

Meet the Team

by [Geoffrey McSkimming](#) |

[EN3-1A](#) | [ACELY1709](#)

Conduct a hot seating activity to ‘meet the team’ further.

Read the text with the students. In groups instruct students to discuss the text and extract key information about E, Fran Jipanni and Pencils Derwent Barrymore (for example their role in ‘The School Magazine, their gadget, and their personality traits). Each group should then complete a character analysis graphic organizer on each member of the team (suggested resource: [Character Profile](#)).

After completing their character profiles, ask the groups to write down any questions they have about the group members and any additional information that they would like to know. For example, they might wonder where E lives, why Fran needs to take her sarongs when she travels the world and the worst accident Pencils has had.

Explain to the class that this type of text is called a profile. A profile is a written portrait of a person based on facts found through research and interviews. Students will conduct further research on the members of the team to expand these profiles. This will be done through asking questions in a hot seating activity.

Allocate each group a member of the team (E, Fran, Pencils) and ask them to choose a spokesperson. Explain that they will become that team member during the hot seating activity. Then ask the groups to come up with a list of questions to ask the team members. They should look at the list of questions they compiled earlier (after completing their character analysis graphic organizer). They may wish to add additional questions.

Next, conduct a hot seating activity (see the Digital Learning Selector page on [Hot Seat](#) for more information). Rotate through the spokespeople to create a panel of the three members. Ask each group to ask one of the team members a question. Either write a transcription of the interview yourself, or ask a couple of students to act as journalists during the activity.

After the hot seating activity, students should choose their favourite moment from the interview and the team member they learnt the most interesting thing about. They should incorporate the information gleaned from this moment into a new paragraph to add to the team member’s profile.

Dossier of Discovery: What's the Big Stink?

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

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

Design a brochure to advertise a smelly flowers exhibition at a botanical garden.

Read the article with the class. After reading, draw their attention to the subheading: 'What's the Big Stink?' Ask students to identify the main idea in the text by using the following strategy: the subject of the text + the topic of the subheading. They should be able to identify that the main idea therefore is the flower of the titan arum plant and its terrible odour.

Then, ask them to reread the text again and underline or highlight the details in the text that relate to the flower's smell. These details may include:

- The flower smells like a corpse
- The purpose of its stench is to ensure pollination
- Flies and dung beetles can smell it over a kilometre away
- The burgundy colour tricks them into thinking its meat

Students may highlight a range of details. Ask them to re-read their list carefully and to only details that relate directly to smell. These details should be recorded on a [Main Idea Graphic Organiser](#).

Ask students to read the Interflora webpage [The World's Smelliest Flowers](#). Instruct them to choose their three favourite smelly flowers and to record three details about their scent or other interesting pieces of information.

Explain to students that they need to imagine that they are a curator or botanist at a botanical garden. They are running a special exhibition on plants with foul odors and need to design a brochure to encourage the public to come. Using the information collected on four smelly plants, students are to design this brochure.

Provide the following success criteria to guide student responses:

- Uses a trifold brochure template with 6 panels
- The front of the brochure has a catchy heading and eye-catching design
- There is a heading for each plant and an interesting image
- Concise and clear paragraphs provide fascinating details
- The back of the brochure contains useful information: maps, opening times, admission fees
- A range of persuasive techniques are used such as: imperative verbs, rhetorical questions or a slogan

The Three Brujas

story by Cathryn Free | illustrated by Queenie Chan

EN3-8D | ACELT1613

Research the cultural context of the story to enhance understanding and enjoyment.

Read the text with the class. After reading, collect a class list of unfamiliar words and phrases such as *brujas*, *Raramuri*, *rarajipari* and *por favor*. (You may also like to mention that italicised words often indicate that they are from a foreign language.)

Provide students with a definition of cultural context: information about the location, beliefs, religion, food, dress, relationships of the characters in the story. You may like to visit the English Textual Concepts webpage on [Context](#) for more information.

Ask students to search for context clues in the story to see if they can discover the location or the cultural group represented. Students could compile this information in a table (some examples below):

Names and cultural phrases	Flora and fauna	Dress and customs
Rahui	Live on Copper Canyon on a ridge	Simple tunic
Raramuri (the Running People)	Antelope	Sandals
Rarajipari (a running game)	Jaguar	Red jewellery
Por favor	Snake	Belief in magic

Ask students if any of these clues help them to work out the location of the story. Draw students' attention to the use of Spanish words (*por favor*, *hermano*, *ayúdame*) and the types of animals in the story. Some students may be able to recognise that this story is set in the Americas, specifically Mexico.

Provide students access to the Britannica website on the [Tarahumara](#) (an alternative name for the Raramuri). Students read the entry and organise the information into a [Fact Wheel](#).

Students reread 'The Three Brujas'. When they encounter information that they have recorded in their Fact Wheel, they tick it off. Any new information can be added to the Fact Wheel.

After rereading, students should review any information that was not included in the story (for example the types of crops that they farm or the structure of their huts). Instruct students to add an extra paragraph to the story which includes this aspect of cultural context.

Reading between the lines

Read 'The Three Brujas.' Think carefully about the characters within the story. Think of eight words to best describe Rahui and the Brujas.

Rahui	The Brujas

- 1. Was Rahui confident about the journey ahead of him? Why / why not?

- 2. Describe Rahui's interaction with the three animals?

- 3. Why do you think Rahui wasn't scared when he came across a jaguar?

- 4. How do you think Rahui was feeling when he said, 'I've come for the power of the opal.'?

- 5. Do you think the Bruja's test of worthiness was fair? Explain your answer on the lines below.

Evermore

poem by Jackie Hosking | illustrated by Michel Streich

EN3-3A | ACELY1713

Interpret the moral of the poem through understanding its narrative structure.

Before reading the poem to the class, draw attention to the subheading:

poem by Jackie Hosking inspired by an ancient Native American myth.

Lead a class discussion about myths by defining the term (a well-known story which was made up in the past to explain natural events or to support religious beliefs or customs) and a providing a list of their features (often explain a natural phenomenon or the origin of a tradition, can sometimes provide a warning about potential dangers, contain elements of magic and the supernatural, include gods or mythical beasts). Explain to students that a key element of myths is that they were used to teach people important lessons. These are sometimes called morals.

At this point you might want to view a range of myths and discuss their lessons. The interactive website [The Big Myth](#) provides a range of creation stories from across the world. You may also want to ask students about other stories they have read (fables, fairytales etc.) which contain morals. You could create a class list of stories and their lessons, such as The Boy Who Cried Wolf, The Pied Piper of Hamelin and Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Read the poem in full to the class. Then read the poem a second time, pausing after each stanza to check for understanding of the narrative. You may wish to cover the following points in your class discussion:

Stanza One	The grandmother promised to make a quilt for her granddaughter. Once the quilt was completed, the grandmother would pass away.
Stanza Two	When the grandmother stopped to make dinner, the granddaughter would unwind the quilt until it was just loose thread.
Stanza Three	This became a game they would play every day and the granddaughter would prevent the grandmother from making progress on the quilt.
Stanza Four	This game went on for a long time. Every time the grandmother remade the quilt, it was more beautiful. However, she continued to remind her granddaughter that one day it would be finished and she would pass away.
Stanza Five	Years passed and the game continued. The quilt was very beautiful and despite the granddaughter attempting to pull it apart, the grandmother kept remaking it. Each time she remakes it, it is more beautiful than before.
Stanza Six	This is the moral or the lesson to the poem and you will need to work it out!

After discussing the narrative of the poem, provide students with a [Fable and Folktale Story Map](#). They should plot out the narrative in their own words and then try to deduce the

moral from their summary. (One interpretation of the moral is that all things in life will pass, but beautiful memories will be created in the process. Students, however, may come up with their own interpretation of the moral.)

Extension: use the Fable and Folktale Story Map to work out the moral of other texts in this edition, such as 'The Three Brujas' (with an obvious moral) and 'Four Days' (with a harder moral to interpret).

Four Days

story by Richard Brookton | illustrated by [Anna Bron](#)

[EN3-2A](#) | [ACELT1800](#)

Write a sensory poem based on the description of camping in the narrative.

After reading the story in full, reread an extract on pages 13 – 14 describing Jason’s first night and the morning after:

I’ll always remember that first night. It rained heavily, and the tent leaked ... They chomped away on their hot breakfasts and flicked bits to Raggedy Bob.

Explain to students that they are going to write a sensory poem to create a vivid depiction of the wet campsite. Their poems should contain all five senses: hearing, sight, smell, touch and taste.

First, instruct students to reread the extract closely and then draw a detailed picture of the wet campsite in the morning. They should include detail from the text such as a soggy tent, mist and water dripping from the trees. They could also infer information from the text, such as Jason hanging his damp sleeping bag out to dry.

If you have a digital subscription, you can do this step as an [interactive activity](#).

Next, they should reread the extract again and write down any interesting vocabulary that they could use in their poem (snuffling, misty, condensation etc.). Then they should brainstorm their own words to describe a wet campsite.

Students then categorise their vocabulary list into a table (below with examples). They should continue their brainstorm to fill in any gaps or add to their ideas.

Hear	Snuffling dog, constant drip of rain
See	Misty trees
Smell	Soggy sausages
Touch/Feel	Sloppy mud in my socks
Taste	Condensation on my tongue

The structure of the poem can be adapted to suitability level. A more scaffolded response can follow the structure:

I can see ...

I can hear ...

I can smell ...

I can feel ...

I can taste ...

Alternatively, students can take a less structured approach to paint a poetry word picture of the scene. Ask them to consider organization, line length (enjambment), rhythm and possibly rhyme. For example:

Sloppy mud oozes between my toes
Soggy sausages cling to my teeth
My sleeping bag has become a sponge
And it smells of Raggedy Bob's feet.
Misty trees make me sad.
Dewy ground makes me mad.
How desperate I am to be home.

Finally, once students have finished their poem they should come up with a title that sums up their description, such as 'A miserable campsite' or 'A sodden holiday'.

A letter from Jason

Use details from the story to help Jason write a letter to his mum back home.

Dear Mum ...

1. Describe your first few days. What have you been doing each day? Are you enjoying your camping trip?

2. Describe Uncle Isaac—his attitude, what he likes to do, and how he treats you.

3. How are you getting along with Timmy and Rachel?

4. How did you feel when you hurt your knee? What did you think would happen?

5. Has your attitude towards Uncle Isaac changed? Why or why not?

With love from your son, Jason

House of Cards

play by Steve Taylor | illustrated by [Tohby Riddle](#)

[EN3-7C](#) | [ACELA1518](#)

Identify the use of puns and idioms in the playscript.

Read through the script as a class. After reading ask the class if they can explain the joke in the play (answer: there are many references to playing card games and the characters themselves are cards.)

Define the two key terms: **pun** (a play on words) and **idiom** (widely used phrase with a figurative, rather than literal meaning). In this play, card playing idioms are frequently used, along with subject terminology. These terms and phrases have a literal meaning in the play, but they also have a figurative meaning when it comes to playing cards. Therefore they are funny for the audience. For example:

JACK: You know, I'm afraid of being taken by a **card shark**.

KING: You know packing is not my **strong suit**.

As a class, brainstorm as many words and phrases related to play cards as possible. (You may want to look at the website [Idioms in Action – Poker](#) as a teacher reference, but please note that this website contains the phrase 'Suicide King' and is therefore not suitable for classroom use.)

Then ask students to reread the text. Challenge them to find as many card related puns and idioms as they can. Use the following scale to rank their success:

- 0-10: Queen of Diamonds – a good start, but there are still more to find.
- 11-20: King of Hearts – great attempt, but could you find a few more?
- 21-30: Ace of Spades – well done for finding so many jokes!

Finally, ask students to find their five favourite puns in the play. Instruct them to explain why the puns are funny using the following steps:

Step one: identify the word or words that are the basis of the joke. They are usually an idiom, homophone or a word that has two distinct meanings.

For example: the phrase 'card shark' has two distinct meanings.

Step two: use two sentences to explain the two meanings of the statement. If possible, try to find a link between the two meanings.

For example: 'Card shark' is an idiom and it means a person who cheats at cards in order to win money. However, in the play its usage is funny because Jack literally means a shark made from a playing card that might attack him.

Magic Umbrellas

article by [Anne Renaud](#) | illustrated by Michel Streich

[EN3-6B](#) | [ACELA1523](#)

Explore how the careful selection of vocabulary creates an exciting and engaging nonfiction text.

Prior to reading the text, reveal just the illustration, diagram and photograph. Ask students to make predictions about the content of the text. Ask the following questions to guide discussion:

- What do you predict will be the main idea or topic of this text? (Likely answer: umbrellas.)
- Can you make any further predictions about the type of umbrellas? (Students may notice from the diagram that they are collapsible.)
- Why do you think the picture of a woman features in two of the images? (Likely answer: she is the inventor.)
- Do you think that a text about the introduction of the collapsible umbrella will be interesting to read? Why or why not?

Read the text. Reflect on students' predictions to the last question, about whether they would find the text interesting or not. Many students will have found the article exciting. Ask them what parts engaged their attention. They may mention the structure (a mix of biography and information report), the secrecy of the process of invention, or Horowitz's treatment in Nazi-controlled Europe.

Explain to students that the vocabulary choices made by the author are a key ingredient to make the article engaging. Compare a series of quotations with more general sentences and ask students to explain why the quotation is a more exciting sentence. They should identify the words or phrases that have been carefully chosen to make the sentence interesting, their word group, and why they make the sentence engaging. For example:

Quotation	Boring sentence	Why the quotation is more interesting
"On a particularly cold and rainy May morning..."	"On a wet May morning..."	The use of the adverb group "particularly cold" makes the weather sound unusually miserable, maybe even dangerous. It makes it seem like Horowitz's invention was essential.
"Concerned that someone might steal her idea, Slawa swore Karl and her family to secrecy..."	"She thought someone might copy her idea, so asked her family to keep it a secret."	The verbs "concerned", "steal" and "swore" all suggest that there is a real threat that she could lose her idea. It makes her invention more impressive because she made it despite people threatening to steal the idea from her.

<p>“Slawa along with Karl (now her husband) and their newborn baby Eva, fled to Switzerland.”</p>	<p>“Slawa and her family travelled to Switzerland.”</p>	<p>The verb “fled” is much stronger than travelled. Fled suggests that she was forced to escape very quickly. In contrast, travelled suggests more of a holiday. For this reason fled is a much better choice of verb because it accurately describes the danger they were in.</p>
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Students then consolidate their understanding of careful vocabulary choice by making a dull paragraph about another inventor more interesting by adding and replacing some verbs, adjectives and adverbs. A suggested text to improve is below:

From the age of 12, Margaret Knight worked in a cotton mill to feed her family. Mills were dangerous as pieces of steel equipment would often fall off the machine and hit workers. This could cause death. By age 13, Knight had invented a restraint system that would prevent these accidents.

Knight continued to invent things through her teenage years. She is most famous for inventing the flat-bottomed paper bag. Most people were carrying their groceries in cones made of paper. These could not store many items and often fell apart on the walk home. Paper bags had to be folded by hand and therefore were very expensive. Knight invented a paper bag machine in 1868 and improved the lives of everyone visiting the supermarket.

A visionary

Read the article 'Magic Umbrellas' and answer the following questions.

1. List the skills or talents that Slawa Horowitz possessed.

2. How did she keep her umbrella design a secret?

3. What made Slawa's umbrella design so popular?

4. Why didn't Slawa's clever design make her wealthy?

5. How would you describe Slawa? What sort of person do you think she may have been?

6. What obstacles might Slawa have had to overcome in the 1920s?

7. What lessons can be learned from the story of Slawa Horowitz and her magic umbrellas?

The Bull

part one of a two-part story by John O'Brien | illustrated by [Greg Holfeld](#)

[EN3-2A | ACELY1715](#)

Peer-edit a student's work to enhance the humorous elements of a recount.

Revise the features of a recount:

- Is a personal story in first or third person
- Retells events in past tense
- Is presented in chronological order
- Focuses on specific events, not general topics
- First paragraph can either tell the who/what/where/when, or is a hook that foreshadows the most exciting event of the story

Explain that sometimes authors will exaggerate or embellish details to make a recount more interesting. This means that many recounts are a mix of fact and fiction.

Read the story. After reading, ask students to categorise which events and details they think really happened (facts), and which events have been embellished (fiction). This information can be organised into a table (example below).

Fact	Fiction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnny went on a family holiday to New Zealand • The family hired a Ford Falcon • A bull was blocking a single lane bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bull was murderous (it wanted to attack and kill humans) • Laurinda sat on a stack of newspapers to prevent car sickness • Johnny's dad made him throw stones at the bull and wasn't really worried about his safety

Explain to students that they will now write a recount of an event on a family holiday. Tell them that it doesn't need to be a particularly interesting event, because they will be embellishing the story and adding extra details.

Provide the features of a recount as success criteria. Give students time to write their recount. Remind them to exaggerate some details and add some embellishments to make their story more engaging.

Now explain that they will swap stories with a partner. Their peer will be reading and making changes to their story. They will have a new set of success criteria. The aim will be to add extra humour to the story by increasing the level of embellishment and including some preposterous detail.

Success Criteria:

- Composes a 'hook' opening paragraph that exaggerates the most dangerous element in the story.
- Chooses three details in the story and adds embellishment to make them sound more humorous.
- Reads the original story carefully and edits vocabulary to make sentences more descriptive.
- Proofreads carefully to remove spelling and grammatical errors.

The partners return stories. They then take turns explaining the changes that they have made and why they have made them.

Understanding 'The Bull'

Read the story 'The Bull', then complete some here, hidden and head questions.

There are three types of questions:

- Here: answers can be found in the text.
- Hidden: answers are in the text but difficult to find.
- Head: clues can be found in the text but you will need to also make inferences.

1. Here question: Where do the events in the story take place?

2. Here question: What is Jennifer's new skill?

3. Hidden question: How many family members does Johnny mention are in the car and what are their names? (Include Johnny himself.)

4. Hidden question: During what part of the day do the events in the story occur?

5. Head question: Why do you think Johnny decided to leave the car and throw rocks at the bull?

6. Head question: Johnny's dad states that bulls never run downhill. Explain whether you believe him or not.

The Knowing Fire-Bird

poem by Jill Carter-Hansen | illustrated by Jasmine Seymour

EN3-7C | ACELT1617

Perform a choral reading of the poem to build students' understanding of rhythm.

Read the poem to the class. During your reading pay close attention to delivering the rhythm of the poem consistently.

After you have finished reading the poem, ask the class what they noticed about the structure. Observations include:

- It has a consistent aabbccdd rhyme scheme made up of rhyming couplets. You may wish students to annotate the rhyme scheme.
- It also has a steady beat. Explain to students that this is called the rhythm or metre. Explain that like music, human speech has a natural beat. There are four beats per line in the rhythm.

Discuss why the techniques of rhythm and rhyme are used by poets. To prompt student discussion, display the words: memorable, sound, entertaining. Students should make the following observations: rhyme makes a poem easier to remember, rhythm and rhyme creates a pleasing musical sound, poems can be easier to perform dramatically with a strong rhyme and rhythm scheme which makes them more entertaining.

Explain to students that the class will now perform a choral reading of the poem so that they understand its rhythm. This involves students closely following the lines by tracking words with their finger and all students reading in unison. For more information visit the Reading Rockets website on [Choral Reading](#).

On the first attempt at a choral reading of the poem, go very slowly. Clap out the rhythm for the students as you read together. You may also want to display the words and rhythm on the board. For example:

The Kite/ flies high/ on wind/-filled wings/,

this bird/ that knows/ the place/ of things/.

Those craw/ling crea/tures on/ the ground/

that se/cretly/ move all/ around/,

On the second attempt, increase the pace of your reading and remove the scaffolded clapping.

Practice the poem a number of times. As students' confidence and fluency increases, also increase the pace of the recitation until the rhythm mimics normal human speech.

Practice choral readings of other poems in The School Magazine, such as:

- The Impossible BBQ (Touchdown, Issue 10, 2021)
- The Magic of the Night (Touchdown, Issue 7, 2021)
- The Rhythm of Time (Touchdown, Issue 5, 2021)