

Long Neck

poem by Sophie Masson | illustrated by Jenny Tan

Outcomes

EN3-2A

- Understand and appreciate the way texts are shaped through exploring a range of language forms and features and ideas
- Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1704, ACELY1714)

EN3-3A

- Understand, interpret and experiment with sound devices and imagery, include simile, metaphor and personification, in narratives, shape poetry, songs, anthems and odes (ACELT1611)

EN3-7C

- Create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experience in innovative ways (ACELT1612, ACELT1618)

English Textual Concept: **Connotation, Imagery and Symbol**

Learning activities

Connecting to the text

Ask the students to close their eyes. Play them the a short audio piece of relaxing river sounds:

[youtube.com/watch?v=lvjMgVS6kng](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvjMgVS6kng)

Encourage students to picture the river; the flow of the water; the plants and trees along the riverbank. Ask them to write down five words that come to mind as they listen to the soothing sounds. Make a class word-bank with these words.

Imagery

Read the poem 'Long Neck' aloud to students, asking them to listen carefully to the words. What images does the poem conjure up? How has the author used language to appeal to our senses? What phrases has the author used to describe the look and feel of the river? From whose point of view is the poem written?

Figurative language

The author compares the turtle to a rock; a submarine; an excavator; and a crawler looking for gold. In small groups, ask students to think of a different animal and come up with three things that it could be compared to—e.g. a shark could be compared to a silent predator; a shadow waiting in the dark; a garbage disposal.

Poetic structure

Ask the students to look closely at the structure of the poem. Does it contain stanzas? Are there any rhyming patterns? Discuss the concept of 'free verse' poetry and the fact that there are no real rhythms or patterns. Explain to the students that this structure allows authors to put words together in all sorts of ways. View other examples of Australian free verse poetry: australianchildrenspoetry.com.au/2015/05/17/interview-with-neridah-mcmullin/
australianchildrenspoetry.com.au/2016/09/21/poem-of-the-day-442/

Joint construction of a free verse poem

Write the word 'River' on the whiteboard and ask students what thoughts come to mind when they hear that word. Answers may include: free-flowing; peaceful; a source of food; a winding snake; a powerful beast etc.

Begin the poem by combining the word 'river' with one of the brainstormed suggestions—e.g. The river is a winding snake that coils around itself.

Discuss the term metaphor (the river is being likened to a winding snake). Choose another one of the class suggestions to use in the next line. This time, include the word 'as' or 'like' to reinforce the use of simile—e.g. It roars angrily, as mighty as a powerful beast.

Continue to draw on the students' suggestions to jointly construct another three or four lines.

Changing it up

'Long Neck' is about a turtle in a river. Tell students that they are going to work in pairs to create their own free verse poem about a different animal in a different habitat. They may choose a giraffe from a savannah, a hippo from a river/lake, a whale from the ocean etc. Using a graphic organiser (or word web), have students come up with words or phrases that describe their animal. Encourage them to think of two or three objects to which their animal could be compared—e.g. a whale could be compared to a semitrailer or a submarine.

Provide each pair of students with two dice. Students start by rolling the two dice; this will determine the number of lines in their free verse poem. Once the line length is established, students roll the dice again to determine how many words will be in the first line. They roll the dice for each new line of the poem. The number on the dice will equal the number of words in that line. Remind students to incorporate metaphors and similes where possible. Students can read their poems aloud, if they feel comfortable.

Publishing

Now it's time to publish! Ask students to find a digital image of their chosen animal.

There's a wide variety at: pics4learning.com/results.php?view=sub&cat=Animals

Students can place their image in PowerPoint, Google Docs, Paint or another similar program and add their poem to the image. You may like to combine all of the poems to create a digital book of poetry.

Further reading

Rivertime by Trace Balla

Rockhopping by Trace Balla

The Worst, Worst Thing in the World

article by Jenny Robson

Outcomes

EN3-1A

- Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements for defined audiences and purposes, making appropriate choices for modality and emphasis (ACELY1700, ACELY1710)
- Discuss and experiment with ways to strengthen and refine spoken texts in order to entertain, inform, persuade or inspire the audience

EN3-3A

- Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text (ACELY1711)

EN3-5B

- Identify and use a variety of strategies to present information and opinions across a range of texts

English Textual Concept: [Authority](#)

Learning activities

Connect to text

Before looking at the article, play the opening of Beethoven's fifth symphony:

[youtube.com/watch?v=4IRMYuE1hl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IRMYuE1hl)

Turn the volume up for maximum effect. Ask the students if they've heard this piece of music before. How did it make them feel? Can they guess who wrote the piece? Discuss the term 'symphony'— a musical composition for a full orchestra.

KWL Chart

Tell students that they are going to read an article about Beethoven. In small groups, guide students through the process of setting up a KWL Chart: K—What we know: W – What we want to find out: L – what we learned

Have the groups fill out the first two columns before reading the text.

Delving into nonfiction

Before reading, ask students what the purpose of a nonfiction text is (to explain, inform and persuade). At a glance, how does the reader know that it's a nonfiction text (subheadings, caption, photographs). The authority of a text can be determined by looking at the

appropriateness of its style; the language, spelling and punctuation; and whether or not the information is clearly explained. Ask students to read the article (individually or in small groups), highlighting any unfamiliar words as they go. Ensure students research these words after reading. Discuss the authority of the text. Did the students feel as though the information was clearly explained? Did the subheadings make it easier to read? Were the images suitable for the text? Did students feel that it was a reliable source of information? Have students return to their groups to complete the final column of their KWL chart.

Hot seat

Ask for volunteers to take on the role of Beethoven. In turn, each child has a go at sitting in the 'hot seat' at the front of the class, pretending to be Beethoven. The rest of the class ask questions that they would like to know the answers to. Encourage them to steer away from 'yes' and 'no' responses. Ask them to think of questions that would really help them to know more about Ludwig van Beethoven.

Think Pair Share

Pose the question: If Beethoven were alive today, what advice do you think he would give to his younger self? In pairs or small groups, ask students to come up with an answer to this question. When finished, students share their answers with the rest of the class.

Conducting an interview

Discuss the role that resilience and commitment played in Beethoven's success. Brainstorm other people who have had to overcome adversity to achieve great things e.g. Kurt Fearnley, Turia Pitt, Stephen Hawking. In pairs, ask students to choose and research a person who inspires them. When students have had time to look closely at their chosen person, tell them that they are going to conduct a 'mock' interview. One member of the pair will take on the role of their chosen person, and the other member will take on the role of interviewer. Together, the pair are to write a script for the interview. Students may like to watch the following short video to help them: abc.net.au/btn/how-to-make-news/10626066 Once the video is scripted, students conduct the interview. Students may like to partner up with another pair to film each other's interviews. The videos can be shared with the rest of the class.

Further reading

Wonder by RJ Palacio

Ugly by Robert Hoge