). *Salute* has also been previously published in *The Enchanting Verses Literary Review* (India). *The Red and the White* was published this year in the 150th anniversary of Ipswich Grammar School's history book, *The Story of IGS*

Klippel

His imaginings of Hoadley; colossal man-child in
His Gibraltar war cave, ex-army stores from WW2.
Backpacking, dirt poor & naked, holed up with only
The Iliad & *The Odyssey*, as his pastoral companions.
Shouting out the rage, ancient Greek, modern Dalby
As British soldiers swept the rocky cliff face trying
To flush him out. Teenaged Polyphemus, who still
Kept like a sharpened magic club through his solitary
Eye, the small iron key of Klippel's that *he* unlatched
From the Queensland Art Gallery on a high school
Excursion & gave to Hoadley; a hormonal art crime.
Who, years later revealed its talismanic existence to
The thief & its strange journey from Darling Downs
To imperial outpost & how it burst youths' blindness.

Teaching

For John Lyon

The tough plastic tidy trays that he once stacked
His students' folders in, now coffin his old school
Technology. Stripped of its duty, the beige enamel
& chipboard desk stretches; Atlas shifting his weight.
It squats naked, but for his nikko-ed name tag; bare
Of the rows of Emily Dickinson & *Death of a Salesman*,
That bowed its metal for thirty years; like a job for life.
All boxed up; his signature pencilled on the inside covers
Like a tattoo of a child's name on a tender shoulder blade.
Already his legacy has turned retro. His analogue counter
Stopped. Eighties audio cassettes hibernate in neat rows;
Tentacles of plastic film wrapped tightly around tiny
Starfish spindles; one says: Ego is Not a Dirty Word.
The *Handbook of English* rests on its broken spine.



SELECTION OF POEMS

The Red and the White

For Ipswich Grammar School

1863 – 1913

(i)

Wars topped and tailed our history like two children
Sharing a bed to keep winter's unmoved breath at bay.
One was fought over the freedom of men; our first
Students' fingers smudged black with newspaper ink
As they broke military faith with their lunch bread.
The other, their grandchildren would fight through,
Only pausing in some broken, muddy advance to
Wonder at what they were battling for; their school
Pride transformed into a love of nation, a care for
Comrades too heart-stricken by the heat of war.
Warrior-scholars who led men against ignorance,
Who soothed boys of their fears, who questioned
Hamlet's resolute silence. Snatches of Latin phrase
Bolstered them over the top: *Labore et Honore*.

(ii)

An Ipswich renaissance; the gothic revival bricks
Were laid by local workers whose sons would later
Stride Queensland's first grammar hall. More than
Just the city's industrial genesis limestone, poured
Into the mortar; the Great Hall's foundations laid
With hope. Education is the eternal time capsule
Which the future opens. The pounds raised from
Rich and common folk paid back a thousand fold,
As the new state invested in centuries long learning.
Our tower was the first torch of wisdom held aloft,
Its flames burned away privilege; the right to school
Universal. We are the strong hand of knowledge
Who passes on the mace; that holds truth's trophy up.
We are those who pull on the red and the white.

1913 – 1963

(iii)

Both wars took our best. Our captains needed
To test their edge as though their minds were
A sword honed to razor sharpness. Europe's
Poppy fields paraded their metal, as crimson

SELECTION OF POEMS

Blooms decorated boyish chests. Or, from
God-like heights an Old Boy's slow release
Of breath was the signal for his pregnant bomber
To crown Armageddon's birth. Sometimes,
Truth's blade was a sword of Damocles which
Hung over wisdom's head. When it fell by wars'
End, ideals of civilisation lay shattered like so
Many torn pages. What could be taught then?
When numbers took on a new significance and
Language was transcribed with chaos's pen.

(iv)

Though its fire burned low post-war, our torch
Never gutted out; a solid base had been crafted
And as the world modernised so did contemporary
Thought. Men and women arrived to rebuild respect;
They breathed on the school's smouldering embers
And fanned new life. One, Matron Fox came mid-war
And stayed on. For three decades she healed the wounds
The world threw at her boys; whether from war, sport
Or unrequited love. Her heart, steady as the school's
Foundation stone, on which students tested their
Self-esteem and more than often, won. Another, inspired
By his vaulted schooling, watched the masters hook
Their gowns over wooden coathangers; the high arches
Of his youth propelling his vision to engineer steel icons.

1963 – 2013

(v)

Once, an ancient education was spruiked here,
Inside the woodland classroom, before even
A red brick was slung; lessons of fire-hardened
Spear beneath sun-speckled eucalypt were given.
A century on, our first people returned; Les Bunda
Threaded through the defence on Maud-Kerr oval,
His feet writing on the green page where his ancestors'
Stories were woven. Each season, more boys alighted
On the castle on the hill; at winter's end the throaty
Cackles of Channel-billed Cuckoos or a Dollarbird's
Silver coins led them. PNG lads, who like feathered
Migrants, left their highland homes and landed on our
New battlement. If school is the airspeed of thought;
Then both bird and boy flew an incredible distance.



(vi)

The 1863 brass plaque has been rubbed mirror bright
As the seniors brush over it on their way to the quad.
Every student's shoe adds a little more buff. Warm
To the touch; a yellow sun, it has captured thousands
Of souls in its historical pull. School bonds are gravity
Strong, as the tug of war rope that coils snake patient,
Waiting annually to be won. Or a cheek-plate of bronze
Armour forged from the pages of Homer. Our school is
A victory cup; a sacred vessel where the 'Milk of human
Kindness will not go sour from neglect.' And the bell that
Sounds off each generation is a sanctuary's gong that beats
Out a new beginning like a starter's gun. And each tear
Shed on that final day, is a tiny looking glass that frames
The spirit of IGS for every boy; like a photo of their class.





REVIEWS

Book review: *The Last Elephant*

Written by Justin D'Arth

Review by Montana Salton

Year 8 student, St Peter Clavier College

The Last Elephant is all about an elephant named Lucy. She is the only elephant left in the world because a plague from ghost rats has brought down the population of animals.

The main characters are Birdy, Clot and Lucy. Birdy likes doing flips and cart wheels and she loves attention. Clot likes animals but he likes Lucy most of all. Lucy and Clot bonded ever since they first met. Lucy is very smart; she trusts Clot and Birdy very much. In the book, the rat cops are trying to kill her, while Clot and Birdy play a big part to try and save her.

My favourite part of this story is close to the end, when they are running away from the rat

cops because you didn't know what was coming next and it was really exciting.

The Last Elephant is a fiction book. I liked this book because unlike some other books that I have read, where the introduction is very slow, *The Last Elephant* introduces the characters through the story. It also begins with a problem at the start that makes you want to read on.

This book made me feel like I was in Lucy, Birdy and Clot's shoes. I think 10-13 year old kids would like this book because they would understand what is going on in this book and I think they would really enjoy it



Book review: *Things a Map Won't Show You — Stories from Australia and Beyond*

Edited by Susan LaMarca and Pam Macintyre

Review by Jessica Stone

Pre-service teacher at the University of Southern Queensland

Things a Map Won't Show You: Stories from Australia and Beyond is a short story, poetry, and comic art collection, edited by Susan LaMarca and Pam Macintyre. Aimed at high school students, this book contains the amusing, the thoughtful, and the historical in its tales, with works ranging from Indigenous Australian and New Zealander stories, to modern-day tales, to humorous works such as a 'Government Guide to Kissing'.

With a compilation of works by authors such as Paul Jennings and Oodgeroo Noonuccal, as well as new and emerging writers, this collection is a great resource for any Year 7 – 12 classroom.

The stories, targeted generally at teenagers, are written at a level that will engage students,

without the length of a standard novel which may intimidate students who struggle with reading. Because of this, the book will engage almost all readers from Year 7 up through the topics, themes, and content explored in each story, poem, or art strip, while encouraging struggling or resistant readers to develop their skills.

The storylines are relevant to teenagers today with a mixture of works from both Australia and New Zealand indigenous cultures, as well as modern perspectives. Teenagers can both identify with and learn from each of these relatable stories. A highly relevant and useful resource for teachers, and enjoyable reading material for students, this book is well worth collecting for classroom use.





Book review: *Run*

By Tim Sinclair

Review by Brandon Gatehouse

Pre-service teacher at the University of Southern Queensland

Run is a cleverly engaging hybridisation of a genre fiction and literary verse novel by the author of *Nine Hours North* and *Vapour Trails*.

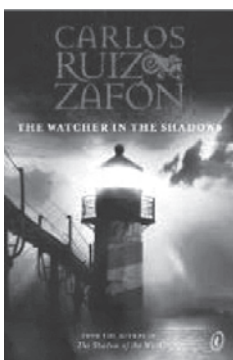
Dee is a young adult who escapes from the mainstream mundane existence through an immersed obsession with parkour. An alternate insight to society, from a sub-culture perspective is presented. Sinclair subtly fluctuates the central character between teenage introverted reminiscence in the Adelaide Hills with best friend Trench, to the present on the inner suburban streets of Sydney. Dee finds himself unwittingly embroiled in a high stakes conundrum. Running is the only way he and his friends will be spared from a perilous fate.

This novel is very engaging. Sinclair discretely uses written words to illustrate the adventure. The audience is captivated with short, sharp

poetic verses mixed with sentences to situate the reader into the mindset of Dee. *Run* allows an insight into the author's background by connecting author and audience, getting more than hearts running.

This book would be beneficial to educators of upper middle years and secondary students, particularly teachers of English, SOSE and HPE. *Run* gently explores multiple social issues; substance abuse, music, sexual identity, cultural identity, and more. These are challenges most can expect to encounter as they find their place in the world.

Students of all learning abilities should be capable of engaging with *Run*. It is written with a voice from the street. Sinclair caters for students and Gen Y's in particular, with widespread appeal to those seeking insight into the sub-culture phenomenon that is parkour



Book Review: *The Watcher in the Shadow*

By Carlos Ruiz Zafon

Review by Leila Heng

Year 8 student, Rochedale High School

"*The Watcher in the Shadow*" by Carlos Ruiz Zafon is a well-written book if not a little predictable.

It is about a family that moves to a village to improve their life. Once they get there the mother, Simone, begins work as a housekeeper. Her children Dorian and Irene settle in well and soon Irene forms a relationship with a sailor called Ismael. The story takes a turn when a friend named Hannah, who worked with Simone, is found dead not far outside

the woods separating the family's and the employer's houses. Ismael is determined to find the real cause of Hannah's death because they were extended family. What they don't know is that what they will find is more terrifying than either Irene or Ismael could imagine.

This is an interesting book but not a light read. I personally enjoyed it and I think it is aimed at readers aged around twelve or thirteen, but I'm sure many older kids will enjoy it too!

