

Sylphie's Squizzes: Mosaiculture

article by [Anne Renaud](#) | photos by Alamy

[EN3-3A](#) | [ACELY1702](#)

Compose questions to assist readers make predictions about the meanings of unfamiliar words.

First, analyse the impact on readers of the questions included at the beginning of the article, by completing the following:

Prior to reading the text, display the questions from the beginning of the article:

What exactly is mosaiculture? Painting with plants? Sculpting with sphagnum?
Fabricating with foliage?

Discuss students predictions about what mosaiculture might be, emphasising how the questions help to scaffold readers' predictions.

Instruct students to draw a three-column table. Label the columns with the headings, 'subject matter/vocabulary', 'prediction' and 'evidence'.

Tell students to write the word 'mosaiculture' in the first column, leaving the other two columns and the entire second and third row blank for now. Instruct students to include their predictions about what mosaiculture might be, using the questions above to scaffold their answers.

Instruct students to read the rest of the paragraph to locate evidence that supports or refutes students' predictions, before adding the to the table.

A table with sample responses is provided below.

Subject matter/vocabulary	Prediction	Evidence
Mosaiculture	Painting with plants	Mosaiculture is all of these and more: an art form that blends horticulture and engineering to create two-dimensional tapestries and three-dimensional sculptures made entirely of plants.
differences between two-dimensional and three-dimensional mosaiculture	Two-dimensional might be flat mosaics made of plants and three-dimensional ones might be solid like sculptures	<p>'Modern-day two-dimensional mosaiculture... Designs are traced on the ground and then planted, using an array of plants and flowers, selected for the effect of their size, growth pattern, texture and colour.'</p> <p>'... the third dimension... allowing mosaiculture to be enjoyed from all angles.'</p> <p>With three-dimensional mosaiculture, a wire structure is built, before soil and plants are added.</p>
topiary	Something to do with the tops of plants	'achieved by pruning a single plant into a desired shape'

Inform students that using questions is one way to explain new vocabulary to readers. Discuss how this adds to engagement, inviting readers to be active rather than passive with new information.

Display the following question:

- What might be the major differences between two-dimensional and three-dimensional mosaiculture?

Add the phrase 'differences between two-dimensional and three-dimensional mosaiculture' to the second row in the table. Instruct students to predict the meaning of this phrase and include their predictions in the table. Discuss whether students found predicting the meaning of this vocabulary more challenging without the questions to scaffold answers. Emphasise that because we understand the words 'two-dimensional' and 'three-dimensional' from mathematics, this can assist with making predictions around these terms.

Continue reading the text, leaving the final paragraph for later. Locate evidence in response to the question above and add this to the table.

Experiment with composing questions to assist readers with making predictions, by following the steps below:

- Prior to reading the final paragraph, instruct students to add the word 'topiary' to the table. Discuss predictions about what this might be. Scaffold students' responses if necessary, by directing them to use their understanding of the root word 'top' and the fact the article focuses on plants to help guide their predictions. Read the final paragraph, and identify the meaning of 'topiary'. Add this as evidence to the table.
- Direct students to further information about topiary, on sites such as [Gardening Australia](#) on the ABC.
- Place students in pairs and tell them to compose questions to guide readers' predictions about what 'topiary' means. A sample answer is provided below:

What is topiary? Is it a way to add fun and interest to your garden? Does it allow you to feature mythical creatures in your yard? Does it mean clipping trees and shrubs into wondrous shapes? Absolutely, it means all these things.

Day 1

story by [Katie Furze](#) | illustrated by [David Legge](#)

[EN3-8D](#) | [ACELT1610](#)

Compose a brief opening for a narrative, told from an animal's point of view.

Analyse the point of view portrayed in the story.

Tell students a brief story about picking up a new pet cat in character as the girl from the story. Include the following points from the story, but told from a human's point of view rather than the cats:

- We went to see the kittens in their enclosures.
- I couldn't help smiling.
- One of the kittens rolled on their back while the other two huddled together.
- The kittens have lovely green eyes.
- My mum really liked the black kitten.
- I wanted the black and white kitten but my brother got to choose, as it was his birthday. He chose the black kitten.
- My brother carried the kitten to the car and the kitten purred. My brother decided to name the kitten 'fluffy'.

The goal here is to make this story reasonably predictable. Discuss students' experiences or assumptions about how it might feel to collect a new pet.

Read the text. Emphasise how different the story appears when told from the cat's point of view. Key points to note include:

- The kitten describes his birth as a 'transfer'.
- The kittens have been trained to look cute and to appeal to humans.
- The kitten is scared of the humans and finds their appearance unpleasant.
- The kitten finds the human's speech too loud, instead revealing that cats have communicated telepathically for centuries.
- The kitten is really a secret agent from planet Bleeerrk in the Alpha Centauri star system.

Inform students, that while the story does not present the human's point of view, we can assume it may be similar to the ideas shared at the beginning of the lesson.

Experiment with adopting an animal's point of view, by completing the following:

- Discuss a time students have visited the zoo or have seen wildlife in the wild. Identify common themes amongst students responses, such as: they enjoyed watching the animals, they thought the animals were cute, they found the experience educational.
- Group ideas under headings, such as: 'interpretation of events', 'feelings', 'response to the experience'.
- View a video of animals, either a life stream from a zoo or a video filmed in the wild.

Some ideas you might like to try, include:

[Taronga Zoo's YouTube channel](#)

Discuss how the animals may feel about being viewed by humans, using the same headings as previously.

Provide examples such as:

interpretation of events	feelings	response to experience
see it as strange when humans stare at them	feel embarrassed and shy	wish the humans would leave them alone
see themselves as a superstar with everyone staring at them	proud	spend the evenings practicing dance routines for the next time humans come and look at them

Instruct students to write a brief opening for a narrative, told from an animal's point of view, outlining how they responded to being watched by humans.

Provide an example such as:

Everyday these strange creatures come to look at me. They make loud noises and follow me where ever I go in my home. My mum says they're a pain, and that us lions should ignore them, but I love having them here. I know they think I'm a famous celebrity. Every night when it gets dark and the strange creatures leave, I practice dance routines for the next day so I can impress them. The strange high-pitched noises they make when I perform, confirm that they love my routines.

Character interview

Read 'Day 1'. Imagine you are the secret agent from planet *bleeerk*. Now answer each interview question as this character.

1. Good morning! Can you please tell us a bit about yourself?

2. How difficult was it adjusting to being in the body of a cat? Why?

3. How did you prepare for your mission to Earth?

4. Why do you think you were chosen over 87 and 88?

5. What are you hoping to achieve on this mission?

I'm an Orchestra

poem by Laura Mucha | illustrated by [Christopher Nielsen](#)

[EN3-3A](#) | [ACELT1611](#)

Compose a stanza featuring a metaphor, following the style of the poet.

Analyse the use of metaphor in the poem, by following the stages below:

Ensure students are aware a metaphor is an example of [figurative language](#) where the traits of one object are applied to another.

Identify metaphors featured in the poem, such as:

Today I am the double bass,
solid, sonorous, strong.

But sometimes I'm the cor anglais,
solitary, subdued.

Sometimes I'm the trumpet, a spicy, strident sound,
and others the euphonium, velvety and round.

For each example, discuss the feeling the metaphor is used to evoke. For example, the first metaphor is used to show the poet is feeling strong and confident, while the second implies they need some time alone, and are feeling more sombre.

Experiment with composing musical instrument related metaphors by following the stages below:

View the video [George Meets the Sydney Orchestra | An Introduction to Orchestra for Children](#).

Discuss the feelings each instrument could be used to show. To make this clearer to students, direct them to identify the response or feeling they experience when listening to each instrument. Tell students this is subjective and can be different for each student. Inform students the goal here is to provide evidence for the feeling evoked. Provide examples, such as 'the trumpet feels joyous, with its powerful, clear notes' or 'the oboe evokes sorrow, as the low notes are slowly drawn out across the strings'.

Further examples of feelings the instruments or items in the video could evoke include:

- The conductor's baton - organised and officious
- The violin - jubilant and excitable
- The clarinet – pottering along, happily playing its part
- The trombone – loud and showy
- The xylophone – quiet and reflective

Discuss the structure of the stanzas, ensuring students observe the following:

- the first line is dedicated to stating the name of the instrument the poet is embodying
- the second line includes adjectives as reasons for why the poet has chosen this instrument
- the final two lines feature further information on an action or feeling

Ensure students also note that the second and fourth lines rhyme.

Discuss how students are feeling (happy, sad, confident, reflective). Place students with a partner based on the way they are currently feeling. Discuss which instrument best exemplifies their mood.

Instruct the pairs to create a brief stanza that features a metaphor based on a musical instrument that represents how they are feeling. Tell them to follow a similar structure to that mentioned above.

Remind students to begin with ideas such as, Today I am a.. or the instrument I am is...

A sample response is included below:

Today I am the conductor's baton,
Officious, confident, organised.
I tell the musicians what to do,
and keep focused and wise.

Governor Philip's Runaway Cows

article by [Kate Walker](#) | illustrated by Fifi Colston

[EN3-1A](#) | [ACELY1700](#)

Evaluate the layout of texts and prepare a presentation defending choices around layout for a new article.

Analyse the layout of two texts, by completing the following:

Prior to reading the body of the article, discuss elements that are immediately visible.

Sample answers include: the main heading, the sub-headings, the illustrations.

Discuss which of these elements make the students curious about the article. Tell students to provide reasons for their choices.

Sample answers include:

- The heading, with the word 'runaway' in it, grabbed my attention as the word implies something dramatic has happened.
- The second illustration with the broken fence and the man with his hands in the air made me curious, as it appears something very tense and troubling has happened.

Scan the article [The Convicts History](#) on Sydney Living Museums. Scroll down, taking time to examine the headings, images and the layout of the page. Discuss elements students find engaging, such as the image sketched from the point of view of the First Australians.

Compare the layout of both articles, discussing students conclusions about which appears to be more interesting.

Read 'Governor Philip's Runaway Cows' from this issue of The School Magazine. Discuss which elements of the information students found most interesting, reflecting on whether this matched the impression they formed from examining the layout. Provide an example, such as 'the information about the cows running away was entertaining which matched the assumption made based on the heading'.

Read the article [The Convict's Colony](#), focusing on the section titled, 'A Harsh Reality'. Ensure students are aware that this covers the same information as in the article, when cattle escaped and food was scarce. Reflect on which article outlined the events in more depth. Most likely students will conclude the article in The School Magazine included more detail than the website.

Plan a presentation outlining a chosen layout:

Instruct students to select a further element of convict history from the website above, perhaps the information under the heading, 'Finding its Feet', found by scrolling down on the webpage.

Note the key points of information. A sample answer is provided below:

- by 1792 the colony was more secure
- farms and gardens were flourishing
- cottages and soldiers quarters had been built
- theft from storehouses was prevented
- planning allowed for fresh water
- there was still insufficient livestock
- corn, maize and vegetables growing well

Reflect on how this information appears on the website, noting that it isn't as visually appealing to readers as the article in The School Magazine.

Discuss how this information might be laid out, in a way that is more visibly interesting to readers and that piques their curiosity. Suggestions include: adding subheadings such as, 'developments with food', 'improvements to housing', 'water supply', adding more images and spreading the information across the page in columns.

Place students in groups and instruct them to mock up a quick sketch of how they might organise this information on the page. Students can select images online and mock up the page in programs such as Microsoft Word if planning their layout digitally, or sketch it on paper.

Instruct students to plan a brief presentation, outlining why their chosen layout is an improvement on the layout of the website. Tell students to include detail about the elements they changed and the reasons for their choices. The success criteria below may provide a useful guide.

Success criteria:

- include information in a presentation about the changes students would make to the layout
- list any headings and subheadings that may be added
- explain why the changes are an improvement on the current layout featured on the website

Runaway cow research

Use this guide to help you organise your research.

Why did Arthur Phillip buy cows?	
When were cows introduced to Australia?	
Describe the impact of rats on the colony.	
Why were the cows so important to the health of the colony?	
What reason might Governor Phillip have had for removing the animals' horns?	
Describe the way in which Edward Corbett must have felt when he realised the cows were gone.	

Dreams Sweet

poem by Jesse Anna Bornemann | illustrated by Amy Golbach

[EN3-2A](#) | [ACELT1798](#)

Compose a couplet, outlining opinions on being upside down.

Analyse the poem, by completing the following:

Listen to the poem if you have a digital subscription or read the poem to the class. Discuss the way the poem sounds when it is read aloud, focusing on the rhyming sequence and the number of syllables per line. Ensure students observe the poem features rhyming couplets (with pairs of lines that rhyme) and that most lines feature eleven syllables except the second and third lines which both contain twelve. Instruct students to read the poem aloud in pairs, feeling for the rhythm and pace of the poem.

Experiment with composing a couplet about being upside down by following these steps:

- Discuss the content, emphasising that it focuses on reasons why sleeping upside down may not be desirable.
- Instruct the students to spend some time upside down. They may enjoy performing handstands, trying out yoga poses such as Downward Dog or simply folding their bodies at the waist and dangling their heads towards the floor. The article, [Vestibular Activities for Kids: Turning Upside Down](#), on the Inspired Treehouse site has a number of suggestions for upside down activities. It also offers guidance for performing the yoga pose, Downward Dog, in the article, [Gross Motor Activities: Downward Dog](#), which would provide a less strenuous way for students to experiment with the sensation if they prefer.
- Discuss what students did or did not enjoy about being upside down. Provide examples such as, 'it was fun to see the world the other way up' or 'it made me feel dizzy when the blood rushed to my head'.
- Place students in pairs and instruct them to compose a brief couplet about their time being upside down. Remind students that rhyming couplets are a pair of lines where the final line of each rhyme. Students may like to use a rhyming dictionary such as [RhymeZone](#) to assist with finding rhyming words. Tell students to strive for a similar number of syllables per line as they identified are in Dreams Sweet (eleven or twelve).
- Provide an example such as:

Dangling my head down towards the dusty floor,
Makes me not know the right way up any more.

For an added element of fun, students may like to use an upside down text converter, such as [UpsideDownText.com](#) to convert their lines to upside down writing.

Raised by Moths

story by Charlie Archbold | illustrated by Sheree Fiala

[EN3-6B | ACELA1512](#)

Experiment with using specific words and include these in the opening to a narrative.

Compare general and specific words by completing the following:

Provide students with a list of general, all-purpose words, including:

- get
- move
- put

Tell students they'll be playing a game of charades, silently acting out words from the list while the other students try to guess what the word is. Model selecting one of the words at random and acting it out. For example, if you selected the word 'get' you might mime picking something up. Invite students to guess what the word is you have performed.

Place students in small groups and allow time for them to mime actions for the words.

Discuss specific verbs in the text, for example:

hop

pushes

jump

scoot

Repeat the charades game with these words. Discuss how easy it was to select an action to mime the word and how many guesses it took to identify the correct word now the language is more specific. Most likely students will choose the second set of words.

Inform students that selecting the most specific word assists readers with forming the clearest image in their minds.

For those with a digital subscription, students can [complete the online activity](#) now.

Experiment with using specific words when composing an interaction, by following the steps below:

- Refer to the text. Discuss David's connection to the moths and the fact their close bond is due to him having been raised by the moths.
- Display an image featuring multiple animals, such as one found on [7ESL](#). Discuss which animals students feel some connection to or which they like. Encourage students to provide reasons for their choice. Provide an example, such as 'I feel

connected to dogs as they are caring and loyal' or 'I like cats as they are independent'.

- Discuss an interaction between the animal and the individual that could reveal their connection. Use the idea of the moths helping David when he became stuck in the ride as a guide. Provide an example, such as a dog helping you if you became injured. Identify specific words that could be used, such as 'scampered' instead of 'came', for the dog arriving to help, or 'whimpered' rather than 'cried' for how you reacted to being injured. Students may like to use a thesaurus, such as [thesaurus.com](https://www.thesaurus.com) to identify specific vocabulary.
- Tell students to select images of both the animal and themselves. They can use a photo of themselves or draw their images on paper.
- Instruct students to compose a two or three frame visual story. Tell them to use thought and speech bubbles to outline a brief interaction between the animal and the human, showing their connection and the reason for it. Students may wish to examine the graphic serials in this issue of Orbit for more guidance on how to communicate with speech and thought bubbles. Remind students to include specific vocabulary.
- Provide students an example, such as:

An image of yourself injured and alone in the bush in the first frame, with the thought bubble saying, 'no one will ever get me out here'.

Model editing the writing, to make the vocabulary more specific, by replacing the word 'find' with the more specific word 'locate'.

The second frame could show an image of a dog sniffing the air, with a thought bubble saying,

'I know I can detect my owner somewhere around here'.

The final frame could feature an image of the dog and person cuddling and the thought bubble,

'I should have known my dog would discover my location. After all, we are bonded as closely as brother and sister. Only two more years and my dog will transition to a human just like I did.'

Tell students to read through their work, checking they have used specific words.

Character interview

Read the story 'Raised by Moths' and complete the interview questions as if you were the main character, Willow.

1. What is your name? What animal were you raised by?

2. List six to ten words that describe you.

3. How did you come to live with your human family?

4. How does the family treat you? Do they know the truth about your connection with horses?

5. How do you feel after meeting David?

6. How do you think David knew to point to the horses in the field?

Cinderella a Capella

poem by Neal Levin | illustrated by [Greg Holfeld](#)

[EN3-2A](#) | [ACELY1704](#)

Compose a brief poem, outlining a character's weakness and a surprising way of overcoming it.

Analyse the representation of Cinderella in the poem, by completing the following:

- Display an image of the fictional character of Cinderella. You'll find a variety of images in the Insider article, [How Cinderella Has Changed Over Time, From Animated Classics to Live-Action Remakes](#). Discuss words associated with the character. Sample answers include: 'princess', 'beautiful', 'dainty', 'delicate'.
- Read up to the second to last stanza, leaving the final stanza for later. Discuss how the new information about Cinderella's singing may be unexpected to readers. Emphasise that this reveals a weakness; the fact Cinderella's singing voice is unpleasant. Discuss how this impacts on the character's relatability. Most likely students will conclude that having a weakness makes the character more relatable to readers.
- Discuss students predictions of how she might overcome her weakness. Most likely they will suggest ideas along the lines of her practicing singing enough to improve. Read the final stanza, emphasising that instead what provides the people in Cinderella's life with a reprieve from her singing is the fact she contracts laryngitis. Discuss how surprising this is and how choosing an unexpected way to overcome a weakness makes for a unique story.

Experiment with crafting weakness for characters and identifying unique ways for them to overcome them, by following the steps below:

- Discuss other well-known characters from fairy stories. Sample responses include, Prince Charming, the Fairy Godmother.
- Identify vocabulary to describe the characters, such as: 'heroic' and 'strong' for Prince Charming or 'magical' and 'kind' for the Fairy Godmother.
- Discuss possible weaknesses for some of the characters. Some ideas include: that Prince Charming is afraid of cats or that the Fairy Godmother is stubborn and shallow. Students might like to use a [Random Character Traits Generator](#) for more ideas.
- Discuss unexpected ways the characters might overcome their weakness, providing examples such as Prince Charming purchases stilts so he can tower above the cats or the Fairy Godmother is distracted from being stubborn by being shown a bag of glitzy jewels, which appeals to her shallow side.

- Discuss the style of the poem, ensuring students identify that it follows the story of Cinderella and her weakness.
- Instruct students to compose a brief poem, about their chosen character's surprising weakness and a unique way they overcome it. Inform students that they may choose to follow a similar structure to Cinderella a Capella, with four line stanzas, featuring rhyming couplets, but that they don't need to follow this if they prefer not to. The focus here is including some story around their chosen character's weakness and the way they overcome it.

A sample response is provided below:

Prince Charming has one major fear,
He cannot keep any cats near,
So stilts he purchased from the shop,
Now he's walking all day, without a stop.

The Girl in the Hat

story by Pam Greatorex | illustrated by [Sylvia Morris](#)

[EN3-7C](#) | [ACELT1612](#)

Experiment with creating an historical artefact and composing information to accompany it.

Discuss what the discovery of the hat, and Lin's subsequent research reveals about history.

Sample responses include:

- that Madeline Mellinger was a passenger on the Titanic
- that she survived its sinking

Students may also identify further details revealed through the conversation between Lin and her Auntie Tram, such as:

- that many people lost their lives when the Titanic sank
- that it was very cold the night the ship sank
- women, children and the very rich were placed into lifeboats
- ships in the area collected survivors from the lifeboats

Students may like to view further information about Madeline Mellinger online on the [Encyclopedia Titanica](#). Direct student's attention to the photo of the hat from the story included in the online article.

Experiment with compiling a historical artifact by completing the following:

- Discuss items that could be used to represent the modern day. Ideas might include: a face mask or devices such as iPads, a mobile phone, a Nintendo switch. Place students in pairs and instruct them to select an item that represents the modern day. Tell students to create an image of their chosen item, either by locating one online, designing one using programs such as Microsoft Paint, drawing a sketch of the item on paper or taking photographs of themselves holding the item.
- Instruct students to swap images with another pair of students. Tell students to imagine someone has found this image in the future. Instruct students to discuss the following questions with their partner:
 - What might people think of this item in the future?
 - Will they know what it is or not?
 - Will it still be useful?
 - Will the item seem outdated, for example a mobile phone?
- Discuss where Lin finds information about Madeline Mellinger (from the list of names in the newspaper clipping and on websites).

- Divide students into groups and instruct them to create an historical pack. Allocate the students in each group one of the following responsibilities:
 - composing a newspaper article about the item when it is found
 - composing information to appear on a website about the item (e.g. its functionality)
- Students may like to view advertisements of products to obtain information for their websites. Ideas for websites that might be used for research are provided below:

[iPhone 12](#)
[iPad 10.2 model](#)
[Nintendo Switch](#)
[Face masks](#)

A sample answer is included below:

Newspaper: A very old object that appears to be an ancient mobile phone was found at the local beach. Local residents who found it were mystified about how to turn the phone on, as the functions seem so outdated.

Website: An iPhone 12 allowed for high quality streaming and was powered by the A14 Bionic chip. It took photos in low light, either wide, ultra-wide or in selfie mode. It had a Super Retina XDR display.

Extension

Instruct students to deliver their historical pack to another group. Tell students to write a reaction scene in character as people in the future, responding to the information they have been provided and imagining they have just found this item.

Message in a bottle

Read the story 'The Girl in the Hat'. Imagine you found a bottle on a beach! The note inside was written by Madeline Mellinger on the night the *Titanic* hit an iceberg.

On the lines below, write out the message that the bottle contains. The note should include the following features:

- a description of what was happening that night
- a plea for help
- vivid language
- a sense of fear.

A large rectangular area with a hand-drawn, irregular black border, containing horizontal lines for writing.

Wipe Out!

play by Darcy-Lee Tindale | illustrated by [Tohby Riddle](#)

[EN3-8D](#) | [ACELT1608](#)

Compose a script featuring an element of Australian culture that is meaningful to students.

Analyse representations of Australian culture in the play, by following the steps outlined below:

- Discuss elements in the text that are synonymous with Australian culture. Sample answers include: the unique native animals, the beach, surfing, the outback, swimming between the flags, sunscreen, cricket, hot chips at the beach.
- Read or view the book, [Possum Magic](#), by [Mem Fox](#). Identify further elements of Australian culture in this text, most notably food such as Anzac biscuits, mornay and Minties, Vegemite sandwiches, pavlova, lamingtons.

Experiment with composing a play featuring representations of Australian culture personal to individual students, by completing the following:

- Discuss what Australian culture means to students, emphasising that it might mean something different to everyone. Students may like to search for ideas in the article, [National Symbols of Australia Facts for Kids](#), on Kiddle.
- Refer back to the play and discuss Dingo Dave's intentions (to encourage the other animals to try something new). Instruct students to write a brief script imagining they are encouraging someone who is unfamiliar with their chosen element of Australian culture to try it. Identify the strategies Dingo Dave uses in the play.

Sample responses include:

Encouraging and offering support, shown in lines such as:

Nah, you should come with me and see for yourself. I'll teach you how to surf. I could lend you a stick.

Offering alternatives, shown in the line:

You don't only swim and surf at the beach; you can build a sandcastle, relax and do some sunbathing. Or play ball games and toss a frisbee on the sand. We could have a picnic lunch.

Provide students with an example of how they might incorporate these ideas into their own script.

Me: Would you like to try a Vegemite sandwich?

Friend: No thank you. It doesn't look edible.

Me: I could try a bit first if you like, to show you it's edible.

Friend: No thanks. I don't like trying new food.

Me: How about just trying a little bit, or mixing it with some avocado?

Friend: Go on then, let's give it a try.