

# Talking to Tomorrow

Worksheet: [Elements of science fiction](#)

Understanding

[ACELY1713](#) | [EN3-3A](#)

**Analyse** how authors craft words, featuring just enough information to allow readers to make predictions.

Read the first sentence, highlighting that the author has chosen to omit an explanation outlining what a crystal sim is. Generate predictions of what a crystal sim might be (e.g. a new type of technology to create 3D graphics, an object that makes a phone look like a crystal etc.). Order the predictions based on those you deem most to least likely. Read the second sentence, about receiving calls from the future. If this new information changes your prediction, adjust the order or add additional predictions. Continue with this process as you read.

Identify when the author finally reveals the purpose of the sim and the way in which it works (paragraph 5). Highlight that delaying till this point invites readers to make predictions as they read. Consider reasons for this (to keep readers engaged and prevent them from becoming passive, to build suspense etc.). Reflect on predictions and the order you placed them in.

**Design** a futuristic device and create an explanation of how it works. Create a brief narrative, featuring characters using the device. Experiment with the best time to include the explanation of how it works, allowing time for readers to make predictions.

Connecting

[ACELT1613](#) | [EN3-8D](#)

**Formulate** a convincing argument, in an attempt to persuade characters to behave differently.

For each of the following characters identify their reactions to the plot points listed:

- Ethan's parents' reluctance to engage in a conversation with Ethan about the lack of calls from the future
- Justin Miller implying Ethan will die before time phones are invented
- Ethan's grandfather throwing Ethan's phone in the fire

Hot seat the characters, asking questions to ascertain what motivated their choices (e.g. Ethan's parents avoided talking as they were petrified the lack of calls meant Ethan wouldn't be around in the future and they were worried of scaring Ethan).

Identify which of the character's actions you agree with and those where you feel you would have reacted differently in the same position. Create a persuasive argument, to convince these characters to act in a different way (e.g. in attempting to convince Ethan's parents to discuss

the lack of calls with Ethan emphasise that he is really worried anyway and that by having an open conversation they would be able to listen to his fears and formulate a plan of how to deal with the issue etc.). Role play outlining your arguments, allocating students to act as the characters from the text and see if any can be persuaded to behave differently.

### [ACELT1613](#) | [EN3-8D](#)

**Investigate** ways to connect to your future self, rather like a time capsule (e.g. creating an email account to send messages to your future self, hiding a message somewhere in your home or setting a reminder on a digital calendar to open a file etc.).

Consider how you envisage your future, whether it's being a website designer and living in a seaside house like Jenny, a big wave surfer like Yashiro, or obtaining a degree in quantum computing in America, like Ivan. Include these predictions in your messages.

### Engaging Critically

### [ACELT1616](#) | [EN3-7C](#)

**Investigate** two texts by the same author.

Read *My Mother's Lament*, part 1 appearing in *Touchdown!* issue 1 and part 2, *Touchdown!* issue 2, by the same author.

Inform students they will be investigating the author's style and encourage them to suggest the elements to consider. Some examples include:

- Characters (ages: Ethan 11, Max 12, gender: both male, personality type: both are sporty with Ethan playing handball and Max into surfing etc.)
- Setting (*Talking to Tomorrow* is set in the near future and *My Mother's Lament* is set in the present, with a character, Laura, from the past)
- Main idea/theme (*Talking to Tomorrow*, centres around connecting with the future and *My Mother's Lament* includes connecting with the past, the endings in both texts are left open, with Ethan's future a blank page in *Talking to Tomorrow* and the reader left questioning if Laura is a ghost in *My Mother's Lament*)
- Elements both texts have in common (they feature pre-teenage boys who have strong connections with their friends, both texts incorporate a connection to a different time period)
- Major differences (*Talking to Tomorrow* is set in a school, Ethan's home and his Grandad's place while *My Mother's Lament* is set in a rural coastal town, *Talking to Tomorrow* is set in cooler months, with a fire burning, while *My Mother's Lament* is set in summer)

Consider which text students prefer and why. Reflect on whether the communication with either the past or the future piqued students' interest and influenced their choice.

Reflect on the elements of the texts that were analysed and identify any features that could consistently feature in an author study.

## Experimenting

[ACELT1618](#) | [EN3-7C](#)

**Re-create** this story for a different audience whose opinion of mobile phones may differ to those of the main character.

Identify the importance attached to mobile phones by Ethan and his friends (they view them as very important, almost that they can't live without them). Contrast this with the way other characters view the phones, such as Ethan's parents (they think technology is out of control) and Ethan's granddad (he says he doesn't need one and he thinks Ethan shouldn't have one either).

Consider this story viewed through the eyes of these characters or a different character, perhaps a younger sibling who has not yet been granted permission to obtain a crystal sim phone. Consider how they may view the attachment Ethan, his friends and siblings have to their phones (that they are too obsessed with phones, that they should be focusing on school work instead or should be communicating face-to-face rather than via technology etc.).